



# Public Policy Initiative Project History

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Schulenburg  
Wikimedia Foundation

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## Wikipedia goes to class



Norm Shafer/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST - James Madison sophomore Anna Wilson works on a Wikipedia-related assignment for a class called "Professional and Technical Editing."

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# Wikipedia Teams Up With Academia

by SARAH GONZALEZ



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## WIKIPEDIA



Wikipedia.org

November 2, 2010

text size A A A

Any college student will tell you that Wikipedia isn't a source you want to cite in a college paper.

"You would get an F, I think, right away on the paper," says Stefano Daniele, a student at Georgetown University.

Ianthe Metzger, also a student at Georgetown, echoes the sentiment. "It has to be a scholarly source; it has to be something, like, legitimate," Metzger says.

The students say Wikipedia is unreliable because anyone can write articles, and the information is always changing.

Rodney Dunican, education programs manager with the Wikimedia Foundation, which operates Wikipedia, knows reliability is a problem, but he says the project isn't meant to fix that.

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## Wikipedia for Credit

September 7, 2010

Some professors believe Wikipedia has no place in the footnotes of a college paper. But could it have a place on the syllabus?

The Wikimedia Foundation, the nonprofit organization that does fund-raising and back-end support for the popular open-source encyclopedia, says yes. So do the nine professors at prominent colleges who have agreed to make creating, augmenting, and editing Wikipedia entries part of their students' coursework.

"We've known for a long time that students are the fuel of Wikipedia," said LiAnna Davis, a Wikimedia spokeswoman. "...We feel there is a place for Wikipedia in the classroom."

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"Students have access to so many journals and library materials and other scholarly materials that other people just don't have access to," she said.

Wikimedia's new alliances with professors stem from its Public Policy Initiative, an effort to improve Wikipedia's coverage of topics relating to U.S. public policy. On a grant from the Stanton Foundation, Wikimedia started recruiting public policy professors who were willing to have their students create content for Wikipedia. This fall, the foundation will help nine instructors — four at George Washington University, two at Georgetown University, and one each at Indiana University at Bloomington, Syracuse University, and Harvard University — integrate Wikipedia-related assignments into their syllabuses. (Wikimedia does not pay the professors to do this; the Stanton grant pays for foundation staff and training associated with the project.)

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### Professors Shore Up Wikipedia Entries on Public Policy

November 3, 2010, 5:21 pm

By Paige Chapman

Wikipedia, the user-written encyclopedia, has a shortage of public-policy articles, so it is getting help from nine universities to solve the problem. The Public Policy Initiative of the Wikimedia Foundation, the nonprofit group that operates the online reference work, is running a pilot program during the 2010-11 academic year, asking public-policy professors to require active student participation on the site as a part of their courses.

Professors at these institutions have already heeded the call for help: Georgetown University, George Mason University, George Washington University, Harvard University, Indiana University at Bloomington, Lehigh University, Syracuse University,

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## Wiki Curriculum

By Aaron Looney



### LSU's Communication across the Curriculum Joins with Wikimedia Foundation to Incorporate Wikipedia in Classrooms

When looking at the popular information website Wikipedia, one can see that numerous contributors add reference content to respective entries.

With the help of LSU's Communication across the Curriculum program,

as Co-LSU students will soon become these contributors, as well.





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### SPEA seminar expands students writing exposure worldwide

By **FROM IDS REPORT** | IDS  
POSTED AT 09:25 PM ON SEP. 21, 2010 (UPDATED AT 09:25 PM ON SEP. 21, 2010)  
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Students enrolled in School of Public and Environmental Affairs professor Barry Rubin's seminar this fall are expanding their classroom writing horizons to 300 million people around the world.

Rubin's graduate seminar, titled "Urban Economic Development," is gaining this exposure as part of the Public Policy Initiative, a program through the website Wikipedia.



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## Students Write Wiki Articles for Law Course

By Autumn LaBuff

Undergraduates in MSU's Federal Indian Law and Policy course are now writing Wikipedia articles as a graded assignment.

The project is part of Wikimedia's Public Policy Initiative, a program first implemented last fall in which students help develop entries for the online encyclopedia. So far Wikimedia has teamed with 31 different public policy courses at 22 academic institutions.

The Public Policy Initiative was established after receiving a sizable grant from the Charles Stanton Foundation, according to LiAnna Davis, communications associate for the Wikimedia Foundation. Professors of public policy courses across the nation were contacted for participation. Kristin Ruppel, Federal Indian Law and Policy professor at MSU, answered the call and agreed to incorporate the new Wikipedia curriculum into the course outline.

Participating students improve existing articles or begin new ones in place of traditional term papers. The Wikipedia articles account for roughly a third of the class grade.

