Expert participation on Wikipedia: barriers and opportunities

Conference or Workshop Item

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oro.open.ac.uk
Expert participation on Wikipedia:
Barriers and opportunities

Dario Taraborelli • Daniel Mietchen • Panagiota Alevizou • Alastair J. Gill

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

Why ornithologists should embrace and contribute to Wikipedia

ALEXANDER L. BOND

Wikipedia: A Key Tool for Global Public Health Promotion

James M Heilman1,2, MD CCFP(EM); Eckhard Kemmann3, MD FACOG; Michael Bonert3, MD MASC; Anwesh Chatterjee4, MRCP; Brent Ragel5, MD; Graham M Beards6, DSc; David J Ibbert7; Matthew Harvey8,9, BMed; Brendan Thomas10, MD; Wouter Stomp11, MD; Michael F Martone12; Daniel J Lodge13, MD; Andrea Vondracek14, PhD; Jacob F de Wolff15, MRCP; Casimir Libe16,17,18, MBBS FRANZCP; Samir C Grover19, MD MED FRCP; Tim J Vickers20, PhD; Bertalan Meskó21, 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses</strong></td>
<td>2605</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complete</strong></td>
<td>1618</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contributors (C)</strong></td>
<td>935</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non contributors (NC)</strong></td>
<td>641</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Available for follow-up interviews</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>234</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### Respondents by field

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
<td>618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Sciences</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Sciences</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Respondents by country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>465</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographics: Areas of contribution

Areas of contribution

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

Respondents by gender

- 80.0% (748), 17.6% (165) contributors
- 52.3% (335), 44.9% (288) non-contributors
Demographics: Age and Professional status

Respondents by age

Respondents by professional status
### Responses by user category

![Heatmap of responses by user category](image1)

### Standard deviation

![Heatmap of standard deviation](image2)
Responses by user category

Mode difference

C vs NC
M vs F
C: M vs F
NC: M vs F
C: 35–45 vs 46+
NC: 35–45 vs 46+
C: PhD students vs Tenured
NC: PhD students vs Tenured
C: Exp vs Non Exp
C: Active vs Inactive
C: Decl Act vs Incr Act
C: Recent vs Less recent
C: WP vs NC: other wikis
NC: other wiki vs no wiki
C: other wiki vs NC: other wiki
C: Native EN vs non native
C vs NC Comment
C vs NC Interview
C: OA vs No OA
NC: OA vs No OA
NC vs NC blogger
C: high vs low SM user
NC: high vs low SM user
C vs NC: high SM user
C vs NC: low SM user
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?

- Yes: 1120 (69.22%)
- No: 320 (19.78%)
- No answer: 178 (11.00%)
Contribution and support of Open Access

Percentage of OA publications

- None: 0.92
- 1–50: 0.74
- 50–99: 1.23
- All: 1.81
- Not sure: 0.94
Comments: word frequency

Contributors

- time: 177 (+20.4%)
- articles: 147
- research: 115
- field: 107
- people: 104

Non contributors

- time: 132 (+144.5%)
- information: 54
- work: 50
- research: 49
- articles: 47
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