

# A Tale of Two Wikis

Techniques for Building,  
Managing and Promoting  
Collaborative Communities

A faint, semi-transparent image of two hands shaking is visible in the background, centered behind the text. The hands are rendered in a light teal color, matching the overall theme of the slide. The background is a solid, dark teal color.

# A Tale of Two Wikis

- **Introduction**
- Starting the wiki
- Maintenance and expansion
- Promotion and advertising
- Site monitoring
- Dealing with problems
- Policy considerations
- The importance of community
- Conclusion and questions

# Introduction

- This presentation is not about Wikimedia
- I'm not an academic!
- Practical advice on:
  - Starting a wiki dedicated to your community
  - Promoting it to other potential contributors
  - Maintaining and expanding the site over time
- If you are interested in the above, this is for you
  - If not, feel free to stay, just don't complain later! ;-)

# Why a separate wiki?

- Some articles are unverifiable even if factual
- Who's had such an article deleted on Wikipedia?
- Who's voted to delete such an article?
- Wikipedia isn't the place for it – so where?
- Answer: A separate site dedicated to the topic:
  - Easier to gather contributors
  - Less stress defending against deletion
  - Policies appropriate to your community

# Why should *you* make it?

- You're the one that cares the most. **Be bold!**
- You have wiki ability **and** domain knowledge
- You get the chance to make your own rules
  - Maybe you'll find out why they were like that
  - Maybe you'll find a better way
- It's really cool to see a site with 1,000+ articles and know you're responsible for its creation
- What else were you going to do with your time?

# Sample wikis

- Two fan-based communities
  - Creatures Wiki: December 2004 – June 2005
    - First featured on Wikia. 2,000+ articles
    - Endorsement from game developers
    - Influenced republishing of game over a year after “death”
  - WikiFur: July 2005 – Present
    - 4,500 articles to date, still growing at 150 edits/day
    - Close, vibrant community involving real-life friends
- Not Star Trek/Star Wars, but not far away either

# A Tale of Two Wikis

- Introduction
- **Starting the wiki**
- Maintenance and expansion
- Promotion and advertising
- Site monitoring
- Dealing with problems
- Policy considerations
- The importance of community
- Conclusion and questions

# Hosting your wiki

- Self-hosting or wiki farm?
  - Adequate technical ability? Can you handle growth?
  - Flexibility vs. performance/uptime?
  - Licensing restrictions? GFDL, CC, total ownership?
  - Server hosting vs. Ad-based vs. Monthly fee
  - Time spent working on server vs. community
  - People complain no matter what you choose!
- Several established hosting companies
  - Wikia is good, but check them all out yourself



# Names and branding

- Names are important - keep it simple
- If people can't figure out what your site is about from the name, find a better one
- Try not to use anyone else's name!
- Use a generic name to get started, change later?
  - It worked for Star Wars Wiki, now Wookieepedia
- Think up a few slogans for publicity purposes
  - Example: “By Furrries, For Furrries, About Furrries”
  - Helps define both contributors and visitors

# Site logo



- You need a logo, too – make it simple but meaningful
- Consider a logo contest soon after you get started
- Test it with the ten-foot challenge
- Make sure you have the rights necessary to use it!

# Seed posting

- You have the vision, but...
  - A vision is just promise without substance
- You have to write a lot of articles yourself
  - Some **may** write *with* you; nobody will do it *for* you
- You have to be at least **interested** in the topic
  - If you're not, find someone else to start the wiki!
- You must believe you're the right person to do it
  - ...but also that others are essential for success

# Mission statement

- A site without focus has no purpose...
  - ...therefore it will not succeed
  - Hundreds of dead wikis demonstrate this
- You **must** have goals to work towards
  - They can be optimistic, but should be achievable
    - “Complete listing of all *Creatures* breeds and addons”
    - “Most comprehensive site for furry fandom information”
- Define your audience and contributor pool
  - *Don't* be too exclusive, especially not at this stage

# Initial policies

- Keep it short and sweet
- Decide what your license is (if there's a choice)
- Consider the desired tone and assumptions
- Use language appropriate to the audience
  - Remember that policy tends to be a *bit* formal
- If you don't **have** a certain policy, don't write it
  - Wait until people finish arguing about it ;-)
  - Once you reach a consensus, write some more

# A Tale of Two Wikis

- Introduction
- Starting the wiki
- **Maintenance and expansion**
- Promotion and advertising
- Site monitoring
- Dealing with problems
- Policy considerations
- The importance of community
- Conclusion and questions

# Attracting and keeping contributors

- Welcomes are not minor edits
  - Relevant to contributions (avoid templates)
  - Link to help pages and a place to ask questions
- Ensure the first thing people see is welcoming
  - MediaWiki:Anonnotice can be very useful
    - ‘**Welcome to WikiFur!** Check out our **Featured articles**, the **Comic of the Week**, and our *Did you know?* section!’
  - Organize your home page for new users
    - Remember, search engines benefit from quality links, too



