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The Korean Cultural Center:
An Information Environment Analysis

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1. Introduction

This paper focuses on analyzing the way an organization manages information within the organization, as well as how it views the purpose of that information within the context of its operations. This case study is a way to observe the real-world application of various concepts, theories, models, and techniques discussed in lectures regarding the information environment of organizations. This study observes only a single organization, the Korean Cultural Center in Washington D.C.; however, the concepts discussed herein can be applied to other organizations.

The Korean Cultural Center was chosen for this case study because it has unique organizational and informational features that allow it to fulfill its special purpose of dealing with cultural and public affairs. The organization has adopted a more traditional business structure and communication model in regards to the way the center operates, while at the same time moving towards incorporating modern business practices. Meanwhile, the center supports various diplomatic and cultural events and details without the use of any exclusively designated teams. In these regards, the analysis of the Korean Cultural Center is very meaningful in terms of identifying its unique organizational culture, information management, and their way of communicating with the general public.

In section 2, we give an overview of the procedures used to gather information about the organization - how we approached the organization, what methods were used to obtain the information, and how information problems were identified. In section 3, we give a general overview of the Korean Cultural Center based on an initial, general interview with one of the center's interns*, as well as analysis of information found on the center's website. Then a more

*Due to security concerns, interviewee names have been removed from the paper.

detailed analysis of the organization is presented in section 4 using the six components described in Davenport and Prusak's ecological model for information management. Finally, we provide solutions to information problems identified during the analysis, and future steps the Korean Cultural Center may take to correct or minimize these problems.

2. Analysis Procedures

In order to identify what the Korean Cultural Center is, as well as what it does, an online search was performed using various search techniques to locate the center's website in order to get a general understanding of the purpose of the center. This search resulted in the location of a simple website for the center that had little or no information about the history, purpose, or other general information concerning the center. This information was also not current. This lack of information led to a visit to the center in an attempt to get more information about what the center does and how it manages its information. The visit also provided an impromptu, general interview with one of the center's interns, where general questions were asked regarding the basic operational and managerial practices of the Korean Cultural Center.

Based on the responses from this general interview, more questions were uncovered. In order to answer these new questions, as well as achieve a better understand of the organization's information environment, a second interview was conducted with a member of the center's regular staff. During this second interview, it was revealed that there was a new website for the center that had been created and launched at a new URL address. Thus, an online analysis of the new website's information was also conducted. After further analysis of the new website, a third interview was conducted with the Korean Cultural Center's webmaster to discuss the structure of the center's technical architecture.

Due to the sensitive nature of the operation of the Korean Cultural Center, as well as the governmental setting in which the center operates, the questions asked during the interviews were abstracted to a point in which they were deemed appropriate by the center's staff. This process allowed for the security of the center's information, but also allowed for analysis of the processes and managerial techniques used by the center when dealing with its information.

The analysis of the information gathered in this case study is based on the six components of the ecological model for information management as described by Thomas H. Davenport and Laurence A. Prusak in their book "Information Ecology: Mastering Information and Knowledge Environment." This model views an organization's information environment as a vast interconnected web that is affected by several managerial and organizational factors (Davenport & Prusak, 1997). These factors are discussed at length in section 4 below.

3. Overview of the Korean Cultural Center

The Korean Cultural Center is a part of the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism; however, the center is also loosely connected to the Korean Embassy, which is a part of the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. According to the Korean Cultural Center's website, "As a worldwide cultural center, it emphasizes activities and events that contribute to the understanding of Korea and Korean culture at a deeper level" ("Overview," 2012). In addition to this, the center provides event support services both as an independent organization as well as to other departments of the Korean embassy.

The Korean Cultural Center's purpose is both as a public affairs office and as a cultural affairs office for the Korean government. As part of the center's public affairs role, the center

provides behind-the-scenes assistance to members of the Korean government wishing to tour the United States, to attend/give lectures, to hold briefings on topics of concern to both the Korean and United States governments and citizens, and more. This assistance is in the form of guided tours for the Korean official while in the United States, as well as providing a means for the official to communicate with representatives in the United States and funding assistance for travel between both countries. In addition to providing assistance to Korean government officials, the center also assists Korean journalists traveling to the United States and American journalists traveling to Korea.

As part of the center's cultural affairs role, the center provides assistance for public displays at area museums, namely the Smithsonian. This assistance includes extending their expertise in Korean language and culture as well as funding for the event. In addition, the center attempts to provide inspiration to the general public to learn about Korean culture, language, and heritage. To successfully carry out this part of the center's purpose, the center hosts area events, lectures, language and culture classes, artistic displays, and various media assets designed to increase understanding and awareness of current issues and culture between the United States and Korea. Some of the local events hosted by the Korean Cultural Center include movie/food fairs, Taekwondo events, traditional theatrical/musical performances, art displays, and more.

