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A CIO's Guide to the Unified *Digital Workplace*

Defining the
Digital Workplace

What exactly is the "digital workplace"? It depends on who you ask. Gartner describes it as an ongoing, deliberate approach to delivering a more consumer-like computing environment that is better able to facilitate innovative and flexible working practices. Put simply, it's a unified workplace where tech-based solutions and tools allow employees to be productive, creative and engaged at any time, in any place.

Addressing disparate locations, apps, and aptitudes

Sometimes we forget how much the internet has changed our lives over the last 20 years. On a business level, it's redefined the way we work and the tools we use to get work done.

And while digitizing processes to save time and money makes good business sense, innovation always comes with challenges.

In the same workplace, you may have people who grew up well before the advent of email alongside those who can't remember life before smartphones. Millennials (who will make up **half the global workforce by 2020**) often have superior digital fluency compared with their older counterparts, so they may choose different technology in their personal lives. But both groups have to collaborate seamlessly at work. They need a common digital destination that bridges generational tech preferences, boosts collaboration, and fosters peak productivity.

According to **GlobalWorkplaceAnalytics.com**, more than three million full-time employees in the US now work from home, up to 25 per cent of the global workforce telecommutes regularly, and people spend 50 to 60 per cent of their day away from their desks. Workers are no longer in the same place at the same time, and that physical disjointedness extends to the digital world as well. Today, employees juggle IT-approved productivity apps like Office 365 alongside personal productivity tools like Dropbox to communicate and collaborate. But without a way to bring critical tools together, multiple platforms and apps can actually overwhelm people.

In a **Global Software Survey** by research and advisory firm Forrester, almost half of all respondents felt that the tools they had access to were too specific to be used effectively. The larger issue? Employees didn't have a unified access point for the tools they needed.

The costs add up when apps go underutilized, data turns nomadic, and new solutions (often expensive ones) are abandoned. It can have crippling effects on productivity, employee engagement, security, and the pace of innovation.

Peak productivity?

A recent **Harvard Business Review** study found that, while productivity skyrocketed in the 1990s and early 2000s, it's been in decline every year since 2007. Why? The authors suggest that because technological breakthroughs have driven down the cost of connecting, the volume of messages we now exchange makes it nearly impossible to get anything done.

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Containing the sprawl, and putting it to work

Addressing these challenges and re-wiring your workplace is just as much about the people as it is the technology. It's about modernizing your culture, values, and ways of working.

A people-first approach to the digital workplace encourages engagement, and engaged employees are productive employees.

Streamlining workflows allows people to spend less time on routine tasks and projects. They become more efficient and more productive, which reduces costs and increases profits as jobs are finished faster and products get to market earlier.

And a single point-of-access connects people to each other, to your organization's processes, and to the information they need most.

How do you make all this happen? Through a next-generation intranet portal.

Not your mom and dad's intranet

Intranet is a legacy term, and for most people it comes with some baggage. The first one you experienced was probably dull and disused – a place for files and internal messages to retire to, and not much more.

Times have changed. A next-generation intranet portal is sleek, fluid and social, a mission-critical tool to bring disparate apps together. A tool that was once little more than an IT-sanctioned document store or link farm is now a sophisticated digital destination that connects the entire organization – across borders, boundaries and organizational structures.

A modern intranet can unify existing solutions and third-party applications. It gives people easy access to the information, processes, and other people they need to get work done, within the context of the project or task at hand.

Key intranet business drivers

Business processes

Work instructions, procedures, processes, workflow.

Knowledge management

Document & content management, search taxonomy, tagging of content.

Environment

Process automation, telecommuting, webinars, less printing.

New ideas & improvements

Discussion forums, online suggestions.

Collaboration

Staff directory, discussion forums, team rooms, document and content management.

