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Resourcing Intranet Teams

Student Name: {Obianuju Eke}

ID Number: {XXXXXXXX}

Supervisor: {Professor John Baptista}

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Submitted by **{Obianuju Eke}**

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Introduction

Intranet teams differ across various organisations in sizes, resources, skills and capacity. A large retail company of about 30,000 employees has an intranet team size of about 15 dedicated staff and is just transitioning into a collaborative intranet whose goals are still to be met. At another government organisation of about 25,000 employees with an intranet team of 161 members, yet the intranet isn't very much evolved. A large telecoms organisation having only two intranet team staff has a very integrated and evolved intranet. So what is the best team size for a relevant and evolving intranet?

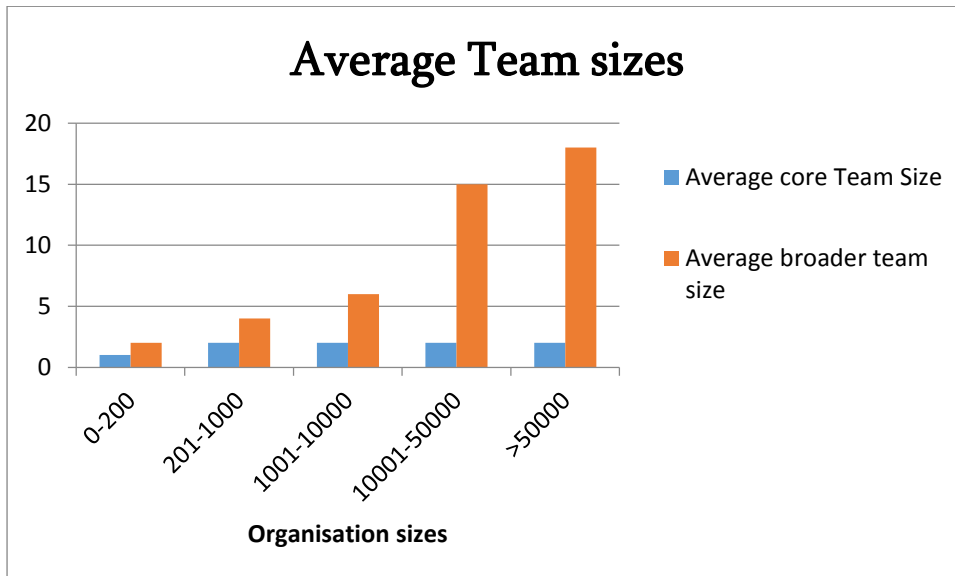
This report offers key points to consider for organisations looking to put together a resourcing plan for a new intranet. It is also useful for organisations to assess their existent team structures and governance models to determine which is more appropriate for their organisational context. Through a research which involved interviews with 8 organisations and a survey of 73 organisations across 16 countries, our findings cover:

- Team sizes for various organisational sizes
- The main roles in the core intranet team
- The size and role of broader intranet teams

This study emphasizes that intranet team resources are not solely determined by organisational size and therefore presents other factors that affect team resources and the main organisational drivers. We then highlight the relationship between governance models and intranet teams concluding with the organisational characteristics or mechanisms which facilitate the appropriate governance models for evolving intranets particularly for the social and collaborative intranet. Finally, the stewardship behaviour which covers these characteristics is introduced.

How many people do companies of size X need to run their intranet?

Many intranet experts, researchers and users have linked organisational size to intranet team size, in this research we found that the team size is rarely solely dependent on the size of the organisation or intranet users as the data below shows;



Out of the 73 survey respondents from various organisations, it can be observed that there is an average of at least one dedicated intranet team member for all organisational sizes above.

Organisations with size more than 200 have more than one core team member. However, the broader team sizes increase as the organisational size increases. The broader team size consists of members who are dedicated to the intranet and others who have an intranet role but not necessarily full time on the intranet. So in most cases intranet resources are made up of a core team which is responsible for the holistic and strategic view of the intranet working in partnership with other areas of the organisation which provide support. At least one dedicated person is required in most organisations. This is necessary for continuous and incremental advancement of the intranet with the organisational needs and strategy and to prevent need for a big redesign project when the intranet becomes barely useful.

