
Government Legal Department Intranet Discovery Case study

By Elizabeth Hitchins

What was the discovery about?

Previous discovery work highlighted severe access issues when it came to the Intranet. Users who worked in co-located teams felt disconnected from their employer and often missed out on key information.

The communications team also need to move the intranet to a newer version of SharePoint and a more devolved publishing model to ease bottle necks around ownership and publishing content.

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My role and the team

The team

I was the lead researcher and service designer in a blended team consisting of a:

- Delivery manager
- Business analyst
- Technical architect

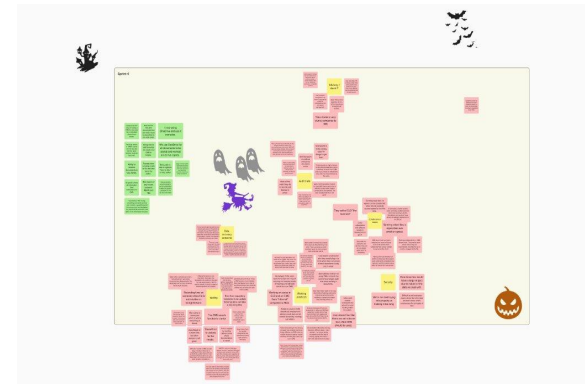
The internal team provided a:

- Service owner
- Product owner
- Two technical leads

Ways of working

The team ran the project in an agile way over 2 months, in two weeks sprints. During these sprints the team conducted sprint planning, sprint reviews, show and tells and retrospectives.

The team used Jira and excel for planning as well as Lucidchart for team collaboration activities.



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Research plan design

The research plan

This was the first document that was collaborated on with the team. It was designed to make sure the team understood:

- Why we were doing this work and what the overall aim of the discovery was
- Who the users were and how the research would be conducted
- Where the points of collaboration would be
- What the research outputs would consist of and when they would be delivered
- Ethical and legal considerations

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Collecting and synthesis of the data

Remote interviews

Remote usability interviews were conducted over 20 users, with a target at 3 sessions per day and time to iterate between sprints. These sessions were conducted using Microsoft teams and note taker from the team was also present.

The users for these interviews were provided by the internal team across the various areas of the business to make sure the demographic spread was proportionate.

Quantitative survey

A quantitative research using a survey was aimed at the wider user base and advertised through the intranet and through community groups. This enabled a more realistic sample of the user base without the presence of a researcher. The survey was designed learn about their experiences of the intranet and how their team published content.

The survey was well received with over 200 responses.

Storing and socialising the findings

The notes and responses were stored in a secure shared drive with any necessary consent forms.

Each user was assigned a participant number and all reported information was anonymised.

An interim research report was generated per sprint, and findings communicated at every show and tell.

A final report was written at the end of the discovery to compliment the final discovery report.

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Collaborating with the team

Getting the team involved

The team and wider stakeholders were invited to take notes during research sessions to immerse themselves in the users' experience.

The team were involved in theming the findings (affinity sort) alongside the researcher in the analysis phase.

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Challenges and trade-offs along the way

Not a typical govt department

Within the department there are various scenarios that differ from a typical govt department.

Users were often seconded to other depts which had different technology, processes, problems and barriers.

Adjustments needed to be made to make sure all users could participate regardless of their technology or access needs

The subject matter also contained elements of legal compliance and practises so these needed to be understood to translate the research.

Final research artifacts*

*these are anonymised and shortened examples

The final outputs

The final outputs for the discovery from a research perspective were:

- A research report detailing the findings, evidence, user needs and considerations
- Personas and corresponding journey maps
- Service blueprint for the as-is and ideal to-be scenario
- Hypothesis backlog of potential user stories
- Plan for the alpha stage

The user needs were broken down into these areas, high level service needs, feature needs and persona level needs.

