

Tutorial on Agile Documentation with Wikis

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ABSTRACT

Although some agile projects can succeed without producing any documentation at all, others may require a little more. Best practices of agile documentation suggest producing just enough documentation, at just the right time, and for just the right audience. It is not by coincidence that wikis and agility share goals of simplicity, flexibility, and open collaboration, thus being natural documentation tools to agile projects. When well integrated with other tools, wikis provide open collaboration, quick feedback, easy navigability, integrated contents, and a low barrier for developers to document. In this hands-on tutorial, participants will learn how to adapt and use a wiki to better support software projects.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

D.2.6 [Software Engineering]: Programming Environments;
I.7.2 [Document And Text Processing]: Document Preparation—Hypertext/Hypermedia, Markup Languages

General Terms

Wikis for software engineering

Keywords

Wikis, software development, collaboration, documentation.

1. OVERVIEW

Every software project and developer uses a wiki for some purpose, especially agile ones.

As many of the wiki principles are common to agility (not by coincidence), wikis naturally support agile documentation of software projects, out-of-the-box.

But wikis can do more, especially when properly configured and tuned for software development purposes.

In this hands-on session, we will learn how to configure a set of tools including a wiki, and then we will collaboratively use it to document part of some/your software project(s) following the principles and practices of agile documentation.

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2. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The tutorial aims at providing participants with the following knowledge and capabilities:

- Principles and practices of agile documentation;
- Balancing documentation effort with effectiveness in communication and understanding;
- Identifying tool requirements for agile documentation;
- Fine-tuning wiki-based environments for agile documentation;
- Integration of complimentary tools with the wiki;
- Features of wikis to consider for documentation purposes;
- Wiki configuration (spaces, roles, templates, etc);
- Creating, organizing, and evolving wiki documents;
- Wiki adoption patterns.

3. MECHANICS

The tutorial is divided in two parts: an interactive and a hands-on.

The first part aims to be very interactive and agile. We will start with an introduction and a short ice-breaking activity (kick-off). We will run the session in five small parts of 15min each (cycle). Each part will have a 10min presentation period, followed by a short but intense 2min period of participant group interaction to reflect on what was presented (retrospective). A small Q&A period will be used to rejoin the audience, to share conclusions and to motivate for the next part (decompression). Several concrete examples will be used during the presentation parts to better illustrate them.

The second part aims to be entirely hands-on. We will split the participants in groups and provide each group with a list of assignments. The session will be divided in several episodes. In the beginning of each episode we will provide some guidance to conclude the assignments and we will then orchestrate and support the participants on the writing of documents using the wiki provided, either individually or collectively.

At the end, a small period will be devoted to share conclusions.