



WHAT IS WIKISPACES?

Wikispaces is a free tool that will allow for us to develop and share an online resource for developing help systems. Writing and editing the wiki will help you practice learning information and then communicating what you learn to others (what an Online Help Developer/Technical Writer does). It will also help you develop one form of online help.

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH WIKISPACES?

Each week we will have one or more wiki topics to develop. You will use the course materials, the course text, and outside sources to gain knowledge, synthesize the information from the multiple sources, and then communicate your new knowledge to others.

Our Wikispace is private at the moment; nobody outside of our class can view it. We will make it public at the end of the course (when it's done and in good shape) to share the information with others--and demonstrate your skills to potential employers. (Note: I can remove your name before we make it public if you'd prefer.)

WAIT! DON'T PANIC!

Feeling overwhelmed? Don't worry. Because I want to encourage you to explore this method of online help development and to gain technical writing skills, I am giving you points for "attempts." I won't evaluate how you do it. I want you to just do it. By the end of the course, you'll be a pro.

HOW WILL THIS WORK?

I've listed the topics to begin work on for each week. I also provide key points that should be explained in each topic. Note that you do not have to complete each topic--just begin each topic. You will add to and improve the topics as you learn more throughout the course.

As an Original Author, you will research the topic and write comprehensive and helpful information in the Wiki, which will include links to your sources so that readers can explore deeper into the topic. You may also determine if the topic needs subtopics and links to other relevant pages.

As a Contributor, you will enhance the topic by adding more information, links, multimedia-- whatever the topic needs.

As an Editor, you will enhance the topic by making grammar edits. (We need to make sure that our Wikispace is completely free of grammar errors by the end of the course.)

You will determine how you contribute to the wiki topics with the following guidelines in mind:

By the middle of the course, you will need to have been the Original Author of at least 1 of the topics. You will need to have been a Contributor to at least 2 of the pages. And you will need to have been an Editor for at least 3 of the pages.

During the second part of the course, you will need to have been the Original Author of 2 pages, a Contributor to 4 of the pages, and an Editor of 6 of the pages.

You will add your name to the Original Author, Contributor, or Editor section at the bottom of the wiki topic.

Because the nature of a Wiki is for anyone to enhance the content, note that your original work may be substantially enhanced, edited, or even removed. But remember that the Wiki Points are awarded based on your attempts. You will learn about the effectiveness and quality of your work by how much someone needed to rework your content.

Students who substantially contribute to the Wiki will each receive 10 Wiki Bonus Points at the end of the course.

HOW TO BEGIN

I've setup user accounts for all of you. Go to the WikiSpaces User Accounts document to find your username and password. (You'll be able to change your password once you login to the site if you'd like.)

Our wiki address is <http://developingonlinehelpsystems.wikispaces.com>

I've setup the initial topics. The rest is up to all of you!