



From intranet to digital workplace:

How to evolve your strategy

A report for DWG members only
Confidential

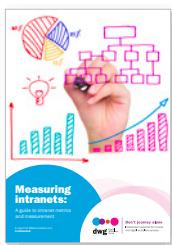


Don't journey alone

Independent expertise for intranet
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REPORTS



Measuring Intranets

Following its publication, this report quickly went to the top of the download chart for DWG's 40+ research archive. It considers what should be measured across the intranet estate, and which metrics are useful and important for intranet managers. It describes strategies for justifying and managing intranet measurement. And it looks at how metrics can be turned into actionable insight, by understanding the goals and benefits of services within the intranet, making decisions and setting targets. The report contains three case studies from the UK Ministry of Justice, Maersk Lines and Thoughtfarmer. Download the executive summary: www.digitalworkplacegroup.com/resources/download-reports/free-summary-measuring-intranets



The Art of Collaboration

This DWG research report examines ways in which teams responsible for intranets and collaboration platforms can improve the success of online collaboration. It concludes that organizations will generally experience greater success the more collaboration is formalized, structured and focused upon different work-related processes, functions and groups. Less value will be gained if collaboration tends to be informal or vague in scope. By focusing attention on formalizing collaboration, intranet and collaboration teams can help to increase adoption and value. It includes best practice case studies from COWI, Environment Agency, GfK, and Lloyds Banking Group. Download the executive summary: www.digitalworkplacegroup.com/resources/download-reports/art-of-collaboration



Strategy and Governance: A good practice guide

DWG's in-depth research report "Strategy and Governance: a good practice guide" identifies some of the current trends in intranet strategy, governance and senior sponsorship. Drawing on DWG's "Strategy & Governance" benchmarking model and a specially-commissioned survey of intranet managers, plus in-depth case studies, it highlights relevant examples of good practice. Download the executive summary:

www.digitalworkplacegroup.com/resources/download-reports/strategy-governance

BRIEFING PAPERS



Social Intranets in Action

"Social" is now the standard direction of travel for intranets, transforming them from static repositories of content into more dynamic channels that enable two-way conversations and provide a less structured platform for collaboration. Social intranets put employees back at the heart of the intranet. This briefing paper presents 21 examples of intranets (complete with screenshots) that use a selection of successful features, approaches and designs in order to help drive real adoption and engagement, offer business value or facilitate better management of the social intranet. Download the executive summary: www.digitalworkplacegroup.com/resources/download-reports/social-intranets-in-action



Managing Enterprise Search

In this briefing paper, DWG considers the current state of search management and the trends that are making search more critical than ever, and sets out the key roles and responsibilities of the search team. The research also includes findings from the recent survey DWG carried out to find out how organizations are managing their enterprise search. Download the executive summary: www.digitalworkplacegroup.com/managing-enterprise-search

Our research reports and briefing papers are available on the DWG secure extranet.

Overview of services

Managing an **intranet, collaboration platform** or **digital workplace programme** for a large organization can be a lonely, thankless task and it's growing more complex every year. [Get DWG on your side](#)



1

Industry best practice for large organizations



2

Objective data for making critical decisions



3

Independent expertise to guide strategy and plans

Samples of members and clients



Full Member list

Strengths of the Digital Workplace Group

- **Real-world practitioners:** Our benchmarkers and consultants have previously managed intranets and digital workplaces at major organizations. Our expertise is rooted in experience.
- **Large company experience:** For over a decade we have worked with Fortune 1000/FT 500 and similar organizations. Our expertise and insights focus on the challenges and needs of that group.

- **Measurement and research focus:** Our consulting and evaluations are underpinned by measurement and our rich research programme. Our mantra is "data and metrics in a world of opinion".
- **Independence:** All our work is vendor neutral and our evaluation framework is technology agnostic.

An expert partner to drive change and success

We provide independent expertise to large organizations to help them advance their intranets and broader digital workplaces through two distinct services:

- 1 A confidential member benchmarking forum
- 2 Bespoke consulting projects

Two lines of service

Member Forum

Confidential learning, ongoing improvement

The DWG Member Forum is a confidential, members-only benchmarking group. Since 2002, we have carried out more than 500 evaluations in major organizations, giving us a rich background of knowledge and unrivalled insight into current best practice. Membership combines extensive evaluations with peer learning and expert research.

Three elements of membership:

- **Benchmarking evaluations:** In-depth analysis of your sites/environment and comparison with other members
- **Peer learning:** Rich interaction and sharing with teams from other major organizations
- **Expert research:** New members-only reports every year and an enormous archive of papers and videos

Consulting Services

Strategic interventions, bespoke projects

DWG Consulting Services provides vendor-neutral, unbiased and high-quality advice, and practical hands-on support for digital workplace and intranet programmes. This work is rooted in our decade of providing measurement and research-driven membership services and our team's experience of working within large organizations.

Sample consulting projects:

- **What does "good" look like?** – External insight of industry best practice to inform strategies and plans
- **Define vision, strategy & roadmap** – Methodology and expertise to set your forward path
- **Facilitated workshops** – Engage stakeholders across a global organization or within a function

Areas of focus

- Benchmarking evaluations
- Content management
- Collaboration platforms and social business
- Digital workplace roadmaps
- Enterprise mobile
- External insights and research
- Facilitated workshops and innovation labs
- HRIS and other self-service applications
- Metrics and measurement
- Search and findability
- Strategy and governance
- Stakeholder engagement
- Usability, navigation and design
- User research



“ We needed a resource. We felt lost. DWG provides resources in one place. It became clear to us that DWG is the one-stop-shop for everything we need.”

Laura Pierce Director,
Corporate Intranet ADP



“ The most valuable thing about DWG is being able to meet your peers. If you work in intranets, it's normally a closed community... But in this forum, you know you're going to get honest answers and honest opinions.”

Mark Mazza Senior Manager,
Digital Projects Lloyds Banking Group



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Confidentiality

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Preface: The digital workplace



Intranets have lasted for more than 20 years – and look likely to have a strong future as they continue to evolve. However, the traditional intranet, no matter what its power and functionality, is now part of the wider digital workplace (DW). What's the difference?

The digital workplace includes the intranet but also other workplace technologies: both those already in operation and new ones yet to arrive. All virtual meeting tools are part of the DW. Enterprise applications such as Yammer, Dropbox and instant messaging (IM) are part of the DW. If you have a Twitter feed coming into the organization then that is part of the DW. Self-serve HR systems are also part of the DW.

Organizations have built physical workplaces in the past 200 years; we know them and understand them. But we now need to design and shape the digital workplaces where staff, contractors and third parties increasingly work. These are effectively work/technology environments that operate irrespective of location and device. If you are working from a café on a smartphone, accessing IM, sales data or online expenses forms, you are in the DW. Sometimes you will be in the intranet, sometimes not. But you are always in the digital workplace.

Paul Miller
CEO and Founder
Digital Workplace Group

Introduction and Executive summary

From intranet to digital workplace strategy¹

This report introduces a model for a digital workplace strategy and discusses how intranet teams might broaden their planning approach to incorporate this wider perspective. Drawing on DWG's extensive experience, this is a tool to help those responsible for managing the online working environment to understand where they are now in terms of the overall employee experience and to think strategically about future directions.

