Final Consulting Report
InsideOut Literary Arts

By

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Executive Summary

InsideOut Literary Arts (“InsideOut”) serves youths in the Detroit area by offering in-classroom and afterschool programming aimed at introducing them to the power of poetry and literature. As part of these initiatives, InsideOut’s 9-person team spearheads the entire execution process including obtaining grant funding from donors, marketing the initiatives to students and the community, coordinating events, and managing the publishing process of student literary journals. Due to the diversity of these tasks, InsideOut uses a variety of productivity applications to develop and manage their collateral, including Google Docs, Microsoft Office, and Dropbox. The team further uses an onsite server to archive older and bulkier files. While this process has been effective to date, as InsideOut scales in the near to medium term, the team believes a more streamlined process is required.

As such, InsideOut has asked CPJ Consulting (“CPJ”) to put together a comprehensive review of their productivity options and propose a solution best suited to their needs as an organization. CPJ used the contextual inquiry process to better understand InsideOut’s workflow and document management process. We collected data through in-person interviews with several InsideOut team members and drew out core insights from these interviews using the affinity wall method.

Based on this analysis, CPJ has identified that Insideout has the following core needs when it comes to document management: (1) full suite of productivity features, (2) ability to collaborate in real-time, (3) remote access to documents, (4) increased storage capacity, (5) standardized folder hierarchy / file naming system, and (6) reasonable cost. With these goals in mind, we reviewed the productivity suites of Google, Microsoft, and Dropbox to determine the best solution for InsideOut. Our analysis uncovered that Microsoft Office 365 leads the other solutions, due to its comprehensive suite of productivity features, cloud storage capabilities, and optimal cost per storage unit.

Introduction

Overview of Client

I. InsideOut Literary Arts

InsideOut was founded in 1995 by former Detroit Public School teacher Dr. Terry Blackhawk to increase awareness and engagement with the written word among students in Detroit. The organization’s mission statement is as follows:

By immersing students in the joy and power of poetry and literary self-expression, InsideOut inspires them to think broadly, create bravely and share their voices with the wider world. Guided by professional writers and celebrated by publications and performances, youth learn

that their stories and ideas matter and that their pens can launch them off the page into extraordinary lives.[1]

To serve this mission, InsideOut offers both in-classroom and after school programming to kindergarten through twelfth grade students across public, charter, or home schools in the Detroit area. All of these initiatives are free for students. As part of the in-classroom programming, InsideOut sources and places emerging, professional poets and writers directly into classrooms to conduct writing workshops and work with students throughout the school year. In additional to writers-in-residence, InsideOut also manages the publication of student creative works into literary journals. As of 2017, InsideOut has published nearly 500 school-specific literary journals[2]. As part of its afterschool programming, InsideOut organizes events such as CityWide Poets, a series of after school workshops where students can hone their creative craft and engage with the broader community, and Louder Than A Bomb, an annual Michigan youth poetry festival. Through these initiatives, InsideOut has served over 50,000 students across more than 150 Detroit-area schools as of 2017[3]. For more details on InsideOut's programs, see the next section.

InsideOut's offices are currently located on Wayne State University's campus at State Hall Bldg. 5143 Cass Ave, though InsideOut is not directly affiliated with the university.

II. Current Programs

InsideOut currently manages a portfolio of 6 programs, including School Residency, Citywide Poets, Detroit Youth Poet Laureate, Youth Writers Conference, BookUp iO Detroit, and Louder Than A Bomb, as well as various community collaborations. Each is discussed in further detail below.

1. School Residency[4]

One of InsideOut's core programs is its placement of professional writers directly into classrooms to lead creative writing workshops. Residencies span 25 weeks, with writers teaching one workshop per week. Through this process, students are introduced to the power and fun of writing by individuals who currently pursue it as a career. During these workshops, students have the opportunity to craft their own literary works (poems and stories), which are collected by InsideOut and published into literary journals for each school. These publications help foster a sense of accomplishment among students who have their work displayed in a professional manner, as well as generate further interest in writing and reading from their peers. As of the 2017-2018 school year, InsideOut has residencies in 22 schools, including 14 Detroit public schools and 8 out of district schools. These residencies are supported financially through grants and donations, including those from individual sponsors.

2. Citywide Poets[5]

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[1] "Home," *InsideOut Literary Arts Project*, accessed October 21, 2018, https://insideoutdetroit.org.

[2] InsideOut Literary Arts Project. (2018). 2017 Annual Report. Provided by Lia Greenwell, Operations Coordinator.

[3] InsideOut Literary Arts Project. (2018). 2017 Annual Report. Ibid.

[4] "iO's Residencies," InsideOut Literary Arts Project, accessed October 19, 2018, https://insideoutdetroit.org/school-residency.

Citywide Poets is one of InsideOut's after school initiatives which gather youth into literary communities that meet at multiple locations across Detroit on a weekly basis. Meetings are led by a prominent local artist who provides guidance on craft and performance skills. These venues also help young people engage with the broader art community outside of the classroom. As of 2018, Citywide Poets holds sessions across 6 total sites, including in 2 local public libraries and 4 schools.

3. Detroit Youth Poet Laureate and Ambassadors[6]

The Detroit Youth Poet Laureate and Detroit Youth Poet Ambassadors roles are initiatives to recognize and nurture youths who are driven and passionate about promoting artistic and civic engagement among their peers. The Laureate role is awarded to one student per year, who is selected based on an application requiring a poetry portfolio, resume, and essay expressing the applicant's goals for the role. Throughout the year, the Laureate will develop a community service project, and publish and perform poetry across the city. Ambassadors are a team of youth who work together to advocate for and publicize peer artists in the community.

4. Youth Writers Conference[7]

This conference is an annual event where 150 youth writers who participated in the School Residency program attend a full day of writing related programming, including a keynote from a prominent local artist.

5. BookUp iO Detroit[8]

The BookUp iO Detroit initiative is a partnership between InsideOut and BookUp, the afterschool reading program launched by National Book Foundation, which aims to set up BookUp sites in Detroit where students can visit to read or receive books. Sites also include weekly small group meetings led by a local writer who engages with students to discuss books and offer reading recommendations.

6. Louder Than A Bomb[9]

Louder Than A Bomb ("LTAB") is a youth poetry festival that aims to promote "artistic growth through peer engagement, team competition, and the celebration of youth voice." The national LTAB structure was originally developed by Youth Chicago Authors in 2001[10]. The 2-day event includes events such as poetry slam competitions, poetry writing and performance workshops, open mic performances, and MC Olympics, a multi-round hip-hop emcee competition judged by

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[5] "Citywide Poets," InsideOut Literary Arts Project, accessed October 19, 2018, https://insideoutdetroit.org/citywide-poets.

[6] "Detroit Youth Poet Laureate and Ambassadors," InsideOut Literary Arts Project, accessed October 19, 2018, https://insideoutdetroit.org/dypl.

[7] "Voices From Our City: Youth Writers Conference," InsideOut Literary Arts Project, accessed October 19, 2018, https://insideoutdetroit.org/youth-writers-conference.

[8] "BookUp iO Detroit," InsideOut Literary Arts Project, accessed October 19, 2018, https://insideoutdetroit.org/bookup-io-detroit.

[9] "Louder Than A Bomb," InsideOut Literary Arts Project, accessed October 19, 2018, https://www.ltabmichigan.com.

[10] "History," Louder Than A Bomb: The Michigan Youth Poetry Festival, accessed October 19, 2018, https://ltabmichigan.com/history.

prominent Detroit emcees[11]. The 2018 LTAB festival is scheduled for May 5 and 6 and will welcome nearly 30 teams of high school writers, the largest attendance yet[12].

