Wikis of Locality: insights from the Open Guides

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Locality is important in people’s lives
When you move somewhere...
...you want to know what’s happening there...
and other people interested in the same things as you
Whatever you’re interested in, locality comes first, topic second.
Wikis of Locality

- Primarily **Locative** : Secondarily **Thematic**
- Support communities of locality
- Local knowledge repositories
- Geodata important
- Utilise third party APIs such as GoogleMaps
Different approaches to local guides
The Open Guides

- Wiki based community guides
- Custom code based on Perl
- Currently 18 live Guides
  - UK Birmingham, Chester, Cotswolds, Glasgow, Lancaster, London, Manchester, Milton Keynes, Norwich, Nottingham, Oxford, Southampton
  - Austria Vienna
  - Canada Victoria BC
  - USA Boston MA, Saint Paul MN
- Worldwide Tourist Engineer
- Each guide managed by small team
- Under 100 to over 10,000 entries
- And you can run one too!
  (http://openguides.org/)
## The Open Guides

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<tr>
<td>Saint Pauls</td>
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Survey of Open Guide Administrators

Posted on Open Guides dev-list
11 out of 18 OG admins responded
18 open ended questions,
4 categories
  - Purpose of the guide
  - Your role(s) in running the Open Guide
  - Publicity and outreach
  - Future of your guide
Cafe Balti, Wolverton

- Telephone: 01908 311188
- Address: 52 Church Street, Wolverton (map of this place)
- Postcode: MK125JW
- Lat/Lon: 52.062193,-0.811732

- Categories: Food, Indian, Restaurants, Takeaway Food
- Locales: Wolverton

Milton Keynes best 'Indian' restaurant (ooh! contentious - am I allowed to say that?). Cafe-bistro style small Indian restaurant, modern decorations, friendly atmosphere. Drop in rather than book in advance usually. Winner of several awards. The restaurant is actually Bangladeshi, so there are some regional specialities. Take away as well as eat in. Really friendly staff.

Take aways are just as high quality as the sit in, too!

Find all things within 500 metres of here.

http://miltonkeynes.openguides.org
Geodata is a significant element

Latitude and longitude data is held where possible...

**Cafe Balti, Wolverton**
- Telephone: 01908 311188
- Address: 52 Church Street, Wolverton
- Postcode: MK12 5JW
- Lat/Lon: 52.062193,-0.811732
... enabling location based searching...

Find all things within 500 metres of here.   Go
... and the use of third party APIs such as Google Maps
What’s underneath?

Not just free data entry; structured editing provides a framework for content...

“Compared with other wikis, the structured metadata is what sets OpenGuides apart” (Ivor, London OG admin)
...and gives us machine-readable, reusable metadata for free!

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      Take aways are just as high quality as the sit in, too.
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```
"... The agent promptly retrieved information about Mom's prescribed treatment from the doctor's agent, looked up several lists of providers, and checked for the ones in-plan for Mom's insurance within a 20-mile radius of her home and with a rating of excellent or very good on trusted rating services. ..."

An enabler for Berners-Lee’s vision?

“... The agent promptly retrieved information about Mom's prescribed treatment from the doctor's agent, looked up several lists of providers, and checked for the ones in-plan for Mom's insurance within a 20-mile radius of her home and with a rating of excellent or very good on trusted rating services. ...”

Where is that kind of info going to come from?
- Us!

That is where Wikis of Locality/Open Guides come in
- folk knowledge + structured metadata!

(a little bit of) “Semantic web for the rest of us”?
Some observations from our experience
Different types of contributions

Invention Of The Diesel Engine, Fenny Stratford

- Categories: History
- Locales: Fenny Stratford

The world's first successful [heavy oil engines](#) were invented and built by Herbert Akroyd-Stuart in Fenny Stratford. These were precursors to what we know as the Diesel engine: Rudolf Diesel based his designs (1892) on Akroyd-Stuart's direct fuel injection and compression ignition inventions (1890). An experimental model was tried out at the offices of the Fenny Stratford Times Newspaper, and the first production models were installed at Fenny's Great Brickhill Waterworks where they were in operation from 1892 to 1923. Maybe engines of this type have not become known as ["Akroyd-Stuarts"] simply because Diesel was (apparently) a rather vain and vociferous person, and his name sounds more butch. Diesel committed suicide by jumping off a cross-channel ferry, whereas Akroyd-Stuart emigrated to Australia and lived to a ripe old age drinking beer and watching cricket (possibly).
Different types of authors

Milton Keynes South West Constituency

- Categories: Constituencies

Milton Keynes has two parliamentary constituencies. The Member of Parliament for Milton Keynes South West is Dr. Phyllis Starkey. She is a member of The Labour Party.
Different types of authors

Placeholders
Completers
Different types of authors

Bletchley Park

- Telephone: 01908 640404
- Address: Bletchley Park, Milton Keynes
- Postcode: MK3 6EB
- Lat/Lon: 51.9973,-0.7431
- Website: http://www.bletchleypark.org.uk/
- Opening Hours: Weekdays: 9:30am-5:00pm. Weekends: 10:30am-5:00pm. Closed during the winter (check website for dates)

- Categories: Education, History
- Locales: Bletchley

Bletchley Park is a manor house situated near Bletchley Railway Station. It is famous for being the location of the team that cracked the Enigma codes during World War II. It is now a museum to that achievement.

