

ABSTRACT

This thesis report discusses the role of the intranet in knowledge sharing. It is based on primary research that investigated in depth a single, maturing intranet in a large, distributed organisation. The qualitative approach that was adopted generated grounded explanation through case study description. In keeping with a sociotechnical analysis, close reference is paid to the environment in which the intranet was developed, with specific attention focused on the other actors with which the intranet was associated. Examination of the knowledge management implementation actor-network, in which the intranet played a part, reveals that an intranet initially intended to motivate knowledge sharing has multiple roles. It furnishes individuals and small groups with personal projects; demonstrates the status of an organisation; connects people together for the purposes of knowledge sharing; focuses corporate attention on issues related to knowledge sharing; inhibits knowledge sharing; provides career direction; and measures organisational engagement with corporate knowledge management initiatives. The broad explanatory factor for these intranet dimensions is the nature of power relations within the corporate environment. The research develops the subject of information and communication technologies and knowledge sharing, and adds clarification to the role of the intranet in such activity. Furthermore, it contributes new insight to the theme of power relations in knowledge management, a topic which to date has largely been neglected, and not made explicit, in the literature.