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About FreePint

FreePint is an online network of information searchers. Members receive this free newsletter twice a month: it is packed with tips on finding quality and reliable business information on the Internet.

Joining is free at <<http://www.freepint.com/>> and provides access to a substantial archive of articles, reviews, jobs and events, with answers to research questions and networking at the FreePint Bar.

Please circulate this newsletter, which is best read when printed out. To receive a fully-formatted version as an attachment or a brief notification when it's online, visit <<http://www.freepint.com/subs/>>.

ISSN 1460-7239

Editorial

Putting aside the impact of global warming for a moment, plummeting temperatures at this time of year signify one thing to me: it's almost time to get together with thousands of people who are likeminded in their interest of information and knowledge gathering.



The freezing UK temperatures were in sharp contrast to those in southern Spain last weekend, where I found myself on a 'stag' weekend amid hordes of people with information-gathering far from their minds. Whilst seeking a word to describe the experience, I stumbled across a wonderful antonym of knowledge: 'benightedness'. Rarely could a dual-meaning word so compactly describe the 'stag weekend' as being both 'overtaken by night or darkness' (i.e. being out all night) whilst also 'in a state of moral or intellectual darkness'. Not a nice experience. Not for a moderate information person anyway.

So, with memories thankfully starting to fade, I can look forward to the enjoyable business of being involved with the Online Information conference and exhibition here in London next week. If you were in any doubt as to the amount of knowledge you might acquire by attending, remember that there are 110 (yes, 110) free show floor seminars, 30 conference sessions by 90 industry experts, and 250 exhibitors.

We will be exhibiting as usual on stand 292, and we would love to chat to you about FreePint, VIP and Jinfo. Full information and free tickets are available online <<http://www.online-information.co.uk/>>.

With all these extremes of weather, experience and intellectual application, today's FreePint continues the knowledge-gathering and 'extremes' theme. We start with two pieces about knowledge management. Then there are the results of an information research project about extreme sports. Although one might rightly consider the 'stag weekend' to be an extreme sport, the article is actually about paintballing.

We hope today's FreePint inspires you to continue your own knowledge gathering, whilst at the same time limiting your extreme pursuits to nothing more strenuous than a visit to London next week.

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My Favourite Tipples

by **Graham Stewart**



Graham Stewart is a freelance writer with a sordid past in IT development. He has a blog at <http://wotiwrote.transmega.co.uk>.

Submit your top five favourite Web sites. See the guidelines at <http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>.

- The weird workings of an interconnected world are well reflected in the daily collection of stories to be found on <http://boingboing.net>.
- As part of my continuous effort to remain only two steps behind what's happening in technology I listen to the podcasts served from <http://www.itconversations.com>.
- There are now a number of 'grassroots' news sources on the Internet. I find <http://en.wikinews.org> to be the best of them.
- Blogs and blogging are changing the way marketing professionals are thinking. Hugh Macleod at <http://www.gapingvoid.com> is a fine example of a new marketeer.
- Another site that is looking to change the way ideas are spread, discussed and accepted is <http://www.changethis.com>.

Euromonitor double bill in VIP

The first ever in-depth review of Euromonitor's new Country Insight product is published in the November issue of VIP. A second review examines the new enhancements made to Euromonitor's flagship product GMID (Global Market Information Database).

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<<http://www.jinfo.com/>>

The Jinfo service enables you to search and advertise information-related job vacancies.

The Jinfo Newsletter is published free every two weeks, and contains a list of the latest vacancies along with job-seeking advice. The latest article is entitled "10 ways to charm a Recruitment Consultant". Read it online and subscribe free at <<http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/>>.

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<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4586>>

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<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4620>>

[The above jobs are paid listings]

NB: There are 40 other jobs in the current edition of the Jinfo Newsletter

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As we pass the milestone of 30,000 postings at the FreePint Bar, VIP celebrates its second birthday with a scoop review of Euromonitor's brand new product Country Insight <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b35848>>. Jinfo has also settled nicely into the FreePint Network, with 4,000 people now reading the twice-monthly career tips and latest job listings <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b35714>>.

