



A buyer's guide

Intranet software for IT leaders



Table of contents:

When the intranet becomes an IT burden	5
How bundled tools create costly, hidden IT workload	6
The architectural requirements of a modern intranet	7
Diagnostic worksheet: Assessing your current intranet	10
Comparing intranet platforms side by side	11
Planning a successful intranet deployment	12
From scattered tools to a single unified employee hub	13

When digital transformation becomes digital sprawl

Most IT leaders aren't looking to add another platform. They're trying to untangle the ones they already have.

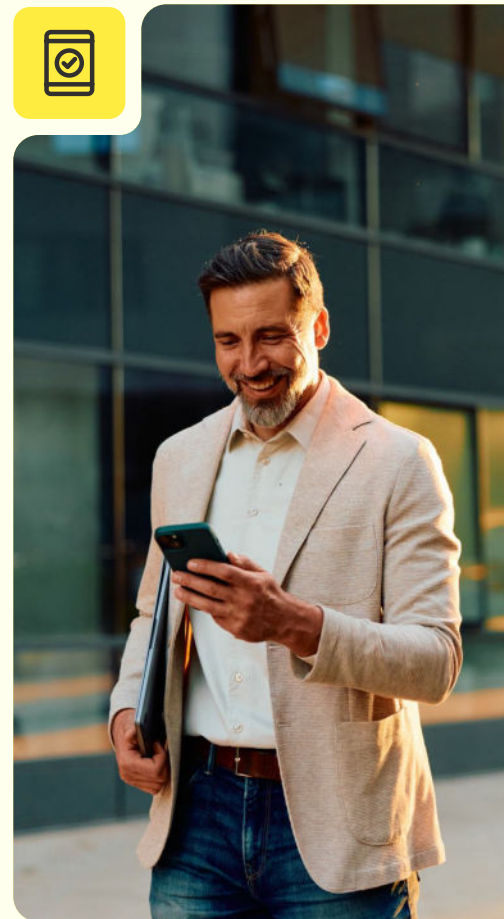
Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace often sits at the center of the IT ecosystem. Around it, SharePoint sites multiply, collaboration tools expand, frontline apps fill access gaps, and AI capabilities are added on top. Each tool serves a purpose, but over time, the stack becomes harder to manage and govern.

Even with more tools, employees still struggle to find reliable information. Workflows remain disconnected across systems, and governance becomes difficult to enforce. Instead of improving the digital workplace architecture, IT teams are pushed into firefighting mode, maintaining integrations and resolving tool overlap.

What started as digital transformation has turned into digital sprawl.

This guide is intended for IT leaders evaluating how to modernize or replace existing intranet and employee experience platforms, including SharePoint-based environments.

We'll explore why fragmentation happens, how legacy intranets burden IT teams, and what capabilities a modern intranet should provide. You'll also learn how to evaluate consolidation strategies so any new platform works with your core systems rather than around them.



More than 55% of IT leaders' time is spent maintaining existing systems instead of driving innovation.

SOURCE: DELOITTE

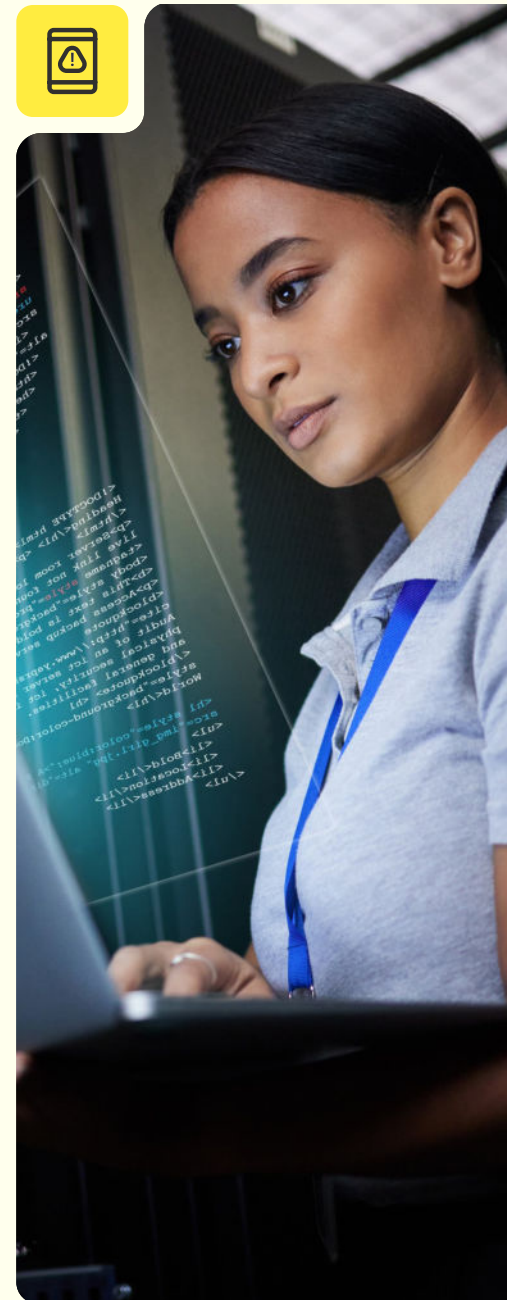
How digital workplaces become fragmented