Our view of the digital workplace is that it encompasses all the elements that constitute the digital equivalent of a physical workplace: for meetings, discussions, individual productivity and social interaction. It is therefore much broader than the scope of an intranet, and we don't propose that an intranet can somehow 'grow' to become a digital workplace. However, we do see that the traditional intranet is evolving to include many elements such as messaging, video, collaboration and applications, and this paper advocates that what needs to change is the strategic perspective, so that intranets are planned as an integrated component of the DW whole.

A metaphor for the digital workplace

As a metaphor for how the digital workplace has developed, the report looks at patterns of marketplace evolution, from informal sets of stalls in villages to the complex array of supermarkets, market towns, malls, retail parks and city centres we see today. Digital workplaces are similarly evolving from their origins as disconnected intranets, email systems and collaboration tools, into more managed and integrated experiences. This is not to say that every organization must strive for a fully integrated, fully featured environment. Just as a small town centre can be the right fit for a regional community, so a smaller-scale solution can be the best match for a given company's strategy. The challenge for DW teams is to decide which pattern best matches their circumstances.

The model dimensions

The model defines five levels of evolution, from 'Base' to 'Excel', along the four dimensions of:

- Communication and Information
- Community and Collaboration
- Services
- Structure.

About the author



Sam Marshall is a DWG Benchmarking Lead and Director of ClearBox Consulting (www.clearbox-consulting.co.uk).

He has over 15 years' experience in online strategy, collaboration and the digital workplace. Sam spent eight years at Unilever, where he was responsible for the company's global portal implementation. This involved overseeing the roll-out of over 700 online communities to 85,000 people and consolidating several thousand intranets into a single system.

¹ A version of this report was published by IBF as 'The Digital Workplace Maturity Model'. This new version is an update to align with developments in the field and the evolution of our service offerings within the Digital Workplace Group.

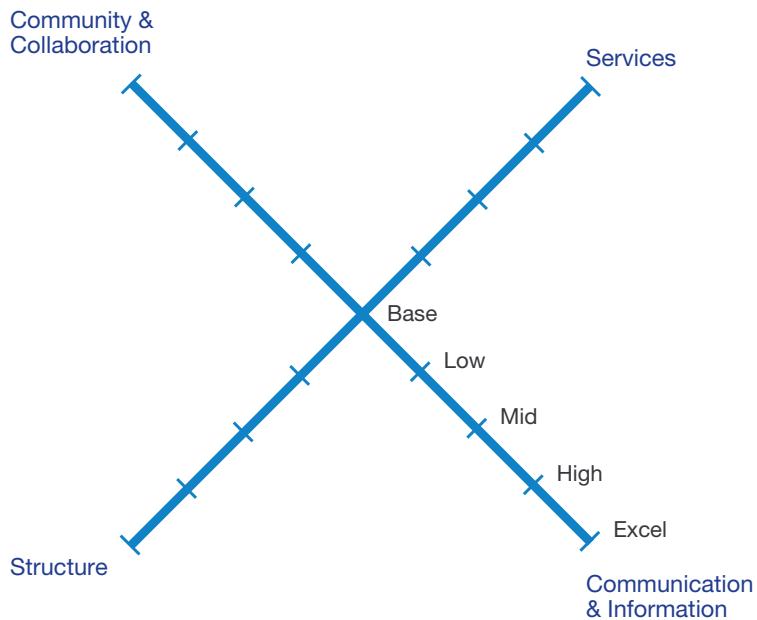


Figure 1: The four dimensions of the DW model.

It then defines a range of patterns, such as ‘market town’ and ‘supermarket’, to depict how digital workplaces evolve in different ways. For example, a supermarket emphasizes the virtues of scale and structure, analogous to having a corporate intranet built around centrally defined communication and information channels. Conversely, a market town is lower on structure, but more balanced in terms of the services and community elements it offers. The DW equivalent would be a set of more loosely coupled intranets, but with team-working tools and forums where employees can discuss work and exchange ideas.

The purpose of the model

The model is intended to be used by digital workplace professionals such as intranet managers, communications directors or IT strategists. A detailed explanation of each maturity level is given in this report to help such individuals think about the current state of their online environment, looking at the totality of the employee experience rather than isolated elements such as an intranet or social media tools. The Digital Workplace Group (DWG) also offers members an independent and more in-depth assessment of digital workplace maturity, based on this model.²

The primary purpose of the DW model is as a thinking tool for developing future strategy. In terms of our marketplace metaphor, this is analogous to urban planning – attempting to meet the disparate needs of multiple stakeholders through a coherent, long-term vision. When following the model, teams need to consider which pattern and maturity level is most appropriate to their overall strategy, taking account not just of technological capabilities but also the scale of the organization, its corporate culture and the specific needs of its employees.

² See <http://www.digitalworkplacegroup.com/consulting-services/digital-workplace-mapping> for more information.

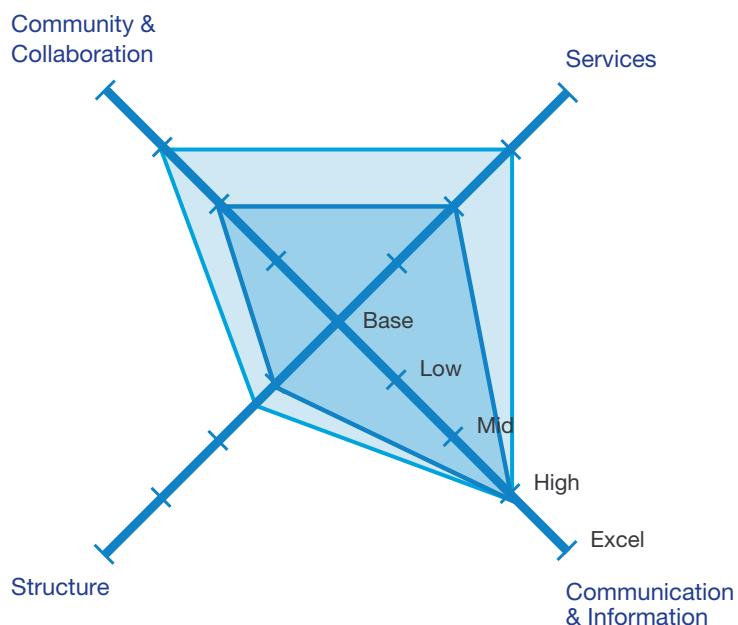


Figure 2: The DW model can be used to visualize patterns of current and potential maturity for an organization.

The DW model vs intranet benchmarking and DW mapping

The DW model, with its emphasis on the wider digital workplace, was designed to complement DWG's well-developed benchmarking framework, which looks at specific aspects of intranet management such as governance, metrics and processes.

DWG recently introduced a Digital Workplace mapping service for members. This provides a detailed expert-led evaluation of how an organization's digital workplace is functioning.³

Through a brief but highly structured intervention, DWG's experts in digital workplace strategy and deployment conduct an independent assessment of an organization's current digital workplace, with a detailed confidential report on strengths, weaknesses and priority areas to exploit.

The mapping service provides:

- A baseline view of capability relative to industry standards.
- An objective assessment of performance at firm-wide or unit level.
- Recommendations for future strategy.
- Discoveries about the digital workplace to inform investment decisions and enable stakeholders to unlock business value.

³ For more information see: <http://www.digitalworkplacegroup.com/membership/overview/benchmarking-evaluations>

Intranet benchmarking

Benchmarking is at the heart of the DWG experience. Through rigorous, impartial assessment, it answers the fundamental questions facing every intranet team: “How good is our site?” “How can we improve?” “How do we compare with others?”

