

Analyzing the Benefits of Blog for Enhancing Knowledge Management among Bloggers

Pinkie Anggia and Dana Indra Sensuse

¹ Faculty of Computer Science, University of Indonesia
Depok, 16424, Indonesia

² Faculty of Computer Science, University of Indonesia
Depok, 16424, Indonesia

Abstract

With the development of information and communication technology (ICT), people's ways to share ideas between communities are changed from time to time. The common issue that will be explained clearly in this research is about the exchanging ideas of tacit to explicit way. In order to solve this problem, a model based on blog is constructed. The emergence of blog as a part of Web 2.0 brings a right way to manage knowledge appropriately. In many industries, the exchange idea between people who have certain expertise might definitely become success with an appropriate model of knowledge management system. In the knowledge management based on blog, both of blog writers and readers will be getting the important information such as professional blogging tips, monetizing blog and strategy to work with brands, writing tips in sharing contents appropriately and so forth. Afterwards, the knowledge will be then managed in platform called blog, where users can access the updated contents with the latest technology without entering the blog page. Therefore, the real time information transfer can be obtained easily. This paper will assess the benefits of blog for enhancing the knowledge management among bloggers then analyze the results obtained from questionnaire and interview with some bloggers and readers.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Tacit, Explicit, Blog, Benefits of Blog.

1. Introduction

In the rapid development of information technology today, people's living and learning style are constantly changed. The way people getting information and communicating each other are now turn to digital style, which can be seen in the emerging of on-line daily news in Web 2.0, social media applications and other facilitate being developed using information technology. As a result for this new change, knowledge transmission should be able to develop very well in order to reach the effective learning among people. Unfortunately, the knowledge transmissions among people are

not always applied appropriately between them. Some people did not realize the importance of capturing the knowledge in order to record important knowledge for future necessity. The emergence of blog as a part of Web 2.0 brings a right way to manage knowledge appropriately. As its core, technologies facilitate the way, where knowledge and ideas can be easily expanded.

This research will be explaining about the importance of blog as a place to manage knowledge among people, especially for bloggers. In order to reach this goal, the definition of knowledge management, the nature of knowledge which will specifically explains about tacit and explicit knowledge and definition about blog will be observe here. Hence, the benefits for the application of knowledge management using blog can be analyzed very well and will be mentioned in the results of this research.

2. Literature Review

This section will be explaining the importance of knowledge management, tacit and explicit knowledge, and then reviewing about blog.

2.1 The Importance of Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is a management theory which emerged in the 1990s [1]. Knowledge management can be defined as any process or practice of creating, acquiring, capturing, sharing and using knowledge, wherever it resides, to enhance learning and performance in organizations (Swan et al, 1999). In general, knowledge management focuses on organizing and making available important knowledge, wherever and whenever it is needed [2]. As an example of managing knowledge effectively on large companies, the successful knowledge management will brings the huge advantages to the market.

2.2 Tacit and Explicit Knowledge

Knowledge is different from data and information. Knowledge helps to produce information from data or from less valuable information to more valuable information [2]. Tacit knowledge includes insights, intuitions, and hunches (instinct). The evident matters about tacit knowledge are difficult to express and formalize, difficult to share and usually based on individual experiences. Explicit knowledge refers to knowledge that has been expressed into words and numbers. An easy example to express the form of explicit knowledge is a book recipe for cooking.

In knowledge management, we can convert tacit into explicit knowledge and so forth. The result of converting tacit into explicit knowledge is an externalization form taken from SECI model. SECI model from knowledge evolution is a model from socialization, externalization, internalization and combination that can be seen in the figure (“Fig. 1”) below:

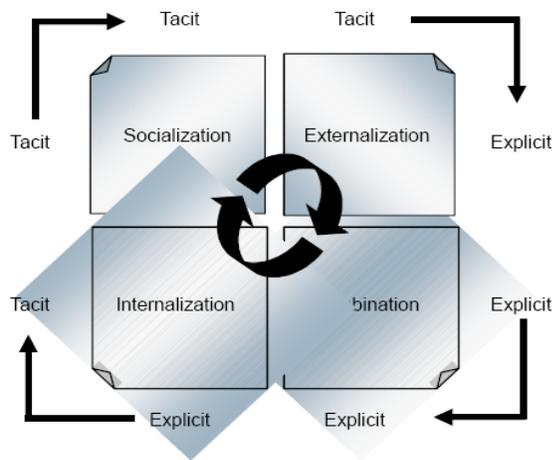


Fig. 1 SECI Model [3].

