

8

Social Networking and MediaWiki

The MediaWiki skin for JazzMeet seems good, but we can still add certain things to our wiki to make it stand out. In this chapter, we will discuss the following:

- Integrating Twitter feeds in to your wiki's template
- Embedding and styling YouTube videos in your wiki
- Using social bookmarking services such as Furl and Facebook

Integrating Twitter with MediaWiki

Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com>) is a micro-blogging service that allows users to convey the world (or at least the small portion of it on Twitter) what they are doing, in messages of 140 characters or less.



It is possible to embed these messages in external websites, which is what we will be doing for JazzMeet. We can use the updates to inform our wiki's visitors of the latest JazzMeet being held across the world, and they can send a response to the JazzMeet Twitter account.

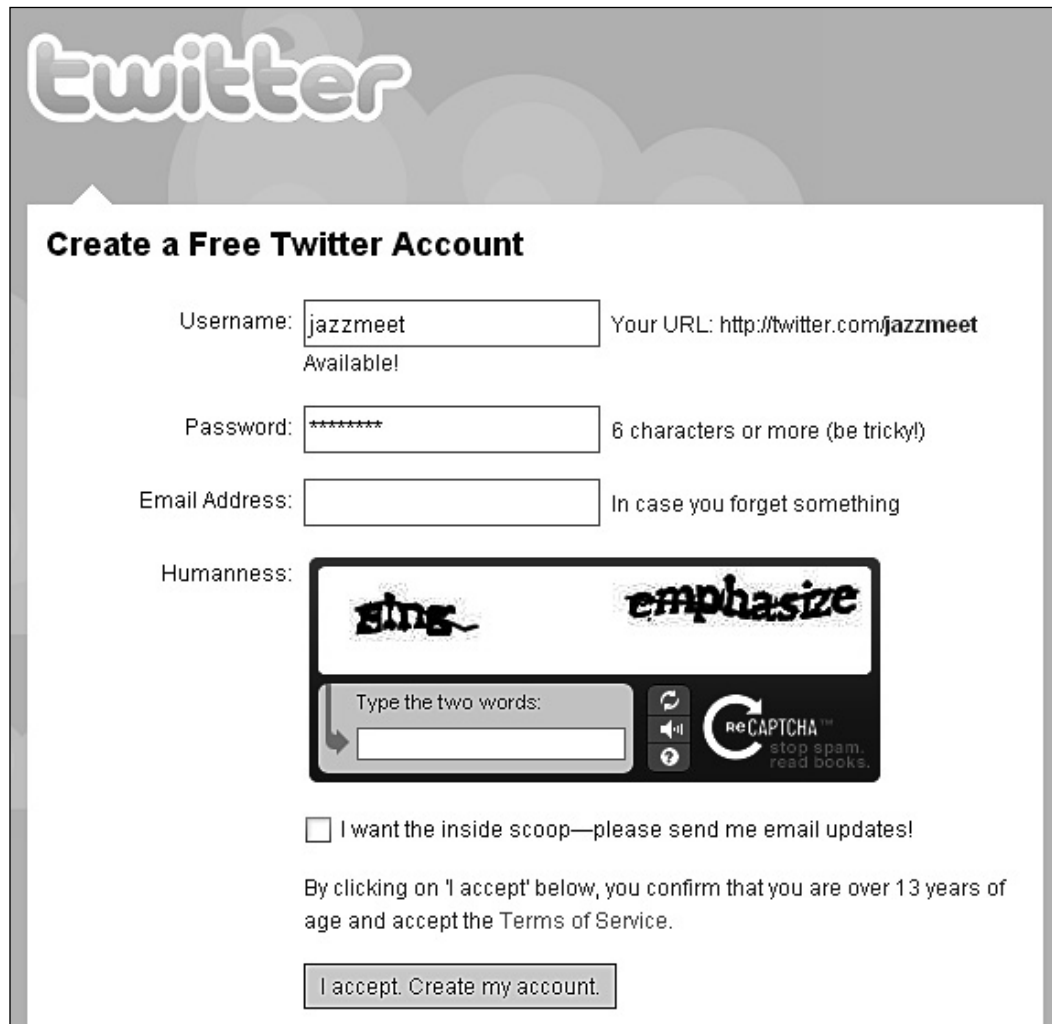
Shorter Links

Because Twitter only allows posts of up to 140 characters, many Twitter users make use of URL-shortening services such as Tiny URL (<http://tinyurl.com>), and notlong (<http://notlong.com>) to turn long web addresses into short, more manageable URLs. Tiny URL assigns a random URL such as <http://tinyurl.com/3ut9p4>, while notlong allows you to pick a free sub-domain to redirect to your chosen address, such as <http://asgkasdgadg.notlong.com>.

