

Wiki What?

Documenting Cataloging Processes in Wiki Format

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What's a Wiki?

- Website
- Collaboratively create, edit & organize content
- Collective knowledge base

Wiki Advantages

- Accessible from anywhere
- Visible to all at the same time
- Content is searchable
- Very flexible format

Wiki Advantages

- Don't have to know HTML code
- Make changes fast
- Easy to fix mistakes or revert to former versions

Why We Wikied

- Documentation we did have was in Word documents
- No easy way to search across documents
- No easy way to see previous versions or make sure everyone was using the same documentation

Why We Wikied

- Many cataloging policies & procedures existed only in people's heads
- Documentation was not complete, so a good time to switch formats

Project Background

- OU Libraries Reference Dept. had been using a wiki for a while
- Mid-2007: Cataloging Dept. asked IT staff to set up a wiki for us, too

Project Background

- Late 2007: OU Libraries administration decided to convert entire staff intranet into a wiki
- Reference and Cataloging dept. wikis became part of overall OU Libraries staff wiki

Wiki Steps

1. Check to see that no one has already created the page you want to create
2. Begin a page and type content
3. Save

ITS REALLY THAT EASY!

Now for a demonstration...

<http://staff.library.ohiou.edu/wiki/index.php/Category:Cataloging>

Which Wiki?

Hosted Wiki

- Commercial web sites that let you create a wiki on their server
- Easy to set up with minimal technical skills
- Less control over how it looks and behaves

EXAMPLES: Pbwiki,
Wetpaint

Open Source Software

- Free software installed on a library server
- Need some technical skills to install and maintain
- More control over how it looks and behaves

EXAMPLE: MediaWiki

Challenges

Fear of open editing concept

- Documentation will be “wrong” due to editing by misinformed individuals
- People will get into editing wars
- Other library staff will be in cataloging department’s business (if they have access to wiki)

Response To Challenges

Fear of open editing concept

- If someone writes an incorrect procedure into the wiki, they've probably been following that incorrect procedure all along – now at least we know about it!
- Wiki changes can easily be tracked and undone (with non-wiki formats, if no one saved the old version, it's gone)

Response to Challenges

Fear of open editing concept

- Use common sense: talk with other staff and/or supervisors to agree on correct procedure, rather than getting into an editing war
- No evidence so far of other departments reading/criticizing cataloging procedures

Challenges

Fear of technology

- Too much emphasis on fancy features makes editing seem difficult
- Some wiki concepts (e.g. Categories) hard to grasp
- Least computer-literate staff may not even be fully comfortable with web browsers

Response to Challenges

Fear of technology

- Conduct structured training workshops for staff
- Emphasize basics (“anyone who can type can edit the wiki”)
- Offer separate, less structured advanced training or Q&A sessions for those that want it

Response to Challenges

Fear of technology

- Create help pages (or make use of those already on the web)
- Have wiki mentors available to answer questions (people who are comfortable with wiki basics, but aren't "techies")

Challenges

Apathy

- Staff don't see need to move documentation to wiki
- Staff don't see need for documentation at all (everything they need to know about their jobs is already in their heads)

Response to Challenges

Apathy

- Honestly, we're still working on this one
- Make sure e-mails, memos, etc. refer staff to wiki, not to old forms of documentation
- Stop maintaining pre-wiki documentation; remove it from network drives, intranets, etc.

Response to Challenges

Apathy

- Emphasize that documentation is needed even if people know their jobs (“you could get hit by a bus”)
- Documentation process uncovers discrepancies in what different employees think are the “correct” unwritten procedures

Future Goals

- More participation by more staff!
- Cataloging FAQ?
- Cataloging glossary?
- Cataloging department news section?

Questions? Comments?

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