The externalization example is blog, which is a process of converting tacit into explicit knowledge. This process belonging to codification process, which has benefits in terms of efficiency and economically. Since blog-based knowledge management assists in converting tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge, it can create tools, platforms and processes for tacit knowledge creation, which plays an important role in the capturing and sharing process of knowledge.

2.3 Blog

Blog is the abbreviation of the Web-log (network diary) [4]. Blog is a part of Web 2.0, which is characterized by the fact of having many tools that enable the production, communication, sharing and dissemination of information

involving more users and generating an infinite interactivity weaving [5]. The Table (“Table 1”) below shows the important tools of Web 2.0 and the utilities that they provide:

Table 1: Utilities of Web 2.0 tools [5]

<i>Tool</i>	<i>Utility</i>
Blog	Regular information publication Commenting information
Wiki	Editing Content Collective Intelligence
Social Network	Creating online communities Sharing files and opinions
RSS feeds	Regular information monitoring
Tag	Improving and personalizing monitoring
Podcast	Sharing audio materials
Video cast	Sharing videos materials
Blog	Regular information publication Commenting information

The articles in blog are frequently updated and organized in time sequence. The latest information in blog can be seen in the top of the page. Hence, blog readers can easily browse the latest information. The contents in blog are some resources of personal thoughts, arguments, news or other multimedia documents such as photo, video and audio. Blog also using hyper-links for linking to other web addresses or social media accounts. Building blog is not requiring a high technical or programming skills since blog platforms nowadays provide easy to operate interface. Therefore, user can directly register, create their own blog and start writing the contents. The main purposes of using blog are for creating openness and deep interaction to other bloggers. An example of these openness and deep interaction is the comment tool that is existed in blog. Bloggers can be able to drop comments in other blogs and also get comments from other bloggers in their article.

Blog is also a place of opinions, research and creation in which one or more authors publish over time contents as texts, images, media objects and data, sorted in reverse chronological order [6]. By some great development tools existed in blog, readers can get the latest information by subscribing into their favorite blog using Rich Site Collection (RSS) and other integration technology without entering the blog page. Therefore, the real time information transfer can be obtained easily. The relevant past research about the application of blog for University students had been done by [7]. Additionally,

there are some past researches related to this topic that has been done by [1, 4 and 7] about improving knowledge management for educational blog.

3. Research Methodology

This research is using the quantitative method using questionnaire and interview, which begins by constructing a professional blog, collecting the data using questionnaire and interview, doing analysis of results obtained from data collections and then generating conclusion in the final.

3.1 Constructing a Professional Blog

This method was adopted from [1] about blog usage among teachers, where they should establish professional blog website according to their profession to facilitate communication among teachers who are interesting in the same subject. Formerly, we construct a professional blog to improve the comparison of data taken from our blog [8] and from others. We have been created the blog in 2010, where we share a way to dress up well using outfit with various styles, colors, fabrics and brands. There were many virtual interaction happened in the comment form in each blog post, which can be the new way for sharing and capturing knowledge among bloggers.

Another blog example was taken from the most influential style blog in 2012 [9], The Sartorialist [10]. This blog is established and organized by Scott Schuman, a professional bloggers and street style photographer. In the beginning, Scott Schuman just wanted to take photographs of people that he met on the streets of New York who he felt looked great. The blog is now an internationally renowned site and a showcase for the wonderful and varied sartorial tastes of real people across the globe. His work resides in the permanent collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography. At the moment, he has already published street style books and got some publications of his work in Vogue Italia, New York Magazine, and so forth. The virtual communication are being held in this blog and being able to facilitate the deep communication among bloggers who have common interest in the same scope. Many bloggers share their opinion about their favorite style street photography taken by Scott Schuman.

Based on our personal experience when we established a personal style blog and from our observation on another blog, we found that it is essential to combine the skills that bloggers already have with other skills like technologies or new tools. Take an example of designing a blog, the bloggers are not only need to learn a graphic design skill

but also a little programming skill for design purpose like CSS or JQuery language to make the blog interface look professional, clean, easy to navigate and of course beautiful. Additionally, it is necessary to learn other tips for enhancing the blog contents and design to make the readers constantly read the blog. Keeping an attention of 8 (eight) golden rules for interface design [11] is also important. The combination example of various skills to enhance bloggers knowledge management will soon need to develop from time to time. Therefore, the improvement of knowledge management among bloggers will be capturing much important information for future learning purpose.

