



Intranet 2.0: Collaborative Networks for the Intranet

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For most companies, the expense of their corporate intranets is a cost of doing business. The early promise of last decade’s Web 1.0 employee self-service applications justified an intranet strategy that has, today, devolved into a huge archive of ever-changing documents, policies, reports, and collateral that inundates IT with time-consuming content maintenance tasks. The next generation intranet is now available and transforms stale, static corporate intranets into collaborative networks that connect people and ideas with lower costs and increased productivity.

The new intranet paradigm applies the social networking technologies and concepts that engage people in their daily lives so company projects and objectives are surrounded by their stakeholders, team members, contributors — even business partners. However, while intranet collaboration is more than forums, blogs, and message boards, it’s not Facebook either. **To deliver real business value, focus must turn from the empowered user experience provided by these popular consumer social networking applications to make enterprise content the center of attention.** The primary goal is not to connect employees to each other, although that is a natural result; it is to connect employee teams to relevant enterprise content.

This paper reviews the limitations of current intranet implementations and the improvements that accrue from employee-powered, Intranet 2.0-based collaborative intranet networks, and specifically, the **MindTouch 2009 Enterprise solution — a robust platform upon which collaborative networks can be quickly deployed, expanded, and maintained.**

CORPORATE INTRANETS TODAY

Corporate intranets began as inconspicuous cubbyholes for miscellaneous internal memoranda that were not appropriate for a company’s public site. As ERP systems opened greater access to business data, vendors added employee self-service (ESS) functionality to provide additional justification for the value

proposition of those multi-million dollar solutions. ESS-enabled intranets provided real costs savings as human resources and other departments no longer fulfilled employee information requests concerning employment, benefits, travel, and other policies. Corporate intranets would never be the same.

Companies have diverse cultures, yet two traits seem universal: 1.) success breeds success and 2.) avoiding work is good. The success of ESS transformed the corporate intranet into the corporate data dump as every department put anything any employee would ever want to know online. Why talk to anyone? Everything could be found online.

Today, most corporate intranets are little more than a huge data archive, company bulletin board, and secure portal into ESS. Forward thinking companies grasping for innovation have added forums, chat rooms, and marketing pizzazz in an attempt to build community and open channels of communication, but users have never engaged at predicted rates, and any claim of added business value is specious at best.

For IT departments already struggling to pull the company upstream against the swift current of cost reductions, the corporate intranet became a boat anchor. Content management responsibilities are daunting. The intranet of a typical Global 2000 corporation will likely have thousands of pages of content, most of which require periodic updates. The reality is that updates are delayed, often for months. Content becomes stale and inaccurate and users become less confident in their decisions.

COLLABORATIVE INTRANETS FOR ENTERPRISE 2.0 — INTRANETS AS A PRODUCTIVITY TOOL

As it turns out, there was an answer to that previous question, “Why talk to anyone?” It’s called “innovation,” and it happens when people share ideas. As more ideas are shared faster, the pace of innovation increases. The fastest and most effective way to exchange ideas is by talking. Unfortunately, corporate intranets in the 1.0 era were actually stifling innovation by eliminating communication channels. Co-workers became strangers to anyone outside their own departments.

Companies that use their intranet, instead, as a collaborative network, facilitate the communication that enables innovation. The concepts of Intranet 2.0 — secure information sharing, interoperability, and content collaboration — come together in the collaborative network to weave all

Limitations of Intranet 1.0

- *IT assistance required for all content updates and edits*
- *No collaboration functionality*
- *No access to live enterprise data (ERP, CRM, databases, web services)*
- *Non project-based*
- *No metrics generated or monitoring enabled*
- *Content is disconnected and unorganized*

enterprise content into an information fabric that can be tailored to fit each project team. Federated from data in the enterprises data silos, file servers and databases, including ERP, CRM, CMS, emails, and web-services infrastructures, the information fabric is dynamic, yet easily secured and governed behind the corporate firewall.

Collaborative networks empower project team members to take ownership of enterprise content and relieve IT of those tasks. Project teams stretch the information fabric using web-based applications, such as social networking, enterprise wikis, blogs, and mash-ups that engage conversations without straying from business objectives.

Implementing collaborative networks becomes possible as project dashboards, reporting, and content workflows are easy add-ons. Rather than a monolithic file repository of slightly old data, the corporate intranet becomes a collaboration platform that fosters innovation. Any team member can edit project data on-the-fly, and share it immediately for all others to review, discuss, expand, or edit.



