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PR-e-FACE: From the desk of Chief Editor **“Collaborative functioning has come to stay “**



“Imagine a world in which every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge. That is what we are doing”. These world famous

words were spoken by Jimmy Wales, Founder of Wikipedia, the online free encyclopedia and the largest reference website on the internet.

Wiki has changed the usage of internet from ‘private’ to ‘collaborative’ tool. Wiki enables all users to contribute to the knowledge pool. Wiki is an effective communication tool in the hands of Corporates and they need to make use of this collaborative tool along with their traditional websites.

The recent first ‘Unconference’ WikiCamp held at Chennai has not only opened up our thinking process towards this ‘open and collaborative tool’ Wiki, on the internet, but also as how a Seminar or Conference can be

done in a more participative manner. As against the conventional model of ‘conferences’ this ‘Unconference’ provided lot of opportunities to share the knowledge in a comfortable and friendly atmosphere, with fun and joy.

The message that we gained was that people behave in a more ‘disciplined’ manner in an uncontrolled and free atmosphere, (read : Wiki and Unconference) than in a controlled situation.

Corporates need to include such new tools like Wikis and Unconferences in their professional agenda to involve the entire community.

We are privileged to carry an exclusive interview with Jimmy Wales in this issue.

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PR-e-CISE – Inside this ezine

- An exclusive interview with Jimmy Wales, Founder, Wikipedia and Wikimedia Foundation.
- Expert views on Unconference and Wikis for Corporates
- A note on WikiCamp 2007

PR-eXCLUSIVE

“Wiki respects every individual’s contribution”



Listen to the full interview through *podcast* at

<http://www.primepointfoundation.org/presense0207.htm>



Q: Good morning Mr. Jimmy. What made you to start the Wikipedia?

Jimmy: I have been watching the growth of the free

software moment, i.e., open source software movement and I have seen people coming together online making software products of very high quality all using free licenses. So, people can copy, modify, and redistribute the work commercially and non-commercially. Then I realized this is a new social model which will allow the people to collaborate on anything and all kinds of things. And so, I thought ‘encyclopedia’ will be a good project and as soon as I thought about that, I wanted everyone to be realizing that the world to have a free encyclopedia for every one. That was the beginning of the idea.

Q: In which year you started the Wikipedia?

Jimmy : Wikipedia was started on January 15, 2001. But prior to that, for two year I had a project called “Nupedia” which had the same goal as Wikipedia, in terms of having free licenses encyclopedia with thousands of volunteers, but I didn’t have the idea of the “Wiki” editing model. So, it was designed as a very traditional top down model that shows something generic.

Q: So, how do you ensure the credibility of the information & integrity?

Jimmy : There is a very good community of users very actively and meticulously policing the site and they

elect among themselves administrators and also there are many mechanisms on the website that allow the community to exercise controls and quality. And for example, every single change is recorded in the “recent changes” page and all of the past versions of the articles are saved for ever so that, if someone comes up and makes an article that was a lower quality than it was before, someone can restore the best version. Lot of little techniques like that empowers the community to actually build something that’s more valuable.

Q: What would happen if somebody gives wrong information or manipulates the information?

Jimmy : Typically, that is a multiple step process. We really try to be a very friendly and welcoming community and try to help people understand what we are trying to do. If somebody comes in and puts in some wrong information, so as a Joke or something, for the first time they will get a warning that will say, “Please don’t do this to Wikipedia, try to help our effort to create a high quality encyclopedia, and we found this inappropriate”. You would be surprised that many people, when they hear this, they would say “You know, actually I probably shouldn’t have messed with Wikipedia.” Beyond that, if they keep it up over time, they can be blocked from editing and the community can then revert back the previous version.

Q: How it can help the corporate world?

Jimmy : A lot of companies are now finding Wiki to be very useful internally

to allow employees to share the information quickly. The word "Wiki" comes from the Hawaiian word "Wiki Wiki" which means "quick". It is a quick collaboration. And so, one of the problems that a lot of companies face, particularly large companies, is how to get the information flowing through the organization in a fast and effective manner. Many times, companies make poor decisions simply because one part of the organization has some information that the other part didn't. The idea of Wiki inside a company is to enable people to really share information in a much faster, broader, and simpler way. Lot of companies are now finding it very useful.

Q: Do you have any advice to the corporate world?

Jimmy : I think the best advice is to experiment with Wiki and to respect the medium and to understand what makes the Wiki successful is "respect for every individual's contributions", so that even if someone in the company is doing something that is not so great, if you have a positive attitude of encouraging them, others will see this and think themselves about posting information. If you have a very hierarchical company Wiki won't work for you, because the employees will be too afraid to type something that may upset their bosses. If you can accept that, Wiki will be an open process and it can work very well.

Q: What inspired you to start Wikipedia?

Jimmy : Originally, as I said it was the open source software, i.e., free software movement. As a child, when I was growing up, I had parents who really strongly emphasize education. I went to a very small private school run by mother and grand mother. There were only four children in my grade! It was a one room school-house, very old fashioned, small school. I had lots of fun when I used to read encyclopedia. I used to read the words in encyclopedia Britannica quite a bit. As a child I always had the idea of broad information and just loved reading.

