



INTRANETS

What's the Bottom Line?

Randy J. Hinrichs

- A Visionary Look at Key Business Issues
- What Decision-Makers Need to Know
- Interviews with CIOs from Sun Microsystems, Netscape, and Microsoft

Intranets

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Randy J. Hinrichs

COOLEY GODWARD LLP
LIBRARY
1 MARITIME PLAZA
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94111-3580

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all. With this design, you can accommodate for the distribution of workers across multiple locations, localizing some information while internationalizing other intranet information simultaneously.

Individual Organization and Access

An intranet must be designed to allow individuals to organize, publish, create, and develop their own infostructures as they see fit. This means individual, group, project, and departmental freedom of expression. Also, this means that the individual is responsible for access to information. This competency needs to be a part of the individual's base for success. In other words, workers who know how to research information are your greatest assets.

Centralized Communication and Coordination

An intranet needs to have a centralized location, a single point of contact. At any level, this is the home page. It is a web page designed to communicate collective, shared information, including tools and organizational focus. Centralized coordination means access control and security enforcement.

Rapid Response to Change

Rapid response to change must be a part of the intranet model's requirements. People leave, processes change, customers alter their thinking, and market trends affect decision making. A broadcast model must be established to inform users of rapid change. When needed, the entire organization must be behind the individual during transitions.

Management Becomes a Negotiator

Management as discussed previously becomes a negotiator between content providers. This model is important, as it reflects the general trend in business today. Someone in the organization still needs to architect information models, workflow, and system views of organization.

Bottom Line: There is no revolution going on here. There is only evolution.

Summary of Key Points

- WHAT'S AN INTRANET?

An intranet is a client/server technology based specifically on Internet standards, especially TCP/IP. It is used specifically within your organization to leverage company intelligence to improve business processes, improve workflow, empower with collaboration, and articulate vision and strategy in a secure communication and transaction environment. Also, the extranet or extended intranet is defined as the external transactions between intranets over the Internet or World Wide Web.

- INTRANET AS A TOOL

The intranet is a tool for collaboration, workflow, process improvement, process identification, decision support, ISO compliance, communication, and customer partnering and interaction.

- KEY FEATURES, KEY COMPARISONS

When you identify how you're going to use your intranet, start first by understanding the differences between an intranet and the Internet. Also, make sure you understand the difference between on-line services, client-server, and the Intranet. The principle benefit is decreased cost and increased productivity. The greatest limitation is having to build Web-friendly applications. And, the biggest controversy is security.

- INTRANET COMPUTING MODEL—*"The Web is the Network"*

Everything moves to the intranet. Servers are multifunctional, and clients are thin (storing little data). The model is based on TCP/IP, where co-evolution and co-location must occur, with centralized communication and coordination and distributed content development.

- AN INTRANATIONAL EXPLOSION

Simply put, you've got to prepare for an intranational audience. The global economy requires your intranet to reach out across the world for electronic partnerships. Globalization of companies is requiring international appeal and cultural sensitivity.

Bottom Line: Now you know what to plan for.
