



## **Transcript for S16, E3 - AI and the future of the intranet with Suzie Robinson**

**Intro:** Welcome to the future of internal communication podcast. I'm Jen Sproul, CEO of the Institute of Internal Communication.

Since we launched this series in 2021, the world of work has been disrupted by event after event. A pandemic, geopolitics, AI, extreme weather events, remote and hybrid working, generational shifts, inclusion, diversity - the entire nature of how we work needs transformation.

This podcast explores opportunities for internal communication in the future of work. Internal comms is a critical function that helps organisations achieve lasting change, building trust and relationship between people, in pursuit of shared goals.

Please, join me, Dominic Walters and Cat Barnard as we dissect what this means for internal communication.

With relentless change the new norm, it's time to reimagine our profession.

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Cat Barnard (00:00:46)

Hello and welcome to a fresh episode of the Future of Internal Communication podcast. I'm Cat Barnard and today I'm flying solo. Jen and Dom have disappeared without leave and left me to man the fort. And so today we're going to have a conversation which kind of segues nicely on from the previous podcast conversation that we had.

Last time we were talking about AI and the future of internal communication with Frank Dias. Today we are joined by Susie Robinson and we are going to have a conversation about AI and the future of the intranet. So for those who don't know Susie, she's an intranet and digital employee experience consultant and she manages the insights reports for Clearbox Consulting. She's been working with intranet since 2008.

And gosh, that's like almost 20 years, right? Don't say the number. So she's been working with intranet since 2008 and she's got practical experience with all aspects of an intranet life cycle from research to implementation to ongoing governance and overall strategy.



Her intranet experience has grown out of the roots of internal communication. So she's got a focus on both employee experience and engagement plus strong content. Remote and difficult to reach users were often the core user base for the intranets that Suzie has managed. So she's extensive experience of finding ways to engage with and connect with a broad audience range. She is a skilled writer. writes not just reviews, but also is a published author and editor and is active in the internal communication community, both writing and getting to speak at conferences. Her LinkedIn is in the show notes and I invite you now to get in touch with her and connect with her. But in the meantime, Susie, welcome. I have been looking forward to this conversation.

Suzie Robinson (03:11)

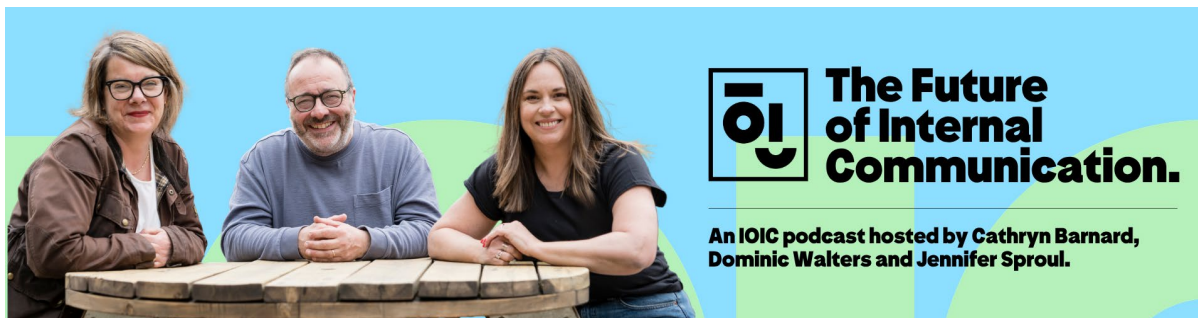
Yes, me too, thank you very much for inviting me on. I am really looking forward to having a chat with you.

Cat Barnard (03:16)

It was funny when I was researching for this episode, I was looking at the origin story of intranets and sometimes, you know, like I just said, my goodness, that's nearly 20 years. Sometimes I delude myself that I'm much younger than I actually am. And so was somewhat discombobulated to discover that intranets have been around almost as long as the internet and their origin goes back to the 1990s. So, but it's funny, isn't it, how you remember the emergence of, the commercial internet and social media and so on and so forth. just going back, casting your gaze back almost 20 years, tell us about your journey back to the start of your work with intranets, some of the changes that you've seen in the last couple of decades.

