

# Building *Understanding* of Library Value Through User Advisory Committees

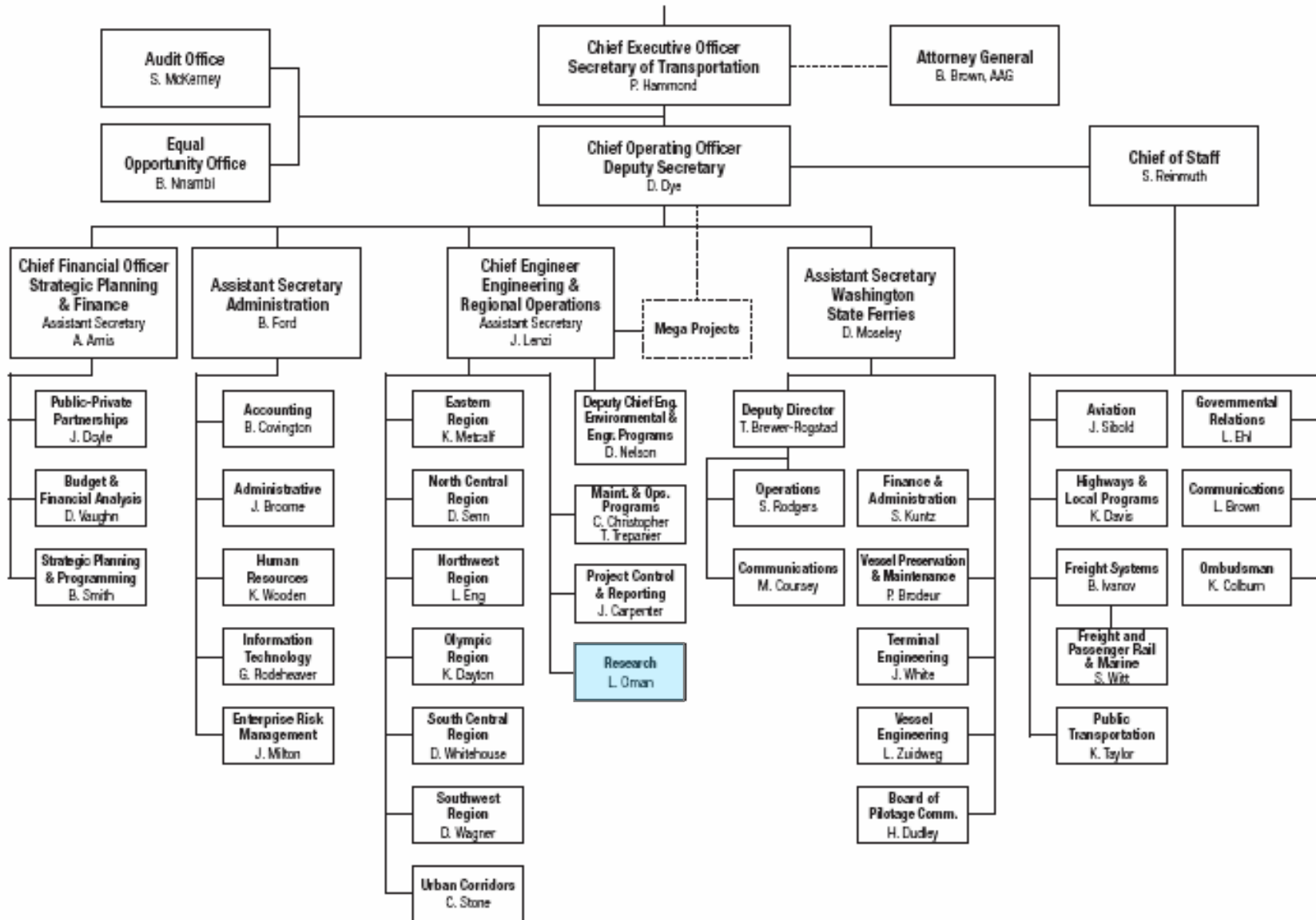
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