A FreePinter is looking for information about bottled water sales <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b35892>> and another needs some unusual insurance facts for a 'lad mag' <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b35878>>. Do you know how to find out how people make purchases, both online and face-to-face? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b35688>>.

What are the rules for keeping financial records of projects funded with EU money? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b35880>>. Which companies donate to charities? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b35598>>.

A query, which has had lots of replies but no definitive answer, asks for a font which is made entirely out of books? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b35807>>.

Have you visited the Student Bar recently? You might be able to help a student who has to write 5,000 words on 'Corporate Governance' but doesn't know where to start <<http://www.freepint.com/go/s4674>>. Perhaps you have suggestions on preliminary reading for a Masters in Library and Information Studies? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/s4600>>.

And lastly, can you help someone who needs ...

"... to find films which include people who have got a tin bath in front of the fire" <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b35858>>.

... or the recently appointed 'Lord Bradney of Sealand' who wonders if he can use his newly purchased title in the UK <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b35708>>.

Thank you to everyone, royalty and commoner alike, who have taken the trouble to frequent the FreePint Bar.

Penny Hann, FreePint
<penny.hann@freepint.com>

The FreePint Bar is where you can get free help with your tricky research questions <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>>

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FreePint

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ISSN: 1460-7239

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Tips Article

"You need to know about what industry? Paintball & extreme sports industry sources" By Penny Leidtke



Penny Leidtke, principal of On-Target Information Services, has over 20 years' experience analyzing, researching, and reporting on companies, industries, economic conditions, and financing strategies. On-Target works closely with operating companies, financial services consultants, and law firms on valuations, M&A activities, product development, strategic planning, and industry or economic trend analysis. In addition to extreme sports, recent projects related to various segments of the automotive, insurance, publishing, organic chemicals, and healthcare industries. Articles and presentations have covered: starting an information services business; market research methods, and automotive industry resources.

One of the things that makes being a business information professional so interesting is that I rarely know what the next project will be. Over the years, I have been called upon to provide various types of information on a wide variety of industries. The topic that stands out, though, is the one I never expected.

A long-standing client in the financial services industry called because he needed information to help him prepare for a meeting with a prospective client. The meeting would take place in two days' time. He wanted as much information as possible, from a wide variety of sources, and he wanted it drawn primarily from the Internet. It didn't need to be highly detailed, but it should be as extensive as possible since he knew nothing about the industry in question. He added that he didn't think there would be much information anyway. His primary goal was to show his prospective client that he knew the industry and understood its unique culture. By this point, my curiosity was piqued but I was still surprised when he finally named the industry - Paintball.

Since I didn't know anything about Paintball, I was starting from scratch. Described below are some of the sites I visited as part of the project. I've also added sites that didn't necessarily cover Paintball but that covered other 'extreme sports'.

General Background Sites

Several sites are useful when you need a broad overview of the subject matter and you're not sure where to start. One is About.com. With coverage of almost every topic imaginable, their sports site can be found at <http://www.about.com/sports>. You can either choose one of the many sports listed or you can search by keyword or phrase. The Paintball site at <http://paintball.about.com> contains links to basic information, articles and resources, forums, and a buyers' guide.

Other useful sites are those that focus on a specific industry, in this case sports. The Virtual Library of Sport at <http://www.sportsvl.com> provides links to sports resources from around the world for most sports. You might also want to check out Hickok Sports.com at <http://www.hickoksports.com>. The site includes sections covering history, biography, quotations, rules, directories, a calendar, and even a glossary. While the history section didn't cover Paintball, there was a page on extreme sports at <http://www.hickoksports.com/history/extremesports.shtml>.

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Full details and free tickets available at:
<<http://www.online-information.co.uk/>>

Most sports, including 'extreme sports', have sites that are dedicated specifically to them. The sources listed above, all have links to a variety of these sites. One of the most valuable sport-specific sites for the Paintball project was WARPIG (World & Regional Paintball Information Guide) at <http://www.warpig.com>. It provides a great jumping-off point, covering: history, rules, manufacturers, distributors, news reports, forums, and other resources.

