

# Wikimedia Foundation

Update on the Wikimedia Five-Year Strategic Plan

Chapters Meeting, Berlin, April 2010



*Imagine a world in which every single human being can freely share in the sum of all knowledge. That's our commitment.*

At last year's chapters meeting, the Wikimedia Foundation Board of Trustees announced its intent to launch a strategic planning process.

Since project launch in July 2009

950+ people

50+ languages

800+ proposals

26,000+ edits

2,300+ content pages

And countless Skype calls, e-mail exchanges,  
IRC meetings & face-to-face conversations

Facilitated by the Wikimedia Foundation's project team and supported by Blue Oxen Associates, a consulting firm focused on collaborative process, and by The Bridgespan Group, a non-profit strategy consulting firm providing data and analysis.

# Premise

Today, Wikimedia properties are the the 5<sup>th</sup> most visited in the world, with 350 million unique visitors monthly to over 700 projects in 271 different languages... all built and maintained by 100K active contributors.

Over the past nine years, growth in reach, content, and participation has occurred organically, initiated and led by a number of different actors, including editors and other volunteers, the Wikimedia Foundation board, the staff, advisors, friends, and supporters.

Organic growth and evolution can and should continue. But, we know that Wikimedia has been more successful in the Global North than in the Global South. And we know that growing the number of editors ---and therefore also readership--- will be more difficult in the Global South. We also see some worrying signs of stagnation in the mature and successful projects.

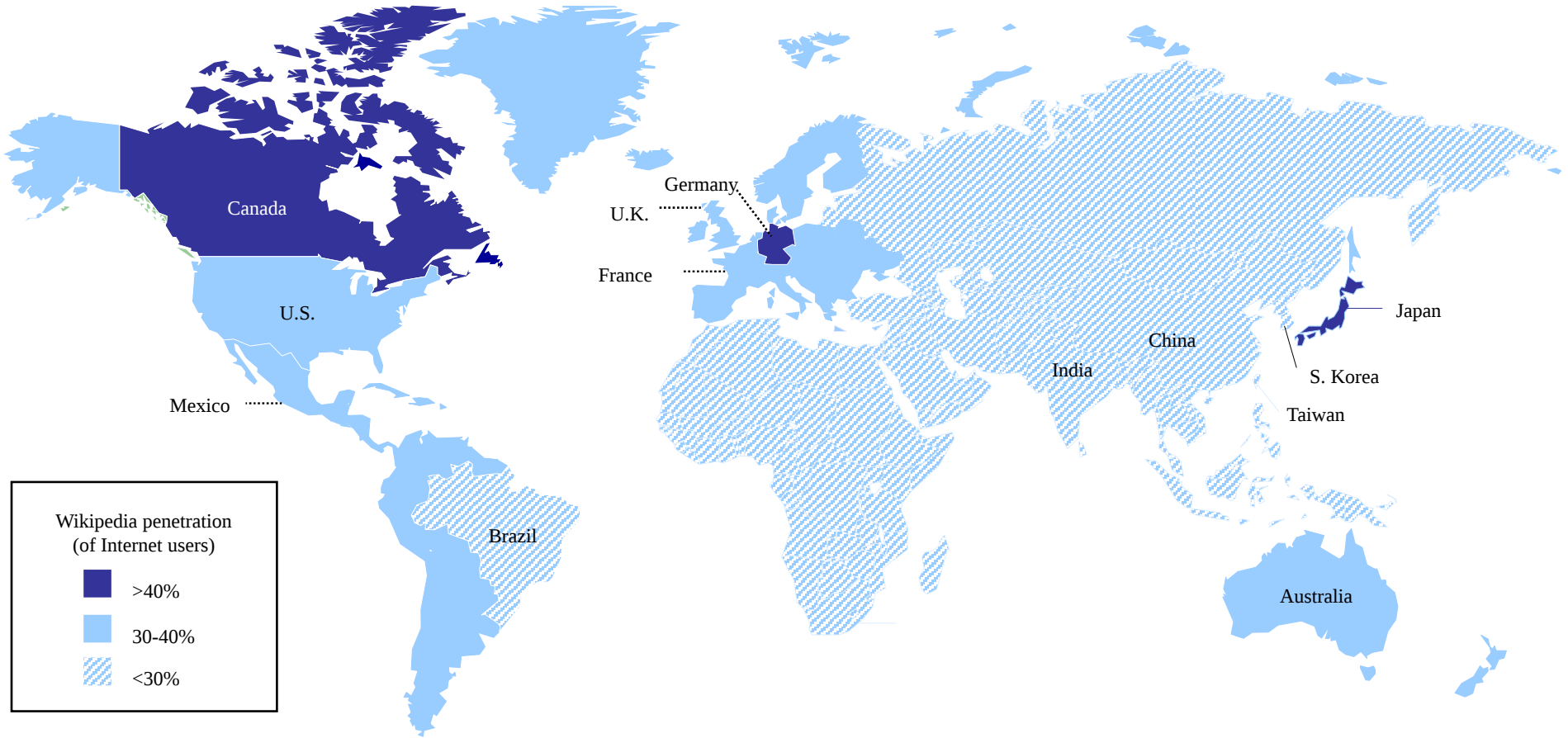
The point of the strategic plan is to achieve better outcomes than would be possible without intervention. To make specific deliberate investments designed to expand reach, content and participation so that Wikimedia can fulfil its vision of reaching everyone in the world with the sum of all human knowledge.