Suzie Robinson (04:11)

Sure. I think you're absolutely right. So intranets were around and then first came around in 1990s. And then it was really the launch of SharePoint in the early 2000s that kind of changed things a little. That does predate me a touch, but I know that that was a significant moment. And ever since then, we've been having the conversation about how SharePoint will fix everything and Microsoft will eat the world. And it's, yes, nearly 30 years on and that hasn't quite happened.



But my origin story as it were is I used to work for Waterstones Booksellers, so retailer selling books and I got job while I was at university and my primary job was selling books to people, stocking shelves, cleaning, that kind of stuff. And I remember it was around 2005, 2006 I think I saw my first ever intranet.

I had no idea what it was, this thing just suddenly arrived and my manager said go and look at this, it's got some stuff on there that might be useful. It was organised by department at head office, so I had no idea where anything was and I looked at it occasionally, realised every week, this shows what the tech was like back then, every week when I eventually worked at head office I carried on doing this. Once a week we uploaded the news that it was, you had to upload it in reverse order because it was only published by date. So we would have to upload the least important things first and then the more important stuff then came, came close to the top. So I would look at this thing every week and be like, okay, that's kind of useful. And then when I went to head office, I ended up working in the department that had internal comms in it and ended up kind of gravitating towards that because I was like, actually, this is really interesting as a field. Didn't really know anything about it again before I moved there. And then I started to be asked to upload the content to the intranet for the weekly news. And then over time, the department shifted and the intranet manager who had been employed by that point came to work in our department and I worked very closely with her. And then I moved through internal comms and began focusing more and more on intranets. And then in the next couple of roles I was in, I became the intranet manager and was responsible specifically for that as well as some elements of internal comms. But the intranet was really where I really honed everything in. But in those early days of the internet, as I say, once a week, I would be uploading that news and the clever people elsewhere in head office who realised when I would be doing it and the restrictions I had would wait until the last possible moment to send me their stuff so that their article would be higher in the list. Yeah, very crafty. mean, this is kind of not an off the shelf product we were using. This was something bespoke built, which is why it was quite restrictive.

And then we moved on to a platform that we had purchased or licensed. And that then started the journey in a far more flexible approach and helped me to understand the potential behind the scenes of intranets and the real purpose going all the way back to the 1990s of an intranet has always been to improve people's day to day, whether that be presenting news and other information to them or helping them find information or find colleagues that they need because they've got a question or don't know how to do something. And that's always been the purpose behind an intranet. And I think we can lose sight of that a little bit in the world of all the features and functionality in AI now. But that's



really, if people remember that that's its purpose, then they can be incredibly valuable to organisations.

Cat Barnard (07:51)

It is interesting, isn't it? Because actually, hearing the origin story is useful in that it grounds us in a reality of usefulness. And I think there are so many business artefacts around today that have been around for so long that most people at work weren't around for the origin story and don't necessarily understand therefore the value and the purpose of those artifacts. And as the world gets turned on its head by the onset of commercial AI, I personally think it's really useful exercise to almost, metaphorically pick every artifact up and say, right, what is it? What does it do?

Does it still have a purpose? Is it fit for purpose in its current form? If it isn't, what do we need to do to spruce it up to give it a bit of a MOT and overhaul. If it's not fit for purpose, what are we doing? Like, why are we still wasting our time with it? But let's, if it is still, fit for purpose, can any elements of it be automated, et cetera, et cetera, and then put it in a, in a kind of revamped basket for ongoing use. And I, I don't know, I think that maybe that is one of the conundrums that businesses are facing at the moment in the whole AI mix. So that does kind of bring me onto another question that I have for you. Given everything that you've seen, so you've moved away from working within one organisation as their intranet consultant and now you have a broader range of experience because you're working for a consulting group that is providing those intranet services to the business community. So you must see quite a wide range of application. What do you think the current state of play is and what is the biggest issue that you see in poor implementation?

