

# Wikipedia & the free culture movement

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Imagine a world in which every single human being can freely share in the sum of all knowledge.

That's our commitment.



First of all, a simple question.



# Wikipedia

- The free encyclopedia that anyone can edit
- Started 2001 as a spin-off from Nupedia
- 15 million articles, more than 270 languages
- Largest and most popular general reference work on the Internet



# Wikipedia in numbers..

- Top-ten Internet property
- 11.1 billion page views per month
- 365 million unique visitors per month
- 7626 new Wikipedia articles per day

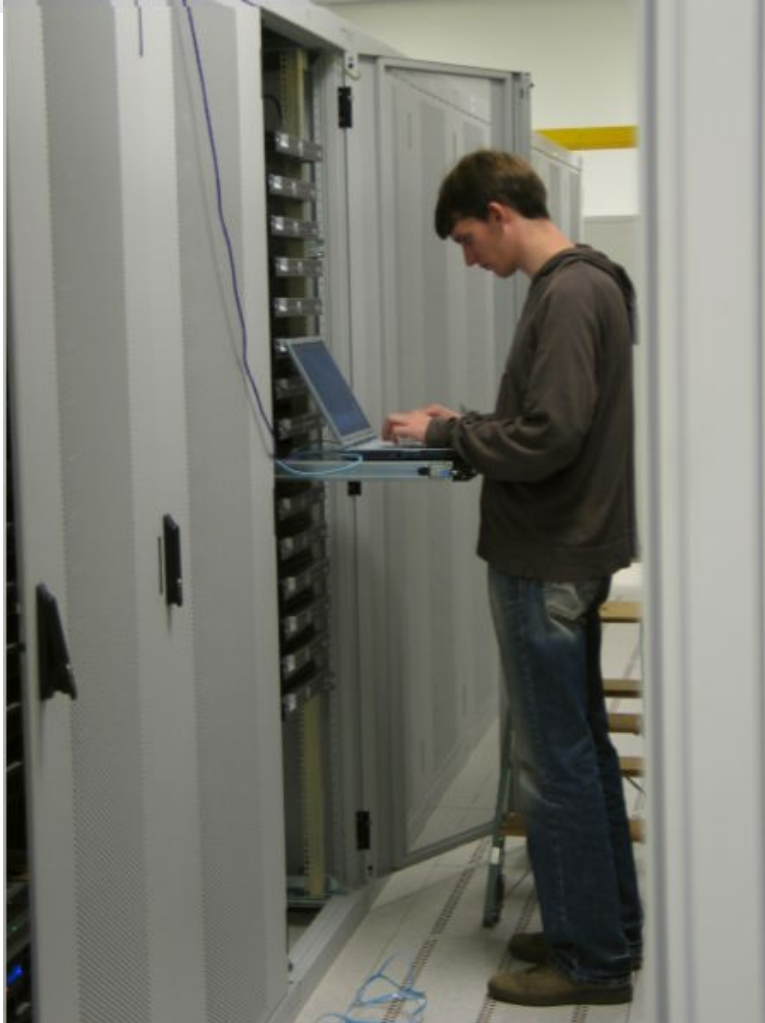




**WIKIMEDIA**

- Hosted by the Wikimedia Foundation
- Non-profit
- San Francisco, US
- +/- 35 employees

# Technical operations



- 400 servers
- 100,000 hits per second
- < 100 kW :-)
- \$1M equipment
- \$3.3M technical spending

Photo by Dennis van Zuijlekom, cc-by-sa 3.0

So, how?





Working together using the principles of free culture and open source.



# MediaWiki



- Open source
- Free to run, study, copy and change
- Largely developed by volunteers
- Organic structure
- Low barrier to entry
- Broadly used wiki software

# Collaborative authorship

- Less than half of all pages are articles
- Discussion pages, meta-pages, media
- 1 billion edits in total (450,000 per day)
- 100,000 active editors
- Guiding principles and rules of the game, but...



