

This year was a real vintage for the *Intranet Innovation Awards*, the global competition run by Step Two Designs which is now in its sixth year. With over 80 entries (a leap of over 50 per cent on 2011) and many high quality entries, we were able to see that intranet teams are more professional and impactful than ever before. This made it exciting for us to sift through the submissions, as well as giving the judges the pleasant dilemma of trying to work out their favourite entry!

Although this year we decided not to give the Platinum award (there was no one entry which stood head and shoulders above the others), we were still able to declare:

- Eight gold award winners: Enter (Russia), Dutch government / Pleio (Netherlands), The Judge Group (USA), New South Wales Dept of Education and Communities (Australia), Scott Corporation (Australia), Urbis (Australia), Chr. Hansen (Denmark), Weston Solutions (USA).
- Eight commended entries: Coca-Cola Enterprises (US/UK), Aviva (UK), Skanska (Sweden), ClimateWorks Foundation (USA), Stockland (Australia), Arup (UK), Luxottica (Italy) and Heineken International (Netherlands)

Considering the entries collectively and viewing some of the traits of the winners, we're also able to see some of the wider trends currently occurring in the intranet space and likely to continue in the coming months. This article explores some of these key themes.



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Social tools are now positioned around how people work

16 case studies, 200 screen shots

The full annual *Intranet Innovations 2012* report features detailed case studies of all 16 winning and commended entries and around 200 intranet screen shots of the sites in question. At \$89 it's great value, and it supports the year-long effort it takes for us to run the awards.

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Social tools are an expected part of intranets

Last year a key theme was that intranets were becoming increasingly 'social' and more informal. This was even more apparent in 2012 where microblogging, social networking and activity streams prevalent in many issues. Social tools are being heavily used. In fact there were a number of very well executed 'social intranet' implementations.

Among the winners, social tools are to the fore in Pleio, a unique open-source intranet and collaboration platform which can be used for free within the Dutch public sector. Various government departments and public bodies in the Netherlands are already migrating their intranets on to Pleio or using it for collaboration, sometimes for initiatives with Dutch citizens. Here microblogging and activity streams are key features, and appear in a personalised dashboard view as default.

There are also signs that the use of social tools is being positioned much more around how people work, rather than the value of the tools themselves. Among the commended entries, both Stockland and Coca-Cola Enterprises delivered new iterations of their intranet which wove and integrated social

The screenshot displays the Pleio intranet dashboard. At the top, there is a search bar and a user profile for Ellen van Aken. The dashboard is organized into several columns and sections:

- Left Sidebar:** Contains navigation options such as Dashboard, Groups, Subsites, Members, Tools, Add, My menu, Settings, Help, and Report this.
- Profile Completeness:** A widget showing a progress bar at 75% with a tip to update the profile.
- Group membership:** Lists groups like 'User stories Projectsecretaris', 'Archivering in de cloud', and 'Vormgeving Pleio'.
- Files:** Lists documents such as 'Discussies AV Pleio', 'Wiki-inhoud', and 'Emailnotificaties van Pleio'.
- Activity:** A central stream of updates from users like Davied, Roelof van Nellen, ErikJonker, and Davied, covering topics like app development and group meetings.
- Content by tag:** A list of tagged content including 'Agenda voor de Werkgroep Pleio op 14 juni 2012', 'Blog van Babel', and 'Nieuwe blog opgezet'.
- The Wire:** A section for announcements or news, currently showing a post about logging in users.

Pleio is an open source intranet and collaboration platform used by Dutch government agencies and public sector bodies. It is deeply social with a variety of tools available, including microblogging. Individuals can also get a dashboard view, displayed above, with activity streams. Even announcements about the platform are distributed through Twitter.

tools right into the homepage. Both positioned and promoted their use with terminology which made sense to employees.

Stockland talked about how its new community space 'circles' could aid collaboration on projects. Coca-Cola Enterprises' new implementation of microblogging tool Chatter, was framed as part of a wider 'Get Connected' campaign which emphasised choices of different communication tools, and which could be used for each working situation.

Gamification is being used to drive business change

Gamification grows up in the enterprise

One theme related to 'social intranets' is gamification – the use of gaming techniques within the context of work. Its use in intranets has been around for a few years now and is most commonly applied in awarding of points and badges to individuals, often to reflect online participation or good feedback.

