mindtouch

harnessing the People's voice

The New Paradigm

For Online Communities

555 W. Beech Street, Suite 501 San Diego, CA 92101

www.mindtouch.com sales@mindtouch.com 1-866-646-3868

mindtouch

Table of Contents

Table of Contents 1
Current Publishing Model is Unviable 2
The New Paradigm 2
- Hyperlocal Content and Communities
- User-Generated Content (UGC)
- Highly Leveraged Publishing Model

Deki Wiki Overview 4
Deki Wiki Features Overview 4
- Customization
- Integrated Web Backend
- Content Management Controls
- Reusable Content

The Power of Wikis ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
Applications 7
- Community Wikis
- Kids' Sports
- School Wikis
- People Profiles
- Hot Topics

Value Proposition 9
- Cost
- Revenues

Turnkey Hosted Service ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
Implementation Tips 12
Content Management and Control 13
Technology 15
- Key Features
- Integration and Extensibility
- Deki Wiki Architecture

This whitepaper describes the new paradigm of online communities that is applicable to all enterprises but is especially pertinent to online media, newspapers, radio and TV, consumer, and topical sites. These markets are addressed interchangeably. The newspaper market is singled out because the paradigm shift and the required adaptation are the most dramatic there, therefore the potential for transformation is also greatest.

Current Publishing Model is Unviable

The Internet has changed the newspaper business forever. Newspaper websites are by and large still anchored by news from print, to be consumed passively by readers in a "we publish, you read" mode. This long-standing model is unviable going forward. Online users' experience and expectations are totally different from reading a newspaper. They demand more compelling content that's interactive, useful, entertaining and unique. News is just one element, which may not be the most important. They also expect to interact and connect with other people through the Internet, be they across the world or across town. Newspapers and other publishers must capture these distinct demands of their online audience in order to thrive.

The New Paradigm

The new paradigm for newspaper websites revolves around three imperatives: hyperlocal content, user-generated content (UGC), and a highly leveraged publishing model.

harnessing the People's voice

Hyperlocal Content and Communities

Newspapers are no longer the near monopolies of news and information they were just 10 years ago. Like every other media outlet, newspapers need to better define and deliver their core services for their vastly changed audience. They cannot possibly be everything to everyone. There is now wide consensus that their best bet is hyperlocal content, for two reasons:

- Many news and other content types (national/international news, topics of general interest) have become commoditized and are widely available elsewhere on the Internet, and readers have already formed their habits on where to get them—elsewhere.
- Newspapers are uniquely positioned to provide local community content better than any other medium given their historical knowledge and links to the readers, advertisers, merchants and community leaders. These deep links are significant assets and advantages that cannot be easily duplicated by any other competitor.

Hyperlocal content is thus the perfect fit for a newspaper website from both the demand and supply perspectives. In short, the Internet has pushed newspapers back into the future, to focus on its original mission: be the leading provider of local news and information.

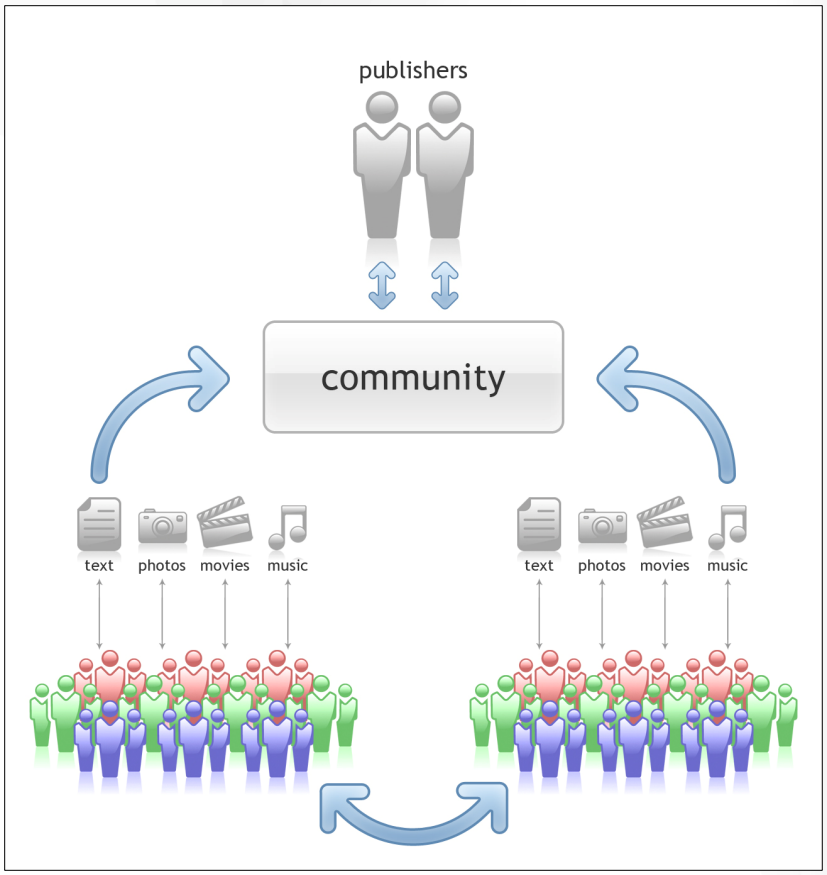
User-Generated Content (UGC)

