Improving Wikipedia's important articles

A strategic opportunity for the En-Wikipedia community, Featured Article regulars, and WMF sponsors

By Wiki user "TCO"
contact: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User_talk:TCO
(revision as of 26NOV11)

Executive summary

- Although Wikipedia has created many articles, it has poor quality on its most viewed articles.

- The Featured Article and Good Article programs are covering obscure topics and becoming more obscure.

- This document contains several capsule analyses. The hope is that these will prompt further thinking and some *actions*…to better serve Wiki's readers.

- Summary recommendations:

    – **For authors:** change drive from "number of stickers" to "total viewed content Featured/Good".

    – **For FA program:** elect leaders, recruit new writers, improve FAC processes.

    – **For WMF management**: support community efforts by addressing the quality gap publicly.

> Upgrading the high-view articles is high "bang for the buck". A few people can drive significant, visible improvements for the public's encyclopedia.

- Vital Articles
- Featured and Good Articles programs
  - Relevance to readers
  - Content checks of Featured Article Candidates
  - Declining output of Featured Articles
- Featured Article writing patterns
  - Champions or star collectors?
  - Collaboration
- High or low view topic concentration?
  - WikiCup
  - Four Award
  - "Waddesdon Road railway station" case study
  - Hurricane WikiProject
  - Ucucha FAs
  - Some high importance efforts
- Wikimedia Foundation quality strategy
- Pulling it all together
- Backups

Even though Wikipedia is 10 years old, the 5th most viewed site on the Internet, and contains 3 million+ articles, 85% of its Vital Articles are still...unsatisfactory.
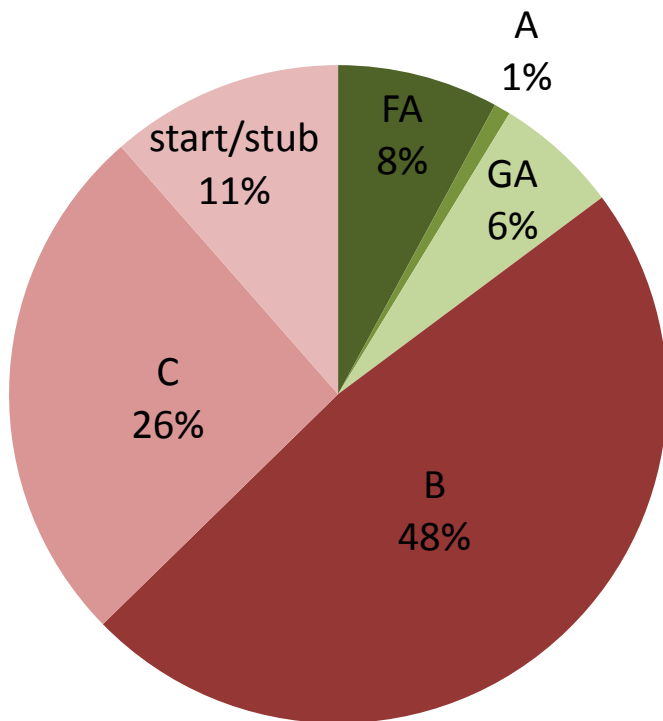
VA top 1000 examples:

- "France"

- "Bone fracture"

- "Spaceflight"

A
1%

FA
8%

GA
6%

start/stub
11%

C
26%

B
48%

2011 Vital Article top 1000 ("level 3")

Explanation:

- GA (Good Article) is the first point where an article dependably reads like an integrated composition.

- Below GA, articles are collages of added text, differing (stub to B) in length.

- An article below Good, especially on an important topic should be called "unsat".

- Note: for unimportant topics, Wiki articles that are collections of stray facts are often useful. And the huge amount of topics we cover is very powerful. But for core topics, a collage is not what the reader needs as an overview and doorway. And it makes the site look bad.

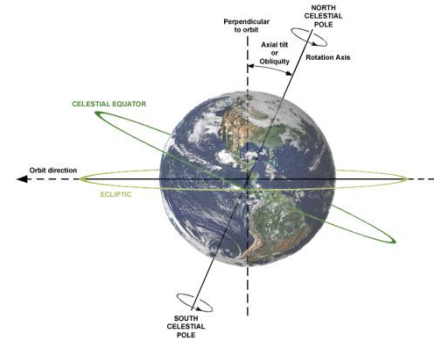# 90% of Wikipedia's top 100 and top 10 most vital articles are also…unsat.
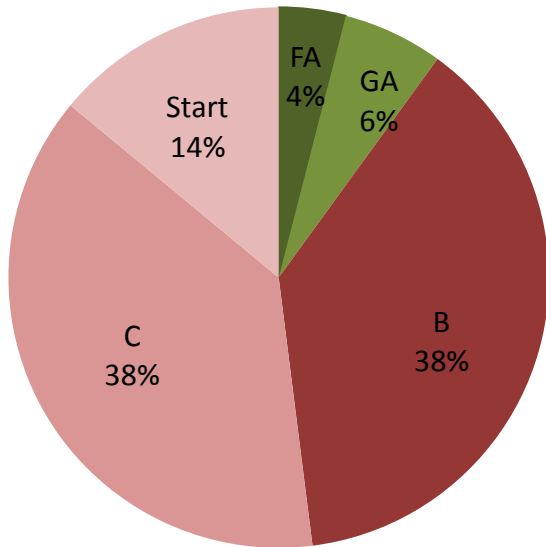
2011 Vital Article top 100 ("level 2")
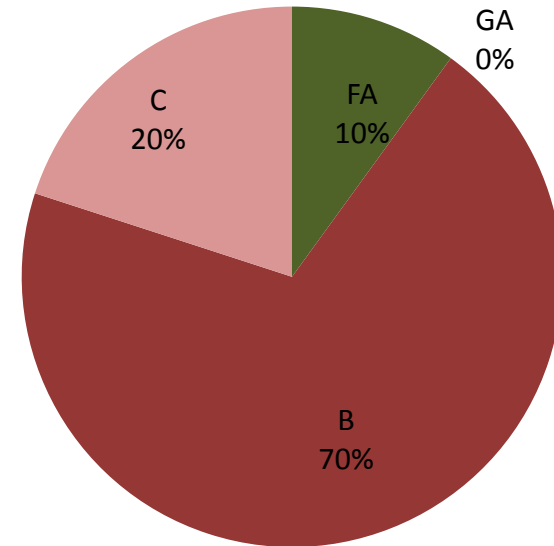
2011 Vital Article top 10 ("level 1")

"Family": example top 100 VA

"Earth": example top 10 VA

"Information technology": poster child for the unsat Vital Articles

The importance…

- $Trillion market size

- 140,000 books with "information technology" in the title

- Top 1000 VA (could be top 100)

- 150,000 monthly views.

- "Parent" industry to Wiki. WMF execs work in it. So do many Wiki editors.

…and what Wiki delivers*

- *14 sentences* in three sections, including an introductory lead (article is not long enough for a summary lead).

- One image, on geographic IT&C spend. No growth curve (very notable and benefits from a visual aid). No pictures of products. No size comparison to traditional industries.

WIKIPEDIA 1.0 — This article has been reviewed by the Version 1.0 Editorial Team.

Start — This article has been rated as **Start-Class** on the quality scale.

(!) This article is a **vital article**.

Wikipedia should be delivering an IT overview that breaks the topic into the major parts of the industry, gives ~three paragraph summaries of the products and services, and directs the user via prominent "See also" hat notes to our sub-industry articles. History should be expanded. Social effects should be added. Criticism should be added. The discussion of economics should be expanded from just size and growth to include value chain, enabling effect on other industries, market share of major suppliers, and employment.

*As of 03NOV11

While FAs and GAs overall have grown significantly over the last 3 years, Vital Article FA/GAs are decreasing not just as a fraction of FA/GA, but in **_absolute numbers_**.

Overall FA/GA numbers
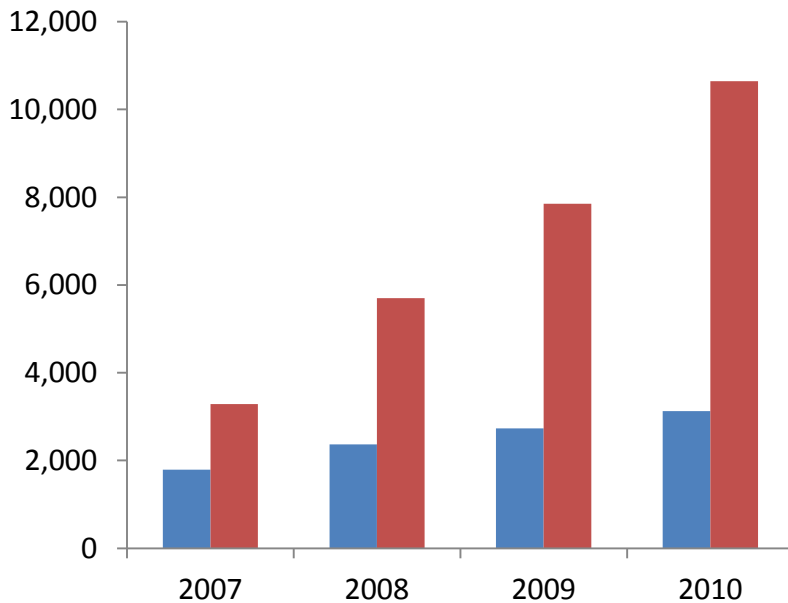
Vital Article FA/GA numbers
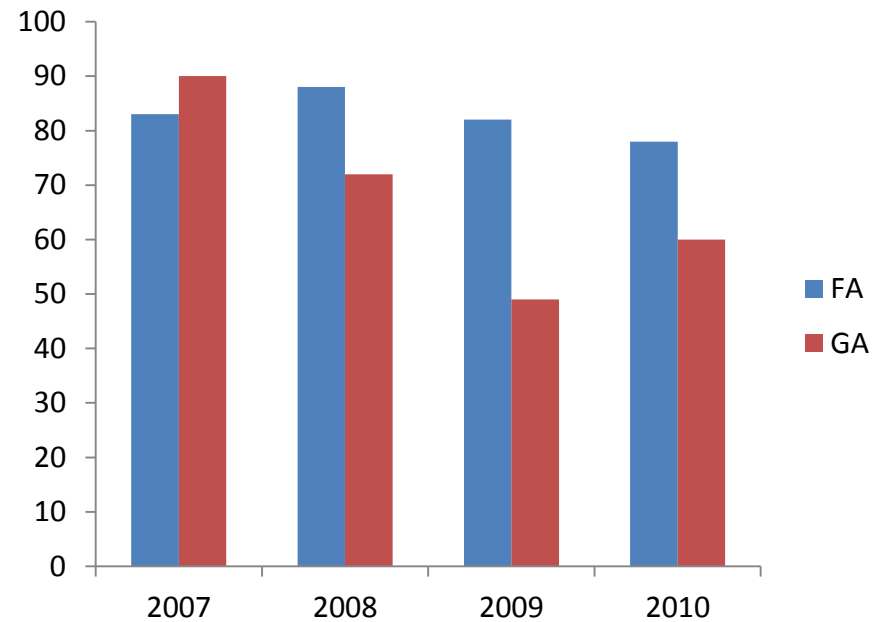
Vital Articles are a tiny percentage of Featured Articles or Good Articles.

3,128   10,648

100%
90%
80%
70%   ■ non-Vital
60%
50%   ■ Vital
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%

FA   GA

2.5%   **0.6%**
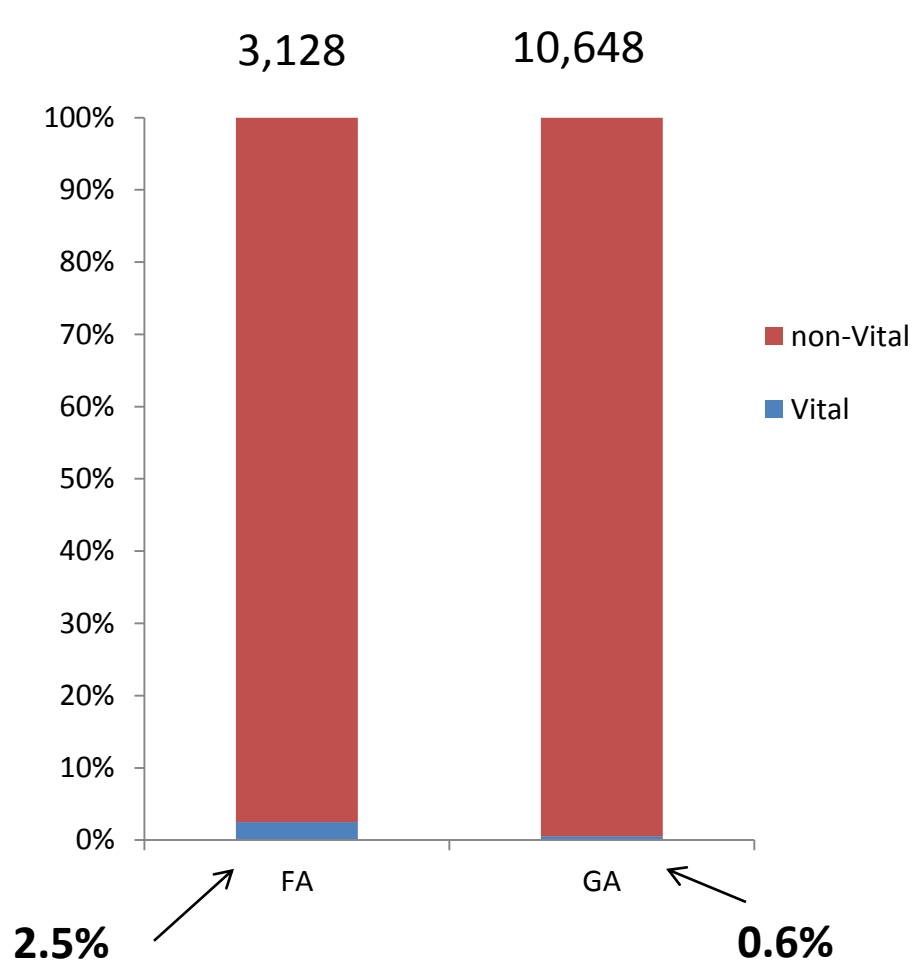
If instead only 15% of Featured Articles and only 5% of Good Articles were Vital…

…we would have no unsat Vital Articles (500 Good and 500 Featured).

Comparing ten random Vital Articles with ten random FA/GAs shows they "feel" more important encyclopedically.

Vital Articles are more important to readers than Featured or Good articles.

Median monthly page views

Chart (bar graph) with y-axis labeled from 0 to 70,000 in increments of 10,000:
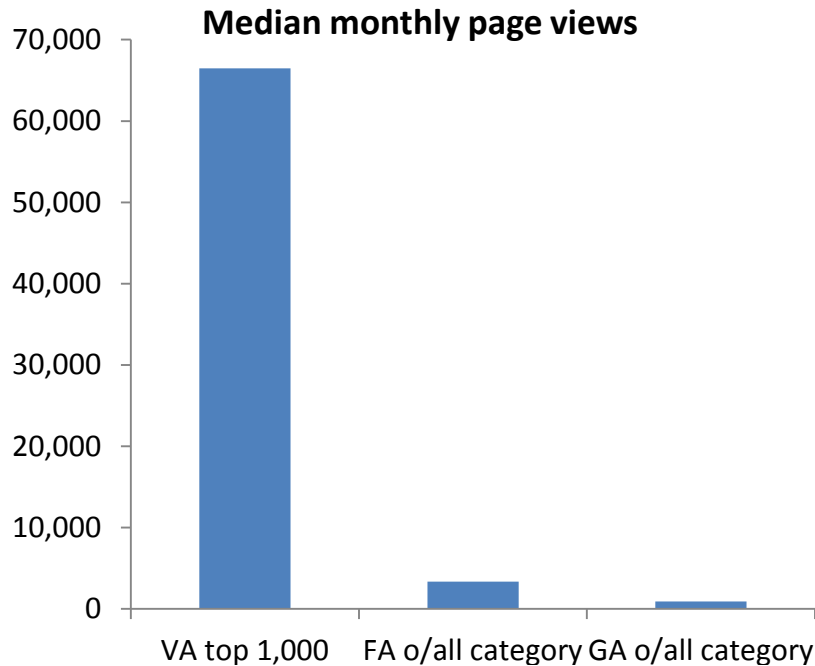- VA top 1,000: ~66,000
- FA o/all category: ~3,000
- GA o/all category: ~1,000

- Vital Articles are not just important for culture or education, **they are popular.**

- Featured Article median views are 1/20th of VAs.

- Good Article median views are 1/60th of VAs.

Net/net: Vital Articles are important to readers, yet our high quality programs neglect them.

We can improve the Vital Articles. Recommendations:

- Create a functioning WikiProject to support authors improving Vital Articles.

  – Get one to two people to show leadership here.

  – Redo the abandoned 2009 Vital Articles improvement project in look (e.g. make the signup list more prominent, userboxes more flashy, award stickers similar to Four Award)

  – Integrate/add as a prominent link to the Vital Article list page itself [is separate now]

  – Update the categories and talk page banners so that Vital Articles can be auto-tracked (like every other WikiProject does).

  – Stay out of the "included/not included" debates. They are fine, but are a distraction from actually improving the Vital Articles. Some people seem to think the only activity related to Vital Articles should be these (minor in number compared to the list) cataloguing debates!

  – Advertise the new Project with FA/GA communities, Village Pump, Signpost, etc.

  – Create a prominent graphic ("fundraising thermometer") to show VA quality improvement.

- Writers: Individuals, start with more specific topics (e.g. biographies) as they are easier. Subsequently, use teams to attack "category articles".

- Sue run a blog post, calling out the issue and "supporting the troops".

- Host a contest ("most FA/GA VAs in a year"). Have WMF shell out for some prizes. Symbolism and acknowledgment is more important than big $$$. Some ideas: Dinner with Jimbo, visit to WMF HQ, Wiki-logo glassware, research account to buy books/JSTOR subscription, physical trophy or plaque, fancy globe, etc.

- WMF Fundraising: not sure how we would spend grant money if given it, but still wonder if there is some…angle. Pointing out this problem and leveraging that to get funds for Wikipedia overall?

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# Academic research showed that Wiki fails on its most important products
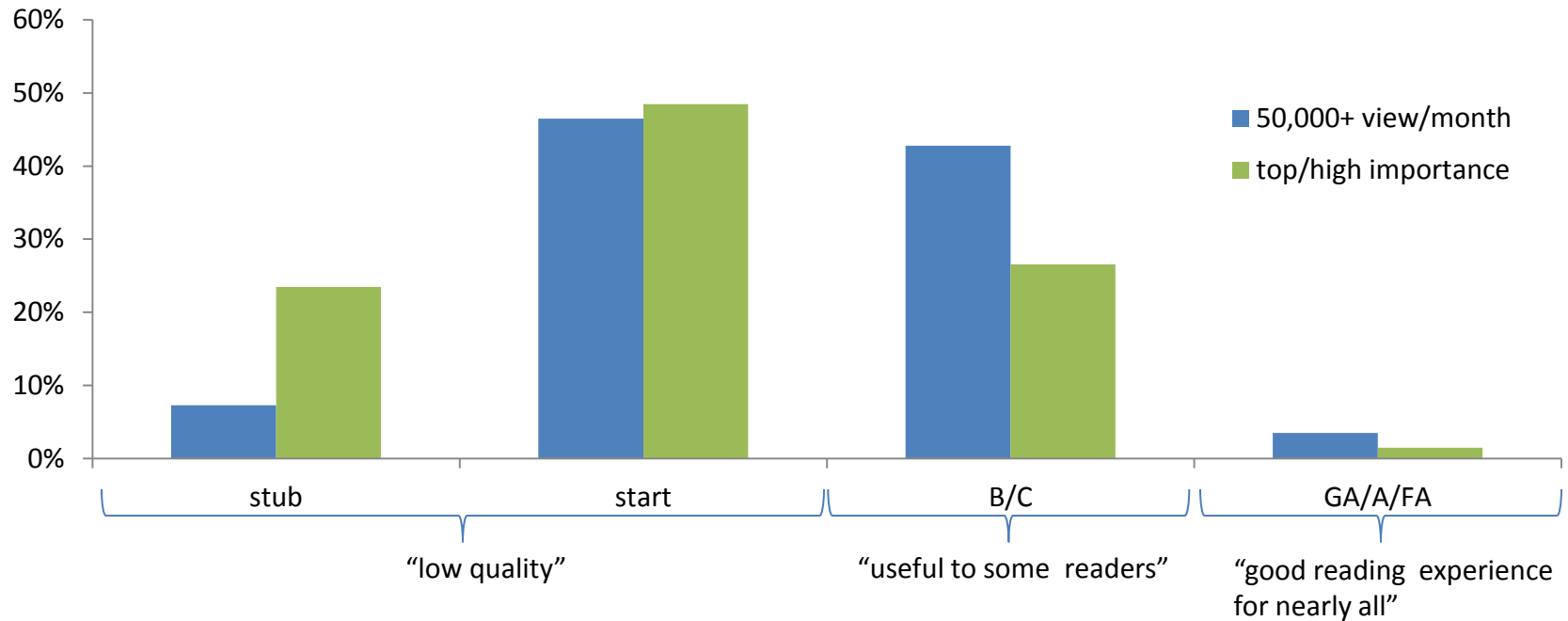
- *'Wikipedia should be assessed versus what its customers want,* not just what it happens to produce.'

- 'For the articles most important (whether subjectively assessed or by web traffic demand), Wiki is delivering only a tiny fraction of high quality. ' Comparing low quality (stub and start combined) to high quality (GA/A/FA), shows a 10-50X ratio. Even judging stubs only versus GA+, the low quality still outweighs the high.

- Simultaneous with delivering poor results on the most important products, **"[most] high-quality articles found in Wikipedia are articles which address minutiae for specialized audiences".**

- This slide's study* done by a Harvard Business School academic using server data and surveying Wiki articles. Message is similar to that of this document, which was based on sampling and manual methods.**

*Gorbatai, Andrea D., "Exploring Underproduction in Wikipedia", WikiSym Proceedings, 2011.

**The author of this document became aware of the Gorbatai paper when finishing this document. The results are independent.

Recent Featured Articles and Good Articles are less relevant than older ones.

