# Diplopedia

## Knowledge sharing through an enterprise wiki at the U.S. Department of State

**EPA Environmental Information Symposium**

**November 14, 2007**

U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Users were dissatisfied with their limited ability
to publish and share their knowledge



← **A typical dissatisfied user.**

# One solution



Provide an easily usable, central place for State personnel to find and share knowledge and expertise

# Benefits of an enterprise wiki

- Centralized place for an organization's knowledge

- Decentralized writing and editing - anyone on the intranet can create and edit articles, with proper attribution

- Familiar concept, thanks to Wikipedia

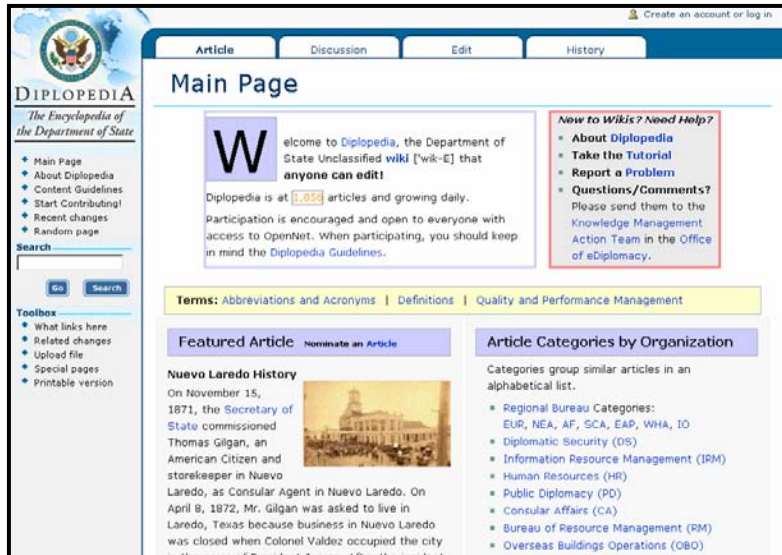- Visible, easy-to-explain product

# The tool: MediaWiki

- Same software that powers Wikipedia
- Robust, powerful
- Used in NSA, CIA, DIA, other agencies
- Markup language widely known
- Free and open-source



Wikis are two-thirds planning, and the rest is a leap in the dark.
*Napoleon Bonaparte*

# Diplopedia facts



- Launched in September 2006
- 2,000 articles
- Almost 400 registered editors
- 170,000 page views

(as of November 12, 2007)

# Ingredients to a successful wiki

- Cultural change
- Marketing & training
- Governance
- Gardening

# Cultural change management

- Gain visible support from the top

- Recruit contributors from the working level

- Fight the phobias:

  - "Clearance Culture": people are reluctant to publish independently

  - Stovepipes: wikis help eliminate "information hoarding" – and that's scary, too

# Marketing & training

- Find the early adopters

- Provide training where necessary

- Tell lots of people about the wiki, or they won't use it or contribute to it.

- Repeatedly explain why benefits (large) outweigh risks (small)

- Integrate with enterprise search

# Governance

- **Central initiative and oversight with decentralized contribution of content**

- **Key tenets:**
  - Informative and deliberative, not authoritative
  - General guidance for conduct and content
  - Anyone can read but contributors must register
  - Don't over-govern, but …
  - …Have mechanism to adjudicate disputes

