PEER-BASED COMPUTER-SUPPORTED KNOWLEDGE REFINEMENT
AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

Nonexpert peer-based knowledge refinement, it turns out, is just as helpful as expert-centric knowledge refinement for improving the quality of results.

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Knowledge management (KM) repository-based systems (such as those involving “best practices” and “lessons learned” applications) are generally costly to operate since they require expert judgment to determine which knowledge submissions are to be included in the system and refined to make them as efficacious as possible.

Empirical evidence in cognitive psychology suggests that experts may not be needed for such refinement when the knowledge consumers are nonexperts. The knowledge “distance” between experts and nonexperts may indeed weaken expert-centric knowledge refinement. In addition, peer judgments delivered to nonexpert end users may substitute well for expert judgments. Multiple peer judgments, especially when provided through computer-supported knowledge-refinement systems, may be much less costly and just as good or perhaps even better than expert judgments, since peers are likely to think more like nonexpert users.

A computer-support system is helpful for facilitating peer-based knowledge refinement, since more peers than experts are probably required for peer-based refinement.