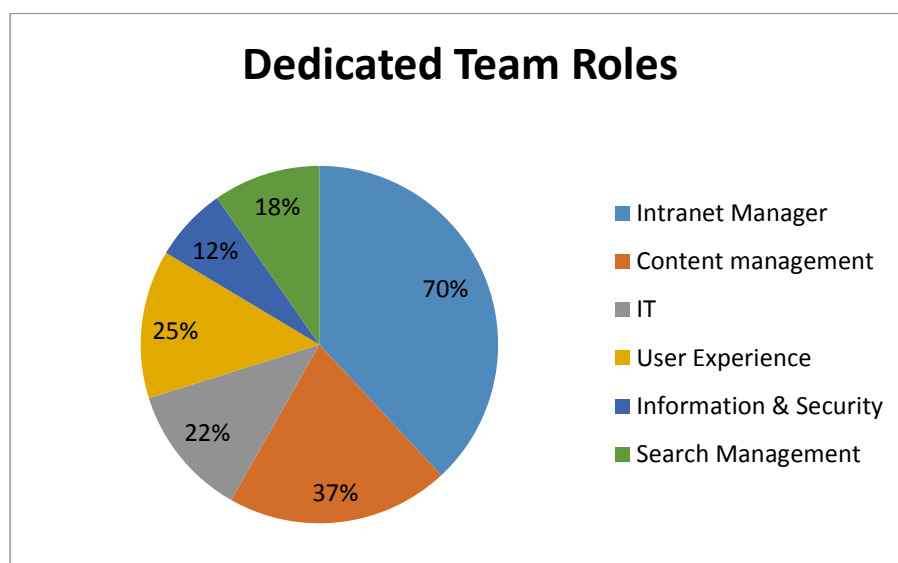
Contrary to popular thoughts on team size, the core intranet team size does not increase with organisational size but the broader team increases with organisational size increase. This implies that other factors influence the intranet team sizes other than the size of the organisations. For example, it is found that organisations with a decentralised/ hybrid governance and publishing model have a smaller intranet team than those with a centralised model which require the most resources as the table below shows.

Governance model	Average Dedicated team size
Centralised	7
Decentralised	1
Federated	2

Average Team size for governance models

What are the main roles in an intranet team?

The main roles contained in the core intranet team size are the intranet manager and the content manager. However, a good amount of time and commitment from these other roles in the broader team particularly IT where the availability of a developer is necessary in progressing the intranet more quickly.

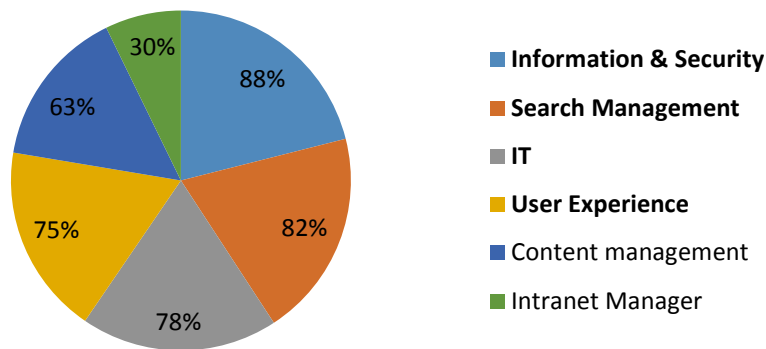


Of the eight organisational intranets that were studied through the interviews, six of them having a hybrid governance and publishing model had a core team of 2 team members. However at other instances, depending on the intranet evolution stage and strategy of the intranet, the team size may vary. For organisations who are transitioning from one evolution stage to another, their intranet team size will tend to increase or be larger than the team size of intranets which are stabilised at a particular evolution stage. A typical example is a large retail company which is transitioning into a more collaborative organisation and has adopted the intranet as the fundamental enabler. With strong support from top management and focus on integrating the digital workplace technologies as well as increasing collaboration and sharing across all organisational entities, the intranet resources was given priority to achieve these goals leading to a larger intranet size. This organisation had 15 employees dedicated to the intranet and the digital workplace. The intranet manager had this to say about the team size;

“I think we are adequately resourced primarily because of the digital services team whose focus is currently on advancing the digital workplace. This informs the size of our intranet team to manage the evolution of the platform as well as manage entities”.

