



motivaction

research and strategy

Vereniging Wikimedia Nederland
Editor survey



Background, objective and problem formulation

Page 3



Conclusions

Page 5



Method and design

Page 8



Results

Page 9



Annex

Page 41



At the request of Sandra Rientjes on behalf of Wikimedia Nederland, Motivaction International B.V. conducted a survey of Wikipedia editors and of users of Wikipedia in the Netherlands.

- Wikimedia Nederland is the Dutch branch of the Global Wikimedia Foundation, the organisation that promotes free knowledge. The Wikimedia Foundation's flagship is Wikipedia.
- An estimated 3.3 million Dutch people (aged 18 to 80 years) are regular wikipedia.org visitors (source: Motivaction Mentality survey 2014).
- Wikimedia is an association with a membership that increases annually. The members support the Wikimedia mission and they pay annual membership fees.
- In addition, there are people who make active contributions to Wikipedia by, for example, writing articles or in the form of other activities.
- In 2012, Motivaction conducted a survey for Vereniging Wikimedia Nederland looking at users, contributors and members. It was felt that a repeat survey was needed this year. Wikimedia Nederland wishes to keep a finger on the pulse in terms of the organisation's profile and grass-roots satisfaction. In addition, a number of new issues have arisen that require examination.
- Specific areas requiring attention this year were working atmosphere and the standards of conduct on Wikipedia, and the participation of women.

This report will present the results of the survey of Wikipedia editors.



The objective of the survey can be described as follows:

- **To provide Vereniging Wikimedia Nederland with an understanding of the satisfaction and commitment of its editors so that Wikimedia can tailor its administrative activities and communications better to the wishes and requirements of the target groups.**



Core conclusion

Editors, and particularly new editors, are confronted with a challenging and confusing working environment. The environment is challenging because editors work together in a competitive online environment with people who are more, and in some cases less, committed or experienced. It is confusing because the communications are fragmented, because they probably fail to reach everyone at all times and because it is unclear what the rules are. This results in an above-average number of conflicts and a working atmosphere that is regularly felt to be unpleasant. Rules and guidelines can help in this respect, but they will not necessarily improve the atmosphere. A change in the mentality of all editors, moderation and clear communications will contribute to a better working atmosphere, the recruitment and retention of new editors and more staffing diversity.

Sub-conclusions

- **New editors** A large majority believe that the constant inflow of new editors is important and think that new editors should be recruited. In order to ensure that new editors do not give up quickly, they should be welcomed and supported better.
- **Diversity** To a greater or lesser extent, everyone understands that there are drawbacks to the lack of diversity among the editors. The atmosphere at Wikipedia is mentioned most often as the cause, and women refer to this issue much more often than men.





- **Working atmosphere** Opinions were divided about the working atmosphere on the Dutch Wikipedia. More editors are dissatisfied than satisfied. The atmosphere was described as *argumentative* and *suspicious* but also as *constructive* relatively frequently. The combination of these three features is both positive and negative. Positive in the sense of: challenging one another and keeping each other on our toes; negative in the sense of: conservative and stubborn. The atmosphere was described as *aggressive* just as often as it was described as *constructive*; in combination with *argumentative* and *suspicious*, this is exclusively negative. A large group of editors have been approached on occasion on the Dutch Wikipedia in ways that they found inappropriate; a small group admit themselves that they have acted inappropriately: this finding can be interpreted in several ways.



- **Conflicts and conflict resolution** The editors feel that the number of conflicts is high; two in five editors stated that they had been involved in a situation that felt like a conflict in the previous six months. If we compare this frequency with the rate of conflicts in an average organisation, it is indeed high. That is, in itself, not surprising since these are situations in which employees are dealing with one another in person. Opinions were divided about conflict resolution. There were more editors who said that conflicts were *sometimes* or *never/almost never* resolved satisfactorily than editors who said that conflict resolution was *usually* or *always* good. However, during resolution, there is probably always one party who is less satisfied than the other. That also emerged from the survey. Another striking finding was that a fairly large group is not aware of the number of conflicts and/or how they are resolved. Egos and stubbornness play a major role as the cause of conflicts. Rules/guidelines and moderation by trained officers are often proposed as the solution.



- **Social interaction** Consultations between the editors are fragmented between numerous channels and they mainly take place through discussion pages. The editors only meet one another to a limited extent in person or online outside the Wikipedia environment. Furthermore, they make only limited use of Wikimedia mailing lists, blogs, newsletters or announcement pages, or of events organised by Wikimedia in the Netherlands or elsewhere.
- **Vereniging Wikimedia Nederland** A large majority know about Vereniging Wikimedia Nederland and approximately a quarter of that group are actually members of the association at present. In general, people are satisfied with the work done by the association and the nature of that work.

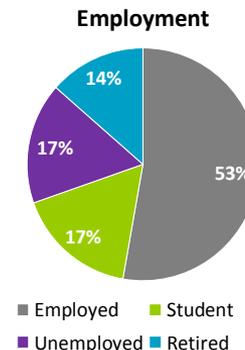
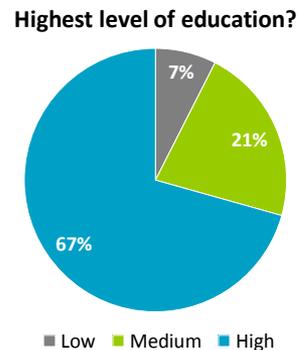
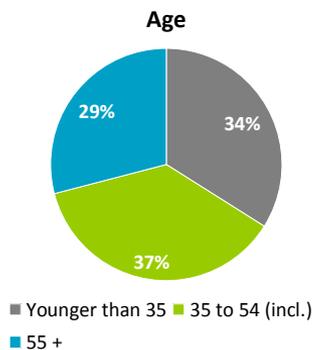
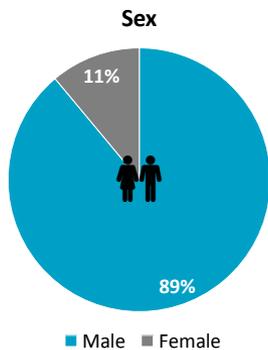


- The survey was conducted online between 4 June 2015 and 16 June 2015.
- Visitors who logged in to Wikipedia were presented with a banner. They opened the questionnaire by clicking on the banner. Wikimedia also approached a number of editors directly in order to ask them to participate in the survey.
- A total of 451 editors completed the questionnaire. The sample profile can be found on page 10.

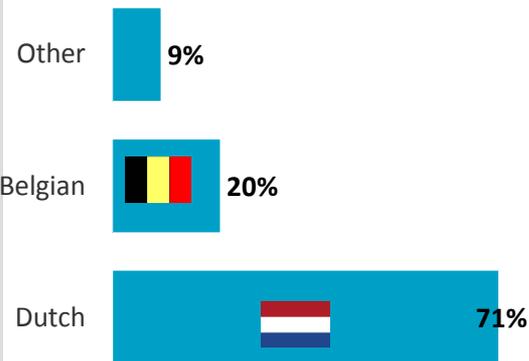




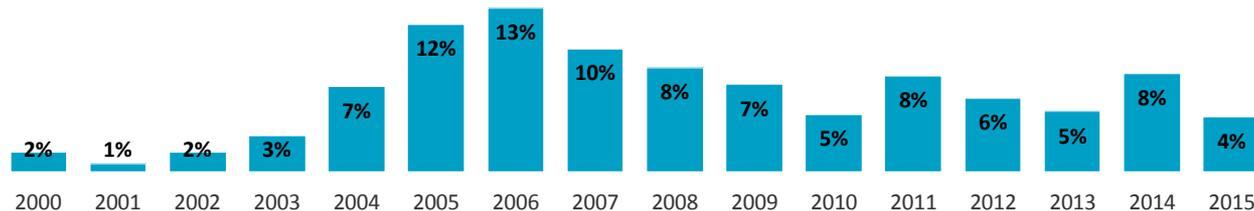
Profile	page 10
General	page 11
New editors	page 15
Diversity	page 16
Working atmosphere	page 19
Conflicts and conflict resolution	page 24
Social interaction	page 30
Vereniging Wikimedia Nederland	page 36



Sees him/herself as



Since when have you been contributing?