Directories

Directories can also help get you started when you're looking to develop a broad base of information. Most people are familiar with the Google and Yahoo! directories but there are others that work in much the same way. The Sports section of the Librarians' Index to the Internet at <http://lii.org/search/file/sports> includes only high-quality resources with informational content. Links are provided for general resources as well as for individual sports.

The Sports segment of the 'Best of the Web' directory at <http://botw.org/top/Sports/> also provides useful links relating to various individual sports, including paintball. They don't, however, have a category called Extreme Sports. On the other hand, the 'Open Directory Project' sports page at <http://dmoz.org/Sports/> has categories for both Extreme Sports and Paintball.

There are also directory sites that focus specifically on sports, extreme or otherwise. Sports365.co.uk at <http://www.sports365.co.uk> provides links for equipment, news and media, and sports organizations for individual and 'extreme sports'. The Sports Directories at http://www.britishsports.com/sports_directory.html lists official clubs, governing bodies, and organizations, as well as news and information sites, leagues, etc. Search by keyword or select a

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sport to view the relevant listings. GravityFed provides an adventure sports directory at <<http://www.gravitydex.com>> where you can search by keyword or use the index itself. Finally, the SportQuest service from SIRC Sport Research at <http://www.sirc.ca/online_resources/sportquest.cfm> allows you to link to local, national, or international associations, as well as events, FAQs, magazines, and so on for various sports or sports-related topics.

Trade associations

Trade associations can provide a wealth of information on almost any industry, including sports. There are several excellent hardcopy Association directories available, as well as some commercial, fee-based databases to help in your search. There are also a large number of association directories available on the Web. One of the more detailed sites is the 'Associations on the Net' section of the Internet Public Library site from the University of Michigan School of Information. The Sports page is found under the Entertainment & Leisure section at <<http://digbig.com/4fkax>>. You can drill down further to specific sports and also link to magazines or subject collections. While there isn't a separate category for "extreme sports", some individual extreme sports can be found under other categories. Depending on your interests, you may want to check the industry section of the Business & Economics category as well. You can also check country-specific Trade Association directories such as the Trade Association Forum at <<http://www.taforum.org>> which claims to serve as a gateway to UK trade associations and business sectors. Searching is done by name, by activity, or by browsing an alphabetical listing.

Links to associations may also be included on a variety of other sites, including any of those listed elsewhere in this article. In any event, given that 'Extreme Sports' is such a broad category, it is impossible to list all of the individual trade associations here. One broader-based association that was especially useful for the Paintball assignment was 'The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association' at <<http://www.sgma.com/index.html>>. This group represents the sports product industry worldwide. The Market Reports and Studies section of their site includes a wealth of information such as the Sports Participation Topline reports and Superstudy reports, as well as reports on general industry data, global markets, market segments, and financial analysis. The Topline charts are free of charge, while the others are available for purchase. The Press Room section of the site provides an additional source of information as does their Sports Edge magazine.

"Enterprise Search Guidebook"

ISBN 1-904769-10-1 - September 2005

This report sets out the principles and practice of specifying and selecting intranet or enterprise search software.

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Articles, news, publications

Since sports are an integral part of society, individual sports, including extreme sports, are written about and reported upon in a number of media outlets. There are web sites tied in with television channels, such as those at <<http://expn.go.com/expn/index>> and <<http://www.extreme.com>>. There are also articles on extreme sports that appear in mainstream, general sports, and specific sports publications and on various web sites. If you don't want to search a fee-based service for these articles, there are several sites that may provide access to some articles of interest.

One such site is MagPortal.com, which provides a searchable, browseable directory of magazine articles. Their Sports category at <<http://www.MagPortal.com/c/sport/>> covers auto racing, basketball, snowboarding, mountain biking, and a host of other sports. Another site is Topix.net, which provides over 300,000 news pages from more than 10,000 sources, focused on a particular subject or locality. Go to <<http://www.topix.net/sports>> and scroll down the left column for a complete list of subjects, including 'Extreme Sports'. A similar site is NewsNow at <<http://www.newsnow.co.uk>> which bills itself as the UK's leading online press monitoring company. Select the Sports newsfeed to see a list of 47 topics, including 'Extreme Sports'. The company also provides other, fee-based services as well.

