

Frequently Asked Questions

KNOWLEDGE-FORGE

About the Company, Products and Services

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Q: How is knowledge different from information?

A: Knowledge is useful; information can only be accurate or inaccurate. Not all information is useful, in fact most is not and knowledge is often the result of filtering out distracting or useless information. An information continuum would have data points as the smallest “granule” of information. A chart or table of data points constitutes information including tabulations, and mathematical derivations—even subjective conclusions. Such a chart may not be useful unless it is placed in context so a user knows when and how to consult it and how to apply the information to achieve a desired end.

An example is a navigation chart. Individual datum points include depth measurements, channels, landmarks, and bearings. All this is useless to anyone unfamiliar with what they are looking at. The information chart and all its myriad of data is only useful to someone who knows how to interpret and apply the information to the tools and instruments required to navigate a water vessel. With the advent of personal computers and the Internet people are deluged with data and floods of information—what is lacking is the knowledge necessary to apply that information.

Q: Is Knowledge-Forge an information management company?

A: While Knowledge-Forge incorporates knowledge management features and technologies into its offerings, it is not a traditional knowledge management company. K-Book technology includes powerful and unique knowledge management features but is not a typical knowledge management tool. Knowledge Management usually involves an elaborate enterprise-wide deployment of information capturing, interpretation, and data distribution schemes that link information centers across the company. It is not unusual for Knowledge Management firms to link information databases, sales and customer tracking systems, accounting, and word processing systems into one uniform system.

Knowledge-Forge does not require an enterprise-wide deployment, and can be deployed “brick-by-brick.” The “bricks” are K-Books which are stand alone, easy to navigate knowledge units incorporating features of knowledge filtering, presentation, navigation, electronic distribution, user assessment, instruction, and feedback—each is focused on a well defined “subject” such as a product, a product line, a technology, or a set of procedures or processes. From the start, or later on, the client can combine multiple K-Books into a library that unifies all K-Books into a single unified knowledgebase.

Example: A K-Book can integrate all product knowledge into a single location including technology, sales and marketing plans, user documentation, collateral materials, and sales tools. This information can be deployed via CD, network or Internet and updated easily and often. Fully integrated with this product knowledgebase is the K-Books powerful instruction tools that can be used to teach people how to sell, install, service, and use the product. Along the way, as users interact with the K-Book their user knowledge is captured and added to a growing knowledgebase that will grow and expand over the life of the product.

Q: Is Knowledge-Forge an e-learning company?

A: Knowledge-Forge incorporates e-learning technology into its products; however, our focus goes beyond that of e-learning companies. Knowledge-Forge K-Books include powerful instructional tools that can assess a user's knowledge and configure a unique instructional plan for each user. A K-Book can even track a user's progress as he or she learns more about the K-Book's subject. Yet a K-Book is much more. Where e-learning's focus is learning, a K-Book is also a powerful knowledge management tool that uses unique "Quick Read" summaries of even vast source documents, linking them together. So a K-Book is like a Cliff's Notes version of a manuscript electronically linked to the source document packaged with pictures, animation, videos, and other tools to improve a user's understanding. A K-Book is a presentation and sales tool, a knowledge management tool, a learning and user assessment tool, a tracking and user management tool. Knowledge-Forge's focus is to apply e-learning and other technologies to improve the effectiveness and productivity of businesses.

Q: Is knowledge-forge a software company?

A: It is probably more accurate to say that Knowledge-Forge is a software and services company. Our K-Book and Knowledge Tracking System (KTS) are software based solutions that are built on the same proven, robust platforms that drive many MRP and e-commerce solutions. These products have been developed to work hand in hand with our unique knowledge-filtering process. Knowledge-Forge offers knowledge-filtering and other services to generate the most effective content for your application. Our K-Book, KTS and editing tools then provide a cost effective and proven platform on which to deploy the solution. The end result is that with our software and service offerings we can help you generate a tailored solution more predictably and at a fraction of the cost of a custom solution.

Questions about Knowledge tools?

Q: What exactly is a K-Book, how is it different from an e-Book?

A: e-Books are electronic versions of paper books. They deliver and present information in words that are stored, distributed, and presented by electronic means. However, e-books simply provide a new means of distribution without taking advantage of the additional tools available on computers today. A K-Book is much more because it includes text like an e-book and augments the text with graphics, animation, audio, video, and a series of electronic links that unify a large body of information into an easy to navigate, ultimately useful package. In addition, K-Books have powerful instructional tools that can assess a user's level of understanding and automatically prescribe a course of study to augment the user's skills. K-Books can be distributed using CDs, networks, and/or the Internet. K-Books are the basic building bricks of the Knowledge-Forge suite of products.

Q: What does Knowledge Tracking really mean?

A: The Knowledge Tracking System (KTS) can work with one or more K-Books to track access, understanding, and learning progress for an unlimited number of K-Book users. Here is how it works: Every Knowledge-Forge K-Book collects user data from who access and uses a K-Book to how they use it... are they just viewing, or accessing the powerful assessment and instructional features. In the case of assessment, what is the user's skill level? What should the user study in

order to improve their understanding? What progress is being made toward that end? Who else is access and using this K-Book, how does one group compare to another?

