Reviewing Main Page and Getting Started Page

Introduction

This document contains three sections. The problems common to any new coming user is stated in the first part with suggestions from my point of view. The same structure follows in the second and third sections where problems/frustrations for the two following specific users :

[1] Random helpful volunteer who just shows up out of nowhere wondering 'what is this and what is this good for'?

[2] Specific user on a mission who shows up with a particular project in mind.

Common Problems

Main Page : https://wikitech.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

1. Problem: The main page looks cluttered at a first glance

Pros: The main page contains almost all the information at one glance where user do not want to scroll.

Suggested Solution: Main page looks cluttered because the production section is cluttered. As a solution we can replace the box in the production section as follows:

The existing
one :

Guides	Get involved · RT Triage Duty · How-Tos · Wiki farm · Profiling (web interface ⮵) · Using the local certificate authority · Puppet coding · Puppet and iptables
Servers	Server Lifecycle · Server Spares · Apaches · Squids · Media storage · NFS · DNS · PowerDNS · Memcached · MySQL · LDAP · Multcast HTCP purging · Virtualization · HTTPS · PartMan
Backups	Current status · Disaster Recovery · XML database dumps · Offsite
OSs	Ubuntu ⮵ (Ubuntu) · Automated installation · Distribution upgrades · Puppet · APT repository
Datacenter	Datacenter operations · Common Datacenter Specifications · Opengear Serial Consoles · Platform-specific documentation
War	Security
Maps	Batch jobs · Locations of backups, mirrors, etc. · Scripts
Email	Mail · IMAP · Mailing lists · OTRS
Network	Design · BGP · IPs · Utils · 802.1Q · RANCID · NOC Phones ⮵ · LVS · Link aggregation · Network cheat sheet · Proxy access to cluster
Other	Status monitors · Request Tracker (RT) · Renaming users · Admin Logs
Wiki	Browse root category · Category:Wiki · Category:Templates

The Structure I suggest will look as follows:

Guides :   Get involved

               RT Triage Duty

               How-Tos

               Wiki farm

               Profiling

2. Problem : No direct link to getting started page from the main page

Pros: Main page link to the help page where you can find getting started with other helpful pages like terminology, shared storage

Suggested Solution: Like in the production section we should have a getting started link at the Labs section and Tool labs section also. This can be discussed in the two sections Labs section and Tool Labs section.

In the Labs section the link directs you to help page where you can find helpful links. According to my opinion it is better if the Labs section has a direct link to getting started page as in the Production section.

In the Tool Labs the help page directs you to the introduction + getting started page. I think this page should be divided to two pages: Introduction and Getting Started Page , or else we could have a separate getting started link in the Tool Labs section on the main page which directly link to the start of getting started in the Tool Labs introduction page.

In another approach we can use the space left at the right lower corner to have a new getting started section. This section should allow any new comer to identify what he has to do in order to volunteer to a project or host a new project. It can have links to IRC and mailing lists, Help pages and FAQ.

3. Problem : No link to a FAQ page or no FAQ page at all

Suggested Solution: If someone new who has only heard about Wikimedia and Wikimedia labs project comes he/she may have lots of questions in mind like

1. What is Wikimedia?

2. What is Wikitech?

3. What is Wikimedia Labs?

4. What is the difference between Wikimedia Labs and Tool Labs?

5. How can I volunteer?

6. How can I create and develop the project I have in mind?

These questions can be answered if you go through the documentation of course. But having an FAQ page can help to people who just don't like to go and read lengthy documentation. Newcomers will be able to have answers for their all the questions in the same place if we have an FAQ page.

4. **Problem: Having no signup but only login icon at the top right corner will let the newcomers feel unwelcomed.**

Pros: Only one link is needed for Signup and Login. If you are new user login page will lead you to a signup page.

Suggested Solution : Having a Signup link along with the Login link at the top left corner will let the newcomers believe that the community is open and welcoming new contributors. Moreover I would suggest the the page which we are directed after the email confirmation would include links to "Getting Started", "Help" and "FAQ" pages with a short description.

5. **Problem: Getting started is not listed in the left sub menu. It only have a link to the help page where you can find the getting started page.**

Suggested Solution: At least the basic items in the help page should be listed as sub menu items under the help item on the left sub menu. But I would suggest that if we can have a menu item called documentation and have all the manuals, FAQ page, Getting Started page, How-To pages and Help pages listed and categorized in there, it would be nice, because by that a user in any page can directly go to these pages.

Getting Started Page : https://wikitech.wikimedia.org/wiki/Help:Getting_Started

1.Problem : No direct link to project list where newcomers can easily find

Suggested Solution: Even you are having a project in mind or you want to volunteer to an existing project first thing you will look in the getting started page is the project list. It is better if you have the project list in both Labs and Tool Labs in the left sub menu where people can find it easily not only from getting started page but also from any other page. So add a sub menu an item called Projects and under that two sub items : Labs and Tool Labs. when we select one of them it should direct us to a tabbed page which includes all projects, active projects and abandoned projects with their description. The default selected tab should be active projects. Moreover if we can add a specific set of tags in the description of the projects and have a page to filter projects according to their tags it will be useful for all.

Use Case 1: Random helpful volunteer who just shows up out of nowhere wondering 'what is this and what is this good for'?

Problem 1: "Join Project" section in the Getting Started page doesn't have a link to the list of projects and their description (left submenu doesn't have a *"Labs : List Projects"* item as stated in the Getting Started page).

Pros: There is a link to "Contact the current project members" which will direct you to a page having list of projects , their descriptions and members.

Suggested Solution : A newcomer may want to look at the projects before he think of contacting the current group members so he may need to look at the project list first without clicking that link. So it would be nice to have a link to list of projects or having a sub menu item as I suggested on the previous point.

Optional Suggestion : I think it would be nice for newcomers to contact one specific person or two in the project group. So rather than giving a list of names and telling them to contact one , it would be better if they give one or two names as the contacts to new comers.

Use Case 2:   Specific user on a mission who shows up with a particular project in mind (e.g. an edit-bot that they want to write.)

Problem 1: Difficulty in finding multiple projects in same context.

Suggested Solution : If you have one project in mind when you come to the Wikimedia Labs you will tend to create a new project rather than look at the existing project list. To avoid that in the "Create Project" section in the Getting Started page it is good to mention that before you create a project go through the existing project list to see if it has a matching idea or concept to project that you have in mind. For this the tag mechanism and having search page filtered by tags would be good.