IA in International Intranets

- What's Different?
- Global / local balance
- User Architecture
- Primary navigation categories
- Home page structure
- Common & specific content

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Jane McConnell

- American, living and working in Europe for 25 years
- Independent Consultant
- Intranet and portal strategy & practice
- International clients
  - both HQ and trenches
  - both sides of the wall

Alcatel (Paris), Alstom Power Service (UK, Switzerland, Paris), Amadeus (Madrid), Georgia-Pacific (Europe), Lagardère (Paris), Nokia (Helsinki), RATP (Paris), TotalGaz (Paris), UPM (Helsinki)

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- NetStrategyJmc works with clients at different key moments:

  - Optimization of intranets & web portals
  - Realignment following mergers & acquisitions
  - Internationalization
  - Creation of new portals & services

- Services and support include...
  - User architecture
  - Content strategy
  - Home page strategy and models

- Approaches
  - Consulting, coaching, facilitation, training seminars

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IA in International Intranets

- ➡ **What's Different?**
  - Unique
  - Complex
  - Potentially conflictual
- Global / local balance
- User Architecture
- Primary navigation categories
- Home page structure
- Common & specific content

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What's different in international intranets?

- A unique role
  - Often the only common communication tool
  - Usually the only permanent link between business units, countries and people around the world
- A centrifugal dilemma
  - "The further you are from the center, the more you depend on the intranet ; the further you are from the center, the less the intranet meets your needs."
- Complexity
  - Multiple viewpoints, many (often conflicting) filters
  - More virtual than face-to-face communication, greater need for trust
  - Essential skill: knowing how to advance projects and influence people outside your local organization

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Different planets, living in worlds apart...?

Local country teams: "Our needs are different. Our business culture is different. We do things differently here."

Headquarters: "Everyone needs to all follow the Guidelines. Otherwise you are re-inventing the wheel, wasting money and resources."

Business unit: "We need a solution fast. We need to do it now. Your approach is excellent but will take too long. You don't understand the pressure we're under."
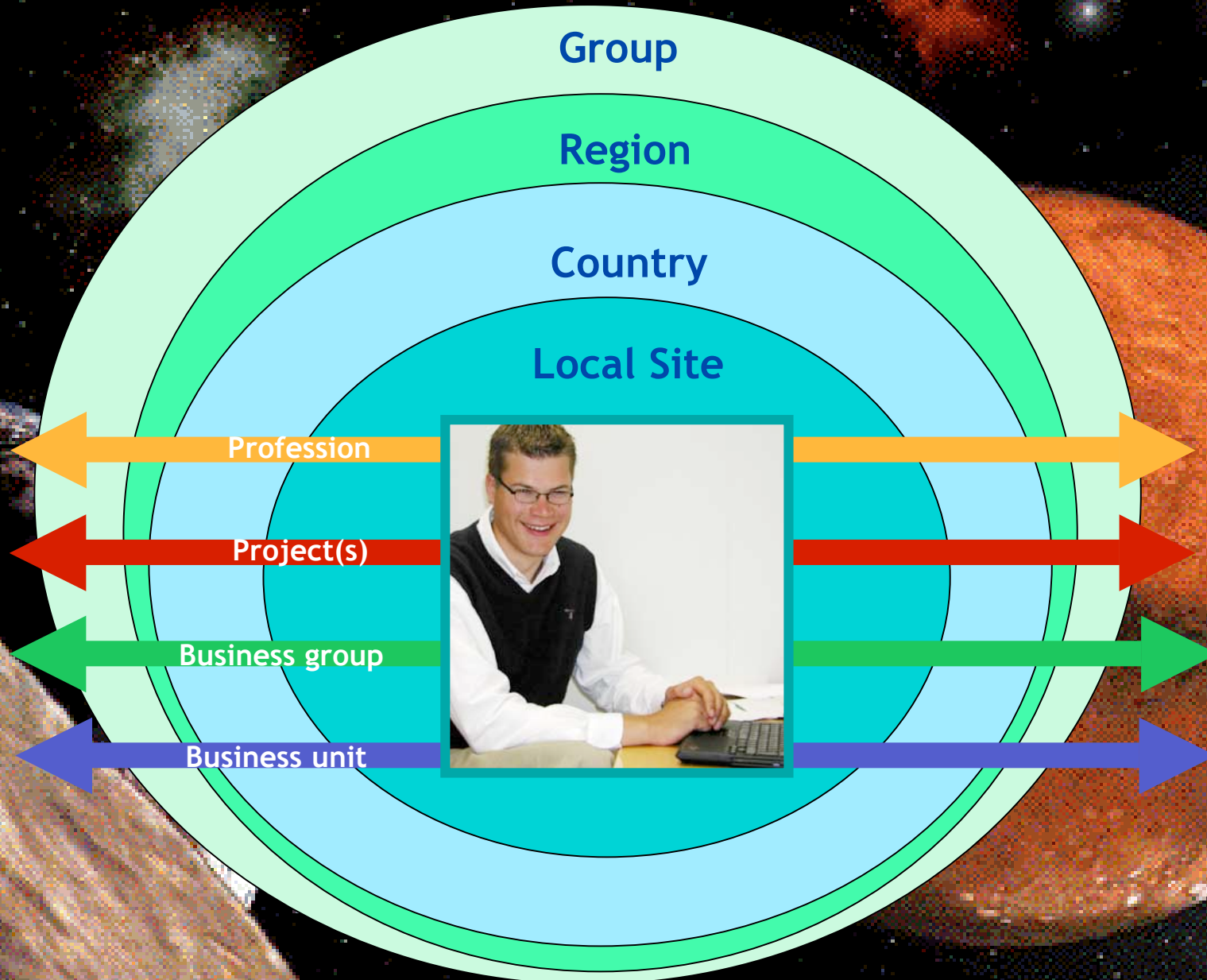
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Or different planets....in the same system

