

Wikis Across Government Agencies

Tech@State and Wikimania 2012

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. . . with lots of advice from others
. . .not representing the agency, just the named author



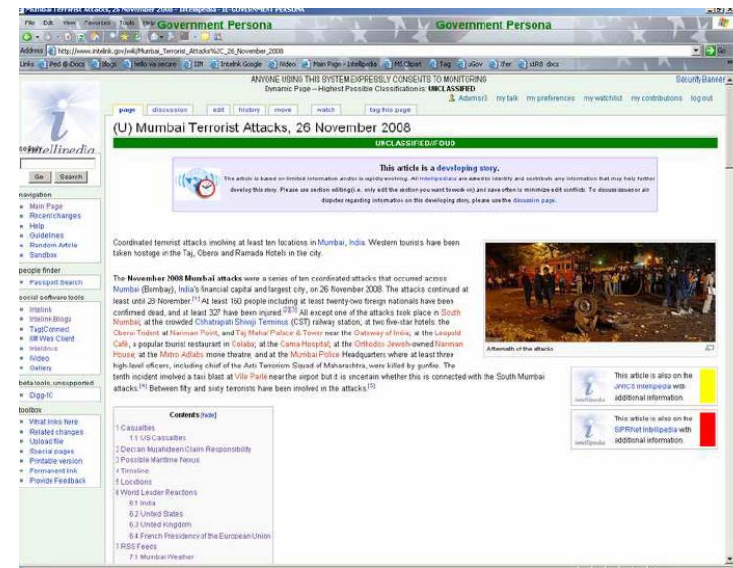
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Outline: wikis across government agencies

- Three big internal wikis in US government
 - Intellipedia, Diplopedia, OMB's MAX
- Many other wikis in government
- Some design differences
- Purposes

Intellipedia

- In 2004 the U.S. intelligence agencies reviewed their communication tools and processes (Andrus, 2005; Burton, 2005)
- They added web tools and work spaces to their network
 - Intellipedia wiki across agencies starting 2006
 - Blogs, tagging, search, messaging, videos
- ➔ easier search across 16 agencies



Diplopedia

- Intended for sharing procedures (Bronk and Smith 2010)
 - E.g. for staff at new posts
- Article count grew linearly with time after 2006 start

The screenshot shows the Diplopedia website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with buttons for 'page', 'discussion', 'edit', 'history', 'delete', 'move', 'unprotect', and 'watch'. Below this is the site's logo and a welcome message: 'Welcome to Diplopedia. Currently there are 6,282 articles. View archive statistics.' The main content area features a 'Features of the Week' section titled 'Secretary Clinton's First Town Hall Meeting: Participate by Blog!' with a photo of Hillary Clinton and a 'Start Contributing!' section with a list of tasks like 'Fix errant HR links' and 'Update links to State's new website'. There is also a 'Popular Pages' section and a 'DiploQuiz' section at the bottom.

