Social Features on Intranets: Case Studies of Enterprise 2.0

A Report From the Front Lines of Enterprise Social Software Projects

2nd Edition

By Patty Caya and Jakob Nielsen

Nielsen Norman Group

WWW.NNGROUP.COM | 48105 WARM SPRINGS BLVD., FREMONT CA 94539–7498 USA

The research for this report was done in 2013, but the majority of the insights presented may still be applicable today, because people and principles of good design change much more slowly than computer technology does.

Thank you!

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Executive Summary

When we first studied social networking on intranets four years ago, we concluded in the first edition of this report that *"across our case studies, 3–5 years seems to be a common timeline for social intranet projects."* We've now gone back to revisit several of the companies covered in that early report, and sure enough, we were right. Their social projects are now much more established and have moved past the experimentation stage; companies that went social early are now reaping the benefits.

In addition to re-examining these established projects, we also studied a new group of companies that were adding social features to their intranets. We now have findings from a total of 22 companies' social projects.

During the four-year period between our two social intranet studies, the public Internet's social networking websites have experienced turbulence. We saw uncontrolled exuberance during the Web 2.0 bubble, where many people gambled (sorry, "invested") fortunes on Facebook's overpriced IPO, only to see Facebook, Groupon, Zynga, and similar stocks implode. Facebook reached a billion registered users, but hundreds of millions of them went into Facebook withdrawal and either stopped using the site or severely curtailed the time spent checking updates.

Despite these ups and downs, there's no doubt that social features are here to stay on the public Internet, and that many mainstream sites are adding them.

Similarly, there's now no doubt that social features are even more useful inside the enterprise for supporting employee collaboration and knowledge management. We use the slightly hokey term "Enterprise 2.0" to summarize our research, and the new research confirms that the real effect of social features on intranets is to change how organizations function by making communication more open.

STABLE FINDINGS

Considering how much social networking websites have changed over the 4 years between our social-intranet research rounds, it's remarkable that almost all of our original findings continue to hold. Given this stability, it's very likely that the following conclusions will remain true for many additional years:

- *Little training is required.* Users take to social tools easily when they're given them for the right reasons and in the right work context. It takes little training, transition time, or urging to get people on board. In general, you should design social tools that employees can easily use without special training. In addition to following usability guidelines, you can achieve this goal by emulating popular Internet designs, such as the five-star rating system known from Amazon and Netflix. Two other important points to bear in mind:
    - Even people who heavily use Internet social tools can benefit from training on the appropriate code of conduct for using social tools in the corporate context.
    - Avoid advertising the new tools as "new tools." Instead, simply integrate them into the existing intranet, so that users encounter them naturally. For example, you could turn an existing bookmarking (or "quick links") feature into a socially shared bookmarking feature without great fanfare.

- *Designing social media for an intranet gives you a major advantage over similarly tasked Internet designers.* You know enough about employees and their work to pre-select stuff that they'll likely find interesting. You can, for example, pre-populate news feeds with relevant information; if you offer users a blank screen to customize, they'll often experience the social-media equivalent of writer's block.
- *Despite companies' concerns about employees using social tools with impropriety, infractions remain rare.* Companies with social tools often use a gentle hand in creating and enforcing terms of use. Most community managers do little more than guide wayward conversations toward more constructive paths. As long as attribution is built in and required, communities police themselves.
- *Community management is vital in social environments.* Community managers are most effective when they manage with a light hand, guiding the conversation rather than controlling it. Designated community managers should serve as facilitators and moderators; they can also reignite slow areas. Ultimately, by keeping a finger on the pulse, community managers will know when it's time to pull the plug on a topic rather than flog it beyond its time.
- *Not all users are producers.* Although social software has matured, the participation–contribution ratio has remained steady. As with the open Internet, there's substantial participation inequality in enterprise communities: some employees participate a lot, while others mainly lurk. It's therefore important to value a community based on a combination of posting and use, because those who lurk also benefit. When calculating ROI, it's important to give your Enterprise 2.0 initiative credit for the value that employees contribute to the company based on their increased knowledge and understanding.
    - *Even a few active contributors can add substantial value to the entire organization.* In our case studies, this was often true for tagging and rating systems, which considerably improved the quality of results prioritization for notoriously ailing intranet search tools. Traditional web methods for relevancy scoring don't work as well on the smaller scale of most intranets. For example, counting links works only if you're doing so across a huge base of links. But, even if only a few employees tag a page with a given keyword, it's likely that the page will produce a good search result for that query in your organization's context.
- *The relationship between "official" and user-generated content is a delicate dance.* As it grows, user-generated intranet content can help address many employee questions. However, "official" content about policies and positions still has a role. You shouldn't segregate these two types of content—the guideline to provide a single federated intranet search, for example, remains more relevant than ever. Still, your design should reflect the different statuses of different content types: label official information as such, and perhaps color-code it as well for easy scannability on SERPs (search engine results pages) and other lists.
- *Search must be integrated.* In the enterprise, information retrieval is always a challenge. Social adds another layer of complexity and an exponential amount of data to parse. The social stream is swift and rich with knowledge, and search is the only realistic way of harnessing that information. In user testing

of intranet search,[1] we've found that it's essential to provide a single, unified search across all intranet resources. This finding was replicated for social intranet features: they should be searched as part of the overall intranet search, rather than having individual siloed search engines for each social tool. Depending on the implementation, the need for integrated search can be a strong argument against outsourced or hosted social software, because many SaaS services don't support federated search.

- *Measurement is still elusive.* It's not surprising, given what we hear in our Intranet Design Annual each year, that measuring ROI is still a challenge for many organizations. There are arguments to be made in both directions on measuring ROI in hard numbers. Some say the intranet (and the social stack by association) are merely utilities and demanding measurement is akin to trying to measure the impact of email: impossible and unnecessary. Others see social as they do any other business application, whose value should be identified and quantified. When social moves beyond pilot projects and discrete platforms, organizations will figure out how to measure its impact, just as it does any other business application. But for now, the debate continues as to whether or not this matters. Our conclusion is that it does.
- *Harnessing the stream requires planning and vigilance.* Integration is not just a technical matter, but also an organizational issue. For example, if a conclusion gels within a discussion forum, it then needs to move from talk to action. It's not enough to build knowledge; you need a feedback loop to bring lessons back to sales, marketing, and other groups responsible for getting things done. Capturing trends can be as simple as a short report to key stakeholders, but feedback loops should be somebody's explicit job assignment or they may not happen.

BUSINESS NEEDS, NOT TOOLS OR FADS

The most important conclusion from both research rounds is that social intranet projects must be driven by business needs — that is, the problem or pain point you're trying to solve. The Canadian agency Klick, for example, was spending too much money on weekly status meetings. Developing an intranet collaboration solution for these reviews resulted in annual cost savings of more than $300,000. (A very nice ROI, given that the feature cost $53,900 to build.)

The reverse process is common, but deadly. Don't start by saying, *"Twitter and microblogging are cool, and I've heard good things about Yammer."* Our report says good things about Yammer, too, but that's no reason to throw it onto your intranet. Maybe your business needs something completely different.

The proper sequence remains the same as it was four years ago: Business needs drive the required solutions; the solutions then drive the tools you should buy or build.

Yes: needs → solutions → tools
No: tools → solutions → looking for a problem

FROM GRASSROOTS TO MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

One major change in our second study was the level of organizational support for enterprise social features. Many of our original case studies were grassroots projects without official sponsorship. The attitude? *Just do it.*

[1] See http://www.nngroup.com/reports/intranet-searching/

Today, many companies see intranet information sharing and other social features as offering true competitive advantages. It's not something to build because it's fun — it's a workday utility. Social tools are an expected part of a knowledge worker's standard toolkit, and many executives recognize this.

Although many companies have official management support for social intranets, others are not yet ready. A company culture that values openness and communication is essential for social projects to succeed. Absent such a culture, adding deep social features is probably wasted effort as employees or managers won't want to use them.

Widespread use of internal social media breaks down communication barriers. Although that sounds good, it can threaten people accustomed to having a monopoly on information and communication. Ironically, corporate communications departments sometimes resist the move to broader communication. They're better served, however, in finding ways to increase new media's value rather than trying to suppress it.

So, before implementing intranet collaboration tools, you must consider your company culture. If people are strongly committed to the "knowledge is power" tenet and don't want to share, then sharing technologies will obviously fail.

Also, there's still concern that, given social tools in the workplace, workers will fritter away their days and not get any work done. What we actually find — in companies with vibrant social platforms — is that employees are no more inclined to fritter away their work hours on non work-related communication with social tools than they were likely to do before these tools existed.

SILOS SPROUT ONCE AGAIN

Many organizations with seasoned social intranets are starting to find that the social stack is yet another silo — that is, a place where enterprise technology is boxed instead of being integrated with other components. Along with this technology fragmentation comes a fragmented user experience.

The idea of social becoming another corporate silo is somewhat paradoxical. Social tools, by their very nature, are effective at breaking down silos based on role, title, and geographic distribution. However, the social stack—sitting side-by-side with the company's existing intranet or portal— can become another silo of information that ought to be managed, ingested into search, and ideally, integrated into the greater enterprise information universe. Mostly, this isn't yet the case.

Even companies with highly sophisticated social platforms are only beginning to tackle the hard work of integrating the social platform or toolset into the enterprise portal beyond merely creating linkages.

Other organizations recognize the challenge, but still keep the two separate and manage the consequences rather than face the complexity of marrying the two.

Social integration involves many challenges: there's a UI challenge, and there's an infrastructure challenge, and usually there's a political challenge. While calling it a marriage between social and traditional intranets sounds better, the reality is that it's a question of who eats whom. And that's not an easy decision to make, either structurally or politically.

It's important to integrate social features with the main intranet for many reasons, perhaps most importantly because it prevents burdening users with double work.

Employees shouldn't have to update their profiles or photos in both the traditional employee directory and a Facebook-like social-connection tool, for example, or be forced to know which directory to search in order to find the results they're looking for. Despite the hard choices required to make this transition happen, the end game must be integration.

THE ENTERPRISE IS (STILL) SLOW TO ADAPT

There's good news and bad news on the social enterprise front. Adoption rates are up. Some surveys put adoption of the "social workplace" at large organizations close to 35 percent.[2] And executives are more open than they were, even four years ago, to give social a seat at the table.

The bad news is that while social communication permeates our everyday lives, outside of work, it is still slowly working its way inside the firewall, leaving many workers without access to tools that were ubiquitous outside the enterprise five or six years ago.

Social is moving into the enterprise in the same manner as most things do in the enterprise — slowly.

There is a generation of workers that has never known a world without the Internet and for whom social communication, sharing and collaboration are not buzzwords, but just the-way-things-work — at least in their personal lives. That generation comprises the entry-level workers of today. Companies that treat communication with anything but an open approach risk alienating their future workforce. Social enterprise tools provide both a business advantage and a recruiting advantage for organizations.

Our research finds that companies seem to land in one of three places along the continuum of social adoption:

- **Not ready:** These organizations are not ready for social or not fully convinced it will be an imperative for their organization. They are either not culturally ready to embrace open communication or they don't trust their employees will do the right thing when given the freedom of open forums. For these organizations social will be a struggle, but in order to remain competitive they may have to figure it out whether they want to or not.
- **Cautiously optimistic:** Many companies we spoke to in the first edition of this research were being led into social from the bottom-up. These grassroots, underground efforts are far fewer now as organizations embrace the inevitability of social tools. But that leaves most organizations testing out the water, adding individual tools to the toolkit or adopting a social stack that sits beside the corporate intranet or portal. These organizations are not only testing the impact of social inside the enterprise they are also searching for best practices to address the many challenges that come along with the benefits of social enterprise. These companies may not have everything figured out but they are forging ahead, knowing that they must find ways to make social work.

[2] NetStrategyJMC, "Digital Workplace Trends 2013": http://www.netjmc.com/future-trends/digital-workplace-trends-2013-executive-summary/

- **Pushing the envelope:** Companies like IBM have embraced social with open arms and are beyond the first wave experimentation phase. They are moving into full integration and solving the challenges that. Yet even with this level of commitment they don't have it all figured out. Their social tools are proven so they are facing the problems of social maturation, struggling with things like integration and measurement.

So while we've come a long way but there's still far to go. It's no longer a matter of "if" companies should adopt social tools. It's more a matter of "when." As one of our interviewees asked, "If you're not actively engaging and sharing information how can you succeed as a cohesive and strategic unit?" And the answer is, you won't — for long.

Introduction to the 2nd Edition

This report is both updated and revised from our earlier work. It contains information derived from interviews with more than 10 additional companies (some named, some anonymous) and updates from three individuals who participated in the first edition research.

While there are several new findings, many of the ideas we presented in the first edition still hold true, as do the challenges. Enterprise 2.0 is maturing but far from ubiquitous across all organizations.

Our findings are anecdotal, in that they are derived from interviews but in many cases they reflect themes as the compilation of the interviews reveal similar challenges across organizations regardless of size, industry or geography. The driving factor how easily organizations adopt Enterprise 2.0 tools is often not how large or small an organization is but rather how fluid they are in their existing communication style. Sometimes, if an organization embraces open communication, the challenges of Enterprise 2.0 are simply infrastructure challenges.

This report is not intended to be a prescriptive guide, but a reflection of real experiences, both positive and negative. Some of the solutions implemented in the projects described here may be useful within your own projects; in other cases, the problems they've encountered may highlight issues that you may want to consider before making crucial decisions about enterprise social software and perhaps may provide some strategy for shaping your own corporate initiatives.

Credits

We would like to thank all the people who generously shared their experiences developing social software programs inside their organizations. In many cases, these contributors participated in interviews, answered survey questions and provided screenshots. In addition to the companies and individuals listed below others also contributed to this research but asked to remain anonymous. The information contained herein reflects their experiences as well.

We are particularly fortunate to learn from a few individuals who agreed to participate in both editions of the research: Jason Blackwell from IBM, Karen Downs from Sprint and Peter H. Reiser who was interviewed for the first edition for his work at Sun Microsystems and then provided updates on how his work has evolved since the company was acquired by Oracle.

The following contributors are named in this report:

Named Report Contributors

- **AXA UK:** Sonia Carter
- **Agilent Technologies, Inc.:** Alan Bell, Kathryn Craven and Rahul Mehrotra
- **American Electric Power (AEP):** William Amurgis
- **BT:** Sandy Blair and Mark Morrell
- **Business Environment Limited:** Jo Vass
- **CenturyLink:** Marjie Goodman and Frank Ybarra
- **IBM:** Jason Blackwell, Ph.D. and Matt Starr, Ph.D.
- **Intel:** Joshua Bancroft
- **Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research & Development, L.L.C.:** Laurent Alquier and Keith McCormick
- **Klick, Inc.**: Jay Goldman, Aaron Goldstein and Leerom Segal
- **L&Q:** Paul Hornsby
- **Officenet Staples Argentina:** Natalia Arnaldi, Sebastián Paschmann and Leo Piccioli
- **OpenRoad:** Darren Gibbons and Gordon Ross
- **Oracle:** Peter H. Reiser
- **Portugal Telecom - Sistemas de Informação:** André Esteves de Carvalho
- **Philips Healthcare, a division of Koninklijke Philips Electronics N.V.:** Candace Cahill
- **the Rubicon Project:** Nicole Jordan and Mallory Portillo
- **Sapient Corporation:** Nicole Bussard and Erik Gottesman
- **Sprint Nextel:** (1st Edition Contributors) Karen Downs, Justin Goldsborough, Dan Kneeshaw, Susan Kreifel, Terry Pulliam and Jennifer Sniderman; (2nd Edition Contributors) Sara Folkerts and Karen Downs
- **Sun Microsystems, Inc.:** Paul Casanova, Grant I. McCormick, Peter H. Reiser
- **Telecom New Zealand Limited:** Neil Forster, Simon Gianoutsos, Rob Inskeep, Jennie Leng and Neal Richardson
- **Welsh Government:** Roland Allan and Yvonne Pawlin

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

AXA UK (UK)*	The idea for AXA's OurSpace tool came out of a daylong retreat where staff was challenged to be more customer-centric. The resulting tool was developed in six weeks with virtually no budget. It consists of employee forums and an idea tool. Unlike traditional suggestion tools, employees can post an idea that will improve their workplace, a product, IT or customer service and other employees can add comments and vote the ideas up or down. The ideas are collaboratively shaped through the comments facility and voting employees have the opportunity to say whether an idea has merit or not. Each month the three highest rated ideas are taken to a steering committee, and then commented on through the site. The goal of the OurSpace tool is to try to get people from very different business areas to work together. This tool has been very successful for fostering change management and also useful when the company is rolling out new initiatives or policies. It serves as an open forum and sounding board for employee feedback and a collaboration space where employees from across the organization collaborate on ideas for improving the customer experience.
Agilent Technologies, Inc. (US)*	Agilent's wiki project is a case study in successful wiki integration toward the goal of transforming an organizational process. The Agilent team successfully migrated from a FrameMaker-WebWorks based authoring system to a collaborative, wiki-based authoring system with 20,000 plus pages of software documentation. This effort resulted in significant timesaving allowing Agilent to operate using a reduced staff and to accommodate an increased work demand. The wiki serves as a collaborative content management system for eight different products and contains over 150,000 pages of version-controlled online help and manuals.
American Electric Power (US)*	AEP has had social communication and collaboration tools on the company's intranet roadmap for several years. Long before Web 2.0 was the norm, the company's intranet team sought out these types of tools as a way to better serve their core constituents: the company's employees. All of AEP's social media functionality is built in-house and tightly integrated with the company's intranet. This gives the organization more control over the end result and the ability to tightly target features to user requirements while building in usability from day one. The company's intranet was recognized for excellence as a recipient of the Nielsen Norman Group's Design Annual award in 2007.[3] The custom social tools that are currently available include: an idea generation system, live chat, several blogs, personal pages/community pages with functionality to enable a Twitter-like conversation between employees and merchandise buy/sell boards that are being used to sell obsolete equipment to employees. AEP's vision for employee collaboration is far-reaching and unbounded by what's popular on the social Web. Instead, they take their inspiration from building tools to address business needs proactively.

[3] Nielsen Norman Group, "Intranet Design Annual 2007: Year's Ten Best Intranets," January 2007. http://www.nngroup.com/reports/10-best-intranets-2007/

BT (UK)*	BT's intranet is a leading example of how to successfully introduce social media tools. The intranet team has built tools to meet business needs and through iterative beta testing, they have effectively weeded out tools that weren't working and expanded those that were. The result is an organically grown social platform consisting of BTpedia, a corporate wiki, and Blog Central, a blogging platform where employees can share personal views and opinions across the organization. At BT, social media is part of the DNA of the organization. It is an integral part of the company's intranet and users can search for social media and more formal content with the same search query. Growing the platform is an evolution and one that the company is committed to.
Business Environment Limited (UK)	Social/collaborative features are fully integrated into Business Environment's intranet and the company's users are invested in using a blend of tools available in Interact Intranet 5.4. The company reports that one hundred percent of staff have logged into "The Lounge" within the last calendar year, not because they have to, but because "they like it!" The company's intranet team believes users flock to The Lounge because it is an informative, interactive and engaging business tool that is vital to the company's success. And because it's fun. The company has taken steps to make sure there is a balance of work and play which ties directly into staff engagement. The Lounge features: an internal social network with activity streams, social bookmarking and tagging, photo and video sharing channels and an idea generation tool.
CenturyLink (US)	CenturyLink has to learn how to make a success of social software after several major mergers and acquisitions required ongoing integration of a variety of communications channels. The company's intranet team, led by the Corporate Communications and IT departments, recently implemented automated commenting, sharing and "like" functionality on its homepage company news. These efforts are aimed at building credibility and value with the organization's leaders and provide a springboard for someday adding deeper social value to the portal.
IBM (US)**	If there is a Web 2.0 tool that exists, you can be assured that IBM has an internal version of it. And while they have every tool you can think of, they are not satisfied with just having an internally branded application. They work tirelessly to optimize the way every tool is integrated into existing systems. The IBM team says they believe users should trip over new technology while they are doing their usual tasks. To provide this level of integration, the company sponsors a Technology Adoption program, where each new tool has a sandbox. There an employee can introduce it, test it, try it out with users, gain feedback and prove it's worth; all before reaching out to the organization for backing. All of IBM's social tools go through this rigorous process.
Intel (US)*	Intel's Interloped wiki project started as a good idea taken on by one person and hosted on a server under a co-worker's desk. That was 2005. Since then, the wiki has grown to 10,000 active users (in a company of about 85,000), 35,000 pages, and hundreds of millions of page views. Though it has better hosting conditions today, it is still not "officially" sanctioned by the company and continues to operate as a grassroots project, supported in an ad hoc manner by willing employees. Intelpedia mimics Wikipedia in many ways; from the software it's based on, to its very open and soft-handed "governance

	model" and editorial policies. While it may never be the official wiki at Intel, it is integral to daily life at the company.
Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research & Development, L.L.C. (US)*	Finding a knowledge management solution for Johnson & Johnson's Pharmaceutical Research R&D scientists turned out to be a bit of a Goldilocks situation. One wiki was too rigid, not giving the IT team the flexibility it needed. Another tool didn't provide the necessary features so that users could edit and link entries right in the tool. Adding to the complexity of the requirements was that the research scientists deal with a large volume of data; usually under time constraints and their technical orientation runs the spectrum from those who are computer savvy and eager to learn new tools to those who are overwhelmed and want to stick to what they already know.. After trying a few tools over a number of years, the team combined MediaWiki (the tool behind Wikipedia) and Semantic MediaWiki to give structure to the data. And this time, the combination was just right. knowIT, the organization's current tool, is still a work in progress. It has been successful on some fronts and still has challenges on others, but it is a giant leap forward for the company. It provides a scalable, flexible solution to quickly, and with limited resources, manage a lot of data for a mixed-skills audience.
Klick, Inc. (Canada)	Klick's leaders saw the writing on the wall: social software was here to stay and with that they saw an opportunity to turn social into a business success. They built Chatter, an internal social news feed allowing individual posts and recognition (known as Kudos) and integrated it with existing features like news, user details pages and social giving; setting one rule — that there were no rules. The results were astounding. Employees gave Kudos 1,273 times in the first six-month period, compared to just 173 in the six months previous. Klick also leverages Genome, its social intranet, for learning and development with Klick Academy. Klick Academy mixes formal e-learning courses with live, electronic and video content and Klick Academy allows employees to teach each other best practices while encouraging a culture of openness and transparency. Klick Talks, a vast peer-to-peer social knowledge-sharing tool is the icing on the cake, giving users the opportunity to ask any question and have a video response posted within 24 hours. Klick calls Genome a "social ecosystem" for good reasons. It is the social universe that underpins its business success.
L&Q (UK)	L&Q is making significant use of the integrated social tools available in SharePoint 2010. With less than a year of history to report, The company's experience with social enterprise is new, but promising. Its early efforts have focused on SharePoint's native "My site" (the personal/social level), team sites (collaboration level) and the portal (publishing level). In addition, blogging tools are available to everyone, though only the CEO has an official blog so far. More advanced tools such as social tagging will be rolled out in subsequent stages as the company builds its engagement program over time.

OpenRoad (Canada)	OpenRoad is an old pro at social computing inside the enterprise. The company launched the first version of ThoughtFarmer, a social intranet product used by companies around the world, in 2006. The company not only sells to customers with great success but also uses social software themselves, learning what works and what doesn't by adopting the "eat your own dog food" approach and taking ThoughtFarmer through its paces as the company' s own social platform. In the seven years since ThoughtFarmer launched, the company's small-ish staff has created an intranet of 10,000 pages and approximately 10,000 documents. More than 11,000 comments have been made, and some 550 topics have been discussed in the platform's forums. To say social tools have become indispensible to the organization would be an understatement.
Officenet Staples Argentina (Argentina)*	Officenet Staples is using social media to affect cultural change across the organization. Their offerings move back and forth through the firewall like it is a semi-permeable membrane effortlessly connecting internal communication with customer-facing activities. That's not to say that their path hasn't had struggles, but the team behind the social media initiatives accept that as part of the journey. They know change is difficult and it takes time, but they chip away at the resistance, one piece at a time, as they carry on with a comprehensive long-term plan. Their current successes involve internal blogs and a Yammer trial that is underway. The company has planted a stake in the ground with an intention to make social media an integral part of its present and its future.
Oracle (US)	Oracle WebCenter is the user engagement platform for social business—connecting people and information. It brings together the most complete portfolio of portal, web experience management, content, social, and collaboration technologies into a single integrated product suite, and it provides the foundation for Oracle Fusion Middleware and Oracle Fusion Applications to deliver a next-generation user experience.
Portugal Telecom - Sistemas de Informação: (Portugal)*	PT-SI's collaborative knowledge base tool (Guru-IT) was built in 2008 to enable the organization to accomplish a wide-range of goals including: retain and share intellectual capital, reduce the learning curve, share knowledge more effectively, understand who does what, reduce the impact of employees that leave the company and increase overall efficiency. That's a tall order for any social platform. Many tools had to come together to form the complete solution set with a number of features including: blogs, user comments on published content, user content ratings, wikis and RSS feeds. Bringing all this together was not easy, but it was worthwhile. In just two months, the team was able to rollout the application across the company and has enjoyed a very enthusiastic response. And the organization's success is not just in building the tool, but also in building a culture of collaboration around the tool. Knowledge sharing is now a part of the review criteria for employees being considered for a promotion within the company.
Philips Healthcare, a division of Koninklijke Philips Electronics N.V. (US & The Netherlands)*	As with many large, global companies, Philips Healthcare is constantly challenged to support the growing needs and expectations of tech-savvy employees who are working on global teams that are separated by time zones, roles, geographies, work cultures, and company silos. How could they start to break down those barriers in order to work more efficiently with one another, improve collaboration, communication and the flow of ideas and information? Philips Healthcare was also looking for ways to safely enter into the

	social media space. So the organization is taking a thoughtful approach to social media by starting with two pilots: employee blogging and microblogging with Yammer.
the Rubicon Project (US & London)*	A workforce that is uniformly young and tech savvy is a recipe for off-the-charts success with microblogging. The Rubicon Project is lucky in that they fit this profile to a T, so when Yammer was released as an early microblogging tool, they embraced it with the kind of enthusiasm one would expect from a company whose staff averages 28 years old. The story they tell of the transformation that is possible with this simple little Twitter-like tool is the kind vendor case studies are made of. Everyone participates, from the most senior executives to the mailroom. The company benefits greatly from the type of open communication the tool facilitates and they can hardly remember life before Yammer. It's just that good. They like it so much, they display their Yammer messages on a flat screen in the office so visitors can dive right in and get acquainted with what's going on in the company from the minute they arrive.
Sapient Corporation (Global)	Sapient's social collaboration and community platform, Vox, connects its 11,000 technologists, designers, strategists, account managers and subject matter experts across 35 global offices, supporting the company's collaborative, iterative approach to helping its clients transform their businesses. Vox serves as a forum to learn from and inspire each other, a secure environment to collaborate on client work, and a channel to communicate across all levels of the organization. The company's social platform, which runs on Jive and has an equal seat at the table with the company's traditional intranet, aligns well with Sapient's open culture. It increases transparency, engagement and productivity among the company's distributed teams, and encourages dialog around policies and processes that were once locked away in email or IT support systems. Vox has experienced an enormous uptake, with the majority of the company voluntarily registering and using the platform on a daily basis.
Sprint Nextel (US)**	Sprint understands how to communicate with its employees and has invested a lot in social enterprise tools. Early efforts toward a company-wide blogging initiative were met with great success, giving the organization momentum to build Sprint Space, the only enterprise-wide social tool at Sprint (built on Jive v.5.0). Sprint Space has been around for five years, giving the organization great insights into how to start, run and improve an enterprise blogging program — over time.
Sun Microsystems, Inc. (US) (acquired by Oracle in 2010)*	The team at Sun Microsystems literally redefined what enterprise social software can do for an organization. When we interviewed them, they had been investing in and refining social enterprise initiatives for the better part of five years and their successes were many. SunSpace was Sun Microsystems' global Enterprise 2.0 system. At its peak it had 30,000 users, 10X growth in six months, 150,000 content items, 25+ million social activities and was the second largest intranet site at the company. Sun team members were early leaders in the social software space, serving as role models for organizations at every step of the adoption continuum and Sun team members earned their stripes through consistent hard work and innovative thought leadership.
Telecom New Zealand Limited (New Zealand)*	Telecom NZ's underground Yammer trial caught on like wild fire and took the official organization by surprise. Started under the radar as a

	completely grassroots pilot project, the tool caught on virally as one person tried it, invited their friends, and so on and so on. The participants in the early trial are grateful that the tool came in under the official radar and without the blessing of the official organization. Grateful, because as a company in a very regulated industry, it was thought that official sanctioning would have killed the project before it even began.
Welsh Government (UK)	The Welsh Government has been dipping it's toes into social enterprise tools, trying them on for size, but has found a foothold in Re:New, the organization's ideas management platform. On Re:New colleagues can share, discuss and develop ideas that have the potential to improve the way they work and help the organization to become more efficient. In addition, the tool has supported increased engagement and participation in innovation and improvement activities.

* Contributed to the first edition

** Contributed to the first and second editions

SETTING THE STAGE FOR SOCIAL

Start With the Business Need

For this report, we interviewed companies whose social enterprise efforts span the continuum from established programs with years' worth of experience to companies finding initial success from a single grassroots effort that allowed social to slip in under the corporate radar. Almost without fail the most successful programs are borne from a business need not a dalliance with a new tool or a buzz-driven trend.

"We don't want to be social just to be social," says Frank Ybarra, Director of Employee Communications, CenturyLink. "We need a cause, a priority, a business result to support."

The only reason to take on the challenge of E2.0 is to fulfill a business need. Period. Creating collaboration or community with these tools, just for the sake of it, will not yield satisfactory results for most companies. Nor, will merely adding new tools to a knowledge worker's toolset increase productivity or encourage adoption.

"We ensure the tools we release make a difference to our business," says Jo Vass, Intranet and Extranet Manager, Business Environment. "They must meet a business benefit. We refuse to just put something out there because it's fashionable within the intranet industry. We feel this is one of the key building blocks for our success. Because the tools are adopted for a reason, mainly for our workers rather than for the whim of management, adoption is rapid and effective."

We can't put too fine a point on this. If you were to stop reading this report right here, you would have gotten your money's worth. This single piece of advice can save a company untold expenses in wasted, misguided tool-centric implementation projects — that fail.

When considering a social enterprise solution, ask: what problem are you trying to solve, not what tool should you use.

"A common misstep of many companies is they say, 'we want X tool,'" says Leader Networks CEO, Vanessa DiMauro. They fall in love with the tool because it's fashionable then squish the business need into it. Start with what you want to accomplish."

"We wanted our Center Managers to learn to recognize the importance of sharing every facet of their service offering to ensure we could offer the best possible service against every site," says Vass. "Our ongoing goal is to ensure that an unusual problem occurring at a location is not just that location's problem. By sharing the issue on The Lounge someone will have the answer, will have experienced something similar or will be able to point the problem holder toward a solution. The Interact Intelligence tools supplement this by recommending other experts and articles."

There is value in experimentation. Social tools can be transformative and it might take some trial and error to really understand how they might affect any particular organization and its culture, but it's important to move quickly from the experimentation phase to the business phase if you want to achieve long-term success.

Social collaboration tools have a certain allure. They hold so much promise in terms of quickly addressing shortcomings in the communication path or adding value for a low investment cost that it's tempting to just "start a blog" or "use a wiki," and use social tools as a throw-it-at-the-wall-and-see-what-sticks approach.

When DiMauro counsels clients she recommends initiating the process with a meeting with stakeholders from across the company: marketing, operations, sales, finance, etc. to figure out what the goals are and define strategic goals from an intranet or internal collaboration perspective. "Then talk to users and find out what they need," she says.

Only when the hard work of establishing a business need is done should you choose tools to solve the problems you've identified.

The Competitive Advantage of Social Enterprise

For companies that take the time to determine the business need and create a social environment to fill that need, success can mean a competitive advantage. Such is the case with Klick's socially enabled intranet, "Genome."

"It's worth noting that we believe in adding a social component to our tools not just for the sake of using the latest shiny tools," says Leerom Segal, President and CEO, Klick Health, "but because we fundamentally believe that it will have a significant and measurable impact on our company's performance."

"We strongly believe that social tools are a critical component in our competitive success," says Jay Goldman, Klick's SVP, Innovation. "They enable us to move more quickly than our competitors, put smaller teams on the same projects that they would overstaff, and ultimately deliver a far superior experience for our clients."

"There are a number of core benefits that drive our business forward," he says. Here he outlines several key business differentiators that are a direct result of the company's social ecosystem:

Speed. "Most organizations gradually become slower as they become bigger. We think of this as the plaque of standard operating procedures building up in the company's arteries as they encode their battle scars into checklists, stored in dusty binders and unseen SharePoint repositories. All of that effort simply creates a heavy inventory of content that weighs the organization down, greatly extending the training and on boarding of new employees, requiring recertification of existing employees, and putting heavy breaks on innovation. Klick runs a million miles faster thanks to Genome features like *Klick Talks* and *Teachable Moments*, which remove the day-to-day friction and focus on just-in-time training only when needed."

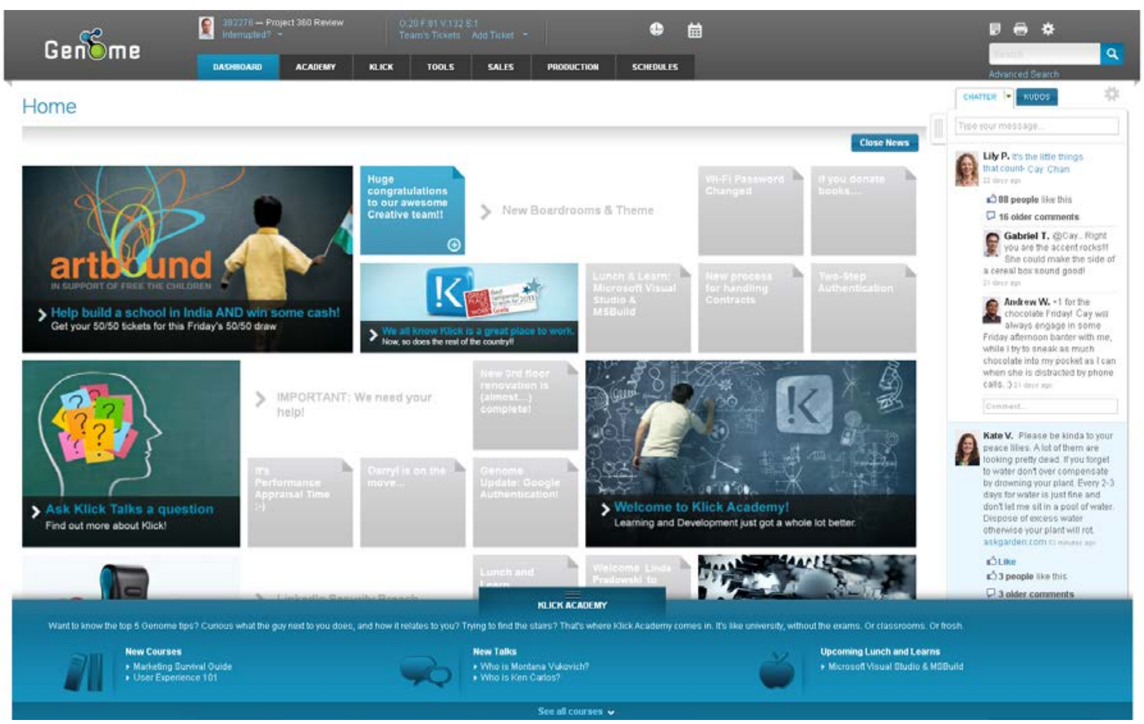
Precision. "Tools like *Project 360s* help us to move quickly without breaking things." [Project 360 is a tool whereby every week each team member on a project is asked to complete a very quick project review, giving the organization an at-a-glance status update across every active project]. "They shape our behavior and enable us to get the most out of our people in very precise ways that would be impossible without a strong social component."

Collaboration. “We believe in the value of face-to-face time for our teams, especially when that time can be made more precise and effective through the creative application of Genome’s tools. Our program management meetings are a prime example, run by our team members using a structure and report prepared by Genome. A perfect integration of physical and digital social tools.”

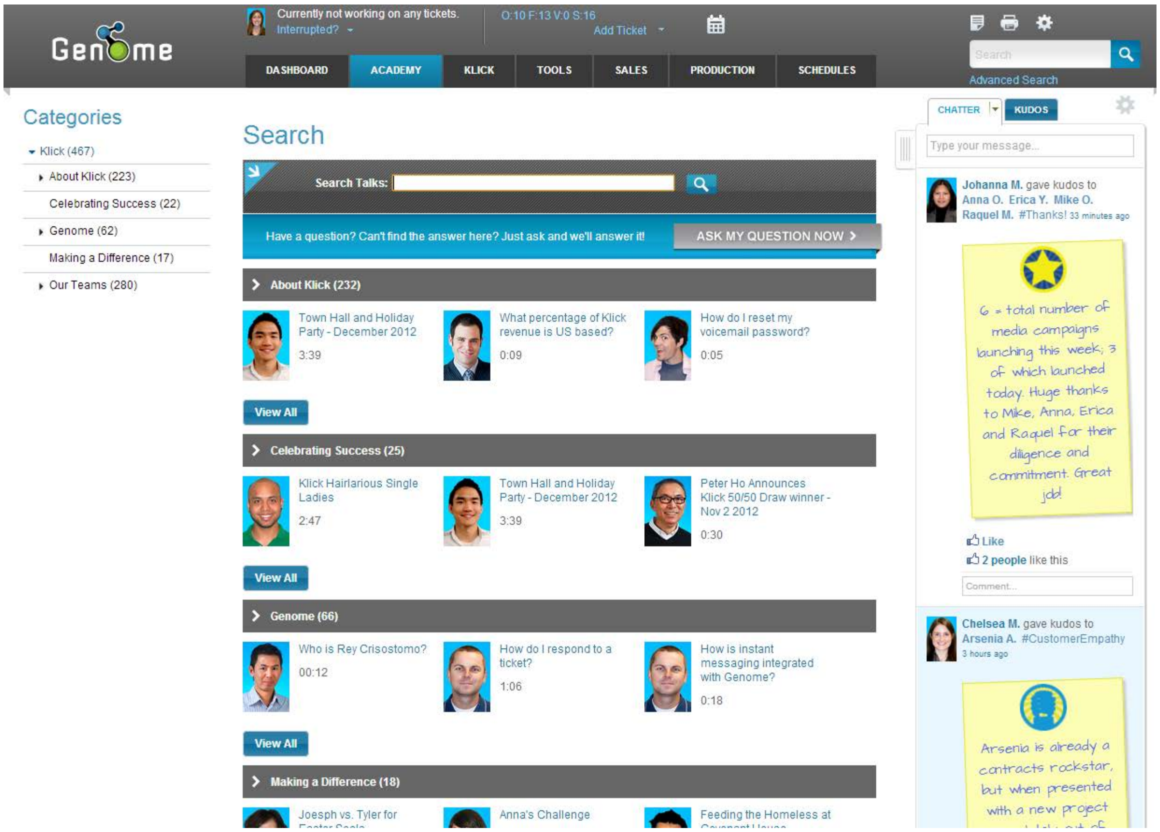
Culture. “We have always prided ourselves on our corporate culture, believing that we can ultimately shape markets by first shaping ourselves. The Positive Feedback Ratio is one of our key senior leadership team metrics, reflecting the amount of positive vs. negative content that flows through our social channels. We encourage our teams to use our social tools for anything they like — there are no rules — and so we often get honest opinions, discussion, and debate in those channels. We carefully measure the aggregated sentiment of those conversations, optimizing the top-down portions of our culture to ensure a highly positive balance. This has a huge impact on our teams, creating a positive environment in which they forge strong social ties (within and outside of their assigned work tasks), shaping a broader culture of trust and empowerment.”

Learning and development. “*Klick Talks* is an excellent example of the true powers of crowd sourcing and co-creation when applied within a corporation. A single member of the Klick team is responsible for the ongoing growth of our *Klick Talks* library and has singlehandedly seen the collection grow to an outstanding 600 items.”

Leading by example. “Genome is a very open environment that reflects our very open culture. All of the social activity contributed by one Klick team member can be seen by all of their colleagues, including the activity of the senior leadership team. The items we choose to like or comment on send a subtle but strong signal to the rest of the organization about where our priorities lie.”



Pictured: The first page an employee lands on each morning on Genome, Klick's socially enabled intranet (which they refer to as a "social ecosystem"). This landing page features news items that are shared with the entire company. Unread items are indicated in blue, while read items are indicated with grey. As stories are liked or commented on, they are pushed to Chatter, the company's social stream, in the right rail.



Pictured: The Klick Talks homepage houses all of Genome's Klick Talks (a question and answer tool where users submit videos to answer questions posted on the site). Each Klick Talk is categorized and the featured Klick Talks for each category are displayed in rows across the page. Employees from all levels of the company participate in content creation (the content shown in this screen is created by junior, intermediate and senior level employees, including the company's CEO). As with most Genome tools, it is integrated with Chatter as any like or comment is pushed into the Chatter feed (in the right rail).

The Recruiting Advantage of Social Enterprise

Workers from the Net Generation ("Digital Natives") were once an ace-in-the-hole to help transition social tools from early adopters out to the rest of the organization. Digital Natives have never known a world without the Internet, so using social tools to communicate and collaborate is part of their DNA: no training or coaxing required.

However, as social media has cemented its place in daily life outside of work, these digital natives are no more likely to have sway over other workers that any other tech savvy group. Companies are still wise to pay particular attention to these workers. This young cohort, with their fluid and borderless communication practices are no longer the future of most organizations, they are already firmly occupying some of the rungs. How an organization uses social tools can distinguish a company as being a progressive, technology forward place to work. The prowess of a company's internal social platform might just be an effective recruiting tool.

"They love it," says Grant McCormick, Director of IT — Chief Technology Office, Sun Microsystems. "Our enthusiastic embrace of Web 2.0 technologies and culture is a major component of how we attract the most talented younger workers into Sun."

Go Slow to Go Fast

Many companies entering the social media space deploy a single tool to solve a specific problem. Many of these early attempts are grassroots initiatives, driven from the employees up rather than radiating out to the staff from a management directive. However, if creation of a social platform is truly intended to solve an overarching business problem, then it should be on the company's roadmap. Social media strategy should be on equal footing with other corporate communications and IT initiatives.

"We have developed a strategic roadmap for social technology at Sun," says [Grant] McCormick. **"**This overall strategy is holistic and addresses the big picture in terms of the corporate strategy and the IT strategy. In parallel to the development of that strategy, we have had our share of 'inching' into social tools and we have used these experiences to help shape the strategy and to validate our early assumptions."

Newcomers to this space can take comfort in the fact that even with Sun, with it's holistic embrace social software, has benefitted from adopting individual social tools along the way. An incremental approach can pave the way for a more comprehensive strategy. So even the giants start with small steps.

The lessons learned from incremental initiatives can help transform the company's intranet from a traditional corporate-focused portal to a socially enabled one.

"We will be applying a lot of social technology to the next rollout of our corporate intranet," says [Grant] McCormick. "It will actually be more of a social platform than a traditional intranet. We also are factoring in the social technology aspects in many other IT system directions, including our approach to overall user identity, presence services, and desktop collaboration tools."

This type of measured approach is one that was also taken by Sprint after the success of its internal blogging platform. Sprint is using that tool's success story as a launch pad for other social software initiatives.

"We have allowed our approach to evolve over time," says Dan Kneeshaw, Intranet Operations Manager, Sprint Nextel. "As we look to the future we are looking at additional ways to further integrate with the enterprise portal. We are going to look at the build out of an expert locator-type functionality to build on the concept of the social network. And finally we will continue to evaluate options and platforms that come along, as we are always interested in 'better, faster, cheaper'."

Many companies in our research have been chipping away for years on initiatives that encompass the principles of the social enterprise.

"We formed our roadmap in 2005, and have already executed most of it," says William Amurgis, Manager, Intranet Strategy, AEP Corporate Communications, "We're completing our Ideas System (it's presently in pilot form), working on an online focus group tool, enhancing our Personal Pages and Community Pages (based on employee observation and feedback), and developing a way for any employee to pose a question to all other employees."

"Once these activities are complete, we'll turn our attention to our next comprehensive intranet redesign, which will introduce a pervasive alert system," he says.

Most companies find that adoption is a gradual process, even those that have been innovating with social tools for some time. There are many reasons for this. Sometimes it's more comfortable for an organization to approach change slowly, and sometimes the intersection between business need and availability of tools takes time to gel. Regardless of the reason, that process works best when the social software roadmap is tied strategically to corporate initiatives. Without that backing, even the most successful, incremental efforts can stall.

Trials and pilots and experiments are all useful but they yield the best chance of success when tied to something more comprehensive.

"We are in the inching stage," says Candace Cahill, Senior Manager, Healthcare Intranet Program, Philips Healthcare. "A lack of a comprehensive enterprise social software strategy and roadmap is our current barrier."

"Don't rush into a tool decision when you haven't addressed the underlying needs." says DiMauro, "There is an old saying, you must go slow to go fast."

LEADING THE CHARGE

If Companies Don't Lead, Users Will

Social tools will catch on with users, regardless of whether they are "official" or not. Just because the organization (or IT) didn't build it, buy it or install it doesn't make any difference if the users really want it. If the organization doesn't lead, it might have to follow.

"Our social media roadmap actually started to take shape in 2007," says Kneeshaw. "Our employee base was essentially crying out for a social networking tool. In the absence of a corporate-sanctioned approach, employees were finding their own path to social media 'opportunities'."

"We listened and set forth to deliver a solution that would meet these needs," he says. "We began with technology assessments and evaluations of tools that had started to get a foothold in different pockets around the organization."

Many of the initiatives we studied for the first edition of this report started *way* down the food chain, as grassroots (and sometimes underground) efforts that first found success and appreciation among users. Rogue operators championed these efforts, oftentimes just an employee with a good idea and access to some technology. These early successes bubble up through the ranks of the organization and attract the attention and approval of organizational leaders only after they proven themselves with the rank and file.

Social platforms are more conducive to an underground approach than other technology implementations, perhaps because they are simple to install and simple to use. While more and more companies embrace social tools, the sad reality is that in some companies the grassroots approach is the only approach that could possibly get such an initiative off the ground.

The social enterprise is not “coming soon.” It’s here. So companies have a choice. Embrace it and it can work for the organization. Turn a blind eye and users just might take matters into their own hands.

Top-Down vs. Bottom Up: Does it Matter?

Just a few years ago, there were many reasonable explanations for the bottom-up approach, not the least of which was the newness of the tools outside the enterprise and the scarcity of them within. When this report was first written, senior managers just did not “get” social and thus it was rare for them to lead the charge. Four years later, we find more and more companies believe in the ideal of a socially enabled workplace so these initiatives do not have to start under ground.

“One challenge we work to overcome in communicating the benefits of this tool,” says Karen Downs, Sprint Nextel Intranet Design & Usability Manger, of the company’s successful internal blogging platform, “has to do with the generation gap between a young front-line employee population that grew up using these tools, and more established corporate executives who may not have had as much experience with open communication platforms.”

Now that social initiatives are more formal endeavors the question still remains where to start — at the top or at the bottom.

The tools sell more easily to users than to managers so teams can use that to their advantage. Once the value is demonstrated to the users, it is easier to leverage that value and bring the leaders on board. Leaders have even been known to take credit for the vision — after the fact.

But as social collaboration has become more tightly woven into the fabric of the enterprise it matters less who’s leading the initial charge than who champions the cause after it gets off the ground.

“Executive engagement must certainly exist from the start in the form of investment support,” says Erik Gottesman, Director, Methods and Tools at Sapient, “but your CEO need not also act in the capacity of Chief Social Advocate. In fact, too visible executive presence out of the gates can create a serious headwind to long-term success. A seed-and-subsidize strategy that populates the early adopter pool from the rank-and-file, by contrast, is essential to creating critical mass mindshare for your social platform as a destination of choice for authentic business collaboration.”

When the executives are on board, teams stand a far better chance of success so it’s not surprising that the companies with the most mature social software platforms are the companies whose management supports these efforts. IBM boasts one of the oldest and most established social software initiatives of all the companies interviewed for this report and its leaders led the initiatives rather than followed users down the path of adoption and engagement.

“Our executives came out early in support of information sharing, both within and outside of IBM (for example business partners and clients),” says Matt Starr, Ph.D., Cognitive Psychologist & Human Factors Engineer, IBM CIO – Enterprise Web Solutions.

Starting at the bottom also means the initiative will take longer to get off the ground.

“The first thing you need to drive cultural change is you need management buy-in,” says Peter H. Reiser, Social Business Evangelist, Oracle WebCenter. “If you don’t have that, it just takes much, much longer. The [people] culture [of social tools] has changed. That is a given. You can't ignore the Web and the stuff happening outside [the enterprise] but if you can't clearly articulate the business benefits of it you will always struggle to get the right business case and the right investment."

Having a senior person as a champion can help not only with getting the initiatives off the ground, but also in removing the barriers along the way.

"The social elements of our intranet are pushed by both Directors and front line users," says Vass. "It is a huge talking point across all of our offices and is the route for all business conversations. Our Managing Director, David Saul, challenges all teams and offices on any initiative that isn't intranet-based during strategy meetings. With David's backing to guarantee the intranet is our business tool of choice, it ensures the intranet reflects our on-going business strategy."

Managers were once the last to jump on board, now they are often in lock step with those leading the charge on the ground.

Getting agreement at a senior level to cede control was straightforward," says Paul Hornsby, Digital Media Team Leader L&Q. "There was little opposition, only a slight concern that social tools would be used for 'selling stuff.' This is perhaps due to significant efforts to develop an open and collaborative culture over the last few years. I would certainly recommend getting high-level sign-off for your approach from the outset."

"With just a little bit of effort and some light-touch guidance and regulation," he says, "we have been successful in getting half of the organization to complete a personal profile page, and a core group of staff regularly using social tools. We did this within two months of making the tools available.

So, while many social initiatives are birthed on the ground floor, they will flourish most when someone in the C-suite eventually support their mission.

"We are lucky I feel in that innovation is being driven by our leaders," says a representative of a manufacturing organization that wished to remain anonymous. "A social initiative needs to be official I think if it doesn't have buy-in from an executive level, the necessary areas of a business will not contribute or work together to make it happen. Communications, IT and HR all have very important parts to play. Without their support, based on executive mandate, it couldn't work."

CULTURAL READINESS

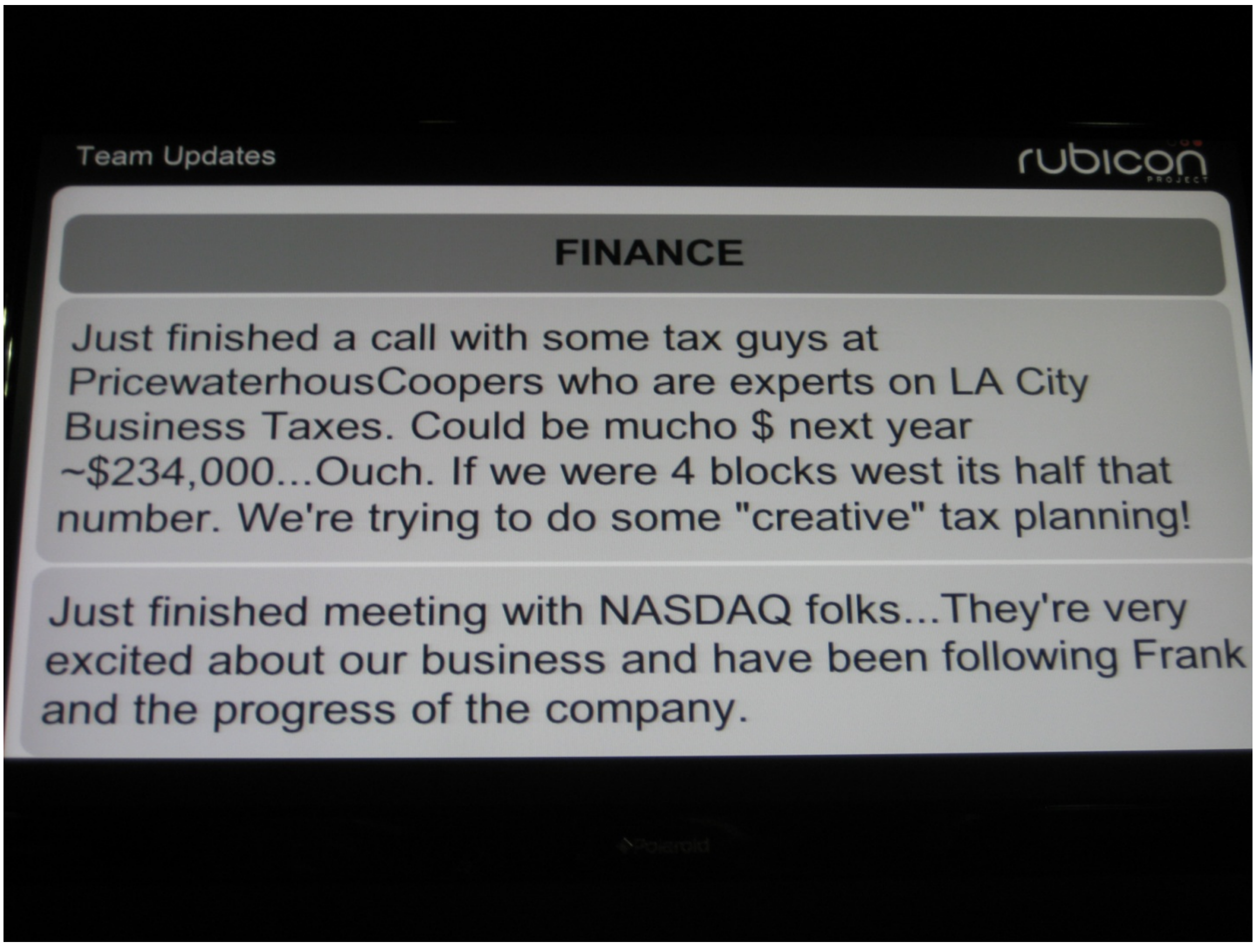
Corporate Culture: Friend or Foe?

Some corporate cultures have established norms that actually work against the kind of open information sharing that Web 2.0 tools encourage. The simple (and often painful) truth is that some companies are not yet ready to engage in and allow open communication. If there is a traditional top-down communication structure in place and not enough support for change, E2.0 can cause friction and incite fear. Companies with this type of corporate environment may fight (and fight hard) against Web 2.0, like an organism turning on itself.

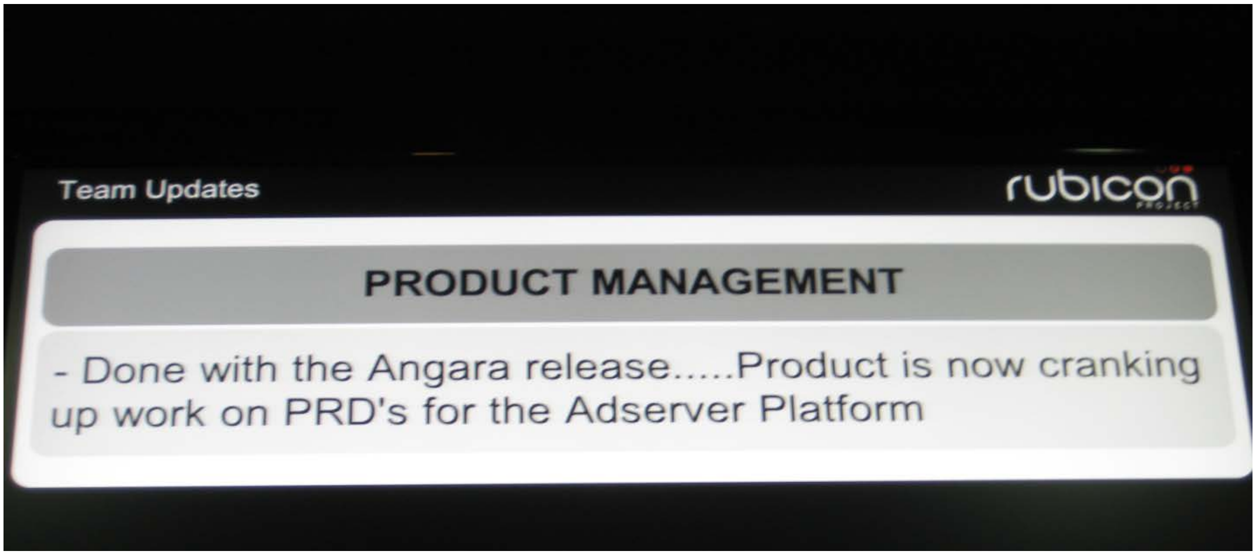
If a culture of openness already exists, social tools can have a dramatic impact. The Rubicon Project is one of the companies where social tools have been incredibly successful, nearly since their inception. "The adoption and use of these tools have greatly improved the culture of our company," says Mallory Portillo, Culture and

Development Team Lead, the Rubicon Project. "Twelve months ago, the biggest complaint we had from our team members was that they didn't feel appreciated by people outside of their department. We hire great people, the kind of people who like to congratulate and acknowledge [other] people for their hard work, but they just did not know when to do so or how without spamming everyone."

Outside of the traditional channels (email, team meetings, etc.) there was no forum at the Rubicon Project to open up the communication between teams. Yammer (a microblogging tool) opened up those channels. "Yammer has created a way for us to stay connected and bridge that lack of knowledge about each other's work," says Portillo.



Pictured: the Rubicon Project's various departments share information with the rest of the organization through Yammer. This screen shows updates from the finance department going out in the company stream.



Pictured: The Rubicon Group's success with Yammer is in part due to the tool's effectiveness at distributing information across departments and out to the entire organization. This screen shows a product update message.

"One reason that the Rubicon Project has been able to grow as quickly as it has is largely *due to* the fact we share so much information," says Nicole Jordan, Director, PR and Communications for the Rubicon Project. "It helps us move fast and as a unit. We're all on the same page. This is rare but something more and more companies need to master."

The success of Yammer has shown the Rubicon Project's team that given all the challenges in business today, without the tool, they can't imagine working as closely or as effectively.

"The digital age has brought about a massive re-structuring of departments with new silos being formed others merging and responsibilities crossing departments," says Jordan. If you're not actively engaging and sharing information how can you succeed as a cohesive and strategic unit?"

A social platform will reflect and amplify aspects of the existing communication culture of an organization — both good and bad.

"Our intranet is a valid reflection of the communicative norms that play out in our office everyday," says Gordon Ross, Vice President & Partner, OpenRoad. "There is no digital dualism in our office. There is only one company that has different modes of expressing our feelings, working together, and being together. Staff that post funny animated gifs to the intranet are just as likely to say something silly in a meeting or crack a joke in a conversation at lunch. Perhaps some of our staff who lack the confidence of speaking in front of a larger group find a voice through the intranet that they might not have otherwise. And those who lack confidence in their writing skills are perhaps still hesitant to write, knowing that the audience for their communication may possess better skills and may be judging."

"But in general," he says, "rather than transforming our culture, our intranet re-enforces and amplifies our existing values, where everyone in the company can contribute to its direction, ways of doing things, and future.'"

As much as social tools can amplify a healthy, thriving culture, they can also amplify its shortcomings.

“We allow freedom for our employees to be who they are. It’s the only way that your people will truly collaborate well together,” says Segal, “but it’s important for everyone to understand that social and sharing tools are essentially amplifiers. If you’ve got nasty, negative people, then they will now have a microphone and a soapbox and that vibe will permeate your culture. This only works well when you can trust that you’ve hired good people who can socialize well together.”

Assessing Readiness

The Rubicon Project has experienced great, early and fast success with its adoption of Yammer. However, while Yammer adoption has enabled effective cross-team communication it couldn’t have worked if certain cultural priorities were not in place first. Mallory Portillo from the Rubicon Group, has identified some of the methods organizations can take to help determine if an organization is ready for social tools. “From my experience,” she says, “this is what needs to happen culturally to a company before these methods can successfully be adopted:”

1. **Survey your team:** Find out where the pockets of unhappiness on your team lie and what the common theme is. For us, it was communication and appreciation and that is where we focused our efforts.

2. **Don’t try to do too much at once:** Adopting four different programs to communicate will not work, but rather overwhelm people. Move quickly but introduce one at time.

3. **Lead by example:** Management (all the way to the top) sets the tone for how seriously the new systems will be used. If they don’t take it seriously or see it’s value, no one else will either.

4. **Hire team players:** People who like to work on things alone are the same type of people who will never see the value in shared communication and collaboration. A team is more innovative and valuable than any one person could possibly be, make sure you hire people who also believe that to be true and embody it in all that they do.

5. **Breathe new life:** If things start to get old and interest is lacking, think of new ways to use the system or get a few folks to lead by example. Once this happens, the value is easy to see for the rest of your team.

Changing Communication Dynamics — Slowly

It is difficult to remember when something so benign as email threatened the corporate communication command and control structure, but it did.

“I remember when we started that we only had internal email,” says Leo Piccioli, Country Manager, Officenet Staples Argentina. “If we wanted to send an email to ‘the outer world’ we had to go through the CEO’s email box.”

That sounds absurd these days, but change can be uncomfortable. It’s important to know where your company registers on the comfort meter. E2.0’s cultural impact will be more unsettling for companies that don’t have a high tolerance for change in general. Social tools change the information dynamic of the organization. The old paradigm of knowledge is power (and power comes from the top) are impossible to maintain in an open system. That will take some getting used to.

“Without doubt our communications professionals will face challenges as they redefine their roles in this new environment where everyone is potentially a communicator,” says Mark Morrell, BT Intranet Manager.

In the first edition of this report, Morrell also noted “We conjectured that Web 2.0 within the enterprise would cause shifts in the power dynamic,” he said. “We were either wrong or it’s too early to tell. There are rumblings of this phenomenon in the works, but as of yet, there is no earthquake to report. Perhaps a seismic shift will come from the second wave of enterprise social platforms, but the first wave is witnessing only small rumbles of the ground shifting as communications change.”

We are happy to report the earthquake never came. Allowing people to promote their knowledge can only be a good thing for an organization, even if it takes some groups longer than others to become comfortable with the new models for doing so.

“We’re a very socially-aware group of people and we naturally expect to be able to communicate across all levels of the organization,” says Bussard, “to share our opinions and ideas without prompting, and to call on each other for assistance and advice using logical channels. What has been interesting is that while the expectation that we can have these conversations online has become more common among the rank and file, executives still tend to communicate using one-way broadcasting channels such as global emails, newsletters, and articles published on our intranet. A few channels allow comments, but they remain limited.”

“As we continue to get good participation and as executives see evidence that people behave themselves well in these conversations,” she says, “I believe we will move more toward social options for all types of communication.”

However, it isn’t just executives who may drag their feet. Other groups, whose work practices have always been more closed, will likely be slow to come around.

“We did not see much resistance from the majority of our company,” says Bussard, “particularly the client-facing side, but still have some resistance from internal groups that historically have interacted with individuals through private channels. This is slowly changing as they watch and learn that people seem to behave themselves naturally.”

So even with the right cultural priorities in place and executive support, some groups within an organization will transition quicker than others. At first, it may not feel like a shift is happening at all, as the initial changes may be so incremental as to feel inconsequential.

“There is a cultural shift with a certain percentage of the employee population,” says Cahill. “Mostly the younger and more technically inclined. However the shift is not yet the prevailing norm.”

So change may be slow to occur, but when it happens the outcome will be improvements. “Re:New has been effective in supporting a culture of constructive challenge, debate and questioning around existing and future ways of improving the way we work,” says Roland Allan, Intranet Content Manager, Welsh Government.

Facilitating change means staying focused on the business driver and gently easing adoption, step-by-step. “We try to focus on practical use cases,” says Laurent Alquier, IT Lead, Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research & Development. For example, the initial scope of the knowledge base was limited to just mapping out IT systems, but slowly Alquier and his team expanded the content to provide the business context around IT systems. From there, they have worked in similar concentric circles to move the scope of the wiki project outward to support the general population.

Building gradually on a firm foundation of successes enables initiatives to gain momentum before they are expanded. “This allows us to remain focused on filling a need and let results speak for themselves,” says Alquier. “People are more willing to adapt to a new culture of information sharing when they have tools that help them provide answers to growing needs from working in virtual teams and from the consolidation of resources.”

Overcoming Resistance

While some organizations, such as the Rubicon Project embraced open communication with zeal, for some organizations, the transition is both difficult and tumultuous. For example, even when Agilent built a successful grassroots wiki program, demonstrated its positive and measurable impact on customer support — and the bottom line — the company struggled to transition away from established norms of information sharing.

“[We’re] still fighting this battle (and losing),” says Rahul Mehrotra, Tech Lead, Agilent Technologies. “Openness of this magnitude is threatening and scary for a corporation. Each month, or so it seems, we fight off yet another initiative to limit the sharing of information.”

For Amurgis and his team the key to overcoming resistance was to find a champion, a high level leader who believed in an open communication culture, to serve as a role model and influencer.

“We have learned to relinquish control and to seek the best outcomes, regardless of source,” says Amurgis, “although some leaders still find this uncomfortable. Fortunately, our chief executive officer demonstrates the preferred, interactive, open culture in his meetings with employees and in his internal blog. He has set an example for others to embrace, and made clear that those who choose to suppress such interaction are in opposition to his style.”

“Oddly, the most prominent culture clash may have occurred within my own department, Corporate Communications,” he says. “In most organizations, the communicators are taught to ‘control the message,’ and social media erodes such control.”

One lesson that Amurgis and others have learned is that organizations differ in how they absorb the shock of change, but over time most come around, even if that means waiting for detractors to move on.

“Fortunately, some detractors have moved on,” says Amurgis. “And the popularity of social media in the public Internet has caused others to reconsider its role.”

MEASURING IMPACT

Measuring ROI is Elusive

Measuring the impact of an intranet, social or otherwise, has long been the Holy Grail of intranet development; illustrious, elusive and much sought after in the annals of history. Since companies struggle with measuring their intranets, in real, quantifiable terms, adding a social media component compounds the challenge further. There are several reasons for this. First, most social tools are part of the intranet stack. If not at first, then at some point down the road, so determining the right metrics is difficult especially if hard measures were not applied to the intranet to begin with.

"We have avoided ROI discussions," says Blair. "However I think you can evaluate the social media site in the same way that any other site can be evaluated. Social describes the publishing model, not the knowledge on the site. You do miss the increased ownership and engagement but I've never seen a convincing description on how to measure ROI on these anyway."

Another challenge is that it's difficult to gauge whether the outcomes are a direct result of the addition of social layer or if the gains were an aggregate impact of melding old and new methods toward a better result.

"We're firm believers in the notion that complex, heuristic tasks on the intranet are only subject to emergent ROI," says Ross. "If we have algorithmic tasks (like doing timesheets) we could certainly employ the classic cost/benefit analysis and look at how we're tying our shoes faster. As we spend the bulk of our days doing heuristic tasks, we've never got out the stopwatch and the spreadsheet to measure. It's not to say it's not happening, it's just that between our cultural bias as company owners, the complex nature of the business that we're in, and the size of our company, it doesn't feel worth our while."

So if people aren't measuring ROI, what are they measuring? Participation? User Satisfaction? Something else?

"Other companies talk about the goal of "getting everybody on" or having "100 percent adoption," says Bussard, "but I think this is neither useful nor even very measurable. We can see whether people have registered on our collaboration platform, but it does not mean that they or the rest of the company are getting any value out of it. Most of our goals are instead based around trends that relate to business goals. We want to see the number of users from specific domains increase, or we want to see the traffic on a certain distribution list declining moving over to Vox where they are archived for future reference."

"When we do have specific targets," she says, "They are usually related to single communities. For example, we have done drives to get everyone within a certain domain, like our project managers, to join their practice-related group, mainly with the goal of assuring that we had enough critical mass that people would feel comfortable taking their email queries to the community, since they could see that people were there to respond."

Some companies measure participation. Some companies measure satisfaction. At Sapient they measure sentiment. "The measurement of it becoming 'indispensible' is a good one," says Bussard. "I would say that, one and a half years in, we are pretty close to that."

The Intranet is a Utility

Increasingly, there is an expectation that social tools will be a standard part of a knowledge worker's toolkit. For younger workers, that expectation is unquestionable.

Social tools are as ubiquitous for them as email was for older generations.[4] So, if social tools are such an entrenched part of daily work practice is there any real need to measure their impact? If the social intranet is a utility, is there any need to justify its ROI? Many companies say no.

"Ultimately, these sorts of applications may become such a part of day-to-day work that the ROI is rarely questioned (such as telephones or email)," says Jason Blackwell, Ph.D., Cognitive Psychologist & Human Factors Engineer, IBM CIO – Enterprise Web Solutions. "Remember that many incoming workers have had these sorts of applications part of their daily routines on the Internet for years. These individuals may not think in terms of ROI, but feel the value is manifest."

When companies do choose to apply metrics to their social platforms, the measures are often focused on gauging the vitality of the community through usage, content consumption, visits, time on site and other types of activity measures.

"We get a certain measurement from the quantity of active users on the social platform, the amount of time they spend there, and quantity and quality of information that gets stored in the social platform, and in survey sent to users of the system," says Reiser. "These measurements taken at regular intervals give us a good picture of what is working, what isn't working, and where people choose to spend their time and put their intellectual property."

At the root of the measurement challenge is acknowledgement that the processes that social tools most impact are also some of the most difficult to measure: communication and collaboration. Experiential gains are important, especially in businesses that base their success on serving customers but they are difficult to report on in anything other than soft, intangible terms. For example, what yard stick would you use to measure efficiencies in problem-solving behavior?

"Month over month, we have been able to cite anecdotal evidence that Sprint Space has helped to surface business issues, close the feedback/communication loop, and help with identification of root causes for customer churn," says Downs. "We have not specifically tied dollars to these efforts at this time."

Sprint is not alone in accepting the limitations in a cost-benefit analysis of intranet social tools. There is a prevailing wisdom that improvements in the intranet do not have to be quantified at a more granular level. Many companies accept anecdotal evidence that a social initiative is a good investment.

"It is the overall value that is really important rather than just comparing costs," says Morrell. "BT believes it gets many £ multiples of benefit from each £ invested in our intranet. There are many intangible but very important benefits which must be included in any assessment of overall value."

Finding concrete ways to measure impact is the next big challenge as social software matures. However, right now few are finding inroads, much less a solution.

Calculating ROI

Soft measures are good enough for many organizations, but not all. Klick, for example, is a very data driven organization and has applied the same rigor to

[4] Nielsen Online: "Global Faces and Networked Places" A Nielsen report on Social Networking's New Global Footprint," March 2009. (Note that Nielsen Online is not affiliated with Nielsen Norman Group in any way; it's a completely different company.)

measuring cost-savings from the intranet as they would any other company initiative.

“As a data-centric company, we measure everything,” says Aaron Goldstein, Chief Operating Officer, Klick, Inc. “You can track to the second the time you spend on a task, and we even have an interrupt button for the moments when you need to chat or Chatter. The metrics that measure the value of each feature are unique.”

One example of the measureable returns the company has found in investing in its online collaboration tools can be found in its Weekly Review system. Prior to developing the Weekly Review, Klick was measuring the cost and value of running weekly client status meetings with an average of 8 to 12 people (representing each of the stakeholder groups involved in the delivery of a client’s projects) for two to three hours across nine different client teams.

“Quantified, at an average hourly rate of $140 per hour for 50 weeks a year, this was an investment of $1 million to $2.26 million,” says Goldstein. “While the value of these meetings in terms of collaboration, problem solving, and issue resolution was acknowledged as important, it was difficult to measure and there was universal agreement that it was not worth the investment. A new solution was required that accomplished many of the same goals while dramatically reducing the costs and improving the efficiency of the process.”

Here’s how they worked out the numbers:

> The Weekly Review technology solution was measured by its cost to develop (385 hours @ $140/hour = $53,900)
>
> + Cost to still meet face-to-face to deal with things that require that type of interaction (8-12 people for 1 hour across 9 teams, once a month ($121,960 - $181,440 for the year)
>
> + The time to participate in Weekly Review process (8-12 people for 15 minutes across 9 teams, weekly = $126,000-$189,000)

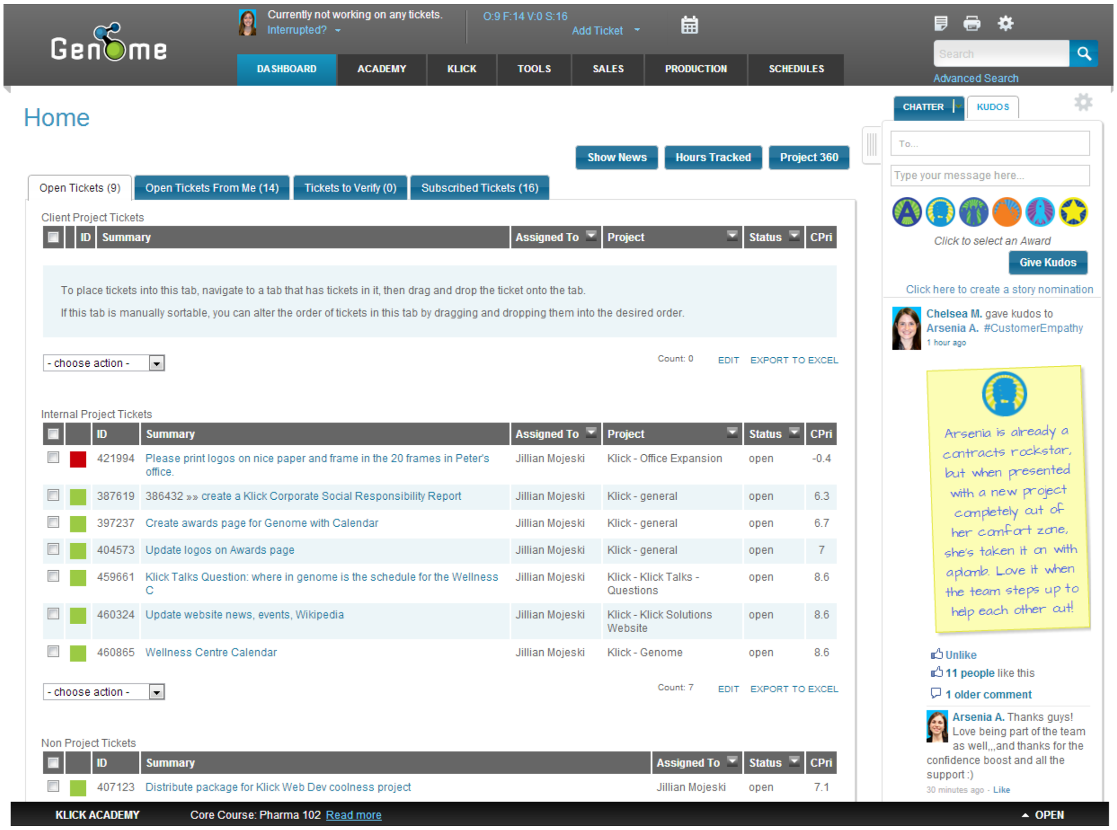
The result: a total cost savings of approximately $300,000-$424,000, relative to an original cost of $1 million to $2.26 million. This initiative had a payback period of less than three months.