Ignore all rules

Be bold





WIKIMEDIA  
NEDERLAND

# Blauwe Keet

A screenshot of a Dutch Wikipedia article titled "Blauwe Keet". The page is displayed in a browser window, showing the article's content, a map, and various navigation elements. The article text is dense and appears to be a technical or historical piece. The browser's address bar shows the URL "https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blauwe\_Keet". The page layout includes a top navigation bar, a main content area with a map on the right, and a sidebar on the left. The text is in Dutch and discusses the "Blauwe Keet" (Blue Keet), which is a type of Dutch cheese. The article includes sections for "Beschrijving", "Voorbereiding", "Eten", and "Paginering". The page is rendered in a light yellow background, likely due to a browser extension or a specific theme.

Wikimedia provides technical support and promotes the ideals of the movement.

Content is shaped by the community.



# Wisdom of the crowd



# Challenge!

Anyone can edit

vs.

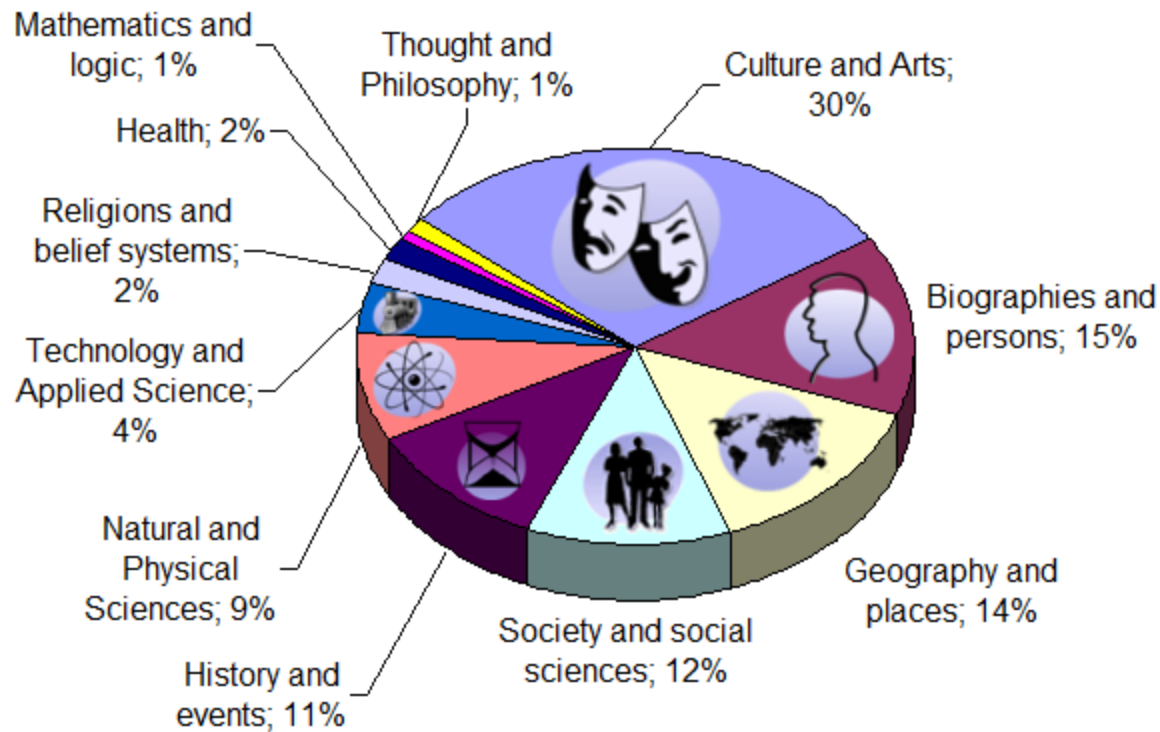
Reliability





# Challenge!

## Involving new target groups



# Broader lessons?

- Invite people to work together online in a wiki
- Keep the barrier for participation low
- Use open source software
- Share your work
- Don't be afraid of experiments and faults
  - they can be reverted quickly



# Finally...

- You can't create a community from thin air
- Don't expect miracles: a wiki is not a silver bullet



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