Twitter automatically shortens web addresses in your posts.

Creating a Twitter Account

Creating a Twitter account is quite easy. Just fill in the username, password, and email address fields, and submit the registration form, once you have read and accepted the terms and conditions. If your chosen username is free, your account is created instantly.



The screenshot shows the Twitter registration interface. At the top left is the Twitter logo. Below it is the heading "Create a Free Twitter Account". The form contains the following fields and elements:

- Username:** A text box containing "jazzmeet" with the text "Available!" below it. To the right, it says "Your URL: http://twitter.com/jazzmeet".
- Password:** A text box containing seven asterisks. To the right, it says "6 characters or more (be tricky!)".
- Email Address:** An empty text box. To the right, it says "In case you forget something".
- Humanness:** A reCAPTCHA challenge box containing the words "ging" and "emphasize". Below the words is a text box with the prompt "Type the two words:". To the right of the text box are icons for refresh, volume, and a reCAPTCHA logo with the text "stop spam. read books."
- I want the inside scoop—please send me email updates!
- By clicking on 'I accept' below, you confirm that you are over 13 years of age and accept the Terms of Service.
-

Once your account has been created, you can change the settings such as your display name and your profile's background image, to help blur the distinction between your website and your Twitter profile. Colors can be specified as "hex" values under the **Design** tab of your Twitter account's settings section. The following color codes change the link colors to our JazzMeet's palette of browns and reds:

JazzMeet (MediaWiki)

Account Password Devices Notices Picture **Design**

Design Your Twitter

Below are the current design settings for your Twitter account. You can change, preview, save, or restore to factory default settings any time.

Use the Twitter default style
 Use my custom style below

Background Color:

Background Image: Use background image (Twitter Clouds) Tile

Images must be smaller than 800k. GIF, JPG, PNG.

Text Color:

Name Color:

Link Color:

Sidebar Fill Color:

Sidebar Border Color:

As you can see in the screenshot, JazzMeet's Twitter profile now looks a little more like the JazzMeet wiki. By doing this, the visitors catching up with JazzMeet's events on Twitter will not be confused by a sudden change in color scheme:



Embedding Twitter Feeds in MediaWiki

Twitter provides a few ways to embed your latest posts in to your own website(s); simply log in and go to <http://www.twitter.com/badges>.

- **Flash:** With this option you can show just your posts, or your posts and your friends' most recent posts on Twitter.
- **HTML and JavaScript:** You can configure the code to show between 1 and 20 of your most recent Twitter posts.

As JazzMeet isn't really the sort of wiki the visitors would expect to find on Flash, we will be using the HTML and JavaScript version. You are provided with the necessary code to embed in your website or wiki. We will add it to the JazzMeet skin template, as we want it to be displayed on every page of our wiki, just beneath our sponsor links. Refer to the following code:

```
<div id="twitter_div">
<h2 class="twitter-title">Twitter Updates</h2>
<ul id="twitter_update_list">
</ul>
</div>
<script type="text/javascript" src="http://twitter.com/javascripts/
blogger.js"></script>
<script type="text/javascript" src="http://twitter.com/statuses/user_
timeline/jazzmeet.json?callback=twitterCallback2&count=5"></script>
```

The JavaScript given at the bottom of the code can be moved just above the `</body>` tag of your wiki's skin template. This will help your wiki to load other important elements of your wiki before the Twitter status.



You will need to replace "jazzmeet" in the code with your own Twitter username, otherwise you will receive JazzMeet's Twitter updates, and not your own.

It is important to leave the unordered list of ID `twitter_update_list` as it is, as this is the element the JavaScript code looks for to insert a list item containing each of your twitter messages in the page.

