

# **Social Media tools in working environment**

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Today's work comes with a lot of new requirements every day: Being more flexible for customer needs, offering the right culture and tools to attract future talents, coordinating more and globally spread partners, identifying the knowledge people within a company. Therefore, today's intranets are the first step for employees for finding news and information.

Today's intranet-sites normally are top-down electronic newspapers. Colleagues can read officially launched news, see organigrams and search for documents – the old way we all know an intranet works.

Today's intranets come with a new style of understanding: The intranet is not just to read – the intranet is a place to work, collaborate, share and network.

On the technical point of view, those “social intranets” are a mixture of wikis, blogs and social network features, designed and combine in a way to suit today's work.

The presentation thus shows a summary of the social intranet of our company, called the “TeamWeb”. It shows why those new tools have a social touch, how the intranet works – but even gives a glimpse into difficulties.

Regarding the company culture, there has been (and still is) a human change process. How to use new tools? Why to share information? How to collaborate in projects? These are the questions we have to answer in the culture change. During the last months, the usage of the new Teamweb rapidly grows and gives a good sign for the acceptance and vibrancy of the social intranet.

The new word in this combination is “social”. We think of a layers, when we have a look on those social tools like Wikis, Blogs or Social Networks.

The first layer is the creation of content itself – creation is a process where the creator gives something from himself and shares with the “rest of the world”. This is the reason why those new social tools are successful – people like to be heard and seen.

The second layer is the direct feedback of our creation in the tools. On a blog entry we get trackbacks and comments, at twitter people follow if they think it is interesting content – getting direct feedback is the first important attribute.

The third layer is the systems feedback. Let's think of the blogosphere –it is a small “ecosystem” that influences itself.

The fourth and last layer is the social feedback. The creator wrote a blog entry, a lot of people wrote comments, the blog entry spreaded, and so the creator has positive feelings. This is the active principle of those new tools.

Transporting the social tools into the company, there are some traps and pitfalls. The tools can be implemented in good use cases in the intranet, that will work. Thinking of a “company wiki” or self-deploying “blogosphere” like in the internet, this won’t work at all, because the use cases is not designed for daily use.

## **All about the “use case”**

The second part of the presentation shows the strategy behind our implementation of social tools in our intranet. Looking at today's company tool equipment, you will see read-only intranets and eMail and documents. All together, those tools did not adjust to the modern world of collaboration and sharing. Being ready for the future, companies need to switch use cases onto modern working styles such as wiki-style collaboration or blog-driven conversation. Those use cases are defined work-processes such as project management or documentation. The use cases are the key turnpoint – they have to be designed well and fitted to the needs of the coworkers, otherwise any implementation will fail.

What happens is that work, done with email and documents, is shifted into social tools, where the information - and knowledge – is stored in an easy accessible and transparent way, whereby the level of transparency depends from information status. Normally every information is accessible, for special reasons there is the possibility to close sites and spaces for special groups only. That habit describes the change of information sharing. Traditionally, all information was kept secret in organizations, and it was to think about which information to share. With social media, this habit is turned vice versa: Every information is shared, it's to think about which media is to be secured.

Our new intranet, the TeamWeb, contains a structured set of deployed use cases. Therefore, the intranet is a complex set of combined social media tools. This tools are combined and designed in a way to match daily work use cases.

Use cases are not functions, they describe daily work issues like project management, team collaboration or just office locations. Let's have a closer look into one of those use cases. Doing project management, eMail and spreadsheets are used very often to spread information. But there is a main problem: the information is stored in unaccessible folders and email inboxes. Now, social software comes the other way around. Instead of writing the information into email, the information is written into an intranet-site. Instead of sending spreadsheets around, those documents can be added to the website. There is a huge difference; the information is now placed at a central page, easy accessible. So the coworkers use social tools like a wiki without knowing it – the tools are integrated into use cases for daily work.

Another use case is expert search. Traditional systems tried to profile expertise by clearly structured information, which often was defined by taxonomies. But, those systems did not really work well – coworkers didn't recognize any need for using a system that does not seem to help the daily work getting done. Implementing the social network, micro blog and activity-tool, expert search is made possible in an easy way. Think of the daily usage in a “social intranet”, a coworker produces something like an activity stream of changed documents, added notes or information. Now, there is a build –in search that looks for an expert. This search not only looks for links and documents, but also

looks for relevant activities in combination to the search string. This new search combines social data, profiles of social networks and is able to find the expert by combining both worlds of data.

Looking at this new kind of intranet, there often is the need for integration of the corporate intranet. Corporate tools have to be integrated; as well corporate news has to be published. All this information can be structured with tags, favorite links and some more tools.

## **Light and dark sides**

After one year of being up and running, there are a lot of advantages up-and-coming. Project managers signal a high leverage of accelerating their projects. There is an easier access for newcomers due to the easy access to current work and status. A wide range of feedback shows much better communication and knowledge-sharing between the colleagues.

Special topics sometime roar up in the intranet; the last time, as the company social media guidelines for all coworkers have been published and discussed, the article was read thousands of times and got hundred comments – this shows a living company culture.

But there are also challenges. It is not enough work, just to place the information and to forget it later. Information can run out of time, so the coworker has to delete it – otherwise the intranet turns into a dustbin. There is a new kind of information responsibility. It is not just than “write and fire” like the email, it is about being responsible for the information.

Also the feedback of the coworker has to be heard – technical problems need to be fixed in a fast way in order to keep the intranet in a modern style. Thus the intranet gets more and more business critical, the costs for high availability rise.

## **A first look on a maturity model**

Looking on the usage of social media in the enterprise as a working tool, it is clear that it affects the whole company. Everybody who is using eMail can switch to integrated social media tools in an intranet. Depending on the task of the business unit, the usage will differ. Technical project teams will use collaboration use cases, whereby helpdesk units may use forums for their work.

Using social media tools for communication and collaboration is an important step – but it is just the first one into a connected enterprise. Therefore the presentation shows a maturity model, which shows a five-step development model from the enterprise just using social media technology up to an enterprise being fully integrated into a connected society. But this process is a long-time strategy.

There are four dimensions to measure the maturity level.

1. Usage in working processes
2. Technology management of social software
3. Radius of usage of social technologies
4. Cultural and organizational development

Looking at the position of our company, there are measurable wins in deploying an enterprise2.0. But there is still a long way to go into a new kind of company and value creation.