## Our starting point

*"Imagine a world in which every single human being can freely share in the sum of all knowledge. That's our commitment."*

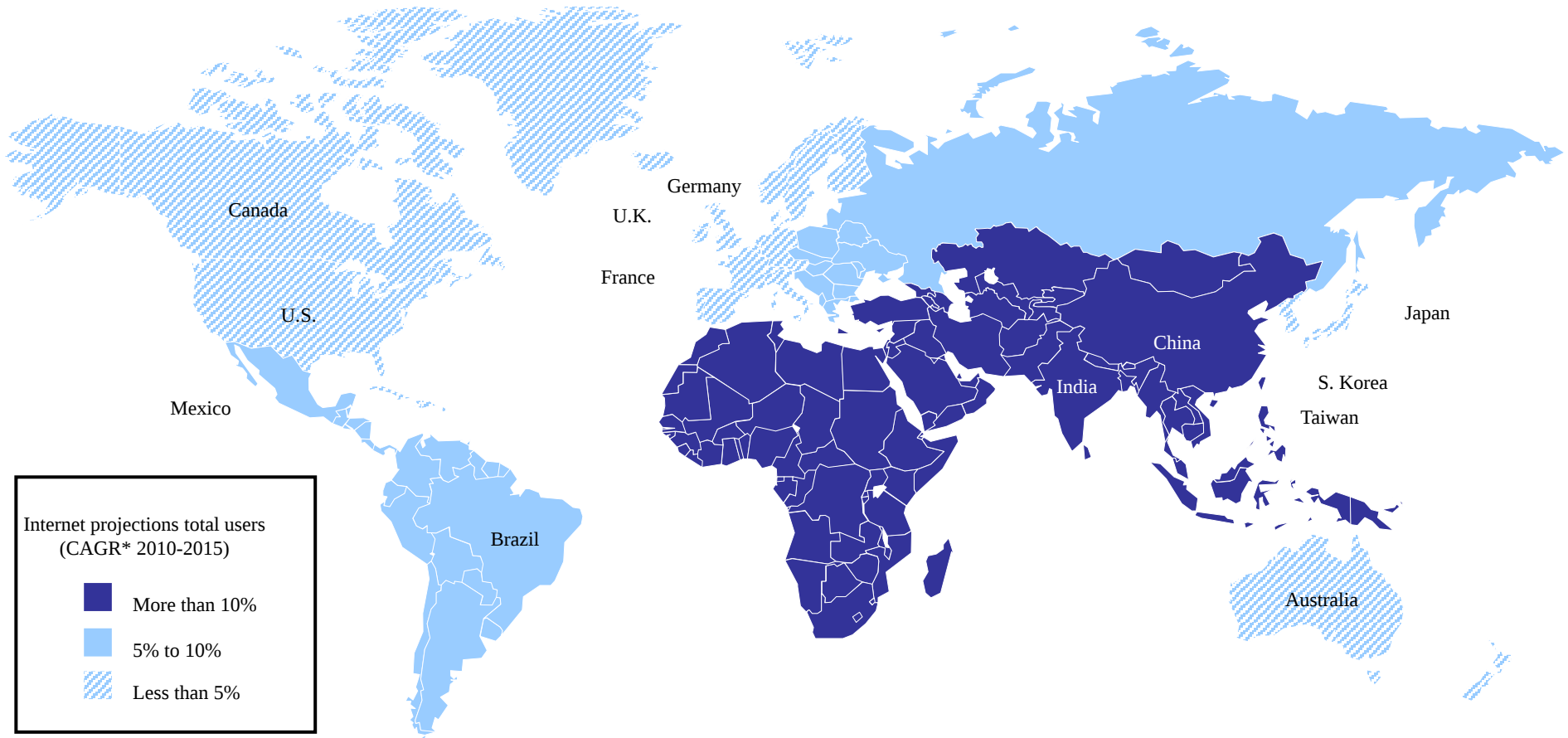
Wikimedia Foundation vision statement

In some parts of the world, Wikimedia reaches lots of people. In other parts of the world, we do not.



- Highest penetration in Canada, Germany, and Japan; penetration in Europe is generally very high
- Lowest penetration in China (~1% of Internet users); penetration in Asia and Africa is generally very low

# The parts of the world where we are weakest, are where the online population is growing the most quickly



- Highest growth in Africa, Middle East and developing countries in Asia Pacific
- Lowest growth in North America, Western Europe and developed countries in Asia Pacific