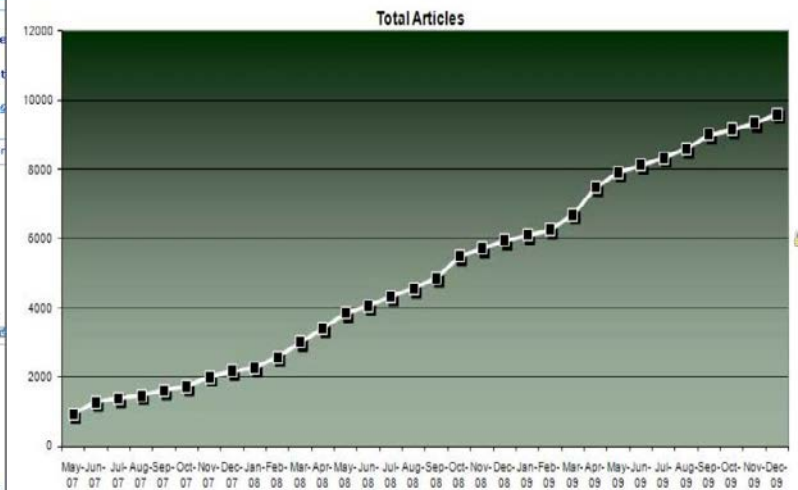
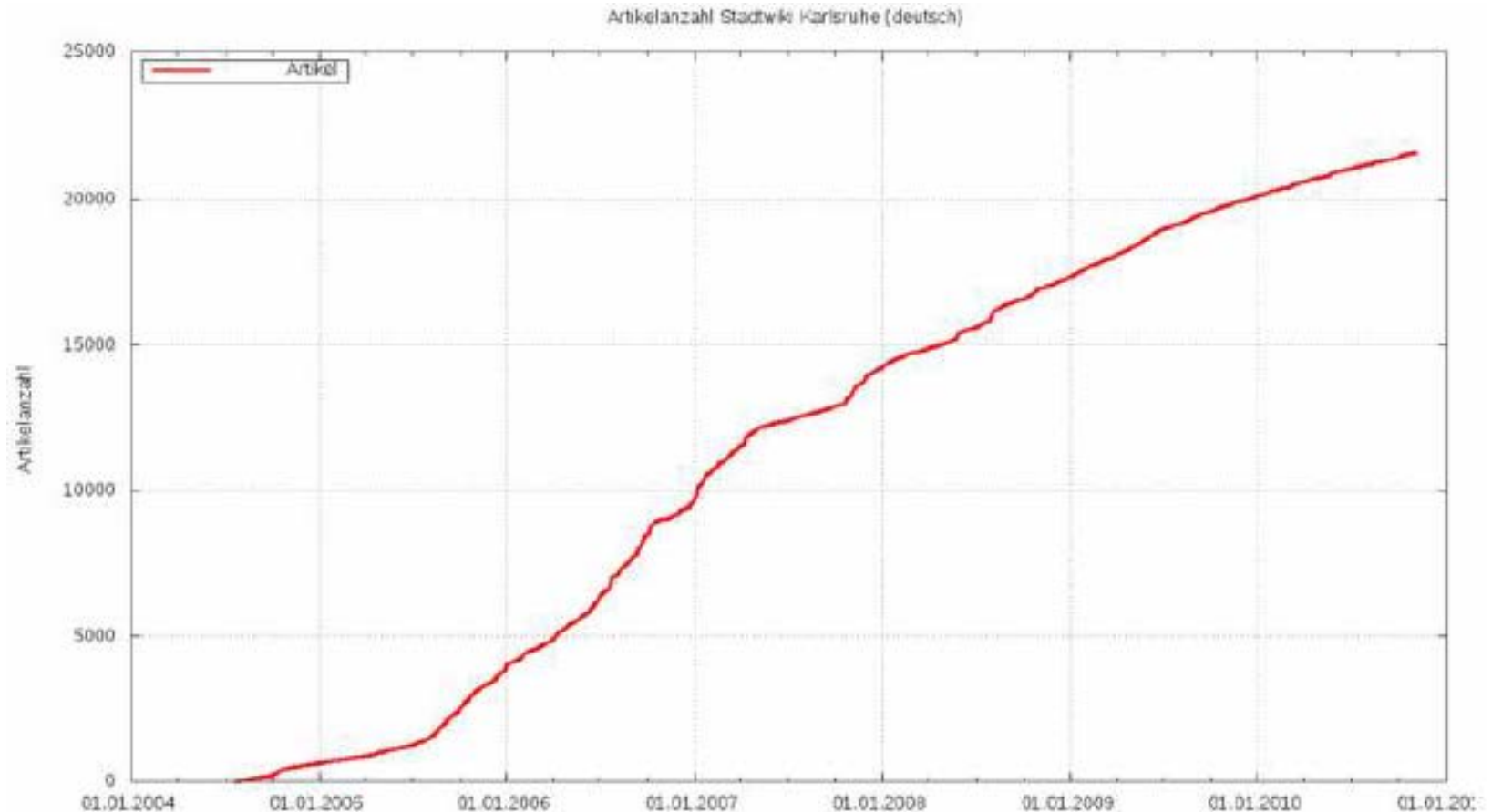


