



# 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**

# The Problem

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

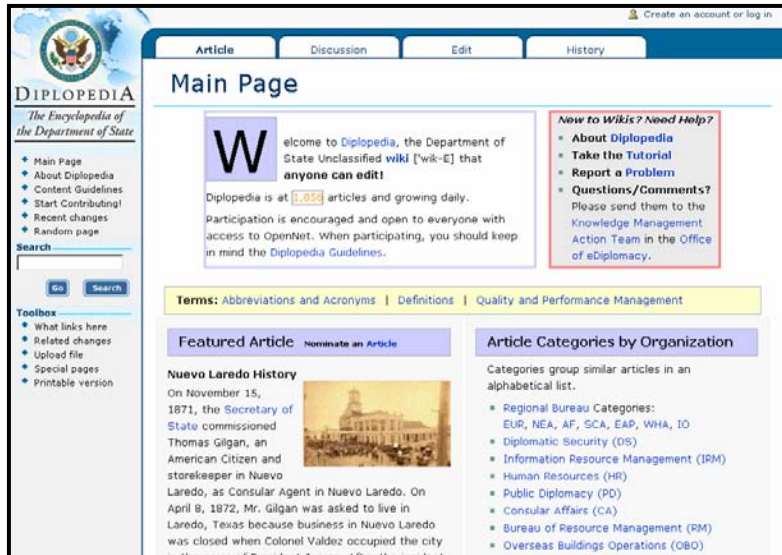
- Same software that powers Wikipedia
- Robust, powerful
- Used in NSA, CIA, DIA, other agencies
- Markup language widely known
- Free and open-source