Audience participation in the form of user-generated content (UGC) and social media (blogs, forums, video and image clips etc.) have exploded onto the scene in the last few years such that by now they are required elements in any online media site. It has been proven without a doubt that when people are given easy tools to express themselves, they will. This phenomenon is universal. We want to share, interact and collaborate with other people on subjects that move us. UGC is arguably more interesting to some readers than what the newspaper produces. On some websites, more than 60% of pageviews are generated by UGC.

Bottom line, newspapers need to capture this powerful human impulse to socialize and blend it into the editorial and syndicated content they produce. If successful, a newspaper site can become the hub of local content and interaction, deepen its bond with its readers and prosper. If not, it becomes a marginal place to check the local headlines, sport scores, traffic and weather.

Highly Leveraged Publishing Model

The publishing industry is under great stress as it undergoes an epochal change driven by the Internet and Web 2.0 technologies. As the value of general news and content is driven down to commodity levels, newspapers are required to produce even more content their readers want. But no amount of editorial staff can generate all the content necessary to satisfy a demanding readership which can go anywhere on the Web with a click. The new paradigm requires a much more leveraged publishing model, one driven by technology and UGC, not bodies.



Implementing this new publishing paradigm will perpetuate most newspaper sites' position as the number 1 local site in 95% of DMAs in the U.S.

mindtouch

MindTouch Deki Wiki Overview

MindTouch Deki Wiki is a social media integration platform based on wiki technology that powers the new paradigm. It enables website owners to accomplish three objectives in the new paradigm:

- Harness multimedia UGC—text, video, images, audio—in wide-ranging applications.
- Integrate and aggregate other social media elements from across the Internet (blogs, forums, news, images, and videos) to complement and supplement a particular story or subject.
- Blend the three elements of site content—editorial, syndicated and user-generated—seamlessly into a rich, contextual story.

Key Features

MindTouch Deki Wiki is a groundbreaking wiki publishing and social media platform. It is scalable for use by a small community paper to an Internet portal with tens, or even hundreds, of wikis. As such, it needs to have key features demanded by these large enterprises. They include:

Customization

UGC must be blended seamlessly into the main website as part of the overall look and feel ("skinning") and content layout, ad placement etc. so that it's indistinguishable from the rest of the site.

Integrated Web Backend

The wikis need to be easily integrated with a site's existing infrastructure, including the advertising, search, account management and security systems.

Content Management Controls

The ability for site editors to control and blend UGC into the whole content canvass to meet their editorial and commercial objectives is a critical element. Some of these tools are:

- Multi-level page permissions—the ability to set different rights for different groups of users based on profile, behavior or content types. Permissions can be set down to the page level of any piece of content, and can be revoked or reinstated based on policy.
- Each page can be set to read-only, comment or fully editable modes.
- Each page has full versioning audit trail and revert capabilities, so that every change is tracked and an editor can restore any version to be published.
- Content filters can be the first level of defense against obviously inappropriate content.

Reusable Content

UGC can be a valuable and significant component of any site owner's content assets. As such, any UGC garnered should be able to be integrated with the site's existing content management system so they can be archived and reused for different purposes, including reverse syndication. MindTouch Deki Wiki is the only wiki system that publishes in XML format, the leading data exchange format for the Web and enterprises, so that every UGC page can be reused in the publication's publishing system. Without this capability, any UGC becomes "dead-end content" that does not reach its full potential.