Q: How do you see the future of Wiki's in another 5 to 10 years?

Jimmy: I think one the most important things that you are going to see in five to ten years is that the editing process to become a lot easier, a lot smoother, a lot more approachable by people who are not necessarily IT specialists. I think that is probably the most important thing that you are going to see. And I think you are going to see that Wiki is used for more things that are useful. Your are going to realize people can write Wiki and can do fictions and do all kinds of things in Wiki that I would have never expected, but I'm seeing all this creativity emerge online. I actually don't know, I think we have to watch and see what people come up with.

Wikipedia introduction www.wikipedia.org



Wikipedia is an online free encyclopedia; the brain child of Jimmy Wales. It has information on all the topics under the sun. Wikipedia is available across the globe in different languages and is also available in various regional languages.

Wikipedia has content from Arts, Biography, History Mathematics, Science, Society, Technology, etc. All these content in Wikipedia are posted by Internet users for sharing information with others. With rare exceptions, its articles can be edited by anyone with access to the internet, simply by clicking the edit this page link. The name Wikipedia is a combination of the words wiki and encyclopedia. This is the largest online reference website in the world

PR –e- Views – Wiki Basics

What is Wiki?

A Wiki is an openly editable set of pages that allows any user to edit content through a simple browser. A Wiki is a piece of server software that allows users to freely create and edit Web page content using any Web browser. Wiki supports hyperlinks and has a simple text syntax for creating new pages and crosslinks between internal pages on the fly.

In a layman's words

Imagine a public park with a wall set aside for mural artists. Anyone could show up at any time and start painting, adding to existing images, filling blank space, or whitewashing as much as they like. A Wiki is an analogous public space, but it's on the web.

Technical meaning

A Wiki is a special type of website that allows the visitors themselves to easily add, remove, and otherwise edit and change available content. It is a set of web pages editable by anyone. No knowledge of computer programming is needed. Nor is it necessary to access a web server to upload pages. Every page in a Wiki can be amended, edited, or even deleted by anyone with a web browser. The term Wiki also can refer to the collaborative software itself (Wiki engine) that facilitates the operation of such a website or to certain specific Wiki sites, including the computer science site (the original Wiki) WikiWikiWeb and on-line encyclopedias such as Wikipedia. A Wiki enables documents to be written very collaboratively in a simple

markup language using a web browser. A single page in a Wiki is referred to as a "Wiki page", while the entire body of pages, which are usually highly interconnected via hyperlinks, is "the Wiki"; in effect, a Wiki is actually a very simple, easy-to-use user-maintained database for searching or even creating information.

History behind Wiki

It all started when a renowned person named Ward Cunningham started developing WikiWikiWeb in 1994 and installed it on Internet domain c2.com on March 25, 1995. It was named by Cunningham, who remembered a Honolulu International Airport counter employee telling him to take the so-called "Wiki Wiki" Chance RT-52 shuttle bus line that runs between the airport's terminals. According to Cunningham, "I chose wiki-wiki as an alliterative substitute for 'quick' and thereby avoided naming this stuff quick-web." "Wiki Wiki" is a reduplication of "wiki", a Hawaiian-language word for fast. . WikiWikiWeb was the first of such software to be called a wiki. The word wiki is a shorter form of wiki wiki (weekie, weekie). The word is sometimes interpreted as the backronym for "what I know is", which describes the knowledge contribution, storage, and the exchange function.

According to Cunningham, the idea of 'Wiki' can be traced back to a HyperCard stack he wrote in the late 1980s. In the late 1990's, wikis were increasingly recognized as a promising way to develop private and public knowledge bases,[citation needed] and this potential inspired the founders of the Nupedia encyclopedia project, which later became Wikipedia.

Source: <http://wikicamp.in/wiki/index.php?title=Wiki2Booklet>

PR –e- STIGE – Expert views

Mr Kirubashankar, A popular blogger and podcaster, Chennai Kiruba@kiruba.com

“In the traditional conferences, best discussions take place during breaks”

(Kirubashankar is a pioneer in the concept of ‘Unconference and the brain behind the WikiCamp)

An ‘Unconference’ is diametrically opposite to how normal conferences are held. Four or five speakers sit on the stage. Four hundred or five hundred people sit in the audience. Audience does not have time to interact or put questions. This is not the best method. In such conferences, best discussions take place during Coffee break and lunch time.

In an ‘Unconference’ there is no restriction. There is no speaker. The speaker becomes the discussion leader. There is no audience. The audience becomes participant. They are encouraged to express freely. The content is not set earlier. People come and set the topic in the morning

through ‘paper wikis’. It runs on an ‘auto pilot system’.

Downside is that you trust the speaker. There are pros and cons. Advantage is that everybody gets a chance.



I would suggest a hybrid model. Best speakers may be selected in the normal course. In the normal conference, you can have two or three hours of ‘Unconference’ and encourage all the speakers to come and participate. You can have traditional conference model and keep few rooms for Unconference also.