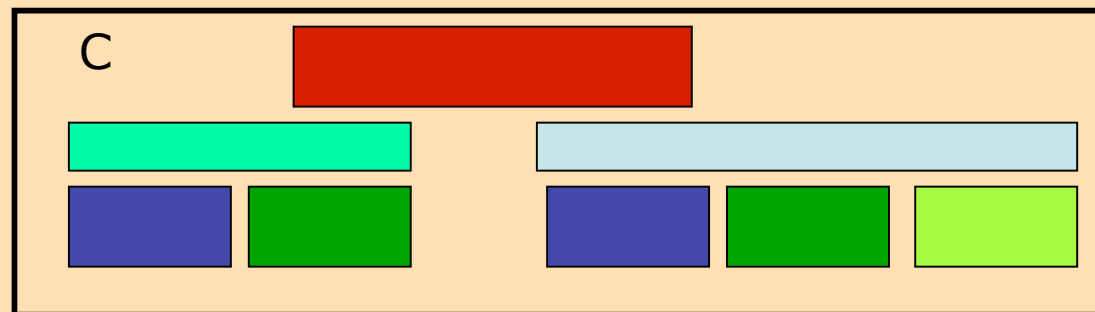"Show me your intranet and I'll tell you how international you are."

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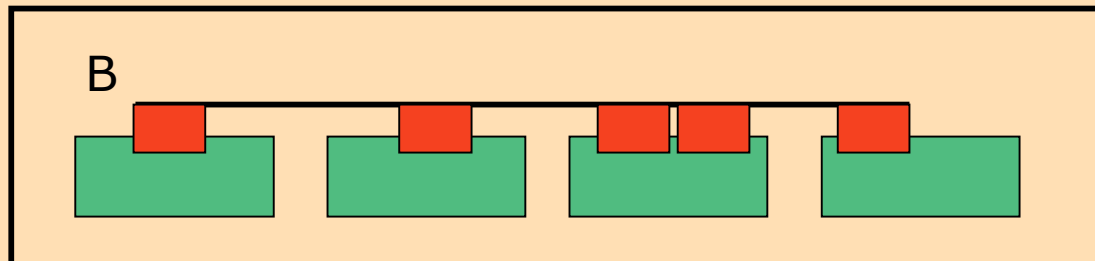# IA in International Intranets