Content Aggregation

MindTouch Deki Wiki powers the most leveraged web publishing model of the future. It can aggregate all content (blogs, forums, news, images, videos) relevant to a story or subject with a simple click, all for free. Coupled with linking, RSS feeds, tagging, and other Web 2.0 features, this capability extends the power of aggregation and content distribution to both publishers and their readers alike. Publishes can now produce many times the relevant content at no cost.

The Power of Wikis

What are wikis? How are they used?

Wikis at their simplest are web pages which can be edited by a community of users. They are best used as a collaborative tool for fostering knowledge, opinions and dialog among a community of people bound by a shared interest. Wikipedia is, of course, the best showcase of the power of wikis as it is among the top 10 trafficked sites in the world. Beyond that, there are thousands of wikis worldwide drawing significant traffic and building large communities around practically any topic or group imaginable.

Wikis have proven beyond doubt that if an environment is created for people to express themselves and interact with other like-minded people, they will. Newspaper websites are the perfect environment to capture this phenomenon because not only can they group people by common interest, they also have the bond of a shared physical location already in place.

While wikis have been around since the late 1990s, they were not widely adopted by commercial enterprises until 2005. How are they different from blogs and forums?

	Blogs	Forums	Wikis
Strength	Individual rants and raves, often on news & events	More extensive dialog between readers.	In-depth, long lasting & contextual content such as reference works or stories Group collaboration with controls Build communities
Weaknesses	No communities Temporal Often shallow/vile or meaningless entries	Not contextual or synthesized No collaboration Not linked	

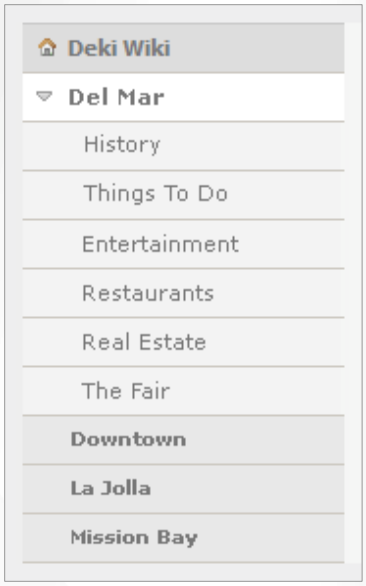
In summary, wikis are best for people to collaboratively write in-depth content—a reference piece or story—that has long-lasting value and can be constantly refreshed by the community at large. They can be evergreen information repositories for any web property. As such, **wiki content is high-quality UGC that can be monetized like other content that has meaning or utility.** The trouble with many other UGC types, e.g. blogs and image clips, is that they provide no value beyond generating immediate pageviews when posted, which drops significantly in a day or two.

Applications

A wiki can be the community portal for just about any topic or group. That's why newspapers are the perfect medium for wikis, because they have a built-in geographical community that is strong and vibrant. In the circle of awareness, interest and impact for every human, what's local is by far the most important. This is a huge advantage, one newspapers can defend and extend through wiki communities.

Community Wikis

The "killer app" for newspapers in this context is a Wikipedia for every local community that they serve. For some, there could be just a couple; for a large metro area, it could be 20, 30 or 50. In such a community, its residents contribute content on local history, interesting places to hike, restaurant reviews, retirement, educational or child rearing issues, real estate profiles, or whatever unique issues they are interested in. Imagine tens or hundreds of contributors commenting, editing and collaborating with each other to make a topic up-to-date, fully contextualized with other content linked from other sites, and all the newspaper has to do is monitor the spontaneous interactions and join in the collaboration.



> *"Newspapers should harness the power of communities—rather than wire service copy—to help fill pages. Half of the newspaper's service-oriented content can be done by users in an engaging way that can enrich the audience. Such a model would free precious resources to do the craft of journalism and create content that sets newspapers apart from other media. You don't need journalists to put out a travel or food section. Users are better served by having user-generated content. Use the journalists to do highly differentiated journalism."*
>
> ***Lincoln Millstein***
> ***SVP Digital Media***
> ***Hearst Corp.***

There are many other creative, fun, useful—and lucrative—applications possible, including:

Kids' Sports

The U.S. is crazy about sports, especially with children. In some small towns, the high school football or basketball team is the glue that binds the community together. Imagine if a paper sets up a wiki for every kid's league in every sport from age five onward. A centerpiece of this wiki is a multimedia profile page for every player where the parents, coaches, friends and relatives, teammates and team boosters can write about the child, post images or video clips of Johnny's first home run or touchdown pass. Someone can compare this child with his older brother, some other player in town, or with the child's previous performances. This will be an instant pageview and traffic booster for the site.