Mr Gangadhar Bhadani. Sr Manager, Bank of India, Puducherry gbhadani@gmail.com

“Wiki helps the Corporates to increase the bottom-line and wealth”

(Mr Bhadani (in mid 50s) is ranked as No 1 Wikipedian in India and in top 50 globally for his contribution / editing of thousands of articles in the Wikipedia)



Primary benefit is that multiple users can contribute for creation of an idea through the medium of Wiki. Corporates using one or more pages of Wiki gets the advantage of the sum

total of knowledge of all the people who are associated with the corporate. Nothing in the Wiki gets wiped out. It remains in the archives. It helps the Corporates to move towards ‘paperless office’.

Wiki is the expression of team spirit. You are empowering the employees. It enables the Corporates to provide seamless flow of information to their stakeholders, who can participate in the discussions irrespective of time zone.

Wiki helps Corporates to increase the bottom-line and wealth.

Podcast: You can listen to the views of Jimmy, Kiruba and Bhadani in the podcast at <http://www.primepointfoundation.org/presense0207.htm>

PR –e- STIGE – Expert views

Mr J Murali, IT Professional and an eminent columnist jmurali@gmail.com

“Wiki helps for collaborative content aggregation”



Wiki is helpful for collaborative content aggregation. It can be useful along

with intranet. Any idea for development or solution can be posted in Wiki to enable others to edit and enrich further and further. (unlike blogs)

Please also read the articles written by J Murali in the following links:

Wiki web: An on-line collaboration tool

<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/biz/2002/11/04/stories/2002110400150200.htm>

A Wiki site for your organisation

<http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/biz/2003/02/24/stories/2003022400020200.htm>

A Squeak-based Wiki server

<http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/biz/2003/06/09/stories/2003060900110200.htm>

(for advanced users)

Wiki web: New frontiers

<http://www.hindu.com/biz/2004/11/08/stories/2004110800631500.htm>

Jotspot: Wiki next phase

<http://www.hindu.com/biz/2004/11/29/stories/2004112900321400.htm>

PR – e- Groups – Have you joined discussion groups?

Image Management Group – Second largest yahoo group on PR with 1440 plus global members. Click here

http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/Image_Management/

PRpoint Group - The largest Indian group for PR/CorpComm /academic professionals with 660 plus members. Click here

<http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/prpoint/>

New Media Forum Group – A group for Indian journalists with around 350 members. Click here

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/New_Media_Forum/

India Vision Group – A group for Indian youth on India Vision 2020 with around 1200 members. Click here

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/India_Vision_2020/

Please do not miss these sites

www.wikicamp.in www.unconference.info www.kiruba.com

<http://blog.jimmywales.com>

PR –e- VENTS – India's first 'Unconference' WikiCamp 2007 at Chennai



India's first 'Unconference' WikiCamp 2007 was held on 25th Feb 07 at Tidel Park, Chennai. Around 350 enthusiasts across India and outside participated. Jimmy Wales, Founder of Wikipedia was the star attraction. Jimmy, an International celebrity, who has changed the way people use internet was simple and unassuming and mingled with everybody without any 'fuss' (It was surprising contrast to those who used to see our 'ego-centric' Corporate CEOs and Senior officials).

Since it was 'Unconference', the topics

and speakers were planned on the same day morning. Whomsoever wanted to speak was asked to write on a 'paper wiki' and stick on the board. Though normally everybody would expect 'chaos and confusion', nothing happened. Kudos to 'Knowledge Foundation' who organised this event.

The Unconference was announced and participants registered through Wiki <http://www.wikicamp.in>. The volunteers made a booklet just on the previous day for distribution to the participants through this collaborative tool. An 'Unbook' on 'Unconference' was also initiated by Jimmy to create a book (Unbook) through Wiki, with multiple authors.

For more details contact
Kiruba@kiruba.com

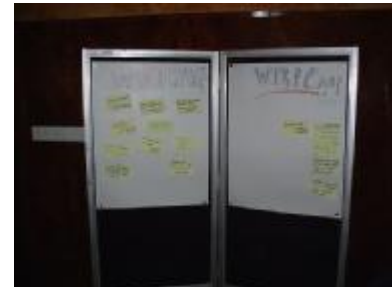
WikiCamp 2007 – Some interesting snap shots



Section of audience



Big fight – Blog vs. Wiki



Paper wikis on the board



Proposed 'Unbook' on 'Unconference'



Jimmy with young group – lying on the floor



WikiCamp booklet made within half a day using 'Wiki'

PR eTTY - Relax – Be careful when you bill next time.....!

A Software Engineer died suddenly, at the age of 45.

He reached the gates of Heaven, and the angel standing there said, "We've been waiting a long time for you."

"What do you mean?" he replied. "I'm only 45, in the prime of my life. Why did I have to die now?"

"45? You're not 45, you're 82," replied the angel.

"Wait a minute. If you think I'm 82, then you have the wrong guy. I'm only 45. I can show you my birth certificate."

"Hold on. Let me go and check," said the angel, and disappeared inside.

After a few minutes the angel returned. "Sorry, but our records say you are 82. Looking at the number of hours you billed to your client, you should be 82....."

Source : unknown



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