Getting Started with your Tikiwiki Site

Congratulations!

Glad you want to join the Tikiwiki Community.

Our documentation site has some pretty good guides on how to Install your tiki out of the box, and choose which configurationyou want to make active.

Apart from the nuts and bolts IT and software stuff, are some ideas for the first steps you can do to make it grow.

1. Create an Interaction Plan

Wikis are interactive community oriented sites - of course it is not exactly an "if you build it they will come" situation. You need to plan how (and think why) people would want to participate in your site. Basically there are three reasons why people participate voluntarily in online communities.

1. They can demonstrate their talent or knowledge. (Gain Status)
2. They can get help or learn something. (Gain Experience)
3. They can make new friends. (Gain Affection)

Sure there are lots of unselfish reasons that people participate too, but if people keep coming back there is something in it for them. How do you think people will interact in the site - what kind of collaboration or communication needs to happen. How can we deploy the tools Tikiwiki provides to make this work: Choose which features to enable: Wiki, Blogs, Tiki Forums, articles, Comments, Surveys, Trackers, User Features, HTML pages, the Shoutbox, etc.

2.Plan a Site Map and Use Structures to Create it.

What do i mean? Suppose we were doing a site for a family. Lets imagine they wanted a site tree like this one on the right =>

Note that each level in the hierarchy is indented one space (not one underscore - that's just for show). When you cut and paste something like this into the window of the Wiki>Structure>Create a structure page, it will create all of those pages (if they don't already exist) and link them in a navigation structure. You can remove or disable the structure navigation later if you want - it won't affect the pages.

The Family Site Tree:
Family Home
Photos
House Rules
Our Goals
Events
_Summer Trip
_Christmas Vacation
__Sleigh Ride Photos
_Grandparents 50'th Anniversary
Moms Page
_My recipes
_Moms Todos
Dad's Page
_Todos for Dad
Samantha's Page
_Sam's Blog
_Sams Stupid Chores
Family Budget

3. Make it Beautiful

Never underestimate the power that the visual appearance of your site has on people. People are overwhelmingly sensory, and when there is no sound, taste or smell to your website (um, and i think there are ways of doing that now if you really want to) people will be very focused on the visual appearance - so don't skimp on this dept.
Things to remember:

1. Not everybody is an artist - the reason for 95% of the bad web design out there is that everybody thinks they are an artist and know what good design is. If only they knew. This is funny, because most people who can't sing know it and steer well clear of public singing performances. Think of it that way - your site is you on stage 24/7/365, and if you aren't sure you are a singer, you probably aren't and getting some help from somebody is a good idea.
2. Everyone's taste is different - while there are a small number of tried and true principles in web design, they don't always apply for everyone. The difference between a good design and a bad design is that
   1. good designs will look really good to some people and won't bother others much.
   2. bad designs look ugly to everyone. (except the person who made it)
3. Bad design drives away traffic. Plain ans simple.
   1. At the moment, most (almost all)of Tikiwiki native themes are bad designs. We're working on that - but theme design for complex CMS takes time. If you do develop a custom theme - consider sharing some or all of it with the community.

4. Get a spell checker.

Having a spell checker in your browser is essential if you are doing live-to-web stuff.

- Google Toolbar has a good spell checker in it that underlines missspelled words as you type. If you know of anything better, let us know.

5. Take responsibility for your site.

Some very informal comments here. If you are the owner/operator of a website which is accessible to the public no matter how small you are a publisher under some national laws. Whatever happens in password protected pages is pretty much your own business, but anything that is publicly viewable can lead to legal issues if someone considers it libelous, or infringes on a copyright.

If you allow public or anonymous comments on your site you are still responsible for the content, whether you wrote it or not. Practicing "due care and attention" of a public wiki means having a terms of use statement and upholding whatever community standards that are appropriate for your site.

Note: Disclaiming all responsibility will not work - it is still your site in the eyes of the law.
Really, what you need to do to operate a public wiki or forum is relatively simple.

- run a clean site - it's your reputation after all.
- clearly publish a "terms of use" statement which prohibits illegal and libelous activity.
- keep an eye on the recent change in your site to ensure nothing really bad stays up there for weeks.
- If someone complains about content on your site, take their concerns seriously and if you can not or will not satisfy their concerns - talk to a lawyer before you blow them off.