Forums

To: Professor Windholz
From: Brandon Morgan, Courtney Caro, Seth Flagle
Subject: Wiki Progress Report – Course Texts and Resources
Date: 3/4/18

The purpose of this memo is to inform the audience of the current state of the Forums section of the Technical Writing class course wiki as of the date of this memo.

Summary

This document details the efforts of Brandon Morgan, Courtney Caro, and Seth Flagle to edit and update the Forum section of the class wiki. This group has worked both together and individually to make their designated section of the course wiki follow the eight measures of excellence as detailed on page eight of our course text. While incomplete, our group is confident that the next group rotation will have a starting point when it comes to be their turn to edit this section.

While working on this section of the wiki, we continued to develop new skills and learned to use tools that will help us in future work with wikidot sites and other coding/internet-based tasks. Our new skills include:

- Making a reddit page
- Linking to a subreddit
- Embedding gifs
- Using the Image Wizard
- Inserting tables
- Increasing the size of both regular and hyperlink text

Introduction

The Forum serves as the communication hub of the wikidot site. It allows classmates and teachers to post comments and concerns, as well as share helpful coding tips, and help with understanding assignments. The current Forum page features a picture of people talking, which is left over from the previous Forums group. We kept their welcome message as well, making only a few minor cosmetic adjustments. Below this are three hyperlinks with descriptions of the pages they lead to. The hyperlink text is limited to one word in maroon text to match the color scheme of the rest of the page, and we increased the font size to draw attention to them. The first is a link to the discussion page, which has an intuitive access and a few discussion questions and coding tips. The second link goes to our subreddit, which humorously announces an AMA on Wednesday as a placeholder. The final link leads to the class blog, which we hope to utilize now that we know of its existence. At the bottom of the page there is a gif of Kermit the Frog furiously banging on a typewriter. We felt that the Tech Writing class could relate to the fervor expressed by Kermit, especially as we approach the end of the semester.

Results of Work

Unfortunately, we remain unable to edit the actual discussion page, other than adding and resolving discussion posts. The link to the Forum page is not on the leftmost navigation table, but rather only on the top dark grey navigation banner. The link leads to the previously discussed Forum page, and from there users must click the "here" hyperlink in maroon to reach the Discussion Board. Furthermore, the Discussion Board site cannot be edited like the other pages can. Attempting to edit the page prompts the following error message:

"Permission error
Please note: Sorry, you can not edit this page. Only site administrators and perhaps selected moderators are allowed to do it."

As we learned that we were unable to cut out the middleman as it were, our group decided that we should focus on making the Forum page a visually appealing and functional way to lead to other destinations.

The creation of a subreddit came from the realization that not many people were using the discussion page. The wikidot site came with a subreddit, but we were not able to admin the site as students, so our group created a new one with more personality. We collaborated with members of other groups to set up the subreddit, called r/TechWritingSU and we hope to update there and on the wikidot Discussion Page more frequently.

Because reddit is a popular site for discussion board questions, already featuring many Technical and Professional Writing subreddits, we wanted to give our classmates the option of posting there as opposed to the wikidot Discussion Board. Our plan is to monitor site activity in both locations to see if one is used more than the other, and how they differ in use. We will then collaborate with the next Forum group and see which method of community posting is more effective and change it as necessary. Our group also realized that social media management for businesses is a desired skillset and thought that honing our skills on a reddit page would be beneficial to potential future careers.

We worked on the Discussion Board page and added to previously posted conversations. We created two discussion threads, one on the Researched Recommendation Reports and another on wiki coding tips. We expect site traffic on the researched Recommendation Reports thread as our classmates collaborate and peer review the work they have. The Wiki Tips and Tricks thread is expected to fill with questions and answers among the class.

Most of the other work that our group did involved the removal of redundant words and links and experimentation with cosmetic changes. We briefly centered the text and images and changed the color scheme, but we ultimately returned to the original settings as we thought that the page looked better that way. We also went through a few gifs and images before deciding on the ones we have.

We were briefly able to customize top banner so that clicking the reddit icon would take users to the subreddit our group made. So far, we have found that the only way to do this is by right clicking the page, going into "inspect element" and changing the master code of the site. However, these changes only affected the computer of the person who edited the elements.