Members of the broader team can be categorised into IT support providers and those who contribute to content. Depending on the organisation size, structure, complexity and capabilities of the intranet type, these roles tend to vary in size.

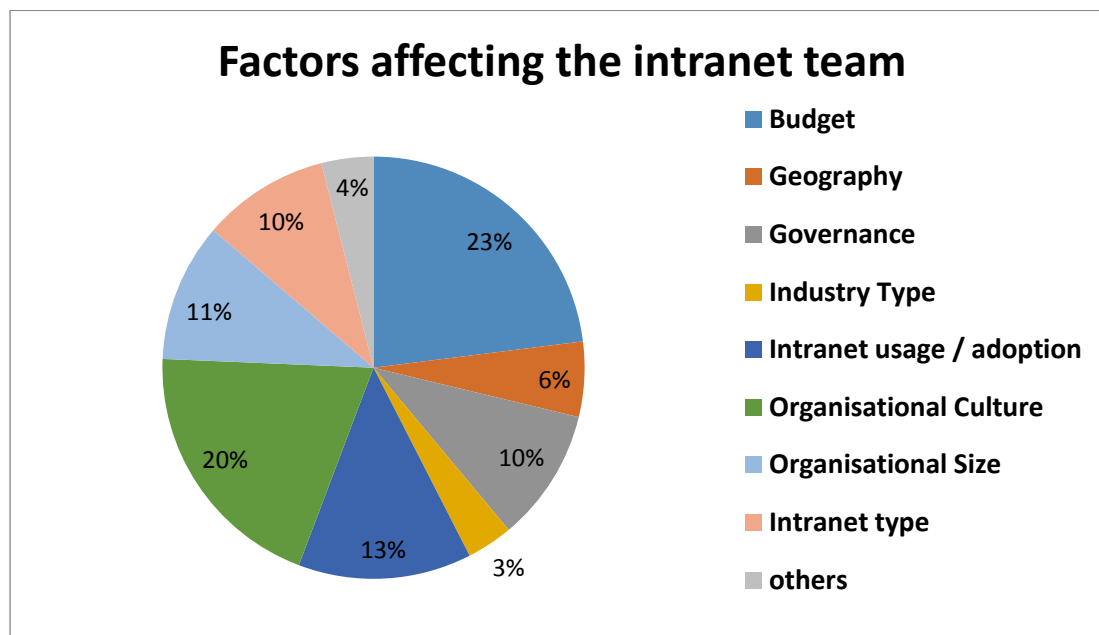
Broader Team Roles



In the chart above, IT and user experience rank high as established roles in the broader team roles meaning that though these roles are more popular and existent in many intranet teams, they are rarely dedicated roles. Information management & security and search management rank highest typically in a broader team role. Although they are very important roles in the optimization of the intranet experience, only 18% of total organisations currently use these roles. The position of the intranet manager here reemphasizes that it is a highly dedicated role hence its being least chosen as a broader team role. Finally content management is more highly rated as a broader team role than a dedicated team role but its position is usually determined by the publishing model adopted by the organisation.

From a broader perspective, other factors affect intranet team resourcing. Budget among other factors was found to be the highest.

What factors influence intranet team resourcing?



Budget and culture as seen in the chart is the most crucial factor affecting intranet team resourcing. While budget can be used to measure the level of management support accorded the intranet, organisational culture determines the extent to which the intranet can be used to achieve organisational goals. Culture is also a major influencer of the collaborative and social intranet and is discussed below.

Sourcing the right budget can be achieved through getting a well-positioned sponsor in the organisation. Most intranet teams studied report that intranet teams hardly have a budget and are mostly dependent on a broader department or unit. In the survey, intranet managers were asked if there was any need for intranet teams to be budgeted independently, 49% of the participants thought that intranet teams should be independent while another 44% did not think it was necessary, the rest thought it depended on the size of the organisation. The reasons highlighted for an independent intranet team include; (1) the need for the intranet team to own its budget and funding to increase its capacity in steering the intranet goals in the desired direction without being biased towards a groups need. In the absence of having an independent funding, an

independent intranet team/unit can more readily gather resources from other departments than when it is sub-united in one department. It positions the team in making decisions concerning required applications purchase and use. One intranet manager at a telecoms company said;

“In the past we worked hard for the intranet to be business led facilitated by retaining the budget not run by the IT teams... Problem with IT having the budget for the intranet is that it shifts the power balance away from the business to the technology people whose technology strategy and goals the intranet must then adopt... unfortunately you are limited in what you can do in terms of innovating on that space”.

