Best Practices for Usable Intranets

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01.07.03
# About Razorfish

**Key Elements:**
- Develop user-centered solutions that enhance a company’s relationships with its key constituents.
- Focusing on solutions in the highest value-creation areas of relationship lifecycles.
- Applying the best and most innovative technologies to the user experience.
- Quantifying how we’ve helped clients maximize their relationship value.

Founded in New York in 1995, Razorfish is a digital solutions provider that helps organizations generate competitive value by leveraging the power of design and technology.

From strategy and design to system integration, Razorfish works with clients to identify and realize opportunities to increase their return on investment, improve productivity, and enhance their relationships with customers, employees and partners. Our solutions span a breadth of platforms, devices and networks, delivered via web, broadband and wireless.
Agenda

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- Study background
- Study participants
- Working definitions

Research findings
- Governance
- Business goals & drivers
- Key features & functionality

Best practice recommendations
- Governance
- Ownership
- Standardization
- Control & autonomy
.01 Study background

Razorfish undertook a 2-month study to understand issues surrounding effective development and deployment of corporate intranets and portals.

Six companies participated in this study. These companies were identified through secondary research and existing relationships.
Introduction

Study background

Goals of the study were to:

Identify and characterize issues impacting the development, deployment, and maintenance of successful intranets and portals

Identify best of breed practices around implementation
Study background

Study methodology incorporated primary and secondary qualitative research:

Secondary market research to
- understand broad market trends
- identify case studies and market leaders

One on one interviews with portal team representatives from six “best of breed” companies to
- gather in-depth “stories” of the development and deployment of each portal
- gather information about adoption rates, lessons learned and successes
- take a “tour” of each company’s portal
## Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Number of employees</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company 01</td>
<td>86,000</td>
<td>IT infrastructure manufacturer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Company 02</td>
<td>36,000</td>
<td>IT infrastructure manufacturer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Company 03</td>
<td>350,000</td>
<td>Automotive manufacturer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Company 04</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>Enterprise portal manufacturer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Company 05</td>
<td>320,000</td>
<td>IT manufacturer and consulting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Company 06</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>Financial consulting</td>
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</table>
.03 Working definitions

Some important definitions:

**Intranet**
An online resource to provide information or tools for a specific role or group.

**Portal**
A central online location to provide access to multiple intranets, websites, information types, and/or tools.
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Research findings

.04 Governance models

**Monolith model:** Strong central authority, with one group mandating adherence to technology, look & feel, functionality, and experience standards. Portal is created and maintained as a monolithic entity.

**Federated model:** Central authority is more focused on bringing existing groups under the umbrella of consistent user experience. Primary goal is to ensure consistency across business units.

**Satellite model:** Primary goal is to create a hub for providing central access to multiple business unit sites. Central authority may control development and technology but there is little emphasis on overall look and feel.

**No Governance:** Little or no central governance to address overall development. Multiple parallel (and possibly redundant) intranet clusters are developed based on individual needs of various business units.
Knowledge sharing is the primary driving force of most corporate portals. Knowledge is shared through:
- Central (meta data) content management
- “Knowledge mining” opportunities

Cost savings, a secondary consideration, occur through multiple channels: corporate communications, IT investment, and automated administrative tasks.
.06 Key features & functionality

- Corporate, competitive, and external news
- Local information such as building maps, floorplans, and cafeteria menus
- HR policies and procedures
- Self-serve administration (such as benefits enrollment, change of address, and employee status)
- Role-based information for business units
- Branded templates and marketing collateral
- Personalized links to business unit sites
- Basic portal search
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Best practice implementations involve in-depth considerations of governance and management issues.

- The move from “initiative” to “project” to “program” to “business unit” is crucial.

- Cross-functional teams streamline implementation processes and facilitate effective governance.

“25% of an enterprise portal is technology. The other 75% is all about governance.” – Director B2E Services, Company 01
Best practice portal implementations involve cross-functional ownership and management.

Companies should incorporate joint ownership models, with input from multiple organizational units like HR, IT, Corporate Communications, and Sales & Marketing.
Best practice portals often focus heavily on implementing and enforcing enterprise-wide efforts at standardization.

- Standardizing technical platforms streamlines the implementation and maintenance of portal initiatives.
- Uniform platforms also support the development of a consistent user experience.

*We saw a cost reduction totaling $220K in the first year alone from reductions in [redundant] hardware and software maintenance.*
– VP Information Services, Company 04
Portal initiatives should not lose sight of the value of small-scale autonomy and innovation.

This is often a struggle as companies rely on employees’ creativity and ability to craft work-arounds. However, portals, by nature, may represent structure and regulations that dictate patterns of behavior.

Incorporating user feedback mechanisms is one key way to mediate the tension between providing too much structure and not enough.
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