A unique added feature is the KTS's ability to acquire, tabulate, and distribute feedback from users into a user knowledgebase that expands and extends the usefulness of the K-Book over time.

Q: *What is Knowledge Filtering?*

A: Knowledge Filtering is a proprietary process that guides the development of content whether it is being created, converted, or repurposed from prior formats. The process assures a systematic approach that involves content experts, end-users, and establishes four vital filters to transform information into useful, vital knowledge. The core filters include filters that **Focus**, **Amplify**, **Condense**, and **Link** knowledge to the users who can best apply that knowledge to purposes defined by the client.

Q: *Who creates content—us or you?*

A: Knowledge-Forge can provide useful templates for its clients to capture or convert their own content. Knowledge-Forge can also develop new content or convert content as an added service to its clients. The choice is up to the client based upon available resources, timelines, and access to internal resources.

Q: *Who owns and controls the content?*

A: Knowledge-Forge clients own their own content and can have direct access and editorial control. While Knowledge-Forge provide hosting, duplication and distribution services, many clients choose to host, manage, and edit content internally over the life of the K-Book.

Q: *How is content updated?*

A: Knowledge-Forge uses an intuitive, easy-to-use, on-line editing interface to change and modify content. Standard and custom templates greatly reduce wasted formatting time. For network, intranet and Internet implementations, changes are immediate and automatically available to all users. If CD-ROM distribution is preferred, a CD-ROM master is created and sent our for duplication.

Q: *Can I use PowerPoint to do the same thing?*

A: No, PowerPoint is a premier presentation tool and does offer some multimedia capabilities, however PowerPoint was not intended for the same purposes as a K-Book. Even power users cannot duplicate the knowledge management, instructional, assessment, and tracking features of the Knowledge-Forge suite of products. For more information on how PowerPoint differs from K-Books, a white paper is available from the Knowledge-Forge web site.

Q: *We have in-house multimedia people why do we need Knowledge-Forge?*

A: Multimedia software can provide impressive presentations. E-Learning software can create useful training programs. It is possible to combine both to create so-called rich media instructional materials, but even then, you are far short of a typical K-Book. K-Books are a proven solution that offer access to an integrated knowledgebase combining source documents and

linked *Cliff's Note*-like summary documents along with pictures, video, animation, audio, and other materials to explain even the most complex subjects.

Q: *We already use e-Learning, what can Knowledge-Forge do for us?*

A: Knowledge-Forge is not an e-Learning company so we are happy to integrate our K-Book functions with existing infrastructure. K-Books can be easily linked to most e-Learning packages and talk to Learning Management Systems. K-Books are first, and foremost a central knowledgebase of well defined information—associated, for example with a product or product line. While K-Books offer powerful instructional tools, if those are off-loaded to existing programs the K-Book still offers a central location for all product specific knowledge.

Questions about deployment?

Q: *What are the technical requirements of Knowledge-Forge programs?*

A: To run Knowledge-Forge K-Books, a user must have a PC with at least 96MB of RAM, 166MHz processor and Windows 95 – XP with Internet Explorer of 5.0 or greater. Versions of Internet Explorer earlier than 5.0 must be upgraded. No support for Macintosh or Netscape Navigator is available at this time.

Q: *What is this “Brick by Brick” architecture?*

A: Knowledge-Forge has designed the K-Book to offer compelling stand-alone value and at the same time integrate seamlessly with our suite of products. On a project by project basis, the K-Book offers an exceptional ROI when compared to other alternatives. The decision to implement a K-Book does not depend on or dictate an enterprise solution - it makes sense in isolation at the project level. However, integrating several K-Books and implementing a Knowledge Tracking System adds additional features and value. In this way a client can build a solution “brick by brick” with each element of the solution making sense on its own, both operationally and financially

Q: *Is this an Internet, network or CD based program?*

A: K-Books can be distributed using any of these methods. Hybrid systems support multiple approaches so it is possible for a network to support local workers, while distributed teams will enjoy the benefits of the Internet. Frequent travelers and remote users will use CDs or periodically remotely update their local version.

Q: *Why do you use videos—won't my dial up account choke?*

A: Not necessarily. It is possible to have the videos stored locally on laptops and desktops to be seamlessly integrated with “live” Internet feeds of the rest of the content. This way you get the best of both worlds. Remote update also allows dial-up users to download content that is run off-line at a later time.

Q: *We already give our sales people CD's, what can Knowledge-Forge add?*

A: Most likely, Knowledge-Forge can add a lot! The majority of CD-ROM's that are produced today have text content, graphics images and/or slide presentations. The problem is that none of these formats are interactive or meant to work together. Knowledge-Forge K-Books can integrate

these formats and add quick read summaries, navigational aids as well as assessment and tracking capabilities. The result is that the people receiving the CDs become much more knowledgeable in a far shorter amount of time. And of course, if your content changes over time, K-Book technology can highlight the changed information, greatly reducing the amount of time it takes to stay current. To compare K-Book features and technology with other alternatives please go to <http://www.knowledge-forge.com> and visit our white paper page.