

Collaborative Workspaces: Google Docs and Wikis

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Google Docs Overview

- Basically a light, web-based version of office software offering Documents, Spreadsheets, Forms, and Presentations
- Can be emailed or downloaded to your computer as regular MS Office file formats (.doc, .xls, .ppt) as well as html and pdf
- Can also import documents from hard drive for web accessibility and editing
- Does not offer as many capabilities as MS Office software, but is more than sufficient for many projects

Google Docs, cont.

- Google Docs is quite valuable simply as a free, web-based suite of office applications
- The innovation lies in the collaborative capabilities; documents can be shared with and viewed or edited by multiple people
- In place of a handout, I will "share" a document with you! You will be able to view the document, make changes, save and print

Wiki Overview

- "A **wiki** is a collection of web pages designed to enable anyone with access to contribute or modify content, using a simplified markup language." (from wikipedia.org)
- No need for special software or programming expertise to create and edit pages.
- The word wiki comes from the Hawaiian word for "fast."
- Many varieties; may be publicly viewable or private, group of editors may be small or large.

Wikis, cont.

- What makes wikis preferable to, say, a shared Google Doc?
 - Level of complexity. Wikis allow creation and linking of multiple pages.
 - Change log shows revision history. Very helpful with multiple editors!
- Great for sharing internal knowledge in an organization
- Many major corporations and government agencies use them, including Microsoft and the FBI.

How Libraries are Using Wikis

- Collaboration Between Libraries:
 - [SUNYLA New Tech Wiki](#)
- Collaboration Between Library Staff
 - [UConn Libraries Staff Wiki](#)
- Collaboration Between Staff and Patrons
 - [Ohio University Biz Wiki](#)
- Any other ideas?

Creating a Wiki

- Many Content Management Systems (including Blackboard) offer wiki capabilities.
- Pbwiki / Pbworks (pbworks.com) offers free wikis, although premium services require a paid subscription ("freemium").
 - Used by many businesses and organizations, including Financial Times and University of Chicago
 - A sample: [Allegheny County Library Association Wiki](#)
- Mediawiki (mediawiki.org) free software package originally developed for Wikipedia
 - Used by Intel, Novell, many others
- Seedwiki (seedwiki.com) also "freemium"