

When developing an information management strategy within an organisation, it is useful to consider information needs on three levels:

- corporate
- team, division, business unit, etc
- individual

The needs of each of these three levels must be met if a coordinated and effective solution is to be maintained in the long-term.

Failure to address any one of the levels will lead to areas of the business or individuals finding their own solution, which may not fit well within the strategic goals of the organisation.

These are not new ideas, but they will be explored in the context of intranets and other corporate information systems.

### Corporate

At the top is the corporate information that is useful for the whole organisation. This 'global' information is generally fairly well addressed by the corporate intranet (even if the intranet itself needs improvement).

Examples of corporate information include policies and procedures, HR information, online forms, phone directory, etc.

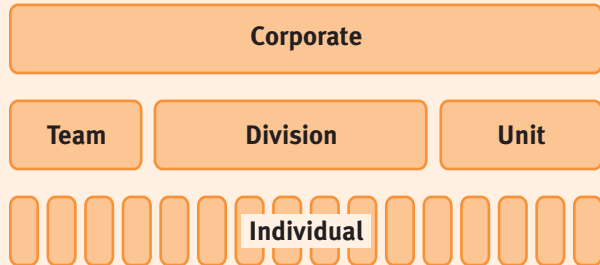
Interestingly, there may be a limited amount of truly global information, and it may not deliver the greatest (measurable) business benefits.

### Team, division, business unit

The middle level is perhaps the most interesting, as it covers all the information shared within teams, divisions, business units, etc. This information may be critical to the day-to-day activities of the group, but of little interest to the rest of the organisation.

Examples include project documentation, business unit specific content, meeting minutes, etc.

This level is generally poorly-served within organisations, although collaboration tools are increasingly being used address team information needs. It is also being recognised that it is this 'local' information that may be the most valuable, in terms of driving the day-to-day activity of the organisation.



### Individual

At the lowest level is the personal information needs of staff throughout the organisation. Examples include correspondence (both internal and external), reports and spreadsheets.

In most organisations, staff must struggle with using e-mail to meet their information management needs. While staff generally recognise the inadequacy of e-mail, they have few other approaches or technologies at their disposal.

Note that some organisations (such as consulting firms) are heavily dependent on personal information management amongst their staff.

### Managing the levels

When managing the information within each of the three levels, consider the following:

- An information management solution must be provided for staff at each of the three levels.
- If corporate solutions aren't provided, then staff will find their own solutions. This is the source of poor-quality intranet sub-sites, and other undesirable approaches.
- A clear policy must be developed, outlining when each of the three levels applies, and how information should be managed within each level.
- Processes must be put in place to 'bubble up' or 'promote' information from lower levels up to higher levels. For example, some team-generated information will be critical for the whole organisation.
- As much as possible, a seamless information management environment should be delivered that covers all three levels.