The Role of Social Software for On-the-job Information Seeking Behavior of Young Professionals

- An information-scientific study with an intercultural perspective on management consulting
Agenda

Introducing Theoretical Framework

Social Software as Information Source

Key Considerations

Research Methodology

Current Status

Outlook & Discussion
Introducing Theoretical Framework

- **Competence Development**
  - **Information Seeking**
  - **Information Behavior**
  - **Information Literacy**

**Concepts**

**Scientific Discipline**

**Human Resource Management**

**Information Science**

- *focus on an individual’s knowledge, skills, and abilities utilized to improve performance*

- *focus on an individual’s behavior dealing with generation, communication, use and other activities concerned with information*

(Ingwersen / Järvelin 2005: 21)
Social Software as Information Source

Social Software

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Information

Information Source

- User-Generated
- Personalized
- Informal
- Up-to-date
- Self-Organized
- Experience-Based

Information Seeking Behavior

- Starting
- Browsing
- Chaining
- Monitoring
- Differentiating
- Extracting
- Verifying
- Ending

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Key Considerations

What are the elements and underlying process steps of information seeking behavior and competence development of junior employees in the workplace?

Do young professionals in the management consulting industry show common characteristics in their information seeking behavior?

What role plays the dimension of culture on information behavior in the management consulting workplace and the use of social software?

What are the particular characteristics of social software applications and what types of information do they contain?

How do organizations need to react to the rising availability of social software applications as information sources in order to effectively support competence development of young professionals?
## Methodology

### Mixed Method Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative</th>
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</tr>
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<td>Literature Research &amp; Status Quo</td>
<td>Survey (Online-Questionnaire) of Information Seeking Behavior</td>
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<td>Scientific definition of core concepts and comparison to use in practice</td>
<td>(Culture-) Specific information behavior and competence development profiles</td>
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<td>Qualitative / Structured Observation and Semi-Structured Interviews (Critical Incident Method)</td>
<td>Corpus Analysis of Social Software Information Sources</td>
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<td>Process exploration of information seeking behavior, workplace information sources and cases of information behavior</td>
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### Consolidation of Findings
### Current Status

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#### Consolidation of Findings
## Current Status

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<tr>
<th>Explorative Study</th>
<th>Austria, Switzerland, Germany</th>
<th>North America (planned)</th>
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| Number of Projects / Analysts | 7 analysts on 3 different projects  
9 Structured / 7 Qualitative Observations  
9 Interviews | 2 – 3 Projects /  
2 – 4 Analysts |
| Type of Projects | Management Consulting  
- Training development @ *Energy Industry*  
- SAP introduction @ *Chemical Industry*  
- Supply chain optimization @ *Chemical Industry* | Management Consulting projects @  
*Chemical, Energy, and Communication & HighTech Industry* |
| Project Phase / Demographics | Average 2.5 months into project  
Average of 12 months corp. affiliation  
Average age 26.7  
5 female / 2 male  
5 German, 1 Austrian, 1 US | Overall project initial phase or at least roll-on phase of analysts |
| Time Frame | February 2009 | April 2009 |
### Outlook & Discussion

#### Mixed Method Approach

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Any Questions or Remarks?

How would you approach the classification of information types contained in social software applications?

- Automatic / Quantitative
- Manual / Heuristic

Thank you and feel free to contact me any time.

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