

Intranet Design Annual

The 10 Best Intranets of 2002

By: Kara Pernice, Candice Goodwin, and Jakob Nielsen

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Nielsen Norman Group

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Executive Summary

In last year's Intranet Design Annual, we predicted that 2002 would be the year of the intranet, after a decade of neglect. Judging from the results of this year's design competition, we were right.

We received a huge increase in nominations, and, more importantly, most of the nominated designs in 2002 showed that many big companies are making great efforts to get their intranets under control. This year, 118 intranets were nominated for the design award; given the high quality of so many of the designs, it was hard to narrow down the field to only ten winners. The best of the best intranets designs in 2002 were (in alphabetical order):

- ABB
- BellSouth
- Credit Suisse Financial Services
- Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, Australia
- Lonely Planet Publications
- Mira Networks AB
- Northwestern Mutual
- Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
- Washington Mutual
- The World Bank Group

Washington Mutual won for an intranet application to manage executive compensation. The other nine winners were company-wide intranets. Most of the winners are huge corporations, such as Wal-Mart and ABB with 900,000 and 160,000 users, respectively. Indeed, one of the main trends this year was that major corporations are making major strides toward coordinating their intranet designs and improving usability.

Still, much smaller companies can also design great intranets. This year's winners, for example, included Lonely Planet Publications, with 450 users, and Mira Networks, which has only twelve employees. Of course, a smaller company will have fewer resources, but it also has a more focused mission for its intranet and can more easily involve all parties in the design process to ensure usability.

A disproportionate number of winners came from the financial services sector, which accounted for four of the top ten intranets in 2002. One possible explanation for this is that financial companies have a long tradition of professionally managed development projects to centralize and coordinate company-wide services. Such a tradition bodes well for establishing a well-functioning intranet with a consistent design. Because financial companies tend to be big and have much money at stake, they have also traditionally focused on productivity and usability in their software projects. This focus may have transferred to their intranet projects, giving them a further leg up on companies with less established usability traditions. Telephone companies also have a strong tradition of software development productivity and usability, and we have a winner from this industry as well.

The remaining winners covered a broad spectrum of industries, from consulting and publishing to retail and manufacturing.

In terms of management structure, the only trend we found was that there was no clear picture of who winning intranet teams report to within the organizations. The two most common organizational homes for the intranet teams were information technology departments and human resources (HR) departments, but we also found good intranet teams reporting to the corporate secretary and the corporate communications department. Finally, a few intranets belonged to broader e-resolutions departments responsible for both the public Internet website and the private intranet within the firewall.

INTERNATIONAL INTRANETS

Great intranets are found in all parts of the world. The 2002 winners include five companies headquartered in the United States, three companies headquartered in Europe (ABB in Switzerland, but designed in Norway; Credit Suisse in Switzerland; and Mira Networks in Sweden), and two companies headquartered in Australia (Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu and Lonely Planet Publications). And, while the World Bank Group is headquartered in the U.S., its design agency was in India (Satyam Computer Services).

The international scope of the top 2002 intranets is even wider than indicated by the winning companies' headquarter locations. Many of the companies cater to international operations, such as the World Bank, which has personnel on missions in countries with low-speed dial-up connections, and the much smaller Lonely Planet, which nonetheless operates branch offices in three countries outside Australia. The intranets enhance communication across borders and help multinational companies achieve a more integrated feel, as well as supporting more pragmatic features, such as document sharing between countries. Integrating a single intranet across multiple countries was a definite theme this year, whereas many companies in the past had separate intranets for each country in which they operate.

Overseas offices usually have their own pages in the local language to cover local content and interests. Unfortunately, some intranets are using content management systems that don't update the navigation features for international users, leaving them to read global menus in English. Multilingual search remains an unresolved problem. We hope that the underlying technology for intranets will evolve in the coming years to provide better support for international users.

LONG DEVELOPMENT TIMES, BUT NO BIG BANG

Most of the winning projects spent about two years on their intranet redesigns. This is an important lesson for companies and cautions against exaggerated hopes for instant gratification. For a big company, it's a big project to redesign an intranet and roll out a consistent design across all divisions. Great intranet usability and employee productivity requires more work than just adding water to some portal software.

Even though the full process can take about two years, our winning projects did not hold off until everything was perfect before releasing the new intranets to an unsuspecting public. Some companies had been burned before by "big bang" development projects that took forever to create a hoped-for solution to all problems in a single, delayed release. Instead, all of the winning companies followed a staged approach, gradually releasing new templates, portals, search engines, personalization features, and other components of the full intranet. Also, the central design teams typically aimed at converting individual departments to the new design

one at a time, rather than asking everyone to change all of their pages all at once. A big bang would be an impossible strategy considering the size of these intranets: BellSouth has 3 million pages across 1,000 subsites, Credit Suisse Financial Services has a million pages, and even a smaller company like Lonely Planet has 50,000 pages.

Some projects had very tight deadlines due to organizational restructuring or corporate mergers. Because we can not expect big companies to base their business strategy on the convenience of intranet designers, it follows that intranet teams need to be flexible enough to accommodate big, sudden changes. Intranet designers should enhance their readiness by continuously collecting usability data and insights so that they know where they should move if they get sudden marching orders. For very fast projects, it may not be possible to employ the full human-centered design process, but you can leverage the usability knowledge and guidelines you have already collected. Projects on overly accelerated development schedules typically followed up on their initial release with a round of usability clean-up and gradual improvements, leading them to a winning design in the end.

In the long term, we will need better tools to quickly implement major changes in intranet designs. For now, one helpful approach is to structure the intranet's information architecture based on employees' tasks and job goals instead of on the company's org chart. Even major reorgs are likely to leave large parts of a task-based intranet in place, whereas an organizationally structured intranet will require redesign. Indeed, most of this year's winners chose information architectures and navigation schemes that are primarily task-based.

KILLER APPLICATIONS AND ONE-STOP SHOPPING

Much of the value of an intranet comes from making it a communications tool that all employees check every day. This can be a challenge, especially if the old intranet was universally hated for being clumsy and impossible to work with, as was the case in some of the companies. A common solution (in addition to redesigning for better quality, of course) is to prominently feature a killer app that is so useful that people will voluntarily — and frequently — visit the intranet homepage.

In most companies, an employee search tool serves as the killer app. We also found several companies that used a daily lunch menu as their killer app. No matter what you pick, pay special attention to your killer app's usability. Many employees will use it, so any weaknesses will cost your company big bucks in lost productivity. More importantly, a highly usable killer app sets the quality level for all other intranet pages and applications that other departments will add. Because they will be using the killer app just as much as everyone else, these designers will internalize the good usability guidelines embedded in its design, and will be reluctant to launch contributions with significantly lower quality.

Many companies provide one-stop shopping for employees by using customized home pages with the most important features and particular employee needs. We also saw several intranets that used a control panel design that let employees tab between a few focused views for different types of information they need. For example, BellSouth integrates views for company information, job information, and personal information in a simple, yet powerful portal.

The one-stop shopping approach extended to the security features for most of the winning intranets. Single sign-on is finally becoming a reality on many good intranets, following years of persistent user requests.

CMS USABILITY

Content management systems have been big for some time and were a common theme for most of last year's winners. This year's winners also relied heavily on CMS, but with a twist: Several companies conducted usability studies of their CMS designs, rejecting many of the initial approaches and authoring templates.

Of course, it's essential to test the usability of the end-user design, but as we saw this year, it is also important to work on usability for authors. In order to be fresh and relevant, intranets rely on having many employees contribute content. If the CMS is too difficult, huge areas of the intranet will quickly grow stale.

MOBILE INTRANET

In terms of keeping the intranet fresh, a special prize goes to Mira Networks. In typical Scandinavian fashion, Mira employees rely heavily on their mobile phones and make frequent use of SMS text messaging. The Mira intranet has a feature for integrating mobile text messages, letting employees update the intranet from their mobile phones — when they're out on an assignment, for example. Talk about up-to-the-minute fresh content.

We expect greater emphasis on mobile intranet access in the future, as mobile devices become more prevalent and allow more powerful remote information services than are possible with traditional cell phones. Many employees work outside the office, but most current intranets only support these users if they dial in with a laptop. It will be interesting to see what new designs emerge to offer more true mobility to intranet users.

WE OWN THE DESIGN

Many intranets suffer from a fragmented design and the resulting loss of usability as users are confronted with different rules at every click. The winning intranets had all made great strides toward consistency and were typically successful at overcoming internal politics by the sheer quality of the central design, as opposed to the dubious designs usually produced by individual departments.

Wal-Mart has a particularly fruitful strategy for managing its intranet for consistency: Users own the content and the central team owns the design.

Selection Criteria and Process

This year marks the second annual Nielsen Norman Group intranet usability competition, which is aimed at finding examples of intranets that are easy to use and that meet users' needs. This year, we posted the call for submissions on www.useit.com in the winter of 2002. We received submissions from 118 companies of different sizes and from various industries and countries. These submissions included: screenshots of the intranet, explicit descriptions of the intranet's design and how it works, notes about the design process (including usability methods employed), explicit information about users and potential users, and the intranet's goals.

We used a three-step judging process for the competition: 1) initial design reviews, 2) follow-up interviews, and 3) rating, sorting, and more thorough design reviews.

INITIAL DESIGN REVIEWS

Based on the initial submission information, the three judges (see the *About the Authors* section of this report on page 159) conducted simple design reviews and whittled down the intranets to the tier-one submissions.

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS

After choosing the top submissions, we asked the site designers many follow-up questions about the site, design decisions, their usability evaluation methods, and lessons learned. We then asked them more specific questions, some exclusive to their particular intranet and some more generic. For example, the more generic questions included the following:

- What was the business reason for setting up the intranet?
- What does it do and what kind of information does it contain?
- Whose idea was it and what goals did he or she want to achieve?
- What were the constraints, for example time, budget, language?
- Describe the development process and usability findings.
- Who was involved in the project and what are their roles in the organization?

RATING, SORTING, AND MORE THOROUGH DESIGN REVIEWS

After collecting this extensive information from site designers about their users and goals, and their own usability evaluation findings, we conducted thorough design reviews on the intranets. We evaluated them based on usability, look and feel, and elegance. We also considered the users that the site was designed for, their tasks, and how well the site's applications might help them complete their tasks. As is the *norm* for design annuals, the award is based on the judges' analysis of the designs, based on certain criteria. In *contrast* to virtually all other design annuals, our criteria are weighted heavily toward usability.

Most design annuals purely consider the visual appeal of the nominated designs, but since intranets exist for the purpose of supporting employees in doing their jobs, we believe that usability is of crucial importance for judging intranet designs. We still do consider aesthetic appeal as part of our judging process since there are certainly

some benefits from supplying employees with a pleasant working environment. Still, most of the weight in our design award relates to employees' ability to easily understand the intranet, easily navigate it, and efficiently perform their jobs.

In addition to written commentary, we rated each site numerically. Using seven areas typically viewed as very important in intranet usability, we scored each design on a 0 to 3 scale, with 3 being the best rating. The seven criteria are:

1. Simple look
2. Simple navigation
3. Consistent navigation and design
4. Visible search
5. Simple search
6. Limited (well-presented) text on pages
7. Home page

In judging the nominated designs to select the winners that are honored in the design, our assessment of what constitutes usability is based on the lessons from the large number of empirical studies we have conducted with employees in a wide range of companies, using a wide range of intranet designs. Unfortunately, most of these specific studies have to remain confidential since they were conducted as client projects. We have also performed a series of intranet tests that we funded ourselves, and which we can therefore discuss in public.¹

¹ Our intranet design guidelines are based on many usability evaluations of various corporate intranets. The report, *Intranet Usability Guidelines*, will be available for download at <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/intranet/guidelines> . Scheduled release November 2002.

Overview of the Ten Winners

COMMON THEMES AMONG THE WINNERS

Any company, regardless of size, industry, or location, has the potential to have a great intranet. The winners in this report come from five different countries: Australia, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the U.S. Four of the ten winners are from companies in the financial services/ banking industry; other industries include power and automation technologies, telecommunications, Internet, travel information, and retail. In terms of general attributes, we found no particular patterns that contributed to an intranet's usability. Some sites used in-house designers, while others hired external designers, and company sizes varied from a few hundred employees to many thousands.

The ten intranets in this report were all well designed with users and their tasks in mind. The common theme across all or many of these first-class intranets include:

- **Customization.** In some intranets we have studied, customized designs were really only done as a workaround to fragmented designs on huge intranets. When a company couldn't get their act together and create one cohesive design, portals and customization features came to the rescue. In these winning intranets, however, customization is used the way it should be — to push the right information to individuals or to let them pull the information they want. Such information includes weblications and process documents they use everyday to do their job, and simple items of interest, such as what's for lunch in the cafeteria.
- **Single sign-on.** Several winning sites integrate many employee work functions on the intranet. Although various organizational units typically control the different applications and procedures, users don't have to know this. Offering single sign-on prevents users from having to log-in to each area separately.
- **Limited use of graphics.** These winning intranets use graphics minimally, and to add to content, not detract from it. In lieu of useless stock art, the designers created elegant pages, using creative layout, colors, and fonts. They use graphics effectively and sparingly, which users appreciate.
- **International focus.** With tightening schedules and wallets, it is easy to consider the most typical and easily accessible users and just design for them. It takes more time and effort to learn about users around the world and design for them all. These noteworthy intranets support international users with added features and careful translation and localization. And, in the best cases, the content and even parts of the design change for different locations.
- **Templates based on predetermined styles.** While not all intranets have a huge style guide or standards, some of the most consistent designs use templates based on tested, proven designs.

The Ten Winners: Insight and Advice from Designers and Company Staff. *Intranets are listed in alphabetical order.*

[ABB & BEKK Consulting AS \(ABB\)](#)

Especially for intranets with high page counts, creating good, thorough design guidelines for all site sections and pages are key. Ensure that pages are created based on a flexible template. This site provides inventive collaboration and customization features to enhance productivity for some 160,000 ABB employees. Recognition of and tailored design for specific divisions and countries also enhances the experience for all employees everywhere.

[BellSouth](#)

When setting goals, be concise, but cover a wide range of areas. Don't be overcome by the daunting task of integrating the design of many different subsites already out there. Other teams often welcome good templates and style guides. The customization features on this site let employees seamlessly see and work with information most important to them — from work tools and information to benefits, career development, and HR policy.

[Credit Suisse Financial Services \(CSFS\)](#)

To build a system that can interact with many people, you must understand how they think and accommodate their different ways of working. With a tight schedule and already existing designs, this team exercised constraint and innovation, learning from what they had instead of starting from scratch. And, recognizing the need to design for multinational employees, the designers met the challenge through inventive personalization features.

[Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu & Eclipse Group](#)

Behavioral research is still the best. What users say they want is often not what they really want or need. You must put something in front of them to know for sure. Also, these designers realized the importance of allowing users to post content themselves. They also incorporated individuality and fresh content by letting individual teams create their own pages and areas of the intranet.

[Lonely Planet Publications](#)

When launching a new intranet: Make it fun and attractive and get people to go there even before putting any business-related systems or information online. To ensure a cross-cultural interface, take advantage of designers in various locations. Recognizing that employees are not necessarily technologically literate, one of the main defined and remembered goals was ease of use. The intranet had to be a system that anyone could pick up and use without training.

[Mira Network AB](#)

Steal from existing good designs when applicable. Achieve balance between what users put into the intranet, and what they get out of it. These designers understood that their users reap productivity gains from an intranet that provides familiar designs. They also "know someone has already put a lot of thought into designing them."

[Northwestern Mutual](#)

If you want people to find something, put it on the same page as the lunch menu. And, make changes gradually. The designers listened to what users said — for example, they listened to complaints when the intranet design changed. More importantly, they consistently analyzed users' behavior to redesign a site that works. They also seized the opportunity to create Web design guidelines to be used in tandem with the corporate branding redesign effort, which was already happening.

[Wal-Mart Stores, Inc](#)

Design philosophy: The users own the content — designers provide the look and feel. The team found that a pretty face wasn't enough, as users were less concerned about how the intranet looked than about how easy and fast it was to use.

[Washington Mutual & Towers Perrin](#)

Don't underestimate the time it takes to coordinate the data from the various sources, and give data suppliers a pre-defined format to populate. Pulling it all together takes time. The designers exploited the sound technology infrastructure already in place, appreciating that the intranet needs to be accessed on a platform that's fast enough so that you don't frustrate the users.

[World Bank Group & Satyam Computer Services](#)

Commitment to the intranet by many different people and departments lets all employees submit content, which is automatically routed to the right people for approval and posting if it's approved. Creating a template with standard components will set the ground rules for all groups contributing, saving time and energy, and necessitating fewer interactions between the intranet team and other departments.

ABB and BEKK Consulting

USING THE INTRANET:

ABB (*Global Web Management*) is a global leader in power and automation technologies. It is one of the world's largest companies with 160,000 employees in more than 100 countries.

DESIGN TEAM:

BEKK Consulting AS, Oslo, Norway, is a leading e-business consulting firm and employs about 100 consultants. The firm delivers consulting services in eBusiness strategy and organizational development, eBusiness platform solutions, and Internet solutions.

MEMBERS: HELENE GUNTHER MERG, GLOBAL WEB MANAGEMENT, ABB; RITA LARSEN, ART DIRECTOR, BEKK; ARNE FOLKESTAD, PROJECT MANAGER, BEKK

Pictured: The ABB home page. Inside.abb.com Group News is the first page that ABB employees see when they log on to the Inside.abb.com intranet. The home page has a stock ticker showing the ABB stock quote on major stock exchanges, a content area featuring ABB news relevant to all ABB employees, and a search field for searching across all Inside.abb.com content.

The screenshot shows the 'inside.abb.com' intranet interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'inside.abb.com', 'Countries', and 'Monday March 18, 2002'. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with 'The Insider', 'Group Functions', 'Divisions', 'Countries', and 'eBusiness Center'. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column is a sidebar with 'The Insider' and various links like 'News & Stories', 'Jobs in ABB', etc. The middle column features a large headline: 'Web site inquiry leads to US\$ 4 million robot order'. Below this is a photo of a woman at a computer and a text block dated 'Mar. 15 - ABB in India won a US\$ 4 million robot order...'. The right column contains a search bar, 'CONTACT US' link, and several news snippets with dates like 'Mar. 18: ABB wins US\$ 30 million contract in Algeria' and 'Mar. 13: ABB shareholders are critical, but approve annual report and discharge board'. The ABB logo is visible in the top left and in the middle-right news snippets.


SUMMARY

Inside.abb.com is ABB's personalized intranet portal. It serves a very large and diverse user group — more than 160,000 people whose work ranges from support functions to highly technical line functions. The users are located around the globe, speak multiple languages, and report to different organizational units. Given the multitude of user types and the equally varied tasks they perform, designing a website that serves them all is no small achievement.

The site navigation is a simple horizontal and vertical bar. The colors and look and feel are elegant and minimalist. The graphic design suits both the Europeans and the other users it serves. Text is well written and easy to read and scan. Pictures are used sparingly and add to the content. The picture quality is high, with crisp images and agreeable colors.

In addition to providing the usual contact and corporate information, ABB also provides discussion forums, which keep users in touch with each other and the site's content. The intranet also takes collaboration to the next level. For example, *Inside.abb* includes the *G5 Net*, a collaborative network for global engineering. This is an online application to support engineering that lets users collect, identify, and distribute comprehensive engineering knowledge to support global reuse. It's one of many ways the intranet supports different types of users and attempts to enhance productivity.

Pictured: An example of a collaborative network for global engineering.



The screenshot displays the ABB intranet portal. At the top left is the ABB logo. The main navigation bar includes 'inside.abb.com', 'Countries', and 'Monday March 18, 2002'. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with 'The Insider', 'Group Functions', 'Divisions', 'Countries', and 'eBusiness Center'. A left-hand menu lists various sections like 'BA Telecom & Product Mfg', 'Account contacts', and 'G5 Net'. The main content area features a large blue header for 'G5 Net' with the text 'Shared expertise', 'Knowledge transfer', and 'Proven solutions'. Below the header, a search bar is visible. The main text reads: 'Welcome to G5 Net - the collaborative network for global engineering'. It describes G5 Net as an online application for collecting, identifying, and distributing engineering knowledge. A graphic of a globe with arrows and the text 'Knowledge Transfer' is shown. Below the graphic is a link for 'G5 Net applications description' with a 'Read more' button. At the bottom, there is an 'Enter G5' button.

International design is a difficult challenge for many global corporations. ABB provides a nice solution by offering both country portals and multi-language support,

including multiple character sets with news, information, and services pertaining to the specified country.

Pictured: The country portal for Norway. Users link to country pages from the Inside.abb.com main page. The local home pages all have a structure similar to the Group News main page, but the information is written in the local language and is relevant to the individual country.

The screenshot shows the 'inside.no' intranet portal. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the ABB logo, the URL 'inside.abb.com' and 'inside/no', and the date 'Monday March 18, 2002'. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for 'Nyheter', 'ABB i Norge', 'Instruksjer', 'Personal', 'Verktøy & tjenester', and 'abb.no'. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Nyheter Norge:** A vertical menu on the left with links to 'Nyhetsforside', 'Nyhetsarkiv', 'Nyhetsbrev', 'What's New', 'Nyheter olje, gass og petrokjemi', and 'Nyheter ABB-gruppen'.
- NYTT PÅ INSIDE/NO:** A section titled 'ABB støtter SOS-barnebyer' with a date of '11. mars'. The text describes ABB's support for SOS-children's villages in Kazakhstan and Colombia. A 'Les mer' link is provided.
- NYHETER ABB I NORGE:** A section with three news items:
 - Team Action fase 2 vel gjennomført:** '15. mars - 137 deltakere var med under Team Action fase 2 på Radisson SAS Scandinavia Hotel i går. Gorm Gundersens og Peer Håkon Jensens foredrag finner du under "Kampanjepresentasjoner"'. Includes a 'Les mer' link.
 - ABB og Statkraft tegner intensjonsavtale:** '14. mars - Divisjon Energi har tegnet en intensjonsavtale med Statkraft om revisjon av generatorbrytere ved Sima Kraftverk. Kontrakten er verdt 10,4 millioner kroner.'. Includes a 'Les mer' link.
 - Barnekunstutstilling på Billingstad:** '13. mars - Elever i første til syvende klasse ved Mellom-nes skole i Asker står bak kunsten som nå smykker korridorene på Billingstad.'. Includes a 'Les mer' link.
- ABB på 1-2-3:** '12. mars - Nå kommer programmet som skal gjøre det enda enklere å bli kjent med mangfoldet, utfordringene og virksomhetsområdene ABB står for.'. Includes a 'Les mer' link.

The right sidebar contains a search box, a 'SNARVEIER' (Navigation) section with dropdown menus for 'Divisjonsportaler' and 'Andre portaler', and a 'NYTTIGE RESSURSER' (Useful Resources) section with links to 'Hvem, hva, hvor på inside.no?', 'Kontakt inside.no', and 'IT Driftsinformasjon'. Each resource link is accompanied by a small icon.

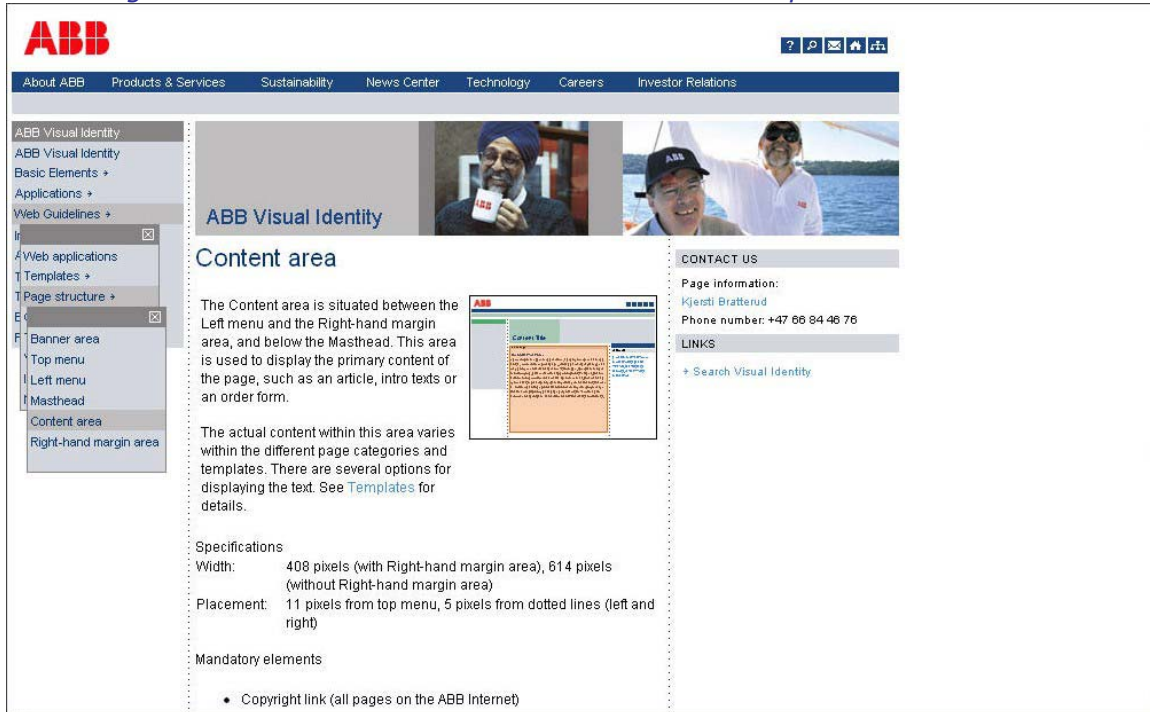
Additionally, most intranet designs must meet the needs of different divisions with different skill sets, responsibilities, competencies, forms, and jargon. The ABB design provides division pages containing information relevant to the specific divisions. Users access the division pages from the *Inside.abb.com* main page.

Pictured: An example of a global division page, which has a structure similar to the Group News main page, but offers information relevant to the individual division.

The screenshot shows the ABB website's 'Power Technology Products' section. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'inside.abb.com' and 'inside/ptp'. Below it, a menu includes 'News', 'Our Profile', 'Organizational', 'Customer Focus', 'Tools & Services', 'Working with ABB', and 'Sales Support Portals'. A sidebar on the left lists 'News', 'PT Home', 'Latest News', 'Press Releases', and 'Newsletters'. The main content area is titled 'Power Technology Products' and features a 'TOP STORY' section with the headline 'ABB Group invested 5 million US Dollar to modernize factory in Lodz'. To the right, there's a 'SEARCH' box and a 'LATEST PT DIVISION NEWS' section with several news items, each accompanied by a small image and a 'Read more' link.

Across these sites and company divisions, the intranet navigation is standard and consistent. This is a very important usability factor, as many companies have intranets for each division and country, but fail to standardize the navigation across those subsites. To ensure consistency across all intranet portals, the company created and makes available detailed Web design guidelines, which support content providers throughout the organization. Further, mandatory sections ensure that each site has a minimum amount of relevant information and services. With more than 200,000 pages on the intranet, adhering to these guidelines is imperative. This not only creates a positive experience for the users, but it also saves time for content providers, as they will know where and how to publish their information.

Pictured: An example from the ABB Web Guidelines. This page shows detailed guidelines for content area use in the Web templates.



Because of these guidelines, employees' experience using the design will be more positive, and productivity will be enhanced. The designers also considered methods to improve efficiency on the backend, building the intranet application on the same platform as the existing Internet sites. So, ABB achieves significant synergies through one common ABB Web platform, with unified content management and publishing for the intranet, Internet, and extranet.

Most of the site's design is minimalist, and the form for editing user profiles follows suit. It doesn't ask for too much information, and its fields and labels are clear and simple.

Pictured: The process of creating an engineer's personal profile on the G5 Net, a collaborative network for global engineering.

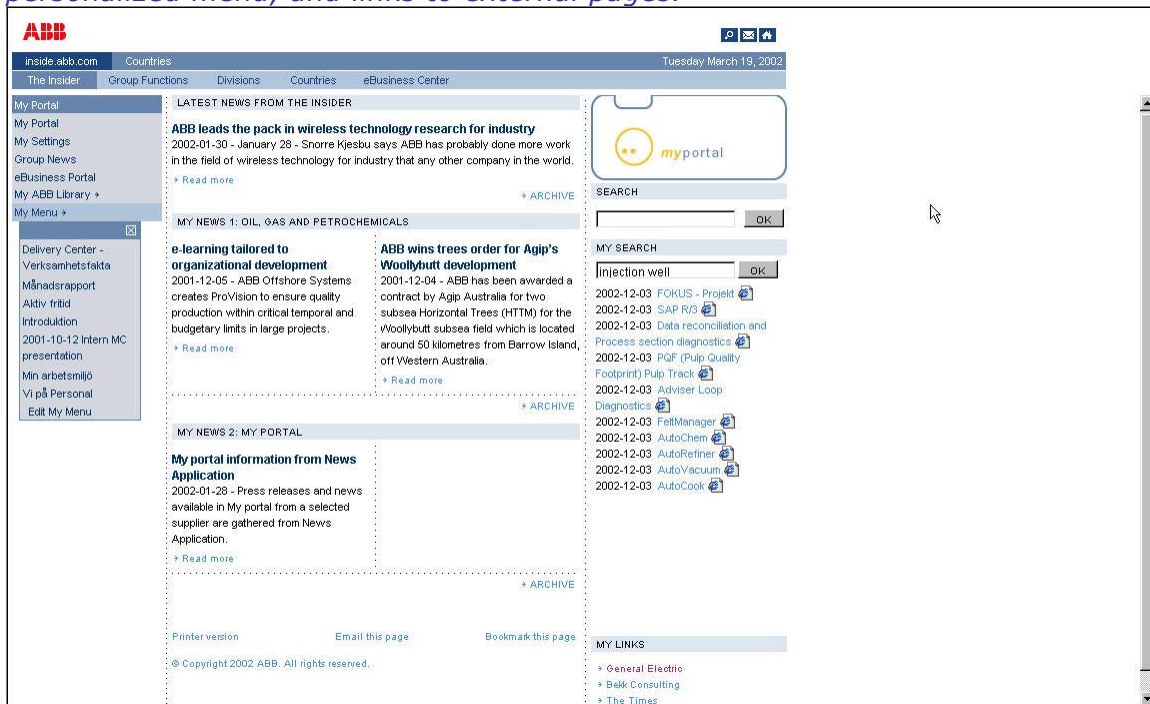
The screenshot displays the ABB G5 Net profile creation interface. The header includes the ABB logo, navigation links like 'inside.abb.com' and 'Countries', and the date 'Monday, March 18, 2002'. The main content area is titled 'Your G5 Net profile' and contains a form for 'PERSONAL INFORMATION FOR HAKAN WARDSELL'. The form includes the following fields:

- Organizational Unit:** G5 - BU G5
- Professional role(s):** GTL, LTL, Process Specialist (PS), Proposal Engineer (PE)
- Preferred language:** English
- Other spoken languages:** Bulgarian, Chinese, Croatian, Czech
- Country of residence:** Switzerland
- Mobile phone number:** [Empty text box]
- Local G5 BU manager:**
- Global Technology Leader (GTL):**
 - AS - Assembly
 - BP - Bulk Liquid Processing
 - CC - Case and Crate Handling
 - CU - Cutting
- Local Technology Leader (LTL):**
 - AS - Assembly
 - BP - Bulk Liquid Processing
 - CC - Case and Crate Handling
 - CU - Cutting
- Office location:** [Empty text box]

On the right side, there is a globe icon with arrows and the text 'You are logged in as: Hakan Wardell' and a link to 'Send feedback/error report'.

Users can also customize the site to suit their needs. The *MyPortal* feature is a personalized portal page with a selection of pages of interest to the user.

Pictured: MyPortal, a personalized portal page on the ABB intranet. The example shows the front page, where the user includes the news feeds of his or her choice, updated pages within a specified category, a personalized menu, and links to external pages.



Even with an extremely short development schedule, these designers were able to achieve an award-winning intranet. Key to this success was constructive communication between the designers and the host company, and a strict five-stage development process.

Scoring (3 = best)						
Simple look	Simple navigation	Consistent navigation and design	Visible search	Simple search	Limited (well-presented) text on pages	Home page
2.5	2	2	3	3	2.5	2.5

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTRANET

The intranet is based on a flexible framework that lets ABB integrate country-specific and division-specific intranets in one common portal accessible to all employees worldwide.

Inside.abb.com was recently upgraded, dramatically improving the usability of content management. Significant development effort was invested in making publishing easy for content providers. The result is a content management system (CMS) that is easy to use and supported by flexible templates that enable decentralized content production.

ABB's intranet serves multiple purposes. First, it is the primary source of information for ABB employees in all countries and across all organizational units. Second, interactive technologies invite key target groups to share ideas and information.

Third, it facilitates ABB's goal of moving internal processes to the Web to increase efficiency.

BASIC FEATURES

Inside.abb.com offers a global intranet portal containing news, information, and functionality relevant for all nationalities. Furthermore, it lets users personalize their own portal. To address cultural issues and differences in needs, ABB also encourages countries and divisions to create their own intranets using the global platform.

Basic features on *Inside.abb.com* include:

- ABB group corporate information and services
- Country portals with country-specific information and services
- Division portals with division-specific information and services
- Multi-language portals/sites
- Support for multiple character sets (this feature is also in the menu system)
- An advanced search engine, searching across all ABB intranet sites and document libraries
- Standardized navigation on all sites
- Seamless integration of division and country sites into the corporate site
- Access to document libraries
- Personalization
- Discussion forums
- An idea bank (*New Ventures*)
- Contact information

ADVANCED FUNCTIONALITY

ABB is Web-enabling and is integrating more and more employee work functions on the intranet. Some of these functions are open on the intranet, others are password protected. Single sign-on prevents users from having to log-in to each and every function. Examples of advanced functionality include:

- The *Response Form* module lets content providers set up a tailored Web-based form where users can respond to a survey, order printed information, and so on. User responses/inputs are aggregated and exported to Excel for further processing by the content provider.
- *News Application* is an efficient tool for ABB's global editorial staff to share and publish news messages and press releases. The messages are published in a news feed; a news editor can also suggest that his or her article be published in a colleague's news feed. Portals or other Web pages using a given news feed are automatically updated when new messages are published.
- *G5 Net* is a business-critical application for a unit that produces automation equipment. From business locations around the world, *G5 Net* enables reuse

- of RFQ documents and solution specifications, and — based on updated competency maps — puts together a good solution-specification team.
- eSMART is a procurement system. It's also an example of a standard application that was equipped with a front-end, in keeping with ABB's design and navigation guidelines.
 - The *Traffic Center* contains weekly statistics on global Web platform usage. It also lets portal owners and content providers order specific statistics related to one or more of their Web pages.

URL AND ACCESS

ABB's *Inside.abb.com* intranet cannot be accessed via URL from outside the corporate network firewall. Inside the firewall, *Inside.abb.com* is not password protected and there is no user identification or log-in. Hence, anyone who has access to a computer connected to ABB's corporate network can access the intranet.

It is, however, possible to explicitly password-protect selected intranet pages. This option is only used for sensitive content or applications with restricted distribution. In this case, the username and password is managed by the Lotus Notes groupware client (mail, calendar, etc.) used by most ABB employees.

Users access the corporate part of the ABB intranet by typing "Inside.abb.com" into their browser's address field. When configuring new computers, this address is set up as the browser's home page. Hence, the intranet is launched every time the user starts the browser.

Users can reach other parts of the intranet through the menu system. However, a number of shortcuts are defined to enable direct access to certain sections. For example:

- All country intranet sites can be access using URLs of the type: inside.abb.com/fr. The two-letter code following the slash is the Internet country codes; the example specifies France. Other examples include "no" for Norway and "us" for the U.S.
- The *Traffic Center*, which provides intranet usage statistics, is available at inside.abb.com/traffic and at inside.abb.com/statistics.
- The Common ABB Web Platform (CAWP) CMS, along with user guides, hints, and tips for publishing on the intranet, is available at inside.abb.com/cawp.

BACKGROUND

Currently, ABB's intranet serves multiple purposes. First, ABB uses it as the primary source of information for ABB employees in all countries and across all organizational units. Second, its interactive technologies invite key target groups to share ideas and information. Third, it facilitates ABB moving internal processes to the Web to increase efficiency.

When ABB originally decided to enhance its IT systems further by developing and launching the global intranet, developers built the application on the same platform as existing Internet sites. In other words, ABB achieves significant synergies through CAWP, which unifies intranet content management and publishing; the Internet; and the extranet. In addition, ABB's intranet has a common and

standardized structure for the global, country, and division sites, providing timesavings for

- intranet users, who only have to learn “how to navigate” and “where to find what I’m looking for” once;
- site owners, who have a standard procedure for building new sites; and
- content providers, who know where and how to publish their information.

Furthermore, the common document structure enables extensive filtering and personalization possibilities, and the sites’ mandatory sections ensure that each site has a minimum of relevant information and services.

GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS

The intranet’s goal is to improve information usage and workflow within ABB by centralizing all information; providing a consistent, easy to use interface that is open to everyone in the organization; and applying global standards for publishing information. ABB sees itself moving toward these goals in a continuous improvement process, rather than a one-off project.

DESIGN PROCESS AND USABILITY ACTIVITIES

ABB uses Lotus Notes as its groupware (including mail) platform. In 1999, the ABB intranet was basically a large collection of Lotus Notes databases. There was no common portal to the databases; each user had to locate and open relevant databases on his or her Notes workspace. The databases were hard to find, hard to search, and contained overlapping information.

In addition to the Notes databases, several small and simple websites had been set up to serve small groups of users. “The sites had nothing in common apart from the ABB logo,” says Helene Gunther Merg, global Web management. “Anyone who wanted to start a website could do so, and everyone wanted to keep their own information to themselves.”