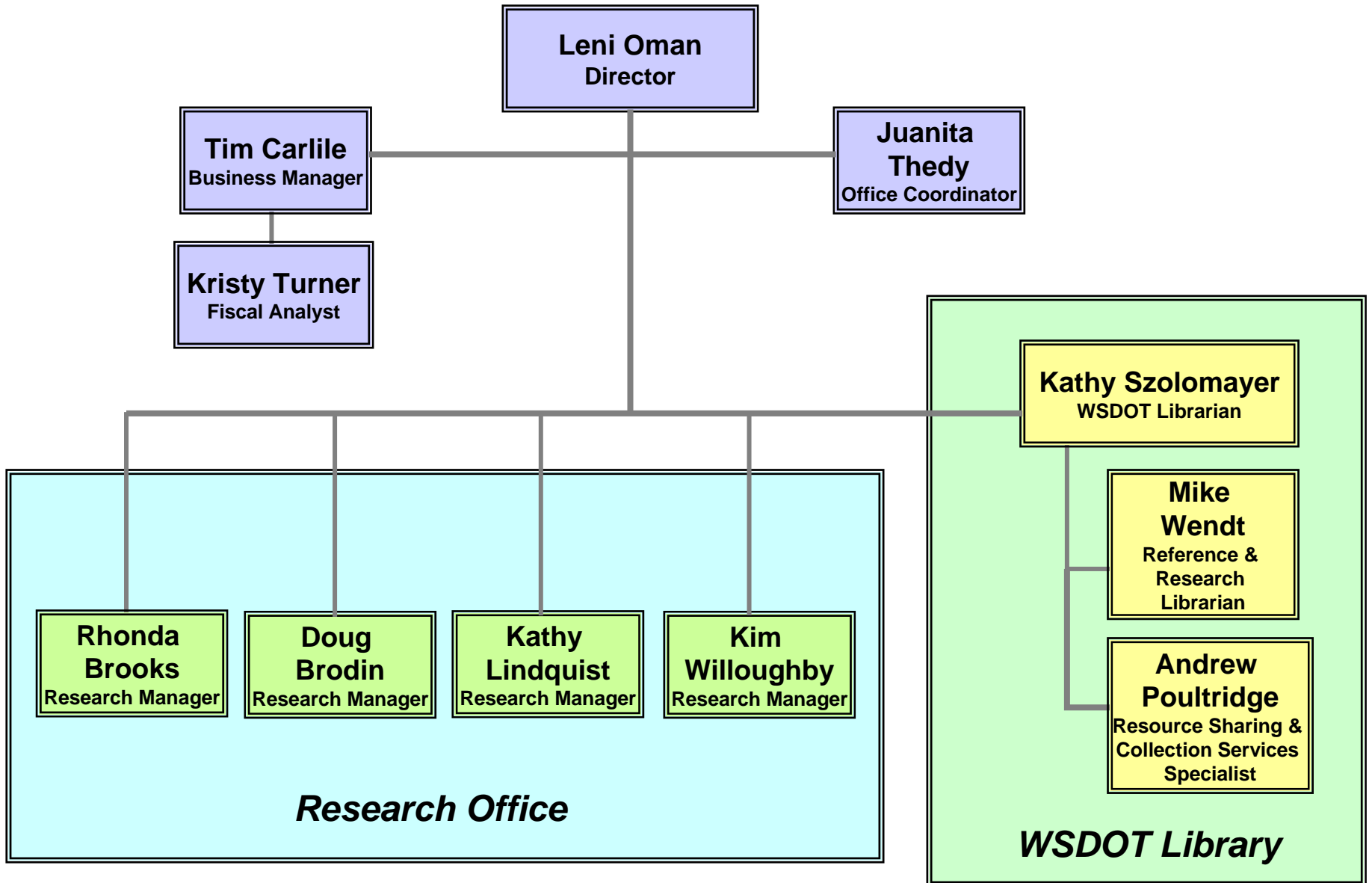
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August 14, 2008  
Transportation Librarians Roundtable  
Webinar