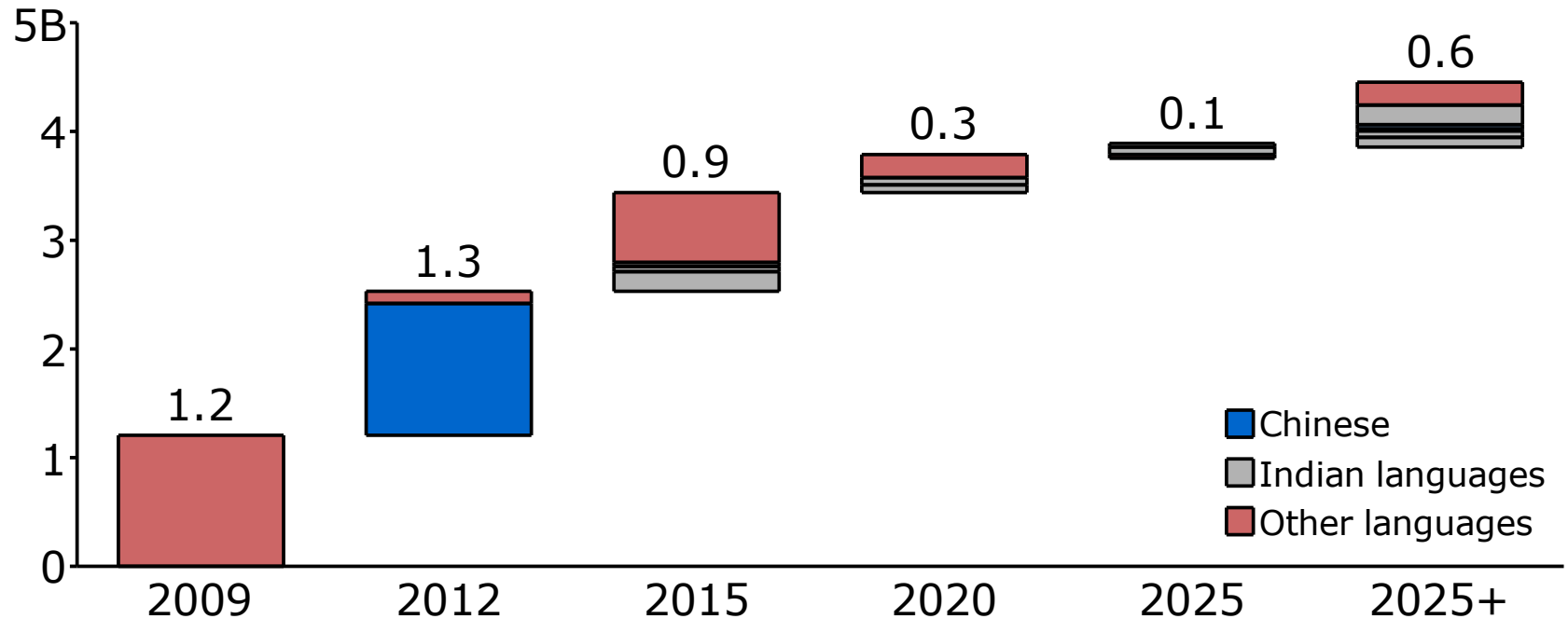
\* CAGR is the compound annual growth rate

Source: Bridgespan analysis; market share data from comScore; data on the number of Internet users by region from The International Telecommunications Union; data on projected regional growth rates of Internet use from Forrester

# At current growth rates, by 2015 nearly half the world may have access to a Wikipedia in their own language

Number of people with a Wikipedia of 120K substantial articles (>1.5KB) in their native language

**Optimistic growth scenario**



Languages in which Wikimedia offers mature\* encyclopedia

Dutch  
English  
French  
German  
Italian  
Japanese  
Polish  
Russian  
Spanish  
Portuguese

Catalan  
Chinese  
Hungarian  
Turkish  
Ukrainian

Arabic  
Azerbaijani  
Greek  
Gujarati  
Hindi  
Indonesian  
Korean  
Persian  
Romanian  
Sinhala  
Thai  
Vietnamese

Bavarian  
Malagasy  
Malay  
Malayalam  
Quechua  
Tagalog  
Tamil  
Telegu  
Zulu

Marathi

Amharic  
Assamese  
Bengali  
Bhojpuri  
Igbo  
Kannada  
Kurdish  
Punjabi  
Pashto  
Sindhi  
Somali  
Swahili  
Urdu  
Uzbek  
Yoruba

\*Mature encyclopedia = 120K articles of greater than 1.5KB articles

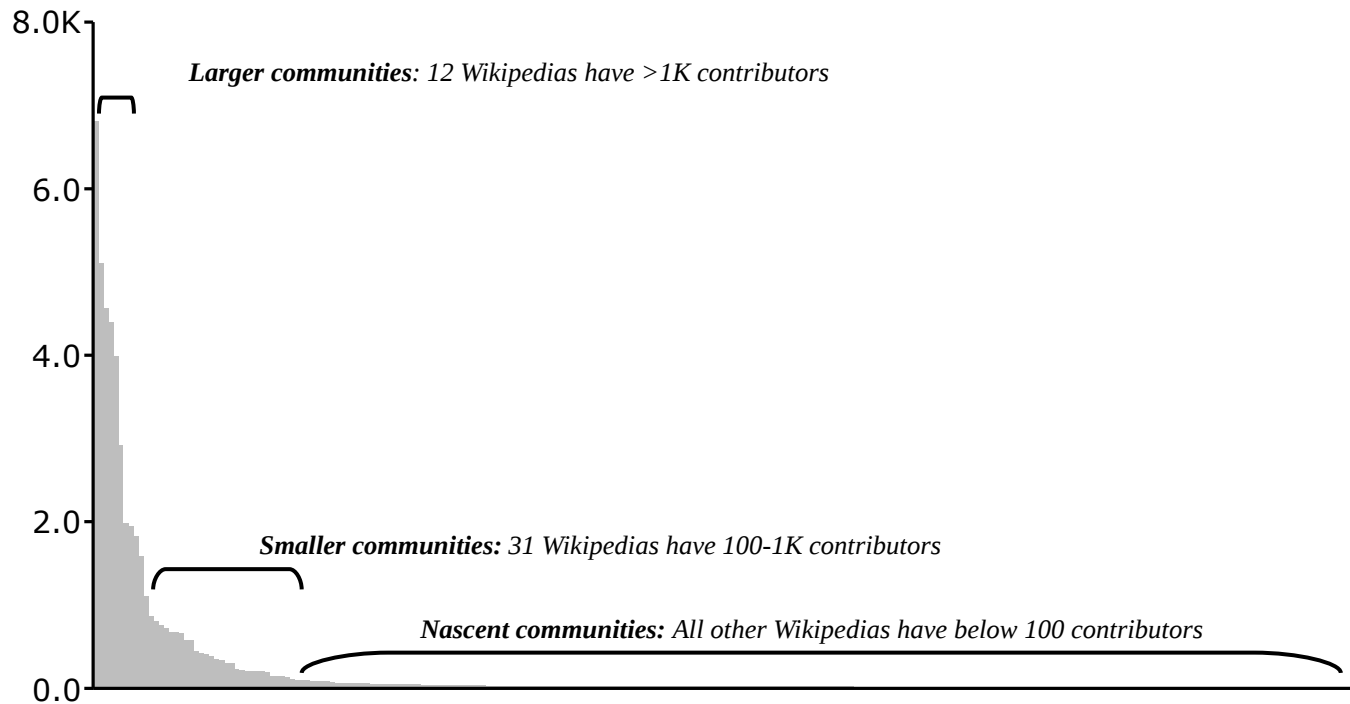
Note: Benchmark of 120K articles based on number of articles in Encyclopedia Britannica; growth rate based on 5/2008-5/2009 growth rate of articles >1.5 KB, which may slow or increase over time; analysis covers languages with more than 10M speakers with existing Wikipedias