Service user needs (example)

- As a user, I need to be able to access the service from whatever technology I use for work, so that I can keep connected with my employer
 - As a user, I need to be able to use the intranet in a way that is comfortable for me, so that I don't face barriers due to my disability
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Jaya is going on maternity leave

Impacts

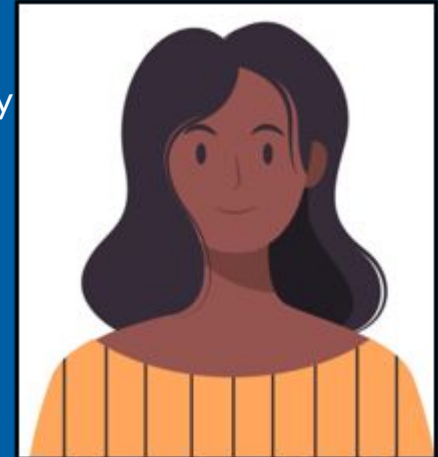
Jaya has some great news for her co-located advisory team. She is starting a family. She wants to make sure that even though she is going on maternity leave, she knows what she needs to do, her rights and how to organise her cover. Due to her epilepsy, she finds the intranet design to have too much contrast between dark and light patterns.

Needs

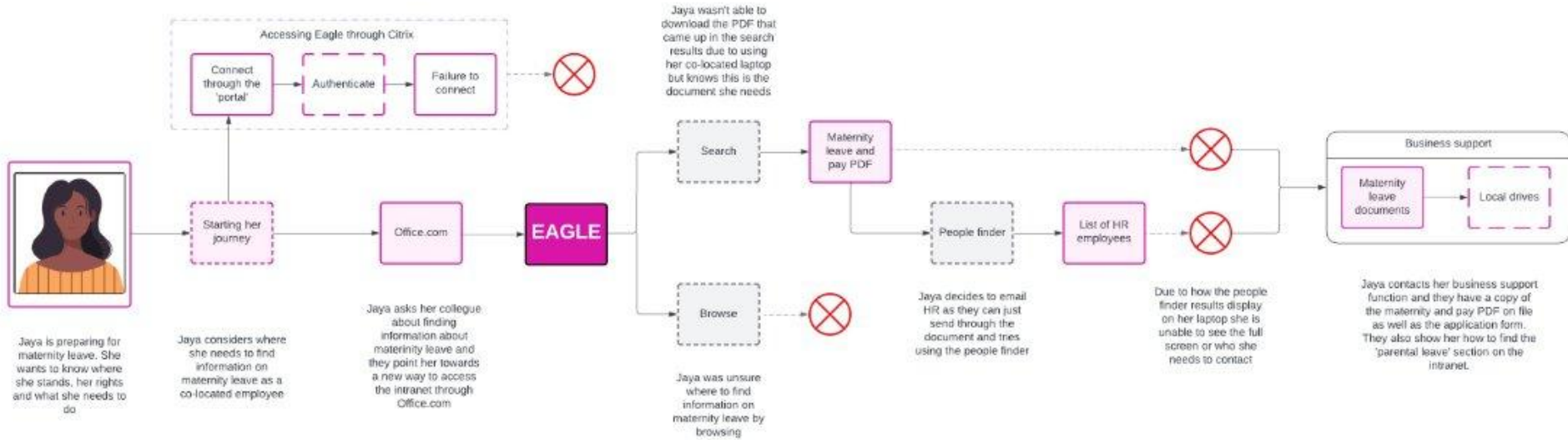
- As user, I need access to up-to-date human resources information about my employment rights, so that I know where I stand
- As user, I need to understand the process of informing my team so that I can follow the correct process
- As a user, I need to find out information on maternity pay so that I can plan for my time away

Jaya wants to make sure that even though her career will be on hold while she is on maternity leave, it is not impacted. She also wants to make sure her team don't suffer in her absence by making sure proper cover and a handover process is in place.