Another intranet manager attributes the need for budget for continued and sustained development of the intranet to remain relevant to the users.

If they just see it as somewhere to dump documents or see their payslip, they would not see it as an enabler, to expand their networks... so the problem with the intranet can also be attributed to the lack of development and investment and has led to people not understanding the potential of the intranet.

(2) Also making the intranet team independent implies that intranet responsibilities are given more attention by specialised personnel and not managed as an additional responsibility to other departments in the organisation. Andy (Pseudo-name) in a large energy company said when asked if the intranet team should be independent;

“Yes, we have very strong support for that... That’s the case for our organisation because the intranet has to be somebody’s responsibility...”

(3) Without the independence of the intranet team, it becomes very difficult for governance to be enforced. Andy also said;

“When it’s a separate function, it can start to look at policy and governance issues which can impose on the rest of the business”.

The department which has the funds and expertise to effect change on the intranet may have higher stakes and influence in decision making for the intranet. On the issue of funds and influence, another intranet manager said;

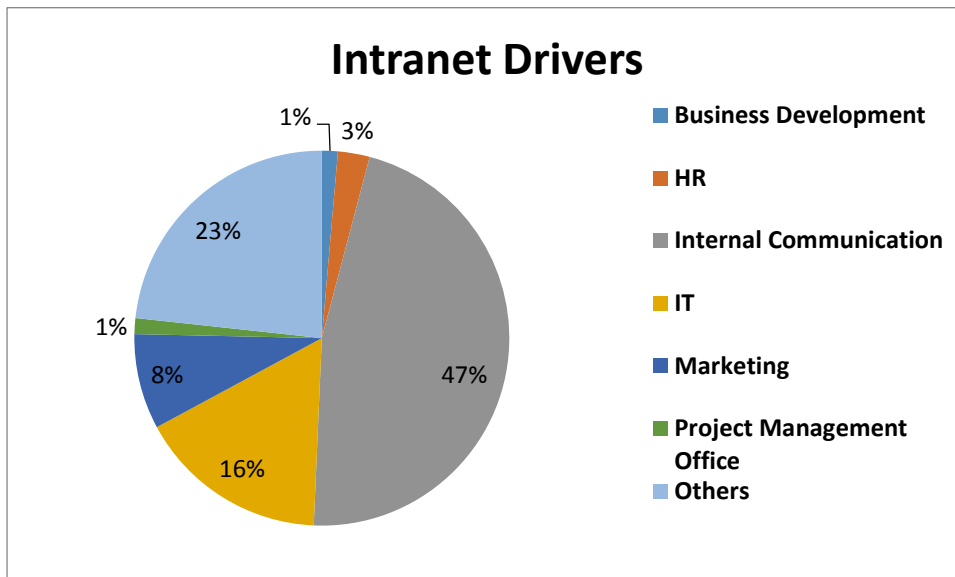
“The person with the budget has the power basically. If you are in a role like mine where you have to give people the bad news, it’s very difficult to carry that role out if you are not the one with the money. If I see that a part of the business is creating something through an agency which is breaking all our guidelines and I tell them, they cannot do it, so they can claim it’s their money and can use it how they like. If I had the money and they had to come to me and to get approval for their requirements, then I could deal with the agency to deploy something that within our rules and guidelines.”

(4) With the evolution of the intranet from the traditional internal communications use to a digital workplace with many more capabilities, the intranet requires a more versatile, visionary management team with skills that are multidisciplinary. This often supersedes the capabilities of a single traditional department such as Internal Communications, IT or HR etc.

Other intranet managers not in agreement with an independent intranet team suggested the following reasons; (1) It is not always realistic to get a budget for the intranet team and so has to be grounded in a broader department most likely that of the sponsor through which funding can be accessed.

(2) Rather than its independence or under which department it is grounded, it is more about how visionary and well-grounded the leadership of the team is.