Median monthly page views
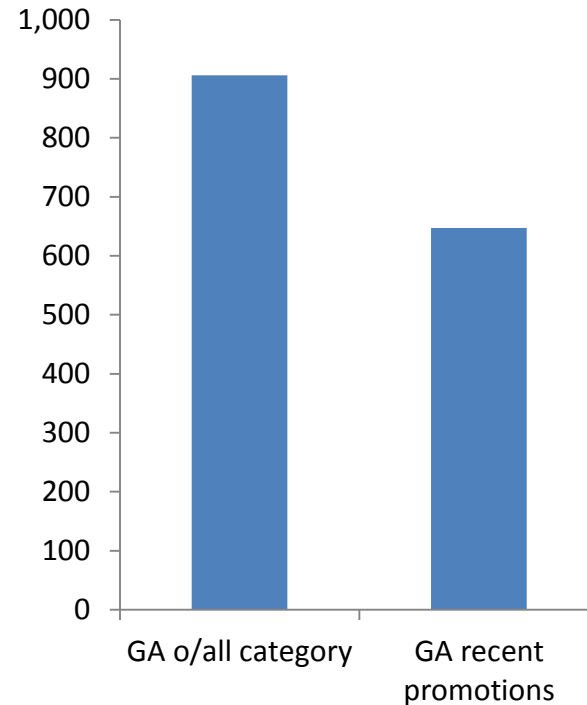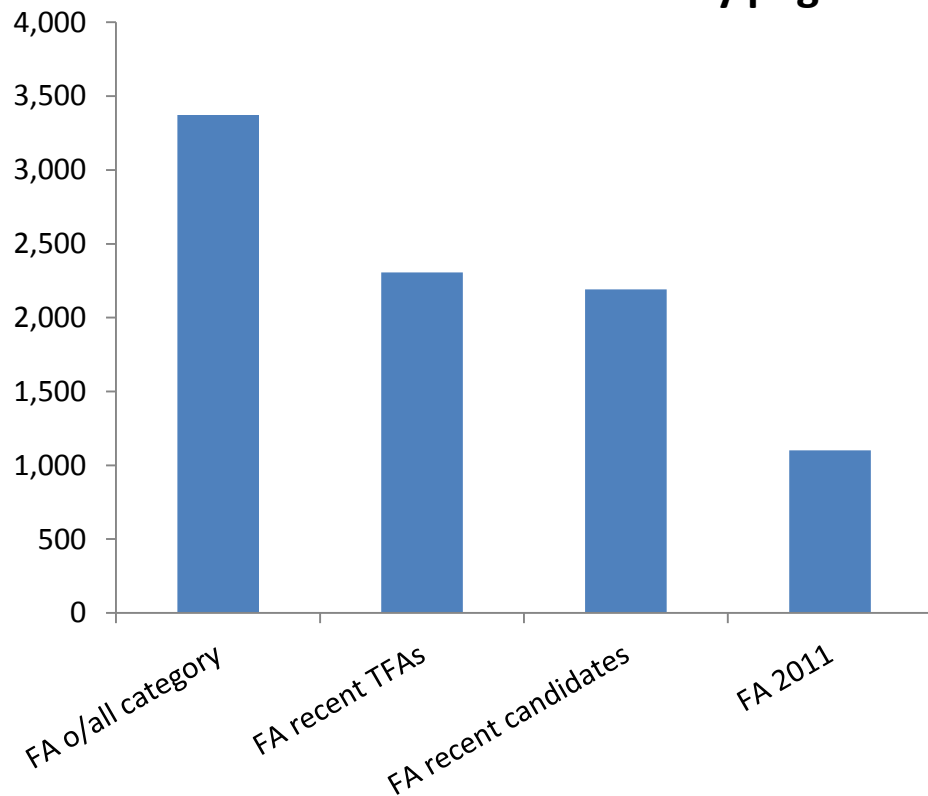
Few "important" articles have been promoted to Featured since 2008
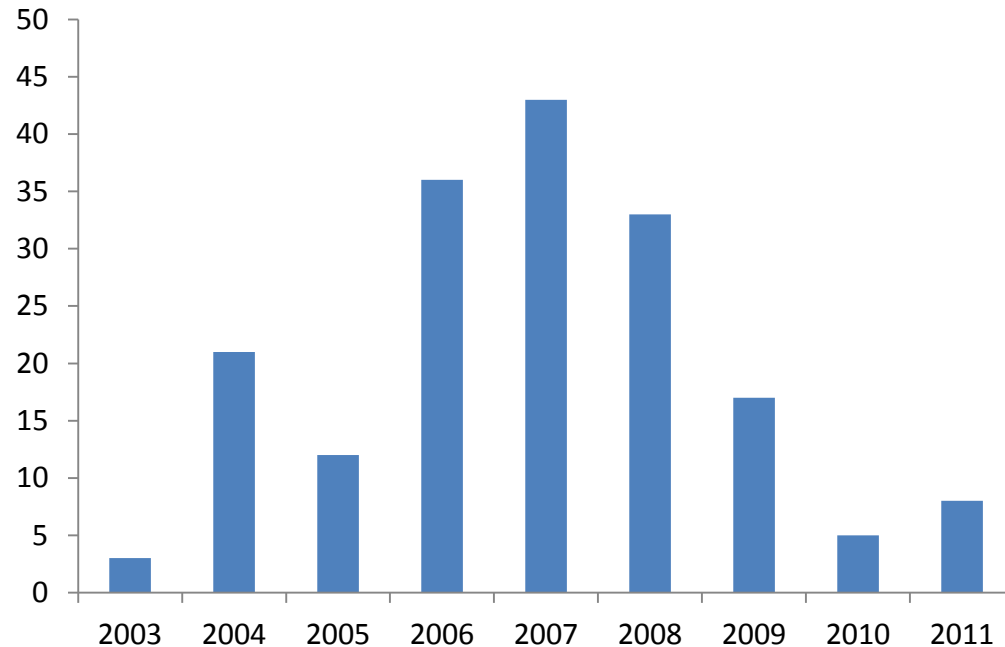
I no longer participate in FAC because it diverts our best writers to trivial topics

A former Featured Article writer

- Methodology: Wiki user Looie496 looked at the entire 3000+ FA portfolio and rated it for importance. He did so without knowing what year an article was promoted. Then he determined this pattern.*

- This is a third independent assessment (along with this document and the Gorbatai academic work) showing the problem of FA not working on reader-relevant articles.

*For this slide, the 2011 number is normalized (increased) to account for partial year data.

Many Featured Article Candidates (OCT 2011) are on unpopular topics.
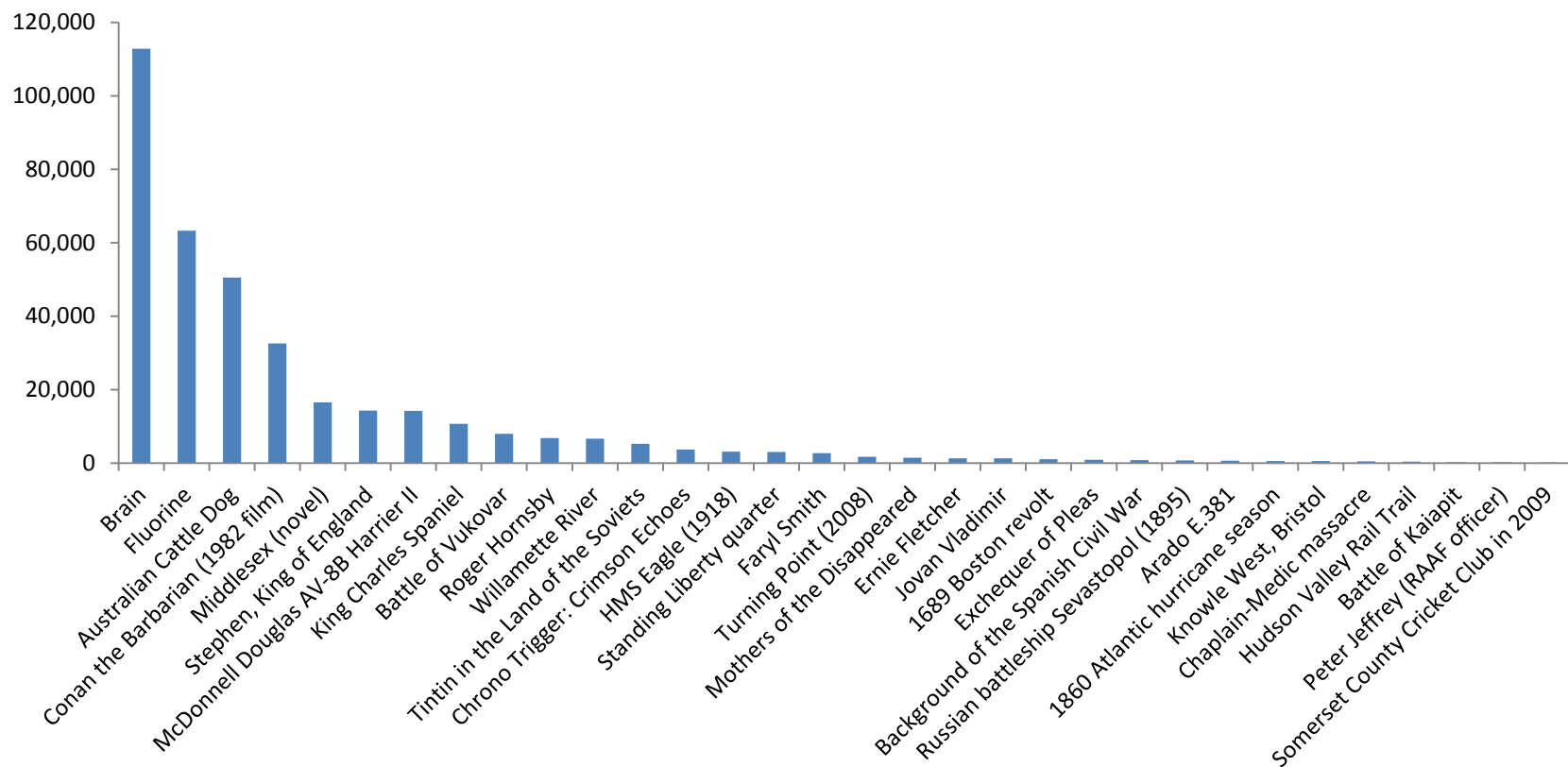
- 55% of the FACs have less than 3000 views per month (100/day).   (3000 roughly corresponds to a half likelihood of "heard of it".)

- The top two articles, "Brain" and "Fluorine" have page views equal to the other 28 articles combined.   *Note these are also the only two Vital Articles (top 1,000 and top 10,000).*

- The distribution tail includes an individual Russian ship, an English neighborhood, and a cricket club's season.

Recent (OCT 2011) Good Article promotions are even more unimportant.
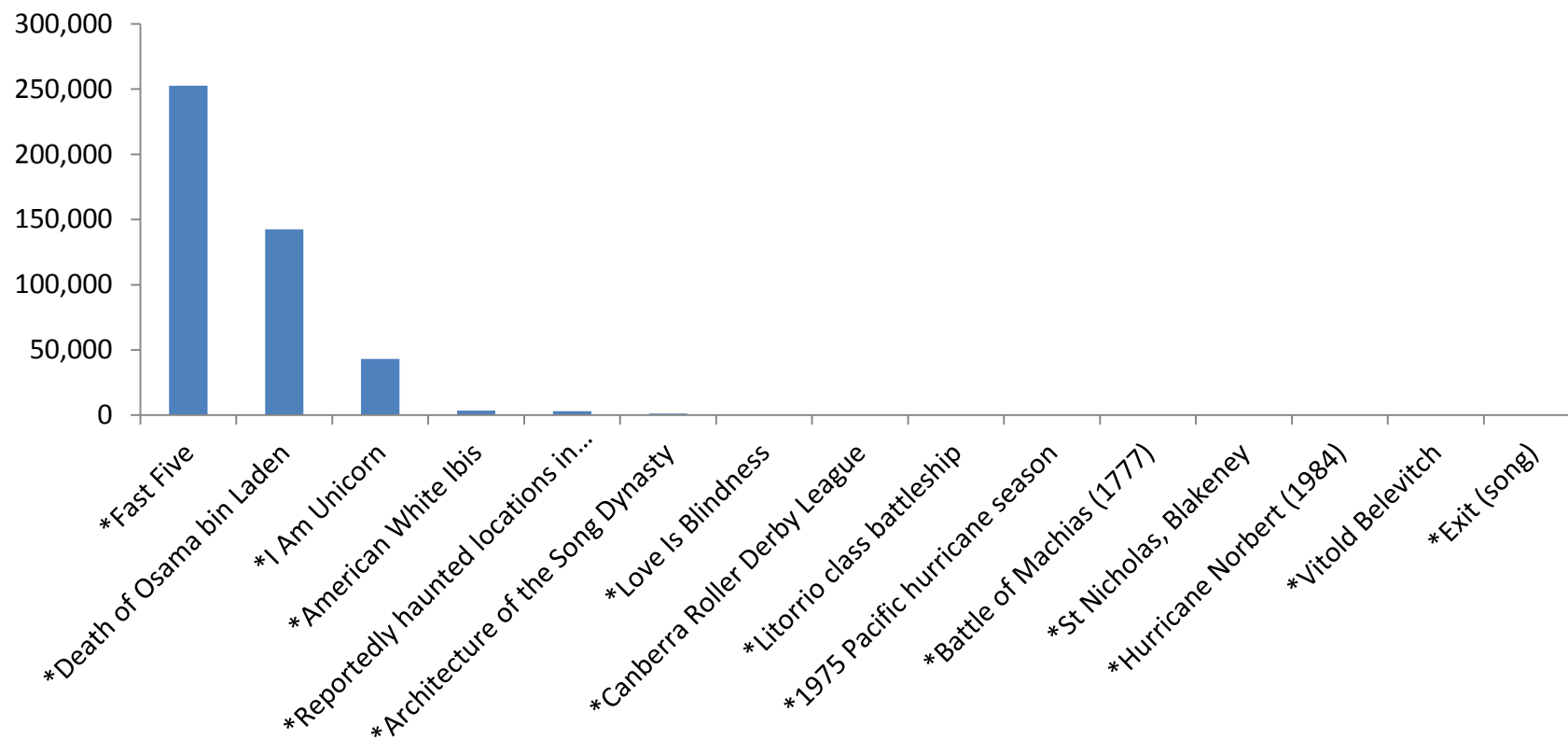
- The median page views (667) are one-third that of the recent FACs (2,192).
- Two thirds (67%) of the articles have less than 3000 monthly views (100 per day).
- One third (33%) have less than 300 monthly views (the average Wiki stub get that…and Wiki has huge amounts of single sentence stubs).
- The are no Vital Articles. (GA has far less Vital Articles as a fraction of category than FA and even has less Vital Articles overall. Also, the amount of VA GAs has been dropping faster than FA GAs.)
- The three high-view articles are two pop culture articles and a news event.
- The distribution tail includes a 6-paragraph-worthy hurricane and a pop song that never tracked top 40.

The peculiar categories of mushrooms, trains, US roads, and hurricanes account for 0.3% of Vital Articles, but are about 10% of the high quality articles
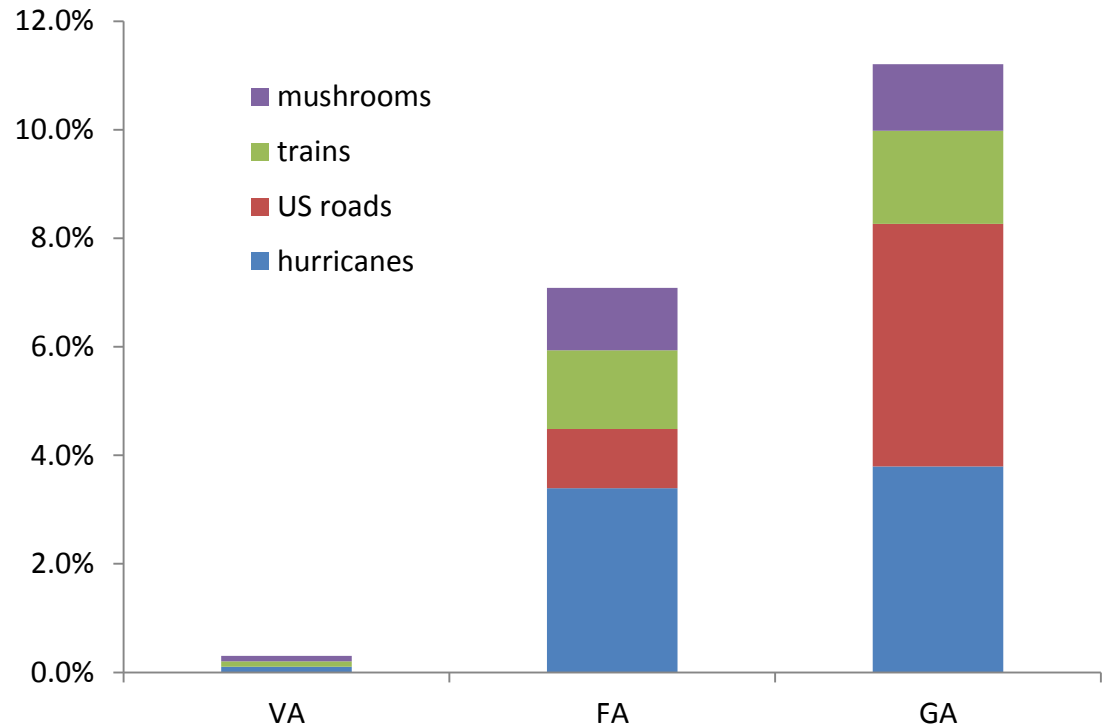
- These categories may be signs of more. Are other strange content tendencies dominating FA/GA?

- Are these categories favored because it is easier to mechanically produce award-winning articles here?

- GA is more plagued than FA. (And is a larger category overall.)

Recommendations: we can improve the relevance of FAs

FA writers: *Examine article page views to prioritize your time*. Even if you some of you refuse--you are volunteers --if half of you are convinced to work on more relevant topics, **the gain for the readers will be immense.**

- There are often tractable subjects in areas of your interests. Why write about a strange fish with less than 300 view per month, when "Cod " gets 50,000 views per month, yet is B class? The essential skill involved is the same.

- Yes, meaningful topics have more written on them (so more to research/write), but even that can be fun. Covering an obscure mushroom, one only can write about the biological. If you do "Portobello", you can cover economic and culinary aspects.

- There is also a massive efficiency of scale involved. It may take three times as long to FA "Snapping turtle" instead of "Alabama red-bellied turtle", but the former has ~15,000 monthly views, while the latter has ~500 monthly views! A 30X payoff difference means ,per unit of effort, you are still ~ 10 times better off writing on the big snapper.

- Also, reviewers are more likely to be interested....and you are not clogging the FA process with low impact nominations .

- Writing on a notable subject also gives more opportunities to find images or to correspond with experts, which can be enjoyable aspects of FA work.

- Also, you can have the pride of knowing more people are seeing your work, even more of your Wiki writing peers.

- If you are altruistic, you are helping more readers of Wiki.

Helpers (reviewers, copyeditors, etc.)

- Look at reader relevance (page views) when allocating your help. Include it in your calculus along with interest, friends, etc.

FA delegates:

- Do not lower standards (if anything they should be higher for more important articles). But some minor things: Don't waste your time pleading for reviews of obscure topic--spend time beating the bushes for helpers for the important topics. Give nominators of important topics the benefit of your counsel on how to practically get these topics over the Featured bar.

- Think creatively about what you can do to help build relevance. Be a part of the solution.

Process:

- We need contests, barn stars, ranking lists, etc. that weight contribution by page views.

- We need a table that shows the page views for FAC candidates so reviewers can prioritize. If proponents of obscure topics fight this too hard for change to occur, someone should create such a table outside the FA process (so those who care can view it).

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Is form is more important than content at Featured Article Candidacy?

Everyone likes to comment on the prose, and I come along a week later, and find they were commenting on and supported prose that is based on non-reliable sources.

Featured Article leader, 2007

What the reader cares about

What FAC review spends time on

Citation format

Sentence/phrase level prose

Paraphrasing cited sources

Readable paragraphs
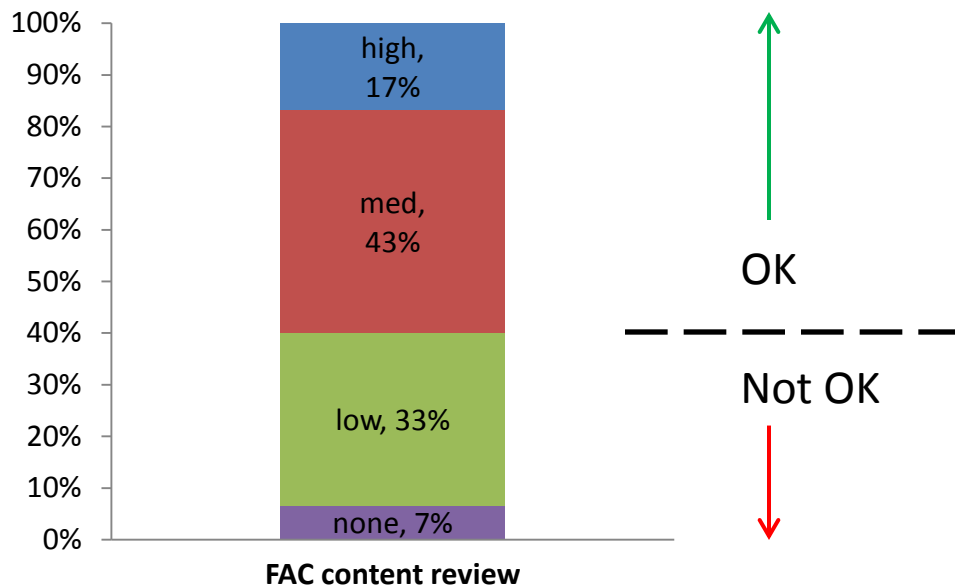
Topic organization

Topic emphasis/coverage

Correct information

Many FAs get inadequate content review during FAC

Rating explanation:

- **High:** Depth of an academic discussion (still short of re-researching the topic).

- **Medium:** Some serious discussion (or volunteers saying they checked content). Good enough for Wiki.

- **Low:** One to two isolated things mentioned. No volunteer commenting on overall content.

- **None:** Zero content assessment remarks.

Methodology:

- A random sampling of 30 of the 2011 FACs was done. The FAC review pages were examined and rated for depth of content review with a mindset of "would an editor of a print source have confidence that reviewers considered content."

- Where volunteers said that they had looked at content and felt it was adequate, this was accepted (not a requirement per se for in depth discussion, although certainly deep discussion is more likely from careful review.) Where comments referred back to a Peer Review or A class review or previous FAC, this was checked for level of content review.

- Some benefit of the doubt (to FAC) was given on the medium rated ones. The intent was not to be overly harsh, but just to do a methodical examination of several FACs to look at the "form versus function" criticism to start getting arms wrapped around it.

- Ratings are of course subjective, but an effort was made to be consistent from article to article on the standard. Also, the list of articles and their ratings is given, so inspection of the choices is possible.

Sampled 2011 FACs: adequate content reviews

content chk	Article	JUN 2011 hits	comments
high	Parkinson's disease	165,561	coverage detail was grappled with
high	Logarithm	147,626	Chock full of real content coverage discussion. Nice.
high	Manhattan Project	96,271	sections added, pictures added, re-org. And article was quite good even before that!
high	Almirante Latorre-class battleship	581	Expert calling out alternate points from other sources
high	Frank Bladin	206	(from ACR), good stuff from NickD, some in the FAC too
medium	Anfield	17,249	some fact/logic questions
medium	Painted turtle	13,669	Sasata did a lit search. Cas said covered topic well.
medium	Tales of Monkey Island	7,666	
medium	Kathleen Ferrier	2,353	Carch engages on content and sourcing
medium	1991 Atlantic hurricane season	1,407	has a non expert comment on emphasis, some discussion of summarizing info
medium	Me and Juliet	1,075	
medium	Brazilian battleship São Paulo	1,049	Lecen's points mostly. ACR was light on content
medium	Warren County, Indiana	986	
medium	Thistle, Utah	968	Dave had some good questions on coverage
medium	HMS Speedy (1782)	785	pretty decent engagement in first FAC.
medium	Canoe River train crash	560	overemphasis on politician corrected by reviewer push.
medium	Taxonomy of lemurs	324	Mav gets into some of the assertions and sources. Concern about overlap with Featured List discussed.
medium	Small-toothed sportive lemur	219	lot of good questions raised about lack of info on conservation and predation, but not really resolved in article as no sourced info to cover this.

