


 **Byron Community Knowledge Management Project**




Is learning changing to meet the changing world?      Mitra Ardron & Jim Nicholls      30 Nov 2003  
ACE Training  
BVET funding

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 **Introduction**

- Founded GreenNet in the UK in '85
  - Online community non profit sector
  - Community Technology Center
  - Communities of Practice
- Active in development of the Internet and online community
- Intersection of Community, Sustainability and Technology

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 **Outline**


- What's the Problem?
- KM and Communities of Practice
- Byron Community Knowledge Management Project
- Where to from here

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 **ANTA - 2000**


Australians are passionate about learning, but for most of them learning is not synonymous with education and training and their passion is not linked to their experience - or even their expectations - of formal education and training

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 **NCVER 2001**

The uncertainty of the environment means that respondents do not know what knowledge and skills they need - until they are needed. What respondents did speak of was the importance of the timing of skill acquisition - needing those skills just in time when they recognised a deficiency.  
- Owen & Bound.

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 **Competency Based Training (1)**

"There is limited evidence that CBT itself is directly associated with the development of a skilful and adaptable workplace. ... the key antagonism is vested in CBT's focus on outcomes, rather than process. ...The orientation employed for developing the educational intents denied the very thinking and acting which determined performance.  
...


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## Competence Based Training (2)

The national focus and the means of implementation also misrepresented the complexity of vocational knowledge, its situatedness, the teaching and assessment of that knowledge, and the basis by which teachers commit themselves to their practice. (Billet 1998)


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## World is Changing

- Information is out of date quickly
- Increased Skill requirements
- Don't know what I will need or when.
- Need it immediately
- Don't know what I need now
  - Can't wait for next ACE term,
- Internationally competitive


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## Work is Changing

- More people are contractors
  - 49% in non-regular employment in 1993
- Or Multi-Employed
- Not accessible to VET
- Needs Tied to skills, not employers
- Learning of value beyond current job


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## What is Knowledge Management

- Blends online and offline processes
- Enhance skill, and information (knowledge) sharing
- To meet the goals of the participants and their common organization


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## History of Knowledge

- Informal Person to Person
  - Story Telling
- Formal Person to Person (writing, courses, computers)
  - Data Mining
- Person to Computer to Person
  - Information Management
- Person to Person - mediated by Computers

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## Survey

How many of you get most of your learning from:

- Courses
- Reading (paper or the net)
- Informal learning from peers

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## Communities of Practice

- Information is In People's heads - "Tacit"
- Hard to write down
- Based on Experience
- Depends on Subtle conditions
- Access People - NOT information
- Computers for communications
- Challenge is Better Facilitation

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## Communities of Practice

- Community
- Shared Purpose, Passion or Interest
- Cultural Context
- Human Scale
- Voluntary
- Practice
- Applying Knowledge
- Sharing Experience
- Co-creating their futures
- Computers for communications
- Supportive

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## KM Project - Activities

- Started in April 2003
- Enhancing or Building five inter-organisational CoPs in Regional Economic Development
- Supporting Communication
- Identifying resources
- Building Community
- Web Site
  - News, Email lists, Resources, Calendars Directories

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## Innovators

- Co-Created Group
- Public Launch
- Mentoring program
- Networking meetings
- Web news & directory
- Showcase events

- Challenges
  - No control of timeline
  - Generating interest in online
  - Priorities

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## Professional Visual Artists

- Existing Group "PAN"
- ~100 small businesses
- Online support

- Challenges
  - Only 40 believed online
  - Organisational Apathy
  - Custom requirements
  - Poverty Conscious

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## Sustainable Agriculture

- New group "SART"
- Initiated by Council
- About 40 people
- Interest in research
- Paid Knowledge Manager

- Challenges
  - Priorities
    - Group & Individual
  - Committee chair didn't have email

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## Event Organisers

- Formed group
- Initial Workshop ~25
- Relevant topics
  - Insurance
  - Council
- High interest
- Paid Knowledge Manager
- Council involvement

- Challenges
  - Starting from scratch
  - We are not experts
  - Validation of Peers
  - Unruly - must be flexible

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## Appropriate Tourism

- No Group
- Just Starting
- Directory as activator
- Focus on learning opportunities.
- Paid Knowledge Manager

- Challenges
  - Hard to get started

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## Community Outcomes

<p><b>Short Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Solving real problems - e.g. insurance</li> <li>■ Avoiding reinventing wheels</li> <li>■ Mobilising "retired" expertise</li> </ul>	<p><b>Long term - hard to predict</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Enhanced support for local small businesses</li> <li>■ New businesses</li> <li>■ Ongoing training</li> <li>■ Jobs ?</li> </ul>
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■ Community <-> Business <-> Council


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## Employment and Economic Outcomes

- Training is not happening through Employers
- Many participants are one-person businesses
  - E.g. event organisers


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## Challenges for ACE and VET

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ From Competency to Learning</li> <li>■ From experts to facilitators</li> <li>■ Validate expertise of peers</li> <li>■ Blend Online AND Offline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Stay relevant (can't bribe with certificates)</li> <li>■ "Student Contact Hours" is not a measure of learning</li> <li>■ Unclear Boundaries</li> <li>■ Its not clean and tidy</li> </ul>
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## Where to next

- Consolidation
- Replicability
- Integrating with ACE


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## Consolidation

- \$1000 per CoP is too small to reach self sufficiency.
- How to make self sufficient
  - e.g. directory fees
- Growing the online participation


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## Replicability

- Cheap / Easy for other VET providers
- Production of Training materials
- Documentation for replication
- Training community facilitators
- Testing on a number of other groups

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## Integration with ACE

- CoPs for ACE trainers,
  - e.g. Byron IT trainers
- Extending courses with CoPs
- Personal web sites for trainers
  - Resources and Community
- Personal KM course
  - e.g. using RSS, mailing lists, finding people.

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## Further Information

- [www.byronkm.com](http://www.byronkm.com)
- [Mitra@mitra.biz](mailto:Mitra@mitra.biz)
- [www.mitra.biz](http://www.mitra.biz)
- Also try ...
- Etienne Wegner's books on Communities of Practice
- Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education [www.iskme.org](http://www.iskme.org)

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