Gamification is a topic which has tended to divide intranet managers, some of whom question its validity and impact in the intranet. However this year's entries provide evidence that gamification is starting to be used to drive business change and user behaviour in some companies, especially where there is a more informal culture.

The most obvious example of gamification is Russian gold award winner, Enter. This rapidly expanding online retailer is keen to foster a unique company culture which fuses fun, participation and excellence. Enter has introduced a motivational game which is primarily delivered over the intranet. It records the points of individuals, based on detailed ratings from co-workers on different aspects of performance.

It's possible to pick up points by introducing colleagues to the company or delivering sessions on particular skills or interests. The employees rewarded most points win 'experience-based' holidays with other Enter employees.

In one of the most extensive uses of intranet gamification the judges have ever seen, there are also fun games such as 'Lucky Lunch' where you can get a lunch date with a random colleague. Of course if you go through

with it, you both get points. How much the intranet will help to craft a company culture will become more apparent in the coming months, but it's a bold experiment in using gaming techniques for real business value and is being used to attract new hires.

Senior budget holders still don't regard mobile as a priority

Enterprise mobility is moving fast but under the radar

Last year one of the highlighted themes from the awards was that enterprise mobility was finally here and, when done correctly, was having a significant impact. This year, enterprise mobility has again featured in one of our gold award winners (from Judge Group) and two commended entries from Aviva and Arup.

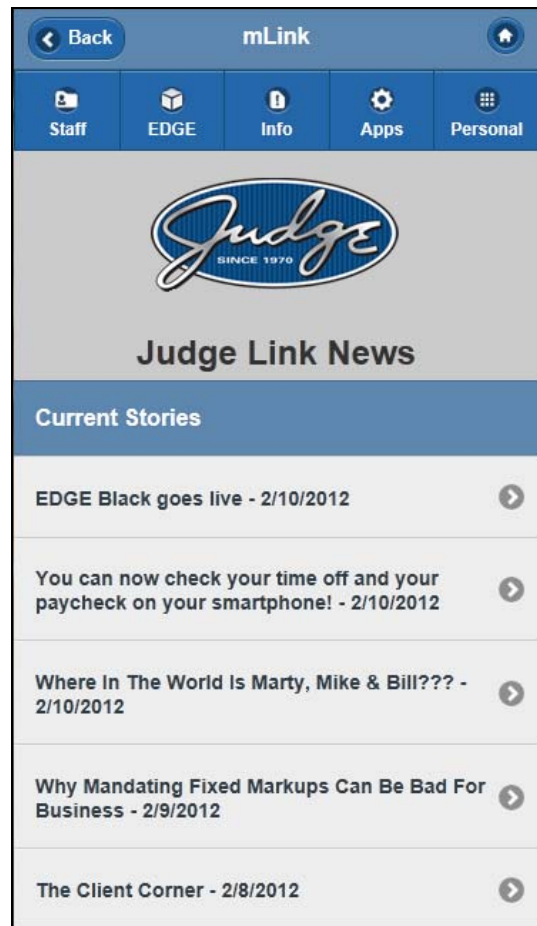
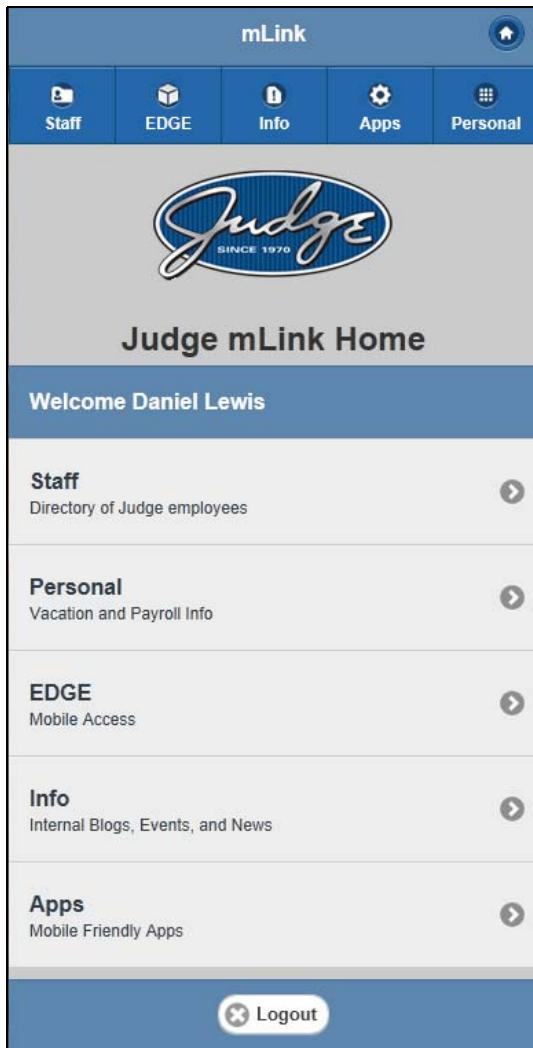
These entries demonstrate that enterprise mobility is maturing fast in some organisations, particularly in the growth and knowledge of best practices around designing and developing mobile intranets. However with restricted resources allocated to the projects in all three entries, there appears to be some way to go for mobile intranets to be regarded as a priority by senior budget holders.