Sharing knowledge and information is the main reason for contributing to Wikipedia and/or other Wikimedia projects (53%).



- Women stated *fun to do/as a hobby* (32% as opposed to 49%) less often.
- Women stated *working with others* (20% as opposed to 3%) more frequently.



- Belgians referred to Idealism more often as a motive: free knowledge for everybody (39% as opposed to 27%).

What are your main reasons for contributing to the content of Wikipedia and/or other Wikimedia projects (Maximum of 2 answers)?
(n=451)



One fifth don't know how many hours they spend on editing a week. A large group (28%) spend 0-2 hours a week on editing.

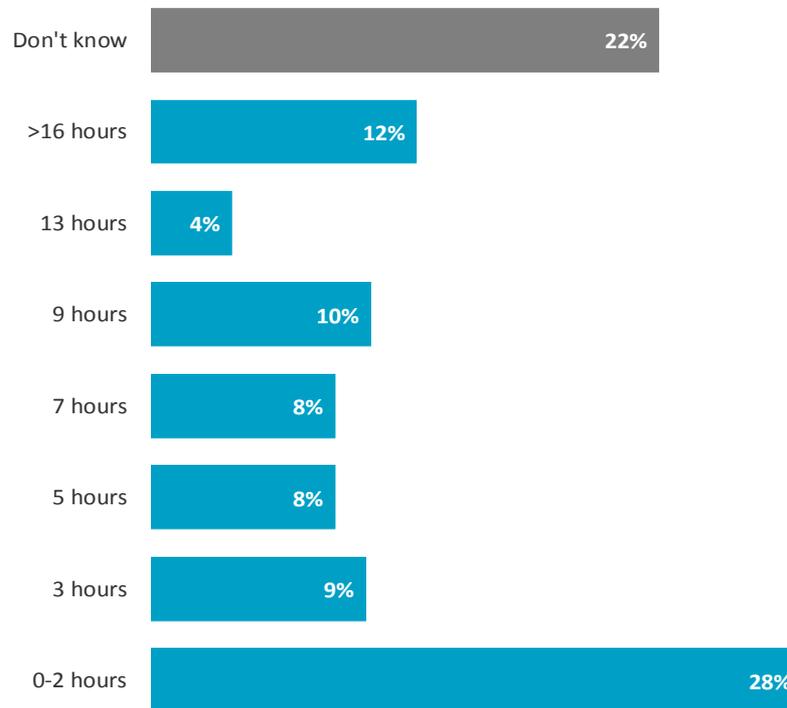


- Men spend 8.4 hours a week on average on editing; the average for women is 5.3. This is not a significant difference.



- Dutch respondents spend an average of 8.4 hours on editing, and Belgians 4.9. This is a significant difference.

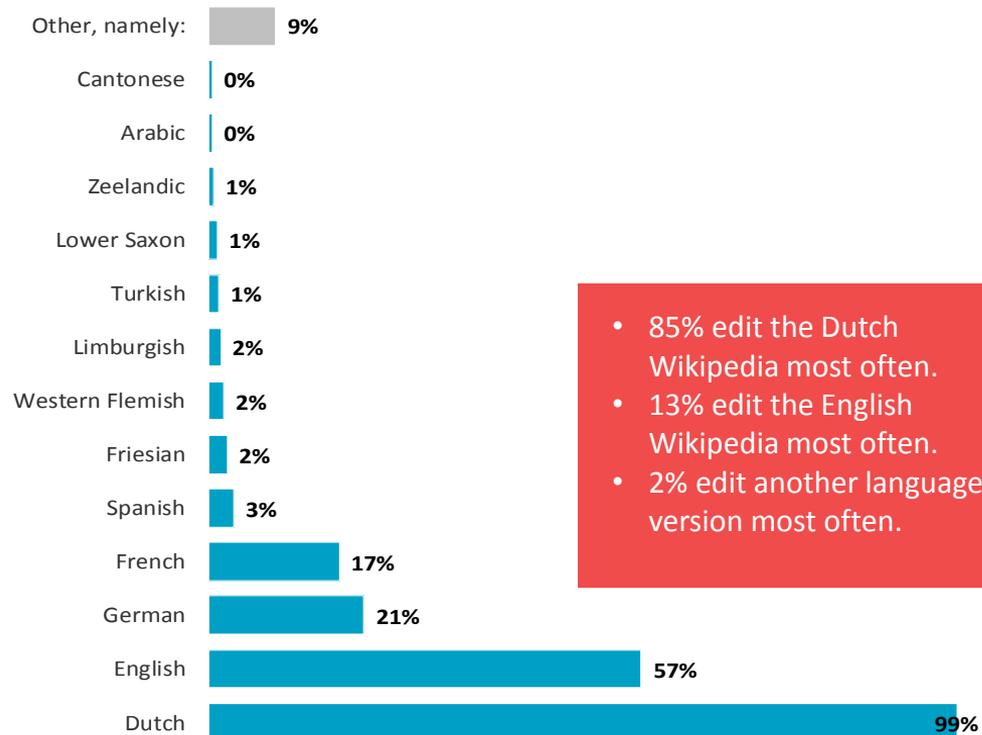
How many hours a week do you spend on average on Wikipedia and/or other Wikimedia projects? Average number of hours a week (n=451)



Most editing work goes into the Dutch version. In addition, more than half of the editors work on the English, one fifth on the German and one sixth on the French Wikipedia.



Which Wikipedia language versions do you edit? (n=451)



People do not feel that the workload associated with editing is exceptionally high. The highest workload is felt to be associated with combatting vandalism.

