Guidelines for Blogs and Wikis at McGill

Issued by the Chief Information Officer, May 1, 2009

These guidelines support McGill's use of blogs and wikis and other similar tools. McGill blogs and wikis must support the academic mission or administrative functions of the University and of the unit sponsoring the blog or wiki. If you would like assistance in the interpretation of these guidelines, or if you have any additional questions, please consult with the CIO. A service description is available here.

Definitions

Blogs and Wikis
Blogs and wikis are spaces that allow multiple authors to collaboratively create and interact with content through posts, comments, and links. These spaces can be public, or protected by a password.

Moderator
A moderator is a delegate of a unit who is responsible for the blog or wiki, including reviewing or deleting content, as required.

Guidelines

1. Blogs and wikis should be moderated by the sponsoring unit on a regular basis, depending on the activity and purpose of the blog or wiki (at least weekly). It should be recognized that this involves a commitment of resources in order to ensure that this effort is sustainable.
2. The university will respond to claims pertaining to objectionable material by immediately removing any content that it is not in keeping with the Policy on the Responsible Use of McGill Information Technology Resources. The material may be reposted, once the claim is evaluated.
3. Every page of the collaborative blogs and wikis must:
    3.1. clearly indicate who is moderator and their faculty or unit
    3.2. include a link to the e-mail address of the moderator
    3.3. indicate that: *Blog authors are solely responsible for the content. Neither the content of this blog nor the links to other web sites, are screened, approved, reviewed or endorsed by McGill University. The text and other material on this blog are the opinion of the specific author and are not statements of advice, opinion, or information of McGill.*"
4. The blog or wiki must make it clear to anyone who posts content that :
    4.1. they must use their real name when they post except where using an alias as provided under section 7.
    4.2. the tone of their comments should reflect common courtesy (flaming will not be tolerated).
    4.3. by posting to the blog or wiki they acknowledge that they are a user of a McGill computing facility and subject to the "Policy on the Responsible Use of McGill Information Technology Resources" (http://www.mcgill.ca/files/secretariat/Responsible-Use-of-McGill-IT-Policy-on-the.pdf). In particular,
        4.3.1. users must respect copyright,
        4.3.2. users must respect the privacy of others
        4.3.3. users must not use the blog or wiki for unauthorized commercial activities; advertisements should not be embedded in the blog or wiki.
        4.3.4. failure to comply with the Policy on the Responsible Use of McGill Information Technology Resources could result in posting privileges being removed as well as any other penalties as specified by relevant McGill policies.

Blogs and wikis used in courses
5. Faculty who incorporate a blog or wiki as a learning activity must provide students with clear instructions about how they are to use and contribute to it as part of their learning experience.
6. Instructors automatically accept the role and responsibilities of moderator when they include a blog or wiki in their class.
7. In keeping with the "Reminder: Potential Impact of Learning Technologies on Student's Right to Privacy and Confidentiality", issued by the Chief Information Officer in February, 2005, (http://www.mcgill.ca/files/cio/student_right_privacy.pdf) instructors should respect the student's right to privacy. Students who do not wish to participate in a publicly-available blog or wiki or other similar site should be provided other alternatives by the instructors, such as the option of using an alias.