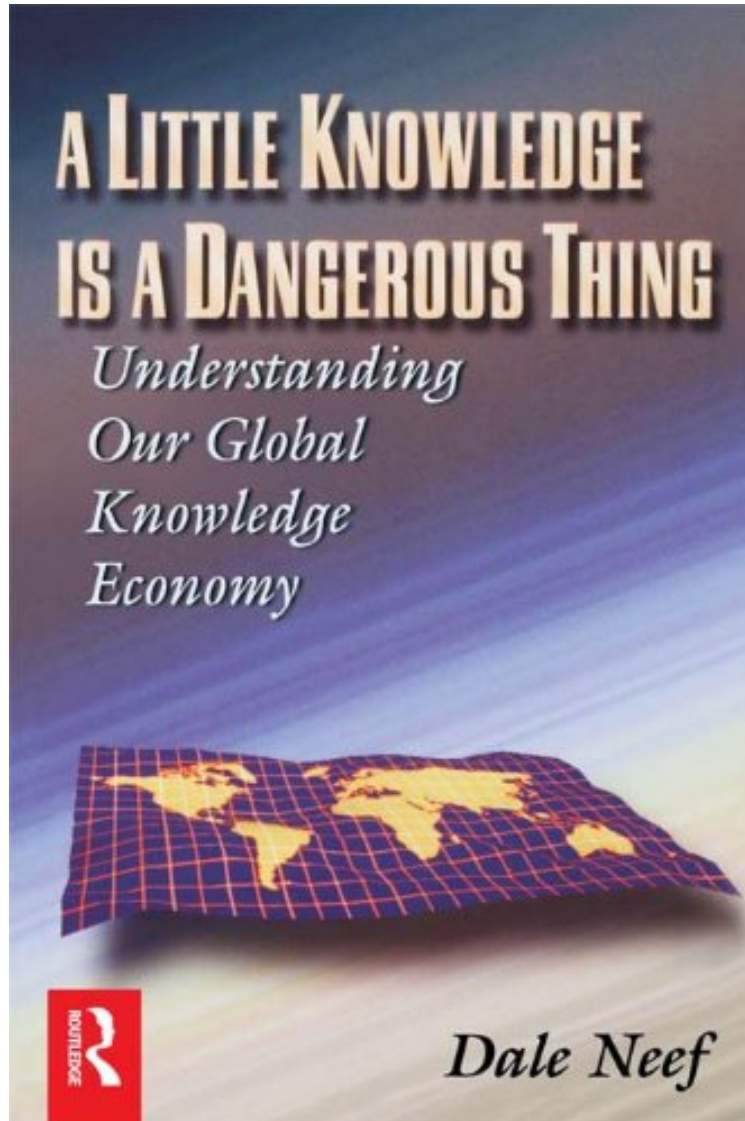


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## A Little Knowledge Is a Dangerous Thing

*Dale Neef*

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**Dale Neef : A Little Knowledge Is a Dangerous Thing** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Little Knowledge Is a Dangerous Thing:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. the high road and the low road By Bill Godfrey Provides a useful analysis of the place and significance of knowledge management in the development of business and society, though it is limited in the range of societal implications that it considers. The book is well organised, with sound definitions (in a muddy field), a formidable array of facts and good analysis. The explanation of the 'knowledge foundation' (Ch.7) is particularly valuable. Chapters 1 through 6 develop the argument that globalisation and the knowledge economy together amount to a major continuing revolution in the way the world works, and that this revolution is a continuing

process, not an event. Chapters 1 through 5 work systematically through the major changes associated with the knowledge economy and globalisation, while Chapter 6 draws important conclusions for the organisation based round six major changes including the level of workforce education, changes in employment, the development of IT in general and groupware in particular, and culture shifts. At this point, Neef introduces the critically important concept of 'high road' and 'low road' organisations and a third group of independent knowledge workers. Essentially, the world is moving towards dominance by a limited number of knowledge based, global organisations, with much of the physical production carried out by relatively small, undercapitalised, low wage 'low road' companies engaged in a 'race to the bottom' and an intermediate group of independent knowledge workers. These corporate polarities are strongly reflected in society, with the trend toward increasing inequalities of income and wealth. Statistics of national wealth are becoming less and less meaningful as the world and nations (even the USA) divide into 'high road' wealthy 'hotspots' (Silicon Valley, the Bangalore region of India etc) and 'low road' areas of economic stagnation or decline. Chapter 7 contains a very useful overview of the place of knowledge management in the world of business. By way of introduction, he points to the confusion caused by the division of KM exponents into 'high-touch' and 'high-tech' groups, where the first are interested primarily in working relationships and culture and the second see KM as primarily a function of new communications technologies, with a third group who see KM 'simply as a way of capturing and distributing leading practices or lessons learned. He seeks to integrate these perspectives around seven broad practice areas. The rest of the book goes broad again, to look at impacts on the social fabric on global competition and implications for (US) national policy. It highlights the implications of 'high road' strategies relative to lack of an explicit strategy or 'low road' strategies and concludes that national government intervention is necessary to ensure that appropriate strategies are followed at a national level.

