

Making the Most of the Very Best

How Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre redesigned their Intranet into a Work Wise Web that complements the extraordinary expertise and efficiency of their greatest resource – their people

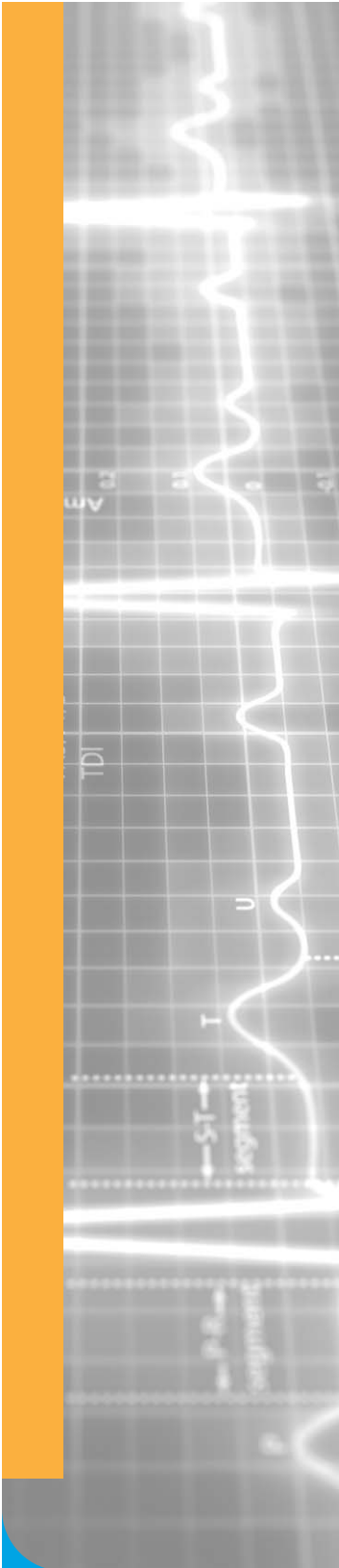


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Introduction

There is no better example of a business technology that truly serves its users than the creation of a well designed Intranet. From the smallest to largest organizations, employers are discovering the powerful and measurable benefits that result from developing an Intranet platform with the means to not only provide their personnel with the resources and support they deserve – but actually inspires them to use it.

As one of the largest hospitals in Canada, **Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre** (Sunnybrook) is a perfect example of a highly successful healthcare organization that has experienced a tremendous amount of organizational and operational growth. Sunnybrook employs over 10,000 personnel and provides a vast array of healthcare and educational services to the Greater Toronto Area. The Hospital is home to several regional programs that care for people across Ontario such as Sunnybrook's Tory Regional Trauma Centre. Sunnybrook is fully affiliated with the University of Toronto and each year conducts in excess of \$100 million in research. Sunnybrook has embraced every opportunity to ensure it's corporate identity and the services they provide meet the changing needs of both the communities they serve as well as their greatest assets – their people.

Leading the Sunnybrook Intranet redesign team as Developer and Project Manager was Dré Noronha. Mr. Noronha was determined to ensure Sunnybrook's ongoing commitment to empowering their staff, with the most effective systems and tools available, was accurately reflected in the redesign of their Intranet. Sunnybrook wished to significantly expand the scope of content offered within their Intranet, utilizing a completely new architecture and navigation with a focus on improving functionality and site organization. Equally important to Sunnybrook was to design a much more intuitive and efficient interface for users while incorporating the ability to upgrade and further enhance the site easily in the future.

It only took one meeting with **Clarity.ca** (Clarity) to convince Sunnybrook of the undeniable versatility and practicality of Clarity's impressive roster of unique proprietary toolset applications. This fact combined with Clarity's extensive expertise and experience in meeting the very specialized needs of the healthcare industry, resulted in a highly productive partnership on this project, as well as on additional projects that continues to this day.

An Initial Diagnosis

Whether creating a new Intranet or redesigning an existing one, the first and perhaps the most important step of the project is the front-end analysis. This part of the project is absolutely essential to its success. A well-conducted analysis process should accurately identify all critical technical and content needs, creating a detailed and comprehensive system framework that will meet each and every project goal.

Clarity's Project Analysts possess both the experience and expertise to guide clients seamlessly through what can otherwise seem like a daunting process without help, resulting in the concise definition and clear understanding of what components are required to develop their online applications.

