

GETTING SMART ABOUT NEUROSCIENCE WITH SHAREPOINT ONLINE

AT A GLANCE

Company

The Florey Institute
of Neuroscience
and Mental Health

Industry

Education, Medical,
Research

Location

Melbourne

Solution

“Intranet in a Box” –
Professional Advantage’s
Pre-packaged SharePoint
Solution

Function

Research, Administration

Key Points

- Collaboration between staff, students and research teams is pivotal for The Florey Institute’s neuroscience and mental health projects.
- An existing intranet offered little more than a document repository and had failed to encourage or support collaborative work.
- Professional Advantage’s Intranet in a Box solution, based on Microsoft SharePoint Online, has given the Florey a common platform for collaboration. It is improving team communication and provides a foundation for future functionalities including standardised processes, forms and work flows.

The Company

The Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health is the largest brain research group in the Southern Hemisphere. Located in the world-renowned Parkville medical research precinct and at Austin Health 15 kilometres away, it employs more than 500 staff and educates in excess of 100 post-graduate students every year. Staff and students work in teams, researching serious diseases including stroke, epilepsy, Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, multiple sclerosis, traumatic brain and spinal injury, schizophrenia and many more.

The Need

In 2007, Florey was formed through the amalgamation of three leading medical research institutes. At the time, the organisation’s ICT team deployed an on-site server-based intranet using the open-source Drupal content management system. Their aim was to encourage information sharing and enable teams to work effectively within the newly formed organisation. However, the result was a poorly laid out document repository that failed to gain buy-in from the majority of users. By 2015, it was clear the intranet had failed to achieve its purpose and a new approach would have to be found.



The solution arrived when Microsoft began offering heavily discounted Office 365 licenses to educational organisations. The ICT team realised they could use Microsoft SharePoint on Office 365 to create a new intranet that all users could interact with, one that offered a familiar look-and-feel and would be easy to use.

Challenges

The team was determined to avoid the mistakes of the past. Rather than building everything up front only to see their wasted efforts due to a lack of users, this time ICT wanted to build iteratively, adding functionality as users became more and more engaged with the platform.

"The pre-packaged solution gave us the assurance they'd done this before. Given the small amount of investment required, there was almost no risk at all."

The Solution

The Florey selected a pre-packaged Internet in a Box solution developed by Professional Advantage and based on SharePoint Online. Being cloud-based, the platform is easy to deploy and very affordable. The packaged design coupled with Professional Advantage's agile methodologies makes the solution ideal for gradual development and evolution, such as that planned at the Florey.

The transition to SharePoint began by replicating the capabilities of the old platform. A new document repository was developed, with more intuitive, easier search functions. To keep users on side and give personality to the intranet, the system was named 'Nucleus'.

Since those first steps, users have responded enthusiastically and teams are now leading the charge to find new ways in which the platform can help them.

Results

- The platform is gradually becoming the most common source of news for Florey staff and students; Committees are using Nucleus to share agendas, gather contributions to ideas and keep others informed.
- Staff efficiency and ICT storage are benefiting from a reduction in the number of emails being sent to all users across the Institute.
- The replacement of the old intranet with the cloud-based Nucleus has freed the Florey's ICT staff from time-consuming update cycles and monthly maintenance schedules.
- Proof of uptake has been confirmed by the numerous research groups that have requested their own lab areas on the platforms, for purposes ranging from electronic lab notebooks to the development of a project management calendar system.
- Further efficiencies planned with a document management development that will see the digitisation of all of the Institute's forms and the introduction of more "digital" policies based on automated work flows, digital signatures.

About us

Professional Advantage is one of Australia's most awarded solutions providers, with over 20 years experience in helping organisations improve their business systems through industry leading software solutions. Our 250-strong team in 6 offices across Australia and internationally has successfully worked with over 1000 organisations.

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Call: 1800 126 499

Visit: www.pa.com.au

Email: enquiries@pa.com.au