




The Evolution of an Emerging Discipline: KM Education

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Outline

- **Introduction**
- **The Emergence of the Knowledge Economy**
- **Knowledge Management as an Academic Discipline**
- **KM educational Foundation and Core Competencies**
- **Current and Future Directions**



“Like water, this rising tide of data can be viewed as an abundant, vital and necessary resource. With enough preparation, we should be able to tap into that reservoir and ride the wave by utilizing new ways to channel raw data into meaningful information. That information, in turn, can then become the knowledge that leads to wisdom”.

Alberthal Les

Alberthal, Les. Remarks to the Financial Executives Institute, October 23, 1995, Dallas, TX

The Emergence of the Knowledge Economy

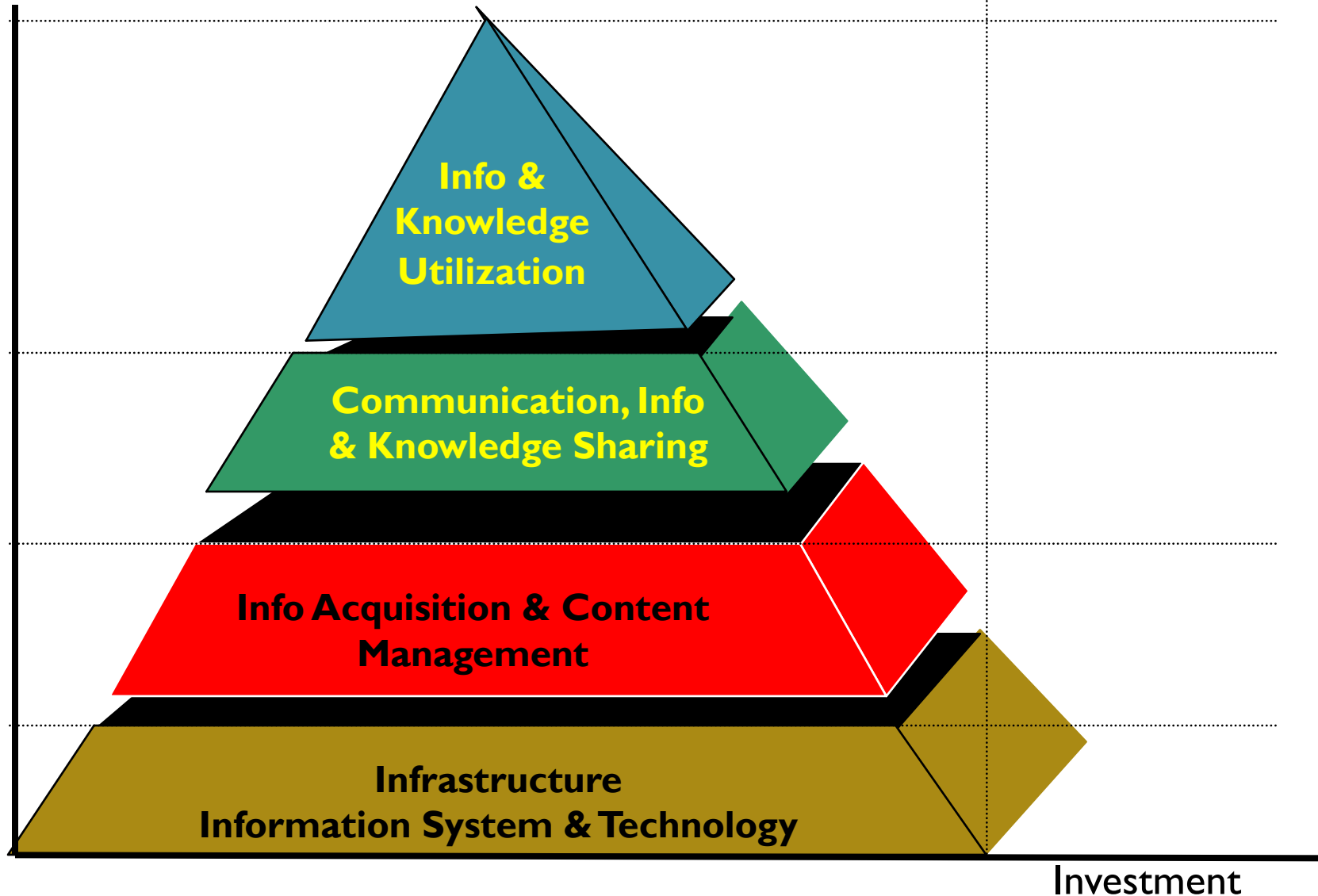
- **An economy that is increasingly relies on knowledge and technology**
- **Information and knowledge are key drivers for economic growth and development**
- **Higher skills and higher wages**
- **The ability to create, access and use knowledge is fundamental determinant of competitiveness and survival**
- **Driven by technological advancement**
- **Increase investment in intangibles & intellectual capital**
- **Increase emphasis on education, skills and competencies**

