

Information audits:

Evidence-based information delivery

Shaida Dorabjee
SD Information Services

sdorabjee@sdis.demon.co.uk

It's a tough world

- New technology and new breeds of users – Digital Immigrants and Digital Natives*
- Producers in charge. Consumers in charge
- Other information-rich services in the organisation
- Lack of clarity about boundaries, responsibilities and definitions
- Information services under the spotlight
- Pressure to provide evidence and to add value

*Terms first coined by Marc Prensky, writer on education and learning
but developed by Gartner in their work on digital natives in the workplace

What we are not doing

- Aligning with business objectives
- Examining in detail
- Providing evidence, demonstrating value

The Audit

The systematic investigation into the availability, use and flow of information within organisations, for the purpose of improving some aspect of their operations or performance*

Improve information and knowledge management
in line with business objectives

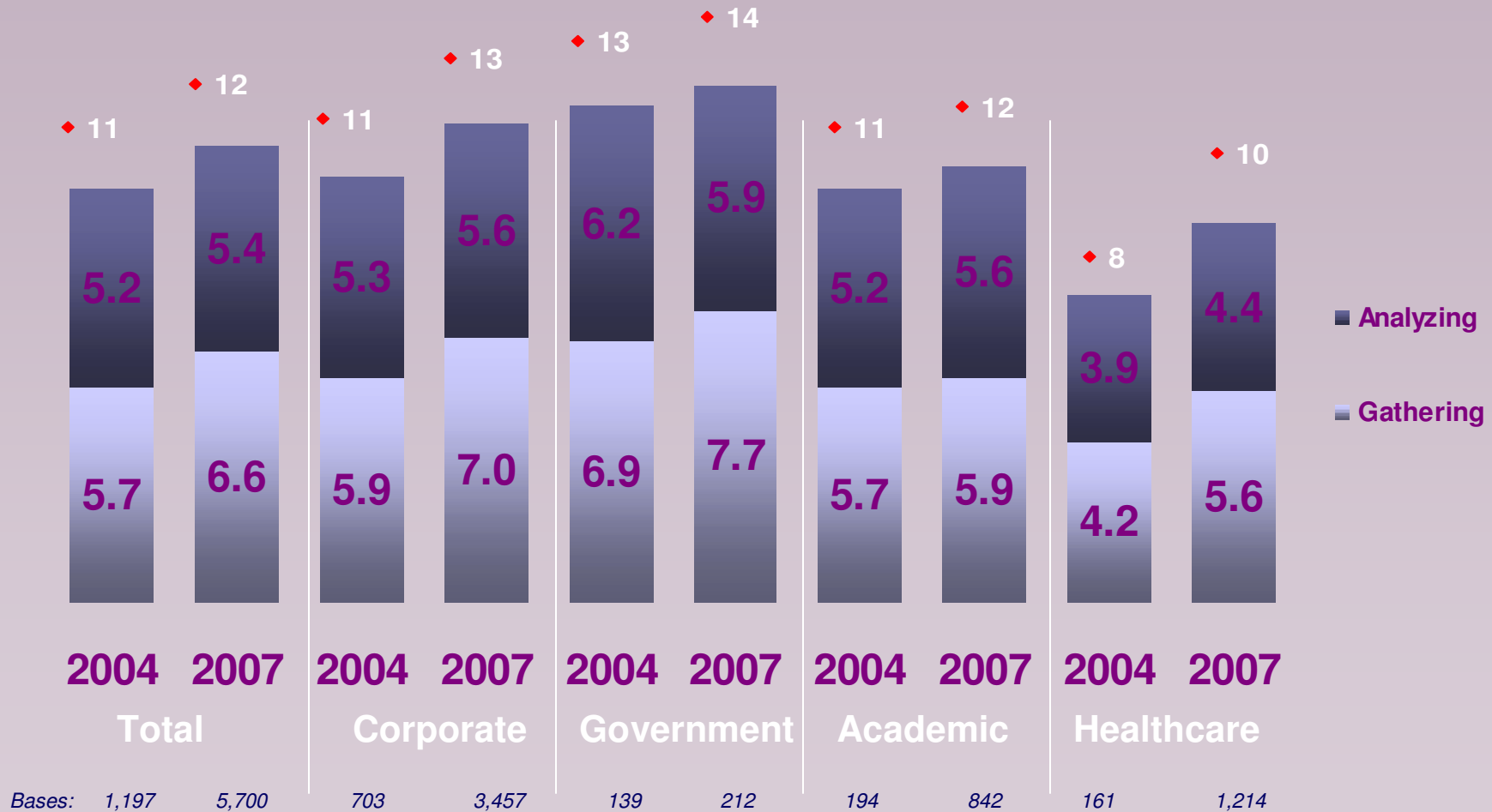
Why undertake an audit

Examples

- Development of a single information service from a number of small fragmented libraries
- Reviews as a result of mergers or relocations
- Need to improve quality and content of intranet
- Perception that the information service is not used as much as it could be
- Information not managed and so 'lost somewhere on the network' and too much time is spent looking for information (See Outsell's data)

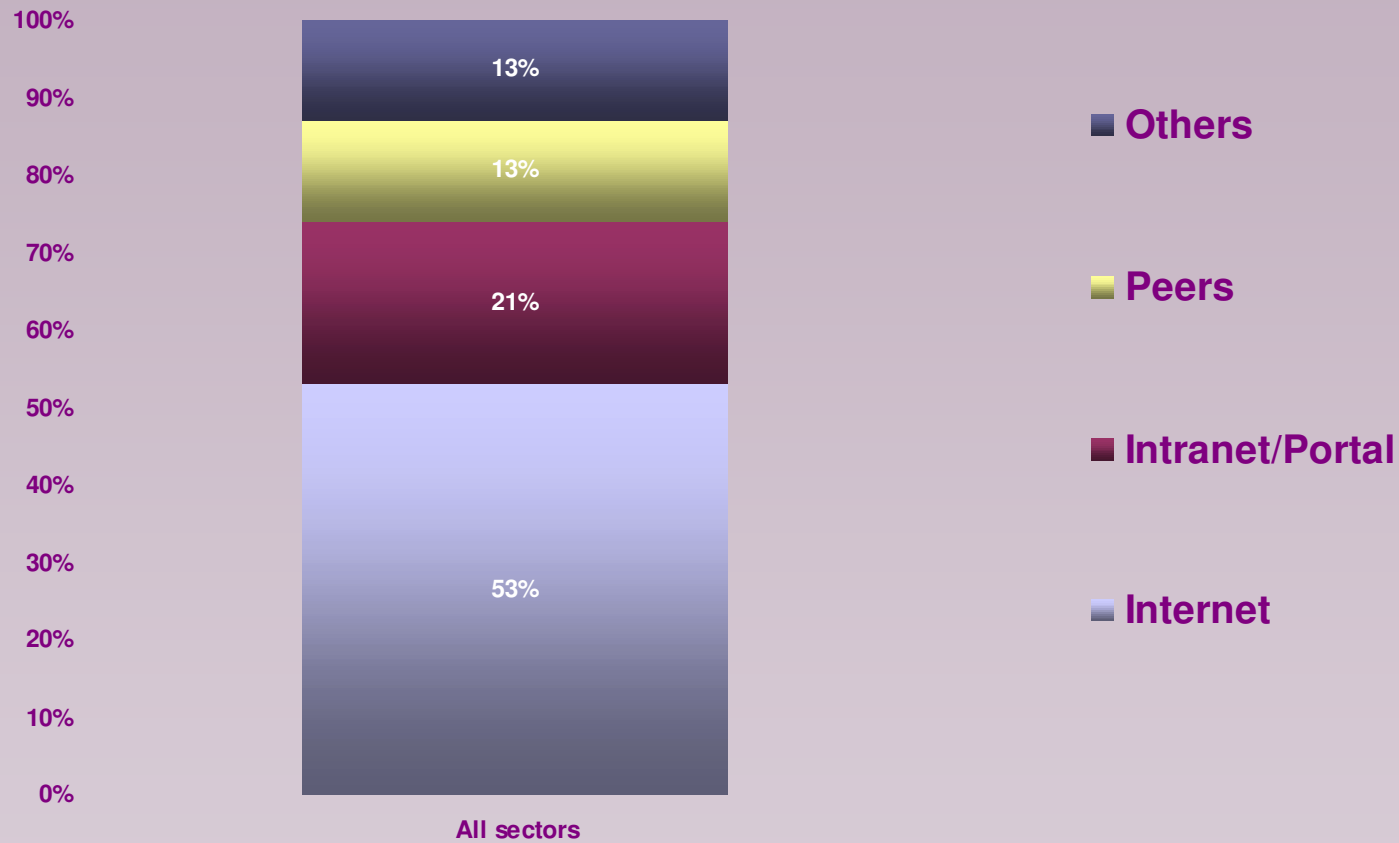
Time Spent Using Information (all sectors)