Probably the most striking changes to enterprise mobility in the last 12 months is the dramatic rise of the use of tablets within the enterprise and the introduction of Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policies from IT departments. These trends are reflected in our entries.

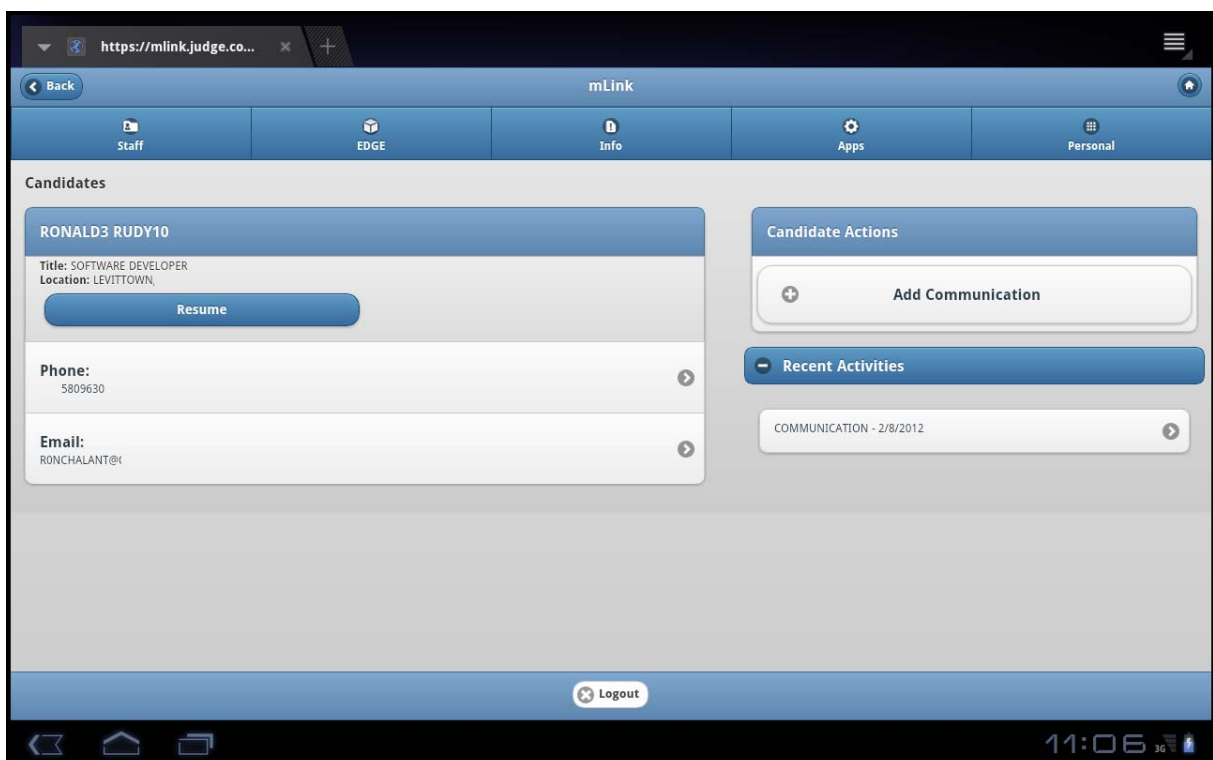
For example the winning mobile intranet from Judge Group (called mLink) has been designed with access from a range of devices in mind, spanning across consumer and corporate devices, tablet and smartphone, Android, iOS and BlackBerry.

