

Wetpaint Wiki: An Introduction

Wiki is a term that most of us probably associate with Wikipedia. It is defined by Wikipedia as follows:

“A wiki enables documents to be written collaboratively, in a simple markup language using a Web browser. A single page in a wiki website is referred to as a "wiki page", while the entire collection of pages, which are usually well interconnected by hyperlinks, is "the wiki". A wiki is essentially a database for creating, browsing, and searching through information“

Why do we use Wikis?

We use Wikis so that we can come together and contribute to a central document or site because the knowledge of many is greater than the knowledge of one. It is a site specifically designed for group work. Everyone works as a writer and editor of a text. Many Course Management Systems, such as Educator, are looking at integrating Wikis into their program. It is becoming a more and more common way of working.

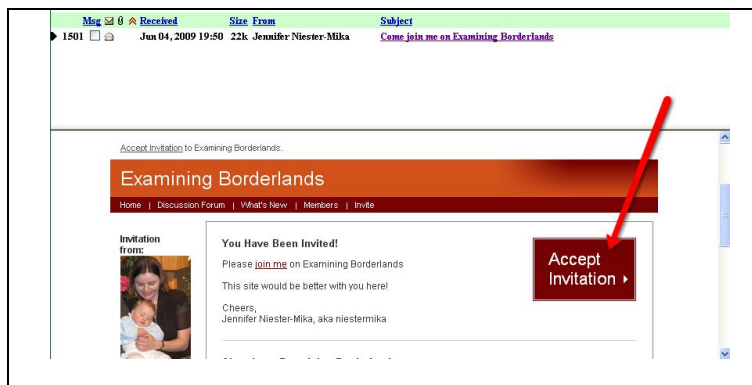
Why Wetpaint?

Before this project, I have created wiki sites in wikispaces.com and pbwiki.com. However, I felt those sites were a little blah and found creating a navigation menu was not as easy as I would like. So I tried Wetpaint and have been thrilled with the results. I find it is extremely user friendly and that it is easy to create a visually appealing site.

Here is a YouTube instructional video on setting up a Wetpaint site:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=--Sy8nI0BvY>

Step by Step Instructions for Students:



1. Check your email to accept your invitation to join the Wiki site. We are using the invitation only function to keep our class site private and to ensure no outsiders can edit our work.

Join Examining Borderlands! New members welcome.

Examining Borderlands is powered by Wetpaint. You have been invited to join this site with the role of **Registered User**. This is a private site. Only members who accept may view the contents.

Already have a Wetpaint account? [Sign in.](#)

*Username: * indicates a required field
This is the name others will see on this site.

*New Password:

*Retype New Password: Passwords must be at least six characters in length. Keep this private!

*Email Address:

*Retype Email Address: Example: myname@company.com

2. Set up an account. Choose a username and password that is easy to remember and make sure you keep the Email address your delta address, as that is where the invitation to join was sent.



Don't be anonymous!

Uploading an image to your profile page helps others get to know you better.

[Add a Profile Image](#)

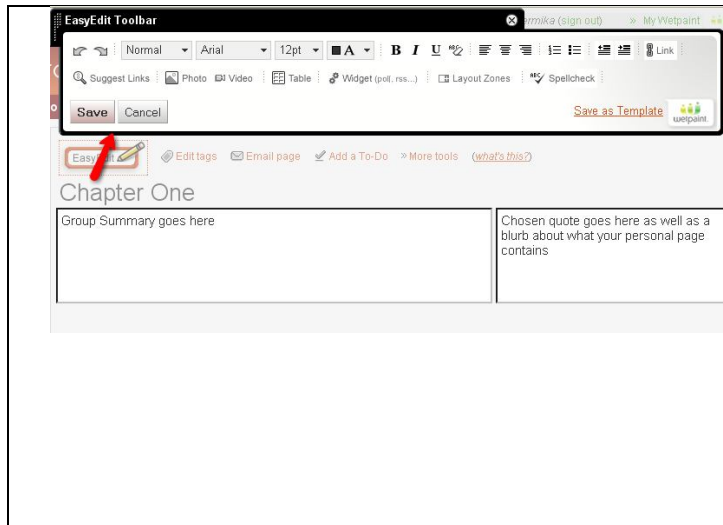
3. Upload a photo of yourself. The "Add a Profile Image" button will take you to an upload document screen that operates similar to the file uploads you do in Educator. I suggest everyone upload a file a photograph of themselves so that we can feel like we are communicating with real people when in working in isolation at home.

