

Governance Drill Down: Don't Forget About SharePoint WCM/Publishing!

Todd Ray, August 2014
toddray@alumni.stanford.edu

Executive Summary

In my May 2014 blog "[Critically Re-thinking Governance, Again: Modernizing How You Manage SharePoint](#)", I presented a framework for re-assessing SharePoint governance and adjusting it to new versions, delivery models (e.g. cloud) and other factors. Taking this a step further, this paper provides additional tools to assess your SharePoint governance in general and then addresses a particular focus area of interest to many of our core customers - that of how to govern intranet portal sites and the content that is published to them, including coverage of the new WCM/Publishing features in SharePoint 13.

Contents

Key Concept	Error! Bookmark not defined.
SharePoint Governance - The Basics.....	2
Simple Governance Taxonomy	2
Getting Started (or Re-Started) - Plotting a Course	3
Key Questions - Starter List.....	4
Governance Maturity.....	4
Developing a Strategy	5
Governance of SharePoint WCM/Publishing.....	5
What is SharePoint WCM/Publishing? Overview	5
Where Does Governance of SharePoint WCM/Publishing Come In?	6
Overview	6
Implementation Mechanisms	6
Roles, Responsibilities and Staffing (typical).....	7
Traditional governance topic areas to be defined for WCM/Publishing	8
List of SharePoint features to be considered in WCM/publishing governance plans (prior to SharePoint 13).....	8
SharePoint 13 WCM Considerations.....	9
How we can help.....	9

SharePoint Governance - The Basics

Governance is a very broad, deep and integrated subject area when it comes to initiatives related to SharePoint. Depending on your role and objectives, "SharePoint governance" (SPG) can mean anything from platform governance - to content governance - to service management - to how information is published and consumed. SPG can also include things such as training, adoption, value realization, etc.

At a basic level, however, proper SharePoint governance typically consists of:

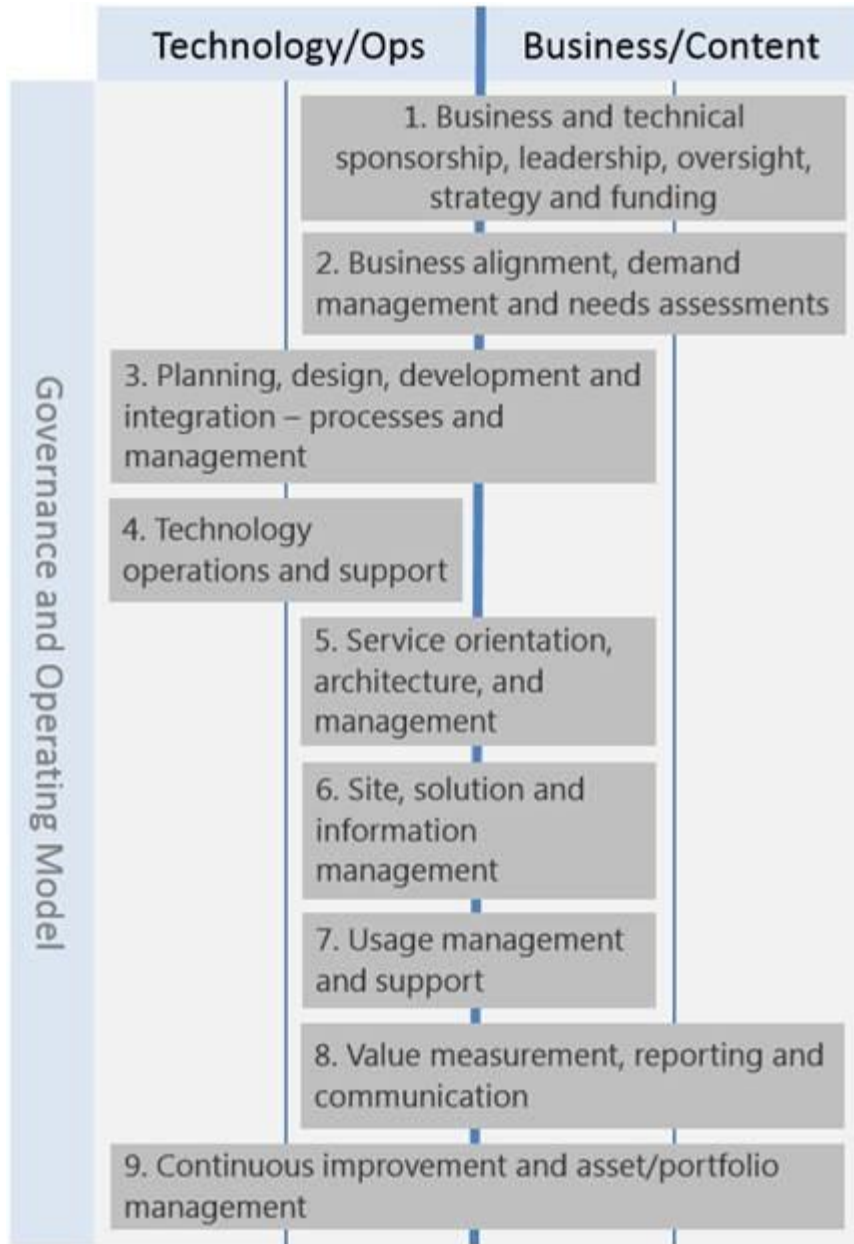
- Establishing the right functioning governance units, including roles, responsibilities and "operating models"
- Development of Governance Principles
- Significant governance "planning" (integrated with overall design planning) and documentation/specifications
- Establishment of standards/guidelines, policies and procedures
- Understanding of key governance processes integrated into the operating model that utilize the above
- Development of a "Governance Plan"
- Implementation through technical controls, communications, role-based training, monitoring and policy enforcement.

