Expert participation on Wikipedia: barriers and opportunities

Conference or Workshop Item

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Expert participation on Wikipedia: Barriers and opportunities

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WIKIMANIA 2011
Haifa, 4-6 August 2011

Motivation

“[Wikipedia] is not the bottom layer of authority, nor the top, but in fact the highest layer without formal vetting. In this unique role, it therefore serves as an ideal bridge between the validated and unvalidated Web.”

Casper Grathwohl (Wikipedia Comes of Age)

“What I wonder is why professors don’t curate [pages on] Wikipedia and add course materials and open access sections of textbooks, much of which they post online anyways.”

David Lipman (Amy Maxmen, Science networking gets serious)
Expert niches in Wikipedia

Wikipedia: A Key Tool for Global Public Health Promotion

James M Heilman1,2, MD CCFP(EM); Eckhard Kemmann3, MD FACOG; Michael Bonert4, MD MAsc; Anwesh Chatterjee5, MRCP; Brent Rago6, MD; Graham M Beards7, DSc; David J Iberno8; Matthew Harvey9,10, BMed; Brendan Thomas11, MD; Wouter Stomp12, MD; Michael F Martone13, Daniel J Lodge14, MD; Andrea Vondracek15, PhD; Jacob F de Wolff16, MRCP; Casimir Libe17,18, MBBS FRANZCP; Samir C Grover19, MD FRCP; Tim J Vickers20, PhD; Bertalan Mesko21, MD; Michael R Laurent22, MD
From a FriendFeed thread to a survey

Turning anecdotes about expert participation into data
Wikipedia wants more contributions from academics

Wikipedia is surveying academics to find out why many seem reluctant to donate their expertise

Subject recruitment

Blog posts
Nature blogs, Wellcome Trust, OKFN

Social media
Twitter, Reddit, Slashdot

Banners on scholarly publishers
Springer, PLoS, BioMedCentral

Press
The Guardian, CBS News

Wiktionary

Mailing lists
Expert participation survey: Design

Demographics and expertise

Perception of Wikipedia participation among peers
  - Authorship
  - Social interaction
  - Quality of information
  - Wiki literacy
  - Expert contribution

Personal motivation to contribute

Attitude towards openness and open scientific collaboration
Expert participation survey: Overview

Total responses 2605
Complete 1618

Contributors (C) 935
57.8%

Non contributors (NC) 641
39.6%

Available for follow-up interviews

C NC
704 470 234
43.5% 66.7% 33.3%

Respondents by field

Respondents by country
Demographics: Areas of contribution

Areas of contribution

Exp only: 721
Non Exp only: 529
Both: 259
Demographics: Gender

Respondents by gender

- Contributors: 165 (17.6%) F, 748 (80.0%) M
- Non contributors: 288 (44.9%) F, 335 (52.3%) M
**Demographics: Age and Professional status**

**Respondents by age**

- Contributors: 378, 221, 119, 59, 41, 247, 165, 96, 69, 14
- Non contributors: 113, 59, 30, 41, 96, 69, 14

**Respondents by professional status**

- Contributors: 214, 129, 133, 150, 127, 77, 65, 4
- Non contributors: 97, 93, 27, 27, 29, 72, 66, 16, 12, 4

Legend:
- PhD candidate
- Postdoc
- Non-tenured faculty member
- Tenured faculty member
- Researcher (academic)
- Researcher (industry)
- Researcher (other)
- Retired academic/researcher
- Other professional expert
- Unemployed expert
Responses by user category

Mode

Standard deviation
Wikipedia is a reliable source for research purposes in my field.
Wikipedia is a reliable source for **educational** purposes in my field.
Researchers are not allowed to write about their own research in WP.
Would you consider helping rate/review wiki articles in your field of expertise?

<p>| | | |</p>
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<td>320</td>
<td>19.78%</td>
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Contribution and support of Open Access

Percentage of OA publications

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<th>50–99</th>
<th>All</th>
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<td>0.74</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.81</td>
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### Comments: word frequency

#### Contributors

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#### Non contributors

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<tr>
<td>articles</td>
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</table>
Comments: topic modeling

algorithmic identification of words characterizing emerging topics

Topic #7 experts editors expert level knowledge rules edits number high amateur problems amateurs opinions contributions times contributor expertise found explicitly

Topics significantly associated with not contributing

#9 time and effort involved in contributing to WP

#13 criticism of WP's reliability, how WP is used or cited by students

#23 lack of recognition for scholars who contribute to WP, fit with scholarly workflow.
Summary

Lack of areas of major disagreement between contributors and non contributors

Main **barriers** to expert contributions: effort and time allocation

Opportunities:

- Potential for review/quality assessment
- Potential for collaboration with OA community

An open data/open access policy for Wikimedia

**Saturday 9-10.30am**

More on this survey

Follow the data and results from the survey at:

Get in touch: expert_barriers@nitens.org