4. Analysis of Information Environment

The following analysis is based on the six components of the ecological model for information management as described by Thomas H. Davenport and Laurence Autor Prusak in their book "Information Ecology: Mastering Information and Knowledge Environment." This model views an organization's information environment as a vast interconnected web that is

affected by the managerial factors of information strategy, information politics, information behavior and culture, information staff, information processes, and information architecture. In addition, an organization's information environment is also shaped by other, broader internal and external organizational factors (Davenport & Prusak, 1997). This model provides a process by which an organization can be evaluated based on the management and use of the organization's information. By using this evaluation process, an organization is able to better ascertain how the organization views its own information, as well as show areas where the organization may work to improve the way the organization manages its information in order to more effectively and efficiently use its information.

4.1. Information Strategy

According to Davenport and Prusak, (1997) an organization's information strategy is to answer the question of, "What do we want to do with information in this organization" (p. 35). More specifically, the purpose of setting an information strategy includes managing financial/operational/market information, customer information, competitive information, common information, new information markets, the company's image, and information overload in business organizations (Day 4, Vitak, 2012). When we look at these various purposes in the setting of the Korean Cultural Center, which has nothing to do with business, it can be said that the purpose of an information strategy for them is to manage common information, cultural and educational events, Korea's international image, and information overload.

From these perspectives, parts of the Korean Cultural Center's information strategy is well established in terms of managing cultural/educational events and Korea's international image. Since one of their explicit roles is cultural affairs, they are highly focusing on the

information management of Korea's international image and cultural/educational events. This strategic mission is explained in more detail on the center's website where it states, "Through mutual cultural exchange, the Korean Cultural Center Washington D.C. has exerted much effort in strengthening mutual understanding and friendly relations between Korea and the United States" ("Welcome Message," 2012).

According to an interview with a member of the regular staff at the center, the center provides Korean language education programs for local citizens who are interested in Korean culture and language. Along with these programs, associated documents such as class materials, participants' records, and data from surveys given to participants are prudently preserved and managed as useful data for future programs. However, most of this information is not in a digital format. In addition, it is easily found on the center's website, as well as social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube, that they are managing and updating information about cultural events such as Korean traditional exhibitions, educational events, and K-pop events – with an extreme emphasis on K-pop – in high granularity (see figure 1 in appendix A).

Meanwhile, when it comes to managing common information such as inter-departmental communication and information about publicity practices, the related information strategy is loosely managed due to the center's small size and relatively narrow focus of responsibility, as well as the center's significant autonomy from other parts of the embassy and Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism. Since it is composed of a very small number of employees and directors, there is relatively little need for a more detailed information strategy. This is also shown through the staff's working style. During the interviews, it was found that staff members are usually involved in other staff member's projects to help make the projects more successful.

If the center holds a Korean film fair, for example, the staff person in charge of the K-Cinema section is the 'project lead,' but all staff members of the center will work with the person during the fair period to help make the fair successful.

In the aspect of information overload, it seems that the center needs to refine its strategy. If the term information overload is described as “a rate too high for the receiver to process efficiently without distraction, stress, increasing errors and other costs making information poorer,” (Klapp, 1986, p. 98-99) there is a high possibility of distraction due to the environment where employees are all working together. Of course, that kind of atmosphere is beneficial in terms of sharing knowledge across the organization, as described by Hansen and Bolko in their paper “Introducing T-shaped Managers: Knowledge Management’s Next Generation.” However, since every member of the Korean Cultural Center's staff is in the position of a “T-shaped manager,” (Hansen & Bolko, 2001) it is hard for staff to focus on their own jobs. A comment during an interview with one of the center's interns shows the potential need to refine the strategy for information overload when the interviewee stated, “We often jump from here to there.”

4.2. Information Politics

As discussed by Devenport, Eccles, and Prusak, (1992) an organization's political structure, “allow[s] people to negotiate the use and definition of information, just as we negotiate the exchange of other currencies” (p. 53). This structure can be restrictive or permissive, and both have their own positive and negative effects on the operation of the organization. According to Devenport et al., (1992) there are five styles of organizational governance, and each style has a defining attribute: Technocratic Utopia, an extreme emphasis and reliance on technology and modeling to manage company information; Anarchy, absence of management policy for

information; Feudalism, individual units/people define their needs with minimal reporting to higher levels; Monarchy, upper-management create definitions, categories, and reporting structures of information; Federalism, focused on consensus and negotiation by all levels of the organization with regards to information (p. 56).

