



Knoco has been keeping users of video as a mechanism of knowledge transfer, ever since we started as a company. We find that it has a power and delivers an engagement that written text alone cannot. Video contains emotional content and inflection that is lost in text, and provides body language that adds conviction. We use it in our presentations and in our knowledge assets, and on our website. Yet video has its limitations, and can easily be overused. In this edition of the newsletter we offer some guidance in effective use of video in KM



How much difference does Video make to knowledge transfer?

Does it really make a difference to knowledge transfer, if you use video as part of your transfer mechanism?

According to a recent article in *New Scientist*, Britain's leading popular science weekly, it can make a huge difference.

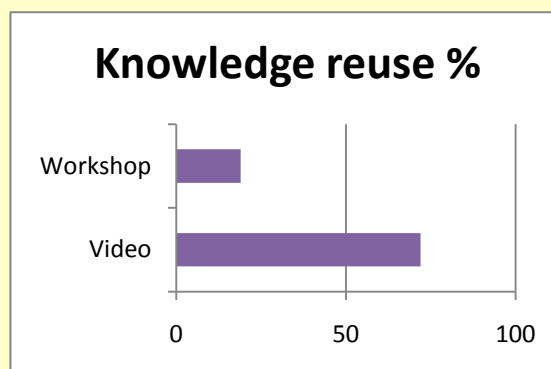
New Scientist was reporting on a study in Benin, in the *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability*. The study described how a team from the West Africa Rice Centre was attempting to transfer knowledge to women farmers in West Africa, on the topic of "how to parboil rice".

They tried a variety of ways to transfer the knowledge, including workshop demonstrations, and video demonstrations. They found that firstly the video attracted more watchers than the conventional workshops (74% of women in the villages, as opposed to 22%), and secondly that the reuse of the knowledge by those who attended was much higher (72% as opposed to 19%).

The author of the study suggests a few reasons why the video was a more effective way of transferring

knowledge than a workshop demonstration.

- The people telling the story in the video were women rice farmers from Africa, not western scientists. This delivered a level of trust in the knowledge, as it was being demonstrated by peers.
- The videos were designed with the user in mind, making the steps of the process obvious and also the principles behind the process.
- Local farmers were then able to adapt the process to their local conditions, and to create local version of the equipment that worked for them.



This video has been a huge success, and the team are now translating it into other languages for use elsewhere in Africa

The Knowledge Managers toolkit

A digital video camera is a key part of the Knowledge Manager's toolkit. When the camera is being used to create video clips for use on PC, web or CD, then it doesn't matter whether you choose a camera that records onto disc, or one that records onto cassettes. Our Knoco cameras use DV tapes, but that's because no other media were available at the time we bought them!

Look for a camera that takes an external microphone. This is important! Modern digital video cameras have built-in microphones which are incredibly sensitive, and can pick up noise from the cassette, from the spinning disc, or from background noise. It's far better to use an external clip-on

microphone. Position it on the person being interviewed and it will capture what is said by the interviewee and minimize the background noise. If the microphone has a nice long lead, or is wireless, you can place the camera a couple of meters from your subject. And if you are filming an interview, this means that it's not "in the interviewee's face". Buy yourself a little portable tripod as well.

One thing to be very careful about however is the connection between the

camera and the computer. IEEE or firewire seems to be the best, and we have struggled with USB connections. One trick that we do use, is to keep an old laptop which has a firewire connection and download video files onto that. That way we can do the downloading and processing, without tying up our main desktop computers.

Invest in spare batteries for your camera, and buy long-life batteries if you can. We have found that you cannot run the camera from mains power, as it results in a loud background hum, so you may be relying on batteries for long periods of time.

Then you need to invest in video editing software. There are many choices, and all seem pretty good.



When should you use Video?

There are three places where we recommend that you might want to use video as part of your KM program. These are for storytelling, for adding "voice" to knowledge assets, and for capturing knowledge that can be shown more easily than it can be told.

We often use Video is a very powerful mechanism for storytelling. A good story, told well, by a number of people who were really involved in the event, can convey authenticity and emotion. The video can either transfer the

knowledge (if it is simple knowledge), or it can act as an advertisement for a more detailed Knowledge Asset.

When we captured knowledge from the team that revolutionized the road safety performance in BP Turkey, for example, we recorded some very powerful short videos. We have combined these into a self-running PowerPoint, with captions, which lasts 5 minutes and tells a fascinating story, and is a great advertisement for the knowledge asset.

Generally, however, the stories need to be short to

hold the interest, especially if only one person is telling the story. 3 minutes is about the maximum time you can expect people to concentrate on one "talking head". Better to mix and match, and tell the story "in many voices".

Video can add colour and personality to knowledge assets. We are not advocates of knowledge assets made from video alone – these are hard to structure, impossible to search, and can take ages to go through. However a video can show the personalities behind a text-based knowledge asset, and so increase the degree of connection and trust with the reader.



When we create our multi-media knowledge assets, we structure them in layers, with the knowledge users in mind. We will include video

for emphasis, or to allow the contributors of the knowledge to “make an appearance” summarizing some of the key points.

Finally there is some knowledge which cannot easily be put into words, but can be shown. In this case, a video may be the best transfer medium.

