

Volume 4: Intranet Branding, Visual and Interaction Design

Intranet Usability Guidelines

4th Edition

Anna Kaley and Maria Rosala



Nielsen Norman Group

8 The Green, Suite #14572, Dover, DE 19901 USA

Copyright © Nielsen Norman Group; All Rights Reserved. To get your own copy, please go to:
<https://www.nngroup.com/reports/intranet-branding-interaction-design>

Copyright Notice

Please do not post this report online or on public file-sharing services.

This report required hundreds of hours of planning, analyzing, writing, and production. We sell our reports to fund our independent, unbiased usability research; we do not have investors, government funding, or grants that pay for this research.

We charge lower fees for our research reports than most other firms because we want UX research to be widely available and used by practitioners.

Please do not post this report online or on public file-sharing services. Even if you share a private URL with only a few colleagues or clients, search engines and AI can still index the information.

If someone gave you a copy of this report, please visit our website to pay for a license:

<https://www.nngroup.com/reports/intranet-branding-interaction-design>.

Thank you!



Report Authors: Anna Kaley and Maria Rosala

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	5
The Impact of Good Design	5
Our Research Studies	6
Methodology.....	7
About The Fourth Edition	7
Findings From All Studies	8
How to Use This Report.....	8
Long-Standing Examples.....	12
GUIDELINES	13
Intranet Branding and Visual Design	18
Branding the Intranet and Digital Workplace.....	18
Layout, Imagery, and Iconography	37
Responsive Design.....	44
Design for Page Components.....	58
Page Layout Considerations.....	84
Considerations When Using Imagery	97
Video	121
Iconography	124
Tables and Charts (Including Org Charts).....	153
Copy and Content, Design and Formatting	168
Support Skimming and Scanning	179
Working with PDFs and Native File Formats.....	202
Form Design	211
Interaction Design	255
Navigation.....	255
Links, Buttons, and Other Action-Oriented Elements.....	259

Tab Design.....	274
Microinteractions	280
Progress Indicators	286
How to Handle New Browser Tabs and Windows	290
Popups and Modal Overlays.....	297
Style Guides and Design Systems	302
Design Systems.....	302
Style Guides	303
METHODOLOGY	313
Intranet Guidelines Study Overview	314
Usability Studies in a Lab Setting	314
Contextual Inquiry in the User's Environment	316
Expert Reviews	317
Participants.....	317
Recruiting Organizations to Participate	317
Research Goals.....	318
Intranet Guidelines Report Series	319
Nielsen Norman Group's Intranet Report Series	319
Author Biographies	324
Acknowledgements	325
About NN/g	326

Executive Summary

THE IMPACT OF GOOD DESIGN

Weak or nonexistent intranet design leads to poor credibility, adoption, and acceptance of the tools, systems, and information employees need to do their jobs effectively. When text, graphics, or space are not used properly, pages look cluttered, with too much content and no visual hierarchy. Scanning is difficult as links, headings, and subheadings are not easily distinguishable from normal text. Employees have trouble determining which page elements are relevant, so they waste time and miss the information they need.

When done well, the intranet's branding, visual, and interaction design can positively impact employee satisfaction and productivity. The visual design of an intranet sets employees' expectations for the content they will find and the site's overall ease of use. The interaction design can either support or interfere with the findability and discoverability of tools and content, two of the key reasons employees visit an intranet.

With these goals in mind, it's important to give the intranet the look and feel it needs to meet these goals. The intranet's design should be more task-oriented and less promotional than traditional website or digital product design. The elements that make an intranet's design look polished, professional, and familiar to employees include:

- Consistent use of fonts, colors, contrast, and alignment
- Utilizing a grid, strategic layouts, whitespace, and a typographic system
- Clear hierarchy, color, and imagery to draw attention
- Cleanliness and consistency in overall visual treatments
- Smooth transitions and animations that support efficiency

The colors and fonts used in an intranet's visual design often closely match those used on the organization's public-facing website and brand guidelines. However, it's still important to ensure the intranet doesn't look so much like the organization's public-facing website that employees can't tell the difference between the two.

When shaping the intranet's design, consider the following factors as they impact quality and how the design comes to life:

- **Employee personas:** Consider their tasks, needs, desires, ages, context, etc.
- **Intranet technology:** Is the design confined to an intranet system that dictates the user interface design, or is the design highly flexible and applicable to other digital workplace tools?
- **Development collaboration** Are dedicated designers and engineers available to improve the intranet's design iteratively and collaboratively?

In our most recent round of research, we observed the following positive themes and areas where intranet design teams still have room to grow and improve:

Positive themes:

- Use of responsive web design
- The creation and use of design systems and style guides
- Grid-based layouts and aligning to a grid
- Using white space to break up content and images
- Some attempts at consistency across digital workplace tools

Areas of opportunity to further inspect and improve:

- Use larger fonts and better text contrast to support scannability
- Apply less emphasis on hero spaces and carousel planning; more time on user research to inform design choices
- Ensure labels accompany all icons
- Avoid unreadable text overlaid on images
- Make links look like links
- Left-align buttons in web forms
- Create more threaded consistency between the visual design of the intranet and other digital workplace tools

By using and following the guidelines in this report, teams can ensure that their branding, interaction, and visual design collectively make for a useful, usable, and pleasant intranet experience for employees.

OUR RESEARCH STUDIES

Findings in this and other reports in this series are based on four large behavioral research studies. These were planned, conducted, and funded by Nielsen Norman Group. The research included the following:

- **Fifty-seven intranets**, with 18 years between the first study and the most recent. We studied:
 - 14 intranets in 2002
 - 13 intranets in 2005
 - 15 intranets in 2011
 - 15 intranets in 2019

- **More than 285 employees** (75 in our most recent round of research). They were all employees of each organization and users of the intranet.
- **Three continents:** North America (the United States and Canada), Europe, and Asia

We conducted these studies to learn about the following:

- How employees use intranets
- What makes intranets helpful or unhelpful
- What can be done to make intranets better

METHODOLOGY

We used three basic usability methods for each round of research:

- **Usability testing** in a lab or conference room setting, with one or a few researchers watching users for 75–120 minutes as they attempted anywhere from nine to 15 realistic tasks on the intranet
- **Field studies** during which a researcher watched employees work for anywhere from one to five hours to see how and when they used the intranet in their personal work areas
- **Expert reviews** during which researchers used the design considering users, top tasks, and established design principles

ABOUT THE FOURTH EDITION

Our most recent round of intranet research followed the same study protocol as in previous rounds and involved more than **75 employees at 15 different organizations**. We usually observed **four to eight employees at each study location**, which ranged from small companies to large enterprises across the United States, Canada, and Europe.

An NN/g researcher conducted one-hour field study sessions, observing participants in their work environment as they went about their normal work. One or two NN/g researchers conducted usability testing sessions, using either company computers or the employee's own work-computer and the think-out-loud protocol. Usability testing sessions were 75-minutes and followed this structure:

- **Initial survey:** Included gender, age, tenure with the organization, job title, department, frequency of intranet use, and device(s) often used to access the intranet.
- **Typical task attempts:** Users attempted to complete between nine and 13 realistic tasks on the intranet. Most of the administered tasks were directed (meaning they had specific criteria for success), while a few were exploratory (meaning they were used to measure engagement and had no success criteria).

FINDINGS FROM ALL STUDIES

Please note that the screenshots and scenarios in this and the other reports in our intranet series represent only a moment in time. It's entirely possible that some of the intranet designs you see in these reports have changed since our research. Many teams and designers learned from our usability studies and changed their designs immediately after the testing.

In addition, some screenshots or quotes in this report were captured in prior rounds of intranet research. Where they substantiate a long-standing guideline, we've kept the older examples for discussion and instructional purposes. The commentary explains what we learned during the testing, and the design best practices we discuss remain true today and most for years to come. Find a complete list of the organizations who participated in our intranet guidelines research over the years at the end of this report.

HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

After conducting this research and reflecting on the findings and insights, we have compiled a comprehensive set of recommendations and guidelines to help you make better intranet designs.

Five Types of Recommendations

Each recommendation in this report falls into one of five categories, displayed differently depending on its type:

- Design guidelines
- Definitions, principles, and methods
- Process and strategic considerations
- Timeless design tips
- User behaviors

Following are explanations for recommendation types and examples of how they appear throughout this report: (and the entire Intranet Guidelines Report Series):

1. Design Guidelines

These include actionable advice, along with evidence, discussions, and screenshots to help designers make usable, engaging intranet designs, and are the bulk of the information in this report.

Concrete design guidelines and recommendations substantiated by behavioral evidence and years of usability expertise embodied by NN/g researchers appear as in the example below. Some of the guidelines are from previous rounds of research and remain valid today, while others are new with this round of research.

Here's an example of a **design guideline**:

59. Avoid using an icon for search on desktop; it's only acceptable on mobile versions of the intranet.

2. Definitions, Principles, and Methods

In these callouts, we explain the terms, principles, and methods we suggest you use in your intranet design work. They span UX design and research and are often used on intranets or at organizations in general.

We also define terms, principles, and UX research methodologies in the context of relevant guidelines and discussions. These terms will be bold.

Here's an example of **Definitions, Principles, and Methods**:



Card sorting

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

Card sorting is a UX research method in which study participants group individual labels written on notecards according to criteria that make sense to them. This method uncovers how the target audience's domain knowledge is structured and helps teams create an information architecture that matches users' expectations.

3. Process and Strategic Considerations

These are larger-scale initiatives and tactical ideas, or those related to process best practices. They tend to focus less on the design itself but help enable good design. These usually require more time, involvement, and alignment from many people and teams across an organization.

Some recommendations are less about design detail and more about the process or strategic ideas behind designing an intranet. These ideas are too large or unspecific to be a design guideline, so they are categorized under this type.

Here's an example of **Process and Strategic Considerations**:

Conduct card sorting early.

Process and Strategic Considerations

Conduct card sorting early in the design process to determine the intranet's information architecture. Card sorting can be done once you know the initial content topics and navigation categories you want to offer on the site.

4. Timeless Design Tips

These are general, sometimes basic, good design practices that apply to both intranets and digital design as a whole.

Basic reminder guidelines, many of which continue to hold after decades of research, are included in this report and, in many cases, apply to the design of digital products in general, not just intranets. When one of these more basic recommendations is mentioned in the report, we will call it out like this to denote that it has withstood the test of time.

Here's an example of **Timeless Design Tips**:

Use clear link labels.

Timeless Design Tips

Front-load text and navigation links with information-carrying keywords.

5. User Behaviors

These describe the ways employees acted as they used the intranets. This doesn't mean your users will act the same way as the ones we saw, but they may behave similarly. There's no substitute for doing usability tests and watching your own employees use your intranet. But, if you're not doing much of your user research, refer to these behaviors as a best guess for how your users may act.

Here's an example of **User Behaviors**:

 Cleaning up browser tabs

User Behaviors

Many employees had several browser tabs open at a time while completing their work or using the intranet. When they encountered links, which opened in yet another new tab, they often wanted to stop and pause between tasks to clean up their tabs. This housekeeping behavior indicated that users felt the interface became cluttered or unmanageable.

Scrubbed Screenshots

You'll notice throughout this report; some screenshots have been scrubbed to protect the organization's proprietary information. Also, individuals' personally identifiable information, including employee names, phone numbers, office locations, profile photos, and sensitive company information, has been removed or blurred from all screenshots and replaced with placeholder images, icons, shapes, or text.

This is intentional to protect and respect the identities of the individuals and organizations who took part in our research.

Employee Name
DEPARTMENT: Corporate Communications
PHONE: 555-555-5555
LOCATION: 12345-67

POSITION: Communications Specialist
EMAIL: email@nait.ca
MAIL DROP: PEB200 (Reception)

Here are two examples of how we mask participants' personally identifiable information throughout the report. Where you see icons or masked text are areas where an employee's actual photo, email address, phone number, or office location would otherwise appear.

LONG-STANDING EXAMPLES

Cumulative Findings Across All Studies

Some screenshots or quotations in this report were captured in our early intranet research, and given how long we have been studying intranets, some may have been captured **almost 20 years ago**. We've kept older examples that substantiate a long-standing guideline, interesting finding, or discussion. Find a complete list of the organizations that participated in our intranet guidelines research over the years at the end of this report.

Please note that the screenshots and scenarios in this and other reports in our intranet series represent only a moment in time. The intranet designs and screenshots you see in these reports may have **changed since our research**. In fact, many teams and designers learned from our usability studies and modified their designs immediately after the testing.

Guidelines

Guideline List

Intranet Branding and Visual Design 18

1. Align the intranet's color palette and branding with the organization's broader brand standards. 18
2. Include tools on the intranet to help maintain brand consistency across the organization. 21
3. Design consistent, modern, and aesthetically pleasing interfaces for the intranet. 23
4. Use consistent design elements, such as colors and fonts, on digital workplace tools outside the intranet..... 26
5. Include the intranet's logo in the upper left corner of each page. 30
6. Design promotions and announcements to match the intranet's style and color scheme. 32
7. Create templates and reusable components to ensure design consistency across all intranet pages. 37
8. Use responsive design to support cross-channel intranet access and desktop multitasking. 44
9. Ensure the intranet's design, templates, and components scale across all offices and languages. 58
10. Design flexible homepage modules at different scales to communicate importance and maintain a clean design. 61
11. Reuse components to create visually consistent and engaging category landing pages. 68
12. Favor static or user-initiated hero spaces over auto-rotating carousels. 72
13. Ensure that the layout of longer pages indicates the page is scrollable. 81
14. Visually balance and evenly distribute different page sections, components, and content types. 84
15. Use a card-based page layout to flexibly group and summarize information and link to additional details. 87
16. Favor list-based layouts to emphasize content ranking when employees need to scan quickly..... 93

17. Use imagery strategically to reinforce meaning and to provide additional context for written messages.....	97
18. Include authentic images of employees, buildings, and products on the intranet.....	105
19. Use consistent thumbnails and visual indicators to denote related and similar types of content or links to tools.....	116
20. Distinguish video from other content types using a thumbnail image, play icon, and label.	121
21. Use a consistent set of icons across the intranet.	124
22. Use icons to reinforce meaning but avoid adding them arbitrarily.	129
23. Ensure icons are accompanied by clear labels that communicate what they represent or the action they initiate.	133
24. Provide a professionally shot photo of each employee on the intranet.	135
25. Use infographics and data visualization to translate abstract data, ease understanding, and drive engagement.	137
26. Use high-contrast text for link headlines or place links next to or below images to visually indicate they're clickable.	147
27. Design intranet tables to support scanning and comparison.	153
28. When designing an organizational chart, include clear names, titles, photos, and reporting structures.	158
29. Use animations on the intranet to provide subtle visual feedback, support discoverability, and ease transitions.	163
30. Design a 404 page that reflects your organization's purpose and personality and provides quick ways to recover.	165
31. Choose fonts and styles that are clean and create a visual hierarchy.	168
32. Position important and frequently used content near the top of the page.....	174
33. Ensure icons and text are legible, scannable, and have proper contrast with the background.	179
34. Design headlines and subheadings so they are visibly different from the body copy.	190
35. Use a line length (also known as line measure) of 45–75 characters.	196
36. Limit the use of PDFs; design HTML gateway pages and provide a link to download a full PDF, if needed.	202

37. Visually indicate the file type for links to native files, PDFs, documents, spreadsheets, or presentations.	207
38. Design web forms instead of paper-based or interactive PDF forms.	211
39. Use a consistent visual design across web forms.....	214
40. Place clear labels above or next to intranet form fields.....	220
41. Left-align form fields and avoid multi-column forms.	224
42. Design form controls that support how employees naturally input information.	228
43. Label required fields with an asterisk or the word “required.”.....	230
44. Choose field sizes that correspond with the amount of information employees will enter.....	232
45. Keep forms simple; include only necessary content, fields, and controls.....	235
46. Use coherent language for form field labels and the values that appear alongside them or in controls.....	237
47. Automatically populate known data in forms but allow employees to edit it.....	240
48. Present visible and helpful error messages at the field level as well as at the top of forms.	242
49. Left-align form buttons and visually differentiate primary calls-to-action from secondary.....	248
50. Provide a clear and visible confirmation message after employees submit forms.	252

Interaction Design 255

51. Design navigation that looks and behaves consistently across the intranet.	255
52. Use visual treatments that make links, buttons, and other action-oriented elements look clickable and interactive.....	259
53. Ensure that link and touch targets are large enough and have sufficient space between them.	268
54. Change the color of visited links.	271
55. Design tabs carefully and use them sparingly; favor anchor links or accordions to break up long content.....	274
56. Include microinteractions such as saving pages, rating a piece or page of content, and liking comments.	280

57. Use progress indicators for long load times, document downloads, and multistep processes.....	286
58. Open links to pages, tools, and documents in new browser tabs or windows only in specific contexts.....	290
59. Label links that will open a new tab, window, or external site to set users' expectations before they click.....	295
60. Design popups and modal overlays that are easy to dismiss but helpful for key use cases.....	297

Style Guides and Design Systems 302

61. Establish design and content guidelines using a style guide, component library, or design system for the intranet.....	302
--	-----

Intranet Branding and Visual Design

BRANDING THE INTRANET AND DIGITAL WORKPLACE

1. Align the intranet's color palette and branding with the organization's broader brand standards.

Visual consistency creates a more learnable and trustworthy experience for employees. Using a color palette for the intranet and digital workplace that's consistent with the organization's brand standards supports cohesiveness. Limiting the intranet's color palette to just a few colors also provides design focus, as there are fewer elements to consider and, thus, fewer distractions. As a result, the intranet's design will have a stronger brand representation.

For example, at Atrium Health, the visual design of its intranet, PeopleConnect, closely matched its public-facing website, atriumhealth.org, which is favorable. The bright teal and white color scheme, along with a rich yellow secondary color, form a visually balanced combination.



Use a refined color combination for your main company branding.

Timeless Design Tips

When choosing colors for an intranet design, create a color palette that aligns with the company's main brand identity, and iterate — switch colors in and out to see what looks good together.

Stay away from anything too similar to a bright highlighter. Adjusting the color slightly from a primary color will refine the color choice. We like to use Adobe Color for color palette inspiration.

PeopleConnect

I need to find... Take me to...

Atrium Health

Tools ▾ Policies ▾ Education ▾ Clinical ▾ Human Resources ▾ Departments ▾ Facilities ▾

Our hearts are with UNC Charlotte

#CharlotteStrong

Escape. Hide. Survive.
How this teammate used her training to protect students.

● ● ● ●

News & Alerts

Classes & Events

LiveWELL

Yammer

Health & Retirement

Got email on your phone?

[Update to New App Now](#)

Order Tech Accessories

[Use the Service Catalog](#)

Are You All Green?

[Total Health Portal](#)

Atrium Health Teammate Movie Nights

[See What's Playing](#)

Quick Links	Teammate	Support	Status Dashboard
Atrium Health Phonebook	About Atrium Health	Emergency Management	Canopy
Concern & Incident Reporting	Career Opportunities	Maintenance - Facilities Management	Encompass
Emerald Requisitioning	Classifieds	Maps & Directions	Network
GE Centricity Business	Community Benefit	Medical Equipment - Clinical Engineering	Office Tools
GE Centricity Business - FSC	Recognition, Rewards & eCards	Safety Data Sheets	Web Apps
Patient Experience	Teammate Discounts	Service Center - Technology & Analytics	Updates to Software & Tools

© Copyright 2019 Atrium Health

The homepage of Atrium Health's intranet, People Connect, uses the same color scheme as the company's overall brand identity.

Visitor Restrictions Update: Due to COVID-19, visitor restrictions are in place. [Learn more.](#)

 Atrium Health

Doctors Locations Appointments Get Care Now Payments News Giving MyAtriumHealth Menu

COVID-19:
Need a test? Need care? Not sure what to do?

Get help now

See the latest COVID-19 information and where to get care
Encuentre la información más reciente sobre el COVID-19

Learn more

World-Class Care



Levine Children's
Expert primary and specialty care for children



Levine Cancer Institute
World-class cancer care close to home



Sanger Heart & Vascular Institute
Specialized care for every heart condition



Neurosciences Institute
Advanced brain and spine expertise



Musculoskeletal Institute
Top orthopedic, sports medicine and spine care



Women's Care
Personalized care for your health journey

More services

News

Atrium Health and Wake Forest Baptist Health Combine, Create Next-Generation Academic Health System

A new era of healthcare was ushered in today as Atrium Health and Wake Forest Baptist Health, including Wake Forest School of Medicine, officially joined together as a single enterprise, Atrium Health. Both health systems are renowned for their clinical expertise and the school of medicine is nationally recognized for its medical education programs and research. With the strategic combination now complete, the collective vision to transform medical education, expand patient-centered research and innovation, and define the next generation of clinical excellence becomes a reality.

Learn more

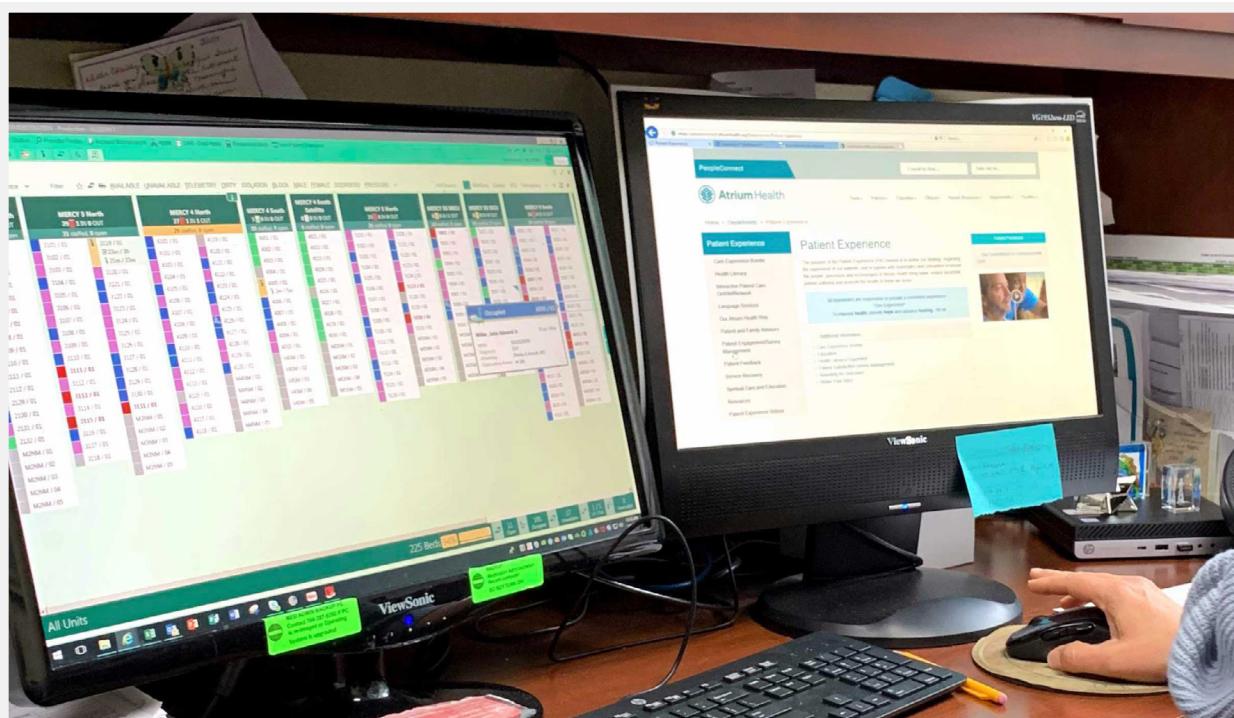


life-changing CARE

Wake Forest* Baptist Health Atrium Health Wake Forest* School of Medicine

Atrium Health's corporate website uses a bright teal primary color and rich yellow secondary color for buttons and notification bars.

Additionally, because it's a healthcare organization, many of the other systems and tools clinical staff and office workers rely on to do their jobs also incorporate the main brand's color scheme for added familiarity. This is an optimal approach, ensuring that no matter which tools or systems employees use, they know they're still within the company's digital workplace and tools.



Atrium Health's intranet, PeopleConnect, also matches many of the company's other software systems to the broader company branding, which adds an additional layer of familiarity and cohesiveness across its digital workplace.

2. Include tools on the intranet to help maintain brand consistency across the organization.

For additional brand consistency, provide tools on the intranet, such as email signature creators and business card makers, to ensure brand uniformity across not only the channels encompassing the digital workplace but also physical representations of the business. The intranet is an ideal, centralized location to house such tools so that employees can reliably find them when needed, and so they can professionally represent the organization.

For example, DIRT had an email signature creator on its intranet. The branded email signatures were predesigned for employees to choose from, and the detailed instructions made it easy for them to copy and paste the shiny new email signature from the intranet into Microsoft Outlook.

As an added benefit, employees could also add their professional credentials from a pre-selected list of options. This helped DIRT maintain consistency in credential presentation across employees, which helped the company build trust and professionalism among its clients.

myDIRTT | SOLUTIONS | PRODUCTIVITY | RESOURCES @ | Rachel | 🔎 | ⚙ | ➔

DIRTTbag
Hello, Rachel

Profile Settings | Password Settings | Email Signature

You can create your custom email signature here. See the detailed instructions below to set your personalized signature into email applications.

Email Signature [Reply/Forward Signature](#)

Click from here
Rachel Krause
d .

DIRTT Environmental Solutions
Calgary, AB
P 403.723.5000 F 403.723.6644 [www.dirtt.net](#)
[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

Label your credentials:
 LEED® AP AIA IIDA ICE Employee

Select a logo:

Instructions:
Check off your credentials on the left

Select the logo on the left by clicking on the logo, this will update the preview area above within the white area

Use your mouse to highlight the full signature above (all the content in the white box, guides have been placed to help make the correct selection of text. From the top left corner of the signature box, left mouse click and hold in the area labeled 'Click from here'. Now, while still holding the mouse down drag to the other marker in the signature box labeled '..to here', once there, you may release the mouse) As a result the required text will be highlighted defining the selected area.

Right Click the selected area and choose Copy

Open Microsoft Outlook

Click TOOLS (Outlook 2007 and older) or FILE tab (Outlook 2010) and choose OPTIONS button([see diagram](#))

In the 'OPTIONS' dialog box Click the 'Mail Format Tab' (Outlook 2007 and older) or Click the 'Mail' option (Outlook 2010) ([see diagram](#))

DIRTT's intranet included a business card maker tool where employees could choose from a predesigned logo and add their contact information to create a consistent email signature they could copy and paste into Microsoft Outlook.

At the Mayo Clinic, employees could use the intranet to initiate the creation of personalized business cards. The landing page, housing the launching point for the tool, outlined how to use the business cards and how long it would be before the employee could expect to receive the finished cards, which is favorable. This approach works well for such a large organization, like the Mayo Clinic, to maintain brand consistency from the intranet to the many other parts of the organization, including how employees represent and introduce themselves on behalf of it.

The Mayo Clinic included a section on its intranet where employees could order personalized business cards.

3. Design consistent, modern, and aesthetically pleasing interfaces for the intranet.

A design will look unprofessional and lack polish when visual elements are used inconsistently or sporadically. In your intranet designs, aim to create a visual and typographic system and apply it consistently across different areas of the experience and digital workplace. For example, make the spacing between elements and around page elements the same, or a multiple of the same unit (e.g., if the base spacing between heading and body is 5px, two base-spacing units could be used to separate different sections, and so on).

Use proximity or the spacing around elements to help establish groups and use similar typographic treatments for specific purposes throughout. When creating groupings in your design,

use less space between the header and its content and more space between groups. When attention isn't paid to these small details, the intranet and digital workplace can look cluttered and outdated.

For example, at DIRTT, the visual design of the intranet looked rather dated. In contrast, giving employees a modern and aesthetically pleasing interface builds trust and credibility for the intranet and compels employees to use and rely on it. One employee mentioned that she felt that the look and feel of the intranet could use a change because “It hasn’t been updated in a while. I’ve been here since 2015, and it hasn’t really changed since. It looks like kind of an older format.”

The screenshot shows the DIRTT intranet homepage. At the top, there's a dark header bar with the "myDIRTT" logo, followed by "SOLUTIONS | PRODUCTIVITY | RESOURCES". On the right side of the header are user profile icons for "Kara" and search/filter options. The main content area features a large, modern-looking banner with a red arrow pointing right, containing the text "Get to know our **executive team**". Below the banner are three smaller cards: "Breathe DIRT BREATHE APPLICATIONS", "Healthcare DIRT HEALTHCARE APPLICATIONS", and "ICE Software DOWNLOAD". To the right of the banner is a sidebar with "QUICK LINKS" for various intranet sections like Photos, Videos, Finishes, ICE Resources, and Contracts. Further down the sidebar are sections for "INFORMATION FOR" (Investors, Architects & Designers, etc.) and "FEATURED AREAS" (Industry Sectors: Government, Healthcare, Education). The main content area below the banner contains news articles with images and titles such as "A prescription for change in the world of healthcare" and "Self-powered clinic in shipping container to provide Uganda with healthcare solution". A quote at the bottom states: "Employees noticed that the visual design treatments used on the intranet at DIRTT seemed outdated. Freshening this design by creating more space between elements and using more modern, clean-looking fonts would help."

At Bracknell Forest Council, the visual design of its intranet, DORIS, was simple, modern, and straightforward. The clean design enabled users to find content easily. The design used recognizable patterns and consistent details such as fonts, colors, spacing, and alignment to create a modern-looking, usable experience and express its brand traits of friendliness and reliability.

People & Teams **Get involved** **Search** **Rachel Krause**

DORIS **Home** **How do I?** **Your council** **News** **Public website**

Home

November Forest Views now available
November's edition of Forest Views is now available

Christmas in Bracknell town centre
Festivities will begin with the opening of LapLandUK's magical Wishing Tree store on 13 November.

#OurDay
#OurDay is your day
Share your photos that demonstrate how the council services you deliver improves the quality of life for residents.

News
11 November 2019 - 09:47 • 0 comments | 07 November 2019 - 13:31 • 0 comments | 07 November 2019 - 10:44 • 0 comments | [Read more news](#)

Browse by category

- Communications
- Data protection and information governance
- Facilities and travel
- Finance and procurement
- Government, democracy and community
- Health and safety
- HR guidance and policy
- IT, computers and telephones
- Learning, benefits and opportunities
- Your pay

Your saved content
There are no items to display.

Stop. Think. Save!
Our budget is under acute pressure and so we need to find some quick savings. Are there things that you could do smarter, cheaper, or better to save some money?
Take action today - no saving is too big or too small!
Have an idea on how to save money? [Add it to our message wall](#). [Request a feature](#)

Visit groups
 Find a group on DORIS and get in touch with your colleagues.
Why not start by [visiting the classified ads group](#) and buy and sell items.

Latest blogs

Name Name 11 November 2019 - 08:26 National Alcohol Awareness Week	National Alcohol Awareness Week This week sees the launch of Alcohol Awareness week across the country. The local drug and alcohol team have arranged a couple of events to increase awareness with work colleagues and residents of Bracknell Forest. On Monday 11...
Name Name 10 October 2019 - 13:58 Meet Councillor Nigel Atkinson	

Visit the message wall
 Leave a message for your colleagues on the message wall!
Add events, announcements, congratulations, birthday wishes and more for all to see.

Internal vacancies
 Senior Practitioner, Approaching Adulthood

Public vacancies
 Family Support Advisor
 SEND Support Assistant Named Child
 Child Development Centre Manager
 Business Assistant Recruitment/HR
 Specialist Family Worker

Bracknell Forest Council's intranet was clean and simple. The use of consistent fonts, white space, color, imagery, and iconography supported a modern look and feel.



Enlist people with design experience to create the intranet's design.

Process and Strategic Considerations

A challenge intranet teams sometimes face is a lack of design skills on the core team supporting it. Often, teams are forced to configure out-of-the-box software or have limited options when designing and customizing the intranet and other tools.

If design isn't your team's strong suit, hire an agency, consultancy, or freelance designer with intranet experience to help design the digital workplace.

4. Use consistent design elements, such as colors and fonts, on digital workplace tools outside the intranet.

When the intranet and digital workplace tools look different, it reinforces the idea that the intranet and related tools were not created strategically or considered a unified set of sites. When lacking a consistent look and feel, the tools can seem like a disjointed set of tools and subsites held together mainly by links. Employees must interact with many different systems and tools to do their jobs, so when they all look different, employees start to question whether they're using the right tools for their tasks.

Different visual designs also communicate different offerings, making it harder for employees to remember what certain tools look like and where to find them. This opens employees up to risk: wasting their time looking for the right tool when they all look so different or the risk that they'll complete what they need to do with the wrong tool. When possible, apply consistent design choices to digital workplace tools outside the intranet.

The Scottish Government had minor visual design inconsistencies between its human resources tools, *OneHR* and *eHR*. Many employees referred to both HR systems as *eHR*, but many logos on forms in both HR systems displayed branding for *OneHR*. Despite this minor inconsistency, most of the Scottish Government's digital workplace tools used a similar blue palette and clean, modern fonts.

The screenshot shows the OneHR E-Business Suite interface. At the top, there's a blue header bar with the "OneHR" logo and "E-Business Suite" text. Below the header is a navigation bar with "Favorites" and "Logout Preferences Help". The main content area is titled "Oracle Applications Home Page". It features a "Navigator" sidebar on the left with links to "SG Appraisal Self Service", "SG Employee Self Service", and "SG Manager Self Service". A message box says "Please select a responsibility." To the right is a "Favorites" section with a "Personalize" button and a message: "You have not selected any favorites. Please use the 'Personalize' button to set up your favorites." At the bottom of the page are links for "Logout Preferences Help", a "Privacy Statement", and copyright information: "Copyright (c) 2006, Oracle. All rights reserved."

The Scottish Government's HR tools shared a familiar blue color palette with the intranet and other digital workplace systems that employees frequently used.

The screenshot shows the iFIX IT support system interface. At the top, there's a dark blue header bar with the "iFIX" logo, a search bar, and user icons. The main content area is titled "Home". On the left is a sidebar with icons for "Home", "News", "Knowledge", "Services", "Quick Links", "My Calls", "My Shortcuts", "My Surveys", and "Reports". The main area is divided into several sections: "Knowledge" (with a lightbulb icon), "Requests" (with a bell icon), "Faults" (with a shield icon), "Quick Links" (listing BitLocker-DINI, Closed, EU exit, My SCOTS, SCOTS IT, and SecurePrint-Darrius), "News" (listing SCOTS Services - Update), and "1. My Open Calls" (a table with columns: Reference, Date/Time Logged, Offering Name, Description, SVD Assigned). The "My Open Calls" table shows the message "No results found".

The Scottish Government's IT support system also shared similar design patterns and elements with those on the intranet, including the hues of blue and modern fonts.

The image displays four screenshots of digital workplace tools:

- Saltire:** A navigation menu with links like "News", "My Workplace", "Our Organisation", "Staff Directory", "Help", "Quick Links", and a search bar.
- Learning resources:** A dropdown menu under "Learning" with sections like "Learning", "Learning resources", and "Local learning support".
- Events Online:** A booking system interface showing a calendar for April 2019, a search bar, and a "Go to Events Online" button.
- Civil Service Learning:** A log-in page with fields for "Email address" and "Password", and a "Sign in" button.

Note: The screenshot is a composite of multiple images, some of which are partially obscured or have overlapping content.

Text overlay:

The visual consistency and familiarity across the Scottish Government's digital workplace toolset made it easy for employees to remember which tools to use to complete certain tasks.

At the General Services Administration, the branding and visual design were inconsistent across its digital workplace tools. Each site seemed to be self-contained and visually disconnected from one another. Rather than having different designs for every tool, a better approach would be for the GSA to use brand colors and typefaces across all GSA sites consistently. Where possible, maintaining the GSA logo across sites so employees know they are still on a GSA system would also help.



Don't try to replicate other intranet designs.

Process and Strategic Considerations

Research and test with your user groups and employees to determine a layout and information architecture that will best serve their needs.

The collage illustrates several examples of GSA's internal websites:

- GSA InSite**: A screenshot showing a navigation bar with "EMPLOYEE RESOURCES", "SERVICES AND OFFICES", "LOCATIONS", and "ABOUT US". Below the navigation is a search bar and a user profile. The main content area includes sections for "Employee Resources" (Acquisition, Purchases and Payments; Book Space and Meetings; Buildings and Real Estate; Communications; Directives, Forms and Regulations; Financial Management; HR, EEO, Pay and Leave), "Information Technology (IT)" (IT hardware, software, security, and systems info), "Popular Tools" (Acquisition Portal, BookIT, Concierge, Directives Library, HR Links, IT Support Request, Online University, Staff Directory, All Tools, Systems and Sites), and "Agency News" (FEVS SURVEY).
- Chief Information Officer**: A profile page for David A. Shive, Chief Information Officer. It features a photo of him, his title, a brief biography, and links to his LinkedIn profile and a PDF of his career timeline.
- My Learning**: A screenshot of a registration form for a "Stress Management Strategies" course. It shows fields for "User Name", "Registration Status" (Active Enrollment (Enrolled)), and "Comments".
- GSA CORPORATE IT SERVICES**: A landing page for HR Links, featuring the "HR LINKS" logo, application links, support, and system status information.
- GSA HR Links**: A screenshot of the HR Links homepage, which includes the "HR LINKS" logo, a video player, and a link to find step-by-step instructions.
- GSA InSite - Acquisition Portal**: A screenshot of the Acquisition Portal, showing a sidebar with "Acquisition By Topic" (Acquisition Career Management, Acquisition Dashboard, Acquisition Links, Center for Acquisition for Professional Excellence, In the News, Policy and Regulations, Procurement Management Review, Reports and Publications, Contacts and Offices) and a main content area with a news item about GSAM amending rules for electronic files.

GSA's intranet branding was somewhat similar to the external GSA.gov site. All other internal GSA sites, such as the agency's Online University and Corporate IT Services site, lacked visual consistency with the GSA Brand.

5. Include the intranet's logo in the upper left corner of each page.

Consistent logo placement in the top left corner of the intranet is one of the most common design patterns of all time. The logo serves as a landmark that orients employees when they first land on a page and helps them identify the digital workplace tool they are visiting. Often, a good logo for an intranet simply includes the intranet's name with no other fanfare. Many intranets use the company logo along with the intranet name. This practice effectively differentiates the intranet from the public-facing website while still supporting the organization's brand.

Much research indicates that speakers of languages that are read and written left-to-right look at the left side of the page first, and often, the logo is the first page element they notice. These people also tend to spend more time looking at the left side of the page overall. As such, it's important to consistently place the intranet's logo in the upper left corner of the global header on both desktop and mobile views. Linking the logo to the intranet's homepage is also a favorable practice so employees can reliably return home on click or tap of the logo.

At Dell, the InsideDELLTechnologies logo (the intranet's logo), was visible in the upper left corner of all pages. The logo was large enough to click easily and helped employees navigate back to the homepage. Though the intranet's logo appeared in the upper left corner, sometimes a secondary logo would appear below it. This contributed to the feeling that the intranet was a mesh of different sites, to which employees alluded. In this case, a better approach would be for Dell to ensure the top header banners are as consistent as possible across all tools. Improving the look, feel, and interaction design of the body of pages across the various platforms would also help build a cohesive intranet.

The image displays four separate screenshots of the Inside Dell Technologies intranet homepage, each showing a different way to return to the main site:

- Top Left:** Shows the "My IT" section with links to Chat with IT, Self-Help, Service Catalog, My Tickets (4), Approvals (7), Cart, and Dell Employee.
- Top Middle:** Shows the "My HR" section with links to Resources for My Job, Need Help?, and John Doe.
- Bottom Left:** Shows the "My Communities" section with links to Dashboard, Activity, Browse, Content, and Help.
- Bottom Middle:** Shows the main navigation bar with links to News, My Communities (highlighted), My HR, My IT, Learning, and a search bar.

Most participants used the Inside Dell Technologies logo to return to the intranet's homepage throughout most tasks. The secondary logos, which sometimes appeared on digital workplace tools, tended to confuse employees and made them question where they were.

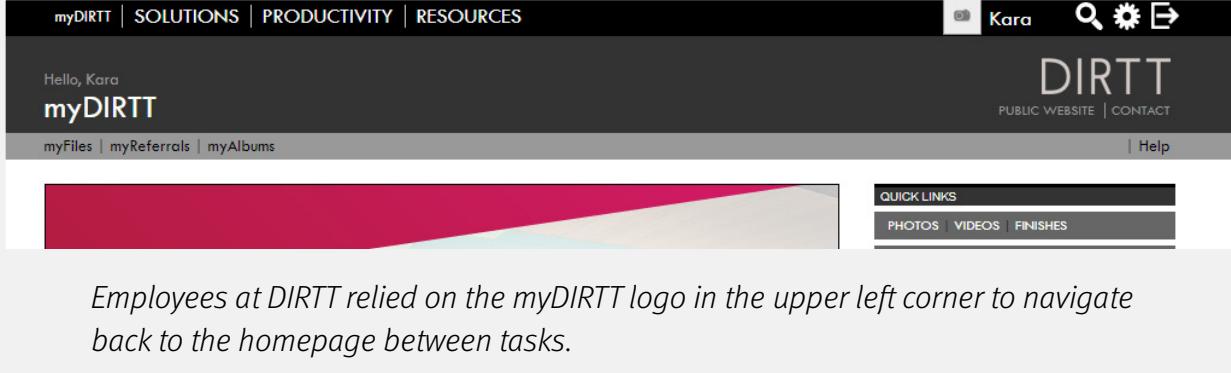


Employees returned to the intranet's homepage before attempting a new task.

User Behaviors

One behavior we observed during our research, which was symptomatic of an unmanageable intranet, was that employees would often want to restart by returning to the homepage before attempting another task. They would click on the logo to get back to the homepage. This helped them start from a familiar location, with a fresh perspective, knowing they may get lost along the way and unable to begin the next task from where they left off on the previous one.

Most users clicked the *myDIRTT* link in the upper left to go back to the homepage before they started a new task or after they had been looking and couldn't find something and wanted to regroup mentally. One user clicked 'myDIRTT' and said, "I always like to start from the main page." Another user said, "I'll jump back home," before beginning a new task.



The screenshot shows the myDIRTT intranet homepage. At the top, there's a black navigation bar with links for 'myDIRTT | SOLUTIONS | PRODUCTIVITY | RESOURCES'. To the right of the navigation are icons for Kara, search, gear, and email. Below the navigation is a dark grey header bar with 'Hello, Kara' and the 'myDIRTT' logo. The main content area has a large red and white graphic on the left. On the right, there's a 'DIRTT PUBLIC WEBSITE | CONTACT' section and a 'QUICK LINKS' sidebar with 'PHOTOS | VIDEOS | FINISHES'. A text box in the center says: 'Employees at DIRTT relied on the myDIRTT logo in the upper left corner to navigate back to the homepage between tasks.'

6. Design promotions and announcements to match the intranet's style and color scheme.

Interface elements and different pieces of content often compete for employees' attention on an intranet. To complete their tasks efficiently, employees have learned to pay attention to elements that are typically helpful (e.g., navigation bars, search boxes, headlines, and links to important digital workplace tools), and they ignore elements that are usually void of information. Ads or ad-looking components are the most prominent member of this last category. Hence, **banner blindness**.

 **Banner blindness**

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

Banner blindness is a well-known web user behavior that describes people's tendency to ignore page elements that they perceive (correctly or incorrectly) to be ads.

On an intranet, employees might mistake promotions or announcements for meaningless messages if they look too much like ads. Legitimate content elements that have certain ad-like characteristics are ignored. Here are the traits that signal an ad:

1. **Ad-specific placement**, such as at the top of the page or the right rail
2. **Ad-like visual treatment**, such as animation
3. **Proximity to actual ads** or promotions

The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology team thoughtfully designed its promotional announcements and messaging to ensure they aligned with the intranet's overall visual style and didn't resemble ads. The designs favored using clear, highly visible text rather than images. The color palette for the announcements also nicely matched the rest of the intranet's design. Even though these elements lived in the right rail of the page, their appearance communicated importance as supplementary information relevant to the page's primary subject matter, not that they were placed there just to fill space. They also appeared in a consistent size with adequate spacing around each element. Also, the design remained clean and coherent because it adhered to a grid.

The screenshot shows the NAIT.ca intranet homepage. On the left, there is a vertical sidebar with icons for NAIT, HELENA, QUICK LINKS, APPS & TOOLS, EMPLOYEE DIRECTORY, LOCATIONS, and EMERGENCY RESOURCES. The main content area has a blue header bar with navigation links: ALL SERVICES, EMPLOYEE ESSENTIALS, TEACHING ESSENTIALS, INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS, DEPARTMENTS & SCHOOLS, INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES, ABOUT NAIT, and NEWS & EVENTS. A search bar is also present. Below the header, the page title is "HOME > ABOUT NAIT > EXECUTIVE HUB". The "EXECUTIVE HUB" section features two columns. The left column is titled "GLENN'S HUB" and contains a profile picture of Glenn Feltham, President and CEO, with the text "Retiring from NAIT" and a small image of him. The right column is titled "EXECUTIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS" and lists "Denise Maclver named dean of the School of Health and Life Sciences" with a brief description and date (Mar 11, 2019). The bottom of the page includes links for "nait.ca | Provide Feedback | Contact Support | Privacy Policy | Credit Card Payments". A quote at the bottom of the page reads: "Although the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology's promotional messaging and announcements appeared in the right rail of the intranet, they were designed not to resemble ads. The design treatment ensured they would be recognized as important information supporting the page's main topic."

On Dell's intranet, even though the promotional messaging in the right rail was consistent with the intranet design's fonts and colors, the visual presentation of the messages resembled banner ads and was too easily ignored by employees. The text treatments in the announcements lacked appropriate styling and hierarchy. ALL CAPS text treatments can be effective for short, descriptive text phrases or provide further context for a main headline. However, that wasn't the design choice here as ALL CAPS text was used for full calls-to-action, such as:

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION >

A better approach would be for Dell's intranet team to align the bottom two banners with the top one's look, feel, and communication style and write a much clearer call-to-action, such as *Contribute Content*, instead of, *Click Here*. Using different font sizes, weights, and type treatments would also help polish up these right-rail announcements' visual design.

Inside DELL Technologies

News | [My Communities](#) | My HR | My IT | Learning |

My Communities Dashboard Activity ▾ Browse ▾ Content ▾ Help ▾

50 notifications 1 profile 1 checklist 1 search FOLLOW ▾

News Inside Dell Technologies in Community List (A - Z)

Overview Activity Content People Subspaces Calendar More ▾ Actions ▾ About Share Manage ▾

Welcome! See what updates you may have missed from the homepage, and learn how to get your content featured on Inside Dell Technologies.

- Learn What Innovation Looks Like in the Next Data Decade
- What Would You Want the World to Look Like in Ten Years?
- Revealing Our Social Impact Moonshot Goals for 2030
- (empty space)
- What is Dell Technologies On Demand? Find Out Here
- Catch Up on Major Product News and Announcements

Learn How to Get Your Content Featured on Inside Dell Technologies

[Click Here >>](#)

One Dell Way

Exclusive internal thought leadership

[Visit Now >>](#)

SAVE THE DATE

QUARTERLY REVIEW

DECEMBER 4, 2019

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION >>](#)

TOP SPACES

- One Dell Way
- Quarterly Review

The promotional messages on Dell's intranet may have matched the intranet's overall visual design, but the design, styling, and placement in the right rail too strongly resembled banner ads, which employees ignored.

Avoid using *Click Here* as link text.

Timeless Design Tips

We tend to call link labels such as, *Learn More* and *Click Here* lazy link labels as they don't help to set employees' expectations for what will happen next after clicking. As much as possible, use more descriptive link labels to inform employees what benefit they'll receive from clicking.

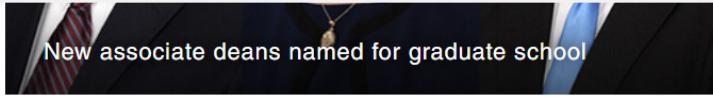
This practice is also much more favorable for employees who rely on assistive technologies, such as screen readers. Hearing a screen reader say, *Learn More*, *Learn More*, *Learn More*, repeatedly as it describes each link is not helpful for users trying to decipher links from one another.

Intranet designers should be thoughtful about how they present announcements and supporting messages:

1. Don't make content look like ads. Choose colors, type treatments, backgrounds, and overall content style carefully.
2. Run usability tests to ensure users see important content in the top banner or right rail.
3. Do not mix content and ads in the same visual section.

For example, the Mayo Clinic had 10 small spaces on its intranet in the lower corner of the right rail for promotional messages. Unfortunately, because each tiny banner used a different background, type treatments, and color schemes, they all looked like vastly inconsistent ads worth ignoring.

Though designers may think making a secondary message look different from the rest of the intranet will increase its salience, doing this often has the opposite effect. In this case, a better approach would be for the Mayo Clinic to reduce the number of messages appearing here, which would help feature only a few important messages or announcements. The freed-up space would also enable the intranet design team to design these messages in a more meaningful and noticeable way that doesn't so strongly resemble advertising.



New associate deans named for graduate school



Possible cause of vaping-associated lung injury



New associate deans named for graduate



Be cautious with supplements and kidney



Mayo Clinic and SBP Discovery: Due Nov. 15

[Read more news in Inside Mayo Clinic Research](#)

RESEARCH RESOURCES

- [Career Development/Education](#)
- [Committees](#)
- [Compliance/Regulatory](#)
- [Industry/Commercialization](#)
- [Research Administration](#)
- [Research Centers](#)
- [Research Communications](#)
- [Research Finance](#)
- [Research Information Technology](#)
- [Research Offices](#)
- [Research Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Research Safety](#)

Profile Search

[By Physician/Scientist Name](#)



INSIDE MAYO CLINIC
RESEARCH



Advancing the
Science
Mayo Clinic's medical science blog



Discovery's Edge
Mayo Clinic's Online Research Magazine



forefront
TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO CLINICAL ADVANCES



Research
OPERATING PLAN



Research Service Center



epiCenter



Pure Experts
Strategic Funding Office



Funding
Institutional



iShopSmart

On the Mayo Clinic's intranet, tiny messages that looked like ads appeared in the lower right corner. A better approach would be to simply include links to these areas on the intranet rather than presenting them as inconsistent-looking banners.

© Nielsen Norman Group | www.nngroup.com

Licensed for group use. Please don't share outside the organization that purchased this copy.

36

LAYOUT, IMAGERY, AND ICONOGRAPHY

7. Create templates and reusable components to ensure design consistency across all intranet pages.

Many of the intranets we studied had a very different look and feel from one section to another, rather than using a consistent design system, pattern library, or set of page templates to establish a common visual language and page structure. When pages all had a different look and feel, employees began to question whether they were still on the intranet, where they were in the digital workplace, and how to get back. Employees also struggled to familiarize themselves with how content was structured when areas of the intranet looked so different. Seeing different designs took more cognitive effort and increased employees' time on simple tasks when they had to stop and consider whether they were in the right place before starting the activity. As much as possible, work to consolidate the look and feel of all web pages on the intranet. One employee said, "The intranet should feel more like a set of cohesive and related web pages . . . If you make it more user friendly in that way, you wouldn't have to navigate through all these different pages."

At the Mayo Clinic, a lack of consistent, full-page templates and reusable components meant the design looked incredibly different as employees moved from the main homepage to department subsections and digital workplace tools. This contributed to employees getting lost and was a missed opportunity to build a coherent system of components that could be used effectively across the entire intranet. This would help employees quickly identify the interface elements to look for when completing key tasks.

The look and feel of the radiology department's subsite changed when employees went to different campuses. The nursing department had a separate intranet, which looked completely different from the main Mayo Clinic intranet. One nurse said, "The system looks good in some places but is not usable. It's so inconsistent."

Internally oriented service teams at the Mayo Clinic, such as Human Resources, tried to use templates for employee-facing pages. However, after the intranet's initial launch and this attempted use of templates, teams were too freely allowed to modify their parts of the intranet. For example, many deleted all the overview-type information that was supposed to appear across all pages consistently and instead used their landing pages to list internally shared documents, which were generally only useful to other team members. This approach was counter to the intended use and purpose of the templates and quickly led to the intranet's design growing inconsistent and disorganized.

The Mayo Clinic lacked a common visual system and standards for the intranet.

The existence of a design system, uniform page templates, and purposeful components alone won't entirely solve the problem of an inconsistent-looking intranet. You can't simply hand off a set of templates or design system components and then walk away, expecting the intranet to stay looking visually uniform and consistent over time. Ongoing training and accountability for content managers and publishers — the people who build pages and post content to the intranet, are also necessary. This way, these individuals know when and how to use the right components, text treatments, and visual styles and are responsible for following specific design standards. Training and accountabilities also ensure content managers avoid problematic behaviors that tend to cause inconsistent-looking pages, such as freely tinkering with the HTML and CSS.

While observing a content manager at the Mayo Clinic, they said:

"I couldn't remember the four-column nuances. It finally worked when I made a single column with a manual column width. I learn so much from WordPress' reference guide. I haven't been trained in this, but I learned so many different things. Like the custom piece of the banner from the beginning; I didn't know how to do it to get everything referenced in here, but I really figured it out."



Ensure content managers and page creators are trained and understand design standards.

Process and Strategic Considerations

Individuals within a particular department may have difficulty seeing beyond their own needs. To make the intranet useful for everyone, organizations that allow different departments to create and maintain their own parts of the intranet must provide specific requirements about what must appear on the main department pages and explain the reason for these requirements.

Eyeo's intranet team created page templates for different departments and teams to use on its intranet. This helped ensure a consistent layout, which was especially important for the sections where multiple employees contributed content. Its content managers underwent much training to understand how to use the templates and components to build pages. The intranet team lead said:

"At the captain level, we try to create content and forms that are going to get people coming to the intranet and excited. We have a standard template we try to keep consistent, especially on landing pages. They all start like this; they usually have five tiles in the top major areas. We used to call them bingo boxes; people loved this because they were hyperlinks to other relevant and important content."

The screenshot shows a clean, modern intranet homepage titled "The Intranet". The top navigation bar includes links for "My Work", "Internal Support", "Company", "Collaboration", and "Community". On the right side of the header are icons for search, settings, and user profile, along with a "Create" button.

The main content area features a large "Coming Soon" banner with an astronaut in space. Below the banner, there are two sections: "Requests" and "Ideas". Each section has a title, a brief description, and a "Submit a Request" or "Submit an Idea" button. To the right of these sections is a sidebar titled "Important Links" containing icons for IRC and Mail, and a note about editing page links.

The left sidebar contains a "PAGE TREE" menu with categories like "Help Desk", "Administration", "Meeting Notes", "Procurement", "Services", "Technical Infrastructure", "Google Docs Deletion I", and "Sitescripts deployed cc". There are also sections for "Space tools" and "IRC".

Eyeo's team used consistent landing page templates across its intranet. This helped to maintain the clean and modern-looking visual design and safeguarded the intranet from appearing disjointed and disorganized.

Of the intranets we studied, Burns & McDonnell's was one of the most visually pleasing and consistently designed. This was mainly because of the organization's strict templates and detailed standards for the intranet page design and content. The use of white space, color, padding, and typography was consistent. One of the content managers said:

“Our templates are useful. Being able to make page and news templates helps a ton. I don't have to be like, ok, in what order did I set things up? Before we had the templates, I'd have to create a copy of another page to create a new one.”

When we discussed how they achieved this consistency, the company's intranet team lead shared:

"There are containers on the page, and then content admins can just fill in pages with information after they've been properly trained. A benefit for our employees with this approach is that from one department to another, if they're familiar with their own department's pages, using the same terms, the same locations, the structure is all consistent, and people know where to find things."

The image displays four screenshots of the Burns & McDonnell MacCENTRAL intranet, illustrating a consistent design language across various departments. Each screenshot shows a header with navigation links (Home, Benefits, My Stuff, Our Company, Resources, HR Hub), a main content area with a large image, and a footer with social media icons and a 'Send by email' button.

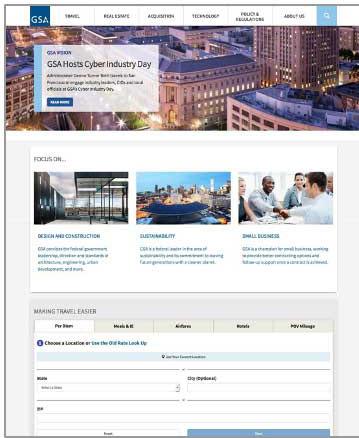
- Benefits Page:** Features a large image of two people smiling, followed by sections on Health Benefits, Retirement Plans, Leaves of Absence and Time Off Work, and FAQs. It includes news items and quick links for benefits like Health Insurance and Retirement Planning.
- Education & Training Page:** Features a large image of a laptop and coffee cup, followed by sections on About Education & Training, Burns & McDonnell University (BMDU) Information, and BMU Attendance Form (Self-Reports). It includes news items and quick links for training topics like Professional Registrations, Licenses and Certifications.
- Human Resources Page:** Features a large image of a group photo, followed by sections on Human Resources, Recruiting, Education & Training, Benefits, and Wellness. It includes news items and quick links for HR topics like Field Assignments and Complete Your Self-Assessment.
- Reference & Research Page:** Features a large image of a person working on a laptop, followed by sections on Standards, Codes & Reference Materials, Market Intelligence, Technical Research, and Information Management. It includes news items and quick links for research topics like Burns & McDonnell's Early Years (1905-1907) and TechnoSet Enterprise Has a New Look.

Burns & McDonnell's intranet templates were arranged and designed consistently. This made it fast and easy for employees to find what they needed and eased content management for publishers.

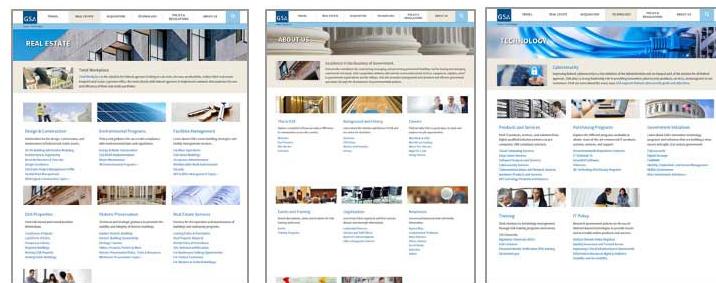
For both its intranet and main government website, the General Services Administration used a comprehensive 37-page style guide to outline and clarify visual design details such as colors, typography and hierarchy, the styling of buttons and links, image sizing, and more. An entire section included information on how to use and when to apply various templates available in its content management platform. This helped content managers, distributed across the organization, understand how to achieve and maintain the consistent visual design GSA intended for its website and intranet.

Overview of Templates

Each template introduced below is linked to a later section in this Visual Style guide containing more detailed descriptions and links to sample pages.



Top Level Pages consist of the Homepage and the six-primary topic “Tab pages”. They act as gateways, introducing content and directing users to further information.



The “**Mega Menu**” is an important component of all GSA.gov templates. It is globally accessible across the site and contains dropdowns allowing a visitor to drill down two levels within the site from any page of the site. It also hosts Featured Topics, highlighted content that is relevant to each navigational tab.

The “**Footer**” presents utility links, resources, and access to GSA’s social platforms.



Standard Pages form the vast majority of the site. This template is flexible and modular and provides many opportunities for variation. Left navigation places the content in the context of other pages. The right column provides contacts and related information to supplement the primary content.

The General Services Administration explained each page template available for its main government website and intranet through a detailed style guide. The style guide prioritized the right types of details for publishers.

RESPONSIVE DESIGN

8. Use responsive design to support cross-channel intranet access and desktop multitasking.

Providing employees with a mobile responsive intranet enables them to access the platform whenever they need it, from wherever they may be — in the office, working from home, or out in the field. When an intranet's interface gracefully scales to maintain a visually appealing and organized design on smaller viewports, employees can maintain maximum flow and productivity, especially as they resize their browsers on larger screens or access the intranet via a mobile phone or tablet in the field. For these reasons, if you're contemplating whether to utilize a **responsive design** for your intranet, the answer is yes!



Responsive web design

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

Responsive web design uses HTML and CSS to automatically resize, hide, shrink, or enlarge a website, to make it look good on all devices, including desktops, tablets, and phones.



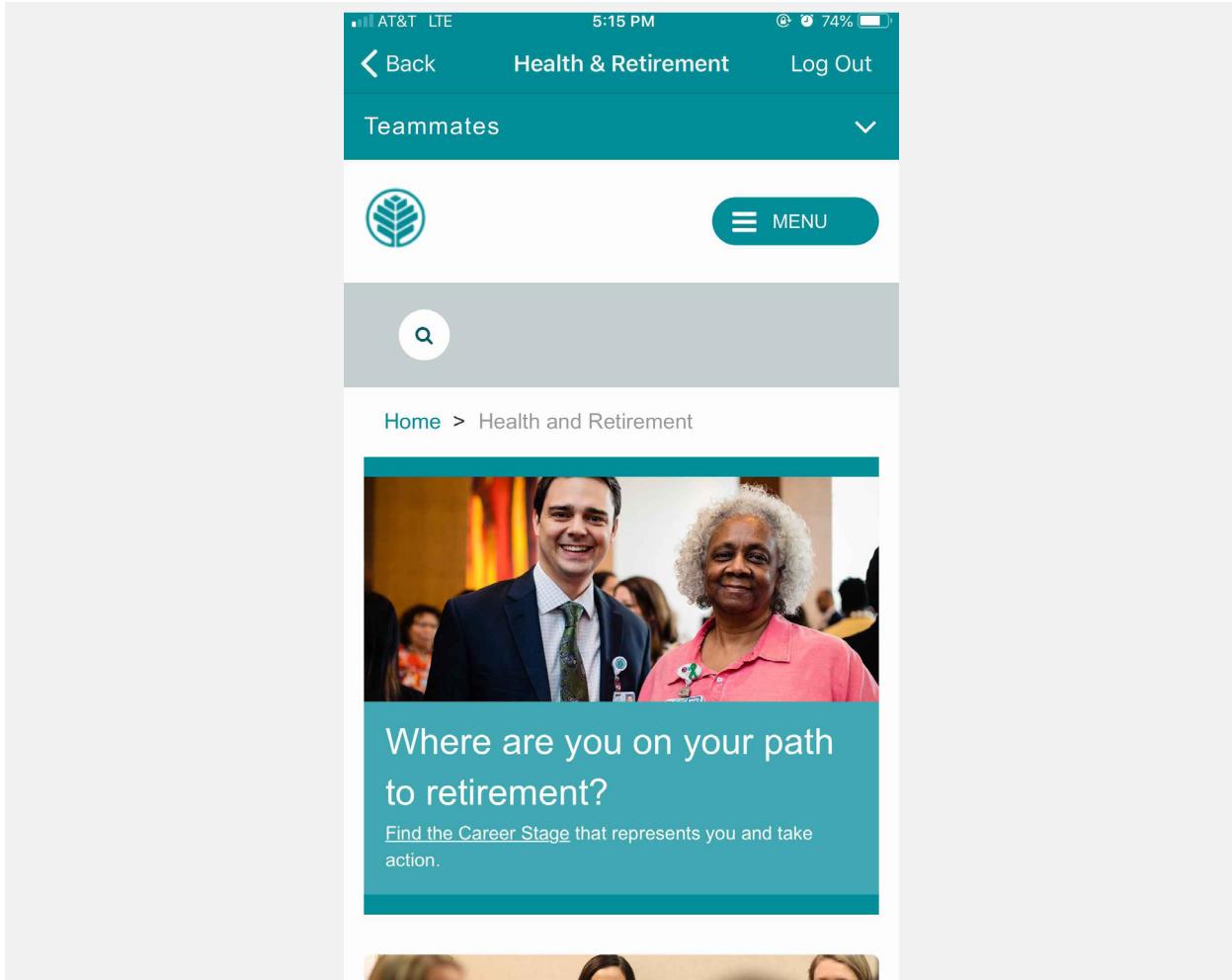
Employees use multiple browser windows of varying sizes while they work.

User Behaviors

In addition, as we observed, employees often had many browser windows open on their desktop or laptop computers simultaneously. As such, employees would resize the windows and move them around to achieve an optimal view to complete their work and various activities across tools and systems.

For example, Atrium Health prioritized a good cross-channel employee experience and used a clean, responsive design for its intranet. As screen size decreased, elements within the interface stacked sequentially into two columns on tablet in portrait view (768 pixels wide) and a single column on mobile. Sufficient white space between each component ensured the intranet remained breathable, scannable, and coherent. Typography and text treatments also decreased in size, however, not to the point where they were rendered unreadable.

Atrium Health's intranet design used a reliable grid system, making it easy to scale across viewport sizes.



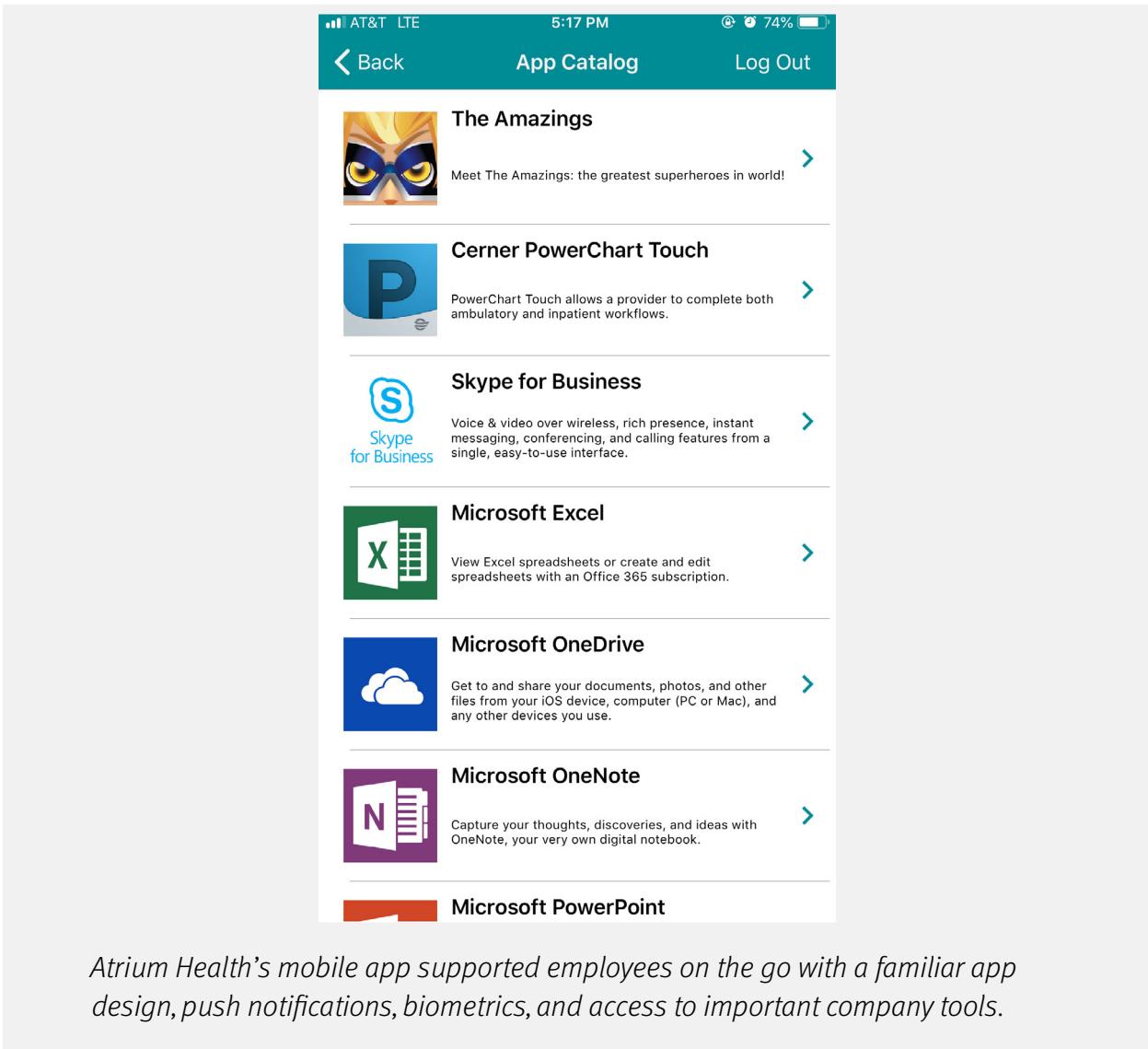
On mobile, Atrium Health's intranet stacked into a single-column grid. Slight modifications to the design in the smaller viewports, such as using a solid teal background for readable text over the hero image, ensured employees could still skim and scan the content on each page to find what they needed.

In addition to using a responsive web design for its intranet, Atrium Health also offered a lightweight version of the intranet on a mobile application. This additional channel option was especially helpful for executives, corporate staff, and medical providers, who often traveled to different campuses and facilities within the healthcare network. Since they were on the go, they could reliably reach for their mobile device and the app version of the intranet to access other tools and systems. The app used inherent device capabilities such as push notifications, maps, and biometrics for signing into apps and tools. The mobile app version of the intranet provided many **accelerators** to help employees stay productive on the go.

Accelerators

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

An **accelerator** is a UI feature that speeds up an interaction or process.



The screenshot shows the 'App Catalog' section of the Atrium Health mobile app. The top navigation bar includes 'Back', 'App Catalog', and 'Log Out'. The status bar shows signal strength, AT&T LTE, 5:17 PM, battery level at 74%, and a biometric lock icon. Below the header, there are seven app cards:

- The Amazings**: An app for superheroes, described as "the greatest superheroes in world!" with a yellow and blue mask icon.
- Cerner PowerChart Touch**: An app for healthcare providers, described as allowing them to complete both ambulatory and inpatient workflows, with a blue 'P' icon.
- Skype for Business**: An app for business communication, described as providing voice & video over wireless, rich presence, instant messaging, conferencing, and calling features from a single interface, with a blue 'S' icon.
- Microsoft Excel**: An app for spreadsheets, described as allowing users to view Excel spreadsheets or create and edit them with an Office 365 subscription, with a green 'X' icon.
- Microsoft OneDrive**: An app for file storage and sharing, described as enabling users to get to and share documents, photos, and other files from their iOS device, computer (PC or Mac), and any other devices they use, with a blue cloud icon.
- Microsoft OneNote**: An app for note-taking, described as capturing thoughts, discoveries, and ideas with OneNote, your very own digital notebook, with a purple 'N' icon.
- Microsoft PowerPoint**: An app for presentations, with a red 'P' icon.

Below the catalog, a descriptive text reads: "Atrium Health's mobile app supported employees on the go with a familiar app design, push notifications, biometrics, and access to important company tools."



Employees were hesitant to download a mobile app to access the intranet.

User Behaviors

Before adding a mobile app version of the intranet to your digital workplace toolset, interview employees and IT teams. This way, you'll learn about employees' attitudes, preferences, and opinions about whether they feel they need and would use a mobile app version of the intranet. IT team members will be able to discuss whether a mobile app is a viable option and if it's safe and secure to have such an application on employees' personal phones. Or if the application should only be installed on corporate-approved devices.

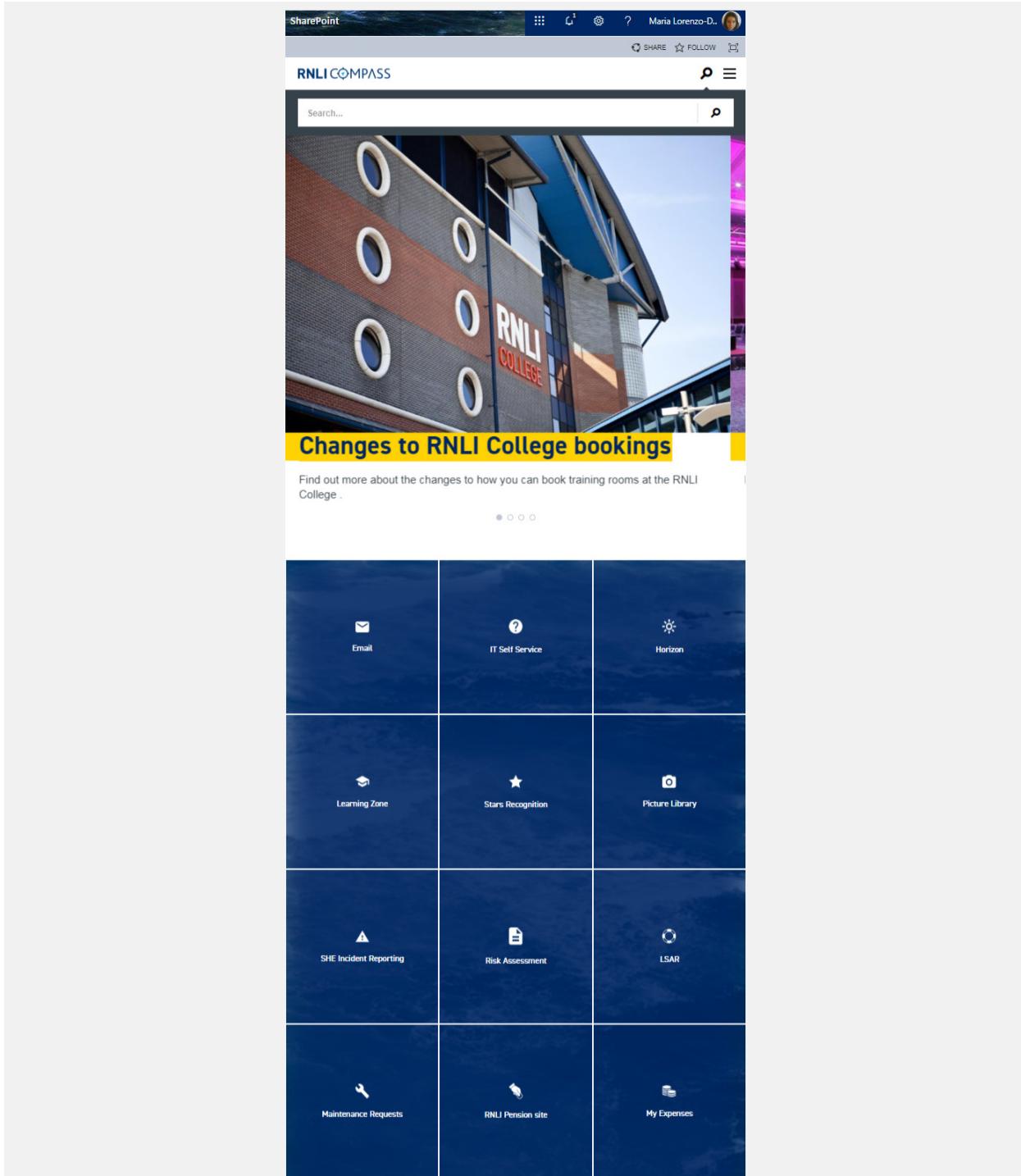
In our research, some employees were slightly apprehensive about downloading an app version of the intranet on their mobile phones. A few feared the organization would be able to track their behavior or gather data from their mobile device about their whereabouts outside of the workday or week.