Suzie Robinson (10:01)

So I work for Clearbox Consulting, probably mention them a little bit more. So we are a boutique consultancy. I am one of three consultants, but we work with a broad range of organisations from little charities all the way up to multinational companies with very different needs, very different digital workplace landscapes. And I think touching on what you mentioned just then is different departmental owners of technology can sometimes be very precious about their technology and every vendor, no matter what it is you have purchased, every vendor will want you to be using their platform to the greatest extent that you physically can. So every single one will be trying to encourage you to use all of the functionality that's on offer, which is where in recent times the likes of Workday,



ServiceNow and similar have been positioned as potential intranets because the people that own those systems are encouraged by those vendors that they can be used. So the way that we at Clearbox approach a digital workplace, so in our eyes, a digital workplace is the entire landscape of tools that are on offer in a business, used in a business by different people for different purposes. And that digital workplace delivers a series of services to employees. So they come under a few different categories. So things like communication and engagement, collaboration, finding and sharing, business applications and agile working. They're the five categories that we have.

And all of those services are delivered in different ways by different tools. And we find now that organisations keep trying to plug the gaps in their services by buying new tech, rather than doing that assessment and seeing what do we have? Is there a way we can consolidate something so that it's a simplified landscape? Or is there a better solution that can actually replace multiple things?

And yes, that means having to give up on a piece of technology we might have been using for a while, but actually that could be better for that landscape. So there's that side of things that tends to be quite a common issue is that just continual growth or someone has a vision and then the entire company has to fit to that vision of a particular piece of tech forming the heart of the digital workplace landscape. But then on the other side of things is also the governance around how all of those platforms are managed and maintained and then specifically with an intranet we constantly see organisation saying we need a new internet, we've got to a stage where the internet isn't fit for purpose, we want to replace the technology for whatever reason. And we come in and have a look and actually a lot of their issues are to do with the fact that they have poor governance standards. And if they had put some of those standards in, maintained them and managed them, then they wouldn't be at that stage where they feel like they need new technology. And so there's something about behind the scenes, away from features and functionality, away from even what really it is you're using, you're looking at, there are some fundamental business management aspects that just aren't consistently maintained across organisations. It's a real common threat that we see all the time.

Cat Barnard (13:23)

And I imagine that that is quite a universal conundrum because the pace of change, the pace of technology evolution is now so rapid. And, when I think about things like the trend for cloud computing, where are we? 2026. So cloud computing was maybe starting to be a thing 15 years ago. Now it's quite rare to find any organisation that has its own on-prem IT



infrastructure. So when you don't host your own IT infrastructure, the people that you need to support whatever it is that you're doing, let's just assume that you just IT is an enabler of your business, but isn't the mainstay of your business. But presumably then, if you don't have on-prem IT infrastructure, you don't need people on site to be as qualified as you used to need when you would hold servers and networks on site. And therefore, presumably, you don't have the same requirement for human oversight and capability.

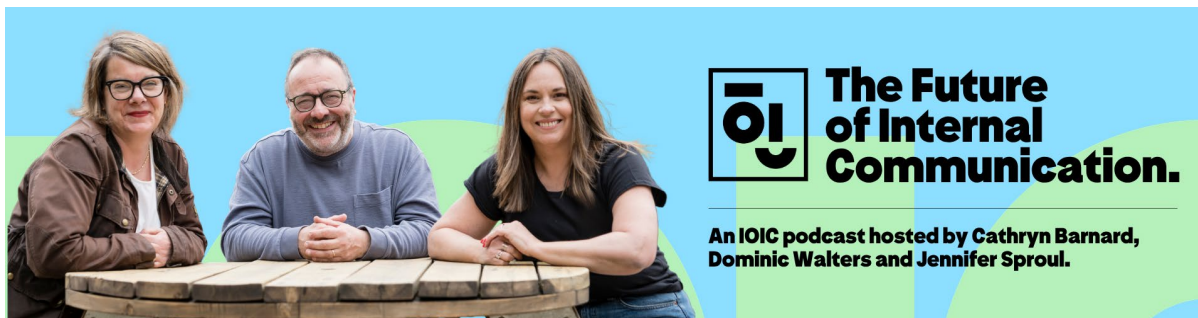
But then if you come back to the intranet, you do require that level of human oversight and capability. So it's a funny one, isn't it? Because you can see why the business community has ended up in the predicament that it has because these trends come on, everybody runs after the cost savings or the efficiencies or the whatever, whatever's, but you end up in a scenario where the rushing and the quest for the cost savings and inefficiencies outpaces any pragmatic due diligence of what actually is required. What are we trying to do? How are we going to do this optimally? And perhaps a little bit to your point about the origin story of SharePoint.

