

## Metadata

Title	Using Wikis in Learning & Teaching
Description	Using Wikis in Learning & Teaching
Keywords	
Objectives	
Author	David Jeckells
Organisation	
Version	
Date	02/06/07
Copyright	

## What's the Difference between a Wiki and a Blog?

This document is also available as an [Adobe PDF](#).

### Simple definitions

Wiki: Non-linear, multiple author web page

Blog: Linear, single author web page (Blog = contraction of **WeB-Log**)

In media/publishing terms, I tend to use the analogy that a **Blog is a one-to-many**, linear/chronological publishing tool (though I know readers can leave comments), whereas a **Wiki is a many-to-many**, always in-development dynamic publishing tool.

### What's the difference?

A **wiki** is similar to a normal web site, but where every page has an edit button, and everyone by default is given permission to press the edit button.

A **blog** is a web site with mainly a single page, and that page displays individual announcements or "news items" in a latest-news-first order.

### A comparison table

Blog	Wiki
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>personal, less collaborative. a journal entry or posting is owned by poster</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>can be personal but open to collaboration. a node/topic is considered public space</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>text is considered to be static: once posted, the posting doesn't change (not true, of course, but expected)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>aim is creation of documents (individual pages as well as the entire wikiweb)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>monological: typically monologue with audience commentary</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>hypertextual</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>temporal: last in first out</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a-temporal: nodes change not by time but by way of development</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>captures change in thinking/self/ideas</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>doesn't capture <i>changes</i> in thought/ideas, but creates artefacts of those changes</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>speech: spontaneous, non-revisable and as permanent as memory</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>text: considered, revised, and as permanent as print</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>generally light on cross linking: dominantly sequential <i>but</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>encourages cross linking: dominantly structural, a-temporal</li></ul>

research blogs and others can create extensive hypertextual webs <i>but</i> creating internal links is painful and secondary to the text	
○ links used to connect outside the blog	○ hypertext linking central to text creation
○ knowledge accumulates at the top ○ knowledge is static but contextual: situated - dominantly chronological - but essays are possible	○ knowledge becomes webbed: situated, contextualized <i>but</i> knowledge is ephemeral: it changes, can be changed
○ immediate: written in the moment, written of the moment	○ mediated: written in the topic, of the topic

(BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY, 2005: Adapted under Creative Commons Licence 2.5)

## Using a wiki at NTU

The university does not currently have use of wiki technology for learning and teaching, though this may change with the project for the VLP replacement. Instead there are several commercial organisations offering wiki hosting. PBwiki is a commercial service offering wiki technology & hosting that is supported within the college of Arts, Humanities & Education, because it offers the best combination of features for zero cost. Below you'll find a table showing several of the choices for wiki creation and hosting if you wish to explore other options.

### Wiki Space Hosting

Wiki	URL	Online Hosting	Private (usable with Groups)	Full Wiki technology	User Interface/Customisable	Free (extra functionality costs)
Wetpaint	<a href="http://www.wetpaint.com/">http://www.wetpaint.com/</a>	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
WikiSpaces	<a href="http://www.wikispaces.com/">http://www.wikispaces.com/</a>	Yes	No	Yes	Limited	Yes
TWiki	<a href="http://twiki.org/">http://twiki.org/</a>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PBWiki	<a href="http://pbwiki.com/">http://pbwiki.com/</a>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ELGG	<a href="http://elggspaces.com/">http://elggspaces.com/</a>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
SeedWiki	<a href="http://www.seedwiki.com/">http://www.seedwiki.com/</a>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Limited	Yes
Schuff	<a href="http://www.schuff.com">http://www.schuff.com</a>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Limited	Yes

PBwiki (<http://www.pbwiki.com>) appears to be the easiest way to get a wiki for your class or for yourself. For example, if you need a class web page, you could create it

in PBwiki in about half a minute and add a link to it from the VLP moments later. Below you'll find the pros and cons of using PBwiki within NTU.

Pros	Cons
Collaborative working People can work when it is convenient to them – flexible Version control Permission control Tracking contributions Simple to use and Intuitive Email when someone has contributed Very easy to customise – delivers a more personal front end Simple to layout information Simple to upload files, edit, delete, etc Attach documents	External to VLP Not managed by NTU or linked to VLP Students & groups have to be created & managed manually Not owned by NTU – terms, conditions & access could change Students cannot contribute to the same page at the same time Environment/application dissimilar to VLP or MS office application Anonymous posting if not careful

## How to use a Wiki for Learning

We would welcome more suggestions about how to use PBwiki/Wikis in learning & teaching, but here are some examples:

Students can produce information in a web page/site (not possible in VLP)

The audience can be as wide and open as is required (not possible in VLP), e.g. for dissemination outside NTU, in schools, etc.

