

What is it?

A *wiki* is a collection of web pages designed to enable anyone who accesses it to contribute or modify content, using a simplified markup language. Wikis are often used to create collaborative websites and to power community websites. Wikis are used in businesses to provide affordable and effective intranets and for Knowledge Management.

"Wiki is a Hawaiian word for "quick". It has also been suggested that "wiki" means "What I Know Is".

More info:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki>

<http://www.sitepoint.com/article/what-is-a-wiki>

Why use it?

Wikis are simple, efficient tools for managing knowledge and collaborating. They're particularly convenient in today's busy and international workplace.

- ✓ They're easy to learn and use. Wikis aren't as complicated as other types of content management systems.
- ✓ With wikis, knowledge doesn't get buried in emails, locked into file systems, hard drives or servers, intranets or extranets, or closed in more specialized data management systems and knowledge management systems.
- ✓ Wikis are online so users can access, collaborate on, and share content, knowledge and files anytime, anywhere.
- ✓ Wikis are also exceptionally flexible. You can customize them and also connect a wiki to other applications, databases, and file systems.
- ✓ And, most wikis are a fraction of the cost of most enterprise software.

Wikis are ideal for groups of people who are connected by a common interest or bond and need to collaborate on an issue of importance. Instead of sending email back and forth, a wiki website can be used to centralize the knowledge of a group. Because the wiki website can be edited by anyone with the proper permissions, you can keep everyone in your group on the same page – literally!

More info:

<http://www.atlassian.com/software/confluence/wiki.jsp#whatsogreat>

<http://www.wetpaint.com/page/What-Is-A-Wiki>

Why the community service and volunteer field should use it:

How to boost your community service or volunteer program by using a wiki:

1. Use a wiki to create a community of practice to facilitate communication, share knowledge, and generate effective practices
2. Use a wiki to organize, consolidate and archive processes and procedures for large planning events like Days of Service or conferences

How to do it?

1. *Research.* If there is already a wiki with your specific topic in mind – see if you can have your users contribute to that community.
2. *Select a purpose.* If this wiki is to be used by a specific group or for a specific project then, what are you going to use the wiki for?
3. *Select a service.* Here is a chart comparing wiki farms (a server or an array of servers that provides hosting for multiple wikis).
➤ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_wiki_farms
3. *Publicize your wiki* – either internally or externally. To have a successful wiki, you must find like minded people to work on the wiki with you.
4. *Get the ball rolling* – To encourage communication and collaboration start by adding content yourself. People will be able to add, delete and edit content.
5. *Accountability* is important. Therefore, every change made to a wiki page is tracked and recorded.

More info:

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=F7BAU2XX5Ws>

http://michaelhyatt.blogs.com/workingsmart/2005/04/how_to_start_a_.html

Examples

You may encounter these in your everyday life:

Wikipedia – A free, multilingual, open content encyclopedia project operated by the non-profit Wikimedia Foundation. Launched in 2001 it is the largest, fastest-growing and most popular general reference work currently available on the Internet. www.wikipedia.com

 Community service and volunteering examples:

TechSoup – For examples on how nonprofits are using wikis check out this article on TechSoup's homepage.

<http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/webbuilding/page6031.cfm>

City Wiki - How about a wiki about your town. A shining example of this is the Davis Wiki, a wiki made by the residents of Davis, California about their town. <http://daviswiki.org/>

Keep in mind

Wikis are generally designed with the philosophy of making it easy to correct mistakes, rather than making it difficult to make them. Thus, while wikis are very open, they provide a means to verify the validity of recent additions to the body of pages. Critics of publicly-editable wiki systems argue that these systems could be easily tampered with, while proponents argue that the community of users can catch malicious content and correct it. The open philosophy of most wikis, allowing anyone to edit content, does not ensure that every editor is well-meaning. Vandalism can be a problem.

More info: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki#Trust_and_security