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

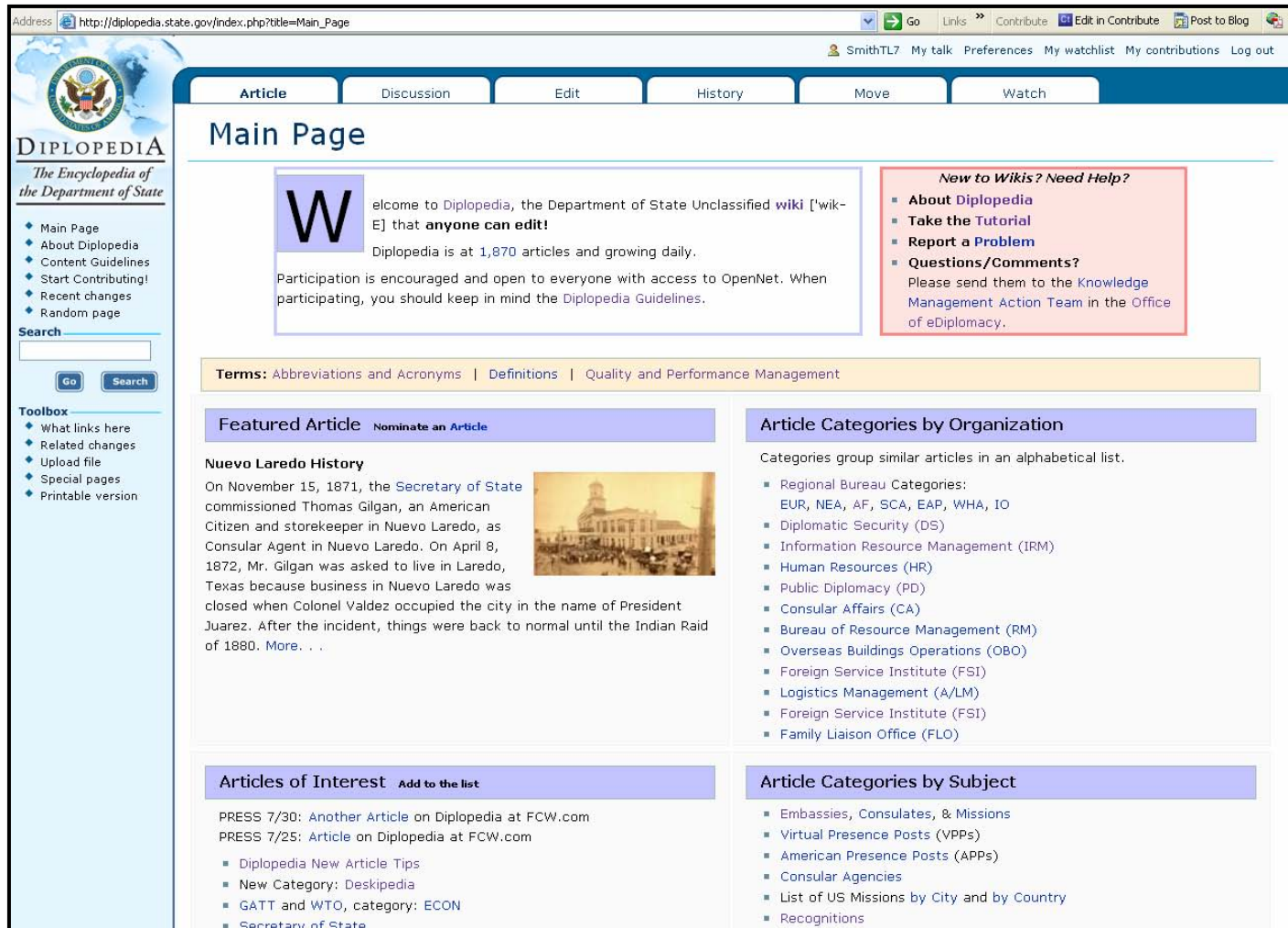


# Measurable successes

- **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



The screenshot shows the main page of Diplopedia, a Department of State unclassified wiki. The page features a navigation bar with tabs for Article, Discussion, Edit, History, Move, and Watch. A central banner welcomes users and highlights that anyone can edit. A sidebar on the left provides navigation links and a search box. The main content area is divided into sections for Featured Article, Article Categories by Organization, and Articles of Interest.

Address: [http://diplopedia.state.gov/index.php?title=Main\\_Page](http://diplopedia.state.gov/index.php?title=Main_Page)

SmithTL7 My talk Preferences My watchlist My contributions Log out

**Article** Discussion Edit History Move Watch

## Main Page

**W**elcome to Diplopedia, the Department of State Unclassified wiki ['wik-E] that **anyone can edit!**

Diplopedia is at 1,870 articles and growing daily.

Participation is encouraged and open to everyone with access to OpenNet. When participating, you should keep in mind the Diplopedia Guidelines.

**New to Wikis? Need Help?**

- **About Diplopedia**
- **Take the Tutorial**
- **Report a Problem**
- **Questions/Comments?**


Please send them to the Knowledge Management Action Team in the Office of eDiplomacy.

**Terms:** Abbreviations and Acronyms | Definitions | Quality and Performance Management

### Featured Article [Nominate an Article](#)

#### Nuevo Laredo History

On November 15, 1871, the Secretary of State commissioned Thomas Gilgan, an American Citizen and storekeeper in Nuevo Laredo, as Consular Agent in Nuevo Laredo. On April 8, 1872, Mr. Gilgan was asked to live in Laredo, Texas because business in Nuevo Laredo was closed when Colonel Valdez occupied the city in the name of President Juarez. After the incident, things were back to normal until the Indian Raid of 1880. More . . .



### Article Categories by Organization

Categories group similar articles in an alphabetical list.

- Regional Bureau Categories:
  - EUR, NEA, AF, SCA, EAP, WHA, IO
- Diplomatic Security (DS)
- Information Resource Management (IRM)
- Human Resources (HR)
- Public Diplomacy (PD)
- Consular Affairs (CA)
- Bureau of Resource Management (RM)
- Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO)
- Foreign Service Institute (FSI)
- Logistics Management (A/LM)
- Foreign Service Institute (FSI)
- Family Liaison Office (FLO)

### Articles of Interest [Add to the list](#)

PRESS 7/30: Another Article on Diplopedia at FCW.com  
PRESS 7/25: Article on Diplopedia at FCW.com

- Diplopedia New Article Tips
- New Category: Deskpedia
- GATT and WTO, category: ECON
- Secretary of State

### Article Categories by Subject

- Embassies, Consulates, & Missions
- Virtual Presence Posts (VPPs)
- American Presence Posts (APPs)
- Consular Agencies
- List of US Missions by City and by Country
- Recognitions

**Search**

Go Search

**Toolbox**

- What links here
- Related changes
- Upload file
- Special pages
- Printable version

**DIPLOPEDIA**  
*The Encyclopedia of the Department of State*

- Main Page
- About Diplopedia
- Content Guidelines
- Start Contributing!
- Recent changes
- Random page



# Deskikipedia Portal

SmithTL7 My talk Preferences My watchlist My contributions Log out

Article Discussion Edit History Move Watch

## Deskikipedia


**Deskikipedia Portal**  
The information reference for State Department Desk Officers

**Introduction** edit

The Deskikipedia Portal aims to provide unofficial guides to coping with the myriad challenges facing State Desk Officers, as well as to be a central repository for hot links to key information—a one-stop-shop for desk officers. To learn more about Deskikipedia, see History of Deskikipedia.

