

Navigating the Knowledge Infrastructure:

Strategies for Increasing Workplace Democracy and Knowledge Management

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There is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory. Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation. —Jacques Derrida[1]

Bureaucratic administration means fundamentally domination through knowledge.
—Max Weber[2]

Abstract: In this paper we are going to describe a particular scheme for utilizing current web based technologies for use in facilitating the understanding, and utilization, of a cooperative knowledge infrastructure. We will describe the reasons we feel our KnowledgeScape mapping system would be a valuable addition to any corporation's intranet.

We begin with a description of the modern workplace. We find that there are certain problems within the modern workplace that we may be able to help address. Two of these problems are the recognition of the value of emergent communities, and the current inability of corporate organizational charting techniques to account for and nurture these informal, but potentially valuable, groups.

Next we will look at some of the interesting philosophical and sociological concepts that directly apply to the issues we raise. Once we have a clear conception of the philosophical background we will attempt to apply these ideas within the design of our proposed knowledge infrastructure mapping tool.

Additionally we will provide a description of the current technologies we surveyed for use in our project and the strengths and weaknesses we found in each of them. Here we will look at how to use current technologies in new ways that will address some of our concerns and ideas. We will conclude with a look at how the KnowledgeScape mapping technique could be of use in any endeavor that seeks to enable the use of large archives or stores of knowledge. We find that the KnowledgeScape mapping scheme would be useful in projects for representing competency, intellectual capital, etc., or any other project that has to do with creating digital archives or libraries. ♦

[1] Derrida, Jacques. "Archive Fever: a Freudian Impression," trans. Eric Prenowitz. The University of Chicago Press, 1996.

[2] Weber, Max. "Economy and Society," Roth, Guenther and Wittich, Claus ed. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1978. Pg. 225