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Performance Improvement is committed to presenting multiple voices and multiple perspectives related to the practice of human performance technology. Opinions of the authors do not necessarily represent the beliefs of ISPI or the editor.

I encourage you to read carefully this special issue of *Performance Improvement (PI)*. Our guest editor, Gary J. Dickelman, has brought together an impressive team of experts to share with us their thoughts about the areas of electronic performance support systems (EPSS) and knowledge management (KM). In his guest editorial, Gary does an excellent job of introducing the issue and explaining its significance to those of us involved in performance improvement and training. On behalf of our readers, I want to thank Gary and his colleagues for sharing their expertise with us.

As I consumed the issue, I had two dominant thoughts. Are EPSS and KM tomorrow's promise or will they lead us in another walk down the primrose path? I use the word "consumed" because one cannot read this issue lightly.

My reading of an editorial piece in the June 26, 2000 issue of *U.S. News & World Report* prompted my thoughts about tomorrow's promise. The piece is titled "No time to slow down: Can we keep working harder and harder indefinitely?" It points out that the average work week is up to 47 hours, four more than two decades ago. Forty-four percent of Americans call themselves workaholics. And, a new number, "24/7," has entered our lexicon. It signifies the growing number of workers who find themselves engaged in their work 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. The editors argue that "24/7" has come to symbolize a new way of life toppling old ways of looking at work, family, rest, and recreation (p.14).

I hope the editors are wrong. I do not want to live in a "24/7" world, and I do not wish it upon our children and grandchildren. So comes the potential of EPSS and KM. If these technologies achieve their promise and help us to increase productivity by working faster and smarter rather than harder, workers at all levels will have the time to slow down and realize the joys of life beyond work.

On the other hand, are EPSS and KM new walks down the all too familiar primrose path? Will zealots and unscrupulous entrepreneurs ignore the lessons of the past and sell the technologies of EPSS and KM as ends rather than means to ends? As with the myriad of past soft and hard technology innovations, will we forget that upfront planning, carefully thought out design and development decisions, and evaluation driven decision-making are what makes performance and training technologies effective? Most important of all, will these technologies be used to maximize the productivity of individual and teams of workers or will they be used sub-optimally?

I have high hopes for these new and emerging technologies. However, we must keep our eyes on the target as we design and develop sets of interventions that include EPSS and KM to be certain that they efficiently and effectively address strategically aligned performance problems. If these high-powered interventions become ends in themselves, their long-term impact on performance technology will be marginal at best and we will once again have taken a stroll down the primrose path.

If you have similar or diverging thoughts about these issues, contribute to *PI* by sharing your thoughts in the *Reader's Forum*. These important issues deserve your attention. The authors of this issue and your colleagues in ISPI want to hear from you. Your input is valued.

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