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2008-05-19

Pro-Israeli group's lobbying gets press, arbitration case

By [Sage Ross](#)

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An attempt by a pro-Israeli group to influence articles within Wikipedia has been subject of prolonged media attention and Wikipedia arbitration over the past several weeks.

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On April 21, the pro-Palestinian media non-profit Electronic Intifada reported (<http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article9474.shtml>) the existence of an email group associated with the pro-Israel Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA). Electronic Intifada also released a set of emails claimed to be from the CAMERA group. The stated purpose of the CAMERA group was to recruit new Wikipedia editors to ensure that Israel-related content is "free of bias and error, and include necessary facts and context." According to Electronic Intifada, the group's emails show that "that the group not only wanted to keep the effort secret from the media, the public, and Wikipedia administrators, but that the material they intended to introduce included discredited claims that could smear Palestinians and Muslims and conceal Israel's true history" and wanted to "take over Wikipedia administrative structures to ensure these changes go either undetected or unchallenged."

Within hours of the Electronic Intifada story's publication, Wikipedians were engaged in an in-depth discussion of CAMERA's "WikiLobbying campaign", now archived. Editors linked 6 Wikipedia user accounts to the group. As three administrators explained in a joint statement, the users participating in the CAMERA group were all blocked and/or banned from contributing to Israeli–Palestinian-conflict-related articles. Even without specific evidence that all of these users had violated Wikipedia policies through their edits, most discussants agreed that off-wiki groups focused on specific political or ideological agendas are incompatible with the spirit of the project. Since the prolonged conflicts of 2005 and 2006 over acceptable userboxes and user categories, there has been a general consensus that categories or transcluded userboxes that could be used to identify or organize editors with a specific common point of view are not allowed; Wikipedia's policy on sock puppetry strongly discourages any similar off-wiki activity.

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Information about the CAMERA group's existence also quickly appeared in the CAMERA Wikipedia article. As *Wikinews* reported on April 28, IP addresses from the United States Department of Justice were blocked for twice removing information on the CAMERA Wikipedia campaign from that article (among other edits deemed vandalism). For a separate story (http://www.theregister.co.uk/2008/04/29/wikipedia_blocked_doj_ip/) on the Department of Justice incident, *The Register* contacted Gilead Ini, CAMERA's Senior Research Analyst, and confirmed the existence of the email group. Ini did not confirm (but did not deny) the authenticity of the emails released by Electronic Intifada, and claimed that the campaign was meant to operate within Wikipedia's rules. On May 3, Ini published an article on CAMERA's website called "How and Why to Edit Wikipedia (http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=2&x_outlet=118&x_article=1485)", urging "fair-minded editors to work toward improving Wikipedia" and lamenting the ill-treatment of those "who try to re-establish objectivity".

In the weeks since Electronic Intifada revealed the CAMERA group's existence, there has been a steady stream of outside coverage. Reports in mainstream newspapers (e.g. "War of the virtual Wiki-worlds (http://www.boston.com/lifestyle/articles/2008/05/03/war_of_the_virtual_wiki_worlds/)" by Alex Beam, a widely syndicated piece that first appeared in *The Boston Globe*) have been framed mostly in terms of the Electronic Intifada characterization of the group and its plans and motives, with CAMERA's side of the story as an alternative viewpoint. A number of other stories, particularly in the Jewish press, have instead presented Wikipedia's reaction to the CAMERA group as evidence of the very anti-Israel bias CAMERA was trying to curb. An article (http://www.honestreporting.com/articles/45884734/critiques/new/Exposed_-_Anti-Israeli_Subversion_on_Wikipedia.asp) from *HonestReporting* last week argues "that it was [Electronic Intifada], not CAMERA, that manipulated Wikipedia to achieve its ideological goals".

In terms of media coverage, the CAMERA story has revived discussions of the potential pitfalls of an encyclopedia that anyone can edit. However, Wikipedians who regularly deal with conflicts of interest and attempts to reshape Wikipedia for political and ideological reasons seem to agree that the CAMERA group had little impact on content and that more serious problems appear on a regular basis. In that sense, the CAMERA group's actions have been a small splash in a very big pond. Partisan editing has been a perennial and severe issue with Israeli–Palestinian-conflict content, with both pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian editors causing problems. An arbitration case earlier this year

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resulted in general sanctions that allow administrators to "impose any sanctions which they believe are reasonably necessary to ensure the smooth functioning of the project" for editors causing disruption in Israel–Palestine articles.

