# Wiki Basics Home

ⓘ This space provides a basic introduction to the Geneseo Confluence wiki. For a complete overview, see the Getting Started with Confluence ebook & explore the Confluence Documentation Center.

## What's a wiki?

A *wiki* is a website that any user can edit. Some wikis, such as Wikipedia, the "free encyclopedia that anyone can edit," really do permit just anyone to make changes. Others, like the Geneseo wiki, restrict editing privileges to selected users.

Wikipedia is probably the best-known wiki. It's a large-scale cooperative project with many contributors. But wikis don't have to be large. The purpose of a wiki is simply to give multiple people - they can be as few in number as two - access to the content of a web page or pages, so that they can add to, subtract from, or otherwise alter the content of these pages. Once saved, changes to a wiki page are immediately visible to anyone who visits the page. Because a wiki stores a complete history of every page, it is always possible to revert a wiki page to any of its earlier states. Nothing is ever lost.

Thus, a wiki at its most basic is simply a tool for managing cooperative projects. Like any website, it's also a powerful means of sharing information.

## Is it hard to use?

Not at all.

Normally, a major obstacle to putting content on the web is that web pages are written in a *markup language*: a special code, such as HTML, that tells a user's browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari, etc.) how the content of the page should be displayed. Software applications that relieve the user of the need to write in markup - such as Dreamweaver - are sometimes as hard to master as markup itself.

A major advantage of wikis is that they typically employ a highly simplified markup language that anyone can master quickly. In Geneseo's Confluence wiki, every time you click the "edit" button to modify a page, you'll see a list of the major markup notations on the right side of the page. These notations will enable you to do things like format text in *italic* or **bold** font or convert a string of text into a hyperlink.

## What's Confluence?

The Geneseo wiki is powered by a software application called Confluence. This software has many specialized features that make it particularly well suited to an organization like ours. One of these is the power to divide up the wiki into an unlimited number of subwikis, each with its own name and its own set of permissions (allowing some users in and keeping others out). In Confluence, each of these subwikis is called a *space*.

Right now, you're in the space named *Wiki Basics.* Each space has its own homepage. (You're on the Wiki Basics homepage now.) In addition, every page in every space can have *children*: one or more pages a level down in the hierarchy from the *parent* page. Even the children can have children. The result is a hierarchical structure of pages that keeps information tightly organized.

Confluence has many other features as well. For example, you can add *labels* to pages in order to make the content in them easier to find using the *search* function.

To learn a little more about using the Geneseo Confluence wiki, look at the children of this page. They're listed just below. (The list will grow as we add more information to the Wiki Basics space.)

To learn a lot more about using Confluence, visit the Confluence User's Guide, which you can either view on the web or download as a pdf.

## How do I get access to the wiki?

Most areas of the wiki are viewable by anyone with a current Geneseo username and password. To inquire about creating a space for your department, project, or class please contact us.