Group Projects – Small groups collaboration (students if required can export the final web site as a MS Word file)

Tutor (and student) Assessment of contribution to a group project

Student sharing of information e.g. Recommended web sites, Shared collaborative Glossary – members adding to and editing the items in the glossary.

Individual projects - showing work in-progress - unlike a web journal or blog it allows for dynamic construction rather than a linear site.

### Points to note:

All PBwiki sites require a password to edit them, but unless changed, all are open to be read by anyone. We recommend that unless openness is required, all PBwikis use password protection to read and edit. This may be particularly the case in group projects where information may not wished to be shared (with other groups) until post review or assessment.

## PBwiki – Features & Functions

[PBwiki](#) is a wiki service that focuses on the education sector and as such has features and functions particularly suited for learning & teaching. Have a look at the [education specific FAQs](#) (inc. Is my data safe?, Can I monitor what happens on my wiki?, and What if one of my students posts something that's inappropriate?) or follow the links below for help videos and PBwiki features.

- [PBwiki help videos](#) – What can PBwiki do for you
- [Features & Functions](#) – Some maybe not so obvious solutions as to what you can do and how to do it in PBwiki

## **PBwiki help videos**

Below you'll find a selection of videos explaining the following:

[What is PBwiki](#)

[PBwiki – helping educators educate](#)

[How do you use PBwiki](#)

[PBwikis Point-and-Click editor](#)

Click the play button to start viewing any off them.

### **What is PBwiki**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmByB0sIPog>

```
<object width="425" height="350"><param name="movie"
value="http://www.youtube.com/v/ZmByB0sIPog"></param><param
name="wmode" value="transparent"></param><embed
src="http://www.youtube.com/v/ZmByB0sIPog" type="application/x-
shockwave-flash" wmode="transparent" width="425"
height="350"></embed></object>
```

### **PBwiki - Helping Educators Educate**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=av2yofWSdU0>

```
<object width="425" height="350"><param name="movie"
value="http://www.youtube.com/v/av2yofWSdU0"></param><param
name="wmode" value="transparent"></param><embed
src="http://www.youtube.com/v/av2yofWSdU0" type="application/x-
shockwave-flash" wmode="transparent" width="425"
height="350"></embed></object>
```

### **How do you use pbwiki?**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hSzJ0Hj\\_eo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hSzJ0Hj_eo)

```
<object width="425" height="350"><param name="movie"
value="http://www.youtube.com/v/9hSzJ0Hj_eo"></param><param
name="wmode" value="transparent"></param><embed
src="http://www.youtube.com/v/9hSzJ0Hj_eo" type="application/x-shockwave-
flash" wmode="transparent" width="425" height="350"></embed></object>
```

### PBwiki's Point-and-Click Editor

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3\\_yn4nvELo0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_yn4nvELo0)

```
<object width="425" height="350"><param name="movie"
value="http://www.youtube.com/v/3_yn4nvELo0"></param><param
name="wmode" value="transparent"></param><embed
src="http://www.youtube.com/v/3_yn4nvELo0" type="application/x-
shockwave-flash" wmode="transparent" width="425"
height="350"></embed></object>
```

## Features & Functions

Below you'll find some answers to frequently asked questions about PBwiki.

You can also have a look at some of the FAQs in the [Getting Started](#) section of the PBwiki site. Or in the complete [PBwiki FAQ](#) section.

If you want to examine a PBwiki and have a go at editing it, try this link:

Web: <http://ntu-education.pbwiki.com/>  
Password: abkclifton

Feel free to change whatever you like.

### FAQs

[How do I make a new page on my wiki?](#)

[How do I edit a page?](#)

[How do I navigate through my pages?](#)

[What you can & can't do](#)

[Can I be notified of any edits to a Wiki?](#)

[How do I manage multiple wikis?](#)

[Should I have a public or private wiki?](#)

[Adding 'extras' to a page](#)

### How do I make a new page on my wiki?

You can add a new page by clicking the "**New Page**" button when viewing your wiki. The recommended way to add a page is through your **Point-and-Click editor**. While editing, highlight the text that you want to make a link,

click the "**Link**" button and select "**new page**" under "**Link to wiki page**". The **Point-and-Click editor** only works in MS Internet Explorer and in Firefox.

### **How do I edit a page**

All wiki pages that you can view are editable. At the top and bottom of every page you'll see an "**Edit Page**" button. Clicking on this will take you to the **Point-and-Click editor**, which will give you word processor-like editing tools. These include **styling**, **tables**, **images**, adding **links** (and **emails**) and **attaching files**.

### **How do I navigate through my pages?**

You can navigate through your pages using the Sidebar. This is available on the right-hand side of every page and is completely editable like any other page. You can use this to create a navigational menu for your wiki site.

