Wikimedia UK communications strategy – extract

It has been suggested that an abridged version of the communications strategy is made available to trustees which only includes the recommendations. Please find these recommendations below, taken directly from the strategy. For more reasoning and context of these recommendations please read the full strategy, which you can find here.

Wikimedia UK wiki recommendations

- Make more use of images. The communications organiser to spend some time reviewing pages on the wiki and adding appropriate images from Wikimedia Commons.

- Ensure press room is kept up-to-date by adding links and summaries of all press releases. Add the details of our social media channels to the contact area. Include out of hours contact information. This page needs a complete overhaul.

- Staff to update the news from the office area. Each staff member to create a short update once every fortnight (negotiable), even if it's just a couple of lines. Make the area worth visiting.

- Establish the water cooler as a place for general discussion, the sounding out of ideas and a noticeboard style area. Communications organiser to begin this process by posting some ideas and linking to project and event pages and assessing the results. Everyone with an interest in our movement to be encouraged to use this space. Add information to the wiki homepage explaining what the water cooler is.

- Review the landing page. Ensure that new users to the site can find the information they are looking for. Focus on how the wiki would appear to new users as they are usually the most difficult audience to retain.

- Create a short survey for users of the UK wiki to assess the user experience and act on its findings. The survey will be designed with community input and would appear as a hyperlink at top of the landing page for a short period.

- From time to time (perhaps every six months to a year – negotiable) place a notice on wiki (via the water cooler?) asking for suggestions to improve the UK wiki. (Please note that this may not be required due to the nature of the wiki and its users who have a tendency to improve things as they arise.)

- Serious pruning of redundant and duplicated pages is required, removing old and out of date content. This will make the site easier to use, especially for new users, and make the site more efficient and effective.

- Better categorisation of pages is also required to aid navigation and search again, especially for new users and people unfamiliar with Wikimedia.

Wikimedia UK email list recommendations

- Do read all email to the list. There's always a risk that the ignored conversation is the one containing the important insight.

- Don't feel the need to reply to every email conversation sent to the list. Only reply when you have something worthwhile to add to the conversation.

- Try not to start too many email conversations with the list as this poses a risk to credibility. Use the list only when it is most appropriate.

Office Hours / IRC chats

- Communications organiser to identify an appropriate subject and implement a suitable event before the end of August 2012 and evaluate the level of engagement and the worth of hosting these events more frequently.

- If this is successful, staff and trustees should develop a timetable of regular IRC chats on topics of interest to the community. Don't be afraid to ask the community what these topics are!

Geonotices recommendation

- Only use Geonotices during the fundraiser if possible. If you'd like to create a Geonotice at any other time do make sure you've considered all other options before making a proposal.

Printed materials recommendations

- Begin work on the annual report very early. Don't under-estimate the time required to create, design and print such a significant piece of work. Allow for plenty of rounds of edits and make sure that everyone who wants to be involved feels that they have had ample opportunity.
- Involve volunteers at every step of the process for every piece of printed material that is created from scratch and encourage them to take ownership of design and, where appropriate (which will be mostly), content.
- Ensure plenty of stocks of publications to share at events, with donors, members and visitors.
- Be ready for the introduction of the WYSIWYG editor and the ensuing need for appropriate printed guides. Liaise with the Wikimedia Foundation (James Forrester, long term friend of WMUK, is a key contact for this).
- Create a competition to design WMUK postcards. The prizes wouldn't need to be significant – simply having one of your designs as one of our "official" postcards would suffice. This will generate content for Commons as well as building community ownership, while creating a useful

resource at minimal cost.
- Ensure that all printed materials reflect our diversity in the language and images used, with a particular focus on groups we are trying to attract, such as women and older people.
- Ensure all publications make appropriate Creative Commons license statement.

News and trade media recommendations

- Build relationships with key journalists by meeting face-to-face and scheduling regular telephone / Skype conversations.
- Promote staff, volunteers and the organisation in general as an excellent source of opinion and comment on any field related to our areas of interest (see also blog, social media).
- Arrange and pay for media training for key volunteers. Stevie to source the training, invite volunteers and make arrangements by end of September 2012.
- Create a list of expert volunteers and their areas of interest to act as a database of "talking heads" for WMUK
- Ensure that all press releases are timely, relevant and only sent to appropriate media. Do not spam journalists.
- Sign-off process for planned releases to remain at 24 hours for board majority, however, for urgent, responsive releases this should be changed to within the hour and sign off from chief executive and / or chair.
- Build up a network of contacts in other chapters and countries who are happy to speak to journalists – it won't always be appropriate for WMUK to respond to every media enquiry we receive.
- Be prepared to support other chapters and the global movement as a whole due to our language, geographical location and time zone
- Reinforce at every available opportunity that we don't control the content on Wikipedia. Do this through notes to editors, responding to comment and enquiry and social media profiles (see social media section).
- Jimmy Wales is a great spokesperson but try to use him less often for comment and interview while encouraging WMUK volunteers to be involved more.