◆ Total Hours per Week



Then = September 2004 through January 2005; Now = February 2006 through April 2007.
Source: Outsell's Information Markets and Users Database

Where Users go for Information



Search failure rate

- Search failure rates for all corporate segments combined is:
 - 31% internet
 - 30% intranet

Starting

- Clear aims (why) and objectives (how) which support the business goals
- Support from senior level, decision makers, budget holders

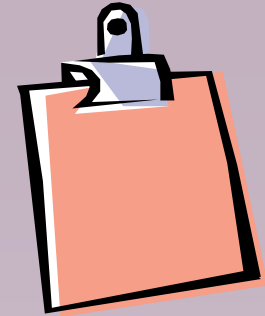
BUT

- Communicate effectively
- Be prepared to take action

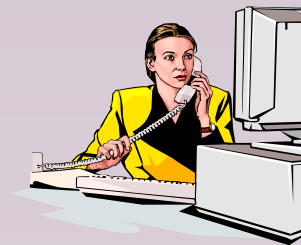
Types of audit

- Info audit can be large (organisation) or small (department)
- Address one issue
- Can focus on soft issues – how people communicate and share information
- Should result in a series of achievable recommendations

Methodologies



- Data collection
 - Existing sources
 - New information via: Interviews, focus groups, questionnaires
- Information on
 - Data
 - Use of information
 - Internal and external relationships
 - Benchmarks



The questions

Current situation

- Types of information: origin, format, storage
- Metrics: how long, how many, how much
- Sharing information: from whom, to whom
- Comments on quality, frequency, reliability
- Barriers, enablers

Ideal situation

- New requirements, different delivery channels, different priorities

Analysis

- Depends on questionnaire design, outcomes required, time available
- Think about presentation of results

- Don't measure just because you can
- Don't measure what you are not prepared to change/address

Assets lists or registers

- Type of information
- Origin/owner
- Format
- Location/availability
- Frequency
- Distribution/access
- Retention
- etc etc etc

Web-based hierarchical
presentation
Included in LMS
Second Life

What about Web 2.0 technologies?

- Collaborative
- Ephemeral
- Dynamic
- Value changes
- Personal choice
- Serendipitous

Web 2.0 Assets

- Knowledge of individuals is the asset
- Connecting people to people is vital
- Develop 'champions' in specific areas and provide pointers to the expertise
- Exploit collaborative tools and practices
- The most useful sources will become evident after time

Outcomes

- Clear and honest view of the state of the information environment
- Register of information available
- Identify good practice and enablers
- Identify gaps, barriers, redundancies and duplication
- Identify new skills/training required

The evidence

- Costs and savings
- Metrics – longitudinal studies to measure performance improvement
- Feedback
- Case studies, anecdotes
- Risk analysis
- Insurance

Develop and publicise a collection of your own routine measures which can support business activities

Unexpected benefits

- Develop a common understanding throughout the organisation (eg knowledge management, information services)
- Raise the profile and engage a wide variety of people in the organisation
- Releases energy for change

So therefore can...

- Demonstrate value and cost
- Prioritise services
- Re-purpose existing information and knowledge
- Develop relationships
- Raise profile
- Confident information provision
- Guide IT investment
- Develop information policy and strategies which inform and support business objectives

Recurring issues - 1

Support from senior management not as enthusiastic as hoped

Issue 1 – Support from senior management

- Resources
 - New space for knowledge sharing
 - Software
 - Training
- ‘Management issues’
 - Individual staff performance/roles
 - Espousing behavioural change eg using intranet or allowing time to learn and share knowledge
 - Re-organisation of functions – too many problems
 - Admitting failure

Recurring issues - 2

Technology-led projects eg Intranet have not been successful, largely due to problems relating to content

Issue 2 – Content management

- IT responsible
- A CMS will solve the problem
- Lack of awareness
 - of time to prepare content
 - of need to manage quality
 - of skills of information staff
- Lack of training for content owners

It's not their fault!

- Skills in negotiating and advocacy at an early stage
- Willingness to collaborate and form alliances with other departments
- Managing change
- Marketing and promoting the knowledge and skills of information staff
- Marketing and promoting the services offered

Thank you

Shaida Dorabjee
SD Information Services

sdorabjee@sdis.demon.co.uk



Stand 734