Conclusion/What remains to be done:

- Adding "Forums" to the Navigation sidebar on the left of the screen
- Changing the dark grey navigation banner so that clicking "Forum" leads to the Discussion Board page, replacing the unnecessary middle step
- Maintenance of the reddit page
- Maintenance of the Discussion Board page
- Maintenance or deletion of the Blog

Overall, our group made great strides in helping to connect our classmates and allowing the different groups to work in unison. Through our work on the Forum page, we also feel more confident in our skills and look forward to continuing to develop the next section of the wiki.

Donald Dayton, Lindsay Embly, Paige Keefer, Joshua Rosenberger
Dr. Windholz
ENG 238 Technical and Professional Writing
April 4, 2018

Wiki Progress Report #3

Purpose
The purpose of this report is to describe and assess our progress on editing the Course Text and Resource sections of the class wiki.

Summary
Our group worked on the Course Text and Resource section of the Class Wiki. In editing this section, our goal was to update or fix the information that was uploaded by previous groups that worked on this specific section.

Introduction
Our intention for this section of the wiki was to make the page more accessible and easy to navigate. As of now, the page has seven categories of resources pertaining to the course. The previous version of the page did not have an effective means of organizing the categories and making them easier to differentiate from each other. Although there were other aspects of the page that needed revision, such as updating links and adding more recent resources, our main focus for the resources page was the graphic design and accessibility. To improve the appearance and accessibility of the page, we focused on adding more graphical elements and clarifying the contents of the categories. Additionally, we were required to learn more about adding graphical elements to the wiki and correcting related errors.

Results of Work
The result of our progress this week is we learned how to download a file onto the wikidot. This allowed us to work on making this page more streamline with the information provided. This will also allow us for the last page to make it look more professional with this new found information. In order to maintain a professional look, we fixed one of the bold fonts to identically match the rest of the page. With each main aspect of content throughout the Course Text & Resources, we also added a brief description detailing what each main aspect.
A big change we did to this page was we added graphics and pictures to the page, making it more easily readable. Initially we only added one large picture to the page, but we also included 7 mini-graphics to help explain each category section. We believe that this added an aspect of

comprehensiveness to each of the sections. The graphics were small icons created using shapes on Microsoft Word to indicate their content, such as an open book for class presentations and a bar graph for graphic resources. The symbols were made using contrasting colors to adjust the appearance of our newly included picture onto the page, we learned how to create spaces using transparent text. This created a concise page that corrected spacing issues and overlapped the text on top our new graphic. On a verge to create a more accurate page, we updated the course syllabus which included the change from March 1st, that comprised of the netiquette assignment of 50 points. We also added several powerpoint presentations from the beginning of march that included the Research Recommendation Report.

Conclusion and Recommendation

As the groups update each section, it is getting increasingly harder to find pieces of the Wiki to edit and improve. With that being said, we are constantly looking for and learning new techniques and skills to enhance the wiki. We were able to visually enhance the Course Text and Resource tab by adding pictures, graphics, and presentations. Some technical adjustments we made were fixing the spacing issues, correcting the overlap of graphics, and learning how to create spaces using transparent text. These technical adjustments aided in the visual enhancement of the page. We fixed some minor spelling errors and also one of the bold fonts. Lastly, we added an updated syllabus for clarity.

The next group editing the Course Text and Research page could focus on reviewing the links to the resource to make sure that they are still relevant to the page. Another suggestion for the next group to consider is to consider updating the syllabus. As always, we also recommend the next group to check for any grammatical and spelling errors that we may have missed in our final review of the page.

To: Jordan Windholz, Professor
From: Adolfo Alvarez, Derek Letts, Logan Myer, Lauren Young
Subject: Wiki Progress Report 3

Purpose
The purpose of this progress report is to explain the changes and additions our group made to the assignments and grading sections of our Technical/Professional Writing Wiki page. Our amendments include enhanced descriptions of the assignments, updates to assignment due dates, and referrals to D2L.

Summary
We took into account our knowledge gained from the home and forum pages to make the assignments and grading sections something more useful to our peers. Prior to our changes and additions, we noticed that although the assignments and grades are outlined properly and in detail, there is little engagement with those who visit the page. Our first course of action was to make sure the page wouldn't be a dead end to visitors. We decided to add further details to the assignment description including concrete details that answered "when" and "where." Now, students can search for the assignments on the page and be referred to the assignment sheet, or any additional information provided for the class on D2L. The new detail is further improved with practical paths for students to follow if they're looking for information on upcoming assignments or the grading system. We completed updates to assignment due dates and the grading table and attempted to add a grading calculator in the grading section.

