GUI ■ DESIGNERS
Intranet Service Briefing

Introduction

This briefing summarises the services that GUI Designers provides to support the design and implementation of successful Intranet sites.

The services are illustrated with examples of work that we have undertaken for Reuters.

Our Approach – User Centred Design

User Centred Design is a proven approach to delivering substantial improvements in the usability of software products and web sites. GUI Designers differ from many new media companies in that we have grown from a usability background and believe that user needs and information organisation are the key factors that determine the structure and appearance of successful web sites.

Intranet Services

GUI Designers offers a full range of Intranet services covering the complete web lifecycle. A brief summary of these services is provided below.

Usability Evaluation

Usability evaluation provides an objective measure of an Intranet's effectiveness. Evaluation is also used as an integral part of our design process. Where appropriate, we apply a range of evaluation techniques including:
- Expert Review
- End-user testing
- Questionnaires and Surveys

User Requirements Analysis

Whether creating a single site, or a group of related sites, a clear understanding of user requirements is a fundamental principle for web design. We can utilise a wide range of analysis techniques to ensure that we have a clear understanding of our clients' needs including:
- User Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Task Analysis
- Use Case Scenarios

The result of applying required techniques is a documented set of user requirements that we use to drive the design process and evaluate the outcome.

Site Design

In designing an Intranet Site Design we take into account many factors including:
- End User Requirements
- Information Architecture
- Clear Navigation
- Ease of Maintenance
- Client Branding

The results are simple, clean web sites that display information effectively and are easy to maintain and update.

Implementation

Where required, we provide an implementation service. We have extensive experience of cross browser compatibility issues including the different releases of Netscape and Microsoft Browsers.

Technologies that we deploy include:
- HTML
- JAVA and VB Script
- Microsoft ASP, SQL Server
- Perl

We also provide consultancy on assessing and choosing appropriate Intranet technologies.

Intranet/Information Architecture

Well designed information architecture is key to Intranet effectiveness. GUI Designers architecture services include
- Site Architecture Development: Identifying the appropriate types and levels of site that are required.
- Content Structure Design: Content authoring techniques for successful on-line presentation of information.

Template Creation

GUI Designers develops site templates that provide an efficient means of promoting consistency within an Intranet and reducing development times and costs.

Style Guides

We create On-Line Style Guides and "Toolboxes" that enable our clients to develop sites that share a common look and feel thereby increasing ease-of-use and branding values across their Intranet.

Training

We offer a full range of training support courses including:

- Effective Web Site Design
- Creating On-Line Content
- Using Microsoft FrontPage 98/2000

Example Projects

Background

Reuters is a large multi-national organisation who specialise in serving the Financial Markets. We have worked with the Marketing Communications group for over four years to develop internal and public Internet sites. The Intranet now comprises well over 200 sites spread throughout the organisation.

The following are overview examples of some of the projects that we have undertaken.

Portal Design

With so many sites, it becomes important to provide efficient means for locating information within the Intranet. Focus groups held with staff identified the need to provide access to information by job function. A new "portal" structure was implemented. The portals enable staff to access information that is relevant to their needs. User centred design was applied to the design of the sites, and

follow-up evaluation undertaken to ensure the appropriateness of the new structure.

Changes to Data

Changes to the Data supplied by Reuters to its customers occur for many reasons. The Intranet is used to supply this information to internal staff. GUI Designers was responsible for the user research, visual design and implementation of web site, which makes use of SQL Server and ASP technology.

The success of this project has lead to the information being published on the Public Internet at: www.opensystems.reuters.com

Web Templates

GUI Designers has designed Templates for a number of different types of Intranet site.

To date, we have built over 50 sites based on the templates working with the site owners to enable them to create the site content and maintain their sites.