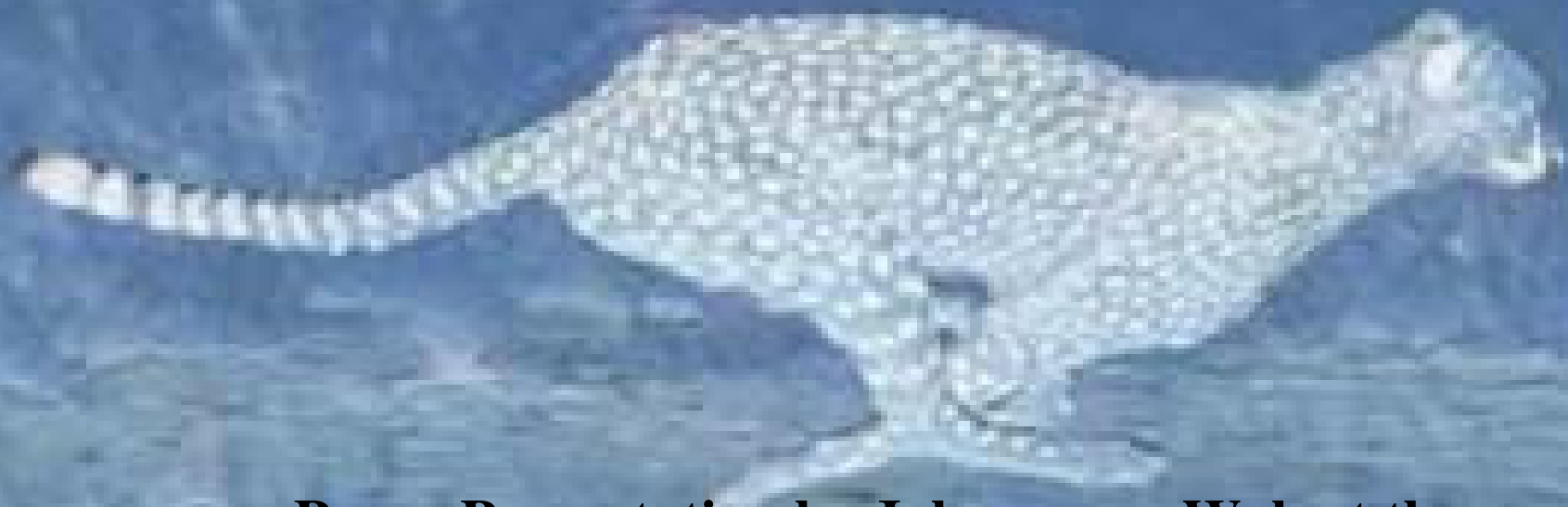


# **Communities of Practice in an academic library: a run on the wild side?**



**Paper Presentation by Johann van Wyk at the  
5<sup>th</sup> ICAHIS Conference held on 4-7 July 2005 at  
Onderstepoort, University of Pretoria,  
South Africa**

