



Take Charge of Your Intranet 2.0 Initiatives

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In the Web 2.0 world, two may be company, but three is definitely not a crowd. However, unlike that annoying “third wheel” of dating fame, an Internet “crowd” adds value to the conversation. Ambitious Internet crowdsourcing projects have attracted tens of thousands of people for such endeavors as gold prospecting, political campaign, scientific research, graphic design, and many more. The value lies in the crowd’s diversity of ideas and perspectives, and its collective work capacity.

For companies looking to leverage the power of crowdsourcing to maintain their knowledge base and documentation, an unmanaged crowd’s ideas and perspectives can become too diverse. Contributors can lose sight of the original project goals and documentation accuracy can suffer. Rather than the informed voice of a valuable crowd, the company may have to deal with unusable noise from an unruly mob.

In reality, crowdsourced documentation will produce, and benefit from, both valid and invalid content. Efficient collaboration encourages false theories to be raised and rejected in the process of building group consensus. The solution is not for the company to deny input; it is to encourage and guide consensus towards company goals and project deliverables. Implementing a MindTouch Collaborative Knowledge Base (CKB) can deliver safety in numbers by providing a company with the tools to attract and engage the stakeholders surrounding its documentation – employees, customers, business partners, and industry experts, rather than anonymous web surfers – and synthesize their diverse ideas and perspectives to create high value, low cost corporate communications.

A COST-EFFECTIVE SOLUTION

Performing traditional cost analysis to ascertain a company’s investment in any particular set of documents would capture obvious infrastructure support costs, such as those for content development software, printing, data access and storage, and disaster recovery – everything required to create, store, and

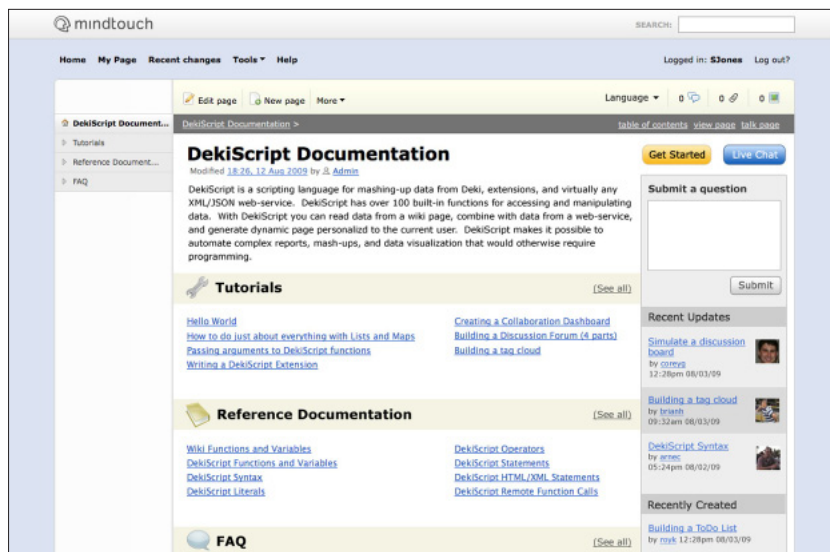
protect the company's intellectual property. Expert analysis would also identify personnel expenses to create and maintain the target documentation, including subject matter expertise, marketing, content development, and legal and HR review. Using that analysis, the value proposition of crowdsourced documentation will produce a very good ROI, as many of those costs are provided free of charge by the crowd.

However, that analysis misses the most significant ROI of crowdsourced documentation. Documents that could be crowdsourced, by definition, are communications to that specific crowd – your customers and business partners. There is no greater risk associated with those documents than that of ineffective communication.

By involving customers and business partners in the documentation process, ineffective communications are eliminated. Rather than hiring a team of experts to make educated guesses as to the content stakeholders want to see in corporate communications, companies create a MindTouch CKB, and have those stakeholders help guide the process.

MindTouch is open source software and accrues every cost savings associated with that licensing model. Implementing a MindTouch CKB can be a very quick and inexpensive project. Initial ROI can be seen within days and will only grow as the crowd increases.

