

R&D Management and Journal of Knowledge Management: A joint special issue

Knowledge intensive ecosystems and knowledge brokerage for designing innovation behaviors in digital and discontinuity exchange.

About the special issue

This joint special issue in *R&D Management* and the *Journal of Knowledge Management* will strengthen interdisciplinary research and perspectives to improve our understanding of knowledge ecosystems and knowledge brokerage. This is a core topic in both the innovation management and knowledge management literatures.

Background:

Innovation activities, by definition, are highly interrelated and encompass the relationships among an increasing number of different actors (Järvi et al., 2018) and research on knowledge and technology transfer has been a defining theme in the scholarly discourse on R&D and innovation management (Allen, 1984; Katz and Allen, 1983). Companies can gain sustainable sources of competitive advantage acquiring knowledge from the external environment (Caloghirou et al., 2004; Voelpel et al., 2005). By adopting a knowledge-driven approach and exploiting external knowledge sources, organizations can increase their knowledge base and improve their innovative performance (Laursen and Salter, 2006; Scuotto et al., 2017). Hence, the creation of inter-organizational knowledge transfer in cooperative environments (e.g. alliances and joint ventures) has been developed by companies as a powerful strategy for creating value and competitive advantage, especially leveraging on open innovation architectures (Chesbrough, 2003; Fang et al., 2013; Enkel et al., 2020). According to van Wijk et al. (2008), inter-organizational knowledge transfer is intended as the activity implemented by organizations to share information and knowledge among them. Inter-organizational knowledge transfer is a two-way process according to which the two involved organizations reciprocally share and acquire knowledge (Del Giudice and Maggioni, 2014; Dayan et al., 2017). The development of connections and relationships with the various sources leads to the creation of innovation ecosystems which are complex systems, based on a focal organization, project, technology or platform (Autio and Thomas, 2014; Ritala et al.,

2013; Rohrbeck et al., 2009; West and Bogers, 2014). Even at the very early stages of innovation development, ecosystems can be important and revolve around preliminary knowledge creation (Clarysse et al., 2014).

Therefore, the inter-organizational knowledge transfer has become an attractive vehicle for creating value or developing competitive advantages not only for companies (Fang et al., 2013). According to Von Hippel (2016), the “free innovation” paradigm is already widespread in national and global economies and is steadily increasing in both scale and scope thanks to the advent of digital platforms. However, a strategy of knowledge sharing across organizational boundaries in a complex and interrelated environment is extremely difficult to manage, and it exposes organizations to high risks of failure.

Even if sharing knowledge across organizations contributes toward increasing firms’ competitiveness, organizations might find adopting adequate strategies challenging (Dayan et al., 2017). In fact, sharing knowledge with external partners might present risks, being costly and ineffective, if not conducted appropriately (Del Giudice et al., 2017). The role played by knowledge brokers, intended as individual or organizational that facilitate connections between different actors of the knowledge ecosystem, is hence vital (Burt, 2007). Knowledge brokers determine the connections within the knowledge ecosystem by delivering knowledge, feeding the network with ties between researchers, inventors and users (Yao et al., 2020).

Numerous prior studies have focused both on the triggers of general knowledge sharing behavior in an organizational context (Intezari et al., 2017; Ismail Al-Alawi et al., 2007; Riege, 2005; Singh et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2018) and on the role played by the different forms of knowledge brokerage such as incubators, digital innovation hubs, knowledge intensive networks (Grimaldi and Grandi, 2005; Meyer, 2010; Rice, 2002).

The relevance of innovation ecosystem and the role of knowledge brokerage has been covered by extensive literature on technology-information systems, open innovation, knowledge management, strategic alliances (Zahra & Nambisan, 2011; Ritala and Almpantopoulou, 2017; Chesbrough et al., 2014). Those literature streams have only occasionally been merged in a combined and organic framework based on knowledge-management

and innovation capabilities (Burt, 2007; Chesbrough, 2003; Bolisani and Bratianu, 2017).

The focus of this Special Issue and recommended areas of research:

Past research on knowledge and technology is now ever more crucial for the strategic metamorphosis of organizations in a digital environment. For example, the evaluation of inter-organizational knowledge connections in new environments such as digital platforms and ecosystems is extremely vital for new and existing organizations (Del Giudice et al., 2017; Chew et al., 2013; Armstrong et al., 2013; Hughes, B., & Wareham, 2010). As matter of fact, digital technologies and platforms are profoundly reshaping both organizations' behaviors and the entrepreneurial landscape. Leading platform firms (e.g., Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google) and other smaller platforms are blurring organizations' boundaries offering new challenges for companies (Kenney et al., 2015; Di Minin et al., 2019; Nambisan et al., 2018, 2019). In fact, platforms are pervasive and heavily influence the entrepreneurial activities, they mediate the technology transfer (Verona et al. 2006; Davis & Meindl, 2012; Möhlmann & Geissinger, 2018), influence social strategies such as the development of a new urban entrepreneurship (Cohen and Muñoz, 2015; Hall, 2006), Knowledge Sharing in Public-Private Innovation Partnership (Lassen et al., 2015; Nissen et al., 2014) or new trajectories of technology and knowledge transfer (e.g., from developing to developed countries) (Corsi et al., 2014; Yao et al., 2020).

