

Spring 1996: Intranets

Speakers:

- **Gerard P. Learmonth Sr.**, President of Emergent Strategies, Inc.
- **Michael Fan**, Business@Web, Inc.

Synopsis

In today's information age, organizations survive by capturing their business processes within information systems. MIS departments have successfully implemented legacy systems, relational databases, and packaged applications to provide users with interfaces to the critical business processes within an organization. However, the emergence of the "information superhighway" known as the Internet is placing new demands on organizations and their MIS departments. In order to establish and maintain a competitive advantage, organizations need to extend and expose their business processes to their suppliers, distributors, and customer. The Internet provides a widely available, inexpensive, low-maintenance infrastructure for MIS departments to meet these demands imposed on the business.

In order to prepare for their forays onto the Internet, many organizations are creating internal Web sites, or "intranets". An intranet allows an organization to leverage the benefits of Web browsers (simplicity, ease of use, ease of administration, etc.) while operating in a controlled, secure environment. New, component-based approaches to application development and system integration allow MIS departments to quickly and easily expose selected on-line information and transactions to new users over an intranet. Legacy systems, client/server systems, and packaged applications can all be integrated and extended to intranet users.

This discussion described how technology that is available today can help organizations make the most strategic use of their intranets while laying down an infrastructure that can also support the global Internet.

Case Study: NASA

During the morning session, we also heard from Kennie Jones who described NASA's experiences with intranets. Jerry and Professor Kathy Chudoba facilitated an electronic brainstorming session which yielded the following prioritized list of intranet-related issues:

1. data quality/data mgt
2. return on investment
3. infrastructure
4. productivity
5. security
6. acceptance
7. training/skills
8. development time & cost

Speaker: Gerard P. Learmonth Sr.

Jerry is the president of the Charlottesville-based management consulting firm [Emergent Strategies, Inc.](#) The firm also operates as an Internet Service provider under the name ESInet.