# Contributor help and support

- Create your own help and style pages
  - Cover the essential topics in a friendly style
  - For detailed help, direct users to Wikipedia
    - Remember to warn them that not all policies apply
- Make a great community portal to direct editors
- Provide public and private places for assistance
  - Public: LiveJournal, forums, mailing lists
  - Private: User talk, email, IM, phone
    - Different people prefer different methods



# Customization

- Customize your wiki to your community
  - It doesn't have to be much – just a unique flavour
  - Images can be very easy to change
  - Appropriate in-page design helps as well
- If an artist or designer can help you, let them
- Consider the effect on usability
  - About 10% of users are still stuck at 800x600
  - Be warned: Some don't like dark colours



# Creatures Wiki Homepage



Welcome to the **Creatures Wiki** - a place where you can find out about the **Creatures artificial life** games, and discover new and exciting *agents*, *metarooms*, *COBs*, *tools* and more for your *norms*.

If what you're looking for isn't here, you can tell the world what **you** know about it - help improve this site today! **Jump in** and make new pages, or edit **2,528** existing ones. Be sure to **look at the help** first! Can't do stuff now? Add us to your bookmarks (**Ctrl+D**) or **search box**.

## navigation

- [Creatures Wiki Homepage](#)
- [Category view](#)
- [Recent changes](#)
- [Random page](#)
- [Help <-- \\*READ\\*](#)
- [JRChat](#)

## search






## toolbox

- [What links here](#)
- [Related changes](#)
- [Upload file](#)
- [Special pages](#)
- [Printable version](#)
- [Permanent link](#)

## wikia

- [Administrators](#)
- [Report a problem](#)
- [Live chat and support](#)

• [Wikia messages:](#)

### Wikia is hiring!

PHP programming rockstar needed.

Join our small team and have a big impact on the development of Wikia and

Congratulations to **Orfeo** for contributing the 2500th Creatures Wiki article, the **Orfeo Norms!**

**Parlez-vous français?** If so, then help build the new **Creatures Wiki France!**

## Games

- [Creatures](#)
- [Creatures 2](#)
- [Creatures 3](#)
- [Docking Station - Free!](#)
- [Creatures Adventures](#)
- [Creatures Playground](#)
- [Tips, Cheats and Easter Eggs](#)

## Addons

- **Breeds:** [Norn](#) - [Ettin](#) - [Grendel](#) - [Geat](#)
- **Rooms:** [Worlds](#) - [Metarooms](#)
- **Objects:** [COBs](#) - [Agents](#)
- [Food](#) - [Drink](#) - [Toys](#) - [Vendors](#)
- [Plants](#) - [Animals](#) - [Machinery](#)
- [Development ideas](#)

## Game Development

- [Tools](#) - [Articles](#)
- [Development Groups](#)
- [Known Projects](#)

## Community

- [History](#) - [People](#)
- [Websites](#) - [Terms](#)
- [Societies](#) - [Humour](#)
- [alt.games.creatures](#)
- [Roleplaying Characters](#)
- [Interviews](#) - [Fiction](#)
- [JRChat](#)

## Inner Workings

- [CAOS scripting](#)
- [Genetics](#)
- [Classification system](#)
- [The Brain](#)
- [Music](#)
- [File formats](#)

## Wiki Tasks & Resources

- [Wanted pages](#) - [Stubs](#)
- [Articles needing cleanup](#)
- [Images](#) - [Article templates](#)

## WikiFur Furry Central

### navigation

- WikiFur Furry Central
- Community Central
- WikiFur LiveJournal
- WikiFur Forum
- WikiFur Chat
- Recent changes
- Random page
- Help <- "READ"

### furry links

- Audio and video
- LJ communities
- Convention info

### search

### toolbox

- What links here
- Related changes
- Upload file
- Special pages
- Printable version
- Permanent link

### wikia

- Wikia Home
- Report a problem
- Live chat and support
- Wikia messages:
  - Read Jimmy Wales' Open Letter to the Political Blogosphere and get involved with the new Campaigns Wikia.

### in other languages

- Suomi

## Welcome to WikiFur,

the free encyclopedia written by and for the Furry community.

We are currently editing **4,335** articles

About WikiFur · Categories · Article talk · User talk · Editing

Questions · Admins · Help · **Community Central**

### COMMUNITY

- PEOPLE
- COUNTRIES
- WEBSITES
- MULTIPLAYER WORLDS
- CONVENTIONS
- SOCIAL GROUPS
- HOUSES
- PARTIES

### CULTURE

- COMICS
- FICTION
- CHARACTERS
- PUBLICATIONS
- GAMES
- MUSIC
- ANIMATION

**News:** WikiFur quoted in paper - TurriWiki links with WikiFur - WikiFur at AC 2006 - Email notification installed - Wikicities is now Wikia - Add to the furple! - Comics fea

### This week's featured article

[edit](#)

***A Fox in the Works*** is a long-running online furry story written by **Fox Cutter** that first appeared online on December 25th, 1995. The series is a **sci-fi** and **fantasy** mixture following the life and adventures of Fox Cutter, his wife Oriana, and their friends through a sprawling multi-verse. The stories range from high fantasy, political intrigue, science fiction, mystery, romance and drama, all to varying degrees.

