

Wikis for You and Your State Association

Definitions

Blog - a user-generated website where entries are made on a regular basis, in journal style and displayed in a reverse chronological order. The term "blog" is derived from "Web log." "Blog" can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.

Wiki - a website that allows the visitors themselves to easily add, remove, and otherwise edit and change available content, typically without the need for registration. This ease of interaction and operation makes a wiki an effective tool for mass collaborative authoring.

The term wiki also can refer to the collaborative software itself (wiki engine) that facilitates the operation of such a Web site, or to certain specific wiki sites, including the computer science site (the original wiki) WikiWikiWeb and on-line encyclopedias such as Wikipedia. Wiki wiki" means "rapidly" in the Hawaiian language.

What is the difference between a wiki and a blog?

A blog, or web log, shares writing and multimedia content in the form of "posts" (starting point entries) and "comments" (responses to the posts). While commenting, and even posting, are open to the members of the blog or the general public, no one is able to change a comment or post made by another. The usual format is post-comment-comment-comment, and so on. For this reason, blogs are often the vehicle of choice to express individual opinions.

A wiki has a far more open structure and allows others to change what one person has written.

Wiki Notes

A wiki is generally used as a group collaboration on editing and refining a topic or focus of study. It can be used by families, classrooms, sports teams, community groups, book clubs, fan clubs, party organizers, wedding planners, and others.

Wiki Walk Through

This site provides a very clean intro for wikis (like the example below).

Use the arrows at the bottom of the menu on the left for lots of good info and ideas for using wikis

<http://www.teachersfirst.com/content/wiki/>

Ways to Use a Wiki in Education

<http://www.wikiineducation.com/display/ikiw/Ways+to+use+wiki+in+education>

Advantages to Using a Wiki

- Good for writing down quick ideas or longer ones, giving you more time for formal writing and editing.
- Instantly collaborative without emailing documents, keeping the group in sync.
- Accessible from anywhere with a web connection (if you don't mind writing in web-browser text forms).
- Your archive, because every page revision is kept.
- Exciting, immediate, and empowering--everyone has a say.

Disadvantages to Using a Wiki

- Dirty laundry isn't a good public face. If a wiki is a shared memory, it's not going to be terribly tidy, and you may not want people to see your half-formed, unsure, and speculative ideas. (You have to decide if you want your wiki be public.)
- Its tendency is to get messier. A wiki isn't an administrative panacea, and there's certain maintenance you need to perform.
- It is not a content management system. You'll have to look after your own standards for formatting and when it comes to moving to whatever your final document format is, there'll be more work.
- If you have a public wiki with open editing, you'll need to patrol it to avoid users battling over content unproductively.

Benefits of using a Wiki

No special knowledge or education of HTML editing is required.

Low upfront investment and little if any cost

Editable by using any browser; no authoring software package needed

Facilitates collaborative writing, editing, peer review, commenting and annotating.

Images, audio, video clips can all be included

Ability to customize to meet the needs of your association.

Revision control with access to previous versions of each page.

Visible tracked changes

Speed of editing and changes in REAL time without approval from "above"

Websites for creating free wikis

Wikispaces <http://www.wikispaces.com/>

WetPaint.com <http://www.wetpaint.com/>

PBwiki.com <http://pbwiki.com/edu.html>

Information on Education Wikis: <http://wikisineducation.wetpaint.com/?t=anon>
