

Intranets

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Over the last few months there seems to have been a rapid growth in organisations looking to migrate their intranet to Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007, or MOSS07 as it is colloquially known. At the excellent IntraTeam Intranet Conference in Denmark in March 2009, over 80 per cent of delegates were managing intranets in an organisation implementing Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 (MOSS07). The 2009 Global Intranet Trends survey from NetStrategyJMC (<http://netstrategyjmc.com>) indicated that 55% of respondents were either implementing, or planned to implement MOSS07 in 2009.

These are just two indications of the level of adoption of this product worldwide, where it is estimated that Microsoft has sold over 100 million seat licenses. As a result an increasing number of intranet managers are finding that IT departments are targeting them as potential high-visibility users of the Web content management, search and collaboration capabilities of the product. Indeed, in principle, MOSS07 would be an ideal intranet platform, ignoring for the moment the problems of migrating content from the current content management application to MOSS07.

Already some MOSS07-based intranets have been selected for the Nielsen Norman Intranet Design Awards 2009, and many others are in the process of development, even if only at the pilot stage at present.

As a departmental solution, MOSS07 is regarded as offering good value for the required investment in licences and development, as it provides users with an integrated package of enterprise and Web content management, search, records management, business intelligence and forms management. MOSS07 is an integrated suite of applications designed to work together. None of these applications offer the levels of functionality and performance that would be expected from individual products from specialised vendors.

The challenge for intranet managers is to balance the benefits of an integrated suite of applications against the investment that has already been made in other content management, collaboration and search applications. It is very important to recognise that MOSS07 is not an out-of-the-box application; it is more of a development platform where the project team needs to be business-led, but have very close relationship with the development team.

Like all enterprise applications, the only certain way to get the best out of MOSS07 is to devote appropriate resources, time and vision to planning before launching a pilot

application, to confirm that an investment in MOSS07 is being put to good use. Microsoft recognises this, and provides a range of checklists and governance documentation to support planning.

Steps for building governance into MOSS07:

<http://office.microsoft.com/download/afile.aspx?AssetID=AM102321871033>

Framework for a SharePoint governance plan:

<http://office.microsoft.com/download/afile.aspx?AssetID=AM102310201033>

Key governance considerations in a SharePoint deployment:

<http://blogs.msdn.com/joelo/archive/2006/08/23/key-governance-considerations-in-a-sharepoint-deployment.aspx>

Governance checklist guide:

<http://office.microsoft.com/download/afile.aspx?AssetID=AM102306291033>

MOSS07 is still, in Microsoft terms, in the early stages of development. Over the next few years the product will continue to develop to meet market requirements, and also to integrate more easily with current and planned Microsoft products such as Windows 7 and Office 14. Even at this early stage a number of critical success factors that have emerged from the early adopters of MOSS07. Four are of paramount importance:

- MOSS07 should only be implemented when it will demonstrably meet the current and anticipated needs of users, and not because the organisation has purchased a licence.
- Carry out the level of detailed planning that would be carried out for any enterprise application. Any failure to plan ahead is likely to result in the need to undertake an extensive and expensive re-build at a later date.
- The development process should be carried out with very close links between business and IT departments, around the world if required.
- Do not assume that because MOSS07 meets departmental or other small-scale deployments it will be both easy and beneficial to roll it out across the enterprise.

If you would like to learn more about MOSS07 and find out about a further 16 critical success factors, then I am giving a workshop on SharePoint for Intranets at the Thistle, City Hotel, Barbican on the 21st May. <http://www.ukeig.org.uk/training/2009/May/SharePoint.html>
No technical knowledge of MOSS07 is required.