If you don't see what you're looking for, try Category: Deskikipedia for a complete index of Deskikipedia articles.

**Deskikipedia** edit



**2007/2008 Deskikipedia Champions:**  
Valda Vikmanis Keller  
and Carol Volk

Please feel free to edit and add information to Deskikipedia as you discover new resources. If you're new to Diplopedia, take a look at the start page.

**Hot Links** edit

- Country Desks -- finding the phone number
- State Telephone Directory
- Foreign Service Info: Link to Key Officers List, Abbreviations and Symbols, IVG Prefixes, Local Holidays, more
- State Department Organization Chart - Principal Officer Biographies
- Foreign Service Info: Link to Key Officers List, Abbreviations and Symbols, IVG Prefixes, Local Holidays, more
- Bureaus and Offices in the State Department

**Reference** edit

- The Previous Deskikipedia Blog Site
- Ralph Bunche Library
- Ralph Bunche Virtual Library
- Econ Information-Finding
- Maps
- Post Management Guidebook
- Translation of a Document
- Leahy Amendment Human Rights Vetting

**Practical Advice** edit

- New Desk Officer Checklist/Timeline
- Keeping Your Principals Informed
- Reading in, Trolling for Information, and Pushing It Out
- DARs: How to write a Daily Activity Report
- How to Get Things Done at State
- Guide to 7th Floor Meetings
- Escorting
- Visits
- Press Guidance: Public Affairs Procedures
- Background Notes
- Congress--correspondence, QFRs, etc.
- New Ambassadors
- Consular Issues
- Drafting
- Clearances

**Topics of Discussion** edit

- "Dipnote" Blog at State.gov

**DIPLOPEDIA**  
*The Encyclopedia of the Department of State*

- Main Page
- About Diplopedia
- Content Guidelines
- Start Contributing!
- Recent changes
- Random page

Search

Go Search


**Toolbox**

- What links here
- Related changes
- Upload file
- Special pages
- Printable version





# Example article: Embassy Athens

 **DIPLOPEDIA**  
*The Encyclopedia of the Department of State*

- ◆ Main Page
- ◆ About Diplopedia
- ◆ Content Guidelines
- ◆ Start Contributing!
- ◆ Recent changes
- ◆ Random page

Search

**Toolbox**

- ◆ What links here
- ◆ Related changes
- ◆ Upload file
- ◆ Special pages
- ◆ Printable version

[Article](#) [Discussion](#) [Edit](#) [History](#)

## Athens

(Redirected from [Embassy Athens](#)) Embassy Athens is the permanent US mission to Greece. The embassy is joined by Consulate General [Thessaloniki](#) in forming the US Missions to the Hellenic Republic.

**Hours of Operation:** Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM (Washington +7)

[\[edit\]](#)

**Post Information** [\[edit\]](#)

**History and Events** [\[edit\]](#)

The United States and Greece have longstanding historical, political, and cultural ties based on a common heritage, shared democratic values, and participation as Allies during World War II, the [Marshall Plan](#), the Korean conflict, the Cold War, and [NATO](#) ([Picture](#)).

For recent history see [Athens Events](#).

**Staffing** [\[edit\]](#)

The U.S. Mission has over 170 authorized American positions. The Mission employs approximately 300 [Foreign Service Nationals](#) countrywide. In addition,

**Telephone Numbers**


Working Hours	+30 (210) 721-2951
After Hours	+30 (210) 729-4301/4444
FAX	+30 (210) 645-6282
IVG	869+extension
<b>Duty Officer</b>	+30 6946-79-1788

**Contacts**

**Street Address** 91 Vas. Sophias Avenue  
10160 Athens, Greece ([Map](#))

**Pouch Address** 7100 Athens Place  
Dulles, VA 20189-7100

**APO Address** PSC 108  
APO, AE 09842



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?

**Eric M. Johnson**

[johnsonem3@state.gov](mailto:johnsonem3@state.gov)



U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE