

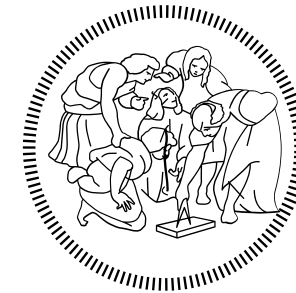
# DEBATABLE KNOWLEDGE

*A Journey Through The Discussion Behind Wikipedia's  
Article On Toiletpaper Orientation*

**Design della Comunicazione**

Arthur Vincent van der Werf





# POLITECNICO MILANO 1863

*Politecnico di Milano*  
*Tesi di Laurea Magistrale*  
*Design della Comunicazione*

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*“The calm appearance of  
the articles hides the stormy  
seas that keep them alive.”*



*An anonymous user*

*In a world increasing in connectivity every day, also our knowledge has decentralised from a system of universities and libraries to the vast web. Consequently, many concerns rise about misinformation stressing the importance of sources. Wikipedia stands up to provide a counterforce, but how well do we really know the platform? This research shows how little users are aware of the origin of information of one of the most used sources today. As a solution it finally presents a digital interactive communication project that aims to communicate the human process behind Wikipedia pages such that its users can put the provided information into perspective.*

# ABSTRACT

## **Italiano:**

Wikipedia è diventata una delle fonti di informazione più utilizzate non solo attraverso il suo sito web, ma attraverso l'integrazione dei suoi dati e informazioni in molte altre applicazioni come Alexa e Google assist. La maggior parte degli studi si concentrano sull'accuratezza delle informazioni o studiano le dinamiche della cultura dei "wikipediani" in relazione alla creazione di conoscenza. Tuttavia, poco si sa sulla percezione dell'utente e sulla sua consapevolezza delle informazioni. La prima parte della tesi analizza l'uso di Wikipedia e la consapevolezza del sistema dietro tra i partecipanti al questionario. Inoltre, un'analisi pratica dell'interfaccia e la ricerca approfondita sulla storia di un articolo specifico e tutte le sue discussioni hanno fornito una visione del processo umano dietro una pagina. Nella seconda parte, i risultati dell'approccio descrittivo e analitico sono stati condensati in un'applicazione web interattiva che attraverso una narrazione permette all'utente di esplorare le dinamiche tra il dibattito e la crescita dell'articolo. Infine, l'impatto sulla comprensione da parte degli utenti della natura della conoscenza di Wikipedia è stato esaminato in un usertest.

## **English:**

Wikipedia has become one of the most used information sources not solely by its website but through the integration of its data and information in many other applications such as Alexa and Google assist. Most studies focus on the accuracy of the information or study the dynamics of the culture of Wikipedians in relationship to the creation of knowledge. However, little is known about the perception of the user and their awareness of the information. In the first part, the thesis sheds light on the use of Wikipedia and the awareness of the system behind, among the participants of the questionnaire. In addition, a practical analysis of the interface and the in-depth research into the history of a specific article and all its discussions provided an insight in the human process behind a page. In the second part, the results of the descriptive and analytic approach were condensed into an interactive web application that via a narrative allows the user to explore the dynamics between the debate and the growth of the article. At last, the impact on the users understanding of the nature of Wikipedia knowledge was examined in a usertest.

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# PREFACE

*What is the message of Wikipedia and how does it supplement its content?*

*In our modern society, information is accessible everywhere and always. We carry our phones with us all the time, have access to the internet in even the most remote places, and with a few keywords almost any question can be answered in a matter of seconds. However, the information online is more shattered than ever. In the past, information used to be institutionalized. Universities would provide research and produce information via books accessible in libraries. Authors would write books on their ideas, experiences, points of view, or maybe independent research but always published and promoted via stores or libraries.*

Not everyone would get their ideas printed off-course. To pursue a printing house to physicalize one's work takes a certain investment upfront. If a writer can prove his success with previous publications, he might be able to get investors or pursue a printing house to take a risk. One way or another, it takes a certain amount of interest from the public to spread ideas. This threshold is kept by the investment on the producing side as well as an effort by the consumer. Both boundaries have considerably dissolved since the rise of the internet as now anyone can produce or consume information with just a minimal number of clicks.

Other channels for information would be the classic types of media: television, radio, and newspapers. All of these were carefully curated by a professional industry that carries forward experience and knowledge on the creation and communication of information. Media would often differentiate with a style in presenting and a political perspective. One of today's information channels that is still curated is Wikipedia. The site is in the top 10 of most visited sites on the web worldwide. Though Wikipedia curates its information in a different manner. Rather than having a group of experienced professionals judge what the public reads, Wikipedia lays its trust in the hands of its large collective. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people contribute to the creation of information content on the online platform. Although proven accurate, there still is a vast amount of criticism against the unprofessional judgement of

the hive mind. As every system, Wikipedia's content management has its flaws. There is a bias towards male biographies, a western point of view, and persistence usually gets one's opinion through. The academic world has devoted many studies dedicated to its maker community, the content, and cultural trends. However, little has been focussed on the passive user, the consumer of all this information.

Wikipedia has a tremendous impact on the believes of the world's population and has a responsibility for curating a shared worldwide perspective. So how is Wikipedia dealing with this responsibility? Most of the website's focus is towards the quality of the information. But from a communication design point of view, it is clear that the medium has a great influence on the message too. What is the message of Wikipedia and how does it supplement its content? This thesis focusses on the way the information is produced, communicated, and perceived, and explores the role of the interface design at its centre.

# INTRODUCTION

*This thesis is divided into two phases. Phase one builds towards a project brief that subsequently phase two executes.*

*The first phase starts with a brief history and description of the Wiki concept and where Wikipedia came from. This part is followed by Wikipedia's mission and how this affects the nature of its content and the choices the platform makes to present its content. From this, a more detailed analyses focused on its functioning and the layers of the interface is executed. The history of its interface and the current structure are very much focused on the objective presentation of information, hiding the human nature of the decision process. Academic literature is focused on accessing the quality of Wikipedia's product but pays remarkably little attention to the display of information.*

*The hypothesis that its users are little aware of the system behind the platform arose. Via a questionnaire, around a hundred participants were interviewed on their use of Wikipedia which confirmed that very few look beyond the article page, though most did question the veracity of the information. This resulted in a project brief that proposed the communication of the dynamics behind the article.*

*Phase two describes the process by its iterations and discusses the development of the visual style. The Wikipedia article on toilet paper orientation was accurately examined throughout its history and used as the topic for a communication project. In the result, the complete discussion page is made available to the user via an interactive narrative. A concluding user test verifies the experience according to the design brief and communication aim.*

# PHASE 1

Goal:  
*To understand the nature  
of Wikipedia's information  
and how it reaches its  
audience.*

# HISTORY

01.

## 01.1 WIKI HISTORY

*A wiki is a web-based software that allows all viewers of a page to change the content by editing the page online in a browser (Wikimedia Foundation Mission. (Ebersbach, A., Glaser, M., Heigl, R., & Warta, A., 2008). In general, there are two types of wikis, one is used in closed groups and the other can be accessed by everyone on the WWW. An example of use for a private wiki could be internal documentation for a company. As all employees are able to access and edit the text, the wiki can be kept up to date with the latest developments visible to the whole team. A well-known example of a wiki that is accessible to everyone is Wikipedia, although it has developed a safety barrier and demands users to register with an account.*



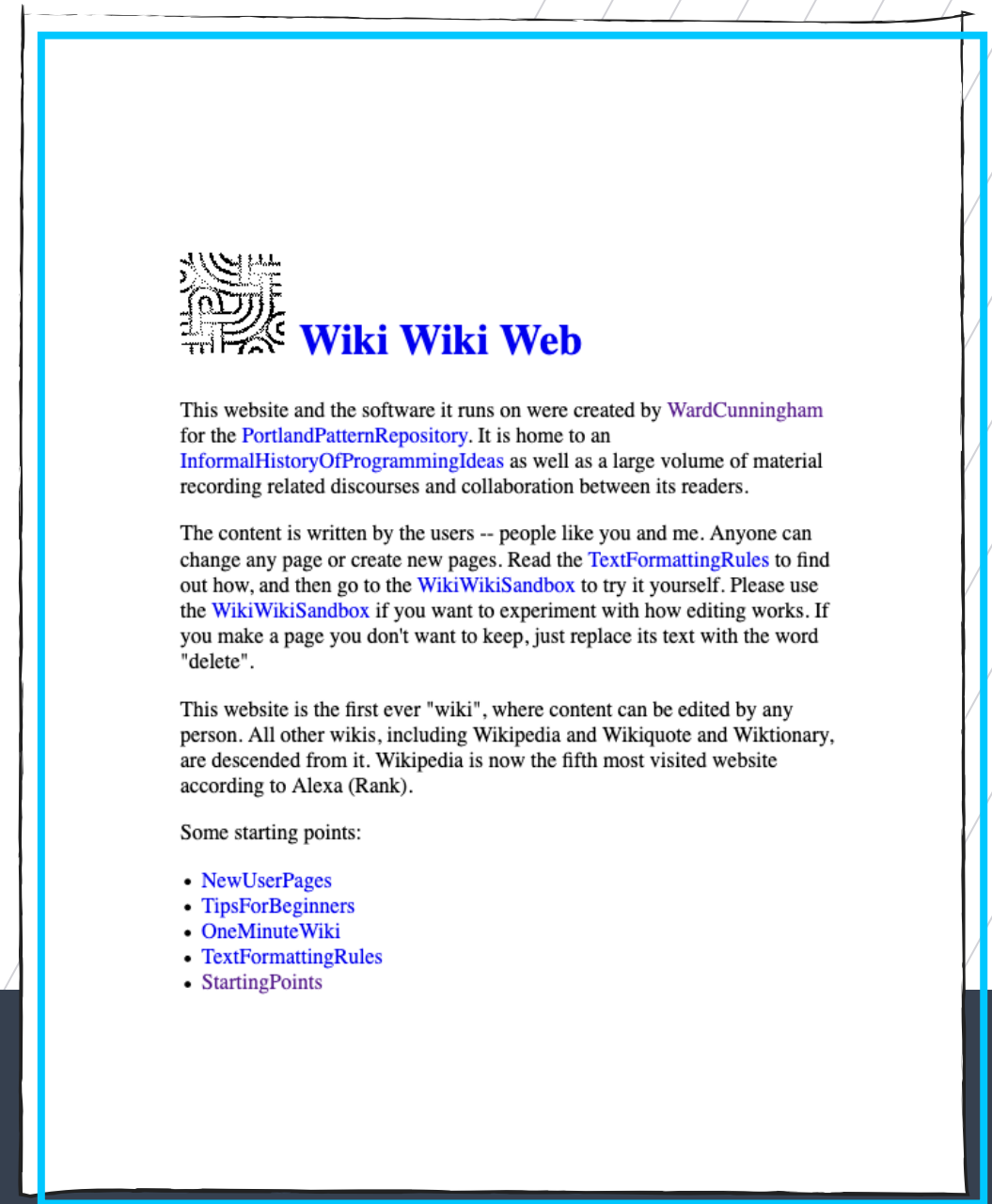


Img 1 : The Wiki Wiki Bus

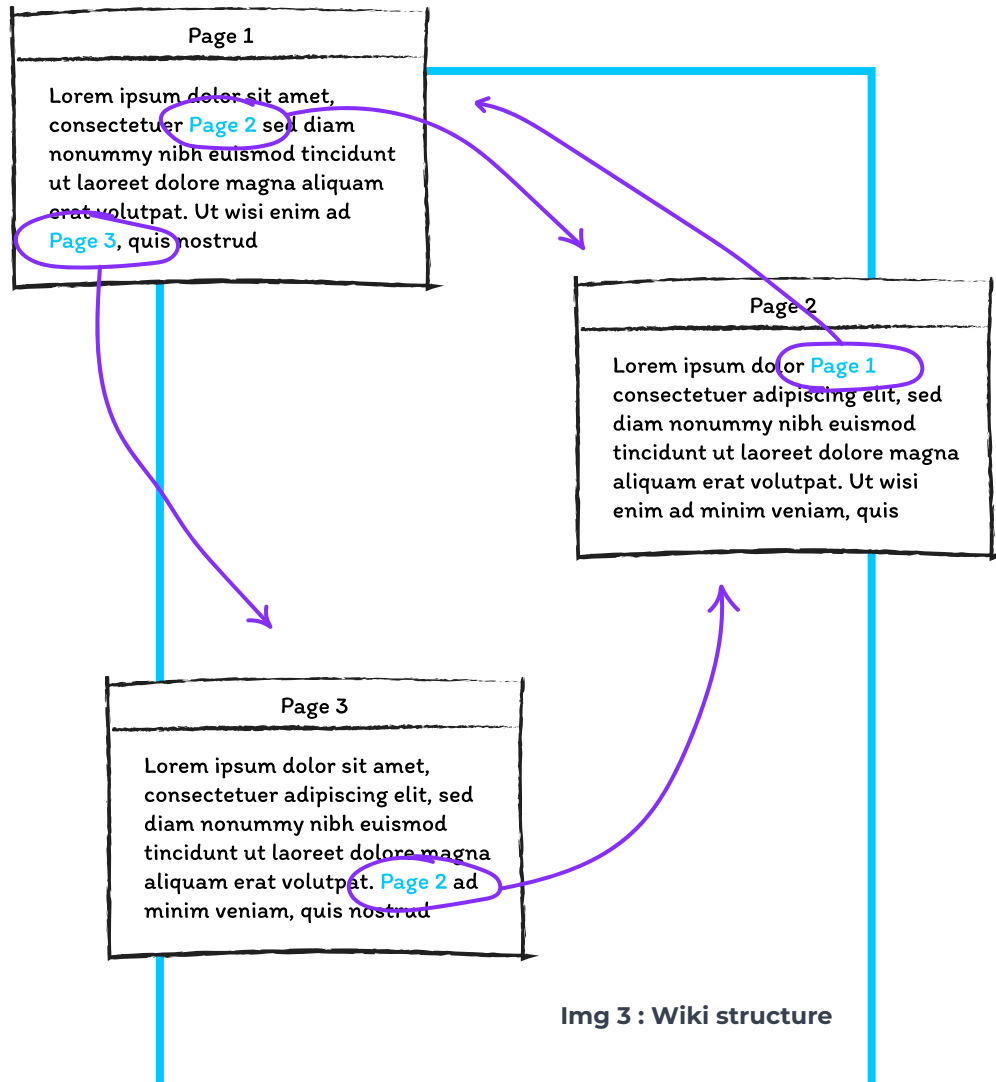


The first wiki was created by Ward Cunningham in 1995 called the WikiWikiWeb (img 2). As a programmer he was looking for a better documentation system. His goal was to create a simple system that could be edited and published immediately and allowed for collaboration. In addition, the software kept track of all changes. The word Wiki means quick of hurry in Hawaiian. Cunningham was inspired by the Honolulu International Airport Wiki Wiki Shuttle bus (img 1) and chose the word as a replacement for quick to describe the web software he created.

According to Leuf, Cunningham called the wiki "the simplest online database that could possibly work" (2001, p. 15). A server runs Wiki-Software and creates wiki pages that can be viewed through a browser like any other website. When an editor writes text for the wiki, this is translated into a database file and stored. If the page is later displayed in a browser, the wiki software translates this database file into HTML and includes it into a pre-designed web template. The technology behind this process can vary. As an example, the database could be a MySQL that is read by a PHP script translating the data into HTML code. In edit mode, the HTML is presented in a pure form such that the editor can send a new version to the database which directly replaces the old version. However, instead of PHP and MySQL, Wikis can be build using many other languages as well. Independent of the language used for the wiki script, all wikis have similar technical functions.



Img 2 : Screenshot WikiWikiWeb



Img 3 : Wiki structure

The image above explains how a hypertext works. Pages are linked via their content, that is, via links on the page that refer to other pages. There is no hierarchy between the pages but instead the complete structure is a complex system. The first hypertexts were purely structured like the image displays. Later Wiki added structure and menus to pages which led to how we know Wikipedia today.

### EDIT

Each wiki has an edit option that is usually open to everyone. Some pages can be blocked from editing or demand extra control such as the wiki policies but in general pages are editable. The philosophy of a wiki is that all viewers can edit content and therefore such a block would be contradicting this idea.

### LINK

Words or articles can be linked to other pages (img 3). The network grows in an organic way according to its use. Wikis are therefore all different and not designed according to a layout. Anywhere a user wants to create a new article he or she can create a new page. If, for instance, a topic emerges within a text that needs further explanation a new page can be made and linked to this word.

### HISTORY

A wiki saves all previous versions of edits. In case unwanted edits have been made or parts that were important have been deleted, the old version can be recovered. The function also allows the study of the progress of a specific page/topic. However, as wikis grow their history takes up a lot of space. Therefore, more modern wiki clones work with a so-called "Diff" function which shows the edits rather than the complete previous version. This is easier to analyse for the author and it saves storage space.

In addition to the above, wiki pages present an overview of their most recent changes. Each wiki has a page with instructions for its users. These vary in complexity as it ranges from a simple read-me to almost an online workshop. An empty wiki page is then provided to practice. This so-called SandBox or PlayGround can be edited by users to test functions without actually damaging the wiki itself. Every once in a while, this test environment is emptied. At last, each wiki provides search function to find information or articles easily.

Cunningham's goal was to create a light program with a simple interface. Therefore, his WikiWikiWeb was just a simple text box where most navigation was included into the content rather than the interface. If the user wanted to navigate, he or she had to return to the main page and navigate from there. The text changes from informative to discussions without clear distinction showing the editors freedom. It is literally a pure form of connected pages that one can click through in any direction without a hierarchical structure or menu. The language reminds of a professional collaborative commenting style used in documentation. Wiki's followed this simplistic style but have developed simple html templates that make more efficient use of the browser space. In addition, there are some simple options included in the template that allow the user to navigate and easily access the commonly included technical functions. Therefore, most wikis will appear to the common eye as similar to Wikipedia

with some minor differences depending on its functionality.

The following pages show four different wikis with their own style and content. On the background these platforms are still structured like a wiki, but the choices made regarding the editing policies and the interface design make them very different from one another.

## 01.2 WIKISPECIES

Database for scientists and non-scientists to reflect the diversity of life on our planet Earth

### INTRODUCTION

And this is what Wikispecies should become: an open, extensive database for scientists and non-scientists to reflect the diversity of life on our planet Earth. Because life is public domain!

### COMMUNITY

Everyone with an interest in biological species.

### INFORMATION

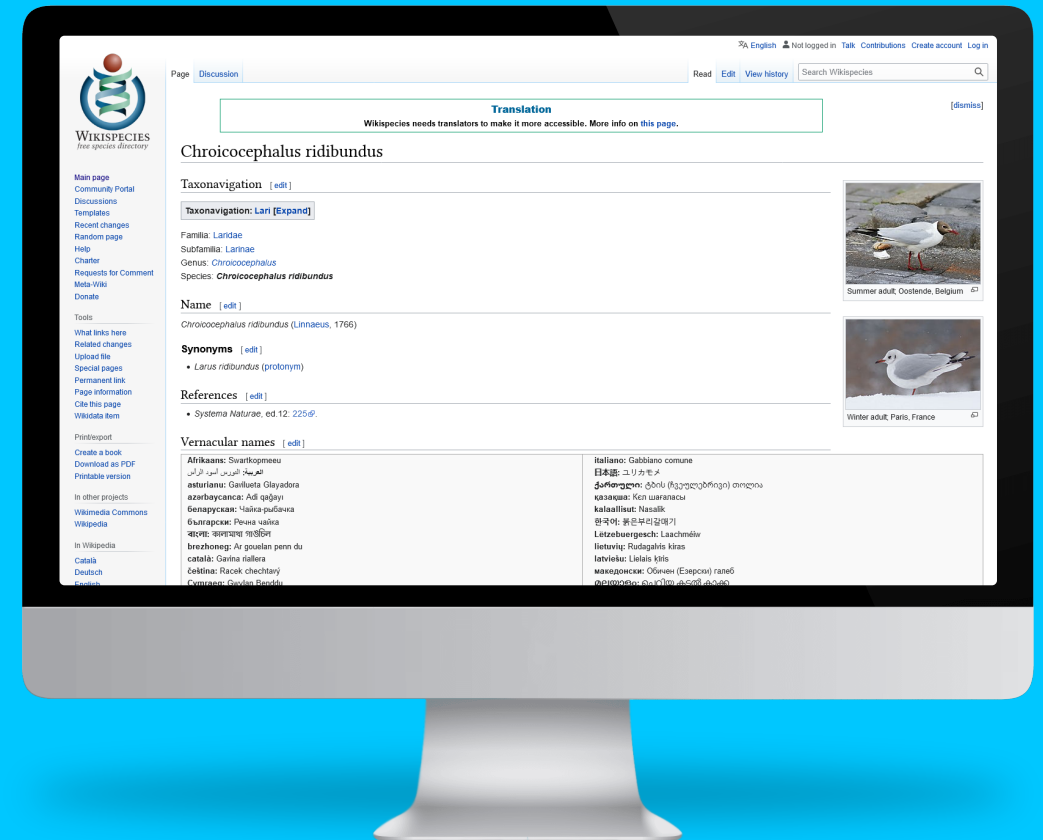
The information is pure biological data, there is barely text. Pages include data, publications, and sometimes an image.

### LAYOUT

The layout is the same as Wikipedia. There are the same buttons, menus, tabs, and page division.

### VISUAL STYLE

Also, the style is the same as Wikipedia. The lack of graphic elements makes it feel very scientific. There is thin lines and basic HTML colours remind of purely functional technical information.



USERS  
5/10 Million  
montly views

CONTRIBUTORS  
285 with one or  
more edits

EDITS  
134.000 a  
month

05/12/20

Img 4 : Screenshot Wiki Species

## 01.3 WOWPEDIA

Cataloging Blizzard Entertainment's Warcraft universe

### INTRODUCTION

Wowpedia is an officially-recognized wiki dedicated to cataloging Blizzard Entertainment's Warcraft universe (with a focus on World of Warcraft), covering the entire Warcraft series of games, strategy guides, novels, comics, reference books, and other sources.

### COMMUNITY

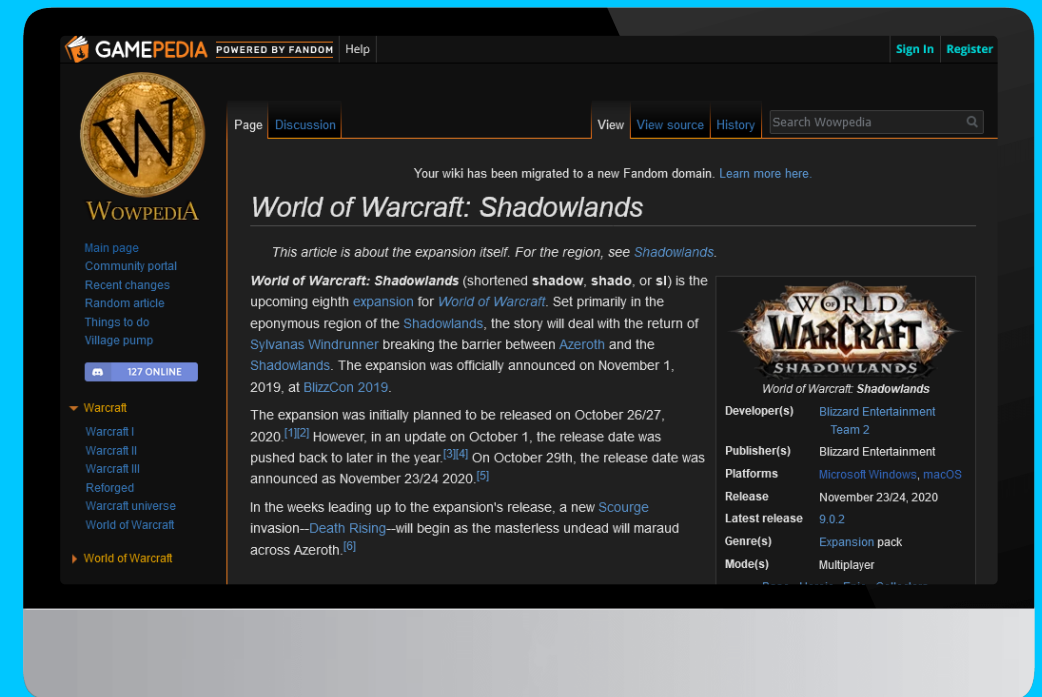
As a community-driven resource, gamers from around the world share and obtain information on Gamepedia wikis (gamepedia). Wowpedia as a part of gamepedia serves the same community but focused on World of Warcraft.

### LAYOUT

The layout is the same as Wikipedia. There are the same buttons, menus, tabs, and page division.

### VISUAL STYLE

Also, the style is the same as Wikipedia. The thin lines and scientific look of Wikipedia and Wikispecies is still there but the colours have been changed to black and orange with white text. Together with the WOW graphics, the style reminds of the gamer/hacker culture.



ARTICLES  
7,292,757

CONTRIBUTORS  
1,293,790

WIKIS  
2,100

05/12/20

Img 5 : Screenshot WowPedia



## 01.4 WIKIHOW

Teaching anyone in the world how to do anything

### INTRODUCTION

WikiHow is a worldwide collaboration of thousands of people focused on one goal: teaching anyone in the world how to do anything. On April 11, 2010, a wikiHow article titled “How to Lose Weight Fast” reached 5 million page views, a first for the site. According to wikiHow, four babies have been born in emergency situations referencing instruction from wikiHow articles.

### COMMUNITY

Everyone can edit.

### INFORMATION

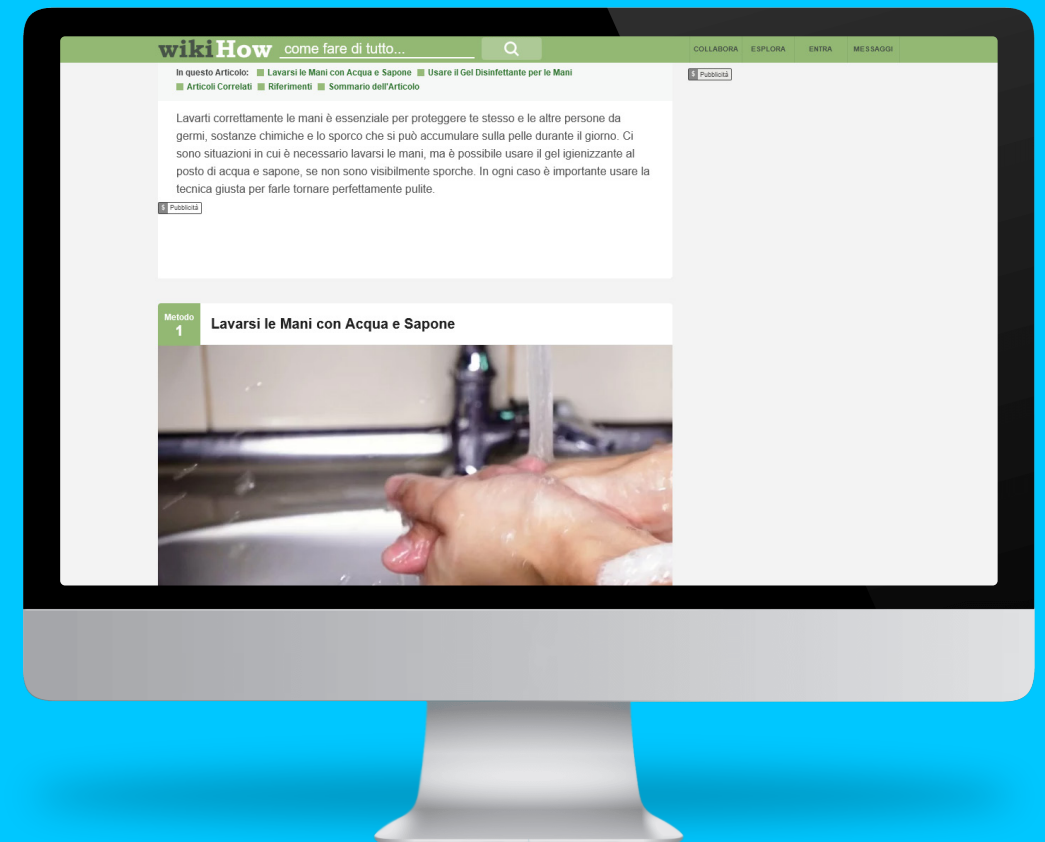
The information is not always as useful and shows how the wiki can be edited by everyone. Pages range from very practical tips to what could be considered personal advice. The website also has a large community of experts that cover a wide range of fields. Their role is to control the quality of the articles.

### LAYOUT

WikiHow is different from the other examples because it uses a clear template for the content. The text is divided in boxes that structure the how to into steps. The website also hides its talk page. Information is presented more constraint than on Wikipedia. One will have to login and open a page editor to get access to the talk page.

### VISUAL STYLE

Very different from a wiki, the information is presented as a sequence of steps with an introduction. The visual language is way softer, green is the main colours and there are no lines. There are also way more visual (photos and illustrations) items to communicate information.



USERS  
2,1 million

ARTICLES  
212,00

05/12/20

## 01.5 LOSTPEDIA

Cataloging Blizzard Entertainment's Warcraft universe

### INTRODUCTION

The Lost-related wiki was launched on September 22, 2005, one day after the Season 2 premiere "Man of Science, Man of Faith" aired. Kevin Croy was the owner of the site, until the site merged with Wikia on December 17, 2008.

### COMMUNITY:

Anyone interested in the American television drama *Lost*. Everyone can edit.

### INFORMATION:

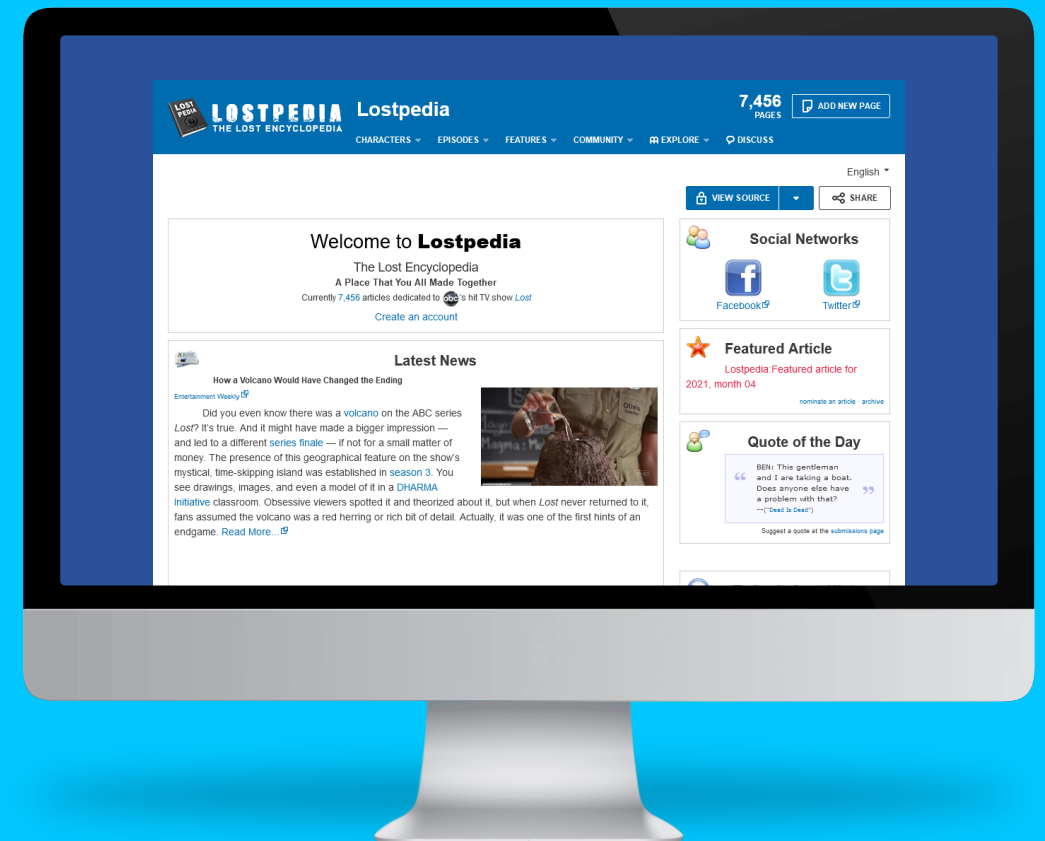
The information is factual about a fictional world. The Wiki covers everything from family tries to storyline. The work of the community is also presented on the side so there is a greater focus on the edits for the consumer.

