

Page ownership in MediaWiki

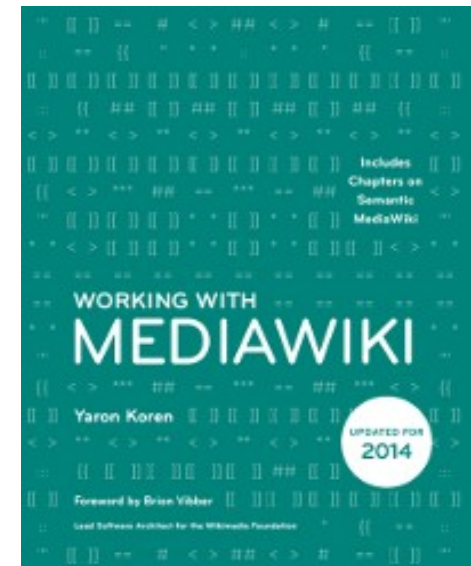
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About me

- MediaWiki extension developer / entrepreneur / author
- My company: WikiWorks



- My book: Working with MediaWiki



Page ownership

- Integral to some content-management systems, like SharePoint, but an afterthought in MediaWiki
- The single biggest weakness of MediaWiki for the enterprise? (Now that VisualEditor exists for WYSIWYG)

The 3 pillars of page ownership



Setting access control * Approving edits * Notification of changes

Access control

- Generally, this means control of who can read, and who can edit
- But read control is difficult/impossible in MediaWiki
- ...and actually, it apparently doesn't work that well in other systems either

Controlling editing permissions

- See ArticleProtection extension

Approving edits

The idea: anyone can edit a page, but only the approved version of the page is shown.

- A “nicer” solution than disabling editing.

Two extensions:

- Flagged Revisions (aka FlaggedRevs, aka PendingChanges)
- Approved Revs

Flagged Revisions

- Created and maintained by the WMF, for use on Wikipedia
- First released in March 2007
- In heavy use on German Wikipedia, in light use on English Wikipedia, elsewhere...?
- Complex: each page review includes metrics for describing article quality

Approved Revs

- Created by me, first released in June 2010
- A consciously simpler alternative to Flagged Revisions
- Only two actions: “approve” and “unapprove”

Approved Revs vs. Flagged Revisions

Flagged Revisions:

- 4 user rights
- 3 user groups
- 15 global variables
- 3 log types
- 11 special pages
- 9 DB tables

Approved Revs

- 2 user rights
- 0 user groups
- 6 global variables
- 1 log type
- 1 special page
- 1 DB table

Page ownership with Flagged Revisions

- Nonexistent? I'm not sure.

Page ownership with Approved Revs

- Currently minimal
- “Ownership” = approval rights
- Admins “own” every page
- Non-admins “own” their own user page, plus pages that they created

More page ownership with Approved Revs

- This would be great to have
- May be on the way?

Notification

This is surprisingly not well supported.

Existing solutions:

- Watchlists / WholsWatching extension
- Semantic Watchlist extension
- PageCreationNotif extension

All of these handle only subsets of what might be useful.

An ideal MW notification system

Would watch for any subset of these actions:

- Creation of new pages
- Edits to existing pages
- Changes in a specific template field
- Changes of a specific template field *to a specific value*

Ideal notification system: pages

...for any of the following sets of pages:

- All pages
- All pages in one or more namespaces
- All pages in one or more categories
- Some specified list of pages

Ideal notification system: recipients

...and the following people would be notified:

- Users in one more user groups
- Users in a specified list
- Users who sign up to be notified
- Possibly email addresses not related to MediaWiki users

...with (potentially) different sets for different pages

Ideal notification system: messaging

Notification would be done by some subset of:

- Email
- The Flow extension
- Calling a hook, to let other extensions perform their own actions

All options (except notification type)

Watch for...

- Page creation
- Page edits
- Template field changes
- Template field changes to value

In...

- All pages
- A list of pages
- Namespaces
- Categories

And notify...

- User groups
- A list of users
- Opt-in users
- Email addresses

Watchlists / WholsWatching

Watch for...

- **Page creation**
- **Page edits**
- Template field changes
- Template field changes to value

In...

- All pages
- **A list of pages**
- Namespaces
- Categories

And notify...

- User groups
- **A list of users**
- **Opt-in users**
- Email addresses

Semantic Watchlist

Watch for...

- Page creation
- Page edits
- **Template field changes**
- **Template field changes to value**

In...

- **All pages**
- A list of pages
- **Namespaces**
- **Categories**

And notify...

- User groups
- A list of users
- **Opt-in users**
- Email addresses

PageCreationNotif

Watch for...

- **Page creation**
- Page edits
- Template field changes
- Template field changes to value

In...

- **All pages**
- A list of pages
- Namespaces
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And notify...

- User groups
- A list of users
- **Opt-in users**
- Email addresses

Revision approvals & notification go together

If you don't know a revision happened, you can't approve it!

Still, it might not make sense to have one extension that handles both... not “modular”.

Needed: a new notification extension?

- Would be a “framework” for handling all the different kinds of notifications
- Would do template/field monitoring – ideally without requiring SMW/Cargo
 - (i.e., parse the page diff directly)
- Anyone interested in discussing such a thing?
Funding it?

Questions/comments/complaints