

Intranet Strategy and Management

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Chapter 1: Introduction

About this report

This report is concerned with the steps required to successfully devise, implement, exploit, monitor and refine an effective intranet. The first two chapters of the report look at the process and techniques required to devise the intranet strategy, whilst the remaining chapters focus on the implementation and measurement of that strategy.

Who this report is intended for?

This report is intended for use by those involved in any capacity with the contribution to, or management of, an intranet, whether in the private or public sector and regardless of organisational size or primary activity. Intranets are as unique as the organisations they serve and although the exact operational and planning activities of organisations may differ, the principles of intranet management covered in this report apply equally to intranets in the public or private sector and for organisations of all sizes and geographic distribution.

Each chapter has been written as succinctly as possible, with the key lessons to be taken from the section summarised at the start of each chapter for rapid digestion. The 'quick reference' summary panel distils the essence of the chapter. If you are looking for answers to common problems turn to the quick reference and suggested reading sections. This will point you in the right direction.

Scope of the report

This report will focus on the contribution intranets can and should make to **any** organisation, not just a profit motivated publicly quoted business with shareholder concerns and considerations central to their decision-making.

This years' annual Norman Nielson Group (NN Group) Intranet of the Year award reveals an unlikely candidate in the UK charity the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) that illustrates that not-for-profit organisations stand to benefit hugely from an intranet focussed tightly on organisational needs. Even charities with strong pressures on cost controls can achieve results that allow them to appear alongside publicly-quoted companies with far deeper pockets and resources.

"Well designed intranets support employees and volunteers in achieving non-profit missions just as well as they improve productivity – and thus profitability – in for-profit businesses." (NN Group)

You won't see the word portal referred to in this report. This report doesn't distinguish between intranets and portals, and throughout the term intranet is used to refer to the range of approaches organisations take to exploit web technology within the organisation. The distinction between portals and intranets has always been problematic, largely technology driven rather than outcome focussed and, over time, and particularly with the emergence of Web 2.0 application integration technology, will disappear completely. It is fair to say that portal products have had a difficult time within organisations. Perceived as expensive and difficult to implement they have frequently failed to deliver to expectations.

According to a recent Gartner report 'Portals are the Swiss Army Knives of Enterprise Software', more than 50% of portal deployments are first generation portals with technology and features developed in the 90s and are without