



## Cognizant Doubles Intranet Use, Improves Knowledge Sharing, Speeds Client Service

### Overview

**Country or Region:** United States

**Industry:** Professional services

### Customer Profile

Cognizant is a leading provider of IT, consulting, and business process outsourcing services. It has more than 40 global delivery centers and 59,500 employees.

### Business Situation

To help fuel its continued growth, Cognizant needed to update an aging, custom intranet site that often had outdated and hard-to-find information.

### Solution

Cognizant created a new enterprisewide portal, based on 2007 Microsoft® Office system technologies, which combines the company's online applications, content database, search technologies, collaboration tools, and security mechanisms.

### Benefits

- Faster content updates promote agility.
- Enhanced search boosts productivity.
- Increased collaboration expedites team building and team performance.
- Superior portal builds community among employees.
- Faster and easier access to knowledge enhances delivery to clients.

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Cognizant, a leading provider of IT, consulting, and business process outsourcing services, had outgrown its custom intranet. As a result, information wasn't always current, users couldn't easily find information they needed, and the intranet was not helping fuel continued business growth. So the company built a new portal, called CWorld, based on 2007 Microsoft® Office system technologies including Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server 2007 and Office Enterprise 2007. Now information is more accurate and up-to-date, and it's faster and easier for employees to find, use, and share knowledge. In addition, Cognizant has enhanced collaboration to build virtual teams more quickly and expedite delivery of projects to clients. The portal also supports Cognizant's goals of increasing employee identification with the company and boosting retention rates.

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### Situation

Cognizant isn't just a global IT service and solution provider, with 40 delivery centers around the world. It's also a company that has built its business and reputation on being able to combine the right local and overseas resources to give clients highly cost-effective results.

That puts a special burden on the company to ensure optimal collaboration and knowledge-sharing among Cognizant employees throughout the company's Teaneck, New Jersey, headquarters; India-based development centers; and offices and near-shore delivery centers in North America, Latin America, Europe, and the Asia-Pacific region.

### Aging, Ineffective Intranet

The company's custom-built intranet site—which sufficed when Cognizant had 5,000 employees and far fewer locations—had reached the limits of its scalability as the company grew to 59,500 employees. New and updated information for the intranet had to be processed by the central IT organization, which meant that it was difficult, resource-intensive, and time-consuming to maintain that information.

The persistence of outdated information on the intranet, in turn, led individual practice groups within Cognizant to create their own intranet sites, which lacked integration with the central site. Information kept in separate applications, such as PeopleSoft customer relationship management and human resources software, could not be accessed or updated through the central intranet site.

“Very few people used the intranet site as their home page,” acknowledges Badri Narayanan AV, Project Manager for CWorld (portal) at Cognizant.

Even when current information was available on the central intranet site, it was difficult to

find. Searches produced slow and uneven results. The lack of a consistent, enterprise-wide hierarchy for intranet content meant that there was often no intuitive way to browse the site to find information. E-mail became the fallback technology for finding information, with Cognizant employees sending messages to colleagues around the world in an attempt to track down what they needed.

Residing outside the company's existing knowledge management system, e-mail was also frequently used for collaboration, consuming valuable bandwidth on the company's network. Even when employees knew whom they wanted to contact, they had no easy way to know if those people were online and to initiate and conduct an interactive online exchange with them in real time.

### New Technology Needed to Woo Clients, Recruits

These weren't just operational concerns for Cognizant. As one of the world's leading technology providers, Cognizant wanted to update its own content management, search, and collaboration solution to showcase for clients what it could do for them with the same technology.

There were yet other high-level concerns at Cognizant. “We are constantly battling to bring the best talent to our organization,” says Mark Greenlaw, Chief Information Officer (CIO), Cognizant. “One way to do that is to enable our associates to focus on pleasing our clients, rather than on having to spend time on administrative tasks like looking for information. Another way is to help our associates build their relationships with the company and with each other. Our central intranet site wasn't supporting us in these efforts.

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Badri Narayanan AV, Project Manager for CWorld, Cognizant

“What we needed was an environment that acts as a one-stop gateway for all Cognizant associates, a portal that provides enterprisewide information in a central location instead of requiring users to manually—and repeatedly—gather information from various sources,” says Greenlaw.

### **Solution**

That’s what Cognizant now has in CWorld, its enterprisewide portal. CWorld is a fusion of Cognizant’s online applications, content database, search technologies, collaboration tools, and security mechanisms. Users can personalize their portal content and appearance. The portal is powered by 2007 Microsoft® Office system technologies including Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server 2007 and Office Enterprise 2007.

Cognizant evaluated three competing content management and collaboration solutions, and conducted a feasibility analysis among them. The core technical team proposed the Office SharePoint Server 2007 solution to the company’s executive management on the basis of its ease of deployment and use, feature set, and ability to integrate with Cognizant’s Microsoft and non-Microsoft software.

The support of executive management was a crucial factor in building momentum for the new solution and led to a proof of concept that confirmed the software’s benefits and then to the company’s decision to adopt the solution across the enterprise.

### **Decentralizing Content Updates**

In contrast to the previous intranet site, which required content changes to be processed by the IT department, the new portal enables IT to authorize specific users in each of the Cognizant business groups to implement changes to their portions of the portal. Those users route changes for approval using automated workflow capabilities in Office

SharePoint Server 2007, configured to the company’s internal governance requirements. Approvers are notified of potential changes through e-mail or when they view their personalized version of the portal, and their responses trigger the next stage in the approval process.

### **Making Content Discoverable**

Cognizant designed its new portal with four key sets of Web sites: a home page, sites for each business group, sites for each individual practice area, and MySites—a feature of Office SharePoint Server 2007 that provides a template in which employees can list clients, projects, areas of expertise, personal interests, and more. The sets of Web sites provide a consistent, hierarchical structure so that all information available through the portal has a logical, discoverable location—making it easier for users to find information on their own.

Cognizant considered several popular search engines to replace the custom search code on its previous intranet site, and chose the Enterprise Search capability in Office SharePoint Server 2007. “We went with Enterprise Search because our proof of concept showed it delivered the performance that we wanted, because we could deploy it without additional licensing costs, and because it integrated well with our environment and searched more thoroughly than the alternatives that we considered,” says Narayanan.

Enterprise Search searches not just documents and other files stored in document libraries, but also all the content available as part of the portal pages. Users can also find colleagues with relevant expertise anywhere in the enterprise, through the Office SharePoint Server 2007 people search capability, which uses the information that employees provide through their MySites.

“The information that business users need is more likely to be on the portal, which encourages more users to use the portal.”

Sriram V. Iyer, Functional Consultant for CWorld, Cognizant

#### **Providing New Ways to Collaborate**

To expand collaboration opportunities for its employees, Cognizant implemented a range of features in Office SharePoint Server 2007. Users can check Microsoft Office files in and out of document libraries, instead of routing multiple copies through the e-mail system. They can hold online discussions through discussion forums and synchronize their Microsoft Office Outlook® 2007 calendars for more efficient scheduling. The ability to provision structured project team sites from templates enables employees to begin their collaborations as soon as possible.

The company has also enabled employees to take advantage of presence awareness and security-enhanced instant messaging, by implementing Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007. When users see the names of colleagues—in search results, on team sites, or in documents—they can click the names to determine the online status of those employees. They then have the option to initiate instant messaging sessions or send e-mail, as appropriate.

#### **Benefits**

The CWorld enterprisewide portal at Cognizant has resulted in more—and more up-to-date—information available in a central location, faster and easier access to that information, and better ways for employees to collaborate.

#### **Faster Content Updates Promote Agility**

By decentralizing the authority for content updates and delegating that authority to users in each business group, Cognizant has boosted the timeliness and accuracy of information posted to its portal. Updates that used to take two to three days to be processed through the central IT department now are posted in just a few hours, for average time savings of about 80 percent.

“Our central intranet site used to be largely static, with not much live content,” says Sriram V. Iyer, Functional Consultant for CWorld. “Now it changes daily. That means the information that business users need is more likely to be on the portal, which encourages more users to use the portal.”

In addition to faster and more frequent content updates, decentralizing content updates to business users frees the central IT staff to implement technology projects that call for its expertise and that might otherwise take longer to implement. “Our IT staff is definitely more productive without the need to handle intranet content,” says Narayanan. “That has helped us support business growth without having to scale up as much on the IT side.”

#### **Enhanced Search Boosts Productivity**

More—and more accurate—content on the intranet is helpful only if business users can find it easily. With the CWorld portal, they can. Cognizant estimates that, by using Enterprise Search, it has increased search responsiveness by 85 percent, and search relevancy by 95 percent, compared with the previous search technology.

“With CWorld, I can find the documents and information that I need much faster than I could before,” says Lisa M. Stapleton, Senior Manager, Marketing, Cognizant. “I get more relevant search results the first time. That’s a very significant benefit to me.”

The company’s use of Business Data Catalog also makes it faster and easier for business users to find content on back-end systems, without having to access those systems directly. “Some of the interfaces in our enterprise resource planning applications aren’t that pretty or intuitive to use,” says Murugappan Singaram, Technology Architect, Cognizant. “Being able to access that information from within CWorld enables our employees to spend less time searching for

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information and more time using information.”

Using information, in turn, helps grow the company’s business. Greenlaw recalls the time that a CIO at a large PC retailer contacted him about having Cognizant submit a business proposal on very short notice. “I had no idea to whom to refer this in the retail practice,” he says. “In the past, I would have had to send out a slew of e-mail messages and hope that someone would respond in time. This time, I went to CWorld, found the appropriate contact name immediately, and, within an hour, had that person speaking with the potential client.”

#### **Increased Collaboration Expedites Team Building**

The abilities to check documents in and out of libraries for editing, meet in virtual team workspaces, and instantly identify and contact relevant colleagues for a given project help speed collaboration at Cognizant. That means greater integration between local and overseas teams, and faster delivery of projects—leading to greater client satisfaction.

Another benefit of the increased collaboration is the ability to build virtual teams more quickly and effectively than before. “When we add people to a team, we can easily get them fully informed on the client and the projects for that client, because it’s faster and easier for them to work with and share information with the rest of the team,” says Stapleton. “They simply become more productive, more quickly.”

#### **Superior Portal Builds Community Among Employees**

The variety of benefits of the new portal—more and better information, faster and easier access to it, and better ways to collaborate with colleagues—have all contributed to its rapid adoption. In the year since the

launch of the new portal, intranet use among Cognizant employees has increased 100 percent and now includes virtually all of the company’s nearly 60,000 employees, with concurrent use running at about 8,000 to 9,000 users. The portal has grown to include more than 70 sites and more than 3,000 pages of content.

“I know we’re doing something right with CWorld because the groups that formerly had stand-alone intranet sites ... increasingly want to be a part of CWorld,” says Greenlaw. “Our goal was to create a portal that delights our users, and that’s what we’ve done.”

Delighted portal users are a means to a larger goal: winning what Greenlaw calls the continuing war for talent. “We are giving our associates more ways to connect to the firm, we are making life easier for them, and we are enabling them to focus on pleasing their clients,” he says. “The result is a better relationship between Cognizant and the people who work for us. The more they want to be here, the more we benefit from their collective expertise. We have seen attrition rates decline in the past year, and CWorld has contributed to that.”

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