DWG
evaluations are conducted by an expert team with many years' experience of running intranets in major organizations. The combination of our vendor-free approach and unrivalled benchmarking data means that our findings carry real weight with senior management and critically inform their investment decisions.

“Seeing objective statements on how we compare to others presents a compelling story that resources are needed.”

DWG Member

While intranets are in many ways unique to their organizations, we've found that they share certain measurable attributes relating to their user experience and management.

Our benchmarking model, the world's first all-encompassing intranet benchmarking standard – covers four areas:

Strategy & Governance:
How well does your organization lead and manage its intranet?

Benchmarking model

Usability

Usability:

How well designed and usable is your intranet?

Communication & Collaboration

Metrics & Performance

Metrics & Performance:

How well does your organization measure intranet performance and value?

Communication & Collaboration:
How effective is your intranet as a communication channel and collaboration builder?

After each evaluation, we report our findings and recommendations via a detailed written report and a step-by-step feedback session.

Find out more about DWG Benchmarking on our website:
<http://www.digitalworkplacegroup.com>

3

A metaphor for the digital workplace: The evolution of marketplaces

As a way of thinking about the development of intranets and the digital workplace, consider the evolution of marketplaces from ad hoc stalls in a village square to city centres and shopping malls.

Early intranets are like market squares – with each stallholder recognizing an opportunity and taking the initiative to establish a presence, but without co-ordinating this with activity on other stalls or any overall plan.

As markets grow, a more structured approach may be adopted, incorporating other services or social elements such as banks and pubs. In the same way, a maturing intranet may become more structured and other services such as social network tools may be introduced into the organization.

From here a number of growth patterns are possible. One involves becoming highly structured and centralized, like a supermarket offering a uniform, centrally managed customer experience. Another is to offer a richer range of facilities, but more loosely structured, like a town centre that plans its main retail areas and services, but allows more autonomous activity at its periphery. This is similar to the shift from thinking solely about intranets to considering the role that other collaborative and online tools can play.

More recently, there has been a trend towards very large shopping malls and retail parks, many of which offer not only shops but also cinemas, opticians (vision centres) and food courts. These can be compared to corporate portals providing a gateway and platform for just about everything. But there has also been a counter-development in that many traditional city centres, and some US downtown districts, have been reborn. In such cases the retail offering may be less efficient, and services less integrated, but there is a stronger sense of community and potential for innovation. This can be compared to a federated approach to corporate intranets, where a collection of sites is allowed to grow organically, supported by a loose collection of tools and services that make up the digital workplace.

The next section introduces the DW model and looks in more detail at how the marketplace metaphor can provide a set of patterns for the development of the digital workplace and the role of the intranet within that.

4

The digital workplace evolution

Overview

The DW model is a tool to help organizations understand where their intranet and digital workplace are and, more importantly, develop a vision of where they might be in the future. Rather than taking a strictly linear approach, our model recognizes that digital workplaces can evolve along different dimensions, namely:

- Communication and Information
- Community and Collaboration
- Services
- Structure.

The model goes on to define the levels of evolution along each dimension, and finally sets out some ‘capability patterns’ – a series of typical templates or prototypes of maturity, using the marketplace metaphor introduced in Section 2.

The digital workplace vs intranets

The term ‘digital workplace’ is used in preference to ‘intranet’ to include all tools and applications used within the workplace, rather than just something produced with a content management system or incorporating social and task-oriented tools. Figure 3 illustrates this point. Intranets are traditionally strongly associated with online internal publishing (the inner circle), so can be considered as one component of the digital workplace. Some intranets also offer more extensive but loosely coupled facilities such as expenses claims and team collaboration sites. There may be ambiguity as to whether these features are part of the intranet or not; however, they are certainly part of the digital workplace.

Going further, the digital workplace concept also includes technologies that have rarely been seen as part of intranets, but which are clearly part of the toolkit of a typical knowledge worker: web and audio conferencing; applications and enterprise resource planning (ERP) software such as SAP and PeopleSoft, for example.

In keeping with this, the model is designed to encompass all online facilities, not just an individual site. In this way it reflects the standpoint of most employees – who don’t care if a booking system is physically part of one application or another but do care that it is easy to find, consistently designed and doesn’t need another login.⁴

The DW model is a tool to help organizations understand where their intranet and digital workplace are and, more importantly, develop a vision of where they might be in the future.

4 Infocentric Research (2013). *The Digital Workplace: Redefining Productivity In The Information Age*. <https://www.infocentricresearch.com/Research/Publications/The-Digital-Workplace.aspx>

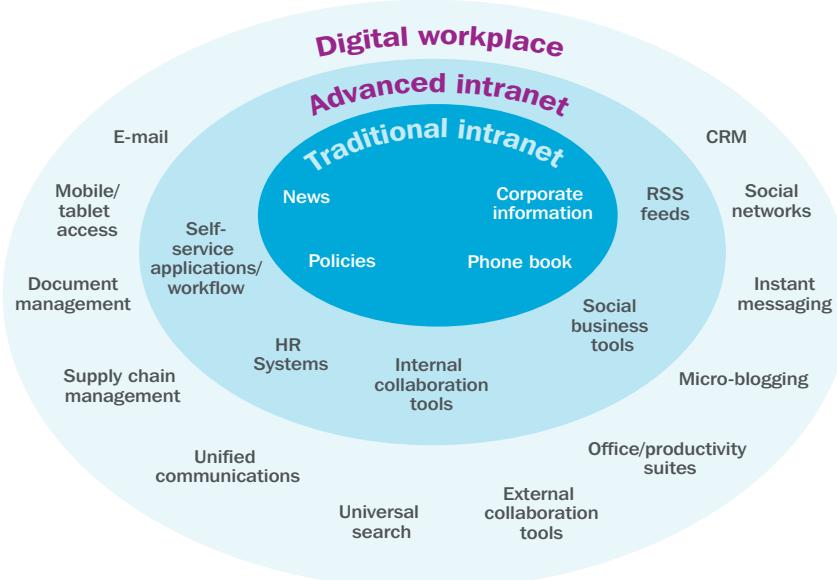


Figure 3: The scope of the digital workplace compared with that of advanced and traditional intranets.

The four dimensions

The DW model emphasizes the usefulness of the workplace as a whole, rather than specific features of it, such as 'travel booking'. It is structured around four dimensions, illustrated in Figure 4.

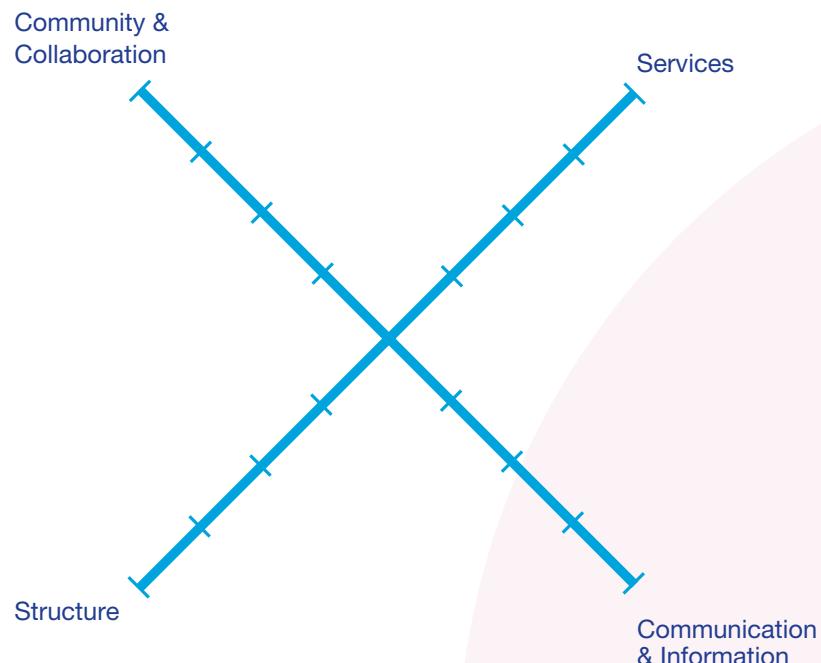


Figure 4: The four basic dimensions of the DW model.

