Common pitfalls in engaging with Wikipedia, and how to avoid them

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I don't like "Like". I like "Edit". I'm a Wikipedian.

Why bother with Wikipedia?

- To make the sum of human knowledge available to everyone on the planet, in their own language.
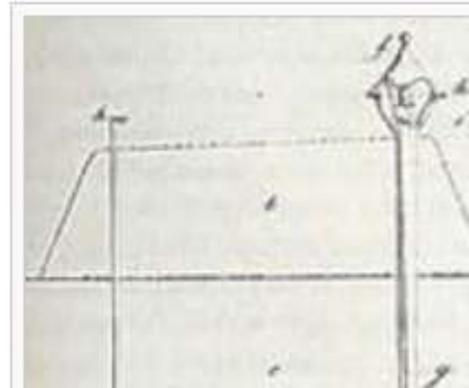- It's rewarding, fun and you get appreciated.

Death

Execution by elephant

Boston Molasses Disaster	Twenty-one people died in 1919 when a huge tank at a confectionery factory burst, sending a wave of molasses down the streets of Boston.
Chess-related deaths	Chess can be surprisingly dangerous.
Collyer brothers	When packratting was taken to a tragic extreme.
Death erection	It *is* possible to die happy, even if you've lived a less-than-stellar life.
Defenestration	The time-honoured tradition of throwing people out of windows.
⭐ **Execution by elephant**	An unusual form of capital punishment used throughout history. (See also History of elephants in Europe.)
Fan death	A persistent urban legend in South Korea, where the media, and even many medical professionals, regularly report on people dying because of having left a fan on in a closed room.
Generalissimo Francisco Franco is still dead	An early catch phrase used on *Saturday Night Live*, based upon the dictator's lengthy death.

Wikimedia: open (& *free*) to the max

- Page history is open
- Discussion is open
- Open processes for policies & guidelines
- Open data
- Open source software
- Open, transparent organisation

Pitfall #1

- Thinking you have to *write articles*

What else can you do?

- Fact-check and review
- Upload files
- Discuss
- Write code
- Thank and encourage

What *else* can you do?

- Translate
- Read aloud -> spoken Wikipedia
- Advise users on helpdesk or IRC
- Rewrite for Plain English
- Create publicity or training materials

Pitfall #2

- Forgetting it's an encyclopaedia

This article **may be written like an advertisement**. If so, please help rewrite this article from a neutral point of view.

Pitfall #3

- Editing in a self-serving way

"Palace of Westminster, London" by Diliff on Wikimedia Commons
Licence: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/

- Forgetting it's an *encyclopaedia*

This article **does not cite any references or sources**. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed.

- Forgetting *it's an encyclopaedia*

This article **may be too technical for most readers to understand**. Please help improve this page to make it understandable to non-experts, without removing the technical details. The talk page may contain suggestions.

WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

Amitsur–Levitzki theorem

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

In algebra, the **Amitsur–Levitzki theorem** states that the algebra of n by n matrices satisfies a certain ide
degree $2n$. It was proved by Amitsur and Levitsky (1950). In particular matrix rings are PI rings such that the
identity they satisfy has degree exactly $2n$.

Statement

If $A_1,...,A_{2n}$ are n by n matrices then

$$\sum_{\sigma \in S_{2n}} \mathrm{sgn}(\sigma) A_{\sigma 1} \cdots A_{\sigma 2n} = 0,$$

where the sum is over all $(2n)!$ elements of the symmetric group S_{2n}. (This polynomial is called the standar
polynomial of degree $2n$.)

Proofs

Amitsur and Levitsky (1950) gave the first proof.

Kostant (1958) deduced the Amitsur–Levitzki theorem from the Koszul–Samelson theorem about primitive
cohomology of Lie algebras.

Swan (1963) and Swan (1969) gave a simple combinatorial proof as follows. By linearity it is enough to prov
theorem when each matrix has only one nonzero entry, which is 1. In this case each matrix can be encoded
directed edge of a graph with n vertices. So all matrices together give a graph on n vertices with $2n$ directed
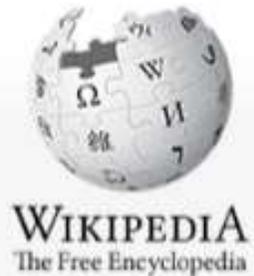
Pitfall #6

- Pulling Rank

A "ranker"

- Rushing in

i.e. making really big changes before you've had a chance to build up trust

Pitfall #8

- Being too timid

Pitfall #9

- *Not* being really, really anal about copyright

- Works which contain other copyrighted works (derivative works) - these are **not permitted**, so don't upload them!
  - Screenshots of TV shows, movies, DVDs, and software.
  - Photographs of art, statues, commercial packaging and often toys.
  - Drawings of copyrighted characters from TV, Comics, or Movies, *even if you drew them yourself.*

Pitfall #10

- Failing to show off

Recently featured: Film noir – Free State of Galveston – Northrop YF-23

Archive – By email – More featured articles...

