

*International Conference on
Innovation through Knowledge
Transfer 2009*

RESEARCH WITH IMPACT

*Wednesday 2 December 2009
Hampton Court Palace, London*

Session C: Innovative Knowledge
Transfer Techniques

***Innovative knowledge transfer
mechanisms and the potential role for
theatric methods in the propagation of
good data handling practice***

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First comments

- Intractable and complex problem
- role of the performing arts in knowledge transfer?
 - The performing arts are a means of unlocking knowledge flows (Knowles and Cole, 2008)
 - ‘The Archers’: propagation of new scientific methods in agriculture
- First phase: co-located *in vivo* approach

'The problem'

- numerous press reports of data security breaches in organisations
- 28% of 'micro' firms and 18% of 'small' firms had no security policy (Clear, 2007)
- security issues are not properly understood or given adequate attention in many organisations whatever their size (Schneier, 2000 & 2003)

Knowledge transfer issue

- ‘the few’ can secure the digital defences for ‘the many’ but ‘the few’ cannot secure the ‘human’ defences for ‘the many’: **you are only as strong as your weakest link!**
- So (some) knowledge of ‘safe data handling practice’ required by all
- Diversity of knowledge and skills on security within any firm with learners of different interests and abilities – what method(s) would engage them all?

Conventional solution

- ‘formalised, structured, prescriptive’ means of training delivery and standard linear progression unlikely to deliver optimal levels of knowledge
- most data security awareness training constructed by information security specialists who lack strong pedagogic methods (Van Niekerk and Von Solms, 2003)
- This leads to ineffective security training (Siponen, 2000).

Obstacles to take up of training

- Lack of budget, esp. for smaller firms
- Lack of time (or lack of prioritisation)

The role for 'Theatric Methods'

- Theatric methods: *use of dramatic devices by which to deliver messages with greater impact and clarity than might otherwise be the case using conventional didactic methods*

Solution?

- Learning event or “show” mounted at the workplace (in canteen, etc)?
- Lasts 90 minutes?
- Requires two actors, one technician, one director/‘straight man’ and minimal props?

Theory

- ‘situated cognition’: knowing is inseparable from doing (Brown et al., 1989)
 - ‘experiential learning’ (Kolb, 1984)
 - codified v tacit knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995)
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- ‘Forum Theatre’ (Boal, 1979)

Knowledge and context

- Knowledge is ‘inextricably a product of the activity and situations in which (it is) produced’ (Brown et al., 1989).
- This holds for ‘apparently well-defined, abstract technical concepts.....part of their meaning is always inherited from the context of use’ (Brown et al., 1989)
- ‘theatric methods’ could allow some analogue of reality and allow ‘experiential learning’

Supporting Research

- Health:
 - Rossiter et al. (2008)
 - Murray and Gray (2008)
- Higher Education
 - Monks et al. (2001)
- Business
 - Beckwith (2003)

Theatric Methods: Attributes

- ‘Performers’ and ‘performance’ give sense of spectacle and significance to learning
- Pre-scripted and improvised vignettes
- Interactive
- Intended to promote interest, curiosity and ongoing dialogue (i.e. beyond the learning event) on subject matter that might be regarded by some as ‘ostensibly dull’.

Caveats and where next?

- Dumbing down?
- Patronising?
 - So needs excellent writing and excellent delivery
- Needs testing!

Summary

- Not wholly new ideas but a new arena of application
- If knowledge transfer is critical and for a mixed group of individuals then alternative methods should be tested
- ‘Theatric methods’ need empirical testing

Comments and questions?

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