INGENIUX

The Rise of the Higher Education Intranet

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It's Time to Rethink your Web Strategy

If you try and please everyone, you will end up pleasing no one. At least, this is the lesson from many higher education websites over the past decade.

Educational institutions face enormous challenges when designing their web experience. They serve multiple constituent groups, each with different needs and requiring unique experiences. Creating a web experience that serves these different constituents within the same website often leads to a confusing and difficult to navigate web experience for everyone.

It's time to rethink the higher education website. Create a program that supports all constituent groups with better services, while also amplifying the marketing mission of the institution.

How? Divide your marketing website and intranet, and shift all student and faculty services into collaborative and managed portal experiences.

Together the public-facing website and the Intranet coordinate common brand messaging and help shift the politics to the Intranet where they belong. The marketing website and the Intranet are the future of web experience within higher education. These are two very different digital experience strategies, both equally important.

The Rise of the Higher Education Intranet

Marketing is content driven. Intranets are transactional and collaboration driven. A successful higher education Intranet strategy requires a different technology and governance approach from traditional websites.

With a strong focus on community and collaboration, higher education institutes recognize that a secure separate environment from the public website is necessary to support student, faculty, and administration.

Traditionally, departments created and maintained their web pages that lived under the .edu website or other domains. Bringing all departments together under one technology and implementation is not

only a cost saving but enables effective collaboration across departments and provides a single location for students to get the information they need to complete their education.

A single Intranet supports the overall brand message of the Institute. It makes it easier to share content across departments, as well as share brand design (and change the brand design).

While the Intranet is also highly visual, it's less about visual appeal and more about functionality and productive work habits. Many of the ideas presented for building the public website also apply to building the Intranet, including the development of personas and journey maps to design an optimal experience for each audience. In this case, your goal is not to convert, but to enable easy collaboration and sharing, as well as support learning activities.

Integration Is Simplification

Integration of key back office systems is critical for the Intranet. It enables students, faculty, and administration to work within a single environment to access all the information they need and update it as necessary.

that manage university information such as resources, staff directories and events.

Integrating LMS systems like Blackboard and Moodle provide students and faculty a single location to study, collaborate and get course information. In some instances, this may simply be a connection through to the LMS system via secure links on the Intranet. In others, elements of the LMS might be surfaced in the Intranet such as assignments and projects, notifications and connected to collaboration sites. How you do this integration depends on your requirements and your LMS.

Among the back-office software that you can integrate with the Intranet are the Learning Management System (LMS) and Faculty software, as well as applications

Other back office software integration enables updating content through the Intranet without having to go into each application directly and make updates. Integration also supports combining information from one or more applications to display within a single pane, or set of web pages on the Intranet.

Identity Management

Security is a primary concern for educational institutions. Student and faculty confidentially pertaining to course work and grades, as well as tuition payments, faculty payroll and so on must be ensured.

For these many different back office applications to integrate with the Intranet, a unified identity management strategy must be employed.

Every application employs a security system that ensures its users only have access to the information they are allowed to access. This security structure must be adhered to in an Intranet. A unified identity management system can be

set up through which all applications are integrated to ensure this happens. This allows Intranet users to access secure information from other systems based on their specific roles and permissions.

Search

Search is a key element of the Intranet enabling students, faculty, and administrators to find the information they need quickly.

For the Intranet, the implementation of enterprise search across all content and information from multiple back office systems as well as the Intranet itself is done using federation. It takes the security of the connected system into consideration when creating search results.

