

PROWE

Personal Repositories Online Wiki Environment

'How To/Questions to Ask' Guides



Guide Two:

The Institutional Perspective

Overview

The institution setting up or hosting a wiki or blogs to support part time tutor continuing professional development (CPD) will possibly be the individual user's only employer but, most likely, will be one only of several employers to whom they will have a commitment. The management systems of any employing institution are unlikely to have been set up with this arrangement in mind. For every account set up on a wiki or blog the institution will, one way or another, need to accord a value in order to determine priorities for the use of institutional resources – the commitment is longer term than may immediately appear.



Critical issues

Specific critical issues are the **technical specifications for user hardware**, for **software**, for **initial access** to the system, and for **access in the medium to long term**, by users and other stakeholders, as user and institutional requirements evolve. There are also issues around the **institutional context and culture**. For example, **intellectual property** and **system contents**; and some points related to **rights, responsibilities, contracts and obligations**. The following questions seek to frame the issues which need to be addressed.

Technical specifications:

Hardware

- Do users need a particular technical specification to gain access to the system?
- Is it likely they will have this specification of hardware; is it realistic to expect them to equip themselves at this level?
- What are the interoperability issues with regard to systems in use, or likely to be in use, in other institutions which also employ the users?
- What server space is required to sustain the system(s)? Over what period?
- What are the implications for longer term storage of materials?

- Does the institution have the capacity and/or willingness to continue to store materials for ex-staff and those who, whilst likely to work for the institution again, are presently not employed or active?

Software

- Is software already available within the institutions' licensing and/or ownership agreements?
- Will the system be within a virtual learning environment (VLE); are there tools built into the VLE that might be used?
- To what extent must any system be fire walled and/or access controlled
- Are users likely to have the necessary software already, or will they have to purchase it? Would asking/expecting them to do so be reasonable?
- Will the system be web-based?

Initial access

- What will be the requirements for system registration?
- Will the system be moderated or have a manager? Who will assume this role?
- Will registration be dependent on contractual or present employment status e.g. current staff status, etc.?
- Will you allow non-tutors in? E.g. to participate in discussions or to access documents?



Medium to long term access

- Do you want retired/resigned staff to retain access? Under what conditions?
- What kind of access do you want them to have?
- Will you guarantee continued access? For how long and on what terms?
- What incentive is there for staff to use the system relative to guarantees on (continued) access?

Context and culture:

Rights and responsibilities

- What agenda is driving development of the system?
- Whose agenda is this?
- Who has ownership of development of the system within the institution? How is this likely to impact on development? On interactions with potential users? On staff confidence in the resultant system?
- How will users come to understand institutional perceptions of individual and/or group rights and responsibilities vis-à-vis content, behaviour etc.?
- How will you ensure that ownership of the system is retained by tutors and avoid it becoming an instrument or notice board for any other part of the institution? (e.g. human resources)

Intellectual property and content

- Are systems clear to users?
- Who will own content? Reused content? Shared content?
- Under what licensing system can content be used/reused by users?
- Will non-staff contribute (e.g. students) and what will be their ownership/legal participation?
- How will you propagate rules and requirements? Assure legal obligations are met? Control and monitor content for potential breaches?

Contracts and obligations

- Will participation in CPD activity via an online community tool be governed by a tutor's employment contract? What will the conditions specify?
- Will participation be mandatory? Voluntary? Subject to other control? Will participation be specifically or implicitly remunerated?

- What implications does remuneration, or lack of it, have for ownership issues?
- How will institution specific material or information be dealt with?
- What will be tutor rights and obligations if they cease to be employed by your institution?
- (How) will tutors retain access to, and control over materials or other content on retirement or resignation? What are the implications for storage?

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