The story has progressed through five years of storytime so far, with each year comparable to a season of a TV series. It is primary made up of short stories, with the occasional novella and one or two novels every year. Each year is built around a large story arc started in the previous year, which may continue onto the next. Many subplots wind through the series. While it is best to read the series from the beginning, the story "Run Around" is a good mid-series starting point. (**more...**)

**More featured articles** - [Suggest an article](#)



### Comic of the Week

[edit](#)

**Y?** (often spoken as "Y question mark", not simply "Y") is a furry comic by artist **Chad Burbidge** about lesbians living in this day and age.



The strip began in August 2004 and continues through to the present, currently being updated a couple of times a week.

While made for a mature audience, the comic isn't about sex: it's about life. The characters are real, down to earth, and could be seen in any comic outside of the furry realm. The dialogue is believable, and the art is very stylised - with the only colors being black, white, and shades of blue - and are definitely distinguishing features of the strip. (**more...** - [comic](#)

**Past comics** - [Nominate a comic](#) - [More comics](#)



### Upcoming events

[edit](#)

- Jul 19-23: **Comic-Con Intl.**(CA)
- Jul 22: **Califur Diego**(CA)
- Aug 5-7: **Furthest North**(AB)
- Aug 11-13: **AnthroFest**(QC)
- Aug 11-13: **Cal-Furr**(AB)
- Aug 23-27: **Eurofurence**
- Sep 1-3: **Mephit Furmeet**(TN)
- Sep 2-6: **Camp Ferall**(ON)
- Sep 29-Oct 1: **KainCon**(VA)
- Sep 29-Oct 3: **H-Con**
- Oct 6-8: **West PA Furry Wknd.**
- Oct 20-22: **FurFright**(CT)
- Oct 26-29: **HerbstCon**

### 2007

- Jan 12-14: **Arisia**(MA)
- Jan 18-22: **Further Confusion**(CA)
- Jan 27-Feb 3: **Zillercon**
- Feb 16-18: **Furry Weekend Atlanta**(GA)
- Mar 2-4: **Megaplex**(FL)
- May 4-6: **Califur**(CA)
- May 25-27: **Rocket City FurMeet**(AL)
- Jun 15-17: **Rocky Mountain Fur Con**(CO)
- Jun 22-25: **Gathering of the Gargoyles**(TN)
- Jul 5-8: **Anthrocon**(PA)
- Aug 24-26: **RainFurrest**(WA)

### Did you know?

[edit](#)

- AlohaWolf** made a cameo on the infamous **CSI** episode
- Rapid T. Rabbit** was interviewed on *The Daily Show*



- Artist Ainsley Seago's** uncle acted in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*
- Ailsa Berk, who played Amanaman in *Return of the Jedi*, is a regular at **Further Confusion**
- WikiFur features a **list of media links** related to the fandom
- You can chat with other **Wikifurries** on the **#wikifur IRC channel**

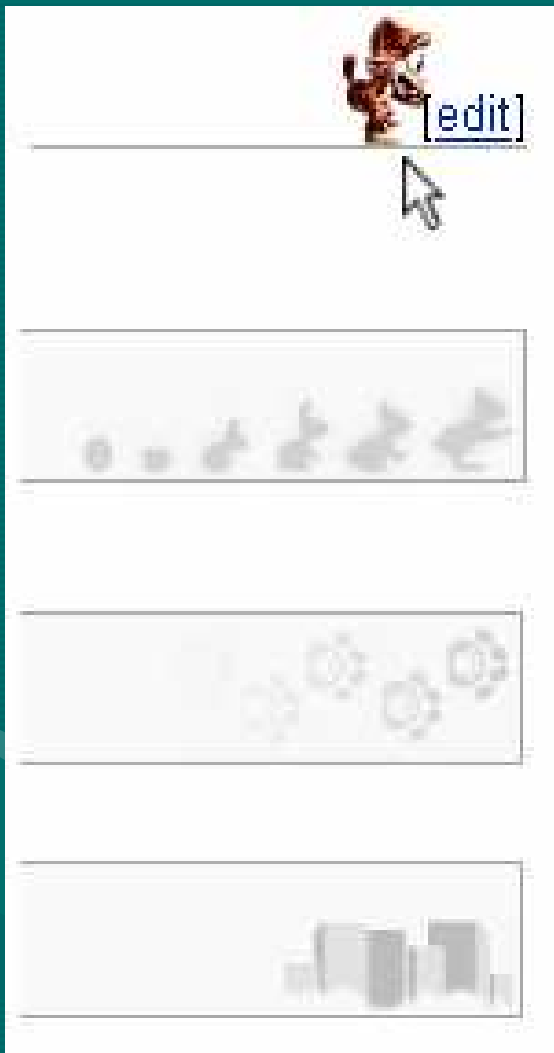
### Help us improve

- Pat Kelly
- Oklahoma Association of Anthropomorphic Arts
- Cake Portfolio
- NC furs
- Dionysian Scream
- Legend of Kay

