

Leveraging off templates proves tempting for Council



THE SITUATION

Although geographically distant, Northland Regional Council's and the Whakatane District Council's technology landscapes were more than similar. When Jason Dawson from the NRC presented at a web conference and highlighted their gains by deploying an EPISever-led intranet, Tim Barrable from the Whakatane District Council immediately saw the parallels. Tied by the limitations of a fairly basic and non-dynamic intranet that didn't support staff well (and before that, working with a single web page and basic links to pdf documents), he was determined to make a solid investment in an intranet that would help support the cultural change and forward direction of the Council.



THE PAIN

Constrained by a basic intranet that didn't provide the right drivers to motivate staff to use it, the Whakatane District Council was keen to move forward - when attendance at a web conference opened the door.

"We were budget strapped - so the opportunity to leverage Northland's development and templates was a windfall."

Tim Barrable, Manager Corporate Information, Whakatane District Council.



Why "Whoogle" didn't reinvent the wheel

"There were substantial cost savings through leveraging off the original development work and using existing templates."

When Northland Regional Council gave Whakatane the green light to use the templates that had been created by Interger on an EPISever-based platform, they were able to side step the normal development hurdles and costs associated with starting from scratch.

Excellent collaboration between the councils meant NRC was in a position to share their intranet experience and the insights they had gained. Enter Interger, and the focus became one of reusing the consulting and development work, picking up the templates and tools that would best serve WDC's needs and create Whoogle, a clever hybrid of Whakatane and Google.

Interger's Bryce Scanlen explains that "The fact that they were using pre existing templates developed for another local government agency means that they didn't need to reinvent the wheel, but could instead focus on making enhancements to their own ends. With the development work already completed, all that was required was rebranding, deployment and training."



Northland's 'Express' intranet led the way for Whakatane's 'Whoogle'

EPISever was selected as the right content management system to sit within the NRC environment, being chosen predominantly for its ease of use.

ENGINE ROOM:

- >> EPISever 4.40
- >> NET Framework 1.1
- >> Windows Server 2003
- >> Microsoft SQL Server 2000
- >> Windows Internet Information Server 6.0

The same reasons stacked up for the Whakatane District Council. Their main requirement was gaining a searchable staff directory with full integration into their Visual Suite phone system, giving staff a real time status of where people were.

With over 160 staff, better communication was a key goal. In rebranding the intranet templates as their own, making Whoogle a smart but friendly experience was a given - hence the cute animated eyes in the logo. Plenty of interactivity was desired, with daily quotes, book reviews, image of the week and other templates nicely packaging the site as a vehicle to assist staff and hold core Council information.

Better content management

A 'before' picture saw information and documentation lying in separate drivers without good access, so Whoogle was able to provide a working structure that gave a clear path for editors and users. Fittingly, Whoogle is integrated with Google's enterprise search capability. Tim Barrable recounts "It was previously very difficult to get staff to update and share content, with information often sitting on individual drives. Now publishing and management of content is very straightforward."

THE GAIN:

Since the mid-April launch, Whoogle has found unanimous support amongst staff, with great feedback coming from those who publish frequently.

"This has been a very cost effective result for us and Interger was very responsive in making this opportunity happen."

Tim Barrable.