As well as being a fascinating tourist attraction the manor house is also available for conferences and weddings.

Photo shows a reconstructed "Bombe" electro-mechanical decoding machine.

Find all things within 500 metres of here. Go
Different types of authors

Placeholders
Completers
Housekeepers

Historical version 30 of Locale Fenny Stratford

Categories: Locales
Locales: Fenny Stratford

Fenny Stratford is an actual village/small town, dating back to Roman times when there was a settlement nearby called Magiovinium. It has a satisfying array of old-style buildings, restaurants, shops and other amenities. It lies to the east of Bletchley and to the south of Milton Keynes; it is administratively linked with the former, though it often tends to get lumped together with the latter. Waggish residents consider it to be the precious jewel in the rhinestone crown that is Milton Keynes. However, don’t be alarmed, it is not as posh as its "big sister" Stony Stratford! Hourly sevices from Fenny Stratford railway station can take you to Bletchley and Bedford. The Italianate influence still exists in Fenny to this day: there is the Colosseo Cafe on the high street, the famous Napoli Fish Bar and an Italian delicatessen tucked out of the way on Church Street. Due to this, and the proximity of a particularly pretty stretch of The Grand Union Canal, Fenny Stratford has been dubbed the Venice of Buckinghamshire by at least one person.

Most of Fenny’s shops and restaurants are situated on it’s main thoroughfare Aylesbury Street.

- Aromas, Fenny Stratford
- Aylesbury Street, Fenny Stratford
- Colosseo Italian Cafe, Fenny Stratford
- Dinajpur Indian Restaurant, Fenny Stratford
- Fenny Stratford Railway Station
- Invention Of The Diesel Engine, Fenny Stratford
- Locale Fenny Stratford
- Milton Kevnes Telephone Exchange. Fenny Stratford
Different types of authors

Placeholders
Completers
Housekeepers

Locale Fenny Stratford

- Categories: Locales
- Locales: Fenny Stratford

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Most of Fenny's shops and restaurants are situated on its main thoroughfare Aylesbury Street.
Different types of authors

Placeholders
Completers
Housekeepers
Scrapers
## Sustainability

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### Charts

- **Milton Keynes**: Contributions vs. Authors
- **Saint Pauls**: Contributions vs. Authors
- **Boston**: Contributions vs. Authors
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![Milton Keynes](image1)

![Saint Pauls](image2)

![Boston](image3)
‘The Long Tail’ and ‘The Boston Scraper Effect’ (encouraging many small contributors)

Contributions to the Open Guide to Boston (data from http://boston.openguide.org/stats)
Open Guide to Boston

Eddie Priest Men's Hairstylist

- Telephone: 617-354-8912
- Address: 89 River St, Cambridge, MA

- Categories: Barbers
- Locales: Central Square

HELLO THIS IS EDDIE PRIEST: I AM NOW HOME AND BACK TO BUSINESS AS OF APRIL 15TH. DROP BY. HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL SOON!!!!! EDDIE

Reviews

- I visited Eddie Priest a couple weeks ago, before heading to a conference for work. Getting the hair out of my eyes is no easy task, and Eddie did a great job with it. I'll be going back to Eddie for haircuts from now on. -- ChristopherSchmidt
mSpace + Google Maps meets Open Guides

Welcome to the mSpace version of an Open Guide for Montreal. Open Guides

OpenGuides™ is a network of free, community-maintained wiki guidebooks to places around the world. Anyone is free to contribute, whether it's by writing new articles or editing the articles that we already have.

As an experiment in exploratory search, we've put an mSpace interface onto this Open Guide for Montreal. We've also added Google Maps so that a place added to the Open Guide can be quickly plotted on the Map. As long as you have a postal code for the place you enter, we can pretty much plot it on the map.

In the Info view you can see any comments that have been added about a particular place. Because the Open Guide is based on Wiki's, you're free to add your own comments to an existing item, or create a whole new place.

If you wish to add a Montreal entry to the Open Guide, just click the "ADD".

Map data ©2006 TeleAtlas
Some issues raised (by Guide admins)

“Some areas of the city get much more complete coverage than others, due to having regular contributors living there. I like to think that over time this will improve”

“I've wondered about 'writeability' in the interface - to what extent can non-geeks feel empowered to contribute, not scared off”

“You need a dedicated group of editors working for a long time to create a useful resource”

“I basically do my best to maintain useful information without it turning into a spam-filled pit”
Future ideas and open questions...

• Wiki lifecycles: will the Guides reach critical mass?

• Who’s using them and why?

• What other forms may a Wiki of Locality take?

• How do we evolve the interface? (‘structure is good’ versus ‘structure is a straight-jacket’)

• New added-value services from semantic web?
Thank you

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