


Reading and Posting to Wikis in Blackboard

What is a wiki?

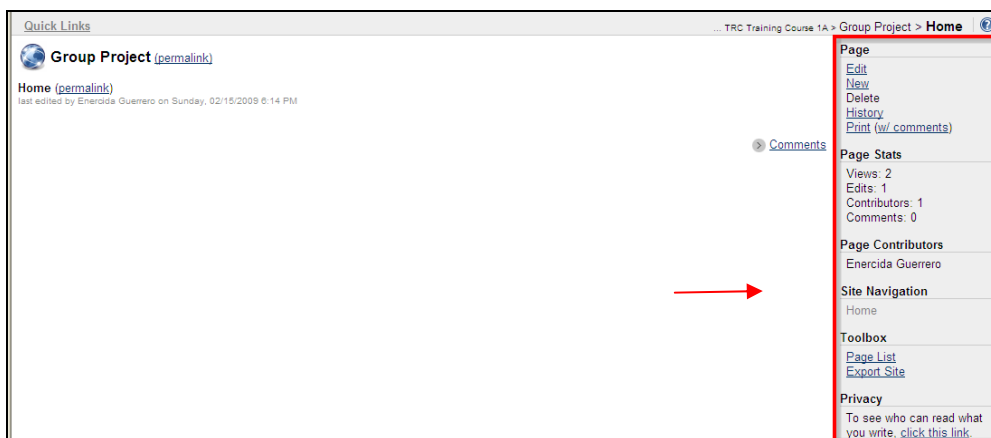
A wiki is a collaboratively constructed web site. Wikis consist of “pages” that can include images, video, attached files, and links to other web sites. Wiki pages can also contain links to other pages within the wiki. Most wikis maintain a history showing how the wiki was changed and who changed it. The best known example of a wiki is Wikipedia, a collaboratively authored, online encyclopedia.

Accessing wikis in Blackboard

1. Your instructor will tell you where in the Blackboard course site your wiki is located. Wiki sites are marked with an  icon next to the title. Click on the **View** link to access the wiki.



2. You will see the wiki homepage. If no one has edited the wiki yet, the home page will be blank, as in the example below. If there are additional pages in the wiki, they will be listed in the right sidebar under site navigation.



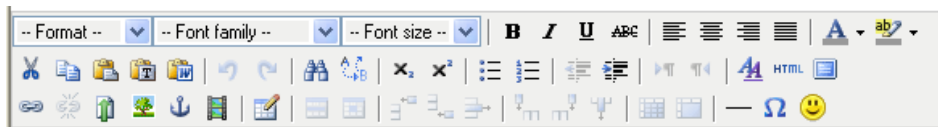
Students who are able to edit a wiki are called wiki members. Your instructor can set up a wiki in different ways. Some wikis can be viewed only by wiki members, while other wikis can be viewed by anyone in the class (but edited only by wiki members). The privacy section in the right sidebar will tell you if your wiki is viewable by all class members or by wiki members only.

Editing a wiki page

You can edit any page in any wiki of which you are a member. You can add to the existing content on a page or change the content that is already there, even if it was initially created by someone else. **NOTE:** You can view individual contributions to a wiki by clicking on the **History** link in the page section of the right sidebar.

To edit a wiki page:

1. Click the **Edit** link in the right sidebar under page.
2. You will see an editor window, with buttons on the toolbar similar to word processing toolbar. These buttons allow you to format text, add images and links, and attach documents. **Holding your mouse pointer over any button will produce a brief explanation of its function.**






3. Type your text into the editing window and click the **Save** button at the bottom of the page to publish.

NOTE: The Safari browser on the Macintosh is not fully supported. Safari users will see only a text box in place of the rich text editor. To gain full functionality of the wiki, download the Mozilla Firefox 3.0 browser at <http://www.mozilla.com>. Make sure you download the right version of Firefox for your operating system (e.g. Firefox 3.0.5 for the Mac OS X 10.4 and above).

Note: A wiki page cannot be edited by more than one person at a time. If the page is being edited and another member tries to edit that page, then a message appears stating that the wiki is unavailable.

Inserting text from MS Word or Notepad:

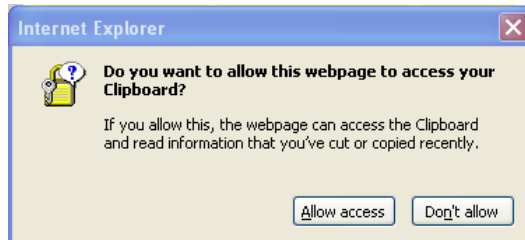
When copying text from a word processor, do not use the paste function in your browser; instead, use the built-in  clipboards in the wiki editor:

1. Copy the text in MS Word as you usually would using your keyboard or mouse.
2. Go to the wiki page where you will insert the text. Make sure you are in editing mode, where you can view the toolbar shown above.
3. Use the clipboard icon  on the Graphical Page Editor to paste text from MS Word to a wiki page. If you are using another word processor use the  plain text clipboard. (Only the text will be copied not the formatting)

On the Mozilla Firefox browser, paste the text and click the **Insert** button to insert the text.