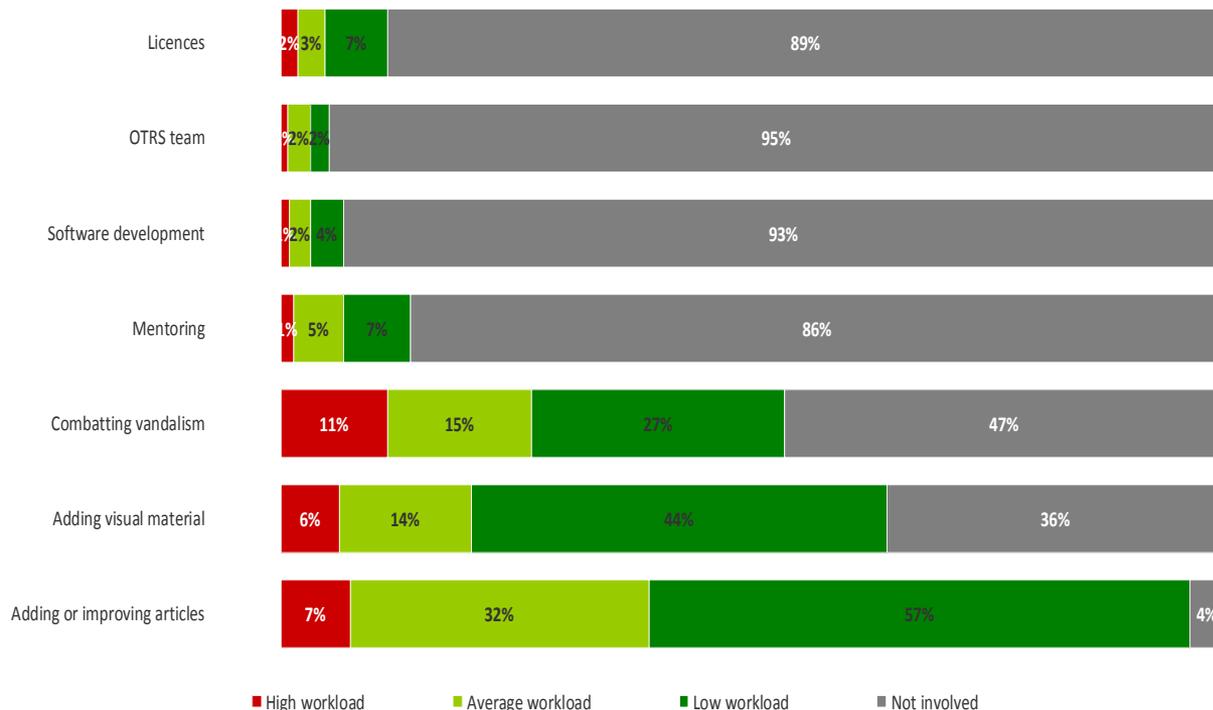


- Women are less often involved in adding visual material.



- Belgians are less often involved in combatting vandalism

With which Wikipedia activities are you involved and how do you perceive the workload during those activities? (n=451)



A large majority understands the importance of an ongoing inflow of new editors and also believe that new editors should be recruited.

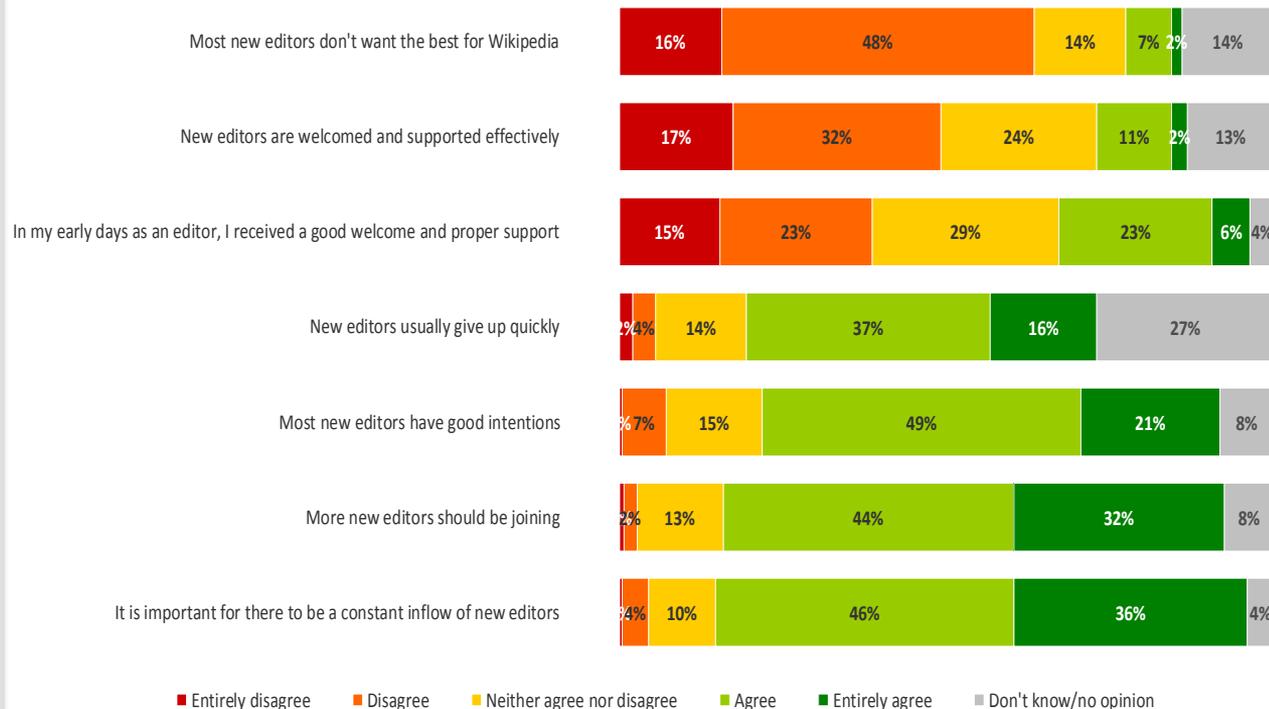


- Men are more convinced that new editors usually give up quickly (45% as opposed to 55%).



- The same applies to Belgians (62%) as opposed to the Dutch (45%).

To what extent do you agree with the statements below about Wikipedia? (n)



A total of 16% see negative effects only. Nobody saw no negative effects or hardly any negative effects only.



- Women saw significantly stronger negative effects than men in all areas.
- This difference between men and women was smallest in the case of *subject diversity*.

At the global level, the number of female Wikipedia editors is low. To what extent do you believe that this low level of female participation has negative consequences for: (n=451)

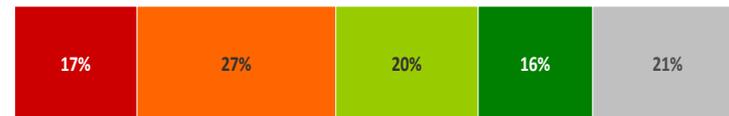
The reputation of Wikipedia as a reliable source of information?



The quality of the article content?



The working atmosphere at Wikipedia?



The range of subjects covered by good articles?



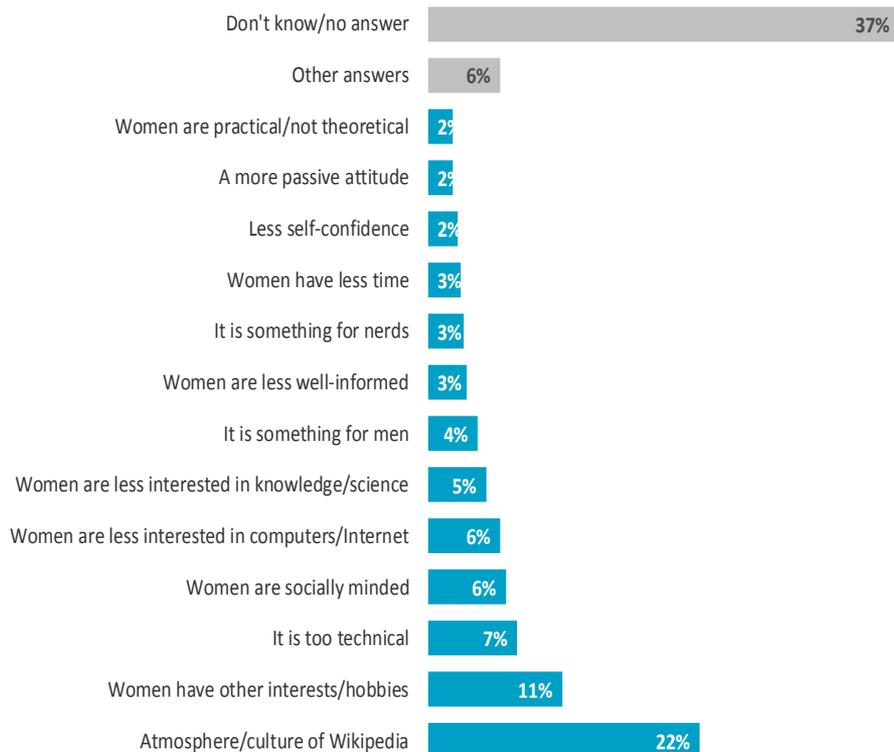
■ Many negative consequences
 ■ Some negative consequences
 ■ Hardly any negative consequences
 ■ No negative consequences at all
 ■ Don't know

A large group of 37% was unable to identify any cause for the lower level of participation by women. More than one fifth mentioned the atmosphere as the leading factor. The other categories that were often mentioned related to the differences between men and women.