People also expressed that if they were required to download an app on their personal device, they expected their company to sponsor or contribute to the costs associated with their mobile phones and monthly cellular plans.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) also used responsive design for its intranet. While the intranet rendered on a mobile device, unfortunately, the SharePoint navigation and other page elements were not fully optimized for smaller screens. Instead, the page design felt like a desktop version of the intranet smashed into a smaller viewport. Iconography and corresponding touch targets were far too small (less than 44x44 pixels) to support mobile tapping. Additionally, the mobile view text was so small that employees had to pinch and zoom to read and scan effectively.

In this case, a better approach would have been for RNLI to design a specific view of the intranet's mobile navigation rather than using the same desktop treatment, only fitting into a mobile view. Increasing font sizes and touch targets, as well as providing ample whitespace and even padding in between components as the intranet scaled down from desktop to mobile, would also help to improve the intranet's responsive design further.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution's desktop intranet design was favorable. It used ample white space, a nice grid of clean components, and prioritized tools and tasks employees needed to complete often.



The mobile-responsive version of the RNLI intranet was less optimal as the design did not directly stack and translate. Fonts and touch targets were too small, and the navigation was simply a desktop rendering on mobile.

Two other areas of the RNLI's digital workplace did represent good examples of responsive design. Its learning and training tools and IT self-service portal were fully responsive and looked polished and professional from desktop down to mobile. The grid systems used in both tools, along with the thoughtful consideration paid to font sizes, color choices, component layout, and mobile navigation, meant employees could reliably access both of these systems and find what they needed while out at sea or in their office seat.

We use cookies for analytical purposes. Carry on browsing if you are happy with this, or find out how to [manage cookies](#)

Hello Maria | Log Out

Lifeboats

Alerts 0 Tasks 0 Search

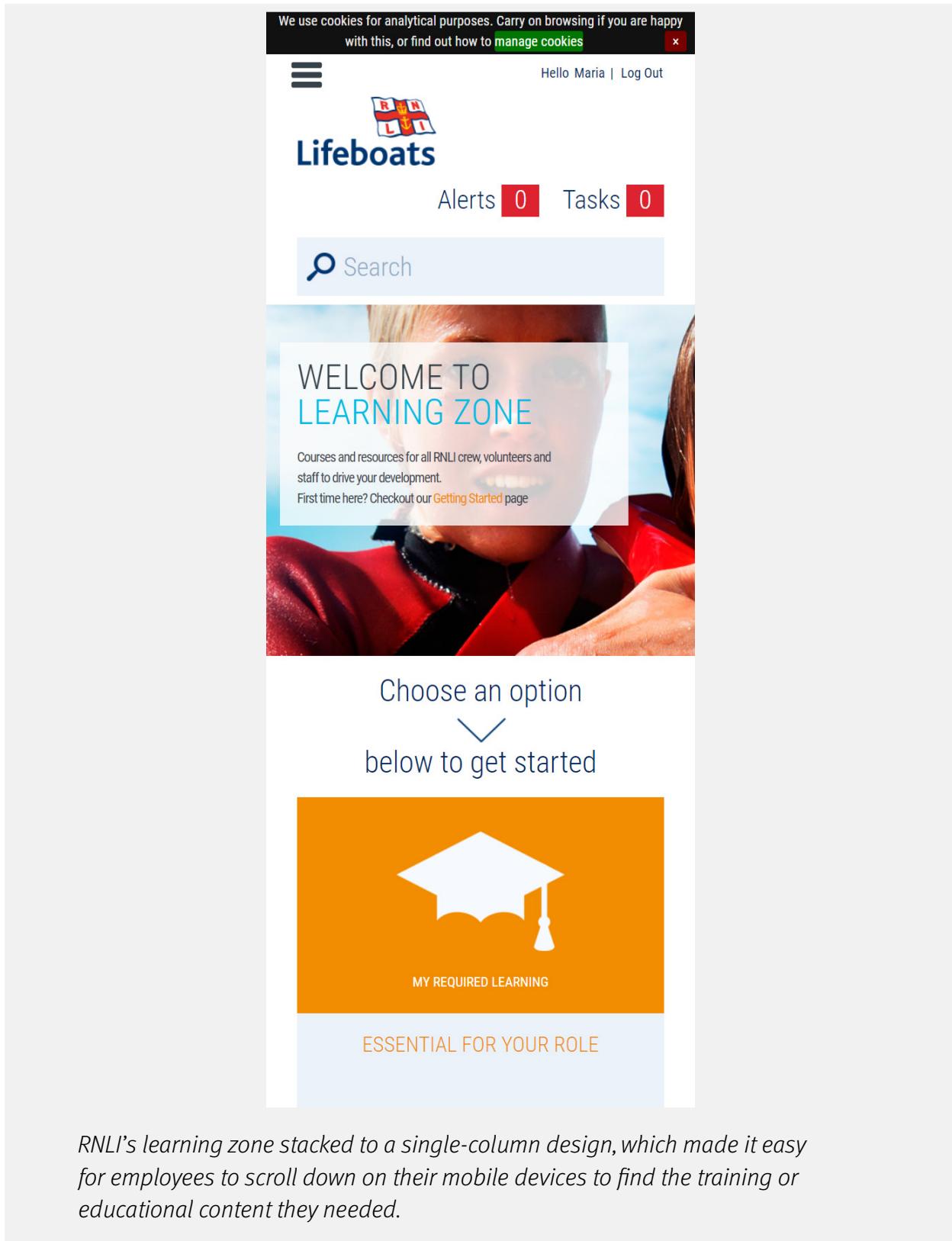
WELCOME TO LEARNING ZONE

Courses and resources for all RNLI crew, volunteers and staff to drive your development.
First time here? Checkout our [Getting Started](#) page

Choose an option ✓ below to get started

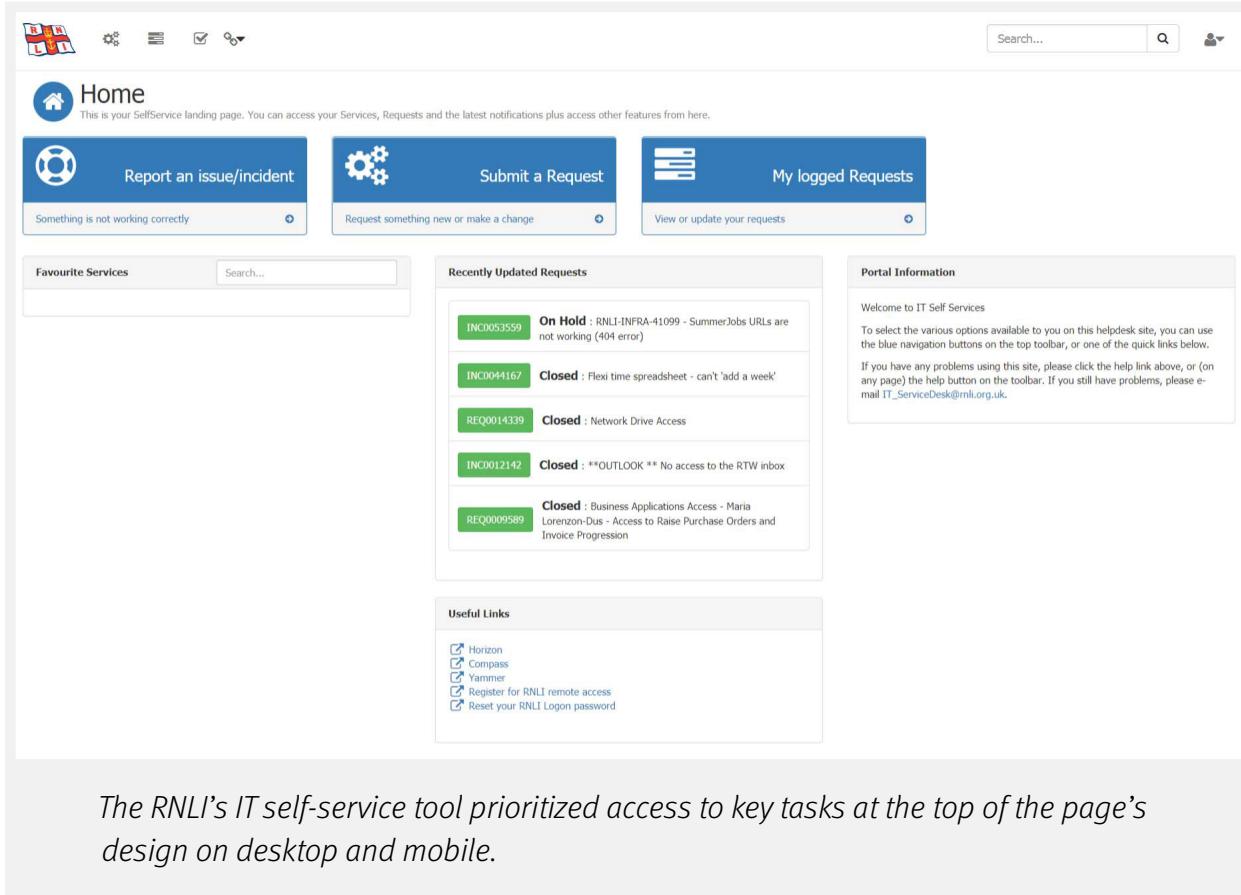
MY REQUIRED LEARNING	MY DEVELOPMENT PLANS	GETTING STARTED <small>First time here? Checkout our quick guide</small>
ESSENTIAL FOR YOUR ROLE	YOUR COMPETENCIES AND RECOMMENDED LEARNING	LATE COURSE AVAILABILITY <small>Latest operational course availability, updated weekly.</small>
EXPERIENCE DAYS <small>Sign-up to one of L&D's experience days and visit a station, spend a day with lifeguards and more!</small>	WHAT'S NEW?	

RNLI's learning and training tool featured a colorful, grid-based design that supported employees' ongoing education and career-building activities well.



The image shows a screenshot of the RNLI Learning Zone mobile website. At the top, there is a cookie consent banner with the text "We use cookies for analytical purposes. Carry on browsing if you are happy with this, or find out how to [manage cookies](#)". Below the banner, the header includes a menu icon, the text "Hello Maria | Log Out", and the RNLI logo. The main navigation bar features the word "Lifeboats" in blue. Below the navigation, there are two red rectangular buttons: "Alerts 0" and "Tasks 0". A search bar with a magnifying glass icon and the word "Search" is positioned next. The main content area has a large background image of a person's face and shoulders. Overlaid on this image is the text "WELCOME TO LEARNING ZONE" in white and blue. Below this, smaller text reads "Courses and resources for all RNLI crew, volunteers and staff to drive your development." and "First time here? Checkout our [Getting Started](#) page". The text "Choose an option" is displayed above a downward-pointing arrow, followed by "below to get started". Below the arrow is a large orange button featuring a white graduation cap icon. The text "MY REQUIRED LEARNING" is centered on this button. At the bottom of the screen, a light blue bar contains the text "ESSENTIAL FOR YOUR ROLE". A descriptive quote at the bottom left states: "RNLI's learning zone stacked to a single-column design, which made it easy for employees to scroll down on their mobile devices to find the training or educational content they needed."

At RNLI, the team considered what employees use the IT self-service tool for most often and ensured the elements that supported those core activities were front and center at the top of the page with no distracting images or other filler components in the way. This allowed for a clean, usable design and provided direct access to those critical tasks from both desktop and mobile to help employees save time. As the site scaled down from desktop to mobile, the three blue boxes containing the launch points for reporting issues, submitting requests, and reviewing open requests remained at the top and highly visible.



The screenshot shows the RNLI IT self-service tool homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with icons for flags, gear, list, checkmark, and refresh. To the right is a search bar and a user profile icon. Below the navigation is a 'Home' section with a house icon and the text: 'This is your SelfService landing page. You can access your Services, Requests and the latest notifications plus access other features from here.' There are three main blue buttons: 'Report an issue/incident' (with a person icon), 'Submit a Request' (with a gear icon), and 'My logged Requests' (with a list icon). Below these buttons are status messages: 'Something is not working correctly' (with a gear icon), 'Request something new or make a change' (with a gear icon), and 'View or update your requests' (with a gear icon). To the left, there's a 'Favourite Services' section with a search bar. In the center, there's a 'Recently Updated Requests' section listing five items:

- INC0053559 | **On Hold**: RNLI-INFRA-41099 - SummerJobs URLs are not working (404 error)
- INC004167 | **Closed**: Flexi time spreadsheet - can't 'add a week'
- REQ0014339 | **Closed**: Network Drive Access
- INC0012142 | **Closed**: **OUTLOOK** No access to the RTW inbox
- REQ0009589 | **Closed**: Business Applications Access - Maria Lorenzon-Dus - Access to Raise Purchase Orders and Invoice Progression

To the right, there's a 'Portal Information' section with a welcome message, a help link, and an email address for support. At the bottom, there's a 'Useful Links' section with a list of links:

- Horizon
- Compass
- Yammer
- Register for RNLI remote access
- Reset your RNLI Logon password

The RNLI's IT self-service tool prioritized access to key tasks at the top of the page's design on desktop and mobile.

The screenshot displays the RNLI SelfService landing page, featuring a clean and organized layout with a blue and white color scheme. At the top, there's a header with the RNLI logo and a navigation menu icon. Below the header, the main content area is divided into several sections:

- Home:** This is your SelfService landing page.
- Report an issue/incident:** Includes a lifebuoy icon and a message: "Something is not working correctly".
- Submit a Request:** Includes a gears icon and a message: "Request something new or make a change".
- My logged Requests:** Includes a document icon and a message: "View or update your requests".
- Favourite Services:** A search bar labeled "Search...".
- Recently Updated Requests:**
 - INC0053559** **On Hold**: RNLI-INFRA-41099 - SummerJobs URLs are not working (404 error)
 - INC0044167** **Closed**: Flexi time spreadsheet - can't 'add a week'
 - REQ0014339** **Closed**: Network Drive Access
 - INC0012142** **Closed**: **OUTLOOK ** No access to the RTW inbox
 - REQ0009589** **Closed**: Business Applications Access - Maria Lorenzon-Dus - Access to Raise Purchase Orders and Invoice Progression
- Useful Links:**
 - Horizon
 - Compass
 - Yammer
 - Register for RNLI remote access
 - Reset your RNLI Logon password

The even spacing, simplicity, and cleanliness of the component-based design helped employees stay efficient while quickly reviewing the requests they made from desktop and mobile.



Outline responsive design considerations in your design system or style guide

Process and Strategic Considerations

Help intranet content managers understand the details they must pay attention to in responsive design. However, remember they shouldn't need to know every technical detail if the intranet's content management system handles most of the legwork.

As much as possible, it's important to outline what steps content managers need to take or be aware of with the responsive nature of the intranet's design. This will ensure it looks good across channels.

Some important details to define and include in training, style guides, design systems, and content management systems include:

- The grid, including the number of columns
- Breakpoints and pixel dimensions for screen widths
- Widths of different page elements per breakpoints
- If any UI elements change across breakpoints
- The order in which content appears or stacks on smaller breakpoints
- Image options, minimum pixel widths, and resolutions
- Images' proportional relationship with the content container in which they are displayed
- How to preview and test pages in each breakpoint before pushing them live to the intranet

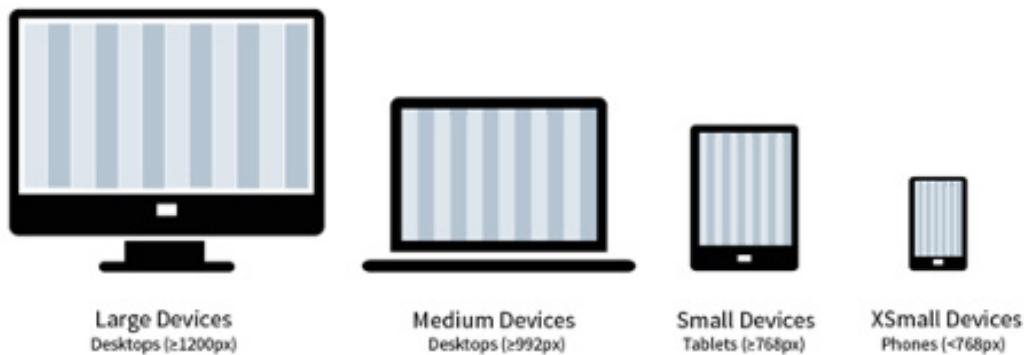
The Responsive Framework

GSA uses a free, open-source collection of tools using HTML, Cascading Style Sheets, and JavaScript called Bootstrap. This collection of front-end tools or "framework" is designed to support the efficient creation of responsive websites and web applications.

How GSA.gov Uses Bootstrap

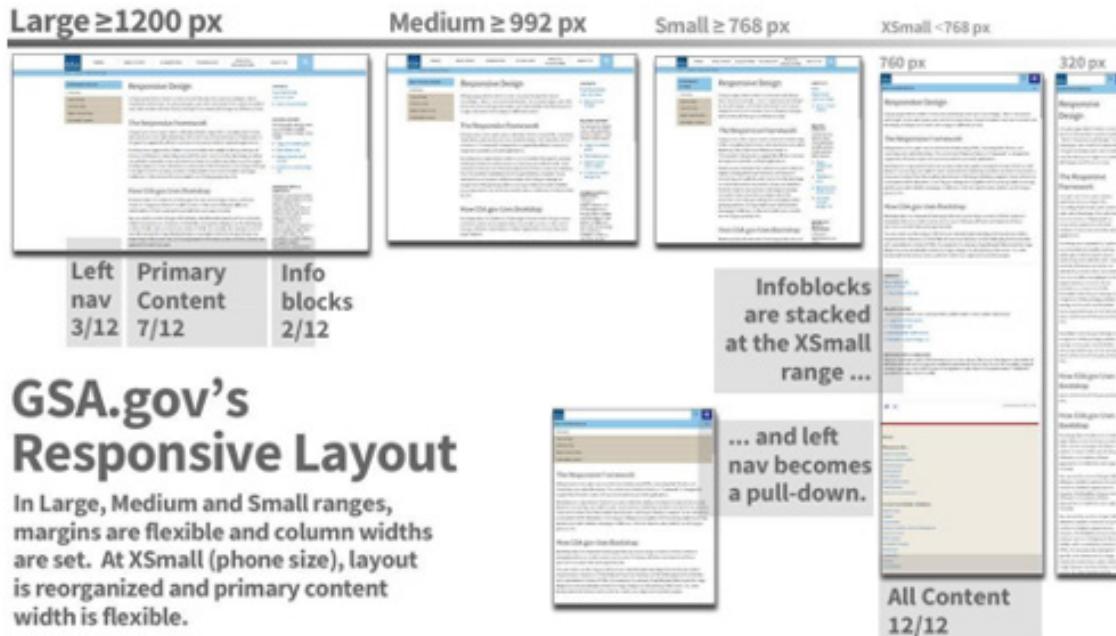
You can readily use the content management platform without a detailed understanding of the mechanics behind responsiveness. However, the flexibility of responsive displays can be challenging to those whose notions of web design are based solely on conventional HTML. For example, the concept of specifying pixel dimensions for image display becomes meaningless when the image changes size depending on the screen. So, some background on Bootstrap can be useful to reorient your approach to planning pages and particularly images.

Instead of fixed pixel dimensions, Bootstrap is based on a system of 12 invisible columns and a series of "breakpoints." The breakpoints represent thresholds for screen width at which different display rules can be written into the user-interface. GSA's responsive design makes extensive use of breakpoints.



The breakpoints used by GSA.gov are illustrated above. They are referred to simply as "Large" (lg), "Medium" (md), "Small" (sm), and "Extra Small" (xs). Page display for the first three breakpoints on GSA.gov holds the page at a fixed width and allows the margins to flex and fill the screen. Within the range of extra small screens, content layout is reorganized, and the content fills the screen with no margins.

The General Services Administration outlined exactly what intranet content managers needed to be aware of in terms of the responsive nature of the intranet. This example shows the 12-column grid system and standard breakpoints the design accommodates.



GSA's implementation of the breakpoints is shown above. Within each breakpoint, the widths of different elements of the page are created as multiples of the twelve columns. So, for example, a typical content page may have a left column of navigation, a right column of supplementary "info-blocks", and primary content in the middle. In this template at the three larger break points, the left navigation takes up three of the 12 columns, the right column takes up two, and the primary content takes the remaining seven. At mobile phone size (bootstrap's **XSmall** breakpoint), the left column disappears and is replaced by pull-down navigation, the right column content floats below the content, and the primary content takes up the full twelve columns.

Using Images within Responsive Design

Bootstrap's 12 column scheme provides a great deal of flexibility for creating containers that are automatically sized to different widths at different screen sizes. This flexibility is multiplied by the fact that any Bootstrap container can itself also divided into twelve columns. So, an image placed inside the primary content can be configured as a multiple of 1/12ths of that container width.

Now, consider that the content container width itself can vary depending on the configuration of the template it is being displayed in and things under the hood get complicated fast. But again, as a content manager, you can employ the CMP without worrying about these technical details – unless you want to.

On the GSA's intranet, visual examples of pages at various breakpoints and detailed explanations of proper image use and sizing helped content managers maintain the intranet's responsiveness and appearance across different devices.

DESIGN FOR PAGE COMPONENTS

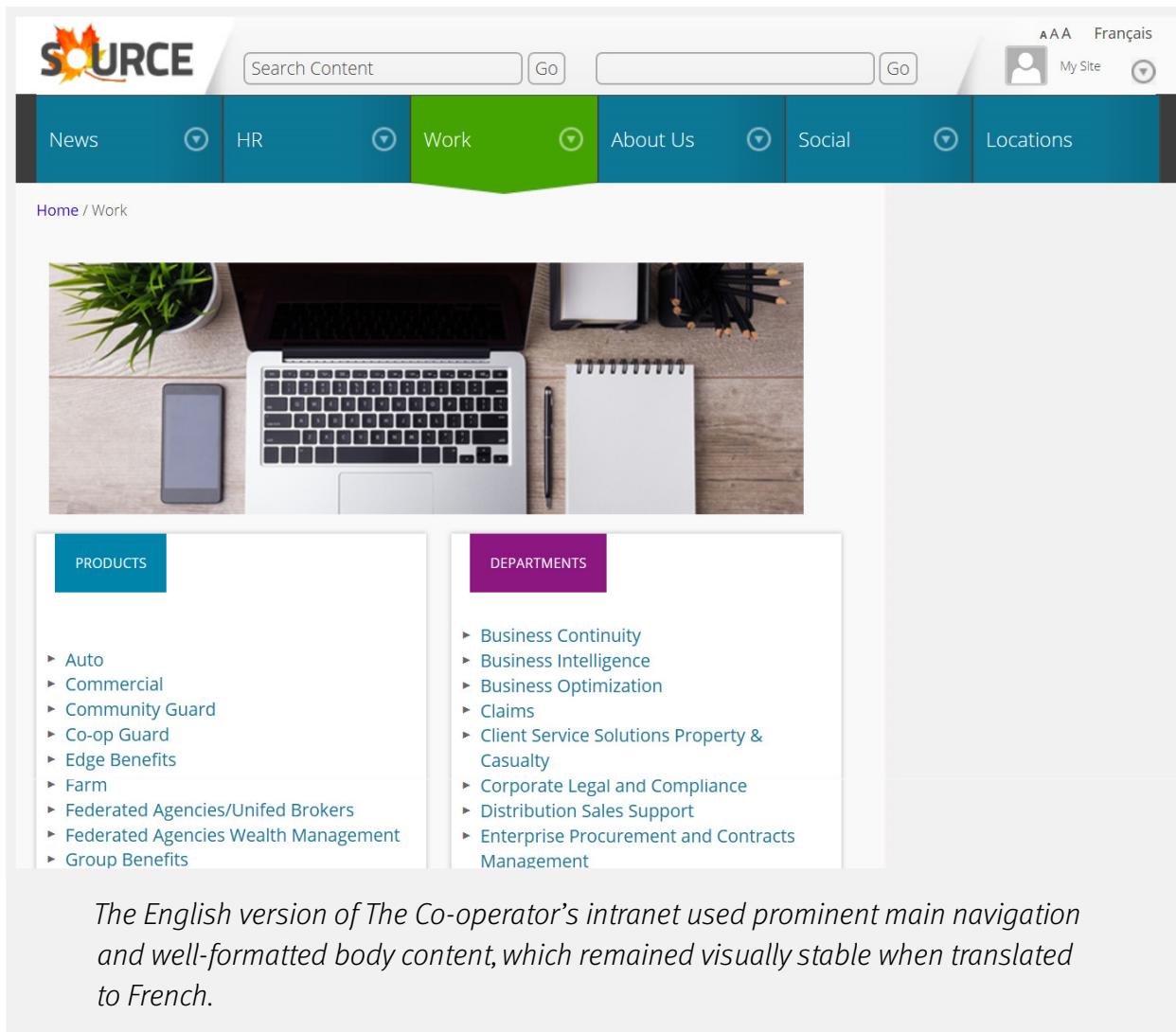
9. Ensure the intranet's design, templates, and components scale across all offices and languages.

Many intranets aim to support employees at various company locations worldwide, not just those who reside in a single office location or at the company headquarters. Some intranets take the favorable approach of balancing both global and localized content to meet employee needs at all locations. Others may provide fully translated versions of the intranet in multiple languages, where employees can customize the language they view.

In either case, the intranet's design must scale and support content presentation and components that are culturally appropriate for employees at specific locations around the world. Review your intranet's design with the following considerations in mind:

- Does the typography, font choices, leading, and kerning afford comfortable readability in all the languages the intranet supports?
- When translated, are navigation, button, and link labels preserved within the design, lending clean and scannable navigation and subsequent levels of sub-navigation?
- Do page layouts embrace left-to-right as well as right-to-left reading? This consideration is especially important for organizations with translated versions of the intranet in which employees may read right-to-left, such as Arabic.
- Are the colors and images chosen culturally appropriate and acceptable for all office locations?
- Can employees easily change the language or office location they're viewing on the intranet?

For example, The Co-operators' intranet, Source, appeared in either English or French. Because the organization is based in Canada, not only were these bilingual options considerate of the employees who may speak one language or another, or both, it's a legal requirement to have these language options available. As such, the intranet's design brilliantly embraced both the English and French versions. The navigation, main content on the body of the page, as well as all supporting content, remained intact and looked visually appealing in both languages.



The screenshot shows the English version of The Co-operator's intranet. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for News, HR, Work (highlighted in green), About Us, Social, and Locations. Below the navigation is a breadcrumb trail: Home / Work. The main content area features a photograph of a workspace with a laptop, a smartphone, a notebook, and a potted plant. To the left, under the 'PRODUCTS' heading, is a list of services: Auto, Commercial, Community Guard, Co-op Guard, Edge Benefits, Farm, Federated Agencies/Unified Brokers, Federated Agencies Wealth Management, and Group Benefits. To the right, under the 'DEPARTMENTS' heading, is a list of business units: Business Continuity, Business Intelligence, Business Optimization, Claims, Client Service Solutions Property & Casualty, Corporate Legal and Compliance, Distribution Sales Support, and Enterprise Procurement and Contracts Management.

The English version of The Co-operator's intranet used prominent main navigation and well-formatted body content, which remained visually stable when translated to French.

The French version of The Co-operator's intranet used the same imagery, color scheme, prominent main navigation, and well-formatted body content. It also remained visually stable when translated into English.



Usability test intranet designs with users from different office locations and countries.

Process and Strategic Considerations

Ask employees at various locations to test and review design iterations before they go live. Expand employee participation in usability research beyond those working at headquarters to get a well-rounded assessment and perspective on the intranet's design and scalability across languages and different office locations.

10. Design flexible homepage modules at different scales to communicate importance and maintain a clean design.

Many intranet homepages we studied acted as gateways, introducing content and directing employees to further tools and information. They often contained a compilation of similar components and modules, each with a specific composition, **scale**, and communication purpose.

Scale

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

Scale is a visual design principle that refers to using relative size to signal importance and rank in a composition.

The homepages typically had a hero space or a main marquee banner, which featured important news, announcements, or other happenings that employees needed to know about. This space often had a flexible yet fixed design treatment and was managed by corporate communications or centralized intranet teams.

Beyond that, secondary messages or paths to specific employee tasks also typically earned themselves a spot on the intranet's homepage. These included items such as calendars or lists of upcoming events, topic, location, or department-specific news and stories, shortcut links or previews of information from other digital workplace tools, or widgets such as weekly weather forecasts, cafeteria menus, social media feeds, or the current time zones at various office locations.

Because of the myriad of messages, employee needs, and competing priorities, intranet homepages must be designed with flexibility in mind. As a designer, the best way to handle this challenge is to design a variety of components to be used like puzzle pieces meant to come together to create a cohesive and visually pleasing homepage, yet still offer some flexibility within a framework.

When designing components, consider their purpose, where they could appear on the intranet, and the other elements that may appear alongside them. Generally, content-focused components usually contain an image, main headline, copy, and a button or link. For widgets presenting other information from other systems, a headline, status, and link may be all that's needed.

Always label components clearly and don't just design homepage components for the sake of having them; make sure they house or communicate something employees truly care about or need to know. Consider **visual hierarchy** and decide if the component would be best suited for a primary, secondary, or tertiary task or message. Thinking through these details as you build the design system will ensure it lends favorably to the homepage but extends beyond it, which will help you design the intranet more cost-effectively and help employees efficiently learn how it's organized.



Visual hierarchy

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

The principle of **visual hierarchy** refers to guiding the eye on the page so that it attends to different design elements in the order of their importance.

For example, the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology had a component-based homepage on its intranet. Each homepage module was visually consistent with hues of blue and other complimentary colors in the organization's brand palette. The modules were thoughtfully designed to fit either full-width or a three-column, two-column, or single-column span. This flexibility meant content managers could move pieces around on the page as needed. Fixed heights for certain components ensured the page remained balanced. This approach also allowed the team to iterate on combinations of components to see what worked best for different messages at different points throughout the year instead of being tied to rigid page templates.

A clean marquee banner appeared at the very top, taking up about three-quarters of the page. The rest of the homepage was divided into three clean columns, with ample labels and spacing between each component. A list of events appeared in the upper right rail, while messages from leadership, links to top resources, and other news stories appeared below. This approach led to a clean design logically organized for employees' key tasks and information needs.

NAIT.ca has been undergoing a radical transformation. Explore the preview site of the new NAIT.ca and provide your feedback.

[EXPLORE THE SITE](#)

ALL SERVICES EMPLOYEE ESSENTIALS TEACHING ESSENTIALS INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS DEPARTMENTS & SCHOOLS INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES ABOUT NAIT NEWS & EVENTS

Search 

HELENA 

QUICK LINKS 

APPS & TOOLS 

EMPLOYEE DIRECTORY 

LOCATIONS 

EMERGENCY RESOURCES 


AND THE INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE NOMINEES ARE...

TOP RESOURCES 

EXECUTIVE HUB [VIEW ALL](#)

 Here's to a summer of play!
Jun. 4, 2019 Sue's Hub

 Retiring from NAIT
May 29, 2019 Glenn's Hub

 Take new cybersecurity training today
Apr. 1, 2019 Ray's Hub

 Election campaign activities: what you need to know
Mar. 25, 2019 Sandra's Hub

CODE OF ETHICS & CONDUCT [WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AND DO](#)

RESPECT AT NAIT [Get respect-certified](#) [TAKE THE TRAINING](#)

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

My Subscribed Topics  

[ALL NEWS](#) [POST NEWS](#)


How our EFAP can support you and your family
Find out why NAIT offers an Employee & Family Assistance Program for staff, and how you and your family can benefit today.
Jun. 10, 2019 Topic: [Pay & Benefits](#) Posted by Human Resources


Common Market is still open!
During the North Lobby Hallway construction (scheduled from May 29th until June 19th), don't miss out on your favorite comfort foods and our wonderful Daily Features at Common Market.
Jun. 10, 2019 Topic: [Budget & Finance](#) Posted by eat at NAIT Administration

Student Service Centre Closure on June 14, 2019
Services unavailable at this time.
Jun. 6, 2019 Topic: [IT Systems & Maintenance](#) Posted by Advising and Career Services

Vacation
Have you submitted your vacation requests for the rest of June yet?
Jun. 5, 2019 Topic: [Pay & Benefits](#) Posted by Human Resources

EVENTS & DEADLINES [VIEW CALENDAR](#) [POST EVENTS](#)

JUN 11 NAIT Events Eating Well to Optimize Performance

JUN 12 NAIT Events AUPE Local 038 - ALL STAFF BBQ!

JUN 12 NAIT Events Meditate at NAIT Wednesdays

JUN 19 NAIT Events Meditate at NAIT

14 Current and upcoming closures or outages

techlife today [WHO'S GREAT AT NAIT?](#)

CLASSIFIED ADS »

NAIT COMMUNITY MESSAGES

Ready to share? Check the [intranet publishing standards](#).
[Yammer Home](#) [All Groups](#)

Yammer®

We're sorry, you do
You don't have a license to use Yammer v
Ask your admin to assign one to you. If

[nait.ca | Provide Feedback | Contact Support | Privacy Policy | Credit Card Payments](#)

The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology's intranet homepage utilized a consistent set of components to build a visually appealing and balanced page.

The Scottish Government took a similar approach in the design of its intranet homepage. Modules encompassed either one, two, or three columns in the desktop view of the page. Additionally, all the components incorporated the three shades of blue in the Scottish Government's color palette: light blue, blue, and navy blue. The blue outline for each component provided clear **contrast** and a boundary, which drew attention to the overall **balance** of the components alongside each of their neighboring components. The color scheme used as the background for certain components, such as the navy and light blue backgrounds, subtly communicated heightened messaging importance.



Contrast

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

The principle of **contrast** refers to the juxtaposition of visually dissimilar elements to convey that these elements are different.



Balance

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

The principle of **balance** refers to a satisfying arrangement or proportion of design elements. Balance occurs when there is an equally distributed (but not necessarily symmetrical) amount of visual signal on both sides of an imaginary axis going through the middle of the screen. This axis is often vertical but can also be horizontal.

News appeared in the homepage's upper left corner, where eyetracking evidence shows people's eyes tend to gravitate first when landing on a web page. As such, placing news in this location makes sense because Scottish Government employees need to pay attention to many, if not all, of these news stories.

The bright blue label treatment with the Permanent Secretary's Twitter handle, along with other key news stories below, reinforced the visibility of this important widget. For new employees, a welcome checklist appeared in navy blue right underneath the main marquee image. Secondary and tertiary modules with links to the latest blogs, vacation tracking systems, cafeteria menus, and other important spaces appeared below. These lower components were customizable, so employees could pick and choose what they wanted to appear in the bottom portions of the intranet homepage, which was favorable.

Saltire News My Workplace Our Organisation Staff Directory Help Quick Links Search Saltire 

News / Must Read See more 

@PermSecScot

Catch up with Perm Sec  Vlog from the Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans

News in Brief  Monday 08 April 2019 Your news from across Scottish Government

Diversity in action  Friday 05 April 2019 Employee blogs about ditching the halo

First Minister writes to EU citizens  Friday 05 April 2019 Message for employees

The launch of VAT TV  Thursday 04 April 2019 Blog from Chief Financial Officer Gordon Wales

Scotland's Natural Capital  Wednesday 03 April 2019 Employee name tells us about recognising nature as a form of capital

Learning through prison volunteering  Wednesday 03 April 2019 Give your time and sharpen your skills

Fair Start Scotland turns one  Wednesday 03 April 2019 Employee talks to Saltire News

EU exit staff discussions  Tuesday 02 April 2019 Directors General invite your questions

World Autism Awareness Day  Tuesday 02 April 2019 Employee name tells us about the work of the Autism Policy Team

Systems 

-  eHR
-  iFix

Welcome Checklist 

Welcome to the Scottish Government. Here's a few things for you to read to get you started in your new role. You can find more information and policies in [My Workplace](#).

-  Scottish Government structure
-  Learning and development
-  Health and safety in the workplace
-  Flexi system
-  Security - your responsibilities
-  Top tips for new staff
-  Staff networks
-  Mandatory training
-  Sign up for Yammer
-  Take the Saltire tour

Need to know 

 Round up of Monday's front pages

Latest Blogs 

Code Words  Thursday 04 April 2019 Posted by Employee Name What do we really mean?

A historic time for forestry in Scotland  Monday 01 April 2019 Posted by Employee Name Launch of new Act and Scottish Government agencies

Flexible Working  Friday 29 March 2019 Posted by Employee Name From Employee Name in Economic Development

Events 

You are currently not booked on any events.

 All events >

Flexi 

Recent clockings

Type	Date	Time	Direction
CLK	09/04/2019	8:58	In
CLK	08/04/2019	8:58	In
CLK	08/04/2019	8:58	In
CLK	08/04/2019	13:50	Out
CLK	08/04/2019	14:21	In

Flexi period (Mon 08-04 to Fri 03-05)

Balance	Hours
Balance last night	8:16
Current balance	4:21
Hours worked today	5:44

My Quick Links 

Yammer 

MyLearning 

You have not selected any learning opportunities, please click the edit button above and select some opportunities.

 All Learning >

Menu 

The Scottish Government's intranet features clean and customizable homepage modules.

The homepage of Dell's human resources site also used a set of consistent components to offer employees a path to deeper subsections. Each component was clearly labeled and contained a list of relevant and organized links. Cases and approvals appeared in the lower right corner in related modules that were properly sized and visually differentiated from others on the page.

The screenshot shows the Dell HR homepage with a dark header bar containing the 'Inside DELL Technologies' logo, navigation links for News, My Communities, My HR, My IT, Learning, and a search bar. Below the header is a banner for 'Introducing My Time' with a large clock icon and a 'Learn More' button. The main content area is organized into several modules:

- Find Answers**: A blue button with a white icon.
- Chat**: A blue button with a white icon.
- Submit a Case**: A blue button with a white icon.
- Access Tools**: A blue button with a white icon.
- Personal and Work Information**: Includes links for My Team, My Address, My Family Dependents, and Letter Requests. A 'View more >' link is present.
- Rewards and Benefits**: Includes links for My Well at Dell, My Dell WebMD, Inspire Recognition, and Dell 401(k). A 'View more >' link is present.
- Pay and Timesheet**: Includes links for HR4U US Pay and Timesheet, Pay Slips/Check Stubs, Payroll Calendar, and Time and Attendance Submission. A 'View more >' link is present.
- Career and Development**: Includes links for Internal Jobs Search, Employee Referral Program (ERP), Mobility and Immigration, and Learning Studio. A 'View more >' link is present.
- Leave and Time Off**: Includes links for Corporate/Public Holidays, Time Away, Sick/Medical Leave and Disability, and Jury Duty. A 'View more >' link is present.
- Workplace and Community**: Includes links for Connected Workplace (Remote/Mobile Work), Culture Code Resources, Social Impact Community, and Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). A 'View more >' link is present.
- New to Dell?**: Includes a link to Visit the New Hire site.
- Tools for the Job**: Includes links for My HR Profile (Workday), MyADP (Pay Statements), Request Time Off (Workday), and Enter Time/Hours Worked (Workday). A 'View more >' link is present.
- My Cases**: Includes a link to Discuss other career opportunities at Dell (HRC0536599) posted 8mo ago.
- My Approvals**: Shows a request for RITM3659547 to manage Application or Service Offering specific close codes, made by Requestor Dell Employee. Buttons for 'Reject' and 'Approve' are shown, along with links for 'First 1 of 2' and 'View all'.

At the bottom, there are four columns of links:

- Resources for My Job**: Personal and Work Information, Rewards and Benefits, Career and Development, Pay and Timesheet, Leave and Time Off, Workplace and Community.
- About Dell**: Inside Dell, Social Impact Community, Crowdsourcing, One Dell Way, People Search, Purpose & Strategy, Salesforce/Chatter.
- About HR**: About My HR, HR Team, HR Leadership Team, HR Policies, HR COE Portals and Sites, HR4U Country Sites.
- Getting Help**: Travel & Expenses, Security, Ethics & Compliance, Facilities, Help a Customer, IT Service Desk.

A footer note at the bottom left states: 'Inside Dell | Dell Internal Use'.

Dell's HR homepage was organized and thoughtfully designed using components to group important areas and content employees often accessed.

Atrium Health also used primary, secondary, and tertiary homepage components to build a well-organized and compelling landing page from which employees could reliably find what they needed.

The screenshot shows the Atrium Health intranet homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Teammates' (dropdown), a search bar ('I need to find...'), and the Atrium Health logo. Below the header, there's a main banner for 'perkspot' with the tagline 'The Experts in Employee Discounts'. The banner features a laptop, a smartphone, and a tablet displaying various discount offers. A prominent call-to-action says 'Looking to save money in 2019?' and 'You're going to love our Teammate Discount programs.' Below the banner, there are four cards for 'Health & Retirement', 'Diversity & Inclusion', 'LiveWELL', and 'New Teammates', each with an icon and a 'Learn More' button. At the bottom, there are four teal-colored boxes: 'Employee Assistance Program (EAP)', 'Show a teammate how much you care.', 'Make time to practice emotional well-being.', and 'Apply for Educational Assistance.', each with a corresponding 'Learn More' button.

Atrium Health used helpful components to organize the intranet's homepage.

11. Reuse components to create visually consistent and engaging category landing pages.

Category and landing pages are midlevel pages within an intranet; they introduce content groupings and items within those groupings, respectively. Usually, items in the intranet's main navigation and organizational functions, such as human resources, information technology, and other departments, have their own landing or category pages.

These pages provide a place to house contextually relevant events and announcements, news stories, team members and organizational charts, links to related tools, and, most importantly, links to deeper-level pages within the category. Many homepage components you design can likely be reused on category and landing pages. This is a viable approach to help maintain visual consistency across the intranet.

Any information employees expect to readily find should appear immediately on the category or landing page. For example, on a category page for human resources, employees should find links to benefits information, pay stubs, vacation tracking tools, and other pertinent HR content without having to scroll, click, or dig. On an IT category page, employees should find links to get help, submit tickets or requests, troubleshoot issues, and find information about the IT department and how to contact someone there. Similar to the intranet's homepage design, items of secondary and tertiary importance should live in visually differentiated components, lower down on the page, or in areas of lower prominence, such as in the right rail.

The paths to content and tools must be thoughtfully designed to convey differences among various content types and individual tools and help employees locate the items best suited to their needs. These pages shouldn't just be a smattering of all content, images, and other design elements that *could* live on the page. It's also important to consider that employees often land on category pages from the intranet's search results. These intermediate-level pages can help employees find specific information very quickly, which is one more reason to care about their user experience and visual design in addition to their importance for within-site navigation.

The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology did an exceptional job with its category and landing page design. A simple left navigation appeared in the first column of the page, which was consistent with other pages appearing at this level in the intranet's information architecture. The subsequent two columns contained a combination of components spanning both or a single column. The hero banner was static and didn't contain any text, which was favorable. The image of a person holding a laptop visually reinforced where the employee had just landed. Important text-based information and links appeared in clean modules at the top of the page, including contact information, self-service resources for troubleshooting, service hours, top resources, events and deadlines, and department news. Each component was clearly labeled, had high contrast with the page background, and ample padding to create a balanced layout. No filler or fluff content or design elements appeared on the page; everything supported employees' IT-related needs.

NAIT.ca has been undergoing a radical transformation. Explore the preview site of the new NAIT.ca and provide your feedback.

[EXPLORE THE SITE](#)

ALL SERVICES EMPLOYEE ESSENTIALS TEACHING ESSENTIALS INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS DEPARTMENTS & SCHOOLS INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES ABOUT NAIT NEWS & EVENTS

Search 

HOME + DEPARTMENTS & SCHOOLS + INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES [ADD TO QUICK LINKS](#)

INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

SERVICES

- PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE
- LOCAL AREA EXPERTS

KEY CONTACTS

ITS HELP DESK
780.471.8624
helpline@nait.ca

[IT SERVICE CATALOGUE](#)

[nait.ca | Provide Feedback | Contact Support | Privacy Policy | Credit Card Payments](#)

Information and Technology Service (ITS) leads the development and implementation of common use and specialized information and technology services at NAIT. We provide support for a wide range of systems and services to the entire NAIT community.

You can email us anytime at helpline@nait.ca with a question or request, and we will actively respond to emails and phone calls on the following schedule.

Monday to Friday	7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday	8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
On call Monday to Friday	7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

During institutional holidays, we are closed. During on-call hours, we are only able to respond to emergencies.

Our **Knowledge Base** is also a great source of self-service information that may help you solve a problem or find what you are looking for. We also offer walk-up support to staff and students at three locations on campus: T307, W203 and CAT215.

[See more information on services available at these locations](#)

TOP RESOURCES

- GET ACCESS TO SYSTEMS
- NAIT EMPLOYEE ESSENTIALS
- FIX PHONE, FAX OR VOICEMAIL
- REPAIR COMPUTERS OR SOFTWARE
- GET AUDIO VISUAL SUPPORT

EVENTS & DEADLINES

APR SEP 27 - 02	Maintenance & Closures ITS Help Desk - Summer Hours
JUN 11	Maintenance & Closures Help Desk Closure

[CALENDAR](#)

DEPARTMENT NEWS

All Topics

PeopleSoft Campus Solutions system outage

PeopleSoft Campus Solutions will be unavailable from 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 13 to 8 a.m. on Monday, June 17 as the system is upgraded to version 9.2.

Jun. 6, 2019 Topic: **Projects & Initiatives**
Posted by Office of the Registrar

Changes to Lab Computers - Adobe Licensing

Licensing for Adobe Products on shared lab computers is changing. Users will need to sign in with their NAIT credentials when using lab computers.

May. 28, 2019 Topic: **IT Systems & Maintenance**
Posted by Information and Technology Services

Moving Personal Drives to OneDrive

Personal drives on \\nait.ca\private\staff are being moved to read-only at the end of June 2019 - find out more about moving your personal data to OneDrive!

Jun. 3, 2019 Topic: **IT Systems & Maintenance**
Posted by Information and Technology Services

Saying Farewell to Windows 7

Beginning May 1, users who have not yet upgraded to Windows 10 will be prompted to upgrade with all

NAIT created consistent and useful category pages by reusing components.

The City of Calgary also had visually appealing category pages that were consistent with the rest of the intranet. The pages prioritized the content employees looked for after landing on the pages. For example, on the *News & Events* category page, employees were greeted by an impressive image depicting an aerial view of the City of Calgary. The main image did not rotate or contain overlaid text, which was good. This way, employees didn't get distracted or bogged down before scanning down to the valuable navigation-focused areas of the page.

Secondary components appeared in light gray below and sat on a white background in a balanced, two-by-two grid. This area provided employees with direct access to all of the intranet's news, a calendar of events, newsletters, and the blog.

Additional news sites appeared below in a tertiary-style, card-based design. This highly reusable component contained a light gray background, which broke up the page and provided some dimension. The component was clearly labeled, so there was no question about what the cards housed. Each card contained a clear image, headline, small excerpt of body copy, and a link to the respective site. The bright white text on top of a fuchsia background had proper contrast and drew employees' attention.



Use no more than three different sizes for components.

Timeless Design Tips

A visually pleasing design generally uses no more than three different sizes. Having a range of differently sized elements will not only create variety within your layout, but it will also establish a visual hierarchy on the page.

Be sure to emphasize the most important aspects of your design by making them the biggest. A general rule of thumb is to include small, medium, and large components in the design.

Calgary myCity

search myCity 

Tools & Resources ▾ myHR ▾ Organization ▾ News & Events ▾ Dashboard ▾ Safety & Security ▾

June 12, 2019  24°

[myCity home](#) > News & Events

News & Events



Information to keep you informed, equipped and inspired as a City employee.

myCity News

Check out the headlines from this month's employee news.

[Learn more](#)

Employee calendar

Upcoming welcome workshops and training for employees.

[Learn more](#)

Newsletters

Corporate newsletters and announcements for City employees.

[Learn more](#)

City News Blog 

Read public-facing stories about City projects, events and initiatives.

[Learn more](#)

Other City News Sites

City Newsroom

See the latest media releases and advisories from The City of Calgary.

Events & Awareness 

News Clippings

See the latest news coverage about The City of Calgary as reported in media.

Events & Awareness 

CityTalk

Public-facing City stories, videos and social media posts all in one place.

Events & Awareness 

IT Help Desk

403-268-8008

HR Support

403-268-5800

Security (24hr)

403-268-8868

The City of Calgary's category pages had a clean design to support efficiency.

12. Favor static or user-initiated hero spaces over auto-rotating carousels.

Hero spaces and carousels allow for one or more pieces of content to occupy a single, coveted space, usually at the top of key pages. During our research, many teams spoke about the time and resources they spend weekly to plan what content will live in this space.

Required Sizes for Images on Top Level Pages



Homepage

Banner

Two files of the same image must be supplied to optimize desktop and mobile display

1600 px width x 800 px height
800 px width x 208 px height

“Focus On” feature images
360 px width x 200 px height

Tab Pages

Banner

Two files must be supplied:

1600 px width x 160 px height
800 px width x 208 px height

Feature image

Featured item in the beige bar is optional. If included, then a graphic is required:

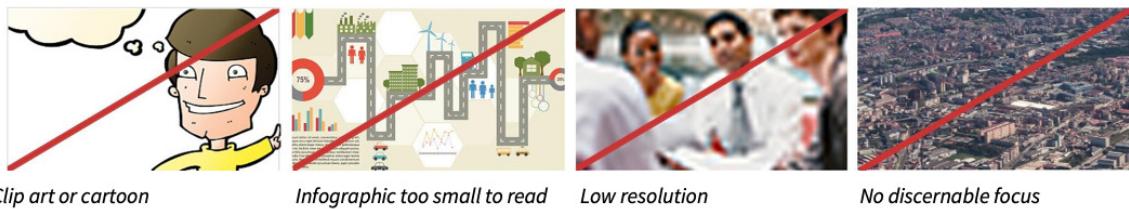
760 px width x 326 px height

Images for topic blocks

400 px width x 112 px height



The General Services Administration provided clear guidance for hero spaces.

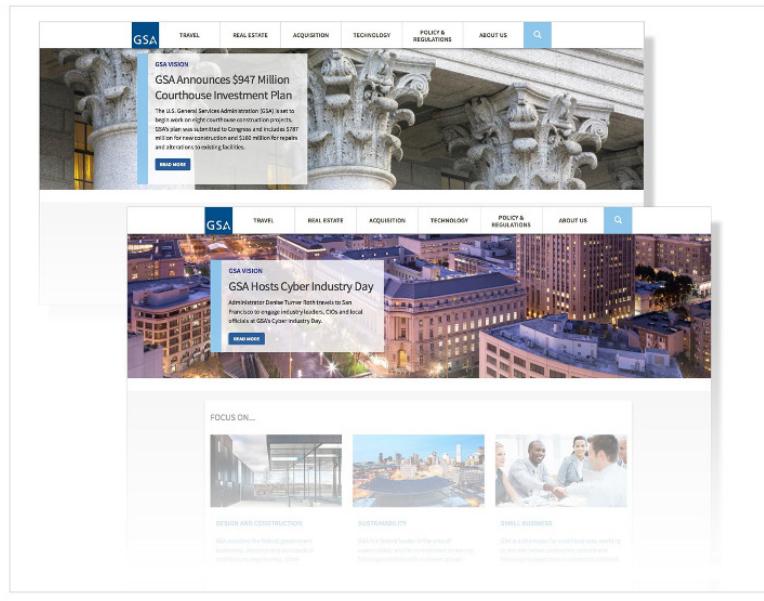


Homepage Feature Image

The homepage feature image, with an overlay white panel for the title story, is the anchor of the homepage. By virtue of its size, shape, and placement it is the most important element of communication on the page. As such, it has the signature responsibility to not only engage and inform but to set the standard for what best represents GSA.

The image chosen should consistently meet the following standards:

- The image container is an extreme horizontal, so the photo must be sufficiently wide enough to fill the space with ease
- Consider the focal point of the image and ensure that it does not fall behind the white copy panel
- Take care to crop the image so that all important information remains intact
- Use extreme close-ups sparingly as the image area is already very large in terms of screen real estate
- Ensure that the image is a dynamic representation of the title story – as current and documentary as possible. Do not use a repeat image as it will inadvertently signal a story that is not current.



Because the homepage hero image was so prominent and important, the General Services Administration outlined exactly how it should look in the intranet's style guide.

There was a recurring theme of emphasis on hero spaces and carousels, and many teams tended to over-scrutinize what lives here, especially on the intranet's homepage. Some people mentioned heated debates that would arise among teams and designers competing for the opportunity to feature content there, determine how it should appear, and where it should link.

This is one of the greatest perceived benefits of carousels; they enable more than one piece of content to occupy the same piece of prime real estate on the homepage, which can help diffuse any bickering about whose content is most deserving. However, considering the time teams invest in planning this space, designing the assets, and changing them out, the reality is, employees often scrolled right past hero spaces, only noticing what was featured in the current frame *some* of the time.

Not one employee in our research willingly or freely stopped to pause and scan a hero image or scroll through a carousel. Employees also didn't describe going to intranets just to preview what was in the hero spaces. This means the likelihood of employees seeing other content featured here, outside of the piece that happens to be in view when they land on the page, is low. From our testing and observations, better solutions might be either a static hero space or integrating text-based content without a large image higher up in the intranet's user interface.

For example, the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology favored text-based content in the coveted hero spot instead of using a carousel or hero image on its News and Announcements landing page. The message in this area encouraged employees to post news and announcements for themselves or on behalf of their department. Social media policy documents, intranet publishing standards, and instructions on specifically posting news or an announcement also appeared here. Including this content in the top-priority space in the design and in this format was much more valuable than providing just a static image alone or a large banner image with text overlaid and links to these resources.

NAIT.ca has been undergoing a radical transformation. Explore the preview site of the new NAIT.ca and provide your feedback. [EXPLORE THE SITE](#)

ALL SERVICES EMPLOYEE ESSENTIALS TEACHING ESSENTIALS INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS DEPARTMENTS & SCHOOLS INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES ABOUT NAIT NEWS & EVENTS

Search 

HOME • NEWS & EVENTS [ADD TO QUICK LINKS](#)

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

We encourage you to engage with other employees by posting news and announcements relevant to your department, including program/department community involvement, awards you or your colleagues receive from external organizations, photos of NAIT events you attend and student successes.

Staff should follow and be guided by our NAIT Way values, Respectful Workplace and [Social Media policy \(pdf\)](#) and NAIT's [Intranet Publishing Standards](#).

Unsure where your post belongs? Check out our [Posting an Announcement Flowchart \(pdf\)](#).

[+ ADD NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS](#)

All News NAIT News Department News School News

Filter by: All Topics Sort by: View by date Date Posted Search: Search All News

GTA for June 10th - June 21st
New Gourmet take away options delivered to your class or office!
Jun. 10, 2019 · Topic: Deals, Discounts & Food Specials
Posted by eat at NAIT Administration

Common Market is still open!
During the North Lobby Hallway construction (scheduled from May 29th until June 19th), don't miss out on your favorite comfort foods and our wonderful Daily Features at Common Market.
Jun. 10, 2019 · Topic: Budget & Finance
Posted by eat at NAIT Administration

Events & Deadlines [CALENDAR](#)

JUN 10	NAIT Events Wayne Tellier is Retiring
JUN 10	NAIT Events Lunchtime Makerspace Tour
JUN 11	NAIT Events Eating Well to Optimize Performance
JUN 12	NAIT Events AUPE Local 038 - ALL STAFF BBQ!

14 Current and upcoming closures or outages

LEADER BLOGS

 [Staying resilient through change](#)
May 8, 2019 Clayton's Blog

 [How we pay for capital projects](#)
Mar. 6, 2019 Jeff's Blog

techlife today

 [Social NAIT](#)

[nait.ca](#) | [Provide Feedback](#) | [Contact Support](#) |
[Privacy Policy](#) | [Credit Card Payments](#)

The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology used text-based content in what would otherwise be considered the hero space. This was much easier to maintain and more valuable for employees who landed on this page. Since it remained as an important fixture on the page, teams didn't have to continually argue about what should go there.

 **Avoid using autorotating carousels.****Timeless Design Tips**

If a carousel is your hero, use a static rather than an autorotating one. This way, employees can scan through the content contained in the hero without rushing or wondering when it will go away. Or even worse, they may miss the message entirely and be left unsure of how to scroll back to it again.

When multiple pieces of content live in the hero space, good navigation, clear and visible headlines and body copy, and attention-grabbing links or buttons can help make it effective. The best hero spaces and carousels we observed communicated something timely and interesting that employees needed to know and then linked to a news article. In other cases, such as during benefits open enrollment, the hero space was solely focused on this important task that was top of mind for employees and provided an efficient launching-off point to start the process right from the homepage.

First Solar's intranet homepage included a static carousel with four different content features. This is a good amount, as users are unlikely to interact with more. Because all four are listed below the space, employees also get a good sense of how many items are in the carousel.

The first frame communicated an award the organization had won, which was favorable and something that interested all employees. Rather than autorotating, employees could click on any of the other four items below to view their corresponding banner. Clicking on the banner took employees to the respective page. The design of each banner was also good; each contained legible text and supporting graphics to reinforce the main message.

The screenshot shows a SharePoint intranet homepage with a dark blue header bar. The header includes the 'power' logo, a 'SharePoint' link, a search bar, and various navigation links like 'APPS & TOOLS', 'WORK RESOURCES', 'TEAMS & DEPTS', 'HR', and 'OUR COMPANY'. A notification bubble in the top right corner says 'Set your time zone'.

The main content area features a large hero section with a banner for '2019 QUARTERFINALIST Intersect Power Module Transaction EXCELLENCE IN ACTION'. Below this, there's a section titled '2019 EIA: INTERSECT POWER MODULE TRANSITION' with four news items:

- 2019 EIA: Intersect Power Module Transition (Aug 21, 2019)
- Investing in Our Associates' Education (Aug 09, 2019)
- Scaling Plant Design and Analysis (Aug 09, 2019)
- Improving Plant Performance Predictions (Aug 06, 2019)

To the right of the hero section is a sidebar titled 'ESSENTIAL LINKS' containing links to Concur, Content Central, Kronos, Kronos SEA, SAP, Workday, YOUShine, Strategic Thinking, and Series 6 News and Updates.

Below the hero section is another banner for 'GLOBAL WEBCAST REPLAY & SURVEY' from First Solar, featuring a photo of a solar farm and the text '2019 AUGUST GLOBAL WEBCAST REPLAY & SURVEY'. This section also includes an 'ANNOUNCEMENTS' tab and an 'INDUSTRY NEWS' section with the headline 'FARMLAND + SOLAR = AGRIVOLTAICS'.

On the right side of the page is a 'Yammer' integration box with the text 'Join the Conversation' and a note '(opens a new browser tab)'. It also includes a message: 'Create your Yammer account to see what your coworkers are saying about this, and join in on other conversations from across your company.'

First Solar's hero carousel doesn't auto-rotate but is attention-grabbing, communicative, and information-rich. The typeface and colors match those used in the global navigation and header, so the hero appears to be part of the site content rather than a pushy advertisement.

Another consideration with hero spaces is that they shouldn't appear to be a collection of images in a single frame. Try to focus on one main message per banner if there are multiple in a carousel. This way, the design of the space will be cleaner, and the mixed messages won't compete for employees' attention simultaneously. When hero spaces try to incorporate multiple images or banners, it tends to look cluttered and like an ad.

For example, the City of Calgary used multiple banner messages in the hero space on its HR landing page. This design was too busy, and employees missed the other two pieces of content on the right side of the space. Additionally, if an employee saw only one of the images in that set, they may get the wrong idea about where they were on the intranet. This problem occurs frequently when an image is not closely related to the page or subject matter.

The City of Calgary incorporated three messages into the hero space. This was less than optimal, as employees were unsure which message to pay attention to. A better approach would be to pick one key message to feature in the space.

A hurried employee on mobile, looking for specific content, may never notice a hero space or carousel. Mobile pages are so small that by the time the carousel image changes, the user may have already scrolled down and will not see it anymore. Reading small text and deciphering small images on mobile devices is also difficult. Cramming a large, high-density image into a small space is never a good idea. The clearer the text and images, the more likely employees will be to engage and understand the intended messages. Dots are a particularly poor cue on mobile interfaces because people often do not notice them. On the mobile view of the City of Calgary's HR site, the carousel appeared only to take up half of the screen. This cramped an already compressed view of the top of the page. A better approach would be to either enlarge

the carousel, so it spans full width and is a bit taller and more visible or to hide this hero space on mobile and present an optimized view of the table below, right at the top of the page. Instead of using dots to insinuate the number of banners and as a set of controls, noticeable icons in the lower right corner helped employees advance forward and backward through the carousel, which was favorable. However, employees won't typically tap controls like this on mobile. They'll swipe, so be sure the carousel supports this gesture.

The City of Calgary's HR tool contained a compressed carousel in the hero space on mobile. In this case, a better approach would be to either enlarge the carousel and its text so it's more visible or hide the carousel altogether in the mobile view.

In a more optimal example of a mobile hero space, Atrium Health reversed the traditional order of the hero image and body copy on its mobile application, specifically on a page about May being Mental Health Month. With the order flipped employees could immediately scan the text first, then see the image below instead of the typical presentation of the image on top and important text below.

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface for 'LiveWELL Incentives'. At the top, there's a header bar with the text 'AT&T LTE', '5:16 PM', '74%', and icons for battery and signal strength. Below the header, the 'LiveWELL' logo is displayed with the tagline 'Work | Eat | Learn | Live'. To the right of the logo are three icons: a bell with '36', a user profile, and a menu represented by three horizontal lines. The main content area features a title 'May is Mental Health Month' in green. Below the title is a numbered list of three items:

1. EAP provides counseling to all teammates and their family members
2. Learn about Resilience Resources throughout Atrium Health
3. Have fun at the annual Teammate Field Day on Saturday, May 18

Below the list is a photograph of a woman sitting on a pink mat outdoors, flexing her bicep. The background shows a city skyline. A teal button labeled 'MY REWARDS' is positioned below the image. At the bottom of the screen, there's a navigation bar with a circular icon and three dots.

Atrium Health used the very top of the page on its mobile app to feature an important numbered content list. The hero image appeared below, which was favorable, as employees could view the text immediately without having to scroll past an image.

As you're designing the hero space or a carousel, remember that employees will likely only see the first frame or none at all. Ensure that important content is also accessible through the intranet's information architecture and on other landing pages. Consider using a static carousel or hero image instead of a rotating one. Design the text, buttons, and links to be clear, visible, and large enough for users to decipher and be able to click.

13. Ensure that the layout of longer pages indicates the page is scrollable.

Employees must rely on the design and page layout to understand what possibilities for content exploration exist. The content they need may be hidden below the fold, where they will never see it unless they know it's there and are motivated to scroll. It's up to intranet designers to create designs that guide employees toward valuable information by clearly signaling there's content down the page or even to the side. Employees have grown accustomed to scrolling vertically; however, we cannot expect them to know to scroll without visual indicators inviting them to do so.

For example, at Eyeo, false floors and large, white-space gaps in page layouts made users miss out on content lower down on the page. When horizontal gutters are too large, or the content does not completely fill the container it lives in, the large gap between content elements can signal the end of a page when users scroll down and encounter one of those wide gaps.

When searching for the number of languages Eyeo supports in its products, all users found the correct page, but only two users scrolled down far enough to find the blue box containing a link to a new page with the answer. The large stretch of white space between the ideas section and the core languages blog post created an **illusion of completeness**, indicating that there was no additional content to be found on the page.

One user said, “Maybe I can find out under translation . . . erm nope, there’s nothing . . .” Make sure designers and content publishers preview pages before pushing them live. Additionally, continue to hold training sessions to help new page creators understand how to avoid some of these layout issues.



Illusion of completeness

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

The **illusion of completeness** happens when the visible content on the screen appears complete when more information exists outside of the viewable area. Bruce Tognazzini coined the term in 1998.

The illusion occurs when the visual design fails to guide users toward additional content that is present off-screen. Thinking a page is complete when it isn't is a serious usability failure: it can make users miss valuable information and prevent them from attaining their goals.

The Intranet

Internal Support ▾ Collaboration ▾ Community ▾

Translations & Localization

Pages

Blog

Calendars

Space Shortcuts

Roadmap

Contact & Members

Calendar & Events

Meeting Notes

PAGE TREE

- Translations & Localization Roadmap
- Space tools
- Meeting Notes

PAGE TREE

- Translations & Localization Roadmap
- Space tools

Dashboard

Save for later Watch Talk Share ...

Translations & Localization Home

Created by [Employee Name](#) last modified [Employee Name](#) yesterday at 6:11 PM

About Translations & Localization

Enter a brief intro to your project. Link to [roadmap](#) if applicable.

Coming Soon

How to Work with Translations & Localization

Enter information about how to engage with your team.

If applicable, also add any information regarding specific requests your team can help fulfill. Please reach out on [#jira_confluence](#) if you need assistance with documentation of Jira processes. 😊

Requests

Information on how you handle requests (add more sections if you have multiple types of requests), including requirements, expected turnaround, etc.

Submit a Request

Ideas

Information on how you collect, evaluate, and prioritize ideas from outside the team, including the types of ideas your team can help realize, requirements, expected turnaround for feedback, etc.

Submit an Idea

Important Links

Edit the page to add your links to these images. Delete the ones you don't need, and add more as necessary. Please reach out on [#jira_confluence](#) if you need assistance with formatting.

IRC

Jira

Mail

Translations & Localization Members

User	Role	Language
Employee Name	Translation Manager	Italian, Polish, English, German
Employee Name	Chief Technology Officer	Spanish, French, Valencian, English, German
Employee Name	Localization Manager	Localization Manager

Translations & Localization Upcoming Events

No events were found that match your criteria. This may be because no events exist, or because the filters you used are too specific. If you know that there are events planned, please adjust the filter criteria.

Create event

Related Teams

These are the different teams we are either part of or collaborate with.

Cluster

ABP UI >

Websites & Web Stores >

Translations & Localization News

Core Languages for Translation

Sep 24, 2019 - [Ivanna Blasco](#)

Translations & Localization 2 0

Posts from the Translations & Localization blog will show up here as cover stories. You can customize this page to show more stories, and include stories about other topics by adding tiles for different news sections, spaces, labels, news categories, or even pin a single blog post.

On Eyeo's intranet, large white space gaps created an illusion that there was no more valuable content on the page when there was.

Also, avoid other design decisions that create a visual barrier and discourage employees from scrolling, including:

- Large hero images or videos that take up the entire screen
- A content break marked by a horizontal line that spans the page width
- Buttons that share internal promotions in the middle of a page can indicate to employees that they have reached the end of the page's relevant content

On the City of Calgary's *Customer Service & Communications* page, employees knew to scroll right away to find more content beyond what was presented above the fold. Some favorable visual indicators that helped people know there was more content lower on the page included an appropriately sized hero image, well-formatted subheadings and body text, and adequate white space between text-based content and components, but not so much that it appeared to cut off the page prematurely.

The screenshot shows the City of Calgary's myCity intranet homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Tools & Resources, myHR, Organization, News & Events, Dashboard, and Safety & Security. The date is June 12, 2019, and the time is 24°. The main content area is titled "Customer Service & Communications" and features a large hero image of the Calgary skyline. Below the hero image, there is a subheader: "We are your team of professional communicators. We're here to help." There is a list of services provided, such as Public and employee communications, Research and engagement, Advertising / creative services, Web design and content, Media and social media, and Issues management and media relations. To the right, there is a sidebar titled "Request services" with a list of links: When to request professional communication services, How do I request communication services?, Communications Campaign Costing, Contact your BU communicator: CSC BU Planner contact list (excel), and CSC intake resource guide (PDF). Below this is a section titled "For CS&C staff only" with a link to Submit your service requests, which includes Create an SR online, Use SR type "CSC - Intake," CSC login required, Create a Web & Digital SR for Web-specific requests, Create Productivity & Project SR, and Brand SR. There is also a section titled "Need help submitting an SR?" with links to CSC intake resource guide (PDF) and SR Selection Guide. At the bottom, there is a "Suggestion box" where users can submit feedback to the CSC management team. The footer contains links for IT Help Desk, HR Support, and Security (24hr).

The City of Calgary's intranet design ensured employees didn't encounter the illusion of completeness. Proper spacing and distribution of elements on the page indicated to users that they could scroll to find more content.

PAGE LAYOUT CONSIDERATIONS

14. Visually balance and evenly distribute different page sections, components, and content types.

A balanced page design occurs when there is an equally distributed (but not necessarily symmetrical) amount of visual signal on both sides of an imaginary axis going through the middle of the screen. This axis is often vertical but can also be horizontal. Just like when balancing weight, the design will feel unbalanced if you have one small design element and one large design element on the two sides of the axis.

The imaginary axis you establish on each page will be the reference point for organizing the layout. In a balanced design, no one area draws a viewer's eye so much that they can't see the other areas (even though some elements might carry more visual weight and be focal points).

Balance can be:

- **Symmetrical:** Elements are symmetrically distributed relative to the central imaginary axis
- **Asymmetrical:** Elements are asymmetrically distributed relative to the central axis
- **Radial:** Elements radiate out from a central, common point in a circular direction

Establishing a column grid provides vertical anchor lines to which intranet components should be aligned. For example, the main landing page on DIRTU's training platform, DIRTU-U, used a symmetrical, four-column grid. The design looks crisp because the card-based content is left-aligned to the leftmost grid line, and the right-sidebar content is easy to scan.

The design also uses space to create groupings and proximity, or the spacing around elements is even, which helps to establish the groups. The minimal space between the content tiles signals that they belong together. When creating groupings in an intranet design, use less space between the header and its content and more space between groups.

The screenshot shows the DIRTT intranet homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for Home, Course Library, Achievements, and Live Sessions. On the right side of the header are icons for email and user profile (KP). Below the header is a welcome message "Welcome, Kara Pernice". The main content area features a large teal-colored dashboard with four circular metrics: "To do 21" (blue circle), "Overdue 0" (black circle), "Completed 0" (black circle), and "Login Week Streak 1" (red-bordered calendar icon). Below this is a grid of cards. The first row contains three cards: "Becoming a DIRTTbag" (Learning Path) with a group photo, "Technicians" (Learning Path) with a man working on a cabinet, and "Construction Project Management Course" (Learning Path) with construction tools. The second row contains three cards: "Design Training Information" (with a photo of a modern office space), "Design Training Part 1" (with a photo of a conference room), and "DIRTT Experience and Immersive DIRTT Courses" (with a group photo). A sidebar on the right is titled "Calendar" and shows a monthly view for May 2019. The bottom of the page has a quote: "The training site at DIRTT was balanced and aligned to a clean grid. This made the page design easy to parse and scan."

The training site at DIRTT was balanced and aligned to a clean grid. This made the page design easy to parse and scan.

For intranet designs, create a visual system and grid and stick to it across different areas of the digital workplace experience. Unfortunately, even though the General Services Administration had ample resources and a style guide available for content publishers, some pages still appeared messy and cluttered as they didn't align with the established grid system.

GSA InSite

EMPLOYEE RESOURCES SERVICES AND OFFICES LOCATIONS ABOUT US  

Home > Employee Resources > Information Technology

Welcome Kristal |  Wifi | Logout

Information Technology

GSA IT strives to deliver innovative, collaborative and cost-effective IT solutions and services to our customers

A-Z IT Self Help

- Do IT Yourself (Self Help)
- IT Planning, Policy and Governance
- 508 Accessibility
- Security and Privacy
- IT Assistance and Help Desk
- IT Training

 [Broadcasting the Benefits of TBM](#)

View the interview on Government Matters with David Shive, GSA's CIO, talking about the playbook and lessons learned.

[Watch the Clip >](#)



Phone: [866-450-5250](#)
Monday - Friday
6 am - 9 pm ET

[:: Chat with a technician >](#)
[:: Submit an IT service request >](#)
[:: Find your local IT Manager](#)
[:: Email \[ITServiceDesk@gsa.gov\]\(mailto:ITServiceDesk@gsa.gov\)](#)
[:: Visit an \[IT Insider Live! Store\]\(#\)](#)



Cannot view calendars? Please use Google Chrome.

IT Training Calendar

Events from one or more calendars could not be shown here because you do not have the permission to view them.

Thursday, May 23

Showing events after 5/23. [Look for earlier events](#)
Showing events until 6/30. [Look for more](#)

Events shown in time zone: Eastern Time - New York [Google Calendar](#)



[Ask IT Chatter Feed >>](#)

Keep up with Ask IT . Join the [Ask IT! Chatter group >>](#)



- [Your Wish is Our Command](#)
- [Now Playing: HR Links Micro Video](#)
- [Security Update for Adobe PDF Software](#)



Systems Outage Calendar

gsa.it.outages@gsa.gov
Events from one or more calendars could not be shown here because you do not have the permission to view them.

Today  Thursday, May 23 

Showing events after 5/23. [Look for earlier events](#)
Showing events until 6/30. [Look for more](#)

Events shown in time zone: Eastern Time - New York [Google Calendar](#)

Top Support Request

- Access [Live Video on Your PC](#)

The spacing between components on the General Services Administration's intranet is inconsistent, as is the visual presentation of the images, links, and bullets. A lack of attention to these details makes the overall design feel sloppy and unpolished.

Make the interelement spacing around your intranet the same or a multiple of the same unit (e.g., if the base spacing between the heading and body is 5px, two base-spacing units could be used to separate different sections, and so on). Set up a column grid and keep alignment consistent across the pages and elements. Any alignment inconsistencies should be purposeful. Define clear rules to guide content creators and publishers and remember that left alignment supports scannability. Align graphical elements to a grid; each element in your design should line up with your grid system.

15. Use a card-based page layout to flexibly group and summarize information and link to additional details.

In recent years, we've seen a lot of interest in creating modular UI components that work well across various screens and window sizes. One such component that's gained tremendous popularity on intranets is the "card," a UI design pattern that groups related information in a flexible-sized container visually resembling a playing card. This design element is intended to encourage employees to click or tap to view more details or navigate to a new page.

For example, the City of Calgary and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution both used card-based designs for their intranet's main news landing pages. Each card included at least an image and a title. At RNLI, the cards also included a small copy excerpt and the date the news article was released.

On the City of Calgary's intranet, each card featured a category, and the cards were grouped on the page according to their respective categories. The different background colors on the cards also aligned with categories to create a visual and meaningful system.