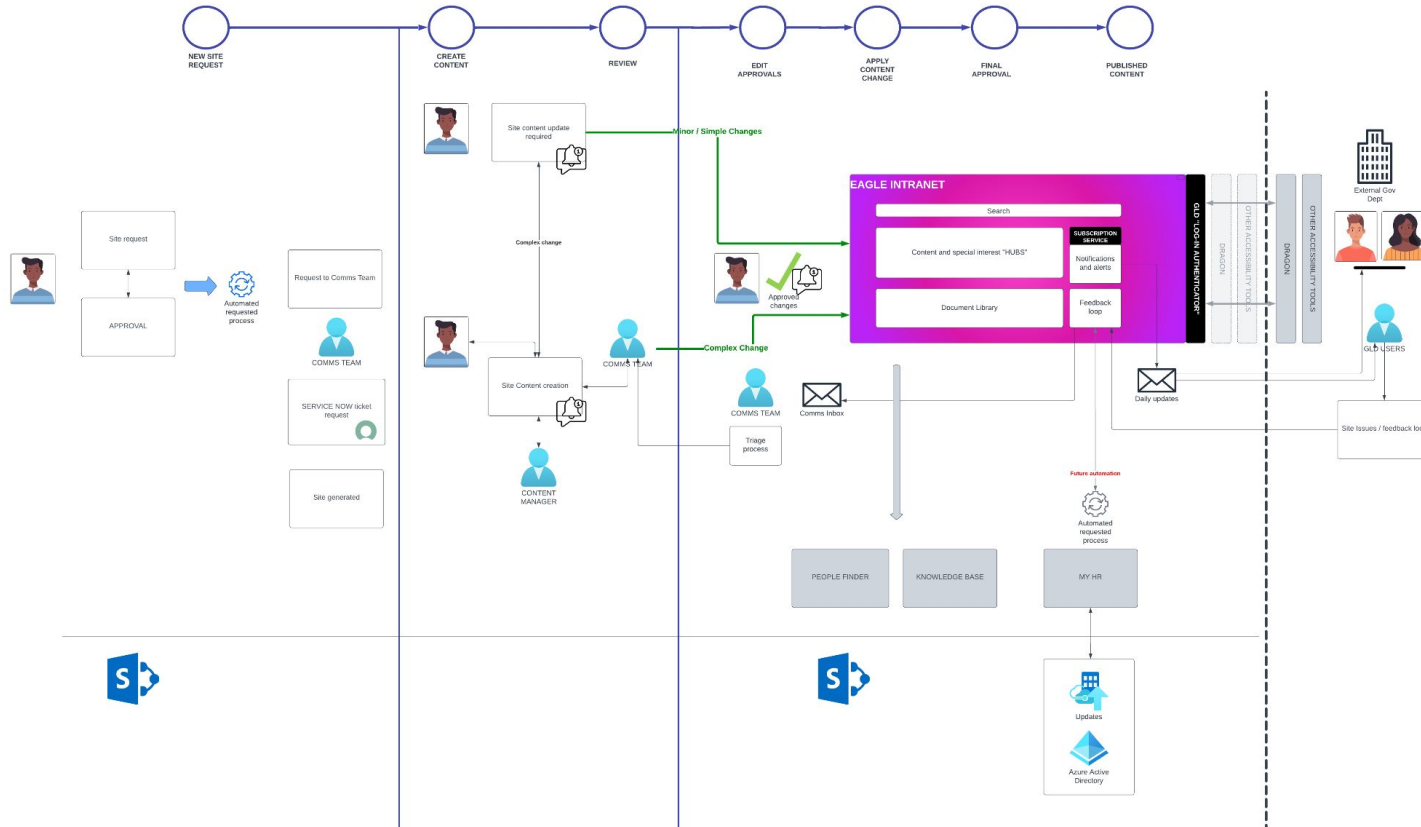
“I am trying to find information on maternity leave in the employee's handbook, but I just can't. The portal is so difficult to use”



Example user journey



Example service blueprint



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Impact of the research

More complex than first thought

The needs for the intranet were as expected by the team however the needs and processes around the proposed devolved publishing model were more complex than first thought.

There was not a 'one size fits all' approach and more consideration needed to be given to the different levels of commitment for teams to publish their own content.

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Thank you.