ABSTRACT:
Blondie is the student portal at the Indian Institute of Management Lucknow, available at the IIML Intranet. It was to offer content to meet the requirements of various user groups – students (PGP1 and PGP2), and faculty. The major selling point of Blondie in the initial days was its positioning as a one-stop shop for all student needs. The case described here highlights the design and architecture of the KM platform for the student community (in a premier Business School of India), and focuses on its marketing efforts – attracting new users, retaining logged in users, and promoting revisits.

Keywords: knowledge management, architecture of KM portals, intranet bulletin boards, management education

Introduction
The case described in this paper was written based on personal interviews of the designers and coordinators of BlondieWebteam), and printed/ online material available within the Institute. The data for this case was collected between December 2002 and February 2003.

As networking and computing technology matured at the Indian Institute of Management Lucknow (IIML), the network infrastructure also expanded from the erstwhile centralized Computer Centre (CC) and faculty/ staff offices to include student hostels and faculty residences. Add to this, the increasing technology dependence among the students, both for curricular and extra-curricular activities. The internet is a critical source of information for students who are expected to undertake a significant amount of pre-class preparation on real-life cases, and work on numerous projects and assignments based on primary and secondary data. Also, the internet helps them research on potential recruiters, and equip themselves with the critical skills and competencies to perform effectively in the campus placement process. “Blondie” is a portal for the IIML student community available through the campus-wide internal computer network that gives them access to all these resources at one place (http://192.168.1.26) within the IIML intranet. Also, as IIML expanded the batch size of students to 240 students in the 2001-03 batch (17th batch), email became the most efficient and effective way of communicating among students. This increasing technology dependence and the expansion of the network helped Blondie become an integral part of a student's life.

Srikanth, graduating from the Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow (IIML), at the end of his 2-year Post Graduate Diploma in Management, was concerned about the sustainability of his brainchild, Blondie. He has been a key member of the Web team, a voluntary group of students with technical know-how to administer Blondie. Rajat, another member of web team however, was not as skeptical about the sustainability of Blondie. He believes that since users have gotten accustomed to using Blondie and are currently using it extensively, it is difficult for such habits to be change. The issue in his mind however is whether the new web team consisting of the juniors (18th batch students) can face the future challenges or not.

The web team (managers of Blondie) did share some major concerns - (1) whether the juniors would devote the kind of quality and quantity of time that they as founding fathers of the portal invested; (2) what measures will they take to attract and retain traffic to the portal; (3) how and what route will they take to expand the scope of Blondie to include other user segments like the faculty and staff members; and (4) what shape will the portal take as Blondie ventures into serving the alumni segment through the Extranet?

The IIM Lucknow Intranet
The Indian Institute of Management Lucknow (IIML), established in 1984, is one of the six premier national management institutes set up by the Government of India (see http://www.iiml.ac.in). The major educational programmes offered by IIML include the Two-year Post Graduate Diploma in Management (known as the Post Graduate Programme, or PGP) equivalent to a Masters in Business Administration, and the Fellow Programme in Management (FPM) equivalent to a Ph.D. degree.

The batch size of PGP students grew from 30 for the first batch to 240 in 2001 for the 17th batch. When the batch–size was smaller, it was easier for both the students and faculty members to communicate with each other. They could meet and share their thoughts in the places like the library and the mess, apart from the formal routine inside the class rooms. Organizing group work (which typically included numerous meetings; allocation of roles and responsibilities for collecting and collating data, field visits, etc.; review of progress; and final report and presentation preparation) was easier in smaller batch-sizes. But as the strength of PGP increased to 180 and subsequently to 240, it became difficult for students to even know everyone personally by name. The community events like student parties started rolling separately in each hostel (currently all students stay in 13 hostels inside the campus) instead of earlier practice of attending events at a common place like the students’ mess.

Apart from the usually rigorous educational routine, students also take part in various co-curricular & extra-curricular activities. Apart from sports and recreation, students take active part in various special interest groups (SIG). These SIGs could include administrative councils like the Students' council handling academics, mess and sports; event organizing bodies like the Index and the Manifest committees; or functional interest groups like the Special Interest Group in Finance (SIGFI) or Infiniti. Every committee/ SIG has representation of both PGP1s (first year students) and PGP2s (second year students). A total of 21 such committees were working in...
The communication problem took different shades in the first and second years. During the first year where all courses are compulsory, every student is part of one of the four sections (of sixty students each). Every section has its Class-Representative (CR) whose prime responsibility is to interface with the faculty on behalf of all the students in the section. His responsibilities include, among several others, the announcements for assignments, projects & their submissions. Quite often, the announcements by the CR tend to be time-bound messages like class rescheduling. The notice board outside the class room was the most effective tool to broadcast such messages that were relevant to that particular section. The common practice was for the CR to create a Yahoo! Group for the section, so that he/ she did not have to manage a long distribution list. This also enabled individual students of that section to communicate with all other students within his section. The major issue with this mode of communication was that the mailboxes of the students (that are of limited size) would get filled up very soon.

During the second year, the issue gets more complicated as the students get distributed into several elective courses. A student is required to take a specified minimum number of electives during every term, totaling to about 17 credits (courses offered at IIML are either of one credit or half-credit) across three terms. Organizing group work, coordinating joint projects, and sharing limited resources (like reference books) become a major issue with this increasing complexity.

A typical student, either a PGP1 or a PGP2, spends very little time in the hostel room. Apart from the class duration, most of the time is spent in the library, computer center, or in the shopping/ sporting/ recreation centers. Also, when students have to work in groups, they tend to choose one of their hostel rooms to conduct meetings. Therefore, it is very difficult to use telephone as a means to contact a student in his hostel - very few of his hostel mates would know his academic schedule, or his whereabouts. Email is by far the most effective means to get some information across to a student.

The Birth of Blondie

IIM Lucknow has a tradition of naming its servers after Indian rivers like Ganga, Gomti, Yamuna, etc., and characters from famous cartoon strips, like, Dilbert, Dogbert etc. Blondie was the name of the server on which the intranet site was hosted originally, and the name 'stuck'. The Web team considered a change in the name, but decided against it, as there was significant brand recall and equity attached to it among the students.

Blondie was designed as the community portal for IIML available through the intranet (http://192.168.1.26). It was to offer content to meet the requirements of various user groups – students (PGP1 and PGP2) and faculty. Blondie, in the beginning, intended to provide articles and information mainly related to academics. But one of the prime concerns in the student community was that of accessing their email. Students were expected to login to “Dilbert,” a UNIX/ Linux server where the mailboxes were stored. People who had little or no technical background were facing difficulties in using telnet (an MSDOS application to login to a UNIX/ Linux server) to read their mails, and using FTP for accessing attachments and files. So, Blondie began providing an easy windows-based interface to access email accounts. Traffic into Blondie started growing because of the easier and user-friendly interface, but still fell short of the projected/ expected levels.

Ashish Saxena (PGP 2002) came back to campus from a European B-school where he had gone for the exchange program by the end of the year 2001. His exposure to the intranet there at the European University charged him to incorporate several of those elements in Blondie’s repertoire of services. Soon after, the Web team consisting of Raghu, Ashish and Srikanth started working on a new version of Blondie. A new look Blondie was launched in early 2002. One another benchmark for Blondie was the much publicized Extranet at the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (IIMC, see www.iimcal.ac.in). This group of Web team members continuously kept adding a host of new features on Blondie.

