

application until the software is installed and stable. However if you leave it until this point to start thinking about the issues and planning for them you will find you have a major problem on your hands and a lot of dissatisfied users. Many vendors offer some form of automated process for migrating pages, but you do need to read the small print! It is all very well being able to migrate 80% of the pages across using a software application but invariably the really important pages need to be migrated manually. The problem becomes substantially more complex when metadata has to be added to each page, and then the process really does become very slow indeed.

Migration needs to be considered right at the outset of the relaunch or redevelopment through the means of a detailed (and we are talking page-level!) audit of the site. Apart from understanding the scale of the problem you will also be able to identify ROT (Redundant, Obsolete and Trivial) pages that have no business being on the web site at all. An important element of the planning process is deciding who is going to do the migration. It could mean a very significant workload for an individual web manager or department.

Intranet governance will be seen as an important success factor

When you start to dig into the reasons for intranets failing to meet success criteria it almost always comes down to governance. No one is really in charge, there is no mechanism to set standards and good practice and monitor conformance, it is unclear whether intranet contribution should be an element in a job description, and overall everyone assumes that the intranet is someone else's responsibility. The fault lines really start to appear when a CMS implementation is planned.

Many organisations have encouraged individual departments or subsidiaries to set up their own intranets on the basis that in that way the intranet will meet the needs of a specific user group. All that then happens is that information silos are created and overall the organisation probably has reduced access to information and knowledge. One pharmaceutical company I know has around 700 intranets, but no one is sure how many, and of even greater concern no one is sure which sites are spidered by the search engine. The result is that no one really trusts the 'intranet' to deliver, and the road to information perdition becomes a six-lane highway.

Many organisations are now starting to consolidate their intranets, and there was an excellent example of this given by Helen Day of Boots at the Online Conference. Indeed the example was so good that

Helen won the Online Information 2004 award for the best intranet project. The basic concept is one of federated intranets, where there are some common standards relating to information architecture etc and a degree of conformity at the top levels of each intranet, but without strangling the enthusiasm of individual intranet teams to provide solutions for their specific users.

Public Sector News

Column Editor: Jane Inman,
Warwickshire County Council and Chair of the
Affiliation of Local Government Information
Specialists (ALGIS in LARIA).
E-mail: janeinman@warwickshire.gov.uk

Another year begins and in the public sector it brings the beginning of the Freedom of Information Act and the beginning of the year in which we should be fully e-enabled.

Freedom of Information

As I write it is still too early to know what impact the Freedom of Information Act will have. Predictions of demand assume use by journalists, campaigners and those who are not happy with the way a local authority or government department has handled an issue. In other countries huge departments have evolved to manage the workload and horror stories abound. Will it be the same here?

After some very last minute decisions the question of fees was finally settled and a Statutory Instrument laid before parliament on 9th December 2004, Statutory Instrument 3244 Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees Regulations) 2004. In local government we are required to supply up to £450 worth of information retrieval before we can begin to charge and in central government the figure is £600 and is based on costs of £25 per hour. It will be interesting to see if anyone is prepared to pay this to obtain the information they want. Is it possible that there may be times when paying us to do the research at this rate may be a cheaper option than doing the research themselves for firms of consultants or similar?

Press coverage since the beginning of the year has included news of the Conservatives submitting questions to the government in areas where they would hope to cause serious embarrassment as a minimum and discredit if possible. Local elections will take place in May and will local politicians do the same?

For us and I suspect other authorities the main issue with Freedom of Information has been the need to make sure that all staff are aware that they could receive a request and to know how they will recognise one when it arrives as it doesn't have to mention the Act. The difficult message to communicate has been that the many enquiries we receive daily should as far as possible be managed as before but we need to be looking out for the Freedom of Information requests. If my experience so far is typical then people do seem to mention the Act when requesting information.

CILIP (The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) has provided guidance on Freedom of Information on their web site at <http://www.cilip.org.uk/professionalguidance/foi/webresources>. The Information Commissioner's web site has a set of documents called Awareness Guidance which are useful particularly for understanding the exemptions and can be found here <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/eventual.aspx?id=1024> The Department of Constitutional Affairs has also produced guidance on its web site (www.dca.gov.uk) and the FoI material is at <http://www.foi.gov.uk/index.htm>

Environmental Information Regulations 2004
Environmental Information Regulations have been in place since 1992 (EIRs) but were re-issued as the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 to bring them into line with the Freedom of Information Act. The current regulations are managed by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) but the new EIRS will be managed by the Information Commissioner. Any request for information must be considered under the Freedom of Information Act but environmental information is exempt under Section 39 of the FoI Act and must be dealt with in line with the Environmental Information regulations 2004.