- What's Different?
- Global / local balance
  - Employee viewpoint
  - Corporate viewpoint
- User Architecture
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The many hats of the international employee

Group

Region

Country

Local Site

Profession

Project(s)

Business group

Business unit

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Corporate structures & strategies differ

A

B

C
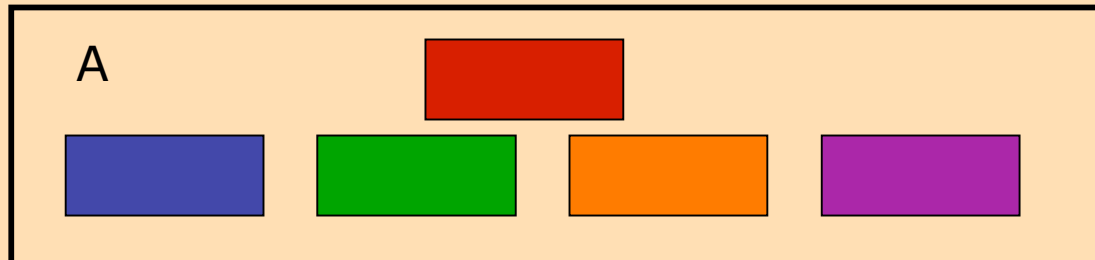
A. Highly diversified

B. Global management

C. Layered, matrix

- What's local, what's global?
- Who decides?
- Standardization?
- Centralization?

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IA in International Intranets

- What's Different?
- Global / local balance
- User Architecture
  - Definition
  - Strategic importance
- Primary navigation categories
- Home page structure
- Common & specific content

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"Our user architecture is the result of a long series of negotiations."

User Architecture

- The mental image the user has of the system
- A series of agreements, common understandings
- Elements
  - ➡ • Primary navigation categories: breakdown into sections, spaces, types of content & services
    - Visibility and accessibility
      - navigation: choices, levels, labels...
      - the overall view and the "drill-down" view
  - ➡ • Home page (common identity, sense of belonging)
    - Structure (zoning) of pages
    - Personalization

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What's at stake?

- User architecture
  - Represents the strategy and values of the company
  - Plays a key role in encouraging collaboration, sharing information and knowledge
- Critical success factor:
  - The "That's for me!" factor
  - Must be meaningful for all stakeholders, from the center to the entities

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IA in International Intranets

- What's Different?
- Global / local balance
- User Architecture
→ - Primary navigation categories
    - Global & pertinent
    - Examples
- Home page structure
- Common & specific content

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Primary Menu Bar: Global & Pertinent

About	News	Global Services	Local Services	Business	Reference
Organization	Corporate	HR	Asia	Customers	Archives
Activities	Local	Finance	Europe	Divisions... Products... Regions...	Publications
Industry	Media Watch	Communi-cation	North America	Project Rooms	Policies
	News-letters	Etc.		Etc.	Etc.

One of the trickiest things to get right when evolving from a national to an international intranet

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Example

Large company, internationalization strategy

	About	News	Global Services	Local Services	Products & Clients	Reference
Target	All employees, all entities	All employees, all entities	All employees, all entities	Local populations (geographical : country, site, agency)	All employees, all entities based on relevance and interest	All employees, all entities
Subject	The company and activities, links to local sites	Internal and external news	Policies, standards, services pertinent for all employees	Local services (strongly HR, others also) Local news "Free spaces": clubs, ads, weather, (No project spaces, no group services)	Information and documents about clients, products, technologies, solutions, ... Project-based work areas Restricted and open areas	Documents, publications, archives, dictionaries standards, processes, ...
Break-down	Organizational, theme, key words	Subject, chronology, key words	Function	Geography, then function	Theme, organization, profession, project & geography	Theme, key words

Variations

1A

About	News	Global Services	Local Services	Products & Clients	Reference

1B

News	About	Clients & Markets	Products & Solutions	R&D	Projects & Teams	Career & Compensation	Employee services & resources	Library

