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.

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**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!
Hi, and welcome! I'm Hilary Kraus, Senior Reference Librarian at Johnson & Wales University Library; and Missy Roser, Reference & Instruction Librarian at DePaul University Libraries.

Today we'll discuss how to transform communication and content with a Wiki.

Good job! I hope this training experience has been both informative and enjoyable. Please feel free to ask any questions and help each other out. Remember, the goal of this workshop is to familiarize you with the basics of using a wiki in your day-to-day work. You'll also learn how to create a wiki, add content, and edit pages.

Welcome to the hands-on part of the workshop.

Suggested readings:


Suggested web sites:

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

Thank you for coming!