Communication and Information: The role of the digital workplace for internal communication and as an information-sharing tool. This includes news, announcements, policies, procedures and other published reference material.

Community and Collaboration: How well a digital workplace supports peer-to-peer working, including collaboration as a project team or community of practice, and social connectivity (such as finding people, seeking knowledge and sharing ideas).

Services: The use of the digital workplace to deliver online applications, either for employee self-service (e.g. absence management, expense claims or e-learning), workflow (e.g. request approvals, event booking) or in support of more specific functions, such as customer relationship management (CRM) or supply-chain management.

Structure: This includes the management element of a digital workplace, including the extent to which sites and applications are integrated, how consistent they are, and their adherence to usability standards and governance.

Levels of evolution

We also define five levels of evolution, from ‘Base’ to ‘Excel’, to define and codify the experience of employees and leaders across all four dimensions of the digital workplace (see Figure 5).

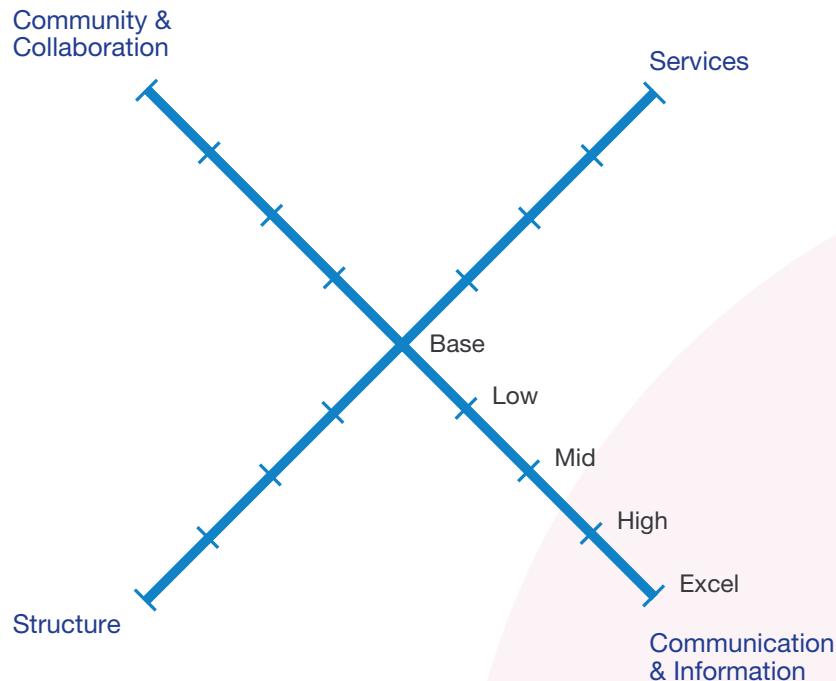


Figure 5: The five levels of the DW model.

			EMPLOYEES FEEL	LEADERS FEEL
1	Base	Entry level, typical of an intranet or collaboration tool when it first comes into existence.	"It's not relevant to me."	"It's not relevant to me."
2	Low	Some attempts at improvement, but offerings are still peripheral to the business.	"I use it when I have to, but it can be safely ignored."	"It has no strategic relevance. It's something IT or Comms does."
3	Mid	Relatively mature, but with room for improvement.	"It's mostly useful, but can be frustrating."	"It's a practical tool, but I don't often get involved with it."
4	High	The highest level an organization would normally expect to reach.	"I couldn't do my job without it." "Part of it is mine."	"It's very important to how we operate, and I support it."
5	Excel	A level of maturity beyond the norm. Strategically important to some organizations, but not necessarily to all.	"It's rewarding to use, and my needs are well anticipated,"	"It's made a significant difference to how we work."

Figure 6: The five levels of the DW model, illustrated by typical employee and leader reactions.

The aim of the model is to be a thinking tool to help you understand where your digital workspace currently is and what options you have for advancing it. *The model is not meant to imply that all organizations should seek to reach the 'Excel' or even 'High' levels in all areas.* Rather, it allows you to consider what pattern would provide the right template based on your organization's strategy, scale and culture. The same might be said of urban planning: a market town may be prosperous because it retains unique shops and a sense of community. In such circumstances, building a state-of-the-art mall would not only be unsustainable, but would detract from existing value.

Dimensions in detail

Figures 7 to 10 outline the typical characteristics of an organization's digital workplace at each level. Note that these are examples rather than exhaustive requirements. Not all the characteristics may be true of your own organization, but they should enable you to find the closest match. When looking at the characteristics, consider how true they are for your total employee base (i.e. not just workers who are currently office-based).

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION	
Base	Static information storage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The intranet is mostly used as an online store for static information such as policies. News is updated sporadically and employees mostly get communication through other channels.
Low	Top-down activity; static periphery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The intranet is actively used for news, but it tends to come from the centre. Employees do not see the intranet as their main communication channel. There is a wide array of content, but much of it is outdated. There is no assessment of the value or quality of content. Departmental or local sites are mostly static (e.g. part of a document management system).
Mid	Multiple, managed communication levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most employees see the intranet as the place to go for regular news. Some employees use online tools for two-way communication and feedback, but there are only a few examples. There is some quality and value control around content. Both global and local content are actively managed. Online news is both centrally and locally produced. Email is used primarily for local announcements only. There is ad hoc co-ordination of communications teams.
High	Structured, flexible content and communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most employees prefer the intranet for nearly all communication and information needs. Most employees feel that the intranet is a place where they can contribute news, opinion and information. There is a broad mix of corporate, department, team and user-generated content with clear boundaries. A wide range of media is used, including video and audio. There is quality control appropriate to each level of content. Content is not duplicated and there is clear ownership. It is clear who publishes what to whom, and information is structured by audience not provider. The user experience is personalized and customizable.
Excel	Communication and content owned by all <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of employees are both publishers and consumers. User-generated content covers all media types (e.g. video, applications). All employees understand the different options for using the digital workplace as a communication tool. All employees are skilled in writing online content.

Figure 7: The five levels for 'Communication and Information'.