**Background: <http://www.cheetahs-cats.com>**

# Introduction



# Knowledge

- **Explicit knowledge**



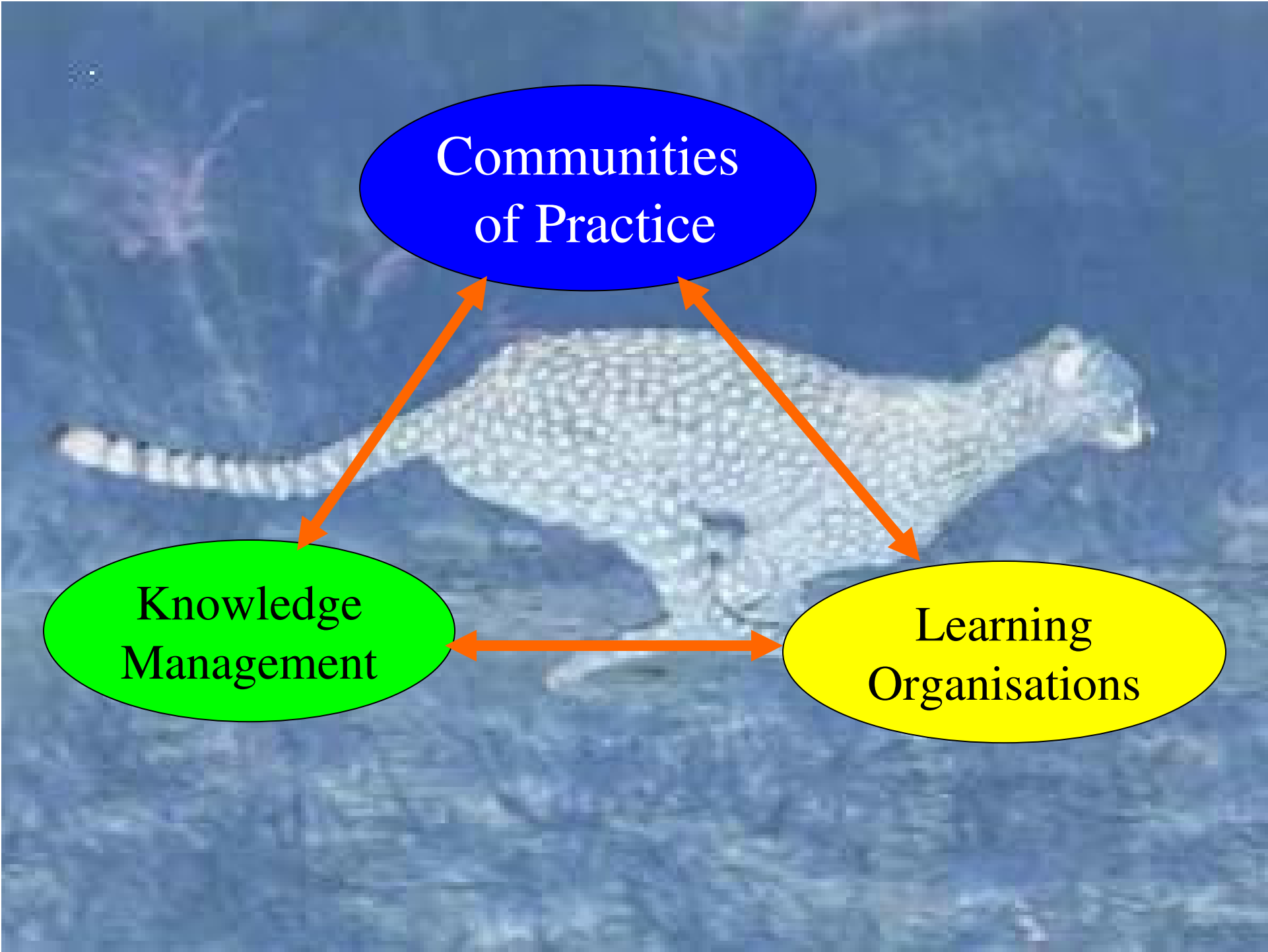
- **Tacit knowledge**





# Overview

- **Knowledge Management**
- **Learning Organisation**
- **Communities of Practice (CoPs)**
- **CoPs in an Academic Library: Case Study: Academic Information Service, University of Pretoria**



# Knowledge Management

- **Definition:**
  - **Utilisation and exploitation of all knowledge assets of organisation**
  - **Including all its info and its unarticulated experience and expertise**
  - **Ensure sustainability and competitive advantage**

## **KM Definition (Cont.)**

- **Utilises its culture, processes and infrastructure to**
- **Create, identify, capture, share, use & re-use knowledge**
- **Adding optimal value to client's knowledge base**

# Learning organisation

- **Definition:**

*“An organisation that can identify, develop and utilize its tacit and explicit knowledge capabilities, enabling the organisation to expand its capacity to learn and grow, and to modify its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights, and in doing so to improve its performance and success”.*