Approaches, of course, vary depending on scale of platform, solution type and governance mandate/culture.

Simple Governance Taxonomy

In terms of making sense of the broader governance domain, some people simply divide things up into "content" vs. "technology" governance (other analogous forms include "business" vs. "operational") and then talk about what's needed in each of those areas. This is a good start.

In fact, if you look at a common set of governance focus areas, they'll each live more or less in a business/content or technical/ops world, as shown in the diagram below.



(The blog: "[Critically Re-thinking Governance, Again: Modernizing How You Manage SharePoint](#)" goes into more detail on items 1-9 in the above graphic)

Getting Started (or Re-Started) - Plotting a Course

When looking at your own overall SharePoint governance, how do you assess where you are and where you want to go? To help you get started, a basic set of questions is provided below. Additional information can be found in the many excellent treatments of this subject published online and in books, articles, etc.

Briefing: Governance Drill-Down – Don't Forget About WCM/Publishing

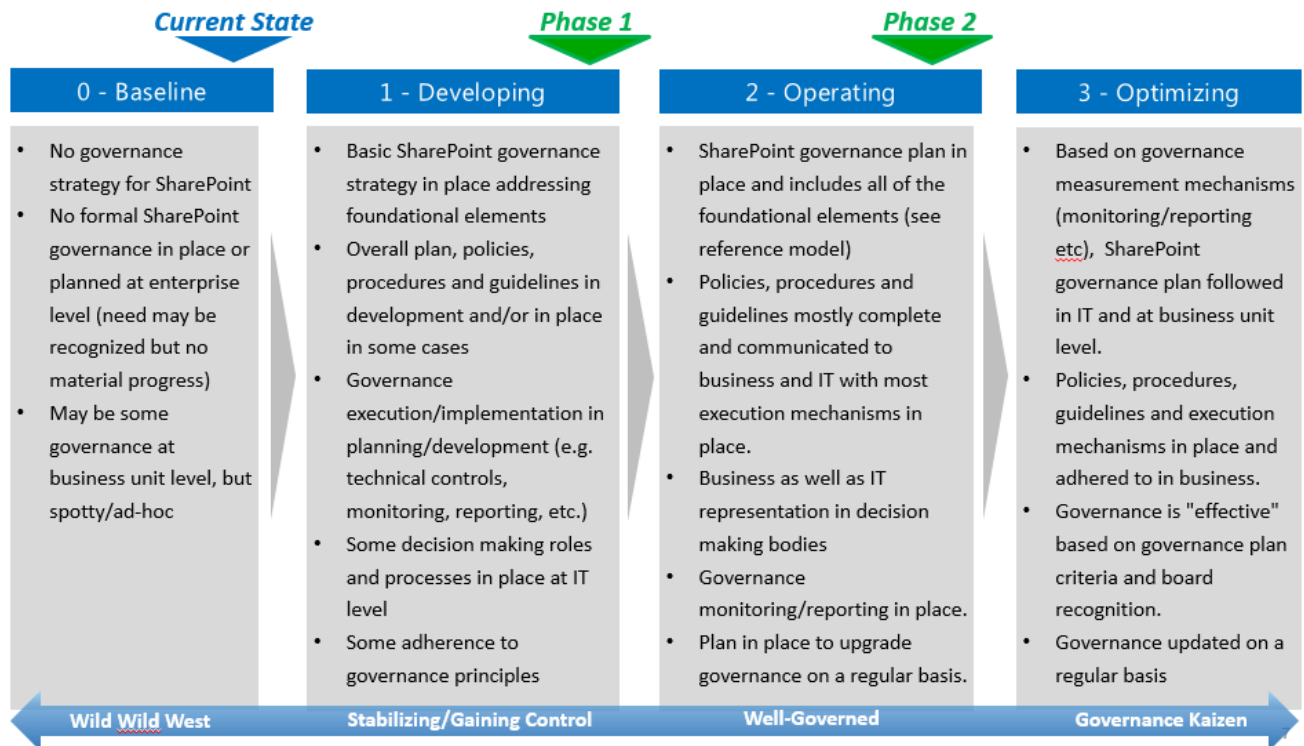
Key Questions - Starter List

1. Does a governance strategy exist?
2. Is there a governance board, committee? Otherwise ownership?
3. Does a governance plan exist? (e.g. for previous versions)
4. Overall governance mandate/culture (impacts principles)
5. Desired governance maturity (vs. current state) – see the "Governance Maturity Model" below
6. System elements of interest (see "Governance Taxonomy", above)
7. Which governance drivers exist? Corp standards? Principles? Guidelines? Overarching Policies? (E.g. HR, Legal, etc.)
8. Focus areas of interest
 - Platform (IT), Solution (e.g. CorpComms Portal) and/or Service (e.g. Collaboration) Management
 - Publishing/WCM
 - Business usage (user-generated content)
9. Cloud, on-premises or hybrid?
10. Infrastructure, application and end-user support - in-house or outsourced?
11. What needs work?
 - Principles and guidelines
 - Strategy/approach/roadmap
 - Operating model, org. structure and roles and responsibilities
 - Adoption, measurement and reporting
 - Policies, Processes and Procedures
 - Technology, solutions, services, publishing and content
 - Etc.

Governance Maturity

A "SharePoint Governance Maturity Model" is presented below for reference. This can be used to benchmark your current state vs. desired future state(s), typically achieved over time through a phased governance planning and implementation approach.

Briefing: Governance Drill-Down – Don't Forget About WCM/Publishing



Developing a Strategy

Once you've answered a few of these questions and assessed any needed progression, you should work with knowledgeable resources to determine what needs to be planned, built and implemented relative to what you are already doing. Typically this is done as part of a short "SharePoint Governance Strategy" project that coincides with otherwise project activities.