### **What you can & can't do**

You can only read a page you have access to edit. Conversely, you can edit any page you can read. You also can't edit a page that someone else is currently editing. However if there has been no activity in the editing of that page for 5 minutes, you can "steal" the page to edit it. For further information about safety and security of PBwiki pages look at their [Safety and security FAQ](#) page

### **Can I be notified of any edits to a Wiki?**

You can enable or disable notifications of any changes when you login to a wiki: Just tick the "**Notify me of changes**" checkbox located under your email address when you login. If the box is checked; you will be notified of changes anyone makes. If the box is not checked; you will not be notified.

The wiki administrator can change notifications through the "Settings" link, at the top of the page.

### **How do I manage multiple wikis?**

We suggest setting up a [PBwiki identity](#) for both yourself and suggest that your students do the same. Having an identity makes it easy to manage your membership in a group of wikis, plus a central place for wiki access & to control notification settings for multiple wikis. Logging in with an identity means that all contributions/edits are trackable and attributable.

### **Should I have a public or private wiki?**

A public wiki allows anyone to see your content, a private wiki is not accessible to the public. **We would recommend making your wiki private**, (under **Settings > Access Controls**), this way no-one could stumble across your or your students' wikis. In either case, however, a password is needed to edit your wiki. If you want students to be able to edit a wiki, simply share the password with them and they'll be able to make changes. You could also share, using the **Share tool** under **Settings > Publicise/Monitor > Sharing**.

### **Adding 'extras' to a page**

You can add 'Table of contents' to a page, 'Number of visitors', or 'YouTube videos' by using the "**Insert Plugin**" button in the editor. These will take you

through wizards to get what you want.  
<http://newfaq.pbwiki.com/Plugin%20Information>

## Questions about PBwiki

Here are some answers to commonly asked questions, adapted from PBWikis own [PDF](#):

### Common Questions

[What else can I do with a PBwiki?](#)

[What if one of my students posts something that's inappropriate?](#)

[How much does it cost?](#)

[Is it easy to use?](#)

[Who controls the content?](#)

[Can I make my wiki public or private?](#)

[Can I attach pictures or video clips?](#)

[Can I monitor what happens on my wiki?](#)

[Is my data safe? Can I back up my pages?](#)

### What else can I do with a PBwiki?

Let your students collaborate: They can use a PBwiki to do group work or create their own personal web page.

Demo your work: Use your PBwiki as an easy-to-create portfolio of the projects completed by your students. You can create an online slideshow to demo your work with one click.

Keep others informed: Set up a page in your PBwiki to update others on what your students are doing, or to update students on changes to your materials. It's live and editable any time.

### What if one of my students posts something that's inappropriate?

If this happens, you can always go back to an earlier version of the wiki. PBwiki keeps all versions of a page, you can go back in time very easily, and you can see who made each change (if the user has logged in with an [identity](#) or name).

### How much does it cost?

Setting up a PBwiki is free. A basic PBwiki comes with 10MB of storage space, unlimited pages, and the ability to welcome an unlimited number of visitors. If you'd like more features and storage space, PBwiki offer Premium wikis starting at \$10/month.

### Is it easy to use?

Yes! It's as easy as making a peanut butter sandwich. It takes about 30 seconds to create and you can have a wiki up and running in about 5 minutes. PBwiki has templates to get you started.

### Who controls the content?

Whoever has the password to your wiki can edit it. In other words, you control who gets access to the wiki, but once they're logged in, they can edit the wiki.

PBwiki Premium plans offer advanced features like access controls, which allow you to designate certain people as Readers and others as Contributors. You may also lock certain pages (like your syllabus) and hide others. You can upgrade to Premium any time, right from your wiki, by clicking the "**upgrade**" button at the lower left.

### **Can I make my wiki public or private?**

Yes, you can make your wiki public or private, and no matter which you choose, a password is always required to edit your wiki - meaning only your password holders can make changes to your wiki.

**Public:** Anyone can access, password holders can edit

**Private:** Password holders can only access & edit

### **Can I attach pictures or video clips?**

Yes. In fact, you can add any type of file to any page in your wiki by clicking the "Files" button and uploading your files – though there is a 10MB limit for file storage. You can also link to pre-uploaded & found video such as [YouTube](#) using the **Insert Plugin** tool.

### **Can I monitor what happens on my wiki?**

Yes, you can choose to be notified by email of every change that's made to your wiki.

### **Is my data safe? Can I back up my pages?**

NTU has no links with PBwiki however PBwiki states that data is backed up hourly, and you can get 1-click backups right from your wiki from the "**Settings**" menu.

## **References**

BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY, (2005). *Blogs and Wiki: WikiAndBlog* [Online] Bemidji State University. Available at:  
<http://ferret.bemidjistate.edu/~morgan/cgi-bin/blogsAndWiki.pl?WikiAndBlog>  
[Accessed 12th June 2007]