

Meeting Report: What's on your home page?

22 June 2006; Intranets forum meeting, Trades Union Congress, London,

For the first intranets forum we started (where else?) with intranet home pages.

Helen Davies, Information Manager, Trades Union Congress

For Helen Davies, Information Manager, Trades Union Congress, the intranet (ToUChbase) is just one of her responsibilities, and the design and structure were already in place when she joined the TUC.

The intranet is the default page when staff open their browsers; the Google search box on the home is a trade-off for those staff that previously had Google. Helen invited us to say what attracted our attention on the home page. For most it was the size of the navigation banner and the tickertape news feed. The current home page requires scrolling – other attendees had similarly long home pages, but we wondered whether it was considered a detriment these days. The structure of the intranet is a mixture of procedural and organisational.

Useful features include:

- Link from the People Finder (the staff directory) to the HR system, allowing staff to book annual leave etc;
- A 'My ToUChbase' feature so staff can save regularly visited pages.

Helen has identified areas for improvement:

- the quick search feature does an automatic Boolean 'or';
- The site map is rarely used; it is automatically generated and is perhaps hard to decipher.

Any TUC staff can add announcements, unmoderated. This has not caused difficulties, and if anything were to cause concern, the name of the person who posted it would be clearly visible. For each of these an email can be generated, and you choose the groups of staff it goes to; the URL and summary is inserted into the email for you.

A Spotlight feature is used to highlight new information – two new items are added per week.

Janet Corcoran, Web Content and Resources Officer, Imperial College London Library Staff Intranet

The library staff intranet serves about 160 staff across the Central Library, department libraries and campus libraries. It cannot be accessed by anyone who does not work in the Library.