III. Organizational Structure

InsideOut is managed by a team of 9 individuals, led by Executive Director Suma Karaman Rosen. Within the team, Suma manages 4 in-house direct reports, including Program Director Alise Alousi, Operations Coordinator Lia Greenwell, Development Associate Ashley Calhoun, and Grants and Evaluations Coordinator Maureen Okasinski. Suma also manages an off-site, external bookkeeper and controller who is responsible for all of InsideOut's finance-related needs including reporting and payroll.

Among Suma's direct reports, Alise further manages a team of 4, who is each responsible for a specific segment of programming for InsideOut. These individuals include Senior Writer Peter Markus, Schools Coordinator Kristine Uyeda, Citywide Poets Coordinator Justin Rogers, and Youth Leadership Coordinator Devin Samuels. As an extension of InsideOut, Kristine, the Schools Coordinator is responsible for coordinating with a team of 22 writers-in-residence who contribute to the program on a part-time basis[13].

Finally, the entire InsideOut team reports to a Board, with Suma acting as conduit. This Board, comprising volunteers who value the work that InsideOut does within the community, contributes to the organization by reviewing its annual budget and providing support in areas such as Finance, Marketing, and Governance. Each area currently has its own board-led committee (3 in total), which work closely with Suma to provide additional support to InsideOut's operations. A visual illustration of InsideOut's organizational structure is below[14].

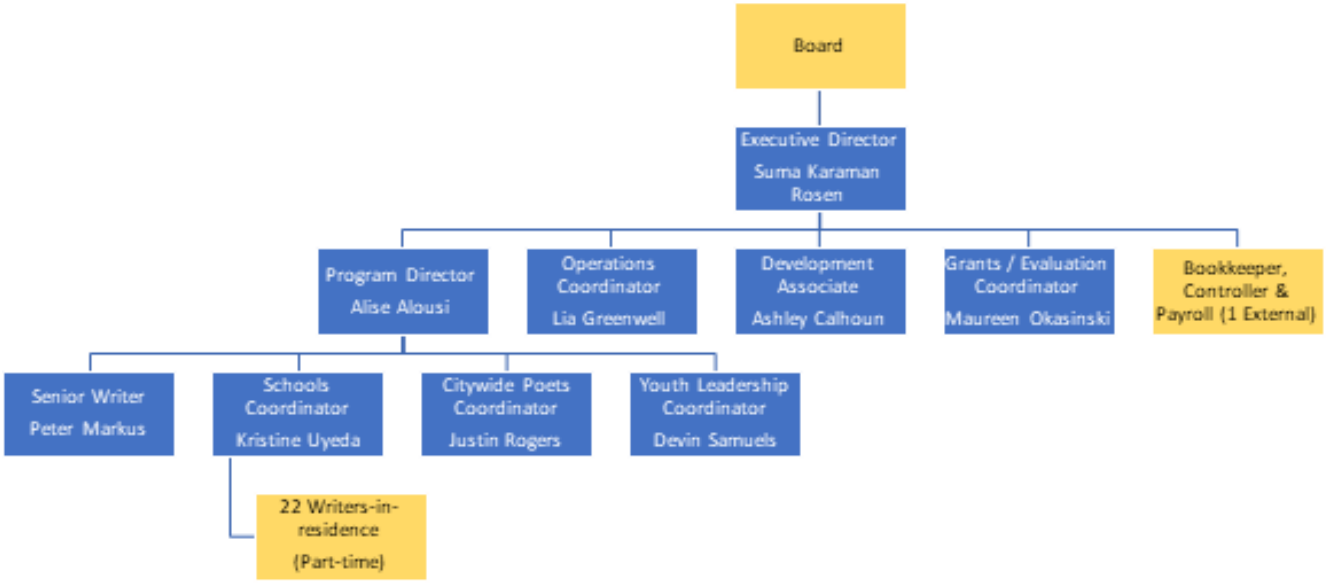
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[11] "Hip-hop artists compete in 'Louder Than A Bomb – MC Olympics at DIA," Michigan Chronicle, accessed October 19, 2018, https://michronicleonline.com/2018/05/01/hip-hop-artists-compete-in-louder-than-a-bomb-mc-olympics-at-dia.

[12] "History," Louder Than A Bomb: The Michigan Youth Poetry Festival, ibid.

[13] "Our Team," InsideOut Literary Arts Project, accessed October 20, 2018, https://insideoutdetroit.org/our-team.

[14] InsideOut Literary Arts Project. (2018). InsideOut Organizational Chart. Provided by Suma Karaman Rosen, Executive Director.



Overview of CPJ Consulting

CPJ is a consulting team formed by three graduate students studying at the University of Michigan. Team members include Corbet Griffith, Prasannah Jaganathan, and Jenny Zhai. Both Corbet and Prasannah are first year School of Information students focused on UI and UX research and design. Jenny is a second year MBA student specializing in technology product management.

Project Goals & Scope

InsideOut is looking to streamline their document and file management and sharing solutions by optimizing between four factors: (1) cost, (2) storage, (3) accessibility, and (4) usability. Currently, the team uses the Google Suite to draft grant documents and other files that require collaboration, the Microsoft Office Suite to develop documents that require specific features such as formatting and data analysis, Dropbox to store final versions, and an on-premise server to store archives and larger files such as photos and videos. Further, there is currently no standard file saving process and folder hierarchy, creating some confusion and inefficiencies when it comes to version control and file retrieval. InsideOut has asked CPJ to assess the organization's workflow and document management needs, and propose a single solution is best suited to improve their productivity and ability to scale in the near term.

Methodology Overview

To conduct a comprehensive review of InsideOut's workflow and document management pain points, CPJ utilized two contextual inquiry tools - (1) stakeholder interviews in the work environment and (2) using the affinity wall method to draw insights from interview feedback. Each is described in further detail below.