The Judge Group implementation also demonstrates thorough knowledge of some of the best practices around implementing a mobile intranet. Not only did the project team concentrate on the essential tasks needed by people on the go (including access to Judge's custom CRM system) but they also used techniques such as responsive web design in order to deliver a compelling user experience across multiple devices.

This greater awareness of designing for mobile is also shown in the Arup mobile intran-



Judge Group's mobile intranet mLink contains news, a staff directory and other key information. However the 'killer app' is access to EDGE, Judges' custom applicant tracking system which is often used by employees in the field and is available on tablet (displayed below).



et, and Aviva's competition which challenged mobile developers across the globe to develop new apps.

Although enterprise mobility is moving fast, these three entries do give out mixed messages about the strategic importance of mobile. The Judge Group launched mLink at the same time as their new intranet, reflecting it as a priority area. Aviva's mobile competition fitted into overall strategic objectives concerning a flexible workforce. However all three projects also had extremely limited resources, were principally driven by the IT department and to a certain extent were 'under the radar.' It will be fascinating to see if next year's mobile-based entries will be better resourced and more visible.

Innovative intranets have a solid foundation of user research

Extensive user research produces results

Last year many of the winning entries were very quickly executed projects, pushed through by motivated teams who cut through the red tape to get a result. There was a real spirit of 'Just Do It'

There's a definite shift this year to larger implementations which have a very solid foundation in extensive user research. It shows that intranet teams who spend time investigating and understanding their users produce better requirements resulting in better design and more engagement. In different winning and commended entries this has been done through observation, interviews, piloting and an iterative approach to implementation.

One particular gold award winner where extensive research helped shape the solution was at the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities (NSWDEC.). The team rolled out a personalised toolbar where staff could link to applications they used in their everyday work on every page of the intranet. Despite having very few metrics about usage, the team went through an intensive and wide research phase, engaging users in one-on-one interviews and surveys from over 240 schools.

From this the requirements and rollout strategy were defined. This meant that the team

had a thorough understanding of what users wanted to link to and how they wanted to use the bar. The results were stunning levels of adoption and a beautiful design.

Other winners this year have used either piloting or an iterative approach to development to help understand users. Perhaps the best example is Chr. Hansen's product documentation search.

Pulling 100,000 different documents from three systems, and using an innovative 'Add to basket' facility to select documents which can then be emailed immediately, the facility has had several iterations over three years, including the addition of free text searching. There perhaps is no better way to research and understand users, planning a series of upgrades based on observing real use and receiving user feedback.

An effective dashboard drives changes in behaviour

Intranets surface real insight

'Big data' and the exploitation of it for competitive advantage has received a lot of attention in the past few months. Organisations have accumulated immense amounts of information and data, yet information overload is the ever present issue. Innovative intranets are cutting through this sea of data, to provide real insights for staff and leaders.

Two of this year's gold award winners (Ubris and Weston Solutions) are doing this, surfacing data which is either hard to access or hidden in different systems, and then presenting it in ways which create real value.

Perhaps the clearest example of this is the commercial dashboard at Urbis, which displays critical financial information and ratios in the form of numbers, graphs and gauges. The data relates to the financial performance of Urbis as a whole, as well as its different business divisions.

Rolled out to all the firm's directors, the dashboard has successfully made many directors more aware of financial data, and also helped facilitate conversations about its importance. Previously this information (and reporting) was difficult to access.

Where the dashboard has had most impact is when it has changed user behaviour. When directors view the dashboard and see a dial



New South Wales Department of Education and Communities introduced a personalised toolbar for employees (mainly teachers in schools and other educational institutions) to add links to relevant applications and content. The attractive design and easy-to-use interface uses large icons for the links and means it is very easy for users to manage changes to the toolbar. Despite having very little data on usage, the team's extensive research phase has resulted in a successful solution with very high levels of adoption.

in the red they instinctively want to act to ensure the gauge moves out of the zone. It's a call to action, stimulating the type of commercial behaviour and awareness which is important for a company like Urbis to remain competitive

And so to 2013...

Of course we're hoping that next year's Intranet Innovation Awards next year will be even better. Will social still dominate? Will

there be more mobile intranets? If you're planning something special or have implemented something which is original and has impact then please enter.

We're open for business again in April 2013.

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Urbis' commercial dashboard presents various key financial data in the form of graphs, dials and gauges, Available for the firm as a whole, as well as different business divisions, it is already helping to encourage more commercial behaviours within the firm.



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