When we are conducting Knowledge Retention, or Knowledge Harvesting,

exercises, we take a video camera and often will say to the interviewee, “show me”. The resulting video can often be more useful than a page full of words.

As an example, the website <http://www.wonderhowto.com/> is full of instructional video on how to dance the moonwalk, tie a Windsor tie, or build an igloo from snow. You try explaining any of those in words only!

Meeting the Challenge of Capability Development

By Ian Corbett, Knoco South Africa

Professor Ian Goldin, of Oxford University’s James Martin 21st Century School told us here at Cape Town University during a talk entitled “Future Shocks and Opportunities: 21st Century Challenges and Choices” that the developed world would need a staggering 100 million people over the next 50 years to meet requirements! This would mean that the current migration rate would need to increase by a factor of 5!

You could have heard a pin drop as people tried to grapple with what this could mean.

Here in South Africa the loss of knowledge and capability is a daily occurrence. We, more than most, have an appreciation of just how difficult and expensive it is to rebuild capability once it is

lost. From my office here in Cape Town, I believe that whilst much has been made of our plight (together with the rest of Africa) it is quite possible that you may not be too far behind!

Offshoring from the developed world might have begun with “low-end” work being migrated to developing countries as a cost saving strategy, but it has quickly evolved far beyond that. Spend a day scanning the internet and you quickly realise that in fact high-tech / high-knowledge work is now fast moving offshore as well. Many factors are driving this global phenomenon, but interestingly cost is no longer #1.

Access to knowledge and innovation is increasingly cited by organisations in support of their offshoring strategy – yes, that’s right; the global knowledge base and the capability to innovatively use it is on the move. Some early warning signs are already emerging – for example, it may come as a surprise to hear that the UK is having to re-establish

IT as a viable career option for undergraduates who no longer see it as a secure future due to the ease with which IT can be offshored.

Faced with the challenge of accelerating capability development, organisations here in South Africa are seeking innovative ways to integrate KM strategy with Learning and Development capability. As some of our global clients are finding, this is also necessary if you want to maintain growth – even in the developed world it seems, our clients are finding that they just can’t find the people.

Faced with this dilemma emphasis is increasingly being placed on finding ways to make sure that you can use KM to quickly bring newcomers up to productive competence and accelerate the growth of the people you already have. It promises to present KM professionals with many new and exciting opportunities to play an important role in business.

Lessons Learned survey

Nick is conducting a small survey on Lessons Learned systems. He is looking to find out how satisfied people are with these systems, and what some of the success factors might be.

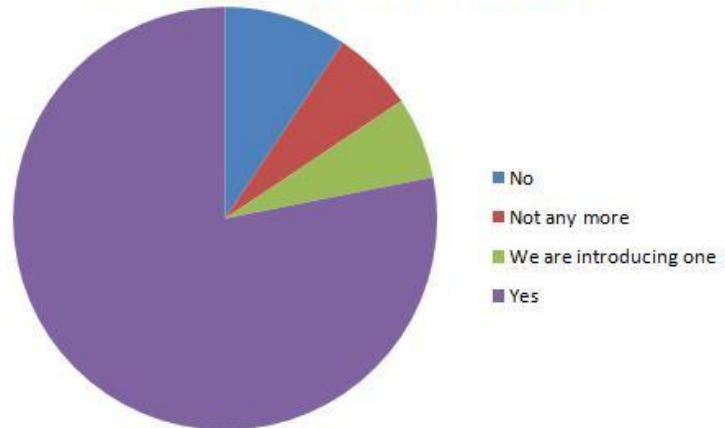
If you have 10 minutes you can spare, visit the survey at <http://tinyurl.com/lnguhu>

Preliminary results so far show that about 80% of the respondents say they have a Lessons Learned system. Of those 80%, the majority of respondents scored the effectiveness of their system as 2 or less out of 5.

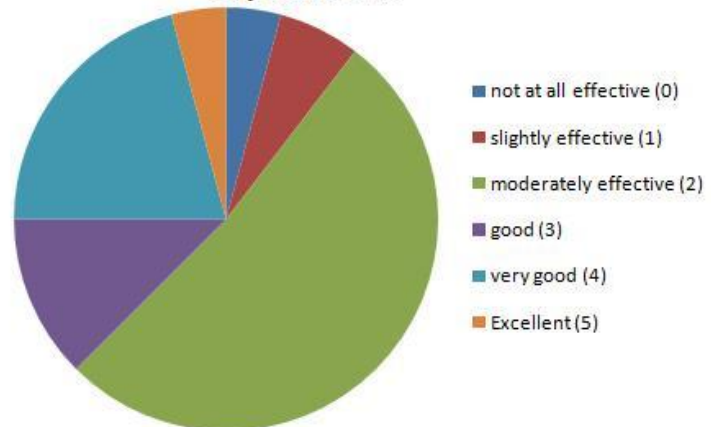
That's a lot of unsatisfied companies!

Nick plans to share the survey results via his blog, at <http://www.nickmilton.com>, and they will also form part of his forthcoming book - due at the end of the year - "The Lessons Learned Handbook - a Knowledge-based approach to Learning from Experience"

Does your organisation have a Lessons learned process in any major part of its activity?



How effective is it in delivering performance improvement?



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