The Korean Cultural Center, as mentioned above, is a part of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism and also connected to the Korean Embassy, which is a part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. This loose association between the embassy and Korean Cultural Center is reflected in the ability of the Korean Cultural Center to create and implement their own information policies without gaining approval from the embassy, however, the center is run under the direction of a diplomat from the Korean government. In addition, each Korean cultural center operates autonomously from other Korean cultural centers. Thus, when viewed from a macroscopic view, the cultural center, in relation to other centers as well as the embassy, follows the Feudalism structure as described by Devenport et al.

As discussed in an interview with one of the regular staff at the center, this style of governance is shifting toward one of a more centralized style. Thus, each cultural center would be able to communicate with other cultural centers across the globe, and staff at each center would have a larger database of knowledge to work with. One example of this centralization, as discussed in an interview with the Korean Cultural Center's webmaster, is in the case of the role of webmaster. Whereas the role of webmaster was one of little importance to the center, it is now more dedicated and established as a vital part of the operation of the center. In addition to this change of the webmaster's role, there is also a shift from independent center web resources towards one where the Korean central government will host all the web assets for all the cultural centers. This style of governance is more closely related to the Monarchy model, where the

Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism creates the structure and definitions to be used by all cultural centers. This would allow for greater information sharing across cultural centers, as well as provide the Korean government better control over the various cultural centers across the globe.

In contrast to this, the internal governance structure of the D.C. cultural center is more closely related to the Federalism model because, in planning and deciding organizational policies, the center has a strong central leadership while at the same time encourage the staff to cooperate with each other. As explained by Devenport et al., (1992) “[a]n executive who has this perspective can then use cooperative information resources to create a shared information vision” (p. 59). This cooperation is seen when the center undergoes a change in the director, and the incoming director uses group meetings and other in-person discussion with current staff to get a feel for the current operations of the center before issuing new changes. In addition, this collaborative style of management permits a large amount of consensus among staff members, and this reduces the amount of power struggle inherent in a more hierarchical style setting.

According to interviews with staff members, the director of the center collects proposals for the various projects from the staff and makes the final approval/rejection of each project; however, the director makes this decision based on exchanging opinions and information with several members of the staff, not just based on his own judgment. Most staff members perform a multitude of various functions managing their own information, and even those staff members who have a ‘specified’ job role may perform work in several other areas, as well as assist with other projects if needed. For example, some staff members concentrate in the area of publicity, but he or she may still be involved in design or accounting as needed.

4.3. Information Behavior and Culture

As discussed by Adrienne Curry and Caroline Moore (2003) in their paper “Assessing Information Culture – An Exploratory Model,” there is both an organizational culture and an information culture; however, there is no consensus as to an all-encompassing definition to either (p. 94). In respect to organizational culture, one definition given defines an, “organizational culture in terms of shared, taken-for-granted, implicit assumptions,” while another defines culture as, “an organization’s customary way of doing things with the philosophies and assumptions underlying these,” and a third refers to, “national culture as collective programming of the mind that distinguishes one group of people from another” (Curry & Moore, 2003, p. 96). Two of these definitions are particularly useful in regards to defining the organizational culture of the Korean Cultural Center.

The second definition, that of philosophies defining the organizational culture, is especially true at the center because, as learned through interviews with the center's staff, the operation of the Korean Cultural Center is designed around a family-style structure. This organizational culture provides an atmosphere that is informal but at the same time defined structurally by certain roles in the organization. This style is historically typical of most Asian countries due to the emphasis of the family unit. Additionally, this style of structuring the organizational environment provides for a culture of greater information sharing due to the collaborative nature of a family.

This family-style of the organizational structure not only provides an atmosphere of collaboration, but also one of trust. This trust is vital and has a critical role in shaping an organization's organizational as well as information culture (Curry & Moore, 2003, p. 97). This atmosphere of trust is necessary in establishing effective communication flows, which the

importance of cannot be overstated (Curry & Moore, 2003, p. 97). By providing an atmosphere of collaboration, trust, and informal structure, the Korean Culture Center enables their staff to most effectively acquire the information needed to perform their roles in the organization.

In connection with this collaboration and trust, the role-based nature of each staff position is superseded by the project-based nature of the work performed by the Korean Cultural Center. Every event the center promotes needs some amount of dedicated manpower, so this cooperative culture provides an effective means of directing the operation of the center without restricting the timeliness and effectiveness of the projects. Thus, this cultural style seems to be truly beneficial in sharing knowledge, as well as providing some structure within the organization.

The third definition given above, that of national culture, is also related to the organizational culture of the Korean Cultural Center. This is observed by a shift towards a more technological approach to the operation of the center both in regards to the emphasis placed on the organization's new website as well as the increased use of social networking sites. This shift is a recent change at the center and is due to a change in generational demographics within the center's staff. Thus, the older generation, where personal interaction is of paramount importance, is slowly being replaced or convinced to incorporate the view of a younger generation, where technological innovation is highly desired.