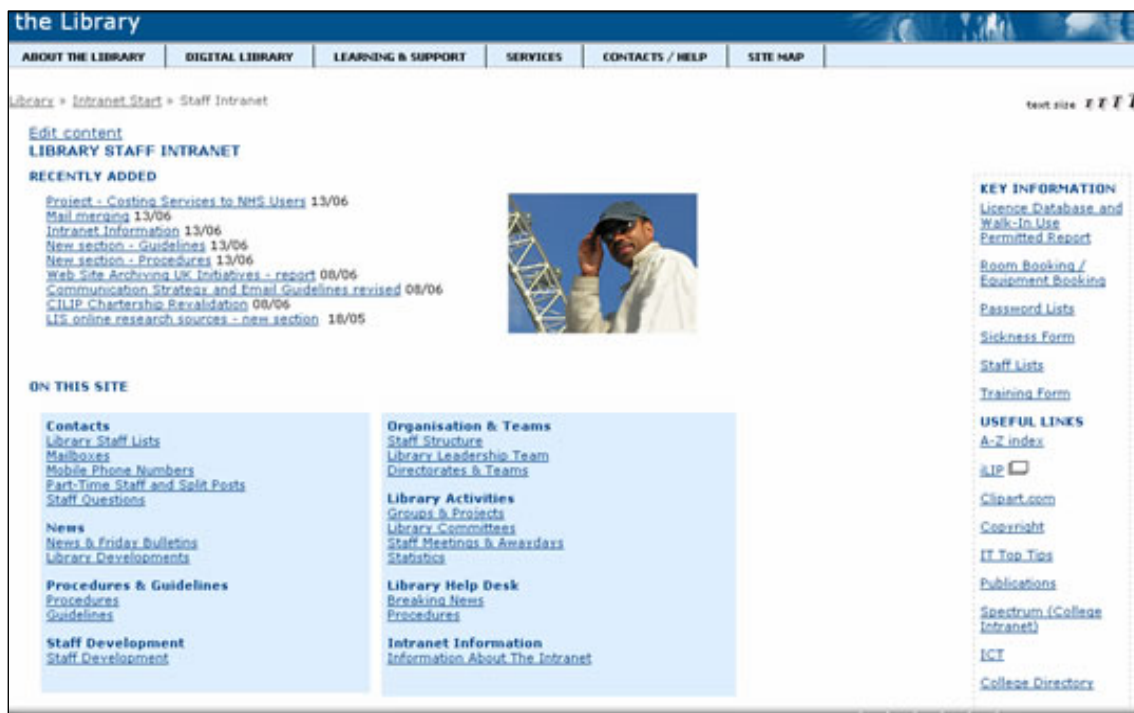


Figure 1: Home Page

The intranet [Figure 1] is a sub section of the main library website, and is accessed through a link from the home page. The link is hidden so that users do not feel that there might be secret information that they are not privy to. The padlock indicates that a password will be required to enter it. Staff use their main College username and password. In contrast to the TUC the library staff intranet is called just that. The previous name, "Staffstuff", did not stick.

Janet maintains the intranet and inputs all the content. The College websites run on a content management system, so it is very easy to edit pages. An Intranet Group made up of staff of various levels and from all sections of the library reviews the pages periodically.

When new staff start they take part in an induction programme and are taught about the intranet at one of the sessions. Staff are encouraged to use it to locate current information that is of relevance to everyone. They use the intranet in conjunction with other forms of communication (a weekly staff bulletin, website, email, shared drives and email public folders) and have a communication strategy that details the purpose of each method of communication.

Some of the sections are getting quite full, and some of the information is out of date, so the intranet team are in the process of creating a small archive, where they will store certain types of file that might be useful in the future: this will include news bulletins, meeting minutes, statistics, and completed projects.

The structure of the content is based on the staff structure in that each team has a section that contains information about them, as well as their guidelines and procedures. Some of this information is then linked to from other pages to give more than one point of access. Links to other sections are particularly useful or important have been identified on the homepage.

There is no search facility because the CMS cannot search secure pages, so Janet has created an A-Z index (well received by staff) and has tried to keep the structure simple.

An interesting feature was the searchable library bulletins. These are pdfs, and the search searches on the indexed content [Figure 2].

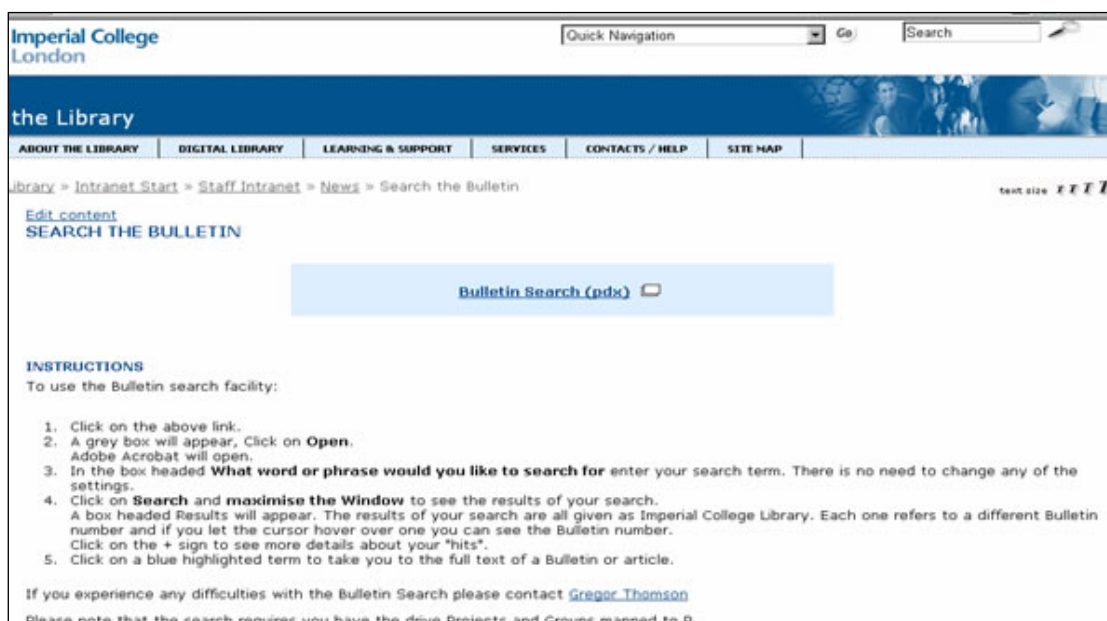


Figure 2: Bulletin search (pdfs)

One well used feature is **Breaking News**, maintained by the library helpdesk [Figure 3].