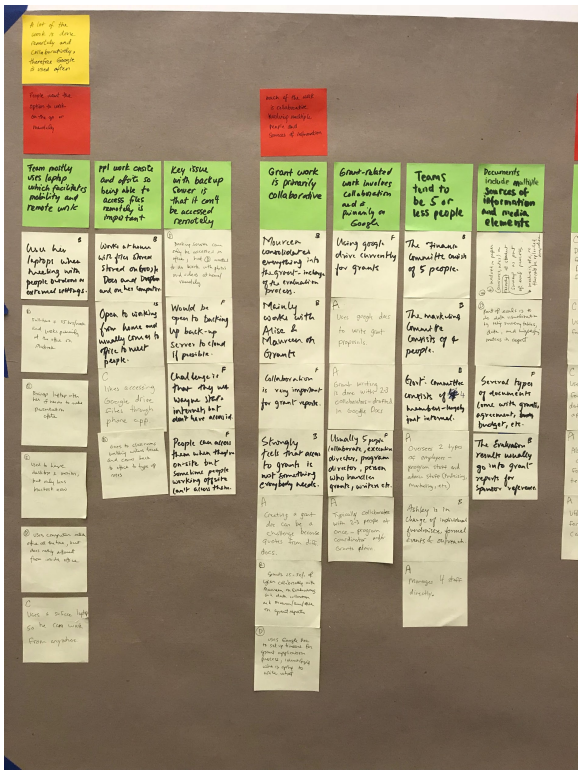
Stakeholder Interviews

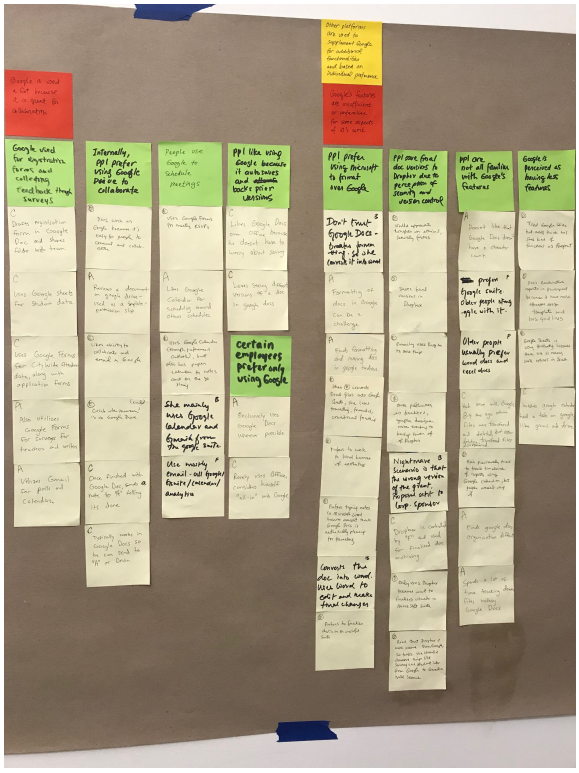
In October 2018, CPJ met with six members of the InsideOut team, including (1) Executive Director Suma Karaman Rosen, (2) Associate Director Alise Alousi, (3) Operations Coordinator Lia Greenwell, (4) Grants / Evaluation Coordinator Maureen Okasinski, (5) Citywide Poets Coordinator Justin Rogers, and (6) Schools Coordinator Kristine Uyeda. Over the course of three days, the team conducted one intro meeting with Lia Greenwell and five hour-long interviews with the rest of the team on-site at InsideOut's offices at the Wayne State University campus.

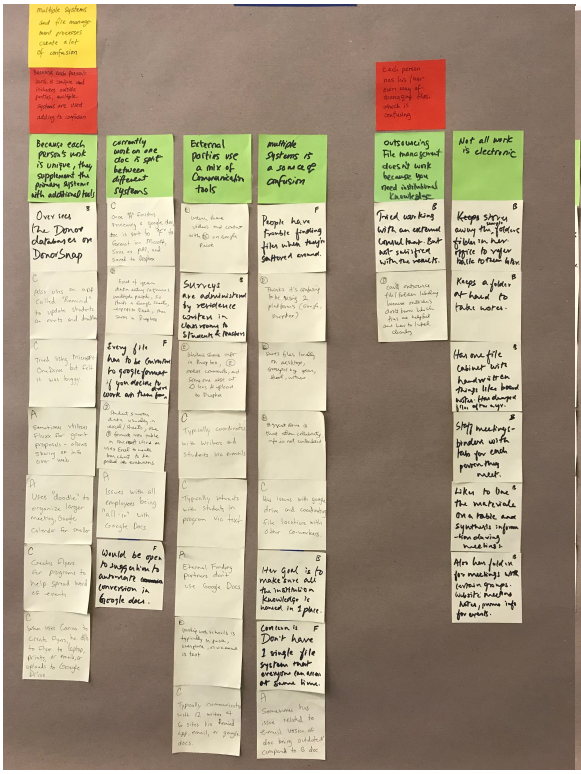
Each interview was conducted in the interviewee's typical work environment so that CPJ can observe how the interviewee goes about accomplishing his / her day-to-day tasks and incorporate this information into our assessment. CPJ assigned one member to lead the interview, following a pre-designed protocol focused on understanding InsideOut's workflow and document management pain points. The other two CPJ members were responsible for recording the conversation and observing contextual cues such as how the interviewee reacted to certain topics and interacted with the work environment. The output of these sessions was several transcripts outlining key points discussed during the interviews.

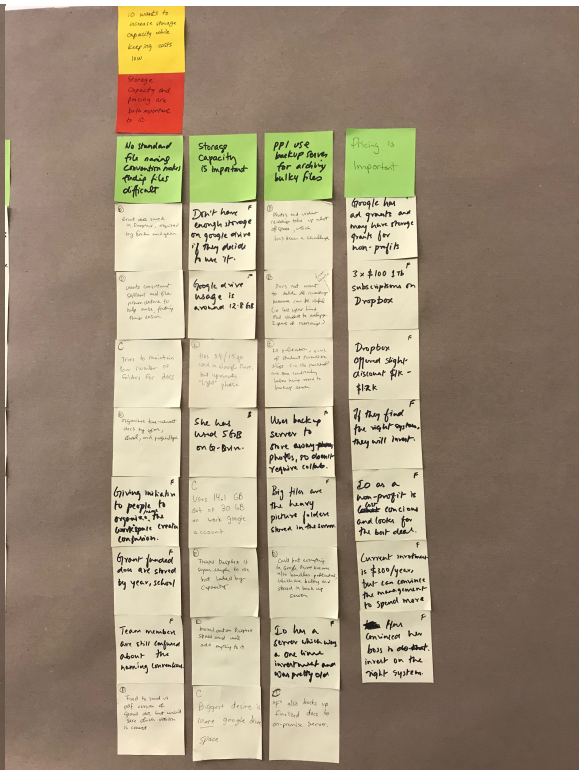
Affinity Wall

To draw insights from the qualitative data collected via interviews, CPJ used a contextual inquiry methodology known as the affinity wall. The process begins by transcribing salient details from the interview notes onto individual post-its. These post-its are then grouped by theme, such as "Team mostly uses laptop, which facilitates mobility and remote work" or "Key issue with backup server is that it can't be accessed remotely". These themes are further grouped into overarching storylines such as "People want the option to work on the go or remotely". And finally, the overarching storylines are further grouped to identify core truths about the workflow and document management process at InsideOut. These core truths are ultimately what drives our final recommendation. Below are snapshots of various cuts of the affinity wall CPJ assembled for this project. The key findings from this process will be discussed in the next section.


Team mostly uses laptop which facilitates mobility and remote work
PPI work onsite and often to keep able to access files remotely is important
Key issue with backup Closer is that it can't be accessed remotely
Grant work is primarily collaborative
Grant-related work involves collaboration and is primarily on Google
Teams tend to be 5 or less people
Documents include multiple sources of information and media elements
Using google drive currently for grants
The "finance" committee consists of 5 people.
Mourveen coordinates everything with the Grant-writing team and oversees finances.
Mainly works with Artie & Mourveen on Grants
The marketing committee consists of 4 people.
Collaboration is very important for grant reports
Usually 5 people collaborate, executive director, program directors, person who monitors grants, written etc.
Grant committee consists of 5 members - though not informal.
Served types of documents (one with email, agreement, term budget, etc.
Strongly feels that access to grants is not formatting everybody needs.
Typically collaborates with 3-5 people on one program director, person who monitors grants, written etc.
Ashley is in charge of individual fundraising, general events & outreach
The fundraising results usually go into grant reports for sponsor reference.
Manages 4 staff directly.
Would be open to looking up back-up Server to cloud if possible.
Chad longer is true - they use Wasque Star- internets but don't have access
People can access them when they're on-site but sometimes people working offsite can't access them.


