This is an archival forum from the FamilySearch Wiki Contributors' Corner forum.

04.03.2011, 20:09

lembley

User Pages

User pages are an important link in the FamilySearch wiki communication loop. Some FamilySearch Wiki user pages provide e-mail, forums or Skype contact information, along with details about the individual's education, experience, research interests and/or roll in the FS wiki. However, some contributors are not setting up user pages, or are using them in ways that are inconsistent with the purposes of the FS wiki.

I think we've reached a point of "critical mass" where it is time to formulate a policy that helps users understand (1) the purpose of FS wiki user pages, (2) what they should be able to find on *any* contributor's user page (including their own), (3) the value of using talk pages to facilitate dialogue with an ever-widening circle of contributors, and (4) description of content that is appropriate (and examples of what would not be appropriate) on a user page.

If we decide that it's time for a policy, then I suggest that we use the Contributor's Meeting to begin the process to craft one.

Your thoughts?

_____

Lise
Williamsburg, VA

Last edited by lembley; 04.03.2011 at 20:12.

04.03.2011, 23:53

jbparker

User Pages

I can understand the reluctance of some people in sharing information about themselves. However, I believe it is very important that we, as a community, have the trust to share at least a brief statement of our interest, knowledge and background in genealogy. We do not need to share a long biography, but it is certainly helpful to know who is adding information to a page, why they have an interest in a subject or locality, and a little about their experience.

The purpose of a user page on a wiki is NOT to become a personal diary or journal, nor a blog. That has no place in a wiki. A wiki should be a place where a user could go to gain knowledge, not read a lengthy biography or list of personal steps taken to add information to the Wiki, unless instructing another individual about how to add a type of chart or template or image to the wiki.

Just a few thoughts...

05.03.2011, 00:01

dsammy

Both of you (Lise and Jimmy) raised several valid points. There were some users I needed to contact to help but can't for the lack of the page itself being the worst.

05.03.2011, 07:30

cottrells



Coming from the understanding that policies **must** be followed and that guidelines **should** be followed, I favour adding more detail to theUser page guidelines that has been started.

For me a user page can be useful to find out a little about the character/ motivations of other users and for them to learn a little about me. This is important as the Research Wiki, being a collaborative project we need to work together to make it the best it can be.

I'd like the *user page guidelines* to outline suggestions, options, and rules that apply to user pages.

05.03.2011, 09:42

evancol

I am guilty of not pushing my group to do their user pages. I tell them there is a user page, not to be confused when it tells them "this page has not been created yet," and then I just let them go.

As an adopter, in addition to a little bit about myself and my interests, I use the page to welcome contributors and let them know that their contributions are definitely appreciated.

As long as I've been on the Wiki, I didn't know that a message notification popped up on the top of the page if you had a post to your Talk Page. I just happened to notice it the other day.

_____

Jane

05.03.2011, 16:39

jamestanner

Contribution to user pages

I think that User Pages are extremely valuable in developing a sense of community on the Wiki. This is not a social networking site, but it is a group of individuals with a common interest. I have a lot easier time talking to someone on a Talk page if I have some idea where they are coming from and who they are. Loss of privacy fears are very overblown. If you want to know something about me, do a Google search on my name in quotes plus

"mesa." Right now, this search returns 49,300 items almost all of which are about me. So how do you define privacy?

If you are going to contribute regularly to the Wiki, have the courtesy and bravery to do so as an individual and not as an anonymous user name.

_____

James Tanner
http://genealogysstar.blogspot.com]

07.03.2011, 13:43

JensenFA

Great discussion about the user page

I like the ideas expressed so far about the user page. The guidelines for the user page, along with the help page provide an excellent foundation for understanding what the user page is and why it's important. But most wiki users are completely unaware of the pages' existence. How can we fix this?

I would like to propose that the discussion include a brainstorm of ideas for informing users of the existence of the user page; encouraging the use of the user page and it's corresponding talk page.

When we recognize that something is missing from the help page, we should go ahead and add it, or at least add it to that pages' discussion page. Someone mentioned they didn't know about the little message line that appears on the wiki when we have new content on our personal talk pages. Is this feature explained on the guideline page or the help page? If not, it should be added. (I haven't checked it yet myself to see if it's there)

I have a couple basic questions about the guideline page the help page and the guideline page about the talk page. Should these two pages about the user page be combined? If not, why not? Does the guideline page about the talk page have a corresponding "help page"? If not, why not? Should there be one?

I think that having multiple pages related to the same topic like user pages and discussion pages is hard for everyone. It's hard to find all the related pages and you never know if you have actually found all the pages that relate to the topic you are looking for. I think this is a basic navigational issue that should be included in the discussion.

07.03.2011, 14:05

lembley

It would be really helpful if the pages Fran mentioned (Talk Page Guidelines, Help:User Page and User Page) were combined, and renamed using a predictable pattern (e.g., User page guidelines and Talk page guidelines, OR Help:User Page and Help:Talk page, etc.). Also, some might not recognize that a "talk" page is actually a tab labeled "discussion." (Should all mentions of "talk" be reworded to "discussion"?) I think that kind of inconsistency creates confusion.