# Gardening

- Gardeners provide the right environment for content to grow

- Gardeners assist the growth of the wiki by organizing content

- Gardeners also help contributors with their articles, including scope and length
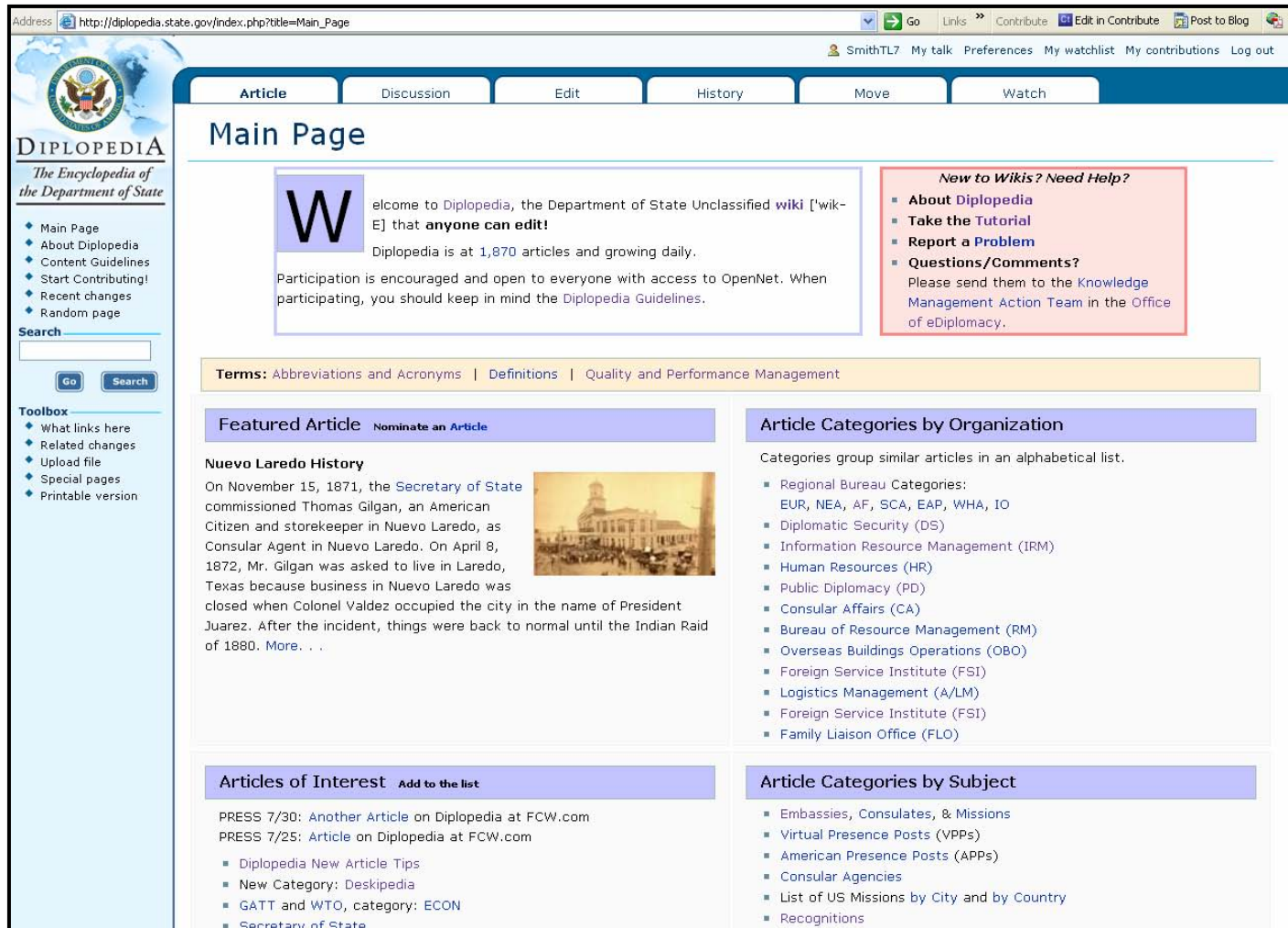
# Measurable successes

- ## Clusters by Subject
  - Abbreviations and Acronyms (360 articles)
  - Embassies (171 articles)

- ## Clusters by Organization
  - Bureau of Diplomatic Security (260 articles)
  - Office Descriptions (17 subcategories)

- ## Cross-Pollinated Clusters
  - Information Technology (~200 articles)

# Main Page

# Deskipedia Portal

# Example article: Embassy Athens



The American Embassy Chancery Athens, Greece

# What's next

- Improving tutorials and documentation
- Expanding content through internal outreach efforts
- Refining categorization
- Portal pages for better subject organization
- "Mirrored" copy for interagency readers

# Questions?

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