

Learning to **Speak** in **Wikipedia's** Language

Public Relations
and The Free Encyclopedia

[market research]

Who am I?

Jake Orlowitz

Volunteer editor

Ocaasi on Wikipedia

3 years

20,000 edits

15 articles created with over **150,000** views

Monitor Group, Occidental Petroleum, US Gov.

The Wikipedia Adventure

Plain and simple **conflict of interest** guide

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The historical **conflict** between PR and Wikipedia can be **resolved** with a proper **understanding** of the two cultures' roles and processes.

PR professionals can **save** themselves countless **hours** of **frustration** by learning the **best practices** for editing.

Imagine a world in which **every single person** on the planet is given free access to the **sum of all human knowledge.**

Wikipedia is **important**.

8 billion words in **19 million** articles

283 language editions

4 over **1 million** articles each

6 over **700,000**

40 over **100,000**

109 over **10,000**

English Wikipedia

3,875,474 articles, **26,301,442** pages

50 times larger than Microsoft Encarta's 2002
Deluxe edition

517,319,601 edits, **250,000** per day

794,530 uploaded files

16,284,081 registered users

147,203 active in the last 30 days

1,507 administrators.

Why you should care.

Alexa rank: **#6** in the **world** in web traffic

88,824,929 unique visitors

8,314,393 in a year

1,565,841 in a month

#1 most influential website in blog mentions

30-50% on **first** page of **Google** searches

In **January** 2012 alone

Krispy Kreme: viewed **25,119** times

BP: **75,014** times

Pepsi: **105,766** times

Walmart: **155,171** times

Lady Gaga: **1,101,475** times

What if these were one of your
clients?

Wikipedia is **trusted**.

Nature:

Wikipedia came **close to the level of accuracy** in Encyclopædia Britannica.

Other studies:

Compared Wikipedia to professional and peer-reviewed sources and found that Wikipedia's depth and coverage were of a **high standard**.

How Wikipedia **works**.

"I say that our revolution is **like Wikipedia**.

Everyone is contributing content. You don't know the names of the people contributing the content.

Everyone was contributing **small pieces, bits and pieces.**

We drew this whole picture of a revolution. And that picture — **no one is the hero** in that picture."

--Wael Ghonim, in 2011 on the overthrow of Mubarak

“The problem with Wikipedia is that
it only works **in practice**.

In theory, it can never work.”

What Wikipedia is.

The **free** encyclopedia that **anyone** can edit, whose mission is to summarize published reliable sources.

What Wikipedia **is not**.

a **dictionary**

a publisher of **original thought**

a **soapbox** or means of **promotion**

a **mirror** or a repository of links, images, or media files

a **blog**, webspace provider, **social network** or **memorial**

a **directory**

a **manual**, guidebook, textbook, or scientific journal

a **crystal ball**

a **newspaper**

an **indiscriminate collection** of information

censored

The Wikipedia **community**.

NOT

anarchy

democracy

bureaucracy

battleground

compulsory

IS

self-organized

consensus-seeking

practical

cooperative

voluntary

The Core Policies.

Neutral Point of View **(NPOV)**

Articles **mustn't take sides**, but should **explain** the sides, **fairly, proportionately** and **without bias**

Verifiability

(V)

Can another editor **check** the source?

The threshold for inclusion is **verifiability**
not **truth**

Cite **reliable sources** for any material
challenged or likely to be **challenged**

Original Research
(OR)

You cannot include facts, allegations, and ideas for which **no reliable, published sources exist**

Analysis or synthesis of published material that serves to **advance a position** not advanced by the sources is **prohibited**

Civility
(CIVIL)

Always treat each other with
consideration and respect

Keep the focus on **improving** the
encyclopedia

Behave **politely, calmly and reasonably**,
even during heated debates

Do not **ignore** the positions of **others**

What is **Public Relations**?

“Public relations is a **strategic** communication process that builds **mutually beneficial** relationships between organizations and their publics.”

--PRSA definition

Protect and advance the **free flow** of accurate and truthful **information**

Anticipate, analyze and interpret **public opinion**

Counsel management

Research to achieve **the informed public understanding** necessary to the **success** of an organization's aims

Plan efforts to **influence or change public**

What does **ethical** public relations entail?

Advocacy

Honesty

Expertise

Independence

Loyalty

Fairness

Advocacy

Honesty

Independence

Loyalty

Fairness

Be **honest** and **accurate** in all communications

Act in the **best interest** of **clients** or employers

Safeguard **confidences** and **privacy**

Avoid **conflicts** between **personal** and **professional** interests

Avoid **deceptive** practices

Avoid actions that appear to **compromise** good business **judgment**

Disclose any existing or potential **conflict of interest**

Investigate the **truthfulness** and **accuracy** of **information**

The **History** of Paid Editing.