3.2 Collecting and Analyzing the Data

We did questionnaire and interview between 16 (sixteen) international bloggers. Most of participants are our own blog [8] readers, where they have big enthusiasm in blogging activities. These are our participants:

Table 2: Number of Participants' Lists of Origins

No.	Origins (Continents)	Number of Participants
1.	Asia	12 Participants
2.	America	2 Participants
3.	Europe	2 Participants

After collecting the data, the next step is doing analysis of results obtained from questionnaire and interview, which will be explained in next chapter.

4. Result

Regarding to the data taken from questionnaire and interview with 16 (sixteen) international blog users, it was evidently tangible that blog able to provide several benefits for them. This research found that blog is needed by them for different purposes, which can be seen in figure ("Fig. 2") below:

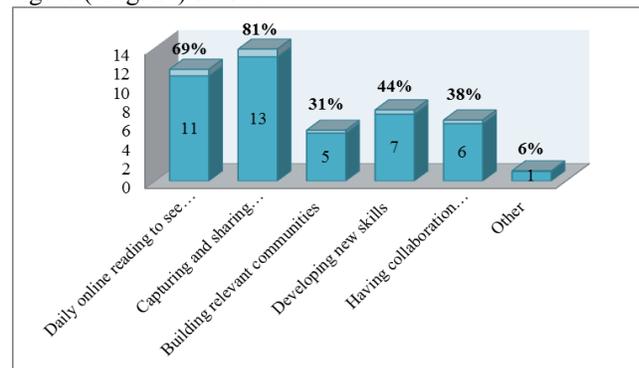


Fig. 2 Several purposes of blog among bloggers and readers.

Blog has been able to provide many new benefits such as enhancing learning process, strengthening communication among bloggers, readers and brands; building relevant communities and developing new skills. Besides questionnaire, the interview to those participants including bloggers and readers were also held to enhance the better understanding result for this research.

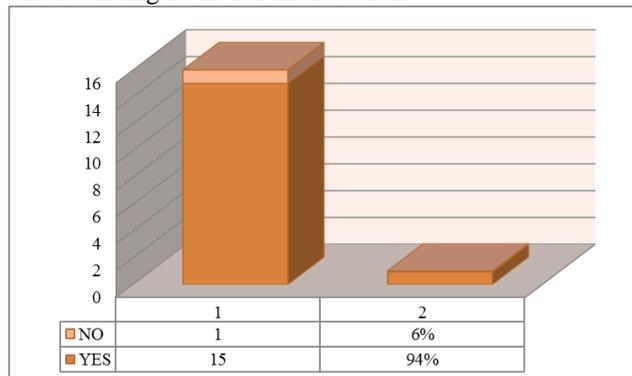


Fig. 5 Percentage of users who stated that blog is beneficial for enhancing knowledge management among bloggers.

Figure (“Fig. 5”) showed that there was 1 (one) participant who stated that blog has no beneficial for enhancing knowledge management among bloggers. Based on the interview with 1 (one) participant who did not agree that blog has certain beneficial related to knowledge management for bloggers, the participant said that some bloggers were focused on getting the highest score for Google Page Rank and other reputations, while ignoring the quality content inside the blog. Another reason was because some blogs did not include the reference of the formal theory that they wrote in their blog. Hence, some readers might think that knowledge written in blogs were opinions. Otherwise, although 1 (one) participant declared that blog has no beneficial for enhancing knowledge management among bloggers, there were 15 (fifteen) participants who stated that blog has some benefits for bloggers. Some reasons taken from interview were because blog able to give some professional bloggers new inspirations, latest trends, enhancing writing skills, interacting with other bloggers, then sharing and gaining new knowledge. Some participants said that reading blogs was a relaxing activity because they found it was an interesting way to know other people’s opinions about certain topics.

5. Discussion

This section explains the result of questionnaire and interview from data collections. There are 5 (five) reasons why blog is being able to drive some benefits to the bloggers. Those reasons were generated after observing

some blogs, getting answers during interview and concluding the benefits of blog by comparing it from our personal style blog with another blog.