The screenshot shows the website header with navigation tabs: Home, Discussions, Photos, Videos, Updates, Members, and My Profile. A search bar is at the top left. Below it is a sidebar menu with links to Home, Chapter One, Chapter Two, Chapter Three, Chapter Four, and Chapter Seven. A red arrow points to the 'Chapter One' link. The main content area displays the title 'Collaborating on Borderlands/La Frontera' and a paragraph of text. At the bottom, there is a video player and a 'Wiki in Plain English' button.

4. Explore! Use the navigation menu on the left to explore the class pages. Use the tabs along the top to explore the features of our Wetpaint Wiki.

This screenshot shows a closer view of the website's navigation and content. The top navigation bar includes Home, Discussions, Photos, Videos, Updates, and Me. A search bar is present. The sidebar menu is expanded to show 'Chapter One' with sub-links for Kristina Appold, Rachel Bringer, and Jill Bauer. A red arrow points to an 'EasyEdit' button (with a pencil icon) located above the 'Chapter One' title. The main content area shows the title 'Chapter One' and the text 'Group Summary goes here'.

5. Find the page that corresponds with your assigned group. You'll see above each page an "EasyEdit" button. Click that button to modify the text on your group's page.



6. Examine the EasyEdit toolbar. You'll notice that the features are very similar to the word processing software you are accustomed to using, such as Microsoft Word. Use the editing tools to format the text as you wish and to add photos and videos. After you have made your contribution hit "Save." If you don't like the changes you made, hit "Cancel." It is now ready for the next member of your group to edit.

7. Watch the video introduction to get a general introduction of the site we are working with (it cuts off a bit abruptly at the end due to the five-minute time limit of the software I'm using): <http://www.screencast.com/users/niestermika/folders/Jing/media/ecf16d1f-bae9-4d35-9d3c-b7db1279beb7>
8. For more in-depth specifics on what you can do in the wiki site, Wetpaint, and how, visit: <http://www.wetpaintcentral.com/page/FAQ>

How I'm using this software in the class:

For my online literature class this spring, I am using the wiki site Wetpaint to create online group presentations. We are working with a collection of essays that are dense and complex creative nonfiction. As a whole class, we will discuss two of the essay chapters together. Then we will break into groups that will each be assigned a different chapter to present. Collaboratively, the students will be writing a summary of their assigned chapters. They will then branch off and individually do short essays that highlight a different issue or theme. It was easy to create subpages under the main page for each group. They will do a peer revision workshop and then the rest of the class will examine each group's pages and discuss how the chapter presentations enhanced their understanding/appreciation of the book we are examining.

There are many ways I can see how this site would be useful in a class. I'm using it to help me cover as much ground as possible in our short seven-week spring semester and also to help students tackle a hard text together instead of on their own.

How This Could be Used in Other Classes:

For any class that assigns readings, a Wiki can offer a way for students to collectively prepare for the next class. One page could be devoted to questions involving the text where each student has to contribute several questions. Another page could be where students assemble a definitions page where they put key terms in their own words and come up with an example of how that term could be applicable.

It is also the obvious choice for any class involving group work. An example of a class that would find this beneficial is Principles of Advertising. Each group could use a wiki site to develop an ad campaign. Because advertising agencies function through creative collaboration, the wiki would offer them valuable experience that may help them in future job situations.