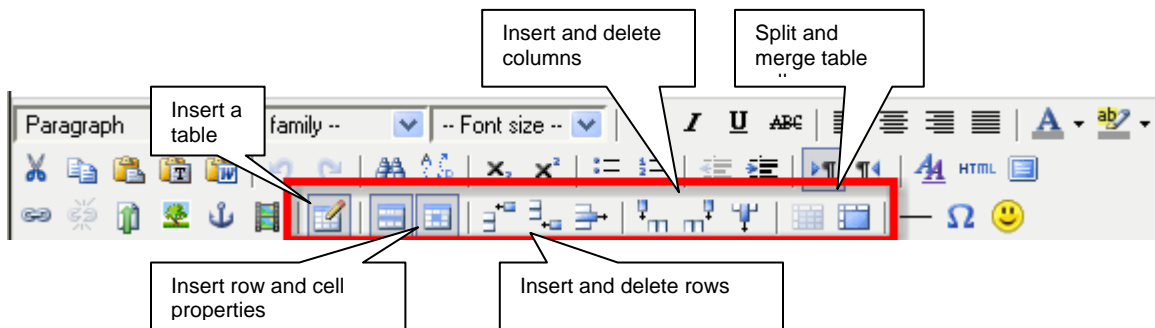


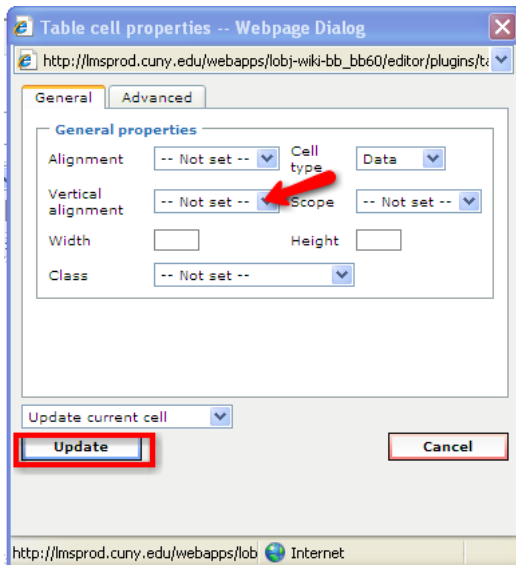
On the Internet Explorer browser, click the **allow access** button to paste the text into the wiki page.



Inserting tables

You can use tables to structure your wiki page content and design a layout for your images and text like the figure to your right. Use the icons on the rich text editor to insert a table, merge or split a table, or insert or delete columns and rows and create the desired layout.





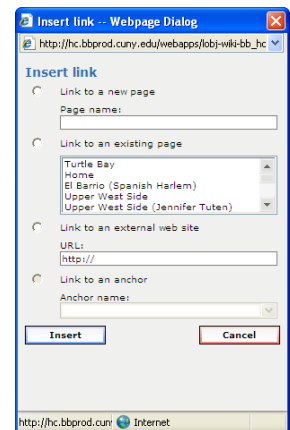


Once you've created your table you can click on the **Table cell properties** icon to align your image or text in the cell.


By default text will appear in the center of the cell and the cell will expand to fit the text. You can change the alignment of the text in a cell in the **Table cell properties** dialog box or fix the dimensions of the cell's width or height.

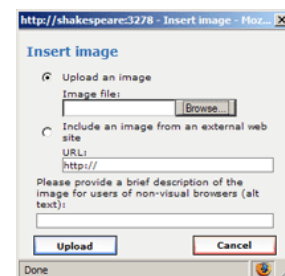
To insert a link:

1. Highlight text that you want to hyperlink.
2. Click the **Insert Link** button on the toolbar ().
3. You will see a dialog box with four options:
 - a. **Link to a new page**
Selecting this option will create a link to a new blank page. Type a name for the new page.
 - b. **Link to an existing page**
Selecting this option will create a link to an existing page within the wiki. Select the page to which to link from the list that appears.
 - c. **Link to an external page**
Selecting this option will create a link to a website outside the wiki. Type or paste in the address of the site to which you want to link.
 - d. **Link to an anchor**
Selecting this option will create a link to a specific point on the wiki page you are editing.
Note: Before creating this link, you must insert anchors in the wiki page first. Use the insert/edit **Anchor** button () to insert anchors on the wiki page.



To insert an image:

1. Click on the **Insert Image** button ()
2. You will see a dialog box with two options:
 - a. **Upload an image**



Click the **Browse** button to look for the image, then select the image file and **Open** in the **File Upload** dialog box.

Note: We recommend that you resize your image before embedding it in the wiki (use a program like MS Word, MS Paint, or Adobe Photoshop).

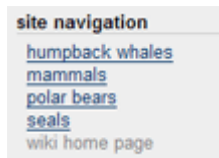
b. Include an image from an external web site

Copy the web address of the image into the URL field. (If you are using Firefox, right-click on the image to copy image location.)

3. Enter an image description.
4. Click **Upload** to insert the image.

Creating a new wiki page


1. Click on the **New** link under **Page** in the sidebar on the right.
2. Enter a title in the **Page Name** field.
3. Add content to the page, as described in the **Editing a wiki page** section of this document.
4. Click the **Save** button. Your new page will appear in the **site navigation** section of the sidebar. You can now create a link to your new page from any other page in the wiki, as described in the **Editing a wiki page** section of this document.



Commenting on wiki entries

Comments may be added to any page in the wiki, if your instructor has enabled the comment feature. To view or create a comment, click on the **Comments** link at the bottom of the wiki page. You will see any comments that have already been made and can add a new comment using the **Add Comment** form. (If you do not see a comment link, then your instructor has not made the **comment** option available)

Where can I get additional help with Wikis?

Additional help can be accessed within the wiki page by clicking the “question mark”  located on the upper right corner of the screen. Additional Blackboard documents are available at <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/icit/help-docs/blackboard/student-docs>.