Key Drivers of Knowledge Management

- **Information Overload**
- **Digital Divide**
- **Technological Advances**
- **Maintaining Competitive advantage**
- **Protecting Intellectual Property**
- **Knowledge Loss and Dealing with Change**
- **Enhancing Organizational productivity and Achieving efficiency**

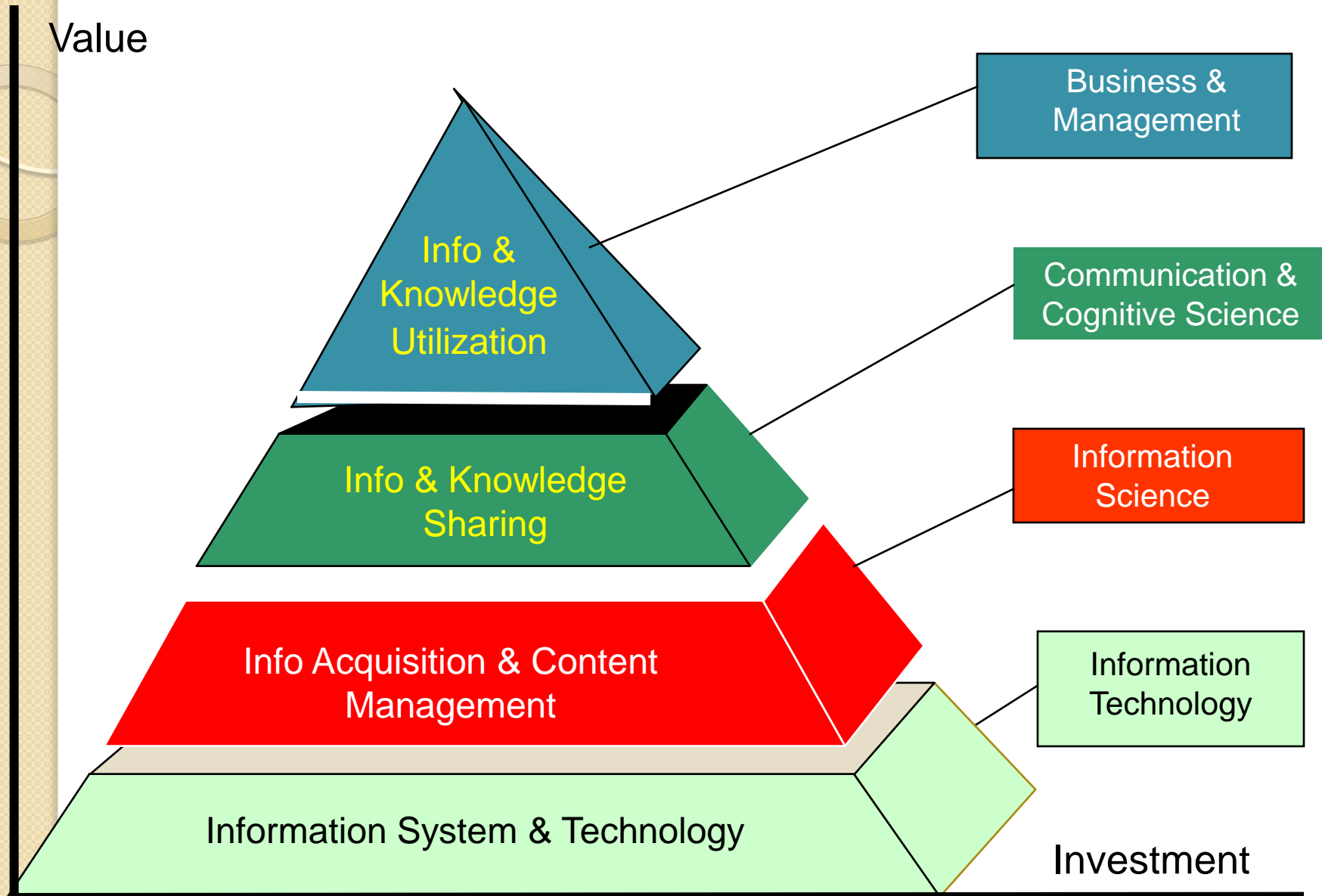
K-Utilization Pyramid

Value



Source: Al-Hawamdeh S. (2003) Knowledge Management: Cultivating Knowledge Professionals. Oxford: Chandos Publishing

