Page ownership in MediaWiki

Yaron Koren
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About me

• MediaWiki extension developer / entrepreneur / author
• My company: WikiWorks

• My book: Working with MediaWiki
Page ownership

- Integral to some content-management systems, like SharePoint, but an afterthought in MediaWiki
- The single biggest weakness of MediaWiki for the enterprise? (Now that VisualEditor exists for WYSIWYG)
The 3 pillars of page ownership

Setting access control * Approving edits * Notification of changes
Access control

- Generally, this means control of who can read, and who can edit
- But read control is difficult/impossible in MediaWiki
- ...and actually, it apparently doesn't work that well in other systems either
Controlling editing permissions

- See ArticleProtection extension
Approving edits

The idea: anyone can edit a page, but only the approved version of the page is shown.

- A “nicer” solution than disabling editing.

Two extensions:

- Flagged Revisions (aka FlaggedRevs, aka PendingChanges)

- Approved Revs
Flagged Revisions

- Created and maintained by the WMF, for use on Wikipedia
- First released in March 2007
- In heavy use on German Wikipedia, in light use on English Wikipedia, elsewhere...?
- Complex: each page review includes metrics for describing article quality
Approved Revs

- Created by me, first released in June 2010
- A consciously simpler alternative to Flagged Revisions
- Only two actions: “approve” and “unapprove”
### Approved Revs vs. Flagged Revisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flagged Revisions:</th>
<th>Approved Revs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 4 user rights</td>
<td>• 2 user rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 3 user groups</td>
<td>• 0 user groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 15 global variables</td>
<td>• 6 global variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 3 log types</td>
<td>• 1 log type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 11 special pages</td>
<td>• 1 special page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 9 DB tables</td>
<td>• 1 DB table</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Page ownership with Flagged Revisions

- Nonexistent? I'm not sure.
Page ownership with Approved Revs

- Currently minimal
- “Ownership” = approval rights
- Admins “own” every page
- Non-admins “own” their own user page, plus pages that they created
More page ownership with Approved Revs

- This would be great to have
- May be on the way?
This is surprisingly not well supported.

Existing solutions:

- Watchlists / WhoiIsWatching extension
- Semantic Watchlist extension
- PageCreationNotif extension

All of these handle only subsets of what might be useful.
An ideal MW notification system

Would watch for any subset of these actions:

- Creation of new pages
- Edits to existing pages
- Changes in a specific template field
- Changes of a specific template field to a specific value
Ideal notification system: pages

...for any of the following sets of pages:

- All pages
- All pages in one or more namespaces
- All pages in one or more categories
- Some specified list of pages
Ideal notification system: recipients

...and the following people would be notified:

- Users in one more user groups
- Users in a specified list
- Users who sign up to be notified
- Possibly email addresses not related to MediaWiki users

...with (potentially) different sets for different pages
Ideal notification system: messaging

Notification would be done by some subset of:

- Email
- The Flow extension
- Calling a hook, to let other extensions perform their own actions
### All options (except notification type)

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<tr>
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<th>In...</th>
<th>And notify...</th>
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<td>User groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Page edits</td>
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<td>A list of users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Template field changes</td>
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<td>Opt-in users</td>
</tr>
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<td>Template field changes to value</td>
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# Semantic Watchlist

**Watch for...**
- Page creation
- Page edits
- Template field changes
- Template field changes to value

**In...**
- **All pages**
- A list of pages
- Namespaces
- Categories

**And notify...**
- User groups
- A list of users
- Opt-in users
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Revision approvals & notification go together

If you don't know a revision happened, you can't approve it!

Still, it might not make sense to have one extension that handles both... not “modular”.
Needed: a new notification extension?

- Would be a “framework” for handling all the different kinds of notifications
- Would do template/field monitoring – ideally without requiring SMW/Cargo
  - (i.e., parse the page diff directly)
- Anyone interested in discussing such a thing? Funding it?
Questions/comments/complaints