“We also generally measure success of new technologies by their adoption rate,” says Goldstein. “We practice ‘Digital Darwinism’ where features either get adopted or die. For Weekly Review that was 83 percent weekly usage three months after launch, which means that people are finding utility and value in it.”

“Same goes for our Kudos and Chatter features,” he says. The number of positive peer recognition nominations grew nearly tenfold from 143 over a six month period prior to launch to 1,272 Kudos being given from one employee to another in the six months post-launch of Kudos.”

“In terms of aggregate social interactions, like Chatter posts, news stories, Kudos, comments, etc. engagement has surpassed all expectations,” says Goldstein. “averaging a new interaction every 76 seconds of the work day, over the first year.”

Klick's detailed measures may be an outlier today (at least among our sample set), but as social intranets mature, more companies are likely to discover real, measurable KPIs[5] that provide insight into how these initiatives are performing.



Pictured: Kudos, Klick's instant peer recognition program. To submit a "Kudos," a user selects the Kudos tab in the Chatter feed. Then they select an appropriate badge to identify the category of the Kudos and send recognition to whomever they want (up to five people at a time). Likes and comments push the Kudos to the top of the Chatter stream (featured in the right rail of every Genome page).

Second Wave Social: It's All About the Business

If experimentation was the first wave of social software then the second wave is to use social techniques to improve business processes and find ways to measure those results in real numbers and hard dollars.

"We are just leaving the first phase of social business," says Reiser, "where companies piloted/experimented with social deployments. They likely have experienced some success and have achieved good adoption from their users.

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[5] Cameran Evans, "How to Calculate the ROI of Enterprise 2.0," Socialcast Blog: http://blog.socialcast.com/how-to-calculate-the-roi-of-enterprise-2-0/

"The key lesson learned from Phase I," he says, "was how to drive adoption, meaning how to build vibrant communities and how to answer the question, 'What's in it for me (WiifM)?' Today, community management is a well known best practice and is offered as part of a standard curriculum by many universities and specialized companies."

So what's next?

After a year or two companies find that their new social deployments are not integrated into the rest of the business and it becomes yet another silo.

Phase II, according to Reiser, is when companies will start to look at social from a business perspective. "Social is a huge opportunity," he says. "Social is a capability to make your business more effective and efficient. It's all about the business because if you want to have social as part of your overall business strategy you have to answer the question, "What's in it for (the) Business (WiifB)?"

"At the end of the day they pay for it," says Reiser. "If you want to have a full social integration in your company you have to get buy-in from top management and to do that you have to have clear metrics to show success. If you can prove success, they'll say 'let's do that' and give you the money."

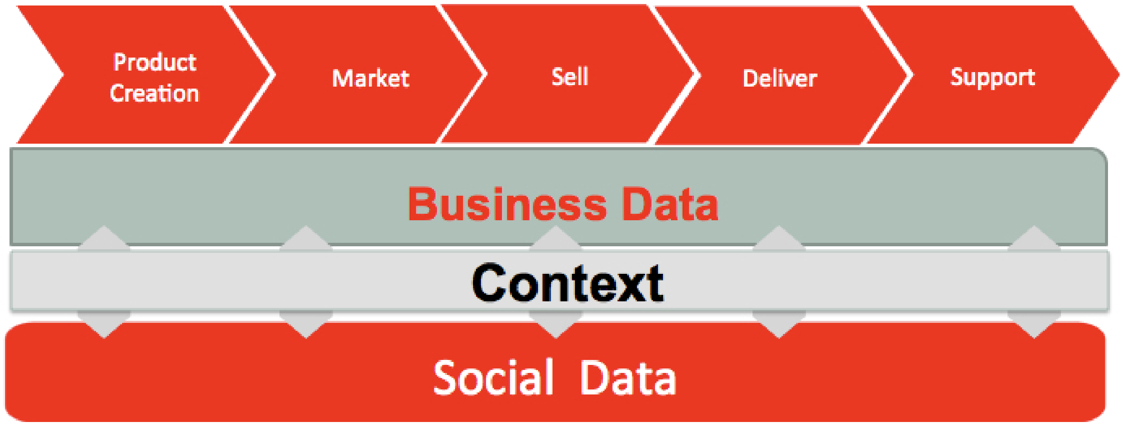
His company, Oracle, is making specific, measurable and meaningful inroads into doing exactly that with its social strategy using Oracle Social Network (OSN).[6] OSN takes enterprise social and builds in a semi-permeable membrane of social tools that enable businesses to use the social layer both internally *and* across the divide that separates them and their customers.

"Oracle's strategy is to seamlessly integrate social capabilities into all our business applications," says Reiser." So the OSN social layer is woven directly into and across business processes and applications.

Oracle recognizes that socially enabling the business processes is not enough. Social interactions need to be measurable in the same way traditional processes have always been.

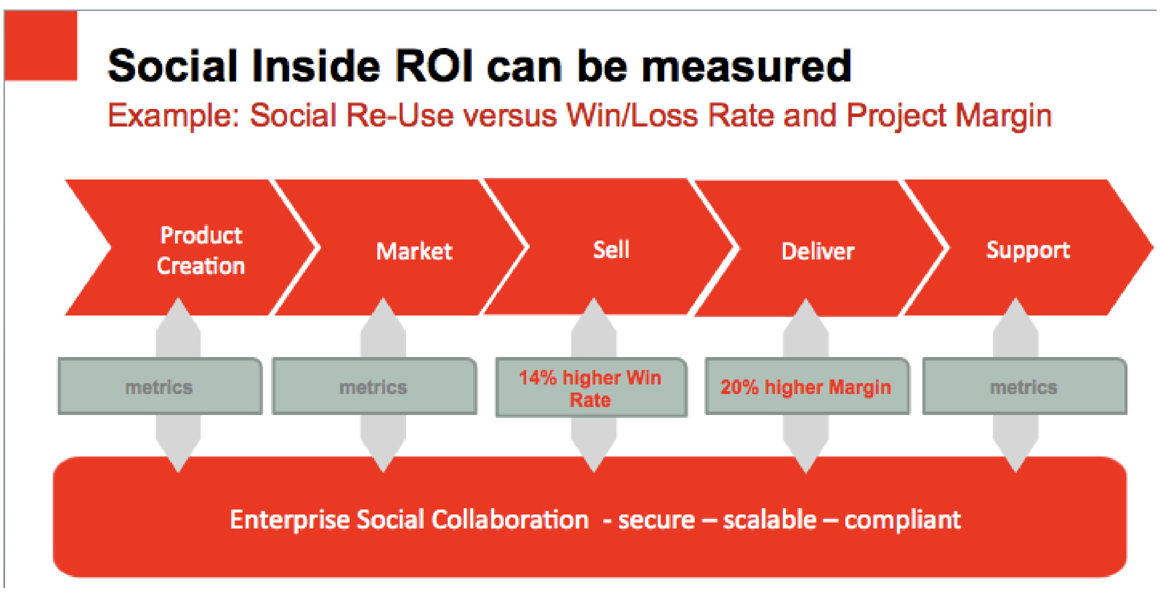
"Companies are doing it already," he says. "They call it business intelligence. On the business side there are extremely good models for how you measure your business. You can slice and dice your business data. Now what's new is to determine what the business analytics model is for social data. How can you bring together social data and business data? You get much better insights by bringing them together, by putting them in context."

[6] "Oracle Social Network — The Social Glue for Enterprise Applications," Oracle WebCenter Blog: https://blogs.oracle.com/webcenter/entry/oracle_social_network_the_social



Pictured: This illustration shows how Oracle's OSN product marries business data and social data along the business process continuum

"So for example," says Reiser, "if you can say, 'to implement social for CRM I can guarantee 14 percent better win/loss rates when you apply the social technology and also the social methodology (you need both),' and can prove it — with clear metrics — that's how you win over management. This is especially true in the current economic climate." [7]



Pictured: This illustration supports Reiser's CRM example (above), applying a business analytics model to social data to demonstrate measurable impact and garner support for social programs.

Marrying social metrics in context of the existing business metrics is the golden ticket and it must be baked into the equation from the start.

"If you don't think about that when you build your social strategy you are missing a big point," he says. "If you say you want to build a social intranet the next question

[7] "Social ROI and Social Value models," Socialadoption.com Blog: http://socialadoption.com/2011/12/12/social-roi-and-social-value-models/

for me is, how are you going to measure success? If you can't answer this question then you won't drive acceptance by management. If you don't have facts and figures to talk to the business it's an uphill battle forever."

Communication 2.0

SOCIALLY ENABLED COMMUNICATION

Immediacy

E2.0 tools accelerate expectations about the flow of information. Microblogging tools such as Yammer and Socialtext turn communication into a continuous stream, but even simple blogging platforms or wikis can help transform the information mindset of an organization as users learn to expect information to be current — at all times.

“One big change is that we can’t wait for days to get approvals on official company messaging,” says Susan Kreifel, Online Intranet (i-Connect) Editor/Manager, Sprint Nextel. “Immediacy is key. We’ve been pushed to be much more proactive and reactive to issues.”

With E2.0 companies are not only expected to support the flow of informal information, but they are also expected to create conversation around topics that might once have been the exclusive domain of stiff, controlled, and highly orchestrated communications, such as press releases. “Just because a topic might not be ‘comfortable’ to discuss, we can’t just ignore it and expect it to go away,” she says.

She gives the example of a hot button issue that the organization needed to stay ahead of because the communications team knew employees would be blogging about it on Sprint Space, the company’s internal blogging platform.

“A potential hot potato topic was the public release of information about executive compensation,” says Kreifel. “With a challenging marketplace and recent layoffs, we knew employees would be talking about it, so we proactively posted a blog post explaining that these actions were part of original contract agreements and were legally binding.”

This proactive approach diffused the potential reaction. “We had no reaction,” she says.

Breaking Down Silos

If you could choose just one social tool to help you break down the silos in your organization, your best bet might be microblogging. Yet this simple little tool is often misunderstood as a time waster. Enterprise microblogging has suffered, at least in part, from the reputation of its most famous Web counterpart, Twitter. However, organizations that have embraced microblogging know firsthand that employees are talking about far more important things than what they had for breakfast, and accomplishing more than anyone could have imagined in short, rapid bursts of information.

Silos created by division, department and role are as ubiquitous in companies as computers and cell phones but the simple premise of microblogging is that everyone can participate and each participant is on equal footing. This is where the tool’s true value shines through.

“Yammer is a completely open forum and is oblivious of hierarchy,” says Jennie Leng, Online Experience Manager, Telecom Retail, Telecom New Zealand. “Users appear as individuals, not by their job title or department. Yammer is completely unmoderated and the only limit is an unwritten guide to keep posts short, due to the nature of the technology. (Unlike Twitter, this length is not enforced.)"

"The key premise: What are you working on now?' is designed to stimulate discussion, break down silos, and keep people in different departments informed of what is happening in other areas of the business," she says. "Because Yammer is completely instantaneous it ensures fast response times for queries. This avoids old issues with finding the right person, escalating through the chain, lags in turning around answers and physically getting hold of people, having too many meetings and wasting time."

"Also," she says, "Yammer helps to avoid the trap of only talking to your immediate colleagues or team rather than fully utilizing all the knowledge and resources within the business."

The proof of its ability to deliver on its promise of real-time communication, across boundaries, is in the use. Here, a Rubicon Project employee comments on what it's like to use Yammer:

> *"Despite my initial hesitancy I've come to really love and rely on this communication tool. I know that wherever our team members are (because our sales team is dispersed across the country) they can provide updates on their recent meetings, closed deals and moments of panic and hilarity. If I'm ever traveling I can pick up on what's going in and out of the office based on blasts through yammer and contribute to what's being discussed through the blackberry application. I wouldn't have that type of connection with everyone in the office without Yammer."*

Microblogging Challenges

Because microblogging is not yet a corporate staple, the perception remains that the risks outweigh its benefits. Some common challenges to microblogging adoption include:

- **Its use must be purpose driven.** Early converts to microblogging concede that more than other tools, a microblogging program must be driven by a clear mandate for use. The free-flowing nature of the tool means users must have a clear understanding of the business purpose of the stream and the expectations of the organization in offering it as part of the users' toolbox.

  It's simplicity is both blessing and a curse. Microblogging is so simple that some people can't grasp its value. Yet simplicity seems to contribute to its success. "Yammer has gained faster and wider cut through than previous attempts for collaborative spaces (such as the use of Wiki and forum spaces) due at least in part to its similarity to other social networking tools," says Rob Inskeep, Security Expert, Technology and Shared Services, Telecom New Zealand. **"**There is also no need to understand formatting or content searching as the whole yammer space is more of a stream of consciousness than an organized information repository."

  "Plus, the remote nature of the tool makes asking hard questions and offering opinions easier than face-to-face," says Inskeep.

- **Timing is everything.** Microblogging is a tool that requires a certain amount of timing to ensure its success. Assessing readiness is key. “As with most tools, the greatest risk is introducing it too soon, or in a manner that causes it to fall into disfavor,” says Amurgis. **“**We have to be careful in how we position and introduce it, lest leaders rally against it for being a productivity drain. (This same risk applies to any new tool.) Better to wait until the need is clear and compelling than to taint its reputation forevermore.”
- **It takes some getting used to.** Users need an acclimation period to develop good habits with microblogging tools. “When people are first starting they want to read everything that comes past, which makes them feel bogged down,” says Simon Gianoutsos, Principal Solution Architect, Technology and Shared Services, Telecom New Zealand. **“**It is better to take the stream as it comes, even if you miss things the first time around.”
- **The line between useful and frivolous is easily crossed.** “If employees aren’t disciplined in their use of it, it can become a great way to fritter away valuable business hours,” says Cahill. When used well, it can be an effective source of information across the entire population of an organization. And when used poorly, it can lead down the rabbit hole of productivity sink, just like any other tool, when mis-used.

Enterprise Social Networks: Exploiting the Value of Weak Ties

Enterprise social networks are a great untapped resource for organizations looking to bolster their single most valuable asset: their workforce. Social networks help employees be better employees by connecting them not just to more people, but also to the *right* people. Expanding one’s social graph[8] inside a company benefits the employee by giving him the opportunity to demonstrate his own sphere of knowledge and influence, and thus forward his career trajectory.

“They [enterprise social networking applications] need to be a directory where I can simply look up a colleague’s phone number or email address,” says Starr. “They also need to illustrate my persona, including my skills, interests, community affiliations, my blog posts, files I’ve shared, the people in my network, perhaps even some things I can share that will foster closer relationships by providing others with a more personal depiction of who I am.”

Networking, once considered crucial to getting a job, is now part of the way many knowledge workers get their job done. Corporate social networks give users quick and targeted access to a wider circle of contacts than face-to-face networking ever could, even for the most earnest networker.[9] Exploiting the value in these connections has never been more important. Gartner predicts[10] that by 2020 workers will need to be adept at exploiting the power of weak ties across organizations in order to advance.

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8 “Facebook's Zuckerberg uncorks the social graph,” ZDNet.com: http://blogs.zdnet.com/BTL/?p=5156

9 McAfee, Andrew, “How to Hit the Enterprise 2.0 Bullseye,” AndrewMcAfee.org: http://andrewmcafee.org/2007/11/how_to_hit_the_enterprise_20_bullseye/

10 “Watchlist: Continuing Changes in the Nature of Work, 2010-2020,” Gartner: http://www.gartner.com/it/page.jsp?id=1416513

A user's social graph on the Web can lead to fragmentation. There are Facebook friends and Twitter followers and LinkedIn connections, and so on. However, at work, one's social graph is comprised of the people they know, usually bounded somewhat by the artificial segmentations of the workplace: role, title, work group, region, division, etc. A workplace social graph is made up primarily of the people one encounters in the course of doing a job. The online social network expands those boundaries and the value a worker gains from their associations.

Harvard Business School professor and Enterprise 2.0 researcher, Andrew McAfee describes the world of the knowledge worker as consisting of four groups or levels of social ties that people have in the workplace:[11]

- **Strong ties:** Close colleagues. These are people with whom we have long, intense interactions and these are the relationships that companies spend the most time fostering and reinforcing.
- **Weak ties:** These exist somewhere between acquaintance and friend. These are the most important and least exploited of the tiers of association.
- **Potential ties.** These are people we have no connection to yet, but should. "They could help you not reinvent the wheel. But at this stage, they are potential and [the worker] can't convert them and exploit them because she doesn't know about them," says MacAfee.
- **Strangers.** People we don't know and don't need to know.

According to McAfee, companies spend the majority of their efforts supporting employees in fostering only the first tier of association: strong ties. "We spend a lots of time strengthening the ties we already have," he says.

Think about project groups and small workgroups that exist in nearly every organization. These groups are often closed communities, even when collaborative tools such as SharePoint groups support them.

The most value comes from a worker's weak ties. Improving those ties is precisely where social networking excels. "Social networks," he says, "help you to build, maintain and exploit diverse networks of people and get information you wouldn't otherwise have access to, links to information you would never have come across."

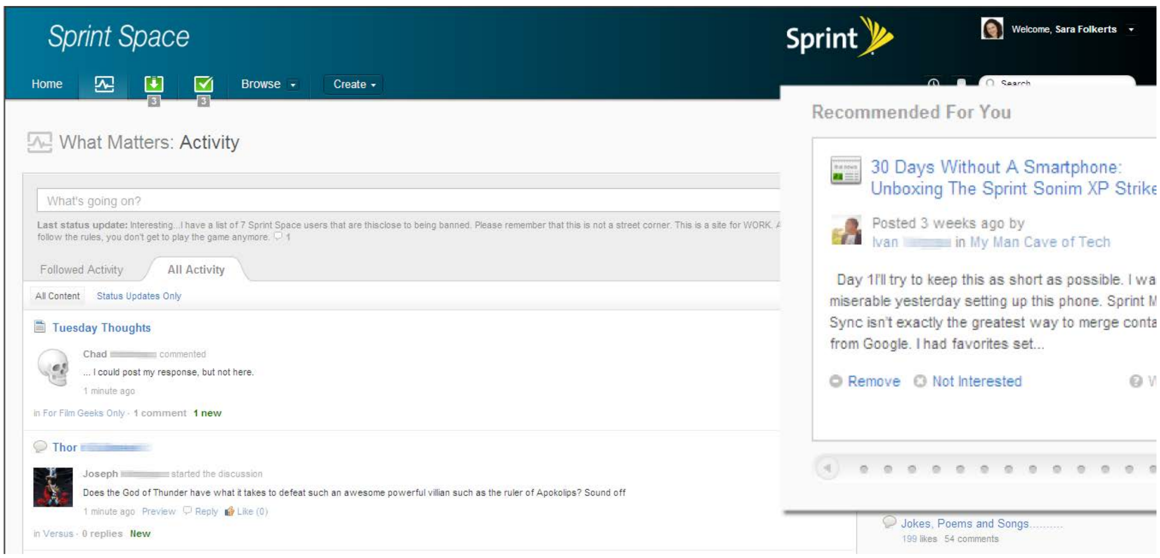
Tapping into one's weak ties can serve as a launch pad to other networks that enable workers to get questions answered at a very low cost. "The barriers to helpfulness are low," he says.

It's easy to pose a question in a status update on Twitter or in Facebook, where the question appears in the stream of all your friends or followers. Even the most superficially connected person is likely to elicit some response while the most connected person has a chance of gaining valuable insights, nearly instantly. Inside a company, a social networking tool can give a user better access to the right people, no matter what the question that needs to be answered. This can make a big company seem small.

11 "Andrew McAfee on Enterprise 2.0," Berkman Center for Internet & Society – Lunch Series: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3NN3uej7IMs&feature=PlayList&p=8CFF6738564B8B77&index=21

"We are making our big company smaller and fostering connections (both professional and personal) between people who might otherwise never meet," says Amurgis. "These connections establish informal networks for mutual assistance and advice. I can give a firsthand example. I now have a list of people, most of whom I'll never meet in person, who have expressed their willingness to evaluate any new tools we develop. Without social media, I would not know of their interest, and may not trust their opinions."

"We are better positioned than ever before to actually connect people to the experts directly, and to allow groups to self-form based on work, interests and skills," says Reiser. "Delivering a platform that allows information to flow without any top down orchestration is not only efficient, it is liberating."



Pictured: On Sprint Space, based on the content, people and places you already follow, Jive will recommend other content you might like or that might be relevant to you. This keeps employees connected to conversations that could be important, but that they might have missed elsewhere.

Blending Personal and Professional Communication

Using social tools inside the enterprise means accepting that not every conversation is going to be work related. This makes perfect sense if considered in broader terms. Do employees engage in work-related activities/communication every moment they are on the clock now? Of course not, so why would one expect their engagement with E2.0 tools to be any different?

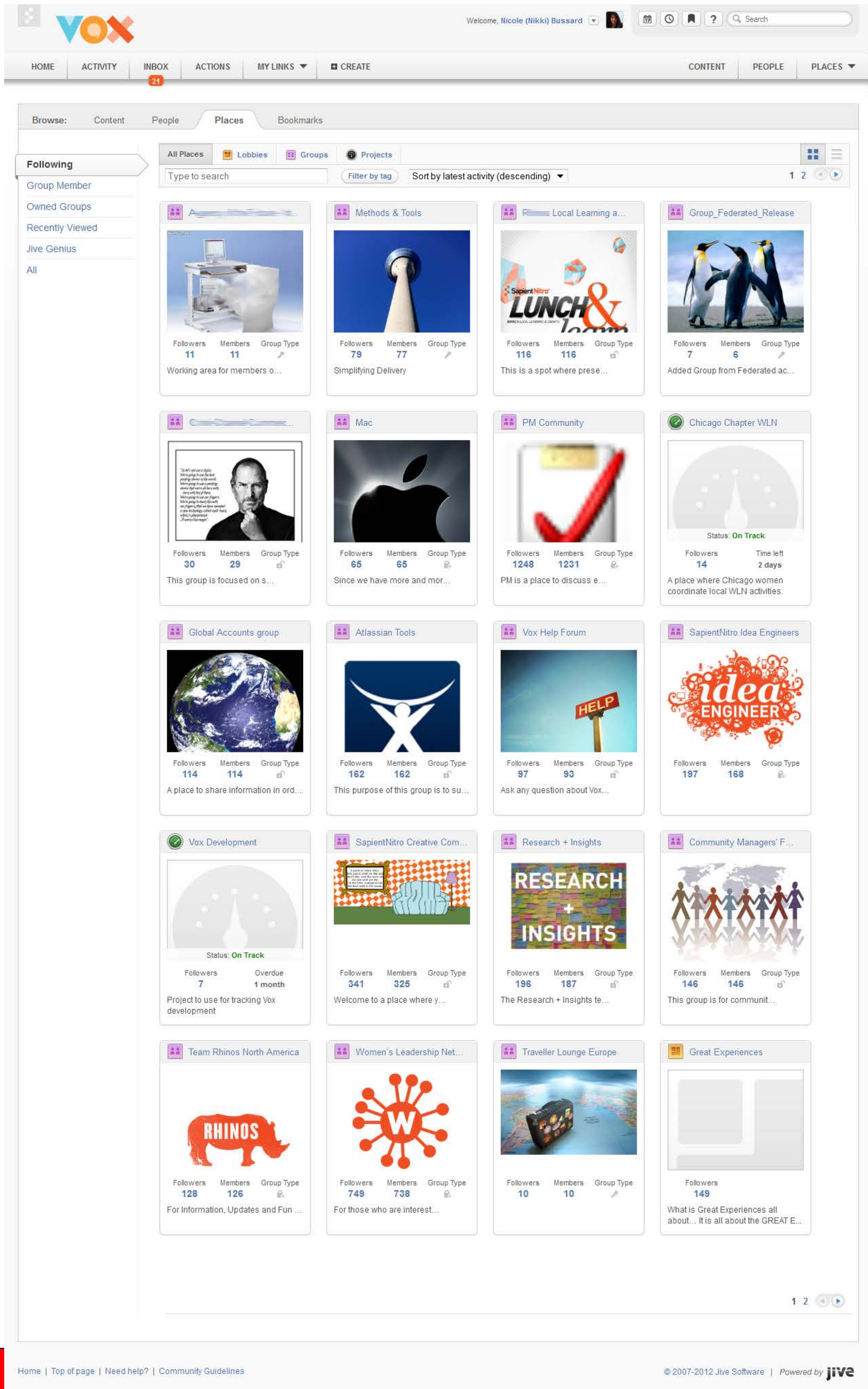
The reality is that the co-mingling of work and personal interactions is how employees build stronger working relationships. "Although not all of the conversations are business critical," says Jennifer Sniderman, Employee Communications, Channels & Editorial Manager, Sprint Nextel, "we can relate the camaraderie and water-cooler chatter that goes on in Sprint Space to traditional office place interactions."

Think of the new social tools as a digital water cooler.

“Similar to a water cooler or coffee machine in the office around which conversations take place,” says Gianoutsos. “Yammer supplements this beyond the geographical constraints of the floor, building, city or country you are working in.”

The social toolset gives employees more opportunities to engage online in the same manner as they do in person, and part of that interaction is merely building camaraderie, camaraderie that will serve them when they step back to their desks to get work done. By amplifying the reach of this water cooler conversation companies are helping their employees extend beyond the geographic or regional boundaries that once defined their work relationships.

“To put it simply, if any of the guys I've been debating whether or not Batman is a superhero or just a vigilante ever need help solving a communications issue, you can bet I'll pick up the phone,” says Sniderman. “Similarly, if I need to get a phone fixed for a customer, I know just where to go. It's relationship building for the digital generation.”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PM is a place to discuss e...
Chicago Chapter WLN
Status: On Track
Followers 14 Time left 2 days
A place where Chicago women coordinate local WLN activities.
Global Accounts group
Followers 114 Members 114 Group Type
A place to share information in ord...
Atlassian Tools
Followers 162 Members 162 Group Type
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Vox Help Forum
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Home | Top of page | Need help? | Community Guidelines
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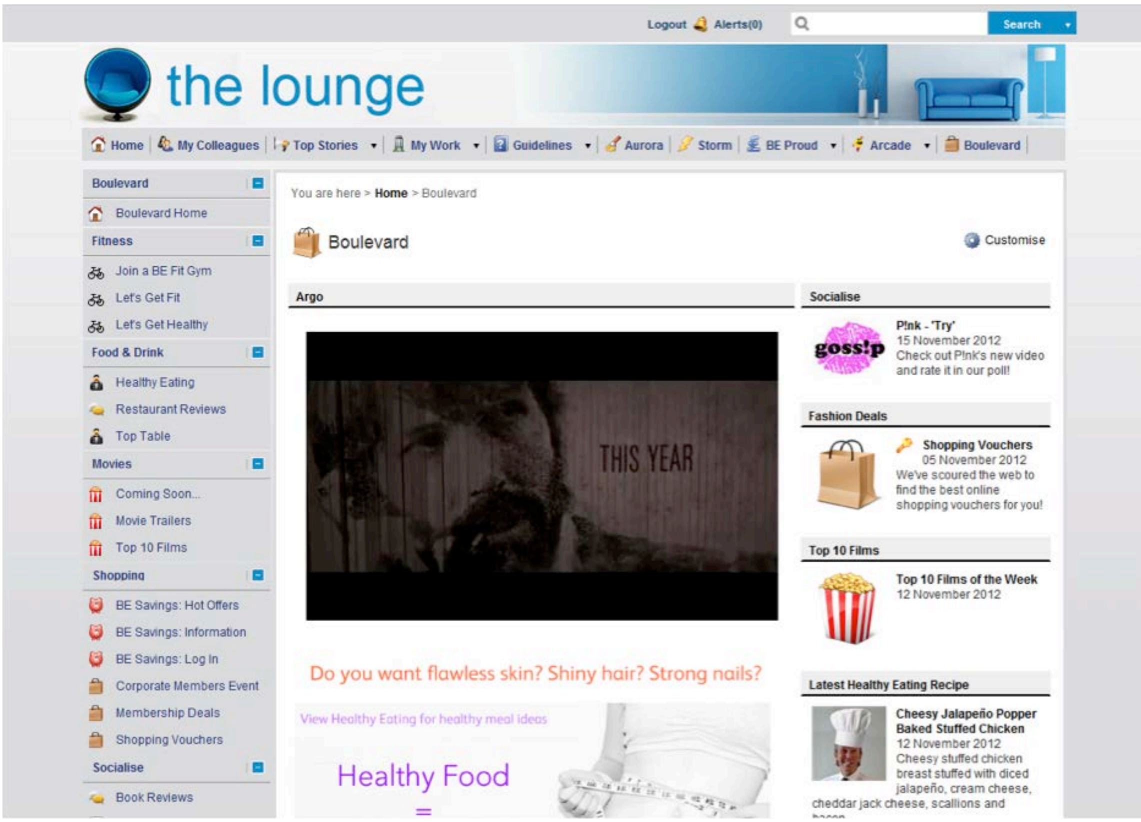
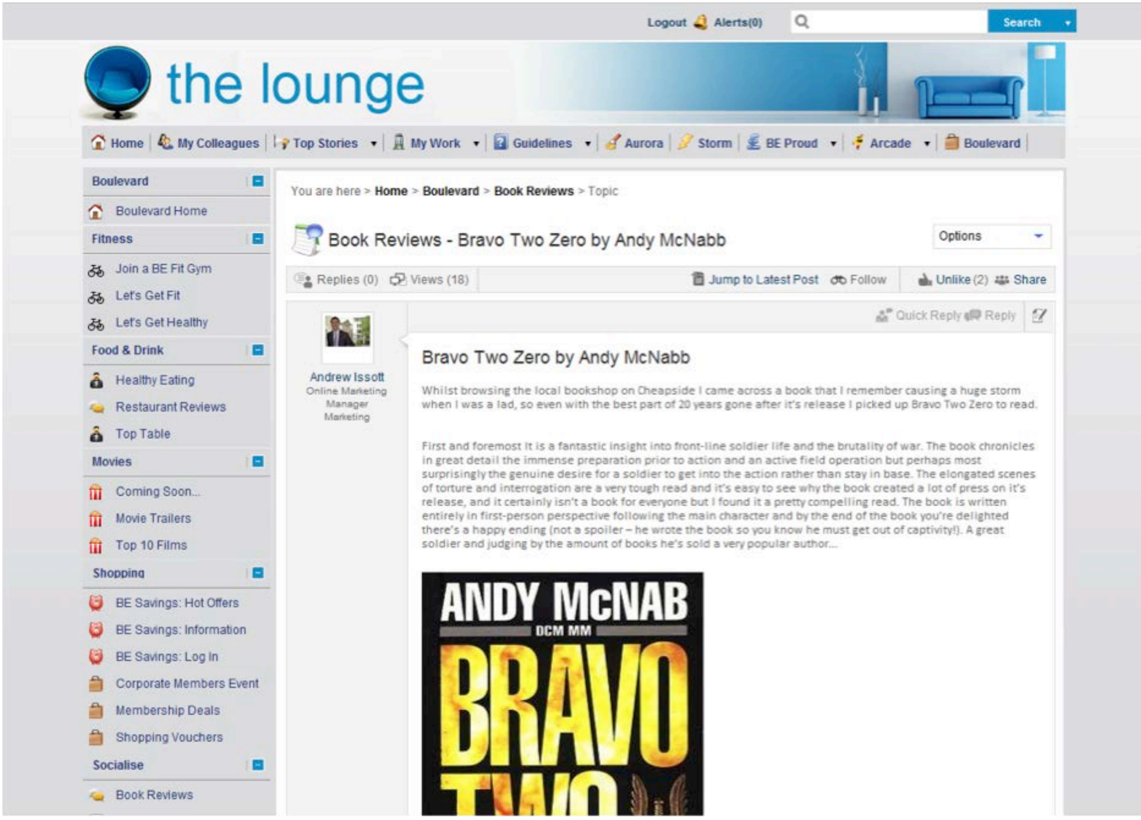
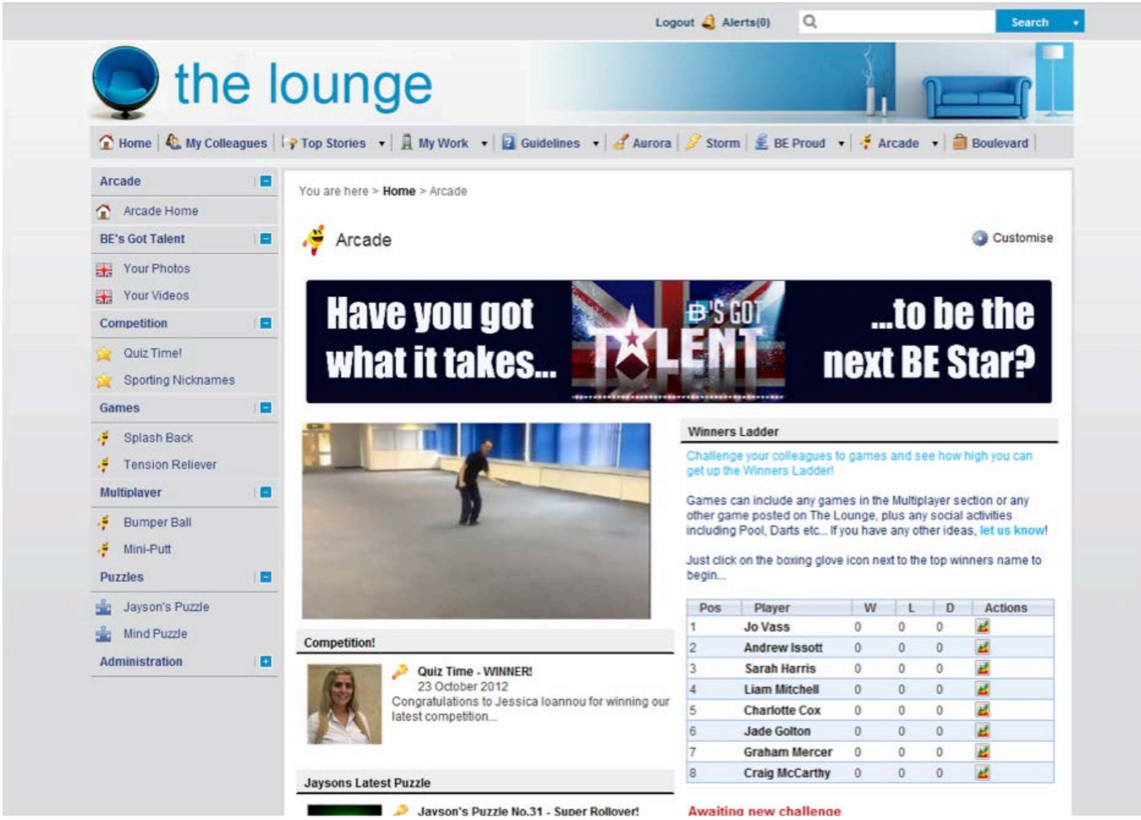
Pictured: This screen from Sapient's Vox shows how users can select to see a list of groups he or she is a member of, or find relevant groups based on a number of attributes.



Pictured: Despite being a Monday to Friday business, Business Environment sees a large number of hits at the weekend both in social and business areas. The inclusion of things users ask for include cinema listings, latest films, health/fitness tips and shopping vouchers. In return this has increased productivity in the region of 20 percent.



Pictured: Business Environment encourages users to use forums to share similar interests. This encourages people to build business networks based on interest and need, rather than location and department.



Pictured: Business Environment is a company that trusts its employees will get their work done and at the same time recognizes that nobody works every minute of the work day. “So we give people break out areas and reward the highest scorers on arcade games,” says Vass. “Again this is based on trust and is monitored, but we've not had reason to reprimand anyone for overuse or poor performance yet. In fact, it is another cause of increased productivity.

SOCIALLY ENABLED CONTENT

“Official” vs. User-Generated Content

Because enterprise social tools enable users to generate their own content, it makes sense to consider the relationship between “official” (company-generated content) and user-generated content (UGC). On social platforms does user-generated content become the de facto source of information over time? If not, does it at least contribute to or augment official content? And is there a split between where the different types of content reside?

“We often see a relationship between official and user generated content,” says Vass. “User-generated content will often reference official content when adding a context.” Business Environment has used this relationship between the two types of content to enhance the collective knowledge base.

“We have watched and learned from this, making a point of referencing user generated content wherever possible to broaden the idea of collective knowledge rather than a ‘them and us’ authoring culture,” she says.

This give and take between content types eventually leads to a softening of the lines that separate the two.

According to Kreifel, at Sprint, official and UGC “complement one another.” “i-Connect postings reflect the official company information, providing the facts of what’s happening, what we stand for and what we’re doing. Sprint Space delivers the ‘why’ behind decision-making, in a two-way conversation. Actually, the lines are blurring between Sprint Space and i-Connect, driving authenticity and engaging key employee influencers.”

While user-generated content does not need to come with a warning: “this content is user-generated and thus may be wrong,” it is helpful to distinguish between the two, in the context in which they appear. As users encounter content, it must be clear what’s what. “It is often coexistent,” says Amurgis, “but clearly labeled to distinguish between the two.”

“Users must easily recognize the difference between what is an opinion which could change quickly and what is authoritative, factual content which will be constant,” says Morrell. “For example the global navigation bars on every intranet page have a different color for social media.”

“Across the intranet it’s very clear which content is official and which user generated,” says Allan of the Welsh Government’s intranet. “The scope of user-generated content is deliberately limited and its presentation very different to avoid any confusion between the two.”

On some intranets, official and user-generated content literally live side by side, as users are given search results that contain a selection of both types of content in the same search results screen. Over time, as social tools become more widely adopted, the amount of “official” vs. user-generated content can shift heavily toward UGC. It will happen on its own, but it is good to acknowledge that shift and appreciate what the organization needs to do to recognize and support that.

“It is shifting the notions of who are the purveyors of information,” says Cahill. “And changing the game as control of information is being lost, gained or shared.”

“We have crafted both a formal and informal content strategy within Sun,” says Casanova. We are heading down the road of 70/20/10 where 70 percent of Sun’s content creation is informal, or peer-to-peer sharing, 20 percent is delivered through mentoring and ten percent is formal content (courses).”

Tools such as wikis often contain all UGC, while the related, official content is linked to in outside sources as reference (think of the Wikipedia model).

Wikis in particular present the possibility of content becoming official over time through an editorial workflow. In the case of Agilent’s documentation wiki, “official content is made ‘official’ both by editing/moderating user-generated content and by placing the final material behind a log-in screen,” says Kathryn Craven, technical writer, Agilent Technologies. “Accessible only to approved customers and users.”

The Wisdom of the Crowd

There is a natural lifecycle to the development of user-generated content. Over time content quality is elevated as more users encounter it and are given tools to react to it. The reason crowdsourcing works is because it users can suss out what’s right and what’s wrong, with very little administrative intervention.

“If it [information] is correct,” says a manufacturing professional, “people learn from it and can do their jobs better. If it is incorrect, surfacing this allows other people to discuss and correct. Facilitating the conversation to come to a common understanding of the knowledge is more important than where it comes from.”

In the same way that communities can be self-governing, community policing also contributes to a standard of excellence in user-generated content. Some call this the “wisdom of the crowd.” If enough people are contributing to an open system, the integrity of the content is all but guaranteed.

“One of the most common questions we hear from social media skeptics is: ‘What if someone gives an incorrect answer or says something inappropriate?’” says Justin Goldsborough, Social Media Manager, Sprint Nextel. “Well, almost every time that has happened in Sprint Space we see the community of employees pull them back in.”

Moderate Lightly

Companies apply just as light a hand to moderation as they do governance. Content flows freely on most social platforms and is posted live, rather than being held in an approval queue. As we mentioned earlier, employees now expect information to be immediate.

“We chose to publish every document submitted by users immediately, leaving content quality control to a background team — knowledge team,” says André Esteves de Carvalho, director, Portugal Telecom - Sistemas de Informação (PT-SI). We did that because in a Web 2.0 environment people must see results right away.”

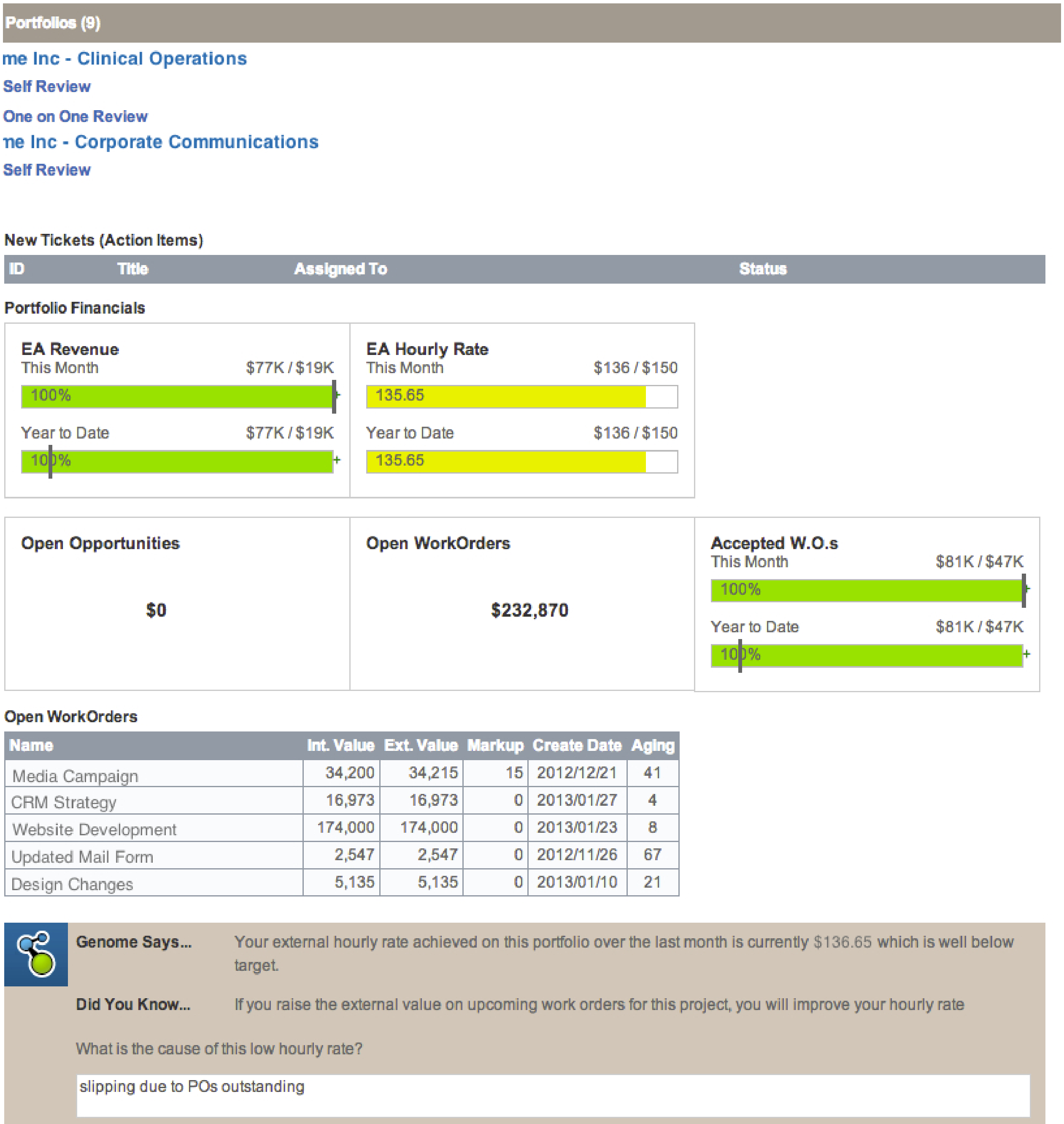
The moderation that occurs tends to be for reasons of quality control rather than policing bad behavior. This is especially true of audio and video content. When content is rejected, it should be for a good reason that is communicated to the user so he can understand why. Moderation is sometimes applied to social content to merely facilitate an educational process.

“The issue is to be fast in executing this background control,” says Carvalho. “Otherwise other users can be confused about what is accepted and what is not. And to be educational when we address users about those unacceptable documents.”

Creating Feedback Loops

The great thing about social software is that it encourages the exchange of ideas. The difficultly of social software is that a lot of valuable information can be lost in the flow. When knowledge is being shared freely within an active, thriving community, it is not enough to sit back and listen to the hum. Companies must put their collective ears to the ground and turn information gathered via these channels into actionable improvements.

“Creating feedback loops is one of our primary goals with Genome,” says Segal. “Everything we do is designed to feed data back into the system, to analyze that data into actionable insights, and to feed those insights back to our team in order to give them informed intuition. Our primary work-related feedback loop is the Weekly Review/Project360 combination, which creates an early warning system for potential problems for our people and our projects. Our whole publication/comment/like system for News, Chatter, Kudos, and Stories creates a number of loops that provide our people with insight and positive feedback. Even our #dogfood tag on Chatter provides a feedback loop to the Genome team about where their product is causing issues or pain for the company."



Pictured: An example of a Weekly Review page on Genome. Genome runs thousands of queries at once, but not all of the data is relevant all of the time. Weekly Review surfaces the data that needs action along with the data that is a basic measure of performance. This way, Weekly Review surfaces what items need to be acted upon, one week at a time, while still providing an employee with the basic data to measure their success.

Finding ways to harness the information is crucial for social media as a long-term business investment but it's not an easy thing to do.

"This is one of the common missteps companies make," says DiMauro, "not integrating community into organizational operations. They don't leverage the results of their efforts. The social media is a huge success but lessons learned and best practices are not being looped back into sales, marketing, etc. There is no feedback loop. They don't know what to do with raw data."

She advocates for establishing a bridging role, such as a researcher who looks at data and make sense of it and circulates it back into the organization. This is someone who can steadily surface hot trends, tips and aggregate the information.

"They need to put in place a repeatable process," she says. "It can be simple — something as simple as a newsletter. But it's a matter of ingraining the behavior back into the organization. It will naturally change the face of the organization when it is right."

"It's a huge priority for us and central to executing our strategy for use of social media in employee communications," says Sniderman. "We adopted and modified Best Buy's 'Easy Listening filter' as a methodology for uncovering key growth opportunities and root cause drivers of issues related to Sprint's top priorities: customer service, financial performance and reputation/brand management."

As DiMauro suggests, capturing the trends can be as simple as a short report or newsletter to key stakeholders.

"We provide a general report on the hot topics and traffic trends and analytics to key stakeholders on a monthly basis," says Sniderman. "We provide an ad hoc 'Buzz Report' that summarizes the sentiment or questions being posed, highlights key comments, defines the volume and tone of the discussion and specifically outlines recommended actions to be taken."

Sun is also working to identify feedback opportunities on the company's social platforms. "We are capturing user patterns, what content are they looking at, what formats those are in, what types of content are they rating highly, providing positive and negative comments around," says Casanova. **"**This data is then used by those that create and submit content) to drive changes in their content and how they approach it, understand what people find value in."

Creating feedback loops is critical but acting on the findings uncovered through those listening cycles is just as important.

"If marketing sees a re-occurring issue or customer problem discussed on Yammer it gives the department (or anyone else) the opportunity to help problem solve," says Jordan. "We went through a period of time where our customers were being besieged with an unwanted ad creative (due to no fault of ours.) It was repeatedly on Yammer and internal emails. Marketing saw that the common questions coming from customers were: what the heck is going on and what are you guys doing about it?"

The company's marketing department responded to that feedback by writing a blog post addressing the root of the problem and what the company was doing to solve it for customers. They distributed that blog post's URL back over Yammer to help employees understand the scope of the company's response.

"It has been sent to countless customers to help answers questions," says Jordan. "It saves our account team time in the long run by not having to explain over and over and it was proactive communication that is outward-facing and lives on our blog for anyone to read."

Closing the circle on learning opportunities that arise from social channels makes communication not just open and transparent, but complete. It is most effective when there are continuous cycles of listen/respond, listen/respond, otherwise, the value of what is shared is somewhat diminished. However, even organizations that are doing this with vigilance say you have to know when to say when.

"We follow the same mantra in our client work that we do in our internal tool development: measure the iceberg but only report on the tip," says Goldstein. "The amount of information you can collect from a complex, properly instrumented system of Genome's size is monumental. Attempting to report on all of it would result in massively complex dashboards stretching over miles of screen real estate. Instead, we follow the belief that we should collect as much data as possible and stash it safely in our data warehouse, and then use Genome's advanced dashboards and displays to only report on the bits that are most relevant right now. This enables us to construct ever-changing feedback loops that meet our ever-changing business needs, secure in the knowledge that all of the data we might need is sitting in Genome."

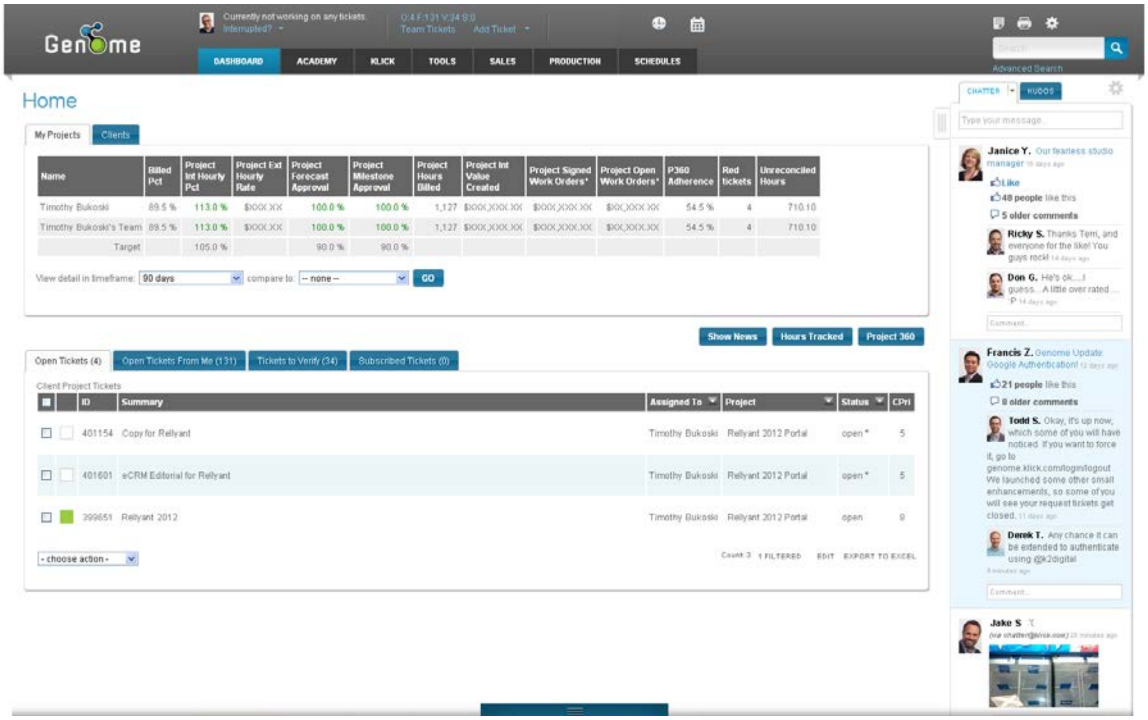
An example of the kind of data Klick collects is on project financial health, information about changes in forecasts over time, and minute-by-minute time and expense tracking against projects. "This allows us to go far beyond a simple profit/loss evaluation of a project and dig deeper into productivity measures like achieved hourly rates for each day," he says. "With that information in hand, we can aggregate by portfolio or customer and explore custom tailored timeframes. This allows some users to monitor the year-to-date productivity on their portfolios, while others examine changes in the last 20 days and identify outliers."

Specifically, when a user identifies a metric — such as achieved hourly rate — that changed in specific way to trigger an investigation, they would simply click on the metric display a list of projects that most positively and most negatively impacted it. From there they could review the project-specific forecast changes over time to identify the offending labor role.

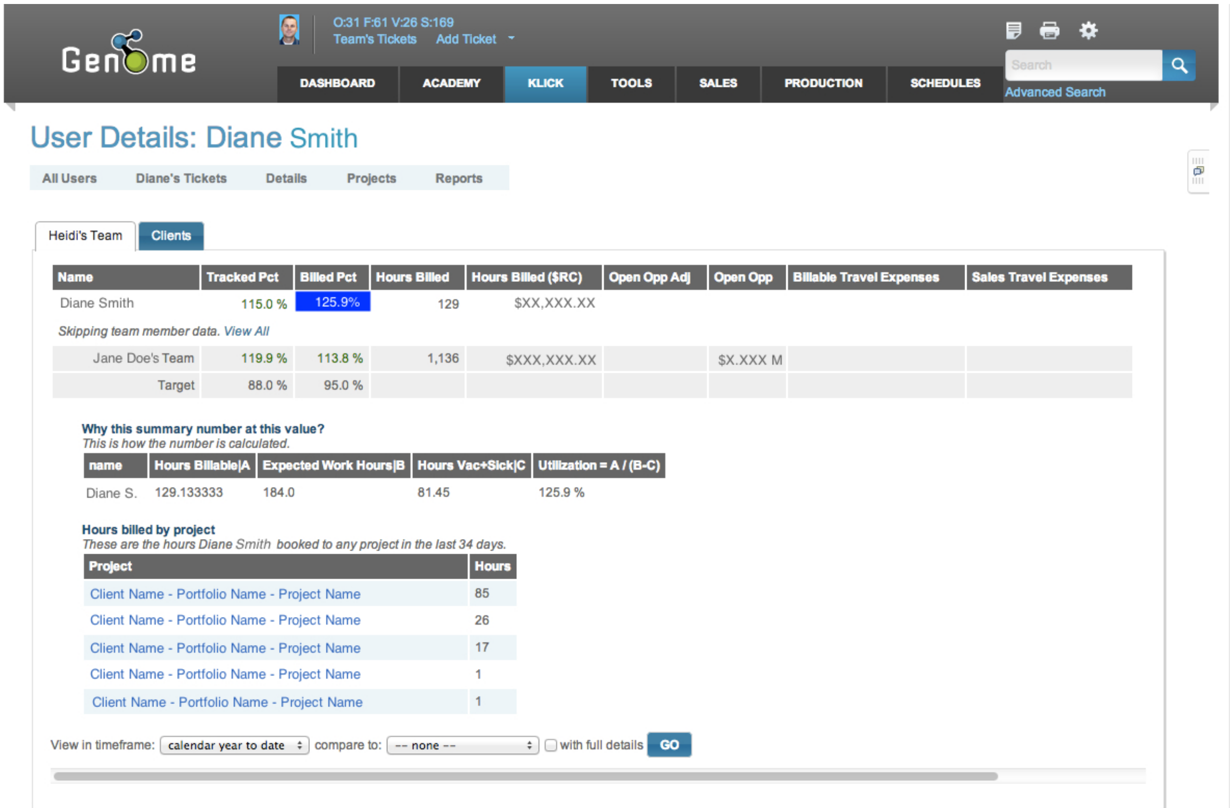
"They could read through the project reviews performed by various project leads to look for a reason, or they could simply talk to a human – and now they know just who to talk to, the team on that project," says Goldstein.

This data capture and analysis processes are accomplished on a variety of levels, as appropriate throughout the organization. "Our people have access to personalized dashboards that enable them to drill down into any of their personal KPIs at any time, helping them to identify trends and make constant, minute course corrections. We strongly encourage our managers to use those data points in their conversations and have built visibility up and down the chain to help drive discussion."

Feedback loops are not a "set it and forget it" feature of a socially enabled organization. "One of the keys to feedback loop success is repeatability," says Goldstein. "All of our dashboard stats are updated daily, our project reviews are required weekly, and new battle scars are codified whenever they're identified. This means we know that there’s a regular flow of data into the loops, which means there’s a regular flow of insight back out.”



Pictured: A personalized dashboard on Genome that an employee would see. This dashboard contains metrics that indicates an employee's performance against the goals established by himself and his manager. Genome tracks the necessary inputs and displays the values in real time, taking into account milestones, deadlines, and goals. Red or yellow data indicates areas the employee needs to improve to meet their goals, whereas green data, as shown here, indicates met or exceeded expectations.



Pictured: An example of a "drilled down" section of an employee's personal dashboard on Genome. In this instance, the employee is looking more closely at his current billed percentage. He is able to see exactly how the number was determined, which projects have impacted that number most, and is then able to determine where he can make course corrections to affect the metrics.

KILLING EMAIL

E2.0 tools have the potential to change users' behaviors as users adopt new tools to perform familiar functions. One of the biggest potential game changers for E2.0 is to help organizations reduce their dependence on email. Given the opportunity, users might turn to an activity stream or a microblog post to communicate something that would have been sent via email. Or they might post something on a wiki or a blog instead of sending an email attachment. The real power of social tools is to help employees re-consider they way they communicate with co-workers. By helping to reduce email, social tools can address a long-recognized enterprise challenge.

Companies recognize this opportunity and are acting upon it.

"One immediate aim is to reduce the amount of email sent to large email distribution groups," says Hornsby. "This type of email is usually poorly targeted. Reducing the volume of such emails is something that would be widely welcome across the business. We have targeted individuals and teams that make the most frequent use of this type of email, and are supporting them to use targeted 'announcements.' We will measure success by measuring the reduction of emails sent from specific accounts."

“One of our biggest changes came from my intense dislike of email for practical, day-to-day handling of our work,” says Goldstein about Klick’s use of Genome as a mechanism to reduce email clutter. “We started more than ten years ago by putting our ticket system in place, moving our team away from email requests and instructions to a ticket-driven production system. Tickets were carefully designed to contain context, relevant conversations, ability to prioritize, accountability by being assigned to only person, etc. Even that simple change quickly affected our entire operation, driving far greater efficiency and precision, and enabling us to grow at 30-60 percent per year for the past fifteen years.”

Social tools provide employees opportunities to communicate more effectively, more appropriately and more succinctly, but most important they give users the incentive to change the *way* they communicate.

“[Yammer] hasn’t formally replaced anything yet.” says Neil Forster, Technical Research & Prototyping, Technology and Shared Services, Telecom New Zealand Limited. “But it has changed people’s use of tools like email and instant messaging. Questions are answered quicker and by many,” says Portillo.

And Yammer has proven to be an excellent replacement for those one-off emails that Jordan says, fall to the bottom of the list but are important nonetheless.

“Since January [2012] we have seen a 25 percent decrease of all emails,” says Vass.

“Email is still used but way down,” says Portillo. **“**Email chains are replaced by the wiki. Managers host all relevant documents on there and anyone who touches or works on the documents accesses it through the system. “

Given alternatives, employees usually rise to the occasion, transferring behaviors without any formal push to do so. “When we launched Sprint Space, we expected to provide an improved knowledge-sharing experience that would eliminate email and provide all employees with the same answers/perspectives,” says Goldsborough. “Just by launching the community, we’ve seen an increase in this type of open communication.”

“People use less email and less Microsoft Office: Word, Project, Excel,” says Mehrotra. “All we did was show them they could do much the same things with a lot less effort and a lot more visibility.

“We have seen a change in the way people are now communicating and sharing information within SLX,” says Casanova. “For instance, instead of emailing out a set of instructions on how to use an application, people are using screen capture software and actually showing people how to use the application, saving it as a video file and posting it to SLX.”

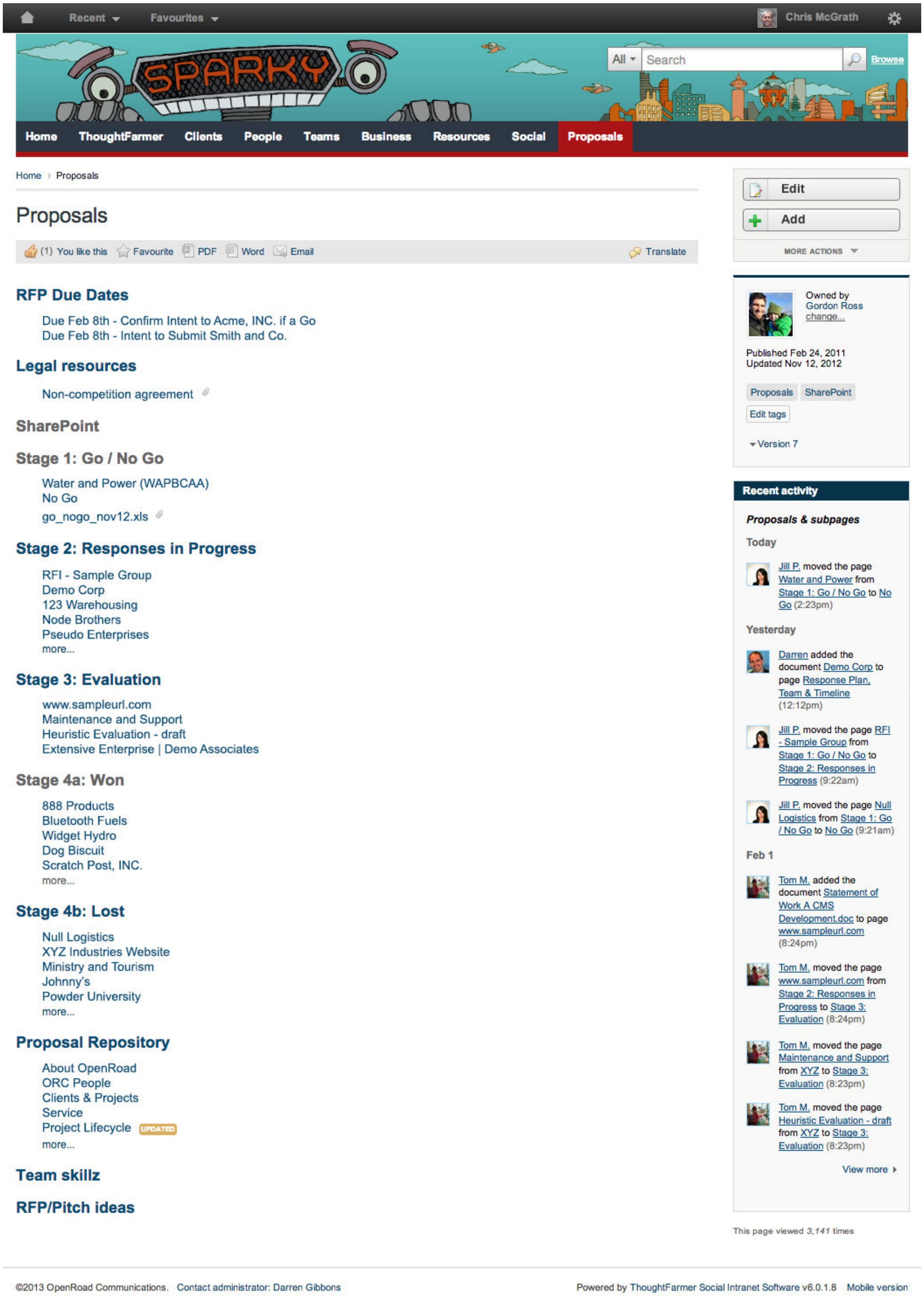
This shift from email to something as unrelated as screen casting shows that in a social environment, users will naturally migrate to the tool that best suits their needs. Social tools provide the platform for users to dictate the medium for the message rather than the tool defining the limitations of distribution.

“2.0 tools have forced us to think about what formats people like their information in (short, video, mp3, informal, etc.), but also how we get that information out to people,” says Casanova. “A shift has happened where people today have more information at their fingertips than ever before in history. They are used to functioning in a networked setting, always in touch with others (Google, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter etc.). We have tried to create a tool that continues that model within the enterprise, recognizing how people function outside the workplace and how they find and consume information.

While many users will naturally migrate to a more effective tool, some users need to be reminded other options exist. Breaking old habits is hard, but not impossible, as Sapient has learned.

“The behavior we would most like to influence is the use of distribution lists for discussions,” says Bussard. “We have been somewhat successful at this, but it is pretty hard to measure. When we have been successful, a lot of it has been through good old fashioned nagging — repeatedly replying to these emails asking people to transfer the discussion thread to Vox — and even going so far as to move the conversation for them if they don’t comply.”

“The more voices we get pushing this behavior, the more successful we seem to be — just one nagger doesn’t really do the trick,” she says.


Recent
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(1) You like this
Favourite
PDF
Word
Email
Translate
RFP Due Dates
Due Feb 8th - Confirm Intent to Acme, INC. if a Go
Due Feb 8th - Intent to Submit Smith and Co.
Legal resources
Non-competition agreement
SharePoint
Stage 1: Go / No Go
Water and Power (WAPBCAA)
No Go
go_nogo_nov12.xls
Stage 2: Responses in Progress
RFI - Sample Group
Demo Corp
123 Warehousing
Node Brothers
Pseudo Enterprises
more...
Stage 3: Evaluation
www.sampleurl.com
Maintenance and Support
Heuristic Evaluation - draft
Extensive Enterprise | Demo Associates
Stage 4a: Won
888 Products
Bluetooth Fuels
Widget Hydro
Dog Biscuit
Scratch Post, INC.
more...
Stage 4b: Lost
Null Logistics
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Gordon Ross
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Published Feb 24, 2011
Updated Nov 12, 2012
Proposals
SharePoint
Edit tags
Version 7
Recent activity
Proposals & subpages
Today
Jill P. moved the page Water and Power from Stage 1: Go / No Go to No Go (2:23pm)
Yesterday
Darren added the document Demo Corp to page Response Plan, Team & Timeline (12:12pm)
Jill P. moved the page RFI - Sample Group from Stage 1: Go / No Go to Stage 2: Responses in Progress (9:22am)
Jill P. moved the page Null Logistics from Stage 1: Go / No Go to No Go (9:21am)
Feb 1
Tom M. added the document Statement of Work A CMS Development.doc to page www.sampleurl.com (8:24pm)
Tom M. moved the page www.sampleurl.com from Stage 2: Responses in Progress to Stage 3: Evaluation (8:24pm)
Tom M. moved the page Maintenance and Support from XYZ to Stage 3: Evaluation (8:23pm)
Tom M. moved the page Heuristic Evaluation - draft from XYZ to Stage 3: Evaluation (8:23pm)
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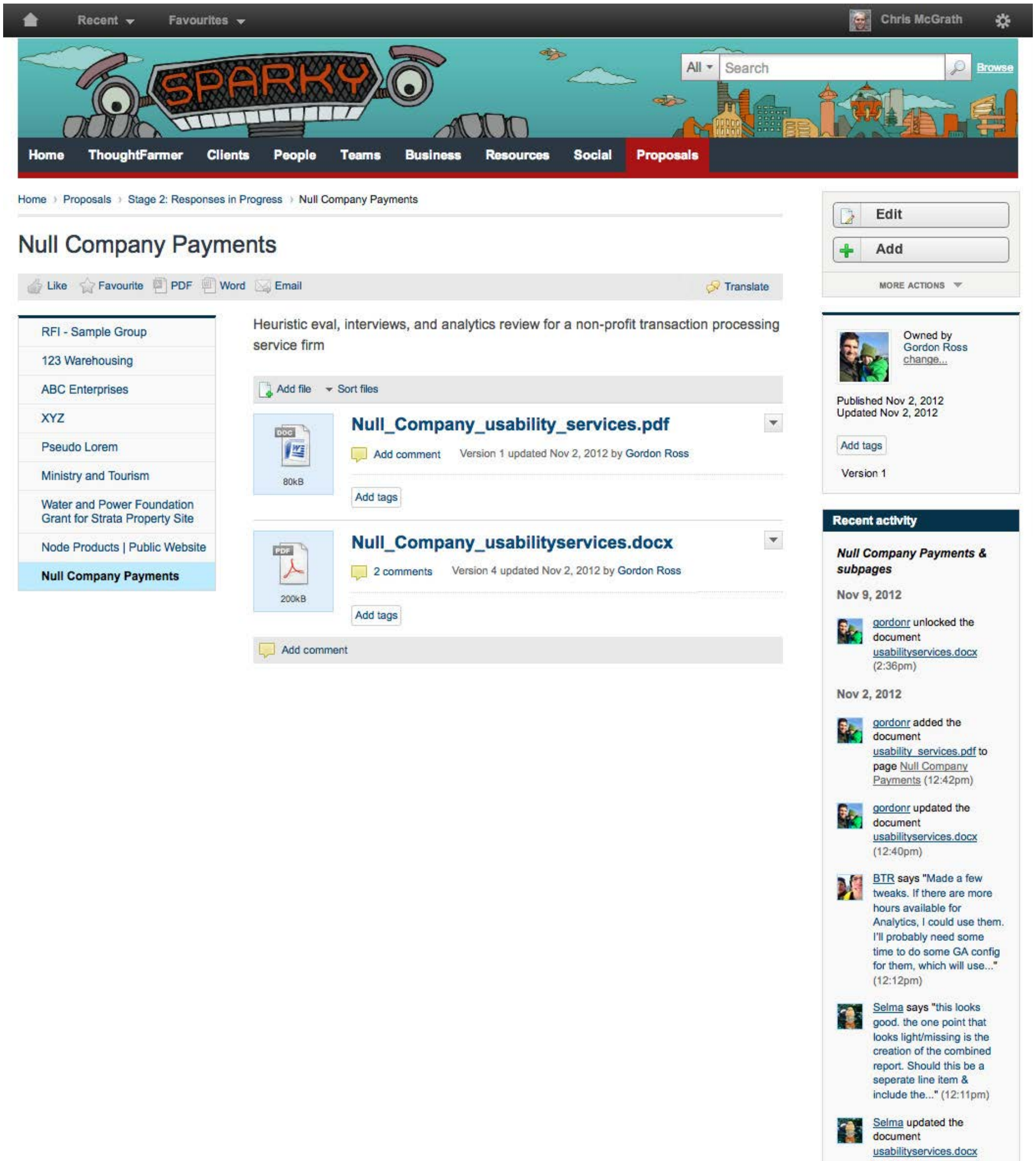
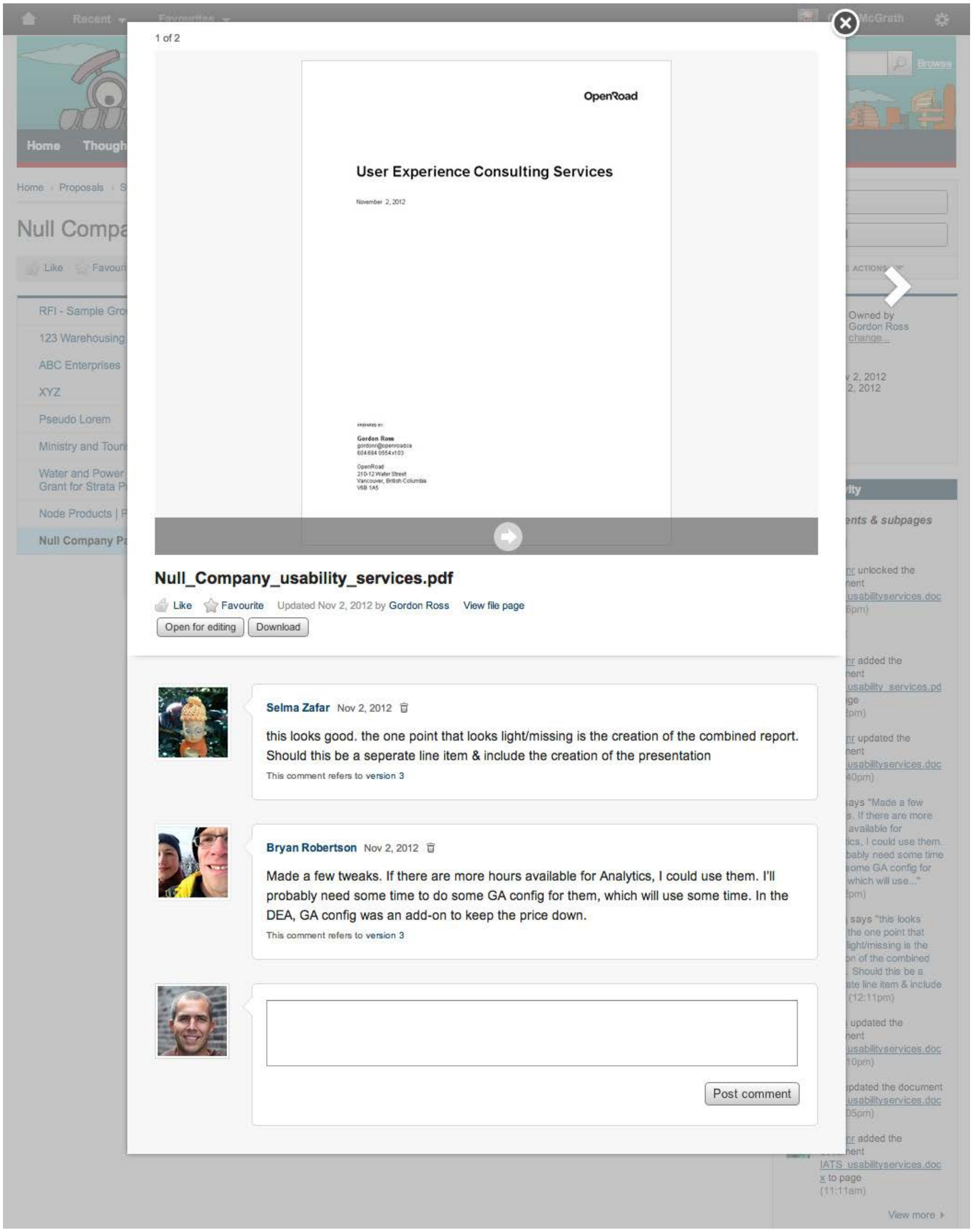
Powered by ThoughtFarmer Social Intranet Software v6.0.1.8 Mobile version

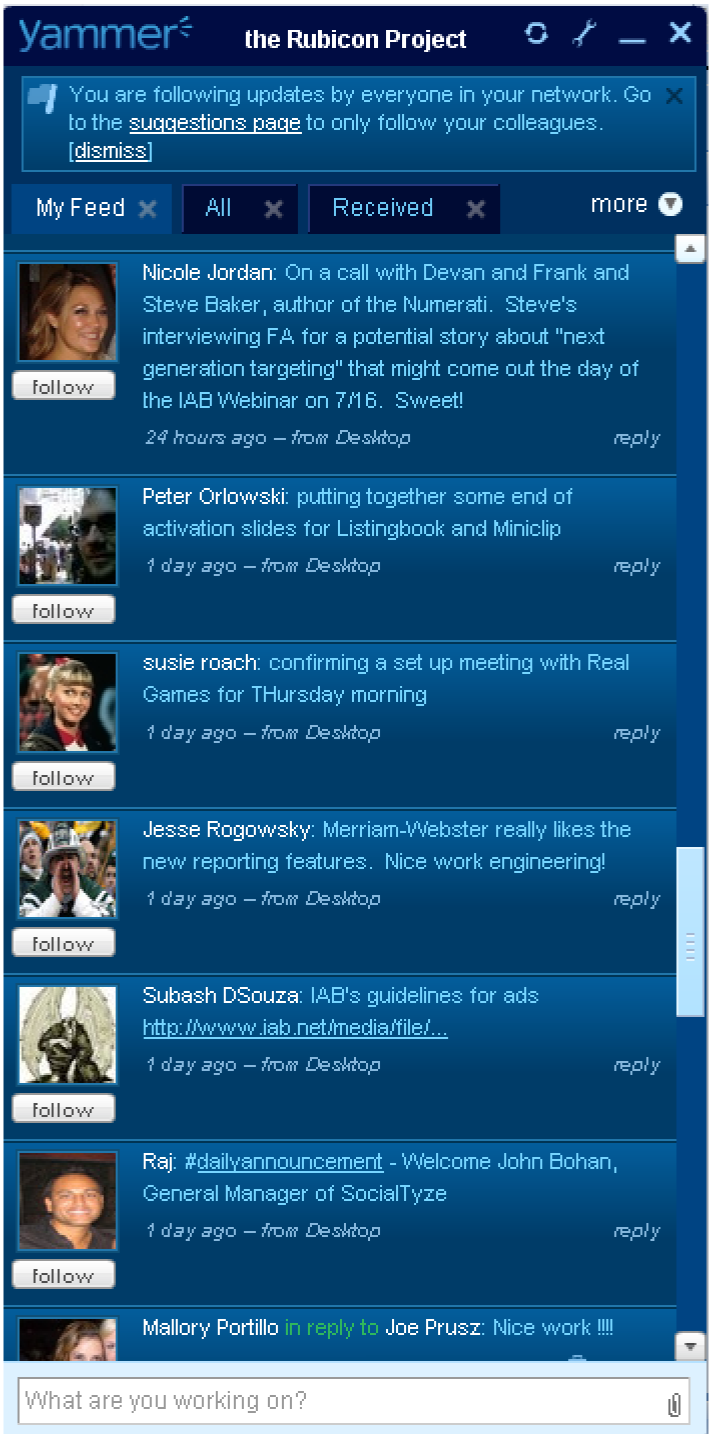
Pictured: The OpenRoad RFP process is a great example of using collaborative tools on an intranet rather than sending documents back and forth via email or using a shared directory system. Proposals are complex, travel through multiple stages, and involve a number of writers. This workflow is easily managed in ThoughtFarmer, with commenting, version history, and direct document editing.