Also, I am really unclear what the table "FamilySearch Wiki namespaces" on the User Page is communicating. Because it is found on the User Page (guidelines), I feel like I should be able to make use of the information somehow. It really doesn't have anything to do with the guidelines (does it?).

Lise
Williamsburg, VA

07.03.2011, 22:51

AdkinsWH

An important discussion!

Thanks, Lise, for bringing this discussion up. Not only will user pages become more consistently completed, but guidelines will be greatly improved.

For new users, welcoming and training should point to user pages and the updated guidelines.

The guidelines need to emphasize the importance and purpose of the user pages almost more than the rules. Help them understand how much it means to other users and how it contributes to the credibility of the Wiki.

08.03.2011, 09:58

lembley

Community, Courtesy, and Bravery

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **jamestanner**
> *I think that User Pages are extremely valuable in developing a sense of community on the Wiki... I have a lot easier time talking to someone on a Talk page if I have some idea where they are coming from and who they are... If you are going to contribute regularly to the Wiki, have the courtesy and bravery to do so as an individual and not as an anonymous user name.*

Well said!

Lise
Williamsburg, VA

08.03.2011, 12:42

evancol

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **jamestanner**
> *If you are going to contribute regularly to the Wiki, have the courtesy and bravery to do so as an individual and not as an anonymous user name.*

I chose a username that matches my e-mail address, and one that I use on every message

board I am on. However, to someone who doesn't know me, it doesn't indicate who I am.

The only reason I created a User Page was that, as an adopter, I wanted to invite contributors to participate on my pages.

I like to think I am reasonably considerate, and if you know me, you know I have no problem taking ownership of my thoughts and words. It just would never have occurred to me that by not creating a user page I would have been thought of as either inconsiderate or attempting to hide behind a veil of anonymity. I just quite frankly don't think I'm all that interesting, I hate writing about myself, or talking about myself, so I never fill out those "about me" pages anywhere. My facebook page is even blank !

I am going to assume there are a lot of others like me, and this is why they haven't created a user page, not that they are attempting to be covert. Particularly since the importance of creating one hasn't really been promoted widely yet.

_____
Jane

09.03.2011, 16:22
VasquezJL
I agree that creating User pages are a good idea for anyone who wants to come in and work in the wiki on at least a semi-regular basis. But I think that most people who come in have no idea about what they are and why they should create one.

Where to put the message:

There are to begin with two major places we could make it a point to get this across, and actually those things are already there:
1. In the Welcome message
2. In the Getting Started section of the Edit and Contribute page

Anywhere else this info should be where it would make a big difference?

Too many Help pages:

Regarding the different help pages on these topics, the two separate "User page" links (in the Help and FamilySearch Wiki namespaces) are for different purposes. This is something that I've struggled with, but my understanding is this:
1. The Help namespace is for help in HOW TO do something in the wiki (How do I create and use a User page and what should I put in it).
2. The FamilySearch Wiki namespace is ABOUT something in the wiki (Why is a User page important to me to be aware of).

So there are uses for both articles. I honestly wish we didn't use both for some of these topics because it's a very fine line and it is confusing. The "Talk page guidelines" on the other hand is different yet again because it's specifically about the Discussion pages (which I completely agree with you, it bugs me to call them both Talk and Discussion pages.)

Perhaps we could create a major article of "Communicating with other contributors in the

Wiki" that would give an overview and link out to all of these articles, essentially tying them together. That could be put into a LOT of different pages; as I've created a few pages I've wished there was something like that.....

BTW - that table is there on each of those "FamilySearch Wiki" articles about each namespace. It identifies the # of each namespace which can be used in some situations but is not common.

09.03.2011, 16:39

VasquezJL

Just added a comment on the talk page of the user page article (got that?), a possible re-wording, what else is missing...?

https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/Fam...talk:User_page

27.04.2011, 10:24

evancol

Have we placed information about User Pages everywhere it needs to be now and updated the necessary documentation ?

Would it be worthwhile to put a blurb on the news page about creating user pages? What about something actually on the Community Center front page ?

Wikipedia has a Trading Pages program they do where you can sign up to trade pages with another member and re-do someone else's user page.

Jane

27.04.2011, 19:27

lembley

That's a cute idea - Trading Pages. The problem is that I'm not sure I'd really want someone else working on my page! (I'm thinking about those "Trading Spaces" TV programs where the home owner comes home and nods politely at the newly painted lime green walls saying, "I love it. Really I do!"...)

Maybe we could figure out a way to do "geocashing" for user pages. Or contributors could host courses of a "progressive dinner" at their user pages. Or ... actually just put something on their user pages!

How did the "trading pages" work?

Lise
Williamsburg, VA