COMMUNITY AND COLLABORATION	
Base	No specific support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific collaboration support – email is the main tool. • No, or partially complete, people-finder and locally maintained contact lists.
Low	Ad hoc use of collaboration tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People-finder is mostly complete but unreliable, or there are multiple people systems. • Most collaboration is via email and shared drives, perhaps with some niche tools for team collaboration. • Tools in use may overlap in functionality or be ‘unofficial’ (e.g. Yammer accounts set up without IT’s knowledge).
Mid	Wide usage of disconnected tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a single address book with contact details, including some long-term contractors. • Collaboration tools are widely used for basic tasks such as document sharing and messaging but are not joined up. • Enterprise social network tools are in use by some groups but are not widespread or joined up (e.g. requiring a separate login for each).
High	Online collaboration as a way of working <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a comprehensive directory of personal profiles, where people maintain their own information about skills, interests and social networks. Contractors and partners are included. • There are activity streams that can be followed for people and information (e.g. projects, documents or image libraries). • Private collaboration spaces are widely used (e.g. by project teams). • Communities are widely used for knowledge sharing and collaborating. • Integrated real-time collaboration tools are routinely used (e.g. presence, IM, desktop video and web conferencing). • Employees are supported in developing skills and techniques for using these tools. • There is a programme to cultivate employee adoption of these tools.
Excel	Seamless collaboration outside and in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is permeability with the outside; employees routinely collaborate with third parties through the extranet and other secure environments. • Collaboration and social tools are fully integrated. • Immersive collaboration environments are commonly used, such as telepresence or virtual worlds.

Figure 8: The five levels for ‘Community and Collaboration’.

SERVICES	
Base	No online services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no online services, although information may be provided about services that are delivered offline.
Low	Basic applications online; manual back office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees routinely use one or two standalone applications online. Some services may involve online forms that are manually processed after submission.
Mid	Key services online <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key employee services (HR, finance, IT, facilities and travel) are used online by most employees. Some services are limited to groups of employees (e.g. not in all countries). Manual processes still exist. Most 'work' tools (e.g. dashboards) that people use are dedicated applications. Disconnected from each other.
High	Services and applications used online by all <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All employee services are used by all employees online. Applications have a consistent interface and single sign-on. There are joined-up processes and workflow (e.g. a new employee process in HR triggers IT processes for user accounts). Online workflow is widely used, even for local activities (e.g. departments define workflows for common team tasks).
Excel	Employees adapt applications to needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees use the digital workplace to combine and integrate data from multiple systems (e.g. for dashboards). Mash-ups are used to help visualize and combine data from internal and external sources (e.g. map overlays, custom apps).

Figure 9: The five levels for 'Services'.

STRUCTURE	
Base	No structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no formal management of the digital workplace framework. • There may be multiple small intranet sites. • The intranet is not connected to anything else.
Low	Disconnected sites, internally structured <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple active intranets exist (e.g. for departments, business lines etc). • The central intranet may link to other sites or tools such as wikis, but there is no deeper integration. • Some key sites may be well governed within themselves, but there is no consistency between sites. • Local sites may not be accessible to people outside that region. • Search does not index between sites. • Little or no remote access (e.g. only by staff with laptops and VPN).
Mid	Aggregation of principal platforms; some standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many sites may share a single platform but a significant minority still sit outside. • There are standards to align look and feel, even if different platforms are used, but there are exceptions and anomalies. • Search is federated across existing sites. • Look and feel is aligned between key sites and tools. • Office-based employees use the intranet and tools other than email at least weekly. • Access from mobile devices is possible, but there are no mobile-specific designs (e.g. apps or mobile stylesheets).
High	Integrated digital workplace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a consistent user interface throughout. • There is a consistent information architecture and metadata. • There is a single profile and login for all services and social network tools. • Applications are integrated behind one gateway interface. • Search can be scoped to any level (faceted search). • Nearly all employees use the intranet and most use it several times a day. • There is clear governance regarding what to manage and what to leave open to user-generated content. • Mobile use of the digital workplace is specifically designed for and supported. • Kiosk or home access is available to all employees without office PC access. • Mobile (e.g. phone or tablet) and employee-owned devices are specifically supported.
Excel	Digital workplace for all <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Components of the digital workplace are adapted to specific use-cases (e.g. sales support apps on tablets for front-line staff). • The intranet is absorbed into other elements of the digital workplace. • Nearly all roles will incorporate the digital workplace in some form. • All employees use the digital workplace daily. • All employees use the same application for a given task. • Innovation of digital workplace features is managed and encouraged.

Figure 10: The five levels for 'Structure'.



Organizations have built physical workplaces in the past 200 years; we know them and understand them. But we now need **to design and shape**

the digital workplaces where staff, contractors and third parties increasingly work.

5

Five digital workplace patterns

The DW model is designed to take account of an organization's total digital workplace, rather than just a single element within it. This provides a more rounded reflection of a typical employee's experience, just as a shopper's experience typically involves many stores and services.

An organization's digital workplace often evolves along different lines; for example, some will emphasize online service or collaboration early on, whereas others will focus on tightly integrated communication and information provision. To explore this in more detail, this section looks at typical maturity patterns and links them back to the marketplace metaphor in Section 3.

For the purposes of our metaphor:

- Retail = communication and information.
- Social and community = online communities and collaboration.
- Civic and private services = employee services and applications.
- Town and retail planning and management = the digital workplace structure, integration and governance.

1. Market square



Figure 11: The traditional open-air market has little structure or pattern.

Our starting point is the traditional open-air market. Here, there is little structure beyond vendors setting up their stalls, quite often with numerous stalls selling the same thing, and with no particular pattern to how stalls are arranged (you could have a flower stall next to a fishmonger, for instance). People entering a market square are likely to find it stimulating and sociable but may need time to become familiar with it.

This represents the early days of the digital workplace, where an organization had many small sites, each run independently and most aimed at providing basic information. Site owners were typically entrepreneurs with a basic knowledge of web software such as Front Page, who would usually run their site in addition to their main responsibilities. Usually organizations find this a low-value pattern and will seek to move to a more mature digital workplace.

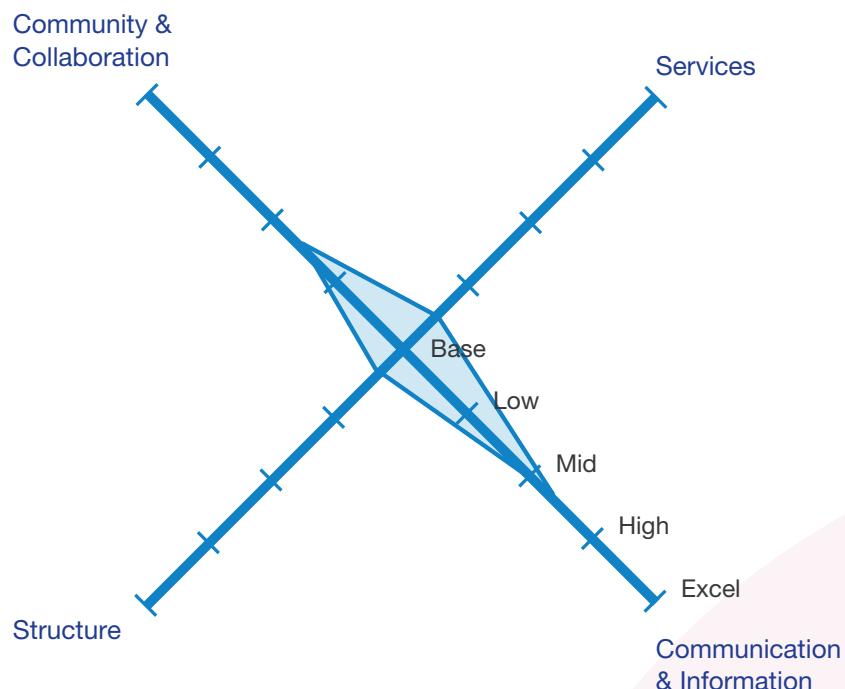


Figure 12: The ‘market square’ pattern.

2. Market town



Figure 13: The market town shows more purposeful design, but grows organically.