Making Blondie A Way Of Life At IIML

The major selling point of Blondie in the initial days was its positioning as a One-Stop shop for all student needs. Without the Blondie, a typical student would have to login with his username and password several times while using the computing resources at the Computer Center (CC). For instance, one would have to login to the PC and the Windows NT server, for checking mail through telnet, for accessing files through FTP, for printing documents (into the print server), etc. Also, one would have to logout from as many places, as the computers in the CC were public access, and anybody else could access the same PC subsequently. What Blondie did was to get the user login once into Blondie, and provide him/ her with all the services under one roof. Figure 1 depicts a typical homepage of Blondie.
In order to provide the users with content that is relevant, dynamic, and current, they targeted two major sets of content generators in the campus - the PGP1 CRs and the coordinators of various SIGs. The CRs were given the space and administrator rights to post various class announcements like class rescheduling, group formations, and assignment submissions. These announcements were earlier done through email to the section yahoo groups id. Blondie provided them with a platform that was convenient, did not clog the users' mailboxes, and could as current as possible. Another feature of this notices was that Blondie was intelligent enough to understand from the login id, whether the user belonged to PGP1, PGP2, or faculty/staff. Depending on this, the homepage content would be customized. For instance, a PGP1 belonging to Section A would be able to see only messages that are posted by the Section A CR, and not all other CRs. Of course, he/she will have access to messages meant for all PGP1s, all PGP2s, and all users. This attracted and locked in students, especially the PGP1s, as they had to access these announcements frequently. It was to the credit of Blondie, that the 18th batch CRs did not create any Yahoo groups id for their sections, and chose to depend on Blondie for all their announcements.

Similarly, coordinators of various committees and SIGs were also given the space and rights, to enable them upload their latest announcements and information about their specific SIGs. For instance, competitive events like Index shifted all their announcements about submission deadlines to Blondie, and that locked in almost the entire batch of 17th and 18th batch students. Slowly, as more and more committees and SIGs shifted their announcements to Blondie, they were provided with separate spaces on the server, known as Message Boards. The message boards were provided only to those committees/SIGs who had dynamic content, and committed to update their contents regularly and maintain currency of contents. The administrators were expected to insert the expiration date of all messages posted, so that the messages are deleted as they become obsolete. Again, the specific mix of the message boards would be based on what events are current in campus, rather than all SIGs/committees maintaining their message boards all the time. This ensured greater relevance and currency of the content. Figure 2 depicts typical message board contents on the Blondie homepage.

![Blondie homepage](image-url)
Providing the CRs and SIG coordinators with administrator rights ensured that the contents were updated regularly, enhancing the quality perception of Blondie, thereby increasing the number and frequency of Blondie. As of now, on an average, every PGP1 logs into Blondie at least once in a day, and every PGP2 logs into Blondie at least 2.5 times a day.

Another major effort was the popularizing of Blondie as the destination for "Lost and Found" notices. Most of these notices were earlier posted in the mess notice board, and due to the clutter there, it was totally ineffective. But when students realized that "everyone" logged in to Blondie, slowly all the "Lost and Found" notices shifted to Blondie. Now, there are no "Lost and Found" notices anywhere else - all of them find their way to Blondie.

Getting students visit Blondie frequently was not sufficient alone. For Blondie to be successful, it was important that users remain logged in to the server for extended periods of time, rather than log in, check the contents that interest him/ her, read mail, read announcements, etc., and log off. A music server was introduced to retain users within Blondie till such time they worked on anything at the CC. Streamed music, rather than downloadable files was preferred to ensure that users don't download the files and listen to them offline. Another less successful initiative to retain users logged in to Blondie was the offering of a games server (The Khiladi Server). The Web team had to be content with downloadable games, and could not introduce online games, as that required a separate server to handle the load.

A popular channel on Blondie is that of academics. This channel offers class room presentations made by the professors and students, information related/ relevant to term papers and assignments, and other such content. This channel also has links to course homepages maintained by some faculty members, that has all the links, material, and announcements related to that particular course. Quite understandably, this channel is in heavy demand during their mid-term and end-term examinations.

