MIND THE GAP

AFRO FREE CULTURE CROWDSOURCING WIKIMEDIA

MIND THE GAP

ADDRESSING STRUCTURAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION ON WIKIPEDIA

MICHAEL BARERA
UNIVERSITY AND LABOR ARCHIVIST
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON LIBRARIES
MIND THE GAP

WIKIPEDIA AND ITS GAPS
• The first section of this presentation covers the mission and purpose of Wikipedia, analyzes both the quantity and quality of its information (including what it covers well and does not cover well), and then discusses issues of structural equity and inclusion (what Wikipedia refers to as “systemic bias”)

RESPONSES ON WIKIPEDIA
• The second section discusses major responses to the gaps and systemic bias problems on Wikipedia by looking at three critical gaps (gender, race, and geography) while also discussing more general responses designed to increase the number of editors that (sometimes indirectly) help address the gaps

WHAT UTA IS DOING
• The third and final section discusses what UTA is doing to fill the gaps through the lenses of its three major areas of engagement with Wikipedia and Wikimedia: “Learn to Edit” workshops and resources, Wikipedia Meetups and content creation on Wikipedia, and uploading images to Wikimedia Commons
WIKIPEDIA AND ITS GAPS
ANALYZING SYSTEMIC CONTENT GAPS ON WIKIPEDIA IN LIGHT OF ITS MISSION AND PURPOSE
THE MISSION AND PURPOSE OF WIKIPEDIA

• In 2004, Wikipedia co-founder Jimmy Wales made the following remark about Wikipedia in a Slashdot article that has become the unofficial mission and purpose of 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.”

• Wikipedia’s “purpose” page outlines its purpose as follows:
  • “Wikipedia's purpose is to benefit readers by acting as an encyclopedia, a comprehensive written compendium that contains information on all branches of knowledge. The goal of a Wikipedia article is to present a neutrally written summary of existing mainstream knowledge in a fair and accurate manner with a straightforward, ‘just-the-facts style.’ Articles should have an encyclopedic style with a formal tone instead of essay-like, argumentative, promotional or opinionated writing.”
QUANTITY OF INFORMATION ON WIKIPEDIA

• As of this month, the English Wikipedia:
  • Has over 6.1 million articles
  • Has over 3.6 billion words
  • Would comprise over 2,700 volumes if printed in the same physical format as Encyclopedia Britannica

• As of this month, all Wikipedias collectively:
  • Have over 54 million articles
  • Exist in over 300 languages

• For comparison:
  • The final (2013) print version of Britannica has about 40,000 articles (0.6% the size of English Wikipedia)
  • The final (2009) deluxe edition of Microsoft Encarta has about 62,000 articles (1.0% the size of English Wikipedia)
  • The online version of Britannica currently has about 120,000 articles (1.9% the size of English Wikipedia)
Depiction of the size of a hypothetical printed English Wikipedia as of January 2020, if printed in the same physical format as the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. At that time, if printed, it would total 2,657 volumes and take up 13 full standard-sized shelving units plus part of a 14th. According to updated statistics, as of this month, English Wikipedia has expanded to a hypothetical 2,775 printed volumes.
QUALITY OF INFORMATION ON WIKIPEDIA

• Strengths of Wikipedia’s content:
  • Computer technology/history
  • Hard sciences (biology, chemistry, physics, etc.)
  • Meteorology
  • Military history
  • Numismatics (coins)
  • Science fiction
  • Video games
  • Western Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand

• Weaknesses of Wikipedia’s content:
  • Africa (especially sub-Saharan Africa)
  • Asia (except for East Asia)
  • Latin America
  • Non-Western culture (art, literature, music, etc.)
  • Non-Western politics
  • Minority communities in many countries
  • Women’s history
The Wikipedia article “Peak oil” as it appeared in 2011. Note the green “plus” symbol in the top right corner, noting it is a Good Article, the second-highest level of quality on Wikipedia (after Featured Articles). As an undergraduate student at the University of Michigan, I was assigned this article as part of required reading for a geological sciences course that I took. This is an example of one of Wikipedia’s strengths.
The Wikipedia article “Sundiata Keita” as it appeared in 2008. As an undergraduate student at the University of Michigan, my professor told our pre-modern African history class not to trust Wikipedia for topics related to Africa. The subject of this article was a major topic in the class. This is an example of one of Wikipedia’s weaknesses.
A great example of geographical systemic bias on Wikipedia is the “rough evaluation of coverage” used by WikiProject Countering Systemic Bias to address both history and politics:

- Excellent: North America, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand
- Good: East Asia, Japan, Eastern Europe
- Mediocre: Latin America, Middle East, North Africa, South Asia
- Poor: Sub-Saharan Africa

Wikipedia’s gender bias, which along with its geographic bias is often considered one of its two greatest flaws, can be seen clearly in two areas:

- Content: 18.6% of biographies in the English Wikipedia are currently about women
  - Note that this is up from 15.5% in 2014, and also that there are over 1.8 million biographies on English Wikipedia
- Contributors: 8-15% of Wikipedians are female
  - The number varies from survey to survey: a 2018 survey found 13.6% female editors on English Wikipedia, but just 8.8% female editors on all Wikipedias, while a 2015 survey found 15% of American Wikipedians were female
### Rough evaluation of coverage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>North America, Western Europe, Australia &amp; NZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>East Asia, Japan, Eastern Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediocre</td>
<td>Latin America, Middle East, North Africa, South Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESPONSES ON WIKIPEDIA

VARIOUS RESPONSES TO BIASES RELATED TO GENDER, RACE, AND GEOGRAPHY ON WIKIPEDIA
RESPONSES TO GENDER BIAS
Perhaps the most notable and effective of all Wikipedia efforts to counter systemic bias, WikiProject Women in Red is a WikiProject, which is “a group of contributors who want to work together as a team to improve Wikipedia” and “often focus on a specific topic area.”

The name “Women in Red” refers to wikilinks (hyperlinks) on Wikipedia articles that link to articles on women that do not (yet) exist. Wikilinks display as blue if their target page exists, but as red if it does not.
WikiProject Women in Red was founded in 2015 by Rosie Stephenson-Goodknight and Roger Bamkin. Emily Temple-Wood joined shortly thereafter, and she has become famous in the Wikipedia community for creating a new Wikipedia biography on a female scientist every time she is harassed about her editing. At Wikimania 2016, Stephenson-Goodknight and Temple-Wood were named Wikipedians of the Year. (Wikimania is the main international conference for Wikipedia and the broader Wikimedia movement.)

The WikiProject hosts both virtual and in-person edit-a-thons to improve the coverage of women on Wikipedia. Its work has substantially increased the percentage of biographies of women on Wikipedia, from 15.5% in October 2014 (before it was formed) to 18.6% by September 2020.
Screenshot from the Wikipedia project page “Wikipedia:WikiProject Women in Red” showing a line chart giving the number of new articles they have created each month since the project was created in 2015. Note the sheer amount of content they are creating, on average between 2,000 and 3,000 new biographies every month.
ART+FEMINISM EDIT-A-THONS

• Founded in 2014, Art+Feminism is a series of global edit-a-thons that focus on improving Wikipedia’s coverage of female artists.

• Art+Feminism was founded by Siân Evans, Jacqueline Mabey, Michael Mandiberg, and Laurel Ptak, a group of artists and librarians.

• After hosting 30 separate edit-a-thons that engaged over 600 volunteers in its first year (2014), it has grown extensively. As of 2020, over 18,000 people have participated in over 1,200 Art+Feminism edit-a-thons around the world, creating or improving roughly 84,000 Wikipedia articles about female artists.
The University of Zambia Art+Feminism Edit-A-Thon, a four-day event to address the information gender gap. March 6, 2020.
RESPONSES TO RACIAL BIAS
In February 2015, the first Black WikiHistory Month was celebrated with multiple edit-a-thons in the United States, including at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (Harlem, New York City), the Brooklyn Public Library, Howard University (in Washington, D.C.), and NPR’s headquarters (also in Washington, D.C.).