# The WSDOT Libraries

Transportation Building  
(WSDOT Library)

State Materials  
Laboratory Library

There are four physical libraries in WSDOT that comprise  
the WSDOT Library Network

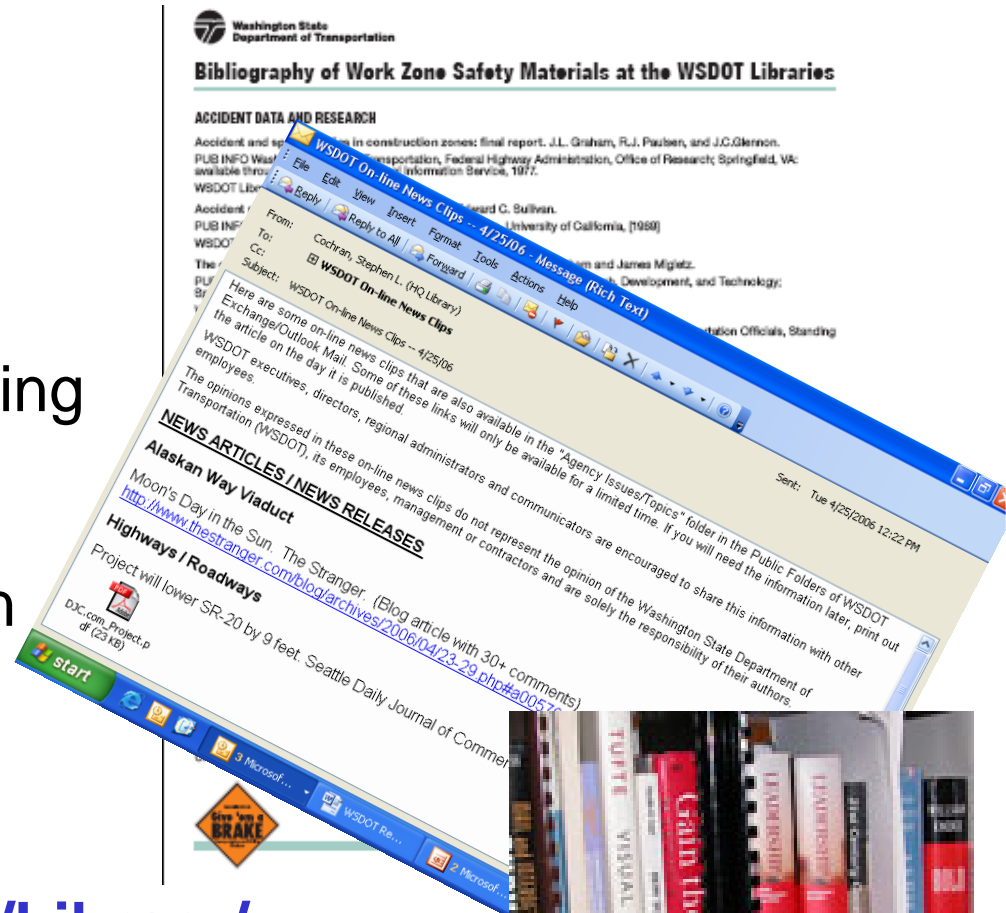
Ferries Division Vessel  
Engineering Library

Ferries Division  
Terminal Engineering  
Library

# WSDOT Library Services

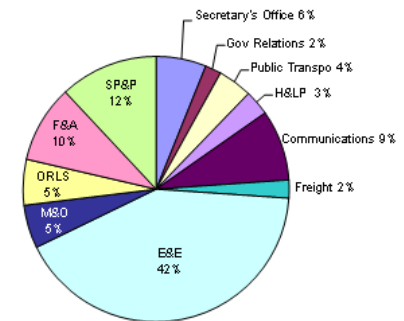
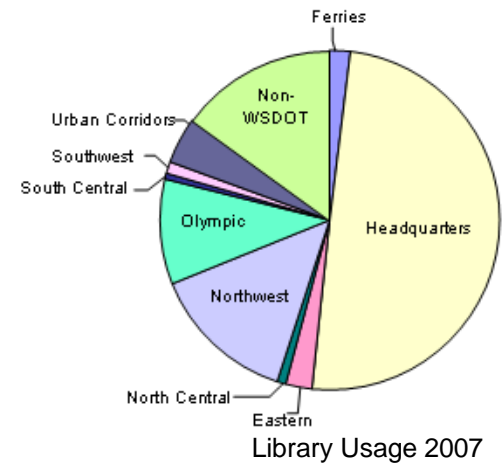
- Ready Reference
- Literature Reviews
- Search Technique Training
- News Alerts
- Information Organization
- Lending Books
- Indexing support

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Library/>



# WSDOT Library Content

- Over 40,000 items in the physical collection
- Over 80 full text journals available online
- Bibliographic databases/e-resources:
  - LexisNexis
  - WestLaw
  - CivilEngineering Netbase
  - BioOne
- Many standards, manuals and texts available online
- Provide topical information “Toolkits” on our Intranet
  - Legislative
  - Climate Change
  - Reauthorization *in development*
- Staff Development and Cost Risk Estimating collections
- Collect and catalog agency publications





# *The Case of the Missing Library*

*By Rebecca Christie*

The story you are about to read is true (mostly). Only the names have been changed to protect the innocent.

