

Network Analysis with I-know

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Abstract: Because information transacted over electronic media such as the Web can be stored in digital form, a new generation of software called "collaborative filters" or "communityware" (Contractor, O'Keefe, & Jones, 1997; Kautz, Selman, & Shah, 1997) can be used to make visible the work communities' virtual social structure. One such tool, IKNOW (Inquiring Knowledge Networks On the Web; <http://iknow.spcomm.uiuc.edu/>), has been designed by a team of UIUC researchers to assist individuals to search the organization's databases to automatically answer questions about the organization's knowledge network, that is, "Who knows what?" as well as questions about the organization's cognitive knowledge networks, that is, "Who knows who knows what?" within the organization.

Unlike traditional web search engines that help an individual search for content on the web, tools such as IKNOW search for content and contacts (direct and indirect). In addition to being instantly beneficial to users, they also provide researcher and e-moderators with an opportunity to unobtrusively and reliably study the influence of Communityware on the co-evolution of knowledge networks.

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