If you are a user of Microsoft or Google, whoever, whoever, there's always that push, isn't there? Use this thing as well. Use this thing. it's free or it's discounted or it's this or it's that. But without the expertise in-house or provided on a consultative basis to really look at the landscape and perform a requirements capture and architects diligently. You just end up with sprawl, don't you, that nobody really knows what is going on.

Suzie Robinson (16:02)

Yeah, absolutely. And with SharePoint and similar where the argument is, it's free, it's part of the licenses we already have, the question is always, does that really mean that it's the best option for you? Just because it's free, is it the best? And SharePoint and other similar solutions like that do need in-house expertise. If you're going to choose to run a SharePoint intranet, someone in the organisation needs to have the technical skills to make that work. SharePoint is incredibly powerful and it can do all sorts of amazing things if you have the skills to do it. But there is also, if you don't have the time, the budgets to do it either in-house or bring someone in, you're just trying to make do.

SharePoint also has an awful lot of quirks that make it quite frustrating and that's why it has quite a bad reputation, particularly amongst internal communicators. It's not always the platform of choice because it is that much harder to use, whereas other off-the-shelf options can be simpler. And so there is sometimes sprawl and sometimes the choice of using something else for a good reason.



Trying not to add something else in isn't a reason to not choose something else that's better for the business. There has to be a more compelling use case than just stopping sprawl or because it's cheap, let's go with this. These tools, intranets can be, as I say, right at the heart of a digital workplace, right at the heart of an organisation if they are run and managed well. And so having something that's free isn't necessarily the best choice for something that could be that important, that vital to employees where it's done right.

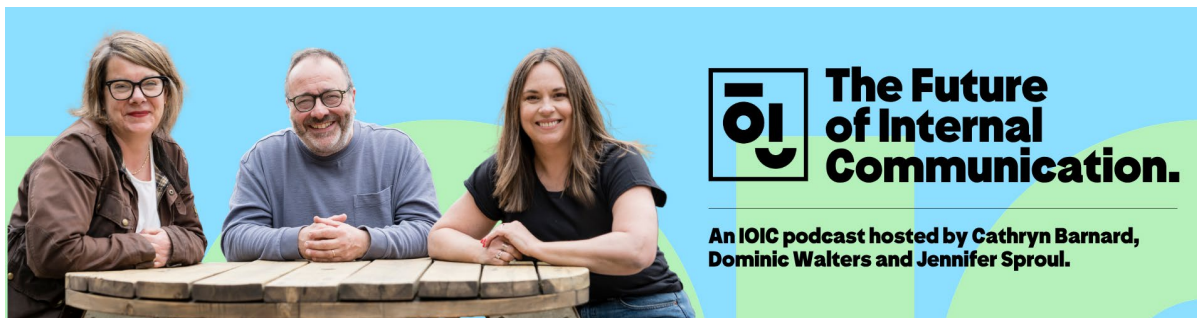
Cat Barnard (17:51)

That's so interesting. obviously those who tune into this podcast regularly might know my background is not internal communication. So apologies if I'm now about to ask a total noob question, but in your experience, does the management architecture of the intranet sit traditionally and majoritatively within internal comms or does it sit over in more sort of IT domain?

Suzie Robinson (18:20)

That is a good question and a question that I have never heard answered definitively for every organisation ever since I've been interested in intranets. My personal belief is that an intranet should be managed by the person who loves it. It should be managed by whoever understands the business more broadly, strategically, operationally, who can have good relationships with a variety of different departments who will be managing it and or managing their content, uploading policies, processes, other information, who can facilitate those conversations. Sometimes that's someone in internal comms, sometimes that's someone in IT. It just needs that consistent thread of understanding that goes beyond departments.

They used to be intranet managers, used to be a common job title. But in recent years, probably the last 10 years, I would say, it's a lot less common to find intranet managers as a role because it gets absorbed into one of the others and therefore that department ultimately is responsible for it. But there are so many nuances behind it, which is why it's difficult to manage and needs governance and needs that kind of set up and understanding within the broader digital workplace.



But it really needs that understanding of how it works and how it works within the broader organisational context, both from that technical and also from that operational perspective. So it's really meeting the needs across the business. They can be complex in that kind of conceptual basis whilst also delivering a very simple user experience that really meets employee needs. And you almost don't think about it because it works so well.

