Overview Presentation for Schools

Agenda

- A very brief overview of Wikimedia
- Wikimedia's Projects
- Common objections and questions
- Tips for re-using our content
- Q & A
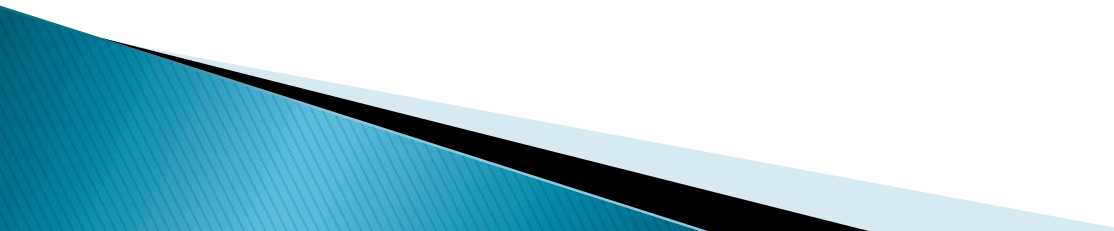
A very brief overview of Wikimedia

» *"Imagine a world in which every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge. That's what we're doing."*

– Jimmy Wales, Wikipedia Founder

So, just what is Wikimedia?

- A non-profit, charitable organisation, headquartered in San Francisco.

- Runs a number of projects aimed at collecting and developing free educational content, and disseminating it effectively and globally.

- Approximately forty paid staff in San Francisco handling administration and software development, but the majority of content is developed and contributed by volunteers.

- A number of self-directed chapters all over the world (including Australia) who promote the Wikimedia projects in their own countries.

What's the difference between "Wikipedia" and "Wikimedia"?

- *Wikipedia* is the original (and arguably the most successful) project of the Wikimedia Foundation.

- The *Wikimedia Foundation* is the body that develops and promotes Wikipedia, as well as a number of other free content projects.

"Free Content?"

- Yes, "free!"

- Almost all content available from Wikimedia Projects is released under "free licences," meaning that it can be re-used for any purpose without being encumbered by copyright.

- These licences include the "Creative Commons" family of licences, "GNU Free Documentation Licence", as well as public domain and copyright-expired material.

- Therefore, educators, teachers, and members of the public may take any content they wish from our projects and reuse them for any purpose.

Wikimedia's Projects

» " *'Commons' is, unfortunately, a little bit too common these days as far as naming projects go, but bear with us, because this project is anything but common...*"
– Brianna Laugher, President, Wikimedia Australia

Wikipedia

- The "free encyclopedia", and probably our best known project.

- Over 3 million articles in the English edition alone (compared to roughly 66,000 in the Encyclopedia Britannica).

- Almost ten million articles in other languages, ranging from major world languages to regional dialects.

Wiktionary

- Our dictionary project, with over 1.6 million entries.

- That compares to only 301,100 main entries in the full version of the Oxford English Dictionary.

- Also contains translations, synonyms, slang, etymologies, anagrams and pronunciation guides.

a multilingual free encyclopedia

Wiktionary

[ˈwɪkʃənri] *n.*, a wiki-based Open Content dictionary

Wikisource

- "The Free Library," consisting of thousands of digitised books, publications, and other source materials of interest.

- Selected works also have audio recordings of the text available.

- Some works that have not yet been digitised into fulltext have comprehensive page scans available.

Wikimedia Commons

- Originally intended as a media repository for our other projects, Wikimedia Commons has become a valuable project in its own right.

- Contains over six million digitised files and media objects, including photographs, maps, diagrams, musical scores, audio recordings, videos, and other files.

Plus, many others...

But beware of imitations…

▶ Not every website or project with "Wiki" in its name is an official project of the Wikimedia Foundation.
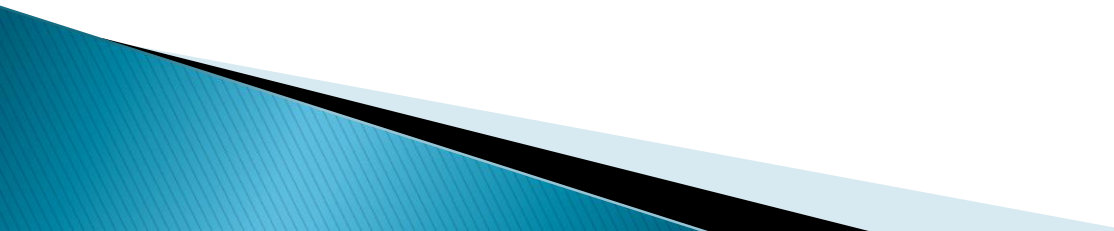
▶ A full list of official projects can be found at:

http://www.wikimediafoundation.org

Common Objections and Questions

» *"The problem about Wikipedia is, that it just works in reality, not in theory."*
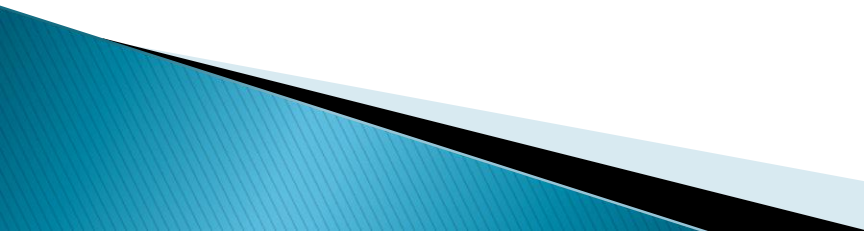– Stephen Colbert, US comedian

Where does all this content come from?

- As mentioned earlier, the great majority of content has been contributed by volunteers around the world.

- Some content has been sourced from public domain sources, or has had its copyright expire, thus making it usable on Wikimedia.

But doesn't that mean that anyone can write anything on Wikipedia?

▸ Yes, anyone can edit content on any page on any Wikimedia project (with some exceptions, which we'll get to in a moment).

▸ Wikipedia has guidelines about what content can be entered though.
  ◦ It must be <u>verifiable</u>, through independent references and citations.
  ◦ It must be <u>notable</u>, that is, of interest to the average reader.
  ◦ It must adhere to a <u>neutral point of view</u>, and not be biased in any way.
  ◦ It should conform to our <u>manual of style</u>.
  ◦ Disputes on article content should be resolved through a process of discussion and <u>consensus</u>.

But what about bad faith changes?

- Wikimedia refers to these sort of edits as "vandalism".

- Numerous tools exist to combat vandalism.

- "Administrators," who are special users trusted by the community, have several special tools at their disposal to combat vandalism:
  - Articles can be "semi-protected," so that only established users may edit them for a period of time.
  - Articles can be "full-protected," so that only administrators and other community functionaries may edit them.
  - Disruptive contributors can be "blocked," and prevented from making any further changes.
  - Unconstructive edits may be "reverted" or "rolled back" off of the live version of the page.

How accurate are Wikimedia pages?

▸ Pretty accurate, as it turns out. It has been observed that there are more "good faith" contributors dedicated to improving the projects than there are "bad faith" contributors dedicated to vandalism.

Studies of Wikipedia's Accuracy

- A 2003 IBM study concluded that "*vandalism is usually repaired extremely quickly—so quickly that most users will never see its effects.*"

- In 2005, *Nature* magazine said that Wikipedia came close to the level of accuracy in *Encyclopædia Britannica* and had a similar rate of "serious errors."

- A 2007 study by German magazine *c't* concluded that "*We did not find more errors in the texts of the free encyclopedia than in those of its commercial competitors.*"

- A separate 2007 study by computing magazine *PC Pro*, which involved deliberately inserting subtle misinformation into Wikipedia articles noted that "*despite our stealth attempts the vast majority... were discovered remarkably quickly... the ridiculously minor Jesse James error was corrected within a minute and a very slight change to Queen Ann's entry was put right within two minutes.*" They went on to conclude that "*Wikipedia corrects the vast majority of errors within minutes*".

How to spot a problematic article

▸ Articles where a consensus cannot be reached, or that have other problems, are tagged with warning notices:

State of Palestine

A *C-class article* from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **neutrality** of this article's *title* and/or *subject matter* is **disputed**.
This is a dispute over the neutrality of viewpoints implied by the title, or the subject matter within its scope, rather than the actual facts stated. Please see the relevant discussion on the talk page.*(January 2010)*

This article is about the political entity proclaimed in 1988. For other uses of the term "Palestine", see Palestine (disambiguation).

▸ How many books or other websites tell you to "be careful" if there might be a problem?