School Wikis

Education is a central topic for every community. To become a deeper part of its readers' lives, a newspaper can set up a wiki for every school in its served market. Through that wiki, teachers, administrators, parents and students can interact and collaborate on any topic that's of interest or concern to them. It will be a live collaborative forum conducted through the paper's website on a daily basis, making that site an indispensable part of people's lives.

People Profiles

People like human interest stories, and everyone has a story to tell. A wiki is the perfect tool to enable that expression with all the power of social media on the Internet. These stories can be categorized into different events and passages of life: birth, graduation, marriage, death etc.

Hot Topics

Aside from the gamut of usual topics that most people find interesting or useful, such as sports, entertainment, pets etc., a newspaper can also use wikis for high-impact issues that interest a particular community. Examples: global warming, illegal immigration, a proposed new sports stadium, or the scandal of the day.

In the end, it's all about creating compelling content and a forum of expression so your customers and readers have a reason to visit your site again and again.

Value Proposition

Cost

MindTouch Deki Wiki is the most leveraged Web publishing system that enables the site owner to generate large amounts of evergreen content at little incremental cost. By working with volunteer contributors and monitors, a publisher's existing editorial staff can leverage themselves many times over. **Getting large volumes of compelling content that boosts "monetizable" traffic for essentially free is a winning formula.**

> *"MindTouch Deki Wiki will generate large volumes of fresh content which will in turn build traffic, increase the ability to post more targeted advertising and deepen our connection with the dynamic San Diego County community. The need to harness community-generated content is the new reality for all online media, and MindTouch Deki Wiki provides us with a powerful tool to fulfill that need in a controlled way."*
>
> ***Chris Jennewein***
> ***V.P. Internet Operations***
> ***Union-Tribune Publishing Co.***

Revenues

- **Boost traffic** —UGC generates much greater traffic than the typical content written by the editorial staff. Two examples: 67% of the pageviews of one major metropolitan paper's website is generated by UGC. A mid-sized paper's photo gallery of 15,000 images generated 500,000 pageviews each month. Wikis are generating hundreds of millions of pageviews across thousands of websites.

- **Elevate search rankings** —This is accomplished through the intricate linking (backward and forward) feature of wiki pages that elevates the importance of the linked pages.

- **Enhance stickiness** —With more compelling and refreshed content, people stay longer, making the site more valuable. Stickiness is an increasingly important metric measured by advertisers.

- **More targeted ads** —The current practice is to scroll the existing ad inventory across a site without any rhyme or reason. People ignore or treat them as a nuisance. That's why current CPM rates are going down. With a wiki page, site owners can serve up much more targeted ads to the audience. Targeted ads increase click through rates and boost ad rates (CPM).

- **Higher revenues** — More targeted ads, higher CPMs and click-through rates mean more revenues. These are incremental revenues that couldn't have been generated by the current content creation process. Wikis' highly leveraged publishing characteristic makes this possible.

- **Build community and deepen brand loyalty** — By using leading-edge technology to make it a hub of information and interaction, a media property can build and strengthen existing or new communities of users and increase its brand equity.

Deployment Options

MindTouch offers three options for customers to deploy or build their online communities. The following is a summary of the choices, applicability, pros and cons of each choice:

	Hosted	**Internal Development**	**Turnkey**
Option	Simple community with limited features on shared hosting facility.	Develop own community with Deki Wiki with or without MindTouch developer and technical support.	Turnkey solution by MindTouch comprising of Deki Wiki software, services and technical support.
Target Customers	Prosumers, small groups, SMBs.	Medium to large enterprises with IT resources and know-how.	Organizations which want a turnkey solution to ensure getting the job done right in a cost effective and timely manner.
Applications	Personal and small communities. Test bench for larger enterprises.	Full-fledged online communities.	Large and multi-tenant online communities.
Benefits	Fast, easy and cheap. Free version available. Good enough for simple sites.	Do it yourself or with expert help from vendor.	• Accelerate time to market • Optimize features and functionality • Save money in long run • Knowledge transfer
Disadvantages	Limited features and functionality.	Requires a significant development effort and commitment.	None.
MindTouch Services			
• Support	Optional	Yes	Included
• Developer	X	Yes	Included

