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AS 5037—2005

Knowledge management - a guide



This Australian Standard was prepared by Committee MB-007, Knowledge Management. It was approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia on 7 September 2005.

This Standard was published on 10 October 2005.

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Australian Standard™

## Knowledge management — a guide

Original standard IS 475—2001.  
Revised and redesignated as AS 5037(Int)—2003.  
Second edition 2005.

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Published by Standards Australia, GPO Box 476, Sydney, NSW 2001, Australia

ISBN 0 7337 6930 6

# Preface

This Standard was prepared by Standards Australia Committee MB-007, Knowledge Management to supersede AS 5037(Int)—2003.

The objectives of this Standard are to:

- provide an easy-to-read, non-prescriptive guide on knowledge management;
- help individuals and organisations deepen their understanding of knowledge management concepts;
- assist organisations to understand the environment best suited for enabling knowledge activities; and
- offer a scalable and flexible framework for designing, planning, implementing and assessing knowledge interventions that respond to an organisation's environment and state of readiness.

The Standard has been developed for professionals who have either recently encountered knowledge management or who are looking for further guidance.

This revision incorporates insights gained as a result of feedback and consultation on the Interim Standard, which was issued in February 2003. The Committee acknowledges the many Australian and international knowledge management practitioners who commented on the Interim Standard. All suggestions received were considered and many of them have been incorporated into this Standard.

The major changes in this revision are:

- an increased emphasis on how to understand whether an organisation is ready to adopt and/or expand knowledge management activities;
- a recognition that organisations are knowledge ecosystems – a complex set of relationships existing between people, process, technology and content;
- detailed guidance on how to implement the Standard within the context of an organisation's environment; and
- emerging issues and trends in knowledge management.

The implementation of knowledge management is context dependent and the field is continuing to evolve. This Standard identifies some of the major trends currently emerging.

The knowledge management field has adopted its own language and metaphors and many of these are used in this Standard.

Breakout boxes containing guidance, stories from practice and key learnings are provided throughout the Standard to enhance an understanding of concepts discussed.

A different style and language has been used in this Standard when compared to other Australian Standards. This is due to the objectives of this Standard and the need to reflect the knowledge management area of practice.

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# Foreword

The transition into the knowledge era means that knowledge has become the major asset and capability for contemporary organisations.

Organisations face a hyper-connected, competitive and constantly shifting environment. Within this environment, Australia has witnessed many changes over the last forty years, including deregulation, microeconomic reform, increased globalisation and the rise of computerisation. The knowledge-based services sector is now a key driver of national wealth. There is growing recognition that knowledge and the ability of an organisation to learn, innovate and adapt contributes significantly towards organisational strength and survival. Knowledge and related intangibles are increasingly viewed as fundamental to organisational success, whether in the public, private or not-for-profit sectors.

To understand and deal with these changes, knowledge management promises deeper insights into an organisation as a knowledge ecosystem, together with greater impact on how the organisation responds to, innovates and learns from aspects of its environment. Knowledge management recognises the uniqueness of organisations in terms of strategic intent, context, capability and culture.

Knowledge management has emerged from a variety of other disciplines. Its foundations lie in the management of explicit knowledge including information, documents and records as well as the management of tacit knowledge including networks, skills transfer and learning. Its strength lies in its power to combine the organisational elements of people, process, technology and content into a coherent approach to address gaps in organisational capability.

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# 1 Scope and general

## 1.1 Scope

This Standard provides guidance on what knowledge management is and how it may be implemented using a flexible framework. The Committee encourages organisations to develop their own shared understanding and/or definitions that are suitable and applicable to their context. This Standard can be used by any individual, community or organisation that requires an understanding of knowledge management and its implementation.

## 1.2 Referenced documents

The following documents are referred to in the body of this Standard:

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| AS 5090        | <i>Work process analysis for record keeping</i>  |
| AS ISO 15489.1 | <i>Records management, Part 1: General</i>   |
| AS ISO 15489.2 | <i>Records management, Part 2: Guidelines</i>  |
| HB 189         | <i>Knowledge management terminology and readings – An Australian Guide</i>                     |
| BS PD 7502     | <i>Guide to measurements in knowledge management</i>   |
| ISO 2788       | <i>Documentation; guidelines for the establishment and development of monolingual thesauri</i> |

Additional references are provided in Appendix C.

## 1.3 Definitions

For the purposes of this Standard the following definitions apply.

### 1.3.1 Data

Any manifestation in the environment, which may include symbolic representations that, in combination, may form the basis of information.

### 1.3.2 Enablers

Specific tools, techniques and activities through which knowledge management is implemented in an operational environment.