Other sites

In addition to those listed above, there are numerous other sites which might be useful depending on the type of information you need. Most governments provide statistical data via the Web so, if you need to put things into a macro perspective, you might want to check those out.

Market research reports may also be helpful. In addition to the usual sources such as Mindbranch or MarketResearch.com, you might also want to take a look at the Research and Markets site at <<http://www.researchandmarkets.com/>>. It has thousands of major research publications covering international and regional markets, key industries, top companies, etc. Browse industry categories or search by keyword to find relevant reports.

Conclusion

In the end, I found a surprising amount of information. Whether they are called 'extreme', 'action', or 'adventure' sports, they are becoming more and more part of the mainstream. As a result, there is a vast array of sources available to meet your information needs. I might have preferred to go to some of the fee-based services such as Dialog or the others to save time, but the client requested otherwise. So, in exchange for speed, I was able to pick up a bit of the 'flavor' of the sport and its participants, which is what my client wanted.

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Review

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"Buying knowledge - effective acquisition of external knowledge"

Reviewed by Olivia Freeman



Olivia Freeman works on freelance basis, as a trainer, researcher and information management specialist. She was previously Head of Business Information at HSBC Bank, where she started the global service. She was responsible for planning and development plus the procurement and exploitation of electronic resources.

Olivia specialises in training on the selection of e-resources and vendor management. She also runs tailored workshops for individuals and companies. She is a judge for the 2005 International Information Industry Awards 'FreePint Award for Best Customer Service Team' <<http://www.freepint.com/events/online-info-2005/>>.

Peter Sammons is a purchasing professional, who sees knowledge buying as a subset of knowledge management. The book is aimed at managers in business, as he says that at some point in their career, most managers will be responsible for a project to buy new knowledge.

There are introductory chapters which explain the recent worldwide growth of R&D and knowledge. There is a useful chapter on intellectual property rights, which defines copyright, the patent of invention, the rights of employed inventors, trade secrecy and design rights.

The chapter entitled 'Why buy knowledge?' is very valuable reading for anyone who has to buy information or knowledge for business. Sammons lays considerable emphasis on the decision as to whether knowledge should be created internally or bought in, and the comparative costs associated with both approaches. I find this interesting, as at present many organisations are dispensing with the services of internal knowledge creators. However, later on in the book, he described Microsoft's recent strategy, which was to buy the owners of the knowledge, in other words to recruit the top researchers in the field on to the permanent staff. The researchers were given freedom to follow their own agenda and in this way to advance the 'state of the art' in software. Sammons works on the premise that the driver for knowledge acquisition is to move into new areas and that little knowledge is needed for operational requirements.

Sammons uses various yardsticks to indicate the value of particular types of knowledge to an organisation. One measurement is the closeness or proximity of the knowledge owner to your organisation. Therefore, knowledge obtained from industry trade associations is much closer than central government. He has also developed a ranking of the value of knowledge obtained via various knowledge-acquisition strategies. For example, hiring employees with specific knowledge or acquiring knowledge-rich firms is ranked higher than knowledge purchase. Knowledge scanning is seen as the lowest of the strategies, partly because it is the least integrated. Integration is defined as the closeness of formal contractual links. Similarly, he describes knowledge transfer models: these start with latent knowledge, for example, a law book, which can be used for reference when required;

