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.
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

Donna Strickland, an associate professor at the University of Waterloo, won the 2018 Nobel Prize in Physics on Oct. 2. Last May, a Wikipedia entry on Strickland was rejected for her lack of “notability.” (Brad Rempel/AP/ Getty Images)

By Dawn Barsey
Donna A. Strickland is an optical physicist and professor at the University of Waterloo. She is known for her work on ultrashort pulses and nonlinear optics. Strickland, along with her Ph.D. supervisor Dr. Gerald Mourou, co-invented the chirped pulse amplification (CPA) system, which made it possible to amplify ultrashort pulses at high peak powers.[1]

In 1981, Strickland received her B.Eng. in Physics from the University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada. She earned her Ph.D. in Optics from the University of Rochester in 1989. After completing her Ph.D., Strickland worked as a research associate at the National Research Council of Canada as a research associate from 1989 to 1991. After a year in the laser division of the National Research Council of Canada, she became a member of Princeton University’s Advanced Technology Center for Photonics. In 1991, she joined the University of Waterloo as an assistant professor. In 1999, she was appointed a professor of the physics department. She is a fellow of the Optical Society of America and was elected as the OSA president in 2013.

Awards and honors
- 2006 Fellow of the Optical Society of America
- 2006 Cottrell Scholar Award from Research Corporation
- 1995 Premier’s Research Excellence Award
- 1995 Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellowship

Early life and education
Strickland was born on 27 May 1958, in Guelph, Ontario, Canada to Ethel J. (née Ramsey), an English teacher and Lloyd Strickland, an electrical engineer.[2] After graduating from Guelph Collegiate Vocational Institute, she decided to attend McMaster University because of its engineering physics program which included lasers and axion optics, areas of particular interest.[3] A McMaster, she was one of three women in a class of 25. Strickland graduated with a B.Eng. degree in engineering physics in 1981.[7]

Strickland studied for her graduate degree in the Institute of Optics[8] receiving a Ph.D. degree from the University of Rochester in 1989.
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
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! Stay in touch!

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