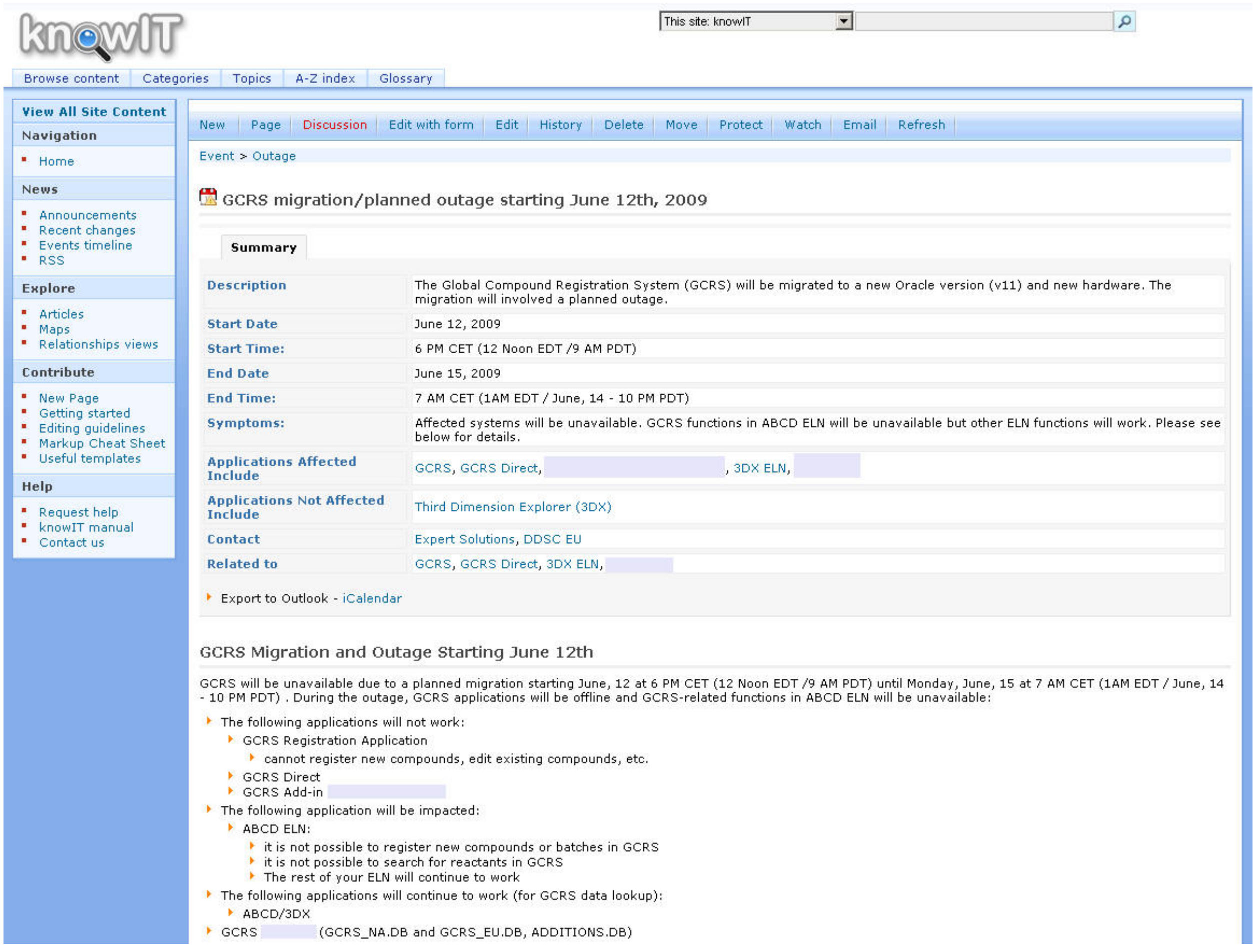
Pictured: The OpenRoad RFP process features a place where pages and files can be organized together in one place, with version history, commenting, and direct document editing.



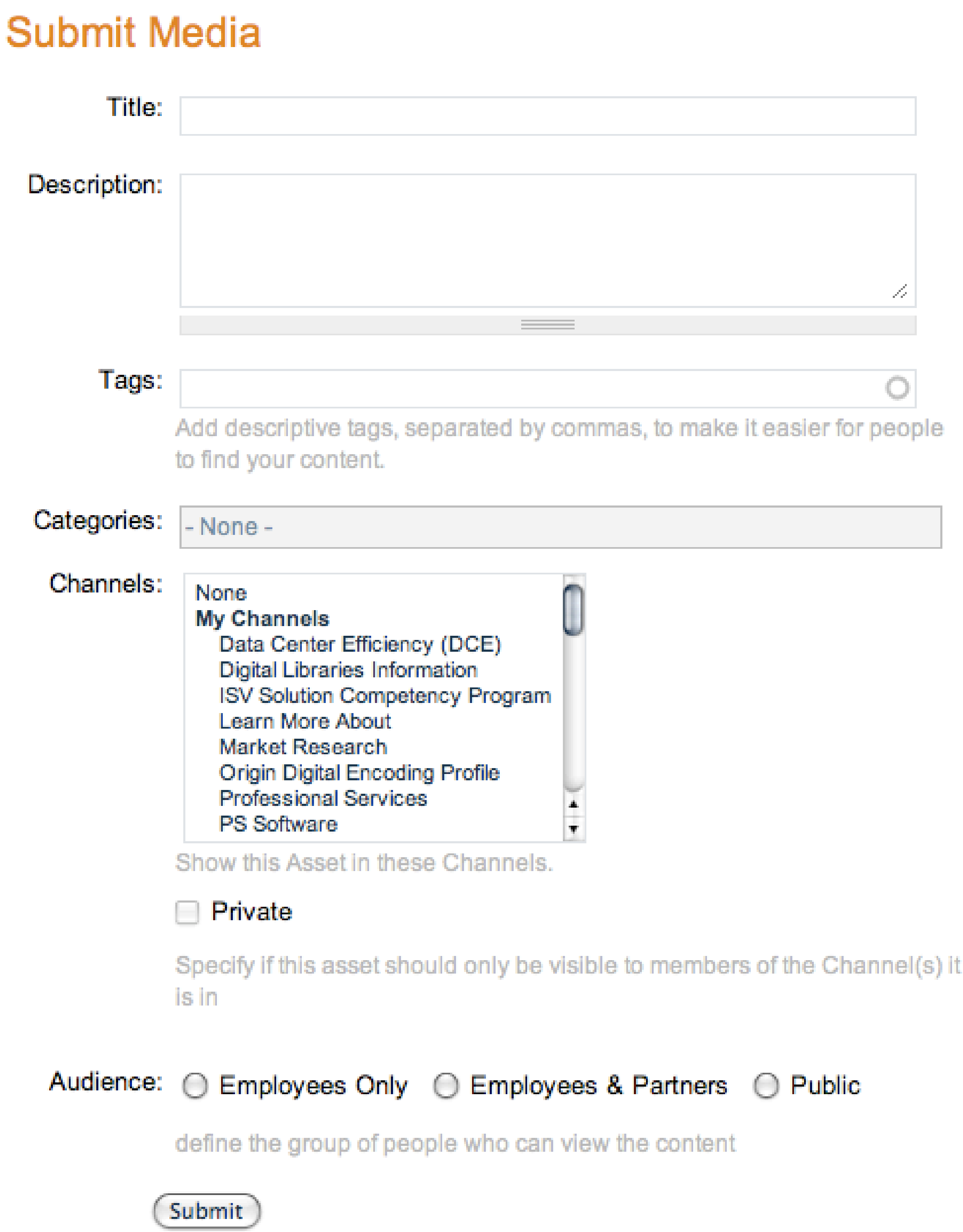
Pictured: This window shows how document review is used on ThoughtFarmer. Clicking on a document opens the document preview window, where users can flip through documents to make sure they have the correct one, before downloading or opening for editing. They can also collaborate with space for comments. Comments are tracked by user and version.



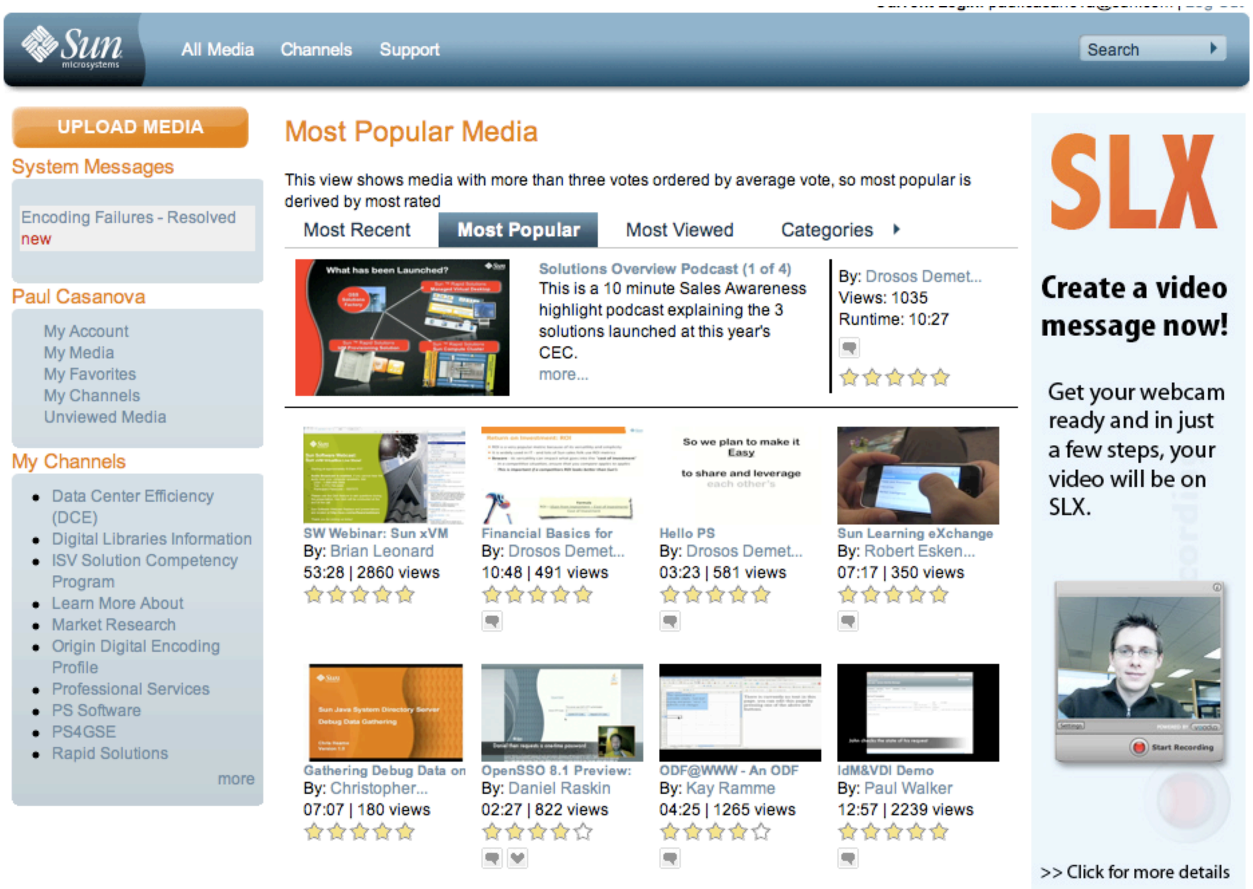
Pictured: A screenshot of the Yammer Interface as used by employees at the Rubicon Project.



Pictured: Rather than send lengthy emails that contain more details than users may need, knowIT includes a link to an outage page with more information. This screen is an example of an outage message in the knowIT wiki tool. Interested users can find more details right inside the wiki.



Pictured: The Sun SLX submit media screen. This screen shows the result when a user clicks on the upload “media button.” It illustrates just how easy it is to add a piece of content to the system.



Pictured: When a user has searched for the most popular media within SLX, they see this type of search results screen.

Pictured: This is the landing page for the BT podcast hosting site. It shows lists of the most recent and also most popular podcasts.

EVOLVING THE INTRANET

With technology, we often have to walk before we can run. Intranets and even portals were training wheels for the types of communication, collaboration and community that Web 2.0 makes possible. As social tools are added onto existing platforms overlap and bloat are inevitable. Over time, the natural evolution and tool replacement process causes most companies with an established portal to have to step back one day and take a fresh look at how the integration of social tools has affected the overall portal experience and what to do about it. It takes some time for the social tools to mature but eventually intranet managers have to decide what to do with the social tools: let them stand alone outside the intranet, make them add-ons, or fully integrate them into the corporate portal, which in turn can mean eventually supplanting existing systems or finding creative ways to mesh them into existing architecture.

The question sometimes boils down to who eats whom. There's a UI challenge, there's an infrastructure challenge and sometimes there's a political challenge inherent in answering this question so decisions about integration are not trivial.

Most companies make these decisions based on some combination of constraints rather than choice. Even companies such as IBM, which has embraced social with open arms, hasn't found a clear answer to the question of who eats whom (portal or social platform).

IBM has been successfully building, piloting and integrating a suite of social tools for several years. These research efforts led to IBM Connections, the company's social platform product, which it uses in-house to support enterprise collaboration.

As the individual tools that comprise Connections were developed, they were added to the company portal, one by one and eventually these individual tools were supplanted by the Connections suite. Connections and the company's portal sit somewhat side by side. There are integration points between the two, but those integration points are still being refined. Users can access Connections directly or they can access Connections through a portlet on the homepage of the portal.

"These tools have been additions to our intranet, and have appeared in the portal in a few ways," says Blackwell. "A major redesign of our portal is being explored to more fully integrate these features."

IBM's situation is somewhat unique as they have built their entire social ecosystem from scratch. Other organizations with more limited resources must choose between several less optimal paths. The result is that today, most social tools don't necessarily reside within the confines of the company's intranet or portal. And for many companies, those tools will stand alone for some time to come.

Full integration between the social platform and the intranet is the end goal but it will take a while for most companies to get there. Full integration is best because it creates a unified user experience and means related systems can operate together to provide user value.

"Our tools are an integrated part of the intranet, though there is a clear divide between the area where social tools are deployed and the portal," says Hornsby of L&Q's environment. "There are lots of benefits in having an integrated system, [which would include] an integrated people/knowledge search, a single interface for managing security, and the ability to develop a 'folksonomy' using social tagging, which can potentially improve the architecture of the portal."

Because full integration is a goal rather than a reality, it's especially important to keep in mind how the lack of integration affects the user experience.

"Some tools are part of the main intranet platform," says Cahill. "Some are on other internal or external platforms (Yammer and SharePoint). The bottom line is that these new social media tools need to be more seamlessly integrated with the entire employee toolkit for faster adoption and so that employees do not have to learn to use yet another tool/platform."

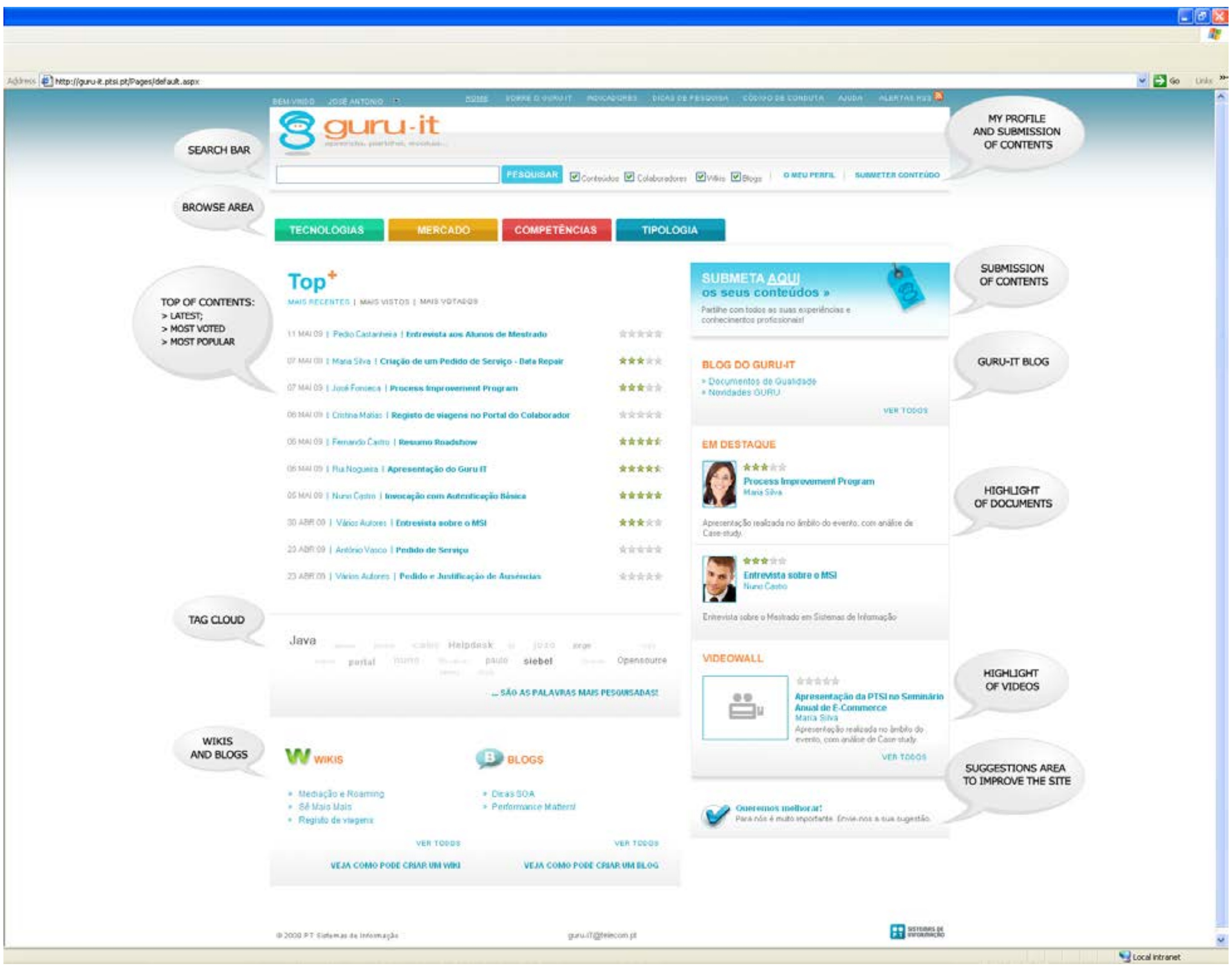
It's easy to get to a point where users don't know where to turn to do what they need to do, or worse, they have multiple places to do it.

"I think one pitfall we must be careful to avoid is to put users in situations where they have to do similar things in disparate tools (such as maintain their profile in the employee directory as well as in a Facebook-like social connection tool)," says Blackwell. There is no one clear answer to avoiding this awkward transition period as tools evolve, but he suggests the approach IBM has used. "Create these social tools as separate entities for testing and evolution," he says. "Then link to them from existing tools, and ultimately perhaps integrate them to the degree that they are no longer separate."

One reason companies might choose to leave social outside the intranet is they want to leave well enough alone if an intranet or portal is functioning successfully. Another, lesser-known reason for keeping social tools off the intranet, at least at first, is that social software is notoriously easy to use: often easier to use than the company's portal. So intranet teams are unwilling to taint these new tools with the sting of being associated with the useful, yet cumbersome portal. Web 2.0 tools are by nature simple, nimble and small, whereas corporate portals are often just the opposite. Corporate portals are "corporate" giving them all the connotations that go along with that, both positive and negative.

"Initially, Sprint Space was launched as an add-on to our corporate intranet capability stack," says Kreifel. "We wanted to create a less corporate-head speaking environment and promote 'water cooler' conversation so open dialogue could flourish."

Sun's SLX team put their video-sharing tool outside the usual VPN access of the intranet to facilitate adoption. "Our portal sits outside Sun's firewall," says Casanova. "You have to authenticate as a user and sign in, so there is a lot of security built in, but you do not have to be on VPN to get to the information. This was key to user adoption, it was easy to get to for our field reps."



Pictured: PT-SI's knowledge base homepage. This shows the key features of the site including: Top of Content, Highlight Content and Video, link to submit content, link to access employee's profile, wikis and blogs access, search and browse areas.

Pictured: An example PT-SI Guru-IT content page. It shows the content title, synopsis, characterization, comments, views, employee voting and the list of the author's other content.


Recent
Favourites
Chris McGrath
SPARKY
All
Search
Browse
Home
ThoughtFarmer
Clients
People
Teams
Business
Resources
Social
Proposals
Home › Teams › Project Management
Project Management
Like
Favourite
PDF
Word
Email
Translate
Edit
Add
MORE ACTIONS
Voices on Project Management
Updated 2 hours ago
Video Series: Women in Project Management, Part Two
Video Series: Women in Project Management, Part Two
(2 hours ago)
The Making of "Life of Pi" and Program Management
The Making of "Life of Pi" and Program Management
(Feb 1, 2013)
How to Build Ethics into Your Team Culture
How to Build Ethics into Your Team Culture
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Moving from Planning to Doing on Your Project By Glenn Briskin I'm almost three weeks into a n...
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Managing Implementation Projects - Tips and Tricks By Bruce McGraw Is there a difference in managing...
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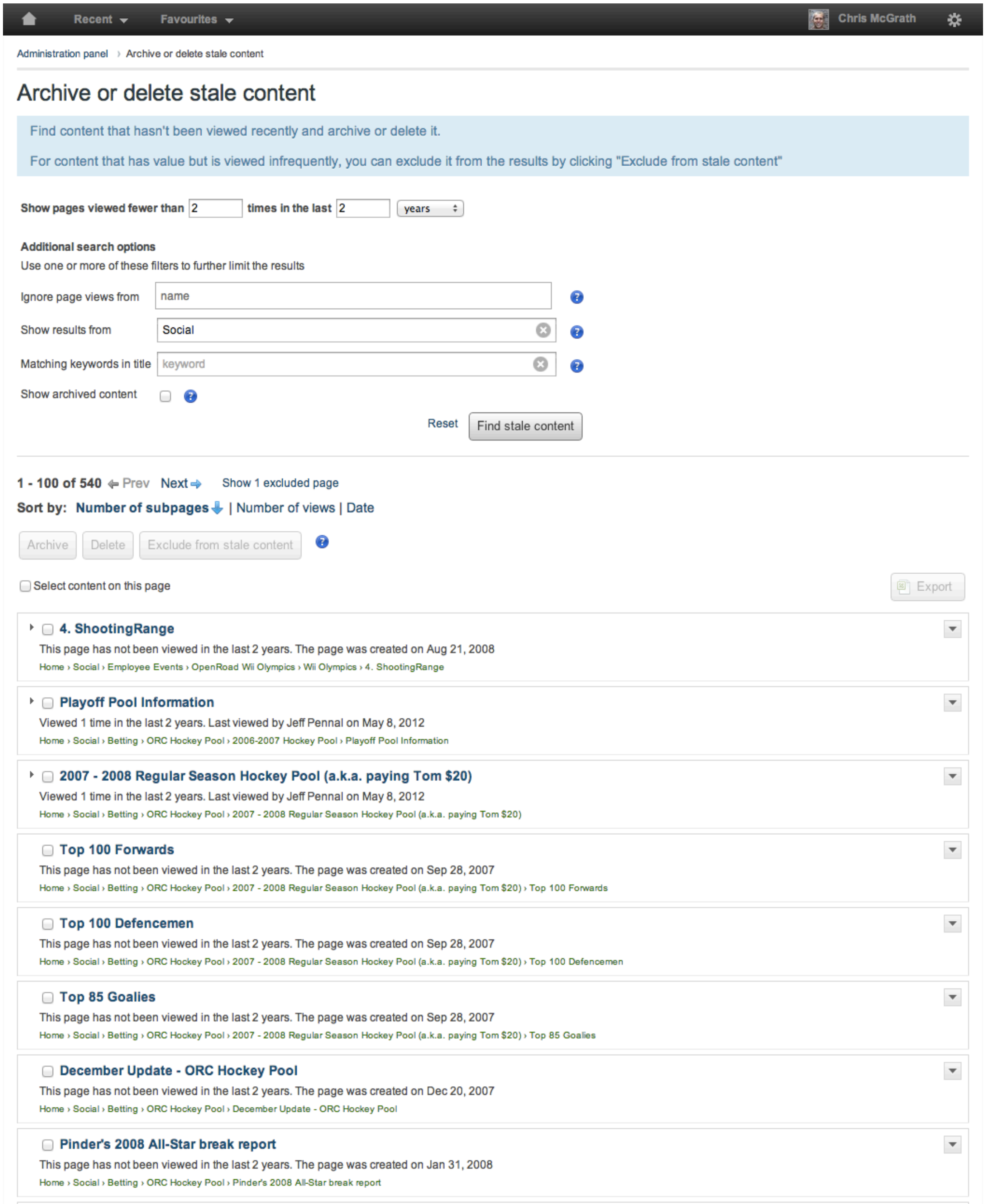
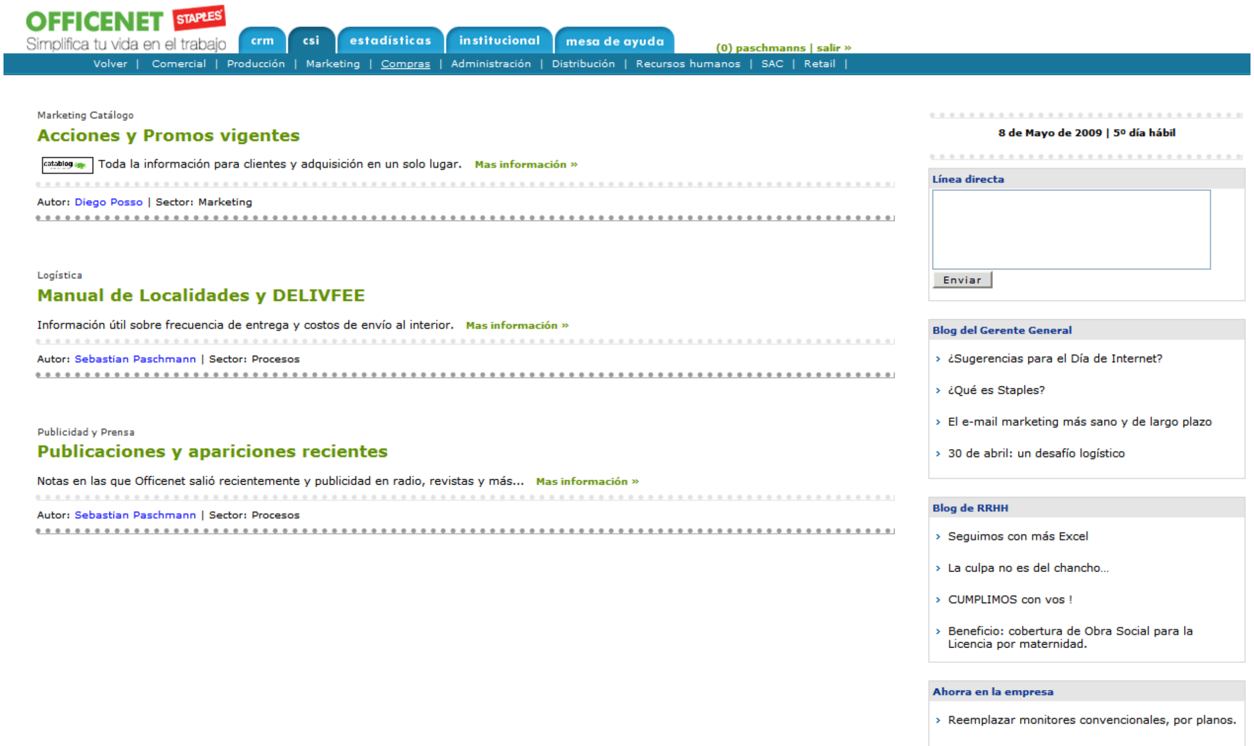
Resourcing
Resourcing Dashboard
Post-Implementation Review (PIR)
PIR Process, PIR Templates
Templates
Development Estimates - DRAFT.xls, OpenRoad Proposal - to EA.doc, ORC Project Status Report Summary TYPE to Feb 27 2009.doc, Responsibility Allocation Matrix - Lite RACI.xls, Client_RACI_DRAFT.xls, more...
JIRA - tickets.openroad.ca
Archive Jira pages ARCHIVED, Jira: Professional vs Enterprise, JIRA User Guide 005.doc
Owned by Tom Munro change...
Published Sep 10, 2007
Updated Dec 13, 2012
Add tags
Version 4
Recent activity
Project Management & subpages
Feb 1
Vince edited the news item Resourcing Meeting - Feb 1, 2013 (3:31pm)
Vince edited the news item Resourcing Meeting - Feb 1, 2013 (2:45pm)
Vince created the news item Resourcing Meeting - Feb 1, 2013 (2:15pm)
Jan 31
Vince edited the news item PMO - February 4, 2013 (11:25am)
Vince moved the page PMO - February 4, 2013 from Project Management to PMO Updates (11:25am)
Vince created the page PMO - February 4, 2013 (11:24am)
Jan 30
Mander changed the layout on PMO Updates (8:50am)
View more
This page viewed 1,805 times

Pictured: ThoughtFarmer includes instant archiving, a feature that allows intranet users and administrators to hide content that is not frequently used, but still retain it for later. In this view, the user has selected to "Show Archived Content."



Pictured: In ThoughtFarmer, while users can archive individual files, administrators have access to mass archiving. Using the "Stale Content Report" they can locate pages based on viewing frequency, section, or keywords. Large volumes of pages can be archived at once, or particular pages can be excluded from archiving.



Pictured: This is the homepage of the Officenet Staples intranet. This page connects with the internal and public blogs and offers important information for all employees across the company.

On the road to full integration there is wisdom in having the social tools stand apart, at least at first. Oftentimes the social tools are a departure in both tone and approach from company's standard toolset. Keeping the tools outside of the boundaries of the intranet allows the tools to flourish and develop their own identity, without having to inherit the identity of the company's Web 1.0 platform.

Sprint took this approach with its blogging platform. "We established Sprint Space with an intentionally different look/feel from the corporate portal," says Downs. "Now that it has been widely adopted, we created a 'fifth tab' as a means to further integrate Sprint Space into the total portal."

The last step on the journey to full adoption is to take a fresh look at the portal, with the new tools in context, to see what changes need to be made to the portal. For instance, Sprint's blogging platform, Sprint Space was a grassroots effort that was allowed to grow organically, and separately from iConnect, the company's intranet. "As blogging behaviors flourished, our team looked for opportunities to better integrate the two platforms," says Kreifel.

"We added a "Sprint Space portlet" to the homepage of i-Connect. In it, we showcase an editor's choice of two recent posts, giving users a direct link to those blogs. As our programs have evolved, it's becoming clearer that we need to tighten our integration of our social features with our news features within our portal," says Downs. "For example, adding comment and ratings to the news, sharing stories with your internal networks, and a profile integration that will allow only one profile instead of several profiles, etc."


Sprint Sprint Space
Welcome, (Log out)
New
Your Stuff
History
Browse
Search
Sprint Space
Sprint Employee space for collaboration.
New to Sprint Space?
Close
Take a quick tour to learn how things are organized and how to best use SprintSpace to work with your team.
Spaces
Life @ Sprint
A place to discuss life at Sprint.
Strategy More
News More
Employee Life More
Money More
Business Areas
Key updates, discussions, documentation, etc. for Sprint Business Areas.
Technology Development More
Network Services More
Wholesale
Product More
Sales
Corporate Communications More
Wireline More
Boost Mobile More
Records More
Interest Groups
Respond to employee discussions and blogs, learn about activities, and discover helpful resources.
SprintSpace Help & Support More
Manage and Optimize Reston real-estate with Excellence
i-Lead More
Finance Management Development Program More
MOSAIC Retail More
Manager Leadership Series
Finance Learning and Development (FLD) More
Top Contributors
View all Contributors
Popular Tags
Browse all tags
video non-employee
business csp employee presentation
intermmediate network device advertising
busdev messaging business-xohm voice
case_study
Latest Poll
More polls
Have you signed up for the Chirp 101 and iDEN Basics course yet?
Yes
No
Vote!
Votes: 15 - Full Results
What's New
All Content
Your View
Go to: Discussions Documents Blog Posts
ANNOUNCEMENT:
** SprintSpace Maintenance | Wednesday July 9, 4-5 PM EST ** by at Jul 7, 2008 4:54 PM
During this time frame, please be aware you may face some intermittent issues. It is advised that you save all work prior to this downtime and in addition, avoid uploading any content until the site is up and running.
Thank you.
ANNOUNCEMENT:
Who's blogging? by at Jul 7, 2008 9:18 AM
Make sure to check out these employee bloggers:
NEW! -- on channeling Tiger through YouTube
NEW! -- on the future of Sprint
NEW! -- on "free public wi-fi"
ANNOUNCEMENT:
Questions about SprintSpace itself or any of the content you've seen out here? by at Jul 2, 2008 3:14 PM
Please e-mail Craig, Dan, Jen, and Justin at
Let's talk: Share your great customer stories
Posted by Jul 7, 2008 2 Comments
The Elevator Speech award is a new way we are recognizing employees for results-generating, positive encounters with customers.
All employees who "sell" Sprint in the spirit of the Elevator Speeches may be considered for the award, both non customer-facing employees, and customer-facing employees who promote our company outside the scope of their regular job duties. This includes Retail or Care employees who create a positive encounter outside of their regular work environment.
will recognize the most deserving employees during our Quarterly Employee Meetings.
We'd like to hear your stories, so please share them here.
But also remember to submit your nominations via e-mail to the mailbox. Go to the Elevator Speech Awards site on i-Connect where you also can see full program details.
2 Comments 0 References Permalink Tags:
elevator speech customers customer experience
What actions are we taking that are helping you feel optimistic?
Posted by Jul 2, 2008 18 Comments
Things seem to be looking up around here.
Instinct is breaking all sales records.
On Monday, The Wall Street Journal said that our turnaround effort is picking up steam.
On June 27, The KC Business Journal in an interview with , cited actions and improvements we're making.
On Monday, The Associated Press, said we're the top telecom gainer in 2Q.
In March, our shares were trading below $6; on Monday, they closed at $9.50. Yes, shares are up and down a bit this week with investors taking profits. But, we had the best performing S&P 500 stock in the quarter - a more than 33 percent increase in three months.
Personally, I'm feeling optimistic that we're finally heading in the right direction. How about you?
18 Comments 0 References Permalink Tags:
instinct turnaround forecast shareholders stock
More blog posts in News Blog (12)
Accessing this site is voluntary and all employees must follow the Sprint Code of Conduct when posting content and must accept the terms of our Privacy Policy. © 2008 Sprint Nextel Corporation. All Rights Reserved.
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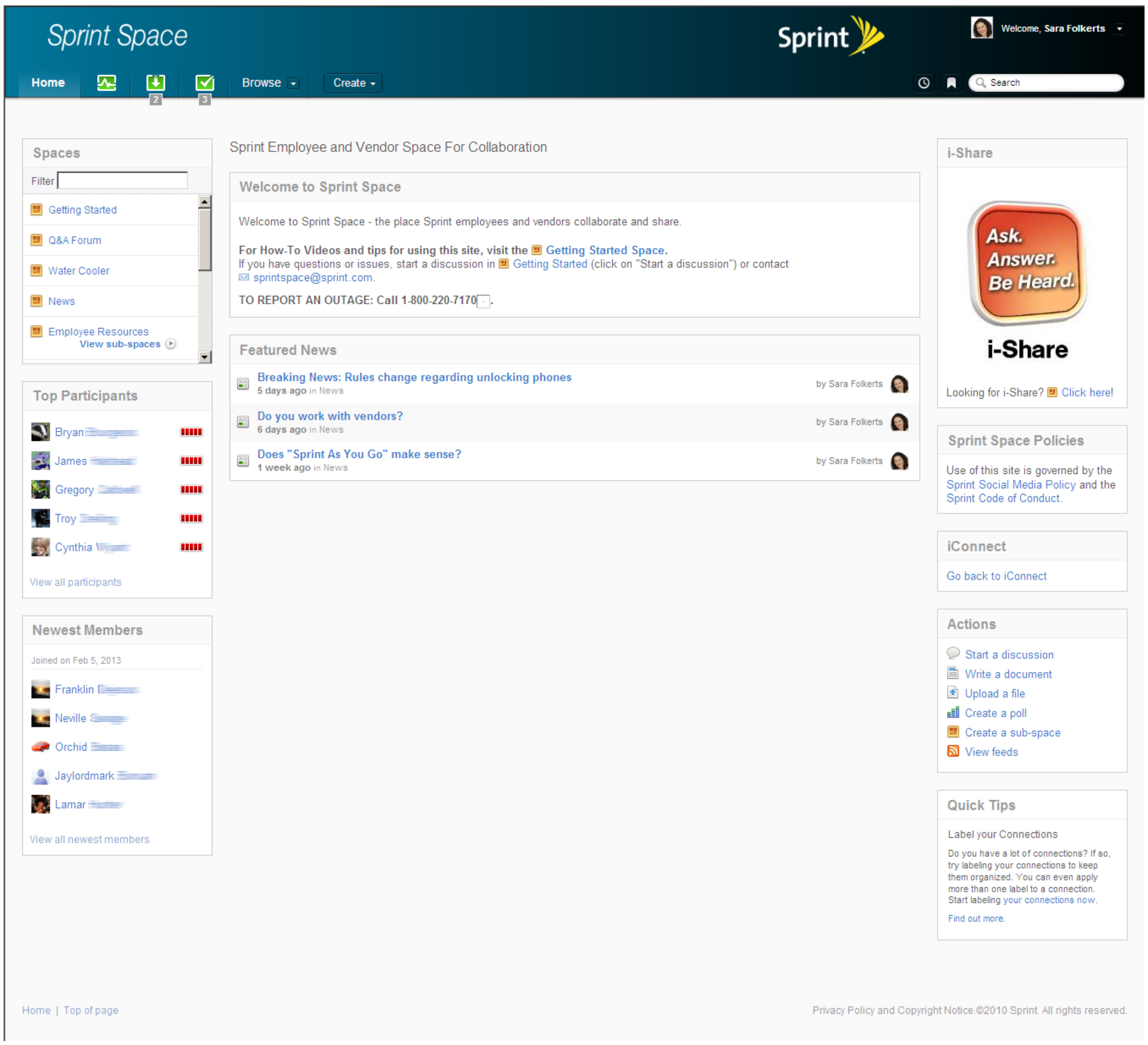
Pictured: This screen shows the Sprint Space homepage as it looked when the first edition of this report was published. Here employees could elect to automatically re-authenticate after initial login had been established. The Global header branding matched Sprint identity at the time however the look and feel was somewhat different from the company's traditional intranet pages. This was done on purpose to ensure users would expect a different kind of communication in this space. The homepage shown here highlights "Who's blogging in Sprint Space," different Sprint Space communities and the most recent blog posts relating to external and internal news coverage of Sprint. Top Contributors avatars are displayed with star ratings that are based on activity in the community. All community members can earn stars for activities such as blog posting, commenting, and participation in discussion threads, etc.



Pictured: Sprint re-launched Sprint Space in June of 2012 with the latest version of Jive Software. They reduced the number of Spaces listed on the home page (see top left) and removed the "Blog Roll," which was replaced by Featured News.

Social Search Results Reflect Value

In a social environment, search results reflect a dynamic view of content and the value users place on that content. User-generated content means user-valued content.

"We look at search as much more than a list of ranked documents or links," says Reiser. "It is a mash-up[12] service that shows people the top links and documents, but also the experts and authors and communities responsible for top links, and of course the search results mash-up is an ideal place for ratings information."

When users apply attributes to content, even a small number of participants can greatly enhance the value of the content. "Within IBM, we've found that even a relatively small number of taggers/social bookmarkers can improve search for the entire population," says Blackwell.

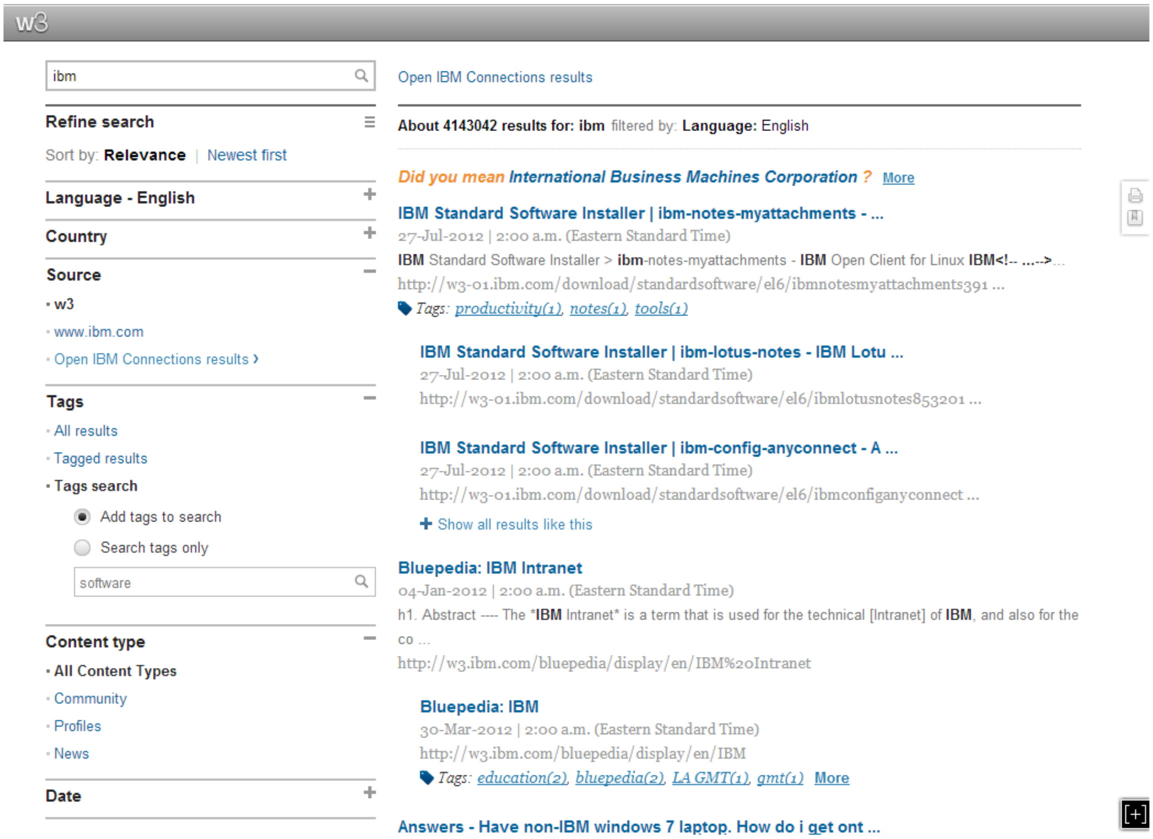
Tagging helps classify content. It makes search results more relevant and tagging content helps organizations elevate useful content and get it in front of the user at the right time and place. Tagged results can help users cut through the stockpile of available information, especially in large companies.

"Users don't tend to tag worthless pages," he says. "This is a big boon for a large company, where outdated content and development systems can clog up the works. This can lead to 'consensus' results, such as the page tagged with 'Java' by the most users may be the best Java page."

Also, this can help link users with results in a way that is challenging with traditional search engines. For example, perhaps a page only uses the term 'Web 2.0' in the text and in keywords. Users might bookmark this page with 'social media,' as they feel it is a better description of the content. Users searching on 'social media' can be taken to this page even though there is no overt reference to 'social media.' With rapidly changing terms, you can see the value."

"When users tag pages we not only learn about the pages but also the tagger (for instance, the topics they are interested in)," says Blackwell. "By exploiting these dynamic profiles, social search systems can push content to users when new pages are added to their topics of interest to reduce the need to search. They can also provide 'personalized results,' where one user gets results in a different order than other users based on this dynamic profile."

[12] Mash-Up was also the name of Sun's personalized search tool.



Pictured: IBM's main search tool is called "w3 Search" and it is the primary way IBMers find w3.ibm.com web pages. In the image above, some of the filter sections are expanded to illustrate some of the tool's features. The IBM team has found that a small, but vigorous group of taggers want access to specialized tag control, so they included the ability to filter search results down to tag results only, and the ability to search by tag. When results have tags the tags are featured on the results and the search result shows a group of filters along the left. While useful to a small population (and not commonly used by most) the overall user population benefits from the improved relevance provided by tagged content.

Blackwell explains the guiding principles behind IBM's search:

- **Search is a unified function:** "We try to inject social content/functions into the users' normal workflow. The goal is not to have a specific 'social stuff' search, but to have a general search that includes social content and features."
- **Present social and traditional content results side-by-side:** "In general, we aim to have social results (for example, wikis, blogs) just be part of the same set of search results. You can see above that 'Bluepedia' (our internal, group-edited encyclopedia) results alongside more standard w3.ibm.com page results."

- **Tags add value:** "Notice that if the search results have been tagged by users, we display the top tags on the search results (a 'More' control can be used to see all tags. We want to keep as many results as possible above the fold)."
- **Unify first; segmentation second:** "While we aim to merge social content with standard content, we offer controls to focus on those spaces. The 'Tags' filters (shown above) allow the user to filter the results to only those with tags, or to perform a search against the tags. Likewise, 'Content type' allows the user to focus in on only community content if they choose to do so."

Simplifying Input While Refining Output

IBM has worked consistently to evolve, refine and integrate social search into the organization's overall search architecture and despite ongoing efforts it's still not "done." "We are still trying to evolve," says Blackwell. "The lesson to keep in mind is the amount of social that gets generated. I don't know if we have an absolute metric on wheat vs. chafe, but the fact of the matter is, with socially generated content it comes fast and easy. There is no doubt there is a kind of explosion of content being generated, so of course that leads to new challenges, such as sniffing out search relevance."

There are, of course, two primary challenges with search: relevance and user experience, and they are tightly woven together, especially when you add social results to the mix. Relevance is only achieved through continual refinement of both what goes in (ingesting) and what comes out (parsing) of the various data sources. The quality of that result *is* the user experience. And thanks to Google, expectations are high for both quality and simplicity.

"I'll maintain until the end of time that the things that drive search UI the most, are number one is the quality of the results based on simple search terms they entered," says Blackwell, "and number two might even be performance. Get them a good result quickly and a lot of times the extra features and functions you add to that are secondary to driving user experience. Everyone kind of has the Google model in their head," he says.

The IBM search results page layout has evolved — moving toward simplicity — as the underlying technology as become more sophisticated in parsing the results. "We went to the 'everything' model of search results," says Blackwell. "So for example, people results are blended in with standard results in our main search results set and one thing we do and I think this is a fairly common practice is when the system recognizes it's a people result, it features the result differently than a standard search result. So if it's a person, it puts the person's face there and their phone number and so forth."

Other types of content are also blended in, with content type and tags informing the search results. In other words, the burden is on the engine, not the user. This is an important distinction because even at IBM tagging is not widespread. It is accomplished by a small, but dedicated group of users – whose work benefits the larger population on the flip side through search. "One of the things [the search engine] uses to contribute to relevance ranking is social activity that's occurred on the page," says Blackwell. So, if it's been tagged it will get a boost in ranking by the mere fact that it's been socialized in that way. The [search] results have been enhanced by tagging and they [the users] would never know it. So they're reaping a benefit of it without being aware."

On the front end, the users are getting what they want: a simple experience.

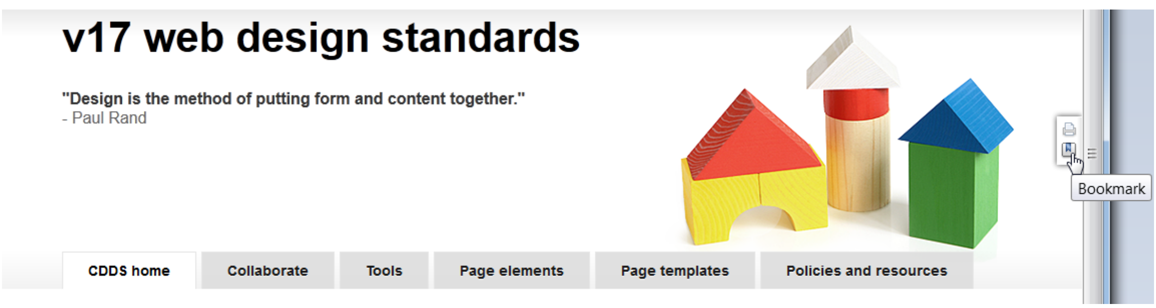
"What we did is try to strategically try to aim for what everyone wants, which is a Google-like experience," says Blackwell. "You have a search box and you type in the search box and the results magically appear and I our goal is to blend in all the social content and use the social data to help drive relevance."

This approach has proven popular and useful with users (through testing) but it is still a work in progress.

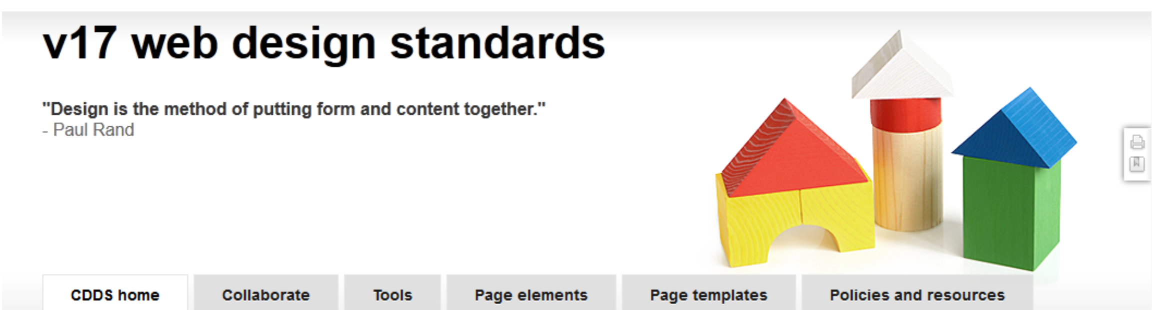
Connections (the company's social platform, and social platform product) has its own native search so currently users can call the Connections search from the main enterprise search, but it is not fully integrated. The eventual goal is to ingest the Connections material properly so it can just be blended in with the rest of the search results

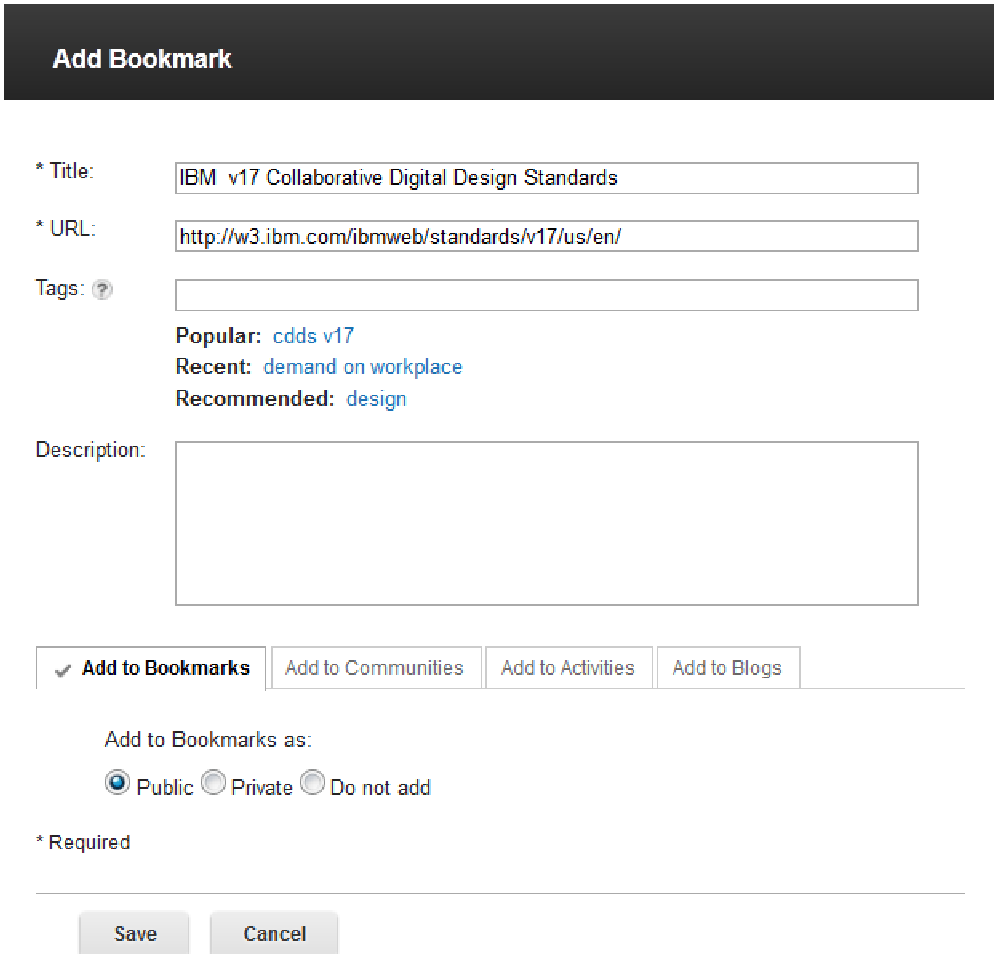
"We're in a transition point where we're still strategizing how to properly ingest Connections material," says Blackwell. "Even when we are in transition we aim to provide some linkage. While 'older' social content is ingested by the search engine, we are still working on ingesting content from IBM Connections. Since that content isn't ingested, we make sure to provide links, such as in the 'Source' section (as shown above)."

"The theme here is to not always give the user 'special places to be social,'" he says. "Social business should be incorporated into business."



Pictured: Shown here (and below) all w3 (v17 — the latest version of the design system) pages automatically have a "social toolbar" on the right side of the screen. This toolbar provides printing and bookmark controls.





Pictured: The bookmark control on the right side of the toolbar (shown on the screens above) opens a dialog box. This dialog calls functions from the company's [social] collaboration tool, "IBM Connections." This takes advantage of functionality already built into Connections (the product). The base bookmarking function includes tagging — including popular tags for the page, recent tags for the page, and recommended tags for the page (essentially a click list to facilitate speed tagging). The user can also opt to add the link to a Community's bookmarks, add it to an activity, or start a blog related to the page that they are viewing. By baking this functionality into the base design template (these social functions for the page are available on all w3v17 pages), it is not up to the page owner whether or not they have the function (although with permission it can be disabled). A similar implementation has been applied to the company's pubic pages, with links to familiar [public] social tools such as Facebook and Twitter.[13]

[13] For example, see: http://www.ibm.com/smarterplanet/us/en/healthcare_solutions/ideas/index.html?re=CS1

Pictured: In contrast with the new design, this shows IBM's old w3 toolbar after the search pull-down had been clicked. The ability to search any source is required on the IBM site. Note that early social tools projects such as Media Library, WikiCentral, and Dogear were prominently featured. Many of these early projects were folded into the company's social platform, IBM Connections.

Social Search Exacerbates Search Shortcomings

While social search adds value to the search relevance, it adds a burden to existing enterprise search infrastructure. If search doesn't work well already, layering on new data sources is only going to exacerbate whatever problems exist.

For example, silos of data sources, each searched separately, can greatly affect search usability, especially if the users are expected to know types of information reside in each.

"Search is the single biggest problem we currently have with intranet usability at Sprint," says Downs. "We have more than a half-dozen search engines scattered throughout the intranet, aimed at single content repositories. Sprint Space is no exception with its own search engine prominently located at the top of the page."

"We currently rely on employees to have pre-existing knowledge of what types of content might be found in each different content repository," she says. "Impact to employee productivity has been easily detected and quantified through the intranet survey, which has been critical for building the business case for enterprise search."

Many companies already have an unmet need for better enterprise search, adding social — with its own search function — can add to the complexity of those requirements. So, where social toolset resides — on the intranet or on its own — can further affect the ability to search across all information sources. A social stack sitting beside the rest of the enterprise data is another silo — a silo containing very useful information, but a silo nonetheless. So evaluating the potential for social to be integrated into the larger enterprise search environment can be a defining requirement when choosing a social tool or technology platform.

"One of the problems with our current documentation wiki is that it is not fully searchable," says Craven. "One can use a browser search function on the page that is open, but our wiki tool does not have the capability to allow search to call up other pages in a space or across spaces."

There's no guarantee that search will be fully-integrated or even possible in any given tool it's critical to make search an important evaluation feature.

Social Search Best Practices

Though an entire white paper could be devoted just to social search, we've captured some best practices to keep in mind when adding the social content layer to an existing search environment:

- **Make search a priority.** Many intranets are designed, developed and deployed with inadequate search functionality. Though it may take time, effort and planning to do it right, a well-executed search will pay off in the usefulness of the information delivered. This is exponentially true when a layer of socially-generated and community-ranked data is applied to the content. Search matters more than ever.
- **Make search an evaluation factor:** Take search into account when choosing any social tool. Does it have a stand-alone search function? Can that search functionality be folded into the global intranet or enterprise-wide search results? Are there restrictions?
- **Manage metadata**. Create metadata rules and make sure they are applied rigorously to both socially-generated content and organizationally-generated content. Content that is not tagged properly will either be difficult to find or will disappear altogether, diminishing its real world use. Some user-generated media such as audio, video and photos may not be found at all without good metadata.
- **Monitor the stream.** When choosing real-time communication tools such as microblogging tools, keep an eye on what's being said. Are critical answers to the questions being asked being passed along in the stream? Are these conversations either included in search results or is there a workflow in place to capture information in another tool such as a wiki or knowledge base?
- **Design the search interface with usability in mind.** It is important that users know what content is being searched when they enter a term. Are they searching the entire portal, specific knowledge bases, etc.? Interface clues should indicate what is being searched.
- **Design the search results.** The way search results are presented can be almost as important as the information itself. Well-designed search results screens can impact how the information is used once it's received. Is it clear what which search results are user-generated content (and thus subject to change) vs. company-generated content (which is likely to be "official")?

Benefits of Tagging

Tagging is a valuable social technology for a variety of reasons:

- **It doesn't take a village.** Even a small number of active users tagging content can increase its relevance. "Benefits to the entire population can be realized with a relatively small number of taggers," says Blackwell. "This doesn't mean you don't want to encourage tagging, as contributors are necessary for the ultimate evolution and to ensure maximum coverage. However, it should provide a new perspective on how quickly you can enable a large population to benefit from the work of a smaller group of early adopters."

  "Within IBM, we've found that even a relatively small number of taggers/social bookmarkers can improve search for the entire population," says Blackwell. With a traditional approach, content is attributed with a description generated by just one person, generally the author, and this metadata can be limiting. "One person's 'Web 2.0' is another person's 'social media'," says Blackwell. "Likewise, someone from another country might want to use a word in their own language to describe the page. Having a wealth of terms from multiple users makes the page much more retrievable, such as the case where someone searches in the language of the tagger, not the author."

- **The cream rises to the top.** One of the strengths of such a folksonomy, according to Blackwell, is that tagging separates the "good" pages from all possible pages. "People don't tag junk," he says. "So it enables consensus to determine the 'best' page for a topic rather than an individual or an algorithm."

- **It makes people happy.** Having content that is tagged means social search systems can be more responsive to "hot topics." Tags evolve as user language evolves. So one of the core benefits of tagging it that it makes search results more relevant, useful and satisfying and this satisfaction is quantifiable.

  "One thing we track is how often a user is likely to exit search after clicking a certain result type (that is, not return to the search application — an indication they found what they were looking for)," says Blackwell. "When they click a tagged result, the exit rate is around 50 percent, that means half the time it [the result] seems to be what they were seeking. We expect this value to improve as social search evolves."

Practical Considerations

TIMELINE

Tools are easy. Change is hard. Estimates vary, but achieving the long-term vision of an enterprise social platform will take approximately three to five years.[14] Getting the tools up and running is the easy part. Dealing with the political and cultural changes these tools affect can be the limiting factor.

"We had large populations that had never blogged before that had no interest and unfortunately a lot of times those are the employees who have been with the company longer, in higher positions," says Downs. "I think that was the hardest part really, is getting people mentally there, mentally prepared to have this kind of capability in our corporate portal stack."

Social software represents, a challenge and a sea change for organizations steeped in the corporate command and control model of operation. Many of the companies interviewed for this report have been inching toward an enterprise social platform for years. Even for these companies, social software is just now beginning to affect major transformational change.

The quick hit that comes from an early implementation of a tool or module can be pivotal to propelling the greater vision toward fruition.

Klick's comprehensive social platform was rolled out in stages. Each component of its platform is built on the success of the previous one. "A full-featured social roadmap is a significant undertaking. However, in our experience, core components can be developed and deployed in self-contained modules, creating very rapid development cycles," says Goldstein. "The cycle time for any one feature, from concept to deployment to critical mass is generally less than ten weeks."

"Users involved in phased rollouts provide excellent feedback and become invested in the solution," he says. "They become champions for change and dramatically accelerate full user adoption."

"Three to five years sounds right to me," says Hornsby of L&Q's social initiative. "It took us a year to consult and plan. It took another year to develop and migrate. We expect that it will take at least another year before we get the level of engagement that we're aiming for. So, we think it will take three to four years before the tools become indispensable to a majority of staff. But we still expect to have a minority of staff who will not fully adopt the tools."

The pace of adoption has increased dramatically over the last few years yet a few years' worth of technology cannot erase decades of institutional culture.

"We are at the beginning of one of the most significant process and system changes for enterprises within the last thirty years," says Reiser. "Traditional enterprises still have the 'knowledge is power' culture which is deeply embedded in the organizational structures, compensation models, and systems, etc."

"The new generation of Net citizens (which is growing up on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) have a natural understanding of the 'sharing is power' culture," says

[14] "Digital Workplace Trends 2012," NetJMC: http://www.netjmc.com/future-trends/10-key-findings

Reiser. “The challenge will be how to change an entire enterprise culture from ‘knowledge is power’ to ‘sharing is power’.”

Inside some companies, this evolution will result in a revolution. However, despite the positive impacts, changes will play out at a measured pace. Such a dramatic shift cannot happen overnight because, as Reiser points out, it will impact the organization on many levels, including:

- How a company is organized from a hierarchical metrics to social bubbles.
- The company value model is reformulated from pure bonus/compensation/performance map to a balanced business/social metrics model.

“In this new culture, community participation and contribution will be valued on par with achieving a sales target. Imagine that!” he says. “Getting such a change (including the cultural aspects) implemented in three to five years is feasible.”

Smaller, more nimble organizations whose workforce is made up of tech savvy and/or younger workers may have an advantage in that they are more flexible by nature and have less top-down resistance to change.

“A lot depends on the company culture that has already been created and how much work needs to be done to effect change,” says Portillo. **“**Milestones are good bases for roadmap progress, but you have to allow them to be dynamic since the communication tools will grow and change in accordance to the people at your company. You might see an opportunity based on the personalities of your team, that you didn’t originally foresee.”

Inching toward the social enterprise is sometimes necessary because the effort required to change deeply ingrained attitudes can be substantial and because there is no manual to spell out how it should work.

“We are conscious that cultural shift is a long term work,” says Sebastián Paschmann, Conversation Manager, Officenet Staples Argentina. “We have a tentative timeline with some general milestones, not specific issues, because some changes require a degree of improvisation.”

The other challenge with trying to gauge how long it takes to build a community is that there is no definitive beginning and end: communities are fluid, ongoing and evolutionary.

“Putting a timeline on how long it takes to build a community is tough,” says Casanova. **“**You hope it is ongoing, changing and that it continues to evolve. We did not build any timelines.”

And more important than knowing how long it will take is to accept that the social platform will not solve all problems.

“Social Media is an incredible thing but it isn’t a silver bullet like many corporations are betting,” says Jordan**. “**Having a healthy ‘social media’ presence is a natural part of our overall communications plan as a company. It’s not treated any differently. It’s just another communications channel that happens to be online.”

GOVERNANCE

Govern Lightly

When it comes to governing social communication tools, the rule of thumb seems to be that simplicity trumps a heavy hand. So, how does governance work best?

"Setting very limited ground rules (such as no anonymous contribution) and then providing the environment to enable it to flourish," says Sandy Blair, BT Intranet Governance Manager.

"We very intentionally have no governance around our social tools," says Segal, as Kick's Genome is an open environment. "They're all open and there are no rules other than the legal obligations we have to provide a safe working environment free of harassment. Norms establish themselves in these kinds of environments and our tools live on the threshold between business and fun, with each serving its essential purpose." And that seems to work just fine so far. "We have yet to take down a post except at the poster's request," he says.

The old rules of governance may no longer apply, or at very least they will have to loosen a little to accommodate the more relaxed nature of a socially-enabled work place.

"As we begin to further blur the lines between the corporate intranet portal, Sprint Space and the other corporate collaboration applications we realize that we must allow our governance model to evolve," says Kneeshaw.

Because user-generated content functions differently than traditional corporate communications content, it is difficult to know who should "own" it. The simple truth is that the users own it, regardless of which group is charged with its care and feeding. Organizations trying to maintain a tight reign would do well to understand that users own the platform and that the community is typically self-governing.

Focus On Content, Not Technology

Social tools, like many corporate technologies are often owned or at least managed by IT. Yet there are far better places with the organization for this type of initiative to live, including corporate communications, HR or in learning teams. Outside of IT, these tools can maintain the content focus that is imperative for their growth.

"Our platform is owned by the Learning Services Organization within Sun," says Casanova. "That said, having it within the learning organization means the portal and content are being governed by an organization that understands how good content is created and deployed as well as how people retain and use information. That has been helpful as a lot of coaching has gone on around best practices with the other business units from the learning organization around how to create effective content, how it is best deployed, formal vs. informal content etc.," he says.

Eventually, even stand-alone grassroots initiatives are folded into the larger communication efforts of a company's intranet or portal. That arrangement seems to work best because portal teams have worked hard to gain respect and autonomy at many organizations and the social platform can benefit from this placement.

"As manager of the intranet, my team is given broad authority to make both day-to-day and strategic decisions (preferably prudent) without having to seek approval or buy-in from a committee, from other business units, or even from our own leadership," says Amurgis. **"**We always use research and logic to defend our decisions, should they be challenged. We realize what a significant and precious advantage we have — we need not ask for permission nor forgiveness — but the authority is fragile and always subject to be withdrawn should we make imprudent decisions."

While the social platform may fall within the governance rubric of the intranet, social media presents unique governance challenges, requiring perhaps a lighter hand, with safeguards in place mainly to guide the community and ensure openness is maintained.

"In an effort to simply get the Sprint Space platform up and running, we chose to implement a smaller governance process focused specifically on the Sprint Space environment," says Kneeshaw. "The governance model for Sprint Space is based on three basic principles. First, we established a social media and blogging policy, which includes the concept of 'you write it, you own it,' which means all employees are responsible and accountable for their own commentary."

"Second, we defer to the pre-established Sprint Code of Conduct as a baseline for how all employees should conduct themselves both on-line and off-line," he says. The third major principle is that we have a 'no retribution' policy within Sprint. We are trying to foster a culture of open communication where every employee can feel like they have a place to go and voice their opinion even if it is not popular."

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

When employees contribute ideas or suggestions through open communication platforms there is an implicit expectation that someone is listening. They expect those ideas will be acted upon or at least considered and responded to.

How companies manage these expectations has a direct impact on the success of the platform or community. It is incumbent upon organizations to foster two-way communication in social channels.

"For us, it is about open communication and a quick response, even if that response is: 'we are considering it and we will get back to you,' This has been well received in the past and is something we'd continue," says one company representative.

A response policy should be part of the implementation plan from the start so that responses are not buried or lost.

"We have a group dedicated to monitoring our 'Great Experiences' community where people submit ideas for improving the company," says Bussard. "This group has a single lead who reaches out to folks in the organization who have been identified as owners for various areas. They are required to respond to any suggestion that is put forth."

Planning for the success of a social engagement tool means knowing how you'll monitor and engage in the dialog if it's a sweeping success. This may require more work than you expect.

"Managing ideas is a challenge for us," says Sara Folkerts, Internal Social Media Manager, Corporate Communications, Sprint Nextel. "In order to get a handle on this, we've had a team working for nearly a year on a back-end process to support an online tool to manage ideas. The tool we are working to implement will be installed as an addition to Sprint Space, again, to leverage the enterprise-wide tool to its best."

Idea-generation tools such as Sapient's "Great Experiences" are particularly burdened with expectations that must be managed.

"This was a huge concern of ours as we developed our new ideas system," says Amurgis. After much soul-searching, we finally came up with a breakthrough: no ideas are solicited unless they relate to a specific problem sponsored by an executive with the authority to implement the best idea(s). In other words, the executive would not pose a problem without also possessing the will to act upon a potential solution. The way we phrase questions and invite participation helps to moderate the expectations."

AEP's example illustrates that as the company executives started to participate in the conversations, they had to tread carefully. Discussion of that kind comes with a certain amount of expectation that popular suggestions will be acted upon. Soliciting ideas in this matter is a win-win. When user suggestions are both solicited and adopted, it can create good will.