Figure 5. Total Articles

Page growth is often roughly linear over time



Articles in the Karlsruhe, Germany wiki (Stadtwiki Karlsruhe) over time

Source: <http://ka.stadtwiki.net/Datei:Artikelwachstum.png> (Hauke Löffler)

OMB's MAX Federal Community

- Intended first for budget then other groups
- Runs Confluence software
- Can recognize NASA computers on login
 - A key capability for the future

The screenshot shows the homepage of the OMB's MAX Federal Community. The browser address bar indicates the URL is <https://max.omb.gov/community/2/2set>. The page features a navigation bar with links for Home, Budget Community, and Home. A blue banner reads "Welcome to the Budget Community!". Below this, there are several sections:

- Home**: A section with a list of links including "BOAC Budget Data Calls and Exercises", "Budget Line of Business", "Budget Reports", "Calendar of Events", "Collaborations", "Documents and Guidance", "Human Capital", "Media on Budget", and "Shared Information (Documents, Resources, etc.)".
- Budget Community Highlights**: A green box containing a list of recent events and updates, such as "FY 2010 Mid-Session Review (August 2009)", "OMB Circular No. A-11 (August 2009)", and "FY 2011 OMB Budget Season Temporary Recruitment Letter & Application".
- Budget Community Frequently Used Pages**: A yellow box listing key documents and resources, including "OMB Circular No. A-11 (August 2009)", "Budget Data Requests (BDRs)", "Budget Procedure Memorandum (BPMs)", "Budget Reports", "Vacancies, Rotations, & Temporary Assignments", "BFLaB Sponsored Trainings", "Request an Online Meeting", "Hands-on MAX Federal Community Training", and "April 2009 Budget Solutions Update".
- Recently Updated**: A section listing recent updates with timestamps and authors, such as "Home (Budget Community)" updated by EMILY FORT (ECP) 2 hours ago, and "MAX A-11 Data Entry Class on Oct. 7, 2009" updated by SARA FARLEY-CARROLL (OMB) 23 hours ago.

At the bottom, there is a link for "Other Government-Wide Federal Communities".

Many other examples

US federal govt

DoDTechipedia

FBI's Bureaupedia

EPA wikis

DOL wiki

OSHApedia

NITRD's wiki

PowerPedia

Statipedia

NIH's several wikis

Others doing governance

GCPEdia (Canadian civil svc)

GovDex (Australia)

Wikiprogress (OECD)

Statistics Explained (Eurostat)

City wikis

Katrina Help Wiki

OpenWetWare

GovLoop

Different wiki designs & uses (1)

All-government versus focused knowledge pool

- GCPedia available across Canadian civil service
- Not all US federal staff have a wiki available & allowed
 - If so, it's not visible across most of government
 - Or requires frequent login
- Key usability issue: **emailing a hyperlink** – will it work?
- Cost/complexity of many wikis, admins, namespaces⁸

Different wiki designs & uses (2)

Storing **documents** versus **wiki-text**

- Documents are self-contained, often finished binary files
 - may be hard to search for; authored; dated; formatted; may have intro, conclusion; may have focused audience; may be official ; updates require coordination or permission; common on SharePoint & Confluence
- Wikitext is searchable and open
 - fragmentary; multi-authored; unlikely to be official or definitive; can be updated and link to latest sources; open format; can manipulate with extensions, import/export
- Both needed ; some mismatch in what's used/available

Different wiki designs & uses (3)