The EIRs include a duty to disseminate environmental information as well as to respond to requests for information. The Local Government Association have produced a guide called Accessing environmental information: a practical guide to the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 which may be ordered from their web site at www.lga.gov.uk

Public Sector Information
One aspect of the Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Information Regulations is the encouragement to publish more of the information we hold both in central and local government. The FoI Publication Schemes were a move toward making more available. There is also an EU Directive on the re-use of public sector information which should become part of UK legislation by July

2005. A consultation has begun and will run until 18th March 2005 and you can find details on the HMSO web site at www.hmso.gov.uk/psi/eudpsi-consultations.htm The legislation would encourage the sale of data to third parties who would add value and publish the information. This could provide income generation opportunities for local and central government.

E-government
According to figures commissioned by Sx3, a supplier of IT services to local government, two thirds of local authority IT managers who were surveyed recently were confident the e-government targets would be met. We are now in 2005 and by the end of this year should have everything that can be e-enabled in place. We also have Priority Service Outcomes to meet and the 'required' ones of these must be completed by December. For the 'good' targets we have until the end of March 2006. These were published in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Defining e-government outcomes for 2005 to support the delivery of priority services and national strategy transformation agenda for local authorities in England which you can find at www.odpm.gov.uk/pns/pnattach/20040112/1.doc

Metadata
Metadata describes an electronic resource just as a catalogue entry describes a book. As part of the provision of metadata a taxonomy is needed and there has been considerable confusion about what terms to use for the subject category of metadata for government and local government information. We had the Government Category List (GCL) and then the Local Government Category List (LGCL) as well as the seamlessuk thesaurus but there is now a Vocabulary Merger Project underway. The product of this work will be known as the Integrated Public Sector Vocabulary although it began its life as the Merged Public Sector Vocabulary.

You can track progress on this work on the web site of the Local e-Government Standards Body (www.legsb.gov.uk) where you can read the scoping report for the project at <http://www.legsb.gov.uk/index.asp?pgid=3672> The Local e-Government Standards Body is a national project funded by the ODPM and aims to bring together all the standards developed to help achieve e-government delivery.

Public Libraries
The Department for Culture Media and Sport presented a report to Parliament on Public Library Matters in November. You can find the report at <http://www.culture.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/etnot2mq66xsa4nodarp2mkmi5ub40e7ib44djvshjnlwciwihauad7ezg753mdpy3mcrcs4zgfslk6g5ii7ii4cded/>

[LibrariesReporttoParliament04.pdf](#)

An enquiry into public libraries is being conducted by the Commons Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport. Evidence was received from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, the Society of Chief Librarians, the Audit Commission and the Advisory Council on Libraries on 30th November. On 14th December evidence was given by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the Local Government Association, Jacqueline Wilson, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Department of Education and Science and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Notice of the committee was very short and the organisations who gave evidence are to be congratulated on preparing representations within the time. You can read the uncorrected transcripts of evidence on the Parliament web site at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmcmds/uc81-i/uc8101.htm> and <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmcmds/uc81-ii/uc8101.htm>

Scanning through the uncorrected evidence it seems that the debate touched on a broad spectrum of issues including the importance of books, the skills needed in public libraries and the percentage of professional staff, free access to the Peoples' Network and the digital divide, the government departments with responsibility for libraries and where the lead should come from, links between school library provision and public libraries, reductions in the levels of borrowing, improvements in buildings, comparisons with bookshops, the role of CILIP and much more. Certainly worth a browse as all the topics of the day for librarians seem to have been touched upon.

Reference Management

Column Editor: Tracy Kent; e-mail: t.k.kent@bham.ac.uk

Beyond bibliographic references : keeping track of your ideas as well as your references

A criticism of reference software is that they often are unable to hold more than the basic bibliographic data and a few links back out to the full text. This makes it difficult to then keep track of ideas and research pathways without using lots of paper. There are, though, a number of packages around which try to help in this idea generation and brain

storming of references. Listed are a few examples but if you have one you would particularly recommend please do pass them on.....

Literary Machine

Literary Machine is a form of graphic organiser, built on the principle of index cards, that can also link with Word. This links back to particular citations which then link further ideas and notes. It has a number of indexing and display techniques that allows a networking and hierarchical organisation scheme for categorising information. The fuzzy thinking kernel allows you to work with pure or hybrid concepts. You can assign items to a project or topic as well, arranging projects or topics in a hierarchical or tree like structure.

Further details from

<http://www.sommestad.com/lm.htm>

The Brain

The brain (www.thebrain.com) gives you the capability to dynamically create a knowledge base with nodes and multiple relationships between documents. It enables you to link files, documents, and Web pages across applications and network boundaries. The Brain illustrates how information is related, provides a visual context for documents and data, and offers a framework for collaboration. By connecting all relevant data sources in a way that reflects your thinking and the underlying processes behind the information, BrainEKP collapses the time to knowledge as demonstrated in this picture below



Ibidem and Orbis

Nota bene is actually three separate, but seamlessly integrated programs: a full-featured word processor (Nota Bene), a bibliographic database manager (Ibidem) and a note-taking and text-retrieval program designed for managing a career's worth of notes (Orbis). In addition, a fourth module (IbidPlus) extends the functionality of Ibidem to provide a customizable database program you can tailor to