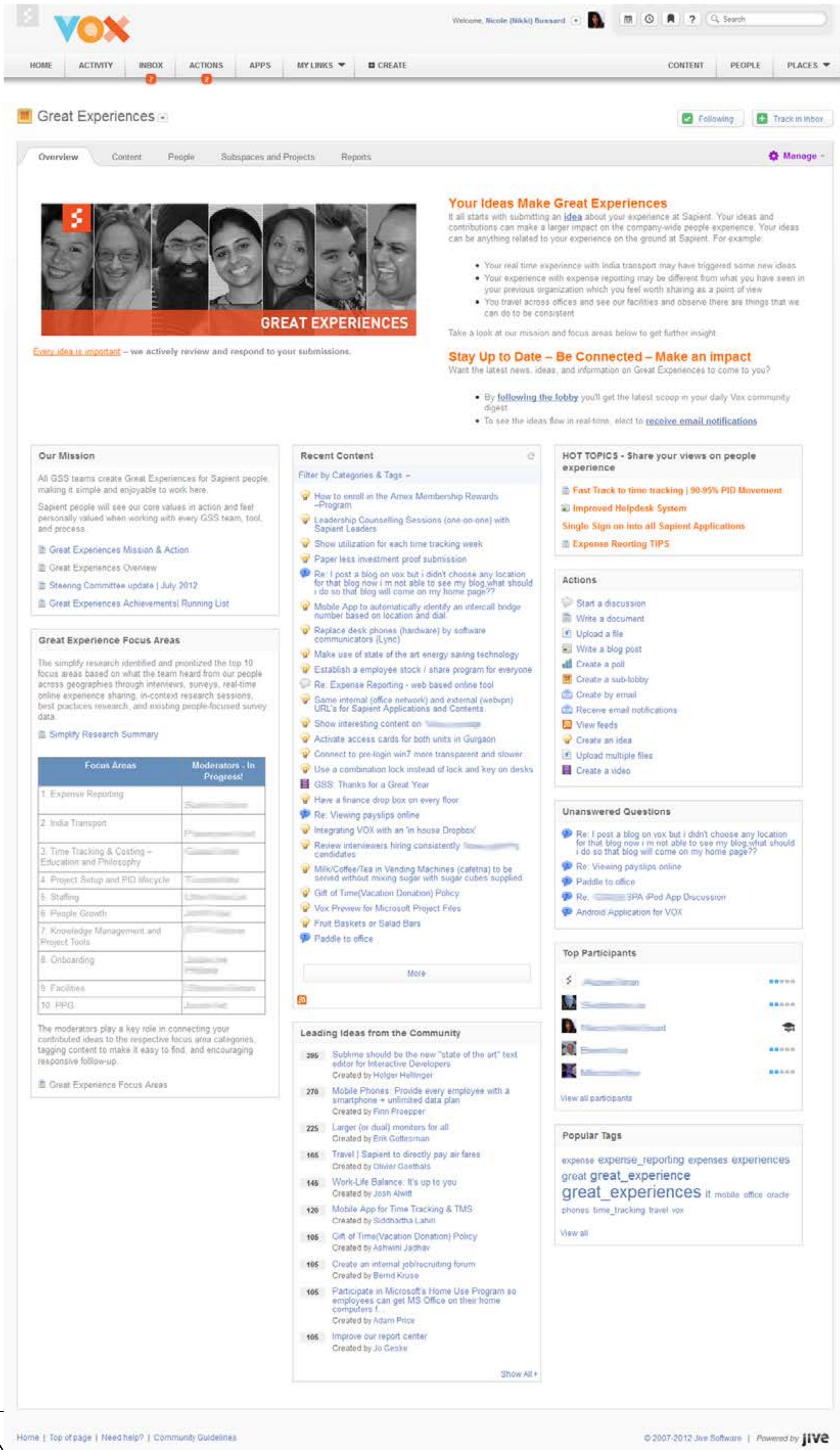
"When we introduced our Sweet pilot [an internal Twitter-like service], we asked the users to send us their feedback and requests for enhancements. Then, we let people vote for the most important ideas and implemented and deployed them very quickly (within days). Can you imagine the positive social dynamics we create?" says Reiser.

This two-way conversation is at the core of social engagement. It is not just a nice-to-have dialogue. It is expected at every level of participation. When it's missing, users notice. You can't just open up the forum if you are not willing (or able) to participate in the discussion.

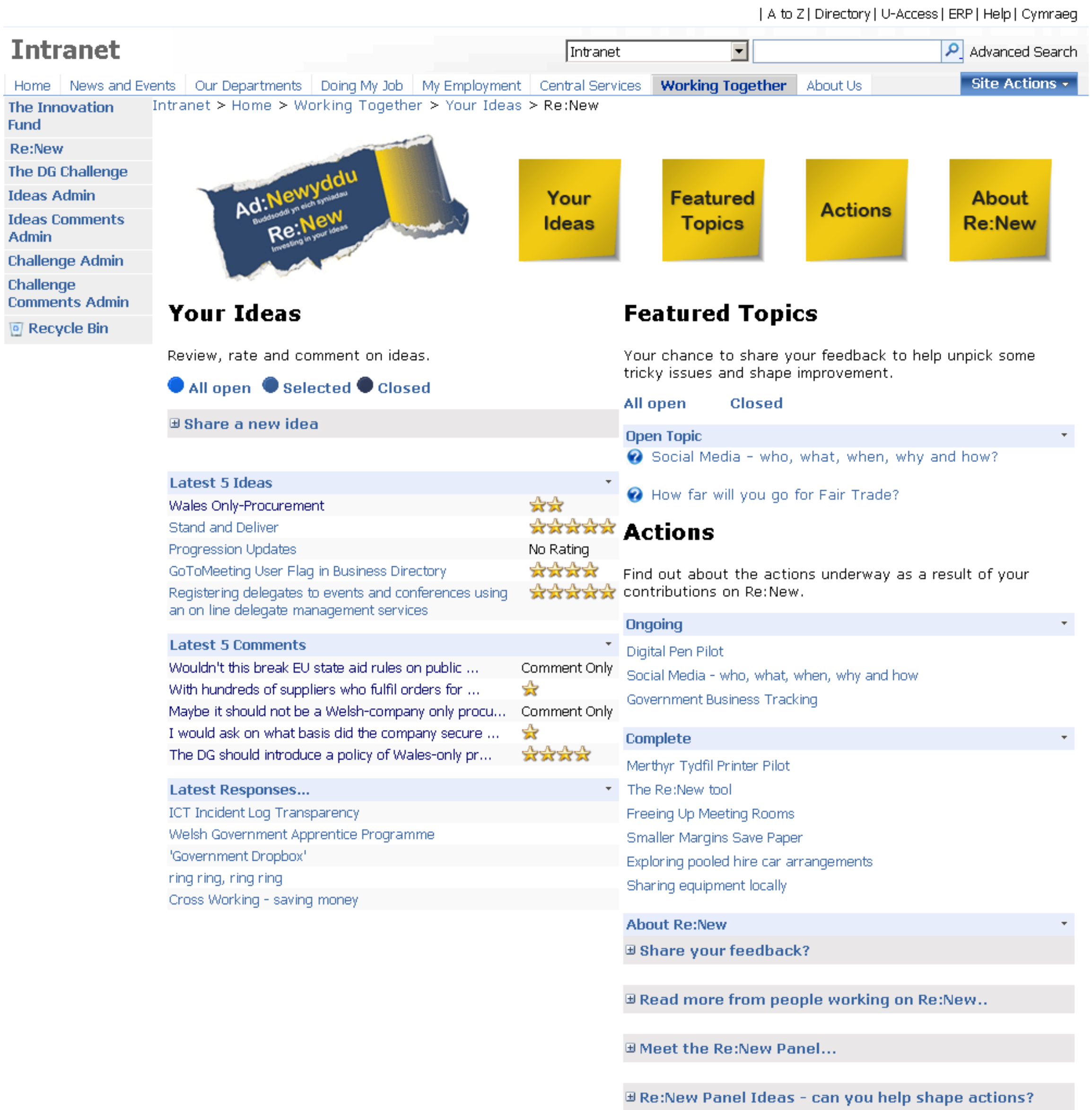
For business leaders. the following may serve as a cautionary tale.

"We see employees posting things like, "Does anyone at Corporate even read this?" says Sniderman. "As administrators of the tool, we have on occasion jumped into a conversation to let people know we are taking their issue forward."

"We know that the key to ongoing success is true two-way dialogue that contributes to productivity of our business," she says. "When our employees are screaming online for someone from Corporate to listen it is a powerful tool for convincing leaders to respond or contribute. However, the lack of a streamlined process for working these issues and the concern that the volume will be too much to manage is the number one thing leaders cite when they are skeptical or resistant to join the conversations."


VOX
Welcome, Nicole (Nikki) Bussard
Search
HOME ACTIVITY INBOX ACTIONS APPS MY LINKS CREATE CONTENT PEOPLE PLACES
Great Experiences
Following
Track in Inbox
Overview Content People Subspaces and Projects Reports
Manage
GREAT EXPERIENCES
Every idea is important – we actively review and respond to your submissions.
Your Ideas Make Great Experiences
It all starts with submitting an idea about your experience at Sapient. Your ideas and contributions can make a larger impact on the company-wide people experience. Your ideas can be anything related to your experience on the ground at Sapient. For example:
• Your real time experience with India transport may have triggered some new ideas
• Your experience with expense reporting may be different from what you have seen in your previous organization which you feel worth sharing as a point of view
• You travel across offices and see our facilities and observe there are things that we can do to be consistent
Take a look at our mission and focus areas below to get further insight.
Stay Up to Date – Be Connected – Make an impact
Want the latest news, ideas, and information on Great Experiences to come to you?
• By following the lobby you'll get the latest scoop in your daily Vox community digest
• To see the ideas flow in real-time, elect to receive email notifications
Our Mission
All GSS teams create Great Experiences for Sapient people, making it simple and enjoyable to work here.
Sapient people will see our core values in action and feel personally valued when working with every GSS team, tool, and process.
Great Experiences Mission & Action
Great Experiences Overview
Steering Committee update | July 2012
Great Experiences Achievements| Running List
Great Experience Focus Areas
The simplify research identified and prioritized the top 10 focus areas based on what the team heard from our people across geographies through interviews, surveys, real-time online experience sharing, in-context research sessions, best practices research, and existing people-focused survey data.
Simplify Research Summary
Focus Areas
Moderators - In Progress!
1. Expense Reporting
2. India Transport
3. Time Tracking & Costing – Education and Philosophy
4. Project Setup and PID lifecycle
5. Staffing
6. People Growth
7. Knowledge Management and Project Tools
8. Onboarding
9. Facilities
10. PPG
The moderators play a key role in connecting your contributed ideas to the respective focus area categories, tagging content to make it easy to find, and encouraging responsive follow-up.
Great Experience Focus Areas
Recent Content
Filter by Categories & Tags
How to enroll in the Amex Membership Rewards –Program
Leadership Counselling Sessions (one-on-one) with Sapient Leaders
Show utilization for each time tracking week
Paper less investment proof submission
Re: I post a blog on vox but i didn't choose any location for that blog now i m not able to see my blog,what should i do so that blog will come on my home page??
Mobile App to automatically identify an intercall bridge number based on location and dial
Replace desk phones (hardware) by software communicators (Lync)
Make use of state of the art energy saving technology
Establish a employee stock / share program for everyone
Re: Expense Reporting - web based online tool
Same internal (office network) and external (webvpn) URL's for Sapient Applications and Contents
Show interesting content on
Activate access cards for both units in Gurgaon
Connect to pre-login win7 more transparent and slower
Use a combination lock instead of lock and key on desks
GSS: Thanks for a Great Year
Have a finance drop box on every floor
Re: Viewing payslips online
Integrating VOX with an 'in house Dropbox'
Review interviewers hiring consistently
Milk/Coffee/Tea in Vending Machines (cafetria) to be served without mixing sugar with sugar cubes supplied
Gift of Time(Vacation Donation) Policy
Vox Preview for Microsoft Project Files
Fruit Baskets or Salad Bars
Paddle to office
More
Leading Ideas from the Community
395 Sublime should be the new "state of the art" text editor for Interactive Developers
Created by Holger Hellinger
270 Mobile Phones: Provide every employee with a smartphone + unlimited data plan
Created by Finn Proepper
225 Larger (or dual) monitors for all
Created by Erik Gottesman
165 Travel | Sapient to directly pay air fares
Created by Olivier Goethals
145 Work-Life Balance: It's up to you
Created by Josh Alwitt
120 Mobile App for Time Tracking & TMS
Created by Siddhartha Lahiri
105 Gift of Time(Vacation Donation) Policy
Created by Ashwini Jadhav
105 Create an internal job/recruiting forum
Created by Bernd Kruse
105 Participate in Microsoft's Home Use Program so employees can get MS Office on their home computers f...
Created by Adam Price
105 Improve our report center
Created by Jo Geske
Show All
HOT TOPICS - Share your views on people experience
Fast Track to time tracking | 90.95% PID Movement
Improved Helpdesk System
Single Sign on into all Sapient Applications
Expense Reorting TIPS
Actions
Start a discussion
Write a document
Upload a file
Write a blog post
Create a poll
Create a sub-lobby
Create by email
Receive email notifications
View feeds
Create an idea
Upload multiple files
Create a video
Unanswered Questions
Re: I post a blog on vox but i didn't choose any location for that blog now i m not able to see my blog,what should i do so that blog will come on my home page??
Re: Viewing payslips online
Paddle to office
Re: 3PA iPod App Discussion
Android Application for VOX
Top Participants
View all participants
Popular Tags
expense expense_reporting expenses experiences great great_experience great_experiences it mobile office oracle phones time_tracking travel vox
View all
Home | Top of page | Need help? | Community Guidelines
© 2007-2012 Jive Software | Powered by jive

Pictured: Sapient’s intranet features a place called “Great Experiences” where employees can submit ideas for improving the company and workplace experience. Other employees can vote on ideas to move them up in priority.



Pictured: The Welsh Government’s “Re:New” ideas tool homepage. Users can browse existing ideas and submit new ones. Staff-generated ideas appear on the left. Questions posed by the Re:New administrators based on their discussions with parts of the business who have a particular engagement need appear on the right.

| A to Z | Directory | U-Access | ERP | Help | Cymraeg

Intranet

Intranet | Advanced Search

Home | News and Events | Our Departments | Doing My Job | My Employment | Central Services | **Working Together** | About Us | Site Actions

- The Innovation Fund
- Re:New
- The DG Challenge
- Ideas Admin
- Ideas Comments Admin
- Challenge Admin
- Challenge Comments Admin
- Recycle Bin

Intranet > Home > Working Together > Your Ideas > Re:New > Item Detail

Ad:Newyddu Buddsoddi yn eich syniadau Re:New Investing in your ideas

Your Ideas | Featured Topics | Actions | About Re:New

Your Ideas

Review, rate and comment on ideas.

All open | Selected | Closed

GoToMeeting User Flag in Business Directory

It would be useful to be able to 'flag' GoToMeeting users in the Business Directory to make the most of this useful software.

Submitted By: [redacted] on 18/1/2013

Average Rating ★★★★

Impact

Improved communications between staff working in different locations. Reduced demand for meeting rooms for small teleconferences and VCs that could handled 'at desk'. Very useful where one or more members of staff is working remotely or from home. GoToMeeting enables VOIP (Voice over internet protocol) so it is possible to mix telephone and computer - based calls.

Likely Cost

Call centre style headphones with microphone.

Links to Further Information

None

Comments

Comment Only

Thank you for all the comments. Just to let you know, we've been in touch with Application Support and they've shown us a page on the intranet where you can see a list of all the GoToMeeting Organisers and Administrators: http://intranet/English/CentralServices/ICT/Pages/VirtualMeetings.aspx

If anyone is having any problems with GoToMeeting, or would like to find out anymore about it, the team would be happy to help and can be emailed at WGApplicationSupport@Wales.GSI.Gov.UK

Submitted By: Re:New Administrator on 25/1/2013

Rating ★★★★★

This is a great idea. I certainly would be very pleased to connect to people using this method and being able to see who has a web cam linked to their rich client on their desk would be very useful. Even better if Stratus users could have wifi access in Gov buildings re: Go to Meeting free ap.

Submitted By: [redacted] (LGC - P... on 24/1/2013

Comment Only

could thgis be used 'conference' style?

Submitted By: Colleague on 23/1/2013

Rating ★★★★★

Good idea Kenn, it makes sense to promote the use of no, or low-cost solutions to keeping in touch. I've used GoToMeeting to conduct a Webinar & it worked well. Far maore reliable than the fragile Video Conferencing solution currently available.

Submitted By: [redacted] (DfES - YEED) on 23/1/2013

Rating ★★★★

Re: last comment asking why GoToMeeting isn't publicised more. To be fair there was a news item about it only last week: http://intranet/English/NewsEvents/Pages/GettingTogetherVirtuallythroughICT.aspx

Submitted By: [redacted] (DfES - FED) on 21/1/2013

Rating ★★★

I was just wondering why GoToMeeting is not publicised far more. I don't know how it works or much else about it, and neither does anyone else I know in WG.

Submitted By: Colleague on 21/1/2013

Rating ★

Useful software for some but does not consistently work throughout the WG estate. Would be interesting to search in the business directory for users to see how many have success with it.

Submitted By: Colleague on 21/1/2013

Comment Only

You could add "GoToMeeting User", via U-Access, to your Business Directory responsibilities and then it is available through the Business Directory search.

Submitted By: [redacted] (PPCS - PLSE) on 21/1/2013

Status

This idea is open for discussion.You can add your views, experience and suggestions here

Response

Share a Comment

* indicates a required field

Add your comments to this idea...*

Rate this idea...*

- Comment Only
- ★
- ★★
- ★★★
- ★★★★
- ★★★★★

Your Details - We will need some basic details before you submit your idea.

If you would prefer these not to be shown on the forum, just let us know by checking this box

Name:

Email:

Please confirm you have read the house rules *

Submit | Clear Form

Pictured: The Re:New idea detail page. This idea was staff-generated and shows the accompanying discussion and the 'Response' section of the tool used when the idea is complete and closed to new comments. This area also provides a history of any actions that were taken as a result of the idea.

RISK

Perception vs. Reality

The riskiness of social media inside the enterprise seems to be rooted more in perception than in reality. However, this doesn't mean convincing IT will be any easier. The risk tolerance of social tools is somewhat dependent on how risk tolerant an organization is about everything else. There is no easy fix for this problem and it is the one area where the powers that be will likely hold fast to their entrenched biases.

One possible solution is to wait it out. As the market for socially-enabled intranets grows, so do available tools. That means that established intranet platforms such as SharePoint are integrating more social features into their product offering. While not always an ideal solution, these tools can at least serve as a starting point.

If your organization is resistant to socially-enabled applications, there are ways to circumvent the system Employees of Telecom New Zealand implemented Yammer without approval of leadership and asked for forgiveness later. This is not something we advocate, necessarily, but sometimes it works.

Security Risk

Security is a very big concern in most organizations and tools that are hosted outside the firewall are often not allowed.

"Security of social software that is hosted outside the company network and firewalls (for example, Yammer) is currently the biggest barrier to formal and company-wide adoption and is starting to be assessed by Corporate IT and IT Risk Management teams," says Cahill.

Telecom New Zealand's popular Yammer effort raised concern about outside hosting, but even a company as regulated as a telecom seemed to be able to embrace change over time.

"There are real issues around ring fencing the ability to publish information," says Inskeep. **"**This is especially true for issues and uncertainty surrounding data ownership as the [Yammer] system is hosted outside of New Zealand and subject to US law. This means that (arguably) the US could subpoena all records from the Yammer hosts and gain access to Telecom conversations."

"There were some early concerns about the tool being hosted externally," says Forster. "Historically, there has been a view that 'we can't trust anything we can't house internally.' One group pulled out because of that perception, but have since rejoined. Housing internally would not have been scalable."

Despite these concerns, the Yammer effort has flourished at the organization. The most ardent detractors have come around to accepting both the tool and the perceived risk. This shift in an organization in a highly regulated industry seems to indicate that while difficult it is not always impossible to convince the old guard that times and tools are changing.

Content Risk

In an open system, there are risks associated with content. There is the risk of what people might say when given an unfettered opportunity to voice their opinions. There is the risk of what people will do with the information they have access to (note content that flows back and forth in social environments is not regulated in any way) so there is a risk of intellectual property leakage. There is also a privacy risk.

"There are risks around having robust starter/leaver processes in place to ensure only authorized people can use the tools and also having adequate control to allow access to any facet of the tool in case of a commercial breach or disciplinary problem," says a representative from a manufacturing organization. "These are perceived as the major [risks] with some off-shoots around further IT/HR related problems. It does put an emphasis on performance management rather than preventing performance problems in the first place by not having the tool, but this isn't considered to be a huge concern."

Intellectual property and privacy-related concerns are more risky in theory than in actual practice as long as necessary precautions are observed.

"The main risks are around leaking IP," says Bussard. "We have a security group that reviews our system and makes recommendations in addition to performing rigorous testing of the platform to identify potential security holes."

"Is this sufficient to dissuade people from doing stupid things with the information they have access to? No," says Ross. "Are there other ways to gain access to that information? Sure."

The only way to make sure information is kept confidential is to not make it available at all, but for the information that is widely available the best thing to do is make sure you trust the people you've hired.

"We have contracts that deal with the legal implications of information governed under those contracts (both company/staff contracts and company/client contracts) being used in an appropriate manner. We have good hiring policies and good people to ensure the right people are hired in the first place. And we have faith in our staff. We treat them like adults, trust them, and communicate the seriousness of the materials that they often work with," says Ross.

While the system of trust may seem a little light-handed, it mostly works.

"So far, we've never had to deal with a security/privacy breach," he says. "We continue to work diligently to ensure that's the case for the future."

His sentiment is often echoed by those who participate in this research.

Trust you've hired the right people and trust that they will do the right thing. Trust is a critical, yet sometimes overlooked content safeguard. This advice may sound simplistic, but we've interviewed many companies that tell us it works. Plan for the worst, hope for the best, and know that it almost always works out.

Unreasonable voices are almost universally silenced through the power of self-policing. It's just how communities work. Because reasonable grievances can now be aired out in the open, companies have the power to address issues when they are raised, giving them some control over how they propagate.

"Users are free to complain in full view of their colleagues (or at least those colleagues who take an interest in the forum)," says Keith McCormick, IT Lead at

Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research & Development. "People can disagree. I've seen this happen between different users, between users and IT, and within IT. Another thing that makes this work is that the IT team responds quickly to the forums. They don't languish, unnoticed, but are actively used throughout the day. Suggestions are acted upon, sometimes within the same day, or if it isn't feasible, the reason is usually stated in the forum."

This not only addresses the vocal minority, but also quells the concerns of those who may have had the same issue, but would never say it out loud.

Kick's COO recalls an important moment when this point became glaringly true on Genome. "Not long after we launched Chatter," says Goldstein, "I posted a message to the organization about the importance of accurately tracking billable time. The post, intended to serve as a reminder to be diligent and accurate, actually created a heated discussion, [with people] citing specific reasons why that level of accuracy could not be met."

Another organization might have been rattled by that type of challenge to a C-level directive made in such a public forum but Kiick considered the consequences if that same conversation occurred without management's knowledge and participation.

"A traditional organization might frown upon a direct challenge to the COO and those publicly criticizing a policy could be flagged as troublemakers who aren't willing to tow the party line," says Goldstein. "The conversation about it would have been hushed into the background. Instead, we were able to engage with those most adamant about the issue and work out a solution within three days of the original post being made."

"The moral of the story," he says, "is that those types of conversations are happening in your organization right now. Employees want nothing more than to be successful and are frustrated when they encounter an obstacle that they feel they can't overcome. It is up to the organization to decide if they want to pretend those conversations aren't happening, or truly open up the lines of communication and collaborate on solutions."

The Productivity Myth

While the fear of social tools being a distraction or time sink is very high, the research just doesn't justify the concern.

"I have definitely heard people who haven't used social tools say that they are a waste of time," says Hornsby. "However, the people that use them find that it only takes a minute of their time to write a status update, and that the benefits of joining a network of people who make similar updates are tangible. It helps us to be a joined-up business, and it helps individuals to spot opportunities for more effective working that they would otherwise miss."

Part of the productivity mythology is fueled by the difficulty of measuring both productivity (in general) and the affect social tools have on productivity. When grounded in a solid business need, social tools provide a foundation for solid *increases* in productivity, though it can be difficult to measure.

"We see increased productivity in most areas," says Reiser. "For example our blogs dramatically extended our external outreach in a very authentic and sincere way. One important reason for this is social platforms provide users an opportunity to be more efficient with time they are already spending trying to accomplish tasks."

In some cases, the time users spend on social software decreases the time they spend on other time-consuming tasks. The net effect can be a timesaving. “Yes, people also spend more of their time now on social platforms,” says Reiser, “but they also spend less time in the email inbox, and especially less time hunting for information. Now we connect people with the experts directly.”

The other major difference between time spent on the social Web and time spent on enterprise social software is that behind the firewall the content is predominantly work-related and specific.

“As the focus of our tools are inward-facing, and the only content that is uploaded is work-related,” says Casanova.

“We are working on defining metrics to measure productivity increase,” says Casanova. “But any time you have employees sharing information with each other, teaching each other and a user has the ability to find that information easier, in multiple formats, with the ability take it with them, we can make the assumptions that productivity will increase.”

“In addition, when employees are sharing best practices with each other you are shortening their time to getting key information and therefore their ability to apply it. Before this portal, they might have gone to three or four different portals, if they found the information at all,” he says.

The way the tools are introduced to users makes a big difference in how they are used. Some of these methods are discussed later in this report when we consider the relative merits of training. Regardless of whether formal training is offered or not, some instruction on best practices can greatly affect how well employees utilize social tools and spend their precious time.

“Our experience is that if employees are not guided on how to use these tools in the most productive and effective way possible they can quickly turn into a time-suck or they can be perceived as a ‘time-suck’,” says Cahill.

So, the moral of the story is that social tools *can* be a time suck, but they are unlikely to be. Employees have other, more fruitful ways to waste time online.

“People are on our intranet to do work,” says Ross. “We've all got way too much work and not enough time in the day. And if you really want to goof off, our intranet can't compete with the Web as a whole. Have you visited Facebook, Twitter or YouTube or MLKSHK recently?”

Though our findings are anecdotal, the results they yield are consistent. The benefits of a socially enabled enterprise far outweigh any perceived risks.

“Within the context of the social tools that we’ve rolled out, we have yet to see anything demonstrate the attributes of a time suck in the sense that every tool built into Genome has a measurable impact on our business,” says Goldman. “The value of stronger social ties between our people, of facilitated collaboration, and of directly tying behaviors to desired outcomes far outweighs any risk of loss productivity.”

The Risk of Inaction

While Web 2.0 tools may present enterprise risks — some real and some perceived — the risk of ignoring these innovations has far greater consequence than embracing the tools and knowing they do not provide perfect controls.

"We see a much bigger risk in not using Web 2.0 technologies in the workplace — the risk of becoming out of touch and irrelevant with our employees and customers," says Goldsborough.

"By providing an internal forum for employees to discuss Sprint issues, we are actually diminishing one significant risk: that employees might share information or discuss issues on external forums because they are searching for answers," he says.

And while some companies continue to try to control all communication, it is becoming clear that it is no longer possible. This means they have a choice: figure out these new channels or be left behind.

"We not only encourage our team to be actively engaged in their social circles, but have gone a step further and created our own internal social networks," says Goldstein. "They are easy to use, encourage open communication, and create a social stream of consciousness of the organization. The fact is that whether we like it or not, conversations are happening around the water cooler and in the elevator. We can choose to turn a blind eye to them and broadcast a neutered, 'corporate speak' message from the top down, or we can actively engage those that want to engage with us, create a dialog and create meaningful changes in the organization."

CODE OF CONDUCT

The best reason to have a code of conduct is to remind people they are at work and as such they are held to a certain standard when using social tools.

"We want users to treat The Lounge the same way they'd treat other tools available to them in both their working and outside work lives," says Vass. "By keeping these guidelines consistent we expect it will garner consistent and conscientious behavior about how they discuss Business Environment. We want to maintain honesty and transparency but also a sense of individual responsibility."

While it might be important to have a code of conduct, it's also best to keep that message simple. Sun's blogging policy goes something like this: "Be interesting, don't disclose secrets, and if you're in trouble you have to pay for your own lawyer!" says Reiser**. "**Of course there are a few more rules and guidelines," he concedes, "but you get the idea."

Codes of conduct governing social media tend to stay pretty close to the ones already in place for activities in other areas of corporate culture.

"When an employee joins Sprint, he/she is required to sign the Code of Conduct, which is a promise not to share proprietary information, use inappropriate language, personally attack colleagues and an obligation to comply with a variety of other stipulations that cover potential issues that might arise in an online community, such as Sprint Space," says Goldsborough.

Even with very light controls in place, employees tend to behave professionally. Employees are no more likely to do anything egregious while using the company's social network than they are to do so in general in the workplace. The one way to ensure this is to ban anonymity.

"Keep it transparent," says Cahill. "In a professional setting, do not make it possible for employees to present themselves anonymously to the community. Not only does it force employees to police their own behavior and keep things professional, but it also encourages them to consider how they can use social media to enhance their professional reputation inside the organization."

When users are personally identifiable it quells the impulse to contribute something that is either inappropriate or inflammatory. Simply put, adopt a policy of “you say it you own it,” as Sprint did on its blogging platform. All users must be identified as themselves.

“Early on in the course of establishing a social media presence there were some concerns raised by legal regarding what might get posted in a forum such as Sprint Space,” says Kneeshaw. “We took a major step in addressing their concerns by requiring that all posts be attributed to someone. In other words, we do not allow any anonymous postings inside of Sprint Space. This goes back to the statement of "you say it, you own it." People have reputations to protect and they are aware of that.

If every piece of content in a social environment is attributable to a specific person it greatly reduces the content risk of the system as a whole.

“Our intranet has a user and security model that ensures there's no anonymity in the system,” says Ross. “That means that every page edit, every access, every touch of information is auditable.”

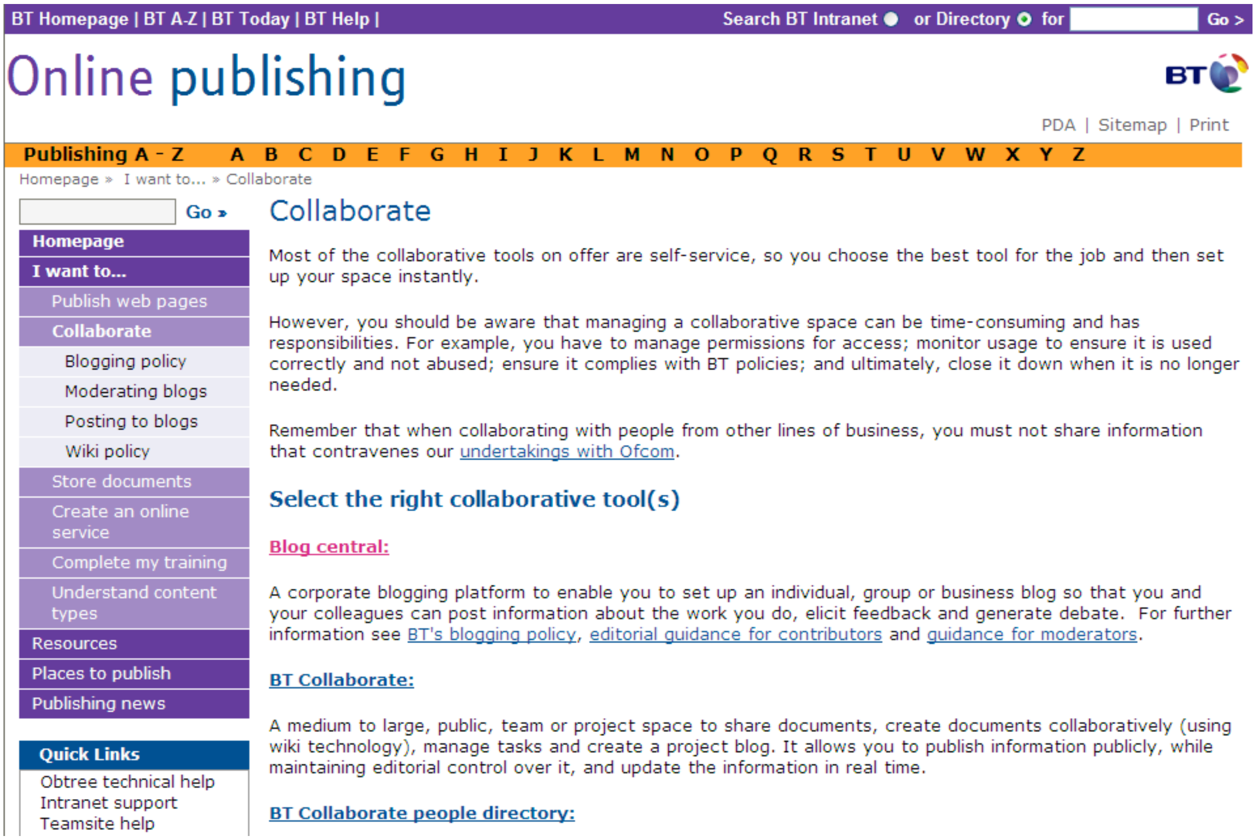
The one company that experimented with anonymous posting, Officenet Staples, says they experienced abuse and had to immediately redress the policy. “Since we allow anonymous postings in some platforms (to encourage our Speak Up! initiative), we had, when we started, some level of abuse. Insults abounded, and we had to define some limits,” says Piccioli.

So, as we’ve said before, a simple approach can be very effective.

“Bad behavior has been rare,” says Amurgis. “And this does surprise me (pleasantly). Banning anonymity has raised the level of professionalism, perhaps, but I’ve learned that employees tend to behave professionally if you trust them. Distrust them, though, and they’ll find a way around you.”

With little or no policing, companies find that the users fall in line with the established code of conduct and the community quickly and easily admonishes those who don’t.

“As with the social Web, it’s also very self-governing,” says Jordan. **“**I recently saw someone get a little snarky on Yammer and another employee nicely, yet firmly, laid out the code of conduct for the app, which is ‘no hating on Yammer.’ I think that’s great. Democracy at its finest.”



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- I want to...
  - Publish web pages
  - Collaborate
    - Blogging policy
    - Moderating blogs
    - Posting to blogs
    - Wiki policy
  - Store documents
  - Create an online service
  - Complete my training
  - Understand content types
- Resources
- Places to publish
- Publishing news

Quick Links

- Obtree technical help
- Intranet support
- Teamsite help

Collaborate

Most of the collaborative tools on offer are self-service, so you choose the best tool for the job and then set up your space instantly.

However, you should be aware that managing a collaborative space can be time-consuming and has responsibilities. For example, you have to manage permissions for access; monitor usage to ensure it is used correctly and not abused; ensure it complies with BT policies; and ultimately, close it down when it is no longer needed.

Remember that when collaborating with people from other lines of business, you must not share information that contravenes our undertakings with Ofcom.

Select the right collaborative tool(s)

Blog central:

A corporate blogging platform to enable you to set up an individual, group or business blog so that you and your colleagues can post information about the work you do, elicit feedback and generate debate. For further information see BT's blogging policy, editorial guidance for contributors and guidance for moderators.

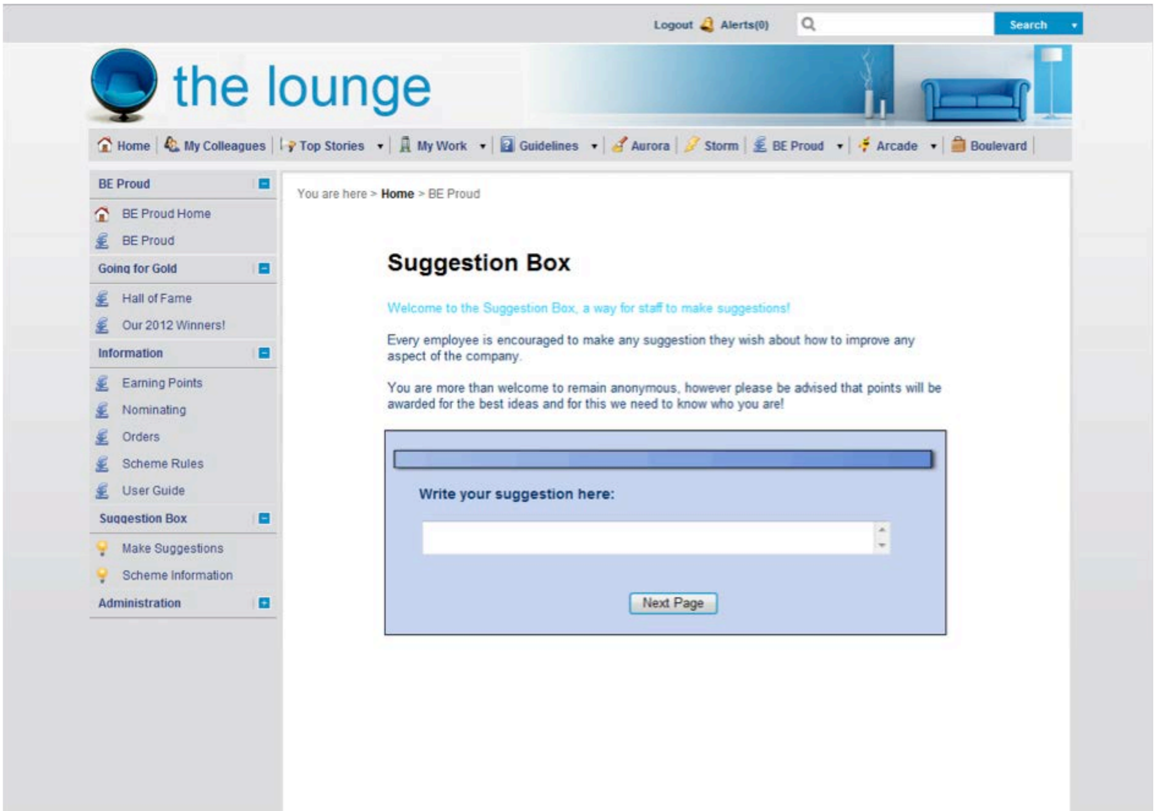
BT Collaborate:

A medium to large, public, team or project space to share documents, create documents collaboratively (using wiki technology), manage tasks and create a project blog. It allows you to publish information publicly, while maintaining editorial control over it, and update the information in real time.

BT Collaborate people directory:

Pictured: This screen shows an excerpt from BT's policy covering various types of collaboration activity. It is linked to from many of the company’s social sites.

Pictured: This is a sample from AEP's blog guidelines. They are intended to reflect the personal tone of AEP Now, rather than come across as overly harsh.



Pictured: Business Environment balances its desire for transparent communication with an awareness that there are occasions when people will want to comment anonymously due to the nature of their opinion. Therefore, they offer the "Suggestion Box" feature for this purpose. But even then, they still try to encourage attribution by reminding the user that they are only awarded points if they attribute their name to the suggestion. "In the long term, we expect this will increase employee trust even further and encourage more open communication even on the most difficult topics," says Vass.

COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

Gardens Must be Tended

Because social platforms can grow like weeds after a warm summer rain, the prevailing wisdom is that if left to their own devices they will just flourish. So community management is often overlooked. Taking the garden metaphor a bit further, there is a fine art to cultivating community where you want to tend to it without over-working it. Too little attention and it will go to seed. Too much pruning and it will die. To achieve this delicate balance, a good manager can be of critical service to the long-term health of any community.

Is a community manager a necessary investment? The simple answer is yes. Sprint, Sun and other companies that have progressed from simple social tools to more comprehensive social platforms stand by the importance of this role.

“The community manager’s job is to manage social communications,” says DiMauro. “It is not a technical position, but more of a sociologist.”

“Community management,” she says, “is the keeper of the knowledge and the relationships. They are the go-to people, the connectors. They are knowledge facilitators and they help bring content and conversation into the community.”

Community managers are an important aspect of social development within organizations. In addition to being the people who manage the ebb and flow of the community, they often handle the logistics of managing groups on the platform, and conduct outreach to tools vendors. However, the bulk of this job is internal facilitation.

Sun’s Community Drivers (managers) fulfilled the facilitation role for each SunSpace community. However, according to Reiser, once a community is up and running it is largely self-governing and self-thriving. His team brings together these Community Drivers to share best practices and establish common policies and practices across the communities.

Though DiMauro and others believe community management should be a full-time position, these roles often evolve, first from a part-time position, as has Casanova’s position at Sun for the SLX platform.

“I spend half of my time on the community management piece,” says Casanova. **“**Part of my role is to continue to develop programs, work with the various business units to keep people engaged with the community, as well as patrol the portal to understand how people are using it and where things can be improved.

The community manager, whether formal or informal, full-time or part time, is the one who is most responsible for maintaining the health over the overall community and intervening when something is going wrong.

Downs explains how the community manager position at Sprint has three main roles:

1. **Facilitate the conversation.** Community managers receive email notifications every time new content is posted in their space. (We use the terms space and community interchangeably.) To show other employees’ value, especially when the community is new, it’s important for these subject matter experts (SME) to start conversations and to share their knowledge.

2. **Moderate content.** Since the community managers receive notifications, we ask them to make sure the content being posted is appropriate, although we know the overall employee community also will serve this role.

3. **Customize the look and feel of the community.** Community managers can use out-of-the box widgets and layouts to design their space and promote the type(s) of content used most.

Facilitating conversation is perhaps the most important of these three important jobs for the community manager, for that is the piece of the job that encourages robust participation.

“We manage the appearance of new ideas,” says Yvonne Pawlin, Re:New Manager, Welsh Government. “For example, we manage the presentation of ideas on the homepage, rotating ideas to give each prominence to generate interest. This also enables us to move content around so that the space continues to showcase new, interesting or popular content. Using webparts that display ideas with high ratings and comments, we enable users to manage the appearance of content. When conversations drift, we add a comment to inform the discussion or re-focus it to generate constructive contributions. The intention is to get people to think differently and take ownership of the idea and subsequent action. Crucially, every idea receives a response, so everyone can see ideas are being considered and the channel is much more than a talking shop."

Keeping the conversation going helps contribute to a feeling of community. "All my work is conversation. Community is a result of effective conversations and a common horizon," says Paschmann.

Monitoring Community Health

It's easy to spot a thriving community by the level of participation and the quality of conversation. Maintaining community health means both monitoring and sometimes intervention.

"We look at a number of indicators in Interact Analytics to judge the Lounge's health," says Vass. "Beyond looking at the percent of unique users using our intranet every 30 days (which is 100 percent), we examine who the main influencers are, compare trends to see which departments or locations are our main adopters or least adopters, and then put these in touch with each other to get the main adopters to sell the benefits of increased usage. We also spend time with the lower adopters to understand what needs The Lounge doesn't currently meet."

"Further to this we hold a quarterly call with all employees," she says.

Lack of activity is perhaps the first and clearest sign that a community is in trouble.

"Lack of activity is one sign that a community is not working," says Casanova. "Activity in the area of upward growth in unique users, time on portal, number of downloads, number of uploads, users rating content, providing comments etc. We monitor the health of our community through some of those metrics."

"We also monitor the health by quality of content that is uploaded (average ratings and views) and that we continue to build a base of SMEs that are considered experts in their field and that they develop a fan base within our community," he says.

A community manager is perhaps most important when a community needs a boost. When there are signs of lagging interest, community managers can step in to stoke the fire, not just on a short-term basis, but to plant the seeds for a renewal.

"We have a community health check as part of our community methodology," says Reiser. **"**We rely partly on the Community Driver to help us measure this. Some of the health check is based on quantitative community metrics (for example, input, output, percent of activities per community members, etc.) and some of the best qualitative data we get is from our Community Equity model, like the top valued contributions, people, communities and trending data based on tags or topic equity."

"Personally, if things get too quiet I have been known to ask a leading question which I know will drive responses and interaction. This tends to have a short term effect on traffic and conversation, but can reignite interest in using the space to discuss ideas and opinions," says Inskeep.

In the long-term, this type of maintenance can pay off both in encouraging successful communities and also in knowing when to pull the plug on less successful efforts. But more important for the long-term, diligent tracking of community health gives social enterprise teams fodder for reporting on the success of their efforts.

“Currently we are looking at the percent of growth of our communities on a quarter over quarter time period,” says Reiser. “We measure the number of communities, the numbers of members per community and in aggregate, and we measure the quality on participation via Community Equity.”

STAFFING

If communication improves and becomes more de-centralized, the question begs to be asked: do successful social tools get people fired? The good news is that among the companies we interviewed for this report, only one reported a staff reduction as a direct result of a social enterprise initiative. In that case, an entire documentation team was replaced by a combination of a wiki and some off-shoring. But that case seems to be an outlier, at least among our sample set.

Enterprise social tools may eliminate process, but they don’t seem to eliminate staff. Happily for employees concerned about their jobs, the efficiencies created by social collaboration mean either more fluidity or staffing increases as the demand for different skill sets increase in order to support the social media efforts.

“No, to be honest, you haven’t eliminated people, you’ve eliminated process, because those other people now are freed up to do other things,” says Casanova. “So it hasn’t really eliminated people, it’s just refocused what people are doing and the processes that they’re using to get information out.”

Social media as communication platform is changing the role of communication and it is, in some cases, changing how these departments are staffed. Social media both inside and outside the corporation have created the need for additional staff to direct these activities. So far, these team members have come from other parts of the organization and their efforts have simply been redirected toward social media initiatives.

“On the internal side,” says Sniderman, “the resources that were once focused on application of new media tools to deliver high-value employee communications were refocused on the social media platform and strategy.”

This shift is a big change for communications professionals who were once the main source of messaging. They now serve to facilitate that dialogue among the broad spectrum of participants.

“It’s a big change, because for Sprint for example, corporate communications is largely staffed by journalists,” says Downs, “by people who are very accustomed to traditional media. It begins to change our jobs from being the foremost expert on editing and editorial and that kind of stuff, to really more facilitators of the dialogue or enablers of the dialogue.”

This shift can lead to some unease as companies figure out how that will affect existing roles and responsibilities.

“How many employees do you need to that?” says Downs. “There are lots of questions that we have to work through.”

In the broader organizational context, social media helps organizations transition people from one team to another as the information that was once resident with an individual is more widely accessible, with very little effort.

"While social media has not directly impacted staffing levels, it has made it much easier to transition people on or off a team," says [Keith] McCormick. **"**With content contributed by various experts over time, available to all, there is less need to chase after people before they leave and try to document all they know."

When a team is in the habit of adding content regularly – as they come across it, there is much less to do when staff transition from one role to another. And ramp-ups are far easier with the aid of these collaborative information repositories.

"New people immediately have access to all the accumulated knowledge. This saves everyone a lot of time and a lot of headaches," says [Keith] McCormick.

COST

Social tools save money in the long run, by increasing the speed and efficiency of communication across an organization. But like intranets in general, social platforms are difficult to quantify in terms of ROI.

"We've increased our capacity for internal communication by giving communication tools to every individual in the organization, without increasing the cost," says Hornsby. "When we communicate via our portal, there is always a need to use a professional resource."

"Though there is clearly a cost in having large numbers of staff spending time writing personal status updates, there is a clear value to these updates, and this value is recognized by those that engage with social tools, he says."

The value is that individuals who use social tools learn about the business much more quickly than those that don't, and they stay up-to-date with current events. This tends to improve the quality of the ideas that these individuals produce.

Users and Use

ON BOARDING

If You Build It Will They Come?

It's not enough to set up a lemonade stand in the desert and hope the camel caravan comes through this week. Attracting users to a new social platform requires a little bit of planning and whole lot of patience. The mantra of social media is: users beget users. And users only come if they see value.

"Getting users to contribute has been slow but steady," says Blair. "Ironically, the driver to participation is participation. I wouldn't use the term 'struggle' as it's been fairly organic and our expectations were realistic. We've concentrated more on the quality of the contributions rather than the quantity. What seems to work most is when there is obvious business value. It's usually niche and much of the user-generated content is of relevance to small groups, but cumulatively this makes a significant impact."

As we've said before, the social platform must tie into business goals, otherwise enterprise users are unlikely to participate. User value is derived from the proposition that this tool, this platform, this new way of communicating and collaborating does one thing: it solves a work problem for the user.

"You are solving business needs for knowledge workers," says DiMauro. "Knowledge workers, they are the doers. They are action-oriented producers. They will adopt that which solves a problem. When tools are chosen that solve problems, that make them more agile in their work, they will adopt them," she says.

Demonstrating Value

The imperative to demonstrate value presents companies with a bit of a chicken-and-egg conundrum. Until a blog is active or a social network has users it might be difficult to show the value because these tools are, at first, just empty spaces brimming with potential.

The solution to this problem is two-fold: provide examples and seed content.

"Provide concrete examples of what you can do, what kind of answer you can provide them," advises Alquier. "If they can understand the potential of the system, they can help with getting other groups to join in."

In the beginning, demonstrating value means making decisions about which user groups will gain the most from the new system right out of the gate. Leaders? Foot soldiers? Or as Sapient found, folks in the middle for whom the tools were most relevant to their work.

"I would say we started in the middle," says Bussard, "mostly with managers, senior managers and directors who saw the value in the tool and were currently tasked with building a program that lent itself to using social business tools. We then used these specific use cases to build out from multiple centers. As people went on to the community to find our Estimation Tool, for example, they also found other valuable content and figured out ways to contribute themselves. From there, we brought in the associates and senior associates by providing them valuable content as well as a platform they could use for anything they wanted, including forming non-business groups."

“The key for all audiences seems to be giving them a specific reason to go on,” she says. “Just saying, ‘come collaborate, communicate and innovate’ (or any other generic invitation) does not work.”

Once the first users arrive there has to be something to keep them interested. It is critical to be strategic about the first content users see when they arrive. Seeding content means the early arrivals have a starting point that is not as daunting as a blank page on an empty wiki.

“We started with an effort to populate the system with relevant information before getting editors on board in order to avoid giving them the overwhelming feeling of having to contribute everything from scratch,” says Alquier.

Seeding content fills the psychological need for users to feel like they are not starting from scratch, but content is the only way to really show relevance and illustrate value.

Realizing this, L&Q used a stealth launch to cultivate a starter community before opening it up to a wider audience. “We quietly let all users have access to the social tools a couple of months before the official launch of the intranet platform,” says Hornsby. “Some started using the tools without needing guidance, and so we had a small but active online community on day one.”

Creating a starter framework such as this makes a world of difference toward demonstrating value.

“In a business environment, the average person is not interested unless they see how it can be relevant and helpful to their work,” says [Keith] McCormick. **“**They also don’t usually want to be the only ones using it. A bare framework does not convey relevance. “

Adoption will happen slowly and uptake will increase over time.

“It is a very slow process,” says Alquier (about the wiki his company uses to support research scientists). “Users generally become more receptive when they can find what they are looking for. The problem is to reach a critical mass of content in order to build a critical mass of users.”

Success stories spread quickly and early successes lead to increased adoption.

“The tools generally sell themselves. We prefer not to overtly market them, but we monitor them all and take special effort to publicize valuable activity,” says Amurgis**.** **“**For example, when an employee asks a question in response to a company news story and a subject matter expert quickly posts the answer (without prodding), everyone’s understanding of the news is enriched, and everyone can see that the exchange provided value.”

When this type of rapid response becomes the norm it shifts expectations. Users can quickly move from giving-it-a-try, to I-can’t-remember-work-before-we-used-this-tool. The tipping point provides a great opportunity to bring underground initiatives out into the light of day. If a tool or an initiative has already proven itself, even in a small trial, the business may have less opportunity to question it and question its value.

“Once a critical mass of users was established, the business was shown the value of the tool, judged by the uptake,” says Forster.

Early Adopters

If social platforms are like gardens, then early adopters are the first sprouts that emerge once the seeds have been planted.

Early adopters lead by example and are role models as other users come on board. Whether they come to a tool or technology on their own — out of interest or enthusiasm — or whether they are enlisted as confederates to support an outreach program, these early adopters can be the most important group of users to a social platform.

“Initially, we leveraged the earliest adopters to help us set up the platform for enterprise use,” says Sniderman. “Other early adopters are community leaders and are key voices in ongoing dialogue across the site.”

In companies where social media efforts have been built from the ground up, early adopters are not hard to find. They are likely the ones who discovered the tool in the first place and found a way to get it launched as an underground initiative. But even in companies where social media initiatives are fully sanctioned, an effort must be made to seek out and leverage early adopters. They will become evangelists and pave the way for other users as their influence works its way through the organization.

The difference of course, between social media and other technology initiatives is that the early adopters of social platforms determine the tone and some of the cultural norms of the system. They seed content and they become the system’s earliest leaders as well as its users. They are the first users to generate the user-generated content. The content they contribute will attract early passive participants — lurkers — who come to consume the content and perhaps contribute by commenting on other people’s contributions.

“The key is making sure your early adopters are well respected subject matter experts, people who are recognized as thought leaders with valuable content to share,” says Casanova. “That drives people to the portal as well as gives others ideas on how to leverage the portal to get their ideas and how to best present them.”

In most social media efforts, the platform grows through a natural progression. People use it, like it and encourage their friends to use it as well. If leveraged effectively, these early adopters will not just pave the way for other users, but will compel other users to join and contribute.

“Early adopters will eventually pull the laggards in,” says [Grant] McCormick. “The cutting edge ‘mavens’ eventually attract the more traditional early adopters, and this group gets a bit larger.”

“Laggards soon start initially interacting with Web 2.0 content as consumers,” he says. “Later they will publish too, but step one is just to get them exposed as consumers of the early adopter's content. Publishing is a step they will take after they get more and more comfortable with consuming content and building up friends on the social platform.”

IBM’s Technology Adoption Program is a formal way the company enlists the help of groups of users willing to try out new applications. “This is essentially a site where employees can register as early adopters and try out new applications,” says Blackwell. “Just by deploying to this site, you can get all the early adopters to review and use the new tool.”

“Supplement this with a few news articles and communications, and you have a decent running start,” he says.

Another approach is to pair technology mavens with what one company refers to as “digital dinosaurs” to bring the reticent along.

“We highlight more savvy users (not always young in our case) to run what’s called a ‘digital dinosaur’ session” says a representative of this organization, “where people who aren’t familiar with the tool, or any social media tool for that matter, can virtually attend a live training session ran by the savvy user to find out more.”

While IBM successfully manages a formal adoption program and other companies use pairings to bring new users into the fold, most companies rely mostly on informal means to spread adoption.

“Personally, I’ve always felt these sorts of applications should grow and succeed on their own merits,” says Blackwell. “I believe it is a good idea to ‘prime the pump’ by encouraging a few key users (such as executives, people in different roles who are the center of a large existing network), but at the heart these are supposed to be user-driven social applications. If your users aren’t going to ultimately champion them, it begs the question as to how well your tool is designed or how well you are meeting an actual need.”

Moving Beyond Early Adopters

It’s hard to know why some people do not participate. They may be perfectly aware the tools exist, but just don’t have a lot to say. In other cases, they may not be aware of the functionality. So, in the end, all you can do is build awareness and encourage use. Then let nature take its course.

To move the needle beyond the initial user base may require some creativity. “We use viral internal marketing whenever possible,” says Reiser. “We often leverage one social tool to market another new social tool. For example at Sun, I often used our internal microblogging platform to provide updates regarding SunSpace.”

Drawing users into the conversation via the tools themselves is also an approach that worked for Business Environment. “We encouraged our early users to @tag wherever possible, pulling users into conversations,” says Vass of the organization’s social platform. “We found this brought people into the center of conversations. Whilst this doesn’t always work the first time, we noticed once people were immersed in conversation about a challenge relevant to them they pick up the social behaviors very comfortably as it becomes the accepted language, broadening to hash tags, @tags, likes and shares. This meant a specific conversation was put into context specific to a challenge the original author could never have expected.”

“We think this transition is far easier and more rewarding that the traditional model of hierarchy,” she says.

Some companies use an approach whereby they increase users’ exposure to the tool, group by group. This worked well for Johnson & Johnson’s R&D wiki. “Ours was a grassroots effort,” says Alquier. “We tried to get key content producers in first and then increase exposure of other contributors and management, once enough data is in. Concrete examples speak a lot louder than ‘visions’ or ‘prototypes.’”

This type of measured approach can help the team maintain control over the rollout to ensure a smooth transition and to keep users focused on the fact that these platforms are driven by their participation rather than being just another top down corporate communications tactic.

Sprint's team used a controlled rollout to reinforce the employee-owned aspect of the tool, after the blogging platform's initial success. "The 'launch' was so successful that communications leaders wanted us to advertise it in the traditional company media channels," says Sniderman. "We opted to wait a month or so to give a few communities some time to grow organically. As usage increased month over month, we began integrating it with our other corporate channels. We didn't want it to become 'too corporate' too soon, and we still aggressively manage the perception that this is an 'employee-owned' communications platform."

Klick uses a blended approach that is part software development and part viral marketing.

"At first, new features are launched in stages," says Goldstein. "Usually we grab a User Acceptance Testing (UAT) group that will serve as our beta launch. They're called up to try out the tool, provide their feedback, and become the de-facto trainers. We show this group how to use the tool live, we ask for their feedback, and we ask them to show the tool to two colleagues a few days later, and to continue to share until we're ready to launch."

"Once we launch, we usually have a 1.0 launch with a basic set of features and then a number of versions with added functionality," he says. "This ensures that the tool is out there sooner, can be updated to include any details that we may not have considered that get suggested by the staff as well as fix any bugs that we miss in UAT testing."

An added benefit of Klick's incremental approach is that it ensures they don't over-invest in a tool. "If we find there really is no usage, then we can abandon the tool before we invest too much," says Goldstein. "Digital Darwinism can be difficult, but it's allowed us to keep moving forward."

Communicating the triumphs can lead to more triumphs. While news of successful projects spread on its own, it is important to leverage those stories and put them to work to help grow the platform. "Along the way we are constantly creating success stories and communicating anecdotal evidence regarding the new technologies," says Reiser.

Whatever methods you use to encourage use beyond the first wave of users, know that while a gentle nudge can be helpful coercion is not. "I think you should exercise caution in treating social collaboration tools as a hammer in search of a nail," says Blackwell. "Success shouldn't be measured in how successful you are at forcing people to use the tools."

Promotion and Outreach

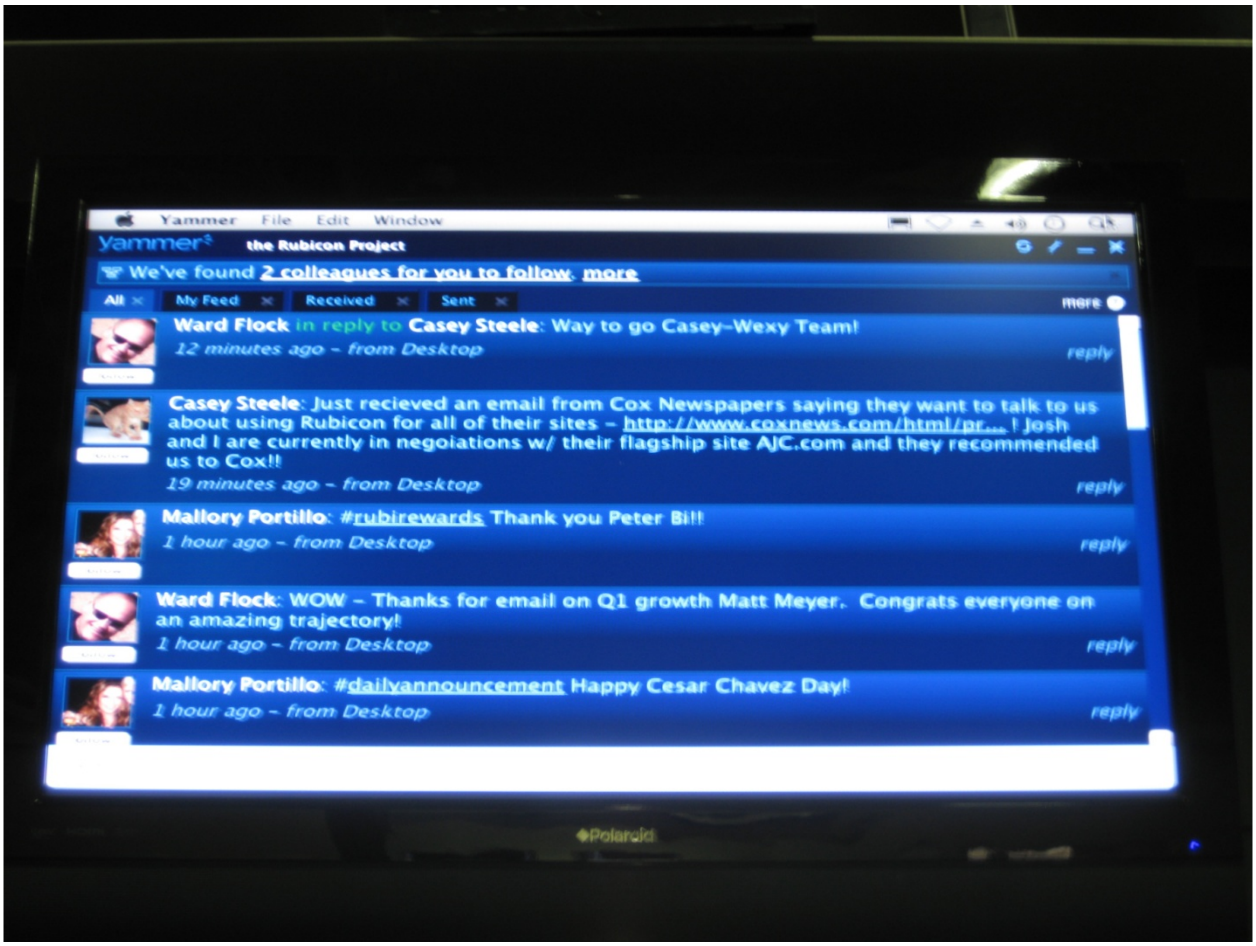
Social tools tend to spread virally throughout organizations. Though this viral momentum is part of the natural trajectory, it never hurts to supplement the normal uptake with some good old-fashioned promotional efforts, whether that is through a communication outreach program or personal connections.

"We developed an internal marketing strategy and communication plan to get users on-board," says Casanova. "We used a mix of contests, identification of key contributors and early seeding of content that helped us drive early adoption and eventually mass adoption."

Focus communication efforts on what the system can do for the users, rather than focusing on the technology or tools. Highlight how the platform or tools address pain points you are trying to resolve.

“We showcased the system in presentations and emails to give people a gradual exposure to the system,” says Alquier. **“**In presentations, we focused on what the system can do more than what technology is it built on. We received better feedback from that kind of presentation.“

Since social tools might represent a dramatic departure from traditional corporate communication, don’t be afraid to also take an unconventional approach when rolling them out. The Rubicon Project showcases the company’s Yammer feed on plasma screens in the office. It’s the first thing visitors see when they enter the office.

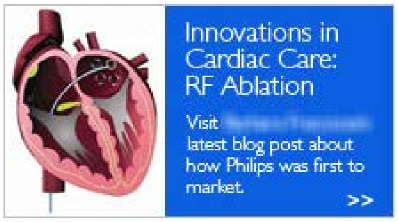


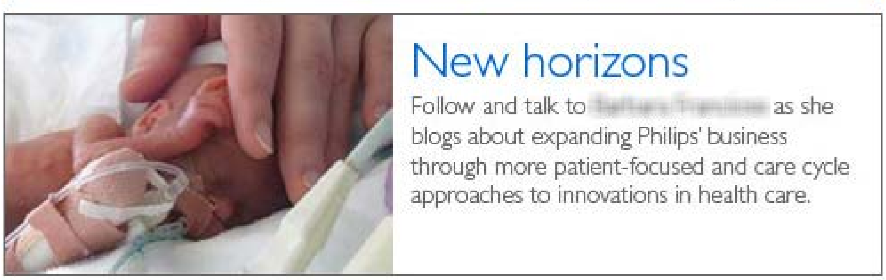
Pictured: The Rubicon Project displays the company’s Yammer feed on a plasma screen in the company’s office and showcases what Rubicon Project employees are talking about that day.

“Part of the beauty of having the Yammer stream on the plasmas in the office is that even the non-participants are able to participate (albeit passively) and observe what’s happening,” says Jordan**.** “We found the monitoring of what everyone is saying is enticing enough to get non-participants to join in so they can contribute.“

Promoting the social platform on the social platform itself is also a good approach.

“We also employed some guerilla marketing techniques with the bloggers,” says Cahill. **“**We asked them to promote their blogs with their circle of colleagues, team, or division (if they are executives). We also recommended they put links to their blogs in their email signatures and on their employee profile on the online employee directory on the intranet.”





Pictured: A snapshot of a collection of intranet ad banners that were created to promote Philips Healthcare employee blogs.

Personal connections are also very helpful in on boarding users. Very few companies have the resources to take a one-on-one approach to socializing a new social platform but it's still worth considering.

"Early and individual training worked best for us, along with repeated reminders and help along the way," says Mehrotra. "Over time, we have tried to sustain a very aggressive 'customer service' that enables people to do their work while making the wiki processes as transparent as possible. Doing this requires a particular mindset of once you get it, it is easy to sustain; if you don't adopt it, it is an impossible task."

Sometimes, the personal touch is just a matter of reaching out to the "right" users and having the introduction and encouragement trickle down and spread.

"To get users to contribute content, we first met with key stakeholders from each line of business to articulate the value of the platform to them and why their people would want to contribute content in this fashion," says Casanova. "Once the general population saw this content being posted and the various types of content that were being uploaded, it brought people out of their shells to share their material as well."

If these methods don't work for your organization, you can always try cookies … or tea.

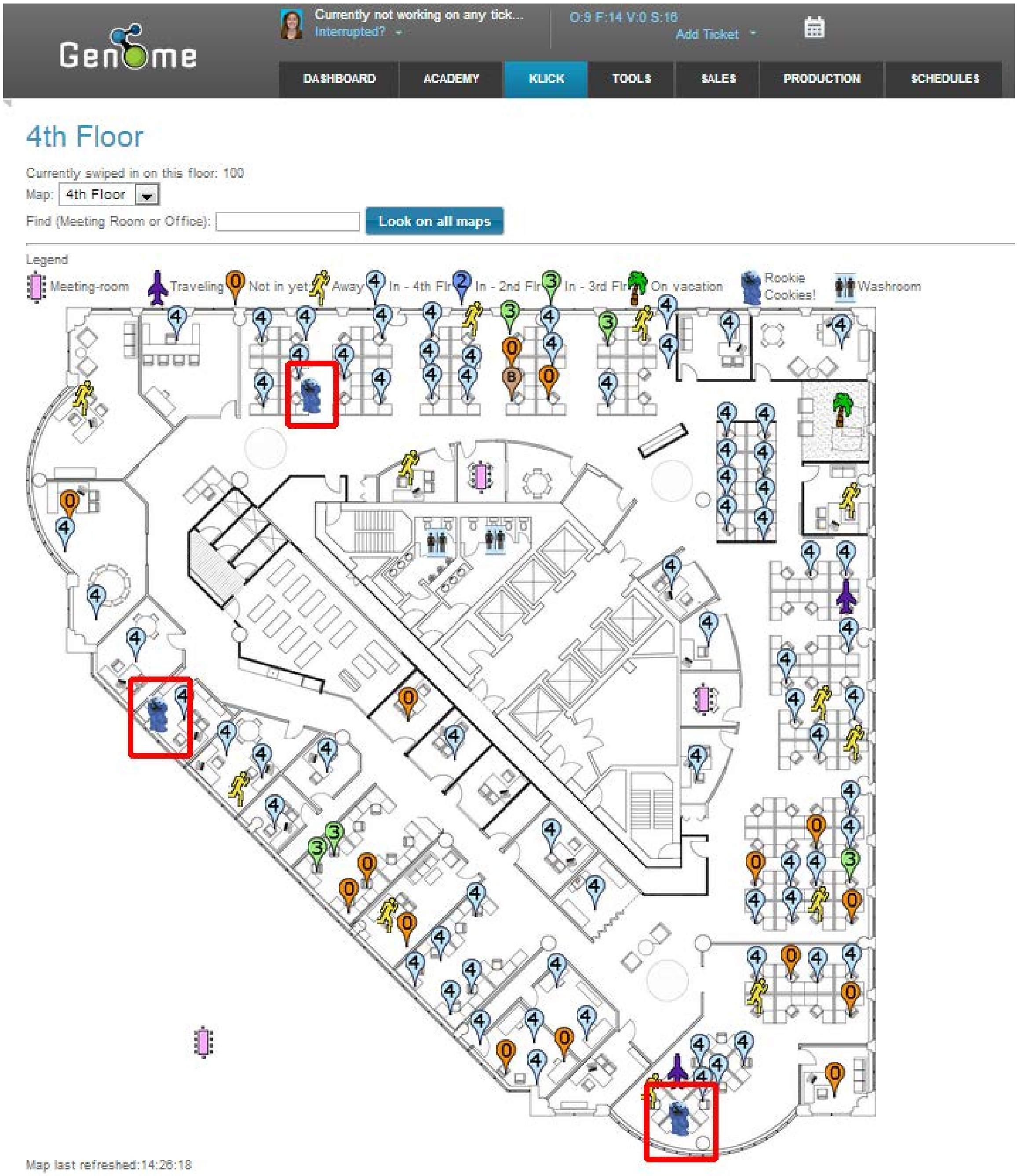
All users at Klick begin their time with the company by receiving a box of Rookie Cookies. "These are intended as a sweet treat for those that come to visit," says Goldman. "This is announced digitally through Klick News as well as the seating map, where new hires are shown as cookie monsters on the seating map. Generally, new hires comment on their own post, and new hire posts are well liked, well commented on, and tend to set the stage up for participation."

Users seem to gravitate to the social tools Genome has to offer, with or without the cookies. "We follow up this initial introduction with a two day training piece," he says, "which includes a section on our social tools and Genome. Generally by the time we get to the two day training session, most of our new hires have already used our social tools."

Business Environment brings laggards on board by sitting down with them in what they call Intranet Café sessions. "We sit them all down with a cup of tea in an open area and discuss the basics," says Vass:

- How to update your profile
- How to search
- How to share
- How to like
- How to @tag

The training team sometimes enlists the [pre-planned] participation of user advocates. New users @tag these confederates when they write their first status update during these Intranet Café sessions. "These advocates try and respond immediately to give the sense that everything is available immediately. Whilst this is creating a 'false experience', we find it encourages confidence in late adopters," she says.



Pictured: Genome, Klick's intranet, displays the office seating map. Because it is the first day for three new employees, their locations are indicated on the map with Cookie Monsters. Employees can look at the seating map and find out where to go to introduce themselves to the new employee — and grab a Rookie Cookie.

Be Patient and Know When to Say When

When it comes to social media adoption, patience isn't just a virtue — it's a necessity.

“The transition takes time, but if your tool provides value to the user that they didn’t have before, and you do a good job of communicating this, the transition becomes easier,” says Casanova. “We also saw a lot of grassroots adoption of this platform. Word spreads if people like the tool and are finding value in using it. That’s why it was important for us to get the right early adopters.”

Companies report that certain social tools spread like a brush fire in a hot, dry forest. Microblogging tends to do that. Uptake is almost instantaneous and there is no learning curve for the users, beyond understanding the basic premise of what the tool is used for.

“With Yammer, usage has grown virally from a small group of early adopters, to over 600 users,” says Leng. **“**Largely the spread has been by word-of-mouth, often with one person leading the way for an entire team.”

“Because the premise of Yammer is so simple, ‘What are you working on now?’ an early contribution is easy for new users,” she says. “Existing members regularly welcome new users and encourage them to download the desktop client to make posting and staying in touch with what is happening much easier.”

Wikis and blogging platforms require users to invest more time and effort before the reward becomes evident, but in return they often have bigger payoffs over a longer period of time. Social networks take time to proliferate.

A word to the wise: be patient and recognize and accept when you’re approaching the saturation point.

Despite all efforts to demonstrate value, enlist early adopters and get buy-in from your leadership team, the reality is that social participation is not for everyone and unless you make it mandatory (which rarely works) you will never have full participation. Knowing when to say when is an important part of the process. Even the most socially enabled organization will never reach 100 percent participation in a social platform.

“Sometimes, you just can’t teach an old dog new tricks,” says Portillo. “About 85 percent of our company uses our communication tools regularly. However, there is that 15 percent of people who choose not use the tools available. What has worked in getting the majority of our company to use it is the team leads and managers leading by example. When they do, other people, on their team and off, tend to follow. What has also worked has been using the communication avenues to celebrate wins versus always focusing on problems that need resolving. It creates a positive tone to the system and makes it fun for people to use, and popular.”

“We do know that some people come in, have a go, and then drop off,” says Neal Richardson, Principal Solution Architect, Technology and Shared Services, Telecom New Zealand.

There is wisdom in accepting there is participation ceiling. Set expectations accordingly.

“Research that we did on user engagement and adoption prior to the launch of the intranet showed us that we had about 15 percent of our workforce who would investigate new online tools without any encouragement,” says Hornsby. “Over half of the workforce would need some encouragement and guidance to adopt new tools, and about 20 percent would resist any change.”

"The reality is you either get it or you don't in this space. If you get it, there is very little 'sell' required," says Inskeep. "If you don't [get it] then we can take you through the journey, show you the service in action and hold your hand as you get your toes wet. From there, you either sink or swim or get out of the pool. We've seen examples of all three from both digital natives and digital immigrants in terms of this internal service."

EXECUTIVES AS USERS

Executive Sponsorship

Once a social initiative is ready to move beyond prototypes and early adopters, it is time to ask for a little help from above: executives. Their sponsorship of a social program is pivotal to its success. If they aren't on board from the start, it's important to get them behind the initiative when the time is right.

"Once you have vetted the basic functionality and developed some community content," says [Grant] McCormick, "it is time to target an executive sponsor who sees and understands the potential of the new technologies."

Leveraging the enthusiasm of executives might not always work as an on boarding strategy. But for some organizations this is the golden ticket.

"I believe it is important, for as the leaders go so goes a company," says Blackwell.

"Not only do they give social software initiatives credibility," says Cahill, "but they also gave it a lot of political clout that can open doors and make things happen that would not have been possible if all the bloggers were mainstream employees. Translation: it's hard to say 'no' to a CEO."