• Customization	Optional	Yes	Included
• Integration	X	Yes	Included
• Community development	Optional	Yes	Optional
• Training/ Consulting	Optional	Yes	Optional

Implementation Tips

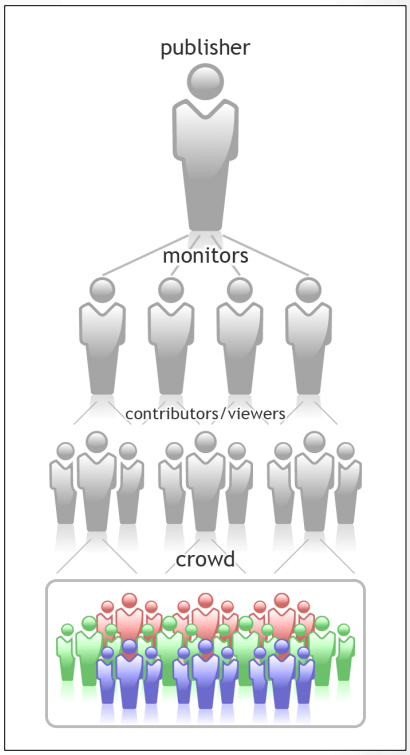
While different groups or topics may have variations on the fringes in terms of how their communities are created and nurtured, general best practices for building successful online communities are well-established. Some of the key ones are:

- **Make the first one succeed** —Don't start with grand plans for multiple wikis at once. Make the first one succeed, and the subsequent ones would be much easier. Obviously pick the first wiki to be about a topic which the targeted audience is passionate about.

- **Promotion** —It never hurts to promote a new community, online, offline, and at local events. Spread the word; make people aware of it. Get them excited about how they can benefit from interacting with other people, contribute to topics they are passionate about and the community at large.

- **Seeding initial content** —This is a critical element. It's like a dance party: an empty dance floor does not a successful party make, as everyone is waiting for someone else to start. Only after a few people start dancing will the next group join, then the rest come in; once the critical mass is reached, the party sustains itself. All you need to do is to lead the way, coax a little and provide an inviting environment for people to join. Let the unique word-of-mouth effect online (viral marketing) take over after that.

- **Eliminate ads at the start**—In this context, reduce to an absolute minimum, if not eliminate altogether, any ads during the audience buildup phase as the site may slow down or be cluttered with too many ads which may very likely deter signups. Any limited ads sold on a small and unsuccessful community site would be meaningless anyway, and defeats the whole purpose of building one in the first place. The most successful online communities usually focus on building up membership and traffic first, and only after that has been established solidly would they start monetizing the site. This strategy is based on the well-known phenomenon that people are often turned off by ads during a community's startup phase. But once a community has been established, the same people will view targeted ads on that community as a value-add feature that benefits everyone.



- **Leverage volunteers** — Dedicated volunteer contributors and monitors are the backbone of any online community, without whom the system will not work. Consider the typical community dynamics of 1-9-90 where 1% of the members are the dedicated contributors/ monitors who are

equivalent to your extended staff, 9% are the occasional contributors, and the rest are lurkers. This pyramid of commitment is typical in many group dynamics.

- **Changing roles** —Running a community necessarily changes and broadens the roles of existing content creation staff. Afterall, a significant new component of a company's web presence is added. For newspapers, for example, some reporters and editors may take on the additional roles of community monitor, moderator and collaborator. Leveraging the volunteers, the additional roles may not take much effort or time but can create the multiplier effect in content creation and community interaction.

- **Spirit of experimentation** — Realize that you are doing something new and innovative but necessary. There might be surprises (both good and bad) and setbacks. So keep tweaking and watching, make reasonable bets until you've found a new formula that works. The beauty of Web 2.0 is that things move fast, the cost of failure is low, but the payoff can be huge.

Content Management and Control

A precondition for successfully harnessing UGC is that it is done in a controlled manner, so the UGC is of sufficient veracity and quality to be included on the site. Most UGC is not news or journalism; rather it is just interesting material on a website that your audience wants to read or can use. The key realization for site owners to have is that there are ***tradeoffs*** to make when incorporating UGC into the mix, as they longer totally control the walled garden. There has to be a little loosening up for an online community to take hold. This adjustment must be made in order to harness the tremendous gains from capturing the people's voice.