Working together, Sunnybrook and Clarity reviewed their existing Intranet discovering a wealth of valuable information and data that could be captured and incorporated into their new Intranet. As this data was reviewed, it helped the Sunnybrook team recognize and further define the specific areas of new content, navigation and architecture they wished to include into the new Intranet design.

Now working with a meticulously detailed final implementation plan, Clarity's technical experts were able to focus on the heart of the matter.

The Heart of the Matter

The nerve centre of any well-designed online application is found with the program platform that enables clients to collaborate, self-publish and manage their critical content. This platform is generally referred to as the content management system.

From its inception, Clarity recognized the need to create a content management system that was as unique as each of its clients. The cookie-cutter content management systems available simply couldn't meet the level of custom design requirements that Clarity's clients needed. Based on this insight, Clarity's programming and design team met the challenge head-on by creating its own proprietary Clarity Content Management system (CCM5). The CCM5 is a web based application carefully and deliberately designed to be flexible enough to modify to meet the exacting requirements of each organization.

Just as their clients continue to grow and evolve, so too has Clarity and their products and services. Sunnybrook had the good fortune to begin its work with Clarity just as their newest content management system was available – the CCM.Net. The CCM.Net proved to be the 'just what the doctor ordered' since Sunnybrook's Intranet system management requirements were incredibly content and asset rich and incorporated a number of online toolsets that had to operate and work together seamlessly.

Once you have the right tools for the job, you need the right people in place to make it all happen. Fortunately, Sunnybrook was more than ready with Mr. Craig DuHamel, Vice President of Communications & Stakeholder Relations and Mr. Oliver Tsai, Director of Information Technology leading the way to oversee the new operational processes and procedures. Their new governance model enabled the Communications & Stakeholder Relations department to control the content power of the Intranet; with Mr. DuHamel's team taking responsibility for ensuring the majority of content posted meets organizational standards.

“Our 'Sunnynet' (Intranet) is proudly powered by CCM.Net, and we certainly look forward to a progressive internal communications future with Clarity on board.”

Dré Noronha
Corporate Webmaster,
Communications & Stakeholder Relations / Information Services

A Prescription for Success

Sunnybrook's Intranet design requirements are as comprehensive and diverse as the multi-faceted healthcare services they provide to their patients. One important factor in the successful deployment of Sunnybrook's new Intranet is having a content manager system that supports both their Mac and IBM users. Fortunately, Clarity's new CCM.Net is not only 100% web based requiring no plug-ins or downloads, it is completely cross platform and cross browser (Internet Explorer and Firefox) compatible ensuring no technical or user difficulties will arise in a multi-platform/browser user environment.

From a design standpoint, while all of the added program features being incorporated into the new Intranet were vital to its success, having an intuitive user interface took equal precedence to Sunnybrook. Awareness and consideration of the user experience with any online application will always greatly improve an organization's chances of increasing target users on-site activity and participation. Consequently, Clarity ensured every aspect of site architecture and supporting hierarchy and navigational design was directed at making the user experience effortless, engaging and enjoyable.

One of the undeniable advantages of an Intranet is the wide variety of practical operations and knowledge sharing applications available. The myriad of program features for an Intranet encompass and impact all main facets of any organization including training, administrative, corporate and operational communications. Maximizing the financial and performance efficiency benefits, an Intranet generates requires an in-depth review of workflow processes, internal communication needs and if possible, soliciting user feedback prior to the final design stage. Although the program features incorporated on Sunnybrook's Intranet spans a considerable array of applications and information, each program component was selected to improve efficiency, encourage teamwork and more accurately reflect their current corporate identity.

A Remedy at Hand

Every program component and feature selected for an Intranet should work together to create a seamless and engaging venue that enhances the staff's work environment. Therefore it's important to recognize that no program feature has more or less value than another in spite of their function or content, because it's the integration of these components that creates a balanced and user-friendly application. This fact is evident in the diversity of program features (highlighted below) that Sunnybrook selected and Clarity designed and implemented on Sunnybrook's new Intranet entitled **"Sunnynet – built for staff, by the staff"**.