Both card designs provided an outline with high **information scent** to entice employees to click through to find further details and information on a separate article page. The three-column grids gracefully scale down to a two-column layout on tablet and a single-column grid on mobile.

 **Information scent**

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

The **information scent** of a source of information (such as a web page) relative to an information need represents the user's imperfect estimate of the value the source will deliver to the user, derived from a representation of the source.

RNLI COMPASS

Our charity · Working at the RNLI · Find people and places · News and events · Find a document · Glossary

Search... 

 / NEWS

News

Search... 

Article date 

From 

To 

APPLY | CLEAR

News type 

- RNLI stories
- Campaigns
- Updates from leaders
- Internal campaigns
- Policy update
- Personal development
- People networks

OTHER VALUE 

APPLY | CLEAR

Location 

- All RNLI
- Poole
- Ireland
- South East
- South West
- Wales and West
- North and East
- Scotland

OTHER VALUE 

APPLY | CLEAR

Topic 

- Campaigns
- Archives and Information Management
- Awards

OTHER VALUE 

APPLY | CLEAR

 26 JUNE 2019
The sometimes strange, often wonderful, world of...
 26 JUNE 2019
Booking training rooms at the RNLI College
 26 JUNE 2019
Russell Tarr appointed as Head of Marketing...
 26 JUNE 2019
Up to 20 per cent off Dell products
 24 JUNE 2019
Financial awareness slides now available
 24 JUNE 2019
RADAR - Your 2019 mid-year review meeting
 21 JUNE 2019
RNLI secures funding from the Isle of Man's...
 21 JUNE 2019
Clinging to survival
 21 JUNE 2019
Powering to the rescue with your spare pennies
 20 JUNE 2019
Welcoming the new Head of Digital
 20 JUNE 2019
Respect the Water: campaign coverage
 19 JUNE 2019
Helping inspire women engineers of the future

1 2 +

About 81 results

PRIVACY & TERMS OF USE POLICY 

The card-based layout the Royal National Lifeboat Institution used for its News page reintroduced visual depth through a subtle drop shadow as a signifier of clickability.

Calgary myCity

search myCity 

Tools & Resources ▾ myHR ▾ Organization ▾ News & Events ▾ Dashboard ▾ Safety & Security ▾

June 12, 2019 ☰ 24°

[myCity home](#) > [News & Events](#) > myCity News

myCity News

Leadership & Vision 



myCity News Flash in a Dash - Episode 6

Leadership & Vision



2018 One City Awards finalists announced

Leadership & Vision



Dear Code: A citizen took out their iPhone and started filming me...

Leadership & Vision

Events & Awareness 



Stuff you should know - June 5, 2019

Events & Awareness



Special Air Quality Statement

May 31, 2019

Events & Awareness



Join the ParticipACTION Community Better Challenge

Events & Awareness

The cards on the City of Calgary's intranet chunked several different (but related) news articles into groups of digestible units. The card design featured a background color and image to create a border and differentiate them from the underlying canvas. These small design elements combined to create a strong sense that the different pieces of information contained within the border were grouped together.

When multiple cards are used together in an intranet page layout, such as on Bracknell Forest Council's intranet, they often do not all have the same type or amount of information. Some cards might include a text summary or an image, whereas others on the same page may include completely different details. Some card-based designs allow for cards of varying heights to accommodate differing amounts or types of content. Typically, the width is fixed from one card to the next.

The screenshot shows the DORIS intranet blog page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'People & Teams', 'Get involved', 'Search' (with a magnifying glass icon), 'Home', 'How do I?', 'Your council', 'News' (which is highlighted in purple), and 'Public website'. On the right side of the header, there is a profile picture for 'Rachel Krause' and a user menu icon.

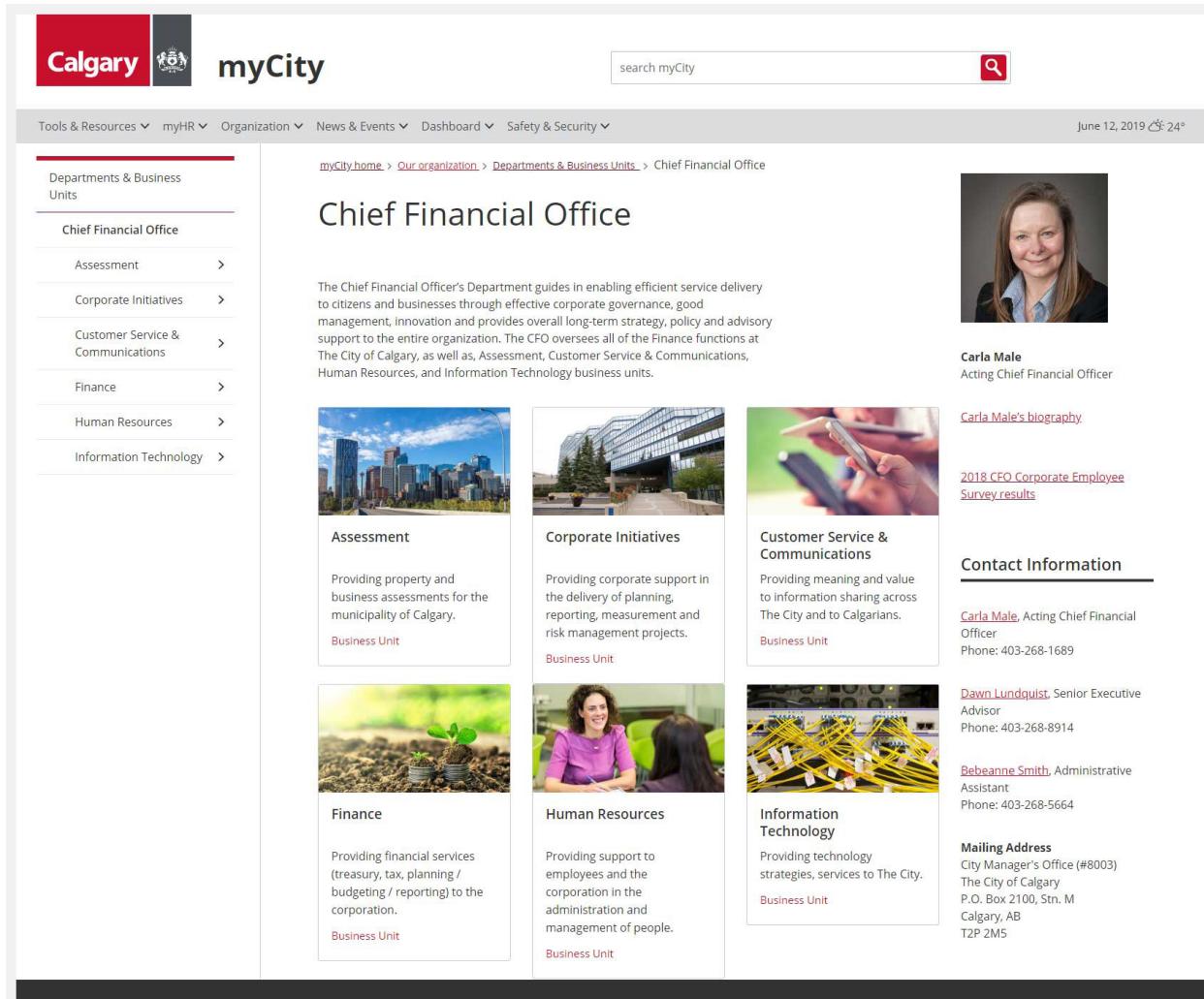
The main content area is titled 'Blogs' and features a section titled 'Our bloggers'. Below this, it says: 'We have a range of bloggers across the council. You can find their posts below, or take a look at all the [latest posts](#).'

The page displays a grid of cards, each representing a different blogger:

- Getting to know Councillors**: A card with a magnifying glass icon over a group of people. Text: 'Meet Councillor Nigel Atkinson' (10 October), 'Find out about Councillor Nigel Atkinson and some things that are important to him.'
- Lexi's blog**: A card with a photo of three dogs on a beach. Text: 'Welcome to Lexi's blog' (19 September 2019 - 10:25), 'Lexi the dog is writing a blog! Take a look to see what she is up to!'
- Colin's blog**: A card with a photo of a hedgehog. Text: 'Help save the hedgehog from extinction' (09 May 2019 - 16:56), 'Hedgehog numbers have been falling rapidly over the last ten years and it is possible that we will...'
- Jane's blog**: A card with a photo of a smiling woman. Text: 'Kick start your year with laughter!' (03 January 2019 - 14:05), 'Fake it 'til you make it' - Laughter Club for 2019'
- Debbie's blog**: A card with a photo of British banknotes. Text: 'Car park closure causes iWorks to crash and staff shortages' (16 August 2019 - 09:32), 'International Bracknell reporter Offish Cobblaz reports: Bookings for annual leave are at their highest rate ever as...
- Maria's blog**: A card with a photo of various icons. Text: 'Easy read' (23 April 2019 - 10:06), 'Did you know there are easy read pages on our public website?'
- Sue's blog**: A card with a photo of a cartoon character. Text: 'Education is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know...' (08 July 2019 - 11:05), 'New basic IT courses.'
- Steven's blog**: A card with a photo of a blue background with white text. Text: 'The Cure Parkinson's Trust'
- Lizzi's blog**: A card with a photo of a pie chart titled 'Percentage holding of US Treasuries'. The chart shows data for China, Japan, UK, and Other. Text: 'All about the money, money, money....' (03 August 2018 - 13:44), 'What goes up - must come down - are we in for another market crash!'

Bracknell Forest Council's intranet blog page design allowed for cards of varying heights and compositions, though the width of the cards and spacing between each one remained consistent. This facilitated a clean, balanced layout.

It's important to be careful with card-based designs and presenting cards of varying heights. If the layout doesn't naturally accommodate cards at different heights, instead favoring symmetry and exact alignment to a grid, it can cause the layout to look misaligned when cards contain additional information causing them to grow taller than others in the same row. We observed this on both the City of Calgary's and the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology's intranets. A simple fix for this issue is to ensure that any additional lines of text do not offset the cards' height; edit the text so that each card remains consistent. This task shouldn't stop you from utilizing the flexibility of a card-based design but, instead, is something to watch out for to maintain a clean design.



The middle card in the second row on the City of Calgary's Chief Financial Office page contained more subtext than the others in the same row. This caused the card's height to grow, making it taller than others in the same row and throwing the grid off-balance.

NAIT.ca has been undergoing a radical transformation. Explore the preview site of the new NAIT.ca and provide your feedback.

[EXPLORE THE SITE](#)

ALL SERVICES EMPLOYEE ESSENTIALS TEACHING ESSENTIALS INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS DEPARTMENTS & SCHOOLS INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES ABOUT NAIT NEWS & EVENTS

Search 

HOME • LOCATIONS  ADD TO QUICK LINKS

LOCATIONS



Main Campus

Centrally-located, Main Campus houses most full-time programs, including those in business, IT, health sciences, hospitality and the engineering technologies. Main Campus is also the hub for student activities and athletics.



Souch Campus

Located just south of Whyte Avenue, Souch Campus focuses on apprenticeship training.



Patricia Campus

Located in the northwest part of the city, Patricia Campus houses a number of mechanical, industrial and trades training programs.



Spruce Grove Campus

The new Spruce Grove Campus will allow NAIT to significantly expand the Crane & Hoisting Equipment Operator apprentice program, helping to meet Alberta's growing need for crane operators in a variety of industries, including the oil and gas sector and construction.

OTHER LEARNING SITES

The card in the lower right corner of the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology's Locations page also contained more copy than the one to its left. This made the card taller, thus throwing the grid off-balance. The one directly above also had less body copy than the one to its left. In this case, a better approach would be to set a two or three-line standard for text that appears below each campus location to maintain a clean grid.

16. Favor list-based layouts to emphasize content ranking when employees need to scan quickly.

List-based intranet pages or components are better suited for situations when employees are likely to search for or quickly scan information to find a particular piece. List-based layouts also tend to emphasize the rank order of content. For example, the list's most important content appears highest, with the less important content listed after that. Or, in the case of search engine results pages, the most relevant links appear first in the list.

A standard vertical list view (in which each item occupies a new row in the layout and may still contain mixed media such as an image, title, summary, and so forth) is more scannable than cards because the positioning of the individual elements is fixed in size and more predictable for the eye. List-based layouts also take up less space than card-based layouts. Because cards are larger than a line of text, any given screen size can't show as many cards in a single view as would be possible in a list view. The more things that are viewable without scrolling, the less demand is placed on employees' short-term memory.

For example, the City of Calgary used a list-based layout for its weekly employee newsletter, *Stuff You Should Know*. The list-based layout was optimal because employees intended to skim and scan this content briefly. The page had a clean design; images were placed consistently, padding and spacing were uniform, and content was presented in a visually appealing length and format.

The screenshot shows the City of Calgary's myCity intranet homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Tools & Resources, myHR, Organization, News & Events, Dashboard, and Safety & Security. A search bar is located in the top right corner. The main content area features a banner with the text "STUFF YOU SHOULD KNOW" overlaid on a background image of the Calgary skyline. Below the banner, a section titled "New this week" is displayed, featuring four items with images and descriptions:

- Do you know how to stay safe at work during a flood?** (Image: Bow River flooding)
- Celebrate the Solstice in the Wetlands on June 22** (Image: People at a festival)
- SharePoint unavailable on Sunday** (Image: Two people working at a computer)
- Council Meetings** (Image: Council chamber)

The City of Calgary used a clean, list-based layout for its weekly newsletter.

As with card-based designs, there are some nuances and inconsistencies to watch out for that can make a list-based design approach look unpolished and hard to scan. On the City of Calgary's corporate dashboards page, the height of the text was often taller than the accompanying images in the list. When this happened, it threw off the spacing between the list items, and rather than maintaining a clean, balanced-looking list, the text wrapped below the image, causing the layout to look misaligned. A better approach here would be to modify the copy to keep it to a maximum of five lines, including the headline, to preserve the main messaging while resolving the awkward text wrapping.

Calgary myCity

Tools & Resources ▾ myHR ▾ Organization ▾ News & Events ▾ Dashboard ▾ Safety & Security ▾

June 12, 2019 24°

myCity.home > Our organization > Departments & Business Units > Deputy City Manager's Office > Corporate Analytics & Innovation(CAI) > Corporate Dashboards

Corporate Dashboards

In collaboration with different groups from across The Corporation, CAI has developed a process that allows the integration of data sources and viewers in the form of dashboards. These dashboards are intended to help any group within the organization to monitor and analyse the data available. The advantage of using these dashboards is that the data is updated through an automated process, enabling content to be refreshed daily or as close to real-time as possible.

About Corporate Dashboards

The purpose of developing Corporate Dashboards is to better share, consolidate and analyze information from across The Corporation in order to:

- Become better aware of the reasons and how often, citizens contact us
- Identify opportunities for sharing and allocating resources
- Enable staff to explore data on their business unit, as well as The Corporation
- Ultimately, contribute to achieving Council's Priority of being a well-run city

We encourage you to explore the functionality of these dashboards. When you are reviewing this tool, please keep in mind it is **not** intended to work on mobile devices including iPads, iPhones and other devices.

311 Dashboard:
 The [311 Dashboard](#) uses data from Service Requests (SR) received through The City's 311 CSR system, call centre and mobile app. This data provides an excellent pulse of what City services and topics are the current priorities for citizens.

Capital Dashboard:
 The [Capital Dashboard](#) uses data from the Financials & Supply Chain Management (FSCM) component of PeopleSoft to connect financial data, PO information, and project status updates. This dashboard provides quick and easy access to information on capital projects and budgets to support effective decision making.

Safety Dashboard:
 The [Safety Dashboard](#) provides statistical near-real-time insight into safety performance of the City of Calgary organization, its Departments and Business Units. This performance includes information on employee related incidents, injuries, claims information, near misses, identified hazardous conditions, and more.

Fair Entry Dashboard:
 The [Fair Entry Dashboard](#) uses data from the Subsidy Assistance Management System (SAMS), a centralized database that stores personal information of Calgarians applying to The City of Calgary's subsidy programs and services. This dashboard provides a snapshot of applications processed and Calgarians applying over a one year period to the current month.

Paragraphs of copy exceeding five lines on the City of Calgary's Corporate Dashboards page caused the list-based design to look less scannable as the text grew taller and the corresponding icons wrapped below. Aligning with the appearance of the first item in this list would be a better approach.

Inconsistent image widths combined with text can also impact the alignment and scannability of a list-based design. For example, Bracknell Forest Council used a list design for its *News* landing page, but when the images on the left had inconsistent widths, the corresponding headline and copy to the right bumped over. While this helped to maintain consistent padding between the image and the text in the individual list item, it misaligned the text with the rest of the list items.

A simple solution for this issue would be to ensure all images in the list have the same width and aspect ratio. For example, don't place a square image here if the design requires a rectangular

shape. It's crucial to train content managers and remind them why consistent image size is important, as well as to encourage publishers to preview specific areas of the intranet before pushing content live.

Using vertical list designs to support easy scanning and comparison from one item to the next will help employees find what they're looking for more easily, as information is placed in predictable locations on each item in the list.

Bracknell Forest Council used a list-based design for its News landing page. A slight inconsistency in the image width on the second list item caused misalignment. Using a rectangular image instead would quickly remedy the issue.

The screenshot shows the DORIS intranet interface with the 'News' tab selected. The 'Latest news' section contains five items:

- November Forest Views now available** (image: tall yellow trees)
- Christmas in Bracknell town centre** (image: small thumbnail of a Christmas card)
- #OurDay is your day** (image: purple banner with '#OURDAY' logo)
- Looked after children celebrated in awards ceremony** (image: group photo with a large gold frame)
- Celebrate Occupational Therapy Week 2019** (image: two women holding certificates)

The 'Forest Views' section contains one item:

- Forest Views November 2019** (image: tall yellow trees)

The 'Council news' section contains one item:

- Read Forest Views November 2019** (image: small thumbnail of the Forest Views document)

The 'Tweets' section shows a single tweet from @BracknellForest:

Eligible two-year olds are entitled to free childcare of up to 570 hours per year. To apply please visit bracknell-forest.gov.uk/twoyearoldfund.... (Bracknell Forest residents only)

The 'Latest blogs' section is currently empty.

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN USING IMAGERY

17. Use imagery strategically to reinforce meaning and to provide additional context for written messages.

Imagery can add valuable information to an intranet; however, imagery shouldn't be used or placed haphazardly. The style of imagery, icons, and photography used tremendously impact the intranet's overall aesthetic and design. Images and graphics should help employees visually understand their location within the intranet or support the concept they're reading about with no extra clutter to distract from the information.

Do's and Don'ts

It's worth remembering that a picture is worth a thousand words. Users scan information online and images play a critical role in prioritizing information to make that easier. When shooting or selecting photos for GSA.gov, consider that the choice of image represents and reinforces the GSA brand.

It is important to consider the following:

Do's

- Do look for images that best portray the diverse and dynamic workforce of GSA
- Do choose imagery that showcases the momentum of GSA's mission and key initiatives
- Do ensure that the image clearly represents the content and is as specific as possible
- Do crop the image to best emphasize the key focal point of the communication
- Do take care with lighting – ensure that all subjects are illuminated and in focus
- Do take time to request a group's attention when at an event and the goal is to capture a composed and professional group shot



Dynamic group shot



Cybersecurity - relevant image



Subject in clear focus



Crop enhances image

Don'ts

- Do not use cartoons or clip art
- Do not resize infographics to fit a space that makes the content illegible
- Do not use the same image repeatedly as it will inadvertently signal that the content is not current
- Do not use logos in a space that would be better served with an illustrative image. If a logo is the most appropriate image, take care to crop and place the logo as effectively as possible
- Do not use a generic image when a specific image is called for. This is critical in feature story areas like the homepage.
- Do not place an image if it is out of focus, low resolution or if the composition is unsatisfactory
- Do not use any photography that does not represent the inclusive and diverse workforce of GSA

The General Services Administration included detailed guidance on selection and image placement in its intranet style guide. It was helpful that they included detail about the appropriate types of images to include and which to avoid.

Don't use graphics just to decorate a page. Consider whether an image is really needed or if you're simply trying to fill space. Ask yourself if another format, such as audio or video, would better deliver the message, or even text-based content alone. When written content is sufficient, try adding some style or color to the text or combining it with a complementary typeface. This can work well to drive visual interest in a similar and often more consistent manner than using a random image. This strategic approach will ensure the intranet remains visually tidy and appealing. Make sure any graphics you include on the intranet help reiterate main points or speed up comprehension.

For example, when interviewing an intranet content manager at the Mayo Clinic and discussing doctor's perceptions of the audience for their department on the intranet, she said:

"The doctors often want us to put pretty pictures and wow factors on the intranet without understanding that people just want to understand the information. We don't have to spend much time on Flash and stock images. It's important to prioritize function, not beautiful photos."



Reduce graphics' file size while balancing quality to ensure pages load quickly.

Timeless Design Tips

Where you do use images in your intranet's design, reduce the image file sizes as much as possible without compromising presentation quality. Do this before uploading the media to the intranet so pages load quickly.

It's also helpful to indicate the preferred image size standards, such as "under 150KB," and file type specifications, such as .png or .jpg, near where content publisher upload their imagery.

Images on the homepage of The Co-operators' intranet were randomly placed and didn't strongly support the messages they accompanied; it appeared as though they were only there to fill space. Additionally, several of the images appeared to be pixelated and were not high resolution. For example, the Source logo and the picture of the featured person were not as crisp and clear as they could have been. In this case, a better approach would be to use more meaningful images only when they're truly necessary and give them a more logical placement. Using a different image format or exploring whether the image resolution could be improved without negatively impacting page load times would also help.

SOURCE

Search Content Go Search People Go My Site Français AAA

News HR Work About Us Social Locations

Good morning, Employee Name Tuesday, October 22 9:18 am

Looking for Sovereign's Source? Go Name of employee Contact Centre Supervisor, HB

Article Title:
Redacted News Article

Let's bust some myths:
United Way edition

Have you lost your *way* or are you *united* in your knowledge about the United Way? Find out now.

October 21 2019 | 3 21 14

Expand your knowledge about our members and co-operatives

The learning doesn't stop with Co-op week! Here's how you can continue your co-operative education all year long.

October 21 2019 | 0 12 14

Employee Poll
Redacted question

Redacted option
 Redacted option
 Redacted option
 Redacted option

Vote View Results

Missed an episode of our audio series? Listen here.

See a new Tech Tip Tuesday OneNote Video

UltiPro
Time & Attendance questions? Get answers now! >

HR QUICK LINKS

- Achieve
- Benefits
- BETTER Recognition Hub
- Career opportunities
- Code of Ethics & Whistleblowing
- Co-opLearn
- HR Shared Services
- LifeWorks

WORK QUICK LINKS

- 2019-2022 Strategy
- AdvisorSource
- Book travel (Concur)
- Co-op Analytics
- Digital channel resources
- ECM Reference Guide
- Forms
- Get help online (ServiceFirst)

OUR PERFORMANCE

J.D. Power Client Satisfaction Auto Insurance

The Co-operators' intranet's homepage contained randomly placed images that did not work well to reinforce key messages or provide context.

We asked General Services Administration employees to use the intranet to find out how much tuition reimbursement they were eligible for. To find this information, people first navigated to the *Training and Development* section, where a filler image appeared at the very top of the section's landing page. Though the image contained text that said, *Training & Development* and other similar phrases written in chalk, it was vertically stretched to fill the image container, which made it look distorted. This image wasn't adding value to the page and obstructed the text below. A better approach for this page would be to remove the image and write a meaningful second-level headline summarizing what employees can find on the page.

The hero image on GSA's Training and Development page is vertically stretched and doesn't add much meaning or value to this page.

From the *Training and Development* page, employees then navigated to the page titled *External Partnerships*. As users scanned the page, they grew interested in learning which universities' tuition was covered in addition to the amount GSA would reimburse. Unfortunately, many employees squinted to scan this text and had difficulty reading the university names from the tiny logos scattered at the bottom of the page. This is also not an effective or strategic use of imagery.

A better approach would be to either remove the logos and use a bulleted list to outline the universities with which GSA partnered or to use a cleaner grid and set of containers to organize the logos better. Using a text label underneath each one would also more clearly communicate to which university the logo belonged.

The screenshot shows the GSA InSite intranet homepage. The top navigation bar includes links for Employee Resources, Services and Offices, Locations, About Us, a search icon, and a user profile icon. Below the navigation is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Employee Resources > Training and Development > Continuous Learning > External Partnerships. To the right of the breadcrumb trail are links for Welcome Amanda, WiFi, and Logout. On the left, a sidebar titled 'Training and Development' contains a 'Continuous Learning' section with links to External Partnerships, Continuous Learning Journey (CLJ), Virtual Lunch & Learn Series, Yoga & Mindfulness CoP, Professional Development Library, Individual Development Plan, GSA Connect Program, and Enterprisewide Training. The main content area is titled 'External Partnerships' and discusses the Federal Government-wide Academic Alliances (GWAA). It states that OPM is partnering with colleges and universities to provide current Federal employees with the opportunity to pursue post-secondary education. The purpose of the program is to build future Federal workforce, address current Governmentwide and agency specific skills gaps, support career development for Federal employees, provide affordable opportunities for Federal employees to obtain college degrees, certificates and/or college credits, provide subject matter expertise by developing and/or teaching courses that infuse the public sector perspective into the schools' curriculums, and provide current college students with a greater understanding of and access to the Federal Government. The alliances are formalized with Governmentwide Memorandum of Agreements (these agreements bear no financial obligation from the Government) which include but are not limited to: discounted tuition rates on most college degree and certificate programs, enhanced collaboration by allowing Federal subject matter experts to work with college curriculum developers to infuse a public sector perspective into their curriculum/programs, and opportunities to focus on targeted recruitment and developing and/or establishing a talent pipeline. A link to 'External Partnerships Program Offerings' is provided for more information. At the bottom of the page, there is a grid of logos for various educational institutions: CMU, Champlain College Online, College for America, Drexel University Online, Excelsior College, Penn State World Campus, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, Pace University Online, Park University, Utica College, and The Catholic University of America.

The logos at the bottom of GSA's External Partnerships page did not help employees quickly or easily understand which universities' tuition would be reimbursed. They were too small and placed sporadically.

Recognize that content managers may not know how to handle or resize images, which can lead to distortion, improperly sized, or out-of-place images. Provide training to help them understand the nuances of image sizes, resolutions, aspect ratios, file formats, and proper placement techniques in pages or components. For example, during a **contextual inquiry** at Bracknell Forest Council, we asked a content manager if parts of her job caused her concern. She said:

“I struggle with sorting out the photos. If I need to do a news item, you have to have a certain size picture for that. I don’t do it often enough to remember what the size is, so I have to go back and work out what the size is. Our stuff is quite boring, so if it’s a picture of an icon I have to send it off to someone else to put a background on it because white is not very good for the homepage. A lot of it was learning, but now I know most of the answers, so now I don’t have as many issues with it.”



Contextual inquiry

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

Contextual inquiry is a type of ethnographic field study that involves in-depth observation and interviews conducted with a small sample of users to gain a robust understanding of work practices and behaviors. Its name describes exactly what makes it valuable — inquiry in context.

The research takes place in the users’ natural environment as they conduct their activities as usual. The researcher watches users as they perform tasks and ask for information to understand how and why the users do what they do, in the context in which they normally work, in their home, office, or somewhere else entirely.

Contextual inquiry is useful for many domains, but it is particularly well-suited to gain an understanding of users’ interactions with complex systems and in-depth processes, as well as to the point of view of expert users.

The City of Calgary did a nice job of using imagery strategically on its access ID cards page. Upon landing on the page, employees could scan the well-formatted text, and an example image of what the actual ID cards looked like appeared to the right. This image choice is favorable as it set employees’ expectations by reminding them what their own ID card looked like. The image placement is also good; it is balanced in the space, doesn’t obstruct the text, and works to effectively reiterate something valuable related to the page’s topic.

Calgary myCity

Tools & Resources ▾ myHR ▾ Organization ▾ News & Events ▾ Dashboard ▾ Safety & Security ▾

June 12, 2019 24°

Workplace security

Access ID cards - new, temporary and replacement

Access ID cards - new, temporary and replacement

Related links

[Corporate Security](#)

Obtain a City of Calgary Identification Card

Follow these steps:

- The City of Calgary Identification Cards can be obtained by submitting a request through your Supervisor or Manager by email to corporate.security@calgary.ca.
- The following information is required:
 - Employee Name
 - Employee Identification Number
 - Management Exempt or Union Employee
 - Position
 - Business Unit
 - Buildings
 - Type of Access (floor(s) and if 24 hours a day, 7 days a week access is required)
 - Pin Code (Whitehorn Multi Service Centre only)
- You will receive a notification email when the card is ready.
- Bring a copy of the confirmation email to the Visitor Management Centre on the main level of the Municipal Building, where your picture will be taken and your card will be printed

For Water Centre employees:

- Access cards can be obtained by emailing the [wchotline](#).

For Calgary Transit employees:

- Contact the Security Operations Supervisor at 403-537-7870 or via email at Ratna.Patel@calgary.ca for an appointment.

Get a temporary City access/ID card?

If you forgot your City access/ID card, you can get a temporary card through [Corporate Security](#). The process is different depending on your work site:

If your work site is in the downtown core:

A temporary pass can be issued at the Visitor Management Centre (VMC) on the main floor of the Municipal Building. Some business units have temporary or visitor passes, as well. Please see your office administrator for more information.

The City of Calgary's Access ID cards page represents a good example of using imagery to reinforce a page's topic. Seeing an example of the ID cards reminds employees of what they look like. The placement slightly offset from the text signals it's related without taking up excessive page real estate.

We often see lots of random, distorted, or inconsistent imagery and stock photos used on intranets. To elevate your intranet's design, set a specific image style that fits your overall brand and aesthetic. Allow images to blend in with the rest of the design by matching their color scheme with the rest of the intranet or the background color of the surrounding space. Set standards for when to use an image versus when text alone will suffice.



Include alt-text for images.

Process and Strategic Considerations

ALT text, a contraction of “alternative text,” is a short, written description of an image. This text is intended to provide context when the image can’t be viewed, for example, to aid employees who rely on screen readers and assistive technologies to use the intranet.

An easy way to think about how to write good ALT text is to write it as if you were trying to briefly describe the image to someone over the phone. A few words are often enough, though a complete sentence is sometimes necessary. Screen readers may cut off ALT text at around 125 characters, so it’s best to stick within that limit.

It’s good to help people understand context, so explain what type of image it is (e.g., a headshot, illustration, chart, or screen grab,), but don’t begin an ALT text description with, “Image of...” or “Picture of...”

ALT text isn’t needed if it repeats what’s already on the page, such as when there’s an adjacent caption or for decorative icons.

Ensure content managers also know when and how to write effective alt-text. Communicate that this is a mandatory part of their publishing duties.

18. Include authentic images of employees, buildings, and products on the intranet.

As much as possible, avoid using cheesy stock photography on the intranet. Stock photography usually feels generic and degrades the overall perception of the intranet and its visual design. Instead, use images of actual employees, buildings, products, and events, not photos of overly happy people wearing headsets or groups of people in business suits holding their thumbs up.

Photography and Video

The style of First Solar photography and videography is as much a part of the identity as the typeface or color palette.

Things to avoid when looking for images:

- Clouds
- Sunsets
- Construction shots without the proper safety equipment
- Overly excited or unhappy employees
- Local buildings or customs familiar only in your region when it's for a global audience



Things that would be agreeable in your photography:

- A big blue sky with a highly set sun
- Globally iconic buildings when it's for a wide audience and local buildings when it's regional
- Authentic and realistic human interactions
- Bright colors
- Diverse ethnicities, genders, and occupations that resonate with global audiences



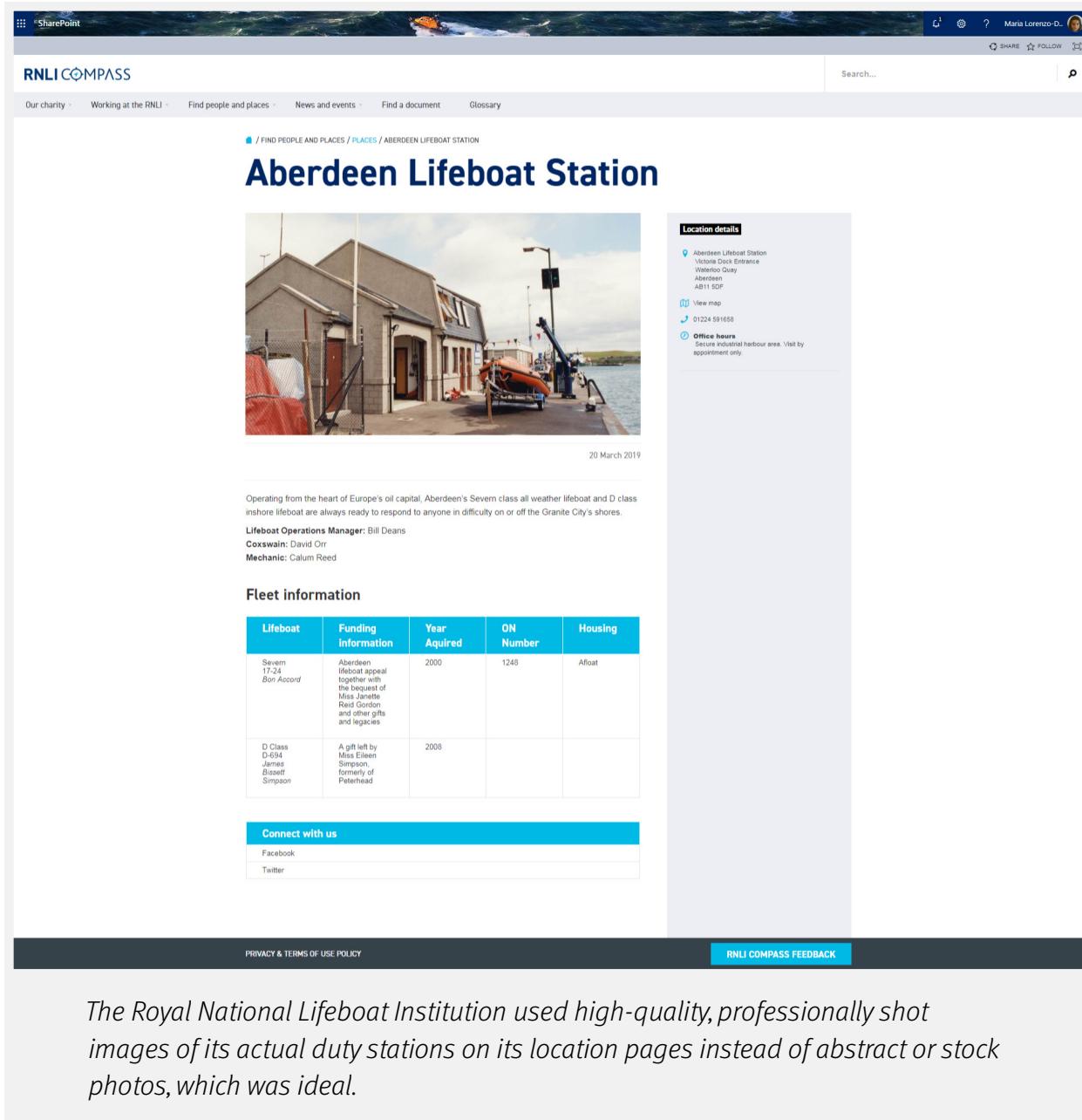
Additional notes for video:

- No fancy movements; stick to simple pans and zooms

If you have additional photography or video needs, contact branding@firstsolar.com.

First Solar prioritized using images of actual employees, buildings, and its products on the intranet and outlined in detail the right types of images to use and how to photograph them in the company's brand guidelines.

Invest in a quality camera to shoot authentic imagery of people, places, projects, and other happenings around the organization. Many mobile phones today also have high-quality cameras capable of taking high-resolution photos that can be used on the intranet. Some organizations we studied, for example, DIRTT, even set up shared photo libraries where employees could freely upload photos of each other and of events and projects happening at the organization. This way, the intranet teams had a catalog of authentic imagery and videos to pull from and use on the intranet when needed.



The Royal National Lifeboat Institution used high-quality, professionally shot images of its actual duty stations on its location pages instead of abstract or stock photos, which was ideal.

At the time of our study, Eyeo content managers and space administrators for certain areas of the intranet could pick their own images for spaces. However, the team shared that, eventually, designers would provide branded versions of all images and logos and educate content managers on the importance of using authentic and consistent imagery. They said:

“Logo tiles are custom, created by the branding team, and available on the intranet for posts. People can request tiles, and we have brand guidelines for the types of images that can be used. Image guidelines aren’t well-known yet, though. Longer-term, we need to educate people more on images when posting. People don’t know these things yet, but we hope to keep it mostly branded.”

myDIRTT | SOLUTIONS | PRODUCTIVITY | RESOURCES

Search Keyword... Search Videos Display all Videos Topics Categories

DIRTT's story

- The Image is the order
- We Are DIRTT
- Geoff Gosling on designing with DIRTT
- The DIRTT Approach
- This Is DIRTT
- DIRTT Approach with English Subtitles

Healthcare

- Kansas City Orthopaedic Institute
- Hospital in Arctic builds Doctor residences in DIRTT
- Collaborate in iCEReality from Anywhere
- Remote Town Turns Convention Center into Nursing School
- Hudson River HealthCare
- Evergreen Health

Education

- DIRTT for Higher Education
- CAST Tech School
- Greater Atlanta Christian School
- Greater Atlanta Christian School - Performing Arts Center
- Remote Town Turns Convention Center into Nursing School
- U of Iowa Learning Commons

Commercial

- Instructure
- JDA Software
- Withum Case Study
- Weber Shandwick Toronto
- Mariner Holdings
- Within Virtual Reality Tour (language alert)

Other Languages

- The DIRTT Approach + Mandarin
- Nous sommes DIRTT
- L'approche DIRTT
- El enfoque DIRTT
- Esto es DIRTT
- Korean Language Version of DIRTT Approach

Instead of using stock photography, DIRTT set up a photo and video gallery where content managers could find media assets. This approach was good, especially for distributed content management teams who could use imagery unique to the organization.

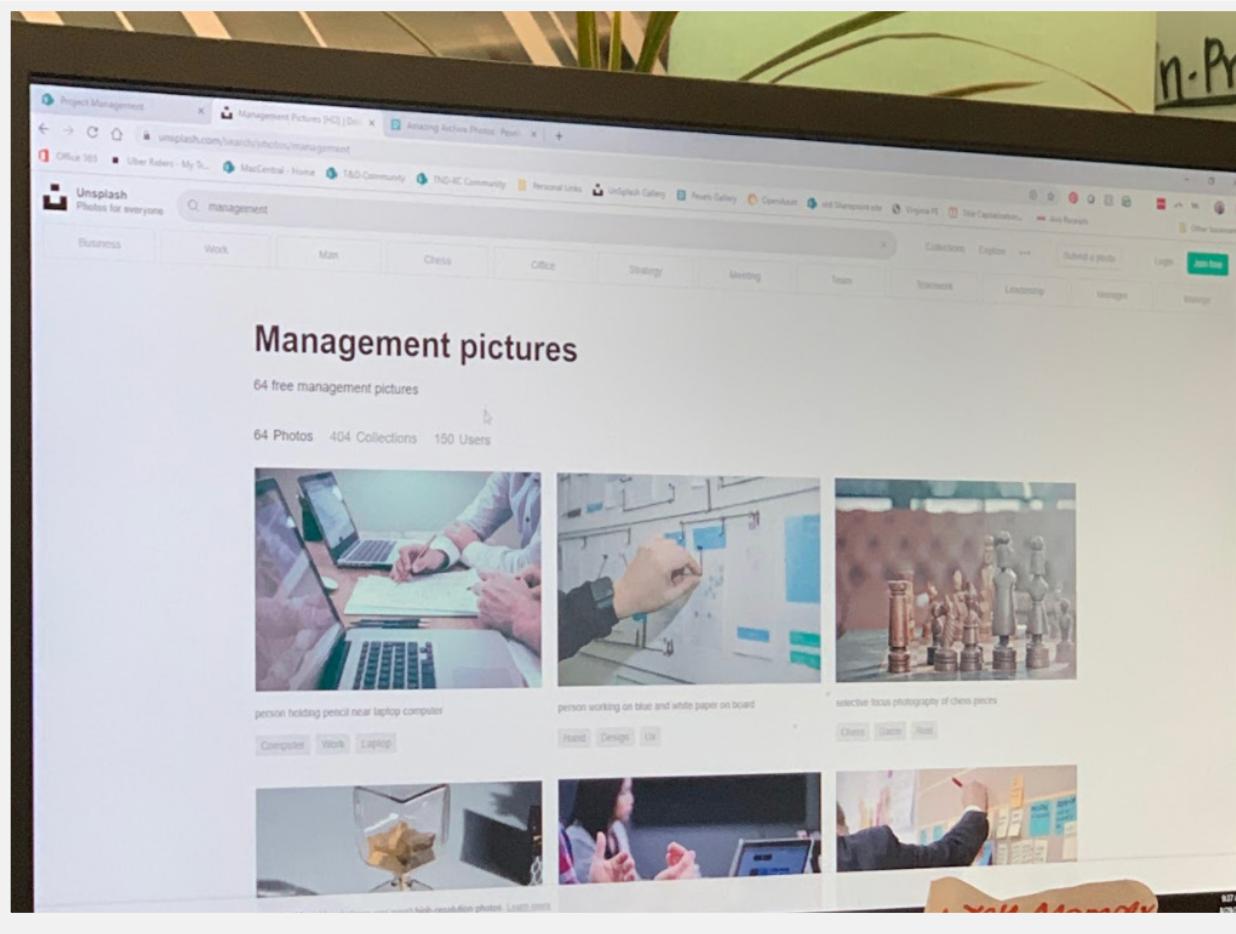
Dell and Burns & McDonnell used stock photography heavily throughout their intranets. In both cases, the images felt “fake” to employees. It would be better to use photos of real employees, even if the photos aren’t perfectly polished and professional.

The screenshot shows the Dell Global Ethics & Compliance homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for Newsfeed, OneDrive, Sites, and a user profile. A search bar and social sharing icons are also present. The main header features a globe graphic and the text "Global Ethics & Compliance". To the right, a banner claims "2019 WORLD'S MOST ETHICAL COMPANIES" and provides a link to WWW.ETHISPHERE.COM. Below the header, a large banner image shows a man in a suit looking down at something, with the word "Privacy" overlaid. To the right of this is a "Speak Up" section containing text about ethics helplines, asking questions, and reporting violations. Below these are several smaller images with captions: "How We Win" (Code of Conduct), "Policies, Guidance, Tools and Resources" (two blue binders labeled "POLICIES" and "PROCEDURE"), "Training" (a computer setup with multiple monitors), "How to Engage Us" (a group of diverse people at a table), and "Videos" (a close-up of a video camera lens). The background of the page has faint, large, semi-transparent gears.

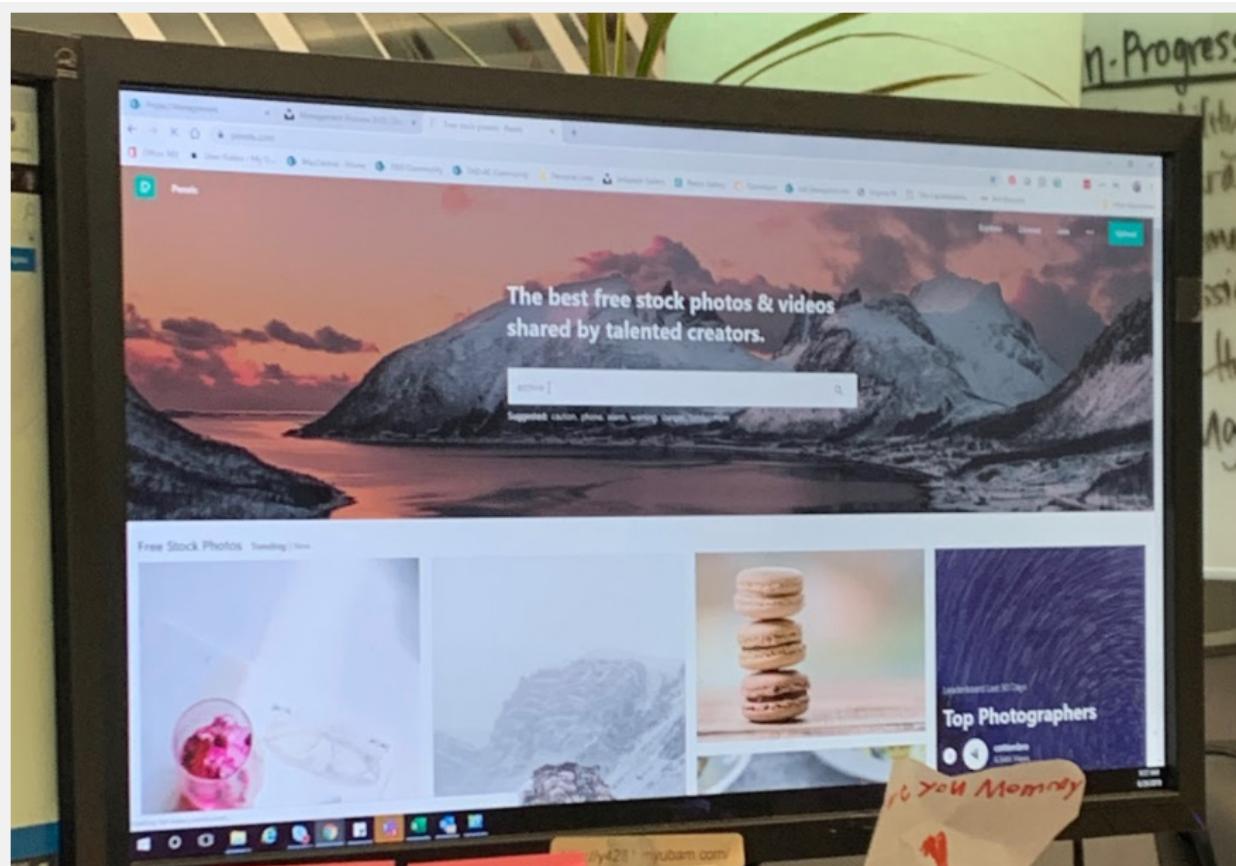
On Dell's Global Ethics and Compliance homepage, stock photos are randomly placed, making the page look overly staged and disorganized. Also, each image is quite different from one another in style.

A few images on this Burns & McDonnell intranet page are authentic, but most are stock photos. Instead of stock photography, authentic images would better support Burns & McDonnell's culture.

Some teams used mainstream stock photography websites such as iStock Photo to find imagery for the intranet, while others used websites that offer more natural-looking, royalty-free images, such as Unsplash and Pexels. If taking photos of actual people, places, or events isn't possible, use these images sparingly.



While observing a content manager updating pages, they went to Unsplash, a royalty-free photo website, to look for management photos for the page. Many of the photos on this site look much more realistic than traditional stock photography.



Another royalty-free photo website the content manager used to look for intranet assets was Pexels. The photos on this site were free to download and looked much more realistic than traditional stock photography.

The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology used authentic imagery of real employees, campus locations, events, and other photos across its intranet. Authors and content publishers made it part of their standard editorial processes to curate or shoot new photos when they were needed. Some used a professional-grade camera, while others used a mobile phone. But its inherent editing and filtering capabilities, combined with enhancements in Photoshop, made genuine intranet images quick and easy to make. Naturalistic stock photography that still fit the intranet's overall visual style was only used in rare cases when no other images were available, or a new photo couldn't be taken.

NAIT.ca has been undergoing a radical transformation. Explore the preview site of the new NAIT.ca and provide your feedback.

[EXPLORE THE SITE](#)

ALL SERVICES EMPLOYEE ESSENTIALS TEACHING ESSENTIALS INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS DEPARTMENTS & SCHOOLS INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES ABOUT NAIT NEWS & EVENTS

Search 

HOME • NEWS & EVENTS • READY? SET? GET UP AND WALK!

[ADD TO QUICK LINKS](#)

READY? SET? GET UP AND WALK!



JUNE 7, 2019 DEPARTMENT: Campus Recreation Services

Fight the sitting epidemic. Take advantage of campus walking routes to stay active, connect with peers and boost productivity.

Sitting too much is more dangerous than you think. In fact, 1 study found that sitting for just 1 hour straight will [reduce your life expectancy by 21.8 minutes](#).

But in today's fast-paced workplace, the sitting epidemic seems to be getting worse. Between meetings, emails and everything we need to do on our computers, how can employees break out of the sedentary habit?

According to campus recreation coordinator Curtis Dell, their key is to incorporate small, manageable spurts of physical activity into our daily schedules. Last year, Curtis' team created a set of [indoor](#) and [outdoor walking routes](#) on Main Campus to help staff stay active.

"The biggest thing when you're walking is to be intentional," Curtis says. "Try to get 30 minutes per day. You want to do that in increments of at least 10 minutes to achieve the health benefits."

Sounds easy, right? The good news is, it is! Follow these 3 simple steps to sneak in a few 10- to 15-minute walks into your workday. Your body will thank you!

Reset your mind - you'll be more productive



It's tempting to catch up on hockey highlights or check out that funny YouTube video your co-worker sent you on your break. Pulling yourself away from your office or workstation will boost your productivity when you return. It just might

RELATED NEWS [MORE NEWS](#)

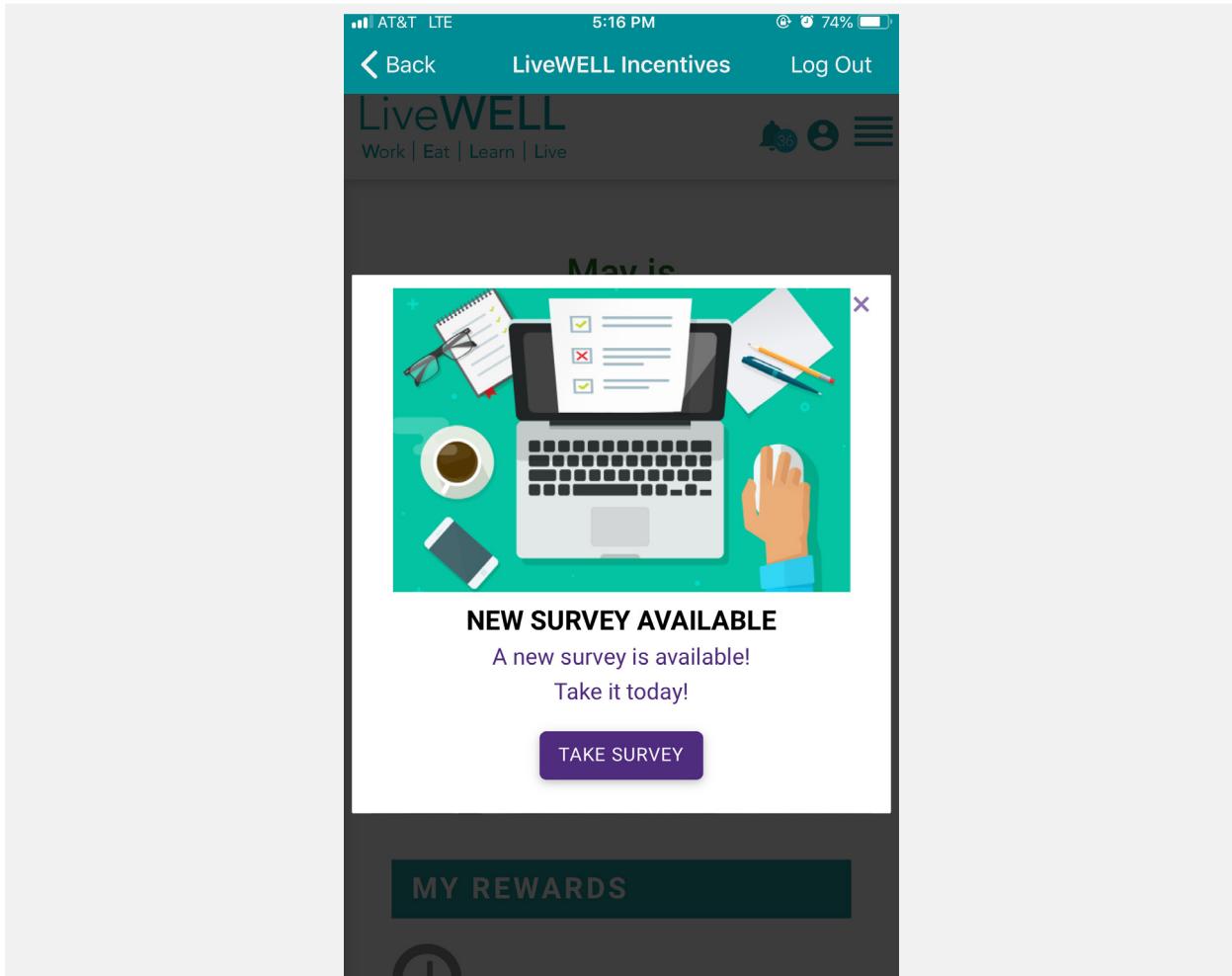

5 ways to boost wellness at your workstation
 Easy changes that make a big impact
 Jun. 4, 2019 Topic: Recreation & Well-being
 Posted by Marketing and Communications


Journey Girls Summer Camp
 NAIT Camps and Student Engagement offer an opportunity to immerse the young women in your life in the Skilled Trades.
 May 31, 2019 Topic: Recreation & Well-being
 Posted by Student Engagement

[nait.ca](#) | Provide Feedback | Contact Support | Privacy Policy | Credit Card Payments

The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology used authentic imagery of real employees, campus locations, events, and other photos across its intranet rather than stock photography, which usually feels generic and degrades the overall perception of the intranet and its visual design.

The type of imagery chosen for use across an intranet can vary, but whether it's iconography, illustrations, abstract photographs, or pictures of real people and locations, the imagery should be complimentary and realistic. Atrium Health used a mix of illustrations and photos of real people and places on its intranet, which worked well because all of the photos, icons, and illustrations looked consistent and complementary with one another. The use of similar colors helped preserve the consistency of the visual design across the digital workplace, even though different types of image assets were used.



An illustrated image on Atrium Health's mobile app version of its intranet prompted employees to take a survey. Even though this wasn't a photograph, the illustration was still consistent with other visual treatments and image styles used elsewhere, which was favorable.

New Physician & ACP Portal ↗ I need to find...

Atrium Health Atrium Health Medical Group ↗ Provider Directory ↗ Regional Providers ↗ About Atrium Health ↗

New Physician & ACP Portal

Credentialing & Privileging Meet Gene Woods, CEO

Benefits Atrium Health at a Glance

Health Assessment Living in the Carolinas

Required Tasks System Resources

Orientation

Tools **Atrium Health** **Support**

Health & Retirement [About Atrium Health](#) [Contact Us](#)

LiveWELL [Careers at Atrium Health](#)

Maps & Directions [Recruitment Rewards Program](#)

In the areas where Atrium Health used photographs across its digital workplace, they were authentic, consistent, and included real people and places, not stock photos.

19. Use consistent thumbnails and visual indicators to denote related and similar types of content or links to tools.

Including consistent-looking thumbnails and image treatments on an intranet can provide a signal to help employees find or pay attention to certain types of content as they scan and navigate. These are known as **visual indicators**.



Visual indicators

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

A **visual indicator** is a marker that helps users quickly locate an item with an important, distinctive attribute within a list or grid of otherwise similar objects. People rely on secondary cues such as color or shape to distinguish groupings and locate relevant information quickly and easily.

Some intranet designs may use a family of multiple or related visual indicators at the same time. For example, Burns & McDonnell used consistent thumbnail images with a blue *Featured* tag overlaid in the upper left corner to signify noteworthy news. In another example, its content series, *Safety Moments*, always appeared with a yellow and black striped image. These consistent visual indicators drew attention, distinguished the content from other nearby types, and helped employees quickly recognize the topic or content type.

The screenshot shows the MacCENTRAL intranet homepage. At the top, there's a large banner image of a control tower at McConnell Air Force Base with the text "McConnell Air Force Base" overlaid. Below the banner, there's a navigation bar with links for "MY STUFF", "OUR COMPANY", "RESOURCES", and "HR HUB". A search bar is on the right. Underneath the banner, there's a section for "ALL NEWS" with a "FEATURED" tab selected. Four news items are displayed as thumbnails:

- Control Hazards for a Safe Outcome** (Safety) - Published Aug 27, 0 comments, 235 views.
- Burns & McDonnell, the Early Years, 1905-1907** (Reference) - Published Aug 27, 1 comment, 478 views.
- Maximizing MacCentral 2.0: Homepage Upgrades** (MacCentral) - Published Aug 27, 1 comment, 308 views.
- Evaluate Warranty Forecasts by Aug. 31** (Risk Manage) - Published Aug 26, 1 comment, 434 views.

A callout box on the left side of the news grid states: "Burns & McDonnell used a blue Featured tag in the upper left corner of its thumbnail images to call out significant news items. This visual indicator helped these news stories stand out so employees could quickly identify them across the intranet."

When designing visual indicators, consider how the indicator or thumbnail will help users decide which items to pay attention to or choose from the set. Ask yourself whether someone would be able to decide where to navigate using only the indicators as their guide.

Repetitive thumbnail images appeared on Dell's digital workplace and other areas of Burns & McDonnell's intranet, which didn't aid in focusing attention or employee decision-making. On many listing and grid pages on these intranets, the same image was used as a thumbnail multiple times. Because image thumbnails are intended to help users quickly recognize the differences between pieces of content, they couldn't serve their purpose when the thumbnails were repetitive.

Also, some thumbnail images were comprised of abstract colors and patterns that seemed to have no relevance to the actual content they represented. In a contextual inquiry, a content manager mentioned that she chooses those abstract images based on what colors might look good on the page. She said, "There's already a blue one on the page, so I'll pick an orange one."

Consequently, the images had no consistent meaning — they were purely decorative. Use unique images for each thumbnail, preferably images that somehow represent the topic. Consider modifying page templates to allow for text-only list items and remove thumbnails when they don't add anything meaningful or valuable to the content.

The screenshot shows the MacCENTRAL intranet homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for CAPTAIN, MY STUFF, OUR COMPANY, RESOURCES, and HR HUB. Below the navigation is a search bar and a 'Published 8/14/2019' timestamp. The main content area features a large banner with a woman sitting at a laptop and the text 'MacCentral Images & Resources'. Below the banner, there's a section titled 'Find images and other resources for MacCentral content.' followed by a 'Quick Links' section with links to 'MacCentral Captain & Contributor Community' and 'MacCentral Content Training'. The main feature is a grid of thumbnail images, each with a purple or blue background and a small white icon. The thumbnails are labeled with file names like '07961_CORP_COM_MacCentral...nd-Images-VioletTrees-1.png' and '07961_CORP_COM_MacCentral...nd-Images-VioletWater-1.png'. Each thumbnail includes a small profile picture of a person named Goodman, Marjorie L (Marjie) and the date 'Edited October 29, 2018'. At the bottom of the grid, there are social sharing icons for Like, Views (48), and Save for later, along with a footer containing social media links (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube) and the text '© 2019, Burns & McDonnell. All rights reserved.'

The thumbnail images on this page on Dell's intranet, though consistent, were not meaningful. The images did not convey anything valuable and were needlessly repetitive.

DELL Technologies | My Learning

Learning Ca... diversity

15 Results found for 'diversity'

Sort by Relevance Results per page 25

RESOURCE TYPE
All Learning Catalog (15)

LEARNING EVENT TYPE
Class/Course (15)

DELIVERY TYPE
On Demand Class (7)

CATEGORY
Business (2)
Online Learning (2)

LANGUAGE
English (7)

MICROLEARNING
No Facet Data found

Diversity and Inclusion in a Global Enterprise Course (1 class)
Course (1 class)
Finding ways to effectively lead diversity efforts is often seen as the grand challenge for today's leaders, particularly when you consider the complexity of a global workforce. In this course, join Stefanie Johnson as she discusses the benefits of divers ...more
0 USD
★★★★★ LAUNCH

Diversity Leadership Accelerator Program (DLAP) Course (0 class)
DLAP is comprised of three sections: 1. The first component is an introductory webinar for program members, managers and the identified sponsors that will provide context for this initiative and how it fits in the overall talent/business strategies, giv ...more
0 USD
★★★★★ REQUEST LEAR...

Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Version: 1 Course (1 class)
Diversity has come to mean having a culture that values uniqueness. Inclusion means inviting diverse groups in —ensuring that people with different viewpoints, cultures, genders, and races can take part in company life. If you're tuned in to conversations ...more
0 USD
★★★★★ LAUNCH

Diversity and Cultural Literacy Course (1 class)
Course (1 class)
0 USD
★★★★★ LAUNCH

Diversity and Inclusion Is There a Difference Course (0 class)
Course (0 class)
0 USD
★★★★★ REQUEST LEAR...

Diversity Speed Coaching Course (0 class)
"Each year, our Speed Coaching events deliver a unique way for career development by bringing together people for a quick yet productive dialogue that can have lasting impact for coaches as well as "coachees." We are pleased to invite you to participate i ...more
0 USD
★★★★★ REQUEST LEAR...

Appreciating Differences Discussion Guide - Diversity Change Agents Course (0 class)
Appreciating Differences Discussion Guide - Diversity Change Agents is a structured thirty-minute, leader-led discussion guide for teams that have completed the web-based training, Appreciating Differences (DIV3060). This discussion guide helps leaders an ...more
0 USD
★★★★★ REQUEST LEAR...

Appreciating Differences Discussion Guide - Dimensions of Diversity Course (0 class)
Appreciating Differences Discussion Guide - Dimensions of Diversity is a structured thirty minute, leader-led discussion guide for teams that have completed the web-based training, Appreciating Differences (DIV3060). This discussion guide helps leaders an ...more
0 USD
★★★★★ REQUEST LEAR...

Managing Diversity Course (1 class)
Course (1 class)
0 USD
★★★★★ LAUNCH

Dell also used the same thumbnail image to represent several different training courses on diversity and inclusion. This approach did not effectively help employees understand which courses to pay attention to, nor did it provide a signal to differentiate the courses from one another.

Atrium Health used an appealing set of branded, icon-based thumbnails on the mobile app version of its intranet. The thumbnails represented links to different digital workplace applications. Each thumbnail was consistent in color and included Atrium Health's logo and a meaningful icon, which reflected the tool's purpose. The thumbnails were different enough to help employees understand the content and the links they represented but visually consistent enough to create a polished and attractive visual design. Because the thumbnails were accompanied by a clear, bold

title and a short description of the tool's function or purpose, this is an excellent example of using a consistently designed set of visual indicators.

The image shows a mobile application catalog titled "App Catalog". At the top, there are status icons for AT&T LTE, battery level at 74%, and the time 5:16 PM. Below the header, there are three buttons: "Back", "App Catalog", and "Log Out". The main content area displays five app cards:

- MyAtriumHealth**: Features a teal circular icon with a white leaf-like symbol. Description: "Get convenient access to your care. Connect with Atrium Health."
- Atrium Health Virtual Visit**: Features a teal square icon with a white leaf-like symbol and the text "VIRTUAL VISIT". Description: "Connect immediately to an Atrium Health medical provider for a live healthcare visit via your mobile device, 24 hours a day."
- Levine Children's**: Features a teal square icon with a white leaf-like symbol and the text "FOR PATIENTS". Description: "Help and support from Levine Children's Hospital is available."
- MyAtriumHealth Tracker**: Features a teal square icon with a white leaf-like symbol and the text "FOR PATIENTS". Description: "MyAtriumHealth Tracker is for patients of Atrium Health. With MyAtriumHealth Tracker, you can get a complete view of your health in one place."
- Atrium Health Directions**: Features a teal square icon with a white location pin symbol. Description: "Maps and directions to find your way around Atrium Health campuses."

Atrium Health had a thoughtful and consistently designed set of icons to represent links to digital workplace tools.

If you're considering a family of visual indicators to mark items on your intranet, consider these recommendations:

- Use a mix of color, imagery, text, and icons to differentiate and make thumbnails and visual indicators noticeable.
- If, for some reason, you are trying to decide between using two fairly similar icons for the two indicators or two different colors, favor a unique one with good information scent as a distinguishing factor.

VIDEO

20. Distinguish video from other content types using a thumbnail image, play icon, and label.

Video is a helpful supplementary content format to include on an intranet, useful for communicating information, providing training, troubleshooting issues, and broadcasting big meetings or events. To ensure users can differentiate video from other content types, include an illustrative thumbnail that sets expectations for the video style, such as an interview, lecture, animation, etc. Videos should be easily discoverable and consistent in style across the intranet. They should also include a play icon and a text-based label that accurately represents the type of content they provide.



Employees often preferred text-based content over watching videos during the workday.

User Behaviors

In our studies, many employees stated that they didn't want to watch videos during the workday because they lacked time. Instead, they preferred skimming and scanning text.

Employees typically followed these behaviors (listed in order of occurrences we observed):

1. Most read the text content only, avoiding the video
2. Some skimmed the text content, then watched some of the video
3. Few immediately watched all or some of the video — before (or instead of) reading the text

Employees also commented that they were concerned about disturbing coworkers around them by playing a video with sound. This was of particular concern to those who didn't have headphones. Including closed captioning and video transcripts can help but may not entirely alleviate this concern.

Employees reacted negatively when the intranet failed to set expectations for video content. For instance, on Dell's intranet homepage, it was not clear whether news content was a video or an article. A *Play* icon appeared inconsistently on homepage image tiles; it appeared on some but was missing from others, even if the image tile linked to a video. People were disappointed when they clicked, and a video began playing, as they had expected to see text-based content instead. Had the video tiles consistently included a thumbnail with a *Play* icon and a label indicating a video, this surprise, and disappointment could have been avoided.

Inside Dell Technologies

Search Inside Dell Technologies 🔍

News | My Communities | My HR | My IT | Learning | ☰

Coming Soon: Quarterly Review

0 : 19 : 56 : 41
Days Hours Minutes Seconds

Welcome Paul

0 My HR Cases > 2 My IT Tickets >

Top Headlines More News Expand the Conversation FEEDBACK

headline News All News >

COMING SOON
Live from Southborough, MA
Dell Technologies Quarterly Review
Stay Tuned for Dell Technologies Quarterly Review! > FEEDBACK

Leadership Update > FEEDBACK

2019 Dell Technologies Holiday E-Cards are Here! > FEEDBACK

Sweet On Skillset Transformation > FEEDBACK

See How Dell and GoalControl are Changing the Game > FEEDBACK

We're Making the World a Better Place > FEEDBACK

DEB Band Debuts New Song - Watch Music Video Here > FEEDBACK

Now Trending: Social Media Awards - Nominate Someone TODAY > FEEDBACK

On Dell's intranet homepage, play icons were displayed inconsistently on video tiles.

Dell's video landing pages had a much more consistent presentation of video content compared to the homepage. Each video included a *Watch* label right before the video's title and the *Play* icon, both of which helped reinforce the expectation that a video would play on click. A simple solution to address the homepage video design would be to include the same type of *Play* icon and *Watch* label, there and anywhere else videos are cross-promoted on the intranet.

 Jacqueline in News Inside Dell Technologies
2 weeks ago Show more

WATCH: We're Making the World a Better Place

Our team members are creating positive change in the world in many different areas including Sustainability, Cultivating Inclusion, Transforming Lives, Giving & Volunteering and Ethics & Privacy. Watch this video and be sure to thank your colleagues in person or in the comment section below if you recognize them in the pictures or catch their...



Like (12) · Comment · Share

3 comments Show more activity

 Patricia 1 week ago Show more

Not surprised at all to see the super-inspirational Liv Carrig listed here, who makes "giving back" look so simple in spite of an already very full plate! Congratulations!

Like (1) · Reply

Dell's video landing pages did a much better job of applying consistent visual elements to help distinguish video from other content formats. Each video included a Watch label and a Play icon.

It is best to display the video's length directly on the page along with the thumbnail, play icon, and label. Knowing the length of a video allows users to decide whether they want to play it. Shorter is often better. Employees are more likely to watch it when the duration of the video is visible before playing it. Display the duration above the video, alongside the title, or as part of the video thumbnail, and not just within the video player's scrub or progress bar. The Royal National Lifeboat Institution used a consistent visual presentation for videos across its intranet, where the length of the video is displayed at the very bottom of each video card in white text overlaid on a dark gray background.

The screenshot shows a company intranet homepage with a light gray header and footer. The main content area has a white background.

- Social Feed:** A Twitter feed section with a blue header. It shows two tweets from @Swim_England and @RNLI. The first tweet is from 1 hour ago about daily swimming facts. The second tweet is from 2 hours ago about beach safety.
- Video:** A video player section with a blue header. It shows a video thumbnail of Prof. Heather Money speaking. Below the thumbnail is the text "Respect the Water: start the conversation".
- Poll:** A poll section with a blue header. The question is "Have you booked in your mid-year RADAR meeting with your line manager?". The closing date is 01/07/2019. There are three options with radio buttons: "Yes", "No, not yet", and "I don't know what RADAR is". A blue "VOTE" button is at the bottom.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution presented its video content consistently across the intranet and included a timestamp indicating the video's length.

ICONOGRAPHY

21. Use a consistent set of icons across the intranet.

Icons can be visually pleasing and enhance the aesthetic appeal of an intranet's design. If well-designed, icons are easy for employees to recognize at-a-glance. This is particularly true for standard icons that employees have seen and used before and those that are consistently used across a digital product. When icons are disjointed and inconsistent, they lose their ability to support the notion of the digital workplace as a cohesive product family or suite.

Even a slight difference in appearance, meaning, or functionality hinders employees' ability to understand and rely on an icon when they encounter them in future experiences. The tighter the mapping between icons and the thing they represent, the easier they are to understand, but standardization can also make icons easier to understand.

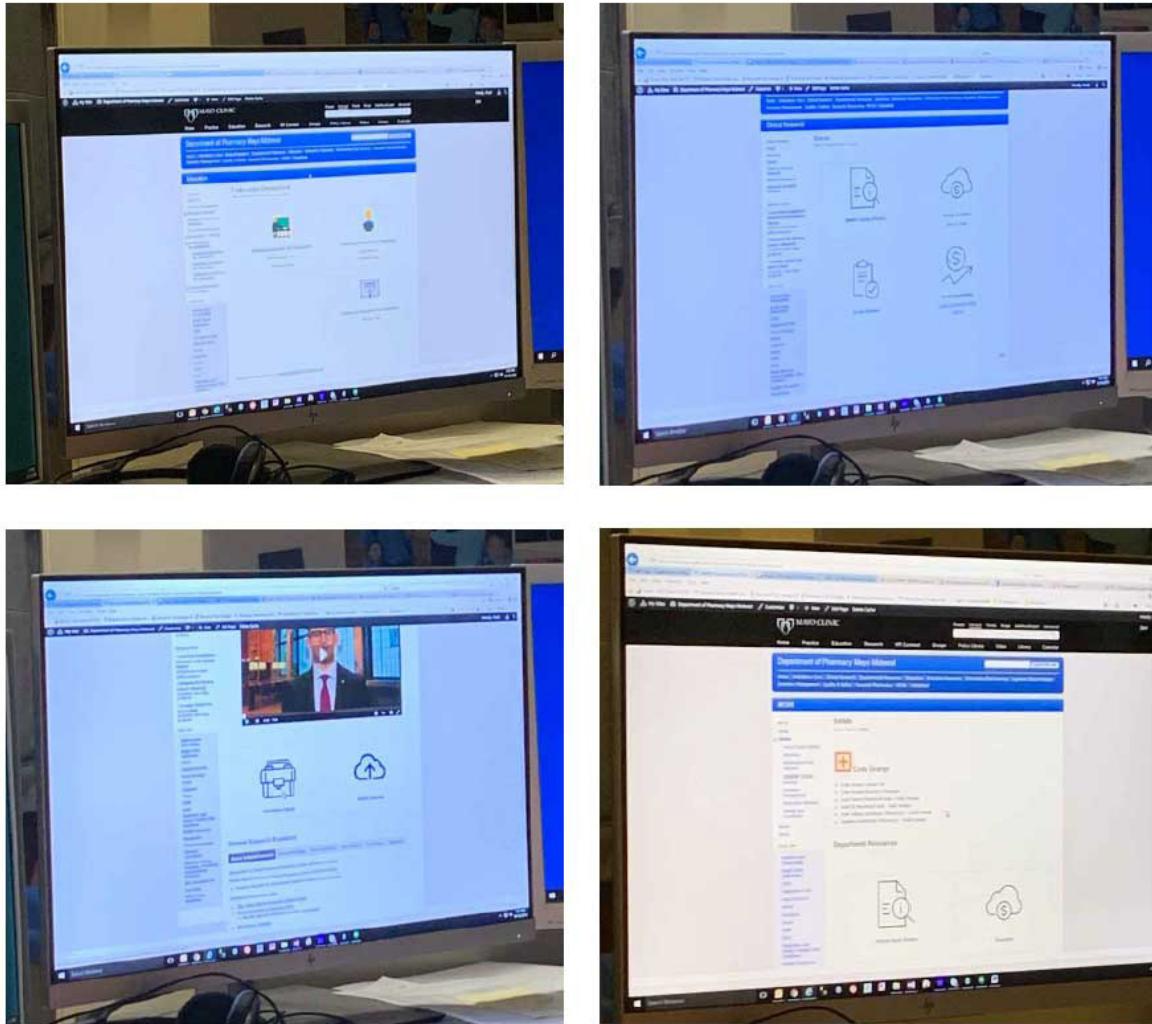


Aim to incorporate icons that match each other in visual style across the intranet. One such example of a consistent library of icons is flat design, material design, or font awesome. Use these, something similar, or even a custom set of icons for an overall less cluttered and consistent aesthetic.

For example, during a contextual inquiry session at the Mayo Clinic, we observed a content manager who was updating several intranet pages. During the session, he placed many random and different-looking icons on various pages to represent different links and functionalities. From his perspective, “This made the intranet look and feel more like an app.” The pages let him place icons wherever he wanted rather than in strategically planned spaces. Because the icons were all styled so differently, the design looked inconsistent and less polished than had he used a consistent icon library. He also made changes to the HTML to accommodate the icons and different visual layouts, and in doing so, he said:

“This is a lot of custom HTML that I did using the WYSIWYG editor. What’s nice is that you can do HTML or visually get in if you know that type of stuff. I have a little background in it, so I can do it. It’s helpful to be able to do that. I’ve been doing tags and things like that to make this look like this. I wanted a thin border around the icons and more spacing. It’s nice to edit it that way.”

Because some intranet teams don’t have graphic designers on staff or proper software, some icons are produced with subpar tools. Thus, the resulting icons are grainy-looking, fuzzy, and hard to discern.