And it's one of the reasons why I really enjoy working with intranets and intranet teams and looking after them, looking at governance and trying to fix them because they can be so, so vital and they just need that love and understanding to be nurtured into their potential.

Cat Barnard (20:25)

I think this is so important to unpick this because as an aside, yesterday I was working on a project and what I wanted to understand, I was working with Claude, Claude is my assistant of choice. What I wanted to understand was if you take an organisation, what is the point at which you might start needing somebody to work exclusively on internal communication?

And so it gave me a couple of bandings. But what I was thinking about as you were speaking just then is that when you think about it, if you think about an organisation that is in growth phase, let's say it's going from startup to scale up, there will be a point on that journey where a certain amount of headcount is hit, where it has been decided, okay, now we need to have somebody coming in to focus on our internal communication. But if you imagine that narrative, imagine that plausibility, such a person hired at that point is unlikely to have come from a digital background. They are going to have come from a writing background or the kind of backgrounds that archetypically fit into the background story of an internal communicator. Therefore, as I think this through, it's not the sweet spot of every internal communication team. It's like, it strikes me, and you might disagree, so please do let me know, but it strikes me as if an internal communication team, let's say, or function comes into being and the intranet comes into existence as a kind of bolt onto that team, could it be the case that the intranet pre-existed an internal communication team?

Suzie Robinson (22:10)

Potentially and I think it's worthwhile pausing and reflecting on the term intranet because I favour that as a word, that is how I refer to these platforms. But an intranet today is very different from the intranet that I very first saw 20 years ago. But at the same time, the fundamentals haven't changed. So a good intranet will deliver reference evergreen material like policies and processes. It will deliver news and other sorts of information. So systems



outages, for example, or reminders that you need to do something by a certain date. It will also have a good search, whether that be within itself or out into other systems too. And will now more so than 20 years ago, will also allow you to complete tasks in other business systems where perhaps it's difficult to remember where you need to go to do certain things, or if there is a way for the intranet to act as that front door, which as a smaller side, and we might come back to it, I think is now more possible today than it ever has been because of AI. But an intranet has always offered those sorts of services. Those services have improved and the quality of the technology behind the scenes have improved. And over the years, we've seen particularly intranet vendors, trying to make themselves stand out by calling themselves different things. So I remember the eras of the modern intranet, the intranet front door, digital workplace platforms, specifically trying to say they do everything in one thing. Employee experience platforms is something that we're seeing now. Internal comms platforms, HR platforms, they've different vendors at different times have called themselves all of those things. But intranet, it just encompasses everything that these platforms can do. But what it means is for one organisation, an intranet may actually be a mobile first frontline worker focused tool that is far simpler in the way it delivers things than perhaps a SharePoint based intranet that is very, very sophisticated for a law firm who are desk based and do everything through laptops or desktop computers. Both of those are intranets for their own organisations. So this term intranet really does encompass things and like an analogy would be if I say to you, I'm going to go and watch TV in a minute.

TV now means I could go and either turn on my actual television or I could look on my laptop and watch Netflix or YouTube or TikTok or it could be terrestrial TV still or it could be sky. It means so many different things and so we still say TV but the meaning behind it in our own heads has changed. It's the same with intranets and the capabilities of them needs to be in people's minds moved on from maybe a bad intranet they saw 20 years ago, the tech is so much more advanced now that it does mean something different.

Cat Barnard (25:22)

Wow. This is such an interesting conversation because what it makes me think about is, and now we are layering generative AI over the top of all of these things. And I actually don't think we can make any kind of productive progress with generative AI until we have literally picked up the artefact, had a good look at it, revisited its core purpose and value, checked to see if it is fit for purpose and whether it needs a spring clean and does it need its oil changing, whatever, and then moving it along. Because what I'm thinking about is, as I was prepping for our conversation and exploring the history of the internet, I then also came up with some detail about the future of the intranet and what I realised is that the intranet as a



tool that helps people find the information and knowledge that they need to do their best work is absolutely right, technically, for agentic AI to come along and really transform the user experience in terms of finding and synthesising and helping the worker do better stuff. So, that being so, and that is my noddy five minutes synopsis of, my goodness, agentic AI is really going to transform this particular area. I, of course, know nothing about intranets beyond this conversation. How do you think AI is going to alter the use and application of intranets in the next three or so years?

