What is Tacit?

What can it be used for?

Tacit is an add-on product to our Knowledgeone (K1) product suite (on GSA Schedule GS35F0370U).

Tacit was designed as an easy way for organizations to collect and manage tacit knowledge, basically that knowledge residing in the heads of stakeholders; the kind of knowledge that is usually exchanged via email and conversations around the water cooler. Tacit + K1 makes it easy to collect and easy to access.

K1 provides the repository, sophisticated search and reporting capabilities and security system.

Tacit provides the collection capabilities.

As the designer, I envisage that organizations will use Tacit to add to their store of knowledge on any number of subjects. For example, a police department may discover in the course of an investigation that a particular person is now a 'person of interest'. The office in charge would then send a solicitation to other policemen, departments, agencies (for example all those he knows are interested in drug enforcement) and ask, "We are conducting inquiries into drug dealing in San Diego and a name that keeps coming up as a person of interest in Samuel Linkletter. Do any of you have knowledge of Samuel Linkletter?"

Another example would be a sales and marketing company that wanted to add tacit knowledge (about customers and prospects and competitive products) to its CRM. K1 comes with a very clever import/export tool called Xchange that makes it really easy to export information from K1 into any other system (and import information into K1 from any other system). K1 can also be used as a CRM if the company does not have a CRM system in place.

For the military I would guess there are hundreds of potential uses for Tacit. I can guess at intelligence gathering (running tacit over a HTTPS (secure socket layer) and heavily encrypted Intranet. I could also be used to collect 'opinions' and 'experience' on suppliers and products that may not be systemized in any formal databases or may in fact be fragmented, incomplete and spread over hundreds or thousands of databases.

Tacit provides a really easy way to centralize all key tacit knowledge and make it available to anyone in an enterprise (or in fact across enterprises) regardless of what application systems they

are using (and the average US organization uses a minimum of 30 disparate application systems to run the business). It is a way to link hundreds or thousands of people in a collaborative knowledge building web. It can also be rolled out in days.

Tacit can be automatically deployed (e.g., using Active Directory) to any user anywhere in the world with Internet/Intranet access. It is very light on bandwidth, easy to use (doesn't require a formal training session) and uses the advanced security system of K1 to manage and control access to information down to the field level. Users can be designated just as Tacit users (able to both solicit and respond to solicitations) or Tacit and K1 users. K1 users have much greater search capabilities.

The K1 client licence runs in a browser and can be deployed to any number of users anywhere in the world in hours or days. It too utilizes HTTP/Web Services as it communications protocols making it extremely easy and low cost to deploy and maintain.

The big advantages of Tacit are that it is small and non intrusive (it is just a little icon in the SysTray), is extremely easy to use and fast (it lights up when someone send you a solicitation and you can respond in seconds) and all information (solicitations and responses) are automatically stored and indexed in the K1 database. It is not an easily misplaced and non accessible piece of paper or email or word of mouth.

Tacit would suit any size of organization but would really be beneficial to an organization with distributed offices. Tacit communicates with K1 via Web Services so it does not require a network (just as the K1 client does not require a network), just access to an Intranet or the Internet. With small organizations, especially those with all the people in one office, we could reasonably assume that they communicate on a regular basis and that the need to 'systemize' the collection of tacit knowledge is not a great one. The larger the organization and/or the more distributed the employees/stakeholders then the greater the need to systemize the collection of tacit knowledge.

The current release of Tacit automates the solicitation (i.e., the question, "Does anyone know anything about.....?") and the Tacit responses (the answers). The information collected is aged and weighted and stored and indexed in the K1 relational database where is can be searched by any user with the required access rights. Tacit is all about collaborative knowledge generation.

The next release of Tacit will include more collaborative tools including document collaboration, instant messaging, check-in and check-out of electronic documents and images plus numerous improvements and extensions. This is all about a regular program of development to meet the ever changing end-user concept of what a tacit knowledge management tool should be.

Tacit will also be made available to RecFind 6 customers (as well as K1 customers) early in 2009.

Click here to view a short online product tour of Tacit K1.

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ISO 9001:2000
Lic No.
OEC 5844