### LAYOUT:

The content is still similar to a regular wiki with the data box on the top right and a similar text division. Lostpedia however has a different menu that is more conventional to web design. Episodes, characters and seasons can be selected from a drop-down menu bar on the top. The edit button is visible but the discussion and history page are also hidden behind a drop down menu.

### VISUAL STYLE:

The visual style is more similar to a simple website. It contains a background image, a menu bar, and some styling colours.



USERS  
25,000

EDITS  
7,454

05/12/20



## 01.6 WIKIPEDIA HISTORY

In the year 2000 Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger started a knowledge platform called Nupedia as a kind of internet encyclopaedia. The idea behind Nupedia was that volunteers could write public pages about their expertise.

A peer-to-peer system would ensure academic quality maintained by ideally scholars and PHDs. Unfortunately, the production of content went very slow because content was only produced by expert volunteers. Launched in

2000, a year later in 2001 the platform only counted twenty-five articles. With the goal of feeding Nupedia, another platform was created called Wikipedia. Wikipedia's design is much more open to collaboration and allows virtually anyone to contribute. A community of non-experts produces and alters content without administrative endorsement. Content on Wikipedia could be produced way faster resulting in 20,000 articles in its first year.

Like the WikiWikiWeb, Wikipedia started as an unstructured horizontal but linked set of web pages. The first years the website was way simpler in terms of usability. The only organization of articles came from the direct links between them. It took until 2004 when the website template was improved with CSS styling and categories were introduced to organise content and make everything more accessible. The Wikimedia Foundation did not provide a template structure for this process but instead the community organised

it by themselves (Suchecki, K., Salah, A. A. A., Gao, C., & Scharnhorst, A., 2012). Contrary to classic knowledge categorization systems, the Wikipedia web was tagged bottom up. In 2004 a new feature was added to the platform that made it possible to create category pages. These pages basically contain links to articles but no text content themselves as this is not their purpose. The community could now identify links as category links and assign pages to categories. Similar to the development of content, the community organically added a classification system consisting of categories and sub-categories.

Considering the original wiki of Cunningham, little has changed. The setup of Wikipedia, an example for most wiki systems out there, is still a complex hypertextual structure. However, the original WikiWikiWeb can probably be best compared with what now is the discussion page. Ward Cunningham created a shared dialogue in which collaborators shared information in a constructive and informative conversation. It clearly was a discussion with points of view, shared experiences, and ideas provided by users, sometimes anonymous and sometimes not. In the modern wiki, this page is accompanied by a neutral article where all information is presented cleanly and without a tone of voice. This article page is what most people visit if they need any information. Searches on the internet direct to these articles and so do searches on Wikipedia itself. The community therefore clearly shows a preference to presenting this page over the discussion.

**Wikipedia started as an unstructured horizontal but linked set of web pages.**

# 01.7 WIKIPEDIA

We want to make it easier for everyone to share what they know.

## COMMUNITY

Everyone

## INFORMATION

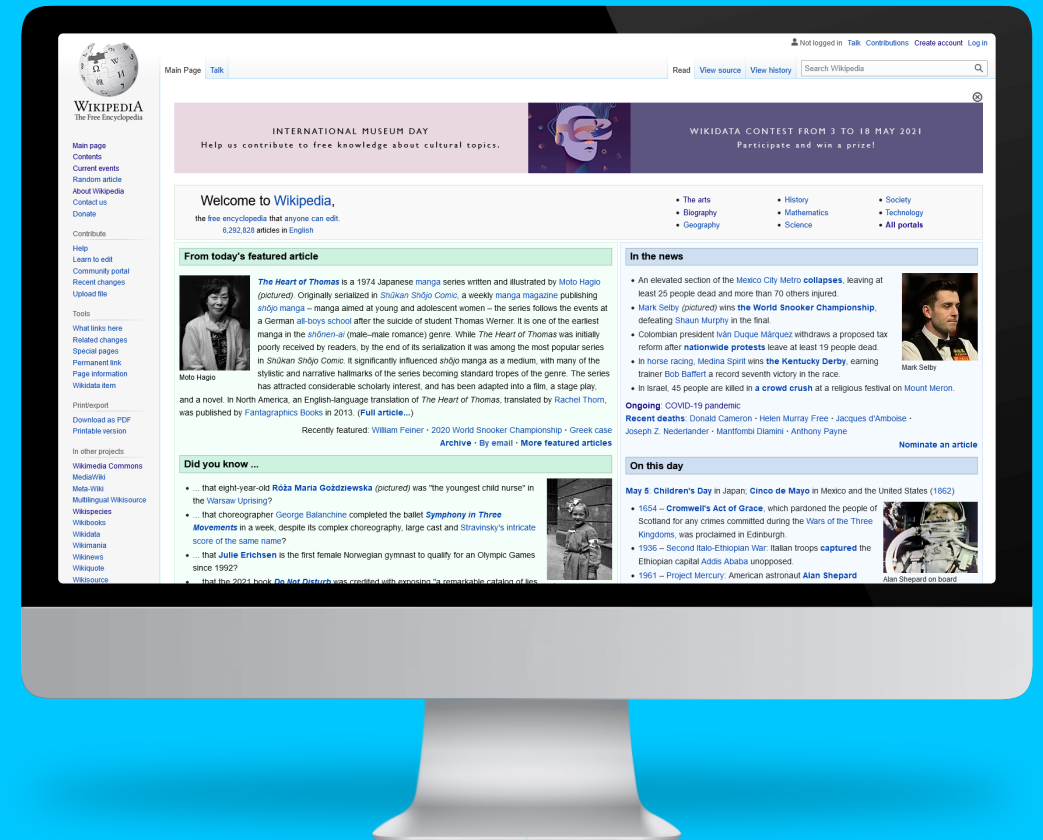
The information is diverse, there is barely text. Pages include data, publications, and sometimes an image.

## LAYOUT

The layout is basic with a menu on the left for different categories and a main page with an introduction on top and different sub topics following that.

## VISUAL STYLE

The lack of graphic elements makes it feel very scientific. There is thin lines and basic HTML colours remind of purely functional technical information.



**USERS**  
41,490,377

**Active registered users**  
140,065

**PAGES**  
53,298,955

**AVERAGE EDITS PER PAGE**  
19.08

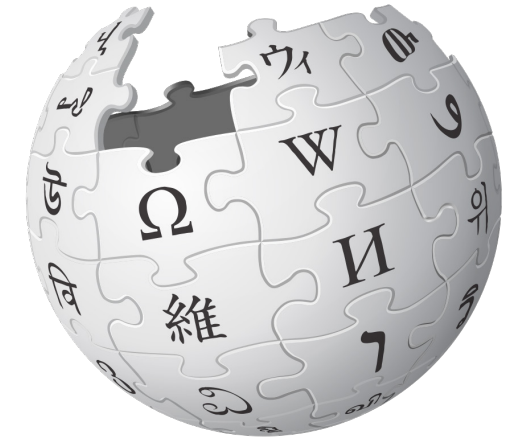
**ARTICLES**  
6,293,328

06/05/21 21:00 CEST

Img 8 : Screenshot Wikipedia

*“We want to make it easier for everyone to share what they know. To do this, we keep Wikipedia and Wikimedia sites fast, reliable, and available to all. We protect the values and policies that allow free knowledge to thrive. We build new features and tools to make it easy to read, edit, and share from the Wikimedia sites. Above all, we support the communities of volunteers around the world who edit, improve, and add knowledge across Wikimedia projects.”*

*Wikimedia Foundation*

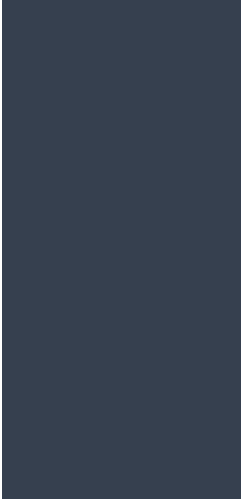


## WIKIPEDIA

Wikipedia is run by the Wikimedia foundation. The organization does not occupy itself with the details of the community but merely facilitates the project together with a series of other Wikimedia sites (Auray, N., Poudat, C., & Pons, P., 2007). On the about page of their website the Foundation starts with the quote on the left. The emphasis is on facilitating people to share their knowledge. To make this freely available is closely connected to the people providing it. Further research brought up a paper from the Wikimedia Foundation stating their vision as “to disseminate open knowledge effectively and globally” (Saez-Trumper, Diego, and Miriam Redi, 2020) Here Wikipedia does not integrate people in their objective. The Wikimedia foundation is not very consistent in the communication of its mission statement. Search results for Wikimedia mission bring up a page dedicated to its mission on what seems to be a sub page of the about section. However, it was not possible to reverse navigate from the about page to this mission statement.

On this about page the mission was stated as written on the right. The word educational is new here and can be interpreted in many ways. What is educational content and how does Wikipedia pursue that? According to Wikipedia: "Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Educational methods include teaching, training, storytelling, discussion and directed research." Thus, it can be said that Wikipedia aims to freely disseminate content for learning. But what can be considered content for learning? It suggests that it is information with affordances that are ideal for learning methodology. The information should lend itself for the process of being acquired or remembered. Without this property the content would merely be content.

Whether Wikipedia achieves this is not part of this study but would make interesting new design cases. It is however important to recognize that Wikipedia values the people who create and consume rather than solely occupying oneself with the construction of the ultimate collection of knowledge. If we shift the focus from the collection of knowledge towards the communication and exchange of knowledge, the people become key. Sharing implies a direction.



*“The mission of the Wikimedia Foundation is to empower and engage people around the world to collect and develop educational content under a free license or in the public domain, and to disseminate it effectively and globally.”*

(Wikimedia Foundation Mission, 2018, September 14)



### 03.1 COMMUNITY

The system of Wikipedia has grown and contains an enormous number of people with different roles that collaborate according to certain rules and behavioral codes. Some help with uploading images whilst others are more focused on writing text. There are people that fight vandalism and others that work on the grammar. Overtime, Wikipedia has structured a hierarchy around all these different roles and defined access to the platform for different types of use. There are over 50 different subcategories for Wikipedia users. We will then discuss the main levels of their responsibility in the next paragraphs.

#### EDITORS

Wikipedians are the main volunteer editors that create the content for Wikipedia. These editors are the readers that have created an account either with their real name or anonymously, and therefore have gained editing capabilities. Within the ideology of Wikipedia all editors are equal, however, some have gained more rights over time by proving their credibility. At a start, the account becomes an autoconfirmed user after four days. From that moment onwards, a user can request additional rights. Examples of these are a rollbacker (who can revert the last edits to a page) and a page mover (who can move pages without leaving a redirect). These additional levels of responsibility are granted by administrators when the requester has proven to be trustworthy and well known with the Wikipedia system.



### ADMINISTRATORS

Editors who have gained special access are called administrators. One who is interested in becoming an administrator creates a request on which the bureaucrats need to reach consensus. However, an administrator may have more access to Wikipedia's functionalities such as deleting pages and blocking editors, he or she may never use these privileges as an advantage. Within any situation an administrator must act as equal. Their task is purely the execution of certain actions based on the trust of the community. Only the arbitration Committee or Jimmy Wales may commission the removal of one's administrative rights.

### BUREAUCRATS

Bureaucrats could be considered a level up from administrators as they have more editing rights. they can hand out or remove administrator bureaucrat statuses. Any action is driven by a consensus within the community and can never be based upon one's personal decisions. Furthermore, they can activate or cancel a bot's status and are expected to contribute with competent judgement based on their experience. The community trusts the bureaucrats with this special level of control as long as they are able to ground their decisions.

**Any action is driven by a consensus within the community and can never be based upon one's personal decisions.**

### STEWARDS

Stewardship means complete access to Wikipedia functionalities, wiki's, and the ability to change all user rights and groups. After group consensus, stewards deal with the technical implementation. In addition, they deal with emergencies and protect Wikipedia against vandalism. Every year stewards are elected by the global community. To become a steward there must be at least 80% support with at least 30 users in favour.

### BOTS

Although there are many volunteering editors actively curating and protecting content, Wikipedia also uses bots to do the simple repetitive tasks. These bots are computer programs that automate functions and interact with Wikipedia as if they were human editors. Examples of their work can be adding templates to large amounts of pages or checking for obvious vandalism. Wikipedia offers many tools for creating bots together with a bot policy.

### 03.2 POLICIES

To manage its content online, Wikipedia maintains three core content policies together with a few secondary ones. On the page which describes these principles, Wikipedia clearly states that these may not be edited based upon consensus. The page may only be edited to improve the application and explanation of the principles.

#### NEUTRAL POINT OF VIEW (WP:NPOV)

All Wikipedia articles and other encyclopaedic content must be written from a neutral point of view, representing significant views fairly, proportionately and without bias.

The objective of the first policy is to create an unbiased encyclopaedia. This goal is at the core of Wikipedia's mission and its complete system is designed and maintained to do so. Soon the community would discover that a neutral point of view does acknowledge that some views are held by more people than others. Hence there was a need to supplement the policy to include other notable views that may be held by a minority. The concept of verifiability was developed to maintain the accuracy of articles. By including sources, different views can be included as long as there is mentioned who holds them and whether it's a minority of majority view.

#### VERIFIABILITY (WP:V)

Material challenged or likely to be challenged, and all quotations, must be attributed to a reliable, published source. In Wikipedia, verifiability means that people reading and editing the encyclopaedia can check that information comes from a reliable source.

However, this new policy resulted in editors combining sources to promote minorities or even support their personal point of view. The use of sources needed guides to prevent users from constructing a point of view. The no original research policy was therefore introduced in 2003.

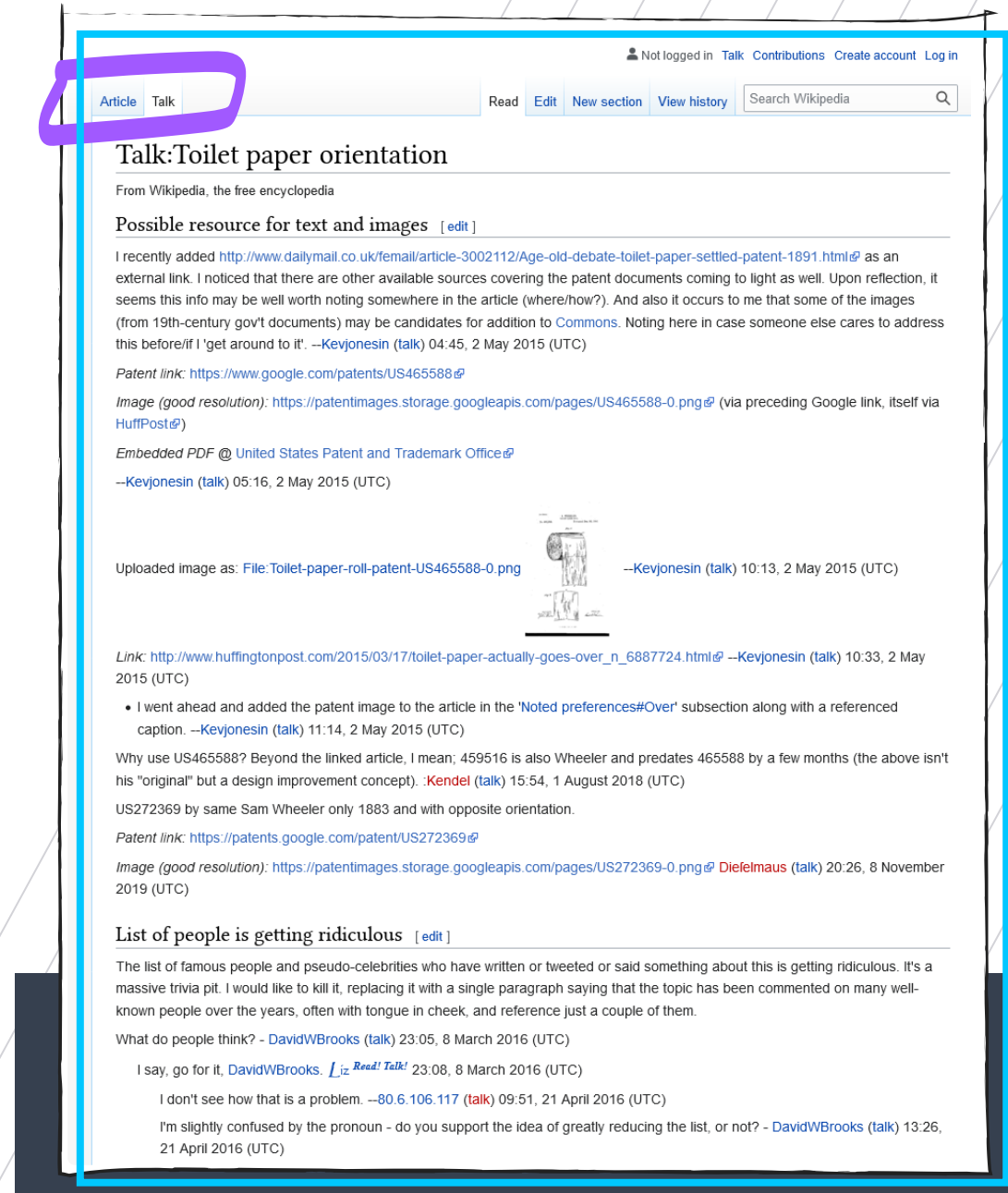
#### NO ORIGINAL RESEARCH (WP:NOR)

Wikipedia does not publish original thought: all material in Wikipedia must be attributable to a reliable, published source. Articles may not contain any new analysis or synthesis of published material that serves to advance a position not clearly advanced by the sources.

### 03.3 TALK PAGES

The main dialogue of Wikipedia takes place on the talk pages (img 9). These pages allow for the ongoing debate on every topic. The talk page is a second page part of every topic where Wikipedians discuss about the content and different edits. This discussion drives the creation of content as participants collectively assess quality and exchange tasks. Articles go through infinite iterations and the edits are publicly viewed and discussed on the talk pages until a consensus is reached.

The talk page can be reached on the top left of every page via the tab 'talk' and looks similar to all Wikipedia pages. The yello box (img 10) is an example of the information box present on top of most talk pages. Most policies and rules are repeated on top of the page including some page specific information. The box serves as a guide for participants to communicate



Img 9 : Screenshot Talkpage



### 03.4 RULES FOR PARTICIPATION

To guide the online debate and make sure the democratic culture drives an equal collaboration for all participants, Wikipedia maintains a set of behavioural guides that stimulate good conduct.

#### CIVILITY

Rudeness or insensitivity, whether intentional or not, can distract from and interfere with our work. Dispute resolution forums are available when civil, reasoned discussion breaks down.

#### CONSENSUS

Consensus among equals is our only tool for resolving content disputes, and our main tool for resolving all other disputes.

#### AVOID PERSONAL ATTACKS

Do not make personal attacks anywhere in Wikipedia. Comment on the content, not on the contributor. Personal attacks damage the community and deter editors.

The three examples above are just a few examples taken from the list Wikipedia presents online. Clearly these 'rules' reflect a focus on content from a collective perspective. Wikipedia stimulates the transcendence of the individual and aim for the quality of content. Applying these roles in the talk pages means that the discussion maintains civil

This is the **talk page** for discussing improvements to the **Toilet paper orientation** article. This is **not** a forum for general discussion.

- Put new text under old text. [Click here to start a new topic.](#)
- Sign your posts by typing four tildes ( ~~~~ ).
- New to Wikipedia? Welcome! [Learn to edit](#), get [help](#).

- Assume good faith
- Be polite and avoid personal attacks
- Be welcoming to newcomers
- Seek dispute resolution if needed

**Article policies**

- No original research
- Neutral point of view
- Verifiability

Find sources: [Google](#) (books · news · newspaper · reference · FENS · JSTOR · NYT · TWL)

**Archives:** [Index](#), [1](#), [2](#)

**Article milestones** [show]

 This article is within the scope of **WikiProject Sociology**, a collaborative effort to improve the coverage of [sociology](#) on Wikipedia. If you would like to participate, please visit the project page, where you can join the [discussion](#) and see a list of open tasks. [Society portal](#)

**B** This article has been rated as **B-Class** on the project's [quality scale](#).

**Low** This article has been rated as **Low-importance** on the project's [importance scale](#).

**This article has been mentioned by multiple media organizations:** [hide]

-  Alexis Kleinman, Maxwell Strachan (14 January 2015). "The 49 Most Entertaining Wikipedia Entries Ever Created". The Huffington Post. Retrieved 8 March 2015.
- Mark Hill (21 February 2013). "Top 10 Worst Wikipedia Pages & Articles". TopTenz. Retrieved 22 Sep 2015.
- Isha Bassi (27 March 2018). "24 Weird AF Wikipedia Pages That'll Make You Say, 'Wait, This Actually Exists?!'". Retrieved 27 March 2018.

Img 10 : Screenshot Talkpage infobox

and productive. In addition, these rules can be used to assess behaviour and intervene if needed. The community can, as objectively as possible, motivate their reasons to restrict or ban access for misbehaving users.

### 03.5 TAGGING

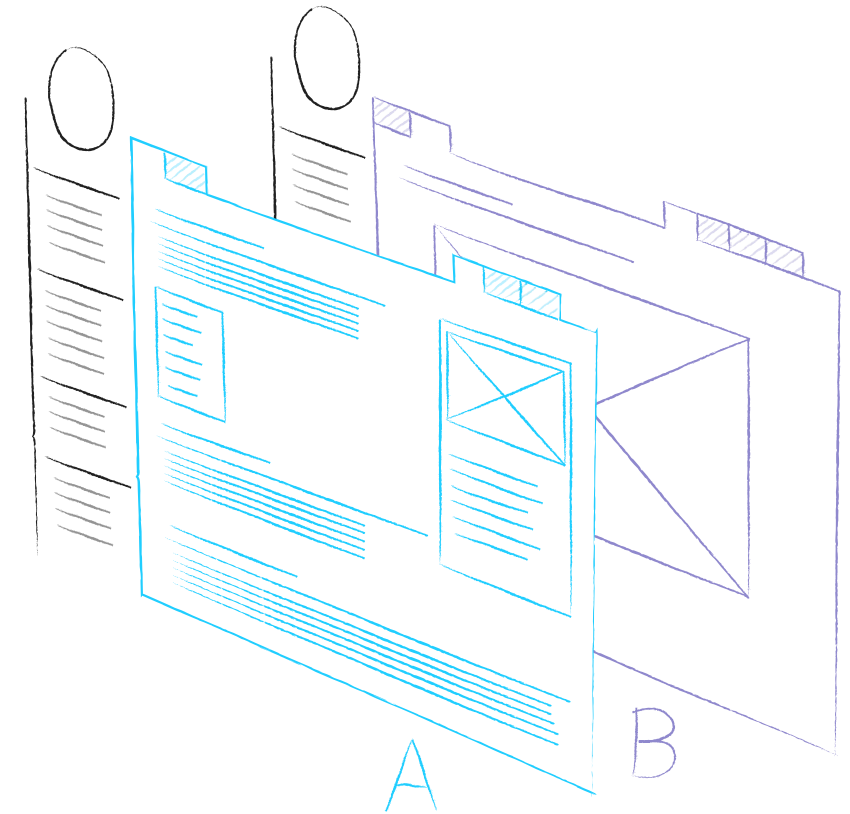
Wikipedia uses a system of tags to improve the quality of its content. Users leave tags on pages that signal a certain problem which others can find and resolve. The tags show up on top of an article to notify both types of users that there may be something wrong with the information. They may concern a whole page or address a specific line. For example, uses for these tags are badly written texts, lack of sources, personal interests, dead source link, etc; all meant to initiate improvement (img 11). Logged in to Wikipedia, a user can search for these tags and improve them.

Tag	Text that will be shown (and usage notes)
<span>{{abbreviations}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>uses abbreviations that may be confusing or ambiguous</b> . There might be a discussion about this on the talk page. Please improve this article if you can. <a href="#">Learn how and when to remove this template message</a>
<span>{{advert}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>contains content that is written like an advertisement</b> . Please help improve it by removing promotional content and inappropriate external links, and by adding encyclopedic content written from a neutral point of view. <a href="#">Learn how and when to remove this template message</a>
<span>{{buzzword}}</span> category links talk edit	This article appears to contain a <b>large number of buzzwords</b> . There might be a discussion about this on the talk page. Please help improve this article if you can.
<span>{{cleanup-PR}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>reads like a press release or a news article and is largely based on routine coverage or sensationalism</b> . Please expand this article with properly sourced content to meet Wikipedia's quality standards, event notability guideline, or encyclopedic content policy.
<span>{{cleanup tense}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>does not follow Wikipedia's guidelines on the use of different tenses</b> . Please consider copy editing to past tense if historic, present tense if not time-based (e.g. fiction), or future tense if upcoming. <a href="#">Learn how and when to remove this template message</a>
<span>{{debate}}</span> category links talk edit	This article is <b>written in the style of a debate rather than an encyclopedic summary</b> . It may require cleanup to meet Wikipedia's quality standards and make it more accessible to a general audience. Please discuss this issue on the talk page. <a href="#">Learn how and when to remove this template message</a>
<span>{{essay-like}}</span> category links talk edit	This article is <b>written like a personal reflection, personal essay, or argumentative essay</b> that states a Wikipedia editor's personal feelings or presents an original argument about a topic. Please help improve it by rewriting it in an encyclopedic style. <a href="#">Learn how and when to remove this template message</a>
<span>{{example farm}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>may contain indiscriminate, excessive, or irrelevant examples</b> . Please improve the article by adding more descriptive text and removing less pertinent examples. See Wikipedia's guide to writing better articles for further suggestions.
<span>{{how-to}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>contains instructions, advice, or how-to content</b> . The purpose of Wikipedia is to present facts, not to train. Please help improve this article either by rewriting the how-to content or by moving it to Wikiversity, Wikibooks or Wikivoyage.
<span>{{inappropriate person}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>uses first-person ("I", "we") or second-person ("you") inappropriately</b> . Please rewrite it to use a more formal, encyclopedic tone. <a href="#">Learn how and when to remove this template message</a>
<span>{{like resume}}</span> category links talk edit	This biographical article is <b>written like a résumé</b> . Please help improve it by revising it to be neutral and encyclopedic.
<span>{{manual}}</span> category links talk edit	This article is <b>written like a manual or guidebook</b> . Please help rewrite this article from a descriptive, neutral point of view, and remove advice or instruction. <a href="#">Learn how and when to remove this template message</a>
<span>{{obituary}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>reads like an obituary</b> . Wikipedia is not a memorial site and articles should have a neutral point of view. Please help edit it to help achieve neutrality, or discuss changes on the talk page. <a href="#">Learn how and when to remove this template message</a>
<span>{{over-quotation}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>contains too many or overly lengthy quotations for an encyclopedic entry</b> . Please help improve the article by presenting facts as a neutrally worded summary with appropriate citations. Consider transferring direct quotations to Wikiquote.
<span>{{opacous}}</span> category links talk edit	This article contains wording that <b>promotes the subject in a subjective manner without imparting real information</b> . Please remove or replace such wording and instead of making proclamations about a subject's importance, use facts and attribution to demonstrate that importance. <a href="#">Learn how and when to remove this template message</a>
<span>{{pro and con list}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>contains a pro and con list</b> , which is sometimes inappropriate. Please help improve it by integrating both sides into a more neutral presentation, or remove this template if you feel that such a list is appropriate for this article.
<span>{{repetition}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>may contain too much repetition or redundant language</b> . Please help improve it by merging similar text or removing repeated statements. <a href="#">Learn how and when to remove this template message</a>
<span>{{research paper}}</span> category links talk edit	This article is <b>written like a research paper or scientific journal that may use overly technical terms or may not be written like an encyclopedic article</b> . Please help improve it by rewriting it in an encyclopedic style. <a href="#">Learn how and when to remove this template message</a>
<span>{{review}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>reads like a review rather than an encyclopedic description of the subject</b> . Please help improve this article to make it neutral in tone and meet Wikipedia's quality standards.
<span>{{speculation}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>possibly contains unourced predictions, speculative material, or accounts of events that might not occur</b> . Information must be verifiable and based on reliable published sources. Please help improve it by removing unourced speculative content. <a href="#">Learn how and when to remove this template message</a>
<span>{{story}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>reads more like a story than an encyclopedia entry</b> . To meet Wikipedia's quality standards and conform to the neutral point of view policy, please help to introduce a more formal style and remove any personally invested tone.
<span>{{technical}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>may be too technical for most readers to understand</b> . Please help improve it to make it understandable to non-experts, without removing the technical details. <a href="#">Learn how and when to remove this template message</a>
<span>{{tone}}</span> category links talk edit	This article's <b>tone or style may not reflect the encyclopedic tone used on Wikipedia</b> . See Wikipedia's guide to writing better articles for suggestions. <a href="#">Learn how and when to remove this template message</a>
<span>{{travel guide}}</span> category links talk edit	This article is <b>written like a travel guide rather than an encyclopedic description of the subject</b> . Please help improve it by rewriting it in an encyclopedic style. If a travel guide is intended, use of Wikivoyage is strongly suggested.
<span>{{verbosity}}</span> category links talk edit	This article's <b>text uses more words than are necessary</b> . Please help improve this article by using fewer words whilst keeping the content of the article.

**Structure, formatting and sections** [ edit ]  
See also: [Help:Section](#), [Wikipedia Manual of Style \(headings\)](#), and [Wikipedia Manual of Style/Layout](#)

Tag	Text that will be shown (and usage notes)
<span>{{cleanup reorganize}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>may be in need of reorganization to comply with Wikipedia's layout guidelines</b> . Please help by editing the article to make improvements to the overall structure. <a href="#">Learn how and when to remove this template message</a>
<span>{{copy edit}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>may require copy editing for grammar, style, cohesion, tone, or spelling</b> . You can assist by editing it. <a href="#">Learn how and when to remove this template message</a>
<span>{{duplication}}</span> category links talk edit	This article <b>duplicates the scope of other articles</b> . Please discuss this issue on the talk page and edit it to conform with Wikipedia's Manual of Style.

Img 11 : Screenshot Tag list

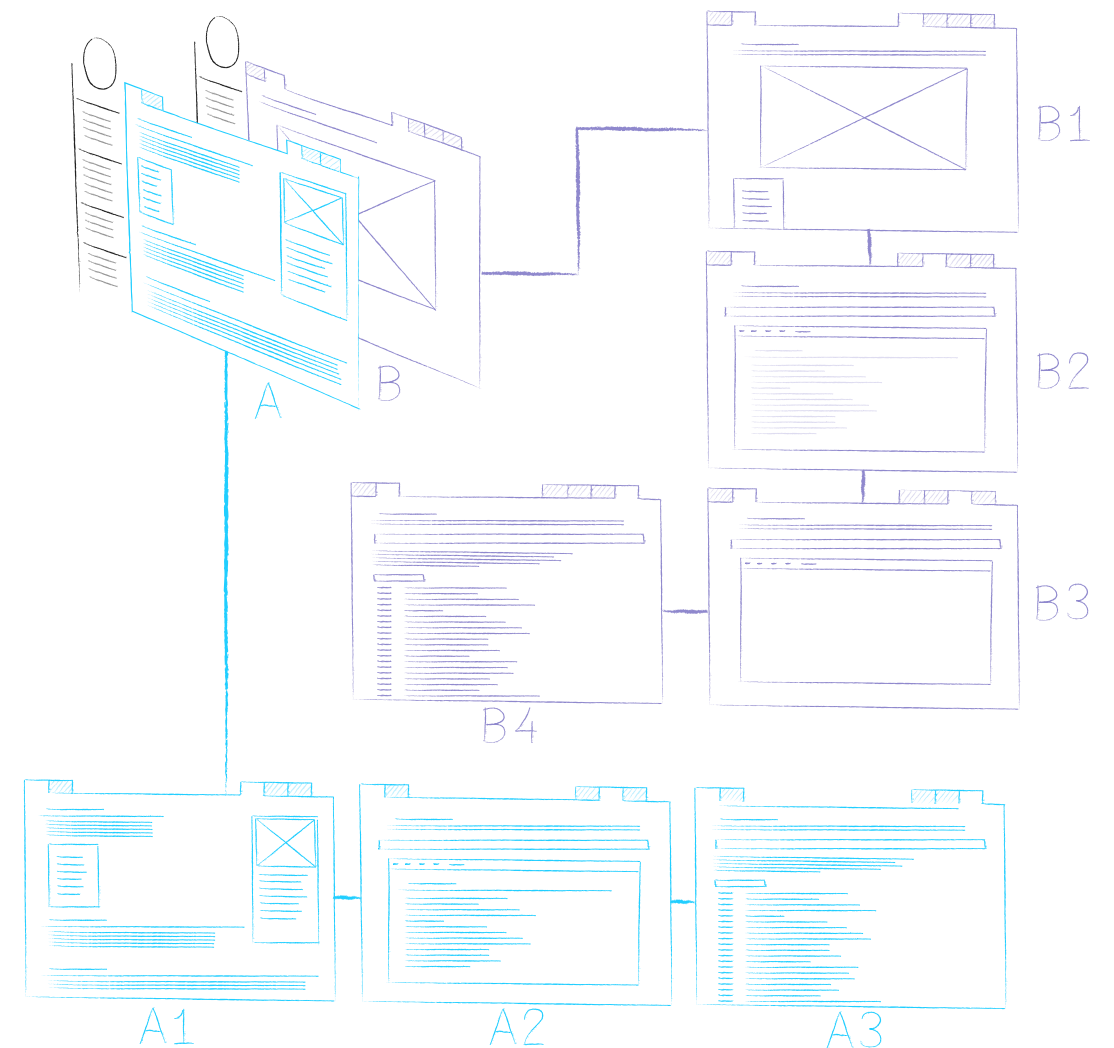


Img 12 : Wikipedia page layout

The interface of Wikipedia is very open and simplistic, and seems fully focussed on accomodating its editors. The complete page of an article is free to edit. All structure therefore is created by its editors. Also, the setup of any page is the same. Every page has an article (A) and a discussion (B) (img 12), and both have their own read, edit, and history view (img 13). This plan is used for all pages, including their own policies and rules. That means that every page can be edited and discussed, however, some will be more strictly controlled or blocked from changing to ensure consistency of Wikipedia's use. Nonetheless, the layout remains the same throughout the whole website which proves how horizontal the organization is. There literally are no non-co-created pages.