Styling Twitter's HTML

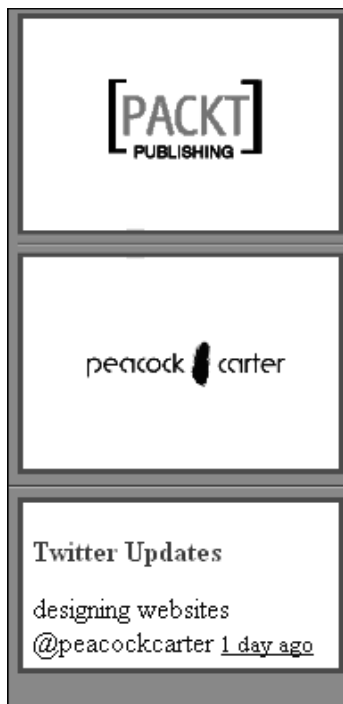
We need to style the Twitter HTML by adding some CSS to change the colors and style of the Twitter status code:

```
#twitter_div {
background: #FFF;
border: 3px #BEB798 solid;
color: #BEB798;
margin: 0;
padding: 5px;
width: 165px;
}
#twitter_div a {
color: #8D1425 !important;
}
ul#twitter_update_list {
list-style-type: none;
margin: 0;
padding: 0;
}
#twitter_update_list li {
color: #38230C;
display: block;
}
h2.twitter-title {
color: #BEB798;
font-size: 100%;
}
```

There are only a few CSS IDs and classes that need to be taken care of. They are as follows:

- `#twitter_div` is the element that contains the Twitter feeds.
- `#twitter_update_list` is the ID applied to the unordered list. Styling this affects how your Twitter feeds are displayed.
- `.twitter-title` is the class applied to the Twitter feed's `<h2>` heading (which you can remove, if necessary).

Our wiki's skin for JazzMeet now has JazzMeet's Twitter feed embedded in the right-hand column, allowing visitors to keep up-to-date with the latest JazzMeet news.



Inserting Twitter as Page Content

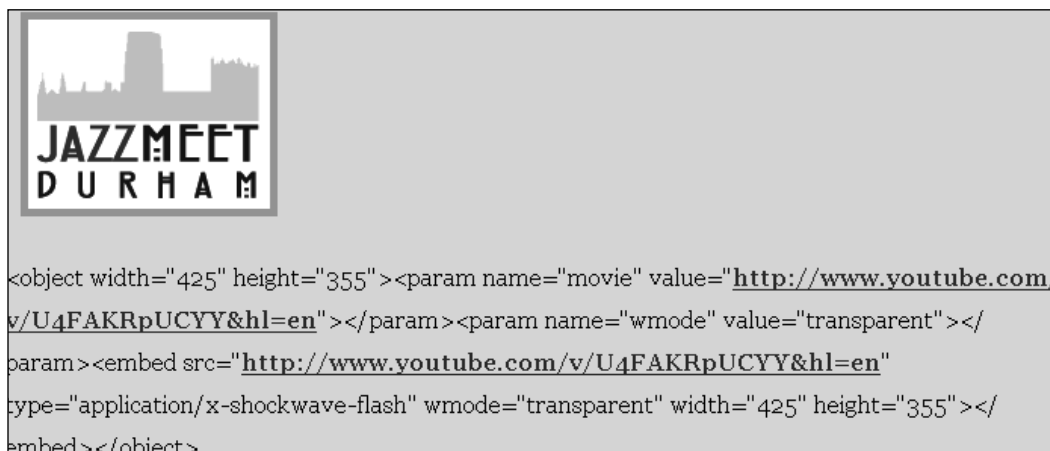
MediaWiki does not allow JavaScript to be embedded in a page via the "edit" function, so you won't be able to insert a Twitter status feed directly in a page unless it is in the template itself. Even if you inserted the relevant JavaScript links into your MediaWiki skin template, they are relevant only for one Twitter profile ("jazzmeet", in our case).

