

Intranet-based staff directories are only truly useful when they contain comprehensive information about staff members.

This means going beyond just a name, phone number and email address. Staff directories should provide a photo, job title, organisational unit, reporting structure, plus much more.

The challenge is that no single system will hold all these details, forcing staff directories to pull information from a number of sources.

Typical sources include:

- HR/payroll system
- IT/security
- user contributed and updated information

Drawing this information together will require integration, a more difficult task when legacy systems are still in place.

In some cases it may be possible to have ‘real-time’ integration between these systems, although scheduled updates are more common. Often, data is synchronised between the systems on a nightly (or weekly) basis. For a staff directory, this is often sufficient.

Take a pragmatic, step-by-step approach to the back-end integration, allowing business needs to be met in the short term, without requiring infeasible investments of time or resources.

In theory, the deployment of Active Directory or LDAP should reduce or eliminate the need for this type of integration, by providing a single authoritative source of information for use by all systems including the staff directory.

In practice, Active Directory tends to focus on the key details needed by IT, and may not be integrated with HR systems. As discussed in the earlier article *Clean up your LDAP or Active Directory*, work is usually required to update and extend details before they can be used.

Conduct a review of the existing systems of staff information, and plan the steps needed to deliver a fully featured staff directory.

The table to the right provides an at-a-glance summary of the possible sources for common staff directory fields. Use this as a guide when planning and prioritising the fields to include in your staff directory.

Field	HR	IT	User
Name	✓	✓	
Phone numbers	✓	✓	✓
Email address		✓	
User name		✓	
Employee ID	✓		
Security rights		✓	
Job role	✓		✓
Organisational unit	✓		
Reports to/team members	✓		
Location	✓		✓
Postal address	✓		
Photograph	✓	✓	✓
Special roles	✓		✓
Nickname (also known as)	✓		✓
Pronunciation of name	✓		✓
Projects			✓
Committees			✓
Skills and expertise	✓		✓
Languages	✓		✓
Availability/out of office	✓		✓
Emergency contact details	✓		✓
Resume (CV)			✓
Collaboration spaces		✓	✓
Documents and deliverables			✓
‘About me’ details			✓