Based on the background above, this joint call for papers organized by the *Journal of Knowledge Management* and *R&D Management* aims to collect contributions on various topics related to knowledge ecosystems, knowledge brokers and R&D inter-organizational networks.

Specifically, we call for contributions on various topics related to knowledge management practices and innovation ecosystems (Borgh et al., 2012; Del Giudice & Maggioni, 2014; Järvi et al., 2018; Ritala, P., & Gustafsson, 2018), knowledge brokers (Gassmann et al., 2011; Keszey, 2018), and inter-organizational R&D and knowledge networks (Dooley and Gubbins, 2019; Ritala et al., 2017).

We welcome conceptual and empirical studies using a diverse range of methods that address topics such as the indicative themes outlined below. Emblematic case studies, action research about startups, firms and

universities, sectoral quantitative research, research in inter-organizational networks, qualitative and quantitative research in national or international incubators and accelerators are some examples of welcomed contributions.

Examples of topics which relate to this call:

The contributions may address, but are not limited to, the following research topics:

- Knowledge management practices and tools in digital platforms
- Tech-business incubators as knowledge brokers
- Innovation in proprietary versus open knowledge ecosystems
- Citizen entrepreneurship
- Inter and intra organizational collaborations and knowledge translation strategies
- R&D-enabled knowledge and technology application
- Universities and research laboratories as technology exchange platforms
- Digital Translation and knowledge intensive networks
- Technology transfer and digital platform mediation
- Knowledge of open innovation practices and the intermediate platform for innovation
- Digital search for dynamic capabilities across knowledge ecosystems
- Design-based knowledge platforms in multi-stakeholder environments
- Knowledge sharing in Public-Private Innovation Partnership (PPIP)
- Global intellectual capital brokering
- Open innovation practices and knowledge platforms for innovation
- Knowledge arbitrage in global value chains (GVCs)
- Knowledge Management Systems (KMS) for creating, enhancing, and promoting innovation ecosystems creation
- The role of knowledge sharing (KS) and transfer for digital platform or ecosystem strategies definition
- The inter-organizational knowledge sharing strategies in the new platform-dependent entrepreneurship paradigm
- Inter-organizational barriers definition in digital platforms and ecosystems
- Knowledge barriers and facilitators of 'Free Innovation'.

- Interchanges of inter-organizational KS and technological boundaries
- Business model innovation and design in business for creating and capturing the innovation
- Micro-foundations of KM strategies and practices
- Technology versus design-based entrepreneurial innovation
- Knowledge-sharing behaviors and innovation design
- Intellectual capital and innovation value in technology-based contexts
- Seizing and sensing actors and strategies in digital landscapes
- Knowledge-based human resource management and innovation journeys
- Open for Innovation: knowledge exchange for orchestrating innovation networks and ecosystems
- Knowledge governance and architectures for innovation incubators

Timetable

- **Submission window: 1st of February 2022 – 31st July, 2022**
- **Publication target: Start of 2023**

Author guidelines, submission and review process

Two different teams of Guest Editors will coordinate this call for papers across R&D Management and the Journal of Knowledge Management (JKM). This first joint Call for Papers will collect, top-quality papers presenting the most cutting-edge research on the crucial aspects highlighted above.

Even if the Call for Papers is the same on the two journals, papers dealing more specifically with formal strategies of knowledge management in national or international knowledge ecosystems should be addressed to the *Journal of Knowledge Management*, while papers involving R&D networks, the interplay between knowledge ecosystems and innovation ecosystems, the intermediary role played by platforms, incubators and accelerators in technology transfer in innovation ecosystems, and the international dimension (e.g. developed country vs developing country), should be instead submitted to *R&D Management*.

Submitted papers which will be considered out of fit for one journal, but appropriate for the other, may be readdressed by the Guest Editors.

Manuscripts for both *R&D Management* and the *Journal of Knowledge Management* are subject to a double-blind peer review process.

Authors are invited to consult the specific journal's guidelines on formatting.

The editorial teams will reserve the right to redirect papers to the partner journal for this Special Issue for a more suitable journal fit. We aim for the entire review process to take about 1 year, from initial submission to completion of the joint special issue, with online and in-print publication in the subsequent months.

For JKM see:

<https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/journal/jkm#author-guidelines>

For R&D Management see:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/14679310/homepage/forauthors.html>

Submissions should be accompanied by an assurance of originality and novelty and should adhere to the 'Author guidelines' that can be respectively found on the journals' page.

All candidatures are managed via the online submission system ScholarOne. Full details are specified in the author guidelines on the journals' webpages. Please ensure you submit to this special issue using the drop-down menu on ScholarOne in either of the journals.

Please also note that you only submit to one of the journals, and not both.

All submissions will be subjected to a rigorous double-blind peer review process, with one or more of the guest editors acting as action editor. As a JKM and R&D Management publishing rule, every paper submitted to the Special Issue would be firstly screened by the SI guest editors and validated

by the Editor-in-Chief or by the Assistant Managing Editor (when necessary) and checked for the match with the topic of the Special Issue and with the general aims and scope of the *Journal of Knowledge Management or R&D Management*. Unsuitable papers will be desk-rejected by the guest editors before the assignment to the peer-reviewers.

For further information, please contact any of the guest editors for this special issue:

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