YouTube in MediaWiki

YouTube (<http://youtube.com>) is a video sharing website that allows registered users to upload videos, and allows visitors to watch streamed videos that are categorized by tags. A feature useful to JazzMeet is that the videos can be embedded in external websites, by inserting the code provided on the video's page in to your own website. The code looks similar to the following example:

```
<object width="425" height="355"><param name="movie" value="http://www.youtube.com/v/U4FAKRpUCYY&hl=en"></param><param name="wmode" value="transparent"></param><embed src="http://www.youtube.com/v/U4FAKRpUCYY&hl=en" type="application/x-shockwave-flash" wmode="transparent" width="425" height="355"></embed></object>
```

This isn't particularly useful for MediaWiki, though, since you don't (generally) want videos in the template itself, but in the content area, where the HTML is presented as text within the document:



MediaWiki Extension: VideoFlash

We can overcome this problem with the use of an extension for MediaWiki called VideoFlash (<http://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Extension:VideoFlash>). VideoFlash allows videos from a number of popular video websites, including YouTube and Google Video, to be embedded in your MediaWiki wiki with relative ease.

Installing VideoFlash

The instructions for installing VideoFlash are included on the website, but we will go through installing them on our JazzMeet wiki for clarity. Firstly, you will need to create a file called `videoflash.php` in the `extensions` directory of your MediaWiki installation. You should copy and paste the code provided in the extension's page on MediaWiki's website into this file.

Secondly, you will need to add a line of code at the end of your `LocalSettings.php` file, which is usually located in your MediaWiki's installation's root directory. If MediaWiki is installed at `http://www.example.com/wiki/`, you should be able to find `LocalSettings.php` at `http://www.example.com/wiki/LocalSettings.php`. The earlier versions of MediaWiki close the file with `?>`: the `require_once` statement below needs to be above this "end of file" marker:

```
require_once("extensions/videoflash.php");
```

This tells MediaWiki that you have installed the VideoFlash extension, and helps you to find the relevant file.

Embedding YouTube Videos in Page Content

If any visitor wants to embed the video located at `http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4FAKRpUCYY`, they can now do so by inserting the following wiki-markup in a MediaWiki page on the JazzMeet wiki:

```
<videoflash>U4FAKRpUCYY</videoflash>
```

The page should now display the relevant YouTube video.



Embedding Videos from other Video Providers

Google videos can be embedded with a similar code once the VideoFlash MediaWiki extension has been installed:

```
<videoflash type="googlevideo">U4FAKRpUCYY</videoflash>
```

Telling your Visitors

It is true that videos can be embedded into your wiki, but your visitors need to know that they can be embedded. There are two ways of conveying this information to your visitors. Either display the `Help:Editing` page, which is linked to the edit interface, or edit the text of the edit interface to inform your wiki's visitors that the ability to add videos from services such as YouTube is available.

The edit interface's text is similar to the one shown here:

Please note that all contributions to JazzMeet may be edited, altered, or removed by other contributors. If you don't want your writing to be edited mercilessly, then don't submit it here.

You are also promising us that you wrote this yourself, or copied it from a public domain or similar free resource (see [Project:Copyrights](#) for details). **DO NOT SUBMIT COPYRIGHTED WORK WITHOUT PERMISSION!**

Summary:

| [Editing help](#) (opens in new window)

To alter the text in the edit interface, go to `MediaWiki:Copyrightwarning` or `MediaWiki:Copyrightwarning2`. This text is displayed directly above the edit summary box and the submission button for the edit. We will add the following HTML to `MediaWiki:Copyrightwarning2` to tell our visitors that they can embed videos:

```
<h3>Add Videos to JazzMeet!</h3>
You can now add videos to JazzMeet using the following code:
<tt>
<video>YouTube video ID</video>
</tt>
Videos from Google Video can be added with the following code:
<tt>
<video type="googlevideo">Google video ID</video>
</tt>
For more information, see [[Help:Adding videos to JazzMeet]].
```

This changes the message in the edit interface of our JazzMeet wiki to:

Add Videos to JazzMeet! [\[EDIT\]](#)

You can now add videos to JazzMeet using the following code: `<video>YouTube video ID</video>`

Videos from Google Video can be added with the following code: `<video type="googlevideo">Google video ID</video>`

For more information, see **Help:Adding videos to JazzMeet**.

Please note that all contributions to JazzMeet may be edited, altered, or removed by other contributors. If you don't want your writing to be edited mercilessly, then don't submit it here. You are also promising us that you wrote this yourself, or copied it from a public domain or similar free resource (see [Project:Copyrights](#) for details). **PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT COPYRIGHTED WORK WITHOUT PERMISSION!**

Summary:

This is a minor edit Watch this page

[Cancel](#) | [Editing help](#) (opens in new window)


Social Bookmarking

Social bookmarking allows people to "bookmark", or make a note of, the websites they like or find useful, and share these bookmarks with other social bookmarkers while surfing the Internet.

