

Wikispaces Icons and Readability

Joan Vinall-Cox, Ph.D.

This explanation of the Wikispaces icons includes information on making your wiki pages easy-to-read as well as how to use the icons.

Web pages have to employ **scannable** text, using

- highlighted **keywords**
- **meaningful headings**
- **bulleted lists**
- **one idea per paragraph**
- the inverted pyramid style, **starting with the conclusion**
- **half** the word count of conventional writing

Excerpted from <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/9710a.html>

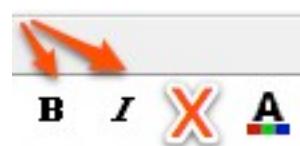
The Visual Editor Icon Bar



Resting your cursor on each icon will bring up its name.

Bold and Italics

Many of the icons will be familiar to you from your previous use of other applications. For example - you can easily **bold** or **italicize**.

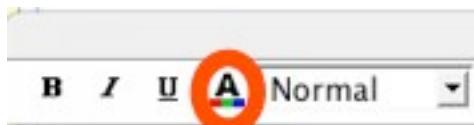


Do not use the underline icon; underlining can confuse readers because it is usually a signal of a link.

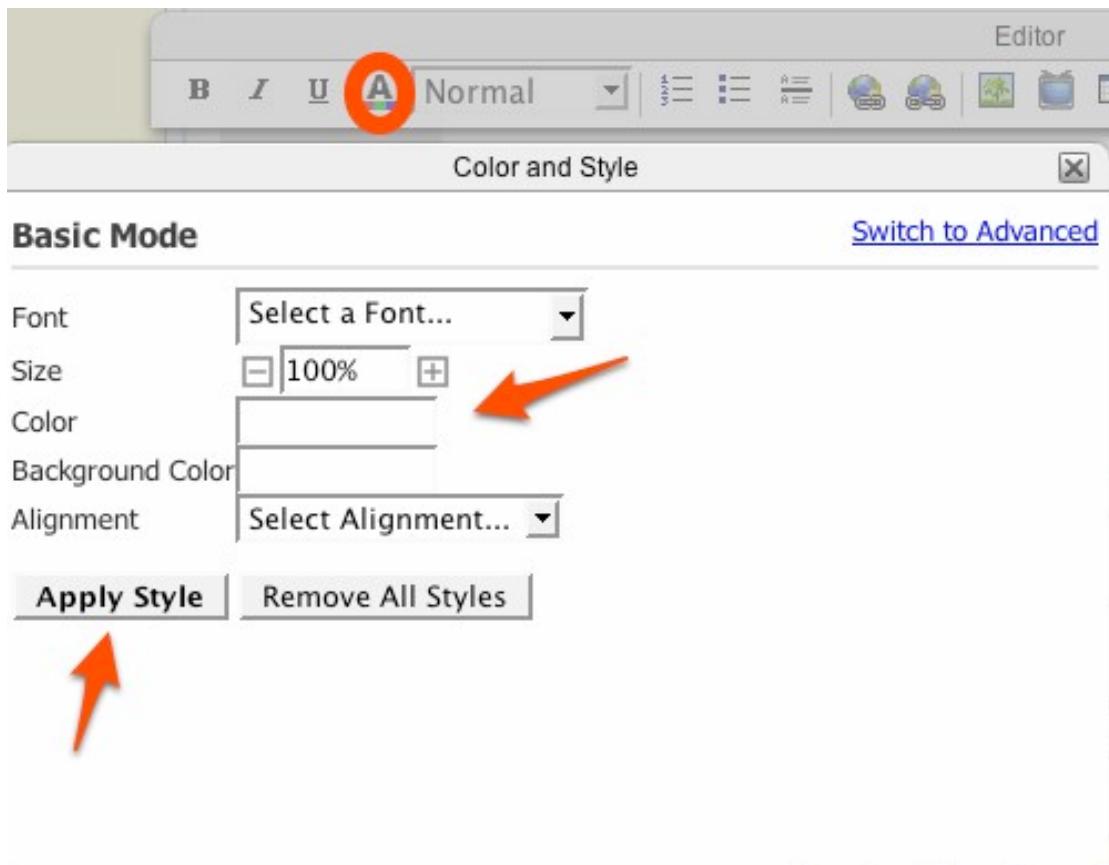
Color and Style

The **Color and Style** icon allows you to change colour and styles of text in a variety of ways.





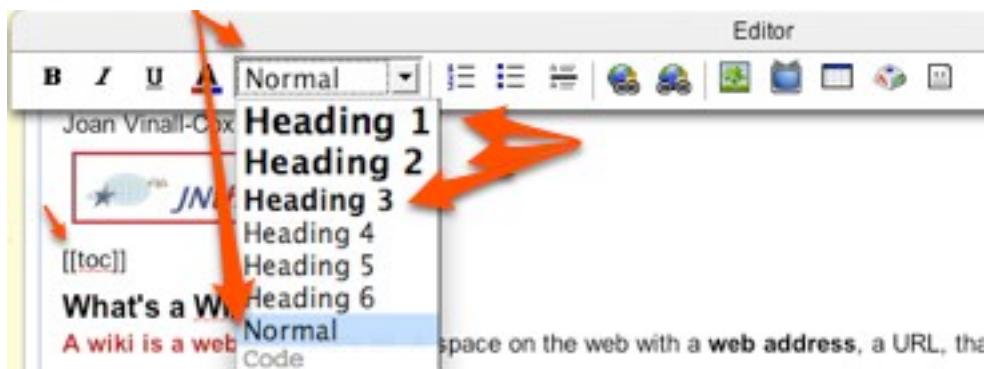
Clicking the icon opens a **dialog box** where you can experiment to find out what's possible.



Don't forget to click on **Apply Style** after making your choices.

Headings and Tables of Contents

Using the heading feature is useful in two ways:



- You just highlight and choose the **heading level** you want; and



- You can add a **Table of Contents** to the page with a link to each heading, for easier navigation.

Wiki Workshop

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What's a Wiki?

A **wiki** is a **website**. That's all. A space on the web with a **web address**, a URL, that is, a "Universal Resource Locator".

What makes a wiki special is that anyone can **create content** on it in a way similar to using a word-processor. You don't need to learn HTML code or have special technical knowledge. You do have to learn a few steps, but you can start creating with very basic knowledge.

Most of you know the most famous wiki, [Wikipedia](#). You might have heard that there's a lot of controversy about it, and that's because of a wiki's most famous attribute: **anyone can edit it!** Wikis can do **more** than regular websites; they can be set up so

- anybody can edit them,
- or just a few specific people,
- or even only one person.

The controversy about [Wikipedia](#) is based on the fact that anyone could edit it, and many

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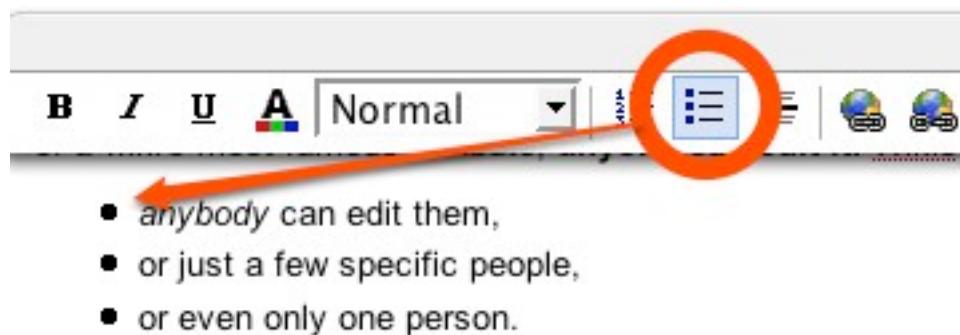
[Wikis in Plain English](#)

[A PowerPoint about Wikis](#)

[Wikispaces Tour](#)

Bullet and List

- The **bullet icon** and the **list icon** work just as they do in other applications.
- Use them **whenever possible** to make your page easier to read



A Line Between – Adding a *Horizontal Rule*

Adding a **line between sections** can help your readers recognize that they are moving to a new section.



Adding Links

Here a series of links have been added, using the link icon, to add background information for the readers who want **more information**.

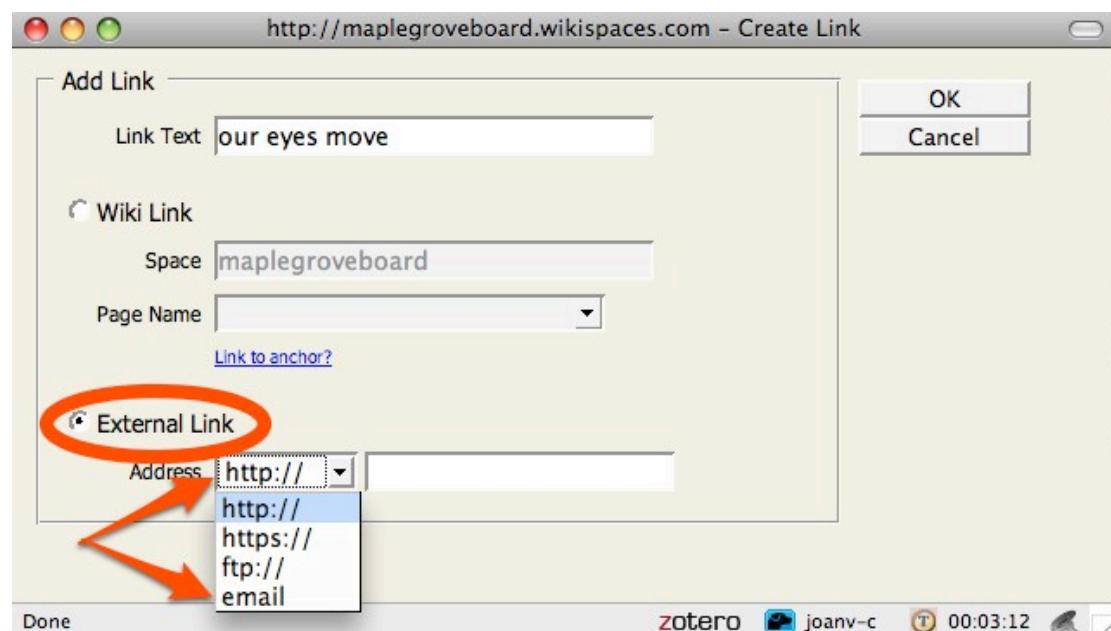


I copied and pasted the URL of the page with the information,

- highlighted the URL,
- clicked on the link icon, and
- clicked beside **External Link**.

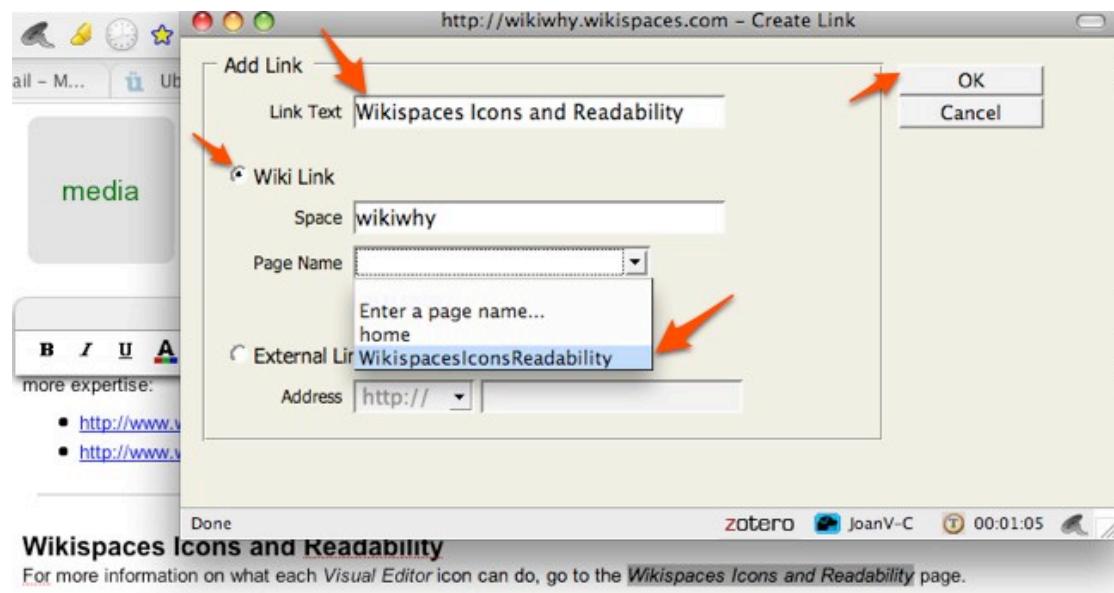
The **link text** can be the URL of a site or a few words. I usually show the URL of links so

- if the link itself fails,
- readers can copy and paste the (unlinked) URL into the **address field** on a web page and
- find it.



The *External Link* can also be used for **email** addresses.

