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Knowledge management and collaboration in space activities (2)

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THE PROJECT IS OVER – THE KNOWLEDGE IS LOST? DLR'S PROJECT DATABASE.

Abstract

The German Aerospace Centre (DLR, Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt) reorganized its knowledge management processes with an initiation project. In the project called "Establishing an integrated knowledge management system" (EIWis) critical knowledge gaps became identified. One of the biggest issues was the availability of project data for other project managers during and especially after the project.

More than thousand projects are realized in DLR per annum. This means that there is lots of project knowledge from the past and present which could help to start a new project, to realize it and to achieve success. Lessons Learned from other project exist somewhere, which can be valuable for a new project. Many project managers work in DLR who could help to solve specific problems in the project realization. Others are experts in their fields, but not easy to identify in a big organization, which has a large variety of research topics.

The challenge was to build a network between people, project information and the organization. Approaches to link people and the organization were already part of the EIWis project. Therefore DLR introduced a people's directory and knowledge sharing workshops. For information sharing, another component of EIWis was very fruitful: the DLR.Wiki. But the Wiki alone was not capable to fulfill the demands of project managers, who need more detailed and structurized information about projects. That meant for us that the DLR.Wiki was a solid base for a project database, but the final project database needed more enhancements.

The purpose of the paper is to show how DLR developed its own project database according to the needs of project managers and where the advantages and limitations are. Besides, an overview of the project database interaction with the other components of the Knowledge Management System will be given.