Traditionally, bookmarking was done through the Internet browsing software, such as Internet Explorer, Safari, Firefox, or Opera. With social bookmarking, your bookmarks are not confined to one browser, but are stored online.

The following two options are available for enabling social bookmarking on your website:

- Link to each individual social bookmarking service that you wish to use
- Use a social bookmarking aggregator such as Socializer or AddThis

 Even if you do not have links to allow visitors to bookmark your website, many services allow their users to install toolbars in their browser, which allows your website to be added anyway. Adding these links will help to spread your wiki and its new skin very fast.

Individual Social Bookmarking Services

There are huge numbers of social bookmarking services on the Internet, and quite a number of these have become reasonably popular. We will look at some of the more popular bookmarking services such as:

- Mister Wong
- Furl
- Facebook

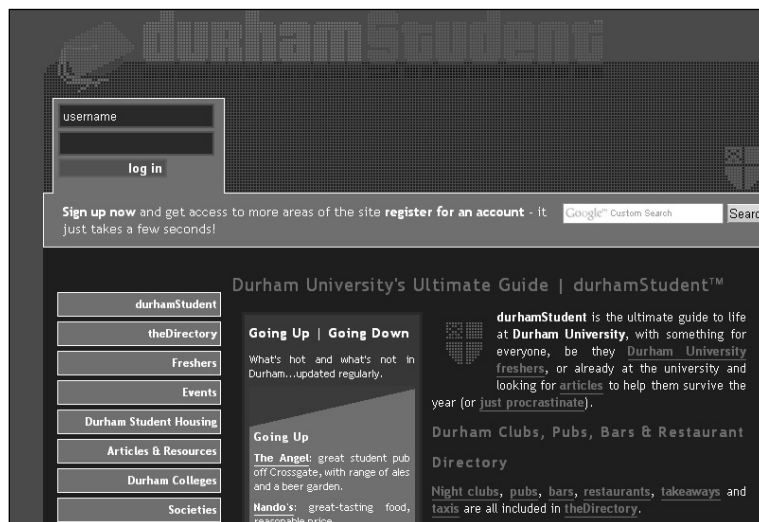
Your Wiki's Audience

One thing to consider before adding social bookmarking service links to your wiki is your audience. For instance, if your wiki is technology-related, you may find it better to use Digg than Facebook, as Digg is more popular than Facebook for your wiki's intended audience. If your wiki's visitors are primarily from Germany, you may find Mister Wong more useful than Furl, because Mister Wong is more popular with the German users.

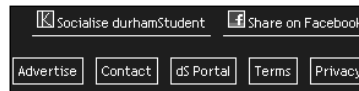
There are many other social bookmarking services available, including Del.icio.us (<http://del.icio.us>) and StumbleUpon (<http://stumbleupon.com>), which you can use after asking your wiki's visitors by means of a poll, or following simple experimentation.

Example of Audience

durhamStudent (<http://durhamStudent.co.uk>) is a niche website aimed at students of Durham University in the UK:



The durhamStudent website uses both the methods of social bookmarking discussed earlier, providing links for eKstreme's Socializer and a link to an individual bookmarking service, Facebook:



Facebook was linked individually here because it is incredibly popular among the students at Durham University (indeed, the Durham network is only open to those with a university email address). Although Facebook's bookmarking service is accessible through Socializer, it is also linked separately as the website's target audience is more likely to use that service than any other.

Mister Wong

Mister Wong, <http://www.mister-wong.com>, is popular with German and other European users (though not so much in Great Britain), and allows the users to store their bookmarks while maintaining their privacy, with the ability to set bookmarks as "public" or "private".

The screenshot shows the Mister Wong website interface. At the top, there is a search bar with a search button and a login section. Below the search bar is a navigation menu with links for Overview, Spotlight, Sign up, Login, Groups, Stuff, Help, Contact, and Blog. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Welcome to Mister Wong:** A section with a title and a brief description of the service, followed by a "Get started!" button and a "Learn more" link.
- Spotlight:** A section featuring a profile for Martin Wells, a technical writer and founder of Tangler, with a "Visit bookmarks" link.
- Browser Burners:** A section listing various websites, including Adium - Xtras - Home, Vexed, and Lose the Blogger 15: 25+ Web Apps for Dieting & Get ...
- Right Sidebar:** Contains promotional banners for "GET THE NEW WIDGETS AND GADGETS" and "MISTER WONG GOES MOBILE".