The ongoing arbitration case for the CAMERA campaign seeks clarification about how the community ought to deal with similar cases and whether the sanctions imposed by administrators in this case were fair.

Reader comments

2008-05-19

Board elections: Voting information, new candidates

By Ral315


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This week, the Signpost covers the election process for the 2008 Board elections.


Candidate entries for the Wikimedia Board of Trustees election closed on Thursday. Fifteen users will be vying for one (1) one-year seat, to be filled in the election.

Voting will run for three weeks, from 1 June through 21 June. While the rules of the election are largely completed, some minor changes may still be introduced. The voting method will be the Schulze method, a form of preferential voting. The voting software will allow multiple candidates to be ranked the same (if the voter has no preference for either), and allows voters to leave candidates "unranked" (in which case, any ranked candidate is preferred over an unranked one).

Under discussion currently is a proposal to send an official e-mail to all eligible voters regarding the election; this proposal is contingent upon its technical feasibility. According to election

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committee member Jesse Plamondon-Willard, discussions with Wikimedia system administrators "seem promising".

As in previous years, election officials will monitor votes for voting irregularities, and discount votes as necessary, if it is deemed that some votes are those of sockpuppets. To discourage sockpuppeting, all voters must have made at least 600 edits before March 1, 2008 on any one wiki, and have made at least 50 edits between January 1 and May 29, 2008 on that particular wiki. The wiki for these requirements must be the same one for both, and edits cannot be combined across multiple wikis to gain suffrage. Exceptions to these edit requirements are given to Wikimedia **server** administrators with shell access, paid staff of the Wikimedia Foundation who began working at the office before March 1, and current and former members of the Board of Trustees.

Other election news

Incumbent board member and current Board Chairperson Florence Devouard announced this week that she would not stand for election, likely meaning that her board membership will end next month. Devouard has been a member of the Board since the first elections in 2004, was re-elected for a two-year term in 2005, and had her term extended until 2008 due to a prior board restructuring. Her decision means that the one position up for election is a non-incumbent position.

This week, twelve users entered the race. The fifteen users who will be running for the seat are, as follows:

- Ad Huikeshoven (Dedalus)
- Alex Bakharev
- Craig Spurrier (Cspurrier)
- Dan Rosenthal (Swatjester)
- Gregory Kohs (Thekohser)

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- Harel Cain ([Harel](#))
- Jussi-Ville Heiskanen ([Cimon Avaro](#))
- Kurt Weber ([Kmweber](#))
- Matthew Bisanz ([MBisanz](#))
- Paul Williams ([Skenmy](#))
- Ray Saintonge ([Eclecticology](#))
- Ryan Postlethwaite
- Samuel Klein ([Sj](#))
- Steve Smith ([Sarcasticidealist](#))
- Ting Chen ([Wing](#))

All fifteen candidates have had their identity confirmed by the Foundation.

The candidates currently hail from eight different nations, across North America, Europe, Asia and Australia. Six of the candidates hail from the [United States](#), with two each from the [United Kingdom](#) and [Canada](#), and one each from the [Netherlands](#), [Australia](#), [Israel](#), [Finland](#), and [Germany](#). Notably, only four of the top ten Wikipedia projects are represented in the candidate slate (English, German, Dutch and Russian). Ten of the fifteen users listed at least one non-Wikipedia project as one of their "active wikis".

Multilingual editors are encouraged to consider [translating](#) various election notices, candidate presentations, and other pages into as many languages as possible. Primary languages in need of some or all translation include Arabic, Basque, Croatian, Esperanto, Hebrew, Hungarian, Malayalam, and Ukranian, although some language updates may be needed at a later date, so linguists in other languages are encouraged to check the page occasionally.

Next week: The Signpost will interview the candidates.

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2008-05-19

Sister Projects Interview: Wikibooks


By OhanaUnited


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Wikibooks logo

What is Wikibooks? What are its goals and objectives?

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Wikibooks is an effort to collaboratively write open-content textbooks. There's often some confusion due to the name, but Wikibooks is for *textbooks*, not books in general.

The project started 10 July 2003 after requests from Karl Wick. As we all know, Wikipedia is not for instructional material. Karl had been working on collating articles on organic chemistry into a format that people could learn from. Of course, there was a VFD, and the book was deleted. That spawned the Wikibooks project, which Jimbo has hailed as "the next big thing in education" and is generally regarded as being a much bigger project than Wikipedia. It'll probably take 20 years or more to flourish where Wikipedia has flourished in a much shorter time.

