CASE STUDY

Knovel®

Arup

Fostering collaboration through efficient access to technical insights

SUMMARY

Knovel supports Arup in driving engineering excellence through connecting users around the world with essential information that is easy to integrate and share.
“I find that searching through Knovel makes it easy to find relevant information and helps me to save time.”

– Jegan Thanapalasingam, Senior Infrastructure Engineer

With over 10,000 employees and more than 81 offices in 31 countries, Arup has come a long way since its mid-20th century origins as a small team of civil and structural engineering professionals. Today, the independent firm of designers, planners, engineers, consultants and technical specialists has revenues over £950 million and representation in Africa, the Americas, Australia, Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

Best known for its innovative and technically-challenging engineering work including the National Aquatics Center (the “Water Cube”) in Beijing, 30 St Mary Axe (the “Gherkin”) in London and the Second Avenue Subway in New York, Arup has projects in acoustics, maritime engineering, public health engineering and waste to energy solutions. By working to shape a sustainable future, Arup continues to build a legacy that is long-lasting.

Arup was first conceived in 1946 as a multi-disciplinary professional services firm. Even then, founder Ove Arup understood the importance of collaboration. Ever since coming into international prominence for its work on the Sydney Opera House, Arup has taken on projects that require a diverse combination of talents. It’s an approach that continues to this day, as the firm is involved with ground-breaking projects, from the UK’s first international high speed railway (through the Channel Tunnel) and Hong Kong’s Stonecutters Bridge to Beijing National Stadium (the famous “Bird’s Nest”) in China. Today Arup is a global organization with a unique ownership structure that keeps Arup accountable to the interdependent, “no man is an island” spirit Ove Arup espoused in his 1970 “key speech.”

Saving time and boosting productivity
These same values of collaboration and worldwide interconnectedness may be what inspired the London-based firm to subscribe to Knovel. By making Knovel’s web-based application available to all of its engineering teams, Arup sought to ensure that each of the firm’s offices worldwide had access to the same reliable technical resources. In the words of Arup Information Systems Manager Julian Dawson, “Arup has a strong information sharing ethos, and knowledge tools like Knovel are fundamental in underpinning our knowledge and skills networks. By using Knovel, we expect to gain savings in time and productivity from the speed at which people can access the information they require from their desktop and by being able to drill down to the exact content of a publication.”

During his long career at Arup, Julian has witnessed the evolution of information strategies – once entirely focused on physical libraries – to now focusing on providing virtual solutions to a global staff that requires not only specific information but also analysis tools that enable instead manipulation and integration of the data they find.

Collaborative companies need collaborative tools
Arup’s adoption of Knovel is still in the early stages, but thanks to the firm’s tradition of collaboration, word of Knovel’s value continues to spread. Trial results of Knovel, initially in Arup’s American offices and then global, were “overwhelmingly supportive” of...
obtaining a subscription to Knovel’s technical content. This helped Julian present a viable business case to the engineering leadership.

The feedback collected from the trials showed that just as important as Knovel’s searchable information is the ability “to manipulate that content and find the precise table that you actually require by searching on particular key words. Moreover, because Knovel “allows people to access material wherever they are, they’re not penalized for being in a small remote office. They’re able to get the information straight away.”

**Powerful search assists with problem-solving**

Jegan Thanapalasingam, for one, strongly believes in Knovel’s usefulness and recommends it to others “more and more.” Thanapalasingam, a senior Infrastructure engineer in Brisbane, Australia says, “I find that searching through Knovel makes it easy to find relevant information and helps me to save time.” He goes on to describe the ease of Knovel’s keyword searching and the value of Knovel’s automatic filtering that directs users to the most relevant sources by showing “appropriateness to the key words in terms of percent.”

JULIAN also touts the company-wide subscription to Knovel as a “cost-effective solution for the whole firm, that’s helped everybody.”

Blair Gray, a London-based engineer who works in building engineering for Arup finds Knovel “very useful.” Gray has used Knovel to research a number of specific problems on jobs. For example, he described how he used Knovel to find “an estimation of electromagnetic shielding provided by a modular walling solution, which led to the development of a simple spreadsheet to allow the performance of various materials to be quickly assessed.”

Mel Navarro, a Manila-based Arup assistant engineer enjoys how Knovel lets him easily search a specific topic. He commented, “Instead of searching for a handbook, I search for a topic and it feeds me various results which are very related to what I want.” Navarro also found “many results about HVAC and Plumbing services” and saved them for easy future access using the Add to My Knovel feature.

**Creating connections to take on big challenges**

Arup continues to produce technically challenging, far-sighted work in part because of its commitment to designing not just for current generations but also for generations of the future. Arup firmly believes in the importance of people working together to resolve challenges. In Ove Arup’s words, “our lives are inextricably mixed up with those of our fellow human beings, and…there can be no real happiness in isolation.”

By connecting engineers around the world with the essential information they need, Knovel is proud to help Arup continue its legacy of making a lasting, positive impact along with its tradition of engineering excellence.
LEARN MORE

To request information or a product demonstration, please visit elsevier.com/knovel or email us at knovel@elsevier.com.

Visit www.elsevier.com/rd-solutions or contact your nearest Elsevier office.

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