

involved in contributing content to an intranet have this role reflected in their job description.

I have thought for some time that UKeIG would be the ideal organisation to provide a platform for an exchange of ideas on intranets. Clair Pillar of the North Cumbria NHS Trust and I have come up with the idea of running some end-of-the-day discussion forums on intranets at various places around the country. The format would be to persuade a UKeIG member to host a small meeting of local intranet managers from perhaps 4pm to 6pm. Ideally it would be useful if the host organisation could demonstrate their intranet, but the main aim is just to provide an occasion for intranet managers to come in out of the cold.

We are looking for just a few volunteers in some of the larger cities to test out the idea, perhaps in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Belfast. If you would be in a position to host such an event and would like to explore the idea in more detail please email me at martin.white@intranetfocus.com, with no commitment at this stage. I would also be interested in hearing from other members if they felt that this format would be of value. I will then work with Shaيدا Dorabjee (who organises the UKeIG meetings programme) to discuss the comments I have received and hopefully the offers of assistance, and see if we can move the idea forward.

You might be interested in a new publication on intranet design and management from James Robertson, who runs Step Two Designs in Sydney and is one of the leaders in intranet management and content management. You can find details of his new Intranet Roadmap publication at <http://www.steptwo.com.au/products/roadmap/index.html> The Intranet Roadmap covers activities in five key streams: strategy, design, content, change and communications and technology. The publication is a A5-size 54 page book that is very clearly written and full of practical advice. There is also a wall-chart that summarises the approach set out in the book. The price is US\$120, and for any organisation moving out of the ad hoc phase of intranet development into something that is effective and scalable this is a small investment to make. James is keynoting the Intranets session at Online Information 2004.

Finally if you will forgive some self-promotion, early in 2005 Facet Publishing will be publishing a Content Management Handbook that I have written, which to a large extent is the text of the Content Management seminars I have been running for UKeIG for several years. It takes a project management approach to CMS implementation and in no way seeks to compete with the Content Management Bible

authored by Bob Boiko, the second edition of which is due to be released early next year as well.

Public Sector News

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What is happening in the public sector?

E-government

Business

Working with Business Your business made easy, Survey of English local authority websites from a business perspective, 2004 was conducted by SOCITM (Society of IT Management) on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. It looked at the information provided by local authorities for businesses and scored councils against 12 key areas. The overall results were deemed to be poor but the report highlights some good practice and gives some advice on how to make improvements.

Transport

Work continues to meet the Priority Service Outcomes identified by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in June. One of those is the need for all authorities to display road works information on their web site using GIS. In investigating how we are going to achieve that requirement I came across the new pilot site <http://www.transportdirect.info/> which claims to bring together road and public transport information to give you choices when planning journeys anywhere in Britain.

Planning

The Pendleton review of planning on local authority web sites was first conducted in 2003 and based on 21 criteria for the delivery of planning services online. The review was repeated in September and results have just been published on the web site <http://www.pendleton-assoc.com/>. In Warwickshire we were delighted to come top of the county councils!

Directgov, launched in April to replace UK Online is now the 8th most popular government site according to a response to a Parliamentary question (Hansard 19.10.04 Written Answers col. 614w) There were 419,916 visits in May rising to 758,149 in September. HMSO claims to receive in excess of 8

million hits a month!

Freedom of Information

Preparation for Freedom of is really hotting up with courses on offer from all sorts of bodies. It is encouraging that librarians are involved as much as they are and records management staff have suddenly become very popular people! Training is on offer on both sides of the fence with the Campaign for Freedom of Information and the National Union of Journalists offering courses for journalists and the NUJ web site carries information on how to use the Act.

ALGIS held a joint seminar with the Government Libraries Group on 14th October and many people said they found it a useful day. Our opening speaker was Maurice Frankel of the Campaign for Freedom of Information who challenged us not to take the approach of trying to identifying an exemption to cover as much of the material we hold as possible and dispose of the rest under our newly developed retention and disposal policy. He suggested that our survival depends on our attitude and that if we communicate openly with requesters we will win support whilst an obstructive approach will encourage requesters to ask for more and more!

Alex Ganotis from the Office of the Information Commissioner talked us through much of the detail of the act and helped us unravel some case studies. At last there is news on what charges will be permitted. The Constitutional Affairs secretary, Lord Falconer has announced that 'The Government will lay fees regulations before Parliament in November. There will be no charge for information that costs public bodies less than £450 to produce. And for central government, the cost ceiling will be set at £600.' He made this statement at the Society of Editor's Annual Conference on 18th October. We produced a bibliography and resource list for the ALGIS/GLG seminar and would be happy to forward a copy to anyone who is interested. It includes a reference to a new journal called Freedom of Information and more details and sample copies are available at <http://www.foij.com/>

British Library

The National Audit Office conducted a review of the British Library and its report called Providing services beyond the reading rooms (Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General HC 879 Session 2003-2004:28th July 2004) was published in July. It takes a look at the document delivery aspects of the Library's work and the challenges it faces from other suppliers and calls for a simpler pricing structure and for greater user friendliness in its online services.

The report is available on the Nation Audit Office website at <http://www.nao.org.uk/>

The British Library is taking the lead in a new project designed to take a snap shot of the web. UKWAC pronounced uckwack is a partnership involving BL, the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales, Wellcome Trust, JISC and National Archives. It aims to collect and archive sites with a UK domain and which reflect the cultural heritage of the country. For more information visit their web site <http://www.webarchive.org.uk/>

Official Publishing

If you buy government publications you may have noticed that the Scottish Parliament is now using Astron instead of TSO to publish their material and Blackwells to distribute publications, although this does not include the Acts and Statutory Instruments. Astron produces a Scottish Official Daily List and to register to receive this you need to e mail registerdetails@astron.co.uk . You may also have noticed that National Statistics material is to be handled by Palgrave Macmillan and not TSO from 1st January 2005. TSO will try to make the transitions as painless as possible and continue to supply publications from these organisations on standing order and through TSO Select.

If you have any concerns about access to these publications once the new contacts are in place do let me know so that I can raise it at the Standing Committee on Official Publishing (SCOOP).

People's Network

The next stage of the ambitious People's Network project is an online enquiry service managed by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and funded from the lottery. It will provide a 24/7 enquiry service and has already attracted 22 library services. Free seminars are being run to promote the service to library staff under the neat title of 'The Mortal in the Portal'. The service will use chat and e mail technology to deliver 'live' access to library and information professionals.

Last but not least ...

The Times covered librarianship in its series called 'Get a job as a...' and the first skill for a successful librarian is considered to be a degree of flexibility! I am sure we can all relate to that. How many of us who have been in libraries for any length of time are doing the job they expected to be doing?