Twitter recommendations

- Make sure that the account profile contains accurate information, links to the UK wiki and makes the distinction that we don't own Wikipedia content – and that Wikileaks is nothing to do with us!
- Encourage all staff and trustees to use the WMUK Twitter account, trusting them to exercise good judgement in doing so.
- When contact has been made with an organisation or individual we haven't worked with before, follow them on Twitter. The chances are they will respond in kind.
- Sign up to follow leading technology and education journalists. This is

the quickest way to access breaking news and also means they are likely to follow us to get our latest.

- Where appropriate, mention our Twitter account in press releases, online, in email signatures, donor and member communications and in printed materials.
- Share new blog posts, articles and anything new we find in our frame of reference, as long as it's interesting.
- When sending links via Twitter, use bit.ly to shorten them. When the links are to our content, for example a blog post, make sure you're signed in to bit.ly when shortening the link. This allows access to click through statistics. The login details are [here on the office wiki](#).
- Don't be afraid to encourage debate and conversation. Using open questions from time to time can be an effective conversation starter.
- Retweet appropriately. If someone posts something useful or interesting, share it.
- Don't feel that you can't tweet just because someone else has already tweeted that day – there's enough interesting content to go around! If people didn't want to hear from us they wouldn't have followed us.
- Don't be afraid to use hashtags. Many of our projects will already have them, such as #glamwiki – there's nothing stopping you creating your own either.
- Don't fear levity – social media for many people is a recreation, a pastime. Sometimes, a [lolcat](#) is all you need.

Facebook recommendations

- Make sure that the account profile contains accurate information, links to the UK wiki and makes the distinction that we don't own Wikipedia content – and that Wikileaks is nothing to do with us!
- Encourage all staff and trustees to use the WMUK Facebook account as admins, trusting them to exercise good judgement in doing so.
- Where appropriate, mention our Facebook account in press releases, online, in email signatures, donor and member communications and in printed materials.
- Share new blog posts and important, relevant articles – but make sure you include open questions to start conversation.
- Don't be afraid to encourage debate and conversation. The aim of using Facebook isn't to generate likes for our posts or for everyone to agree, it's to gain understanding and share viewpoints while understanding those of others.
- Don't feel that you can't post just because someone else has already posted that day – there's enough interesting content to go around! If people didn't want to hear from us they wouldn't have followed us. But do be sensible, not spammy.
- Don't fear levity – social media for many people is a recreation, a pastime. Sometimes, [a post from Fail Blog](#) is all you need.

Blog recommendations

- A strong first recommendation is that all staff and trustees not currently set as blog administrators are given the necessary permissions and taught how to use the Wordpress system. The same should also apply to core volunteers too, who could either nominate themselves for access or be nominated by the community. This would encourage greater use of the blog and increase its focus as a community-owned resource rather than one which falls to the office to solely maintain. It would also lead to a greater variety of posts than are shown at the present time as it appears the blog is only currently used as a place to copy press releases.

- A second strong recommendation relates to the sign-off procedure. This is currently the same as press releases in that a 24-hour period for approval by at least four trustees is required. This defeats, entirely, the notion of effective blogging. Blogs should be engaging, relevant, timely and topical. With such a protracted sign-off process the element of timeliness is immediately lost. It is also likely to hinder and undermine any creativity a potential blogger may feel, reducing their inclination to blog at all (which is, perhaps, what we're already seeing). Signing off each individual blog post is also an inefficient use of the time of trustees. Such procedures could, over time, result in diminishing levels of engagement from trustees as they become over-burdened with trivial administrative matters that don't allow them to pursue the reasons they became interested in WMUK in the first place – the projects themselves.

- The preferred suggestion is to allow trusted individuals freedom to blog whenever they see fit on appropriate subjects. This would encourage greater sharing of information and stories than currently happens and would, over time, mean we are likely to see a significant increase in returning traffic and subscriptions to the blog. Currently, there is no real incentive for visitors to subscribe or bookmark the WMUK blog. More content would remedy this.

- One way in which intelligent blogging can support the achievement of our strategic communications is to use it to respond to key issues of the day. If, for example, a government minister makes a speech related to any of our areas of interest, we should create a blog post in response. If there's a news story about open knowledge, blog about it and share the blog on social media channels. Over time this will build an audience of people who share our opinions and are interested in our views. As we are already an influential organisation in our own right this establishes us further as a source of relevant opinion and will lead to increased media opportunities. One important caveat – this takes time.

