A Beginner's Guide to Wikity

Table of Contents

What is Wikity?

Wikity is a new sort of wiki, suitable for classrooms and workgroups, which runs on top of the WordPress engine.

If you just want a wiki that runs on top of WordPress, Wikity compares favorably to other options.

- We use a Markdown-based syntax with a bit of syntactic sugar for things students and faculty need (like footnotes).
- We use a card-and-catalog based metaphor that encourages users to write in wiki form, rather than use it as an academic paper-publishing engine.
- Our Quick Edit functionality in catalog view is something you will never want to live without after you use it.
- The social-bookmarking functionality is a great way to pull people into the process of wiki-ing.
- And our use of "Paths" allows the creation of mini-sites out of common pools of content.

All this is to say is on one level Wikity is *just a really good wiki engine*. You'll be more productive in it than you have been in years. If you want to use it just as a wiki, I think you'll be pleased.

Underneath the covers of Wikity, however, there is an even more radical idea. Wikity allows you to create wikis that are *federated*. What this means is that everyone on your team and in your class can have their own wiki, the way they might have their own blog, but these different wiki sites can work as one big wiki system.

This idea, which we stole shamelessly from a project called Federated Wiki, solves many of the problems that have plagued wiki use in the past. But it's a somewhat complex tale, and something we'll deal with later in this Guide.

Installing Wikity (The Minimal Install)

This section is for people who want to run their own copy of Wikity on their own server. If you already have Wikity set up or are using a copy of Wikity someone has installed for you, scroll down to the chapter labelled "Your First Card in Wikity".

Wikity is most fun, I think, in a multi-user instance with a community hub, but people who want to use it as a notetaking system and an alternative to bookmarking sites can do fine with a minimal install. It's also a good choice for people just wanting to try it out

The following outlines the "Minimum Wikity Install". The minimum Wikity install installs as a theme without a "community hub" and uses no additional plugins. If you like it, you can always move to a add that other stuff later.

A Note about Wikity and Security

I haven't combed through this theme looking for security holes, and it's early stage software. So the caveat that I am not responsible for lost work etc. applies. You assume the risk.

Three suggestions:

- I would install it as its own WordPress instance, so that it's sandboxed off from your other stuff.
- If your web service provider offers backups, enable them.
- Contact me to get on an email list for updated releases, so that as we find issues you get notified of theme updates.

In short, this is very new software, so treat it like the alpha release it is.

Licensing and Wikity

The Wikity theme is free to use, reuse, modify, distribute, whatever. It's yours.

Stuff you post on your Wikity site can be released by you under the license of your choosing, but after much research and thought, we suggest keeping it under the CC BY-SA license that ships in the footer.

We could spend hours talking about why that particular license, but the short answer is the CC BY-SA license best encapsulates the expectations of the technical architecture – e.g. content I copy from you can be copied from me in turn. If we don't adopt CC BY-SA we get into some weird scenarios we'd like to avoid.

CC BY-SA has had its trial by fire on Wikipedia as a wiki license, and it works. We're sticking with it as the default.

Installing Wikity (Simple Version)

Download the 0.3 theme:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxU2UK1rWxPYQ3VXQXNwQnViUjZadzVKU2Q2RFRCbWpNSEk0/view?usp=sharing

1. Set up your WordPress site.
    a. Install to a subdomain instead of subfolder if you can.
    b. VERY IMPORTANT: Choose the **MULTISITE INSTALL** even if running a single instance. Why? Because we test against multisite only and things won't work. If using Installatron the Multisite option is toward the bottom of the install page.
2. Under settings, go to the Permalinks option, and select "post name" as the option.

3. Upload the theme, and select it.

4. Check your front page, you're ready to go!

Slightly Harder Stuff

Some quick notes for doing harder stuff that you can skip if you want.

Requiring a Password for Viewing Posts

You can password protect a site by installing the Password Protected plugin. You will need to add the IP of your server into the exceptions list, so that people on your site can still copy stuff between sites on the multisite.

To get the IP of your server, go to a command window and ping your server:

Then install the Password Protected plugin with your desired options and add the server IP into the box:

Keep in mind this plugin provides some security, but not bulletproof security. I don't know much about the internals of the plugin, but my guess is that a determined hacker will still be able to hack in and see your stuff. So use of Password Protected is not for confidential materials, but for materials you want to keep away from the general public, but wouldn't be tragic if exposed. It is a good choice for classes that discussing issues that they don't want random strangers walking in on, or teams that are writing things that could be public but feel too unpolished to share.

It is extremely poor choice for anything that constitutes an educational record, or any confidential materials.

If you need to use Wikity for secure materials, you should set up the server to only be available through your VPN, and maintain security through network access.

Setting up a Central Hub

Installs with a central "hub" collect cards from across many different sites on the multisite instance and post them to a central hub. This is useful for a class or team to get a global view of activity without visiting each member's site.
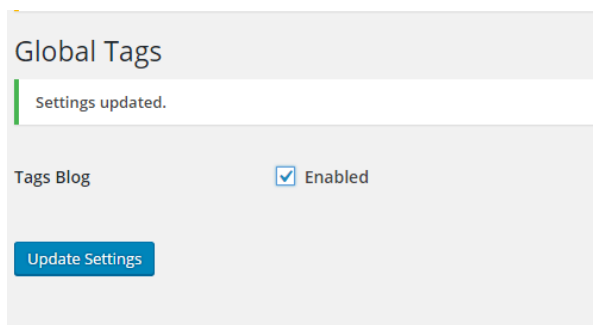
I use the Multisite Tags Plugin for this purpose. Here's how I set it up. You can get a copy of it online, or you can use the version I've zipped up here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxU2UK1rWxPYcG9HalcyT0hpaGhlM3NvVGpOWGpHNEtKTUNB/view?usp=sharing

Note: the above zip has three plugins in it. Unzip the file, and then load the individual zip files up to your server as needed. The file you need for this is called WordPress MU Sitewide Tags.

First, upload, install, then go to network admin > settings sitewide tags.

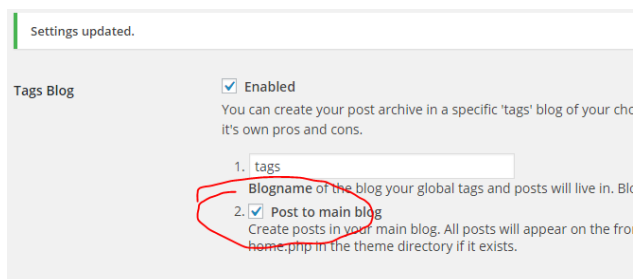Check the "Tags Blog" option and submit. More option will be shown.

Check off the post to main blog option if you want the hub as your front page:

Under "Post Meta" add a line in the box named "history". This makes sure the copy history of the page comes along with the page:

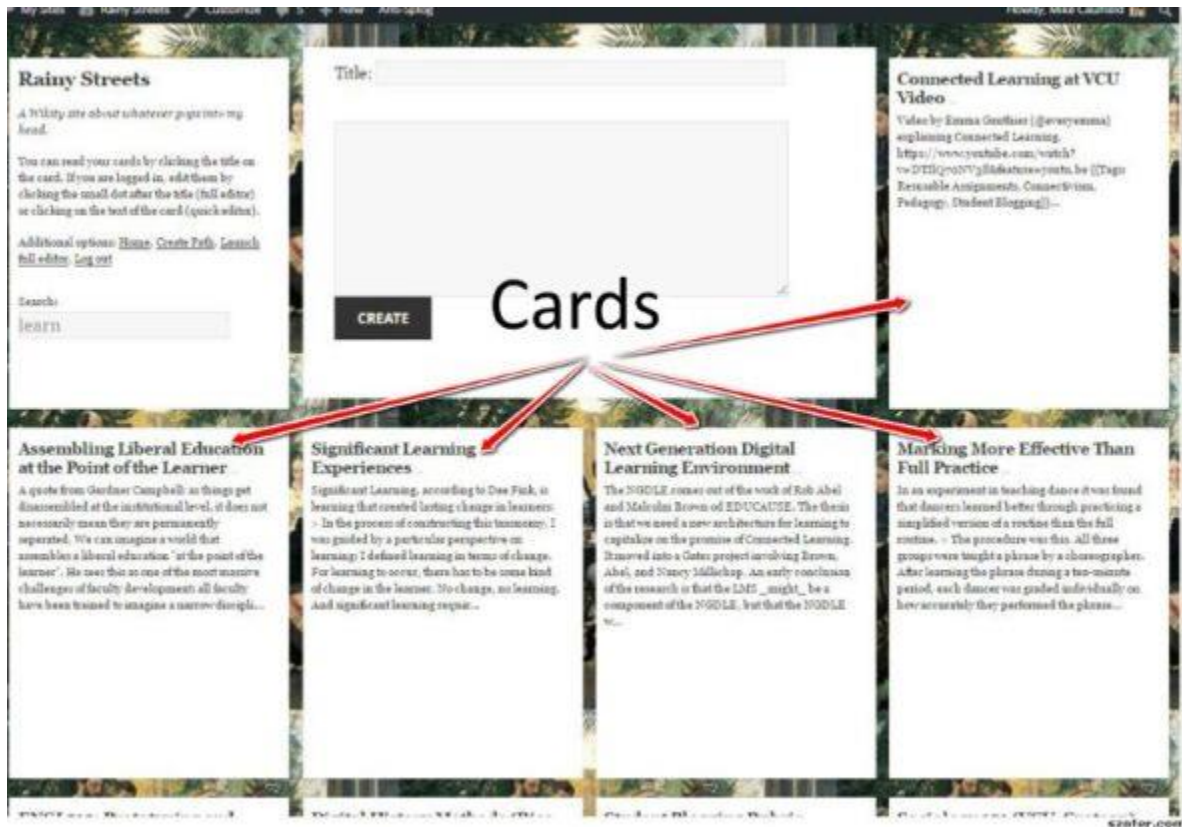**Super important:** first pass through hit the Update Settings button, not the populate posts button.

That's it, you're done! To test the system, go to another site on your multisite install (make a new site if you need to) and post something there.

For web geeks, I'll mention that this multisite approach to the hub has three advantages over RSS based solutions. First, the posts can flow to the hub, even if the content is behind a password. Second, and more importantly, the materials on the hub always stay up to date and reflect revisions. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this system copies source Markdown (not rendered output the way RSS does) and ports the history meta information along with the document.

The downside is that it's not as flexible as a true syndication system, but we will have some solutions for that in the coming months that make use of our JSON-based API.

Auto-uploading Images to Site

One of the most loved features in our current educational use of Wikity is auto image uploading. Basically, if you make a reference to an external image on another site in your Markdown, Wikity goes out and fetches that image and saves a copy locally.

This prevents the issue that haunts all my old blogs, where a third of the images are broken or missing.

It also is a great way to compose rich media posts (or in our case "cards") from a text editor, without ever having to go into the WP-Admin Dashboard.

To do auto-uploads, we've hacked a version of a plugin that does this with HTML pages to work with Wikity's Markdown. To use it, install Auto-Upload Images from the Wikity Plugins package:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxU2UK1rWxPYcG9HalcyT0hpaGhlM3NvVGpOWGpHNEtKTUNB/view?usp=sharing

It shouldn't ask you to update this plugin, but if it does, don't. Our version has some workarounds to work with Wikity, and we don't want them clobbered.

Once you activate the plugin, you're done: it gets called during the normal Markdown process. More on that in the section on images and Markdown.

Your First Card in Wikity

Wikity is implemented as a "hyperlinked card library". Each card stores information of some sort, formulated in such a way that it can be linked to from many other cards.

On the front page of Wikity, you'll find your "catalog view". This is a view that helps you find and edit cards quickly. Here, the text of the cards is highlighted so that you can quickly find or edit what you need.

You can look at an individual card by clicking the title and entering "card view", which will show graphics, embedded videos, formatting, and other features.

Let's make our first card – a simple "social" bookmark.

The bookmark functionality is on the first card of the catalog view of your site, a link that is labelled "Wik-it!"
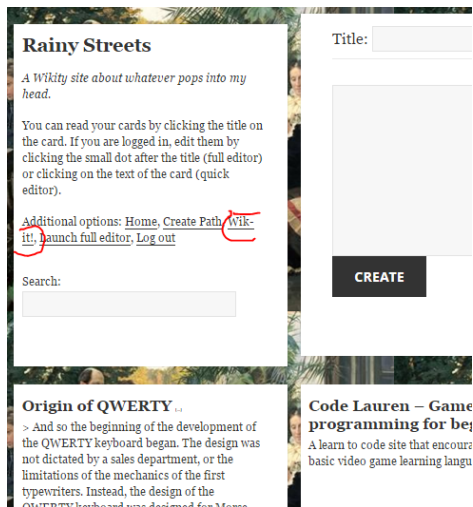
To create the bookmark, first open up Chrome or Firefox as a browser, and display the bookmarks bar. In Firefox, you can do this by right-clicking up near the icons at the right side of the top of the browser:
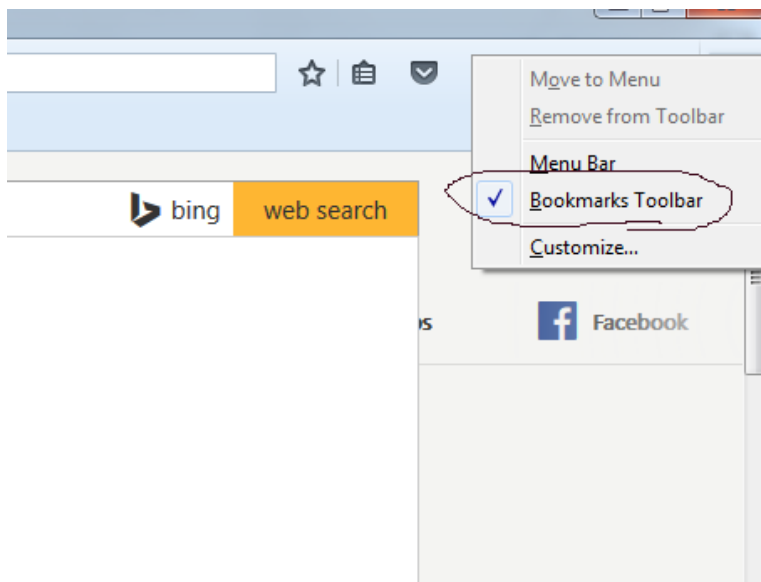
On Chrome it can be found under the "hamburger menu" at the top right of the browser:
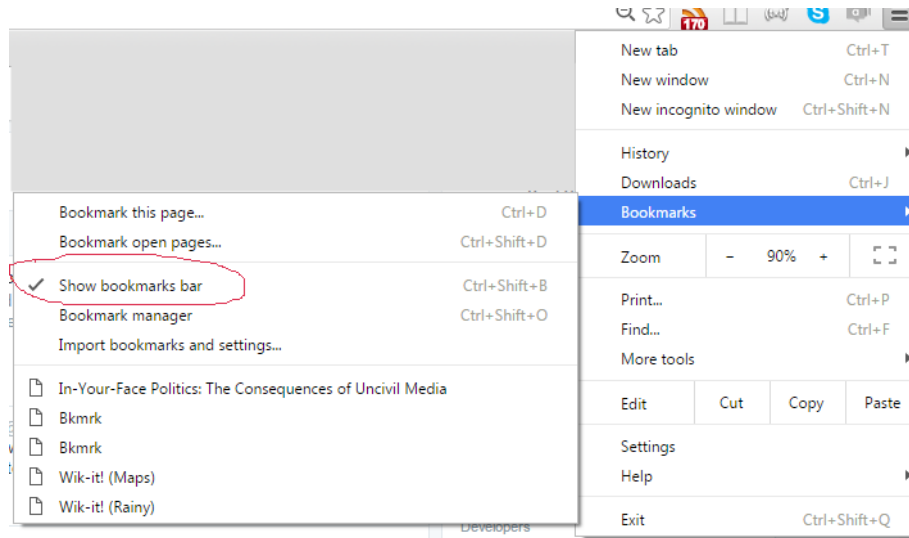
Once the bookmarks bar is visible, simply click and drag the "Wik-it!" link on to your bookmarks bar and drop it there, like so:

