Case Study Title: Leveraging social media and traditional document management in mobilizing knowledge

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1. What is/was the context and key challenge(s) in your K* case study?
   a. When, where and how long did this initiative occur, or is it ongoing?
   This informatics K* case study focuses on the use of technology to support knowledge mobilization. In particular, it hinges in on the implications of using either social media or traditional document management exclusively, and proposes a way to fuse the two together to reap the following benefits:
   - allowing researchers to connect outside of their immediate circle of peers by using social networks
   - retaining control of authorship and focusing “the message”, particularly in situations where a team co-produces a work
   We will introduce an open-source tool, Alfresco Share, that allows these different channels to be utilized together.

2. Who are/were the players and why did/do they need to come together?
   a. What was/is the reach of the initiative?
   The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada uses electronic collaboration, specifically the open-sourced Alfresco Share, to connect some of its 40,000 Fellows, volunteers, and staff. While they do not use any of the K* terms, how they are connecting staff, Fellows, and volunteers has many similarities with K* initiatives. In particular, medical specialty groups, which are at the heart of the Royal College, share and exchange knowledge online. Moreover, the College leverages its considerable network of volunteers by connecting them electronically to staff and Fellows.

3. How did/does K* play a role in the story, i.e. tools/techniques/approaches.
   Effective knowledge mobilization requires a comprehensive strategy to be successful. Technology plays a significant role in connecting and disseminating research to an audience outside of one’s circle of peers. With the help of social media networks knowledge mobilization becomes a 2-way street, benefiting the researcher in terms of being able to improve and fine-tune knowledge based on new perspectives, and benefiting the person utilizing that knowledge in new and innovative ways.

4. What was/is the intended impact/contribution of K* and, if you can, tell us whether K* had an impact and how.
   Electronic collaboration and document management have been around in IT circles for over 2 decades. What differentiates K* is the particular focus on and the mechanics of sharing knowledge.
   On the one hand, we continue to have a need for traditional document management systems. They give us:
   - the ability to have technology assist us with electronic work flows,
   - the ability to version documents and retain a record of evolution for questions of intellectual property,
   - the ability to find knowledge in the proper context by applying various taxonomies,

- and the ability to properly secure our work.

But on the other hand, we also want to leverage social media networks because they allow us to reach beyond our known circle of peers. We want to be able to use Youtube, Slideshare, Twitter, Facebook, Google+, and so on because we are in the business of making our knowledge available, and, more importantly, actionable by people outside of our regular circle of peers.
We need a way to fuse traditional document management systems with cutting-edge social media technology.

5. **What are the lessons from this example that others should know about/could be transferred, in general and particularly in a resource-limited context?**

When looking at implementing technology in support of K*, we are ideally looking for software whose price of entry is low, software that has a sizable user base on whom we can draw for shared experiences, and software that can scale to “enterprise dimensions”.

The open source movement is based on many of the same drivers as K*: a willingness to share information and knowledge, and, more often than not, an adherence to open standards preventing vendor lock-in. As such, companies that follow open-source business models earn their money not in product license fees but rather in add-on services and support.

In addition, “renting” services “in the cloud” as opposed to hosting one’s own servers further lessens the cost of entry, and makes such deployments of particular interest to organizations with limited financial resources.

6. **Any other observations...:**

Much more could be said on the use of technology to facilitate K*. In particular, an increased focus on providing knowledge metrics and user statistics would better allow practitioners and managers to measure outcomes of K* processes.

On the social media side, a deluge of information often requires a knowledge broker to play the role of “social curator” as well: someone filtering information in such a way as to make it more meaningful to researchers.