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## **Knowledge Sharing: Context, Controversy and Confusion**

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### **Abstract**

Project managers in the construction industry increasingly seek to learn from other industrial sectors. Knowledge sharing between different contexts is thus viewed as an essential source of competitive advantage. It is important therefore for project managers from all sectors to address and develop appropriate methods of knowledge sharing. However, too often it is assumed that knowledge freely exists and can be captured and shared between contexts. Such assumptions belie complexities and problems awaiting the unsuspecting knowledge-sharing protagonist. Knowledge *per se* is a problematic esoteric concept that does not lend itself easily to codification. Specifically, tacit knowledge possessed by, embedded in individuals presents particular methodological issues for those considering harnessing its utility in return for competitive advantage. The notion that knowledge is also embedded in specific social contexts compounds this complexity. It is argued that knowledge is highly individualistic and concomitant with the various surrounding contexts within which it is shaped and enacted. Indeed, these contexts are also shaped as a consequence of knowledge adding further complexity to the problem domain. Current methods of knowledge capture, transfer and sharing fall short of addressing these problematic issues. Research is presented that addresses these problems and proposes an alternative method of knowledge sharing. Drawing on data and observations collected from its application, the findings clearly demonstrate the crucial role of re-contextualisation, social interaction and dialectic debate in understanding knowledge sharing.

**Keywords:** context, socialisation, knowledge sharing, construction, aerospace.