

Need for Tamil Intranet

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Intranets defined

The Internet had its origins in Intranet. Intranet is defined as "an internal network that uses Internet technology" (Internet & Intranet, 1997). However, several authors extend this description to include *which* Internet technologies an Intranet uses. Most authors would agree, however, with Andreessen who states that Intranets are:

...internal corporate networks built upon Internet standards that provide dramatically improved communication and access to information.

In earlier sixties, computer networking in educational institutions made it possible for sharing of files and documents between various computers. This concept of computer networking and sharing of files is what led to the development of Intranet. Internet as we know very well is a development of intranet. While intranet is used within an organization Internet broke the barrier of organizations and made it possible the sharing of files from a remote server.

Intranets and Internets

Intranet and Website on the open Internet of the same company/Concern are two different information spaces.

- **Users** differ. Intranet users are mostly employees who know a lot about the company, its organizational structure and its special terminology.
- **Tasks** differ. The Intranet is used for everyday work inside the company, including some quite complex applications; the Internet site is mainly used to find out information about your products.
- **Type and Amount of information** differs. The Intranet will have internal information like human resource information whereas the Internet site will have marketing and customer support information. All the internal documents that are available in Intranet would not be available in Internet.
- **Bandwidth and cross-platform needs** differ. Intranets often run between a hundred and a thousand times faster than most Internet users' Web access so it is feasible to use rich graphics on Intranet pages.

Why do we need Tamil Intranets?

Internets had slowly evolved from Intranets spanning across many years. Unlike the general evolution, we had brought Tamil into Internet directly without passing through the intranet. The missing link has it toll today. English instead of being a language to communicate in the International forums, has become a matter of pride for communication in Tamil Nadu. It is high time that Tamil establishes itself as language of educated people in Tamil Nadu at Research Institutes and Organizations. Tamil Intranet could solve this attitude to an extent, as it becomes the medium of communication. Tamil Intranet would help not only in dealing with technical difficulties in creating Tamil Software, it could be the testing ground before being launched on the Internet. It is essential to develop the usage of Tamil internally in organizations, research institutions and by business people.

The importance of Tamil intranet in organizations and research institutions cannot be over emphasized. This Tamil intranet would help organizations to communicate in their own mother tongue (Tamil). While intranet is mostly English based, we know that there is a need for Tamil Intranet, which would foster the communication process in an organization. Providing Tamil intranet would make communication process much easier.

It would also make people used to typing in Tamil and it would actually develop the concept of “engum Tamil ethilum Tamil” (Tamil everywhere, Tamil in everything).

We are all well aware how intranet is used in various organizations. They are used to create a kind of companionship in organizations. Many organizations conduct contests in English helping people develop their talents. Poetry competition, cross word, essay competition is common. It also common that they provides quotes from famous authors, politicians etc. Tamil intranet would help people develop their talents in Tamil language. Giving quotations from Famous poets and classics would help people know about them and appreciate them. When it becomes a norm it would be much easier to be extended to the Internet.

Tamil Intranet would make communication process easier, typing in Tamil comfortable. When comfortable with the process it would be easier for users on the Internet to communicate freely in Tamil. Thereby making Internet in Tamil much more interactive with more number of Tamilians.

Tamil E-zines

Tamil E-zines are Tamil Electronic Magazines or Tamil Portals available on the Internet. These magazines have flourished in the early 2000. But later the dot com crash had its toll on the Tamil E-zines also. While earlier there was a great spurt of Tamil e-zines many have closed down in recent years. These magazines had users from Tamil speaking people all over the world. While offering a treasure of valuable Tamil literature these E-zines provided a forum for Tamilians all over the world to interact. They help in exchange of information and ideas. They provide many features like discussion forums, Chat, Tamil e-mail etc. Aaramthinai, Ambalam, Tamil are some examples of Tamil E-zines.

Tamil Intranets in organizations would make people familiar with Tamil Internet and more Tamil E-zines could start with more users. Tamil E-zines would play a great role in

uniting Tamilians all over the world. They not only would create a sense of community among the users but would also provide discussion forums to keep the spirit living. It would also nurture creativity. Discussion Forums would involve greater sharing of knowledge by Tamilians all over the world.

Tamil E-zines on Intranet would be ideal for all these. Already Tamil E-zines on the internet exist but Tamil e-zines could be created on Intranets fostering creativity in Tamil and in familiarizing users with Tamil E-zine son the Internet and also Tamil on Internet itself.