Sources: Enthologue 2009; Bridgespan analysis based on data from stats.wikimedia.org



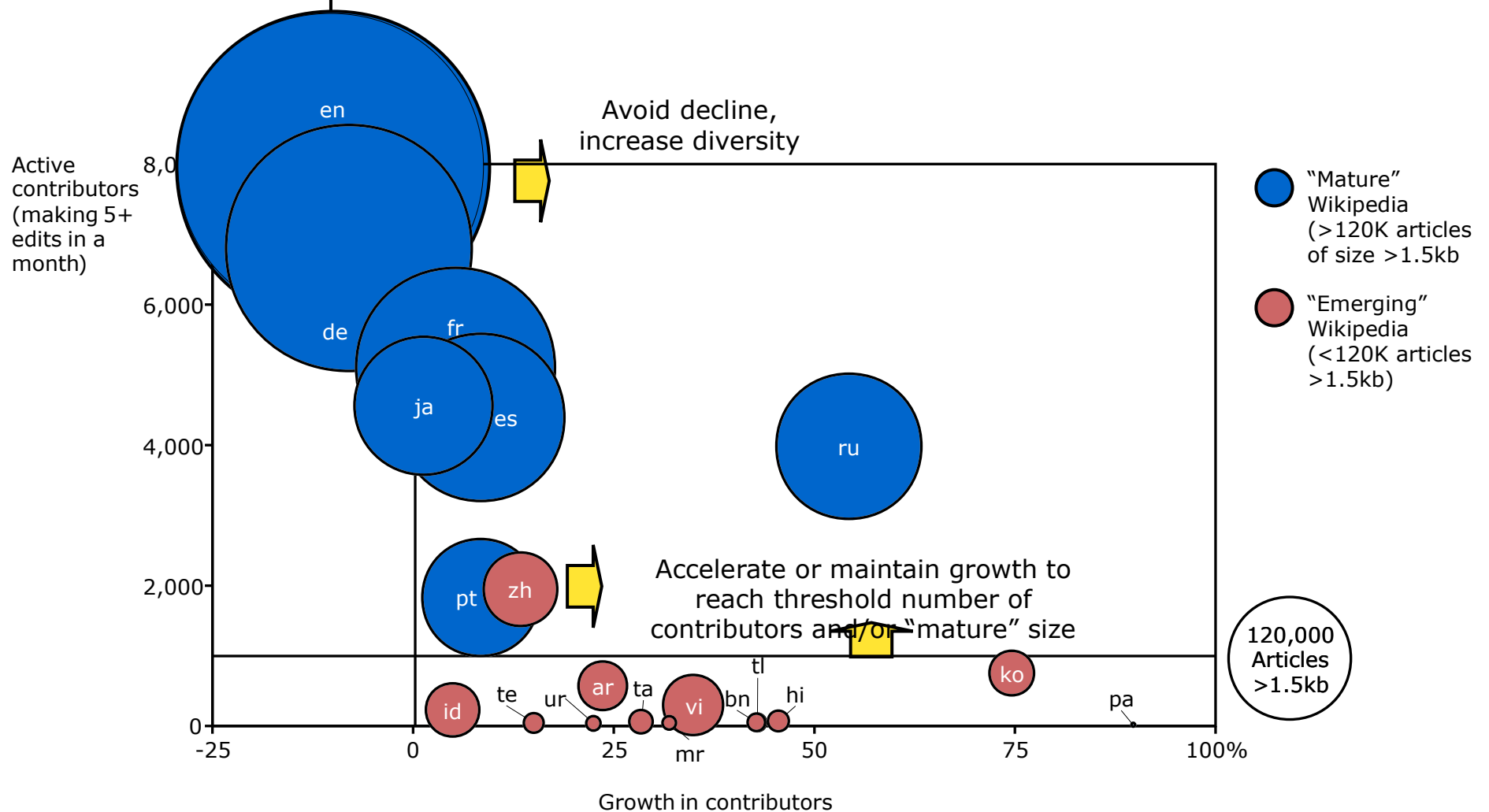
# But that's only half, and it depends on active healthy editing communities that in some cases don't yet exist

Active contributors (making 5+ edits in a month)



Wikipedias, ordered by largest to smallest number of contributors

Mature projects need to increase participant diversity to avoid decline. Small projects need to rapidly grow articles and participants.