Sampled 2011 FACs: inadequate content reviews

content chk	Article	JUN 2011 hits	comments
low	Galápagos tortoise	20,245	article had a lot of formatting and prose issues and the reviewer attention/work went there.
low	Covent Garden	17,938	one issue from the Colonel. Other than that all prose and format stuff.
low	Green children of Woolpit	4,091	Milburne has some logic questions.
low	Happy Chandler	2,399	one question
low	Abdul Karim (the Munshi)	1,593	some logic questions raised, but on a topic like this with a lot of uncertainty (from the burned letters) more looking at the sources, by reviewers, needed
low	Peveril Castle	1,231	
low	The Magdalen Reading	852	Johnbod has a few questions.
low	Planet Stories	713	
low	Indian Head eagle	620	
low	U.S. Route 30 in Iowa	449	
none	Flowing Hair dollar	2,547	
none	Unknown (magazine)	727	

The more important an article is, the more its content is reviewed.*

monthly page views

Depth of content review**
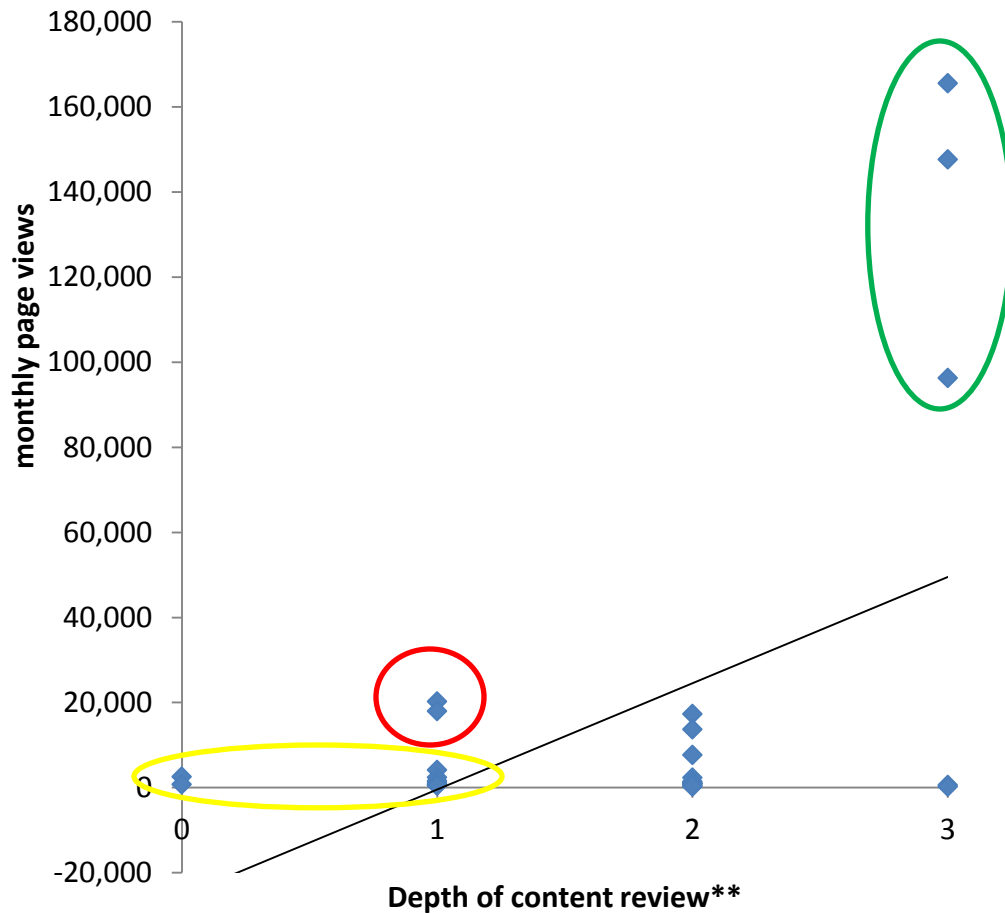
- Blockbuster articles are getting outstanding content review.

- A few moderately high view articles get poor content review.

- Many obscure topics get inadequate content review. (More a danger to the FA brand than to the readers, given these articles are a tiny percentage of page views of Featured Articles.)

*Weak relationship.
**Expressed as 0=none, 1=low, 2=medium, 3=high

Recommendations

Process:

- *Change the format of reviews from the "all on one page" to something allowing section and templates.* One should be allowed (even encouraged) to leave a thoughtful lengthy review like reviewing an academic paper. Open review online academic journals like *Climate of the Past Discussions* can be looked at for insights rather than depending on Wiki-only innovation.

- *Subdivide articles to delegates (presumably by topic area) and then have a specific delegate responsible for that article throughout the FAC.* This allows more efficiency for the delegate, deeper inspection of the article and its reviews and improvement…and there is also clarity in what role a delegate has in making comments (as a normal reviewer or the deciding authority). Note: this is how periodicals work (academic or commercial)…by a subeditor system.

Practice:

- FAC delegates: ensure content is covered as part of FAC review. Treat lack of it like lack of an image review.

- Close paraphrase checker: also check content tangentially when doing the source check. Since you are in the materials…this just makes sense.

- Promote a culture of discussion of content issues that are not black and white (for instance coverage decisions for a meta-topic article). This is a higher level of sophistication than "followed rule X or not". It is also important that decisions on these areas are not viewed as reviewers having a trump card via the "object" vote.

- Allow longer time for discussion/work on more substantive articles. 2 months+ is reasonable for a meaty topic. We should not let the practices suitable for short articles on triviality (or template driven FAs) define processes needed for substantive topics.

Other:

- Someone: write an essay on how to quickly engage with content and major aspects of content. Emphasize the easy things that come with a Google search. And the value of something over nothing. (People are letting difficulty of re-researching a topic stop them from the rapid checking. Letting perfect be the enemy of better. Too many talk page comments about how "hard" it is to engage on content compared to prose. It's a little harder…but not really that hard…just takes a curious mind.)

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The Good Article program is growing. The Featured Article program is shrinking.

GA trailing 12 months production
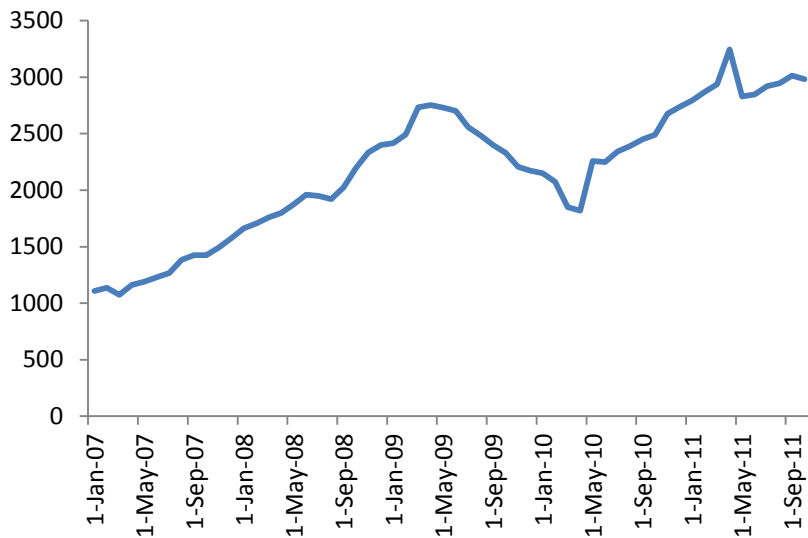
FA trailing 12 months production
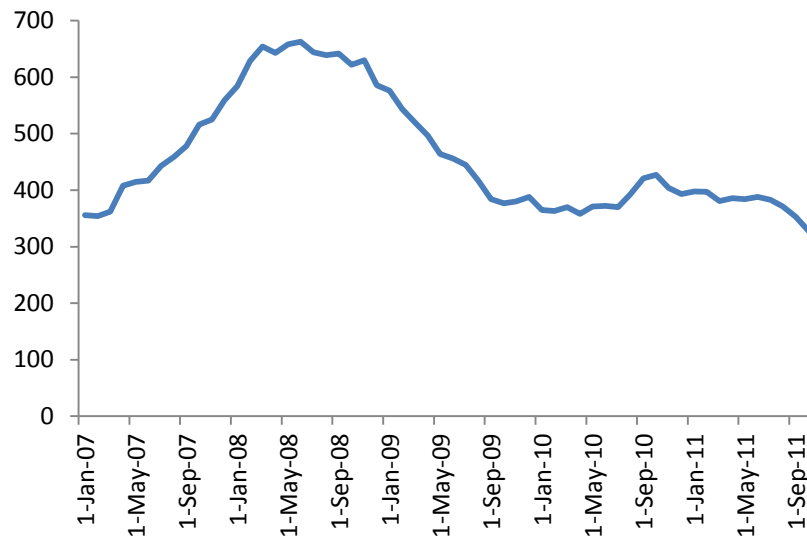
The FAC leader is not thinking strategically about growth.

Quotes…

…and replies

> I wish we could consistently get the page size below or around 30 nom[ination]s so we could discuss removing that restriction [allowing simultaneous FA nominations by a single author].

- This is wishing for the program to be **both smaller and more insular**.
- Instead…how about wishing for a program *three times the size…and bringing in new blood*. Wouldn't that build the Wiki better?
- Don't let "page size" drive the size of the program. Nooo! Create the structure that serves the goal.

> FAC continues to maintain standards, and we aren't going to do something to artificially up the volume in spite of Wikipedia's overall decline just so we can claim higher numbers

- Dropping quality (like a marketer dropping price) is NOT the ONLY way to increase volume. *Think about more factors that affect production.*
- Yes, Wiki editorship is declining, but that does not mean FAC is optimized. FA is a small program, with very high talent requirements. It may be able to grow while other aspects of Wiki decline.
- The participation model for Wiki may be changing with time. One could imagine a future where FA writing was strong while low end writing was less.
- Complaining about Wiki decline (or waiting for WMF to fix it) is not taking the initiative with what FA can control locally.
- ***Good Article output has increased in both number and quality versus 4 years ago.***

Featured Article regulars are concerned about the program

Issues:

- Lowered production

- Loss of old regulars

- Little new blood

- Not enough good reviewers

- Perception of an in-crowd, even favoritism

The perception of impropriety can be as dangerous as actual impropriety, so if there are ever any cases where reviewers/nominators feel that there was some collusion/improper weighting going on, please bring it up...

Featured Article delegate

What we need is a no holds barred RFC [discussion], but how do you do that when *everyone is scared silly*?

A Featured Article writer

Recommendations

Leadership: bring in new blood and increase moral authority

- ***Elect the FA director/delegates yearly.*** Do it in FA "space" with a 7-day period (minimize drama) and invite anyone who considers themselves an FA stakeholder to vote.   The refusal to hold elections makes FA look like a fiefdom (*scared of not being re-elected*) . GOCE and MilHist do fine electing their leaders. It will be OK…

- Double the number of delegates so that articles get more attention, delegates can review and write more as well. This will also make it less of a fiefdom. It will also add new ideas to benefit administration (Ucucha is a positive example here).

- Clarify the position of FA leader (director). The acting leader is different than the named leader (who is disengaged from FAC).

Recruit new writers

- Time for new essays, Signpost coverage, etc. Think about what the message should be in terms of encouraging submissions while also being realistic about what the standard is. But let's get more "bodies in shop".

- Foster collaborations as a method of apprenticeship. Perhaps FA regulars can rewrite articles where others have done most of the research on the topic and both share the star credit. (Note this is MORE than a sentence level prose copyedit.)

Recruit new reviewers

- Bring in subject matter (on Wiki) experts who may lack FA expertise or interest in terms of prose…but who know the topics. These can be easily found by circulating in article space and seeing who is working on parallel topics. (We lack content reviews anyways.)

- Invite external academics for important FAs (for example an element or major species) to submit an FA review.

- Some of the above may get seduced into FA writing later (don't tell them this—let it be a sneaky side objective).
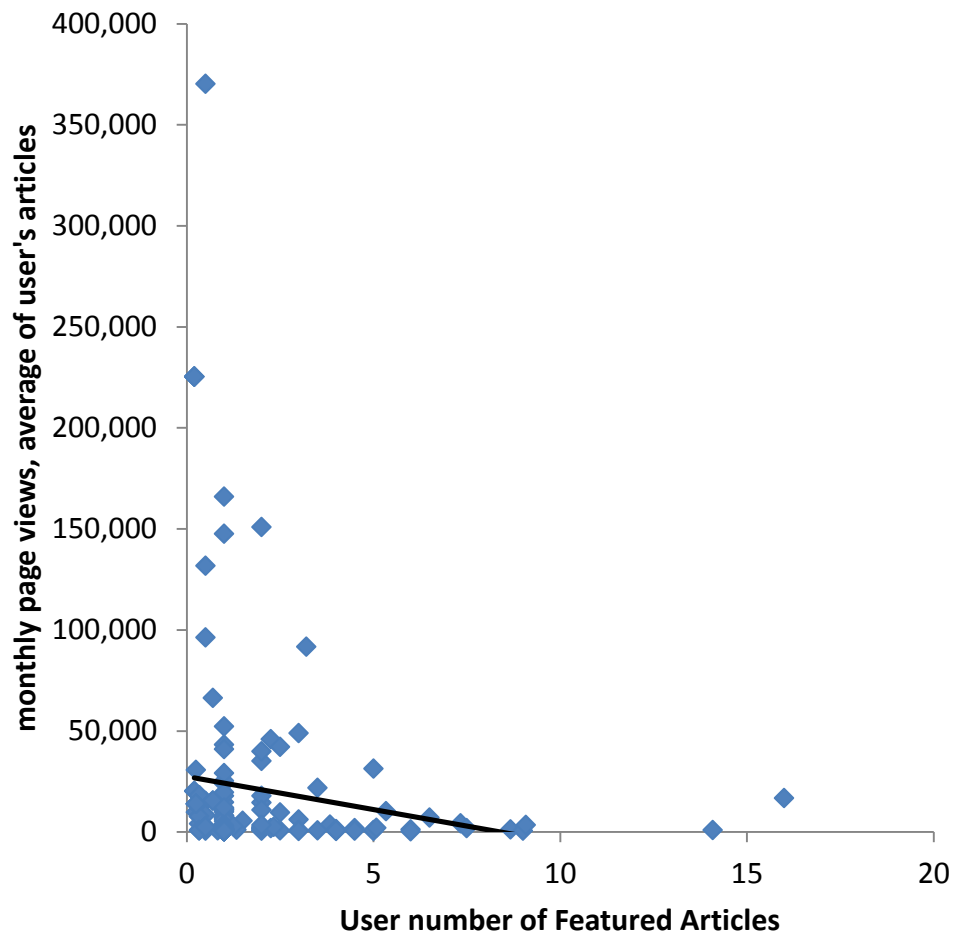
Improve efficiency

- Think about ways in which FAC or FA writing can be more efficient. Ucucha's recent creation of a tool for link checking and a bot for notification are great recent additions to upgrade old issues. What if we had a topic organized list like GA does? Brainstorm and be willing to think about (and TRY!) new ideas.

Make the process more pleasant for nominators

- This does NOT mean to lower standards. But having a delegate acting as "subeditor" will allow intervention when reviewers are unreasonable or unpleasant. (The tone is worse than academic review…even though academic review is more substantive.)

- FA nominators (and reviewers) deserve some sort of summary statement for articles that are rejected. This is absolutely the norm in academia (see any science journal). The writer should get some reasonable feedback on how far away he was, which reviewers' objections the delegate found serious (or rejected), and what is needed in order to pass. Failed RFAs get this. AFD and RFC closes get this. It is just normal good practice…and not that much work compared to the immense work of writing and reviewing. A short paragraph is enough.

- Vital Articles
- Featured and Good Articles programs
  - Relevance to readers
  - Content checks of Featured Article Candidates
  - Declining output of Featured Articles
- Featured Article writing patterns
  - Champions or star collectors?
  - Collaboration
- High or low view topic concentration?
  - WikiCup
  - Four Award
  - "Waddesdon Road railway station" case study
  - Hurricane WikiProject
  - Ucucha FAs
  - Some high importance efforts
- Wikimedia Foundation quality strategy
- Pulling it all together
- Backups

The more Featured Articles a user writes, the lower the average relevancy of his articles*

*Weak linear relationship. Looks hyperbolic, though.

22 authors were responsible for half of the Featured Articles

User name	stars
Wehwalt	16
Ucucha	14.08
Sasata	9.083
Mike Christie	9
Ealdgyth	8.667
Casliber	7.5
Brianboulton	7.333
RHM22	6.5
Acdixon	6
Ian Rose	6
Truthkeeper88	5.333
Visionholder	5.083
Gyrobo	5
Hawkeye7	5
Parsecboy	5
Hunter Kahn	4.5
Hurricanehink	4.5
Juliancolton	4.5
Jimfbleak	4
Nick-D	4
Sarastro1	4
Tim riley	3.833
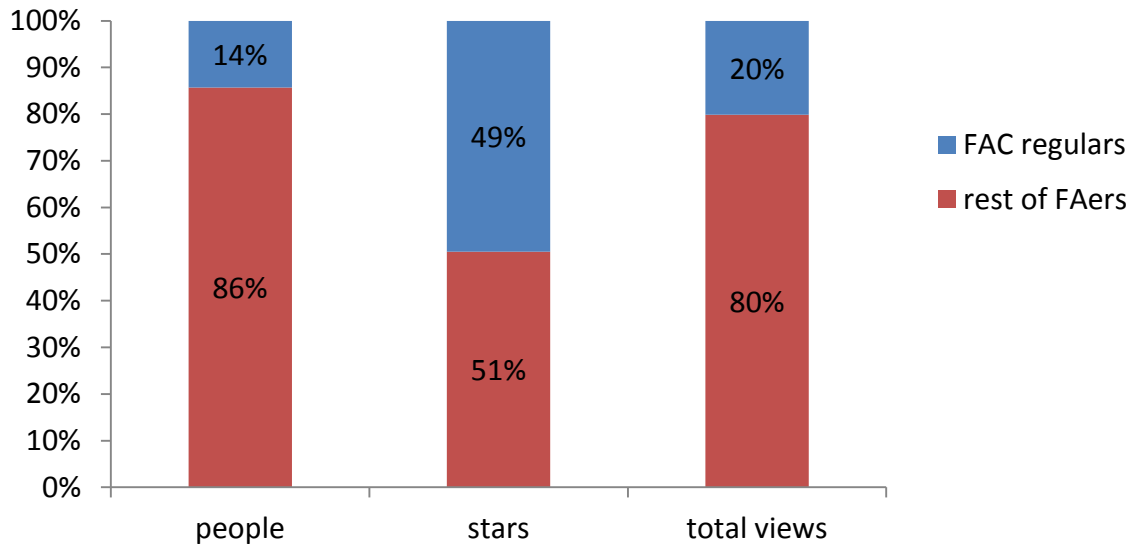
- The casual impression that a core group of FA regulars is dominating the process seems validated. Picking an FAC at random to review, it would be by a regular half the time (more with full credit to collaborations).

- Still a fair amount of diversity. 154 authors had at least a partial FA*. There is hope…

- *While the "regulars" made 50% of the "star count", they only contributed 20% of page-viewed FA content (the value to readers).* An assessment based on "number of stars" overestimates the value of regulars and underestimates the value of non-regulars.

*JAN-SEP 2011

Featured Article writers can be segmented into four categories by how many articles they FA and how relevant those articles are.
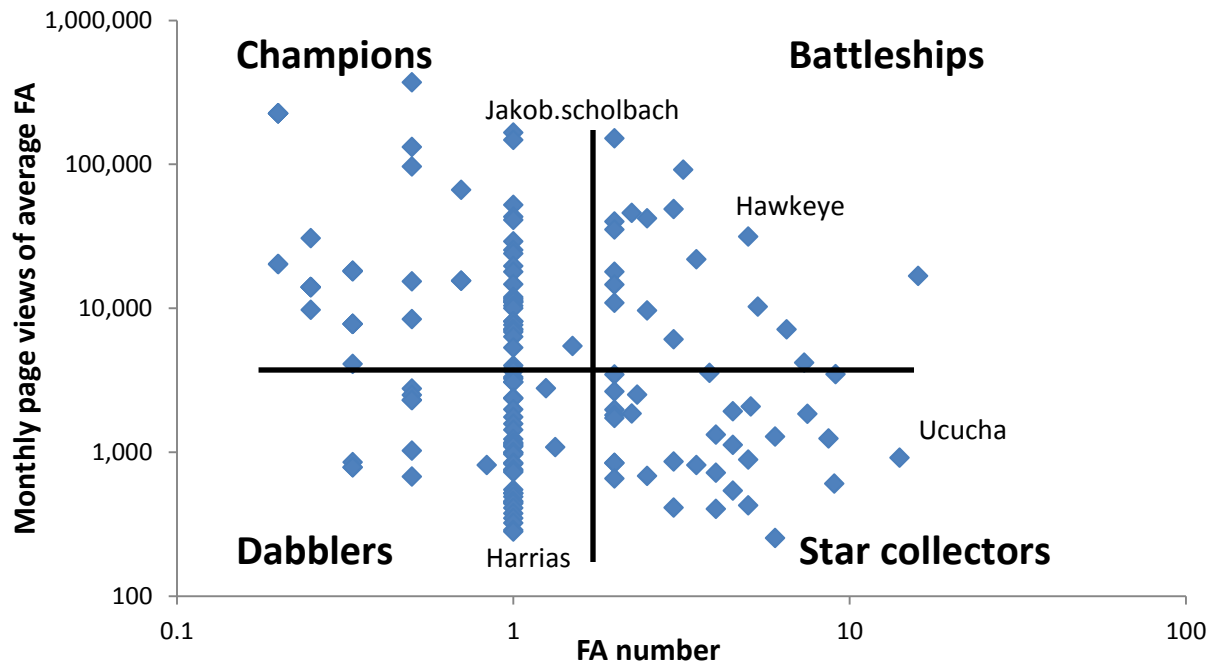
Breakpoints selected:

- 2 FAs in period* (note, this equates to 2.67 per year)

- 3500 monthly views for average FA

Four segments are proposed for the Featured Article writers:

- **Dabblers:** Typically a single FA on a low view topic . Example: Harrias writing "Herbie Hewitt", a 19th century cricket player.

- **Star collectors:** High production of FA stars by emphasizing low-relevance content. They usually concentrate on a narrow subject like lemurs or (actual) battleships.

- **Champions:** Typically a single FA on an important topic. An example is user Jakob.scholbach writing "Logarithm".

- **Battleships:** Multiple high impact FAs. An example is user Hawkeye writing "Manhattan Project" and "Leslie Groves". Could also be a star collector who does at least a single high view article.

*2011 FAs through SEP

Champions deliver more value than star collectors, per capita and overall:
High relevance/low production beats low relevance/high production

total monthly page views per capita
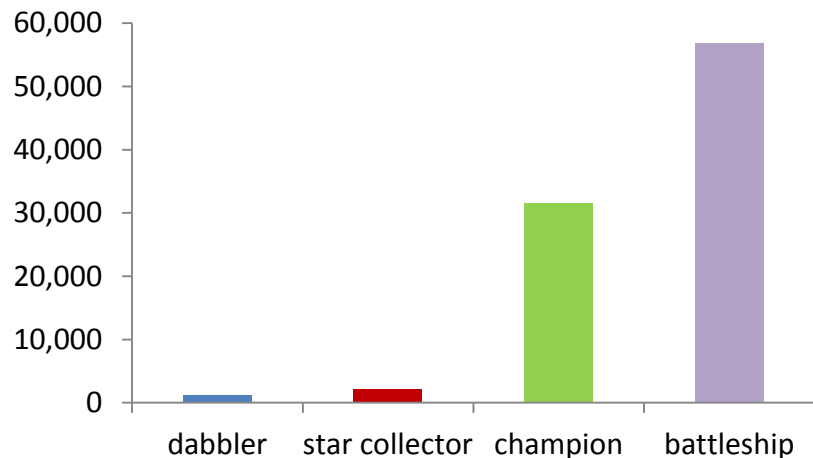
The average champion delivers 15 times the *total value* as the average star collector.

- There is no mathematical reason this must be…just that concentrating on highly read articles is a more efficient strategy than maximizing stars.

