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Special Issue Preface: Theory and Practice of Emerging Knowledge Services (Postprint)

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Abstract

Currently, the knowledge market in China is becoming increasingly active, with strong societal demand for high-quality knowledge products and knowledge services. Meanwhile, on the supply side of knowledge services, a diversified supply pattern has emerged, characterized by the coexistence of emerging and traditional knowledge service models. Typical manifestations include: in the field of public cultural services that address the basic cultural needs of the entire society, as the construction of the modern public cultural service system enters an “efficiency enhancement” era, the equalization level of public services in the cultural domain continues to improve, and the “knowledge assurance” function of public cultural services for society is continuously strengthening; in the field of internet knowledge services that cater to upgraded knowledge consumption demands, the “knowledge payment” business model has matured through continuous development and market selection, greatly expanding the scope of service recipients for knowledge services and profoundly transforming both the exposition and practice modes of knowledge services; in the field of think tank knowledge services that serve high-level decision-making information needs, the construction of new-type think tanks in China has achieved initial success, with think tanks themselves being institutions that provide various knowledge services based on knowledge innovation achievements; in the field of commercial publishing that addresses traditional book reading needs, facing internet impact and changes in user reading behaviors, numerous traditional publishing units have begun transforming into “knowledge service providers” and have started to regard knowledge services as the core of the publishing industry; and in the domain of personal knowledge management needs, a proliferation of personal knowledge management tools, represented by various note-taking software, has enhanced the precision and granularity of knowledge services, providing significant empowerment to individuals.

Full Text

Preamble

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China's knowledge market is becoming increasingly active, with strong societal demand for high-quality knowledge products and services. On the supply side, a diverse landscape has emerged where emerging knowledge service models coexist with traditional ones. This is evident in several domains: in public cultural services that meet basic societal cultural needs, the construction of modern public cultural service systems has entered an "efficiency enhancement" era, continuously improving equalization of cultural services and strengthening their role as societal "knowledge guarantors"; in internet-based knowledge services that address upgraded consumption demands, the "knowledge payment" sector has matured through continuous development and market selection, significantly expanding its user base and profoundly transforming both the discourse and practice of knowledge services; in think tank knowledge services that serve high-level decision-making information needs, China's new-type think tank construction has achieved initial success, with think tanks themselves being institutions that provide diverse knowledge services based on knowledge innovation outcomes; in commercial publishing that addresses traditional reading demands, many conventional publishing houses are transforming into "knowledge service providers" amid internet disruption and changing reading behaviors, now viewing knowledge services as central to the publishing industry; and in personal knowledge management tools that address individual needs, numerous note-taking applications and similar tools have emerged, enhancing the precision and granularity of knowledge services while greatly empowering individuals.

These trends manifest at the phenomenon level as a convergence of online and offline channels, interaction between physical and virtual spaces, integration of upstream and downstream processes, intermingling of free and paid services, and blending of mass and personalized offerings. Overall, these various knowledge service models represent innovations along different dimensions compared

to traditional approaches, collectively forming a supply system for society-wide knowledge services that meets growing knowledge demands at multiple levels. This special issue targets this context, offering research attention to these practical transformations. We need to examine not only specific innovative models within this landscape but also analyze the overall trends, providing references for researchers and practitioners in knowledge management and knowledge services to identify, grasp, and leverage these developments.

Amid the emerging knowledge service boom, the internet “knowledge payment” sector—following continuous development since 2016—is gradually showing new patterns, with some platforms experiencing declining traffic and profits. This suggests that the initial boom in internet “knowledge payment” is cooling down, yet the questions it leaves us with remain far from resolved. What impacts do emerging knowledge service forms have on social knowledge supply, demand, intermediaries, and the resulting knowledge market? As new players continuously enter the social knowledge service system as “knowledge service providers,” how should we view the strong intervention and even transformation of the knowledge service discourse system by internet commercial platforms? When the knowledge service discourse system undergoes such dramatic changes, what effects does this have on knowledge service practices? How has the meaning of “knowledge” in knowledge services evolved? How should traditional knowledge service entities like libraries respond, adapt to, contribute to, balance, and reconcile with the new knowledge service context and ecology—what should they change and what should they preserve? What positive and negative effects do emerging knowledge services have on knowledge audiences? Beyond commercial logic and business models, do these trends reflect deeper patterns of knowledge exchange and institutional evolution? Finally, facing an upgrading knowledge market and consumer demands, how should knowledge managers and service providers respond?

This special issue represents a concentrated presentation of research reflecting on these questions. These studies examine different dimensions of emerging knowledge services: at the service provider level, they address discourse system and practice transformations and response strategies; at the content resource level, they consider emerging variables such as big data, open data, and personal data; at the audience level, they tackle issues like personal information protection, information cocoons, and big data-enabled price discrimination. We believe this reflection, discussion, and resulting practice can continue, driving various knowledge service models and information delivery methods toward greater coordination and improvement; promoting more optimal allocation of overall societal knowledge resources through new models and business forms to better meet users’ needs for high-quality knowledge content; and ultimately harnessing the power of information and knowledge to drive more balanced and adequate social development.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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