Imperial College London

Quick Navigation Go Search

the Library

ABOUT THE LIBRARY | DIGITAL LIBRARY | LEARNING & SUPPORT | SERVICES | CONTACTS / HELP | SITE MAP

Library » Intranet Start » Staff Intranet » Breaking News text size **TTT**

[Edit content](#)

BREAKING NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY HELP DESK

[SFX on Google](#) | [Reference Manager](#) | [Central Library Moves](#) | [Georef](#) | [New Jstor Link](#) | [Royal Brompton Journals](#) | [Theses](#)

REFERENCE MANAGER

This appears to be a new problem. If a user tries to import new references into their database and each time gets an error message and the whole program shuts down even using different databases and import text files. Check if they have the Reference Manager 10.0.1 version and have recently upgraded to WindowsXP. Although Reference Manager 10 normally works with XP there does appear to be a compatibility issue in this case. If the user has a Imperial College PC they can upgrade to Reference Manager 11 which is compatible with XP at no cost to themselves. (16.06.06)

SFX ON GOOGLE SCHOLAR

David has got Google Scholar to enable a link to our SFX holdings. Google won't show a button or icon, instead you see a text link: SFX@Imperial. Google has a list of our active holdings so the link only appears where we can supply full-text. They have also been supplied with our IP address ranges so the link appears automatically for users on the College network. Off campus users can use the Find Library option in Scholar Preferences to search for Imperial. (16.06.06)

CENTRAL LIBRARY MOVES

There will be a list of collection moves in the Helpdesk Diary and a shortcut on each desktop.

Helen Buchanan has confirmed the following theses have been transferred to Silwood Park from the A-Z Stack. They are now available via ILL.

Reference copy MBA's up to 1999
Phd's up to 2000

Still in the A-Z stack and available via store service.

SEE ALSO

- [SFX & E-Journals Problems](#)
- [E-Resources Problems](#)
- [Printer Problems](#)
- [IT Problems](#)
- [Guest Logins](#)
- [Other](#)

Figure 3: Breaking news from the Library Help Desk

The intranet is marketed by training new staff to use it, highlighting new sections on the homepage and advertising new additions in the weekly staff bulletin. They had a birthday party for it a year after its launch.

Ruth Hilbourne, Information Officer, Peter Brett Associates

Ruth's approach to showing us this intranet was to deconstruct each column of the homepage at Peter Brett Associates (PBA), consulting engineers. She recommended use of the intranet review toolkit, free to download at <http://www.intranetreviewtoolkit.org>, written by James Robertson of Step Two.

The PBA intranet [Figure Four] is named Desktools, and the logo is intended to portray a collection of tools used from the desktop; it appears on every page of the intranet. The top tabs are the company's key specialisms, and contain information specific to each division.