The lack of information sharing between divisions was a problem for ABB; divisions often sell to each other, and solutions sold to external customers always involve input from more than one division. “We lose a lot of contracts and money by not being well coordinated,” Merg explains. “There have been cases where people in the company have brought in items from outside companies to sell to customers, because they weren’t aware we made those items.”

In 1999, the Global Web Management department was formed at ABB’s Zurich head office, and was given responsibility for building a common platform for company-wide intranet and Internet development.

During the fall of 1999, the department worked on a white paper outlining a strategy for unifying ABB’s Web-based communications and introducing a common CMS. Published in December that year, one of its recommendations was that work should start on creating an integrated, browser-based intranet in early 2000. Then, in April 2000, the executive committee suddenly decided it needed the intranet up and running for ABB’s annual forum for high-level managers, which gave the team only eight weeks for development and deployment.

Although the old ABB intranet was organized on a divisional basis, Global Web Management's white paper proposed a navigational structure based on working tools rather than organizational structure. Also, as with information architecture, many elements of the intranet's visual design had already been laid down by the group's design guidelines for ABB's public Internet site.

The task of getting the new *Inside.abb.com* live on the new publishing platform in eight weeks was not quite as impossible as it seems, because the Global Web Management group had already laid a lot of the groundwork. In addition to the business case for a new intranet, its white paper contained a new proposed information architecture, and ideas about how the intranet should develop and how language versions should be treated. The company also already had a usable CMS based on Lotus Notes in place for ABB's global Internet site.

To help meet its deadline, the group called in Norwegian e-business consulting firm BEKK, the developer of the ABB's Internet's CMS. ABB and BEKK have continued to work closely on the intranet's development ever since.

BEKK has applied its five-stage process of iterative development to the later stages of the intranet's development. Those five stages are: 1) decide (establishing business goals), 2) define, 3) design, 4) develop, and 5) deploy. User input is crucial at all but the first stage of this process.

However, in the rush to get the initial intranet version out, all types of formal methods had to be abandoned. "We didn't have time to sit down with groups in ABB," says Arne Folkestad, BEKK's project manager. "We already had some feedback from the existing Internet site and the structure there, and we had good ideas about how the new intranet should be."

Key groups from areas such as management, HR, and corporate communications were informed that a corporate intranet was about to be launched. The information was distributed by email, because — prior to the first version of the browser-based intranet — there was no channel to reach all of the targeted ABB employees. The intranet has since been actively used to inform individuals and groups about changes, and to provide user guides and other relevant material for content providers and regular Web users.

Pictured: The first version of Inside.abb.com, January 2001.



Once the new *Inside.abb.com* was live, team members went back and carried out in-depth usability studies, and made a series of improvements. They used both questionnaires sent out to key user groups and direct observation of user groups. For example, the team did extensive usability work with groups of content providers in August 2001, just before a major upgrade to the CMS.

“We sent out questionnaires to the content providers and sat down with them and watched them work. The user friendliness of the CMS’s templates increased incredibly as a result of their feedback,” Folkestad says.

In June 2001, team members made minor changes to the design as a result of user feedback. Then, after they upgraded the CMS in November, they began looking more closely at how they could improve the intranet navigation. Important input to this work was a system usability evaluation that BEKK carried out, based on user feedback and an expert walkthrough. They concluded that although the basic design and navigation principles were good, the front page wasn’t effective at drawing users into the site; navigation was too time-consuming; the site structure was hard to understand and users could easily get lost; and menu items were not intuitive enough.

In April 2002, the new navigational and menu structure went live, and is now being migrated to all countries and divisions.

“It might not be the fanciest Web design in the world, but we think it’s a nice, clean structure,” says Merg. “ABB is a bit like this: serious, strict, clean. Most of our business is in Europe, and our design reflects that we’re a European company, though we have to consider that we do have employees and customers all over the world.”

ABB continues to canvass user feedback in several ways. It has an intranet user group of twenty-eight people, representing the major divisions and countries in which it operates. The group was established in the summer of 2000, and has evolved with the intranet, with the emphasis on keeping the group relatively small and action-oriented.

The intranet user group meets for a two-day workshop four times a year, and also sends out quarterly email surveys both to existing intranet users and to a random sample of ABB employees who don't use the intranet to find out why. On its first attempt, the group sent 3,000 random surveys and got a 20% response.

The group's email surveys contain introductory text and a link to a questionnaire prepared using the publishing platform's *Response Form* module. Using this module, the user group and all ABB content providers can easily define flexible questionnaires, along with feedback and registration forms. The Global Web Management group and BEKK use the platform in their work in the same way as regular content providers.

Another source of improvement information is *Inside.abb.com's Traffic Center*, which provides statistics on Web usage and information about how content providers and webmasters can use these statistics to improve their pages. This process of continuous improvement has led to many minor and major design changes since the new *Inside.abb.com* was launched.

BEKK developed and deployed a new, easier to use version of the CMS in autumn 2001. At that point, all existing content had to be moved into the new Notes content templates, and team members took the opportunity to clean up much of the structure and design. Before developing the new CMS, they completed thorough usability studies of the previous version to pinpoint where users had problems, experienced the system as inefficient, or wanted to see improved and added functionality.

During the development phase, the BEKK team ran several sessions with the ABB helpdesk, which serves global content providers, to assess the system's usability and get feedback on the proposed functionality. This proved very useful; in addition to being advanced content providers, the helpdesk knows quite well where the different user groups were likely to face problems. Since deploying the new CMS, user feedback on it has been consistently very positive.

ABB has about 4,000 content providers around the world, and their technical skills and ability to write vary. Global Web Management's focus is now on improving the quality of the intranet content by providing Web guidelines, writing guidelines, and online training, as well as hands-on courses.

Several other changes were made in response to user feedback. In June 2001, a more flexible menu system was introduced, giving content providers more control over the sequence in which published pages at a given menu level appear in the left menu. Previously, the sequence was strictly alphabetical, but users indicated that they needed more flexibility. At the same time, the icons for help, home, and contact us were moved from the footer to a more visible place at the top of the page.

Pictured: In June 2001, a more flexible menu system was introduced and the icons for help, home, and contact us were moved from the footer to a more prominent place at the top of the page.



On the Internet site, the icons appeared in the top right-hand position. Users indicated their preference for this placement, so ABB decided to use it on the intranet site as well.

Further design modifications were introduced in November 2001, including making search available on all pages and moving the intranet's front page stock ticker to just below the page title.

In May 2002, more far-reaching changes occurred, with navigation reorganized around a site structure based on business tools and functions rather than departments. The new structure is heavily influenced by this "radical" proposal, which implies profound changes in the usability evaluation. The same structure is being applied to the country and divisional subsites.

Pictured: A new menu structure based on business tools and functions, rather than departments.



In September 2002, the design team plans to launch a new front page that, in addition to news, will feature more functionality and interactivity, including a calendar of events, a poll function featuring issues relevant to ABB, a tips and links of interest feature that includes user submissions, and a better shortcut navigation to important intranet sections. In addition, work is progressing on making tailored portals to encourage more intranet participation by less active user groups. In the first stage, this includes managers and sales people.

LANGUAGE ISSUES

Employees in all divisions and all countries use the intranet. About thirty countries have already set up their own intranet, seamlessly integrated into the global solution; more countries are in the process of doing so. Currently, content is generated in twenty-seven different languages, all from a single CMS.

The CMS automatically translates most of the menu system, and has special coding to handle Chinese and other non-Latin character sets. The top navigation remains in English, however, to emphasize that it is the entrance to the global intranet.

TIMELINE

- December 1, 1999: ABB's Global Web Management department formed, initially as an interim working group.
- December 1999: *Web White Paper* published, recommending that work on an integrated intranet begin.
- April 2000: Executive committee decides it wants an intranet ready in eight weeks.
- May 2000: Prototype intranet is launched.
- June 2000: Global site goes live.
- Fall 2000: Several country-specific intranets are established and integrated into the global solution.
- June 2001: More flexible menu system introduced, along with some changes to the design.
- November 2001: Major upgrade to CMS.
- November 2001: Further design modifications.
- April 2002: New navigational and menu structure goes live and is rolled out worldwide.
- September 2002: Planned release of a new version of the front page.

RESULTS

The team is in the process of migrating information from various global sites to the intranet, and the company is confident that centralizing the technical infrastructure and intranet design will save a lot of money. "Before, there was a lot of duplication, and that was obviously very costly," Merg says. "Now, content providers can concentrate on content rather than design."

LESSONS LEARNED

Insights from Helene Gunther Merg:

Start small, grow fast. "You could sit around forever deciding what the intranet should look like. It's best to get started and try it out, then change it later. Iterative development is the Internet way."

Have figures at your fingertips. "People always ask about costs and benefits. It's important to be able to give them an answer."

Get your priorities right. "People will put everything on their wish list, whether they will use it or not. You have to focus on what's really needed."

Go for quality, not quantity. "To start with, people will create a lot of content that can be good or bad. You need to be selective."

A user-friendly CMS is key to success. "Invest in making life easy for your content providers. A user-friendly interface is a key to having a live intranet with frequently published and updated content. A good user interface will also save money on user support."

BellSouth Corporation

USING THE INTRANET:

BellSouth Corporation is a Fortune 100 communications services company headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia. It has 46 million customers in the U.S., 95,000 total employees, and 40,000 employees with intranet access in the U.S. and sixteen other countries.

DESIGN TEAM:

BellSouth Corporation, *ePortal* Team

MEMBERS: DEBORAH BAKER, DIRECTOR, EPORTAL; CAROL GOULD, DIRECTOR, COMMUNICATIONS; DIANE TUCKER, DIRECTOR, IT; JOHN STEFANIK, MANAGER, DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT; KIRK AHLQUIST, MANAGER, INFORMATION ARCHITECT; MARK CHILTON, MANAGER, IT PLANNING; ANDY KOCIS, MANAGER, IT-TECHNICAL; BETH CORBITT, TECHNICAL WRITER; LINDA KENNEDY, MANAGER, EPORTAL

Pictured: The ePortal home page. The myBellSouth tab is designed to provide the user with direct access to sites of interest throughout the corporation. All tabs are fluid in design, stretching to fill the window horizontally for any screen resolution. The news channels, in the center, are fed from other internal BellSouth news sites.

The screenshot shows the BellSouth ePortal home page. At the top, there's a blue header with the BellSouth logo on the left and navigation links (Help, Feedback, Register Your Site) on the right. Below the header, there are tabs for 'myBellSouth', 'myWork', 'myPage', and 'Search'. A welcome message for 'Kirk Ahlquist' is displayed, along with a 'Login as a different user' link. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'Operating Divisions' (BAPCO, BellSouth International, Customer Markets, Network Services), 'Corporate Centers' (BASC, CRES, Finance, HR Community, Legal, Security/Claims, Regulatory and External Affairs, Supply Chain Services, Technology Community), 'Internet Sites' (bellsouth.com, Cingular, Internet Guide), 'Quick Links' (Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Employee Discounts, Employee Orientation, Employee Vouchers (SSE - BASC), IQPC, InSite, Investor Relations, Performance Management, Staffing, The Customer Rules, Travel, Trip Manager), 'BellSouth News' (NewsFLASH: Network Services announces additional headcount reduction; NewsSource: Employees can direct investment of company match; Connections: Innovators help keep BellSouth strong; Other News: Daily Clips, Cellular, DSL lower need for land lines - San Francisco Chronicle), and an 'Employee Locator' section. A sidebar on the right contains sections for 'Powering down energy consumption', 'Employee Locator', and 'Policies and Guidelines'. The footer includes a privacy notice and copyright information.

SUMMARY

BellSouth has 40,000 intranet users around the U.S. These employees comprise more than 3,000 different job descriptions in five operating divisions, making for an especially diverse user base. This intranet succeeds because of the designers' clear goals, which they established and communicated at the project's onset. These goals ranged in areas and scope, from managed content, to single sign-on, to consistent

corporate branding. This coverage of a wide range of areas demonstrates the team's good experience combined with their early and thorough planning and research.

With 95,000 employees at the company, finding the right person and their contact information is an important task for most users. The intranet lets employees easily search for each other by name, nickname, title, email address, and location, among other things. This makes it possible to find people even when you only have minimal information about them. By default, the users are only offered the most minimal fields to find a person, but clicking *More search options* will give them many more fields to do a detailed search. The most important fields are first, so the user rarely has to use the advanced form to find an employee. The employee locator is one of the more popular features on the intranet. The developers use Oracle to maintain and update employee information. Before this area of the *ePortal* went online, employee update information was maintained in several areas across the corporation and updates were inconsistent. This one simple feature alone makes the employee's lives easier, and makes the intranet worthwhile.

Pictured: The employee locator feature, found in the upper right corner of pages.



The image shows a screenshot of a web form titled "Employee Locator". The form has a title bar with a minus sign and a close button (X). It contains two text input fields: "First Name or Nickname:" and "Last Name:". Below these fields is a blue button labeled "locate employee". At the bottom of the form is a link labeled "More Search Options". To the right of the form is a small image of a man in a suit looking at a mobile phone.

Pictured: The employee locator advanced search feature, which appears when the user clicks More Search Options.

Advanced Search

First Name or Nickname:

Last Name:

Email:

Employee Type:

Employee Title:

Geographic Location Code:

Responsibility Code:

Phone Number: ()

State:

Department:

Company:

Pictured: An employee's details page.

EmployeeLocator

[New Search](#) **Employee**

Webb I. Stanley

FACILITY TECHNICIAN
NTWK OPN NORTH
BELLSOUTH TELECOMMUNICATIONS INC

phone: (502) 633-9038
RC: NN20G40F

96 OLD 7 MILE PIKE
SHELBYVILLE, KY 40065

 [org chart](#)  [maps/directions](#)  [add to ipager](#)  [escalate](#)  [edit entry](#)  [new search](#)



If your Locator data is incorrect, please notify your manager.
For BellSouth employees, Locator data is updated regularly from PeopleSoft personnel records.
For contractors, Locator data is entered and updated by your BellSouth manager.

Many intranets provide static information and applications to support employees. However, few modify pages so that the applications that individual employees need are available on their own work page. Even fewer permit the employee to choose the best applications and information for themselves. The BellSouth intranet facilitates both of these timesavers. The *myWork* page lets employees build a site

based on individual work needs. Employees can add or delete links or channels based on their job needs, which lets them focus on the information most important to their performance, and ignore superfluous information.

Pictured: A customized myWork page.

The screenshot shows a customized intranet page for a BellSouth employee. The header includes the BellSouth logo and navigation tabs for 'myBellSouth', 'myWork', 'myPage', and 'Search'. A user greeting for 'Kirk Ahlquist' is displayed. The page is organized into several channels:

- BellSouth Online Buying:** Includes links for Supply Chain Services, Purchasing, and a list of suppliers like Arch, Barnes & Noble, and Best Flowers.
- Employee Toolkit:** Lists HR resources such as Compensation Resources, Diversity & Inclusion, and Performance Appraisal for Clerical Employees (PACE).
- Choose Your News - Powered by BKR:** Features a 'Newspapers/Magazines' section with a dropdown menu set to 'The Wall Street Journal' and a 'Newsletters' section with a dropdown set to 'APQC'. It also includes search boxes for 'Find the Latest News About' and 'Search for Telecom Info'.
- Documents and Forms:** Lists various forms like BellSouth Electronic Library, Intellectual Property Forms, and Security Forms.
- myWork Links:** Contains links for ARGUS, Neilson Norman Group, Use-it, and Yahoo.
- Applications:** Lists 'Corporate Shuttle', 'Mechanized Time Reporting (MTR)', and 'Trip Manager'.
- BASC-Paid employees:** Lists reports and services like 'Ad Hoc Reports - Business Objects' and 'Self-Service Expense - BASC (SSE) Launch SSE'.
- Support and Services:** Lists services such as 'AMEX Corporate Card Info', 'American Express Online', and 'Travel'.

Private/Proprietary: Contains private and/or proprietary information. May not be used or disclosed outside of the BellSouth companies except pursuant to a written agreement. Copyright © 2001. Content owner info.

In addition to the work productivity feature funneling, the intranet also feeds the user the right information about career development, their 401K, health guidance, and more. Of course, an intranet like this can only work if those policies are in place at the organization. But, once those policies are in place, having an intranet that makes this important information available can actually drive employees' decisions to both determine and write down career path and benefits information.

The *myPage* tab includes individual employee information, such as benefits, career development, and community service links. The tab also lets users add their own links in the *myPage Links Channel* or take advantage of links already on the site.

Pictured: An example of the myPage tab, which includes information relating to the individual employee.

The screenshot displays the BellSouth myPage interface for user Kirk Ahlquist. The page is organized into several channels:

- Header:** Includes the BellSouth logo, navigation tabs (myBellSouth, myWork, myPage, Search), and utility links (Help, Feedback, Register Your Site, add/remove channels, edit tab layout, log out).
- Welcome:** Greeting for Kirk Ahlquist with a "Login as a different user" link and the BLS stock price (38.33) as of March 18, 2002.
- Career Development:** Lists resources like BellSouth Leadership Institute, BellSouth OnLine Training System, and CareerLINK.
- Benefits:** Titled "Benefits @ Your Fingertips", it lists programs such as EAP, Employee Product Discounts, and Health plans.
- Community Services:** Lists various volunteer and support organizations like American Red Cross and BellSouth Foundation.
- myInternet Guide:** Provides links to Finance & Money, Health & Fitness, News, and Stock Quotes.
- Quick Links:** Offers shortcuts to EAP, Employee Discounts, and other key services.
- Weather:** A weather widget for Miami, FL, showing a temperature of 81°F and a "Mostly Cloudy" forecast.
- myPage Links:** A section for personalized links like myFinance and myHoldings.

At the bottom, a disclaimer states: "Private/Proprietary: Contains private and/or proprietary information. May not be used or disclosed outside of the BellSouth companies except pursuant to a written agreement. Copyright © 2001. Content owner info."

To make the site's vast quantities of information manageable, a channel approach gives users some control over what information they see on the home page. We know from many usability tests that even when the most sophisticated customization features are available, people only use them if they are simple. If they need to hunt for commands or go through a long process to customize, users will not bother. But, in this case, the intranet is very simple to customize. The *Add/Remove Channels* button takes the user to a page displaying all the channels available on the *ePortal*.

Pictured: The Add/Remove Channels button takes the user to a page displaying all the channels available on ePortal. The user clicks a checkbox to add or remove the channel from the current tab. The user can assign a channel to any of the four tabs.

BELLSOUTH Help Feedback Register Your Site
[add/remove channels](#) [edit tab layout](#) [log out](#)

Add or remove channels from the current tab

Channels with checked boxes are included on this tab.

- To add a channel, put a check in the box to the left of the channel name by clicking in the box.
- To remove a channel, remove the check in the box to the left of the channel name by clicking in the box.
- When you have completed your additions and/or subtractions, click the "Save" button at the bottom of the page.

Thin Channels: (Appear on the left and right-hand columns.)	Wide Channels: (Appear in the center column.)
<input type="checkbox"/> BellSouth Online Buying Link to Supply Chain Services, Purchasing, and authorized vendors.	<input type="checkbox"/> Weather Monitor the weather reports of the cities you choose.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> External Links Locate information using these links to sites outside BellSouth intranets.	<input type="checkbox"/> Choose Your News - Powered by BKR Choose newspapers, magazines, or newsletters to read or search for telecom info provided by BellSouth Knowledge Resource.
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Services Participate in service to your community through BellSouth.	<input type="checkbox"/> H.R. Community Stay up-to-date with developments in the HR Community.
<input type="checkbox"/> Documents and Forms Obtain copies of company-wide documents and forms.	<input type="checkbox"/> Other News Add links to national and regional news sources.
<input type="checkbox"/> Quick Links Set up access to sites that help you do your job.	<input type="checkbox"/> Welcome to myBellSouth Put extra links to Help and Login information front and center.
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance Stay up-to-date with announcements and other information specific to the Finance professionals.	<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Markets News See the latest news from BellSouth Customer Markets.

Even with all this customization, users can access nearly all the sites without logging in. But, logging in gives users the ability to rearrange the display and add or delete links.

In addition to letting users choose the content they want, BellSouth also makes recommendations where appropriate. For example, the main page's *Quick Links* channel contains the most often-accessed user tasks. And, the *Choose Your News* channel saves the company \$10 million by eliminating the need for multiple paper subscriptions to news publications.

The navigation is consistent across pages, with the ever-present tab structure and high-level top horizontal commands. The customization features let people utilize the intranet that is best for them. The look is inviting, with hints of soothing blue, and legible black text on white pages. Graphics are used to enhance the messages. The overall feature set and customization capabilities make for an intranet experience that employees will want to return to — or maybe never leave.

Scoring (3 = best)						
Simple look	Simple navigation	Consistent navigation and design	Visible search	Simple search	Limited (well-presented) text on pages	Home page
2.7	2	2.3	3	1.5	3	2

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTRANET

BellSouth's *ePortal* is an enterprise information portal designed to give employees across the corporation access to the considerable knowledge resources maintained by business units and work teams. With many intranet sites maintained by employees across the region, a central intranet location was needed to make intranet information accessible and accurate.

The *ePortal* uses the iPlanet enterprise portal as its main application, with an interface customized in several innovative ways in cooperation with Sun. Netegrity SiteMinder was used for single sign-on capability.

BASIC FEATURES

- Users can access nearly all the sites without logging in.
- Logging in gives users the ability to rearrange the display and add or delete links. There are also two channels that are designed exclusively for user bookmark links.
- The employee locator helps people find each other at this large company.
- The help feature is comprehensive and provides links to appropriate help topics placed near the point of need.
- The tab structure enhances organization of the numerous links.
- The search function uses key word search, search by organization, search by external link list, and an alphabetical index. Sites are cross-referenced under all commonly used names in the alphabetical index.
- The *Quick Links* channel on the main page contains the most often-accessed user tasks.
- The *Choose Your News* channel eliminates the need for multiple paper subscriptions to news publications.

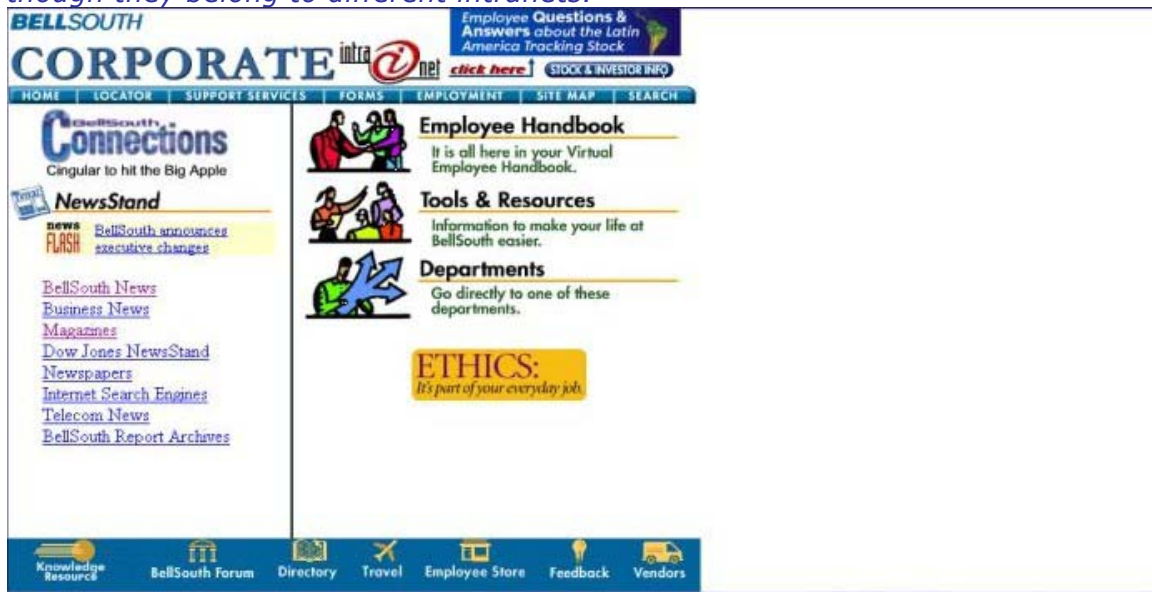
URL AND ACCESS

Users can access a generic version of the site without a password. To access the site that includes their individual settings, they need a user ID and password.

BACKGROUND

Prior to the redesign, the company had set up a nominal forum to manage the intranet, but in practice individual content providers basically had free rein to put up intranet content in any way they chose. The result was that the system was getting increasingly cumbersome and hard to use. By 2000, there were about three million pages, many of them obsolete or inaccurate, and there were no guidelines or policy for how intranet content should be presented and how long it should stay there. There is very little to show that the old home page and the old *Measurements Analysis Resource System* page, for example, belong to the same corporate intranet.

Pictured: The old home page and the old Measurements Analysis Resource System page. The inconsistent design makes them look as though they belong to different intranets.



"We had fabulous data out there, but either you didn't know it was there, or by the time you found it, it was too late," says Deborah Baker, director of BellSouth's *ePortal*.

In 2000, BellSouth decided to develop an intranet portal that would act as an umbrella site for the intranet as a whole and give easy access to its information resources. "We saw an opportunity to go in and change the way we as a company wanted to communicate with our employees and how our employees could expect to communicate with us," adds Baker.

GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS

The overall goal of the redesign was to improve communications and company productivity. The *ePortal* team also had six specific goals for the intranet's design:

- Provide a virtual workspace with single point of entry.
- Develop consistent corporate branding and navigation across the enterprise.
- Create a managed content environment.
- Establish guidelines and standards for all sites.
- Offer single sign-on access to multiple resources.
- Furnish an embedded search engine against current corporate information.

The main constraint, apart from budget limitations, was that the team needed to somehow incorporate the old intranet's diverse home pages, which many employees heavily used.

DESIGN PROCESS AND USABILITY ACTIVITIES

The designers kicked off the project in May 2000 by sending out an email to a randomly selected sample of 100 BellSouth employees, canvassing their views and requirements for the intranet. In late 2000 and early 2001, they followed this up by holding focus groups to determine users' feelings about the old site and wishes for the new one.

To assess the breadth of the BellSouth intranet, including the number of sites, site owners, and locations, the designers set up a link on the old site called *Register Your Site Intranet*. The result gave them an initial inventory. Based on this, they carried out an analysis of two intranet home pages and more than 900 other group "home pages."

During January and February 2001, the team continued to solicit users' views with a series of surveys about how users grouped links and categorized intranet sites.

"Each business unit came up with their requirements for the site, and took them to the IT group," Baker explains. "We used techniques like card sorting to find out how people liked to group information."

By the end of February, the designers had the intranet's preliminary information architecture. At the same time, they were working on the *ePortal* site's visual design. An external design firm produced design storyboards and BellSouth's internal design group produced design templates. These were combined into three final design proposals, which were shown to a focus group.

The following month, team members created a prototype of the new *ePortal* in a test environment and ran user scenario tests. They also conducted surveys comparing

the old and proposed new home page. The results of the testing were a new version of the information architecture, followed by the first version of the BellSouth *Intranet Style Guide*.

Then, in May, they launched the *ePortal* in pilot form, as a static site with just four tabs and no customization, help, personalization, or log-in. During the second half of the year, they gradually refined the pilot in an iterative process. In addition to customization features, such as add/remove channel, edit tab layout, and edit, they developed maximize and minimize channels and integrated a single sign-on feature to log-in to the interface.

At the same time, the team started applying the *Style Guide* to some of the BellSouth intranet subsites.

During the six months that the static site was live, users were encouraged to provide feedback via email. Also, team members developed a formal usability plan, including user surveys and use cases; they also carried out user scenarios in the company's usability lab over a four-day period. Based on this, they added several new features, including a help application, revised log-in functionality, the ability to search alphabetically and by organization, and external links and professional group channels.

The dynamic site went live in October 2001. With the main *ePortal* up and running, the designers are now working to persuade subsite content providers to use the new templates and style guides. The guidelines seem to be catching on as users realize that they help save time and free them up to focus on content.

"We've asked people to incorporate the guidelines as they go forward with new content," Baker says. "We do get some resistance because someone wants to do their own creative thing, but mostly the people who own the content are concerned about content, not design."

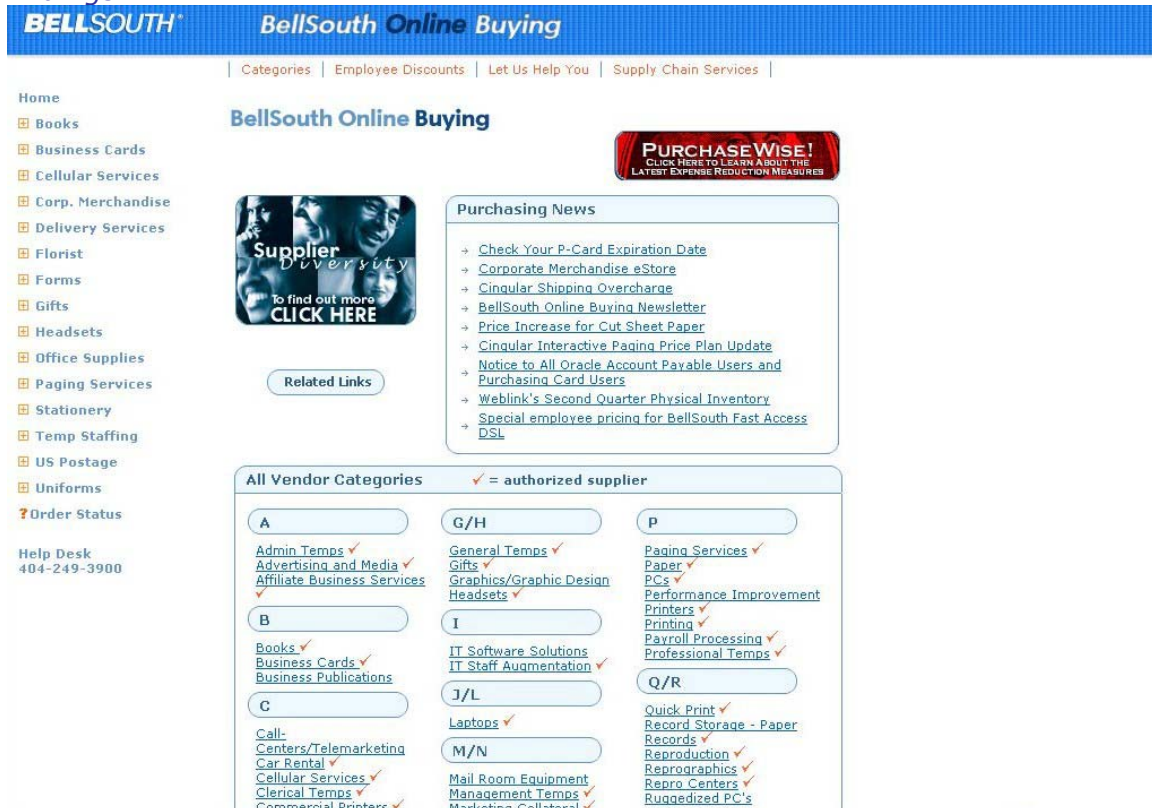
Baker estimates that about 30% of the BellSouth subsites are now consistent with style guidelines. This is not bad, considering the site contains about 1,000 subsites with an estimated one- to three-million pages overall. As yet there is no corporate CMS, but one is planned for the future.

Team members asked users about the final design ideas for the main portal page. To their surprise, people rejected more colorful orange and green mockups in favor of a much plainer design using the standard company blue. "We were expecting them to want something jazzier, less blue, but they liked the BellSouth blue and the logo," says Baker. "It seemed that internally, people felt strongly about the brand and expected to see it on the site. To them, changing it was like tampering with the corporate identity."

Once the design was selected, the team fine-tuned navigation elements and conducted usability testing. Team members asked user groups to carry out specific tasks using a prototype portal page. One finding was that users wanted to see a navigation style familiar to them from the applications they used every day. "We had people come to the focus groups with different levels of IT expertise," Baker recalls. "One user in particular was comfortable using Word, and kept trying to do the exercises using Microsoft commands."

Since one of the redesign's objectives was to minimize the need for training by making the site more intuitive, this idea was incorporated into the site in features such as the Windows-like plus and minus signs used to open and close panels.

Pictured: A page that adopted familiar controls, based on usability test findings.



Other user feedback included preferences for dark rather than light text, quick links to their favorite pages, only three to five major content tabs, and clear messages in the section headers. Users also wanted to see "happy" photos in the design, linked to content.

The home page's design is driven by its function: to provide easy links to a vast number of topics and subjects. "That determines how much creativity you can have in a page," Baker says, adding that they decided to design the tabs based on the site's three primary types of information: 1) company-wide information that everyone needed, 2) employee-specific information on things like benefits and training, and 3) work-specific information. Whereas the original home page was structured along organizational lines, the main tabs at the top of the new portal page provide links to tools and information individual employees need for their work.

The operating divisions and policies and guidelines columns are fixed, but the *Quick Links* are customizable, as is the news that appears in the center panel.

In the absence of a central CMS, the intranet team relies on subsite content providers to abide by design guidelines, and some have done so more than others. The *Product Encyclopedia* subsite, which used to have an extremely individual design

has partially submitted to the guidelines in its new version. The page banner has been modified with a search graphic and the link style is nonstandard, though the page does have a standard curved box and "happy" photo.

Pictured: The Product Encyclopedia subsite's original design, which was highly unique.



Pictured: The Product Encyclopedia subsite now, after partially submitting to style guidelines.



"We, the intranet team, don't control user group content, and we haven't asked people to change their websites wholesale," says Linda Kennedy, who manages *ePortal*. "We simply send out guidelines asking content providers to use the standard templates and abide by our design guidelines. Many people are complying because they don't have the resources to do design, and they're mainly interested in content anyway."

TIMELINE

- Late 2000 to January 2001: Focus groups on old site. *Register Your Site Intranet* developed and initial intranet inventory carried out.
- January–February 2001: User surveys conducted on information architecture; development of preliminary information architecture and graphic design iterations.
- March 2001: Creation of consolidated home page prototype; usability testing.
- April 2001: First version of BellSouth *Intranet Style Guide* appears.
- Q2 2001: Iterations of consolidated home page. *Style Guide* applied to *Technology* and *Online Buying* subsites.
- May 2001: *ePortal* pilot launched as static site. Release 2 of *Intranet Style Guide*.
- May–August 2001: Customization features developed.
- May 2001: Dynamic news feeds from major operating divisions.
- August 2001: Usability plan developed to include user surveys and use cases; users scenarios conducted in usability lab environment over four-day period.
- August–October 2001: Features added based on usability research and findings; performance testing.
- August–September: Functional testing.
- October 2001: Dynamic site launched.

RESULTS

Usability studies have shown that users find the new *ePortal* easier to use. However, the intranet team has found it difficult to put a return on investment figure on the intranet portal itself, as opposed to the applications it carries.

"Intuitively, everyone agrees that it saves you time and makes you more productive, but we couldn't reduce that to a budget figure that would satisfy our finance people," says Baker. "It's easy to quantify applications such as processing vouchers online, but the portal itself is harder to pin down."

LESSONS LEARNED

Insights from Deborah Baker:

Get backing from the top. "The appropriate executives with budget controls must be involved from the beginning."

Money matters. “You need centralized funding. At the start of the project, if you're asking departments to give up something they're attached to, you can't expect them to provide funding, too.”

Make it fun. “Getting collaboration between different groups was easier because it was an exciting project, and everyone wanted to work on it — the IT people and the business people.”

Credit Suisse Financial Services

USING THE INTRANET:

Credit Suisse Financial Services provides banking and insurance solutions for private clients, companies, and institutions around the world.

DESIGN TEAM:

Credit Suisse Financial Services internal design and IT team.

MEMBERS:

CSFS: URS BUOB, DIRECTOR; ANDREAS HEDINGER, VP; JAMAL SADICK, VP; BOJAN BLEICIC, ACCOUNT MANAGER FOR TECHNOLOGY AND OPERATIONS

Pictured: The intranet's home page is a non-personalized portal with generic news. The portal is in English, and the navigation displays the organizational structure of the company.

The screenshot shows the CSFS Intranet home page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Directory, Orgchart, Keywords, Subscription, All Subsites, Serverlist, Smartnet, and CSO Webs. Below this is a search bar and a language selector (deutsch, français, italiano). The main content area is titled 'Intranet Portal' and includes a 'MyNews' section with three news items: 'Credit Suisse Group 2001 Annual Results', 'Appointments at CSFS', and 'Handheld personal digital assistants'. To the right, there is a 'Topics' section with five items: 'Cyberhelvetia: Behind the pavilion', 'Record viewing rates for Winterthur', 'Olympic Silver Medal Winner', 'Our guest: Rudolph W. Giuliani', and '«one»: please send us your feedback'. A left-hand navigation menu lists various services and support options.

