Appropedia: Page permissions

Appropedia has a different approach to permissions for editing and viewing different pages, from open editing to restricted editing and private pages:

- **Mainspace pages**: These have the advantage of open editing, making it easy for anyone, including anonymous editors, to contribute. This is similar to Wikipedia, and helps to encourage people to get involved. Many topic pages will link to original content pages (described below).

- **Original content pages**: Original namespace documents (those pages whose title start with “Original:”) are protected, and can only be edited by admins (and certain individuals given special permission when helping in porting, and/or the authors). As these pages have a more clearly defined authorship, this may help with citing sources, and some people may just be more comfortable with this type of content.

- **Not available**: **Proprietary pages**: There is no plan to implement this (and a MediaWiki plugin would have to be installed, to enable this feature.). Those who are concerned to keep control of their pages (which may include businesses, organizations, researchers, designers, and people writing up projects) may wish to restrict editing of their pages, so that only they (and perhaps admins?) can edit the pages. However, in the philosophy of open editing, the most that is usually allowed is soft protection. Under the original suggestion for proprietary pages, they would be required to have an appropriate notice at the top (templates will be created for this) saying, for example: *This is a commercial, proprietary page. Content is the responsibility of XYZ* (where XYZ = name of organization or user, wikilinked). The notice will also clarify, in small font, that content here is not necessarily endorsed by Appropedia. However Appropedia (who exactly? The Appropedia Foundation? the admins? The review team that also marks high impact content?) would not tolerate misleading information and reserves the right to veto content as appropriate. Also, while businesses are encouraged to put information about themselves, their products and services, Appropedia is not a business directory or advertising site, to the main emphasis should be on information sharing. In the end, it is felt that open editing is more suitable to achieve these goals, using soft protection as appropriate.

- **Private pages**: Private pages can be set up on the Appropedia forum site, and user access is controlled by the forum site administrators (currently Curt and Chriswaterguy). However, it is encouraged to collaborate on the open pages where possible, and only use private pages when there is good reason.
Installing finer permission controls

Private pages on the wiki

Full openness is almost always preferable but it would be nice to have the permission tools on the wiki. We can do private pages on the Drupal site, but would it be better if they're integrated into the wiki?

Pros:

- Easier navigation for those with permissions, not switching between different sites.

Cons:

- With the current state of MediaWiki, this is not a serious option. There are ways of doing it, but they don't do it well - MediaWiki is not designed to provide security for private pages, e.g. preventing private pages showing up in general wiki searches. (For links relevant to this, and some notes on why it's not fully doable in MediaWiki, see mw:Extension:Hierarchical Namespace Permissions.)
- It would frustrating for someone who finds a link to a page, but finds they don't have permission to view it.

In any case, the Drupal private pages work almost like a wiki.

Editing permission controls

It might be possible to have finer control over who has editing privileges on certain pages. Some users would certainly prefer this - thinking particularly of businesses and other organizations that want to safeguard their reputation (mentioned above). Also, some people may want to set up groups where only members can edit their pages.

But is it a good idea? Probably not - openness and shared editing are key principles of a wiki, and we haven't had significant problems so far with this. To prevent vandalism of sensitive pages, very occasional use of soft protection (preventing anon and new users from editing certain pages) has been more than adequate.