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Executive Summary

RAPID ADVANCES in information and communications technology, combined with globalisation and market convergence, have produced a 21st century workforce that is typically dispersed yet connected. Corporate intranets and enterprise portals support core business objectives by giving employees a personalised gateway to the online corporate environment – a self-service, one-stop shop, providing access to all the knowledge resources and collaborative tools they need to fulfil their day-to-day roles and add value to the business.

As the organisation's main internal communications channel, intranets and portals are key to enterprise-wide connectivity, enabling employees to share information and expertise and facilitating communication and collaboration at every level. Accessible at any time and, via mobile and remote access, from almost any location, the corporate intranet helps to maximise individual and collective performance and produces efficiency gains throughout the business, maximising the value of knowledge resources and providing a single platform for key business processes and administrative functions. Nor should the intranet's social function be overlooked. The development of formal and informal workplace communities and other seemingly frivolous interactive features bring together people from every part of an organisation, overcoming the boundaries of geography and function to create an inclusive, high-performance corporate culture that underpins the successful delivery of core business objectives.

Part 1 of this report takes a macro view of intranet and portal development, concentrating on the top priorities and

winning features of successful intranet strategy. It identifies six key considerations:

- Establishing business and user requirements as the basis for intranet and portal development and implementation;
- Intranet design;
- Content management;
- Personalisation;
- Developing an intranet culture;
- Extending security beyond the firewall.

Each chapter draws on the latest thinking from experts in the field, including contributors to Ark Group's *Ei* Workshop Series, design guru Dr. Jakob Nielsen's 'Ten Best Intranets of 2006' and content specialist Gerry McGovern, as well as guidance from successful intranet developers at leading organisations who have contributed case studies to *Ei* and *Inside Knowledge* over the past 18 months.

There is general consensus that the key to a successful intranet strategy is to ensure that its content and presentation are aligned with organisational strategy, business objectives and user needs. Chapter 1 presents some of the latest research and guidance from Dr. Richard Miller and Paul Chin - among others - on determining the key requirements that guide intranet and portal development, and devising an effective methodology for successful implementation and consolidation.

A successful intranet or portal also depends on good design. Chapter 2 identifies the key criteria underpinning successful intranet and portal design as consistency and usability, and explores some of the latest trends from Dr. Jakob Nielsen's 'Ten Best Intranets of 2006'. It then focuses

on the design elements of intranet redesign and consolidation.

A successful intranet or enterprise portal is the platform for relevant, easily-accessible content. It follows, therefore, that content management is at the heart of this report. Chapter 3 divides the main content management considerations affecting intranet and portal strategy into three categories:

- Content generation and migration;
- Ownership and responsibility;
- Categorisation, navigation and search.

Experts agree that the optimal content management system is aligned with the profile of the organisation and the different information requirements within it, so this chapter then explores the considerations – and some of the applications – that underpin effective content management.

Personalisation, which is covered in chapter 4, is an increasingly popular feature of intranet and portal strategy. Tailoring each individual's interface to the system gives users speedy and straightforward access to the applications and information that they routinely use, and prevents them from being overwhelmed with irrelevant messages and information. It also gives individuals a sense of ownership of their online interface with the enterprise.

Chapter 5 moves from individual ownership to collective ownership of the corporate online environment, exploring how organisations are increasingly establishing online communities and networks, which promote enterprise-wide dialogue and collaboration and enhance employee engagements. It uses examples from leading organisations on how to develop an authentic intranet culture.

Finally, chapter 6 looks outside the enterprise, considering the benefits and

challenges presented by the shift to remote and mobile working, which has freed many workers from the conventional office environment. Enterprise portals overcome the limitations of time and distance, enabling employees to access online resources whenever they require them and remain part of the workplace community. However, this raises important security issues that intranet developers and managers have to address.

The case studies in part 2 were written for Ark Group's *Ei* and *Inside Knowledge* magazines. They represent practical examples of successful intranet and portal development, implementation and consolidation, and include lessons learned and hints and tips on developing a cohesive information infrastructure, that maximises an organisation's performance while enhancing the working lives of its employee population.