

# Mental Models and Knowledge Management for Government Organizations



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**Harvesting Information to Sustain Our Forests**

OGI School of Science & Engineering, Oregon Health & Science University



# Session Questions

- What perspectives are useful for the study of the developmental processes and organization of digital government?
- What forms and processes of collaboration between social, policy and information scientists might further a research agenda for digital government?

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# Mental Models

- **Beliefs** about “the way the world works”
- **Drivers** for our actions
  - What questions we ask, what we filter out
- **Deeply trusted**
  - They got us where we are today
- **Hard to change**
  - We may not even be aware of them

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# So What?

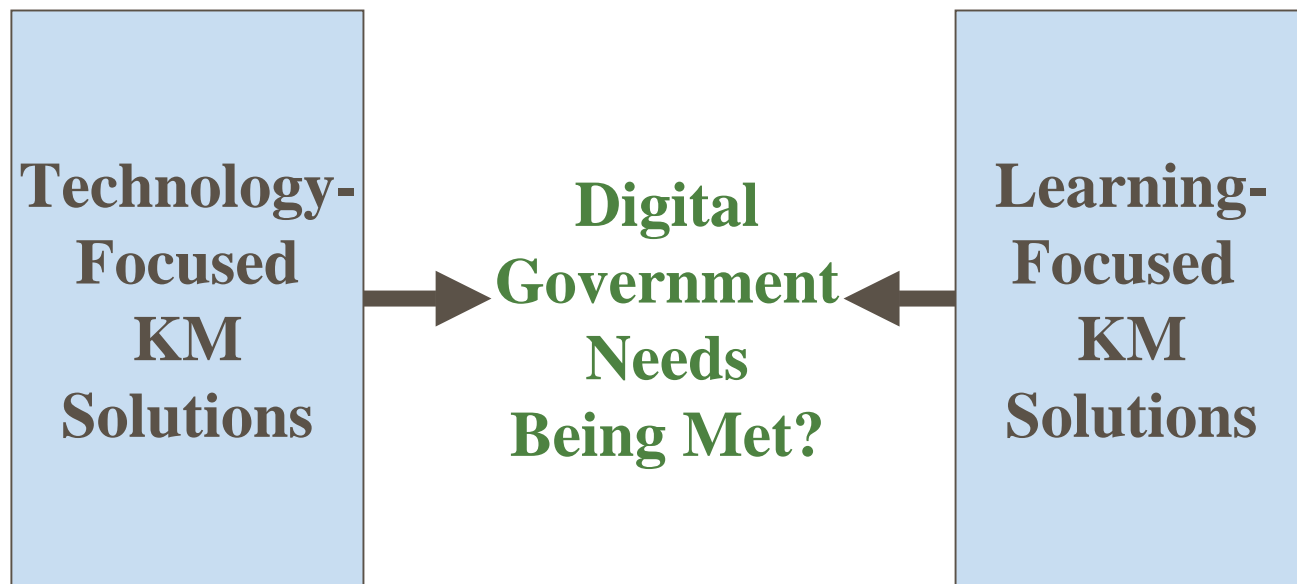
- Mental Models drive:
  - **Design** of information technology  
(e.g. user requirements)
  - **Implementation** of information technology  
(e.g. culture clash with IT folks)
  - **Use** of information technology  
(e.g. "data-free analysis")

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# Implications for dg.o Knowledge Management (KM) Needs:

- Current research is **bifurcated**

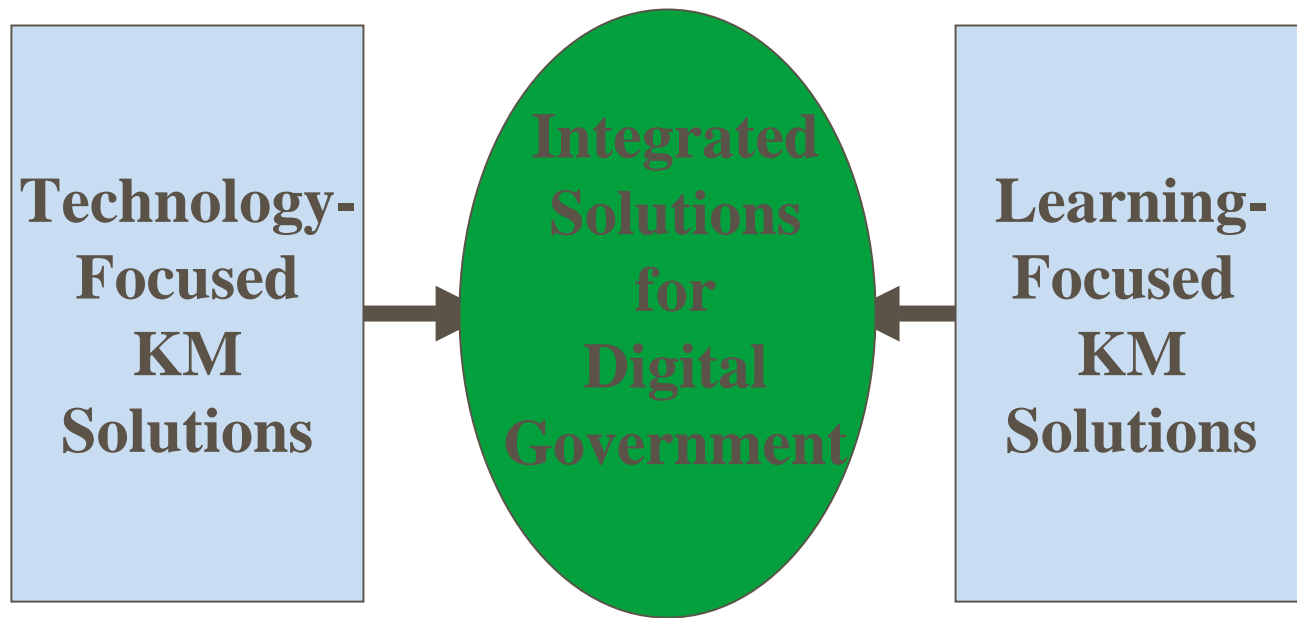


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# Implications for dg.o Knowledge Management (KM) Needs:

- Future research needs to be **integrated**



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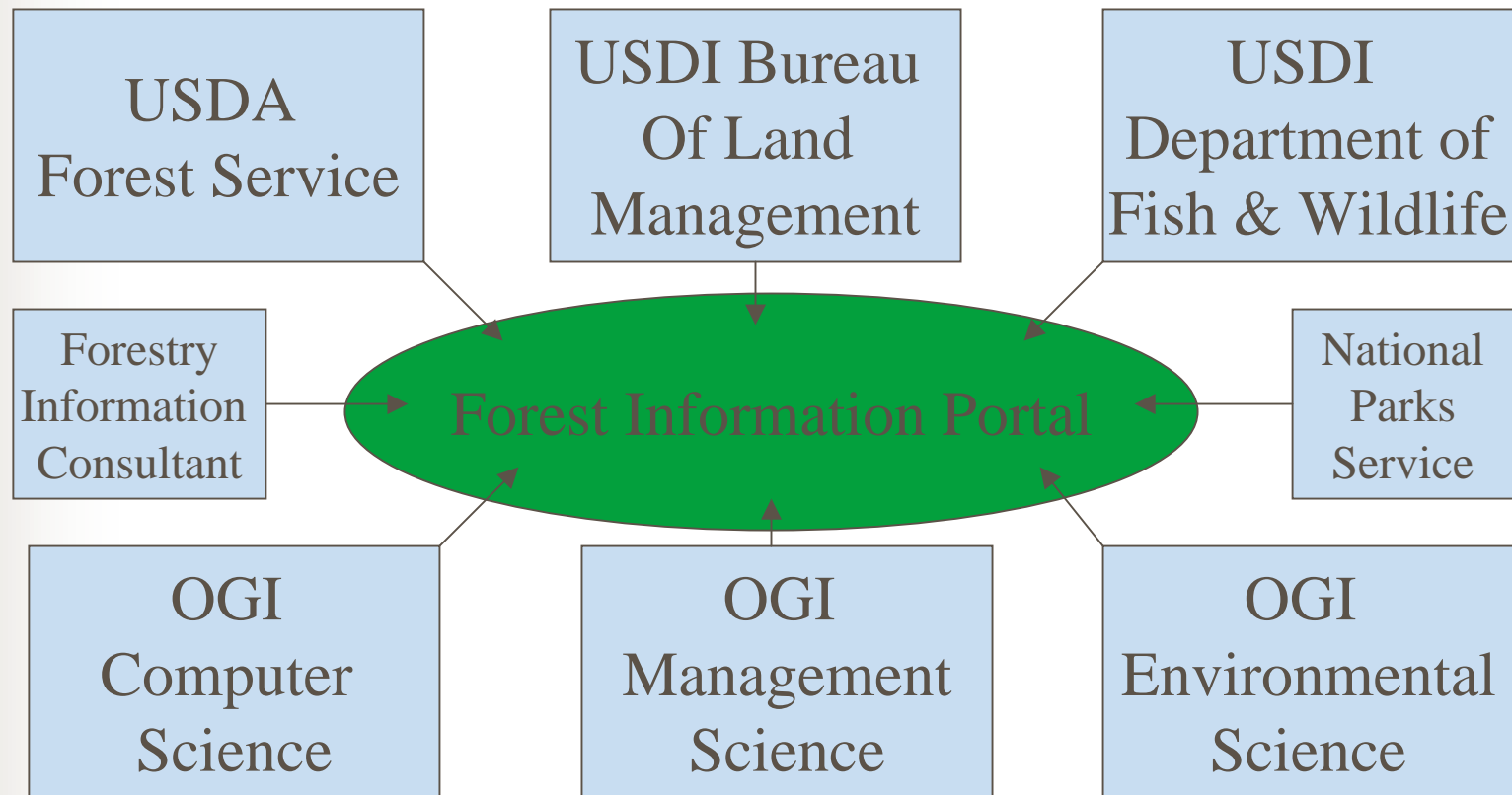
# Interdisciplinary Teams to Tackle Complex d.g.o Problems

- Seek active **government partners**
  - Motivated **individuals** as well as agencies
- Bring together key **academic disciplines**
  - **Computer science**
  - **Social science**
  - **Other relevant disciplines (e.g. environmental science)**

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# Harvesting Information to Sustain Our Forests: An Example



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# Mental Models in Practice

- **Similar and different** mental models:
  - Between (and within) different **government agencies**
  - Between (and within) different **academic disciplines**
  - Between **government and academia**

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# Implications for dg.o Interdisciplinary Research

- **Be aware** of your own mental models
- **Translate**
- **Ask questions**
- Look for the **forest** as well as the **trees**