- Men referred more often to: *women have other interests/hobbies* (11% as opposed to 4%), *it is something for men* (4% as opposed to 0%), *women are practical/not theoretical* (2% as opposed to 0%).
- Women referred more often to: *atmosphere/culture* (38% as opposed to 19%), *a more passive attitude* (10% as opposed to 1%).

What do you see as the causes for the lower level of female participation? (n=451)



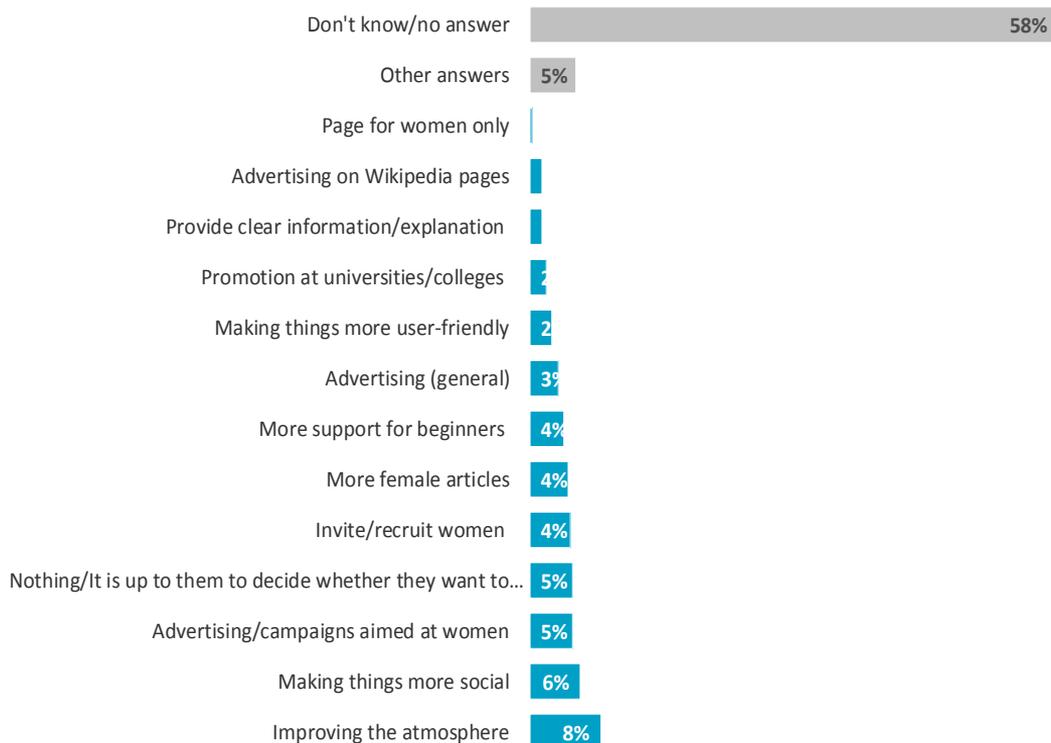
A large group (58%) had no suggestions to make for enhancing participation by women.



- Women referred more often to *more support for beginners* than men (14% as opposed to 2%).



Do you have any suggestions for enhancing participation by women? (n=451)



More than a quarter were satisfied or very satisfied with the working atmosphere on the Dutch Wikipedia. More people are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (37%) than satisfied or very satisfied (26%).

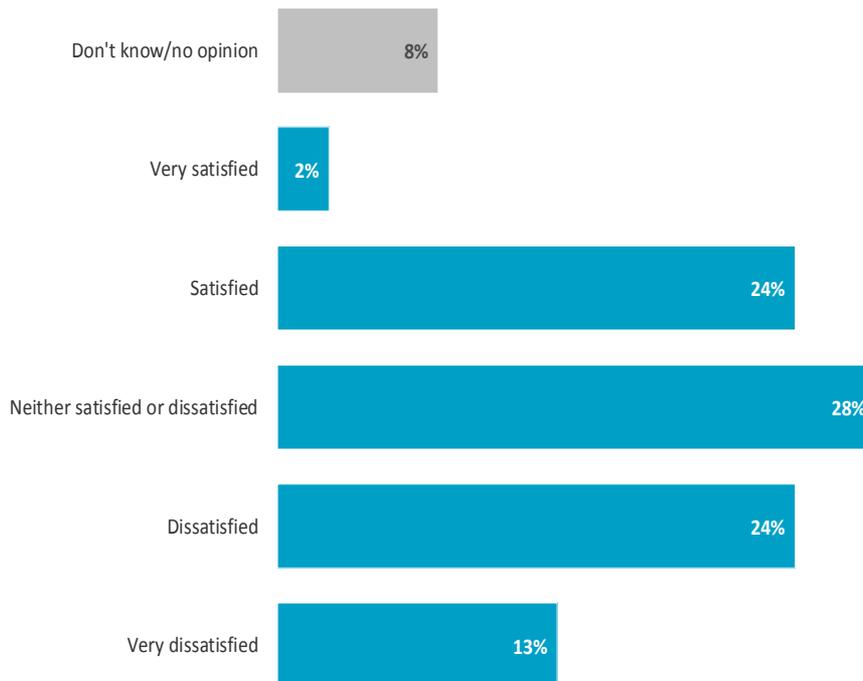


- There was no significant difference between men and women in this respect.



- There was no significant difference between the Dutch and Belgians in this respect.

To what extent are you satisfied with the working atmosphere on the Dutch Wikipedia? (Base - Edits Dutch version of Wikipedia, n=448)



The working atmosphere was primarily described as negative.

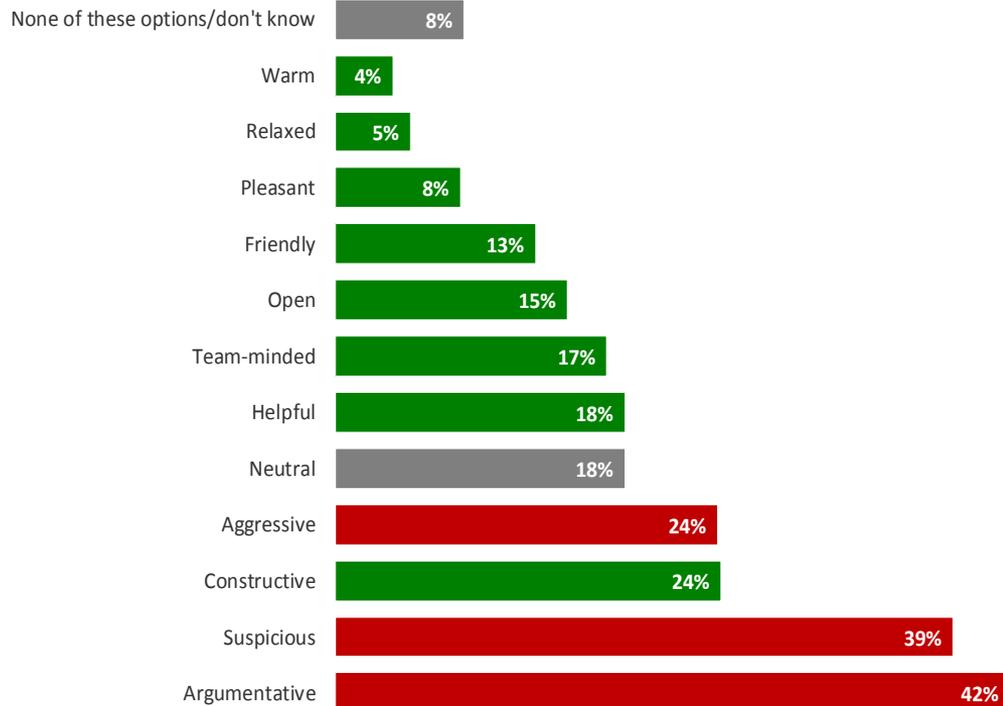


- Men used the terms constructive (26% as opposed to 5%), team-minded (19% as opposed to 4%) and pleasant (9% as opposed to 2%) more often.