▸ Such notices make evaluation of the reliability of a particular source a lot easier.
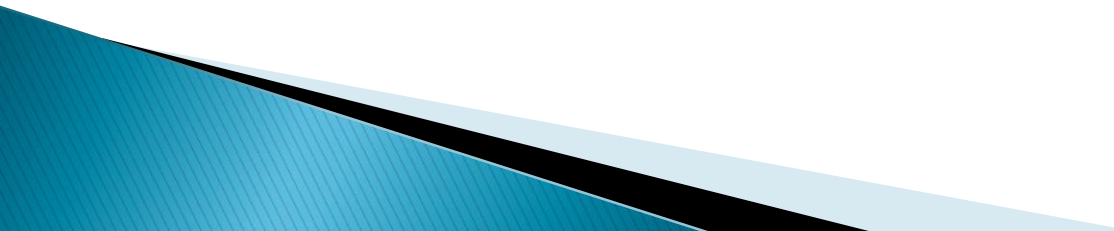
Referencing

▸ Any Wikipedia article worth its salt contains referencing:

References

1. ^ Short, John. *An Introduction to Political Geography* ⬀. Routledge. pp. 123-124. ISBN 9780203418727.
2. ^ Fitzgerald, Ross. *A history of Queensland: from 1915 to the 1980s*. University of Queensland. pp. 260-261. ISBN 9780702219573.
3. ^ *a b c* Reynolds, Paul (2002). *Lock, stock & barrel: a political biography of Mike Ahern*. University of Queensland Press. ISBN 9780702232947.
4. ^ *a b c* Wear, Rae (2002). *Johannes Bjelke-Petersen: the Lord's premier* ⬀. University of Queensland Press. pp. 164-165. ISBN 9780702233043.
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6. ^ "Queensland Parliament Members Register" 📄. Queensland Parliament. Retrieved 14 February 2010.
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8. ^ Moon, Jeremy; Sharman, Campbell (2003). *Australian politics and government: the commonwealth, the states, and the territories* ⬀. Cambridge University Press. pp. 97. ISBN 9780521532051.
9. ^ *a b* Koch, Tony (2010). *A Prescription for Change, The Terry White Story*. Brisbane: University of Queensland Press. ISBN 9780702237423.
10. ^ Goss, Wayne. "Parliamentary Committees in Queensland" 📄. pp. 5. Retrieved 14 February 2010.

▸ Wikipedia articles without sources should be trusted just as much as any other book, website, or publication that does not include sources.

Timeliness

- Due to its open nature, Wikipedia often has information on current events before more traditional sources of information.

- For instance, Wikipedia had information (including references!) on the recent death of Polish President Lech Kaczyński on its front page before BBC News, CNN, or news.com.au, not to mention before print newspapers and other encyclopaedias.

Re-using our content

>> *"Not only did we learn something, but we also gave back to society. Also, we didn't just learn how to publish, but we learned how to publish collaboratively."*

– Kristine Callis, a student speaking about a school project that involved writing and contributing to a Wikipedia article
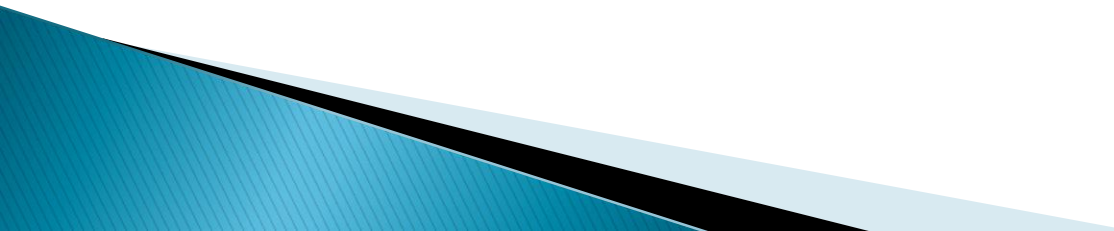
Featured Content

▸ The very best content that Wikipedia has to offer.

▸ "Featured Content" has to pass a rigorous peer review process before being marked as such.

▸ A portal to the Featured content is available on the left-hand navigation pane.

▸ Featured content is identified with a bronze star:

Types of Featured Content

- There are five distinct types of content recognised by Wikipedia:
  - Encyclopaedia Articles
  - Images
  - Sounds
  - Lists
  - Portals (topic-specific pages that cover an area in greater detail than the site's main page)
- "Featured Topics" are also recognised, which consist of groups of other featured content that relate to a particular subject area or series.
- Other Wikimedia projects (such as Commons) run their own Featured Content projects, a summary can be accessed through Wikipedia's featured content page.

