

# Editorial: Multidisciplinary Points of Entry to Organizational Knowledge Communication

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Knowledge is the resource par excellence permeating and catalyzing social development today (e.g. Lyotard, 1984[1979], Qvortrup, 2003, and Stehr, 1994). As the general body of knowledge grows, the pressure for specialization and expertise is increased (e.g. Berger and Luckmann 1991[1966]) – something which in turn leads to the formation of ever more specialized organizations (e.g. Luhmann, 1995[1985] and Giddens, 1990). While this may increase the risk of fragmentation and isolation, it certainly enhances complexity of knowledge (Casadevall and Fang, 2014). Within already established scientific fields, such as knowledge management, numerous journals are focused on solving these challenges of complexity, theoretically as well as practically. They tend to favor strategies of conceptual simplification focusing on the application of research to contribute directly to solving practical, managerial problems, such as defining the concept of ‘the knowledge worker’ and understanding the role of IT in capturing, coding and sharing knowledge in organizations (Grant, 2011). Many of these journals thereby assume somewhat conventional approaches to the concept of knowledge and to the dynamics of knowledge – e.g. a sender–receiver perspective on the transfer of cognitive products from one specialized corporate unit to another. Whereas this perspective continues to be extremely valuable for practitioners, it tends to assume a blatant reduction of complexity inherent to the concept of knowledge and knowledge intensive processes. In stark opposition to this view, we believe that it is this very complexity that has made knowledge a key aspect of social development, and we therefore view it as imperative to discuss and debate as well as examine and explore the concept of knowledge in its full complexity. The *Journal of Organizational Knowledge Communication* (JOKC) is created as a direct response to what we see as an uncritical acceptance of the ubiquitousness of the call for a reduction of complexity when dealing with – be it in theory or in practice – the concept of knowledge.

JOKC therefore aspires to be a channel for academic discussions of the construction, representation and communication of specialized knowledge within different organizational contexts. The mission of the journal is to frame the emerging discipline of organizational knowledge communication by continually exploring and challenging the ideas of specialized knowledge (e.g., organizational, domain specific, or disciplinary knowledge), the organizational contexts in or between which it arises, evolves, flows, or is transformed, as well as the

communicative events, settings and ideologies in which these processes are embedded. And to no small degree, relations between these three pivotal concepts. The vision of the journal is to create an open and constructive academic forum for discussing, challenging, provoking, re-interpreting, and proposing. In order to accomplish this, the *Journal of Organizational Knowledge Communication* is based on one basic assumption: that the complexity of knowledge should not be reduced or avoided and that the most elegant way of approaching such complexity is from as many different disciplinary perspectives as possible. The journal will thus favor multidisciplinary, polyphonic, polyocular, and otherwise multidimensional contributions free from orthodox restraints in terms of theory or method.

This first issue is dedicated to highlighting how organizational knowledge communication can be approached from a range of different disciplines. It takes its cue from five different positions and equally different perspectives in order to show how the theme of organizational knowledge communication appears differently to each of them, while simultaneously connecting them all through its function as a boundary object (Star and Griesemer, 1989). As such, each paper can be viewed as a different point of entry in the conceptual trajectory of organizational knowledge communication as it emerges and begins to build momentum.

The common denominator for all five papers is, then, their relation to and focus on the pivotal theme of the journal. Whether this theme is even considered to be a theme or if it is considered a domain, a discipline, or a phenomenon depends on the orientation and perspective of each author demonstrating the range and variation inherent to organizational knowledge communication. Three of the five papers situate themselves in different academic disciplines in order to draw on the structure and terminology of those disciplines – from translation studies and metaphor studies to sociology and organizational communication. Each of these three papers considers organizational knowledge communication to be a phenomenon to be analyzed in a specific domain or context. Svejvig and Nielsen (2014) use metaphor analysis to discuss how organizational knowledge is structured and managed through communication in the context of large IT projects. Lueg (2014) adapts a sociological perspective to analyze how student evaluations of university-level teaching functions as a kind of performance measurement instrument of knowledge. Mousten and Locmele (2014) approach knowledge as text in order to discuss how it constantly changes as a consequence of travelling through different cultural and corporate contexts. As such, the three papers position themselves within very different academic disciplines and consequently approach the boundary object of organizational knowledge communication differently. The two final papers, one by Kastberg (2014) and another by Alrøe and Noe (2014), take a somewhat different route to their discussions of this object in that they assume a meta-theoretical perspective in their analyses of interdisciplinarity, crossdisciplinarity, and multidisciplinary in the context of organizational knowledge communication in order to critically reflect on its scientific premise.

All of the papers address the complexity of knowledge and knowledge-intensive processes in different organizational and communicative contexts either directly or indirectly. With the

objective of this first issue of the journal in mind – to highlight the multidisciplinary inherent to approaching the concept of organizational knowledge communication – these five papers seem to be ideal examples of how different perspectives are able to contribute differently to a complex discussion and how such a discussion ultimately enriches our understanding of knowledge.

For this reason in particular, we believe this first issue to be an apt catalyst of our fundamental ambition: to publish an international, peer reviewed research journal that function as a framing of the emerging discipline of organizational knowledge communication. Such a framing not only makes room, but hopefully also enables and catalyzes new research with different disciplinary alignments and different analytical perspectives all relating to and focusing on a fuller and hopefully more complex understanding of organizational knowledge communication.

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