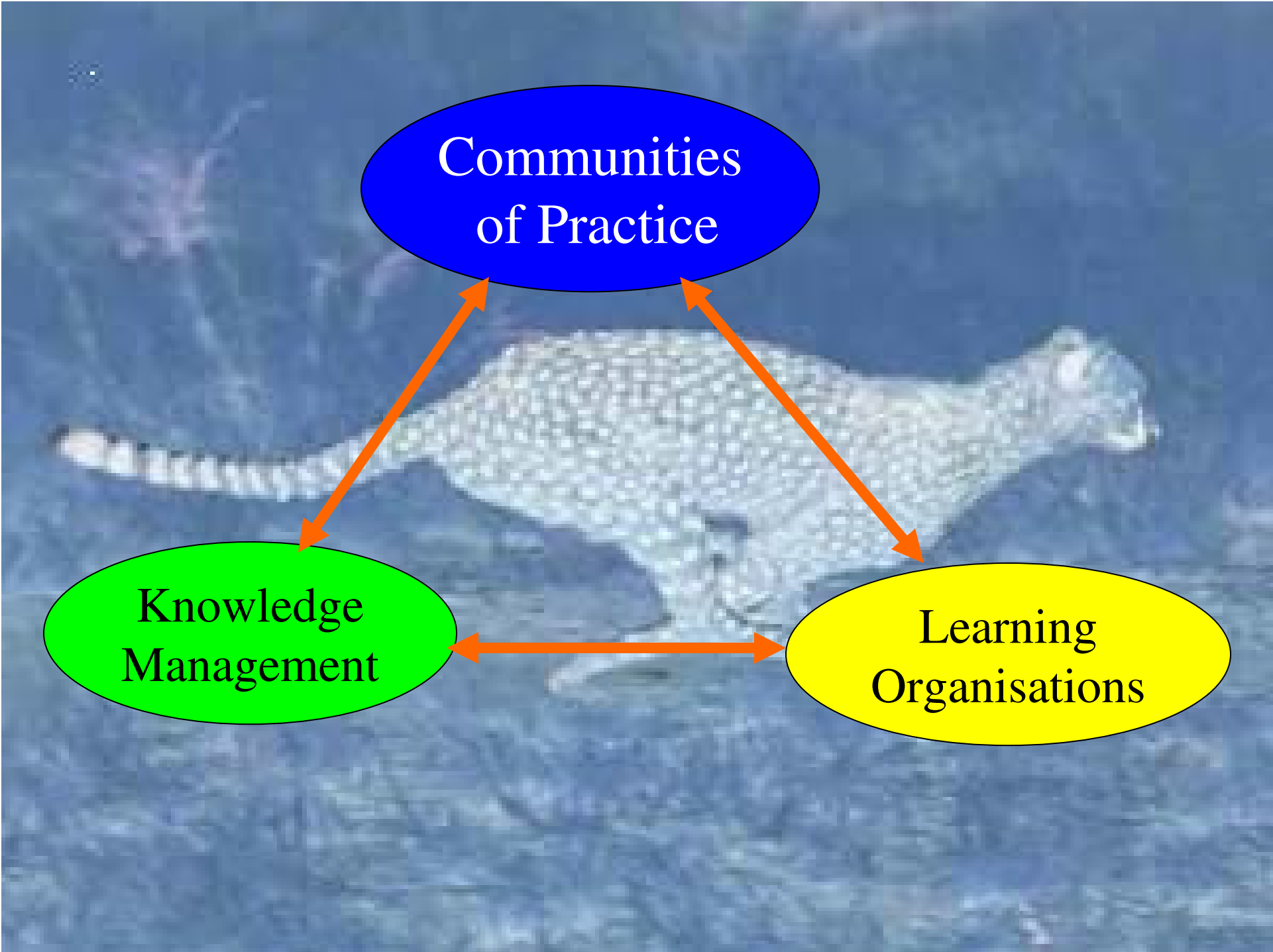


# Communities of Practice (CoPs)

- **Background:**
  - **Social groups: e.g. Drinking clubs, Roman Collegia, Guilds, Caste System in India, regiments, old-boy-networks, peer groups and gangs.**
  - **Academic groups: e.g. Royal Society, American Philosophical Society**
  - **Informal Academic Groups: Invisible Colleges**
  - **Xerox: Communities of Professionals**
  - **Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger**

# What is a Community of Practice?

*“A Community of Practice is a network of people emerging spontaneously, and held together by informal relationships and common purpose, that share common knowledge or a specific domain, expertise and tools, and learn from one another”.*