- Another point on the blog. Once content is updated more frequently it is worth evaluating the layout of the UK wiki homepage. It is

recommended that serious consideration is given (with community input) to switching the location of the blog and the about us areas to put the about us section top centre. This will provide a more consistent user experience to visitors of the wiki.

Video recommendations

- Be liberal in the use of video. There's no harm in creating video content to complement other content.
- Encourage volunteers to create and share video content and support them, where the amount of time involved is not prohibitive.
- All WMUK video content to be released under CC-BY-SA on Wikimedia Commons.

Audio recommendations

- Be liberal in the use of audio. There's no harm in creating audio content to complement other content.
- Encourage volunteers to create and share audio content and support them, where the amount of time involved is not prohibitive.
- All WMUK audio content to be released under CC-BY-SA on Wikimedia Commons.

Webcast recommendations

- Webcasts should be implemented for appropriate events (such as open elements of our AGM, board meetings (except those elements required to be *in camera)* any public conferences and so on, as long as this can be made to happen cheaply, effectively and with no cost to our end users.

- Webcasting is also useful for press and other engagement events, particularly when joined up with a Twitter hashtag enabling interaction with "hosts" on specific themes in real time. Stevie to investigate delivering a webcast for journalists and stakeholders.

- Stevie to investigate and find free, open source materials and service providers if possible. If not free, as cheap as possible. Likewise appropriate equipment.

Photography recommendations

- Use imagery whenever creating a new page – unless there is a very good reason not to.
- Never use paid for images – the wealth of imagery on Commons should more than meet our needs.
- If ever a photographer is needed to cover an event they should be

recruited from within our volunteer community wherever possible.

Design elements recommendations

- Ensure that any usage of WMUK logos or other assets is compliant with the Wikimedia Foundation identity guidelines
- Stevie to create a full toolkit of useful visual resources on Wiki that others can contribute too also.

Infographic recommendation

- Address each request for an infographic on a stand alone basis and, if required, try to find someone from within the community to create.

Communicating with donors recommendations

- Conduct A-B or A-n testing to establish our most effective donor messages. What is this year's "green leafy background"? Stevie to discuss with Chris and Katherine.
- Donors who make significant one-off donations - £1,000 or more – should receive a personal letter of thanks signed by both the chair and the chief executive. This letter should explain how much we appreciate these donations and provide some detail of the work the money will help to support. An invitation to visit the office may also be appropriate.
- A selection of standard message templates should be created. These standard messages would include a thank you letter to one-off donors, a thank you message for new direct debit donors and (pending the advice of Katherine, our fundraiser) a note thanking direct debit donors for their ongoing support on each anniversary of their support. These templates will be written and added to the communications toolkit (in development) which will be on the UK wiki.

Communicating with members recommendations

- Anyone wishing to communicate directly with members *en masse* should seek input from Mike Peel (Secretary) and Stevie Benton (Communications Organiser) in the first instance. They will advise whether this kind of communication is appropriate. Please also allow plenty of planning time.

- When messages are approved in principle Stevie should help draft the message and source images. Once finalised the draft should require approval before sending. For member communications it is recommended that the content is approved by the Chief Executive and a nominated trustee. Once approved, please send the content over to Stevie who will generate the appropriate HTML and forward to Richard who will send out the email via Civi-CRM.

- Content within messages like this should be made shareable – this is a

good way to encourage a growth in membership.

- A selection of standard message templates be created. These standard messages would include a thank you letter to new members and a reminder that membership is due to expire. These templates will be written and added to the communications toolkit (in development) which will be on the UK wiki. Stevie to work on with Katherine and Chris.

Press release recommendations

- Communications organiser should draft an appropriate response, addressing fully the issues requiring a response.
- When the response is drafted, it should be sent to the Chief Executive and Chair for review and approval. This should be followed up with telephone calls to ensure that the content has been received and that they are aware it is for immediate action.
- If the issue results in a request for interview or personal comment (particularly on a live broadcast / pre-record) follow the recommendations for comments and interviews beginning on page 29. Comments and interviews should always come from volunteers wherever possible. There should be a good reason for these to come from staff.

Comments and interviews recommendations

- Anyone participating in interviews should be fully briefed, either by the Chief Executive of the Communications Organiser.
- Never turn down an interview request or comment request unless there is a good reason, such as serious reputational risk. For example, it is almost always preferred to address negative coverage head-on, with a right to reply, than it is to allow an erroneous version of events or situations to go unchallenged.
- Enquiries of this nature should always be referred to the Communications Organiser in the first instance. In his absence, refer to the Chief Executive or Chair.
- Create a list of Wikimedians willing to participate in media activity and their areas of expertise. This will guide which Wikipedians are offered which opportunities and ensure that the person contacted for comment has appropriate and relevant skills and knowledge. This is especially important if the enquiry relates to highly specialised areas of expertise.