In summary, though the study shows that the internal communications is the most popular unit in which the intranet should sit, it remains a debate for many intranet owners and managers.



This study however finds a link between the evolution stage of the intranet and the drivers of the intranet. The department under which the intranet sits depends on the evolution stage of the intranet. Organisations whose intranet use is at the lower stage of evolution (i.e. Internal communications and HR tools) have their intranet teams grounded in the more traditional departments, particularly internal communications. 65% of the 23 participants whose intranet usage is at the lower intranet evolution stage have their intranet teams grounded in the internal communications department while 45% of the total participants whose intranet drivers are the

internal communication unit have internal communication as a core use of their intranet. As the intranet capabilities increase, the intranet drivers begin to involve people from other departments or a combination of different departments. Out of the 10 organisations whose intranets are more highly evolved, it is observed that the intranet drivers move away from being solely internal communication and involve departments such as IT, Knowledge management, business development and a combination of departments etc.

To conclude, important factors that should be considered when thinking of positioning intranet teams to achieve the best fit are;

- To have a committed sponsor who is within top management and can secure sufficient resources.
- The sponsor and the intranet manager should be visionary and well-rounded in skills having experience that spawns business and technology perspectives.
- The team should not be isolated but have easy access to employees across the organisation.
- The team should have a good level of independence from other departments which is usually facilitated by having funding.

Governance and structuring the intranet team

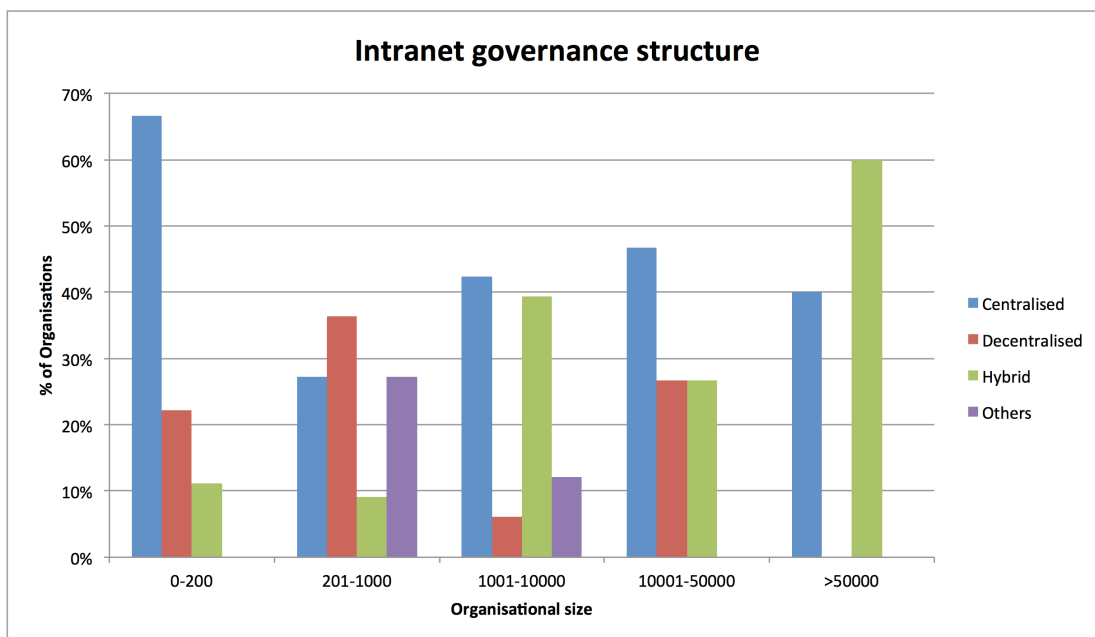
While many intranet experts have emphasized on the importance of governance in intranets, this study shows the relationship between the different types of governance models and the intranet team. Three major governance models are the decentralised, centralised and hybrid models.

Decentralised IT governance surrenders authority to the divisions and engenders speed, adaptability, agility and flexibility within the organisation (Tiwana & Konsynski, 2010) while for the hybrid governance model, authority for the management of IT infrastructure and IT strategy planning is vested in a central IT team and authority for operational activities is vested with

business units (Sambamurthy & Zmud, 2010; Williams & Kaharana, 2013). The hybrid governance model allows for flexibility and adaptability allowing for input from users while managing the infrastructure and information architecture.