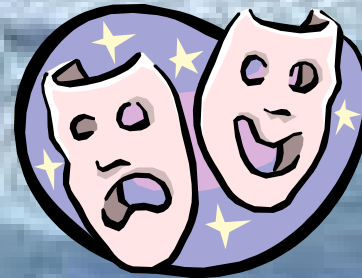


# Capturing knowledge through CoPs

- **Storytelling**

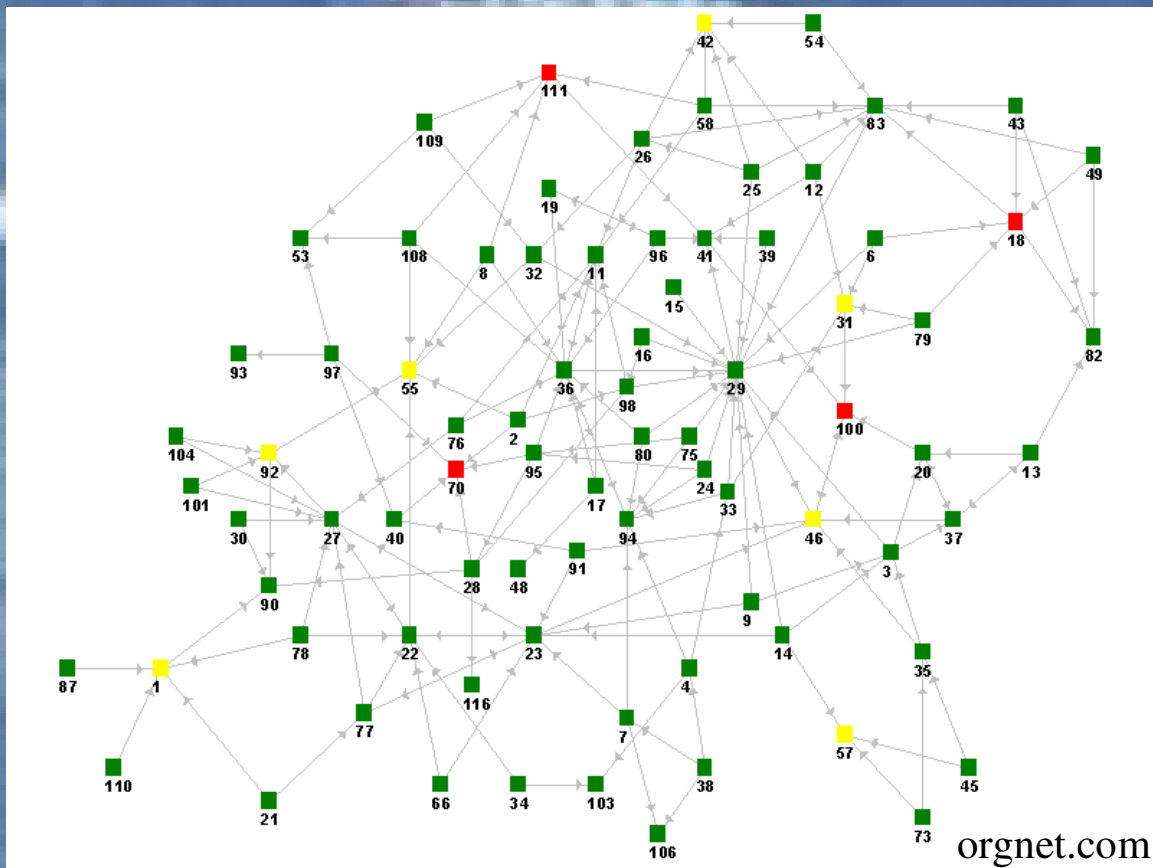


- **Role-play/simulations**



# Capturing knowledge through CoPs (Cont.)

- Knowledge Mapping



# **Case Study: Academic Information Service (AIS), University of Pretoria, South Africa**

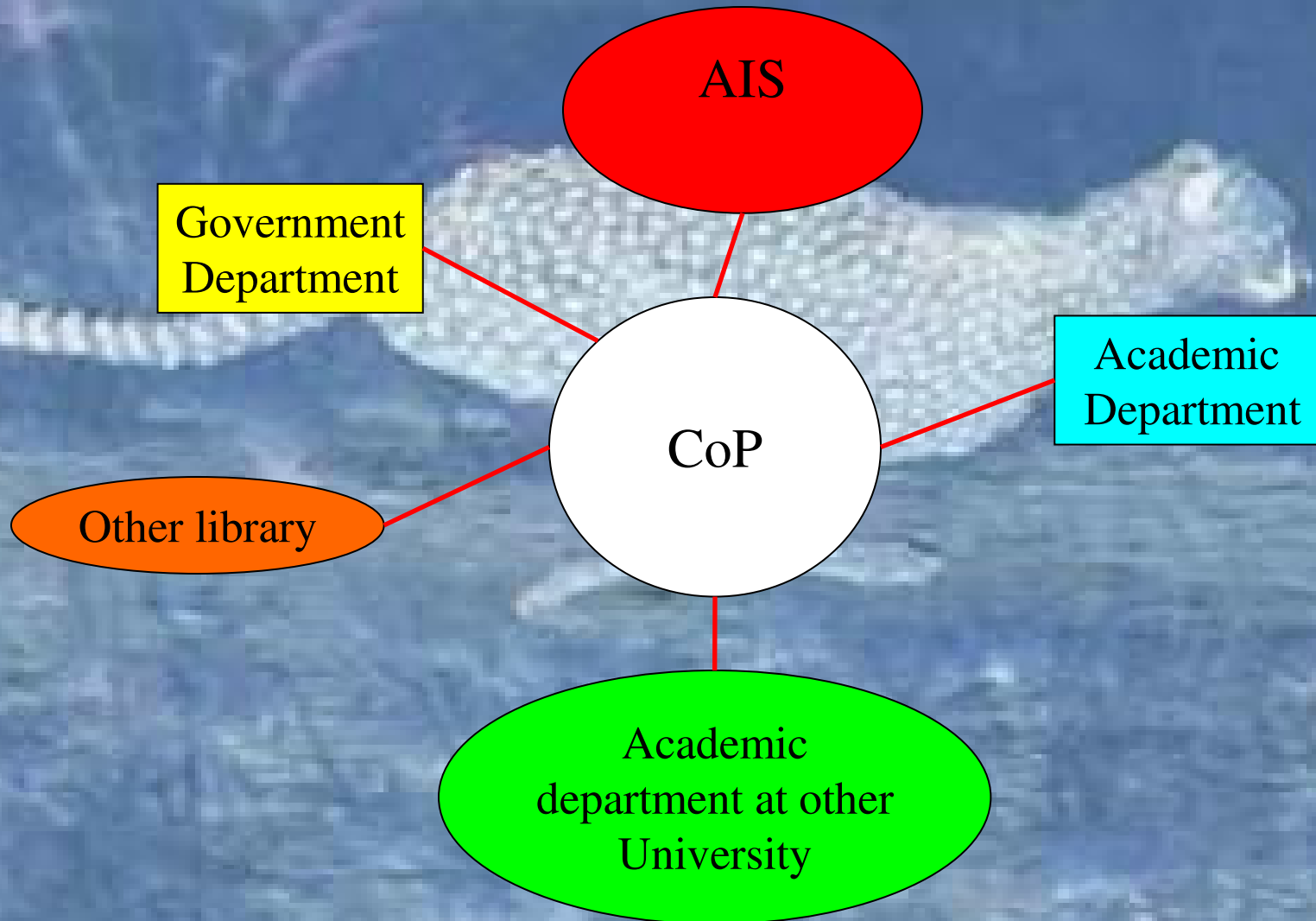


- **Background**
- **Respondents**
- **Method: Literature study and Interviews**

# CoPs identified in the AIS



# Cross Organisational CoPs





# Knowledge Management Practitioners Group of Pretoria

- <http://www.kmpg.org>



# GCATS (GAELIC Cataloguers)

**GAUTENG AND ENVIRONS  
LIBRARY CONSORTIUM  
(SOUTH AFRICA)**



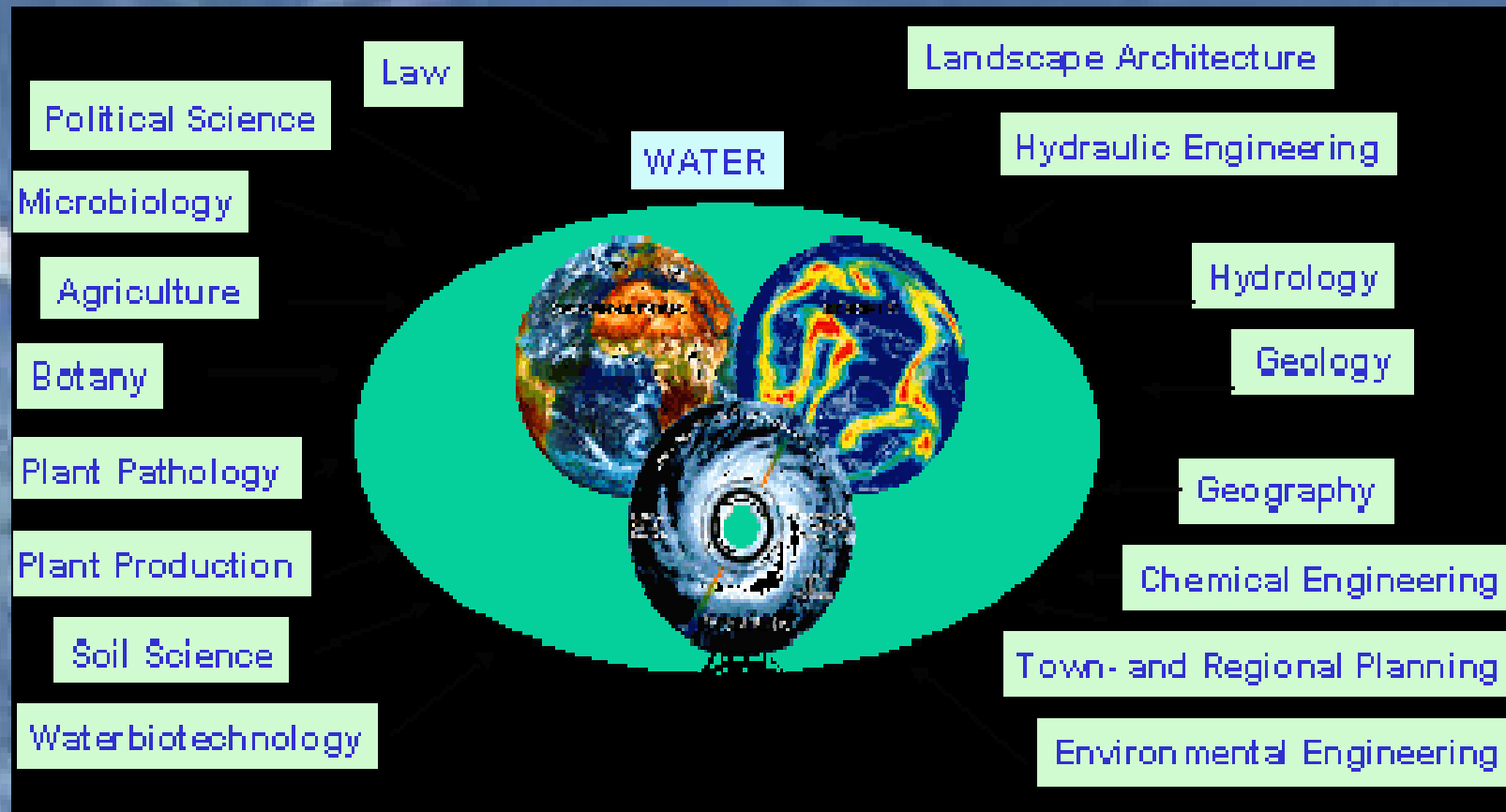
*Cataloging and Technical Services Workgroup*