SUMMARY

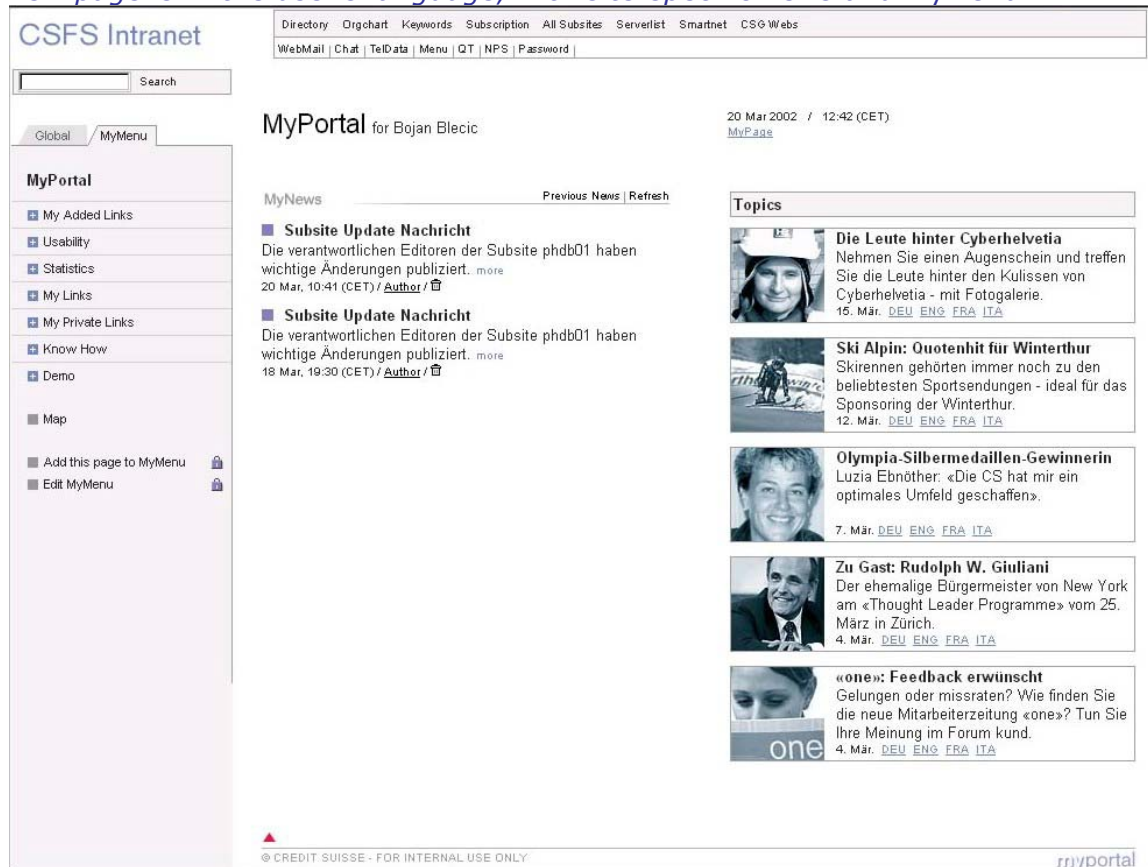
The Credit Suisse Financial Services (CSFS) intranet, composed of one million pages, supports about 28,000 employees distributed all over the world. The many user groups carry out distinctive tasks, from simple information gathering to complex work processes, so it's important not to inundate users with information that is not essential to them. This intranet succeeds through the simple navigational scheme, subsites, and personalization features.

The default home page (*pictured above*) shows a simple, attractive page with news; the organizational structure is disclosed via the left vertical navigation. In most cases, we recommend that your organizational structure does not drive intranet

design. However, in this case it works since the organizational units actually make sense as navigational categories.

Once logged in, only some of the default page remains, and the rest is customized to the specific user's needs. The news and articles are displayed in the employee's language. A set of community dedicated news and/or channel news is displayed in place of the generic news, and a new menu, *MyMenu*, appears. This menu is editable and configurable, which lets employees with different international working places instantly get their own bookmarks.

Pictured: The home page, MyPortal, once the user has logged in. The new page is in the user's language, with site-specific news and MyMenu.



The employee search feature is important, with more than 25,000 users. After searching for a user, the detailed view shows all the most important information a person might want.

Pictured: Detailed view of an employee's information.

The screenshot displays the CSFS Intranet interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Directory, Orgchart, Keywords, Subscription, All Subsites, Serverlist, Smartnet, and CSF Webs. Below this is a search bar and a secondary navigation bar with links for WebMail, Chat, TelData, Menu, QT, NPS, and Password. The main content area is divided into three sections:

- Personal Information:** Surname: Blecic, First name: Bojan, Grade: AVP, User-ID (PID): a239627, E-mail: bojan.blecic@credit-suisse.ch. A "Details" link is provided.
- Workplace Information:** Primary Workplace: BGES, Dep. Code: BGES, Department: KAM and Strategy (with a "Show in Chart" link), Job description: KAM for K,P,B, Tel: +41(0)1 657 36 32, Fax: (empty), Personal Fax: (empty), Business Unit: CSFS, Company: Credit Suisse Financial Services, Assignments: (empty), Office Address: Neugasse 14c, 8810 Horgen, Schweiz, Postal Address: Credit Suisse Financial Services, BGES, Att. Mr. Bojan Blecic, P.O. Box 100, 8070 Zurich, Switzerland.
- Business Chart:** A small organizational chart snippet is shown, with a "Show in Chart" link and the text "See my workplace area in the Business Chart:".

On the left side, there is a "MyPortal" sidebar with various links like "My Added Links", "Usability", "Statistics", "My Links", "My Private Links", "Know How", "Demo", "Map", "Add this page to MyMenu", and "Edit MyMenu".

An innovative feature of employee search is that users can locate a person based on their position in the company using the organization chart. This feature lets users navigate the org chart and different company units to find a person, which is convenient if the user knows the person is in a specific group, but doesn't know his or her name. The system also lets users cross-navigate through the chart's interactive boxes, clicking on boxes to show employees in each unit. The employee names also link to each employee's *My Page*.

The most interesting aspect of this feature is that it is one of many designs that had roots in an earlier intranet design that the designers were, in some ways, forced to follow. While many designers find it attractive to have a blank slate to exercise their creativity on, it can be a great gift to use an existing design as a prototype that they can test and mold to meet its potential. In so many ways, starting with any design is better than starting from scratch, which this team had the wisdom to recognize. Instead of being defeated by the recommendation to follow a general existing design, the team learned from the design and made vast improvements — lemonade from lemons, so to speak.

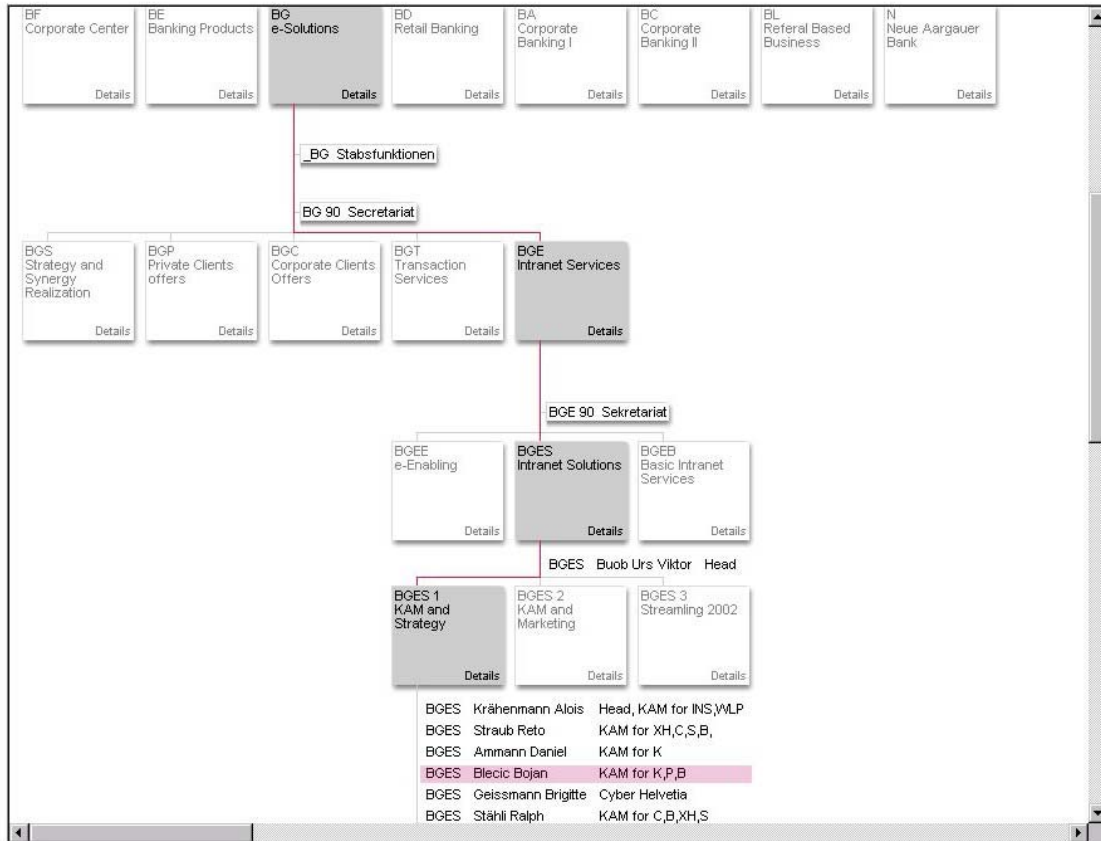
Pictured: The organization chart people can use to find company employees.

CSFS Directories: Staff and Structure

20 Mar 2002 (CET)

Business Chart (valid as of 14 Jan 2002)

[Search for department](#)



As far as customization, users can choose different subscriptions and channels for their own page. Each subscription is described in full, and focuses on relevant company information. Each subscription also offers various channels that users can choose from.

Pictured: A page that lets users edit their subscriptions and channels.

CSFS Intranet

Directory Orgchart Keywords Subscription All Subsites Serverlist Smartnet CSF Webs

WebMail | Chat | TelData | Menu | QT | NPS | Password

Search

Global MyMenu Subsite

Subscription

- News Channels
- Update Notifications
- Complete overview
- Map
- Subscribe Subsite Updates
- Add this page to MyMenu
- Edit MyMenu

What you see is what you subscribe | 21 Sep 2001 14:00 (CET)

Intranet Subscription

Product & Market News [Show Channels](#)

Products & Market News channels cover the core business of our company: product and services offers, research information and sales channel developments.

Corporate Services News [Show Channels](#)

Corporate Services News channels provide headlines regarding our bank's strategic and operational support services like Compliance, Accounting, Information Technology, Communications and many more.

Client Group News [Show Channels](#)

News on these channels is of interest to staff dealing with specific client groups.

CSG External News [Show Channels](#)

CSG External News features official statements such as releases, statements, speeches or presentations from any unit within CSG to the public.

Subsite Update Notifications [Show Channels](#)

If you wish to be informed about relevant changes within certain PrivateLink subsites: please subscribe the respective subsite.

Link Sets for MyMenu [Show Channels](#)

The following link sets have been compiled by community managers or other experts in our business. They are mandatory for defined staff groups. (In this case they appear in the "MyCommunity Link" selection of the MyMenu.) Select any of the following link sets and the respective entries will appear in your MyMenu under "Subscribed Links".

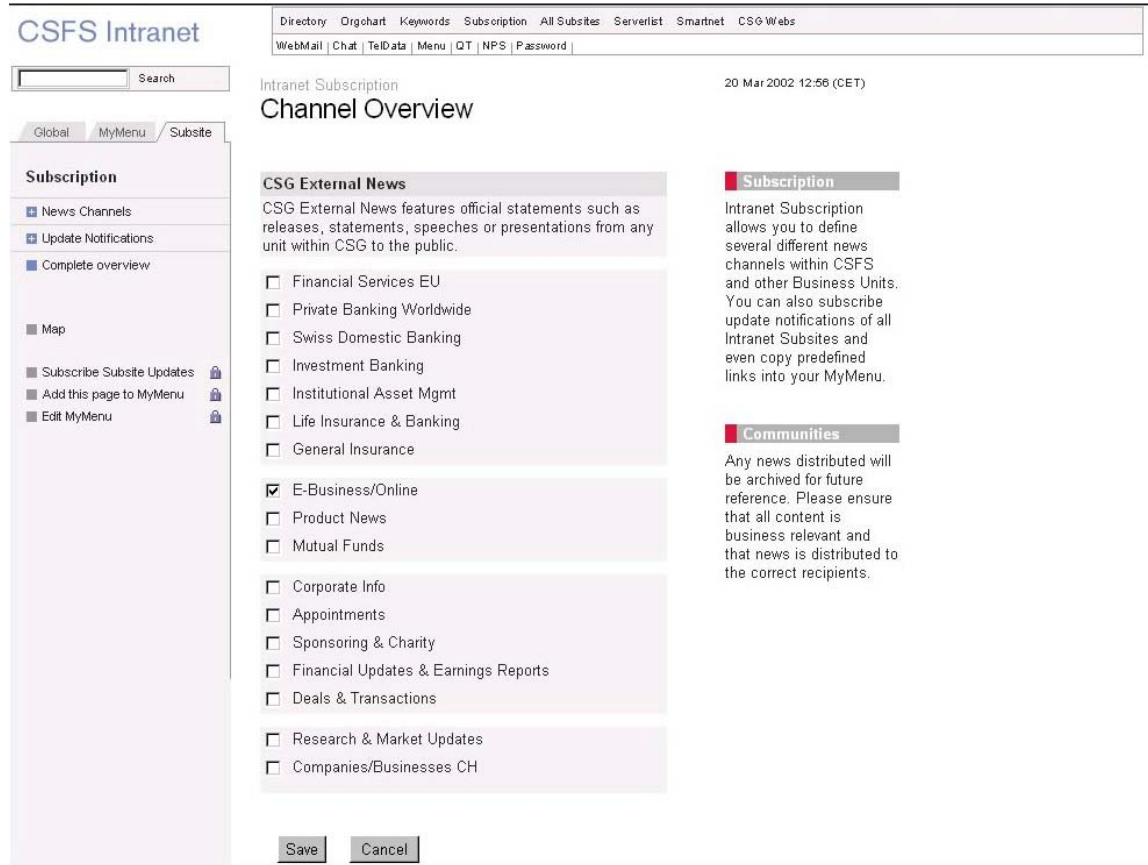
Topic Overview

Intranet Subscription allows you to define several different news channels within CSFS and other Businet Units. You can also subscribe update notifications of all Intranet Subsites and even copy predefined links into your MyMenu

Please Note

Any news distributed will be archived for future reference. Please ensure that all content is business relevant and that news is distributed to the correct recipients.

Pictured: Some of the channels offered.



Search is present and predictable. The navigational elements are obvious and memorable. The overall design is discreet, and the color palette of blues, grays, and white set the stage for a pleasant user experience.

Scoring (3 = best)						
Simple look	Simple navigation	Consistent navigation and design	Visible search	Simple search	Limited (well-presented) text on pages	Home page
2.8	2.3	2.5	3	2.8	2.7	2.8

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTRANET

The CSFS intranet supports four languages — English, German, French, and Italian — and has about one million pages. The main navigation is based on three levels: 1) global navigation, 2) subsite navigation (contextual), and 3) personalized navigation.

MyPortal, the CSFS intranet, is a working tool and information repository. It serves 40,000 CSFS employees with a wide range of jobs and responsibilities. Employees are based in CSFS's Zurich headquarters and in regional offices around the world.

BASIC FEATURES

- Personalized interface

- Dynamic organization chart bound with directory services
- Community-based *News Delivery System*
- News channels based on subscription
- Call-in support center operating twenty-four hours a day, five days a week
- Decentralized network of subsite editors and content providers
- Centralized unit of Key Account Managers

URL AND ACCESS

Users access the intranet through a default browser setting that opens the intranet's home page when users open their browsers. Users have to log-in only the first time; after that the system recognizes the machine through a Cookie. Log-in requires that users submit a personal identification number (PID) and a password. Users accessing the intranet from outside the firewall must enter a three-level security log-in (PID, password, and secure ID card). Only a few select employees are allowed to access the intranet that way. The URL is not public; only CSFS employees are allowed to access the intranet.

BACKGROUND

In November 2001, the board of Credit Suisse decided to merge the organization's corporate and private banking units into a single company, Credit Suisse Financial Services. One visible sign of the change would be a single unified intranet; the design team was given until January 2002 to get it up and running. Faced with the requirement to deliver a working intranet in just two months, the team pragmatically decided to use elements from the existing intranets.

The corporate banking unit had a fairly simple intranet known as *WebHotel*, which acted mainly as an information source, giving about 20,000 retail and corporate banking staff within Credit Suisse electronic access to documents, procedures, and so on. It was published in German, French, and Italian — the three main languages spoken in Switzerland — and had its own CMS.

Pictured: WebHotel, the predecessor to the new intranet.

CREDIT SUISSE
WEBHOTEL

Technische Verantwortung: [KTPZ 5](#)

Sprache: [[FR](#)] [[IT](#)]

[Serverliste](#)
[Projekte](#)
[Produkte](#)
[Smartnet](#)
[News-Archiv](#)

Datum	News CS Intranet	Sprache
! WICHTIG !		
Das Webhotel wird nicht mehr gepflegt und in naher Zukunft definitiv abgestellt. Das gewünschte Intranetangebot finden Sie neu über das Intranet-Portal http://my.csintra.net . Dort befinden sich folgende alternative Suchmethoden:		
	Button 'All Subsites' > eine Sitemap, die Ihnen alle Subsites (eigenständige Intranetangebote) aufzeigt.	
	Button 'Keywords' > ein Stichwortverzeichnis nach A - Z (Schlagwörter), das Sie zur gewünschten Website führt.	
	SEARCH (Suchmaschine) > ein Eingabefeld, in das Sie Ihre Suchbegriffe eingeben können.	
Bei Fragen wenden Sie sich bitte an unsere Intranet Hotline +41 (0)1 335 71 71 oder senden Sie ein Mail an GG Hotline Intranet (intranet.hotline@csfs.com).		
24.12.01	Informationen aus dem Ressort e-Channels Contact Center! Das neue CCM online ist da!	DE FR IT EN
24.12.01	Heute letzter Tag beim grossen e-Business e-Adventskalender-Gewinnspiel! Klicken und gewinnen...	DE FR IT EN
24.12.01	Stati der Jahresendaktivitäten (JEV, EURO, newCSFS)	DE FR IT EN
24.12.01	Beachten Sie bitte die Arbeits- und Anwesenheitszeiten von Swift/Telex/Fax/Telecommunications über die Feiertage	DE FR IT EN

The private banking unit, however, had a very different intranet. *PrivateLink*, published mainly in English, served primarily as a business tool for 8,000 relationship managers and other private banking staff. Because private banking employees often have to travel around the world and work from different PCs, this intranet included extensive personalization features allowing users to, for example, set their bookmarks centrally.

"*PrivateLink* was a working tool with applications in it. It was more frequently used than *WebHotel*," says Bojan Blečić, account manager for technology and operations. "*WebHotel* users wouldn't routinely start their browsers up first thing in the morning."

Pictured: The private banking unit's own very different intranet, PrivateLink.

The screenshot shows the PrivateLink intranet portal. On the left is a 'PrivateLink Portal' sidebar with a 'central menu' and navigation links: 'Daily Update', 'Sales Front', 'Investment Radar', 'Corporate Services', 'Our Business Unit', 'Search', 'About PrivateLink', 'My Desk', and 'Map'. The main content area is titled 'Intranet of Credit Suisse Private Banking' and 'PrivateLink Portal'. It features a central announcement: 'CSPB named Best Private Bank of 1999' with a 'FINANCE ASIA' award logo and a link to 'ENG'. Below this are sections for 'Competitor Watch on the Intranet', 'Dow Jones Newswires Interview with Oswald J. Grübel', 'Corporate Center Subsite goes online', 'US Withholding Tax: New Regulations 2001', and 'New Tariffs for Securities Operations as of 01 Jan 2000'. A right-hand sidebar contains 'New Setup for CSPB', 'Online Products' (including 'Fund Lab'), and 'Tools' (including 'Key Words A - Z', 'Staff Directory', and 'My Desk'). The footer contains copyright information: '© CREDIT SUISSE PRIVATE BANKING - FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY' and 'Realisation: Andreas Hedinger, Lukas Müller, Jamal Sadik'.

The board saw personalization as a crucial feature. Given the tight schedule, the design team decided to base the new, combined intranet mainly on the look and feel of *PrivateLink*, despite the fact that the bulk of the user base was accustomed to *WebHotel*. "It was a case of technology deciding how people should work," Bleicic admitted.

GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS

One of the combined intranet's key goals was to promote effective collaboration between interdisciplinary teams and enable employees to share knowledge. To accomplish this, they set several design goals.

For example, because the combined intranet would hold far larger quantities of information than either of its predecessors, one goal was to optimize information delivery to dedicated target groups through the use of communities. Information would be filtered and delivered only to members of the community for which it was relevant. Other goals included:

- Provide a solid directory system that would make it easy to locate employees.
- Avoid information overflow through filtering and personalization.
- Enable and promote efficient collaboration and knowledge sharing between interdisciplinary teams.

All of these goals had to be accomplished within the main constraint: a very tight time scale.

DESIGN PROCESS AND USABILITY ACTIVITIES

With no time for user consultation, team members simply took what they saw as the previous intranets' best elements and tried to merge them into a single system. The team created new templates and design guidelines for content managers to use. These can be applied either via the existing *WebHotel* CMS or to basic HTML pages. In some cases, existing *WebHotel* content could be dropped into a new frame. Not all existing content is suitable for this treatment, however, and so far only about a third of the intranet content is displayed using the new look and feel.

Pictured: In this page, existing WebHotel content was dropped into a new frame that provides the new top menu bar navigation and translates the old left-hand navigation into the new style.

The screenshot displays the CSFS Intranet interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Directory, Orgchart, Keywords, All Subsites, Serverlist, Smartnet, CS&Webs, and Subscription. Below this is a search bar and a language selector (ENG, DEU). The main content area is titled "Technology & Operations" and features a "News" section with several articles, a "Hot Topics" section with links to Specialist and Management Career System, Skillprofiler, and HR contacts, and a "Services" section with links to CS Support Center, CS Anti Virus Site, and IT Security Awareness Program. A left-hand navigation menu is visible, listing various sections like Home, TOP, en, News Archive, About us, Our Services, Ausbildung, TOP Corporate Center KF, IT Architecture & Standards KX, Application Development KA, IT Production KP, IT Systems Engineering KT, Operations KS, Human Resources Portal, and Shared Business Services KI. At the bottom, there is a copyright notice for 1998-2002 CREDIT SUISSE GROUP and contact information for Marlis Zbinden.

Given the tremendous time pressure, the team dropped usability testing in the initial development of *MyPortal*. "People had to decide based on their own usability experience what was right and wrong," Blečić says. "Now we're going back and slowly gathering the information we need to fix the main usability problems."

Over the coming months, the team is planning to carry out user studies at both a portal and subsite level, and do a detailed analysis of the intranet log files to find out

what is and isn't being used. However a number of usability issues are already apparent.

The main issue is the culture shock for former *WebHotel* users, who must use a very different content structure in the *MyPortal* site. These users were accustomed to content organized by task. *MyPortal*, like *PrivateLink*, is organized by business, with the left-hand navigation reflecting departments within the organization. "Users tell us they can't find things any more," Blecic says.

For example, the server list that appears as the top item in *WebHotel* navigation is now found in the *All Subsites* link at the top of the *MyPortal* page — not an obvious place for users to look. Furthermore, because there has not been time to change the design of all one million or so subpages, navigation might work differently, depending on where users are in the site. "The navigation looks consistent, but it isn't," Blecic says. *WebHotel* users also face language issues with the new site, which is all in English.

Yet another issue is that links need to be further defined and described. Currently, users can click on a link expecting to jump to an HTML document that will open instantly, and find instead that Acrobat Reader is launching and they must wait several seconds for a PDF file to download.

The new design uses the typography and understated design from *WebHotel*, but the same general layout as the latest version of *PrivateLink*. As discussed above, existing content can be dropped into a standard template, which provides the horizontal navigation at the top of the page and puts the left-hand navigation into a consistent form.

The design team increased the type size from *PrivateLink*'s hard-to-read 8-point type to 10 point, as used in *WebHotel*. Links are underlined throughout.

One change from both of the previous versions is a double menu bar across the top. The lower bar shows mainly personalized applications available through the individual's portal page (the exception is *WebMail*, which is available to all employees).

Another change is a move away from the small red boxes featured in the *PrivateLink* design, which user feedback showed were frequently mistaken for check boxes. Although the boxes appeared in the first version of the combined portal, they have been removed from the current version, which came out in summer 2002.

Users are given several ways to access critical information. For example, they can search for people by going straight to the *Directory* link or they can use the dynamic organization chart. Using this chart, which is based on the *WebHotel* organization chart, users can click on employee names to bring up contact details or click on departments to bring up basic information, including a map of each department's location.

Pictured: The new directory organization chart design is based on WebHotel's old organization chart design.

CREDIT SUISSE
WEBHOTEL

CS INTRANET - SERVERLISTE

[Probleme mit der neuen Serverliste?](#)

- Serverliste
- Nach Fachbereich
- Projekte
- Produkte
- Smartnet

! WICHTIG !

Die Serverliste wird nicht mehr gepflegt und in naher Zukunft definitiv abgestellt. Das gewünschte Intranetangebot finden Sie über das Intranet-Portal <http://my.csintra.net>. Dort befinden sich folgende alternative Suchmethoden:

Button 'All Subsites'
> eine Sitemap, die Ihnen alle Subsites (eigenständige Intranetangebote) aufzeigt. Sie enthält als Teilmenge auch alle Intranet-Links aus der Serverliste.

Button 'Keywords'
> ein Stichwortverzeichnis nach A - Z (Schlagwörter), das Sie zur gewünschten Website führt.

SEARCH (Suchmaschine)
> ein Eingabefeld, in das Sie Ihre Suchbegriffe eingeben können.

Bei Fragen wenden Sie sich bitte an unsere Intranet Hotline +41 (0)1 335 71 71 oder senden Sie ein Mail an [GG Hotline Intranet](mailto:intranet.hotline@csfs.com) (intranet.hotline@csfs.com).

CREDIT SUISSE FINANCIAL SERVICES **WEITERE**

X Weitere

CREDIT SUISSE BANKING

The *Topics* column, which takes up about a third of the main portal page, is intended to contain information that is less business-critical, and more general and social. However, the team would like to reduce it. "We think the topics are not as relevant as they look, and that too much surface area is being used for nice-to-have rather than need-to-have content," says Blecic. "We will be trying to convince content owners that this section should be reduced to one topic that will change regularly, making more room for news."

The CSFS intranet has around 400 subsites that users can search in a flexible way: By entering keywords or by skimming through the alphabetical *All Subsites* list.

The concept of communities is fundamental to personalization within *MyPortal*. A network of community managers can build user communities by adding groups of employees according to non-organizational factors such as location, language spoken, type of job, and so on. The news and topics are then pushed to users according to which communities they belong to. Users can also choose to receive certain news channels, so the *MyNews* section on the main portal page will typically be driven on both a push and a pull basis.

Another new feature of the *MyPortal* design is the tabs in the left-hand menu column, which let users switch between the global menu that appears on the general home page, a customizable menu (*MyMenu*) that users can add bookmarks to and so on, and a subsite menu that appears when users select a subsite (10_chann.jpg).

Large sections of the site are still using the old *WebHotel* look and feel. Over time, they will be migrated to the new design.

LANGUAGE ISSUES

Around 70% of CSFS employees are based in Zurich where German, French, and Italian are spoken — a language mix that was reflected in the old *WebHotel* intranet. In *MyPortal*, English is the main language, with some of the content and navigation also available in other languages when users set their preference accordingly. Translation is, however, another pragmatic issue. “It’s time sensitive — if we have to get news out quickly we don’t always have the time to translate it,” Blecic says.

Select site content is also available in other languages, including French, Italian, Spanish, and, most recently, Japanese. When available, alternative language versions of an item are indicated by links at the end.

Language has been one of the major usability issues in combining the two intranets into a single corporate portal. *WebHotel* users accustomed to having their intranet in German, French, or Italian are now typically confronted with a largely English-language front page. With no time to translate all content, however, English speakers can find that a link from the main English *MyPortal* page takes them to content like this, which is still all in German.

TIMELINE

November 2001: Work on *MyPortal* begins.

January 2002: *MyPortal* launch.

February 2002: Intranet team begins review of design and usability issues.

RESULTS

The decision to create *MyPortal* using the *PrivateLink* look and feel made it possible to get the new intranet up and running in two months — an impressive feat. However, it also left CSFS with a lot of disgruntled *WebHotel* users who suddenly found their familiar interface had been taken away. “They lost their own intranet, which was quite different, and had to be reeducated in use of the new one,” says Blecic.

Selling the largely Zurich-based corporate banking staff on the benefits of personalization has proven tricky. Because most of them work in the same office, from the same PC, preferences such as bookmarks can easily be set locally, and the advantage of being able to personalize them through the portal wasn’t obvious. “They felt their browser bookmarks worked well, and wanted to know how they could import them into the new intranet — which unfortunately isn’t possible at the moment,” Blecic explains.

Cultural changes will also be needed to fine-tune the personalization strategy; it is not yet meeting the goal of tightly focusing content for those who want it, without overloading those who don’t. “It’s a people problem, not a technology problem,” says Blecic. “We need the community managers to understand the meaning of

communities and how to build them. At the moment, everyone thinks their own news is the most important and wants it to reach the maximum number of employees.”

One obvious adverse result of too much information being pushed out to users is that some divisions are threatening to abandon the corporate intranet and build their own subportals where they can display what they feel is more relevant information on the front page. Rather than letting the intranet be fragmented in this way, the team is hoping to introduce community navigation that could be either person- or process-oriented, and enable divisions to display relevant news within the overall *MyPortal* framework.

LESSONS LEARNED

Insights from Bojan Blecic:

Technology isn't a silver bullet. “A content management system won't solve your problems if people misunderstand the rules and put in unstructured, hard-to-understand content. Content management is part of the solution, so is personalization, but educating people is the major challenge.”

Uniformity isn't consistency. “A uniform look and feel is different from a consistent look and feel. Consistency, too, is only part of the solution to creating a usable intranet.”

Understand the way users think. “The logical model or conventions one person has are just their ideas, not universally applicable. If you want to build a system that has to interact with lots of people, you have to understand their mental structures and allow for their different ways of working.”

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu and Eclipse Group

USING THE INTRANET:

Headquartered in Sydney, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Australia is part of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, a global professional services firm offering assurance, tax, and advisory services.

DESIGN TEAM:

Eclipse Group and Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu

Eclipse is a specialist Web consultancy and fully owned subsidiary of DTT. They provide a broad spectrum of services, from initial strategy formulation to development.

MEMBERS:

ECLIPSE: MICHAEL KEAN, PROJECT DIRECTOR; VANESSA ROWE, PROJECT MANAGER; ANDREW BODDY, LEAD CREATIVE; EUGENE O'BRIEN, DEVELOPER; SIMON JACKSON, DEVELOPER

DELOITTE TOUCHE TOHMATSU: TONI HAMILTON, INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR; SUE COLWELL, INFORMATION SOLUTIONS MANAGER; YUSUF MANSURI, DIRECTOR INTERNET & E-BUSINESS SERVICES (NO LONGER WITH DTT)

Pictured: The home page for the Deloitte Australia Intranet Service (DAIS). Headlines link to a full article with more detailed information. A gray headline link indicates the article has been read.

SUMMARY

The Deloitte Australia Intranet Service (DAIS) primarily supports employees of Deloitte Australia. The core user base comprises more than 2,600 employees across twelve offices in all major cities in Australia. Users are predominantly accounting, tax, or consulting professionals, as well as internal service teams. About two-thirds of all users spend the majority of their time outside the office at client sites.

A key element in the design is the home page's simplicity. The designers set a clear objective: to ensure that as many employees as possible receive important messages even if they only read the home page. This is a smart idea, as many users do not have the time or desire to surf the intranet on a daily basis, but they will check out the home page. And, for those users at remote sites, getting the information they need on one page can be crucial. For those who can and want to use the intranet past the home page, the most used tools are easily accessible from their own area on the home page.

Among many good features, one of the best on this intranet is a feature that lets employees contribute content. All employees can contribute content to key areas by filling in online forms. Because some content approvals are necessary, these forms are automatically routed to the right people for approval. Users can type in a headline, summary, and the full article, as well as an activation date for the news. Making it possible and simple for users to add content will help keep the information on the intranet diverse and changing, which keeps people informed and coming back. Also, the user contribution forms are very straightforward and not too long. They ask for important information about the submitter, but also let the user type a different author name for when they are posting material written by someone else. Also, users can choose the news date, the activation date, and the expiration date for the information. This ensures that information on the intranet will be dated, posted, and removed at the right time.

Pictured: An example of a contribution page where any Deloitte employee can submit a news story.

ADD NEWS ARTICLE

Submitted by:

Name

e-mail

News article details:

Author Name

News Headline

News Article Summary 1

News Article Text

News Article Date

News Activation Date

News Expiry Date

Allowing users to post content is only one way DAIS incorporates individuality and fresh news. It also lets teams create their own home pages, while still adhering to the intranet design standards. This ensures a consistent design across the intranet, but lets groups highlight people, services, and events.

Pictured: The People & Knowledge teams' home page is an example of how subsites can have their own identity while complying with overall look and feel guidelines.

Pictured: The Signals corporate culture home page is another example of how subsites can have their own identity while still complying with overall look and feel guidelines.

The overall look of the pages is attractive and cheerful, with splashes of bright orange. In addition to projecting a simple, business-like image, the designers gave

the intranet a human face by judicious use of quirky graphics, such as the cow on the example home page. The intranet designers also involved upper management, turning the new CEO’s mustache into “the twirling moustache” — a feature that gives users access to the CEO’s news. (Such features and graphics only work, of course, if they match with your corporate culture, as they do here.) The static horizontal and vertical menus make navigation simple and memorable. All pages have a simple search box, which is one more way users can quickly and easily use this intranet to get the information they are looking for.

Scoring (3 = best)						
Simple look	Simple navigation	Consistent navigation and design	Visible search	Simple search	Limited (well-presented) text on pages	Home page
2.7	2	2.4	3	2.7	3	2.7

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTRANET

BASIC FEATURES

DAIS provides a central repository for corporate information and includes the following basic features:

- An online directory of employees that includes photos, biographies, and key skill areas
- A news tool that facilitates internal news publishing
- A file library document repository
- Employee self-services such as online expense claims, personal details, and payroll information
- Information pages with background and contact details for all service areas, internal support teams, and communities within Deloitte Australia

URL AND ACCESS

User access is automatic by log-in. The intranet loads as soon as a user enters his or her correct log-in and password details.

BACKGROUND

Before work started on DAIS, the company had various intranets at the business-units level, plus a company-wide intranet launched at the start of 1999. No formal resources were allocated to the old intranet, which was developed on a part-time basis. As a result, it contained little more than links to the departmental intranets, was not maintained, and employees did not use it.

At the start of 2000, the company decided it needed something better to facilitate information sharing across the organization. It called in the design company Eclipse Group to help.

Pictured: The home page of the old company-wide intranet, launched at the start of 1999.

The screenshot shows the Deloitte Australia Intranet homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Telephone Lookups, Search Engines, Business Groups, Other Sites, Travel Sites, and Industry Groups. Below this is the main header with the text "Deloitte Australia Intranet" and "DAIS Intranet" in a stylized font. The page is divided into three main columns: NEWS, Business Groups, and Services. The NEWS column contains a list of articles with titles like "In memory", "Payroll System", and "Do You need ESP?". The Business Groups column lists various services such as "Assurance and Advisory", "Corporate Reorganisation Group", and "Deloitte Consulting". The Services column includes links for "CC:Web", "Links Beyond Deloitte", and "Feedback and suggestions". At the bottom of the page, there are logos for DTTA, LEARN, and Claim.

GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS

“Management wanted to use the intranet to build a Deloitte-wide community where people could make connections across the whole Australian practice,” explains Michael Kean, chief executive officer for Eclipse. “It has a number of large business units, and it’s easy for them to just stay in their silos and not be aware of all the firm can offer. Management wanted to create awareness of the firm’s specialty offerings in order to increase cross-selling.”

Other key goals included:

- Create a primary channel for internal communications through which employees can find out what’s happening across the organization, rather than just in their own practice area or office.
- Create opportunities for people to build internal networks.
- Facilitate more efficient information sharing by providing a central access point for resources.
- Make DAIS itself a collaborative experience, where everyone has the opportunity to contribute.

DESIGN PROCESS AND USABILITY ACTIVITIES

Work started on the DAIS project in July 2000. Deloitte had held a series of informal discussion sessions earlier that summer. Eclipse then ran a strategy workshop in Sydney for about thirty representatives of the firm’s major service areas, including communications, knowledge management, and financial professionals working in client-facing roles.

Using the workshop findings, Eclipse produced a scoping document to define the site’s information architecture and a plan for carrying out the work. Deloitte signed

off on the information architecture in September 2000. The aim was to complete phase one of the intranet by December 2000, and launch in mid-February 2001. Deloitte ran a competition in August to come up with a new name for the intranet, resulting in the DAIS name. "The old intranet was so bad we felt we had to distance ourselves, and come up with an entirely new brand," explains Andrew Boddy, lead creative for Eclipse.

The competition was part of a conscious effort to get intranet buy-in from employees. The previous intranet was almost universally disliked within the firm, and the team had an uphill struggle to gain acceptance for the redesigned version.

Before the launch, the team gave a series of presentations to internal stakeholders who would be key to providing content and managing subsites, showing them the site structure and features and ensuring they understood how it worked. To generate interest and anticipation, Deloitte also arranged for key executives to leave voicemails for employees, telling them that the new-look intranet was on its way and explaining the thinking behind the changes.

Deloitte continues to use voicemail to promote the intranet. "The CEO does a lot of voicemails, and he will specifically refer to DAIS in his announcements, telling people to click on DAIS for more information," says Kean.

The firm is also continuing to stress the intranet's top-level backing, including the "twirling moustache" feature. "We had a change of CEO about four months after DAIS launched," explains Sue Colwell, information solutions manager for Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu. "He had a distinctive moustache, so Toni Hamilton thought up the idea of using the moustache device as a link to all CEO announcements."

Pictured: A page with the "twirling moustache" feature, a link to all CEO announcements. It was created based on the new CEO's distinctive moustache.



While Deloitte was wooing the user base, Eclipse was working on the design. Unlike many design companies, it did not attempt to come up with a number of alternatives. "My philosophy is that if you're given time to spend on design, it's better to spend your whole time working on one feel and refining that," says Boddy. "If you have enough information from the client, the design should define itself." The proposal he came up with was very similar to the one they launched, and the Deloitte team accepted it without much modification.