Google used for registration forms and collecting feedback though surveys
Internally, PPI prefer using Google Docs to collaborate
People use Google to schedule meetings
PPI like using Google because it automates and reduces back-n-forth versions
certain employees prefer only using Google
PPI prefer using Microsoft to format over Google
PPI save final doc versions in Dropbox due to person-to-person of shared and version control
PPI are not all familiar with Google's features
Google is perceived as having BAD features
Don't trust Google Docs - thinks person-to-person of shared and version control
Nightmare scenario is that the wrong version of the grant proposal sent to [illegible] sponsor
Other people usually prefer Word when they need [illegible]
Google is not always reliable
Other platforms are used to supplement Google for additional functionality and based on individual preference


Because each person's work is unique, they supplement the primary software with additional tools
currently work on one doc is sent between different systems
External parties use a mix of Communication tools
multiple systems is a source of confusion
Outsourcing file management doesn't work because you need institutional knowledge
Not all work is electronic
Over use the Donor Database or DonorSnap
Every file has to be converted to google format if you're going to work on them for...
Surveys are administered by receptionist working in clean room & Statement & Posters
People have trouble finding files when they're scattered around.
Tried working with an external consultant but not quite sure how it went with the website.
Keeps strong away from [illegible] folders to never have to refile to right folder
Keeps a folder at hand to take notes.
Would be open to suggestion to automate conversion in Google docs.
Hey Geof is to make sure all the information is housed in 1 place.
Can't have 1 single file system that everyone can use because of shared files.
Like to use the macro-scale on a table and synthesize information when doing meetings.
Often have folders for meetings with certain groups - website, meeting notes, promo info for events.


No standard file naming convention make finding files difficult
Storage Capacity and flexibility are both important to us
Storage Capacity is important
PPI use backup servers for archive bulky files
Pricing is important
Don't have enough storage on google drive if they decide to use it.
Google drive usage is available 12-8 PM
She had used 5GB on G-Drive.
Uses 14.1 GB out of 30 GB on work Google account
Big files are the heavy picture folders stored in the server.
Use back-up server to store away photos, so doesn't require collab.
Giving initials to people to organize the workspace creates confusion.
Grant financial data are stored by year, school
Team members are still confused about the naming convention
2.0 has a server which is a one time investment and was pretty cheap
Google has ad grants and many have things built for non-profits
3 x $100 1TB subscriptions on Dropbox
Dropbox offered slight discount for $12k
If they found the right system they will invest.
2.0 as a non-profit is not [illegible] conscious and looks for the best deal.
Current investment is $300/year, but can convince the management to spend more
Have convinced how basis is data about invest on the right system.

Key Findings

InsideOut Workflow

As part of this project, CPJ interviewed 6 members of the InsideOut team to better understand the main task streams and the various tools the team currently employs to complete them. These findings are synthesized below.

1. Administrative Tasks

InsideOut's administrative duties are primarily owned by Suma and Operations Coordinator Lia. As Executive Director, Suma is responsible for managing fundraising relationships, acting as liaison with the Board, and managing each team reporting to her (both internal and external, including the 3 Board-led volunteer committees). Typically, team members such as Grant Director Maureen or the external bookkeeper use Gmail or Google Docs to share the latest grant application / report or financial statement (typically in both pdf or Microsoft Excel) to Suma, who then provides comments as needed. Across these tasks, Suma's documentation needs are primarily that of a reviewer to ensure documents going out of the organization are high quality and presentable to external stakeholders. In her own words, her "greatest fear is something is sent to a [funder] that is not the latest or best version."[15] To help her keep track of versions, Suma works with Lia to save final pdf copies of every document in her own Dropbox storage account, within which certain folders are shared with the full team.

Other administrative tasks such as coordination among teams via email or meeting invites are shared across the team, with Lia acting as a central facilitator[16]. These activities are conducted on the Google Suite using Gmail and the Google Calendar, with each InsideOut staff having his/her own account.

2. Grant Applications & Evaluations

InsideOut's primary source of funding is via grants provided by funders and individuals. For each sponsor, InsideOut is required to submit annual applications requesting funding, as well as provide program evaluation reports updating sponsors on the status and impact of InsideOut's programs. As the Grants and Evaluations Coordinator, Maureen collaborates extensively with other InsideOut staff on drafting both grant documentation and evaluations reports. For grants, drafting primarily takes place on Google Docs, which allows the team to comment and edit simultaneously and remotely. However, Maureen prefers to finalize documents offline via the Microsoft suite, with the final version saved as a pdf in Dropbox[17].

For evaluations, Maureen typically uses Powerpoint, which she finds has a "more attractive design template" than Google Slides[18]. To made evaluations informative, Maureen works with the Program team, including Alise, Kristine, and Justin to develop student surveys and

[15] Suma Karaman Rosen (Executive Director, InsideOut Literary Arts Project), in discussion with CPJ, October 8, 2018.

[16] Lia Greenwell (Operations Coordinator, InsideOut Literary Arts Project), in discussion with CPJ, September 26, 2018.

[17] Maureen Okasinski (Grants / Evaluations Coordinator, InsideOut Literary Arts Project), in discussion with CPJ, October 9, 2018.

[18] Maureen Okasinski (Grants / Evaluations Coordinator, InsideOut Literary Arts Project), ibid.

interviews and collect data on InsideOut's impact. For in-person interviews, audio and visual files are stored in an on-premise backup server due to space constraints on both Google and Dropbox. However, Maureen noted that this is a challenge because the server can only be accessed at the office while the InsideOut team values the ability to work offsite. For student surveys, these are typically set up by Kristine and Justin using Google Forms, with data collected into spreadsheets, also housed in Google. Maureen synthesizes the data offline using Excel and funnels salient data points into easy-to-visualize graphs to be inserted into her evaluation Powerpoint decks.

A final grants-related task that Maureen manages is keeping track of the application timeline across each grant. She does this via an Excel spreadsheet which contains details on each grant, relevant deadlines, and a link to the Google Doc housing the latest grant write-up.

3. Program Management

As leads on InsideOut's two core initiatives School Residency and Citywide Poets, Kristine and Justin take a variety of tasks that help them manage the entire planning and execution process of each program. These include managing the program timelines and funding details, marketing materials, and student permission slips. For managing program timelines and funding, Kristine prefers using Excel. She notes that because she uses conditional formatting to help her track timelines, these Excel-only functionalities become lost when she uploads a file to Google Drive. In her words, "Google Sheets is very frustrating because there are so many more options in Excel."[19]

For student permissions slips, which are required for students attending the after school Citywide Poets program and for including student work in each school's literary journal, both Kristine and Justin use Google Docs as an easy way to share drafts with reviewers such as Suma and Alise[20] [21].

For Citywide Poets, Justin designs event-specific flyers using an external service called Canva, which has attractive, preset designs. Working versions of these flyers are housed on Justin's Canva account and final pdf's are uploaded to Google Drive for shared storage[22].

4. Literary Journal Publication[23]

Lastly, as part of the School Residency program, Kristine also manages the annual publication of literary journals for each partner school. The file management aspect of this process includes storing scans of student permission slips, which averages 150 per school, text submissions of student writing, and graphics designs. Permission slips are typically stored in the backup server, while writers and graphic designers share their submissions via Dropbox. Kristine is primarily involved with proofreading, content editing, and reviewing proofs spreads and galleys prior to

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[19] Kristine Uyeda (Schools Coordinator, InsideOut Literary Arts Project), in discussion with CPJ, October 9, 2018.
[20] Kristine Uyeda (Schools Coordinator, InsideOut Literary Arts Project), ibid.
[21] Justin Rogers (Citywide Poets Coordinator, InsideOut Literary Arts Project), in discussion with CPJ, October 8, 2018.
[22] Justin Rogers (Citywide Poets Coordinator, InsideOut Literary Arts Project), ibid.
[23] Kristine Uyeda (Schools Coordinator, InsideOut Literary Arts Project), ibid.

publication. Given external parties such as students, professional artists, and publishers are involved, Kristine is focused on finding a secure file management solution that permits simultaneous collaboration across both internal and external partners.