Reference works vs. Project/team-orientation

- Reference works (like Wikipedia) tend to be
 - Open, descriptive, scientific, for broad audience
- Groups/teams may require
 - Fine-grained security
 - Dashboard or project status summaries

Reference work example: Statipedia

Past or comparative cases

2004 Economic Census of China
Hungarian Central Statistical Office
Hungarian industry classification TEÁOR
History of BLS Mass Layoff Statistics

New technical subjects

Wikidata
Data.gov
Dataset Publishing Language
Semantic Mediawiki

Agency practices & policies

Editing Wikipedia for work

Other wikis

(to learn from)

Events

July 2012 Events
Conference submission due dates
Notes on presentations

Critiques and FAQs

Source code

Rhetorics for wikis in govt

- Openness, transparency (translucency)
 - Overcoming stovepipes/silos
 - Reduce duplication of effort
 - Clarify & unify procedures
 - Ease training, turnover, emergency management

Rhetorics against

- System's insecure or uncertified
- Organizational culture doesn't fit
 - Wiki would encourage sloppy or undignified handling of info
 - "Knowledge base" is not our job

Other purposes & imagined futures

“Management visions often do not match the benefits delivered by successful wikis.” -- Grudin & Poole (2010)

- Citizens get their information from wikis
 - And we in govt are in the information services business
 - It's relevant to know the science and practice
 - Writing for Wikipedia meets our mission directly
- Empowerment
 - Benefit to our personnel – e.g. in enabling to publish good work
 - Users find specialists, who then serve larger audience
 - **Together**, agencies have vast, diverse resources, expertise, capability, and economies of scale and scope

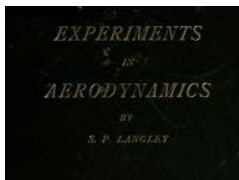
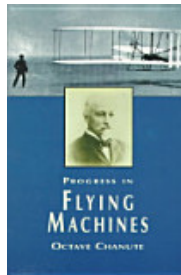
More purposes and futures

- Efficient scientific communities (knowledge management)
 - Support references to evidence → cultural change
 - Shared source material, reference points, mutual awareness, peer review (reduce fiefdoms)
 - Support tools development by our own staff
 - Info on platforms - “discoverable” not “disseminated”
 - Could reduce email strain
- Support bottom-up and outside-in innovation
 - Compare practices between agencies
 - Give workers broad opportunity/right to wikis
 - like IG’s office; like freedom of speech
 - Emergent or open-source type innovation

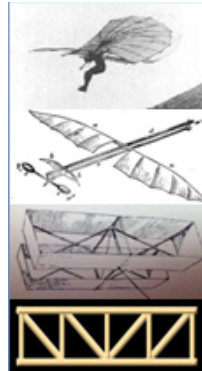
Analogous open source invention process

Literature, source examples → imitation and progress

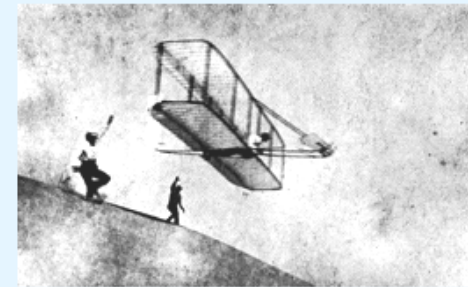
1860s-1890s
aeronautics:
1000s of articles;
100s of patents;
10s of clubs and
journals



Shared experiments
led to design
synthesis



Chanute-Herring glider, 1896



Wright brothers 1900 kite,
1901-2 glider

Design was adopted
by others
A version of the
invention worked and
an industry began

Wilbur Wright's first letter to Chanute in 1900 says **“the apparatus I intend to employ . . . is very similar to [your] "double-deck" machine [of] 1896-7 . . . [. . . with these changes]”**

**If we want innovation and
improvement in government . . .**

**It'll help to have a wiki that says
what governments do.**

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