**Probably it is best to approach Wikipedia as an encyclopaedia where every page has a forum page attached to it.**

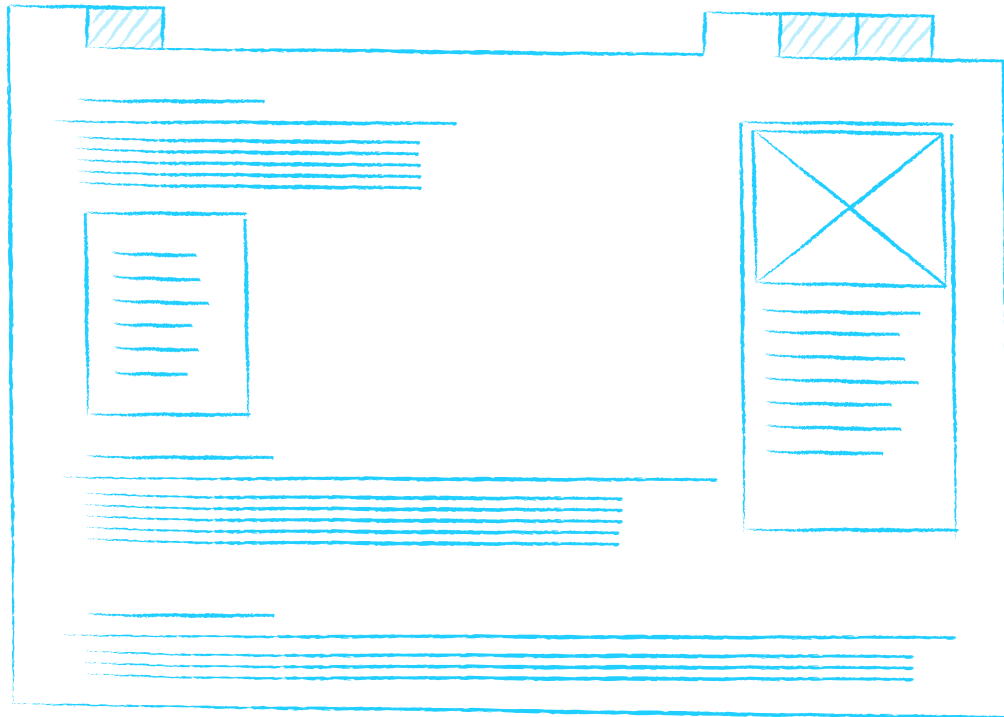
Obviously, it is also part of the identity of Wikipedia to present information on a separate page. They identify themselves as an encyclopaedia and not as a forum. Probably it is best to approach Wikipedia as an encyclopaedia where every page has a forum page attached to it. There is also a fundamental difference between the two in presenting information, which also can be observed between the talk and discussion page. On a forum or in a dialogue, whether participants are anonymous or not, the text is structured according to who says what, that is, by messages. The users maintain their individuality through separation. On the article page their identity dissolves and the work they produce becomes one entity. This is like a physical manifestation of collaboration in which the subject of the process is constructed as a uniform result in the centre of the group. Google Docs works in a very similar way and those who have used this know how multiple people can work on a text simultaneously and make all different phrases blend in to one consistent text. This text is the product of a collaborative process that is absent in a forum. As of any collaboration, the sense of being part of something, and working on something greater than the sum of the parts is important. Wikipedia stimulates the quality of a well written page; the community demonstrates a similar level of care for the group work through their comments in the discussion page (Lanier, J., 2006). It can therefore be assumed that this centralised result is essential to the motivation of the community and allows participants to experience a sense of pride.



**Img 13 : Wireframe Wikipedia article structure**

Back to the interface, because both the article and the discussion page have a similar structure for editing as well. Both the Article A and the talk page B have an editor A2 and B2 and a history page A3 and B4. The user enters the page on A1 and can find the talk page via a tab on the top left. Both pages provide access to their editor and history pages via the tabs on the top right.



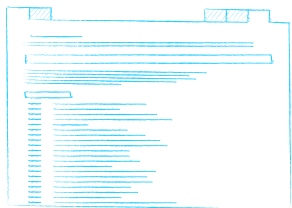


Img 14 : Wireframe article

A1



A2



A3

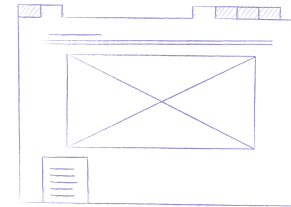
The article usually has a standard format with an introduction on the top followed by a table of contents that can be clicked to navigate to that specific subtopic (img 14). On the right, a box with information is displayed, if available. This information is connected with the WikiData platform, that will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on literature. The rest of the article contains sub chapters that the interface represents by a title, followed by a line the width of the page, followed by the text. Images are presented on the right. On the bottom of the page one can find notes and references to the links used to write the article. Any additional page information with regards to the structure and classification within Wikipedia follows at the end.

The talk page is structured the same. On top there is a box with article information and Wikipedia rules presented earlier in (img 10). The rest of content follows the same header and line structure as the article, however,

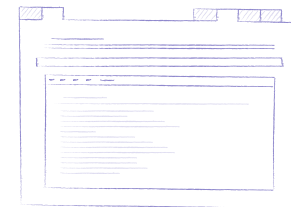


Img 15 : Wireframe history

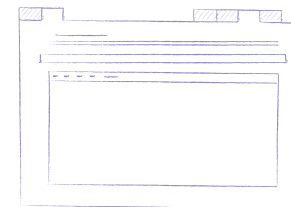
B4



B1



B2

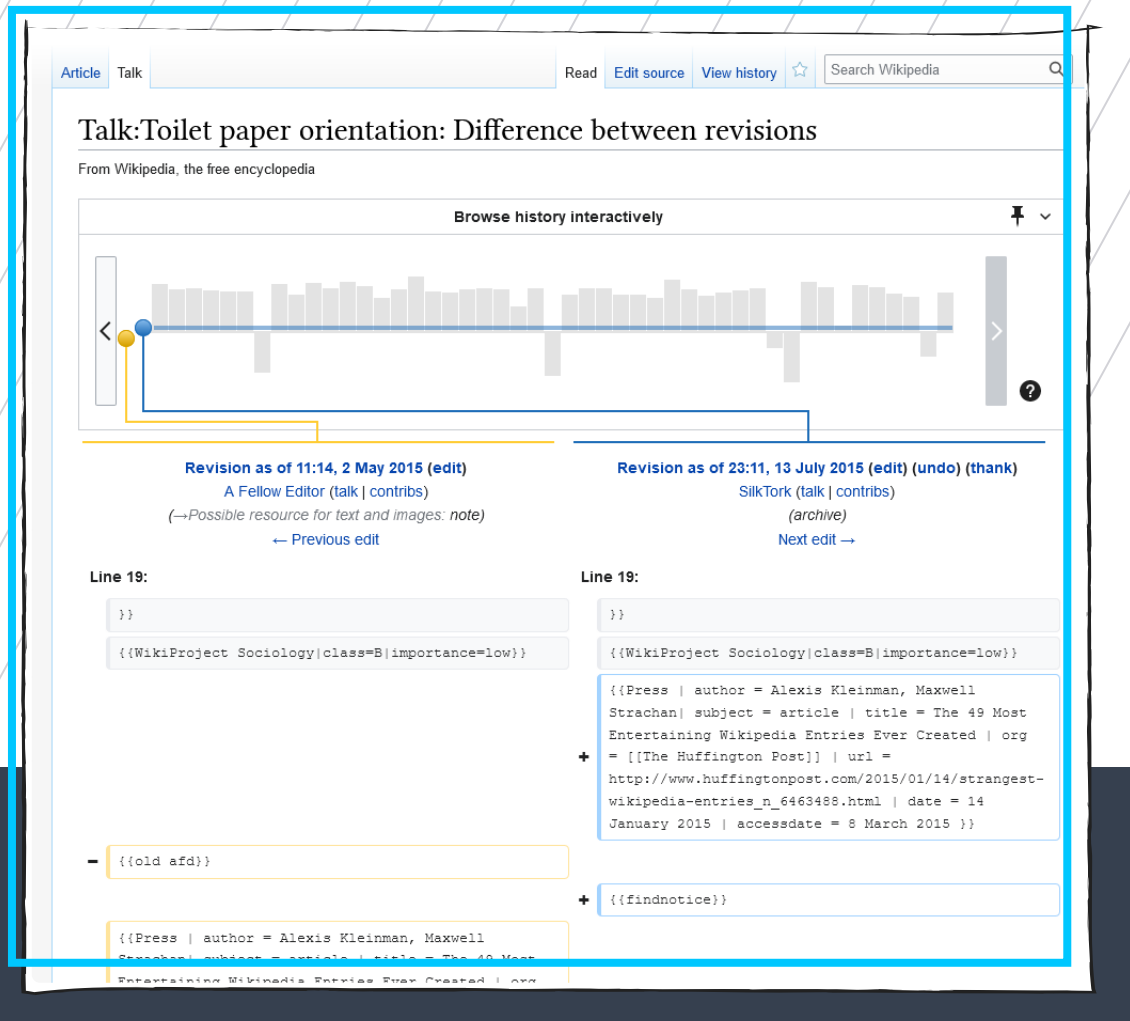


B3

reactions on previous comments are made by a left indent. There are no information boxes and images are displayed at with the comment as part of the text.

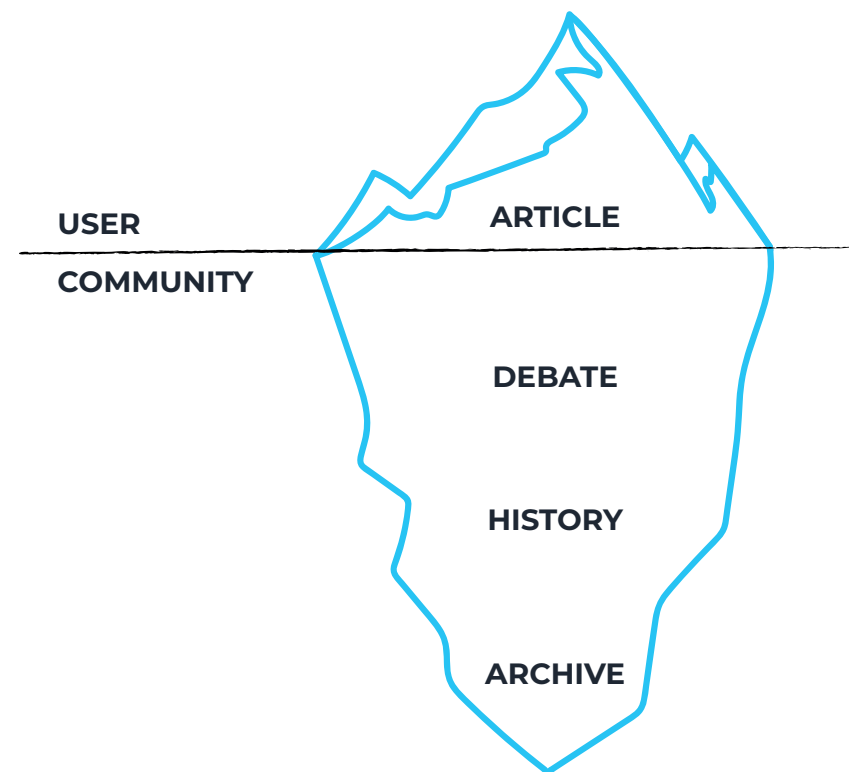
The editor of A2, B2, and B3 is a box where either new content can be coded, or existing coding can be edited. There are basic text editor options on the top of the window and more extensive editing can be executed with better knowledge of the Wikipedia platform.

A more important page to which little attention has been given in this thesis is the history page (img 15). Every edit of the article is registered on the history page with a date and the person responsible. Clicking the edit brings one back to the page in that moment of time with the option to go to the previous or next edit. Unfortunately, the page is little self-explanatory and does not motivate its use. Little information on the edit is provided and going through the history therefore takes a lot of manual search work. It is however



Img 16 : Screenshot edit history

possible to compare two edits in time side by side and see the amount of data change on a timeline (img 16). This interface is similar to the wayback machine discussed later in this thesis (page 115). From this timeline, certain behaviour can be predicted. For example, during my research into the toilet paper orientation page, I went through the history. After an extensive review of pages, I could recognise edits that were removed and directly placed back and edits that removed the whole page. The size of the rhythm of the graph gives away what kind of edit was executed.



Img 17 : Page metaphor

However, for the common user, the current interface of Wikipedia does not focus on its editing (img 17). A clean design with mostly text and descriptive small images insinuates a clearly functional objective. Only those who know seem to be aware of the tabs on top that direct to the page its discussion, history, or editor. Even when one clicks these tabs the information presented upon this action is so raw and almost technical that it is hard to understand at first what one is looking at. The lack of an interface that guides the user in understanding the information presented makes it tiring to take the text in. Clearly these templates originate from the origin of wiki and are aimed at a practiced user. To read the backend of Wikipedia, one must understand how it works rather than that its graphics will explain so.

### 05.1 WIKIPEDIA AS DATABASE

Wikipedia must be one of the biggest examples of a crowdsourcing and a collaborative project where many individuals make small contributions, but the total result is greater than the sum of its parts. Behind this system, a database was developed that is compatible with most of the web. The data displayed on the content box on the top right of a page is directly linked to the corresponding Wikidata item and encourages the collaborative editing of the data. These infoboxes contain a different kind of information that void of all the unstructured text in the main body, is readable by machines. Between 2008 and 2015, the Gene Wiki project has automatically created and maintained around 10000 infoboxes for articles about human genes (Brown, G. R. et al, 2015). This initiative is focussed on the improvement of infobox content regarding biomedical knowledge to enlarge Wikidata to drive new applications. This just an example of initiatives that contribute to the database behind Wikipedia that shows how the Wiki is no longer merely a hypertext but at the same time a digital source for scientific data that can be read by applications and feed machines. This system is kept up to date by bots that periodically check between sources and the data available on Wikipedia (Mitraka, E., Waagmeester, A., Burgstaller-Muehlbacher, S., Schriml, L. M., Su, A. I., & Good, B. M., 2015). The DBpedia project mines this content from Wikipedia by scraping the info boxes and mapping it into their own ontology. The data can be accessed

in their large database and is available for download.

## 05.2 WIKIDATA DRIVEN TECH

These are some older examples of the semantic web of knowledge that grew from Wikipedia. Since the article on platform integration from 2015, many new applications have grown on top of Wikipedia and directly use the information made available by Wiki as their data storage has become much more readable for machines. A 2019 article of Wired (Simonite, T., 2019, February 15) describes how the big tech companies now are using Wikipedia opensource data to feed their tech. Inside the bot-friendly world of Wikidata, every concept is represented with a numeric code dubbed a QID. These numeric labels are also included in content of institutions such as libraries who thereby continuously update the Wikidata platform. Virtual assistants do their jobs better because of this data. Big tech corporates use the data and process it with other sources, but the exact process is kept secret. According to the 2019 Wired article, Apple declined to discuss its use of Wikidata but Siri sometimes cites it as its source. After the Wikimedia Foundation, the non-profit organisation that is responsible for the existence of Wikipedia, called out the tech giants for using the database freely without much in return, each of them donated significant numbers to the platform.

**Big tech corporates use the data and process it with other sources, but the exact process is kept secret.**

**Wikipedia's scale reaches far beyond any database out there, especially due to its variety of information that can be interpolated.**

But the use of Wikipedia does not finish there. The huge tech giants program their intelligent technologies to use Wikipedia as a source to provide us with information. But these systems are simultaneously trained on the data as well. Wikipedia's scale reaches far beyond any database out there, especially due to its variety of information that can be interpolated. It is exactly therefore that the University of Stanford used Wikipedia to train their algorithms for image recognition (Uzkent et al., 2019). Earlier trials with Instagram images libraries did not lead to adequate results which is why the scientists switched to Wikipedia for their vast database. But this example just talks about an image comparison and recognition research program. Currently, Wikipedia is widely used to train language artificial intelligence. Due to the earlier discussed tokens, the AI is able to understand meaning within the huge textual database and can train itself into structures relevant for writing, speech, and other applications with language (Nabi, J., 2019, February 6).

## 05.3 SOCIALLY PRODUCED DOCUMENT

Considering the profound integration of Wikipedia below the surface of our society, its nesting in our daily used services, the projection of its knowledge in the artificially integrated intellect, we must consider the impact of its structure. As written by Cindy Royal and Deepina Kapila from Texas State



**A mega hypertext structure, freely expanding and self-correcting by peer control, shapes according to the minds of its creators.**

University: Wikipedia is more a socially produced document than a value-free information source (Royal, C., & Kapila, D., 2009). It reflects the viewpoints, interests, and emphases of the people who use it. As will become evident from the project following this research, pages on Wikipedia can be edited by anyone always. People do not realise how literally this should be interpreted, on the Toilet Paper Orientation page of the English Wikipedia, many have attempted to vandalise the content. This demonstrates how often vulgar expressions are written to harm the article and usually within seconds this is removed by either a bot or a Wikipedian. However, not always do errors get corrected straight away. For example, a Wikipedia entry was created that falsely implicated John Siegenthaler, Sr. in the Robert Kennedy assassination (Giles, J., 2005). The article was eventually corrected but certain media had already picked up on it. Another example is how well over one third of the Scottish Wikipedia was written by a non-Scottish person in a language he had made up. The editor responsible for the articles has written over 23.000 in the dialect he created. For 5 years his work remained unnoticed, and the damage done is of such considerable scale that the entire Scottish Wikipedia had to be removed or reset 5 years back in time (Ongweso, E., 2020, August 26). Certain examples are mere exceptions, though it demonstrates the open structure of Wikipedia and how eventually a

mega hypertext structure, freely expanding and self-correcting by peer control, shapes according to the minds of its creators.

Many articles have been published on the comparison between Britannica and Wikipedia. The interesting part is the difference in approach. Wikipedia does not claim to be the most accurate, but its special collaborative setup makes it remains up to date. The platform states that they do not aim to have the least mistakes, but the ones that are there will be resolved by the community in a continuous process of evolvment (Wikimedia Foundation Mission, 2018, September 14). However, the curated and organised process of creating an encyclopaedia such as the Britannica, means that content is pre-structured to balance coverage.

#### **05.4 CONTENT BIAS**

The article mentioned earlier by Cindy Royal and Deepina analyses content on Wikipedia on the presence of a bias. In their analyses they compared the article that Wikipedia provides depicting the highlights of each year. There was a strong progression of the length of each article with a dramatic increase occurring starting in 2001. The average word count for the year since 2001 was 90% greater than the average for the entire preceding 100 years. The same correlation with time occurred in the analyses of articles on award-winning films by year. Similar biases were found in terms of country population, where larger

countries had more coverage on Wikipedia. These results show how the interests and representation of the editors effects the content and creates a natural bias.

Another example of the content bias that reflects societal patterns is the poor representation of women in the person category of Wikipedia (only 17% of biographies) (Wikipedia contributors.). The encyclopaedia contains a section on key figures in the world, like the systemic bias in our history, most people represented on Wikipedia are men. A Wikipedia project has been setup to counter this systemic bias and create more content on women. The project proposed possible improvements in style and provides a channel for people to spread the awareness about the issue so that editors can keep their bias in mind. Movements within the community exist on other topics as well.

### **05.5 A SOCIAL CULTURAL MIRROR**

Now, it is clear that the contemporary situation leaves an imprint on the content of Wikipedia it is easy to see the value of this database as a tool to study society and culture. The website makes the complete editing history for every page available for study together with a discussion between its creators. The academic world is continuously studying trends, movements, growth, and many other behaviours in the development of information on the Wikipedia medium. As a platform, completely dependent on the voluntary contribution of its community,

the behaviour is highly connected to social cultural developments which makes the study of its responses so valuable.

As an example, the article: studying collective memories in Wikipedia describes the formation of collective memories in Wikipedia (Ferron, M., & Massa, P., 2011).

**The behaviour is highly connected to social cultural developments which makes the study of its responses so valuable.**

Their study of traumatic events such as the September 11 attacks demonstrates a higher likeliness of edits around anniversary periods compared to regular pages. A clear annual periodic increase of activity in both the discussion and article page can be observed around the date of the events. Although Wikipedia strives to stay clear of personal opinions, the articles and talk pages have also become a place to express grief. The article brings up a series of messages from the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, solely written to express support to the victims of the event.

### **05.6 CONTROPEDIA**

Researchers from different university media studies, one of which was the Politecnico di Milano, have grouped together to create a tool called Contropedia to bring forward the social utterances in the fabric of text. The project approaches Wikipedia with a humanities perspective and aims to dig up controversies in the creation of content. An algorithm analyses a page's editing history and brings out the words that have been touched the most. Similar to Microsoft Word's

review mode, the program highlights the text according to the results from the algorithm. The researchers promote the program for cultural heritage studies and outreach initiatives.

**An algorithm analyses a page's editing history and brings out the words that have been touched the most.**

The project is important to consider because it is an interface that communicates different levels of information on Wikipedia. Its interface brings transparency in the discussion and editing history through its content with a focus on corrections. On the top, a similar history bar shows the edit activity over time for the article. Below the bar, the Wikipedia page is visible with a complete overview including a view window next to it. The overview visualization reminds of code editors like Visual Code Studio that give a similar overview. The page itself has words highlighted with a colour indicating the number of edits. Words can be clicked and will display a history of their edits. Words that are highlighted can often be considered key words as well as show in demo for the Climate Change article (Borra, E. et al., 2015, April). Interesting however, is how the emphasized words are often those that were exempted from editing. The word CLOUD is presented as having “received 6 substantives, disagreeing, edits by 6 users in 6 revisions” but in all these revisions, the word has been the consistent factor in a sentence that has been changed.

That same group of researchers composed an article on Wikipedia as a Cultural Heritage

Gateway and Site in which they use the tool to analyse controversial entries on Wikipedia (Pentzold, C. et al., 2017). Bullfighting is the entry they focus on most as it is considered cultural heritage and thus as a sort of art, sport, or tradition but on the other hand a cruelty that should no longer take place. The analysis of the page was executed on multiple languages which all were written from scratch. These different entries all reflect the culture they were created from within the edits that were made around the most controversial words. The article discusses how in the Spanish entry the word “fighting” repeatedly was replaced by verbs such as “killing”, “murdering” or “wounding”. It is clear how deeply interwoven the culture is within the literal text nuances as well.

## 05.7 ITS EPISTEMIC CULTURE

So, the content of Wikipedia is created in line with certain societal trends and reflects cultural ideas, but this is something that also counts for the realm of science. Obviously, the research that is being done follows certain topics and interests that correspond to scientific developments or societal patterns and sometimes even funding greatly influences what is being researched. Though the two cultures are very different with respect to the knowledge produced, who produces the knowledge and the process by which the knowledge is produced. According to (Wray, K. B., 2009), the two have a very different objective, and aim to produce very different epistemic products. Science aims to

increase what we know and is continuously trying to answer questions that are not yet settled whereas Wikipedia aims to grow with respect to its coverage of what is already known. It presents knowledge already made versus knowledge in the making (science).

Wray also mentions the difference between the producers. Whilst both cultures of peer review, the epistemic culture of science only allows review by other scientists. Scientist work for peer recognition and strongly value reputation within the community. This is why the culture of science is driven by the creation of quality work, as only good research can earn one such a reputation. On

**Wikipedia trusts in the goodwill of the majority of the contributors and the sheer amount of the community ensures that every mistake eventually will be improved.**

Wikipedia, the authors are mostly anonymous and therefore unaccountable for their work. Although a certain level of reputation exists based on previous work and levels of responsibilities, the system aims to equally value everyone's contribution. Wikipedia trusts in the goodwill of the majority of the contributors and the sheer amount of the community ensures that every mistake eventually will be improved. Wray stresses that according to Wikipedia's philosophy, it is unimportant to trust the individual, given that the testimony is provided by the provided sources. However, as discussed before, there is the intention for vandalism for amusement which makes it very important to be cautious.

In order to organize the large community of contributors, Wikipedia maintains a set of

guidelines and policies which includes rules for behaviour, writing guidelines, and content policies (page 52) . Previously this article has discussed the impact of societal and cultural trends on the creation of content, but what about the system itself? Wray described the difference in structure and how the relationships between the contributors differ vastly from the epistemic culture of science. As Marshall McLuhan said, the Medium is the Message, referring to the impact of the medium on the message itself. The infrastructure of the platform directly effects the creation of content. A historical example is how in the 17th and 18th centuries, communication between researchers took place via letters. As communication technologies developed, the exchange of scientific knowledge exchange evolved, and review did no longer take place privately between two people but could be executed on a large scale (Bowker, G. C., Baker, K., Millerand, F., & Ribes, D., 2009). This had a direct impact on the process of creating knowledge.

## **05.8 THE IMPACT OF ITS STRUCTURE**

Research has shown how the rules of Wikipedia and the structure in which the community is organised has a direct impact on the information itself. In controversy goes online, a study is presented on the article on Schizophrenia genetics on Wikipedia. Similar to the article on bullfighting, this topic is controversial in the scientific community and a lot of contradicting research can be found supporting multiple perspectives. It is



important to consider that at the time of the research, the scientific community had not reached consensus on the matter. The article focussed on how the technical architecture of Wikipedia shapes the utilisation of knowledge resources (Wyatt, S., Harris, A., & Kelly, S. E., 2016).

One of the findings on the Schizophrenia page was that it seemed to be important who you are. Editors used personal stories or self-identification as living with schizophrenia to reinforce the legitimacy of their contribution. Others would refer to the rules: no original research or neutral point of view, sometimes even removing subjective comments from the discussion page. Excessive vandalism made that the page was democratically put under protected editing which means that anonymous contributors can no longer edit. The study therefore argues that the article is shaped by the protological following of the rules and the embedded hierarchies and expertise between contributors.

Another finding was that the lack of scientific consensus on this topic made it difficult for Wikipedians to provide an encyclopaedic overview. In the curation of article sources supporting the topic they drew conclusions that were not in the original papers. The article combines a number of studies which unfortunately results in the synthesis of knowledge. In addition, the study shows that access to articles to research was a problem

**The article is shaped by the protological following of the rules and the embedded hierarchies and expertise between contributors.**

for editors. Some papers are only accessible on payment or with accounts. Not only are these sources still included in the article to create legitimacy, but sometimes editors also create links to only abstract pages. The availability or research in general is a problem for the high speeds production of knowledge on Wikipedia which is why the rules are often neglected and the article becomes an ad hoc assemblage of resources.

## 05.9 REFLECTION

Although the list of examples continues, the data mentioned earlier states that Wikipedia outperforms other encyclopaedia by far on scale and accuracy. During my research into the topic, I also was impressed by the size of the project solely created by volunteers. According to me the story has two different sides. On the one hand it is very important to discuss the accuracy and improve the system of Wikipedia. Though, on the other hand we must understand that no system is perfect and that the result of collaborative work is still immensely impressive. In my view, the academic world judges Wikipedia too much on accuracy and the details of its internal discussions. Most of the research was focussed on the content of the page or on the dynamics of the community, little was said about the user and their interpretation of the content.

Considering the collaborative approach of the editing community it is remarkable how little of this is communicated to the mere reader.

It seems as if the purity of text presented honestly and transparently is also the reason why all content seems the same. Consider a discussion page which is also a text document in which contributors just write after each other in the form of a conversation finishing with their name. At first glance, the lack of any graphic distinction between users makes the page look like any other. Only the jargon in titles and content show how that this is a discussion instead of an article.

Jaron Lanier said in an article of Edge, Digital Maoism: In the last year or two the trend has been to remove the scent of people., so as to come as close as possible to simulating the appearance of content emerging out of the Web as if it were speaking to us as a supernatural oracle. This is where the use of the Internet crosses the line into delusion. Lanier refers to the disappearance of the author's voice, discussed earlier in this thesis. The reference to a supernatural oracle made me think about Ed Finn his book, What Algorithms Want (Finn, E., 2017), in which Finn compares the human fascination for the perceived magic of technology with the construction of a cathedral. Wikipedia has more or less transformed its interface into the cathedral of truth, hiding the complex human decision-making process that constructs this truth. Lanier later mentions the prematurity and danger of lowering the expectations we hold for individual human intellects. The impressive technologies seem to outperform

**The appearance of content emerging out of the Web as if it were speaking to us as a supernatural oracle.**

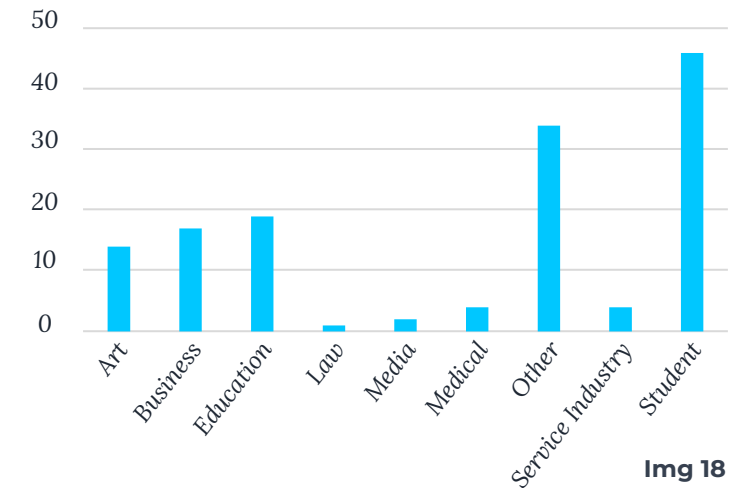
**The information on Wikipedia is incredibly human, though without the rhetoric of the interlocutor we lack the framework to assess its veracity.**

us on facts and information which has made us prefer asking our phones over asking our fellows. The ancient Greeks believed knowledge was fundamentally interwoven with the development of men. Knowing and articulating knowledge, were skills that came with well educated and experienced characters like philosophers. With the evolution of science, knowledge temporarily objectified itself until we recently rediscovered how all information is subject to a frame of reference. The information on Wikipedia is incredibly human, though without the rhetoric of the interlocutor we lack the framework to assess its veracity. Criticizing Wikipedia for its coloured information, biases, opinions, etc is not about its accuracy, its about the lack of honesty in its representation. Transparency with regards to the systemicity of its information is what ultimately provides us with the truth.

To continue that line of thought I started to wonder how much the user knows about everything that is going on behind a Wikipedia page. Sure, people know its open source, but how many of us do actually know what that means? Collaborative, but to what extend? Most people were quite surprised when I told them about the editing vandalism, merely because they did not expect the system to be so open. From these questions I set up a questionnaire, to understand how the user sees the information presented on Wikipedia.