InsideOut File Management Pain Points

Below is a summary of the four core truths CPJ uncovered from the stakeholder interviews using the affinity wall process. Underneath each core truth are the encompassed storylines, as well as their respective themes. Based on this analysis, InsideOut has the following core needs when it comes to document management (1) full suite of productivity features, (2) ability to collaborate in real-time, (3) remote access to documents, (4) increased storage capacity, (5) standardized folder hierarchy / file naming system, and (6) reasonable cost.

I. A lot of the work is done remotely and collaboratively, therefore Google is used often
   A. People want the option to work on the go or remotely
      1. Team mostly uses laptop, which facilities mobility and remote work
      2. People work onsite and offsite, so being able to access files remotely is important
      3. Key issue with backup server is that it can't be accessed remotely
   B. Much of the work is collaborative, involving multiple people and sources of information
      1. Grant work is primarily collaborative
      2. Grant work is primarily on Google
      3. Teams tend to be 5 or less people
      4. Documents include multiple sources of information and media elements
   C. Google is used a lot because it is great for collaboration
      1. Google is used for registration forms and collecting feedback through surveys
      2. Internally, people prefer using Google Drive to collaborate
      3. People use Google to schedule meetings
      4. People like using Google because it autosaves and backs up prior versions
      5. Certain employees prefer only using Google

II. Other platforms are used to supplement Google for additional functionalities and based on individual preference
   A. Google's features are insufficient or unfamiliar for some aspects of InsideOut's work
      1. People prefer using Microsoft to format over Google
      2. People save final document versions to Dropbox due to perception of security and version control
      3. People are not all familiar with Google's features
      4. Google is perceived as having less features

III. Multiple systems and file management processes create a lot of confusion
   A. Because each person's work is unique and includes outside parties, multiple systems are used, adding to confusion
      1. Because each person's work is unique, they supplement the primary systems with additional tools
      2. Currently work on one document is split between different systems

3. External parties use a mix of communication tools
4. Multiple systems is a source of confusion

B. Each person has his / her own way of managing files, which is confusing
1. Outsourcing file management doesn't work because you need institutional knowledge
2. Not all work is electronic

IV. InsideOut wants to increase storage capacity while keeping costs low

A. Storage capacity and pricing are both important to InsideOut
1. No standard file naming convention makes finding files difficult
2. Storage capacity is important
3. People use backup server for archiving bulky files
4. Pricing is important

Recommendations

The InsideOut team is a tightly knit group working out of the office at Wayne State University situated in Detroit, Michigan. Working as a team of 9, they collaborate on files such as grants, reports, surveys, marketing materials, creative assets, permission slips, and so on. Being a 23-year-old organization, adapting to the ever-evolving needs of student groups, schools, funders, and stakeholders, the apparent dissonance in operations and more specifically the mechanism for file management is a constant challenge. Moreover, the team has unique responsibilities, comfort level with technology, and work styles, leading to diverse preferences for productivity tools. Another constraint is cost, given InsideOut's status as a nonprofit organization whose funding is sourced primarily through grants and charitable donations. Consequently, InsideOut is seeking a solution that is flexible, secure, and economical. In light of these requirements, CPJ has reviewed the following solutions: Google Productivity Suite, Microsoft Office 365, and Dropbox.

Background Information

Cloud Storage

Cloud storage is a cloud computing model in which data is stored on remote servers accessed from the internet, or "cloud." It is maintained, operated and managed by a cloud storage service provider on a storage servers that are built on virtualisation techniques. Cloud storage is also known as utility storage – a term subject to differentiation based on actual implementation and service delivery.

Cloud storage works through data center virtualization, providing end users and applications with a virtual storage architecture that is scalable according to application requirements. In general, cloud storage operates through a web-based API that is remotely implemented through its interaction with the client application's in-house cloud storage infrastructure for input/output (I/O) and read/write (R/W) operations.

When delivered through a public service provider, cloud storage is known as utility storage. Private cloud storage provides the same scalability, flexibility and storage mechanism with restricted or non-public access.

Current Work Practices

InsideOut is still in the process of transitioning to a more consolidated cloud storage system. At the moment, the team is managing files based on its lifecycle. The “live” files that entail team collaboration for editing and sharing are maintained on Google Drive. These files may include grants, reports, marketing, and creative assets. Moreover, the team prefers the functionality of Google Drive, comprising Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Forms, which accommodate user-friendly means to comment, track changes, assign tasks, etc. All of these tasks are performed on Google Drive without a paid subscription, and this puts a cap on the storage limit.

Additionally, most of the text files are maintained as a Microsoft Word document which cannot be moved to Google Docs without unraveling the formatting and leaving a trace of the original word file. Factoring these limitations, the team had concluded that Google Drive at present is not the most consummate tool that would satisfy their work requirements. In addition to Drive, the team has recently secured paid subscriptions with Dropbox which they utilize as an overall file storage repository for “old” files. At present, they possess three paid subscriptions with Dropbox for a combined cost of $300. They have, with relatively little success, managed to develop a nomenclature to organize the files that are stored away but many employees still find it challenging to access it with ease. Moreover, Dropbox does not afford the real-time collaboration features that Google does, and creates conflicting version control when multiple people try accessing and editing files. Thus the team found Dropbox to have several disadvantages that outweigh its benefits.

Overview of Productivity Solutions

Microsoft Office 365

Office 365 is a subscription service that offers access to the productivity tools from Microsoft. These tools include apps like Word, PowerPoint, Excel, OneNote, Outlook, Publisher, and Access. It also includes services like Exchange, OneDrive, SharePoint, Skype, and Microsoft Teams. For a monthly or yearly cost, you get the latest version of Office which has the updated features and latest security. The Microsoft office service allows you to sign into five devices at the same and access the files on-the-go using OneDrive, Microsoft's’ cloud storage service.

Google Productivity Suite

Google Docs is the homegrown office suite by Google featuring productivity tools like Docs, Sheets, Slides, Form, and Survey, and a range of third-party applications. It can be accessed through major browsers by going to the website and logging in using your Google account credentials. Google Docs can be accessed on your desktops & pc, mobile, and tablets on-the-go using Drive, Google’s cloud storage service.

Dropbox

Dropbox is a file hosting service which can be accessed through major browsers via its website. Additionally, Dropbox also features a desktop app which offers file synchronization to the cloud. It also includes office productivity tool known as Dropbox Paper featuring document creation and editing, presentation, and team collaboration capabilities among other features.

