

# Lessons Learned from the Failure of an Experience Base Initiative Using a Bottom-up Development Paradigm

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# The Issues

1. A large electronic repository of lessons learned and project information.
2. The information is not easily accessed.
3. Question - Can we provide experience successfully without explicit packaging?

# The Organizational Context

1. Well-documented processes
2. Existing measurement program
3. Staff committed to improvement and “allowed” to experiment

# The Organizational Solution

Microsoft Site Server 3.0

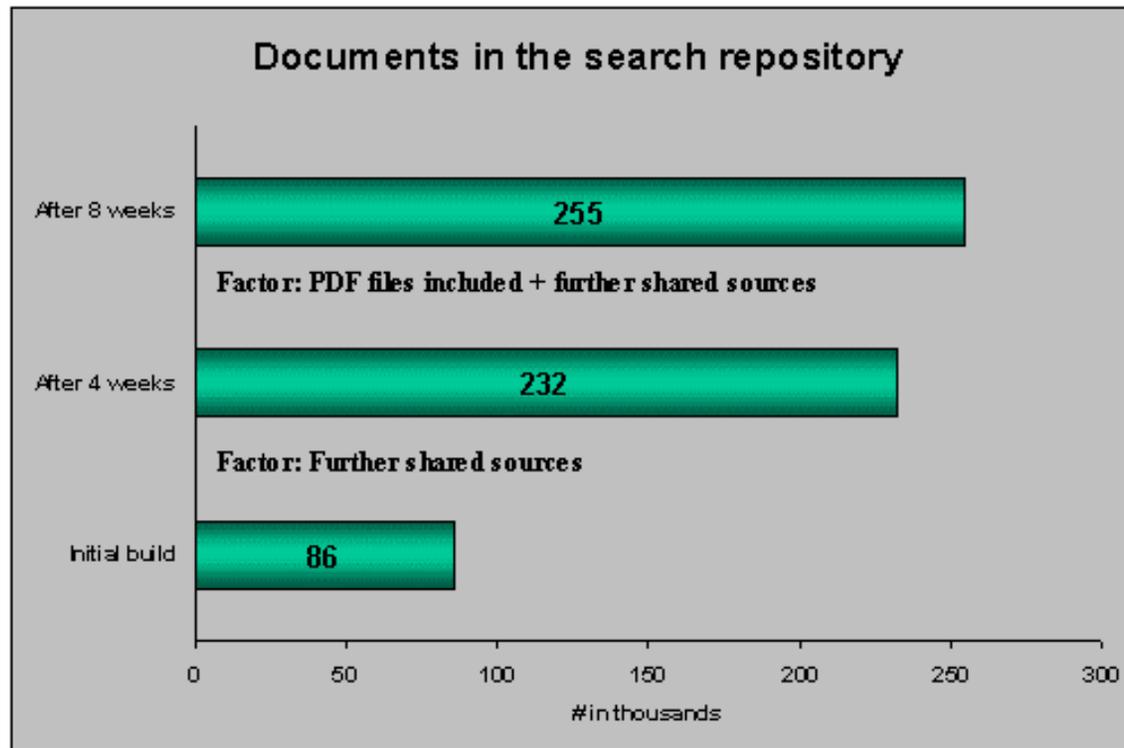
Network environment (Intranet) - Microsoft  
Windows NT .