1C
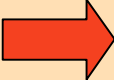
The Company	Clients & Business	Products & Services	For Our Markets	Internal services	Practical Information

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Primary Menu Bar: Global & Pertinent

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IA in International Intranets

- What's Different?
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- Primary navigation categories
- Home page structure
  - Mission, risks
  - Roles, choices
- Common & specific content

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The Mission of the Home Page

- Create / strengthen a shared vision of the company
  - Sense of belonging
  - "Where do I fit in?"
- Serve as a reference point for the whole company
  - Communicate strategy, news, business achievements,....
  - Crisis communication, source of information during difficult times
- Facilitate productivity
  - Save time when looking for content and services that you may find in multiple places in an international intranet
- Encourage collaboration and innovation
  - Offer view and news from all parts of the organization, call your attention to unfamiliar content/subjects

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Risks

- If the home page does not meet user & business needs ....

    – Entities (countries, functions, business units,...) will skip over it, and it will become irrelevant

    – They will create substitutes and you'll end up with multiple, uncontrolled entry points

    – Management will miss the opportunity to leverage a powerful tool for creating a truly international company
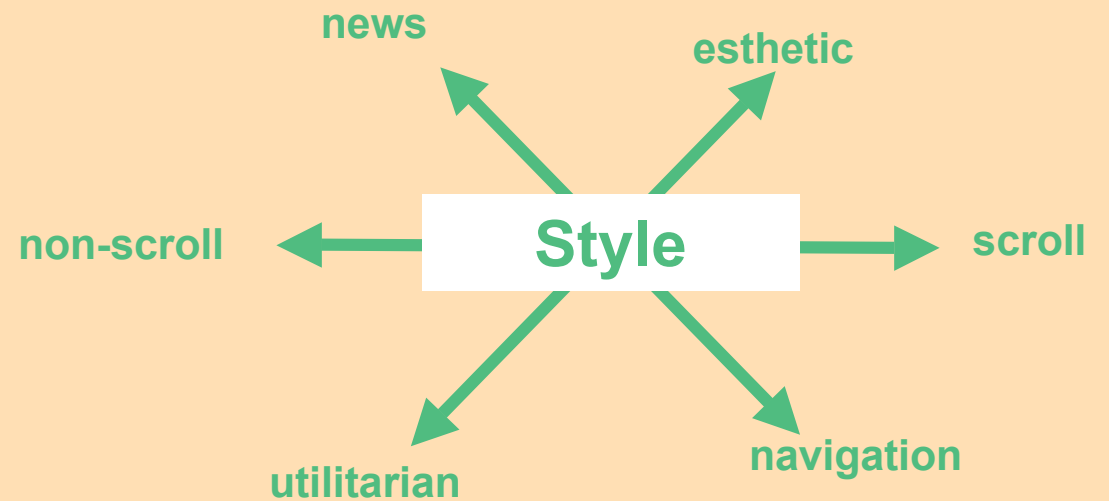
Five roles

The home page must …

- Make and keep a promise
- Guide the user to understand the structure and navigation of the intranet
- Indicate the range of content and services available
- Listen (offer opportunities for feedback)
- "Speak to the user", trigger the reaction "this is for me"

Fulfilling these five roles successfully is especially challenging in an international company where diversity and complexity are a way of life.