Data & applications

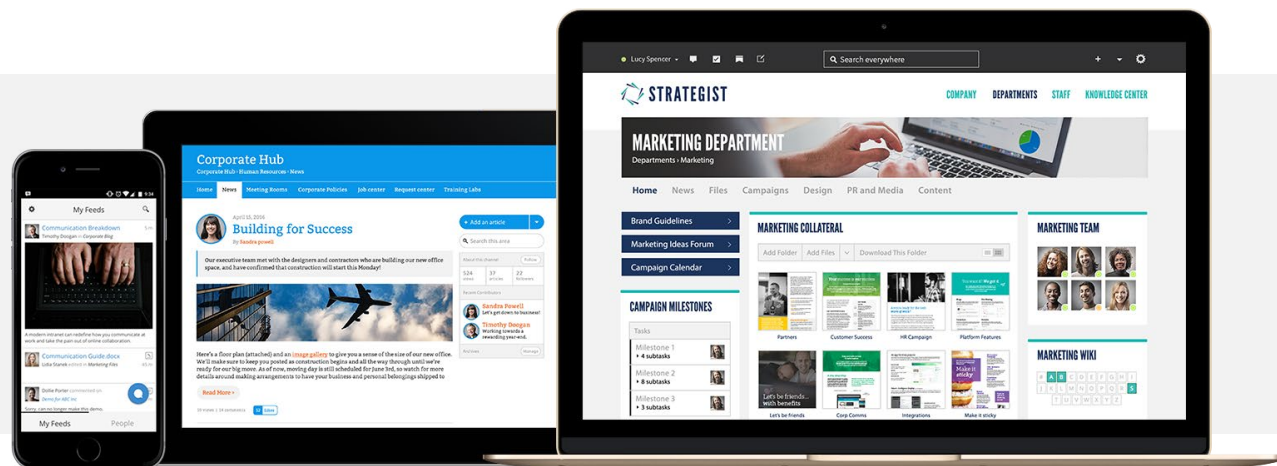Application directory, intranet lists, front end access to corporate data (eg. SAP, Oracle).

Change management

Alerts, news items, page updates.

Employee engagement

News, wikis, blogs, communications.

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It has all the *features* you need

A modern intranet has built-in features that are dynamic, familiar, and easy to use. Plus, it integrates with leading cloud apps so you can keep all your work in one place.

Blogs

Share news, updates, and reports with your employees or customers.

Calendars

Post events, coordinate schedules, and keep track of who's in or out of the office.

File Sharing

Share files, preview documents, and manage permissions in context.

Forums

Have discussions, propose ideas, ask questions, and solve problems. Together.

Gamification

Build a points and badges system to encourage participation on the intranet.

Newsfeeds

Give quick status updates, share links, and more. It's a quick way to connect with your colleagues.

People Directory

Locate experts inside your organization with knowledge, skills, and abilities to help you do your job.

Search

Find anything in your intranet. All files, content, and personal profiles are searchable.

Social

Enable conversations by adding the ability to like, rate, and comment on any type of content.

Spaces

Create public or private spaces for teams, departments, or committees to collaborate.

Tasks

Track to-do's from a meeting, request changes on a document, or create a reminder to pick up cake for the office.

Wikis

Document processes, policies, and other indexed bits of information that change over time.

App Integrations

Access your file sharing, messaging, and other business apps from right inside your intranet.

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How a modern intranet benefits the whole organization

A modern intranet portal stands to benefit everyone in your company. Let's take a look at just a few of the ways it helps three key audiences:

IT: More control, fewer headaches

Manage, track and optimize

Providing centralized access to the tools and apps employees love allows IT to manage and track how people are using them. Tools that aren't getting traction can be removed or replaced. And with all IT-approved apps under one roof, employees don't need to go rogue, which tightens security, eliminates redundant file storage, and saves money.

Offload basic tasks

An intranet that's been optimized for ease-of-use allows employees to self-manage forums, blogs, and discussion threads, saving IT (and help-desk) time and effort.

Leave it to the vendor

If you're deploying a cloud-based solution from a vendor you trust, you don't have to worry about software updates, version upgrades, new security threats, or authentication hassles (trusted employees can log in safely from any device using their existing work credentials).

