



HOW TO DECLUTTER YOUR INTRANET (AND KEEP IT THAT WAY)

With no policing, your intranet will grow cluttered over time. This is inevitable for teams who have homemade or SharePoint intranets that lack robust governance features.

It can take a dedicated effort to prevent your intranet from becoming a wasteland of outdated and unused resources. In addition to lessened productivity, decreased engagement, and an overall lack of employee adoption, a cluttered intranet can also represent a large financial cost to your organization due to the amount of time wasted trying to navigate it.

In this whitepaper, we will discuss the challenges of a cluttered intranet and provide 5 immediate actions you can take to begin decluttering your intranet.

Let's dive in.

THE SIGNS OF A USELESS INTRANET

Most company intranets are the digital equivalent of a messy teenager's bedroom, with piles of dirty clothes on every surface.

Nested folders with no overriding logic, search that only returns exact matches in the title, inconsistent file names, partially updated versions of the same file in different places—the hallmarks of a useless intranet are familiar to anyone who's worked on a team with outdated tools.



Hallmarks of a useless intranet

- Low engagement
- Lack of communication tools
- Nested folders with no overriding logic
- Search that only returns exact matches in the title
- Inconsistent file names
- Poor content governance
- Partially updated file versions
- Users can't find what they're looking for
- Duplicate pages, content, and resources

A useless intranet provides no value to any of the internal stakeholders within your company. Your employees that depend on the intranet as their primary source of information and collaboration are repeatedly let down and increasingly frustrated with its poor performance.

Did you know that 90% of intranets fail before 3 years?¹

Whether the reason for failure is unclear governance, outdated content, poor user experience, or something else, without a strong commitment to the ongoing success of your intranet, it will not succeed.



THE CHALLENGES OF A CLUTTERED INTRANET

There are many frustrations that arise when dealing with a cluttered intranet. If any of the challenges listed below feel familiar, you most likely have a cluttered or outdated intranet.



STALE OUTDATED CONTENT

A classic sign of a cluttered intranet. There is nothing more frustrating for your employees than seeing outdated resources and information in their intranet environment. Stale content often derives from poor content governance. Without a modern intranet to automatically archive old content, your intranet platform will slowly become a breeding ground for useless and outdated information.



MULTIPLE SOURCES OF TRUTH

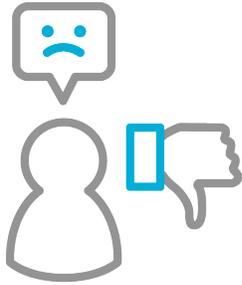
Failing to have auto governing features can lead to multiple versions of a resource peppered throughout the intranet. This can make it incredibly difficult to try and locate the 'current' version of a file. Not only do employees quickly become frustrated, they are also wasting lots of time searching for the right version, thus hindering productivity.



LACK OF PERSONALIZATION

Another massive contributor to a cluttered intranet is the lack of personalization to each user's environment. Personalization (often a byproduct of permissions and access rights) is critical in keeping relevant resources and information directly in front of the user.

If you are a member of the IT department, you don't need to see all of the Sales department's information. Not only does it not apply to you, it can make it quite difficult to find what you're actually looking for. Providing brevity in an intranet can be an invaluable asset, but one that is surprisingly difficult to maintain without the proper tools.



POOR USER EXPERIENCE

The final challenge of a cluttered intranet is that it can often lead to a poor user experience for your employees. Elements of a poor user experience include: confusing navigation, access to resources and information that do not pertain to them, outdated content, unclear governance, and bugs and software issues. These elements can all dramatically hinder user productivity and can diminish the business output for your workforce.

Now that we've discussed a few of the challenges that can arise as a result of a cluttered intranet, let's dive into a few ways you can begin to clean up your intranet. The unfortunate reality we live in is that the larger your company is, the more likely it is that you desperately need to declutter your intranet, and the less feasible it is to change.

So how do you fix it?

Get a modern intranet, obviously. But that takes time and costs money, so here are 5 things you can do right now to make the best of the current situation.

Even if you only have control over some small portion of your company intranet, taking the steps below can improve your department's experience, and potentially act as a pilot program for the rest of the company.

Did you know?

Poor intranet usability can cost a company with 10,000 employees up to \$15 million per year due to worsened productivity.²



5 WAYS TO DECLUTTER YOUR INTRANET

1. WATCH PEOPLE USE IT

Ask a few of your colleagues to show you how they typically navigate the intranet. Put twenty minutes on their calendar, and ask them to show you how they get to the content they use most frequently. Ask them what they like and don't like about the way it's set up.