Digital workplace fragmentation doesn't happen all at once. It creeps in over time as teams add new tools to solve immediate problems without revisiting how those systems fit into the overall architecture.

A few things usually drive that fragmentation:

- **Teams adopting their own tools:** When teams need to move quickly, they often adopt their own tools. Marketing may launch a collaboration platform while HR rolls out its own communication tool. Each solution addresses a specific need, but without coordination, overlapping capabilities quickly accumulate.
- **Mergers, acquisitions, and rapid growth:** M&A activity can introduce multiple intranets, repositories, and collaboration tools into the same organization. Instead of replacing them right away, companies often run them in parallel. In some cases, one system is removed quickly to reduce costs, without an appropriate consolidation or migration plan. Rapid growth can create similar challenges as teams add tools to support new regions or workflows.
- **Tools chosen without considering ecosystem fit:** Departments naturally focus on selecting the best tool for their specific use case. But how that tool fits into the broader tech stack isn't always considered, leaving IT responsible for maintaining systems that were never designed to work together.
- **AI deployed across disconnected tools:** AI is being introduced across collaboration platforms, search tools, and knowledge repositories. But when information sits in multiple systems with inconsistent permissions, AI often reveals governance and knowledge management gaps rather than fixing them. It can also introduce shadow IT and new security risks as teams adopt tools outside IT's oversight.

The intranet was intended to bring order to this complexity by acting as the main entry point to company information and resources. Instead, employees often end up navigating a patchwork of tools, sites, and systems to find what they need.



When the intranet becomes an IT burden

Legacy intranets often struggle because they were built for a different way of working.

Early intranets were designed for desk-based employees operating inside a corporate network. But today's workforce is far more distributed. Employees work across devices, locations, and roles, from office teams to frontline staff who rely on mobile access.

As expectations expanded, intranets grew far beyond their original purpose. What began as a simple information portal gradually took on responsibility for communications, knowledge management, employee resources, and access to workplace tools.

Microsoft SharePoint is one of the most common examples of how many intranets have evolved.

SharePoint is highly effective for document management and team collaboration. It's a Microsoft standard, familiar to IT teams, and widely used across enterprise organizations. With an "all-inclusive" licensing model, it's no surprise many CIOs choose to go all in. As a result, companies often cobble together Microsoft apps to approximate the functionality of an intranet—only to find the true cost extends well beyond what was originally anticipated.

After all, SharePoint was never designed to function as a complete, ready-to-run intranet platform. In fact, Gartner does not include SharePoint in its 2025 Magic Quadrant™ for Intranet Packaged Solutions (IPS), which evaluates out-of-the-box intranet platforms.

When organizations rely on SharePoint as a makeshift intranet, the experience often becomes a "Franken-intranet" stitched together from multiple sites, navigation structures, and integrations. The system technically works, but maintaining structure, governance, and usability places a growing burden on IT.



Keep SharePoint. Modernize the intranet.

Most organizations don't rip out SharePoint. They build around it:

- SharePoint remains in place for file storage
- A modern intranet integrates with Microsoft 365
- One employee hub brings communication, tools, and tasks together
- IT gains stronger governance, visibility, and control

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How bundled tools create costly, hidden IT workload

At first glance, bundled tools can look like the most cost-effective option. Platforms like Microsoft 365 and Google Workspace already include capabilities that seem close to what organizations need, whether that's using SharePoint as an intranet or relying on Teams and Viva for employee communications.