Participants per profession

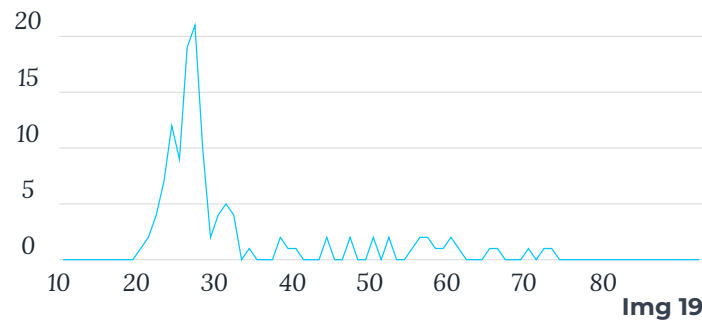


Img 18

### 06.1 RESULTS

To get an indication of Wikipedia use and the perception of its user, a questionnaire was sent out (Appendix A). This questionnaire was spread among personal social circles that cover multiple nationalities. In addition, the questionnaire was spread in both Dutch and Italian librarian communities on Facebook, as well as a series of survey groups. In total, the questionnaire was compiled by 141 individuals. There is a peak in responses around the age of 25 which is probably caused by the deviation of age in my personal social circles (img 19). A large number of responses came from students followed by the group 'other' (img 18). The group other probably represents a large group of engineers present in my social group due to this option lacking in the profession question. Although the objective was there, it has proven more difficult than anticipated to significantly spread the questionnaire and reach beyond one's private bubble. Reading the results, it must therefore be considered having a bias towards academic or higher educated people.

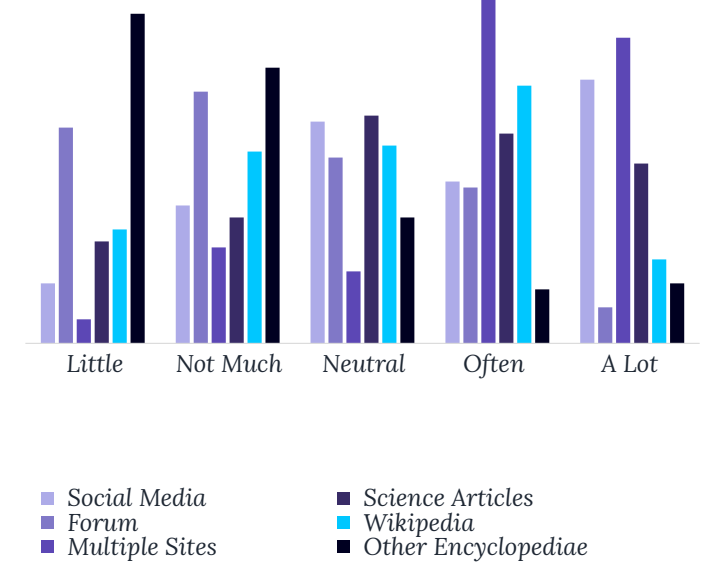
### Participants per age



Img 19

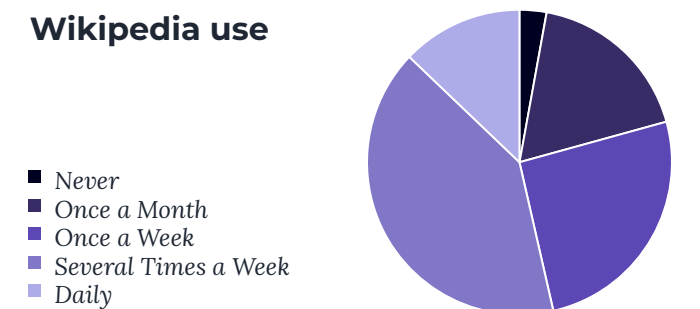
That said, most participants use ‘multiple sites’ to inform themselves with ‘social media’ on the second place (img 20). ‘Wikipedia’ comes second in the category ‘often’ but loses considerably in the ‘a lot’ section. Scientific articles take a clear third place in the highest occurrence. Both ‘forums’ and ‘other encyclopaediae’ are barely used ‘a lot’, however, ‘forums’ is still among the others in the category ‘often’ whilst ‘other encyclopaediae’ doesn’t stand a chance. Most use Wikipedia several times a week and about 13% uses Wikipedia even daily (img 21).

### Sources for getting information

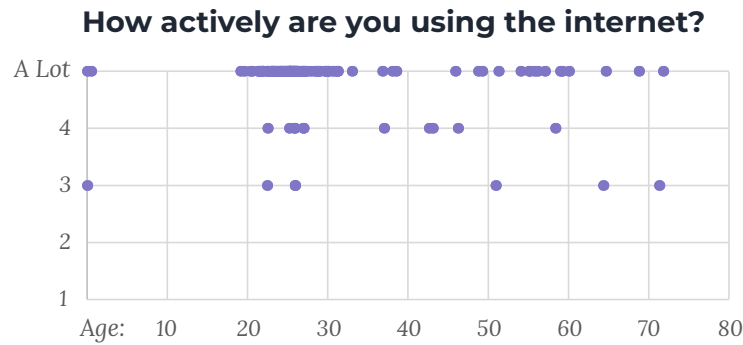


Img 20

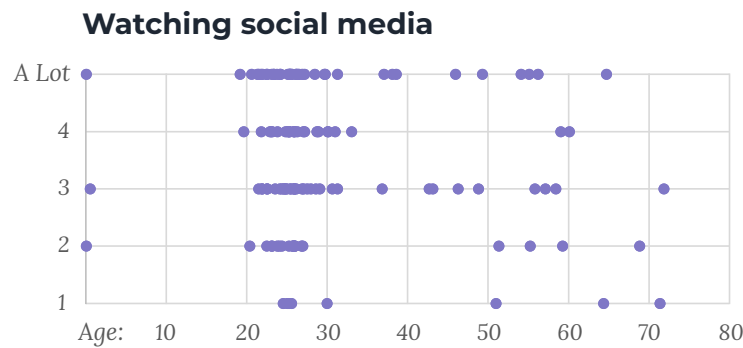
### Wikipedia use



Img 21



Img 22



Img 23

Comparing both the frequency of use of social media and the frequency of use of the internet with respect to the age there was no significant correlation. One might expect to find a drop off at the increase of age, but this was not the case. With the highest density around the age of 25 the responses lean towards the higher end of usage especially regarding the internet with some participants also using little social media (img 22, 23). Throughout the complete age spectrum this division remains similar although between the age of 30 and 50 there are no participants who use either the internet or social media on a

Sezione 1 di 5

## Questionnaire Wikipedia

This questionnaire is part of a master thesis at the school of design at the Politecnico di Milano. The goal is to understand the knowledge of the user about the Wikipedia platform and its interface. Results will be used to inspire and motivate design choices for the proposal of a new interface.

**Date of birth**  
Giorno, mese, anno

**Nationality** \*

Testo risposta breve

**Which industry describes your job best** \*

- Art
- Business
- Education
- Law
- Media
- Medical
- Service Industry
- Student
- Other

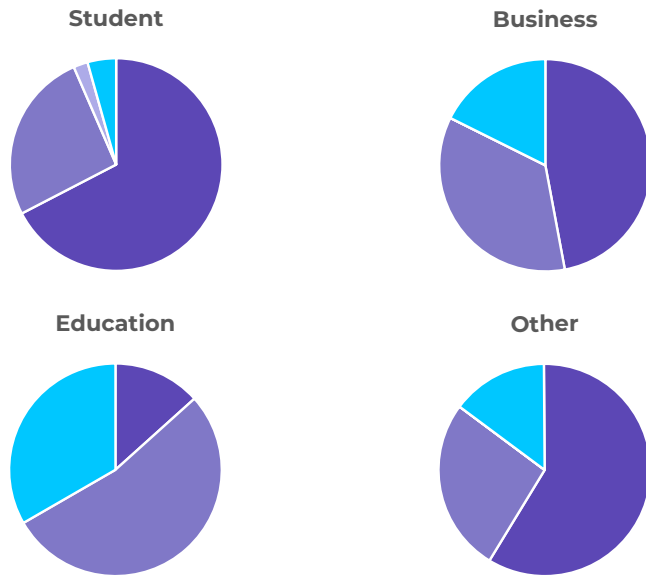
**How actively are you using the internet?**

Little    1    2    3    4    5    A lot

Img 24 : Screenshot questionnaire



Do you ever look at the discussion behind a page on the so called 'talk page' ?



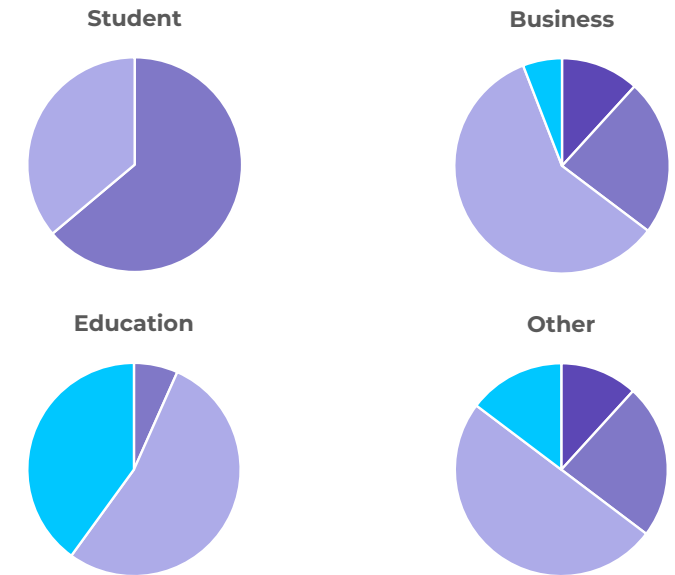
- No, I didn't know that exists
- No, but I know that exists
- Yes, but I didn't know what it was
- Yes, I purposely check the discussion behind an article

Img 28

largest demographic groups: Italy and the Netherlands, the Italians scored a 100% and the Netherlands just 95% on the awareness of the opensource culture. Everyone was aware of the existence of sources with a majority of people using them occasionally to get more information. Generally, the sources are better known in Italy. Similar results regarding the discussion page, the Italians seem to use them more than the Dutch. These results could reflect the difference in the spread of the questionnaire for the countries. My socials probably reach a different audience in the Netherlands as most Italian connections were made via University or the librarian Facebook groups.

Instead of comparing countries, we can also compare different professions. To have a reasonable set of datapoints, only the four main professions among the responses were

Do you ever check the sources of an article?



- No, I didn't know that they are there
- No, but I know that they are there
- Yes, but just occasionally to know more
- Yes, I use Wikipedia as a starting point and continue from sources

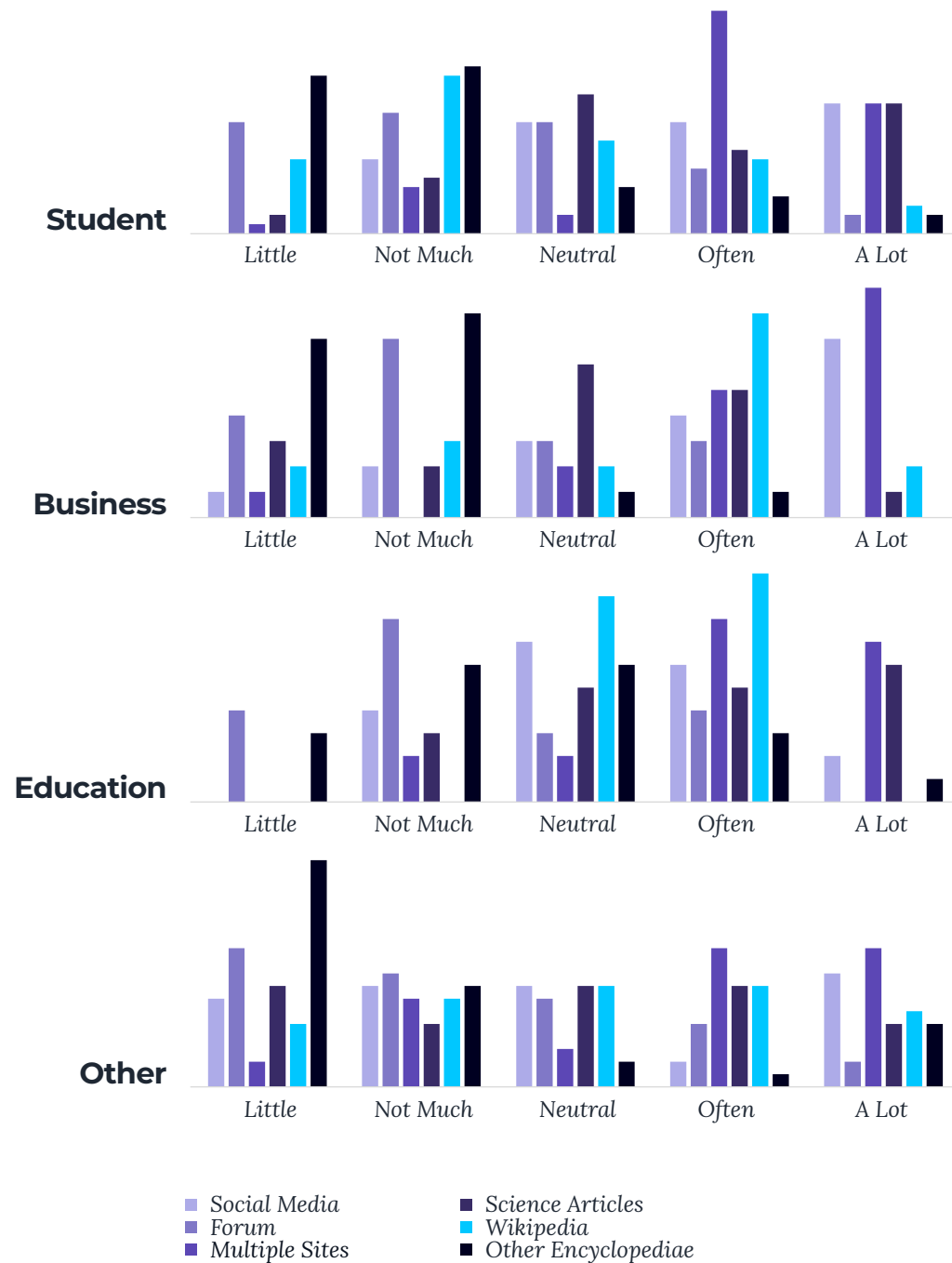
Img 29

isolated: student, business, education, and other. From these four main groups, the students knew the least about the discussion page (img 28). Over 67% was not aware of the existence of the page with another 26% never visiting it. Only 4 % of the students actually checks the discussion on purpose. The group 'education' responded by far the best with a third purposely checking the discussion. More than half was aware of its existence. Only 13% didn't know about the page. The groups 'business' and 'other' where in the middle with 14 and 17 percent checking the discussion and half didn't know it existed.

Taking another look at the professions regarding the sources (img 29), 'education' jumps out again. Forty percent uses Wikipedia as a starting point to continue based on the sources. Another 53% uses the courses occasionally leaving just 7 percent

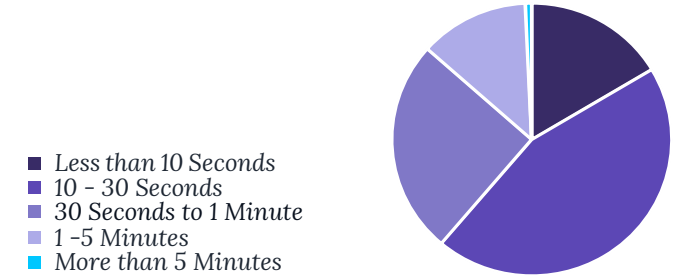


### Sources for getting information



Img 30

### How much time do you need on average to decide if a page answers your question?

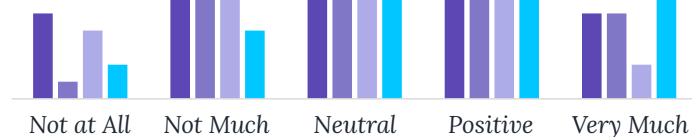


Img 31

not using them. Again, the students score the opposite with 64% being unaware of their existence. The groups 'business' and 'other' are again quite similar with a majority of participants using Wikipedia sources regularly. Analyses of the professions for Italy and the Netherlands show that the Italian group contains more participants from the profession 'education' and less from the group 'students'. This corresponds to the previous findings and explains why the Italian group scored better on the use of sources and their knowledge of the discussion page.

The difference between 'student' and 'education' is particular because one would expect the two groups to be quite similar though they are returning opposite results. It could be that high school students filled in education as profession which would justify the use of Wikipedia as a start, though it would not explain the higher awareness of the talk page. From all groups the 'education' group comes out as being the most information aware in this questionnaire. They also estimate the accuracy of Wikipedia lower

**To what extent would you like...**



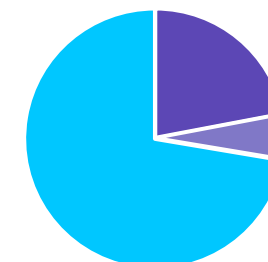
- to see who collaborated to an article?
- information on who they are?
- to know what else they wrote?
- to see the latest edits?

**Img 32**

than the other groups. Students favoured Wikipedia with the highest score although for 'business' and for 'other' the deviation in total shifted most to the top.

In the second part of the questionnaire the participant was asked to indicate how much they use different online media to get information (img 30). Clearly, the 'education' group is using Wikipedia the most and the 'student' group the least. This corresponds to the awareness of the discussion page and the use of Wikipedia references. It seems quite likely that the increase of use is the cause for the increase in awareness. A closer examination of the data however shows no direct correlation between the favoured or more intense use of Wikipedia and the awareness of the talk page. Another look at the data reveals that the average age of the group 'education' is 34 and most of them are Italian. Most likely these results came back

**Would you like to know what has been removed from a page?**



- No, I don't want to know
- Yes, but I don't need to know why
- Yes, and I would also like to know why

**Img 33**

from the librarian Facebook group.

When in front of a Wikipedia article, a quarter of the interviewed said he or she decides within half a minute if the page answers their question (img 31). Half of the interviewed needs between 30 seconds and a minute. Most people look at the title and the introduction, but the index and info table proved to be very popular as well. If a page is useful people say they read between half and threequarters of the text. In addition, most people spend their time on Wikipedia looking for specific information. Over half of the interviewed responded with the maximal of 5 for a targeted search. I made a comparison between the responses to the media used for finding information and how much time they spend to judge whether a page is useful or not. My expectation was that people who spend less time judging the usefulness of a page lean more towards social media. Looking at the data there was no clear difference between the media, there was however a generally higher response for all of the sources by those

who spend more time judging a page. This same group also said to read the most text on a page. Comparing the amount of read content to the time they spent give a curve that shift along the x-axis. As expected, the group that reads the least and the group that reads the most are on the outside. However, the groups in the middle are reversed. Those who judge a page between 30 seconds and a minute read less than those who judge a page between 10 and 30 seconds.

From the questionnaire it became clear that the user cares less about who contributes but they do value to know what else they wrote (img 32). They did however value information about who they are, a background reflecting their interests, knowledge etc. This could still be anonymous. Most important were the latest edits. About 72% wanted to know what was removed from a page and why (img 33). This information is actually available on Wikipedia, but it is not as accessible. A result discussed earlier proved that many haven't seen the discussion page.

## **06.2 DISCUSSION**

As discussed in the results, the number of participants did not reach expectations. It can therefore be argued that the findings are unreliable as they are based on a small test group. Additionally, the spread of the questionnaire was mainly within my social network, which, although covering multiple countries, still limits the participants to a certain type and level of people. A clear

example of this is the concentration of age around 25, the age curve closely corresponds to what would represent the age deviation of my social network. Obviously, that means that there are not enough datapoints to draw comparisons throughout the age spectrum. That same problem arises making other comparisons. To have a considerable amount of datapoints, only four professions could be extracted and compared. Still, main result of this questionnaire motivates this study and confirms the lack of awareness of the system functions behind the main page of Wikipedia. The group of participants might be small, but they are biased towards higher education and expected to have a more critical approach to information, which makes the lack of use of the discussion page and sources even more compelling.

## **06.3 CONCLUSION**

Taken into account the spread of the questionnaire the results yield appalling knowledge of the so-called discussion or talk pages. Only a select group of librarian minded participants had a significant knowledge of the existence of this page. Overall, the awareness and use of the sources was slightly better. Still there are strong arguments for the lack of profound understanding of the platform and the origin of its data. Details on the latest edits, the editor, and what was deleted all can be found on Wikipedia. The interest in this information coming

forward in the questionnaire suggests that people are unaware of its availability. At least it can be argued that the information is hidden too deep into the background. The low awareness of basic structure of a Wiki page is worrying because the questionnaire also confirmed Wikipedia is a frequently used source. Although slightly less used than social media channels or a multitude of websites the platform scores high as a source of information among far more diverse umbrella methods.

#### 06.4 PERSONAS

The average user based on the questionnaire can be any age. He or she frequently uses Wikipedia but has other sources as main information provider. When visiting Wikipedia, the visit is targeted and he or she reads most of the text on the page. This user could be aware and even checking sources but is less likely to visit them. About the system of Wikipedia this user is uninformed and although critical about its information he or she is not aware of or does criticize the article with the discussion page. In the end they rate Wikipedia information reasonably high and therefore demonstrate a form of trust in its contents. In the next pages the information will be used to create several specific personas as a starting point for the design phase.

**NAME:**  
Jochem van Vliet

**NATIONALITY:**  
Dutch

**OCCUPATION:**  
Student

**AGE:**  
22



Img 34

CVVVV

WIKIPEDIA USE

ESTIMATES WIKIPEDIA ACCURACY

ABOUT

Jochem is a history student in Delft. He uses Wikipedia to quickly access information he needs on the go. Although he estimates the accuracy to be high, he is more likely to use a variety of sites on the web to get information.

- Uses Wikipedia for study
- Does not check sources
- Not aware of the talkpage

OPPORTUNITIES

Being aware of the discussionpage might help Jochem for his studies on History. Not only would he be able to use the information for himself, studying discussions and development of pages over time could give him insight in topics related to his interest.

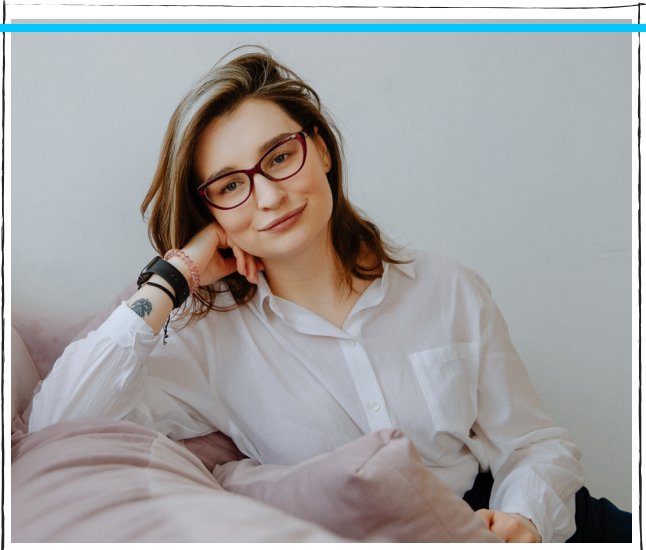


NAME:  
Andrea Bianchi

NATIONALITY:  
Italian

OCCUPATION:  
Consultant

AGE:  
28



Img 35

#### DIGITAL LITERACY



#### WIKIPEDIA USE



#### ESTIMATES WIKIPEDIA ACCURACY



#### ABOUT

Andrea works as a consultant in Milan. For her work, she daily deals with new topics for which she quickly visits Wikipedia to get informed. Due to time pressure she uses Wikipedia eventhough she knows estimates the accuracy to be low. To compensate she often checks sources.

- Uses Wikipedia for work
- Checks sources
- Not aware of the talkpage

#### OPPORTUNITIES

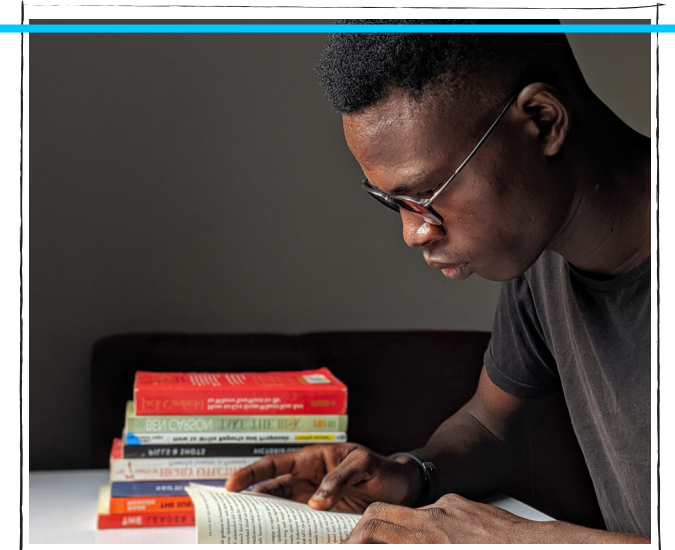
Knowing more about the system might give Andrea insight in what she can use and what not. Furthermore she can increase her trust in the platform and benefit from the discussion

NAME:  
Tomaso Alessi

NATIONALITY:  
Italian

OCCUPATION:  
Librarian

AGE:  
34



Img 36

#### DIGITAL LITERACY



#### WIKIPEDIA USE



#### ESTIMATES WIKIPEDIA ACCURACY



#### ABOUT

Tomaso works as a librarian and is involved in many workshops and events organised by the library. He has a wide interest in knowledge, reads a lot, and uses Wikipedia to fulfill his need for information. He is not so digitally literate and has heard about Wikipedia's system, trusts it therefore less, but does not comprehend how it works.

- Uses Wikipedia for private interest
- Checks sources
- Seen the talkpage but did not understand it

#### OPPORTUNITIES

Participating in many events around knowledge and online information, Tomaso could spread awareness and bring Wikipedias system to discussion among users.



*From the history of Wikipedias structure we learned how the platform developed from a forum like documentation system to a platform where every page has a front and a backend. Studying the interface in more detail made clear how the design barely motivates users to look beyond the article's main presentation. Although the system is widely used as a source for information, Wikipedia's interface seems mostly oriented to those who know its system and are familiar with its templates.*

*A subsequent orientation of the literature showed how the academic world is mostly studying its content, responses to our culture, and the dynamics among its creators. Remarkably little is known about the perception of its user and how they judge Wikipedia's information. From the questionnaire it became clear that the number of people that go beyond the article page is worryingly small. Given the current societal restructuration of information structures with more and more people using socials to get informed, it is important to realize how communication of information through any medium rests upon choices made by individuals. That is why this project focusses on the human curation of knowledge on Wikipedia and aims to create insight into this process.*

# PHASE 2

Goal:  
*To design an artifact  
that communicates the  
human process of curating  
knowledge behind the  
scenes of every Wikipedia  
article.*

### **8.1 AIM**

*To communicate the human process of curating knowledge behind the scenes of every Wikipedia article.*

*How a continuous discussion connects a group of diverse editors to create content that we can use as information source.*

*How the protection and quality control of this content is all regulated by human goodwill.*

### **8.2 MESSAGE**

*Behind the scientific interface of Wikipedia, many people are daily working to create content and protect its quality. The platform is truly open source in the way that it can always be edited by everyone, but is just recovering from errors so quickly by a mass of editors that this tread is out ruled.*

*This project shows you the human process and how its organised through the example of a controversial page that evokes a lot of discussion and vandalism.*

### **8.3 AUDIENCE**

*Taken from personas (page 101, 102, and 103)*

- *Young Adults (between 20 and 35).*
- *Internet users.*
- *All levels of digital literacy.*
- *Mainly inquire information through the internet.*
- *Zero to intermediate knowledge about the functioning of Wikipedia.*
- *The general user tends to know Wikipedia is open-source but has no idea how the system itself works.*

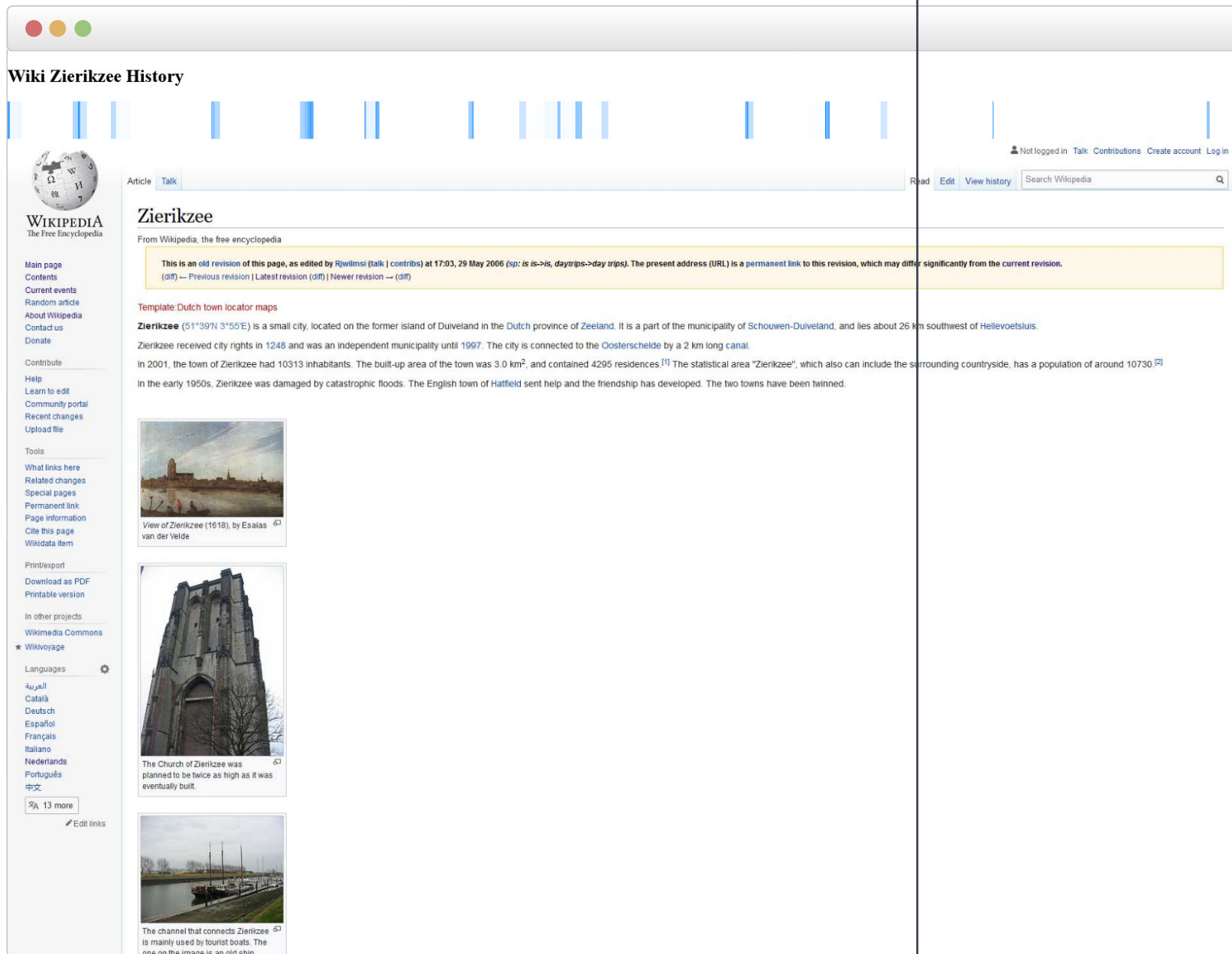
### **8.4 MEDIUM**

*Given that Wikipedia is read mostly at home or in the office, it makes sense to use a similar channel closely related to the Wikipedia platform itself. Which is why the project is web based and contains fragments and of Wikipedia as well, providing a direct link between the two. Additionally, the pandemic has caused many musea and exhibitions to go online. An educational project on the web can easily be shared by institutions that wish to increase digital literacy among society.*

### 9.1 HISTORY WEB PROJECT

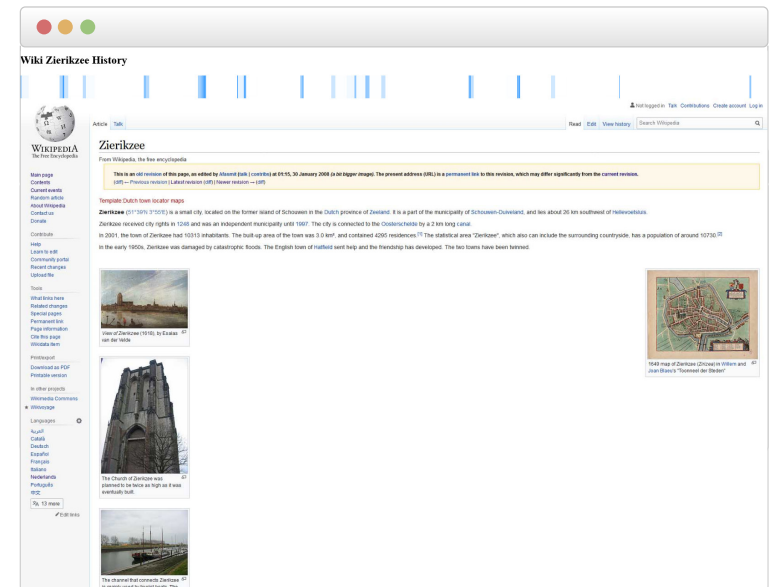
The history web project was created to get an overview of the history and development of the page myself in a fast and simple way. My goal was to create a timeline interface that later incorporated the density of editing. When I showed the mock-up around (img 37, 38, 39), I was told that there was another program that does presents history of the web in a similar way: the Wayback Machine (img 40). I hadn't done any research upfront because there was no design intention initially, my motivation was solely practical. Now the Wayback Machine has a similar interface, presenting time on a horizontal line on top which allows the user to click and go back to older versions of a page. There is however a major difference in the interaction, the velocity. My mock-up is running screenshots and is capable of showing them almost instantly upon mouse movement on the timeline. The result is an almost animated visual transformation of the website. On the contrary, the Wayback Machine loads the original site as a functioning page and therefore directs the focus to the content.



