

How Intranet Platforms Measure Up Against One Another

You have a lot of choices when building an intranet. Here are a few distinguishing characteristics.

Jive

Jive works most effectively as a partitioned, permissions-based social network. Think of a private Facebook, made just for your company. It has a distinct architecture based on “spaces,” “groups” and “users”.

In Jive, your community is a “space,” a large container where everything else is and all activity happens. A “subspace,” like “Marketing,” “Legal” or “Europe/Africa Group” is contained in the main community space. Also in the space are “groups,” like “Administrators,” “Leadership” or “Party Planners,” and “projects,” like “New Website Launch,” “Business Development Acquisition” or “Jerry’s 50th Birthday Party.” The software delivers content via “news” and “streams,” and is highly customizable, if not always intuitive from the back end.

As you can tell, Jive gets a little “jive-talky” very quickly, and for those not steeped in its vernacular it can be difficult to discern “places” from “spaces,” “groups” from “projects” and “streams” from “news.” Jive is also very costly and takes the most time to implement. While an out-of-the-box Jive implementation (called an “instance”) has become the most popular intranet solution in the corporate world, there are many limitations and drawbacks to the software that stymie certain projects needs and require in-depth consulting.

You can take Jive for a test drive and join Jive’s own external community of Jive users [here](#).

Wordpress

Many people familiar with the well-known open source website platform don’t realize it is capable of being crafted into an intranet community, but through a series of plug-ins, customizations and with the right theming (check out Thrive in the theme store), it can.

Wordpress is great for organizations that have fewer than 1,000 users and want to manage every detail of the project. Wordpress is more flexible than Jive, but it requires greater upfront configuration and a deeper understanding of CSS and HTML.

As it is open source, there is no Wordpress “support team”, per se, but there is an entire planet’s worth of documentation and experts who can help with any problem—and do so for free.

Yammer

Recently acquired by Microsoft, Yammer is a freemium enterprise social networking service used for private communication within organizations. Like Slack, it focuses more on in-the-moment, ephemeral messaging. It is less robust than Jive and Wordpress, less costly than Jive, but simpler to use and implement.

Slack

The hottest internal communications system at the moment, Slack is a short-message driven platform that works best with remote teams of likeminded coworkers who need to share multiple ideas and messages on the spur of the moment and informally. Where ConstantContact, Mail Chimp and other email providers offer a “NASA approach,” where every communication is like a carefully orchestrated shuttle launch, Slack is informal and most closely resembles old-school AOL chat rooms. But with GIFs.