The icons across the Mayo Clinic's intranet did not adhere to a consistent visual style, nor was there an intentionally designed set or library of icons that content managers could choose from to place on intranet pages.

On Dell's intranet, the design team created a custom set of consistent and cleanly designed icons to use on its *Global Travel & Expense* tool. Each icon was of similar weight, visual aesthetic, color, size, and placement. Just by scanning the icons, it was easy to understand what they represented. Then, after clicking through to the content sections the icons represented, they also appeared similarly on these deeper pages and other areas of the intranet as well. Clear labels also appeared underneath each icon. All of this made for an excellent example of how to apply cohesive iconography on an intranet.

Dell used consistent and modern-looking iconography on the Global Travel & Expense area of its intranet.



Test icons with real employees.

Process and Strategic Considerations

Icons should also be tested for recognition and attractiveness individually and as part of an icon family. One of the common reasons to use icons in the first place is to add visual appeal to a design, but not all icons are good-looking.

The simplest way to test for this is to ask people to score each icon on a 1–7 scale. If you have alternative designs of the same icon, you can also ask people to pick the most attractive from each set of alternatives and have them explain why they like or dislike particular images.

Finally, you can show people an entire icon family and ask them to pick the one they like the best and the least. This last test can help you avoid the common problem where most of your icons are fine, but there are one or two less attractive ones that require a do-over to match the aesthetic of the overall design better.

Test the icons to ensure they are both recognizable and memorable. Ask people what they expect the icons to stand for and then ask a repeat set of users if they can remember the icon's meaning after being told what it represented a few weeks earlier. Later, A/B testing can be used to determine which candidates have the strongest information scent.

There is no need to change or translate icons for international employees, provided the icons were designed with cultural differences in mind (for example, mailboxes look very different in various countries, whereas envelopes look the same. Therefore, an envelope is a more international icon for an email program than a mailbox).

Keep the design of your intranet icons simple, schematic, and consistent. Reducing the graphic details by focusing on the essential characteristics of the object rather than creating a highly realistic image will help speed up recognition, as intricate details are difficult to distinguish at smaller sizes.

Icons

The icons should be simple, abstract, and one color.

An icon may be placed within a square. When placed in a square, the icon should be reversed to white.

Make sure the icon has enough clear space surrounding it. Reference diagram.

If an icon has a title, the copy must go on the right side. The icon title must be vertically centered.

The icon title should be ITC Franklin Gothic STD Book Compressed. The Cap height equals one-fifth of the height of the icon square.

If you need a new icon developed, please contact branding@firstsolar.com.

PLACEMENT

Grid Integration & Plant Control Systems Engineering & Plant Optimization Project Development Project Finance

Advanced PV Modules Inverters & Power Conversion Components Trackers & Fixed Mounting Systems Procurement & Construction Advisement

Operations & Maintenance Module Cleaning Solutions Energy Forecasting Warranties & Performance Guarantees

Power Block

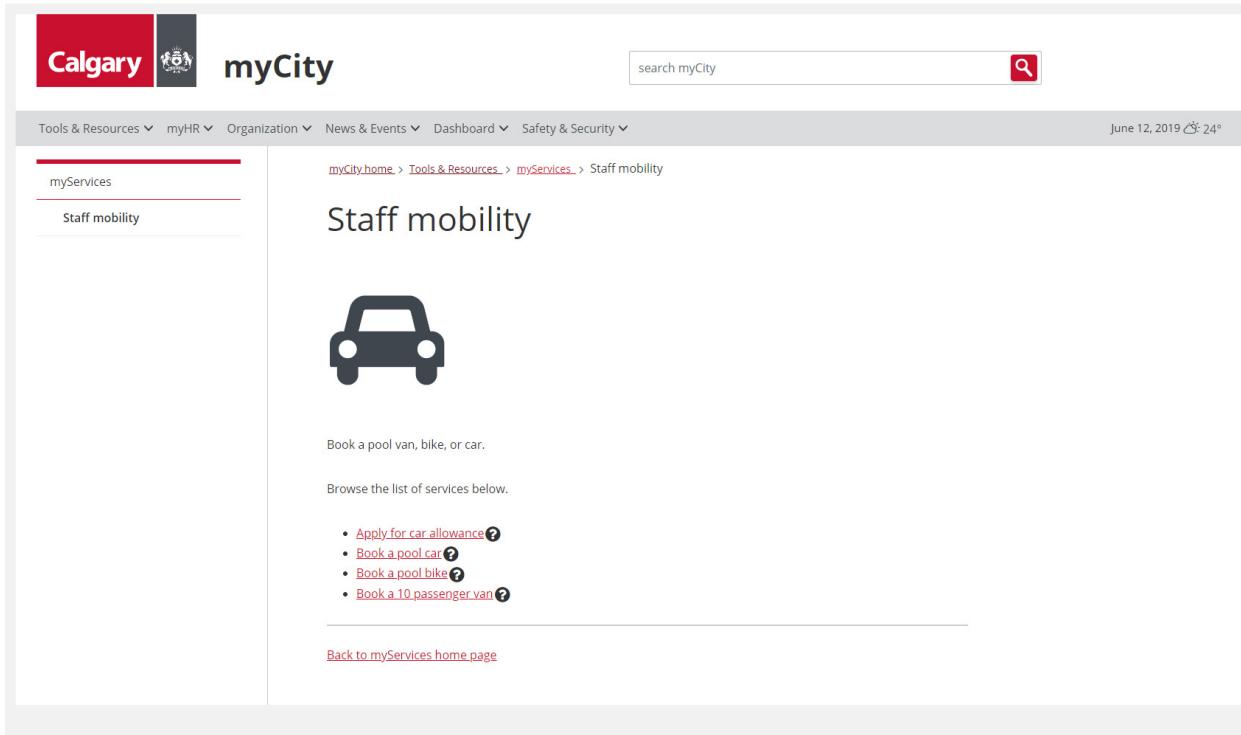
First Solar designed a custom set of consistent icons to represent specific parts of its business, which were favorable and recognizable to employees.

A set of bad intranet icons amplifies confusion, adds clutter, and wastes screen real estate, not to mention employees' time. When people learn what action is associated with a given icon, the icon's presence can provide an opportunity for some users to locate the command quickly and be more efficient with repetitive tasks. A set of links with icons of inconsistent quality will confuse employees and waste their time. Design a set of usable, consistent icons, or just use clear text links and no icons at all.

22. Use icons to reinforce meaning but avoid adding them arbitrarily.

It's tempting to break up text-heavy pages with photos, illustrations, and icons, but icons must first and foremost communicate meaning in a graphical user interface while conveying brand personality through color and style. Icons are, by definition, visual representations of an object, action, or idea. If that object, action, or idea is not necessary or immediately apparent to users, the icon's value is reduced to mere eye candy. Worse, it can be confusing, frustrating, eye candy that adds visual noise and hinders employees from scanning text and completing a task.

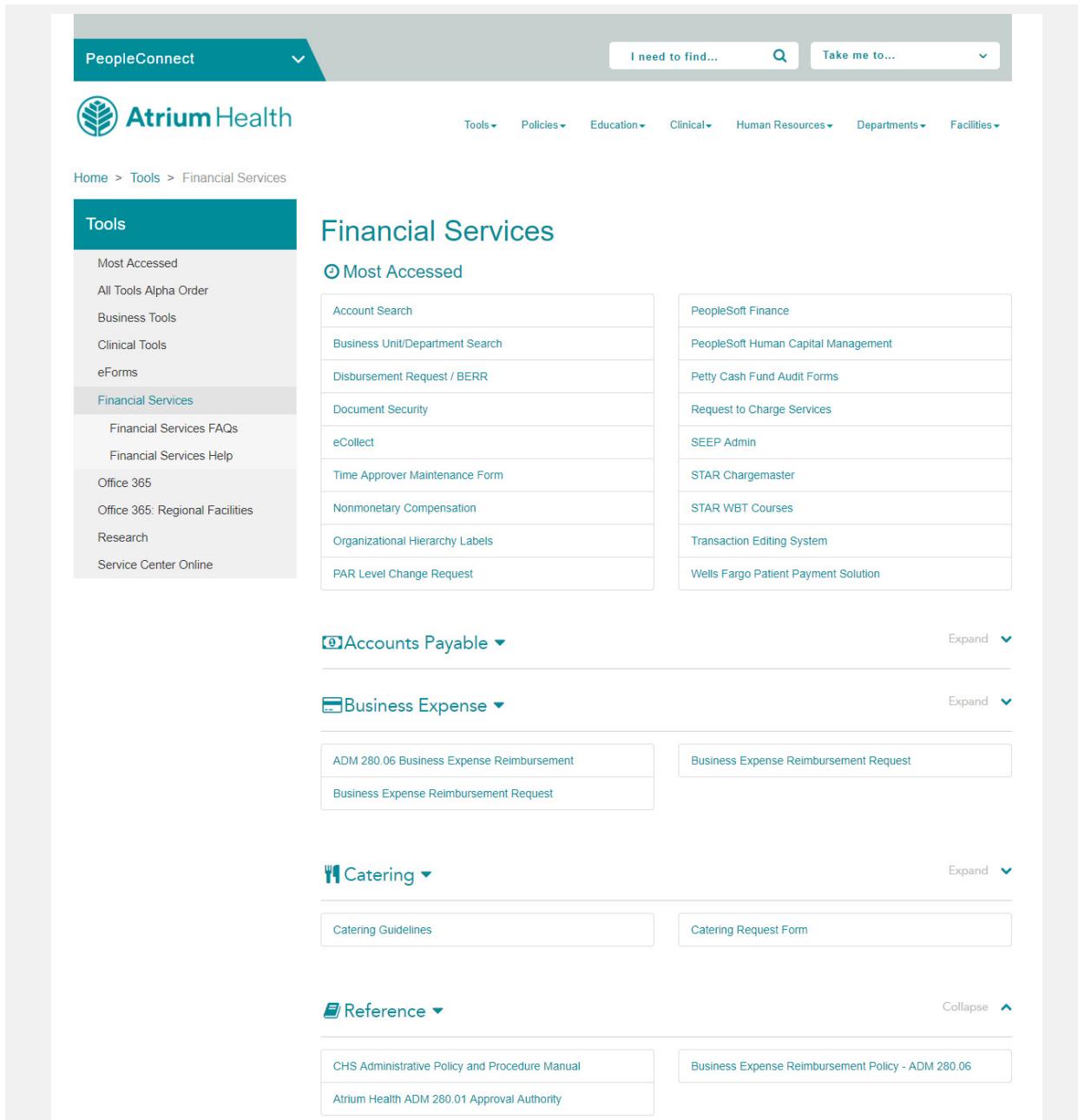
For example, using the City of Calgary's intranet, we asked employees to find out how much they would be reimbursed for mileage if they drove their own vehicle for work travel or to meetings at other office locations. Some users navigated to the *Staff Mobility* page in search of the answer. However, on the staff mobility page, a car icon appeared at the very top, and users had to scroll and scan past this icon to see the text. In this case, this icon is unnecessary, as it doesn't add any additional or helpful meaning to the page beyond what the text is already communicating. In this case, a better approach would be to remove the icon and bump the text to a higher page placement.



The car icon on the City of Calgary's Staff Mobility page is unnecessary and could be removed to get the text-based content higher up in the layout. Also, consider the relative size of an icon compared to other visual elements presented on the screen. Here, the icon is a distraction.

Not every link or page on the intranet deserves or needs an icon. And icons don't just materialize out of thin air. Unlike adding a text link, someone with graphic-design skills needs to create them. They are conjured, drawn, usability tested, and iterated. Then, once created, they need to be coded, quality-tested (usability-tested again), supported, and sometimes documented, all of which is more work than just adding a text link. Icons also take up more screen space than text links, meaning another UI component may be forced below the fold, onto another page, or omitted altogether. Icons may also add to visual noise. While good icons can be helpful, poor icons add clutter, and some are hard to understand. The benefit the icon offers should be greater than the costs of having it.

For example, Atrium Health included icons next to each subheading and accordion label on its *Financial Services* page. While consistent in color, placement, and style, these icons were not needed since employees would rely on scanning the text to understand what the section or accordion entailed. A better approach would be to remove the icon and let the text communicate on its own.



The screenshot shows the Atrium Health Financial Services page. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'PeopleConnect' and search functions. Below it is the Atrium Health logo. The main content area has a teal header 'Tools' and a sub-header 'Financial Services'. On the left, a sidebar lists various tools under categories like 'Most Accessed', 'Financial Services' (which is highlighted), and 'Office 365'. The 'Financial Services' section contains several sub-links. The right side features a large grid of links, many of which have small icons to their left. Some sections are labeled with icons and arrows (e.g., 'Accounts Payable', 'Business Expense', 'Catering', 'Reference').

On Atrium Health's Financial Services page, the icons next to the subheadings and accordion labels were arbitrary and likely not needed. Employees would be able to scan the page faster without the added clutter.

First Solar used icons to visually reinforce connotations for different parts of the employees' user accounts. The icons quickly conveyed meaning — sometimes more so than the text alone. When considering adding an icon to a text label, ask yourself if it will benefit employees before deciding to include it.

The screenshot shows a mobile-style interface for managing employee accounts. At the top left is a navigation menu with a grid icon, followed by the word "power" and "My account". On the far right is a back arrow. The main content area is divided into four sections:

- Install status**: Shows "Detected installs: 0" and a "Manage installs" button.
- Subscriptions**: Shows "Verify what products and licenses you have." and a "View subscriptions" button.
- Security & privacy**: Shows "Protect your account and adjust important privacy settings to your preference." and a "Manage security & privacy" button.
- App permissions**: Shows "Apps with access to your data: 25" and "Manage which apps have access to your data. You can revoke permission whenever you want." with a "Change app permissions" button.

A vertical sidebar on the left contains links with icons: "My account" (home), "Personal info", "Subscriptions", "Security & privacy", "App permissions", "My installs", and "Tools & add-ins".

First Solar included icons to clarify further what different parts of the employees' account entailed, which was helpful as some of the sections could be interpreted differently. The icons, along with the corresponding text, helped reinforce what employees would find in each area.

When deciding whether or not to add an icon, consider if the concept or command you want to enhance with the icon can be naturally represented by one. Some concepts are complicated and too difficult to be represented by a simple icon. Sometimes designers think of a great visual for an icon, but it's impossible to minimize, shrink, crop, or make work as one. Ensure the icon's visual will fit well in the available space. People should not need to stare for long, lean in, or squint to decrypt the icon's meaning.

If you find yourself pondering how to come up with an icon to represent something, chances are it's not needed, nor will it be easily recognizable or intuitive for users. Stick with simple text alone or a stand-alone text link instead. This will be less work for you and better for employees, as they won't have to navigate around or get distracted by meaningless icons. If it takes you more than five seconds to think of an appropriate icon for something, it is unlikely that an icon can effectively communicate the intended meaning, so leave it off.

23. Ensure icons are accompanied by clear labels that communicate what they represent or the action they initiate.

A text label must accompany icons to clarify their meaning and use in the workplace context, which will help address the ambiguity that almost all icons face. Even if you're using a standard icon that employees would recognize from mainstream digital products, still include a label, especially if the icon was altered slightly to match your intranet's aesthetic preferences or design constraints.

For example, the Scottish Government did an exceptional job of clearly labeling icons across its intranet. A series of five consistently and cleanly designed icons appeared in the upper right rail of each page. Each icon had its own associated command for actions that included *Share this page*, *Print this page*, *Add to My Quick Links*, *Provide feedback on this page*, and one that denoted *Related links*. The text was easy to understand, and the icons' imagery aligned well with the corresponding action. The touch targets were also large enough that employees could effectively click or tap the icons on both the desktop and mobile versions of the intranet.

The Scottish Government did a great job of clearly labeling all intranet iconography, which meant employees didn't have to guess what an icon meant or what it would do on click or tap.

Make touch targets at least 44 pixels wide by 44 pixels tall.

Timeless Design Tips

Touch targets that include both a word and an icon are larger than targets that are just the word or the icon alone. These larger targets are easier to click and tap than smaller ones.

Icon labels should always be visible without any interaction from the user. Don't rely on tooltips or hover to reveal text labels; this increases the interaction cost and fails to translate well to touch devices. Stripping icons of text labels renders them wholly meaningless and is counterproductive to the goal of providing easy access to content, features, and functionality to support employees' tasks.

DIRTT displayed three small but important icons in the upper right corner of its intranet without text labels. The icons' style, positioning, and appearance — without labels — made the intranet's design seem dated and forced employees to guess what each icon meant. A better approach would be to use a more modern-looking set of icons, increase their size, space them apart from each other, and add labels to each one to ensure employees know exactly what to expect after interacting with them.

myDIRTT | SOLUTIONS | PRODUCTIVITY | RESOURCES

Hello, Rachel

myDIRTT

myFiles | myReferrals | myAlbums

Rachel    

DIRTT

PUBLIC WEBSITE | CONTACT

SPRING 2019

DIGGIN' IT

PREV  NEXT 

QUICK LINKS

PHOTOS | VIDEOS | FINISHES

ICE RESOURCES – TOOLS & INFORMATION

DIRTIBAG INVESTMENT INFO

DIRTT'S CONTRACTS

INFORMATION FOR

On DIRTT's intranet, icons on the top right corner of the screen were presented without text and made the intranet's design look dated.

An employee's understanding of an icon is based on previous experience. Most icons lack a common, standard usage, aside from common things such as a mobile menu icon for navigation and a magnifying glass icon for search, so text labels are always necessary to communicate the icon's meaning and reduce ambiguity.

24. Provide a professionally shot photo of each employee on the intranet.

Displaying photos of employees on intranets can contribute to a feeling of community and can help people recognize and get to know each other. Seeing someone's face before starting to work with them or stepping into a meeting with them can help employees feel more comfortable and confident about who the other person is, which is especially important in enterprise organizations where people may not work together often or even get the opportunity to meet their other coworkers.

Professionally shot and consistently styled employee headshots can elevate the intranet's visual design and ensure that the photos uploaded to represent employees look like them instead of showing a picture of their dog, for example. We often see intranets with poor quality or inconsistent headshots, which makes the intranet look sloppy and unprofessional, and it carries over to how people perceive the organization and their peers. It's not worth damaging a company's professional reputation with amateur headshots or leaving it up to individual employees to upload their own photos. Use headshots that are photographed in a consistent style and a high photographic quality, ensuring people's expression, wardrobe, location, and background looks pulled together and recognizable.

For example, each employee at Burns & McDonnell, including senior leadership, was represented by a professional and consistent-looking headshot on its intranet. These photos appeared alongside the employees' names wherever they appeared, including team pages, organizational charts, full employee profiles, and alongside comments the employee added to news articles and other content types.

Burns & McDonnell chose a more professional business style for its photos, but casual dress may be more appropriate if your organization's culture is a bit more laid-back. In any case, establish some wardrobe standards for the headshots and use a consistent style and background. Crops and angles are critical. If you don't have internal people with photography skills, enlist the help of a professional photographer or branding agency to take the headshots. As new people join the organization, include a task in their onboarding activities where they have their professional headshot taken.

The screenshot shows the MacCENTRAL intranet homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'OUR COMPANY' (with a dropdown menu), 'MY STUFF', 'RESOURCES', and 'HR HUB'. A search bar is on the right. Below the header, there's a banner image of a group of people in suits, with the text 'Executive Leadership' overlaid. To the left of the banner is a '+' button for creating new content. Below the banner, the page title 'Board Members' is displayed. Underneath the title, there are two rows of four cards each, each containing a circular placeholder photo, the name, and the title. The names and titles are as follows:

Row 1	Row 2		
Donald R. Kay Chief Executive Officer Chairman & CEO	Ronnie West President President, Regional Office Group	John Morris President President, Construction/Design-Build	Charles G. Miller Chief Operating Officer President, Transmission & Distribution
Robert J. Kelleher (Bob) President President, Oil, Gas & Chemical	Scott Denney Chief Financial Officer Chief Financial Officer	James C. Morris President President, Aviation & Federal	

Burns & McDonnell included professionally shot and consistent-looking employee photos on its intranet, which helped employees recognize one another and improved the intranet's overall appearance. The way the photos were shot and cropped also lends favorably to either a circle or square shape. This flexibility is ideal.

If it's not possible to shoot employee photos, a viable stopgap until photos can be taken is to use employees' initials overlaid on colorful backgrounds, along with their names and titles, which provides a visually interesting placeholder and is a more optimal approach than using a standard avatar or person icon, as those have much less meaning. For example, Dell had a newer platform for employee recognition, and the tool included a "work circle" (similar to a team). It gave employees quick access to recognize the people they work with most often. While the eventual goal was to integrate this space with the master directory, where employee photos were stored (so they would also populate here), in the interim, employees' initials appeared within colorful circles instead.

The screenshot shows a user interface for nominating colleagues. At the top left is a search bar with the placeholder "Search for Colleagues". Below it, under "My Work Circle", are two sections: "My Team" and a list of colleagues. Each colleague entry includes a colored circular icon with initials, the colleague's name, their role, and their location. To the right of each entry is a plus sign (+). On the far right, there is a sidebar with the message "No Colleagues Selected" and a close button (X). Below this, there is a large icon of a person's head with a plus sign inside, and the text "Add colleagues to nominate".

If professionally shot photos of employees are not feasible, a good alternative that helps keep the intranet's visual design clean and interesting is to use employee initials overlaid on colorful backgrounds, such as what Dell did on its employee recognition tool.

25. Use infographics and data visualization to translate abstract data, ease understanding, and drive engagement.

Infographics and data visualizations are powerful storytelling tools that allow employees to comprehend, analyze, and explore data related to the organization they work for, their role in it, or their personal well-being. The distinction between **data visualizations** and **infographics** is subtle but important. Infographics often contain data visualizations, but a data visualization is not an infographic.

Data visualization

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

A **data visualization** is a graphical representation of a data set. Charts, graphs, and maps are the most commonly used types of data visualization.



Infographic

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

An **infographic** is a multimedia graphic used to present complex information and data in a way that is easy to understand. Infographics often include data or information visualizations but must also provide context through illustrations, facts, quotes, and captions.

An infographic can stand on its own as a separate piece of content or can be shown in the context of an article with additional text.

We commonly see infographics and data visualizations on intranets used to represent and communicate quantities and comparisons. For example, in the case of Eyeo's HR platform, vacation time used versus vacation time accrued, or on Dell's learning platform to show training courses required versus those already attended. And in many other cases, infographics and data visualizations are used to communicate and show progress against quarterly or annual company goals.

The screenshot shows the HR lab dashboard interface. At the top, there's a blue header bar with the 'HR lab' logo, a user profile icon, and navigation links for 'Employee Data EN', a help icon, a bell notification, and a power button.

Employee Profile: On the left, a sidebar shows a placeholder profile picture and the text 'Senior UX Researcher Employee Name'. Below it, a 'PROFILE' section lists various categories: Dashboard, Employees, Manage & Approve, Vacation, Sickness, Business Travel, Qualification, Documents, Calendar, Tasks, and News.

Open Tasks: A card titled 'Open Tasks' displays the message 'No information to show'.

News: A card titled 'News' also displays the message 'No information to show'.

Task Overview: A section titled 'ALL TASKS' shows a date '03/10/2019' and the text '8 Days Left'.

Next Event: A card titled 'Next Event' shows the date '03/10/2019' and the text 'National State Holiday'.

My Vacation Statistics: This section contains two circular progress bars: one for 'Days Taken' (20.5) and one for 'Days Available' (9.5). A note below states: 'Only approved, paid vacations are shown in the statistics!'

Not in Office Today: A table showing employee absences for today:

EMPLOYEE	DEPARTMENT	END DATE	ABWESENHEIT
Employee Name	Filters	25/09/2019	--
Employee Name	QA	25/09/2019	--
Employee Name	QA	25/09/2019	--

Calendar: A detailed calendar for Wednesday, 25/09/2019, showing the month of September 2019. The 25th is highlighted with a blue circle. The calendar includes a note: 'Wednesday 25/09/2019 ○'.

Footer: Copyright © 2019 HRlab All Rights Reserved. Links to Dashboard, Support, Compliance, and Term of use. A blue circular icon with a keyhole symbol is also present.

Text at the bottom:

Eyeo's HR tool used a data visualization to show employee vacation statistics. The scale between the two charts accurately represents the differences between data points, days taken vs. days available, giving employees an immediate and correct impression of the data.

The screenshot shows the Dell Technologies My Learning interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the Dell logo, a search bar, and user profile information. Below the header, the main area has a title 'My Plan' and a 'Learning & Certifications' section. This section includes a donut chart and a table of counts for In Progress, Completed, and Pending action items. Below this, a table lists three learning paths: 'Blades and M1000E Essentials', 'Fulfilling Resource Requests in CP IT', and 'Upgrade the End User Experience'. Each row in the table shows the course name, type, progress status (e.g., 'Progress 0%', 'IN PROGRESS'), due date, and actions like 'REGISTER', 'VIEW SUMMARY', or 'LAUNCH'. At the bottom of the page, there are links for Support, About, Terms and Conditions, and Privacy, along with a note that it's powered by Saba.

Dell will process the personal data you are entering below for the purpose of workforce skills management. Please copy this link into a browser (https://dell.service-now.com/hrportal?id=kb_article&sys_id=c044ada6db8e5fb84cc15ae441b9619b8) to read and understand Dell's team member Privacy Notice which applies to your skills data and to Dell's learning management application.

NAME	PROGRESS	DUUE	ACTIONS
Blades and M1000E Essentials Certification Version:1.0.0 Source : M1000e - 13G - V...	Progress 0% <div style="width: 10%;">ASSIGNED</div>	-----	REGISTER <input type="button" value="▼"/>
Fulfilling Resource Requests in CP IT Course On Demand Class	IN PROGRESS <div style="width: 50%; background-color: #90EE90;">IN PROGRESS</div>	-----	VIEW SUMMARY <input type="button" value="▼"/>
Upgrade the End User Experience Course On Demand Class	IN PROGRESS <div style="width: 50%; background-color: #90EE90;">IN PROGRESS</div>	-----	LAUNCH <input type="button" value="▼"/>

Support | About | Terms and Conditions | Privacy

Powered by Saba

Copyright © 2019 Saba Software, Inc. All rights reserved. | Version: Saba Cloud 45.0.6.2

Dell also used a data visualization on its learning platform to show employees their ongoing learning and certifications in progress, completed, and pending action. Glancing at the chart informed employees of how much more training they needed to complete compared to what was already done.

On the Co-operators' intranet, employees liked informational pages that included infographics. The graphical elements in the infographics were modern and minimalistic. Also, a few employees liked when strategic efforts and key figures were presented visually, especially those they had heard called out in briefings from annual reports. Two study participants commented on this:

“I have an interest in our current strategy. . . . The four pillars, this infographic is very familiar to me.”

“I like the visual of this. It’s just easy to read. It takes some of what’s in the annual report and distills it to make it easier to understand.”

To learn more, select an icon below.



CLIENT ENGAGEMENT

We will be the leader in client engagement within the financial services industry.



CO-OPERATIVE IDENTITY

Being a co-operative is core to our identity, and to our business. We will continue to be invaluable to the co-operative system.



COMPETITIVENESS

We will relentlessly pursue operational excellence, which will allow us to grow profitably and capture market share.



CREATE THE FUTURE

The business landscape is changing, and we need to be ready. We will explore and invest in far-reaching new business models and capabilities to secure future success.



WORKFORCE CAPABILITY

Our people are the core source of our competitive advantage in a rapidly changing environment.

[View additional resources](#)

[Learn about KPIs](#)

[Explore our 2030 goals](#)

Employees at The Co-operators appreciated the clarity and simplicity of an infographic that summarized the organization's strategic pillars. Clicking on the lower elements in the infographic led to data visualizations that communicated information shared in the company's annual report.

Employees also commented on an interactive infographic in the *Our History* section of The Co-operator's intranet. Unfortunately, employees didn't know the history image was clickable. They scanned the image but never clicked to get more information because no signifiers indicated that parts of the image were clickable links. One user said she was finished with a task related to finding historical information about the company but continued to look at the image as though she was interested in the content. She said she did this because she didn't have enough information from the image alone:

"I'd be making some assumptions here on the answer to this task. I might ask someone . . . It's a snappy little photo, but I might go validate with other people. Otherwise, this is on Source, so I think it's true. I have never seen this page. And actually, now that I'm here and seeing this, this is nice actually, it's a nice little flow chart. I didn't know that this was here, and I like it. It's a cool chart."

A key benefit of interactive infographics is that they provide context and narrative while allowing users to control what aspects of the data they see. However, ensure that link affordance — visual signifiers that indicate that things are clickable — is strong.

Consider the needs of the piece you are creating before adding interactive elements. What aspects of the data will employees be interested in? A static visualization may be enough if you simply want to make a point. If you'd like employees to interact with the information to get a deeper understanding of the different aspects of the dataset, an interactive infographic may be more appropriate.

SOURCE

Search Content Go Search People Go My Site Français

News HR Work About Us Social Locations

Home / About Us / Our History

OUR HISTORY

Co-operative Group Roots

From the fertile land of Regina, SK, The Co-operators has grown into a national, co-operative insurer that reaches the coasts of Canada. We began as farmers and social pioneers; today, we continue to be a socially conscious and sustainable organization that meets its business goals without forgetting what's most important — the Canadian people.

The infographic illustrates the historical evolution of The Co-operators through a network of interconnected circles, each representing a company founded in a specific year. The circles are color-coded by location: green for Regina-based companies and orange/red for Ontario-based companies. A central circle for CIAG Management Ltd. (1975) is connected to several other companies, including CIS Ltd. (1963), Co-operative Life Insurance Co. (1945), Co-operative Fire and Casualty Co. (1951), Co-operators Fidelity and Guarantee Assn. (1946), Co-operators Insurance Agency Ltd. (1951), Co-operators Insurance Association (1950), Co-operators Life Insurance Association (1959), and CI Management Group Ltd. (1975). The final circle at the bottom represents The Co-operators Group Limited (1978), which is shown as a large, multi-layered ring. Various historical documents, photographs, and logos are displayed around the circles to provide visual context for each company's founding and early years.

Regina Based Companies

Ontario Based Companies

1945 Co-operative Life Insurance Co.

1951 Co-operative Fire and Casualty Co.

1946 Co-operators Fidelity and Guarantee Assn.

1950 Co-operators Insurance Association

1951 Co-operators Insurance Agency Ltd.

1959 Co-operators Life Insurance Association

1975 CIAG Management Ltd.

1975 CI Management Group Ltd.

1978 The Co-operators Group Limited

This interactive infographic on The Co-operators' intranet communicated the company's history, but employees didn't know they could click on each circle representing a year to read more about what happened at the organization during that time. The circles lacked visual clues to indicate they were clickable.

The Sovereign General Insurance Company

Established in May of 1953 as Merit Insurance Company, the organization originally focused on personal lines of insurance. In 1974, Merit merged with The Sovereign Life Insurance Company – both subsidiaries of Industrial Acceptance Corporation – with Merit becoming The Sovereign General Insurance Company. In the late 1970s, The Sovereign General moved its operation to Calgary, and in 1984 shifted its strategic direction to emphasize commercial lines of insurance. Acquired by The Co-operators in 1987, The Sovereign General now offers solutions for the specialized and complex needs of Canadian businesses through an independent brokerage network.

Current Company Structure

©CUC. Thank you for coming from the Economy of Co-operators Life Insurance Company and Co-operators Life.

Had the Co-operators used a rollover state on the circles to slightly animate and enlarge them, along with a color fill and a tooltip, employees would likely have understood they could click on the circles to read more.

Every item on an infographic or data visualization — from the charts to the imagery that illustrates them — should convey meaningful information. The goal is to make abstract concepts easier to understand and grasp at-a-glance. It's also important to present data clearly and truthfully. When using charts, scale them in a way that shows the differences in the data and communicates the range of values accurately. If you include summary statistics in your graphic, clearly indicate the information source you used to calculate those figures.

Choose fonts that are readable and scalable rather than decorative and use a limited color palette. Use clean fonts for titles, headings, quotes, statistics, and captions, all sized differently to establish a clear hierarchy within the graphic. Avoid script fonts and overly complex serif fonts,

as they often distract from the key points of visual information. A few distinct colors are more visually inviting and focus attention better than many colors. Color can be an excellent way to communicate differences quickly or highlight various infographic sections, but too many colors are overwhelming.



Avoid using color as the only visual distinction.

Timeless Design Tips

Although color is a powerful communication tool, colorblind and visually impaired users will struggle to understand infographics that communicate important points using color alone.

A minimal palette forces designers to be conscious of how they use color and encourages them to explore other visual tools, such as scale and hierarchy, to express information.

For example, on Burns & McDonnell's intranet, simple and clean illustrations within infographics allowed the focus of the infographic to remain fixed on data used to describe the intranet's evolution over its first six months. The illustrations used simple, concise text and graphics, both of which supported the overall messages of the piece.

The screenshot shows the MacCENTRAL intranet homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'MACCENTRAL HELP', 'MY STUFF', 'OUR COMPANY', 'RESOURCES', and 'HR HUB'. Below the navigation is a toolbar with options like '+ New', 'Send by email', 'Promote', 'Page details', 'Posted', and 'Edit'. The main content area features a large, colorful background image of a network or celestial map. A blue button labeled 'VIEW THE INFOGRAPHIC' is visible. The title 'MacCentral By the Numbers' is displayed, along with the author's name, Goodman, Marjorie L (Marjie), Senior Communications Strategist, and the publication date, Published 8/25/2019. To the right, there's a sidebar with 'Quick Links' and a link to 'MacCentral Help Home'. Below the main title, a section titled 'MacCentral Is Six Months Old' includes a callout for users to share their thoughts in the comments. The central part of the page is the 'By the Numbers' infographic, which is divided into several sections with numbered icons:

- 1.** We Don't Have a Case of the Mondays: Shows a sun icon. Text: 'The busiest day for Burns & McDonnell to visit MacCentral is Monday.'
- 2.** O Captain! My Captain!: Shows a captain's hat icon. Text: '81 Captains directly manage their GR RO or CCR team from MacCentral. Content owners create content.'
- 3.** Most Popular Communities by Page Views: Shows a computer monitor icon. Text: 'MacCentral Homepage, MacCentral News & Publications, Information Technology, Transmission & Distribution, Benefits, Kansas City, Safety & Health, News & Publications, 8. Safety & Health, 6. News & Publications, 3. Information Technology, 8. Safety & Health, 4. Transmission & Distribution, 9. Benefits, 5. Kansas City'
- 4.** Let's Give Them Something to Talk About: Shows a person icon. Text: 'Employee-owners receive a Day of Recognition every year. In 2019, the most recent 118 employees received 118 comments, the most to far. Employee-owners were asked to @mention an amazing coworker (or two) in their lives.'
- 5.** You Shared, We Listened: Shows a speech bubble icon. Text: 'Maximizing MacCentral is a training program for all users, and MacCentral UserVoice, an idea submission platform. 41 new ideas submitted to MacCentral's UserVoice:
 - 3 Completed
 - 12 Pending
 - 2 Under Review
'
- 6.** Coming This Fall: Shows a smartphone icon. Text: 'Mobile browser access, Deeper collaboration via conversation groups'

At the bottom of the infographic, it says 'Recognized by IABC International Assoc. of Business Communicators for Change Management Communications'.

The visual hierarchy on this infographic from Burns & McDonnell's intranet guides employees through the variety of information presented. Items are sized appropriately and sequenced intentionally so the key messages of the infographic are easy to discern.

Prioritize communicating complex information in a digestible way through data visualizations and infographics. Ensure infographics are of high resolution (not pixelated) and that any text within is legible. Also, always provide substantial ALT text for screen readers.

26. Use high-contrast text for link headlines or place links next to or below images to visually indicate they're clickable.

Many intranets we studied used visual designs incorporating images and graphics to represent links to news articles, tools, events, and other areas. A well-chosen visual adds interest and can set the tone for an intranet, in addition to hopefully conveying some meaning or prompting an emotional response. Because images play such an important role, intranet designers often place text over an image to leverage the attention-grabbing aspect of the photo while providing text to communicate information.

One factor that isn't always considered when designing an intranet is that if you place text over a background image, you must ensure it's readable, which means providing adequate contrast and font weight. This can be accomplished through subtle tweaks that increase contrast without affecting the overall site aesthetic. According to color contrast accessibility requirements, text that is not purely decorative or part of a logo should have a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 (or 3:1 for large characters, defined as an 18-point font or a 14-point bold font).



Ensure images are also clickable, not just headlines or links that lead to content.

Timeless Design Tips

Especially with hero images or main header banners, teams sometimes only linked the headline text, buttons, or links that appeared in the space. This caused issues when employees clicked on an image expecting it to send them to the section of the intranet the image represented.

In addition to linking buttons, text links, and headlines, ensure any corresponding images are linked to the same destinations.

At Burns & McDonnell, there were legibility issues with text overlaid on images. Some image backgrounds were too busy and colorful, which obscured the title text and made it more difficult for users to read. For example, in the hero space of a landing page, the phrase "Wear College Colors This Friday" was overpowered by the multicolored college pennants in the background image behind the text. Though the pennants meaningfully reinforced the message, a better approach, in this case, would be to ensure that any background images are simple enough to allow the overlaid text to be legible. Redesigning the templates so that images are to the side of the title, not underneath it, blurring portions of the photo, darkening the photo, or adding

a semitransparent black box behind the text (but in front of the image) are all techniques that would help make the text easier to read.



On Burns & McDonnell's intranet, text over busy images in the hero space was difficult to read.

An alternative approach to overlaying text on images is to place linked headlines, short snippets of body copy, and buttons or links to the side or underneath the images. This way, there's less risk of the text becoming distorted or difficult to read on top of the images, especially as the page layout scales from desktop to mobile and vice versa. This is a viable approach as long as all elements, including the image, headline, and link or button, click through to the same area of this intranet.

For example, on the *Reference & Research* page on Burns & McDonnell's intranet, a grid of six images with overlaid text appeared at the top. While most images had a dark enough background to render the text legible and readable, the photos for *Market Intelligence* and *Information Management* with text overlaid were not; the section names were too hard to read because of the busy and low-contrast background.

A better approach could be seen further down on the same page of Burns & McDonnell's intranet and Atrium Health's *Benefits* page, where four images stood alone to represent contextually relevant topics or content types. And instead of using overlaid text, it appeared to the right of the images, as did clear headlines, short excerpts of body copy, and links. The image and the space containing the headline, subtext, and links were all clickable so that no matter where employees clicked or tapped in the space, they'd make their way to the right place.

MacCENTRAL |

REFERENCE & RESEARCH MY STUFF OUR COMPANY RESOURCES HR HUB

+ New Send by email Page details Published 7/25/2019 Edit

Reference & Research

Ellen, Molly A
Section Manager

About Us LEARN MORE →

Standards, Codes & Reference Materials

Market Intelligence

Technical Research

Information Management

News

+ Add

Burns & McDonnell, the Early Years, 1905-1907
Beginning in the early years (1901-1904), the good fortunes of Burns & McDonnell, Consulting Engineers...
Warren, Lance M 2 days ago
414 views

Techstreet Enterprise Has a New Look
Techstreet Enterprise has changed its look and feel, but still offers the same great content! Check it out! It's ev...
Warren, Lance M August 12
234 views

Images of America Camp Crowder Book Review
There's a new book fresh off the press called Camp Crowder . It's written by Jeremy P. Amick and is part o...
Warren, Lance M August 6
465 views

American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Digital Collection
The American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME)...
Warren, Lance M August 6
164 views

Some of the text overlaid on the images at the top of Burns & McDonnell's Reference & Research page was hard to read because of the background images. A better way of handling imagery and text is shown in the News section below, where images were placed to the left of text-based content, but both the image and the text linked to the news articles they featured.

PeopleConnect

 Atrium Health

Home > Human Resources > Benefits

Benefits

- Educational Assistance
- Teammate Emergency Care Fund
- Time Out for Prevention
- Update Personal Information

Benefits

Your Health and Retirement at Atrium Health

Atrium Health cares about your physical and financial health. Atrium Health is proud to offer health plan benefits for you and your family.

Learn about more about:

- [Health Plan Benefits](#)
- [Retirement](#)
- [Leave of Absence and Maternity](#)
- [Dependent Back-Up Care](#)
- [EdAssist](#)

 [Where to Find Benefits Information](#)

Human Resources Portal

Your primary source for Benefits information. Access anytime, anywhere at [HumanResources.AtriumHealth.org](#)

Use the Human Resources Portal for:

- LiveWELL Incentives
- Health Plan Resources
- Retirement Information
- New Teammate Benefits

 [Who to Contact: Benefit Providers](#)

YourHRLink

 YourHRLink is only accessible through the Atrium Health intranet.

Use YourHRLink to:

- Verify your address and other personal information and make any necessary changes
- Enter your Federal W-4 tax withholding information
- View paycheck, direct deposit and W-2 details
- Access PTO balance, benefits enrollment details and more



Health Plan

Atrium Health is proud to offer market-competitive health plan benefits for you and your family.

- [LiveWELL Health Plan, Dental, Vision](#)
- [Prescription Drug Info](#) and [CarolinaCARE](#)
- [LiveWELL Incentives and Health Savings Account](#)
- [Additional and Supplemental Benefits](#)
- [New Teammate Benefits Enrollment](#)
- [Submit Enrollment Changes](#)

 [Learn more about your Health Plan Benefits](#)



Retirement and Savings Accounts

Here at Atrium Health, we want you to feel the same pride for your own financial well-being as you have for the quality care you deliver and the support you provide to others.

- [401\(k\) Retirement Savings Plan](#)
- [Health Savings Account \(HSA\)](#)
- [ADVANTAGE Retirement Plan](#)

 [Learn more about your Retirement Benefits and Resources](#)



Time Away from Work

Teammates benefit from time off and time away from the workplace.

- [Paid Time Off with option to cash-in](#)
- [Leave of Absence](#)
- [Paid Maternity Leave](#)
- [Paid time to participate in Atrium Health-sponsored volunteer activities](#)
- [Time Out for Prevention – paid time to receive prevention care services](#)

 [Reference our Paid Time Off page for more information](#)



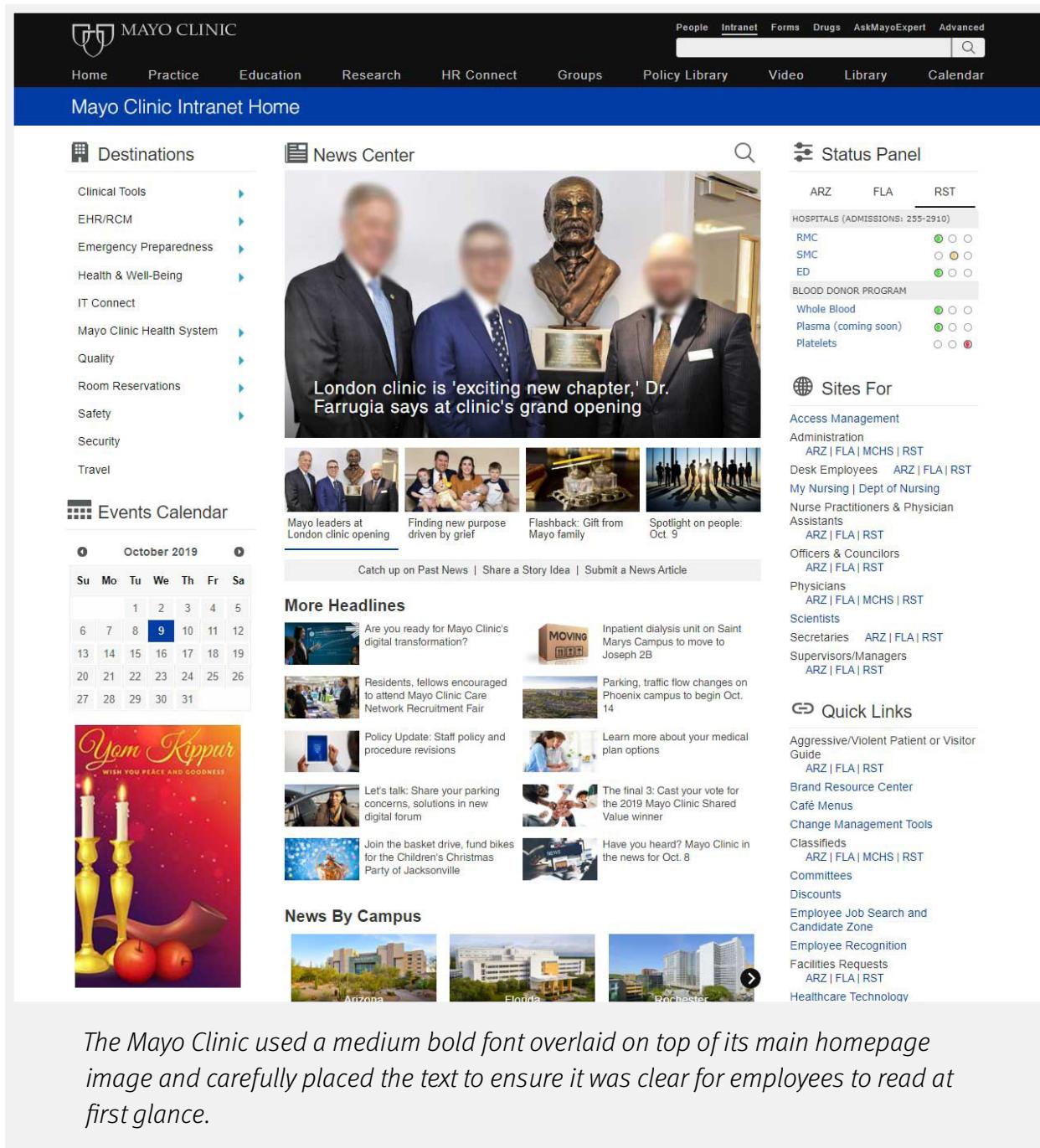
Dependent Back-Up Care

Need a reliable care provider, even at the last minute? With Dependent Back Up Care, you have access to care providers to look after your loved one when your normal care plans are disrupted. Learn more about Dependent Back Up Care and other available Additional Benefits.

 [Learn more about Dependent Back-Up Care](#).

Atrium Health took a similar approach on its benefits page. Rather than having text on top of the images, they were stacked vertically to the left of text-based content and links, which all linked to the benefits subsections they highlighted.

On the Mayo Clinic's homepage, careful consideration was taken to place text in darker areas of photographs, where it would be easy to read. The main feature image always had text overlaid and placed near the bottom. Sometimes the photos were blurred at the bottom edge to ensure the background had high enough contrast with the text.

The Mayo Clinic Intranet Home page features a dark blue header with the Mayo Clinic logo and navigation links for Home, Practice, Education, Research, HR Connect, Groups, Policy Library, Video, Library, and Calendar. A search bar is located in the top right. Below the header is a blue banner with the text "Mayo Clinic Intranet Home". The main content area includes a "Destinations" sidebar with links to Clinical Tools, EHR/RCM, Emergency Preparedness, Health & Well-Being, IT Connect, Mayo Clinic Health System, Quality, Room Reservations, Safety, Security, and Travel. A "News Center" section displays a large image of three men in suits standing next to a bust, with the caption "London clinic is 'exciting new chapter,' Dr. Farrugia says at clinic's grand opening". Below this are four smaller images with captions: "Mayo leaders at London clinic opening", "Finding new purpose driven by grief", "Flashback: Gift from Mayo family", and "Spotlight on people: Oct. 9". A "Status Panel" shows hospital admissions data for ARZ, FLA, and RST, and a blood donor program status. An "Events Calendar" for October 2019 shows a list of dates. A "More Headlines" section contains several news items with small images and captions. A "News By Campus" section shows images of Mayo Clinic buildings in Arizona, Florida, and Rochester. A quote at the bottom left reads: "The Mayo Clinic used a medium bold font overlaid on top of its main homepage image and carefully placed the text to ensure it was clear for employees to read at first glance."

Consider the full range of possible images that may be used before deciding on a technique to ensure contrast when overlaying text. Often, a solution may work for one type of image or page layout but not for others. If both dark and light images are included in an intranet design, ensure that the chosen overlay method will provide a high-enough contrast for the worst-case background image and text placement. Just because you did something to help increase the contrast on one image doesn't necessarily mean you've added enough contrast to make the text readable.

We observed another approach to text overlaid on an image background on the General Services Administration's intranet. A list of text-based headlines that looked clickable appeared under its *Agency News* component. To the right, four featured images were displayed along with a similar headline style and subtext, all of which were clickable to the news articles. Two of the photos were simply bright white, bolded text overlaid on a darker-colored background, which is a viable approach to use when the design's layout requires an image, but one isn't available. It is also much better than placing a busy image behind text.

The screenshot shows the GSA InSite intranet homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Employee Resources, Services and Offices, Locations, About Us, a search icon, and a user profile icon. Below the navigation bar, there is a breadcrumb trail "Home >" and a welcome message "Welcome Heidi | Logout".

Employee Resources

- [Acquisition, Purchases and Payments](#)
Purchase and travel card info
- [Book Space and Meetings](#)
Work and meeting spaces (physical or virtual)
- [Buildings and Real Estate](#)
Design, construction, facilities and leasing info
- [Communications](#)
Branding and communication guidelines
- [Directives, Forms and Regulations](#)
- [Financial Management](#)
Budget info and financial policies and reports
- [HR, Pay and Leave](#)
Benefits, pay, time reporting and work-life info
- [Information Technology \(IT\)](#)
IT hardware, software, security, and systems info
- [Performance](#)
Planning, appraisals and agency reporting
- [Safety and Security](#)
PIV access cards, contacts and preparedness
- [Telework](#)
Tips, tools and work arrangements
- [Training and Development](#)
Opportunities and development plan info
- [Travel and Events](#)
Temporary duty travel (TDY) and event info

Popular Tools

- [Acquisition Portal](#)
- [BookIT!](#)
- [ConcurGov](#)
- [Directives Library](#)
- [HR Links](#)
- [IT Support Request](#)
- [Online University](#)
- [Staff Directory](#)
- [All Tools, Systems and Sites](#)

Agency News

- [OMA: Financial literacy key element to preparedness](#)
- [Check out what news outlets are saying about us >](#)
- [Read how we're fostering industry relationships >](#)
- [Search our news products and find stories that matter to you >](#)
- [GSA Central - the latest from Chatter](#)

FY 2020 BUDGET

OCE Names Results for First Quarter 2019 Award
GSA's Administrator and Chief Customer Officer recognize expected service employees who worked tirelessly to meet customer needs during the recent government shutdown.

Administrator Murphy Announces GSA's Proposed FY 2020 Budget
GSA is celebrating Peace Corps Week by highlighting the Peace Corps experiences of GSA employees.

Celebrating GSA at 70

Call for Earliest GSA Memories
GSA is celebrating its 70th anniversary later this year. To help make it memorable, the 70th anniversary planning committee is looking for earliest GSA memories.

Have Questions? OHRM Introduces One Location for HR Contacts
The Office of Human Resources Management wants to deliver a mission-ready workforce.

The General Services Administration used a combination of approaches on its homepage to ensure images were present where required but that any overlaid text was still readable. This mix of methods preserved a consistent look and feel.

There is no need to choose between creating a usable intranet design or an aesthetically pleasing one. Both can be achieved if attention is paid to both goals. When combining emotion-provoking and meaningful imagery with informational text, ensure it is readable by creating a high-contrast ratio between the text and its background.

Use effects such as a semi-opaque overlay by either covering the entire image or just the text portion; add a blur, a text shadow or outline, or a combination of these techniques. Or place linked text next to images or underneath, but make sure all elements are clickable.

TABLES AND CHARTS (INCLUDING ORG CHARTS)

27. Design intranet tables to support scanning and comparison.

On pages with distinct cells of content, employees often scan those cells in a **lawn mower pattern**. The pattern's name is inspired by how a lawn mower sweeps methodically back and forth across a field of grass. The mower moves from one side of the lawn to the other, then flips around and mows the next row of grass in the opposite direction. In our eyetracking research, we have observed this pattern on many types of pages and tables. We were surprised to find this pattern as we expected users to scan each row from left to right, starting with each row label, but that's not always the case.



Lawn mower pattern

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

Users scan a table by beginning in the top left cell, then moving to the right until they reach the end of the row, then they drop down to the last cell of the next row and move back to the left until they reach the end of the row, and so on.

This pattern is an efficient way for employees to process and absorb the differences between two or more pieces of information, as it minimizes the amount of eye movement. However, if the table's design and content are not informative and thoughtfully laid out, it can disrupt the lawn mower pattern and make employees' comparison tasks more difficult.

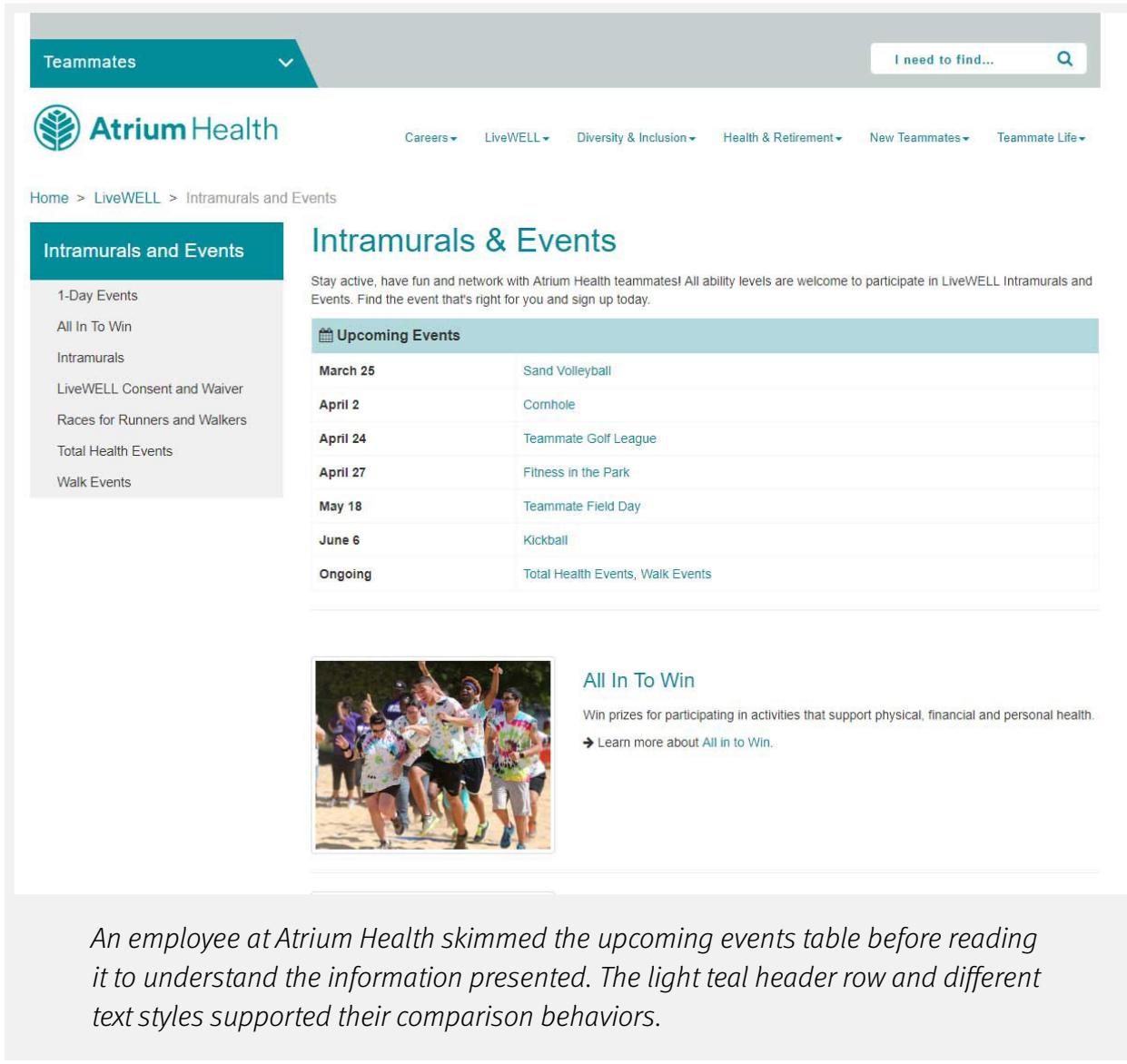
As intranet designers, it's important to realize that employees are likely to engage in this pattern when actively comparing several adjacent items in a comparison table. The pattern is often proceeded by an appraisal where the user quickly processes the table's layout before reading more closely.

The diagram illustrates the 'lawn mower pattern' of gaze movement. It features a grid of light blue rectangles representing text blocks. A series of orange arrows show the path of the eye: starting at the top left, it moves horizontally to the right, then down to the next row, then right again, and finally down to the bottom row. This pattern repeats across the grid.

In a lawn mower pattern, the user's gaze moves from left to right, then down, then from right to left, then down.

NNGROUP.COM NN/g

On Atrium Health's intranet, one employee scanned a table on the *Intramurals & Events* page to see when upcoming activities were happening. Within a few minutes of landing on the page, they appraised the table by glancing at the column and row labels and some of the cells. Because the first row of the table had a light teal background and bolded text, this supported the scanning behavior and drew the employee's eye. Additionally, because the table was well-spaced and had different text treatments for dates versus activities, employees could quickly scan the table to compare the dates to when events were happening.



The screenshot shows the Atrium Health intranet homepage with a navigation bar at the top. The main content area is titled "Intramurals & Events". On the left, there is a sidebar with links like "1-Day Events", "All In To Win", "Intramurals", etc. The main content area features a table titled "Upcoming Events" with the following data:

March 25	Sand Volleyball
April 2	Comhole
April 24	Teammate Golf League
April 27	Fitness in the Park
May 18	Teammate Field Day
June 6	Kickball
Ongoing	Total Health Events, Walk Events

Below the table, there is a section titled "All In To Win" featuring a photo of people participating in an event and a brief description.

An employee at Atrium Health skimmed the upcoming events table before reading it to understand the information presented. The light teal header row and different text styles supported their comparison behaviors.

If employees are only interested in comparing a single item in the table, they'll likely focus on a single row or column and won't engage in this pattern. In those instances, it can be helpful to alternate the table's background colors, for example, using light gray and white in either rows or columns to drive focus.

NAIT.ca has been undergoing a radical transformation. Explore the preview site of the new NAIT.ca and provide your feedback.

[EXPLORE THE SITE](#)

ALL SERVICES EMPLOYEE ESSENTIALS TEACHING ESSENTIALS INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS DEPARTMENTS & SCHOOLS INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES ABOUT NAIT NEWS & EVENTS

Search 

... DEPARTMENTS & SCHOOLS • HUMAN RESOURCES • CODE OF ETHICS & CONDUCT • ARTICLE 9.0 - ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS AND RESTRICTIONS AND MONETARY LIMITS [★ ADD TO QUICK LINKS](#)

HUMAN RESOURCES

- PAYROLL & BENEFITS
- UNION ASSOCIATION & MAE
- TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- AWARDS & RECOGNITION
- PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT PROCESS (PEP)
- CODE OF ETHICS & CONDUCT
- Article 3.0 - General responsibilities
- Article 5.0 - Requirements to disclose real or apparent conflicts of interest
- Article 6.0 - Conflicts of interest and furtherance of private interests
- Article 7.0 - Other employment or appointment
- Article 8.0 - Business dealings with institute
- Article 9.0 - Acceptance of gifts and restrictions and monetary limits
- Article 10.0 - Political Activity
- Article 12.0 - Duty of confidentiality
- Article 15.0 - Interpersonal relationships and workplace harassment
- Article 19.0 - Contraventions, consequences and penalties
- Article 20.0 - Reporting and response protocol and procedures
- Frequently Asked Questions

STAFF EVENTS

SERVICES

CLAYTON'S BLOG

HR & ODS CALENDAR

KEY CONTACTS

If you have questions regarding the Code of Ethics & Conduct, please reach out to your [human resources consultant](#).

[nait.ca](#) | Provide Feedback | Contact Support | Privacy Policy | Credit Card Payments

ARTICLE 9.0 - ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS AND RESTRICTIONS AND MONETARY LIMITS

It isn't unusual for employees to be offered gifts or entertainment opportunities by a client or vendor as part of establishing or doing business, or in exchange for services. However, it's important to recognize that sometimes accepting these gifts or opportunities could be seen as a conflict of interest.

When accepting free invitations to social, cultural or sporting events, you should consider how accepting that invitation could be perceived. Is there an expectation this will lead to business? Could this be seen as a bribe? This is especially true if the invite is very limited to specific staff versus a broader invitation to other members of the NAIT community.

Use your judgement to make sure the intent of the exchange doesn't present a conflict of interest. The code also sets out monetary limits for gifts, which vary depending on your role.

Here are some examples to consider.

- A vendor invites you to a conference or trade show, all expenses paid. This would be considered a gift and would exceed the limits – accepting this would generally not be advised and may require further approval.
- Receiving a group of tickets to a local sporting event, which you're welcome to share with your whole team. This would generally be acceptable.
- Receiving an exclusive invitation from a client/vendor to enjoy a hockey game in their hospitality suite. This may present a potential conflict and should be carefully considered given the relationship with that client/vendor. If accepted, the value should be counted towards the annual gift limits.

SOURCE OF GIFT	RECIPIENT OF GIFT	INDIVIDUAL GIFT VALUE CAP	ANNUAL GIFT VALUE CAP FOR SINGLE SOURCE TO THAT RECIPIENT
Supplier of Goods/Services	President, Vice President, Provost, Board Member or Board Chair	\$500	\$500
Donor/Partner	President, Vice President, Provost, Board Member or Board Chair	\$1,000	\$2,000
Supplier of Goods/Services	Associate VP, Executive Director, Director or Dean	\$250	\$500
Donor/Partner	Associate VP, Executive Director, Director or Dean	\$500	\$1,000
Supplier of Goods/Services	All other employees	\$250	\$500
Donor/Partner	All other employees	\$250	\$500

The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology included a table on its Gifts & Restrictions page with alternating row colors to help employees focus on the row of interest.

With table design, it's also important to help employees avoid repetitive cells. When two or more items share an attribute in the table, consider a single content cell stretching between columns. This saves employees from having to read repetitive content by darting back and forth between duplicate cells. Alternatively, offer users a way to show only rows where the offerings differ.

The Scottish Government's table design was clean, consistent, and uniform but could be further improved by merging rows and columns that share attributes. Additionally, the header row's white text overlaid on the bright blue background isn't easy to scan. A better approach would be to use a darker navy blue with white text overlaid for the header row.

The screenshot shows a 'Mandatory training' page on the Saltire intranet. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for News, My Workplace, Our Organisation, Staff Directory, and Help. On the right, there are 'Quick Links', a search bar, and a user profile icon. Below the navigation, the page title 'Mandatory training' is displayed, along with a breadcrumb trail: My Workplace > Learning > Learning resources > Mandatory training. A 'Quick Answer' section follows, containing a heading 'Mandatory learning' and a table with three columns: Learning, Who, and When. The table lists various mandatory training topics like Data protection, Managing information, Equality and diversity essentials, etc., with their respective target audience and frequency. Below this is a 'Recommended learning' section with a similar table for topics like Freedom of Information (FOI) and Health and safety for managers and employees. To the right of the main content, there's a sidebar with options to Share this page, Print this page, Add to My Quick Links, and Provide feedback on this page. It also features a 'Related links' section with links to Civil Service Learning and Health and safety e-learning, and a 'Tags' section with the tag 'elearning'. A note at the bottom indicates the page was last updated on 26/02/2019 01:44 PM.

Mandatory training

You must complete the following:

Mandatory learning

Learning	Who	When
Data protection	Everyone	Yearly
Managing information	Everyone	Yearly
Equality and diversity essentials	Everyone	Once
Recognising and dealing with bullying	Everyone	Once
Fire safety	Everyone	Every three years
Display screen equipment	Everyone	With each significant change
Unconscious bias	SCS and lead panel members	Once
Driver safety awareness	If you drive on official business	Every three years
Manual handling	If required for your role	Once
eRDM training	Everyone requiring eRDM access	Once

Recommended learning

Learning	Who	When
Freedom of Information (FOI)	Everyone	Once
Health and safety for managers and employees - this course is only available to core Scottish Government colleagues	Everyone - agency colleagues should contact their health and safety representative for local arrangements	Once

The Scottish Government had a clean table design on its intranet; however, merging rows and cells with similar attributes would have helped employees scan this table more efficiently.

Also, avoid using overly long tables on the intranet. When tables grow too tall, employees can too easily lose track of which items and information are in certain columns and rows. Instead, use fixed header rows, break the content into multiple tables, or use other design and content formatting techniques such as anchor links and accordions. Using a consistent table design across the entire intranet is also important. The table's overall style should be similar but can have slight variances to support what employees are trying to do in their scanning and comparison.

Establish your basic table design with a header row style, border color and weight, and cell text treatments. Design variations to consistently accommodate rows with the same colors, include alternating row colors and cluster related information. To keep the intranet's design tidy, don't show drastically different table designs across various intranet sections. When implemented correctly, tables can help employees make decisions quickly and easily.

28. When designing an organizational chart, include clear names, titles, photos, and reporting structures.

In addition to helping colleagues find each other, either through the main intranet search or a separate employee search and including employee profiles with key details and professional-looking headshots, it's also beneficial to include a nicely designed organizational chart on the intranet (also known as an org chart or organogram). Employees often like to find out who reports to whom and who works together on certain teams and departments.

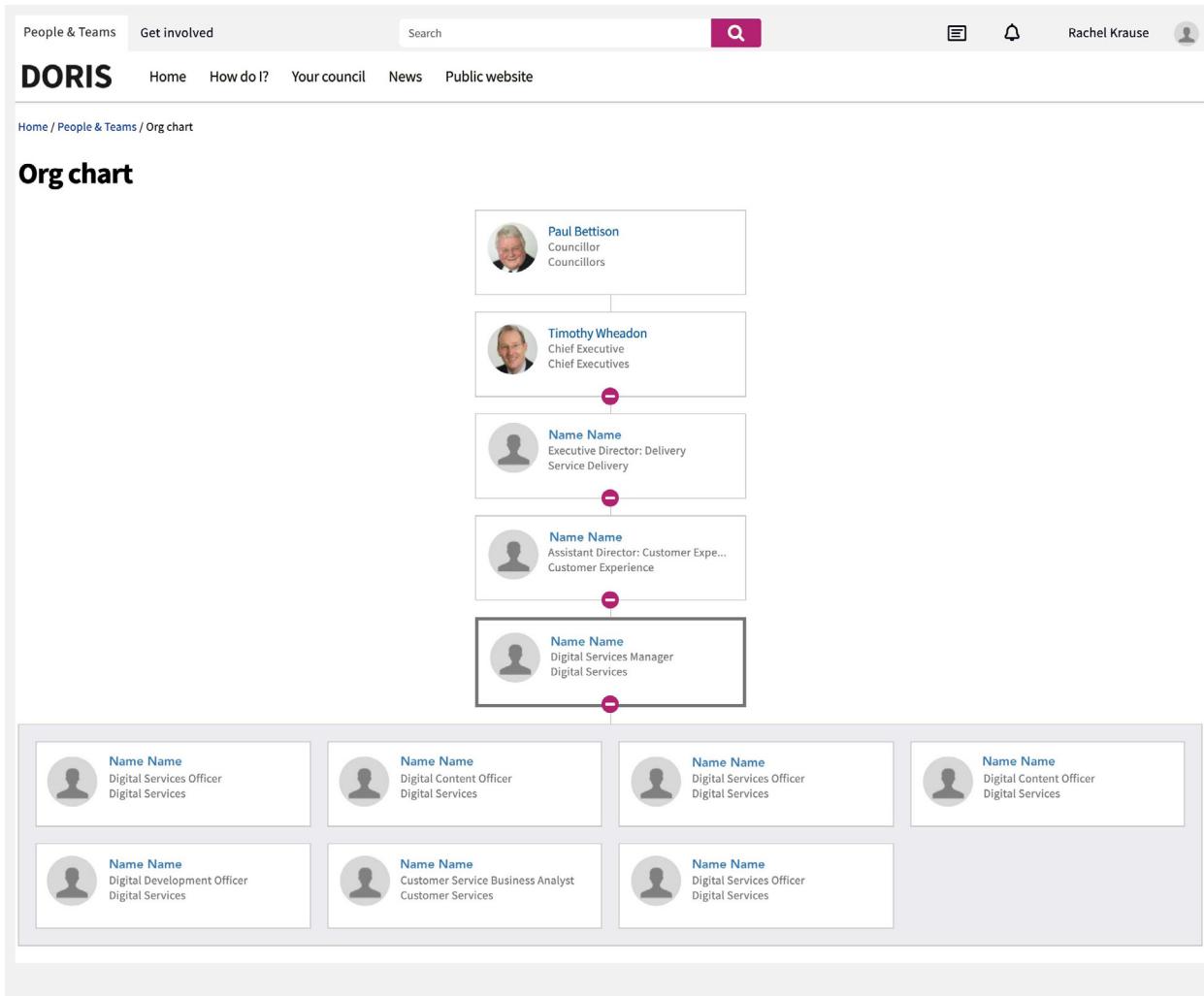
At enterprise-level organizations, it is even more critical to have access to updated, full-scale org charts. Linking to the full company org chart from an appropriate category in the main navigation or employee directory and linking to department org charts from department pages and employee profiles are all contextually relevant and viable approaches.

The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology included org charts on its employee directory and profile pages.

Bracknell Forest Council included an interactive org chart linked from the *People & Teams* section of its intranet. Employees were familiar with this feature and used it frequently. The organizational charts also made it easy to find someone's direct reports. A plus sign icon appeared at the bottom of their card for individuals who had direct reports, signaling to employees that they could click to expand it to see their direct reports. Direct reports appeared in a light grey box to visually indicate and contain the reporting structure, which was favorable. As an added benefit, each person's card in the org chart included their professionally shot photo, title, and name, which linked to their employee profile.

The screenshot shows a clean, modern organizational chart interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'People & Teams' and 'Get involved' buttons, a search bar, and user profile icons for 'Rachel Krause'. The main header 'DORIS' is displayed above the title 'Org chart'. Below the title, the breadcrumb navigation shows 'Home / People & Teams / Org chart'. The org chart itself is a hierarchical tree. At the top level is 'Paul Bettison' (Councillor, Councillors). He connects to 'Timothy Wheadon' (Chief Executive, Chief Executives). Timothy Wheadon connects to four departments: 'PA to Chief Executive, Chief Executives', 'Executive Director: People, People Directorate', 'Director: Place, Planning & Regeneration, Place, Planning & Regeneration', and 'Director: Finance, Finance'. Each department box contains a small placeholder image of a person and a red '+' button. Below this level, each department connects to specific roles: 'Director: OD, Transformation & HR, Organisational Development, Tran...', 'Executive Director: Delivery, Service Delivery', and 'Head of HR and Employee Experience, HR Centre of Expertise'. These roles also have their own placeholder images and red '+' buttons.

The organizational chart on Bracknell Forest Council's intranet had a clean design and interactive capabilities. The only design improvement we recommend to this org chart is to include clearer labels for team and department names linked to those spaces; they're difficult to decipher from people's titles alone.



Clicking on the small plus sign icon at the bottom of the cards on Bracknell Forest Council's intranet org chart revealed a manager's direct reports in a grey box, which made it easy to see who was on the same team. Employees could collapse the level in the reporting structure by clicking on the minus sign icon.

On Dell's intranet, the department org charts offered a good, high-level overview of the hierarchy, but if employees wanted to see people at the same level, they had to dig deeper and often scroll to the bottom of the page. A better approach would be to use an interactive solution where employees can navigate up, down, or across the reporting structures, especially in such a layered organization. Or the design team could tighten the spacing between each level, still showing hierarchy but with less space in between. This way, employees wouldn't have to scroll as far to see the entire reporting structure and parallel partners.

The screenshot shows Dell's internal organization chart titled "My Org Chart". The chart is a hierarchical tree structure with the following levels:

- Level 1 (Top):** Michael Dell (Chairman and CEO) and Howard Elias (President, Dell Services).
- Level 2:** Dell Employee (00000) (IT Business) and Dell Employee (00000) (Director, IT Business Co.).
- Level 3:** Dell Employee (00000) (Senior Manager, Programs & Initiatives), Dell Employee (00000) (Senior Manager, Infrastructure), and Dell Employee (00000) (Senior Manager, Applications).
- Level 4:** Various roles including Senior Analyst, Project Manager, and Business System Advisor.
- Level 5 (Bottom):** Specific employees like "Senior Advisor, IT Business - Bangalore, India" and "Senior Advisor, Product - Bangalore, India".

The chart uses a light blue background with white boxes for nodes. Yellow lines connect the nodes. A "Show Less" button is visible at the bottom of the fourth level.

Dell's org chart could have used a tighter layout with less open space between each level or benefitted from interactive features to allow employees to navigate the org chart vertically and horizontally for more focused browsing.

An HTML org chart is much better than a PDF or PowerPoint version. The optimal approach is if the org chart syncs with a tool such as Active Directory to dynamically update as employees leave the organization, get promoted, or change roles. This way, an administrator or content manager doesn't have to remember to update static org charts regularly. When org charts don't reflect the organization's actual reporting structure and hierarchy, employees become confused and waste time looking for the right people and teams. It's also helpful to include a date on the org chart for when it was last updated, regardless of whether the updating happens manually or dynamically.

29. Use animations on the intranet to provide subtle visual feedback, support discoverability, and ease transitions.

While you can design animations to draw employees' attention to things that would otherwise be overlooked, don't use animations on an intranet to make up for weak signifiers. When designing animations, it's important to match how attention-grabbing the motion is to the object's level of importance to the employee. Be careful not to overuse animations, as they can easily become overwhelming and distracting.

For example, when expanding and collapsing parts of an org chart to see who reports to an individual, the animation should be a smooth, simple, revealing transition; the cards that show other employees don't need to dance on the page as they come into view. Zooming animations can help employees understand the direction of their journey into a hierarchical information space, such as an org chart, without having to look at a tree diagram. Zooming out shows less detail but more objects, suggesting that the employee traveled up the hierarchy, whereas zooming in shows more detail, but fewer objects, creating the impression of going deeper.

At the time of our study, the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology had recently redesigned its intranet, so many employees were encountering the new design for the first time. On an employee's first visit, a very subtle set of prompts encouraged them to look around and notice various navigation sections and new features as they animated into view. The animations were obvious enough to draw attention but not so jarring that they interrupted employees' tasks as they could simply click the *End Tour* button, and the prompts would smoothly transition off the screen.

For employees who did click through each part of the tour, the prompts animated around the screen in a logical order to align with employees' expectations for discoverability; they didn't frantically jump around the page, which was favorable.