Topic-based search (or guided search), created from a range of disparate content resources is a great feature when helping students and faculty discover the right information. Applying security to the results set ensures that the searcher can only see the information they are allowed access to see.
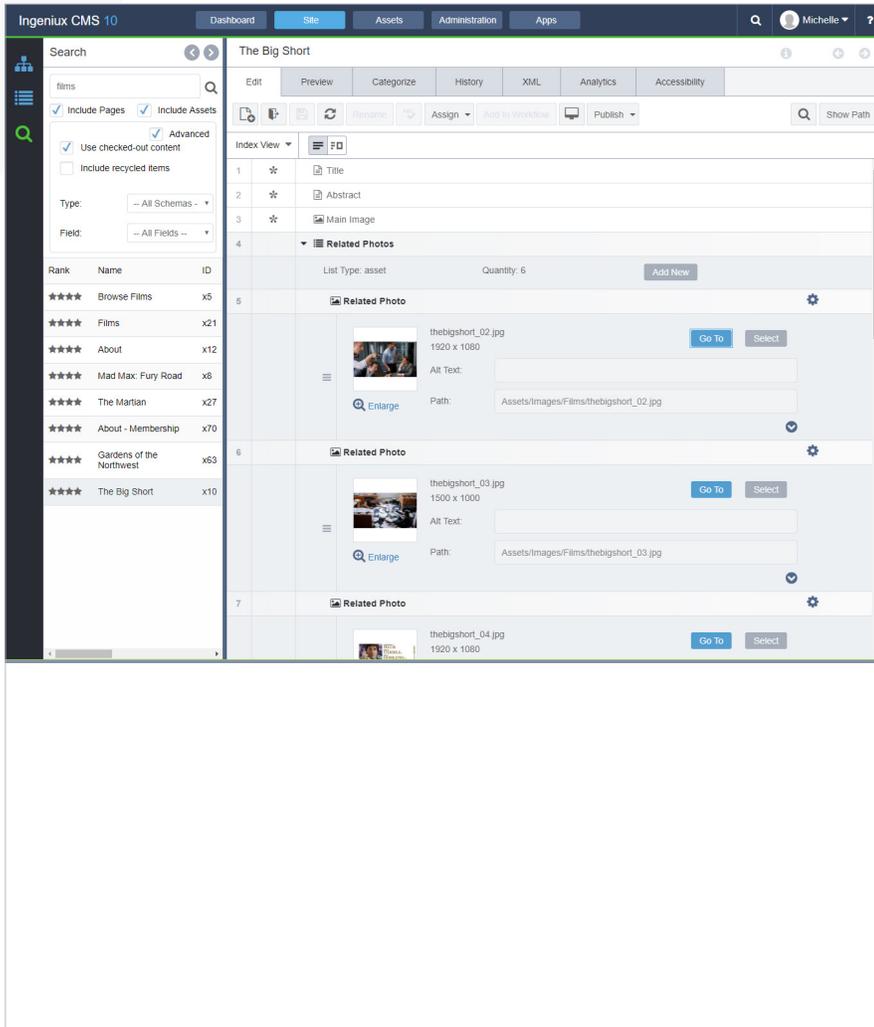
Mobile Experience for the Intranet

If the mobile experience is key for the public website, it's even more critical for the Intranet. As students and faculty are on the go, the ability to access course information and other content is a necessary feature.

You need to understand how students and faculty are using their mobile devices and design a mobile experience that best suits those needs.

Student creating their course structure for the year might use the mobile Intranet site to view courses, apply to courses, learn more about instructors, view course locations and so on. During the year, students might use their mobile device to find their way across campuses to courses and events, view homework, check exam results and more.

Faculty members might use mobile to network with students for special "ask the professor" sessions, collaborate on coursework, assign work, and much more.

It's critical to apply the right Intranet features to the mobile experience to ensure students and faculty have the resources they need at their fingertips.

Analytics – How is the Intranet Used?

Equally important as monitoring the usage of your public website towards acquisition goals, you also need to ensure your Intranet is being used as expected. Some things you will want to monitor include:

- Number of community and collaboration sites created
- Actual usage of these sites (number of collaborators, how often content is updated, who manages them)
- Traffic stats for news and events sections
- Usage stats for LMS content
- Number of type of searches
- Key contributors to the community (to build a list of influencers)
- Inappropriate attempts to access secure content

Intranet Design Recommendations: Things to Consider

Your Intranet homepage is the first web page student, faculty and others will see, so it needs to offer key information, typically personalized to the users.

Typical Intranet home pages include recent news and events, important dates, alerts and notifications, newsletters, shortcuts to most visited sections of the Intranet for the user and so on.

Personalizing the homepage experience ensures you offer specific content for the user, in addition to important information everyone should see.

Don't forget social media integration here as well. Your students and faculty are some of your best influencers, giving them the tools to talk about your institution and promote it is better than anything you do directly.

Also, design for accessibility. Perhaps as important, or even more important, than an accessible external website, the Intranet needs to support a wide range of users with diverse abilities. As mentioned above higher education institutes are required to adhere

to certain web accessibility standards. Make sure you understand what standards you need to follow and how your Intranet design may be affected.

