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Information creation as means to create joint understanding in work interaction

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Introduction

In organizations and communities of all kinds, solving problems and developing new ideas are key activities, which require sharing, evaluating, and using knowledge and information. Problem solving, as well as ideation, often requires interaction between different professionals and other stakeholders. To enhance face-to-face interaction, workshops and joint activities are often organized. Along with the discussions, circumstances for social action and interaction need to be especially focused, to enable the ideas and solutions to develop and materialize into outputs and actions (Suorsa et al., 2019). This challenge can be explicated and examined with the concepts of knowledge and information creation: developing something new is both creating new understanding as knowledge (Tsoukas, 2009) and new information, i.e., new outputs (Huvila et al., 2022). However, the relations between these two phenomena, and their entangled role in problem solving and ideating, has not been examined. Moreover, empirical examination of this entanglement is limited and there is a need to develop conceptions and methods for studying it coherently.

In our study, we examine the role of information creation in the field of Knowledge Management (KM) by relating it to the study of knowledge creation. We also present our current research setting, where we examine information and knowledge creation in a multidisciplinary research workshop.

Theoretical background

Knowledge creation has been studied mostly as part of KM research (Choo, 2016), whereas information creation has mainly been dealt with in the study of information behavior and information literacy (Corighanaz, 2019; Huvila et al., 2022). An extensive body of research on KM has explored *knowledge creation* since Nonaka and his colleagues developed their SECI-model, based on the notion of tacit and explicit knowledge and interaction (Nonaka, 1994). In recent decades, a line of research focusing on the interpersonal interaction and concrete collaboration needed in knowledge creation has emerged, drawing attention to the material and embodied events of interaction and raising the question of the borderlines between knowledge and information (Suorsa et al., 2019).

Within information studies *information creation* has been conceptualized in several ways, covering a diverse field of activities such as creating, making, and producing information in different forms (Huvila et al., 2022). Huvila et al. (2022) suggest that information creation research can be categorized into four

dimensions according to whether the studies focus on things (e.g. documents), actions (e.g. production or process), actors (e.g. individuals or groups doing the creation) or contexts (e.g. situations where information is being created). Overall, information creation research seems to highlight materiality, whereas knowledge creation focuses on understanding and learning in more immaterial terms.

Our study is based on the notion of humans living and acting in the material world, highlighting the importance of focusing on the concrete circumstances, actions, and outputs as pointed out e.g., by Carlile et al. (2013) and Lloyd (2010). Knowledge creation is defined as a process, in which sharing knowledge and seeing new meanings in interaction creates joint understanding for new situations and challenges (Tsoukas, 2009). Information creation, in its part, is understood as social action unfolding as practices related to creation of informative content regardless of its format (Koh, 2013). Information creation practices are considered crucial activity in the process of developing joint understanding in work interaction (Ju et al., 2022) and in our study we suggest that they are a crucial part of knowledge creation, and vice versa.

Context and data

Based on our theoretical approach, we illustrate how to study information and knowledge creation and practices related to these in organizational community with multimodal data. The data was gathered in a multi-disciplinary research community's workshop organized in 2021. 20 members participated, four of them via video conferencing tool Zoom. The participants formed four teams, one of them working virtually. Groups discussed their expectations considering the research project's aims to enhance the societal impacts of research and developed stakeholder interaction activities. Gathered data consists of video recordings of the workshop (in total 6 hours), observations and fieldnotes of the workshop, as well as documents produced in the workshop by the participants (paper and online software Padlet).

Findings and conclusions

The findings of this study will give insight into the knowledge creation process which specifically aims at formulating action, that is – mutually produced impact goals of the project. Theoretically, the study will contribute to research interested in the linkages between knowledge creation and information

creation by providing an investigation of the practices and processes related to these phenomena. In our future research, the approach explicated in this presentation will be further developed with a nexus analytical approach, to examine the intersection of knowledge and information creation practices and mediational means – that is, semiotic resources, such as language – or physical tools, such as technological applications (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). Nexus analytical approach regards all social action as mediated through these cultural tools (Scollon & Scollon, 2004).

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