The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology effectively used light-touch animations to communicate and draw attention to noteworthy parts of its newly redesigned intranet.

Animations with a significant shift in position or those that gain speed or seem to be self-propelled rather than merely reacting to some other action are the most attention-grabbing. This is especially true when the animation occurs near the periphery of the screen, such as with toast notifications that slide up from the bottom of the intranet, popup chat bot notifications in the lower right corner, notifications that appear over the top of icons in the upper left corner, or back to top buttons that slide up from the bottom right of the screen. These are all things that would direct employee attention away from their tasks.

Because we know employees are task-oriented when using the intranet, consider whether an object is worthy of distracting the employee and potentially wasting time they could otherwise spend on work-related tasks. A notification about something important related to their job or well-being might be worth it, but that *back to top* button or obnoxious animated gif probably isn't.

Slow transitions, animations that don't change position, and those that simply fade in or out in the same spot are less likely to cause a shift in employees' attention and are less distracting. Favor slower animations for anything indirectly triggered by the employee, such as having a *back to top* button only appear available when scrolling down the page. Animations can quickly shift from helpful to annoying, so choose the most appropriate type of movement based on task context and employees' goals.

30. Design a 404 page that reflects your organization's purpose and personality and provides quick ways to recover.

Designing a good 404 page shows you care. When employees land on a 404 page, it indicates they aren't finding what they need on the intranet and that content management practices may be falling short. It's also more likely that employees will land on a 404 page on an intranet than on mainstream, public websites since intranets tend to have much more content, pages, and links to other tools and applications than public-facing sites. Providing links to help employees recover, along with meaningful graphics and copy on the **404 page**, can help get employees back on track toward accomplishing their tasks.

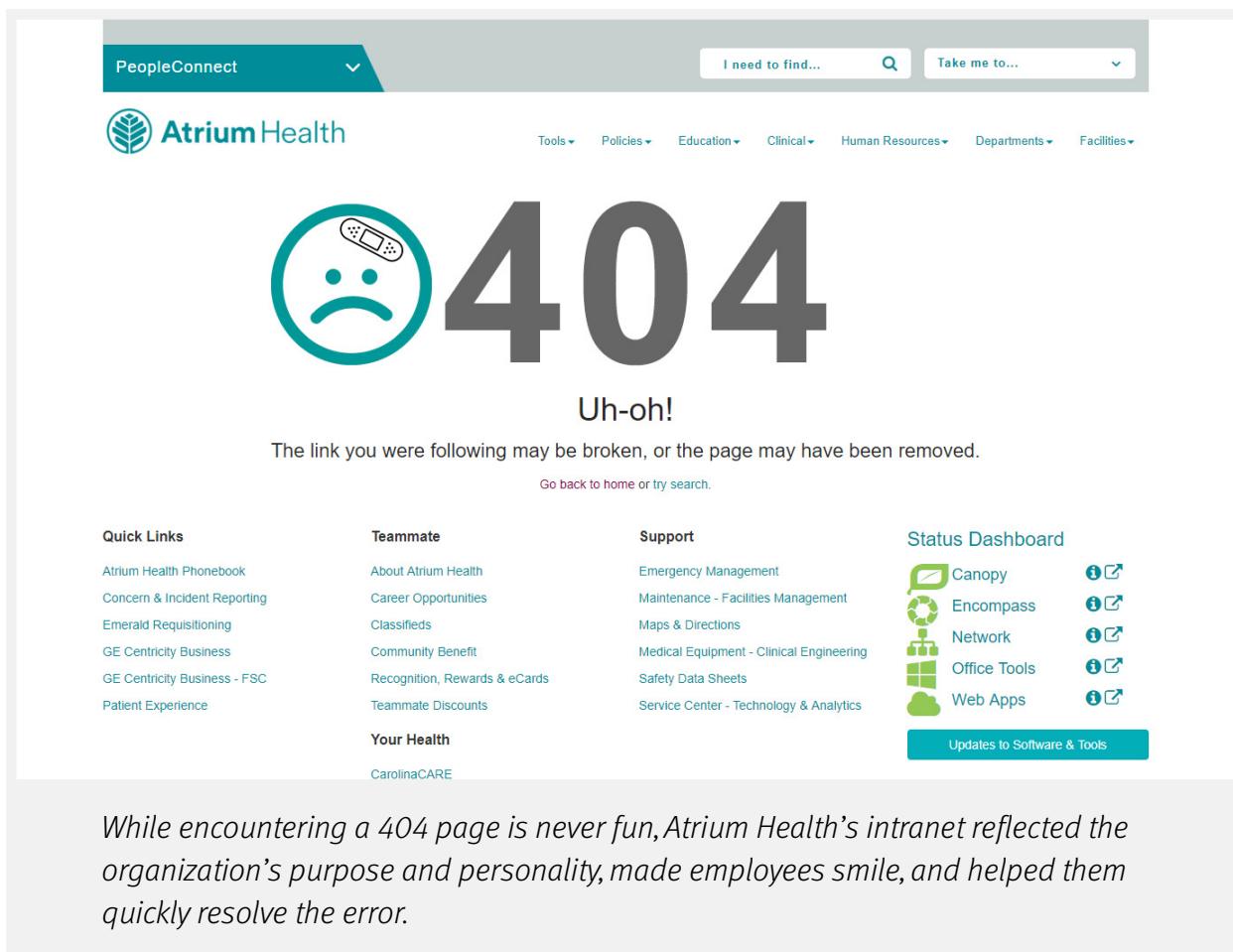


404 page

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

A **404 page** is a server error landing page that tells intranet users the requested page is unavailable or, in some cases, doesn't exist.

On Atrium Health's intranet, the 404-page reflected what they do as a healthcare organization. The graphic of a frowning face with a Band-Aid on its forehead visually indicated that the employee had encountered an error, while a clear and playful "Uh-oh!" headline was shown along with a message indicating the link wasn't available or had been moved. Links directing employees to return to the homepage or try a search helped them quickly recover and find a different route to find the needed information. Some employees even smiled and said, "Aw, how cute!" upon viewing this page.



The screenshot shows the Atrium Health intranet's 404 error page. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'PeopleConnect' on the left, a search bar with 'I need to find...' and a magnifying glass icon in the center, and 'Take me to...' on the right. Below the navigation is the Atrium Health logo. The main content area features a large teal circle containing a sad face emoji with a bandage on its head, positioned next to the large gray '404'. Below this, the text 'Uh-oh!' is displayed. A message follows: 'The link you were following may be broken, or the page may have been removed.' Below this message is a link 'Go back to home or try search.' To the left, there's a 'Quick Links' section with links like 'Atrium Health Phonebook', 'Concern & Incident Reporting', etc. In the center, there are sections for 'Teammate' (About Atrium Health, Career Opportunities, Classifieds, Community Benefit, Recognition, Rewards & eCards, Teammate Discounts) and 'Support' (Emergency Management, Maintenance - Facilities Management, Maps & Directions, Medical Equipment - Clinical Engineering, Safety Data Sheets, Service Center - Technology & Analytics). To the right, there's a 'Status Dashboard' with icons for Canopy, Encompass, Network, Office Tools, and Web Apps, each with a 'Details' button. A blue button at the bottom right of the dashboard says 'Updates to Software & Tools'. A quote at the bottom of the page reads: 'While encountering a 404 page is never fun, Atrium Health's intranet reflected the organization's purpose and personality, made employees smile, and helped them quickly resolve the error.'

An employee might encounter a 404 error on the intranet for many reasons, including:

- Server is down.
- Page was moved and wasn't redirected.
- Page never existed.
- User typed the URL incorrectly.
- URL is broken.

On the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology's intranet, the 404-page provided context and included reasons why they might be encountering the error, which was favorable. The team could improve the page further by adding links to help employees quickly find what they need to recover from the error. Adding a touch of personality or graphics that align with the organization's mission would also elevate the design.

The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology's 404 page clarified why an employee might land on the page.

The 404 page on the Mayo Clinic's intranet, specifically in its *IT Connect* tool, used plain language in the page headline, stating *Page Not Found* instead of 404 error, which was good. However, the body copy below the headline was difficult for employees to understand. There were also no links to help employees recover from the error. Though the search field is exposed in the upper right corner, it would be better to prompt employees to try search or provide links frequented by employees directly on this page.

The 404 page in the Mayo Clinic's IT Connect tool would benefit from clearer body copy and directions to help employees overcome the error.

The best intranet 404-pages maintain the overall tone and design of the intranet and help direct employees to the information they are looking for, which reduces the need for them to interrupt another colleague (to find the answer they're looking for) by chatting with them, calling, or emailing to get an answer, which wastes both people's time. A great 404-page can even make employees smile during their workday, but most importantly, it should help them recover quickly and help them find what they are looking for.

COPY AND CONTENT, DESIGN AND FORMATTING

31. Choose fonts and styles that are clean and create a visual hierarchy.

The intranet can certainly use the same color palette and typeface dictated by the organization's broader brand guidelines. However, as intranet designers, it's easy to forget that employees won't devote their full time and attention to the intranet, nor do they always use digital workplace tools in neutral, quiet environments. They are often distracted, stressed, or multitasking. Employees often scan new pages rather than reading word for word.

Choosing legible fonts and styles can significantly improve an employee's intranet experience, particularly in suboptimal conditions. For example, while we all know it's dangerous to use a smartphone while walking down the hallway to a meeting, we also know that employees do it anyway. If we can design digital workplace tools and intranets that allow employees to read important information quickly and effortlessly, we can help them be more productive with content. Good design choices can support scanning and multitasking, encourage employees to pay attention to important intranet content and save them the embarrassment of bumping into another colleague.

Text-based content must be highly legible and easy to comprehend. Consider these key factors when choosing **typefaces** and **fonts** for the intranet:

Design for glancing and accommodate distracted consumption:

- **Use larger font sizes** for anything that needs to be **glanceable**, meaning employees will likely only look at or read only one to two words, as is the case with alerts, headings, and subheadings.
- **Avoid all-lowercase** text for anything that needs to be glanceable.
- **Avoid condensed or thin typefaces**, especially for applications that may be used in distracting environments.
- **Use larger fonts in non-condensed variants** to promote quick readability for notifications, toasts, and feedback presented to employees.

Avoid the all-lowercase design trend. Avoid using all-lowercase text, especially with:

- **Headings and titles**, which need larger text in wider variants
- **Small font sizes** (and typefaces that inherently have a small x-height), as the combination of lowercase and small size, exacerbates the problems inherent in either attribute



Glancing

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

Glancing refers to quickly reading short text (often just one or two words long) in microsessions as a person is engaged in other complex tasks. Glancing often happens in response to alerts, which is a different reading behavior than skimming a longer passage of text.



Typeface

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

Also known as a font family, a **typeface** is a family of letters and characters designed to be presented together to form words and numbers. Arial, Calibri, and Helvetica are examples of typefaces. There are often subsets of fonts within typefaces from which designers can pick.



Font

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

Font is a specific set of distinct, stylized letters within a typeface, such as:

- Garamond Regular, bold, 15px
- Arial, italic, 13px

Font should not be confused with typeface or font family. A font describes the specific size, style, and weight of text that designers can use. A typeface is the group to which a specific font belongs.

We generally don't recommend using ALL CAPS text for longer passages, such as news articles, where employees will consume multiple words. When users are skimming longer passages or reading full sentences, ALL CAPS text can reduce legibility and create greater letter confusion.

Using more than one or two fonts can make the intranet design look sloppy and should also be avoided. Stick to clean, simple fonts with no more than four levels in the CSS, as it gets confusing to know when to use an H4 vs. an H5. You can use only sans serif fonts, with bolded, uppercase headings and regular, sentence case body copy, or a serif font for main headings and sans serif font for body copy.

Font styles can have an impact on the intranet's tone. Sans serif fonts often carry the connotations of being modern, hip, cold, and impersonal; while serif fonts may carry connotations of being traditional, warm, expensive, and old-fashioned. Choose styles that fit with your organization's overall culture and branding.

Sans serif fonts	Serif fonts
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Modern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hip	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Warm
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cold	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expensive
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Impersonal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Old-fashioned

Typography

GSA.gov uses the open-source font family Source Sans Pro as recommended by the US Web Design Standards. Designed for legibility, it provides a variety of visual styles.

This, along with clear and consistent header styles, highly legible tables, maps and body paragraphs, clear labels, captions and buttons creates a site that is contemporary and accessible.

Source Sans Pro

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Default Paragraph Style

“Body copy” font size is 17px, line-height is 1.5 and there is 10px space following each paragraph.

Heading Styles

These are the attributes of the headings used on GSA.gov

Heading	Font Size	Font Weight	Letter Spacing	Line Height	Space before/after*
h1	40px	500	-0.9px	1.3	0px/30px
h2	34px	500	-0.9px	1.3	20px/20px
h3	24px	400	default	1.1	20px/20px
h4	19px	600	default	1.1	10px/20px
h5	25px OR 1.5625rem	bold	default	1.1	10px/15px
h6	13px	bold	default	1.1	10px/15px

The General Services Administration used only one font family on both its public-facing website and its intranet, Source Sans Pro, which resulted in a clean and legible experience on both channels. Clearly defining when to use each heading style in the style guide would also be favorable and would ensure a consistent visual hierarchy is maintained.



Avoid embedding text within a graphic.

Timeless Design Tips

If you must use pictures of text, make sure the font size is especially large, and you use high-contrast colors. Include descriptive ALT-text so that screen readers can communicate what the image represents and what information is stated in the graphic.

It's also important to choose web-safe fonts; if a typeface is not web-safe, the text may not load as desired. For example, First Solar used Franklin Gothic as its primary typeface. However, Arial was used as the fallback if the font wasn't available.

Primary Typeface

ITC Franklin Gothic STD Book and Italic is for body copy, disclaimers and legal.

ITC Franklin Gothic STD Book Condensed and Italic is for footer information.

ITC Franklin Gothic STD Book Compressed and Italic is for subtitles and icon titles.

ITC Franklin Gothic STD Medium Condensed and Italic is for headers.

ITC Franklin Gothic STD Demi and Italic is for highlighting something within the body copy.

All disclaimers, legal, body, and footer copy must be set as sentence case.

If the Headline or Title is eight words or less, it must be set in all caps case. If it is more than eight words, set it in title case.³

³Always default to this rule unless specified otherwise.

ITC FRANKLIN GOTHIC STD BOOK

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRS
TUVWXYZabcdefghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz1234567890

ITC FRANKLIN GOTHIC STD BOOK CONDENSED

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRS
TUVWXYZabcdefghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz1234567890

ITC FRANKLIN GOTHIC STD BOOK COMPRESSED

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRS
TUVWXYZabcdefghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz1234567890

ITC FRANKLIN GOTHIC STD MEDIUM CONDENSED

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRS
TUVWXYZabcdefghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz1234567890

ITC FRANKLIN GOTHIC STD DEMI

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRS
TUVWXYZabcdefghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz1234567890

ITC FRANKLIN GOTHIC STD BOOK ITALIC

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRS
TUVWXYZabcdefghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz1234567890

ITC FRANKLIN GOTHIC STD BOOK CONDENSED ITALIC

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRS
TUVWXYZabcdefghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz1234567890

ITC FRANKLIN GOTHIC STD BOOK COMPRESSED ITALIC

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRS
TUVWXYZabcdefghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz1234567890

ITC FRANKLIN GOTHIC STD MEDIUM CONDENSED ITALIC

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRS
TUVWXYZabcdefghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz1234567890

ITC FRANKLIN GOTHIC STD DEMI ITALIC

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRS
TUVWXYZabcdefghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz1234567890

First Solar outlined its typefaces and intended use criteria in its style guide, including body copy choices, footer styles, icon titles, headers, highlighting within body copy, sentence vs. title case, and when to set headlines in ALL CAPS. This level of detail is excellent and necessary to ensure a clean and consistent design.

Substitute Typeface

For digital purposes, when ITC Franklin Gothic STD is not available, use the Arial typeface.

All brand typography styles should be followed.

Use Arial Regular and Italic for body copy, disclaimers, and legal.

Use Bold and Italic for headers.

All disclaimers, legal, body, and footer copy must be set as sentence case.

If the Headline or Title is eight words or less, it must be set in all caps case. If it is more than eight words, set it in title case.⁴

ARIAL REGULAR

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRS
TUVWXYZabcdeghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz1234567890

ARIAL REGULAR ITALIC

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRS
TUVWXYZabcdeghijklmnopq
rstuvwxyz1234567890

ARIAL BOLD

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRS
TUVWXYZabcdeghijklmnop
qrstuvwxyz1234567890

ARIAL ITALIC

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQRS
TUVWXYZabcdeghijklmnop
qrstuvwxyz1234567890

⁴Always default to this rule unless specified otherwise.

If, for some reason, the primary typeface isn't available, Arial is the web-safe fallback font.



Use variable fonts to preserve intranet performance.

Process and Strategic Considerations

Rendering text in a custom font can significantly increase the intranet's visual appeal, but it results in delays due to the extra time browsers need to load the custom font files. The delay is even greater when the text requires different weights (such as bold or light weights), as each weight involves a separate font-file download. Font-file compression and caching help, but these techniques don't completely solve the problem.

It is more favorable to use **variable fonts**, which allow the use of a single font file but adjust the weight of the characters to achieve the desired visual aesthetic. Make sure the browsers your employees use to access the intranet support variable fonts. If they don't, employees should see a fallback, browser-safe font, and up to one custom font.

Visual hierarchy and font choices control the delivery of the experience. If employees struggle with where to look on a page, the layout and typography may lack a clear visual hierarchy. Use different text styles and bright colors to draw attention to important items and muted colors for less important areas. Pages look cluttered when text, graphics, or space are not used properly. Also, scanning becomes difficult as links, headings, and subheadings are not easily distinguishable from normal text, and employees have trouble determining which page elements are relevant.

32. Position important and frequently used content near the top of the page.

A frequent mistake intranet designers make is not to provide sufficient content or place valuable information high enough in page layouts. Too often, we see landing pages with a big image and very little text on the first screenful. Even when those pages contain the right information, they often don't provide enough context to tell people whether they're in the right place or on the right track.

As a result, employees don't bother scrolling down in search of the right information or clicking on any visible links; they quickly decide the page is not worth exploring and leave with a negative impression of the intranet. Even if the link that led the employee to that page had good information scent (for example, a link from a search results page or the navigation), the employee's time is wasted by the poor context and content positioning on the page where they arrived.

When employees have a question, they decide which page or area of the intranet to go to based on how likely it is to provide an answer to their question and how long it will take to get that answer. Atrium Health knew this and positioned the most frequently accessed digital workplace tools at the top of a dedicated page.

Atrium Health placed links to important information at the very top of the page, knowing employees would be looking for specific tools after navigating to the Most Accessed Tools and Applications page.

The Mayo Clinic took a similar approach when prioritizing frequently used bookmarks for resources, education, groups, and people, by placing this information at the top of its nursing department's intranet.

Employees don't scroll mindlessly or click on every link on a page. In their [information foraging](#), they're attempting to maximize their **rate of gain** to acquire as much relevant information in as little time as possible. That's why it's important to understand what employees want to do or what information they seek on any page and then prioritize placing that at the very top. On the Scottish Government's intranet, the design team knew employees would be looking for instructions on how to request annual leave on the *Annual Leave* page. So, they placed this content at the very top, in short, well-formatted, and highly scannable bullet points. Then, subheadings drew employees' attention to other relevant sections of the page that might pertain to those with different information-seeking needs. Even though it's not at the top, that information is still easy to find.

Rate of gain and information foraging

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

If people have a question, they will decide which web page to go to based on (1) how likely it is that the page will provide an answer to their question, and (2) how long it's going to take to get the answer if they go to that page.

They assess the information that they can extract from any candidate source of information relative to the cost involved in extracting that information and choose one or several candidate sources so that they maximize the **rate of gain ratio**:

Rate of gain = Information value / Cost associated with obtaining that information

Saltire
News
My Workplace
Our Organisation
Staff Directory
Help

My Workplace > Leave > Annual leave > Annual leave - request and record
 Quick Links
Search Saltire 

Article

Annual leave – request and record

You should use the [eHR system](#) to request and record annual leave. You must not take annual leave without your manager's permission.

You should:

- make your request in advance
- give your manager as much notice as possible
- not make firm plans before your annual leave is approved

You must take annual leave in minimum blocks of half a day. Where your leave is shown in hours (i.e. part-time or non-standard working pattern), the minimum amount of annual leave is half of your contracted hours for the day of leave. Absence of less than half a day should be managed through the flexi system.

Managers approve and monitor their team members' annual leave. Wherever possible, manager may have to:

- restrict the amount of annual leave taken at any one time
- refuse annual leave at specific times of the year

If you transfer to a new post, your new manager must reauthorise any forthcoming annual leave that's been approved.

Find out about your [annual leave entitlement](#).

Part-time colleagues

If you work part-time, you are also required to record your public and privilege holidays on a [public and privilege leave hours form](#).

Employees without eHR access

You should record all your annual leave on an:

- [Annual leave sheet - full-time colleagues](#)
- [Annual leave sheet - part-time colleagues](#)

Share this page 

Print this page 

Add to My Quick Links 

Provide feedback on this page 

Related links

- [Managing annual leave in eHR](#)
- [Contact HR Help for advice](#)

Tags

[annual leave](#) [request leave](#)

Last updated 28/01/2019 12:31 PM

On the Scottish Government's Annual leave page, the layout and design prioritized the exact content employees needed to find at the top. And it wasn't full of fluffy introductory details or a hero image of someone on a beach.

At the page level, the way information is laid out and the order in which it is presented suggests what's most likely to be relevant. For example, designers can use scan-friendly formatting such as bulleted lists, bolded keywords, and descriptive headlines to help employees find relevant information. Optimize the content and its position on pages to support the top task the page is meant to address. That will take care of the many employees whose goal is to accomplish that task. It will also take care of other employees attempting to solve a different task for whom the page is irrelevant; they won't be tempted to stick around unless signals on the page lead them to what they need.

When one study participant at the General Services Administration reached a page about the agency's *Thrift Savings Plan*, as they tried to find the how much employees were allowed to contribute to their plan each year, they said, "I'm glossing over all of this information [content in the main body copy]. I don't want to read all this. I just want the website to pop out at me."

The participant went on to scan the page, looking for a number in the text. Once they found a number, they settled on that figure as the answer to complete the task. However, rather than being confident they'd found the *correct* answer, they simply stated they had stopped because it was a number.

When scrolling through the same content, another user said, "Huh, this is just so stressful . . ." because the text wasn't easy to scan. Had the page prioritized this information, placed it at the top, and used clearer subheadings to lead employees to areas of interest, they would have been much more confident and efficient.

The screenshot shows the GSA InSite intranet homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for Employee Resources, Services and Offices, Locations, About Us, a search icon, and a user profile icon. Below the navigation, a breadcrumb trail shows the user has navigated from Home > Employee Resources > HR, EEO, Pay and Leave > Benefits > Thrift Savings Plan. To the right, a welcome message for Kristal includes links for WiFi and Logout.

HR, EEO, Pay and Leave

- Benefits
- Thrift Savings Plan**
 - Roth Thrift Savings Plan
 - TSP Investment Options
 - TSP Enrollment
 - TSP Catch-up Contributions
 - TSP Interfund Transfers
 - Withdrawing Your TSP Account
 - TSP Contributions
 - Thrift Savings Plan Loans

Thrift Savings Plan

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a retirement savings plan that offers federal employees the same type of savings and tax benefits that many private corporations offer their employees under "401(k)" plans.

The TSP is a great way to supplement your retirement income. By contributing to the TSP, you can watch your nest egg grow through the course of your federal career. You pay no taxes on contributions [investments] or earnings until you withdraw the money from your account.

The Roth TSP

Federal employees have the opportunity to use a Roth TSP to contribute to their retirement. The Roth, in contrast to the traditional TSP contribution plan, requires that employees pay taxes on the money they add to their TSP. However, when they withdraw their money, unlike a traditional TSP, they owe no state or federal taxes on their contribution. However, it is important to note that unlike a traditional TSP, employees using a Roth get no tax deduction for their contributions.

Restrictions and Conditions

Because your TSP account is for your retirement, you should protect your nest egg by not withdrawing money from it until you leave federal service. If you withdraw your money prior to retirement be aware that you will be subject to an early withdrawal [penalty tax](#). You may apply for a [loan through your TSP account](#) providing certain conditions are met. And if you [leave federal service](#) before retirement age and have at least \$200 in your account, you may leave your money in the TSP until the [account withdrawal deadline](#). Consider all your options carefully because the decisions you make today will impact your financial future.

TSP news and announcements

Find out when your TSP account statement will be released, system outages, updated forms and other changes by visiting this section of the [TSP web site](#).

Resources

- GSA's Benefits and Retirement Specialists
 - Form: Summary of the TSP
 - TSP Purpose and history
 - Planning tools: How much should I save?
 - Funds performance
- Access Your Thrift Savings Plan Account
 - With HR Links, you can:
 - Enroll in TSP
 - View and update contributions
 - Stop TSP contributions

Last updated: Mar 27, 2019 [Edit](#) [Email](#)

Is this information helpful? [Yes](#) [No](#)

[Report an issue with this page](#)

Users grew discouraged by this content page on the GSA's intranet, as the content was not easily scannable. Users felt like they had to stop and read each paragraph to find the answers they needed, and this action was counter to how they wanted to consume the content.

Try to stay one step ahead of employees. Adapt content, page layouts, and information positioning to suit real needs and tasks. This way, employees won't need to create special workarounds and can maximize the efficiency of their information-seeking. A good intranet user experience involves web pages designed so employees can get the maximum amount of relevant information in the minimum amount of time.

SUPPORT SKIMMING AND SCANNING

33. Ensure icons and text are legible, scannable, and have proper contrast with the background.

Employees come to the intranet for the content — to get answers and information. In our research, employees didn't read entire pages of intranet content, nor did they want to; they wanted to skim and scan. This is why content formatting is such an important part of an intranet's visual design. Make design decisions that ensure text is as legible and easy to scan as possible:

- Choose a clean typeface (usually sans serif for body copy) — reserve serif fonts for headlines and sub-headlines.
- Use a text color that is high contrast with the background.
- Apply proper spacing (also known as leading) between lines of text.
- Size fonts large enough so that users don't have to squint or lean forward to read.

Also, remember that today's intranets are used on various devices, many of them portable; glare due to sunlight can make low-contrast text invisible. Employees shouldn't have to work hard to read the text on a page, whether on a big monitor or a phone.

For example, on DIRT's intranet, the text was small and sometimes had poor contrast with the background, making it difficult to read. In several cases, such as in the summaries under the homepage news items and the links on the *DIRTTbags* page, the text was tiny to the point where employees leaned in to read it. The typeface used on the intranet — TW Cen — wasn't easy to read. Updating it to a more readable font for body copy and links would be a better approach.

myDIRTT | SOLUTIONS | PRODUCTIVITY | RESOURCES

Hello, Rachel

myDIRTT

myFiles | myReferrals | myAlbums

Rachel | Help

DIRTT
PUBLIC WEBSITE | CONTACT

QUICK LINKS

- PHOTOS | VIDEOS | FINISHES
- ICE RESOURCES – TOOLS & INFORMATION
- DIRTTBAG INVESTMENT INFO
- DIRTT'S CONTRACTS

INFORMATION FOR

- INVESTORS
- ARCHITECTS & DESIGNERS
- DIRTT PARTNERS
- SALES REPRESENTATIVES
- INTERIOR TECHNICIANS
- PROJECT MANAGERS
- DIRTT BAGS
- STUDENTS

FEATURED AREAS

INDUSTRY SECTORS

- Government
- Healthcare
- Education

NEW / UPDATED DOCUMENTS

- LinkedIn Profile Checklist
- Leaf Folding Wall Project Scope FORM
- Grouping Requests for Site Management
- Graphic Samples
- ICE M21, DIRT and DIRT Millwork May 2019
- Cheat Sheet - Custom Graphics
- Ceiling Perimeter Drywall Mount UPDATE
- A prescription for change in the world of healthcare
- Self-powered clinic in shipping container to provide Uganda with healthcare solution
- Integrated Drop Ceiling System RELEASE

More >>

A prescription for change in the world of healthcare

Adaptability is the big take away from ASHE design conference

2019-05-10 13:26:42 :
<https://www.dirtt.net/news/2019-a-prescription-for-change-in-the-world-of-healthcare/>

Self-powered clinic in shipping container to provide Uganda with healthcare solution

Arizona State University researchers and dig collaborate on a mini medical clinic using DIRT

2019-05-10 13:24:58 :
<https://www.dirtt.net/news/2019-self-powered-clinic-in-shipping-container-to-provide-uganda-with-healthcare-solution/>

DIRTT announces first quarter 2019 results

2019-05-10 13:17:46 :
<https://www.dirtt.net/news/2019-dirrt-announces-first-quarter-2019-results/>

Employees struggled to read the small copy underneath news links on the DIRT intranet homepage because it appeared in tiny, light gray text. Though the text only communicated the date and URL, this is still important information employees needed to scan to decide which link to click.

myDIRTT | SOLUTIONS | PRODUCTIVITY | RESOURCES

Rachel   

INFORMATION FOR:
DIRTTbags

DIRTT
PUBLIC WEBSITE | CONTACT

| Help

DIRTTbags

DIRTTbags and ICEcubes – this page is just for you. Here you'll find forms and documents you need for an enjoyable life at work.

EMPLOYEE INCENTIVE PROGRAM

-  **Variable Pay Plan**
Introduction to DIRTT's incentive program for full-time, salaried, non-commissioned employees.
-  **Variable Pay Plan: Q & A**
Questions and answers for DIRTT's 2019 VVP-eligible salaried employees.
-  **Plant Incentive Program**
Details of DIRTT's 2019 incentive plan for full-time, regular, hourly direct and hourly indirect plant employees.

ARTICLES

-  **Ordering DIRTT Business Cards**
Get your custom DIRTT business cards with one simple request.
-  **DIRTT Fitness Centers**
Want to get involved with the fitness centers provided at DIRTT? Here's how!
-  **Expense and Spending Guidelines**
Use the guidelines below whenever you are making a purchase for DIRTT.
-  **DIRTT Calgary Shuttle**
Keep safe by using the DIRTT Shuttle Service in the winter months!
-  **Technology Tips**
Technology tips for DIRTTbags
-  **Stock Option Exercise Change**
-  **Client Directory**
Look up our past and current clients, as well as GC and A+D firms who understand DIRTT.
-  **Travel for DIRTTbags**
Travel for DIRTTbags
-  **Expensify Troubleshooting**
Expensify Troubleshooting

GENERAL	CANADIAN FORMS	US FORMS
 DIRTT Vision and Guiding Values	 BENEFITS	 BENEFITS
 DIRTT Travel Webinar	 CALENDARS	 FACTORY SHIFT/STAT HOLIDAY CALENDARS
 DIRTTshop / Swag Store	 Calendar 2019 Alberta	 Phoenix Holiday Calendar 2019
 Meet Your Industry Experts	 Calendar 2019 BC	 Savannah Holiday Calendar 2019
 Info@DIRTT.net Support	 2019 Shift Calendar	 LETTERHEAD
 Find that DIRTTbag	 RSP & TFS	 401K
 e signatures	 Carpool Nomination Form	 OTHER
 DIRTT UK Internal Privacy Notice	 Employee Assistance Program	 Shepell-fgi
DIRTT BRANDING		
 All Remaining Announcements		

INFORMATION AREAS

- Fit You**
CHECK OUT THE MICROSITE
- Investor Info**
INVESTOR INFORMATION FOR DIRTTBAGS

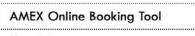
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Community Involvement**
- Sponsorship & Donations**
- Volunteering**

QUICK LINKS

- DIRTT Webmail**
- Find that DIRTTbag**

DIRTTBAGS NOTIFICATIONS

-  [Integrated Drop Ceiling System RELEASE](#)
-  [Double Door Header Support with Bulkhead INSTALL](#)
-  [Adams Rite Lock in Barn Door](#)
-  [Additional Options](#)
-  [Book Trip](#)
-  [Edit](#)
-  [Search Overview](#)
-  [New Trip Search](#)
-  [Profile](#)
-  [AMEX Online Booking Tool](#)
- [More >>](#)

Though the text on the DIRTTbags page had proper contrast with the page's white background, it was too small and tightly spaced to be read or scanned easily.

The screenshot shows the DIRTT intranet homepage for the DIRTtbags group. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for myDIRTT, SOLUTIONS, PRODUCTIVITY, and RESOURCES. On the right side of the header are icons for Rachel, search, settings, and a help link.

The main content area has a dark header "INFORMATION FOR: DIRTtbags". To the right, the DIRTT logo is displayed with "PUBLIC WEBSITE | CONTACT" below it, and a "Help" link.

DIRTTbags

DIRTTbags and ICEcubes – this page is just for you. Here you'll find forms and documents you need for an enjoyable life at work.

EMPLOYEE INCENTIVE PROGRAM

- Variable Pay Plan**: Introduction to DIRTT's incentive program for full-time, salaried, non-commissioned employees.
- Plant Incentive Program**: Details of DIRTT's 2019 incentive plan for full-time, regular, hourly direct and hourly indirect plant employees.

ARTICLES

- Ordering DIRTT Business Cards**: Get your custom DIRTT business cards with one simple request.
- Expense and Spending Guidelines**: Use the guidelines below whenever you are making a purchase for DIRTT.
- Technology Tips**: Technology tips for DIRTtbags.
- Client Directory**: Look up our past and current clients, as well as GC and A+D firms who understand DIRTT.
- Expensify Troubleshooting**: Expensify Troubleshooting.
- DIRTT Fitness Centers**: Want to get involved with the fitness centers provided at DIRTT? Here's how!
- DIRTT Calgary Shuttle**: Keep safe by using the DIRTT Shuttle Service in the winter months!
- Stock Option Exercise Change**
- Travel for DIRTtbags**: Travel for DIRTtbags

GENERAL

- DIRTT Vision and Guiding Values**
- DIRTT Travel Webinar**
- DIRTTshop / Swag Store**
- Meet Your Industry Experts**
- Info@DIRTT.net Support**
- Find that DIRTtbag**
- e signatures**
- DIRTT UK Internal Privacy Notice**
- Job Posting Leader Client Engagement**

DIRTT BRANDING

- All Branding Materials**

DIRTT PRESENTATION TEMPLATES

FACTORY FORMS

- Propane Forklift Inspection**

CANADIAN FORMS

- BENEFITS**
- CALENDARS**
- LETTERHEAD**
- RSP & TFSA**
- OTHER**
- Carpool Nomination Form**
- Employee Assistance Program**

US FORMS

- BENEFITS**
- FACTORY SHIFT/STAT HOLIDAY CALENDARS**
- LETTERHEAD**
- 401K**
- OTHER**

DIRTTBAGS NOTIFICATIONS

- Double Door Header Support with Bulkhead INSTALL**
- Adams Rite Lock In Barn Door**
- Additional Options**
- Book Trip**
- Edit**
- Search Overview**
- New Trip Search**
- Profile**
- AMEX Online Booking Tool**
- Lead Lined Walls OVERVIEW**

More >>

A text improvement on the DIRTtbags page would be to update links and body copy to Arial font, as shown in this screenshot, and increase the font size and line spacing to help with readability.

Some of the text on Dell's intranet was also too small and difficult for users to scan. For example, when a participant read the Chief Customer Officer's profile, they leaned forward to get closer to the computer screen to read the text. The employee also followed along each line with their cursor, which indicated the lines of text were too close together. Additionally, the text against the white background could have been in higher contrast to improve readability.

To make the text more scannable and legible, Dell could:

- Chunk like content together on pages.
- Add subheadings within the text to make it more scannable.
- Use bullets when appropriate.
- Increase the vertical line spacing (leading) between lines of text.
- Make the text color slightly darker.
- Make the font slightly larger.
- Bold keywords and phrases.

The screenshot shows a user profile page for Karen Quintos. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a search bar containing 'karen quintos'. Below the search bar, there are icons for notifications, messages, and profile. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Basic Information:** Includes location (Round Rock, Texas, United States), manager (Michael Dell), company (DELL USA L.P. (1001)), and supervisory organization (CEO/CC (Michael Dell (1)) (1000000001)).
- Education:** A section for educational qualifications.
- Skills:** A section for professional skills.
- Statements:** A section for key responsibilities and narrative bio.
- Job History:** A section for previous employment history.
- Summary:** A large blue sidebar on the left containing a profile picture, name (Karen Quintos (000000)), title (CEVP, CCO), and action buttons (Actions, Phone, Email, Team). It also lists Summary, Job, Compensation, Contact, and More (3).

On Dell's intranet, the copy in the Chief Customer Officer's profile appeared as a wall of text. This content could have been made easier to scan through simple modifications such as adding sub-headlines and using darker text, bulleted lists, and a larger font.

It's important to use formatting techniques strategically. Color and bolding can improve scannability and help draw attention to the most important areas of the page. But when overused, or if everything is bold, it has the opposite effect, and users don't know where to focus their attention. They'll end up overlooking and ignoring the important information you need them to see.

All	Southwest	United	Delta	American Airlines	Multiple
76 results	Most Preferred	Most Preferred	Most Preferred		
Nonstop 5 results	2 results	3 results	—	—	—
1 stop 71 results	7 results	12 results	23 results	26 results	3 results

On Burns & McDonnell's travel booking tool, Concur, the use of bolded, red, and yellow-highlighted text made it difficult for users to know where to focus their attention and what to pay attention to. They often ended up ignoring the important details and alerts, which led to confusion and booking errors.

On the City of Calgary's intranet, pages visited by participants during the study had well-constructed text that had proper contrast and was easily scannable. Most pages made good use of headings and bullets, which made scanning the page easy. The only comment one user had about the text being too dense was in a blog post they clicked on. When they faced a wall of text, they said, “I think I struggle with reading with a lot of information on the screen. I think that [the blog about online scams] would put me off. I’m more of a visual person.”

However, not all of the intranet's blog posts suffered from this problem. One user commented favorably on the content layout of a different blog post by saying, “So, there's one very recent one, so I'll click on that one. Yeah, so this one is about National Alcohol Awareness Week. Nice use of heading and bullets; it's very scannable.”

The screenshot shows the City of Calgary's myCity intranet. At the top, there's a red header bar with the 'Calgary' logo and the 'myCity' logo. A search bar with the placeholder 'search myCity' and a magnifying glass icon is positioned to the right. Below the header, a navigation bar includes links for 'Tools & Resources', 'myHR', 'Organization', 'News & Events', 'Dashboard', and 'Safety & Security'. The date 'June 12, 2019 ⏲ 24°' is also at the top right.

The main content area has a left sidebar under 'Pay and benefits' with sections for 'Time off and absences' (which is expanded) and other topics like 'Leaves of Absence (LOA)', 'Statutory Holidays', 'Unauthorized Vacation Banks', 'Return to Work', 'Time reporting', 'Inclement Weather (Snow Days)', and 'Attendance Support Program (ASP)'. The 'Time off and absences' section contains links for 'Time off and absences', 'Time Off', 'Illness or injury (not work-related)', 'Workplace injury', 'Leaves of Absence', and 'Voting'.

Time off and absences

Employees have a responsibility to attend work on a regular and punctual basis, and arrive at work mentally and physically able, willing, and ready to work.

The Department/Business Unit has an obligation to create working conditions conducive to good attendance, monitor attendance, and work with employees who are experiencing unacceptable levels of absenteeism through the [Attendance Support Program](#).

Time Off

Statutory holidays, vacation and witness duty are governed by your [Collective Agreement](#). All employees are encouraged to take vacation. If you do not use your full vacation entitlement each year, and do not transfer unused vacation into "Banked Vacation", you accumulate [unauthorized vacation hours](#).

Illness or injury (not work-related)

Employees who are sick and unwell and [call in sick](#) to take time off work to recover, may be covered by Sickness and Accident (S&A) benefits. For payroll purposes, the code for this time is S03.

Absences shorter than five consecutive days
For absences that are shorter than five consecutive working days, you do not need to provide an Attending Physician Statement.

For absences greater than five consecutive working days
Absences greater than five consecutive working days must be supported by an Attending Physician Statement. Coverage is provided by [Sickness and Accident \(S & A\)](#) or [Long Term Disability \(LTD\)](#), depending on length of absence.

Workplace injury

An injured employee should report the incident to their supervisor immediately and get medical attention if needed. If you are absent because of a workplace injury, it needs to be reported to WCB within 72 hours. Supervisors and employees should follow the claim process of the [Worker's Compensation Board](#).

For questions about the WCB process contact [WCB Administration](#). Visit [Health Management](#) for details.

Leaves of Absence

[Leaves of Absence](#) are governed by your [Collective Agreement](#). These can include Union Leave, Maternity Leave, Parental Leave, Adoption Leave, Paternity Leave, Overstay Leave, Military Leave, Bereavement leave.

Voting

Any employee who is scheduled to work on voting day and who is eligible to vote is allowed **3 consecutive hours** for the purpose of casting their ballot. However, these 3 consecutive hours need not be working hours.

For example, an employee whose shift is from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. would qualify to leave at 5 p.m., without loss in pay, whereas an employee whose shift ends at 5 p.m. (or sooner) would not be entitled to any time off work. Further, you are NOT REQUIRED to grant the time off unless it is requested by an employee.

Resources:

- [Union agreements & representatives](#)
- [2018 Year-end Client Communication](#)

The text and content on the City of Calgary's intranet was well formatted, legible, and easy to scan.

First Solar's content was also easy to skim and scan. The text was dark enough against the bright white background, and headlines, subheadings, bolding, and bulleted lists were used.

The screenshot shows a SharePoint site with a dark blue header bar. The header includes the 'POWER' logo, a 'SharePoint' link, and various navigation icons. Below the header is a dark blue navigation bar with links for 'APPS & TOOLS', 'WORK RESOURCES', 'TEAMS & DEPTS', 'HR', and 'OUR COMPANY'. A search bar is located on the right side of the navigation bar. The main content area has a light gray background. At the top of the content area, there is a breadcrumb trail: 'POWER > Human Resources > HR Recognition-YOUshine'. Below the breadcrumb is the team name 'HR Recognition-YOUshine' and a 'FOLLOW THIS TEAM' button. The main content area features a large image of a sun with rays and the word 'YOUshine' in a stylized font. Below the image, there are three tabs: 'ABOUT US' (which is selected), 'TOPICS', and 'RELATED SITES'. The 'ABOUT US' tab contains the following sections:

- About Us**: A brief introduction and a quote from CEO Mark Widmar.
- YOUshine**: A section about the recognition program, mentioning an update due to budget depletion.
- YOUshine Program Guidelines**: A list of links including 'Program Guidelines', 'Recognition Toolkit', 'Quick Reference', 'Award Values', 'Standard of Living Index', 'FAQs', 'Nomination Planning Template', 'Video: Follow a Year of Service Celebration', and 'Points After Leaving Company'.
- Other Recognition Programs**: Links to 'Excellence in Action Awards' and 'Exceptional LTI'.
- Recognition Beyond Our Programs**: A section about the responsibility of recognition and a link to 'Low Cost Recognition Ideas'.

On the right side of the page, there are three vertical boxes:

- ESSENTIAL LINKS**: Includes links to 'Launch YOUshine', 'YOUshine Guidelines', 'Recognition Toolkit', 'Excellence in Action Awards', and 'ELTI Process'.
- POPULAR RESOURCES**: Includes links to 'YOUshine Program Guidelines', 'Recognition Low Cost Ideas', 'Recognition Toolkit', 'YOUshine Approver Tips', and 'Using YOUshine'.
- PEOPLE**: Shows two employee profiles: 'Employee Name, Manager, Organizational Development' and 'Employee Name, Specialist, Organizational Development'.

At the bottom of the content area, there is a small red footer bar with the text '#HR RECOGNITION-YOUShINE'.

The footer is a dark gray horizontal bar containing several links and social media icons. On the left is the First Solar logo. To the right are four columns of links:

- POWER**: About POWER, Feedback, POWER Training.
- ETHICS & COMPLIANCE**: Corporate Policies, Ethics Helpline, Global Business Guide, Trading Blackout Calendar.
- SAFETY FIRST**: EHS Services, Emergency Numbers, Report an Incident, Safety Moment.
- IT SERVICE DESK**: Local Service Desk Numbers, IT Help: 1-419-682-8999, Internal Ext. 1234, Service Desk Ticket.

Below these columns are three social media icons: LinkedIn, YouTube, and Twitter.

First Solar's intranet also had nicely formatted content that was easy for employees to see, skim, and scan.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution used a light blue background behind bright orange text on its learning platform homepage, which was not accessible and was difficult for users to scan.

The screenshot shows the RNLI Learning Zone homepage. At the top, there's a banner with the RNLI logo and the text "WELCOME TO LEARNING ZONE". Below this, a large image of RNLI crew members in yellow life jackets. A call-to-action text "Choose an option ▼ below to get started" is centered above a grid of cards. The grid contains nine cards arranged in three rows of three:

- MY REQUIRED LEARNING**: Shows a graduation cap icon.
- MY DEVELOPMENT PLANS**: Shows a bar chart icon.
- GETTING STARTED**: Shows a collage of six people's faces.
- ESSENTIAL FOR YOUR ROLE**: Shows a person in a yellow suit holding a helmet.
- YOUR COMPETENCIES AND RECOMMENDED LEARNING**: Shows a person in a yellow suit holding a helmet.
- LATE COURSE AVAILABILITY**: Shows a calendar icon.
- EXPERIENCE DAYS**: Shows a person in a yellow suit holding a helmet.
- WHAT'S NEW?**: Shows a small image of a person and arrows pointing left and right.
- PROSPECTUS**: Shows the text "Learning and Development PROSPECTUS Your guide to RNLI learning".
- LEARNING RESOURCES CENTRE**: Shows the text "resourcescen" with a large white 'i' icon.
- getabstract**: Shows the text "getabstract compressed knowledge".

The orange text on the homepage cards on the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's learning platform did not properly contrast with the light blue background. A better approach would be to use dark blue or black text.

Contrast Checker

[Home](#) > [Resources](#) > Contrast Checker

Foreground Color

#F28C00

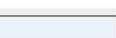


Lightness



Background Color

#EAF2FA



Lightness



Contrast Ratio

2.17:1

[permalink](#)

Normal Text

WCAG AA: **Fail**

WCAG AAA: **Fail**

The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

Large Text

WCAG AA: **Fail**

WCAG AAA: **Fail**

The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

Graphical Objects and User Interface Components

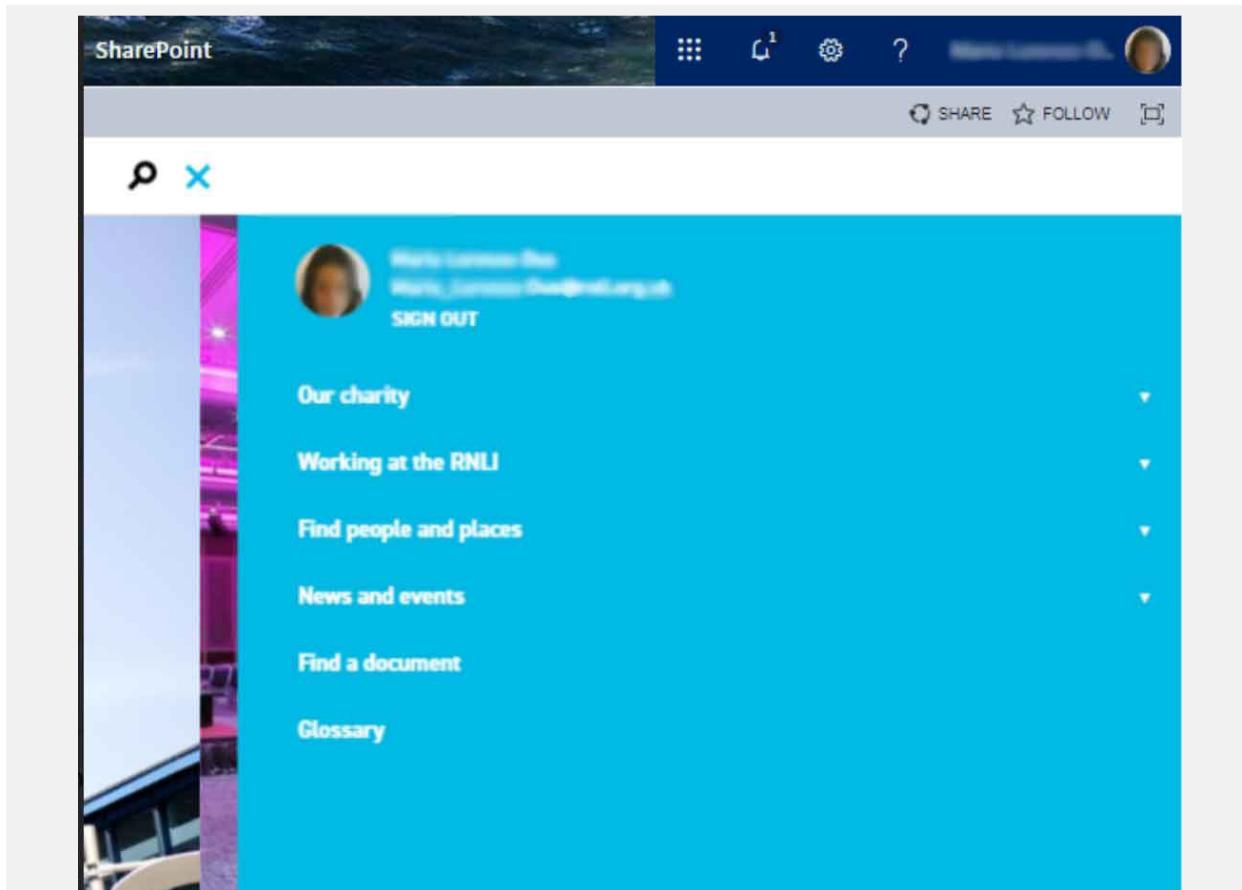
WCAG AA: **Fail**



Text Input

Checking the text and background color contrast ratio on RNLI's learning platform homepage using WebAim's contrast checker reveals that this combination fails all accessibility standards.

RNLI used a hamburger menu icon to represent the main navigation on its intranet. Unfortunately, the icon's bright blue color against the white background was not accessible. Additionally, the items were displayed with the same poor color contrast once the menu was opened. Two employees leaned in closely to read the white menu labels on the blue background. For those with visual impairments, this color combination was also too difficult to read, skim, and scan, as the contrast ratio of this color combination was not accessible.



White text against a bright blue background on the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's main navigation menu did not pass accessibility standards, and it strained employees' eyes as they tried to scan the menu options.

34. Design headlines and subheadings so they are visibly different from the body copy.

When content pages are not visually segmented with descriptive headings and subheadings, employees have to wade through an undifferentiated mass of text on the page. We call these walls of text. Don't force employees to expend the extra cognitive effort and energy required to understand intranet content with this type of presentation. When designing content, add headings and subheadings to make sure the content is scannable. Subheadings must be visibly different from body copy so that employees can easily tell one section of content from another.

In one example, an employee scanned a page on the Mayo Clinic intranet to find out how much money the company would contribute to an employee who was adopting a child. The page displayed many different types of allowances, but one of the subheadings mentioned the words, *Tax Considerations*. The user skipped that content section entirely, even though the answer to complete her task was there. She found it later, after three minutes and 26 seconds of searching. If the subheading had been more visibly distinct and contained more of the content underneath it, the user would have found her answer much more quickly.

A user at the Mayo Clinic struggled to find the answer to complete a task because the subheadings on the page were not visually different enough from the body copy. This issue could be easily solved by increasing the font size of the subheadings and writing clearer headlines to draw users into key content sections.

In another example, an employee was scanning content on the mobile version of Atrium Health's intranet. Unfortunately, the content appeared as a wall of text without headings or subheadings to break up the content. Including signals and signposts, such as subheadings, in content consumed on smaller screens is even more important as there is less context. By doing so, users will quickly get a sense of what's in each section of copy on the page as they scroll to skip the ones they don't need and focus on the ones they do.

Atrium Health, one of the nation's leading and most innovative healthcare organizations, provides a full spectrum of healthcare and wellness programs throughout North and South Carolina. Our diverse network of more than 791 care locations includes academic medical centers, hospitals, healthcare pavilions, physician practices, destination centers, surgical and rehabilitation centers, home health agencies, nursing homes, and hospice and palliative care. Atrium Health works to improve and enhance the overall health and wellbeing of its communities through high quality patient care, education and research programs, and a variety of collaborative partnerships and initiatives.

Atrium Health is an outgrowth of a community hospital originally founded in 1940. Since that time Atrium Health has grown into one of the nation's largest and most comprehensive systems, with more than 60,000 full-time and part-time employees, more than 7,460 licensed beds (acute care and post-acute care), and an annual budget exceeding \$7.7 billion (comparable to many Fortune 500 companies).

Premier facilities include Levine Cancer Institute, Levine Children's Hospital, Sanger Heart & Vascular Institute, CMC Neurology and The Transplant Center. Other specialties include maternity (regular and high risk), assisted reproduction, interventional oncology, radiation therapy,

This About section on Atrium Health's mobile intranet would be much easier to skim and scan by adding subheadings that are visibly different from the body copy, such as in a teal font that's slightly smaller than the main headline.

On Burns & McDonnell's intranet, a content page with information about requesting time off from work would have also benefitted from larger subheadings. The main headline on the page read *Time Off Work*, which was clear and favorable; however, only one additional subheading appeared. It was bolded and displayed in a navy-blue font, which was visibly different from the body copy, but it could have been slightly larger to stand out sufficiently. Including several more subheadings to summarize what each paragraph communicated would also reduce the wall-of-text appearance.

Time Off Work

There are a variety of programs to account for your time out of the office. These programs are listed and described in the following sections.

Personal Time Off (PTO)

The Personal Time Off (PTO) program allows full-time and reduced-full-time employee-owners to take time off work with pay. Time charged to PTO may include illnesses, vacation, funerals for non-immediate family members (see Bereavement Leave for definition of immediate family), or any other reason an employee-owner may have for taking time off work. Part-time employee-owners may have for taking time off work with pay.

PTO accrual begins in the first pay period worked. Full-time employee-owners begin with an annual PTO accrual rate of 15 days (120 hours) per year. After three years of service, the PTO accrual rate will increase to 17 days (136 hours) per year. One additional day (8 hours) of PTO will be accrued for each year of service thereafter up to a maximum of 25 days (200 hours) of PTO per year. PTO is accrued on a per-pay-period basis and is carried over from each payroll period to the next. PTO accrual rate is at the rate of your annual PTO divided by 26 payroll periods.

Please note: Annual PTO accrual rates are based upon the employee-owner's service anniversary date. Reduced full-time employee-owners accrue PTO at a pro-rated amount, based upon their work schedule of 75%, 80%, or 90% of full-time.

PTO cannot be charged until it has been accrued, except during the first 90 days of employment. New employee-owners may charge up to a maximum of 24 hours of PTO during the first 90 days of employment, subject to repayment if the individual separates employment during that same timeframe (except where prohibited by applicable law). Reduced full-time employee-owners accrue personal time off at a pro-rated amount.

Exempt employee-owners may charge PTO in one-hour increments, unless required otherwise by law. Hourly employee-owners may charge PTO in half-hour increments. Employee-owners may not accumulate more than one year's total PTO accrual as of December 31 each year. For example, if you are entitled to 15 days of PTO per year, you cannot carry over more than 15 days to the following year. Any time in excess of one year's accrual will be bought back.

Notice will be sent to employee-owners with PTO accrued in excess of one year's accrual at the beginning of the fourth quarter of each year. An employee-owner may not take time off without pay if there is an available balance of PTO, other than as set forth in the military leave and FMLA policies. An employee-owner who resigns or is terminated will be paid in full for any accrued PTO unless the employee-owner has a debt to the company.

Employee-owner may access the [PTO process](#). The PTO balance will adjust bi-weekly after payroll has processed. If adjustments are made to past timesheets, the PTO report will update once the adjustments are processed through payroll. The process date is determined by the approval date of the adjustment. To be included in current PTO accrual, the adjustment must be approved by the end of the current pay period. The PTO taken on the right side of this report is cumulative. PTO balances are also available on pay slips. Keep in mind, this balance is as of the last day of the pay period and does not reflect the current pay period's accrual. Therefore, the pay slip balance will be less than actual PTO report Current Available Balance by prior accrual.

The use of PTO must be approved in advance (when foreseeable) by your department manager. PTO usage in excess of two weeks must be approved in advance by both department manager and division manager to ensure all appropriate business needs are met.

Please contact [with questions about your PTO](#). To request PTO, please complete the [PTO Request Form](#) and submit to your manager.

Part-Time Personal Time Off (PTO)

The Part-Time Personal Time Off (PTO) program allows part-time employee-owners to take time off with pay. Time charged to PTO may include illnesses, vacation, funerals, or any other reason a part-time employee-owner may have for taking time off work. Part-time employee-owners accrue one hour of PTO for every hour worked, up to a maximum accrual of 50 hours.

Part-time PTO is accrued on a per-pay-period basis and is extended at the beginning of each payroll period. Part-time PTO cannot be charged until it has been accrued. Part-time employee-owners may charge Part-Time PTO in one-quarter hour increments. An employee-owner who resigns or is terminated will be paid in full for any accrued Part-Time PTO unless the employee-owner has a debt to the company.

Holidays

Regular full-time and reduced-full-time employee-owners are entitled to **eight paid holidays** each year:

Paid holidays are:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas

In addition to these designated company holidays, eligible employee-owners will receive pay for one floating holiday each calendar year. Employee-owners may elect to take floating holidays any day of the calendar year, but cannot be charged for floating holidays. Managers are responsible for scheduling with their department Manager to utilize the floating holiday if required. Floating holidays may not be carried over to the next calendar year and will be forfeited if not used by the end of the calendar year or at the time of separation of employment.

When a holiday falls on Saturday, the preceding Friday will be observed as the holiday. Holidays falling on Sunday will be observed the following Monday. Employee-owners should not work on holidays unless they are authorized to do so by their department managers.

2 people liked this 9472 Views Save for later

Burns & McDonnell's Time Off Work page only included one subheading that was not as visually distinct as it could be from the body copy. Increasing the font size and having even more subheadings would help to improve this page.

While some pages on the City of Calgary's intranet used large subheadings that were visibly different from the body copy, others failed to use consistent formatting and had subheadings that appeared in either bolded body copy or the same font size and weight as the body copy itself. Though the subheadings were spaced apart, they were not visually different enough from the body copy to stand out. A better approach would be to use the same headline treatments as what's used on the *Help topics* subheading or a slightly smaller version of this treatment for the other subheadings on the page.

The screenshot shows the City of Calgary's myCity intranet. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like 'Tools & Resources', 'myHR', 'Organization', 'News & Events', 'Dashboard', and 'Safety & Security'. A search bar is also at the top right. The main content area has a sidebar on the left with a 'How Do I...?' section containing various links related to IT services. The main content area features a large heading 'Computers & Phones'. Below it, there's a paragraph about the Information Technology (IT) business unit. Underneath, there's a 'Help topics' section with a 'How do I...?' heading and several links. The page is filled with subheadings and lists of links, such as 'Smartphones, cell phones and Wi-Fi', 'Hardware and software', and 'Access to folders and applications'. The overall layout is complex and visually dense.

The subheadings on this page from the City of Calgary's intranet were not visually different enough from the body copy on the rest of the page. Increasing the size and weight of the font for lines such as Smartphones, cell phones, and Wi-Fi would make the page easier to scan.

Calgary myCity

search myCity

Tools & Resources ▾ myHR ▾ Organization ▾ News & Events ▾ Dashboard ▾ Safety & Security ▾

June 12, 2019 23°

Pay and benefits

Employee benefits

Employee benefits



City employees are provided benefit coverage under the [Municipal Employees Benefit Association of Calgary](#) (MEBAC) program which includes life and disability, as well as health and dental coverage for you and your dependents. It also includes:

- Prescription drugs
- Vision care
- Paramedical practitioners
- Emergency travel

Popular resources

- [Employee benefits booklet](#), information on eligibility, coverage and premiums
- [Optional Critical Illness booklet](#) and [adjudication examples](#)
- [Make a benefits claim](#) through Green Shield Canada
- [Sickness and accident information](#)
- [myHRconnect](#) - view your pay statements, benefit coverage levels, time reporting and internal job postings.
- [Emergency travel benefits](#)
- [2019 Pay Deductions](#)

Coordinating benefits

If you have benefit coverage under more than one benefit plan (e.g. through your spouse's plan) you can submit expenses under both plans to receive up to 100% coverage.

How to coordinate benefits if:

- [One spouse works for The City](#)
- [Both spouses work for The City](#)

Changing your coverage level

Health and dental coverage levels can only be changed during the benefit enrolment period. This year, the window for change was **November 19 and December 16, 2018**. [More information on the 2019 benefit enrolment will be shared in the fall.](#)

For new employees: Enrolment may also take place throughout the year for newly hired employees, those in recall/rehire positions or for temporary employees who moved into a permanent position.

Benefit updates:

Long-term disability rates have increased for 2019

This year, members will notice an increase in their Long-Term Disability (LTD) rate; from 2.20% of earnings to 2.85% of earnings. The increase was necessary due to increased use of the LTD plan. The rate increase will ensure plan stability and maintain its current offering. Every year MEBAC reviews and sets member contribution rates. It is currently working with The City to support employee health and reduce the cost related to the plan. For more information contact your [MEBAC Trustee](#) or [Union/Association](#) representative.

The Employee Benefits page on the City of Calgary's intranet was a much better example of using subheadings that were clear and visibly different from the body copy.

On the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's intranet, users found the subheadings on the *Travel season ticket loans* page helped them locate the information they needed. In addition to being clear, concise, and descriptive, the subheadings were visibly different from the body copy, which helped draw the user's eye to the specific information they needed.

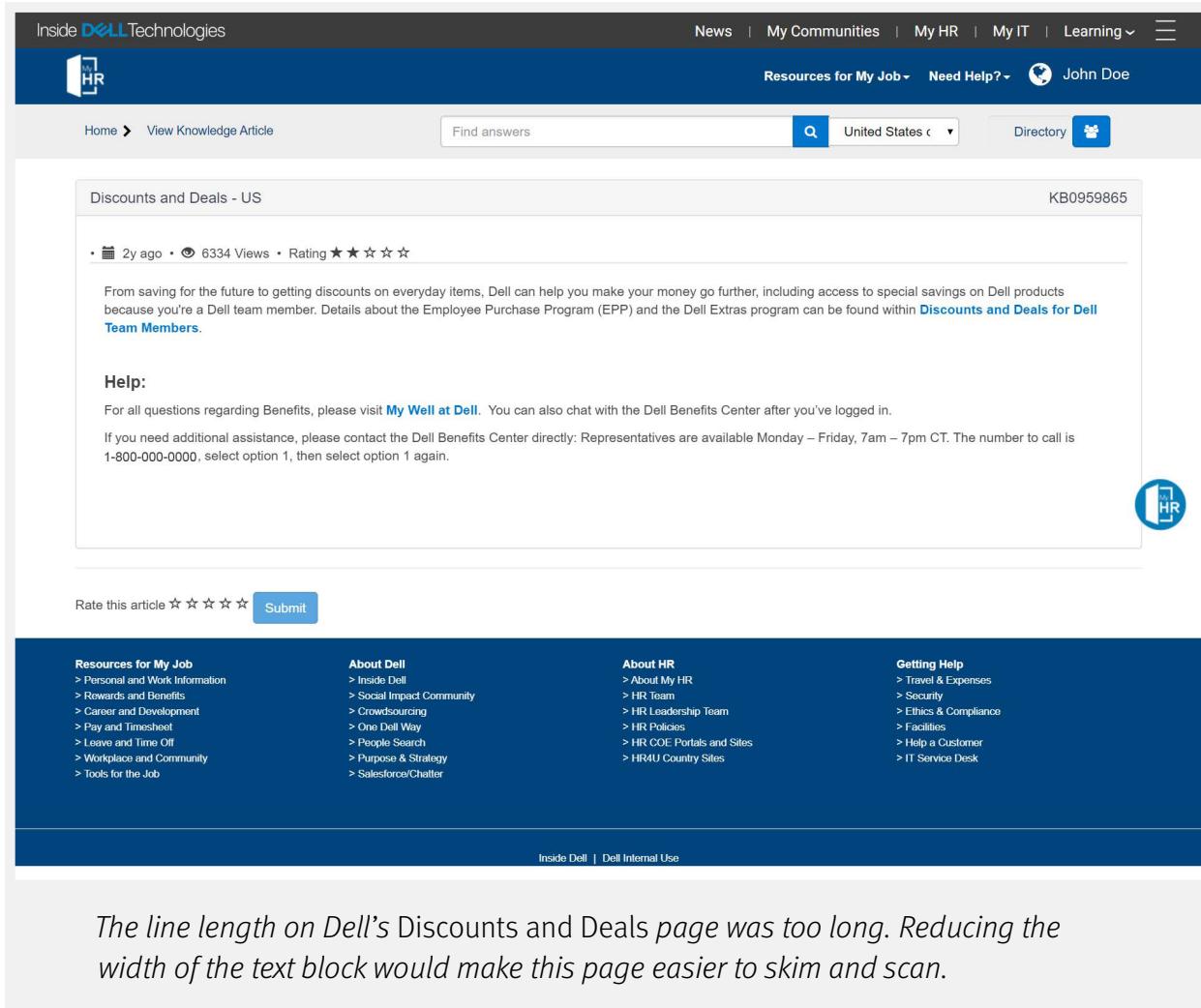
The subheadings on the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's intranet were effective and easily distinguished from the body copy on the page.

35. Use a line length (also known as line measure) of 45–75 characters.

When pages are designed to have wide columns with a lot of text, it makes it difficult for employees to read and scan the content. Their eye is forced to traverse the entire width of the page, then find where to start the next line all over again on the complete opposite side of the screen. This is too much cognitive effort and interaction cost for busy employees.

As such, it's best to use a line length (also known as line measure) that doesn't force employees' eyes to work so hard to consume content. A maximum line length of 45 to 75 characters works best for intranet designs.

For example, *Discounts and Deals*, the employee discounts page on Dell's intranet, had a wide line length. To improve pages with wide columns of text, consider narrowing them.



The screenshot shows the Dell Intranet homepage with a dark blue header. The header includes the "Inside DELL Technologies" logo, a navigation bar with links for News, My Communities, My HR, My IT, Learning, and a user profile for John Doe. Below the header is a search bar with a magnifying glass icon and dropdown menus for "Resources for My Job", "Need Help?", and "United States". A "Directory" link and a video camera icon are also present.

The main content area features a knowledge article titled "Discounts and Deals - US". The article has a timestamp of "2y ago", 6334 views, and a rating of ★★★★☆. The text discusses saving for the future and getting discounts on everyday items for Dell team members, mentioning the Employee Purchase Program (EPP) and Dell Extras. It links to "Discounts and Deals for Dell Team Members".

A "Help:" section provides contact information for the Dell Benefits Center, including a phone number (1-800-000-0000) and instructions to select option 1. There is a "Rate this article" section with a star rating and a "Submit" button. At the bottom of the page is a footer with links for "Resources for My Job", "About Dell", "About HR", and "Getting Help", along with a "Inside Dell | Dell Internal Use" note.

The line length on Dell's Discounts and Deals page was too long. Reducing the width of the text block would make this page easier to skim and scan.

The screenshot shows the Atrium Health intranet homepage. At the top, there's a teal header bar with the word "Teammates" and a dropdown arrow on the left, and a search bar with the placeholder "I need to find..." and a magnifying glass icon on the right. Below the header, the Atrium Health logo is displayed, featuring a stylized green leaf icon followed by the text "Atrium Health". To the right of the logo are several navigation links: "Careers", "LiveWELL", "Diversity & Inclusion", "Health & Retirement", "New Teammates", and "Teammate Life". A breadcrumb navigation path "Home > New Teammates > Pre-Employment Assessments" is visible above the main content area. The main content title "Pre-Employment Assessments" is prominently displayed in large, bold, teal font. Below the title, a paragraph of text provides general instructions for new team members. Three numbered steps follow, each with a bullet point:

1. **Health Assessment** – Know what to expect at your new teammate health assessment, including the paperwork you may need to bring with you.
 - Note: You may be required to take your employee badge photograph at that time.
2. **Physical Ability Test** – If required, you may need to complete a physical ability test. Refer to your offer letter for the location to complete your test.
3. Take time to review the [Orientation page](#), so you are prepared for your day of new teammate orientation.

 A section titled "Health Assessment" is expanded, showing a bulleted list of requirements. The list includes items such as drug screens, immunization history confirmation, flu vaccinations, medical exemptions, health history forms, TB skin tests, chest X-rays, medical statement reviews, and work authorization requirements. It also notes that if flu documentation is not present, a free flu vaccine will be offered. The text ends with a note about acceptable documents.

There is plenty that you can do, prior to Orientation, to ensure you are well-prepared and ready to get the most out of your first days with us.

1. **Health Assessment** – Know what to expect at your new teammate health assessment, including the paperwork you may need to bring with you.
 - Note: You may be required to take your employee badge photograph at that time.
2. **Physical Ability Test** – If required, you may need to complete a physical ability test. Refer to your offer letter for the location to complete your test.
3. Take time to review the [Orientation page](#), so you are prepared for your day of new teammate orientation.

Health Assessment

Your new teammate health assessment will consist of the following:

- Drug screen
- Confirmation of your immunization history
- Bring your complete immunization records
- Related to the flu vaccination, please also bring one of the following:
 - documentation of a flu vaccine for this flu season
 - a documented medical exemption
 - a documented religious exemption
 - If flu documentation is not presented at the health assessment a free flu vaccine will be offered. Applicants must be compliant with the Atrium Health flu vaccine policy in order to begin employment
- Complete the Health History form and bring to assessment
- Tuberculosis / TB skin test
- If you have ever had a positive Tuberculosis / TB skin test, bring a record of that positive skin test and your most recent chest X-ray
- If you have any records of any TB skin tests completed in the last year, bring those records
- Medical statement review (if applicable)
- If you are under care for a chronic or serious medical problem or have any work restrictions, bring a [medical clearance](#) from your physician.
- Work authorization requirements (I-9)
 - See the [list of acceptable documents](#) to bring in order to prove you are authorized to work in the United States

Atrium Health's Pre-Employment Assessments page also contained text that was too wide. The bulleted lists on this page would be much easier to scan if the line length was reduced.

The screenshot shows a web page from the City of Calgary's myLearning platform. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'My courses', 'For administrators', 'For students', 'Code of Conduct', and 'Information Security'. On the right side of the header is a search bar labeled 'Search courses' with a magnifying glass icon. Below the header, a breadcrumb trail shows 'My Courses > ICDS-EffectiveDecisionMaking'. A sidebar on the left is titled 'Administration' and includes links for 'Course administration' (with a sub-link 'Enrol me from ICDS-EffectiveDecisionMaking'), 'My profile settings', and 'Site administration'. The main content area features a section titled 'Effective Decision Making (Employees Only)'. It contains descriptive text about the workshop, learning objectives, program details, cancellation policy, and registration information. A table at the bottom lists two session details: one on September 20th and another on October 31st. The table includes columns for Location, Date, Time, and Remaining Seats, with 'Sign-up' buttons for each row.

Location	Date	Time	Remaining Seats	Action
RM AND02R2200-20 - Athens - No Re-occurring Meetings	20 September 2019	8:00 AM - 4:00 PM	-15	Sign-up
RM AND02R2100-32 - Owen Tobert - No Re-occurring Meetings	31 October 2019	8:00 AM - 4:00 PM	-18	Sign-up

A page on the City of Calgary's myLearning platform also contained text that spanned the entire page width. To improve the presentation of this content, the City of Calgary should reduce the line length to between 45–75 characters.

Calgary myCity

search myCity 

Tools & Resources ▾ myHR ▾ Organization ▾ News & Events ▾ Dashboard ▾ Safety & Security ▾

June 12, 2019 ☰ 24°

All myCity News Stories

What is myCity?

Tools & Support August 22, 2018

What is myCity?



Your new myCity

Welcome to myCity! A website designed exclusively for you as a City of Calgary employee.

The myCity website has been around for about 15 years; however, this is the first time the website will be available to ALL of our staff including those who work out in the field. This opens up many possibilities to how we can and will communicate with each other more easily within our large organization.

You can use myCity to:

- Stay connected to City of Calgary news, right from the source.
- Access myHRconnect to view your pay cheques, apply for jobs, access City staff contact information.
- Access useful City information and tools.
- Get the latest messages from your City of Calgary leadership.
- Be part of The City's online employee community.

Find information about your's and other important City departments, access important safety training, contact a human resources colleague...there are many things you will find within myCity. Use the search function at the top of your screen to search on items that are important to you specifically. If you don't want to search, no problem! We've identified a few things under your For You button on the home page that you will find useful; however, your key to finding the information you want to find is the search function. It's like our own Google channel, so check it out!

We know most staff come to myCity to either read the news, answer the daily poll question, or access myHRconnect to enter time or view paycheques. You can still do all these things and more directly from the home page, which is the most commonly used page within myCity. Don't worry if you've moved off the home page; wherever you are in the myCity website, simply click on the City of Calgary logo at the top left corner and you will return to the home page. Click [here](#) if you want to learn more about the new home page design and what this page provides for you.

Want to request something be added to myCity? Please do! Find and click the Feedback link below to send us these suggestions.

Another page on the City of Calgary's intranet featured a video about the intranet and had a much more comfortable line length. Using a standard line length across the intranet would help produce a more consistent and visually pleasing reading experience.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution's content had a narrower line length, which made the content easy to skim and scan. When combined with clear and noticeable subheadings, all these factors made the copy very comfortable for employees to interact with.

The screenshot shows a SharePoint-based intranet page for the RNLI. The top navigation bar includes links for 'Our charity', 'Working at the RNLI', 'Find people and places', 'News and events', 'Find a document', and 'Glossary'. The main content area has a breadcrumb trail: '/ WORKING AT THE RNLI / FINANCE SUPPORT / CREDIT CARDS'. The main title is 'Credit cards'. A sidebar on the left lists categories: 'Finance support', 'Expenses' (selected), 'Credit cards' (highlighted in grey), 'Cost centres', 'New vendor', 'Pay', 'Pension', and 'Site contents'. The main content area starts with a question 'Should I have an RNLI credit card?'. It explains that cards are issued for business need and must be approved by a line manager. Below this are sections on 'How do I apply for a credit card?', 'What do I need to do once I get the card?', 'How do I submit receipts?', 'How do I ensure I don't overspend?', 'How can I increase my credit card limit?', and 'When does my card balance clear?'. At the bottom of the page are links for 'PRIVACY & TERMS OF USE POLICY' and 'RNLI COMPASS FEEDBACK'.