The market is responding with Intranet 2.0 solutions, but vendors offer different visions, with most looking to support legacy product lines. The market leader in collaboration, SharePoint, features a comprehensive solution offering, but works best as part of a total Microsoft environment. Looking to capitalize on the popularity of consumer social networking sites, other vendors wrap the same technology in a business-focused marketing message and call the product “social business software.” While the solutions certainly attract and engage employees, their focus on building personal networks, rather than on enterprise content collaboration and company objectives, produces no real business value.

Social networks enable conversations between people. Instead, collaborative networks encourage personal conversations, and focus on enabling teams to access and organize data within their information fabric into meaningful information that empowers decision making, enables collaboration, and fosters innovation.

Benefits of Collaborative Networks

- Access to all enterprise content
- Real time document editing
- Employee-generated content
- Low-cost data integration
- Connect people dynamically
- Superior Office Connectivity
- Collaboration enabled
- Innovation facilitated
- Monitoring enabled and custom metrics produced
- Dashboards

Adaptive Intranets change as the needs of the corporation change

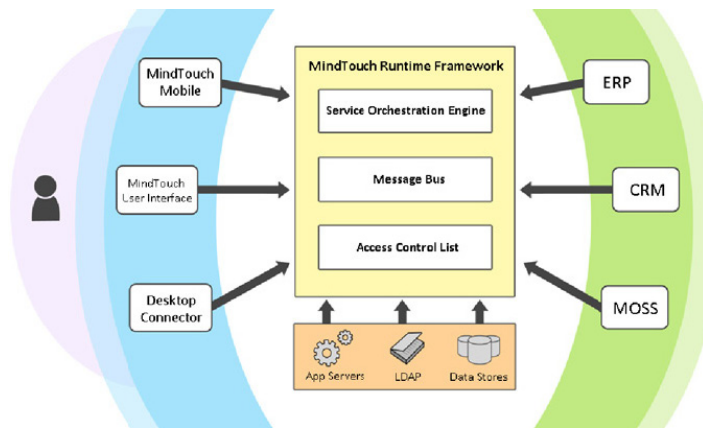
MINDTOUCH 2009 ENTERPRISE: EASY INTRANET 2.0

MindTouch is a leading provider of collaborative networks and an implementation partner on Intranet 2.0 strategies for corporate clients. The MindTouch solutions are based on MindTouch Core, one of the world’s most popular open source projects, and offer an enterprise collaboration platform that installs quickly, is easy to use and extend, and provides scalability and security comparable to the most robust enterprise portals.

Examples of popular extensions added by MindTouch users include:

- Accessing enterprise content across all data silos and web services
- User authentication
- Content storage
- Enterprise content search
- Analysis and visualization of diverse content

Figure 1. MindTouch Runtime Framework



MindTouch 2009 Enterprise provides a distributed application platform for the development of user specific web applications. Out of the box, MindTouch immediately delivers a wiki interface that enables improved collaboration between users of project files and email. Extending the application is easy as all programming languages and operating systems are supported. Built-in connectors to major business applications mean that no knowledge of the platform’s architecture is required by developers.

Deploy your Intranet 10x faster with MindTouch

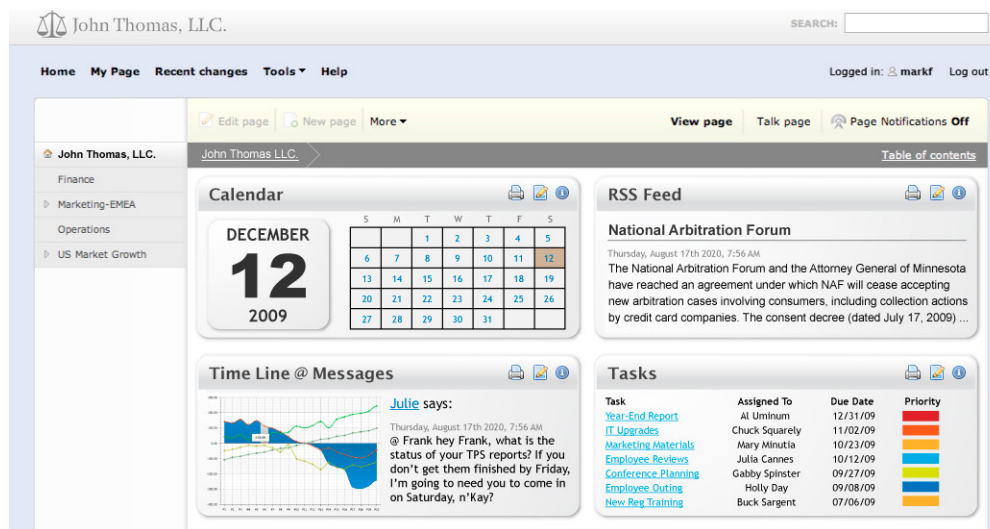
User development initiatives leverage three primary advantages of the MindTouch platform. Content authoring capabilities are extensive and dynamic. All pages are HTTP accessible XML web services that enable data mash-ups, embedding of files, smart linking, and WYSWYG editing on-the-fly. Content management functionality includes page and file versioning, multilevel permissions, section-level editing, and enterprise search down to the file content level. Finally, MindTouch makes enterprise integration easy through a services management console that allows users to quickly add external applications, data stores, and libraries. MindTouch Enterprise customers have instant access to more than one hundred external applications and libraries for which extensions have already been built.

