

## **Special General Seminar # 2: Use of Laptop Computers Issued and Wiki Training**

Speaker: Mr. Mike Borowczak, GK-12 and RET Grant Coordinator, University of Cincinnati (taking over from Dr. Andrea Burrows)

Date: June 20, 2011 and June 23, 2011

Time: 10:00 – 11:00 AM

Venue: University of Cincinnati, 662 Baldwin Hall

Prepared by:

Ms. Veronica Dean, Mt. Healthy Junior/Senior High School, Cincinnati, OH

Ms. Sherry Kembre, St. James the Greater School, Cincinnati, OH

The laptop and Wiki training baton was immediately passed to the capable hands of Mr. Mike Borowczak and then the fun began. The perfect storm describes the beginning of our Wiki training. The objectives were simple: distributing laptops, assigning usernames and passwords, and (drumroll please) Wiki training.



**Mr. Mike Borowczak Leading the Wiki Seminar**

Mr. Borowczak is a 5<sup>th</sup> year Ph.D. student in Computer Engineering and Computer Science. He completed his B.S. in Computer Engineering in June 2007 at the University of Cincinnati. While an undergraduate student Mr. Borowczak held co-op positions at Texas Instruments - a large semiconductor corporation, International Techne Group, Inc. – a local software company, and Clifton Labs – a proof of concept and computer engineering consulting firm. As a graduate student, his primary research interests include the design of Computer Aided Design tools for computer chip design. In particular, he is interested in developing secure methods for implementing cryptographic algorithms in hardware. Currently Mr. Borowczak serves as the Grant Coordinator for the RET and NSF GK12 grants at the University of Cincinnati – he took this position from Dr. Burrows. In the past, he was a NSF GK-12 Fellow paired first at Norwood High School and then paired with CPS Hughes STEM High School.

All RET participants received their laptops and began changing the usernames and passwords, when the storm began. The RET participants quickly learned nothing is cut and dry or easy; thus the training for the Wiki began. It was stopped due to technical difficulties, and resumed on Thursday, June 23, 2011.

The seminar's objective of using the Wiki is to integrate information, communication, the Internet, software, with participants using either a laptop or a desktop computer. The Wiki service is a free service accessed through the Internet. Working technology is a requirement for this process; all laptops and/or desktop computers must have working usernames, passwords, and access to the Internet. When this feat is accomplished, RET participants moved to the next phase of the process.

Log on to the Internet, the website is <http://www.eng.uc.edu/step/wiki2011/>. The home page is an easy navigational page with toolbar selections listing Calendar, Information, Projects, Comments, Special Actions, and of course the Register action.

RET Participants immediately dived into changing username and password. This process was made simple by selecting Register under the Special Section. In this section, Wiki selects a password and email it to the participant's email address. The password designed by Wiki is a computer generated, very strong, and nearly un-hackable password; which the participant copied and pasted into the password request selection. Once Wiki is officially opened, participants moved quickly to the Profile section and created a new password and updated the Profile.



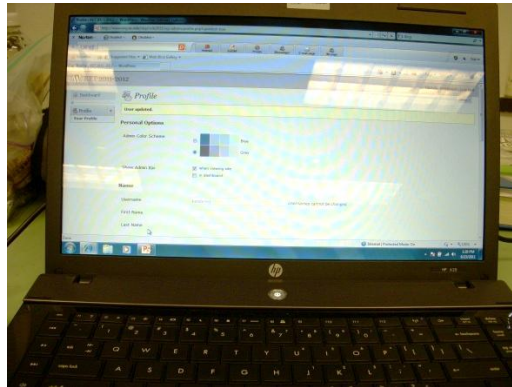
**Two RET Participants Studying the Wiki**

Wiki may be viewed by millions; therefore participants must use care when submitting and uploading information and materials. Since Wiki is a free service, educators may use Wiki in the classroom; providing home school districts permit the usage of the Wiki service due to hackers and other unscrupulous Internet behavior. Therefore there are many safeguards to prevent the "wardrobe malfunction," for example selecting edit, publish, and/or submit.

The Wiki is user friendly. There are toolbar headings with drop down menus to guide the Wiki user. RET participants logged in as "Author" and the user friendly training began. Participants were able to edit profiles, view recent posts, explore current projects, and submit questions and comments. Wiki users may also utilize the tool as a communication tool, such as an email device; Comment and

Response selection opportunities. The opportunity to edit, delete, and resubmit are available to the user.

The Wiki's page design may have a variety of headings to direct the RET participants. Calendar, Recent Actions, and Actions may be utilized to prioritize and manage assignments, activities, and engagements. A Wiki profile screen is shown below.



**Wiki Displaying the Profile Screen**

The Wiki is a free service that will enhance the classroom setting and make any learning situation more interactive and exciting for the participants and the trainers/instructors. With the Wiki, RET participants can become empowered, more engaged, and more responsible for the learning and research process. To begin a Wiki for the classroom, go to <http://wiki.com> and the system will guide step by step through the process of setting up a free Wiki.