

Being Lazy in a Large Organisation Documentation by Wiki

Systems Administration Miniconf
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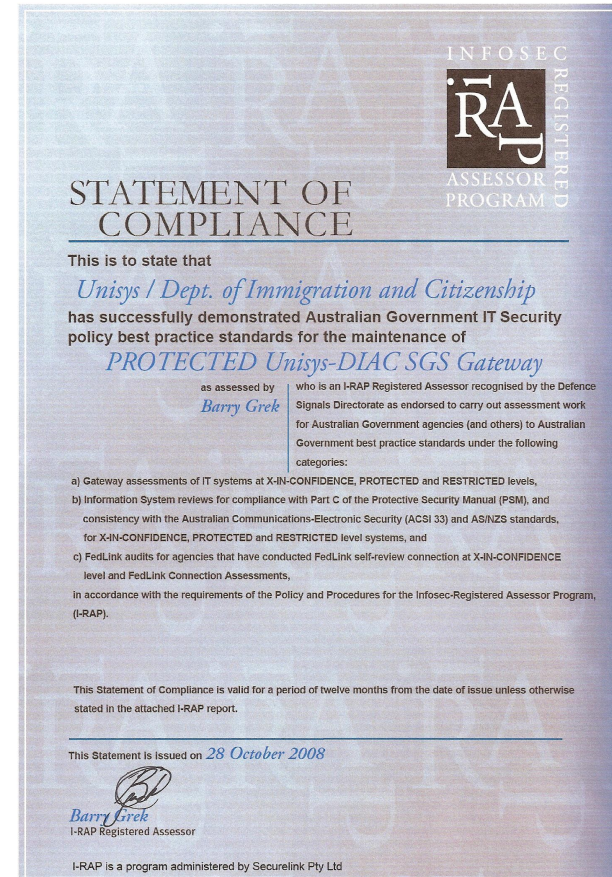
Lazy?

- **Laziness** is the quality that makes you go to great effort to reduce overall energy expenditure. It makes you write labor-saving programs that other people will find useful, and document what you wrote so you don't have to answer so many questions about it.

<http://c2.com/cgi/wiki?LazinessImpatienceHubris>

Large?

- Thousands of desktops
- 24/7/365 Service Desk
- A PROTECTED Gateway
 - Risk Assessment
 - Design / Configuration
 - Procedures
 - Reporting



Wiki?

- A wiki is a type of website that is easily edited by all **users** and not just special administrators
- Famous examples:
 - <http://c2.com/cgi/wiki>
 - <http://wikipedia.org/>
 - The one in your workplace ;-)

Choosing your Wiki

- Use <http://wikimatrix.org/>
- Which one almost doesn't matter
- Pick one that suits your skill set
- We chose <http://dokuwiki.org/>

Basic Setup

- Use an easy-to-remember hostname
- Enable authentication from the beginning
- Be technically as permissive as possible
- Pilot with a small, accepting group
- Minimise technical changes after go-live

Possibilities

- Most wikis offer full revision history
- Scripting possibilities (HTML::WikiConvertor)
- Semi-automation of regular reports
- Export Open Document Format
- Export Portable Document Format
- Web logs → usage history and metrics

LIME tool



[Knowledge Base](#)
[Help / Feedback](#)
[Logout](#)

Account matching "xxxx02" 2009-09-02 15:27:40

Username: xxxx02
Name: Joe Citizen or CITIZEN, Joe
Email: joe.citizen@immi.gov.au
SAP Search: [By Surname](#) (position is 123458)
Section: Important Section
Desktop? pc123456 (192.0.2.1) - [LANDesk Remote Control](#)
VPN Token: Digipass Go3, serial 12-3456789-0
Created: 2008-07-04 12:24:44
Changed: 2009-08-27 11:21:10
Expiry: 2010-07-01 23:00:00
Directories: [Home](#) and [Profile](#)
AGS Number: 123456
Cost Centre: 123456
Groups:
8532 [GR-IMPORTANT-GROUP](#) Tom Citizen is the authorising officer
8532 [GR-OTHER-GROUP](#) Harry Citizen is the authorising officer

Business Case

- Our business case was fairly simple:

Let's put all our documentation in one place and keep it up to date

- Start small and just do it.

Advantages

- One source of truth – everyone knows where to look and everything has a home
- Keeps documentation alive - prevents “shelfware”
 - SOPs get used, improved and kept current
- “Works in progress” receives early help
- New starters have a practical induction
- Service Desk Knowledge Base
 - Documentation drives behaviour

Challenge: Ownership

- Separating the author from the document
 - Key to success
 - Make ownership explicit
 - Open and shared the the default
 - Make any exceptions very clear
- Don't make the technology the enforcer

Challenge: Champions

- A champion will win you the battles you didn't know about. They are
 - Early adoptors
 - Believe in the wiki
 - Will help market the wiki
 - Will often need to most support

What goes into the wiki?

- Include:
 - Design, configuration detail, system notes
 - Everything you can handle
 - Links to any and all other systems
 - Make your wiki the single place to go
- Non-editable copies or links for:
 - Formal Policy Documents
 - Legal Contracts
- Be very clear on where “The Master Copy” lives

What does success look like?

- People ask, “Why isn't that in the wiki?”, then they put it in the wiki themselves
- A sense of shared control – we all can improve the documentation together
- Lots of traffic on the website and the need to move to larger hardware ;-)

Recommendations

- Start small – just do it
- Make a conscious “go live” after pilot
- Allow and guide growth but don't force

Questions?

This presentation is at
<http://zwitterion.org/talks/>