- You just can't collect stars fast enough to make that pay off…
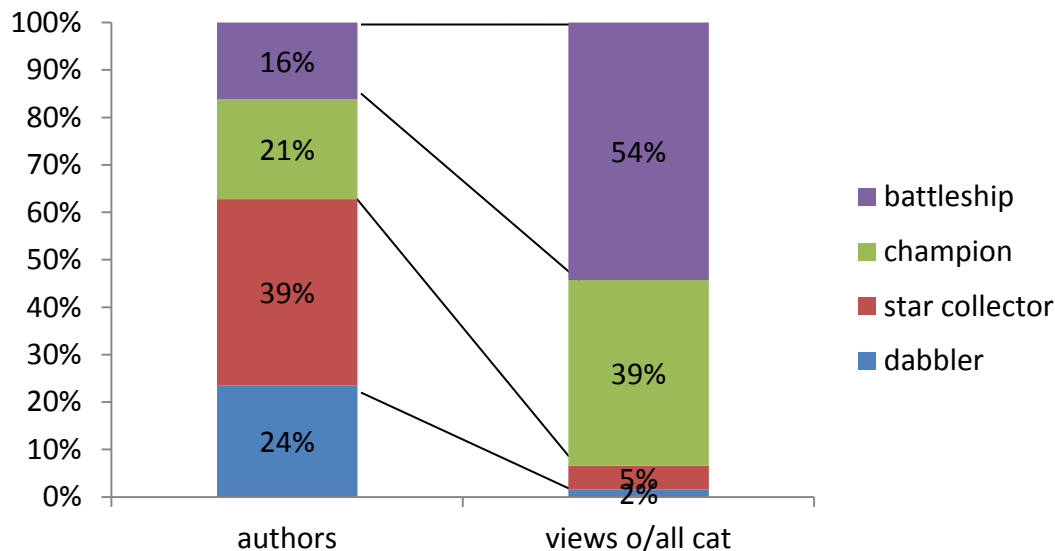
Star collecting delivers little benefit as a segment.

- Even though there are almost twice as many star collectors as champions, the champion group delivers eight times the value.

- Star collectors and dabblers together deliver only 7% of overall FA viewer impact.

Champion and star collector face-off:
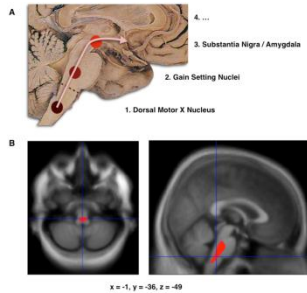
 VS.

Champion: Garrondo is the author of "Parkinson's disease", the highest viewed solo-authored article by a champion. He is a Spanish psychologist who writes about neurological diseases, having also FA-ed "Huntington's", "Multiple sclerosis", and "Alzheimer's". He has been on the Wiki since 2007 and has 4 FAs, tied for 222nd most with 71 others.*

Star collector: Ucucha is the star collector with the most 2011 FAs. He is a Dutch biology student who writes about rare rodents. He has been on Wiki since 2005 and is 4th on the list for most FAs with 45.*

Results: Ucucha had 14 times the stars as Garrando in 2011 JAN-SEP. But since Garrando's single article has *180 times* the popularity of Ucucha's average article, Garrando had 13 times the total reader impact. ***Champion beats star collector.***
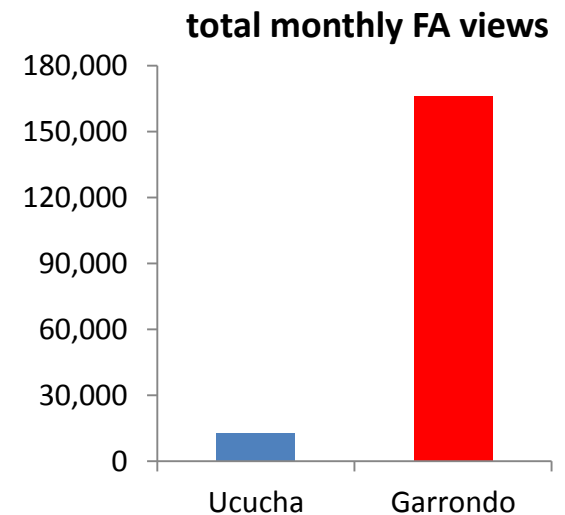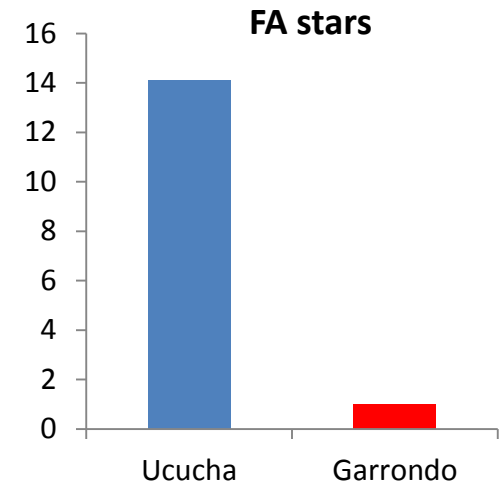
"Core Cup" leader board: individual breakout (explanation of next seven slides)

Leader board:

- The next seven slides show individual contributions* in 2011.

- The individuals are ranked by order of total contributions (total monthly page views of FAed articles). Both making more FAs and FAing import ones help move an individual up.

- This is the shape of what a leader board would look like that weighted FA contributions by article importance…not simply number of FAs, as is implicit in current rankings, what is easily observed on user pages, and what is referred to in talk.

Individual contribution strategy

- The contribution strategy (box in the 2 by 2 matrix) of individuals are listed, mostly for the interest of the contributors named. Human nature is to look for one's own name. and "see where you ended up".

- For individual contributors, look at the result for your own interest. Think of it as a better framework than purely numerical production of articles, any articles to FA. Like a quadrant based political landscape instead of left-right spectrum.

- **CAVEAT on time range:** The list is purely based on JAN-SEP 2011 FAs. For individuals, pattern of contribution might differ if a longer time frame was used. If someone authored a blockbuster FA on the 31st of December, 2010, that will not be shown and could change which quadrant he falls in. Or consider user Ceoil. Per this list, he is a dabbler, with 33% of an FA. Looking at his long term contributions, he has 19 FAs.** In the extreme limit, someone who had FAs only prior to 2011 would not be on the list, so it obviously does not capture everything.

- However, note someone like Garrando has the same pattern of contribution for several years, so the labels, even just based off of a snapshot, may be insightful. Use them if helpful, with the caveat about time restriction in mind.

- **CAVEAT on net positive for content creation:** Anyone who is positively contributing researched prose (writing rather than edit-warring/drama-mongering) should be proud. Making an FA of any popularity is clearly an accomplishment of a difficult task requiring skill and work. Also many individuals with ZERO FAs are still contributing researched prose. The ranking and labels are a way to differentiate value contributed from the *reader-back perspective* and think about patterns of behavior.

Future work (possible)

- Manually extend the Core Cup leader board to end of 2011.

- With automated assistance, evaluate the entire pattern of FA creation (all contributors, all 3000+ FAs).

*2011 FAs through SEP
**Source WP:WPBFAN, counting collaborations with full credit

"Core Cup" leader board: total monthly Featured Article page views*: top 25 (of 154)

Rank	User name	Sum of indiv contrib	stars	AVG CONT	label
1	NapHit	301,876	2	150,938	battleship
2	DrKiernan	293,530	3.2	91,728	battleship
3	Wehwalt	267,512	16	16,720	battleship
4	Happyme22	185,149	0.5	370,298	champion
5	Garrondo	166,000	1	166,000	champion
6	Hawkeye7	156,958	5	31,392	battleship
7	Jakob.scholbach	147,626	1	147,626	champion
8	Parrot of Doom	146,645	3	48,882	battleship
9	Jfdwolff	105,156	2.5	42,062	battleship
10	Hchc2009	103,396	2.25	45,954	battleship
11	Figureskatingfan	79,810	2	39,905	battleship
12	PresN	76,421	3.5	21,835	battleship
13	Coemgenus	70,180	2	35,090	battleship
14	Sjones23	65,861	0.5	131,722	champion
15	Truthkeeper88	54,581	5.333	10,234	battleship
16	MartinPoulter	52,232	1	52,232	champion
17	Jmh649	48,094	0.5	96,187	champion
18	Serendipodous	46,451	0.7	66,358	champion
19	RHM22	46,231	6.5	7,112	battleship
20	Cosmic Latte	45,072	0.2	225,360	champion
21	HRIN	45,072	0.2	225,360	champion
22	PL	45,072	0.2	225,360	champion
23	Shii	45,072	0.2	225,360	champion
24	Prime Blue	43,155	1	43,155	champion
25	Staxringold	40,916	1	40,916	champion

- Mostly battleships, some champions.

- 8 of the top 25 have less than 1 FA (because of collaboration on a high view topic).

- *Zero star collectors in the top 25 useful content creators*

- The medal podium:

  - Naphit, 1st, gets almost all his contribution from "F.C. Liverpool".

  - DrKiernan, 2nd, gets almost all his contribution from "Queen Victoria".

  - Wehwalt, 3rd, is interesting. He has most 2011 stars (16), but a lower average article relevance than 22 of the top 25. Without the half-credit for "Richard Nixon", he would be 10th. (But full credit would make him 1st.)

*2011 FAs through SEP

"Core Cup" leader board: total (monthly) Featured Article page views*: 25-50

Rank	User name	Total contrib	stars	AVG CONT	label
26	Nikkimaria	35,756	2	17,878	battleship
27	Sasata	31,680	9.083	3,488	star collector
28	Brianboulton	30,725	7.333	4,190	battleship
29	David Fuchs	29,199	2	14,600	battleship
30	North8000	29,134	1	29,134	champion
31	Karanacs	25,384	1	25,384	champion
32	Sturmvogel 66	24,095	2.5	9,638	battleship
33	Jezhotwells	23,937	1	23,937	champion
34	Wizardman	21,739	2	10,870	battleship
35	Sp33dyphil	19,618	1	19,618	champion
36	HJ Mitchell	18,240	3	6,080	battleship
37	SilkTork	17,938	1	17,938	champion
38	Reaper Eternal	14,624	1	14,624	champion
39	Casliber	13,839	7.5	1,845	star collector
40	Tim riley	13,619	3.833	3,553	battleship
41	Ucucha	12,875	14.08	914	star collector
42	Yllosubmarine	11,961	1	11,961	champion
43	NortyNort	11,664	1	11,664	champion
44	Reckless182	11,361	1	11,361	champion
45	Mav	11,066	1	11,066	champion
46	FullMetal Falcon	11,029	1	11,029	champion
47	NYMFan69-86	10,884	0.7	15,548	champion
48	TCO	10,884	0.7	15,548	champion
49	Ealdgyth	10,788	8.667	1,245	star collector
50	Visionholder	10,522	5.083	2,070	star collector

- Several star collectors in this level.

  - Sasata highest at 27th.

  - Note the high numbers of stars required to reach not so lofty levels.

  - ***By number of stars, the "collectors" would seem to be the "top FAers", but correcting for article relevance shows less overall contribution to the reading public.***

- Rest of this level is champions, with a couple of battleships.

*2011 FAs through SEP

"Core Cup" leader board: total (monthly) Featured Article page views*: 51-75

Rank	User name	Total contrib	stars	AVG CONT	label
51	Resolute	10,419	1	10,419	champion
52	Jarry1250	10,000	1	10,000	champion
53	Hunter Kahn	8,661	4.5	1,925	star collector
54	Ruby2010	8,188	1.5	5,458	champion
55	Rusty Cashman	8,102	1	8,102	champion
56	ChrisTheDude	8,083	1	8,083	champion
57	Acdixon	7,683	6	1,281	star collector
58	JeanColumbia	7,682	0.5	15,364	champion
59	Rlendog	7,669	0.25	30,676	champion
60	S@bre	7,666	1	7,666	champion
61	Woody	7,151	1	7,151	champion
62	Cryptic C62	7,044	1	7,044	champion
63	Rodw	6,935	2	3,468	star collector
64	Scorpion0422	6,852	1	6,852	champion
65	Y2kcrazyjoker4	6,341	1	6,341	champion
66	Dana boomer	6,048	0.333	18,145	champion
67	Montanabw	6,048	0.333	18,145	champion
68	Gerda Arendt	5,985	0.333	17,955	champion
69	Malleus Fatuorum	5,858	2.333	2,510	star collector
70	Mike Christie	5,442	9	605	star collector
71	Titoxd	5,330	1	5,330	champion
72	Jimfbleak	5,287	4	1,322	star collector
73	DavidCane	5,285	2	2,643	star collector
74	Hurricanehink	5,050	4.5	1,122	star collector
75	Parsecboy	4,432	5	886	star collector

- Champions and star collectors

*2011 FAs through SEP

"Core Cup" leader board: total (monthly) Featured Article page views*: 76-100

Rank	User name	Total contrib	stars	AVG CONT	label
76	Nergaal	4,199	0.5	8,397	champion
77	Astynax	4,163	2.25	1,850	star collector
78	Mike Searson	4,049	0.2	20,245	champion
79	Minglex	4,049	0.2	20,245	champion
80	Jappalang	3,997	1	3,997	champion
81	Lemurbaby	3,940	2	1,970	star collector
82	A. Parrot	3,803	1	3,803	champion
83	The Writer 2.0	3,652	1	3,652	champion
84	Cliftonian	3,610	2	1,805	star collector
85	Nishidani	3,495	0.25	13,978	champion
86	Paul Barlow	3,495	0.25	13,978	champion
87	Tom Reedy	3,495	0.25	13,978	champion
88	Xover	3,495	0.25	13,978	champion
89	Lecen	3,474	1.25	2,779	dabbler
90	JimmyBlackwing	3,451	2	1,726	star collector
91	Harrison49	3,330	1	3,330	dabbler
92	H1nkles	3,245	1	3,245	dabbler
93	Nasty Housecat	3,074	1	3,074	dabbler
94	Brad101	3,062	1	3,062	dabbler
95	Sarastro1	2,883	4	721	star collector
96	The ed17	2,840	3.5	811	star collector
97	GabeMc	2,595	0.333	7,786	champion
98	Malik Shabazz	2,595	0.333	7,786	champion
99	Protonk	2,595	0.333	7,786	champion
100	Imzadi1979	2,584	3	861	star collector

- Many star collectors

- Several champions (note some are here because of collaboration on medium view topics)

- A few dabblers, at this level

*2011 FAs through SEP

"Core Cup" leader board: total (monthly) Featured Article page views*: 101-125

Rank	User name	Total contrib	stars	AVG CONT	label
101	Arthur Holland	2,437	0.25	9,748	champion
102	Juliancolton	2,430	4.5	540	star collector
103	Cptnono	2,385	1	2,385	dabbler
104	Dream out loud	2,356	1	2,356	dabbler
105	Gyrobo	2,128	5	426	star collector
106	Simon Burchell	1,986	1	1,986	dabbler
107	Ed!	1,756	1	1,756	dabbler
108	Apterygial	1,708	2.5	683	star collector
109	J Milburn	1,682	2	841	star collector
110	Iridescent	1,681	2	841	star collector
111	Nick-D	1,614	4	404	star collector
112	MisterBee1966	1,571	1	1,571	dabbler
113	Ian Rose	1,521	6	254	star collector
114	Johnbod	1,441	1.333	1,081	dabbler
115	Hans Adler	1,428	1	1,428	dabbler
116	Ruslik0	1,379	0.5	2,757	dabbler
117	Drmies	1,364	0.333	4,091	champion
118	Cplakidas	1,311	2	656	star collector
119	Cla68	1,246	0.5	2,491	dabbler
120	XavierGreen	1,233	3	411	star collector
121	Nev1	1,231	1	1,231	dabbler
122	Hylian Auree	1,163	1	1,163	dabbler
123	Dweller	1,148	0.5	2,296	dabbler
124	The Rambling Man	1,148	0.5	2,296	dabbler
125	Charles Edward	1,139	1	1,139	dabbler

- Many star collectors

- More dabblers

- A single champion (a collaborator)

- Ian Rose, star collector, has 6 FAs at an average page view of 254 (*the lowest average of all 155 FAers*, including all the dabblers).

*2011 FAs through SEP

"Core Cup" leader board: total (monthly) Featured Article page views*: 126-150

Rank	User name	Total contrib	stars	AVG CONT	label
126	Niagara	1,116	1	1,116	dabbler
127	Midgrid	1,094	1	1,094	dabbler
128	Prioryman	1,000	1	1,000	dabbler
129	Omnedon	986	1	986	dabbler
130	Moabdave	968	1	968	dabbler
131	Cinosaur	843	1	843	dabbler
132	Mkativerata	830	1	830	dabbler
133	Ironholds	756	1	756	dabbler
134	Amitchell125	741	1	741	dabbler
135	Skotywa	726	1	726	dabbler
136	Dank	678	0.833	814	dabbler
137	Grondemar	547	1	547	dabbler
138	EdChem	518	1	518	dabbler
139	Viridiscalculus	517	1	517	dabbler
140	Bzuk	511	0.5	1,022	dabbler
141	Wackywace	491	1	491	dabbler
142	Disavian	456	1	456	dabbler
143	Fredddie	449	1	449	dabbler
144	TodorBozhinov	441	1	441	dabbler
145	Hesperian	411	1	411	dabbler
146	Admrboltz	375	1	375	dabbler
147	Cyclonebiskit	348	1	348	dabbler
148	AlexJ	338	0.5	675	dabbler
149	Ceranthor	322	1	322	dabbler
150	Aldux	288	1	288	dabbler

- All dabblers down here

- Note a few have less than a single star (collaboration)

*2011 FAs through SEP

"Core Cup" leader board: total (monthly) Featured Article page views*: 151-154

Rank	User name	Total contrib	stars	AVG CONT	label
151	Ceoil	284	0.333	852	dabbler
152	Harrias	280	1	280	dabbler
153	Benea	262	0.333	785	dabbler
154	Kirk	262	0.333	785	dabbler

- 3 of last 4 have been part of a collaboration only.

Keep on with your analysis—you're convincing me...I promise not to bring any low-hit mushroom articles to FAC for a while...

A Featured Article writer

*2011 FAs through SEP

- Vital Articles
- Featured and Good Articles programs
  - Relevance to readers
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  - Ucucha FAs
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- Wikimedia Foundation quality strategy
- Pulling it all together
- Backups

Most 2011 Featured Articles are solo nominations.

Legend:
- 5-way
- 4-way
- 3-way
- 2-way
- solo

Values: 2, 3, 7, 28, 253
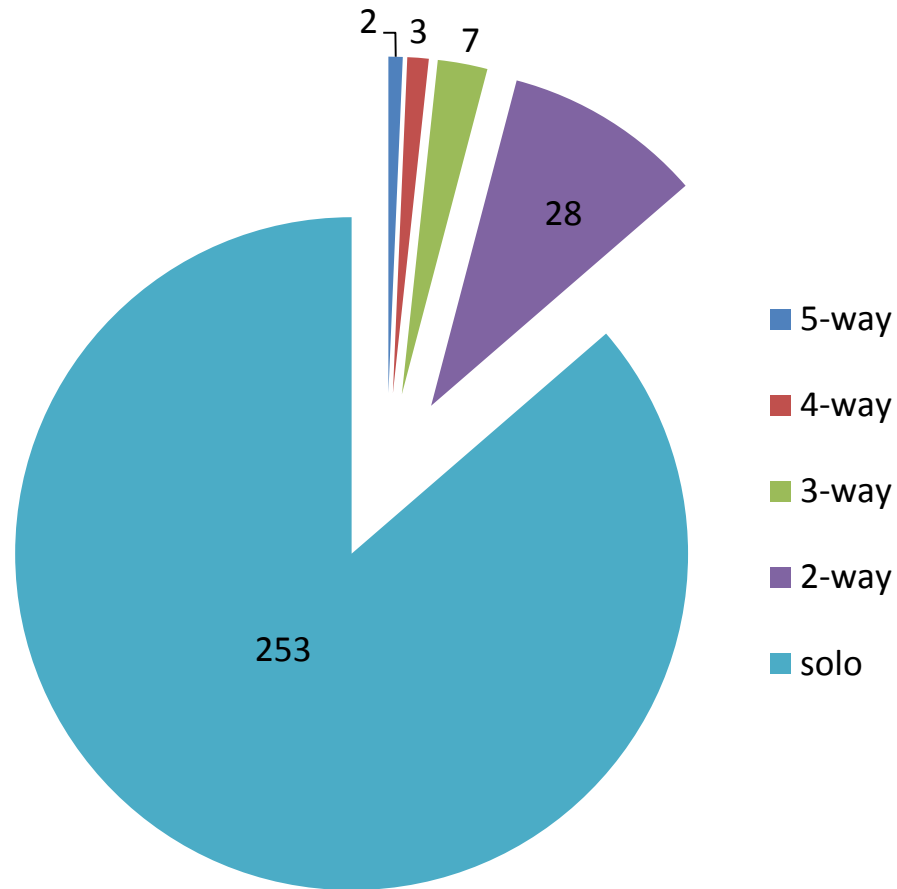
Collaborated Featured Articles are more relevant than solo-nominated ones.

Monthly page views
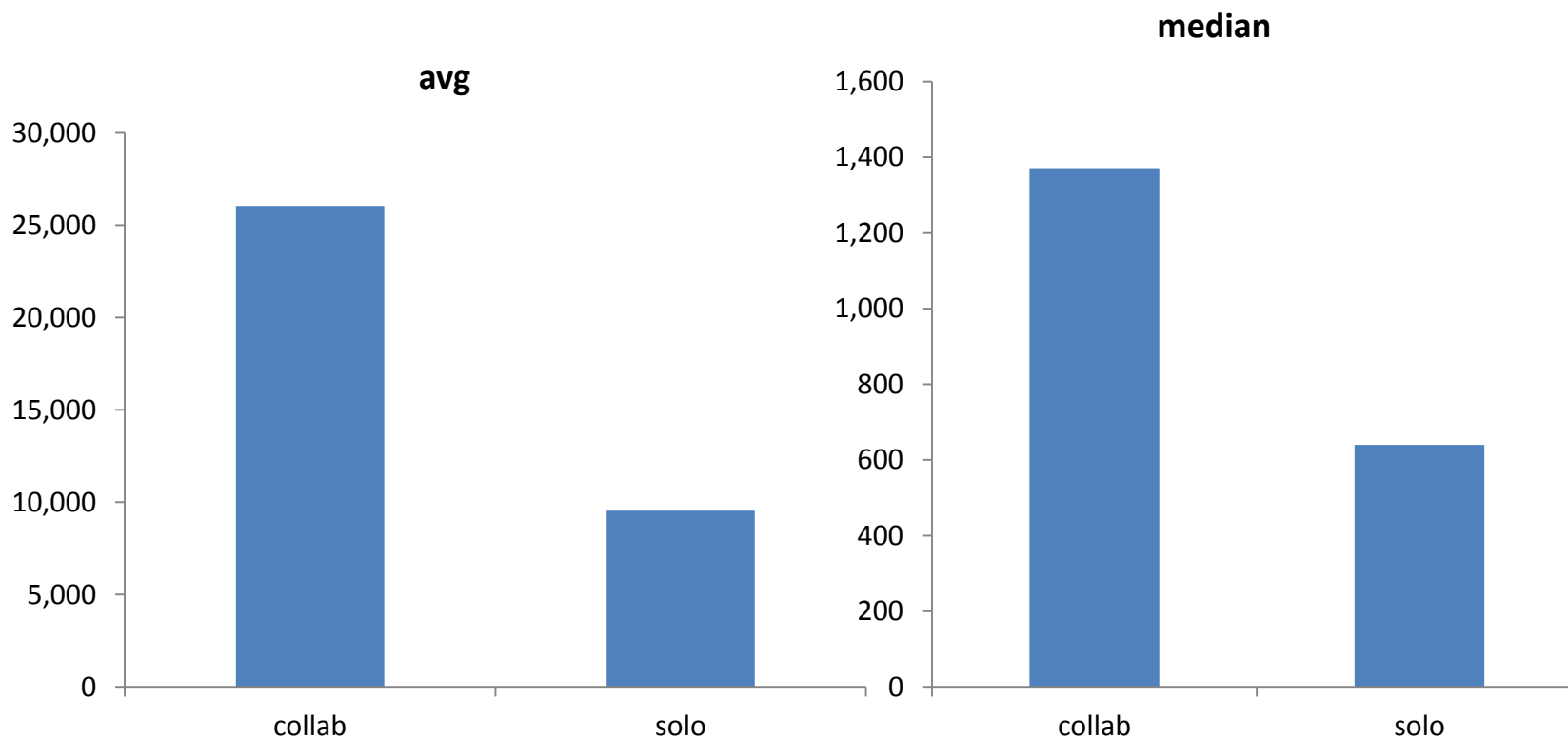
avg

30,000
25,000
20,000
15,000
10,000
5,000
0

collab   solo

median

1,600
1,400
1,200
1,000
800
600
400
200
0

collab   solo

The more highly collaborated articles are more relevant than the less highly collaborated articles.

