



**Bill Robertson has long pursued open-source computing and trialed Linux well in advance of his contemporaries.** Photo: ROB HOMER

## Model has its limitations

### Kate Hennessy

While bosses ponder how social networks can help their employees collaborate, De Bortoli's chief information officer, Bill Robertson, sticks to social contracts instead.

Social networking is one plank in a raft of tools known as Enterprise 2.0. If prevailing wisdom exists with such an emergent concept, it suggests companies that deploy Enterprise 2.0 tools should relax their grip and allow participation and structure to emerge spontaneously. Robertson disagrees.

"There's an assumption that if you build it, they will come," he says. "In theory this is true, but our

experience suggests it will be unbalanced. Some bright sparks will always be keen but it depends on their skills and background."

His definition of Enterprise 2.0 is based less around specific technologies and more around how they are used. He says De Bortoli has years of practical experience using technology in a collaborative environment and points to its open-source intranet content management system as an example.

For three years, De Bortoli staff have been able to create, link and edit intranet content.

"It's been a staggering success in places but has also shown us the limitations of the model," says Robertson. "Some departments

really fleshed it out and others accept it's a good idea but don't have the resources or need to contribute."

To some extent, Robertson gets around the issue by providing training, much of which is placed on the intranet for self-training.

"I have a social contract to treat all staff equitably," he says.

Robertson also bucks the trend that assumes a good dose of Enterprise 2.0 salts is necessary to dissolve organisational hierarchies.

"For companies that don't obsessively adhere to organisational charts and already encourage free and frank discussion, some of these solutions aren't as appropriate," he says.