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Turnkey Student Training: Transforming Communication and Content with a Wiki

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The Wiki Experience at DePaul University

Where did the wiki begin?

The DePaul University Library's Reference Department began developing a wiki for student training and support in 2006. More than an online "reference binder," it was a sea change in how we communicated with our students and each other.

It allowed us to:

- Collaborate to build ever-improving training materials for new student workers.
- Give students our expertise and institutional memory even when we weren't in the building.
- Make the transition between student supervisors a snap.

Where is the wiki now?

As the wiki grew, and departments beyond reference began to see its advantages, the library administration approved development of a suite of interconnected wikis, integrated via a single entry portal. The Library Intranet was born.

As part of this process, the library:

- Funded a subscription to PBwiki (now PBWorks), our wiki host, to obtain better access, support, backups, and visual consistency with our library brand.
- Established the Internal Knowledge Management Committee, charged with oversight of the wikis, policy creation, and training responsibilities.

Lessons Learned for Wiki Development

Getting started with wiki-based training:

- Think about the structure of your current training program, and consider how it might translate to a wiki format—initial training or ongoing.
- Make use of any checklists or other documents you have as a starting point.
- Gradually add content that supports your in-person training.
- Ask colleagues to contribute entries on topics within their area of expertise.
- Don't be intimidated or feel you have to develop everything at once.

Tips to make your wiki successful:

- Name your pages logically & include common keywords so they can found with an easy search
- Add links to a sidebar or other navigation tool; these should include frequently accessed pages & a link to an a-z list of all entries
- If you use tagging, think carefully about your tags, and try to standardize a basic list; after that, let people think up their own supplementary ones
- Standardize page formatting, within reason, to establish a comfortable look & feel
- Make the most of a powerful tool: linking between entries; try never to duplicate information!

Turnkey Student Training
Transforming Communication and Content with a Wiki

Hilary Kraus & Missy Roser

Training Program

last edited by mr 9 mos ago Page history

Training Program

Welcome to the Lincoln Park reference team! We're so happy that you've joined us. This training program is designed to acclimate you to our environment and what we do at the reference desk. Our goals for your training experience are that you'll:

- feel comfortable working as part of the team,
- be confident in your job skills,
- feel empowered to ask any questions you may have.

Your training will mostly be conducted by me, Missy, as your direct supervisor. Some training may also occur with other members of the reference team. We've worked hard to design a training program we think you'll find interesting and applicable to your daily work. Your feedback, whether positive or negative, is welcome. Please feel free to speak openly and help us improve the training experience for all our student employees!

Good luck!

Training Day 1: Orientation to the Library

Training Day 2: Procedures and Responsibilities

Training Day 3: The Reference Interview; Search Skills

Training Day 4: Finding Books

Training Day 5: Finding Articles

Reference Meetings: Ongoing Training

The 6th Annual CLENE Training Showcase:
Best Practices in Training Staff Development and Continuing Education
ALA Annual Conference, Chicago, IL

Suggested readings:

Clark, Caleb John, and Emily B. Mason. "A Wiki Way of Working." Internet Reference Services Quarterly 13.1 (2008): 113-132. Print.

Glogowski, Joel, and Sarah Steiner. "The Life of a Wiki: How Georgia State University Library's Wiki Enhances Content Currency and Employee Collaboration." Internet Reference Services Quarterly 13.1 (2008): 87-98. Print.

Welsh, Anne. "Internal Wikis for Procedures and Training." ONLINE 31.6 (2007): 26-29. Print.

Withers, Rob. "Something wiki this way comes." College & Research Libraries News 66.11 (2005): 775-777. Print.

Suggested web sites:

Select a wiki tool that's right for you: http://www.wikimatrix.org/

Thank you for coming!

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