In terms of history of Wikibooks, there have been a few major changes over the project's lifespan. Wikiversity ([interview](#)) used to be a project within Wikibooks. Wikiversity wasn't seen as a textbook, and therefore not suitable for inclusion in Wikibooks, so a [VFD](#) and [proposal](#) resulted in Wikiversity being split off. Wikibooks is still home to two major subprojects. The [Wikijunior](#) project is for kids' books, in an effort to write age-appropriate non-fiction books for kids up to age 12. The second project is our [cookbook](#).

Another major development was the formalization of the [exclusion of strategy guides](#) (aka game guides). This was always the intent, but was insufficiently and unequally enforced. The rationale is that textbooks are inherently academic. If you take a course in university, there will never be a walkthrough as required reading, so we don't allow such things at Wikibooks. We *do* however allow textbooks *about* video games. If you're taking video game design, then of course you'll need that sort of textbook. The line is sometimes hard to draw, but the distinction is between a walkthrough and an academic examination.

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What activities are performed most at Wikibooks?

Wikibooks editors, called *Wikibookians*, tend to work on their own project. Writing a textbook is a much more ambitious endeavour than writing an encyclopedia article for example, so people who are successful in doing so tend to be very driven, but focus their work exclusively on one book or one subject area. Since textbooks are instructional it is not enough to simply present information as you would in Wikipedia – the writing style and the overall structure must be coherent from an instructional point of view. Readers need to be able to learn from a Wikibook, so structure, organization and tone are very important.

From this point of view, it's much more important to know your subject matter thoroughly. Many of our editors are educators of various kinds. Of course, Wikibooks is no more a meritocracy than Wikipedia, but it is much more difficult to write a textbook well if you don't know much about the subject compared to writing an encyclopedia article on a subject you're not familiar with.


Wikibooks has all the same maintenance tasks as Wikipedia does, but let's focus on the differences. As you can imagine, cataloguing our books is a major challenge. Until recently we used static lists to keep track of our books. Needless to say, this method isn't scalable, so we've now harnessed an extension called Dynamic Page List which allows us to dynamically list items in a category. We've created a new Subject: namespace for these catalogue pages. We also catalogue books by various other methods (Dewey Decimal, Library of Congress & Alphabetical), but these methods are becoming less and less important. Subject:Engineering is a great example of this new method. Exploring around in the Subject: namespace is always a great way to find books you're looking for but can't necessarily find in other ways. Maintaining these pages is as easy as ensuring that new books are properly categorized, which we did in the past anyways.

What are some of the tasks done by administrators?

Again, most administrator tasks are consistent across all wikis. One task which will not be familiar to most Wikipedians is importing. At Wikibooks, administrators may import pages from other projects with a full edit history (barring technical errors of course). Content is often imported by request – someone starting a new text will often want to use Wikipedia articles as seed material. Importing in this manner allows us to comply with the GFDL instead of the much more cumbersome copy-paste method.

There are sometimes irritating situations with this, and I'll focus on Wikipedia here, though it's not the only example. Wikipedians will often want to move content to Wikibooks after an AFD, but nobody bothers to check whether it's suitable for inclusion. Wikipedia has an inclusion policy, and few would be thrilled with people from other wikis dumping their unwanted content in Wikipedia. Likewise, Wikibooks is not a place to dump unwanted pages. It's not hard to determine what's acceptable – we're a very friendly folk, so just ask :)

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Helping new contributors is actually one of the main tasks at Wikibooks. The bar is a little higher for beginners because we're writing textbooks not encyclopedia articles, so we try to focus very much on making our processes easy to follow, and the regulars are very available to help out new contributors. If you can't figure something out, there's a very active helpful community ready to help you out. In the past, I've had many emails using an amazing array of adjectives to describe how much more welcoming the Wikibooks project is to new contributors, and how helpful the community is. This is especially true of class projects. Wikibooks is sometimes used as a teaching tool, especially in universities. This results in a big influx of new contributors who need to be "herded" in the right directions. The professor often doesn't know any better how things work than the students to, so it falls to the community to help them along. And we've had many projects like this which have been highly successful. One such project was the Social and Cultural Foundations of American Education which is a recurring class project out of Old Dominion University.

If I want to become an active editor, what should be my first step (other than signing up)?

We try to keep the bar to entry as low as possible. Most people will find that Wikibooks is a much more laid-back environment for contributing than Wikipedia. We're a very tight-knit group of contributors, and we tend to work very well together.

