



A Collaboration Platform for VO Projects

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Why & What

Finding an easy way of sharing knowledge and experience in a geographically dispersed project is not easy. A *TWiki* is a Web-base collaboration platform that lets people get in touch through a browser using an internet site like a whiteboard. A *TWiki* site is somewhat unusual but easy-to-use, full-featured open communications environment. To assure transparency a revision control keeps track of changes and all prior revisions are directly accessible. *TWiki* was not invented by the Astronomy Community but it perfectly suites our needs.

Even if at first it seems almost the opposite of how the Web and online communications “normally” work, it is intuitive and aspires to the Zen ideals known as Wabi-Sabi:

*<http://www.art.unt.edu/ntieva/artcurr/asian/wabisabi.html>

Wabi-sabi is a beauty of things imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete.

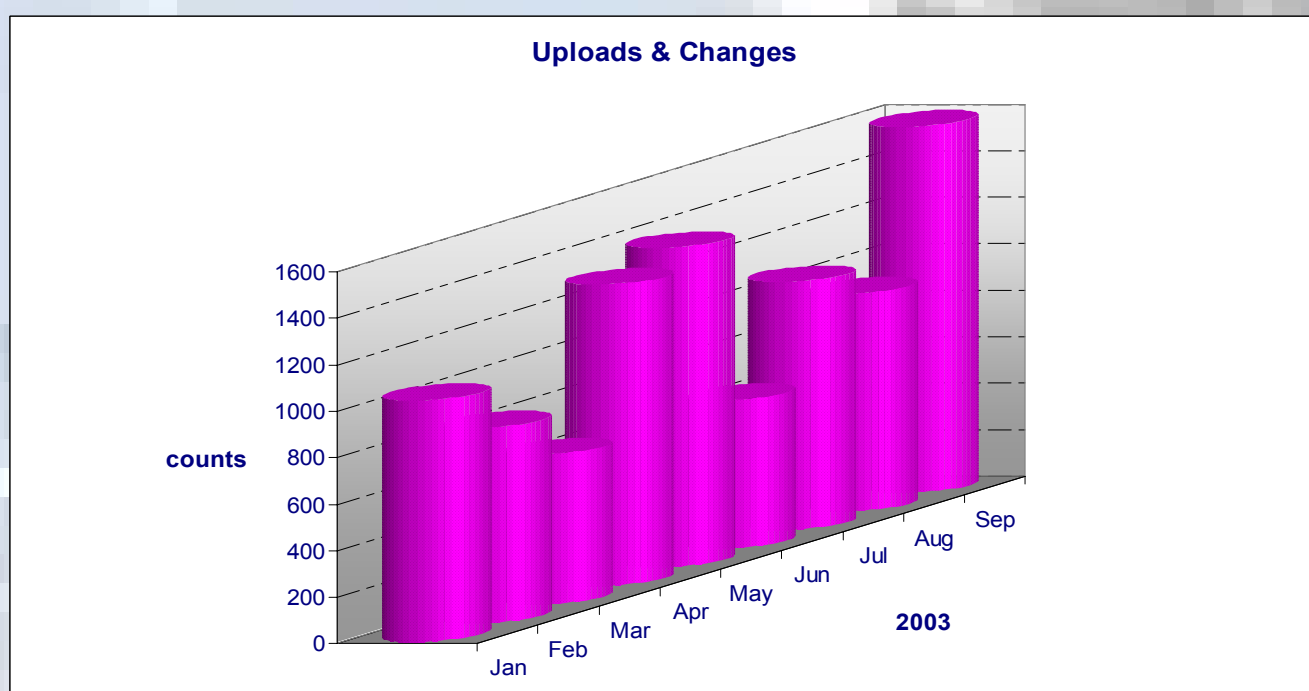
It is the beauty of things modest and humble.

It is the beauty of things unconventional.