By February, the first version of the intranet was launched, consisting of a core toolset: news, people and site search, policies, background, and community information, plus one or more pages for each of the eight or nine service lines.

Since then, the intranet has developed in a process of continuous improvement, rather than formal new releases. As more tools have been added to the right-hand column, the intranet is gradually evolving into a full-blown enterprise portal. The intranet's design is shaping the design of enterprise applications such as Peoplesoft.

Modifications are driven by user feedback. Some of this comes via the site's feedback tool; Deloitte also conducts electronic surveys on specific topics. More often, feedback comes from users talking directly to their site coordinator, who then feeds comments back to the central team.

Much of the feedback concerns the search capabilities. People have asked for more sophisticated searching, and have also complained that searches are not turning up some of the information they want. "We can resolve that by process, by getting people to participate more," says Kean. "We're streamlining and automating the process by which information is fed through from various back-end systems."

The content is fixed by standard templates and is increasingly served up automatically from a series of databases. For example, each time a new employee is added to the Peoplesoft HR application, an entry is automatically created in the intranet people directory. Employees can then add their CV, areas of expertise, and photo. Additionally, all employees can contribute content to key areas by filling in simple online forms, which are routed to the appropriate person for approval.

Projecting a strong corporate identity while letting the business units personalize their own site areas was the design's fundamental objective.

Business units have control over the central panel, where they can, for example, change the text structure, add images, add their logo under the DAIS logo, and choose colors from a set palette.

The design Eclipse developed was based on the principles of clarity, simplicity, and use of white space. In developing the design, Eclipse designers expanded on and incorporated Deloitte's existing corporate font into a Web identity, and created icons for key functions. They chose a color palette based around warm colors. "We also decided to use frames," says Boddy. "It was a big choice, but because we knew the platform and browser type, we felt we could control it."

TIMELINE

- Early 1999: First Deloitte intranet launched.

- July 2000: Work starts on DAIS project.
- September 2000: Intranet strategy document signed off.
- February 2001: Phase one of DAIS goes live.
- March 2001 on: Continuous improvement.

RESULTS

On a purely practical level, the HR department's payroll-related transactional contacts have fallen by about 80% since the self-service function appeared on the intranet. Also, the company previously used broadcast emails to deal with conflict of interest issues — where the firm may be restricted from dealing with a certain client because it works for a competitor or for the same company, but on a competing issue. On a typical day, the company would send out ten or twenty such broadcast emails, and they were easily lost in employees' email inboxes. These issues can now be dealt with by the site's Con_Rel search function, resulting in a 90% reduction in broadcast emails.

Employees' attitudes to the intranet are steadily becoming more positive. "DAIS has gotten into the vernacular now, and there's a lot of focus around what stories get on to the main page," says Kean.

Most of the subsites, which were initially resistant to being absorbed into the corporate site, have now agreed to this. "Once people saw the quality of design work in the new system, most of them folded almost overnight," Kean says. Subsite owners were further motivated by the company's decision to stop funding separate development efforts and a desire for a better end result that didn't require them to waste resources handcrafting a subsite.

LESSONS LEARNED

Insights from Michael Kean:

Never think of the intranet as being finished. "You can't do everything at once. We started out addressing the priorities identified in requirements stage, but the intranet will continue to evolve as we meet new requirements."

Give people something to criticize. "What users say they want is often not what they really want. You need to put something in front of them."

Workflow is vital. "The authorization and workflow processes for providing content are vital to making the intranet work, and need to be identified very early on."

Publicity matters. "There was a lot of negativity around the first intranet. Making sure this one was promoted well was key to its success."

Lonely Planet Publications

USING THE INTRANET:

Lonely Planet is an independent travel publishing company with offices in Australia, France, the U.K., and the U.S. Based in Melbourne, Lonely Planet boasts a publication list spanning over 600 titles, plus new media enterprises such as award-winning Internet sites, the ekno communication service, a Web-based photography agency (Lonely Planet Images), and Lonely Planet Television.

DESIGN TEAM:

Lonely Planet

MEMBERS: MELISSA MCVEIGH, INTRANET MANAGER; ALAN KOENINGER, WEB DESIGNER; ANDREW STEVENS, DEVELOPER; CAROL BARTON, EDITORIAL MANAGER

Pictured: Home page of The Loop, Lonely Planet's intranet.

The screenshot shows the home page of 'The Loop', Lonely Planet's intranet. The page has a yellow and green color scheme. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'THE LOOP MELBOURNE' and a sidebar with links for 'TIMESHEETS', 'CONTACTS', 'HELP', and 'HOME'. Below this is a main navigation bar with categories like 'NEWS', 'COMMUNITY', 'SUPPORT', 'PUBLISHING', 'NEW BIZ', 'DESIGN', 'SALES & MKG', and 'AUTHORS'. The main content area features a large headline 'The Loop: In The Limelight...' and a 'NEWS FEATURE' section titled 'The Gap Year Grows Up'. There's also a 'SPOTLIGHT' section with a photo of a group of people and a 'HIGHLIGHTS' section with links to 'Mad Dog Cafe Menu', 'Guide Book Review', 'City Sync Horoscopes', 'LPAU Event Calendar', and 'Birthdays In March'. A search bar is located on the right side. At the bottom, there's a 'MORE NEWS' section with three items: 'News Bytes', 'Love Blooms On The Thorn Tree', and 'Content Licensing'. A 'LP WEB SITES' section lists links to 'Lonely Planet', 'Lonely Planet Spain', 'Lonely Planet France', 'Ekno', 'Lonely Planet Images', and 'City Sync'. The page is dated '20 March 2002' and includes a 'Timeclock' icon.

SUMMARY

Lonely Planet employs 450 people in offices in Melbourne, the U.S., the U.K., and France. It also has an extensive network of over 150 authors and cultivates relationships with a broad range of business partners and alliances worldwide. The intranet, named *The Loop*, unifies the company by providing a service that is not only entertaining, but is an essential one-stop shop for communication about company news, initiatives, business interests, social endeavors, and personal development. It also lets different global offices share working files and documents.

The home page conveys the fun, young atmosphere at the company, with crisp graphics and information sound bites. The graphics add to the messages and even the navigation. Also, no scrolling is necessary to see the content.

The intranet comprises both light personal touches, such as horoscopes and birthdays, and more business-related data, such as schedules and product information.

A single page template ensures that each page has the same core navigational features, such as horizontal navigation, print, search, and contact the page owner.

The *Publishing Information* database provides a standard template for viewing detailed results in Web format. Thorough labeling and date stamping of content lets users reach higher levels of efficiency. The most common tasks, such as export and print, are reachable via simple icons in the upper right, and the print template automatically converts data into printer-friendly format.

Pictured: The Publishing Information database, which provides a standard template for viewing detailed results in Web format.

Many companies have issues with finding, storing, and downloading documents. At a company where publishing is key, the intranet designers have solved that problem. The content download pages have a *Quick search*, making it easy to find specific documents. The document lists show the most important information about the documents, such as title, size, and date, making it easy for users to locate the right document. Users can download documents from a file server, regardless of location. As each category in the main menu is clicked, vertical expanding menus appear, letting users quickly jump down through three levels of the site. A toolbar and expandable menu show the key navigational features, such as *Print* and *Settings*, in the download area.

Pictured: An area where users can easily download content from the file server.

THE LOOP PARIS

NEWS COMMUNITY SUPPORT PUBLISHING NEW BIZ DESIGN SALES & MKG AUTHORS

Support > Organisation > Organisation Charts

Support: Organisation Charts

Menu Introduction

Please find attached links to the latest Organisation Charts for each office. The charts updated on the Loop in the first week of each month.

If you're sending an all staff email to announce new starts, promotions etc, the chart will be updated automatically by the people listed below. You need to advise of any promotions, resignations, transfers, new starts or changes to structure on the day they occur.

Changes to the organisation charts should be submitted to the following people:

Melbourne Sue Amis London David Green
Paris Sandrine Dupain Oakland Aimee Goggins

Melbourne Downloads

	DATE	SIZE	TYPE
London_Office_22Feb.Pdf	22 Feb 02	70 KB	Acrobat
Non_Publishing_Staff_Melbourne.Pdf	25 Feb 02	310 KB	Acrobat
Oakland_Office.Pdf	3 Jan 02	43 KB	Acrobat
Paris_Office_1March.Pdf	1 Mar 02	99 KB	Acrobat
Publishing_Staff_Melbourne.Pdf	22 Feb 02	382 KB	Acrobat
Sales_And_Marketing_All_Offices.Pdf	22 Feb 02	233 KB	Acrobat

The contact information pages combine business needs with whimsy, with important information packaged in an enjoyable design. Candid photos of employees help users recognize each other.

Pictured: A page of search results for contacts.

THE LOOP MELBOURNE

NEWS COMMUNITY SUPPORT PUBLISHING NEW BIZ DESIGN SALES & MKG AUTHORS

CONTACTS 20 March 2002 Timeclock

last updated: 13 Mar 02

settings print search owner

Contact Directory

Contact Directory: Search

Menu

ADVANCED SEARCH ?

Enter Keyword: Restrict Search To: Office: Display As: Sort By:

First Name: ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Your Search Criteria - All
Showing 1 - 20 of 60 1 2 3 4 5 6 Next >>

Aaron Miller - IT
Systems Engineer
AaronM@lonelyplanet.fr
ext: 129
Paris

Alex Guilbert - Cartography
US Cartography Manager
alexg@lonelyplanet.com
ext: 145
Oakland

Abby Emerson - Marketing
Publicity Assistant
abbye@lonelyplanet.com
ext: 222
Oakland

Alex Hershey - Editorial
Publishing Assistant
alexh@lonelyplanet.com
ext: 185
Oakland

Pictured: A detailed contact page.

THE LOOP MELBOURNE

NEWS COMMUNITY SUPPORT PUBLISHING NEW BIZ DESIGN SALES & MKG AUTHORS

CONTACTS 20 March 2002 Timeclock

last updated: 13 Mar 02

settings print search owner

Contact Directory

Contact Directory: Search

Menu

ADVANCED SEARCH ?

Enter Keyword: Restrict Search To: Office: Display As: Sort By:

First Name: ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Your Search Criteria - All
Showing 1 of 2

Jamie Supple

PERSONAL DETAILS
name: Jamie Supple
email: jamies@lonelyplanet.com.au
phone: ext: 8512

OFFICE INFO
staff/author: Staff
office: Melbourne
title: Senior Systems Engineer
department: Technical Services

The top horizontal menu is static and makes navigation predictable and simple. Icons specific to the selected area consistently appear in the upper right corner,

making it easy to perform the most common tasks in that area. Unlike some intranet designers, whose default is to organize their menu structure based on the organizational structure, these designers instead structured the menus around tasks and user processes — a good idea.

The design also lets different locations localize the pages. The main panel can be customized to give a regional identity. The team took an inclusive approach by inviting designers from many locations to a meeting where they each presented their design ideas and favorite websites. Involving all those people helped ensure against imposing an uninformed, provincial design on the many locations.

Country design managers were each given a selection of 100 images and asked to pick eight to represent each main menu category in the top page banner. “The Paris office picked images of Paris, the U.S. tended to pick images showing the U.S. flag or Golden Gate Bridge, but Melbourne picked images from all around the world. It was an amazing test of cultural differences,” says Melissa McVeigh, intranet manager. Photography is used in the main banner and elsewhere to customize sites. Country offices can also pick their own color scheme, and have come up with very distinctive identities, with the U.S. and France picking red, white and blue, while Australia selected yellow and green and the U.K. chose purple.

The country offices can provide content in their own language, but as yet the standard template’s menu is untranslated. The appropriate regional look and feel is applied automatically according to the user’s IP range. However, users can manually change the settings themselves and edit location, language, and text settings.

Pictured: A country office in France provides content in French (but the menu provided by the standard template is not yet translated).

The screenshot shows the Lonely Planet website interface in French. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the text "THE LOOP PARIS" and a list of links: TIMESHEETS, CONTRACTS, HELP, and HOME. The date "14 February 2002" and "Timeclock" are also visible. Below the navigation bar is a horizontal menu with categories: NEWS, COMMUNITY, SUPPORT, PUBLISHING, NEW BIZ, DESIGN, SALES & MKG, and AUTHORS. The main content area features a "News: French News" section with a "Menu" sidebar containing "Archive" and "Previous" links. The main article is titled "Le Prix Lonely Planet du Carnet de Voyage" and discusses a travel award competition. A "Quick Search" box is located on the right side of the page.

The overall look of the intranet corresponds with the company mood: fun and communicative. No matter their location, users can access pages for other locations. This not only inspires a feeling of unity across the company, it leads to increased efficiency.

Scoring (3 = best)						
Simple look	Simple navigation	Consistent navigation and design	Visible search	Simple search	Limited (well-presented) text on pages	Home page
2.8	3	3	2	2.5	3	3

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTRANET

BASIC FEATURES

The Loop intranet has over 50,000 pages. Key features include:

- A customized look and feel for each office, to promote ownership and address cultural differences
- Core navigational features on every page
- A toolbar feature that lets employees customize the look, language, and accessibility needs; print clean, user-friendly versions of any Web page; and view every page's content owner and email address
- The use of candid staff photos to encourage socializing and celebrate the unique workplace culture
- A searchable global contact directory
- A search engine on every page that lets users conduct an advanced Web and document search
- Customizable hot links and library items for each business unit
- A collapsible menu that provides three links into the site in one click
- Ability for all staff to add content locally, without relying on the intranet team

Among the team's future plans are to expand the intranet to include authors on the road, and to launch a comprehensive publishing information database.

BACKGROUND

Lonely Planet's Production Services had already started to put its documentation online when, in August 2000, the idea emerged for a company-wide electronic system for sharing company news and information. "Lonely Planet had never had a staff newsletter, just an author newsletter," says McVeigh. "So we decided to create an online newsletter and take all the documents we share and put those online too."

GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS

The Loop was designed in-house using limited resources. This prompted the team to seek innovative solutions to address users' disparate needs, without the support of a sophisticated CMS. The designers wanted to facilitate the constant and ever-

expanding exchange of ideas and information within Lonely Planet's diverse global community.

Lonely Planet is a publishing company, not a technology company, and employees are not necessarily very technologically literate. Thus, one of the main goals was ease of use. *The Loop* had to be a system that anyone could pick up and use without training.

Because Lonely Planet wanted a system that was truly global and not just a mouthpiece for the head office, it was important to get support and buy-in from all of its worldwide offices.

Also, because the intranet contains crucial documentation, information had to be available locally even if the Web server was down. All Web content is stored on a single server in Melbourne, but each office also has its own central server for storing documents; data from the three overseas offices is replicated to Melbourne every four hours.

DESIGN PROCESS AND USABILITY ACTIVITIES

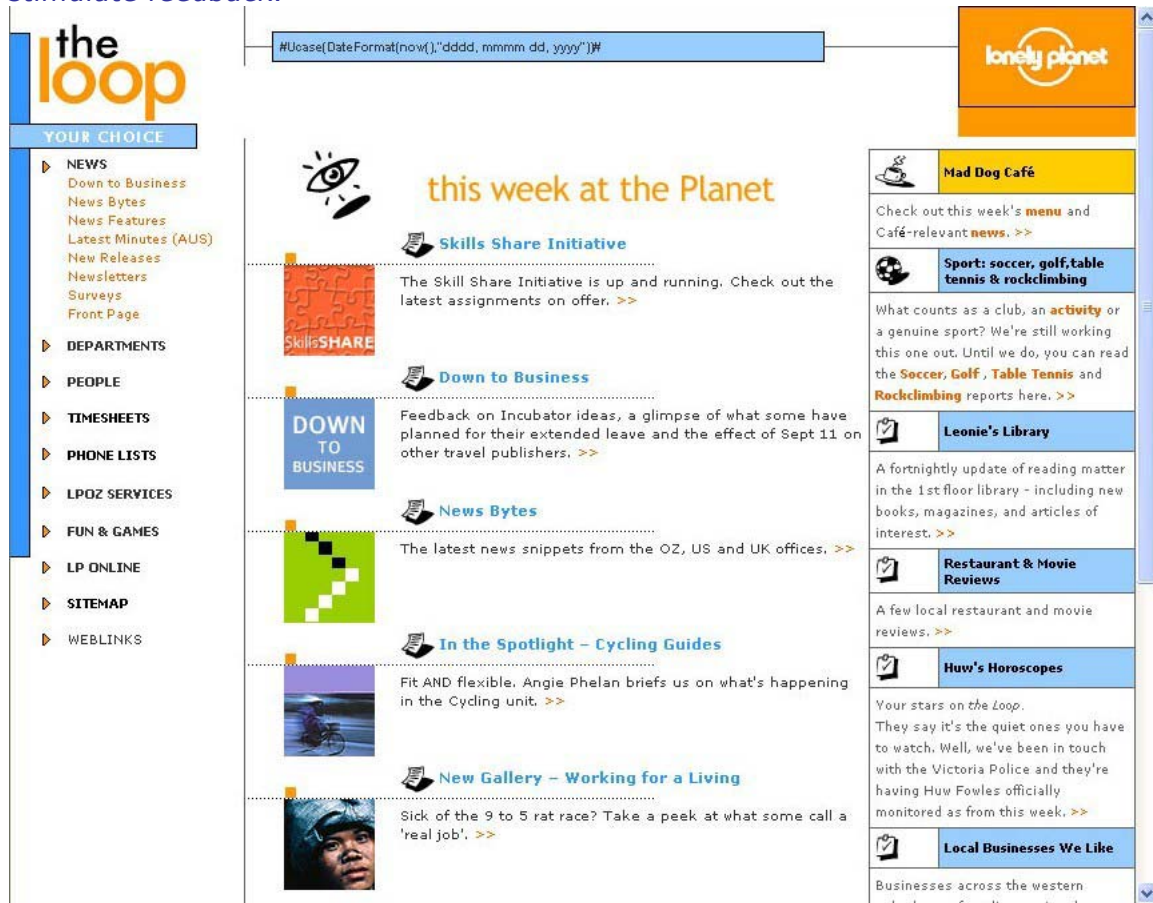
During December 2000, McVeigh visited Lonely Planet's four offices, interviewed as many people she could, and collected their ideas. "I interviewed about 150 people, every unit manager as well as some other key individuals who'd worked on the Web and who had ideas for the intranet," she recalls.

She then distilled their feedback into a strategy document and presented it to the senior management team. One of the document's suggestions was that, to get employee buy-in, the intranet should leverage Lonely Planet's corporate culture, which emphasizes social activities alongside work.

"My pitch was, rather than trying to jump straight into the heavy duty applications, it would be better to start off with the social stuff," she says. "People will always use an intranet if has fun stuff, then they will already know how to use it when they start trying to use it to help them do their jobs."

Shortly after presenting the strategy paper, McVeigh went on maternity leave and things slowed down, but the company's Web designer, Alan Koeninger, made some initial pages and put them online for staff in Melbourne. His goal was to get people used to the idea of a weekly Web newsletter and also to stimulate feedback.

Pictured: Some initial pages put online for the Melbourne staff. The goal was to get people used to the idea of a weekly Web newsletter and also to stimulate feedback.



When McVeigh returned in July, she found this had worked almost too well. “The intranet was almost unmanageable because it had grown so much and everyone wanted to launch their departments online,” she explains. So she started work on scoping out the intranet, using the feedback from the December survey. The scoping took from July to mid-September, and involved creating a detailed site plan and infrastructure, as well as all user and functional requirements. All documentation was developed with input from the entire development team, and each of the company’s departments nominated a key stakeholder.

The company also decided to launch new sections for two key departments: design, and sales and marketing. These departments operate globally, and so were critical in getting overseas support. User representatives were closely involved in the process. “Our belief was to get two important users involved in all aspects to help with our credibility as well as their understanding of how it works,” McVeigh explains.

All the programming, from server setup to application development, was completed in two weeks by developer Andrew Stevens. McVeigh, Koeninger, and editorial manager Carol Barton then spent five weeks working intensively to convert the existing content and launch the two new sections — *Design* and *Sales & Marketing* — from scratch.

They broke the design into two distinct areas: look and feel, and content and navigation. Discussions about navigation started as far back as December 2000. "I had to get people thinking firstly about knowledge and content, and how best to structure it," McVeigh says. "This was hard because knowledge is such an intangible asset, and people generally are not that good at wanting to share it."

While planning the site navigation, there were long-running discussions about whether it should be structured around business units or functional content. Content won, which McVeigh believes makes for a more flexible system. "If your intranet mirrors the corporate structure and you restructure the company, as we've just done, then you have to change everything."

Because the information categorization was not finalized until application development had already started, many design sessions involved prototypes that did not reflect the end result. "It's hard to explain things to people without an image to relate to," McVeigh says.

McVeigh grouped the content into nine categories — which are now the main horizontal navigation on each page — then presented the categories as part of a Photoshop page mockup to the senior management team and senior line managers for discussions and briefing.

Pictured: A Photoshop page mockup grouping the content into nine categories, now the main horizontal navigation. This mockup was used for informal usability testing.



Her conceptual structure echoes the book-making process: workplace news and community; support processes that help employees do their jobs; the publishing and production processes; visual design; postproduction sales and marketing activities; and, finally, an author-related area.

The original categories are still more or less in place today, though some have been renamed, and some categories were merged. "Even after our restructure, those categories still hold because they're about process, not departments," McVeigh says. File servers throughout the organization now use the same eight categories and navigation system to store content.

In earlier designs, team members planned to have a second horizontal hidden menu appearing under the main one as categories were clicked, but they ultimately felt this would be hard to maintain as site information expanded. "When people saw it, we all realized that it would not grow and scale well as the intranet grew in content," McVeigh explains. "The hidden menu could expand out to a maximum of thirteen categories, but areas such as publishing, design, sales, and marketing are such big units, there's no way we could get all of the information in." Now, as users click each category in the main menu, vertical expanding menus appear that let users quickly drill down through three levels of the site.

Running concurrently with work on the content structure was the process of designing the look and feel. In August, Koeninger, McVeigh, and Lonely Planet's international design manager wrote an initial brief on how to create the feeling of a strong global brand with local identities. "The thing I found very hard as a designer was trying to meet all those needs," McVeigh says. "Someone in the U.K. office can have a whole different way of thinking from someone in Melbourne. We had to be very careful with terminology, too."

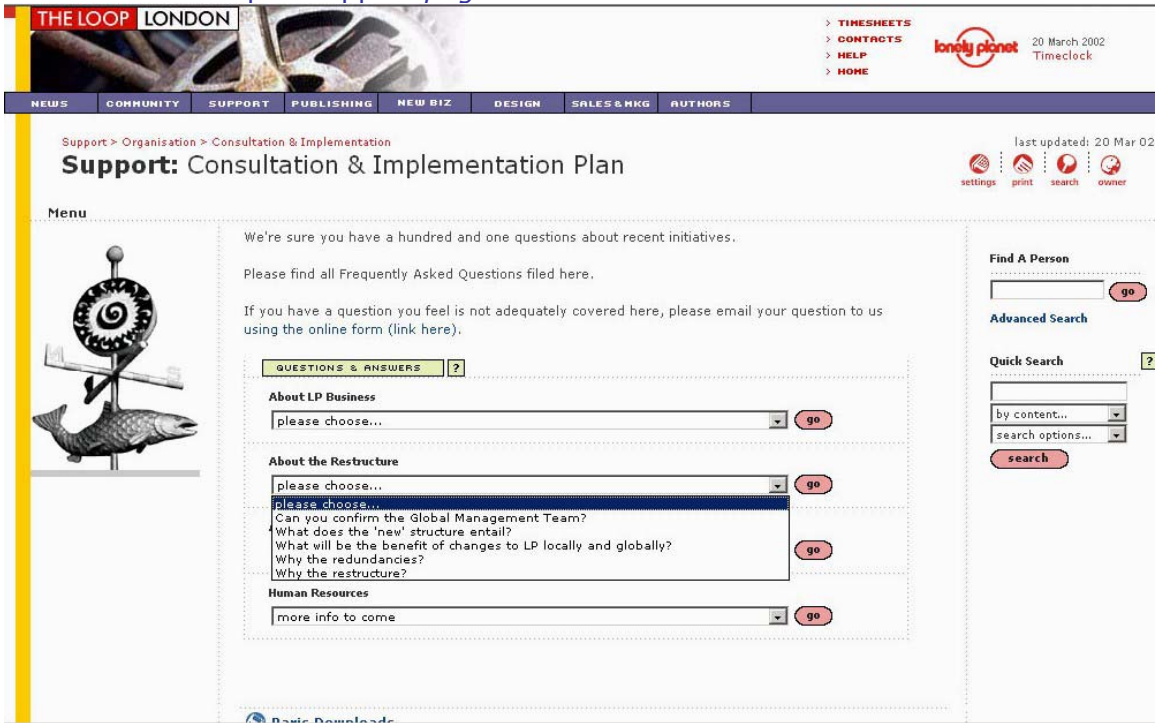
To ensure that all the regions were represented, designers from all four offices attended a design meeting. Everyone sat around the table and gave a twenty-minute presentation on their favorite websites, and the navigation and design features that impressed them. Then, each designer had to produce three visual designs: 1) text-only, 2) photographic, and 3) graphical. Each also wrote a design brief discussing visuals, branding, and the core elements on each page. It took about three weeks to complete the mock-ups. Although the graphical design concept never got off the ground, designers presented the photographic and text-only designs to a core group of key stakeholders from each office and their local design managers.

These designs were combined into a single page template, which ensures that the same core navigational features appear on every page, including the horizontal navigation and buttons to print, search, and contact page owners, and settings to customize the look, language, and accessibility needs. The main panel, however, can also be customized to give a regional identity.

When the photographic version was approved, Koeninger applied a navigational framework and further developed the photographic design in consultation with the local design managers. As the design progressed, each section was allowed to have its own visual style.

The design also allows for user customization. Users can modify the navigation image, the left side's subnavigation, the *Favorites* and *Library* features, the right side links, and the center content.

Pictured: The Help & Support page with all elements visible.



Pictured: An application results page with left- and right-hand navigation turned off.



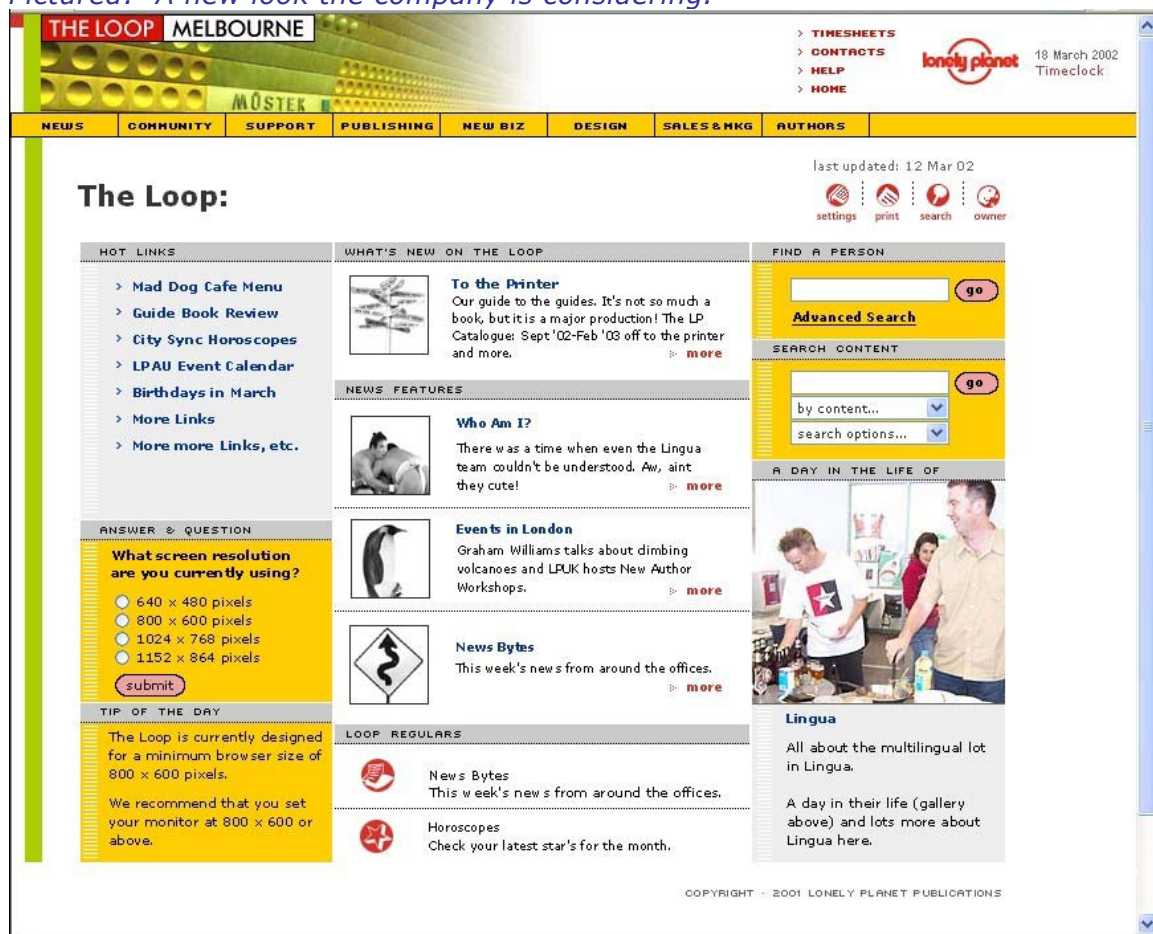
McVeigh and the company's international design manager signed off on the final design, with agreement from local design managers. A working HTML prototype, showing how the actual navigation and other core features would operate, was then

presented to all staff at open sessions in Melbourne. For overseas staff, there were dedicated meetings and telephone conferences with key stakeholders. Once the core design was finalized, the team created templates of each core page, the programmer built the application, and, in late September, the final design was approved.

Since the launch, the team has modified the front page design to make it easier for the editorial manager to update without having to rely on a designer. The new design also allows for more interactive features, including a quick poll, tip of the week, and photo gallery. The new front page took about four weeks to design and test. Testing involved a group of core users with differing intranet exposure and requirements. The team also got ideas from the 2001 Nielsen Norman Group intranet report² and by talking to other companies with proven expertise in the area.

Refining the design is a continuous process, and the company is now considering a new look. Also, it plans to add remote access for its network of over 150 authors in early 2003.

Pictured: A new look the company is considering.



² *Intranet Design Annual 2001: 10 Best Intranets of the Year;*
www.nngroup.com/reports/intranet/2001

TIMELINE

- August 2000: Concept of *The Loop* is broached.
- December 2000: McVeigh interviews users in four offices, and sends strategy paper to senior management team.
- Early 2001: Prototype site for Australian staff launched.
- July 2001: McVeigh returns from maternity leave; starts scoping out intranet.
- July–September 2001: Design work on intranet completed.
- October 2001: Construction.
- November 2001: Existing content converted to electronic form.
- December 2001: *The Loop* goes live worldwide.

RESULTS

Though Lonely Planet has not put any figures on business gains from the intranet, information duplication within the company has already been reduced and files previously kept in four different places are now in one location. Communications have also improved. Once the internal database is up and running, the team plans to do a cost-benefit analysis.

McVeigh feels that the greatest gain from the intranet has been improved inter-office communication. In early 2002, for example, Lonely Planet went through a major restructuring during which almost all the publishing staff had to reapply for their jobs. “*The Loop* provided a place where all staff could find information on the new structure, timelines, updates, job descriptions, and so on,” says McVeigh. “We also offered access to staff on maternity leave and holidays. It was a stressful time for the whole company, but at least all staff could be reassured that the information was there whenever they needed it. I believe that the fact the process ran smoothly and we did not get many complaints is proof of the intranet’s value.”

LESSONS LEARNED

Insights from Melissa McVeigh:

Start with the fun stuff. “People will always use an intranet if has fun stuff; then they will already know how to use it when they start trying to use it to help them do their jobs.”

Give people something to look at. “It’s hard to explain things to people without an image to relate to.”

Share experiences. “A great source of inspiration is to talk to other companies with Web-based intranets.”

Mira Network AB

USING THE INTRANET:

Mira Network, started in 1998, is a Swedish Internet consultancy with twelve employees, headquartered in Stockholm. The company helps other companies use the Internet to transform their business by focusing on systems that are closely integrated with the clients' core business. Mira Network is also an incubator for Internet-related business ideas.

DESIGN TEAM:

Mira Network

MEMBERS: HÅKAN ANDERSSON, TECHNICAL CONSULTANT, INTRANET COORDINATOR; RONNY BELIN, BUSINESS CONSULTANT; MAGNUS BRATT, BUSINESS CONSULTANT; OLLE ERIKSSON, TECHNICAL CONSULTANT; JOHAN WENNSTRÖM, BUSINESS CONSULTANT

Pictured: The home page, which contains news and shortcuts to the specific responsibilities for the person logged in. It also pushes important information such as a link to the time-reporting function with a comment: You haven't reported your time for three days. You should do this every day.

The screenshot displays the Mira Network intranet home page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with tabs for 'Internt', 'Tidrapportering', 'Fakturerering', 'Administration', 'Projekt', and 'Utveckling'. The user is logged in as 'Ronny Belin'. Below the navigation bar, there is a 'Startsida' (Home) section with a 'Billing center' notice. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- 5 senaste nyheterna**: A list of five news items, including messages from Johan Wennström, Magnus Bratt, and Jenny Andersson.
- Mina kunder**: A list of customers, including Stockholm School of Entrepreneurship, JKL, Gryphus, and AIESEC.
- Kundgenväg**: A section for customer navigation, showing a dropdown menu for '[Välj] kund/prospect' and a 'Visa' button.
- Senaste inloggningar idag**: A table showing the latest logins for today, with columns for 'Användare', 'Inloggad', and 'Utloggad'.
- 10 senaste olästa på anslagstavlan**: A list of ten unread messages on the bulletin board, including messages from 'alumni@mira.se' and 'Dagens Forskning'.

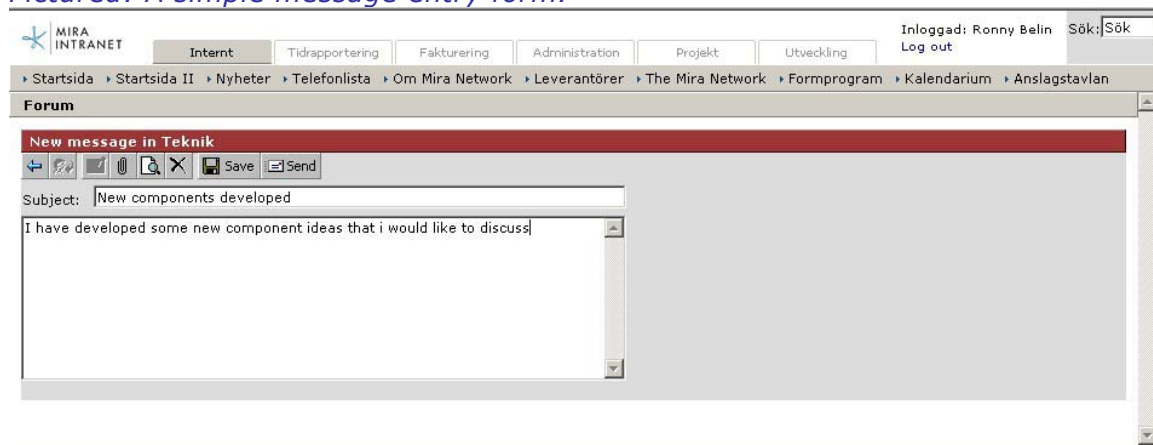
SUMMARY

The users of this intranet are primarily the employees who work with system development, project management and administration, customer contact, and sales. Some users frequently access the intranet from other locations, such as client sites, their home office, or when traveling. Meeting the needs of these different users, especially those who travel and those who deal with customers, cuts right to the core of their business. The intranet, organically developed by the users, meets this important challenge. The employees use spare resources to create functionality that suits their needs. The designers boldly decided to involve all users, which creates high usage and functionality over a wide range of areas.

While some intranets are strong on content, and others are strong on data collection, this intranet excels in both areas. The site combines information that users can consume with text entry and reporting features that streamline corporate processes; employees can exploit both to thoroughly communicate with each other. Much of the site's functionality is based on the bulletin board, which works as a universal message management machine that users can easily customize for multiple purposes, making input verification possible.