Monthly page views

avg

140,000	
120,000	
100,000	
80,000	
60,000	
40,000	
20,000	
0	

5-way   4-way   3-way   2-way

median

140,000	
120,000	
100,000	
80,000	
60,000	
40,000	
20,000	
0	
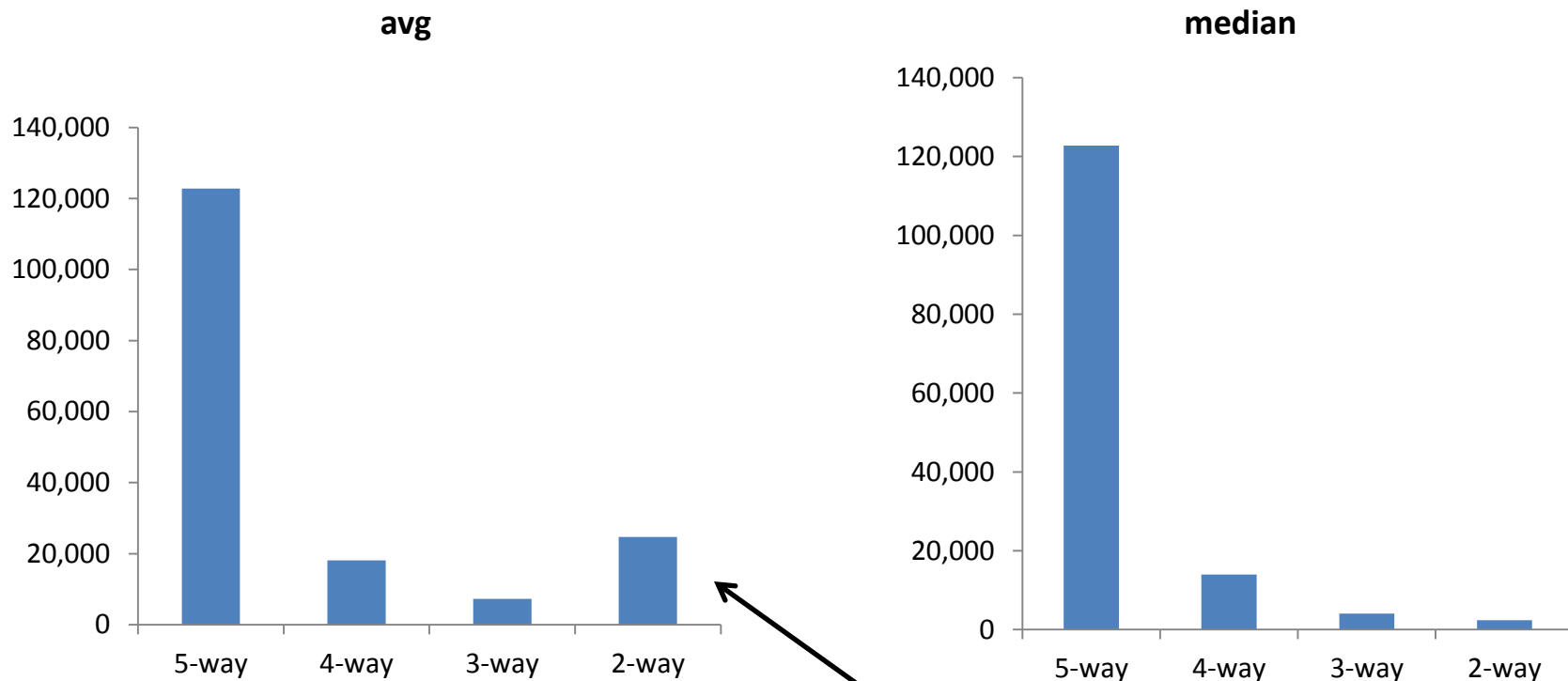
5-way   4-way   3-way   2-way

- "Richard Nixon" drives the high average of the 2-way group.

18 users were "super collaborators".

Nominator	5-way	4-way	3-way	2-way	TOTAL
Wehwalt				8	8
Ealdgyth			2	2	4
Astynax		1		2	3
Brianboulton			1	2	3
Casliber				3	3
DrKiernan	1			2	3
Lecen		1		2	3
Malleus Fatuorum			1	2	3
Sasata		1	1	1	3
Ucucha		1	1	1	3
Visionholder		1	1	1	3
Dank			1	1	2
Hesperian				2	2
NYMFan69-86	1			1	2
Serendipodous	1			1	2
TCO	1			1	2
The Writer 2.0				2	2
Tim riley			1	1	2

- 46 users had a single collaboration.
- 90 users had solo FAs only.

How can we use insights from the collaboration analysis?

- Will collaborations lead us to more relevant work (cause or effect)?

- How can we encourage collaboration socially?
- Any structural supports for FA collaboration?

- Should we target cross-discipline topics?
  - For instance "Louis Pasteur" is a top 10,000 VA, draws 90,000 views per month, but is rated C. It could draw on a biographist like Wehwalt and a scientist like Sasata.
  - Looking at VAs with multiple projects in talk banners can find more ideas.

- Can teaming up give us the courage to attack meta-topics like "Science", a top 10 VA? Not just the added pairs of hands and differing expertise, but even just the moral support of having comrades?

- Any other ideas sparked?
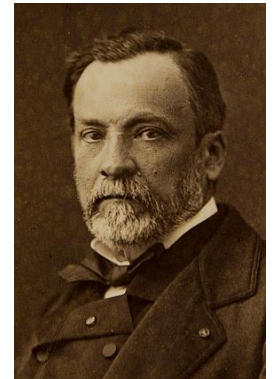
- Vital Articles
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Concerns exist that WikiCup drives low view content…

The Cup has something of a reputation, due in part to a general fear of anything too MySpace-y or too game-y.

Leader, WikiCup

You must declare your WikiCup participation in any FAC nomination.

Cup rule, enforced at FAC

Problem with the WikiCup (for those who are trying to win it) is it boils down to who can pump out the highest volume of content that few will read (and thus marginal benefit to Wikipedia).

Notable 2010 WikiCup participant

Going-in hypothesis was that WikiCup was a culprit…

...but the data shows WikiCup is not to blame.
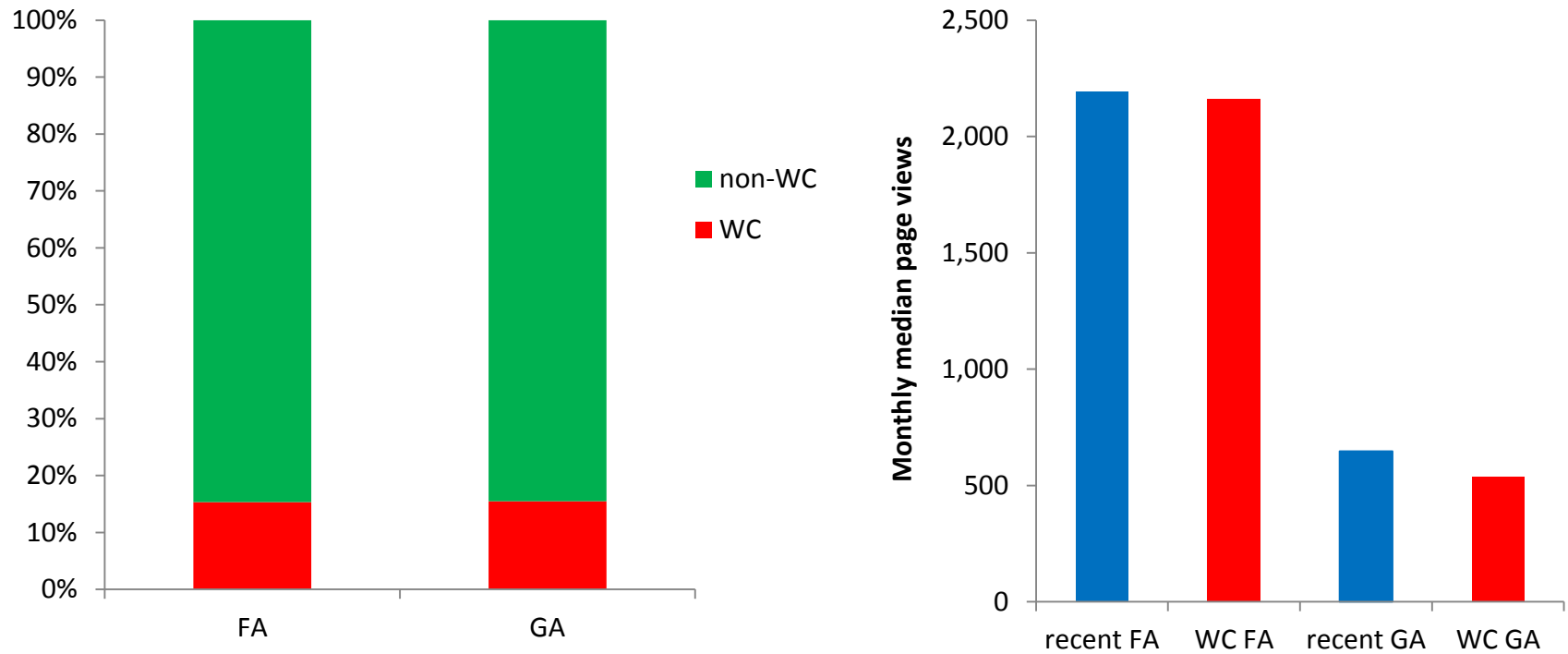
WikiCup is responsible for a small fraction of FA/GA additions...which have the same popularity as non-WikiCup additions

But WikiCup does not significantly incent working on important articles...

- Through 2010, WikiCup had zero incentives for working on more important articles.

- In 2011, WikiCup added double credit for articles that were either:
  - On the top 1000 Vital Articles list
  - Had 20 other language versions

- The result* was only 4 articles out of 308 actually got the bonus. Concerning them:
  - All were GAs, none were FAs.
  - 3 of the 4 were "20 Wiki" (the easier hurdle)
  - The single VA was on the weak nuclear force
  - Only 2 users had bonuses (2 and 2). Neither made the final round of competition.

- Interestingly, WCers were vastly more likely to make GAs than FAs, despite a 3X multiple for getting FA versus GA.

- In discussions of the scoring approach for next year's Cup, participants and leaders indicated satisfaction with this year's rules. A suggestion of doubling the VA multiplier (to 4 times) was raised.

- The group did not seem to note or be unhappy with how few FA/GAs got an importance multiple.

- More radical weighting schemes (e.g. by page views) were not even floated for discussion.

VA GAs, 1, 0%
20 lang. GAs, 3, 1%
unimportant FAs, 33, 11%
unimportant GAs, 271, 88%
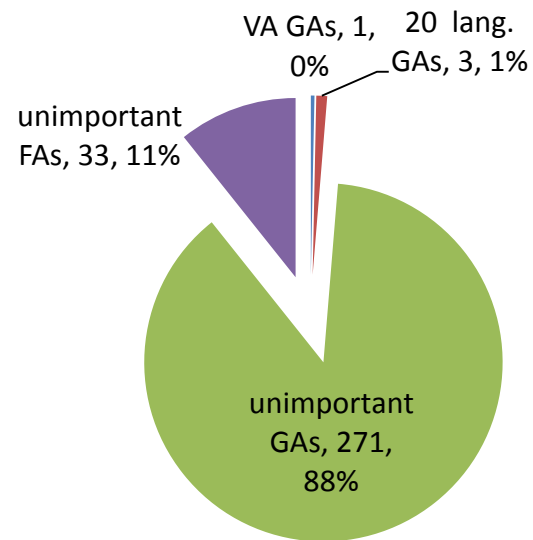
WikiCup should be commended for trying importance incentives in 2011. However, their rewards were too miserly. Previous analysis has shown that weighting by page views would create overwhelming incentives to work on the high view articles to "win the game".

*Source: WikiCup/History/2011/Running_totals (contest is done, but file says last round info is incomplete)

Recommendation: Use what is good about WikiCup to drive core contributions.

1. *Leave the existing WikiCup alone.*

    –   WikiCupers are not harming anyone, are enjoying Wiki, and are creating content.

    –   They don't seem interested in radical changes. Likely their participants are self-selected for the current setup.

    –   Too hard to get anything changed on Wiki (decision paralysis)

2.   Create an alternate "**Core award**". Not to compete per se, but just to use the positives of WikiCup (fun of competition and sticker-joy) to incent work on important articles.

    –   Could bootstrap something simple by just taking the list of FA authors by total page view impact and just update it with the last 3 months of 2011.

    –   Get some award icons made up. And just award them.

    –   No discussion, consensus, resistance to change, etc. Just try an experiment and see if it works.

    –   Could add some things over time to make the thing better (GAs, bot collection of data, etc.)

- Vital Articles
- Featured and Good Articles programs
  - Relevance to readers
  - Content checks of Featured Article Candidates
  - Declining output of Featured Articles
- Featured Article writing patterns
  - Champions or star collectors?
  - Collaboration
- High or low view topic concentration?
  - WikiCup
  - Four Award
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Is the Four Award driving low relevance content?

- Four Award is given to a user who makes a new article, makes it into a Did You Know, makes it a Good Article, then makes it a Featured Article. ***Four Award is a fifth sticker given for getting four other stickers.***
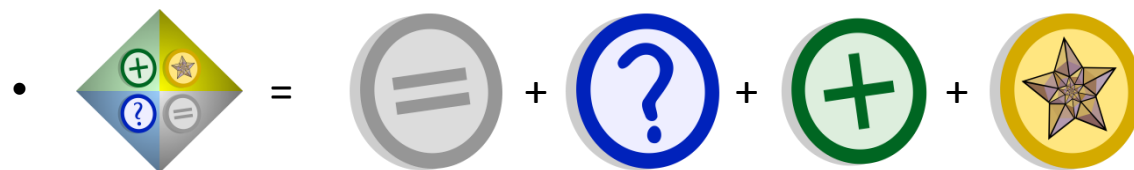
- Key concern is that Four Award requires creating an all new article (i.e. addressing a topic that no one else felt worthy, even for a stub) and then working that topic up to Featured. This may be driving high effort on unimportant topics. (A reasonable exception is new events/movies, etc.)

Going-in hypothesis was that Four Award was a culprit…

Four Awards are a small but significant proportion of FAs.

Pie chart:
- 4-award 17%
- non-4 83%
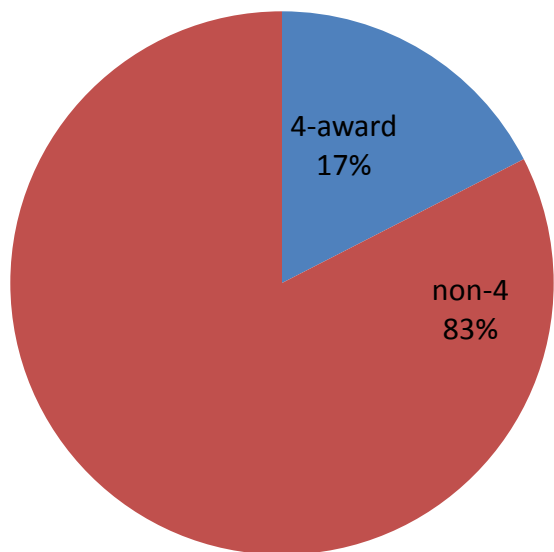
- Note, 17% is a "floor" of FAs from new articles (there may be more that did not meet the DYK or GA hurdles for Four).

- Note, it is popularly perceived that all-new articles are easier to make Featured.

Four Award articles are less relevant than other FAs.

Monthly page views

average

4-award	non-4 FA

16,000
14,000
12,000
10,000
8,000
6,000
4,000
2,000
0

median

2,000
1,800
1,600
1,400
1,200
1,000
800
600
400
200
0

4-award	non-4 FA
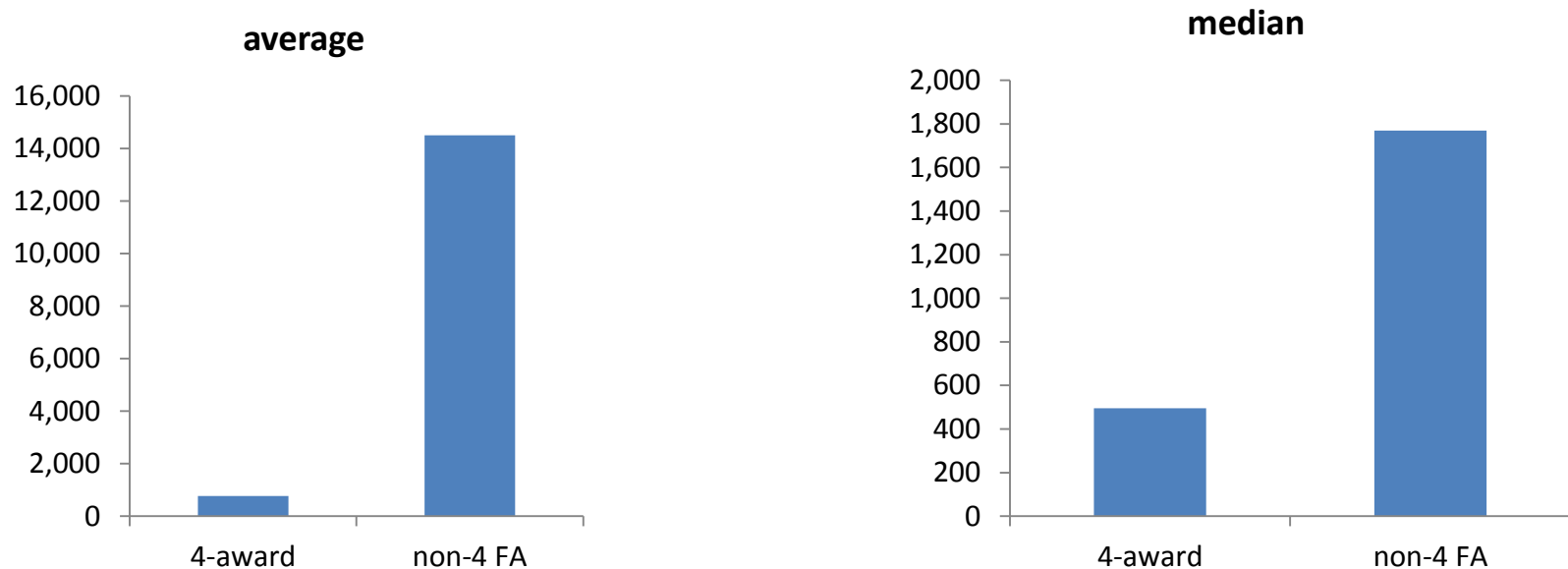
- Four Award winners get an extra sticker, but the readers get unimportant content.
- Is the Four Award actually driving low relevance work or just a sign of inherent "star collecting" behavior?
- Could we construct different reward games that would incent authors to serve the customers (readers) better?

Article	What it concerns	Nominator	description	views/m
Tales of Monkey Island	2009 video game	S@bre	champion	7,666
Mercury dime	old U.S. coin	Wehwalt	battleship	2,802
Maya stelae	self-explanatory	Simon Burchell	dabbler	1,986
Into Temptation (film)	2009 film with less than $100,000 box office	Hunter Kahn	star collector	1,898
Thyrotoxic periodic paralysis	Hyperthyroidism complication	Jfdwolff	battleship	1,253
Clathrus ruber	mushroom	Sasata	star collector	1,066
Verpa bohemica	mushroom	Sasata	star collector	1,000
Olivia Shakespear	woman who slept with poet Yeats and befriended poet Pound	Truthkeeper88	battleship	997
Entoloma sinuatum	mushroom	Casliber	star collector	994
Javan slow loris	a primate species (recently elevated from subspecies)	Visionholder & Ucucha & Sasata	star collectors	979
Jefferson nickel	current U.S. coin (this is on the current design, the article on the nickel itself is only B and has 44,000 hits per month.)	Wehwalt	battleship	976
Eastbourne manslaughter	1860 corporal punishment death	Nikkimaria	battleship	938
Mantra-Rock Dance	Hare Krishna hippy jam	Cinosaur	dabbler	843
Section 116 of the Constitution of Australia	freedom of religion in Oz	Mkativerata	dabbler	830
Conservation of slow lorises	aspect of a primate genus	Visionholder	star collector	779
Thomcord	seedless version of the Thompson grape (which is un-Featured, yet has 12,000 views/month)	Visionholder	star collector	708
Operation Kita	World War II Japanese ship movement	Nick-D	star collector	622
Indian Head eagle	old U.S. coin	Wehwalt	battleship	620
John McCauley	Australian military leader	Ian Rose	star collector	581
Rosendale trestle	a bridge	Gyrobo	star collector	555

Article	Description	Nominator	Type	Score
Opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway	Very historic railroad, still operating (but this article covers only an aspect)	Iridescent	star collector	555
Rhodocene	an inorganic molecule (more noteworthy is ferrocene, not Featured)	EdChem	dabbler	518
Adelaide leak	1930s cricket player dramah	Sarastro1	star collector	517
Sack of Amorium	Byzantine-Arab battle	Cplakidas	star collector	511
Canoe River train crash	Canadian 1950s troop train	Wehwalt	battleship	506
Suillus spraguei	mushroom	Sasata	star collector	500
1955 MacArthur Airport United Airlines crash	self-explanatory	Wackywace	dabbler	491
Liber Eliensis	Middle Ages document	Ealdgyth	star collector	465
Adenanthos cuneatus	Australian plant	Casliber & Hesperian	star collector, dabbler	461
James E. Boyd (scientist)	pretty boring college administrator	Disavian	dabbler	456
U.S. Route 30 in Iowa	self-explanatory	Fredddie	dabbler	449
Battle of Sio	World War II battle	Hawkeye7	battleship	439
Agaricus deserticola	mushroom	Sasata	star collector	436
Joppenbergh Mountain	A hill, 500 feet	Gyrobo	star collector	422
Myotis escalerai	Bat species	Ucucha	star collector	378
Myotis alcathoe	Bat species	Ucucha	star collector	373
La Stazione	train station/restaurant	Gyrobo	star collector	367
Gymnopilus maritimus	mushroom	J Milburn	star collector	367
Richard Barre	Middle Ages clergyman	Ealdgyth	star collector	362
Suillus salmonicolor	mushroom	Sasata	star collector	359

USS Constellation vs L'Insurgente	1799 two-ship battle	XavierGreen	star collector	336
Calabozos	Chilean volcanic crater	Ceranthor	dabbler	322
Monticolomys	mouse species	Ucucha	star collector	321
Ferugliotheriidae	An uncertain fossil species (based on tooth fragments). Had to read to the very end to find out animal was apparently sort of rodent-like (still not sure).	Ucucha	star collector	304
Macrotarsomys petteri	mouse species	Ucucha	star collector	303
William Brill	Australian military leader	Ian Rose	star collector	222
Fairfax Harrison	railroad executive	Ealdgyth	star collector	215
Frank Bladin	Australian military leader	Ian Rose	star collector	206
Drymoreomys	rodent	Ucucha	star collector	204
Suillus pungens	mushroom	Sasata	star collector	186
Valston Hancock	Australian military leader	Ian Rose	star collector	168
Alister Murdoch	Australian military leader	Ian Rose	star collector	156

Additional Four Award insights:

52 versus one: monthly page views

- *All 52 Four Awardees together* had one fourth the views of one (championed) FA: "Parkinson's disease".

- Only 2 of the 52 articles were on new events (a 2009 video game and a 2009 film). They ranked 1st and 4th among the 52 in page views.

- Topics:
  - lots of mushrooms, rodents, and Australian Air Force senior officers (there must be a joke in there).
  - Some subordinate articles (blown out sections).
  - No hurricanes--why did they miss the party?

