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Versions

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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

Viewpoint
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 Chatterjee8, MRCP; Brent Ragar4, MD; Graham M Beards7, DSc; David J Iber4, MD; 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; 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

Zoe Corbyn
The Guardian, Tuesday 29 March 2011
Article history

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**

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<td>704</td>
<td>470</td>
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Demographics: Areas of contribution

Areas of contribution

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

Respondents by gender

Contributors

Non contributors

165
17.6%

748
80.0%

288
44.9%

335
52.3%
Demographics: Age and Professional status

Respondents by age

Respondents by professional status
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?

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

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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