To explain, the Korean Cultural Center's staff does not require a great amount of technology to perform their work, as can be seen by their use of paper records, but the staff are now gradually adopting a more technological approach to their job. Due to the center's mandate as a cultural affairs and public affairs organization, the center needed to find a way to better reach a larger audience. This resulted in the center starting to use the various SNSs to a much

greater extent than previously utilized as well as a complete redesign of the center's website, but this change is still not one of high priority. This was reiterated during an interview with one of the center's regular staff when the interviewee stated that the website change took longer than desired due to prioritization of other projects, but that, “Recently, we felt the need of making use of web-based tools and started to adopt them.”

4.4. Information Staff

According to Davenport and Prusak, (1997) “People are still the best identifiers, categorizers, filterers, interpreters, and integrators of information” (p. 35). To better understand this statement, it is required to discuss the difference between data, information, and knowledge. Computers are most easily able to work with data because data is, by the definition given in the lecture, a “Simple observation of states of the world” (Day 1, Vitak, 2012). This simple observation is most often in the form of *quantifiable* information. For example, this can be the number of products a company manufactures.

The second stage in the evolution of information is to provide relevance and/or meaning to the data. This ‘endowment’ of data is slightly more difficult for a machine to process because it is making some relational connection with the data. The example given during the lecture, where a product ships to, demonstrates this very well. It is possible to create more complex computer algorithms that take the data about a given product and track the product’s physical location. However, this computation requires the use of more advanced algorithms created by humans; thus, it is not an inherent capability of the machine.

The final stage in the evolution of information is the process by which context is given to the information found in the previous stage, and the information now becomes knowledge. An

example of knowledge would be the understanding of when to reorder inventory at a particular location. This understanding has to take into account the geographical location, the demographics of the area, the time of year, possible weather predictions, past experience, etc., etc. This process is all but impossible for a machine to do, although it is necessary to point out that some very complex computer programs attempt to perform this functionality with some limited success.

In the context of a cultural center, where language translation and cultural norms are an everyday process, the evolutionary stage of the data being used is of this final, knowledge, stage. This is due to the immense variations in meanings of words, as well as the various ways of portraying an idea within a single language. This complexity becomes exponential when dealing with more than one language, especially when several world languages take into account the context of how the words are spoken or the locational relationship of a given word to other relevant words. This process requires experience with the languages, as well as a level of immersion into the separate cultures in order to provide more than a word-for-word translation, but to provide the proper structure and flow to the translated information to make the information more meaningful to the people using the translated information. To accomplish this, an organization needs to have humans to provide this complex service.

The staff of the Korean Cultural Center consists of approximately ten people. As discussed in interviews with members of the center's staff, as well as confirmed on the center's website, these ten people consist of two diplomats from Korea, the director and deputy director, who are replaced by other diplomats on a 3-year cycle; however, this change may occur at shorter intervals ("History," 2012). In addition to the two diplomats, there are eight regular, full-time employees, most of which are American citizens with some form of connection to Korean

heritage or culture, and an unspecified number of interns work with the regular staff throughout the year.

4.5. Information Processes

The information process is a way to “describe how information work gets done” (Davenport & Prusak, 1997, p. 36). As mentioned in lecture, this process can be identified by four basic steps: determine requirements, capturing information, distributing information, and using information (Day 3, Vitak, 2012). In the lecture discussion, determining the requirements relates to what the organization must do ‘right’ in order to perform its specified function. In the case of the Korean Cultural Center, this amounts to communicating cultural information and translation of information into other languages.

In order to perform this role, the center must be able to ‘capture’ information. In other words, the center must be able to obtain information, categorize that information, and then ‘repackage’ or translate the information (Day 3, Vitak, 2012). During this process, the staff of the Korean Cultural Center not only have to be able to acquire the information, but they also need to determine whether or not the information is relevant to the needs of their clients. After the information has been captured, the center must distribute the information. This distribution happens by means of the Korean Cultural Center’s website, social networking sites, email lists, and word-of-mouth communication.

The primary way the center communicates with the general public is through their website. During the online data analysis of this project, the Korean Cultural Center removed their old website and unveiled a new website at a different URL. This change was not discovered until a second, more in-depth interview was conducted. This second website not only has more

information about what the Korean Cultural Center is, but also what it does, how to contact the center, and the information contained on the website has been updated to reflect changes that have occurred at the center. According to an interview with a regular staff member at the center, this change was slower than the staff wanted and was due to the prioritization of various other projects.

In addition to the website, the center communicates with the public by using an email mailing list and several social media outlets, and the staff members promote all these various resources by word-of-mouth and at events hosted by the center. There is currently no concerted effort observed to promote the center's new website, as it is located at a completely different URL address than the previous website, to a broader audience; thus, the center is relying on word-of-mouth and social media to spread the word about the change.