The following are examples of some of the sections you might want to have in your Intranet. Note that most of these sections should include the ability to not only display information but add, update and delete it as necessary.

Key Section Purpose/Sub-Sections

Key Section	Purpose/Sub-Sections	
For Students	Community	Social Networking
	Collaboration Sites	Document Management & Document Sharing
	Notifications	Tutors Listing/Learning Groups
For Faculty	Community	Social Networking
	Document Management & Document Sharing	Setting up Courses, assigning homework, projects, etc.
General	Campus Directory	Faculty Directory
	Campus Alerts	Faculty Profiles
	Support Programs	Events Calendar
	Campus News/Events	
LMS	Courses	Assignments/Homework
	Projects	Grades
	Secure Parent Portal	Student Portfolios/ Outcomes

Hosting Considerations (SaaS vs. On Premise)

Traditionally, higher education institutions purchased web content management and Intranet technology and implemented the software in-house. While this option is still available, there has been a shift towards hosting public websites and even Intranets in a hosted environment.

The benefits of hosting your public website with a cloud provider/web content management vendor are numerous. You don't have to hire a team of IT support personnel to maintain the website; the hosting provider does this. Hosted solutions offer things like regular backup of content, fully managed software upgrades when you are ready for them, disaster recovery and 24/7 monitoring and support.

Hosting your website or Intranet off site also ensures that even if you have issues on campus (such as power outages), the website and Intranet won't be affected.

In some cases, hybrid hosting solutions are employed. For example, you can host your public website in the cloud, and keep your Intranet on premises, but still be able to share content across the two (e.g. Events calendar, news, course information).
The decision to host on-premise or in the cloud is a big one, so think carefully about your requirements and the option that will best support them.

Wrapping it all Up

Whether embarking on a redesign project or simply looking to improve the experience of your website and Intranet, take the time to review what your respective audiences need carefully.

Take a page from business marketers and organizations and start examining your customer and internal experiences. Learn the differences between prospective students and donors, and your current students and faculty. Each has a different relationship with your institution and very different needs. A single web experience cannot adequately support all of them at once.

Focus your external website on prospective students and donors and carefully design the path to conversion (register or donate). Focus your Intranet on creating a single location for students, faculty, and administrators to find everything they need to live and study on your campus.

There are key considerations you need to understand and map out: personas and journey maps, application integration, intelligent content strategy, mobile experiences, analytics and more.

You can create great experiences for everyone within your institution and those thinking of joining it if you focus on their needs and design for them. It's time to rethink your web strategy.

How Ingeniux Can Help with your Web Experience

The web has changed. To support the modern web you need a digital content platform with intelligence to serve all your constituents and optimize content, and the agility to connect an ecosystem of applications, services, devices, and student experiences.

Ingeniux is building the third wave of digital content management. Our CMS platform delivers modern higher education websites and Intranets, mobile experiences, professional communities, and secure employee and student portals.

The Ingeniux platform includes web content management, digital asset management, a responsive visual page designer, enterprise search application, community, and more.

With the best support and service in the industry, 24/7 software-as-a-service plans, and value added partnerships, Ingeniux is the answer for managing higher education websites and Intranets and digital solutions.

Work with People Who Understand

Ingeniux makes content management work on campus. Used by over 140 colleges and universities, we offer best-in-class content management software and .edu website solutions, including:

- Course catalogs, event calendars, intranets, newsletters, and other EDU solutions

- Professional service staff with expertise in EDU requirements and technology

- Standards-based technology that supports XHTML, CSS and accessibility requirements

Our team understands your challenges. We are committed to providing cost-effective solutions that allow you spend less time managing the web and more time achieving your goals.

About Ingeniux

Ingeniux is the leading provider of web content management and digital experience software. We enable organizations to orchestrate the entire customer experience from acquisition through to sales to support and service, across any device, application, or website.

We build content management software with an unparalleled focus on the content itself. The Ingeniux CMS is designed to manage and deliver modern websites, customer support portals, online communities, and other customer touchpoints.

We believe in intelligent "structured" content. We design our software to enable content reuse, enable true mobile and multi-channel content delivery, and insightful content discovery. Our unique content-as-a-service capabilities deliver content into web and mobile applications, and other key channels.

Ingeniux software is available as a fully managed software service or an on premise application. Ingeniux delivers unparalleled service and support to customers worldwide.

To learn more, visit us at http://www.ingeniux.com.

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