Microsoft

the CIA

US Republican Party

Industry Canada

US Senate

**Israeli government
Dow Chemical**

Anheuser-Busch

MySpace

DuPont

Fox News

Washington Post

Bell Pottinger

Newt Gingrich

MyWikiBiz, **Microsoft**, the Vatican, **the CIA**, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the US Democratic Party's Congressional Campaign Committee, the **US Republican Party**, Britain's Labour Party, Britain's Conservative Party, the Canadian government, **Industry Canada**, the Department of Prime Minister, Cabinet, and Defence in Australia, the United Nations, **the US Senate**, the US Department of Homeland Security, the US Environmental Protection Agency, Montana Senator Conrad Burns, Ohio Governor Bob Taft, **the Israeli government**, Exxon Mobil, Walmart, AstraZeneca, Diebold, **Dow Chemical**, Disney, Dell, **Anheuser-Busch**, Nestle, Pepsi, Boeing, Sony Computer Entertainment, EA, SCO Group, **MySpace**, Pfizer, Raytheon, **DuPont**, Anglican and Catholic churches, the Church of Scientology, the World Harvest Church, Amnesty International, the Discovery Channel, **Fox News**, CBS, the **Washington Post**, the National Rifle Association, News International, Al Jazeera, Bob Jones University, Ohio State University, **Bell Pottinger**, Portland Communications, Anheuser-Busch InBev, Stella Artois, **Newt Gingrich**, United Kingdom Parliament...

Those are **only** the ones that made
the **news**.

Why paid editing **matters.**

Anything you say and do on Wikipedia can have **real world consequences**

Extreme media **embarrassment**

Wikipedia is a very **public forum**

Attempts to improperly influence Wikipedia are **frequently reported** in the media

Significant **public backlash**

Embarrassing PR

Risk of **alienating** clients

Taints Wikipedia's reputation

Arguments in **favor** of paid editing.

“You can **destroy** someone's reputation in **one minute** and it will take **years to rebuild.**”

-- Lord Bell, head of Bell Pottinger

Wikipedia has a **responsibility to be accurate**

Inaccuracies **can do real harm**

PR professionals have **time, access, and competence**

PR professionals bring a **different point of view**

Arguments **against** paid editing.

"It is **difficult** to get a man to understand something, when his **salary** depends upon his **not** understanding it."

--Upton Sinclair

History of non-neutral edits

Ultimately **accountable** to their **employers**, who have a responsibility **to make profit** for their company

Strong incentive to **whitewash negative** and **promote positive** information

Neutrality is difficult

“What I have found - and the evidence for this is pretty comprehensive - is that people who are acting as **paid advocates do not make good editors.**”

They insert puffery and spin. That's what they do because **that is what paid advocates do.**”

–Jimmy Wales, in 2012 responding to Phil Gomes

“People shouldn't do it, including me. People have a lot of information about themselves but **staying objective is difficult.**”

That's the trade-off in editing entries about yourself. If you see a blatant error or misconception about yourself, **you really want to set it straight.**”

--Jimmy Wales, in 2005 on editing his own article

We believe that PR professionals are **responsible and respectful**.

It's wrong for the PR profession to think it can **run roughshod over the established Wikipedia community**.

PR professionals must **engage** in a reasonable manner that respects the community's rules and protocols, while also ensuring they are acting in their **clients' best interests**.

But the engagement should be a **two-way street**. At the moment, we do **not believe that to be the case**.

--Gerald Corbett, head of PRSA

We may have to start with an acceptance that Wikipedians **have a problem with our profession** and this reputation has unfortunately **been earned**.

We **can't change this overnight** but by working in partnership through outreach, diplomacy and dialogue, **we can make a difference**.

--Jane Wilson, head of CIPR

What is a Conflict of Interest?
(COI)

An **incompatibility** between the aim of Wikipedia, which is to produce a **neutral, reliably sourced encyclopedia**, and the aims of an individual editor

Do not **promote your own interests** or those of other individuals, companies, or groups

Do not write about these things unless you are **certain that a neutral editor would agree** that your edits improve Wikipedia

Can you **edit** with a COI?

COI editing is **strongly discouraged**.

But **participation** from COI editors is
welcome.

COI editing done right.
(best practices)

Register with an independent username.

Your username should represent you as an **individual**, and not your company or client as a whole

Multiple people may **not** ever use the **same account**

Disclose your conflict of interest on your userpage and the article's talk page.

Being **transparent** about who you are and who you're working for is the easiest way to **gain the community's trust**, get help, and **avoid embarrassing revelations** of misconduct.

What does a **COI declaration** look like?

I would like to **disclose** here that these contributions are made on behalf of Monitor Group and in consultation with them, and I intend to **follow all of Wikipedia's guidelines.**

On **any pages** where I look for assistance, I will be sure **to disclose my relationship** to Monitor in the interests of transparency.

--CanalPark (talk) 22:12, 13 April 2011 (UTC)

I work for **Interprose Public Relations**.

While we **do not intend to directly edit** our clients' Wikipedia entries, we are happy to **act as a resource** for the editing community by **providing factual, non-advertorial information** and accompanying third-party citations.

--Mdroszdowski (talk) 15:28, 2 July 2010 (UTC)

Read the notability guideline.

Not every company, person, artist, artwork, event, or website can **have a Wikipedia article**

Subjects require **in-depth, significant coverage** from **published, reliable, independent sources**

Sources, sources, sources.