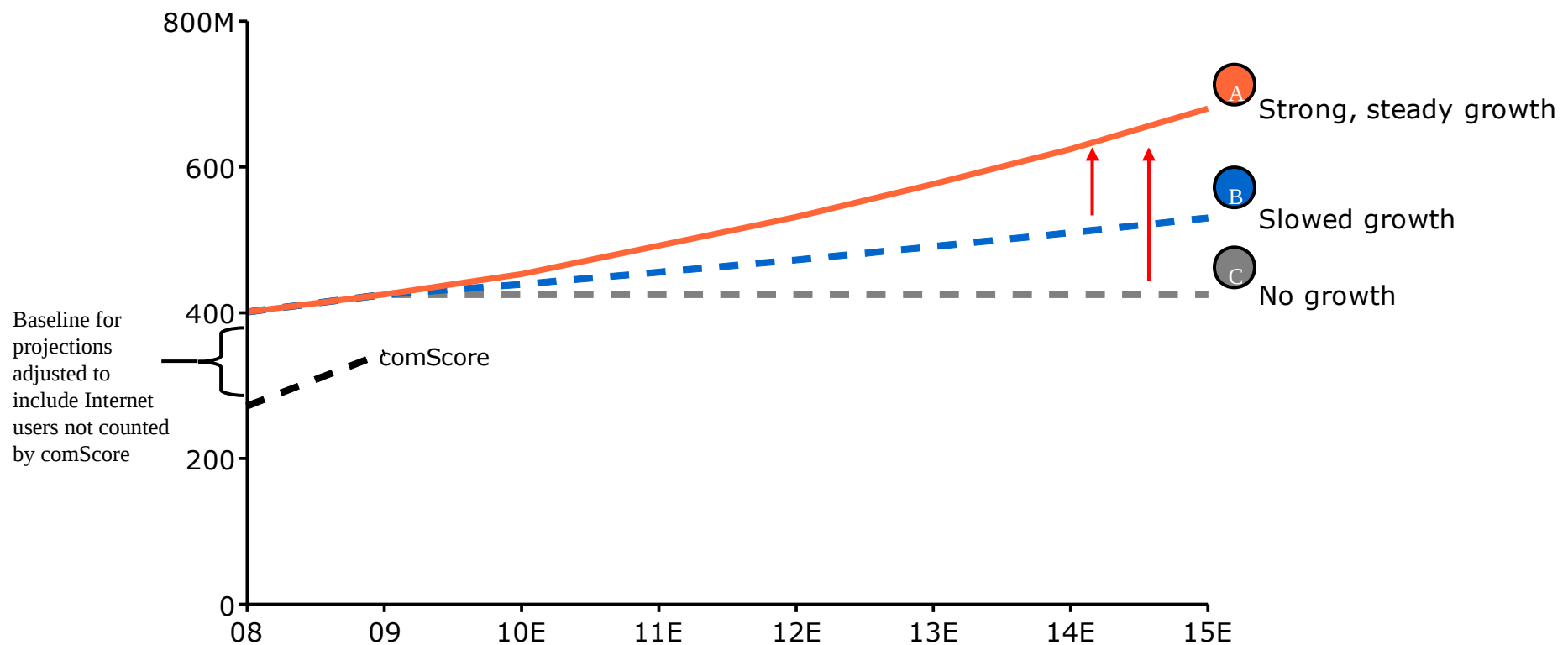
Note: en=English, de=German, fr=French, ja=Japanese, es=Spanish, ru=Russian, pt=Portuguese, zh=Chinese, id=Indonesian, te=Telugu, ur=Urdu, ar=Arabic, ta=Tamil, mr=Marathi, vi=Vietnamese, bn=Bengali, tl=Tagalog, hi=Hindi, ko=Korean. English bubble estimated in size. Data for contributors from May 2009, growth from May 2008-May 2009, articles >1.5kb from August 2009.

Source: WikiStats; Bridgespan analysis

# Goal: Achieve strong, steady growth

## By 2015, increase reach to 680 million people

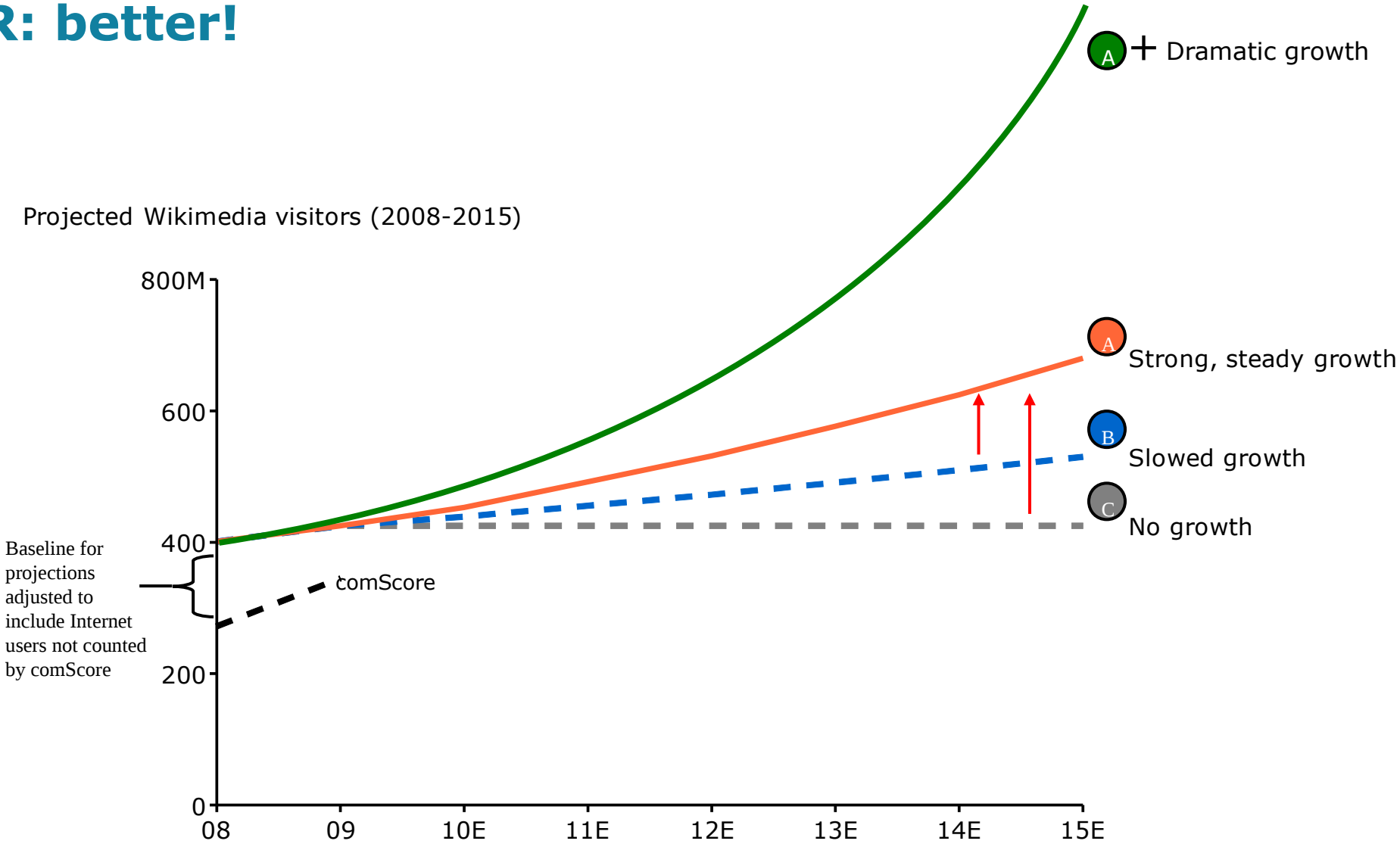
Projected Wikimedia visitors (2008-2015)



