Organizations and Information

Knowledge Cycle (Choo)

Sensemaking

Information

Knowledge Organizations

Information and Organizations

Knowledge Cycle

Definition
- Shared meanings
- Knowledge creating: tacit and internal; explicit and external
- Decision making
Sensemaking

- **Definition**
  - Identify gaps of information, knowledge, and experience
  - Bridge gaps of information by using criteria to
    - ascertain usefulness or value of new knowledge
    - determine if new knowledge fits with old knowledge or experience
    - make up what we don’t know (rumors, misinformation, misinterpretation)

Seven Properties of Sensemaking via Karl Weick

- **Grounded in identity**
  - “parliament of selves”
- **Retrospective**
- **Enactive of sensible environments**
  - people shape and are part of their environment
- **Social**
- **Ongoing - never starts and never stops**
- **Focused on and by extracted cues**
- **Driven by plausibility rather than accuracy**

More Sense or Nonsense via Karl Weick

- Actions affect situation & yourself
- Intuition and experience interprets non-sense
- Effects of action cannot be predicted
- Patterns may be evident after the fact
- Every representation is an interpretation
- Language is action
Scenarios

• Not to predict future
• Enables envisioning behavior
• Reveal nature and dynamics of forces shaping the environment
• Use hard, analytical data and soft intuitive hunches

Information ↔ Action

When action grows unprofitable, gather information; when information grows unprofitable, sleep.

-- Ursula K. LeGuin

Questions and Information

• Question reveals nature of problem
• Amount and reliability of information
• Multiple conflicting interpretations of information
• Varying value orientations, political/emotional clashes
Information: Ambiguity and Change

- Goals are
  - Unclear
  - Multiple
  - Conflicting
- Roles are vague, responsibilities are unclear
- Success measures are lacking
- Symbols and metaphors used unclear
- Participation in decision-making is fluid.

Information: Diversity and Consensus

- Sensemaking constructs framework
  - Shared meanings
  - Purposes for concerted action
- Shared meanings
  - Social order
  - Temporal continuity
  - Goal-directed clarity

Organizational Sensemaking Process

Belief-Driven Processes

Action-Driven Processes

- Arguing: creating meaning by connecting the contradictory
- Expecting: creating meaning by connecting the similar
- Committing: creating meaning to justify actions high in choice, visibility, and irrevocability
- Manipulating: creating meaning to explain actions taken to make things happen.
Models of Information Use

Central Info Problem in Organizations

- Reduce ambiguity
- Develop shared meaning for
  - Collective and purposeful action
- Maintain a level of information equivocality
- Accommodate a diversity of interpretations
- Allows cognitive “white space” for its members to
  - Inquire
  - Experiment
  - Discover
Organizations as Sensemaking
Communities

Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun.
- Max Weber