Disciplines associated with each Area



KM as an Academic Discipline

- **Academic discipline is the field of endeavor**
- **The organization of learning and a systematic production of knowledge**
- **A branch of knowledge that is researched and taught**
- **Exhibit a community culture**

Characteristics of an Academic Discipline

According to Krishnan 2009, an academic discipline is characterized by:

- An object of research
- Body of accumulated specialist knowledge referring to their object of research
- Theories and concepts that can organize the accumulated specialist knowledge effectively
- Terminologies or a specific technical language adjusted to their research object
- Specific research methods according to their specific research requirements
- Institutional manifestation in the form of subjects taught at universities or colleges

Epistemology

- **According to Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy “epistemology is the study of knowledge and justified belief”**
- **Body of Knowledge about knowledge itself.**
- **KM is more about Knowledge Processes and Practices more than the knowledge itself**
- **According to Goldman 2001, Social epistemology is the study of social dimension of knowledge and information**

Goldman A. (2001) Social epistemology. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

Skills and Competencies

Defining a set of core competencies for knowledge management professionals has been the subject of discussion by researchers as well as practitioners in the field for sometime.

Neilson in 2001 suggested six main categories:

- 1. Tools and Technology Skills**
- 2. Communications**
- 3. Leadership & Management**
- 4. Personal Knowledge and Cognitive Capability**
- 5. Strategic Thinking**
- 6. Personal Behavior**