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# The Stories

# Student stories



# Student stories



## Student stories

"I'd rather spend 30 hours putting work into a project that will be available for public consumption upon its completion than putting 10 hours into a project which gets graded, returned, and then either thrown out or forsaken and forgotten. Turning in a paper and getting it back with a letter on it is far less rewarding than submitting an article onto one of the world's most renowned knowledge bases for all to see."

-Student response to survey, January 2011



# Student stories





# Public Policy Initiative Research Results



# Was the Public Policy Initiative a success?

- Improve and increase the public policy content in Wikipedia
- Increase the credibility of Wikipedia among academia
- Develop Wikipedia as a teaching tool
- Create a sustainable program to support the educators who implement Wikipedia in the classroom
- Align with the priorities of the Wikimedia Foundation:
  - Recruit new editors
  - Foster a welcoming environment for new editors
  - Close the gender gap

# Article Quality Examples

- Fall 2010 Food Quality Protection Act
- Spring 2011 Nuclear energy policy of the United States

# Student Learning Outcomes

- Expository writing
- Media literacy
- Critical thinking
- Collaboration
- Literature research
- Technology fluency
- Community of practice

"Students become better consumers of information."

-Professor, Fall 2010

# Wikipedia and Trust

"Students use Wikipedia. It is very critical that we, meaning academia, get on board with this, because it is going to happen if we like it or not. We need to work with them to learn to use Wikipedia correctly and contribute to it to make it better."

-Professor, Fall 2010

"I would just really challenge people who say that it is not a legitimate source... It should not be your only source."

- Student, Fall 2010

# Ambassador Role

1. Help newcomers improve content in Wikipedia
2. Help newcomers navigate Wikipedia
3. Help newcomers learn Wikipedia policies
4. Help newcomers get content to stick
5. Provide technical assistance

# Ambassador Motivations

1. Increase Wikipedia's credibility among academia
2. Help new editors
3. Develop Wikipedia as a teaching tool
4. Improve content on Wikipedia



# Ambassador Responsibility

1. To students/new editors they help
2. Wikipedia community
3. Wikipedia readership

## Outcomes According to Ambassadors

1. Increased use and development of Wikipedia as a teaching tool
2. Provided support for college-educated newcomers
3. Increased credibility of Wikipedia in academia
4. Improved content in Wikipedia
5. Contributed toward a more welcoming environment
6. Increased the number of new editors

# Measuring Article Quality

Wikipedia 1.0 Ratings the WikiProject Article Grading System

# Measuring Article Quality

Assessment area	Scoring methods	Score
Comprehensiveness	Score based on how fully the article covers significant aspects of the topic.	1-10
Sourcing	Score based on adequacy of inline citations and quality of sources relative to what is available.	0-6
Neutrality	Score based on adherence to the <a href="#">Neutral Point of View policy</a> . Scores decline rapidly with any problems with neutrality.	0-3
Readability	Score based on how readable and well-written the article is.	0-3
Formatting	Score based on quality of the article's layout and basic adherence to the <a href="#">Wikipedia Manual of Style</a>	0-2
Illustrations	Score based on how adequately the article is illustrated, within the constraints of acceptable copyright status.	0-2
Total		1-26

## Quality Improvement in Numbers

- 174% quality improvement in spring term articles.
- 124% quality improvement in fall term articles.
- 150% quality improvement for all articles in the Public Policy Initiative.
- Average score for articles created through the program is 15.0 about a “B” Wikipedia 1.0 rating.



