SI 563: Introduction to Wikipedia

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Follow along
Agenda

Introduction to Wikipedia (35 min)
- Why we edit
- Legacy of Wikipedia editing in Econ
- Wikipedia Resources
- Wikipedia Basics

Finding Secondary Sources in Econ (15 min)
- Econ Reference Materials
- New library search
- Econ research guide
Who uses Wikipedia?

Wikipedia is the best thing ever. Anyone in the world can write anything they want about any subject, so you know you are getting the best possible information.
Wikipedia is the world’s free encyclopedia, accessed by nearly 500 million unique visitors per month in more than 301 languages. It hosts more than 5.9 million articles in English with about 800 new articles created each day by volunteer editors around the world.
And where do we encounter this knowledge?
YouTube will use Wikipedia to tackle fake news - but failed to tell Wikipedia
So, who edits Wikipedia?
“Imagine a world in which every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge. That's what we're doing.”

- Jimmy Wales [1]
There are currently 42,401,269 Wikipedia accounts, of which 125,894 are actively editing. [1][2]

- 90% men
- 9% women
- 1% trans
- 72% under the age of 40
- A majority reported secondary education or higher
What does this snapshot show?

Why are these numbers important?
“Wikipedia will only contain ‘the sum of all human knowledge’ if its editors are as diverse as the population itself…”

- Sue Gardner (citation)
“The Wikipedia project suffers systemic bias that naturally grows from its contributors' demographic groups, manifesting in imbalanced coverage of some subjects, thereby leaving less represented demographic groups without adequate coverage.” (citation)
Foundations of this Project

**WikiProject Econ**

Devoted to improving coverage of Economics on Wikipedia.

**Expert Ideas**

Solicits comments on Wikipedia articles from academics in the field of Economics.
Five Pillars of Wikipedia

1. Wikipedia is an encyclopedia
2. Wikipedia is written from a neutral point of view
3. Wikipedia is free content that anyone can use, edit, and distribute
4. Editors should treat each other with respect and civility
5. Wikipedia has no firm rules
Well... sort of.

Wikipedians love making rules about editing Wikipedia, and there is a well-developed bureaucracy with policies, guidelines, and user levels.
Core Content Guidelines

1. Neutral Point of View
2. Verifiability
3. Conflict of Interest
4. Reliable Sources
5. Notability and significant coverage
What makes a good source?

Good sources are independent of your subject and prove notability. When possible, focus on:
  • books
  • magazines
  • journals
  • academic journals
  • mainstream newspapers (ex: NY Post vs. NY Times)

When using websites, focus on those that are most likely to have undergone an editorial process that includes fact-checking.

In very limited cases, personal websites and social media can be appropriate. When in doubt, ask a librarian!
“notability” and
“significant coverage”
Why Nobel winner Donna Strickland didn’t have a Wikipedia page
Sample Articles

REJECTED

PUBLISHED
Project Goals:

- Understand differences between genres and contexts for different forms of academic texts and general reference texts
- Engage in public scholarship and improve the inclusivity of a public resource
- Learn to critically evaluate information we encounter and/or receive
- Question the “neutrality” of sources and sites of knowledge
Resources

- U-M Library Wikipedia Research Guide
- Training resources from Wikipedia
- Slate’s Source Notes series
- Wired, “Meet the Editors Fighting Racism and Sexism on Wikipedia”
- Huffington Post, “Editors Are Trying To Fix Wikipedia's Gender And Racial Bias Problem”
Tutorial: Anatomy of a Wikipedia page, basic editing, inline citations
Editing Checklist

Enable Visual Editor
Sandbox
Talk Pages
Adding citations & references
Hyperlinks
  - Wikipedia page links
  - External links
Leaving edit summaries
Watchlists

[More here]
Finding Secondary Sources for Economics
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Research Guide for SI 563

- Guide with suggested databases and resources for this assignment
- Suggested references sources for economics
  - New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics
  - Handbooks in Economics
  - Many more
Thank you!
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