Skills and Competencies of a Chief Knowledge

Figure 2

CKO COMPETENCIES & SKILLS

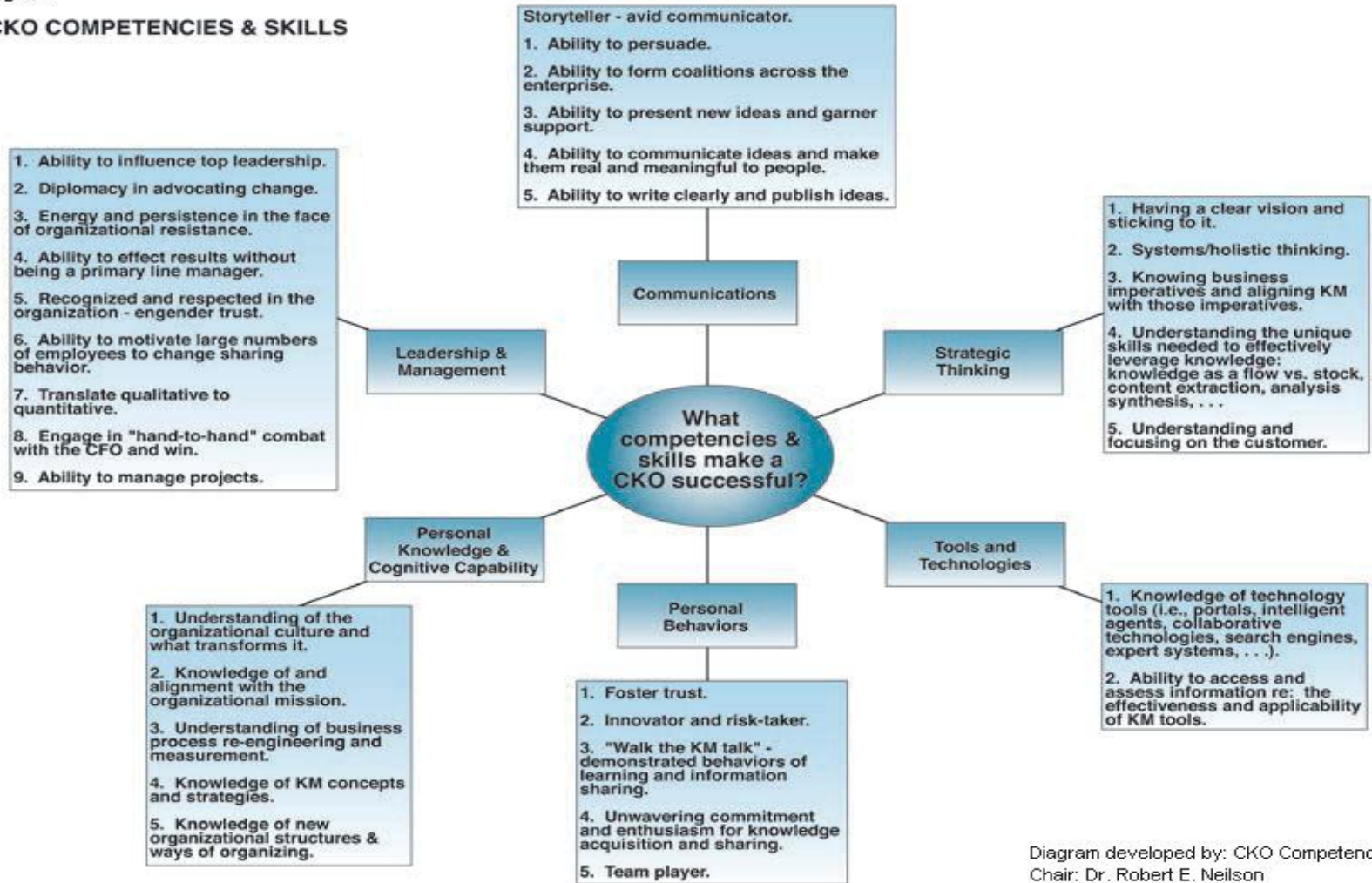



Diagram developed by: CKO Competency SIG
Chair: Dr. Robert E. Neilson