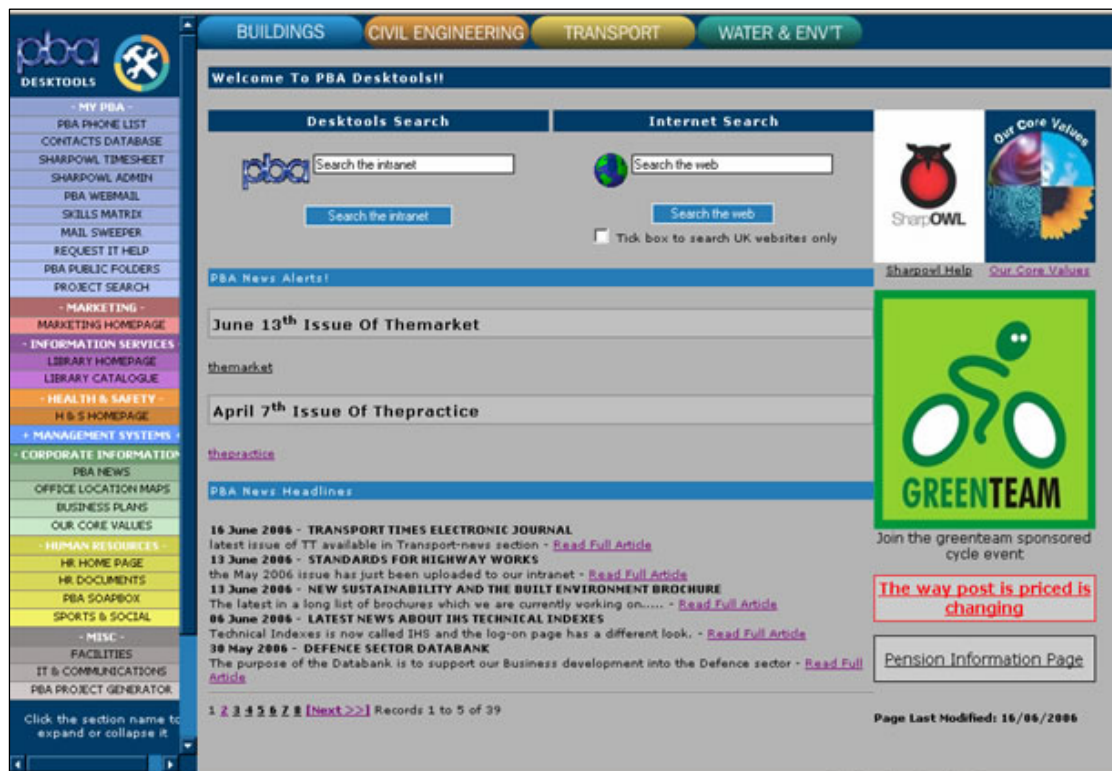


Figure 4: PBA Desktools

- The My PBA menu contains the core company information
- Effort has been made to group the links into relevant categories
- The menu has relevance to every single member of the company
- The menu has been colour co-ordinated to make it more attractive and appealing to users
- There is a large area in the middle devoted to news and trusted information, updated regularly.

Search

- Internal and external search facility option
- The internal search is powered by a “Google Box” that indexes every four hours
- The homepage is the only page to display these search facilities.

The area on the right hand side is used to highlight important messages. The bright thumbnails are eye catching but Ruth felt that this area could do with a re-think. The intranet has been created in-house, and does not use a content management system. The company has a soapbox feature, unmoderated. Only once has intervention been needed.

Key points about PBA Desktools

- Efforts have been made to organise and de-clutter the page
- Good use of colour and well organised menu
- Lacks strong brand identity and looks slightly dated
- An in-house product with many innovative features

I work for the National Health Service and it was fascinating to see three very different intranets. All had useful features that I could apply to the intranets I work on.

Questions we came away with:

- Are site maps useful – and when?
- Are ticker tape news feeds a draw or do they put people off?

Our thanks to Helen Davies at the TUC for hosting the meeting, and to Helen, Janet Corcoran and Ruth Hilbourne for sharing their intranet home pages at this meeting.

Claire Pillar, UKeiG Management Committee Web Liaison, Web Coordinator, North Cumbria NHS Informatics Service

Intranets forum: next meetings

We are organising the next meeting in London for late September at Imperial College London, on the theme of intranets for academia. Details will be on the members' area of the UKeiG website at <http://www.ukeig.org.uk/members/index.html> and we will notify the date on LIS-UKEIG. If you would like to be notified directly, please contact Claire Pillar, UKeiG Website Liaison at Claire.pillar@ncumbria-acute.nhs.uk

Calling Yorkshire intranets

We have an offer to host a meeting in the Wakefield/ Leeds area. If you would like to come to a meeting in the area, please contact Claire Pillar as above.

Small and medium legal intranets

We have members interested in having a meeting about small and medium legal intranets. Are you interested and can you help? Please contact Claire Pillar as above.

Factsheets

Luke Tredinnick compiled a Top tips for taming your intranet factsheet following the course he led in March. It is now available on the website in the members' area at http://www.ukeig.org.uk/members/access/factsheets/intranet_tips.html