

Getting On The Same Page

The *Wiki* as Project
Communications Tool

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GroupHealth

First Principles

- ★ Communication is key to successful collaboration.
- ★ The end result of **effective** communication is *shared understanding*.

Capturing the (evolving!) shared understanding

- ★ There's too much information on any given study to keep in our heads at once.
- ★ We need to record this stuff someplace where we can find it again when we need it.
- ★ In programming, we have a principle for managing important information: DRY

The DRY Principle

- ★ Don't
- ★ Repeat
- ★ Yourself

Which means: Every piece of information in a system should have a **single** unambiguous, **authoritative source**.

Repetition creates the burden of *maintenance*.

We have a technical problem

- ★ We're in different places, attached to different computer networks.
- ★ I can't save a document (protocol, instrument, analysis plan, etc.) anyplace where you will be able to get at it.

What to do?

Is your budget outlandishly large?

★ Yes: Hire a staff of techies to create and maintain a study-specific web site for everyone to use to document the project as it evolves.

(and see if they can keep up with you)

★ No: E-mail documents back and forth.

But e-mail brings pain!



- ★ Now there are as many copies of a document as there are recipients.
- ★ Multiplied by the number of versions!
- ★ Not very DRY!
- ★ E-mail is person specific—what happens when staff change?
- ★ How easy is it for a new person to come up to speed on the project?

Are changes making it out to everyone who needs them?

Enter the *wiki*

A wiki is a website that **anybody** can edit from **any** computer:

- ★ Right inside their browser.
- ★ Without needing to know anything about creating web pages.
- ★ Without needing any special permissions.

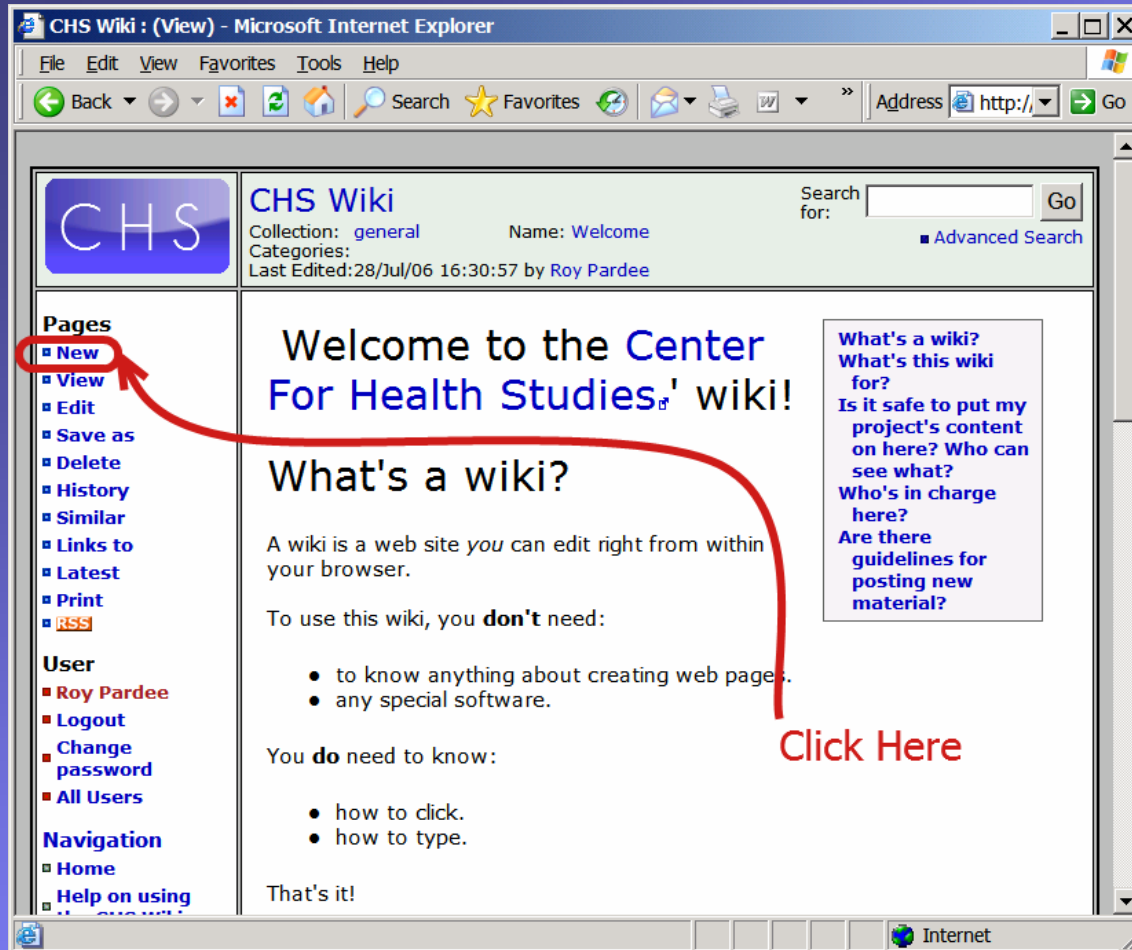
The wiki:

- ★ Makes it incredibly simple to **create new** pages, and to **establish links** between pages.
- ★ Keeps track of **who edited** every page.
- ★ Keeps a **copy** of every **past version** of a page.
- ★ Makes it easy to **roll back** to a previous version of a page.

