

(and *How to Fix Them*)⁹ remains the only book published this century on intranet management, and is well worth acquiring and reading even by those who feel that their intranet is in good shape. It might be now, but next year...? (www.chandospublishing.com ISBN 1-84334-068-2).

Finally, in this round up of intranet-related resources do have a look at the Gilbane web site at <http://www.gilbane.com/articles.html> . The reports listed here are all free of charge, and are exceptionally well written.

Public Sector

E-Government

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As I write, we have just two months to go before we reach the golden age when all local authorities are 100% e-enabled. At this stage, it is encouraging to read the headline "E-Gov will not fail, vows minister". This is quoting Jim Murphy, e-Government minister, and appeared in *Public Servant* (21st September 2005) The confidence of the minister stems from what he learned from a tour of community-based IT projects that he believes allow the government to deliver its 'choice' agenda. The visits made were also referred to in a Parliamentary debate on e-Government held on 13th October 2005. Mr Murphy cited examples of

situations where IT is making a difference to lives and giving people access to government information and services. The main aim of e-Government is to provide customer-centred services, but it is recognised that there are savings to be made and challenges to be faced.

It is good to take stock and consider just how much has changed in the way local and central government provide information to citizens, and how they interact with them electronically. There is doubtless a long way to go and there was enough to debate for the session to last nearly three hours! The Hansard reference is 13th October 2005 Column 143WH (as the debate took place in Westminster Hall), and you can find this by going to the Parliament website <http://www.parliament.uk>.

The debate made reference to the publication of the government's IT strategy, which was issued on 2nd November. Called *Transformational Government*, you can access the strategy at <http://www.cio.gov.uk>. In it, the government sets out how it will improve delivery of public services in ways that fit with people's lifestyles. The technology and services will be designed around the needs of the public and will tackle security issues, seek greater efficiency through reducing duplication and improve the planning and delivery of IT projects. Customer Service Directors will be appointed to represent groups of users and ensure their needs are met and are joined up across government. There is also recognition of the importance of mobile phones and digital TV, especially when reaching those who could be considered as socially excluded. Linked to this the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has produced a report called *Inclusion through innovation: tackling social exclusion through new technologies*. A

⁹ This book is reviewed in the book reviews section of this issue of Elucidate.

Social Exclusion Unit Final Report.
(<http://www.socialexclusion.gov.uk>)

The take-up of local e-Government services is essential if all the work in this area is to be worthwhile. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has therefore commissioned a 'feasibility study into undertaking a national campaign to promote the take-up of local e-services early in 2006.' The ODPM local e-Government programme can be found at <http://www.localgov.gov.uk>

In 2003, only 18% of the UK population were using e-Government services and by 2004, this number had risen by only 6%. This compares to a minimum of 40% in 2003 in Australia, Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand and the US, according to research carried out by Taylor Nelson Sofres and quoted by Helen Margetts of the Oxford Internet Institute, when speaking at the IDeA e-Champions Conference.

Government web sites

A recent survey of 42 British and Irish government web sites conducted by iQ Content (<http://www.iQcontent.com>) rated most British sites as good, whereas more than a third of the Irish ones were considered poor. Improvement is still needed if government sites are to catch up with commercial sites, and the survey identified failings in understanding the users, developing good navigation and in keeping content updated. (*Benchmarking e-Government websites in the UK and Ireland: Who's getting it right? (And why?)*)
http://www.iqcontent.com/publications/reports/article_43/

A new government web site has been developed to provide a directory of public services for the most vulnerable in our community. The directory has

been established to back up the Supporting People programme of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. This programme aims to provide a stable environment for the vulnerable such as the elderly, teenage parents or victims of domestic violence, and the directory will help to match people with the right services to meet their needs. It includes 150 local authorities and 20 thousand service providers
(<http://www.spkweb.org.uk>).

Procurement

In the public sector, if you offer a contract above a certain value it must be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEC). Currently the process used means that it takes 12 days for the advertisement to appear in TED, the EU Tenders Electronic Daily. From the end of October, new online forms have been made available and details of the contract will appear on TED in just five days. The new forms take account of other changes to the procurement process such as allowing for framework agreements and electronic reverse auctions etc. as specified by Directives 2004/18/EC and 2004/17/EC. You can find the forms at <http://www.simap.eu.int>.

Enquire, Discover, Read

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) has launched its online enquiry service, which operates 24 hours a day and provides answers to questions either through live chat or by e-mail. The 24-hour coverage is provided by cooperative arrangements with Canada and America.
<http://www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk>

Statutory Instruments

If you need to access Statutory Instruments online through the web site

of the Office of Public Sector Information, you may have noticed a change in the way they appear. From Statutory Instrument No. 2670, issued in September 2005, there are now three entries for each one. This is because there is now a web or html version, a pdf and explanatory notes. In fact, from October all new legislation is being provided as a pdf due to public demand. <http://www.opsi.gov.uk>

Public Sector News is supplied by ALGIS (The Affiliation of Local Government Information Specialists) which represents information professionals providing information services to local authority staff and elected members. Jane Inman is currently Chair of ALGIS. For more information go to <http://www.algis.org.uk>

Current Awareness

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This column contains summaries of articles (print and electronic) about information access and retrieval, electronic publishing, preservation and virtual libraries etc. including, with permission, abstracts identified with an * next to the author initials, drawn from *Current Cites*, the monthly publication distributed electronically by a team of Librarians and Library Staff and edited by Roy Tennant
(<http://lists.webjunction.org/currentcites/>)

If you are interested in providing reviews for the Column, please contact Jane Grogan for further details.

Content Management

Austin, Marcus. **Big Blue sets its sights on market dominance.**
Information World Review, 215

(July/August 2005): 8-11 – This article looks at how IBM has been buying into the Enterprise Content Management (ECM) sector. The author looks at the strategic acquisitions that have been made, and speaks to IBM about their plans to develop further in this sector, including the scope of ECM in searching and in e-mail management in the light of users everywhere requesting something 'as quick and easy to use as Google'. – [RN]

Education

Seaman, Scott. **Another Great Dissolution? The Privatization of Public Universities and the Academic Library.** – *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 31(4) (July 2005): 305-309. – Grim tidings are portrayed on the financial front as states gradually disengage from supporting institutions of higher learning. The changing financial environment, from public to private sources, begins then to change the nature and priorities of the institutions themselves. Needless to say, libraries are left with the short end of the stick. – [*LRK]

Electronic Publishing

Cole, Louise. **"A Journey into E-Resource Administration Hell"** *Serials Librarian* 49(1/2) (2005): 141-154. – Hair-raising jaunt through the "horrors" of managing e-resources, primarily subscription-based, that face an academic library in the 21st century. The author's tongue-in-cheek style makes palatable what otherwise must be a challenging situation. On display is a system so complicated that vendors can't tell what they hold, whether you're subscribed to it and, er, when it's expected to come back online. – [*LRK]

Correia, Ana Maria Ramalho and Teixeira, Jose Carlos. **Reforming**