OK, time to capture some knowledge. Head over to Hacker News, Reddit, Twitter, or wherever it is you get your daily reading from. If you don't have a place to go, try Hacker News.

https://news.ycombinator.com/

Look down the list of articles there, and find one that interests you:

1. ▲ More code review tools (github.com)
   358 points by Oompa 4 hours ago | 87 comments
2. ▲ Handful of Biologists Went Rogue and Published Directly to Internet (nytimes.com)
   278 points by srikar 6 hours ago | 99 comments
3. ▲ Hublin: open-source video conferencing (hubl.in)
   50 points by based2 1 hour ago | 17 comments
4. ▲ AWS Database Migration Service (amazon.com)
   19 points by henbe1979 44 minutes ago | 3 comments
5. ▲ Study finds negative association between empathizing and calculation ability (nature.com)
   78 points by randomname2 3 hours ago | 36 comments
6. ▲ Show HN: Podcat – Imdb for podcasts (podcat.com)
   288 points by hijp 6 hours ago | 76 comments
7. ▲ The Complete Guide to HTTP/2 with HAProxy and Nginx (m12.io)
   37 points by ryzy 1 hour ago | 4 comments
8. ▲ Fermat's Last Theorem Earns Andrew Wiles the Abel Prize (nature.com)
   49 points by fforflo 3 hours ago | 7 comments

Go to the article and find and interesting paragraph and select it:

Then, leaving the paragraph selected, go up to your bookmarks bar and hit the Wik-it! bookmark. A pop-up window should appear with your content in it, a provisional title, and a Markdown-based link back to the article:
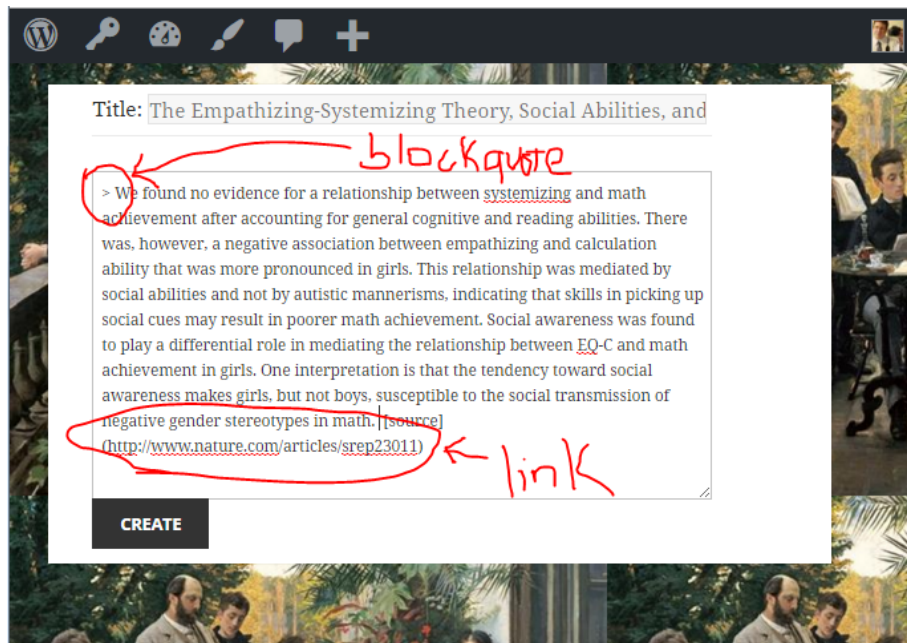
Hit "Create" and it will close and post to your card catalog. Go to your catalog view and you should see it there:
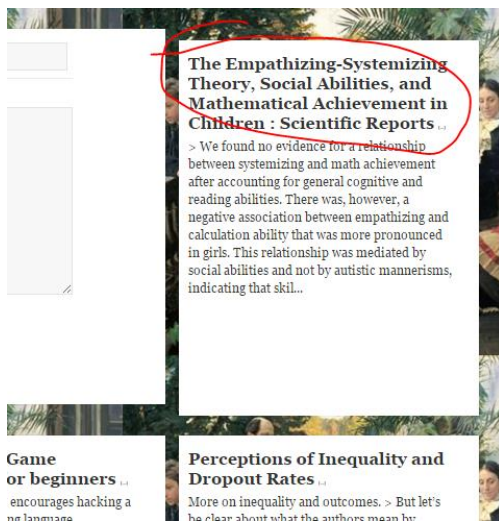
Note that it is in "catalog form" – it is not displaying formatting or embedded media; it's just showing you enough of the text to hint to you what it is about.

Click on it to get the "card" view.

Rainy Streets

A Wikity site about whatever
pops into my head.

Go to wikity.cc.

Go to home.

Search …

RECENT POSTS

The Empathizing-Systemizing
Theory, Social Abilities, and
Mathematical Achievement in
Children : Scientific Reports

Path:: Neat Stuff on the Science
of Mind

Origin of QWERTY

Code Lauren – Game program-
ming for beginners

Perceptions of Inequality and
Dropout Rates

The Empathizing-Systemizing Theory, Social Abilities, and Mathematical Achievement in Children : Scientific Reports [...]

> We found no evidence for a relationship between systemizing and math
> achievement after accounting for general cognitive and reading abilities. There
> was, however, a negative association between empathizing and calculation ability
> that was more pronounced in girls. This relationship was mediated by social
> abilities and not by autistic mannerisms, indicating that skills in picking up social
> cues may result in poorer math achievement. Social awareness was found to play a
> differential role in mediating the relationship between EQ-C and math achievement
> in girls. One interpretation is that the tendency toward social awareness makes
> girls, but not boys, susceptible to the social transmission of negative gender
> stereotypes in math. (Source)

The card view renders the card and any embedded media. Note that the Markdown link has been nicely rendered to a "source" link, and that the angle bracket (">") that was inserted has blockquoted your text.

To get back to catalog view, click the title of your site in the upper left hand corner.

That's it. You've made your first card!

Making a Better Card

You can use Wikity cards any way you like, but a couple of years of experience has taught us the most efficient format is a form we call "Title-Abstract-Treatment-Connections". Using this format will help you and others get the most out of your cards.

(Yeah, I know – this says "References" not "Connections". We need to update it at some point. Documentation is hard.)

So let's make another card but be a bit more thoughtful this time. We'll start off doing just what we did before, let's grab a link:

2. ▲ Hublin: open-source video conferencing (hubl.in)
67 points by based2 2 hours ago | 22 comments

3. ▲ AWS Database Migration Service (amazon.com)
36 points by hepha1979 1 hour ago | 8 comments

4. ▲ Handful of Biologists Went Rogue and Published Directly to Internet (nytimes.com)
287 points by srikar 6 hours ago | 104 comments

5. ▲ Study finds negative association between empathizing and calculation ability (nature.com)
84 points by randomname2 3 hours ago | 44 comments

6. ▲ Show HN: Podcat – Imdb for podcasts (podcat.com)
293 points by hijp 7 hours ago | 79 comments

Now grab a paragraph, but grab one that has an interesting idea to it. Here I grab a paragraph that notes that if the scientific publishing system falls apart researchers will have to evaluate articles based on their quality, not where they are published.

they should. Disruption is needed, for many reasons.
#ASAPbio @NatureNews
6:44 AM - 19 Feb 2016

In any case, some researchers say, a détente between journals and preprint advocates may be short-lived. If university libraries drop their costly journal subscriptions in favor of free preprints, journals may well withdraw permission to use them, forcing biomedical researchers to make a harder choice. The preprint movement, some #ASAPbio advocates argue, may presage the need for a greater cultural shift than scientists have yet been willing to make: evaluating one another based on the substance of their papers, not where they are published. But it does, Michael Eisen, a longtime advocate for scientific publishing reform at the University of California, Berkeley, told his colleagues, help move this area of scientific publishing "into the 20th century."