- Nominator segment: overwhelmingly, the articles were by *star collectors.*

Four Award FAs by nominator segment
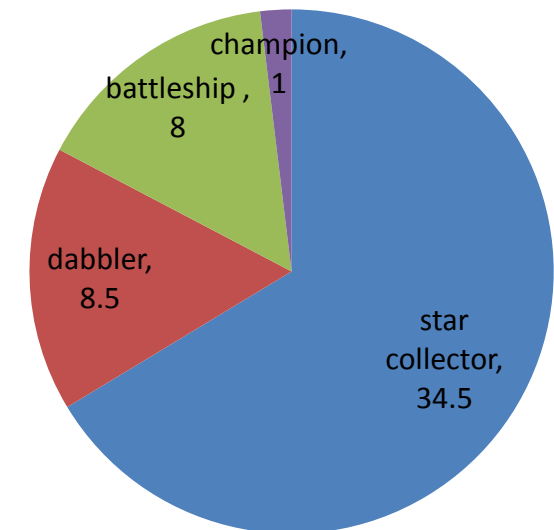
champion, 1
battleship , 8
dabbler, 8.5
star collector, 34.5

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"Waddesdon Road railway station": case study*
of a problem FA on an obscure topic.

- "Waddesdon Road railway station" (WRRS) describes a rarely used rural train station, now destroyed, of a minor railway that itself closed 75 years ago.

- The article gets a little under 300 hits per month, comparable to an average Wiki stub.

- WRRS was started by user Iridescent, a minor star collector. It achieved all Four Award requirements in 37 days: On 12 May 2010, WRRS was created. It won GA 6 hours later. It was DYK on the 22nd. On 02 June, it entered FAC. It was promoted on the 19th.

- Major problems are quickly apparent:

  - **Most of the article is not on the station.**

  - **The article is sourced from self-publishing hobbyists.**

  - **FAC did not review the content.**

- As a recent FA (and OCT2011 TFA), the article's problems are not from "old, low standards"

Monthly page views
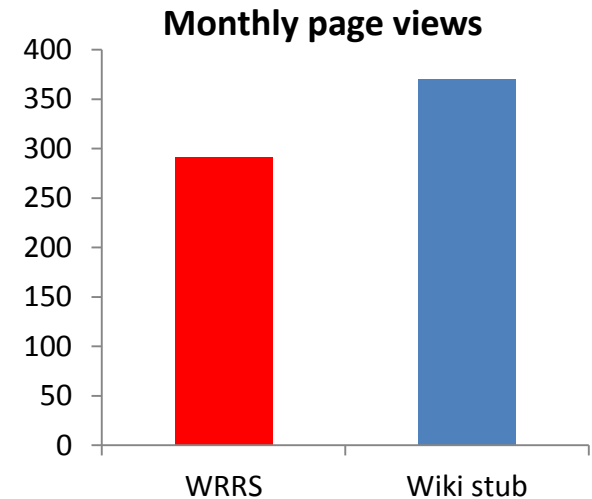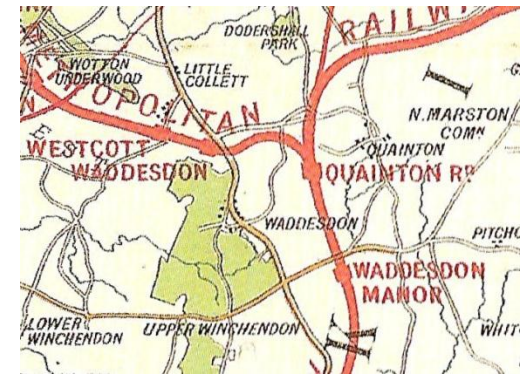
*Not meant to be statistically representative but more as an example of interest. The issues here called out are something to watch for with FAs on trivia.

"Waddesdon Road railway station" does not cover the topic.

- **WRRS is padded with off-topic information.**

  - More than half of the article covers the Brill Tramway (itself an article by the same nominator).

  - The article is already short (a lead and 3 body sections). Cutting the padding would lead to about a Start length article (there are only four body paragraphs covering the actual station).

- **WRRS does not well detail the station particulars.**

  - Lacks a floor plan, showing layout . Doesn't give square footage.

  - Article body is vague about dates of siding and station opening . (Lead and infobox better but un-cited.)

  - Poor illustration: For the actual station, only a single, external view.
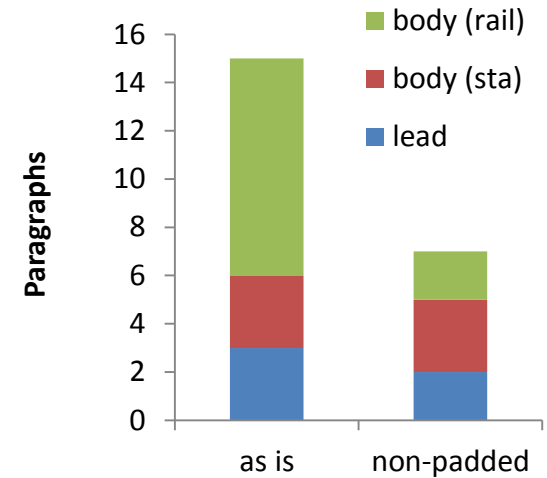
The article reads like it is on the railroad, not on the station.

A good article… addresses the main aspects of the topic and…stays focused on the topic

Good Article criteria, rule 3

Paragraphs

- body (rail)
- body (sta)
- lead

as is   non-padded

"Waddesdon Road railway station" lacks reliable sources.

- No books or articles concentrate on the WRRS as subject. Or book chapters, it looks.

- Only 5 pages are used to reference the 4 paragraphs of real station-related content. The impression is that these are stray facts from discussion of the Brill Tramway.

- *The sources are self-publishing hobbyists*:

    1. Simpson, Bill. *A History of the Metropolitan Railway*. Lamplight Publications. **Lamplight's only products are…train books by Bill Simpson.**

    2. Mitchell, Vic; Smith, Keith. *Aylesbury to Rugby*. Middleton Press. **Middleton Press was founded by…Vic Mitchell…to publish train books.**

    3. Jackson, Alan. *London's Metro-Land*. Capital History.   **CH (also called Capital Transport) specializes in train/bus/road books. It looks less like a one author shop, but the website still does not look like that of a real publisher with editorial policies, advances, commercial heft, etc. Home business?**

Want to produce a book?

Can't find a publisher?

Self publishing is easier than you think!

Click here for more details

This is a screen shot from the parent site of "Lamplight Publications"

Waddesdon Road railway station" had shallow review at FAC.

- Two one-liner RFA-support-per-nom style votes:

    – Jim Bleak: "**Support** I love these obscure stations."

    – DavidCane:* "**Support** Small but perfectly formed."

- Brianboulton: "All sources look good, no issues here." Not sure what this review consisted of: plagiarism or other aspects of sourcingy? Just verifying the books existed (did he actually get them--they are not widely circulated)? A formatting check? Did he consider the lack of focus on the station topic? The self publishing? Hard to tell if he looked hard and signed off or did not look hard, given the blank declaration.

- Bencherlite notes several prose/logic nits. He also does an image review. While he did not find the serious faults here, he is the single reviewer who engaged deeply with the material. *Kudos, Bencherlite.*

- Delegates: One prods for image review. A different one promotes and makes two article tweaks. No commentary on the article on the review page.

This article had **1** in-depth prose/image review.
Content was not examined by FAC.

*Cane was also the GA reviewer. He approved GA using the template only, no textual comments.

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Hurricane articles are unpopular.

Median monthly page views

4,000	

(Bar chart with y-axis from 0 to 4,000 in increments of 500)

Categories along x-axis: FAs o/all, HUR FAs, GAs o/all, HUR GAs, Wiki stubs
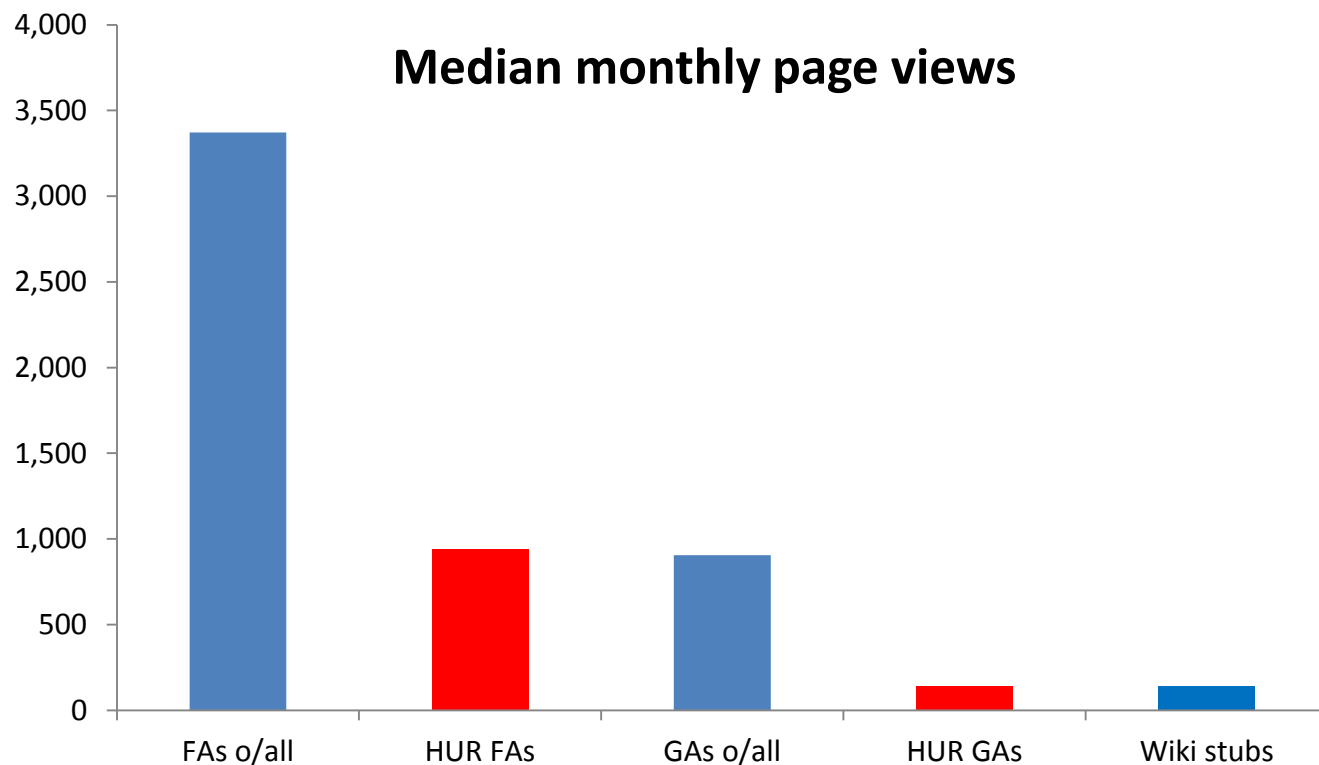
- Hurricane FAs are viewed less than other FAs.

- Hurricane GAs are viewed less than other GAs

- Hurricane GAs are comparable to Wiki stubs. (And Wiki has many stubs that are single sentences on place names, mechanically created.)

Hurricane WikiProject has a strange pattern of quality. Almost a third of the articles are "Good". More so than B and C combined. This is unlike the pattern in any other WikiProject examined.
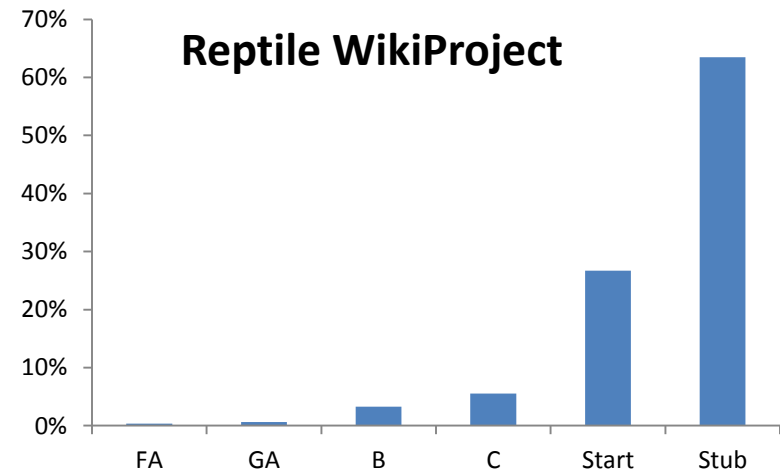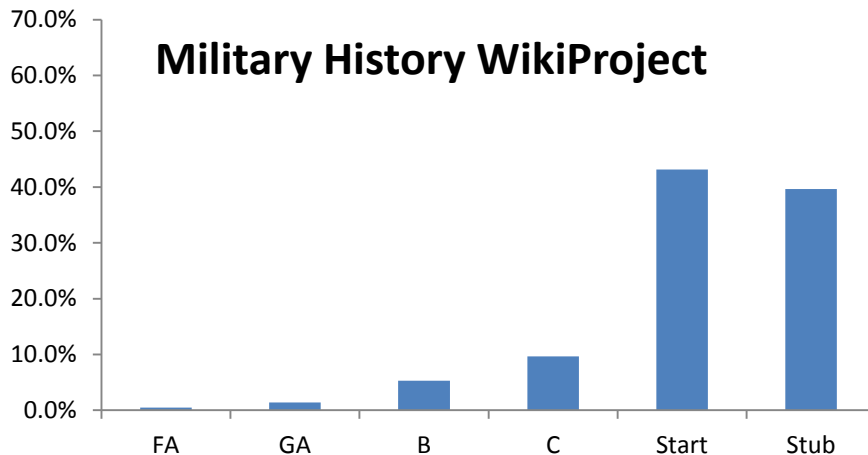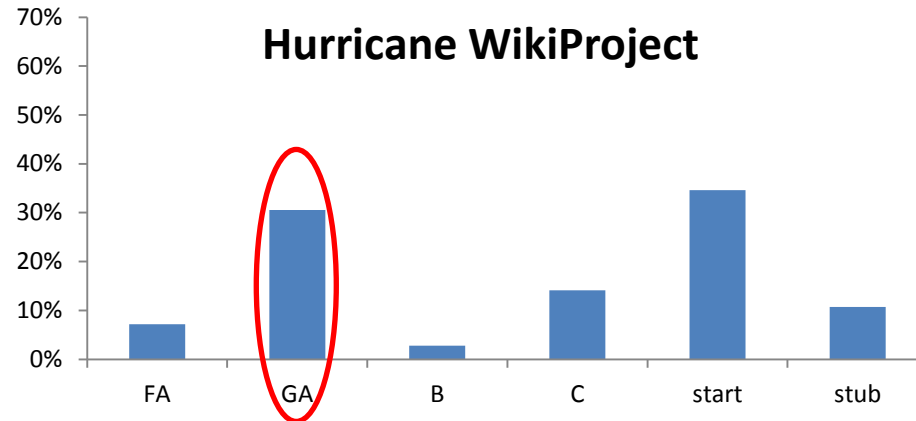
Hurricane WikiProject has a higher percentage (61%) of Low importance GAs, than the Low importance percentage (49%) in the overall Hurricane project. *It is prioritizing developing obscure topics even within its category.* This is unusual.

Hurricane WikiProject

Reptile WikiProject
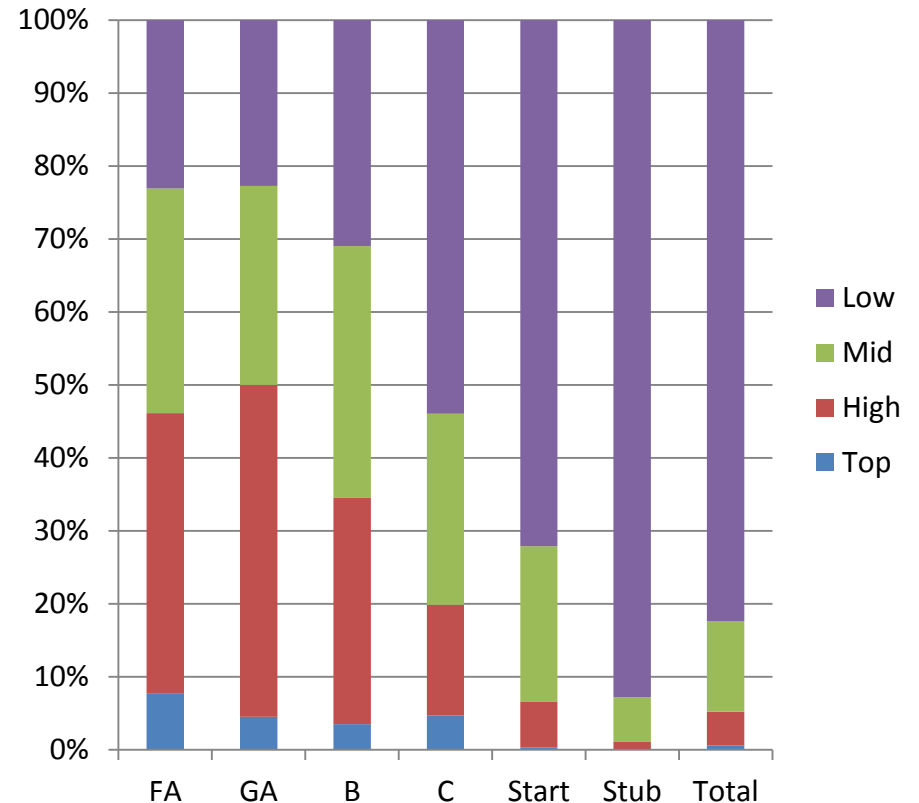
Hurricane WikiProject is ignoring interesting storms.

- While the project has an incredible 600+ GA/FAs, half of its Top Importance articles (only 13 articles) are still below GA.

- This author looked at the first three famous storms that came to his mind (Hugo, Camille, Andrew). **All were rated C.** If one loves hurricanes, why not make these articles Good?

WikiProject Hurricane is not for helping the public or even experts.
It is a machine for stamping GA "plus signs".
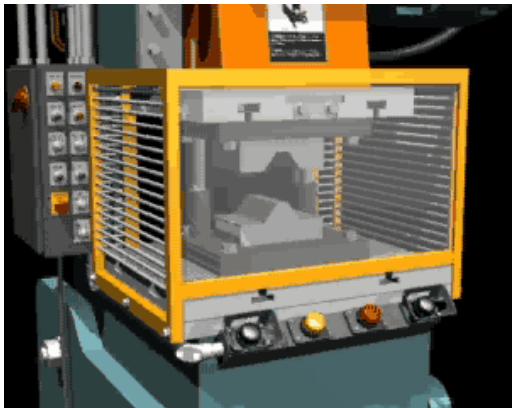
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Emphasis on obscure species can lead to questionable decisions for Featuring

- Method: looked at the 2011 lead-authored FAs by user Ucucha, the most prolific star collector. Noted issues coming from concentrating on obscure species. Made a matrix of article versus issue. Noted details.

- Issues related to obscure species:
  - *Single source concentration*
  - *Over-touting mitochondrial DNA results*
  - *Inadequate coverage of behavior*
  - *Lack of illustration*
  - *Overemphasis of technical detail*

- Caveats:
  - This is sensitive to look at an individual 's work. **The intent is not to negatively portray or even to judge an individual.** Intent is to find insights from a "deep dive" that may apply to FA in general.
  - *Ucucha is a good guy of the Wiki.* A strong writer of the format of Featured Content and a serious biology student. He also contributes to Wikipedia by service as an administrator and as a delegate for the FA program.
  - No ethical or scholarly gotchas here. *The concern is around what it means that 'every topic can not expanded to Featured'.*

The 13 Ucucha solo-nominated FAs (JAN-SEP 2011)

article	hits/mon
Akodon spegazzinii	467
Dermotherium	320
Drymoreomys	204
False potto	649
Ferugliotheriidae	304
Macrotarsomys petteri	303
Monticolomys	321
Myotis alcathoe	373
Myotis escalerai	378
Pennatomys	280
Salanoia durrelli	633
Voalavo	188
Voalavo gymnocaudus	298

Many articles are sourced from a single science team

- 9 of 13 FAs sourced from a single paper (or a single research team).

- Journal article cites broken out by page number makes the endnotes more in number (normal research paper style is book -> paginate, journal article -> don't paginate).

- Sole sourcing makes the article lack good synthesis of sources. It leads to a summary of a report.

- Science is a process. *Single articles are not dispositive* and may end up being recalled, contested. If an area is obscure, the lack of disagreement may not mean acceptance.

- Even if something justifies a Wiki article, is it "best work"? *How would a high school research paper be graded with sole sourcing?*

article	concentrated on one source
Dermotherium	3/4 of citations are to two papers by Marioux. Other cites deal with background, not subject.
Drymoreomys	45 of 46 cites from one paper.
False potto	4/5 of the cites are to Shwartz 1996 (the posited discovery that others deprecate, this article too).
Macrotarsomys petteri	A 2005 Goodman paper on a single specimen, backed up by a 2006 paper on some bones he claims are the species. No other scientists reporting on this species
Monticolomys	Almost all from one 1996 paper. A few subsequent cites are from the same authors as 1996 (not new researchers)
Pennatomys	95% from Turvey et al 2010.
Salanoia durrelli	one paper (Durbin et al) on species
Voalavo	Carleton and Goodman papers (little better than species, but still just on duo of researchers)
Voalavo gymnocaudus	mostly couple papers from Carleton and Goodman

Screen shot of all endnotes in "Pennatomys", showing derivation from one journal article (Turvey et al. 2010).

References

1. ^ Turvey et al., 2010, pp. 748–500
2. ^ Branch, 1907, p. 332
3. ^ [a] [b] Turvey et al., 2010, p. 750
4. ^ [a] [b] [c] [d] Turvey et al., 2010, p. 758
5. ^ [a] [b] [c] [d] Turvey et al., 2010, p. 761
6. ^ Turvey et al., 2010, p. 765
7. ^ [a] [b] Turvey et al., 2010, p. 763
8. ^ Turvey et al., 2010, p. 766
9. ^ Weksler, 2006, pp. 1, 10; Weksler et al
10. ^ Musser and Carleton, 2005, *passim*
11. ^ [a] [b] Turvey et al., 2010, table 2
12. ^ Turvey et al., 2010, pp. 760–761
13. ^ [a] [b] Turvey et al., 2010, p. 759
14. ^ [a] [b] [c] [d] [e] Turvey et al., 2010, p. 760
15. ^ [a] [b] Turvey et al., 2010, p. 762
16. ^ Turvey et al., 2010, table 3
17. ^ Turvey et al., 2010, pp. 758–759
18. ^ coney | coney, n. 🔗 Oxford English Dict
19. ^ Turvey et al., 2010, pp. 763–764
20. ^ Turvey et al., 2010, p. 764
21. ^ Turvey et al., 2010, p. 767

In addition to single scientist sourcing, there are other science concerns related to covering claimed new species:

- Recent reports:
  - 11 of 13 animals first classified in last 20 years, 7 of 13 from last 10.
  - 2 FAs written on a months-old reports. Species not IUCN listed

- Mitochondrial DNA "proof"
  - Mitochondrial DNA is not the same as the DNA of an animal's genes. It technically belongs to a degenerate host bacterium of eukaryote cells. Most importantly, it only shows the female descent. For species with roaming males, normal genes may be well spread while mito DNA is differentiated.
  - It may not be clear to the non biology trained reader the mito DNA situation and how it is not what a reader thinks of as "genes" or dispositive like a crime scene DNA from *Law and Order*.
  - Some scientists put great store on mito DNA and have touted new discoveries. Others are more skeptical of mito DNA new species claims. In some cases, FA lead text or nomination statements about 'DNA proving a new species' may be going a little far.
  - None of the articles have supporting science from the most traditional definition of speciation (inability to interbreed).

