

Hacking Work

Wikis, Wikis Everywhere

Companion piece to our book,
HACKING WORK, By Bill Jensen and Josh Klein
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www.HackingWork.com

Also see our other sites:
www.simplerwork.com
www.josh.is

Why U Shd Wiki



From Robert Rapplean: “While my title is Senior Software Engineer, I’m basically a utility fielder, an all-purpose project manager. Most of my job is keeping track of the adjustments our company makes in our software products. My hack is to run as much of my job as I can through the wiki I built for my own use, ignoring most company-supplied tools.”

Why I Wiki and Why Others Do the Same: “Since this is my wiki, I can organize it any way I want. I don’t have to spend time negotiating with others over how it should be structured, and its organization is always something that I personally understand. It’s become the primary method of tracking my progress for various projects, and greatly improves my personal productivity. At first, I built it on my own because the management overhead necessary to do it with anyone else’s cooperation would have been prohibitive. Over time, others have contributed to the wiki I produced, and have since built their own wikis.”

On Pushback: “At the end of the day, all bosses really care about are results — high quality, fast solutions, on time and on or below budget. That’s what I do, aided by my wiki. As long as I’m producing the results they need, whatever pushback I get from my boss and company is inconsequential.”

On Benefits: Report Generation and Distribution: “All reports are produced online and readily visible to anyone at anytime. This reduces the amount of time I have to spend in meetings rehashing what I told the other guys in another meeting two hours ago. Also, since wikis are a fairly simple medium, it gives me a solid reason for not producing documents that are of presentation quality. Producing documents that don’t offend some CxO’s sense of prettiness can be very time consuming.

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Plus, as a bonus, if anyone nitpicks my spelling, grammar, or the accuracy of what I have to say, I tell them 'Thank you for spotting that! Please feel free to fix it.' "

On Benefits: All That Miscellaneous Information: "My job generates all sorts of ad-hoc information that, at least at first, doesn't fit neatly into categories. Since this is my wiki, it allows me to easily index and re-index, categorize and re-categorize as things evolve and the importance or irrelevance of information reveals itself. Typing it in and organizing it later also helps me organize my thoughts based on what the information in front of me is telling me, not based on what pre-ordered formats tell me that I should be thinking."

How Wikis Work

"Wiki software is currently free and technologically lightweight. Having a wiki set up as one's personal knowledge base and journal allows an individual to record things that others might need to know in an environment that does not require extensive negotiation or resources, or centralized management. There's lots of information in all our daily activities that is invariably difficult to organize and categorize. An unstructured wiki like the one I use, MediaWiki, is a near-optimal place to store and search for information that is only findable by keyword or association. By setting up one's own wiki, an employee creates a place that they can store their own notes on how to do their job for their own reference, and for the reference of others.

"Said more simply: A wiki can be your thinking tool — helping you go from gathering all sorts of information; to making sense of it; to organizing it; to sharing it with others. All done on your terms, not by how somebody else tells you to do it.

"Some companies set up corporate wikis. While valuable, a shared wiki will often set rules about what content belongs

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where. This is severely discouraging to random note-taking because much of what a worker needs to record doesn't categorize well until there's enough of it to start identifying topic patterns. Furthermore, having complete ownership of a wiki allows a person to type whatever they darn well please without concern that others will be annoyed because they're wasting space or swamping the 'good' content.

"If any information becomes well-developed enough or relevant to others. you can give them access to what you created or export it from your wiki to presentations or even a company-wide wiki. The key is to keep control of your own thought process and how you make sense of things for as long as you can."



Why Hack, Why Wiki

FROM BILL AND JOSH

Business is broken.

We all know it, even if we're scared to admit it.

Most of us feel screwed, and many of us feel helpless to change it. We have become slaves to our infrastructure — to business's controlling tools, procedures and mandates.

People like Robert, like you, are building their own toolkits. Taking back control of their lives and their work. The real issues being discussed in this companion piece are far bigger than simple wiki How To's.

Everything comes down to the three ideas that are the foundation of Hacking Work: Power...Control...Risk. Building your own toolkit, including your own wiki, allows you to manage those three on your terms, not just the company's.

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THE CV OF

A Simpleton

Harvard Business Review, CNBC and *Fast Company* have called Bill Jensen today's foremost expert on work complexity and cutting through clutter to what really matters.

He has spent the past two decades studying how work gets done. (Much of what he's found horrifies him.)

He is an internationally-acclaimed author and speaker who is known for provocative ideas, extremely useful content, and his passion for making it easier for everyone to work smarter.



Some people see things that are and ask, Why?

Some people dream of things that never were and ask, Why not?

Some people have to go to work and don't have time for all that...

George Carlin

- His first book, *Simplicity*, was the Number 5 Leadership/Management book on Amazon in 2000.
- His next best-seller is *Simplicity Survival Handbook: 32 Ways to Do Less and Accomplish More*.
- His current book, *Hacking Work: Breaking Stupid Rules for Smart Results* reveals an underground army of benevolent hackers — breaking all sorts of rules so everyone can do great work.

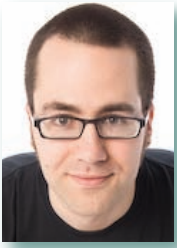
Bill is CEO of The Jensen Group, whose mission is:
To make it easier to get stuff done.

Among the Jensen Group's clients are Bank of America, GE, NASA, the US Navy SEALs, British Petroleum, American Express, Chevron, the government of Ontario, Pfizer, Merck, L'Oréal Italia, Johnson&Johnson, Guangzhou China Development District, and the Swedish Post Office.

Bill's personal life fantasy is to bicycle around the globe via breweries.

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THE CV OF

A Hacker

“Josh Klein is the quintessential hacker — someone who takes his greatest joy from combining the unexpected and seeing the result work in new and better ways.”

Josh has practiced and was trained, both formally and informally, in hacking — social systems, computer networks, institutions, consumer hardware, animal behavior, and, most recently, the publishing industry. When he’s not taking things apart or putting them back together again he speaks, writes, and consults on new and emerging technologies that improve people’s lives — and has tremendous fun doing it.

Most of Josh’s time is spent speaking to companies and at conferences such as Gadgetoff, TED, SICS, LA-IP, BIF, and Serious Play, and he has appeared on the Sundance Channel, Nova, and other programs. He also spends a significant amount of time consulting to companies large and small, such as Microsoft, Oracle, Frog Design, Nokia, Johns Hopkins, Bankinter, The United States Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and others.

But really what Josh does is this: he examines systems, he takes them apart, and he puts different pieces together to produce something new and more effective.

He hacks. Everything.

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