

## **Social Networks for Business**

*Making "Business Associates Smarter" by Leveraging  
Internal Enterprise Data Repositories for Semantic Searching*



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## Synopsis

Social Networking Applications are tools and technologies that make it easier to identify, meet, connect, share and collaborate with other appropriate colleagues. They can help you discover or even rediscover and locate the right people, build "knowledge" maps, develop locations of expertise and to collaborate with others across your network.

In its simplest form, a social network is a map of all of the relevant ties between the nodes being studied. These nodes can be projects, files, documents, people or even organizations. The ability to identify and create these ties or relationships is one of the keys to success in today's knowledge economy. Social networking enables collaboration, which is the key to productive business relationships. People, who have worked together on something that engages them, forge powerful relationships of trust and respect and productivity for their companies.

Social networks have always existed; the challenge for companies today is how to formalize this to gain a business advantage. Since social networks are adaptive and often complex systems, the goal is to develop tools that are 'invisible' and do not impede relationship-building and collaboration. The greatest challenge will be in making these "type" of tools and approaches applicable and "useful" to the business community.

Employees must be able to collaborate at all levels as demanded by the success of the business. A user must be able to develop social networks of their own work and data that may otherwise be hidden from them. Then they are able to develop knowledge and draw conclusions to help drive the business forward. The

need for social networking and collaboration is perhaps more obvious when discussing project teams and departments. Businesses today are not limited to these entities. Successful companies today require social networking and collaboration across teams, departments, sites and in fact, at an international level.

Ardenno Town Hall® is an excellent example of a Web 2.0 social networking solution that has been specifically designed to address collaborative business needs.

## Introduction

Software solutions supporting social networks have been popularized these past few years by systems such as Facebook and MySpace. They have enabled individuals to “share” and “find” personal details with and from others. The use of internalizing social networking for a business seems so obvious. A business may well be able to gain extensive insight into knowing the interests and levels of expertise of their employees.

An important part of a social network is user bookmarking that helps create community-based popularity ranking. Successful social networks are comprised of millions of independent users who apply their own “thoughts” and “opinion” bookmarks. Digg and del.icio.us are two examples of social network bookmarking services that help create community-based popularity ranking that are widely used today. These bookmarks help enhance the ‘social aspect’ of content, so a user gets a sense of what others have found to be useful and interesting.

In the business world, bookmarking content by users is something that just does not occur enough to be helpful and useful. Think about it, we have all had Microsoft Office for years. When was the last time any of us added a bookmark to a documents? How many of us even know what a bookmark is for? If you are “the one” who does use the properties in Office, does anyone else in your group leverage this property content? How do they do that? The key in the business environment is being able to bookmark information without having to add this task to users. If you make it a “mandatory practice”, failure awaits.

Turning your volumes of existing data into greater value and intelligence for users is exciting and thought provoking. Think of this approach as a “Web 2.0” with the business as the recipient of data and information value.

## Social Network’s for Business are Different

The ultimate success of a social network is based on a simple measurement. Do people use it? Since, social networks are pure opt-in models, the tool/site will only gain adoption if it is easy to use and add value to a user. Business social networks, in this respect are different, in that selfishness is often the motivator.

Many software projects have failed because users have not embraced them. They fail because they require users to change their ways. Inexplicably, the user often ends up with more work after the new system. So, how is it really better for the individual (me)? We all are selfish, so you must always answer the following question for the user, “*what’s in it for me?*” The goal is to embrace and indeed to exploit this behavior.

Another key difference between traditional consumer social networks and those of business is that in business the social networking and collaboration tools deployed must not compete with existing enterprise systems but rather must compliment them.

## Ardenno Town Hall

Ardenno Town Hall is such a solution; it enables the utilization of “knowledge communities” as a means to improving operational efficiency. The creation of an Ardenno “knowledge community” in Town Hall provides increased content relevancy and a linkage between the available information and individuals across disparate data silos. Town Hall provides a multi-dimensional semantic search view of related files and information based upon indexed content, enhanced metadata and customer ontologies and/or taxonomies.

Ardenno's Town Hall provides the ability to view the relationship of users, files and database records in a multi-dimensional semantic search display. Town Hall uses purpose-built algorithms to logically structure and present content based on relevancy.

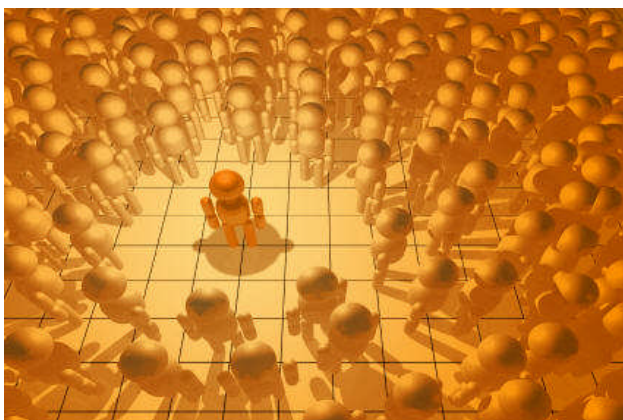


Figure 1

The visualization of a business community of “data” is what Ardenno Town Hall is all about. Figure 1 shows how within Town Hall a focused document (the center of town) transitions information relationships, from the “flat” or folder metaphor to a more useful multi-dimensional graphical display, allowing users to gain value from their internal data sources. Town Hall social networking and enhanced logical relevancy offers knowledge workers a way to provide “social structure” between information, individuals, knowledge and their organization.