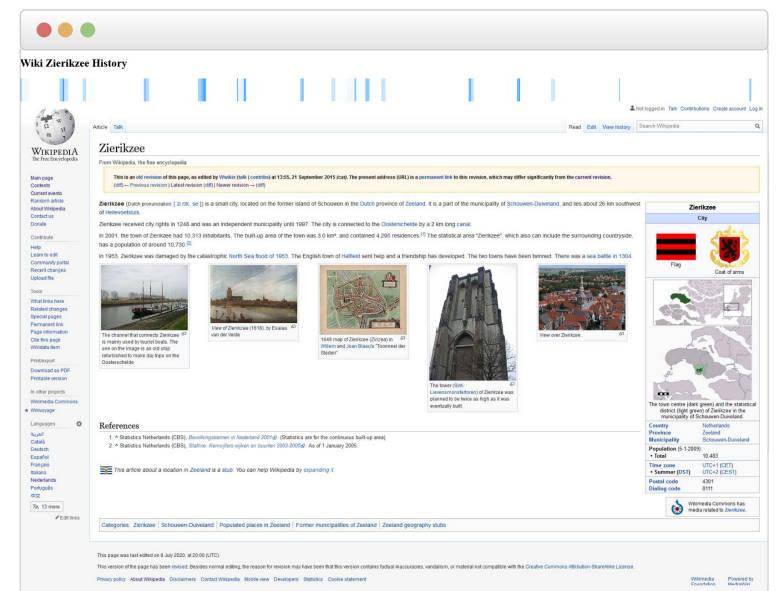


Img 37 : History project screenshot (Zierikzee article May 29th, 2006)

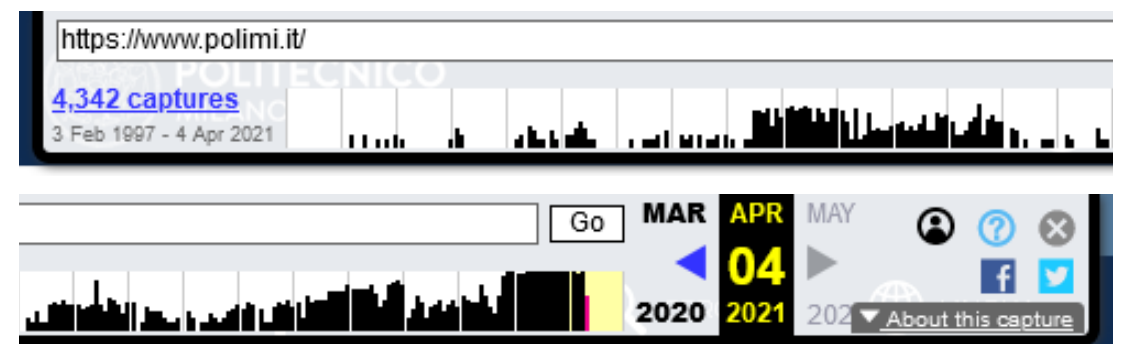
The project taught me that the interaction with the content clearly changes the message. I realised that the interaction can be used to design transparency for the consuming user. It is not the graphics, but it is the functionality that communicate how something was done. Therefore, my goal changed to bringing the user experience of the consuming user, closer to the producing user.



Img 38 : (Zierikzee article jan 30th, 2008)



Img 39 : (Zierikzee article Sep 21st, 2015)

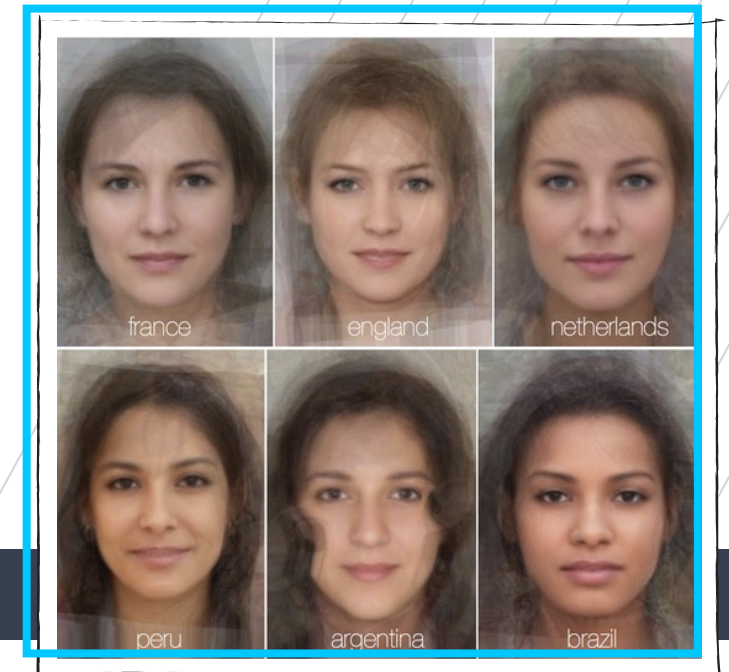


Img 40 : Wayback Machine timeline

## 9.2 POETRY STORYTELLING

After having decided that I could do a communication project instead of a practical redesign of Wikipedia, I dove a bit into the extremes and explored multimedia storytelling. No longer being bound to reality as long as the design is in line with the communication aim, meant I could virtually create anything. My fascination at that time was how a collective of social dynamics is transformed into a static almost scientific representation, void of any human traces. I wanted to visualise the transition of a human into a robot, using the content of a Wikipedia page.

The idea was to write a script that would transition from a personal story into a report and finally into a descriptive text. This change of style represented the transition from human into computer. Actors would voice act the script. The idea was also visually inspired on those diversity pictures where many small people are represented together as one image. My ideal was to visually blend the actor portrait videos in an overlay such that they would become one, an image morph, a technique used to average certain cultures and see what their faces look like (img 41). Simultaneously the audio would become monotonous and robotic.



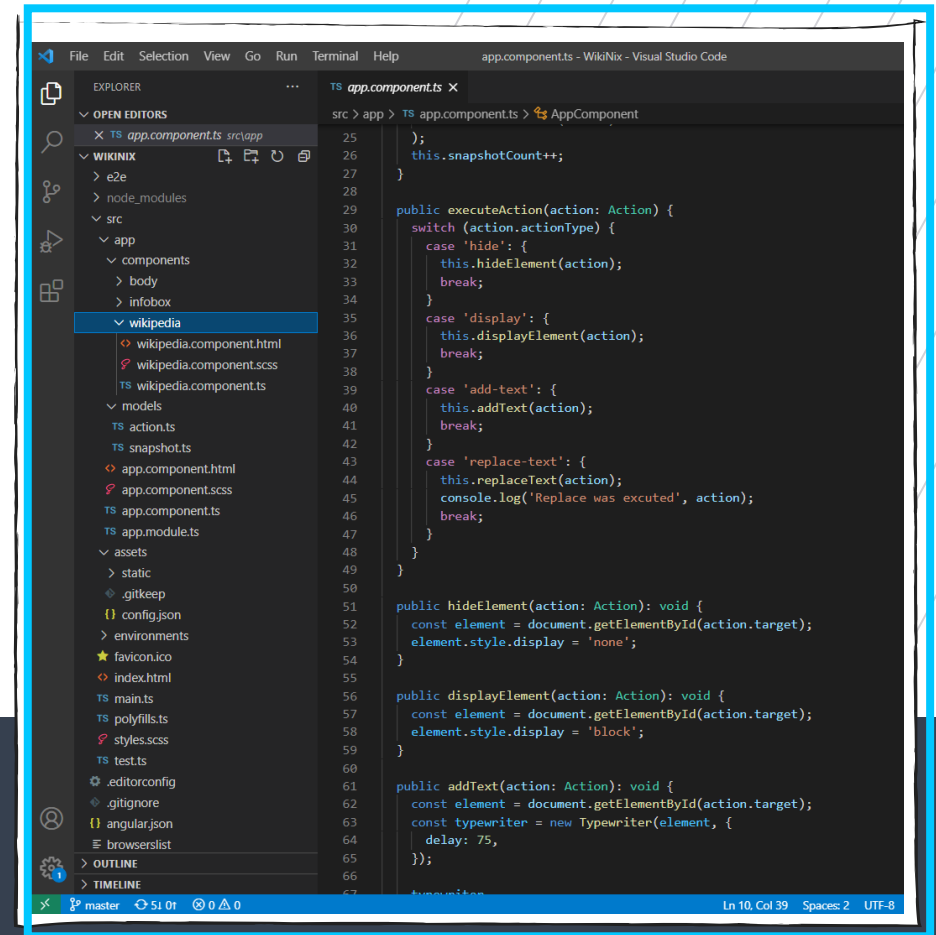
Img 41 : Facial morphs

After some experiments with the script, I experienced difficulty in the merge of multiple story lines into one. Additionally, I discovered that the morph software was not for video. On top of that, I was very difficult to convince other designers and make them imagine the results like I did myself. I realised that the idea lacked a clear communication aim related to my research and decided to leave the concept and simplify the project.

### 9.3 PAGE ANIMATION

Coming back to the essence of the project, communicating the human side of Wikipedia and bringing forward what is behind the page, I took a different approach. The new idea was to let the content speak for itself. My idea was to take a page and animate its development, similar to the Wayback Machine and my first experiment. While the page animates its development, the discussion in the back is brought to the spectator as audio. The experience would be like watching a Google Docs document develop whilst hearing the discussion at the same time. As a user one would be able to go through the steps in the timeline, forward or backward and see the steps animated.

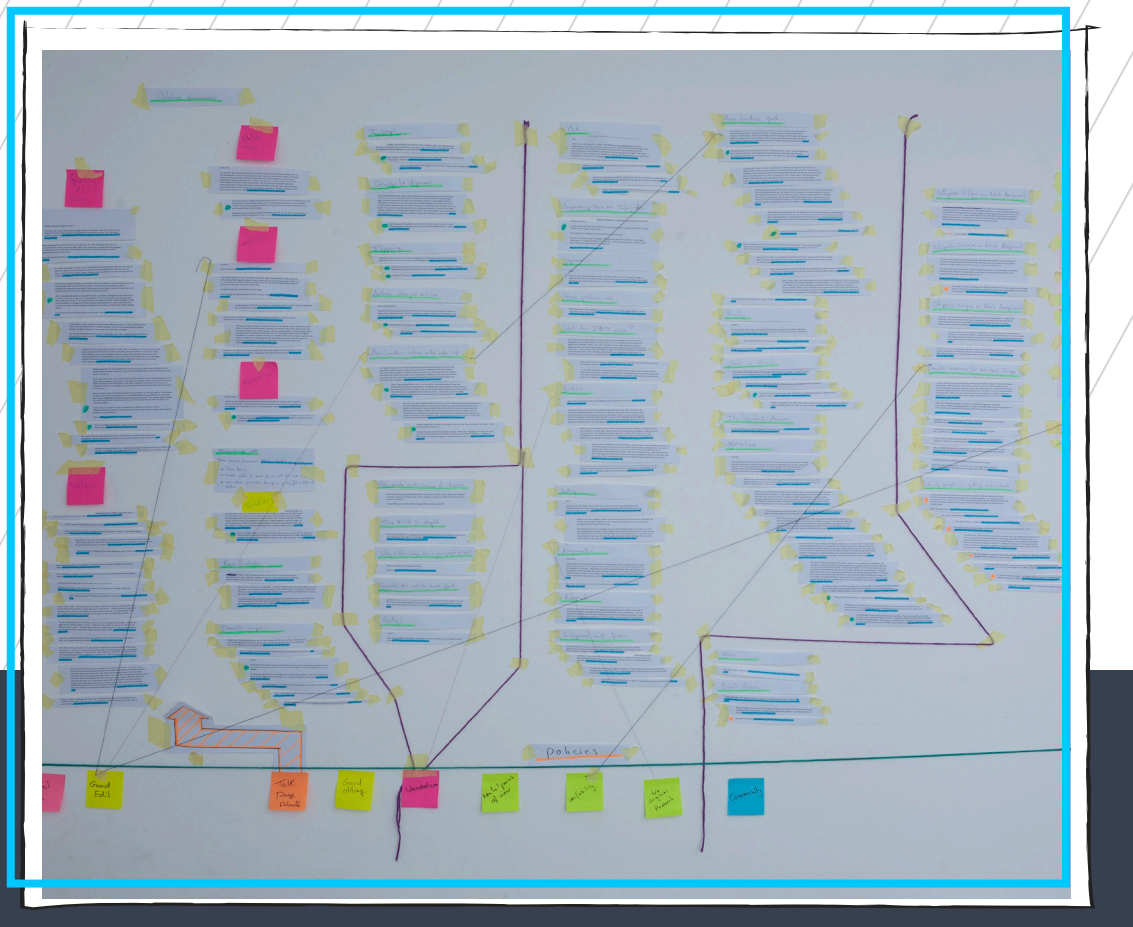
With the help of a friend, I coded a website in Angular that animated the page based on a Json. Script. The script allowed me to control popups, hide and show elements, and control text on the pages. As a page I chose: Nix v. Hedden, an article about a court case in America on whether a Tomato is a fruit or a vegetable. The represents the human urge to define and cluster, in line with the enlightenment and science. This idea serves as a metaphor for Wikipedia itself according to my idea. Practically the article is lent itself as it is humoristic, relatively short, and contains a good discussion page.



Img 42: Screenshot Visual Studio Code

As soon as I got the code to work, I realised how the whole experience would be long and quite boring. There was too much content even on a short page, speeding up the animation would make it unnatural. Another issue would be the audio and to sync it with the page animation without too much overlap. The process taught me I needed a storyline because the story of a page would simply not be enough.





Img 43 : Talk page map on wall

#### 9.4 HISTORY DASHBOARD

The following iteration started with the desire to print the entire talk page of an article. I had earlier considered another page about the orientation of toilet paper for my thesis, but the page was very long which is why I chose the page on tomatoes for the animation. Though the discussion page is much more on fire as the article is so unconventional. Looking through the discussion page history I found that the majority of the discussion was archived and hidden from the public as the discussions were closed. This goes against

what I learned from the questionnaire and the open design of Wikipedia. As a side-track I decided to go through the discussion and bring forward everything ever said about the page.

As a result, I printed the whole discussion and mapped it on the wall (img 43). In addition, I printed screenshots of all the negative edits, those where content was removed. I needed to filter as there were too many edits and the negative edits often were more controversial and interesting. Once on the wall, certain patterns started to come forward. In the early years of the page the original creator of the page responds to most of the comments and is therefore involved in almost all discussions. Later, a few other key figures take over and change roles. Usually, they are editors with a lot of experience and responsibilities. They curate the debate and make sure that the rules are followed.

From the wall, patterns emerged that very much represented the research on Wikipedia I started this project with. From here I could construct a storyline, explaining the different mechanisms of Wikipedia following a series of examples (img 44). It was not possible to directly connect the discussion page and the article itself as the discussion usually is more meta and does not treat individual edits. As a result, I created a double interface in which the article is on the front and behind, the user can find the map with the discussion as a metaphor for how Wikipedia is structured as well. A structured story is needed to make

First Page

Good Edit

Community

Rules for Participation

Policies


Vandalism

Bots

Vote for deletion

Wikimedia

5

- About Wikipedia
- Contact us
- Donate
- Contribute
- Help
- Learn to edit
- Community portal
- Recent changes
- Upload file
- Tools
- What links here
- Related changes
- Special pages
- Permanent link
- Page information
- Cite this page
- Wikidata item
- Print/export
- Download as PDF
- Printable version
- Languages 
- Català
- Deutsch
- ★ Ελληνικά
- Français

**Revision as of 06:39, 10 March 2014 (view source)**  
 82.8.91.197 (talk)  
 ← Previous edit

**Revision as of 06:44, 10 March 2014 (view source)**  
 Mistercow (talk | contribs)  
 m (rv POV edit)  
 Next edit →

Line 2:

```
{{Use dmy
dates|date=October
2013}}
```

Line 2:

```
{{Use dmy
dates|date=October
2013}}
```

```

{{double
image|right|Toilet
paper orientation
over.jpg|150|Toilet
paper orientation
under.jpg|150|The
''correct''
orientation|The
''incorrect''
orientation}}
```

```

{{double
image|right|Toilet
paper orientation
over.jpg|150|Toilet
paper orientation
under.jpg|150|The
''over''
orientation|The
''under''
orientation}}
```

```
[[Toilet paper]] when
used with a [[toilet
```

```
[[Toilet paper]] when
used with a [[toilet
```

In a world increasing in connectivity every day, also our knowledge has decentralised from a System of universities and libraries to the vast web. Consequently, many concerns rise about misinformation stressing the importance of sources. Wikipedia stands up to provide a counterforce, but how much do we really know the platform. This research shows how little we are aware of the origin of information on one of the most used sources today. This thesis presents a digital interactive communication project that aims to communicate the human process behind each Wikipedia page.

Img 44 : History dashboard front interface



*the user understand how everything works. On the same time, I found my research into the discussion page and the map on my wall too interesting and valuable to not use in the project. Some tests showed that people really liked to explore the content for themselves. For this reason, I kept the backend of the experience more open and freer to explore.*

*Presenting my mock-ups and sketches to possible users, I discovered that the relationship between the front and the back of the interface was one of the weaker points. One often found it unclear how the two pages related to each other. My idea was to create a transition interaction that would clarify how the map serves as the source for the frontend. Just like the style, which will be discussed later in this report, supports the relationship between the two parts of the platform. However, like all experiments, the story was essential in the user experience. That is why a mere interaction would not communicate what should be connected and included in the main narrative.*

*In order to alternate between the two interfaces following the narrative without directly connecting the two sides of the experience, it was important to setup the project more freely. This is why I centralised the narrative independent of the platform affordances and discovered how it better aligned with the discussion page than with the front interface. As a result, I inverted the layout and brought the map to the centre of the experience.*

*Inversing the experience puts the emphasizes on the discussion page and shows where needed the effects on the page itself. It allowed me to still use the same design components I already created but made more sense from a user point of view. Additionally, the more playful interaction gives the total experience more colour. The user experience is very similar to a game I programmed during the lockdown to create a web version for a project of the Politecnico. The map, the movements on the map, and the information boxes can all be borrowed from this platform that has already proven its interaction flow.*

### 10.1 STORYTELLING

The narrative consists of twelve locations on the map. Each location opens a popup containing a brief text of about 200 characters that describes an element of Wikipedia's structure, followed by a snapshot of Wikipedia's page related to the element. For example, the popup on 'Rules for Participation' shows a snap of the Wikipedia page containing these rules such that the user can explore the policy as presented by Wikipedia itself. Out of the twelve popups, eight are contained in a sequential story that increases in complexity to ensure the user gradually builds an understanding.

Before really starting the programming of the game with the help of an expert, the narrative was put to the test (img 45). The Covid pandemic did not allow me to test in presence but I was able to prepare a mock-up and test via skype. In the previous chapter of this thesis, the history dashboard was discussed, which contains a series of pages that compose a narrative (img 44). For the new concept, these pages used as popups

are linked to locations on the map. To test the narrative, a sequence of screenshots was presented to a tester, alternating between the map and the intended popup.

The participant was motivated to continue reading. He found it sad that the screenshots did not allow him to explore the complete discussion. Wikipedians left a negative, complaining impression on him. His impression was that people are complaining a lot. According to the user, the discussion was interesting, he did not know that took place because it is something you normally don't see. He wondered if that would be the same for other pages as well. His thought it was good that people thought about these things with such detail.

Feedback on the narrative was very positive. It was alternating enough, good balance between the discussion and helpful facts, quite immersive. However, the popup with the text below makes you read the Wikipedia snap first, therefore I move the text from the bottom of the popup to the top, even though I think it looks less attractive. Having not had any introduction, he made clear that the project needed one. The user asked for a small overview or anatomy of the talk page, which I placed on the introduction page. Furthermore, he did not understand the graphic layout of the map and suggested the use of titles which is why I changed the map. For the user test, I also made a simple screenshot of a robot that was connected to the popup. This was so different from the rest



Img 45 : One to one usertest

of the narrative that it was not clear why it was there.

Based on this one-to-one session I decided that the narrative was finished, but the graphics needed more work. As a result, I changed the whole map to a more wireframe design which I initially had in mind. The difference in colour corresponds to a graphical overview of the page that I inserted in the introduction. Lastly, I included more titles on the talk page and decided to give these also a popup with explanation.

### First Page

The first popup is automated and not related to the talk page, it contains the first edit of the page. The user is introduced to the toilet paper orientation article and learns who created it and when. Although I did not want to focus too much on time as a dimension within the user experience, it gives the user a direct understanding of the story via the core of Wikipedia's functioning, the creation of pages.

### Good Edit

The second popup discusses a good edit. With this element I wanted to introduce the user to the dynamic between someone who create the page and another Wikipedian that adjusts it. As discussed earlier, it was nearly impossible to find a direct relationship between an edit and discussion on the talk page. For this reason, I used a message that seems a standard Wikipedia response to motivate editing. This comment briefly describes the process of editing in general which is why it collaborates well with the example in the popup.

### Community

As the user begins to understand the dynamic between editors, an obvious next step is to demonstrate a dialogue between them. The third popup is located at a point where one editor suggests an idea in the discussion page, and another recognised his contribution. The popup talks about the community and presents the original Talk page that the graphic map is based on.

### Rules for Participation

Certainly, interaction between users does not always remain polite. Having demonstrated to the user how editors interact, the next step explains how conflicts arise. The popup next to the discussion introduces the rules for participation together with a snapshot of the Wikipedia page containing these rules, including other policies to freely explore.

### Policies

Sometimes, editors refer to the content policies to support their comments. Such a comment contains the next popup on the content policies and how Wikipedia regulates its information. This gives the user also an idea of the mission of Wikipedia and what kind of information they desire to present. Bringing forward these policies via the discussion makes it clear that these are rules/guides that are either followed or used to restore changes that do not obey these policies. Either way, it's a system of peer control.

### Vandalism

Vandalism is a rarer topic that is quite common on this page but not a thing on many others. However, it shows how Wikipedia can be edited by virtually anyone. The dynamics explained earlier are now demonstrated to the extreme. The popup shows an example of an edit where the page was deleted and the one responsible left a negative message. This page explains what many people don't know, how Wikipedia is continuously susceptible to change and how this kind of vandalism usually is corrected within minutes by an editor with good intentions.



### Bots

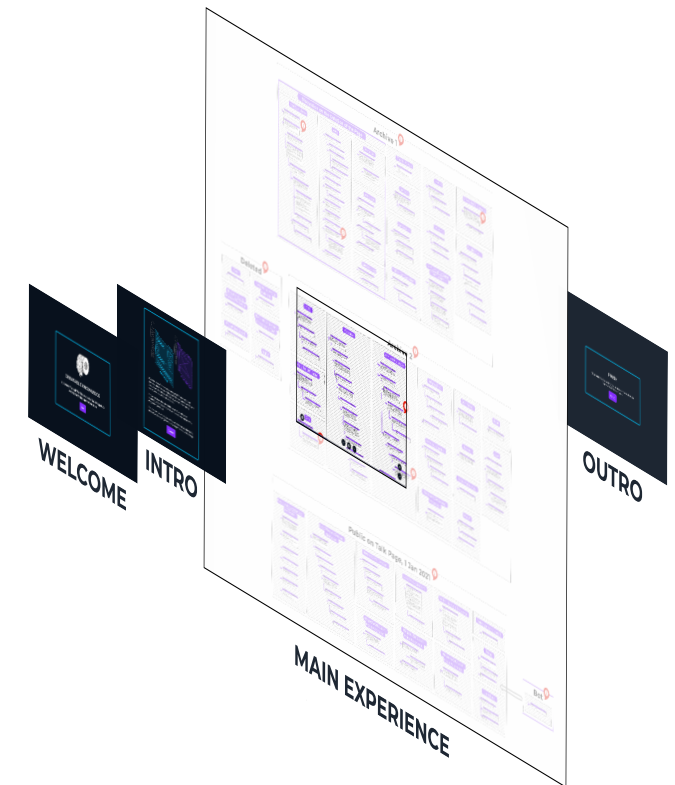
Including a bot was a bit more difficult because they usually do not leave messages on the talk page. During the user test I discovered that a bot icon was unclear, so I decided to add a fake comment by a bot. The bot and its action are real, though the message was not written on the talk page.

### Vote for Deletion

At last, the story finishes with a voting process upon request when the page was still young. This is something that happens only in very specific situations such as this article that has many editors questioning its existence. It is included to give the user an idea of the templates and processes that Wikipedia uses to support its democratic nature. The editors can propose these processes and then in term participate due to the horizontal organization.

### Independent Items

The remaining four elements explain the layout of the graphic and are assigned to the titles of the boxes. These are all accessible throughout the whole experience contrary to the narrative elements that enable one another. For example, the box named 'Deleted' opens a popup that explains how certain comments have been deleted but that Wikipedia archives all edits and that these were recovered manually by spitting through the history page. Additionally, the popup contains a snapshot of the history page of the Wikipedia article. The archives and current talk page are explained with a popup.



Img 46 : Project layout

## 10.2 LAYOUT

The previously discussed experience takes place at the centre and main part of the project. This is sandwiched between an introduction and an outro (img 46). The user arrives on a welcome page that contains the title of the project and an illustration of a toilet paper roll. A start button directs to a small introduction to the project with brief instructions before entering the main experience. If one leaves the map, progression is saved in the browser and will continue from that same point upon return. The map also contains an information button that directs back to the introduction. Then returning to the map again will also maintain the progression in the narrative. After having





Img 47 : Project navigation map



Img 48 : Project popup

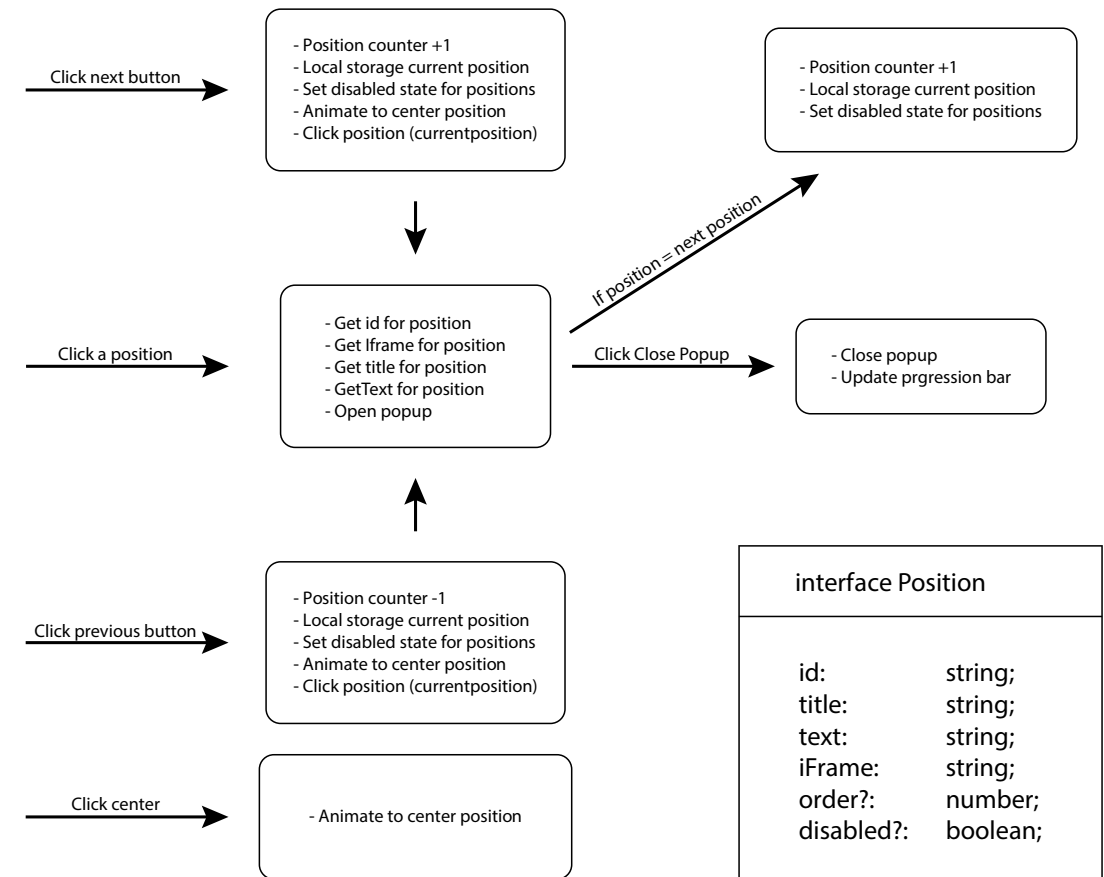
explored the map and finished the narrative, the outro will pop up. On the outro page, a restart button will take you back to the first step of the map experience and reset the story.

The main interface consists of an interactive graphic representation of the discussion page on the Wikipedia article about toilet paper orientation (img 47). Apart from exploring the discussion itself, the user can explore the popups (img 48), triggered by the red information icons. The narrative follows a sequence so that the information is presented according to a certain order. Popups enable the next one on the map. The arrows allow one to navigate through the sequence. Clicking an arrow will animate the page to the next location and open the popup. The centration button animates the map to the last popup in case one gets lost. Progression can be monitored by the progression bar on the bottom.

### 10.3 PROGRAMMING

The whole program is built around an array containing an object for every position (img 49). All these positions contain an id, title, text, and an iframe (link). Positions that are part of the storytelling also contain an order number and a disabled state. Their order number defines their order in the narrative based on which they will be enabled on the map.