Mich@el Eisen
@mbeisen

I hit my bookmark, and think what I want to call this idea/example. Instead of writing a card that summarizes the article, we are going to write a card that just captures this *idea*.

I think for a bit and come up with a title: "The Meaningless Where". I click my *Wik-it!* bookmark and write in the title.
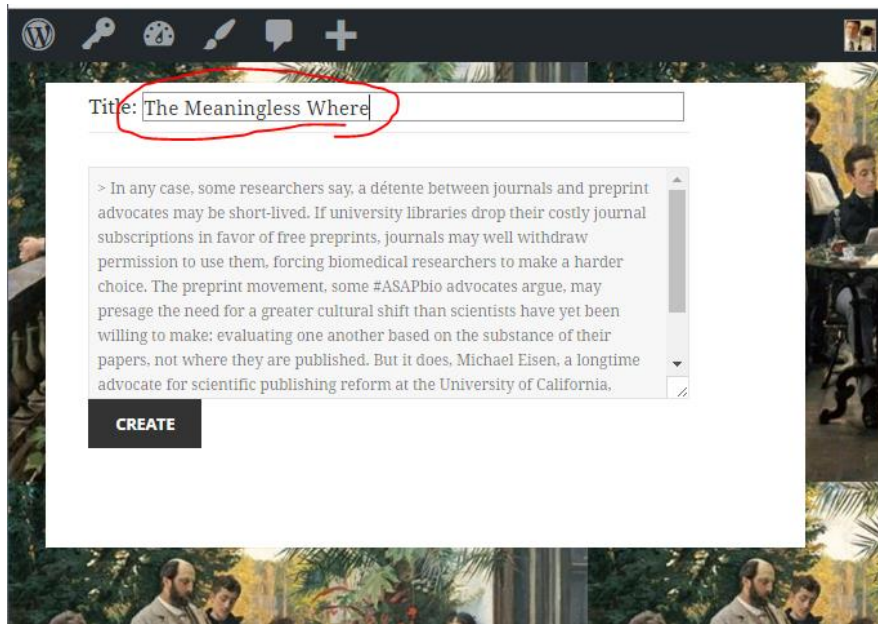
Writing the Abstract

That's the Title. Next up in TATC: the *abstract*.

The abstract is the first paragraph of your card. It's the part you are most likely to see in the catalog. It should summarize what the card is about, and use the sorts of terms that you might search for later. It should also provide a quick summary of the concept, data, or example so that people without time to read the whole thing can get the gist of it.

So let's write an abstract. Here's a start:

> As researchers begin to publish outside traditional publishing channels, questions of authority begin to shift from the "where" (what publication was this published in) to the "who" and "what" (who said this, and what in the paper supports the conclusion).

This is good enough for now.

Expanding the Treatment

The treatment (TA*T*C) expands on the abstract, adding detail and nuance to it, and placing it in a larger context. This quote is going to be the bulk of our treatment. But let's add some context around it.

> The increasing use of "preprints" in biology, a system whereby researchers submit their articles to online sites like bioRxiv months before they are printed in journals, has fostered the most recent round of debate. While preprints are currently synergistic with the publishing world, they may not be for long.
>
> > In any case, some researchers say, a détente between journals and preprint advocates may be short-lived. If university libraries drop their costly journal subscriptions in favor

> of free preprints, journals may well withdraw permission to use them, forcing biomedical researchers to make a harder choice. The preprint movement, some #ASAPbio advocates argue, may presage the need for a greater cultural shift than scientists have yet been willing to make: evaluating one another based on the substance of their papers, not where they are published. But it does, Michael Eisen, a longtime advocate for scientific publishing reform at the University of California, Berkeley, told his colleagues, help move this area of scientific publishing "into the 20th century." [source](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/16/science/asap-bio-biologists-published-to-the-internet.html)

> What would newer systems that "ignore the where" look like? Other online reputation systems hold clues. Prominent researchers could vote the research up or down. Networks of citation could provide additional insight into value. In short, reputation could become more decentralized and networked.

This treatment does a couple things. Though the main value is still the quote, the quote is properly contextualized and explained. Additionally, after the quote we draw out some of the implications explicitly.

And then we stop. The thing about cards is they don't have to do much more than this to be valuable. We expand these discussions very often not through writing a longer card, but by writing new cards and linking them. Which brings us to our next section: References.

Adding External Connections

At the end of the Treatment we put a row of four or more dashes, and then we add "Connections" (TAT*C*). There are three types of Connections. The first type is external references, which link to external support for claims and sources, as well as to related external sites. For instance, we mention bioRxiv in the text, so let's add a link and description:

        BioRxiv is the best known preprint source in biology. [site](http://biorxiv.org/)

Let's also note that there is an article from the Guardian that covered this issue that might be worth reading.

        BioRxiv is the best known preprint source in biology. [site](http://biorxiv.org/)

        The Guardian covered the issue of preprints last year, and has additional information. [article](https://www.theguardian.com/science/occams-corner/2015/sep/07/peer-review-preprints-speed-science-journals)

Incidentally, you see here one reason why we try to put links at the end of lines. Links can get long and they make editing messy if they are in the middle of sentences. You're free to do as you choose of

course, but we've found the best pattern is to either begin or end paragraphs with links and avoid the middle.

These links are in Markdown syntax, and will look like this when in card view:

BioRxiv is the best known preprint source in biology. (Visit Site)

The Guardian covered the issue of preprints last year, and has additional information. (Article)

Adding Internal Connections to Your Own Cards

Internal connections, sometimes called "wiki links" are used differently than external connections. While external connections are most often used to supplement the material on the card, internal connections can be best thought of as "cross-references". They are a way to connect related cards to one another.

Usually we save the card before adding internal connections, because we do a lot of searching about. So let's save our card and go to catalog view. And we'll search our card stack for related cards

One note here: this next part is hard to do until you've got a set of cards you've developed. So if you're not finding connections on day one, don't worry.

In catalog view perform a search on a related term to jog your memory. This article is about Open Access and Open Science, so let's start with that.

There's not much here to work with, but there is one card I have that is about a "Lab blogging" site, and this kinda-sorta relates. So I copy the title, return to my *Meaningless Where* card, and write this in the Reference section:

> Another way to share results more quickly is Lab Blogging. For an example, see [[Geospatial Ecology of Marine Megafauna Laboratory (Oregon State)]]

In card view it will look like this:

Now, that name of that page is way too long, but there's nothing to do about that. Don't make my mistakes. Shorter page names!

Internal references are an art form, and one of the most powerful and useful features. We'll come back to the art later, but this is probably enough for now.

Adding Internal Connections to Stuff That Doesn't Exist Yet

Here we linked to stuff that existed. But maybe you have an idea for a connection to a card that hasn't been written yet. What then?

Add the link. This process, of adding links to things that don't exist yet, was the secret behind Wikipedia's growth. When you see that link and click it, it will ask you if you want to create a new card on the subject. Say yes, if you've got time, and write a few sentences. You or someone else can always make it better later.

Adding Metadata

The final thing we put in the references section is metadata. Metadata is data *about* a document. It might be about where that document came from, or information about its contents. Hashtags are metadata, as are tags and photo credits.