Organisations that adopt the hybrid or decentralised governance model tend to have a smaller core intranet team because publishing is devolved and users are given the responsibility and accountability to manage their content. On the other hand, the management for the IT operations, strategy decisions and the use of the systems is managed by the central team for a centralised governance model. Here such organisations have a larger team size as they are solely responsible for all content and activities of the intranet and to meet up with the organisational demand require more resources leading to a larger intranet core team.

Though the most common governance model is the centralised model across various sizes of organisations, the hybrid model is increasingly being adopted especially as capabilities and sophistication of the intranet increases.



In the graph above, the centralised governance appears to be quite prominent, smaller organisations tend to have a centralised governance model while very large organisations tend to have a decentralised governance model. In between, the hybrid model is increasingly being adopted by organisations. This graph is a strong indication that organisational size is not solely the determinant of the governance model appropriate for any particular organisation. It also depends on other factors such as the intranet evolution stage, the objectives of the intranet and the organisational characteristics.

Further, typical roles in the various governance models are found to be similar but may vary in quantities. While teams with the centralised governance model will have more content managers and editors within the core intranet team, teams with more devolved governance models will have content managers in either the broader intranet team or as employees in other departments. A typical example can be drawn from a large government organisation whose intranet evolution stage can be described to be at the mid-stage used for internal communication, HR purposes and to access other legacy systems. The intranet team which adopts the centralised governance model has 151 content managers and has over 2500 content publishers who aren't part of the intranet team. On the other hand, a large telecoms company of over 50,000 employees which uses the hybrid governance model with a highly evolved intranet has only 2 intranet team members and without a content manager. Here employees and content contributors are accountable and responsible for their content. The intranet team acts as a business customer for the intranet gathering all requirements from the business ensuring they are clearly articulated. For the government organisation, its basic use of the intranet in addition to its model of governance provides a need for a large intranet team which consists mainly of content manager unlike the telecoms company with a more compact intranet team.

Again, the relationship between the intranet governance model and the intranet use evolution was drawn. Below contains a table from the survey data showing the governance models relevant at different intranet evolution stages.

Governance Model	Intranet Scope			
	Internal Communication (IC)	IC, Self-Service(SS)	IC, SS, Enterprise apps(EA)	IC, SS, EA, ESN
Centralised	37%	16%	7%	4%
Hybrid	32%	21%	16%	15%

Governance model at stages of intranet scope

The number of central organisations reduces as the intranet use increases and is significantly lower than the number of hybrid organisations. At the most basic stage of internal communication use, there are more central organisations than hybrid organisations, but from the next level of intranet use for communications and self-help services up to the last stage of a full-fledged intranet, central organisations decrease in comparison with hybrid organisations. This implies that CGM organisations have less capability to evolve as much as FGM organisations requiring organisations to adapt their governance model as their intranets evolve as governance models that encourage empowerment and contribution are necessary for advance intranets.

What organisational characteristics affect governance?

Lastly this section looks into the characteristics of an organisation that determine or support different governance models. This was studied through psychological and contextual factors that serve as coordinating mechanisms for intranet governance. The psychological factors include motivation, identity and power use while the contextual factors cover organisational culture and management philosophy.

Analysis of our findings shows that intranet users are motivated to use the intranet when it fulfils their needs. Factors which determine how employees are motivated to use the intranet include its relevance to users, how robust and responsive the intranet is, taxonomy and Findability. In addition to that, employees in more devolved organisations are more motivated to contribute to the intranet platform than central organisations because they feel better empowered as the hybrid governance model devolves operational control to the business units allowing users to be better represented in intranet activities. The level of autonomy and independence provided to users increases motivation. Furthermore, users are likely to have a high identity (a) for intranets that allow for a devolved publishing model, (b) if they are represented in decision making, (c) if the intranet has been rewarding in the past and employees easily identify with the intranet name (d) if users are able to collaborate and share on the intranet. These capabilities were found to be more linked with federated organisations than the central organisations. In organisations that have active communities and networks, and use of project sites, my sites, ESN, wikis, commenting, power use is likely to be more personal than institutional. Contextual mechanisms have high influence on psychological factors therefore organisations with flatter and more fluid culture support an involvement-oriented way of working while organisations whose culture are more hierarchical with high power distance support a control-oriented way of working.