Once the user clicks a position, the id



Img 49 : Project programming model

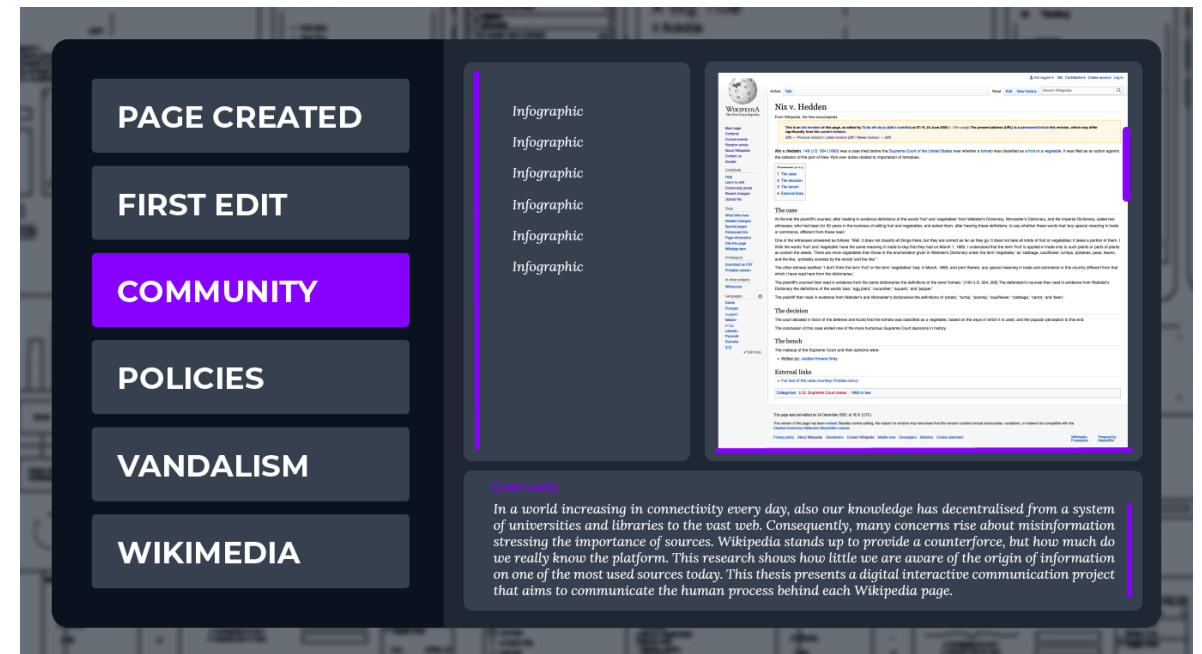
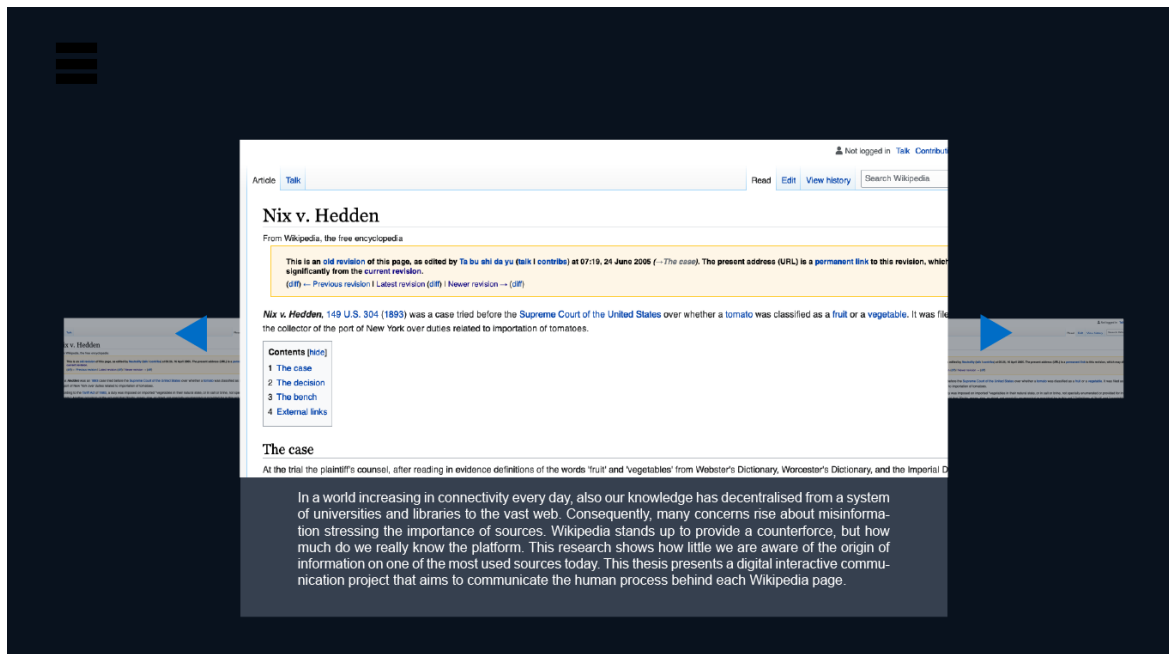
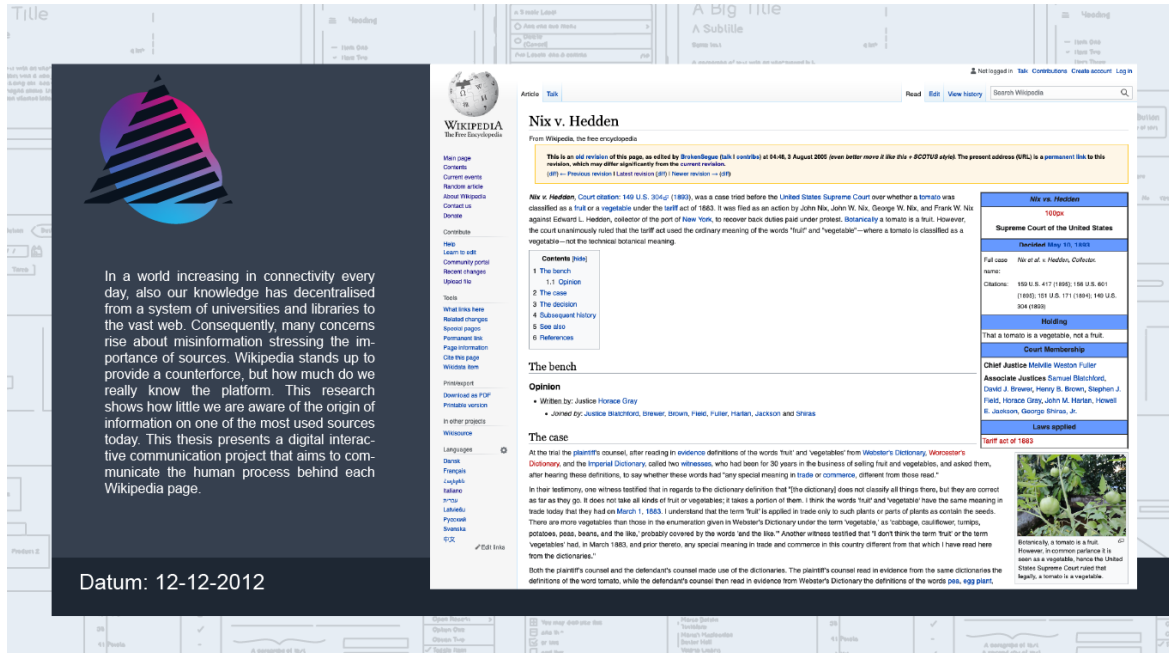
is checked, and the code picks up the corresponding data to open the popup accordingly. Upon closing, the progression of the progression bar is recalculated. If the clicked position is the next position of the narrative, the value for the current position is increased by one. This value is always stored in the local storage of the browser so that the user can return to the website and continue from the same point in the narrative. After updating the current position, the disabled states are recalculated such that the correct positions are visible on the map.

*If the user clicks one of the navigation arrows on the bottom of the screen, he advances or returns a step in the narrative. In case of advance, the current position value is increased by one and the local storage updated. Additionally, the disabled state is recalculated. Another function is called, which will animate to the centre position of the position required. From there, the program will animate a clicked position and send the id of the current position. Having already increased the current position value, the program will no longer register the position as the next position and follow the common path for a clicked position: request data and open the popup.*

*As the user is free to navigate on the map, he or she can get lost, which is why a centre button is included. The centre button always returns to the last position included in the narrative. At the end of the experience, after closing the last popup, a counter will automatically open the outro to present the finish of the experience.*

### 11.1 POPUP

*This part originated from the screenshots taken of the changes on the Wikipedia page. They found their way into the project as selected examples and were added to the wall to complement the talk page already there (img 43). Therefore, obviously the design of the visual style started as a container for these screenshots. At first the idea was to include them into a carousel but the information box to explain what was on display seemed inconveniently unattached to the part it was explaining (img 50). Another issue was that these carousels quite easily look very outdated. The opacity on the back with the carousel on the front looked like something from the early days of the internet.*



Img 50 : left to right , top to bottom , evolution of design



After a series of experiments, using even the same font as Wikipedia, I realised that the visual style of the project was too similar to the Wikipedia style itself. This caused the whole project to look like something outdated. I do not wish to speak negatively of Wikipedia when I say the styling of the site is a bit outdated. The platform is mainly text based and the interface hardly uses any graphic elements. As discussed in the research part of this thesis, this is important because the template should be light and simple for everything to work fluently. The styling reminds of the history of the web with the HTML pages with little styling. Following this style meant that my project would look the same, which was not what I intended it to become.

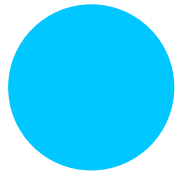
Searching for inspiration I stumbled upon dark interfaces and their current popularity in UX UI. The dark interface contrasted very well with the Wikipedia fragment in the iFrame on the page (img 51). A darkened interface allowed me to clearly create a boundary between my project and the imported styling of Wikipedia itself. Additionally, it reminds of the editor interfaces used for coding. My goal was to create this editing, Wikipedia under the loop experience.



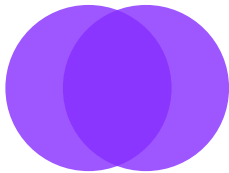
Img 51 : Project popup first narrative position

Colour wise, the blue was preceded by violet and electric/baby green. Initially the idea of the violet was to suggest magic and mystery, but the colour didn't match Wikipedia well. Hence the blue which is more analytical and scientific and corresponds well to Wikipedia. The same blue is used in the background for the dark GUI in light tints to translate the colour away from grey.

## 11.2 COLOURS



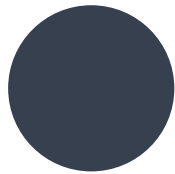
RGB 0, 199, 255  
*Little accents on the popup.*



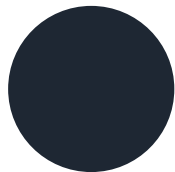
RGB 134, 46, 255 80%  
*Marker effect on talkpage wireframes, used with oval brush*



RGB 226, 22, 7  
*Popup info button used on the talkpage map.*



RGB 54, 64, 79  
*Dark interface light*



RGB 30, 39, 51  
*Dark interface medium*



RGB 9, 18, 30  
*Dark interface Dark*

## 11.3 TYPOGRAPHY

**AaBbCc**

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
0123456789

**MONTERRAT CAPS FOR TITLES**

*AaBbCc*

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
0123456789

*Lora for text and text in the popup*

**AaBbCc**

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
0123456789

*Itim for the discussion on the map*

#### 11.4 TALK BACKEND

As discussed earlier the layout of the backend page came from the organisation of the discussions on the wall (img 43). The need to organise the information in order to get an understanding myself directly influenced the layout for the final platform. During the design of the history dashboard, I used photos of the wall to test the layout. During these tests it became clear that the chaotic hand made structure of the wall really emphasized the human side of the discussion. Hence my objective became to maintain this hand made feeling (img 52).

206.64.224.128 (talk) 21:34, 12 July 2010 (UTC)

This seems like a stealth advertising campaign linked to Cottonelle's "Roll Poll", which is in fact linked in the article. There have been advertisements about which way you "roll" toilet paper (check the web).~~M

206.64.224.128 (talk) 21:34, 12 July 2010 (UTC)

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93.139.39.64 (talk • contribs)

While I was pleasantly surprised to find such an article on WP, with seemingly deep analysis, I concluded that this article is most likely fake. None of the references are hyperlinked or googlable (or matched results are irrelevant). Inline citations seem to be circular. Seems like someone celebrates April Fools on 4th of July.

Please add template for deletion

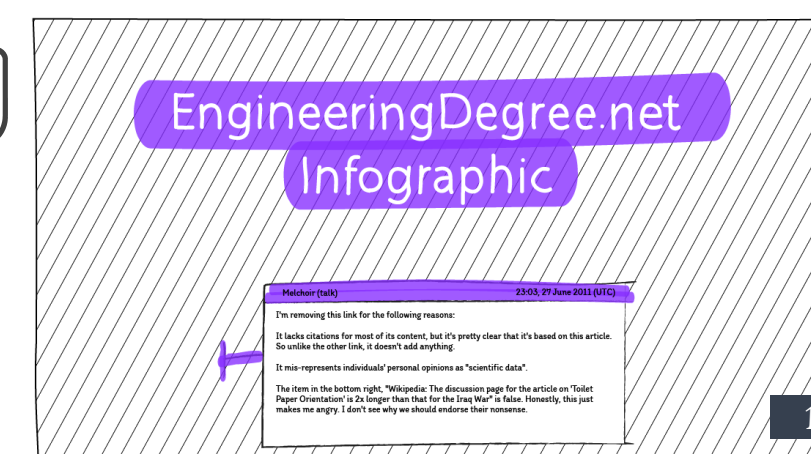
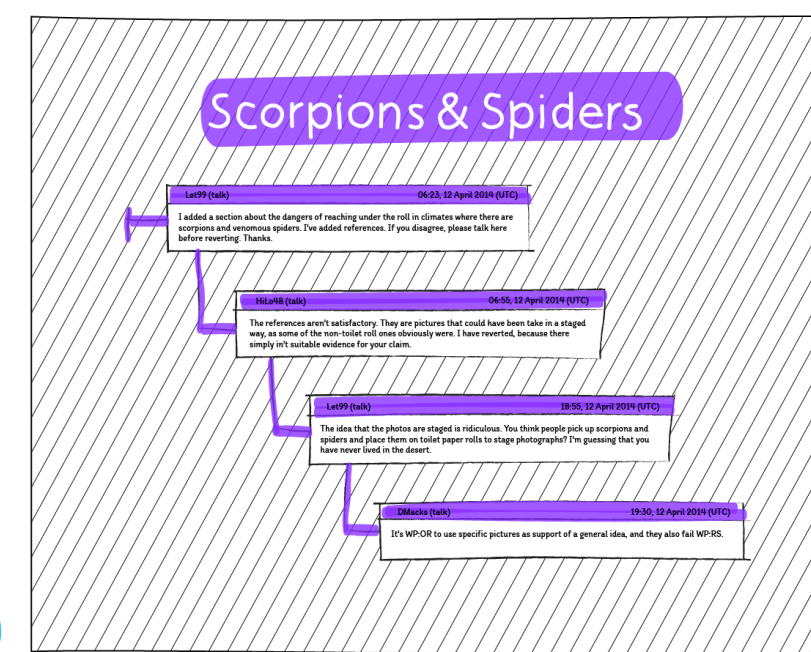
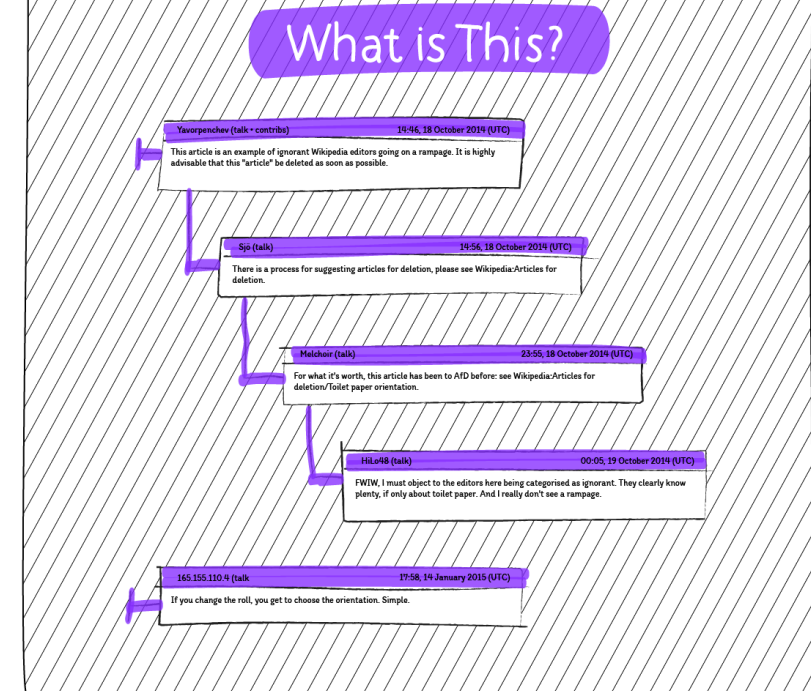
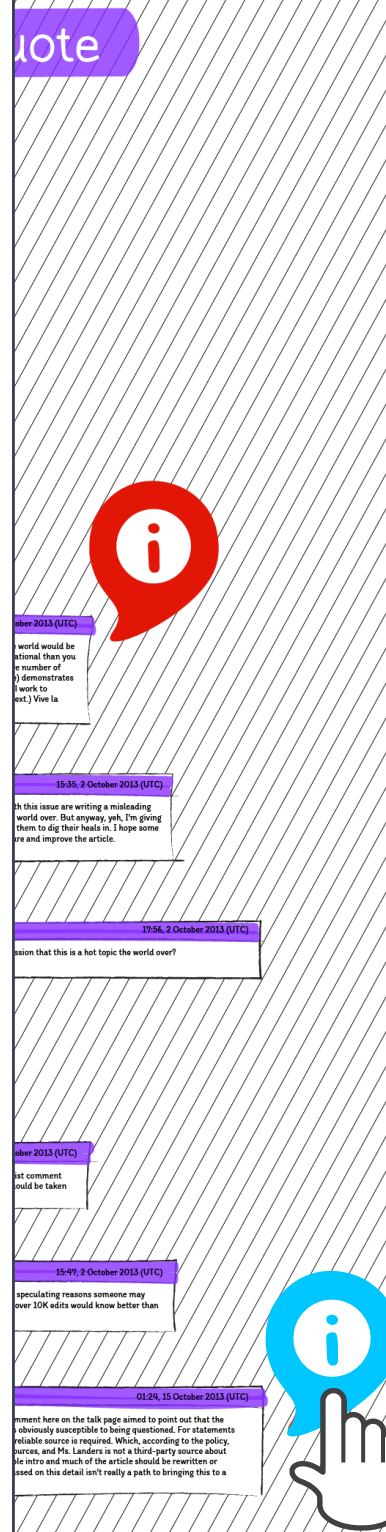
BorgHunter (talk) 01:43, 7 July 2010 (UTC)

*It's a pretty trivial topic, I'll admit, but it's well-referenced (the hyperlinked references all seem to work, and I was 1-for-2 on finding print references online, granted I didn't check too many of them). I don't think it fits speedy criteria, though do take it to WP:AfD if you feel strongly that I'm mistaken.*



In my search for inspiration, I came across hand made wireframe drawings. The idea of the wireframes really fitted the backend idea of the platform. In Illustrator I have a package of brushes that I tried on the template. First, I organised all the chat boxes and designed them with normal boxes. This became the layer to trace as I subsequently manually drew all the boxes on top of the layout. Whilst doing so, I discovered another brush that with some opacity was really similar to the kind of markers one uses to mark books and papers. The effect really fitted the hand drawn style and I used this to highlight parts of the chat. Almost naturally I wanted a darker background to emphasize the chat boxes which is why I brought back the same colours as the front interface to create a coherent platform though it took away the wireframe look too much (img 54). That is why I redesigned the background with the same texture brush and brought out the text boxes with the striped background and marker highlights (img 53). Later, the tree lines were added to make the items less floaty on the page but give them some support. Also, the user can now easier follow the conversation and see who responds to whom.

Img 53 : Talk page project navigation map



**Discussion on the Deletion of the Page**

Speedy as a Hoax

Votes

Delete this

Ontology

Epistemology

Material to Add

Toddlers

Ramification

Author Compensation?

I wept

Flapping

Ann Lander's Inclusion in the "Under" list

Gravity-fed Dispensers

Possible Snips

Deleted on the bla bla bla

This Article Sucks because of Wikipedia

This Article is Stupid

Congrats: this Article made Fark

Why is this Longer than a Paragraph or Two?

Really?

Cats

Globalize

Ann Landers Quote

What is This?

Asymmetric

Japan

Wow

Respect

Noted Preferences

Really?

EngineeringDegree.net Infographic

Scorpions & Spiders

Wait, this ISN'T Satire?

Why

Still visible on the Talk Page

Giant Hoax

Over

Possible Resource for Text and Images

List of People is Getting Ridiculous

Nomination for Deletion

Just some Suggestions

Two Rolls in Public Restrooms

Toiletpaper in Hollywood

Mergy

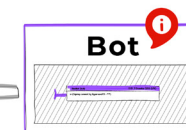
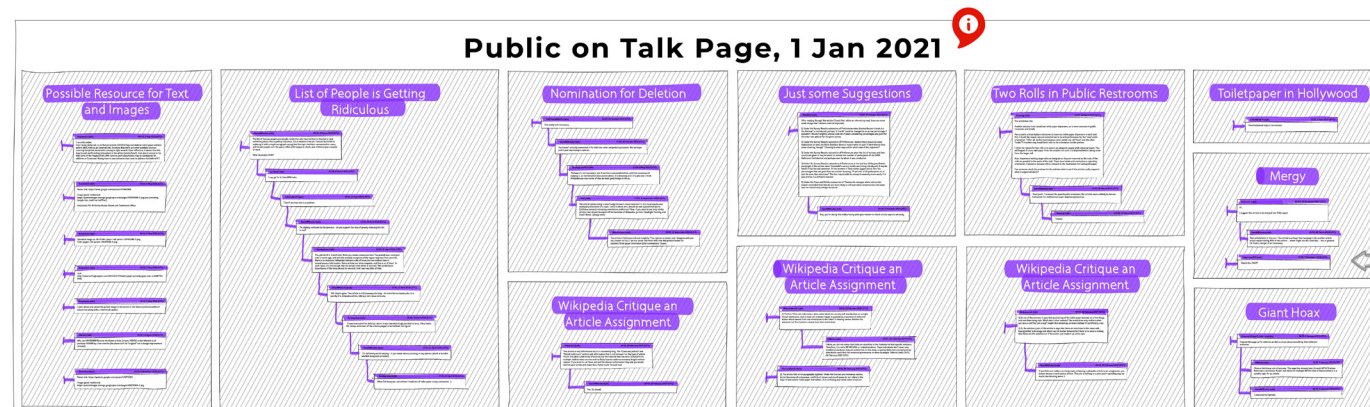
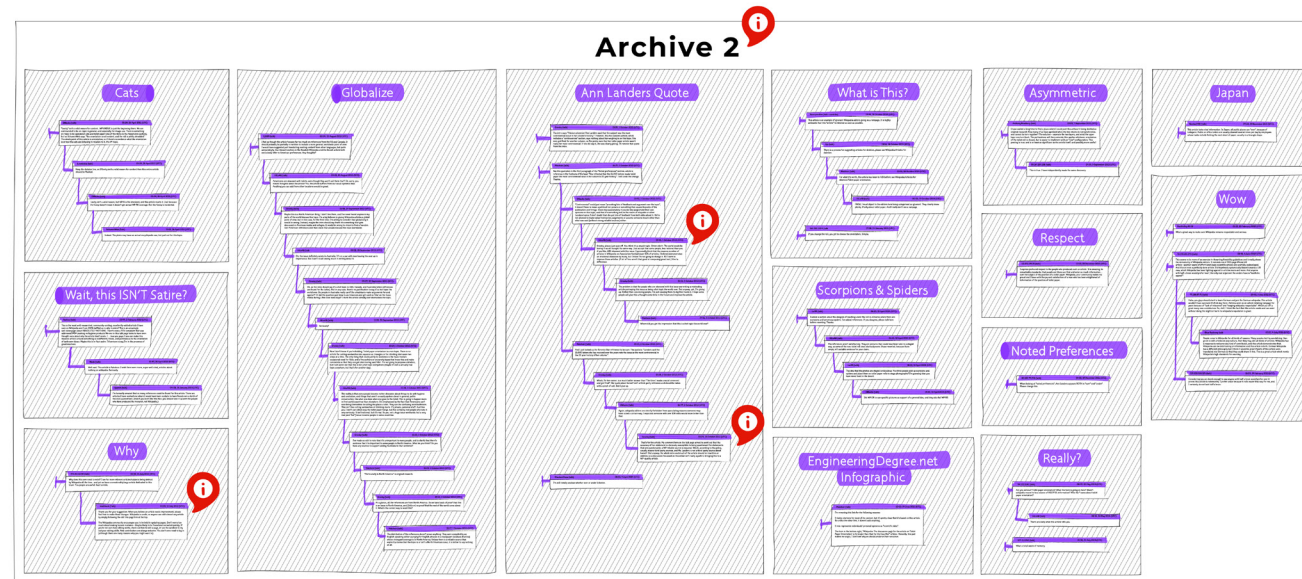
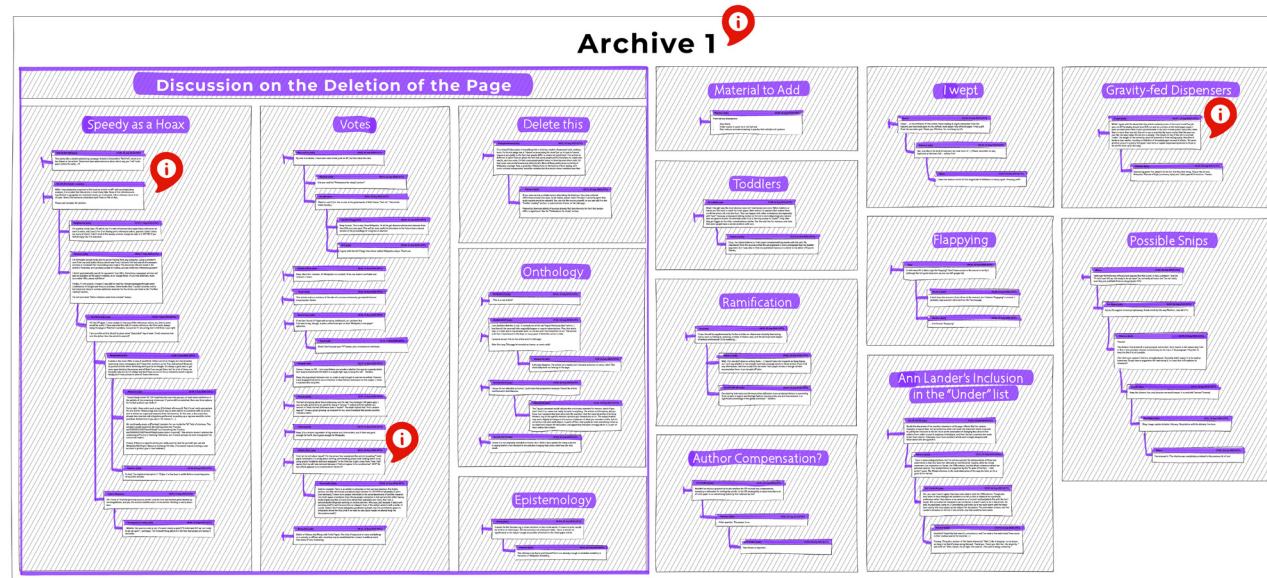
Wikipedia Critique an Article Assignment

Wikipedia Critique an Article Assignment

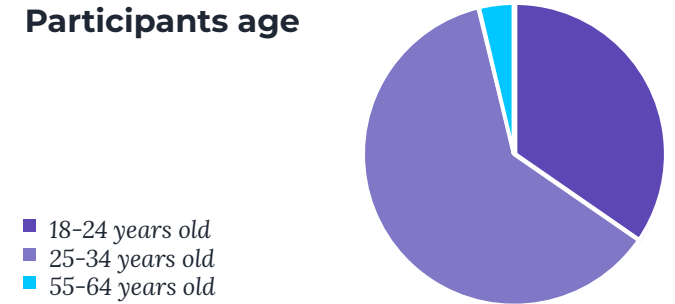
Still visible on the Talk Page

Img 54 : intermediate version talk page infographic





### Participants age



Img 56

### 12.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

As the project reached a working prototype, it was possible to test both the interface and the effect of the story on the perspective of the user. The current pandemic has limited me in reaching potential users. Over skype, I already executed a qualitative one to one test to develop the storyline. Consequently, I felt was more appropriate to launch a quick evaluation form including the project, given the digital nature of the product that allows it to be easily spread (Appendix B). In total, 27 participants received a questionnaire that contained several questions before presenting the experience. Afterwards the participants were asked to respond to the same questions to evaluate any change in opinion. Additionally, they were asked what they learned, if their opinion changed, and given the opportunity to provide feedback on the interface and the project in general. Nine out of the 27 participants were between 18 and 24 years old, 17 were between 25 and 35 years old, and only one participant between

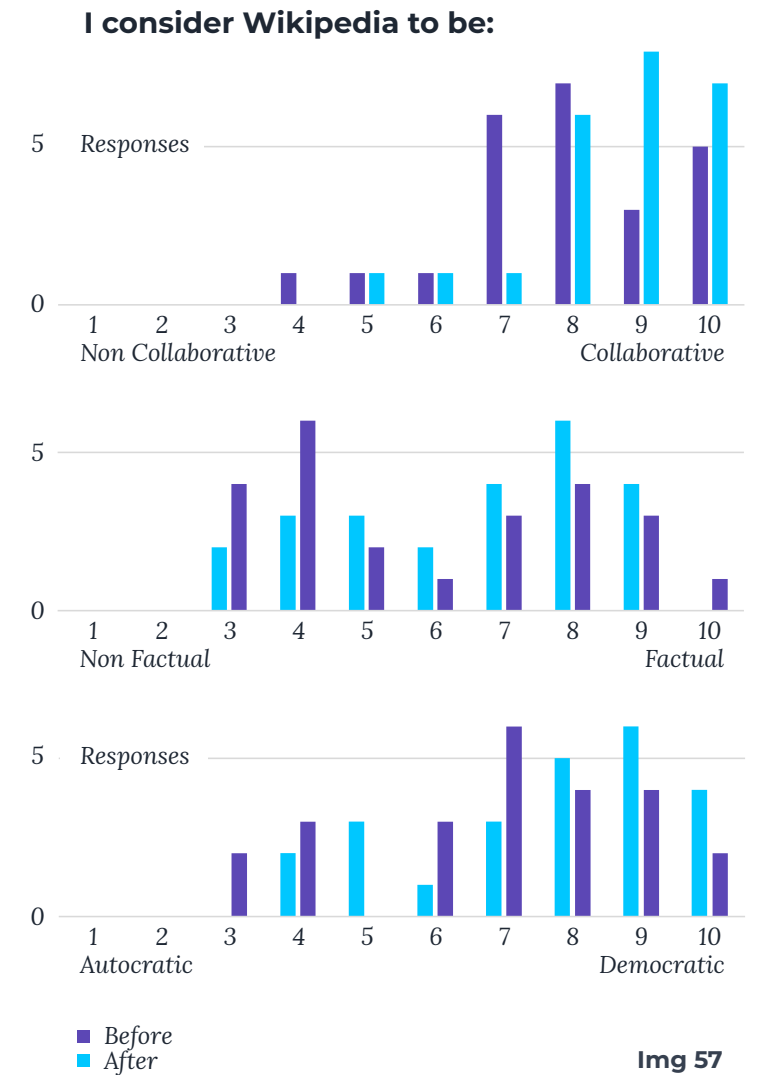


55 and 64 (img 56). The group represents the target audience between 20 and 35 very well. With all participants having finished a bachelor's degree and almost 70% even having finished a master's degree, the group can be considered very educated, which fits the personas and previous questionnaire. Most participants were employed for wages when filling in the questionnaire.

## 12.2 BEFORE AND AFTER

Before visiting the project, participants were asked to describe Wikipedia in their own words. Additionally, they were presented three scales from one to ten and asked to indicate how they look at Wikipedia in terms of collaboration, factuality, and democracy. The same questions were asked directly upon return to the questionnaire after having finished the narrative (img 57).

