

# The APS KM Forum

Workshop

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# What we'll cover

- **What is a Community of Practice?**
  - Other KM Enablers
- **Background**
  - NOIE / DCITA / AGIMO
  - CoPs in the APS
  - The Need for an APS KM Forum
- **APS KM Forum**
  - What
  - Who
  - Governance
  - When
  - Where are we now
  - Benefits
  - Where are we going
- **Resources and links**

# What is a Community of Practice

- Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (Etienne Wenger)
- A group of people with a common interest in a subject area and a practical need to make improvements or find solutions to issues in that subject area. They are characterised by the willing participation of their members and their ongoing interaction to collectively share information, build knowledge, develop expertise and solve problems (AGIMO)

# Other KM Enablers

- Communities of Practice is one KM enabler.
- Others include
  - story telling or scenarios,
  - collaborative technologies,
  - social network analysis,
  - intranets,
  - records and document management,
  - mentoring,
  - reflection and evaluation

# Why an APS KM Forum?

**Dr Peter Shergold** “ Whole of Government is the future approach of public administration to face the governance challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century”

**William M Snyder & Xavier de Sousa Briggs** “ Communities of practice provide government leaders with a new tool for managing in a fast-paced, fluid environment where they need to reach beyond traditional organizational boundaries to solve problems, share ideas and develop peer and stakeholder relationships”.

**Bill Martin:** Knowledge management and the Australian Public Service: some lessons learned. ([International Journal of Knowledge and Learning 2005 - Vol. 1, No.1/2 pp. 146 – 158](#))

# Drivers

- Responding to growing complexity
- Availability of new technology and delivery platforms
- Knowledge lost through retirements
- Support for providing online services
- Lack of formal interdepartmental networks indicating no overarching whole of government approach to KM exists within the APS
- Bill Martin 21<sup>st</sup> February 2005: “Realise interagency collaborative action on knowledge management endeavours”

# Barriers

- Absence of knowledge sharing culture
- Most common knowledge management initiative is building an intranet
- Time

## What is the APS KM Forum?

- Inter-departmental Community of Practice to examine the potential for KM initiatives that connect government agencies and take collaborative action to improve APS performance

# APS KM Forum - Background

- KM in the APS Case Studies
- *AGIMO Knowledge Management Better Practice Checklist (2004)*
- AGIMO-sponsored CoPs in the APS
  - Content management
  - E-democracy
  - Marketing e-government
  - Australian government agencies based in Victoria

# APS KM Forum - Genesis

- No champion
- No departmental leadership
- No owner or sponsor
  
- Requires coordinator role
- Requires secretariat role
- Requires collaborative technology platform

# APS KM Forum – Rationale

- Information Economy principles
  - Inter-organisational collaboration leads to macroeconomic productivity improvements
  - Needs standards, communities, case studies
- KM Communities in the APS
  - All Departments doing KM
  - Internal CoPs
  - actKM
- Limitations of organisational KM

# APS KM Forum - Membership

- Voluntary – interested knowledge management practitioners from a range of APS agencies
- 17 agencies as at October 2005 - FaCS, GA, DCITA, ATO, AGs, ABS, DEWR, DEH, ANAO, ASIC. IP Australia, DoFA, LAWA, DEST, Centrelink, NAA, DIMIA

# APS KM Forum - Governance

- Rotating convenor through the various APS agency members
- Platform - *Quickplace* provided by ABS
- Meet at different agencies
- Adhere to APS Values and Code of Conduct
- We trust each other

# APS KM Forum - Meetings

- Relatively new
  - First meeting 15/3/05
- Monthly meetings at different agencies –
  - E.g ATO, FaCS, Geoscience Australia, DIMIA

# APS KM Forum – Current Status

- Invited participants – expanding
- Invited guest speakers – e.g. the new KM standard,
- Open discussion
- Establishing trust
- Forming relationships
- Sharing information
- Tangible information exchanges
- *ABS Quickplace* as knowledge sharing platform

# APS KM Forum - Benefits

- Knowledge sharing which has lead to efficiency & effectiveness in APS
- Problem resolution
- Relationship building for whole of government
- Confidentiality means members are more open about knowledge sharing
- Sharing knowledge and information is critical to APS success
- Learning through the experiences of our APS colleagues

## Benefits cont.

- Building capacity in the APS
- Opportunity to make a difference
- Accessing expertise
- Making jobs easier
- Getting up to speed much faster
- Identifying and transferring best practice
- Accelerating the transfer of knowledge
- Collecting anecdotal evidence

## Examples of Benefits (Etienne Wenger)

- **Problem solving** "Can we work on this design and brainstorm some ideas; I'm stuck."
- **Requests for information** "Where can I find the X to connect to Y?"
- **Seeking experience** "Has anyone dealt with a X in this situation?"
- **Reusing assets** "I have a proposal for a local area network I wrote last year. I can send it to you and you can easily tweak it."
- **Coordination and synergy** "Can we combine our purchases of X to achieve bulk discounts?"

## Examples of benefits (cont.)

- ***Discussing developments*** "What do you think of the new system? Does it really help?"
- ***Documentation projects*** "We have faced this problem five times now. Let us write it down once and for all."
- ***Visits*** "Can we come and see your program? We need to establish one in our agency."
- ***Mapping knowledge and identifying gaps***  
"Who knows what, and what are we missing? What other groups should we connect with?"

acknowledgements to Etienne  
Wenger

# APS KM Forum – the Future

- Updating the AGIMO CoP guidelines
- Discussing
  - Palmer report and its impact for information and knowledge management in the APS
  - Business value of IM and KM
  - Developing an APS wide KM capability framework
- Comparing notes on the use of the ASHEN framework

# Potential Issues for Discussion

- Raising the profile of knowledge management activities to senior management
- Exploring what comprises a whole of government strategy
- Identifying linkages between government agencies for knowledge exchange and action on issues common across agencies
- Nourishing and protecting the knowledge commons
- Being ready to exploit knowledge waves
- Preparing communities for participation in the knowledge economy

# Any Questions?

- What issues do you think we should be covering for the APS?
- Any suggestions for new members?
- Further reading – available at door

# Thank you

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