

 **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 (uk) in '85 and co-founded APC in '89 (international)
 - Online community non profit sector
 - Community Technology Center
 - Communities of Practice
- Active in development of the Internet and online community
- Intersections 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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 **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- Information is out of date quickly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
- Training not happening through employer

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 **History of Knowledge**

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

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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
- Online and/or Offline
- Practice
- Applying Knowledge
- Sharing Experience
- Co-creating their futures
- Computers for communications
- Supportive

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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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KM Project - Overview

- Started in April 2003
- Funded by NSW BVET - \$40,000
- Looking at taking Learning beyond the classroom
- Enhance skill, and information (knowledge) sharing
- To meet the goals of the participants and their common organization

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KM Project - Activities

- Blends online and offline processes
- Enhancing or Building five inter-organisational CoPs in Regional Economic Development
- Supporting Communication
- Identifying resources
- Building Community

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Website

- News
- Mailing list - integrated with News
- Resources (FAQs)
- Calendar
- Directory
- Photo Gallery
- Based on APC-AA CMS

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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
 - Manager got another job

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Event Organisers

- Formed group
- Initial Workshop ~25
- Relevant topics
 - Insurance
 - Council
- High initial 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

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Community Outcomes

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


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Challenges for ACE and VET

- From Competency to Learning
- From experts to facilitators
- Validate expertise of peers
- Blend Online AND Offline
- Hard to measure
- Stay relevant (can't bribe with certificates)
- "Student Contact Hours" is not a measure of learning
- Unclear Boundaries
- Its not clean and tidy
- Hard to measure


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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
 - Financially e.g. directory fees
 - Personally
- 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
- Mitra@mitra.biz
- www.mitra.biz
- Also try ...
- Etienne Wegner's books on Communities of Practice

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