"Built for staff, by the staff" is much more than just a slogan – it's a fact. Throughout this design and development process, Sunnybrook's personnel demonstrated their vast array of knowledge and expertise at every turn. Ms. Precilla Roopnaraine, Administrative Assistant to the Communications & Stakeholder Relations division presented invaluable input into the architectural and basic design concepts their organization needed. Mr. Doug Nicholson of the Media Source Team worked closely with Clarity to design all of the site banners and over 100 Sunnybrook authors helped move their content to the new Sunnynet site and are accountable for keeping their pages up-to-date. As Developer and Project Manager, Mr. Noronha had the responsibility for overseeing all facets of the Sunnynet design project, but he did so with the unwavering support of his executive management team comprised of Mr. Sam Marafioti (CIO), Mr. Craig DuHamel (VP, Communications & Stakeholder Relations) and Mr. Oliver Tsai (Director, Information Technology).

Critical Data Management

System Access and Staff Directories

To streamline access to Sunnynet, Clarity created role-based personalization portals for users including Managers, Physicians, Nurses and the Health Disciplines. Since the Physician's directory is so extensive, Clarity created two separate personnel directories, one for the Physicians and one for the rest of the staff. Separating the Physician's directory provides all staff the ability to search for a specific Doctor quickly and easily.

Typically, staff directories are inactive entities. To enter or change personal information on an inactive directory, a user must notify and work through the IT Department. Clarity's personnel directories are active directories. An active directory provides 2-way communication, allowing users the ability to change their own information and any such changes made on Sunnynet is automatically updated in Sunnybrook's Active Directory system.

Policies & Procedures

Supported by Clarity's CCM.Net, Sunnybrook discovered a new way to manage their corporate policies and procedures process using Clarity's proprietary toolset specifically designed for the medical industry entitled 'COPPS'. Operational policy decisions made within the medical industry are one of the most important factors that directly affect the cost and quality of medical care today. The process of authoring, reviewing and implementing new facility policies can be a very real challenge.

The COPPS toolset enables authors to create, import, track and store policy documents in an easy to use, easy to learn policy portal that ensures a controlled and documented methodology of releasing policies and tracking changes and updates. This program also enabled Sunnybrook to completely eliminate the cumbersome and unsecured Word documents that it had be relying on prior to implementing the new COPPS toolset.

Priority News

Often there are important news flashes that require varying levels of attention to be shared with an organization's staff. What makes these news flashes different from standard 'News and Events' is that they have a meaningful effect on daily operations and planning and must not be 'lost' within the general facility current events/news. To differentiate this vital data from the daily news, Clarity designed a section entitled the 'Help Desk' for Sunnybrook. This section has the unique distinction of providing the author with a color-coded system of priority, automatically alerting the readers to the level of importance the message contains. This section is of particular importance within a medical facility such as Sunnybrook because in some cases it can affect patient care directly if an employee is unaware (i.e., emergency drills schedules, notable changes to patient care procedures, etc.). These announcements are categorized into Low, Medium and High Urgency priority levels.

Finding What You Need

There is nothing more frustrating to a user than not being able to find the information they need quickly and easily. To ensure their users did not have to contend with this issue, Sunnybrook took advantage of the flexibility of Clarity's CCM.Net to integrate the Google Mini-Search program. This program not only allows their staff to search for data on Sunnynet, but can also include Sunnybrook's main website and the Internet. This search feature provides a method of locating the relevant information their staff needs instantly within a secure environment.

Internal Affairs – the good kind!

Sunnybrook News

Keeping employees informed of the latest organizational/health news or operational changes by ensuring information directly affecting staff's daily work is shared in a timely and efficient manner, greatly reduces the chances of misinformation or 'missed memos' from occurring. Using this venue for information dissemination also gives staff the opportunity to provide immediate feedback or ask questions about any upcoming changes being implemented.

In addition to presenting critical organizational information, this component is used for bringing attention to upcoming corporate events typically involving employee recognition/social activities, volunteer opportunities and charitable fund-raising events that the staff may wish to participate in or attend. The combination of providing internal personnel with easy access to current news and events goes a long way in fostering a feeling of teamwork and organizational harmony.

Sunnybrook's commitment to providing their staff with the most current news and events is even more important because in addition to being a large healthcare services organization, they also serve as an education campus making it vital that program information and course related presentation events are posted in a timely and easily accessible manner.

To meet all of these requirements Sunnybrook selected Clarity's News & Events toolset. This powerful template is designed to not only easily disseminate desired information from management, it also includes an option for employee submission of news and events that incorporates an automatic approval workflow process to ensure only appropriate requests are posted. From a site administration perspective, the Clarity toolset includes start and expiration dates to keep the corporate Announcement Board current as well as enabling the administrator the ability to compose future announcements for posting in advance. Further complementing Clarity's News & Events toolset is the enhanced capabilities of their new CCM.Net that provides a Document, Image, Preview and Video Thumbnail 'checkbox' feature to assist content publishers and views to visualize their item of interest.