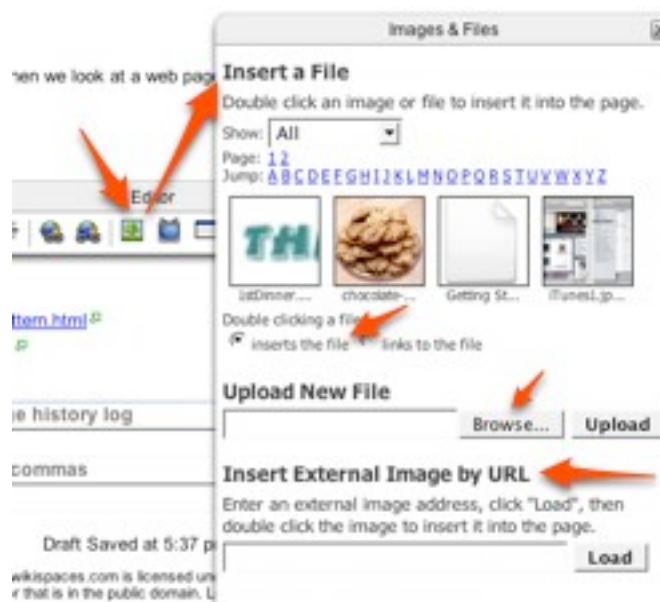
If you want to link to another page **inside your wiki**, you use the *Wiki Link*.



Be careful when you link to a wiki page, because if your text isn't an exact match, the default response in the dialog box is to create a new page. Make sure you **choose the correct page** before you click "OK". (I often include spaces in the link text, but not in the wiki page name; the page URL looks better without spaces.)

Insert Images and Files

The tree icon allows you to insert an image or a file.

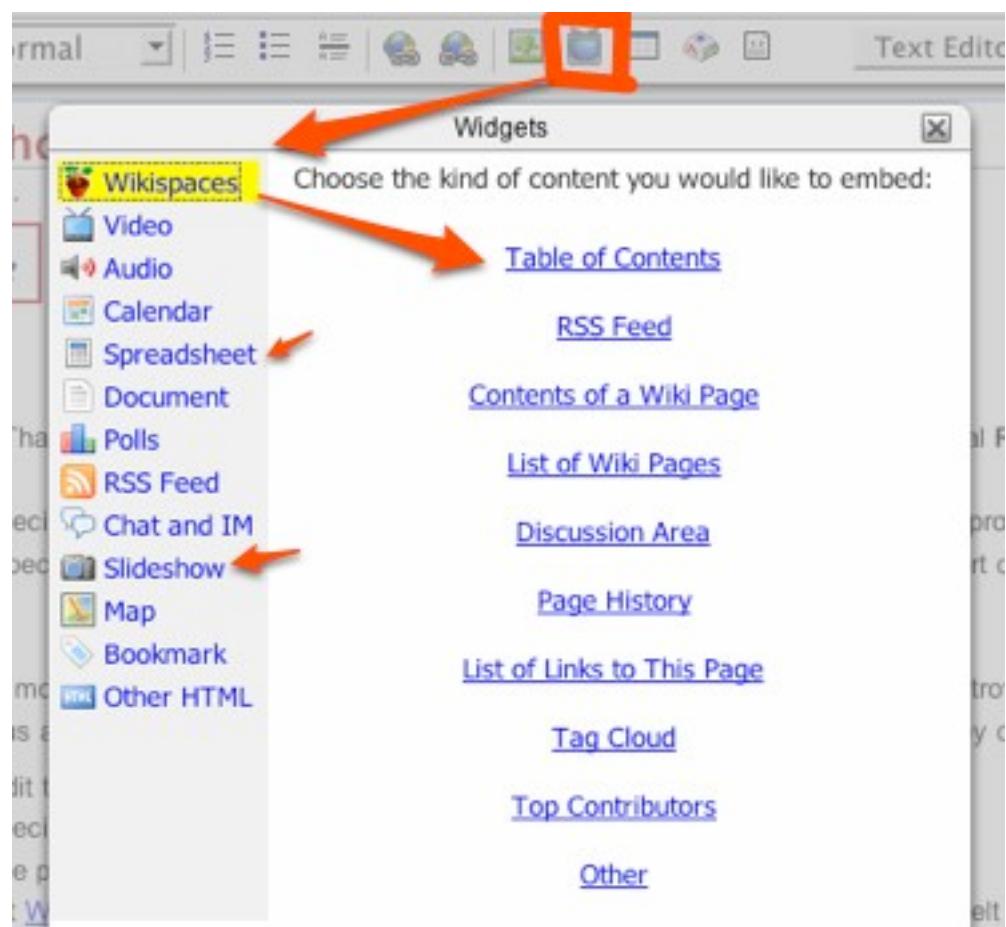


There are two ways to add images:

1. Upload the file, which takes **storage space**, and there is a limit.
2. Insert an external image by **URL**, which takes some knowledge of how and where to put an image up online. I recommend **Skitch** - <http://plasq.com/skitch>

Widgets

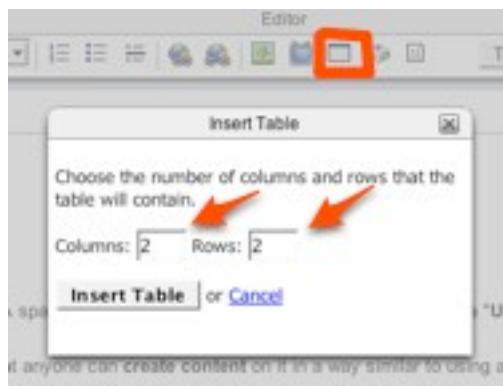
The *Widgets* icon allows you to add many different applications to your wiki. Here is where you can add a Table of Contents if you have used the Headings choices.



Experiment to find out what all you can do.



Tables



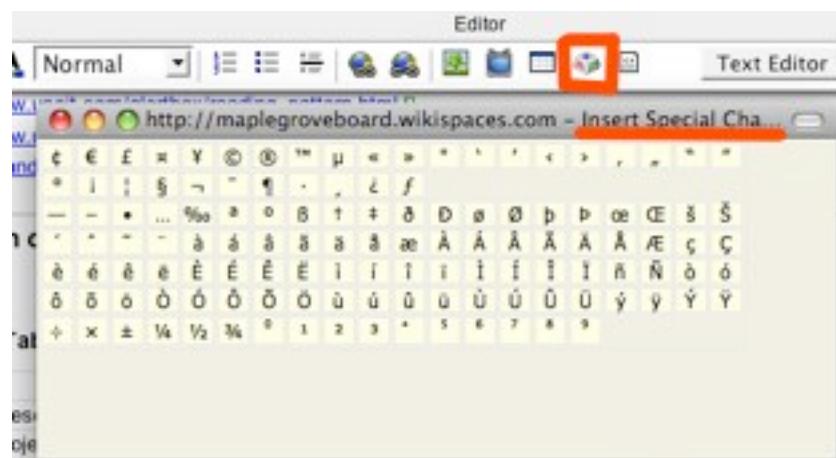
Choose the row and column size of your table.

Tables can be a useful way to display information to make it easy to read.

Agenda in a Table		
Item	Responsible	Completed
1. Set up the presentation room	Joan & Donna	
2. Set up the projector for the presentation and ensure that everything works.	Joan	
3. Give the presentation	Joan	
4. Return the room to its previous set-up	Joan & Donna	
5. Answer questions as people use Wikispaces	Joan - (905) joan.vinall-cox@gmail.com	Continuing

You can use the table icon that comes up where you click in the table to make changes.

Special Characters



Put your **cursor** where you want the special character, **click** on the icon, and then on the character you want.

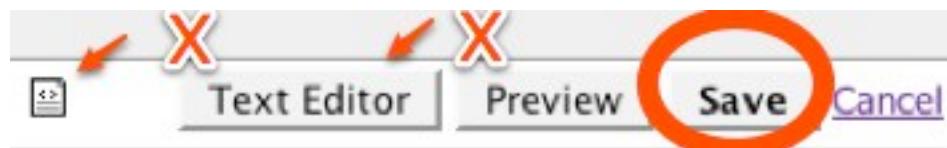


Save Before Leaving

I suggest you **ignore** the *Insert Code* and the *Text Editor* unless you are good at using HTML or know the old-style wiki-text.

Remember to **Save** before leaving the page!!!!

Cancel wipes out all the changes you've made since opening the Visual Editor. Use it if you've added a lot of material than have changed your mind if that would be easier than just deleting.



Readability

If your wiki page is hard to read and/or unattractive, people won't read it. I recommend the following to help you learn more about making your web work easier to read:

- <http://www.sensible.com/chapter.html>
- http://www.useit.com/alertbox/reading_pattern.html
- <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/9710a.html>
- *The Non-Designer's Design Book* by Robin Williams