Generally, the social bookmarking services ask for two pieces of information when creating a link from your website to them: the URL (address) of the page or website you want to add, and the title of that page or website, as you wish it to be posted.

Linking to Mister Wong

To link to Mister Wong, create a link where you want your social bookmark to be shown in your MediaWiki template in the following format:

```
http://www.mister-wong.com/index.php?action=addurl&bm_url=www.example.com &bm_description=Your+Website
```



Spaces are automatically escaped with a "+" sign by the majority of social bookmarking services. You don't have to worry about properly escaping spaces in the title of your link when linking to bookmarking services.

To use these services with MediaWiki, we will be required to use some PHP that we covered in Chapter 5. In particular, we will need the following:

- The page's title, which we can get with
`<?php $this->text('pagetitle') ?>`
- The website's address, retrievable with
`<?php $this->urlencode('serverurl') ?>`

For simplicity, we will assume that our visitors will always want to bookmark JazzMeet's homepage, `http://www.jazzmeet.com`. Thus, the code in our MediaWiki template would appear as follows:

```
<a href= "http://www.mister-wong.com/index.php?action=addurl&bm_
url=www.jazzmeet.com &bm_description=JazzMeet" title="Bookmark
JazzMeet with Mister Wong">Bookmark JazzMeet with Mister Wong</a>
```

What Mister Wong Users See

If a visitor to your wiki decides to bookmark your wiki with Mister Wong, they will be greeted with a screen similar to the following, with fields for the address of the website (URL), title, related keywords ("tags"), and a comment about the website:

jazzmeet's **MISTER WONG** jazzmeet | 0 Bookmarks | Messages | Logout

Search: All My Bookmarks Tags

Newest on the Blog:
We're a candidate for a startup award
New Bookmark Info Pages

Overview Spotlight **Add** My Bookmarks Buddies Groups Profile Stuff Help Contact Blog

Add bookmark

Here you can enter a URL and additional information.

URL:
Only http://, https://, and ftp://

Title:
Up to 100 characters

Comment:
Up to 200 characters

Tags:
Keywords separated by space characters

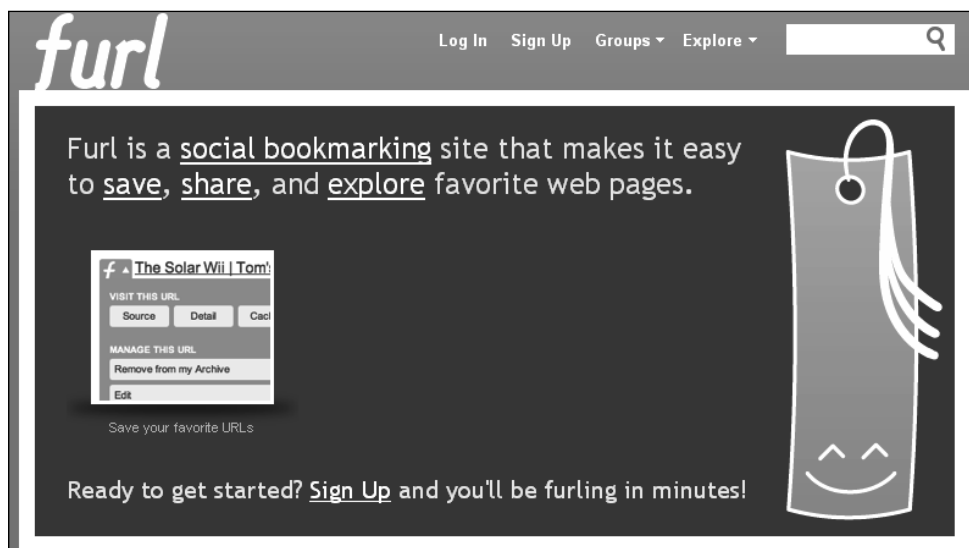
Status:
 Public (default)
 Private

My Tags

They are also given the option to bookmark as either "public", allowing other Mister Wong users to see it, or "private", which restricts the bookmarked website to their account only.