This is the city. Olympia, Washington. I work here...I'm a librarian. It was Thursday, December 11. It was raining in Olympia. A middle-aged mustachioed man in a brown suit entered the Headquarters building. In the entryway, he asked a passing employee where the library was located.

"Oh, the library closed a few years ago," he was told by a tall, thin man with a bowler hat. Brown suit sighed, his shoulders bent inward a bit and he turned to go back out into the rainy Northwest afternoon.

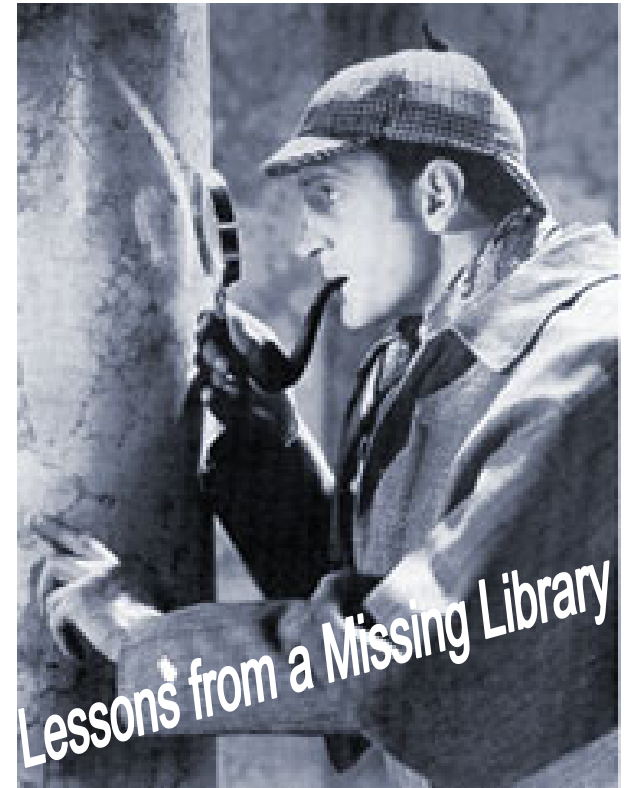
"Wait!," the perky receptionist intervened with a smile. "We still have a library - it's in Room SC5!" Hope revived in his eyes, and to his great delight he discovered a wealth of information on the subject he was researching.

"Since the library was downsized and moved to the Service Level, some employees think the library was shut down," said librarian Stella Service. "On the contrary, the library is very much open and available to serve the information needs of all WSDOT customers."



# Why Create an Advisory Committee?

- Developing a communications plan
  - Who's the target audience?
  - What do they think now?
  - What do you want them to think?
- Connecting to business needs
  - Know thy customers
- Know your needs
  - What are your barriers to meeting your performance goals?
  - Who can help address those barriers?
- Know what you have to offer
  - What are your services?
  - What are your resources?







# What do we need?

To guide continued development of library services and promote a stable and vibrant information delivery organization within the department. Through:

- Prioritizing information collection, management and organization needs in a manner that addresses critical department issues
- Making recommendations for improved and expanded information services
- Helping the department understand, from a high-level perspective, the importance of well-developed information organization and retrieval capabilities
- Shaping an information management strategy that takes advantages of the national information network and develops appropriate information tools for the workforce of the future



# Selecting Members

Who can help us? Who needs to know? Balancing representation amongst directly affected functional areas of WSDOT.

The Libraries and organizations they support.