# Maritime Archaeology Group



# Virtual Group on Water Research



# Virtual Group on Architecture

UPPortal - Virtual Group - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Refresh Print Stop

Address <https://www.up.ac.za/vgroups/app/template/workspace%2Cworkspace.vm/workspaceid/1376/view/1> Go Links »

UP Portal Search the UP Website

Help1 Logout

UP Portal -> InfoPortal -> Virtual Groups Mr Johann Van Wyk  
04 July 2005 10:42

Virtual Groups > Architecture

- Architecture
- What's New
- Messages
- Events
- Bookmarks
- Categories
- Documents and Resources

**New Messages**  
There are no new messages.

**New Events**  
There are no new events.

Local intranet

Start | Inbox - Outlook E... | UPPortal - Virtua... | Microsoft PowerPoi... | Desktop | Links | 10:42 AM


# African Goats Group

Goatweb - Microsoft Internet Explorer


File Edit View Favorites Tools Help


Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Refresh Print Stop

Address <http://www.ais.up.ac.za/vet/goatweb.html> Go Links »



UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
ACADEMIC INFORMATION SERVICE  
SERVICE UNIT: VETERINARY SCIENCE





**African Goats**

Information on goats and  
goat production systems in Africa

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- [Bibliography on African Goats](#)
- [Conferences and Papers on Goats](#)
- [Links to Goat Websites](#)
- Lists of African Expertise on Goats
  - [State/Provincial Goat Research and Development Facilities](#)
  - [Parastatal and University goat Research and Development Facilities](#)
- [Goat Research Centres / Departments](#)