Executives, once a hard sell, are now sometimes the driving force behind enterprise adoption of social tools.

"At IBM, many of our executives have jumped head-first into the world of Web 2.0, so it's not so difficult," says Starr. "I pride myself on trying out just about every social computing tool and site out there, but my former director was always one step ahead of me on the adoption curve."

At Klick, the executives can't help but be behind the social platform as it's integral to every aspect of how the company does business and they've had to use it to move up in the ranks.

"Our senior managers already 'get it'," says Segal. "They've become senior within the organization because they inherently understand that the tools we have are critical to our success so we don't have to spend time and effort convincing them to get on board. Regardless of where or when they started at Klick, they quickly realized that Genome was the system that was there to help them get their job done."

Executive Participation

Executives may be more willing today to get behind social initiatives than they were even just a few years ago, but in some organizations it's still difficult to get them to participate directly in the social channels. Though it might require some additional effort to help them overcome their reticence whatever it takes, it's worth it.

“We do find that it’s important for our leaders to participate in our social communities,” says Segal. “Every interaction is a demonstration of how and why the system should be used and leads to better adoption by the rest of the organization.”

Executive participation is usually tightly tied to the business driver behind the initiative.

“Executives are perhaps the slowest to come on board, with many of them seeing the value, but still feeling uncomfortable about posting,” says Bussard. “The key seems to be in helping them understand how it relates to their business goals.”

Telling executives to blog or post status updates is never met with enthusiasm. However, asking them what their business goals are and then explaining how the social platform can help them expedite their goals resonates with them.

“Give them specific use cases,” she says, “like pointing out that regular email updates could easily be posted as blogs, really helps turn on the light bulb, so to speak.”

She’s also had success using other executives as examples, and also with encouraging them to contribute in ways that “humanize” them.

“For example,” she says, “I point out that there is no reason they can’t ‘like’ a blog post by one of our technologists describing a new process she’s discovered for working with a software package, or even comment on some of the beautiful photos we have in our photography community. It is the online equivalent of walking the halls, and it serves to show people who that leader is, build connections, and generally build that leader’s clout in the workplace.”

Participation in social platforms is a very visible way for executives to publicly endorse these initiatives.

“As to whether it is important,” says Bussard, “it is at some point. Maybe not immediately, but if you have a thriving community with more than half of your people on it regularly (like we do), it loses credibility if senior people have no activity or have empty ‘skills and experience’ fields on their profiles.”

Executives adding their voices to the social channels can also greatly influence rank and file contribution and set the tone of contribution for the organization as a whole.

“The biggest driver of adopting Yammer was when our CEO, Frank Addante, encouraged it’s use within the company,” says Portillo. “[He] is a constant Yammerer, he often asks questions and engages different departments. This keeps people on their toes and using the system.”

In companies with strong hierarchal cultures, executive participation signals to users down the food chain that it’s okay to participate.

“Part of our communications plan in launching the redesigned homepage news with 2.0 functionality is to have leadership comment and share articles relevant to their organizations so that employees see it is both ‘okay’ to do so and that it’s important for the company,” says Marjie Goodman, Communications Manager–Intranet, CenturyLink. “The more our top leaders engage and model this behavior, the more it will help employees to realize that intranet sharing and commenting are not only okay, but that leadership cares and listens.”

While having executives take off their shoes and wade in the social stream is ideal, an executive voice can make a big difference even if participation is limited.

“It *is* important that leaders participate, and it often doesn’t even matter *what* they contribute,” says Amurgis. “It’s more important that they demonstrate, through their participation, that they’re listening to employees.”

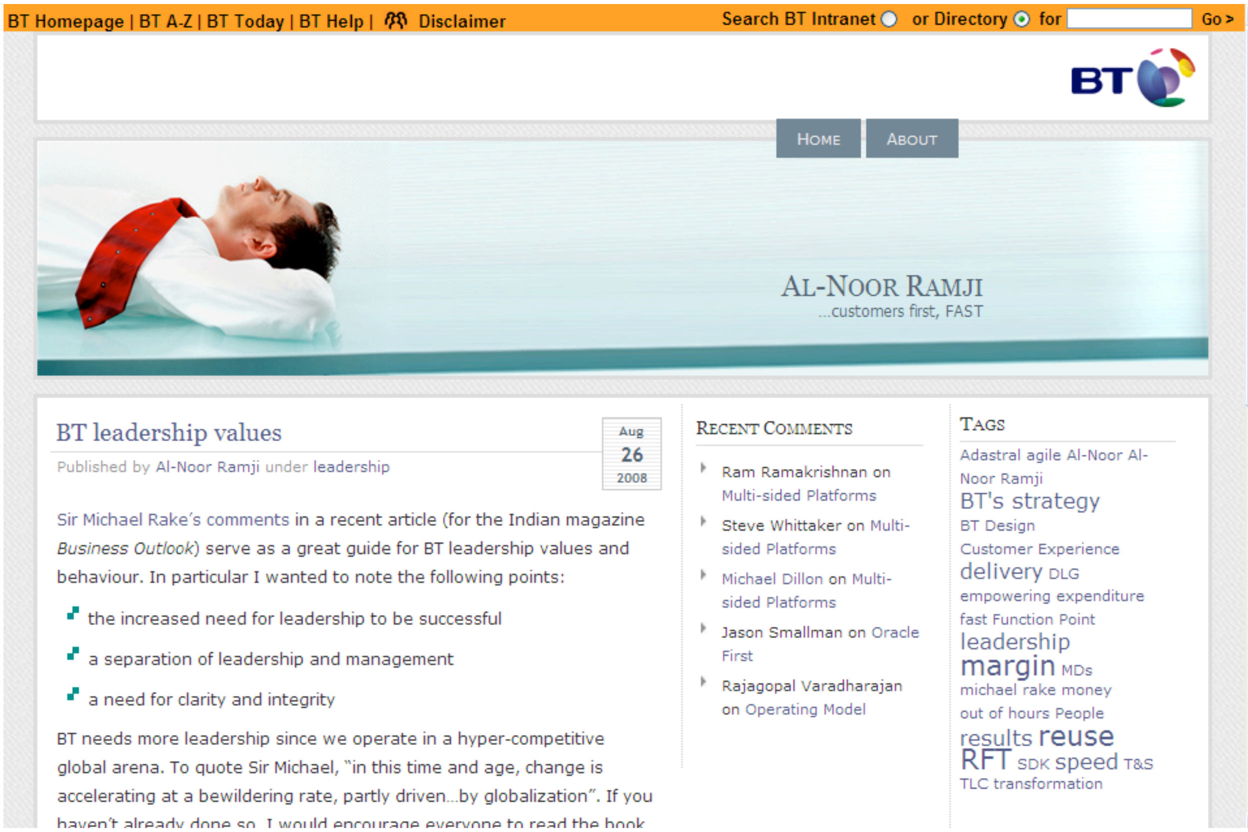
“If you are committed to communication and transparency, then it starts with the leadership team,” says Portillo. “Also, executives tend to be the ones who know the most about the business from all angles, their perspective brings interesting questions, solutions, and connections to any communication tool.”

The CEO and the entire management team don’t need to all be engaged as long as some key leaders are visible and participating.

A good way to include executive users is to use the social tools as the means of communication. “One way to increase executive usage is to make the social tool the exclusive location for the publication of some relevant business data,” says [Grant] McCormick. **“**This also allows the more progressive executives to ‘show off’ their technical prowess to their peers, and also pull the ‘laggards’ in.”

“A common scenario is to send out links to wiki pages, instead of attaching a file to the email,” advises Reiser. “This can be done up and down the social technology platform and before you know it, you have executives active on your social platform. Necessity can be the mother of invention, so to speak,” says [Grant] McCormick.

“We especially encourage executives to join or begin conversations on matters of policy,” says Sniderman. Other executives have joined specific conversations to provide answers or set the record straight on key issues. A Vice President of Human Resources offered a blog post on why Sprint chose to offer a voluntary separation program last fall. Another Director of a major business segment has been hashing out critical issues in his blog post on a regular basis.”



Pictured: The CEO of the BT Design group, one of the major departments in BT, has the most popular blog on the site. Although such 'top level leadership' blogs have promoted blogging as a communications channel, many of the company blogs are topic specific and are written by people at all levels of the organization.

Because executives have the same challenges as other users, but on a larger scale, the best way to get executives to participate is to make it as easy as possible and to direct them to participate in a very targeted manner. So, the intranet team must ensure that participation is as simple as sending an email.

"Our CEO has an internal blog, and he faces three challenges I like to call the 3 Ts: time, travel, and typing," says Amurgis. **"**He doesn't have much time to devote to his blog. He travels the globe, and he's not the best typist. So, we set up a voicemail box for him to call, and transcribe his blog post for him."

"He's pleased," says Amurgis, "because he can contribute from anywhere, within about two minutes. Our employees are also pleased, because they recognize his patterns of speech and can clearly see that the words are authentic."

While AEP's voicemail solution is one route, mobile technology is beginning to provide to type of access to social tools that help executives participate. "One fantastic mobilizer has been [putting] apps on the cell phones so the execs can update from wherever they are," says Jordan.


Wide Open
Read and react to the thoughts of Mike Morris, AEP's chairman, president, and CEO

APRIL 20, 2009

Targeted potential layoffs

I'd like to touch on the issue of the capital reductions for 2010-2011, and make sure that we have a clear understanding of how and why we had to go through those particular points, and then touch on the issue of what will we do with the headcount challenge that they may present to us.

First off, it's quite clear that the economy has turned down. Our industrial sales are off, and I think you all know that. Because of that, and because of the cash flow challenges that we and other utilities are facing with sales off, **we need to throttle back on the amount of money we spend** – no different than you or I would do at our own personal residence and our own management of family money. Companies are exactly the same, as I've said many times – just a few more zeroes.

So, that is the step that we're taking: $1.8 billion [in capital spending] in 2010, a planned $1.8 billion in 2011, and more if the economy picks up – which, of course, we all hope happens through the hard work of President Obama and our friends in Washington.

One of the issues that goes with the reduction in capital budgets, particularly for individual employees who have been doing 100% capital work, is that if there isn't additional capital projects that will continue to go forward (where they can be reassigned), then we have to address the issue of what do we do – because we are holding our O&M [operations and maintenance spending] flat, and there's no room for just having people sit around with nothing productive to do.

What we have said, and what we will do, is to have targeted potential layoffs in those areas where the capital projects are being delayed or extended and simply not going to be worked on in the near-term period. I know that's disquieting and disruptive to a lot of people, but that's what we intend to do.

I do NOT – let me make sure I emphasize that – **I do NOT have any plans for an enhanced early retirement proposal**. I've been through that many times in my career, and I'm not saying that we won't [ever], but I have no plans to do that at the current time.

So, I hope that sheds a little light and would **welcome your ideas**. I've received a lot of ideas about temporary employees, part-time employees, and across-the-board salary reductions. I'm looking at all of those potentials, and will continue to do that, because – as I hope you know – it's my strong desire to make sure that we affect as few lives as we possibly can.

So, somebody sent along a comment to me recently that said, "**Keep your head down, work hard, and be safe**." That's the way I'd like to close this blog post. Good luck to you all and have a safe day.

Posted by Mike Morris at 10:50 AM | Permanent link | Comments (83)

MARCH 23, 2009

The Pickens Plan

I was hoping that most of you saw the announcement that an old friend of mine, T. Boone Pickens, will be in town on Tuesday to have a town hall meeting to announce our continued support of the Pickens Plan.

I'd be interested in how you all see the Pickens Plan. We feel very strongly about the end game that Boone's talked about in his commercials -- sometimes missed by some folks -- but the fact remains that the way he sees this unfolding is that **ultimately you use wind energy and other renewable sources of power to take some natural gas out of the equation of electrical energy production, and then take that natural gas and put it into the vehicle cycle**, particularly in large vehicles, over-the-road trucks, and those kinds of things.

The theory is that we need to free ourselves from imported oil -- something

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Pictured: AEP's CEO maintains his own blog, and invites employees to respond to posts. To encourage his blogging habits, the company set up a voicemail box where the CEO can recite a new post in two minutes or less, wherever he happens to be.

Mentoring Executives

Executives more so than other user groups may need a little hand holding to start them on the road to social adoption. DiMauro used a reverse mentoring technique to bring senior executives on board with social technology for one of her clients. In this experiment, she paired millennial workers with senior staff.

“We cleaned them up and mapped them to key executives who were willing to participate in this program,” she says. “We had senior staff sit with someone who was similar to their college age kids and over time they became more comfortable with the tools.”

“Focus on best practices,” she advises, “not on the tools. The tools will always change. You are solving business needs for knowledge workers. Knowledge workers — they are the doers. They are action-oriented producers. They will adopt that which solves a problem. So when tools are chosen that solve problems, that make them more agile in their work, they will adopt them.”

This approach addressed several challenges. It helped build organizational relationships between the Net Generation employees and the executives. As a result, the technology adoption rate among the executives increased.

Done carefully, this kind of mentoring is mutually beneficial and can yield stunning results. The most engaged users work with the most critical group of potential users. Executives might not lead the charge for trying social media, but if they get involved, other employees who are, will follow their lead.

“The tools are happening too quickly and the young people are leading the charter,” says DiMauro. “Those in power are not taking the time to understand it and fear breeds control.”

Listening Counts

Like other users who many not be inclined to participate actively, another way for executives to participate in social channels is for them to at least be listening.

“It is extremely important that top managers allow these improvements,” says Piccioli. “It is also desirable that they participate actively, but the lowest acceptable level of involvement is ‘reading.’” Executives benefit from participation, even if that means listening.

“If the execs *wanted* to participate, they could and would,” says Inskeep. “The reality is they either don’t have the time or the desire to participate. The execs who have involved themselves tend to watch the conversation as more of a barometer rather than as an opportunity to collaborate and communicate.”

There is value in using the tools as a barometer. By monitoring the relevant conversations, it can provide executives with a deeper understanding of both what’s happening in the company and what social media is all about.

Even if executives are just listening, by engaging in the channels there is a better possibility that they may pipe up and contribute eventually.

“I’m pleased to see many senior leaders offering words of encouragement or appreciation, unsolicited, when they read news stories about employees’ achievements,” says Amurgis.

TRANSITION STRATEGIES

Just Go For It

Social tools and platforms are often a replacement or improvement on existing systems. Knowing how to transition users from one to the other can be the difference between adoption and abandonment.

One approach is: "go for it." This was the approach taken at the Rubicon Project. "My advice would be, just go for it," says Portillo. **"**We literally scrapped our old intranet when it wasn't working and launched a new wiki. "We had a small group testing the system to make sure it would work well for our needs, and then we rolled it out to the entire company with a quick training session."

Then the team moved all the data over to the new system prior to the training so that once users completed the training, they couldn't revert to the old tool.

"The key with transition is that you have to make it smooth but you can't draw it out too long," she says. "Force people into adopting the new system because the old one no longer exists. Trust me they will get on board with the use!"

The Rubicon Project did the same "rip-the-bandage-off" approach with its Yammer introduction. "We hit the ground running with Yammer," says Portillo**.** "Rolling it out to the entire company over email, with managers and other leaders jumping on board right away."

OpenRoad took a similar no-drama approach when launching its social intranet. "We launched the intranet. Everyone was to use it. And away we went," says Ross. "The launch is kind of lost to the sands of time to be honest. We started out mainly with a blog on the homepage with content from around the Web that we thought was interesting. Then more and more of our 'work' got onto the intranet; product design, product marketing, sales material, client work, proposals, etc. And then one day it was just the way we do things here."

While this type of approach can work for some (probably smaller) companies, many larger and slower-moving organizations have too much invested in their intranets, too many employees and too much information at stake to take the rip-the-bandage-off approach and not have it result in chaos or rebellion. For most companies, a staged approach might be a more appropriate tactic.

Evolution Not Revolution

The least invasive approach to transitioning users to new tools is to put the tools in front of them as part of what they are already doing and nudge their existing behaviors onto the new tools. This type of transitional approach provides users a feeling of safety as they become acclimated to the new system without missing the old one or feeling like they've had the rug pulled out from under them.

By taking an enhancement-based approach, IBM has been able allow for the greatest flexibility in piloting new tools without creating a disjointed user experience.

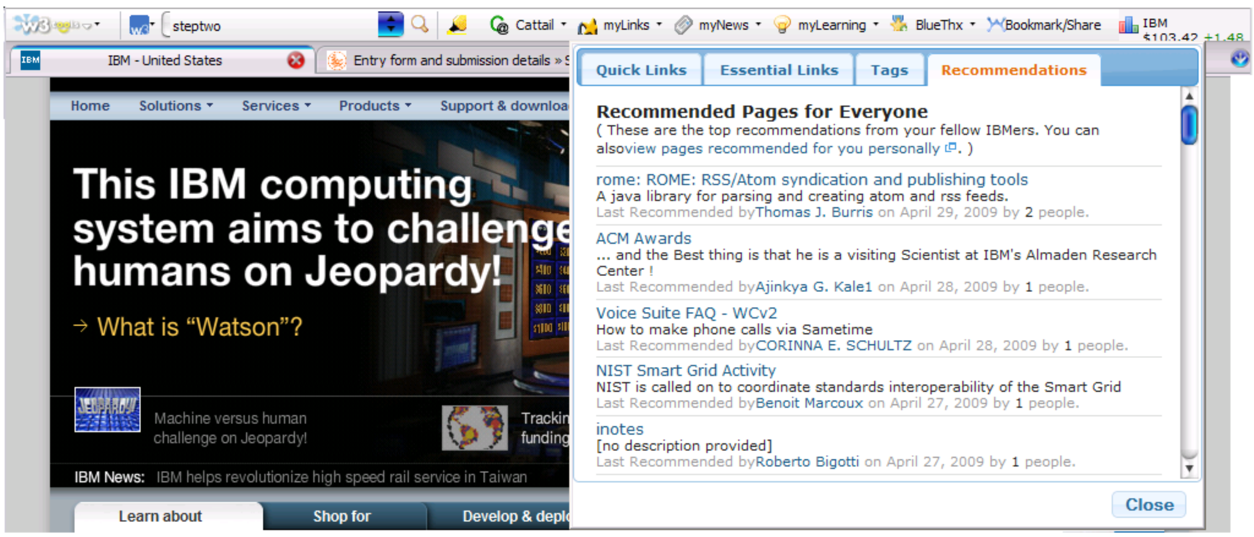
"The key is to provide linkage, especially to help broaden adoption," says Blackwell. "These sorts of linkages rarely require a major change to the existing applications, so they rarely cause problems for the early adopters," says Blackwell.

This means that the intranet's tools evolve over time rather than the user showing up one day and not knowing how to do something that they used to do every day with a familiar tool.

"Here's an example," says Starr. "When an IBMer searches for something on our intranet, they see their normal search results, but they also see a set of matching results that have been tagged/bookmarked by other IBMers. In many cases, one of these tagged results is exactly what the user is looking for, which introduces them to the power of tagging (better organization and filtering of content)," he says.

"Integration is key," says Starr. "My credo is that our users should trip over new technology as they go about their usual tasks. One of our integration platforms, the w3 browser toolbar, is a great example. Our intention is for the toolbar to be pre-installed in all IBMers browsers. The idea is, a user fires up their browser one day and suddenly they see that they can easily share a file or recommend a page or start a blog. For people who are already aware of these tools, the integrated toolbar provides a convenient way to have all these tools at their fingertips. For users who are not aware of these Web 2.0 tools, the toolbar provides an introduction to a new socially-enabled world."

We provide more details on IBM's social search capabilities later, in the Information Retrieval section of this report.



Pictured: IBM's old w3 Toolbar with the "My links" section expanded. The w3 Toolbar on the IBM site was created after a number of social applications began being used regularly in the company. Rather than putting users in the position of having to learn about each tool individually (and sometimes having to do special installation), the toolbar offers the ability to search and access all of these tools (for example Cattail is social document sharing, my links provides access to tagged pages and quick links, bookmark/share enables tagging, etc.). This image shows how users can easily consume their own quick links, tagged pages, recommended pages, etc.

When the company started using "Dogear," a proprietary social bookmarking system, early adopters began using Dogear to bookmark, tag, and share pages and the Dogear search to find pages. "Meanwhile," says Blackwell, "other systems (such as our internal blogging system and our media sharing application), had their own idiosyncratic tagging functions, which early adopters were also using."

An internal team created something called the "Enterprise Tagging Service," which provided a tagging widget and became a database that pulled tag information from all of these systems. This approach allowed the corporate enterprise search (w3 Search) to add a results module for tagged pages.

"With the addition of this module, every employee doing an enterprise search was also given the benefit of other user's social bookmarks," says Blackwell. "This provided better search results, as well as introducing new users to the concept of tagging (at the time w3 search received 40,000+ unique users per day)."

"If you want users to see something, introduce it to their existing workflow," he says. "You're always going to hit a challenge when you tell someone they have a brand new piece of software to learn. Rather than having to find/learn a new search tool, we moved the 'social' into the tool users were already familiar with and using."

The example Blackwell uses involves the company's Connections social suite, which [as part of a pilot program] gives users a Connections portlet on the company's existing intranet.

"So when I go to my homepage there is a blank status update box for me to fill in and below that are the status updates from people in my network so for me, every time I go to the homepage it's front and center," he says. It's those kinds of little things that help ease transitions, where the new tool is right at their fingertips and it feels more like it's part of their usual flow.

This type of integration-based approach is just the opposite of the "just do it" approach described above but works just as well because each approach is tailored toward the specific cultural norms of the organization it serves. Deciding which approach will work for a particular organization means being keenly aware of the company culture. Are users comfortable with change in general? Before determining a transition strategy, figure out where they fall on the comfort scale first.

Not providing bridges can sometimes mean you'll lose users in the crossing from the old system to the new one. Klick learned this lesson with some of their early efforts with Genome.

"Our previous form of launch was stealth, as in one day you logged in and something was different," says Goldman. "Occasionally there was a News post [to announce the change]. While this definitely helped with the feeling of Genome as a living and breathing organism, some of the tools ended up poorly understood or not used because of ignorance rather than lack of need."

The solution was to find people who could be the bridges.

"We found the tools needed champions," he says, "people who could explain the value proposition of the tool to their peers. And we needed a way to ensure that this could be communicated in a grassroots way without too much formal training. We didn't want to force people to use any tool that wasn't useful to them, but we wanted to ensure that there was awareness of what was available so we could ensure that tools were dying for the right reasons."

Fixing the "Problem" of RSS

IBM's approach to RSS integration is similar, but with a twist.

Despite the prevalence of RSS on corporate portals, enterprise-wide RSS readers have never really caught on. At one point, the popular technology blog ReadWriteWeb even declared enterprise RSS “dead.”[15]

This means that blogs are gaining popularity in far greater numbers than the most efficient tools in which to read them. There is a debate among RSS proponents as to whether the problem is that users need more education or the problem is that RSS is too geeky and technical and users should be shielded from it. IBM’s approach to getting users to take advantage of RSS is to make the subscription process so well integrated that RSS as a technology is barely noticed. This approach is a good example of knowing your audience and knowing how to ease them from one technology to another with little fanfare or disruption.

For instance, instead of the user visiting the corporate news page from the portal, they look at the corporate news through a feed reader — without any declaration that what they are seeing is “an RSS feed reader.” Once inside the tool, they are exposed to other available content so they not only see what they came for, but they see what else is available and are even presented with related, recommended content.

“That is the advantage that enterprise has over the Internet,” says Starr. “As an enterprise there is a portal and that news portal could be an RSS feed page. All the user needs to know is the edit settings button.”

IBM also automatically subscribes users to content based on their preferences and other activities on the portal.

“The key,” says Starr, “is to make them feel like all you’ve done is enhance their tool. Automatically subscribe them to their own forum postings, etc. Instead of something new, just advance what we already have. Change that application so that it is RSS-enabled instead of separate.”

“With Web 2.0,” he says, “you won’t appreciate it until you do it yourself.”

“By putting functionality where they are already looking at it,” says Blackwell, “you put it in front of people. Doing stuff subtly, it seems like a simple concept.”

Take Away the Horse

No matter how gradual the transition or how many bridges get built to ease users from one system to another, at some point it’s time to rip off the bandage and retire the old system. “If you want them to drive the car to work you might have to take away their horse,” says Blackwell. “No company wants to maintain multiple systems that all do the same thing.”

“Set a date for the transition,” says Mehrotra. “Redirect the storm of protest that arises into discussions and coping strategies. Modify your specs based upon feedback from such sessions. Spend a lot of time involving people, listening to them, and acting on their concerns. For the most part, the concerns don’t have to be addressed; just heard.”

If you’ve done everything right in on boarding users, getting executive buy-in and providing training and introductions to the tools, then this transition should be a

[15] Kirkpatrick, Marshall, “R.I.P. Enterprise RSS,” ReadWriteWeb.com (January 12, 2009): http://www.readwriteweb.com/enterprise/2009/01/rip-enterprise-rss.php

formality. At best, users will be so entrenched in the new system that they will not miss the old one when it's gone.

Support Good Use

There is a school of thought that says Web 2.0 tools are so simple to use that no training should be required. Those who subscribe to this theory conclude that social software inside the enterprise should be based on the norms established on the social Web. Companies find the closer they stay to the models users are most familiar with outside of work, the easier it is to transition users to social tools on the intranet.

"The key is to design many of the elements in Enterprise 2.0 to be very analogous to what they experience every night and weekend when they live in the Web 2.0 world," says [Grant] McCormick. "For example, having the rating system be five stars, similar to what is experienced on Netflix.com or Amazon.com. When was the last time you needed someone to show you how to interact with the product ratings on Amazon.com?"

Users can usually accomplish most common Web 2.0 tasks easily but therein lies one of the challenges of social software. Its simplicity can belie the difficulty in helping users discover the value that can be derived from these tools.

To support ease of use, organizations employ a variety of very traditional training methods: in-person workshops at rollout supported by ongoing self-help materials such as screen casts, video introductions, FAQs and tutorials.

But to support *good* use, companies must find ways to encourage users through an acclimation period.

"Training about the tool itself is limited to a walkthrough, followed if necessary, by a workshop to help people get started quickly," says Alquier. "Once people are introduced to the knowledge base, most of the ongoing training goes into developing good practices and quality content."

So the question is not whether or not to train, but rather how best to train users.

"For many Web 2.0 tools, training isn't enough. Usage and experience are key," says Starr. "I have trained many employees on how to use something like a Web feed reader, but in many cases it's necessary for the user to experience what a feed reader can do for them over time in order for it to really stick. Personally I'd set the goal at introducing and encouraging, rather than training."

"What happens with social tools is a culture of use emerges and uptake involves more than just mechanical mastery of the interface controls," he says. "Mastery is much more about understanding the ecosystem of the tool and the cultural norms that have developed around it. This is where the social of social collaboration (tools) comes into play."

Microblogging tools are a great example because they are simple to use. Type a short message (in the range of approximately 150 characters) in a box and hit send. Your message goes out to a specific population and you are done. Nothing could be easier. Yet, microblogging is the social tool that often gets the most resistance from users who have not used Twitter much outside of work. What they don't realize is that it's not how you use the tool but what you use it for that matters. That value is only realized through firsthand experience and ironically experience can only be gained through use so it's a delicate balancing act to simultaneously encourage use while trying to convey and encourage value.

The decision of how and how much to train depends somewhat on the particular mix of tools in use and the tenor and experience of the workforce. If the workforce is mixed in terms of age, experience, technological familiarity, and comfort (and really, what company isn't?), then providing various methods of introducing the tools and the functionality as they apply to specific work functions will go a long way toward easing the transition. It's better to cover all bases rather than leave people out. But the important results occur when the "training" is focused on the why-to-use and support is focused on the how-to-use. This approach will both encourage use and maintain the momentum created by the early adopters.

"The early adopters were thrown into the fire without any training," says Portillo. "And watching new people come on board and having a specific 'communication training' dedicated to teaching people why and how to use Yammer, RubiCast, wiki, and our external social media tools has been imperative for scaling and keeping usage high."

The training, like the tools themselves, must be tied to the business need. The training must be part of an ongoing effort toward encouraging a culture of collaboration — not just use of new tools.

"We are looking to help people in their everyday tasks and to approach and discover a new awesome way to add value for themselves and for the company," says Paschmann. "But what is more necessary is talking with people throughout the organization to spread the idea of collaboration. It is necessary that people feel free to collaborate in areas and activities where they feel they can provide more value."

Training: What Works and What Doesn't

Whether or not you provide traditional training for your social tools will depend on the specific needs of your workforce. Most companies interviewed for this report said they provide supporting materials that quickly explain key features but very little broad-based training.

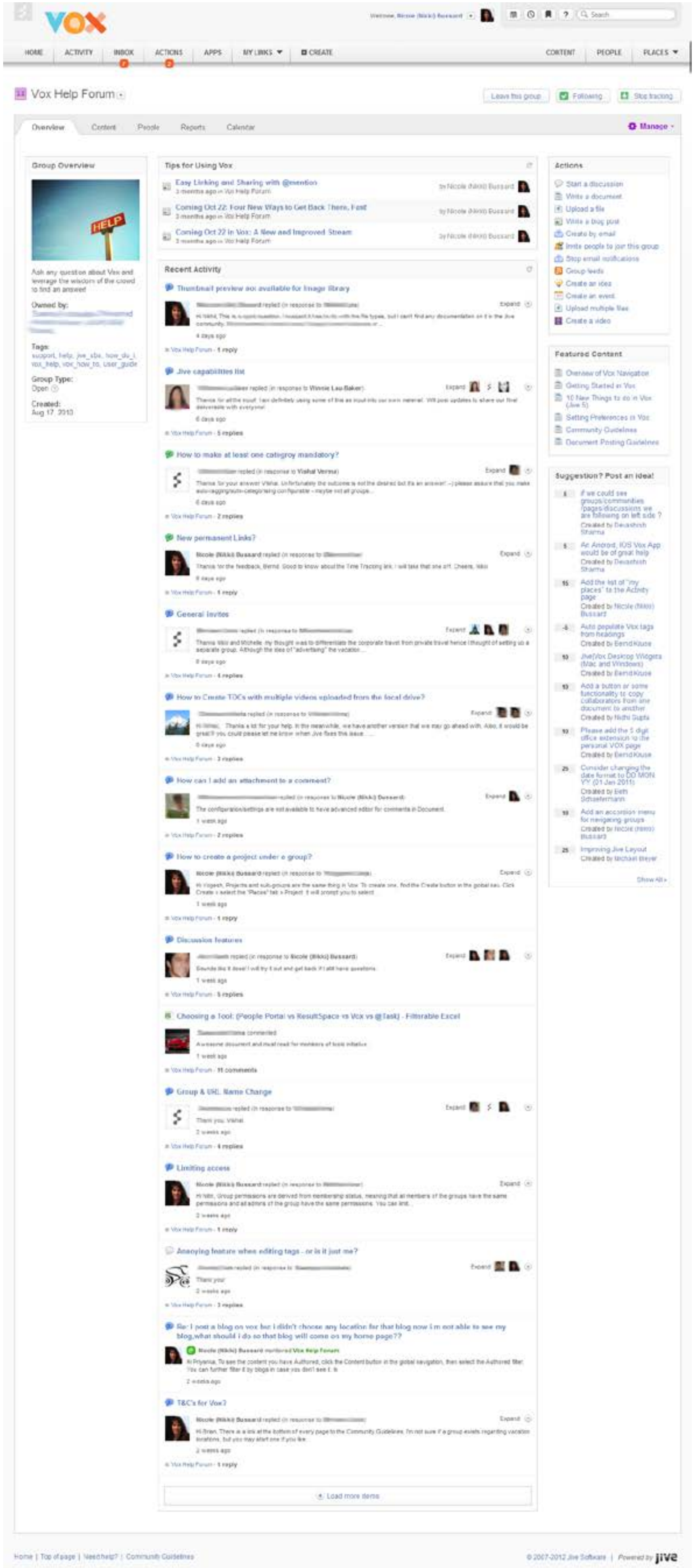
If you are going to provide formal training for your social tools, Sapient's Bussard offers some advice on what works and what doesn't. Here are her suggestions:

What Works:

- **Help forums:** "An active help forum where users can ask questions directly and get answers from experts or other community members, usually within 24 hours. These questions are available for others to reference, effectively building a library of FAQs. People occasionally ask questions that have been asked before, but we generally don't discourage it, since the platform is updated regularly and older answers don't always apply; in addition, we find that people respond the best and become more frequent users if they feel their questions are answered in a personalized way."
- **Small group training:** "Training smaller groups to do tasks that are relevant to their specific jobs."
- **Quick start guides:** "Posting Quick Start guides with prominent links, including multiple ways of describing the same features."

What Doesn't Work:

- **Extensive documentation:** "Long, detailed documentation."
- **FAQs:** "Pre-fab FAQs (also known as 'the list of questions I want you to ask because they are the ones I already have answers to'). We don't publish these types of lists, but instead build them dynamically by encouraging users to ask their questions in the forum."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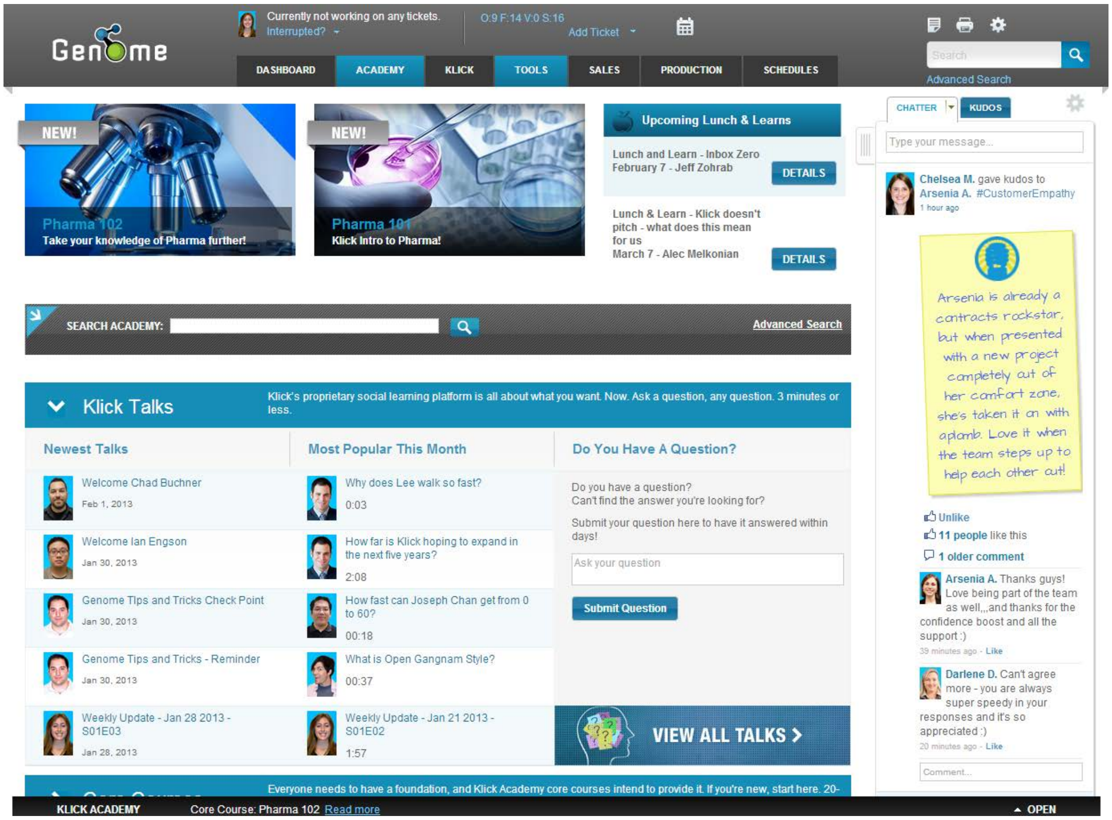
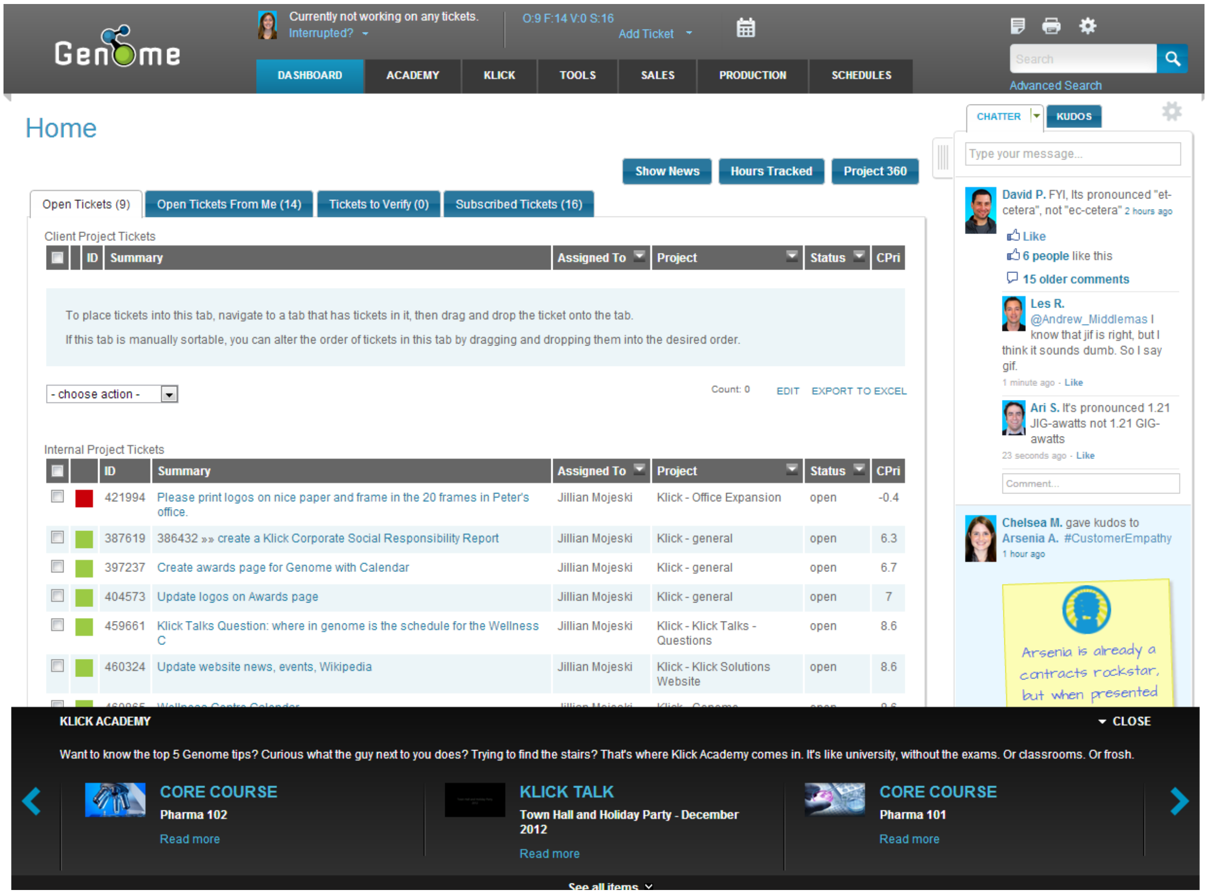
Content
People
Reports
Calendar
Manage
Group Overview
Tips for Using Vox
Recent Activity
Actions
Featured Content
Suggestion? Post an idea!
Load more items

Pictured: On Sapient's social platform, Vox, users go to this forum to ask any questions they have about using the system. Questions are answered within 24 hours, sometimes by moderators, but also by other employees.



Pictured: Klick Academy, the learning and development hub of Genome, is the home for the company's core courses, elective courses, resource library and KlickTalks (an internal initiative that lets Klick promote a culture of idea sharing and knowledge transfer). The newest courses and upcoming Lunch & Learns are featured along the top of the page. Through this page, employees are able to pose a question and be provided with the answer, or (if the content doesn't exist yet) Genome tasks someone in the company with preparing the answer within the next 24 hours.



Pictured: This screen shows the Klick Academy footer, which lives on the bottom of every page in Genome. It can be minimized or maximized depending on the employee's preferences. The footer displays the newest content added to Klick Academy.

USE AND USABILITY

Involve Users

Even if your social tools are "walk up and use," social software is still software and deserves the same level of rigor and adherence to fundamental usability principles as any other aspect of your intranet. Don't assume because enterprise social tools are based on the interaction style of Web social tools they are all usable. Many Web users never scratch the surface of the functionality available in online tools, while enterprise users may have to become experts in order to get their job done.

"A number of users 'walked up and used' our social tools well before the official launch of the platform, which was an indication that there was some level of good usability there," says Hornsby. But that wasn't a signal for the L&Q team that their were done. Instead, it was a signal that they were going in the right direction and to keep going — with user input.

That level of ease of use is only achieved though traditional usability research and testing, involving actual users in planning, designing and validating the software. Companies that stand behind this level of rigor in other IT applications should apply it to social software as well. “Like any other tool, the ease of use will help drive adoption and the goal should be set at ‘walk up and use’, says Blackwell.”

“Usability for these tools is critical,” says Starr, “particularly in the climate of the current economy, employees are focused on working smarter. That means not engaging in activities that waste their time. As a result of this pressure to get things right, we are merciless when it comes to evaluating the usability of our tools and applications.”

This type of rigorous adherence to usability principles is an ideal that is most often achieved by practitioners in companies where they both build their own software and have a strong usability methodology in place. Attention to usability principles should not to be overlooked simply because social tools are more familiar or less complex than other types of software.

“We have our own social interaction designers,” says Reiser. **“**We tune in to ‘Gen Y-ers’ on usability testing. You could say we focus on the ‘green hair’ people (young people which have grown up on social sites) versus the ‘grey hair’ people to lead the design. We never stop learning from external sites like Facebook and MySpace.”

But don’t let the success of Facebook and other social tools be a substitute for applying usability principles to enterprise tools. Reliance on this similarity at the expense of user testing will be at the users’ peril.

Just because a tool is popular does not mean it’s very easy to use. Beyond the simple act of setting up an account and uploading a photo or posting a status update, most social tools are in fact not very easy to use at all. Users will work hard to do what they want to do online because there is a high motivation factor.

OpenRoad is in unique position because its internal social platform is also a social intranet product (ThoughtFarmer) used by companies around the world. “We usability test our new features,” says Ross, “ both recognizing that while we are the authors of it, we're not perhaps ideally the target users. We have a few clients our size (small) and in our general industry (creative/design oriented). But for the most part, we sell to larger organizations and testing is important to get out of the self-referential developer oriented ‘works for me’ way of building software.”

Many companies have discovered the secret to ensure a usable experience is simply a rigorous iterative development process that involves users in each release cycle.

“We have always found iterative development cycles to be the fastest and most cost effective way of getting new tools into our users’ hands,” says Goldstein. The company’s successful social ecosystem, Genome, has been honed through years of iterative test/release/test again cycles.

“It turns out that iterative (phased) rollouts are also the secret to well-refined tools that are not only used, but also loved by our user base,” he says. “Each release is launched to a group of select users who provide feedback for the next release and, in turn, build up a base of advocates for the tool who are part of the ‘inner circle.’ Each subsequent release is more refined and the users who were part of providing direction and feedback are then asked to unveil it to one or two more peers.”

This means by the time the tool is released company-wide, it has been refined over and over again.

A good example of this process in action is the company’s microblogging tool, Chatter. “As we released the tool, we asked users to make any suggestions using the tag #dogfood," says Goldstein, "aptly named because we were truly eating our own dog food by using the very tool itself to provide a mechanism for feedback. The #dogfood posts with the most likes were an indication of updates that were most pressing, and they were moved to the front of the development queue. A year later, we're still seeing new posts with the #dogfood tag, and the ideas have far surpassed what the initial development team could have ever dreamed up."

Observe and Evolve

Once you have started down a path with social software, it is important to continue to monitor use and make changes accordingly. These efforts can be simple, but they are critical. **"**We have constant feedback loops with users through surveys and interviews," says Cahill.

"In the case of the integration of social bookmark ("tagged pages"), user walkthroughs, surveys, and usability testing were conducted to review discoverability, use, and understanding of the module," says Blackwell. "Clicks are also monitored to measure the use of the results in this module."

"We are constantly watching people as they use the tools," says Mehrotra. "Constantly tweaking things to make things work seamlessly in ways most people work. This is an ongoing process, the watching and the changing."

"Create specs, define personas, prototype, put it out there, watch people use it, get back to the drawing board," he says.

Before committing to a tool that looks and acts like something one might find on the social Web, run a trial and see if those features translate to your organization. Take the time at the beginning to really study the audience.

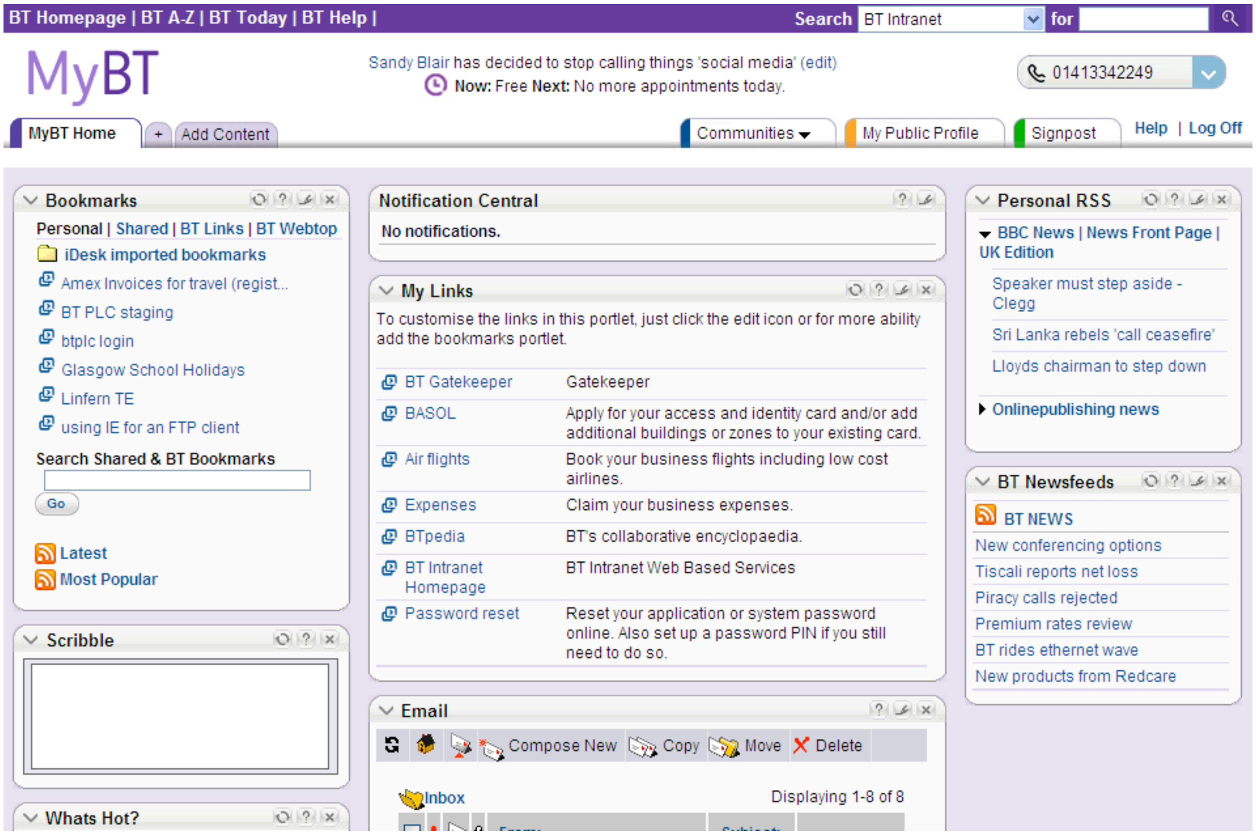
"We took the time pre-launch, to study blogging behaviors," says Downs. "Such as why people choose to lurk, post or comment, what kinds of things inhibit blogging behaviors, practical uses of online communities, and what skills, perceptions and behaviors are most important for bloggers to have. This information was used to help inform our strategy for encouraging Sprint Space adoption."

Observe what the users are doing, and how they are doing it. Then adapt the tools as needed to your particular environment.

"We strive to make our tools intuitive, and we do conduct usability sessions to observe and correct trouble spots," says Amurgis. **"**Fortunately, we tend to launch any tool with a limited set of features, so we can easily tell if problems exist."

"Over time, as our audience experiments, gains comfort and then begins to demand new features, we enhance the tool," he says. "All enhancements, though, are based on feedback and observation." This process may be time consuming at first, but the hard work at the beginning will pay off over time.

"Initially, we went through this cycle once a week," says Mehrotra. "Now, after a year-and-a-half, it has slowed down to once a couple of months."



Pictured: This is the personalized homepage on the MyBT site. Much of it supports “consuming” social media. According to BT’s intranet team, uptake rates are low, likely because this page takes some time to configure.

Social tools are useful for communication and collaboration, but their ancillary value is that they provide a great listening device for the organization. They are a place where leaders can discover what the community is saying about the tools themselves. A simple listening program can yield great results. Listen to what people say and ask questions when there is silence.

“One of the nice things about many of these types of applications is that they are user-empowering,” says Blackwell. “If you don’t like the blogging tool, you can write a blog post on the topic, and mobilize the community.”

“I check in with my engineers from time to time to make sure that those who aren’t using the wiki much know how to use it and to ascertain if there are particular problems that I or someone in the Writing Group needs to address,” Craven. **“**When there is a problem that the software has not yet addressed, I log a defect with the programmer in the Writing Group to see if he or the company supplying our wiki can take care of it.”

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF CONTRIBUTION

Defining “Contribution”

“Contribution” means many different things in a social software context. Not everyone *will* contribute and honestly, not everyone should.

"If everyone focused on contributing, we would have a big pile of noise," says Bussard. "Commenting, rating/liking, bookmarking, etc. are as important as creating content, since they help identify which content is the most valuable."

"People who have important, informative, or interesting things to share and have the skill and motivation to express them well should be the producers," says Blackwell. "The goal then, is to remove any barriers (including culture and experience) from those who wish to be producers, but not force everyone to produce."

"Likewise," he says. "You want to make consumption easy for the consumers, possibly without undue pressure to contribute."

Some community members provide comments or clarifications on other users' contributions while others serve as editors. Some users only consume the information (or "lurk" in popular parlance), but within the context of the enterprise, even the consumers are providing value.

The premise of social media is that all of these roles contribute equally to the ecosystem and are of equal value. The enterprise governance model must be predicated on a philosophy that rewards each type of participation, regardless of whether it is active or passive.

"Community participation (view/download, rate, comment, tag, reuse of content) is equally important to community contributions (add/edit content)," says Reiser. "Not everybody is comfortable to write a blog or create a wiki page or a white paper. In our Community Equity model, we equally honor contribution *and* participation. When you look at our Community Equity model we honor two things: we honor when you put something into the system, when you contribute a blog post, wiki, microblog. But also we honor people who read stuff and give feedback."

"And typically it's 90/10 model where you have 90 percent consuming and ten percent contributing," he says.

This breakdown of 90/10 seems to be fairly standard across social platforms and has held up over time.[16]

Forcing contribution — implying that everyone needs to "participate" — will not work.

"Communities are about participation through choice not compulsion," says Inskeep.

It is against the fundamental idea of community to force participation. Communities are founded on willing participants. Acknowledging this fact and planning for it are both important.

"I'd never set an arbitrary goal of having every employee write blog postings [as an example]," says Blackwell. "Honestly, those conditions might lead to a degradation of quality. You don't want people posting to meet some arbitrary goal of having a certain number of postings."

"Communities are not organizations," says Reiser. "They are not hierarchical organizations. You cannot dictate a community charter, but you can influence it. It's not like you can go to your direct reports and say: 'You have to do that.' In community it's more a [matter of] convincing."

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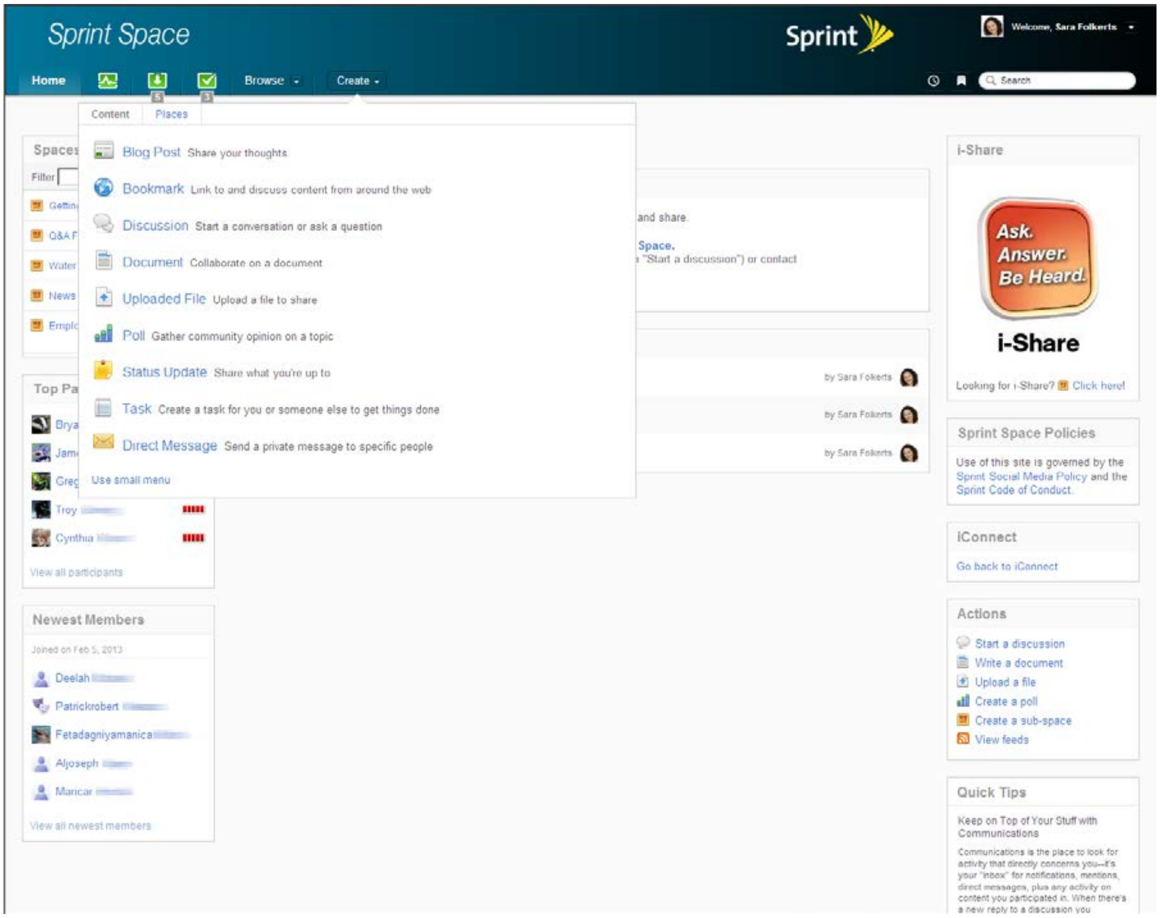
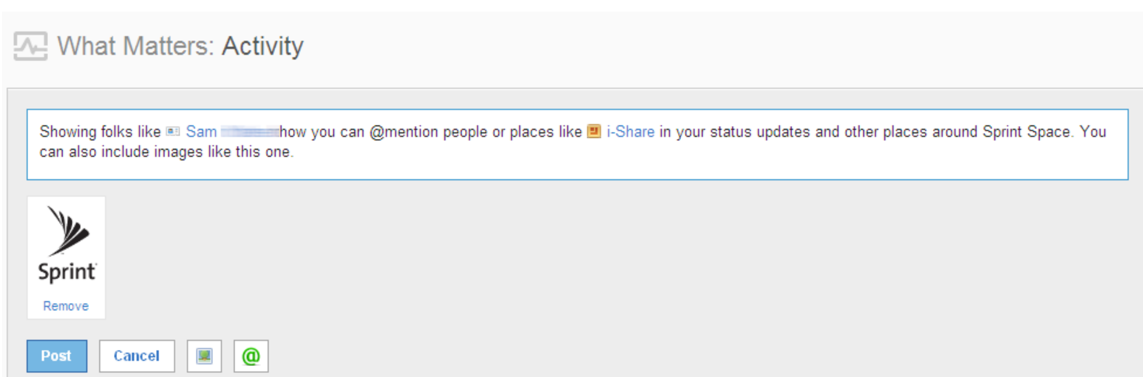
[16] Steve Bynghall, "Social Intranets part 1: Adoption and Integration," Intranet Benchmarking Forum blog (July 5, 2012): http://www.ibforum.com/2012/07/05/social-intranets-part-1-adoption-and-integration/



Pictured: This screen shows how easy it is to create something new in the Sprint Space. Users can create content from any page on the site and can also create groups, on the fly.



Pictured: Employees can now use status updates in Sprint Space. And like most places on the site, they can @mention people, places/spaces/groups, or even content in their status updates. Users can also embed images and videos in updates as well.

Reward Value Not Numbers

When thinking about participation goals it is important to focus on measuring value or impact rather than numbers. Set realistic goals and know that quality of contributions is far more important than quantity.

"The goal for us is to have around ten percent of the population be content contributors, with the rest of the population being consumers," says Casanova. "In addition, having the *right* ten percent — not just ten percent would be key for our success."

"You would find very quickly if you had the wrong ten percent contributing," he says, "as people would not return if the content had no value."

You'll know you have the right mix when the content reflects that diversity of contribution.

"To me, an acceptable level of participation is achieved when the conversation leads to enlightenment," says Amurgis**. "**Either a solution to a problem, or exposure to various thought-provoking points of view."

Focus efforts on removing barriers to contribution and you'll find that the contributions naturally reach a useful equilibrium.

"We will be successful when everyone who needs to contribute is able to do so without needing to focus on process, tools, or procedures," says Mehrotra. "Already, we notice that people from outside our division have begun to contribute to our content even as they create their own."

What's In It For Me?

In traditional (pre-Enterprise 2.0) organizations, the basis of an individual's contribution was based somewhat on information acquisition built on the mantra, "knowledge is power." Social software shifts the emphasis from "knowledge is power' to "*sharing* is power," where one's power and influence is derived from sharing and contributing to the overall knowledge of the organization in a highly collaborative manner. Influence is no longer based on title, position or rank. Influence is based on one's willingness and ability to contribute to the greater body of knowledge.

This shift creates a challenge for socially enabled organizations. How do they recognize, measure and reward individual contribution toward a collective effort?

"Wouldn't it be interesting to have a way to measure the social capital in an enterprise?" says Reiser. "Why? Because we could give the individual an answer to the most important question: 'What's in it for me?'"

The answer to the question, "What's in it for me?" has been demonstrated on the social Web as bloggers and Tweeters have risen from obscurity and gained enormous personal or professional followings. Along the way they have also gained the trappings that go with that type of micro fame: personal brand development, community respect, and monetary benefits, etc.

The same holds true, to a degree, within the enterprise. Social tools give users the power to make an organizational impact, build a reputation and leave a digital footprint behind,[17] all of which are important for building personal capital. Yet, figuring out how to reward contribution on an organizational level is a problem companies are now grappling with.

Klick uses participation as a metric in advancement. “We specifically use a metric we call ‘System Adherence’ when determining things like promotions and bonuses, and senior managers have all generally scored well on this front,” says Segal. “System Adherence is a comprehensive look at how well someone uses and understands Genome, based on usage data of key features and the analytics we draw from the system. We only move people into leadership positions that are using our system at an advanced level, as they’re setting the example for the people they’re going to manage.”

“Usage and participation amongst senior managers becomes a virtuous cycle,” he says, “because those who use our social tools and engage in the community are the ones that are escalated to senior management.”

Using Game Mechanics as a Reward System

Few organizations have built social contribution into an overarching professional development assessment system as Sun did with its Community Equity Model and what Kick does tying participation into advancement. Some companies have applied game mechanics to their social platforms to encourage use and provide a type of reward or encouragement for participation.

At Business Environment, users receive points for answering questions and encouraging sharing across The Lounge. Depending on how critical the question is to the business, the answerer receives one of three levels of reward:

Type of Question Answered	Award Amount
General question answered	150 points - worth £5
Outstanding business issue answered	300 points - worth £10
Critical business issue answered	600 points - worth £20

The same structure is used to encourage employees to contribute to business improvement process via The Lounge:

Business Improvement Suggestion	Award Amount
Standard improvement suggestion	150 points - worth £5
Good improvement suggestion	300 points - worth £10
Excellent improvement suggestion	600 points - worth £20

[17] Shah Rawn, “Corporate Microblogging Helps Employees Migrate Work Conversations Online,” Forbes.com (April 11, 2011): http://www.forbes.com/sites/rawnshah/2011/04/11/corporate-microblogging-helps-employees-migrate-work-conversations-online/

Users can also nominate other users for points. In turn, a bronze, silver or gold award is selected. This is based on how influential the suggestions are perceived to be. All medal recipients are displayed on the homepage of The Lounge and they receive a financial reward. A bronze medal is worth 1.5 x the points amount of the specific nomination; silver is worth x 2.25 of the points amount; and gold x 3.

The program has been a great success. "Ideas generated from this program have been far reaching, both in results and company behavior," says Vass. "People feel enabled to make a greater difference and doing so is very easy."

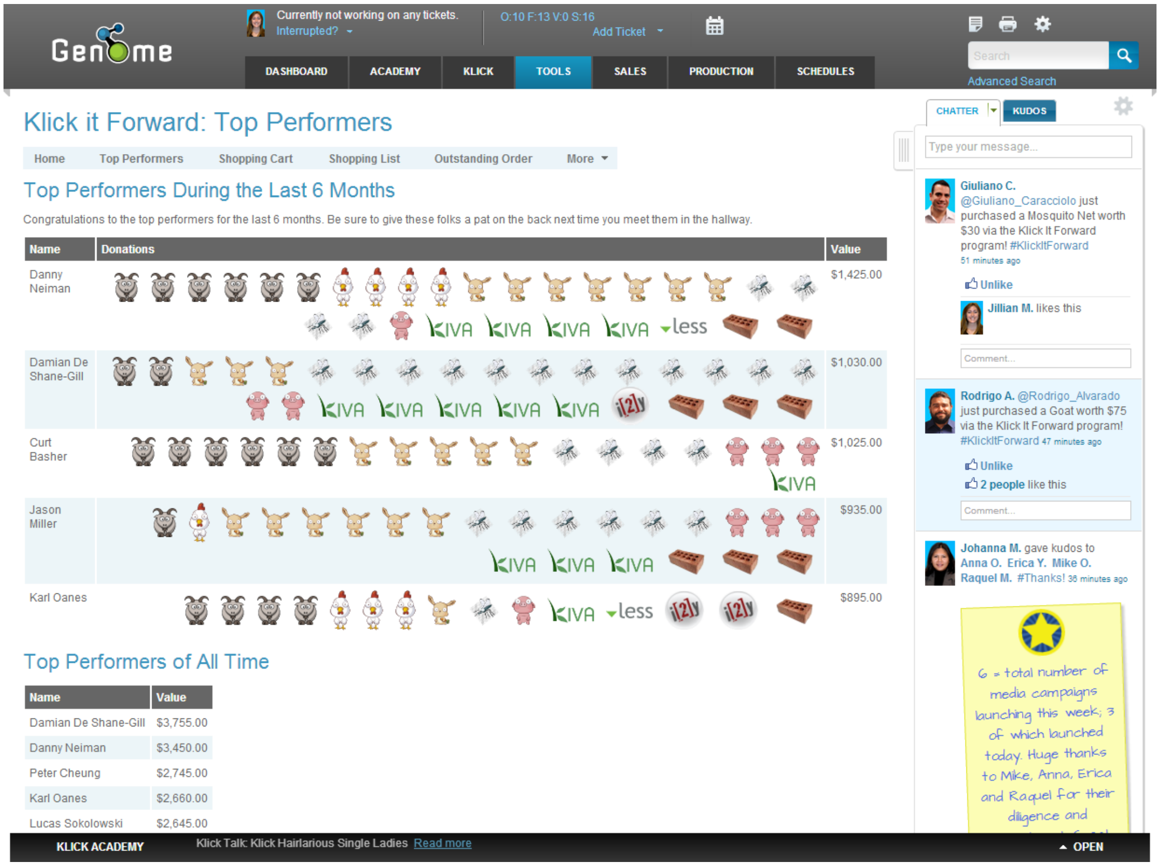
Klick offers a program called "Klick-it-Forward." "Once an individual completes any activity that achieves the business results we're looking for, (measured using an algorithm that incorporates all elements of their performance) the program allocates them a certain amount of Klick-it-Forward credits, which are converted into dollars," explains Goldman.

Employees are able to decide which of nine charitable organizations they want to donate their Kick-it-Forward dollars to. "All donations appear both on Chatter and on the user profile of the donor, adding a tangible way in which contributing to Klick allows you to contribute to the world at large," he says.

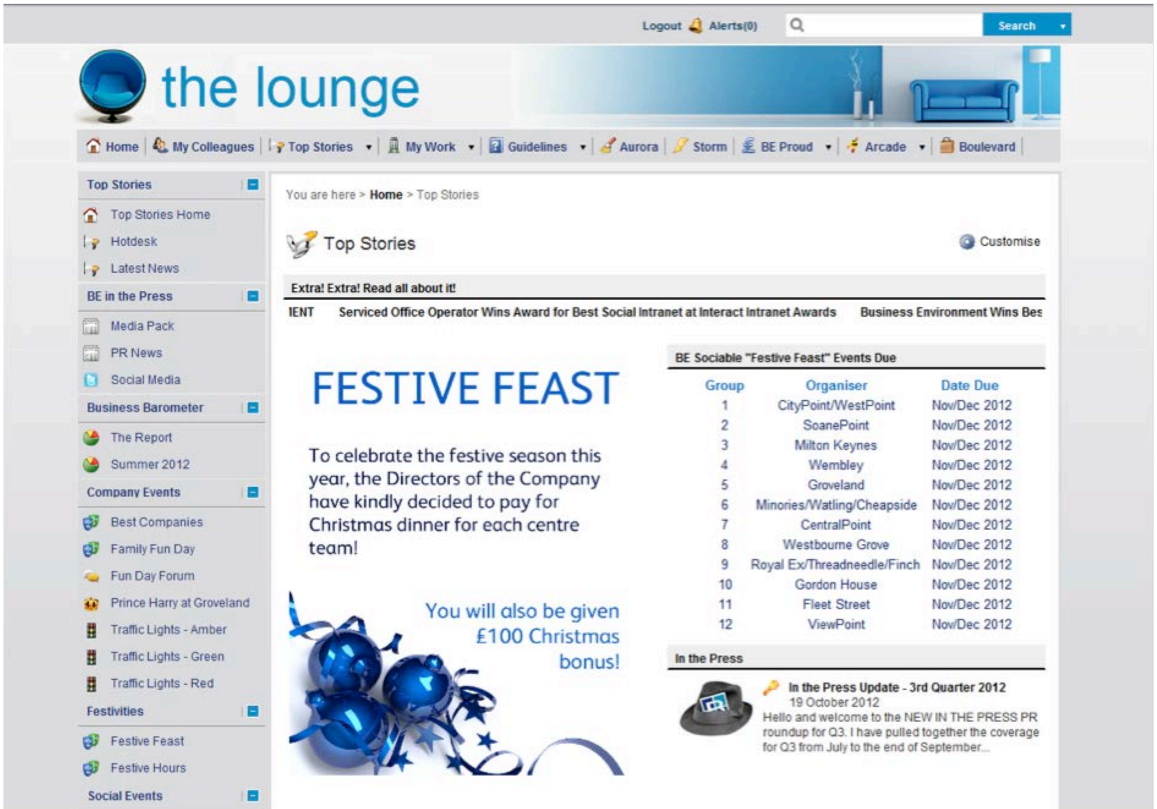
The company's "Klickster" program rewards employees based on content contributions to Stories and Klick Academy. Each week, an employee is chosen to win the use of the company's Porsche Boxster (a.k.a. the Klickster), based on the number of likes on either their Story or Klick Academy content.

The recognition programs (Klick-it-Forward, Kudos and Klickster) have all been very successful. Since its inception in late 2011, Klick has donated more than $135,000 through the donations of Klick employees via the Klick-it-Foward program. Kudos, also launched in late 2011, has resulted in more than 2,800 Kudos garnering well over 25,000 combined likes. The Klickster program, not even a year old yet, has elicited over 80 Stories about Klick employee achievements.

"Altogether, these Stories have garnered almost 1,200 likes within Chatter," says Goldman. "The programs really do encourage participation as they allow our employees to: recognize each other for great work, donate to the causes they truly care about and reward one another for outstanding contributions to the organization. And importantly, interactions with any of the above programs are visible through Chatter, so employees can congratulate each other and share supporting anecdotes."



Pictured: Klick's Klick-it-Forward Top Performers page. The Klick-it-Forward program is the company's most popular charitable program. It rewards employees with money to donate to the charities of their choice when their projects go well. The icons represent the donations employees have made and the corresponding monetary totals are included in the "Value" column along the right side of this chart. Each time an employee makes a donation, it is shared in the Chatter stream. Here, likes and comments help the post to rise the top of the stream.



Pictured: Business Environment tries to add an element of game mechanics to all broad business tasks, finding that this lighter approach to contribution makes employees more productive and also more engaged. Vass says she believes it also increases employee retention.

Case Studies

MEASURING SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION

The Community Equity Model

Reiser, when interviewed for the first edition of this report, had worked with his colleagues at Sun to address the challenge of measuring participation. The Community Equity System evolved from these efforts where social contribution is measured and users are rewarded according to their contributions.

How do you measure collaboration? “The simple answer,” says Reiser, “is we measure communities and we recognize individuals. We thought about this problem very carefully and realized that we needed to develop a whole new community value system. We use it to quantify one's contribution to the information sharing model (instead of the ‘information hoarding’ model of the past).”

Sun’s Community Equity[18] system automatically evaluates the value a person creates [for the organization] based on their activities on Sun’s social platform, SunSpace. “The vision is pretty simple,” says Reiser. “We evaluate the contribution, participation, skills and ‘role equity’ of a person. Then we combine the community equity values with the aggregated profile information (internal Facebook-like service) of a person and build an automated social reputation model.”

Community Equity is an entire social value system. There are two main components: reputation and equity. “What we do with individuals is to take this community equity model and build reputation programs around it,” says Reiser. “So, we honor people for their contribution and we measure the community itself.”

Building Trust Through Reputation

A good place to begin to understand the reputation component of Community Equity is in Sun’s Onestop community. Onestop was perhaps the most trusted community inside Sun.

“It’s a community where we share all of our internal technical topics on one site,” says Reiser. “And what is really interesting is people trust this content, so if they go to this wiki content about Java or Sun product, they more or less one hundred percent trust the content. We have built a trust model.”

Approximately 300 subject matter expert volunteers (Onestop authors) maintained the community and the company facilitated the activities of these authors. The community came to represent a trusted brand inside the organization. “If people want to know something about the latest technology or the latest development internally at Sun, they go to Onestop first,” says Reiser. And this content that the organization trusts so completely is nearly ninety-five percent user-generated.

“This is probably the highest level of community engagement you can have,” he says. “You have 95 percent user-generated content, but this content is trusted by the rest of the community.”

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[18] Sun Microsystems was acquired by Oracle after the first edition of this report was published. While the Sun communities changed as a result of that acquisition we felt the value of the contribution model created by Reiser and his colleagues was worth keeping in this second edition publication for the value of its insights into community development models.

This level of trust took almost five years to build and in addition to receiving backing from management, Reiser and his team spent considerable time working out the details of the reputation model. This work yielded good results. At Sun, being a Onestop Author was considered an honorable job.

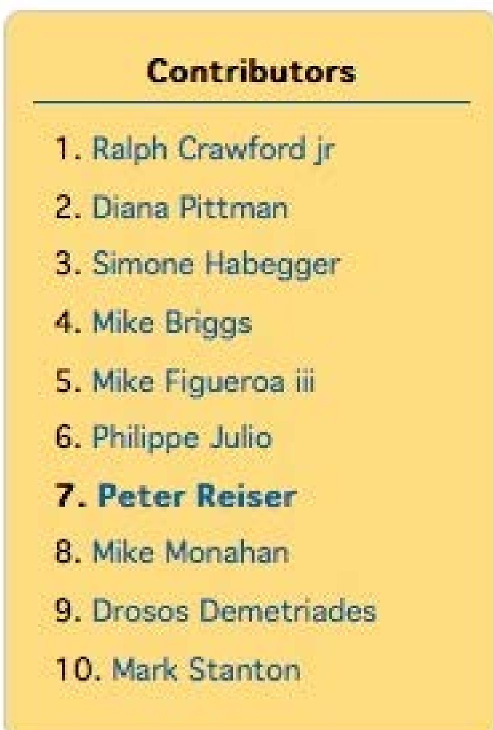
“It has a certain reputation,” says Reiser. “And also if people want to do technical career planning, they want to get to the next level, especially if you want to go up to the high up or senior technical positions, being a Onestop author gives you good credibility to get to the next level.”

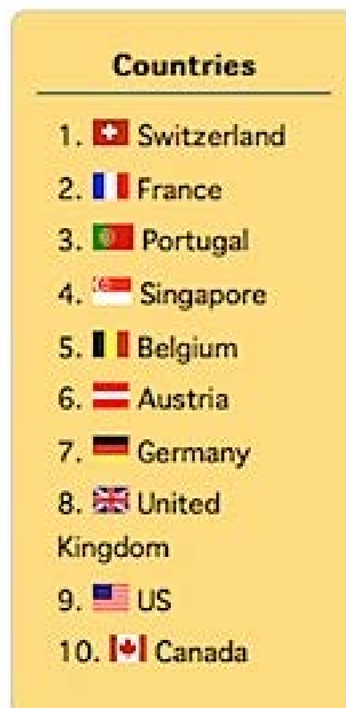
Measuring Contribution

The other major component of Community Equity at Sun was a mechanism the team developed to capture all of a user’s social activities (editing, viewing, tagging, etc.) and reward contributions by adding rankings to the individual’s profile, and also by publishing the rankings to feed widgets displaying various “top” contributor listings on the site. The system enabled the site to dynamically calculate the social value of the blog post or a URL. “We associate [that value] with a person, then we expose the total social value you have to all the users,” says Reiser.