Another popular space on Blondie is the Discussion Forum, or just "Forum." In the forum, users could post/ submit there articles, views, and opinions about contemporary topics related to several themes, viz., academics, notices, virus alerts, sports, placements, news, music, movies, and "for sale." The messages that are posted on Forum are threaded and archived for future reference. This user-generated content has been one of the major attractions on Blondie, and has been instrumental in attracting and retaining students' interest. The various discussion forums offered by Blondie include, achievements, best status message, electives, current events like annual budget, sports events like the FIFA World Cup, PGP1s, Placements (Placecom notices and preparatory material), and student affairs (read "parties"). Figure 3 depicts a typical Forum space.
A significant issue with the Forum is its administration. Currently, all the messages posted to the Forum are screened by the Web team members before being ultimately posted. There are two reasons for this screening by the Web team. Firstly, the notices/messages need to be in a specified format for it to be effective. For instance, the norm for a "Lost and Found" is that it should have "what is lost" and "whom to contact" on the subject line itself. When messages do not conform to such norms, the Web team members edit such messages and post them on the respective notice boards. The second reason for the Web team screening of messages is the level of maturity expected from the users. Srikanth, for one, does not believe that the Blondie users are mature enough to be given this facility of directly posting messages. It has been found that some time, people forget to logout of the machine that they were working in the CC, and leave. Such cases are invitations for mischief and pranks. Some of them are well-natured and are made in good humor, but some other such pranks could hurt others' sentiments as well. For instance, when the "Lost and Found" notice board was launched, they got messages like "I lost my heart; finders please keep it with you!"

Another service – Instant messaging (IM), was an instant hit on Blondie. It’s a messaging service, that could transmit instant messages, but one could not see/store earlier messages as most chat applications. It works as a sort of SMS, which is primarily used to communicate short messages.

As the number of students grew and the places where they could be found spread, people found it more and more difficult to locate other students. This need is felt acutely when a particular student would be part of 5-7 group assignments as well as be a member of 3-4 event management committees, and the availability of every member in each meeting is unavoidable. IM facilitated this coordination as people logged in to Blondie could be located, and it was possible for users to even specify a status message, that sent out specific instructions to others. Typical status messages used for locating others include, "Have you seen Vishal Verma?", or "Please get Deepak Gaur to talk to me." On the other hand, people wanting to be located (if they did!) could specify their status message as something like "I am currently in the CC - any MCT group member looking for me?" In order to increase the usage of status messages, Blondie awarded the best status message award to users displaying creative and effective status messages. It also helped increase traffic and worked as a promotion for Blondie.

IM was intended to retain the users within the site (keeping him logged in) by providing him/her a very useful service, to contact his peers/group mates. Figure 4 shows a typical screenshot of the IM window at Blondie.
IM aspires to spread out interactivity among the users, primarily user to user chats. The Web team sees a day when IM would be the tool by which faculty would chat with students in the line of celebrity chats on popular websites like the www.indiatimes.com (for instance, the Director, PGP Chairman, Placements Chairman, etc. answering students concerns online).

Another habit amongst the students is the online subscriptions to various comic strips - the most popular ones being Dilbert, Garfield, Hagar the Horrible, and Dennis the Menace. People had to access different sites to view these cartoon strips. Blondie, going with its "one-stop shop" quickly understood this need, and provided them with a new comics server, that provided them all the popular ones under one roof. The download page in Blondie provides for widely sharing popular files (like Power point presentations relating to academics or placements, music files, or common applications like the Winzip or Acrobat reader).

Blondie always opted for open source software to optimize the technical and financial resources. Because of its free availability, LINUX was a better choice over the other available options. Even in the case of applications like the IM, Blondie managers chose to download freely available solutions and customized them to the requirements, rather than development of a solution. This was because of the time consumed in developing a new solution, which was obviously not available with them, and secondly, even if one were to have the time and skills, it is not worth spending the effort in development, as a management graduate he/ she is not expected to hone his technical skills at this juncture.