In Wikity, we put metadata in double "curly braces" with a key term identifying the type of metadata. The most common type of metadata is tags, which work just like tags on Twitter or Instagram – they are a way to tag things so that you can find them later. You preface them with the term "Tags:"

Here we'll add a couple tags to our Meaningless Where card:

> {{Tags: Open Science, Open Access, Publishing, Peer Review, Networked Authority}}

When looked at in card view the text should appear in a small, unobstrusive font:

You can also use the metadata curly brace syntax for giving credit when necessary.

    {{Tags: Open Science, Open Access, Publishing, Peer Review, Networked Authority}}
    {{Credit: Photo of beach is by Alan Levine [source](http://cogdogblog.com/)}}

When adding multiple types of metadata, wrap each type in separate curly braces. Note that as above, links can be rendered in metadata if necessary. They will look like this in card view:

Eventually we hope to expand the use of this syntax, and treat things within double curly braces as special little embeddable widgets that display differently depending on the type. Perhaps, for example, the tags will display as clickable tag links, credits might have special formatting etc.

For now, it just makes text small, which works enough. ☺

Editing in Catalog View

In case you haven't discovered this yet, you can edit in catalog view. Simply search for the card you want to edit in the search box, and then click that card where you see it. An edit box will appear. Make your edit and click "update" to save.
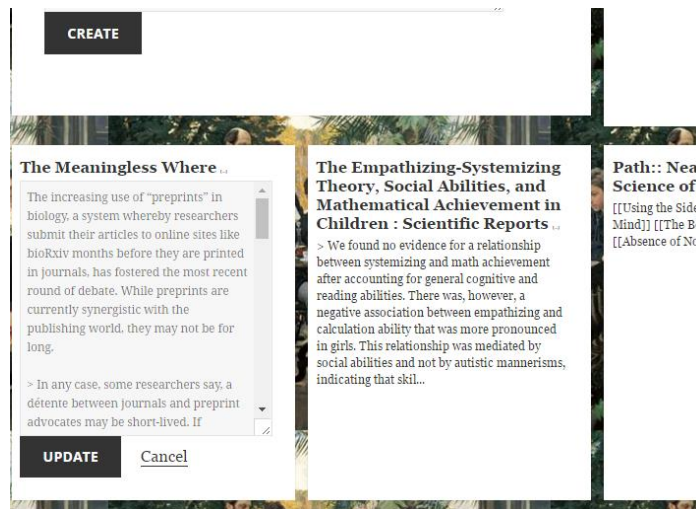
Note that although you can open many cards at once in your catalog view, at present, you can only save one set of edits at a time. So, for the time being, don't simultaneously edit two cards in the view – instead, edit one, save it, then edit another. Future versions (might) allow multi-card editing.

Understanding Markdown and Extensions

The Markdown format is a plaintext format to represent "rich text" features such as bullets, images, and blockquote. Markdown is used, at various levels of implementation, in products from WordPress to Microsoft Word, so some of the skills you learn here will transfer.

Wikity uses "GitHub-Flavored Markdown" and you can use any reference on that. Here's a cheat sheet:

https://github.com/adam-p/markdown-here/wiki/Markdown-Cheatsheet

We'll go over a couple of the main points though.

Basic Formatting

First, you can do basic formatting, such as **bold** or _italic_.

Bulleted lists are supported, ala:

* This is a point I am making.

* This is another point.

Headings are supported through a hash at the beginning of the line, e.g.

This is a first level heading

This is a second level heading

This is a third level heading

Note that in Wikity, the first level heading is already taken by your page title, so start with the second-level heading.

Links and Images

External links created with a link word in brackets, followed by a URL and an optional title in quotes.

You might want to check out [this page](http://hapgood.us/).

You might want to check out [this page](http://hapgood.us/ "Go to Hapgood Site").

The URLs cannot have any spaces in them. If your URL has a space in it you can replace it with "%20" which is the correct way to encode spaces in URLs.

URLs can generally deal with parentheses in the URL, but if it give you problems you can encode opening parens as %28 and closing parens and %29.

The most common error with Markdown link formatting is people putting a space between the closing bracket and opening parenthesis – "] (". There should be no space there.

Images are added as a variation on the link syntax. We just put an exclamation point in front of the brackets, the "link word" is the "alt" tag, the URL goes to the image, and the title becomes the caption.

![Freud as an older man](http://flickr.com/u/234/aksk88903958.jpg "Freud was a major influence on areas other than psychology.")

Wikity adds a bit of sugar to the Markdown image experience. When your image is loaded, Wikity looks at the image size and decides if the image would look best left-aligned with no wrapping text (for bigger images) or right-aligned with wrapping text (for smaller images). This sometimes results in the image right-aligning only after it is fully loaded, but it makes for a better page experience.

If you've installed the Auto Upload Images plugin (see first section, above) any external images referenced will be copied to your own site at the point you save. Currently, this only happens when you use the full image syntax (including caption) though this will likely be fixed in a future release.

Footnote (Link Extension)

Because academics and students often need to use footnotes, Wikity provides a small extension to Markdown link syntax that allows footnoting.

To link to a footnote, first write the footnote at the bottom of the page in the following format:

1. [#song] Favorite song this week, really

Notice there two parts here: the footnote "Favorite song of this week, really" and the **name** of the footnote (in this case we've named it "#song" – the name is *always* prefaced by a hash and will not be seen when in card view).

Now link the footnote from your main text, like so:

My favorite song is "Where No Cars Go", by Arcade Fire.[1](#song)

Note the syntax here is very similar to the link syntax, but instead of a URL in the parentheses you have a name of a "target" on the page.

Also note in the footnote at the bottom of the page that the name is in brackets but the in-text footnote has it in parentheses.

Ok let's take a look at how that works:

Footnote Example [...]

Hmmm, Let me think. My favorite song is "Where No Cars Go", by Arcade Fire[1] and my favorite food is probably[2] Orange Chicken.

1. Favorite song this week, really
2. OK, definitely.

You'll see that the footnote is superscripted, and when you click it, it should talk you to the link.

Please note that the *numbers* here don't matter. What has to match is that hashtagged name.

This extension is unique to Wikity and not part of Markdown core.

Tables

Wikity uses the "GitHub-flavored Markdown" syntax for tables. Columns are separated by the "pipe" character ("|"), and table headings are separated by a row of dashes. The way to make a table is like this:

President | Year

-------------|--------

1980 | Reagan

1988 | Bush

1992 | Clinton

2000 | Bush

2008 | Obama

This will display like this:

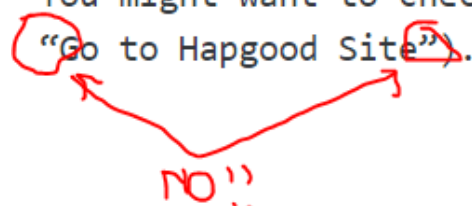| President	Year
1980	Reagan
1988	Bush
1992	Clinton
2000	Bush
2008	Obama

The table functionality is meant to be very basic. There is no way to adjust the width of the columns, for instance. But this should also save you hours wasted tweaking table columns that don't really matter.

Beware Curly Quotes

When we talk about writing the syntax for a link or an image, we mention the use of quotes. It's important that these are "straight" quotes, not curly quotes (generally called "smart quotes").

Sometimes when you compose in or copy text from programs such as Microsoft Word, you'll see that your opening quote curls left and closing curls right. Markdown will not recognize these as valid links or captions.

```
You might want to check out [this page](http://hapgood.us/).
You might want to check out [this page](http://hapgood.us/
"Go to Hapgood Site").
```

NO!!

```
You might want to check out [this page](http://hapgood.us/).
You might want to check out [this page](http://hapgood.us/
"Go to Hapgood Site").
```

YES!

Auto-Embeds

Auto-embed is a feature of WordPress that we make use of that is not part of Markdown or specific to Wikity.

If you put a bare URL on a line and WordPress recognizes it as something that can be embedded, WordPress will try to embed it automatically for you.