All things are impermanent

All things are imperfect

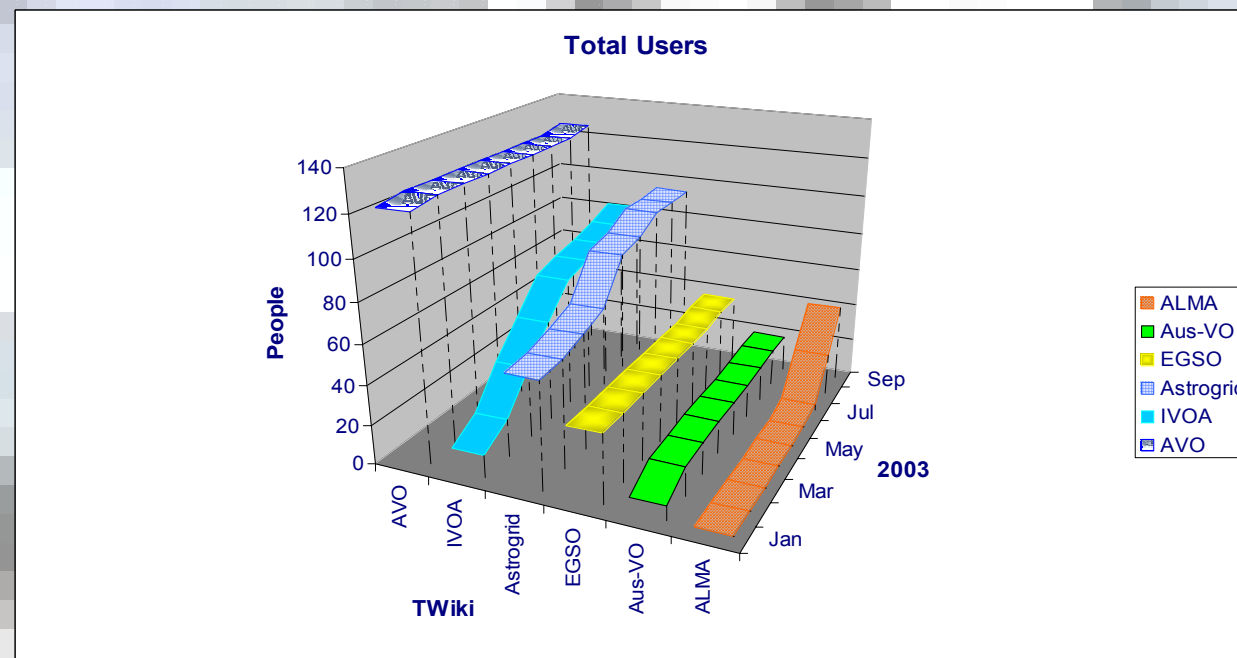
*All things are incomplete**



Usage Statistics: Saves

This represents the number of pages modified and the number of new files uploaded, i.e. real interactions with the *TWiki*.

Note: Statistics info were collected from "WebStatistics" pages of each *TWiki* site. Values are total cumulative counts of all sites.



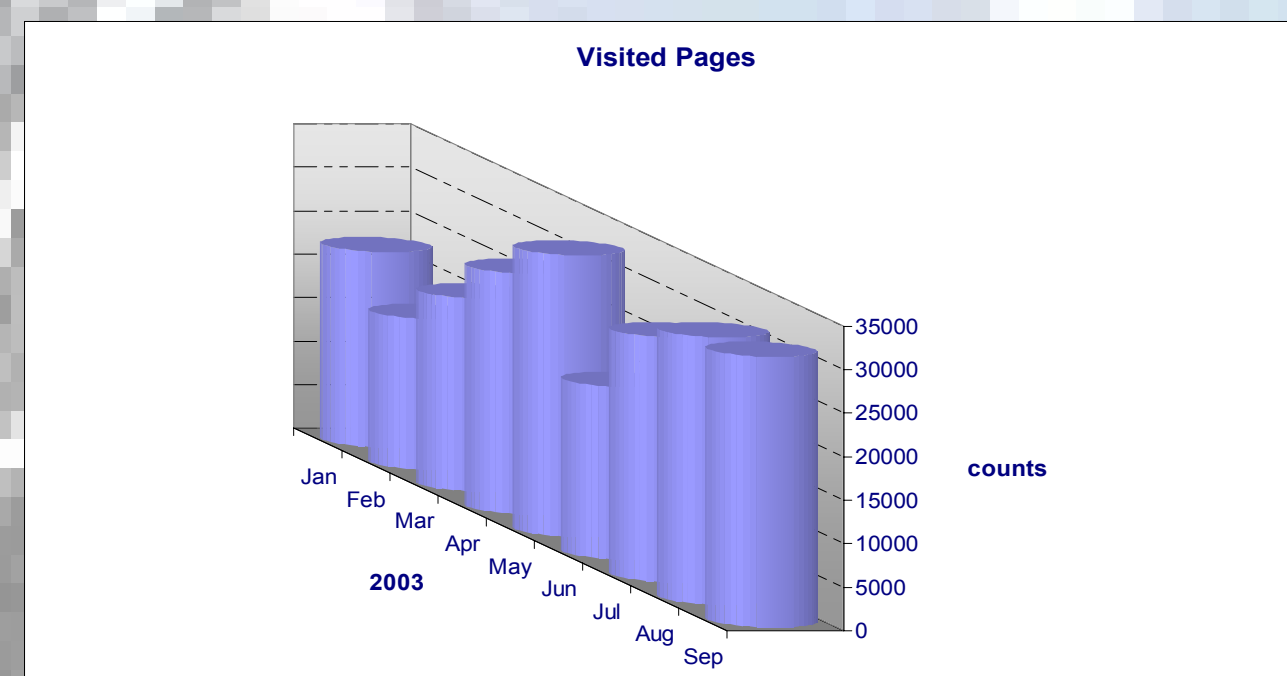
Usage Statistics: Users

The plot displays the number of collaborators who put material on the *TWiki*.

Usage Statistics: Views

Below chart presents the number of pages visited (=hits) for each month.

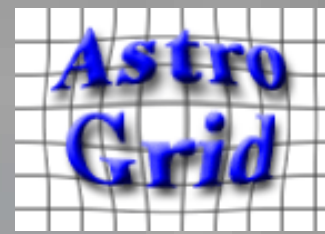
The sum takes into account the major webs of each *TWiki* site (the same for *Uploads&Changes*)



VO & Astronomy TWikis

Several Virtual Observatories are already running a *TWiki* site:

ALMA <http://almasw.hq.eso.org/almasw/bin/view/Main/WebHome>
Astrogrid <http://wiki.astrogrid.org>
Aus-VO <http://www.aus-vo.org/twiki/bin/view/Main>
AVO www.euro-vo.org/intranet
EGSO <http://www.mssl.ucl.ac.uk/grid/cgi-bin/twiki/view.cgi/Main/WebHome>
IVOA www.ivoa.net/intranet



Pros

- Easy to use, and easy to maintain.
- Full public access from the web.
- Instant updates of the online material.

Cons

- Probably the most hard piece is to get people used to use it! (But once they have started.....)
- Sometime web client/browser incompatibility causes annoying visualization effects.
- Since many users edit pages it is difficult to structure the content.

Server-side system requirements

Installation

- runs on Unix-like OS
- uses **Perl** for CGI scripts
- works on port 80 → no firewall requirements
- **RCS** for revision control
- **sendmail** for email notification service

Customization

- adjust the look&feel customizing the templates which manage the html rendering
- a huge set of plug-ins and add-ons allows to add useful (and funny) features

Maintenance

- tuning of privileges: users can be grouped, groups can have different accesses