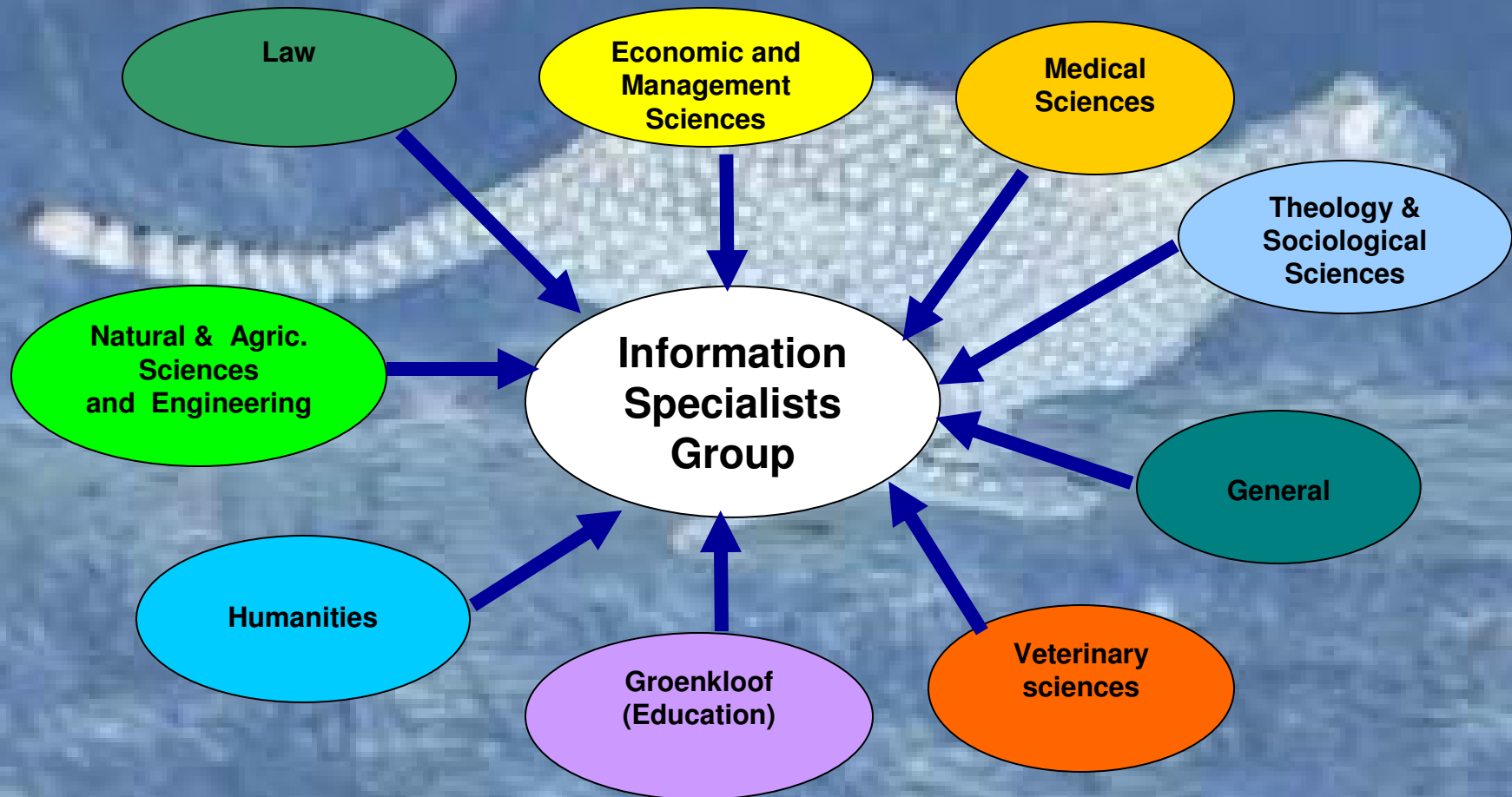
Local intranet

Start | Inbox - Outlo... | University of ... | Microsoft Po... | Goatweb - ... | Desktop » Links » | 10:47 AM

# Internal CoPs in the AIS



# Information Specialists Group






# Digital Repositories Group



# Informal Network for E-Information Experts



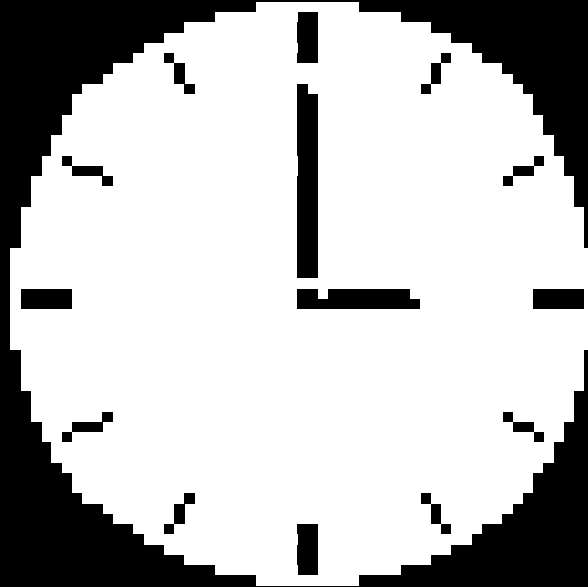
A blue-tinted photograph of a lizard, possibly a spiny-tailed lizard, on a textured surface. The word "Results" is overlaid in large, bold, black serif font across the center of the image. The lizard is facing right, and its tail is long and thin. The background is a mottled, textured blue.