If you're interested in writing a text, first see if there's something you can add to or re-work. Just like there should be one article per topic in Wikipedia, there should be one text per subject in Wikibooks. Only when scope or audience is significantly different should there be more than one text on a subject. If there is a pre-existing book, then get crackin'!

If not, then you'll want to start off with a detailed outline of the structure of the book. You want to detail the scope of the book, and the overall picture of what you'll be teaching. Once that's complete, then start filling in content. Many new authors at Wikibooks make what I consider to be a mistake: they dive right in with contributing content with no clear idea of what the text should look like in the future. "Scope creep" is common, and can be easily avoided by planning what you want to do ahead of time.

Does the project have any plans to promote itself or recruit more members?

Contributors are the number one thing Wikibooks needs to succeed. Wherever I can, I try to talk up Wikibooks, and I know other regulars do too. Beyond that I'm not aware of any organized large-scale efforts to get new authors to come to Wikibooks. User:Whiteknight has given several talks on Wikibooks, which are certainly helpful. We need more press to gain the scale Wikipedia has. This is something that Wikibooks should be dealing with as a community, and I don't think we've done enough in the past.

For any Wikipedians involved in a WikiProject, you may well be interested in coming over to see whether we have texts that you can contribute to, or if there's a gap in coverage you can help to fill.

Recently there have been a number of book donations – authors of books have decided to release their book into the wild and add it to our collection. Getting the book converted to wikitext is often a major hurdle, but it's great to have a book added all in one go. While this increases the number of books we host, it doesn't usually add more contributors. Content is great, but without the people to back it up, that's all it is.

What are some difficulties that Wikibooks faced?

The major difficulty that I see for Wikibooks is getting new contributors. The only thing that will make us successful is more people to maintain the wiki, but more importantly contribute content. Many contributors come and write a single book, then leave. We need people to come and stay. Even if you're not going to contribute another entire textbook, there is always editing to be done. Slow, steady and long-term work in a variety of areas is preferable to contributing only one book and leaving.

To do this, we need to become more recognizable. One way is by choosing a new logo for our project. The discussion about our new logo isn't restricted to Wikibookians – anyone can come help improve the options and help us decide what to pick.

Another ongoing set of issues is technical. MediaWiki was written for Wikipedia, so it's unsurprising that the software isn't ideal for writing textbooks. We have many wishes for software features, but there's been little progress in getting anything major done. My hope is that the Foundation may hire another developer which would allow some additional time to go into developing features for the non-Wikipedia wikis (Wikibooks is not the only project that feels ignored). I should be clear that the fault doesn't lie with the developers – they're doing excellent work. In recent months we've seen fruition of efforts on SUL and FlaggedRevs. Global blocking seems to be coming along shortly; same for rev_deleted; and global groups are potentially in the near future. It's just that none of these developments are helpful for Wikibooks to overcome some problems in using software designed for a slightly different purpose.

How can I recognize the best works of Wikibooks?

Wikibooks has Featured Books just like you find Featured Articles at Wikipedia. We've divided the books by subject on Featured Books, and there's a corresponding subject page at Subject:Featured books. These books must meet certain criteria and are discussed thoroughly before being marked as featured. We're excited to get Stable versions enabled to assist this process.

Reader comments

2008-05-19



WikiWorld: "Hodag"

By Greg Williams


Contribute — Share this


This comic originally appeared on April 16, 2007.

This week's WikiWorld comic uses text from "Hodag". The comic is released under the Creative Commons Attribution ShareAlike 2.5 license for use on Wikipedia and elsewhere.

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HODAG

BLACK HODAG

The hodag is a fictional animal of Wisconsin. The earliest "discovered," found in the woods of northern Wisconsin in 1893 near Rhinelander, is also the largest and most ferocious. It is covered with black fur and has spikes along its back and two horns on its head.



SIDEHILL DODGE HODAG

The sidehill dodge hodag dwells in the hills and bluffs of southwestern Wisconsin. It has evolved to have longer legs on one side than the other, so that it can more easily walk across the hills, with the shorter legs on the uphill side.



(Of course, this only helps in going one direction across the hills.)

CAVE HODAG

The smallest hodag of all, with at least three glowing eyes to enable it to see in the caves of southwestern Wisconsin, the sidehill dodge hodag may have retreated to the caves to escape encroaching civilization or logging.



SHOVEL-NOSE HODAG

On the hodag's nose, instead of a horn, there is a large spade-shaped bony growth, used as a lever for knocking over trees containing its favorite food, porcupine, which it then devours head first.