The line length on the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's intranet was favorable and didn't force employees to expend much energy when skimming and scanning content.

WORKING WITH PDFS AND NATIVE FILE FORMATS

36. Limit the use of PDFs; design HTML gateway pages and provide a link to download a full PDF, if needed.

PDF files continue to be cumbersome for employees to navigate. Even after 18 years of studying intranets, most of the participating organizations in our recent round of research still had a lot of content housed in PDF files instead of on nicely designed **HTML gateway pages**.



HTML gateway pages

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

An **HTML gateway** is a web page that summarizes the information contained in a PDF and offers a link for interested users to download the full PDF.

All links to the information, such as from the intranet's main navigation or search results page, should be to the gateway page; none should go directly to the PDF file.

Also, the gateway page should warn users that they'll get a PDF file and state its page count and download size.

One great example we observed of using an HTML gateway page instead of relying on a PDF alone was on the *Catering and Refreshments* page on Bracknell Forest Council's intranet. All the important information employees needed to know about ordering food for meetings or other events was summarized on the page, but because employees might need to print menus to distribute to colleagues so they can make food selections, the menus and other documents were displayed in their native formats (PDF, spreadsheet, Word doc, etc.) below. As an added benefit, an icon appeared next to each document to indicate the file type and set expectations that clicking on the item would not take them to a web page.

If you're posting a PDF to an HTML gateway page, make the PDF accessible when creating it:

- Make text searchable
- Ensure fonts allow characters to be extracted into text
- Create form fields that are labeled as interactive and include error messages with proper timing

Additional work needs to be done to ensure a PDF is inclusive; you can't just export it and assume it's good to go. Employees should be able to access bookmarks using the keyboard, and PDFs' security settings must not interfere with screen readers. Structural tags on headlines, paragraphs, tables, and other elements must be set to define reading order, and ALT text must be included

on all images. Color should not be used to convey meaning; there must also be proper contrast between foreground and background.

In another favorable example, Bracknell Forest Council included a thorough blog post on its intranet, outlining how employees and designers who create, and post PDFs could ensure they were accessible.

The screenshot shows a corporate intranet page with a header featuring 'People & Teams' and 'Get involved' on the left, a search bar in the center, and user profile icons on the right. The main navigation bar includes 'DORIS' (Home, How do I?, Your council, News, Public website) and a breadcrumb trail (Home / How do I? / Facilities and travel / Catering and refreshments). The main content area is titled 'Catering and refreshments'. It contains several sections: 'Food orders' (describing the Corporate Catering contract with 'Something Else To Eat'), 'Staff lunches' (mentioning delivery of lunchtime items), 'Pre-orders' (for specific sandwich requests), 'Drink refreshments for meeting rooms' (considering refreshments for meetings), and 'How do I collect my refreshment basket?' (instructions for collecting baskets from the Facilities desk). A red box highlights the 'Documents' section, which lists four downloadable files: 'SOMETHING ELSE TO EAT MENU - June 2018 final.pdf', 'food-order-form - June 2018.xlsx', 'Staff delivery sandwich list.pdf', and 'Staff lunch booking form.xls'. Below the documents is a 'Tags' section with 'lunch, catering, lunches, food, refreshments'. At the bottom, it says 'Last updated on: Tue, 28/05/2019 - 14:06' and 'Does anything need adding to this page?'. The overall design is clean and professional.

Bracknell Forest Council used an HTML gateway page instead of relying on a PDF alone to communicate how to order food and catering services, which is the proper way to handle PDFs on an intranet.

The screenshot shows a grid-based intranet layout. In the top-left corner, there's a small graphic of a stylized building or flag. The main content area contains four distinct sections:

- Lizzie's blog**: A post titled "Education is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know..." dated 08 July 2019 at 11:05. It includes a snippet: "New basic IT courses."
- Steven's blog**: A post titled "All about the money, money, money...." dated 10 August 2018 at 13:44. It includes a snippet: "What goes up - must come down - are we in for another market crash!"
- PDF accessibility**: A post dated 30 April 2019 at 14:58. It features two screenshots of PDF documents. The first is titled "Registration Services Terms and Conditions" and the second is titled "Terms and conditions for booking Registration Services appointments". A large green arrow points from the first PDF to the second.
- The Cure Parkinson's Trust**: A post titled "The Cure Parkinson's Trust" dated 27 February 2019 at 19:23. It includes a snippet: "Recommendation to watch the 2 part BBC 2 documentary."

To take it even further to ensure PDFs were properly designed and formatted, Bracknell Forest Council included a detailed blog post on its intranet to help designers ensure haphazard PDFs weren't posted on the intranet.

Posting content only as PDFs is also problematic. PDFs break employees' workflow and contribute to the issue of too many new browser tabs and windows being open. **PDFs are meant to be used for distributing documents that users will print.** They're optimized for paper sizes, not browser windows or modern device viewports, and they're not navigable like a web page. PDFs also use lots of heavy, dense text and elaborate graphics, increasing their file size and, subsequently, the time they take to download.

For example, though the Mayo Clinic's employees may want to eventually download and print a cafeteria menu to post in their office for the week, this PDF (shown below) was over-designed, highly colorful, and included needlessly fancy graphics. The amount of colored printer ink needed to print this out is unnecessary. Navigating to a PDF just to see what the cafeteria was serving slowed down busy employees as they waited for this to download. Don't design PDFs for content that should otherwise be posted on an HTML page.

morrison healthcare

HOME MENU NUTRITION INFORMATION COMMUNITY & WELLNESS WHAT'S HAPPENING LET'S CHAT

Rochester - Saint Marys Select Location

MENU

10/11 FRIDAY

TILAPIA VERA CRUZ FIT
160 CAL
CHIPOTLE MEATLOAF FIT
250 CAL

SPICY POTATO WEDGES FIT V P
200 CAL
GARLIC ORZO FIT V
70 CAL
STEAMED BROCCOLI V
45 CAL
SUGAR SNAP PEAS FIT V P
60 CAL
CORN WITH PIMENTO FIT V P

SOUPS

NEW ENGLAND CLAM CHOWDER FIT
180 CAL
WHITE BEAN SOUP FIT V
120 CAL

TEXAS COWBOY CHILI FIT
300 CAL

○ BREAKFAST

SELF-SERVE WAFFLE BAR

○ LATE NIGHT

MAC & CHEESE FIT
850 CAL
FRIED CHICKEN FIT
240 CAL
RED BEANS & RICE FIT
60 CAL
GREEN BEANS & PIMENTOS FIT V P
90 CAL
GLAZED CARROTS V P

10/12 SATURDAY

LONDON BROIL FLANK STEAK
350 CAL
PESTO CHICKEN FIT
150 CAL

FINGERLING POTATOES V P
130 CAL

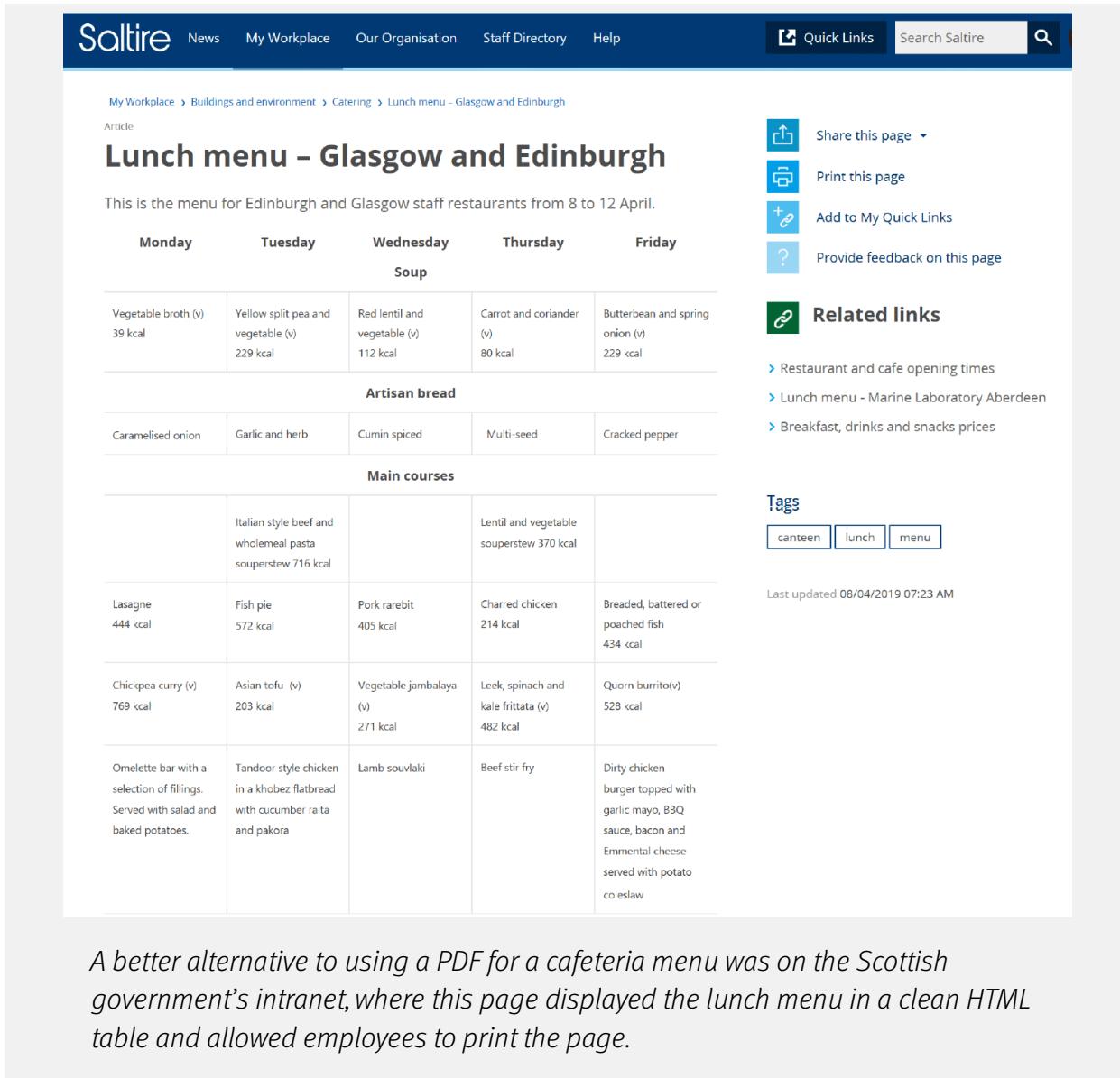
LOCATION INFO

HOME

COMMUNITY & WELLNESS

In the case of a PDF cafeteria menu on the Mayo Clinic's intranet, the designers' time would have been better spent laying out and formatting this content for an HTML web page. Don't design PDFs for content that should otherwise be posted on an HTML page.

A better approach would be to use a design similar to the Scottish Government's intranet, where the lunch menu is provided as a simple table on a printable HTML page. This supports employees navigating the web page and those who want a printer-friendly version.



The screenshot shows a clean, modern website layout for the Scottish Government's intranet. At the top, there is a dark blue header bar with the 'Saltire' logo on the left and navigation links for 'News', 'My Workplace', 'Our Organisation', 'Staff Directory', and 'Help'. To the right of the header are 'Quick Links' and a search bar with a magnifying glass icon. Below the header, the page title is 'Lunch menu - Glasgow and Edinburgh'. A breadcrumb trail indicates the page is under 'My Workplace > Buildings and environment > Catering > Lunch menu – Glasgow and Edinburgh'. The main content area contains a table of the lunch menu items for Monday through Friday, categorized into 'Soup', 'Artisan bread', and 'Main courses'. Each row in the table includes the dish name, description, and kcal content. To the right of the table, there is a sidebar with sharing options ('Share this page', 'Print this page', 'Add to My Quick Links', 'Provide feedback on this page'), a 'Related links' section with links to 'Restaurant and cafe opening times', 'Lunch menu - Marine Laboratory Aberdeen', and 'Breakfast, drinks and snacks prices', and a 'Tags' section with three buttons labeled 'canteen', 'lunch', and 'menu'. At the bottom of the sidebar, it says 'Last updated 08/04/2019 07:23 AM'.

A better alternative to using a PDF for a cafeteria menu was on the Scottish government's intranet, where this page displayed the lunch menu in a clean HTML table and allowed employees to print the page.

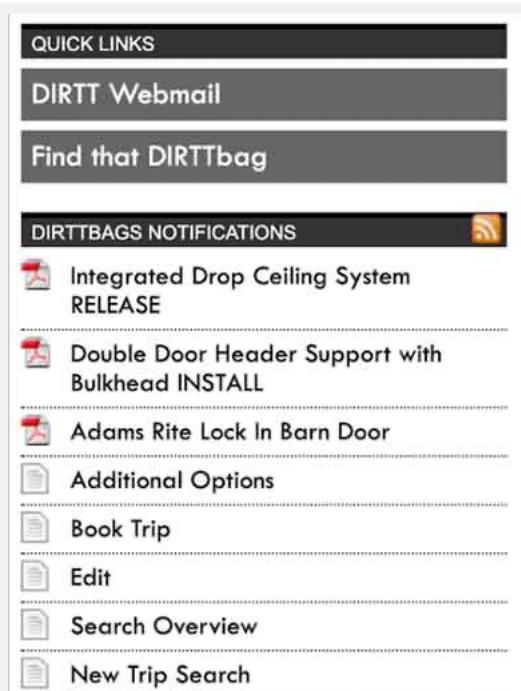
Clickable tables of contents are often introduced in PDFs as pseudo navigation, but employees still slow down and have trouble finding what they need. The use of *Command* or *Control + F* to find something within a PDF is not familiar to all employees. Some will take advantage of these shortcuts, but others will not. If technical limitations are holding you back from creating HTML gateway pages for your PDFs, collaborate with experts on web-publishing principles to create a template for an HTML gateway page. With advancements in web content management, there's no reason why we should still see so many PDFs; design a gateway page template to reduce the number of PDFs on your intranet.

37. Visually indicate the file type for links to native files, PDFs, documents, spreadsheets, or presentations.

There are legitimate cases when documents and policies must exist in PDF or other native formats on an intranet (e.g., for legal reasons), but this doesn't mean these native file formats are the only format in which the content should exist. A document, presentation, or spreadsheet should never be used to display digital content that users will read online.

Gather evidence to understand the document types your employees need and expect in certain situations. You will need to conduct research such as field studies, usability testing, interviews, and contextual inquiries to find out. It will all depend on your employees' context and reading preferences relative to the content and task. If you find employees don't want to print out a document, use a web page. When they do, use a web page to summarize the key information and provide a link to download the document, along with a visual indicator or icon to represent the document type.

For example, DIRTT employees often needed instructions on designing and building different office furniture and fixtures. Because they were out in the field and accessing the intranet to download, print, and use these documents, it made sense that they were available in this format. Each document had a unique icon that indicated its file type, which signaled to users that the link would open a file, not an HTML page, which was favorable.



Knowing employees would need to access, share, and print these documents, DIRTT made them available in their native file formats and included clear icons to visually indicate that they were not linking to web pages.

On Burns & McDonnell's intranet, there was no way to predict link destination, and format, no icons to set expectations about the content type (PDF, Word doc, video, or HTML in a new tab). For example, in the *How To* section of the *EcoSys* page, there were no visuals to indicate whether each link would open as a PDF, Word document, or web page. A better approach would be to include an icon or suffix (for example, "PDF") in each link in the list. If the link does anything other than open a new web page in the same tab, communicate that to users.

How To

 Create ABS	 Project Setup to Full Approval	 Creating a Services Estimate to Approval
 Project Setup to Full Approval from an Estimate	 Add an Agreement	 B&P Project Setup
 Project Setup for WBS Only	 Add/Remove Key Members	 Add Project Timesheet Location
 Delete WBS	 Change Project Manager	 Change Project End Date
 Create/Edit Budget Changes	 Basic Forecasting	 Clear Overruns and Negative ETCs
 Add a Change Order	 Defund a Project	 View Invoices/Commitments

Cost Forecast changes should only be made as specifically directed by GP or LOC management.

EcoSys will freeze Wednesday, August 28, at midnight.

Click the link below for additional details.

[EcoSys Lockout Details](#)

Helpful Links

 MIS SharePoint Site	 Project Cost Transfer Request	 Defining and Classifying Warranty Risk - July 2019
 Project Scope Classification	 Chargeability App in Power BI	 Customer Setup Form - Canada

Help

IT Service Desk

Request IT Service: help.burnsmcd.com

Phone: 816-822-3480

Providing employees with a visual indication of what will happen when they click on each link in these lists would improve this page on Burns & McDonnell's intranet.



When designing PDFs, lay them out to fit different paper sizes.

Timeless Design Tips

Some countries use the 8.5x11-inch paper size, while others use A4. Make sure your document will fit both. Avoid using multiple columns of text and small font sizes. Multicolumn text is harder to read and scan when printed out, and small font sizes cause readers to strain their eyes, regardless of the medium.

Save documents you design in an earlier PDF version and include the date to help users avoid issues when opening the document. Reduce the size by making sure only the most necessary information is included, and that image sizes are reduced to balance size with quality of display.

Remember the use case: someone will print out this document because, given their context and task, using paper is easier than a device.

On Dell's intranet, information presented in native file formats was usually accompanied by a corresponding icon, especially on the search results pages. While this did help warn the users — both on search results pages and inline hyperlinks, employees still complained that they had to open a PDF or other document type. One said, "Oh great, now I have to download a file to open it."

This substantiates the importance of favoring content presentation on nicely designed HTML pages instead of directly posting PDFs, Word documents, spreadsheets, or presentations to the intranet. Only use native file formats if employees must print, share, or distribute approved information with people who can't otherwise access links on the intranet. Even then, provide visuals to set expectations about what will happen next after clicking.

Inside DELL Technologies

News | My Communities | My HR | My IT | Learning | Paul

tip policy

Results 1-10 of 1,532 for tip policy in 0.62 seconds

Dell Technologies Inc - Securities Trading Policy.pdf
Company's policies regarding the protection or authorized external disclosure of ... Policy must enter into a Rule 10b5-1 plan for transactions in Company Securities that meets conditions ...
Created: 07/09/2019 Last Modified: 07/09/2019 Author: Anne
Legal4U > Corporate > Policies

Dell Technologies - Securities Trading Policy (Final) 2019 Revised.pdf
Company's policies regarding the protection or authorized external disclosure of ... Policy must enter into a Rule 10b5-1 plan for transactions in Company Securities that meets conditions ...
Created: 07/09/2019 Last Modified: 07/09/2019 Author: Anne
Legal4U > Corporate > Policies

CI Tip: Rubrik - Tales from the Field
30-day retention ... SLA domain policies are very limited with only a few options... You fill in the policy to say how often to take snaps and how long to retain them and that is it.
Created: 08/22/2016 Last Modified: 08/22/2016 Comments: 0 Likes: 0 Views: 74
Author: Margaret

Travel and Expense Policy
Version 27 General Policy Guidelines Internal Meetings & Events ... Local management may implement policies or limits that are lower and/or more conservative than the Regional Policy.
Created: 09/16/2015 Last Modified: 09/16/2015 Comments: 0 Likes: 0 Views: 1138
Author: Christopher

Travel Expense Policy
Expense Policy 1 ... Policy guidelines for advanced booking are at least 10 days for domestic flights, 21 ... and in adherence with VCE's policies, including the Business Conduct Guidelines.
Created: 05/07/2015 Last Modified: 05/07/2015 Comments: 0 Likes: 0 Views: 713
Author:

Compensation Basics Deck for Managers
1 Policy basics & what's changed Accelerators Temporary Pay Adjustments ... Policies and processes must be not just understandable, but rational.
Created: 08/09/2019 Last Modified: 08/20/2019 Comments: 0 Likes: 0 Views: 141
Author: Meghan

Dell did a nice job of including visual indicators to set expectations for what type of file employees would encounter upon clicking, which is good, as usability suffers when users are abruptly dumped into a PDF or other native file format. Including icons can help, but it doesn't make the experience of interacting with native files in a browser window any better.

FORM DESIGN

38. Design web forms instead of paper-based or interactive PDF forms.

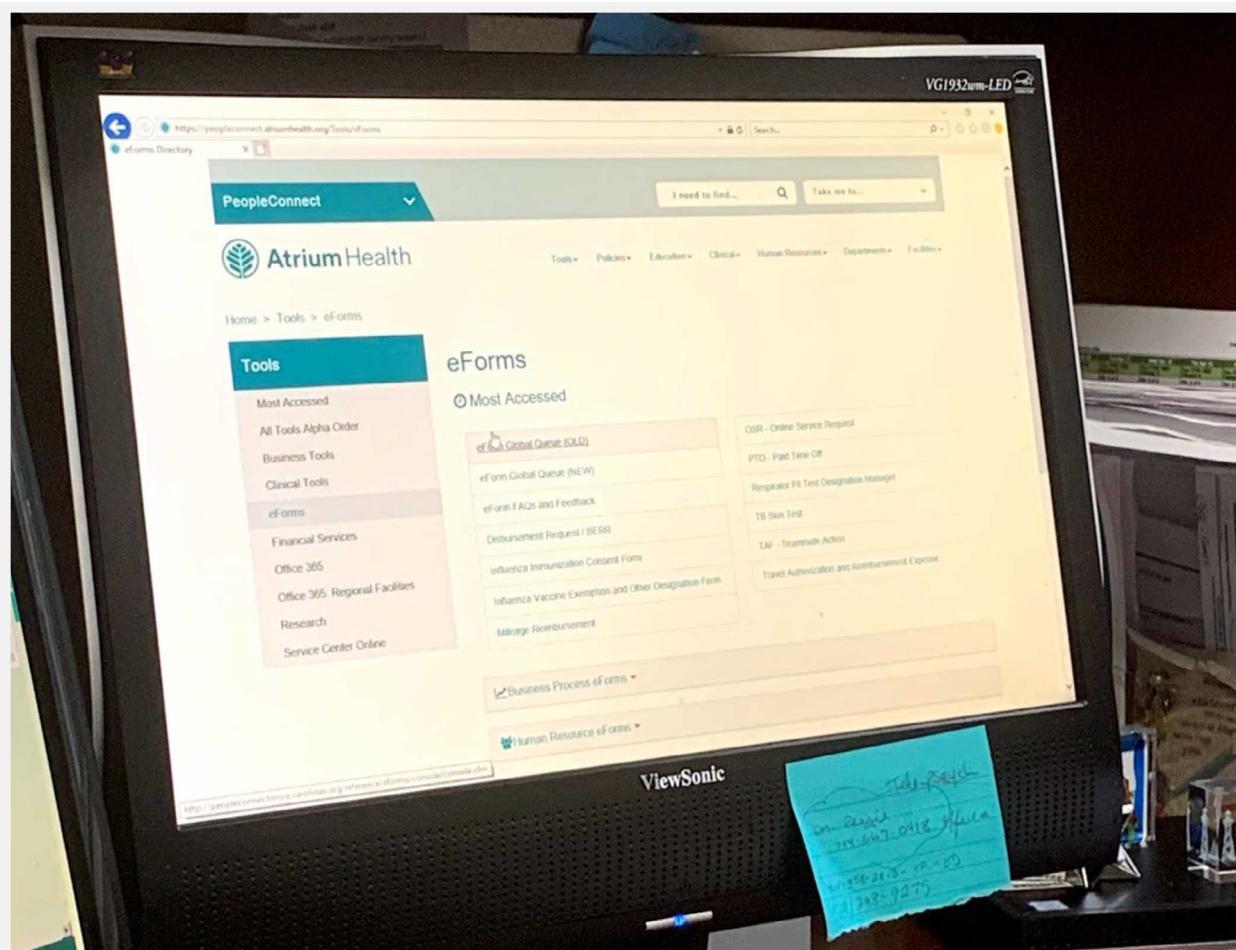
Downloading and printing paper forms or filling in and emailing interactive PDF forms on an intranet slows employees down. It's much better for employees to enter data online. As intranet designers, we advocate for designing a true user interface for forms. Existing processes are usually suboptimal and designed under the old technology's constraints. New technology alleviates these constraints and offers designers different ways of solving problems while introducing new constraints we must address for web forms to work.

When designing web forms, do not repeat failures or create bottlenecks by screen-converting hundreds of complex forms that are probably no good to begin with. Follow established best practices for form design.

For example, the City of Calgary was working on converting 1,200 PDF forms to web forms. It was no easy task, but IT was moving them all to Adobe electronic tools. The vision was to integrate the forms with PeopleSoft so that information could be pre-populated. The intranet team lead said:

“All of the PDF forms are horrible. Old forms and versioning control is difficult. To take 1,200 forms and tie them into a database, the cost is \$3,000 to \$5,000. Much of the work is inventory and determining before you design the form if we really need it at all. We’re going to take the top forms and start designing those to be web-based.”

Atrium Health used web-based forms on its intranet and did a great job merchandising links to forms employees accessed often. A dedicated eForms page allowed employees to access the forms they needed quickly and easily. Anytime a contextually relevant form moved from the legacy workflow of being paper or PDF-based to the new web-based workflow, the design team intentionally and thoughtfully placed messaging at the top of the page to inform employees of the new web-based form, which was favorable.



Atrium Health's eForms page enabled employees to easily access the web-based forms they used most. This central location for all forms was helpful, and forms were displayed where they were contextually relevant.

PhysicianConnect > **Staff Resources** > Forms and Related Materials

Staff Resources

- Compliments Awards and Recognition
- Forms and Related Materials**
- Health and Retirement
- Atrium Health Medical Group
- Medical Staff Bylaws
- Medical Staff Services
- Onboarding
- Physician Focus
- Well Being & Resilience
- Speakers Bureau

Forms and Related Materials

The Application Process is now Electronic

Please call **Medical Staff Services at 704-355-2147** to obtain a password that will give you access to the online application form. **The Reappointment Application Instructions PowerPoint** provides guidance to help staff complete their online Reappointment Application. Please email ReappointmentMSS@Carolinashsalthcare.org if you need additional help or you can call the Medical Staff Office at 704-355-2147. This application process applies to Physicians, Dentists, Oral Surgeons and Allied Health Professionals.

NOTE: Any misrepresentation or misstatement in, or omission from this application whether intentional or not, may constitute cause for automatic and immediate rejection of this application.

Allied Health Professional Application

Used by Allied Health Professionals (PsyD, PhD, RN, PA, NP, CRNA, etc.) who are interested in applying for privileges at one or more facilities. Please call **Medical Staff Services at 704-355-2147** to obtain a copy of any Delineation of Privileges forms.

CHS Proctoring Form

Use this form to request proctoring of specific procedures.

- [Permission to be Proctored Form \(PDF, 34k\)](#)

At Atrium Health, whenever processes moved from legacy paper or PDF-based forms to web-based forms, the intranet design team provided clear messaging at the top of relevant pages with instructions for accessing the electronic forms.

Because the Mayo Clinic is such a large healthcare organization, it has many paper forms, PDF forms, and web-based forms. The team designed a landing page to house and describe each form and outline when employees should use them. The Mayo Clinic's design team included the forms' availability as an added detail. With so many different types of forms, this helped set employee expectations for how they would ultimately interact with the form. This was a favorable approach. For organizations that may still have a mix of formats, it's important to be upfront with employees about when they must use a paper or PDF-based form.

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the Mayo Clinic intranet. The top navigation bar includes links for Home, Practice, Education, Research, HR Connect, Groups, Policy Library, Video, Library, and Calendar. A search bar at the top right contains the text "patient safety". Below the search bar, a message says "Hello. (Sign-in) [?]". To the left of the search bar is a sidebar with links for Search, Order Items (0 in Cart), Customer Contacts, Items By Group, Request Access and Account Changes, Returns, Getting Started, and Linking to this Site. The main content area displays a search result for "Patient Safety Incident". It shows the Item Number: MC7941-01, For Use In: Rochester, and Availability: Online Only. Below this, there is a note about the item being only available electronically. At the bottom of the page are tabs for Specifications and Usage, with the Specifications tab currently selected.

The Mayo Clinic included a landing page for each type of form on its intranet where they described the form's purpose, where to use it, and its availability.

39. Use a consistent visual design across web forms.

Advocating for consistency and standards across forms on the intranet may seem like we're pushing for all forms to look and act the same, but that's not the case. Rather, when forms and applications adhere to standards, employees know what to expect, learnability increases, and confusion is reduced. Errors decrease, while efficiency, productivity, and satisfaction with the intranet and the organization improve.

Intranet forms should adhere to both **internal** and **external consistency** so that they are easy to learn and use. They should use the same patterns everywhere inside the system and follow web-, platform-, and domain-specific conventions. This means the look and feel of form components, including colors, fields, and other inputs, buttons, links, and control types are similar. The way forms are laid out should be parallel, as should the way information is asked for across the forms. Labels and messages should also be consistent.



Internal consistency

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

Internal consistency relates to consistency within a product or a family of products, either within a single application or across a family or suite of applications.



External consistency

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

External consistency refers to established conventions in an industry or on the web beyond one application or family of applications.

Including form components in your intranet's design system can help maintain consistency across forms. Not only will employees find the forms familiar and easy to learn, but the teams building the forms will also benefit from reduced redundancy in their work and a single source of truth for how and when to use form components.

Employees spend most of their time on sites other than the intranet, which means they'll bring their expectations from other sites' forms when they visit the intranet. Most form interactions should be consistent with what people expect. When designing forms, focus on helping employees complete them as efficiently as possible rather than creating a nonconventional form interface that people need to figure out.

For example, the form design around Atrium Health's intranet was inconsistent. In some cases, the submit button was on the top right, while in others, it was on the bottom. Fields were aligned differently; some forms autofilled some content, while others didn't. The inconsistent behavior forces employees to pay more attention and spend more time on forms than if the forms were designed more consistently.

PEOPLECONNECT


Atrium Health

Personal Info Request

Requestor

Name	Nelson Norman	Title	Manager
Display Name	Kathy Nelson-Norman	Department Name	Nelson Norman Group
Email		Business Unit	
Teammate ID	CBN1000	Department Number	
Office Location			

Facility Search

Facility Search	<input type="text"/>
To search, enter part of a facility name	
Facility ID	Facility Name
Street	City
State	Zip Code

Phone Details

Phone	<input type="text" value="704-355-2000"/>	Fax	<input type="text"/>
Assistant	<input type="text"/>	Home	<input type="text"/>
Mobile	<input type="text"/>	Pager	<input type="text"/>

Comments

Optional

Signature and Submit

Click Sign to authorize this request.

© 2019 Atrium Health | Contact the Service Center (704) 446-6161 or [Service Center Online](#)

The design of forms around Atrium Health's intranet was inconsistent. This Personal Info Request form used multiple form blocks and several different columns. The yellow submit button appeared in the lower right corner.

PeopleConnect

I need to find...

Take me to...

Atrium Health

Home > Tools > Clinical Tools > Provider Search Directory

Clinical Tools

- Canopy Information
- Atrium Health Phonebook
- Atrium Health Physician Connection
- Formularies
- Healthcare Literacy
- HIPAA
- MedCenter Air
- MedCon MDWeb Logins
- Nutrition
- Philips PACS
- Provider Search Directory**
- Provider Profile Update
- Stethoscope

Provider Search Directory

Provider Facility Privileges

This database contains information on practitioners who hold clinical privileges at one or more of the Atrium Health facilities. Update requests or issues with this application should be reported to the Service Center by calling **704-446-6161** or through Service Center Online.

▲ Please note that a "Y" indicates "Privileges Granted", the absence of a "Y" under Granted indicates "NO PRIVILEGES".

CHS Provider Credential Search

Facility (Required):

Specialty:

Last Name:

First Name:

Star No.:

Sex: Male Female

Search **Reset Form**

Contact the Support Center at **704-446-6161** for issues concerning this application or information.

Atrium's Provider Search Directory form labels were positioned similarly to the left of the fields as on the first form; however, those fields had rounded edges. The layout of this form, sharp border edges on fields, and the primary buttons to submit the form were all inconsistent.

PEOPLECONNECT


Atrium Health

Paid Time Off Request

Requester	
Name Teammate ID	Title Department Name
MEGAN TROTTER II 123456789	Customer Customer Support

Request Details

PTO Hours Accrued as of 05/06/2019	2019 PTO Cash-In Elected	May	December	Total
------------------------------------	--------------------------	-----	----------	-------

Work Shift

All Day <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Start Date <input type="text" value="05/06/2019"/> <input type="button" value="..."/>	End Date <input type="text" value="05/06/2019"/> <input type="button" value="..."/>	Requested <input type="text" value="1"/> Days <input type="button" value="..."/> <input type="checkbox"/>
---	---	---	---

Comments

+ Add Request

Send for Approval

Send this request to your manager for approval.

Send To <input type="text" value="To search, enter all or part of a name (Last, First)"/>	+ Add Message
--	----------------------

To send a read-only copy of this request, click **Add CC**. Add multiple CCs to send to more than one person.

+ Add CC	Submit
-----------------	---------------

© 2019 Atrium Health | Contact the Service Center (704) 446-6161 or [Service Center Online](#)

Atrium Health's Paid Time Off Request form had some similarities with the form shown above, but the colors used, label placement near the fields, and container header background colors were inconsistent.

Ensure consistency in the design and placement of form fields and buttons, especially for multipage forms or wizards. Will you place the call-to-action on the left and the *Cancel* button on the right, or vice versa? How will you designate fields as required? Regardless of the answers to those questions, make sure that each form on the site is designed in the same way. For example, the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology used a consistent form design across its intranet. Each form included all of the same components and design elements.

NAIT.ca has been undergoing a radical transformation. Explore the preview site of the new NAIT.ca and provide your feedback. [EXPLORE THE SITE](#)

ALL SERVICES EMPLOYEE ESSENTIALS TEACHING ESSENTIALS INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS DEPARTMENTS & SCHOOLS INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES ABOUT NAIT NEWS & EVENTS Search 

HELENA ADD TO QUICK LINKS

QUICK LINKS

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

- BRAND
- COMMUNICATIONS
- MARKETING
- WEB & DIGITAL MEDIA
- SERVICES

WEB SUPPORT FORMS

- Web Support Request Form
- CMS Access Request Form
- Project Request Form

[nait.ca](#) | [Provide Feedback](#) | [Contact Support](#) |
[Privacy Policy](#) | [Credit Card Payments](#)

SUPPORT FORM

CONTENT TYPE: Form **DEPARTMENT:** Web and Digital Media

Fill out and submit this form to get help with content editing, approval and general workflow questions.

Request Title:

I am having CMS Access Problems:
 Yes No

Description and details:

Attachments: No file chosen
Only a single file can be uploaded. Once your ticket has been created you can reply with any additional files that you want to attach.

Full Name:

Email:

Phone Number:

Business Unit:

[SUBMIT SUPPORT REQUEST](#)

We observed one of the best examples of consistent form design across an intranet on the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology intranet.



Establish standards and conduct design reviews at regular cadences.

Process and Strategic Considerations

Form consistency doesn't happen by itself but requires an active process. Even if you have an official design standard and a mandate to follow it, people will forget about rarely applied elements. They will interpret more ambiguous parts of the standard in different ways.

There is also the risk that some design teams will rebel and decide to do things differently because they feel their corner of the intranet is surely different than everything else.

Without design standards, it's common to have different designers invent different solutions to the same problem as they work on different pages. Conduct regular design reviews and flag deviations from the design standards or from how things are done elsewhere.

Finally, acknowledge that some inconsistency will happen over time, despite your best attempts to root it out during the initial design stages. Occasionally (say, once a year), conduct a special consistency review across all your intranet designs and identify and fix the worst offenders.

40. Place clear labels above or next to intranet form fields.

Labels should be close to the fields they describe, placed either immediately above the field for mobile and shorter desktop forms or next to the field for extremely long desktop forms. We usually recommend putting field labels above the corresponding text fields. Although this increases the form's overall length, it makes scanning easier because users can see the text field in the same fixation as the label. Top placement also allows for longer field labels, as horizontal space isn't an issue.

If form length is a concern, you can place field labels to the left of the fields. However, make sure that labels are of similar length and are placed as close to the text fields as possible. If the labels are too far to the left, it can be difficult to associate the correct label with its corresponding field.

Avoid ambiguous spacing, where labels are equidistant from multiple fields, and be sure to include the label attribute for screen readers. If your form asks about two different topics, section it into two groups of fields and tag the groups for screen readers.

Do not put form labels for prompts or instructions in form fields. For example, at Dell, some form fields contained instructions as prompt or placeholder text in the fields themselves. The form to create an IT ticket had helpful labels set on top of the field, but when ghost text (which reminds users what to type in a particular form field) was contained inside the form field, then it disappeared when the user started to type. When this happened, people often forgot what the form field was asking them to enter in the first place. One employee said, “All these questions are in here, but as soon as you type, it goes away.”

Use form field labels (rather than placeholder text) that sit above the form fields and concisely indicate what the user should type in the field.

Inside DELL Technologies

News | My Communities | My HR | My IT | Learning | [☰](#)

My IT Chat with IT Self-Help Service Catalog My Tickets 4 Approvals 7 Cart Dell Employee

Home > Guided Help Search Self-Help and Service Catalog 

⚠ Current outages being addressed by IT teams

Chat: OUTLOOK ANYWHERE UPDATE - Thank you for contacting Dell IT Service Desk. If you are unable to access Outlook and s... Started: 2019-02-26 13:30:00

Guided Help & Create a Ticket

1. Select a Topic 2. Clarify Further 3. Get Help 

Not Listed Above (Create Ticket Now - English/Japanese/Mandarin)

I need help with something else

Create a Ticket Language English

* What can we help you with?

* Who is this for?

* Product

Category

Sub-Category

* Please provide as much detail as possible so we can help you

- Summary of issue you are facing
- URL of Application or instance
- Steps to recreate issue
- Best time to contact you

Attachments - (provide screenshots, data, error messages, etc.) 

Drop files here

Issue Impact Self Team Facility

Computer Name

Watch List - Notify these people

Submit Ticket

Though Dell's IT ticket form included labels on form fields that sat above, the placeholder text is what helped users understand what to enter.

Dell also used placeholder text in form fields on its *Inspire Recognition* tool, but it disappeared after users selected the form field and was inaccessible. The text contrast also appeared too low to be considered accessible, as it's light gray on a white background.

The screenshot shows a user interface for 'Award Advisor'. At the top, there are purple and yellow circular icons with letters 'PK' and 'RG' respectively, followed by a right-pointing arrow and the text 'You are nominating Ruchi'. Below this, a dark vertical bar on the left has the word 'ibbo' partially visible. A question 'Question 1 of 5' is displayed. The main content area starts with 'Welcome to Award Advisor' and a note: 'Sometimes it is difficult to add a value to a nomination, let award advisor recommend a value by answering some questions below'. A large red circle containing the number '1' is positioned above a question: 'Is this contribution part of the employee's current role or is it above and beyond current expectations?'. Below this question is a text input field with a placeholder 'Related to the role' and a 'Back' button with a left arrow icon. A callout box at the bottom states: 'Dell did not include labels on the form fields in its employee recognition tool. The light gray placeholder text disappeared as soon as users clicked into the field and was not accessible.'

Question 1 of 5

Welcome to Award Advisor

Sometimes it is difficult to add a value to a nomination, let award advisor recommend a value by answering some questions below

1

Is this contribution part of the employee's current role or is it above and beyond current expectations?

Related to the role
Back

Dell did not include labels on the form fields in its employee recognition tool. The light gray placeholder text disappeared as soon as users clicked into the field and was not accessible.

The Co-operator's Technical Support platform included clear labels above form fields. The only improvement to this form would be to use a different color for the question mark tooltips, as red usually indicates field-level errors.

Long forms, with many fields, can feel overwhelming. Grouping related fields together helps users understand the information they must fill in. For example, name and date of birth could be *Personal Information*, while address and phone number could form the group *Contact Information*. Using white space and clear labels to effectively group related fields and indicate what information goes in each field could significantly increase form usability.

41. Left-align form fields and avoid multi-column forms.

Right-aligned fields and labels make it more difficult for employees to scan an intranet form for the same reasons right-aligned menu items impede scannability. Most forms work better if you stick to a single column of fields with corresponding labels, all of which should be left-aligned and properly spaced.

Avoid the temptation to make the form shorter by squeezing multiple fields into a single row, which results in a multi-column form. Of course, there are exceptions to this guideline, such as for dates. A day, month, and year are three parts of the same information, so dividing them into three different rows would be strange. Each form field is essentially a separate question, and you should ask those questions one at a time with clear signals to guide users through the form. A single-column design reduces the risk that people will overlook fields that are off to the side.

Multi-column design requires employees to visually reorient themselves with each new row. Keep users in the flow by sticking to a single column with a separate row for each field. Exceptions to this rule are short and logically related fields such as City, State, and Zip Code, which can be presented on the same row.

The screenshot shows a 'Report an Issue' form on a company intranet. At the top, there's a breadcrumb navigation: Home > Service Catalog > Core IT Services > Report an Issue. To the right is a search bar with a magnifying glass icon. The main title 'Report an Issue' is at the top left of the form area. Below it, a sub-section title 'Report an Issue' is followed by a note: 'Before submitting your issue please review the knowledge base for assistance.' The form contains several input fields:

- A required field 'Employee Name' with a placeholder 'Employee Name' and a 'Contact Phone Number' field next to it, both marked with a red asterisk.
- A required field 'Subject:' with a placeholder 'More information' below it, also marked with a red asterisk.
- A required field 'Please describe your issue below' with a placeholder 'More information' below it, also marked with a red asterisk.

At the bottom of the form, there's a blue 'Submit' button and a link 'Add attachments' with a paperclip icon. A note at the bottom says 'Required information' followed by the red-highlighted required fields: 'Subject:' and 'Please describe your issue below'.

On Burns & McDonnell's intranet, it's excusable that the employee's name and contact phone number appear in the same row since this personal information is generally related. It's also good that the rest of this form is presented in a single column with left-aligned fields and labels. However, an improvement would be to move the required information to the top of the form and use a darker font for the form's text.

In addition to left alignment and presenting form information in a single column, use logical sequencing for fields. (e.g., Credit card number, Expiration date, Security code) and for value choices (e.g., Standard shipping, 2-day shipping, 1-day shipping). Employees had to navigate a complex, multi-column form on Dell's travel and expense tool, Concur. The form fields' logic and order were unclear (for example, *Source*), as were the red vertical lines affixed to the left side of the form field to denote them as required. A better approach here would be to include only the necessary form fields and place them in a single-column form.

Create a New Expense Report

Report Header

Report Name	Policy	Report Date	Business Purpose	Comment
<input type="text"/>	N America EMC T&E	12/03/2019	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Company Code	Business Unit	Cost Center		
EMC CORP US OPERA HOPK (US)	EMC CORPORATE (100)	Mkt_BusPrt_US10 (US10183)	<input type="text"/>	
Source	Project Code	Task/WBS	Billable	Report Key
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Requests

<input type="checkbox"/> Request Name	Request ID	Cancelled	Request Total	Amount Approved	Amount Remaining
<input type="checkbox"/>					

Add

Dell's travel and expense tool, Concur, had too many fields per row, and a red line was used to denote required fields instead of a standard asterisk. Since this is only marked by color, it's not accessible.

First Solar employees create their intranet accounts using a nice, single-column form where each item in the form appeared in its own row with clear labels above the fields. The only improvements we'd suggest to this form would be to include a specific prompt for the first form item, use a darker font for the explanatory text underneath the bottom two form prompts, left-align the button with the form fields, and make the button look active instead of gray, which typically indicates a disabled state.

Welcome to First Solar, Inc. - Prod, Anna!

Create your First Solar, Inc. - Prod account

 Secondary email

I don't have a secondary email

 Choose a forgot password question

Answer

 Add a phone number for resetting your password or unlocking your account using SMS (optional)
Okta can send you a text message with a recovery code. This feature is useful when you don't have access to your email.

 Add Phone Number

 Add a phone number for resetting your password or unlocking your account using Voice Call (optional)
Okta can call you and provide a recovery code. This feature is useful when you don't have access to your email.

 Add Phone Number

Create My Account

The form to set up an intranet account on First Solar's intranet is nice because it is a single, easy-to-scan column; however, the button doesn't look clickable and is not properly left aligned.

42. Design form controls that support how employees naturally input information.

When asking employees to input information such as dates, phone numbers, or locations, use industry-standard controls rather than trying to reinvent the wheel. For example, most intranets use a calendar date picker when asking employees to input dates. If employees come to the intranet and are presented with an open form field, they will have to spend extra time considering which format to use when entering the date.

It's okay to allow employees to type in dates, but autoformat how the numbers should appear. Don't force employees to type parentheses or dashes for dates, phone numbers, and area codes. Also, avoid using a dropdown when there are only two or three options that could be displayed better as radio buttons, which require only a single click or tap. Use the form controls that will support employees' common tendencies and expectations for entering information.

Holiday details

Holiday period •
Part day

Start date (dd/mm/yyyy) •

Nov 2019

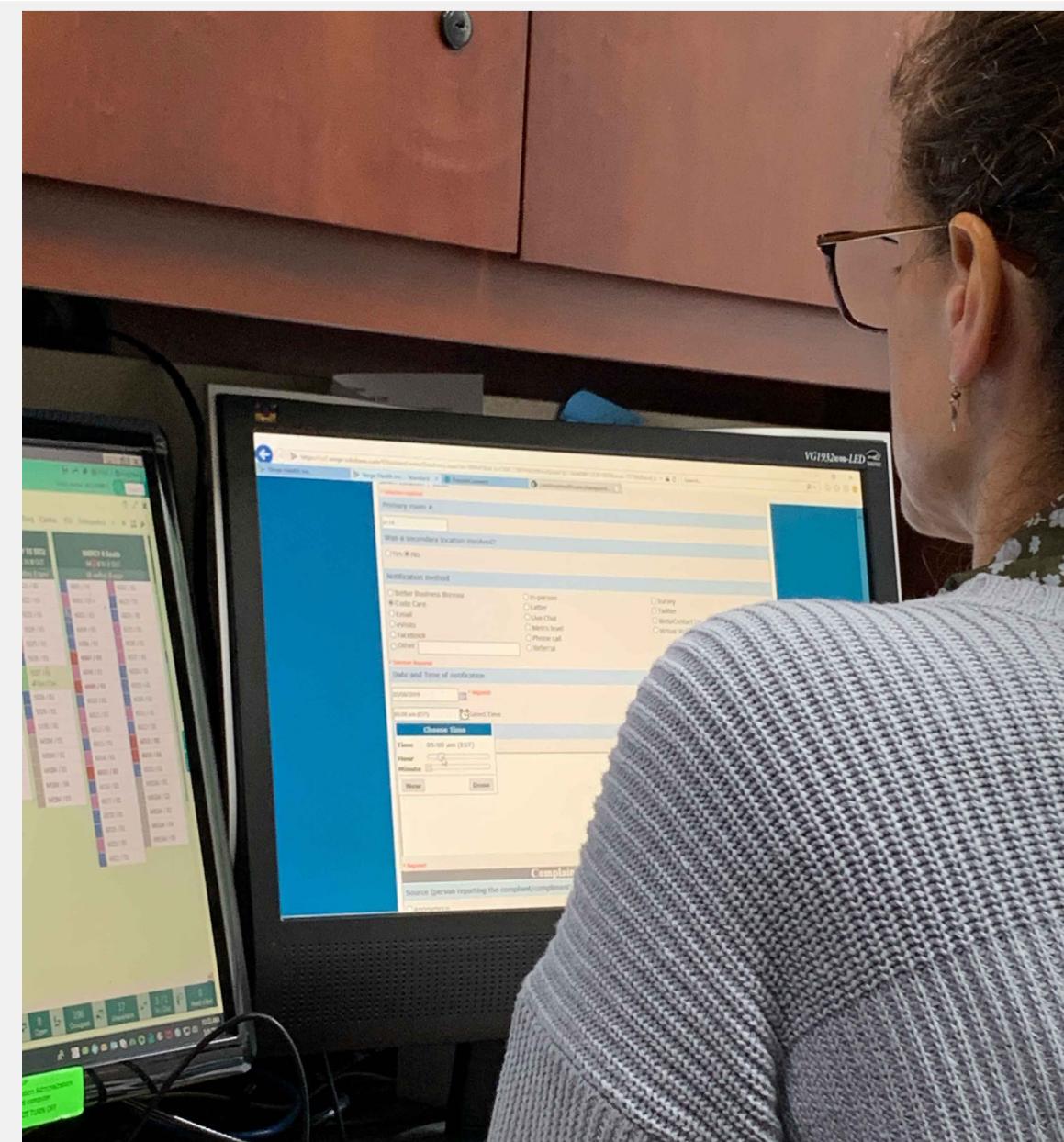
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Today Done

Save Cancel

This calendar picker on one of the intranets we studied used a clean design, applying expected form interaction controls for entering a date, but employees could also type in the date following the format communicated at the top.

Whenever possible, help users enter data by designing form fields and controls that eliminate the need to guess how the entry should be formatted. Explain any input or formatting requirements, and if a field requires a specific format or type of input, state the exact instructions. Don't make users guess your obscure password requirements or mine through massive columns and lists of checkboxes or radio buttons when a listbox or dropdown would be better.



A house supervisor at Atrium Health was filling out a long, multi-column form. She took a while with the form as it used less than optimal controls to help her get through the task. For example, instead of using sliders to set the time, it would have been much faster to let users simply type in the exact numbers. The overwhelming three columns of radio buttons could be a dropdown instead.

Stick to familiar and standard input controls such as text fields, calendar pickers, checkboxes, dropdowns, listboxes, and radio buttons for forms. Using fancy sliders or other novel controls isn't necessary and will likely only waste employees' time as they try to get the precise answer or information they need to enter into the form. Using these nonstandard controls also introduces the risk of employees entering the wrong information.

The screenshot shows a vacation request interface titled "Add Vacation". On the left, there's a sidebar with a user profile picture and the name "Senior UX Researcher Employee Name". The main area has a blue header bar with the title "Add Vacation". Below it, there are fields for "Employee Name and Number", "Start Date" (12/10/2019), and "End Date" (12/10/2019). A prominent feature is a horizontal slider with two blue circular markers labeled "1 / 2" at both ends. Between the markers, the text "Forenoon" is above the left marker and "Noon" is above the right marker. Below the slider, there are sections for "Type" (with a dropdown menu showing "Please Select" and "Holiday Replacement"), "Comment" (an empty text input field), and "Vacation days calculation" (showing "Free days in period:" and "Absence days:"). At the bottom right of the form is a blue "SAVE" button. The background of the page shows a dark grey dashboard with various icons and data snippets.

Eyeo's vacation request tool through HR Labs used a slider for employees to specify how much time they'd be taking off. It was a confusing, non-intuitive control that forced employees to waste time and work harder than necessary just to request time off.

43. Label required fields with an asterisk or the word “required.”

It's best to have either an asterisk or the word "required" next to every required field in intranet forms instead of just having a message at the top or bottom that says, "All fields are required" or "All fields are required unless otherwise indicated," or worse, no message at all. Employees usually don't read small or even large font instructions at the top of a form. When they see a form, they often jump straight into filling it out. Even when employees read such instructions, they'll likely forget them if interrupted while filling out the form.

Some designers may think marking only the optional fields in a form is more efficient since there are often fewer of these. Unfortunately, with this approach, an employee must scan the entire form to determine which fields are required. Users won't do this. Instead, people will use common sense to assume which fields are mandatory. Employee expectations can differ from designers', resulting in a form submission error that will take significant time and interaction costs to recover from.

Asterisks have become the standard for indicating mandatory fields, and this approach has the advantage that it does not take up much space, so use it. Ensure the mark precedes the label to help employees' eyes easily locate which fields are required upon scanning. This way, they only need to fixate on the leftmost character to know what is required.

Though not likely to make a massive difference, placing the asterisks indicating a required field to the left of the first character in the form field label is favorable. This way, employees can simply scan down the left side of the form, which they'll already naturally do, to understand which fields are required.

You can also specify the optional fields as it will lighten the employees' cognitive load. Without the word *optional*, employees must look around and infer whether the field is optional based on the other fields marked as required. The task becomes easier if the word is next to the form label.

Additionally, try to eliminate as many optional fields as possible. If some fields are truly necessary but only apply to a subset of users, don't make users find out through trial and error. Limit the form to only one or two optional fields and clearly label them as optional.

Absence Pay & Benefits Employment Career & Development Goals & Perf

Holiday details

Absence type •
Please choose

Holiday period •
Please choose

Notes

Save Cancel

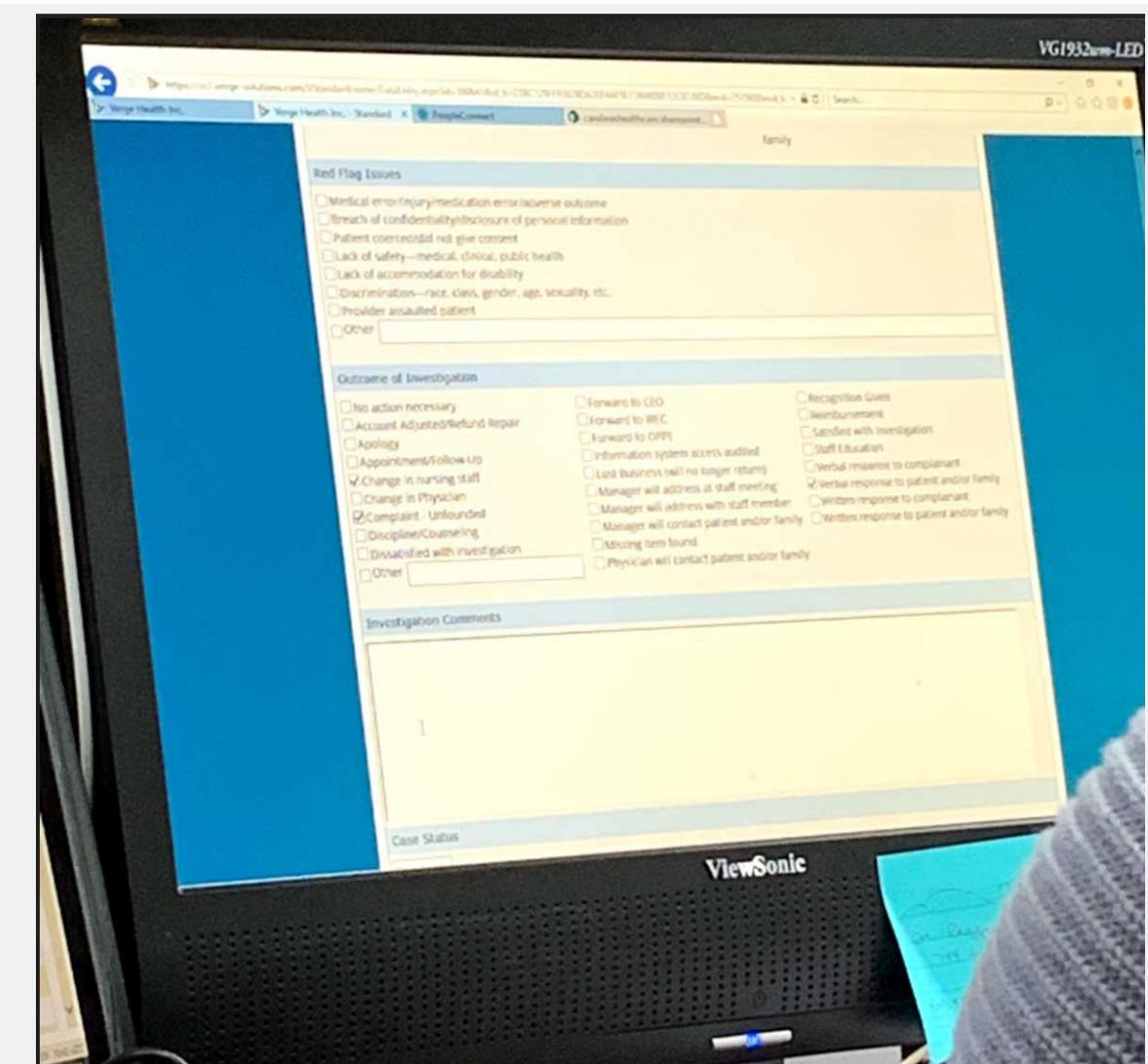
Though not a standard means of marking required fields, the small blue dot next to the form fields on a leave request form still insinuated that those fields were required. A better approach here would be to use an asterisk instead and to label the Notes field as optional.

44. Choose field sizes that correspond with the amount of information employees will enter.

All form fields do not need to be the same size or format to yield a visually appealing and balanced form. Match fields to the type and size of information employees will input. Text fields should be about the same size as the expected input since it's highly problematic when users can't see their full entry.

For example, for 2,130 recent participants in the UX Conference, the user's city of residence ranged between three characters (Leo, Indiana) to 22 characters (San Pedro Garza Garcia, Mexico). 99.9% of city names were 19 characters or shorter, making 19 characters a reasonable width for a city field.

While observing a house supervisor at Atrium Health as they worked through a complex form used to file an incident report, the investigation comments field looked abnormally large. However, for this context and situation, it wasn't. The nurse manager explained that many details and comments are required to file these reports, so having that much space was helpful. However, the *Other* checkbox, which appeared higher up on the form and had a wide open form field next to it, likely could have been narrower to match the level of detail and information contained in the checkbox options listed above.



To make this complex form easier to scan, the Other form field in the section related to Red Flag issues would be more favorable if it matched the width of the one in the Outcome of Investigation section above. As it appears, it's too wide, given the amount of information in the options above it. Containing the many checkboxes in the Outcome of Investigation section in a scrollable, multiselect listbox would also help simplify this form.

Report Something Broken

Report Something Broken

Thank you for contacting the service desk. Please describe the nature of your problem in the fields below. Upon receipt, the service desk will categorize and prioritize your problem at which time you will receive an automated email with the details of your ticket.

Person Who has the Issue?

* Is this for an existing ticket?

* Short Description

* Please provide the Steps to Reproduce and any additional information

* Are you teleworking?

* Number where you can be reached

Submit

Add attachments

Required Information

In another example, these form fields are too wide, considering the amount of information that will eventually populate them. For example, the second question seeks a yes or no answer, yet it has a field that spans the entire page width. Additionally, the last field asks for a phone number and also spans the full width of the page. Better to reduce the width of these form fields to a more realistic size, given the data they'll hold.

45. Keep forms simple; include only necessary content, fields, and controls.

Eliminating unnecessary fields and form elements requires more time and possibly debate, but the resulting reduction in employee effort and increase in form completion rates will make it worthwhile. Remove content and fields that collect information that can otherwise be:

- Derived in some other way
- Collected more conveniently at a later date
- Simply omitted

We recently applied this technique to one of our own forms and reduced it from six fields to only two. Every time you cut a field or question from a form, you increase its conversion rate and save employees time, making the business case for this guideline obvious.

At the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, there were UI elements on form pages that did not support the employees' tasks, which increased cognitive load. In addition to a panel on the side right of the form where users created an IT request, there were also inactive buttons.

The *Previous* and *Next* buttons at the top of the form were not clickable. A better approach would be to remove or hide elements like these to avoid unnecessarily increasing cognitive load as employees scan forms.

The screenshot shows a 'Request Support' form. At the top, there are navigation icons (flag, search, etc.) and a search bar. The main title is 'Request Support'. Below it is a 'Wizard Description' section with a note about attending support requests according to service level. The form itself has several input fields with red borders and error messages: 'Please identify where the problem you are having is located' (Error Message), 'Please provide a summary of the problem you are experiencing?' (the printer is not work), 'Please describe in more detail what the problem you are experiencing is?' (Awaiting Answer...), and 'Please provide any troubleshooting steps that have been taken' (Awaiting Answer...). On the left, there are 'Previous' and 'Next' buttons. On the right, there is a 'Log New Support Request' section with similar questions and a note about hardware errors. A large green 'Submit' button is at the bottom.

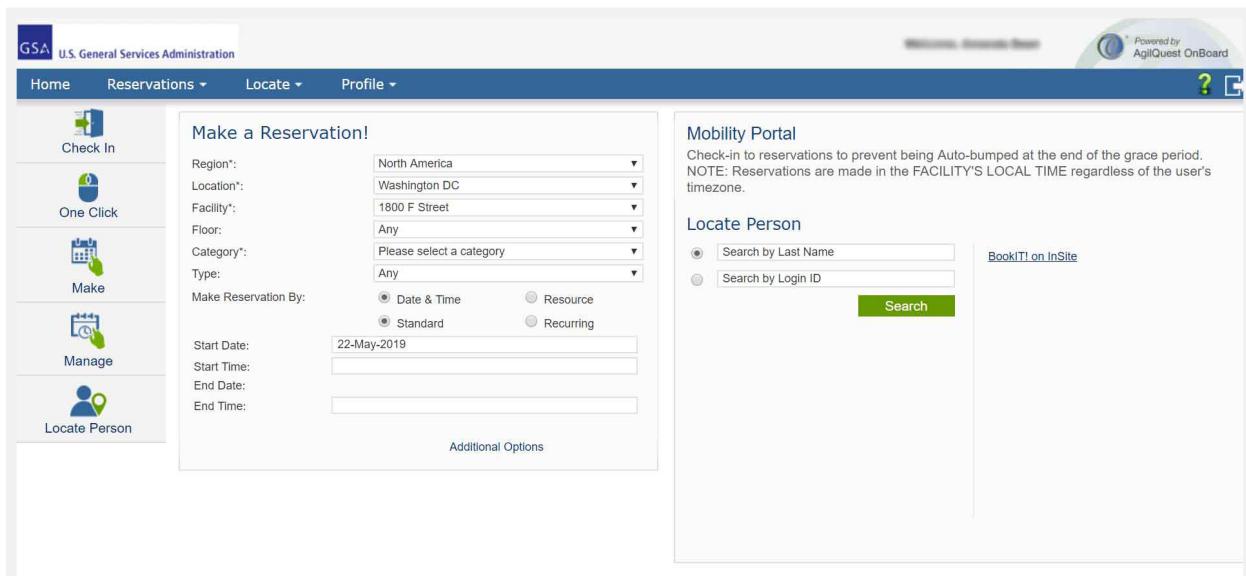
Though it contains only necessary fields, a better approach for this form on the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's intranet would be to remove the Previous and Next buttons, as they're inactive, as well as the right rail of supplementary content. These elements distract the user and add clutter. Additionally, making all the form field labels black instead of red would also help simplify the form.

Avoid excessive bolding and italicizing in forms.

Timeless Design Tips

Stick to only one or two text and font treatments in a form. Too many competing visual elements will distract employees and make the form appear overly complex. When everything is bold, bright, or italicized, it becomes hard to know what is actually important.

When employees at the GSA were booking conference rooms through the agency's booking tool, unnecessary fields, and mandatory dropdowns slowed them down. Users also complained about unnecessary fields and questions in the *BookIT* and *HRLinks* systems. They did not want to shift through various building wings to find open rooms in the tool. They said it would be much easier if they could see all open rooms available on an entire floor. A better approach here would be to simplify the forms by eliminating redundant fields, those that are unnecessarily required, and confusing options within the fields.



The General Services Administration's conference room booking tool included excessive fields and another confusing form to the right of the main form. When attempting to book rooms, employees wondered what the difference was between the Type and Category fields. A better approach would be to simplify the form down to only the most important fields required to book a room.

46. Use coherent language for form field labels and the values that appear alongside them or in controls.

Labels should clearly identify all form controls. That goes for text fields, checkboxes, radio buttons, and dropdowns. Labels should describe the purpose of the control and the names of the values that coincide with or are contained in any controls. Employees shouldn't have to stop and wonder which value or option to pick or what to write in an open text field. If employees have to do this, they'll waste time or possibly enter something incorrectly into the form.

For field values, also consider usage frequency, and whenever possible, list the most common values first. Help keyboard users by testing the tab-key navigation to ensure it follows the correct field sequence. Use the language you hear employees speaking, either in passing, in interviews, or during usability testing. You can also mine intranet search logs for the keywords and phrases employees search for related to the tasks your forms support. That language will be clearer to employees and align with their mental models for the topic.

At the GSA, employees struggled to understand what form field labels and dropdown values meant, which increased task completion times. While attempting to request a half-day vacation, several users had difficulties, and one employee gave up. They were particularly confused by the field labels. One user said, “It’s confusing what these terms mean. It would be nice to have a bubble that says, ‘this means ____ and that means ____’.”

A helpful approach to address obscure labels or control values is to place contextual help text near the field or provide tooltips to help users understand which option to select for a given task or need more clearly.

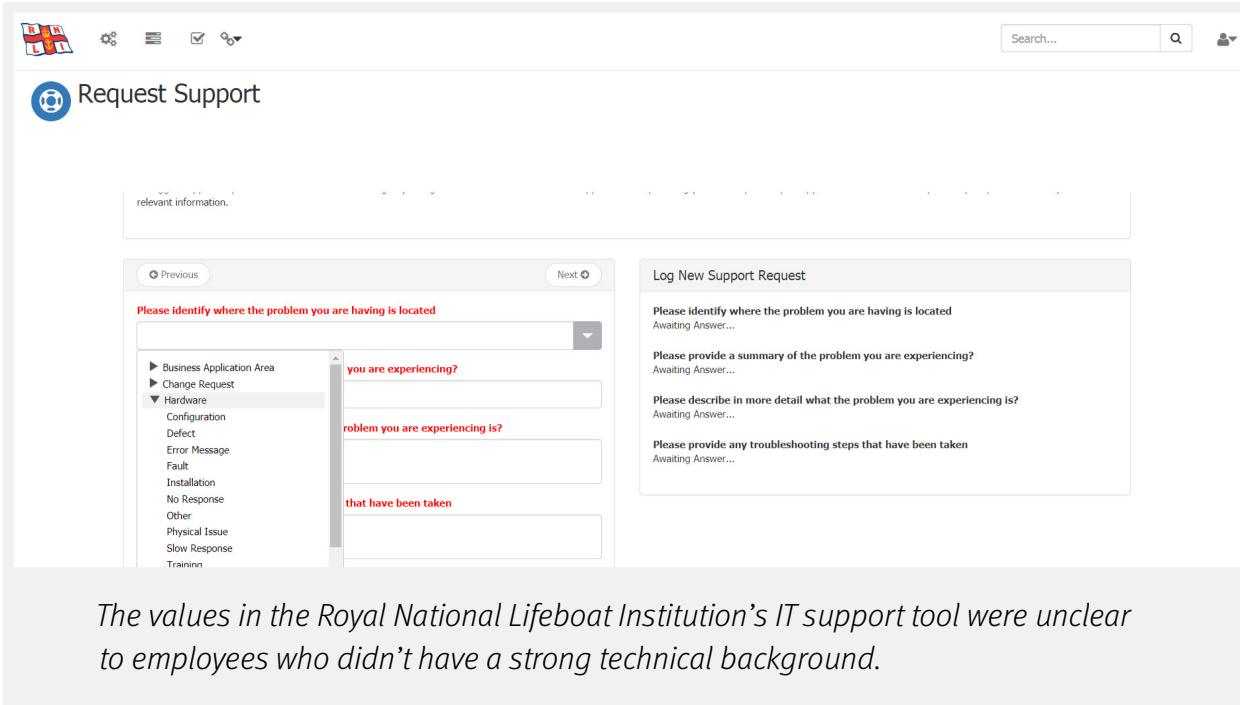
While trying to request a half-day of vacation, employees at the General Services Administration were confused by what the labels and values under the Filter by Type and Absence Name dropdowns meant.

At the Mayo Clinic, when an employee tried to submit an IT ticket to report an issue with their phone dropping calls, he missed the correct reporting option to *Report a telecom issue*. Instead, he selected *Other issues* from a dropdown. This language was not an issue for longtime employees during the testing. However, considering the Mayo Clinic's expansion and size, using plainer language for dropdown options, such as *Report a phone issue* would help more employees understand which option to choose.

The screenshot shows a web-based form titled "Service Catalog > Something Broken > Something Broken - Telecommunications > Telecom Issue". The form is for reporting a telecom issue. It includes fields for "Who is creating the ticket?", "Site", and "Issue to report". There is a section for "The group working on your submission needs a few more details:" with checkboxes for various issue types, where "Telephone Issue" is checked. Below this, there are fields for "Pager or Extension Number Being Reported", "Campus", "Building", "Floor", "Room", and "Phone Number or Email Address to Contact Requestor". A "Submit" button is at the bottom right. A note at the top of the form reads: "NOTE: Use this form for non-urgent requests. If you need to report an urgent issue, please call the Help Desk. (Use this form for non-urgent Telecom issues only. For all other non-urgent issues [click here](#))".

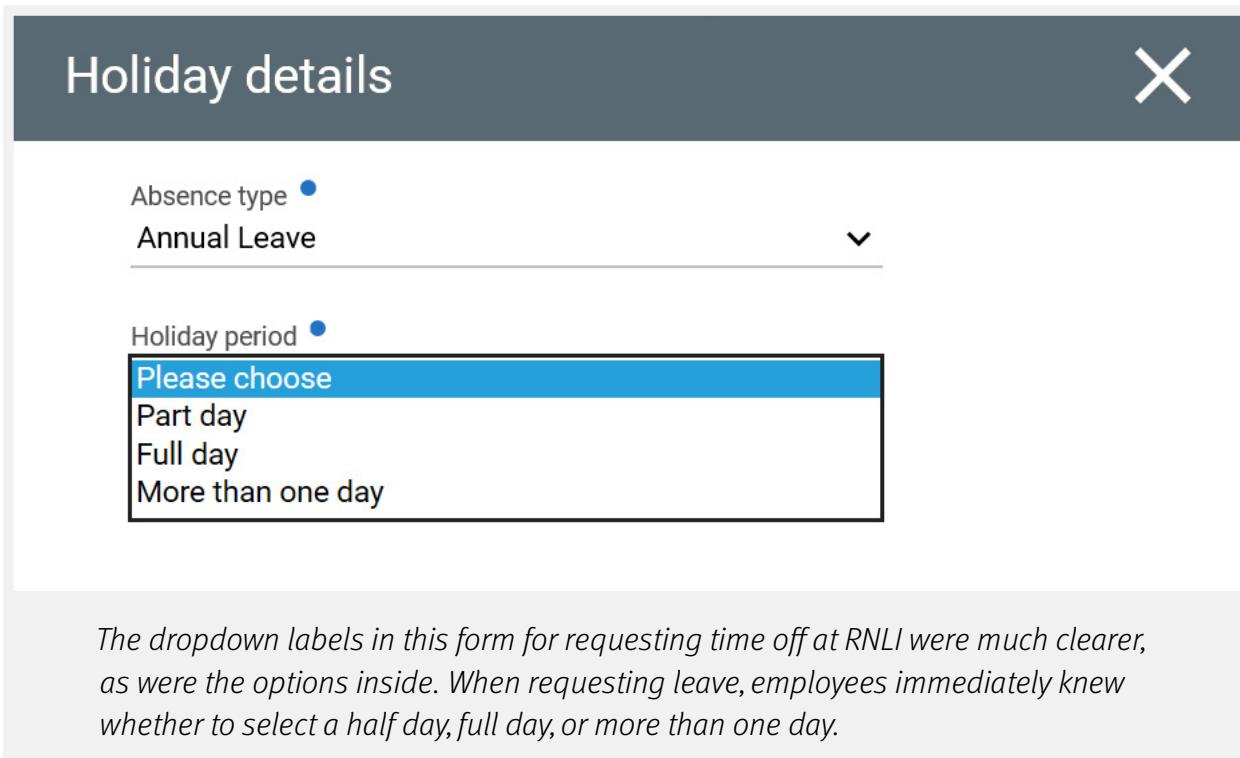
Seasoned employees at the Mayo Clinic knew to select Report a telecom issue when submitting an IT ticket to get their broken phone fixed. They knew by choosing this option, they'd be directed to this page where they could elaborate on the issue to get it resolved quickly. Unfortunately, this phrasing in the initial dropdown wasn't clear to all employees, especially new hires, so many test participants didn't reach the proper form to get their phones fixed.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution used a custom control on its IT support tool, a dropdown with accordions inside. While the field label was straightforward and asked employees where the issue was occurring, some options were redundant or would be unclear to employees who didn't have a highly technical background. It would be better to clarify and simplify the language in these options and reorder them so that the problems employees report most frequently are listed first.



The screenshot shows a 'Request Support' page. On the left, there's a sidebar with a search bar and user icons. The main area has a title 'Request Support' with a gear icon. Below it, a message says 'relevant information.' A large dropdown menu is open under the heading 'Please identify where the problem you are having is located'. The menu items include 'Business Application Area', 'Change Request', 'Hardware' (which is expanded), and several sub-options like 'Configuration', 'Defect', etc. To the right of the dropdown, there are four text input fields with placeholder text in red: 'you are experiencing?', 'problem you are experiencing?', 'that have been taken', and 'Awaiting Answer...'. There are also 'Previous' and 'Next' buttons.

The values in the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's IT support tool were unclear to employees who didn't have a strong technical background.



The screenshot shows a 'Holiday details' form. At the top, it says 'Holiday details' with a close button 'X'. Below that, 'Absence type' is set to 'Annual Leave'. Under 'Holiday period', a dropdown menu is open with a blue header 'Please choose' and three options: 'Part day', 'Full day', and 'More than one day'. The entire form is contained within a light gray box.

The dropdown labels in this form for requesting time off at RNLI were much clearer, as were the options inside. When requesting leave, employees immediately knew whether to select a half day, full day, or more than one day.

47. Automatically populate known data in forms but allow employees to edit it.

Remember that when employees access the intranet, they're focused on tasks. Often, those tasks involve filling out forms to share information or initiate a workflow. Employees don't want to waste time doing this; they want to move through the forms quickly and easily. Because an intranet has a user account for each employee with information such as their name, phone number, title, office location, email address, and more, it's a good practice to leverage some of this data to prepopulate form fields. This will enable employees to skip over the mundane fields that the intranet already knows about them through their logged-in state or connection to the company's network. Then, they'll only have to fill out the parts of the form specifically related to their task. Whenever possible, automatically fill in what's already known about employees to give them a jumpstart.

While observing an administrative assistant at Atrium Health, she used the *eForms* page on the company's intranet to find a travel request form to request a rental car for the vice president she supported. Unfortunately, even though this form was listed on the eForms page, it opened as a Word document that she had to fill out and email to a travel agent.

She said she wished the forms would populate employee information based on their name. She was frustrated that she had to find information or look it up in a separate system to add it to the form. Her workaround was to save contact information in Outlook to use when needed to complete the forms.

