



**A community of leading knowledge-based organizations dedicated to networking, benchmarking and sharing best knowledge practices.**

**Cortada, J. W., and Woods, J. A. (Eds.), *The Knowledge Management Yearbook 1999-2000*, Butterworth Heinemann, 1999, 521 pages.**

The authors set themselves four requirements. These are to be authoritative, to create a clearing house, to emphasize the practical and to create a book of lasting value. This useful text continues the tradition of its publishers within the 'knowledge' field in artfully packaging relatively recent material from related contexts in an attractive format. It steers a masterly, though uncritical, course through the dominant paradigms.

The yearbook is divided into five parts:

1. The nature of knowledge and its management.
2. Knowledge-based strategies.
3. Knowledge management and organizational learning.
4. Knowledge tools, techniques and processes.
5. Knowledge management references.

A major feature of the yearbook is the increasing alienation that the reader begins to feel towards the topic. There is no critical examination of the contradiction of the terms 'knowledge' and 'management.' The old model of knowledge as either tacit or explicit is taken as a given without any consideration of the dangerous inclusivity of the term 'knowledge' nor even of emergent knowledge within organizations, or Bohn's levels of knowledge about processes.

The most exciting component of the yearbook is the discussion of the concept of 'a shared space for emerging relationships,' a concept that can be brutally reduced to the means of recognizing information patterns that can exist outside their original purpose and context, with the potential for redeployment into new contexts with new purposes. Or is it?

The editors seem unable to synthesize the knowledge revolution, or to understand its revolutionary nature and transforming future potential. The failure of most of the contributors has been in applying fundamental critical thinking or demonstrating excitement or passion. It is this absence of passion and excitement that is deadening. Clearly, knowledge about yearbooks remains to be developed.

(Extract of review by Victor Newman, Director, Knowledge Development Centre, CIM, School of Industrial and Manufacturing Science, Cranfield University.)

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Year Published: 1999

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