Use: newspapers, magazines, books, trades, websites, tv, radio, journals; with a reputation for fact-checking and accuracy

Avoid: self-published blogs, press releases, and sources with a direct connection to the subject

Barack Obama is the President of the United States.<ref>Blitzer, Wolf. “Obama Inaugurated”. CNN. January, 2008. Retrieved March 2012. <http://www.cnn.com/Obama-inauguration></ref>

Neutralize your conflict of interest.

Take extra care to **write without bias**

Write so your **biggest competitor** would think it was **fair and balanced**

Write so it's **impossible** to tell that someone who **works** for the company **wrote** it

Avoid spam or promotion.

Articles should **inform** and **reference**, not promote or sell

Not commercial, not marketing

Start with a draft.

New article **wizard**

Userspace draft

Article's **Talk** page

Have other editors review your work.

Ask for **feedback**

Talk page, Live help channel , Conflict of interest noticeboard, Paid Editor Help

{{subst:submit}} for new article drafts

{{requested edit}} for **existing** articles



Don't make direct edits to live articles.

The **safest** way to avoid COI editing is to **never** making direct edits to **live** articles, especially for controversial information

That **doesn't** mean your contributions are **unwelcome**. Instead of direct editing, propose drafts and edits and **let others make the changes**

Don't use other articles as excuses.

Do **not** use them as **justification**

Make your **own** content **better**

Then it will **last**

Don't rush.

We operate on the timescale of months, years, and **decades**

Seek the **community's feedback** before making changes to an article directly

Articles about **living people** take precedence.
Negative and **unsourced** information can be **removed** at any time by any editor

Join the community.

WikiProject **Cooperation**

Corporate Representatives for Ethical Wikipedia
Engagement (**CREWE**)

The **Signpost**

What to do if something goes **wrong**.

If your article was deleted.

Seek to **understand** why, **fix** the issues

Talk to the **administrator**

Request for Undeletion—**uncontroversial** deletions

Deletion Review—**controversial** deletions

Userfied copy

If no good sources exist for your article.

Do more **research**

Reference Desk

Ask good sources to **write about it**

Wait

Try **again**

If someone is editing your article.

Nobody, not even the **subject** of an article, **owns** it

Accept that others will make changes and engage them in **civil** and **constructive dialogue**

If there's a mistake in your article.

Minor... fix it yourself

Major... seek input from other editors, let them do it

If you want to make changes to an article.

Post **requested edits** on the article's talk page using **{{request edit}}**

WikiProject Cooperation's **Paid Editor Help**

Conflict of interest **noticeboard**

If someone is vandalizing your article.

Revert **obvious** vandalism **yourself**

Vandalism only applies to **intentionally destructive** changes, **not** edits you just **disagree** with

For any significant changes, **discuss** it with other editors **first**

Seek **page protection**

If you disagree strongly with other editors.

Stay **civil**

Read the relevant **policies**

Seek the **input** of other **uninvolved** editors

Use the **dispute resolution** process

If you requested feedback but haven't received a timely response.

Be **transparent** about your identity and conflict of interest

Use **Talk** pages, **noticeboards**, **WikiProjects**, **Paid Editor Help**

Jimmy Wales' Talk page, Email **info@wikipedia.org**, contact the **Arbitration Committee**

If your account was blocked.

Stay calm

Ask the administrator who blocked you for an explanation

Appeal the block , place **{{unblock}}** on your **Talk** page or through **online unblock chat**

Acknowledge if you made a **mistake**, **correct** it

If you're overwhelmed by Wikipedia's interface and policies.

Take your **time**

Ask for **help** – **Help Desk, live chat , WikiProject Cooperation, COI Noticeboard, Search**

Ask **questions**

We're here to **assist** you, and we're **not** your **enemy**

What does the **future** hold?

Wikipedia **matters**

PR and Wikipedia can **work together**

You can **use Wikipedia effectively**

Imagine a world in which **every single person** on the planet is given free access to the **sum of all human knowledge**.

That's our **commitment.**

You can **help.**

Links

- **A free, online copy of this presentation**
<http://goo.gl/8LsKW>
- **The Wikipedia guideline on COI editing**
<http://enwp.org/WP:COI>
- **The Plain and simple conflict of interest guide**
<http://enwp.org/WP:PSCOI>
- **WikiProject Cooperation**
<http://enwp.org/WP:COOPERATION>
- **Corporate Representatives for Ethical Wikipedia Engagement, CREWE**
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/crewe.group>
- **The history of COI editing on Wikipedia**
http://enwp.org/COI_editing_on_Wikipedia

Questions

Is it more efficient to just edit in secret?

Does Wikipedia care about the truth?

Are paid editors treated more unfairly than unpaid advocates?

Does Wikipedia protect living people more than corporations?

Is Jimmy Wales' stance stronger than the actual policy?

What do you do if a reliable source is wrong?

Are PR ethics in conflict with Wikipedia policies?

Are the interests of the client the same as the interests of the encyclopedia?

Is the client's interest to avoid embarrassment or fix articles? Is there a COI in working on the encyclopedia for profit?

Is it deceptive to make changes without disclosure?

How do we engage ethical PR editors while dealing unethical ones?

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