These factors presented above favour the hybrid governance than the centralised governance and facilitate the grooming of intranet users as stewards. Stewards are intranet users with an on-going sense of obligation or duty to others based on the intention to uphold relationships. Their goals are aligned with those of the intranet and are empowered to take responsibility for their work which enables them to make decisions contributing to strategic goals. The stewardship behaviour is found to be suitable for an evolved digital workplace in which the collaborative and social intranet is the fundamental platform and also for managing the complexities of social relations in

evolving intranets. The main task is to be able to find and define the right control points in a way that creates the right balance that facilitates empowerment, contribution and collaboration.

Conclusion

This report focused on intranet team resourcing highlighting key factors that should be taken into consideration in making a plan for an intranet team. Intranets have contributors from different parts of the organisation and for this reason, the intranet team was categorised into the core team and the broader team. Through this, we can conclude that at least one dedicated employee is required for a successful intranet because the intranet requires continuous attention and management. The total size of the intranet team then varies for organisations depending on other factors such as the governance and publishing model, organisational structure, size, culture and evolution stage of the intranet. For instance, organisations with a centralised governance model will have a larger core team than organisations with a more devolved governance model.

The need for an independent intranet team was also discussed highlighting justifications for it as well as its limitations. More and more, intranet managers want to have a higher level of autonomy and budget for continuous advancement of the intranet to provide relevance to its users and to be able to enforce policy and governance. Due to the new capabilities of the intranet in enabling a collaborative and social organisation, the place of the intranet team within the organisation continues to evolve and move out of traditional departments such as Internal Communications or IT into newer units such as knowledge management, digital services, or a combination of departments. The intranet team led by the sponsor and intranet manager will have to be very much business and people focused with strong technical support. This will provide a broader

perspective which underpins a more integrating platform upon which various units, networks and communities become more visible and interactive.

To facilitate the new integrative and participative intranet requires the right governance model.

The centralised governance model has been the more popular governance model however, a shift to the hybrid governance model is seen more and more especially for intranets which are more highly evolved. Lastly, stewardship mechanisms which should be used to coordinate the hybrid governance model includes high motivation for employees with the intranet, high identity, use of personal power combined with involvement oriented management philosophy and a collaborative culture.

About the Research

This study was conducted by a Masters' student from Warwick Business School in partnership with ClearBox Consulting.

Data was collected from the field by contacting a wide group of intranet managers from various industries and locations through a survey however, the first stage towards the survey was to conduct series of interviews with intranet experts to develop, fine tune questions as well as pre-empt issues. These intranet experts provided accounts of experiences and suggestions which steered the main study to better focus.

For the main study, a survey was first conducted which received up to 73 responses from various intranet managers, architects or internal communications managers across different organisations. They were mostly in the UK, Western Europe, North America and Nigeria. The survey was promoted across seven intranet groups on LinkedIn and received support from clients of ClearBox Consulting. The survey was open for 21 days. Following the survey closure, respondents who indicated interest in participating in the interviews were shortlisted and spoken to. A total of 8 intranet managers, architects and consultants etc. were interviewed. This stage of interviews was to further investigate the key themes and patterns arising from the survey data and in order to provide more insight into different contexts. This selection was based on the information received from their survey forms and also depended on how detailed their responses were which was an indication that interviewing them would be much more insightful. Also industry and organisational size were considered in order to provide variety as well as balance. A summary of the interviewees, their companies and their roles is given below:

Industry	Coded Name	Role	Organisational size
Telecommunications	Andy	Intranet Manager	100,000

Pharmaceuticals & Healthcare	Mary1	Intranet Manager	8000
B2B	Mary2	Intranet Manager	3500
Financial services	Andy1	Intranet Manager	9000
Retail Company	Andy2	Intranet Manager	30,000
Telecommunications	Mary3	Intranet Manager	60,000
Energy & Utilities	Andy3	Intranet Manager	13,000
Private –Public	Andy4	Intranet Manager	500

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Other Contributors

Mark Morell, Director – www.intranetpioneer.com

Kristian Norling, owner – www.norling.co

Martyn Green, Director – www.Intranetpeople.com