The final step in the information process is to use the information. This use can be in various forms from finding ways to improve how to obtain information to better ways of distributing the information. This analysis of the use of the information obtained by the center was not observed to be utilized. Thus, this is an area that the center's staff could focus on to provide an improved service.

4.6. Information Architecture

An organization's information architecture includes all the physical properties of the information in the organization, whether this is paper forms, digital files, the room layout in the building, or even the location of the building. All of these and more effect how an organization stores and accesses its information. The most common topic of information architecture is that of the use of technology in the organization. To help distinguished this from other parts of an

organization's information architecture, we will refer to it as the organization's technical architecture.

In the case of the Korean Cultural Center, their technical architecture is two-fold. First, their file archives are partially digitized, without any form of database structure, but most of the center's information is in the form of paper. This is due to the small size of the organization and because of this small size it can be a burden to maintain a full-time IT team. However, staff have access to computers as well as centralized network resources such as a shared network drive. In an interview with the Korean Cultural Center's webmaster, it was revealed that the center does make use of an internal IT management system for the purposes of providing administrative support. However, this system is not being utilized as a digital repository. In addition to this administrative system, the center uses a third-party for web hosting services, yet this is planned to be changed to the Korean central government's IT center.

Second, the center has several supporting technical innovations to better fulfill its purpose of publicizing cultural information. To begin with, the center boasts a modern, digital showcase of Korean artifacts and art. This showcase uses several digital panels to display computerized images of cultural artifacts and artistic imagery, and there are several of these digital images that cycle in each panel. This allows the center to display a greater quantity of cultural information, in the form of historic artifacts and artistic imagery, without dedicating a large amount of its already limited office space to this endeavor. In addition to this digital showcase, the center also has state-of-the-art recording and translation equipment in its briefing room. This equipment allows for the center to host lecturers and briefings with local as well as foreign diplomats, while permitting instant translation and recording for later distribution to the respective governments and general public.

In addition to its technical architecture, the center also makes use of its building architecture to provide an authentic and meaningful experience to its visitors. The layout of an organization's building can provide a way for staff members to interact with each other; thus, providing for the transfer of information (Catmull, 2008, p. 9). This is true in regards to the Korean Cultural Center because there is a 'hub' style design to the room layout of the building ("Facilities," 2012). As one enters the building, they are in a reception room. This room displays simple Korean decor as well as informational brochures. From this central room all the other rooms connect, but each of those other rooms is only connected to each other by way of this central room; thus, everyone has to pass through this room, encouraging the exchange of information.

As stated previously, there is a room with a digital showcase of historical artifacts and art, and in addition to this digital showcase, the center also houses a rotating display of physical artifacts. This provides a more authentic experience for the visitors by allowing them to view the historic artifact in their physical rather than digital form. There is also a second room dedicated to this display of physical artifacts, where artistic masterpieces are on display. In addition to both of these physical display rooms, the center also houses an authentic replication of a Sarangbang, or tea ceremony room. By using both digital and physical displays, the center is able to maximize its limited space in sharing Korea's cultural heritage and modern innovation.

As mentioned in an interview with one of the regular staff, the center's website is their primary way of communicating K-pop and cultural/educational events, political news, and more. To this end the Korean Cultural Center's website underwent a major overhaul in 2012, where the information was made current as well as a complete design change. This design change took into account the difficulty of locating information on the website due to the 'link farm' style of design

in the previous website; thus, the navigation structure of the new site was made simple yet powerful (see examples in Appendix B). The new design incorporates modern web design technologies and practices to provide users with an accessible and navigable portal to information. As discussed in an interview with the center's webmaster, this new design was achieved through consensus with all staff members, but the majority of the content on the site is the responsibility of the webmaster with some input from each staff member.

5. Problems and Solutions

Through the above analysis of the Korean Cultural Center, it was observed that there are several aspects where the center can improve on its operations, and one of these is the digitization of its archives and records. This digitization problem is apparent because of the vast number of cultural and educational events hosted by the center, and each of these events has a record of the success or failure of the event. In addition, the record also states what was done to accomplish the specific event tasks. However, the current process used by the center is that of storing these records in paper format. This process is both inefficient in terms of accessibility of the records as well as the sharing of this information with other cultural centers.

To improve the center's operational efficiency, as well as provide a more consistent way of recording and accessing information, it is suggested that the Korean Cultural Center move to a digitally formatted archive. As discussed in the architecture section above, the center has an operational IT management system, but this system is only being used for administrative tasks only. Thus, this already available technology is not being used to its full capacity. As the center operates on a constrained budget, it is more cost effective to use all the center's assets to their full potential.