# Quality Improvement in Pictures

Article Quality Before and After Student Assignments

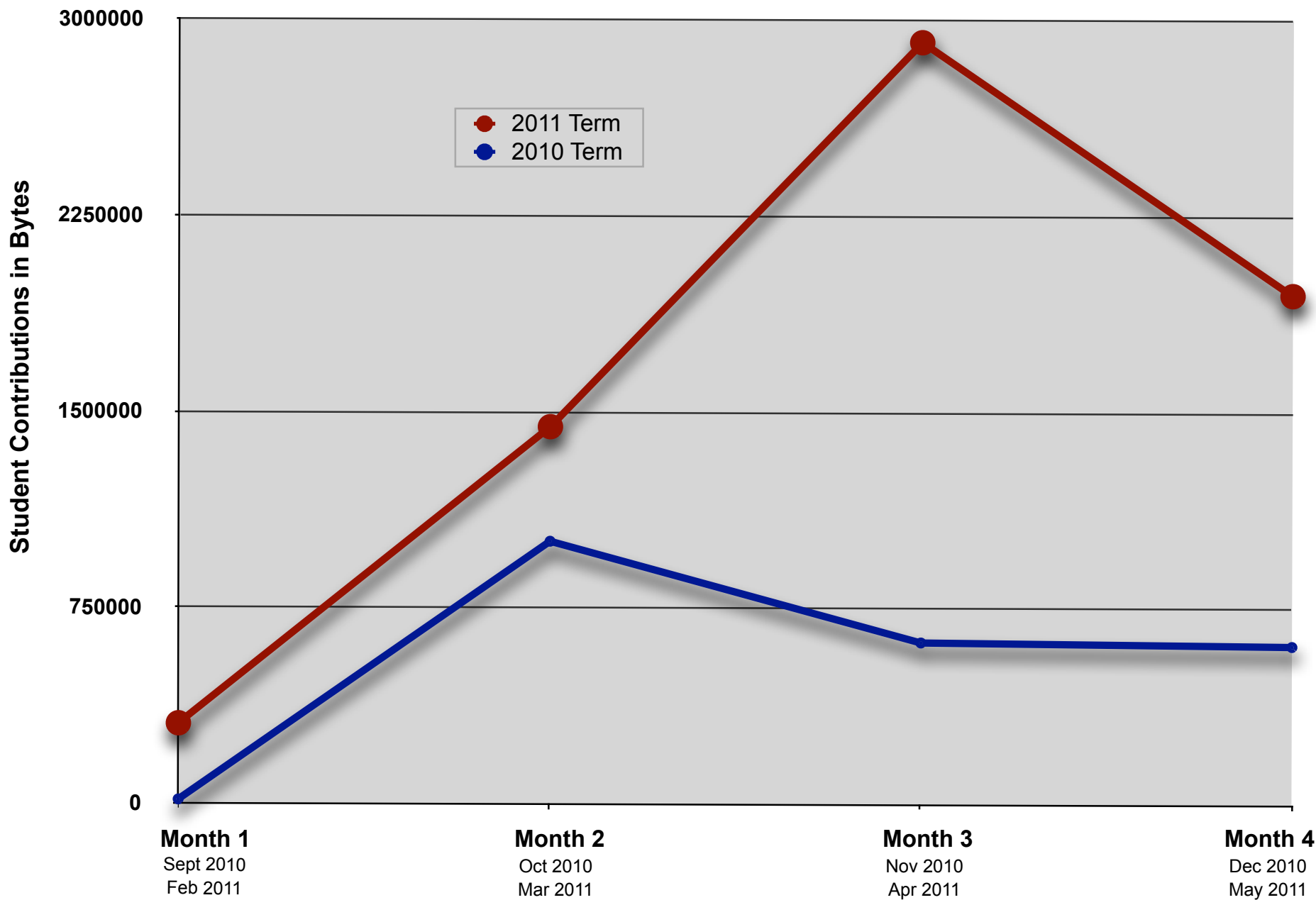


# Quality Improvement in Pictures

New Article Quality After Student Assignments

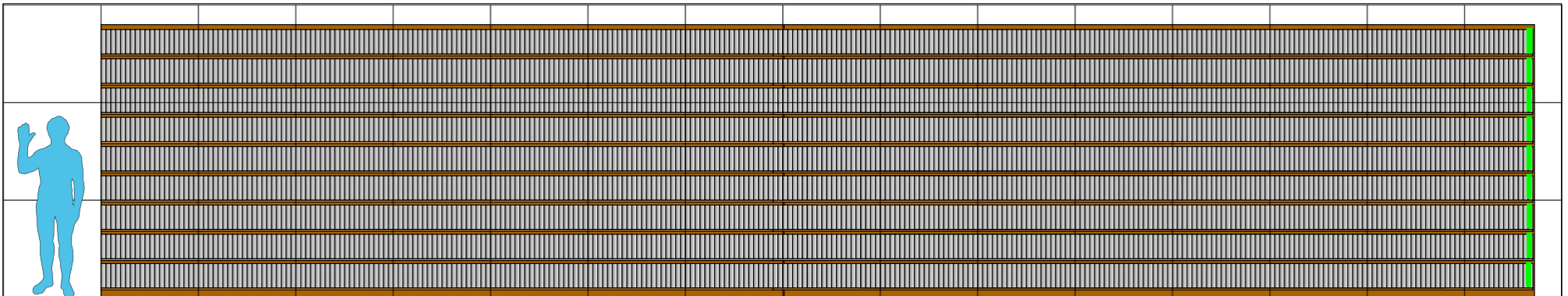


# Public Policy Initiative Student Contributions in Bytes by Month and Term Year



# How much is that really?

- A print version of the 2010 Wikipedia (without references and pictures) would consist of about 1500 volumes of similar size to other encyclopedia collection books.
- By adding over 11 reams of paper, the Public Policy Initiative participants added roughly an entire column of volumes to this calculation-based image of an entire print version of the 2010 Wikipedia!!!



# Was the Public Policy Initiative a success?

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**Thank you!**