The following ideas, tips and description of tools in Deki Wiki will help you make the tradeoffs appropriate to your online goals and corporate mission:

- **1% problem** — Despite the occasional well-publicized incidents of bad behavior online, the vast majority of UGC is innocuous and acceptable by most community standards. One major metro newspaper site surveyed the issue and found only1% bad content, and most of that are blog entries on politics, religion and other emotionally charged news items. Eliminating those controversial subjects will wipe out almost all objectionable content.

- **Wikis are thoughtful** —People's mindset and behavior change according to the medium they are working in. Blogs are prone to abuse because they provide such an easy way for the ill mannered to rant and rave. Wikis are designed for more in-depth, thoughtful and substantive writing and collaboration with kindred souls, so their users tend to act accordingly. It's overkill to use a wiki to spew one's venom; a blog is much better for that.

- **Content filters** —Deki Wiki has a set of standard word and content filters to weed out the obviously bad words. It can also use your list or combine any list you desire.

- **Editing rights** —This issue goes to the heart of the matter: who gets to edit. At minimum, no anonymous editing is allowed; only registered users can edit. Deki Wiki also filters out robots. Typically it is sufficient to grant all registered users editing rights. In advance cases, different classes of users can be created which will have different rights for different content types. For example, maybe only users who have actively contributed for more than six months without problems can edit political pages. Naturally there is the ability to revoke, suspend or reinstate editing rights through the account management system.

- **Page modes** —Each page in Deki Wiki can be set to read-only, comment-only or editable mode to allow editors very granular content controls to satisfy editorial policies and goals. This means that not only content categories (politics vs. restaurant reviews) can be managed, but each page within a category can be controlled, as well.

- **Multi-level page permissions** — Deki Wiki provides a sophisticated permission system for managing different user classes down to the page level. For example: the site administrators have rights to all pages, the sports editor and community monitor have rights to only sports communities, and the miscreants can only read but not comment or edit etc.

- **Versioning controls** — Deki Wiki provides a full page versioning capability that tracks every change to every page by person, date and subject. The authorized administrator, editor or monitor can pick any version to revert to if the current one is not acceptable. This audit trail is maintained through the life of the page.

- **Moderation scheme** —This is another critical decision: does someone need to approve the UGC before posting it on the website (pre-moderation), or take down objectionable content only after the fact through monitoring or alerted by users (post-moderation). As a practical matter, pre-moderation does not work since bottlenecks will invariably choke off contributions, and the community will never take hold. This approach is counter to the whole premise of UGC anyway. In fact, Wikipedia originally operated on this approach in order to check the facts, but couldn't keep up with the contributions and didn't take off. It was only after it switched to a post-moderation approach did it explode onto the scene. That's why practitioners of community building use the post-moderation method. Using trusted volunteer monitors, tips provided above, and content management tools provided by Deki Wiki, pre-moderation provides an acceptable tradeoff for harnessing UGC in a big way.

Technology

The MindTouch Deki Wiki platform is designed to accommodate flexible deployment options, while remaining scalable and cost-effective. At the heart of it is a sophisticated service-oriented architecture that binds all components together and makes them work seamlessly. This design makes Deki Wiki equally adept at handling large wiki sites or thousands of smaller ones. Each wiki can be configured with its own look-and-feel and customizations. Community sites built on Deki Wiki present well and offer rich, interactive user-experiences with state-of-the-art WYSIWYG editing, dynamic image galleries, and intuitive navigation via hierarchies and tags.

Key Features

Content Authoring • WYSIWYG editing • Embed multimedia files • Interactive image galleries • Pages indexed, linkable, searchable & tagable • Easy and powerful application extensions and mashups	**Content Management** • Multi-level page permissions • Edit, comment & read-only modes • Version tracking • Flexible page structure • Content & word filters • User abuse management • Restorable content
Integration and Admin • Plug into existing website • Customizable interface • Single sign-on • User & group permissions • Administrative GUI • Easy style changes • XML data exchange • Extensible service-oriented architecture	**Support and Security** • Ongoing tech support • Continuous software updates and patches • Developer support plan • Consulting and training services available

Integration and Extensibility

Deki Wiki adds on its strong presentation foundation with advanced integration capabilities allowing wikis to be meshed into an existing infrastructure.