Although already scoring high on collaboration with most people answering with eight out of ten, Wikipedia was even considered more collaborative after the narrative. A clear shift on the X-axis by a point seven out of ten is evident in the results. A similar shift can be observed regarding the factuality of Wikipedia. After the experience, the average answer regarding how participants judge Wikipedia in terms of factuality increase by half a point out of ten in favour of factuality. This result is interesting because one might expect the opposite after having seen how the information on Wikipedia is created by the

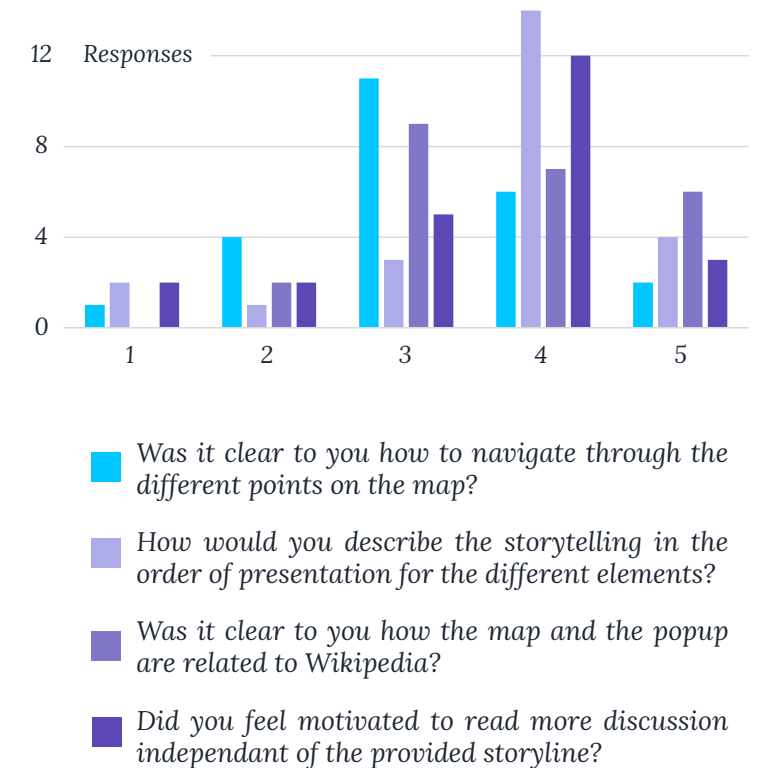


community. Nonetheless, the project works in favour of Wikipedia and the insight in the processes increases its value according to this questionnaire. Someone literally said: "it felt like taking a secret backstage tour of Wikipedia. At last, Wikipedia was considered point eight more democratic afterwards."

### It felt like taking a secret backstage tour of Wikipedia.

The previous shifts are confirmed by 23 out of 24 participants agreeing that they have learned something from the project. The question was followed by an open question that asked the participants to name at least two things they learned. Most were not aware that there was this amount of collaboration behind the articles. Some had never seen the discussion which also came out as a result from the first questionnaire. Another aspect people were not aware of are the rules. Answers reflect insights in the system behind Wikipedia. The contradictory nature of most responses also demonstrates reflection. People seem to question their own thoughts in their answers.

The last question on the experience part asks whether the participant considers his or her opinion has changed due to the project. Opinions are divided, many respond with both yes and no. The general trend is that they have learned more about the actual practical mechanisms behind the content but already knew Wikipedia was collaborative. However, most were still surprised of the level of activity behind the page. Multiple responses say they will trust Wikipedia more than they used to because understanding the system makes them trust it more. Either way, the participants agree that they have increased their knowledge of the system and the majority was impressed by the level of collaboration which answers the objective for this project.



Img 58

## 12.3 INTERFACE INTERACTION

The last section of the questionnaire contains a few basic questions regarding the interface and opens the dialogue for improvement. A first question addresses the navigation on the map and if the interface clearly presented its affordances (img 58). Responses were neutral leaning slightly towards the positive side. The most general complain was lagging of the page due to the heavy graphics. For some participants this was not an issue at all and for others it was a big problem. To improve need more complex



programming that can either preload the map or make it lighter in some way. Unfortunately, I have not been able to test in presence because there are some comments on the accessibility of the navigation arrows that I do not fully understand. The issue that multiple participants discuss is that they are unclickable when the popup is opened. This is a design choice that avoids the user from clicking through the whole narrative at once. Instead, it forces the user to move back and forth between the map and the popup. Simultaneous, users talk about getting lost on the map which is why I assume they have not tried the centration button. Others did miss out on the possibility to zoom and therefore did not explore the map. Altogether, the page lacks a visual introduction. The first steps should accompany the user more as an introduction. Currently the introduction page only textually explains briefly how the navigation works. This can be improved in the future with more visual cues at the start.

The second question asks if the storytelling in the order of presentation for the different element was clear to the participants. Responses were generally more positive with most answering clear and some very clear. In the qualitative feedback, participants left only positive notes on the story. Some didn't use the story much and explored for themselves which is what the project tries to stimulate. Other feedback mostly discusses how the story builds an understanding and supports the further exploration of the map. One specific person reached the ending without

finding the finished popup. This is still due to the program not activating the popup when the user closes the popup by clicking next to it rather than closing with the close button.

Two following questions ask if the relationship between the map and the popup was clear. Most participants respond either neutral or positive, though responses are neutral. This is a point of improvement that also needs to be included into the introduction that is currently not clear enough. On the other hand, people confirmed that they felt motivated to continue exploring the discussion. Written feedback confirms that the discussion dialogues intrigue and capture the user's attention. Most people continued reading and answered a seven out of ten regarding the extra time spent on reading. Concluding, 56% judged the experience as interesting and 24% found the project very interesting. Final feedback was positive and mainly points at the lagging interaction. Audio was also mentioned in a similar way as one of the iterations discussed earlier in this thesis. Altogether the responses of the participants reflect an increased understanding of the social dynamics behind the page. From that point of view, the goal of the project has been reached though a lot can still be gained by improving the interaction and introduction to the navigation to accompany the storytelling.

### 13.1 RESULTS

*From phase one it became clear that there was a need to educate Wikipedia users on the nature of the information they consume. Phase two started with the objective of designing an artifact that communicates the human process of curating knowledge behind the scenes of every Wikipedia article. The outcome communicates the research into Wikipedia's system from the first phase via an edge case that users have confirmed to be interested in. From the final user evaluation, feedback confirmed that users picked up on the functional elements communicated via the narrative and were interested in further exploring the map visualization of the discussion. To that extend, the project communicates the complexity and social dynamics that have evolved from a simple set of core rules.*

### 13.2 FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

However, the project has only been exposed to close relatives, a bias already slightly present in the initial research questionnaire. Although this group represents the target audience, it will need to be developed together with a wider audience. This will probably bring out more issues with the interface and the interaction. The lack of a clear introduction and relationship between the project and the structure of a Wikipedia article will become more evident. To further improve the project, I would prefer to closer study how people interact and improve the interface to increase their understanding afterwards. Once the user understands the message in more detail, he or she can also start using Wikipedia's platform more advanced for their own benefit.

The project can also be improved on the Wikipedia side. From the literature review and my own analyses, I have been able to extract the core systemic properties of Wikipedia's mechanism. Though, due to the complexity, I have never felt I really was able to comprehend Wikipedia. To improve the project, I would like to reach out to Wikipedia and involve some recognised wikipedians into the design process as well.

At last, a project of such nature can encourage reflection. As we have seen in the last questionnaire, the user is triggered to think about the dynamics of the collaborative structure and the effect on the information.

Naturally, one started to reconsider their opinion on, and their use of the information. A next step could be to add a way of facilitating the sharing of thoughts and discussion for the user afterwards. The medium lends itself for an exhibition context or to be found on the web. But to really have an impact on the use of information it should accompany it as an infinite limit. Seeing how people increase their trust in Wikipedia, it might be a suggestion to the foundation to open their interface and involve the passive user more. We are in the end, as society, all creating information, though evermore hidden behind the layers of technology. It would fit the mission and vision of Wikipedia very well to centralize the human in this process of creation. To create a counterforce against the discriminating trends of computation and show how wonderful, diverse, coloured, and human, knowledge can be.

# CONCLUSION

*Digging into the history of Wikipedia brought to light how its interface became what it is today. Consequently, new questions arose around the separation of debate and information in its interface and therefore perspective of its users. It became clear that there is a need to educate users on the nature of knowledge on Wikipedia but also the data that has seeped into our devices via Google Assist and Alexa. In the end there is always a human consent involved in the process, even though we wish to believe our technology is providing us with purely objective information.*



The project that followed, proved to have taken its users on an educational journey. Almost all of them were surprised to see the intense discussions and confirmed they had learned more about the functioning of Wikipedia's system. The project demonstrated that the insight in Wikipedia's system increased the user's trust in the content, which is remarkable given that the case presented was so messy. According to their feedback, the level of devotion and dialogue convinced the user of the article's veracity. Wikipedia might therefore benefit from increasing transparency. Future studies are needed to better understand the effects of interfaces on the information they contain. Our society might need a design guide for information systems as the number of layers increases and the origin of the content is no longer known. Recently, the GDPR was created to bring transparency on personal information collected on the web but what about the information we consume ourselves? Such a guide could stimulate the visualization of the origin of information in its presentation.

Finally, to invert the trend of removing the dissent of people, users need to accept a new kind of information, or more precisely, a new identity for the knowledge they already use. This knowledge is human and subjective but interpreted with all its subjectivity as well. Currently this may not be what the user wants to see, but this thesis has shown this increases the users trust in the information. Who has not finished an argument by going to Wikipedia for the facts? Though actually

you have just asked a larger group of people that still has a certain bias. Knowledge is human in its essence and inseparable from us. Hiding the origin of this information will not make it more objective--indeed just the opposite. Instead, we might do well to more fully embrace the imperfect nature of this information, contextualizing its assumptions and blind spots. Afterall, it is only through recognition of the innate perspectives and subjectivities of received information that any human user may truly begin to approach that elusive goal of "objectivity" in information.

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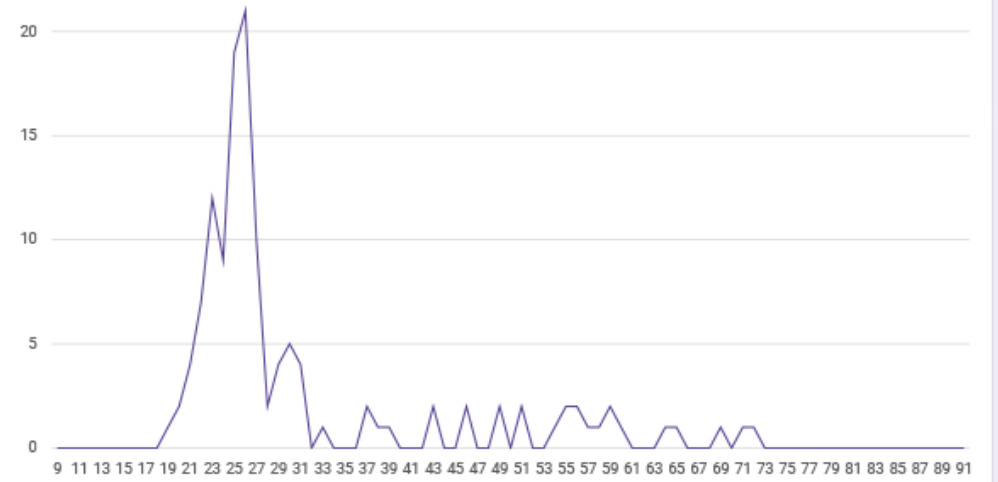
# APPENDIX A

## Questionnaire Wikipedia

142 risposte

### Date of birth

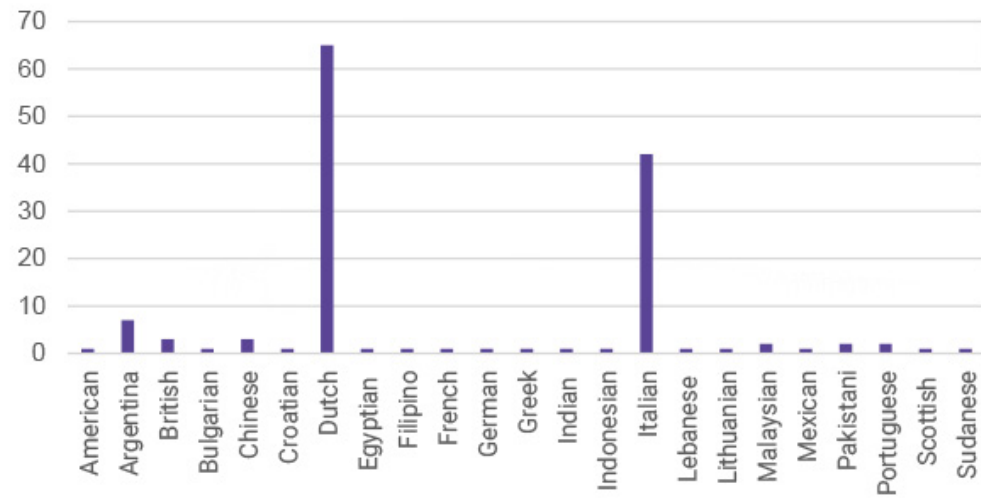
142 risposte





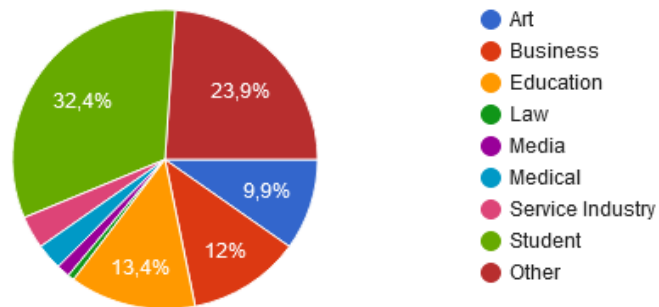
### Nationality

142 risposte



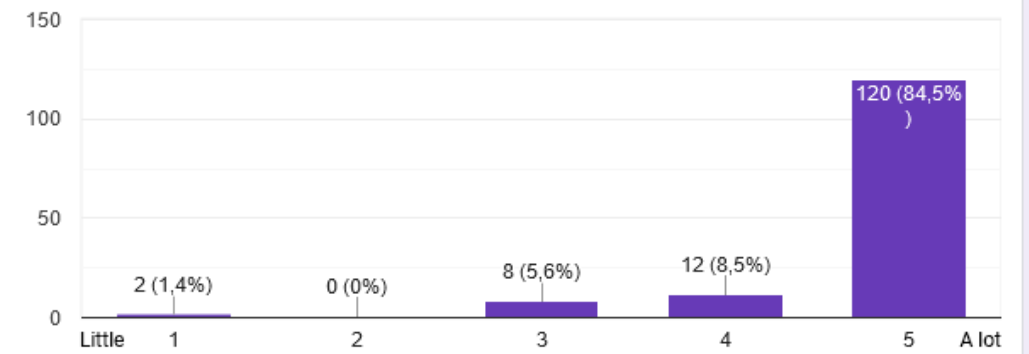
### Which industry describes your job best

142 risposte



### How actively are you using the internet?

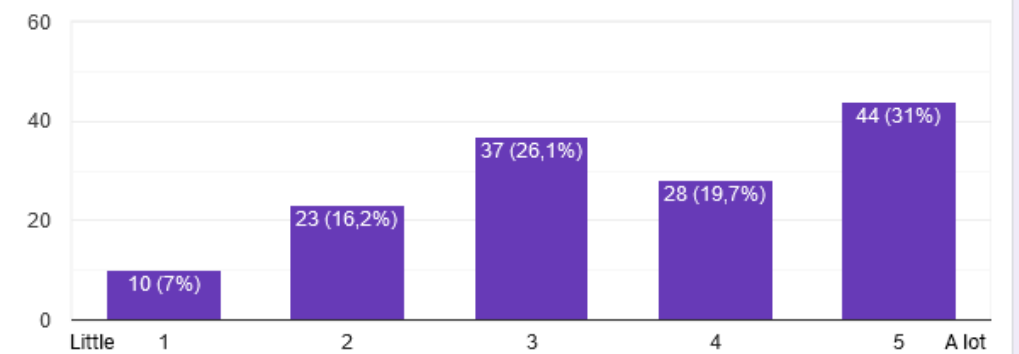
142 risposte



### Information online

#### Watching Social Media

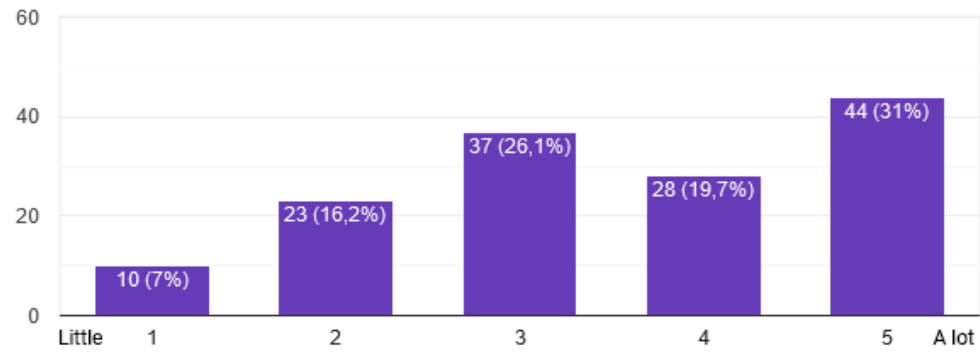
142 risposte



## Information online

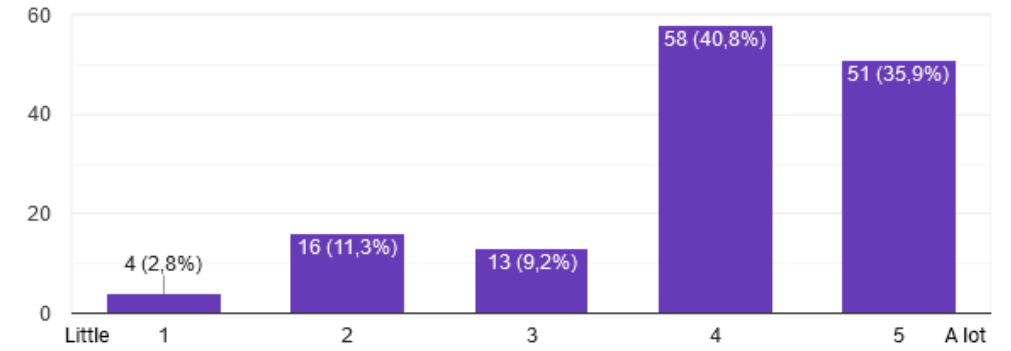
### Watching Social Media

142 risposte



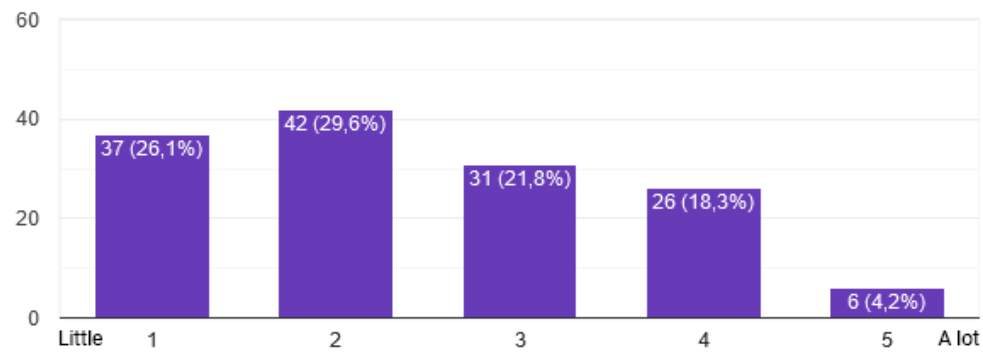
### Watching multiple sites

142 risposte



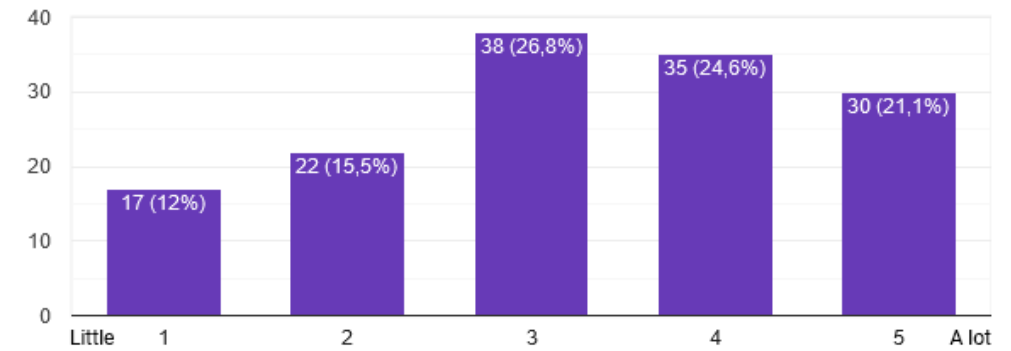
### Reading Forums

142 risposte



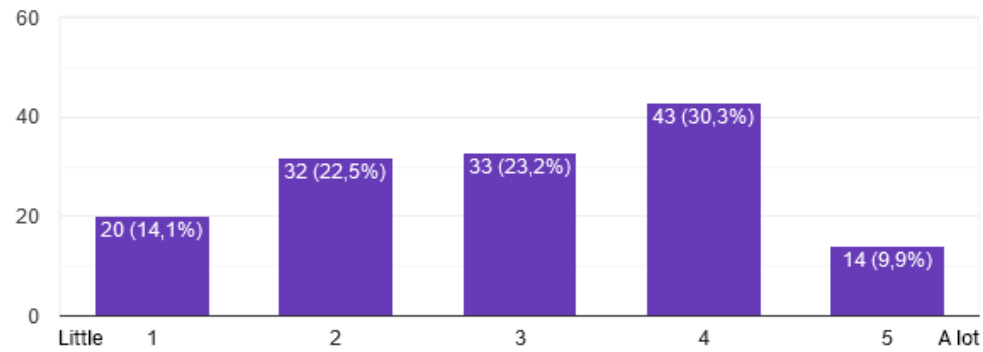
### Reading Scientific literature

142 risposte



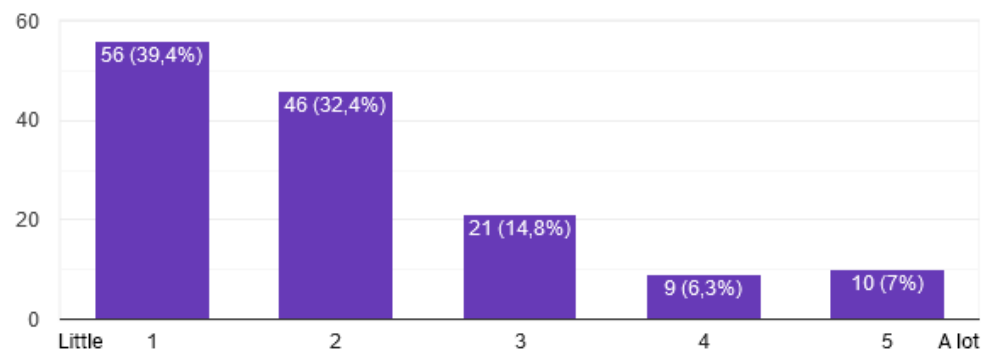
### Browsing Wikipedia

142 risposte



### Reading other encyclopediae

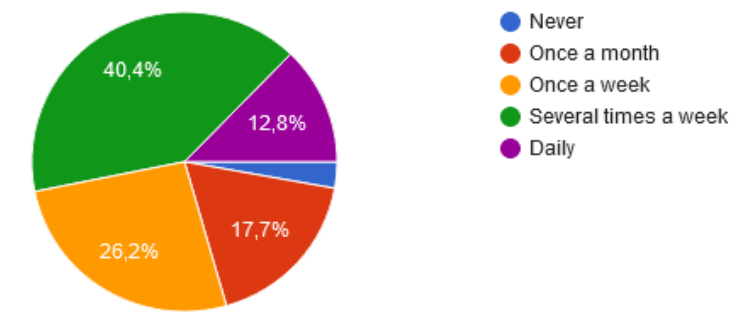
142 risposte



### Wikipedia general

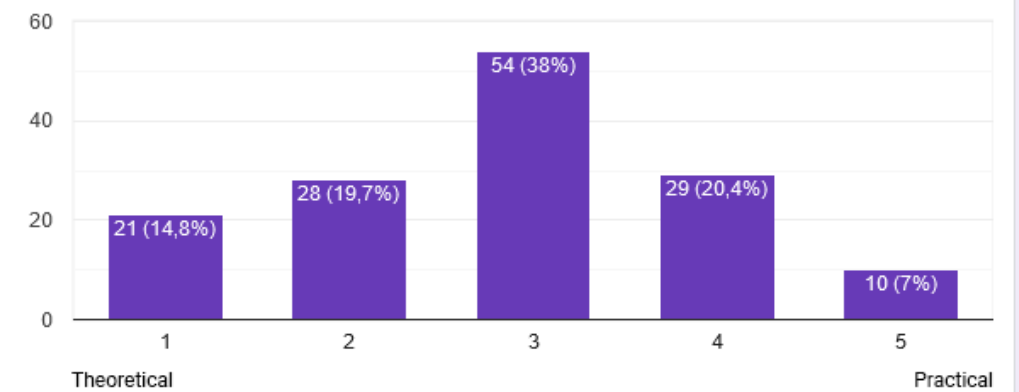
Which of the following answers describes best how often you use Wikipedia?

141 risposte



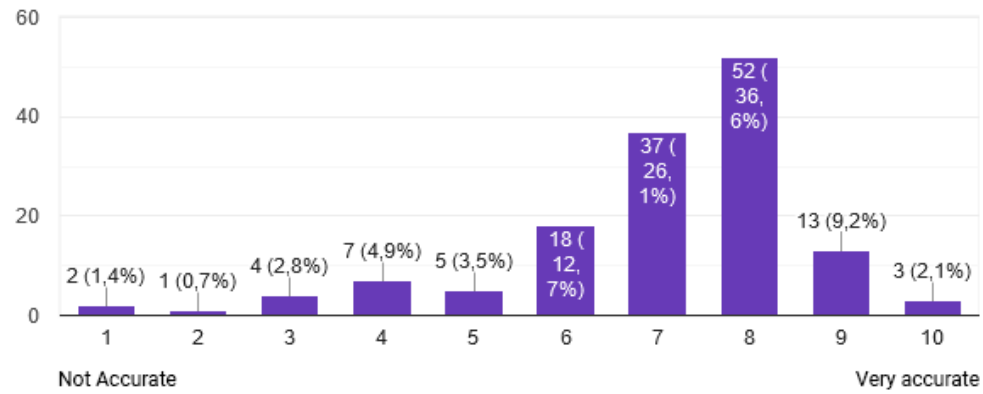
How would you describe the information on Wikipedia?

142 risposte



### How accurate do you estimate the information on Wikipedia to be?

142 risposte



### Who are responsible for the content on Wikipedia according to you?

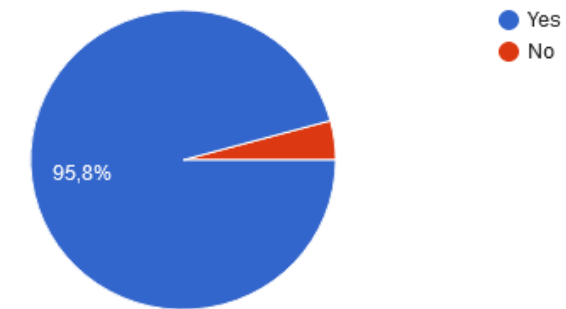
142 risposte

- everybody of us
- Gli utenti che scrivono le pagine
- Anyone
- Author
- geregistreeerde bijdragers (kan iedereen zijn)
- active nerds / the hivemind
- everyone can be responsible
- Voluntary contributors & moderators
- ALTRI (26)

### Knowledge of Wikipedia

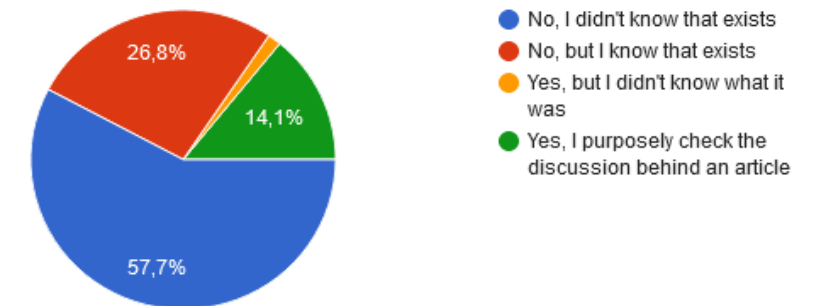
#### Did you know Wikipedia is open source and created by many collaborators?

142 risposte



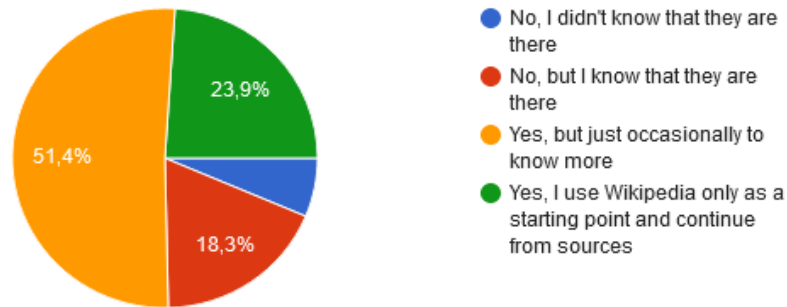
#### Do you ever look at the discussion behind a page on the so called "talk page" ?

142 risposte



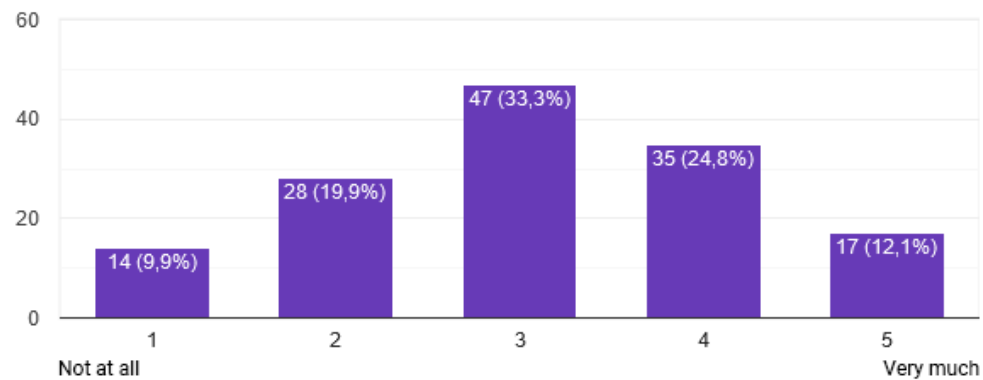
### Do you ever check the sources of an article?

142 risposte



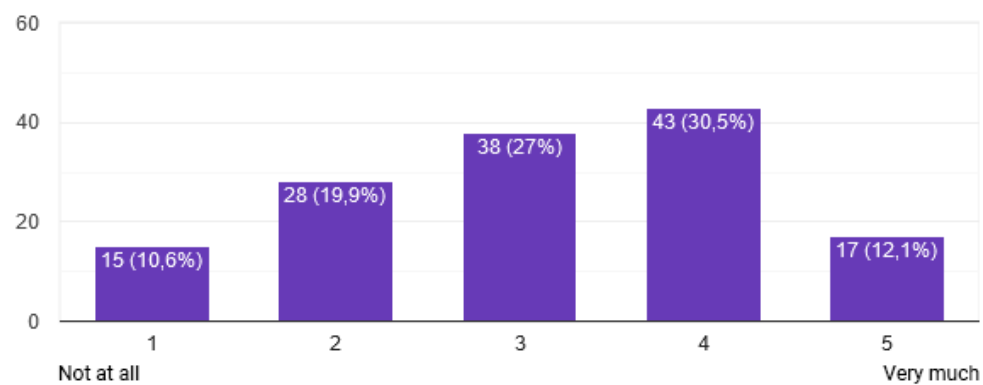
### To what extent would you like to see who collaborated to an article?

141 risposte



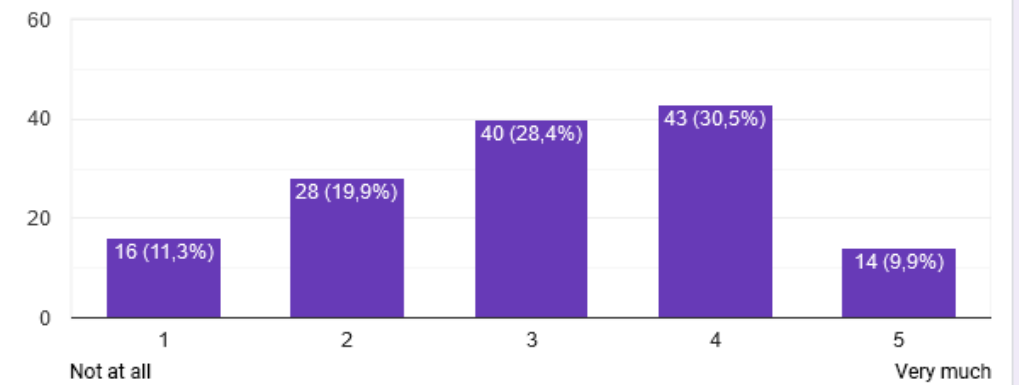
### To what extent would you like information on who they are?

