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
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://c2.com/cgi/wiki)
- 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Username:</th>
<th>xxxx02</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Joe Citizen or CITIZEN, Joe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:joe.citizen@mimi.gov.au">joe.citizen@mimi.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP Search:</td>
<td>By Surname (position is 123458)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section:</td>
<td>Important Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desktop?</td>
<td>pc123456 (192.0.2.1) - LANDesk Remote Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VPN Token:</td>
<td>Digipass Go3, serial 12-3456789-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created:</td>
<td>2008-07-04 12:24:44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed:</td>
<td>2009-08-27 11:21:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expiry:</td>
<td>2010-07-01 23:00:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directories:</td>
<td>Home and Profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGS Number:</td>
<td>123456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Centre:</td>
<td>123456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups:</td>
<td>8532 GR-IMPORTANT-GROUP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8532 GR-OTHER-GROUP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tom Citizen is the authorising officer

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 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/