



**CHAPTER ONE**

# **Organizational Intranets: Cultivating Information Technology for the People by the People**

Rens Scheepers  
Swinburne University of Technology, Victoria, Australia

Jeremy Rose  
Manchester Metropolitan University, England

## **INTRODUCTION**

Fueled by the overwhelming media attention to the Internet and the explosive growth in World Wide Web usage during the mid-1990s, many organizations began to establish their own Internet presence and harness the Web's electronic commerce potential. The Web was a breakthrough in terms of global connectivity, because it allowed organizations to locate and disseminate information in a standard, user-friendly manner across a variety of incompatible technical platforms and across geographical boundaries (Castells, 1996). In the course of their Internet efforts, organizations realized the potential to apply the very same technology, but this time with an intra-organizational focus to overcome similar problems associated with intra-organizational connectivity. Intranet technology has subsequently opened up a wealth of possibilities in terms of its organizational application (Goles & Hirschheim, 1997). By utilizing their intranet, organizations have the ability to share information, collaborate and transact across various incompatible technical platforms and information systems, and across functional, structural and geographical boundaries within the organization, in a standard and user-friendly manner (Bernard, 1996; Isakowitz et al., 1998; Cecez-Kecmanovic et al., 1999; McNaughton et al., 1999; Damsgaard & Scheepers, 2000). Intranets are now also envisioned as platforms for organizational knowledge management (Davenport & Pruzak, 1998).

We believe that the organizational rollout of such an emergent and ubiquitous information conduit poses several new and unique challenges for IT management. Much has become known about various aspects of the organizational application of computer-based information systems and technologies since the early days of computerization. This knowledge is rooted in studies that were typically based on a centralized computing paradigm at the time (for example Nolan, 1973; Tornatzky & Klein, 1982; Markus, 1983; Srinivasan & Davis, 1987; Kwon & Zmud, 1987). The more decentralized computing paradigm associated with information technologies such as office automation, e-mail, groupware and so forth, required an extension of this knowledge (as reflected in studies such as Hirschheim, 1986; Orlikowski & Gash, 1994; Grudin & Palen, 1995; Orlikowski et al., 1995; Dennis, 1996; Ciborra, 1996). The advent of the organizational application of Internet-based technologies now marks the ubiquitous computing paradigm (Lyytinen et al., 1998) that weaves together a complex array of existing communication and information technologies into one rich medium (Dahlbom, 1996) that may involve numerous organizational units and role players (Scheepers, 1999a). As an example of this class of technologies, intranet technology calls into question some of our traditional IT implementation wisdom and presents new challenges for organizations seeking to implement the technology (Balasubramanian & Bashian, 1998; Scheepers, 1999b). Indeed, approaching intranet implementation with a traditional managerial mindset may be the reason why some intranets do not become organizationally embedded. A survey conducted in 1997 showed that half of the respondents indicated that although their intranets were deployed, they were by no means organizationally pervasive (Gartner Group, 1997), while more recently Romm and Wong (1998) reported on the stagnation of an intranet effort in an Australian University setting due to an insufficient level of information content. In addition, and importantly from an intranet practitioners perspective, Rein et al. (1997) note that "this internal Web, as an environment for supporting organizational work, is falling short of our expectations and hopes in significant ways."

Thus despite the promise that intranet technology holds, there are already some disappointing intranet outcomes. This chapter will not attempt to provide IT managers with an intranet rollout panacea. In fact we will argue that such simplistic conceptions of the intranet implementation process that are proffered by some consultants and intranet service vendors are not only misleading, but may lull managers into a false sense of security. Rather, by means of a case study, this chapter highlights some key implementation challenges associated with the introduction of intranet technology. Based on the case we will argue for a different managerial mindset, given the nature of intranet technology itself and context-specific issues. In light of this mindset, we offer intranet managers a way forward and compare our advice against some recent intranet research findings. Finally we will examine some current trends and also discuss avenues that we believe warrant further research attention.

18 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: [www.igi-global.com/chapter/organizational-intranets-cultivating-information-technology/25884](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/organizational-intranets-cultivating-information-technology/25884)

## Related Content

---

### Explorative Study on the Influence of National Cultures on Business/IT Alignment Maturity

A. J. Gilbert Silvius, Steven De Haesand Wim Van Grembergen (2012). *Business Strategy and Applications in Enterprise IT Governance* (pp. 102-122).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/explorative-study-influence-national-cultures/68047](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/explorative-study-influence-national-cultures/68047)

### HRM Practices and Knowledge Sharing Behaviour: Lessons from Pakistani Knowledge Intensive Firms

Salman Iqbal, Paul Toulsonand David Tweed (2015). *Organizational Innovation and IT Governance in Emerging Economies* (pp. 167-183).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/hrm-practices-and-knowledge-sharing-behaviour/123651](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/hrm-practices-and-knowledge-sharing-behaviour/123651)

### A Conceptual Model for Aligning IT Valuation Methods

J. Gilbert Silvius (2012). *Business Strategy and Applications in Enterprise IT Governance* (pp. 182-201).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/conceptual-model-aligning-valuation-methods/68051](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/conceptual-model-aligning-valuation-methods/68051)

### Auditing Customer Identity and Access Management

Sushmita Podugu, Vamsi Krishna Rayapureddiand Manish Gupta (2023).

*Modernizing Enterprise IT Audit Governance and Management Practices* (pp. 181-210).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/auditing-customer-identity-and-access-management/333182](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/auditing-customer-identity-and-access-management/333182)

### Culture Influence on IT Governance: What We Have Learned?

Parisa Aasi, Lazar Rusuand Shengnan Han (2014). *International Journal of IT/Business Alignment and Governance* (pp. 34-49).

[www.irma-international.org/article/culture-influence-on-it-governance/110922](http://www.irma-international.org/article/culture-influence-on-it-governance/110922)