Introduction
Our group was assigned to work on the assignment and grading sections of the Wiki page. Our meetings were scheduled by group messaging. For this report, we collaborated over Google Docs with each member amending the document with their own inclusions. Our greatest goal with making changes to the page was for ease of navigation and application for visitors.

Results
Our work on the Wiki page began with examining the assignments and grading sections created by the previous group. Our group followed their lead on the assignments page and crossed off the due dates that have passed since the last group edited. We also removed the top subheading that said "Basic Guidelines," and replaced it with "Assignments & Attendance" to make the page easier to navigate. A large change that we made involved the policies written in the syllabus. Originally, the second bullet stated "late assignments are not accepted and no exceptions will be made." We added "if you know you are unable to finish an assignment in time, please email me to discuss prior to the deadline." The bullet underneath about attendance was also edited to show that it's not the end of the world if a student must miss class, but they should avoid absences if possible. This was done to create a more realistic and comforting look to the course when students' are reading the policies. Finally, our oral presentations are scheduled for finals week. However, the date and time allocated for our presentations was not known until recently. We found that our final was scheduled for May 7th and decided to add this to the oral presentation assignment description replacing the text "TBA" that was previously there.

After editing the assignment section, we turned our focus to the grading section. At first, we made minor changes that we felt added some continuity to the page. In the grading table created

by the previous groups, we noticed that "Points" was both spelled out and abbreviated throughout the table. We changed the abbreviations to the actual word "Points" as we felt this was more professional. To allow students to see the points breakdown for each of the larger assignments, the previous groups placed the total points in the table followed by points for the parts that comprise the larger assignments. We felt that some students may misinterpret the total points some we italicised the points for the smaller assignments that comprise the larger assignments.

We wanted to add a new tool to the grading page that would be helpful for students. The tool is the grading calculator. With this tool, students can put the scores they received for each assignments and see where they stand in class. We used excel to create a calculator. The format of the calculator is based off of the assignment list that is posted on the Assignments Page, we wanted to keep the consistency in Wiki. After getting the formatting, we added the formula functions that will calculate the results when a student plugs in their score. There were some functions that were easy to put in the calculator, for an example, putting a formula in a cell that will add up certain numbers in certain cells to give an accurate result. We added a division formula to give a percentage depending on what the student scored. We did have some trouble when constructing the grading calculator. The first struggle we encountered was making the calculator put the letter grade depending on the percentage the student received. We do know that this type of function is a "WhatIf" function in Excel, but the formula is too complicated for us to pull through. The other issue we encountered was how to put it in the Assignments Page. We decided to add the calculator to the page using files. On the bottom of the "Grading Page", the grading calculator is underneath with the instructions to click "files" at the bottom of the page. Once the calculator is clicked, the file pops up, but the calculator won't show up. It shows some sort of encrypted file that can't be open. We hope that the next group can look into both the issues and make the grading calculator a successful tool to use in Wiki.

Conclusion
Our knowledge of editing the Wiki continues to grow as we gain greater confidence with managing our web pages. With this round of work on the Wiki, we felt that editing and updating what was already there was the best approach. Our group attempted to add a handy grading calculator, but could not get it loaded into the Wiki properly. This presents an opportunity for the next group to try and finish what we started. Overall, we feel that we were able to make effective changes to the assignments and grading sections and hopefully future users will find these changes helpful.

Technical and Professional Writing

To: Dr. Windholz
From: L. Ashberry, M. Schiereck, S. Long, S. Bream (Group 3)
Subject: Wiki Progress Report 3
4/2/2018

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to discuss our progress on the home page including changes made, some difficulties we faced, and what we would like to see improved.

Summary

In this report you will find the introduction, results and a conclusion. The introduction will describe the current state of the home page. The results section describes what each individual did in the group to and why they did it. Then, the conclusion will describe our success and suggestions for the next group.

Introduction

The home page on our course wiki has been redesigned completely by our group. We made the page look more like a welcome page to the site. Instead of the home page having pictures that were placed randomly on the page and a lot of text, we decided to show off what technical writing is about – concise but clear information and infographics.

The page consist of a title image with the name of the site. Right below the image is a small description of what technical writing is. Then it is followed by two infographics side by side that show the writing process and eight measures of technical writing. After that, you will find Dr. Windholz's contact information.

