

Manual:Namespace

A **namespace** is a collection of pages which have content with a similar purpose, i.e. pages where the intended use is the same. Namespaces can be thought of as partitions of different types of information within the same wiki, and keep "real" content separate from user profiles, help pages, etc.

Technical overview

Pages exist within a namespace, and this can be distinguished using the **namespace prefix** of a page, which forms part of the title of a page, separated with a colon (:).

For example:

Title	Namespace
Foo	Main
Project:Foo	Project
Help:Foo	Help

The "main namespace" does not have a prefix. Also, pages in the main namespace cannot have names starting with any of the existing namespaces prefixes followed by a colon.

Pages can be moved between namespaces simply by changing the prefix part of their title.

Namespace prefixes can be translated, and aliases can be configured for each (see `$wgNamespaceAliases`). All namespaces also have a "canonical" prefix, which works on all wikis regardless of configuration. Aliases and canonical names can be used in links, when performing a search, and in the page title with the help of the `{{DISPLAYTITLE}}` magic word.

Each namespace has a corresponding **namespace index**. Within the database, the title is split into namespace index and text title, and this is used for storage in the `page.page_namespace` and `page.page_title` columns, among others.

Subject and talk namespaces

See Help:Talk pages for instructions on how to use talk pages.

Most namespaces have an associated **discussion namespace** (or "talk" namespace). All discussion namespaces have odd-integer indices, and the discussion namespace index for a specific namespace with index n is $n+1$. The namespaces with even-integer indices are **subject namespaces** (note that this is a distinct concept from content namespaces). The subject-talk duality can be explored using the `{{SUBJECTPAGENAME}}` and `{{TALKPAGENAME}}` magic words. The `<body>` tag of pages in talk namespaces has the `"ns-talk"` CSS class, which might be useful for styling.

Built-in namespaces

MediaWiki ships with 18 built-in namespaces.

The following 8 namespaces all have associated discussion namespaces.

Index	Name	Constant	Purpose	Comments
0	Main	NS_MAIN	"Real" content; articles	Has no prefix
1	Talk	NS_TALK	Talk pages of "Real" content	
2	User	NS_USER	User pages	
3	User talk	NS_USER_TALK	Talk pages for User Pages	
4	Project	NS_PROJECT	Information about the wiki	Defined by <code>\$wgMetaNamespace</code> ^[1]
5	Project talk	NS_PROJECT_TALK		
6	File	NS_FILE	Media description pages	
7	File talk	NS_FILE_TALK		
8	MediaWiki	NS_MEDIAWIKI	Site interface customisation	Protected by default. Only users with the 'editinterface' permission can edit pages in this namespace.
9	MediaWiki talk	NS_MEDIAWIKI_TALK		
10	Template	NS_TEMPLATE	Template pages	
11	Template talk	NS_TEMPLATE_TALK		
12	Help	NS_HELP	Help pages	
13	Help talk	NS_HELP_TALK		
14	Category	NS_CATEGORY	Category description pages	
15	Category talk	NS_CATEGORY_TALK		

2 other namespaces have negative indexes and have special purposes. You cannot create or delete pages in these namespaces, and there are no corresponding discussion namespaces.

Index	Name	Constant	Purpose
-1	Special	NS_SPECIAL	Holds special pages
-2	Media	NS_MEDIA	Alias for direct links to media files

[1] Unless manually set, `$wgMetaNamespace` defaults to `$wgSiteName`.

Custom namespaces

It is possible to define additional namespaces to group additional classes of pages together. This is done using the `$wgExtraNamespaces` configuration variable.

For a thorough overview, see [Manual:Using custom namespaces](#).

Functionality

Some namespaces, like Project and Help, only exist for convenience and do not have any extra functionality compared to the Main namespace.

Template namespace pages can be transcluded without namespace prefix.

User namespace pages are associated with user accounts or IP addresses. Changes to user talk pages generate an automatic message notification.

Pages in "MediaWiki" namespace are used to override default messages in language file and can only be edited by administrators or other users with the editinterface permission.

File and Category pages have special functionality, as described in [Help:Managing files](#) and [Help:Categories](#). Category pages cannot be moved (renamed) yet (but they can be exported and then imported, if you need to maintain edit history). Image moving can be enabled with `$wgAllowImageMoving` in MediaWiki 1.13 and above.

All pages in discussion namespaces have "post a comment" feature (see [meta:Help:Section#Adding a section at the end](#)).

Article Sources and Contributors

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