But “included” doesn't necessarily mean it's the best value.

Bundled tools are usually built for a specific function, such as document management or collaboration. When stretched into an intranet or employee experience platform, the costs tend to show up in:

- **Endless configuration work.**
IT teams spend significant time building navigation, page structures, permissions, and integrations.
- **Reliance on specialists.**
Updating content structures, adjusting permissions, or improving search often requires someone with deep platform expertise.
- **Shadow IT risk.**
When bundled tools don't meet employees' workflow needs, they often turn to unsanctioned tools, exposing company data to unmanaged systems.
- **Licensing fragmentation.**
Capabilities that appear bundled often require additional licenses when extended to frontline workers, contractors, or mobile employees.

Often, organizations force-fit bundled tools simply because they're already there. A built-in communication feature or knowledge portal may technically check the box, but still fall short of what internal communications, HR, and operations teams actually need.

At that point, the conversation shifts from license cost to total cost of ownership (TCO). The real consideration is how much work IT must do to make the platform function effectively as an employee hub.



The architectural requirements of a modern intranet

If bundled tools introduce hidden tradeoffs, the next question is what a better intranet architecture looks like.

For IT teams, the goal isn't simply replacing one intranet with another. It's choosing a platform that simplifies the digital workplace, integrates with existing systems, and supports the entire workforce without adding complexity.

A modern intranet should deliver the following capabilities:



A unified employee hub experience

What to look for:

A platform that brings together communication, knowledge, learning, and workplace tools in one personalized employee hub.

Why it matters for IT:

Consolidating these capabilities reduces tool sprawl, improves adoption, and provides a centralized employee experience platform that IT can manage and govern more easily.



Strong ecosystem integration

What to look for:

Native integrations with Microsoft 365, Google Workspace, and HR systems, along with prebuilt connectors and APIs for integrating other enterprise tools.

Why it matters for IT:

A platform that integrates across the ecosystem reduces reliance on custom integrations and lowers long-term maintenance requirements.



Built-in governance and lifecycle management

What to look for:

Clear permissions, defined content ownership, publishing workflows, and lifecycle management.

Why it matters for IT:

Governance is much easier to maintain when it is built into the platform rather than layered on through custom rules or manual processes.



Controlled self-service for business teams

What to look for:

A platform that brings together communication, knowledge, learning, and workplace tools in one personalized employee hub.

Why it matters for IT:

Reducing reliance on IT for routine updates lowers support overhead while maintaining architectural control.



AI orchestration across the digital workplace

What to look for:

A platform that brings together communication, knowledge, learning, and workplace tools in one personalized employee hub.

Why it matters for IT:

As AI capabilities appear across more workplace tools, employees often end up interacting with multiple assistants that rely on different information sources. Connecting AI to a shared knowledge foundation helps maintain consistency, security, and governance.



Access for every employee

What to look for:

A platform that brings together communication, knowledge, learning, and workplace tools in one personalized employee hub.

Why it matters for IT:

Supporting the entire workforce on a single platform reduces the need for separate communication tools, frontline apps, or shadow systems that can introduce additional security and governance risks.

With these capabilities, the intranet stops being just a publishing destination. It becomes a central employee hub where employees can access information, tools, and internal services in one place. And as organizations increasingly introduce AI across the digital workplace, having that foundation in place becomes even more important.



JEBSSEN & JESSEN

From launch to daily habit

Jebsen & Jessen Hamburg Group achieved 100% adoption and created a daily digital destination for 500 employees across 80+ countries with LumApps.

[Read the full story](#)

Avoiding AI sprawl in the digital workplace

AI is now a familiar part of the digital workplace, with assistants and generative capabilities appearing across many of the tools employees use to collaborate, find information, and complete everyday work.