Comparison of Alternatives

Categories	MS Office 365	Google Drive	Dropbox
Overview	**Price** (price per user, price per storage space unit) $3/user per mo. 1Tb storage space per user. **Accessibility & Integration** (browser & computer, mobile v tablet v pc) Available on pc browser, desktop app, mobile app & tablet app	**Price** (price per user, price per storage space unit) $10/user per mo. Unlimited storage space. **Accessibility & Integration** (browser & computer, mobile v tablet v pc) Available on pc browser, mobile app, and tablet app. The apps lack certain features compared to the computer browser version.	**Price** (price per user, price per storage space unit) $12.50/user per mo. 1Tb storage space per user. **Accessibility & Integration** (browser & computer, mobile v tablet v pc) Available on pc browser, mobile app, and tablet app.
Productivity	**Collaboration** (is it easy to collaborate) Collaboration is straightforward. Follows the same workflow as Google Docs. **Offline Access** Desktop versions of Office 365 apps only upto 5 PCS or Macs per users.	**Collaboration** (is it easy to collaborate) Yes, very easy to collaborate with direct integration with the google suite. **Offline Access:** You can access and edit files offline by installing a Google Docs Offline Chrome Extension. Access and editing can only be done through the Chrome browser	**Collaboration** (is it easy to collaborate) Collaboration is possible with a share link on Dropbox Paper. **Offline Access** Possible to work offline using Paper mobile apps. Moving, archiving, favoriting, following, and managing collaborators on docs are currently not

			possible while offline.
Organization	**Features** (workstreams and whether product features address them) As a tried and tested tool, Office suite offers the most sought-after features. Therefore, it can be considered the standard when it comes to document creation and editing.	**Features** (workstreams and whether product features address them) Formatting is a big miss for the Google suite. For instance, pdf'ing documents sometimes results in docs that are formatted differently from the word version. Slides is even more lacking than doc, as is Sheets, which is not compatible with Excel's conditional formats. Another aspect is the inability to keep versions final because Docs is so conducive to open collaboration. The navigation of docs is also confusing because it keeps shared and owned folders separate, so it is difficult to find documents.	**Features** (workstreams and whether product features address them) It is possible to export Paper files into .docx, .pdf, .md. Paper does fall short when it comes to formatting when compared to Microsoft word. Paper again features presentation mode, a means to present a paper document in presentation format but falls short in capabilities. The platform also does not support Spreadsheet capabilities.
Storage	**Non-profit** plan offers 1Tb storage space per user. **Back-up** Auto-save ensures that work is being consistently backed up.	**Business** plan offers unlimited storage space per user. **Back-up** Auto-save ensures that work is being consistently backed up.	**Business** plan offers 1Tb storage space per user. **Back-up** Auto-save ensures that work is being consistently backed up.

Cost Analysis

On comparing the cost of the various services, it is essential to consider that the organization in conversation, InsideOut is a non-profit and price is a significant factor. It is also important to note that each of these services has their requirements criteria to determine the eligibility of the non-profits to access their plan. Considering the above, the platforms that offered exclusive non-profit discounts were Microsoft and Google. With Microsoft's pricing at $3/user/month which

includes access to all of their productivity apps like Word, PowerPoint, Excel, etc. Moreover, Microsoft also offers 1TB of storage through its OneDrive.

On the other hand, Google's non-profit offering, featuring its office productivity app GDocs, is free of cost with only 30GB of storage. At the next tier, the business level is $10/user/month ($120 per year per user) and provides unlimited storage. Dropbox does not currently offer exclusive non-profit discounts but allows organizations to subscribe to its business plan which stands at $12/user/month which includes access to Dropbox Paper, their office productivity tool and comes with 1TB of storage per user. Factoring in all of the above, Microsoft Office offers the ideal solution regarding cost.

Accessibility & Integration

One of the areas of assessment is the platform accessibility for multiple devices including macOS, PC, smartphones, and tablets. With an inclination towards remote working, more and more users are moving towards mobile devices to access files and perform tasks. Microsoft Office 365 comes with the browser accessible Office 365 version for Mac and PC, along with iOS and Android tablets and smartphones. Google Docs and Dropbox also follow suit.

Features

Microsoft Office 365 features well-rounded tools including Word, Power Point, Excel, etc. which have gone through decades of product evolution and feature build. Standardization across multiple file formats and robust formatting options are hallmarks of the Microsoft Office 365 suite. As noted during our interview process, formatting in Google Docs can be difficult. For instance, converting documents to the printable .pdf format sometimes results in docs that are formatted differently from the word version. Google Slides also fall short in terms of features when compared to Powerpoint. Excel's macro support provides advanced tools that Google Sheets lacks.

Storage & Backup

With the organization anticipating business expansion, the need for storage space and file backup would be a critical infrastructure to focus their attention on. Microsoft Office 365's non-profit package ($2/user/month) offers 1TB of storage space per user. 1TB of storage as Microsoft claims can accommodate up to 3,000,000 images or 1,000,000 docs[24]. Whereas Google on the other hand offers 30GB of storage on their free version and unlimited storage on their Business package ($10/user/month). In the case of Dropbox, the Business package ($12/user/month) offers 1TB of storage space per user. All three platforms also feature autosaving which saves the work progress dynamically.

Collaboration & Document Finalization

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https://support.office.com/en-us/article/what-s-the-difference-between-office-365-and-office-2019-ed447ebf-6060-46f9-9e90-a239bd27eb96

With the addition of Microsoft Sharepoint, the method in which collaboration and document finalization occurs is drastically changed. Instead of files and documents being stored in a hierarchical file system like in Google Drive or Dropbox, these files and documents are published on customizable sites that make documents easily accessible and collaborative in a team-based setting.

The current collaboration and finalization process involving DropBox and Google Drive are essentially replaced by Sharepoint - instead of worrying about a hierarchy of files and folders and whether or not a file gets deleted on the cloud, important files are placed on a Sharepoint web page for safe keeping, and are always available from anywhere. Collaborating and finalizing files within Sharepoint helps unify any version of a file that may have been edited by somebody else within their own personal OneDrive. Editing rights can easily be modified within Sharepoint, as well as notifications that somebody modified a file.

Conclusion

With employees adopting different tools spanning across various platforms, including the tried and tested legacy systems like the Microsoft Office and the more contemporary systems like the Google Suite and Dropbox. There are several emergent patterns with regards to the usage of these platforms. The more experienced category of the workforce lean towards the feature-rich and all-encompassing legacy system like the Microsoft Office, with Word, Excel, and Powerpoint being the most sought-after applications. Whereas, the younger staff members, who look for convenience and remote access, opt for the Google Suite that offers mobility and version control among other features. Although, when it comes to team collaboration, the team opts for the Google Suite which allows them to invite people to collaborate when they see fit. The need to build a centralized storage system, collaborating with the team, and taking work with them away from the office stands out as the main requirements of the team. With the team consisting of a meager 10 employees, it’s apparent that the staff are expected to wear multiple hats, play different roles, and move around to accomplish tasks if needed. Also, there exists an autonomy in the manner in which the work is carried out in the offices with the individuals responsible for taking the initiative and framing most of the work related documents. Conclusively, Microsoft’s Office 365 seems to be an optimal fit with regards to the various requirements of the team.

Appendix: Implementation Guide

What is Sharepoint?

Sharepoint is a web-based collaboration tool that lets businesses easily store, manage, and edit documents and files within an organization. Sharepoint pages can be used as a hub for any internal projects, teams, or roles, along with any centralized information that should be shared with the entire organization. Sharepoint is incredibly customizable, letting businesses like InsideOut customize every aspect of each Sharepoint site.

What is Office 365?

Office 365 is the Office software suite, but optimized with real-time collaboration for small businesses in mind. Office 365 has adopted similar cloud-based features like real-time collaboration, auto-save, and more. Office 365 can be downloaded onto 5 devices per person, and can be used from anywhere - your tablet, phone, laptop, or even browser.

What is OneDrive?

