

## Introduction

Wikis can be used for group co-ordination to collect information on a topic. Anyone can change what appears on the page, although there may be a requirement to register and this may involve the reading of a Captcha – image with a series of muddled letters or numbers. There may be no alternative to the Captcha, which can make it impossible for those who use screen readers to access the wiki.

Wikis use online editors, which are generally similar to word processors, and allow the user to make or edit a web page without having any knowledge of how to develop web content. Users can make multiple changes to the page, which then replaces the previous version and makes the updated site available for other users to see and edit. The content in wikis can be made very accessible to all users and these applications should be an ideal way to set up a method for collaborative working.

## Considerations

- **The choice of Wiki service is important.** The rich text editor used to add content to make the web pages may not be accessible. This means that not all the menu items can be reached using a keyboard or screen reader. To ensure that this is not a problem, use the Tab key to navigate through the menus.
- **Be careful with the layout of your Wiki.** Each section should be structured and headed correctly, that is headers should be in a consistent order, and images should be placed inside the containing section. Furthermore, investigate the positioning of section edit links. These are links that users select to begin editing the page, and for screen reader users the best position is immediately to the right of the section heading, otherwise they may have difficulties accessing or editing the page.
- **Describe links so that they can still be understood out of context.** A big feature in wikis is linking to other wiki pages on a similar or related topic. When writing a link, **avoid** phrases such as “**click here**”, as this provides no description as to where the link is going. Try to describe the target of the link as the link itself e.g. The [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0](#) contains links to definitions of terms used in guidelines and Success Criteria... (actual link <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/> )
- **Restrict the use of colour.** Not all users will see colour in the same way. For this reason, never use colour by itself to convey information. Select combinations of colour for text and background so that the text is easy and comfortable to read for all users with good contrast levels.
- **Ensure that it is possible to add alternative text to graphics** when they are added to a page. If the graphics have words embedded in the picture, explain these in the content as it is unlikely that you will be able to add a long description elsewhere when using a rich text editor.
- **Multimedia elements will require alternative formats.** For example: audio presentations, text descriptions for graphical representations, captions for video and flash animations etc. As with alternative text for graphics, these may have to be part of the wiki content.

## Additional Resources

- Common Craft provide an online video about wikis and how they can be used.  
<http://www.commoncraft.com/video-wikis-plain-english>
- Discussion about the accessibility of Wikipedia.  
[http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia\\_accessibility](http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia_accessibility)  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Accessibility>
- Writing Wiki provides details on how wikis can be used in teaching.  
<http://writingwiki.org/default.aspx/WritingWiki/For%20Teachers%20New%20to%20Wikis.html>
- Mediawiki discusses how their wikis can be improved for screen reader users.  
[http://blind.wikia.com/wiki/Mediawiki\\_and\\_Accessibility](http://blind.wikia.com/wiki/Mediawiki_and_Accessibility)
- Tiddlywiki is a very simple site for gathering information and tagging it for searching. It can be added to at any time, as well as being shared with others.  
<http://www.tiddlywiki.com>
- Web2Access can be used to help decide which wiki provider to use, by evaluating the service with a series of checks. Those wikis that have evaluations include: PBworks (PBwiki), Tiddlywiki, Wetpaint Wiki, Wikipedia / Mediawiki. <http://www.web2access.org.uk/activity/10/>
- Scripting Enabled Wiki has useful links for ways of working round issues related to wikis and other Web 2.0 activities that might affect accessibility. This site is for those developing materials.  
<http://scriptingenabled.pbworks.com/>