As the market grows, retail activity moves away from stalls and into shops. There is more evidence of purposeful design, though each shop looks quite different. Growth is still organic – there is no overall plan and the original market stalls continue to exist. In addition, other services emerge, such as banks, cafés and post offices, to meet a broader range of consumer needs. This is typical of rural centres in Europe, or ‘small town America’ featuring ‘Mom and Pop’ stores. People using a market town may enjoy the manageable scale and community environment but feel frustrated that it lacks the convenience of a mall or superstore.

In digital workplace terms, the market town represents the emergence of key communication sites (such as intranets) or information sites (such as document management systems) that are well designed individually but do not connect to each other and exist alongside smaller, ad hoc sites. Some basic services such as room booking may also be offered on a standalone basis, along with more socially oriented facilities, such as a ‘for sale & wanted’ board. This pattern of digital workplace is illustrated in Figure 14. The ‘market town’ pattern may be appropriate for small to medium-sized enterprises where online services may not be cost-effective and most collaboration and information needs can be easily dealt with in person.

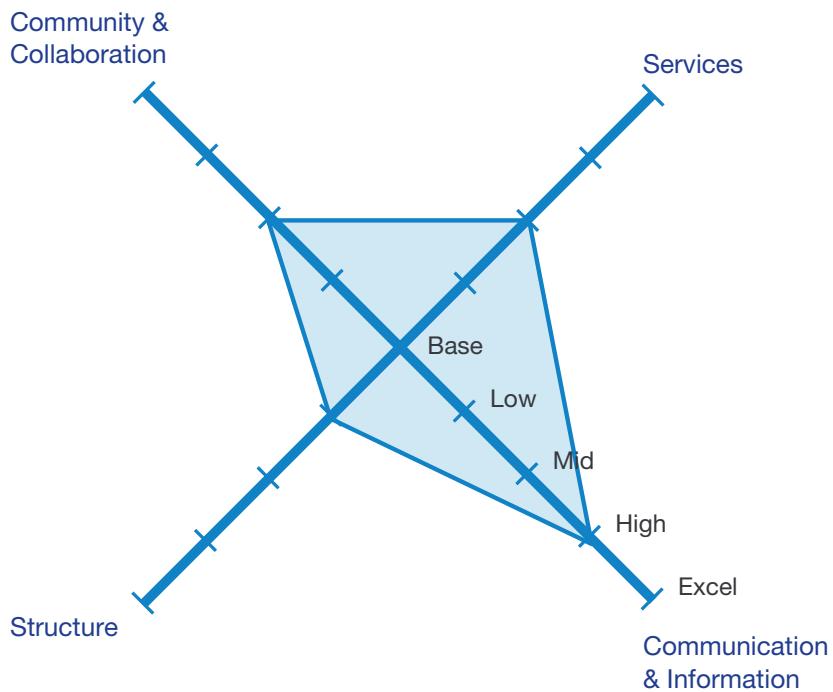


Figure 14: The 'market town' pattern.

3. Supermarket



Figure 15: The supermarket is well ordered and may provide a range of services.

Supermarkets represent a distinct evolutionary branch, beginning with an attempt to meet all grocery needs in one place but then in many cases expanding to cover other shopping needs such as toys, clothing and music. There is a great deal of order; everything has its place and no duplication is permitted except by design (e.g. prominent promotions). More recently, supermarkets have expanded into services too, offering pharmacies, dry cleaning and cash machines (ATMs), for example. People are typically drawn to supermarkets for their convenience and pricing. However, very large stores may be hard to navigate and can feel overwhelming. Some people also resent supermarkets that squeeze out independent specialist retailers that provide a more personal service.

The digital workplace equivalent of a supermarket is the intranet portal: an attempt to bring all content into a single, uniform experience at a lower cost than multiple platforms. Portals typically have more controls in place and strive to avoid having sites that duplicate functions, with efficiency and uniformity emphasized above community and collaboration. Although early portals were often promoted as a means of delivering services too, in reality this integration was often superficial (in the same way that banks and food chains may open up units alongside supermarkets so that they are loosely linked). The ‘supermarket’ pattern is best suited to organizations whose digital workplace priority is convenient access to information rather than collaboration between colleagues.

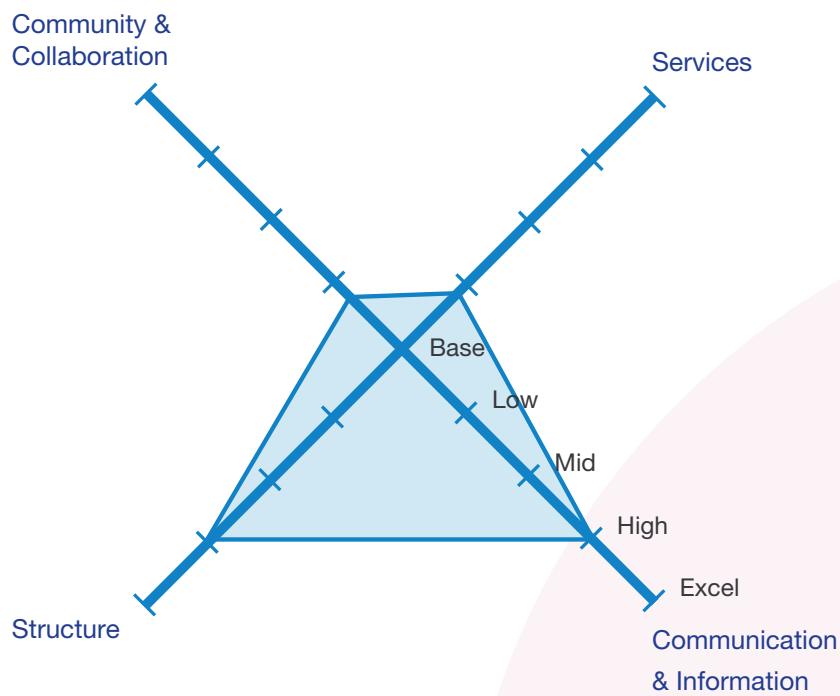


Figure 16: The ‘supermarket’ pattern.

4. Mall



Figure 17: Shopping malls provide a range of shops and services, with some autonomy for individual units.

Shopping malls (or shopping centres) represent a slightly different approach to that of supermarkets. Although they aim to create an ‘everything-under-one-roof’ experience, there is typically more autonomy within individual units. Often shops compete in what they sell. There will typically be a large department store that draws people in (an ‘anchor store’) to the benefit of other shops there. Malls also tend to have more services and social areas, such as travel agents, food courts or a cinema.

Some out-of-town malls have become like privately owned town centres. Typically covering a large, multi-unit site, they comprehensively meet shopping needs, but also provide extra amenities. For example, some civic services, such as libraries, sports facilities and post offices, may relocate there on the grounds that this is where people are likely to congregate.



Figure 18: The retail park is like a privately owned town centre.

People visiting malls do so for a wide range of purposes, both social and practical. The uniformity of malls often appeals as it ensures consistent quality and makes it easier to accomplish different activities. However, the experience can also feel rather sterile or synthetic.