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Choices and Degrees

single   work tool

global ← **Positioning** → local

communication tool   multiple

news   esthetic

non-scroll ← **Style** → scroll

utilitarian   navigation

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Home Page Choices

Profession | Community | Individual | Mix

Polls, surveys, email, ...
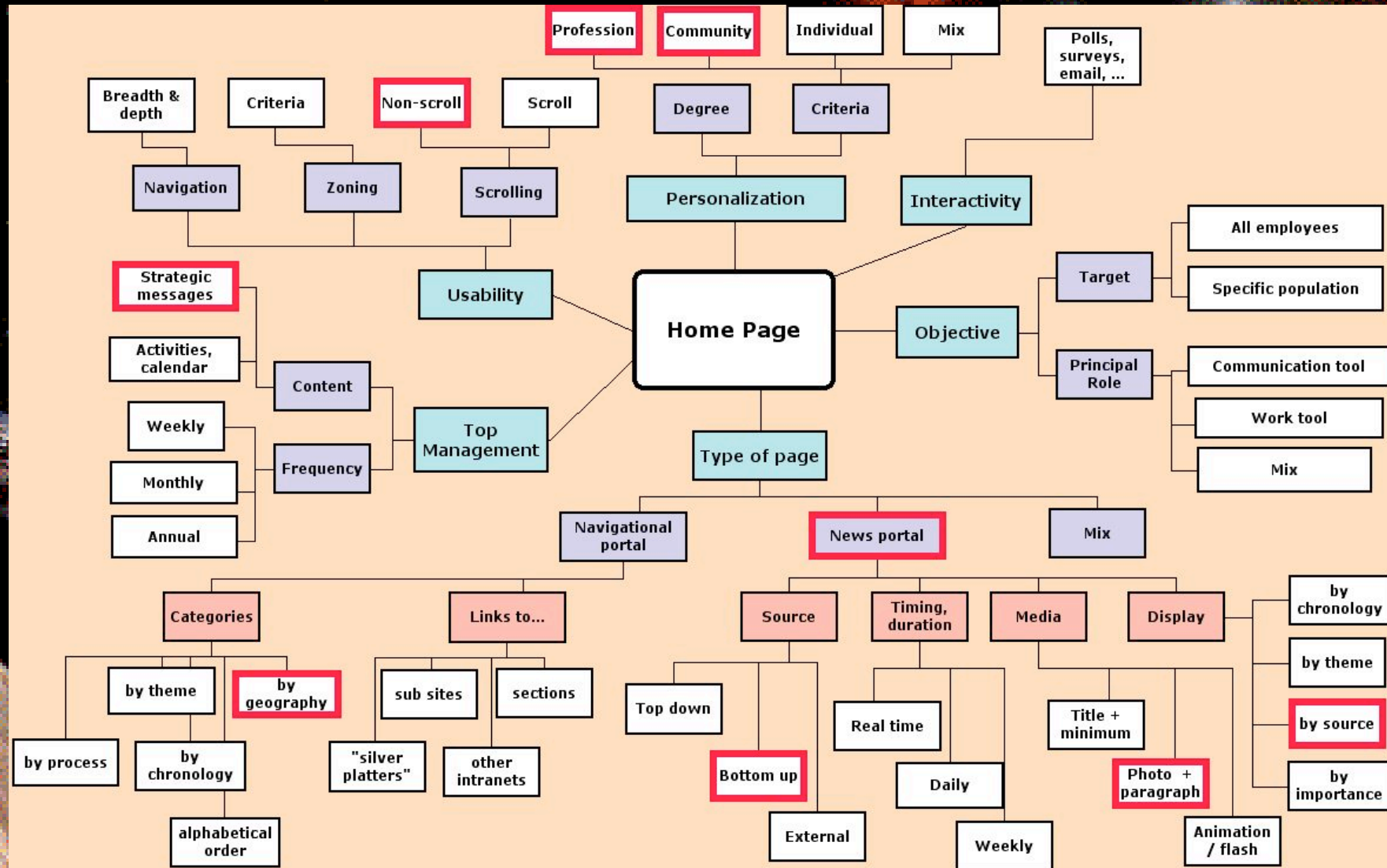
Breadth & depth | Criteria | Non-scroll | Scroll

Degree | Criteria

Navigation | Zoning | Scrolling

Personalization | Interactivity

All employees

Usability

Target

Specific population

Strategic messages

Home Page

Objective

Activities, calendar

Communication tool

Content

Principal Role

Work tool

Weekly

Top Management

Type of page

Mix

Monthly

Frequency

Annual

Navigational portal | News portal | Mix

Categories | Links to... | Source | Timing, duration | Media | Display | by chronology

by theme | by geography | sub sites | sections | Top down | by theme

by process | by chronology | "silver platters" | other intranets | Bottom up | Real time | Title + minimum | by source

alphabetical order | Daily | Photo + paragraph | by importance

External | Weekly | Animation / flash

Languages | Model / Blueprint | Resources | Workflow | Decentralized management

For international home pages...