### This week's featured picture



# Customization



- Norn appears on edit link
  - It's just for fun...exactly what you need in site decoration
- Creatures Wiki category bar includes well-known graphic
  - Get permission for these!
- WikiFur category bar features pawprint motif shown in logo
  - Reuse graphics to reduce time
- Wikicities category bar – one of many echos of the logo



# A Tale of Two Wikis

- Introduction
- Starting the wiki
- Maintenance and expansion
- **Promotion and advertising**
- Site monitoring
- Dealing with problems
- Policy considerations
- The importance of community
- Conclusion and questions

# Promotion: A necessary task

- Your wiki needs other contributors
  - They will not appear by magic
  - Someone needs to lead them there
- As the leader, people expect **you** to write most of the promotional material
  - You have the vision, you need to communicate it
  - Others may help with distribution and graphics
- You can do it – it just takes practice!



# Avenues for promotion

- News posts on community websites
  - Contact site owners and ask them to link to you
- Forums, LiveJournal, Open Directory
- Conventions, user groups, notice boards, etc.
- Conversation in chat rooms, word of mouth
- Remember:
  - The best promotional tool is good content
    - Majority of wiki users arrive via Google

# Types of promotion

- **Contributor-oriented**
  - Objective: Inspire others to join in
  - Explain why they should bother helping at all
    - What problem does your wiki solve?
    - What is your vision of its future? How will you get there?
  - Describe different ways in which they can help
    - “Only *you* can create this article!” – “Share your interests!”
    - Artists, writers, organizers, copyeditors all have their place
  - Mention other well-known contributors, if any



# Types of promotion

- **Visitor-oriented**
  - “Why should I bother looking at your site?”
  - Emphasise breadth of topics
  - Tell them a story, include interesting links to follow
  - Make sure you’re sending them somewhere good!
- You can combine both types of promotion
  - “X has written interesting articles on Y and Z...”

# Example: WikiFur Flyers

- Targets both visitors and potential contributors
- Outlines goals of site
- Cites previous success
- Makes personal appeal
- Thanks existing editors
- Incorporates appropriate graphics and formatting
- Call to action at end


Proxie - Outwando - Amrus - Brody - Ken Pick - Kaffuoff - Leoni - Krihoo - Yey Dragon - Sahninatar - Terey - Alhuawolf - Dnorathien - Scani - Fihuomi - Taren - Gene Breshnars - O'wand

**wiki furo** We're building the world's first furry encyclopedia, and we need *your* help. Join us now at [wikifur.com](http://wikifur.com)!

Tired of trawling the same old websites? Feel like you've **seen it all before**? Want to **learn more about the furry fandom**, but don't know where to begin? Why not visit the fastest-growing source of furry info in the world - WikiFur!

Our goal is a **comprehensive, unbiased** information source for the fandom. Articles cover **people, comics, events, websites, games, and much more.**

Join **hundreds of contributors** in recording our **past, present and future.** So far we've created **over 3,500 articles.** We're writing more. *You can help.*



We believe **history is important.** That's why **we've decided to record it.**

Furry fandom has **much to share.** So much, in fact, that **some gets lost.**

Together, **we're changing that.** We'd like you to **join in.**

- WikiFur's contributors range from convention organizers, writers and artists to regular fans
- Over **50,000** edits have been made so far
- All text is **freely licensed** under the GFDL
- **Hundreds of fans** visit WikiFur every day
- Contributors come from around the world
- An average day sees **five new articles**
- WikiFur's best content is featured weekly

Websites are plentiful, but WikiFur is a little different. For a start, **the community owns the site.** Most pages can be - and are - edited by all. No one person defines policy; instead, *everyone* does. Sound crazy? Well, it's worked well so far, and every day we get a little closer to our vision: a complete reference to the fandom's past, present and future. **We want you to be a part of it.**

Of course, no article is perfect - yet. Many are short and incomplete. That's where *you* come in. Maybe you know something nobody else does, or you have the patience to write a hundred stubs. Perhaps you can illustrate, copyedit, fact-check, or organize people's work. **We need your help.**

Whether you're a greymuzzle or new to the fandom, you can be a part of WikiFur. **Give it a go.** Together we can keep our fandom's past alive, and maybe make a little history along the way.

