

## Contributing to a wiki

**Wikis are about collaboration.** You need to demonstrate to your lecturer that you can co-operate and collaborate with your classmates on building a wiki. Showing that you can contribute to group discussions and projects at university has traditionally been done in a tutorial context, but wikis give you a different way of doing this. If you're a bit shy in class, it also lets you contribute without having to speak up in front of a group, so it's all good 😊

Don't get too precious if your content is edited by another community member. Take a step back and re-consider: did my addition really add to the wiki, or was it, in fact, a bit lame? Sometimes, your content was actually what inspired another user to find something similar but that perhaps demonstrated the point the group was trying to make a little more clearly ... There's always an upside!

**Structure your wiki clearly.** Your group should structure your wiki as if it were any other website. Just as you would plan and structure an essay, you need to plan and structure your wiki. Ask yourselves, What information needs to come first? How can we lay out our content so that visitors to the wiki can easily navigate their way around? Are there areas of redundancy that we need to ditch? Are there other areas that double-up on information that we need to consolidate? Think also about what is appropriate in terms of page length and the amount of content on your group's wiki. If you find that the wiki pages are getting too long, maybe the group needs to break the content up and create extra pages. Or if a page is too short, it might be a message that this topic isn't important enough to justify building a whole page around it.

**Write simply and clearly.** Wiki language as a whole is less formal than is essay language; however, you must still use correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. Use simple, jargon-free language. Edit your own and others' work for style, tone, grammar, spelling, and focus. Poorly structured and worded text will put readers off.

**Content, including images, videos, links and other media must be relevant to the page.** Don't just add any old rubbish, although in the beginning stages of building a wiki you might find that group members dump a lot of content into the wikispace to be worked on later. As your wiki grows, you should refine your own and others' content to make sure your community is building the best resource possible. Don't be afraid to ditch material (again, your own or others') that is no longer relevant, useful, or of poor quality. Poor quality content may be deleted by another user.

**Content from books, journal article or other publications must be referenced.** You may need to discuss, as a group, how to do this with your lecturer, but your group's wikispace should at least have consistent and comprehensive referencing, where appropriate.

**Images, videos, links and other media and be properly labelled.** People reading your wiki need to be able to make sense of your content, so make sure that any additions to the wiki have clear labels.

**Give reasons for content change.** If you think something you add or edit as an individual might be controversial, you should justify your decision in the wiki's discussion forum.

**The page or pages should go through several revisions, by different editors.** Wikis are about collaboration. You will get both better individual and group marks if you can demonstrate that your wiki was developed by 'team players' and not by a loose consortium of loose-cannon individuals!

**Don't 'farm bits out.'** Dividing the work up amongst yourselves (e.g., "I'll do this bit, you do that bit, and you do that other bit") is the 'kiss of death' for both you and your wiki. In the first instance, your lecturer is looking for evidence that you can work in a collaborative fashion in a team-based environment - and your contributions can be easily tracked through the wiki's 'history' function. In the second instance, your wiki is likely to end up a mess of incoherent, unfocused, unlinked ideas and content, all of which will be reflected in your final grade for the project.

**Don't just fix others' punctuation.** You should aim for a balance in your contributions to the wiki: you should be 1) adding substantive, topic-related content, 2) working with the group to organise that content, and, 3) making an effort to 'polish' the site in terms of grammar, punctuation, spelling as well as how the site looks. This might mean resizing images, adding labels to media, or generally tidying up the formatting. This last one is 'end of the line' stuff: just as you would polish an essay before you handed it in, so you should leave the polishing until the wiki's ideas and content are knocked into shape.

**Do not, under any circumstances, engage in an edit war!** If some back-and-forth starts on a page, then editing should cease and a discussion started in the page's discussion forum about why certain content should or should not be included. You will need to reason and argue for your position. This is about gaining a consensus on what is the best content for the wiki: it is not about personalities or ego, but rather about equipping with the negotiating and reasoning skills you will need in the workplace to be able to get along with your colleagues.