

desirable disambiguation

or: why primary disambiguation is *not* the solution

legend

user browse path		
preferred link path		dot-dashed green
lazy link path		dashed red
redirect		solid blue

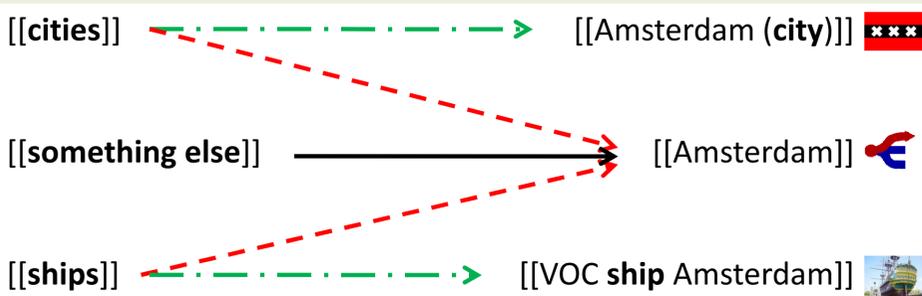
All examples follow the same structure: the **user** is on a page about **cities**, about **ships** or about **something else**. A link from **cities** should link to the **city**, while a link from **ships** should link to the VOC **ship**. The **city** is the primary topic with a 1000:1 link ratio.

introduction

“**Disambiguation** in Wikipedia is the process of resolving conflicts in article titles that occur when a single term can be associated with more than one topic, making that term likely to be the natural title for more than one article.”

Several methods of disambiguation exist on Wikipedia. All of them have their advantages and disadvantages. This poster introduces the two main systems in use, and discusses two alternatives: one handled with the current software, one with a future software change.

normal disambiguation



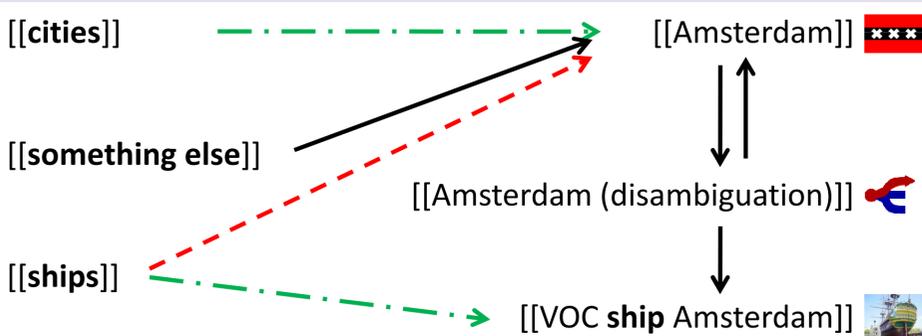
Advantages:

- Easy to maintain: **all** links to [[Amsterdam]] are **wrong**.
- A ‘lazy link’ links to a **disambiguation page** so a reader never gets to the wrong page first.

Disadvantages:

- Even the primary topic has an ‘ugly’ subtitle in brackets

primary disambiguation



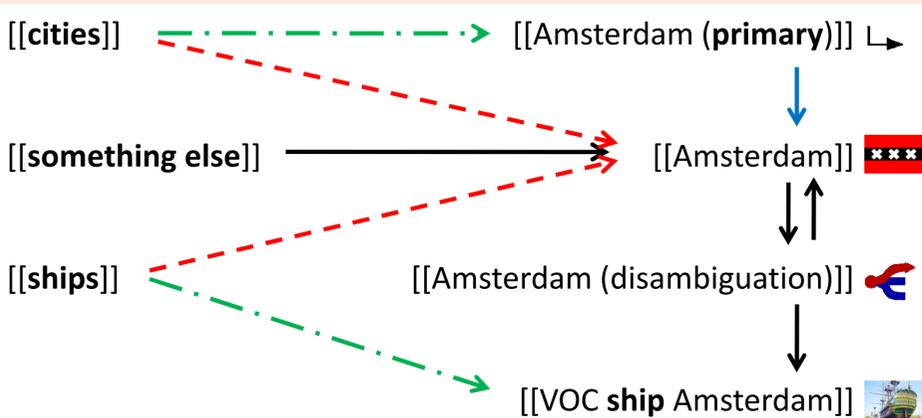
Advantages:

- Most ‘lazy links’ link to the right page
- The primary topic has no subtitle

Disadvantages:

- **Impossible** to maintain: **almost** all links to [[Amsterdam]] are **correct**. The incorrect links are -literally- a needle in an haystack.
- Lazy links can lead to the primary topic incorrectly

redirect primary disambiguation



Advantages:

- Easy to maintain: **all** links to [[Amsterdam]] are wrong.
- Most ‘lazy links’ are correct, thanks to the redirect.
- The primary topic has no subtitle

Disadvantages:

- A redirect notice is shown when clicking a link on [[cities]]

additional solutions

The redirect notice of the redirect solution can be hidden by using javascript or related techniques.

Another solution would be to extend the MediaWiki parser. By creating a way of ‘tagging’ separate links, it is possible to find the unchecked (untagged) links, without searching through all checked links: the big haystack.

conclusion

It is possible to enhance the primary disambiguation in order to maintain the list of links. This has its own disadvantage, which can be handled with display techniques.

For a more long term solution, extending the parser is desirable, as tags could add other options in the future

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Sources

Disambig-dark.svg (Stephan Baum, GFDL)
VOC_Amsterdam.jpg (User:Deepak, GFDL/CC-BY-SA)
Flag_of_Amsterdam.svg, Redirect_arrow_without_text.svg (PD)