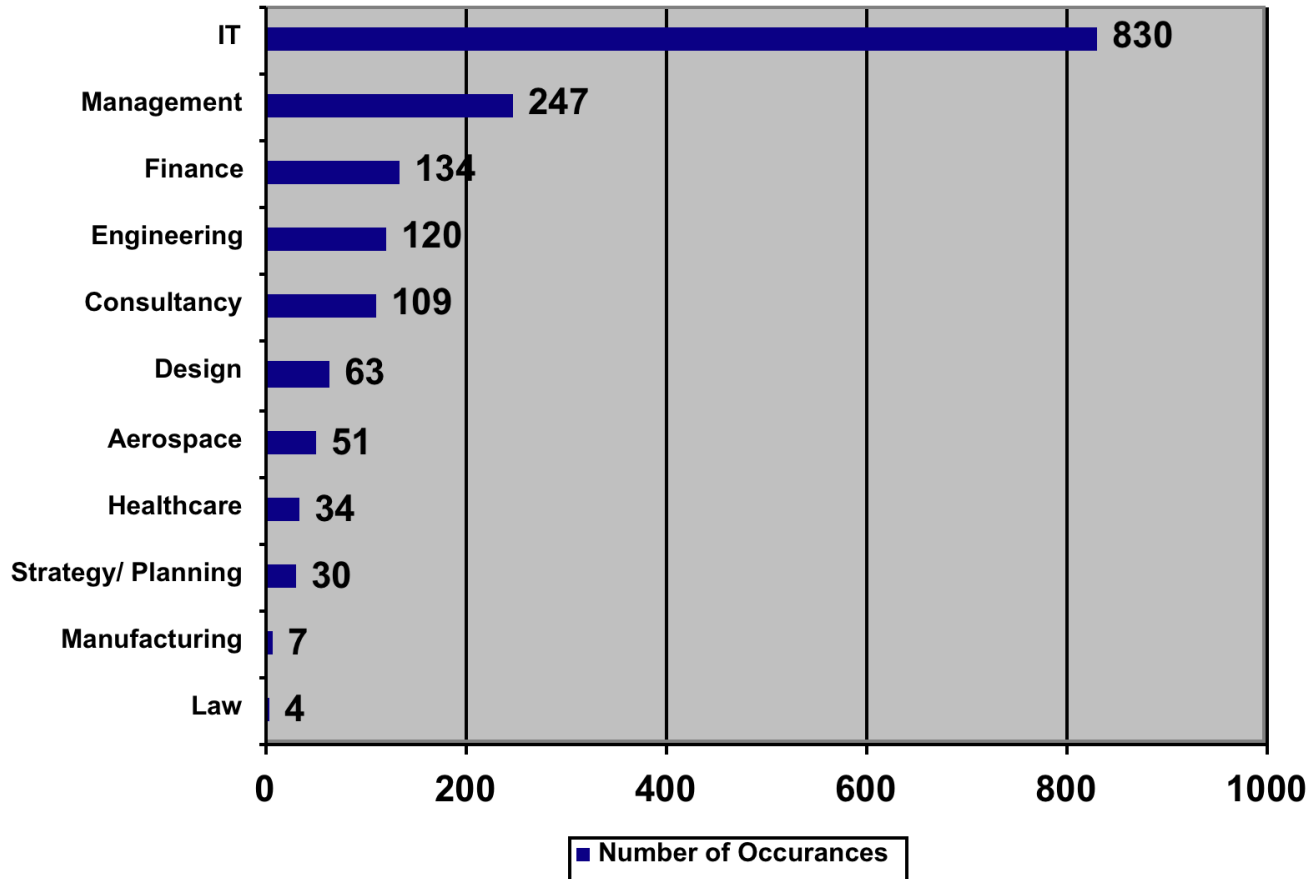


**Content Analysis of KM Jobs:
What type of Skills and
Competencies Employers
are Looking For?**

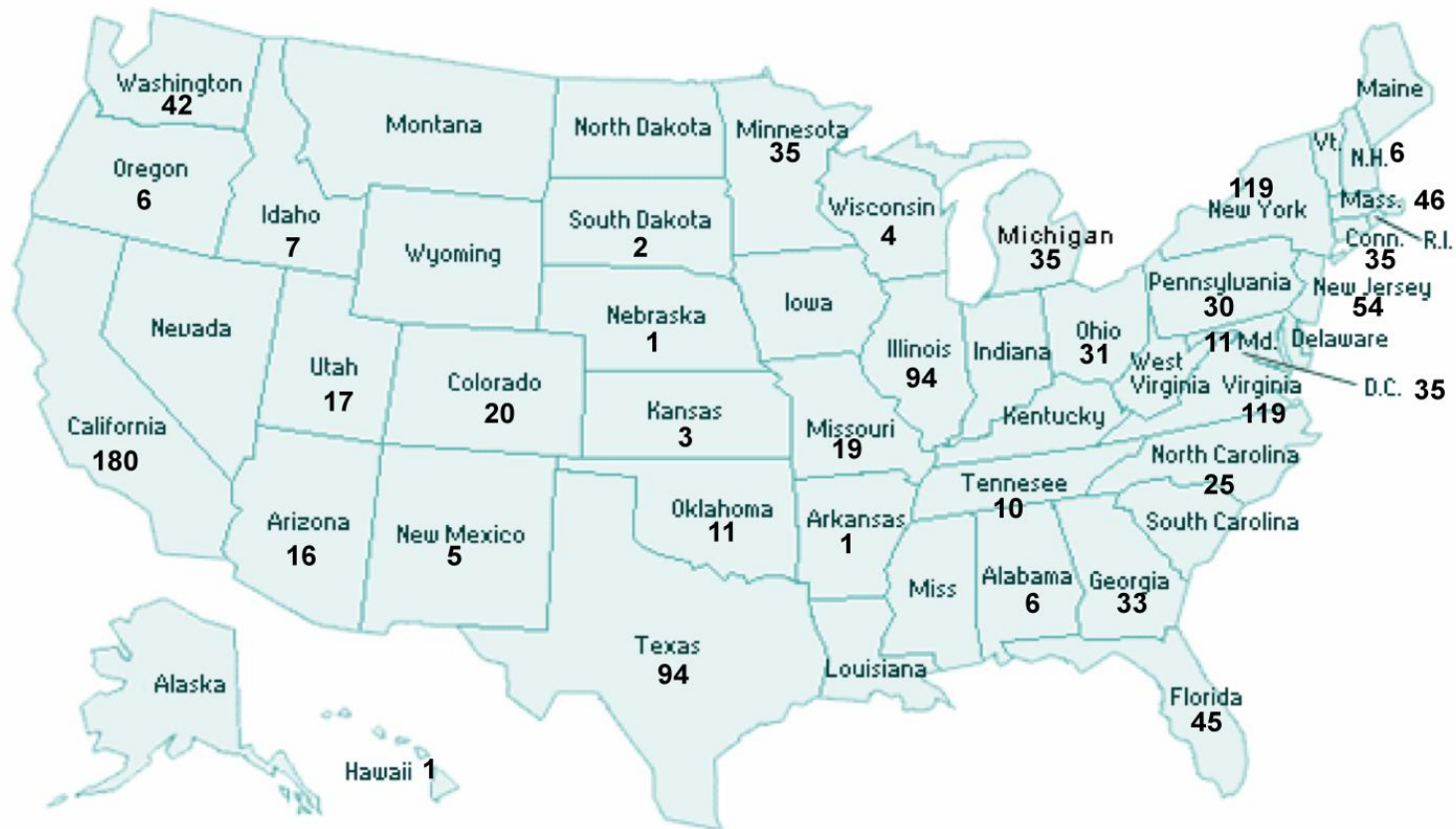


The study looked at 1200 KM-related job postings from 135 firms on national job postings websites such as Careerbuilders.com and Job.com in order to develop an empirically-based picture of KM competencies and skills currently in demand.