Note: Baseline estimate is higher than comScore's estimates for 2008 and 2009, because it was based on data from the International Telecommunications Union data, which includes all Internet users (including those under the age of 15 and those who access from Internet cafes). Source: Market share data from comScore; data on the number of Internet users by region from The International Telecommunications Union; data on projected regional growth rates of Internet use from Forrester's; Bridgespan analysis

# OR: better!

Projected Wikimedia visitors (2008-2015)



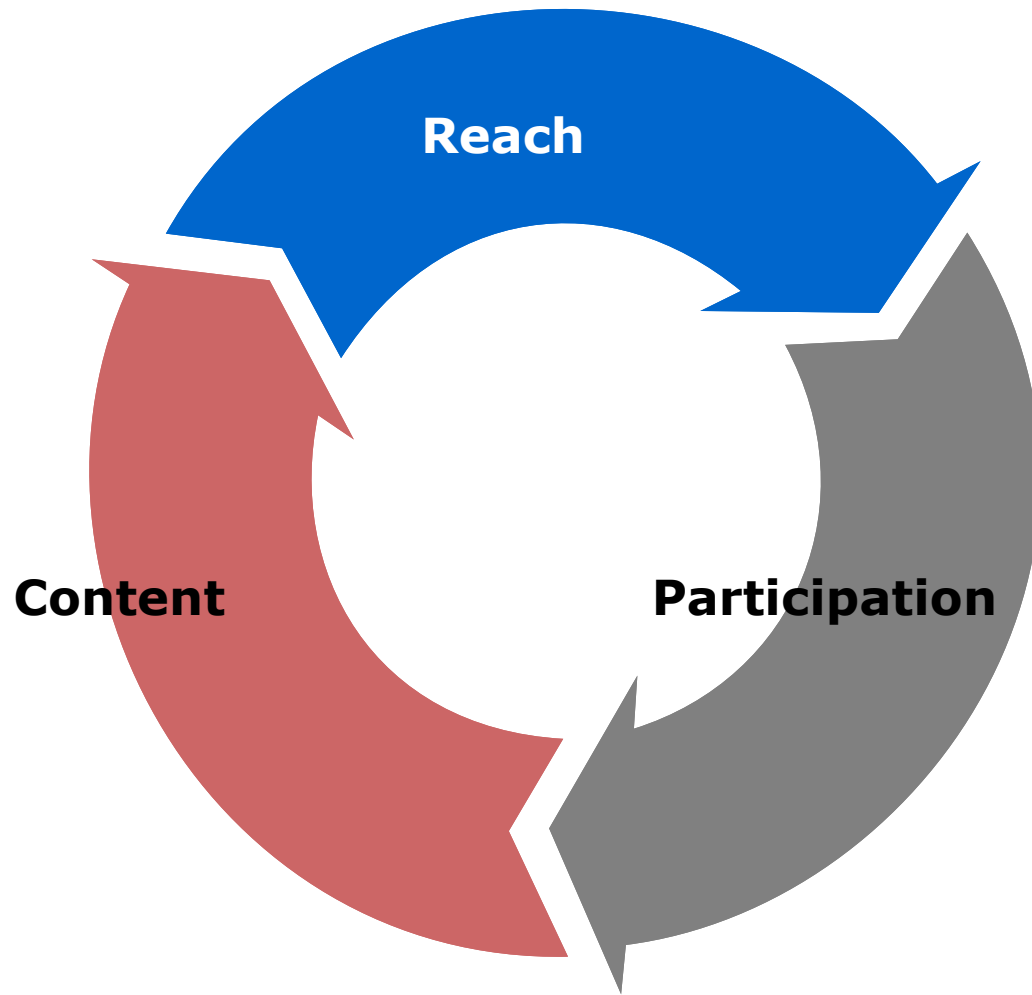
Note: Baseline estimate is higher than comScore's estimates for 2008 and 2009, because it was based on data from the International Telecommunications Union data, which includes all Internet users (including those under the age of 15 and those who access from Internet cafes). Source: Market share data from comScore; data on the number of Internet users by region from The International Telecommunications Union; data on projected regional growth rates of Internet use from Forrester's; Bridgespan analysis