Text excerpted from the Wikipedia article *Hodag*. 16 April 2007

2008-05-19

News and notes

By [Ral315](#)


[Contribute](#) — [Share this](#)


Russian overtakes Swedish for 10th-largest Wikipedia


This week, the [Russian Wikipedia](#) officially overtook the [Swedish Wikipedia](#) as the 10th-largest Wikipedia, replacing it on the [Wikipedia.org](#) (<http://wikipedia.org>) portal. This week also marked the [German Wikipedia's](#) 750,000th article, and the [Polish Wikipedia's](#) 500,000th article.


Briefly

- After a [poll](#) to change the autoconfirmed level, it has been changed from a requirement of 4 days and 0 edits to 4 days and 10 edits for the English Wikipedia. Discussion is currently ongoing as to what the consensus was; some users have argued that consensus was actually for 7 days and 20 edits, since 66.7% supported at least that level, and that option received 61.3% of the votes by itself.
- [Meta-Wiki](#) has reached 1,000,000 revisions. In true "meta" fashion, the [1,000,000th revision](#) (<https://meta.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?diff=1000000>) updated [Wikimedia News](#) to mention the millionth revision.
- The [Ukrainian Wiktionary](#) has reached 5,000 articles.
- The [Vietnamese Wikipedia](#) has reached 40,000 articles and 200,000 pages.

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Reader comments

2008-05-19

In the news

By Enochlau

Contribute — Share this

Recent mentions in the online press include:

- Is that so? (<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/985096.html>) – Researchers have developed automatic systems to evaluate information quality, and the Hebrew Wikipedia has been used as a test-bed for these ideas.
- A 'Frozen' Wikipedia Could Be Better for College, Founder Says (<http://chronicle.com/wiredcampus/article/3007/possible-cha>


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ge-to-wikipedia-could-make-it-more-academically-useful-founder-says) – Wikipedia may soon have a feature that will allow particular versions of articles to be flagged as being free from vandalism, or possibly even vetted by a committee.


- HMS Britannic Optimistic About Deck-Chair Re-Arrangement (<https://www.techdir.t.com/articles/20080516/0916211136.shtml>) – This author believes that the Encyclopedia Britannica's business model cannot compete with the free and up-to-date Wikipedia, but suggests that the company may still be able to leverage its brand name.
- Disobey! (http://www.sfbg.com/entry.php?entry_id=6389&catid=&volume_id=317&issue_id=379&volume_num=42&issue_num=34) – Wikipedia and other online communities may simply embody "theoretical" free speech, because they result, at best, in lively subcultures up against the tide of corporate-produced content.


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Reader comments

2008-05-19

Dispatches: Good article milestone


By Geometry guy, Karanacs, Jbmurray

Contribute — Share this

There are now more than 4000 Good Articles, and for the first time there are more than twice as many Good Articles as Featured Articles. The numbers of both Good Articles and Featured Articles have been growing steadily, but despite this expansion, most Wikipedia articles do not meet either of these standards. The Good Article process has changed significantly in the three years since it was first introduced. At this milestone, and following a recent debate over whether or not Good Article status should be displayed in mainspace, perhaps it is time for another rethink.

History

The Good Article (GA) process was introduced in October 2005; its original purpose was to recognise very short or very specific articles, which at the time were not eligible for Featured Article (FA) status. As the Featured Article process evolved, to accept short yet comprehensive articles, the Good Article process in turn changed: it now recognises a wide range of articles which do not yet meet the

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Featured Article criteria. The Good Article criteria demand that, to pass muster, an article should be "well written, factually accurate and verifiable, broad in coverage, neutral in point of view, stable, and illustrated, where possible, by relevant images with suitable copyright licenses". The differences between GA and FA criteria are that Good Articles are "satisfactory" whereas Featured Articles represent "our very best work".

Milestones


The number of Good Articles has grown rapidly: there were 1000 by June 2006, 2000 by April 2007, and we reached 3000 in late October 2007. Now, shortly after the Featured Article total crossed the 2000 mark, the number of Good Articles has exceeded 4000. And on 4 May 2008, for the first time there were twice as many Good as Featured articles.