In doing this you will be able to identify patterns and shared pain points that your colleagues experience while navigating the intranet. It's important to have these discussions so that you can quickly see which items/resources are not being used and begin exploring ways to consolidate common roundabout paths to content.



Did you know?

With a cluttered intranet, employees spend an estimated 20% of their work week looking for internal information or tracking down colleagues who can help with a specific task.³

If you don't have the time to shadow your colleague's intranet usage, don't fret. You can obtain similar data by running a survey—you'll get less detail but it's easier to spot larger trends. Keep it to as few questions as possible, and make sure each question is tied to something specific that it is in your power to change.

Feedback from your colleagues is crucial as they are the ones with the most to benefit from an improved intranet. Take some time and really try to understand the thought process of your peers as they sift through the intranet. A mix of surveys and 1:1 discussions will arm you with the best balance of information, and hopefully give you a to-do list you can refer to as you declutter your intranet.

2. ESTABLISH A DATA POLICY

Establishing a data policy (and sticking to it) is the next proactive step you can take in decluttering your intranet. You probably have a data policy buried in your IT team's portion of the intranet. Ideally, it lists out your policies for how to name files, proper metadata, and some language around how to decide where things are put.

Has anyone read it? No.

Many companies try to address this by sending out memos or scheduling meetings to go over the policy. This is ***a losing battle***. In the grand scheme of things you'll probably have more success getting your employees to open random sales emails than reading through your data policy.

So if people aren't interested in reading it, how can you get them to take actionable steps in following a data policy? Lead by example. Pick a few high traffic folders or pages, and fix the content. Remove duplicates, update or remove anything old, give everything consistent names—make it perfect. When someone screws up your content/data, which you can bet will happen soon, politely ask them to fix it. If they ignore you, fix it yourself.

It is this type of proactive behavior that can help you begin effectively decluttering your intranet and making the positive changes actually stick. If you are not able to be a vocal advocate for following the data policy within your intranet, how can you expect your peers to adhere to it?

This in combination with step one has the potential to get other people on board for the changes you're making, which is good. The more champions you have, the better.

3. TAKE AN INVENTORY

You can't fix a problem until you understand it. Which brings us to our next step, taking a complete inventory of your intranet. In most cases, your intranet will have already been in use for years contributing to a large amount of outdated content, unused pages, misplaced folders, and more.

You will need to conduct a complete audit of the content within your intranet. Make a list of folders, paths, and amount of content in each. Put it in a spreadsheet. If possible, include volume and recency of activity (i.e. who is viewing which resource, and how frequently).



Checklist:

- ✓ #1 Identify high traffic areas within your intranet
- ✓ #2 Make a list of folders, paths, and amount of content in each
- ✓ #3 Put it in a spreadsheet and include volume and recency of activity
- ✓ #4 Take note of bloated folders, outdated pages, and repetitive information
- ✓ #5 Find a way to consolidate and refresh all of your 'out-of-date' content
- ✓ #6 Repeat! Repeat! Repeat!

Once you have a better understanding of your intranet's inventory, you'll have a generalized idea of which areas have excess/unused resources. The next course of action is to start chipping away at it. Take note of bloated folders, outdated pages, and repetitive information. Then, find a way to consolidate all of it and refresh out-of-date content.

This process can involve a lot of time-consuming manual effort. It is usually helpful to start small; pick the areas of the intranet where you know people are going frequently, and start there. Prioritize content that is important and keep it organized. Make sure it is easily accessible for your colleagues without them having to wade through a bunch of irrelevant, disorganized clutter.

This will naturally deprioritize less important and less frequently needed items and folders, which is good. Decluttering your intranet from top to bottom is likely an impossible task for one person or team, so it is important to pick your battles and prioritize the more frequently-used areas of the intranet.

4. ESTABLISH CONTENT GOVERNANCE

If your intranet has governance features built into it, it's unlikely you've made it this far. That said, if they're there, set rules around how long a piece of content stays up before it either gets archived or flagged for a relevancy check. This ensures that old information disappears over time, which builds trust.

Did you know?



22% percent of people attribute their failed intranets to stale, outdated content.¹



If you don't have this luxury, figure out a way to do it manually, at least with your high-traffic content. One way to do this is to pick the most important items, and create a spreadsheet with links to them, which lists the last time each folder, wiki, or document was checked for relevancy and updated.

Once a quarter or year, fire up that spreadsheet, do an audit, and make sure everything is up to date and in the right place.

Again, a little goes a long way. Even if you only do this with a small percentage of your content, it will have value. You just have to make sure you're applying yourself in the high traffic areas your colleagues are actually going to.

5. PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR OWN PATTERNS

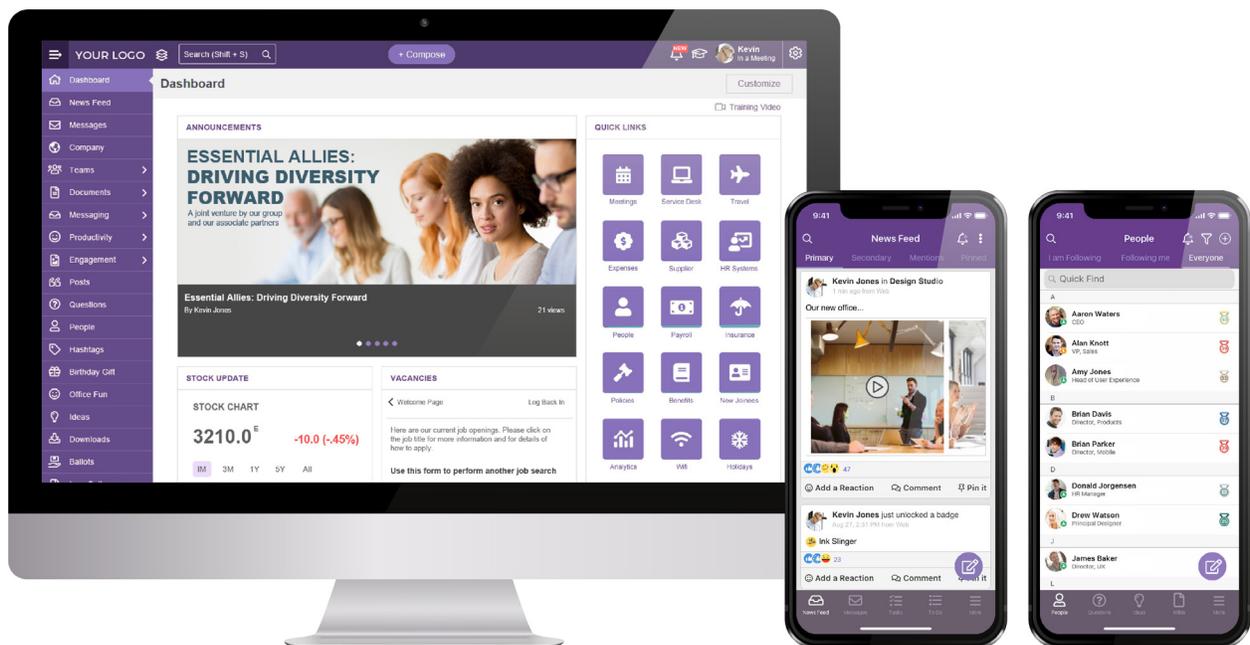
The fifth and final way to begin decluttering your intranet is the one that requires the most continuous effort on your part. Every time you struggle to find something and eventually have to give up and ask someone to email you the file, take note of where you looked for it first. Then, go back and put it in that place, or think about how you could organize things to match your own tendencies. This will likely serve others, too.

This may be the smallest scale item on this list, but it's also the one you can probably have the highest degree of confidence in. By leading this charge, you can start to slowly chip away at the poor usability of your intranet, and begin transforming it into something that can help sustain productive employees.

THE CASE FOR A MODERN INTRANET

All of the above is time-consuming. It's a big, manual effort that is likely to be outgunned by apathetic colleagues who do not understand the value of a decluttered intranet. Without a modern intranet platform to automate this work away, you're fighting a losing battle, and you're doing so in a way that is costing you money every day.

Not to worry—there is an alternative option to spending countless hours making an outdated intranet 'somewhat manageable.'



Upgrading to a modern intranet offers not only a better interface and a functional search, but deeper features like automated content governance, freshness checks, AI-generated metadata, and the ability for departments to own their own content without IT involvement. Unlike their predecessors, modern intranets actually have the ability to centralize communication and collaboration across an organization. From document storage to instant messaging to project workspaces, a modern intranet truly represents the inclusive and intuitive tool your organization needs.

A modern intranet will keep your employees coming back frequently to check out what is new while providing immediate access to the resources and information they need to perform their jobs effectively.

MANGOAPPS

At MangoApps, we know first hand how frustrating and inadequate outdated intranets are. It was these ancient digital tools and complicated processes that inspired us to create a more effective solution. As leaders in business communication and collaboration, our innovative modern intranets truly create a centralized employee experience.

MangoApps is a modern intranet platform that unifies content, communication, training, and operations for the entire organization.

To learn more about MangoApps or to see our product in action, schedule a demo today!

SCHEDULE A DEMO!

SOURCES

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