

**Design a collaborative intranet platform for efficient online communication between diverse groups on- and off-campus.  
(Examples include Yammer and Socialcast)**

**CURRENT CHALLENGE:**

The university lacks a collaborative intranet platform for efficient online communication between diverse groups on- and off-campus. The MyFresnoState portal definitely serves a purpose, but it is not built for increasing employee engagement and communication/collaboration.

Throughout my employment here at Fresno State, I have heard several individuals say that new hires find difficulty getting oriented, important information becomes scattered and difficult to find, and we spend too many resources and time on ineffective methods of communication such as departmental newsletters and electronic publications, interoffice mail and exchanging emails.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION:**

Between June - October 2009 I wanted to be proactive in initiating some form of healthy discussion centered around web technology on campus. I took the opportunity to create accounts with two popular social enterprise networks called Yammer and Socialcast to demonstrate the potential tools we could leverage if the university ever moved forward with implementing a collaborative platform. A few colleagues signed up to help me test both platforms, and over time, the discussion faded. To my surprise some people still sign up only to learn that the tools are just demos. I haven't actively promoted these unofficial accounts and never intended to without the consent of I.T. and administrative approval. However, the accounts have remained active because the topic continues to creep up. The topic was briefly discussed at a recent open forum with Dr. Castro and it seemed to be of interest to several people in the audience. A few days after the event, Debbie Astone and Shirley Armbruster asked for more information that was later sent via email. (The topic may have faded again...perhaps to include our newly appointed CIO in the discussion?).

**BENEFITS TO FRESNO STATE:**

There are several enterprise social networks to choose from. Yammer was acquired by Microsoft so the features are a bit different than the product I tested in 2009. Socialcast was also acquired by VMWare and the platform has gone through several changes too. If I were an I.T. stakeholder interested in implementing an enterprise social network I would probably focus on platforms from companies with better track records such as Salesforce Chatter (<https://www.salesforce.com/chatter/features/>) or perhaps take a look at Jive (<https://www.jivesoftware.com/>).

One platform implementation can possibly address multiple pain points:

- 1) Centralize official documents, policies, institutional brand assets, etc;
- 2) Provide easier ways to recognize and broadcast individual or team accomplishments to help boost morale in the workplace;
- 3) The need for increased transparency
- 4) Be connected with Fresno State, wherever you are;
- 5) Conduct online business in a more efficient manner;
- 6) Strengthen the institution's brand and integrated marketing efforts;
- 7) Cut down on unnecessary email communications;
- 8) Virtually connect with individuals you would otherwise never meet;
- 9) Faster and more efficient ways to bring important news and updates directly to the campus community rather than having to search for it;
- 10) A more comprehensive employee directory

An enterprise social network may or may not be one of the ways to improve collaboration and communication between departments. There is a lot of recent data that supports why institutions should have one, but there are also a few reports that discuss why they shouldn't. (Harvard Business Review: <https://hbr.org/2015/04/why-no-one-uses-the-corporate-social-network>).

There seems to be a consistent theme among the various publications I have read about enterprise social networks: Leadership participation is crucial for collaboration.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Thanks for the opportunity to submit some thoughts. If I have accidentally violated any information security policies by creating unofficial accounts for testing purposes please let me know. I would feel more comfortable deleting these two sample accounts if I.T. anticipates performing their own research into enterprise social networking. Thank you.