Black WikiHistory Month has been celebrated annually with multiple events every February since 2015. In addition to frequent events in New York City and Washington, D.C., numerous states have hosted multiple events, including California, Missouri, Tennessee, and Washington (state).
Wikimedia UK’s Black History Month Edit-A-Thon in the map room of the Geography Department at University College London. October 26, 2012.
AFROCROWD AND BLACK LUNCH TABLE

- **AfroCROWD** was founded in New York City in 2015 by Alice Backer with the goal of improving Wikipedia’s content on Black culture and history.
- It regularly hosts edit-a-thons in the New York City metropolitan area.
- It has partnered with other organizations, such as the Haiti Cultural Exchange, to host edit-a-thons.
- AfroCROWD also partners with **Black Lunch Table** (BLT), which focuses on creating oral histories with Black artists and which also organizes Wikipedia edit-a-thons of its own.
New Wikipedians learning to edit at Black Lunch Table’s Black History Everyday edit-a-thon at the Staten Island Museum. February 9, 2019.
RESPONSES TO GEOGRAPHIC BIAS
WIKIPEDIA ZERO

- Wikipedia Zero was a Wikimedia Foundation project that provided free access to Wikipedia on mobile phones, mostly in developing countries.
- It used the “zero-rating” technique of providing access to content without cost, which was made possible by subsidies that exempt Wikipedia content from a user’s mobile data allowance.
- The goal of Wikipedia Zero, which was based on Facebook’s similar zero-rating project Facebook Zero, was to increase access to Wikipedia in developing countries.
- From its launch in 2012 until its end in 2018, Wikipedia Zero provided Wikipedia content to over 800 million people in 72 countries via 97 different mobile plan operators.
- While it received a South by Southwest Interactive Award for activism in 2013, it was frequently criticized for violating the principle of net neutrality and experienced lack of growth before its termination in 2018.
There are numerous Wikimedia affiliate groups around the world, including 39 Wikimedia chapters ("incorporated independent non-profits") that mostly represent the wealthy countries of the global north, such as Germany, France, Canada, and South Korea. However, there are also chapters in middle-income developing countries such as Argentina, India, Mexico, Thailand, and South Africa.

There are a further 134 Wikimedia user groups ("open membership groups...designed to be easy to form") that provide even greater representation from the global south. Examples range broadly, from Benin to Iraq and Nepal to the Caribbean. There are also non-geographic, thematic user groups like AfroCROWD and Art+Feminism.

All movement affiliates exist to organize Wikipedians in their respective areas (either geographic or topical) and to support Wikipedia, generally by editing and creating new content. Some affiliates, especially major global north Wikimedia chapters such as those in Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, also support Wikipedia and Wikimedia projects through donations and even technical support (as in the case of Wikidata).
Map of all recognized Wikimedia chapters (blue) and Wikimedia user groups with a regional focus (green). June 20, 2020.
GENERAL RESPONSES RELATED TO BIAS
VISUALEDITOR

- Long a dream on Wikipedia, VisualEditor is a “what you see is what you get” (WYSIWYG) editing interface that allows Wikipedians to edit Wikipedia easily. It looks similar to the editing interface on a blog or a word processor, and it is much easier to use than writing in wikitext markup, the simplified form of hypertext markup language (HTML) that was the only way to edit Wikipedia for over a decade (2001-13).

- VisualEditor was implemented in 2013. After receiving pushback from many existing editors, it was made an opt-in choice until it was refined and further developed and ultimately restored to being an opt-out feature in 2015.

- While not explicitly designed to address systemic bias or lack of diversity among Wikipedians, VisualEditor does benefit Wikipedia’s efforts to recruit more female, minority, and developing-world editors just as it does all other potential editors because it makes editing the site substantially easier for all new users, lowering the bar to entry.
Screenshot showing the English Wikipedia article “Tarrant County, Texas” being edited with the VisualEditor. The text format menu is selected in this screenshot. Note how closely this editing interface resembles the appearance of live Wikipedia articles.
Screenshot showing the exact same page being edited with traditional wikitext markup, illustrating the difference that VisualEditor makes for increasing the ease of editing on Wikipedia and reducing the learning curve for new Wikipedians.
Another Wikipedia project begun to help all new editors is the Wikipedia Teahouse, which is designed to be a friendly, unintimidating place for new Wikipedians to ask questions.