The Sunnybrook Experience

Highlighting what it's like to work with any organization can be demonstrated in a number of ways. One way Sunnybrook emphasizes their dedication to their staff is by incorporating an 'Employee Announcements' option that enables administration to draw special attention to events such as upcoming employee retirements, employee recognition awards, etc. Another component Sunnybrook selected is the 'Did You Know' content area that provides staff with fun facts about the facility's support resources such as dining and snack areas, gift shops and other information tips to make working Sunnybrook the most enjoyable experience possible.

Internal Growth

Employees in today's challenging workplace environment know the value of internal job postings. Creating a direct channel to their Human Resources Department that enables staff to apply first for roles opening within the organization they already work so hard for and have proven themselves in – is perceived as a great advantage and encourages corporate loyalty.

Fully aware of the outstanding level of expertise and experience that their existing personnel offer, Sunnybrook tasked Clarity to redesign their existing Career Opportunities section to be a much more flexible and intuitive component to make the process as easy as possible for their staff. This internal job posting section lists all open jobs within Sunnybrook, as well as providing a search capability that can be conducted by a wide variety of criteria. The corresponding online application system allows the user to submit applications, resumes and cover letters for review.

In response to employee feedback when redesigning the new Intranet, Sunnybrook also had Clarity alter the way confidential documentation submitted through job applications was stored. To ensure personal privacy, employees did not wish their documentation to be stored automatically in the corporate database every time they submitted it for a job application. Responding to this request, Clarity designed a system that goes only and directly to the Human Resource Department via email where the email and attachments can only be opened and printed from this department with no permanent records being stored on the corporate database.

A Personal Resource

Providing your employees with non-work related networking capabilities within a controlled environment is a terrific job perk. Designing a section for Classified Ads is a perfect example of giving value-added services to your staff in exchange for their hard work.

Never one to miss such a positive opportunity, Sunnybrook had Clarity create an online Classified Ads feature that allows their people to submit their ads for posting. This feature has an automatic workflow approval process built into it so the proposed item can be reviewed before it's posted live to ensure the subject matter is always appropriate for a corporate supported environment.

Other quick-access Clarity toolsets used to engage and inform personnel are the Events Calendar and Quick Poll features. These components actively engage user participation, as well as providing a link to upcoming corporate events through a visually enticing calendar presentation located on Sunnybrook's Home Page.

Staying Connected

There is some information that can only be garnered from outside sources and today the tool of choice is that of an RRS feed. There are several definitions of what 'RRS' stands for including 'Rapid Response Service' or 'Really Simple Syndication'. When all is said and done, this tool enables a client to provide their employees with a quick and easy way to access external information from the Internet from authorized sources. Since an effective Intranet is targeted at making the users life a little easier and more productive, it's important to include items of interest that they can view to make their workday and even their breaks informative and pleasant.

Consequently, Sunnybrook made certain their Intranet design included RRS feeds to the local news from CTV, a feed to the local weather and even a connection to a daily comic to lighten the mood. Additionally, a link to the 'Green Tip of the week' was incorporated to offer new ideas on how to support Sunnybrook's organizational commitment to work in the most environmentally friendly way possible.

Presentation Matters

Visual Design Enhancements

Determining critical content is essential to creating a well-designed Intranet. Equally valuable is recognizing that the presentation of online content matters just as much as the information being provided. This is a consideration that applies not only to the end users but also to the site administrators or key personnel that are responsible for its maintenance and updating. An effective user interface that is intuitive, visually appealing and informative generates a significantly higher activity level by users. Likewise, providing the site administrators with the ability to change the layout and visual presentations (i.e., images, video clips, banner copy and colors, etc.) should be an equally painless process for everyone involved.

Clarity's CCM.Net's inherent design was created to accomplish both goals by allowing site administrators the ability to easily change main visual features such as banners throughout the site and add graphic elements to postings as appropriate (images and video), while still maintaining a standard of control that meets the corporate identity parameters defined by their clients. All program features with the Sunnybrook Intranet site designated to incorporate graphic or visual enhancements include this proprietary user-friendly toolset to ensure updating and maintenance of their Intranet is a simple process.

