



Design and implementation of a hospital intranet: a case study

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Introduction / Aim

Sant Joan de Déu, a research and teaching hospital specializing in pediatrics, gynecology and obstetrics, has its own intranet developed by the authors. This intranet, now 5 years old, has gone through a process of redesign over the past year in which improvements in structure,

content management and imaging have been introduced. The aim of this presentation is to describe the process of planning, design and implementation of this new version.

Material and methods

At the start of the project an interdisciplinary team was brought together, and the following objectives were defined:

- To convert the intranet into an tool that would form part of everyday hospital routine, familiar to and used by all the professional staff.
- To facilitate the work of the hospital staff by improving:
 - Access to and exchange of information.
 - The quality of the relationship between employee and institution.
- To create a tool of knowledge management.
- To transform the intranet into the main channel of internal communication.

The project was completed in three phases:

- 1 Planning phase:** internal analysis of the institution and benchmarking in order to define needs, identification and involvement of key persons in the project, definition of technical requirements, budget and schedule.
- 2 Implementation phase:** identification of contents of internal and external origin, assignment of responsibility for content maintenance, database design, development and adaptation of applications, graphic design of website, inclusion of contents and utilities, testing, launch, publicity, and training and technical support for users.
- 3 Evaluation phase:** collection of statistics on use, suggestions and user satisfaction questionnaires, creation of new services, evaluation of impact on the institution.

Results

The intranet is structured as a knowledge portal, with all information accessible at one click. This attractive feature makes it possible for the user to view all contents easily. Inclusion of a powerful search engine allows users to browse the Web.

The contents are divided into four broad areas:

Research and teaching:

- Publications by hospital staff: journal articles, conference papers
- Current and ongoing research, clinical trials
- Research grants received – information updated weekly
- Digital library
- Websites of interest
- CVs of researchers at the hospital
- Seminars
- Courses and workshops

In-house information and internal processes:

- Standardized medical procedures
- Nursing procedures and plans of patient care
- Medical histories
- Human resources

Utilities, administrative tools and requests for services:

- Hospital directory
- Image bank
- Available software
- Forms and internal documents
- Requests for services

Communication:

- Schedule of hospital events
- Press dossier
- In-house newsletter

The intranet as a new organizational tool makes it possible to:

- Access centralized information, providing hospital staff with a standardized means of problem solving.
- Reduce costs and increase the quality of care.
- Manage time more efficiently.
- Optimize resources and administrative procedures.
- Improve communication and information exchange among hospital staff.
- Determine which research and teaching activities may serve as a basis for developing new institutional strategies and initiatives.
- Create internal documents such as newsletters, reports and yearbooks.

Conclusions

The experience of the past year in developing and fine-tuning the intranet into an improved tool for hospital management, continuing education, and access to information/knowledge shows that in order for it to become the main channel of communication and therefore a strategic organizational resource, the following conditions must be present:

- The administration must support the project fully
- The users must be involved in the project
- Intranet contents must be updated frequently
- The content must meet the needs of the users
- The project must be adequately publicized and technical support made available to users