

wiki questions and answers

Q: What is a wiki?

A: A wiki is a web page or collection of web pages where collaborators are able to contribute or modify content using a streamlined editing tool (meaning that contributors need not have any coding/HTML knowledge). Wikis also commonly let you track changes over time and give you the option of reverting to previous versions in the edit history. In short, wikis are web pages anyone can edit.

Q: If anyone can edit my content, can't anyone ruin/delete it?

A: Yes. But wikis are transparent and use "soft security", meaning that they make it easy to correct mistakes rather than making it hard to make them. Wikis tell you who made what changes and when, and allow you to revert to a previous "good" version of your document with the click of a button. Wikis are based on trust and community rather than authority.

Q: Can I control who has access to my wiki?

A: Most wiki platforms allow you to control access to who can see and edit your wiki. Often, members have to join through email. Almost any wiki can be made "private" so no personal information is broadcast.

Q: What are wikis good for?

A: Wikis are good for any task that requires the collaborative creation of content. Student group projects, writing projects, agenda planning, overseas/national collaboration, and so forth are common applications. Wikis can also be used on an individual basis for process-oriented writing. Wikis are a powerful tool for educators for identifying who has contributed what components in a group project setting.

Q: What technical skills are required for using a wiki?

A: If your wiki is already set up or if you are using third-party web applications such as Google Sites or PBWiki, creating and editing pages on a wiki is only marginally more difficult than using word processing software.

Q: What technical skills are required for setting up a wiki?

A: Setting up software from scratch requires basic server administration skills (e.g. modifying permissions, creating databases). Setting up third-party web applications can be done by a web-savvy user in about ten minutes and is not taxing.

Q: How can I get learn more?

A: All workshop materials are made available at:

http://www.unc.edu/euce/resources/education/eu_lesson_plans/workshops.html