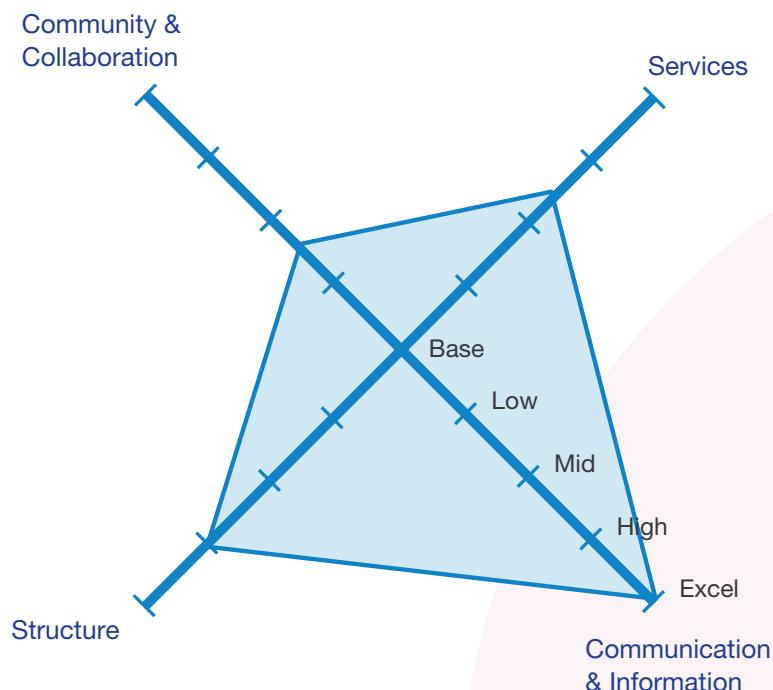


Figure 19: The 'mall' pattern.

In digital workplace terms, the mall is like a federated approach, with several intranet sites running on a common platform, complemented by other standalone tools. There may be an anchor site (usually the corporate or group site) that acts as a gateway and links to a range of other relatively independent sites. There may also be high-level controls on which sites are allowed (just as a mall would stop a fish shop opening next to a bridal-wear outlet), but autonomy exists in terms of specific content. The social aspect of a mall is represented by community features within intranet sites or by social media tools. For example, there may be discussion forums or blogs where people can interact, though these may be viewed as contrived, top-down and soulless rather than community-owned. They may well be whatever comes with the existing platform (e.g. SharePoint), rather than the best or most current available. There will also be a greater range of services incorporated to draw people in, such as travel booking or online expenses. The ‘mall’ pattern is therefore well suited to larger organizations where the emphasis is on efficiency and cost control.

Interestingly, there is a new trend towards re-establishing market squares in some larger malls and retail parks. These may be in the form of craft or farmers’ markets, and, like user-generated content on an intranet, seek to instil a sense of individuality, creativity and community that perhaps existed in the past but was somehow lost.

5. City centres



Figure 20: City centres show a mixture of top-down planning and organic growth.

The final model for our analogy is the modern city centre in Europe, Asia, or the downtown district of a US city. Growing from a ‘market town’ template, cities often mix a degree of top-down planning with more organic growth. Like malls, they combine retail, services and social activities. However, they can also have a stronger sense of community or social activity, such as city squares, artistic quarters and theatres. People may visit city centres for their vibrancy and variety, but also because, unlike malls, it is where they work and socialize.



Figure 21: People both work and socialize in the city centre.

The digital workplace equivalent of a city centre is one that has a degree of top-down structure but also nurtures bottom-up developments. While the infrastructure and services may be driven centrally, much of the content will be more locally owned and managed. This approach can lead to a stronger sense of ownership and scope for innovation but may be less efficient than the mall model.

It is likely there will be established tools for social networking and that these will be integrated to some extent – sharing a common profile, for example. However, there is also likely to be experimentation on the periphery of the digital workplace, particularly where consumer trends are experimented with and introduced into the enterprise ‘unofficially’, as has been the recent trend with mobile devices.

Overall, this pattern is well suited to larger, federated organizations that may have a number of relatively autonomous business units but are seeking to improve communication and sharing across boundaries.

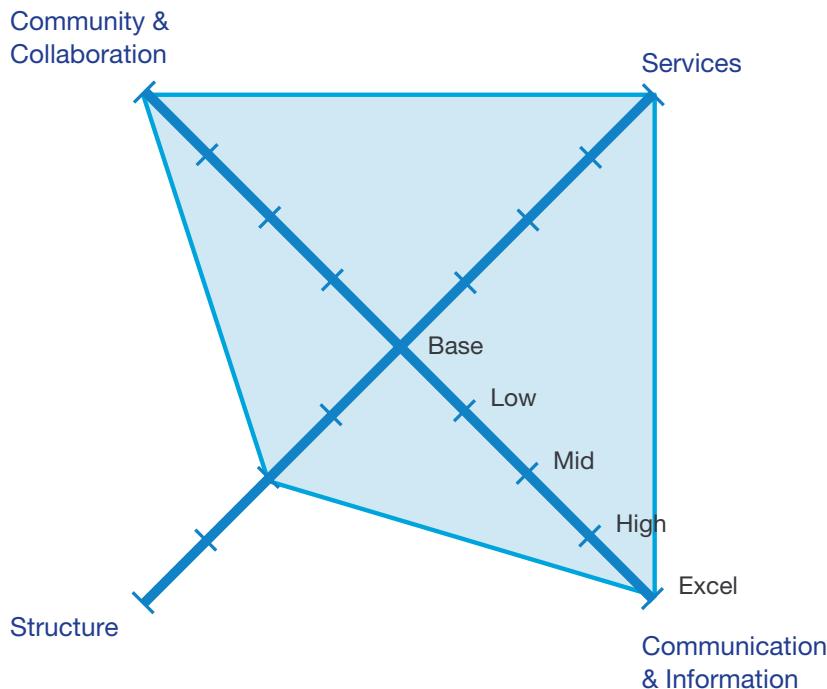


Figure 22: The 'city centre' pattern.

As with malls (see above), there has been renewed interest in regenerating market squares in some cities. The same applies to the digital workspace, where we are seeing a return to user-generated intranet content and community involvement, making the overall experience more rewarding.

Not all city centres are thriving: either by design or through lack of planning some city centres have died and activity has moved to the outskirts. This may be a warning for organizations that do not nurture a healthy digital workplace inside the firewall, leaving their 'citizens' to look elsewhere for information and services.

6

Developing your digital workplace in line with business strategy

The DW model is most valuable when used as a tool for thinking about future options. In terms of the metaphor, the task is like that of an urban planner attempting to meet the disparate needs of multiple stakeholders.⁵ Future steps should be guided by:

- **Business strategy** – what direction your organization is taking and what role the digital workplace should play in this (for example, a merger would need strong communications and collaboration).
- **Employee needs** – introducing easier ways for employees to do their work and removing current frustrations. Often these changes will be operational but have widespread impact (such as improved knowledge sharing).
- **Culture** – digital workplaces usually reflect an organization's culture. Those with strong top-down management and a cohesive structure will be able to implement a 'mall' pattern more easily than a more federated company, for example.
- **Scale** – company size will dictate the appropriateness of certain changes. For example, it may be more desirable for a small company to have an employee contact for benefits administration rather than implementing a self-service system.

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⁵ See <http://www.thoughtfarmer.com/blog/connected-companies-complex-systems-and-social-intranets/> blog, 6 April 2011, which lucidly explains why intranets are a 'wicked problem' involving complex systems, just like town planning.