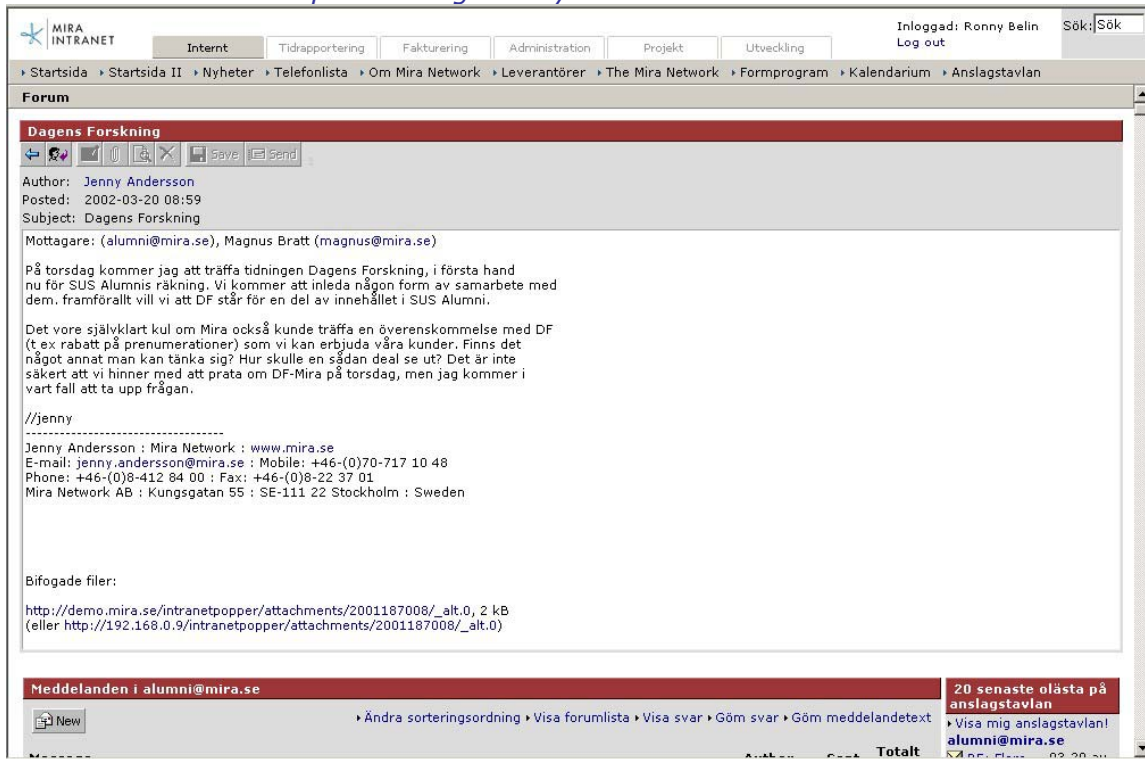
Understanding that users transfer knowledge from one interface to the next, the designers created the intranet such that all data input uses an email metaphor familiar to all users. Further, users can submit messages via ordinary email or SMS straight into specific intranet locations.

Pictured: A simple message entry form.



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying an intranet interface. At the top left, the logo reads "MIRA INTRANET". A navigation menu includes "Internt", "Tidrapportering", "Fakturering", "Administration", "Projekt", and "Utveckling". On the right, it shows "Inloggad: Ronny Belin" and "Log out" next to a search box labeled "Sök". Below this is a breadcrumb trail: "Startsida", "Startsida II", "Nyheter", "Telefonlista", "Om Mira Network", "Leverantörer", "The Mira Network", "Formprogram", "Kalendarium", and "Anslagstavlan". The main content area is titled "Forum" and contains a "New message in Teknik" form. The form has a toolbar with icons for back, forward, print, delete, save, and send. The "Subject:" field contains "New components developed". The message body contains the text "I have developed some new component ideas that i would like to discuss".

Pictured: Another simple message entry form.



The time-reporting function provides an easy way for the employees to report their hours, independent of where they are at the moment. Ironically, reporting time daily could take up much of an employee's time if the system is not well designed. Worse, employees could rebel against reporting time consistently or at all if they do not like using the system. In this case, however, the month report is the basis for salary payout and hence the time-reporting function works as a usage booster on the intranet. Also, the simple design makes for a painless time-reporting experience.

Pictured: A time-reporting form.

Tidrapportering: 2002-03-18

Feb Mar Apr

18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

Tidrapportera

--- Mina projekt --- Tid:

Faktureras: Ja Nej Komponenter:

Dagrapportera

Arbete Sjukdom Semester Ej arbete

Kommentar:

Spara Avbryt Spara

Projekt	Tid	Faktureras	Beskrivning	Komponenter	Id
Alumni - sälj & mfö	3,5	0	Möte på Ottsjö	-	Ändra / Ta bort
Mira övrigt	1	0	Måndagsmöte	-	Ändra / Ta bort
JKL Löpande support och koordinering	0,5	1	Telefonsamtal med Martin Ågren (eg. 0:20)	-	Ändra / Ta bort
Gryphus Alumninätverk	0,5	0	Koordinering inför lördagens möte.	-	Ändra / Ta bort
Sinf, U1: Koordinering	0,5	1	Samordning med Mary-Anne inför improt till XOR.	-	Ändra / Ta bort
Övrig arbetstid	1	0	-	-	Ändra / Ta bort
Mira övrigt	0,5	0	Hjälpte Jenny m. fotografering.	-	Ändra / Ta bort
Mira övrigt	0,5	0	Fikade för min födelsedag.	-	Ändra / Ta bort
Summa	8	-	-	-	-

Minnesanteckningar, kontaktnoteringar och inlägg i anslagstavlor under dagen

Tidpunkt	Rubrik	Kund	Anslagstavla
2002-03-18 13:47:00		Ottsjö	Kunder
2002-03-18 14:35:00	Medlemsnätverket LibNet	Ottsjö	Kunder
2002-03-18 15:27:00	Import av medlemförteckn till webbplatsen	Sinf	Kunder

Pictured: The month report, used as basis for salary payout.

Månadsrapport: Mars 2002, Ronny Belin

2002 3

Månadsrapport

	Dagrapporering	Fakt. projektstid	Övr. projektstid	Övr. arbetstid	Total tid	Egen tid		
1. F	Arbete	5	1,5	1	7,5	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
2. L		0	0	0	0	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
3. S		0	0	0	0	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
4. M	Arbete	6	1,5	1,5	9	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
5. T	Arbete	0,5	6,5	1	8	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
6. O	Arbete	1	6	1	8	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
7. T	Arbete	2,5	2,5	1	6	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
8. F	Arbete	0,5	6	1,5	8	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
9. L		0	0	0	0	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
10. S		0	0	0	0	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
11. M	Arbete	0	8	0	8	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
12. T	Arbete	0	6	3	9	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
13. O	Arbete	7	2,5	1	10,5	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
14. T	Arbete	0	7	1	8	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
15. F	Arbete	0	7	2	9	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
16. L		0	0	0	0	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
17. S		0	0	0	0	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
18. M	Arbete	1	6	1	8	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
19. T	Arbete	5,5	4	0,5	10	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
20. O		0	0	0	0	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
21. T		0	0	0	0	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
22. F		0	0	0	0	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
23. L		0	0	0	0	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
24. S		0	0	0	0	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT
25. M		0	0	0	0	0	INFO	TID-RAPPORT

Employees can also use the intranet creatively to keep abreast of customer and potential customer relations. The site provides an area for management of customer and prospect relations. The site includes a diary for each customer, in which employees can record contact events.

Pictured: An area to manage customer and prospect relations.

The screenshot displays the MIRA INTRANET interface for managing customer and prospect relations. The top navigation bar includes 'Mina kunder', 'Prospectlista', 'Kunder', 'Support Center', 'Projektlista', 'Tidsuppföljning', 'Diagram', 'Alumni', 'Exeds extranet', and 'Todo-lista *'. The main content area is titled 'Mina kunder' and features a search bar with filters for 'Belin, Ronny', 'Prospect', and 'Aktiv bearbetning'. Below the search bar is a table with columns: Name, Ansvarig, Status, Saljstatus, Kategori, and NGV. The table lists several customers, including Enea, SvD, IKEA, Stockholmsbörsen, Manpower, Lernia, Ottsjö, and Telia. The 'Lernia' entry is highlighted, and a detailed view is shown below. This view includes a 'Dagbok för Lernia' section with a list of contact events, such as '2002-03-20 10:52' and '2002-03-12 14:13:00'. The interface also shows a 'Hur går vi vidare?' section with a dropdown menu set to 'Aktiv bearbetning' and a 'Call Jenny Gejke' section with a text area and a 'Kontakta igen' button.

Once clients are signed, the intranet provides information about the status of the clients' systems, how many users they have, and how active they are. And, to expedite efficient maintenance for client systems, the intranet provides a function that issues automatic alerts when errors occur in clients' systems. This leads to better relationships with clients.

Pictured: The client systems usage page.

Network	MemberCount	NoOfLogins	NoOfContactsFreetext	NoOfContactsNormal	NetworkPenetration
IT Alumni	1314	7964	83	1591	2,5
Studieförbundet	918	1546	0	278	0,6
Leifur	884	15005	166	1441	3,6
ITN Alumni	782	7467	273	3413	9,4
SI Alumni	561	3597	53	883	3,3
Entrepreneurial Network	515	2445	34	213	1,0
IT's AlumniNetwork	438	4430	37	984	4,7
MSBIC Alumni	255	1816	209	1146	10,6
SwedishAdministrative & BusinessFormation	237	178	0	7	0,1
SI Alumni	219	2349	55	596	5,9
SI Alumni	210	2282	139	1111	11,9
PersonalFinance - Alumni	114	1017	33	390	7,4
1-advokat	107	3251	544	79	11,6
MSBIC-Administrative Network	107	81	0	9	0,2
Gruphus utbildning	93	260	0	163	3,5
SI Alumni	61	371	0	166	5,4
North Alumni Relations and Development Network	42	349	27	78	5,0
SI Alumni	23	94	0	12	1,0
The Mira Network	21	770	0	107	10,2
E-learning network	7	23	2	4	1,7

Totalt antal medlemmar: 6908

Pictured: A function that automatically alerts employees when errors occur in the clients systems.

ErrorType	Status	User	System	Info	ReportDate	Mer info.
500-100	Obehandlat	Thomas Wiking	MS, SI		2002-03-01 04:10:00	Mer info.
500-100	Obehandlat	Thomas Wiking	MS, SI		2002-03-01 04:07:00	Mer info.
500-100	Obehandlat	Thomas Wiking	MS, SI		2002-02-28 17:15:00	Mer info.
500-100	Obehandlat	Thomas Wiking	MS, SI		2002-02-28 17:15:00	Mer info.
404	Obehandlat	Thomas Wiking	MS, SI		2002-02-22 09:32:00	Mer info.

The error reporting feature is only one way that the intranet designers provide innovative, up-to-the-minute information to employees. For example, the site provides a simple method for creating, modifying, and following up on invoices. Keeping accounts up to date is key to any well-run business, and using the home-

grown intranet to do this in a way that suits your company processes and culture is clever.

Pictured: A simple method for creating, modifying, and following up on invoices.



The employee contact feature lists all company employees, with links to more detailed information about them. This function is also integrated with mail programs using vCards, and the list notes when each person last logged in to the intranet, so users know who has started working that day.

The intranet’s look and feel is comforting, with consistent tab navigation and an always-present search box. The color scheme is uncomplicated, using maroon for delineation lines and a splash of color, legible black text on white pages, and standard blue text for links. The welcoming graphic design compliments the inventive productivity features that employees can use throughout their workday.

Scoring (3 = best)						
Simple look	Simple navigation	Consistent navigation and design	Visible search	Simple search	Limited (well-presented) text on pages	Home page
3	3	2.9	3	3	2.5	2.8

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTRANET

Mira Network’s intranet provides the company’s staff with tools to make their work more efficient.

BASIC FEATURES

The intranet supports the administrative parts of the users’ work as well as the more creative and educational parts. Features include:

- Time reporting
- Customer relationship management (CRM)
- Bulletin board (with support for Web, email, and SMS input)

- Invoice administration
- A support tool that automatically reports errors in clients' systems
- Client, project, and project team administration
- Executive information support
- Maintenance tools for client product updates
- User statistics from clients' systems
- Office equipment ordering
- Phone list
- News
- Calendar
- To-do list
- Information about Mira Network
- Micro features for several miscellaneous functions

URL AND ACCESS

The intranet is hosted externally by a professional hosting company and is accessed by the URL <http://www.mira.se/intranet/>. Log-in requires a username and password, making the intranet available from any computer with Internet access. From the company's personal computers, most users use an "autologin" feature to avoid having to type username and password each time they access the system. The log-in is not integrated with Windows normal network log-in since some intranet users do not have access to the local area network. Some LAN users (employees of other companies sharing the same facilities) do not have access to the intranet.

BACKGROUND

Mira has had a basic intranet since the company was set up in 1998. Initially, some of the company's employees worked at home and others worked in separate offices, so it was important to have a way of exchanging information easily and creating a sense of common purpose. The intranet was originally created to support time reporting, a function that is essential for generating Mira's revenues. Since then, new functions like bulletin boards and company news have been added.

There have been three distinct versions of the intranet; the most recent was introduced for two reasons: user dissatisfaction with the previous design, and the need to add several major new functions. These included an invoicing system; a search function, which was needed to handle a growing volume of intranet information; and improved navigation for selecting time-reporting dates.

GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS

The intranet's main goal is to provide users with tools to improve their work efficiency. The company achieved this goal by providing a platform that makes it easy to add suitable functionality.

Mira encourages its employees to add new intranet functions. The only constraint is that they be able to justify the time needed to build a function in terms of the business benefit it will deliver.

The site's design reflects Mira's corporate branding, and is intended to work on a wide range of browsers and platforms so it's easily accessible when employees are traveling. "It's important to use very simple technology," says Ronny Belin, business consultant. "We only use JavaScript if we have to."

DESIGN PROCESS AND USABILITY ACTIVITIES

Mira has a philosophy of continuous development, not only for its own intranet but for projects it works on for external clients. Users gradually add new functionality to the intranet themselves, in response to a business need and when they have the time to work on it. "The employees use spare resources to create the functionality that suits their needs. If you want a new function, you just build it yourself or get someone else to build it," explains Belin.

He estimates that time spent on intranet development can range from zero to forty hours a month, with most new functions taking ten to twelve hours to build. The entire development time for the intranet is probably 400 hours in total.

Because Mira is a small company, and all of the staff is closely involved in building the intranet, user feedback is a natural part of the development process. "We have a culture where it's natural to seek feedback from the users and for users to give feedback," Belin explains.

The high user involvement in building the intranet also encourages high system usage. New functions are tested in the most practical possible way. "If the function proves to be useful, we keep it; if not, we disable it," Belin explains. In practice, only a few minor features have actually been disabled.

In addition to the ongoing feedback, the company has a regular meeting every Friday afternoon to discuss usability improvement across all its projects, including the intranet. "It's a very informal meeting. Sometimes we just have a beer and a chat," according to Belin.

In early 1999, the Mira intranet was somewhat minimalist. "We had no design at all!" comments Belin. Nonetheless, the intranet serves its purpose of providing common tools for employees who do not work out of one office.

Pictured: The minimalist Mira intranet, early 1999.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title 'mira network | Inloggad: Ronny Nilsson'. The page is titled 'Tidsredovisning' and contains a form for logging time. The form includes a date field set to '2002-06-17', a project dropdown menu set to 'Mira övrigt', a time field set to '2' with the label 'timmar (punkt i stället för komma)', and a description field containing 'Made screenshots for docum'. There is a checkbox labeled 'ska faktureras' which is checked. At the bottom of the form are two buttons: 'Skicka' and 'Rensa'. On the left side of the page, there is a navigation menu with three sections: 'Allmänt' (with links for startside, adresser, om mira network, anslagstavla, miras logotyp, sajtstatistik, buggrapportering, and Projektuppföljning & administration), 'Tidsredovisning' (with links for registrera tid, kontrollera tid, tid per dag, and ta bort tidreg), and 'Nyheter' (with links for lägg till nyhet, nyhetsarkiv, and ta bort nyhet). At the bottom of the page, there are links for 'startside' and 'logga ut'.

Later the same year, the intranet still had a very simple layout, but did feature some design elements, such as the company logo in the top right-hand corner and a shaded menu bar on the left; the left-hand menu content remained the same. The extra section, *Administrera*, was only shown to users with a higher access level, and enabled them to add, deactivate, and edit system users. One major change let users fill in and submit four different time reports at once, rather than doing them sequentially, thereby saving time and making it more appealing to use the function.

Pictured: Another iteration of the intranet in 1999. It still had a very simple layout, but included some design elements, such as the company logo in the top right-hand corner and a shaded menu bar on the left.

Mira Network • Intranät • Inloggad: Ronny Nilsson

MIRA NETWORK

Allmänt

- Startsida
- Adresser
- Info. om Mira
- Anslagstavla
- Miras logotyp
- Sajtstatistik
- Buggrapportering
- Projektföljning och administration

Tidrapportering

- Registrera tid
- Kontrollera tid
- Tid per dag
- Ta bort/ändra tidregistrering
- Månadsrapportera

Nyheter

- Lägg till nyhet
- Nyhetsarkiv
- Ta bort nyhet

Administrera

- Lägg till användare
- Avaktivera användare
- Andra uppgifter om användare

Tidsredovisning

Här redovisar du timmar du lagt ned på olika projekt

Datum: 2002-06-17

Mina Projekt1: Mira övrigt	Mina Projekt2: Välj projekt →
Alla Projekt1: Välj projekt →	Alla Projekt2: Välj projekt →
Tid: 2 timmar (punkt i stället för komma)	Tid: timmar (punkt i stället för komma)
Beskrivning: Made screenshots for docum	Beskrivning:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ska faktureras	<input type="checkbox"/> ska faktureras
Mina Projekt3: Välj projekt →	Mina Projekt4: Välj projekt →
Alla Projekt3: Välj projekt →	Alla Projekt4: Välj projekt →
Tid: timmar (punkt i stället för komma)	Tid: timmar (punkt i stället för komma)
Beskrivning:	Beskrivning:
<input type="checkbox"/> ska faktureras	<input type="checkbox"/> ska faktureras

Skicka Prens

startside | logga ut

In the summer of 2000, the intranet underwent a major rewrite, partly to improve the design (which was unpopular with users), and partly to add new invoicing, *Fakturering*, and search functionality. Also, a new CRM function, *Projekt*, was added prior to the new design's release.

Pictured: The summer 2000 intranet design featured a major rewrite, with added functionality for invoicing, search, and customer relationship management.

The screenshot displays the MIRA INTRANET interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'Internt', 'Tidrapportering', 'Fakturering', 'Administration', 'Projekt', and 'Utveckling'. The user is logged in as 'Ronny Belin'. The main content area is titled 'Tidrapportering: 2002-06-17' and includes a calendar for May and June. Below the calendar, there are two main sections: 'Tidrapportera' and 'Dagrapportera'. The 'Tidrapportera' section has a dropdown menu for 'Mira övrigt', a 'Tid' field with the value '2', and radio buttons for 'Faktureras: Ja' and 'Nej'. The 'Dagrapportera' section has radio buttons for 'Arbete', 'Sjukdom', 'Semester', and 'Ej arbete', and a 'Kommentar' field. Below these sections is a table titled 'Tidrapporteringar' with columns for 'Projekt', 'Tid', 'Faktureras', 'Beskrivning', 'Komponenter', and 'Id'. The table shows a 'Summa' row with dashes. Below the table is a section titled 'Minnesanteckningar, kontaktnoteringar och inlägg i anslagstavlor under dagen' with columns for 'Tidpunkt', 'Rubrik', 'Kund', and 'Anslagstavla'. It lists two entries: '2002-06-17 11:15:00 Testmessage in discussion Forum 2.0 buggtester' and '2002-06-17 11:31:00'. Below this is a 'Konsultklockan' section with a dropdown for 'Mira Ventures' and a time field '0:00:40'. To the right is a 'Konsultklockan - Sammanställning' table with columns for 'Client' and 'Time', showing 'Mira övrigt' with a time of '0:3:57'. At the bottom, there is a message: 'Hur använder jag Konsultklockan? Idag loggade du in första gången kl 2002-06-17 11:05:25. Det är 0h 26min sen.'

"The aim with the design was that it should feel like a tool, not a brochure," Belin recalls. "We wanted it to look like Office." For example, the bulletin board message composition feature uses standard Outlook icons.

To minimize the area needed by navigation, the left-hand navigation bar was replaced with horizontal tabs across the top of the screen (the application uses full screen width, regardless of screen resolution). Clicking on either the company logo or the *Internt* tab takes the user back to the start page.

The time-reporting page includes a new navigation for selecting dates by clicking on the appropriate day, and users can now do project-based time reporting and day reporting on the same page.

Users also have a wider range of information to help them do their jobs, including a summary of all time reports submitted, *Tidrapporteringar*, and a record of all potentially billable activities carried out on the intranet, such as discussions in the technical bulletin boards. This is automatically populated from relevant areas of the site. "If you post a message in the development bulletin board, it automatically appears in this section," Belin explains.

The *Konsultklockan* function at the bottom of the page is a stopwatch, which employees can use to determine how much time they spend on work for each client.

"It's not widely used. You tend to forget to switch it on, or off, but it works for some people so we haven't disabled it," Belin says.

Similarly, the current start page draws together several information sources, including a list of which employees are logged into the intranet, and can thus likely be contacted. The start page also includes the most recent news and bulletin board messages, and direct links to information on each employee's clients.

Both the current time-reporting application and home page have a layer of secondary navigation for each section under the main section tabs — a feature introduced to deal with the growing quantity of intranet information. "This was an idea we stole from other sites. We find it very effective in making navigation compact," says Belin. The most commonly used secondary functions are positioned under the section tab. For example, news and the telephone list are near the main start page tab, and the CRM application is near the project management, *Projekt*, tab.

Mira's intranet is continuously evolving; the proposed design for one of its management information applications shows a more striking design using contrasting colors and Windows XP-like look and feel.

Pictured: A proposed, more striking design for one of the intranet's management information applications.

Fakt. projekt	F.h	TR h	Fakt	TR projekt	Datum	Person	Description
Gryphus Aluminätverk 6							
Gryphus Aluminätverk	2	2	0	Gryphus Aluminätverk	2002-02-18	Ronny Belin	Fixade med avtal.
Gryphus Aluminätverk	4	4	0	Gryphus Aluminätverk	2002-03-08	Ronny Belin	Migration av databasen
Gryphus konfiguration 22,5							
Gryphus konfiguration	2	2	0	Gryphus Aluminätverk	2002-02-26	Johan Wennström	M om avtal och konfigurering
Gryphus konfiguration	2,5	2,5	0	Gryphus Aluminätverk	2002-02-26	Ronny Belin	Konfigureringsmöte
Gryphus konfiguration	0,25	0,25	1	Gryphus Aluminätverk	2002-02-27	Olle Eriksson	hjälpde RB med click'n'go
Gryphus konfiguration	5	5	0	Gryphus Aluminätverk	2002-02-28	Ronny Belin	Konfigurering
Gryphus konfiguration	0,5	0,5	0	Gryphus Aluminätverk	2002-03-04	Ronny Belin	Konfigurering
Gryphus konfiguration	1	1	0	Gryphus Aluminätverk	2002-03-05	Jenny Andersson	Hjälpt Ronny med konfigurering
Gryphus konfiguration	0,25	0,25	1	Gryphus Aluminätverk	2002-03-05	Olle Eriksson	hjälpde ronny med click'n'go
Gryphus konfiguration	3,5	3,5	0	Gryphus Aluminätverk	2002-03-05	Ronny Belin	Försökte konfigurera med Click'n'go
Gryphus konfiguration	5	5	0	Gryphus Aluminätverk	2002-03-06	Ronny Belin	Konfiguration.
Gryphus konfiguration	0,5	0,5	0	Gryphus Aluminätverk	2002-03-07	Jenny Andersson	Buggtestat
Gryphus konfiguration	2	2	0	Gryphus Aluminätverk	2002-03-07	Ronny Belin	Konfigurering och uppladdning
Totalt: 28,5							
År Mån F.h TR,h							
2002 2 11,75 11,75							
2002 3 16,75 16,75							

TIMELINE

- 1998: Mira founded; Web-based time-reporting application created.

- Early 1999: News, bulletin board, and project information applications added.
- Late 1999: Design elements introduced, time-reporting function enhanced.
- Summer 2000: Major redesign.

RESULTS

"The intranet is now a critical tool for Mira. Each employee uses it every day, several times a day," says Belin. The company has not tried to quantify the business benefits, but believes there have been clear gains from automating core functions such as time reporting. In Belin's own experience, for example, the recently introduced invoicing feature halved the time it took him to produce an invoice.

LESSONS LEARNED

Insights from Ronny Belin:

Arrange your intranet around your business structures. "Because we modeled the system around the structures in our business, it was easy to communicate what the various functions did. They were functions users were already familiar with."

Keep it simple. "It can be good to trade flexibility for less complexity. There's no point having a good-looking browser if it won't work in your hotel room."

Learn from other designs. "Amateurs borrow, artists steal. We try to steal ideas from existing interfaces because the user will feel comfortable with them, and because we know someone has already put a lot of thought into designing them."

Look for the killer app. "You need a killer app in your intranet to create usage. In our case, it was time reporting."

Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance

USING THE INTRANET:

Northwestern Mutual and its subsidiaries offer an array of financial products. The company was founded in 1857 and now services 2.8 million policy owners holding more than five million policies. In 2002, Northwestern Mutual was again (for the nineteenth year in a row) voted the most admired company in its industry by Fortune magazine.

DESIGN TEAM:

Northwestern Mutual's software product design team

MEMBERS:

MICHELE BERKES, USER-CENTERED DESIGN (UCD) SPECIALIST; MICHAEL DELGAUDIO, USER INTERFACE (UI) DESIGNER; DEBORAH HALL, MUTUALNET SITE COORDINATOR; MICK ROSOLEK, UI DESIGNER; MARK BENDER, UI DESIGNER; JUDY HURLEY, UCD SPECIALIST

Pictured: The Mutualnet home page, which provides navigation across the entire intranet.

mutualnet HO Directory Mutualnet
more search options

March 19, 2002
[Cafeteria](#) | [Newscan](#) | [Coverage](#) | [HO Calendar](#)

UPAF campaign under way
The performing arts take center stage March 14-22 during the annual [UPAF campaign](#) in the home office.

Hit your stride
Whether you walk or run, stay in shape with the [Striders Club](#). Join now! The membership drive ends March 31.

Microsoft help line available
Basic how-to assistance for Microsoft desktop applications

[Emergency x363](#) | [NSD x3824](#)

Milwaukee, WI
Reported by Milwaukee, WI
Cloudy

Tue Mar 19 09:51 AM CT
Temperature: 40°F/4°C
Humidity: 79%
Barometer: 30.16in/1022mb
Winds: SE at 17mph/27kph

Click for Forecast
THE WEATHER CHANNEL
weather.com

(Use control+F5 to receive the latest weather)

[Current Local Conditions](#)

[Milwaukee County Bus Schedules](#)
[WisDOT Travel Times Monitor](#)

Directories ▶
[AA Guide](#), [Dept./Div. Listing](#), [Financial Representative](#), [Home Office](#), [Organization Charts](#), [White Pages](#) ...

Web Links ▶
[Hot Sites](#), [Internet Search](#), [LINKnet](#), [NorthwesternMutual.com](#), [NMFN.com](#) ...

Employee Resources ▶
[401\(k\)](#), [Business Travel](#), [Clubs](#), [Credit Union](#), [Discounts](#), [Jane's Take-Away Foods](#), [Job Opportunities](#) ...

Computer Corner ▶
[NSD](#), [Passwords](#), [PC/LAN](#), [Contacts](#), [PC Software Installation](#), [Printers](#) ...

Project Management ▶
[Corporate Projects](#), [PMK](#), [Visual Process](#) ...

Research ▶
[Business & Management Database](#), [E-Journals](#), [Forrester Research](#) ...

Departments ▶
[Actuarial](#), [Agency Development](#), [Agencies](#), [Annuity & Accumulation Products](#), [Audit](#), [Communications](#), [Compliance/Best Practices](#), [Controllers](#), [Corporate Offices](#),
[Corporate Planning](#), [Corporate Services](#), [Disability Income](#), [Field Services & Support](#), [Field Systems & Administration](#), [Field Training & Development](#), [Human Resources](#)

Forms ▶
[HR Forms](#), [I.S. Forms](#) ...

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About Northwestern Mutual ▶
[Brand Management](#), [Calendars](#), [Directions to Home Office](#), [Fact Sheet](#) ...

Web Resources ▶
[Internet Resources](#), [LINKnet Guide](#), [Mutualnet Publishing Guidelines](#), [Web Application Infrastructure Services](#) ...

SUMMARY

Mutualnet is the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company's corporate intranet, which serves the specific business needs of approximately 5,000 employees and contractors, plus the many off-site employees in regional real estate offices across the U.S. Users include attorneys, accountants, doctors, actuaries, engineers, and stockbrokers. Operations staff includes people in data entry and processing, customer service, training, and sales support. Marketing and sales departments also have process and product specialists. The Information Systems department alone has over 800 employees.

Mutualnet combines simple design, data collection, and communication all in one place. The home page provides navigation across the entire intranet, and designers chose a Yahoo-like design to provide quick links to heavily used items. The page makes minimal use of graphics, making it fast to load and easy to keep current. The visual design of the page is flexible to accommodate different browser resolutions. The scrollbar on the *Today* column let designers maintain a shorter, more balanced page. This column includes employee-oriented news items as well as weather and traffic information. On the downside, designers report that the single search box, which combines two search functions into one entry box, has not been as well received. The two buttons do let directory-centric users eliminate a click to locate phone numbers, however. Designers are also working to improve the department focused navigation structure.

In addition to having design goals of a clean look, fast-loading pages, and consistent navigation across sites, Northwestern Mutual is the only intranet winner that specifically set a design goal dealing with accessibility for user with disabilities. The company focused on testing and adhering to *Priority One W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines*.³ Making it possible for users with disabilities to use the intranet is extremely important, and we've found that making improvements to this end typically helps all other users, too.

At many companies, HR planning and maintenance is at best a quagmire of papers that are copied, faxed, or mailed through the office to whatever HR person you happen to know or find. Northwestern Mutual, however, has implemented a full HR area of the intranet where users not only find benefits information, but can make changes to their electives and personal information. For example, HR offers two forms on their department-level *Mutualnet* site that help eliminate the large chain of paper communication and electronic data re-entry required by their predecessors.

The *Employee Personal Data Change* form lets employees directly inform HR of any changes to their address, name, marital status, and so on. The form is a bit long, but necessarily so, and it is well laid out, with obvious fields and field labels.

³ W3C Web Accessibility Initiative, guidelines at <http://www.w3.org/WAI/Resources/#gl>. See also the Nielsen Norman Group report with usability accessibility guidelines, *Beyond ALT Text: Making the Web Easy to Use for Users with Disabilities* (Coyne, Nielsen) www.nngroup.com/reports/accessibility.

Pictured: The Employee Personal Data Change form, which lets employees inform HR of changes in personal information.

Human Resources | DEPARTMENT

[Human Resources Home](#) | [Human Resources Support](#) | [Mutualnet Search](#) | [Mutualnet Home](#)

Employee Personal Data Change Request Form

Requesting changes for:

Name: Department:

SSN: Manager:

Request changes to the following information:

- [Address and Phone Number](#)
- [Marital Status and Spouse Information](#)
- [Emergency Contacts](#)
- [Name \(Legal\)](#)
- [Additional Degree](#)
- For all other changes, contact your manager.

Address and Phone Number

Home Address

Address:

City:

State: Zip:

Country:

Effective Date:

Home Phone

()

unpublished:

Other Phone (optional)

()

unpublished: type:

[Back to top](#)

Marital Status and Spouse Information

New Status:

Effective Date:

Spouse

Name:

SSN:

Birthdate:

Male Female

If you haven't already done so and it is applicable, also change your **Name**, **Address**, and **Emergency Contact**.

[Back to top](#)

Emergency Contact(s)

Primary Contact

Name:

Relationship:

Home Phone: ()

unpublished:

Other Phone: ()

unpublished: type:

Effective Date:

Secondary Contact (optional)

Name:

Relationship:

Home Phone: ()

unpublished:

Other Phone: ()

unpublished: type:

[Back to top](#)

Name (Legal)

New Name

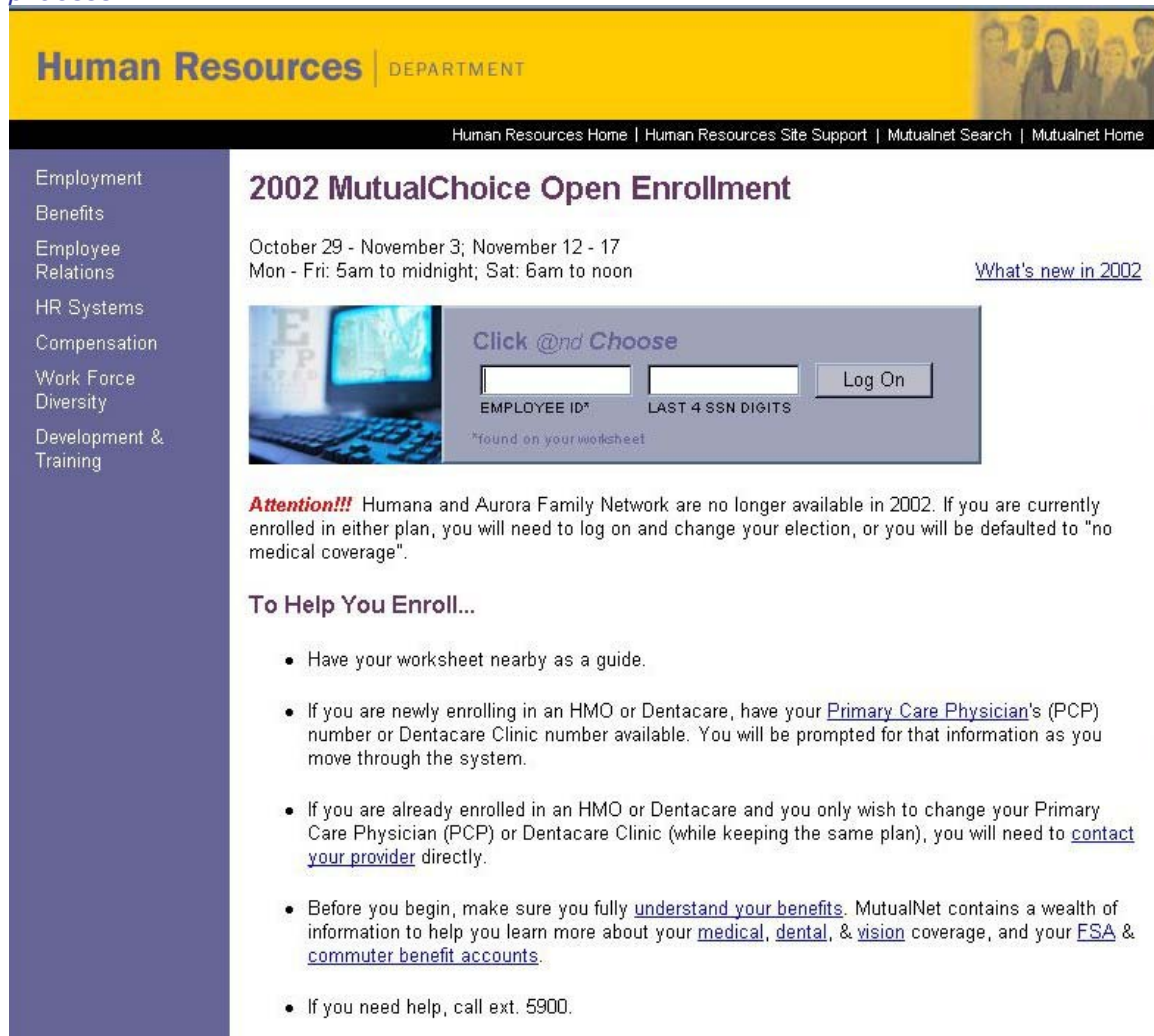
Prefix:

Previous Name

Prefix:

The *Open Enrollment* forms let employees view and directly modify their benefit options. There are two very nice features in this process. First, data is automatically batch-processed nightly, so there is no extra administrative hassle and HR representatives have timely information. Second, employees need various items or information on hand before they can actually go through the forms. Rather than hitting users with a "gotcha" in the middle of the process, designers had the expertise to give users a list and explanation of the information they need to complete the forms before they even begin. This is an innovative way around a common form problem.

Pictured: A page beginning the Open Enrollment process, which lets employees view and modify their benefit options. This first page helps users get started and tells them what they will need to complete the process.



Human Resources | DEPARTMENT

Human Resources Home | Human Resources Site Support | Mutualnet Search | Mutualnet Home

Employment
Benefits
Employee Relations
HR Systems
Compensation
Work Force Diversity
Development & Training

2002 MutualChoice Open Enrollment

October 29 - November 3; November 12 - 17
Mon - Fri: 5am to midnight; Sat: 6am to noon

[What's new in 2002](#)

Click @nd Choose

EMPLOYEE ID* LAST 4 SSN DIGITS

*found on your worksheet

Attention!!! Humana and Aurora Family Network are no longer available in 2002. If you are currently enrolled in either plan, you will need to log on and change your election, or you will be defaulted to "no medical coverage".

To Help You Enroll...

- Have your worksheet nearby as a guide.
- If you are newly enrolling in an HMO or Dentacare, have your [Primary Care Physician's \(PCP\)](#) number or Dentacare Clinic number available. You will be prompted for that information as you move through the system.
- If you are already enrolled in an HMO or Dentacare and you only wish to change your Primary Care Physician (PCP) or Dentacare Clinic (while keeping the same plan), you will need to [contact your provider](#) directly.
- Before you begin, make sure you fully [understand your benefits](#). MutualNet contains a wealth of information to help you learn more about your [medical](#), [dental](#), & [vision](#) coverage, and your [FSA & commuter benefit accounts](#).
- If you need help, call ext. 5900.

Pictured: A form within the Open Enrollment process. It is well laid out, and the forms are short and to the point.

2002 MutualChoice

Current Elections THROUGH DEC 2001 Medical Dental Vision FSA & Commuter

Medical Options for 2002

Step 1: Choose Your 2002 Medical Plan

	EMPLOYEE ONLY	EMPLOYEE & SPOUSE	EMPLOYEE & CHILD(REN)	FAMILY
<input type="radio"/> Principal Choice Plan	\$ 2.22	\$ 6.96	\$ 8.44	\$ 7.77
<input type="radio"/> CompcareBlue	\$ 1.09	\$ 4.32	\$ 3.21	\$ 6.54
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Humana HMO	\$ 3.45	\$ 6.76	\$ 6.67	\$ 9.90
<input type="radio"/> No Medical Coverage	If selected, you'll receive a \$ <input type="text"/> annual benefit allowance. By choosing this option you will not be able to enroll in medical coverage until the fall of 2002.			

