

WIKIPEDIA & LIBRARIES

INSERT CATCHY SUBTITLE HERE

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WIKIPEDIA & LIBRARIES

Part 1: What we're dealing with

WHAT IS WIKIPEDIA?

- Wikipedia is “the free encyclopedia that anyone can edit”.

- Wikipedia is the sixth most heavily trafficked website in the world, with over half a billion page visits a month

- Wikipedia is also (unofficially)
 - ▣ A rapidly updating news source
 - ▣ A finger on the pulse of popular culture
 - ▣ A social network
 - ▣ The secret anarcho-libertarian agenda

THE FIVE PILLARS



- Wikipedia is an encyclopedia.
- Wikipedia is written from a neutral point of view.
- Wikipedia is free content that anyone can edit, use, modify, and distribute.
- Editors should interact with each other in a respectful and civil manner.
- Ignore all rules.

ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION



- In areas where governmental, religious, or social pressures restrict people's ability to teach or openly discuss certain topics, encyclopedias such as Wikipedia can provide important, sometimes life saving, information
- In areas that are too poor or too remote to have libraries (or, in some cases, schools), Wikipedia can be the only source of information people have access to
- For these reasons, the WMF has invested heavily in providing free access to Wikipedia over mobile phones to parts of the third world.

SOME NUMBERS



- Wikipedia has just under 4,100,000 articles and just under 800,000 files.
- In the past 30 days, 132,800 users made at least one edit to Wikipedia.
- Just over 17,800,000 accounts have been registered on Wikipedia, although some of them have never edited.
- Wikipedia has just under 1,500 administrators and just over 700 registered bot accounts.

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Part 2: What Wikipedians get out of a strong relationship between Wikipedia and Libraries

SOURCING



- Wikipedia cannot function without access to high quality source materials.

- Most libraries provide Wikipedians with access to:
 - ▣ Books, including books no longer sold in stores
 - ▣ Microfilm copies of local newspapers, often dating back at least several decades
 - ▣ Digital media, including documentaries

- Some libraries provide Wikipedians with access to:
 - ▣ Archives and the otherwise inaccessible materials contained therein
 - ▣ Academic journal and newspaper compilers/brokers such as JSTOR, Credo, HighBeam, and Elsevier

SOURCING

- In July 2012 another Wikipedian did a rough count of article sourcing and found just over 1,050,000 citations to printed sources, and just over 1,100,000 citations to online sources.
 - ▣ With over four million articles, this is a dramatic under-representation, however it illustrates that print sources are just as important as online sources
- There are 234,735 articles on Wikipedia that do not contain any sources. ☹
 - ▣ A long term targeted effort has dramatically brought down the number of unsourced articles, especially unsourced articles on living people.

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS

- A small fraction of the people that visit Wikipedia stay and contribute. The more people that visit Wikipedia, especially when they're recommended it by a respected authority figure (i.e. a librarian), the more people stay and contribute, and the better the project becomes.
 - ▣ Also librarians are confident enough in Wikipedia's quality to recommend it to people seeking information, it's a sign that we're doing something right.
- Librarians and archivists, as people who are already committed to the concept and practice of spreading knowledge, tend to make excellent Wikipedians themselves.

LEGITIMACY

- Librarians are trained to make value judgments as to the usefulness and reliability of information sources (not only in choosing what to recommend to people looking for information, but also in selecting books to include in the library and pruning the shelves). In this capacity, acceptance by librarians is one of the two main bellwethers that Wikipedia uses to measure its acceptance among the academic community.
- ▣ Far from (just) being an ego thing, legitimacy opens doors for Wikipedia; groups that might otherwise not want to collaborate with an entity like Wikipedia may choose to do so because of our higher public standing.

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Part 3: What Librarians get out of a strong relationship between Wikipedia and Libraries

WILL WORK FOR CONTENT

- Some Wikipedians are so dedicated to getting public domain material out to the world in an easily accessible digital format that they are willing to expend a great deal of time performing menial tasks to get that information out there.
 - The biggest example of this is Wikisource, a project where people transcribe documents within the public domain into computer readable/searchable text and store it in a free and open repository
 - Wikipedians have organized scan-a-thons, events where they scan archive material, input the metadata for it, and load the scans on to Wikimedia Commons
 - Wikimedia Commons itself is a 14,700,000+ strong collection of freely licensed images that anyone can use for almost any purpose

AND...

- Brainstorming time! I've got a room full of librarians, archivists, and people that handle information as a living or a passion. I want to hear what ideas you have for collaboration with Wikipedia and Wikipedians.

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Part 4: Questions? Comments?