For instance, Deki Wiki hosts a bi-directional REST API (Application Programming Interface) that allows content and its meta-data to be repurposed by other applications. Data is exchanged via XML and

XHTML documents. Using these open formats ensures that blogs, forums, or even editorial systems can reuse data from the wiki or that it can be adapted for devices, such as mobile phones. Similarly, new content can be published into the wiki from other applications, such as content management systems.

In addition to offering a flexible API, Deki Wiki also provides extensibility through its service model. For instance, Deki Wiki allows custom login services to co-exist with its built-in user management system. This means that existing users don't need to reregister with the wiki, nor do system administrators need to synchronize multiple user databases. Instead, Deki Wiki can delegate identification to one or more custom login services. This approach results in greater control and less overhead when integrating a wiki into an existing infrastructure. The service model is also used to allow custom dynamic content extensions. This is achieved by registering specialized services called "MindTouch Extensions" which enables users of the wiki to embed dynamic content that may come from other databases or processing systems: for example, upcoming events from an in-house database, prices from a retailer's pricelist, or stock information from another web-service. With Live Data services, each wiki can have unique capabilities that distinguish it from others, and these capabilities can be added at anytime and without requiring any changes to the Deki Wiki platform.

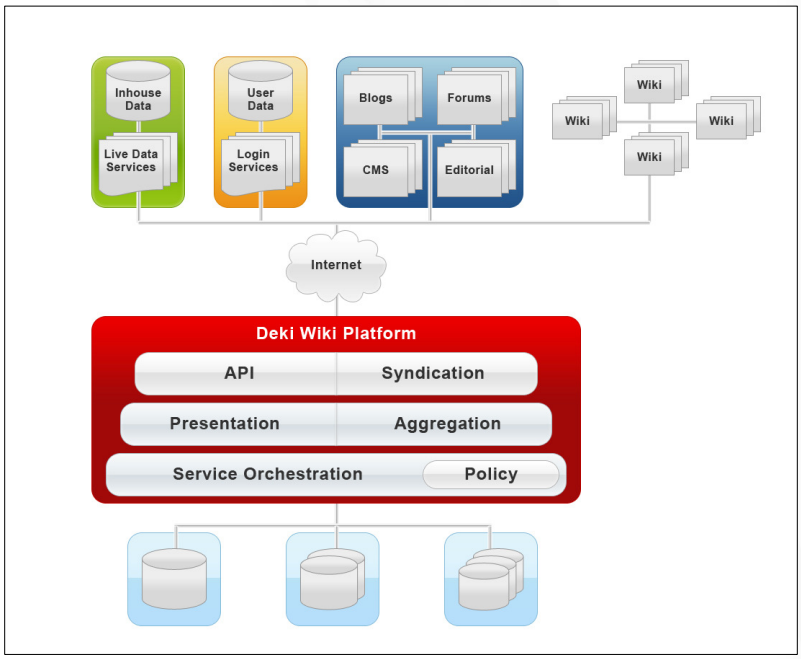
This level of integration and extensibility is one of the unique benefits offered by the Deki Wiki platform. With it, customers can leverage their existing infrastructure investment and capitalize on community-generated content for their various media outlets. With Deki Wiki, customers get an open platform that can be tightly meshed into their existing business practices while enabling new opportunities.

Deki Wiki Architecture

Deki Wiki runs in a secure Linux environment using Microsoft .Net technology for its core services.

The topmost layer is responsible for bi-directional communication, including the API and the content syndication, which allows other systems to subscribe to various RSS/Atom feeds of the wiki. All data is exchanged by default in XML, but can also be retrieved in JSON, PHP, microformat, and other representations.

The second layer handles the presentation of wiki pages and aggregation of external data sources. Wiki pages are sanitized for malicious content, and normalized to ensure adherence to the XHML standard.



Optionally, content can also be analyzed for banned words. Lastly, the presentation layer can also generate detailed change reports between revisions of pages.

The bottommost layer is responsible for enforcing content policies, such as who can see what and who can modify what, as well as coordinating activities between the various services of the Deki Wiki platform.

Finally, the database resources can be customized for each Deki Wiki customer and can range from shared database servers to dedicated severs to redundant clusters.