



Walsall NHS Intranets

Folding Space has enabled two vital public sector intranet services to work more effectively, with search and retrieval capabilities provided via Content Finder.

In any large organisation, sharing information, ideas and experience has always been a real challenge, especially beyond immediate colleagues or into different departments.

And this is one area of the work environment that has been assisted greatly by the development of intranet services, which allow people within an organisation to submit and view all kinds of ideas and experiences which can help their colleagues.

Essentially, an intranet is a restricted-access network that works like the World Wide Web (viz. Internet Protocol) but within and across an organization.

Primarily, the purpose of an intranet is that it enables an organisation to more easily share its document resources amongst its employees.

Walsall NHS tPCT

Walsall NHS Teaching Primary Care Trust (tPCT) is a prime example of an organisation which has not just enabled intranet-based information sharing, but has made it part of their organisational policy.

"The intranet is rapidly becoming an indispensable resource for all kinds of information across all areas of the Trust," explained Matt Johnson, IM&T senior developer at Walsall tPCT.

"Our intranet has a large document sharing capability, whose function is to help colleagues cooperate without the need to re-create pages and pages of information across different departments and servers, when it could be much more easily accessed via the intranet."

Sharing information

Shared subjects include all kinds of information relating to areas such as Trust services, equality, training and HR, among many others.

"Information sharing on this kind of scale is an excellent development and we've had lots of feedback from users testifying to the fact.

Popularity brings challenges of its own, because the more you open up and develop services such as this, the more central the search facility becomes to the usefulness of the whole exercise," explained Matt Johnson.

Metadata limitations

When the intranet was first established the search function relied purely on the metadata attached to each document.

Metadata is often described as 'data about data'; essentially, a descriptive label or summary of the information being presented.

However, this offered only a very limited set of results which did not include searching within the actual document content and, as such, relied heavily on the quality of the 'summaries' to answer each search query.

Meeting the challenge

A re-design to its current form in 2005 also prompted a fresh look at the search capability in discussion with Birmingham-based Folding Space who, as specialists in the field of content-based search and retrieval, were ideally placed to assist with the search specification.

Folding Space had already developed a strong reputation within the Trust having previously provided a very successful search and retrieval solution for the Information Governance department to better enable Freedom of Information Act compliance.

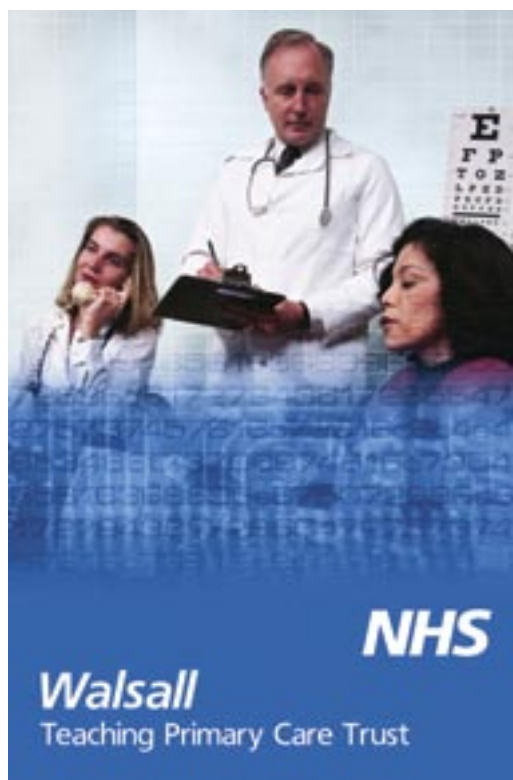
Content Finder from Folding Space

Folding Space's **Content Finder** 'search & retrieval solution was implemented to accompany the re-launched intranet service, and chosen specifically to provide the depth of search (full text) which the information sharing aspects of the service required.

On a practical level, Content Finder is integrated into web-style HTML page which visually has been designed in the style of a street, with different subjects arranged according to the buildings encountered, such as the post office, shop or office building.

The services are comprehensive enough to provide access to the Trust chief executive so that colleagues can ask questions or raise issues directly.

The intranet also makes extensive use of forums allowing users to discuss ideas or ask questions.





Instant search & retrieval

Everything placed on the intranet (e.g. HTML pages and documents) can be instantly retrieved via any search word or phrase, which given the growth in the forums and shared information functions is a vital tool.