As discussed in interviews with the center's staff, it was mentioned that this digitization was not perceived to be of value due to the center's constrained budget and limited staff. However, these perceived aspects preventing the digitization of the center's records are also the aspects that can most greatly benefit from the digitization process. By digitizing the center's records, it provides faster access to the archive information. This is apparent by comparing the time it takes for a person to locate a paper file in a storehouse of file cabinets and boxes, which if unlabeled or label incorrectly may compound the process and further increase the time it takes to locate the desired information. By providing a centralized, digital archive, the staff are able to very quickly search for a desired file, as well as share this information with other staff members or other cultural centers. In addition, this central archive allows for a consistent format across all the center's information, and this consistency can also be extrapolated across all the cultural centers. As was mentioned previously, the Korean central government is moving towards a more centralized format for all the cultural centers, and the implementation of a digital system will improve the consistency of the information being stored; thus, improving the sharing of information between centers, as well as the quality of the events hosted by each center.

It is understood that the digitization process has its costs, but these costs are short-term due to the vast amount of technology available. New records are already created by using digital means, for example, by using a word processor on a computer. So the digitization of the records from the present onward is actually already in use and is more efficient for the center as the staff do not need to print and catalog this new information. The staff can simply save their work into the digital archive and the archiving of that information is complete.

However, the digitization of the old records is time consuming and cost prohibitive to the center because of the center's small size. This can be overcome by using short-term,

contractual labor to assist in the process of digitizing the old paper archives. This has associated cost, but is a lower overall cost to the center than hiring more full-time staff for a position that is not needed after the completion of the digitization process.

6. Conclusion

Overall, the Korean Cultural Center has established its information strategies well with respect to operating cultural events as well as the management of its staff members. The remarkable point is that the directors and the staff members frequently share their ideas and information so that they can promote various events and programs without using specific technical tools, following the typical Federalism model. When considering the external and internal environmental factors such as size of the center and no competing organization, it seems that the center uses an appropriate degree of technology when distributing information as well as a proper political model for its organizational structure.

Nevertheless, when considering potential work efficiency, information sharing among the cultural centers all over the world, and consistency throughout the center, the digitization of its records and materials is highly recommended. Of course, information technology cannot resolve all the information problems the center could potentially encounter. In terms of long-term management of information and making use of it, however, it would be a great base to start with.

Therefore, this analysis of a non-profit, governmental organization focusing on public relations and project-based operations finds that an organization does not necessarily require technological assets to accomplish its goals. In addition, it is of worthy note that this analysis shows how an organization can incorporate its national culture into its organizational structure

without compromising the effectiveness of the organization.

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Vitak, Jessica (2012). *Day 4: Information Strategy* [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from

University of Maryland Elms website: <https://elms.umd.edu/>

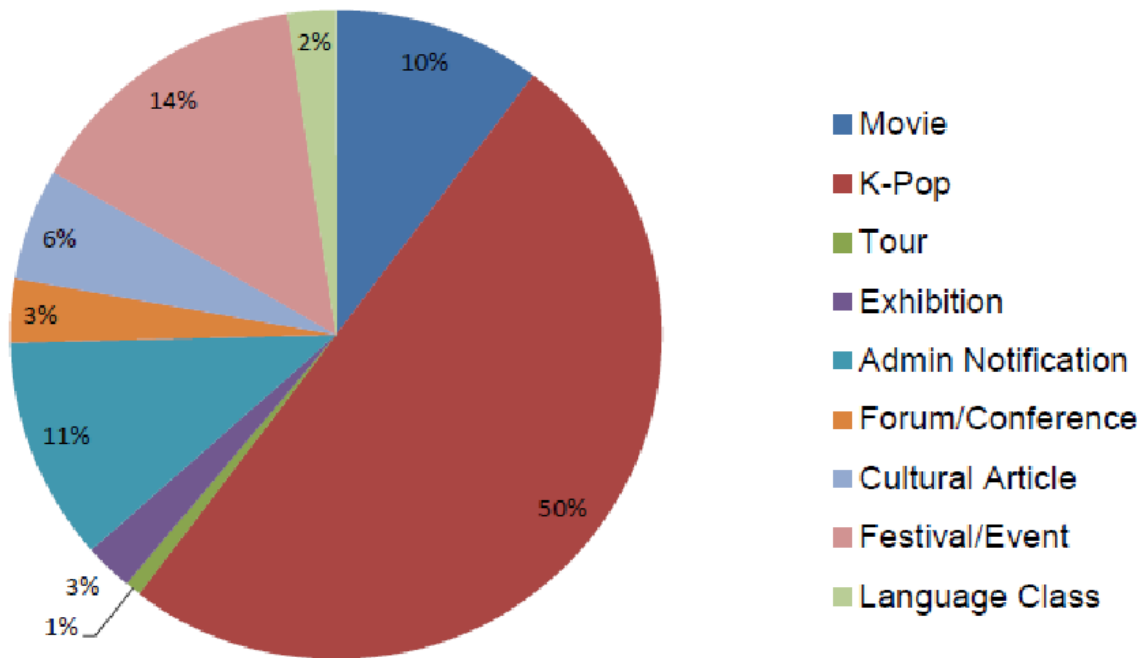
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Welcome Message. (2012). Retrieved December 10, 2012, from

