

## Wikis for Education

### What is a wiki?

- Wikis are basically online documents that can be edited by multiple authors.
- Invented by Ward Cunningham in 1995, the term *wiki* was derived from the Hawaiian word for "quick," referring to how fast and easy it is to collaborate using one.
- There are many forms of wiki but it is commonly an online body of collaborative writing on a given topic (like Wikipedia, the user generated encyclopedia). With wikis, you can play both roles of a reader and a writer. Wikis allow people to communicate across geographical and temporal boundaries – creating a flexible and lasting, yet inherently unfinished, document.

**Private wikis:** editing and viewing only by a selected membership community.

**Protected wikis:** allow for public viewing but only private editing.

**Public wikis:** allows all to view and edit equally.

### Ways you can use wikis in your course:

- Spaces for literary writing in collaboration and/or editing.
- Any class project with a reference or encyclopedic format. Instructions, manuals, glossaries, textbooks, and bibliographies are all excellent wiki applications.
- Easily create simple websites for group or individual student projects.
- Project development with peer review and editing: consider exposing the essay writing process to the helpful comments of the instructor and peers. Or consider using a wiki space for thesis editing between student and Thesis Advisor.
- Spaces for brainstorming and/or planning.
- Perpetually updated lists or collections of links.
- The choice is yours. The limit to the use of wikis is only the imagination – it is a tool which can be implemented for many course contexts.

*If the Wiki format does not make sense for your needs, consider using other applications such as WebCT 6 blogs, websites, or podcasting! (See other EDC guides for information on these tools, or contact us with questions).*

### How do I get started?

#### 1. Choosing the right type of Wiki.

- Choose a Wiki software application that meets your needs, taking into account the finer details of appearance, storage space, features, privacy, dependable developers, etc. An excellent site which can help you choose is **Wikimatrix** (<http://www.wikimatrix.org/>). It contains and organizes an updated directory of all wiki applications and allows you to go through comparisons of different products to see which one corresponds to the features you indicate are important. The **Wiki Choice Wizard** (<http://www.wikimatrix.org/wizard.php>) even allows you to simply answer qualifying questions to help you find the wiki host(s), which you can then put

Continued on reverse.

into a side by side comparison chart for an overview of all features.

- A few recommended hosts are PB Wiki (<http://pbwiki.com>), **Wikispaces** (<http://www.wikispaces.com>), and **Netcipia** (<http://www.netcipia.com/xwiki/bin/view/FreeNetcipia/Create/>)).

## 2. Develop a privacy consent form.

- Due to the Ontario Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) each student must sign the General Consent form (available at available at <http://fippa.carleton.ca/form/index.html>). For public wikis, the identities of the students must be protected and thus a more extensive consent form should be signed as well as the implementation of strategies to protect student participants.

## 3. Develop an Acceptable Use Agreement.

- Clearly outline what constitutes acceptable participation and behaviour in the site. Allow students to contribute to this Agreement. If any of their behaviour comes into question, you can then refer back to the Agreement for reinforcement.

## 4. Plan integration with your course.

- Develop in-class tutorials, set up a course wiki or smaller wiki working groups with several students monitoring wiki activity, and introduce email notification for wiki changes.
- It is important to consider critical issues such as possible student fear of publishing in front of their peers (or if public, in front of the internet in general), the means of grading individual and/or group contributions, and making accommodations for the reluctance of inexperienced technology users.
- Ensure you have back-up contingency plans in case of students not wanting to participate, software issues, or other related complications.

## Where can I learn more?

- See Renée Fountain's article, **Wiki Pedagogy**, online at ([http://profetic.org:16080/dossiers/dossier\\_imprimer.php3?id\\_rubrique=110](http://profetic.org:16080/dossiers/dossier_imprimer.php3?id_rubrique=110)) for an excellent overview of the use of Wikis in education.
- **Pink Flamingo's Resource Lists:** Despite the glaring pink design, this site is an excellent aggregated, comprehensive collection of links related to information technology in teaching and learning. See the section on Blogs, Wikis and Video Podcasting for a cornucopia of useful links related to setting up course wikis: [http://www.ibritt.com/resources/wp\\_blogs.htm](http://www.ibritt.com/resources/wp_blogs.htm).

Remember that EDC is here to help you with your technology projects! Set up a meeting with a Technical Assistant or review our other online and print guides on our website. We can be reached by mail at [edc@carleton.ca](mailto:edc@carleton.ca) and by phone at extension 4433.

**Educational Development  
Centre**  
410 Dunton Tower  
[carleton.ca/edc](http://carleton.ca/edc)

Phone: 520-4433  
Fax: 520-4456  
E-mail: [edc@carleton.ca](mailto:edc@carleton.ca)