# Results

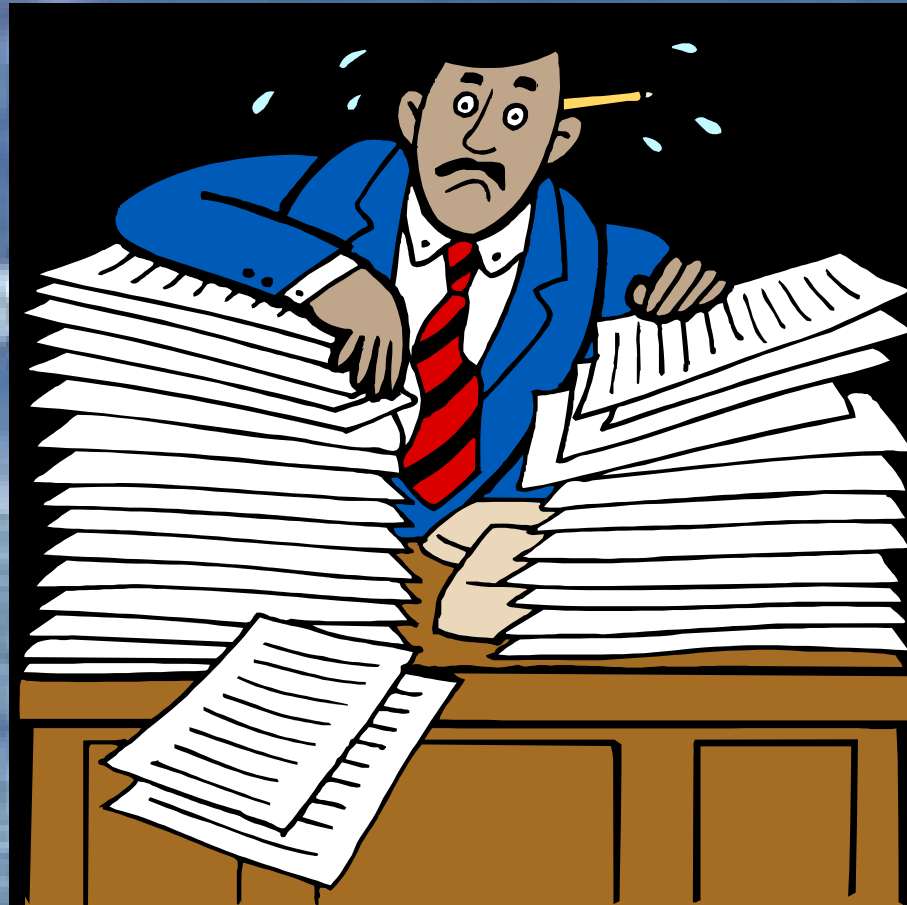
# Role of Management



# Time to participate



# Workload



# Rewards or Incentives



# Size of the CoP

- **Ideal size: 15 – 20 members**





# Trust

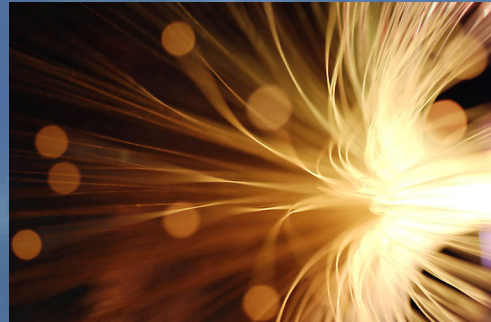


# Coordination or Facilitation role in the CoP





# **Information Technology**



- **E-mail and Listservs**
- **Telephone and Teleconferencing**
- **Web Pages**
- **Virtual Workspaces on Portals, e.g.  
InfoPortal of UP**



# Conclusion

- **Are Communities of Practice in Academic Libraries a run on the wild side?**