- The Dutch used the term helpful more often than Belgians (21% as opposed to 10%).

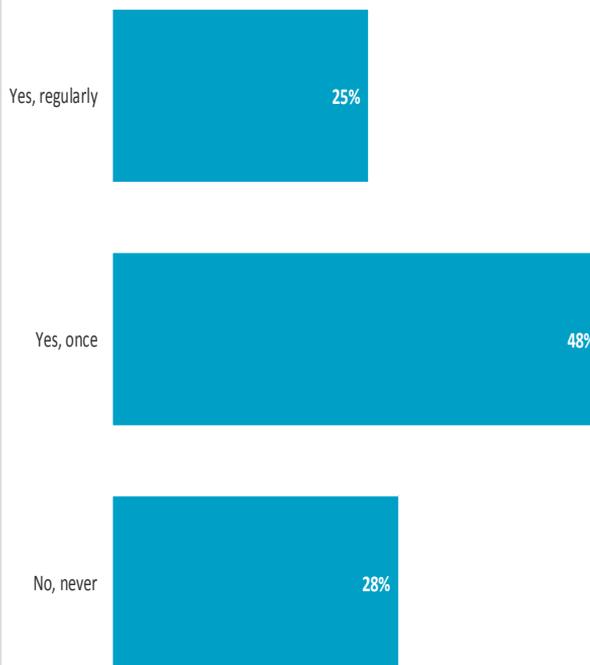
The working atmosphere on the Dutch Wikipedia is generally ... (maximum of 3 answers)? (Base - Edits Dutch version of Wikipedia, n=448)



Almost three quarter of the editors had, on occasion, been approached by other Wikipedia editors in a way that they themselves thought was inappropriate. This had happened regularly to one quarter.

Have you yourself have been treated on the Dutch Wikipedia by another Wikipedia editor in a way that you found to be inappropriate?

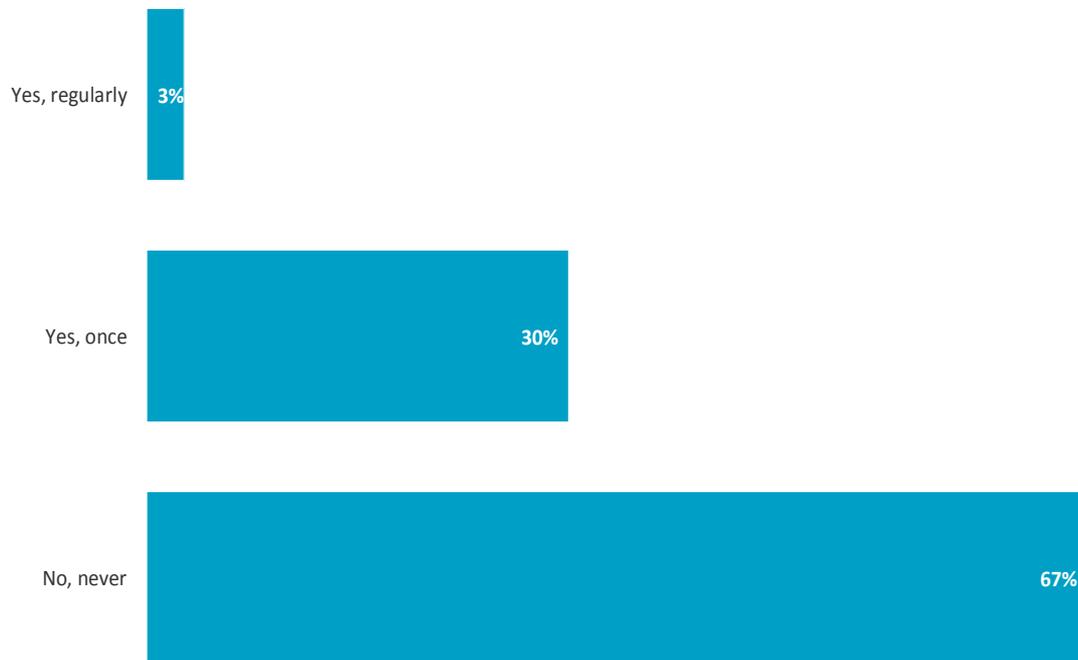
(Base - Edits Dutch version of Wikipedia, n=448)



Almost seven out of ten said that they themselves had never treated anyone inappropriately.



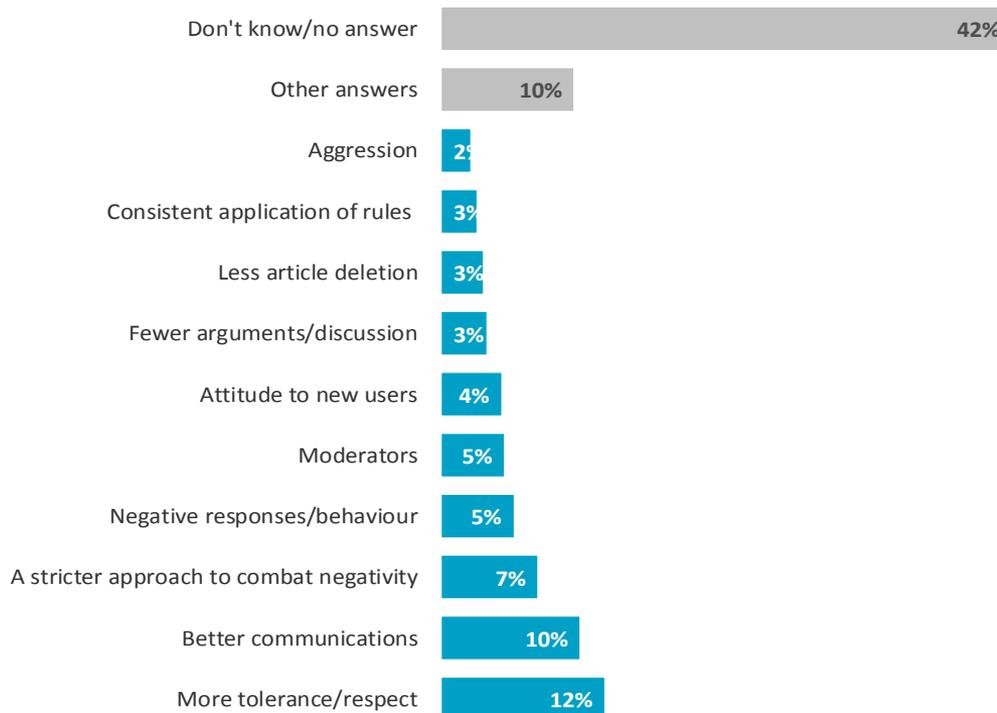
Have you yourself ever treated another Wikipedia editor in a way that you found later to be less than entirely appropriate? (Base - Edits Dutch version of Wikipedia, n=448)



The largest potential improvement can be made among the editors themselves: *more tolerance/respect* and *better communications*. There should also be more regulation (*action taken to prevent negativity / moderation*).