**Got questions?** Come to the party, ask GreenReaper, or visit the site!  
**Talk to the whole community at** <http://wikifur.livejournal.com/>

**WikiFur: By Furrries. For Furrries. About Furrries.**

WikiFur thanks: Sine - Gaa - Moulina - Seblaa - RainRat - Sprout - Duncan De Husky - McKerris - Umi - Sammeltey - Sieg - Markus - Almafata - Carl Fox - Fritzzy - Weblu - MfSkank

Rumi - Tom Haddock - Tiffin - Zofko - Shikawa - Xaker - Raskom - Mispshier - Mido - Sonora - Hakuu - Sige - Skak - Zora - Iru - Fimori - Aniloko - DrossuWife - Raskom - Fave - Pamiu Fox & many others

Rem - Treaku - Yrra - Remar - Olyg - SpudEry - Sakas - Rex - Kikk - JSH - Benjamin - Chubbs - Cider Fox - Amy - Orach - Cress - Lardito - Akemfu - Jukka - Le M - Capulinks - Comk - K.M. Hines - Hake Clang - Ferni



We're building the world's first furry encyclopedia, and we need *your* help  
Visit [wikifur.com](http://wikifur.com) today!

Tired of trawling the same old websites? Feel like you've seen it all before?  
Want to learn more about the furry fandom, but don't know where to begin?  
Why not visit the fastest-growing source of furry info in the world - WikiFur!

Our goal is a comprehensive, unbiased information source for the fandom.  
Articles cover people, comics, events, websites, games, and much more.

Join hundreds of contributors in recording our past, present and future.  
Last year we created over 2,500 articles. We're writing more. You can help.

Join the community at <http://livejournal.com/community/wikifur/>  
Got questions? Ask Carl Fox, email [greenreaper@hotmail.com](mailto:greenreaper@hotmail.com), or visit us!

**WikiFur: By Furrries. For Furrries. About Furrries.**



# Example: *From the Creatures Wiki*

- Thread posted on major community forums
  - Including non-English-speaking community
- Long, conversational, many links to best articles
  - Specific mention of active contributors
- Results:
  - Mentioned in company weblog
  - Endorsement from game's designer, Steve Grand
  - Significant traffic boost, continuing to this day

# Promotion on Wikipedia

- Good source of contributors, but tread carefully
- Add links in articles to prevent articles being created on Wikipedia for non-notable topics
  - Use interwiki links if possible – looks better
  - **Don't** go spamming links inappropriately
  - Try suggesting transwiki in relevant AfD's
- Port general-purpose articles back and forth
  - ...but keep the non-notable details on your copy

# Search engine advertising

- Is it worth it?
- It depends!
  - How much can you afford?
  - How much do keywords cost?
  - Can you get a community deal?
- Not the ideal way to attract contributors, though it helps
- Best used for attracting visitors to your finest articles
- Google AdWords is nicer and cheaper than Yahoo
  - However, neither system has complete coverage



1 - 10 of about 185,000 for [furry fandom](#). (0.18 seconds)

Sponsored Links

[What is "furry" fandom?](#)  
Like cartoon animals? You may enjoy what our **fandom** has to offer.  
[www.anthrocon.org](http://www.anthrocon.org)

[The Furry Encyclopedia](#)  
Curious about the **furry fandom**?  
We're writing the book about it.  
[WikiFur.com](http://WikiFur.com)



# A Tale of Two Wikis

- Introduction
- Starting the wiki
- Maintenance and expansion
- Promotion and advertising
- **Site monitoring**
- Dealing with problems
- Policy considerations
- The importance of community
- Conclusion and questions

# Site monitoring

- You want to know how you're doing, right?
- The best way to judge success is to measure it
  - Number of active users, articles, edits, links, images...
  - Visitors and pageviews, site referrals, search ranking
  - General reputation of site, mention in publications
- Use this information to plan improvements
  - Popular articles, site navigation
  - It's also great for promotional material



# Monitoring tools

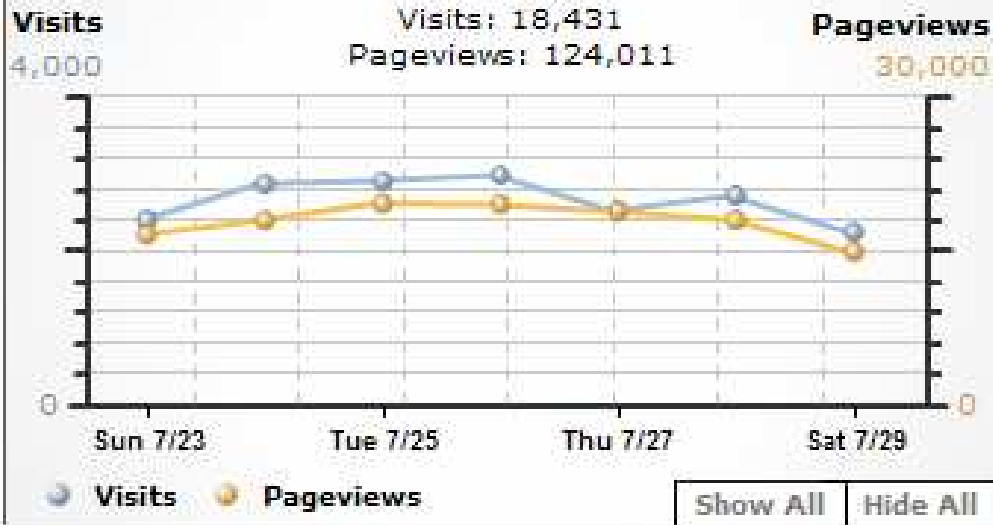
- Internal statistics
- Access log analyzers
  - Analog
  - AWStats
  - Webalizer
- Wiki-specific statistics
- Web-based stats
  - Google Analytics
  - Any number of alternatives