All values are cost per month unless otherwise noted.

Step 2: Choose Family Members You Want To Cover In 2002

2002 FAMILY MEMBER	EDIT	2001	RELATION	M/F	SSN	BIRTHDATE	PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN #
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Norm Weston	...	✓	Employee	M	123-45-6789	02/05/1965	Same as 2001
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nancy Thomas-Weston	...	✓	Spouse	F		12/14/1969	Same as 2001

Print Call x5900 with questions Submit Quit

Like many intranets, Northwestern Mutual's offers an employee directory. However, their design is innovative in that it takes information that is currently available from several different resources and combines it into one, making it faster and easier to find people at the company. The directory search lets users type a name or browse by letters. If a search returns one unique result, the result displayed is a detailed page including the employee's photograph. If more than one match is found, a page listing the possible matches, including name, phone number, location, department and division, and budget code is displayed. Regardless, the results show the most important information for the users. Knowing that the *Home Office Directory* is a frequently used featured, the designers usability tested it, and in the course of the usability evaluation gathered information about what other information users expected or needed there. They then used the information to make sure that the details given on the intermediate list page were those most pertinent to users. In addition to the directory, designers created the *How Do I* section in part to help direct users to other site resources.

Pictured: An employee directory search results page. More than one user was found based on the search criteria.

mutualnet

[Mutualnet Home](#) | [More Search Options](#)

Home Office Directory Search

Select a letter to display an alphabetic list by last name.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

Search Results for: hall

Name	Phone Ext.	Location	Department	Budget Code	Contractor Firm
HALL, ADAM T	2537	E16J	Field Services and Support	0667	
HALL, CHRISTOPHER (TOM)	2575	E10N	Field Training & Development	1942	
HALL, DEBORAH A	2529	N095E	Information Systems	2523	
HALL, JOHN Q	2983	146	Human Resources	0667	
HALL, REBECCA	7126	E14P	Life Product	1601	

The content available is provided for the use of employees for the purpose of conducting company business or company approved activities. Misuse of employee information or photographs is strictly prohibited.

How do I ... ?

- **Update information in the directory?**
 For Northwestern Mutual employees, send an e-mail to your department's [HR Officer Assistant or HR Officer](#).
 For contractor/intern updates, send an e-mail to [Directory Updates for Contractors](#).
- **Look up contact information for a financial representative?**
 Use the [Financial Representative Directory](#).
- **Find other directories?**
 See the Mutualnet [Directories](#) page.
- **Contact someone about my photo?**
 Send an e-mail to [Employee Portraits](#).

Not getting the results you expected? Submit a [Mutualnet Comment](#).

Last Revised: 10/30/2001
 Editor: [Deb Hall](#), extension 2829


Pictured: An employee's results page. This page is a unique search result, and thus is displayed instead of a list of search results.

The screenshot shows the Mutualnet Home Office Directory Search interface. At the top, the Mutualnet logo is on the left, and a search bar with the Mutualnet logo is on the right. Below the logo, the text "Mutualnet Home | More Search Options" is visible. The main heading is "Home Office Directory Search". Below this, there is a profile card for Deborah A. Hall. The profile card includes a headshot of a woman with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark top and a patterned jacket. To the right of the photo, the text reads: "HALL, DEBORAH A", "Extension: 2829", "Location: N09SE", "Cubie: 09181", and "Information Systems / Web Client Computing GRP 17". Below the profile card, there is a disclaimer: "The content available is provided for the use of employees for the purpose of conducting company business or company approved activities. Misuse of employee information or photographs is strictly prohibited." Below the disclaimer, there is a search bar and a button labeled "HO Directory". Below the search bar, the text reads: "Select a letter to display an alphabetic list by last name." Below this text is a grid of buttons labeled with letters A through Z. Below the grid, the text reads: "How do I ... ?". Below this text, there are two bullet points: "Update information in the directory?" and "Look up contact information for a financial representative?".

mutualnet Mutualnet

Mutualnet Home | More Search Options

Home Office Directory Search



HALL, DEBORAH A
Extension: 2829
Location: N09SE
Cubie: 09181

Information Systems / Web Client Computing
GRP 17

The content available is provided for the use of employees for the purpose of conducting company business or company approved activities. Misuse of employee information or photographs is strictly prohibited.

Select a letter to display an alphabetic list by last name.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

How do I ... ?

- **Update information in the directory?**
For Northwestern Mutual employees, send an e-mail to your department's [HR Officer Assistant](#).
For contractor/intern updates, send an e-mail to [Directory Updates for Contractors](#).
- **Look up contact information for a financial representative?**
Use the [Financial Representative Directory](#).

Aside from small news bits and letters from the CEO, many intranets miss the opportunity to communicate current information to employees. Northwestern Mutual, however, has taken the opportunity to use the intranet to communicate about a delicate topic: a new facility design.

Having your office arrangement and architecture change can be exciting. Many people, however, feel stress with such changes and the worst thing a company can do in this situation is to withhold information about the changes. Thanks to the intranet, the opposite is true at Northwestern Mutual. Information is posted thoroughly and regularly, using the *Franklin Campus* site, an all-in-one location for information regarding the home office's new campus expansion. As the planning and construction on the new campus progresses, so does the site. Employees can look for the most current answers to questions about things like amenities and parking excerpted in a FAQ document. But a FAQ is the not the whole story. Employees can also ask their own questions and receive individualized answers via the Franklin

Campus Q&A Domino application. The Communications department also made maps, plans, and drawings available on the intranet. Taken together, such features have successfully alleviated employee concerns and inaccurate grapevine information by providing more direct communication between employees and management. Now, employees can look forward to the changes with anticipation and excitement.

Pictured: The first page of the new campus site, used to communicate changes and information to employees.

Communications | DEPARTMENT

Communications Home | Communications Site Support | Mutualnet Search | Mutualnet Home

- People & Organization
- Policies & Procedures
- Company News & Direction
- Communications Services & Media
- Employee Services
- Franklin Campus**
 - News & Updates
 - Staffing
 - Photos & Drawings
 - Committees
 - Questions & Answers

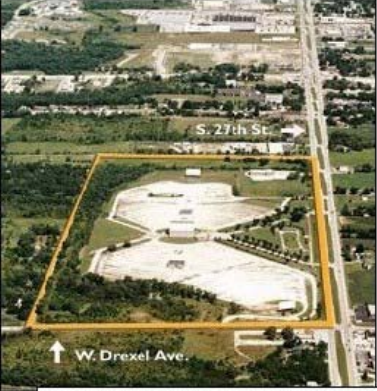
Franklin Campus

Welcome to the Franklin Campus site, your all-in-one location for information regarding the new facility!

As the planning and construction on the new campus progresses, so will this site. Look here for the most current answers to [frequently asked questions](#), including issues such as amenities and parking.

Related Links

- [City of Franklin](#)
- [Franklin Hub newspaper](#)
- [Eppstein Uhen Architects](#)
- [Opus North](#)



Aerial view of Franklin Campus site, looking north
The Franklin Campus site is located at the corner of Drexel and S. 27th St.

Pictured: The Question and Answer page allows users to ask their own questions about the changes. This is a much better alternative to stale FAQs.

Communications | DEPARTMENT

Communications Home | Communications Site Support | Mutualnet Search | Mutualnet Home

Franklin Campus Q&A

Search this database for:

[Ask a Question](#) • [Admin Login](#)

Sort:

Reply Date	Question #	Question	Category
03/18/2002	220	Any plans to keep any of the old "drive-in" amenities for some historical references? (for example: the old sound boxes you hooked on the window, the old concession stand, etc.). I've seen many developments that have preserved remnants of the locations prior existence, whatever it may be. For instance, there is a Holiday Inn in Indianapolis that use to be a train station. They preserved some of the old character into the new hotel. Just curious if any plans exist for the old drive-in that has been there forever.	Misc.
03/18/2002	219	Will the Franklin location offer space for a warehouse facility so that we can eliminate the Wallace location?	Misc.
03/08/2002	175	What type of arrangements are going to be made for handicap access, not only to the buildings, but for cafeteria and restroom access and utilization as well? For example, will there be automatic doors available for restroom access on each floor? Thank you.	On The Job
02/26/2002	206	Overall I think that NML has done a great job in providing for its employees. Im sure we all feel there are things that we would individually like in addition to what we currently get. However, I think it's slightly unfair to compare other companies' amenities to ours, when we might have something they do not. I used to work for a company that only had two elevators which were constantly breaking down. What I'd like to know more than anything else is when is the initial groundbreaking going to be and are we on track to meet the move-in goal of late 2003 or early 2004. I drive past the new site frequently and the drive-in sign still says see you in the spring.	Construction
02/26/2002	202	Currently Northwestern offers the Employee Home Purchase Plan but it only applies in certain areas, does Northwestern plan on adding the City of Franklin to the list? If not are they going to offer	Pay and Benefits

Pictured: A page of plans, the actual location, and maps for the site.

Communications | DEPARTMENT

[Communications Home](#) | [Communications Site Support](#) | [Mutualnet Search](#) | [Mutualnet Home](#)

People & Organization

Policies & Procedures

Company News & Direction

Communications Services & Media

Employee Services

Franklin Campus

- News & Updates
- Staffing
- **Photos & Drawings**
- Committees
- Questions & Answers


Franklin Campus Photos & Drawings

Check this page to find the latest photos of the site, architect's drawings, and other images of the Franklin Campus.

- [Aerial photo of Franklin campus location](#)
- [Site plan concept drawings](#)


Aerial photo of site

The Franklin Campus site is located at the corner of S. 27th St. and W. Drexel in Franklin.



Site plan concept drawings

The following two drawings show the preliminary plans for the Franklin Campus site. For more information about the plans for buildings on the campus, see the [preliminary site plans handout](#).



Scoring (3 = best)						
Simple look	Simple navigation	Consistent navigation and design	Visible search	Simple search	Limited (well-presented) text on pages	Home page
3	1.5	1.8	3	2.5	2.3	2.3

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTRANET

Mutualnet is composed of a community of home office department subsites with an umbrella enterprise layer. The intranet resides across thirteen servers, including more than 150,000 pages plus applications. First implemented in 1996, it has been through four revisions. Currently, *Mutualnet* adds approximately 1,000 pages of content per month.

BASIC FEATURES

Mutualnet's top layer is considered the enterprise level. These are the pages that provide navigation across the entire intranet. The redesigned site uses global and local Cascading Style Sheets to ensure branding and best practices consistency across subsites. Creative content and color palettes let each subsite illustrate its uniqueness within the *Mutualnet* community, while communicating an identity with the Northwestern Mutual brand. There are two standard navigation areas in the page structure: global navigation and site navigation. Site navigation provides a "you are here" functionality. Designers encourage consistency in site navigation labels across subsites. A scoped search box is available on subsite home pages, and all pages include a global navigation bar with a link to the full site search. All pages must have metadata titles and descriptions, and all graphics require Alt tags. All branded sites are link and spell checked, and monthly reports are run for content owners.

Types of content/applications include:

- Forms to initiate various internal processes
- Daily company news column, company newsletter (*Coverage*), department newsletters
- Policies and procedures — A to Z, standards, guidelines
- Online training, scheduled training calendar, professional development
- Computer help desk, password change, software downloads, contacts
- Third-party news and research links
- Employee self service — job postings, 401K, benefits enrollment
- *Home Office Directory* with photos and other directories
- Company calendar of events
- Project and Competency Center databases of documents and team collaboration
- Weather and commuter information links
- Interactive Q&A, bug trackers, minutes and agenda databases
- Job aids and documentation
- Clubs, lunch menu, special discount offers, credit union
- Business and leisure travel information

URL AND ACCESS

Employees must be authenticated, of course, to access home office systems, but *Mutualnet* itself has no separate log-in. After successful user authentication,

Mutualnet is generally available. Certain applications or sections of information do have restricted user groups, and users in those areas must reauthenticate. The designers are piloting a project called *Mutualnet Anywhere*, which will let employees access a limited subset of *Mutualnet* content from home. Employees will, of course, need to authenticate to get into *Mutualnet Anywhere*.

BACKGROUND

The first version of *Mutualnet* appeared in 1996, having grown out of a previous intranet created for Northwestern Mutual's sales force. Initially, the rationale for having the intranet was simply to make corporate information more accessible by putting policy and procedure manuals online. Since then, the intranet has been through four revisions, including a major redesign that was launched in 2000 following an extensive usability review.

Pictured: A page from Mutualnet's major redesign in 2000, based on usability evaluations.

In 2001, all intranet department and club sites were redesigned. In 2002, redesign of forms, applications, and Domino databases will begin. It will take approximately two years to complete these conversions; they are currently converting over 1,000 pages per month.

Many of the intranet revisions were motivated by user feedback. As information volume grew, respondents in Northwestern Mutual's annual survey of intranet users started to complain about difficulty in finding what they wanted. Many were unhappy with the search facility, which by default delivered a search of the head office directory rather than the whole site. The team was also becoming aware of a lack of uniformity across the site's different departmental areas.

Meanwhile, in 1999, Northwestern Mutual's board had decided to introduce a new brand identity throughout the organization, including the intranet. During 2001, the design team received funding to bring *Mutualnet* into line with Northwestern Mutual's corporate branding standards. The designers decided to take the opportunity to introduce a simpler, more consistent site design that would increase user productivity and reduce the maintenance issues involved with diverse designs.

"As we had to touch every page anyhow to apply the corporate branding, we felt that we could use Web best practices to improve usability of the site," explains Deborah Hall, *Mutualnet* site coordinator. "We've found that consistency is good for the user; it helps them focus on content rather than navigation."

Content publishing is still done manually, with all content passing through a central group that applies corporate design standards and turns content into HTML files. Northwestern Mutual does, however, plan to move to automated content management by 2004.

GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS

Mutualnet exists to meet three overall goals: improve both individual and organizational productivity, provide a reliable centralized information source, and act as a platform for collaborative applications.

The aim of the 2001 restructure was to create a unified site with a simple, clean, and consistent design. By increasing consistency across the site, the team hoped to make it easier and therefore more efficient for employees to use, thereby increasing corporate productivity and reducing design costs.

Since Northwestern Mutual has a number of employees with impaired vision, another aim was to comply with *W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* by making pages suitable for screen-reading devices.

The new corporate branding guidelines dictated several design elements, such as the use of photographic images in the menu bars. But the guidelines have been a benefit as well as a constraint for the team. "If we didn't have the corporate initiative to brand the site, I'm not sure we'd have had the same amount of credibility about going in and requiring that standards be met," Hall says. "We do have people complain about things like the color palette, but I can point out that it's beyond my control. It's mandated by corporate standards."

Other *Mutualnet* goals include:

- Improve organizational and personal productivity.
- Provide an enterprise collaboration platform.
- Provide a centralized source for quality data and information.
- Minimize use of graphics to speed load times.
- Use simple, clean, and consistent design to reduce design costs and improve usability and user satisfaction.
- Adhere to and test *Priority One W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines*.
- Ensure consistent navigation across sites to shorten task completion and learning curve.

DESIGN PROCESS AND USABILITY ACTIVITIES

In spring 2001, the team received signoff from Northwestern Mutual's branding committee for the redesign, and started work on the page design and information architecture in parallel. Before the 2000 launch of the redesigned *Mutualnet* portal site, the design team had carried out a major usability exercise, using techniques such as brainstorming with user groups, card sorting, prototyping, and several rounds of usability evaluations and user feedback. The team used these usability findings as the basis for developing the new version.

The team also carried out a comparative usability exercise using Northwestern Mutual's usability lab, which has a video facility with video cameras that can film the user's face, keyboard, and screen. The lab is used for both enterprise application interface development and Web design. For the *Mutualnet* project, team members ran tests both before starting the redesign and again when the new version went live, giving users a range of tasks to complete. They then compared user responses across various parameters (the tests are described further in the *Results* section below).

A core working group of ten people, including the design team and representatives from various business departments, spent six months working through the intranet sections developing standards and information design.

It was an evolutionary process. "The information design evolved as we found chunks of information that didn't fit in," Hall says. "At the end of the process, we had developed some more sophisticated thinking, so next year when we fine-tune the branding, we're planning on going back to the early sites and tightening up the information design, too."

The resulting information architecture is already delivering benefits to both users and content providers.

"For example, the fact that we now have a taxonomy of navigational terms provides a comfort level for users," Hall says. "They know that under *People And Organization* they will always find an organization chart, mission statements and so on, and that improves productivity, because the user is not trying to learn everyone's language. The reverse is also true: departments don't have to waste time having to decide what words to use for the navigation. Instead of solving the same problems over and over, they can focus on improving content."

Finalizing the designs took about four months of negotiation with the company's internal designers. "To be polite, you could say it was iterative," Hall recalls. "It was a classic clash between usability people, wanting a flexible design that would work with a fixed page width, and graphic designers who were used to having absolute control over the look of a page."

Fortunately for the intranet team, the corporate branding also worked well on the Web. "The very squared off look is a branding element," explains Hall. "When we took it to the Web we found it worked well; the simple, chunked-up screen helped people understand what was in the various boxes."

The team also worked to add elements that made sense to both groups. "We felt strongly about putting in global navigation as well as having search on all pages," says Hall. "By having this simple design controlled by CSS we can reduce design time and focus on content."

Now that the site is live, the team uses the annual user survey and monthly *WebTrends* reports to continually refine the home page content. For example, each main heading leads to a secondary page with a listing of all *Mutualnet* resources related to that topic, and the most commonly accessed pages are listed as subtopics on the home page.

The current home page retains many elements of the 2000 home page, including the high proportion of the page devoted to navigation. "There are people who feel that news should take up two thirds and navigation one third. But we feel that navigation is more important than news, because it bubbles up content that users might not otherwise be aware of," Hall explains.

The weather forecast is still a prominent home page feature because of the region's extreme weather and the geography of Northwestern Mutual's offices. "We're in five different buildings, so we need to know if we have to put a coat on to go for a meeting with our colleagues in another office," says Hall.

The team sees this kind of practical information, along with commuter information and details of the lunch menu, as helping to draw users into the intranet by telling them things they want to know on a daily basis.

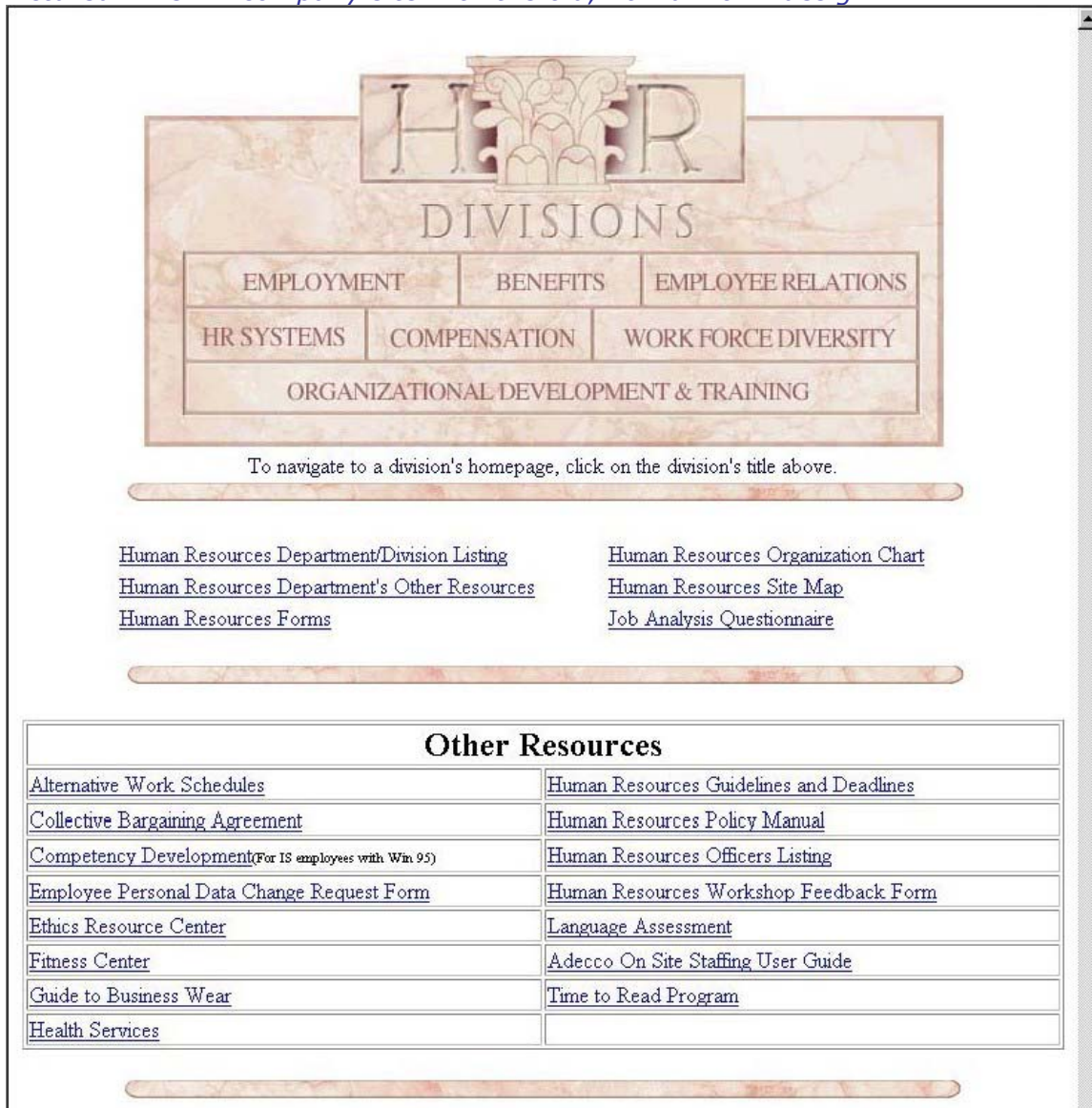
One change has been to the search function, which now explicitly offers users the choice of directory and site search, but the team still isn't entirely happy with the solution. "We went through four or five proposals for the search, none of which was obviously the fix," Hall says. "The trouble is that if users click *Return* in the heat of the moment, it still goes to the default, which is directory search. So we're examining options like splitting the boxes or letting people set their own search preferences."

Unlike the previous version, the home page now features a scrollbar on the news column to avoid having large volumes of news in a long, thin left-hand column and white space on the right. Hall is aware that this change may raise eyebrows in usability circles, but explains: "The common idea is that people don't want to scroll, but if there's something they want to scroll to, they will. We had people look at it and test drive it and got favorable results doing that."

In line with its aim of moving away from a department-focused navigation structure, the team relegated navigation by department to the bottom of the page. "Departmental navigation is still wanted by some users, but we hope to eventually move this level of navigation deeper," Hall says.

The most radical change has been to subsite pages, where team members replaced a wide diversity of old designs with a uniform, and more professional, look and feel. They applied this new look to both company sites and sites for the wide range of company-sponsored clubs.

Pictured: The HR company site with the old, non-uniform design.



Pictured: The HR company site with the new, uniform design.

The screenshot shows the Human Resources Department website. At the top, there is a yellow header with the text "Human Resources | DEPARTMENT" and a photo of a group of people. Below the header is a black navigation bar with links: "Human Resources Home | Human Resources Site Support | Mutualnet Search | Mutualnet Home". A search bar is located on the right side of the page. On the left, there is a blue sidebar with a navigation menu: "People & Organization", "Policies & Procedures", "HR Forms", "Job Opportunities", and "Other Services". The main content area features a "Mission Statement" section with the text: "The Human Resources Department seeks to support Northwestern Mutual's growth objectives through maintaining the competitive advantage our employees provide to the company, its field force and our policyowners. Our employees, through the decisions they make, the work they produce, their attention to what is best for the Policyowner, and their high degree of integrity, play a key role in producing the value and security so important to our customers." Below the mission statement is a "Quick Links" section with a list of links: "401(k)", "Employee Personal Data Change Request Form", "Fitness Center", "Holiday/Vacation", "Performance Management", "Policy Manual", and "Workshops". To the right of the quick links is a photo of a group of six diverse employees. At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with the text: "Updated: April 29, 2002" and "Contact: Norm Weston, x1234", along with the Northwestern Mutual logo.

One of the new branding guidelines was to use photos rather than clipart on company material, focusing on images of people rather than objects and thus emphasizing human relationships as one of the company's core values. The team selected images for the subsite pages' top menu bar in cooperation with the departments concerned. One department, *Policy Owner Services*, uses photos of actual employees, which are changed on a monthly basis.

TIMELINE

- 1996: Original *Mutualnet* launched.
- 1997 and 1998: Additional features added.
- 2000: Significantly new design introduced, intended to provide a more functional look at information.
- 2001: Funding received to apply corporate branding. Departmental and club sites redesigned (the company funds thirty clubs as benefits for employees; women's golf is one example).
- 2002: Work starts on redesign of electronic forms, applications, and Domino databases. Converting existing information is expected to take about two years, at a rate of around 1,000 pages per month.

RESULTS

Because the design team needs solid figures to convince Northwestern Mutual's hard-nosed management to invest in further development, it pays close attention to measuring the site's business benefits. "Measurable benefits are so important to getting future funding that we'd be foolish not to do metrics at this point," Hall points out. Metrics are mined from server logs, annual user surveys, benchmarking outside organizations, and on-site usability testing. In 2001, the team measured the following attributes:

- Users' level of intranet use and satisfaction
- Timesavings
- Information credibility
- Contribution to productivity
- Individual ROI studies on new features
- Pain points for users

Although there has been some user resistance to change, it is balanced out by growing recognition that a consistent design is easier to work with: "People grumble, but people grumble at just about any change," says Hall. "Quite early on we started to get feedback that the redesigned pages were easier to navigate through, so when were we going to finish the redesign of this and that department?"

According to the team's most recent user survey: 94% of respondents used *Mutualnet* daily or multiple times each day, 95% thought it was an honest and credible source of information, and 87% said that it contributed to their job performance.

In addition to holding the annual intranet satisfaction survey, team members benchmarked the whole site during 2001 using thirteen different test scenarios and three key measures: success at completing tasks, time taken to complete tasks, and number of clicks involved. They ran the same test again in 2002 on the new site, using nine testers each time. On both occasions, the team recorded users on video in Northwestern Mutual's usability lab.

Initial results (the team is still carrying out further analysis) show that, though the number of clicks remained the same, test users took 20% less time to complete tasks, and the number of times users gave up and failed to finish the task at all was reduced from 9% to 1%.

"We're pretty pleased with that," Hall says. "We're going to use those numbers to try and justify more money so we can carry out further enhancements next year."

The team has now been given the task of developing an extranet for the field sales force, which Hall sees as an endorsement from the top: "Clearly we've got some credibility with management, seeing as they're trusting us to do it again!"

LESSONS LEARNED

If you want people to find something, put it on the same page as the lunch menu. "If you want people to use the site, you need to provide information they

want to see. Adding softer information, such as the lunch menu and weather and commuter information, draws people in," says Hall.

Make changes gradually. "We had a lot of unhappiness among our users when we moved to a more Yahooish look. It was too radical a change, and they couldn't find what they wanted. So the change from 2001 was more subtle. We've found that the best approach is to make small significant changes, but to keep them coming so people don't get entrenched," advises Michele Berkes, a UCD specialist at Northwestern Mutual.

You can never rest on your laurels. "As soon as you improve something, the users raise the bar and expect more," says Hall.

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc

USING THE INTRANET:

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. is an international retail chain with headquarters in Bentonville, Arkansas.

DESIGN TEAM:

Wal-Mart *Pipeline* Team

MEMBERS:

WEB DEVELOPERS/PROJECT MANAGERS:
MICHELE MAESTRI, NITA MIX, LAURA HAMMARSTROM, AND PAUL SCHAEFER;
NORMAN WILLIAMS, TEAM LEADER; ALSO INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT WERE TIM CRANE, JAMES MARSHALL, AND MARK QUINALTY

Pictured: The Pipeline home page. This is the default page for users in the home office.

welcome to
pipeline
.com

Today is Wednesday, March 20, 2002

Menu
Search
Go To...
Wal-Mart Stores
SAM'S CLUB
Logistics
Home Office
International
Resources
Benefits
Corporate Info
Culture & History
Good.Works.
Phonebook
Policies

CORPORATE NEWS
Wal-Mart and Sumitomo Corp Agree to Acquire Strategic Stake
2002 Teacher Recognition Kick Off
Do More With Your Pictures
Wal-Mart Reports Record February Sales
[Click here for more News Releases.](#)

COMPANY EVENTS
Did you ever get the chance to meet or share in an experience with Sam Walton? If you did, we would love to hear about it. We are looking for stories about our founder to share with others in the company who never had the opportunity to meet him.
[Click here for a form you can use to submit your story.](#)
Please make sure you fill in all the boxes.
We look forward to receiving your memories of Mr. Sam.

Stock Quote
63.46
- 0.09
Change from closing

CARMEX
FACE-COLD-SORES
How many can you sell?

[Displaying the American Flag at Wal-Mart Stores](#)

SUMMARY

Approximately 900,000 staff in the U.S. alone use Wal-Mart's *Pipeline* intranet. The company has separate intranets for its operations in Canada, Germany, and the U.K, but all use the same publishing guidelines, ensuring consistency across the company. Intranet teams in other countries essentially use the U.S. intranet's design, but with some interpretation to suit each country. The sites have been very well received by the associates and colleagues in each country, and in many respects have become the communication tool of choice.

Pictured: A page used in Germany. Designers in all locations use the same guidelines.

ASDA pipeline

Wednesday, March 20, 2002

Search

Go To...

- ASDA House
- ASDA Stores
- George

Resources

- ASDA News
- Directory
- Feedback
- First Time Users Guide
- Pipeline SiteMap
- Phone Book
- Phone Book User Guide
- Weather

Top Ten Stores Using Pipeline in February
By Visitor Sessions

Store	Visitor Sessions
Tilehurst	256
Wigan	255
Dyce	247
Longwell Green	243
Marina	238
Ayr	230
Swansea	229
Edinburgh	225
Wembley	223
Sutton Ashfield	223

Stock Quote

63.22
- 0.16
Change from closing

Click here for exchange rate

Thought For The Week -

"Success is not something to wait for it is something to work for, so lets start"
Author Unknown

Pipeline Poll

View Last Weeks Results

Here

Mission : Why we exist - "To be Britains Best Value Retailer, exceeding customers needs....always!" ----- Pu

Individuals from all areas of the company use the intranet, including people in marketing, merchandising, and logistics, to name a few. What's more interesting is that these individuals also provide content by emailing it to the *Pipeline* team, who then prepares it for publication. "Our design philosophy is simply this: They own the content, we provide the look and feel," says Paul Schaefer, Web developer and project manager.

Knowing that numerous users have many different needs, these designers came up with a novel approach. When a user logs in, they are sent to the department page for the department they work in. This lets them quickly see the information that is most pertinent to them. Clicking the *Home* button on the browser or using the *WM Stores* link on their department page takes them to the home page for the stores. This intranet does an excellent job maintaining a consistent navigation model across many pages, stores, countries, and functions. The department and stores pages have basically the same look and feel, but with different color schemes and links to related content.

The designers understand the need to keep content new and different. A key feature of these pages is the *Last Updated* date found in the upper left of the page, directly under the header image. The *Pipeline* team uses this feature to manage the content for the department and ensure that pages are being updated regularly.

Pictured: The toys department page. When an associate in one of the stores logs in to the system, he or she is taken to their department page.

Department 07

Toys



Updated: March 18, 2002

Menu

- Broadcast Schedule
- Bulletins
- Check Your E-Mail
- E-Mail My Department
- Fixtures
- Guides
- Item Performance
- Modular Relay Sch.
- Recalls
- Rollbacks
- Store of the Community
- Supplier Phone #'s
- SWAS/PI
- Training Plans/Job Desc.
- Wal-Mart Stores Page

Resources

- Bike Instock %
- COMACS
- EAS
- Hot Items
- Opening Price Point
- Pool Chemical Info
- Risk Solutions
- Wise Items

NEW / UPDATED

NEW! Two new links have been added to the Menu. Check Your E-Mail and Wal-Mart Stores Page. 03/14/02

- [Bicycle You Name It Tags](#)
- [Kid Connection Replenishable Items](#)
- [NEW Replenishment Method for Pool Chemicals](#)

PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE

- [Larami Limited Air Bazooka Recall 3/14/01](#)
- [Most Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Huffy Bicycle replacement Parts Information](#)
- [Bike Racks & Rack Replacement Parts](#)
- [Bike Fact Tag Printing](#)
- [Children Book Returns](#)

EVENTS & PROMOS

- [M&M's Global Color Carnival -- April 13 3/18/02](#)
- [Bob the Builder -- March Licensed Event 3/5/02](#)
- [Barbie/Hot Wheels Spring Egg Hunt 3/5/02](#)
- [Easter ... in your basket -- March 31 2/15/02](#)
- [Licensed Sidecounter](#)



April 13
M&M Vote Info



March Licensed Event



Spring Egg Hunt
March 23



March 31

Pictured: The logistics division's home page. Like other department pages, it has basically the same look and feel as the stores page, but has its own color scheme that sets it apart. The same style of navigation is used, but with links to logistics-specific content.

WAL*MART Logistics

Updated: March 14, 2002

Menu

Search

Go To...
Your Area

- Benefits
- Corporate Info
- Culture
- Good Works
- Phonebook
- Corporate Policies

Resources

- Distribution Center List
- Announced DC Sites
- Web Forms
- Recruiting Resources
- Payroll
- CMI - Accidents/Claims
- Field Support Hotline

NEWS

Wal-Mart and Sumitomo Corp Agree to Acquire Strategic Stake
2002 Teacher Recognition Kick Off
Do More With Your Pictures

[Click here for more News Releases.](#)

NEW / UPDATED

We would love to hear your stories about meeting Mr. Sam.
We are looking for stories to share with others in the company who never had the opportunity to meet him. [Click here for a form you can use to submit your story.](#)

[Click Here](#) to order a replacement W2 form.
Important information about your W2 Form!

Click on the links below for details about **Logistics University's** newest courses or visit the LogU on-line [course descriptions](#) for more information.

NEW

Telephone Doctor - helps any Associate that uses the telephone with internal or external customers
Fun Facilitation Skills for the Classroom - supervisors/managers can develop skills for training in a fun, exciting, and memorable way.

Stock Quote

63.46
- 0.09
Change from closing

LOGISTICS UNIVERSITY

The links under *Menu* are the same on all department pages (with a few exceptions), while the links under *Resources* are department-specific. Content under the department *Menu* includes specific guides and information employees need to do their jobs efficiently. The intranet's publishing guides help reduce printing costs and ensure that all stores have access to the same information.

Pictured: An example of a content page that would be found under the department *Menu*. The intranet's publishing guides help reduce printing costs and ensure that all stores have access to the same information.

Hanger Guide

W226S - PS

12" Top Hanger

Item Number 9912412

Infant 0-24 Months

Tops, Dresses, Sportswear, Sleepwear, 1- pc. Swimwear, Coveralls, Creepers, Overalls

Toddler 2T-4T

Tops, Dresses, Sportswear, Sleepwear, 1- pc. Swimwear, Coveralls, Creepers, Overalls

Girls 4-6X

Tops, Dresses, Sportswear, Sleepwear, 1- pc. Swimwear, Rompers

Boy 4-7

Tops, Shirts, Sportswear, Windsuit Jackets



W227S - PS

14" Top Hanger

Item Number 9912405

Girls 7-16, 4-16

Tops, Dresses, Sportswear, Sleepwear, 1- pc. Swimwear

Boys 8-18, S-XL



Reference material is one valuable type of information that *The Pipeline* communicates. Employees also use the intranet to convey timely and time-sensitive information.

Pictured: A page displaying how the buyers in the head office can communicate timely or time-sensitive information to the stores. Like all other content pages, the look is consistent and controlled by the template and CSS.

Notes From the Buyers

[Shareholders Recap 2001](#)

[Department 20](#) | [Department 21](#) | [Department 22](#)

Department 20

Bath

Jubilee Towels

Try to maintain the solid color pallets that were sent in August. These displays got the towel increase over 30%. For stores that did not receive pallets, set endcaps of your best sellers for increased sales!

18 pack Wash Cloth

This is the #1 item in dept. 20. Inventory is high but sales are also on the same trend. The average store is selling 75 pieces a week. Maintain endcap features to capitalize on sales and profits.

If you mark this item down to move it out, replenishment will send you more.

Rugs

Christmas has arrived; features should reflect the holiday theme.

Stay instock on the basics, basics still drives the high volume sales.

Decorative Pillows

All 2.50 Christmas doormats should be out and pulled together in the domestics department.

All Christmas pillows should now be out in power alley for last minute gift giving . group all non-modular pillows now by price point

Pictured: A home page for one of the Wal-Mart stores.

An interesting feature of the stores page is a weekly poll, on the right side of the page. Designers use this as a tool to educate the associates about current topics.

The home page for the associates in the Wal-Mart home office campus in Bentonville, Arkansas, is tailored to that location. Also, like the other location pages, it shows the current stock price. This reflects the company's culture of ownership and has proven to be a very popular feature of the site. The stock price is displayed through an I-frame that is refreshed approximately every five minutes while trading is in session.

Pictured: The home page for the associates in the Wal-Mart home office campus in Bentonville, Arkansas.

One of the things employees say sets Wal-Mart apart from other companies is their corporate culture. To support this, designers created a *Culture and History* page on the site. This links to everything from the *Statement of Ethics* to the company's history. It even has a virtual tour of the Wal-Mart Visitor's Center.

Pictured: The Culture page.

The Pipeline intranet embodies the efficient operations and hometown feeling that Wal-Mart is known for. Even with almost a million users, the intranet was designed to make employees feel that it was made for each of them individually.