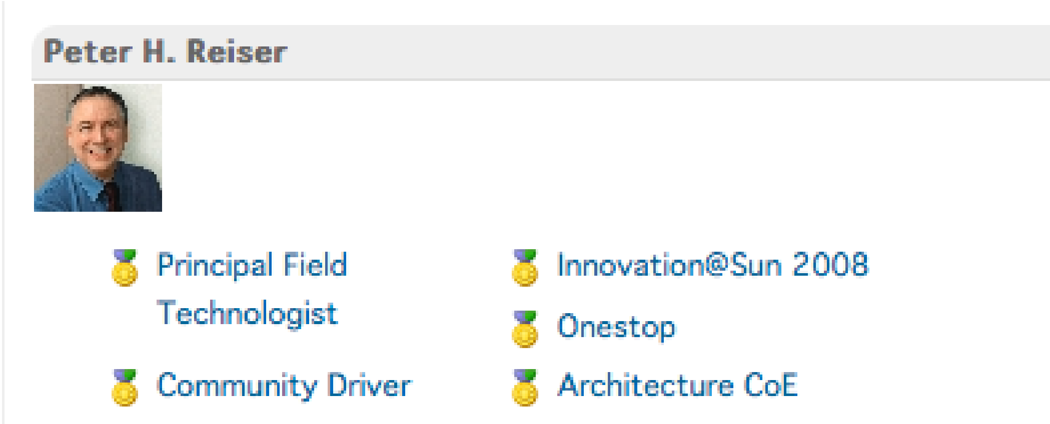
“So basically, what we implemented was a social capital value system based on all activities in a community,” he says. “We can now do pretty interesting stuff like we can show you the top authors, the top content, and top people. Also the model we have here in place is that the Community Equity is aging over time because knowledge is aging. So if a person doesn’t do a lot of activities over a certain period of time, his reputational barometer goes down.“

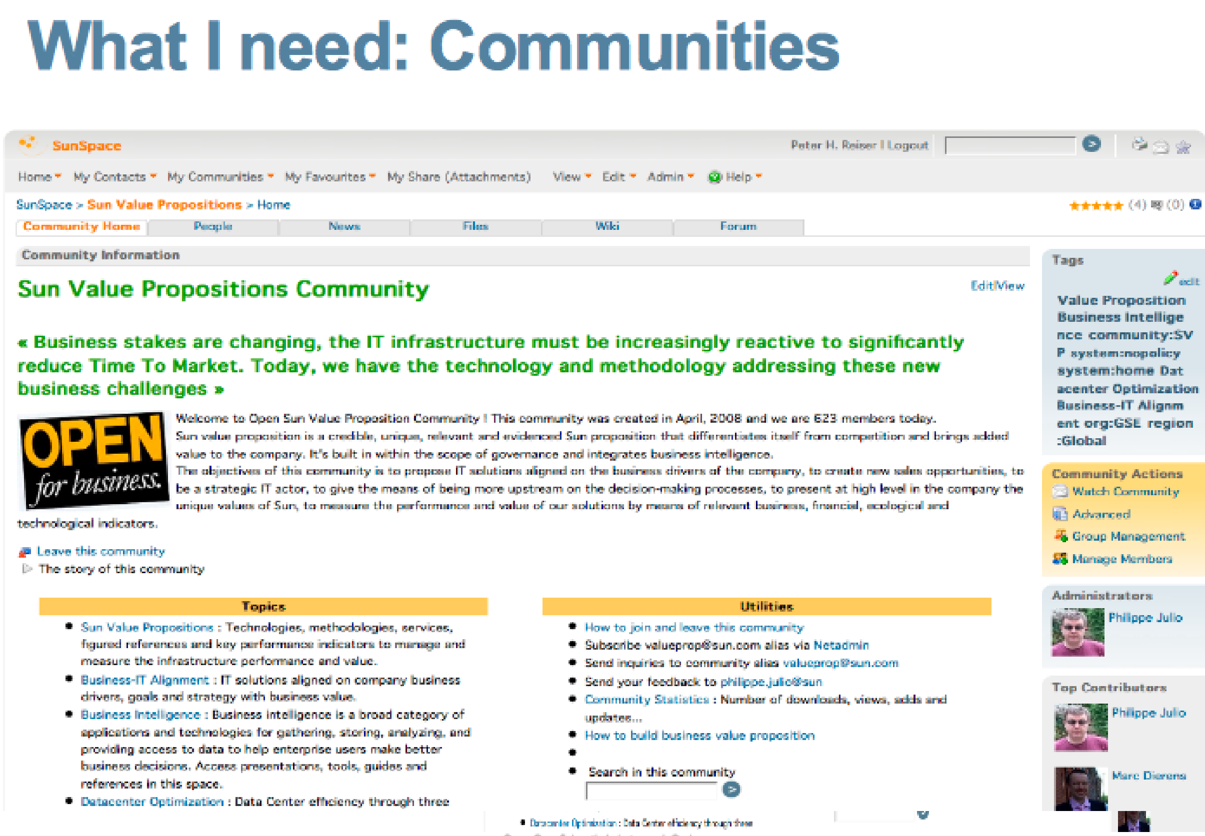
SunSpace users were recognized for their community contributions in various ways. Social Equity widgets measure and display a user’s social credentials, as shown in the screens below:





Pictured: Sun made sure that it recognized key contributors to the social platform, as seen here and below.





Pictured: The SunSpace team created distinct community roles. Affiliations were listed in the "MyProfile" screen seen here.

Community Equity Lessons Learned

Reiser outlines some lessons learned from Sun's experience with the Community Equity model.

What worked:

- **Clear community goals.** The Sun team established clear community goals that are tied to business objectives.
- **Community driver model.** A scalable community facilitation model with integrated best practices sharing among the community drivers.
- **Clear benefits for users:** SunSpace seamlessly integrated Community Equity with clear user benefits including:
  - **Dynamically generated “top” lists:** These “top” lists recognized top users, top content, top communities, etc.
  - **What’s in it for me?:** They answered and accommodated part of the “what’s in it for me?” question for the users.
  - **Better search results.** SunSpace provided enhanced search that encompassed results generated by the social feedback of the entire community through the Community Equity model.
  - **Recognition programs.** Reiser’s team created recognition programs related to community contributions (for example “Best of the Week”).
  - **Distinct community roles.** User profiles showed information related to each user’s community role, clearly displayed in the user’s profile.

What did not work:

- Forcing people to use it.
- **Install and hope.** Reiser and his team went far beyond just putting the tools in place. They incorporated the tools with a solid grounding in strategy, feedback and iterative development. “Hope by itself is not a strategy,” says Reiser.

ENTERPRISE BLOGGING

Evolving Communication

When we began our research on enterprise social software, blogs were certainly prevalent on the Web at large, but there was still a hesitance to adopt enterprise-wide blogging programs. Four years later we can’t say much has changed, but for the companies that do adopt these programs, the pay-off can be significant. Sprint is one organization that has put an effort behind enterprise blogging — taking an incremental approach and reaping the rewards of increased two-way communication across the organization.

“For years, our intranet strategy has centered around creating a ‘hub’ for communications and work," says Terry Pulliam, Director, Employee Communications, Sprint. "But it was always in our sights to fully exploit what the Web does so well, two-way conversation and interaction. We're in the business of connecting people with what they want, when they want it, and our employee communications and intranet program needs to reflect that."

The team grounded its social media approach in solid business objectives: to equip employees with what they need to answer customer questions and to explain the “why” behind company decisions. With that in mind, Sprint took a “toe-in-the-water” approach.

First, the team posted questions to i-Connect, the company's intranet homepage news. As employees responded via email, their comments were published verbatim, with names attached. "We found with this 'faux chat' that employees loved the opportunity to open up and be candid, just like they do outside of work," says Pulliam. "This first step, in which we still maintained control, dispelled some of the fear among internal skeptics and gave them confidence that employees would behave appropriately."

When their social media and blogging platform, Sprint Space was ready. They continued with a slow-roll approach. Rather than doing a formal launch, the team used a controversial business decision to open a dialogue. The issue: employees had to wait to buy a hot new mobile device until the initial customer demand wound down. Again, a story was posted, but this time the dialogue happened in real time, unfiltered. The initial blog post "Who cares that we have to wait?" received 459 comments, many of them heated.

"Marketing leadership followed up with a post that received 332 comments, and the tone of the conversation began to change," says Pulliam. "It began to shape the story that we hoped employees would share with friends and family, that we're focused on customers and want to make sure they get our great new phone first."

"In the first six months, we saw a 47 percent increase in visits with incremental increases each month following," says Pulliam.

When we first published this case study Sprint Space was receiving more than 3,000 visits each day and nearly all employees were visiting the site at least once per month. The platform hosted more than 350 communities, approximately 770 personal blogs, 310 community blogs, 2,056 blog posts and 1,100 discussion threads.

Those numbers have continued to grow to the point where Downs describes that growth as "explosive." "Once we partnered with our Customer Care organization 18 months ago, we have seen explosive growth in the tool, mostly driven by their employees," she says. "They are using Sprint Space as a 'peer to peer' learning tool. The aim is to get employees to help one another find information and better help customers, faster. With this specific use case and lots of communication about the tool, Sprint Care Agents have flocked to the site. In just the last quarter (Q4 2012), site visits jumped by 55 percent from the third quarter of 2012. Unique visits jumped by 66 percent. Page views jumped from 1.6 million in the third quarter to more than 4.5 million in the fourth quarter."

These usage numbers reflect more than page views and unique visits. They represent demonstrated value being returned to the organization directly from the platform. "We do see value in blogging and the community overall for Sprint," says Downs, "mostly in the open and transparent feedback loop it gives us as communicators. It's no longer okay for us as communicators to feel that our job ends when we hit 'publish.' We and other groups around the company are using employee feedback on our communications as a way to improve and bring solutions back to the business."

"For example, she says, "we routinely find out that we have more than one policy that contradicts the other, and we find these loopholes because employees point them out to us. We then work with the policy owners and make them resolve these issues."

The success of Sprint Space is its own best advertisement. As other groups cross the company see how effective Sprint Space has been, they ask to have their own communities so their teams can also collaborate more effectively. “They now find the online social tools easier than other tools we have deployed,” she says.

Success also leads to expansion. “We’ll need to continue to integrate Sprint Space with other work tools to make the use case for the business more compelling,” says Downs. “For example, we will need a mobile component soon and maybe even connections to Microsoft products, such as Outlook and PowerPoint.”

Big Value from Few Publishers

Sprint’s social tools follow the pattern we have seen with most enterprise social tools: few people can have a big impact. “We have activity along the lines of the 90-9-1 rule,” says Downs. “Ninety percent of people typically look and read, nine percent will comment, rate, etc., and only about one percent of people actually create the content we’re all reading and commenting on. We do slightly better than those metrics in Sprint Space because our community is robust and defined (everyone has access and we’re all here for work).”

Those who participate do so simply because they are included to, not because of some big payoff. To date, Sprint Space offers only very basic rewards. Users get a small number of points for comments, and more points for blogging or having the correct answer to a question. And yet they contribute.

“I have found that most employees get enjoyment out of belonging to this community and having the right answer,” says Downs, “but many find the value intrinsic. Plus, these points are a little like that old show ‘Who’s Line Is It Anyway?’ The points don’t really matter.”

That may change as the platform evolves. “There is a lot of research that says that more incentives and even ‘gamification’ helps drive activity and more adoption of these platforms,” she says, “so we are looking into those additions and programs this year. We are even hoping to create a real marketplace where your points can be cashed in for real goods, such as gift cards.”

The Challenges of Enterprise Blogs

Despite Sprint’s success with Sprint Space, enterprise-wide blogging programs are still not common and the challenges can be many. Even Sprint still experiences challenges. “Our biggest [challenge] is that we allow non-work related conversations on our site,” says Downs. “We do this because we know employees don’t only talk about work with their co-workers offline, so we don’t have that expectation online. We think this also builds community among employees that are distant and in silos around the company.”

Though clearly most employees are not “goofing off” on Sprint Space, Downs says many managers still have a hard time seeing any non-work related conversations as useful. “Management is key to driving adoption of this site,” she says, “and we are constantly thinking about this as a team. Our best approach so far has been to approach each manager or business unit leader with a specific use case on why they should be using Sprint Space. These ‘pitches’ are custom to them and often work well.”

One lesson that has come out of this experience for Sprint is to develop specific use cases in advance so these conversations don’t have to happen in response to introducing a new tool. Instead, they now happen in advance. “We won’t ever launch another tool, product or platform without developing specific use cases for each leader we want to work with in the future,” says Downs.

Other enterprise blogging challenges include:

- **Corporate culture can get in the way:** Blogs require and open corporate culture, open to informal communication. Blogs can be a hard sell in companies that have a rigid communications. When considering a corporate blogging program, it’s worth asking: “Is your organization prepared for total transparency?”

  “We have teams at Sprint that are used to having more control over their communications,” says Goldsborough. “They would prefer managers share only the information they deem pertinent with direct reports.”

  “We continue to nudge them toward discussing business issues in an open forum so they can have a stronger influence on employee perception,” he says. “This is the biggest value add we’ve seen as communicators, the ability to identify business questions/problems and to work with our internal clients to offer solutions they can then share with a larger audience by “joining the conversation” in Sprint Space.”

- **Blogs can seem non-essential:** Blogs may seem, at least on the surface, non-essential to the business at hand. Bloggers tend to mix the personal with the professional, even inside the firewall. It’s just the nature of blogging and creating an online voice. Not all companies embrace this content mix. “The [AEP] blogs are informal, personal, and folksy. They reflect the personality and passion of the authors and contributors, and emphasize their humanity,” says AEP Amurgis. **“**The tone is in stark contrast to official news releases and other announcements, which are corporate and somewhat stuffy. Plus, the blogs invite comments, whereas official news usually does not.”

- **Value is hard to measure:** It’s harder to translate the value of blogs when page views don’t fully convey the value of that impression. Wikis and other tools can be measured in time-savings, cost-savings and perhaps even productivity improvements, while blogs’ impact is often measured in softer metrics such as communication improvements, engagement and empowerment and the mother of all fuzzy corporate values: humanity.

- **Very few people blog:** People like blogs. They like reading them. But often, especially at work, they don’t like writing them.[19]

- **Signal to noise ratio is not a perfect mix:** The great thing about blogging is that valuable content tends to rise on its own merit and gain a following. The bad thing about blogging is that anyone can have their say and that means for each kernel of good quality information, there may be quite a bit of noise. Companies have to embrace that reality because an open blogging culture is the best blogging culture to cultivate.

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[19] “Intranet Blogs Hit Critical Mass,” Prescient Digital Media Intranet 2.0 Global Study 2010: ”http://www.prescientdigital.com/articles/intranet-articles/intranet-blogs-hit-critical-mass/

> "We also believe that any employee should be able to start a blog around a specific topic, and then compete for attention based on the merits of the conversation," says Amurgis.
>
> Another reality of blogging is that employees will mix business with pleasure so what comes across as "noise" to the company may actual be signal to its employees.
>
> "For example, if you have an audience that trends toward Gen Y," says Goldsborough, "those employees are likely used to mixing business and personal conversations and so the noise may actually be an expectation and a gratifying part of their work experience."
>
> "It's a careful balancing act and your company might even consider multiple platforms to cater to different employee preferences," he says.
>
> But at the end of the day, it's not the ratio that matters most. It's the quality of the signal. "Are they helping employees reach goals, answer questions, gain new perspective, tell the company's story, have fun at work?" asks Goldsborough.

While there are many challenges associated with blogging, they are worth the effort. The payoff from a blogging program can be transformative.

The personal tone of a blog post can engage employees and help to align them with a company's values. "Sprint Space has given every employee at Sprint a voice and highlighted the power of 'word of mouth,'" says Goldsborough. "Employees are telling a better 'Sprint story' today because of the blogging in Sprint Space."

Because they are written in first person, blogs present an opportunity to see the company through other people's eyes. For companies willing to listen, blogs provide an amazing opportunity for market research.

"Want to know what people are saying about our brand? Check out the blogs," says Goldsborough. "Want to know what the biggest issue is for our frontline employees who deal with customers on a daily basis? Read their blogs."

Pleasant Surprises

Some things about blogging programs may surprise those who are new to the space. Companies interviewed for this report have experienced their share of pleasant surprises, including the following:

- **Political passions.** "I've been surprised by how much political issues ignite passions. I'm also pleasantly surprised by how bright and articulate some employees are, which, to me, helps justify the premise of social media." (Amurgis)
- **Executive enthusiasm.** "I was surprised by the interest by executives to want to blog. At first it was the opposite of what we wanted but then the demand was so great we decided it was foolish to fight the demand because of the benefits of executive participation." (Cahill)
- **Front-line contributions.** "I was surprised when I began to see regular contributions from our line workers — treasured field employees who are often thought to be disconnected from our corporate computer network. We discovered (by asking those who contributed) that they have computers in

their trucks to obtain work orders, and will often participate if the topic interests or affects them.” (Amurgis)

- **Unexpected participants.** “At the beginning I was surprised by some comments from the timid people, people with a low profile in a face-to-face interaction, but through the blog they could share big ideas.” (Paschmann)

Determining Readiness

Maybe blogging *isn’t* a good tool for your organization. Social tools are not a one-size-fits-all solution. If you would answer “no” to many of the questions below and you don’t see a way to change them, then perhaps blogging won’t work, at least right now.

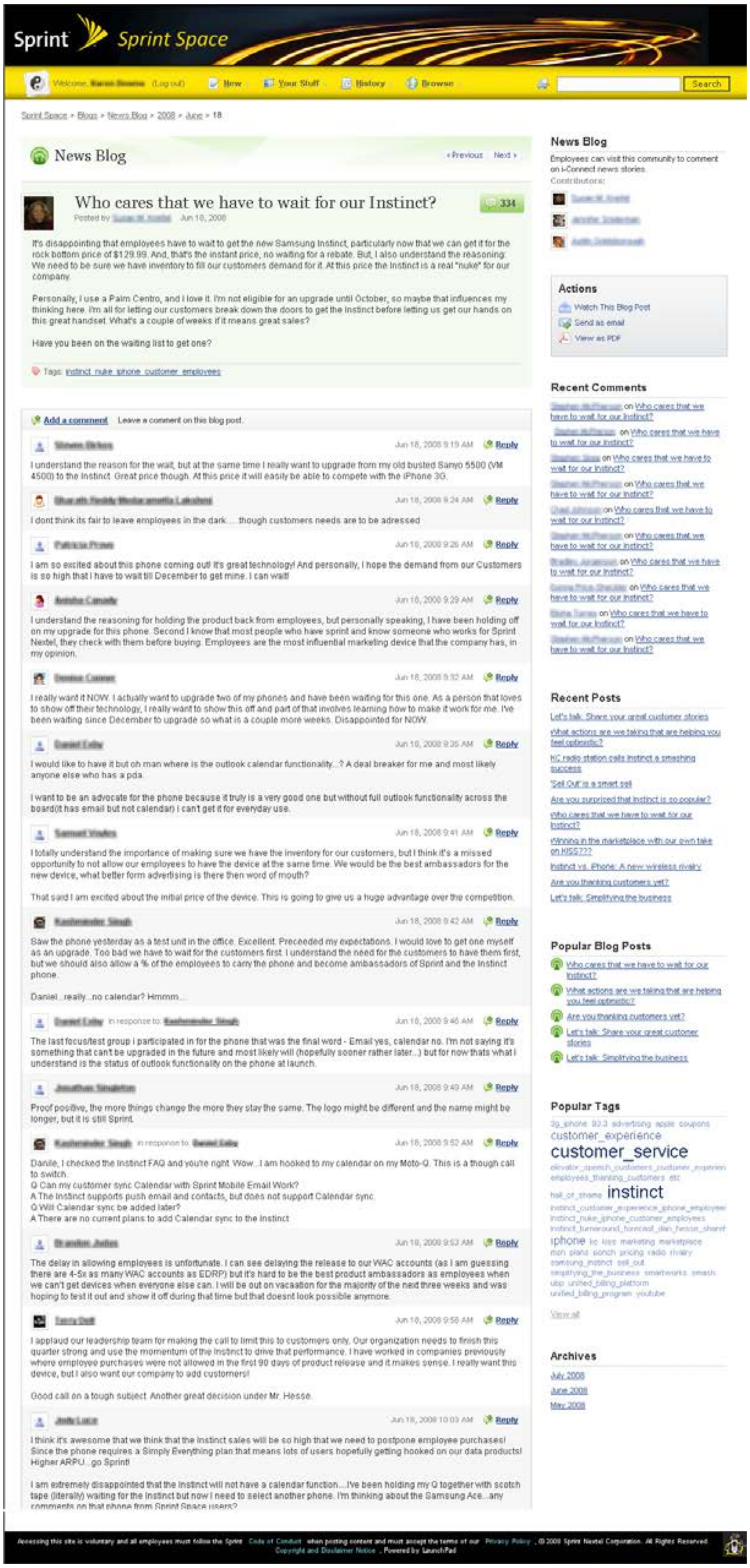
- Are there people, including leaders perhaps, who are willing to commit to a blog and share their authentic thoughts regularly?

- Is the leadership of the organization truly interested in employees’ perspectives, and will those perspectives be respected? Or does the organization have a “yes” culture where employees are not comfortable challenging the status quo? This type of culture won’t make for a very lively blog environment if everyone is just toeing the company line.

- Have past knowledge management efforts succeeded? Are the reasons for failure known and understood?

- Does the blog format of open communication fit the company culture? Is the organization committed to transparent communication?

- Is the company willing to invest in this effort? Is the company willing to continue to invest in this effort for the long run?



Sprint
Sprint Space
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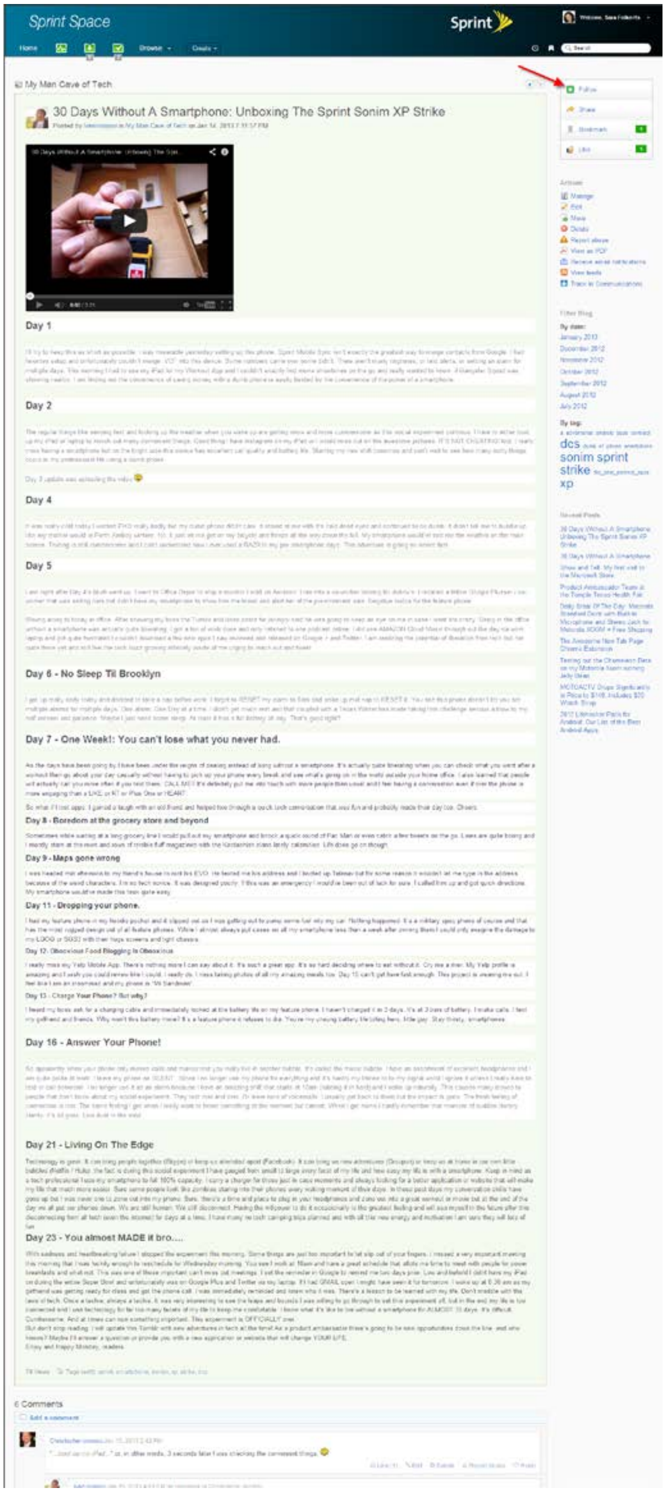
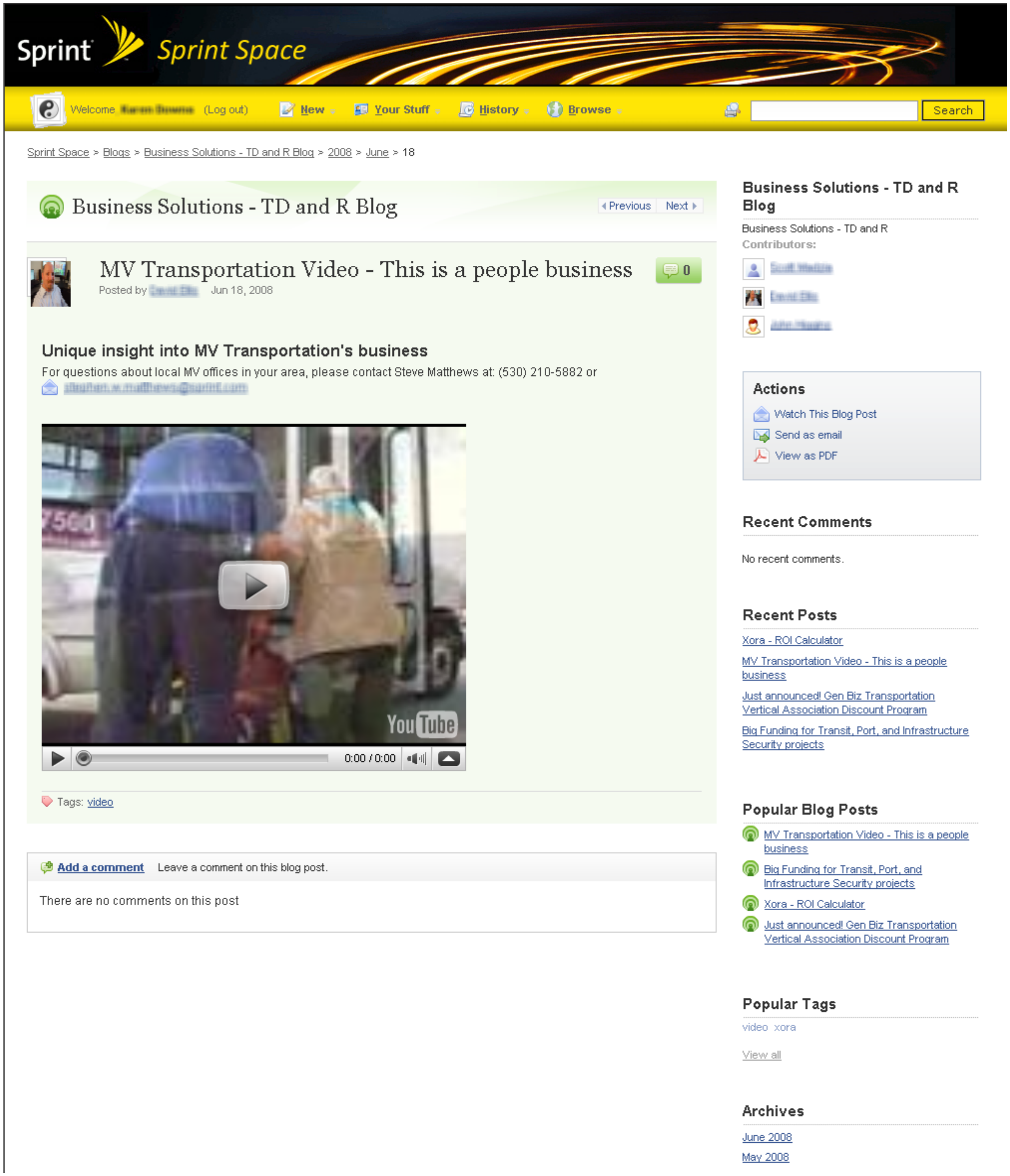
New
Your Stuff
History
Browse
Search
Sprint Space > Blogs > News Blog > 2008 > June > 18
News Blog
« Previous
Next »
Who cares that we have to wait for our Instinct?
334
Posted by
Jun 18, 2008
It's disappointing that employees have to wait to get the new Samsung Instinct, particularly now that we can get it for the rock bottom price of $129.99. And, that's the instant price, no waiting for a rebate. But, I also understand the reasoning: We need to be sure we have inventory to fill our customers demand for it. At this price the Instinct is a real "nuke" for our company.
Personally, I use a Palm Centro, and I love it. I'm not eligible for an upgrade until October, so maybe that influences my thinking here. I'm all for letting our customers break down the doors to get the Instinct before letting us get our hands on this great handset. What's a couple of weeks if it means great sales?
Have you been on the waiting list to get one?
Tags: instinct nuke iphone customer employees
Add a comment
Leave a comment on this blog post.
Jun 18, 2008 9:19 AM
Reply
I understand the reason for the wait, but at the same time I really want to upgrade from my old busted Sanyo 5500 (VM 4500) to the Instinct. Great price though. At this price it will easily be able to compete with the iPhone 3G.
Jun 18, 2008 9:24 AM
Reply
I dont think its fair to leave employees in the dark..... though customers needs are to be adressed
Jun 18, 2008 9:26 AM
Reply
I am so excited about this phone coming out! It's great technology! And personally, I hope the demand from our Customers is so high that I have to wait till December to get mine. I can wait!
Jun 18, 2008 9:29 AM
Reply
I understand the reasoning for holding the product back from employees, but personally speaking, I have been holding off on my upgrade for this phone. Second I know that most people who have sprint and know someone who works for Sprint Nextel, they check with them before buying. Employees are the most influential marketing device that the company has, in my opinion.
Jun 18, 2008 9:32 AM
Reply
I really want it NOW. I actually want to upgrade two of my phones and have been waiting for this one. As a person that loves to show off their technology, I really want to show this off and part of that involves learning how to make it work for me. I've been waiting since December to upgrade so what is a couple more weeks. Disappointed for NOW.
Jun 18, 2008 9:35 AM
Reply
I would like to have it but oh man where is the outlook calendar functionality...? A deal breaker for me and most likely anyone else who has a pda.
I want to be an advocate for the phone because it truly is a very good one but without full outlook functionality across the board(it has email but not calendar) i can't get it for everyday use.
Jun 18, 2008 9:41 AM
Reply
I totally understand the importance of making sure we have the inventory for our customers, but I think it's a missed opportunity to not allow our employees to have the device at the same time. We would be the best ambassadors for the new device, what better form advertising is there then word of mouth?
That said I am excited about the initial price of the device. This is going to give us a huge advantage over the competition.
Jun 18, 2008 9:42 AM
Reply
Saw the phone yesterday as a test unit in the office. Excellent. Preceeded my expectations. I would love to get one myself as an upgrade. Too bad we have to wait for the customers first. I understand the need for the customers to have them first, but we should also allow a % of the employees to carry the phone and become ambassadors of Sprint and the Instinct phone.
Daniel...really...no calendar? Hmmm....
in response to:
Jun 18, 2008 9:46 AM
Reply
The last focus/test group i participated in for the phone that was the final word - Email yes, calendar no. I'm not saying it's something that can't be upgraded in the future and most likely will (hopefully sooner rather later...) but for now thats what I understand is the status of outlook functionality on the phone at launch.
Jun 18, 2008 9:49 AM
Reply
Proof positive, the more things change the more they stay the same. The logo might be different and the name might be longer, but it is still Sprint.
in response to:
Jun 18, 2008 9:52 AM
Reply
Danile, I checked the Instinct FAQ and you're right. Wow...I am hooked to my calendar on my Moto-Q. This is a though call to switch.
Q Can my customer sync Calendar with Sprint Mobile Email Work?
A The Instinct supports push email and contacts, but does not support Calendar sync.
Q Will Calendar sync be added later?
A There are no current plans to add Calendar sync to the Instinct
Jun 18, 2008 9:53 AM
Reply
The delay in allowing employees is unfortunate. I can see delaying the release to our WAC accounts (as I am guessing there are 4-5x as many WAC accounts as EDRP) but it's hard to be the best product ambassadors as employees when we can't get devices when everyone else can. I will be out on vacation for the majority of the next three weeks and was hoping to test it out and show it off during that time but that doesnt look possible anymore.
Jun 18, 2008 9:58 AM
Reply
I applaud our leadership team for making the call to limit this to customers only. Our organization needs to finish this quarter strong and use the momentum of the Instinct to drive that performance. I have worked in companies previously where employee purchases were not allowed in the first 90 days of product release and it makes sense. I really want this device, but I also want our company to add customers!
Good call on a tough subject. Another great decision under Mr. Hesse.
Jun 18, 2008 10:03 AM
Reply
I think it's awesome that we think that the Instinct sales will be so high that we need to postpone employee purchases! Since the phone requires a Simply Everything plan that means lots of users hopefully getting hooked on our data products! Higher ARPU...go Sprint!
I am extremely disappointed that the Instinct will not have a calendar function....I've been holding my Q together with scotch tape (literally) waiting for the Instinct but now I need to select another phone. I'm thinking about the Samsung Ace...any comments on that phone from Sprint Space users?
News Blog
Employees can visit this community to comment on i-Connect news stories.
Contributors:
Actions
Watch This Blog Post
Send as email
View as PDF
Recent Comments
on Who cares that we have to wait for our Instinct?
Recent Posts
Let's talk: Share your great customer stories
What actions are we taking that are helping you feel optimistic?
KC radio station calls Instinct a smashing success
'Sell Out' is a smart sell
Are you surprized that Instinct is so popular?
Who cares that we have to wait for our Instinct?
Winning in the marketplace with our own take on KISS???
Instinct vs. iPhone: A new wireless rivalry
Are you thanking customers yet?
Let's talk: Simplifying the business
Popular Blog Posts
Who cares that we have to wait for our Instinct?
What actions are we taking that are helping you feel optimistic?
Are you thanking customers yet?
Let's talk: Share your great customer stories
Let's talk: Simplifying the business
Popular Tags
customer_experience
customer_service
instinct
iphone
View all
Archives
July 2008
June 2008
May 2008
Accessing this site is voluntary and all employees must follow the Sprint Code of Conduct when posting content and must accept the terms of our Privacy Policy
Copyright and Disclaimer Notice . Powered by LaunchPad

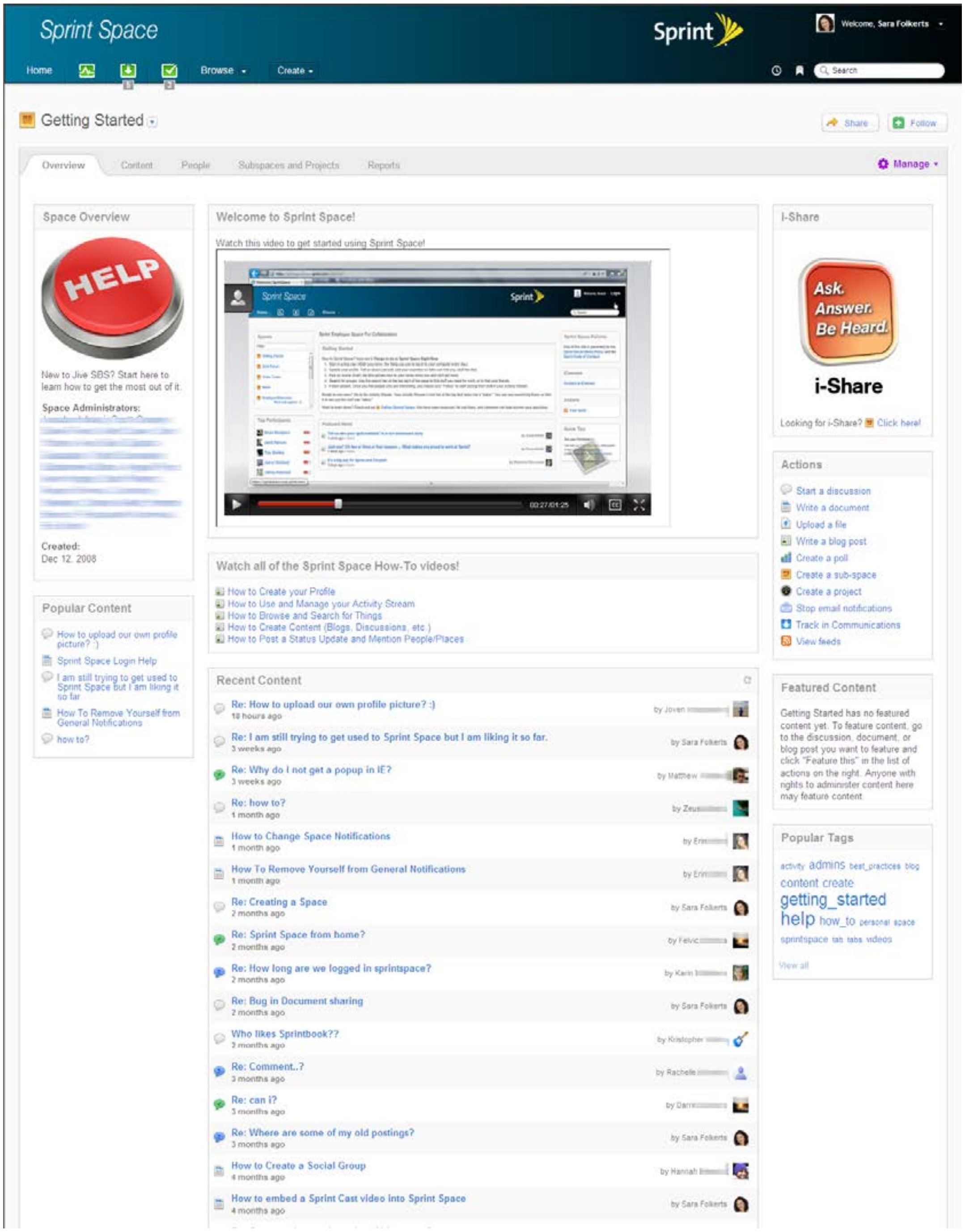
Pictured: This example shows an article posted by Sprint's chief news editor. She is sharing an opinion about the decision by company executives to ask employees wait to purchase a popular new device, increasing the initial availability for customers. When this screenshot had been taken, 336 employees had participated in the discussion to talk about why that decision was made and what it means for Sprint. (Also, this blog post had more than 12,000 views.) Blog posts such as this one contributed to the popularity of Sprint Space blogs. Prior to Sprint Space, covering a controversial topic like this was not part of the company's change management culture.



Pictured: In the new Sprint Space, employees can follow content, people or places. All of this followed content shows up in their Activity Stream, where users can also “like” content and rate documents, bookmark the content in Sprint Space, or share the content with other Sprint Space users.



Pictured: This screen shows integration of a YouTube video into a blog post on the original Sprint Space blog.



Pictured: In the new Sprint Space, it is now easy to embed videos nearly anywhere. The video seen here is from Sprint Cast, the company's internal video platform, powered by Qumu. This video also automatically plays when a user lands on this page.

A TALE OF TWO WIKIS

Wikis: Quick and Agile

Wikis provide nearly instantaneous collaboration, are scalable to accommodate vast amounts of data and numbers of users, and provide a notoriously easy set-up. Some wiki environments can be set up in a matter of hours and are essentially plug and play. “The most surprising thing about wikis,” says Alquier, “is how quickly and organically their content grows.”

Wikis are so easy to set up that they can easily outpace an organization’s ability to recognize and absorb the benefits they provide: open access, real-time collaboration, and unparalleled authoring environments for documentation and content management.

Perhaps it is the speed and agility of wikis that are the reasons why wikis often emerge from grassroots initiatives. Wikis can be both quiet heroes in the Enterprise 2.0 arsenal of tools and at the same time pose a threat to those who previously held power over knowledge repositories and manual documentation processes. Even successful wiki projects can ruffle feathers in organizations. While the politics are often tricky, the benefits of wikis are substantial.

Intelpedia: Lead, Follow or Get Out of the Way

Our early research on this topic revealed that many successful enterprise wikis resulted from grassroots initiatives. An employee in the rank and file had a good idea for a wiki and happened to sit next to a guy who controlled the Linux servers. Thus, a wiki was born.

That’s just about how it happened for Josh Bancroft, Social Media Expert at Intel, who created Intel’s first and still very successful wiki Intelpedia. He read a blog post by Intel Product Support Engineer, John G. Miner. Miner posited an idea on his blog: “Wouldn’t it be cool if we had something like Wikipedia, but inside of Intel for the domain of knowledge that is appropriate inside of Intel?”

As we’ve mentioned, these types of rogue endeavors are no longer the norm, but there are still lessons to be learned from some of the initiatives we highlighted in the first edition of this report.

Bancroft says he thought this was a great idea and latched onto it immediately. “It was really difficult to find and get this information,” he says. “And even more difficult to collaborate with other people on it, unless you were just trading stuff via email.”

So Bancroft replied to Miner’s blog post and found comments from other people who questioned the difficulty in executing on this type of initiative and proving its value.

“People were saying things like, ‘Yeah, it would be really cool, but it would take really two to three years to get it off the ground,’ and, ‘senior management would have to approve it,’ and ‘what’s the ROI?’,” says Bancroft.

“It was really kind of a little sad and disappointing,” he says, “that people were not fired up by this idea, but just kind of thinking: ‘Oh, a big corporation would never be able to do this inside’.”

He disagreed.

“So, I replied, and I said, because I had installed MediaWiki, I said I could do it,” says Bancroft. “Give me a place to put it, and I’ll have it up for you in a day.”

“I had installed MediaWiki on my own site and learned that, in fact, it was really easy,” he says. “All it needed, basically, was a database and a Web server that could speak Apache and PHP.”

It took a while for Miner to respond so Bancroft went ahead on his own.

“I poked my head across the hall to the guys who run the Web servers and said, ‘hey, can I have a database and can you help me set up this website?’” says Bancroft.

When Miner finally replied a few weeks later giving him the green light for the project, it was already done. “I was able to say to him, ‘it’s already done, just go use it,’” he says.

There’s a lesson here for managers everywhere. When it comes to Web 2.0 tools, let innovation happen. If the initiatives aren’t coming from the top, at least create an environment where they can bubble up from the bottom. It doesn’t take much to get one of these efforts off the ground. So if managers create an atmosphere where employees feel comfortable pursuing innovation, it is more likely to happen.

Perhaps the lesson for managers is avert your gaze when people are trying new tools and don’t try to formalize everything or look for immediate ROI.

Intelpedia has been up and running for three years when we spoke with Bancroft and it still wasn’t the top-down, official wiki at Intel. It wasn’t running as a renegade site under someone’s desk anymore, but it wasn’t fully sanctioned either.

“There are lots of other wikis around Intel,” says Bancroft, “so, it’s not, and probably never will be, the ‘official,’ official wiki, but it’s the *de facto*, official wiki that people use for a lot of different things.”

It turns out the set up was the easy part. Without executive sponsorship, Bancroft took on the role of champion for the wiki. He led a core group of grassroots evangelists who latched onto the project from the start.

“In the beginning, we got a core group of people who were really excited about this and really just kind of grabbed a hold of it and ran with it,” says Bancroft. “I did a lot of evangelism, a lot of teaching.”

“For a while,” he says, “I was like a broken record, and you could hear me in meetings: ‘hey, there’s this wiki out here. Have you heard of Wikipedia? Well, we’ve got something like that. It’s really easy to use. Here, let me show you how to do it.’”

“People would say: ‘We need to document this information somewhere.’ And I was like a broken record, saying, ’Well, why don’t you put it in Intelpedia? Why don’t you put it in Intelpedia?’ It was almost comical,” he says.

But his efforts paid off in both growth and adoption. “We started getting thousands of pages and hundreds of users and millions of page views, and it really, really just took off,” he says. “And it just continues to grow.”

Not bad for an idea that started on a server under someone’s desk.

Charting a Path Without a Map

Agilent is a company that produces highly technical documentation for software. Experts around the world provide the information that feeds this documentation. At the time we interviewed members of the company’s documentation team about their wiki project, the company, and specifically, the documentation team, had been through staff reductions, eliminating people in key roles in formatting, illustration and production departments..

“So, really, what we were left with was a very small group of people who clearly could not cope with the volume of information that was coming through, nor with the short cycles,” says Agilent’s Mehrotra. “By the time the documentation team manages to get the content out to the users, it's already outdated.”

So, the business need was simple. Existing staff couldn’t support existing documentation methods. Faced with this challenge, Mehrotra and his colleagues tried to innovate by automating and simplifying the publishing environment but they were challenged by the evolving documentation needs of the organization and the current state of desktop publishing tools available.

“Eventually it struck us that the problem was not that we could not engineer our way out of the problem,” he says. “But that we were in the way of the people who had something to say.“

The Agilent team turned to a wiki as an interim solution, to ease the burden of the fast-paced distributed publishing model, but the wiki wasn’t supposed to be the end game solution. At first, it was just a bandage to slow the bleeding.

Mehrotra and his team set up a wiki and tried to get content providers to provide their inputs in the wiki first, as a holding place.

“People were willing to contribute content.” he says. “But that was because they felt sorry for us, not because they saw this as a viable tool. The way they looked at it, their effort remained the same, whether they gave it to us as a Word file or an Excel spreadsheet, or they contributed it in the Wiki. Eventually, we were going to cut and paste and put it in some strange desktop publishing tool.” But they soon realized that the wiki could take the place of the old publishing model and it would make the information available instantaneously to boot.

“We started letting go of the control that, as writers, we have over documentation,” says Mehrotra. “We set up this wiki and said: ‘All right, whatever you write, you will see the next day.’ Customers will see. Everybody will see it.”

In the field of documentation tools, this is where the mighty little wiki excels. Like nearly all Web 2.0 tools, it provides the platform and then gets out of the way, putting both publishers and end users both a platform for publishing and immediate access to up-to-the minute documentation.

The Agilent team took the desktop publishing tools and the editorial workflow out of the way of the content. By doing so, they put the users directly in touch with the flow of information with nothing standing between the information repository and the information.

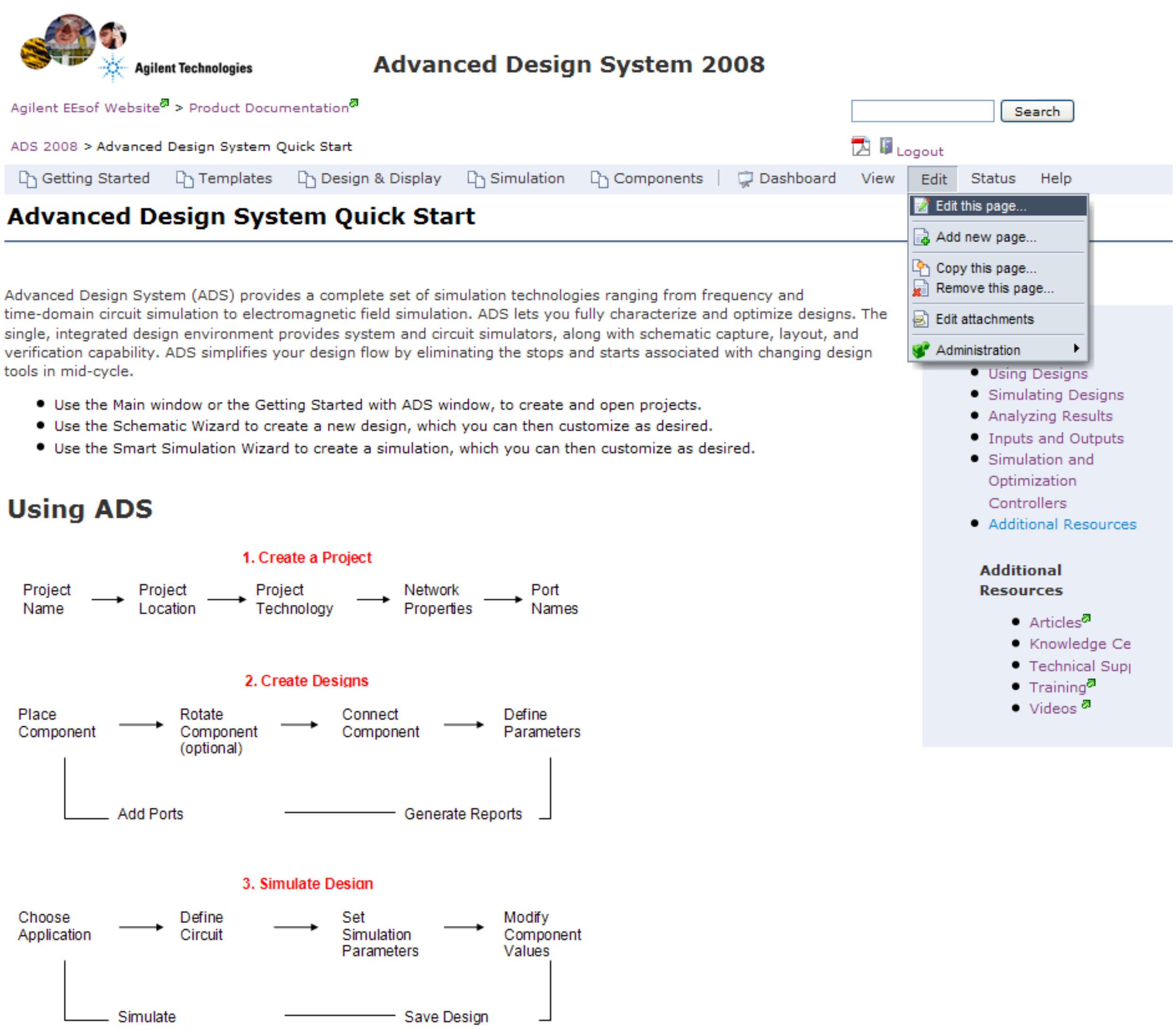
Providing this collaborative platform meant that customers had access to documentation as soon as it was written: instant access around the world. Timesaving comes from two aspects of the wiki environment. First, there are fewer delays; parallel instead of sequential workflow removes documentation steps and review cycles from the process. Second, everyone viewing and working on the material can access the same resources and their contributions are immediately published on the platform.

Agilent’s documentation group stayed involved in the editorial content flow but transitioned to new roles as moderators and editors.

“We don’t hold back content until it has been moderated,” says Mehrotra. “Instead, “We publish first and moderate/correct later, if needed. We create the structures for it. If somebody puts in content in what we consider the wrong place, we move it. If it's not written to certain standards, we rewrite it.”

This moderation role means that the documentation team is providing structure and conducting oversight and this shift has actually improved the quality of the content.

“It has gotten better,” says Mehrotra. “It has gotten easier to find, and scrutiny by all these people have given it greater visibility and there have been a lot of improvements to it.



Pictured: This screen illustrates defined workflow on the Agilent wiki. Through “transparent intervention,” the documentation team addresses content integrity without robbing the wiki of its immediacy.

Real Measurable Time Savings

If you could find a way to save 65 percent of your team's time would you do it?

Before the Agilent wiki was put in place, Mehrotra estimates that sixty-five percent of the documentation team's productive time was spent formatting and reformatting content.

"So, if I was to say how much time — given that we spend sixty five percent of our time formatting content," says Mehrotra, "we're still spending thirty five percent of our time in oversight and writing. That's my guess. I don't have data on it, but that's my guess right now. And the way I arrive at that is we're handling four times the amount of information."

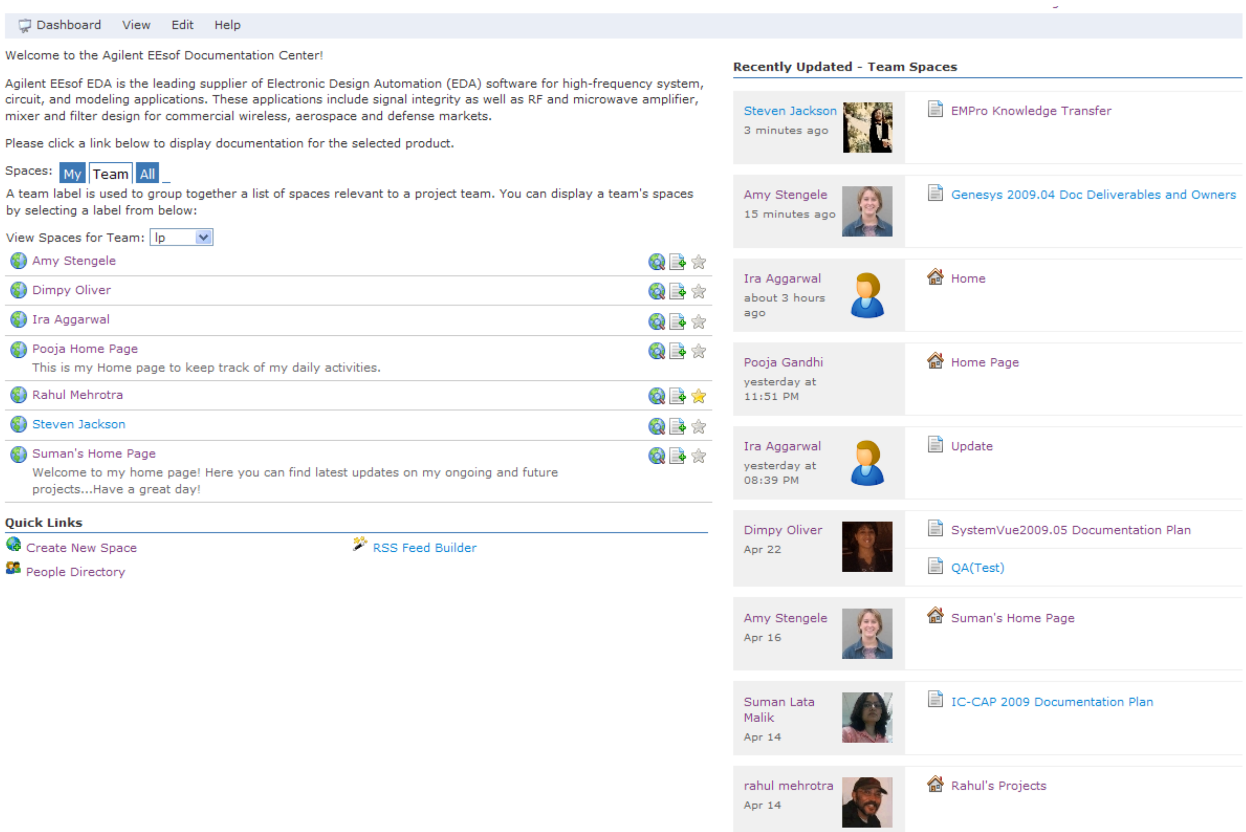
By all accounts, the Agilent documentation wiki was a remarkable success. It allowed a staff with a reduced headcount to accomplish not just the same amount of work, but more work, more efficiently. It has increased the quality and timeliness of the content and raised the satisfaction levels of the customers who use the documentation.

"So, everything that we expected to go wrong — we were expecting the sky to fall on our heads. None of that has happened," says Mehrotra. "What has happened by replacing the traditional documentation process with an open wiki is that the content is better, there is faster turnaround and "happier people."

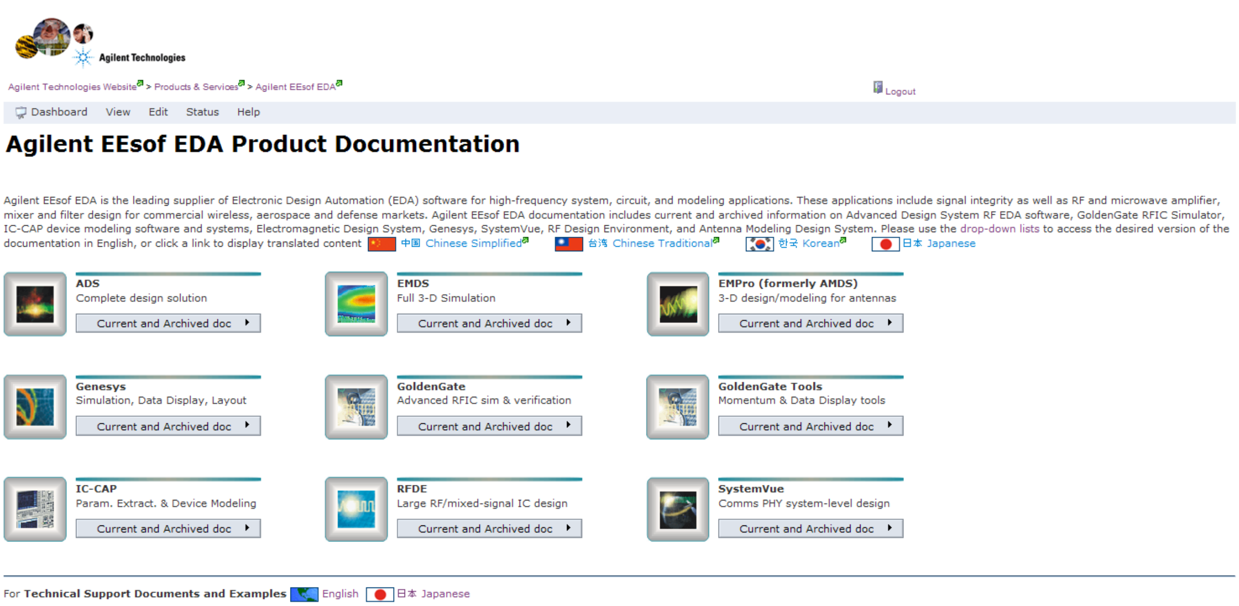
"So, it's really been a revelation," he says.

But this success story is also a cautionary tale. The sky did not fall but everyone got fired. The entire documentation team had their jobs eliminated. That's not to say it was a direct result of the success of the wiki, but certainly the productivity gains made that decision somewhat easier.

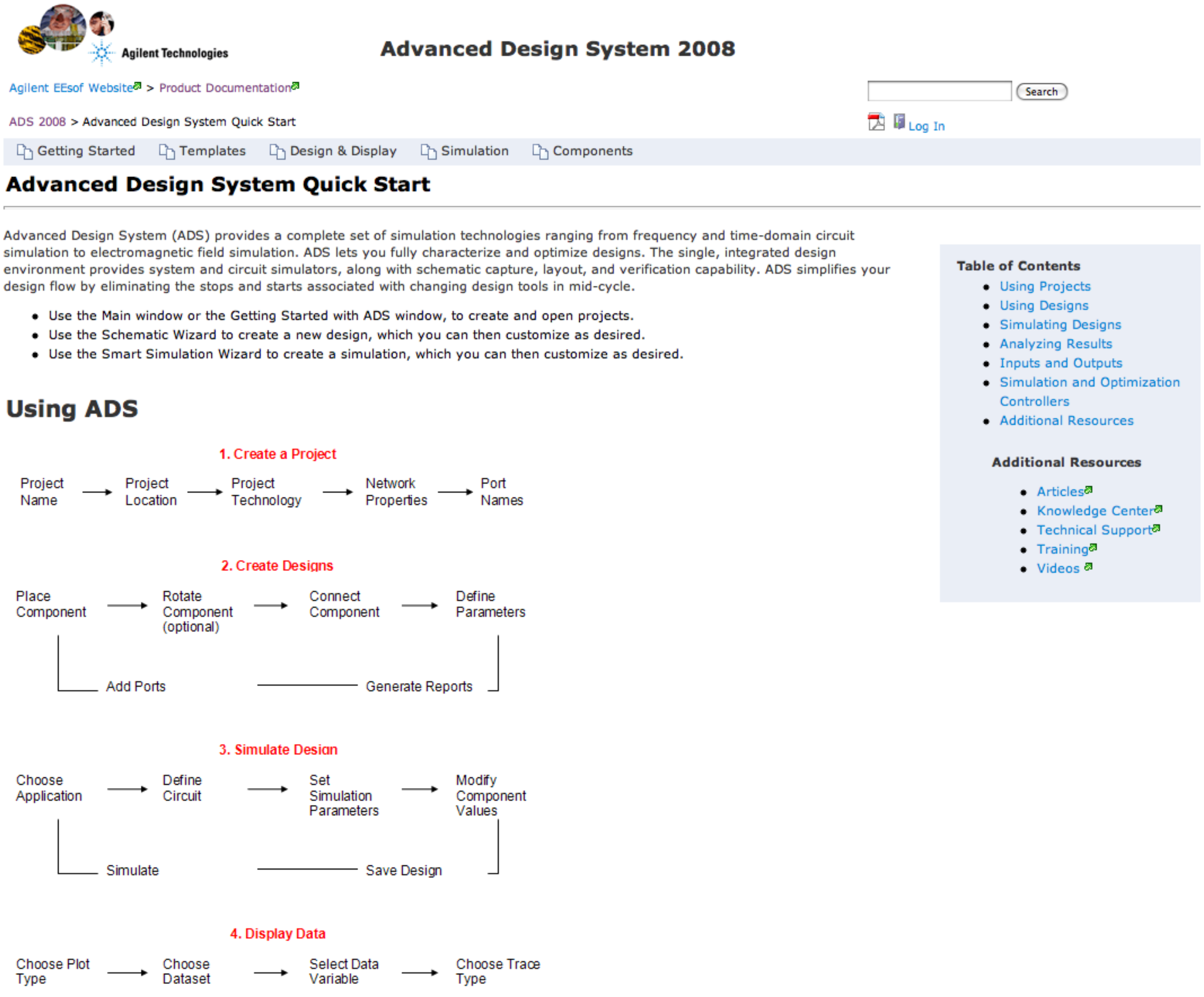
For Intel, the wiki worked because an employee with an idea didn't wait for "top down" sanctioning. For Agilent, the wiki's success resulted in productivity gains for the company and great tragedy for the documentation professionals who worked on it.



Pictured: This is the Agilent wiki "home" page. It is used as one way to monitor activity, by watching who has entered or modified content on the wiki.



Pictured: Agilent's main customer-facing wiki page. This is the public face of the Agilent wiki where the efforts of an entire division are displayed as documentation.



Agilent Technologies

Advanced Design System 2008

Agilent EEsof Website > Product Documentation

ADS 2008 > Advanced Design System Quick Start

Search

Log In

Getting Started | Templates | Design & Display | Simulation | Components

Advanced Design System Quick Start

Advanced Design System (ADS) provides a complete set of simulation technologies ranging from frequency and time-domain circuit simulation to electromagnetic field simulation. ADS lets you fully characterize and optimize designs. The single, integrated design environment provides system and circuit simulators, along with schematic capture, layout, and verification capability. ADS simplifies your design flow by eliminating the stops and starts associated with changing design tools in mid-cycle.

- Use the Main window or the Getting Started with ADS window, to create and open projects.
- Use the Schematic Wizard to create a new design, which you can then customize as desired.
- Use the Smart Simulation Wizard to create a simulation, which you can then customize as desired.

Using ADS

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- Articles
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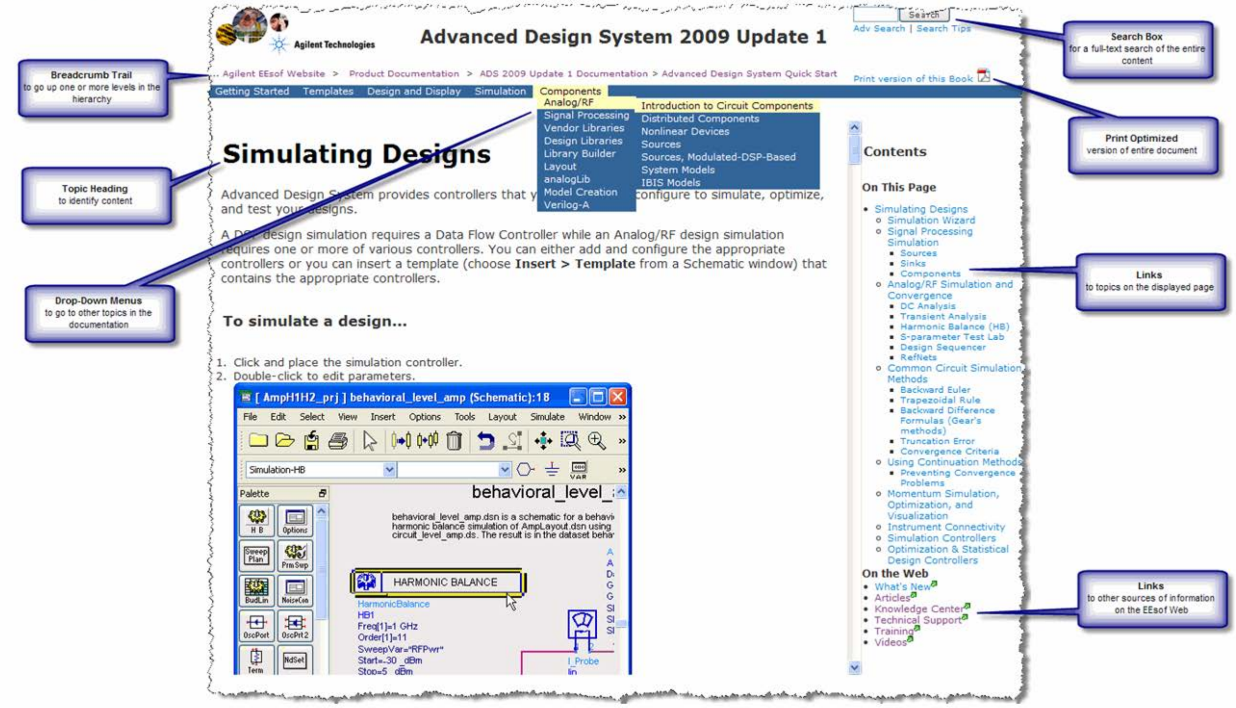
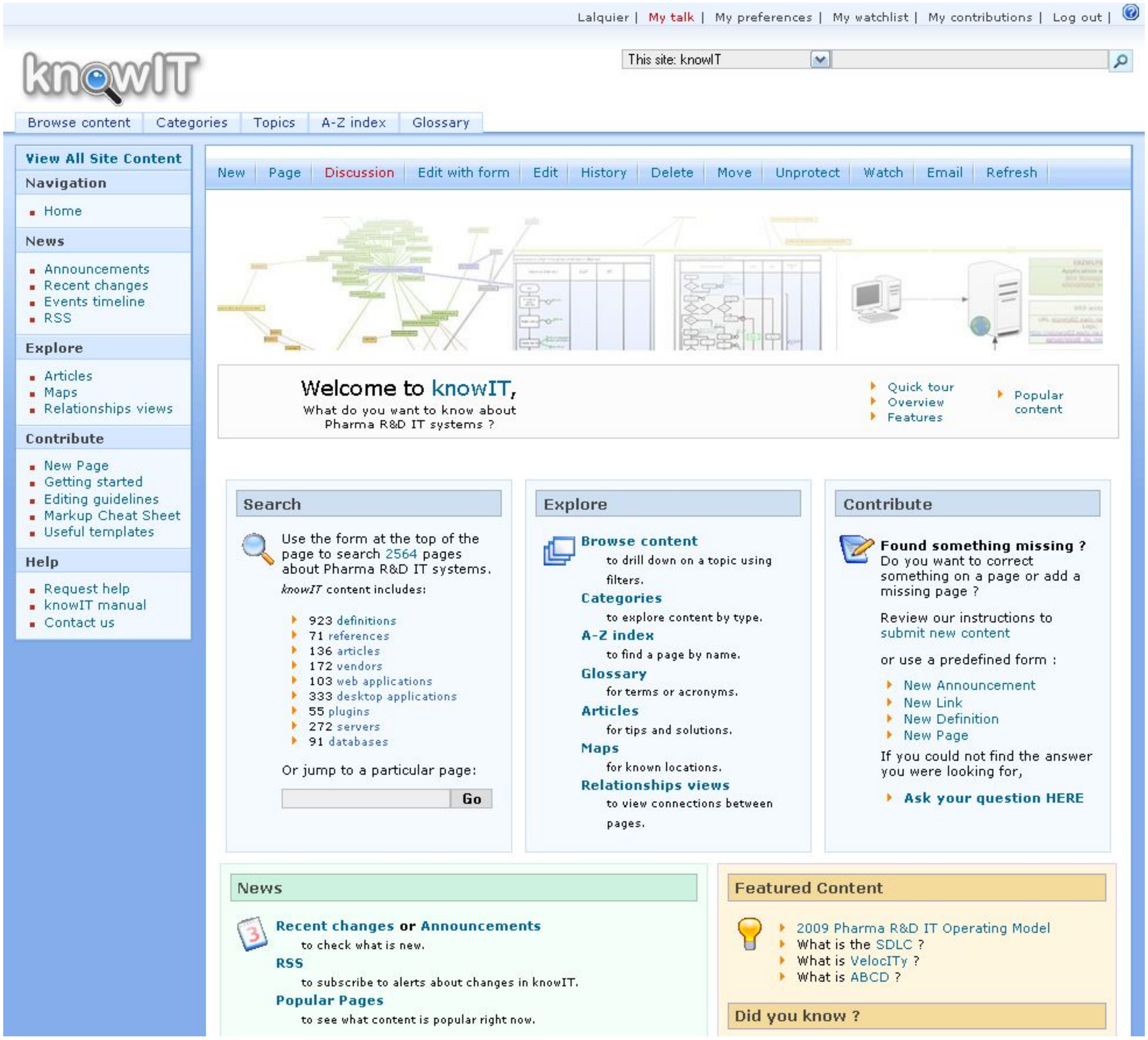
Pictured: This view shows how the customer sees the content on the Agilent wiki.

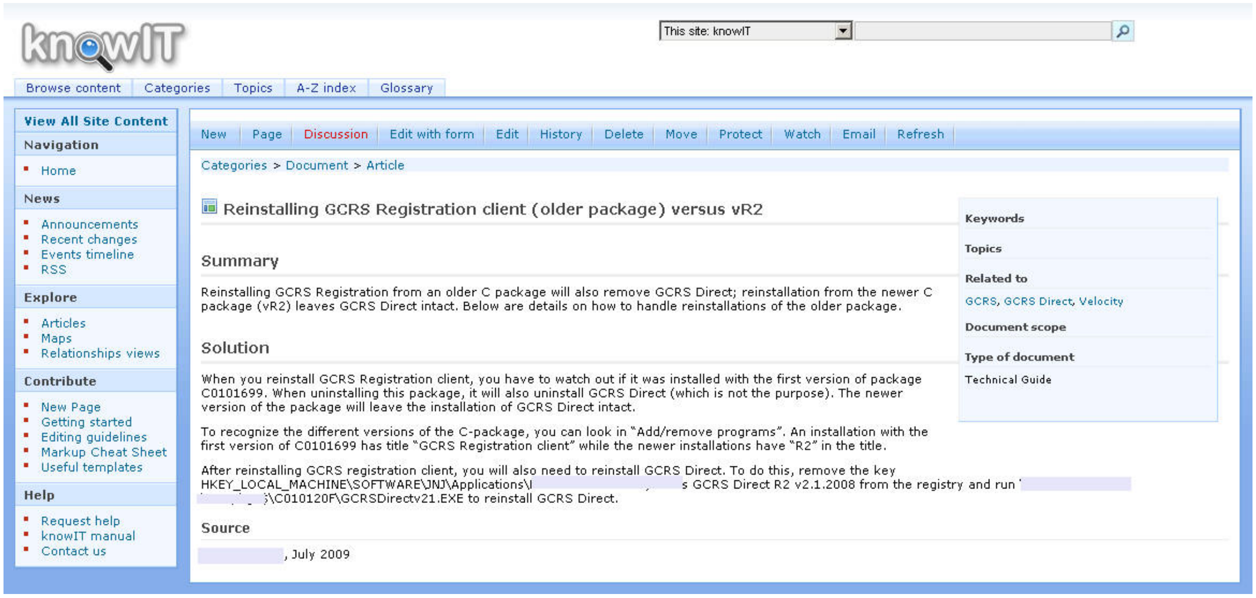
Provide link to “how to use” explanation



Pictured: This screen shows a mock-up of some of the many changes that were planned for the Agilent wiki in response to user feedback.



Pictured: The homepage of Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical R&D tool knowIT. Using a SharePoint look and feel allows knowIT to fit in with other intranet collaborative sites and provides users with a familiar interface.



Pictured: An article on the knowIT wiki on how to solve an issue. Contributors are more likely to add content if it requires a minimum of effort. In this case, the audience is technical support, so it is not necessary to include step-by-step details. Articles for end users must be more explicit.

Lessons Learned

Nearly every person reading this report will be at a different level of understanding and adoption of enterprise social software. Along the way, each individual or organization will need to make decisions based on their own unique set of requirements. Here, we let our interviewees save you some missteps and give you an opportunity to learn from their experiences in the trenches and on the front lines of social software adoption.