Even so, fewer than 0.18% of the encyclopedia's articles are Good Articles, i.e., certified "satisfactory", and fewer than 0.09% are Featured, that is, our "very best work"; most of Wikipedia's content is neither. At current rates of growth, the discrepancy between Wikipedia's typical article and its best ones isn't likely to change any time soon. The Featured Article count grows by approximately two articles per day. Can the Good Article process help? Well, no, not significantly at the moment: Good Article growth has been fairly stable at six articles a day. That is three times as many as Featured, but it means that the 2:1 ratio is the last such milestone we will see: 3:1 is an asymptote.

Process

The GA process differs from other review processes. Whereas a Featured article candidacy and Peer review involve reviews by multiple editors, a Good article nomination is generally reviewed by only one editor. This is both GA's strength and its weakness. It is a strength because it is efficient: a GA review typically involves only two editors (the reviewer and the nominator), yet if they can agree that an article meets basic standards

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of quality, then that article is likely better than 95% of the encyclopedia. It is a weakness because different editors interpret the Good Article criteria in different ways.

The Good Article solution to this problem is to make it as easy to delist a Good Article as to list it. The idea is that consensus will eventually be reached by multiple listings and delistings, with article content being improved throughout. This ideal is far from being realised, and there are many editors critical of the Good Article process, with some justification. However, the only way to really understand a process is to get involved, and a further strength of the Good Article process is the enthusiasm and dedication of those editors who choose to do so. All review processes depend vitally on their reviewers. Please come and help out!

Recent discussions

The 2:1 milestone arrived just as a discussion on using Good Article signs in the mainspace was closed. This began with the suggestion, which has been proposed several times before, that Good Articles should be recognised, like Featured Articles, with a sign or symbol visible on the article itself, like the bronze FA star. The ensuing discussion was vigorous, with well over a hundred users presenting their views for or against. As Sam, the closing admin, put it, it soon became clear that what was at stake was more than a "poll about putting a little green symbol on pages"; rather, in Sam's words, there are some "big issues" involved, about the future direction of the GA process, and indeed the role of assessment in the encyclopedia as a whole. There was no consensus to add such a symbol.



How a Good Article might look with a green dot

Now, much more recently, there have been a series of proposals to make changes to the Wikipedia Version 1.0 assessment scale, and a community discussion is underway. Some want to revise the role of the GA process within the broader assessment system; others want to separate out the FA and GA designations from the assessments (A-class, B-class, Start-class) managed by WikiProjects. These proposals arose out of an observation about B-class articles: some are much closer to GA standard than others. At the heart of the matter is the question of what makes for a good enough Wikipedia article.

Future directions

It is time, therefore, to revisit the role of the Good Article process within the encyclopedia as a whole. Foreign-language Wikipedias have successfully copied the GA/FA mould forged here, but there is still tension between the processes on the English Wikipedia. The recent debate on the Good Article sign illustrated this well: many other Wikipedias mark Good Articles with such a symbol, but here there is a sense of caution, a need for transparency, and a question about what Good Article really means.

There are two quite different reactions to these observations. One is to make the Good Article requirements more precise and more stringent, and to develop more exacting processes to ensure quality control. The other is to accept that the Good Article process will never reliably produce

articles meeting an exacting standard, but that Good Articles are at least far better than the vast majority.

If we were to choose the first option, there would be less disparity between our Featured and our Good articles, but this would ensure that, in all likelihood, there were never many more than twice as many of the latter as the former. If we chose the second, however, a process might emerge that would more efficiently bring more Wikipedia articles up to at least an approximate standard. We might even envisage a future milestone, in which there were, say, ten times as many Good Articles as Featured Articles, and in which a far greater proportion of the encyclopedia's content would be at least satisfactory.

Reader comments

2008-05-19

Features and admins

By OhanaUnited

Contribute — Share this

Administrators


Five users were granted admin status via the Requests for Adminship process this week: PeterSymonds (nom), WBOSITG (nom), Riskier (nom), Gatoclass (nom), and Jbmurray (nom).


Bots

Eleven bots or bot tasks were approved to begin operating this week: Rtz-bot (task request), BJBot (task request), BotMultichill (task request), SoxBot (task request), Rick Bot (task request), SpBot (task request), Kisbesbot (task request), ViskonBot (task request), Numbo3-bot (task request), ShepBot (task request), and SoxBot II (task request).

Featured pages

Eleven articles were promoted to featured status last week: Le Quang Tung (nom), Interstate 15 in Arizona (nom), Tibet during the Ming Dynasty (nom), Myst (nom), Diorama

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(album) (nom), HMS Cardiff (D108) (nom), Nine Inch Nails live performances (nom), Master Juba (nom), NeXT (nom), Formation and evolution of the Solar System (nom), and Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi (nom).