Clients - Windows 98, Windows NT,  
Windows NT Server, Unix

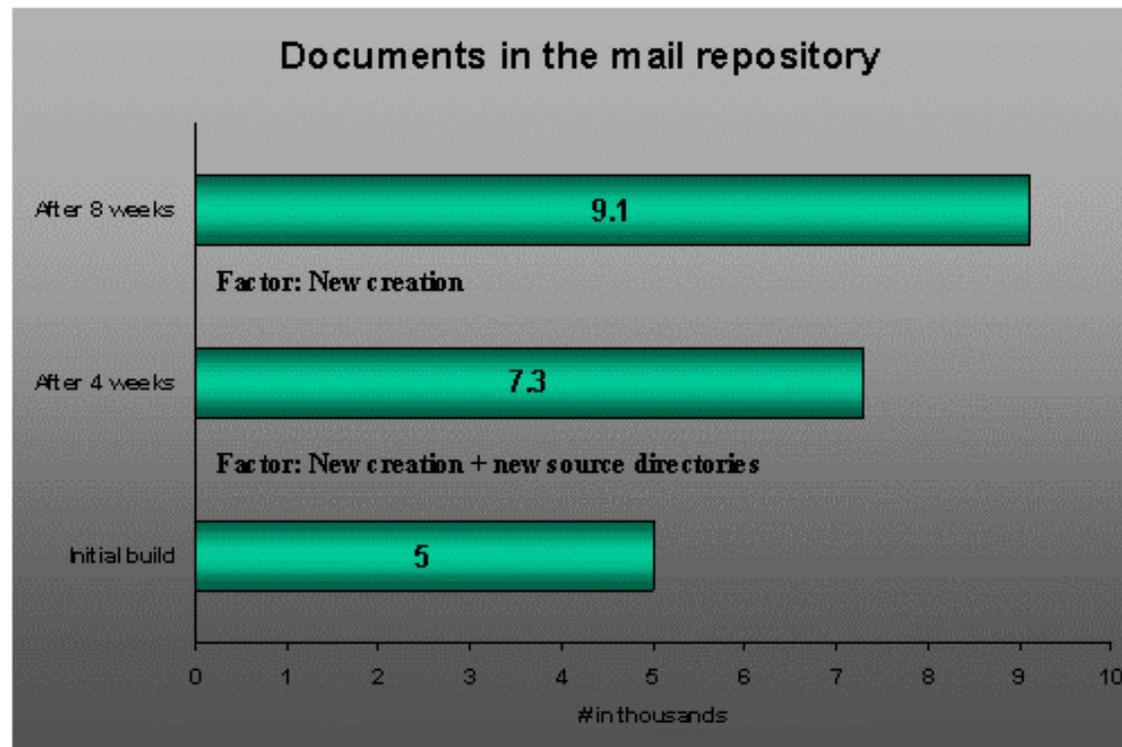
# The Potential Experience Base

Document source	File types	Information type
Mail Exchange Server	Mail format (exch)	Folders for past and current project information, technology discussions, reuse items, etc.
Project and department web server	HTML, Microsoft Office documents (DOC, XLS, PPT), Adobe Acrobat PDF, database files (SQL, Access)	Project documents ranging from code to process descriptions, general department information like administration tasks
Local workstations	Microsoft Office documents (DOC, XLS, PPT), Adobe Acrobat PDF, HTML, plain text (TXT)	Documents gathered for own information purpose, document drafts

