

## **AcaWiki Increases Impact of Scholarly Research Using Web 2.0**

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Today, representatives from the new nonprofit project AcaWiki announced the opening of their website, <http://acawiki.org>, to the public. AcaWiki's semantic-wiki based website allows scholars, students, and bloggers to easily post summaries, and discuss academic papers online. All content posted to the site is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution license.

AcaWiki's mission is to make academic research more accessible and interactive by creating a "Wikipedia for academic research." "Cutting-edge research is often locked behind firewalls and therefore lacks impact," founder Neeru Paharia explains, "AcaWiki turns research hidden in academic journals into something that is more dynamic and accessible to have a greater influence in scholarship, and society." AcaWiki enables users to easily post and discuss human-readable summaries of academic papers and literature reviews online. AcaWiki also helps users to share and organize summaries through the use of tags and RSS feeds. Vijay Kumar, senior associate dean and director of the Office of Educational Innovation and Technology at MIT, says, "AcaWiki can provide an important 'sense-making' function for enabling easier sharing of knowledge that can help to build bridges across disciplines—and even between academia and those outside."

AcaWiki's work follows on the work of open-access publishers such as the Public Library of Science, as well as on the tradition of using new media to create public dialogue with science. Currently, it can cost up to \$35 to download an academic paper—a significant cost, especially because thorough research on any topic usually entails downloading many papers. AcaWiki's approach takes advantage of the fact that copyright does not apply to ideas, only to the written expression of those ideas. Scholars can thus post summaries of their or others' research online as long as they are not copying verbatim beyond what fair-use laws permit. John Seely Brown, former head of the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center and a leader in the open education movement, says, "AcaWiki complements [the movement's] work and opens a whole new dimension of making research accessible to the public."

AcaWiki's website is built using Semantic MediaWiki, combining the sophistication of the semantic web with the ease-of-use of a wiki. The site enables comments, discussion, user profiles, and tagging. Visitors can also import and export from other reference-management tools, such as Endnote and Zotero, via the BibTeX standard.

### **More About AcaWiki**

AcaWiki is starting with seed funding from the Hewlett Foundation. Founder Neeru Paharia is in her final year of doctoral studies at the Harvard Business School. Previously, she was executive director of Creative Commons. AcaWiki board members include Mike Linksvayer, vice president of Creative Commons, and John Wilbanks, vice president of Science Commons. Librarian Jodi Schneider, formerly employed at Appalachian State University and Amherst College, is the community liaison.

Please direct press inquiries to Neeru Paharia at [neeru@acawiki.org](mailto:neeru@acawiki.org) or (510) 823-1073.

<http://acawiki.org/AcaWiki:PressRelease-2009-10-07>