Employees: All the key tools under one convenient roof

Go social to save time

When you include familiar social media features in your intranet portal, employees can connect with each other in an informal, intuitive way. This helps build bonds at work, can cut meeting times, and eliminates the need for dozens of reply-all emails.

Share knowledge and keep work moving

Your employees' heads and hard drives are full of important information about your business. That's not so helpful when people leave the company, are out on an extended medical leave or simply have a couple of weeks off. With a proper knowledge management framework in place, new hires or those picking up the slack have full, immediate access to the content they need to keep projects moving ahead.

Get it all in one place

When documents, calendars, meetings, and conversations all live on a cohesive platform, and when multiple stakeholders can document processes, policies, and more with wikis, everyone has immediate access to this data. You can eliminate shared drives and unnecessary meetings, freeing up time and space for employees to focus on the crucial tasks at hand.

Corporate/HR: Effective communications, cohesive teams

Get your message out

The modern intranet makes corporate communications and onboarding easier and more effective. Whether you're announcing new hires, new policies, employment opportunities, events, or changes to a benefits package, you can ensure the right people are notified (and even track if they've read the announcement).

Keep a record

Important communications and policies can be stored as long as necessary and updated as information changes so people always have access to the latest version.

Create a custom workspace

Construct an area within your modern intranet that has exactly the functionality your team requires.

Saving money and resources in the cloud

Choosing an intranet vendor that offers cloud-based hosting will enable you to be up and running in no time. Once the initial design is complete, all the set-up, migration (if necessary), and deployment is handled by the vendor.

With a cloud-hosted solution, there's no ongoing investment in equipment. This lower cost of ownership is not only good news for your bottom line, it means easy management for your IT department. You don't house any of the equipment on-premises, so your cloud-hosted intranet will scale with your business as its needs grow and evolve.

According to Nucleus Research, cloud-hosted intranet solutions deliver 1.7 times more return on investment than their on-premise counterparts, require 40% less consulting, cost 25% less in support, and 4 out of 5 (cloud) deployments deliver increasing benefits over time.

Collaboration is all about task management

Whether you work in waterfalls or scrums, your next-generation intranet portal should include task assignment and management features that help you track to-dos, take-aways, action items, review cycles, user stories, epics, and themes. It should also allow you to integrate the project management tools you're using today, if that's your preference.

As you start your search for a next-generation intranet portal, look for a solution that ticks these boxes:

- ☑ Is it feature-rich, intuitive, and built for the way people work?
- ☑ Does it sync personal, departmental, and corporate calendars?
- ☑ Can it leverage the best features of popular social networks?
- ☑ Will it enable collaboration, easily, and securely?
- ☑ Does it streamline workflows?
- ☑ Can it integrate with popular productivity apps like Office 365, G Suite, Zendesk, and SalesForce.com?
- ☑ Can it host company blogs and micro-blogs?
- ☑ Does it include or support secure file-sharing solutions?
- ☑ Will it provide unified access to employee directories and forums?
- ☑ Does it offer powerful search capabilities?
- ☑ Will it meet enterprise security standards?

Quantifying the value of a modern intranet

Technology decisions often come down to three letters: ROI. But ROI isn't just about measuring dollars and cents. It's about measuring the incremental value the intranet brings to your business by addressing the challenges you're trying to solve.

A modern intranet delivers a solid investment payback across many fronts. Your intranet becomes the gateway to all IT-approved apps and tools, maximizing your investment in each of them, while driving utilization, consistency and effectiveness. The time savings and productivity gains from easier collaboration, file storage and retrieval, and employee retention, amongst many things, are usually significant.

Your measure of success depends on what business problems you're trying to solve. It becomes a measure of Return on Objectives (ROO), rather than Return on Investment (ROI). Whether it's reducing the number of emails sent, aligning your team around a specific vision, or sharing knowledge more efficiently, setting objectives at the outset is critical to being able to measure the effectiveness of your intranet.

Revisiting your objectives on a regular basis will help you track progress, focus your efforts, and illustrate the positive change you're making across your business.

