



GLOBAL EVENTS

ASIA

For more information on events in Asia, please contact Amy Tan on +65 6325 3168 or e-mail: atan@arkgroupasia.com.

Dave Snowden Masterclass: Setting Up an Effective Knowledge Management System

26 – 27 September 2007, Malaysia

Knowledge management (KM) veteran David Snowden will take participants 'back to basics' in this two-day KM masterclass. Snowden will show participants how to:

- Get a new knowledge-management programme off to a flying start or breathe new life into an existing one;
- Understand how to link KM projects to core business objectives;
- Deploy information technology and social computing as part of a broader knowledge management programme;
- Use stories and story-telling in order to inspire people into action in alignment with corporate goals;
- Manage and harness the so-called shadow organisation, understanding the role of informal communities.

KM Asia 2007

29 – 31 October 2007, Singapore

The biggest knowledge management (KM) event in Asia, attracting more than 700 participants from across the continent, will include keynote speakers David Snowden, Verna Allee, Jeff Kelly and the legendary Robert Buckman. David Gurteen will also be conducting a knowledge café, too. Presentations will include case studies from such organisations as the Singapore Police Force, and the event will be rounded off with a variety of post-conference workshops.

Opinion

Just say Web 2.NO!

How would you fare if the internet was just closed down for five years? How would your organisation cope?

By Lynda Rathbone



I READ an article in the *Guardian* newspaper recently that quoted Elton John as saying we should just shut down the internet for five years and see what would happen. He was making a point about illegal downloading of music, but it was an interesting thought, nevertheless. What would happen? Could it happen?

Guardian columnist Tim Dowling had a very humorous take on Sir Elton's statement. "Without the internet, people would no longer be able to download their favourite tunes onto their MP3 devices," he wrote. "In order to fill the gap, our high streets would inevitably become littered with unsightly 'shops' selling compact discs at inflated prices, killing off the music industry as we know it... Without access to Wikipedia, thousands of schoolchildren may never learn how Joseph Stalin overcame his political enemies to found Motown Records."¹

It's been a mere five years or so since these types of sites have been around and people are starting to realise the negative effects they can have. False information, fake posts of traumatic events as 'jokes' and children getting a hold of information they are far too young to see (let alone understand) are frequent. The inmates are now out, online and they're having a great time.

In the book, *The Cult of the Amateur*, author Andrew Keen² explores

this concept and goes so far as to claim that, "...today's internet is killing our culture and assaulting our economy". And you know what? He may just have a point. The expert opinion of people trained in their field, and with years of experience that we could rely on, to report the news or tell us about Joseph Stalin, is being replaced. By whom? You.

No offence intended, of course. It's not just you, but millions of other people who have been unleashed by technology that enables anyone, at any time (after, say, a night on the tiles) to say what they think. True or not. Everybody's out there waxing poetic – there are millions, maybe billions, of videos, blogs, songs, photos, chat rooms and MySpace pages sharing thoughts, feelings, pets, fetishes, opinions and secrets. As Keen states in his book, "Everybody was simultaneously broadcasting themselves, but nobody was listening."

As I read the book, I thought to myself, but is this really so bad? Isn't this what we've been working toward? A world where everyone has the right to say what they think about anything? Yes, but not at the expense of others, and not if it's untrue or you aren't who you say you are. Keen is of the opinion that society is paying the price for all the democratisation by blurring the lines of fact and fiction. Just because it's online doesn't make it true.



The next generation

But tell this to the Web 2.0 generation. This is *their* world. In ten years time, where will we be? These kids will be starting their careers and changing the way business provides and consumes information. We already suffer from e-mailitis – sending an e-mail to the person two cubicles down from you instead of getting up and talking to him. How often do you pick up the phone now? How many e-mails do you get? How many do you actually need? E-mail used to be a timesaver, but now the backlash against that has started as well. The amount of spam versus ‘real’ e-mail versus e-mail that’s actually relevant is a sorry statistic for most people.

Culturally, our ways of working have already changed and will continue to change significantly in the future, but the way most of us think about providing information as organisations has not. In terms of business, we must be aware that the internet is now capable of spreading as much harm as good, and we should take steps to future-proof our ways of authoring and consuming information – or at least let everyone know where the fire exits are.

How can you be sure the information out there about you is from you? Have you Googled yourself or your organisation lately? How can you encourage collaboration or foster communities on your site or around your key topics/issues without worrying that you, your organisation, product or service won’t become a victim of Web 2.0’s army of amateurs?

How can you ensure that your staff aren’t out there with their own blogs under false identities disclosing company secrets (or just generally trashing the company)? The reality is you can’t. As former British Prime Minister

James Callaghan once said, “A lie can be halfway round the world before the truth has got its boots on”.

But it’s not all doom

and gloom. At least, not yet. And that’s the message here, I think. As businesses, we should all be thinking about the impact this new way of authoring and collaborating across the web will have on us and how we can both harness its power, and be aware of its impact on us as a cultural phenomenon. Some companies are now creating a new ‘chief buzz officer’ type role encompassing the social-networking strategy for their organisations, including the creation of policies and procedures around employee behaviour, too.

So what would happen if we followed Sir Elton’s advice and simply turned off the internet? Somehow I reckon we’d get by, but I doubt we’d miss those videos of the ‘adorable ferret’ (32,688 views and 41, 4½ star rating on YouTube) or the ‘fat kid falling on diving board’ (71,687 views, 5 ½ star rating on YouTube). ■

As always, I’d love to hear from you so send in those videos of your pets/ children doing adorable things, a link to your blog or simply let me know what you think about my column this month to lynda@foursquaremedia.net.

References:

1. <http://music.guardian.co.uk/pop/story/0,,2139713,00.html>;
2. *The Cult of the Amateur* by Andrew Keen. Published by Nicholas Brealey Publishing, priced \$22.95/ £12.99.

AUSTRALIA

For more information on events in Australia, please contact Steven Oesterreich on +61 1300 550 662 or e-mail soesterreich@arkgroupasia.com.

EDRM Masterclass

4 – 5 September 2007, Melbourne

Electronic document and records management (EDRM) is now a well-established information-management technology. However, EDRM systems are only as effective as the policies and their enforcement. This event will be led by three different leaders with competencies in different, distinct areas. They will explore the following big issues:

- Establishing EDRM best-practice techniques for governance;
- Ensuring internal processes comply with EDRM standards;
- Realising the costs versus benefits of purchasing ‘whole of government’ solutions;
- Understanding the importance of properly managing documents.

Collaboration in the World of Web 2.0

12 – 14 September 2007

The technologies that underpin the Web 2.0 of Facebook, MySpace and Wikipedia can also help bring cheaper and easier to use collaborative technology to organisations and companies, too. Many are already taking advantage by implementing internal blogs and RSS to push information around the organisation, or introducing wikis so that staff can write technical manuals and ask questions and share information on a plethora of topics. This conference will not only clarify what Web 2.0 has to offer, but will also demonstrate how you can use these technologies to improve your organisations approach to collaboration.