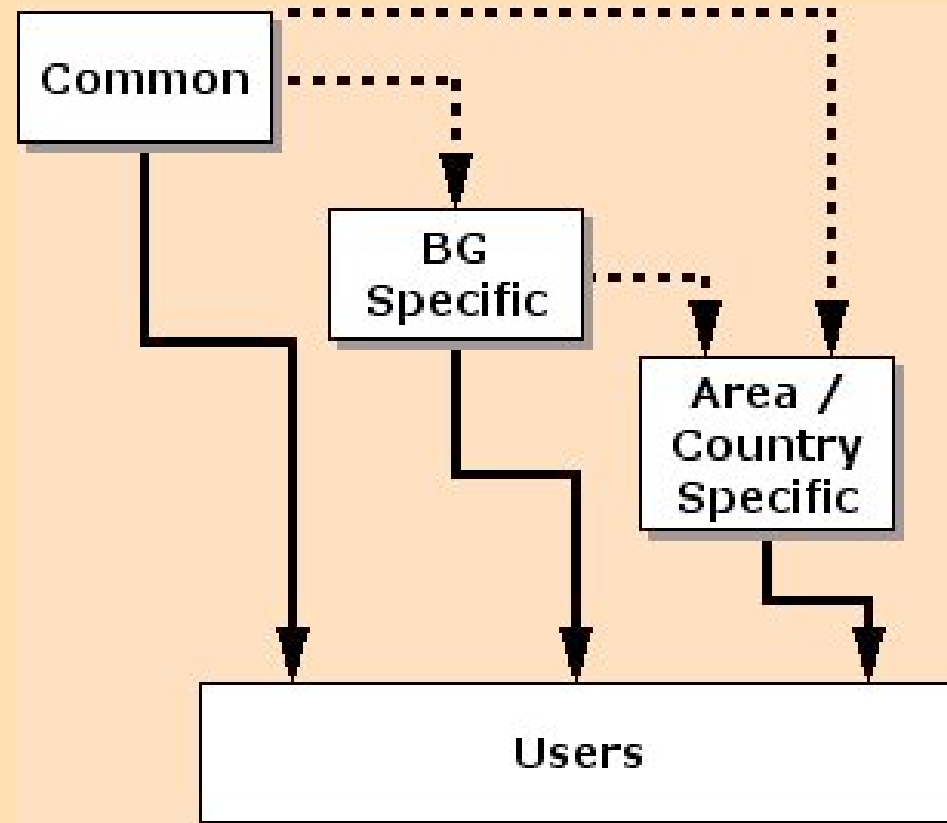*NetStrategyJmc*

IA in International Intranets

- What's Different?
- Global / local balance
- User Architecture
- Primary navigation categories
- Home page structure
- Common & specific content
  - Key questions
  - Principles
  - Language, communities and content