Suzie Robinson (27:18)

So I think, so we have generative AI across most intranet platforms now. You are unlikely to see a demo from a vendor and not find generative AI in there for helping with article creation or maybe prompting for leadership, creating a social post. That sort of generative AI has been around pretty much rushed out as soon as ChatGBT burst onto the scene a few years ago. All the vendors scabbled and introduced that in. And we are now seeing the much more interesting AI applications, which going back to what I said earlier on about the purpose of an intranet is to help people's day to day. And we're seeing AI, including agentic AI being introduced to really do that. And an intranet is in the prime place to do it.

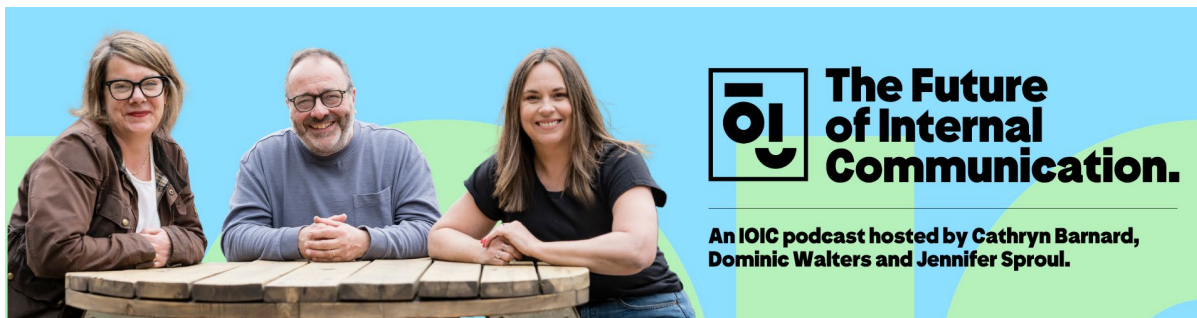
Because it is agnostic. Its purpose is to help people's day-to-day. It's not also doing ticketing. It's not doing payroll. It's not doing any of those other things where the other vendors are saying, hey, use our platform for your intranet. You still need to do all of those things in those platforms that is separate from that purpose of a main intranet that can pull all of the ends together from all of these different systems and provide that really good user experience. And so the AI that's really interesting right now that we're seeing is search-based AI. So providing that kind of Google experience you're finding now, which is the likely answer that is generated from the information that it's finding. We're also finding agentic AI is starting to be released. So we've seen a handful of those and a lot more is coming. Hooking in business systems behind the scenes and allowing an employee to just have a conversation with an AI to be able to book time off and have that facilitated conversation with their manager and with the HR booking system to get all of that booked through. And it's far more simplified than it even has been even with integrations from a few years ago. We're also seeing a few tools around governance being introduced and starting to see AI being introduced into analytics, which I think is where there's some real opportunity there alongside the governance side of things. And the tech is evolving really quickly, but to go back again to an earlier point I've made, what isn't evolving quickly is organisations practices around things like governance. So if you put junk into an AI, you're going to get junk out.



So you need to be keeping on top of maintaining information still and providing the AI with the right information to present to people. It's not going to fix any of that just now. And so people really do need to bear in mind that AI is not a golden bullet. It's not going to fix everything. You still need to have good practices behind the scenes to then deliver that really powerful employee experience. But AI is around more, there's more coming. So I know some vendors are planning to allow people to just use a few prompts to generate entire sites of content or entire intranets. Rather than having to set it all up, you can just kind of explain the sorts of things that you want, then it's going to kind of ping into existence. Or even using AI behind the scenes to say, we've created an AI, which is this particular persona, and I'm going to ask it some questions while we're thinking as vendors what is it we want to develop, this is an idea that we've got AI person, what do you think? And it will tell them. So that's where there's some really interesting stuff happening. But the reality is just needing to make sure that organisations are ready for it, because it just needs so much more than just plugging in and turning on.