Good articles

- Wikipedia also has a project to identify "Good Articles"
- Unlike Featured Articles, Good Articles are not considered to be 'the best of the best', but rather are solid, factual, useful and completed articles.
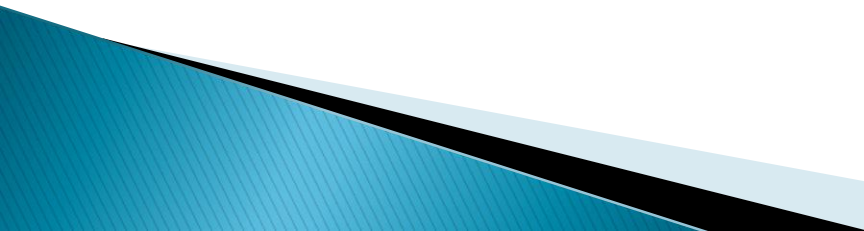- There are currently over 8500 Good Articles, across a wide range of subject areas.

Categories

- Most articles and pages are sorted into "categories", which are collections of pages on similar topics.
- For instance, the Wikipedia article on Wally Lewis falls into a number of categories:

Categories: 1959 births | Living people | People from Brisbane | Australian rugby league players | Fortitude Valley Diehards players | Wynnum Manly Seagulls players | Brisbane Broncos players | Brisbane Broncos captains | Australian rugby league coaches | Gold Coast Giants/Seagulls/Chargers coaches | Australia national rugby league team players | Australian national rugby league team captain | Australian Rugby League Hall of Fame inductees | Members of the Order of Australia | Recipients of the Australian Sports Medal | People with epilepsy | Gold Coast Giants/Seagulls/Chargers players | Queensland Rugby League State of Origin players | Queensland Rugby League State of Origin captains | Queensland Rugby League State of Origin coaches | Wakefield Trinity Wildcats players | Sport Australia Hall of Fame inductees

- Categories are listed at the bottom of every page
- Clicking on the category name takes you to a list of all other pages in that category.

School projects utilising Wikipedia

- There have been a number of successful school projects where students have been encouraged to research and contribute content to Wikimedia projects.

- The flexible nature of the Wikimedia projects means that it can be adapted to fit in with educational curriculums, while the "real world" nature of the sites give students an added incentive to produce something useful.

Some possible ideas for projects...

- Have students write Wikipedia articles to the 'Good Article' standard on whatever topic they are studying. Local places, history, and events are usually good starting points.

- For LOTE teachers, consider taking non-English text from our foreign language projects on topics of interest to young people, and have them attempt to translate them.

- Without revealing the source of the information, take the text of an article on Wikipedia that has a warning notice for reliability or bias, and get students to see if they can spot the problems. This is a good way to promote information literacy and teach critical evaluation of sources.

- Have students compose photographs of local landmarks and places of interest, and upload them to Wikimedia Commons.

- There are, of course, many more possibilities!

Where to find more information

- Wikimedia Projects
  - Wikipedia:
    - http://www.wikipedia.org (Multilingual Portal)
    - http://en.wikipedia.org (English language edition)
  - Wiktionary:
    - http://www.wiktionary.org (Multilingual Portal)
    - http://en.wiktionary.org (English language edition)
  - Wikimedia Commons
    - http://commons.wikimedia.org
  - Wikisource
    - http://www.wikisource.org (Multilingual Portal)
    - http://en.wikisource.org (English repository)
  - Meta (A global coordination site for all Wikimedia projects)
    - http://meta.wikimedia.org

Other links of interest

- Wikimedia Foundation (the US-based organisation that manages the Wikimedia projects on a global scale)
  - http://www.wikimediafoundation.org
- Wikimedia Australia (An Australian organisation affiliated with the Wikimedia Foundation)
  - http://www.wikimedia.org.au

Other links of interest (continued)

- Wikipedia's frequently–asked–questions page for schools:
  - ◦ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:FAQ/Schools
- A page detailing some previous school and university projects undertaken involving Wikipedia:
  - ◦ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:School_and_University_projects
- The "Classroom Coordination" Wikiproject, formed by editors and volunteers to develop a "best practice" framework for collaborations between Wikimedia and educational institutions.
  - ◦ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Classroom_coordination

Q&A

>> *"What, so anyone can edit any page on this encyclopaedia? What are they thinking, this will never work!"*

– Craig Franklin (your presenter), 2004, upon discovering the then-tiny Wikipedia for the first time.

Horses on Bianditz mountain – Mikel Ortega.

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