Data Acquisition

Clarity knows that their clients don't need help in determining what data or information is necessary and relevant to their internal organizational and operational management. What their clients need is the ability to create custom forms for specific data gathering endeavors, without the headache of becoming layout and design experts while ensuring all collected data is then easily managed by their corporate database.

Clarity met Sunnybrook's comprehensive information gathering requirements by incorporating Clarity's proprietary Formbuilder toolset. This toolset enables Sunnybrook to create customized forms within the CCM.Net's HTML editor for easy and complete control over the form layout. Inherent within the formbuilder's design is automatic control validation, notification and data calculation along with the ability add n-tiered workflow capability to any form.

Site Map

Last but never least, is remembering how important the Sitemap feature is – especially when you are a large organization with a numerous divisional areas and a great deal of information to disseminate. The bigger or more complex your Intranet is – the more important it becomes to make navigating your site a simple process.

The Sitemap feature designed for Sunnybrook had to meet the highest standard due to the size and complexity of their healthcare organization. Clarity designed a Sitemap that is dynamically populated and can be accessed by the user a number of ways - even alphabetically. This feature helps ensure that Sunnybrook's team can find the area of interest they need to locate in order to acquire the information they are seeking quickly and easily.

A Successful Operation

As any healthcare professional will verify, effective collaboration, communication and teamwork are critical factors in the successful operation of any medical services facility. Supporting these efforts are new tools and technologies that offer the opportunity to not only enhance the delivery of collaborative care to patients, but also support and enhance the work life of the caregivers themselves. Sunnybrook's new Intranet development project presented just such an opportunity and the facility's administration and management team found an enthusiastic and knowledgeable partner in Clarity.

There can be no better way to gauge the true performance of an application than by the feedback of the users depending upon this new support tool. Dré Noronha, Developer and Project Manager, has been inundated with positive feedback from all areas of Sunnybrook's facility. The publishers and authors love the system and the executive team has come to depend upon it for meeting a great deal of their corporate communication needs. To quote Dré "the hits on the site are off the chart" and the staff are extremely pleased with the practical modules like the Employment Applications, Policies and Procedures, Classifieds, Homepage elements and the Help Desk Notification System is seeing constant use. At a recent conference, Sunnybrook showcased their new Intranet application to other hospitals and received very positive feedback and interest.

Making a large and complex project like this one work requires finding the right combination of expertise and people. Just as there are no cookie-cutter technology solutions, Clarity knows there are no cookie-cutter project management processes. Clarity's team modified their project process to match Sunnybrook's scheduling needs, conducted requested weekly update meetings and met all projected timeline and budgeting deadlines and performance expectations. The end result speaks for itself with increased user participation and satisfaction and heightened interdepartmental collaboration and communication, while delivering the clear message to all members of the Sunnybrook team of just how important each and every one of them is to the ongoing success of their healthcare facility.

Conclusion

Since 1948, when Sunnybrook first opened its doors as the largest hospital in Canada for Canadian Veterans, Sunnybrook's primary mandate has remained true – to care for their patients and their families when it matters most.

Today's Sunnybrook has evolved into a fully affiliated teaching hospital of the University of Toronto. Partnering with the University, Sunnybrook continues to provide the highest quality of patient care with an equal emphasis on teaching and research excellence. With an organizational mission based upon discovery, innovation, teaching and learning – supported by a corporate value system designed to reward excellence, collaboration, accountability, respect and active patient and organizational engagement – it's no wonder that Sunnybrook has grown into one of the largest and most respected healthcare organizations in the country. It is these principles that enable Sunnybrook to move toward their highest organizational vision to help invent the future of healthcare.

Clarity is pleased to have become a small part of Sunnybrook's journey to facilitate their efforts to further empower their staff with every opportunity and tool available to see their corporate vision come to life.

Whether it's providing expert consulting, application development, application integration, creative design, employee training and/or intranet development services – our impressive team of experienced multi-disciplined professionals enables us to ensure that our clients are presented with only the most effective and cost efficient solutions available to support and achieve their unique organizational and customer service goals.

To explore what innovative solutions Clarity can provide your organization with or to request more information, please call: (403) 705-5900 or select www.clarity.ca. To learn more about Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, please select www.sunnybrook.ca

“Clarity is full service solution for Intranet development needs, built on the foundations of quality, team work, dedication, customer loyalty and professionalism. They have consistently delivered solutions to every challenge or concept we have presented them with, and have been a pleasure to have as a vendor.”

Dré Noronha
Corporate Webmaster,
Communications & Stakeholder Relations / Information Services