<http://www.koreaculturedc.org/En/About/Welcome.asp>

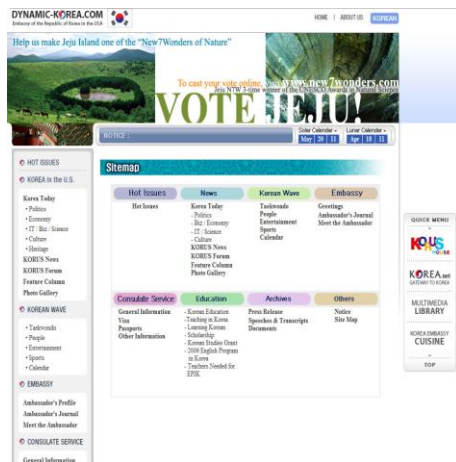
Appendix A
Figure 1. Analysis of the Korean Cultural Center's Facebook Page (2012)



Percentage of Each Category's Postings on
Korean Cultural Center's Facebook Page

Appendix B: Website Comparison: Before and After

Old Website Style

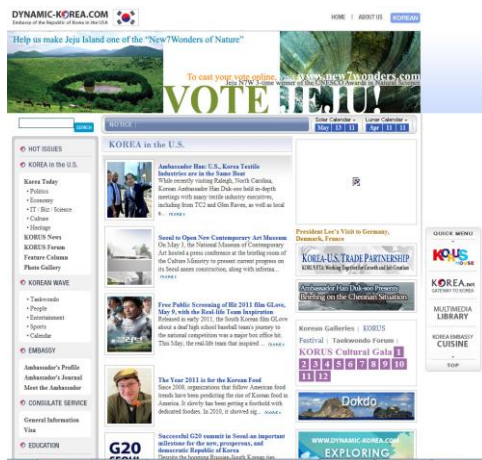


Site Map

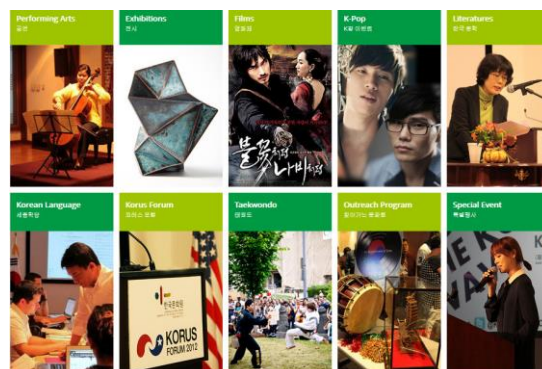
New Website Style



Site Map



Main Page



Main Exploration page

Appendix C: Explanation Letter to Korean Cultural Center Staff

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you to explain the purpose of a class project that my teammate has been in contact with a staff member regarding. This project is for our Information Environments class here at the University of Maryland, where the purpose of the class is for students to understand the:

“Role and function of information in organizations. Organizational environment and its influence on internal and external communication, organizational structure and management, organizational culture, information flow, organizational identity. Shared mental models and group decision making. Differences among types of organizations. Information policy.”

There appears to be concern regarding the purpose of our project and the safety of embassy data. This project is NOT attempting to use data mining techniques to obtain sensitive information about the embassy, staff, or citizens. Nor does this project intend to compromise the security of the embassy. This project only seeks to understand the role of information and the organizational model(s) used when dealing with information at the embassy.

The basic principle of this project is to get a broad, abstract view of how information flows through the embassy, NOT the specific information. Absolutely NO personal data will be collected for this project; rather, it is the purpose of this project to understand the organizational model(s) employed, and the role of management, when dealing with this information at an abstract level.

It is understood that the embassy is held to a stricter code of confidentiality in regards to the information provided to, and used by, the embassy. Thus, this project has taken all possible steps to adhere to this stricter confidentiality by making sure the questions asked are as abstract as possible. This allows for the understanding of different ways to organize and manage information, as well how decisions are made in regards to policies dictating the use of the information. In addition, it preserves the confidentiality and integrity of the data maintained within the embassy, as this information is not being sought by this project; only an abstract understanding of how information is organized and managed is being sought.

Participation in this project is most helpful, and will expand the understanding of how organizations manage information, as well as the various ways in structuring an organization to handle the flow of information within the organization. If at any time a question is too detailed, it is perfectly acceptable to refuse answering; however, it would be greatly appreciated instead to assist the project team in rewording the question to be more abstract so it maintains the integrity of the embassy's data.