Marketing Of Blondie

There were three main issues with at marketing of Blondie:

(a) to attract the users who are not using Blondie;

(b) retaining the users who log in to Blondie for longer periods of time; and

(c) prompting the existing users to access it again & again.

The initial marketing of Blondie began with awareness campaigns. The URL of Blondie was publicized by sticking it on the various offline notice boards and Blondie was made the default browser home page in all the computers of the CC. There were teaser campaigns - posters designed and displayed before every launch/ new addition. For the PGP1s, the Web team delivered a presentation during their formal induction (Overtures) programme into the institute, and briefed them on how to use it, its features etc. This helped Blondie's brand recall significantly. Another significant move was the locking in of the PGP1 CRs. This move ensured that all class related announcements were to be seen only at Blondie, and therefore every PGP1 had to necessarily login to Blondie at least once a day.

There were retention campaigns too. New features were added frequently, contests like the "best IM status message" and "Blondie IM hall of fame" were held to popularize the use of Blondie. As the discussion forums matured, there were discussions on topics relevant to the PGP1s – placements, academics etc. The count on how many times an article has been accessed was perceived by the users as an unofficial contest of how popular that particular piece is, and this brought in quite a lot of quality content. The various corners for several committees and SIGs were created and activated from time to time. Even Jigyasa, which was once seen as a competitor for Blondie was provided with a link through Blondie, living up to its "one-stop shop" image. Standardized content like the music server was updated frequently. Both formal and informal feedback was taken from the users frequently to improve the look and feel of the site.

The Web team continuously set goals for themselves and assessed them from time to time. Initially, the goal was to have 100 users logged in to Blondie at the same point of time, when they started with the web interface for email and FTP. Later, when the present version of Blondie was launched, the goal is now shifted to getting every user log in at least twice a day.
As the PGP2s (17th batch) were about to graduate, they had a lot of issues about the sustainability of Blondie in mind. When the new Web team takes over, the first issue will be would they be as committed to the cause as the founder members were? Would they devote the same time and energy in maintaining and promoting Blondie, given their heavy academic commitments? Would it be possible for the outgoing Web team to share all informal feedback about the contents and policies of the site to the new Web team? With all this increase in complexity and services, would it still be possible for Blondie to be administered by a voluntary group of students, the Web team? Or would it be necessary to outsource the maintenance of Blondie to a professional group of people? If so, would they understand the requirements and needs of the PGP students?

There have been demands from the Alumni affairs committee to the Web team for the provision of a web-based platform for the alumni spread across different corners of the globe to interact with the students. It could be done through the implementation of an IIM Lucknow Extranet like those that exist at the IIM Calcutta or the IIT Kharagpur. The issue is to see what shape Blondie will take as the extranet is implemented.

Clearly, there is a lot of skepticism in the transition and the story is yet to be finished.

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Architecture and Education, Cambridge, Educational Aims and Values through Architecture, Seminars. Schools of Tomorrow but Rooted in Society â€” an Interview with Silvia Fehrmann of Berlinâ€™s HKW. An interview with Silvia Fehrmann, curator of HKW’s conference â€œSchools of Tomorrowâ€ on schools and society. Conference, HKW, John Dewey, schools of tomorrow, silvia fehrmann. Architecture Schools for Children. A list of organisations running architecture schools for children. architecture with children, kids and design.Â Jennifer Singer is an architect and education design advisor. She has collaborated with students, teachers, parents, contractors, local authorities, governmentâ€¦ Shopping for Schools 2 â€“ Schools Advertising. ABSTRACT The Department of Architecture of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) is the pioneer institution imparting architectural education in Bangladesh. Top meritorious students with higher secondary education in science background are taught in this department. Compared to the curriculum in context of some other countries, visual art or related core subjects are always missing in the pre-university courses in Bangladesh.Â The outcome of this paper may help to formalize new objectivity in First Year Design Education in Architecture in a regular basis in context of Bangladesh. Bookmark. by Mohataz Hossain.