STRATEGY

- **Start now and commit:** “We should have started creating social tools a decade earlier than we did. Although we’ve definitely seen the results, we could have been enjoying them for a much longer period with a much bigger impact on our company. We also should have committed to a dedicated Genome team earlier than we did. It always seemed to be working to have people take on Genome tasks in their downtime from client work, but the truth is that we had no idea how much more productive a dedicated team would be. I’m regularly amazed by how much they’re able to get done.” (Goldstein)

  “I wish we could have implemented these tools 10 years ago. Really, Web 2.0 is a mystifying term – the Web has always been interactive. Unfortunately, our leaders ten years ago would not permit such interaction. We had to wait until the culture shifted (with a new CEO) and see the acceptance of social media in consumer technology before introducing it within our organization.” (Amurgis)

- **Get buy-in early – prior to launch:** “I would have probably started the process of, getting people to understand these tools earlier than when we launched it. We weren’t quite sure what to expect, so [in hindsight] I would have done a better job ramping people up before, perhaps a few of the key business units that we knew we wanted on board to get them to start actively using it first. One piece of advice we would offer is to work with the key stakeholders within each business unit, get their buy in, and then engage key content contributors out of the gate. Engage with those who are well respected within the community and get them to contribute.“ (Casanova)

  “Be clear on why you are using the tools and garner executive support. Engage support areas to make sure the boring, admin side of the tools are going to work with their existing processes or they are open to creative new ones.” (Anonymous)

- **Do it for the right reasons.** “Do not deploy a social tool without a need for it. Social solutions in search of a problem are bound to fail. Let needs drive social tools from the user base instead of deploying them by mandate.” (Alquier)

- **Be bold. It won’t be easy. Do it anyway. Don’t give up.** “Start small, fail early, learn from the failure and work out how to avoid it next time. I wouldn’t change how we’ve done anything.” (Blair)

"My main advice is to be bold and don't give up when the inevitable pushback occurs. Start with a few features, and then listen to your audience to improve them and add more." (Amurgis)

- **Don't be afraid to try:** "Just do it. Just release it. The nature of the tool is that it will either work or not depending on the people. You can expect some initial reluctance, but often it is the same people who end up congratulating you. The community will quickly grow to an extent that it silences the nay-sayers." (Forster)
- **Don't be afraid to ask forgiveness.** "The community needs to reach a certain tipping point where there are enough conversations and participators to justify it. This makes launching under-the-radar an attractive option." (Richardson)
- **Plan for success.** "The main challenge was faced was the 'spread like wild-fire' approach to adoption which we encountered in some business units. This usually would be encouraged but this was done before the support areas were in a position to actually provide any support. We overcame this by explaining to leadership the heightened risk of this approach and so were able to align the adoption with a steadier pace until the support services had caught up." (Anonymous)
- **Don't underestimate how long it will take: "**We made some commitments about timetables for launch about nine months before we actually launched the intranet and social tools to the business. With the benefit of hindsight, I'd have planned for at least 12 months for migration to the new platform and launch. This would have allowed us time for more user testing, leading to a better quality engagement program. My advice would be: 'don't underestimate the time this takes.'" (Hornsby)
- **Empower your team:** "One of the most important lessons we've learned is to make sure the team building the tools feels empowered to push back on executive requests. That's a difficult balance to maintain, but if you end up with a spineless team then you will end up with tools no one wants to use. That's a ton of wasted time and effort that could have been much better invested elsewhere." (Segal)
- **It's okay to make mistakes:** "We've learned it's okay to be wrong and make mistakes. We take a page from Eric Ries' Lean Startup movement in terms of trying to build Minimum Viable Products. Each new feature or function for Genome gets built in the smallest way possible for us to test its effectiveness before it gets launched to our team. It only grows after that with their support, so it's also critical to have feedback mechanisms and proper tracking in place." (Segal)
- **Know when to say when:** "Don't be afraid to kill things off when they aren't working. They only get more and more expensive to maintain, so start sharpening your knives and get ready to be ruthless. There are no sacred features. " (Segal)

USERS

- **It's about people.** "My tip is you have to balance implementation between architecture and technology implementation, methodology of all these psychological tricks how you build and maintain communities and also you have to establish a value system to answer the question: what is in it for me? It has to be a balanced stack." (Reiser)
- **Let users define the interactions:** "Allow it to be organic and allow people to find the best use of the tools that you give them, and don't try and shoehorn people into using it in a particular way. You just give people a tool and maybe give them a little bit of a nudge; give them some suggestions, but don't tell them how. Don't command how to use it." (Sonia Carter, Head of Online Internal Communications, AXA UK)
- **Manage expectations about the participation rates.** "It might start off slow, and that's just natural." (Carter)
- **Sow the seeds of collaboration.** "Culture comes first: sow the seeds of collaboration into the organization. Involve top and middle management (all of them). Work with passionate persons who want to share with a collaborative spirit. If you have some area like Institutional Communication, Institutional Marketing or Organizational Communication start there, then the rest of the company will be infected." (Paschmann)
- **Think about information differently.** "One lesson we learned was to think differently about our user community, our learners. We had to realize that there was and will continue to be a shift with Sun's employees and how they view the world and consume information. At Sun, we had to realize that the conventional way we distributed information that we wanted our employees to consume was now outdated. We had to allow them to share with each other, quickly search for information and find it, take it with them (mobile formats) and in ways that they liked to view content (video, podcasts, etc.)." (Casanova)

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

- **Transparency can be uncomfortable.** "One thing we've learned: most leaders are not yet comfortable asking employees for honest critique. Recently, we asked employees to tell us, in a public discussion, what they like least about the intranet, for two reasons: (1) to see where we could improve, and (2) to demonstrate that it's acceptable and even valuable for any group to expose itself to criticism. Sadly, I've encountered few other groups willing to be so exposed." (Amurgis)

GOVERNANCE

- **Develop standards.** "Have a really good acceptable use policy." (Carter)
- **Even best practices are not blueprints. "**Organizations are complex. They are made up of people. It's a human system. There's no such thing as a best practice in a complex system. Best practices imply causality. And organizations (contemplated through a communications/culture lens) are dispositional, not causal. So read a case study, think about what went on, but don't believe there's a blueprint for your company that you can buy off the shelf." (Ross)

- **Think about governance — before you need it:** “Agree a governance plan/strategy before you launch. Be clear about why you want to implement social tools in a business environment. Recognize that some users will engage without encouragement, some will need encouragement and a bit of guidance, some will need encouragement and a lot of guidance, and some will resist. Start with simple tools - preferably those that you think will have most value to your users. Explain the benefits. Explain how to use them. Promote the successes. Keep doing all of that until you get the desired level of engagement. (Hornsby)

TECHNOLOGY

- **Intranet platforms don’t necessarily make good social platforms.** “We redesigned our intranet from the ground up based on the new SharePoint 2010 features. SharePoint is undoubtedly a sophisticated enterprise content management solution, and it’s serviced our needs in that realm capably, but we were not satisfied with how the promise of social collaboration was executed in the product. It did not take long to determine that it would not meet our needs, particularly if we were to minimize customizations and associated ongoing maintenance. We ultimately created a solid, better performing, and more maintainable system, but we disabled most of SharePoint’s social features because they were unintuitive and behaved in unexpected ways across different operating systems and browsers. To attend to our social collaboration needs, we turned to Jive Software, and created a platform we call Vox, that’s social at its core. As we look to the future, we must now reconcile and better integrate these distinct user experiences.” (Gottesman)
- **Don’t invest in competing technologies.** “Have a social media policy and a great relationship with your HR and Legal partners. Don’t invest in competing technologies.” (Folkerts)
- **Evolve as the technology evolves.** “The concept of groups (Yammer) didn’t exist at the beginning, and is now quite powerful. Understanding and implementing groups at the beginning would have been easier.” (Forster)

  “I only wish we could have a crystal ball to gaze in to and see which software providers would still be around in 12 months time!” (Morrell)
- **It’s not really as much about the technology as how you use it.** “Creating and sustaining a knowledge sharing culture is as critical as selecting the right technology. First find a technology which will make knowledge sharing easy and then maximize it to encourage social behavior.” (Vass)
- **Do your homework.** “I wish we had spent more time evaluating other comparable tools. This tool is a good fit for us and the pricing makes it attractive but I would have liked to know a bit more about what is out there.” (Anonymous)

  “It would have been useful to explore more options for delivering Re:New. It is a custom development using custom Web Parts. This approach has strengths including the speed with which we can make changes and potential to reuse without incurring additional costs. However, the tool is not as feature-rich as some packaged solutions.” (Roland)

- **IT perspective is not necessarily user perspective.** “People outside of IT don’t necessarily care about computers. They care about their work first. To IT people, this sounds like blasphemy but it is so important to keep in mind. It also applies to trainers and other professionals whose work supports, but is not the primary focus of a business effort. Many users, in general, just want the computer to do what they need, when they need it, as quickly and simply as possible. Technology is often a means to an end, not the end itself. Learning a new tool can be a chore that steals valuable time from their core work.” (Keith McCormick)

  “I think as IT people, we are also much more willing to accept dead ends, to put time into tools that looked promising but might never really deliver. We find them interesting, and are surprised when users aren’t willing to take a chance on them.” (Keith McCormick)

  “Another factor is IT’s famously short attention span. Things constantly change, and the effort to keep up with new technology can be daunting. If users feel they’re already doing well enough with what they have, they can have less interest in exploring something new. Plus, will today’s new tool still be supported in five years? Microsoft Office will be around forever, so why switch to something that may not last?” (Keith McCormick)

Best Practices

Best practices can be subjective but within in each guideline there is usually a kernel of universal truth. Learning from other teams conducting similar projects is a great way to see the road ahead more clearly — or possibly do a gut check on your own experience. Talking to dozens of intranet teams we've gleaned the following best practices. Individual results may vary:

BLOGGING

Blogging Best Practices—for the Organization

- **Be open-minded.** Be prepared to accept suggestions and criticism.
- **Don't censor.** Social media is about open communication and transparency. It is best to make sure everyone is on the same page about this before launching an enterprise-wide community.
- **Pay attention to usability.** The blogging platform needs to be intuitive and convenient. Do your best to remove all barriers to posting.
- **Show, don't tell.** It's not enough to tell someone how great social media is or can be. Many people will be skeptical. You have a much better chance to get user to try blogging if you show them the value instead of trying to tell them about it. You can lead a person to blog, but you can't make them write. Work with employees to help them see benefits of blogging and how it can be used for practical business applications.
- **Lead the way.** Enlist a group of 'lead' bloggers who can show everyone else how to do it. Give these bloggers lots of support: coaching, technical and editorial support. Lead bloggers should represent a wide variety of interests, roles, geographies and areas of the company in order to pull in the widest possible audience. Then, open up blogging to everyone.
- **Use a blogging tool.** Don't try to retrofit a tool really intended for other purposes (such as SharePoint blogs or document management software that has a blog component). Adopt a true blogging platform that works like the blogs users are used to outside of work. Employees will expect a similar experience to what they see on the Internet. So if it isn't easy to set up a blog, takes a long time or the company tries to launch blogs one at a time, there may be negative reaction from employees who think the company doesn't understand how blogs work.
- **Give everyone a voice.** Allow all employees to blog. There is a natural attrition that occurs with blogs. Some die a natural death because they are not relevant or useful, but let the community cull the herd, not the leadership of the organization. If the community decides who lives and dies, it feels like democracy. If the managers decide it feels like censorship.
- **Address concerns head-on.** Ask employees what they like, don't like, fear, are skeptical about, etc., and let them help shape the experience.

Blogging Best Practices—For Bloggers

- **Blog regularly.** A general rule of thumb is that an internal blog should receive a new post at least once a week or else it ceases to be a regular conversation.
- **Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good.** Blogs don't have to be perfectly crafted. Think of them as a virtual conversation starter and a way to collaborate on business solutions and then share those with all employees at one time. "Water cooler" conversations have taken place since business began. Enterprise blogs are a great way to surface those informal conversations so leadership can take the pulse of employees and so employees can get answers to their questions.
- **Choose a Topic.** What works best is having the blog devoted to a single, compelling topic; having a blog author who is authentic, personable, and engaging; and having both frequent posts and responses to employee comments. A successful blog covers a topic that has broad appeal across the organization. It discusses issues that employees find interesting or vital, and it invites them to share their perspectives.
- **Engage**. Listen and engage with readers often. That doesn't mean you have to respond to every comment, but set aside time to join the conversation, not just start it. Blogs used as a one-way communication tool just don't work.
- **Be Brief.** Make your posts short but valuable. People have many things vying for their time and often won't have time to read long posts. But a short post can draw them in. Plus, the value is most often in the comments conversation that results from the post. Think of your posts as conversation starters.
- **Be authentic.** Trying to put a corporate tone on a blog won't work. Blogs are most compelling when there is an authentic human voice behind them. Be honest, personal, and conversational. Don't be afraid to be funny. Blog like you're talking to someone, not like you're reading a script or giving a PR spin to something. Don't let someone blog for you (ghost blog). The community will find out and it will negatively impact your personal brand.
- **Spice up your content.** Think beyond just text. Add video, photos, presentations, podcasts, etc. People love multimedia content.

Traits of a Good CEO or Management Blog

Having a CEO blog is a good step toward better communication and connection between upper-level managers and the people they lead. But it has to be done right. Successful CEO blogs often share many of the following traits:

- Easy-to-find (often linked to from a homepage blurb)
- A clear, close-up picture of the person that makes them look approachable
- Short posts—typically fewer than five paragraphs (even one or two paragraphs is fine!)

- Posts that describe a personal experience and circle back to reference its business relevance
- A writing style that was less formal than other intranet content
- Information aimed at helping the business
- A call to action, call to discussion, or question to ponder
- A simple way for employees to participate, respond, and read other responses

ENTERPRISE SOCIAL NETWORKS

- **Focus on business activities — at least at first.** Staying focused on the business aspect of personal profiles makes them easier to defend to skeptical stakeholders.
- **Align with business objectives.** Make sure that the communities are developed with an alignment to business objectives. Though most internal IT systems have fairly rigid and scripted workflows (for example, click here then select from the drop-down, then click save or cancel, etc.), it is important that social platforms have a more free form workflow. It is fine for IT to tightly control the infrastructure platform that supports the social interaction, but this tight control should not extend into the application workflow.
- **Create linkages.** If the social platform has intelligent linkages to content management and enterprise search, the linkages it creates will be more valuable to users. The more integration, the better, as it gives a more complete picture of the world of the employee. Linkages make sure that the person's profile on the network shows a link to his blog, his wiki entries, his forum posts and just about anything else that form his sphere of both knowledge and contribution across the company.
- **Don't be afraid.** As we've said throughout this report, there are few horror stories, or at least so few that they are hard to find. The majority of employees know how to behave in such a way so as to not get fired. They know the rules. Now give them the tools.

MICROBLOGGING

- **Monitor the conversation.** While it's not necessary to police the content stream, it is important to participate and monitor its content and direction. "If the streams were to become some other forum, be it political, administrative, trivial or frivolous, it would destroy the power of the tool and the engagement of the audience," says Leng. "This means that there is a reliance on the core group of users to set the right example and tone and to address any undesirable behavior."

- **Harness the stream.** Capturing valuable information that hurries past in the fast-moving stream of microblogging tools will become an increasing concern as adoption grows and companies move from giving-it-a-try to relying on it for mission-critical functions. Finding ways to harness the value means putting mechanisms in place so that the wisdom shared in the stream is both searchable and codified somewhere more permanent, such as in a wiki.

  "We have integrated everything into our enterprise–wide search," says Reiser. "What we do in our enterprise-wide search is there is a lot of tagging, cross-tagging. So through the search we can then interrelate Sweets [what Sun calls individual posts in its microblogging tool] to communities [and] to people. So, an example is if you search for a person and you find the person, it dynamically shows the last three Sweets the person has done or if you search for a community related topic, it shows you the wiki page of documentation and also the related Sweets."

  "And in addition we are playing around with some analytics in terms of when you match up Sweets with wiki and blog content, you know, what are the trends we see," he says.

- **Provide and encourage.** Microblogging, more than any of the other social tools tends to grow virally. There is great power in releasing a tool such as Yammer to a core group of users and letting uptake spread through its own use.

- **Let it be a first taste.** Because microblogging is simple, cheap and easy to install, use and monitor, it can be the first step, or provide a first taste of social media for an organization. Success breeds success, so give users tools and let them experiment.

- **Lead by example.** Having senior managers use microblogging tools sets the tone for the conversation and helps users get over the cultural hurdle of not quite knowing what to say or talk about.

- **Share links.** Use the tool, not just for conversation, but also as a way to spread company and industry news. Putting links into the stream gives users another way to be aware of what's going on outside the company that affects their jobs. It also encourages users to share news they find relevant.

- **Ask the right question.** Though Twitter seems to thrive even while asking a seemingly inane question: "What are you doing?" in a corporate environment, it is important that the tool makes it clear what sort of information is most valued in the stream. "What are you working on?" is a better approach.

- **Establish micro-streams.** "We encourage people to build groups in the microblogging [tool] similar to the communities [on the broader intranet]," says Reiser. "And the next thing we do is we dynamically link this group content to the community content on the community page. So, it's a kind of real-time voice of what's going on in the community. It's kind of the mini-feed of the community. "

WIKIS

- **Let the wiki fill a need.** Do not use a wiki just because you heard it's a good tool.

- **Pick the right wiki.** All wikis are not created equal. Your company's successful wiki will likely hinge on choosing the tool with the right set of features. Just because wikis are quick to set up and easy to use is no reason to skimp on requirements gathering. It's important to consider the following:

    - **Do your homework**: When choosing a wiki, do your homework. Don't assume all wikis have the same features or the right features for your project. The most popular or most talked about wiki may not be the right wiki for your particular needs. Some wikis do not offer the type of robust formatting, which was required for Agilent's documentation.
    - **Analyze security requirements:** Some organizations and types of content require a secure environment rather than an open platform that is common in most wiki tools. If secure content is a priority, choose wiki with the proper control mechanisms or store sensitive content in other systems and reference it from wiki.
- **Don't call it a wiki.** Subterfuge can sometime be helpful in acclimating users to new technology. Sometimes just the work wiki can cause the "What do we need to learn to use now?" reaction that can sabotage adoption. There is no reason why users need to know that the underlying technology is a wiki.

- **Customize.** Simple changes to the wiki interface can help the tool blend in with the rest of the corporate environment or intranet. "One trick was to change the look and feel of the interface to match other applications on our intranet that users are familiar with," says Alquier. "Search form, help, navigation are in places users will expect. Make the interface consistent and simple."

- **Dive In.** "Just plunging in helps sometimes." says [Keith] McCormick. "If the tool is ready, just using it exposes it to an audience and begins to make the case for others to contribute." None of the companies we talked to about their wikis reported any significant acclimation process. A simple trial with pilot users to seed the content is really all that most wikis require to get started.

- **Set Scope.** Wikis can get out of control. Setting a scope and providing examples of what to expect in the wiki helps keep users on track. Companies with successful wikis say they review content and address issues, as they happen to develop best practices.

- **Make sure it's searchable.** People usually have a specific question in mind when they want to retrieve data, so helping them get to the specifics quickly has a huge impact on how useful the wiki knowledge base is to them. Provide different paths to the content: browse with filters to drill down on a topic, A-Z index, glossary for definitions, a break down by categories, etc.

- **Seed the content.** An empty wiki can be a lonely place and also a hard sell to users. As with all Web 2.0 tools, their value comes from the strength of the content. Use bots or scripts to load a base of content in bulk if you can. Having a content base to work from helps early users see value in the tool.

That value can only be realized if the first groups of users encounter an environment seeded with content that they can build upon.

- **Wikis are not forums.** Wikis are in fact forums all grown up. Some wikis feature so called "talk" pages and these are a good place to keep a lot of short discussions and perhaps a decision about a page, but should not be used as a general-purpose forum. Discourage this type of use within the wiki.

- **Take a bottom up approach.** Users need to feel that they are adding content for their own benefit, not because they are forced by management decision. Some people need encouragement to embrace a free-flowing contribution model, but it should be encouragement not mandate.

- **Structure the content.** Plan structure, navigation ahead of time. Consider using semantic tools to help with structure. Johnson & Johnson R&D used Semantic Mediawiki, which provides a way to annotate pages using forms and templates. This tool to standardizes data entry and presentation.

- **Easy in / easy out.** Provide multiple ways to contribute content including manually with forms, in bulk with scripts, etc. This is especially important in the early days of the wiki when users are trying to port existing content from other knowledge systems. Provide multiple ways to export content (reports, spreadsheets, printable versions. email and subscriptions).

- **Provide training.** Wikis are a simple tool, yet the specifics of any particular wiki environment can confuse new users. Create some simple resources that give users instructions on exactly what they need to know to get started.

NEWS FEEDS (RSS)

- **Control the environment.** Make the RSS reader environment the only way to access certain types of business-critical information.

- **Take the geek out of it.** In the same way users don't need to know anything bout HTML or CSS to view a Web page, users shouldn't have to know anything about RSS (or know that it's called RSS) to subscribe to a blog.

- **Seed the subscriptions.** Auto-subscribe users to their other activities across the portal, such as their forum postings.

- **Educate through experience.** Provide an adoption path by subtly easing users from what they are already doing—such as reading the news—to new tools for reading the news, right inside the reader environment.

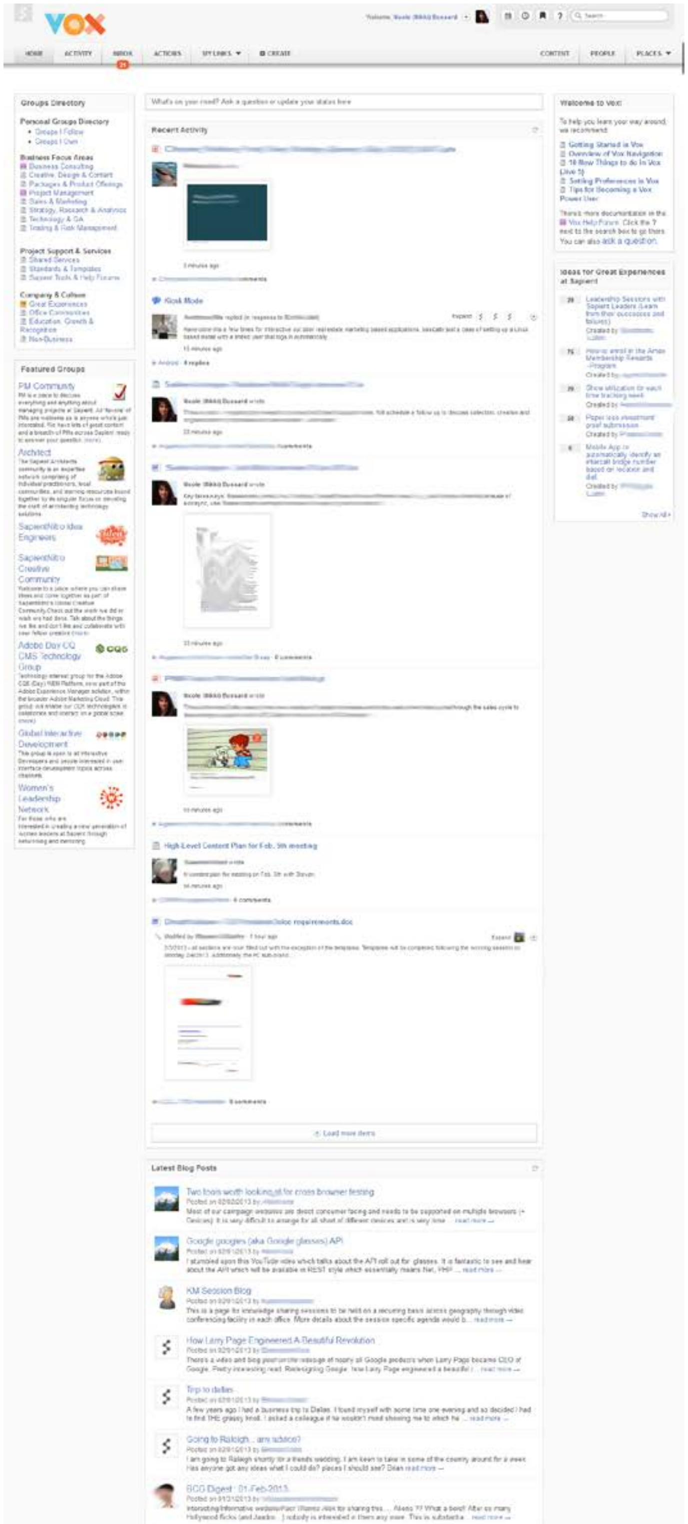
- **Let the outside in:** Many companies offer RSS readers that have the ability to add aggregate internal and external news sources into their corporate news reader. This puts most of the users' news all in one place and is important for keeping users on task. "We also believe it is necessary to provide external information from the industry in order to fully inform employees of the larger marketplace in which we operate," says Cahill.

TAGGING

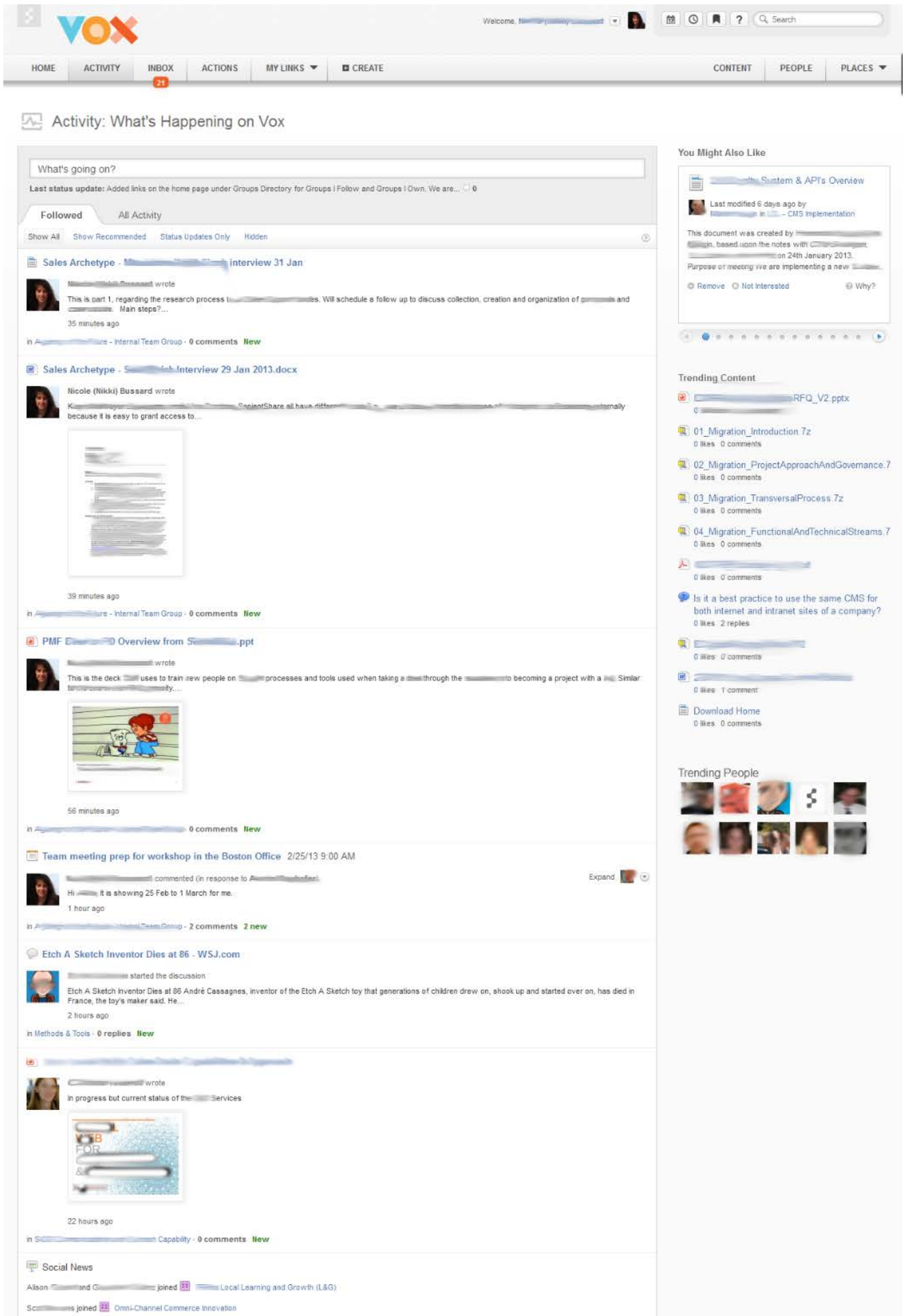
- **Attribution is key.** While we have said attribution is key to successful outcomes in enterprise social software in general, tagging it is important because it gives users more of a stake in the quality and context of their contributions. Attribution also ensures that “shared” content or bookmarks are appropriate for a corporate environment.
- **Let freedom reign.** Tags are most relevant when users are given the freedom to tag as they see fit. While certain syntax rules may contribute to consistency, the ability to apply a personal filter to content is important to harnessing the collective power of the crowd.
- **Provide help.** Refer to tags as keywords if that helps users to understand the concept. And provide a quick tooltips-type of help or even a tagging FAQ if many users are new to tagging.
- **Build awareness over time.** Even if users don’t know what tags are right away, they can benefit from the tags that early adopters build into the system and over time their awareness will increase. The best way to generate contribution is through demonstrating value. As users begin to see the increasing relevance of search results based on user tags, their participation will in turn, increase as well.
- **There is no substitute for good search.** If the mechanism for retrieving tagged content is poor, then the value of what the users have contributed is diminished.

Screenshot Gallery

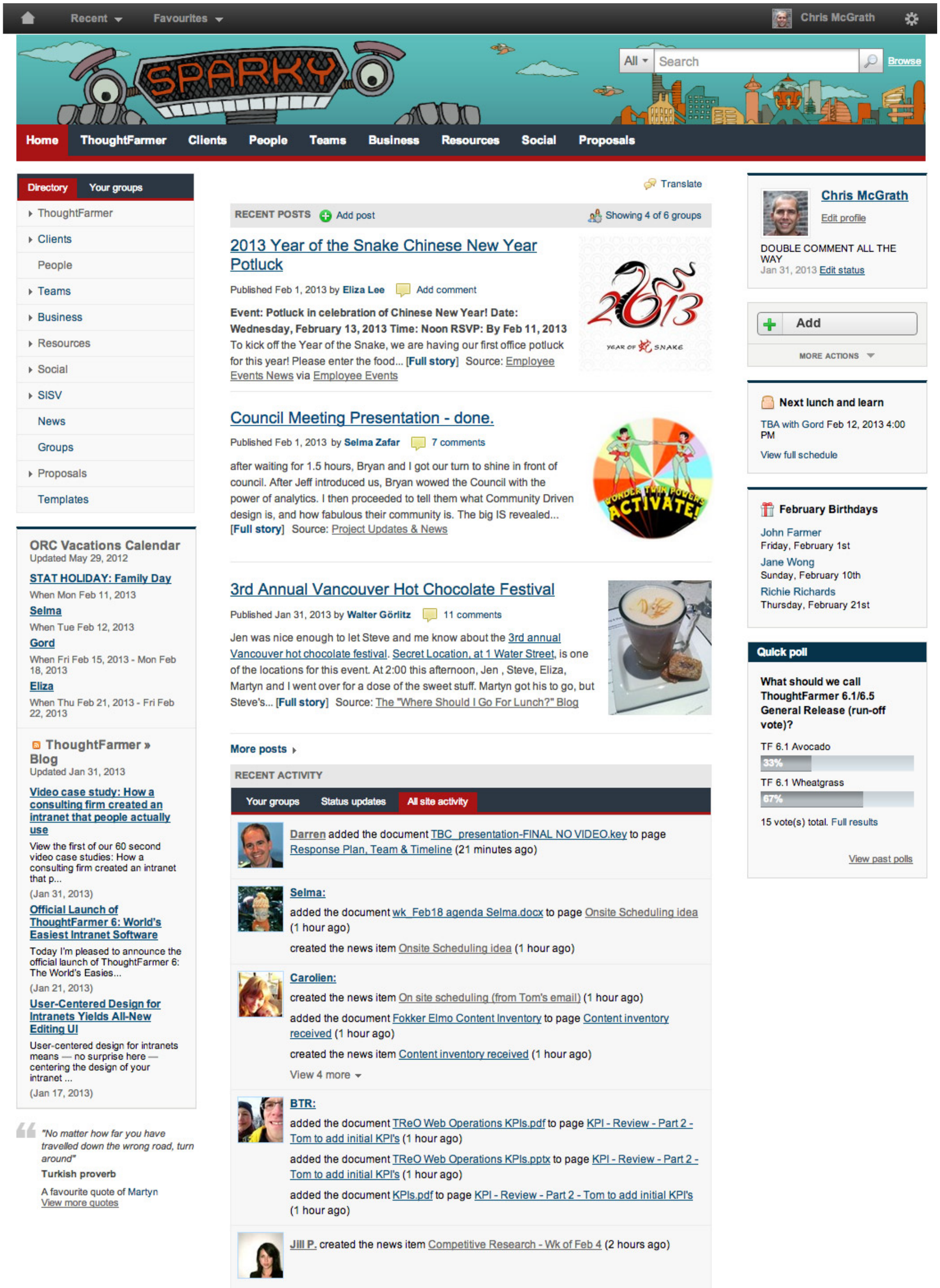
HOMEPAGES AND ACTIVITY STREAMS



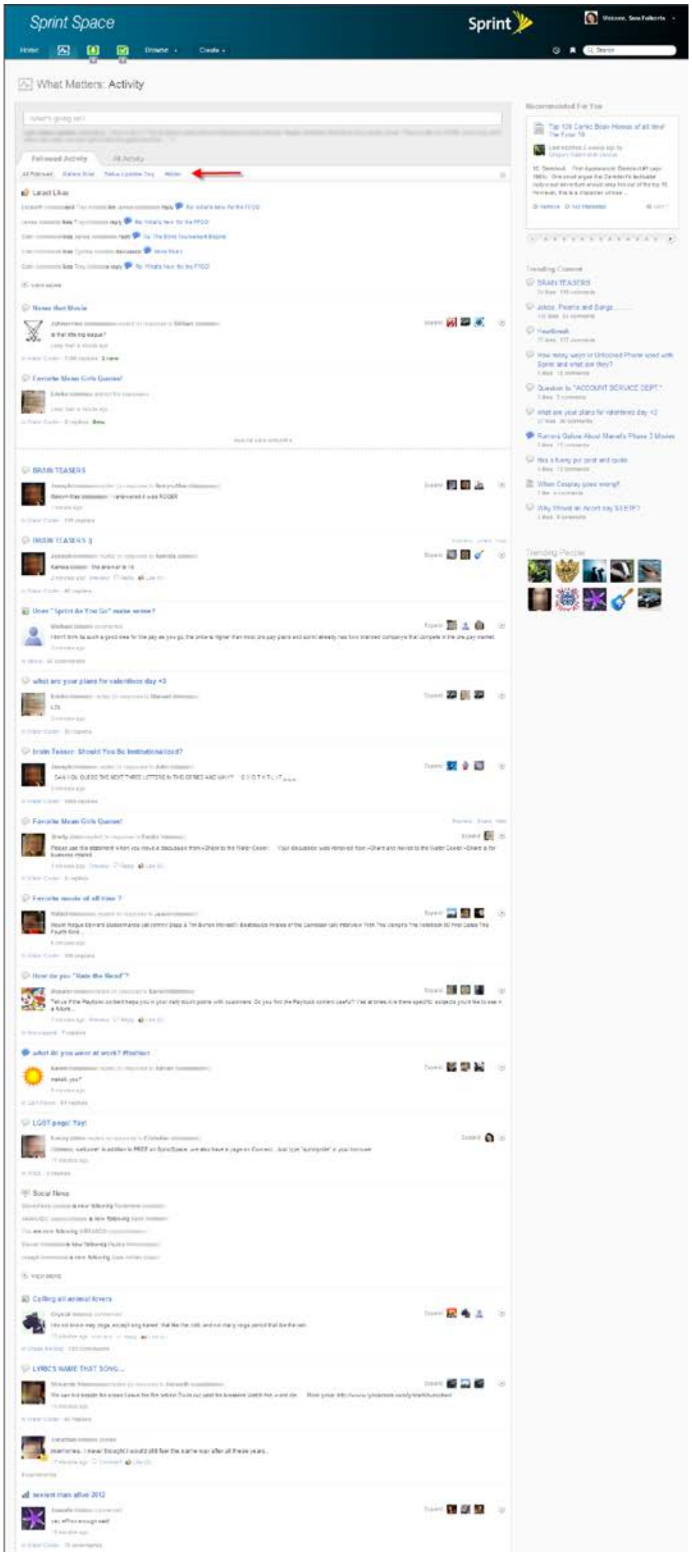
Pictured: The homepage of Vox, Sapient's social intranet. Users see the company activity stream, a list of recommended groups, recent blog posts and help documentation.



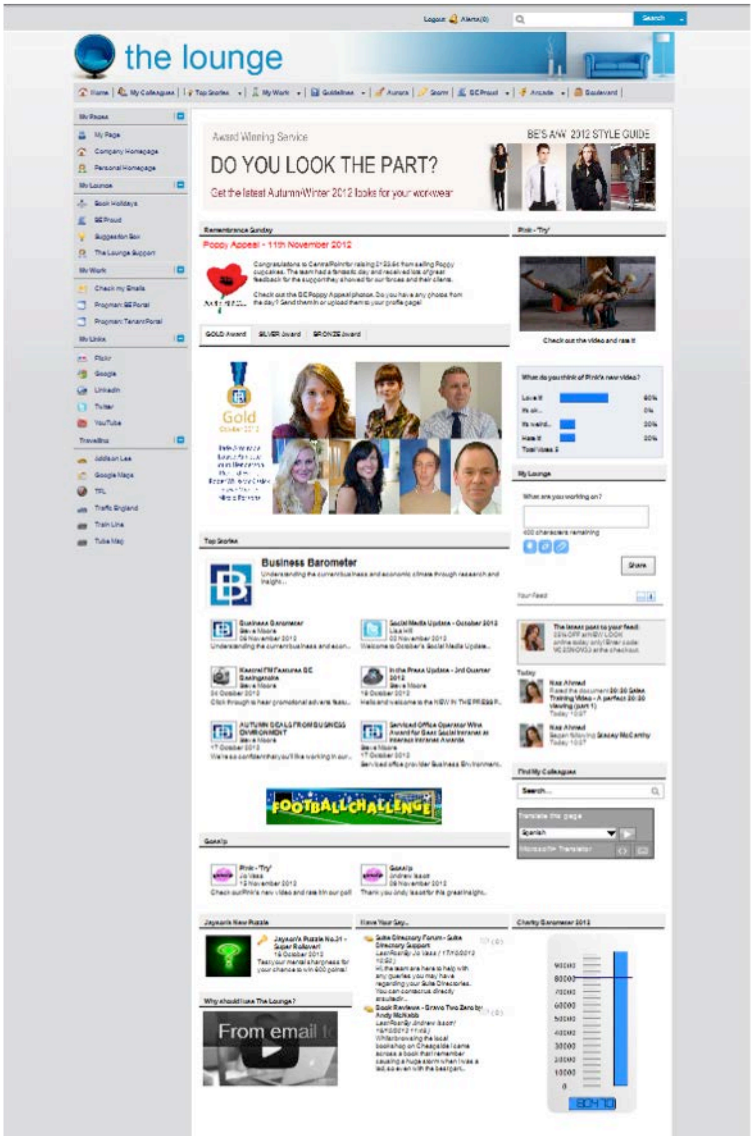
Pictured: Sapient's activity stream on Vox, filtered by the activity that the individual follows. This page allows users to preview and respond to any activity, including viewing complete document previews, adding comments, and "liking" the content. The screen also shows recommended and currently-trending content.


Recent
Favourites
Chris McGrath
SPARKY
All
Search
Browse
Home
ThoughtFarmer
Clients
People
Teams
Business
Resources
Social
Proposals
Directory
Your groups
ThoughtFarmer
Clients
People
Teams
Business
Resources
Social
SISV
News
Groups
Proposals
Templates
ORC Vacations Calendar
Updated May 29, 2012
STAT HOLIDAY: Family Day
When Mon Feb 11, 2013
Selma
When Tue Feb 12, 2013
Gord
When Fri Feb 15, 2013 - Mon Feb 18, 2013
Eliza
When Thu Feb 21, 2013 - Fri Feb 22, 2013
ThoughtFarmer » Blog
Updated Jan 31, 2013
Video case study: How a consulting firm created an intranet that people actually use
View the first of our 60 second video case studies: How a consulting firm created an intranet that p...
(Jan 31, 2013)
Official Launch of ThoughtFarmer 6: World's Easiest Intranet Software
Today I'm pleased to announce the official launch of ThoughtFarmer 6: The World's Easies...
(Jan 21, 2013)
User-Centered Design for Intranets Yields All-New Editing UI
User-centered design for intranets means — no surprise here — centering the design of your intranet ...
(Jan 17, 2013)
"No matter how far you have travelled down the wrong road, turn around"
Turkish proverb
A favourite quote of Martyn
View more quotes
Translate
RECENT POSTS
Add post
Showing 4 of 6 groups
2013 Year of the Snake Chinese New Year Potluck
Published Feb 1, 2013 by Eliza Lee
Add comment
Event: Potluck in celebration of Chinese New Year! Date: Wednesday, February 13, 2013 Time: Noon RSVP: By Feb 11, 2013
To kick off the Year of the Snake, we are having our first office potluck for this year! Please enter the food... [Full story] Source: Employee Events News via Employee Events
2013
YEAR OF SNAKE
Council Meeting Presentation - done.
Published Feb 1, 2013 by Selma Zafar
7 comments
after waiting for 1.5 hours, Bryan and I got our turn to shine in front of council. After Jeff introduced us, Bryan wowed the Council with the power of analytics. I then proceeded to tell them what Community Driven design is, and how fabulous their community is. The big IS revealed...
[Full story] Source: Project Updates & News
WONDER TWIN POWERS ACTIVATE!
3rd Annual Vancouver Hot Chocolate Festival
Published Jan 31, 2013 by Walter Görlitz
11 comments
Jen was nice enough to let Steve and me know about the 3rd annual Vancouver hot chocolate festival. Secret Location, at 1 Water Street, is one of the locations for this event. At 2:00 this afternoon, Jen, Steve, Eliza, Martyn and I went over for a dose of the sweet stuff. Martyn got his to go, but Steve's... [Full story] Source: The "Where Should I Go For Lunch?" Blog
More posts
RECENT ACTIVITY
Your groups
Status updates
All site activity
Darren added the document TBC_presentation-FINAL NO VIDEO.key to page Response Plan, Team & Timeline (21 minutes ago)
Selma:
added the document wk_Feb18 agenda Selma.docx to page Onsite Scheduling idea (1 hour ago)
created the news item Onsite Scheduling idea (1 hour ago)
Carolien:
created the news item On site scheduling (from Tom's email) (1 hour ago)
added the document Fokker Elmo Content Inventory to page Content inventory received (1 hour ago)
created the news item Content inventory received (1 hour ago)
View 4 more
BTR:
added the document TReO Web Operations KPIs.pdf to page KPI - Review - Part 2 - Tom to add initial KPI's (1 hour ago)
added the document TReO Web Operations KPIs.pptx to page KPI - Review - Part 2 - Tom to add initial KPI's (1 hour ago)
added the document KPIs.pdf to page KPI - Review - Part 2 - Tom to add initial KPI's (1 hour ago)
Jill P. created the news item Competitive Research - Wk of Feb 4 (2 hours ago)
Chris McGrath
Edit profile
DOUBLE COMMENT ALL THE WAY
Jan 31, 2013 Edit status
Add
MORE ACTIONS
Next lunch and learn
TBA with Gord Feb 12, 2013 4:00 PM
View full schedule
February Birthdays
John Farmer
Friday, February 1st
Jane Wong
Sunday, February 10th
Richie Richards
Thursday, February 21st
Quick poll
What should we call ThoughtFarmer 6.1/6.5 General Release (run-off vote)?
TF 6.1 Avocado
33%
TF 6.1 Wheatgrass
67%
15 vote(s) total. Full results
View past polls

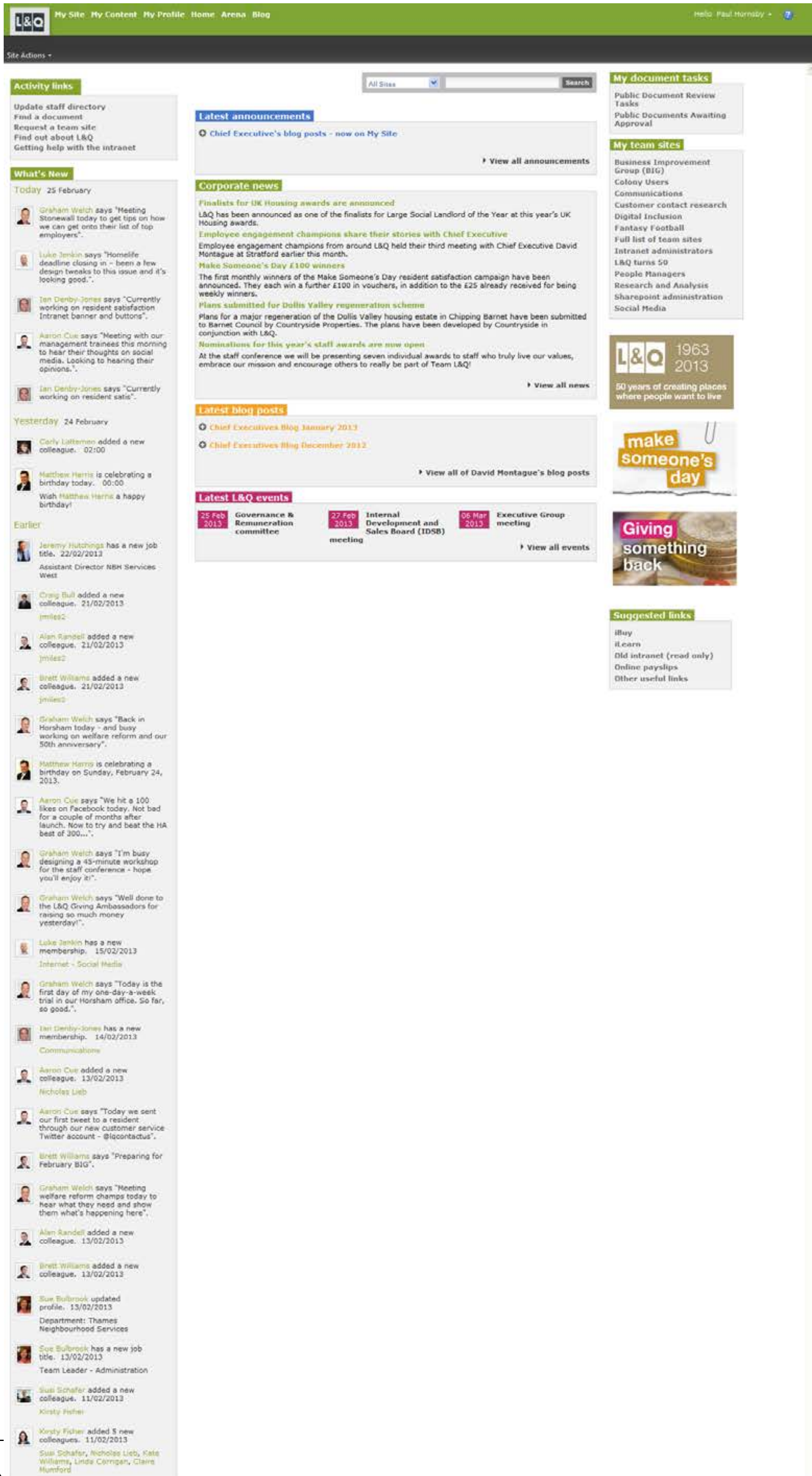
Pictured: The ThoughtFarmer homepage tailors the content to the user. An intelligent news feed, activity feed, and directory is based on the users role, location, and current projects. Other homepage information and branding can be fully customized depending on company needs.



Pictured: Sprint employees can see all of the content created on Sprint Space, or can filter their view to just the content, people and places they follow.



Pictured: Business Environment's homepage is designed as a "shop window" for The Lounge. Homepage content is customized for the user and depends on their profile tags, typical searches, typical user journeys and other users they network with. Therefore, it is unlikely that any two user's homepages are identical. The homepage has also been designed to feature the company's exceptional workers based on the work they do and their influence on the Intranet, not on their job title and position in the hierarchy. User opinions are collected through the use of polls, likes and shares.


L&Q
My Site My Content My Profile Home Arena Blog
Hello Paul Hornsby
Site Actions
All Sites
Search
Activity links
Update staff directory
Find a document
Request a team site
Find out about L&Q
Getting help with the intranet
What's New
Today 25 February
Graham Welch says "Meeting Stonewall today to get tips on how we can get onto their list of top employers".
Luke Jenkin says "Homelife deadline closing in – been a few design tweaks to this issue and it's looking good.".
Ian Denby-Jones says "Currently working on resident satisfaction Intranet banner and buttons".
Aaron Cue says "Meeting with our management trainees this morning to hear their thoughts on social media. Looking to hearing their opinions.".
Ian Denby-Jones says "Currently working on resident satis".
Yesterday 24 February
Carly Latteman added a new colleague. 02:00
Matthew Harris is celebrating a birthday today. 00:00
Wish Matthew Harris a happy birthday!
Earlier
Jeremy Hutchings has a new job title. 22/02/2013
Assistant Director NBH Services West
Craig Bull added a new colleague. 21/02/2013
jmiles2
Alan Randell added a new colleague. 21/02/2013
jmiles2
Brett Williams added a new colleague. 21/02/2013
jmiles2
Graham Welch says "Back in Horsham today - and busy working on welfare reform and our 50th anniversary".
Matthew Harris is celebrating a birthday on Sunday, February 24, 2013.
Aaron Cue says "We hit a 100 likes on Facebook today. Not bad for a couple of months after launch. Now to try and beat the HA best of 300...".
Graham Welch says "I'm busy designing a 45-minute workshop for the staff conference - hope you'll enjoy it!".
Graham Welch says "Well done to the L&Q Giving Ambassadors for raising so much money yesterday!".
Luke Jenkin has a new membership. 15/02/2013
Internet - Social Media
Graham Welch says "Today is the first day of my one-day-a-week trial in our Horsham office. So far, so good.".
Ian Denby-Jones has a new membership. 14/02/2013
Communications
Aaron Cue added a new colleague. 13/02/2013
Nicholas Lieb
Aaron Cue says "Today we sent our first tweet to a resident through our new customer service Twitter account - @lqcontactus".
Brett Williams says "Preparing for February BIG".
Graham Welch says "Meeting welfare reform champs today to hear what they need and show them what's happening here".
Alan Randell added a new colleague. 13/02/2013
Brett Williams added a new colleague. 13/02/2013
Sue Bulbrook updated profile. 13/02/2013
Department: Thames Neighbourhood Services
Sue Bulbrook has a new job title. 13/02/2013
Team Leader - Administration
Susi Schafer added a new colleague. 11/02/2013
Kirsty Fisher
Kirsty Fisher added 5 new colleagues. 11/02/2013
Susi Schafer, Nicholas Lieb, Kate Williams, Linda Corrigan, Claire Mumford
Latest announcements
Chief Executive's blog posts - now on My Site
View all announcements
Corporate news
Finalists for UK Housing awards are announced
L&Q has been announced as one of the finalists for Large Social Landlord of the Year at this year's UK Housing awards.
Employee engagement champions share their stories with Chief Executive
Employee engagement champions from around L&Q held their third meeting with Chief Executive David Montague at Stratford earlier this month.
Make Someone's Day £100 winners
The first monthly winners of the Make Someone's Day resident satisfaction campaign have been announced. They each win a further £100 in vouchers, in addition to the £25 already received for being weekly winners.
Plans submitted for Dollis Valley regeneration scheme
Plans for a major regeneration of the Dollis Valley housing estate in Chipping Barnet have been submitted to Barnet Council by Countryside Properties. The plans have been developed by Countryside in conjunction with L&Q.
Nominations for this year's staff awards are now open
At the staff conference we will be presenting seven individual awards to staff who truly live our values, embrace our mission and encourage others to really be part of Team L&Q!
View all news
Latest blog posts
Chief Executives Blog January 2013
Chief Executives Blog December 2012
View all of David Montague's blog posts
Latest L&Q events
25 Feb 2013 Governance & Remuneration committee
27 Feb 2013 Internal Development and Sales Board (IDSB) meeting
06 Mar 2013 Executive Group meeting
View all events
My document tasks
Public Document Review Tasks
Public Documents Awaiting Approval
My team sites
Business Improvement Group (BIG)
Colony Users
Communications
Customer contact research
Digital Inclusion
Fantasy Football
Full list of team sites
Intranet administrators
L&Q turns 50
People Managers
Research and Analysis
Sharepoint administration
Social Media
L&Q 1963 2013
50 years of creating places where people want to live
make someone's day
Giving something back
Suggested links
iBuy
iLearn
Old intranet (read only)
Online payslips
Other useful links

Pictured: L&Q uses Microsoft SharePoint so any social features of its intranet are part of the native toolset. This screen shows the MySite homepage, which is a personalized page for each employee. This is the first page a users sees when opening the site. It incorporates content, such as news and events, from the main intranet portal, as well as personalized information such as the "What's New" feed in the left column, and a list of team sites in the right column.

BLOGS

Pictured: The internal company commercial blog at Officenet Staples.

Pictured: A typical post in the Officenet Staples internal HR blog. In this post, the company is asking for ideas, opinions and advice on ways to save money.

from Now on
a behind-the-scenes glimpse at AEP Now

Editing comments

We're planning to upgrade the comment capability on AEP Now's news stories, blogs, and discussions, and seek your advice.

One change we will make -- and that you've demanded -- is to provide a **spell-checker**.

However, we're torn over whether we should provide the ability to edit or even delete a comment you've already posted. On the one hand, it would be nice to correct a grammatical error or even remove something that, upon reflection, might offend. On the other hand, many of the comments relate to other comments, and removing or changing previous comments may disrupt the flow. (Today, you can always post a second comment to clarify your original.)

We're also considering a hybrid approach: no such edit or delete functions, but clear instructions on how to contact someone who can make such edits for you. (This is the case today, although not publicized; contact me and I can edit or remove any comments.)

What features would you prefer?

Posted on April 8, 2009 04:26 PM

RESPONSES (SCROLL DOWN TO SUBMIT YOUR OWN RESPONSE)

spell checker would be great ...

Posted by on April 8, 2009 04:46 PM

If need arose, I don't mind contacting you to edit a comment. The only situation in which a comment should be removed is if it's posted twice and even then it's not a big deal, all understand why it was posted twice.
If a comment is misconstued then subsequent posts should clarify. Putting something in print for the company to see should require forethought and rereading before the post button is clicked.

Posted by on April 8, 2009 04:49 PM

I agree with Mr. Hildeson.

Posted by on April 8, 2009 04:52 PM

William --

I agree with you, too.

Regarding the duplicate posts: this occurs because it takes awhile -- too long, in my opinion -- for your comments to be submitted to some areas on AEP Now, including this blog.

Some employees become impatient, and click the Submit button a second time. I don't blame them -- I blame the ancient computer server that holds our blogging software. We plan to upgrade it soon.

I do monitor all comments, and will often delete duplicate ones.

Posted by William A Amurgis on April 8, 2009 04:56 PM

A simple pre-posting spell checker is fine with me.

Posted by on April 8, 2009 05:01 PM

Search
About this blog

RECENT POSTS

- Record traffic
- Editing comments
- Worth watching
- Quick facts
- Mega Water
- Quiet period
- Gouge away

CATEGORIES

- About AEP Now
- Announcements
- Behind the news
- Benchmarking
- Blogs
- Comments and suggestions
- Fun and games
- Guest blogger
- New on Now
- News story reactions
- Philosophy
- Photograph reactions
- Possible new features
- Research
- Tips and tricks
- Travel
- Web design
- Works in progress

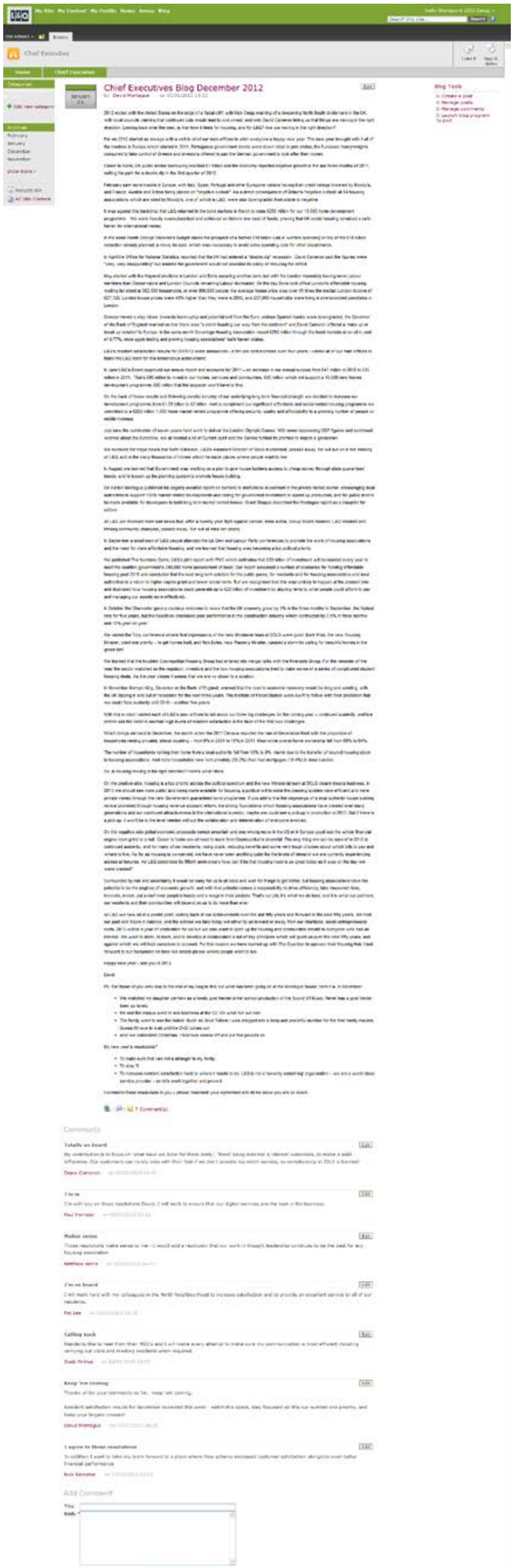
ARCHIVE

- April 2009
- March 2009
- February 2009
- January 2009
- December 2008
- November 2008
- October 2008
- September 2008
- August 2008
- July 2008
- June 2008
- May 2008
- April 2008
- March 2008
- February 2008
- January 2008
- December 2007
- November 2007
- October 2007

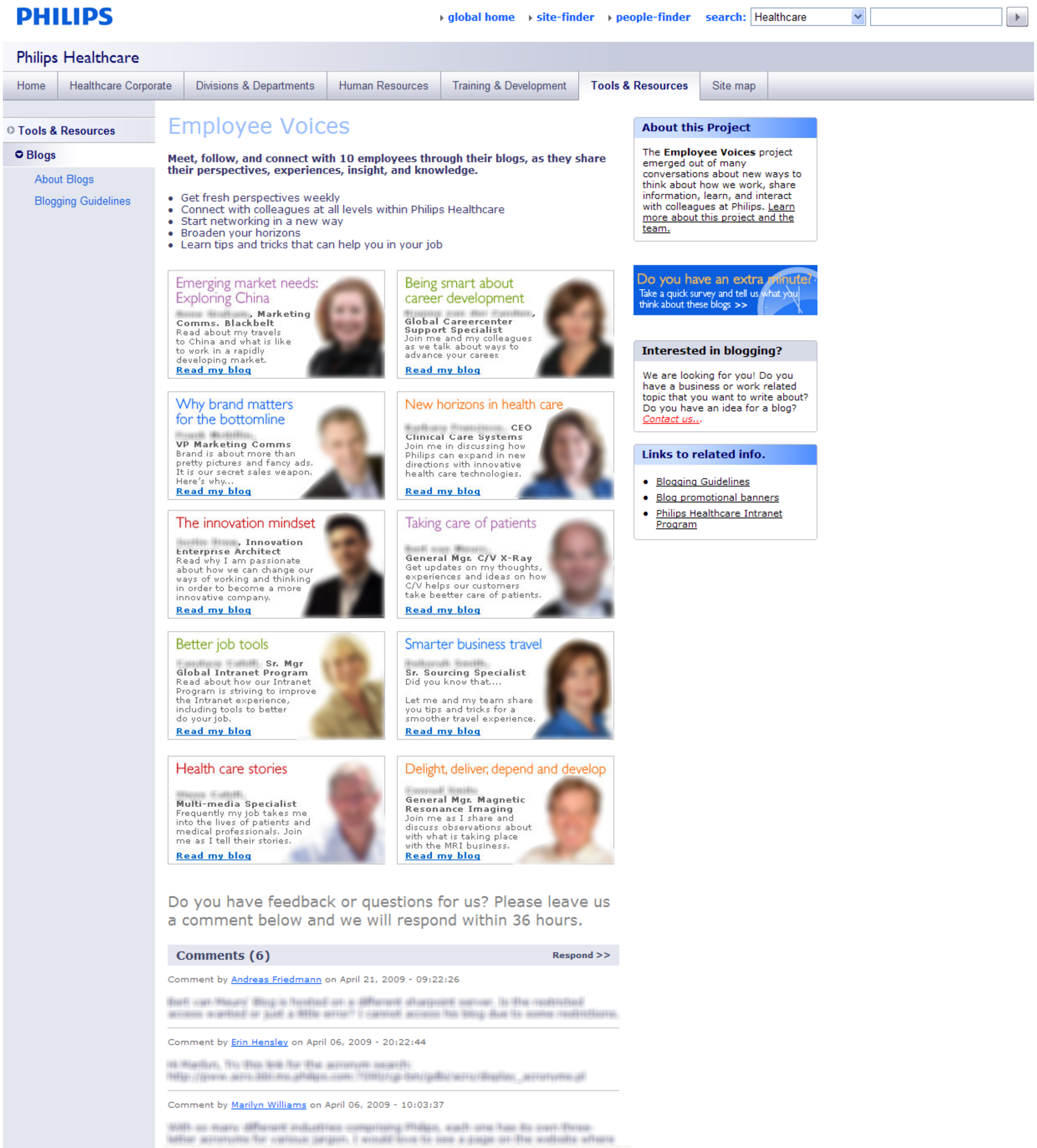
To subscribe to this blog, please enter your e-mail address below.
(e.g., jqpublic@aep.com)

Subscribe

Pictured: The AEP Now blog. This blog gives a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the intranet itself. Here, the company will often announce new features or ask employees which options they prefer.

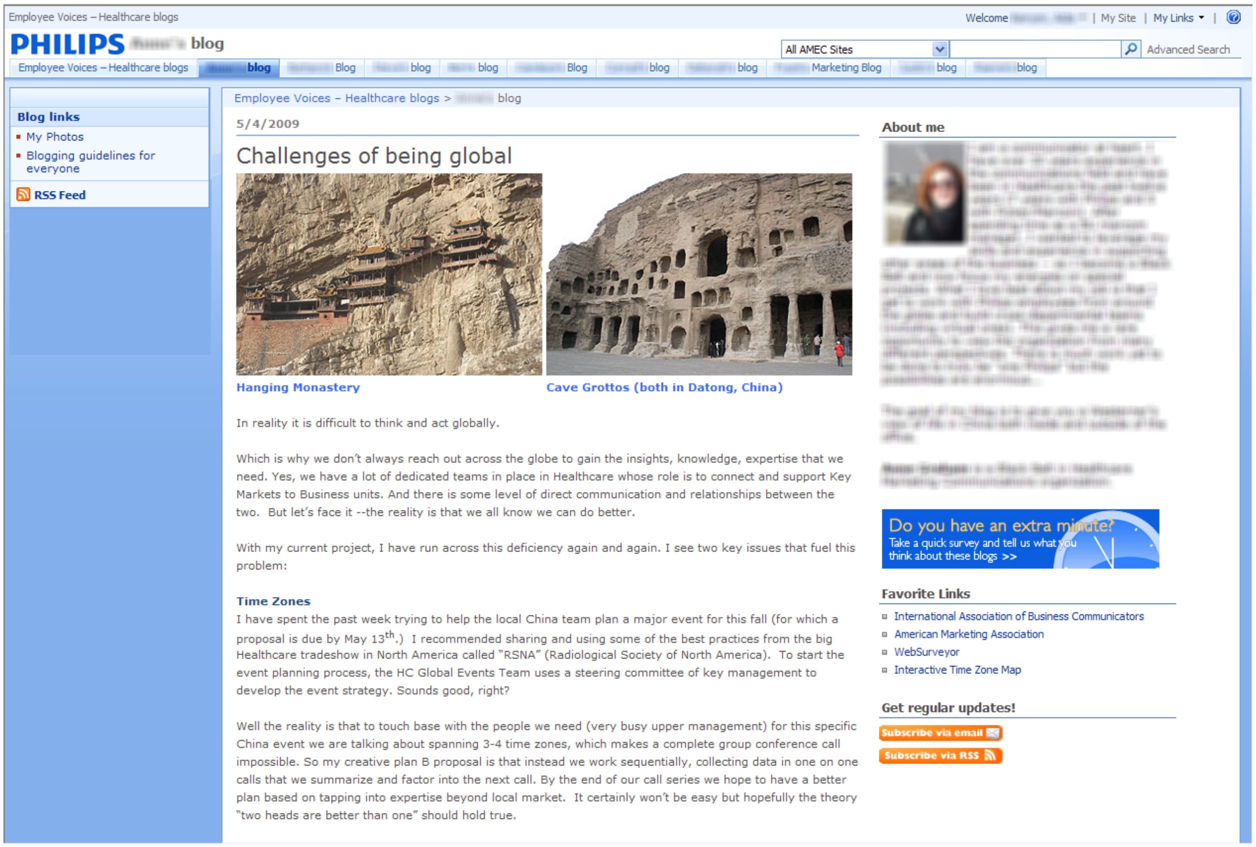

Chief Executives Blog December 2012

Pictured: This screen shows a blog post written by L&Q's CEO. Any user can comment on blog posts also displayed here. L&Qs CEO's blog posts are promoted on the My Site and the Portal homepage. L&Q's social features, including this blog, are SharePoint tools.

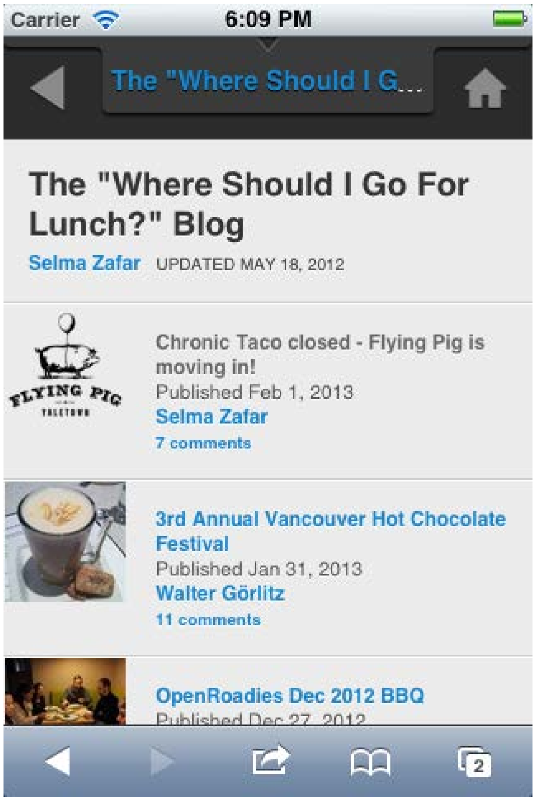


Pictured: The gateway page into Philips Healthcare employee blogs. On this page users can see who the bloggers are, and what they are blogging about. Users can also find more information about the blogging pilot, various blogging resources, as well as a way to contact someone if they are interested in starting a blog.

Pictured: The homepage of an employee's blog on the Philips Healthcare site. This employee maintains a video blog.

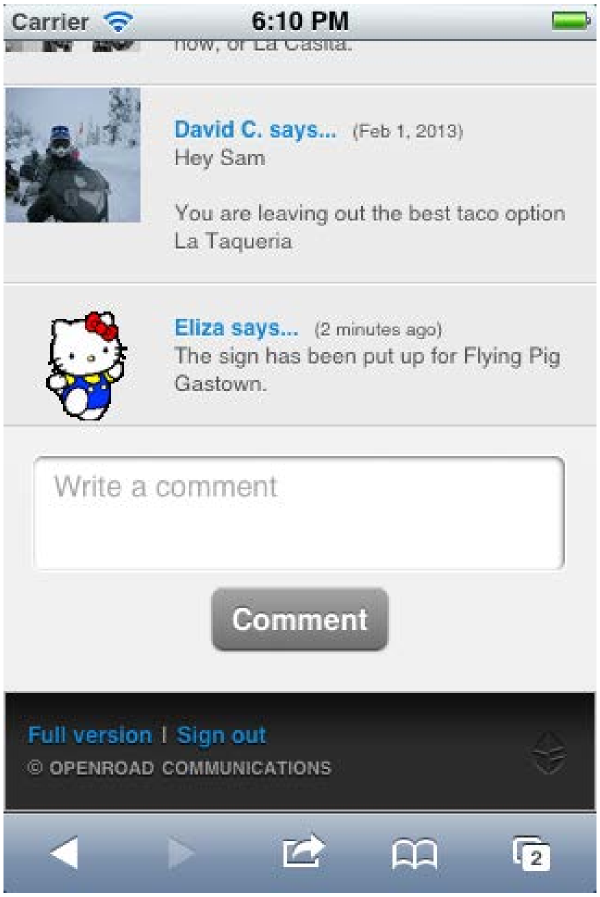


Pictured: This screen shows a blog homepage for an employee who is blogging about her six-month assignment at Philips Healthcare offices in China.

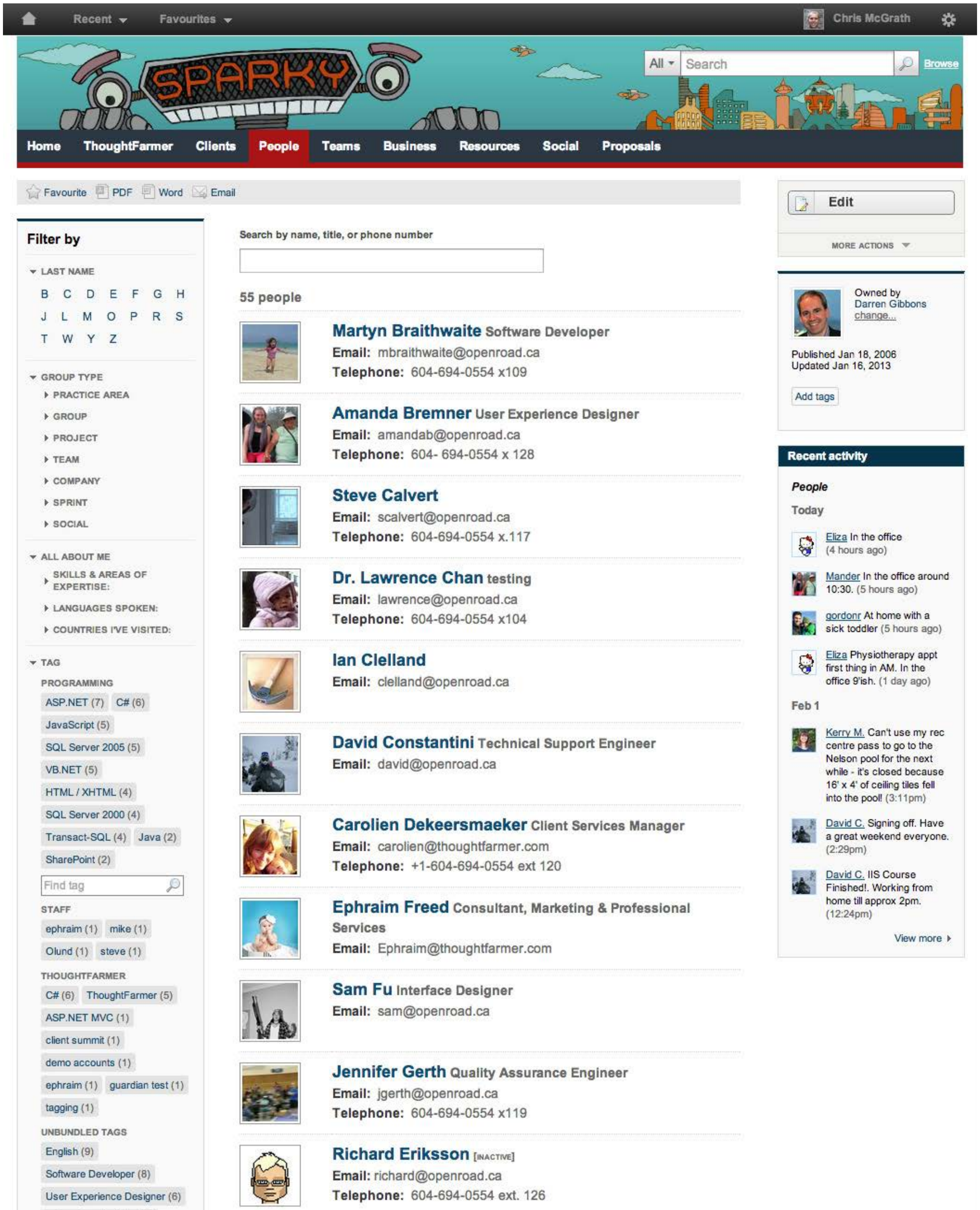


Pictured: ThoughtFarmer news feeds, blogs, and photos are accessible from mobile devices. Additionally users can also comment using their mobile devices.