If this is still unacceptable, we humbly apologize for our insistence, and graciously thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Appendix D: Interview Questions for an Intern

1. How is the embassy and the cultural center structured?
 - a. All all the departments on the same level? Is there any hierarchy among them? Is there much collaboration between departments?
 - b. Do you know the key roles of the other department? If yes, please state them.
 - c. Does the embassy dictate the policies of the Korean Cultural Center or are the policies decided by the center's staff?
 - d. Is the embassy and the center autonomous from the Korean government or are the actions of the embassy and center dictated by the policies of Korea?
2. What's your section/department's main role?
 - a. What is the most important thing/function you perform? (ex. publicity, communication with general public, etc)
 - b. To perform the role, what do you use as a tool? Or what's the main communication media? (ex. Own web environment, email, paper, face-to-face meeting, etc)
 - c. Do you interact with other departments? If yes, which ones? How do you interact with them? (ex. Own web environment, email, paper, face-to-face meeting, etc)
3. What type of training is required of the staff?
 - a. What training or knowledge expansion is provided after being hired?
 - b. Do you need to translate among Korean and English a lot to do your work?
 - c. How much documentation of how to handle information is available to staff?
4. Who is in charge of making decisions about information?
 - a. How much of this information is distributed to lower staff, and how much is held by management?
 - b. Who do you think has the most important position in the center?
5. Is the technology used understood by the employees at all levels?
 - a. What do you think is the most important tool or software in your department?

Appendix E: Interview Questions for a Staff Member

1. How are new policies determined regarding the operation of the Korean Cultural Center?
 - a. Can the Korean Cultural Center create its own policies without intervention from embassy/government?
 - b. If yes, who is tasked with creating these policies within the Korean Cultural Center?
 - c. Who is tasked with enforcing policies?
2. Why are the roles of staff members so vague?
 - a. If a project becomes too large for one person, how are other staff members able to assist (due to the lack of formal structure)?
 - b. If a staff member is unable to perform a certain part of a task, how do they determine who can help them? How do they communicate?
 - c. Why is the mentor system no longer used?
 - d. How are the requirements specified for hiring new employees?
 - e. How “highly trained” are the technical staff members?
3. WEBSITE QUESTIONS:
 - a. How new is the web portal?
 - b. Is the website a continually evolving entity or is it “complete”?
 - c. What information not available online is permitted to be viewable by the public?
 - d. How does the general public find out more information provided by the Korean Cultural Center, as the information available online is severely limited?
4. With all the technology available, why does the staff not put the technological resource to better use?
5. If the purpose of the Korean Cultural Center is to ‘publicize’ information, why is there such a limited amount of information?

Appendix F: Interview Questions for Webmaster

1. Do you host your own server or use third-party hosting for the Korean Cultural Center's website?
2. We looked at the old website. The website of the Korean Cultural Center and that of the Korean embassy were altogether in one homepage. Is it completely separated now?
3. Do you have any internal IT systems or websites to manage the center's documents? As we know, records of cultural events are not managed in an IT system.
4. Who is responsible for uploading the content to the center's website? You or other staff members?

Appendix G: Behind the Project

The project started with email correspondence to request permission to use the Korean Cultural Center as the organization being observed in this project, and an analysis of online information regarding the center was conducted. This analysis consisted of using a variety of online search techniques, but resulted in locating the center's website with little to no information about the center. This information was limited to address, out-dated email contact info, and information not related to the center. As later discovered, this was due to the fact the the website was the embassy's website, and the center only had limited space allocated to it. During the email correspondence, it was found that there seemed to be a problem with communicating the purpose of this project, and resulted in hesitation by the center's staff to allow the analysis of the center for the purposes of this project. Therefore, it was determined that an in-person visit to the center was needed and included a letter detailing the reasons for this project, the methods used and information needed, and the understanding of added sensitivity of the information due to the nature of the center's work (see letter in appendix C). During this visit, the center's staff permitted an interview with one of the interns to get general, abstract information regarding what the center does, as well as some basic information about the organizational environment of the center.

The explanation letter seemed sufficient in providing assurance to the staff members in a more managerial role, as a second, in-person interview was permitted. In this second interview, more detailed information was obtained concerning the general operational and managerial style of the center, as well as the discovery of a brand new website. This change in the website resulted in a much greater amount of information being provided about the center online, and

required a second analysis of the online material.

Following the second online analysis, a third interview was conducted by phone with the center's webmaster to discuss the technical architecture of the Korean Cultural Center. This information shed more light on topics mentioned during the second interview that the interviewee was unable to answer. In addition, the webmaster was able to explain the 'before-and-after' style in the role of the webmaster, as well as the history of the design of the center's website.