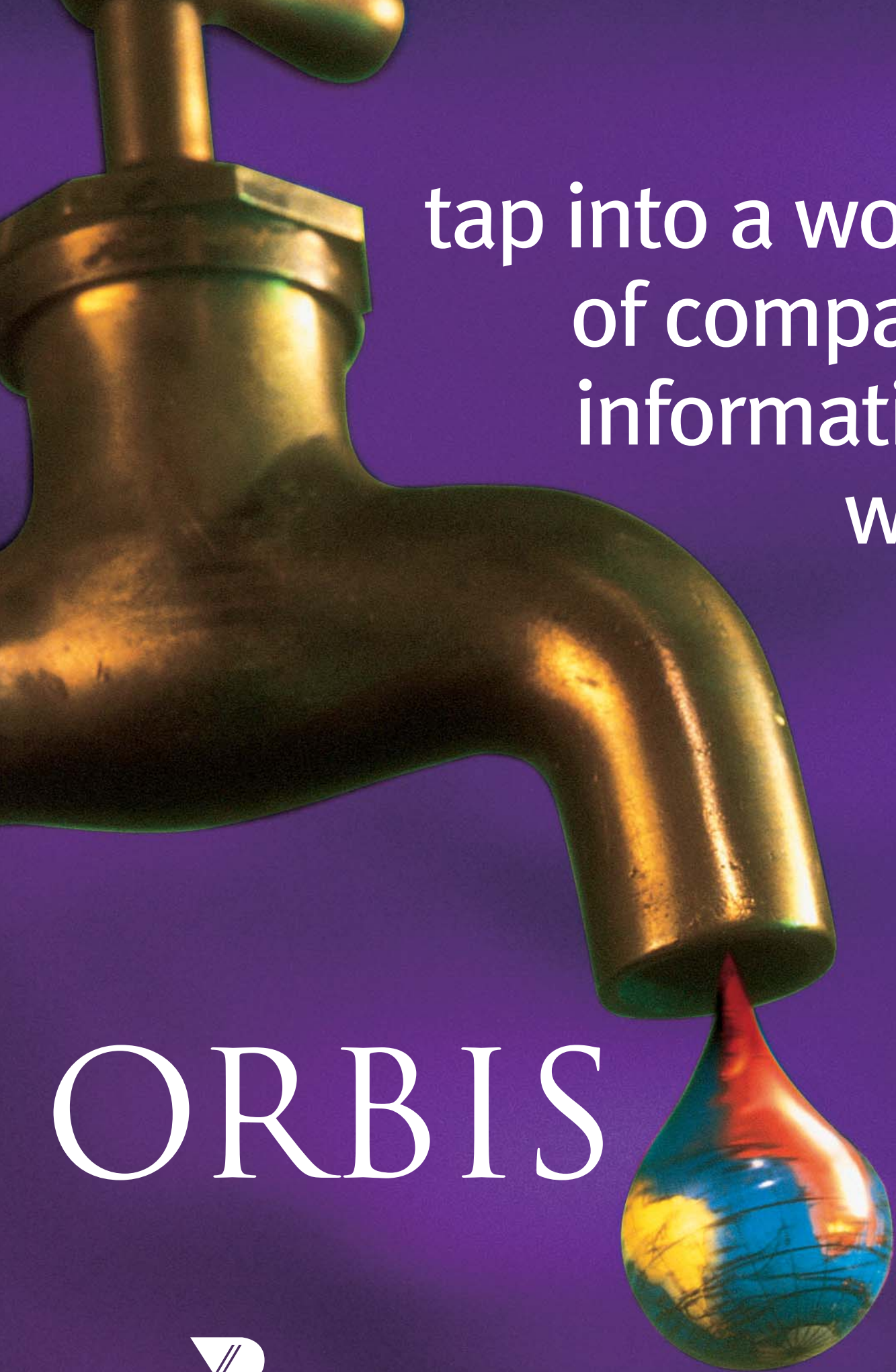
moving on to knowledge transfer with skills enhancement; and then to extremely active knowledge transfer, which will effect a strategic change.

The book contains some extremely useful acquisition-planning information: how to assess vendors throughout the contract; advantages and disadvantages of competitive tendering or negotiation; specifying the work and project management: contract costing. The yardstick for return on investment should be a minimum payback of 3:1 and if this target cannot be reached, then the organisation should look for another way to acquire the new knowledge.

The book finishes with chapters on acquiring knowledge from consultants, contract research organisations and universities. It offers insight into some procurement techniques and how organisations perceive the value of acquired knowledge.

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Feature Article

"Knowledge management for development: an international organisation's perspective"

By Giulio Quaggiotto

Giulio Quaggiotto is the Programme Officer for Knowledge and Innovation at the IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, based in Washington, DC. His interest in knowledge management for development stems from his work as Knowledge Manager for WWF International, based in Gland, Switzerland and subsequently as online dissemination coordinator for the United Nations University - Institute of Advanced Studies in Yokohama, Japan. Giulio is a member of the Editorial Board of the Knowledge Management for Development Journal.