Cat Barnard (30:59)

And I think this issue is, I mean, it is right across the board. So very relevant to have a conversation in the context of intranets, but I think it does apply to most digital business systems now. And I do worry that in many organisations, there is that lack of specialist knowledge to actually sit down and do a kind of, what did they used to call it? You know, that sort of reverse engineering, deep dive analysis of, know, root cause analysis. It's almost like a root cause analysis, isn't it? Like, why, what are we here? What are we using this for? And I think there's so much noise and froth and fluff about, must adopt AI, must get the games. But none of the, or very little of the applied oversight. So we know from the conversations and the feedback that comes into IOIC headquarters that most people working in the field in 2026 are feeling increasingly pressured to do more with less. And presumably the intranet may well be perceived as one of those tools, particularly if it's thrown in as a bolt on freebie from something else that is going to solve a range of problems. But without that specialist knowledge, it strikes me that it's an accident waiting to happen, kind of. So thinking about where we're at today, Susie, what advice would you give to an internal communicator as they start to experiment with more AI enabled workplaces and types of internal communication and knowledge management, et cetera. No pressure, big question, sorry.



Suzie Robinson (32:59)

So I would suggest taking a breath and stepping back and looking at your internal comms strategy, your digital workplace strategy and the organisational strategy. Look at those, don't look at tech, look at those three things first of all and understand what you, your departments are trying to achieve, what your organisation is trying to achieve. And then work on from there and if you have any research about what employees need, where they are finding pinch points, where there's opportunities to make an improvement in their day to day. Then look at that as well and combine it with that strategic thinking. And then start to think about, what tech do we have that can meet those goals and in what ways? And then once you've kind of got that foundation right that's when you can start experimenting with what actually does this deliver and where can it add additional value, where is there room to actually consolidate because two things are doing very similar things but we need something that's better than that so let's retire those two things and get this one thing instead and it can all be done from that internal comms perspective but again, going back to the question earlier on about why internal comms tends to be the owner of an intranet is because communications tends to be a massive use case for an intranet. And so it does tend to get picked up by comms because it's like, we need it for this thing. So that's why that gives you a door to then improve the whole intranet because you may not be responsible for HR or health and safety or finances documentation on your intranet, but if employees can't find that information when they need it, if they have a terrible search experience because no one's keeping their documents maintained, then no one's going to look at your news because they won't trust your intranet.

And so taking that step back and just really thinking how do we deliver what our employees really need then means you can start looking at technology off the back of that and to kind of promote our own material as well. The Clearbox reports, so if you go on to [clearbox.co.uk forward slash reports](https://clearbox.co.uk/forward/slash/reports), it's many, many pages. It's quite a long PDF. It's absolutely free.

And we have assessed the best platforms on the market and also provided summaries of the trends of what's going on in the world of intranet tech in the market right now. And what that will allow you to do is to benchmark what you currently have and the current experiences you have against business scenarios that we assess these platforms against. And that will help you give that point of comparison. If you don't know anything about this space, you've been given the internet and suddenly told you need to go and manage it or you're trying to experiment with new things. If you use our report, it'll just give you that insight into the ways that these technologies can work, the ways that they can offer benefits to you as an internal communicator versus the end user versus maybe a person in IT who doesn't want to have to be asked every five minutes to create a brand new audience and



have to administer that in the background. And so taking that step back and just ignoring your own tech stack, thinking about your strategy, thinking about your employees, and then thinking about what's possible can then be a good way to then start to think about what is it then we can add on that really does bring that value.

Cat Barnard (36:46)

And so that plays quite nicely into the subsection of the Future of Internal Communication white paper that was published late last year, early this year, to members and then non-members around the new roles for internal communication. And I think that started with new skills for the new roles. And one of the primary skills was business acumen and then the other being kind of digital and data literacy.

This is the kind of spread and expansion that, you know, were internal communication to be a function that was well resourced and well financed, you would have a colleague. And at this point also, I would say that colleague doesn't need to be full-time permanent. You might want to work with a consulting organisation like Clearbox or any other freelancer, whatever, who provides that support enough over the course of a month to make sure that the offering to employees or colleagues or whoever is adequate and on point. And I think it strikes me that it may be the case in certain organisations that the ball is getting dropped because there is an assumption, well, we can't afford a full-time intranet person, but we don't have anybody in-house to help us do that or who's competent. And actually, do you need somebody full-time permanent to help you scope and manage and govern and maintain it? I suspect perhaps not, but...