The Teahouse is run by a series of experienced Wikipedians known as “hosts,” who volunteer to mentor new Wikipedians and answer their questions as they begin editing.

As with the VisualEditor, the Teahouse was not explicitly created to address systemic bias on Wikipedia, but it provides support and encouragement for all users that new female, minority, and developing-world Wikipedians can benefit from as much as anyone else.
Screenshot showing the English Wikipedia project page “Wikipedia:Teahouse.” Note how “ask a question” is prioritized, but there are also clearly marked buttons for “meet your hosts” and “articles to improve,” both of which are also important to new Wikipedians, both in terms of where to look for help as well as where to look to start editing articles.
WHAT UTA IS DOING
BUILDING A MORE DIVERSE USER COMMUNITY THROUGH “LEARN TO EDIT” WORKSHOPS AND RESOURCES

• Since I started working at UTA in April 2019, I have helped to build a more diverse Wikipedia community here at the university, in three closely interrelated ways, by providing:
  • Occasional formal two-hour-long “Learn to Edit Wikipedia” workshops, such as the one at the 2019 UTA Open Access Week
  • “Learn to Edit Wikipedia” LibGuide, based off the content of the workshops, which is continually available online to anyone interested in learning to edit Wikipedia
  • One-on-one, one-hour-long “Learn to Edit Wikipedia” trainings conducted via Microsoft Teams, which have been especially popular since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic
Screenshot of the home page of the UTA “Learn to Edit Wikipedia” LibGuide, which I created and continue to maintain. It is designed to teach a prospective future Wikipedian the fundamentals of Wikipedia editing in about one hour.
UTA WIKIPEDIA MEETUPS AND DIVERSE CONTENT CREATION ON WIKIPEDIA

- I have also begun leading a UTA Wikipedia Meetup, which meets twice every long term (September, November, February, and April) for two hours around lunchtime on a Friday to collaborate on an article (generally a new article created from scratch, unless otherwise noted):
  - November 2019 (inaugural Wikipedia Meetup): Lady Movin’ Mavs wheelchair basketball team
  - February 2020: Emerson Emory
  - April 2020: Climate of Dallas (improvements to an existing article)
  - September 2020: Santa Fe Freight Building in Fort Worth
  - November 2020: TBD (likely a biography about a cartographer whose works are held in Special Collections)

- Informally last year and more formally going forward, the February meetup is and will be tied in to the other Black History Month events celebrated by the UTA Libraries.
The UT Arlington Mavericks women's wheelchair basketball team, commonly known as the Lady Movin' Mavs, is the women's college wheelchair basketball team representing the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). Established in 2013, the team plays under the auspices of the National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA). It has been coached by Jason Nelms since its establishment.

The Lady Movin' Mavs have won two National Intercollegiate Wheelchair Basketball Tournament (NIWBT) national championships, in 2016 and 2018. Two of its players, Abay Dunkin and Rose Hollermann, have played for the United States Paralympic wheelchair basketball team. Two additional players of international note who have played for the Lady Movin' Mavs are Australian Annabelle Lindsay and Canadian Elodie Tessier.

Contents

| 1. History  |
| 2. Roster  |
| 3. Coaches  |
| 4. Season-by-season results  |
| 5. References  |
| 6. External links  |

History

The Lady Movin' Mavs were established in 2013.[1][2] Jason Nelms was named its coach. He previously played as a member of UTA's men's wheelchair basketball team, the Movin' Mavs, from 2000 to 2005 and also competed in the Paralympic Games.[3] During its inaugural 2013–14 season, the team had no substitute players, instead playing all five of its players for the full 40 minutes of each game.[4][5] The Lady Movin' Mavs played their first games against the University of Alabama and University of Illinois during a tournament in late October 2013.[6] They also played in the National Wheelchair Basketball Association Tournament (NWBAT) in their first season, but were disqualified because one of their players fell sick before the tournament and the team could not field a five-player lineup. In April 2014, the team signed Rose Hollermann and Josie Astrakos in its first recruiting class.[7]

