

**The following text is made up of excerpts from Jerry Ash's recent writing about the Smart People Magazine concept. They are taken from our Smart People magazine group on LinkedIn: one of the forums in which conversation about these topics is welcomed and encouraged.**

## **Tapscott on Digital's and Work**

...Don Tapscott likes the concept of Smart People magazine and has submitted a major feature for the Premiere Issue. I'm, of course, elated particularly because I think Don and I are on the same path, though I think of us as the tortoise and the hare, although I never expect to catch up!

Anyway, his book validates my thought that KM and the Digitals were made for each other and Smart People magazine can bring them together.

To stimulate some dialogue, I'm going to give you some of Don's words in advance of the Smart People magazine publication, April 15. This drill will continue in lots of networks as the feedback and idea loops for a truly 'new media' publication.

By Don Tapscott  
Author, Grown Up Digital

"The world of work, and its traditional resistance to sharing knowledge, is about to be challenged by a new generation of employees – young people who have grown up digital.

"As the first generation in history to be immersed in digital technology, they have a natural feel for digital tools that keep them connected with friends, sometimes hundreds of them, all day long. For the Net Generation, as I call them, sharing knowledge and collaborating with each other is as natural as breathing. Their way of sharing, so powerfully demonstrated in the way they propelled President Barack Obama to the White House, is now about to enter the workplace.

"Work – and how we work together – may never be the same.

"Organizations should take a long look at how these Net Geners operate. Their new modus operandi could offer companies a huge competitive advantage in this digital age. Right now, the nature of work is changing. Work has become more cognitively complex, more team-based and collaborative, more dependent on social skills, more time-pressured, more reliant on technological competence, more mobile and less dependent on geography. This means knowledge must be shared effectively so that teams around the world can collaborate on tricky problems.

"Yet for many organizations, sharing knowledge has been a challenge."

He goes on to describe the nature of Digital Geners and their upcoming relationship with

the hierarchy:

"CoreMedia is clearly on the cutting edge, but young people are introducing tools that could affect the way knowledge is spread in traditional businesses. Take the standard annual performance review, in which the boss is supposed to tell the underling how he or she rates against corporate objectives. It's been criticized for years by experts in the Harvard Business Review as backwards and counterproductive. But it makes even less sense to the Net Gener.

"It's a one-way communication – boss to employee – that usually ignores the employee's wishes and desires. It happens once a year – long after the performance took place. It rewards or punishes individual performance – not the collaboration that Net Geners treasure. It's more about compensation and promotions than about improving performance."

Don concludes:

"People throughout a firm, locked into traditional organizational structures, can be freed to share knowledge and ingenuity.

"Further, companies can reach outside their boundaries to tap into vast pools of labor available in the global economy.

"Whether designing an airplane, assembling a motorcycle, or analyzing the human genome, the ability to integrate the talents of dispersed individuals and organizations is becoming the defining competency for managers and firms. This is a tremendously powerful way to do business, says Best Buy CEO Brad Anderson. It's "unleashing the power of human capital."

Here's what I suggest as discussion points:

1. People who have grown up digital are eager to share.
2. Job descriptions and annual reviews are so yesterday.
3. The impact of the Digitals will change work and management.

## **Not just for Knowledge Wonks**

Give me your ordinary smart people.

First of all, I am hugely gratified to have so many KM practitioners and thought leaders coming to the Smart People magazine Group. It matters!

Now that you know the mission of Smart People, I'd like to ask you to help me take KM mainstream by inviting all the ordinary smart people you know (which includes 99.44

percent) to join us.

That's all your knowledge workers, but it's more. It's your colleagues in other business units. It's co-workers not engaged in KM per se. It's your family, your high school and college students, your golf buddies, people you know at church. It's anyone who is digitally engaged and using Web 2.0 tools for fun and personal purpose.

Smart People magazine is for Don Tapscott's grown up digitals (ages 11-32) and my catching up digitals (ages 33-70 and counting).

Our mission is to bring everyone together, exchange interests and begin sharing what we know and what we have experienced in this knowledge-driven life of ours. It's about developing and growing a magazine that is \*Powered by Smart People\*.

Need to know more? Please ask. Have an opinion? Let's hear it!

Jerry Ash  
Developer, publisher  
Smart People magazine

## **Focus of Smart People magazine**

I've been on the KM trail for 15 years now, and I've learned so much. And I'm so grateful to all the KM pioneers, practitioners and thought leaders who have taught me.

But I've always thought we aren't casting our net far enough, and I've worried that too few are getting the good news. Of course, I've always been interested in the knowledge work end of the process.

So, in leaving AOK to Avigdor Sharon and ending my stint as managing editor of Inside Knowledge magazine, I'm not leaving KM but taking it mainstream...