

# Wikis for e-Assessment

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## Introduction

Generally known and used as a collaborative open access tool for sharing information, wikis also provide an ideal mechanism for delivering and assessing student work in both an efficient and effective manner.

Lecturers and students need no technical knowledge in order to make use of a wiki. There is no specialised programming interface to learn. It's simply a case of being able to click on the wikis Edit and Save buttons in order to post or amend information and provide feedback.

## Process

Using a wiki as part of a college Virtual Learning Environment (Blackboard), a number of units from an HND New Media course were delivered and assessed by means of a wiki. All that was required was access to the Internet via a standard web browser such as Internet Explorer and a user login and password.

The wiki was setup to allow students to edit and upload both formative and summative assessment work. The 'delete' option was removed so that accidental deletion by students could not occur.

The main advantages of using a wiki for assessment purposes included the provision of a detailed audit trail including date/time of submission and an accurate history of all amendments made and by whom. In addition the wiki is easily exported by both lecturer and students for record keeping purposes and providing a basis for student based e-Portfolios.

## Conclusion

The wiki provided an up-to-date mechanism for undertaking and recording both formative and summative assessment. It proved time saving by providing an electronic record of student work which was easily exported for storage and future verification purposes. Evaluation of the wiki from students undertaking the above unit was positive. They particularly liked the provision of electronic responses as it provided them with a permanent record of feedback which they could access and refer to at anytime.

## Working example

1

The screenshot shows a Blackboard course page for 'WEB DESIGN (CC000225) > ASSIGNMENTS'. The page has a navigation menu on the left with options like 'My College', 'Student Advice', 'Staff Zone', 'Web', 'My Courses', and 'Help'. The main content area is titled 'Assignments' and lists four assignments, each with a 'View' link. The assignments are: 'Web Design - A N Other', 'Web Design - Student B', 'Web Design - Student C', and 'Web Design - Student D'. Each assignment description states: 'Here you can upload your prototypes, site map, audience analysis etc. You must also maintain a record or all meetings/discussions you have with the client (minimum of 2)'.

After setting up the wiki the lecturer can view and access all student wikis via the 'View' link. Students also see this page but can only access their own wiki.

2

The screenshot shows a Blackboard wiki page titled 'Web Design - A N Other' with the page title 'Electronic Portfolio for Web Design'. The page content includes a '1 Home' link, a description of the unit, and a 'Site Navigation' section with links to 'Home', 'Goals and Target Audience', 'Prototype 1', 'Prototype 2', 'Publishing a web site', and 'Site map'. The page also shows 'Page Stats' (Views: 43, Edits: 10, Contributors: 1, Comments: 0) and 'Page Contributors' (Fiona Muhsin). A 'Comments' link is visible at the bottom.

This wiki was setup for a web design unit. The unit was an individually assessed unit but a minor alteration to the wiki's settings would enable predetermined groups to see and contribute to a group based wiki.

3

The screenshot shows a Blackboard wiki page titled 'Web Design - A N Other' with the page title 'Goals and Target Audience Proforma'. The page content includes a question: 'What is the main aim(s) of this website?' followed by a paragraph: 'The main aim for designing this website is to extend the clients current customer base and to provide an up-to-date way in which existing customers can view and purchase products via the Internet.' Below this is a question: 'List at least 3 objectives for this website' followed by a bulleted list: 'give a modern feel to their existing static website', 'provide up-to-date information and pricing of products', and 'accept payment via payment methods such as paypal'. The page also includes a 'Design Considerations' section with the question: 'Describe the type of end user for this web site.' followed by a paragraph: 'The type of people who would use this website are those who are carrying out or about to carryout home improvements. They are likely to be familiar with browsing and using the Internet to source and obtain goods.' The page shows 'Page Stats' (Views: 26, Edits: 7, Contributors: 2, Comments: 1) and 'Page Contributors' (Fiona Muhsin, A N Other). A 'Comments (1)' link is visible at the bottom.

The extract above is used for formative assessment requiring the student to provide responses to questions which have been set by the lecturer.

4

The screenshot shows a Blackboard wiki page with a comment by the lecturer. The comment text is: 'Overall this is a good attempt. You could think more about the target audience and the type of access they might have to the Internet - not everyone has the latest PC hardware or high speed Internet access. You could also give more thought to accessibility issues.' The comment is dated 'Thursday, 03/19/2009 9:38 AM by Fiona Muhsin'. Below the comment is an 'Add Comment' form with a text area and an 'Add Comment' button. The page also shows 'Page Stats' (Views: 43, Edits: 10, Contributors: 1, Comments: 0) and 'Page Contributors' (Fiona Muhsin). A 'Comments (1)' link is visible at the top right.

Above is an example of a comment given by the lecturer in response to the above formative assessment questions. Students can review and respond to comments before undertaking summative assessment.