Scoring (3 = best)						
Simple look	Simple navigation	Consistent navigation and design	Visible search	Simple search	Limited (well-presented) text on pages	Home page
2.5	3	3	3	3	3	3

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTRANET

Wal-Mart Stores' intranet, *The Pipeline*, delivers information to store employees. It is a static, template-driven site made up of more than 12,000 HTML files, 6,600 PDF files, and nearly 7,000 images.

BASIC FEATURES

Wal-Mart's intranet, *The Pipeline*, delivers the information that employees need to do their jobs, including:

- Departmental policies and procedures
- Departmental information, such as internal and supplier contact numbers, lunch menu, and stock FAQs
- Employee self-service, including company benefits information and online enrollment
- Information about upcoming sales and promotions
- Company news
- Corporate information such as stock price, history, and culture

URL AND ACCESS

Users can access *The Pipeline* by opening their browser. The PCs have been modified so that the default page is the intranet. In the stores, users go through a sign-on that identifies the department they work in and sends them directly to that home page (that is, a department manager in electronics will be directed to the *Electronics* home page). *Pipeline* is not a public site; it resides on servers within the corporate network.

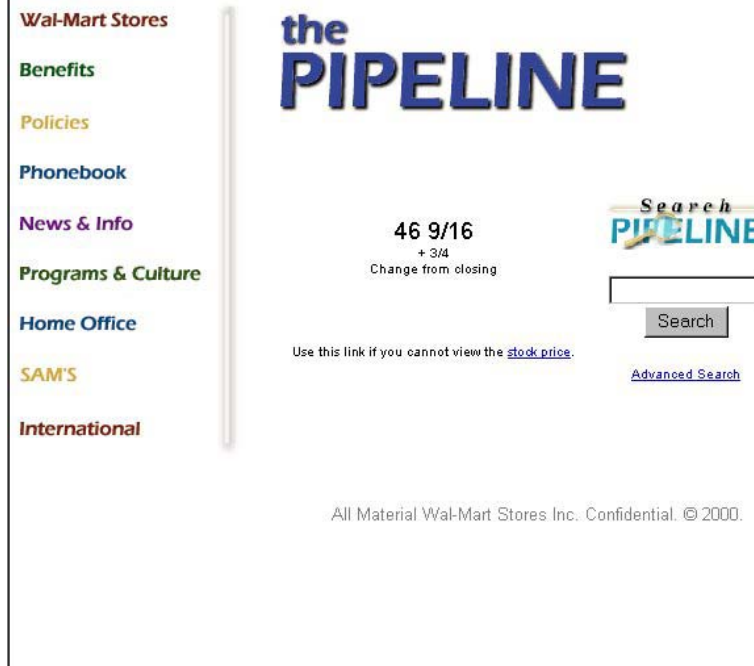
BACKGROUND

The Pipeline has its origins in the policies, procedures, and guidelines that the company's training department had to relay to stores around the U.S., and is still part of the training department. It first appeared in Web form in 1998, and from then on other departments, such as merchandising and public relations, started adding information to the site. As the volume of content grew, users started to complain that it was hard to find the information they wanted quickly.

One challenge was that the site was trying to address two very different sets of users with different needs: staff at Wal-Mart headquarters in Bentonville, and employees in its stores around the country. Both groups entered the site from the same high-level

page and someone in search of merchandising information, for example, would have to drill down through three levels to find what he or she wanted to know.

Pictured: The high-level page that both home office employees and those from other stores around the country originally entered the site from.



Pictured: A second-level page a user would drill down to if he or she were searching for merchandising information, for example.



Pictured: A third-level page the user would have to drill down to in order to find that merchandising information.

Merchandising Info & Departments

[Supplier Phone Listing - All Divisions.](#)

Department Links

choose your department ▾

Food

- [Food Specific Info:](#) Merchandising and operating info for food only.
- [UPC/POS Hotline](#)

Specialty Groups

- [Jewelry](#)
- [Optical](#)
- [Pharmacy](#)
- [Photo Center](#)
- [Shoes](#)
- [Tire & Lube Express](#)
- [Specialty Group Phone Listing](#)

GM Departments

- [Automotive \(10\)](#)
- [McLane](#)
- [Cosmetics \(46\)](#)

[Notes from Tom's Dept. Manager Broadcast:](#) Aired week 25 to be viewed by department managers and store managers.

[Local Supplier Program Guide:](#) Licensed / Branded merchandise MUST NOT be purchased from Local Suppliers. You **MUST** print the [Manager Tip Sheet](#) before you complete the Program Guide.

[Modular Relay Schedules:](#) Info for department managers when new modulars will be downloaded.

[Marketing:](#) Retailtainment ideas and events, VPI info, Wild & Crazy Guide info, 2000 Cliff Notes planning Calendar, Special Event and what it takes to set them at the meetings, on-line marketing forms, Entertainment News, and other Merchandising events sponsored by Marketing.

[Warehouse Replenishment Items:](#) Item listings for Seasonal, Import Assembly, Priority Assembly Distribution (P.A.D.) and Warehouse Replenishment Methods.

[Click here](#) to send a Feedback Form to your Department

Another challenge was that information was organized by department, rather than by operation. "In the old intranet, for example, if the training department published a goods-receiving manual, it would put it in the training area of the site," says Mark Quinalty, former business analyst. "But associates [this is what Wal-Mart calls its employees] looking for that information out in a store might not have thought of it as training. They just knew that certain pieces of information applied to their business in a certain way."

So, in January 2000, *The Pipeline* team started work on a new intranet version, in which users would be taken straight to the information they needed to do their jobs. "It's a filtered rather than a restricted view," Quinalty explains. "You can see any information you want, but you're guided to view it in a particular way." For example, someone working in the toy department of a store will be presented with a different start page than someone in the head office.

GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS

The primary redesign goal was to improve ease and speed of navigation. "Time spent on the intranet is time spent not taking care of the customer, so easy access to content was a high priority," says Quinalty.

A secondary goal was to raise awareness about and usage of the intranet within the company. "Some departments were very excited about it, while others weren't aware of how they could use it," says Quinalty.

As speed of usage was a priority, the team set a maximum page size of 40Kb to ensure fast download (though it occasionally bends the rules for Acrobat documents).

DESIGN PROCESS AND USABILITY ACTIVITIES

Efficiency is a high priority at Wal-Mart, and usability testing was seen as essential to ensure the intranet would be quick and easy to use. "Ninety-nine percent of our associates don't sit in front of a computer on a daily basis; they have to be able to get on, get the information they want, and get off quickly," says Quinalty.

The team used a wide range of methods to elicit user feedback during the development of the latest version of *Pipeline*, including Web-based surveys, cold calls to randomly chosen users, and visits to stores all over the country to talk to content providers and observe people using the intranet. Quinalty, Laura Hammarstrom, Michele Maestri, and James Marshall observed the users. Feedback from about 5,000 users influenced the new version.

Discovering user and content provider requirements took up five months at the start of the *Pipeline* redesign project. In March, work on the visual design started in parallel, and was influenced by user feedback about their information needs. Wal-Mart's in house designer came up with a series of design iterations. In the early stages, the team showed these static pages to nearly 100 people in the field — mostly sales staff and department managers in the stores — and sought their comments on both the functionality and visual appeal.

As the design neared completion, the designers conducted usability testing on a dummy click-through site with about 500 people, chosen to represent both a variety of job roles and locations, and experienced and new users. The team observed them as they attempted a series of tasks that involved locating certain pages within the site. Users were asked, for example, to find out how to order fixtures for their department or find information regarding a product recall.

The most significant change in the latest *Pipeline* version is the new role-based approach that takes users to the appropriate site area based on their log-in. This also involved restructuring the site so that unnecessary content layers were stripped out or relocated according to the user's needs.

"We brought the information that your position would require you to know to the front," says Schaefer. "It has been well received by associates in the stores, because they can just go straight in and get information to do their job, and only have to drill down at most two or three layers."

Feedback collected from users and content providers about the existing site was the major influence on the new structure. "We basically made the design based on what customers needed, but at same time supporting the information that the business says it needed to provide," says Schaefer.

Because of the simplified structure, the team decided that breadcrumb trails to show users where they are in the site were unnecessary.

Team members developed page templates in collaboration with the major content providers. "We worked with the business and sold them as much as possible on the concept," recalls Marshall. "We went to them, asked them what kind of information they wanted to convey, came up with a standard template, and got their buy-in."

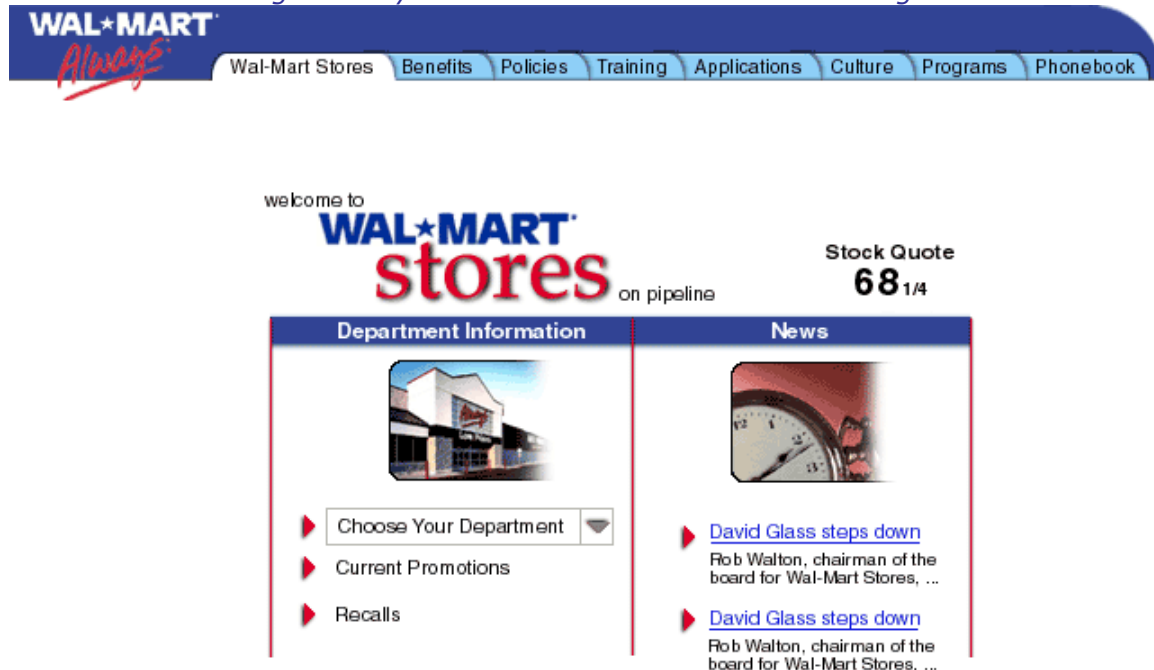
The store's in-house designers created the visual design, once again informed by feedback from the users. It was also based on HCI best practice, culled from reading HCI literature.

A few early designs were rejected because the team felt their horizontal navigation style would not scale well as the site grew.

Pictured: An early design that was rejected because the team felt the horizontal navigation style would not scale well as the site grew.



Pictured: Another early design that was rejected because the team felt the horizontal navigation style would not scale well as the site grew.



“We were expecting there to be more and more topics to place on that horizontal bar, which would have meant either scrolling or using a very small font size in order to see all of the navigation,” Schaefer explains.

The final clean, spare design is intended to maximize readability and minimize download time. “Like our stores, *The Pipeline* is a customer-oriented, business-driven site,” says Schaefer.

It’s also very much what users were asking for. The team found that a pretty face wasn’t enough; people were less concerned with how the intranet looked than how easy and fast it was to use and what there was in it for them.

There is no horizontal navigation on the pages because users didn’t seem to need it. “We tried a horizontal menu, but it simply didn’t test as well,” says Schaefer. “When we watched people, they always looked to the side, and that was true of new associates as well as those who were used to our old intranet structure.”

In testing, users also seemed to be looking for a standardized view. There's a lot of cross trading between Wal-Mart’s stores, and people want to be able to go into different areas of the site and get the same information in the same way. Departments do, however, have leeway on how they apply their branding, and are asked to choose their own photographic images for the top banner to help with brand recognition.

Content providers are given a standard template that lets them add their own content to the center panel, but imposes a maximum file size and provides key design elements. The font, crossheads, standard banner across the top, left-hand navigation, search, stock ticker, and weekly poll appear on all major divisional pages.

The poll is part of the team's drive to increase site usage by increasing interactivity. In a good week, the poll generates 15,000 responses, and it can also be used to improve aspects of the company's operations.

For example, a recent poll question related to a store promotion on textbooks for college students. The poll asked: "Where would you buy your textbooks for school? Campus Bookstore, Private Bookstore, Walmart.com? When users clicked on the *vote* button they were redirected to a page showing the poll results so far and a link to a page about the promotion.

"Our aim was to heighten store associates' awareness of this promotion," Schaefer comments. "We've recently asked questions about everything from the origins of our Father's Day holiday to whether or not you own a pet. The question is just a device to steer them to the content that we hope to emphasize."

In addition to producing templates that employees can use for producing content, the team has put a lot of effort into educating the business about how to communicate effectively with end users via the intranet, explaining the thinking behind the page templates and providing training in presentation and writing for the Web.

"It's a continuous learning effort," Marshall explains. "Most people who contribute to the site receive individualized training on using the software, and in some cases we run training courses, though we see it as educating rather than training them."

TIMELINE

- Spring 1998: First Web-based version of the site goes live.
- Mid-1999: More operational information added.
- January 2000: *Pipeline* team gets go-ahead to redevelop the site.
- January–May 2000: Requirements analysis.
- March–May 2000: Design iterations.
- Summer 2000: Final testing.
- August 2000: Current version goes live.

RESULTS

"The goal was to shave 50% of the time taken to find information. We think we've accomplished that, and the comments from the field are that they can find information faster," says Schaefer.

Web statistics indicate that traffic to the site has increased four-fold since the latest version was launched, indicating that the team has succeeded in its goal of increasing usage, while average time spent on line has decreased by 50%.

LESSONS LEARNED

Insights from the designers:

Learn the business before you build the site. In this case, the designers went to the different stores, sat down with people, and studied both their tasks and needs in their own environment.

Learn about your users, and listen to them. The designers agree, “We opened their lines of communications any way we could.”

Washington Mutual, Inc. and Towers Perrin

USING THE INTRANET:

With a history dating back to 1889, Washington Mutual, Inc., is a financial services company that serves consumers and small to mid-sized businesses in all 50 states. Through subsidiaries, the company engages in the following business activities: Consumer Banking, Mortgage Banking, Commercial Banking, Financial Services, and Consumer Finance.

DESIGN TEAM:

Towers Perrin is one of the world's largest management and HR consulting firms. It helps organizations manage their HR strategy and service delivery, benefits and compensation design and implementation, employee and organizational communication, HR technology, and outsourced HR administration.

MEMBERS:

TOWERS PERRIN: CAROLYN HARPER, OVERALL PROJECT MANAGER; JIM CUMMINGS, PROJECT MANAGER, EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION; MONICA LINN, COMMUNICATIONS; BILL PETERS, PROJECT MANAGER, CREATIVE & TECHNICAL; ELAINE PILIPENKO, WEB DESIGNER/DEVELOPER; IVAN EPPS, PROJECT MANAGER/PROGRAMMING; MIKE HACKETT, PROGRAMMER

Pictured: The home page on Washington Mutual's Leadership Rewards Intranet.

The screenshot shows the Washington Mutual Leadership Rewards Intranet home page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Washington Mutual logo, the text "wamu.net", and "Leadership Rewards". A "Log Out" button is visible in the top right corner. Below the navigation bar, a welcome message reads "Welcome, John V Doe ID: 999998 Level: 5". To the right of the welcome message is a search bar with a "Go" button and a "Feedback" button. Below the search bar, there is a "Stock Watch" section showing "NYSE: WM \$33.76 03/20/2002 9:34:32 AM EST". The main content area features a large graphic with a clock and a globe, and a call to action: "Find out more about this site, take a virtual tour! Click Here". To the right of this graphic, there are three sections: "My Rewards" (Your pay and benefit information for 2002.), "My Wealth Today" (Your WaMu-related wealth as of 1/1/02.), and "My Wealth Tomorrow" (Interactive tools to project the long-term value of your rewards.). Below these sections, there are dropdown menus for "Modelers" and "My Personal Links" (Links). At the bottom of the page, there is a "Need help?" section with contact information: "Call HR Services -- Senior Leader Support Specialist at 206-490-1529."

SUMMARY

The *Leadership Rewards* intranet site serves the important purposes of reminding executives of their total compensation and enabling them to project their future wealth as Washington Mutual employees. Making information available is only one part of the story. Continued awareness of this information could lead to increased retention, which is extremely cost-effective — especially at the executive level. And, a byproduct of the intranet is a large reduction in support calls to the HR department.

Usability was a significant consideration in developing and implementing the site. Two features make this site especially user-friendly: 1) Executives navigate via left-hand navigation that expands and collapses to show them where they are within the site. 2) Modeler inputs are completely customized, so that executives never need to input any personal wealth information (such as number of unexercised stock options, retirement account balances, and so on).

Understanding the busy schedule of upper management, the designers customized the intranet for each individual executive. While approximately 120 executives were originally included, the site is being expanded to include an additional 500 senior managers. The site requires a personal log-in; upon log-in, the screen displays the user's name, ID, and level. Other features include a current stock price, expandable navigation, password change, search, and a virtual tour to explain site features.

Personalized rewards statements pull personal data from a database. The data is first displayed in a pie chart, which is an easy-to-scan format. A more thorough breakdown of the user's total compensation is explained in the table to the right of the chart.

Pictured: A rewards statement displayed dynamically in a pie chart.



Users can also see a more detailed, tabular look at the information presented in the pie charts. The user can toggle back and forth by clicking the *View Table/View Chart* button.

Pictured: A more detailed and tabular look to the information presented in the pie charts.

The screenshot shows the Washington Mutual Leadership Rewards portal. The user is John V Doe (ID: 999998, Level: 5). The page displays a 'My Rewards Statement for 2002' with a 'View Chart' button. The statement is organized into sections: Base Salary, Leadership Bonus, Long Term Incentive Value, and Health & Welfare. A 'Retirement Benefits' section is partially visible at the bottom.

Long Term Incentive Value		
Stock Option Grant		\$242,000
Restricted Stock Grant		\$0
Performance Shares		\$41,072
		\$283,072

Health & Welfare		
Medical/Vision		\$3,696
Dental		\$456
LTD		\$410
Supplemental Life		\$983
		\$5,545

The designers did a great job of keeping pages short and uncluttered. One method they used to achieve this is to put additional explanations and information on secondary pages. Throughout the site, when the user clicks a blue question mark, a definition screen appears providing a brief explanation.

The site also provides six different modeling tools to help executives make financial decisions about their wealth. All data is pulled from a database so that users do not need to input their own information. This expedites their calculations and ensures accuracy.

Pictured: A modeling tool that helps executives make financial decisions about their wealth.

The screenshot shows the Washington Mutual Leadership Rewards website. The header includes the logo, user name 'John V Doe', ID '999998', and level '5'. A search bar and 'Log Out' button are also present. The main content area is titled 'My Wealth Tomorrow' and 'ITRO — Modeler'. It displays a table of financial data and several dropdown menus for configuration.

Base Salary as of 1/1/02	\$228,000
Target Award Percent for year 2002	40%
Target Award Amount for year 2002	\$91,200
Percent of Target Bonus to be Replaced	10.0%
Modeling Period (Years)	10
Stock Price Appreciation	10%
Taxes	
Federal	38.6%
State	0%
Local	0%

Submit

Site navigation expands to include only the section the user is in. With the left navigation, it is very easy for users to determine where they are in the site. The title of the page also reflects this, making it effortless for users to traverse the site and keep their context at all times.

While most pages are customized for the user, some textual pages do not pull in dynamic information, but rather give basic plan information that is consistent for all users — such as flexible spending information.

Pictured: The Health and Welfare Basics page. On this page, the user is in My Rewards, Health & Welfare, Basics. This is also reflected in the page title.

The screenshot shows the Washington Mutual Leadership Rewards website. The header includes the Washington Mutual logo, the text 'wamu.net', and 'Leadership Rewards'. A user profile for 'John V Doe' with ID '999998' and Level '5' is displayed. There is a search bar with a 'Go' button and a 'Feedback' button. The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with categories like 'My Rewards', 'Health & Welfare', and 'Basics'. The main content area is titled 'My Rewards Health & Welfare — Basics' and contains a paragraph of text followed by a bulleted list of benefits: Medical, Dental, Health Care Flexible Spending Arrangement, Dependent Care Flexible Spending Arrangement, Long Term Disability, AD&D Insurance, Travel Accident Insurance, and Life Insurance.

When users click a link, they are brought to a page of legible, uncluttered text.

Pictured: A page of text explaining an employee benefit.

The screenshot shows a page titled 'How the Plan Works' explaining a health care FSA. The text states that the FSA can help save money by using pre-tax dollars for anticipated health care expenses and that participation is voluntary. It provides an overview and a bulleted list of key points: contributions up to \$3,000 annually, non-interest-bearing funds, use for qualified expenses with a reimbursement request form, and the requirement to use all funds by the end of the plan year. A 'back to top' button is located at the bottom of the content area.

A simple search box is present on every page, making it easy for people to use this alternate to browsing. The *Log Out* button is also easy to find, in the upper-right corner. With agreeable aesthetics, a winning search, simple navigation, and unbeatable features, this intranet provides executives with a valuable experience that lets them save precious time.

Scoring (3 = best)						
Simple look	Simple navigation	Consistent navigation and design	Visible search	Simple search	Limited (well-presented) text on pages	Home page
2.3	3	3	3	3	2.8	2.6

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTRANET

The *Leadership Rewards* site is a stand-alone intranet originally designed to give 150 senior Washington Mutual executives a complete picture of their income from the company, including salary and other benefits and incentives.

BASIC FEATURES

The company wanted to give executives a complete picture of all company-provided wealth. The intranet accomplishes these goals through three main sections:

- *My Rewards*: Summarizes annual total compensation. Additional screens provide historical pay information and brief descriptions of all compensation programs, including online access to enrollment forms, and so on.
- *My Wealth Today*: Aggregates all current values/balances of company-provided wealth. Additional screens provide details about the sources of this wealth, such as current value of all unexercised stock options and recent retirement account activity.
- *My Wealth Tomorrow*: Allows executives to project their future wealth, both in aggregate and by individual compensation program.

URL AND ACCESS

Users can type in the URL directly — which they have to do from home — or they can click a special "button" on their intranet site to access *Leadership Rewards*. The button only shows up on their intranet, for them. They then enter a specific personal identifier and a password, which they can change whenever they want. These standards are consistent with other Web-based sites they have access to.

BACKGROUND

Towers Perrin has worked with Washington Mutual on various projects over a period of ten years or so, and knows the company very well. In spring 2001, Washington Mutual asked Towers Perrin to create the *Leadership Rewards* site and have it working by the end of the year.

GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS

The intranet's main goal is to reinforce loyalty and aid retention among Washington Mutual's senior employees by giving them a comprehensive, easy-to-access picture of all the different income streams they get from the company, and how they add

up, including their future wealth projections if they stay with the company. A secondary goal is executive self-service, taking some of the pressure off Washington Mutual's HR department, which would otherwise have to deal with queries about remuneration and rewards.

The bank wanted to have the intranet operational as soon as possible, creating a time constraint. In terms of design, the *Leadership Rewards* site had to echo the general look and feel of Washington Mutual's general intranet site.

DESIGN PROCESS AND USABILITY ACTIVITIES

Building the site involved cooperation between four groups at Towers Perrin: executive compensation experts, programmers, graphic designers/usability specialists, and the communications group, which looked at how to present the intranet to the users.

The team started on the project in late April 2001. Following an initial meeting with the project sponsor — the bank's executive vice president of HR — Towers Perrin built an initial information architecture for the site, based on the briefing it had been given, its knowledge of the company, and its experience of working on other executive compensation projects. The bank agreed on this information architecture with only minor changes.

The next phase, analyzing the data requirements, took most of the summer and involved finding out what data sources were available within the company and how to best pull data from all these sources into a back-end database.

Once it was established what data was available, the team began work on the designs for presenting that data to Washington Mutual's users. The designers first drew up a plan for page behavior and a series of style sheets. They then drew up some alternative visual designs and presented them to the project sponsor in paper form. Once a design was accepted, the team applied it to other site areas and ran internal usability tests. Toward the project's end, just before the intranet went live in early December, Washington Mutual carried out more usability testing.

Team members did not carry out initial user requirements analysis before producing initial designs, because they already had in-depth knowledge of the company from their longstanding working relationship. The team also got input along the way from its main company contact, the head of HR. Once the designs were firmed up, a group of Towers Perrin staff combed through them to weed out obvious usability problems. One result was that the modelers and information about them were all grouped together under the *My Wealth Tomorrow*. In November, Washington Mutual's in-house usability department tested the screens on some of the bank's senior staff. "They had very few changes to make, but we had spent a lot of time doing testing ourselves and making sure the design elements made sense," says Carolyn Harper, the overall project manager.

The *Leadership Rewards* site design was dictated partly by the requirement that it reflect the main intranet's design. Both sites feature the bank's logo in the top left-hand corner, use its corporate colors (blue and gold), and feature a left-hand navigation bar rather than horizontal navigation across the top. The Verdana typeface used in the left-hand navigation is also a company standard.

Washington Mutual had requested some kind of imagery across the top of the page and on the front page. Towers Perrin picked the globe, watch, and compass to project the idea of Washington Mutual as a global company operating across different time zones. The curved shape on the home page echoes the roundness of the imagery.

Towers Perrin was also able to draw on its experience of developing intranets for other clients, incorporating tried and tested features such as a feedback button on every page and the *Virtual Tour*, which gives users a quick site overview.

The designers modified the main site's navigation by introducing a collapsing menu structure to keep the left-hand column a manageable length and reduce scrolling. The white links are section headings, which expand to reveal yellow clickable or expandable links.

Color is used throughout the site to reinforce basic functions. The designers chose a pale blue background for pop-ups that give modeler information and light green backgrounds for those that give definitions.

Pictured: A pop-up window that appears after the user clicks the What's This button.



One of the project challenges was to present large volumes of information and modeling tools in an easy to use way. The team's design solution was to keep the basic pages simple and let users seek further information by clicking on query buttons (presented in white text on a blue background) that lead to a form or pop-up definition. The site contains no fewer than 150 explanatory pop-ups. "We try to make it as unobtrusive as possible while helping the user," explains Bill Peters, project manager for creative & technical.

Pictured: A page with query buttons that lead to a form or pop-up definition. This choice let designers keep the basic pages simple, while letting users seek further information.

Washington Mutual
wamu.net

Leadership Rewards

John V Doe ID: 999998 Level: 5

Search **Go** **Feedback**

Log Out

Leadership Rewards Home

- ▶ My Rewards
- ▶ My Wealth Today
- ▼ My Wealth Tomorrow
 - Statement
 - ▼ Modelers
 - ITRO
 - Deferred Gain
 - ISO - Hold or Sell
 - Option Exercise
 - Deferred Comp
 - Retirement

My Wealth Tomorrow

ITRO — Modeler **Assumptions**

Target Bonus to be Replaced	\$9,120
ITRO Replacement Value	\$13,680
Current Stock Price	\$33.63
ITRO Stock Option Grant (Shares)	1,193
ITRO After-Tax Gain After 10 Years	\$37,060
After-Tax Value of WaMu Stock After 10 Years	\$13,000
Time (Years) for ITRO Gain to Equal WaMu Stock Investment Value	2 years and 8 months

What can I gain from Exchanging My Target Leadership Bonus for Options?

What's This?

After-Tax Value (\$'000)

Years

ITRO Value (Gain) Value of Investment in WaMu stock

Change Model Parameters

The results of your calculation are estimates only. The actual benefit that you will receive will depend on such things as our stock price and dividend performance, other investment returns, timing of your transactions, tax rates and other plan provisions in effect at the time you receive your benefit.

TIMELINE

- April 2001: Towers Perrin starts work on the *Leadership Rewards* site's information architecture.
- May–September 2001: Analysis of data requirements; architecture refinement.
- October–November: Design work.
- Late November: Usability testing.
- Early December: Intranet goes live.

RESULTS

No metrics have been collected for the site, but response from the 150 initial executive users has been very positive, and the bank now plans to roll the system out to its top 2,000 staff.

LESSONS LEARNED

Insights from Carolyn Harper:

Strong project management is critical. “Building, organizing, and managing a large intranet site is a fairly complex task.”

Make sure you have a sound technology infrastructure. “The intranet needs to be accessed on a platform that's fast enough so that you don't frustrate the users.”

Pulling it all together takes time. “Don't underestimate the time it takes to coordinate the data from the various sources, and give data suppliers a predefined format to populate.”

World Bank Group and Satyam Computer Services

USING THE INTRANET:

The World Bank Group is one of the world's largest sources of financial aid to developing countries. Headquartered in Washington D.C., the Bank has employees working in country offices throughout the world.

DESIGN TEAM:

World Bank's Internet Working Group and Usability Team; and Satyam Computer Services, an Indian IT services company, which is implementing the CMS and designing the input and display templates.

MEMBERS:

WORLD BANK: MARIA DOLORES ARRIBAS BANOS, TEAM LEADER AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT OFFICER; ISABELLA NUNEZ DE MAGALHAES CUNHA, CONSULTANT IN CHARGE OF INTRANET MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT; DAVID CLINGMAN, VALERIE STEWARD, AND MICHAEL BETTERRIDGE, COMMUNICATIONS AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT; ANGELA FAN, METADATA MANAGEMENT; VIRGINIA FOLEY, REGIONS/COUNTRIES MIGRATION; CHATCHARES CHITVARANUND, TECHNICAL SUPPORT; BAKKIYA MURUGABASKAR, MANAGES THE TECHNICAL STAFF; ALOK JAIN, MAIN DESIGNER WHO WORKS WITH A DESIGN TEAM IN INDIA

Pictured: The intranet home page is uncluttered, but still provides a comprehensive picture of the World Bank's online resources.

World Bank Group Staff Connections WB External Site | WBG Directory | Help | Site Map | Feedback

Home Countries Topics Units Services People Operations Data & Reference

Staff Connections

Search: People GO Advanced
Site GO Advanced

Emergency Contact 202-458-8888

Bank's World Today 19 March, 2002

Internal Communications


The Headline Appears here
Story Summary appears here. Story Summary appears here. Story Summary appears here.
[Full Story / Video \(🔗\)](#)

External News


The Headline Appears here
Story Summary appears here. Story Summary appears here. Story Summary appears here.
[Full Story / Video \(🔗\)](#)

Other News

- ▶ [Infrastructure & the poor : Nemat Shafik on what we've learnt](#)
- ▶ [Around the Bank Group : People Events and Issues](#)
- ▶ [Ian Johnson outlines WBG Views on Sustainable Development](#)

[...More](#) | [Suggest News Article](#)

Kiosk Announcements

- ▶ [Better Measuring Results of the Bank's Work](#)
- ▶ [James Adams, Vice President , OPCS](#)
- ▶ [Extension of Additional Benefits to Domestic Partners](#)
- ▶ [James Adams, Vice President , OPCS](#)
- ▶ [Extension of Additional Benefits to Domestic Partners](#)

Services

- ▶ [From HR](#)
- ▶ [From ISG](#)
- ▶ [From HSD](#)
- ▶ [From GSD](#)

Staff Favorites
Select from List
Vote your favorites

- ▶ About Us
- ▶ Security Information
- ▶ Seminars & Events
- ▶ The Bank in the News
- ▶ Extracurricular
- ▶ World News Links

Millennium Development Goals

Taking on HIV/AIDS in Africa

Annual Meetings 2002

SUMMARY

The World Bank has more than 10,000 staff worldwide, and is headquartered in Washington D.C. All employees are not only allowed to post content on the intranet, but are encouraged to do so. Many corporate communications and IT departments, and intranet designers have said they cannot let users contribute to the intranet because of company rules governing content. But in this case, the intranet succeeds because of the commitment to the intranet by many different departments and individuals. The necessary reviews and approvals for submitted content do not just fall on the Web team's shoulders. Instead, submitted content is routed to the right people, and those people and departments review and actually post the approved information. This helps the organization balance controlling the intranet's submissions and overall content, as well as how it is displayed.

The intranet home page provides a comprehensive big picture of the Bank's online resources, and consolidates corporate communications, both internal and external, while maintaining an uncluttered look. The internal communications appear in the middle section of the page, and external communications (*Bank in the News*: press releases and press reviews) appear in the left-hand navigation. Employees can suggest articles for each section; the Internal Communications team and Media Relations team facilitate and prioritize the content. The advertising icons toward the bottom of the left-hand column highlight items, such as annual meetings, that will be posted for more than a day.

The intranet is the perfect place to advertise internal events and seminars. What better way to ensure that all groups are included than to let people post their own events? On the World Bank intranet, all Bank staff can publish their seminars and events using the *Kiosk* tool. A Kiosk administrator monitors the entries to make sure that the audience for the event is big enough that it makes sense to publish it for all employees.

Pictured: The events calendar, Kiosk, where users can read the calendar of events or post their own events.

World Bank Group Staff Connections My Page | WB External Site | WBG Directory | Help | Site Map | Feedback

Home Countries Topics Units **Services** People Operations Data & Reference

Kiosk Search in: Complete Intranet GO Advanced Search

You are here: Home > Kiosk Announcements > Seminar and Events > Calendar View > **Calendar-Day-Time**

Calendar-Day-Time

<<Previous 6 Next>>

January 2002	February 2002
<p>28 Monday</p> <p>11:00AM RADARSAT International</p> <p>11:00AM Trade Seminar on Trade and the Environment: Unmasking the pollution</p> <p>11:00AM COMMUNITY-BASED APPROCHES TO HEALTH: DO THEY WORK?</p> <p>11:00AM Trade Seminar on Trade and the Environment: Unmasking the pollution</p> <p>28 Monday</p> <p>11:00AM RADARSAT International</p> <p>11:00AM Trade Seminar on Trade and the Environment: Unmasking the pollution</p> <p>11:00AM COMMUNITY-BASED APPROCHES TO HEALTH: DO THEY WORK?</p> <p>11:00AM Trade Seminar on Trade and the Environment: Unmasking the pollution</p>	<p>28 Monday</p> <p>11:00AM RADARSAT International</p> <p>11:00AM Trade Seminar on Trade and the Environment: Unmasking the pollution</p> <p>11:00AM COMMUNITY-BASED APPROCHES TO HEALTH: DO THEY WORK?</p> <p>28 Monday</p> <p>11:00AM RADARSAT International</p> <p>11:00AM Trade Seminar on Trade and the Environment: Unmasking the pollution</p> <p>11:00AM COMMUNITY-BASED APPROCHES TO HEALTH: DO THEY WORK?</p>

<<Previous 6 Next>>

Home | Regions | Sectors | VPUs | Services | People | Operations | Publications | Data | Reference | News

Help • Feedback • Site Map • Publishing Guidelines • IFC • MIGA • IDA • ICSID • WB External Site

The services portal lets users browse by service category, by service provider, and by headquarter services versus country office services. It integrates decentralized service catalogs with the yellow pages, and lets units that do not have a service catalog submit an entry into the yellow pages directly from the services portal. The yellow pages administrator reviews and approves submissions for the yellow pages catalog.

Pictured: The services portal lets users browse by service category, by service provider, and by headquarter services versus country office services.

The screenshot shows a web interface for adding a service. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links like 'Home', 'Countries', 'Topics', 'Units', 'Services', 'People', 'Operations', and 'Data & Reference'. Below this is a search bar with a 'GO' button and a 'Punchline appears here' placeholder. The main content area is titled 'Add a Service' and includes a 'Print version' link. The form fields are as follows:

- Product Name: Text input field
- Action Name: Dropdown menu
- Object Desc: Text input field with a scroll bar
- Technical Desc: Text input field with a scroll bar
- User Jargon: Text input field with a scroll bar
- Service Contacts: Text input field (Note: Each name should be separated by a Slash)
- Service Manager: Text input field
- Manager: Text input field
- Service Director: Text input field
- Service Standard Hours: Text input field
- Units: Text input field
- Cost Center Code: Text input field
- E-Mail ID: Text input field
- Telephone No: Text input field
- Charge back: Radio buttons for 'One Time' and 'Monthly'
- Rate: Text input field
- Notification Required: Radio buttons for 'Yes' and 'No'
- Service Type: Radio buttons for 'Basic', 'Optional', 'Custom', and 'Corporate'
- Domestic or International: Radio buttons for 'Domestic' and 'International'

A 'Submit' button is located at the bottom of the form. A 'Top' link is also present at the bottom right of the form area.

The designers chose templates with a standard and simple look and feel, light pages that load quickly, and a consistent user experience. There is a prominent place on the header for local branding, such as pictures and logos, while the rest of the header components remain constant across the site. Most of the categories on the left-hand navigation are optional, and there is room for free categories that are specific to a particular group. Much of the content is data-driven, but in most cases owners have the option to reject or accept content coming from an institutional source.

Pictured: A country page, demonstrating the templates' standard and simple look and feel.