## Strategic questions

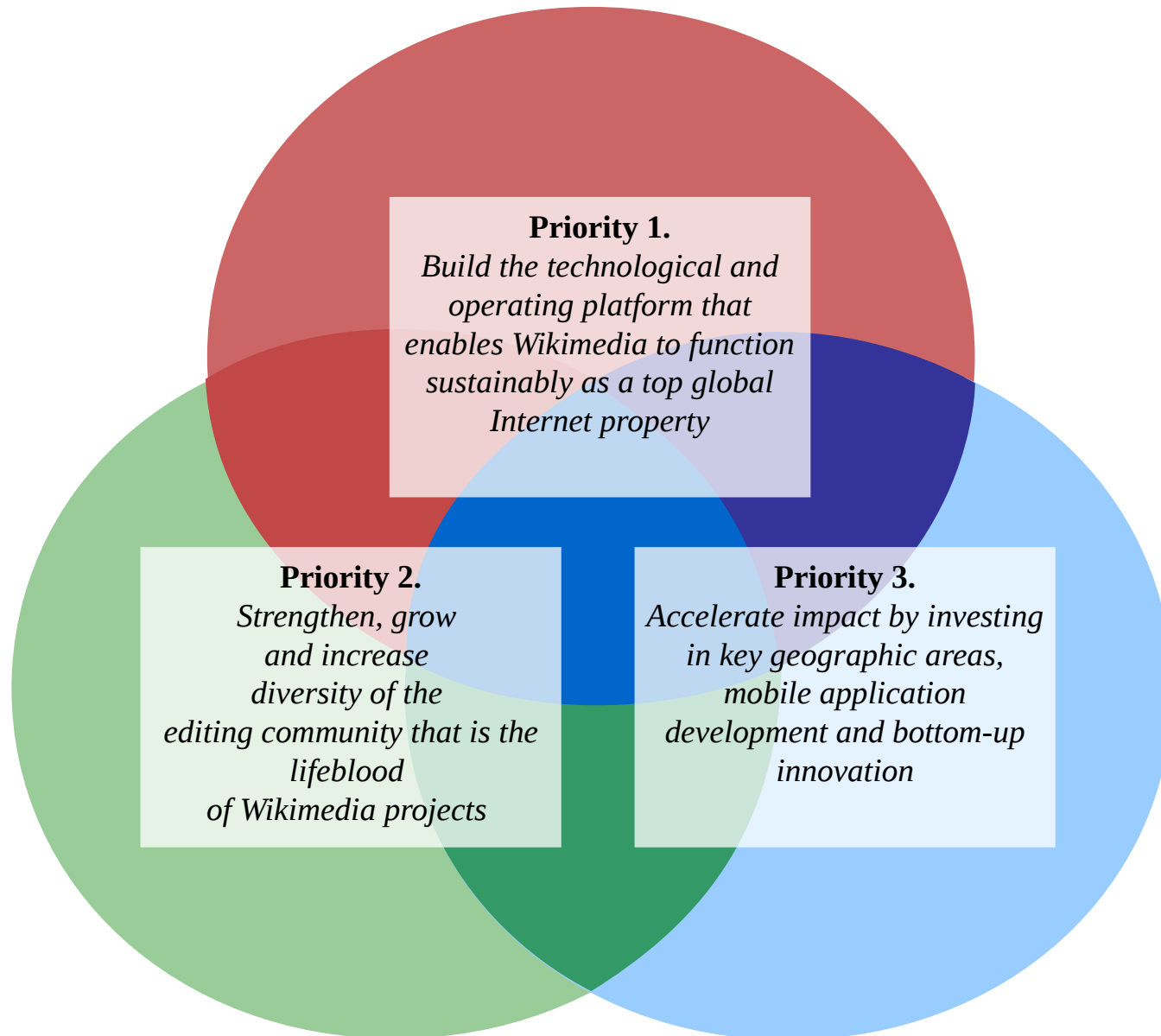
*What will it take to reach more people in the many parts of the world where Wikimedia is weak today?*

&

*What will it take to do even better (and avoid decline) in the parts of the world where we are currently doing well?*



To achieve this, the Wikimedia Foundation has set three main goals:



# **Priority 1: Build the technological and operating platform that enables Wikimedia to function sustainably as a top global Internet property**

For example:

Establish additional data centres and caching servers to support better performance and reliability

Continue new focus on usability and interaction design

Set up good tools and systems for collecting and communicating data



## **Priority 2: Strengthen, grow and increase diversity of the editing community that is the lifeblood of Wikimedia projects**

For example:

Shelter and support new editors

Provide funding to enable editors to meet up face-to-face

Encourage development of new tools that enable collaboration and support social bonding

## **Priority 3: Accelerate impact by investing in key geographic areas, mobile application development and bottom-up innovation**

For example:

Continue supporting partnerships that expand mobile and offline reach

Deploy staff teams in high-potential geographies to recruit new editors and strengthen the existing community

Fund outreach activities, and develop tools and kits in support of them

**The Wikimedia Foundation believes the chapters are critical to successful global programmatic activities.**

- Evangelizing on behalf of the Wikimedia projects to the media and general public;
- Staging outreach events designed to recruit new editors, especially subject-matter-experts, “social engineers,” and women;
- Developing content partnerships with galleries, libraries, museums, archives, and public service media;
- Working with experienced editors and other volunteers to support a healthy, productive Wikimedia community;
- Supporting volunteers in their efforts to provide good service and accountability to Wikimedia readers;
- Representing Wikimedia's agenda to policymakers around issues like copyright law, censorship, open access and open standards;
- Fundraising to ensure the sustainability of the Wikimedia movement.