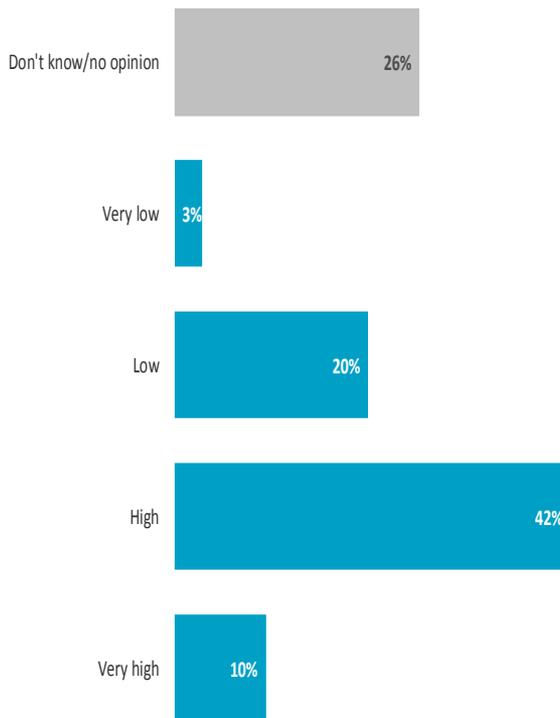


Are there things you would like to change in the working atmosphere on the Dutch Wikipedia? (Base - Edits Dutch version of Wikipedia, n=448)



More than the half the respondents thought the number of conflicts was high or very high. One quarter did not agree and another quarter had no opinion.

The number of conflicts on the Dutch Wikipedia is ... (Base - Edits Dutch version of Wikipedia, n=448)



- Belgians were slightly more negative in this respect than the Dutch: they selected the response *very high* (21% as opposed to 5%) more often, but the option *high* less often (33% as opposed to 45%).

Almost half said that conflicts were not always resolved satisfactorily. A large group also said that they did not know (23%).

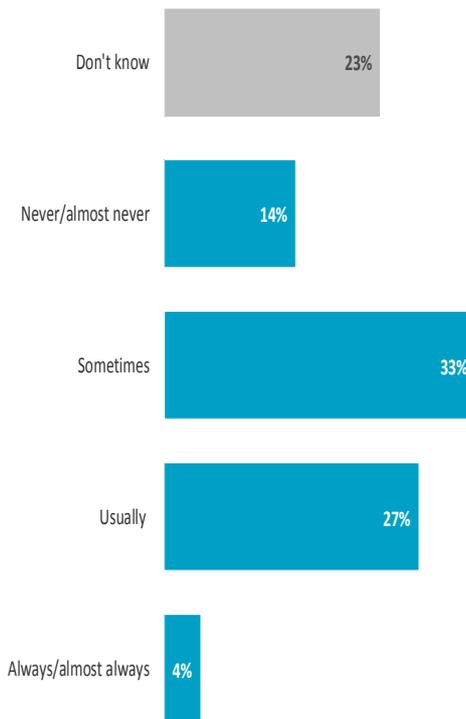


- Men (28%) said *usually* more often than women (14%).



- Belgians said *never or almost never* more often than the Dutch (26% as opposed to 10%).

Are conflicts on the Dutch Wikipedia resolved in the right way? (Base - Edits Dutch version of Wikipedia, n=448)



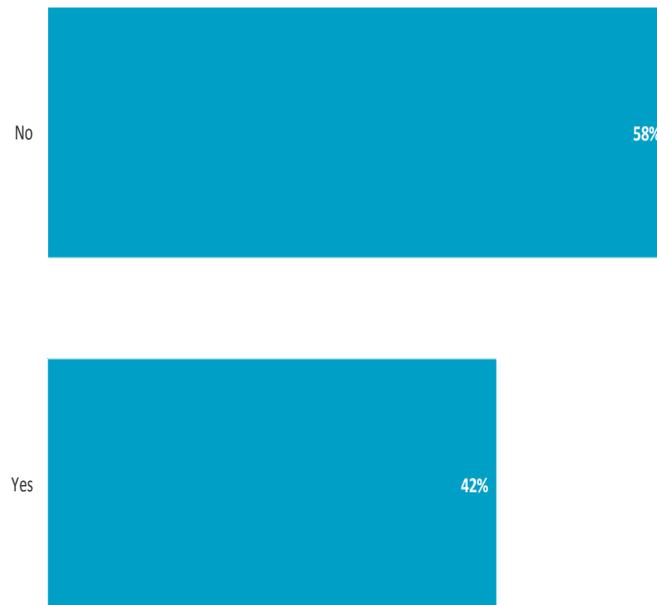
Two out of five had been involved in a situation in the last six months that felt like a conflict.



- This was more often the case with Belgians (54%) than with the Dutch (39%).



Have you yourself been involved in the last six months on the Dutch Wikipedia in a situation that you felt was a conflict? (Base - Edits Dutch version of Wikipedia, n=448)

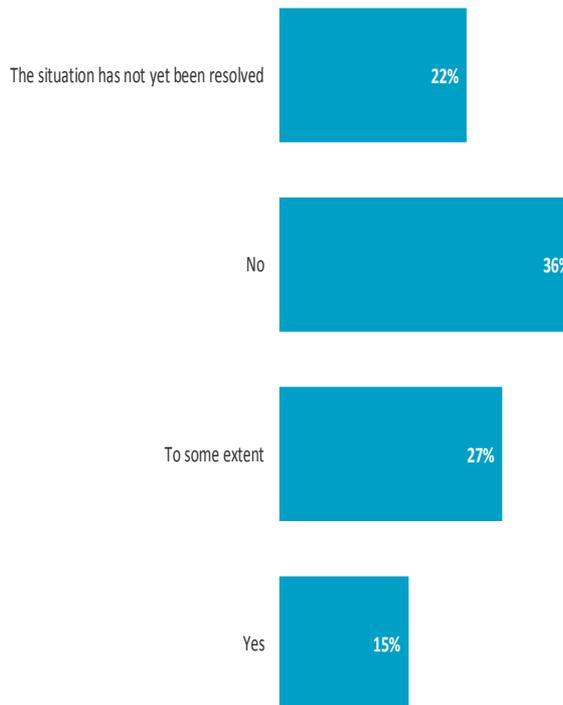


The situation (conflict) was usually not resolved entirely satisfactorily: only 15% thought that this was the case. According to the people involved, more than one fifth of the situations had not yet been resolved.



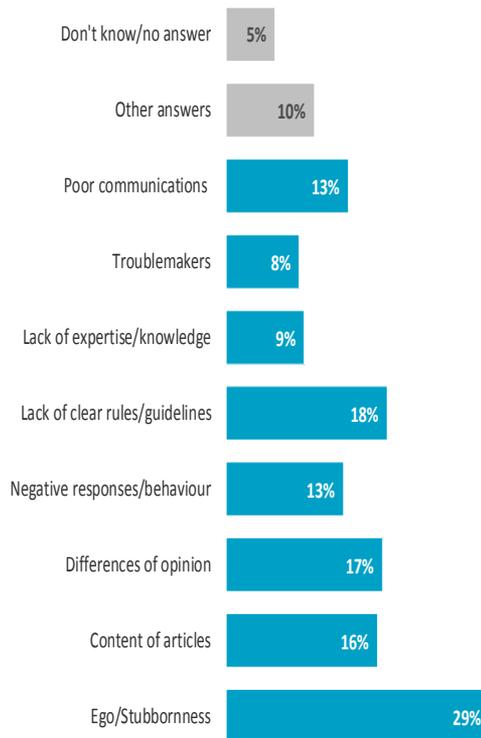
- More Belgians said that the situation had yet to be resolved (48% as opposed to 29%).