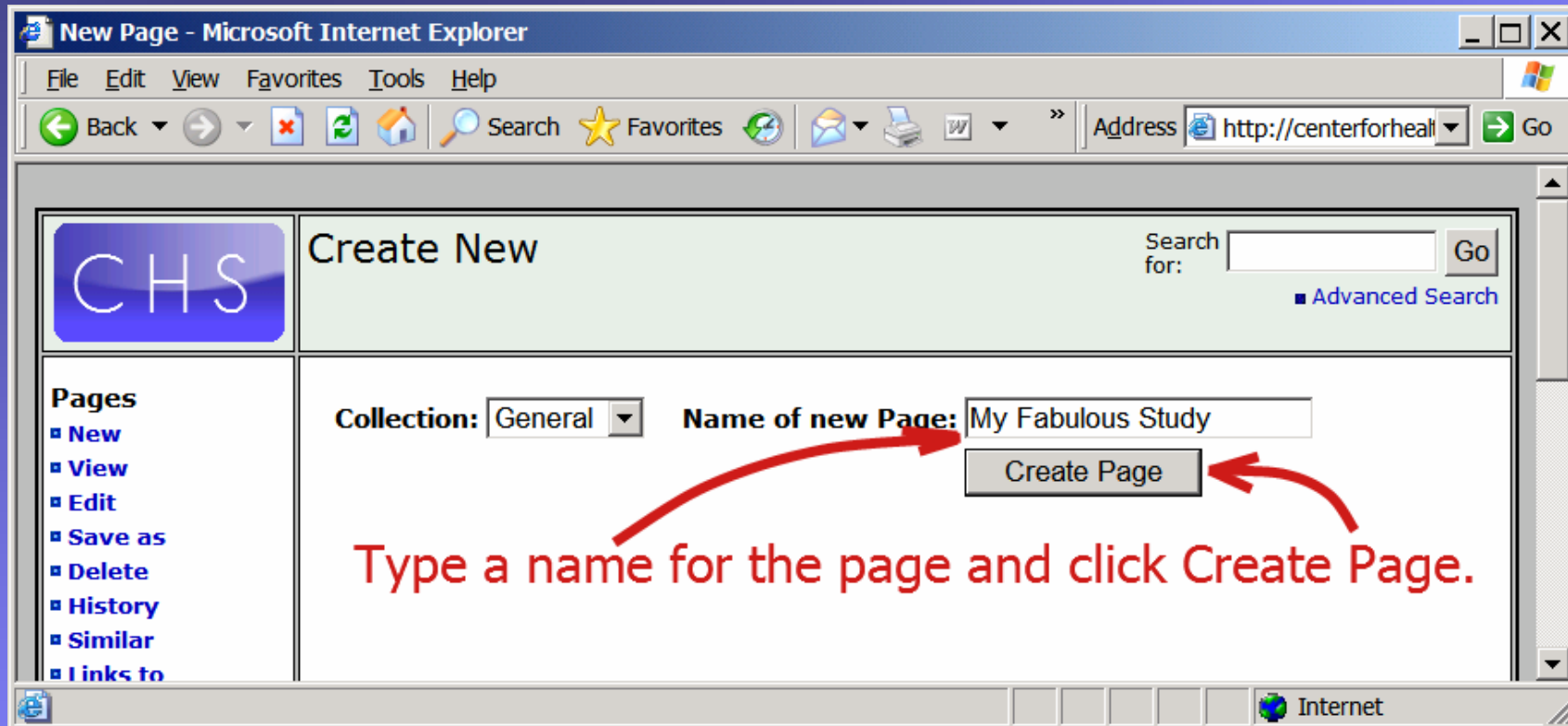
demo

http://localhost/chs_wiki

Step 1: Click the 'New' link



Step 2: Give your page a name



Step 3: Add text and save.

My Fabulous Study : (Edit) - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address http://centerforhealthstudies.com/chs_wiki/perspectr Go

CHS

My Fabulous Study

Navigation is disabled during editing.

Use **Save** or **Cancel** buttons to leave this page.

To create Wiki links:
[[page]]
or
[[page|anchor]]

Overview

The My Fabulous Study (MFS) is a study of the fabulosity of samples of plan members from [[Group Health Cooperative]] and [[Kaiser Permanente Northwest]].

Activities

- Fabulosity Index Development & Validation
- Pilot Survey
- Data Analysis

Impending Deadlines

[[Complete To-Do List]]

Important Documents

Save Comment: Cancel

Type anywhere in the big yellow box.

Format your text w/the toolbar.

Click Save.

Done!

Advantages

- ★ Users are empowered to maintain the information themselves (and they're the ones who most care about it).
- ★ Minimal barriers to editing mean information can easily be kept up-to-date, no matter the source.
- ★ Easy creation of sub-pages allows for depth of information without clutter.

Disadvantages

Wikis are *less good* for:

- ★ Back-and-forth **conversations**
- ★ Documents that need to be **highly or consistently formatted**

Questions?

Thank you!

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