A COLLABORATIVE NETWORK SOLUTION FOR EVERY COMPANY

The value proposition of collaborative networks scale to meet the requirements of any company. From a small-to medium sized (SMB) company that webifies its Microsoft Office and Outlook apps for Wiki collaboration to Fortune 100 companies with dozens of data silos, the cost and time to implement collaborative networks are not significant impediments to success. To date, the struggles of early adopters have resulted from poor vision – typically, the mistaken assumption that popular social networks could be leveraged for business value.

- MindTouch Intranet 2.0 Portals**
- Connections to enterprise data
 - Team dashboards
 - Superior office connectivity
 - Twitter-style messaging
 - Data Mashups
 - Share documents
 - Easy Form building on the fly
 - Global project management
 - Easy to implement and maintain
 - Improved governance

Figure 2. MindTouch Runtime Framework



Implementing a flexible, extensible collaborative network development platform provides the best opportunity for project success. As much as any company may know of its user needs today, it should also understand that social communications are undergoing historic changes, such that it's almost certain that user needs will change. Whereas a pre-packaged Intranet solution may have only a one or two year shelf life, a powerful, well-supported development platform can deliver many solutions, and for years to come.

The decision becomes easier if you know that the best collaborative network development platform, MindTouch Core, is available at no cost as an open source project. Platform in place, you can begin developing extensions one project at a time, building on each success. Larger companies that have already identified several valid projects will want to consider upgrading to

MindTouch's licensed solutions, 2009 Standard or 2009 Enterprise to gain access to MindTouch's Desktop Productivity tools, more than one hundred application connectors and database adaptors, and product and technical support.

Companies can choose to host MindTouch behind their corporate firewall or access the application on the MindTouch Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) cloud, depending on their business and security requirements. The MindTouch cloud computing implementation delivers cost effective hosting services that can be dialed up as needed to meet peak load demands.

SUMMARY

After stagnating for the last few years, attention has again shifted to the corporate intranet as a source for cost savings and productivity increases across the enterprise. Using proven Intranet 2.0 and social networking strategies, vendors are helping clients deploy collaborative network solutions that build on the successes of ESS while eliminating the burden of content updates from the IT department.

The MindTouch enterprise collaboration network development platform is the leading Intranet 2.0 solution and one of the most popular open source projects ever. Available in open source and licensed versions, or as a SaaS solution, MindTouch has the right solution for every company.

Most importantly, MindTouch solutions are easy to use and easy to extend. Employee adoption rates average 75% with MindTouch Collaborative Intranet. In contrast, Intranet 1.0 implementations average less than 25% adoption. The company provides product and technical support to clients and offers complete system design and implementation services.

MindTouch stands alone among competitors with the most complete solution available. Components include an enterprise wiki, an enterprise data mashup platform, and collaboration suite. MindTouch is built on a flexible, web-oriented architecture with enterprise-grade security and scalability, and flexible deployment options at an affordable price point.

‡ Top 10 Enterprise Web Products of 2008 | ReadWriteWeb

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MindTouch Inc. is the leader in Enterprise 2.0 Collaborative Networks and is changing the way businesses capture, share and collaborate on information. With MindTouch, companies are revolutionizing how they work and increasing returns on investment from existing software, hardware and humanware.

MindTouch serves more than 16 million users and thousands of companies. Customers include Mozilla, Microsoft, Intel, Intuit, The Washington Post, EMC, Harvard, Timberland, The US Army and The United Nations. MindTouch users report double-digit percentage increases in productivity and orders of magnitude of return on investment from their MindTouch powered Collaborative Intranets, Extranets and Documentation Portals.

MindTouch Partners

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