The case for a California Chapter

Areas where the Wikimedia Foundation can not, has not, or will not act in the interest of its mission, with proposed solutions

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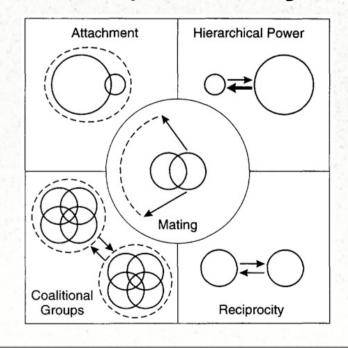These slides: `http://3.ly/wm10ca`

Constructive criticism

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to [those] who are actually in the arena... who strive valiantly... Because there is not effort without error and shortcomings; but who does actually strive to do the deed; who knows the great enthusiasm, the great devotion... a worthy cause... at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement...."
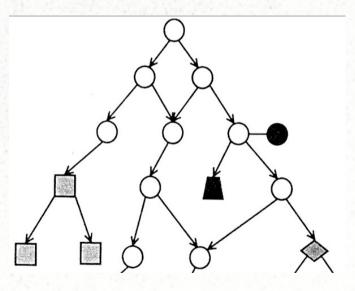
Teddy Roosevelt, "Citizenship in a Republic," 1910

Hierarchical power (cathedrals) are at odds with fairness among groups

Daphne Bugental (2000) "Acquisition of the Algorithms of Social Life: A Domain-Based Approach" *Psychological Bulletin* **126**(2): 187-219. `http://3.ly/Bugental2000`

Examples of flaws caused by hierarchical power imbalances

- Socrates, Jesus, Galileo, *et al.*

    – Advocacy opportunities are limited by some forms of nonprofit corporations

- income inequality

    – influencing 23+ life quality measures

- health care

    – affecting Foundation and community costs

- energy utilization, development

    – costs and climate mitigation

More examples of flaws caused by hierarchical power imbalances

- law enforcement choices

  – e.g., sexual content policy, tax havens,

- foreign policies

  – Protection for journalists and editors

- encyclopedic coverage

  – Mistakes happen, but these are the easiest to fix

- educational delivery

  – Missing many opportunities to reach those who need the Foundation's content the most

Strive valiantly to achieve

"We're always going to need to do better.
  All aspects need to be improved."

Sue Gardner, Wired.co.uk, 10 January 2011

The mission of the Wikimedia Foundation is to empower and engage people around the world to collect and develop educational content under a free license or in the public domain, and to disseminate it effectively and globally.
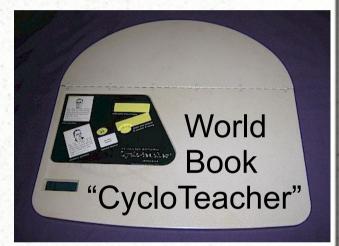
Who isn't being reached effectively and globally?

- People with low-end mobile phones
    - Mobile adoption 8% in 2000, up to 76% in 2010 globally! per io9.com: `http://i.imgur.com/GReJW.jpg`
    - Relatively easy: push out less javascript & CSS
    - or build low-end client software (the bazaar is)
- People with limited vocabularies
    - More difficult educational, less technical problem
    - Only English Wikipedia has a Simple version
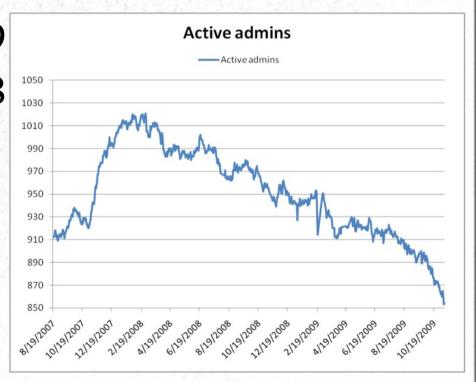   - few know it exists, and no way to guide in to it

What educational content are we missing?

- Formal low-stakes assessment questions, for:

  - interactive self study

  - guiding people to content at their level

  - identifying out of date facts

World Book "CycloTeacher"

- Audio recordings in Wiktionaries

  - Possible but absurdly difficult at present

- Most popular related articles

  - Guide people to appropriate content & much more

Who isn't being sufficiently engaged?

- English Wikipedia administrators
    - down 12% in 2010 (from 869 to 768)
    - down 8% in 2009
    - down 6% in 2008
    - Unsustainable!
    - WP:ANI sections archive time halved in 2010

Active admins

Who isn't being sufficiently empowered?

- Developers
  - Code review backlog; cathedral development block-ages; unwillingness to accept outsiders

- Hosting administration
  - Controversial content puts Foundation at risk

- English Wikinews reporters
  - Not as fully independent journalists as useful

- Fundraising message volunteer authors
  - "Help increase the number of active editors" and more than 2/3rds of ~350 submitted not tested for 2010

What structural adjustments could solve these problems?

- More hierarchies, with assigned rights and responsibilities

  - e.g. Wikia reduced inclusionism/deletionism disputes by at least an order of magnitude

- Should be some overlap but not at top, like Wikia

- In competition for, e.g.: testing, procurement, benchmarks, nurturing admins, software devel., external advocacy, fundraising, telework, etc.

  - Would provide measures of achievement presently missing from Foundation statistics

Recommendation

- Start a geographically overlapping Chapter
  - With bylaws which allow conducting ordinary business primarily on-wiki, not face-to-face, synchronous, or in email

- Delegate tasks, rights, and responsibilities

- Fund and support fundraising

- Eliminate conflicts of interest

  - e.g. Wikinews, leadership advocacy with a "mutual" (not "public") benefit corporation

- Set expectations for self-sustenance