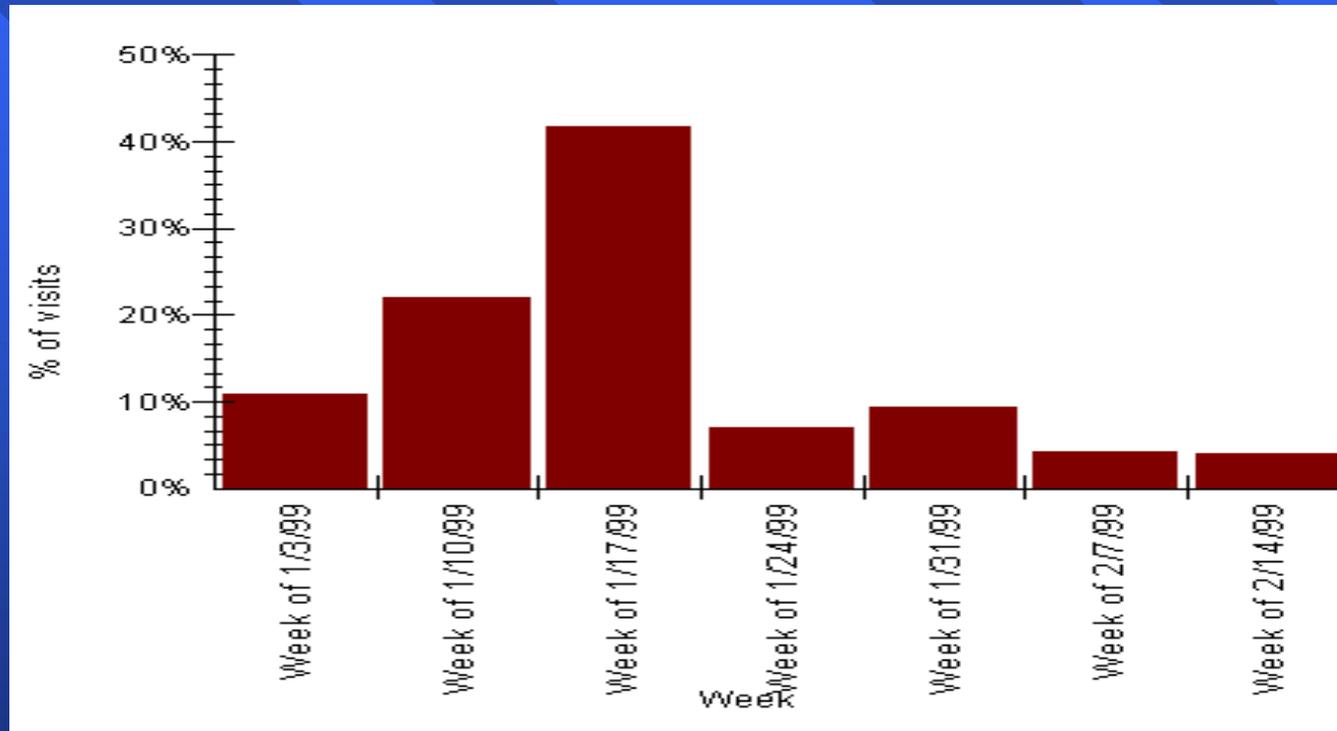
# Analysis of Documents



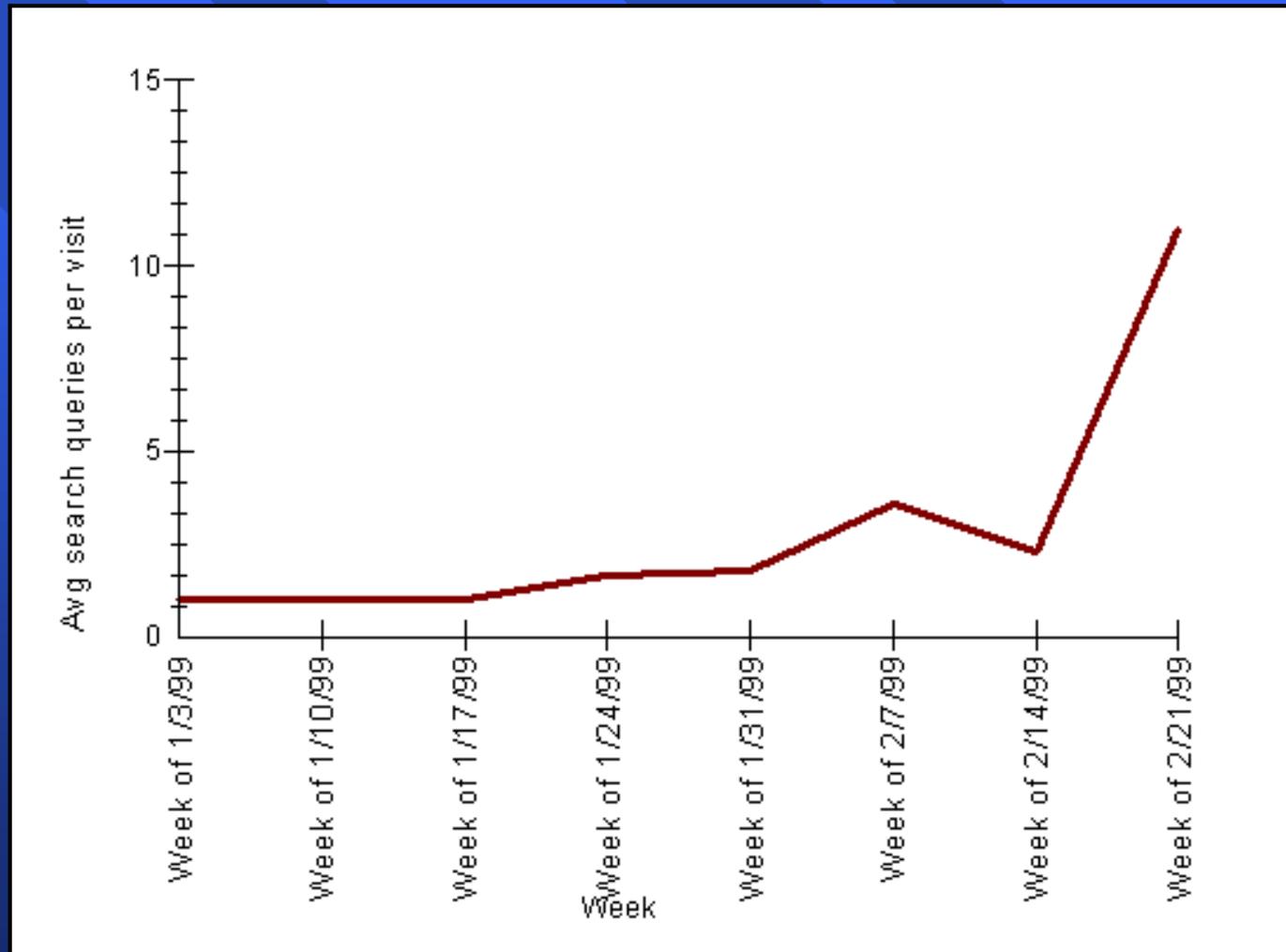
# Documents in the Mail Repository



# Site Visit Pattern



# Queries per Visit



# Preliminary Indications.

- The acceptance and usage of the repository was promising.
- The usage frequency indicated a degree of integration into the daily information search activities.
- The information which was needed in the department covered a very wide range of areas.
- Process and new technology information seemed to be of special interest.
- Informing people about the presence and the usefulness of the concept was important.

# Survey about usage benefits

- People who had been working in the department for a long time knew where information could be found without using the repository.
- People also reported that they found documents and information that had been lost. The average time saved through this was estimated to be in a range of 1 to 4 hours.
- The search engine breaks down information barriers between projects and environments.

# Conclusions (1)

The environment was usable for only 8 weeks and hence the data has to be considered very carefully.

Our experience is that we achieved the technical objectives. In this respect the project was successful.

The usage patterns indicated a trend towards consistent use and integration into the work cycle.

# Conclusions (2)

Surprisingly, given the positive comments by the users, the system was decommissioned shortly after the completion of the project.

While a senior manager was the initial champion of the project, its implementation was assigned to a busy project leader.

1. Greater emphasis should have been placed on ensuring that the project champion maintained a more visible presence on the project.

# Conclusions (3)

2. There was a lack of identification of clear goals and payback criteria for the project.

Although technology can support this type of experience base, a top down GQM-based methodology has the characteristics that are more likely to ensure longer-term success. A business focus might have maintained the initiative.

3. The close physical proximity of the development teams and the relatively small number of personnel worked against the need for a more formal repository-based experience factory.