Giulio welcomes comments to this piece and is eager to share views on knowledge management for development with other FreePint readers. He can be reached at gquaggiotto@ifc.org.

Disclaimer: the views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect those of the IFC.

How do you go about helping a rural tribe in Senegal preserve their oral knowledge so that they can cure their children using local herbs rather than expensive imported medicines? How can you replicate a community-based forest management model that was successful in Colombia in an Indonesian context? What lessons can you draw from the failure of the introduction of a new waste management technology in Dhaka so that you won't repeat the same mistakes in Manila? These are just a few examples of the challenges that knowledge management (KM) practitioners face in development organisations.

KM and development practitioners: an enduring appeal

Interestingly, whilst the knowledge management fad seems to have passed its peak in the private sector (as was noted in a previous FreePint article by Sheena Thompson, "Knowledge Management Does Not Grow On Bonsai Trees", <http://www.freepint.com/issues/140705.htm>), in the context of international development organisations, the appeal of the discipline seems to endure. This is due to a number of different factors, including, perhaps, the stronger motivation for development practitioners - when compared with their counterparts in private companies - to analyse and eventually overcome barriers to knowledge-sharing across organisations, communities or even governments in order to maximise their impact on the ground. The urgent need to tackle humanitarian and environmental crises -- such as the Asian tsunami, the HIV/AIDS epidemics, or the rescuing of refugees in Sudan, to name but a few examples -- puts organisations under pressure to share know-how quickly and effectively in order to make the latest scientific research findings as well as lessons learnt from previous projects readily available to experts on the ground. It is not a coincidence that the 2005 World Disasters Report <http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/wdr2005> (from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) focused on the role of information in disasters.

Another element that may explain the continued interest in knowledge management in the development context -- this time externally driven -- is the increased call for transparency and accountability. Rightly, development organisations face increasing demands from donors and the general public to provide detailed information on

how effectively they spend their funds and what mechanism they put in place to avoid repeating mistakes that can often have a high cost in financial and also humanitarian terms. For this reason, in the development context, the practice of capturing and disseminating lessons learned and best practices is often connected to monitoring and evaluation and/or fundraising purposes.

Challenges for KM in a development context

The private sector and international development organisations obviously face many similar dilemmas when it comes to implementing knowledge management strategies, such as, for example: how to encourage information flow between headquarters and regional offices; how to develop metrics to evaluate the impact of knowledge management activities; how to engage with time-starved experts on the ground to persuade them to share their (often) tacit knowledge with their colleagues. And there has undoubtedly been a significant level of cross-fertilisation between the two sectors, as exemplified by the work of Geoff Parcell, a senior knowledge management professional from BP and co-author of the influential book 'Learning to Fly', on the AIDS Competency Model for UNAIDS/UNITAR http://www.unitar.org/programme_en.htm.

Having said that, there are challenges in the area of knowledge management that are probably quite specific to the domain of non-for-profit organisations. I am listing below a few based on my experience without any claim to exhaustiveness:

1. Definition of boundaries: what are the boundaries of a knowledge management initiative in the context of a development organisation? Can the scope be confined to employees, as would often be the case in the private sector? But what would be the purpose of accumulating expertise internally on, say, poverty reduction, if that know-how is not ultimately shared with the communities it is meant to affect? This tension often pushes development practitioners to question organisational silos in a rather radical way (see, for example, the work on organisational learning at ActionAid as documented in R. David and A. Mancini, 2004, *Going Against the Flow*:

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Making Organisational Systems Part of the Solution Rather Than the Problem, Lessons for Change in Policy & Organisations, No. 8, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies <<http://digbig.com/4fgyn>>).

2. Staff engagement: typically, employees in development organisations are driven by a strong commitment to the mission. This can turn out to be a double-edged sword when it comes to engaging them in KM initiatives. On the one hand, if it can be proved that adopting KM best practices enhances the impact on the ground, then they are likely to be embraced with a passion that perhaps would be difficult to encounter in a private sector context. On the other hand, staff are unlikely to buy into a knowledge-sharing initiative thanks to incentives based on material rewards alone, as may be the case in a for-profit enterprise. Furthermore, the internal culture is such that every single penny that is not spent in concrete projects on the ground is often perceived as a waste of money. As a result, somewhat arcanelly worded initiatives such as 'capturing tacit knowledge' - that can often be perceived as having a remote connection with the development mission - are unlikely to find a favourable reception and get off the ground.

