

The New 'Knowledge Speak': the implications of contested definitions of knowledge and information

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Abstract

This paper presents a critique of notions of information and knowledge found in the management literature and amongst proponents of 'knowledge management' (Davenport and Prusak 2000) interviewed in the course of a study of changing operations of the Federal Government of Australia as it is found in Canada (Shields, Taborsky, Jones, and O'Hara 2000). Interviews with a range of Federal Government Departments and Agencies on a number of topics including knowledge management were conducted throughout the Summer of 2000. Definitions and numerous misunderstandings of the relationship between knowledge and information emerged. We will distinguish and contrast these with definitions derived from semiotic and information science frameworks. We argue for the importance of the conclusions allow us to specify the shortcomings of existing knowledge management approaches and to identify a necessary and specific focus for future knowledge initiatives in organizations.

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