For instance, this card here, in which we've dropped a YouTube link:
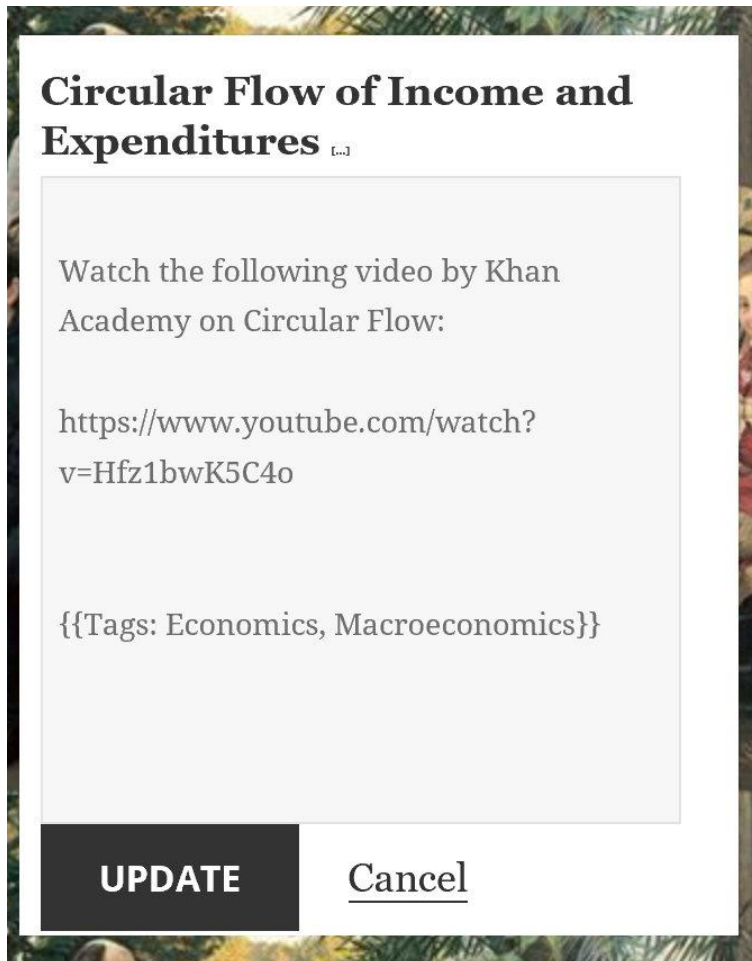
Will look like this when seen in card view:

Circular Flow of Income and Expenditures [...]

Watch the following video by Khan Academy on Circular Flow:

Tags: Economics, Macroeconomics

Pretty cool, right?

Auto-embeds are powered by a technology call oEmbed, and can work with any provider who supports oEmbed. Right now that list of providers includes YouTube, Soundcloud, Flickr, Vimeo, Twitter, and 28 other sites. There's a full list of supported providers here.

Creating Paths

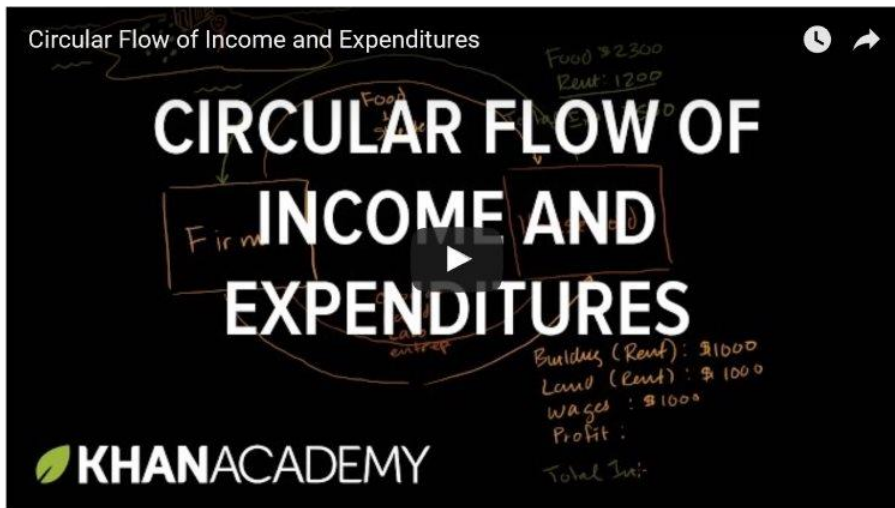Sometimes you want to put together a packet of reading for people to read in order. Maybe these are materials for students to read for class on a particular week. Maybe they are materials for a meeting. Maybe, as is the case in one of our Wikity uses, the students want to build a virtual museum, and need to create a tour.

We have a special way of doing this in Wikity. By creating a special "path" card, you can create a selection of materials ordered for easy reading by an audience.

We'll show you two ways to do this – the hard way first, and the easy way second.

Creating Paths Manually

To create a path manually, create a new card with a title that begins "Path::" followed by the name of your path. Here's an example:
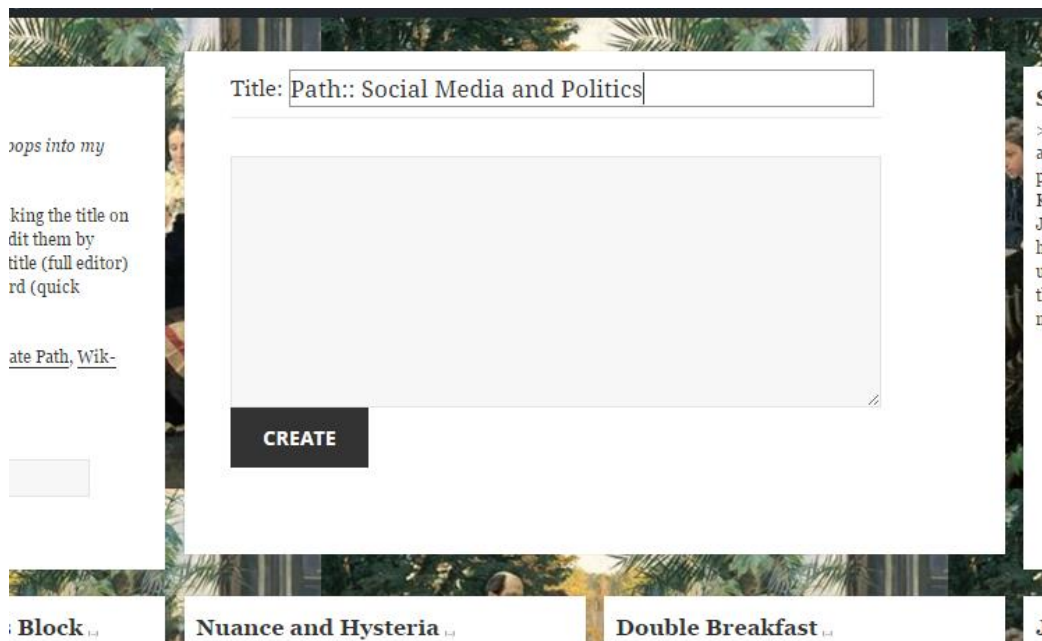
Notice the double colon after the keyword "Path".