The Lady Movin' Mavs were initially a sports club at UTA and transitioned to full intercollegiate team status once sufficient funds had been raised.[8] It plays under the auspices of the National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA), which organizes intercollegiate wheelchair basketball tournaments across the United States. During the 2014–15 season, the team's roster grew from five to nine players, which allowed the team greater flexibility with strategy and opportunities to rest players.[9] That season, the team played in the National Intercollegiate Wheelchair Basketball Tournament (NIWBT) in its first year and then lost to the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater in the third-place game.[10]

During the 2015–16 season, just the third season in the team's existence, it won its first national championship by beating the University of Alabama and then the University of Illinois in the NIWBT.[11][12] The Lady Movin' Mavs finished with a 19–5 record on the season.[13] That summer, it also had its first two players make the United States Paralympic wheelchair basketball team roster for the 2016 Summer Paralympics: Abby Dunkin and Rose Hollermann.[14]

The Lady Movin' Mavs finished the 2016–17 season with a 57–48 loss to the University of Alabama in the championship game of the NIWBT after they beat the University of Illinois 68–19 in their first-round game.[15]
Screenshot of the English Wikipedia article “Emerson Emory,” which was created during the UTA Wikipedia Meetup in February 2020. Although not officially a Black History Month event as celebrated by the UTA Libraries, the topic of the article was specifically chosen because February is Black History Month.
CONTRIBUTING DIVERSE CONTENT TO WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

• Since last year, the UTA Libraries has also been uploading images from numerous already-digitized collections to Wikimedia Commons and then integrating them into Wikipedia articles.

• While the largest collections in terms of raw numbers are the UTA Photograph Collection, UTA News Service Photograph Collection, and maps, there are three collections documenting people of color that have also been contributed already:
  • Pancho Medrano Papers
  • Emerson Emory Papers
  • Elzie and Ruby Odom Papers
Screenshot of the Wikimedia Commons category “Pancho Medrano Papers at the University of Texas at Arlington Libraries,” which consists of all the already-existing digitized photographs and documents from the Pancho Medrano Papers that were already available on UTA’s Digital Gallery.
Screenshot of the Wikimedia Commons category “Emerson Emory Papers at the University of Texas at Arlington Libraries,” which consists of all the already-existing digitized photographs and documents from the Emerson Emory Papers that were already available on UTA’s Digital Gallery.
IMAGE CREDITS

- AfroCROWD logo: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Afro_Free_Culture_Crowdsourcing_Wikimedia_(AfroCROWD).svg (AfroCROWD User Group, CC BY-SA 4.0)


- Black History Everyday edit-a-thon at Staten Island Museum with Black Lunch Table: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BLT_%2B_SIM_Editathon_05.jpg (Heathart, CC BY-SA 4.0)

- Black Lunch Table logo: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Black_Lunch_Table_logo.png (blacklunchtable.org, CC BY-SA 4.0)

- Mind the Gap logo: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mind_the_gap1.svg (London Student Feminists, Pro Femina, and Anonmoos, CC BY-SA 3.0)


- University of Zambia Art+Feminism Edit-A-Thon: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:UNZA_Art%2BFeminism_Edit-a-thon_2020_13.jpg (Icem4k, CC BY-SA 4.0)

• Wikimedia chapters existing and regional user groups:
  https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Wikimedia_chapters_existing_and_regional_user_groups.svg (Effieietsanders, Bidgee, and others, CC0 1.0)

• Wikimedia UK Black History Month: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wikimedia_UK_Black_History_Month_editing.JPG (Caroline Bressey and Daria Cybulska, CC BY-SA 3.0)

• Wikipedia Editathon at Newnham College, Cambridge, March 2017:

• Wikimedia Commons screenshots (Wikimedia Commons contributors, CC BY-SA 3.0)

• Wikipedia screenshots (Wikipedia contributors, CC BY-SA 3.0)

BIBLIOGRAPHY


BIBLIOGRAPHY (CONTINUED)

QUESTIONS?

MICHAEL BARERA

MICHAEL.BARERA@UTA.EDU

(817) 272-7511