The Partners

- with whom we work to deliver information resources
- who do similar work

Key customers

- that had strong usage of library services
- that we wanted to engage



# Role of the participants

- Represent agency goals, activities, and priority management issues in their office and the department from a multifunctional, multimodal perspective
- Be able to discuss knowledgeably the relative urgency of library services, information organization and delivery needs across the agency
- Have the time to proactively participate
- Have the ability to influence budget decisions in support of library resources where warranted
  
- Valuing their time

# WSDOT Library Advisory Board Members

## *Key Partners*

Communications Office

Office of Information Technology

Administrative Services

## *Key Customers*

Design Office

Government Relations

Strategic Assessment Office

Enterprise Risk Management

## *Libraries*

WSDOT Library

Materials Laboratory Library

Terminal Engineering Library

Vessel Engineering Library



# Activities of the Board

## Six Month Action Plan:

1. Continue marketing Library Services
2. Continue to improve knowledge of agency information interests.
3. Develop the concept for of an information clearinghouse
4. Compare library salary rates with those of other libraries in the state, region, & nation
5. Initiate an assessment of all the publications and photographs produced by the department
6. Continue to improve the library resources

In addition, we've brought in speakers by web meeting:

Maureen Hammer, VDOT, on Knowledge Management

Amanda Wilson, RITA NTL, on the Science of Search

And, we've added work on a Collection Management plan

# Why Participate?

My first thoughts:

- Some interest
- Admittedly, some ambivalence

Why I agreed:

- It helps to be flattered when asked

What I've learned:

- Time-saving services
- Better information
- Related issues – knowledge management, etc.

What I'd tell others about participating:

- Leni/Kathy/staff prepare well for meetings – they are interesting

# Advice

- Meeting twice a year is good
- Members were thoughtfully selected
- Marketing library services to mainstream engineers is difficult – Don't sweat it too much
- But don't give up either

**Dear Nancy, P.E.:**

Help! We're a library within a transportation agency and we'd like to improve our connection with the engineers in the department. I mean some know that we exist and appreciate the services we have to offer but many don't even know we're alive! How can we get them to see us for what we really are - a tool to help them do their work efficiently and effectively?

Yours truly -

A Little Bit Lonely

# Is it Worth It?

Absolutely! The LAB has helped with:

- ✓ Prioritizing information collection, management and organization needs in a manner that addresses critical department issues
- ✓ Making recommendations for improved and expanded information services
- ✓ Helping the department understand, from a high-level perspective, the importance of well-developed information organization and retrieval capabilities
- ✓ Shaping an information management strategy that takes advantages of the national information network and develops appropriate information tools for the workforce of the future

## Information Resources

Data  
Photos/Images  
Documents  
WebPages  
Records  
People

## Findability

Keywords  
Metadata  
Indexes  
Controlled  
Vocabularies

## Easy Access

User Interfaces  
Portals  
Downloadable  
Interactive  
Non-spamming

## Controlled Use

Security  
Stewards  
Public Disclosure  
Destruction  
Archiving

## Structured Storage

Version control  
Data Migration  
Space Management  
Clearinghouses  
Feasible Updating

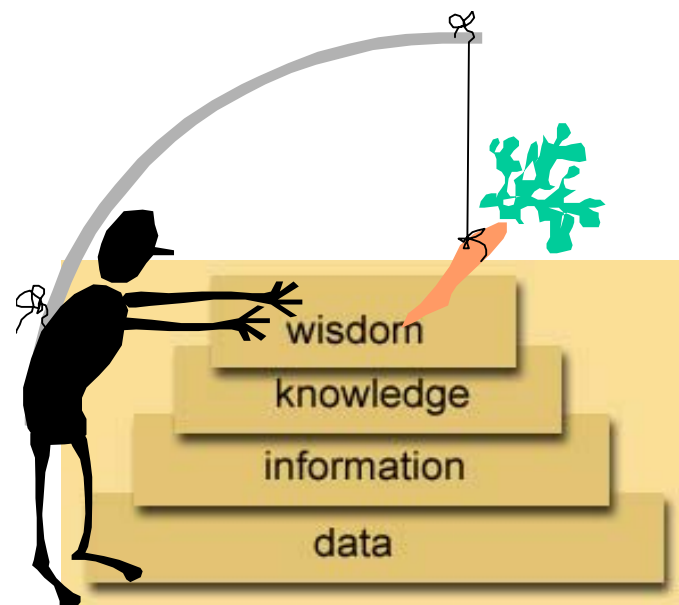


# Lessons Learned

- Take the initiative, there's much to be gained
- Keep the meetings focused and interesting
- Keep the activities appropriate to the level of decision-making
- Bring in speakers, demos, specific issues
- Use technology to extend your range efficiently
- Brainstorm needs but set near term, reasonable objectives
- Listen and use what you hear
- Celebrate your successes