Source [Medium]	Visits	P/Visit
google[organic]	772	6.70
(direct)[(none)]	363	6.27
en.wikipedia.org[referral]	249	8.36
yahoo[organic]	207	4.68
furaffinity.net[referral]	83	7.73
google[cpc]	52	6.25
	32	5.44
	17	6.24
	15	13.80
	15	29.47

Wikians				Articles								Database			
total	new	edits		count		new per day	mean		larger than		edits	size	words	internal	
		> 5	> 100	official	> 200 ch		edits	bytes	0.5 Kb	2 Kb					
346	17	71	6	4.1 k	3.6 k	13	11.0	1465	58%	13%	3.9 k	9.7 MB	804 k	29 k	
± 351	± 22	± 86	± 8	± 4.2 k	± 3.7 k	± 13	± 11.0	± 1465	± 58%	± 13%	± 5.0 k	± 9.8 MB	± 818 k	± 29 k	
329	19	70	5	3.7 k	3.3 k	12	10.9	1474	58%	14%	3.7 k	9.3 MB	750 k	27 k	
310	26	65	4	3.4 k	3.0 k	7	11.0	1470	59%	14%	3.0 k	8.7 MB	677 k	24 k	
284	18	53	4	3.2 k	2.8 k	5	10.8	1438	58%	13%	3.4 k	8.3 MB	621 k	22 k	
266	69	121	6	3.0 k	2.7 k	3	10.2	1421	59%	13%	4.8 k	4.3 MB	583 k	21 k	
197	18	40	3	2.9 k	2.6 k	8	8.9	1406	59%	13%	2.0 k	4.0 MB	564 k	20 k	
179	23	56	4	2.7 k	2.4 k	7	8.8	1402	59%	13%	2.9 k	3.7 MB	524 k	19 k	

### Visits and Pageviews

Average: 6.73 P/V  
Visits: 18,431  
Pageviews: 124,011



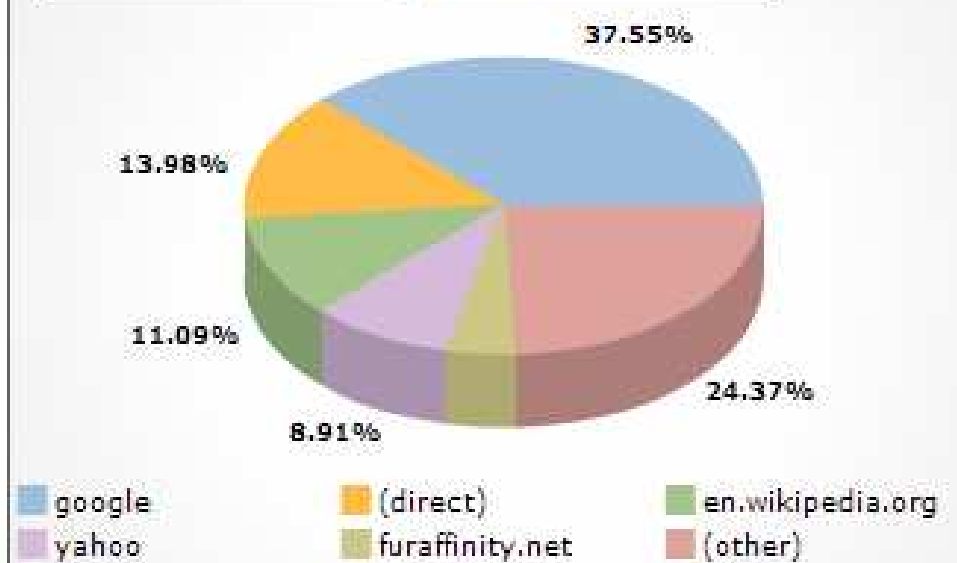
### Visits by New and Returning



### Geo Map Overlay



### Visits by Source



# Other ways to measure

- Check what your referrers are saying about you
  - We actually found groups planning to attack us . . .
- Google searches on your wiki name and URL
  - You can also try searching on related topics
- Site/topic-specific search engines: LJSeek et. al.
- Just ask people – you may be surprised!
- Take every source with a pinch of salt
  - . . . and remember, size/popularity isn't everything!

