

Dispute Resolution on the English Wikipedia



By Steven Zhang

What is dispute resolution?

- Process to resolve disputes over article content and user conduct
- Can involve the assistance of a third party
- A variety of techniques are used, including consensus-building, collaboration, or compromise

Why is dispute resolution important?

- Can help with editor retention - happier, more productive users
- Leads to article neutrality, quality and stability

“Wikipedia is a machine – dispute resolution is the grease that keeps it all running”

Conclusion: Dispute resolution is ineffective and inefficient

- Full survey results: [[WVP:Dispute resolution survey]]
- Four out of five respondents rated their experience poorly.
- Problems: Duration, complexity and lack of volunteers
- 70% of respondents had volunteered
- Resolution rate: 47%*

Problems with dispute resolution

When asked about the problems with dispute resolution, the most common responses were:

“It takes so long for a dispute to be resolved”

General response times: 5 to 24 hours

General resolution times: 2 to 28 days

Problems with dispute resolution

“The process is too hard to use”

The screenshot shows the Wikipedia page for 'Wikipedia:Dispute resolution'. The page is titled 'Wikipedia:Dispute resolution' and is a redirect from 'Wikipedia:DR'. It contains several sections of text and navigation links. The left sidebar includes 'Main page', 'Contents', 'Featured content', 'Current events', 'Random article', 'Donate to Wikipedia', 'Wikipedia Shop', 'New pages', 'Interaction', 'Help', 'About Wikipedia', 'Community portal', 'Recent changes', 'Contact Wikipedia', 'Toolbox', 'Print/export', 'Languages', and a list of languages. The right sidebar includes 'Dispute resolution', 'Tips for dispute resolution', 'Content disputes', 'Formal mediation', 'Conduct disputes', and 'Arbitration'. A pyramid diagram is located in the bottom right corner, titled 'Stay in the top three sections of this pyramid.' The pyramid has five levels: 'Refuting the Central Point' (top), 'Refutation', 'Counterargument', 'Contribution', and 'Ad Hominem' (bottom). The text below the pyramid says 'Stay in the top three sections of this pyramid.'

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Problems with dispute resolution

“The process is too hard to use”

- 43% said there were too many forums
- 39% described the process as complex
- 30% didn't know where to take their dispute

Problems with dispute resolution

“There aren't enough volunteers”

- 70% have volunteered at some point, but only one in three do so frequently
 - 52% thought there were not enough volunteers
- Reasons for participation: Dispute resolution being critical to Wikipedia, keeping articles balanced or just helping people
- Reasons for non-participation: Disputes too toxic, complex and lengthy, lack of knowledge on how

How we can change dispute resolution and why

- Simplify the way to request dispute resolution
- a workflow system has been created to do this
- Make it easier for editors to do dispute resolution
- Investigate technical and policy changes such as dispute-detecting bots, edit filters and page-specific blocking.

How you can get involved in the change

- Try volunteering - it's not that as hard as you think!
- Keep an eye on discussions at the Dispute Resolution WikiProject ([[WP:DRP]])
- Ask lots of questions - the existing volunteers will be more than happy to help

Questions?