Because Atrium used Active Directory, this data was likely already known, including information about the executive she supported. Also, other forms in the digital workplace leveraged data to prefill form fields. A better approach would be to digitize the form instead of using a Word document so it's consistent with other forms on the intranet. It would also be helpful to autofill information such as home office location and address, so she doesn't have to fill in the field or waste time looking up an address in Outlook contacts.



Automatically save employee progress in long forms.

Timeless Design Tips

Automatically save employees' progress in long forms or multistep workflows. And don't force them to have to do the saving to make sure they keep their place. Use autosave to give employees one less thing to think about and provide additional time savings.

Atrium Health

Home > Service Catalog > Get Help > Report an Incident

How can we help?

Report an Incident

Report something that just isn't working right

! This form is available for reporting non-emergent incidents. For life threatening or patient care related issues, please call the Atrium Health Service Center at (704) 446-6161. Your online submission will be reviewed and/or processed within 24-hours.

What type of issue are you experiencing?

* Issue type
 If your issue is one of the ones listed, please select from this list. If not, select "Other" and describe your issue in the details box.

* Tell us about your issue: Do NOT include PHI data in this field.

Device Information

Asset
 Asset N/A

* Asset Tag

Windows users: To find your asset tag hover over the Canopy leaf down by the date and time and then hold down the "Ctrl" key. MAC users: Click the Apple icon at the top-left corner of the screen, select "System Preferences" and then choose "Sharing". (See example of asset tag below)

Make/Model

Who needs help? (Update the fields below as needed)

* Name (Example: Smith, John A):

* Best number to reach you (Example: 708-999-9999)

This needs to be your direct line phone number. The system may recognize and blank out a main phone number.

* Facility name:

Street address:

Office/Room/Workstation

* Help us locate you (Floor/Wing/Suite)

Is there an alternate contact? (Example: Smith, John A)

Type and select from the list the name of someone who will be able to assist if the "requested for" person is not available. Use the magnifying glass icon to search for the name.

This Atrium Health form is a good example of prepopulating known employee data in a form; however, the red message describing the form's purpose looks like an error when it's not. Also, the button to submit the form in the upper right corner is partly hidden. Fixing those two issues and making other forms on Atrium's intranet follow the same consistent pattern of prepopulating known data in fields would be favorable. Users could complete the forms faster and be pleasantly surprised when forms prefilled their information.

It's good to prefill data you already know about employees but use caution when prepopulating data based on the most common responses. When fields and controls are filled in, employees tend to skip right over them, assuming they don't need to do or answer anything. Usability test your forms with employees to know when it's acceptable to prepopulate other values outside of personal information such as name, phone, email, office location, etc. In some cases, it may help to accelerate the pace at which employees move through forms, but in others, it may cause them to inadvertently submit the wrong value for the field.

48. Present visible and helpful error messages at the field level as well as at the top of forms.

Provide specific and highly visible error messages on intranet forms. Errors should be signaled through a variety of cues, not solely through color: outline the field and use red text and a heavier font to ensure employees don't overlook this critical information. Make sure errors on intranet forms are:

- Easy to notice and understand
- Easy to locate
- Not reliant upon employees memorizing instructions to fix the error

On Burns & McDonnell's intranet, the form used to register as a content management system user had error messages that appeared inline as soon as the user skipped over a required field. When employees filled out a field correctly, they could move forward. Not only did the error messages highlight the form field with the error and label in red, but clear helper text also appeared below the form, which told the employee exactly what to do to course-correct, all of which was easily noticeable.

Fixing the error immediately after the field is completed requires the least interaction cost for employees as they don't need to locate the field with the error or navigate to it later, nor do they have to switch context from a new field to return to an old field they thought they had completed successfully. Of course, there will be situations where inline validation won't be possible, and data entered by the employee will need to be sent to a server for verification. However, whenever possible, follow this practice of providing immediate error feedback.

UPDATE PROFILE DETAILS

Congratulations! As a registered user, now you can enjoy these benefits:

- Save and organize content
- Share content with colleagues
- Have quick access to recent searches and viewed content
- Access content offline on your mobile device
- Add Notes to content

[* Indicates required fields]

First Name *
Type your First name
Please provide your first name.

Last Name *
Type your Last name
Please provide your last name.

Personal Recovery Email Address
signon@burnsmcd.com Ø

Company
Burns & McDonnell Ø

Organization Unit*
Select ▼

Industry
Select ▼

Areas of Interest
Select ▼

Please accept the updated [Terms & Conditions](#) and [Knovel Privacy Policy](#) *

A form in Burns & McDonnell's digital workplace followed form error guidelines perfectly. The messages were explicit, human-readable, polite, precise, and they gave constructive advice on how to resolve errors.

Employees were not drawn to the error messages provided in forms on the GSA's intranet. They often did not see or use them to course-correct. For example, after getting stuck in a form after a couple of attempts to request a half-day of vacation, an employee scanned a red error message to see what they needed to do to proceed, then said, "Do people know how to do this, am I the only one that doesn't know how to do this?" The employee then read the error message and successfully course-corrected, however, they also said:

"I find it to be cumbersome, and it's new. I don't think we've had it for a year. It's frustrating because why do I have to put in partial days? Why can't I just put in that I want a half day? The training we had for HR Links was not robust enough. It was rushed, and they should have had other iterations of the training system after it went live. It was a module, not hands-on or scenario-based training which is more helpful."

Employees shouldn't need to undergo training to understand how to fix errors on a form.

At First Solar, while a content manager was trying to post a new event to the intranet, she received an obscure error message saying the system couldn't populate the groups of permissions needed to read and write the event. She immediately said the terminology was strange, and she wasn't able to move on with posting the event. Also, the field where she received the error was required, so, unfortunately, she lost all progress. When asked what she'd do next after trying to use the

intranet to complete the task, she said she would find someone more familiar with it and ask them questions or look over their shoulder.

She tried one last time to create the event but failed and received the same obscure error message shown below.

Single sign-on login error

2019-10-09T17:58:53Z

! Invalid login credentials

We are unable to grant you access to this service because one or more of your Single Sign-on login credentials is invalid. Please try again.

If this issue persists, please contact your service provider for assistance.

```
FBTSM200E Unexpected exception: java.lang.NullPointerException at com.tivoli.am.fim.saml20.protocol.actions.sso.SAML20ExchangeTokenAtSPAction.getPa at com.tivoli.am.fim.saml20.protocol.actions.sso.SAML20ExchangeTokenAtSPAction.needT at com.tivoli.am.fim.saml20.protocol.actions.sso.SAML20ExchangeTokenAtSPAction.runPro at
```

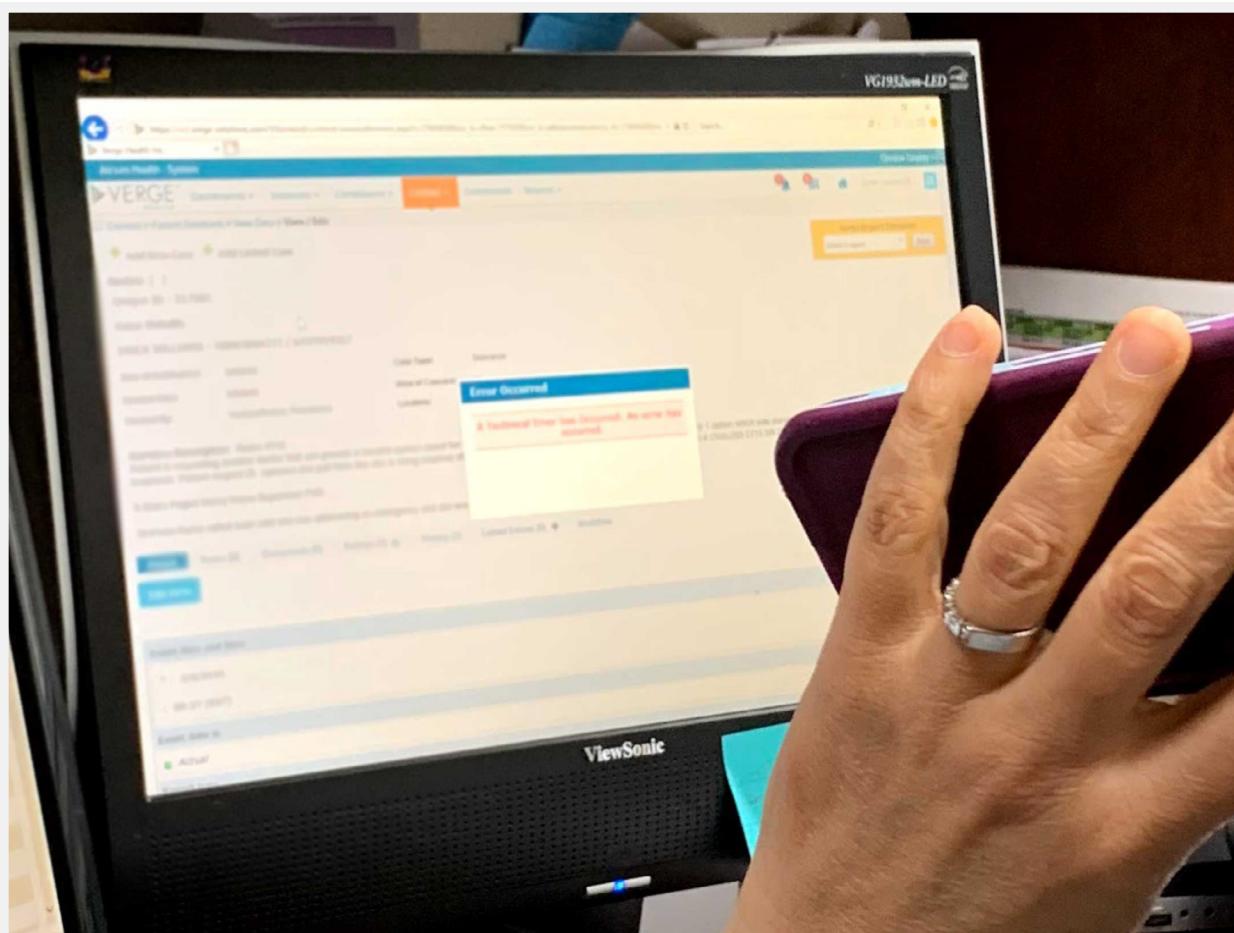
Obscure error messages that don't help employees overcome errors and those that include technical language force people to waste time, sometimes to the point where other colleagues' time is also wasted helping them resolve the form issues.

While trying to complete a long, complex form, a nurse at Atrium Health encountered an error message she couldn't overcome on her own, so she called another employee. The need for employees to pester peers costs organizations in the form of lost productivity, not only for the stuck employee but for the others that must help them course-correct. This shouldn't happen, as properly designed error messages can help employees self-solve instead.

To draw extra attention to a potential error, you can use a modal or confirmation dialog to explain the details and help the employee fix the issue. However, use such dialogs sparingly as they have two significant disadvantages:

- They are disruptive.
- The error message is presented in a window that needs to be dismissed before the employee can fix the error, so any complex instructions will have to be stored in users' working memory, thus increasing their cognitive load.

These modals and dialogs are okay to use if the error message is simple or the form could still be submitted as it is.



Use modals and dialogs sparingly for errors. This unclear error at Atrium Health caused a nurse to call IT to resolve the issue so she could (hopefully) save the progress she had already put into completing this long form.

Red is the color associated most with errors, along with orange or yellow for warnings and green or blue for success. Ensure the validation text's color stands out from the rest of the form so the employee will notice it quickly. Add a semitransparent background of the same color to the error field to make it stand out on a long page with many form fields.

Additionally, don't use validation summaries as the only indication of an error. A validation summary is a message shown at the top of the form page to let employees know that there are errors that need to be fixed, whether those errors are in the viewport or below the fold. A validation summary can give the employee a global understanding of all the errors in a form but shouldn't be used as the only form of error indication, as it forces them to search for the field with the error. Moreover, the validation summary message may no longer be present in the viewport when the employee reaches the error field, thus forcing them to memorize the error message in order to fix the issue.

The screenshot shows a web-based room reservation system for Mayo Clinic. The top navigation bar includes the Mayo Clinic logo, a search bar, and links for 'Log out' and 'User name: [M221757]'. On the left, a sidebar menu lists 'Main Menu' (Select Area), 'Room Reservation' (My Reservations, My Pending Requests, Search Requests, Request Reservation, View Availability, Reporting, All Tasks), and 'Related' (Catering, Facilities and Support Services, Plummer Group Study Rooms, Policies and Guidelines, Mayo Clinic Home, Media Support). The main content area is titled 'VIEW AVAILABILITY - MAYO EAST 11'. It contains several input fields: 'Capacity needed' (0), 'Duration of event' (1 hour), 'Search times from' (7:00 AM until 5:00 PM), and checkboxes for 'Allow Reservations on Holidays' and 'Meet only on days colored' (Blue, Orange, Either). Below these are frequency options ('Frequency of event': Standalone, Weekly, Monthly) and a date range ('Search days from 10/10/2019 until 10/10/2019'). A dropdown menu for 'Buildings by Name' shows 'None' and 'Mayo Building'. At the bottom, a red message box contains the text: 'For viewing purposes only. If you wish to make a reservation, please select Request Reservation.' A 'Next' button is visible at the bottom right.

On the Mayo Clinic's conference room booking tool, a message appeared in red at the top of the page, mimicking a validation summary, but it was not. It was merely form instructions. A better approach would be to use black text to communicate information about the form.

The screenshot shows a support form for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. The header features the RNLI logo and a 'Request Support' button. Below is a 'Wizard Description' section with the text: 'All logged support requests will be attended to according to your agreed service level. To assist the support team in providing you with a quick response, please enter a clear description of your problem and any other relevant information.' The main form area has four text input fields with red labels: 'Please identify where the problem you are having is located', 'Please provide a summary of the problem you are experiencing?', 'Please describe in more detail what the problem you are experiencing is?', and 'Please provide any troubleshooting steps that have been taken'. Each field has a green 'Submit' button at the bottom.

Do not use red text for form field labels as the Royal National Lifeboat Institution did on its support form. Red text will signal errors to employees.

Invalid username or password

martin@nngroup.com

Password

Keep me signed in

LOG IN

FORGOT PASSWORD | HELP

On shorter forms, like a login form, it's perfectly acceptable to use a short validation summary to communicate errors. Place a visible red design treatment at the top of the form to help employees quickly resolve the error.

Error messages indicate system status: they let employees know they have encountered a roadblock and provide solutions to help fix it. But for the error messages to be effective, people need to see them, understand them, and be able to act upon them easily. An error flow is the sequence of steps the employee must complete to correct the error. A thoughtful error flow allows employees to easily fix their mistakes and proceed with their tasks. We recommend you review analytics data to discover repeated errors and then review or test the design to try to improve it. A rewritten error message is often the first thing to try.

As a stopgap solution, you can also show a link to more detailed help information or documentation after an employee has made the same error too many times. Design error flows to help employees fix mistakes and advise them on how to avoid making more. Ensure that employees can easily detect errors, understand how to fix them, and see the error message while correcting the corresponding error. Remove the guesswork and let employees get on with their tasks and workday.

49. Left-align form buttons and visually differentiate primary calls-to-action from secondary.

We've established in previous guidelines that single-column web forms yield the cleanest designs. This means a form design where each control or field lives on its own row instead of using a multi-column form where employees must scan it from left to right and from top to bottom. The only time it's acceptable to place fields on the same line is when information is very closely related, such as date of birth with a month, day, and year, or the city, state, and zip code corresponding to an address.

A significant trend we noticed in our most recent round of research was that *Submit* buttons on intranet web forms were often improperly aligned, appearing to the far right at the bottom of the page or, in some cases, at the top of the form instead of left-aligned with the left side of the input fields and controls. It was also often difficult to visually discern the primary call-to-action from the secondary call-to-action in forms, as the primary button style was applied to both, instead of using different visual styles to denote levels of importance.

When simple forms are lined up in a single column, and buttons are left-aligned, it makes forms much easier for employees to skim and scan and supports peoples' natural F-shaped reading pattern. Users generally move through forms in a straight, vertical, visual line as it's the most efficient means of navigating the form. Forcing the user's eye to move down and over to the right takes more mental effort to find the buttons and submit the form. Left-aligning buttons is also more convenient for employees who rely on the *Tab* key for navigation because they don't have to look over on the other side of the screen to see where the focus jumped.

For example, the *Submit* button appeared in the upper right corner of a general inquiry web form at the Mayo Clinic. This button is placed too far up and to the right of where the employee would be looking to submit the form. Additionally, a bug with the button's CSS appeared to have rendered more than half of it invisible in the interface. A better approach would be to place the button below and left-aligned with the *What is your question?* field, with the same style of white text over blue.

The screenshot shows a web-based inquiry form titled "General Inquiry". At the top, there is a breadcrumb navigation: Home > Human Resources Catalog > General > General Inquiry. To the right of the breadcrumb is a search bar with a magnifying glass icon. The main form area has a title "General Inquiry" and a subtitle "Ask a general question". Below this is a large text input field. A required field indicator (* What is your question?) is placed to the left of a second text input field. At the bottom right of the form, there is a blue "Submit" button and a link "Add attachments".

The button placement on the Mayo Clinic's HR inquiry form is incorrect.

Employees could use a web form to update their profile on the Scottish Government's intranet. Two buttons appeared at the bottom right of the form. The first button was the primary button to *Save and close* after making updates, and the secondary button was to *Cancel and go back*. Each button's background was bright blue with white text overlaid, which would be a perfectly acceptable design choice for a primary call-to-action. However, the secondary call-to-action also used this same style when it should have appeared in a different visual style.

An improvement to this design would be to use either a simple blue text link or the opposite of the primary button style, using a white background with blue text to indicate its secondary importance. Moving the buttons over to left-align them with the left side of the form fields would also help provide better visual balance to this form because it would fit with where employees will naturally look to submit the form. Aligning with this natural behavior may seem like a small detail, but as an intranet designer, you control where users' eyes move on the screen and where to direct people's attention. Small touches matter and are what separate mediocre intranet design from great intranet design.

The screenshot shows a 'Basic Information' section of the Saltire intranet. It includes fields for Last name, Name, Work phone, Department, Title, Manager, and an About me text area. There are also Picture, Ask Me About, and Save/Cancel buttons.

Field	Description	Visibility
Last name		Everyone
Name		Everyone
Work phone		Everyone
Department		Everyone
Title		Everyone
Manager		Everyone
About me	Provide a personal description expressing what you would like others to know about you.	Everyone
Picture	Upload picture Remove	Everyone
Ask Me About	Behaviour Change; Communications Strategy; Change Management; Change Programme s; Change Communication;	Everyone

Note: The 'About me' field has a placeholder text: "Provide a personal description expressing what you would like others to know about you."

Buttons:

- Save all and close
- Cancel and go back

The Save and Cancel buttons on the Scottish Government's intranet could benefit from being visually differentiated from one another since one is primary and the other is secondary. Moving them to be left-aligned instead of right-aligned would also improve this form's design.

Sometimes, designers encounter debates about button placement. The logic often used to justify right-aligned button placement is based on the Gutenberg diagram. There's also a general perception that a right-aligned button either indicates employees will move on to the next step or that the form will “close.” Right-aligned button placement can be beneficial in a multistep workflow or a dialog box that opens in software but not in simple web forms. It is acceptable to center-align buttons in intranet forms, especially on mobile, but only if the form fields are also center-aligned on the screen, and the button spans the same width as the form fields.



Gutenberg diagram

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

The **Gutenberg diagram** is a general pattern the eyes move through when looking at evenly distributed, homogenous information.

The login form on the Scottish Government's *Civil Service-Learning* platform represented a good example of form design, button design, and primary and secondary button placement. The bright green *Sign in* button was left-aligned with the form fields, and the secondary action of *Forgotten your password* appeared below the button as a text link.



Civil Service Learning

Please log in to access the site.

Sign in

Sign in to find out what's available on Civil Service Learning.

If this is the first time you have used the Civil Service Learning website, you will need to [register for an account](#)

Email address

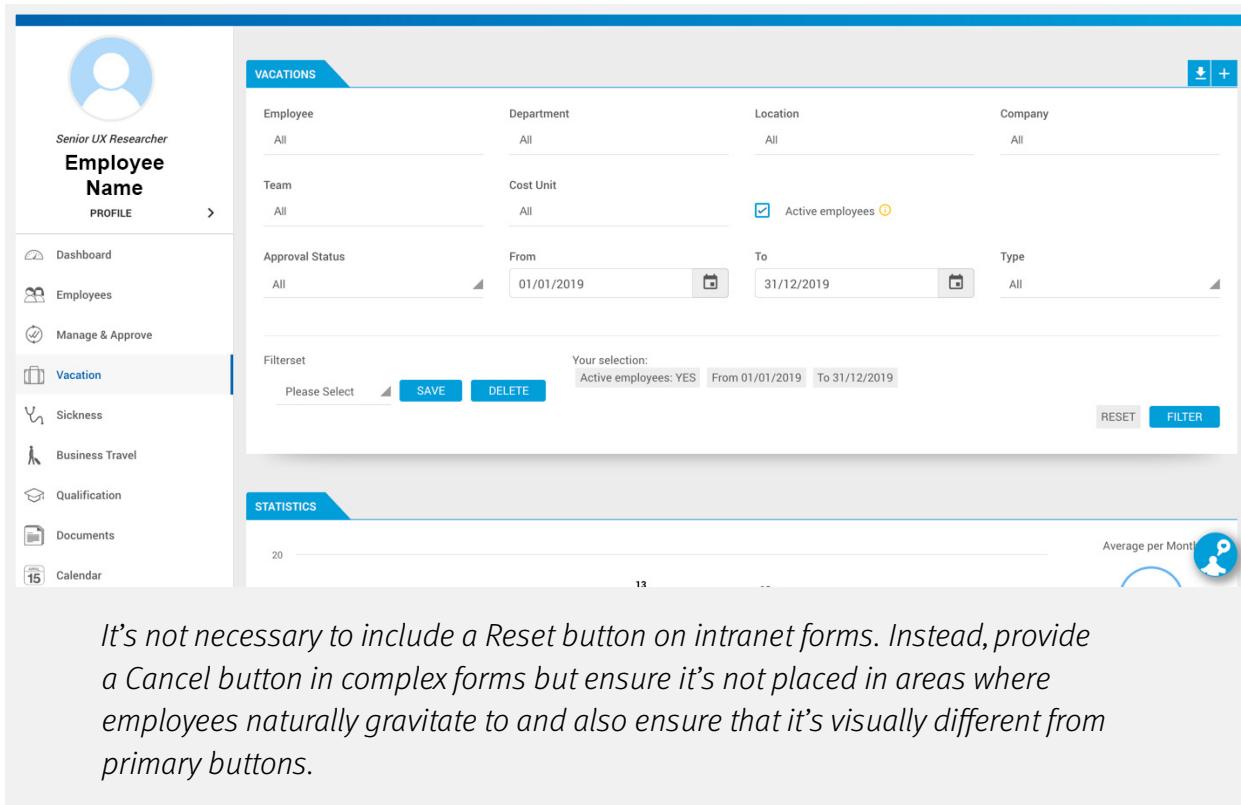
Password

Sign in

[Forgotten your password?](#)

The design of the primary button and secondary link on the Scottish Government's Civil Service-Learning platform represented a great example of proper button and call-to-action placement in web forms.

Avoid including *Reset* and *Clear* buttons in intranet forms. The risk of accidental deletion outweighs the unlikely need to start over. In forms that collect sensitive input such as financial information, provide a *Cancel* button to support those employees who abandon the form and want to delete their information. Ensure that the *Cancel* button appears to the right of the primary call-to-action and has significantly less visual prominence than the primary button to avoid accidental clicks.



The screenshot shows a complex intranet form for managing vacations. On the left, there's a sidebar with a user profile picture and the name "Senior UX Researcher Employee Name". Below the profile are several navigation links: Dashboard, Employees, Manage & Approve, Vacation (which is highlighted in blue), Sickness, Business Travel, Qualification, Documents, and Calendar. The main content area has a header "VACATIONS" with a download and add icon. It contains four filter sections: Employee (All), Department (All), Location (All), and Company (All). Below these are Team (All) and Cost Unit (All) filters. A checkbox for "Active employees" is checked. Under approval status, "All" is selected. Date filters "From 01/01/2019" and "To 31/12/2019" are set. A "Type" filter is also present. At the bottom of the filter section, there's a "Filterset" dropdown set to "Please Select", and buttons for "SAVE" and "DELETE". To the right, a message says "Your selection: Active employees: YES From 01/01/2019 To 31/12/2019". Buttons for "RESET" and "FILTER" are available. Below the filters is a "STATISTICS" section with a chart showing "Average per Month" and a person icon. The overall layout is clean but complex, illustrating the point about unnecessary buttons.

It's not necessary to include a Reset button on intranet forms. Instead, provide a Cancel button in complex forms but ensure it's not placed in areas where employees naturally gravitate to and also ensure that it's visually different from primary buttons.

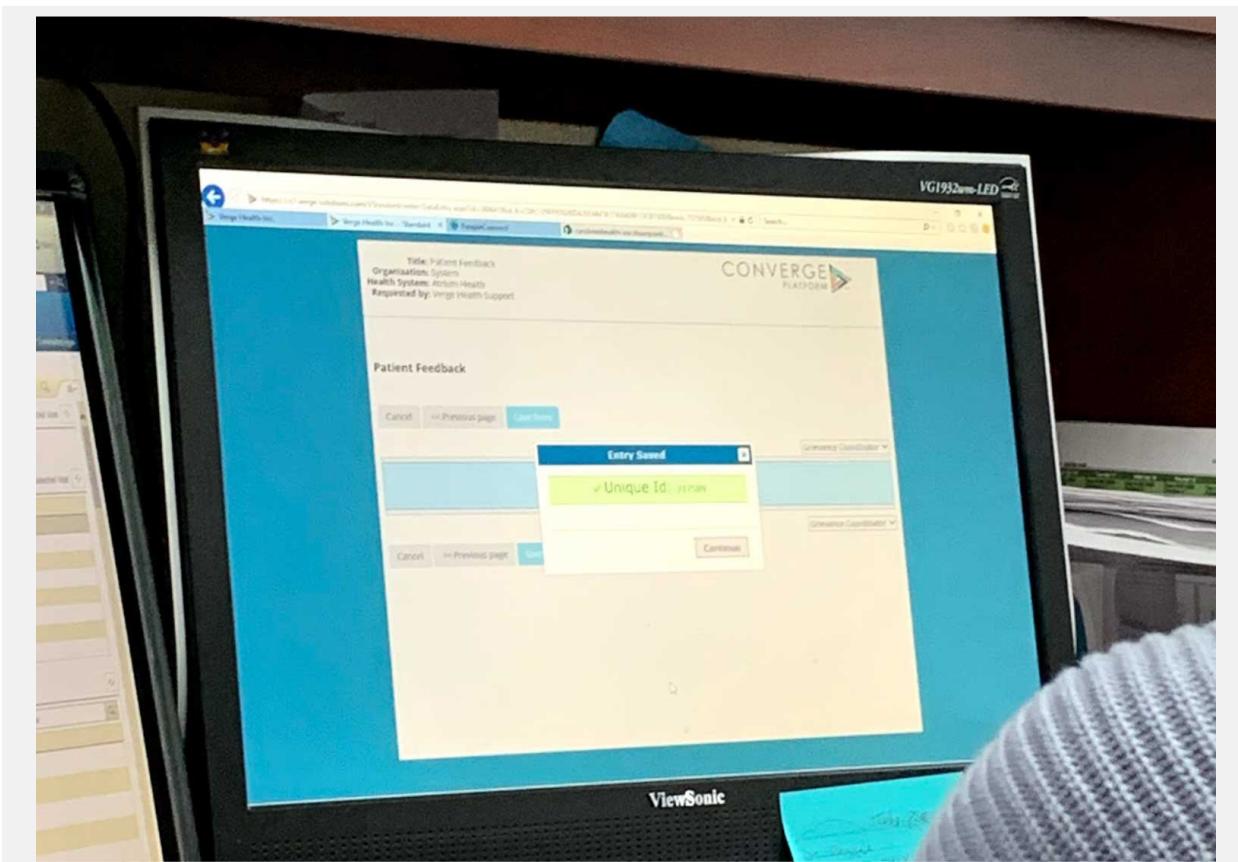
Consistently left-align primary buttons and place them at the bottom of all intranet web forms. This way, employees won't have to stop and ponder which button is primary and which is secondary as they vertically scan the form. This way, employees will save time and encounter fewer form errors, which they always appreciate.

50. Provide a clear and visible confirmation message after employees submit forms.

Just as errors must be highly visible, both at the top of the form and at the field or control level, it's also important to show employees a visible and clear confirmation message after they successfully submit their form. This way, employees know the process or task is complete, and they aren't left wondering whether they're done with the form and if their information was successfully submitted.

Confirmation messages for form submissions usually appear on a subsequent screen or in a modal dialog box. In other cases, they can appear at the top of a new screen with a blank version of the form displayed below. A confirmation message is usually less important for login forms, as the indicator of success isn't message-based, it's whether the employee can access their account.

Visual design cues shouldn't be the only indicator of a form's submission; clear and coherent messaging must also appear to communicate that the form was completed and successfully submitted. It's even appropriate to include messaging in the confirmation that sets employees' expectations about what to do next, what will happen next, how long they'll have to wait for a next step or to hear back from another person or department. For example, at Atrium Health, after a nursing supervisor filled out a lengthy form, she saw a confirmation dialog that said, *Entry Saved* at the top and a green message below that said *Unique ID*. While the *Entry Saved* message helped communicate the form had been saved successfully, a better approach would have been to include this clear, meaningful message in the green visual style down below instead of presenting the employee with a random unique ID that didn't carry any meaning as to whether or not her form had saved.



Though form submission confirmation messages can appear in modal dialogs, the corresponding message should be clear, coherent, and free from system-oriented language such as "Unique ID."

The image shows a OneLogin login interface. At the top is a black header with the "oneLogin" logo in white. Below it is a light gray main area. A green rectangular box at the top contains the text "Your password has been updated". Below this are two input fields: "Username or Email" and "Password", each with a small "..." icon on the right. Underneath the fields is a checkbox labeled "Keep me signed in". A large blue "LOG IN" button is centered below the inputs. At the bottom of the main area, there are links for "FORGOT PASSWORD | HELP".

In a better example of submission confirmation messaging, after an employee completed the workflow to reset their password, a simple and clean message appeared at the top of the login form. The green color palette and clear messaging helped employees feel confident that the process was complete.

Interaction Design

NAVIGATION

51. Design navigation that looks and behaves consistently across the intranet.

Ensure the visual styling of the intranet's navigation and menus makes them easy to notice. Navigation and menus shouldn't be easily mistaken for banners or advertisements. The design of the intranet's navigation should be much more task-oriented and less promotional than the organization's public website. A company should have only a single design for the intranet's navigation and menus, so employees must only learn it once. Even in this most recent round of research, we still saw many companies with multiple intranet navigations and styles. We suggest you eliminate that in favor of a unified intranet design and consistent navigation approach.

For example, some pages on the Mayo Clinic's intranet had different styles for the main navigation. One version of the topmost navigation, which the team called the "universal banner," appeared in black, while the other appeared in white. Even though the same links appeared in both styles, when employees reached pages where the universal banner style changed, it caught them off guard and made them feel lost. They had to pause and intentionally look to see if the navigation had changed, which wasted their time unnecessarily.

The Mayo Clinic also had another secondary row of navigation that appeared in department-specific areas of the intranet. The team called this navigation the "empire navigation." Departments were allowed to determine which links appeared here, whether to add another search field in the upper right corner, and other customizations relative to the department's needs. While this might support department needs, it caused other employees who may need to access these areas of the intranet for information about other teams and departments to become lost and disoriented as they navigated to these areas where the design had changed.

Additionally, many departments chose different colors and link treatments for the empire banner and its corresponding menus, adding additional inconsistencies to an already inconsistent system. Some used dropdown menus, and others did not, which made the intranet's navigational system visually disjointed and cognitively impossible to learn.

 MAYO CLINIC

Home Practice Education Research HR Connect Groups Policy Library Video Library Calendar

People Intranet Forms Drugs AskMayoExpert Advanced

Quality

Home | **About Us** | Accreditation | Quality Data and Analysis | Mayo Clinic Experience | Patient Safety

About Us

About Us Home > About Us



**ATTENDS : HIGHEST
QUALITY CARE**

Information and resources to help you with your quality improvement needs

Mayo Clinic Quality is comprised of four areas: Accreditation, Quality Data and Analysis, Patient Experience, and Patient Safety.

Accreditation
Accreditation provides Mayo Clinic with the framework for the delivery of safe patient care in a safe environment, and through the dedicated partnership with the clinical practice, contributes to Mayo Clinic remaining fully accredited at all sites.

Quality Data and Analysis
Quality Data and Analysis is responsible for regulatory interpretation and monitoring of measures, maintenance and enhancement of quality information systems, data abstraction, and standardization of data collection processes across Mayo Clinic. Ultimately, Quality Data and Analysis provides efficient, reliable and actionable quality data.

Patient Experience
Patient Experience partners with the practice to diffuse patient satisfaction data, strategize and monitor improvement, provide a robust education program and support patient service recovery efforts to create an unparalleled patient experience.

Patient Safety
Patient Safety drives rapid dissemination of learned threats to patient safety, a vigorous response—working at a system level whenever possible, and diffusion of learned best practices so that every Mayo Clinic patient, wherever they enter Mayo Clinic's care, can be confident that they will receive the safest possible care.

Site- and Region-Based Resources

The Mayo Clinic's intranet called its global navigation the universal banner. It appeared across the intranet in either black or white, depending on the location. A better approach would be to use one consistent visual treatment, either the black or the white background across the entire intranet, instead of switching the color scheme arbitrarily.

MAYO CLINIC

Home | Practice | Education | Research | HR Connect | Groups | Policy Library | Video | Library | Calendar

Mayo Clinic Health System - Administration

People Intranet Forms Drugs AskMayoExpert Advanced Search

MCHS Intranet login | feedback

MCHS Sites Practice EHR HR Connect Depts/Groups Forms Policies Tools Resources

MCHS Initiatives

- MPAC (Mayo Post Acute Care)
- Outreach
- Population Health

Quality

- Outcomes
- Patient Safety
- Scorecard
- Patient Experience

Administration Office
MCHS Web Teams (Internet/Intranet)

MCHS Chat Time

Wednesday mornings, 8-8:15 a.m.
201 Building, Room 1-20
Dial-in*: 1-866-365-4406, access code 2841960
*please mute your phone while listening

Add to Microsoft Outlook

For more information and past video clips visit the Leadership Forum.

Locations: MCHS REGIONAL MAP & Leadership information

Hospitals & Accreditation
Locations on Google map

People: Search for MCHS Employees by campus | Search MCHS Medical Staff
We have over 1000 physicians, and 14,000 allied health staff in three states.

Looking for Services? MCHS Medical Services A-Z

Looking for Directions? Driving Directions to MCHS Sites

Heading for Rochester? Please call the Card Access office for information at 507-284-8513.

Driving Directions to MCHS Sites

MedSpeed

MCHS Addresses & Phone Numbers

MCHS Administration Staff

MCHS Conference Room Directory

Patient Online Services Resource Center

Ready Access (formerly Level 3)

More Resources...

152

Impaired 1
Unavailable 0
Planned 0

Click for downtime resources

Days Since Last Preventable Harm

263 days since last incident in NWWI: Management-anticoagulation related

331 days since last incident in SEMN: Major fall-witnessed, unassisted

68 days since last incident in SWMN: Major fall-unwitnessed, found by staff

265 days since last incident in SWWI: Major fall-unwitnessed, found by staff

News Center

News Center

- Headlines: Northwest Wisconsin
- Headlines: Southeast Minnesota
- Headlines: Southwest Minnesota
- Headlines: Southwest Wisconsin

More News | Submit a Story

News and Announcements

- Mayo Clinic News Center
- MCHS Leadership Forum
- The Scope
- Hometown Health
- Inside Mayo Clinic Research
- In the Loop

The navigation row below the Mayo Clinic Health System – Administration department title shown above was referred to internally as the “empire navigation.” Teams could customize the links, dropdown menus, and search fields that appeared here, which made the navigation inconsistently designed across the intranet.

A successful intranet needs a strong navigational system that's visually consistent because it has to encompass more information, links, and tools than a mainstream, public website. It's usually best if the intranet has a single, well-structured information architecture and well-designed navigation system under the control of a single or a few designers. The entire intranet should always follow a well-planned (and usability-tested) information infrastructure that facilitates navigation. The following elements should be standardized and visually consistent:

- The main navigation background color and main link style
- Dropdown menus and secondary link styles
- Left navigation menus with secondary and tertiary link styles
- The footer background, layout, and link styles

Don't change the intranet's navigation design just to signify different team or department sections. For example, the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology used a consistent visual style for its navigation across the entire intranet. The design used a fixed left panel to help employees access frequently accessed resources, while the global navigation appeared in bright blue with white text links. The left navigation always used a blue header label and bolded link labels. The fact that the design didn't change and behaved the same way across the entire intranet made the system much more learnable, familiar, and efficient for employees to use.

The screenshot shows the NAIT intranet homepage. A vertical dark sidebar on the left contains icons for NAIT logo, user profile (HELENA), quick links, apps/tools, employee directory, locations, and emergency resources. The main navigation bar at the top has links for All Services, Employee Essentials, Teaching Essentials, Industry Solutions, Departments & Schools, Institutional Priorities, About NAIT, News & Events, and a search bar. Below the navigation, a breadcrumb trail shows HOME > DEPARTMENTS & SCHOOLS > HUMAN RESOURCES. A "HUMAN RESOURCES" dropdown menu is open, listing Payroll & Benefits, Union Association & MAE, Training & Professional Development, Awards & Recognition, Performance Enhancement Process (PEP), Code of Ethics & Conduct, Staff Events, Services, Clayton's Blog, and HR & ODS Calendar. Another section below lists Apps & Tools, Human Resources System, Course Catalogue, and Career Opportunities. Key contacts for Human Resources are listed as 780.471.7466, with email hrs@nait.ca and links to See all HR Contacts (pdf) and HRA/HRC Contacts by Area (pdf). The main content area features a "HUMAN RESOURCES" heading, a photo of four people, and a text block about the department's mission. It also mentions the Who's Great at NAIT and SHINE programs, and the ETS@Work program. A "LATEST BLOG POST" section shows a thumbnail for a blog post titled "Staying resilient through change". A badge for Alberta's Top 75 Employers 2019 is visible on the right.

The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology used a clean and consistent navigation design that behaved similarly across the intranet, which helped employees reliably navigate without having to waste time or expend cognitive energy to relearn or reorient to a new navigational appearance as they moved from section to section.

LINKS, BUTTONS, AND OTHER ACTION-ORIENTED ELEMENTS

52. Use visual treatments that make links, buttons, and other action-oriented elements look clickable and interactive.

Whether or not you adopt a **flat-design** style for the intranet, interactive components must retain sufficient clues to suggest they are clickable. Using design treatments such as borders, color, size, consistency, placement, and adherence to web standards can give interactive components the proper look. Employees need to know which areas of the page are static content and which are clickable or tappable. Make clickable elements obvious so employees don't need to ponder the meaning of design elements or encounter productivity-lowering surprises when something doesn't work as expected.



Flat design

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

Flat design is a minimalist web-design strategy that seeks to simplify interfaces by removing unnecessary elements or content that does not support user tasks.

For example, at the Mayo Clinic, when we asked an employee to identify where a colleague's office location was, they knew from experience that clicking on the *Group* link in the *Work Area* in a user's profile would show all the people in that group. They said, "If I want to see who works in that area, I can click on the building."

However, there were no signifiers within the employee profiles to indicate these were clickable links. When responding to a post-task interview question, the employee shared that they had learned about this feature over time, but the text doesn't appear to be a link. A better approach, in this case, would be to make links look visibly clickable and different from normal text. Using a consistent visual treatment for all text links will help employees learn which areas are active and which are not.

The screenshot shows a user profile for Anthony W. Williams. On the left, there is a portrait of him in a suit and tie. Below the portrait, it says "Portrait: Mar 2017" and "View Access Card". To the right, there is a section titled "Identifiers" with a dropdown arrow. Under "Work Area", there is a list of roles and locations, including "Mayo Clinic Administration RST – Siebens Building 12 West", "Chief of Staff", "Administrative Assistant", and "Administration (Agenda/Committee Administrative Assistant Support) RST – Siebens Building 12 West". A tip at the bottom of this section says "Tip: move mouse over phone or pager icon for more information." Below this, there is a section for "Site Access Codes" with a "show" link. At the bottom, there is a section for "Institutional Committee Appointments" with a dropdown arrow, listing "Board of Trustees", "Vice President and CAO", "Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Committee", and "Executive Operations Team". A tip at the bottom of this section says "Tip: try exploring the Title, Unit and Supervisor links." The "Work Location" field is highlighted with a red box.

Seasoned employees at the Mayo Clinic knew to click on the Work Location link in employees' profiles to find everyone who worked in that location. Unfortunately, this didn't look like a link, so new employees would not know it was clickable using this design.

It was also difficult for employees to discern which areas were clickable in other parts of the Mayo Clinic's digital workplace. While trying to book a conference room, an employee clicked on a black, underlined word. When it didn't work right away, she tried clicking multiple times, then said, "Anything that's underlined, I expect would be a link. I think I can click it. Yeah, I can. Okay, there it goes."

Soon after, she encountered some data tables in the design, and based on her prior uncertainty about what was clickable, she said, "I don't know if these are clickable." She repeatedly clicked on the underlined text and said, "C'mon!" urging it to respond.

Don't underline any text that's not a link. Reserve underlining for links. Because underlines provide a strong perceived affordance of clickability, employees will be confused and disappointed if underlined text doesn't have an actual affordance to match this perception.

The screenshot shows a web-based room reservation system for Mayo Clinic. The top navigation bar includes the Mayo Clinic logo and the title "Room Reservations". On the left, there's a "Main Menu" with links like "Select Area", "Room Reservation", "Related", and "All Tasks". Under "Room Reservation", there are links for "My Reservations", "My Pending Requests", "Search Requests", "Request Reservation", "View Availability", "Reporting", and "All Tasks". The main content area has a header "REQUEST RESERVATION - INSTITUTIONAL MEETING ROOMS". It shows a dropdown for "Duration of event" set to "1 hour". Below that, a message says "You have selected these location(s) and time(s):" followed by a large empty text area. At the bottom of this section are buttons for "Return", "Next", and "Clear Selection". A blue link text "Click on a room and corresponding empty time slots to request it." is present. Two tables show availability for different rooms:

Availability for room RO_OC_03_05 / Computer Lab (12)	
	Thu 10/10/19
2:00 PM	1610659
2:30 PM	1610659
3:00 PM	1610659
3:30 PM	1610659
4:00 PM	1610659
4:30 PM	1610659

Availability for room RO_OC_03_15B / Computer Lab (12)	
	Thu 10/10/19
2:00 PM	1610683
2:30 PM	1610683
3:00 PM	1610683
3:30 PM	1610683
4:00 PM	1610683
4:30 PM	1610683

When trying to schedule a conference room on the Mayo Clinic intranet, one user looked at the text for a room and hesitated before clicking, not knowing if it would be clickable given its low signifiers.

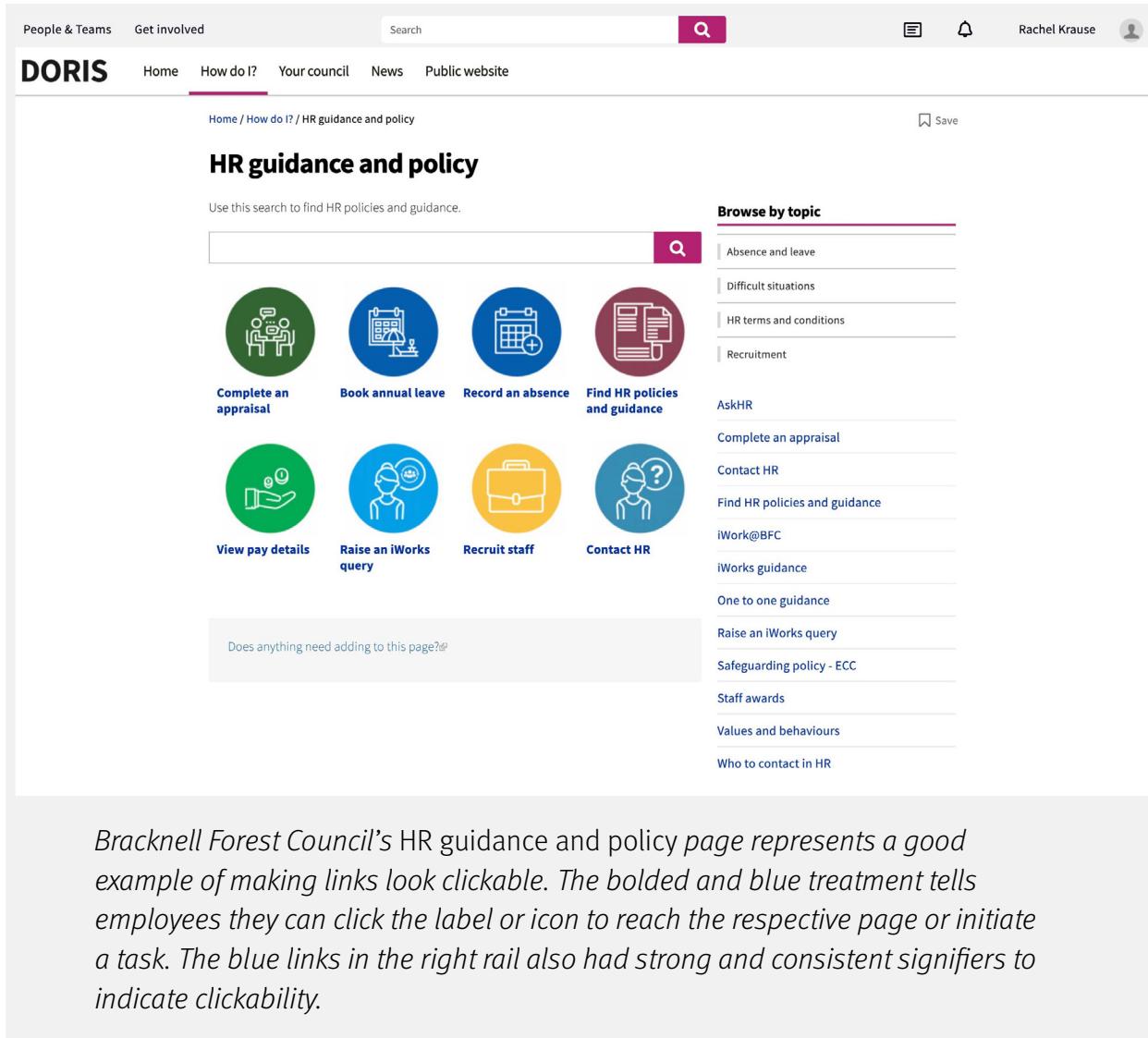
The traditional cue for hyperlinks is blue text. While blue is still the safest link color, other colors work just as well, as long as the links stand out clearly from the body text. If you don't have a specific reason to prefer another color, we recommend blue as the safest choice.

Other visual clues that can help communicate active states and clickability are bolded text and underlining. The position of links can help you determine whether or not underlining is necessary. The navigation menu and lists, especially along the peripheral areas of the page, don't require underlining. Their locations identify them as links.

Like their real-world counterparts, buttons are rectangular, often with a color treatment. These conventions provide the strongest perceived affordance of clickability. Never make employees rely on scrubbing the screen with the mouse to determine if text is clickable. Hunting for links takes effort, and employees won't do it for long. Whatever appearance you choose for buttons, hyperlinks, and other active elements, make sure to apply the same treatment consistently throughout the intranet.

On several intranets we studied, signifiers to indicate which areas were clickable varied across the intranet and sometimes were nonexistent. In many cases, there was no unified treatment for

hyperlinks and buttons. A better approach would be for these design teams to work to ensure all links across the intranet are given the same visual treatment and that design system or style guide standards are clearly in place to maintain the consistent appearance of clickable elements.



The screenshot shows a web page titled "HR guidance and policy" under the "How do I?" category of the DORIS intranet. The page features a search bar, a navigation menu with links to Home, How do I?, Your council, News, and Public website, and a user profile for Rachel Krause. The main content area includes a search input field, a "Save" button, and a breadcrumb trail showing the current location: Home / How do I? / HR guidance and policy. Below the breadcrumb is the title "HR guidance and policy". A sub-instruction "Use this search to find HR policies and guidance." is followed by a search bar with a magnifying glass icon. To the right is a sidebar titled "Browse by topic" with a list of categories: Absence and leave, Difficult situations, HR terms and conditions, Recruitment, AskHR, Complete an appraisal, Contact HR, Find HR policies and guidance, iWork@BFC, iWorks guidance, One to one guidance, Raise an iWorks query, Safeguarding policy - ECC, Staff awards, Values and behaviours, and Who to contact in HR. The main content area also contains a section for tasks like "Complete an appraisal", "Book annual leave", "Record an absence", "Find HR policies and guidance", "View pay details", "Raise an iWorks query", "Recruit staff", and "Contact HR", each with an associated icon and a blue link.

Bracknell Forest Council's HR guidance and policy page represents a good example of making links look clickable. The bolded and blue treatment tells employees they can click the label or icon to reach the respective page or initiate a task. The blue links in the right rail also had strong and consistent signifiers to indicate clickability.

The screenshot shows the DORIS intranet homepage with a navigation bar at the top. The 'How do I?' link is underlined, indicating it's the current page. Below the navigation, there's a search bar and a 'Save' button. The main content area features a heading 'How do I?' and a sub-instruction: 'Use this page to search for content or access key council services.' A search input field and a magnifying glass icon are present. To the right, a sidebar titled 'Browse by topic' lists various categories with corresponding icons.

My employment

- Complete an appraisal
- Book annual leave
- Record an absence
- Complete an expense claim
- View pay details
- Validate parking

My tasks

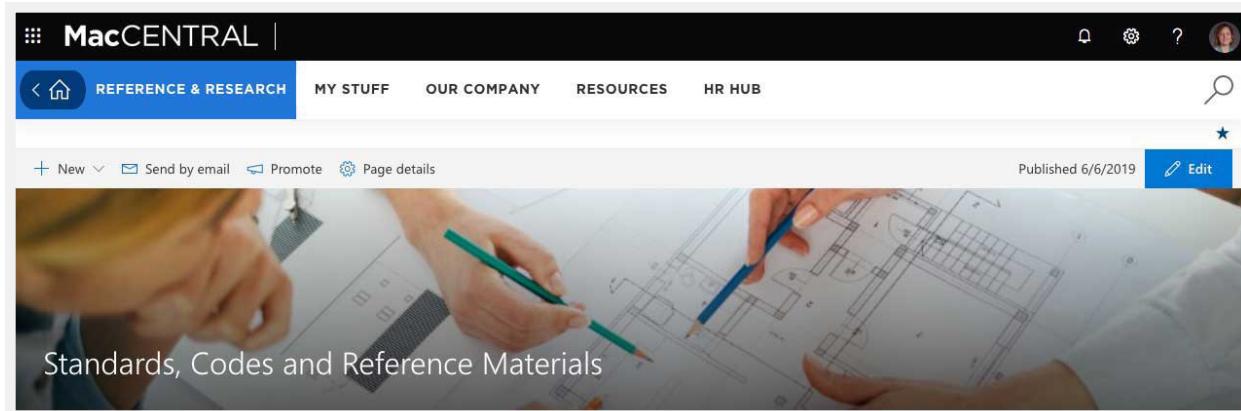
- Carry out budget monitoring
- Find HR policies and guidance
- Recruit staff
- Enter performance data on InPhase
- Report a data breach

Contact support services

- Contact IT
- Raise an iWorks query
- Contact HR
- Contact facilities

Does anything need adding to this page?

Unfortunately, Bracknell Forest Council did not consistently use the bolded and blue visual treatment throughout the entire intranet. On the How do I? page, which was a page that employees frequently visited, it was hard to tell what links were clickable vs. which were static, as they did not have the same blue style.



The Reference Center has links to all our standards, codes, e-books, and other engineering and technical subscriptions. Explore our digital collections, ask us a question, or come visit the library where we maintain a small collection of engineering books and journals.

Reference Center

- [!\[\]\(007ac74cb93a17eff3233f03bb700157_img.jpg\) Library Catalog](#)
- [!\[\]\(52856ff71c8b5b77f8d4fc7ed9611cab_img.jpg\) Ask A Researcher](#)
- [!\[\]\(b984ac83715c71ee9d64672a08844ef0_img.jpg\) Standards](#)
- [!\[\]\(5004d9d959985e7c0aaf4d3d97cf36b6_img.jpg\) Codes](#)
- [!\[\]\(be8e3f3c8089fcd5af46ec1aacaf1df6_img.jpg\) eBooks](#)
- [!\[\]\(c9e90f5e54d62bb20944650c89733646_img.jpg\) Journals](#)
- [!\[\]\(b98916235e7937fc21c94d78d9c6de08_img.jpg\) Market Intelligence](#)
- [!\[\]\(2607804c15e5270ecaa0b483b4bde420_img.jpg\) Research Tools](#)
- [!\[\]\(5f8b4a99137c2aa4f145b758ab565435_img.jpg\) Corporate Memberships](#)

Notice: Warning Concerning Copyright Restrictions

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

 1 person liked this  14153 Views 

    © 2019, Burns & McDonnell. All rights reserved.

The Quick Links on Burns & McDonnell's intranet also did not look like links. A better approach here would be to use a blue text color to indicate they're links.

At Eyeo, employee names appeared to be clickable links from the team and department pages. The teal blue text treatment made it immediately clear to employees that clicking on an employee's name to view their profile was possible. An underline appeared on hovering over the person's name. When looking for a colleague's office location, an employee found the individual's name on their team page and realized they could click on it to find the person's profile which contained their office location. As a result, they successfully completed the task.

The screenshot shows a web-based intranet interface titled "The Intranet". The top navigation bar includes links for "My Work", "Internal Support", "Company", "Collaboration", and "Community". On the far right of the header are icons for search, settings, and user profile, along with a "Create" button.

The main content area displays the "Help Desk" page. At the top left is a sidebar with "PAGE SHORTCUTS" and a "PAGE TREE" section listing various help desk categories. Below this is a "Help Desk" section with a sub-section "About Help Desk" containing a brief introduction and a "Coming Soon" graphic featuring an astronaut in space.

On the right side, there is a "Important Links" section with a callout box containing instructions on how to edit the page. Below this are links for "IRC" (with a cloud icon) and "Mail" (with a red envelope icon). Further down is a "Upcoming Help Desk Events" section with a message indicating no events were found.

The bottom half of the page features a "Help Desk Members" table with columns for User, Role, Responsibilities, IRC, and Email. The table lists five members with placeholder names and roles like "admin", "IT System Administrator", and "DevOps Engineer".

On Eyeo's intranet, links appeared in teal blue text with an underline on hover which strongly signaled to users which items were clickable.

On DIRT's intranet, some interactive elements were not styled to be distinct from non-interactive elements. Interactive elements that lead to a different page, move a carousel forward, or submit user input should be styled to clearly signal to users that an action can be taken. If static (non-interactive) elements are visually similar to interactive elements, users must guess how to use the interface. A better approach would have been to make the *More* link blue, and the buttons on the *Client Directory* filled in with an active-state color other than gray, such as blue or green.

More >>

CALGARY GREENS

Mon - Korean meatballs with rice

Tues - Chicken skewers with greek salad

Wed - Sausage penne marinara with caesar salad

Thurs - Fish n' chips

Fri - Chicken stirfry with rice

Sat - BBQ chicken with rice and veggies

Sun - Burgers with thai chicken soup

Interactive links (More >>) were styled similarly to the non-interactive text about the Calgary Greens menu on DIRT's intranet.

The screenshot shows the DIRTT Client Directory page. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for myDIRTT, SOLUTIONS, PRODUCTIVITY, and RESOURCES. On the right, there are user profile icons for Rachel, a search icon, and a public website/contact link. Below the navigation, there's a section titled "Client Directory" with a "Tools" link. The main content area is divided into three sections: "Clients", "Architect / Designers", and "General Contractors". Each section has a search input field, a dropdown for filtering by industry, and a "All" button. The "Clients" section displays a list of 6 clients: Apple Dental, Apple Inc., Apple Roofing, Apple Valley Medical Center, Applebee's International Inc, and Appleseed Workshop, LLC. Each client entry has an information icon (i) next to it. The "Architect / Designers" and "General Contractors" sections show similar search interfaces but no results listed.

Displaying all 6 clients.

- Apple Dental
- Apple Inc.
- Apple Roofing
- Apple Valley Medical Center
- Applebee's International Inc
- Appleseed Workshop, LLC

Buttons on DIRTT's intranet, specifically on the Client Directory page, also looked inactive. Using a brighter button color would signify that buttons and icons were clickable.



Avoid using red for clickable or interactive elements, as it's associated with errors.

Timeless Design Tips

On the web, blue equals clickable. Avoid using red for clickable text or links as users typically connotate red with error messages.

Additional Benefits

Atrium Health partners with you to take care of your physical, financial and personal health, including your unique individual and family need. In addition to your core benefits, (medical, dental, and vision) Atrium Health provides you with convenient access to cost effective group rates on a wide range of Additional Benefits. Pair these Additional Benefits with your core benefits to supplement income in the case of an accident or emergency, protect you and your family's financial future, and help balance the important areas of your life.

Additional Benefits details are available in the 2019 Benefits Guide. For more information, contact Atrium Health Benefits Administration at (704) 631-0263.

New in 2019: New Dependent Backup care options. [Learn more.](#)

Income Protection Benefits

- Short-Term Disability Buy-Up
- Universal Life Insurance
- Supplemental Life
- Accidental Death and Dismemberment
- Voluntary Short Term Disability

Visit the Benefit Focus Additional Benefits Portal

Enroll in Additional Benefits

New teammates, start [here](#). Teammates returning from a leave of absence or who have experienced a qualified life event are eligible to [enroll for Additional Benefits](#) within 31 days of event date.

Summary Plan Documents

Summary Plan Documents provide details about benefit coverage and plan exclusions. Find your [Additional Benefits Summary Plan Documents here](#).

On Atrium Health's intranet, a red button appeared in the upper right corner, which took employees to their benefits portal. While the button's design is acceptable, the red color suggests an error. A better color choice would be to use the primary brand color, which was teal.

An arrow icon may help suggest clickability when no other clickability cues are present; however, this is the least favorable approach. The arrow is not a standard cue, so it is often too subtle for people to recognize. If you decide to go this route, use arrows sparingly, as they can undermine the goal of keeping your interface simple. Encourage intranet engagement by designing clickable items so that employees easily recognize them as clickable. Although it's okay to veer away from traditional link design to denote clickability, straying too far from familiar patterns can be problematic.

53. Ensure that link and touch targets are large enough and have sufficient space between them.

Adequately sized touch targets are critical for using an interface. We've all experienced the frustration caused by small touch targets or those that lack adequate space between them. They're often visible yet unresponsive to our taps — or worse, force us to trigger nearby links accidentally. These moments can make us feel like gawky giants in a too-small world.

This issue is often described as a “fat finger” problem because users’ fingers are larger than the desired targets — clumsy cocktail sausages poking at screens. But fat fingers are not the real

culprit; the blame belongs squarely on the tiny targets. Designers who prioritize aesthetics over functionality often forget to create targets that can be easily and accurately selected.

Small targets take longer to reach and increase the chance of a slip, accidentally tapping a wrong target placed too close to the desired one. Even when an error is avoided, just noticing that an element could be problematic to select adds to the perception that the interface is difficult to use.

Lists of links and stacked buttons also often fall victim to touch-target errors because the spacing between the elements is too small. For example, on the Co-operators' intranet, padding around text links was very small, which made it difficult for employees to select the correct link. This often occurs when links are placed in the main body text and are displayed in list format. Increasing the padding and line spacing between links in bulleted lists can help employees achieve greater precision when navigating lists of links. Of course, if the targets are too small, adding space between them will likely not help. Targets must first be big enough and then spaced well enough to avoid accidental taps.

The screenshot shows the SOURCE intranet homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for News, HR, Work (highlighted in green), About Us, Social, and Locations. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: Home / Work. The main content area features a photograph of a workspace with a laptop, a smartphone, a notebook, and a pen. To the left, there are two columns: 'PRODUCTS' (listing Auto, Commercial, Community Guard, Co-op Guard, Edge Benefits, Farm, Federated Agencies/Unified Brokers, Federated Agencies Wealth Management, Group Benefits, Home, LIFE Pages, Member Benefits Program, Travel, and Wealth) and 'DEPARTMENTS' (listing Business Continuity, Business Intelligence, Business Optimization, Claims, Client Service Solutions Property & Casualty, Corporate Legal and Compliance, Distribution Sales Support, Enterprise Procurement and Contracts Management, Enterprise Project Portfolio Office, Enterprise Risk Management, Finance and Accounting, Government Relations, Group Distribution, Individual Operations CLIC, IT Enterprise, Manufacturing HB, Marketing & Communications, Member & Key Client Relations, Ombuds Office, Sustainability & Citizenship, and Underwriting Operations). To the right, there is a 'TOOLS & RESOURCES' column (listing Agency Training Calendar, Brand guidelines, Binding Restrictions, Change management, Client Review Program, Co-op Analytics, Corporate policies, CRM and ECM) and a 'SERVICES' column. A quote at the bottom states: "The lists of links on the Co-operators' intranet could have benefitted from more space (padding) between them so employees could more precisely click on the links they needed."

The lists of links on the Co-operators' intranet could have benefitted from more space (padding) between them so employees could more precisely click on the links they needed.

Touch targets need to be large enough to (1) discern what the target is, and (2) to accurately acquire them. **View–tap asymmetry** occurs when elements are large enough to be seen (e.g., read the label text), but too small or densely packed to select without struggling. View–tap asymmetry is often caused by desktop intranet designs that are not well-adapted for touchscreen use.



View–tap asymmetry

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

View–tap asymmetry occurs when elements are large enough to be seen (e.g., read the label text), but too small or densely packed to select without struggling.

Elements that are easily clicked using a mouse are not always accessible using fingers. The minimum size for a tap target is 1cm (0.4in), and there are many cases where an interactive element on the intranet should be even larger. For example, primary calls to action often deserve great visual prominence and thus deserve a larger tap target.

The context of use may also demand tap targets larger than 1cm x 1cm. If an app or mobile site is to be used when the employee is on the go, targets will be harder to hit and should be bigger to allow for more room for error. Controls requiring precise manipulation will be difficult, if not impossible, to use when driving or walking.

As an intranet designer, it's important to consider the different ages of people who make up your workforce. Older individuals may benefit from larger controls that are more forgiving. Limiting the number of elements on the screen can allow key touch targets to be larger, spaced further apart, and thus easier to tap. The screen size can also influence the size of the touch targets. Large touchscreens often require larger targets to be noticeable and to minimize the time to reach them.

Ensure that all interactive elements are at least 1cm × 1cm (0.4in × 0.4in) in physical, rendered size and positioned with enough space from other competing touch targets to be easily and accurately acquired. Too-small targets lead to longer acquisition times and errors and are bound to cause employee frustration.

54. Change the color of visited links.

It's important to help employees understand where they've been on the intranet, where they currently are, and where they can go next. Links are a key part of employees' navigational processes, and changing the color of already visited links allows employees to quickly exclude links that were unsuccessful in earlier visits. Knowing where they've already been makes it easier to understand where to go next and frees employees up from unintentionally revisiting the same pages repeatedly.

For example, the standard link style on Atrium Health's intranet was teal text. Once employees had navigated to a link, anywhere that link text appeared on the intranet turned purple, which was favorable and visually indicated the employee had been on that page before.

The screenshot shows the Atrium Health intranet homepage. At the top, there are two columns of links:

- Left Column:**
 - Ascom Phone Numbers for Carolinas Medical Center, Levine Children's Hospital, and Carolinas Rehabilitation
 - Emergency Telephone Number List to Reference in the Event of a Telephone Outage
 - Emergency Telephone Service Policy
- Right Column:**
 - Faculty Physician Network White Phones and Numbers
 - Metro Facilities with Emergency Routing Plans
 - White Phones vs Ascom phones during a Telephone Conference

Below these are sections for **Facility Directories** and **Quick Links**.

Facility Directories includes:

- Carolinas HealthCare System Blue Ridge
- Carolinas HealthCare System Cleveland
- Carolinas HealthCare System NorthEast
- Carolinas HealthCare System Union

Quick Links includes:

- Atrium Health Phonebook
- Concern & Incident Reporting
- Emerald Requisitioning
- GE Centricity Business
- GE Centricity Business - FSC
- Patient Experience
- About Atrium Health
- Career Opportunities
- Classifieds
- Community Benefit
- Recognition, Rewards & eCards
- Teammate Discounts
- Emergency Management
- Maintenance - Facilities Management
- Maps & Directions
- Medical Equipment - Clinical Engineering
- Safety Data Sheets
- Service Center - Technology & Analytics

Teammate includes:

- CarolinaCARE
- Get Care Now
- MyAtriumHealth

Support includes:

- Canopy
- Encompass
- Network
- Office Tools
- Web Apps

Status Dashboard includes:

- Updates to Software & Tools

At the bottom left, it says "© Copyright 2019 Atrium Health". On the right, there are social media icons for YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn, and mobile devices.

After employees had visited links to pages on Atrium Health's intranet, the link text color changed from teal to purple, which was favorable.

The color for unvisited links should be more vivid, bright, and saturated than for visited links, which should look “used” — duller and more washed out. The two colors should be variants or shades of the same color so it’s clear they are related. Using drastically different colors (say, orange and green) makes it hard for users to understand the relationship between the two types of links and to identify which color is the used version of the other. Shades of blue provide the strongest signal for links, but other colors work almost as well.

As always, when using color to signal information, you should also provide redundant cues to help colorblind users. Making unvisited links brighter and more luminous than visited links will usually accomplish this goal.

The Co-operators also used teal links, which changed to purple after employees visited the page.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution also used teal links that turned purple after employees visited the link.

Using different colors for visited and unvisited links makes the intranet easier to navigate, which always increases employee satisfaction.

TAB DESIGN

55. Design tabs carefully and use them sparingly; favor anchor links or accordions to break up long content.

Tabs should be used to switch between alternative, but related, views of information within the same context. Tabs should not take employees to other areas of the intranet or digital workplace. If you're considering using tabs on the intranet, logically chunk the content behind them so employees can easily predict what they'll find when they select a given tab.

If you don't find clearly distinct groupings, then tabs are likely the wrong interface control for managing the content. Metaphorically speaking, using tabs is like leafing through index cards in an old-fashioned card catalog drawer, so employees must be able to tell at-a-glance what constitutes an "index card" (i.e., tab panel).

In a good example of tab use, Bracknell Forest Council had a standardized information architecture for the *Groups* area on its intranet, with an overview/homepage, a list of group members, documents, and a dashboard. It was appropriate to use tabs to switch between the alternative views while retaining the main context and illusion of being at a single location on the site, as in the example below, the *Classifieds* group.

Bracknell Forest Council used tabs to allow employees to switch between information related to a group's member list, documents, and a dashboard.

It's best to stick to only one row of tabs. Multiple rows create jumping UI elements, which destroy spatial memory and make it impossible for employees to remember which ones they've already visited. Additionally, multiple rows are a sure sign of excessive complexity: if you need more tabs than will fit in a single row, you should simplify your intranet's design.

For example, on Burns & McDonnell's travel booking tool, Concur, the section where employees explored flight options used a double row of tabs. The approach broke the metaphor of file tabs and was confusing to skim and scan, let alone navigate.

The screenshot shows the 'Select Flights' section of the Concur travel booking tool. On the left, there's a sidebar with 'Trip Summary' and flight details (MCI - QHO, Fri, 09/27/2019 - Mon, 09/30/2019). Below it are 'Change Flight Search' dropdowns for 'Depart - Fri, Sep 27' and 'Display Settings' (checkbox for 'Hide Propeller Planes'). To the right is a main panel for 'KANSAS CITY, MO TO HOUSTON, TX FRI, SEP 27 - MON, SEP 30'. It includes a progress bar 'Getting your schedules and fares...' and a 'Hide matrix' link. A red box highlights a row of tabs labeled 'All', 'Delta', 'Alaska Airlines', and 'American Airlines'. Below these are two more tabs: '1 stop' (17 results) and 'Most Preferred' (11 results). Further down is another row of tabs: 'Shop by Fares' (selected), 'Shop by Schedule', 'Depart', and 'Return'. A red box also surrounds this row. At the bottom, there's a search bar for 'Flight Number Search', a 'Sorted By: Stops' dropdown, and a list of flight results for American Airlines from MCI to DFW and DFW to IAH. A 'Select' button is visible next to the second flight.

Two stacked rows of dependent tabs on Burns & McDonnell's travel booking tool broke the best practices for tab use. The top row of tabs is disconnected from the corresponding content below. A better approach would be to revise this design to use only one row of tabs or a different navigation approach other than tabs.



Only use tabs to switch between alternative views of information within the same context.

Process and Strategic Considerations

Use tabs only when employees don't need to see content from multiple tabs simultaneously. If they do need to compare the information behind different tabs, then having to switch back and forth puts an added burden on their short-term memory, increases cognitive load and interaction cost, and lowers usability compared to a design that puts everything on one big page.

The scope controlled by the tabs should be obvious from the visual design. Be sure to prominently highlight the selected tab so employees can tell which tab is selected. In addition to highlighting, you can signal the currently selected tab by making it slightly larger, adding a boldfaced label or an icon, or by making it appear to be in front of the other tabs. This additional signaling is important if there are only two tabs. The unselected tabs should also be clearly visible and readable, reminding the employee of the other options. If the nonhighlighted tabs fade too much into the background, there's a risk that employees will never click them or discover the content they contain.

As shown below, Burns & McDonnell also used tabs on its intranet's training pages to house *Session*, *Details*, and *Ratings & Reviews*. Because employees would likely need to see all of this information related to a course, a better approach would be to list all of this information on the page. In this case, the tab design makes the selected tab visually known, and the nonhighlighted tabs fade into the background since everything appears in various shades of gray.

The screenshot shows a web page titled "Training Details" for a course titled "2019 BMcD PM Training Series: International Project Best Practices". The page includes tabs for "Sessions", "Details", and "Ratings & Reviews". The "Sessions" tab is selected, while the others are faded. Below the tabs, there are filters for "Show Available" and a "View Full Calendar" button. The main content area displays course details: "FOS: Management Services", "Session: Accounting & Finance, 1 hour", "Location: Conf Room, 95N-TrRm 1A (95N-163), Kansas City Office, Missouri, United States", "Duration: 10/17/2019, 11:45 AM CST - 10/17/2019, 12:45 PM CST", and "36 Openings Available". A "Request" button is present. At the bottom, there are links for "Notify me of new sessions" and "1 Result".

Instead of subtle tabs on its training course pages, it would be more favorable for Burns & McDonnell to list all of the information contained in the tabs directly on the page, allowing employees to review and compare this information in context of the training session.

Write short tab labels and use plain language rather than made-up or branded terms. Short labels are more scannable; if you need longer labels, it's a sign that the choices are too complicated for a tab control. Tab labels should usually be one to two words. Additionally, do not use ALL CAPS for tab labels. ALL CAPS are rarely a good idea because they're harder to read and scan.

Design tab labels that are parallel in nature. If the tabs are significantly dissimilar, users will interpret them as site navigation.

The screenshot shows the Mayo Clinic Library homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for Home, Practice, Education, Research, HR Connect, Groups, Policies, People, Intranet, Forms, Drugs, AskMayoExpert, Advanced Search, Video, Library, and Calendar. A user profile for 'Hi Feifei Liu' is shown with 'My Account' and 'Log Out' options. Below the header, a blue navigation bar for 'LIBRARY' includes links for HOME, ABOUT, LOCATIONS, HOURS, and HELP. The main content area has a blue background with a search bar asking 'What can we help you find today?'. It features tabs for SEARCH (which is selected), DATABASES, eJOURNALS, eBooks, CATALOG, and RECENT. Below the tabs is a search input field with placeholder 'Search for:' and a magnifying glass icon. A 'Look in:' dropdown is set to 'All listed below', with other options like PubMed, UpToDate, Catalog, and Google Scholar. A 'Search' button is at the bottom right. To the right of the search area is a graphic of a 'HELP WANTED' sign.

The homepage of the Mayo Clinic's Library used tab controls to feature its various sources. The last tab, Recent, shows items recently viewed, while the other tabs describe the sources available. It would be better to remove the Recent tab to keep the tabs parallel. Because these tabs appear so close to the library's navigation, employees may misinterpret the tabs as such.

 MAYO CLINIC

Home Practice Education Research HR Connect Groups Policy Library Video Library Calendar

People Intranet Forms Drugs AskMayoExpert Advanced 

News Center

 News By Campus Benefits Around Mayo **Bigger Picture** Practice/Education/Research Work/Life Patient Stories

BIGGER PICTURE

Are you ready for Mayo Clinic's digital transformation?

Oct. 8, 2019



Watch the first in a series of videos on digital tools such as artificial intelligence that will support Mayo Clinic's strategy leading to 2030.

As Mayo Clinic launches its 2030 strategy to cure, connect and transform health care, a key component of the strategy's success will be staff working in a more digitally forward organization. Technologies involving machine learning, process automation and artificial intelligence will improve health care for patients and reduce administrative burden for staff.

Mayo Clinic recognizes that many staff members are not familiar with these technologies and are interested in learning more. That's why this video series has been produced to define technologies such as artificial intelligence, offer examples that show the potential of technology as it applies to health care, and explain how staff can take action to strengthen their digital competencies.

"We're excited to present these short videos to showcase innovative technologies that will improve both the patient and staff experience," says Cathy Fraser, Mayo Clinic's chief human resources officer. "We hope the videos will inspire staff to imagine how they will work in 2030 and join their work unit in taking the first steps toward that future."

The first video in the series addresses the role of artificial intelligence and robotic process automation through the lens of Mayo Clinic's workforce.

The Mayo Clinic also used tabs to organize its news articles in a right rail module, separating them into Recommended, Read, and Commented groupings. Using sentence case on the tab labels and making the Read and Commented tabs slightly more prominent would help improve the design.

Bold. Forward. 