Did you know...

From Wikipedia's newest content:

- ... that the function of the Gorgon and panther reliefs *(Gorgon pictured)* on the pediment of the **Temple of Artemis** in Corfu is believed to be apotropaic?
- ... that, after going bankrupt as Receiver General of Finances for Paris, **Pierre Perrault** developed the theory of the hydrologic cycle?
- ... that Haydn's oratorio *The Creation* is **structured** in three parts, the first two about the creation as narrated in Genesis, the third about Adam and Eve in Paradise?
- ... that **Brian Jamieson** received several citations for reconstructing *The Big Red One*?
- ... that the **blushing tricholoma** fungus formed a fairy ring in Germany which was 80 m (260 ft) across and contained an estimated 10,000 mushrooms?
- ... that in his early life, **David Hoberman** couldn't walk on cracks, and had to touch poles?

Archive – Start a new article – Nominate an article

October 3: **Labour Day** in Australian Cap Wales and South Australia (2011); **Nation** South Korea

- 1918 – World War I: Following his arm defeat to the Allied Powers, Bulgarian Ferdinand I abdicated in favor of his s *(pictured)*.
- 1951 – Korean War: The **First Battle** San, primarily pitting Australian and Br against communist China, began.
- 1981 – The **hunger strike** by Irish Re the Maze jail in Belfast ended after sev
- 1990 – East and West Germany **offici** first fully sovereign united German stat War II.
- 2003 – Roy Horn of the American ente **Siegfried & Roy** was mauled by a tig The Mirage hotel and casino resort on

More anniversaries: October 2 – **October**

Archive – By email – **List of**

It is now October 3, 2

Today's featured list

A **group of Italian monks and priests** was sent by Pope Gregory the Great to Britain in the late 6th and early 7th centuries to conv and Christianize the Anglo-Saxons from their native Anglo-Saxon paganism. Most of the known members of the Gregorian mission became bishops or archbishops, and all but one of the remainder, James the Deacon, became abbots: as his name implies, Jame never rose beyond the rank of deacon. Among the archbishops were the first five Archbishops of Canterbury: Augustine *(statue*

Pitfall #11

- Getting lost in rules & policies

Wikipedia:Ignore all rules

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

If a rule prevents you from improving or maintaining Wikipedia, **ignore it**.

See also   [edit]

- Wikipedia is not a bureaucracy
- What "Ignore all rules" means
- The fifth pillar of Wikipedia's five pillars: "Wikipedia does not have firm rules."
- Editing policy

Wikipedia policy

Principles
Five pillars
What Wikipedia is not
Ignore all rules

Content standards
Neutral point of view
Verifiability
No original research
Biographies of living persons
Article titles

Working with others
Civility
No personal attacks
Harassment
No legal threats
Consensus
Dispute resolution

More
List of policies
List of guidelines

Listen to this page (info/dl)

▶

This audio file was created from a revision of Ignore all rules dated 2011-09-25, and does not reflect subsequent edits to the page. (Audio help)

Don't be a dick

Language select: [en ▼]

Català (ca) · Deutsch (de) · **English** (en) · Español (es) · فارسی (fa) · Français (fr) · Italiano (it) · □□□ (ja) · Polski (pl) · Português (pt) · Русский (ru) · Suomi (fi) · Norsk (bokmål) (no) · +/-

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[translate]

The presence of this page does not itself license any editor to refer to any other identifiable editor as "a dick".

Don't be a dick.[1] If people abided by this, we wouldn't need any other policies about behaviour. This is a corollary of ignore all rules, and most behavioural rules are special cases of this one.

Implicitly or explicitly calling people dicks is a dick-move: don't use this essay as a justification to do so.

Fundamentals
[edit]

"Don't be a dick" is a fundamental rule of all social spaces. Every other policy for getting along with other humans is a special case of it. Although nobody is expected to ban or block somebody for dickery (as this itself would be an instance of such), it is still a bad idea to be a dick. So don't be one. If a significant number of reasonable people suggest, whether bluntly or politely, that you are being a dick, the odds are good that you are not entirely in the right.

Thanks

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