This currently runs to over 3,500 documents plus all the published web pages and forum topics.

Although very happily working within an enclosed intranet environment, more broadly, Content Finder technology applies what is known as 'symbiotic indexing' to provide a full text search & retrieval across networked computers based on distributed computing and local indexing.

This enables very rapid and accurate retrieval of documents based upon any choice of words or phrases.

Content Finder operates without the use of a central server, repository or database, or any file re-formatting or document conversion.

Instead it works with the original folders, files, documents, programs, database records and emails. Importantly, the technology can carry out search and retrieval simultaneously - across a network, irrespective of its size or multi-location - within every data processing device connected to that network - and to/from any such device connected to that network.

Users search by typing in any words, phrases, figures, and dates or similar as a search query into the Content Finder interface.

Then all the relevant folders, files, documents, programs, database records, pages, images and scans with or containing those words and/or phrases are immediately there to access & view from the desktop.

Individual 'finds' typically take milliseconds and rarely take more than one second irrespective of how many servers, PCs and software assets are searched.

Making the intranet a return experience

"In order for an intranet project to run successfully, the users must want to keep coming back because it is genuinely useful to them - central to this is being able to find what you need," said Matt Johnson.

"Without the effectiveness of Content Finder, it would be difficult to provide such a good service in a cost-effective manner."

"We see Content Finder as a very clever piece of technology, well engineered to do a complex job in a very simple and efficient way," said Matt Johnson.

"It strips open the document, analyses the content and creates an index which is used to provide search results - it's instantaneous and provides extremely good quality search results - we know our users aren't going to miss anything."

Walsall Hospitals NHS Trust

Since the implementation of Content Finder within the tPCT, the intranet system has also been replicated on a smaller scale for the Walsall Manor Hospital intranet (part of Walsall Hospitals NHS Trust), which is now using Content Finder for its search and retrieval function.

"Folding Space has provided the backbone for sharing some six thousand business-critical documents across 1500 staff. The system has proved easy to integrate with existing archives, and users find it to be both intuitive and powerful," commented Martin Turner, Head of Communications for Walsall Teaching Primary Care Trust.

"The supplier has also provided outstanding support, in one case delivering a massive performance boost within just a couple of days, during the initial testing phase.

Folding Space has proved itself to be more useful and powerful than either of the other two systems which we had previously implemented. Once running, it operates entirely transparently and falls into the 'golden' category of 'fit and forget'; as far as users are concerned, it just works."



Folding Space

Folding Space software technology enables users to find, identify, discover, retrieve and manage all the folders, files, programs, documents, emails, images, scans and records across their network. Also, to create, collaborate and route files, documents, records, forms and dynamic data across the network via automated workflows and business processes.

This technology is manifested in a number of complementary software products and applications which can also be treated as software 'modules' or 'aspects' that can be assembled and customized into new products, applications and niche solutions upon demand.

Folding Space has developed an 'intelligent software' technology IPR that is truly unique – **sybiotic indexing** via **distributed computing** allied to a breakthrough in the concept of **intelligent, self aware documents** and **business process automation** ('**sybiotic intelligence**').

This world class technology and the resulting products and applications are demonstrably superior to anything comparable providing significant and sustainable competitive edge, both in terms of cost of purchase and cost of ownership.

Folding Space products and applications address various parallel and complementary IT areas:

- o Business process management
- o Document/Records management
- o Document & Email search & retrieval
- o Document & Email Archiving
- o Document de-duplication
- o Document scanning
- o Document workflow management
- o Enterprise-wide intra-mail
- o Forensic document & data discovery
- o Image editing & redaction
- o Intelligent Electronic Forms
- o Metadata management
- o Program asset management
- o Website construction & content management

Products:

- Search & Retrieval
 - **Content Finder**
 - **Desktop Finder**
- Email management
 - **Exchange Finder**
 - **Exchange Archive**
 - **Message & Search Manager**
- Records management
 - **Image Viewer**
 - **Scan Manager**
- Metadata management
 - **Image Tagger**
 - **Document Tagger**
 - **Metadata Manager**
 - **Taxonomy Manager**
 - **Process Manager**
- Document management
 - **Document Workflow Manager**
- Content management
 - **Site Manager**