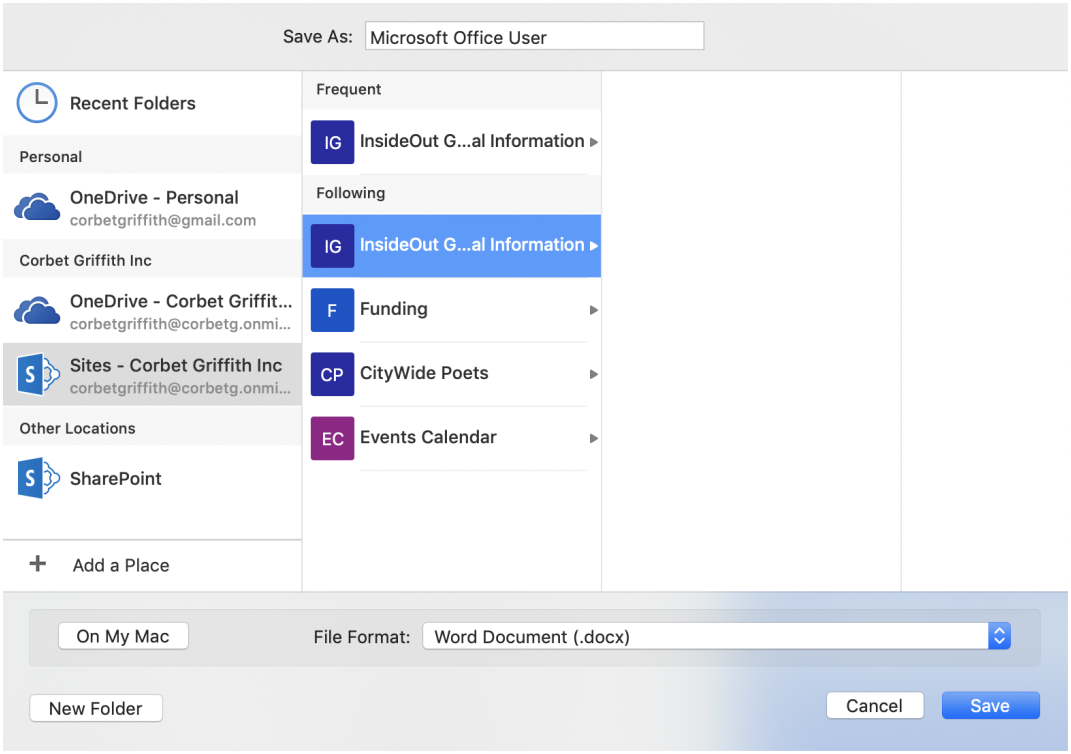
Think of OneDrive as your personal cloud-based hard drive - there may be some occasions where you want to share a specific file with somebody, but it's largely your own space to create and modify various documents, images, and files within the InsideOut Organization. Users of OneDrive have up to 1TB of space available.

How Would Collaboration Work With Office 365, OneDrive, and Sharepoint?

With the addition of Sharepoint within your organization, the method in which collaboration and document finalization occurs drastically change. DropBox, Google Drive, and OneDrive are essentially replaced by Sharepoint - instead of worrying about a hierarchy of files and folders and whether or not a file gets deleted on the cloud, important files are placed on a Sharepoint page for safe keeping, and are always available from anywhere.

Collaborating and finalizing files within Sharepoint helps unify any version of a file that may have been edited by somebody else within their own personal OneDrive. Editing rights can easily be modified within Sharepoint, as well as notifications that somebody modified a file.

Office 365:
Saving Files in Office 365



Office 365 apps like Word, Excel, and Powerpoint are auto-saved as you work on them. If you need to save the file to a specifically location, the save as function allows users to easily save their files to any Sharepoint team site, OneDrive folder, or folder on their desktop.

Finalizing Documents into Sharepoint
Saving files to a specific Sharepoint team site, along with a specific OneDrive, is incredibly easy with Office 365[25]. While file are always auto-saved, you can easily save to OneDrive and Sharepoint by going into "Save As" and selected which folder:

Saving to OneDrive
OneDrive, for all intents and purchases, operates similar to how Google Drive functions. Ideally, OneDrive should never be utilized if you have any documents you want to archive or collaborate on - these files should remain your personal files.

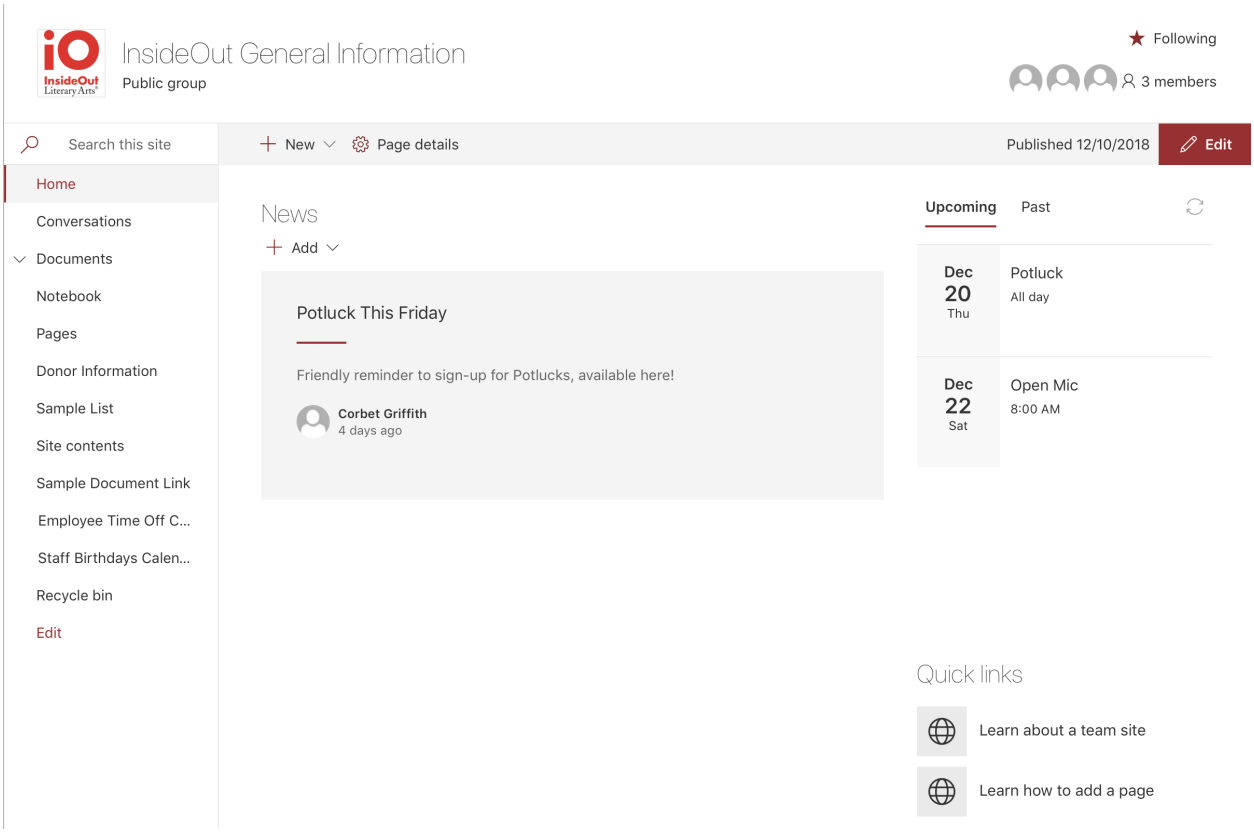
[25] https://support.office.com/en-us/article/should-i-save-my-documents-to-onedrive-for-business-or-a-team-site-d18d21a0-1f9f-4f6c-ac45-d52afa0a4a2e

Sharepoint:

Team Sites

Team sites are a great way for employees to connect, collaborate, and create together. Team sites can be used for projects, work teams, or even partners - you can create a team site for any unique project or duty. Specific examples that could utilize a team site include one for Grants, Operations, CityWide Poets, and Events.

Team sites can be as limited or as broad as you'd like - you can limit who has access to each Sharepoint team site. You also have the ability to grant administrative duties to specific people who have the ability to move, modify, add, or delete files and information on a team site.