More from Bigger Picture

London clinic is 'exciting new chapter,' Dr. Farrugia says at clinic's grand opening

Lillian's gift: Finding new purpose driven by grief

Flashback: Transformative gift creates Mayo Clinic as it's known today

Have you heard? Mayo Clinic in the news for Oct. 8

The final 3: Cast your vote for the 2019 Mayo Clinic Shared Value winner

The Most

RECOMMENDED	READ	COMMENTED
Voices of Mayo: Mark Markham		
Patient surprises daughter at wedding		
Dr. Jonathan Johnson on values learned		
A year to live turns into more than 60		
Finding new purpose driven by grief		

Tabs should look and work the same across the intranet. Consistency is important in visual and interaction design because it builds employees' feelings of mastery over the interface in several ways:

- **Recognizability.** When something always looks the same, employees know what to look for and what it is when they find it.
- **Predictability.** When something always works the same way, employees know what will happen when they interact with it.
- **Empowerment.** When employees can rely on their past knowledge of all the available features, they can easily compose a set of actions to achieve their goals.
- **Efficiency.** There's no need to spend time learning something new or worrying about the effect of inconsistent features.

Tabs shine on intranets when they facilitate access to content.

MICROINTERACTIONS

56. Include microinteractions such as saving pages, rating a piece or page of content, and liking comments.

One of the greatest joys of using technology comes through user empowerment and engagement. An enjoyable experience means more than just usability — it needs to be engaging, and that's where microinteractions can play a macro role. On an intranet, well-designed microinteractions such as saving pages, rating a piece or page of content, or liking comments can positively impact your employees' digital experience. They provide value by serving as an extra visual vehicle to communicate.



Microinteractions

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

Microinteractions are trigger-feedback pairs in which (1) the trigger can be a user action or an alteration in the system's state; (2) the feedback is a narrowly targeted response to the trigger and is communicated through small, highly contextual (usually visual) changes in the user interface.

Microinteractions encompass a substantial number of digital elements, but not every element is part of a microinteraction. Static elements that are always present on the screen are not microinteractions because they do not have a distinct trigger.

Microinteractions can improve an intranet's user experience by:

- Encouraging engagement
- Displaying system status
- Providing error prevention
- Communicating brand

These use cases show the value microinteractions can add to an intranet, making them a key method for elevating your design. Microinteractions provide feedback, which keeps employees informed and engaged. The most valuable microinteractions we observed in our research were those focused on helping employees save pages, rate a piece or page of content, and liking other employees' comments on longer-form pieces or in intranet social channels.

Inside Dell Technologies

News | **My Communities** | My HR | My IT | Learning | ☰

My Communities Dashboard Activity ▾ Browse ▾ Content ▾ Help ▾

50 🔍 🌐

More documents in [Global Travel & Expense](#) ▾

Global Travel and Expense Policy

Created by [Rebecca](#) on Jan 17, 2017 5:42 PM. Last modified by [Jake](#) on Jul 10, 2019 9:50 AM.

SUCCESS

Please see below the full travel and expense policy. If you have further questions, please visit the [Global Travel Inside Dell Space](#).

ACTIONS

- Follow
- Share
- Bookmark 139
- Like 97

PRO.WWPGP.GlobalTandE_Policy.PAL (11).docx (125.7 KB)

View Download

Virus scan did not detect any viruses or malware. Last Scanned: 5 months ago

1320695 Views Categories: Tags (edit): travel, expense, t&e

Average User Rating ★★★★☆ (4 ratings) | Your Rating: ★★★★☆

1 SUCCESS **MOST LIKED**

69 Comments **0 Author comments**

ADD A COMMENT

Erin Sep 22, 2017 3:59 PM

The document (page 15/section 7.7) states "Team members may be reimbursed a maximum of \$50USD per night in lieu of hotel accommodations up to a maximum of 15 nights within a calendar month." but Conur just "yelled at me" and said \$50 for trip. I already bought the gift card for 4 nights and now it looks like Concur wants me to eat it. Why is the rule?

Actions Helpful Like (9) **REPLY**

Rebecca Sep 22, 2017 9:26 PM (in response to Erin)

Judith G, can you assist?

Actions Helpful Like (0) **REPLY**

IMPACT METRICS

Global Reach	87%
Impact	113
Sentiment	Neutral 0

View more

MORE LIKE THIS

New, enhanced Concur now available!

Microinteractions on Dell's intranet meant employees could rate content, add comments, star comments as helpful, or like comments, which drove engagement and improved communication on the intranet and among employees.

The screenshot shows a Dell intranet page titled "Discounts and Deals - US". At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for News, My Communities, My HR, My IT, Learning, and a sign-in for "John Doe". Below the navigation is a search bar and a dropdown for "United States". The main content area displays a card with a timestamp ("2y ago"), view count ("6334 Views"), and a rating section. A red box highlights the rating area, which includes a star icon and a "Submit" button. Below the card, there's a section for "Help" with contact information for the Dell Benefits Center. The bottom of the page features a footer with links for "Resources for My Job", "About Dell", "About HR", and "Getting Help", along with a "Rate this article" section. The entire page has a dark blue header and footer.

On Dell's intranet, employees could also rate content pages to signify how helpful or informative they were, which is an example of a microinteraction.

Any display of a system's status is a microinteraction because the interaction naturally includes a trigger, either a user action or a change of system state and feedback. Microinteractions communicate the state of a UI component and suggest that further interaction is possible.

For example, First Solar and Burns & McDonnell allowed employees to favorite or save content by clicking on a ribbon icon in the corner of an item's featured card. The microinteraction uses a filled-in ribbon icon to communicate that a person has saved or favorited the content. Employees could easily undo this action by clicking on the ribbon icon again, which reverted it to its original open state. This microinteraction is subtle enough not to divert the user's attention away from their primary task and is helpful to communicate the change in system state and direct the employee's attention to the effect of a potential accidental activation, something that's sadly all too common in touch-driven user interfaces.

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Delve interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with icons for Home, Me, Favorites, and People, followed by a search bar labeled "Search". Below the navigation bar, the main content area is titled "Your favorites". It contains sections for "Favorite boards" and "Favorite documents". A large, semi-transparent callout box is overlaid on the right side of the screen. This callout has a title "No favorites?", a descriptive text "Click the ribbon icon at the bottom of your favorite documents and they'll show up here.", and a sub-instruction "Try it out on your [Home](#) page." A red arrow points from the text "Employees at First Solar could click on the ribbon icon in the lower corner to favorite a piece of content on the intranet." down to the ribbon icon in the bottom right corner of the callout box.

power | Delve

Search

Home

Me

Favorites

People

Your favorites

Get back to your favorite boards and documents. Only you can see what you've added to your favorites. [Learn more](#)

Favorite boards

Boards you've added to or marked as favorites will show up here. [Learn more](#)

Favorite documents

No favorites?

Click the ribbon icon at the bottom of your favorite documents and they'll show up here.

Try it out on your [Home](#) page.

Are my documents safe in Delve?

Employees at First Solar could click on the ribbon icon in the lower corner to favorite a piece of content on the intranet.

The screenshot shows the MacCENTRAL intranet homepage. At the top, there's a large banner image of a control tower at McConnell Air Force Base. Below the banner, a navigation bar includes links for 'MY STUFF', 'OUR COMPANY', 'RESOURCES', and 'HR HUB'. A search bar is on the right. The main content area features a news feed. One news item, 'Maximizing MacCentral 2.0: Homepage Upgrades', has a red box drawn around its 'SAVED' ribbon icon in the upper right corner. Other news items include '2019 Houston Client BBQ Volunteer Signup', 'Early Timecards This Week', 'EO Spotlight Shines on Yonathan Anteneh!', 'PR Weekly News - August 23, 2019', and 'Introducing: MacChannel'. Each news item includes a small thumbnail image, the date, a brief description, and a 'VIEW NOW' button.

Burns & McDonnell used a similar microinteraction on its intranet to allow employees to save content. The ribbon icon was located in the upper right corner.

Microinteractions and their corresponding results must be clear so employees aren't left wondering what will happen if they click on something. For example, Eyeo employees didn't understand what *Watching* a community space meant and were discouraged from following pages when they realized they would receive email notifications.

Users had to click on the *Watch* icon before seeing a message about what watching meant. When looking at the icons, users also weren't clear about what *Save for later* meant versus *Watch*. Hovering over the icon did not provide any information about what watching meant, which would have been a better way to set expectations for the microinteraction. One employee said, "I'm not sure if I watch all content, if that means everything in animal lovers or anything in recreational communities."

None of the employees who received this task wanted to receive email notifications after initiating the microinteraction. One employee said:

“I will start wondering whether there is a way to subscribe to a community without getting emails. I’m probably going to click on *Watch* and then hope that I can unsubscribe.”

Another employee elaborated by saying:

“If notifications get sent to my email, that can be very distracting. I don’t want that distraction; I don’t want emails when someone is interacting at all hours of the day. I want to get a notification [on the intranet] and then choose when I interact instead of someone else choosing for me.”

And yet another said:

“I’m not really sure if I want to receive emails because it’s a personal thing.”

Instead of emails, use microinteractions to notify employees about changes on the intranet or changes to communities they follow. Our previous research shows that users don’t like receiving workplace notification emails and switch off email updates altogether, meaning they will miss out on useful content. Eyeo could also consider exposing what *Watching* or *Saving for later* means rather than expecting users to know they should click the icon to find out.

The screenshot shows a web-based intranet system. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'Internal Support', 'Collaboration', and 'Community'. Below this is a sidebar with sections for 'Blog', 'Calendars', 'SPACE SHORTCUTS' (including 'REC Community Events', 'REC Community Directory', and 'Meme Gallery'), and a 'PAGE TREE' section with 'Recreational Community Events' and 'Recreational Community Directory' expanded, showing 'Animal Lovers' under the latter. The main content area displays a community page for 'Animal Lovers', created by 'Employee Name' on 'Sep 23, 2019'. It includes a 'About Animal Lovers' section with a description and a 'Animal Lover Activity' section with a 'Animals' stream. A message in the stream says 'You can only read this stream.' A user profile picture and name ('Employee Name') are visible next to the stream. On the right side, there's a sidebar with 'The Animal Rescue Site Blog' featuring articles like 'Man Deserves An Oscar For Pretending To Be An Unruly Cat During A Veterinary Training Video' and 'Australian Shepherd Has Favorite Song And "Sings" Heart Out When It Comes On.'. There are also links for 'Scientists Believe Octopuses May Be...' and other blog posts. A 'Watch' button is present in the top right of the main content area, and a tooltip for 'Watch' explains: 'You are not watching this page. Start watching to receive email updates about changes to this page.' It offers two options: 'Watch page' (unchecked) and 'Watch all content in this space' (unchecked). The overall design is clean with a blue header and a white background.

Users on Eyeo's intranet weren't immediately sure what the difference was between Watching a space and Saving the page for later. When they found out that Watching a space might result in them receiving emails to notify them of content updates, they were less inclined to watch the space and hoped they'd still receive notifications on the intranet but not in their inbox.

Employees email themselves links.

User Behaviors

A valuable microinteraction would be to give employees an easy way to save content on the intranet, so they don't have to email themselves links to remember where things are nor rely on lengthy lists of bookmarks.

Be very clear that the microinteraction refers to saving content for later. Some employees in our studies didn't know the difference between saving a page, following a community, and managing their favorites. When so many similar features are available, employees will likely get confused about each type of microinteraction.

Additionally, employees did not always know how to save pages or where to go to refer back to them, or how to follow new communities. They wondered if communities were in social channels if they were pages or sections of content, or groups of people with like-minded interests.

Limit the number of similar microinteractions and let employees save the content they access most, regardless of its type or origin.

Well-designed microinteractions can make a positive impact on your employees' digital experience. They provide value by serving as an extra visual vehicle to communicate. These little details can transform a good intranet into a great one and help disengaged employees become engaged.

PROGRESS INDICATORS

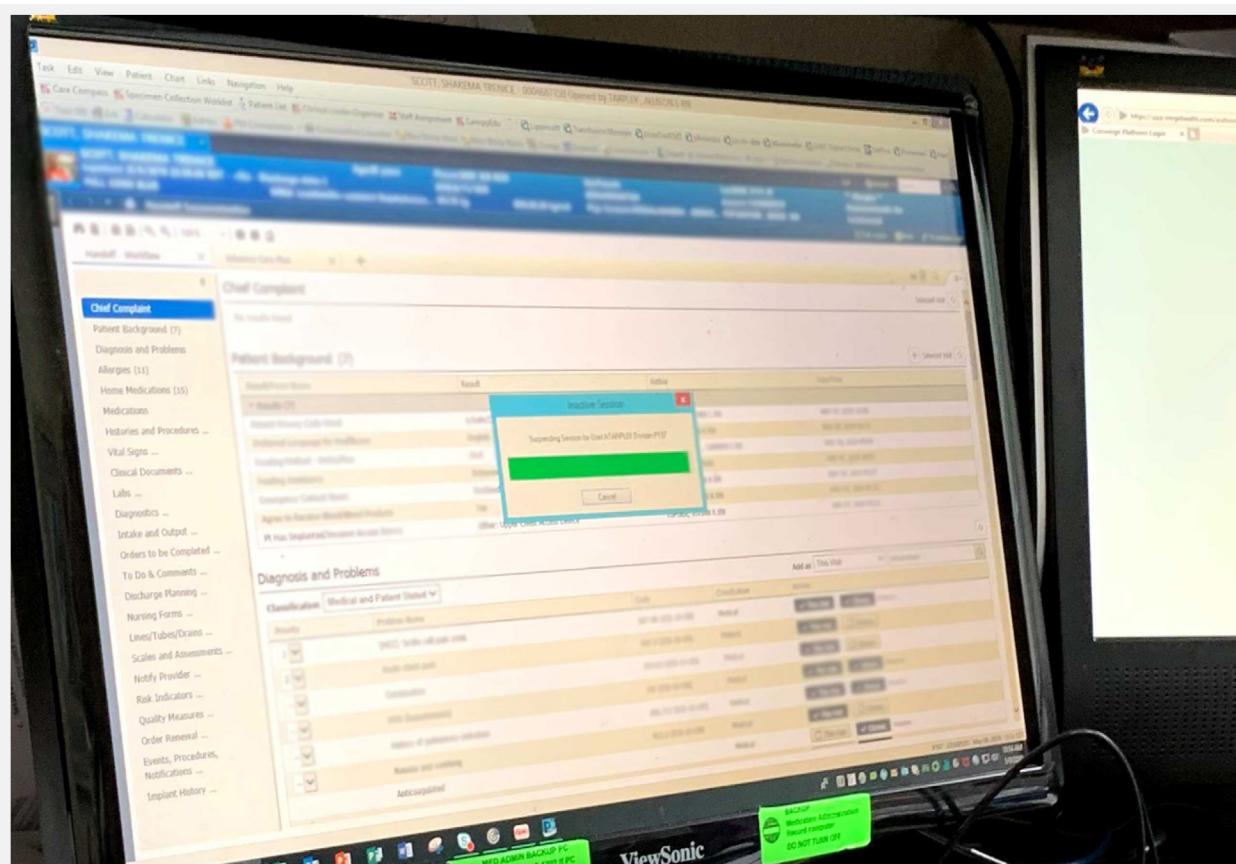
57. Use progress indicators for long load times, document downloads, and multistep processes.

Progress indicators and wait-time animations, such as percent-done bars and spinners, inform employees of the current system state, reassure them that the intranet is working, and make processes more tolerable by reducing uncertainty. Employees experience higher satisfaction with the intranet and, in some cases, may be more patient and willing to wait longer when the intranet uses a dynamic progress indicator.

Progress indicators are a subcategory of microinteractions. They let employees know the system is still working to respond to their actions. They can show a specific or undetermined wait time and may include components such as linear or circular progress indicators. These elements encourage employees to remain committed to their task while they wait for something to happen.

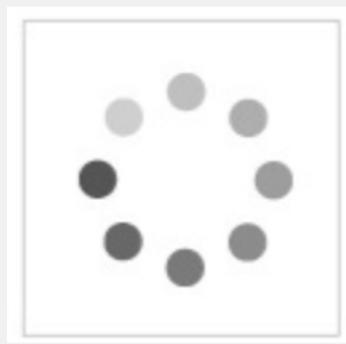
Many intranet designs neglect to show feedback until the system is completely done processing the employee's input and can display the final answer. This creates anxiety as the employee is uncertain whether the intranet received the command, or the system crashed. Plenty of extra clicks and double submissions have resulted from such a design.

If the results of an action take more than one second to appear, it's best to show not only some sort of progress indicator but also an estimate of when the intranet will be finished with the request. For example, while observing a nurse manager at Atrium Health, we noticed a progress indicator immediately after she filled out a long form and pressed *Submit*. This was good as the system provided immediate, visual feedback that it had received and was processing the request. The progress indicator also gave her something to look at while she waited, which made the waiting period easier to tolerate.



A progress indicator on Atrium Health's intranet helped ease uncertainty about whether the system had received a nurse manager's request, and it gave her something to focus on while she waited for the system to respond.

Use loop animations for fast actions to show employees that the system is working without providing information about how long the user will have to wait. The animated spinner icon is an example of this common progress indicator.



An example design for an animated spinner icon. This indicator should be reserved for fast actions that take between two and 10 seconds.

Including text that explains why users are waiting can add another layer of clarity to progress indicators. For example, after employees searched for a flight on Burns & McDonnell's travel booking tool, *Concur*, a progress indicator bar appeared at the top of the page and included helpful text, *Getting your schedules and fares*.

A progress indicator bar and clear messaging about why the employee was waiting appeared on Burns & McDonnell's travel booking tool, which was favorable.

Use percent-done progress indicators, either in bar or circular form, that fill from 0–100% for actions that take 10 seconds or more. These are the most informative type of wait-animation feedback. They show the current progress, how much has already been accomplished, and how

much is left to be done. This information gives users control (that is, they can decide whether to wait or not); it decreases uncertainty about the length of the process and may reduce the perceived wait time.

A percent-done indicator may be used for actions that take less than 10 seconds if the action involves processing a series of documents or forms because the user understands that the system is working with a set number of records. As with looped-animation indicators, include a text explanation of the process, for example, “Updating address 3 of 50.” For actions that take a little while, give users the option to stop the process if they decide they cannot wait. Otherwise, your design may be hijacking control of the system, leaving the user powerless.

One issue for designers is calculating how long the process will take. Here are a few ways to handle this:

- **Start the animation slower and allow it to move faster as it approaches the end.** This way, you don’t risk establishing a faster expectation than the system can maintain. Exceeding employee expectations always creates more satisfaction than disappointing them by delivering less than promised. (Note that this slow-fast recommendation only applies to wait animations; research has shown that for surveys, progress indicators that start fast and end slow reduce drop-off rates.)
- **Provide a general time estimate.** Don’t try to be exact; it will inevitably be inaccurate at some point, and the intranet’s credibility will suffer. A simple, *about 3 minutes remaining* message can be enough to inform the employee and encourage them to wait it out. Always allow for extra time, just in case. If the action goes faster toward the end, it’s a pleasant surprise.

Providing feedback is fundamental to a positive employee experience. By being forthcoming and transparent about wait times, designers can reduce uncertainty. Use a looped indicator for delays of two to nine seconds and a percent-done indicator for delays of 10 seconds or more. Ultimately, good progress indicators can make employees stick around to finish the task and generally have a more favorable impression of the intranet.

HOW TO HANDLE NEW BROWSER TABS AND WINDOWS

58. Open links to pages, tools, and documents in new browser tabs or windows only in specific contexts.

Since 1999, it's been a firm usability guideline to refrain from opening new browser tabs and windows for several reasons. All of these apply to intranets and are still valid today:

- More windows or tabs increase the clutter in the employee's information space and require more effort to manage.
- New windows or tabs cause disorientation as employees often don't realize a new window or tab has opened. This problem is exacerbated on mobile, where the old window is never visible.
- Less-technical employees struggle to manage multiple windows and tabs, especially on mobile. On tablets, where users can have both multiple windows and tabs for the browser, it's even more confusing.
- New windows or tabs prevent the use of the *Back* button for returning to the previous page and force the employee to expend effort to find their way back to the prior content.
- New windows or tabs are not inclusive for blind or low-vision employees — especially when they open outside of the area magnified area.

There is generally one good reason to open a page in a new window, and that is **when the employee will need to refer to that content to complete a task in another window**. For these situations where a linked page or document will be used as a reference while completing some other flow (e.g., when a PDF has instructions for a process), it's helpful to have it open in a new tab or a new window, so employees can easily switch attention between the main flow and the reference material. However, if the page link is likely to be used by itself, having it in a different tab can burden employees by increasing browser clutter (too many tabs). And, on mobile, multiple tabs are often confusing and hard to manage.



Employees struggled with multistep processes that required information from different pages.

User Behaviors

When reporting an incident or submitting a ticket on a separate digital workplace tool outside of the intranet, employees in our research studies often referred back to the intranet content about what type of incident or ticket to report and what to include in the form.

Two users had difficulty remembering the instructions for how to complete forms as soon as they clicked on the tool link because those instructions were on an intranet landing page. This is one case where opening a page or form link in a new window or tab could be helpful.

One user said, “This time, I would right-click in a new tab so that I could actually see what I was meant to be doing at the same time. What type of incident am I trying to report?”

In addition to opening the link in a new tab, always ensure contextual information about multistep processes or form nuances is available instead of forcing employees to reference multiple sources or pieces of information.

In most cases, it’s best to keep employees in the same browser window or tab, so they can click the *Back* button to return to the previous page. However, after finishing with a page or document, we often see users close the browser window instead of clicking the *Back* button, so they lose their navigation history.

The generalization often used as the rationale for opening links in new browser tabs or windows is to do it when it’s a link to a different content type or site. This argument is problematic because it assumes employees will always do the same things with certain pages, tools, and file formats, which isn’t always true. The reason we can’t just generalize about when to open a link in a new browser tab (or window) versus when to keep users in the same browser tab is because users’ needs, expectations, and reactions aren’t triggered by a file format or link type (internal or external). This decision has much more to do with people’s context, task, and what they’ll do next with the content housed at the link.

For example, at the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, we noticed that a lot of content was posted as PDFs, which caused many new browser tabs to be open in users’ browsers. This also contributed to slightly longer task times overall, as PDF documents are more difficult for employees to skim and scan. In certain situations, employees did not expect PDFs and new browser tabs. After clicking on a *Lifesaving Strategy* link, an employee remarked: “I didn’t think it would be a document.” After returning to maps and selecting the *Lifesaving Delivery Areas* map, the same employee said frustratingly, “Oh, goodness!”

Royal National Lifeboat Institution employees grew frustrated by PDF documents opening in new browser windows and tabs.

Open Links to PDF Documents in New Tabs on Desktop

The reason we advise you to open links to PDF documents in new tabs on desktop is because, as we observed with our study participants, they usually needed to combine information in the PDF with that in the original tab, so they often had to go back and forth between the two. Or they wanted to print out the PDF. In either case, when they were finished, they would often close out of the PDF rather than click on the *Back* button.

Again, however, if your employees are primarily completing tasks on mobile, don't use a PDF in the first place, or if you must, at least open it in the same tab so they can get back to it more easily.

In one example, an employee needed to print a PDF of a flyer to post on the wall in their office, but in another, they referred to a multipage PDF of directions on their mobile phone to assemble a piece of office furniture. In the first case, opening the PDF in a new tab was favorable, as the employee was finished with the document after printing and closed it. But in the second case, the employee needed to refer back to information on the website where the directions were originally linked. Since they were on their mobile phone, opening the PDF in the same tab preserved the back button and better suited the employees' channel, context, and task. However, if this employee had been on desktop and needed to reference the PDF and the website together, opening it in a new window would have been more favorable.

Downloading a PDF may also be a good option to protect employees from the agony of reading a PDF in a browser window, but we've also observed employees who were bothered by having to first download the PDF and then reopen the file in another platform. These are all real problems

you must consider before including a PDF in the user experience. Research with your employees is the only way to understand the best action to take.

Context Always Matters

Employees' reactions to links opening in new tabs or windows depended on the following:

1. **Context:** Employees performing casual, laid-back tasks were far less bothered by new browser tabs or windows than employees in high-pressure or time-sensitive scenarios.
2. **Device:** Employees on mobile were more annoyed when links opened in new tabs, as they couldn't use the *Back* button to return to the previous screen, and accessing the previous tab was difficult.
3. **Task:** Opening a page in a new window or tab was well-received when the task involved one of the following types of activities:
 - a. **Comparing content** across browser tabs or windows. For example, a content manager may edit a page in a content management system in one tab or window and view a preview of the page in another. When the link to the preview opens in a new browser tab, content managers could easily see how changes in the content management system impact the page's appearance before publishing. The same could also be accomplished with two separate browser windows.
 - b. **Combining information** from different tabs or windows. For example, a nontechnical user attempted to complete paperwork online. One of the windows had three tabs open, each with a different piece of reference material from the same website. Because each link opened in a new tab, she could easily use them together to confidently complete the forms she had opened in the other window.
 - c. **Using multiple browser tabs to keep track of items.** For instance, an employee looking at different flight options for an upcoming work trip. They would review the available flights on the main page, then click on fare options, and the flight would open in a new tab. This made it easy to keep track of the items they wanted to review in more detail before making a purchase decision.
 - d. **Using the original browser tab as a launching-off point** to others (e.g., exploring multiple alternatives listed on the original page). For example, one user was browsing a Google Drive folder that contained links to various forms and documents. Because each link opened in a new tab, she could easily close out of it when she was finished and return to the original Google Drive tab to access the next document or form needed.

With these types of activities, we often saw employees close the browser tab(s) after they were finished (rather than trying to click the *Back* button), so, in these instances, it's more fitting to open links in a new tab.

Tasks that Should Not Open in a New Tab or Window

For the following types of tasks, employees did *not* appreciate being sent to a new browser tab or window:

- **A quick inspection of a new page**, followed by resuming the activity in the original tab or window. For example, while one employee was completing an expense report, he couldn't remember if his organization allowed an 18% or 15% gratuity on company-covered meals. A link to the company's expense policy revealed the answer, but it opened in a new tab. The user grew frustrated when he noticed the browser's *Back* button wouldn't work to take him back to his expense report.
- **Multistep workflows** in which new steps appear in a different window or tab. In these cases, employees preferred to click the *Back* button to get to previous steps in the process, regardless of if they were on the same or separate sites. For example, one employee was trying to submit an IT ticket to get a broken printer fixed. First, he scanned an intranet page to understand what type of ticket to open. Next, he clicked a link he thought would take him to a form to open the ticket. Instead, the homepage of a completely different website appeared in a new tab. Then, finally, when he found the link to initiate a request on the new website, the form opened in yet another new tab. Needless to say, he struggled to get back to the original intranet page from which he started. Opening links in new tabs was *much less* problematic when there wasn't a next step, and the user's task concluded shortly after clicking the link. Users could simply close out of the tab without fear of losing their session history.
- **Many tabs or windows are already open.** Busy employees often have many browser tabs open at a time while they work. If employees already had many tabs open, they were often annoyed when another one opened.

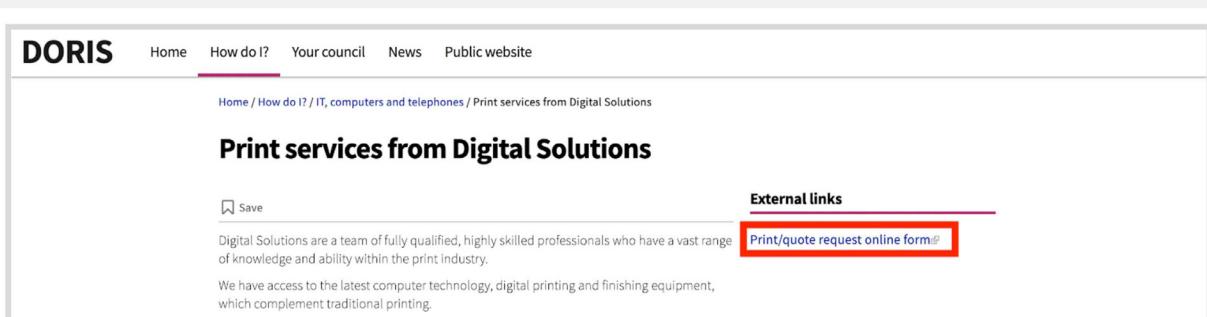
As a rule, always open links in the same browser tab or window. However, if you hypothesize that opening a new tab or window may help employees in their task, don't base this decision on the type of link or content alone. Rely on observational research methods, such as usability testing, contextual inquiry, and field studies, to help you make the right call.

Don't go overboard with opening links in new browser tabs or windows simply because you think employees might need them to display that way for certain use cases. If links open in a new browser tab or window and users don't notice, they'll wonder why the browser's back button doesn't work and how to get back. Or, if the link opens in the same browser window or tab and the user doesn't notice, they close the window or tab, assuming it did, in fact, open in a new one. They'll then have to start their session all over again.

59. Label links that will open a new tab, window, or external site to set users' expectations before they click.

It's important to watch employees so that you can better understand their task, context of use, and environment before opening a page in a new tab or window. There may be too much variability across possible user tasks, so you may not know the best decision. If you decide to open the link in a new browser tab or window, **use contextual messaging and perhaps even an icon** to let users know about it before they click.

For example, on Bracknell Forest Council, Atrium Health, and the City of Calgary's intranets, external links were labeled with a clear, consistent format throughout the intranet. This visual treatment of icons and messaging sets employees' expectations before clicking the link that they will be leaving the intranet.



The screenshot shows a website header with 'DORIS' and navigation links for Home, How do I?, Your council, News, and Public website. Below the header, a breadcrumb trail shows 'Home / How do I? / IT, computers and telephones / Print services from Digital Solutions'. The main content title is 'Print services from Digital Solutions'. On the right side, there is a section titled 'External links' containing a link 'Print/quote request online form' with a small arrow icon next to it, which is highlighted with a red box. Below this, there is some descriptive text about digital solutions and their equipment.

Bracknell Forest Council used a small arrow icon next to links to signal to users that a new window or tab would open. Though this was a good approach, increasing the size and visual prominence of the icon would make it even better.

Lands' End Business – Save 10% on Orders
10/28/2018

[this link opens in a new tab](#)

Results per page: 10, 25, 50, 100

Status Dashboard:

- Canopy
- Encompass
- Network
- Office Tools
- Web Apps

Atrium Health labeled links that opened a new tab or external application (other than the intranet) with a bright teal arrow icon, which helped set employees' expectations before they clicked.

Calgary myCity

search myCity

Tools & Resources, myHR, Organization, News & Events, Dashboard, Safety & Security

June 12, 2019 24°

Departments & Business Units

Transportation

- About Transportation
- Calgary Transit
- Roads
- Transportation Infrastructure
- Transportation Planning
- Environment
- Safety
- Transportation Mentoring Program
- The plan for future travel choice
- Employee Mobility Choices

myCity.home, Our organization, Departments & Business Units, Transportation

Transportation

We provide a variety of convenient, accessible and efficient transportation choices that support the movement of people and goods throughout our city and region. Our services are safe, reliable and affordable, ensuring Calgarians get to their destinations quickly, and businesses benefit from connectivity. We shape Calgary's future through careful planning, design and construction of the transportation network, and we strive to meet the goals of the Municipal Development Plan and Calgary Transportation Plan. Together we're creating a transportation system that's helping make Calgary a healthy, vibrant and dynamic community.

Employee mobility choices

Sustainable options to get to your next meeting. Book a pool bike, fleet car, get a transit ticket or use Manchester's shuttle service.

[Get to your next meeting](#)

Public Transit

Plan a trip with Calgary Transit, view the latest Bus and CTrain schedules and get service updates.

[Go to Calgary Transit](#)

Employee Name
General Manager, Transportation

[Email](#)

Plane

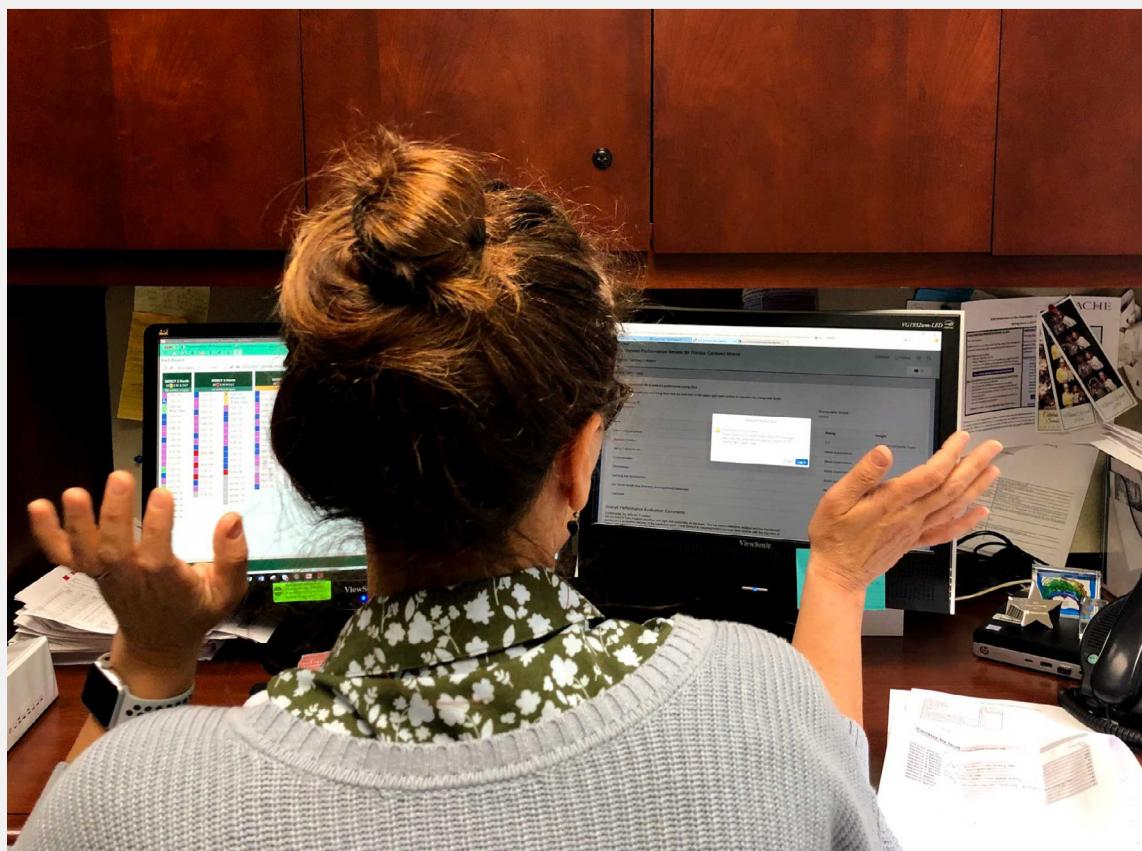
The City of Calgary used a similar icon on its intranet, only it appeared bold and in black, which was a favorable treatment.

POPUPS AND MODAL OVERLAYS

60. Design popups and modal overlays that are easy to dismiss but helpful for key use cases.

Use modal dialogs and popups for important warnings on the intranet and as a way to prevent or correct critical errors. When employees' work may be lost, or an action may have destructive, irreversible consequences, interrupt the employee to avoid a disaster. However, do not overuse popups or display them at inopportune times, such as when the employee lands on the intranet's homepage. This will deter them from having a good experience.

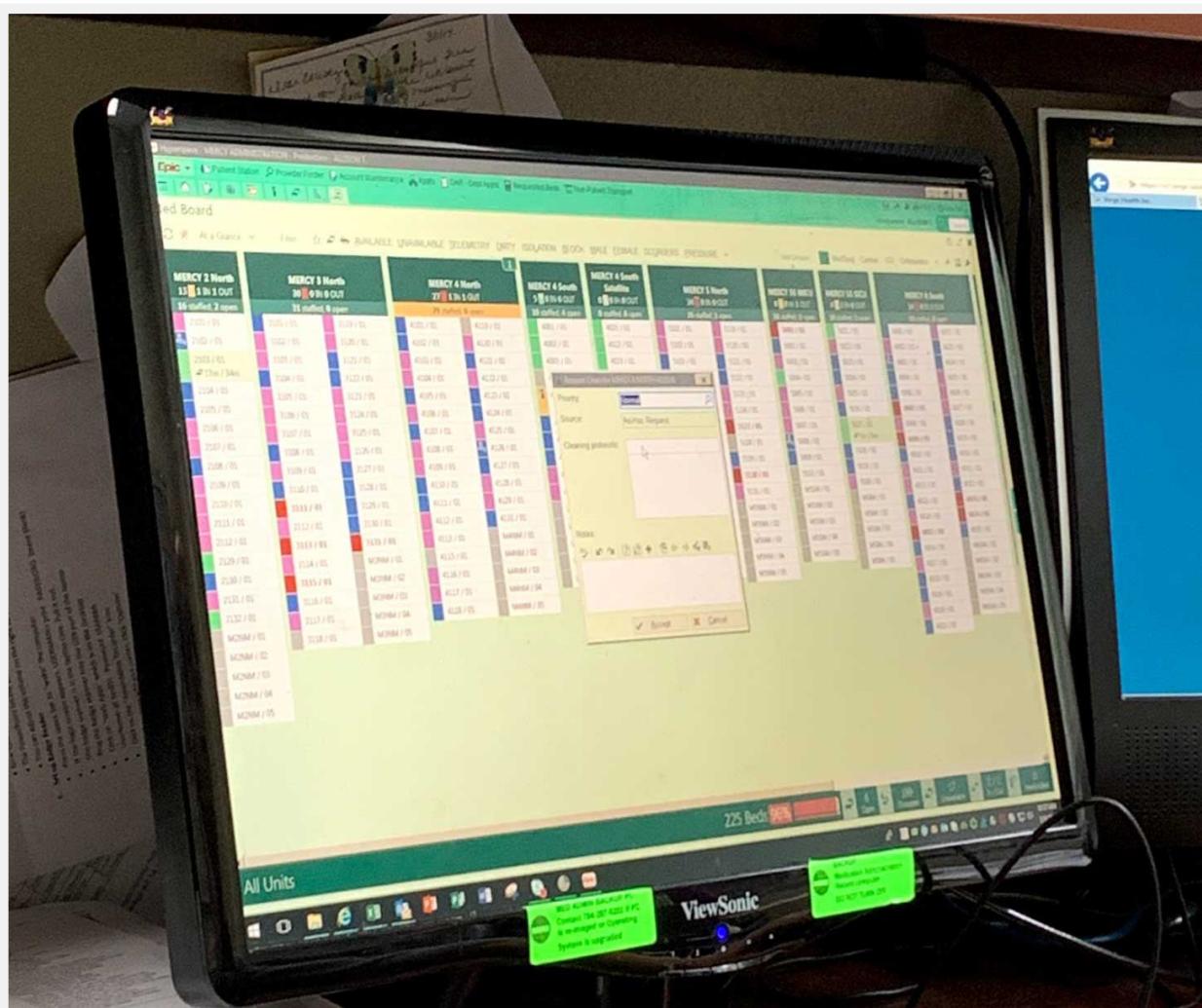
To determine whether a popup or modal overlay is appropriate, ask yourself if the problem would be easier or harder to correct if the employee's attention is taken away from the task. It is always good to prevent human error before it happens, if possible. For example, a message to inform an employee that their computer will restart or that they will be logged out of the intranet in 10 seconds could be displayed in a modal dialog to ensure the employee notices the message.



One study participant encountered a modal that informed her that her session was about to time out. From her body language, we can tell she was displeased this was happening, but because the popup was highly visible, she was made aware.

Before designing a modal, determine if the error is irreversible. Irreversible errors often result in a loss of information, which can be especially damaging for complex and time-intensive tasks. When missing information prevents the system from continuing an employee-initiated process, a modal dialog can prompt the employee for that information.

For example, an Atrium Health nurse manager was filling out information related to a patient when a modal appeared. This was a good example of using a modal because it drew her attention to the information that needed to be saved before proceeding to her next task. The modal popup was easy to close using the prominent x icon in the upper right corner. The *Save* and *Cancel* commands were also easy to understand. The *Cancel* command would also close the popup, which was good, giving employees multiple options to close it.



Atrium Health's digital workplace software used modal windows to ensure employees entered information critical to continuing their current process, which was favorable.

For time-consuming and mentally involved tasks, it can be overwhelming to ask for lots of information all at once. In those situations, use modal dialogs to break complex information into simpler, more digestible chunks. Wizards are typical instances of such use of modal dialogs. However, it's important to note that a modal with multiple steps will just prolong the time spent away from main tasks, making it more likely that employees will forget what they were doing in the first place.

If you must do multiple-step modals, give employees a sense of their progress so they don't abandon the task immediately. If something requires multiple steps, it probably justifies dedicating an entire page to it.

Use modal dialogs to ask for information that, when provided, could significantly lessen employees' work or effort. Modals can be effective when the information being requested or presented is relevant or can streamline the current task's completion.

“Pop-Up” Modal Windows

Pop-ups are modal dialog windows which force visitors to interact with the presentation before they can return to the parent page.

They are useful in focusing the visitor on a single task. On GSA.gov, modal windows are centered on the screen with the rest of the page grayed to focus attention on themselves and to visually imply that the background content is temporarily unneeded.

Some examples shown (from top left) are:

- Finding Regional contact information on the [Newsroom](#)
- Viewing an introductory video on the microsite overview for [Small Business](#)
- Using the [GWACs Dashboard](#) to research sales data

The General Services Administration clearly explained popups and modal windows in its style guide.

Do not use modal dialogs for nonessential information unrelated to the employees’ current workflow. When nonessential information is presented in a high-priority format, such as a modal dialog, employees will refuse to give attention to further instances of this format. Also, avoid modal dialogs that interrupt high-stakes processes or for complex decision-making that requires

additional sources of information unavailable in the modal. Use modals for short, direct dialogues with the user. If a modal requires the user to do complex research or consult additional information sources (potentially blocked by the modal), it's not the correct UI element for that interaction.

In situations where the task is not critical, a nonmodal dialog might be appropriate. Nonmodal dialogs are less offensive than modal ones because they allow users to continue their activity and ignore them if they are irrelevant. However, they can still be disruptive, especially if they obscure important information on the screen or if they require too complex interactions.

Add or Edit Favorites

Add and manage links that you'd like easy access to here. These links will appear in your "My Favorites" menu.

Link Title *
Enter a title for this link

Link URL *
Enter a URL, i.e. [https://www.microsoft...](https://www.microsoft.com)

Burns & McDonnell used a nonmodal dialog for employees to add or edit pages saved to their favorites. The only improvement would be to move the Save and Cancel commands down below the form fields.

Both modal and nonmodal popups are useful and request or encourage employee participation. When deciding between these two types of dialogs, consider the user context and the workflow. Avoid unnecessarily interrupting employees and disrupting their workflows. No one likes to be interrupted, but if you must, make sure it's worth the cost when considering using modals or popups.

Style Guides and Design Systems

DESIGN SYSTEMS

61. Establish design and content guidelines using a style guide, component library, or design system for the intranet.

As an intranet design evolves, the scale and speed at which new pages and screens must be created also increase. Many intranets and digital workplaces have hundreds or even thousands of pages and screens. With this enormous scope encompassing content and tools comes a dire need for organizations to find ways to streamline intranet design work. Many intranet teams leverage robust design systems to manage their intranet and digital workplace designs at scale.



Design system

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

A **design system** is a complete set of standards intended to manage design at scale using reusable components and patterns.

The primary benefit of intranet design systems is the ability to quickly replicate designs using premade UI components and elements. With these, teams can continue to use the same elements repeatedly, reducing the need to reinvent the wheel and risk unintended inconsistency.

Intranet design systems can also alleviate strain on busy or strapped design resources so they can focus on larger, more complex problems. Since UI elements are already created and reusable, designers can focus less on tweaking visual appearance and more on solving complex problems such as information prioritization, workflow optimization, and journey management.

Another benefit of design systems and style guides is that they help protect intranet teams from having to engage in wasteful debates with individuals in the organization who do not have a design background. For example, the functionality or appearance of a dropdown menu does not have to be debated when that term is reserved for a specifically defined element within the design system.

For example, the Atrium Health intranet team described the importance of its design system and style guide by saying, “We have a style guide, and we have tried to make our clients understand that we really need to be the ones who pick the layout for the content to actually go on the intranet.”

STYLE GUIDES

Style guides contain specific implementation guidelines, visual references, and design principles for creating intranet pages or other design deliverables. The most common style guides tend to focus on branding (colors, typography, trademarks, logos, and print media), but style guides also offer guidance on content, such as tone of voice and language recommendations, and visual and interaction design standards (also known as **front-end style guides**). These guidelines are sometimes also incorporated into the component library to provide relevant guidance in context.



Front-end style guide

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

Front-end style guides are a modular collection of all the elements in your product's user interface and code snippets for developers to copy and paste as needed to implement those elements. They include common UI components like buttons, form-input elements, navigation menus, modal overlays, and icons.

For example, standards, conventions, and style guides were available at the GSA, yet content editors still had to spend considerable time tweaking submissions for news and pages because of a lack of adherence to them. Also, tight timelines and content management platform limitations meant content editors had to quickly convert the content themselves rather than being able to take the time to educate each client on the submission requirements.

A better approach would be to make adherence to the style guides, standards, and conventions more stringent and to boost awareness of these standards by surfacing them at a higher level on the intranet. Educating content contributors on the standards and conventions would also help minimize the need for content editors to rework what was done by the content editors.

GSA.gov Visual Style Guide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Introduction / Who This Guide Is For](#)

[1. Elements of GSA.gov Visual Style](#)

[Typography](#)

[Default Paragraph Style](#)

[Heading Styles](#)

[Color Palette](#)

[Imagery](#)

[Conceptual Images](#)

[Contextual Images](#)

[Do's and Don'ts](#)

[Homepage Feature Image](#)

[2. Responsive Design](#)

[The Responsive Framework](#)

[How GSA.gov Uses Bootstrap](#)

[Using Images within Responsive Design](#)

[3. GSA.gov Page Templates](#)

[Overview of Templates](#)

[Top Level Pages](#)

[Required Sizes for Images on Top Level Pages](#)

[Standard Pages](#)

[Elements of Standard Pages](#)

[Standard Configurations](#)

[Styled Content Elements](#)

[Configuration Options](#)

["Pop-Up" Modal Windows](#)

[CMP Feature Pages](#)

[Region Homepages](#)

[Featured Microsites](#)

[Umbrella Pages](#)

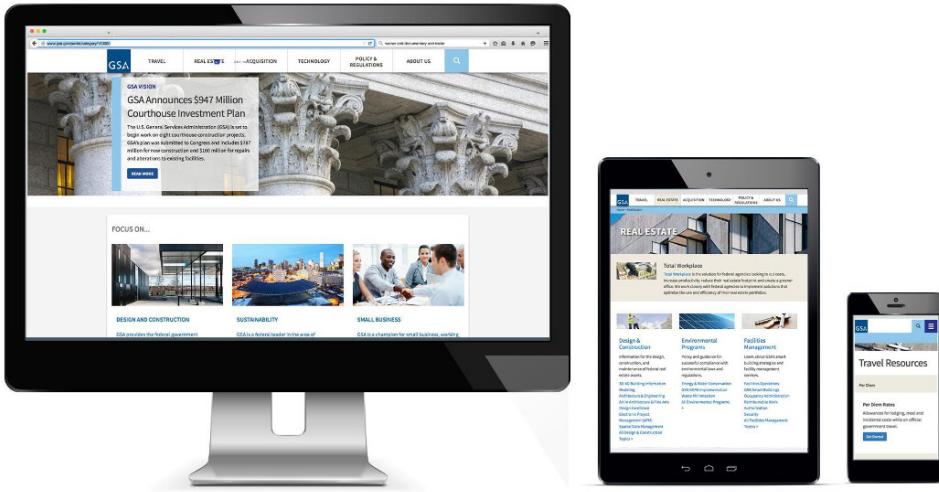
[Agency Initiatives](#)

[Specialized Content](#)

[Custom Microsites](#)

Standards and accountability are required for intranet style guides to work well.

Introduction / Who This Guide Is For



This style guide reflects a new standard of simplicity and consistency for GSA.gov and provides guidance for content across the site.

The style guide is created with two key audiences in mind – **business owners** and **content managers**.

Business owners use GSA.gov to communicate about a program or offering. You can use this style guide to quickly understand what the site offers in terms of structure and scale and determine how best to deploy their message on GSA.gov.

“Business owners” is a term encompassing everyone who is responsible for the accuracy, timeliness, and relevance of information on GSA.gov. Business owners include:

- Individuals formally designated as “owners” of content on GSA.gov,
- Managers of programs and offices, and
- Subject matter experts seeking to have information published on the site.

Content managers create content using GSA’s Content Management Platform (CMP). You can use this style guide to:

- Learn how different templates organize information to suit a range of communication needs,
- Understand the range of pages on GSA.gov, how they are used, and their layout and structure
- Prepare images for publication and use consistent page layouts to assure approved styles and typographic elements.

A favorable element of GSA’s style guide was that it outlined who the guide was for and the purposes it served: familiarity and consistency.

Component libraries (also known as design libraries) are what many people associate with design systems. These thorough libraries house predetermined, reusable UI elements and serve as a one-stop shop for intranet designers and developers to learn about and implement specific UI elements. In addition to visual examples of components, they include:

- **Component names:** a specific and unique UI component name to avoid miscommunication between designers and developers
- **Descriptions:** a clear explanation of what the element is and how it is typically used, occasionally accompanied by dos and don'ts for context and clarification
- **Attributes:** variables or adjustments that can be made to customize or adapt the component for specific needs (i.e., color, size, shape, copy)
- **States:** recommended defaults and the subsequent changes in appearance
- **Code snippets:** the actual code excerpt for the element (some design systems go as far as sharing multiple examples and offering a “sandbox” environment to try out different component customizations)
- **Front-end and backend frameworks:** used to implement the library to avoid painful and unnecessary debugging

While component libraries specify individual UI elements, pattern libraries feature collections of UI-element groupings or layouts. Pattern libraries are often considered less robust than component libraries, but they can be as thorough or as high-level as needed. They typically feature content structures, layouts, and/or templates. Like the components, the patterns are meant to be reused and adapted.

For example, the Scottish Government housed its design standards and pattern library on a separate website, [SaltireGuidelines.com](https://saltireguidelines.com), which was the best example of a comprehensive intranet design system in our most recent round of research. It was accessible, easy to understand, and included important design details related to content. The use of the design system was also evident on the Scottish Government’s intranet, as it was clean and consistent.

Principles	
Content guidelines	▼
Visual guidelines	▼
Pattern Library	^
Overview	
1.Grid System	
1.1. Using the grid	
1.2. Two-thirds one-third Panels	
1.3. One-third two-thirds Panels	
1.4. Full Width Module	
1.5. Half Width Module	
1.6. Third Width Module	
2.Blocks	
3.Media Objects	
4.Typography	
5.Iconography	
6.Buttons	
7.Navigation	
8.Forms	

1 Grid System

A responsive 12 column grid is the base of all page layout for Saltire.

Panels, spanning 2/3 and 1/3 width of the grid, or 1/3 and 2/3 width sit in the grid. Modules spanning full width, half width, third width and quarter width sit within panels.

1.1 Using the grid

CSS column classes are available for use with panels and modules:

- .column--two-thirds
- .column--one-third
- .column--quarter
- .column--half
- .column--full

1.2 Two-thirds one-third Panels

```
<div class="row push-bottom">
<div class="column--two-thirds" style="background-color:#eee">
    &nbsp;
</div>
<div class="column--third" style="background-color:#ddd">
    &nbsp;
</div>
</div>
```

1.3 One-third two-thirds Panels

The Scottish Government's intranet design system was an impressively comprehensive tool that helped scale the design and support consistency across the digital workplace.



The intranet design team needs bandwidth to support and sustain the design system.

Process and Strategic Considerations

An intranet's design system is only as effective as the team that manages it — usually a design or internal communications team. Design systems require continuous maintenance and oversight to ensure they don't become outdated, obsolete, or overcrowded with redundant entries or submissions.

At a minimum, an intranet design and development team should include one interaction designer, one visual designer, and one developer. Each help write interaction design guidelines, create visual examples, and provide code snippets and implementation specifications for each element.

Consider securing an executive sponsor (from leadership ranks) to orchestrate design-system efforts and ensure the team has time to maintain it. While the lack of a sponsor won't be a showstopper, sponsors can secure money and resources while also conveying the strategic importance of the intranet's design system to the rest of the organization.

First Solar adhered to the company's main branding style for its intranet. Content contributors are trained to use the correct colors, fonts, and logos as part of the training process that goes with learning how to edit parts of the intranet. First Solar favorably placed the style guide and brand standards directly on the intranet so employees could easily access and reference them as needed. A team member said, “On the intranet, under libraries and templates, people can access style and design guidelines and logos, etc. As long as they are adhering to this, they're fine.”

The screenshot shows a SharePoint site titled "Marcom Strategy & Planning Central". The main navigation bar includes links for Home, Products, Corporate Resources, Strategic Resources, and Regional Resources. A sub-navigation bar under "Guidelines" lists "Brand Guidelines", "Naming and Branding Guidelines", "Co-Marketing Guidelines", "Message Library", "Photography Guidelines", and "Event Guidelines". On the left, there's a sidebar with links for Back to Content Central, Recent, Request a Change, PERMISSION MAINTENANCE, Logos - Letterhead, Creative-Services, and Segmentation.

Designers, developers, and content creators at First Solar could find the brand standards in the intranet's Marcom Strategy & Planning section.

Table of Contents

<p>2 Overview</p> <p>3 Logo</p> <p>4 Logo Variations</p> <p>5 Logo Usage</p> <p>6 Logo Color Variations</p> <p>8 Color</p> <p>9 Color Palette</p> <p>10 Typography</p> <p>11 Primary Typeface</p> <p>12 Substitute Typeface</p>	<p>13 Layout</p> <p>14 Fact Sheet Measurements</p> <p>15 Fact Sheet Typography</p> <p>16 Brochure Measurements</p> <p>17 Print Advertisement Measurements</p> <p>19 Print Advertisement Typography</p> <p>20 45° Angle</p> <p>21 Line Pattern</p> <p>22 Icons</p> <p>23 Photography and Video</p> <p>24 Title Cards</p> <p>25 Writing Style and Voice</p>
---	---

First Solar's brand standards were comprehensive and included writing styles and visual elements such as logos and colors, typography, and layouts.

The screenshot shows the SOURCE intranet homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for News, HR, Work, About Us, Social, and Locations. Below the navigation bar is a sidebar with links for Our Difference, Mission, Vision & Values, Our Value Proposition, Our Strategy, Our Performance, Our History, Media & Recognition, Corporate Reports, Our Executive Team, Org Charts, and Brand Guidelines. The Brand Guidelines link is highlighted with a green background. The main content area shows the 'Brand Guidelines' page, which includes a large, colorful abstract graphic at the top. Below the graphic, there is a sub-navigation bar with links for Corporate Identity Guide, Corporate logos, and The Co-operators Style Guide. Underneath these links, there is a list of items: 'The Corporate Identity Guide – for all Co-operators companies' with two download links; 'The Co-operators Style Guide'; 'CUMIS Brand Guidelines' with a download link; 'Sovereign'; and 'Federated'. At the bottom of the page, there is a footer bar with links for Contact us, Submit News, and SourceBook.

Brand Guidelines

- > [The Corporate Identity Guide](#) – for all Co-operators companies
 - > [Co-operators logo downloads](#) – for external use only
 - > [Co-operators logo downloads](#) – for internal use
- > [The Co-operators Style Guide](#)
- > [CUMIS Brand Guidelines](#)
 - > [CUMIS logo downloads](#)
- > [Sovereign](#)
- > [Federated](#)

The Co-operators also included brand guidelines directly on its intranet, making them easily accessible to all employees.

DIRTT also included a comprehensive branding section on its intranet, with topics related to digital channels and physical communication pieces.

The absence of an organization-wide intranet design system can lead to an inconsistent visual appearance and result in experiences that seem fragmented or unrelated to employees. Design systems provide a single source of components, patterns, and styles and unify disjointed experiences so that they are visually cohesive and appear to be part of the same digital workplace ecosystem.

As an added bonus, any major visual rebrands or redesigns can be managed at scale through the design system. Explicitly written usage guidelines and style guides help onboard individual contributors who are new to intranet design or content creation and also serve as a reminder for the rest of the contributors.

Design systems help teams scale and reuse the intranet's design for years to come, ensuring replicable design work over time. Design systems are made of many components, patterns, styles, and guidelines, which can help operationalize and optimize your intranet's branding, visual, and interaction design efforts.

Methodology

Intranet Guidelines Study Overview

In these studies, we used three methods — usability tests, contextual inquiries, and expert reviews — to gain a variety of insights into the usability and effectiveness of intranets as a whole.

USABILITY STUDIES IN A LAB SETTING

We watched employees use their company's intranet in a lab setting at every company, typically a small conference room or an office. Employees used either a company computer or their own company-issued computer. Some participants also used their mobile phones. Researchers observed four to six employees at each study location in organizations that ranged from small companies to large enterprises across the United States, Canada, and Europe in the 2019 study.

We gave users tasks to perform and quietly observed them as they worked. Users were asked to think out loud as they completed their tasks. They were also told to carry out each task as far as they would if they were on their own. Following the completion of each task, the researcher presented users with a brief satisfaction survey and asked follow-up questions.

There were two types of tasks given to users: directed and exploratory.

- **Directed tasks** require the user to find a specific piece of information (e.g., Who is the CFO?) or perform a particular task, such as submitting a support ticket to the IT department. When a directed task is given, there is a clear endpoint: the user either finishes the task or gives up.
- **Exploratory tasks** allow for a more natural exploration of content. There is no right or wrong answer when an exploratory task is given. Administering these tasks reveals how discoverable and engaging the content is on the intranet. For example, users were asked to find a community group they might be interested in joining or to see if there were any news articles they'd like to read.

In each session, users performed the directed tasks first and then completed as many of the exploratory tasks as possible in the time remaining.

For directed tasks, we recorded how long each employee took to complete the task and whether the task had been completed successfully. Employees were unaware they were being timed, and we did not tell them they were being assessed on whether their answers were correct. None of these quantitative measures were used to assess the performance of participants included in our study. Instead, they helped us to evaluate the usability of many different intranet designs.

Tasks

In each research study, we gave users similar types of tasks so that we could compare the performance of the same tasks across intranets, including those tested in previous studies. Although we tried to keep tasks consistent across organizations, the tasks administered varied slightly from one organization to another depending on what was offered on each intranet and what was realistic for employees to do. The table below shows the shell tasks (with an example) that were administered in many of the intranet studies.

TASK PREMISE	EXAMPLE	TYPE
Find a cafeteria menu	Use the intranet to find out what burger is being served in the cafeteria today. Tell the researcher your answer.	Directed
Find a colleague's office location	You've been told you need to speak to <name> from <a department>. Use the intranet to find where they are located. Tell the researcher your answer.	Directed
Sign up for training	Use the intranet to sign up for product owner training in October. Stop before signing up for the training but point to where you would click.	Directed
Find a specific piece of information	Your company offers tuition assistance. Use the intranet to find out how much money you can receive each year. Tell the researcher your answer.	Directed
Submit an IT request	Your office phone keeps dropping calls. Use the intranet to get it fixed. Go as far as you can without actually sending the request but point on the screen to where you would click.	Directed
Find the latest piece of news	Find the latest news article on the intranet. Tell the researcher your answer.	Directed
Find information about leadership	Use the intranet to find out when the Chief Operating Officer joined the company. Tell the researcher your answer.	Directed
Find a benefit	The company offers on-site childcare for employees. Use the intranet to find out how much it costs per month for a four-year-old child.	Directed
Request leave or vacation	Use the intranet to request a half-day off this coming Friday. Stop before submitting the request but point to where you would click.	Directed
Look for a job	A colleague mentioned there is a <certain job role> available. What level of education is needed to apply? Tell the researcher your answer.	Directed
Explore engagement with content types	Find a blog on the intranet that you'd be interested in reading. Say what you are thinking as you work on this activity.	Exploratory

Explore engagement with content types	Go to the intranet and see if there are any videos that interest you. Watch as many as you would like. Say what you are thinking as you work on this activity.	Exploratory
Explore engagement with content types	Read something interesting in Yammer. Say what you are thinking as you work on this activity.	Exploratory
Explore engagement with content types	Use the intranet to find a community you'd like to be a part of. Say what you are thinking as you work on this activity.	Exploratory
Explore engagement with content types	Use the intranet to find a piece of news you're interested in reading. Say what you are thinking as you work on this activity.	Exploratory
Explore engagement with content types	Read something interesting in Yammer. Say what you are thinking as you work on this activity.	Exploratory
Explore engagement with content types	Use the intranet to find a community you'd like to be a part of. Say what you are thinking as you work on this activity.	Exploratory
Explore engagement with content types	Use the intranet to find a piece of news you're interested in reading. Say what you are thinking as you work on this activity.	Exploratory

CONTEXTUAL INQUIRY IN THE USER'S ENVIRONMENT

We carried out contextual inquiries with employees at several organizations in 2005, 2011, and 2019. During these sessions, we observed employees wherever they worked, usually at a desk but occasionally in less traditional spaces, such as the floor of a retail store, at the ticket gate of an airport, or even at a quarry!

In a contextual inquiry session, instead of giving users tasks (as in a usability test), we simply watch what users do in their everyday jobs. Doing so reveals more about how employees actually work (outside the artificial setting of a usability test). We were also able to observe more atypical aspects of use, for example, the experience of content editors using a content management system (CMS) to update content on the intranet.

To ensure contextual inquiry sessions were useful, employees were told to save work that involved using the intranet for the time they would spend being observed by a researcher. The sessions began with a short, semi-structured interview, followed by a period of uninterrupted observation. Follow-up questions were asked of participants after the observation period ended. Sessions lasted 90–120 minutes. We observed users interacting with other people, their computer, and the intranet. Watching users do their routine work gave us valuable insights into how well the intranet facilitated users' productivity, motivation, and information finding, as well as their everyday work.

EXPERT REVIEWS

Based on watching hundreds of people use intranets over the years, combined with design and research experience and knowledge of design principles, researchers were able to make judgments about which designs might cause issues or help users as they reviewed the intranets on site. While watching actual users is far more important and telling, experts can provide insights about a design's potential effectiveness. Some of these thoughts are expressed in our reports.

PARTICIPANTS

The intranet teams at each organization recruited employees for the usability tests and contextual inquiry sessions. We provided guidance for the recruitment, including stressing the need to recruit a representative sample (such as a mix of genders, ages, tenures, and roles).

All research participants knew their company had an intranet, and many of them said they used it every day or at least every week. Although one might assume daily users would be expert users, we found this was not the case. Our participants typically worked with only a small subset of features, such as looking up a phone number or reading company news.

RECRUITING ORGANIZATIONS TO PARTICIPATE

To recruit for this study, we posted a call for participation on our website, on social media, and in our weekly email newsletter, asking organizations to allow us into their offices and give us access to both the intranet and its users. In return, the organizations received a usability study and an evaluation of their intranet's usability, plus they were promised a copy of these final NN/g research reports.

We selected a varied sample of intranets (custom-built versus commercial-off-the-shelf, tech stack, use of social features, etc.) and a varied set of organizations (industry type, size, country) to ensure our findings could be applied to many situations and intranet types.

Each intranet we studied had its own goals, lifespan, history, content, number of pages, and user types to support. They all had interesting qualities, whether it was a particular implementation approach or a design or organizational challenge. Our overarching goal was to study a widely diverse group of organizations and intranets. Our more specific research goals for this study differed somewhat from those of most design and development teams.

RESEARCH GOALS

In carrying out our research, we had several research goals:

- **Observe how users use the intranet and digital workplace tools.** This insight informed our guidelines and recommendations.
- **Learn which design elements make intranets and digital workplace tools easy or difficult to use and why.** We used this information to describe real user scenarios and write the guidelines found in this report about intranet design and the various tools, applications, and separate websites that make up the digital workplace.
- **Observe how teams and individuals manage intranet content.** This information informed recommendations for how to organize and audit intranet content.
- **Collect metrics about basic intranet tasks.** We collected these numbers to get a benchmark of intranet usability today. We also wanted designers to be able to reproduce the study at their own organizations and compare results from their intranets to the ones in our study.

Some organizations house critical workplace functions **on the intranet**, while others **link to separate websites and applications**. The intranet, in concert with these external systems and tools, make up what we call the **digital workplace**. Simply put, it's all the online systems a person uses to do their job, communicate with coworkers, and manage their well-being as an employee. Throughout this report, We'll refer to the intranet and various digital workplace tools (separate websites and applications).



Digital Workplace

Definitions, Principles, and Methods

All the online systems a person uses to do their job, communicate with coworkers, and manage their well-being as an employee.

Intranet Guidelines Report Series

NIELSEN NORMAN GROUP'S INTRANET REPORT SERIES

This is one of the report volumes generated from the findings gleaned from our intranet research studies. Based on these findings, we derived guidelines about many topics, each of which merited its own report.

The entire **Intranet Usability Guidelines** series is available for purchase and download from our website.

Volume 1: Intranet Content Strategy, Presentation, and Governance

Volume 2: Intranet Information Architecture, Navigation, and Menus

Volume 3: Intranet Search for Content, People, and Tools

Volume 4: Intranet Branding, Visual, and Interaction Design

The report series contains guidelines for good intranet design, along with descriptions and examples from the companies that formally participated in our studies. We also drew our recommendations from the intranet knowledge gained through our client work and from running our [Intranet Design Annual](#).

We hope that by studying the examples and guidelines in this report series, other designers will learn more about how to design usable intranets.

About the Organizations in the Study

As the table below shows, we studied the usability of intranets at 57 different organizations from a wide variety of industries.

NAME	INDUSTRY	LOCATION
ABB	Power & automation technology	Zurich (Switzerland)
Allen & Gerritsen	Strategic marketing	Watertown, MA (US)
Amazon.com	Online retailer	Seattle, WA (US)
American Airlines	Airline	Fort Worth, TX (US)
Antigenics Corp.	Pharmaceutical	Lexington, MA (US)
Atrium Health	Healthcare group	Charlotte, NC (US)
Avery Dennison	Manufacturing	Headquarters in Pasadena, CA (US); study conducted in Brea, CA (US)
Bayer CropScience	Crop protection	Research Triangle Park, NC (US)
British Red Cross	Nonprofit/humanitarian aid	London (UK)
Burns & McDonnell	Engineering	Kansas City, MO (US)
Bracknell Forest Council	Local government	London (UK)
Cathay Pacific	Airline	Lantau, Hong Kong (China)
Chick-fil-A	Restaurant chain	Atlanta, GA (US)
CIT Group, Inc.	Financial services	Livingston, NJ (US)
City of Calgary	Local government	Calgary (Canada)
Consumers' Association	Nonprofit/publication	London (UK)
Co-operators	Insurance	Guelph (Canada)
Currie & Brown	Construction risk management	London (UK)
Dell	Technology	Round Rock, TX (US)
DIRTT	Design-build construction	Calgary (Canada)
Dispatch Printing Company	Four media outlets (network, cable, and two radio stations)	Columbus, OH (US)
Dubai Chamber of Commerce & Industry	Government	Dubai (UAE)
Easter Seals, Inc.	Nonprofit/health and human services	Chicago, IL (US)
Elsevier	Science, technical, and health publishing	Amsterdam (The Netherlands) and Philadelphia, PA (US)

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University	Higher education	Daytona Beach, FL (US)
Eyeo GmbH	Software	Cologne (Germany)
First Solar	Energy	Perrysburg, OH (US)
Fortum	Energy	Espoo (Finland)
General Services Administration	Government agency	Washington D.C. (US)
HealthGrades	Technology/healthcare	Denver, CO (US)
Houses of Parliament	Government	London (UK)
Kaplan	Education and test preparation	New York, NY (US)
KeyBank	Bank	Cleveland, OH (US)
Kulicke & Soffa	Semiconductor	Willow Grove, PA (US)
Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA)	Energy, water, parks, and community service	Austin, TX (US)
Luck Companies	Mining and stone retailing	Richmond, VA (US)
Mayo Clinic	Healthcare	Rochester, MN (US)
Millennium Pharmaceuticals	Biochem R&D	Cambridge, MA (US)
Nestlé Group	Food	Vevey (Switzerland)
New York Life Insurance	Life insurance	New York, NY (US)
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology	Technical school	Edmonton (Canada)
Microwave Data Systems (MDS)	Wireless networking	Rochester, NY (US)
NetApp	Computer storage	Sunnyvale, CA (US)
Rabobank International	Finance & banking	Utrecht (The Netherlands)
Royal National Lifeboat Institution	Charity	Poole (UK)
Salesforce.com	Customer relationship management	San Francisco, CA (US)
Scottish Government	Government agency	Edenborough (Scotland)
San Juan Unified School District	Public school district	Sacramento, CA (US)
Sharp HealthCare	Healthcare	San Diego, CA (US)
Shell UK (IT Intranet)	Energy, petrochemical oil	Study done in London (UK); but IT head office is in Houston, TX (US)
Sprint	Telecommunications	Overland Park, KS (US)
State of California Employment Development Department (EDD)	State government agency	Sacramento, CA (US)
Towers Perrin	Global professional services	Philadelphia, PA (US)

U-Haul International, Inc.	Moving, transportation, manufacturing, and retail	Phoenix, AZ (US)
University Health Network (UHN)	Healthcare	Toronto, Ontario (Canada)
Vytra Health Plans	Managed healthcare	Melville, NY (US)
Wildcard Systems, Inc.	Financial services	Maitland, FL (US)

Authors & Acknowledgements

Author Biographies

Anna Kaley is a Senior UX Specialist with Nielsen Norman Group. Before joining NN/g, Anna worked for more than 10 years in UX architecture and digital strategy. She has conducted complex user research and experience design for healthcare, agriculture, finance, tourism, retail, and engineering clients. Most recently, she worked at a large retailer where she was responsible for ecommerce UX in both B2C (business-to-consumer) and B2B (business-to-business) channels. Anna is skilled at using qualitative and quantitative research methodologies throughout the design process to drive conversion, increase revenue, and improve satisfaction. She also has expertise in digital media planning, search marketing, and graphic design.

Anna has held UX roles on internal product teams and in digital agencies of various sizes and understands the challenges that UX professionals face in both contexts. This familiarity helps her bring a well-rounded approach to her projects and instruction. Anna has a Bachelor of Journalism degree with an emphasis in strategic communication. She attended the University of Missouri, Columbia.

Maria Rosala is a Senior UX Specialist with Nielsen Norman Group. Maria has a decade of experience conducting UX research. At Nielsen Norman Group she provides research services and advice to clients across numerous industries including construction, fast-moving consumer goods, pharma, and education. Prior to joining NN/g, Maria worked as a UX researcher in the UK government, where she carried out research in the UK and internationally to improve numerous digital products and services, including internal casework systems, online visa applications, and public-facing websites.

Maria has conducted usability evaluations on a variety of intranets at public and private organizations in North America and Europe for the 4th edition of the *Intranet Guidelines Report*.

Maria has a BSc in Philosophy from the London School of Economics and Political Science and an MSc in Human-Computer Interaction and Ergonomics from University College London.

Acknowledgements

We thank the companies that welcomed us into their offices and let us review and test their intranets, the teams at those companies, and the employees who volunteered to participate in our research studies.

We also want to thank Kara Pernice, Therese Fessenden, Kim Flaherty, Rachel Krause, Feifei Liu, and Kate Moran for assisting us in our study visits.

Special thanks to Patty Caya and Rachel Krause for editing and designing the 4th edition of this report series.

About NN/g

A Leading Voice In The Field of User Experience Since 1998

- Conducting groundbreaking research. Every week, somewhere around the globe, NN/g team members are conducting user experience research. Our experts are experienced at executing dozens of research methodologies. We know when and how to apply each one, resulting in trusted insights that inform everything we do.
- Evaluating interfaces of all shapes and sizes. We've tested thousands of different user interface designs over the years. Every year we evaluate hundreds of interfaces, adding to our collective understanding of design and user behavior. Our experts work with users, interfaces and organizations from all over the world, widening our collective understanding.
- Insights with more depth. We don't have a narrow focus. Our observations are the result of the cumulative findings across a large volume and variety of circumstances, making them highly valid and comprehensive. For everything we publish, we combine our collective knowledge of longstanding patterns with any new findings we uncover from our targeted research studies. This allows us to interpret observations through the lens of the dozens of similar topics we've seen before to conclude their importance and validity. So this report is based not only on our most recent research on the topic, but more than 20 years of UX knowledge.

OUR EXPERTS DO IT ALL

Our experts are researchers, educators, and UX Design practitioners all in one. Everything we do informs the 3 pillars of our business, research, training, and consulting.

- Research — Every person on our team conducts research. We tackle every topic in UX from the most evergreen challenges like information architecture to the most recent and emerging trends.



- Training — Our UX Conference training events take place in cities around the world and are also offered as virtual events that can be attended from anywhere.
- Attendees learn from NN/g experts and invited industry peers, leaving with practical skills that can be applied immediately.
- With more than [40 courses available](#), there's something for everyone. Courses are taught in areas such as: research practices, design processes, working with stakeholders

and product teams, among other things.

- Certification — Our UX Certification Program helps UX professionals quickly gain skills and credibility. By taking 5 courses and passing related exams, practitioners earn [NN/g UX Certification](#) and badge, a recognized credential in the industry.
- In-house Training — Many of our courses can be taught at your location and customized to fit your unique needs. [In-house training](#) is ideal for teams that want to spread user experience perspective throughout a large group and those working on large projects that need to kick start the creative process and head in the right direction.
- Consulting — Our experts are available for [custom consulting](#). Our services include but are not limited to:
 - Design Reviews and Competitive Analysis (starting at \$38,000 USD)
 - Usability testing (starting at \$20,000)
 - Benchmarking (starting at \$45,000)

PUBLICATIONS AND CONTENT

Over the years, our experts have developed a comprehensive body of knowledge and UX resources. We've taken the results of our decades of research and distilled it down into actionable guidelines, best practices and proven methodologies.

Articles and Videos

Over the years, we have created one of largest and most comprehensive sources of free user experience content and research insights.

- Articles — Each week we publish new [articles](#) on current UX topics available to practitioners around the world at no cost.
- Videos — In addition to our free articles, we produce a variety of short topical UX videos posted to our [YouTube channel](#) weekly.

Reports

Our research library contains more than 60 published reports and books addressing a variety of topics including but not limited to the following:

- Doing UX in Agile Environments
- UX Design for specific audiences (e.g., children, college students, seniors, people with disabilities)
- Information Architecture
- B2B Websites

- Corporate Websites
- Ecommerce UX Design
- Marketing Email and Newsletters
- Intranets
- Non-Profit Websites
- University Website

Find all of our reports at <https://www.nngroup.com/reports>.

Our Free Newsletter

Nielsen Norman Group's Weekly Newsletter includes summaries of our latest research and insights published each week. Subscribe at <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/subscribe>.