

Intranet projects are often longer and more involved than most teams expect. While no two projects are the same, and organisational circumstances vary greatly, teams should have some core expectations going into a design or redesign project.

In particular, as there is often pressure from stakeholders to deliver a new site quickly, it is important to have a realistic project plan and to set appropriate timeframes from the outset.

## Project activities

A number of project activities are common across intranet projects. As the Intranet Roadmap ([www.steptwo.com.au/products/roadmap](http://www.steptwo.com.au/products/roadmap)) outlines, these may include:

- researching staff needs
- determining intranet strategy and project scope
- developing a business case and obtaining funding
- determining overall intranet structure
- developing page designs
- testing and refining both structure and designs with staff
- conducting a content inventory
- determining required content
- cleaning and migrating content
- selecting and implementing new technology
- communication and change management

These activities can be small and informal, or substantive pieces of work, depending on the size and scope of the intranet project.

## Common scenarios

The table lists some indicative timeframes for common intranet scenarios.

The simplest situation is applying incremental improvements to an existing site. As discussed in the article *6x2: a new approach to planning*, these improvements should be planned on a rolling six month basis, and sized accordingly.

Project	Duration
Incremental improvement (fix key issues with current site)	6 months
Creating a new intranet (where one hasn't existed before)	6 months
Core intranet redesign (improve site structure and design)	9–12 months
Major intranet redevelopment (redesign and new technology)	12–18 months
Intranet as a business tool (improve processes and tools)	6–12 months

Creating a brand new intranet can also be quite quick. In some cases, senior management gives the team just three months to deliver a new site, but this is too short. Even assuming out-of-the-box technology, there is only enough time to put in place standard 'boilerplate' content.

A small project to create a new intranet will more likely take six months. This includes spending time at the outset of the project understanding staff and business needs.

Intranet redesigns are often more complex, due to legacy issues and the volume of content on the current site. Core intranet redesigns addressing usability issues commonly take upwards of a year, while major redevelopments can be longer.

Focusing on delivering functionality rather than addressing content issues may allow an incremental approach to be taken, with commensurately quicker projects.

Some intranet redesigns have stretched out to two, three or even four years, but this is clearly too long! Organisational patience will be stretched to the limit, and the drawn out nature of the project will often mean that improvements can be dated by the time they launch.

Where possible, break intranet projects into a series of activities, each producing clear business value and concrete deliverables.