

Knowledge Management *in Action*

By Mr. Douglas D. Fowler

There are many changes underway here at the United States Army Engineer School, and knowledge management is a component of how we do business every day. To many of you, the term “knowledge management” means control, as if knowledge were something static and unchanging, but we all know that knowledge is dynamic and constantly changing.

Knowledge management means many things to many people. It can mean creating, identifying, sharing, capturing, acquiring, and leveraging knowledge. First, we need a common definition of the word *knowledge*, so we can define it as “information in context to produce actionable understanding.” There are two primary forms of knowledge—explicit and tacit. Explicit knowledge encompasses things we know that we can write down, share with others, and put into a database. Tacit knowledge is what we do not know that we know, including know-how, rules of thumb, experience, insights, and intuition. Therefore, knowledge management is the systematic processes by which knowledge needed for an organization to succeed is created, captured, shared, and leveraged.¹

Undoubtedly, the people and teams here at the Engineer School and throughout the Engineer Regiment own and routinely manage both forms of knowledge and are hard at work developing better ways and means for their management. Using the power of Army Knowledge Online and its numerous tools and capabilities, the Engineer School has developed a single sign-on entry portal called the Engineer School Knowledge Network (ESKN). This portal, related to the Maneuver Support Knowledge Network, serves as the secure entry point for knowledge-sharing inside and outside of the Engineer School. Up-to-date announcements, links to communities of practice, forums, training materials, the latest doctrinal publications, the Engineer Systems Handbook, and engineer personnel pronency issues are all available directly from this site. Also, ESKN lets visitors solicit assistance or information directly from the Engineer School via a request-for-information interface. Another part of ESKN—the *Building Great Engineers* page—serves as the site for downloading the campaign plan as well as various strategic communications products.

Soon, all of the directorates within the Engineer School will have individual sites set up and linked to ESKN, with information and tools tailored specifically to their core

The screenshot shows the Engineer School Knowledge Network (ESKN) website. The header includes the site name and navigation options. The main content area is organized into several sections: a top navigation bar, a main content area with links to ENR ORCE, USAEs Featured Links, and USAEs Command Links, a News & Announcements section with a welcome message and updates, a Command Team section with photos of COL Robert Tipton, CWO Robert K. Lamphar, and CSM Robert J. Wells, a Request for Information section with contact details for the USAES RFI POC, and a Doctrines section with links to Organization, Training, Material, Leadership, Personnel, and Facilities.

Engineer School Knowledge Network (ESKN)

missions. Lastly, efforts are underway to develop and post a secured version of ESKN on the Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNET) for use by deployed members of the Engineer Regiment. This secured portal—ESKN-S—will help to facilitate the management of classified knowledge to include lessons learned; observations; best practices; and tactics, techniques, and procedures generated within each of the combatant commands. The direct link to ESKN is available on the Engineer School homepage at <http://www.wood.army.mil/usaes>.

We have also leveraged the power of the Battle Command Knowledge System under the Protection.Net forums to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and information in a forum-oriented environment. Within Protection.Net, we've created two initial topic areas—combat engineering and construction engineering—under the *Engineer Profession* heading. There are also useful discussions under the *Environmental* heading. These forums will help facilitate dynamic collaboration among members of the Engineer Regiment across the

globe by generating immediate feedback, soliciting input and expertise, and sharing the knowledge of Engineer School subject matter experts.

Finally, we've taken great strides in completely revising our public-facing website, <<http://www.wood.army.mil/usaes>>, to a more static, content-driven interface for our external stakeholders. This site will be much less dynamic than ESKN and will not contain products for downloading. However, the site, with links to the 1st Engineer Brigade and other organizational websites, will be of vital importance to the Engineer School in providing timely information to family members about trainees, students, and key stakeholders from industry, academia, and our sister Services. This information will include graduation dates and related information.

In the very near future, all information related to ENFORCE will be published on a stand-alone public-facing website linked to the Engineer School public-facing website. This site will have a new permanent domain name—<<http://www.wood.army.mil/enforce>>—and will serve as a single-source repository for all ENFORCE information, to include agendas, schedules, key events, and registration information.

U.S. Army Engineer School Public Website

Battle Command Knowledge System (BCKS)

We encourage interested visitors and users of these sites to provide recommendations and suggestions on their content, capabilities, and functionality. Send suggestions or comments to <leon.usaeshqrfi@conus.army.mil>.

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Endnote

¹Melissie Clemans Rumizen, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Knowledge Management*, Penguin Group (USA) Incorporated, Madison, Wisconsin, 2002.