# Where to Now?

- Checking in: a survey of the members
- Reviewing goals and activities
- Revisiting meeting schedules
  - Frequency
  - Length
  - Diversity of topics
  - Subcommittees
  - Openness?
- Following up on Tasks
  - The Action Plan
  - Knowledge Management
  - Findability



**Wisdom:** The capacity to choose worthwhile objectives

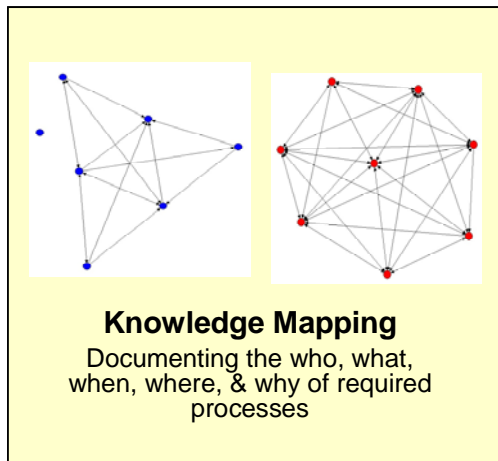
**Knowledge:** The ability to use information to achieve objectives

**Information:** Structured data

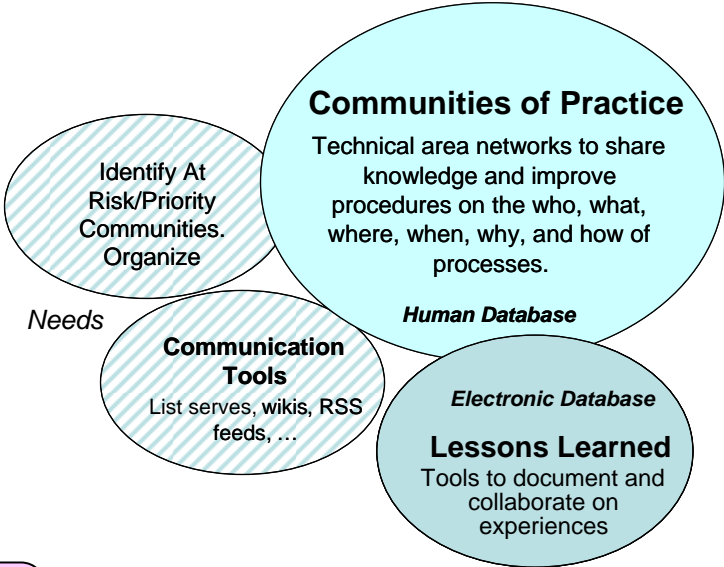
**Data:** Pure and simple facts

<http://www.systems-thinking.org/dikw/dikw.htm>

# Moving from Data & Information to Knowledge



- Needs*
- Identify Priority/At Risk Processes or Opportunities
  - Map Network Structure
  - Tweak Process as Needed



Lessons Learned

Research

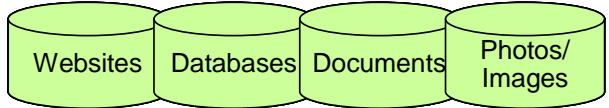
**New Knowledge**  
Developing new knowledge as needed

Reference

Synthesis Reports

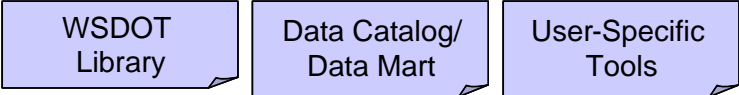
Technical Transfer

Portal to New Knowledge



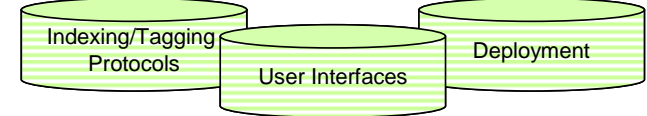
**Information Infrastructure**  
Organizing information through a common structure so it can be easily found and managed

*Needs*



**Information Access**

Finding the information when you need it  
When you need it



*Needs*

Enterprise Data Portal

*Needs*