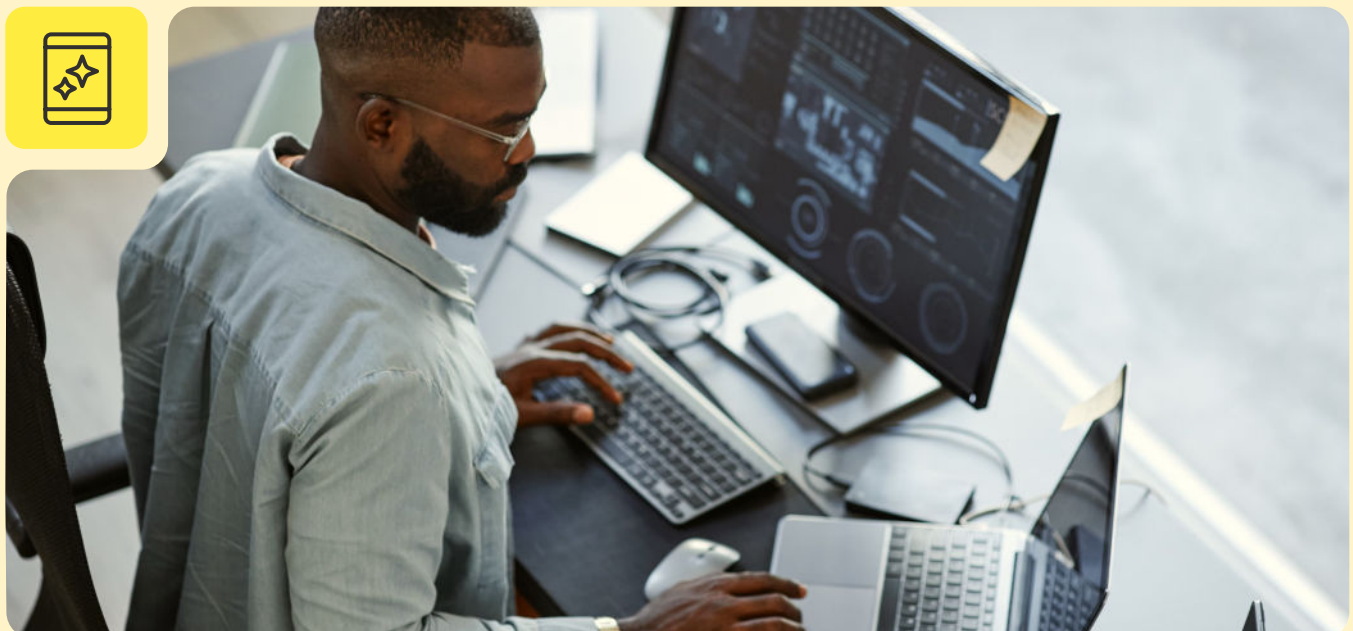
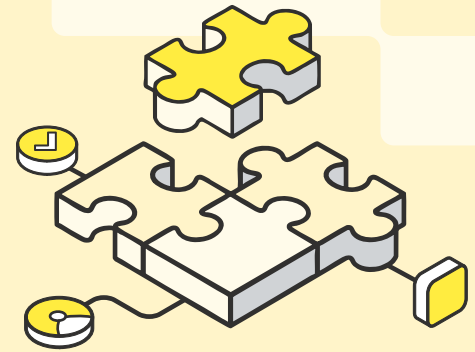
But without a connected architecture, AI can easily recreate the same fragmentation that led to digital workplace sprawl in the first place.

When AI features exist across multiple tools, employees often interact with different assistants that rely on different information sources. The answer someone receives may depend on where the question is asked. Governance and data oversight also become harder for IT teams to manage.

Solving this means connecting AI to the broader digital workplace. When AI can draw on trusted enterprise information and the systems employees already use, answers are more reliable and governance is easier for IT to maintain.

For organizations modernizing their intranet, architecture matters. If the digital workplace is already fragmented, AI will only widen the cracks.

Organizations getting the most value from AI aren't just adding assistants across tools. They're connecting AI to a shared foundation of enterprise knowledge and workflows, often through an employee hub that brings workplace systems together.





Assessing your current intranet

Once you understand what a modern intranet should support, the next step is evaluating how well your current environment delivers on those capabilities.