In this card, put the page you want in your path in the order you want them, one to a line, using "wiki-link" syntax (double-brackets).
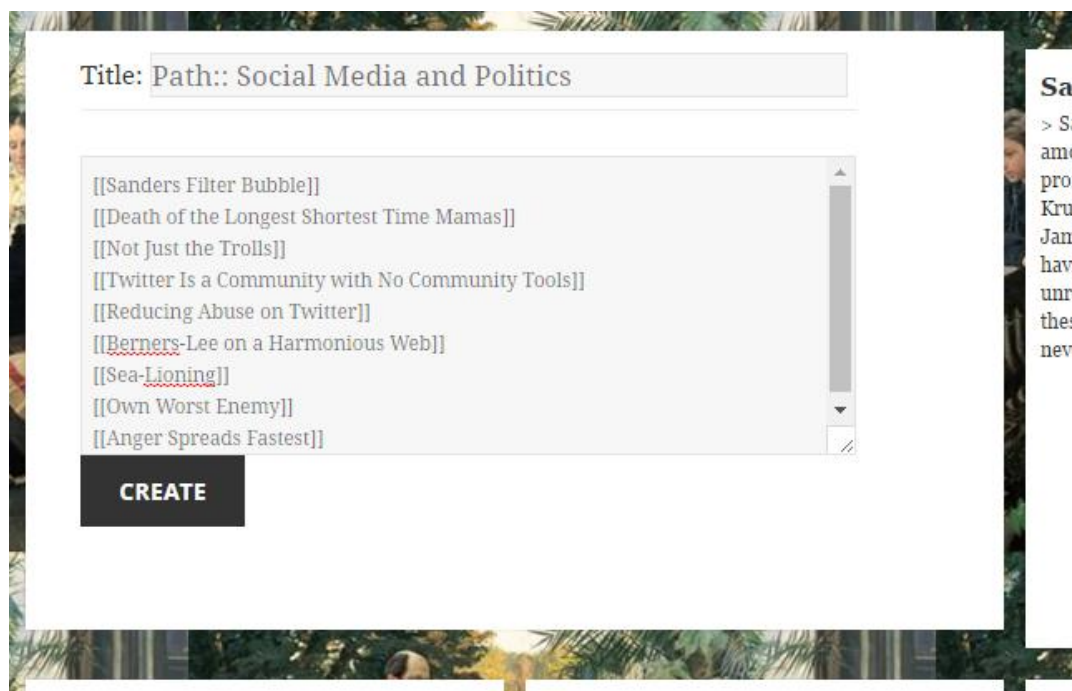
Now create the card, and then click on it to look at it in card view. What you'll notice is you are not taken to this card, but to the first item of the link list.

Rainy Streets

A Wikity site about whatever pops into my head.

Go to wikity.cc.

Go to home.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICS

Sanders Filter Bubble

Death of the Longest Shortest Time Mamas

Not Just the Trolls

Twitter Is a Community with No Community Tools

Reducing Abuse on Twitter

Berners-Lee on a Harmonious Web

Sea-Lioning

Own Worst Enemy

Anger Spreads Fastest

Sanders Filt

Sanders was able to broaden prominent liberal pundits — and Jamelle Bouie were attac and an unrealistic political s lot of Sanders fans never saw

People on /r/politics aren't ju overwhelmingly getting artic Sanders or make the case for Republican candidates) are r

And this doesn't just happen media sites like Facebook an friends. And because people means social media tends to

"It's easier than ever to surre you already believed was tru social news site Upworthy. In

What's more, you'll have a menu on the side that that lists the items in order, headed with the title of your path card. And at the bottom of each page there will be links for your reader to either go forward or back through the path:

kinds of articles they share. But regardless of whose fault it is, the resu same. (Source)

NEXT

Death of the Longest Shortest Time Mamas

You can click back and forth through the materials.

This functionality is great for assembling course materials, primers on a topic, or materials for a meeting.

After you assemble these materials you may want to add some introductory material about the collection or a conclusion. To do this, just write a card the same way you would write any card and add it to the beginning or end of the path:

Remember that your pages must have unique names.

Copying the first URL in the path will give you the path, more or less, but depends on that page continuing to be the first page. A better way to link to the path is to get the URL of the path card itself. You can do this from catalog view by bringing up the context menu (right-click the link on Windows) and choosing "Copy link address".
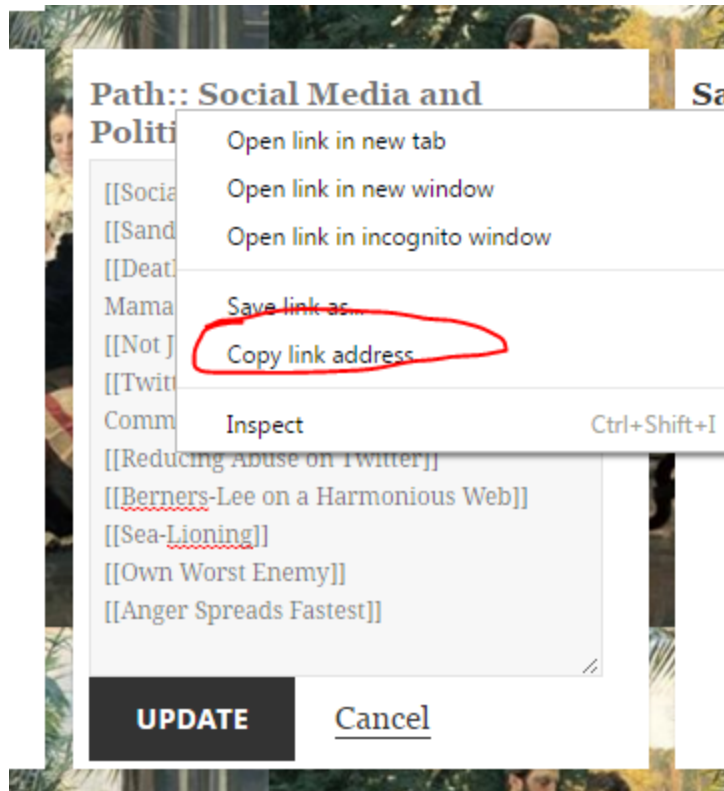
You can use that URL in Blackboard, Canvas, an email, Twitter, or wherever else you need to share your path.

Creating Paths from Catalog View

Making a Page as a Starting Point

If you want something on the site more formal, you can make a WordPress page. WordPress pages are not treated like cards and should be used sparingly. But they are sometimes a good entry point for outsiders.

To make a page, go up to the +New menu at the top of your pages when you are logged in and click "Add Page".
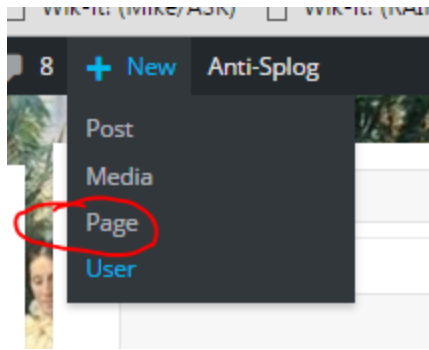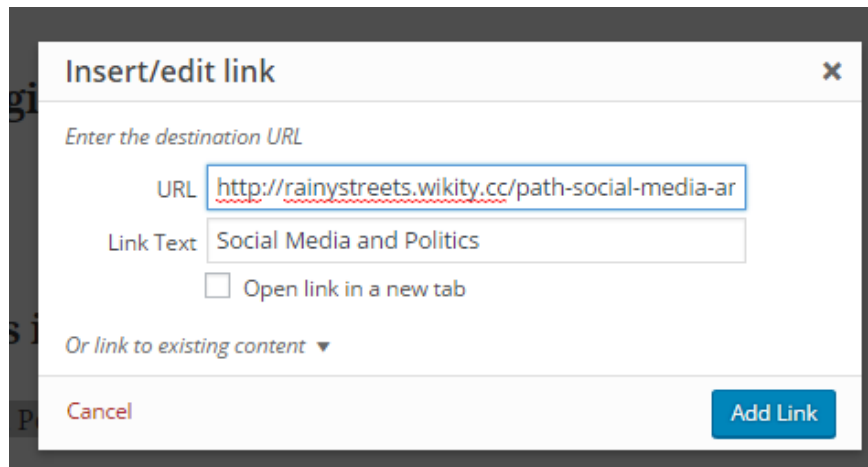
Pages have none of the formatting or special features of cards. When making a page, you'll get a normal editing interface. Instead of wiki links you'll use full URLS. Instead of Markdown you'll use the visual editor.