Covering topics this new and isolated puts us at the bleeding edge of science. Also, taxonomy is a field with some subjectivity and debate. Nature…functions, while Man decides how to name the animals. These FAs are NOT junk science (the opposite), but the above are concerns to watch out for as a tertiary source. And the issue is not coverage in Wiki per se, but what we brand "best work".

article	recent discovery	mito DNA
Akodon spegazzinii	No (early 1900s)	among other things
Dermotherium	yes, 2006	no
Drymoreomys	*named in 2011, not yet recognized by IUCN*	Among other things
False potto	1996	no
Ferugliotheriidae	1986	no
Macrotarsomys petteri	yes, 2005	no
Monticolomys	1996	heavy reliance
Myotis alcathoe	2001	yes, nuclear also mentioned.
Myotis escalerai	2006+ naming	no. IUCN does not recognize as new species.
Pennatomys	2010 paper	no
Salanoia durrelli	*2010 claim (not IUCN recognized)*	no
Voalavo	1998	mito DNA and nuclear both suggest this is not a separate genus
Voalavo gymnocaudus	1999	10% difference in one mito DNA gene driving differentiation from other Voalavo species (morphology differences slight)

Obscure species articles do not cover basic aspects of the animals

article	missing aspects
Akodon spegazzinii	single para on behaviors, range not well understood
Dermotherium	fossil species with only bones being jaw/teeth (rest of body not known)
Drymoreomys	Only four sentences on behavior, some speculative.
False potto	Lacking info on the animal behavior. But as a Wiki article ABOUT rebutting the Schwartz species claim, functions OK
Ferugliotheriidae	fossil species with only bones being jaw/teeth (rest of body not known)
Macrotarsomys petteri	Almost nothing known of behavior. Only a single living individual has been documented.
Monticolomys	(OK) Only one para on behavior, but in general this article is a little fuller on the species than others in the set
Myotis alcathoe	(OK) Information on location in several countries and on behavior
Myotis escalerai	(OK) article says little known about behavior, but really this has more info than others in the set.
Pennatomys	(OK) More types of bone (skull and some post cranial) than other fossil species.
Salanoia durrelli	One observed live individual and one killed individual. Unclear if this is same species as nearby, just more water adjusted population
Voalavo	Little known about behavior of the non-type species
Voalavo gymnocaudus	One para on distribution and behavior

WP:N and WP:V in practice set a much lower barrier for inclusion than the sourcing/comprehensiveness aspects of WP:WIAFA...Unfortunately, it seems to be a fact of the wiki that **articles will always exist with no possibility of ever achieving FA.** [emphasis added]

Featured Article Review delegate

I've opposed articles at FAC because while they do meet notability, they aren't really comprehensive. I think there's lots of leeway as far as "allowable" structure for articles, but if I can't get the bare essentials on gameplay, development, reception, etc. from a video game article, **I don't see how it can stand as Wikipedia's best, merely a polished piece**. [emphasis added]

Featured Article writer

No descriptive subject is ever perfectly understood. There is much we don't know about Mars, yet a rich FA can be written on it, covering dozens of sources. But where we have an animal *known from a single study, perhaps even a single specimen*, we have big gaps in coverage (behavior especially).

Obscure topics are inadequately illustrated to be Featured

Media. It has images and other media where appropriate…

FA criterion #3

- *10 of 13 articles lack a photo or drawing of the animal* (or fossil)

- Image reviewers are only checking for copyrights and caption punctuation. **They are not checking coverage (or quality).**

- Some (other) reviewers complain about the lack of images.

- Not enough effort to get images--in some cases, had not written to ask for donations.

- Some very technical discussions of teeth in the fossil articles need diagrams to show the placement in the jaw or the ridges on teeth.

- While these articles deserve to be in Wikipedia, are they really Featurable "best work" if they lack a single subject image?

- Nominators and image reviewers tend to think that images are not important--that only words matter. This is not sound pedagogy. Images are not just ornaments to entertain viewers (although that is not so evil anyhow). They also convey information efficiently.

- From a reader perspective, is it not basic to want a picture of an animal to learn about it? The source articles use such images!

- Would a magazine editor (*National Geographic*, *Scientific American,* even *Science*) feature an imageless article?

---

article	Lacking subject image
Akodon spegazzinii	none (animal has been known for 100 years and US museum specimens exist)
Dermotherium	lacks fossil image or species drawing
Drymoreomys	(OK) Photos obtained during FA, by reviewer action
False potto	no photo or drawing, nom did not try for a donation
Ferugliotheriidae	lacks fossil image or species drawing
Macrotarsomys petteri	lacks one, complained about by a reviewer. No comment on a donation attempt.
Monticolomys	lacks one. But nominator did attempt to get a donation.
Myotis alcathoe	None
Pennatomys	lacking one
Voalavo	lacks one. FA reviewer tried to get one.
Voalavo gymnocaudus	lacks one

Owing to the lack of typical content (e.g. behavior), scientific details may be over-covered to fill space

Dermotherium:

- There are 7 paragraphs on the teeth. The first 3 are readable, but the following 4 are painfully technical, describing nooks and crannies of individual teeth.

- While this is appropriate for the source in the academic literature, it is not right for a general encyclopedia.

- Separate reviewers in the FAC and GAN complained about the teeth prose.

Voalavo gymnocaudus

- The 6 paragraphs of description seem very technical, especially the skeleton part with many Latinate anatomy terms. Reads like a primary science paper report. Suspect the description was covered heavily as there was little known about animal behavior and otherwise article would look too short.

- Fair amount of overlap with the genus and sister species articles and all are short (and sourcing mostly from one science group). Wonder if reader experience would be better if all three combined. Wiki allows for separating as was done, but these topics are unlikely to soon be expanded given the sourcing available. Worried that desire for award numbers for nominators may retard merging obscure short topics.

A highly technical review of dentition makes up two-thirds of the description, I wonder if that's disproportionate?

Featured Article reviewer

Virtually all we know of this animal is from the dentition, so I don't think describing it in detail is disproportionate.

Nominator response

- Lack of info on "Aspect X" does not justify over-detail on "Aspect Y".   That only adds a second flaw.

- Reviewers' initial reservations are right, but too much deference is being paid to the science expert when he states a need for deep technical passages.

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WikiProject Elements

- WikiProject Elements wants to "turn the Periodic Table blue." [Featured]

- Elements are not just encyclopedic. *They are popular: 15,000-150,000 monthly views.*

- What are some other rally-around themes with manageable numbers of high importance articles? "Turn the globe blue" ? "Turn the United States blue*" ? "Turn the presidents blue"?

We should aim to do [Feature] all chemical elements, all major solar system objects, all of the plays by Shakespeare, all Roman emperors (well, the Julio-Claudians, at least), all countries, all capital cities, all currencies, the few longest rivers and highest mountains on each continent, all heads of state, all winners of a Nobel or Booker or Pulitzer prize...

User ALoan, 2006.

Periodic Table by Article Quality

views/month
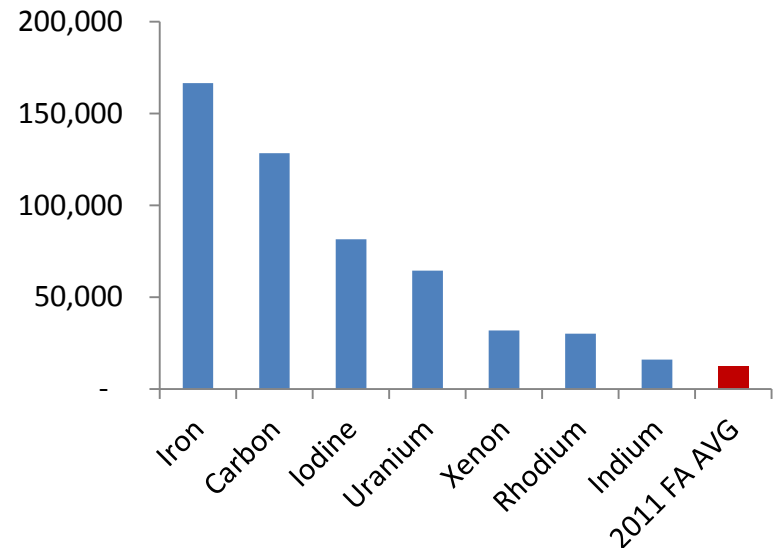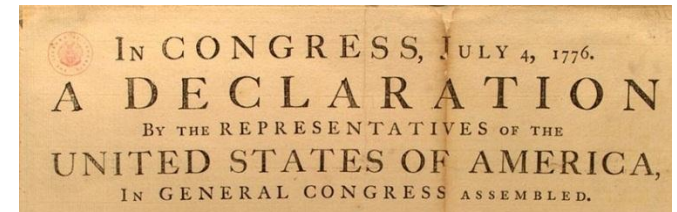
*No offense to Republicans.

National Archives contest

- Sponsored contest by U.S. NARA to get FA/GAs of three documents:

  - *Declaration of Independence*

  - *Constitution*

  - *Bill of Rights*

- Initial FAC regulars responses:

  - Too hard to work on important articles—give us easier subtasks

  - "Impossible to get the Declaration of Independence to GA"

- Results:

  - No (apparent) serious efforts to go after the contest by FAC regulars

  - Declaration was actually *already* GA-worthy based on article content, was rapidly nominated for GA…and passed review by one of the tougher GA reviewers.

  - The small impetus made the main author of "Declaration" interested in taking it to FA. (It is close to ready and author is an experienced FA writer and capable historian).

> NARA contest was a good idea. But look for champions in article or project space. Do not allow reasonable challenges to be watered down by FA regulars.

Aviation master plan

- Creation of user Sp33dyphil, a young new featured content writer. AMP working to Feature twenty-eight notable aircraft.

- AMP articles are popular: two are higher than 100,000 views per month. Most well into 5 figures.

- Before the AMP, only 4 aircraft were Featured.

- One year-in results: 2 FA   22 GA

Average monthly views

While Sp33dyphil is GA capable, he is still a bit raw compared to FA standards. But what he is doing addresses a big unmet reader need. FAC leadership should look at this as an opportunity, not a threat. Not think about past conflicts with Project Aviation. Think about how to get those boring plane articles (*which the readers show that they care about by hit count*) to FA "brilliance".
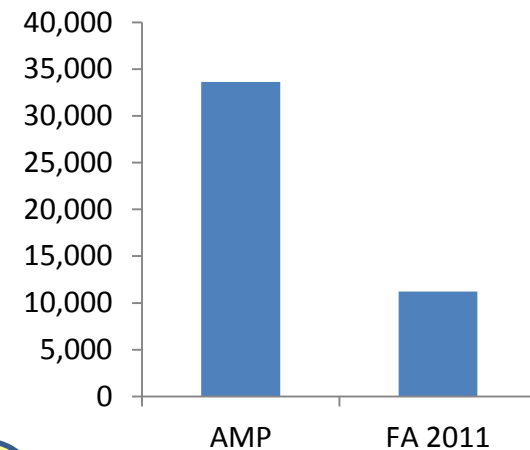
Other ideas?

- What other categories/projects have high reader interest but poor FA coverage?

  - Cars: 3 models, 3 brands FA

  - Fashion: 4 FAs. (no cosmetics or shoes, could we improve the dance club's ratio?)

  - ...?

- Think about the contrast with categories that have very high FA representation:

  - Mushrooms: 40 FAs

  - Battleships: 67 FAs

  - Hurricanes: too scared to look, triple digits?

- How does FA find and encourage new high energy FA writers? Is complaining about the general Wiki editor base decline sufficient?

- How does FA better train new contributors? Especially when they are going after important articles for readers but lack the polish of our star collectors?
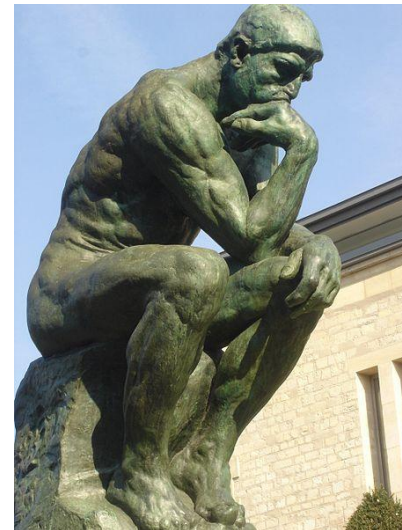
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Article quality is one of Wikimedia's top 5 strategic priories

Stabilize infrastructure

Increase participation

Improve quality
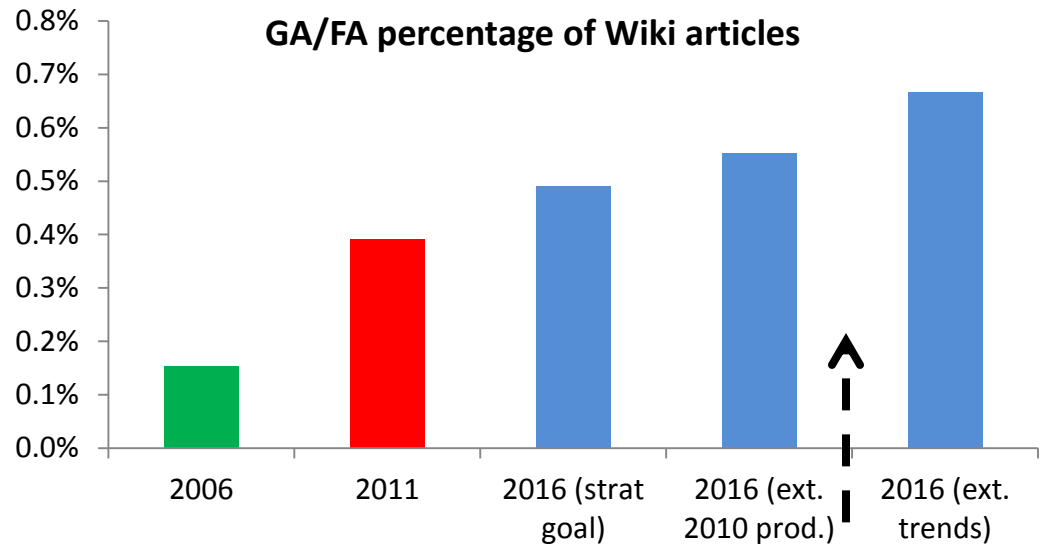
Increase reach

Encourage innovation

- Good that quality is top 5.

- No debate that there are major needs other than quality.

- *Important to realize that each priority has some independent levers and results. This gives us extra chances for success.*

The WMF metric for 5 year improved quality is flawed.

Ensure information is high quality by increasing the percentage of material reviewed to be of high or very high quality by 25 percent

WMF 5 year strategy

GA/FA percentage of Wiki articles

Chart categories: 2006, 2011, 2016 (strat goal), 2016 (ext. 2010 prod.), 2016 (ext. trends). Y-axis from 0.0% to 0.8%.

Likely result, with no extra efforts

Translation: JAN 2016 FA, GA's =
(1.25) X (JAN 2011 FA, GA's) X(all 2016 articles)/(all 2011 articles)

Issues:

- **This is the opposite of a "stretch goal".** WMF is targeting less of a quality improvement than just extending recent trends or even just 2010 production. *Consider changing to a 100% increase as a stretch goal.* (50% increase will happen with no extra efforts.)

- **The metric is based on article count instead of page views (reader experience).** This kind of metric biases to production of obscure articles that are easy to GA/FA but which are rarely read. *Consider a goal expressed something like "drive amount of high quality page views from 3% to 10%"*

- **The metric is not a catchy slogan to rally around.** Hard to understand ("percentage of a percentage"), like a math question on the SAT. Consider how "make the Vital Articles Featured" or "25,000 high quality articles" sound.

- **Metric (and supporting initiatives) do not discuss difference of en-Wiki versus emerging language wikis.** Is there some useful differentiation of strategies (core business versus growth business) where en-Wiki should concentrate on quality of articles while new language wikis concentrate on getting any articles?

Initiatives…   **…and comments**

Article assessment tools

- This feels like a "we know how to do it" **techie option** that will not dramatically improve quality. On a bulk basis, current assessments are decent. Just aping Facebook or Amazon with a rating tool is not doing much.
- What could be cool would be more effort to **strategically monitor** and discuss **quality** by the WMF. Yearly "state of quality" report. And getting some external views as well (general reader surveys as well as academics/traditional publishers).

Institutional partnerships

- Ok…but we really need to emphasize the part about "**documenting best practices**". Discuss both what succeeded and what did NOT. (Not "declare victory".) For instance, how man GA/FAs has the whole Public Policy Initiative delivered? There is a tiny AP Bio class in North Carolina that seems to have more impact on GA/FA than that whole expensive endeavor.
- We also need to think about **more creative experiments (not just museums)**:
  - How about getting in touch with some **celebrity agents** and *bypassing* photographer middlemen to allow our volunteers some access to shoot decent photos (current quality has been panned by the New York Times.)
  - Or ask for **press passes at sporting events**. The World Gymnastics Championships (by the way a "female" topic) had heavy press by *bloggers*. Or even…just ask for the Super Bowl sideline pass (can't hurt to ask…and if not, perhaps "preseason access"…but the Wiki name and some official engagement can really open doors…marketers are looking to engage social media….Wiki should exploit that.)

Initiatives…   **…and comments**

Quality labeling for readers

- A simple grade on the front would be a big upgrade.

- Wikipedians will resist it for many "perfect is the enemy of better" reasons. Project disputes, specifics of the grade structure, that articles are not perfectly assessed now, FA turf, edit wars, etc. But the READERS would appreciate it. Perhaps WMF can help move the overly conservative, stuck community forward.

- This seems like a small idea…but could really percolate into substantial actions over time to move us forward on quality in a very far reaching manner (e.g. converting all the start articles to B would be huge impact for readers…GA/FA can't do everything.)

Support development of first responder systems that empower community volunteers to consistently and effectively address hot-button issues.

- Not sure what this means. Sounds like there is some hidden meaning that is not being bluntly described. Is this BLPs? Image filters? Pending changes? Legal threats? Copyright? Spam? Political correctness? Expanded checkuser?

- Could be a great initiative…but let's not beat around the bush.

WMF's quality enabling initiatives need upgrading to really drive improvement (3 of 3).

This is what else WMF should do for quality…
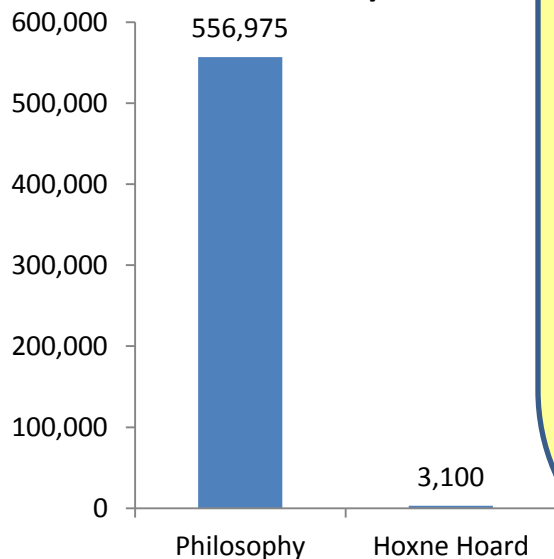
Hire 1-2 people with a traditional content background: A senior person with publishing (editor, writer or academic) experience and maybe a junior editor type. Not any prose person is right. It needs to be someone who can interact in this medium/company. But, we are way heavy with tech veterans (and junior people in the chapters and participation drives). Adding someone with *"editor in New York city"* perspective would *fill a gap we don't even recognize*. She can't write the articles, but can interact with the community, run a blog and talk about what we can learn from traditional media and what we can't, help with outreach to GLAM. (Right person will define the role.) Philippe is there as reader advocate …but he is stretched thin with strategic/operational jobs.

More WMF/CEO statements on quality to the community: talk about the good, the bad, etc. Show it matters to top management. You can't write the content, but you can cheerlead and scold. Jimbo used to do it more.

Host a contest or get some outside entities to do so. It's not even about the specific results of that contest but about the morale lift and energy.

Create Featured Article Fellows: Give them a business card and a title and JSTOR access.. Ally it with GEP or GLAM to help them get archives and academia interaction. Use this is a carrot to drive high view FAs. If the scope requires it, assign a staffer part or full time to run it. Get some good press out of it. Use outside funding if needed.

Create some GLAM-like **partnerships with top university academic graduate departments** to write some of the meta-category Vital Articles like "Philosophy". Target important articles (not "Hoxne Hoard"). The objective is movement on high view, difficult topics. Not just engagement /PR (that will happen too, though). And this is NOT USEP/IEP with a mass newbie goal. This is targeting the top. Get a brand name like Harvard or Stanford. (NARA and British Museum were big names.) This is NOT about semester coursework like the rest of GEP. It is about getting a grad department to jump in with students that are not on a strict timeline. Have someone credible (mature, smart, engaging) make the calls on several prime targets, with a goal of landing about three to demo the concept.

Monthly views

	Monthly views
Philosophy	556,975
Hoxne Hoard	3,100

Why article quality should be on the WMF CEO's agenda
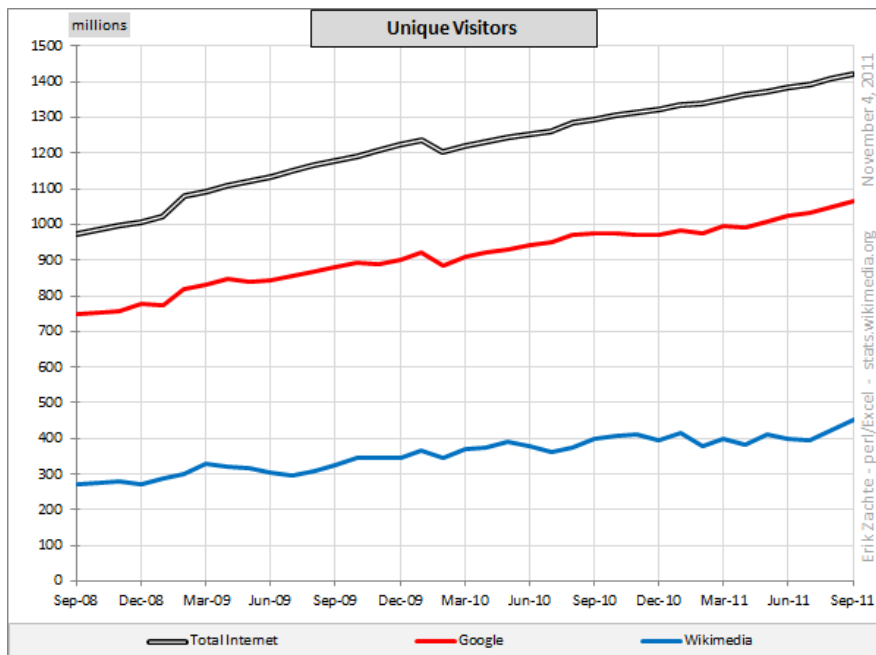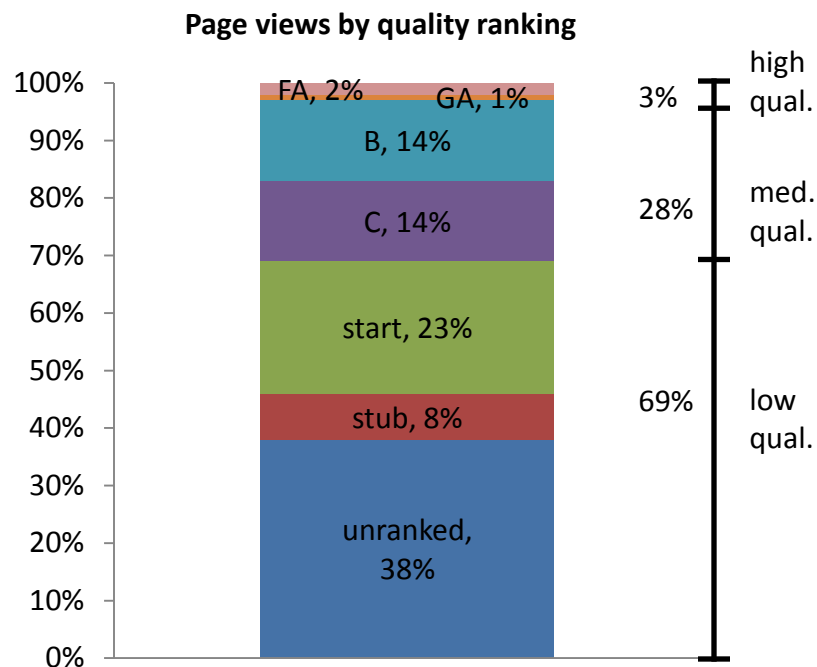

- Quality is the next frontier. We've done quantity. Quality is what Wiki "wants to be when it grows up".