# How can the Wikimedia Foundation best help chapters?

- To evangelize
- To better understand readers, new editors, experienced editors and donors
- To recruit new editors
- To support a healthy, productive editing community
- To fundraise
- To accelerate their organizational development (hiring of staff, developing plans)
- Other...?

# DISCUSSION

# APPENDIX

Whereas the Wikimedia Foundation intends to develop a strategic plan laying out a course of action for the next three to five years, the Board of Trustees directs its Executive Director, Sue Gardner, to develop and execute a strategic planning process, in close consultation with the Board, and on its behalf.

The work of the Wikimedia Foundation is founded in the premise that open, mass collaboration is the most effective method for achieving high-quality decisionmaking. Therefore, we ask that the strategic planning process be designed to include input from a wide range of sources, including Wikimedia volunteers and supporters representing a diversity of geographies and projects. We ask that the process also aim to solicit input from parties who are currently not part of the Wikimedia community, in an effort to broaden our knowledge base and benefit from new ideas and information.

The principles guiding this process should include:

- \* Transparency. As much as possible, work should be done in public, and be visible to all.
- \* Participation. The mechanisms used to solicit input should be designed to be as open as reasonably possible, and to encourage broad participation.
- \* Collaboration. We recognize that we will not develop a consensus strategy that pleases everyone. We will need to make difficult decisions that may prove unpopular. But we believe that people who want to have a voice in the process, should be heard.

# Two interdependent objectives for the planning work

- Define a ***strategic direction*** that advances the Wikimedia vision over the next five years
  - Broader reach and participation
  - Improved quality and scope of content
  - Defined community roles and partnerships

- Develop a ***business plan*** to guide the Wikimedia Foundation in executing this direction
  - Organization, capabilities, and governance
  - Technology strategy and infrastructure
  - Economics, cost structure, and funding models



# Priority 1: Build the technological and operating platform that enables Wikimedia to function sustainably as a top global Internet organization

Investment area	Agenda
Site operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in infrastructure to address site performance and reliability, data security vulnerabilities</li> <li>• Identify long-term site performance and capacity requirements; implement infrastructure changes to meet requirements</li> </ul>
Tech operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design, realign tech operations to support critical roles cost effectively; create effective environment for work in partnership with volunteer developer community</li> </ul>
User experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build from usability project to institutionalize product development process for user (reader and editor) experience</li> </ul>
Data analytics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make operational data accessible to the staff and movement</li> <li>• Create management systems and culture that utilize data for decision making</li> </ul>
Financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build fundraising expertise to increase community giving; improve existing campaigns and develop new approaches to donor cultivation</li> <li>• Continue business development for licensing and in-kind support</li> </ul>
Organization and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build organizational capacity: fill in key leadership and administrative positions; refine structure, systems and operations to enable and manage fast growth</li> <li>• Increase staff capabilities and attention to volunteer management and coordination</li> <li>• Clarify and improve governance of the Foundation, roles and responsibilities, and accountabilities within the movement</li> </ul>

## Priority 2: Strengthen, grow and increase diversity of the editing community that is the lifeblood of Wikimedia projects

Investment area	Agenda
Newer contributors acculturation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve overall user experience and make it much easier for readers to try their first edit</li> <li>• Enable default experience for new editors that provides shelter, guidance, and aids acculturation</li> <li>• Work on creating and supporting mentorship roles; encourage experienced editors to assist with new contributor acculturation</li> </ul>
Article quality and improvement tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage experimentation and application/widget development to improve advanced tools and functionality that help contributors find places to contribute, make edits that align to quality policies and “project manage” their own work</li> </ul>
Rewards, incentives, and supports for ongoing quality contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to leverage feature articles, barnstars and other simple rewards to recognize excellence in a low stakes fashion that helps build the culture, but doesn’t undermine volunteer spirit</li> <li>• Fund meetups to allow Wikipedians to build social bonds offline</li> </ul>
Collaboration / coordination around solving problems, resolving disputes, and adding value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable contributors to develop new applications/widgets that support social bonding, collaborative work, aid in resolving disputes, create more transparency on the interests and reputation of their fellow contributors</li> </ul>
Increase diversity of contributors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on improving the new contributor experience</li> <li>• Conduct focused outreach to groups with potential to bring new expertise to the community (e.g., academia)</li> <li>• Nurture community members (particularly members of underrepresented groups) who are working to create more of an open and welcoming culture</li> </ul>

## Priority 3: Accelerate impact by investing in key geographic areas, mobile application development and bottom-up innovation

Investment area	Agenda
Geographically-focused teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and deploy staff teams to focus on growing both readership and the contributor base in selected geographies</li> <li>• Create global management structure to supervise local teams, integrate their work with other areas and cross-pollinate learning</li> </ul>
Global outreach support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop support kits and help tools for outreach work around the globe (e.g., Wikipedia Academies)</li> <li>• Provide small funding opportunities to encourage experiments in community building</li> <li>• Support new organizational models and structures to support collaboration (e.g., wikipods)</li> </ul>
Mobile and offline strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build partnerships that expand mobile and offline reach</li> <li>• Continue to be supportive of efforts within the community and by entrepreneurs to develop mobile and offline applications</li> <li>• Look for low cost opportunities to make Wikimedia content more accessible for mobile usage (e.g., first paragraph synthesis)</li> <li>• Add dedicated staff resources to support mobile applications and develop coherent mobile strategy</li> <li>• Assess the medium-to-long term implications of mobile and product/service expansion opportunities for the Foundation (as well as threats)</li> </ul>
Innovation space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop criteria for the type of innovations the Foundation will support as well as criteria for “sunsetting” investments</li> <li>• Capture data to measure and assess experiments; create avenues for migrating high potential innovations into strategic priorities for the Foundation</li> </ul>