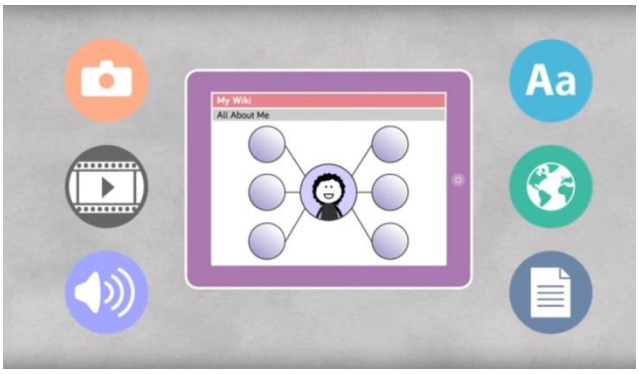
Wiki's in Oxfordshire



The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reforms have put children, young people and their families at the heart of planning. Oxfordshire County Council wanted to identify an easy to use tool which would empower children, young people and their families and support person centred planning. Research identified wikis, developed and supported by Rix Research and Media. Based at the University of East London, Rix Research and Media have been working for over 15 years to develop ways of using new technologies to make life changing tools like the RIX Wiki available and affordable for people with learning disabilities, their families, carers, and support professionals.

Wikis are simple, accessible, secure and easy to build personal websites. They can be used to multimedia person-centred plans that use pictures, words, video and sound to capture the voice, skills, aspirations and needs of an individual. Although originally designed for and with those with learning disabilities, a wiki can be used by a wide range of vulnerable children and young people. The contract to be able to provide wikis in Oxfordshire has been in place since September 2015.

A group of **Early Adopters** reflecting parent/carers, education settings, Oxfordshire County Council, Social Care and Health formed a steering group to pilot and evaluate the use of wikis in Oxfordshire. Abingdon and Witney College, Kingfisher and Frank Wise Special Schools have set up wikis for young people and their families via their setting, whilst other colleagues have supported individual families to develop a wiki themselves. Rix Wiki have provided support via induction, meetings and training for Early Adopters and parent/carers.

A **showcase event** was held in October 2016 at the Unipart Centre. 80 young people, parents/carers and professionals attended one of 3 sessions offered. Young people and families who are using wikis shared their experiences alongside the professionals working with them. Feedback after the event was unanimously positive

> *I attended the Wiki showcase event tonight which was very informative and motivating! (Father requesting wiki)*
>
> *I came to the presentation last week - thanks it was great (mother requesting wiki after conference)*

I attended the Wiki Showcase Event today (morning session) - it was informative and well run.(mother requesting wiki after conference)

I really enjoyed the WIKI presentation yesterday and I'm looking forward to creating a WIKI for my son (mother requesting wiki after conference)

Thoroughly enjoyable event, Tim (student who shared his wiki at the event) spent today parading around school proudly sharing his news with anyone willing to listen! A big pat on the back to all involved, the Wikis on show were fantastic and gave me many new ideas to introduce to the students and parents (professional)

I thought it was a fantastic day with such a great range of material I learnt so much about my students too - and I think working on their wikis has given them so much confidence in their own ability to communicate what matters to them, and to really believe that people are interested. I forgot to talk about how we have been using wikis in students EHC Plan meetings, which has been huge benefit (professional)

Where are we now?

- As of February 2017 there are a total of 206 **wikis registered**. 79 of these are owned by the family. Abingdon and Witney College support 64 young people with their wikis and are clear about the many benefits, not least about supporting effective transition, both into college from school and when moving on from college. Kingfisher School has decided that every pupil will be offered a wiki and Frank Wise School is also considering how to promote their use further. Mabel Prichard School has begun to trial wikis within 3 classes
- Information about wikis (including a link to a simple animation) and access to the **registration form** is available via the Local Offer pages https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/person-centred-planning-wiki
- Videos of local wiki users are being developed to add to the Local Offer page and for use in future training about wikis
- Schools News, SENDIASS and Inclusion Consultant SENCo networks are being used to promote wider use of wikis to children, young people and families
- A mother who is a wiki owner is so convinced of the benefits she has arranged to talk to a local support group for parents of children with SEND in mainstream schools to show them how easy it is to use, is promoting via her social media networks and has offered to help with future training
- The Early Years Autism Project is developing a wiki to promote the core offer available to parents and carers via the Local Offer pages

Extending the contract funded by Oxfordshire County Council for another year is being investigated, with the possibility of a second year after that being highly likely. This will allow time for more settings and families to become wiki owners

thus supporting a wider establishment of self-advocacy and person centred planning.

The trial of wikis in Oxfordshire has shown their power as a self-advocacy tool. One young person recently shared what having a wiki meant:

'It makes it easier for me…it's brilliant'.