

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Why not Wiki ?

Using Wikis for interactive learning

by Gayleen Mackereth, eFellow (2004)
mackereth.g@gmail.com

Everyone is now familiar with Wikipedia based on the concept of Wikis. In this article I will briefly outline the use of wikis as the next best thing to an interactive whiteboard.

The word Wiki comes from the Hawaiian or "quick". A Wiki is an easy to use webpage which multiple people can edit and in the case of the Wiki which I am going to use for this article, (www.pbwiki.com) can also interact verbally through third party plugins and therein lies its power for language teaching.

You can set up a Wiki at several sites FREE and this is sufficient for text and most basic teaching operations. (For additional storage space you will have to upgrade and pay.) However, as most useful plugins store slideshows, videos and talk etc off-site you do not use up too much of your free Wiki storage.

Why is a Wiki site the next best thing to an interactive blackboard?

- You can do almost anything you can do on an interactive whiteboard except write over webpages. You can project your pbwiki page onto a screen and watch students' additions and modifications as they work from their computers or use a projected page for comment and conferencing.
- A wiki page can be retrieved at any time for individual conferencing or for group discussion.
- It is better than an interactive whiteboard because you can TALK worldwide on it while looking at the page

How can I use a class Wiki?



Ideas for use

- Set up your classes and list all NCEA standards for easy reference and update changes regularly for students to constantly refer to.
- Set up group projects and let your students collaborate
- Get students to post work on the wiki and allow other students to correct it online and add comments or post extra information..
- Use it as a portfolio tool for students to showcase individual work then with one click create an online slideshow to demo their work

Advantages: Any place any time:

- Wiki pages are not time/place dependent. Material can be posted from any computer anywhere.
- A wikipage can be accessed by all the computers in the room so all the students can be actively participating in writing, editing and modifying (If you have to send some students to different rooms to get computer access you can still all be on the same page at the same time and participating in the lesson!)
- Teachers can set homework and correct student work or add comments in class or from home and your buddy teacher overseas can also add or correct anything!
- Students can edit/ correct each other's work and add comments exerting constant peer pressure on all in the group or class to perform.

Who controls content?

- You can make your Wiki public or private
- You can decide to give full access or read only access.
- To allow others to edit you must invite them in (email is sent) and give them the password
- Whoever has the password to the Wiki can edit it
- As administrator you are advised whenever one of your students edits the Wiki so you can see who is working and who has not contributed (and put pressure on all students to participate)

What happens if one student deletes another's work?

- All drafts are kept till deleted so you can go back and see changes which have been made or delete recent changes if unsatisfactory.
- A comparison tool (under "history") makes comparing versions simple so you can see how students 'work has developed/or been modified over the drafts.

What other wiki sites are available?

A search will reveal a number of wiki sites. A lot of people are using www.wikipages.com but I have found the PBwiki site www.pbwiki.com far better due to the range of features and plugins as well as an excellent Point and Click editor allowing good multimedia access.

On www.pbwiki.com with the Point and Click editor

- You can type in Japanese fonts –no problem

- You can use different fonts and colours
- You can insert exercises in "Hot Potatoes"
- You can link to "Inspiration" or "Quia"
- You can download webpages and store them or add links
- You can add Google tools such as a translator or a weather forecast.

Multimedia use of pages

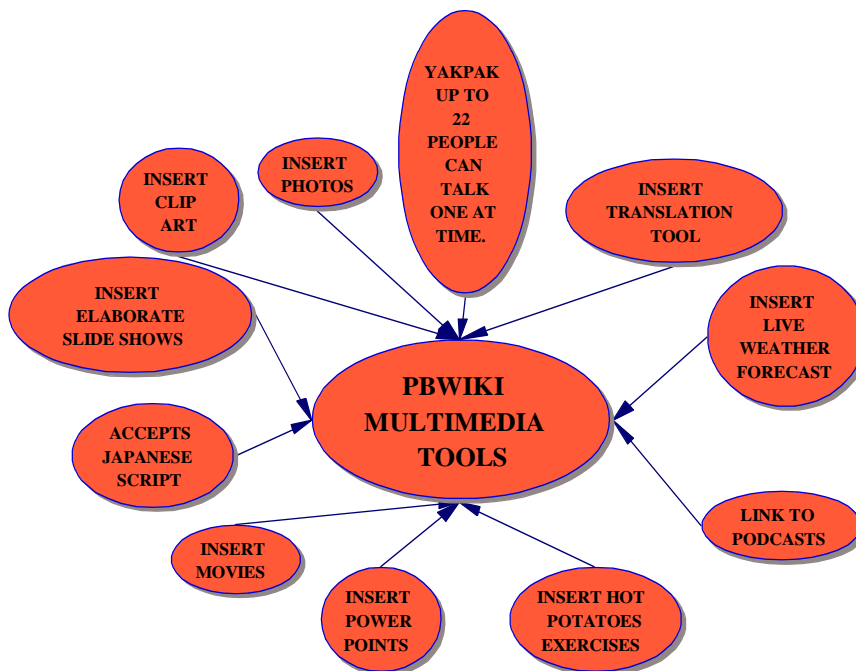
- You can insert clip art
- You can insert photos-e.g. school trip
- You load a Power point
- You can access video
- You can add YACKPAK chat.

YACKPACK-Talking in many languages

This is an amazing feature which allows up to twenty-two people to chat FREE WORLDWIDE on the Wiki (The person who depresses the button controls the speech and as soon as the mouse is released the next person can take a turn.)

This is ideal for international language communication.

Multimedia use of wiki



So GO to it! Set up your own free PB wiki NOW! By the way-PB stands for Peanut Butter because to make one is as easy as making a peanut butter sandwich!!

You can check out a sample page I have loaded on www.eduvite.pbwiki.com (Turn Youtube volume off or pause!)

One extra ICT note:

Did you know to use Teachertube not Youtube for your school ? www.teachertube.com

[Click here for next article](#)