E-Governance

Tamil Intranet is the starting step for E-Governance in Tamil Nadu. E-Governance would be a success only when the language of the people is used. And there are no two opinions about using Tamil in E-Governance in Tamil Nadu. Tamil Intranet would make E-Governance a success. Already efforts are made by many NGOs for using Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) for development. Telecentres have been set up in various places where people have access to information. These have made getting Certificates from Government like Community certificate etc easy. But this is oriented towards the user level. What about computerization of government offices that would lead to transparency in government?

E-governance would be possible only with conception of Tamil Intranet. E-governance would involve linking up all computers in Government offices and networking them. This should be followed by the creation of Intranet.

First step would involve computerization of all Government procedure. Next would involve linking them up through network. The next step would involve creation of Intranet. This would result in transparency of the procedures. It would result in increased efficiency. It would no longer be easy to lose files in the overflowing files in office. It would also reduce physical space for piling up increased number of files everyday. Files can be maintained efficiently with less space and less possibility to get lost.

E-Governance can be divided into two parts. They are computerization in the Government offices that would be a great way of improving administration. It can have pages on job sheets and other administrative details that could be stored in increased efficiency. The other one is providing service to the people like setting up of telecentres so that people can access directly the government departments through the websites for activities ranging from College admissions to railway reservations. TamilNadu women's development corporation, which is called the TamilNadu's first paperless office provides good intranet but unfortunately in English. The E-Governance concept in TamilNadu would be a success only when it reaches the masses and for that medium of communication should be in Tamil.

Tamil Intranet in Research Organizations

In research organizations there is always need for sharing of files and databases. This could be made possible through an intranet. Here all the researchers in those organizations would be able to access the shared files. This actually helps in creating valuable database. This would be a great place to start with in creating a database. It would be of great help for other researchers to find out what his colleagues are doing to enhance his knowledge. It would also decrease replication of work on the same topic on the same lines.

Putting out papers that were recently presented in a conference or published recently by the researcher in the intranet would help other researchers to know the current flow of information. Also putting out information of latest conferences and seminars would help their colleagues also to participate in them. This sharing of files would result in creating a greater scope for utilizing the organizations potential to the utmost without repetition. It would also strengthen the organization.

These files would be of utmost use for literature review for researchers. Researchers can know what their colleagues are working on and create critique on it and work on it. This would actually give them a direction to go on. These can be stored for years so that the later researchers would know what others have done in the particular field and they can develop their work on that.

This would also help in discussing various topics and difficulties. They can get advice, suggestions from their colleagues. This would be vital because their colleagues may have passed through the same methodological problem or other difficulties. Since they have already gone through the process they would know how actually to tackle it guiding others without loss of valuable time in getting around the problem.

Tamil intranet would be of great use in Educational Institutions and research organizations. When Tamil is used as the language for communication in Intranet in these organizations, it would not only foster the development of the language but also would help people sharpen their Tamil language skills. The appropriate place to start a Tamil Intranet would be Educational institutions. These institutions already play an important role by not only imparting Tamil Language but also conducting research in Tamil. They have a greater incentive in using Tamil in their intranet.

This Intranet would help in sharing research documents among various researchers in organizations. It would help in creating valuable databases of research material with in an organization. It would simplify research work, when the researchers know where to look for information. It would be a valuable source for literature review. When all the past researchers done in an organization are available it would give them a direction to go about in their research.

Compiling all this research material would be a great task towards creation of Tamil Database. At a later stage these research material could be published as a CD Rom or a book. It could also be published on the Internet creating a worldwide Tamil database of research material from various research organizations working throughout the world.

When Tamil Intranet is a success here it should be extended to other organizations both governmental and commercial.

Advantages of Tamil Intranet

1. It would help users familiarize with Tamil in Computers.
2. It would help them to learn Tamil typing and using Tamil software.
3. It would help the growth of IT in Tamil.
4. It would improve communication among users. Since it always known that nothing is better than communicating in our own language.

5. It would provide Developers practical difficulties in using technologies, thus making them create better software in Tamil.
6. It would provide an incentive for developers to create Tamil Software.
7. It would give an incentive for software developers to create better products in Tamil. As it would be used by more and more people.
8. Help increase growth of research in Tamil by fostering sharing of files.
9. Create valuable Tamil Database, which can be shared with other research institutions.

Role and Scope of Tamil Intranet

Even though establishing a Tamil Intranet would be not easier, it is also not difficult. Organizations that already have a web site and computer network can start this process. The Tamil Nadu Government should deploy Tamil Intranet across its Departments so that it can launch E-Governance through Tamil. Tamil Internet already exists. Let its success start with Tamil Intranet.