

DOMAIN: Collaboration Tools
TOPIC: Blogs & wikis

ARTICLE: Business Information Review (2007) “Blogs and wikis: A personal journey” by Ruth Ward, Head of Knowledge Systems and Development at Allen & Overy LLP, an international legal practice with offices in 19 countries, 4800 staff and 450 partners, founded in 1930. Her duties include the development and management of new knowledge management systems, tools and coordination of major KN projects.

ABSTRACT: Describes the use of social software and social media, incorporating blogs and wikis to develop websites to support internal communication and collaboration in a law firm. Explains that blogs foster regular and timely personal communication for a defined group, and how wikis can be utilized to create knowledge resources or as a collaborative working or project management tool. Outlines the traditional knowledge management model for law firms and how, upon review, it prompted an investigation of how “social media” might support the firm’s know-how systems. Provides advice on how to successfully set up an initial blog or wiki project (“10 Tips for Success”).

- + Allen & Overy LLP have developed a number of websites to support internal communication and collaboration that include blog and wiki components
- + Members of the relevant site can contribute to the group blog, either to post a new discussion or a bookmark or to post a comment on an existing discussion
- + Select a category to post a new discussion and select a theme (user-defined classification know as social tagging)
- + Members receive an aggregated daily email alert for each site linking to each new discussion and comment appearing in the blog and wiki
- + Provide a link between the business needs and the available software and define an initial functionality set and design template

SUMMARY: Blogs and wikis do offer great potential for teams that want to open up their management and working processes and promote a more participatory and collaborative approach to projects and daily operational activities. Identify, however, what precise business objectives one thinks their sites will address.