Team Calendars

Since Sharepoint transforms the way you collaborate with your co-workers, it also changes how calendars function with an organization like InsideOut. Each Sharepoint has their own calendars that members can access. You can also add additional calendars to your Sharepoint team site, which can easily be linked in the navigation bar.

Customizing Sharepoint Team Sites[26]

Sharepoint team sites are fully customizable - the administrator can decide which information can be presented at the team site home page, along with what important links or images are displayed. Think of each team site as it's own adaptable website.

Sharepoint: Communication Sites

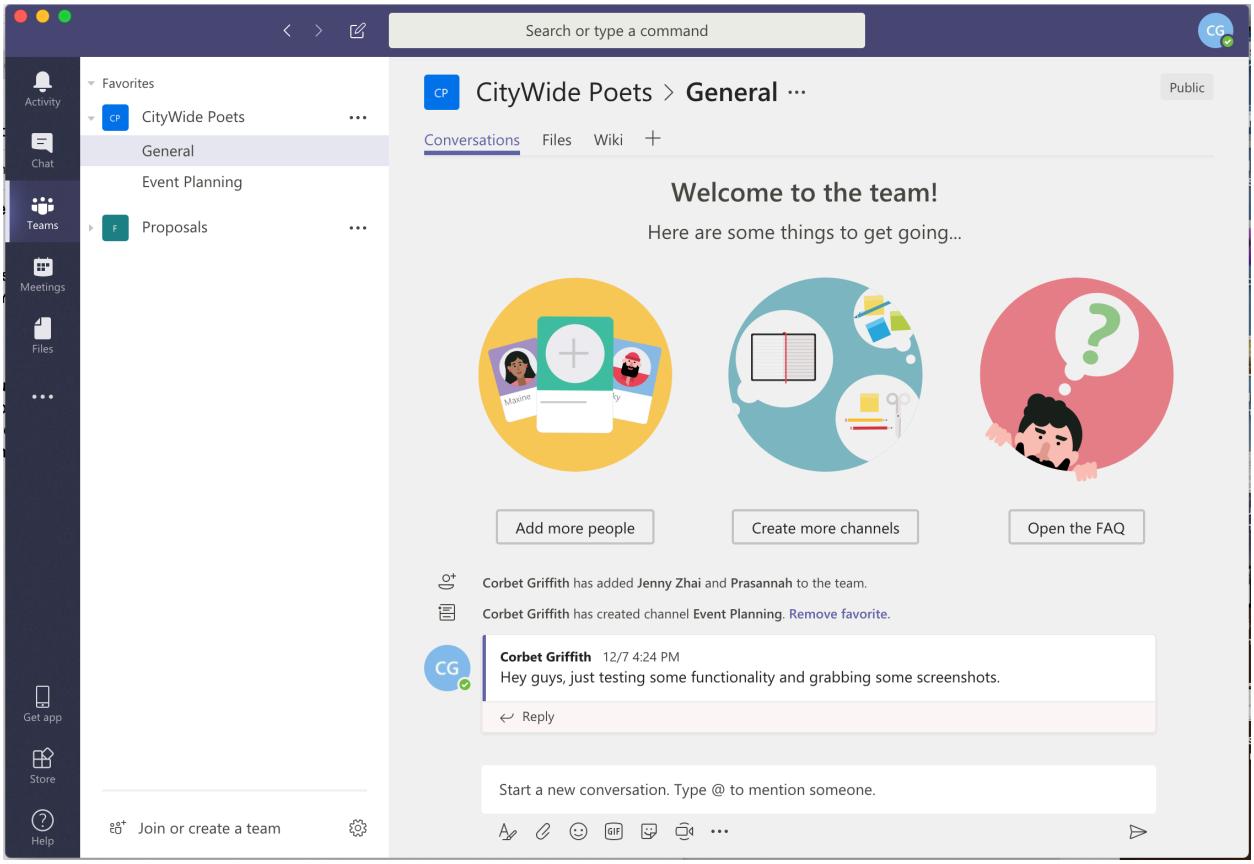
Communication sites, on the other hand, is used as more of a showcase for your project - most users should be reading the information on a communication site, not editing or managing it. Communication sites can be a great resource for internal training, an overarching view of your organization, or overall news for everybody within your organization.

[26] For a video overview, please see: https://support.office.com/en-us/article/video-start-designing-your-team-site-7b77c8cc-6131-47a9-9470-f39ec6027c07

Microsoft Teams[27]

Microsoft Teams is a communication application that allows co-workers to collaborate, share files, and communicate using team-based chat rooms. Microsoft Teams is free with every Office 365 membership. Microsoft Teams can also be used to communicate privately to each other.

While Teams may not necessarily need to be implemented at InsideOut, it may be something to consider as the organization continues to grow. Teams can be downloaded to any smartphone, tablet, or laptop.



Creating Teams

Microsoft Teams works similar to Sharepoint team sites - anybody can create a team for any specific project or job duty. Teams can be public or private, and employees can join any number of teams.

Managing a Team

Each Team has its own chat room channel. Each channel's transcripts are automatically saved in Microsoft Teams, so new members who join the channel can easily review any previous communication that occurred in a channel.

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[27] For a video overview, please see: https://support.office.com/en-us/article/video-welcome-to-microsoft-teams-b98d533f-118e-4bae-bf44-3df2470c2b12

Channels can also easily be searched within Microsoft Teams, and really important information can be pinned to a team's channel, or onto a team's wiki, which can be edited by everybody.

Restoring Deleted Files in OneDrive and Sharepoint
Trusting a cloud-based storage solution can be stressful, especially when you're using a new service for the first time. With OneDrive and Sharepoint, those concerns are alleviated with advanced data recovery features.

OneDrive
Drive Business administrators have the ability to restore all files that have occurred in the past 30 days, regardless of what gets deleted. You can even restore your OneDrive to a specific date, if needed.[28]

OneDrive also allows administrators the ability to restore a file from the OneDrive recycling bin, or restore a previous version of a file.[29]

Sharepoint
Sharepoint also offers the ability to restore a previous version of a Sharepoint file[30], along with restoring items that have been deleted and placed into the recycling bin.[31]

Advanced File Recovery
An administrator has the ability to restore files that may have been inadvertently deleted from the OneDrive or Sharepoint recycling bins by accessing the site collection recycling bin.[32]

Using Outlook with Google Email
Office 365 Non-profit/Business will automatically create an @insideout.onmicrosoft.com account and corresponding email address for all of its users. While this email doesn't necessarily have to be used by InsideOut employees, it may be worth transitioning all employees over to e-mail addresses if they currently primarily use their personal email addresses.

Outlook can also be setup and linked with any third party email address, including Gmail, Hotmail, and Yahoo. Employees who utilize third-party email addresses can also setup notifications for any Sharepoint or OneDrive notifications that would normally come through their Office 365 account.

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[28] https://support.office.com/en-us/article/video-welcome-to-microsoft-teams-b98d533f-118e-4bae-bf44-3df2470c2b12

[29] https://support.office.com/en-us/article/restore-a-previous-version-of-a-file-in-onedrive-159cad6d-d76e-4981-88ef-de6e96c93893

[30] https://support.office.com/en-us/article/restore-a-previous-version-of-an-item-or-file-in-sharepoint-f66dbda0-81f4-4d1e-b08c-793265c58934

[31] https://support.office.com/en-us/article/restore-items-in-the-recycle-bin-of-a-sharepoint-site-6df466b6-55f2-4898-8d6e-c0dff851a0be#ID0EAADAAA=Online

[32] https://support.office.com/en-us/article/restore-deleted-items-from-the-site-collection-recycle-bin-5fa924ee-16d7-487b-9a0a-021b9062d14b