

Meeting Reports

Knowledge Management at the Environment Agency

On Friday 12th December, a small but enthusiastic UKeIG Intranet Managers Forum met at the Environment Agency's head office in Bristol to look at its new intranet and wiki project.

Matt Thomas, Head of Knowledge Management, gave a broad overview of the work of the Environment Agency, and the importance of knowledge management in such a large and diverse organisation.

Jonathan Connor, Interactive Content Manager, gave a presentation on the planning and execution of a major restructure of their intranet (Easinet), from a huge site based on an organisational structure, to a more streamlined and user-focused task-based format. Jonathan's team carried out user surveys to identify the most common tasks that people used the intranet for. This revealed that although the organisation employs a wide range of professions, most of the intranet traffic was based on the needs of a small number of user types. As a result, they developed three personas: new starter, environment officer and manager. The site was primarily designed around the needs of these users, and was extensively tested by hundreds of users. As a result, the number of content pages was reduced from 50,000 to 7,000, and the number of publishers from 700 to 100. Following successful migration of the intranet, the process was repeated for the Environment Agency website. Again, personas were used for this, based on the needs of visitors. It finally went live the weekend before the presentation!

Jackie Bowater, Knowledge Officer, gave a brief demonstration of the library pages on Easinet.

Finally Liane Bradbrook, Project Manager, talked about the wiki knowledge management project. The Environment Agency's glossary of terms and acronyms is currently held in a flat database of nearly 10,000 records. The plan is to use the wiki to make the glossary interactive, and to encourage users to add to it. There will also be user-driven "how to" guides and "lessons learned". A pilot scheme involving 200 users is currently underway. All sessions generated plenty of questions and discussions.

Jackie Bowater, Environment Agency

Intranets Forum meetings are free to UKeIG members. The following sessions are planned for 2009:

Thursday 19th February, 14:30 – 16:30: What would an intranet be like if it was designed by a librarian?

Wednesday 22nd April 14:30 – 16:30: SharePoint

Please contact Janet Corcoran j.m.corcoran@imperial.ac.uk for further details about the Forum, or to attend one of our events.

UKeIG has an informal network and mailing list, The Intranets Forum, which holds free informal meetings every two months. This is open to all UKeIG members.