Furl

Furl, <http://www.furl.net>, has functionality that is similar to Mister Wong.



Linking to Furl

Very similar to Mister Wong, you can create a link to bookmark a particular page in MediaWiki by inserting the following in to your skin template:

```
<a href= "http://www.furl.net/storeIt.jsp?t=JazzMeet&u=www.jazzmeet.com" title="Bookmark JazzMeet with Furl">Bookmark JazzMeet with Furl</a>
```

What Furl Users See

Furl has the same features as Mister Wong. But the Furl team has added its own twist to social bookmarking, with the added features of being able to add a rating (out of five stars), marking the bookmark as "read" or "unread", and creating "groups" to better organize your bookmarked websites:

The screenshot shows a 'Save a Bookmark' form with the following fields and options:

- URL:** www.jazzmeet.com
- Title:** JazzMeet
- Topics:** (empty text box with a dropdown arrow and 'Clear' button)
- Groups:** (none)
- Rating:** 4 stars (5 stars total)
- Mark As:** Public Private Read Unread
- Comments:** (empty text box with a dropdown arrow)
- Clipping:** (empty text box with a dropdown arrow)
- Keywords:** (empty text box)

Buttons: 'Save & Email' and 'Save' (top right and bottom right).

This information is provided by the user, so you don't need to specify any more parameters in addition to the page title and your wiki's address.

Facebook

Facebook (<http://facebook.com>) is a very popular social networking site that allows people to share photographs with each other. In 2006, Facebook launched its social bookmarking feature.

The screenshot shows the Facebook homepage layout. On the left is a login sidebar with fields for Email and Password, a 'Remember me' checkbox, a 'Login' button, and a 'Forgot Password?' link. The main content area features the Facebook logo, a tagline 'Facebook is a social utility that connects you with the people around you.', and a 'Use Facebook to...' section with icons for keeping up with friends, sharing photos, controlling privacy, and reconnecting with old classmates. Below this is a 'Find your Friends on Facebook' search bar and a 'Use the Friend Finder' link. On the right is a 'Sign up for Facebook' form with fields for Full Name, Your Email, and New Password, dropdown menus for Sex, Month, Day, and Year, and a 'Sign Up' button. A disclaimer at the bottom of the sign-up form states: 'By clicking Sign Up, you are indicating that you have read and agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy.' The footer contains copyright information 'Facebook © 2008 | English' and navigation links: 'About Find Friends Advertising Developers Terms Privacy Help'.

Linking to Facebook

To link to Facebook's social bookmarking service, we can use the following code:

```
<a href= " http://www.facebook.com/sharer.php?u=http://www.jazzmeet.com" title="Bookmark JazzMeet with Facebook">Bookmark JazzMeet with Facebook</a>
```

Note that we do not need to specify the page's title, as Facebook will automatically insert this, along with an (optional) image and a brief description of your website.

What Facebook Users See

Facebook's sharing features are a lot more limited than other social bookmarking services. The user is given an option to change the title or the address being bookmarked, and write a short description of the website:



The image shows a screenshot of the Facebook sharing interface. At the top, there is a dark bar with the word "facebook" in white. Below this, there are two buttons: "Send a Message" and "Post to Profile". The "Post to Profile" button is highlighted. Underneath, there is a "Comment:" label followed by a text input field containing the text "JazzMeet: community for jazz enthusiasts around the world!". Below the input field, there is a section for "Choose a Thumbnail" with a checked box next to "No Picture". To the right of this, the title "Main Page - JazzMeet" and the URL "http://www.peacockcarter.co.uk/rich..." are displayed. At the bottom of the dialog, there are "Post" and "Cancel" buttons.

Once posted, the link is visible in the poster's feed:



Social Bookmarking Aggregators

Rather than attempting to put every single social bookmarking site link in your MediaWiki skin template, there is a simpler way. We can use a social bookmark aggregator such as eKstreme's Socializer, or AddThis.


AddThis

AddThis (<http://addthis.com>) is the "number one bookmarking and sharing button".

[Blog](#) | [My Account](#) | [Help](#)

One Button.

Your Content Everywhere.