3. Dealing with oral knowledge and the cultural dimension: it's already challenging enough to talk about knowledge capturing and dissemination, or, say, storytelling, in a context when everybody is an office worker. But what about the challenge of getting isolated communities of mostly illiterate campesinos in Paraguay to share their techniques for growing manioca (as in the case study presented in the SDC's Guide to Using Story and Narrative Tools in Development Co-operation, <<http://digbig.com/4fgyp>>)? Or persuading park rangers, poachers and local communities to engage in a constructive debate on how to preserve wildlife while at the same time improving their living conditions? What techniques can be used in this context, and what ethical dilemmas do they raise?

4. North-to-South, South-to-North knowledge flows: traditionally, aid has flown from developed countries in the North to developing economies in the South. The flow of financial resources has often been accompanied by the presumption that knowledge about the best recipe for development resides in donor economies. The recognition that local stakeholders hold crucial knowledge that can inform the policy and strategic decisions taken in the North has prompted organisations to question whether they are equipped to support South-to-North and, increasingly, South-to-South knowledge flows.

It is only through the exchange of experiences and a continuous process of mutual learning that the KM community in development organisations will be able to address these challenges, equipped with the awareness that there is no such thing as a unique recipe to achieve development. And perhaps the experience of dealing with extreme situations such as humanitarian crises, or the radical questioning of organisational boundaries, will foster the introduction of tools and techniques that might be relevant also to the private sector.

Useful reading

Below I am providing a quick overview of some of my favourite resources, hoping that they might help orientate those who are interested in finding out more about the applications of knowledge management in development organisations.

A bibliographical overview of the literature in this area can be found in Pasteur, K., 2004, Learning for Development: A Literature Review, Lessons for Change in Policy and Organisations, No. 6, Brighton, Sussex: Institute of Development Studies <<http://digbig.com/4fgym>> and Hovland, I., 2003, Knowledge Management and Organisational Learning, An International Development Perspective: An Annotated Bibliography, ODI (Overseas Development Institute) Working Paper No. 224, London <<http://digbig.com/4fgyk>>.

A current overview of strategies to promote knowledge-sharing in international development organisations, including the WHO <<http://www.who.int>>, the ADB <<http://www.adb.org>> and UNDP <<http://www.undp.org>> is provided in the second issue of the peer-reviewed online journal Knowledge Management for Development (of which I am a member of the Editorial Board) at <<http://digbig.com/4fgyj>>.

- An evaluation of knowledge management efforts in the development sector has been provided in Ben Ramlingham's paper Implementing Knowledge Strategies: Lessons from International Development Agencies, 2005, ODI Working Paper No. 244 <<http://digbig.com/4fgyh>>, and King and McGrath's book Knowledge for Development? Comparing British, Japanese, Swedish and World Bank Aid, Zed Books, London, 2004. A review of the above mentioned AIDS Competency programme at NAIDS/UNITAR can be found at <<http://digbig.com/4fgyg>>.

- The World Bank is often credited for being the first international development organisation to have made a concerted effort to embrace knowledge management in its operations. For this reason, the independent evaluation of their effort in this area, available at http://www.worldbank.org/oed/knowledge_evaluation, makes for particularly interesting reading. Apart from the World Bank, a number of development agencies have made their knowledge management strategies publicly available, including, among others, USAID <http://knowledge.usaid.gov> and UNFPA <http://digbig.com/4fqyq>.
- The IISD has published a number of extremely interesting research papers on knowledge networks as a tool for civil society organisations to achieve their development goals. They can be downloaded at <http://www.iisd.org/networks/research.asp>.
- Finally, many of the issues that I mentioned in this article are hotly debated in the KM4dev mailing list (accessible via <http://www.km4dev.org>), which I would strongly recommend to anyone who's got a genuine interest in this subject

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