01 Information access

- Can employees reliably find policies, procedures, and operational resources? Y / N
- Is there a single source of truth for important company information? Y / N
- Does search help employees locate relevant information across systems? Y / N

02 Tool consolidation

- Does the intranet act as a central entry point for company information and workplace tools? Y / N
- Can employees access the tools they need without switching between multiple systems? Y / N
- Has the intranet reduced support requests related to finding information, tools, or internal resources? Y / N

03 Ecosystem integration

- Does the intranet integrate smoothly with your core systems and productivity tools? Y / N
- Do identity and permissions stay consistent across connected tools? Y / N
- Can integrations be maintained without ongoing custom development? Y / N

04 Governance and control

- Are content ownership, permissions, and publishing workflows clearly defined? Y / N
- Can governance policies be enforced without constant manual oversight? Y / N
- Is sensitive information protected through role-based access across employee groups? Y / N

05 Operational efficiency

- Can business teams manage routine content updates without relying heavily on IT? Y / N
- Has the intranet reduced support requests related to finding information or accessing tools? Y / N
- Are integrations and connectors stable and easy to maintain? Y / N

06 AI readiness

- Can AI tools access trusted enterprise knowledge across systems? Y / N
- Do AI responses respect existing permissions and governance policies? Y / N
- Is AI connected to enterprise knowledge and tools rather than isolated sources? Y / N

07 Workforce access

- Can both desk-based and frontline employees access the intranet from the same platform? Y / N
- Is the experience consistent across desktop and mobile devices? Y / N
- Do employees receive company updates directly instead of through informal channels? Y / N

How to use this diagnostic:

Answer each question with a “yes” or “no.” Your responses will quickly show whether your intranet simplifies the digital workplace or creates additional work for IT.

How to interpret the results:

A few “no” responses are normal. If they appear frequently, it may signal opportunities to simplify the digital workplace architecture.

Comparing intranet platforms side by side



Choosing an intranet platform involves more than evaluating publishing or content management features. The right platform should support the full workforce, connect core business systems, reduce operational overhead, and meet enterprise governance and security standards.

Use the matrix below to compare platforms across the capabilities that matter most in a modern intranet or employee experience platform.

Capability area	Evaluation question		Option 1	Option 2
Identity and access management	Does the platform support enterprise single sign-on (SSO) through Microsoft, Google, SAML 2.0, or OpenID Connect?	☒	☐	☐
	Can the platform enforce role-based access controls (RBAC) across content, integrations, and user groups?	☒	☐	☐
	Can user identities and permissions synchronize with enterprise identity providers such as Okta or Azure AD?	☒	☐	☐
Security and compliance	Is data encryption at rest and in transit enforced across the platform?	☒	☐	☐
	Does the vendor maintain SOC 2 Type II and ISO 27001 certification ?	☒	☐	☐
	Does the platform provide audit logs for governance and compliance oversight?	☒	☐	☐
Platform reliability and infrastructure	Does the platform provide enterprise uptime SLAs and resilient cloud infrastructure with built-in redundancy?	☒	☐	☐
	Are data backup and disaster recovery mechanisms built into the service architecture?	☒	☐	☐
	Does the platform provide ready-to-use intranet capabilities without requiring heavy customization or ongoing custom development?	☒	☐	☐
Enterprise ecosystem integration	Does the platform offer native integrations with Microsoft 365 and Google Workspace ?	☒	☐	☐
	Does the platform provide prebuilt connectors for enterprise applications such as Workday, Slack, Zoom, and Box?	☒	☐	☐
	Does the platform provide a unified employee hub that connects workplace tools, information, and tasks in one interface?	☒	☐	☐
Workforce access and targeting	Does the platform provide a secure mobile intranet experience for frontline or deskless employees?	☒	☐	☐
	Does the platform support audience segmentation and content targeting by role, location, or department?	☒	☐	☐
Knowledge management	Does the platform provide a centralized knowledge experience for policies, documentation, and operational resources?	☒	☐	☐
	Does the platform support enterprise search across intranet content and connected systems?	☒	☐	☐
	Does the platform support content governance across the full lifecycle, including ownership assignment, publishing workflows, taxonomy, and expiration policies?	☒	☐	☐
Automation and self-service	Does the platform support digital forms and workflow-based processes for common internal requests?	☒	☐	☐
	Can employees submit requests through a self-service portal instead of relying on email or manual tickets?	☒	☐	☐
	Can the platform integrate with ITSM systems such as ServiceNow or Jira to route and manage request workflows?	☒	☐	☐
AI capabilities	Does the platform include AI digital assistants that help employees find information or initiate tasks?	☒	☐	☐
	Can AI access built-in enterprise knowledge and connected systems to surface answers, recommendations, or actions?	☒	☐	☐
	Can AI operate within collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams or Slack while respecting identity permissions and access controls?	☒	☐	☐
Analytics and insights	Does the platform provide administrative analytics for platform adoption and usage patterns across employee groups?	☒	☐	☐
	Can administrators identify knowledge gaps, search trends, and content performance using built-in analytics?	☒	☐	☐

Planning a successful intranet deployment

Modernizing an intranet isn't just about choosing the right technology. It's an opportunity to simplify the digital workplace and reduce the number of disconnected systems employees rely on.