[served over **30 billion** times per month]

+ **Add This** **THE #1 BOOKMARKING AND SHARING BUTTON**

≡ ONE BUTTON

- » Easy Bookmarking & Sharing
- » Spreads Your Content
- » Removes Clutter
- » Fast and Reliable
- » Easily Customizable
- » For Websites and Blogs
- » Completely Free




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- » Where Your Content is Sent
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- » Geographic Breakdown



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Linking to AddThis

Linking to AddThis is easy as there is a wizard-style, step-by-step guide for creating and customizing your button. AddThis gives you a number of choices as to how it looks and acts for your wiki's visitors. Firstly, it can be used as a single button:



Secondly, a "drop-down" version with JavaScript can be used, which provides an instant access to the more popular bookmarking services:




[ You may need to register for an "AddThis" account to gain access to the code that will be required.]

Socializer

ekStreme's Socializer (<http://ekstreme.com/socializer>) is another social bookmark service aggregator.

[about](#) [webmasters](#) [surfers](#)




socializer 2.0

simplifying social bookmarking


Part of ekStreme.com

You have not specified a URL to bookmark. Please read below about using the Socializer.

Submit Your URL
Increase Website Traffic. Submit to 500,000 Free Sites. This Works!



Social Bookmarking
We submit your website to 50 PR6+ social bookmarking websites.



Ads by Google

What's the Socializer?

The Socializer allows you to easily submit a link to several social bookmarking systems. Instead of having a link to each social bookmarking website, you have a single link to all of them!

The Socializer is a free web service from ekStreme.com.

Contact me: to suggest new sites to add to the Socializer or contact me for other reasons, please use the contact form.

Web Surfers Info

Unlike AddThis, Socializer does not have a drop-down "widget", so to use it you can just link to it as you would do in any other website.



New Windows

You can create a new browser window by adding `target="_blank"` to the relevant link attribute. You could use this to prevent your wiki's visitors from losing their place on your wiki when they bookmark it. But it may irritate some visitors who are accustomed to opening a new tab in their browser by using the central mouse button.

Linking to Socializer

Linking to Socializer is similar to linking to Mister Wong or Furl's social bookmarking services.

```
<a href= "http://ekstreme.com/socializer/?url=www.jazzmeet.com&title=JazzMeet" title="Bookmark JazzMeet with Socializer">Bookmark JazzMeet with Socializer</a>
```

What Socializer Users See

Socializer users are presented with a list of bookmarking services, with a more popular group towards the top of the screen:

The screenshot shows the Socializer 2.0 website interface. At the top right, there is a navigation menu with links for 'about', 'webmasters', and 'surfers'. The main content area features the Socializer 2.0 logo, which includes an icon of three stylized figures and the text 'socializer2.0 simplifying social bookmarking'. Below the logo, it says 'Part of eKstreme.com'. A notification states 'You are bookmarking: JazzMeet.' and provides a 'Create Short Socializer link.' button with a lightbulb icon. A help button with a question mark icon is also present, labeled 'Click for help below.' The services are organized into two sections: 'Top Services' and 'Other Services'. The 'Top Services' section lists: Blogmemes, del.icio.us, digg, Furl, Mister Wong, Netscape, netvouz, PlugIM, reddit, Slashdot, Squidoo, and StumbleUpon. The 'Other Services' section lists: Backflip, BlinkBits, and Blinklist.

Social bookmarking for JazzMeet

As JazzMeet's visitors are likely to be from a wide range of backgrounds, we will use eKstreme's Socializer for JazzMeet's social bookmarking.

Insert the XHTML given earlier in JazzMeet's skin template, below the article's content, aligned to the right:

so far |

1. 14:00 - 15:30: Richie Vitale (www.richievitale.com).
2. 15:30 - 16:30: Ralph Lalama.
3. 17:00 - 18:15: TBA.

Category: [JazzMeetEngland](#)

[Upload file](#) [Special pages](#) [Printable version](#)

[Socialise JazzMeet](#)

[About JazzMeet](#)
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[Top of this page](#)

Summary

We have covered embedding links to social networking sites and more interactive elements in your website, including the following:

- Videos from YouTube, Google Video, and other popular video sharing websites
- Twitter feeds
- Social bookmarks

Although adding these more interactive features to your wiki can be a good thing, remember that they should only be used to enhance your wiki, and not as its primary focus. Without useful content, your wiki's visitors will leave your wiki and not add anything to the community that you are trying to create.