141 risposte



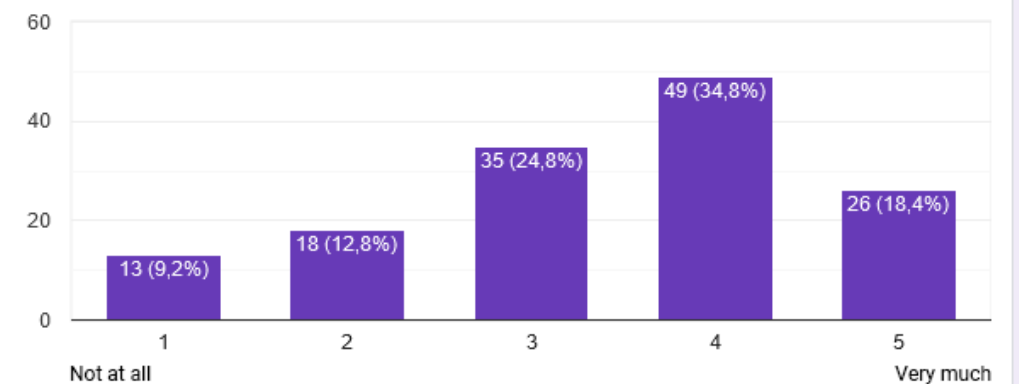
### To what extent would you like to know what else they wrote?

141 risposte



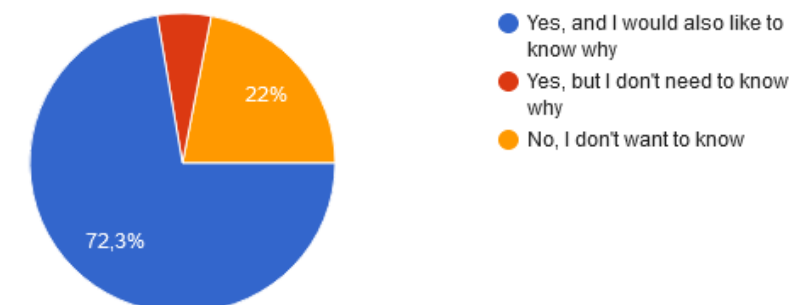
### To what extent would you like to see the latest edits?

141 risposte



### Would you like to know what has been removed from a page?

141 risposte

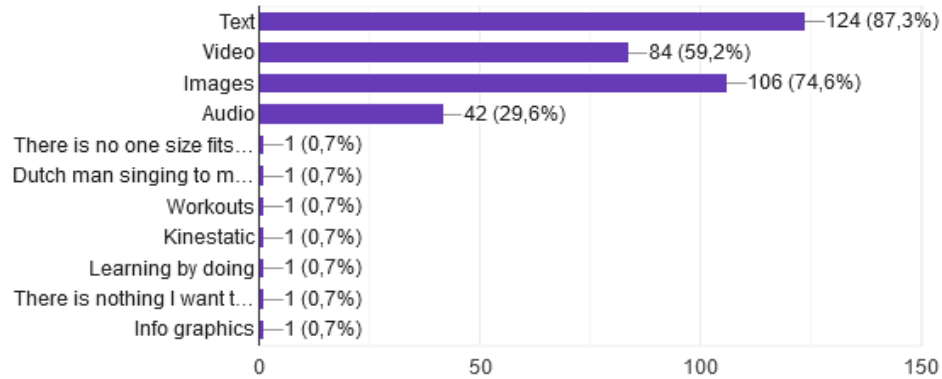




## Use of Wikipedia

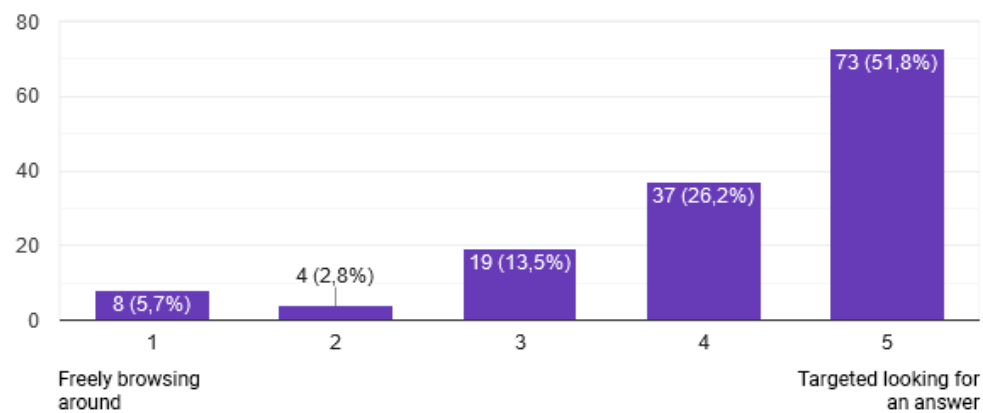
How do you like to take in knowledge? Multiple answers are possible.

142 risposte



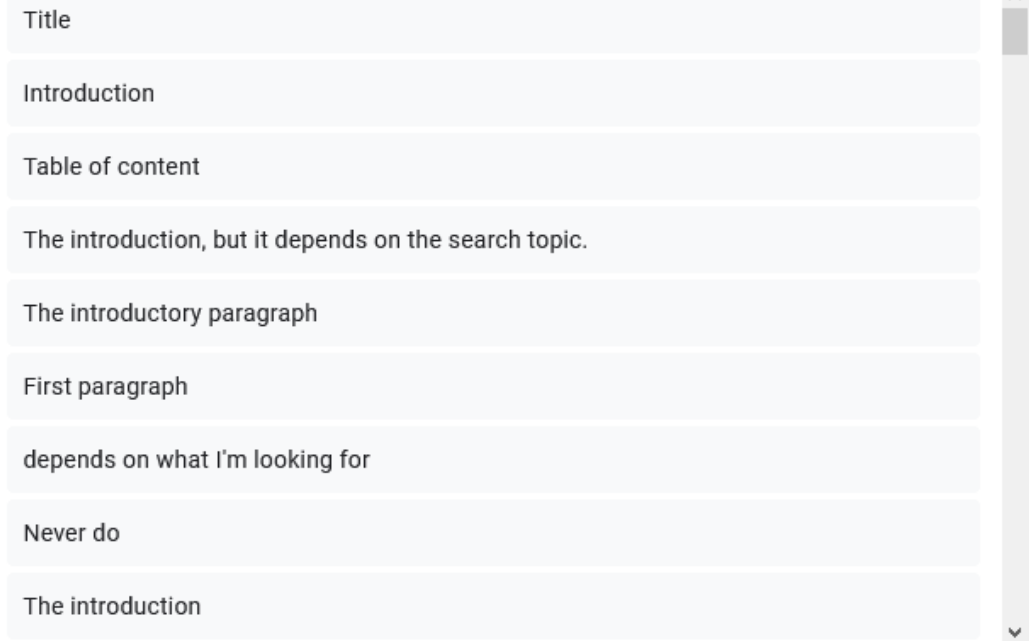
How do you spend most of your time on Wikipedia?

141 risposte



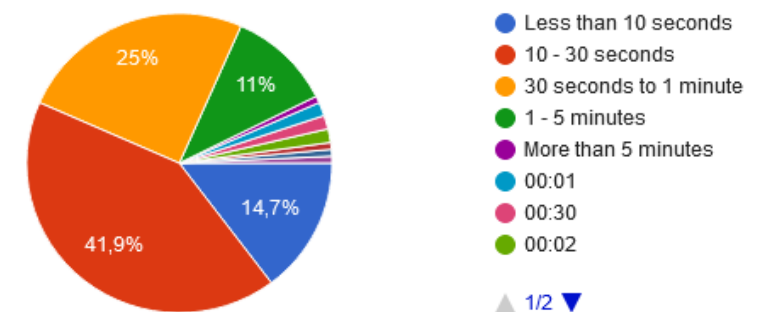
Which element on a page do you scan first to know whether a page is interesting or not?

141 risposte



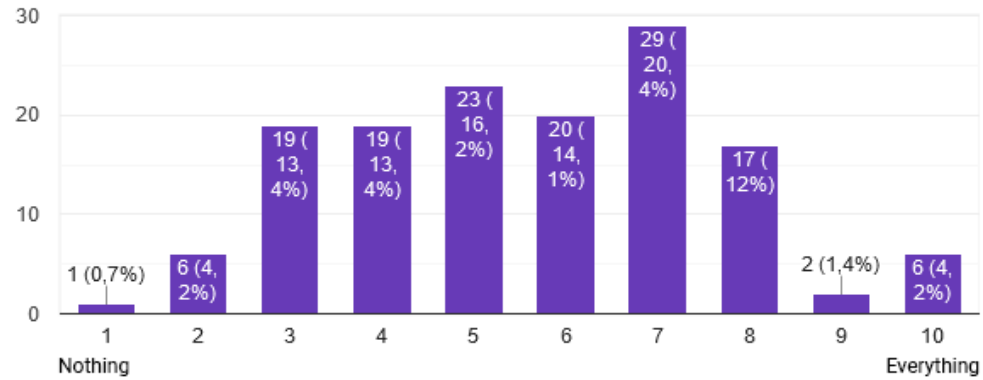
How much time do you need on average to decide if a page answers your question?

136 risposte



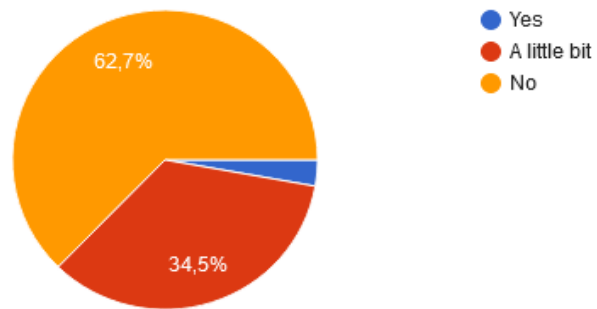
### How much text on a page do you read on average?

142 risposte



### Does this questionnaire change the way you will look at Wikipedia in the future?

142 risposte



### If your answer to the previous question was 'yes' or 'a little bit', how would this questionnaire change the way you will look at Wikipedia in the future?

50 risposte

It makes you look more critical on "factual" platforms and the way how they gather their information. Since Wikipedia is an opensource free website like GitHub and many others, it really depends on their community and users that take their time to back check all the stated facts.

Dont know

I really wanna check out the talk page

I would consider there was more to the text and was removed.

Will look for the discussion pages just for fun. And am interested in what your master thesis results will be. Groetjes, Anne

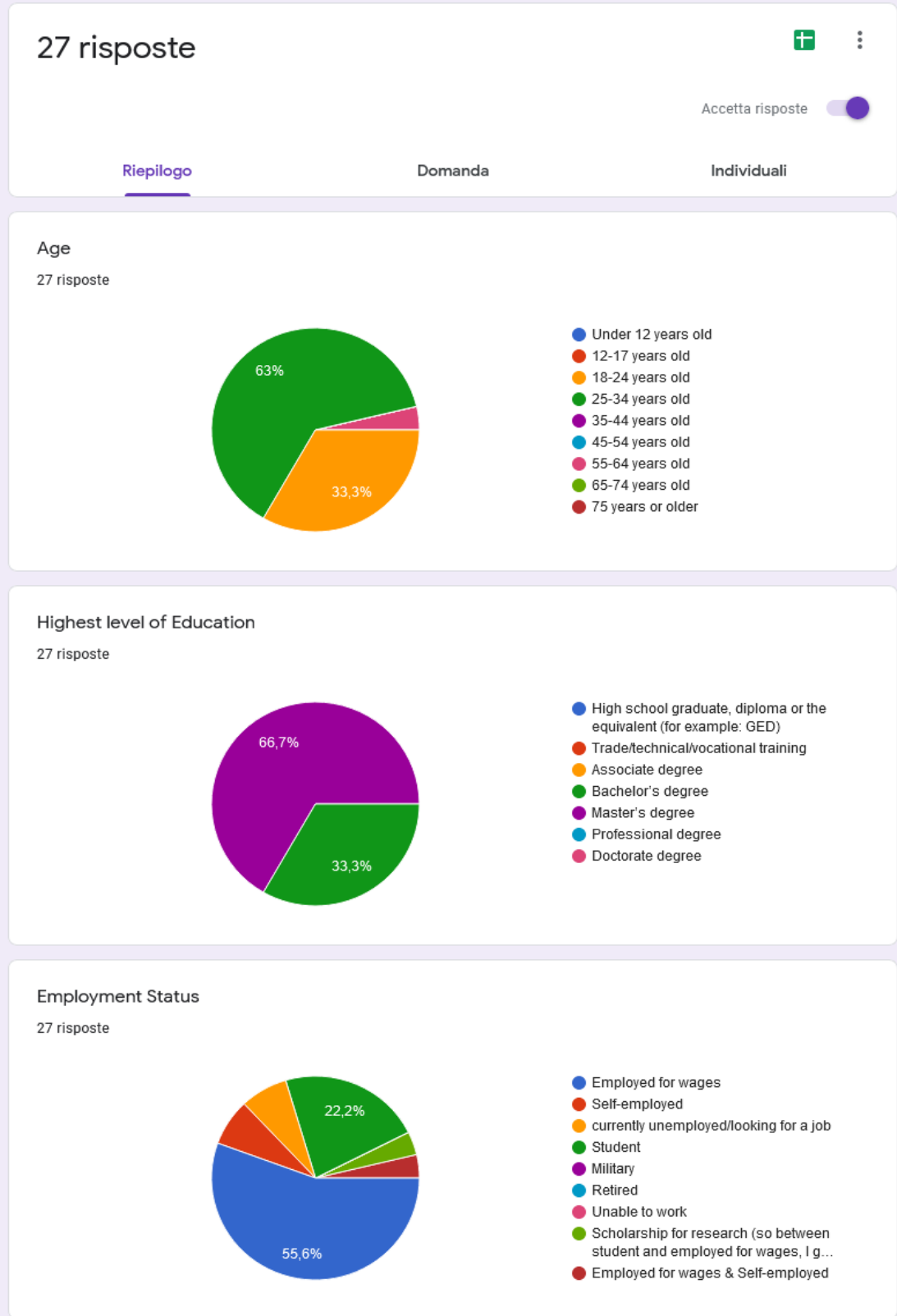
It's a good idea to find more information from the source of Wikipedia.

I will check previous version of texts sometimes

Questi contenuti non sono creati né avallati da Google. [Segnala una violazione](#) - [Termini di servizio](#) - [Norme sulla privacy](#)

Google Moduli

# APPENDIX B



## Pre experience

Describe Wikipedia in your own words.

27 risposte

I would through my first born child into a river if that's what it took to keep Wikipedia free.

Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia.

A platform where I can search quick answers before doing serious research

The contemporary incarnation of the "Library of Alexandria"

Reference information website

It is a source of knowledge validated through collaboration. In a way it is a living document because new site are added all the time.

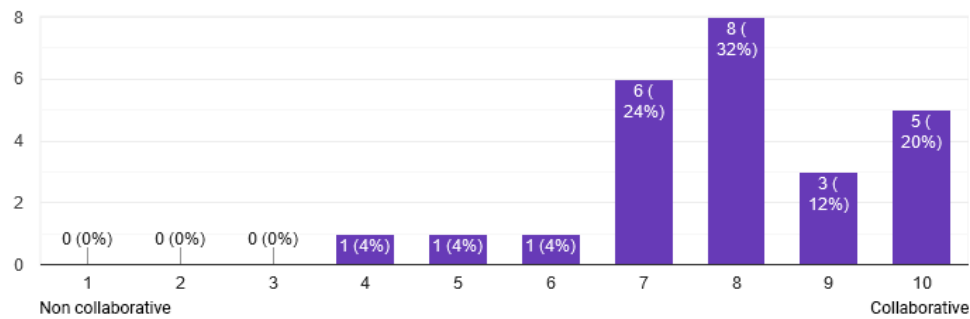
An open-sourced library that everyone has access to and that everyone can edit

Infinite source of information

Collaborative and free encvclonedia

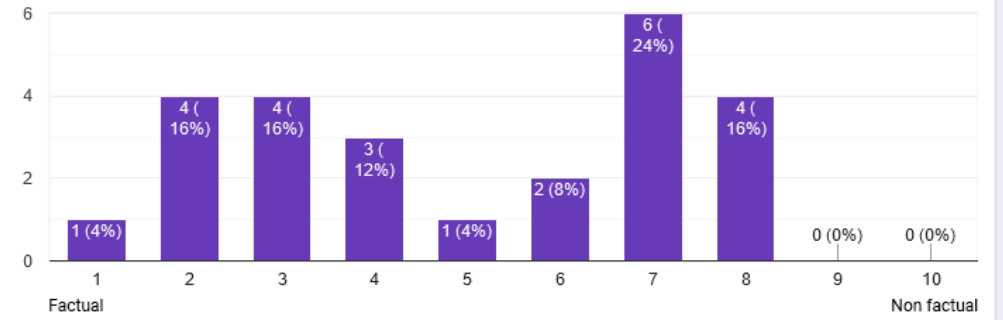
I consider Wikipedia to be:

25 risposte



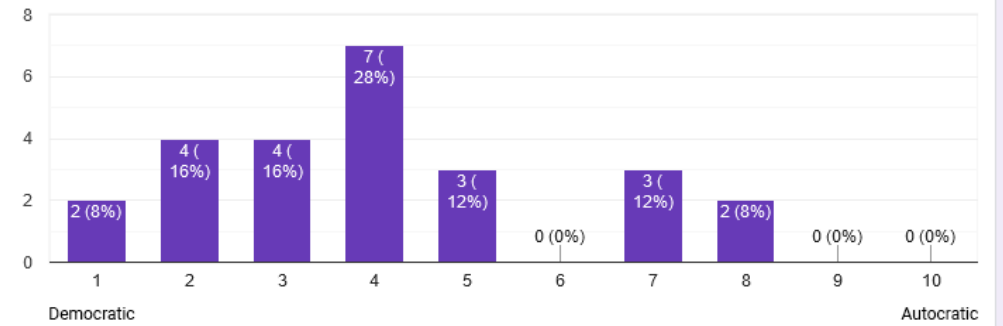
I consider Wikipedia to be:

25 risposte



I consider Wikipedia to be:

25 risposte

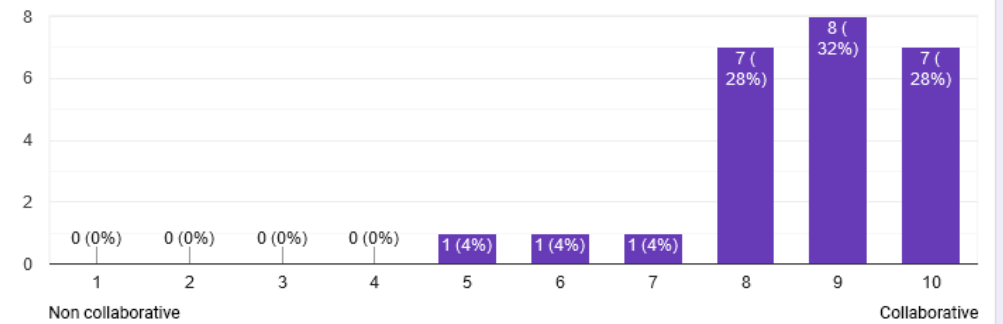


## Web project

### Post experience

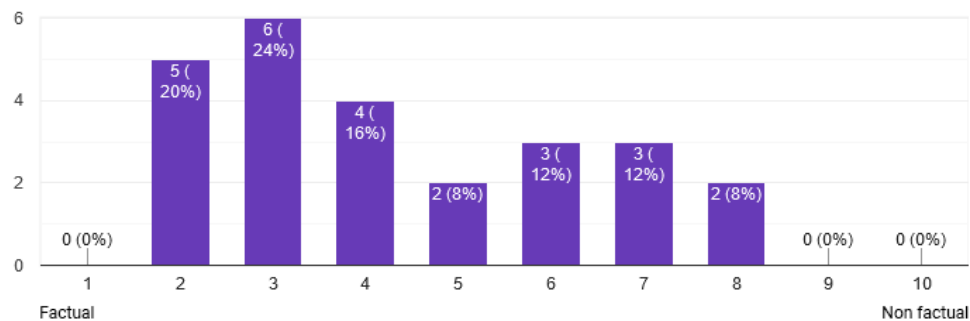
I consider Wikipedia to be:

25 risposte



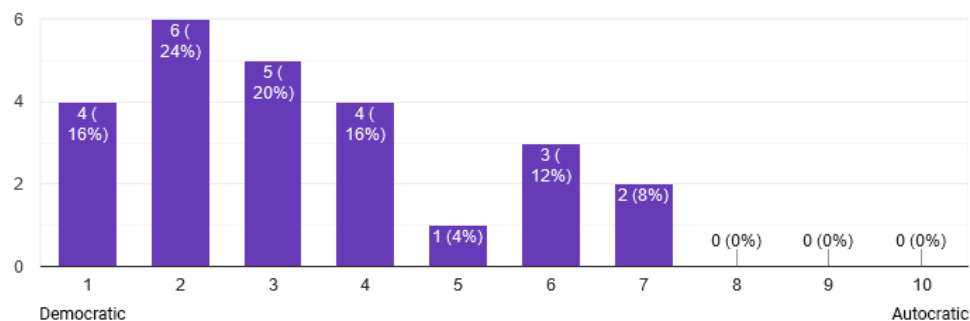
I consider Wikipedia to be:

25 risposte



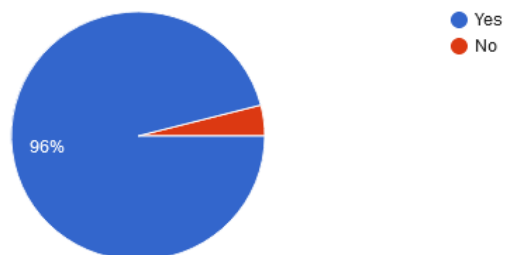
I consider Wikipedia to be:

25 risposte



Did you learn anything new during the experience?

25 risposte



Please write down at least 2 (and up to 5, if you can) things you learned about Wikipedia during the experience

25 risposte

dump trucks

They have rules for participations, not everybody is scientists.

- 1) I have fully understood how wikipedia works.
- 2) I don't know so many factors determined what the user really sees.

I learned that: the community behind wikipedia has very strong belief and opinions; Wikipedia has a very strict system of self defence against vandalism and un-constructive criticism

Chaotic 4chan-looking discussion, involved, hierarchical.

The process of voting for deletion or existence.  
The use of bots for the first moderation steps.

The size of engaged editors base. I use wikipedia often but haven't really taken part in editing, now I see how big that base must be since there is so much discussion taking place.

I was not aware of the discussion forum behind every page

Has this experience changed your opinion/view of/idea of Wikipedia? If so, please describe how your understanding of Wikipedia has changed.

22 risposte

Yes, I was not aware about the crazy discussions in the background.

My view of Wikipedia isn't changed very much

Understanding the modus operandi of a wikipedia page

It showed me the collaborative reaching consensus on what is true. Which is a mentality we should have more often in society.

It is amazing, nothing changed

Yes, I consider it a more reliable source of information.

Before this experience I'd never thought of such collabs in Wikipedia.

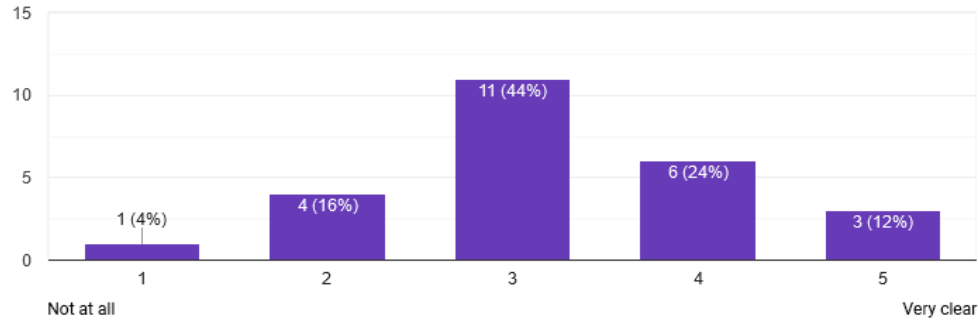
Yes, it felt like getting taking a secret backstage tour of Wikipedia. I think it gives you the appetite for finding out more about how Wikipedia articles are creating and some of the knowledge and tools to do so. However, in laying out everything easily for me to read, I don't think I would go out of my way to relive this



Feedback

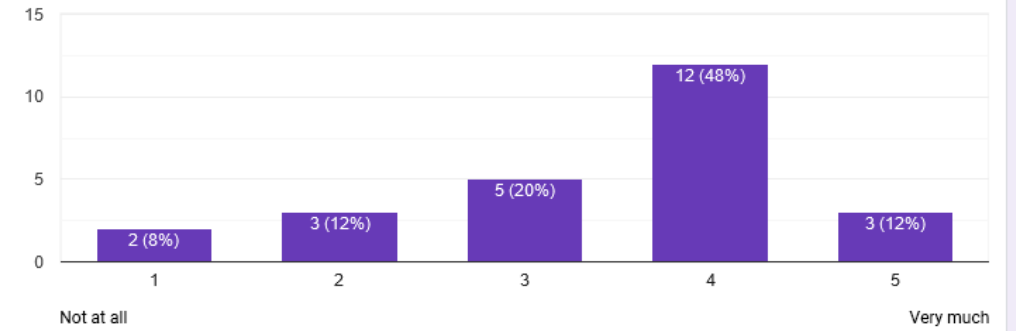
Was it clear to you how to navigate through the different points on the map?

25 risposte



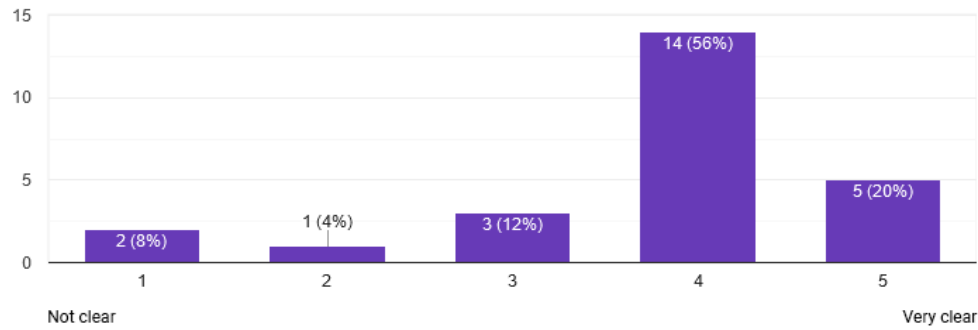
Did you feel motivated to read more discussion independent of the provided storyline?

25 risposte



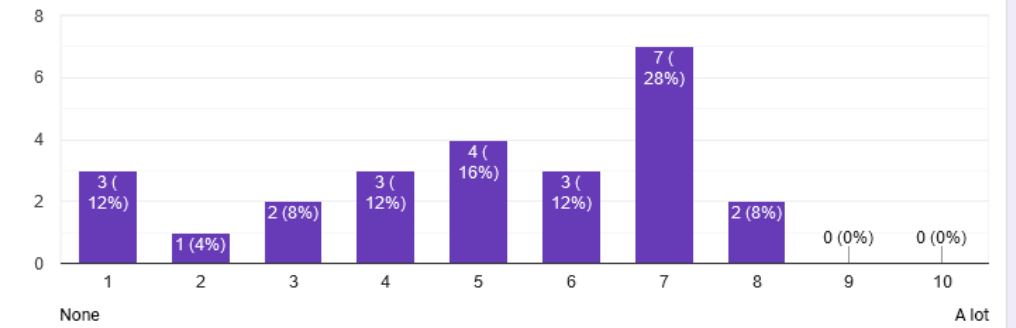
How would you describe the storytelling in the order of presentation for the different elements?

25 risposte



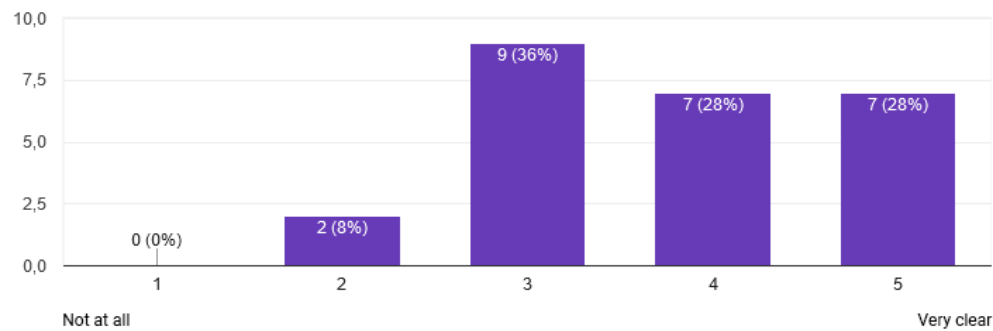
How much extra time did you spend reading

25 risposte



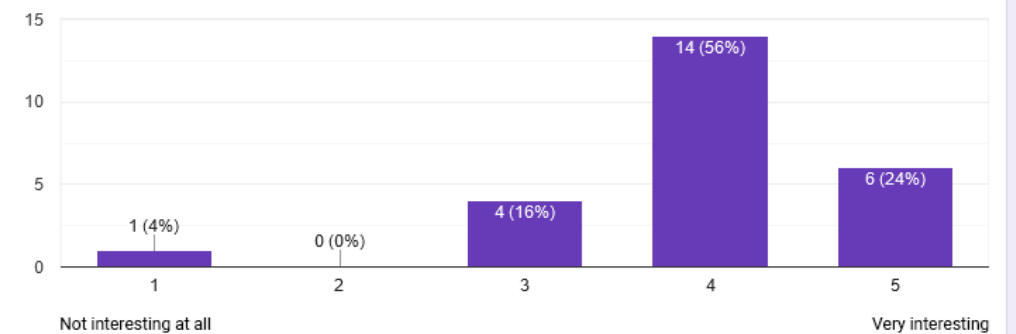
Was it clear to you how the map and the popup are related to Wikipedia?

25 risposte



How would you value this experience

25 risposte



If you have any feedback on the interface, leave it here

17 risposte

Would make the arrow accesible when reading the card (about policies etc).

I was hard to move and read through the interface, every time I tried to move it blocks.

Page wise by topic instead of by discussion topic and/or chronology

It was at first not really clear how to move on after the first pop up

At the beginning the impact with the map scared me a little bit, it took me some minutes to understand how it works and that the popup messages explain the map structure, but once understood it was clear and enjoyable

I would give slightly more detailed instructions maybe on a page separate to the introduction, many users are stupid and want to go through as fast as they can so avoid reading. At first i couldn't figure out that i should zoom in to read the conversation lol

The biggest issue for me was that the two arrows I could have used to go through the story were unreachable under the dialog box (I used a laptop, old Mac book pro, Brave browser). I could not reach

If you have any feedback on the story, leave it here

11 risposte

Which story?

I ended up reading more of the extra bits on the map rather than the main story, which i felt was more like additional information rather than an actual story, I actually clicked on them whilst reading through the map rather than using the arrows and then reading the convos. maybe it's too late to turn it around? Either way it's cool!

the story was interesting, it got my attention at the beginning and I wanted to keep reading, but I could not fully appreciate it because of (previous feedback)

Story is good, the point is nicely and clearly explained.

The story was clear

I navigated through the page before getting into the story. The story helped me look at contributions differently

Interesting to learn more about a knowledge source I use (almost) everyday, but have little knowledge

Additional quotes, ideas, improvements you could not express in previous questions, shoot here!

11 risposte

i loved it

Not taking credit for this: but a wikipedia account would be more interesting if it had a kind of personal folder function. So you can list the articles you like by either WP designed topics or custom topics.

I'm not sure if I'd call it a map? I know it's a mind map but when I read map I was expecting it in a more symbolic sense.. I was expecting a visual translation of the topic, although I think the way you did it makes sense and is in line with the topic, so I like it... but maybe I would change the words 'map' and 'story' as I was expecting a creative looking game (let me know if you don't understand what I mean by this - I'm sure that by now you know who I am ;)

If I was to improve this I would try to fix the sequential navigation and keep it always on the one side of screen (50%) and make sure you can sequentially go through each dialog box while the map stay on the other side (so, user read dialog box on the left, click the arrow, the dialog box load new info, the map on right moves on the next bit of the chart)

This project should have a important place on Wikipedia, so more people can understand how it works. Good luck!