

ARMY OPERATIONAL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

PORTALS AND DASHBOARDS

Portals and dashboards are two of the most useful and visible tools available to knowledge managers. They are deployed in almost every organization at all echelons of command. But, despite being widely used, they are often misunderstood. When a commander asks you to build a dashboard, how can you tell if what he or she really wants is a portal? The answer lies in knowing what these two tools are, and then understanding your commander's actual needs.

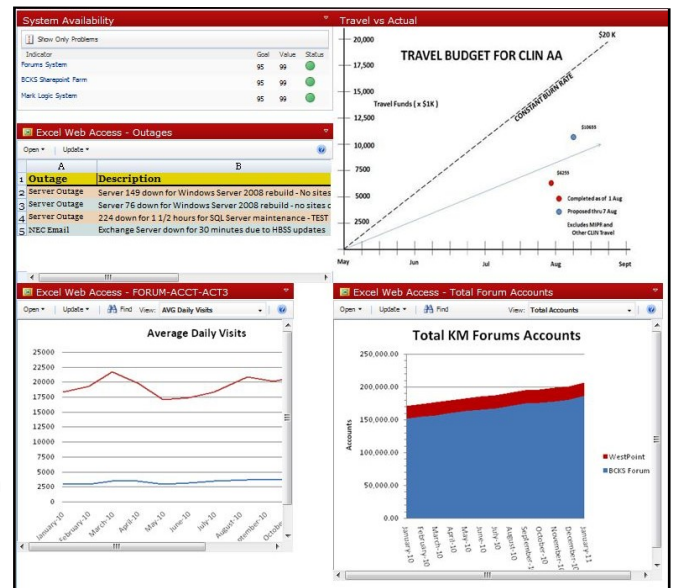


The screenshot shows a 'Knowledge Portal' for the MCoE. It features a mission statement, 'MCoE CG Initiatives' (All Initiatives, Future-Concepts/Development, Collaboration-Tools/Initiatives, STRATCOM-Army Wide, STRATCOM-Community, CSF-CHPC/PREP), 'MCoE Operations' (Training Updates, Central Tasking, Toolbox), 'MCoE Resources' (Logistics, Personnel), and 'MCoE Top Ten Links' (Center for Army Lessons Learned, ATN, Battle Command Knowledge System, Fort Benning Facebook Page, Fort Benning Libraries, Fort Benning Website, Maneuver Net).

Knowledge Portal

In contrast, a dashboard is a visual or graphical display of the information that drives decision-making in the organization. It is usually based on key organizational metrics. The information on a dashboard is consolidated, contextualized, and arranged on the screen so it can be monitored at a glance. The information needed for immediate decisions is displayed in the most prominent position and updated in real time. Other, less time-critical information can often be made accessible through links or pop-ups that "drill down" to the desired topic of interest. The primary purpose of a dashboard is to convey information as efficiently as possible.

A portal is simply a central access point for knowledge and information. Portals present information from a variety of sources using a centralized launching point. The internal home page of an organization is often designed as a portal. It includes links to all the sites and documents members of the unit use on a day-to-day basis. The primary purpose of a portal is to provide organized access to information.



The screenshot shows a 'Dashboard' with several data visualizations: 'System Availability' table, 'Travel vs Actual' line chart, 'Excel Web Access - Outages' table, 'Excel Web Access - FORUM-ACCT-ACTS' line chart, and 'Excel Web Access - Total Forum Accounts' stacked area chart.

Indicator	Goal	Value	Status
Future System	95	99	Green
BCKG SharePoint Farm	95	99	Green
Mark Logic System	95	99	Green

A	Description	B
1	SERVER OUTAGE	Server 149 down for Windows Server 2008 rebuild - No sites
2	SERVER OUTAGE	Server 76 down for Windows Server 2008 rebuild - no sites c
3	SERVER OUTAGE	224 down for 1.12 hours for SQL Server maintenance - TEST
4	NETC Email	Exchange Server down for 30 minutes due to HRSS updates

Dashboard

With these definitions in mind, ask your commander what he or she plans to do with this new site. If the answer is mostly about accessing various sources of information, the right tool is a portal. If the answer involves at-a-glance support for decision making, the proper tool is a dashboard. It's likely that the right answer is a combination of both. Either way, the goal should be to design a page that meets the needs of the commander. If those needs are met, what you call the page really isn't an issue.

To learn more about Army Knowledge Management, visit the AOKM AKO portal:

<https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/645010>