# A Tale of Two Wikis

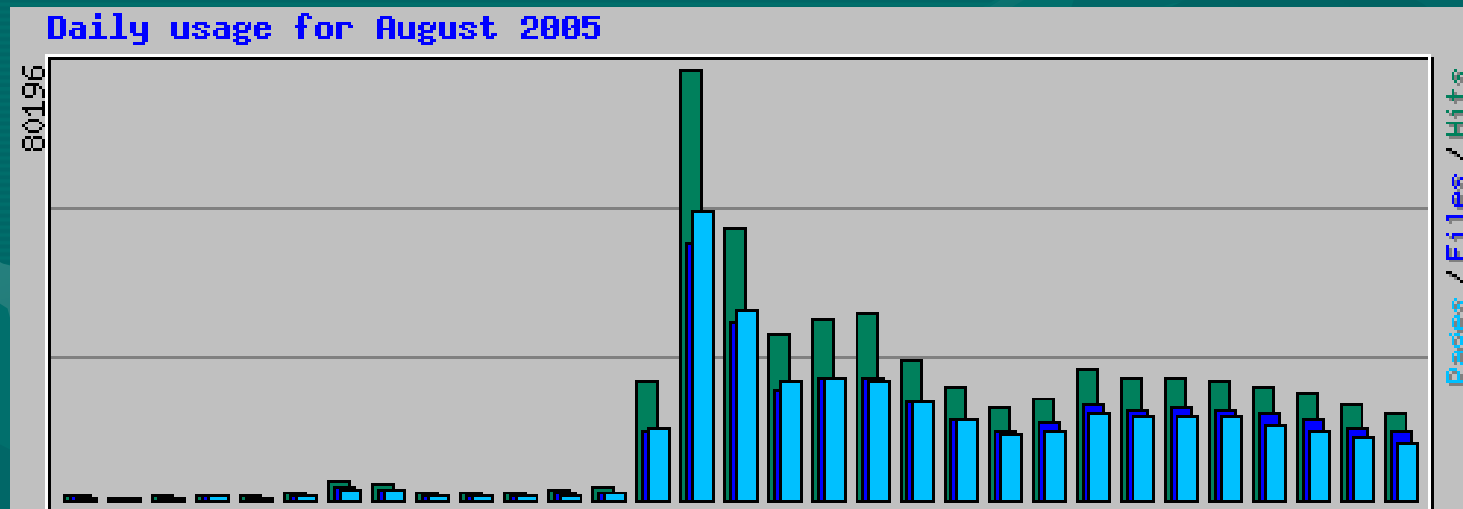
- Introduction
- Starting the wiki
- Maintenance and expansion
- Promotion and advertising
- Site monitoring
- **Dealing with problems**
- Policy considerations
- The importance of community
- Conclusion and questions

# Vandalism and spam

- Most wikis have some; the level varies widely
  - Defamation, blanking, obscene text/pictures
- Why do people vandalise?
  - Personal grudges (or trying to hide past actions)
  - Controversial topics ('LOL FURRIES!!!11')
  - Because they enjoy attention (so deny them it)
- Can be devastating when “sponsored” by a site
  - But: A crisis can be turned into an opportunity...

# Example: Something Awful

- Three weeks in, thread opened on SA forums
- WikiFur selected as Awful Link of the Day
  - Looked like a proxy attack, so many different IPs
  - Edits every 45 seconds – what would you do?



# Example: Something Awful

- Lock down the wiki or meet them head-on?
  - We chose the latter
  - Added welcome message to point out recent changes
  - Promoted good users who were trying to help
- It worked: vandalism was brought under control
  - Many current admins became involved at this point
- One month later:
  - 1000 article pages
  - 50 regular contributors

# Wiki spam

- Automated programs exist to add external links
  - There may also be people doing it manually
- Simplest way is to block originating IPs
  - Make use of publicly-available proxy lists
- Consider using pattern-matching software
  - Matches external links substrings
- If you have a hosted provider, have them do it
  - You shouldn't have to waste your time on it



# Coping with conflict

- Most wikis involve disagreements now and then
  - As the founder, **you** are the default arbitrator
- Encourage people to help you
  - You don't want to be the only one making the calls
- Prefer debate over immediate voting
  - It's OK to call a vote after finding several solutions
- If in doubt, look to Wikipedia's guidelines
- If the final decision makes policy, write it down

# A Tale of Two Wikis

- Introduction
- Starting the wiki
- Maintenance and expansion
- Promotion and advertising
- Site monitoring
- Dealing with problems
- **Policy considerations**
- The importance of community
- Conclusion and questions