Go and add a new page. The page must not share the name of any page or card you've already written. Here we'll start a "Home Page" for our course, and add links to our paths:
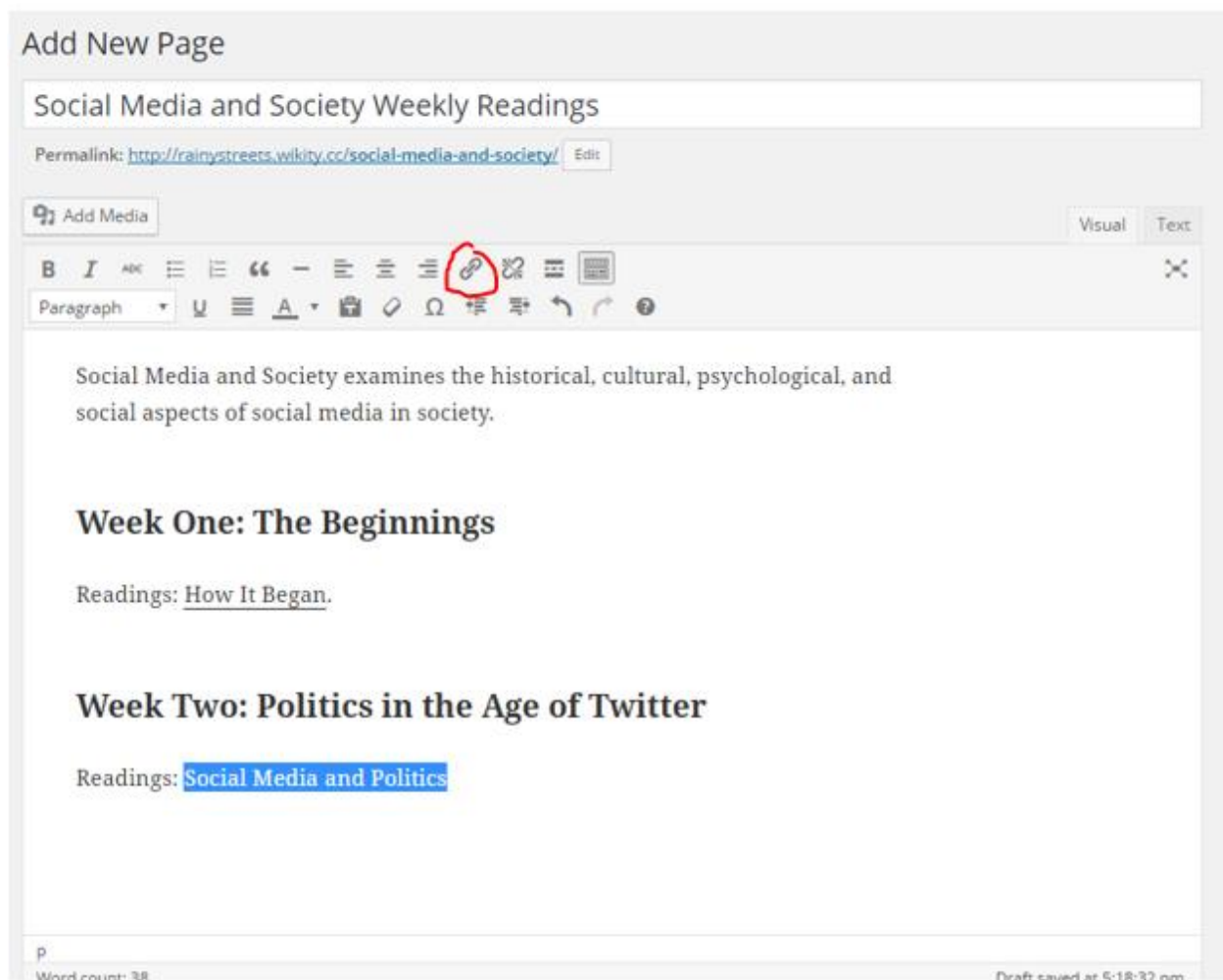
When adding links, select the text of the link and use the hyperlink button on the edit bar (see the button that looks like a chain link) to add the URL in. Again, use the full URL, as we show below:

Publish the page and then view it. You can share this URL as your starting point for outside visitors.

Again, pages have none of the superpowers of cards. They can't be searched from the front page, they don't do wiki-links, can't be included in paths, don't support Markdown, and don't allow the copying and history functions that we discuss in the next chapter. They should only be used to create aesthetically pleasing "landing pages" for your projects. You can create any number of these for different intended audiences or purposes, but we encourage you to put the bulk of your content into cards, not pages.

The Special "Home" Page

In its default installation, the Wikity Theme has a link to "Go to Home" in the sidebar. This is for you if you want to create an easily reachable central page. Just name the page "Home" and you're set. Future versions will allow you to customize the name of your "Home" page.

Copying Cards from Other People's Libraries

One of the radical ideas behind Wikity is that we can collaborate through the use of *connected copies*. Any content on any Wikity site that you can view can be copied to your own site, where you can edit it, customize it, extend it, fix it, repurpose it, or just store it in your library for future reference.

If you're a programmer, you can think of it being a user-friendly GitHub for text. If you're a user of Pinterest, you can think of it as Pinterest + privileges – not only can you "re-pin" it by adding it to your library, but you can edit it as well.

However you think about it, here's what to remember – if you see a card you like, copy it. Don't link to it, copy it. Get it into your library for safe-keeping.

Why? Here's where we get a bit theoretical, but making copies tends to be the best way to save, maintain, improve, and spread information.

Now there are some things out there where having a dozen different copies is *not* good. And we should acknowledge that. Some examples of things you might *not* want to create a dozen copies of:

- A policy document, where it's important to have only the most recent version
- Something you are co-writing with someone, where you have to produce a single document at the end
- User documentation for a system, that must be kept up-to-date

For most other things, however, copies are *good.* Consider this:

Copies prevent "link rot". Have you ever linked to a resource for a class you were teaching or from a blog post you were writing, only to come back a year or two later and find that the resource no longer existed? Or, even worse, realized that it hadn't existed for a long time, meaning that all your readers couldn't make sense of what you were talking about, because all the links were broken? We call this link rot, and it's more common than you think. About 5% of links die per year, and in the space of five years, over a quarter of all web pages are gone. If you're building on links, you're building on sand. Having copies puts you in control.

Copies are a disaster recovery strategy. Have you ever lost stuff you've written, photographed, or recorded because of technical failure or migration to a new site? Of course you have. One solution to this is to encourage people to copy your stuff. If other people copy your best stuff and your technology fails you, you can always copy it back from them. This is, in fact, the biological model of resilience: create lots of copies and species will survive most catastrophic events.

Copies provide for permissionless improvement and adaptation. Suppose you write up a card on recent trends in Universal Design around a concept called DeafSpace on a site being hosted at another school. I like your card, but notice that you're missing a great video on it. I also think some of the language in it is a bit academic for the people I want to share it with.

If you're on another school's site, I can't get access to directly edit your card, and I don't know if it's a great idea for me to have access to edit your wiki anyway. You might have that card exactly the way you want it for your school's purposes.

So my option is usually to send a link to your page in email, and a link in the email to the video, and note that the language is a bit academic but it's worth sticking with. So now we're maintaining important information in email, asking people to visit multiple sites to synthesize information that could be centralized, and requiring people to tolerate materials that don't quite fit them as an audience. Not good!

With copies, I don't have to do that. Instead, I can take your card, add in the video, and change the language in a couple places to suit my audience. Note how I change the abstract of this card to match my campus's universal design initiative:

DeafSpace [...]

DeafSpace is a movement to design architecture that supports the hearing impaired. Born at Gallaudet, it has relevance for other campuses as well. From our campus's universal design perspective, it's useful to remember that designing for hearing loss has implications for aging Baby Boomers returning to campus, as well as the 13 percent of people in the U.S. that have *some* level of hearing issue, even if they are not deaf.

The vibratory doorbell long ago gave way to visual signalers that flash or dim the lights. But it's an inspiration for the researchers involved in a design movement

Copies + variation makes information more findable. If you look at the DeafSapce card, you see that I added the sentence on universal design into it. This is **useful**