Ten lists were promoted to featured status last week: List of acquisitions by AOL (nom), List of Victoria Cross recipients of the Indian Army (nom), List of tallest buildings in Seattle (nom), List of Stanley Cup champions (nom), Sonic Youth discography (nom), Green Bay Packers Hall of Fame (nom), List of tallest buildings in Los Angeles (nom), List of acquisitions by Electronic Arts (nom), Delta Goodrem discography (nom), Tool discography (nom), Róisín Murphy discography (nom), Appalachian State Mountaineers football seasons (nom), and List of United States hurricanes (nom).

One topic was promoted to featured status last week: Characters of Halo (nom).

One portal was promoted to featured status last week: Portal:Florida (nom).

The following featured articles were displayed last week on the Main Page as Today's featured article: Battlefield Earth (film), Nahuatl, Super Smash Bros. Melee, Royal Blue (B&O train), Elagabalus, Redwood National and State Parks, and Coeliac disease.

Former featured pages

Two articles were delisted last week: AIDS (nom) and Acorn Computers (nom).

No lists were delisted last week.


Featured media


The following featured pictures were displayed last week on the Main Page as picture of the day: Roundhouse, Stereographic projection, Rotterdam Blitz, Broken Hill, New South Wales, Robby Naish, Agar plate and Red-capped Plover.

No sounds were featured last week.


No featured pictures were demoted last week.

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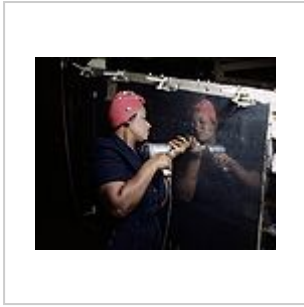
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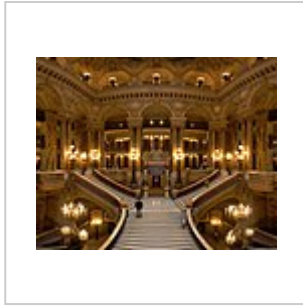
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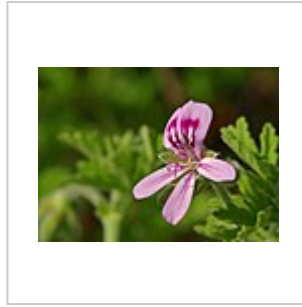
Ten pictures were promoted to featured status last week and are shown below.



Rosie the Riveter



Palais Garnier



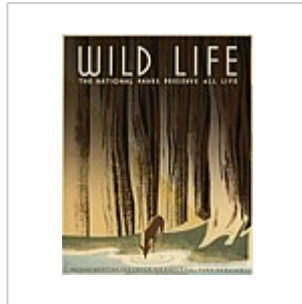
Pelargonium graveolens



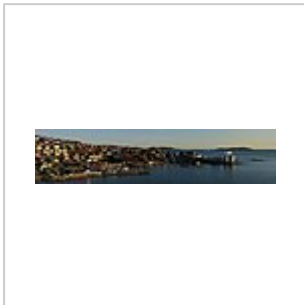
Abner Doubleday



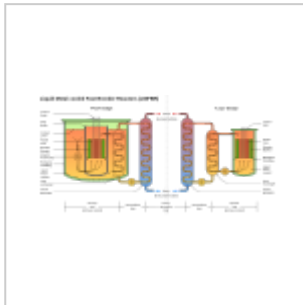
Paradise fish



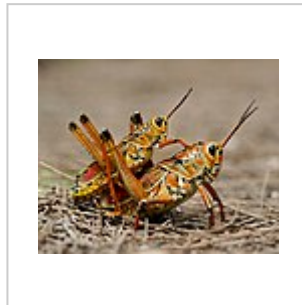
Poster for United States National Park Service



Panorama view of Upernavik, Greenland



Fast breeder reactor



Romalea guttata



Albert Memorial

Reader comments

2008-05-19

Bugs, Repairs, and Internal Operational News


By [ais523](#)


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This is a summary of recent technology and site configuration changes that affect the English Wikipedia. Note that not all changes described here are necessarily live as of press time; the English Wikipedia is currently running version 1.44.0-wmf.6 (d77bde6), and changes to the software with a version number higher than that will not yet be active. Configuration changes and changes to interface messages, however, become active immediately.