One specialized area often overlooked by those managing intranet portal-related initiatives is that of SharePoint WCM/Publishing Governance. Successful governance in this area requires attention to all the focus areas mentioned above plus additional considerations. These are highlighted in the next section.

Governance of SharePoint WCM/Publishing

The topic of governing SharePoint Web Content Management (WCM)/Publishing can be as narrow as just defining rules for pushing content to branded portal pages and/or as broad as providing rules for everything from site/page templates themselves to the content that is published to them (and the people and processes that are involved).

Here we'll take the broad view and list a few governance considerations related to the end-to-end scenario, including key roles and responsibilities that need to be considered when using SharePoint for branded intranet/portal sites.

We'll also cover some of the new features in SharePoint 13 that need to be considered when developing governance for this area.

What is SharePoint WCM/Publishing? Overview

- Broadly speaking, SharePoint WCM/Publishing starts with the process of customizing, configuring and deploying portal site templates, content pages, branding artifacts, content,

Briefing: Governance Drill-Down – Don't Forget About WCM/Publishing

metadata and (OOTB or custom) workflows (etc.) at various levels in a well-defined information architecture (IA) using various tools.

- Once the site(s), pages and publishing mechanisms are established, content authoring comes in, whereby pages/content are edited (including application of metadata and editing of properties) and content is published, employing built-in workflow (e.g. for approval), audience targeting, cross-site publishing, etc.
- You can support many publishing requirements with SharePoint's out-of-the-box support for check in, check out, versioning, publishing, and approval workflows for content and pages, but sometimes customization of these same elements is employed, utilizing custom features (for example) for how content is scheduled, propagated and updated in the production environment.
- Security has an impact on all phases of publishing (for example, who can edit content, who can approve content, and where is content authored (staging or production)).

Where Does Governance of SharePoint WCM/Publishing Come In?

Overview

At a high level, Governance covering this area typically involves the following elements:

- **Plan.** Overall governance plans (or those specific to WCM/publishing) should include documentation of related standards/guidelines, policies and procedures and roles/responsibilities related to WCM/Publishing.
- **Standards/Guidelines.** Standards should specify standards for content authoring (including authoring environments), content approval, workflows, deployment, security, audience targeting and customization.
- **Policies.** Policies should be created to enforce any standards related to publishing.
- **Procedures.** Should be developed for roles involving farm, web application, and site collection/site administration related to publishing, as well as content authoring/publishing performed by various defined roles.

