U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral & Social Sciences

FACT SHEET

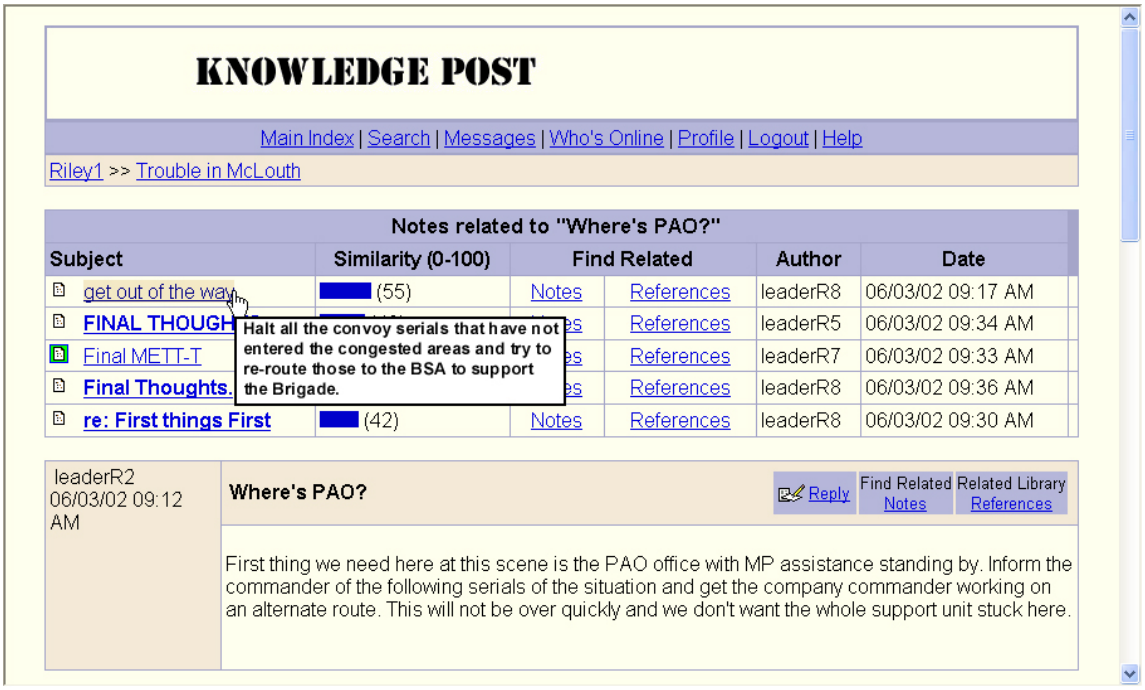
Knowledge Post: Learning through Collaboration

Background. Adaptable and creative leadership skills develop slowly over many years, growing out of operational experience in a wide variety of situations. However, by exploiting computer power in communities of practice, we can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of leadership skill acquisition. In the classroom and the field, leaders can use collaborative learning environments to create better solutions and share more relevant knowledge on tactical and daily life military scenarios.

Product. Knowledge Post is a collaborative threaded discussion group, powered by Latent Semantic Analysis, a machine learning technology that understands the meaning of text. Knowledge Post allows users to:

- **Post and read "notes" or contributions**
- **Find notes that are similar to other notes & references**
- **Find relevant material in a vast electronic library**
- **View summaries of notes**
- **Have their cumulative contributions critiqued automatically**

(over)



This screen shows the related notes facility and the summarization facility. By clicking on the "Find Related Notes" button, the most semantically similar notes containing broader and better information than the one entitled, "Where's PAO" are displayed above. The note, "get out of the way," has been summarized by "mousing" over the note title. If desired, the user could also find related library references.

Results: Officers contributed and learned more using Knowledge Post. Over the past year Knowledge Post has been compared to face-to-face discussion groups with several hundred Army officers discussing leadership and battle scenarios. Knowledge Post has won the comparison hands down:

- ✓ **Officers made higher quality contributions than when discussing the same issues face-to-face.**
- ✓ **More learning took place with Knowledge Post, particularly for the more junior officers.**

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