Wiki Guidelines

Acceptable use

Acceptable use of the Wiki service is governed by the University policy entitled "Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources" found in Section II, Chapter 19 of The University of Iowa's Operations Manual.

Wiki sites can be configured to allow either public or private access, on a site-wide or page-by-page basis. Users contributing to publicly available pages should be aware that contributed materials may be seen by external users, show up in web searches, etc.

Further questions about the use of the wiki service may be directed to the ITS Help Desk.

Wiki site creation

How can Wiki sites be used?

Wikis are web sites that allow editing of pages directly in the browser. They can be used whenever a web site is required. Some common uses include:

Instruction

Wikis can be used in support of coursework by, for example, providing a space and mechanism in support of collaborative writing assignments. Wiki sites can also support persistent learning artifacts, such as a corpus of knowledge that is added to by members of the same course over several semesters. Wikis provide an easy way for students and instructors to gather research materials, share findings, and comment on each others' work.

Research

Wikis can support research in several ways. The collaborative writing features, including automatic version tracking, are useful in authoring papers. Wikis provide flexible permissions that allow for, e.g., a public website for a research group or project, with a section of the wiki marked as private and only available to research project members.

Collaboration and group work

Some administrative workgroups and non-academic campus groups find Wikis a useful tool for supporting group work. Wiki pages are convenient for quick documentation, meeting notes, and sharing or searching PDF or Microsoft Office documents. Advanced users may take advantage of features such as todo-list management and group mail archiving.

Community building

A popular use of Wiki technology online, community building usually involves wide-open wikis with few or no usage restrictions. An online community can be as small as a handful of members of a community of practice, or as large as Wikipedia.

Wiki ownership

Each Wiki space has at least one owner, typically the person who requested the Wiki site, called the Space Administrator. The Space Administrator has administrative rights to the Wiki, and can alter permissions, theme, etc. The Space Administrator accepts responsibility for maintenance of the Wiki, and should ensure that its use meets the acceptable use guidelines. Space Administrators will be notified in advance of scheduled downtimes, upgrades, etc.

Who can request a Wiki site?

A wiki site may be requested by any University of Iowa faculty or staff member by filling out the request form.

Student requests should either be made through a sponsoring faculty or staff member, or accompanied by documentation showing that the student represents a recognized University of Iowa student organization. Student requests may require additional documentation or signatures. Teaching Assistants are exempt from this requirement when acting in their official capacity.

Any user may enable a "personal" wiki site, by simply signing in, accessing his or her profile page, and selecting the option to enable a personal wiki space. A personal wiki space is just like a regular wiki, but with the following restrictions:

1. a personal wiki always has the username in the URL (e.g., http://wiki.uiowa.edu/display/~jdoe)
2. by default, a personal wiki can only be used by the owner (though it can be opened up at the owner's discretion)

Wiki maintenance

Support

Wiki support is provided by the ITS Help Desk (384-HELP) between 8-5 M-F.

Backup

Individual pages and attachments are automatically "versioned" by the Wiki server. Users with editing rights can view all previous versions, or restore a previous version in order to undo recent changes. This is sufficient for most backup/restore needs. Please note that individual attachments deleted from wiki spaces cannot be recovered.

ITS will take regular backups of the entire Wiki server, for use in disaster recovery situations. Wiki owners are encouraged to save a backup of their individual Wiki sites on a regular basis. To back up an individual wiki site, go to Space Tools -> Content Tools -> Export and choose the "XML Output" method. The resulting zip file can be used to restore the entire Wiki space, without affecting other hosted wikis. To restore and individual Wiki space, please contact the ITS Help Desk.

Site lifetime

Wikis will generally be allowed to run for as long as they are in use. Wiki usage statistics will be collated yearly, and outdated Wiki sites will be retired using the following mechanism:

1. An outdated Wiki site is identified by lack of usage.
2. The wiki owner is emailed with a warning of the impending site retirement. If the Wiki owner responds with a request to keep the Wiki site active, it will be held over until the next retirement cycle.
3. If no response is received within two weeks, another email is sent.
4. If no response is received within a week, the Wiki site is archived and removed from the server. Archives will be kept for 6 months, and can be restored to the server at the Wiki owner's request.

Anti-Virus and file attachments

Anti-Virus scans are continuously run on the UI Wiki. If a scan results in the suspected presence of a virus in an attached file, the file will be quarantined and thoroughly scanned again. If a virus is confirmed on the second scan the offending file will be deleted. Please note that the owner/source of a compromised attachment file is impossible to know so notification of file deletions is not possible. If you suspect that an attachment file was deleted from a Wiki space please contact the ITS Help Desk to see if it may have been removed due to the detection of a virus. Please note the file name and the Wiki space it was removed from.

User access

University of Iowa users

The Wiki server supports authentication by HawkID, and Space Administrators may assign permissions based on HawkID or on groups in the campus Active Directory configuration. Authentication on the Wiki server will be provided for as long as a user's HawkID is active.

Non-UI users

The wiki server also allows signup by external users who do not have a HawkID.