Results

The home page, before we started working on it, had a lot of random text and pictures that were not needed. Our group mutually decided that a home page should be more of a welcome page with minimal text and more graphics, so we decided to redo the entire page. We agreed that the humor used on the homepage was not appropriate to have on the homepage, and the graphics were a little off-putting, irrelevant and unorganized. We felt that the description paragraphs on the homepage were sort of patronizing. A college student should be able to figure out how to navigate the wiki, and they are presumably in the technical writing class so they don't need a course description.

Luke worked on maintenance of the sidebar and home page, Shannon designed the header, Meghan designed the infographics and Samantha eliminated unnecessary coding. In addition,

Luke figured out how to upload pictures directly to the wiki and Meghan figured out how to change font style.

We decided that Meghan's infographic about the description of technical writing would be helpful to include on the home page. We decided that we could add another infographic about the eight measures of technical writing. Our group work looked to other website's home pages for inspiration.

Luke was in charge of looking into changing the theme of the home page and website. If editors try to change the theme, the heading and delete pages they are blocked. After emailing Dr. Windholz, it was concluded that giving editors the ability to do these tasks was not permitted. If the access was allowed, Luke would have updated the home page and theme to something more modern and visually appealing. We wanted to change the color scheme and gradient on the heading make that website seem dated. After researching this topic, Luke had to find other tasks to change and improve the homepage. Luke decided it would be important to have the contact information for Dr. Windholz accessible on the home page because it is such a process to get to that information on D2L or the Shippensburg website. He cleaned up the side menu bar to hold only relevant items, such as the 5 main pages, the watchers, the toolbox and the page finder. He did this to make enhance the organization and sleekness of the website.

Shannon began her work on the wiki page by doing some research about what most home pages on websites look like. She found that often homepages had very minimal text and a lot of photos or graphics. So, she took on the task of creating a photo that would go along with the home page that would welcome people onto the website.

Originally, the home page we created had a bold headline that said "Welcome to Technical and Professional Writing," but to make it stand out more, Shannon used a photograph from Pixabay and overlaid the text onto the image. To do this, she looked up photos of people writing on Pixabay. Once she found the image she wanted to use, she cropped it to make it fit better on the page. At first she just added the image to the page, but decided to overlay the "Welcome to Technical and Professional Writing" text overtop of the image after her group mates gave her the idea. She used Pixlr to create the text and the gray box that went underneath the text. She then uploaded it to the page. In addition to creating and adding the photo, Shannon added her definition of technical writing to break up the photo from the infographics.

Samantha started working on different coding and eliminated what wasn't working when it involved uploading pictures to the wiki. She tried a few different methods to see how to properly upload a picture. She realized that it was possible to download a file and it was able to be attached using the image wizard but when it came to applying it to the home page there were too many coding errors in order to complete the upload.

Meghan added the technical writing process infographic she created for the description assignment to the home page, and then made the eight measures of technical writing infographic to match. She made both infographics in canva. She made the second infographic have the inverse color scheme of the first infographic.

After making the infographics, Meghan decided to look into changing font styles. It was a very frustrating process, and took a long time to figure out. She had to look at several websites to figure out what to do. To test font coding, she created a separate page as not to mess up any of the formatting on the home page. She first used CSS code to change the font, but for whatever reason, it didn't work. Rather than trying to figure it out, she decided to use a code block and use HTML coding to change the font. Using the HTML code block works, but it appears that the wiki only recognizes three different types of new fonts: Serif, Sans-Serif and Cursive. Meghan then added a PDF under Wiki Resources on the Course Text & Resources page explaining how to change fonts. She also added a link to the google font library.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we did not complete all of the items that we set out to do. This is because some of the items we wanted to complete could not be done with our level of access on Wiki. It is believed that the group has improved the home page on the Wiki site, despite this.

We felt that working on the home page was challenging due to the formatting of the wiki. The theme of the wiki limits what we can do with our home page. Our wiki doesn't really have the option to look like a sleek and modern site because of the limits of the theme. However, changing the theme risks ruining the formatting of the other pages. No one was really sure what to do with the home page.

Our group couldn't really take into account what the previous group wanted to do with the home page because there was an issue with access to the progress reports. The next group could try to fill in the white space and make the two handouts larger so they can be read. The next group should be able to access the infographics from the file storage on the wiki page. In the future, if the class has done something important (like going to a conference) maybe the home page could be updated with announcements. If the class has social media, that could also be featured on the home page.