While IT typically leads the evaluation and implementation process, intranet deployments also involve internal communications, HR, and digital workplace teams. The platform must meet architectural requirements while still supporting day-to-day employee needs.



A few practical decisions can make the rollout smoother:

1. Audit existing content before migration

Most legacy intranets contain years of outdated pages, duplicate documents, and confusing navigation. Implementation is a great time to clean up outdated content and build a more useful knowledge structure.

2. Define ownership across departments

A modern intranet touches multiple teams across the organization. Establishing clear ownership for content, workflows, and integrations early helps keep the platform organized as adoption grows.

3. Configure where possible, customize carefully

Intranet platforms work best when they are configured using built-in capabilities and integrations rather than heavy customization. Teams that take this approach usually deploy faster and avoid creating complex systems that require ongoing IT maintenance.

4. Plan rollout across the full workforce

Organizations with both desk-based and frontline employees often introduce the intranet in phases tied to priority use cases. Mobile access, role-based targeting, and guided onboarding paths help employees across roles adopt the platform faster.

5. Use early adoption data to guide improvements

The first few months of usage often reveal where employees struggle to find information or complete routine tasks. Use these insights to refine navigation, expand integrations, and improve how information is organized after launch.

Three priorities for a successful intranet rollout:

1. Simplify how employees access tools and information
2. Connect the platform to core enterprise systems
3. Build governance that scales as adoption grows

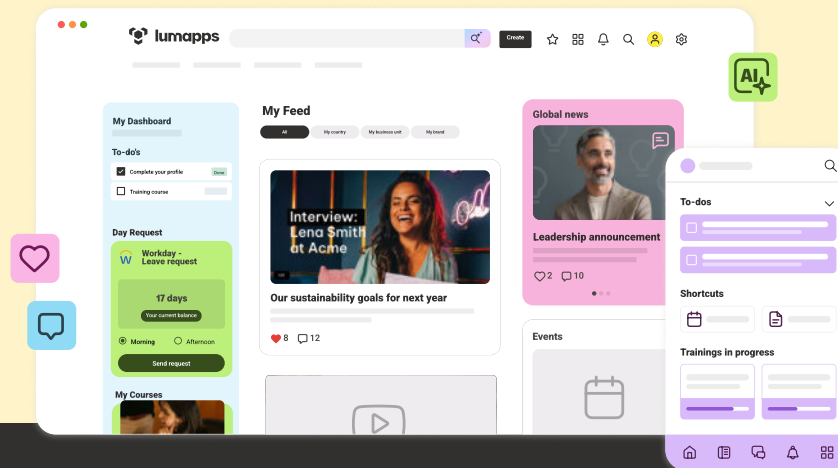
Frontline adoption doesn't have to be the barrier. LumApps customers see an average 87% frontline adoption rate.

From scattered tools to a single unified employee hub

Most employees don't think about the architecture behind their digital workplace. They simply expect to find what they need quickly — whether that's a policy, a workflow, a colleague, or the next task in their day.

When information, tools, and internal services are scattered across multiple systems, that complexity becomes hard to ignore. Employees spend more time searching or switching between tools, while IT teams are left managing a growing web of systems and integrations. A modern intranet brings those systems into a single environment. Rather than adding another isolated tool to the stack, it becomes the front door to the digital workplace.

LumApps is built on this model. The LumApps AI Employee Hub brings communication, tools, and tasks together in one secure platform. It integrates with Microsoft 365 and Google Workspace while supporting both desk-based and frontline employees in a single governed environment. For employees, this means one consistent place to find information and access workplace tools. For IT teams, it creates a more cohesive digital workplace that is easier to manage, easier to scale, and ready for enterprise AI.



Ready to see what a modern intranet looks like?

[Schedule time with our team](#) to explore LumApps and compare your options.



[Book a demo](#)