Implementation Mechanisms

Implementation of stated governance plans, guidelines, policies, procedures, etc. relies on the following in typical environments:

- A structured implementation and establishment of capabilities and processes related to publishing
- Publication of related guidelines, policies and procedures on role-based resource/training sites
- Role-based training
- Enforcement through voluntary (manual) policy adherence, technical controls and monitoring/reporting (using OOTB or 3rd party tools)

Briefing: Governance Drill-Down – Don’t Forget About WCM/Publishing

Roles, Responsibilities and Staffing (typical)

Although this will vary considerably by organization (and within organizations), the following organizational entities and responsibilities are typically involved in some capacity*:

*Adapted from: <http://www.nngroup.com/articles/intranet-portals/>

Organizational Entity (typical)	Intranet Component	Responsibility
Portal steering team (made up of leaders from Communications, HR, IT, Marketing, business units, etc.)	Ongoing guidance and tactical decision making	Helps prioritize enhancements based on business value and manage the organizational and technical impacts of enhancements; meets monthly.
	Long-term guidance and strategy	Approves long-term strategy, allocates funding, and advocates for portal initiatives with the senior leadership team; meets quarterly or on demand.
IT	Platform and core service offerings	Custodian role, providing consulting on technology decisions and portal support. Strategic direction on overall platform. Service management and ops.
Internal Communication Department	Branded intranet/ corporate portal	Oversees and governs the user experience; trains new content owners; reviews sites to ensure compliance with standards; and consults on how sites can add more value, keep their content up to date, and implement new technologies or social features
	Corporate portal homepage	Manages the homepage content.
Site and content managers (throughout the business)	Department or business-specific sites on corporate portal plus collaboration sites	Responsible for the content on their sites and in the case of collaboration, site and content lifecycle management
End-Users	User-generated/contributed content	Compliance with appropriate use and other corporate guidance per HR and otherwise intranet policies.

Briefing: Governance Drill-Down – Don't Forget About WCM/Publishing

Additional notes:

- Though cross-department portal support is still common, intranet ownership responsibility is shifting towards corporate communications, with IT maintaining a technology support role.
- The most successful portal projects involve cross-functional business owners or steering committee members.

Traditional governance topic areas to be defined for WCM/Publishing

- Branding
- Asset classification (data security)
- Content Lifecycle management
- Asset/data protection
- Metadata Services
- Training
- Workflows
- Quota templates
- Site branding and templates
- Customization via SharePoint Designer, use of "Features", and integration with external data

List of SharePoint features to be considered in WCM/publishing governance plans (prior to SharePoint 13)

- Audience Targeting
- Audit Policies
- Automated content routing
- Backup and Restore
- Blocked File Types
- Branding
- Business Connectivity Services
- Compliance and Audit Reporting
- Content Organizer
- Content type management
- Content type sharing across farms (content type syndication)
- Customization and/vs. configuration
- Data Connection Libraries
- Document IDs
- Document Libraries
- Document sets
- Drop-off libraries
- External Lists
- Information Rights Management
- ILM via Multi-stage Disposition
- Language Packs
- Large list Throttling
- Legal Holds
- Lists
- Managed Metadata Services
- Metadata-driven navigation
- Mobile Access
- Multi-stage disposition
- Office Web Apps
- Quota establishment, enforcement and change
- Records Management and Retention
- Rich Media Management and Support
- Search
- Self-service site creation
- SharePoint Designer
- Site collection auto-deletion (configurable at server, server farm and web app level)
- Site provisioning
- Site definition page detachment (breaks ability to control branding; master page and page layout enablement)
- Versioning
- Web Analytics
- Web Content Management/Publishing
- Web Parts
- Word Automation Services

SharePoint 13 WCM Considerations

SharePoint 13 provides a number of new WCM and mobility capabilities that need to be considered from a governance perspective. Here's 10 of the most prominent of these, each incorporating a number of new features as well as improving on existing ones:

1. UX/Branding
2. Web Content Management and Publishing
3. Device Targeting
4. Search/SEO
5. Digital Asset Management
6. Friendly URLs
7. Analytics
8. Navigation
9. Translation/Multilingual Support
10. Mobility

Getting help

Firms offering Intranet strategy and user experience (UX) services typically provide:

- WCM/Publishing governance strategy
- SharePoint governance development for IT
- Operational capability development
- Business service re-orientation and management

These services include the following (typical):

- Documentation of current organizational governance standards and existing SharePoint governance
- Definition of preferred technical and business/content governance responsibilities
- Definition of the right functioning governance units, including roles, responsibilities and "operating models"
- Development of governance principles
- Establishment of standards/guidelines, policies and procedures
- Documentation of key governance processes integrated into the defined operating model
- Development of a "Governance Plan", including specifics related to implementation through technical controls, communications, role-based training, monitoring and policy enforcement

Please contact toddray@alumni.stanford.edu for more information.