

Meet the Editor

# Hugh McKellar: Riding the *KMWorld* Wave

by LAUREE PADGETT

It was a busy September for Hugh McKellar, the editor-in-chief at *KMWorld*. In between his daughter's wedding and all his deadlines, he still managed to find some spare time to talk about his *KMWorld*.

For the record, I met him years ago when I was still working at ITI conferences.



Lauree Padgett

For a time, I was also part of the Medford production team for *KMWorld*, so I was in contact with him on a regular basis. That's when I first experienced his humor, which serves him well as he handles all the *KMWorld* offshoots he juggles

on a daily basis, including serving as co-chair of the *KMWorld* conference this month in San Jose, Calif.

## Surfer Boy

Born in Los Angeles, McKellar attended the University of California—Los Angeles, where he earned his B.A. When



Hugh McKellar

he wasn't studying, he was surfing along the California coast. Prior to joining *KMWorld*, he was a freelance writer and worked in content-strategy development for several business-to-business websites. Now that he's in Camden, Maine, the headquarters of *KMWorld*, he says he can't ever imagine leaving the Pine Tree State, even if finding places to ride a wave has become a bit more difficult in this locale.

## Catch a (KM) Wave

McKellar says *KMWorld* first "began life" in 1992 as *ImagingWorld*, a publication that covered the digital capture and document management industry, which is quite a bit different from knowledge management. He tags 1997 as the year when market conditions prompted a complete repositioning of the publication into *KMWorld*.

Tom Hogan, Information Today, Inc. president and CEO, remembers the publication's transition and why ITI purchased *KMWorld* in 1999.

Hogan recalls that during *ImagingWorld*'s heyday, the emphasis was on document and records management involving many different technologies: microfilm, document scanning, and data storage. Hogan explains those different technologies addressed the need to convert printed documents into electronic form for future storage and retrieval. At the end of the 1990s, more and more documents were starting out in digital form, and the conversion process was becoming a nonissue. "What *was* needed was a comprehensive strategy for retrieving and sharing the information in those documents—thus the term 'knowledge management' was born," says Hogan.

During that shift in technology, organizations were concerned about an aging work force that was on the verge of retirement. Not only would these older workers be leaving the work force, they would also be taking the knowledge they had acquired during their many years on the job home with them and onto the golf course or sailboat. In Hogan's words, "Knowledge management is an attempt to capture that knowledge for future generations of workers before it walks out the door forever."

He says ITI's interest in knowledge management "was a natural outgrowth of our many years following the field of information science and technology." He adds, "When we heard that *KMWorld* magazine and its companion conference were for sale, we jumped at the opportunity to add knowledge management to our portfolio of magazines and conferences."

ITI officially acquired *KMWorld* and its conference in December 1999 and began publishing the magazine in 2000, the year the conference also debuted under the ITI name. By that time, McKellar had taken over the editorship from Andy Moore, who later returned to the publication as publisher.

"There were some lean early years, particularly after 2001, when knowledge management lost favor as a useful but nonessential initiative, and we wondered if we had done the right thing," says Hogan. And for the benefit of all concerned, the need for knowledge management strategies proved to be strong enough not only to survive those turbulent times, but to thrive today.

## In My *KMWorld*

*KMWorld*, sporting a tagline of "Content, Document, and Knowledge Management," has carved a niche for itself in today's marketplace. McKellar has an interesting take on the topic. "Knowledge management isn't an application, it's an attitude," he says. With that in mind, he says the magazine focuses on "the technologies and best practices that enhance organizational and employee performance, efficiency, collaboration and innovation." The topics covered in *KMWorld* include business intelligence, business process management, collaboration (including social networking), competitive intelligence, content management, customer relationship management, digital asset management, document management, email management, enterprise search, intellectual property management, and records management (including e-discovery and compliance and workflow).

McKellar points out that while other similarly focused publications have come and gone in the past 10 years, *KMWorld* is excelling. So what's the secret formula? "We continue to be successful because of the experience, talent and integrity that are the cornerstones of the publication," he says. *KMWorld*'s regular contributors combine these three elements in every issue, including the work by columnists David Weinberger, Art Murray, and Jeff Leshner and senior writer Judith Lamont.

## *KMW* Gets Around

McKellar anticipates that in the next 12 months, monetizing content in the age of the web will be an ongoing challenge. However, he's confident that *KMWorld* will be ready for it.

"Fortunately our readership is by far the best in the business, and we have a variety of mechanisms to serve them: print, web, electronic newsletter [*KMWorld NewsLinks*], sponsored editorial (through our white paper series), and our conference," he says. To check out the range of KM-associated media that McKellar is describing, go to the ITI site ([www.infotoday.com](http://www.infotoday.com)) and click on the Knowledge Management option on the left bar. While you're there, you can peruse the final program for the 13th annual *KMWorld* conference and exhibition, which concentrates on Resetting the Enterprise: Focusing on People, Talent, and Knowledge.



McKellar is also excited about a new development for the 2010 publishing year. "We are currently investigating a great opportunity: a quarterly supplement for users of Microsoft SharePoint, the most widely adopted software suite on the market," he says. "Earlier this year, Microsoft announced more than 100 million users worldwide. Hundreds of independent software vendors have developed value-added components and services for SharePoint." He also expects *KMWorld* to continue to track the ever-growing emergence of social software in the enterprise.

## Wouldn't It Be Nice?

Since McKellar is a big fan of the poet T.S. Eliot, he cites these lines from "Burnt Norton" as his favorite quote:

Time present and time past  
Are both perhaps present  
in time future,  
And time future contained  
in time past.

It seems safe to bet that McKellar will remain a force in the present as well as the future of *KMWorld*, no matter which way you look at it.

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