6

Few organizations will have the resources to develop along all dimensions at once, so a roadmap for improvement should pick one or two priority areas. When thinking about future patterns in relation to business strategy, each situation will be different, but there will be common themes. For example:

BUSINESS GOALS	DIMENSIONS TO DEVELOP
Innovation	'Community and Collaboration' are important, in particular, support for idea sharing and social networking. A low to mid score on 'Structure' might also be appropriate.
Knowledge sharing	'Communication and Information' and 'Community and Collaboration' should both be strong, so that information is accessible and there is a community context to help exploit it. 'Structure' is also important to ensure content quality and good search performance.
Organizational change, such as restructuring	'Communication and Information' should be a priority. During change, two-way communication and regular, reliable updates are particularly important (aim for the 'mid+' level for this dimension).
Reduce internal administration costs	'Services' are important as these reduce transaction costs. Integration also matters as it lowers barriers to employee adoption (e.g. integration, usability and access to all employees should be at 'mid' to 'high' levels for this dimension).
Creating a sense of 'one' company	'Structure' is important for ensuring that employees gain a sense of a single organization by having a single intranet, with all parts of the organization visible. 'Community' is also a significant factor. Even at the 'mid' level, having everyone in the same people directory can be symbolic. At higher levels, creating spaces where employees interact across silos is important. 'Communication and Information' are fairly important for the reasons given under 'Organizational change' above.
Reducing carbon footprint	'Community and Collaboration' will play a role, particularly at the 'high' to 'excel' levels where virtual working is strongly supported, reducing the need to travel.

Figure 23: Aligning the dimensions to develop with business goals.

As with the current state, it may be appropriate to consider a range of sub-patterns. For example, while Research and Development employees may benefit from a pattern optimized for innovation, it may not be sensible to make these features available across the organization. Clearly, the compromise that such a strategy entails is that 'Integration' will not score as highly.



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7

Discussion

Implications for intranets

Hopefully, the model presented in this paper makes it clear that a digital workplace is not simply a more advanced intranet. Indeed, there are often cohorts of employees for whom an intranet plays no role in their digital workplace, for example, pilots, field engineers and retail staff. However, in practice, many organizations will have an intranet that is playing a key role in their current DW landscape. Organizations should therefore consider moving to using a digital workplace strategy, within which the intranet strategy can be defined at a high level, rather than developing it in isolation.

The approach to doing this is likely to be a combination of sponsorship, governance and strategy process changes.

Sponsorship: Where a sponsor exists for an intranet, they typically come from Internal Communications, IT or sometimes HR. The broad scope of the DW means that it can be very hard to fit that within the remit of a single leader. Senior sponsorship for a DW is therefore often a joint effort across the lead functions and business areas, sometimes referred to as a 'Digital Board'.⁶ If you currently have an intranet steering group, consider reformulating its composition to represent the DW, or perhaps have a digital board with a more operational intranet steering group reporting up to it, if this is more appropriate to the seniority of the participants.

Governance: Where intranets are governed in isolation, there is scope for other elements of the DW to create 'back doors'. For example, where there are strict publishing guidelines for the formal content on an intranet, so collaboration sites become unofficial publishing platforms instead. Governance owners should review their policies and guidelines so that they are not platform-specific but encompass all elements of the DW. Of course, implementing such governance is more challenging in a DW that follows a 'city' pattern rather than a 'mall' pattern, and this can be one reason why companies that need strong governance might seek to move to more of a 'mall' approach through integration.

Strategy process: When formulating a DW strategy rather than an intranet strategy, the emphasis moves away from a web-inspired model towards one focussed on employee task needs. The means of supporting these needs will then cascade down to strategies for specific platforms, some of which may be the intranet, but other needs may be met by mobile apps, real-time communication technologies or changes to physical office designs to accommodate shifts in working patterns. The scenario to avoid is one where the intranet strategy tries to keep expanding to meet as many needs as it can, even if it is not fit for purpose.

Returning to the sponsorship question, we have found that the concept of the DW can engage senior leaders in a way that an intranet-led conversation cannot. Intranets, it would seem, are often perceived as rather mundane 'plumbing', whereas the messages of agile working, improved productivity or reduced carbon emissions that go with the DW business case are often closer to the priorities of the board.⁷ A visioning process, similar to the one used in "[A week in the digital workplace](#)" can also help bring the concept to life.⁸

6 See, for example: <http://www.netjmc.com/intranet-strategy-governance/choosing-the-right-digital-board-model> [accessed 3 July 2013].

7 See <http://www.digitalworkplacegroup.com/resources/download-reports/digital-workplace-business-case> [accessed 31 January 2014].

8 Step Two Designs. *A Week in the Digital Workplace*. <http://www.steptwo.com.au/products/week-digital-workplace> [accessed 3 July 2013].

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Implications for intranet managers

Should intranet managers all aspire to become DW managers? In most organizations, it is unlikely that the intranet will go away any time soon, so the role of the intranet manager will live on. It may be that as the DW strategy becomes clearer, the scope of the intranet becomes more focussed again on the Communication and Information dimension and less on those of Community and Collaboration, Services and overall Structure.

Where organizations take their DW seriously, there will be an opening for a more strategic role that defines and executes a vision. For some intranet managers, this will be an appealing career move, but it should not be seen as an inevitable one. Many of the skills required to be an effective intranet manager transfer well: change manager, project manager, evangelist and strategist. However, life in the DW world is likely to involve more conversations around infrastructure, security and technology, and fewer about content and communications, so it will not be a match in all cases.

A

Appendix: Further reading

Digital Workplace

ClearBox Consulting. *Digital Workplace Manifesto*. An infographic on DW principles from an employee perspective.

<http://www.clearboxconsulting.co.uk/digital-workplace-manifesto>

Deloitte. *The Digital Workplace: Think, share, do*. A digital workplace framework.

http://www.deloitte.com/assets/Dcom-SouthAfrica/Local%20Assets/Documents/the_digital_workplace.pdf

Digital Workplace Forum (2012). *Digital Workplace Business Case*. A comprehensive review of the financial case for a digital workplace with numerous examples.

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Miller, Paul (2012). *The Digital Workplace: How Technology is Liberating Work*.

London and New York: TECL Publishing. Book by IBF and DWF founder.

<http://digitalworkplacebook.com>

McConnell, Jane. *Digital Workplace Trends*. An annual survey and report conducted by Jane McConnell of NetJMC, which offers invaluable statistics on current adoption levels and management practices. <http://www.digital-workplace-trends.com>

Step Two Designs. *A Week in the Digital Workplace*. A 'future scenario' around starting a new job showing how a comprehensive digital workplace might feel for a new employee. <http://www.steptwo.com.au/products/week-digital-workplace>

Intranet Evolution Models

CloudAve. *Maslow's ROI Hierarchy for Enterprise 2.0*. Not a maturity model per se, but a thought-provoking model of how Enterprise 2.0 thinking can move from a tangible to intangible focus. <http://www.cloudave.com/link/maslow-s-hierarchy-of-enterprise-2-0-roi>

Martini, A., Corso, M. and Pellegrini, L. (2009). 'An empirical roadmap for intranet evolution', *International Journal of Information Management*, 29(4): 295–308. An academic treatment of the topic that addresses governance issues in detail.

<http://www.elsevier.com/ijinfomgt>

Prescient Digital Media. *The Good to Great Intranet Matrix*. A free whitepaper that compares 'good' with 'great' intranets based on 13 different factors.

<http://www.prescientdigital.com/articles/good-to-great-intranet-matrix>

A

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- Angela Pohl
- James Robertson
- Martin White

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The paper by Martini et al. (see Further Reading) was also influential on our thinking about a multidimensional approach to intranet maturity.

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