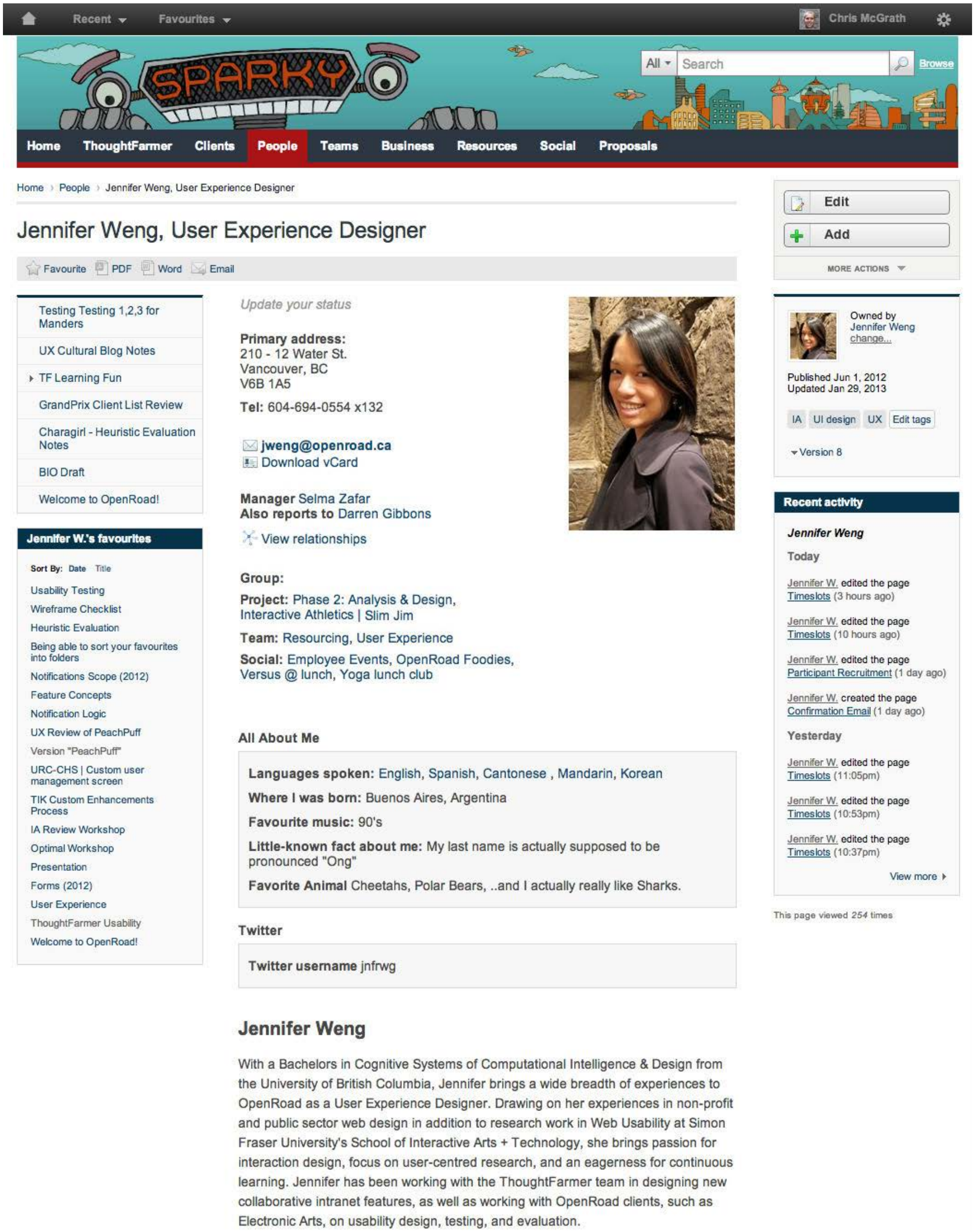
Pictured: A view of a ThoughtFarmer blog post as seen on a mobile device.



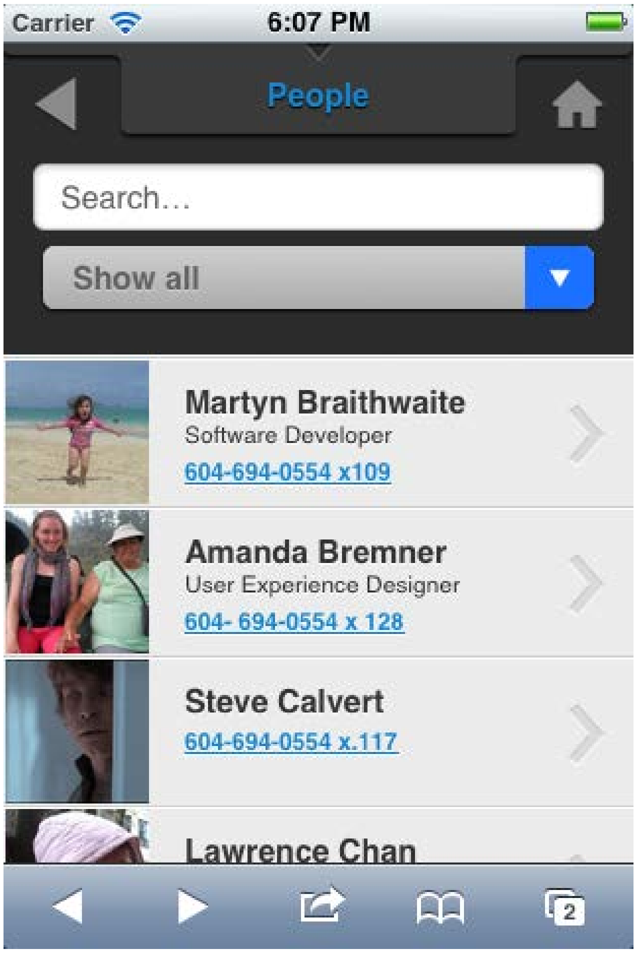
Pictured: ThoughtFarmer blog posts are resized to be easily readable from mobile, and include full photo content and full commenting.



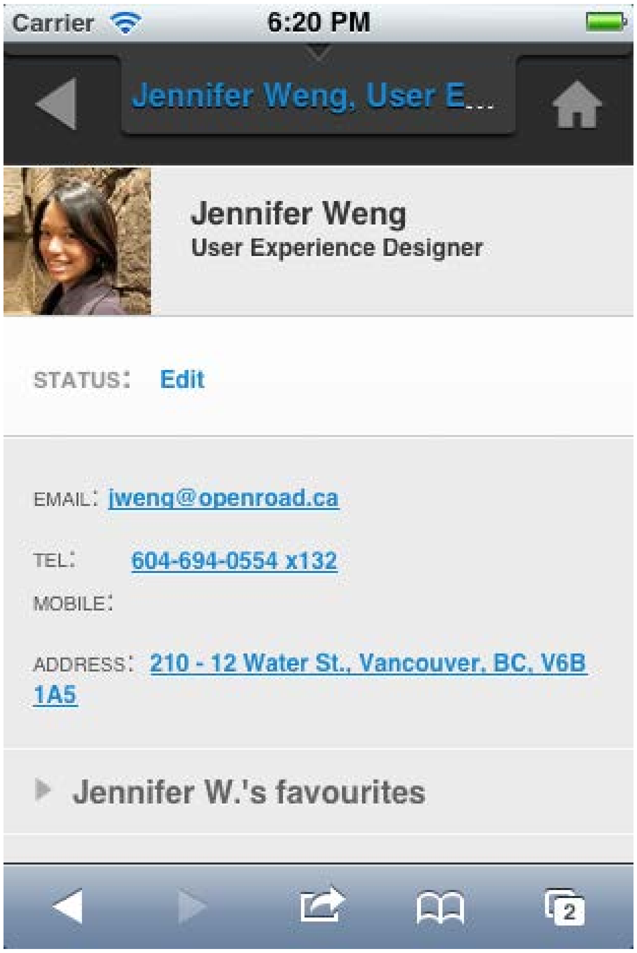
Pictured: The ThoughtFarmer people directory allows for quick searching and filtering of employee information. Find the right employees for the job, with filters by project, team, department, language, or skill set. Information can be auto-populated with Active Directory sync.



Pictured: At OpenRoad, each employee is given their own space, where they can include a photo, bio, upload personal files, create personal pages, and make their own blog. Basic information can be synced with Active Directory.

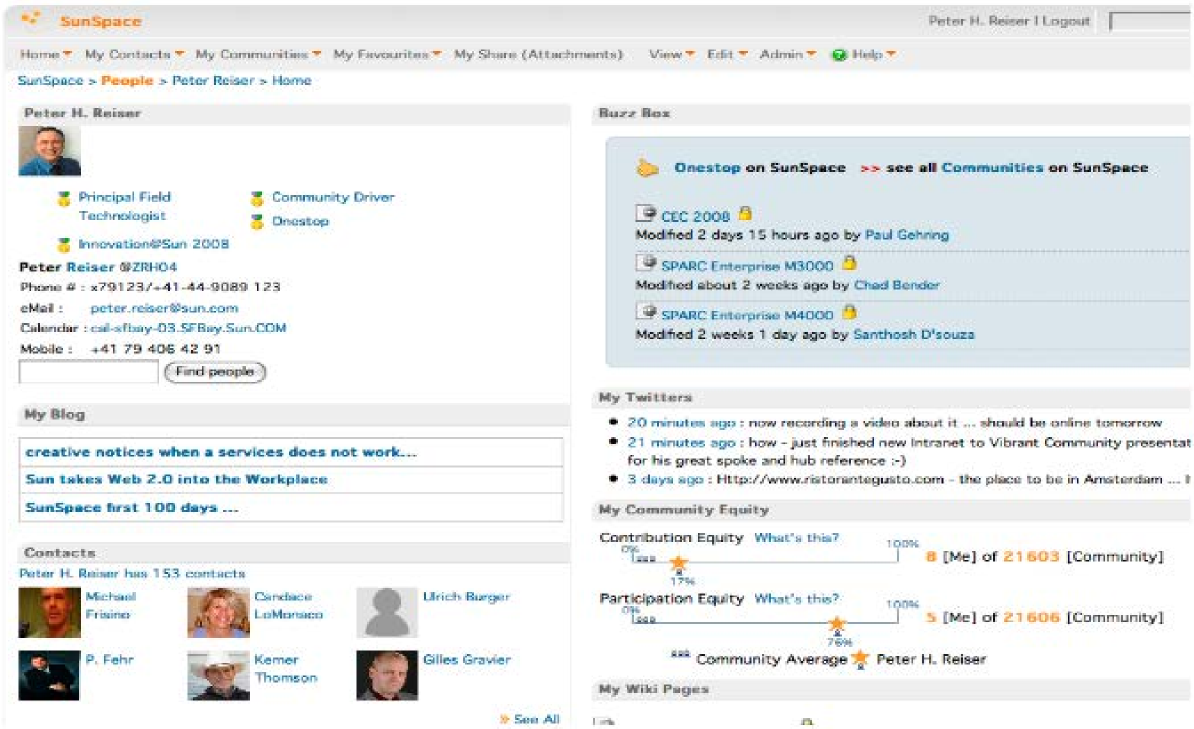


Pictured: Because ThoughtFarmer is available on all mobile browsers, using responsive design techniques, the mobile version of the people directory includes click-to-call, for quick dialing of co-worker phone numbers.

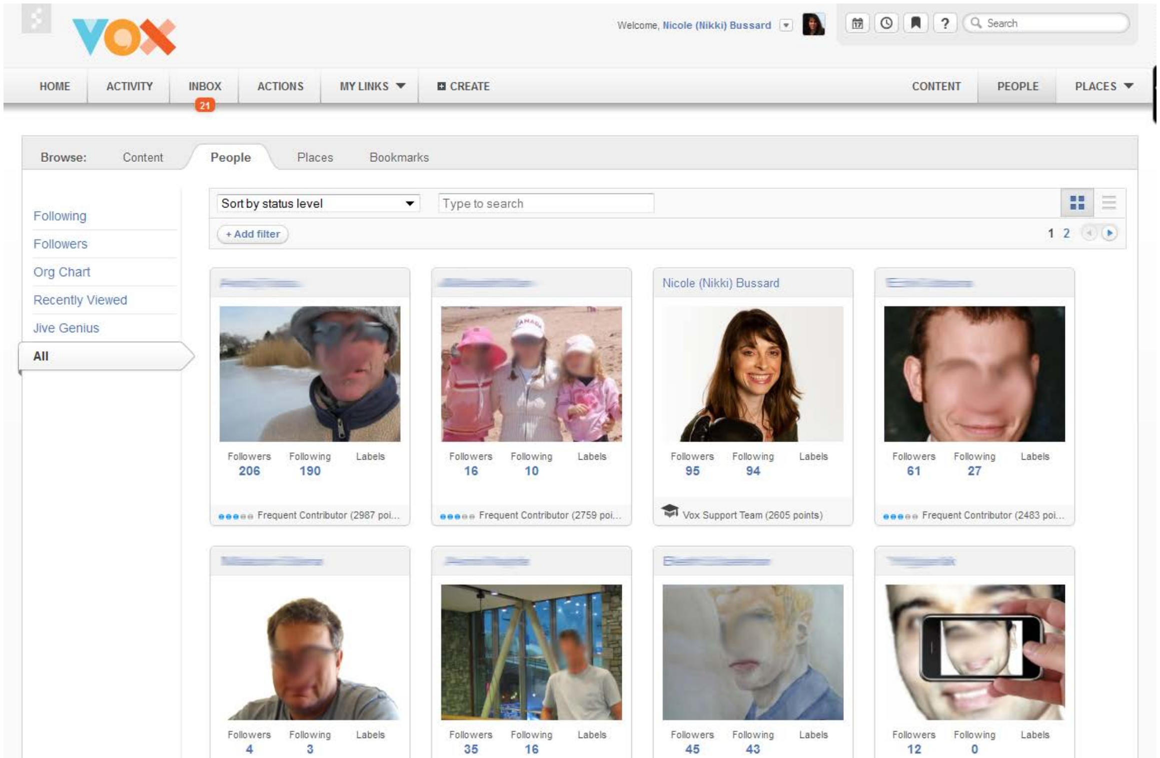


Pictured: One of the most popular features of OpenRoad's mobile intranet is the people directory, offering full search and rich employee profiles. This view shows the employee details, with click-to-call, click-to-email, and map functionality. Employees can also update their status while they are out of the office.

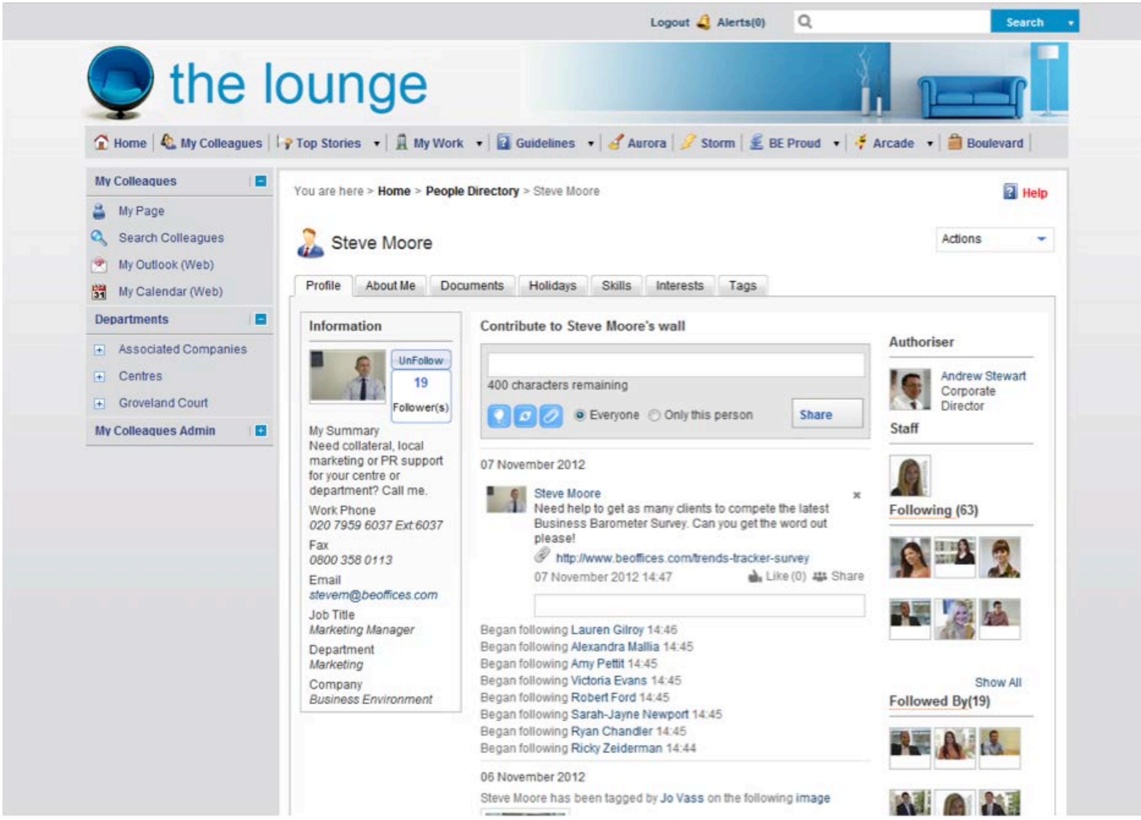
Who am I : MyProfile



Pictured: By featuring a robust personal profile that showcases each user's content contributions, Sun has the ability to better connect users with experts throughout the company, quickly.

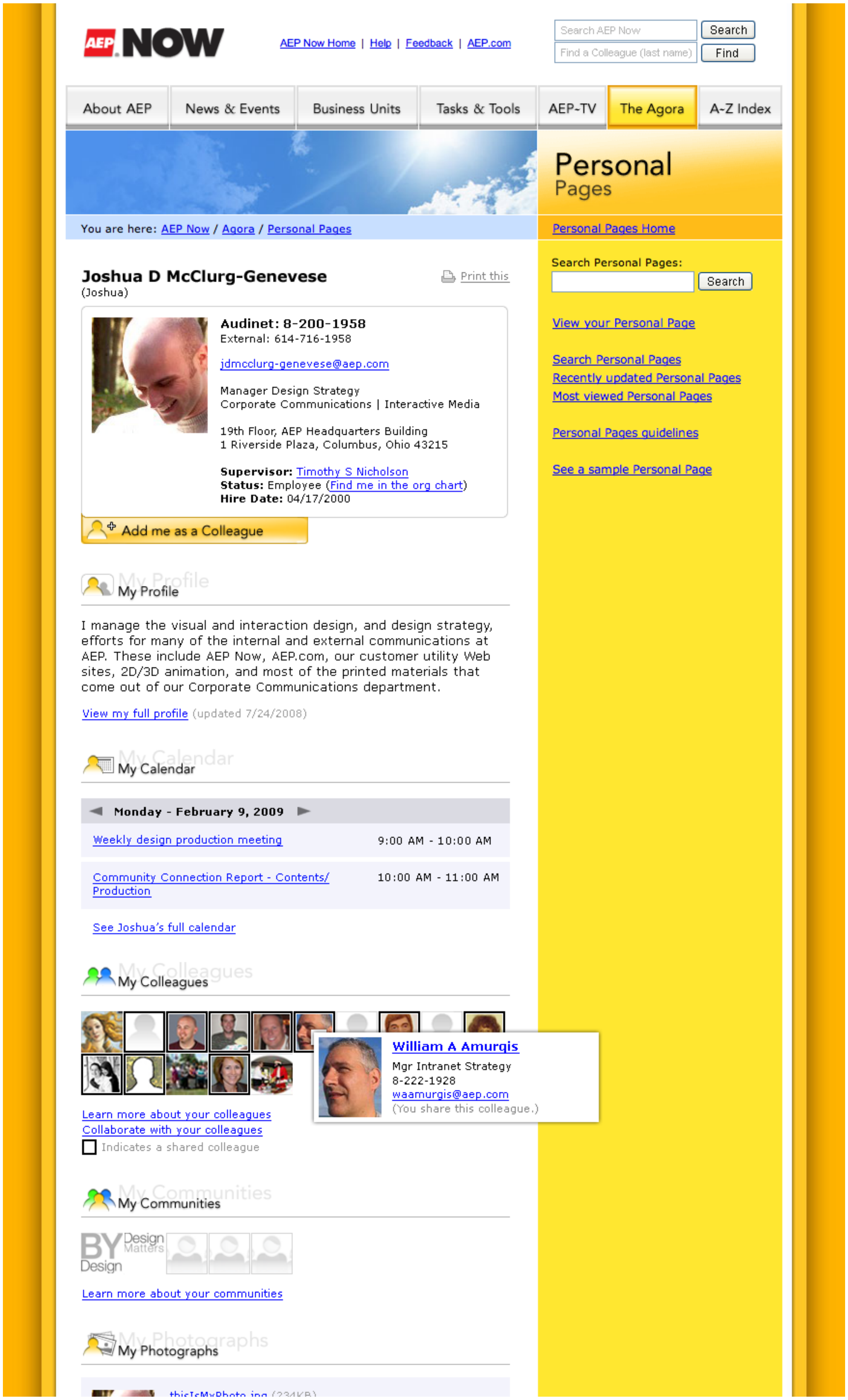


Pictured: On Vox (Sapient's intranet), users can browse the people directory according to people they follow or filter the entire company directory by key attributes and tags to quickly find experts.



Pictured: All Business Environment users have their own profile page. The company uses intranet analytics to make sure these profiles are up to date. The company can automatically send out reminders to either get people to complete or check their details every six months.

Pictured: An employee profile page on the PT-SI site. It shows the user's personal data, content submitted to the site, projects, skills, training, certifications, and professional experience. The employee edits his/her own profile. It also shows the percentage of completeness and his participation in wikis and blogs sites.


AEP NOW
AEP Now Home | Help | Feedback | AEP.com
Search AEP Now
Search
Find a Colleague (last name)
Find
About AEP
News & Events
Business Units
Tasks & Tools
AEP-TV
The Agora
A-Z Index
Personal Pages
You are here: AEP Now / Agora / Personal Pages
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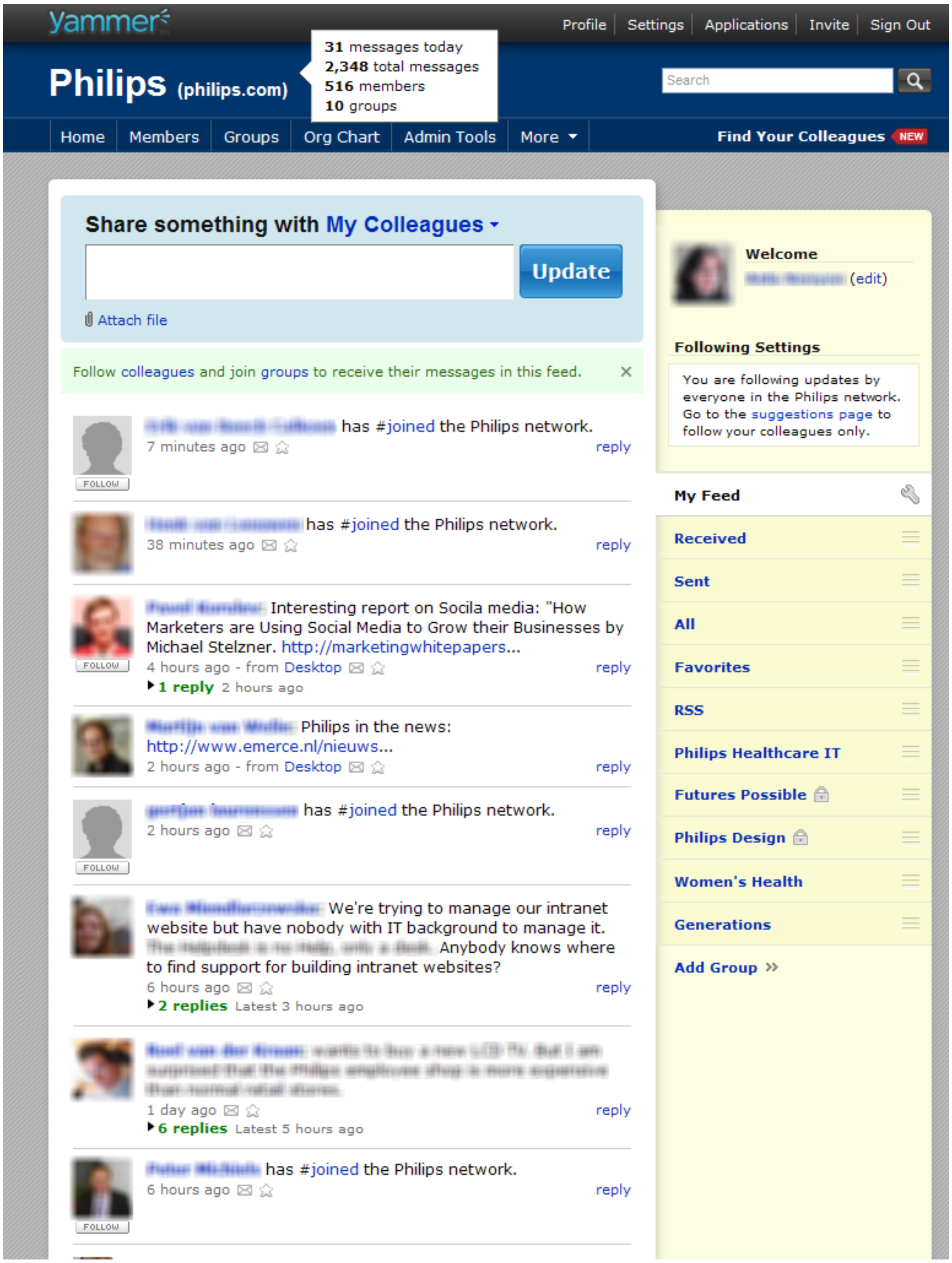
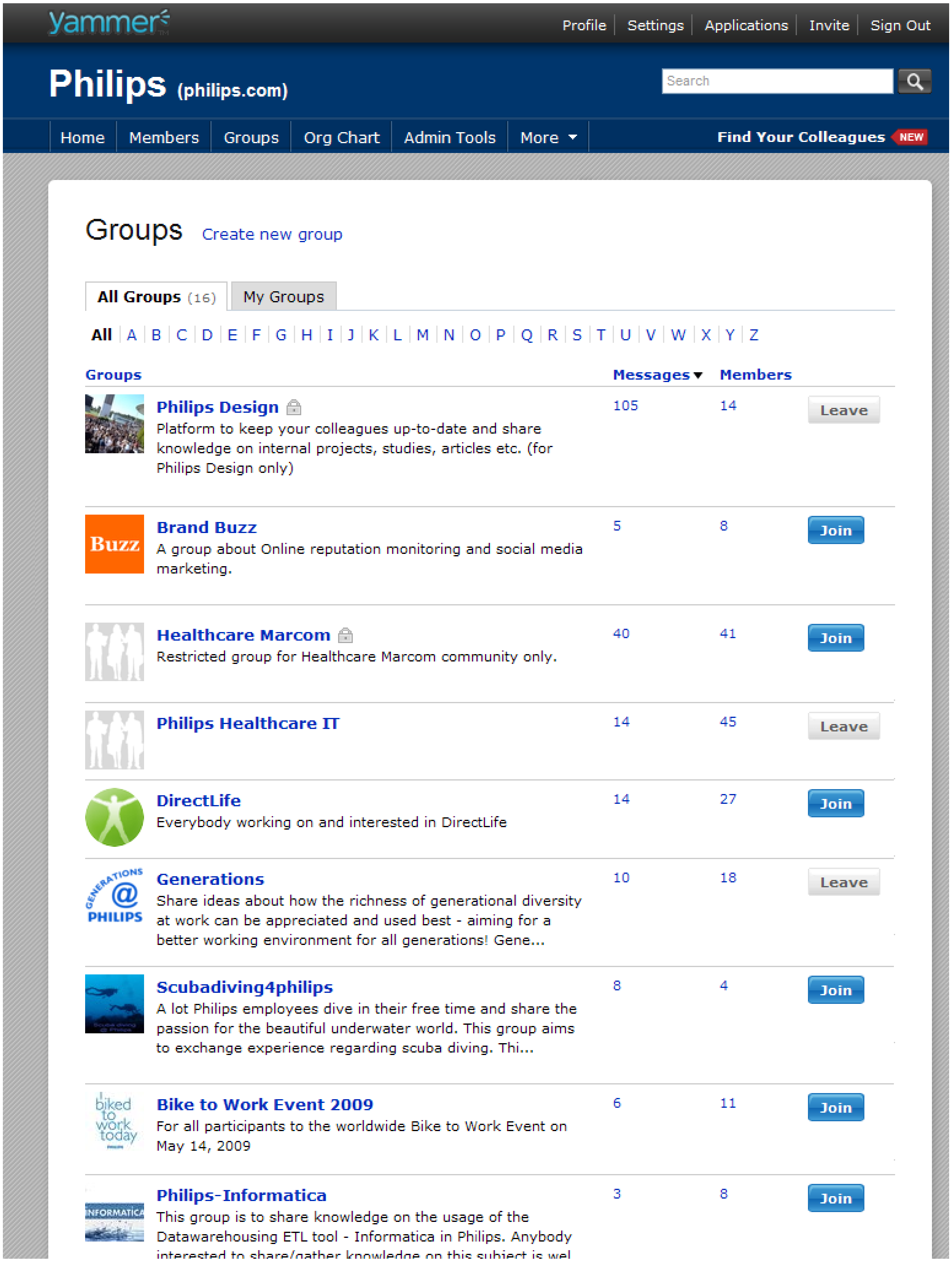
Joshua D McClurg-Genevese
(Joshua)
Print this
Audinet: 8-200-1958
External: 614-716-1958
jdmcclurg-genevese@aep.com
Manager Design Strategy
Corporate Communications | Interactive Media
19th Floor, AEP Headquarters Building
1 Riverside Plaza, Columbus, Ohio 43215
Supervisor: Timothy S Nicholson
Status: Employee (Find me in the org chart)
Hire Date: 04/17/2000
Add me as a Colleague
Search Personal Pages:
Search
View your Personal Page
Search Personal Pages
Recently updated Personal Pages
Most viewed Personal Pages
Personal Pages guidelines
See a sample Personal Page
My Profile
I manage the visual and interaction design, and design strategy, efforts for many of the internal and external communications at AEP. These include AEP Now, AEP.com, our customer utility Web sites, 2D/3D animation, and most of the printed materials that come out of our Corporate Communications department.
View my full profile (updated 7/24/2008)
My Calendar
Monday - February 9, 2009
Weekly design production meeting 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM
Community Connection Report - Contents/ Production 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM
See Joshua's full calendar
My Colleagues
William A Amurgis
Mgr Intranet Strategy
8-222-1928
waamurgis@aep.com
(You share this colleague.)
Learn more about your colleagues
Collaborate with your colleagues
Indicates a shared colleague
My Communities
BY Design Matters Design
Learn more about your communities
My Photographs
thisIsMyPhoto.jpg (234KB)

Pictured: At AEP, each employee has a personal page with basic contact information, which can be enhanced with a personal profile, photographs, and colleague relationships.

MICROBLOGGING

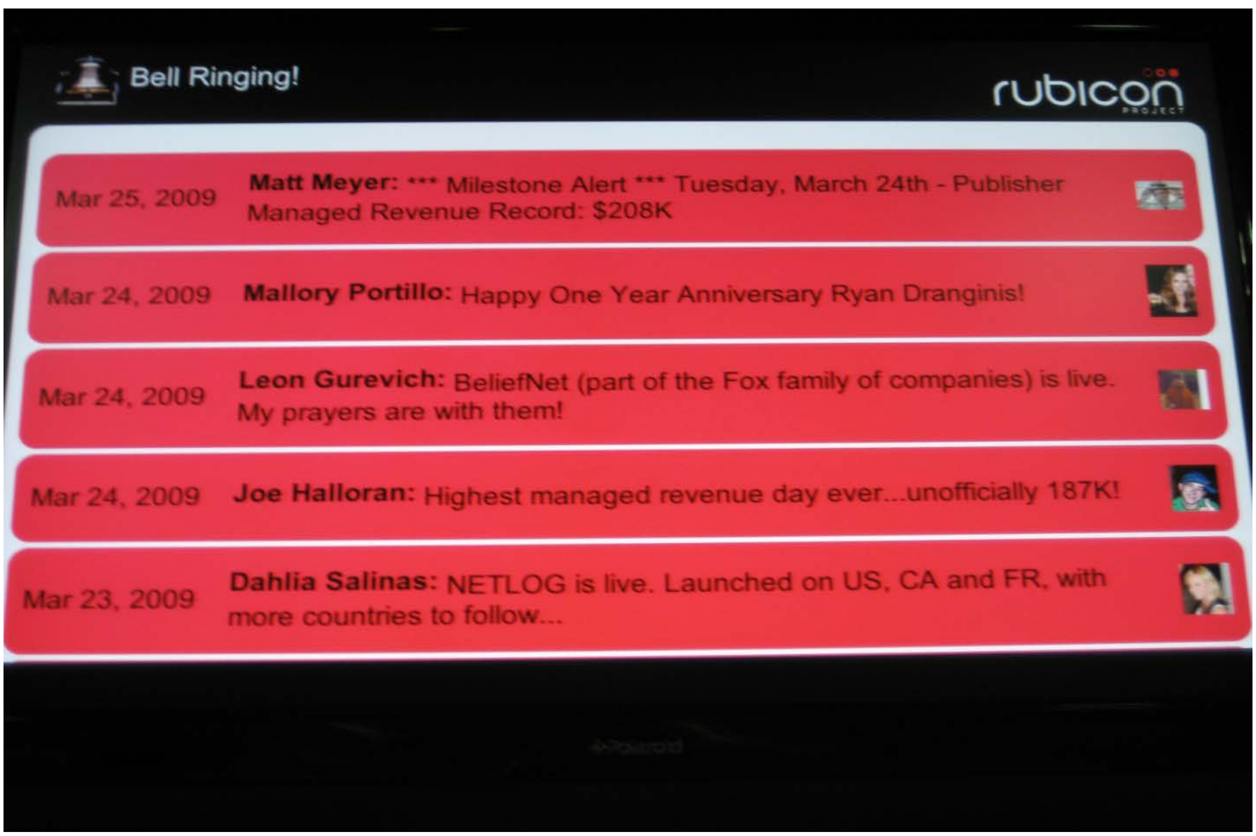


Pictured: This is the main page of the Philips Yammer stream interface.



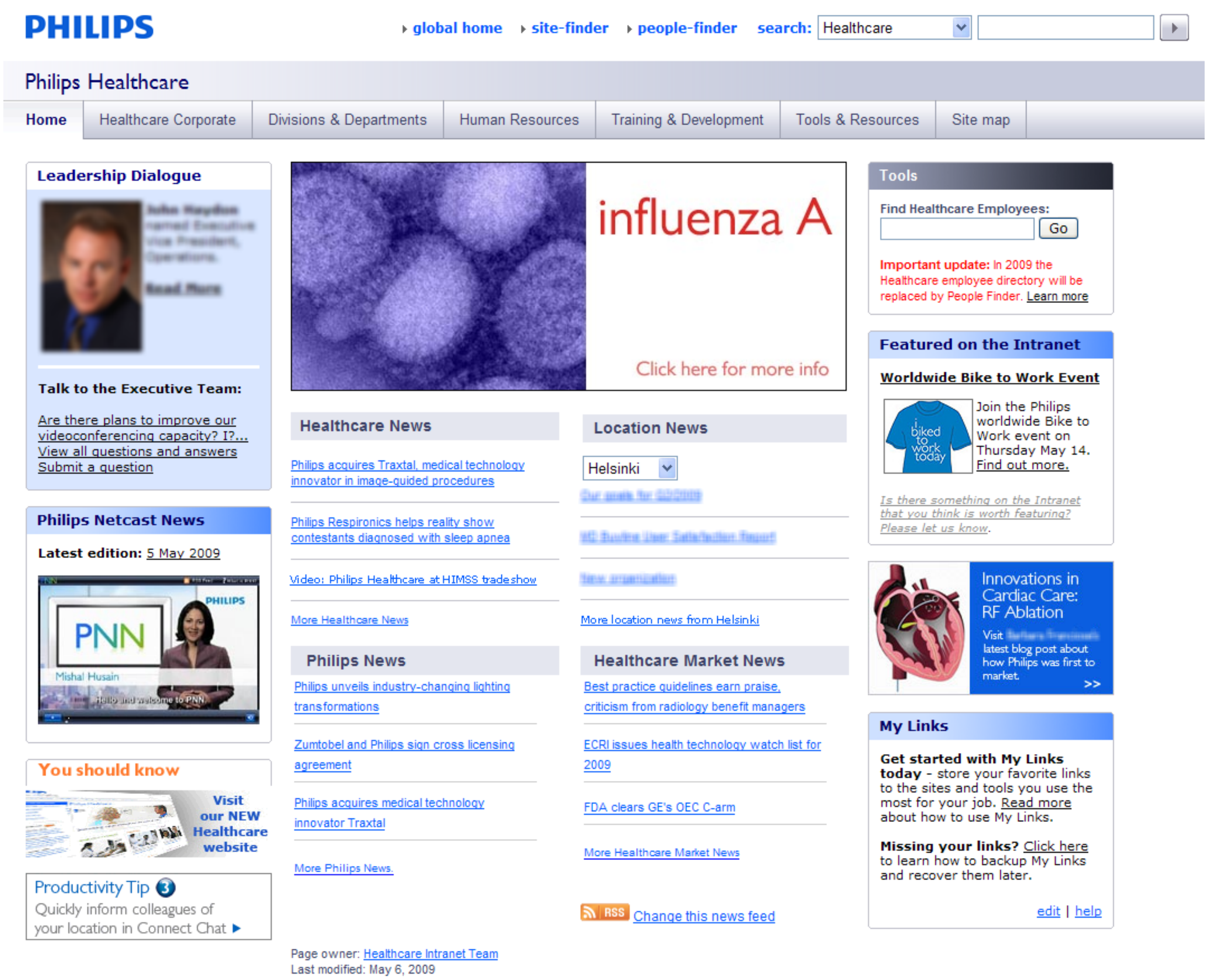
Pictured: The main page of the Philips Healthcare Yammer tool. This shows a sampling of some of the groups that have formed within the Philips Yammer-sphere.

Pictured: A screenshot from Sun Microsystems' microblogging tool, "Sweet." This is was custom tool. The interface prompts the user with the question: "What are you working on?" instead of the popular, "What are you doing?" question posed on Twitter and other sites.

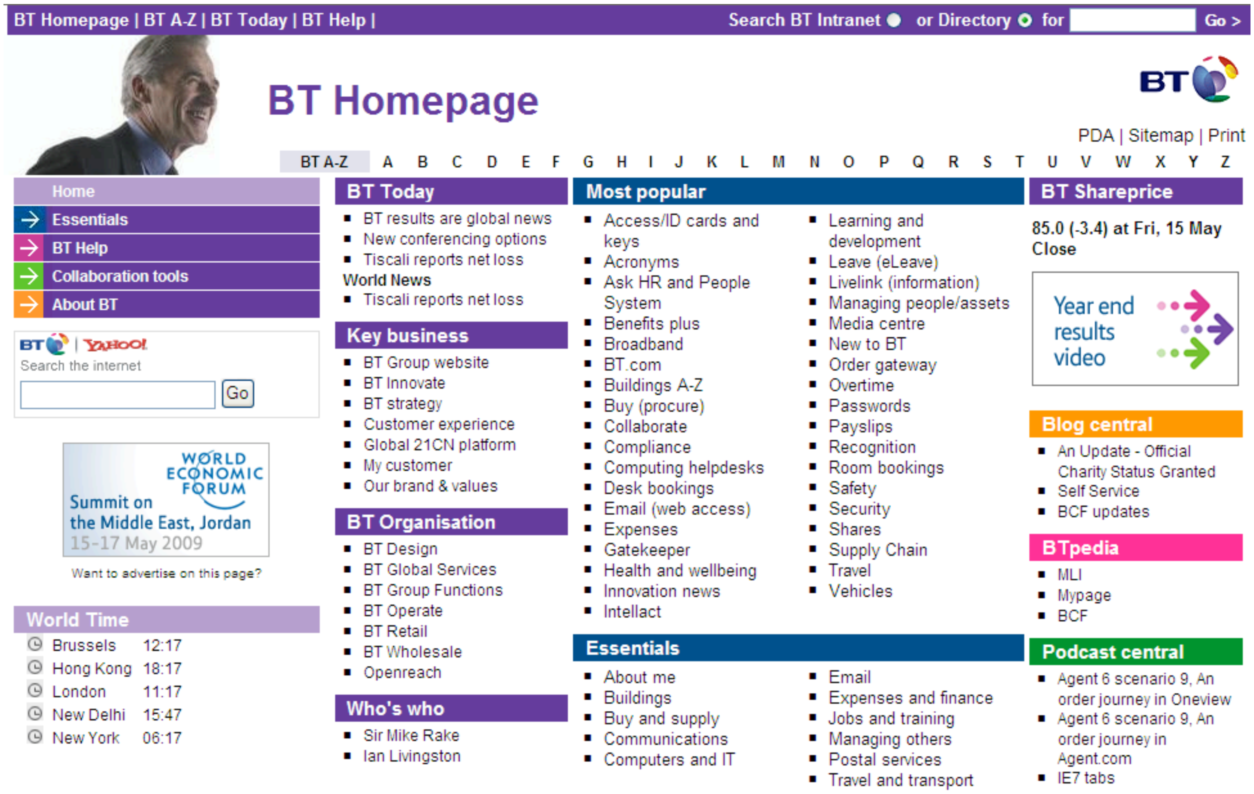


Pictured: An example of how the Rubicon Project extends Yammer to not only facilitate communication, but also to recognize employees. This custom Yammer feature, called the “Bell Ringer,” showcases employees who have been recognized for outstanding contributions.

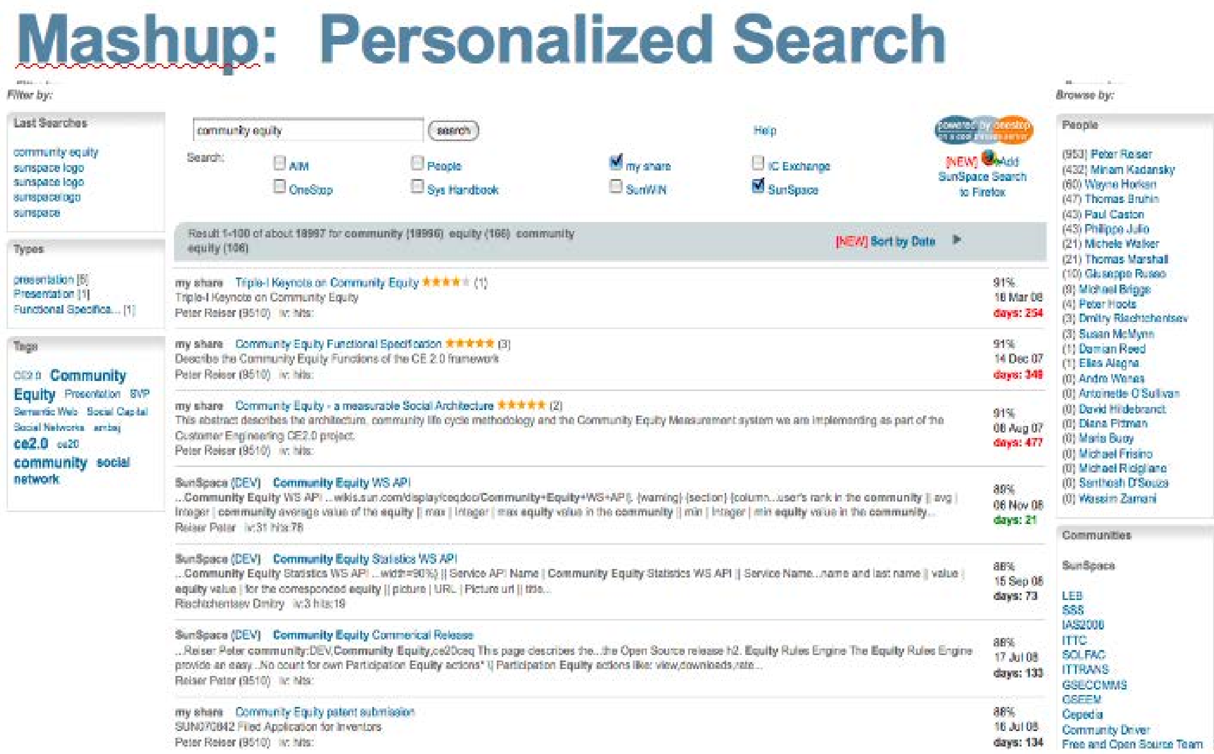
NEWS FEEDS (RSS)



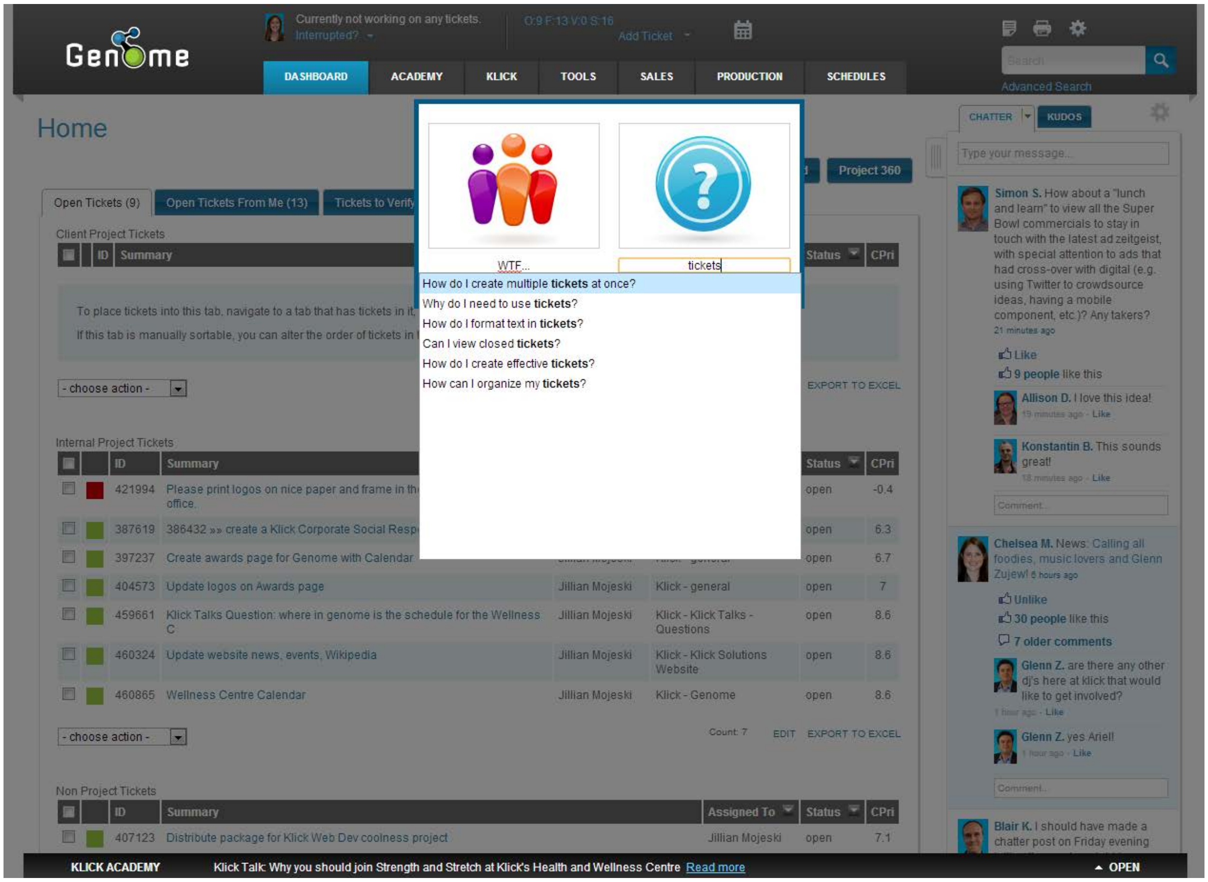
Pictured: Philips Healthcare intranet homepage uses RSS and promotes employee blogs.



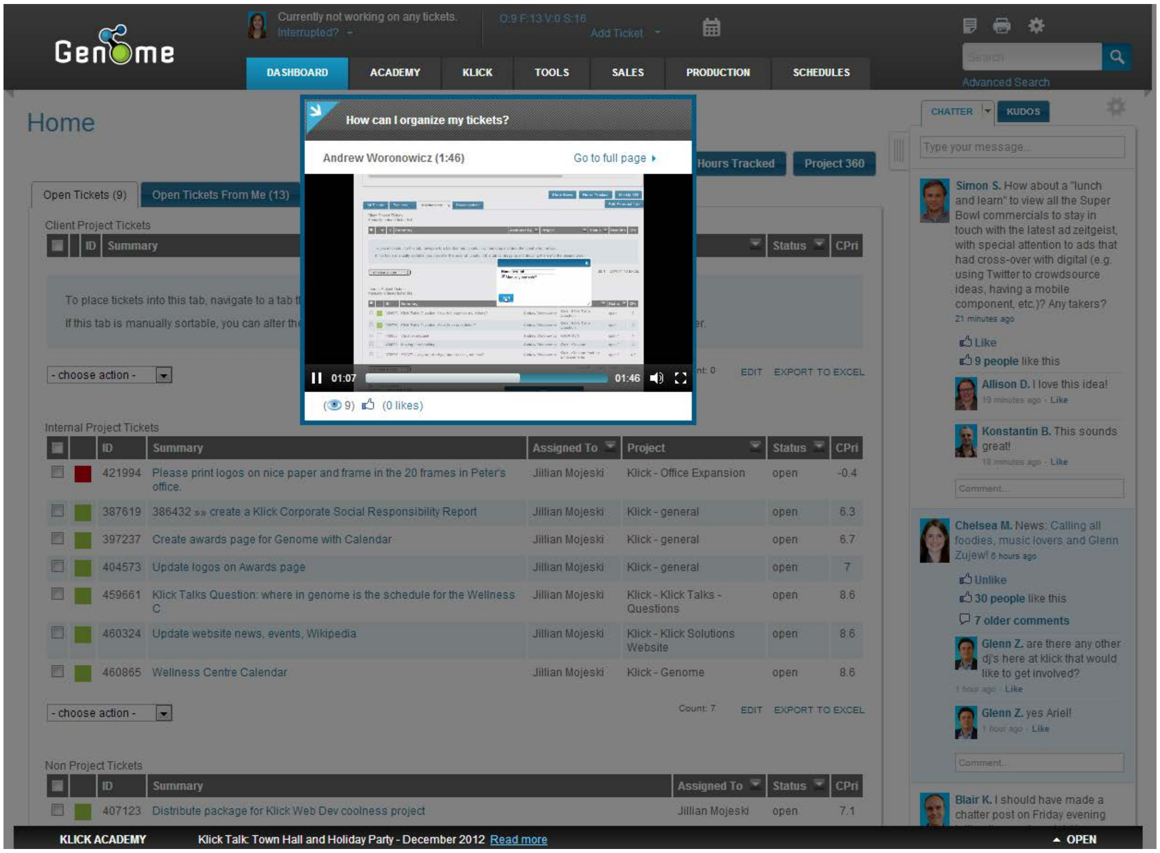
Pictured: The BT homepage, showing the social media sites section. This is the homepage for most BT employees. The right hand column displays a (frequently updated list of items that are added to the social media site. These are basically RSS feeds.



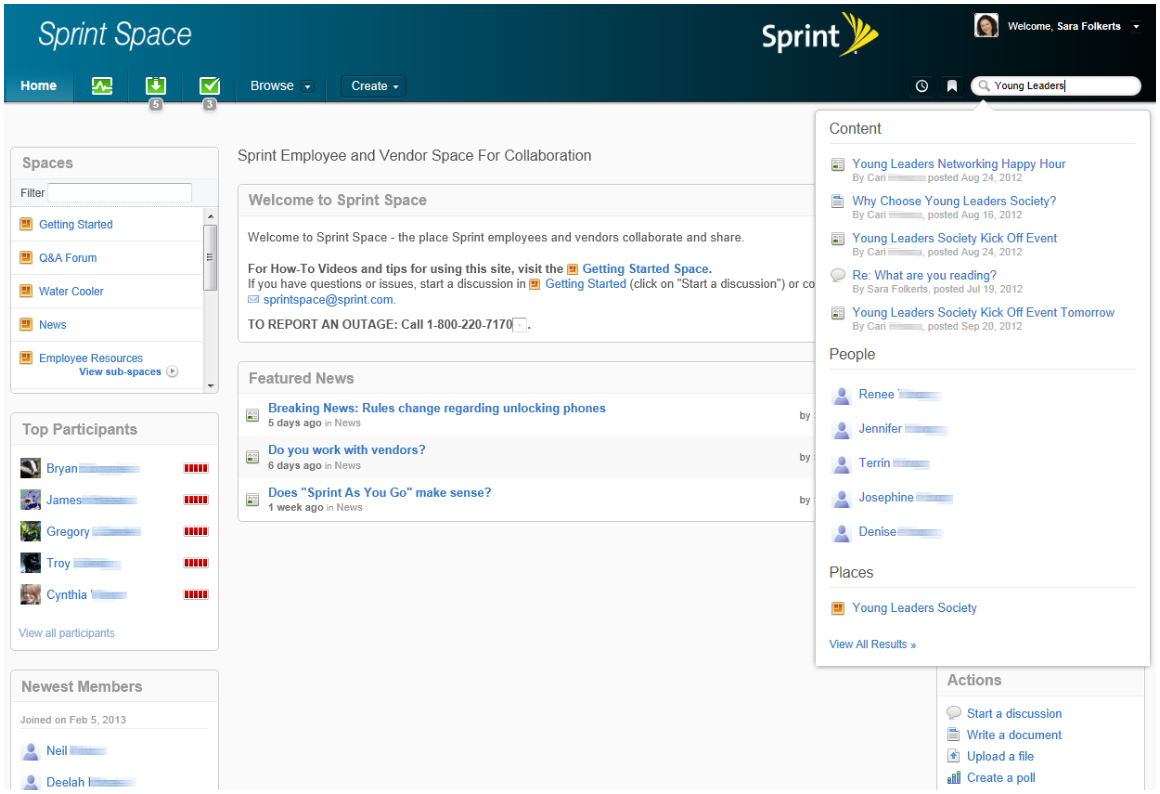
Pictured: A search results from the former SunSpace showing how users can filter results from the various content sources – both company generated and user-generated, including content from experts and authors and communities.



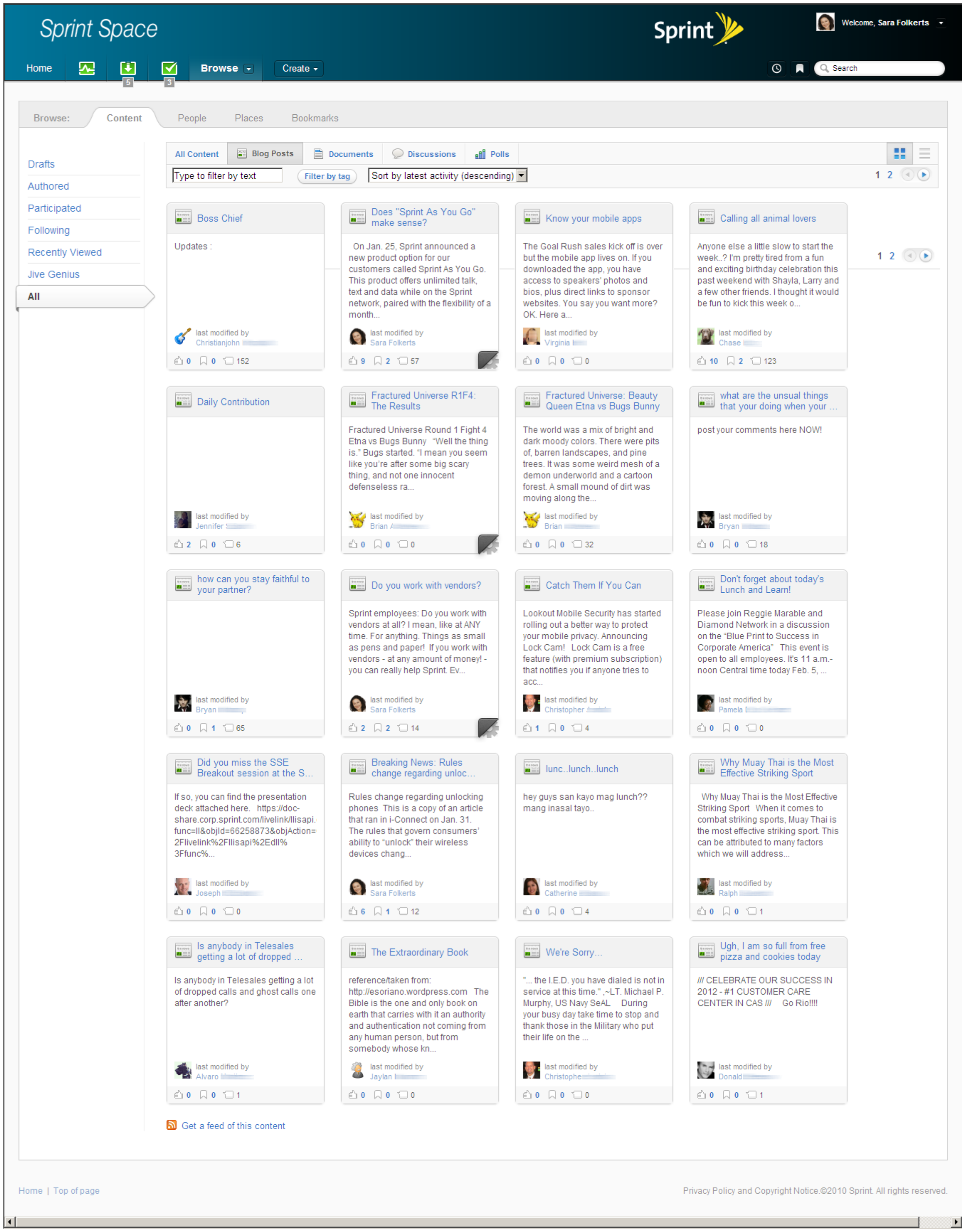
Pictured: This screen shows Klick's quick search functionality, accessible through any page by pushing ctrl+space. Through this search employees can access information on projects, portfolios, tickets, fellow employees (including the ability to call them via Genome), and Genome tools. Pictured here is Klick Talk integration with quick search. By typing wtf+tab employees can then search anything they'd like, and the relevant Klick Talks are displayed.



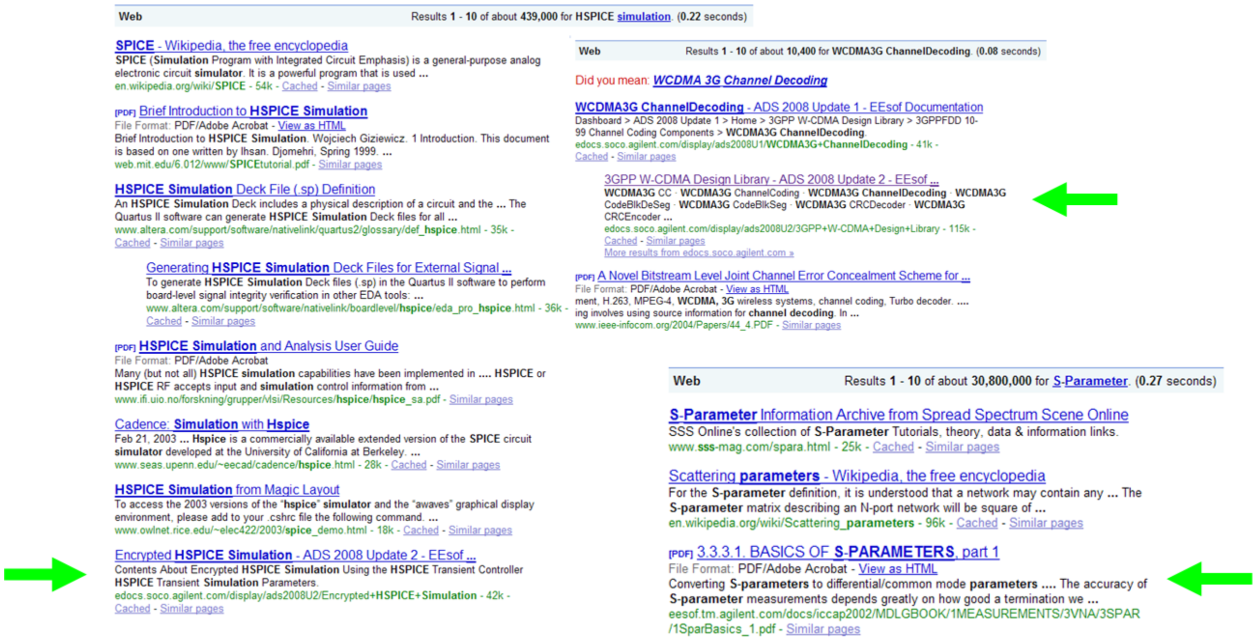
Pictured: This shows an embedded Klick Talk video. When a user accesses a Klick Talk video through quick search (using the "wtf" functionality) the video plays in the employee's current screen rather than re-directing the employee to the Klick Talks page. This embedded video can be made full screen, and hitting Esc allows employees to return to their current page in Genome.



Pictured: Sprint uses the native search functionality in Jive to allow users to search Sprint Space. A user can search for content from any page, and suggested results will populate right below the search box. The results are narrow, but are sorted according to content, people or places.

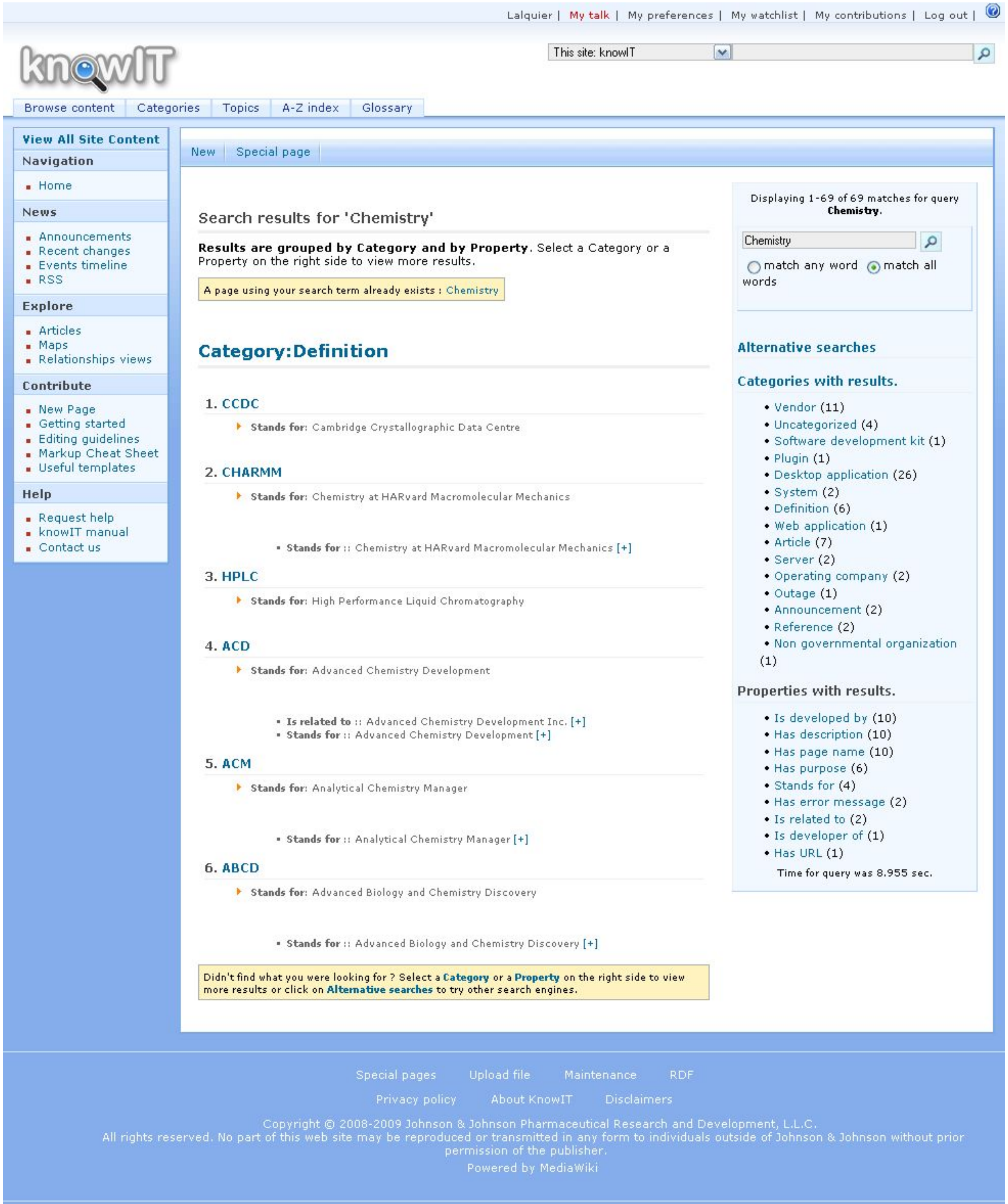


Pictured: On the new Sprint Space browsing and searching can be very robust. As shown here, there are many ways to filter search results. Most Sprint users prefer to browse rather than search.

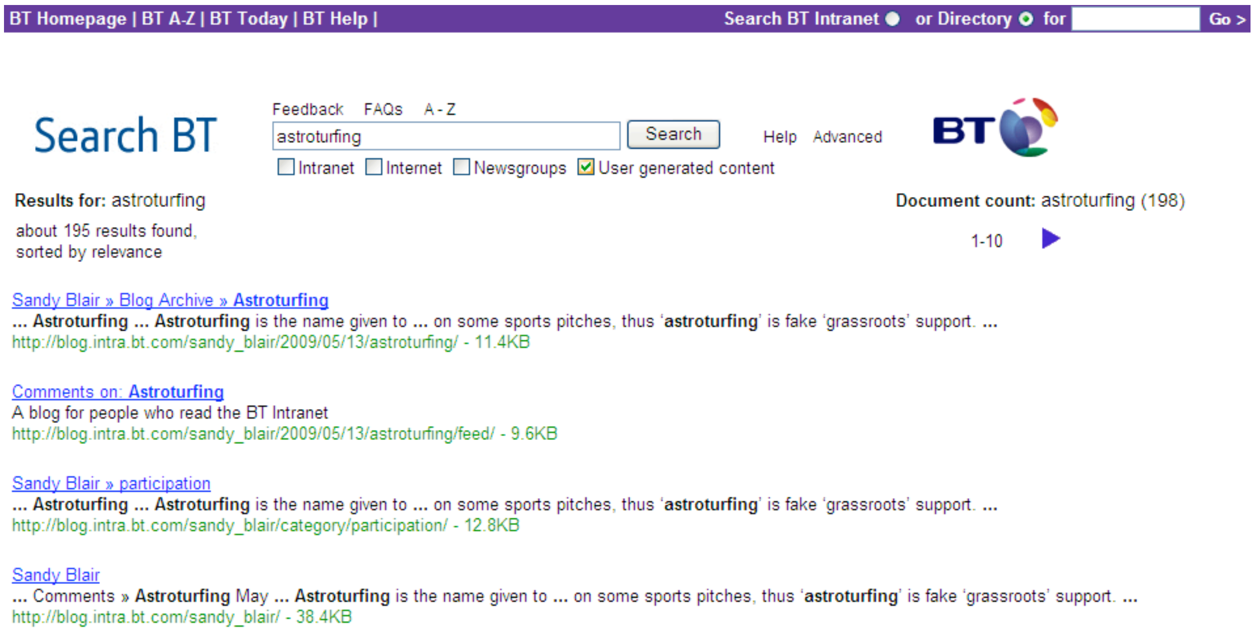


Pictured: At Agilent, US customers find it faster to use Google to search the Agilent wiki than to navigate to the wiki and use its native search.

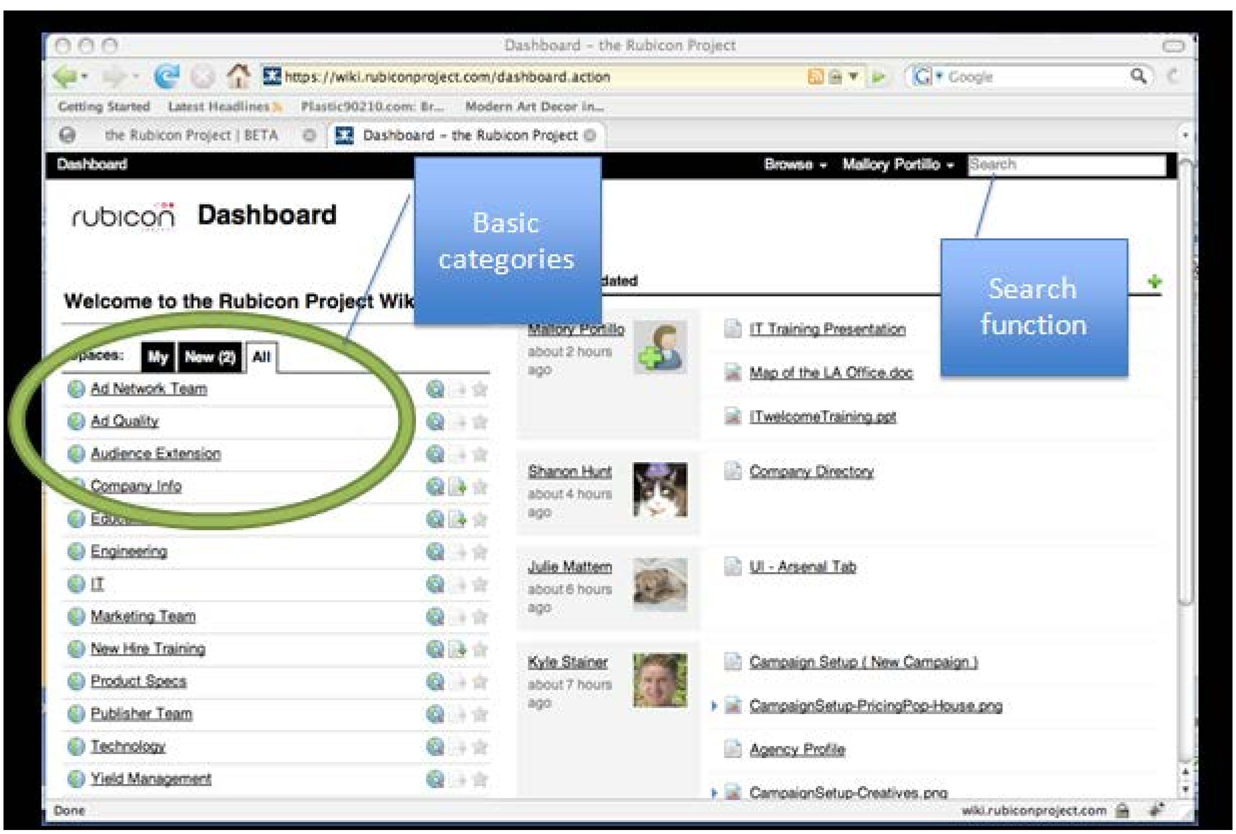
Pictured: A PT-SI search results pages. The list of search results is organized by content, by employee, by wikis and by blogs.



Pictured: Search results in knowIT are enhanced by semantic annotations in several ways. Results are grouped by categories and excerpts are replaced by individual summaries tuned to each category of pages. This screen shows an example of a search results screen where the user has searched on the term "chemistry."



Pictured: A typical search result on the BT site. Note the check boxes for filtering user-generated content.



Pictured: the Rubicon Group's wiki offers a search box and a browse capability to find relevant topics.

About the Authors

Patty Caya (www.pattycaya.com) is a freelance journalist (writer and editor), and award-winning digital media producer. In her business writing, she specializes in topics relating to usability, social media, and the business and technology of the web. She has co-authored the Intranet Design Annuals for NN/g from 2008-2013. She wrote both the 3rd and 4th editions of the report on Intranet Portals and was the author of the first edition of this report.

For over a decade, Caya has split her time between journalism projects and web consulting. She is an experienced content strategist and information architect. She has consulted for many of Boston's top interactive agencies, leading web and intranet development projects as well as usability testing, research, and design initiatives. Her client roster spans a wide range of industries and includes leading national brands alongside mission-driven non-profits. She has a BFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and has completed coursework in the User Experience Program at Bentley University.

Jakob Nielsen, Ph.D., is a Principal of Nielsen Norman Group. He is the founder of the "discount usability engineering" movement, which emphasizes fast and efficient methods for improving the quality of user interfaces. Nielsen, noted as "the world's leading expert on Web usability" by *U.S. News and World Report* and "the next best thing to a true time machine" by *USA Today*, is the author of the best-selling book *Designing Web Usability: The Practice of Simplicity*, which has sold more than a quarter of a million copies in 22 languages. His other books include *Usability Engineering*, *Usability Inspection Methods*, *International User Interfaces*, *Homepage Usability: 50 Websites Deconstructed*, *Prioritizing Web Usability*, *Eyetracking Web Usability*, and *Mobile Usability*.

Nielsen's Alertbox column on web usability has been published on the Internet since 1995 and currently has about 200,000 readers. From 1994 to 1998, Nielsen was a Sun Microsystems Distinguished Engineer. His previous affiliations include Bell Communications Research, the Technical University of Denmark, and the IBM User Interface Institute. He holds 79 United States patents, mainly on ways of making the Internet easier to use.

Acknowledgments

A number of individuals (in addition to those quoted) contributed insights that helped frame the first edition of this report. These include: Vanessa DiMauro, CEO Leader Networks; Chris Coleman, Executive Vice President, Marketing and Scott Ryser, founder and CEO, Yakabod Knowledge Networks and Robin Hastings, Information Technology Manager, Missouri River Regional Library.

We are grateful to everyone who contributed their time and effort toward this research. We extend a special thanks to all of those individuals who generously donated their time and insights as part of our interview process.

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