5.1 Daily Online Reading to See New Trends Happening

This result taken from interview session where most of participants stated that the main purpose of reading blog was to see the current trends based on their interest. Since blog is now also use at a purpose of looking for a new trends happening, readers can get the latest information easily and frequently updated by the bloggers. Many features are being integrated in blog nowadays, such as the usage of RSS, social media accounts integration and others. Therefore, the readers can get the information from their own favorite blogs quickly with no need to entering the blog page first.

5.2 Capturing and Sharing Knowledge with Both Bloggers and Readers

As mentioned in previous chapter, blog is one of the examples of converting tacit to explicit knowledge, which is existed in SECI model. The knowledge captured on blog can be transferred easily to readers and other bloggers. As a part of knowledge management system, blog provide several technologies to transfer the idea appropriately.

5.3 Building Relevant Communities

The other advantage of blog as the knowledge management system for bloggers is for building relevant communities, where people in the same topic of interest are constructing a place to share knowledge together. An example of this case is taken from Independent Fashion Bloggers (IFB) [12], a community for fashion bloggers to share their experiences and create a resource so everyone can build a better blog. In this community, many bloggers share their own idea about professional blogging tips such as styling tips and tutorial, monetizing blog, tips for writing contents appropriately and so forth. There is also an international conference every year from IFB to obtain an improvement of sharing knowledge with other bloggers. Therefore, it has shown that blogging can connect bloggers in many mutually beneficial ways.

5.4 Developing New Skills

This point was adopted from [1] where bloggers could combine blog with other technologies and skills to make a good use of blog. Writing blog might also be able to improve the current skills or develop some new skills. The

former example has been explained in chapter II, where bloggers need to expand their new skills in order to reach the great content in their blog. Another example from this case is the acquisition of skills derived from knowledge by the readers and other bloggers when they share something in articles or comments. The new ideas being transferred in blog will be able to create a huge knowledge among communities.

5.5 Having Collaboration Projects with Brands or Other Bloggers

Lately, some bloggers are accepting projects with brands or other bloggers. As its core, the appropriate knowledge management among bloggers can also bring new perspective of business value. In some large companies, the good knowledge management will bring the profit to the market. Brands will know the right blog to collaborate by looking for the well-known bloggers. The popular bloggers can be seen from their statistical visit from their blog, number of subscribers, number of press release received, number of awards received and number of readers they have in their blog or social media accounts. From the knowledge that is transferred by bloggers frequently, the numbers of readers will constantly growth. By the rapid growth of readers in the blog, the brands or other bloggers might be interest to invite for future collaboration projects. Hence, the good knowledge management in blog is not only delivering the idea, but also growing new business value for many people.

6. Conclusions and Future Research

As the conclusion taken from questionnaire and interview, blog can be able to generate many benefits for knowledge management among bloggers. Some benefits derived from blog as a knowledge management system are as the daily online reading to see new trends happening, a way for capturing and sharing knowledge with other bloggers, a place for building relevant communities, a place for developing new skills and a new opportunity for collaboration project with brands or other bloggers. The knowledge being transferred in blog can be rapidly expanded because blog platform is providing many new facilitates for both bloggers and readers.

In the future, this research will be searching for other factors, which enhancing knowledge sharing among bloggers. Those factors will be then used to measure the effectiveness level of knowledge management among bloggers. Since this research is still collecting the small respondents or participants for questionnaire and interview, we will propose the larger numbers of bloggers and

readers to reach deep analysis of core points. Statistical analysis will be also applied to generate and to ensure the more significant result of this research in the future.

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Pinkie Anggia received her B.Sc in Computer Science (Binus University, Indonesia, 2011). She is currently taking her M.Sc in Computer Science (University of Indonesia). During her study, she works as a teaching assistant at Faculty of Computer Science, University of Indonesia and a research assistant at e-Government Laboratory, Faculty of Computer Science, University of Indonesia.

Dana Indra Sensuse received his B.Sc in Soil Science (Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia, 1985), M.LIS from Dalhousie University (Canada, 1994), and Ph.D in Information Studies from University of Toronto (Canada, 2004). Now he works as a teaching staff in Faculty of Computer Science, University of Indonesia, and Head of e-Government Laboratory. His research interests include E-Government, Knowledge Management, and Information Systems.