

Knowledge Discovery in Case Studies

The Case Insight Method for Case-Based Problem Solving

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Abstract:

The topic of this paper is a new method of knowledge discovery in documents called “Case Insight” (abbreviated to CI). The research question that led to this development was “How can we discover knowledge through case studies and make it usable for case-based problem solving?” To answer this question, this research took a Systems Thinking and Networked Thinking qualitative approach.

Case-based problem-solving uses knowledge contained in authentic case descriptions (i.e. “good practice” or even “best practice” cases) and adapts it to the requirements of a new problem. Who can use this? Managers and management consultants who are starting out in their careers can benefit in particular from the CI method as it allows them to expand their repertoire of experience in problem-solving on the basis of case studies, i.e. without being involved in projects. All those interested in solving complex management problems in a case-based way also form part of the target audience.

Case studies contain a great deal of problem-solving knowledge but only part of that knowledge can be absorbed through simple reading. The rest remains difficult to access, a hidden treasure, so to speak. Why is that? The reason is that knowledge discovery in case studies is made more difficult due to two obstacles: firstly, the texts are not sufficiently brain-friendly and secondly, they are not designed holistically enough.

The CI method makes it possible to overcome these obstacles by means of CI tools and CI models. Firstly, CI tools are used to analyse case studies by comparing concepts, ideas, etc. and combining them into a whole; secondly, CI models make knowledge discovered in this way usable in the form of brain-friendly and holistic knowledge structures. Thus, knowledge discovery through the CI method complies with Immanuel Kant’s definition of knowledge as “a whole of compared and linked ideas”