Fixed bugs

- API queries when multiple titles and a namespace filter are given no longer time out. ([bug 14102](#))
- The links passed as parameters to `MediaWiki:Fileexists-extension` now contain the correct namespace, rather than trying to link to the image in the main namespace. ([r34742](#), [bug 14111](#))
- The spam blacklist now allows users to edit pages which already have blacklisted links on (but still prevents addition of new blacklisted links). ([r34769](#), [bug 1505](#))
- API log events queries no longer incorrectly return 0 for the log ID. ([r34767](#), [bug 10660](#))
- Pages transcluding `Special:Newpages` now again load (for a while, they mistakenly were blank in most browsers, and showed as an internal server error to Internet Explorer). ([r34780](#), [bug 14113](#))
- Email-blocking users now again prevents them sending email via `Special:Emailuser`. ([r34846](#), [bug 14133](#))
- The number of pages in a category occasionally incorrectly counted as negative; when this happens, the number of pages in a category is now recounted to give a correct count (however, the bug that's causing the count to drift off the

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correct value probably still remains).
([r34870](#), [bug 13683](#))

- A loophole in the spam blacklist was closed. ([r34932](#), [bug 14154](#))
- #ifexist: now works on special pages. ([r35157](#), [bug 13640](#))

New features


- The API action=expandtemplates query now allows a generatexml parameter; if given, it generates an XML parse tree for the text in addition to expanding templates in it. ([r34716](#), [bug 13829](#))
- Users are now warned on preview if a page exceeds a [template limit](#); in addition, pages exceeding the pre-expand include limit are added to [Category:Pages where template include size is exceeded](#) and pages exceeding the template argument size limit are added to [Category:Pages containing omitted template arguments](#). (The names of these categories, and the warning messages, can be customized; see [Special:Prefixindex/MediaWiki:Post-expand-template-](#).) ([r35059](#), [bug 14094](#))

Configuration changes

- All [Wikipedia:WikiProject Spam](#) subpages have been added to Wikimedia's robots.txt, making them unsearchable by search engines.
- The Wikipedia logo was changed to remove an incorrect white border. ([bug 14137](#))
- The definition of 'autoconfirmed' on the English Wikipedia was changed to require 10 edits (by server edit count, so deleted edits are also counted) as well as 4 days before a user becomes autoconfirmed, allowing them to move pages and edit semiprotected pages. There is active discussion on the [bug page](#) about whether the limit should have been increased higher. This follows a [poll](#) about whether the limit should be increased. ([bug 14191](#))
- The rate limit for rollback on the English Wikipedia was increased to 100 rollbacks per minute, effectively removing it, following a [discussion](#) at the proposals village pump. This

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desysopped, but can apply for adminship at any time.

New case

- **C68-FM-SV**: A case involving Cla68, FeloniousMonk, SlimVirgin, and JzG.


Evidence phase


- **Giovanni33**: A case involving the accusation of sockpuppetry by Giovanni33. Giovanni33 and Rafaelsfingers, who has been labeled as a sockpuppet of Giovanni33 by some, have denied the charges.

Voting phase


- **Footnoted quotes**: A case involving the use of quotes in footnotes, and general concerns with the biographies of living persons policy. Remedies supported by two arbitrators would encourage more enforcement of the BLP policy, and a one-year restriction banning Alansohn from making any edits judged to be "uncivil, personal attacks, or assumptions of bad faith". The latter remedy allows his blocking, without warning, should he violate it.
- **CAMERA lobbying**: A case involving lobbying by pro-Israel group Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA) on Middle East-related articles. A remedy supported by four arbitrators confirm the sanctions imposed by administrators (an indefinite ban of Gni, a one-year ban of Zeq, and a one-year ban on Arab-Israeli topics for Dajudem). Other remedies supported by four arbitrators provide a general amnesty for other editors who may have been involved in the lobbying group, urging community members to forward evidence about all forms of external group-lobbying to the Committee, and admonishing Hypnosadist to "maintain an appropriate level of professionalism at all times, and to avoid misrepresenting Wikipedia policy to other editors."

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- **Homeopathy:** A dispute involving a number of editors over the Homeopathy article. Remedies with the support of five to six arbitrators include banning DanaUllman for one year, the creation of a "Sourcing Adjudication Board" regarding the inappropriate use of citations, and emphasizing the Committee's ability to issue subsequent sanctions in the case, based on reports of "inappropriate conduct" as judged by the Sourcing Adjudication Board. Another remedy, with the support of four arbitrators, allows uninvolved administrators to impose sanctions on editors involved in Homeopathy-related articles, for various reasons.

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