Looking back, are you happy with how that situation was resolved? (Base - Involved in Conflict, n=188)



Stubbornness (29%), and the associated differences of opinion (17%), are common causes of conflicts.

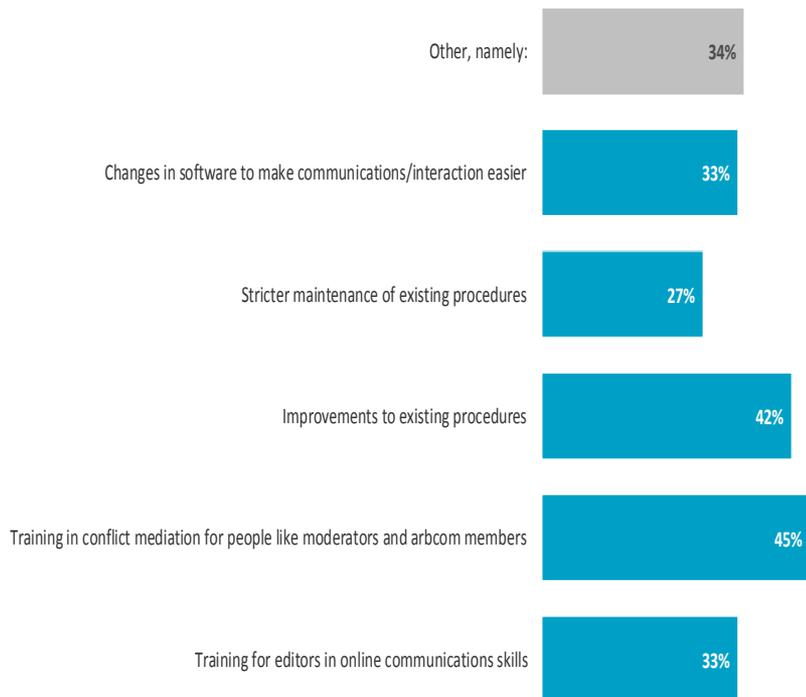
What do you see as the most common causes of conflicts on the Dutch Wikipedia? (Base - Involved in Conflict, n=188)



Editors believe that *training in conflict mediation and improvements to the existing procedures* are promising ways of avoiding/resolving conflicts.

Improving communications (resources and skills) could also be helpful in this respect. To a lesser extent, people believe that the *stricter maintenance of existing procedures* could also be useful.

Which ways of preventing/resolving conflicts would you consider to be relevant for the Dutch Wikipedia? (Base - Involved in Conflict, n=188)



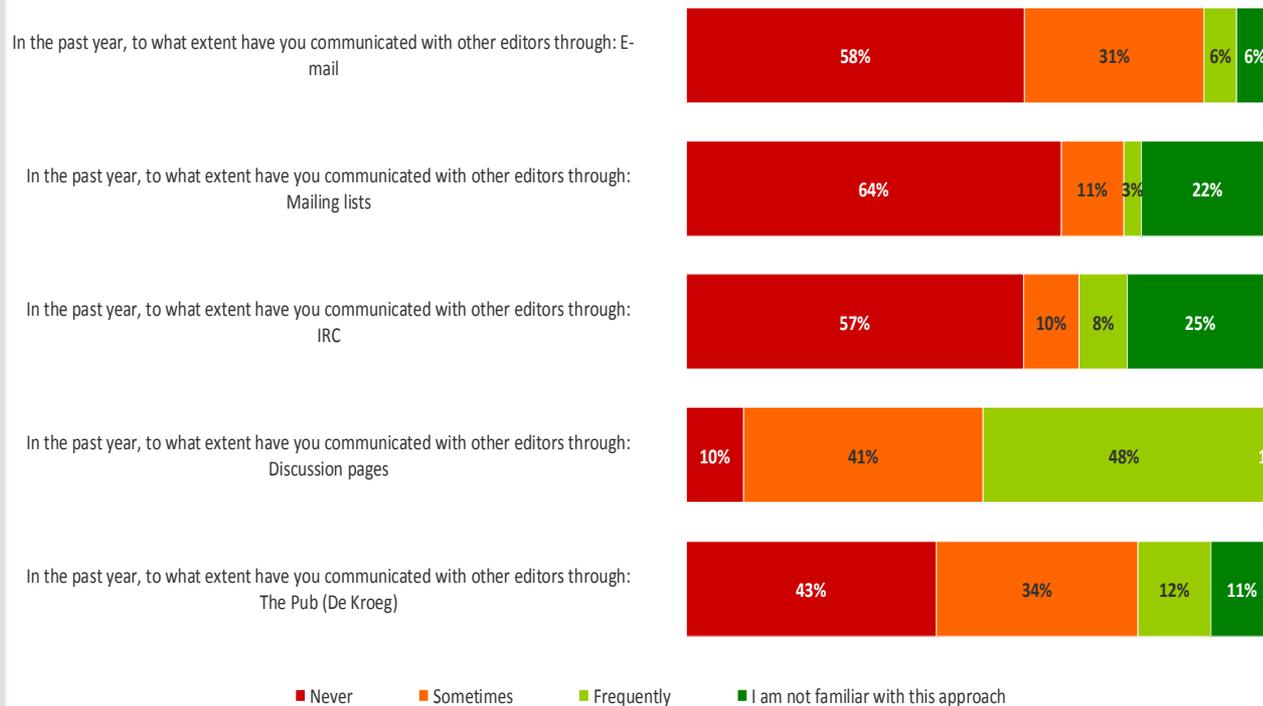
Most communications involve *discussion pages*. In addition, people communicate extensively through *The Pub (De Kroeg)*. A total of 6% said that they did not use these channels at all for communications.



- Men use *discussion pages* and *IRC* more often.



In the past year, to what extent have you communicated with other editors through: (n=451)