# Importing policies

- Wikipedia is a great example sometimes
  - It is not the only way of doing things
- Some features and policies are very useful
  - Featured article, “did you know”, picture of week
  - NPOV, “no personal attacks”
- Some don't work so well
  - Original research may be your best content
  - Verifiability is best reserved for active conflicts

# Modifying processes

- You may have to alter how things are done
  - Complex systems can be inappropriate
  - Lower barriers to participation
- Example: Featured articles on WikiFur
  - Users did not care enough to go through the process
  - Admins (mostly myself) ended up doing the work
- Contrast: Comic of the week
  - Simple vote-based system, widely used

# Personal information

- On community wikis, contributors **can** be topics
  - Whether they *should* be depends on the community
- Issues to consider:
  - Puff pieces and personal attacks
  - Dealing with removal of information
    - On WikiFur: Personal articles can be removed, but not public actions or creations (like comics)
    - There are always exceptions – use consensus to decide
  - Lots of problems – but lots of referrals, too

# A Tale of Two Wikis

- Introduction
- Starting the wiki
- Maintenance and expansion
- Promotion and advertising
- Site monitoring
- Dealing with problems
- Policy considerations
- **The importance of community**
- Conclusion and questions

# Importance of community

- Vital to the success of any group endeavour
- Individuals matter!
  - Wikipedia has 25,000 regular users; you have 5 to 50
  - One good contributor can make or break the site
- Encourage users to become part of the group
  - LiveJournal, forums, talk page discussions, etc.
  - Offer help if they need it, don't wait for them to ask
- Do what you can to keep people on the site
  - But, if they are determined to go, let them.



# Example: GalCiv II Wiki

- Created as knowledgebase for game after release
  - Promoted for a short time on main website
  - A fortnight of work by founder, then abandoned
  - New users welcomed, shown help, but little else
- Results:
  - Just 1-2 edits a day from 500 visitors/5k hits
  - Few long-term contributors; most have departed
- Lack of community involvement == dead wiki

# Example: Creatures Wiki

- Seven months of work, 2000 articles (now 2500)
- Half the visitor count of GalCiv II Wiki
- Consistently >10 edits/day, sometimes far more
- Group of contributors who care for it
  - Some visit daily, others drop in every week or two
  - Actively help others, update pages, combat spam
- Small, stable community == viable wiki
  - Without community, all you have is a static database



# A Tale of Two Wikis

- Introduction
- Starting the wiki
- Maintenance and expansion
- Promotion and advertising
- Site monitoring
- Dealing with problems
- Policy considerations
- The importance of community
- **Conclusion and questions**

# Conclusion

- **Community wikis are a good thing**
  - Permit thousands to try their hand at wiki editing
    - . . . in a less formal editing environment than Wikimedia!
  - Provide a place for interesting information which might otherwise be deleted
    - May also reduce arguments about deletion on Wikipedia
  - Develop a deeper understanding of a topic that can be ported to Wikipedia or linked at a later date
  - Expansion of the mission of free information for all

# Conclusion

- **No problem is insurmountable**
  - Vandals?
    - Find quality contributors, empower them to fix things
  - Lack of contributors?
    - Use promotion to gather more from existing community
  - Personal disagreements?
    - Look to Wikimedia for dispute resolution policies
  - Too successful?
    - Consider managed hosting, ads, or donations



# Conclusion

- **Anyone can start a community wiki**
  - The most important factor is passion for the topic
  - Be prepared to spend a **lot** of time starting up
  - Devote a significant proportion of time after that towards attracting and keeping new contributors
  - Delegate power and responsibility when feasible
    - ...but no sooner, else important things don't get done
- **Lastly: Don't take things too seriously!**
  - It's meant to be fun, after all... ☺



# Further information

- Meatball Wiki: [www.usemod.com](http://www.usemod.com)
  - Many great ideas (best taken with a pinch of salt)
  - Origin of the Barnstar
- [[Help:Improving your Wikia]] on wikia.com
- Wikipedia's own promotion pages
  - Talk to the founders, it wasn't easy for them either!
- Sample wikis
  - [creatures.wikia.com](http://creatures.wikia.com) and [WikiFur.com](http://WikiFur.com)

# Anonymous users

- Anons are generally low-quality and untrusted
  - One solution: discourage or ban anonymous users
    - Some users relate better to a name, can encourage
    - But: may scare valid users away, doesn't stop vandals
  - Another solution: promote more administrators
    - No chance of scaring people away, can still be welcomed
    - Empowering people lets them feel even more trusted
    - Downside: checking still needed, just spread across others
- In the end: It depends on the community!

# Advertising details

- WikiFur advertises on numerous keywords
  - Popular: Furry fandom, furry art, furrries, ‘yiffing’...
    - Yes, the yiffing one is most popular – sex sells!
- Clickthrough for fan sites can be rather low
  - You might get 40 clicks for 40,000 impressions
- Fortunately, few people advertise fan sites
  - Clickthrough rate can be as low as \$0.01/click
    - Test impression-based ads as well – they may work better