Figure 1. MindTouch Collaborative Knowledge Base homepage



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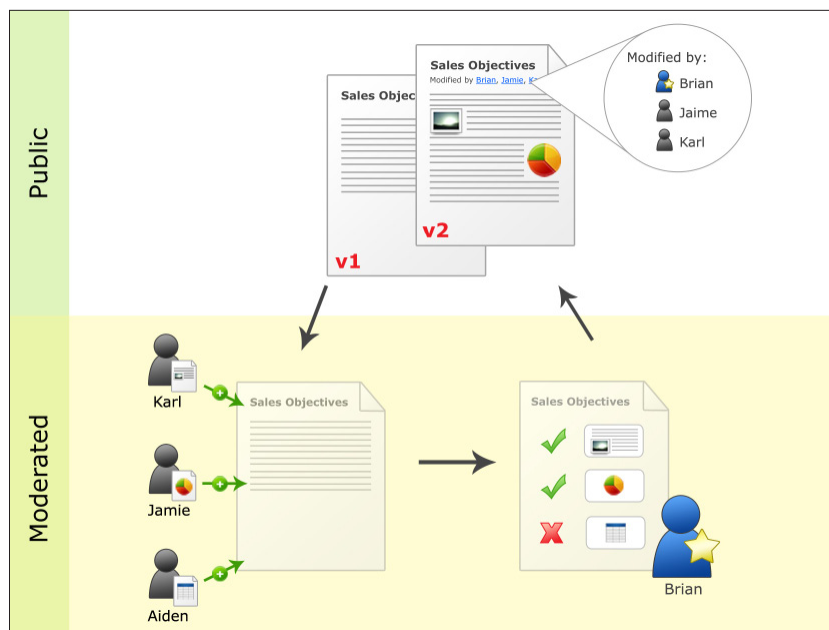
AN ENTHUSIASTIC CROWD – NOT AN UNRULY MOB

By concept, the crowd is undefined. Those gold miners, politicians, and scientists accepted every contributor into their crowds. However, with their brands on the line and reputations at stake, companies cannot afford to allow open access to their documentation. MindTouch CKB allows companies to attract and engage the right crowd – their stakeholders – with moderation controls, granular permissioning functionality, user groups and user roles support, and overriding access control, while protecting the accuracy and messaging of corporate communications with comprehensive content moderation capabilities.

Crowdsourced Documentation Equals Higher Quality and Lower Costs

- Companies can get the value of crowdsourcing without mass participation by focusing on their customer and partner network
- Manage user contributions with powerful editorial moderation capabilities set
- Crowdsourcing eliminates ineffective communication by letting engaged users define the communication
- Make it easy to join the crowd and contribute so that users provide positive suggestions
- By starting with one document set and implementing MindTouch open source

Figure 2. Safe crowdsourcing through content moderation



Yet, a company should not completely rely on external crowdsourcing – without financial or professional motivations, non-company contributors engage intermittently, significant contributors can disappear, and managing to adhere to deadlines would be difficult. Instead, consider the crowd an unpaid, bright, energetic, and innovative member of the project team.

Likewise, the company's project team members join the crowd – as informed, and task-oriented contributors to the collaborative documentation process, and without unduly constraining or directing the closely connected crowd's innovation. Staff members act as managing editors by using MindTouch CKB's integrated dashboards to monitor global changes to documentation, and then drill down to view contributions by individual users. Editorial tools enable staff to compare revisions and track changes, reject contributions, and control attributions – even banning contributors, if required.

However, you must build a crowd and create enthusiasm. MindTouch CKB assists with the ability to quickly web enable existing content and documentation to attract interested stakeholders. Joining the crowd is fast and easy, and contributing to documents is simplified by intuitive drag-and-drop and WYSWYG functionality. Localization in 20 languages is included. MindTouch CKB allows company editors to approve contributions in seconds, crowd members can receive positive reinforcement immediately. Finally, all content is stored as XHTML for easy conversion by users to a variety of formats.

GROW A COLLABORATIVE KNOWLEDGE BASE FROM SCRATCH

By selecting a targeted document set and deploying the MindTouch CKB License, a company can easily prove the value of a collaborative knowledge base with minimal expense through a phased implementation. A product user manual or FAQ page, for example, offers high value to customers and business partners, and should attract a significant number of stakeholders to the crowd. That success allows the document list to be expanded, attracting other users. MindTouch 2009 Standard and Enterprise licenses are a seamless upgrade and enable the CKB to scale indefinitely, quickly integrate popular business applications, and each includes access to MindTouch Technical and Product Support.

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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.

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