Around the central document entity are displayed all the other database records and files that the current user has permission to see as defined by the company's security policy. The more relevant a file's content, the closer it is displayed to the entity center. Town Hall provides a clustered display of multiple relevant files in a single view (not page after page of irrelevant hits) and allows users to pan or “zoom” into a closer view for enhanced readability.

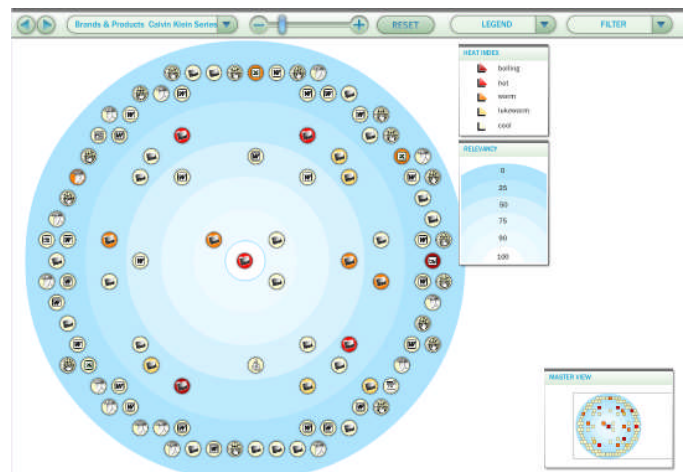


Figure 2

The icons of the various files and records are displayed in different colors based on their Ardenno Relevancy Heat Index™. Town Hall dynamically determines a file's Relevancy Heat Index based on advanced algorithms with a quantitative ranking.

Figure 3 shows details of a selected file, including its associated metadata. The Knowledge Heat Index is constantly changing based on the number of times that other users utilize this file, and the actions that they perform on it. The Heat Index rapidly becomes a very useful tool, as users quickly gain a visual indication of a file's "usefulness" to others within the organization.

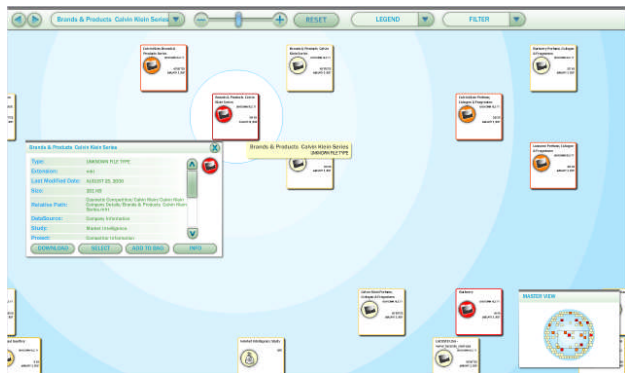


Figure 3

Town Hall provides a community-based way for improved collaboration by helping to quickly identify related files based upon their content, file name and associated Metadata layers.

Not only does Ardenno display the relationships between the data, records, users and files (Figure 4), it allows users to filter and data mine to instantly identify and extract key pieces of information. Once located, the information can be added to an Ardenno Knowledge Bag where the users can continue to collaborate on it and develop company intellectual capital.

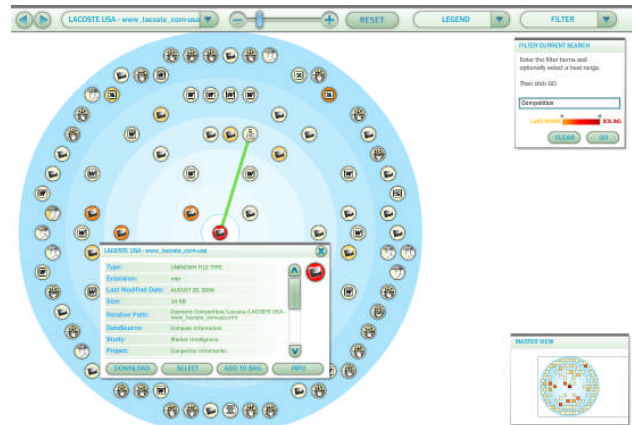


Figure 4

## Summary

Social networking applications oriented around the data and users of organization makes it easier to identify, share and collaborate with others. It can help your business discover or even rediscover information, users, knowledge and build visual maps of expertise to share content with people in your trusted networks.

Ardenno's Town Hall is an excellent example of a Web 2.0 social networking solution to specifically address collaborative business needs.

Ardenno delivers a simple approach to make data more accessible and a way to find more value from the data when you find it. Thus, you are able to better leverage the information you've invested so much to create.

See for yourself how Ardenno can enhance your existing technology environment.

## Social Networking for Business: Web 2.0

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