- Site traffic is a function *of reader views, not editor edits*. Wiki readers come for **content**, not for participation. We need more meat for them. The stub creation and translations are not enough. Readers want real articles--we still have very large gaps on fundamental topics (see slide on "Information Technology": poster child for unsat Vital Articles).

- We can *prioritize* (most viewed articles, En-Wiki) and get *high-visibility, near term* wins

- Positive interaction with other WMF initiatives: (1) WYSWYG editing, (2) improved multimedia, (3) institution partnerships. Fits.

- Key aspect of our foundation's raison d'etre

- Fundraising angle to exploit (what we need to do, next step of Wiki, etc. etc.) It will resonate.

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69% of readers are seeing a low quality article. Only 3% a high quality article

Page views by quality ranking

Stacked bar chart showing page views by quality ranking:
- FA, 2%
- GA, 1%
- B, 14%
- C, 14%
- start, 23%
- stub, 8%
- unranked, 38%

Grouped as:
- 3% high qual.
- 28% med. qual.
- 69% low qual.

Analysis by Andreea Gorbatai, Harvard Business School:

- 1% random sample from en-Wiki 1.0 data dump.

- Weighted average of "eyeball" experience compiled: Page views from OCT08-JAN09, quality from MAY10.

- Project disagreement on ranking -> average and round intermediate ranking up

- No main page spike removal (e.g. TFAs)

- The sample had no A class article.

- Manual examination of 10 unranked articles showed them stub/start in character. Future work planned to quantify this as a distribution so unranked articles can be assigned to the ranked buckets.

- Unpublished work, first known of this sort.

Implications:

- **The premier quality article programs (GA/A/FA) have little impact on the everyday reader.** As there is a limited pool of good writers (and in FA, process bottlenecks to production), *these programs need to concentrate on high view articles to consider themselves strong content advocates.* They are in danger of being small enclave(s) with an elite that gives each other awards for (genuinely high quality) articles that are only of interest to themselves.

- **Movement of articles from start/stub to C/B remains a powerful quality help.** At least readers have "some content" then. In that vein, efforts like the PPI (essentially getting start/new articles to B) can be considered positive. It is not just the number of GA/FAs that matter (although they are easier to track and have reviews).

In retrospect, what are the major themes that emerged from all this analysis?

We still have a long way to go on quality

Many Vital Articles are sub-par quality and the website as a whole is still far from even a medium quality reader experience. But there are still many things we can try to improve this.

When we think about quality, we need to think about page views...about the reader.

Star collecting (emphasizing many low-view GA/FAs) is a poor strategy for helping the readers.

There is something wrong with Featured Articles

We need to look at this as a community (RFC) and search for understanding from many viewpoints, with inquiring minds. This presentation should not be taken as gospel. Neither should a view that FA is optimized and any issues are from outside.

# Social rewards may help us align quality incentives

Power of social rewards

* There is a rich literature showing that people in online communities are motivated by intangible community rewards (post counts, Amazon reviewer rank, etc.) These factors DRIVE contributions (along with enjoyment , socializing, and altruism).

* There is too much evidence to say that Wiki "star collecting" does not occur. Writers are motivated to get numbers of recognized articles. To an extent that their time is misallocated from the reader perspective. It's not all interest in the obscure, there is an element of churning.

* It is a big task to write a Good Article and more so for a Featured Article. It also requires differentiated writing skill. What is wrong with an intangible reward for the hard, unpaid labor?

Wikipedia is resistant to change

* It takes near unanimity and long debate to make process changes. There is a status quo prejudice related to how we do things.

* It is difficult to take something away from a group that is used to receiving it.

The solution to the problem is to ADD, not change reward systems

* We need barnstars, rankings, contests, userbox candy, etc. to recognize page view champions.

* Changing the icon on an article page might be resisted, but who can complain about a barnstar?

* While Wiki is incredibly resistant to change…it is also incredibly easy to add features.   An individual can usually just do it and see if it works. The status quo becomes to keep additions and long debate is avoided.

* This is positive instead of negative. No one will try to prevent hurricane FAs or take away the stickers. But we will recognize those that serve the readers more.
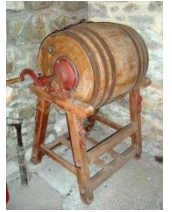
I think we should run small experiments, tests, see what works, what doesn't, and be prepared to be flexible and change, and not be too locked into stone about how things should work.

Jimmy Wales, 2006

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Methodology

- **Page view measurement:** The tool stats.grok.se was used to measure page hits for a monthly period. Results were manually transcribed. Use of server data in future would allow for looking at whole year data (eliminating seasonality). Use of a database would also lower risks of transcription errors (a couple were caught in the work up).

- **Spikes:** In cases where a huge day's spike was present, this was removed by picking an alternate month. From manual examination, almost all "spikes" seemed to be from main page. The possibility of a demand driven spike (e.g. from news event or from a sports star on the day of competition) exists, but inspection showed it to be rare. In general, even for news events (e.g. World Championships for an amateur gymnast), there is a "tail" of viewing in the days after (sometimes before too, like sports events but not disasters) the spike, which is very different than the appearance of a main page caused spike. If using server data and automation, sigma deviation culling or just culling the top couple (and perhaps bottom) viewed days could also eliminate the "push marketing" of the front page. (These pushes have a much more dramatic effect for low view topics where a day on the main page may generate more hits than a year without it. This means studies that do not eliminate the spikes [yet still show the issues with low view articles] are actually understating how bad things are.)

- **Sampling versus surveying:** Because of the manual examination, some populations were characterized by random sampling vice surveying. However the 2011 JAN-SEP FAs were surveyed. Automated methods would allow more surveying, less sampling. (Although future researchers should also consider some manual examinations…one sees things and learns things when peering at the articles personally. This can be helpful for developing hypotheses to test then with out of sample data.) Also, as shown here, sampling can be a very powerful tool to move from qualitative views to semi-quantitative inferences. This can enable strategic discussion at Wiki with something that is halfway between formal statistical papers and arguments on talk pages. This is normal, for example, in business strategy. (It should also be remembered that requiring perfect methods before making decisions is also a decision…it is a strong bias for the status quo and against change/evolution.)

- **Median versus average:** The distribution of articles by page view is not symmetric, but heavily tailed (perhaps power law). This means that determining averages from sampling is problematic. For this reason, populations were often compared by medians (which are much less responsive to the lack or presence of a "blockbuster" view article). In some cases, where surveying was done and the sample size was large, averages were used. It's recognized that surveying all articles, using server data and automatic processing, would allow more use of averages which is the more correct metric for comparing populations. In several cases, averages were looked at and they did not change the directionality of the main findings (e.g. A is bigger than B). However, see the slide titled "The more highly collaborated articles are more relevant than the less highly collaborated articles." for an example of an average to median difference for a small sample (actually a survey, but small).

- **Software:** Data were compiled into Excel, which was used for processing and charting also. Several comments on methods of random selection, the raw data of what was selected, etc. are in the Excel.

Acknowledgements

- **Comments:** Several anonymous Wikipedians ,as well as Philippe Beaudette of the Wikimedia Foundation and Andreea Gorbatai of the Harvard Business School, gave helpful ideas or information. But all opinions and mistakes are from this author, and the text is sole-authored.

- **Images:** Wikimedia Commons was the source for the images listed below (in presentation order). License terms and authors can be found at the corresponding file pages. Other images are either modifications of those images, created images using basic shapes, or text-based screen shots.
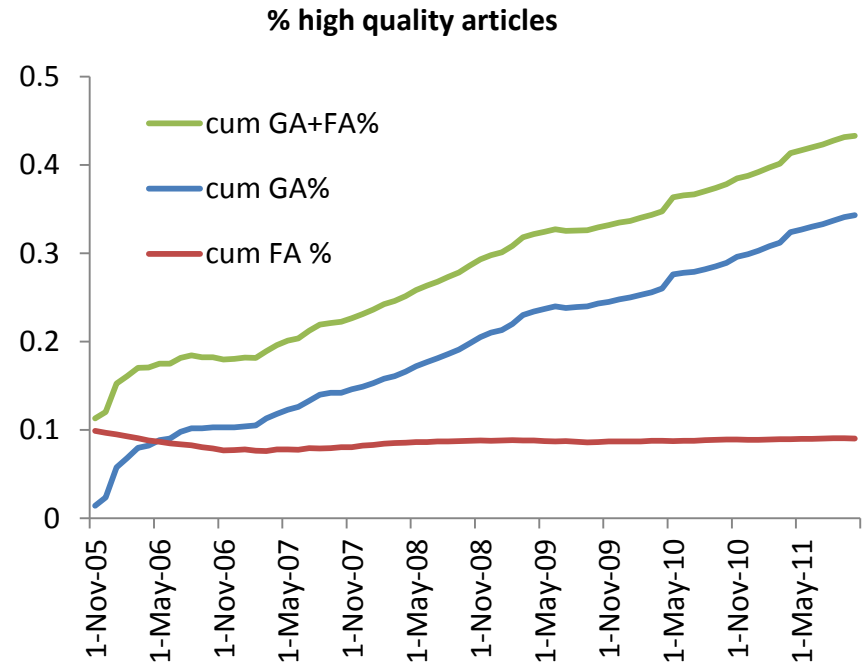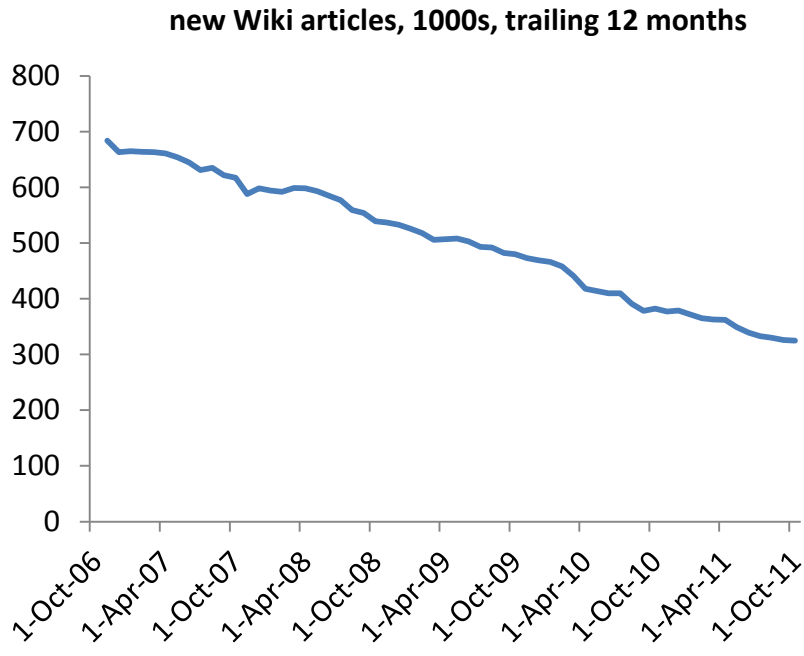
Tango_style_Wikipedia_Icon_svg	Gnome_globe_content_svg
Attention_niels_epting_svg	Four_Award_svg
LocationFrance_svg	Symbol_neutral_vote_svg
MHK4-Fraktur_23j_Annotation	Symbol_question_svg
Soyuz_TMA-7_spacecraft2edit1	Symbol_support_vote_svg
Familia_3510	Symbol_star_FA_gold_svg
The_Earth_seen_from_Apollo_17	Waddesdon_stations,_1903
WP1 0 Icon.svg	Power_press_animation
Amanita_muscaria_(fly_agaric)	Periodic_Table_by_Quality
Cowan_Pusher	NARA_Logo_created_2010_svg
Cyclone_Gafilo	Declaration-of-independence-broadside-cropped
Indiana-rural-road	Long_sky_background_+_PAN
Journal_pone_0008247_g001	Russian_Air_Force_Sukhoi_Su-35_Belyakov
Drymoreomys_albimaculatus_002	2010-06-30_A330_LH_D-AIKK_EDDF_02
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At_a_loss_svg	File:Tournesol1.jpg
Louis_Pasteur_by_Pierre_Lamy_Petit	File:Sunflower Blüte.JPG
Soyuz-TMA-13-Mission-Patch	Michael_Wolff
File:Trophy.png	1NumberOneInCircle
_Chief_Warrant_Officer_Thomas_Wain_Cummings,_left,_food_service_officer,_receives_the_Captain_Edward_F__Ney_Memorial_Award_for_Food_Service_Excellence	Amazon_com-Logo_svg
	Butter_Churn
	Medals

The more select Vital Articles get more viewing.

This is the category people usually mean when they say "**the** Vital Articles".
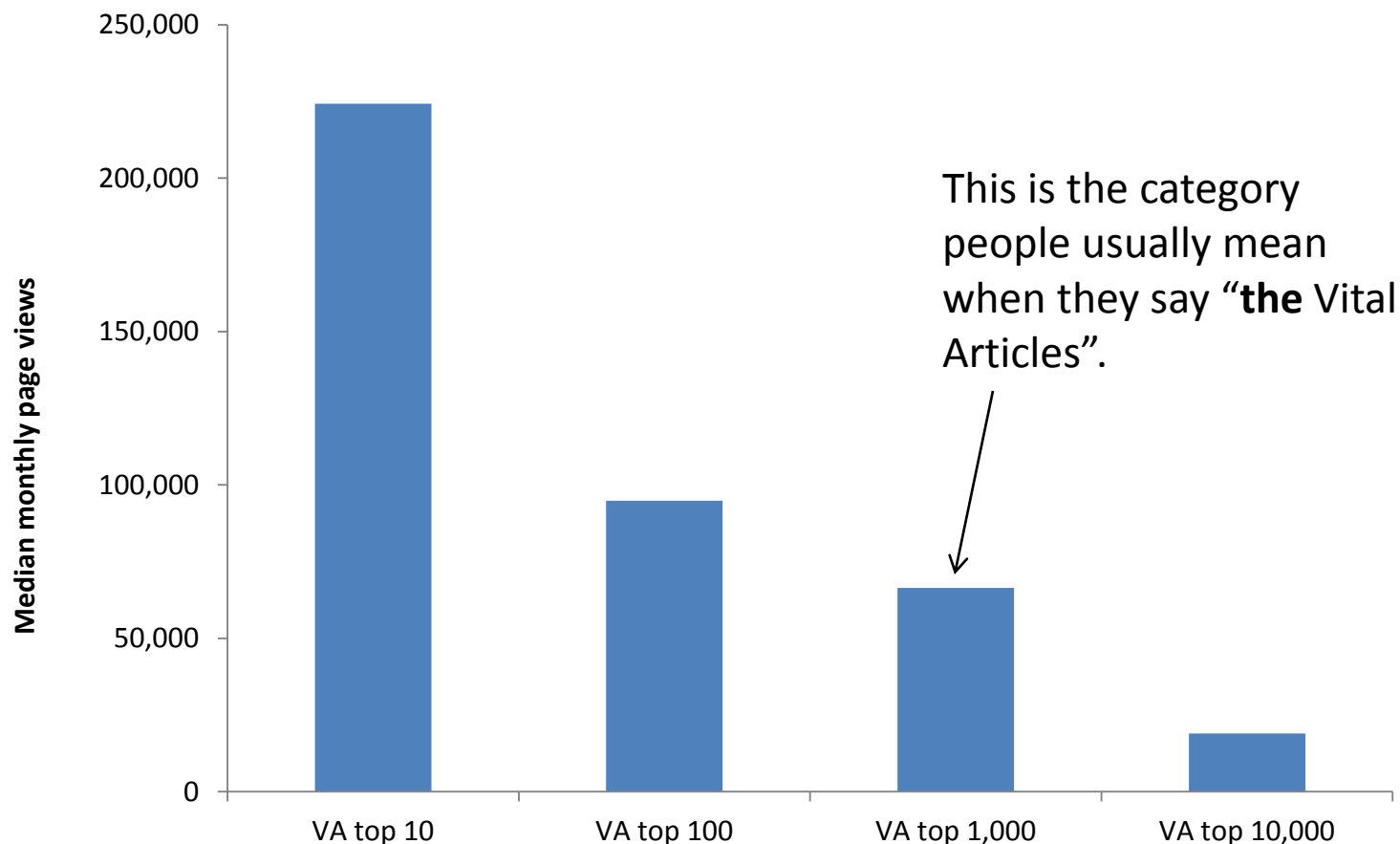
Vital Articles were initially developed by user David Gerard from a similar list by the WikiMedia Foundation. List is Wiki community maintained without significant dispute.   The list contains topics that "feel" important for an encyclopedia although one might question occasional choices.

As Wikipedia transitions from *quantity* to *quality*, GA is carrying the load. FA is not pulling its weight.

new Wiki articles, 1000s, trailing 12 months

% high quality articles

- cum GA+FA%
- cum GA%
- cum FA %

Why is FA percentage of total articles flat?

- Yes, new article growth is declining, but they are very different sorts of activities: stubs versus complete compositions.
- There are plenty of worthwhile subject for FA to work on, with 999 of 1000 current articles not an FA.

Why is production of new FAs dropping?

- Bottlenecks of structure (page construction, time requirements)?
- Reviewer limits (only a few trusted reviewers and no recruitment or training of top replacements)?
- Unpleasant FAC atmosphere? Edit wars dissuading high investment in articles? Desired exclusivity? "Burnout"? Others?

The Aviation master plan is working to Feature 28 aircraft articles.

Monthly page views
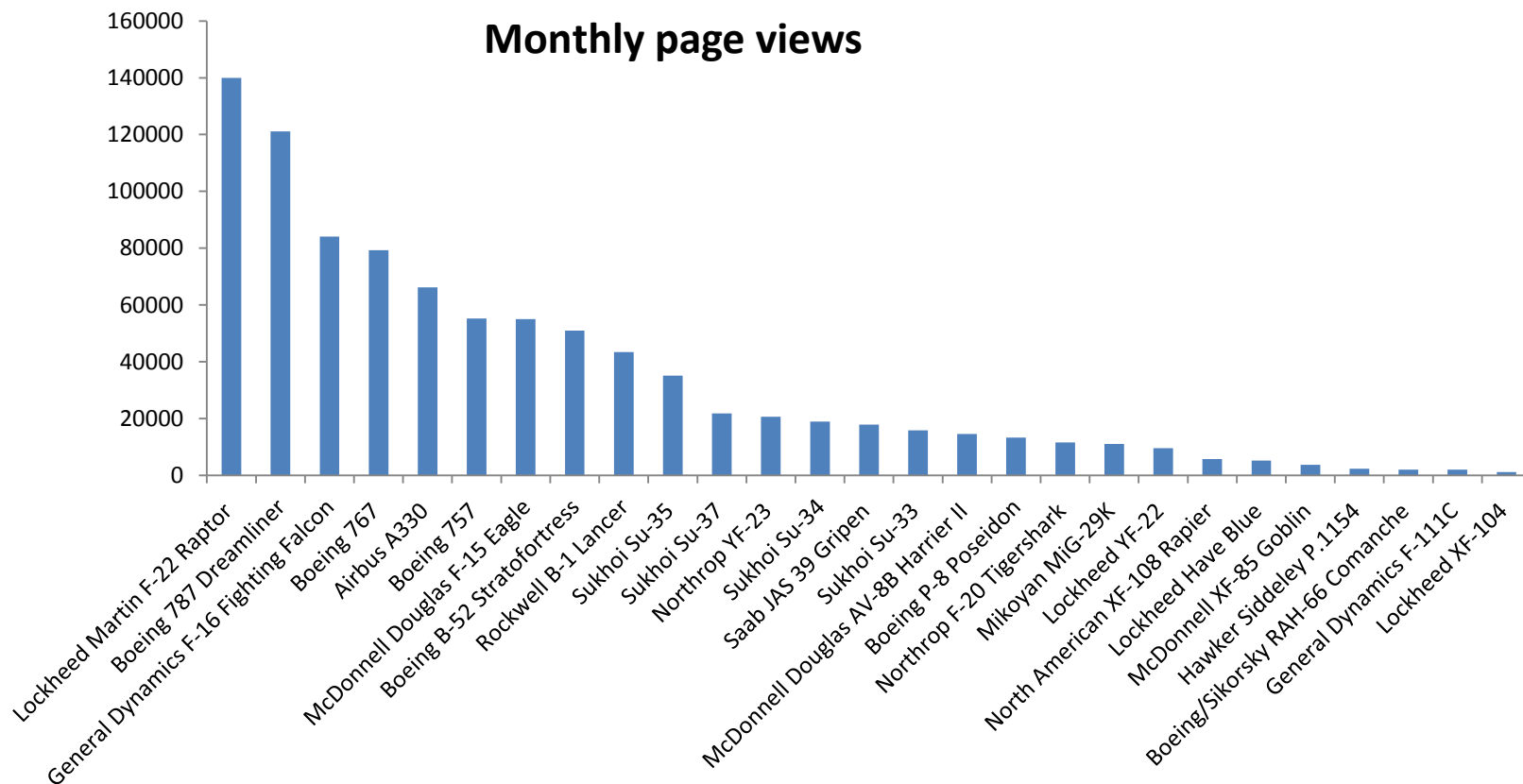
(incomplete) The Good Articles were not examined as much as Featured Articles. Initial scratch list of ideas of what could be examined there:

- Subject amounts

- Queue times

- Quality

- Main players

- GA to FA transitions

- Users eschewing FA and why

- Others? (discuss hypotheses to check)

(incomplete) Decay and vandalism (future analysis, starter thoughts)

- Reference previous three previous studies showing impact of IP edits on FAs.

- Do a lit search

- Discuss the types of degradation (especially well meant additions that are not up to needed quality, for example adding content to the lead that is already in the body).

- Quote (to counterpose/rebut) the idea that quality monotonically increases (Chi at PARC?) (also the issue that "friction" to increase/maintain retards investment of new content, even if qual does increase)

- Quotes from FA writers on reticence to work on high view articles because of the fear of degradation.

- Quotes from essay on tended garden, quotes on the mild ownership exception for FAs

- Perspective on the difference between additions to articles in different stages.

- Estimate of volunteer time spent on policing poor quality additions to GA+ articles

- Estimate of impact of reverts for well intentioned additions to GA+ articles.

- "Ideology" of freedom versus practical benefits to readers' articles. Show this with numbers (amount of improvements less than amount of degradations, volunteer time not unlimited to police/edit war. Many other articles are open for editing additions with a much lower bar for helping.

- Reference evolution of business models in other net businesses, Nupedia, etc.

> Recommendations:
>
> Semi protect all GA/FAs
>
> Liberally full protect (when requested by author or for high view) GA/FAs
>
> Full protect TFAs

(incomplete) TFA (future work, placeholder with initial thinking)

- Better incentives for high view articles

- Less emphasis on anniversaries (exception rather than rule), more on good topics.

- Perhaps a slight bias to educational traditional topics, although some pop culture is OK especially if high view (e.g. "The Simpsons", but NOT an episode of the Simpsons)

- The front page is promotional is "push". It is very different than surfing in from Google (give some math and graphs here).

- As it is promotional, we should think about putting up *topics of general positive interest and avoiding negative ones*. They are still in the encyclopedia…nothing is censored. We don't have to be so touchily proud of running in your face choices though.

- Think about what a NYT editor would use that slot for…think about reader first.

- Less running of old articles (some of which are low quality from decay or lower standards). Also will motivate current submitters more…and more ability to integrate additions (or fight off the degradations).

- Tighter coordination of FAC and TFA (very separate now: Raul not on FAC, Dabomb is not an FA delegate, etc.)

- Other ideas/analyses (TBD)

- Oh…paragraphs for columned text. Blurbs now are not structured as unitary paragraphs but are usually two paras run together into a 200 word mass (longish on its own, but even worse as columned text). Research and cite something here about normal content practices, quote from Strunk and White on using the paragraph as the element of composition, blabla.