World Bank Group Staff Connections My Page | WB External Site | WBG Directory | Help | Site Map | Feedback

Home Countries Topics Units Services People Operations Data & Reference

Search in: All GO Advanced Search

Home > Countries > Africa

About Africa

- Regional Brief
- Learning Programs
- Poverty Profile
- Country Offices

Units

- From the VPU
- Country Units
- Sector Units

Services

- Partnership Group
- Act Africa (HIV/AIDS) Operational Quality and Knowledge Services
- Human Resources
- Resource Management

People/Communities

- By Skill
- By Unit
- By Projects
- Country Office Staff
- Country Team
- Contacts
- Distribution Lists

Operation & Projects

- Operational Management Reports
- ImageBank
- Monthly Operational Summary
- Evolution [OED Reports]
- Regional Portfolio
- Active Projects
- Projects in Preparation
- Projects in Action
- Partnerships
- Doing Business in Africa

Africa Overview

Sub-saharan economies are growing again after decades of stagnation. But on average, growth countries to fall short of what is needed for the absolute number of poor to decline. See regional brief

Angola GO

News & Events

- IFC Finances Innovative \$45 Million Project for GSM Cellular Telephone Network in Cameroon - Feb 13 2002
- Re-engaging Cote d'Ivoire - World Bank vice president ends 5-days visit to, Cote d'Ivoire clears arrears - Feb 11, 2002
- World Bank to Commit \$500 Million More to Fight HIV/AIDS in Africa - New Support Will Reach More Countries and Sub-regional HIV/AIDS Programs - Feb 7, 2002. Also Available, [Radio News Release](#).
- Zambia : World Bank Group Expert Present Recommendations To Zambian Government - Feb 1, 2002

New Resources - Recent Titles

- Title for a new Publication on line
- Title for a new Data source
- Title for a new Research Paper
- Title for a Latest doc in ImageBank
- Title for a Latest Library Acquisition on Africa

Special Interest

- Taking on HIV/AIDS in Africa
- Benin : MIGA Blacks New Mobile Phone Network
- Eliminating River Blindness by 2002

Key Issues

- Nile Basin Initiative
- Learning Programs and Partnerships for Capacity Building (784kb)
- Chad-Cameroon Petroleum Development & Pipeline Project
- Environment Strategy
- Deforestation
- Human Development & HIV/AIDS

Print version

For performance reasons, the designers chose to separate the people search from the site search. Because the employee directory search is the intranet's killer app at many large organizations, it's imperative that this feature is visible, simple, and most of all fast. The site search combines a metadata search for frequently used repositories with a crawl search that uses Google's intranet search appliance for uncataloged content.

The search results page repeats the search query, which is always a good idea. The page is easy to scan, the title links to the full document, and the short descriptions further describe the documents. The *Hide Descriptions* link is a nice feature, which, obviously, hides the descriptions and lets the user see more results at once.

Pictured: A search results page.

The screenshot shows the World Bank Group Staff Connections search results page. The header includes the World Bank Group logo and navigation links like Home, Countries, Topics, Units, Services, People, Operations, and Data & Reference. A search bar is visible with a dropdown menu set to 'All' and a 'GO' button. Below the search bar, the results are categorized into sections: All Results, Good Starting Points, Services (Yellow Pages), Bank Documents, Knowledge, and Other Web Content. The 'Good Starting Points' section is expanded, showing a link to 'West and Central Africa - Special Programme for African Agricultural Research (SPAAR) information system - Vol.1 (SPAAR Working)'. The 'Services (Yellow Pages)' section is also expanded, showing a similar link. The 'Bank Documents (ImageBank)' section is also expanded, showing a link to 'West and Central Africa - Special Programme for African Agricultural Research (SPAAR) information system - Vol.1 (SPAAR Working)'. Each section has a 'See all results' link.

The breadcrumbs, standard navigation, and consistent page layout make this intranet's behavior predictable, but not boring. The bold colors and exciting pictures, plus pertinent and ever-changing content make this intranet a place people will want to return to when they conduct their everyday tasks.

Scoring (3 = best)						
Simple look	Simple navigation	Consistent navigation and design	Visible search	Simple search	Limited (well-presented) text on pages	Home page
2.4	2.8	2.5	3	3	2.7	2.8

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTRANET

Though the World Bank is a multinational organization, the intranet is mainly presented in English. It does, however, include documents in different languages, and the search facilities make it possible to search for content in a specific language. Where content is available in a choice of languages, the link to the other language versions appear at the top of the page, letting users toggle back and forth through the language versions.

BASIC FEATURES

- News subscriptions, staff news, corporate news, and newsletters
- HR services, such as pension benefits, salary increases, resume updating, and job applications
- General staff services, such as visitor passes, conference room booking, coffee services, and cafeterias menus
- Health services, such as health room schedules, info on vaccinations for traveling staff, and gym schedules
- IT services, such as ordering a Lotus Notes account and requesting global/remote access
- Operations services, such as travel requests and travel expense processing
- Various documents and reports, publications, and information on projects and loans.
- Staff directory
- E-discussions
- Events calendar
- Announcements to employees, extracurricular announcements, and a bulletin board for buying and selling items
- Extranet applications with clients

The intranet also includes a knowledge management system. Although content creation is completely decentralized, with the implementation of the CMS, the company has standardized the tool used to update the page and design templates.

URL AND ACCESS

The intranet is the default page when Bank employees open their Internet browser, unless they manually change it. On the standard desktop, the browser always opens at start up, so the intranet home page is the first thing employees see when they start their computer. An exception to this is country offices staff, who sometimes have slower connections.

BACKGROUND

The Bank has had an intranet since about 1994, but started out by letting about 400 internal content providers around the world contribute on an ad hoc basis, using their own tools and design ideas. "Everyone could do what they wanted: create pages in HTML, Lotus Notes, and so on. Same for design — we had a few standard templates, but that was pretty much it," says Maria Dolores Arribas-Banos, team leader and information management officer.

As the intranet grew in size and scope, it became increasingly cumbersome and hard to maintain, and content became increasingly hard to find. In September 2001, the Bank embarked on a three-year intranet redevelopment project, which would also harmonize the internal and external sites. Although the technology department

owns the project, a steering group of representatives from various Bank areas approved the budget.

GOALS AND CONSTRAINTS

There were two main goals for the redevelopment project. First, the Bank wanted to provide a common technical infrastructure for the intranet and public website to reduce development speed, create an easily maintainable structure, and integrate navigation and search so that information is easier to find. Second, it wanted to transform the intranet from a basic information source into a full-blown corporate portal that offered personalization features and provided a platform for Web-based applications.

In pursuit of its first goal, the Bank is now migrating existing intranet and Internet content into a central CMS, with a dynamic publishing capability. As it introduced a common technical platform and common look and feel, the Internet Working Group (IWG) wanted to ensure both that content providers retained control over their content and that departments and regional groups retained some individual identity. "The templates we had before were very rigid. We wanted to provide some flexibility and local branding," Arribas-Banos says.

So, content creation will still be decentralized, but the IWG will centralize and manage template management and overall design. Also, some content owners have the same content on the intranet and external Web; the CMS should save them time by making it easier to repurpose content.

One of the technical problems the team had to resolve was improving the search facilities. "Before, you pretty much had to go to each individual repository to find something," explains Arribas-Banos. Now, the Google search engine lets users search the whole intranet or narrow the search to a particular section.

All 10,000-plus Bank employees have intranet access, some from country offices with less than optimal Internet connectivity. The intranet also has to serve mobile employees as they travel throughout the world, and therefore has to work well even over low-speed and mobile connections. This means, for example, a strict limit on use of graphics. But, set against that constraint, the organization's standard desktop gives the design team the advantage of only having to develop for one browser: Internet Explorer 5.0.

DESIGN PROCESS AND USABILITY ACTIVITIES

The team divided the intranet redevelopment process into four stages: requirements gathering, development, usability testing, and content migration. The intranet is not yet completed, and the team continues to carry out the final three stages on various parts of the site.

Requirements gathering lasted about six months, from July to December 2001, and involved about 400 different content providers and users throughout the organization. Satyam, the Bank's development partner, created a detailed questionnaire covering issues such as the goals, target audience, content type, and workflow requirements for each section. The team sent this out to the main regional coordinators around the world, who were asked to review it with the different country webmasters.

One finding from this exercise was that questionnaires had to be worded quite carefully to get the desired result. “We found that the responses to the questionnaire were a bit too general, and in many cases we had to go back and get more specific information,” Arribas-Banos says. Once the exercise was completed, the results were consolidated into an overall requirements document.

In addition to sending out questionnaires, team members met with representatives of various departments at the Bank’s headquarters to discuss their requirements. To create a more user-driven information architecture, they also asked Satyam consultants to carry out card sorting exercises with user groups for both the overall site and individual subsites to determine where users would expect to find certain content.

The team learned some lessons while using card sorting to elicit requirements. “Card sorting gives you some insight about how content should be organized, but you have to be careful in how you use the results, because it may not be the case that people really want it that way,” says Arribas-Banos. “We found the responses would vary widely depending on the person’s background; depending on who you asked, you would get a completely different organization, and when you played the result of the organization they had chosen back to them, they didn’t always like it.”

The team addressed this issue by creating a flexible structure that lets users navigate to the same content in different ways. Users can find data on Angola, for example, by going to the data page and browsing by country, or by going to the country page and browsing by data.

Finally, team members conducted a content inventory to determine what content was currently on the site, whether any of it should be deleted, and if any key content was missing. They also looked at metadata issues, such as which content required cataloging (for example, press releases), and what information they needed to capture.

Using all this information, the team created an information framework that included the overall site and navigation structure; basic template definitions; what approval processes were needed; and any special requirements, such as specific workflow processes.

They also specified a basic color palette and a page design framework, which they called the *C-clamp*, consisting of a header across the top, left-hand navigation, and a footer. In addition, local branding goes at the top left in the main menu bar, search is always in the top right corner, and help and feedback buttons are mandatory on all pages.

Once the information structure and workflow was established, the team started work on building each section’s input and display templates, using either existing templates or producing customized templates to meet departmental requirements. “Some departments, like General Services, need very specific templates, so it was very much demand-driven,” Arribas-Banos explains.

Before the designers started working on the site templates, they consulted with content owners to come up with a preliminary content structure. Once the initial design was set and the standard components were developed, they built a basic

storyboard using Lotus Notes to show where the page elements should go, and defined the page behavior.

Pictured: Designers built a basic storyboard using Lotus Notes to show where the page elements should go, and defined the page behavior.

The screenshot shows the World Bank Group Intranet homepage. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, Regions, Sectors, VPU's, Services, People, Operations, Publications, Data, Reference, and News. A search bar is located on the right side of the header. The main content area is titled "Data & Reference" and is divided into several sections:

- Resources & Research Tools:** Includes links for Data (DEC), Library resources, Publications (Pubs), WB Research (DEC), WB Documents & Reports, and WB Archives.
- Browse By:** Includes Topic and Region.
- Full Text Documents:** Lists various document types like WB Docs / ImageBank, WB IRIS, WB Research Papers, E-Journals, E-Research Papers, E-News Papers, and Full text databases.
- Statistical Resources:** Lists resources such as SIMA, HNP Stats, PovertyNet Data, WB Depository Libraries, WB, EduStats, GenderStats, Other Dev't Institutions, and Statistical Db Resources.
- WB Publications:** Lists local distributors, public information centers, depository libraries, FAQs & Contact Info, Order Form, and Your Account.
- What's New:** Features several news items, including "Global Development Finance 2002 Summary", "The Bankers' Almanac is now available on line", "GDF Online", "Educational Enrollment and drop out", and "If not us, then who? Social Dimensions of Community Based Environment Initiatives".
- Featured:** Highlights "Millennium Dev't Goals Meeting the Promise? Early Experience and Emerging Issues Report (161K PDF)", "World Dev't Indicators Early Experience and Emerging Issues Report (161K PDF)", "Annual Report 2002 (161K PDF)", and "Global Economic Prospects & the Developing Countries 2002 (161K PDF)".
- Recent Titles:** Lists "A CDF Progress Report Card", "Who Owns the Development Agenda?", "Country-led Partnership: With Whom and for What?", and "Facing Up to New Challenges".
- Millennium Dev't Goals Progress (Rotating graph):** A line graph showing the progress of Goal 1 (Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) from 2000 to 2001. The Y-axis represents the percentage of the population living on less than \$1 a day, ranging from 0 to 80. The X-axis shows the years from 2000 to 2001. Two lines are plotted: a blue line for "Global" and a red line for "World Bank". Both lines show a general downward trend, indicating progress in eradicating extreme poverty.

Being able to specify the storyboards and page behavior in electronic documents is particularly important, given that the Bank is working with an offshore design team. Face to face meetings are almost impossible, and they carry out most communications via email, phone, or video conferences.

Early on in the project, team members developed a migration plan setting out where existing content should go — basically, they had to decide whether it should migrate to the CMS or a document management system, or just be deleted. The final migration stage is now underway and the aim is to complete the bulk of it by the end of 2002. The data migration is proceeding in parallel with the portal implementation, which includes the staff portal, projects portal, managers portal, and so on, plus extranet applications such as the donors portal. This stage also includes training for content providers, editing, and testing.

In January 2002, the team launched a pilot site, including news and events on both the intranet and the external Web. By introducing the new system to users in small steps, the team hoped to avoid the culture shock associated with a "big bang" approach. "So we decided to go with a pilot and have the owners of those sections bring the business on board, and this approach worked well," Arribas-Banos explains.

Rather than appearing as a series of staged releases, the intranet design evolved gradually, with some pages going through up to 200 small iterations. The home page is one example of a design that went through many design changes. The Bank's old home page design had about 50 links on the first screen, visible even before scrolling down. The page contained too much information and redundancy within each category. "It was just too busy," Arribas-Banos explains. "People couldn't spot changes in content." Furthermore, because all the sections were automatically populated from the source material, there was no way of highlighting priority items, and, since new material replaced old items, there was no way to highlight items for longer than a day (or in some sections, a few hours). Also, users found the black top menu bar hard to read, and tended to miss menu items, including the search feature. They were also confused by the cascading menus, which were activated by mouse over.

Pictured: The previous home page design, which was too busy.



In October 2001, Satyam presented its first attempt at a redesign. However, several of the problems identified on the previous intranet remained, so the design was rejected, and it didn't get as far as the Web and user communities. "It wasn't fixing any of the problems we had," Arribas-Banos says. The page was still cluttered, with almost the same amount of information as before. And, while the search option was more prominent, it didn't solve another existing problem: that most users didn't think to change the default search option — people search — resulting in frustration and complaints.

Pictured: The first attempt at a home page redesign. Several of the previous intranet's problems remained, so the design was rejected.

The screenshot shows the World Bank Group Intranet homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with tabs for 'My Page', 'Regions', 'Sectors', 'Units', 'Services', 'People', 'Operations', 'Communities', and 'Reference'. A search bar is located in the top right corner with the text 'Search in' and 'Advanced'. Below the navigation bar, the page is divided into several sections:

- Staff Favorites:** A dropdown menu set to 'People' with a 'GO' button.
- About Us:** A list of links including 'Mission Statement', 'Office of the President', 'WBG & C. Secretariat', 'CDF & Special Interest', 'Internal Communications', 'Documents/Publications', and 'Related Institutions'.
- Security/Emergency:** Links for 'Emergency Contact', '202-458-8888 Other Nos.', 'Security Web Page', and 'UN & WB Travel Advisories'.
- External News Links:** Links to 'Washington Post', 'CNN Interactive', 'USA Today', 'Oxford Analytica Daily Brief', 'New York Times Online', 'Panfrican News Agency', 'BBC Online', 'Financial Times', 'UN Wire', and 'Weather Channel'.
- Kiosk Announcements:** A list of links including 'Revised Disclosure Policy', 'Administrative Tribunal Reforms', 'Joint Library Extends hours', and 'Under Construction - IBI Meditation/Multi-Faith Room'. A link for 'More | Sr. Staff Changes' is also present.
- Bank's World Today:** A section featuring a video of Bank President James Wolfensohn with the text 'Videotaped Message from Bank President James Wolfensohn to All Staff'. Below this are links for 'Minute of Silence—Ceremony in MC Atrium', 'See "Yesterday's Today"', and 'Bank Group Expresses Condolences to US after Tragedy'.
- Seminars & Events:** Links for 'Global Business Ethics Standards: An Interactive e-Conference' and 'Join an e-discussion on Reforming Technical Cooperation for Capacity Development'.
- Press Review/Yellow Sheets:** Links for 'U.S. Supports Postponing I.M.F.-World Bank Annual Meetings' and 'Anti-Globalization Protesters Urge U.S. To Seek Justice, Not Revenge'.
- Country News:** A dropdown menu for selecting a country, with a note '(from News Machine)' and links for 'Exchange Rates | Holidays'.
- From HR:** A section with links for 'Updated 9/27: Resources/info for staff during time of crisis', 'HR's new strategy: we'd like your input!', 'Jr Professional Associates Program Online live!', 'The Bank's Learning Board', and '2001 Salary and SRI Tables & Zones'.
- Bulletin Board:** Links for 'WANTED-PROFESSIONAL BOOKCASE MAKER AND INSTALLER', 'Kitten for Adoption', 'Knit-Out and Crochet on the Fund & Bank Ski Club - 01', and 'Fund-Raising for Red Cross'.

At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with links for 'Help', 'Site Map', 'Feedback', 'Publishing Guidelines', 'Terms & Conditions', and 'Privacy Policy'.

Several further iterations resulted in the next version. "We liked this much better and felt it was much clearer," Arribas-Banos says. The search problem had been fixed by having two separate boxes for people and site search, and the site had a more professional-looking design, most of which has been retained in the current version. In addition, the new version included a name for the intranet, *Staff Connections*, and a new section, *Kiosk Announcements*, where staff can more easily submit their own announcements, enhancing the sense of community. Because the Bank wanted more regional input on the home page, the team introduced an *In The Field* section to carry daily regional news. However, this turned out to be impractical, and had to be dropped.

Pictured: A later iteration of the home page that was better, but not final.

World Bank Group Intranet My Page | WB External | WBG Directory | Help | Site Map | Feedback

Home Countries Topics Units Services People Operations Data & Reference

Search: People GO Advanced
Site GO Advanced

Staff Connection

You are here: Home

Staff Favorites
select from the list... GO
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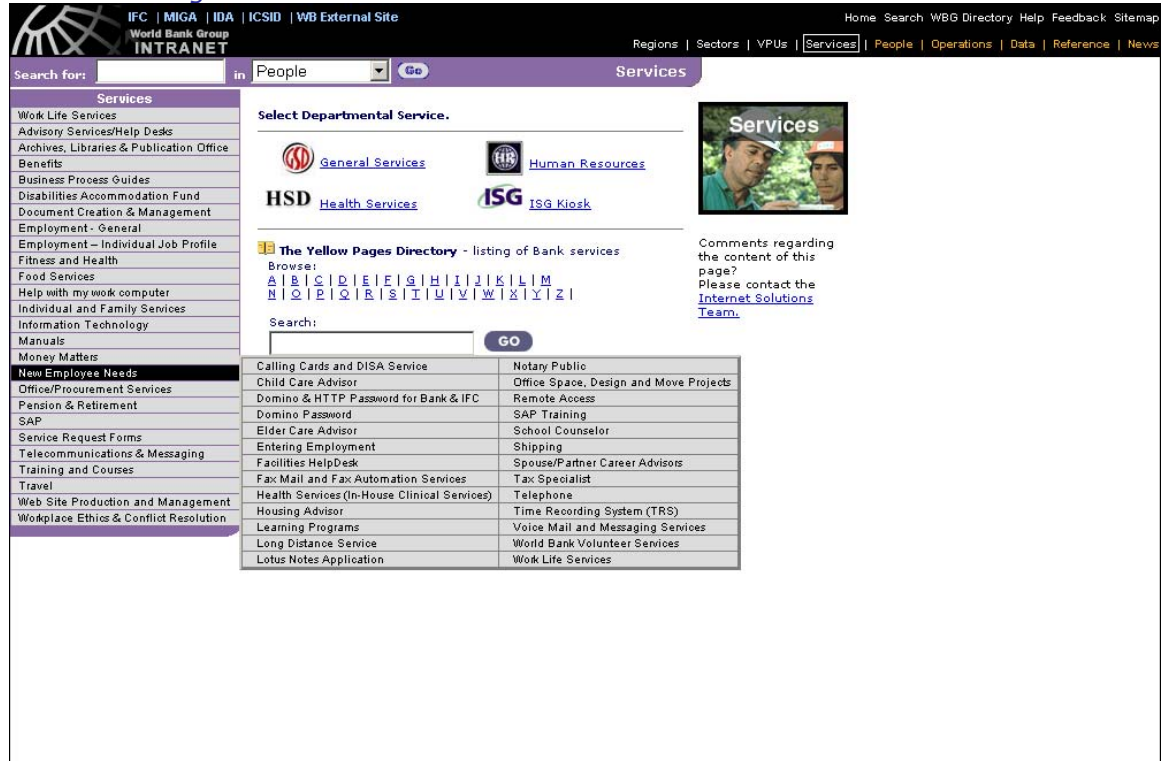
Even with the improvements to the home page, a number of user criticisms remained. These included unclear priorities for the daily news; no way to highlight items for longer than a day; and poor visibility for *HR content*, one of the site's most popular areas. The users also disliked the people image used in the top left corner with the *Staff Connection* logo. Users felt that because the Bank has a multinational, multicultural staff, the image should reflect this diversity.

In the latest home page design, the controversial photographic image has been replaced with a neutral silhouette, and the logo was redesigned. To solve the problem of being able to highlight items for a longer period, the left-hand menu column can now include graphic buttons (such as *Millennium Development Goals*) linking to special items of longer-term interest. But the page continues to evolve in a process of ongoing development.

The latest design also addresses a longstanding issue by having content from the Bank's internal communications and external news departments appearing under the same *Bank's World Today* banner. User feedback showed that users did not see the difference between the two sections, which both essentially cover news about the Bank, and found them confusing. The solution is a compromise.

The drive toward less clutter and greater simplicity is reflected in changes to other site areas. The old services page had a long list of services categories and used cascading menus. Since there was no formal process for content publishing, services were often cataloged by the service providers — again by the central yellow pages administrator, with help from the services site manager.

Pictured: The old services page, with its long list of services categories and cascading menus.



In the new service portal, the number of service categories was reduced to nine, but users have more ways of browsing them: by service category, service provider, and headquarter services. Decentralized service catalogs will be integrated with the central yellow pages. Units without a service catalog can already submit yellow page entries directly from the services portal.

One of the problems the design team faced was providing central control over the intranet’s structure and look and feel, while also providing a measure of local autonomy. Setting the rules for the information framework, template definitions, and page behavior upfront was vitally important. Before individual departments start to look at page design proposals, they have already agreed on the basic ground rules. Their own designers can be involved in the process, but must work with design guidelines, such as a standard color palette. In developing the *Bank’s World Today* section, for example, this meant much fewer interactions were needed between the intranet team and the department, because the templates already included the intranet’s standard components.

In an organization with more than 10,000 employees, getting representative user feedback in manageable volumes is a major challenge. “Of course you want to hear everyone’s feedback, but we have a lot of staff and everyone has an opinion and a

preference,” Arribas-Banos says. “So we set a time frame for listening, then we had to go ahead and make a decision.”

Principle feedback comes from the IWG Community, which any Bank employee with any interest in the Web can join. The IWG Community distribution list currently includes more than 600 people.

New proposals for the intranet are circulated to the IWG Community with a request for comments. The intranet team also puts a link to any new pages on the intranet home page, partly to get feedback and partly to alert users that a change is imminent. “We might put up three mockups and ask them questions; we keep them up there for maybe fifteen days or longer,” Arribas-Banos explains.

The intranet group can call on the Bank’s in-house usability team, which carries out both heuristic evaluation and user testing for page designs as they evolve. “We do a heuristic evaluation ourselves and then, once we’re comfortable with the design, we send it to the in-house usability team,” Arribas-Banos explains. “They will find the most obvious usability issues and fix them; most of the problems you can fix right away but others need more changes. Once the final templates are ready, we send those to the team and they do an evaluation with real users.”

Team members initially focused the user testing on the input templates used by content providers; they also extensively tested display templates. They carried out tests with groups of three to five users, who were given a list of tasks to complete and a questionnaire to fill out. One compromise the group had to make was on its samples of test users. “It’s a challenge to get a representative group, because people are busy, so you tend to end up working with the people who happen to be wherever you are,” Arribas-Banos says.

TIMELINE

- November 2000: World Bank starts to look for new CMS; sends out questionnaire to gather requirements from all content providers.
- September 2001: Work starts on the intranet metadata model.
- November 2001: Satyam starts work on page designs. Pages developed on an iterative basis.

RESULTS

Before the project started, the World Bank hired a contractor to run out a baseline assessment of the previous intranet, identifying indicators such as number of broken links, time spent configuring subsites, how many consultants were hired to do site design, and so on. When the current system is completed, the same indicators will be measured to give quantitative results.

The intranet team also conducted a user survey when the old intranet launched and the team plans to do the same survey once all content has been migrated into the new version. The team also analyzes statistics of site usage, conducts surveys of the organizational webmasters, and logs comments sent in by users via the feedback button.

The change has not been painless, and initially many staff found it hard to agree to a standard look and feel. "All the units had technical people who would need to work from centralized templates," says Arribas-Banos. "Change management was the most difficult part of the process."

Change management measures have included inviting outside speakers to offer presentations on the benefits of a consistent user experience across the intranet, the benefits of using standard templates, and how sales increase as a result of introducing corporate standards. "When someone from outside comes and tells you, you pay more attention, particularly when they're talking about very specific bottom-line improvements," Arribas-Banos says.

Though the site is still at the pilot stage, there are already informal indications that it is achieving its goals, with an increased number of users reporting confidence in the intranet. The improved search function has proved highly popular. "Search was a huge win," says Arribas-Banos. "People actually called us up to say how well it was working, which was a pleasant surprise."

The Bank also expects to make savings by using the CMS to more easily repurpose content between the intranet site and the public Web site.

LESSONS LEARNED

Insights from Maria Dolores Arribas-Banos:

Change management is more challenging than any technical issue. "People don't like change. If you encourage them to participate by sending feedback, they're more receptive to the new system."

Anticipate requirement changes. "If you need to deal with changing requirements and you're working with a contractor, make sure you set up the contract to allow for change."

Involve content providers early on. "Content providers need to know the capabilities of the new system and its potential before they can submit realistic requirements. You have to go to them with a straw man and let them break it apart."

Go for process rather than perfection. "If you're aiming for perfection the first time, you'll never get anything done. Aim for continuous improvement instead."

Get buy-in from decision makers. "Sponsorship and top management support are vital."

Plan for staff adjustments. "Don't forget transitional activities like training, ongoing support, and deploying staff whose skills are no longer used in the new system."

Recommendations for the Intranet Design Process

Understanding the lessons learned from these good intranets will help you to design a better intranet for your organization or your client's organization. There are also other, more process-related things you can do to improve intranet usability. Based on the above cases, the 2001 cases, and our other experiences testing intranets, we offer the following list of a few of the most important recommendations for designing a usable intranet.

1. Conduct many simple usability evaluations on design iterations — and watch people work.

Several of the designers working on our winning intranets said that it's important to come up with something before attempting to get feedback. This has certainly worked for them, as the outcomes show. However, it's important to remember that you don't need a complete design to get feedback. You can test prototypes, paper mockups, and competitive sites (if you can find them). Alternatively, you can watch people using current systems, even if they are not an intranet per se, and determine the activities that are already well laid out.

When looking through this year's design submissions, we noticed a lack of consistent usability processes, including regular usability testing, heuristic evaluations, and field studies. Even busy development teams with tight deadlines should take the time to watch people try to complete basic tasks using the design. It does not take very long to do a quick test. We also encourage you to get a group of designers and developers together — even for just twenty minutes — and do a quick review of the site's design to discuss and agree on the top usability issues.

2. Measure ROI.

Most of the intranets in this study have made obvious strides and great usability improvements, and, no doubt, productivity and efficiency gains for the company. However, most do not formally or even informally measure any return on investment. Often this is not a priority because of tight schedules, and the way money is allocated at organizations. For example, maybe the money to design and pay for maintaining the intranet is allocated to the IT VP, but the actual productivity gains are found in the HR department. Take the time to measure decreased task time and increased money savings across the organization. Make the gains known to the different departments and at higher levels, so even the most upper-level managers understand the importance of well-designed internal systems.⁴

3. Create user profiles and analyze user tasks.

One of the great the benefits to designing a website or application for internal users versus external users is that you can really find out who your users are, even if you work at a very large organization. Use this to your advantage. Find out about the people who will be using the intranet, their experience levels, tasks, what other tools are available and familiar to them, and how the intranet could streamline their work. Visit them and watch them work.

4. Consider accessibility.

⁴ For more information on ROI, see our separate report on that topic, *Usability Return on Investment*, www.nngroup.com/reports/roi

Many companies employ people or will employ people who use assistive technology. Almost all of the submitted intranets suffered from accessibility issues for users with low vision, no vision, or motor skill challenges. We found no improvements in accessibility this year over the 2001 intranet submissions. The trends toward many graphics, tiny text, poor contrast, limited space between links and text, and small targets are a bit scary, as these are chief accessibility offenders. On the positive side, while many submissions do overuse graphics, many others use graphics sparingly, and when they do use them, they are well labeled for users with low vision or no vision.

5. Allow users to add content.

The most well-received intranets are those that have fresh information that people need and want. One way to keep information updated and interesting is to provide methods for employees to add and edit information. Also, letting users add content will make them feel some ownership toward the intranet. And, more good content providers will probably lead to more varied information on the intranet, inspiring more employees to return.

Intranets Not Selected: Common Issues

The ten intranets featured in this report were selected from more than 100 submissions. This created a more challenging selection process, compared to that for the 2001 Intranet Design Annual. It was far easier to select winning intranets in 2001, as we had a smaller group to choose from and less usable designs were common. Maybe 2002 is the year of the intranet, as among this year's submissions, we found many more than ten very good designs.

Although we won't name or show examples from intranets not in the top ten, the following are some of the major problems we saw across the submissions not included in this report.

1. INCONSISTENT DESIGN ACROSS THE INTRANET/WILDLY INCONSISTENT NAVIGATION

Inconsistent look and feel across the intranet was probably the most common flaw we saw. A common symptom resulting from this design problem is that users find it difficult to determine their location and context. This frequently affects how quickly they can accomplish tasks when they use the intranet.

In reading the history of some of the intranets, we noticed a common scenario: Different teams created intranets for their divisions, and at some point the company decided to link them all together via one main home page. However, they never created a consistent design across the subsites, leaving employees to work with fragmented and disjointed intranet designs. Some of the more common reasons for creating such a design might include:

- Designers did not think of creating a common interface
- Designers did not think a common interface was important
- Designers cannot find the time or budget to redesign all of the subsites for consistency
- Managers, vice presidents, or designers who created different subsites want to retain their own image (and brand and design) on the intranet

Whatever the reason, if this sounds familiar, please reconsider your intranet design. All users will benefit from a consistent design across the entire site.

2. LACK OF CONTENT

Some intranets seem to be placeholders for the intranet to come. They have very little actual information, news, or processes. Many provide no way for the users to provide or affect site content.

3. GARISH COLORS

Color can be used to make a site look good, inspire a team feeling, or indicate an interface state. But some of the colors on the intranets are just too loud and distracting. These detract from the message.

4. POOR USE OF PAGE REAL ESTATE

On many an intranet, pages are far too long, requiring much scrolling. Also, having too much text and information on one page is difficult for users to manage. Some pages are even too sparse, with hardly any information at all.

5. VERY DIFFICULT TO READ NAVIGATION AND TEXT

Text is getting smaller and smaller. And, many designers choose colors that do not contrast the text and the background. Users should be able to easily read the text on a page, especially in navigational elements.

If the intranet is meant to support users with low vision or senior citizens, be sure to use a default text size of 12 points or higher, and never use fixed fonts.

6. MISSING OR DIFFICULT TO FIND SEARCH

It is surprising that some intranets hide their search feature, or provide no search feature at all. People want to search, and they expect it. Even those users who prefer browsing instead of searching will look for a search feature when the site's navigation fails them.

7. TOO MUCH MARKETING (OR ADVERTISEMENTS) FOR THE INTRANET

Nothing is more annoying than being presented with marketing hype or advertisements for the intranet, especially since the user is already using it. The intranet is meant to be a tool to help users get work done, get important and timely company information, and possibly to inspire a team feeling across the company. It is also appropriate to post awards and other applicable information on the intranet. But, an intranet is not a good place for its designers to post information about themselves or advertise the intranet. Explaining features is one thing: Using it for self-promotion is another thing. It's an obvious way to send employees away, and make them feel unwelcome.

Honoring Last Year's Winners

The following table lists the winners of the 2001 Intranet Design Annual. For more information about these ten great designs, please see <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/intranet/2001>

Andersen: Business Radar 3.0

Insights: 1) Relentlessly cut items you don't need. 2) When you decide to outsource content management, find the best partner, commit to them, and trust them.

The navigation controls and sparingly used pictures and graphics make this site simple. The extensive, ultra-current content is what keeps the users of the Business Radar 3.0 site coming back for more.

BC Hydro: HydroWeb

Insights: 1) Include users in both the design and site-updating processes. 2) Make all pages load very quickly.

This site is the product of both resourcefulness and inspired methods of collecting usability information. Considering what a massive repository it is, the site design is uncomplicated.

Cisco Systems: I-deal (tristream)

Insights: 1) Convince clients to try usability activities; once they do, they'll be sold on them. 2) Before you code, collect usability feedback and conduct field studies. 3) Have the courage to make big changes, as long as you have good reasons for them.

For designers, it's always a scary prospect to revamp an interface in a new release. In this case, they courageously opted to make a drastic change, and everyone was rewarded with a winning design.

Fidelity Investments Canada

Insights: 1) Make it easy to keep material updated. 2) Recreate the homepage to draw people into the site and offer a compelling user experience.

This design works for many different kinds of users, from those who use it all day long to those who refer to it only periodically. The beauty is in the content, which is drawn from many different sources and frequently refreshed.

Interactive Applications Group: Community [apps]

Insights: 1) To really learn about usability, watch real users in the field. 2) Iterate your design based on what you learn.

This intranet template collects most of the essential elements users seek in an intranet, and combines them nicely in an easy-to-use package.

Luleå University of Technology

Insights: 1) What users say they want isn't necessarily what they really want. Put a prototype in front of them to learn the truth. 2) Developers are typically poor usability critics, even when they're the site's primary users.

With up-front features and an uncomplicated look, this site is proof that even with few resources, you can build a simply designed, effective solution for a small organization.

Pearson Technology Centre

Insights: 1) Organize the site based on user tasks, not on organizational structure. 2) Even if it's grueling, convince contributors that a single design will radically improve usability.

Site designers used a systematic, four-stage development methodology to achieve this usable design. They reorganized various unique sites into a cohesive whole.

Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC): ISSAIC

Insights: 1) Harness information that's already out there. 2) Help users aptly direct comments and suggestions to the right people.

This site harvests and delivers information from many sub-sites in a straightforward way. Their novel approach to collecting and directing feedback helps organize this huge enterprise.

silverorange

Insights: Build something that you won't get sick of looking at or using, even 20 times a day.

The silverorange intranet sports a very simple look and innovative tools. The design succeeds at managing vast content without being sterile or impersonal. The collaboration features utterly support ever-changing content for both a small set of internal users and the company's external clients.

U.S. Department of Transportation: DOTnet

Insights: Promote information exchange in a way that makes people visit the site and keep coming back.

This site offers a new twist on productivity-specific applications. The *Work Tools* and *Communities* are designed to help people get work done.

About the Authors

The three authors were also the reviewers, interviewers, and judges for the competition this report is based on. These same three people worked on Nielsen Norman Group's 2001 Intranet Design Annual, <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/intranet/2001>.

Kara Pernice Coyne is the director of research at Nielsen Norman Group and heads the Boston office. Since joining NN/g, Coyne led several intercontinental research studies and wrote associated reports about topics such as the Web and accessibility, senior citizens, public relations, and site maps. In addition to teaching seminars about accessibility, senior citizens, the usability life cycle, and field studies methodology, she has had several other speaking engagements. She has worked with clients in a variety of industries including publishing, technology, e-commerce, government, and pharmaceuticals. Coyne has been evaluating software usability for more than ten years. Before joining NN/g, she established successful usability programs at Lotus Development; Iris Associates, an IBM subsidiary; and Interleaf. She managed the first usability program for Lotus Notes and the Domino server, and, after her team's work, *PC Magazine* wrote, "If this were summer camp, Lotus Notes would walk away with the Most Improved Camper award." Coyne chaired the Usability Professionals' Association conferences in 2000 and 2001, was presentations chair for UPA 1999, and was the conference advisor for UPA 2002. She has an MBA from Northeastern University and a BA from Simmons College.

Candice Goodwin has worked for twenty years as a journalist specializing in technology and how people use it at work. Based in London, she has contributed to a range of technical and business publications in the U.K., including the *Telegraph*, *New Scientist*, *Computing*, *Computer Weekly*, and *Accountancy*. She has a BA in psychology from Oxford University and an MSc in human-computer interaction from University College, London. Since earning her master's degree in 2001, she has combined writing with freelance usability and ergonomics consultancy.

Dr. Jakob Nielsen (www.useit.com) is a user advocate specializing in Web usability and a principal of Nielsen Norman Group, which he co-founded with Dr. Donald A. Norman, former Vice President of Apple Research. Until 1998, Dr. Nielsen was a Sun Microsystems Distinguished Engineer and led that company's Web usability efforts starting with the original design of SunWeb in early 1994. His previous affiliations include the IBM User Interface Institute, Bell Communications Research, and the Technical University of Denmark. Nielsen's best-selling book, *Designing Web Usability: The Practice of Simplicity*, has about a quarter million copies in print in 21 languages. In its review, *Business Week* says that this book "should ... be read by any executive with responsibility for managing online operations." Nielsen's Alertbox column about Web usability has been published on the Internet since 1995 (www.useit.com/alertbox) and currently has about 200,000 readers. Nielsen has been called "the guru of Web page usability" (*The New York Times*), "the smartest person on the Web" (*ZDNet*), "knows more about what makes websites work than anyone else on the planet" (*Chicago Tribune*), and "the next best thing to a true time machine" (*USA Today*). He holds 67 U.S. patents, mainly on ways to make the Internet easier to use.

Acknowledgements

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