Suzie Robinson (38:27)

So I don't think you necessarily do. I think it depends on the nature of the business and the size of the organisation and the scale of the intranet and what you're trying to achieve and where all the problems currently are with it. My love for intranets came about because I had limited choice when it came to communications channels. So I had literally no budget. I had an intranet and I had the email system without a newsletter tool, just Outlook.

And creating posters that either were downloaded and printed in the local stores or was sent out to them in in packs. Those were my choices back in the day when I was first an intranet manager. And so I had to make the intranet work and I had to think creatively about how it could be used as more than one channel in its own right. So designing the home page, so that the stuff that people really needed to know was positioned in a very



specific place and had a very distinctive visual cue. When people could see a change, they knew what they needed to go and have a look at. Versus the things that were nice for them to know but they kind of needed to know it. So strategic changes to the business that some people would not bother about others needed to know about it versus the things that were not really business critical but were really nice for them to know. So when I worked at Waterstones there would be publishers would send out freebie books so the booksellers would read them in advance and then be able to recommend them and so we would collate that every week and we would publish that one article and that was always really popular because people were getting nice things off the back of it so thinking about how to approach those different messages but all through one tool meant that I had to make the intranet work and I had to care about the whole thing in order to make sure that my communications then were being read and were landing correctly. And I think potentially there is almost too many channels now for internal comms think about because now there are things like town halls and events and you have newsletter tools and there are external things you can go to and there are a lot more, there's a lot more in the mix and there are a lot more training opportunities now. So there's a lot more for comms to think about and have to manage, which means that having to focus on the internet isn't necessarily always the case and I think sometimes it just needs an intranet isn't ever a project tick done you don't have to worry about it anymore there is an ongoing element to an intranet but it doesn't need to be a full-time job the whole year round you can have like focus times like a focus of a week or something as a team of comms you look at different things and you figure out what needs to be fixed. Building a community of people around you can be so powerful for maintaining an internet community and maintaining the intranet. So building on something like Viva Engage or using something like Work Viva or wherever you have those kind of social conversations, even teams, and building that community to say, hey, there's a new thing that this intranet now does. Here's how you do this thing. And, we're doing our month of tidying up soon. Go look at your content.

And actually empowering other people to look after it is an important part of internet management. And I think sometimes comms maybe lose sight of being able to do that. And that's where it goes back to that governance. Because if you have an agreement as an organisation that comms is going to spearhead it, not do everything, I'm not going to upload your policy page for you. Yes, I can advise you on the wording if you want to make this less legalese and more absorbable by a normal employee, yes I can help you with that, but I'm not going to be maintaining it actively but I will help you understand how to do that, then the entire ecosystem will be much better looked after and then internal comms through the intranet will benefit hugely from that entire thing being better.



Cat Barnard (42:33)

Wow, just I'm so glad that we've had the conversation. I think there's an awful lot for any internal communicator to take away from this conversation and reflect on. I, my takeaway is that I don't think we can gloss over the depth of inquiry into getting this right. We are kind of on the precipice of something that is going to happen, whether we engage with it or not, AI, increasingly digital workplaces, etc. Sounds like the Clearbox report is really well worth an internal communicator having in their, asset bank of resources and I hope that those listening today who are internal communicators have found this conversation useful and demystifying. And I think my big takeaway is like most things, and by the way, I say this not singularly for internal communication, I think every function within every organisation needs to take a step back now and start thinking more deeply and broadly about what it is that needs to be achieved in order to then move forward with all the permutations of AI. So, Susie, you've been amazing. Thank you ever so much. I will look out for you as you go around the conferences and speak and write and so on. And I will make sure that in the show notes to accompany this episode, people know where they can contact you and find out more about your work and Clearbox's work.

Suzie Robinson (44:23)

Lovely stuff, thank you. Yes, I like sharing the knowledge that's in my head. I see so many different internet platforms that I just, like helping people. Yeah, and for anyone listening, please do feel free to get in touch. Would love to have a chat and nerd out about intranets basically.

Cat Barnard (44:40)

Lovely stuff. Well, thank you so much for joining me today and I look forward to chatting with you under separate cover at a different occasion.

Suzie Robinson (44:47)

Sounds great. Thank you very much.