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See Also:

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What is a Wiki?

Wiki definition | Editing in Wikis | How Wikis work | What can Wikis do? | What Wikis can't do | Installing Wikis | Live Wiki examples

Wikis save you time and trouble creating your own website content

Disclaimer We're providing this demonstration and definition page, because we really enjoy wikis and we work on a wiki project, but for ethics sake, we have to admit that we're biased because Eclectic Tech installs wikis. Eclectic Tech uses wikis when client's needs allow for it, because it's too easy to create new pages, saving everyone a great deal of time, trouble and money. If you aren't interested in wikis, I suggest you run away now, because they're really tempting when you can get a timesaving flat-fee wiki install starting at \$.

Wiki Definition

Wikis are a category grouping of website applications based on a philosophy of simple and fast website editing for non-programmers. Wikis are designed for exceptionally easy content management and editing, such as required for website owners, writers and content editors, and are often used for website collaborations -- works where there are multiple writers or authors, such as encyclopedias (cf. Wikipedia).

Wikis are quick to edit -- "Wiki" means "quick" in Hawaiian, thus a "Wiki-Wiki Web" is a "quick-quick web."

That's really all "wiki" means. There are many software applications that allow "quick-quick" website building.

How wikis work

Wikis give you the ability to quickly edit a webpage or create new web pages directly from your browser. Absolutely no other software is necessary, and you don't need to know anything about HTML to create basic pages. Some wikis give you a choice of editing buttons (wysiwyg - what you see is what you get), and thus act exactly like popular word-processor software.

Behind the scenes, all wikis use simple and somewhat intuitive codes -- "wiki markup" -- to tell the program how to format a page, and nearly all of them require absolutely nothing special to write a simple paragraph. See the sidebar for **examples of wiki markup**. A quick example is that if you add a pound symbol # to the beginning of a line, it becomes a numbered list. Additional #'s in a row indicate the level of the list item. The ability to take simple outlines and drop them directly into the edit form on the webpage is part of the reason wikis are so powerful while still remaining simple to use.

What wiki's can't do

- o Your dishes or laundry (damn!)
- o 100% Flash website design
 - o They will handle *limited* template-based Flash navigation or ad elements, and you can embed Flash in pages with a little custom code
- o Write your content for you (feature expected in 2010 ;))

Installing wikis

You can install wiki software on your web server and learn how to configure it, or someone, like Eclectic Tech, can install it for you. We offer a **\$ wiki installation package**. I've been installing wikis for over 3 years, and program on the wiki project. Eclectic Tech also includes up to 2 hours of training in using the application. If you learn how to edit, we'll teach you something else about the software.

I can't say how long it would take or how difficult it would be for you to be installing your own wiki -- it depends on your ability with technology, your type of website hosting service, and your ability to follow the instructions. I've added in special configuration directives to my offer, to allow wysiwyg editing, blogging, Podcasting, RSS feeds, and more, all of these do not work out-of-the-box if you install it yourself. You don't have to sit down with the manual and puzzle through what to do -- I'll do everything for you.

Live Wiki Examples

Here are wikis in real public use, and only some of them are public collaboration sites.

- o Private Edit:
 - o This site
 - o [Archutech Consulting](#)
 - o [Business Exchange Network](#) (members & officers may edit)
 - o [Zino Technical Services](#)
 - o [e-Trailblazer Consulting, LLC](#)
 - o [Personal Care by Myrna](#)
 - o [Holistic - Hudson Valley](#)
- o Public Edit:
 - o [Similepedia project](#) (registration required)
 - o [The Open Source Reiki Project](#)
 - o [Multiplicity: The Missing Manual](#)

Editing in wikis
Each wiki has different language, but for a quick idea of PmWiki (this wiki) try typing the following examples in a open-edit wiki sandbox page (such as this sandbox .)
Typing a paragraph is just typing a paragraph. If you don't put a blank space in between (like this one), then it's still the same paragraph.
This would be a different paragraph.
Exclamations are used to denote a level of importance for text in the wiki !!header becomes:
header
Asterisks are used like bullets for bulleted lists *list **list sub-item becomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">o listo list sub-item
A row of dashes becomes a horizontal rule ---- becomes:
Putting something inside of double brackets denotes a link (or use CamelCase if enabled) [[http://www.kinhost.org/wiki/Main/ManualTOC The Manual for people with Dissociative Identity Disorder]] becomes: The Manual for people with Dissociative Identity Disorder
What Can Wikis Do
Quick answer: anything any other website application can do -- if you let it. Out of the Box WikiExpress Uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Web Content managemento Podcastingo RSS feeds & Articleso Press releases / media centero Portfolioso Photoso Class assignmentso Collaborative projectso Technical documentationo Course Documentso Online Purchasing (cf WikiExpress package page -- uses PayPal buttons - this is a custom edit in the program)
Who can use a wiki: <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Anyoneo Musicians and pro/amateur net radio broadcasterso Newspapers and newsletters, classifieds, community newso Businesseso Artistso Photographerso Studentso Community Activistso Help Desk/Tech Supporto Schools