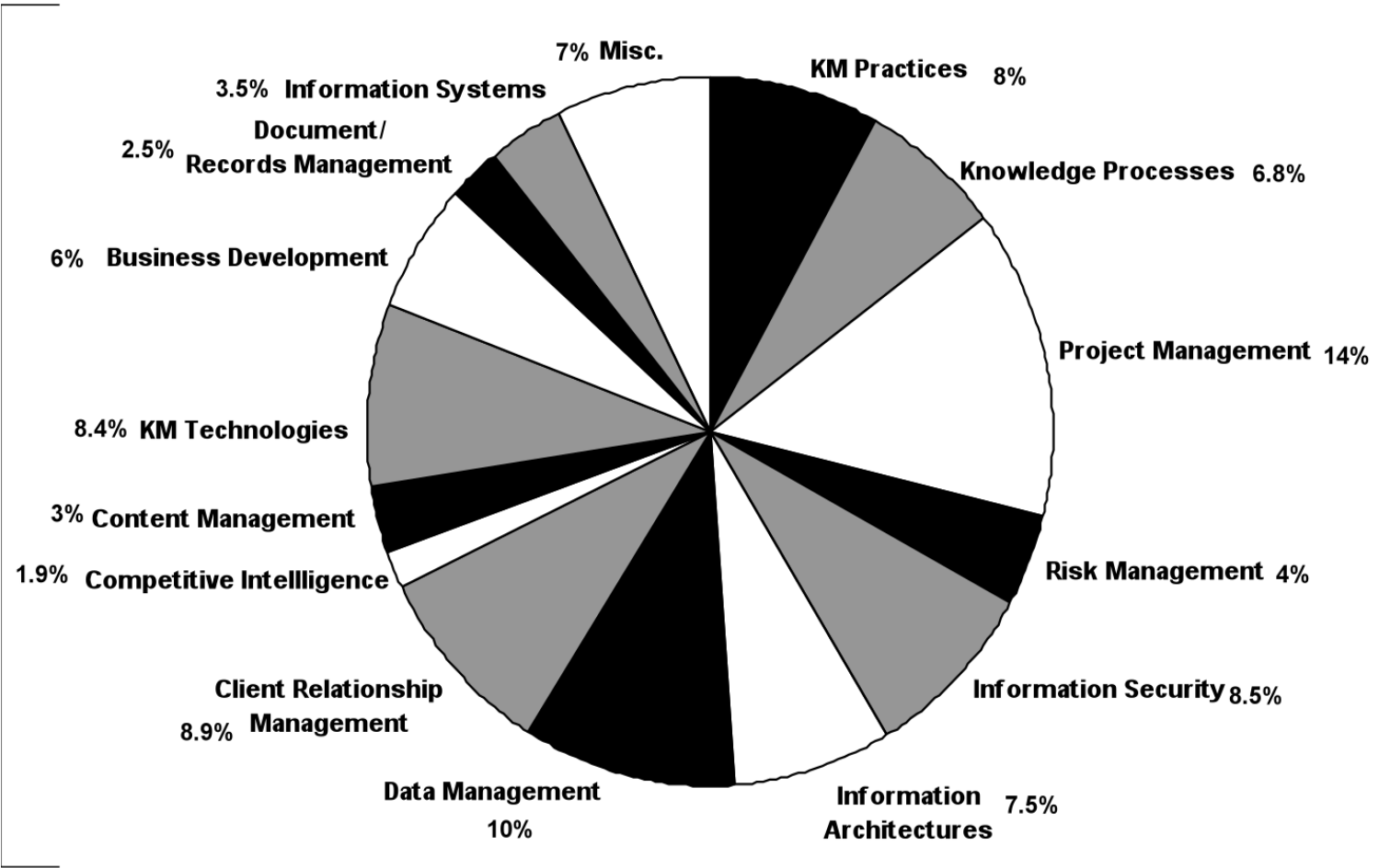
Industries Represented



Location of Analyzed Employers



Dispersion of Skills Relevant to KM Positions



Emerging Trends and Job Opportunities in KM

- **Chief Knowledge Officer (CKO)**
- **Chief, Information and Knowledge Management**
- **Chief Information Officer (CIO)**
- **Knowledge and Content Manager**
- **Internal Communication Manager**
- **Customer Information Management Analyst**
- **Information Management Coordinator**
- **Information Management Specialist**
- **Information Specialist-Intellectual Property**
- **Knowledge Services Team Leader**
- **Project Manager-Information Management**
- **Research Analyst-Business Intelligence**
- **Senior Information Specialist**
- **Knowledge Management Project Manager**

KM as an Academic Discipline

According to Grossman (2006):

- **KM is Interdisciplinary in Nature**
- **Not appropriate at undergraduate level**
- **Perceived more of an executive or value added degree at the graduate level**
- **The emergence of new professional categories and job titles met by a growing KM certification industry**
- **Steady growth in KM research and in particular PhD dissertations**

Grossman, M (2006) The Emerging Academic Discipline of Knowledge Management. *Journal of Information Systems* 8(1).

Some of the Areas Covered in Existing KM Programs

- Knowledge organization
- Knowledge discovery
- Data mining & data warehousing
- Organizational analysis
- Communication and leadership
- Enterprise knowledge architecture
- Innovation management
- Epistemology of knowledge
- Business risk management

KM Programs: Key Challenges

Designing and implementing an effective KM programs requires:

- **Shared understanding of the nature and scope of the field.**
- **Expansion of thinking and broadening of horizons of those involved**
- **Understanding the complexity associated with the range of skills and competencies associated with KM and the fact that a single constituency may not be able to cover them all**
- **Applying and practicing some of the key principles in KM such as fostering collaboration among stakeholders**
- **Success of any collaborative effort will depend on the mechanisms and policies in place for establishing and recognizing relative contributions of partners.**

Is KM a Natural Evolution of LIS?

A study of LIS doctoral program from 1930-2007 by Sugimoto et al (2009) shows that:

- **Most of these programs are interdisciplinary in nature with faculty recruited from areas such as computer Science, communication, MIS etc.**
- **Eight out of the ten of the top producing schools graduating the most future LIS Faculty are part of the iSchools.**

A recent study has found that while LIS graduates may possess the necessary skills to take their place in the knowledge economy, the view of ‘the librarian’ is still impeding their entry into the Knowledge Management sector (Breen et al, 2002, p 127).

The future of librarianship thus hinges on what happens to the perpetually changing work of the profession in its three contexts: the context of larger social and cultural forces, the context of other competing occupations, and the context of competing organizations and commodities (Abbott, 1998, p 3).

Knowledge & Information Professionals

As more and more organisations realize the importance and benefits of managing knowledge assets and flows, information professionals are faced with the challenge of transforming themselves into knowledge and information specialist with expertise in dealing with both tacit and explicit knowledge. They must:

- **Engage in problem-setting, problem-solving and adopt a holistic approach to dealing with complex issues**
- **Demonstrate autonomy and transcend the boundaries of their discipline**
- **Engage in continual learning and development, remain flexible and adaptable**
- **Demonstrate leadership quality and remain proactive**

LINCHPIN

Seth Godin in his book *Are You Indispensable?* defines a “linchpin” as a person who is “indispensable” to an organization. A “linchpin” is a person who acts as an “artist” by:

- **creating and sharing new organizational knowledge;**
- **facilitating effective connections among colleagues;**
- **helping develop creative responses to sustain the organization going forward; and**
- **facilitating the organization by dealing with complex and often nonlinear system dynamics issues that, if unaddressed, may hinder sustained growth.**