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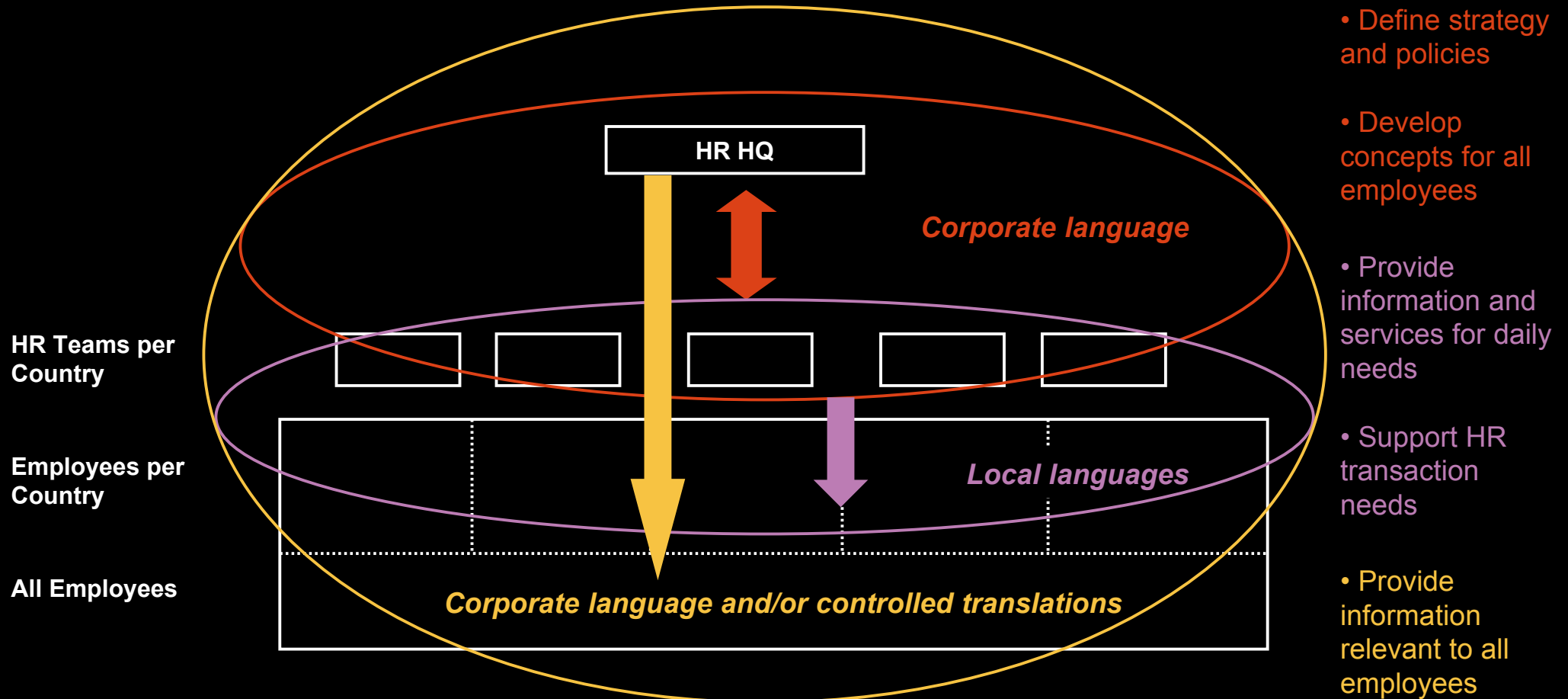# Common & Specific Content: The flow

Common & Specific Content: Key Questions

1. What proportion of content and services are common?
2. Why is common content not always used?
   - It is not relevant.(different process, needs)
   - It is not considered adequate
   - It is not appropriate (formulation, context)
   - It needs to be translated
   - It does not exist
3. How do you define and create common content and services
   - Input from entities
   - Involvement of other functions
   - Standards for adaptation
4. How do you identify and share local initiatives that could be beneficial on a larger scale?

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Principles

- "Our starting point is that a maximum amount of content and services should be common.

- Variations may occur when
  - Specific strategy is different.
  - Local legislation is different.
  - Local flavor is necessary for appropriation and buy-in."

Language, communities and content: HR example

HR HQ

Corporate language

HR Teams per Country

Local languages

Employees per Country

All Employees

Corporate language and/or controlled translations

• Define strategy and policies

• Develop concepts for all employees

• Provide information and services for daily needs

• Support HR transaction needs

• Provide information relevant to all employees

Issues: Language, orientation of messages, processes

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Three Final Thoughts

- Make your global strategy truly global
  - Get worldwide involvement in the key decisions
  - How you decide is more important than what you decide
- Get the balance right
  - Make the essential minimum mandatory
  - Leave a maximum of controlled autonomy
- Make it relevant
  - Build trust with users
    - "This is where I fit in, that's what I need."
  - Build trust with management
    - "I can use this to do my business."

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Consulting, coaching, training Services

Intranets & Web Portals

Thank you

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