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How Igloo helps IT sleep at night

Identity and access management

With Igloo, user authentication is simple. You can use Igloo's native sign-in or single sign-on (SSO) with SAML, so no additional login is required for access. And, Igloo never stores passwords in a readable format – credentials are always stored as a secure, salted hash.

Data loss and prevention

Igloo servers are hosted at SSAE 16 (SOC 1, SOC 2 Type II) and ISO 27001 compliant facilities. Our hosting environment encrypts your data using AES-256 and AES-256 FIPS 140-2 Level 3 to keep your data safe at rest. Plus, all connections to Igloo are secured via SSL/TLS, so you're covered from every angle (Qualys SSL Labs even gives us an A+).

Corporate governance

As an IT admin, you have complete control of the content, applications, and structure of your community. You can set up restrictions system-wide, or control access by group, individual, and even by specific pieces of content. And, permissions cascade down so you don't waste time re-inventing the wheel with each new member.

"We now have an information portal where employees can access all of these different applications. I can now do what I need to do, no matter where I am, which is incredibly useful. I loved Igloo's flexibility to integrate with these online tools - essentially Igloo serves as a hub for collaboration."

Kenneth Fonzi, Associate Director of Online Information Systems, Children's Hospital Foundation

"With Igloo Software, we have built up a greater awareness of the skill quotient within our firm that we never had before."

Michael Dieterle, Global Knowledge Manager, Siegel + Gale

Forrester: "A Next-Generation Intranet Portal Unites Information, Systems, And Processes"

In an Igloo-commissioned survey, Forrester found that organizations that have implemented an intranet portal are *"reaping big benefits and overcoming the challenges of using disparate collaboration tools."*

Nearly all (90%) agreed that their organization's intranet portal supports corporate communications overall.

Top benefits of using an intranet portal include helping to capture and share company knowledge (77%), facilitating project coordination and team collaboration (76%), and providing a central location to organize and share files (76%).

Igloo: A people-first digital workplace

With Igloo, you can choose whether to use its full spectrum of built-in capabilities – ranging from file sharing and workflows to task management and calendars – or integrate today's leading tools to give employees access to the apps and products they're already comfortable with. Igloo works with file-sharing solutions like Dropbox, OneDrive, Google Drive and Box as well as with apps like Outlook, Gmail, Google Calendar and Slack. It's also fully integrated with Office 365, Salesforce, G Suite and Zendesk.

Igloo works inside and outside your firewall, so whether you're using it strictly as an intranet or sharing content with clients and partners externally, your data remains safe on a highly secure cloud server. Because it's cloud-hosted, Igloo offers flexible deployment options and hosting models that scale with your business. Upgrades are automatic, so there's no need for IT or third-party consultants to maintain servers.

Igloo's enterprise-class platform, processes, and networks are constantly monitored and tested and undergo regular independent security audits, ensuring that high standards for security are met – and exceeded. Data is backed up regularly, mirrored at the local data center, and replicated to an outside location to build in consistent availability and uptime in case of disaster.

Thousands of businesses are already using Igloo's custom tailored solutions so you'll benefit from our wealth of technical expertise and customer service experience. Our team will work directly with you to ensure the right intranet solution is built to your specific needs, whether you want to be hands-on, hands-off or somewhere in between.

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Create a modern
digital workplace

Everybody wins when you invest in technology that promotes collaboration, eases communication, keeps data secure, enhances your corporate culture, reduces IT's burden and boosts productivity. A next-generation intranet portal is the foundation of a digital workplace, allowing you to streamline workflows and increase profitability – all while saving you money.

Get started at igloosoftware.com with a free trial or book a demo ›

About Igloo

Igloo helps organizations create a digital destination where employees can access the information, tools, and expertise they need to do their best work, from wherever they are. This modern intranet platform provides a seamless work experience that brings together content and conversation and integrates an organization's preferred apps and tools.

Learn more at:
igloosoftware.com
info@igloosoftware.com
1 877 664 4566

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