Blogs, Wikis, and Innovative Software

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For our purposes, a blog is...

- A web site where one or more people put up short passages of text ("posts")
- Grows over time as author(s) add more posts – like a diary
- Produces a record of thoughts, announcements, etc. about a particular topic over time
Project Tracking with a Blog

- For projects where numerous changes are made sequentially
- Keep a record of:
  - What change was made
  - When
  - Reasoning behind it
  - Who was consulted
- Use a sidebar or static page to give up-to-date picture of overall project
Project Tracking with a Blog

Example:
Alden Library itypes revamp blog
http://aldenlibraryitypes.blogspot.com/
Project Tracking with a Blog: Advantages

- Centralized, shared place to keep track of all changes
- Everyone sees the most up-to-date picture (rather than looking at different outdated emails or memos)
- Sequence of actions and reasons for decisions not lost to memory
Project Tracking with a Blog: Caveats

- People have to read it
  - May not remember/want to visit blog site
  - Posts can be delivered via email (through tools like Feedburner)
- May need separate document (or static blog page) to give “executive summary” of overall project
For our purposes, a wiki is...

- A web site shared by a group of people
- Anyone in the group can easily add or edit site content, without having to know HTML
- Collective knowledge base
- Example: Wikipedia – an encyclopedia where anyone can write or edit articles
Documenting with a Wiki

Use for your in-house documentation (instead of Word Documents, 3-ring binders, etc.)

Good things to put in a wiki:

- Library-specific procedures
- Coding schemes, e.g. location/itype/status
- Direct links to useful Manual pages
- Informal tips/best practices
Documenting with a Wiki

Example:
Ohio University Libraries Staff Wiki

http://staff.library.ohiou.edu/
Documenting with a Wiki: Advantages

- Centralized, shared documentation
- Everyone can spontaneously participate in creating documentation that’s needed
- Everyone sees the most up-to-date picture (rather than all looking at different outdated e-mails or memos)
- History of policy/procedure changes automatically kept
Documenting with a Wiki: Caveats

- Wiki format may take some getting used to
  - Mechanics of reading and editing
  - Idea that staff are supposed to create own documentation
- When to put full explanations/code lists in the wiki, vs. using it to direct people to Manual, in-system code lists, etc.
Official Innovative Wikis

- WebBridge Wiki: [http://csdirect.iii.com/webbridge](http://csdirect.iii.com/webbridge)
- Print Templates Wiki: [http://csdirect.iii.com/lswiki/PrintTemplates](http://csdirect.iii.com/lswiki/PrintTemplates)
- WebPAC Wiki: [http://csdirect.iii.com/lswiki/WebPAC](http://csdirect.iii.com/lswiki/WebPAC)
- More?
Your Own Blog/Wiki

Commercially hosted
- Commercial sites that let you create a blog/wiki on their server
- Easy to set up with minimal technical skills
- Less control over how it looks and behaves

EXAMPLES: Blogger, Pbwiki

Library hosted
- (Open source) software installed on library server
- Need some technical skills to install and maintain
- More control over how it looks and behaves

EXAMPLES: WordPress, MediaWiki
Questions? Comments?

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