It is said that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. It is a time honored cautionary statement that has suddenly acquired a new urgency. A little knowledge is dangerous, because as a force for dramatic change, knowledge today is revolutionary. More is known and being learned everyday than was ever known or learned before. As a direct result, the pace of change-and that means change in the sense of everything from business to economics, science, medicine, and politics-is beginning to accelerate much more rapidly than ever before in mankind's history. The purpose of this book then is twofold. First it is to provide a broader case for action for knowledge management-to explain what it is, why it has come about and why it is important. In this regard, we take a step back and try to understand the root causes behind the knowledge management techniques are very different, and in many ways more important, than the sort of process or productivity improvement techniques we have dealt with before. "Brains, not brawn. The success of countries, companies and people in the next century will depend on what they know and how clever they are at using this knowledge. Dale Neef has given us the best outline yet of the forces behind this extraordinary change in the world economy, the threats and opportunities we all face, and the prizes that await the winners." -Hamish McRae, author, *The World in 2020*, Associate editor, "The Independent", London "Dale Neef has produced a singular achievement: a book which lucidly explains the powerful driving role being played by knowledge in the emerging global economy. He provides a penetrating, all-too-rare trans-national perspective which highlights in a highly readable manner the historical, social and technological context within which this revolution is taking place. In doing so, he has stripped away the hype and jargon with which many knowledge management "experts" have clouded this structural change in the global economy. Mr. Neef offers a fascinating array of facts to support his explanations and goes on to discuss the implications of these developments for managers, for companies and for national governments. This book is a must-read for anyone actively engaged in global business today." -Jon Lowe, Former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor "A Little Knowledge Is a Dangerous Thing provides a very comprehensive view of the impact that the knowledge revolution on our 21st Century society. The economic dislocations that Dale Neef describes are already taking place, creating the prospect that large segments of our population may not have the skills for sustainable employment in the future. The implications of these events on the social and political fabric of our country give one great pause for reflection and concern." -William R. Brody, President, The Johns Hopkins University "Once again, Dale Neef combines just the right amounts of theory, academia and practical business experience to write a truly insightful book. In his consulting work, Mr. Neef's broad business, cultural and educational background has allowed him to analyze problems from a rich variety of perspectives. In this book, he artfully applies this skill to Knowledge Management." -James R. Breakey, Senior Vice President, Chief Information Officer, Green Tree Financial Corporation "This book is full of facts... that we need to understand if we are to draw critical conclusions about how the knowledge economy is impacting our businesses and our lives. Neef provides us with a broad perspective, concentrating not just on the US, but including insightful comparisons with Canada and Europe as well as many developing countries. The numbers provide an eye opening look at what has changed and what is changing in the knowledge economy...It is a book that challenges our thinking and ...provides a much needed conceptual framework to guide the actions organizations will need to take in the knowledge economy." -Nancy M. Dixon, Associate...

About the Author Dale Neef is an author and management consultant specializing in strategic corporate policy and

knowledge management, and is currently researching the subject of corporate integrity as a Visiting Fellow at The Center for Global Change and Governance at Rutgers University. He has worked for IBM and CSC, and was a fellow at Ernst Young's Center for Business Innovation, where he helped the firm to develop their knowledge management service line and wrote or edited several books on knowledge management and globalization. Over the past fifteen years he has worked with executives from more than forty companies on strategy development, corporate assessments, and strategic change initiatives. He earned his doctorate from Cambridge University, was a research fellow at Harvard, and along with radio commentary, speaker tours, and frequent contributions to journals, has written or edited numerous books on business, globalization and the changing economy, including: \* E-Procurement: From Strategy to Implementation, (New York: Prentice Hall, May, 2001) - the Financial Times/Prentice Hall's 3rd best-selling business book in 2001; \* A Little Knowledge Is a Dangerous Thing: Understanding the Global, Knowledge-based Economy, (Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1999); \* The Economic Impact of Knowledge, Co-editor, (Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1998); \* The Knowledge-Based Economy, Editor, (Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1997); \* Enterprise Value in the Knowledge Economy: Measuring Performance in the Age of Intangibles, Co-editor, (OECD/Ernst Young, 1997) These books have been recommended by the Harvard Business School and have been used as texts for courses at MIT, Birbeck/University of London, the University of Northern Texas, the University of Tennessee and George Mason University.