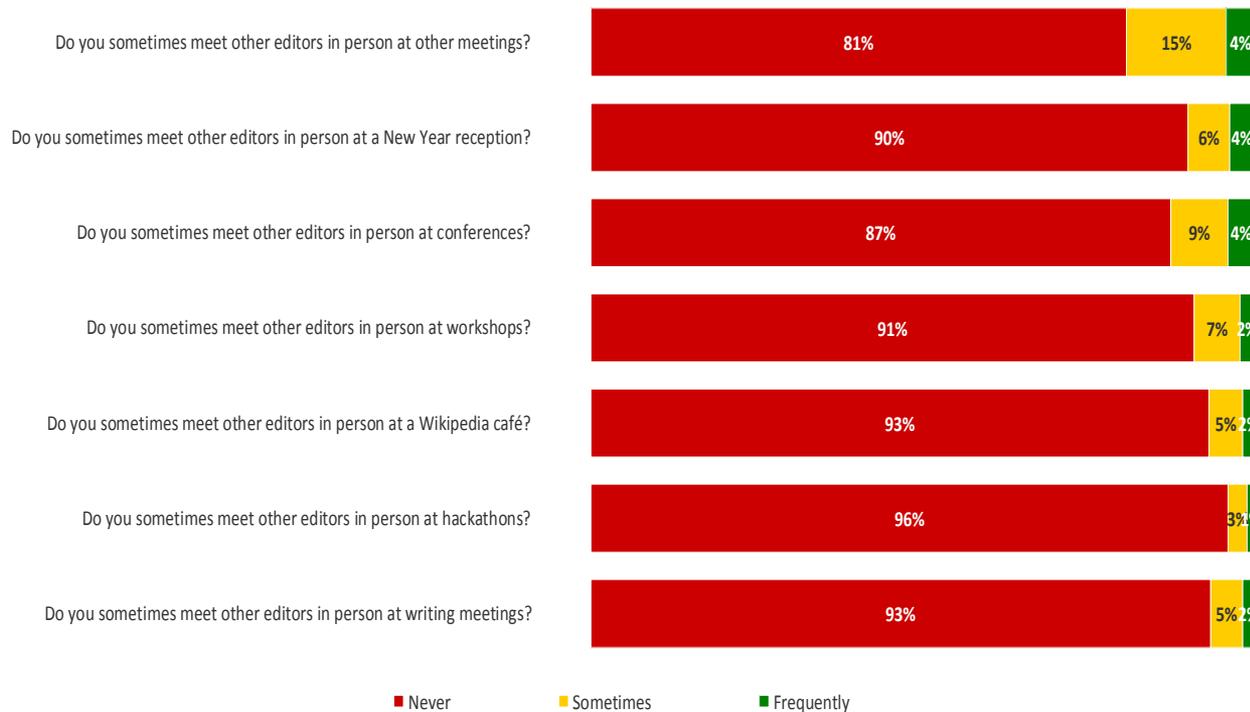


Editors meet in person to only a very limited extent. Almost a fifth do this at *other meetings*.



- Women (24%) attend conferences more often than men (11%).

Do you sometimes meet other editors in person at ...? (n=451)

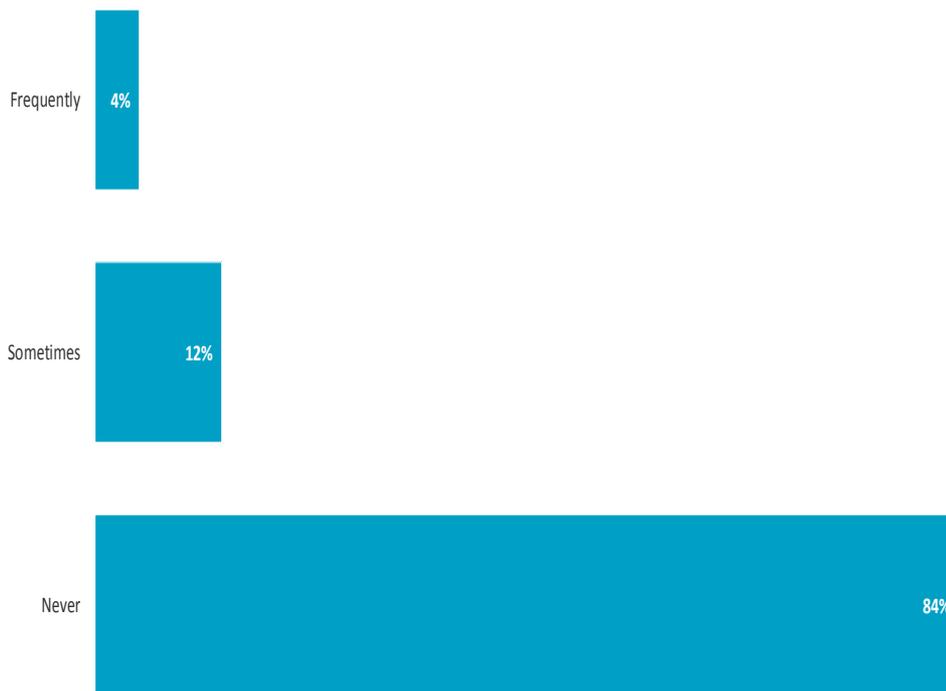


A large majority have *never* had contacts with other editors through online social networks.



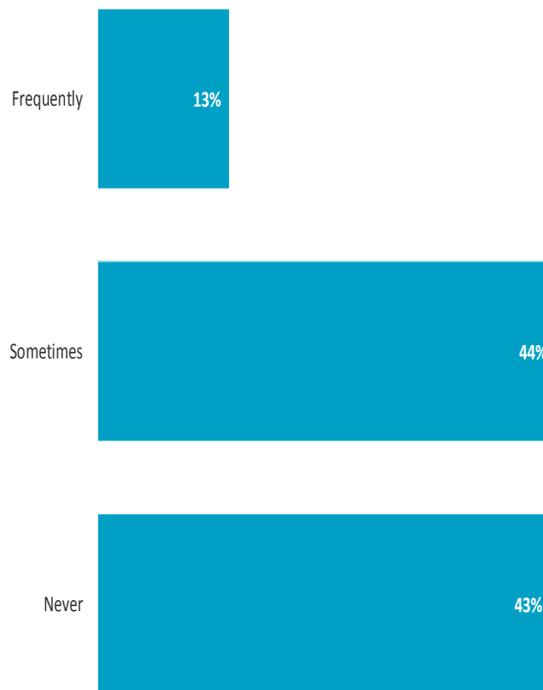
- Belgians (23%) do have contacts more often through online social networks than the Dutch (13%).

To what extent do you have occasional contacts with other editors on social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter? (n=451)



Approximately three in five read, to a greater or lesser extent, Wikimedia mailing lists, blogs, newsletters and/or announcement pages occasionally.

To what extent do you read one or more Wikimedia mailing lists, blogs, newsletters or announcements? (n=451)



Only 13% had visited an event in the previous two years.



- The Dutch (14%) did so more often than the Belgians (5%). These are events organised by Wikimedia Nederland.



Have you, in the last two years, visited an event organised by Wikimedia Nederland? (n=451)



Only 5% had visited an event in the previous two years.



- The Dutch (5%) had visited an international event more often than the Belgians (1%).

Have you, in the last two years, visited an international Wikimedia event such as Wikimania, an international Hackathon or the Wikimedia Conference? (n=451)

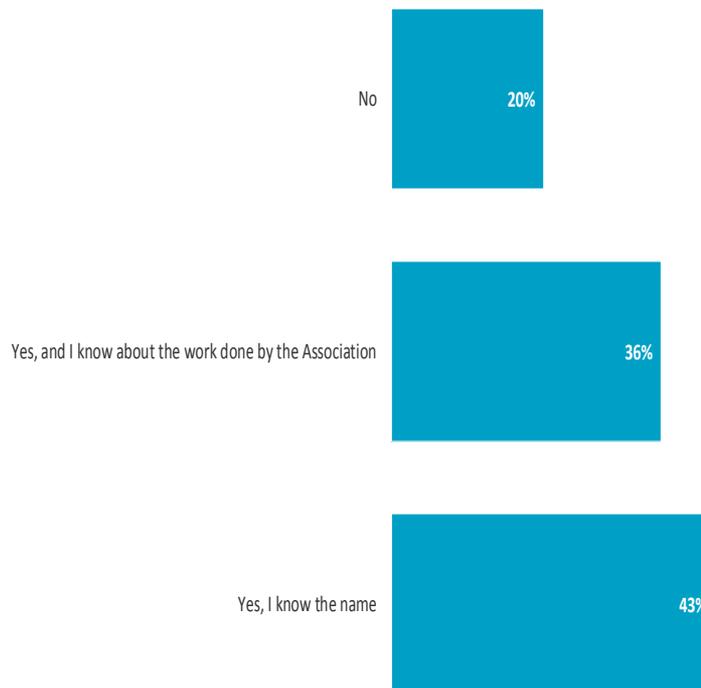


Four in five were at least aware of the existence of Vereniging Wikimedia Nederland.

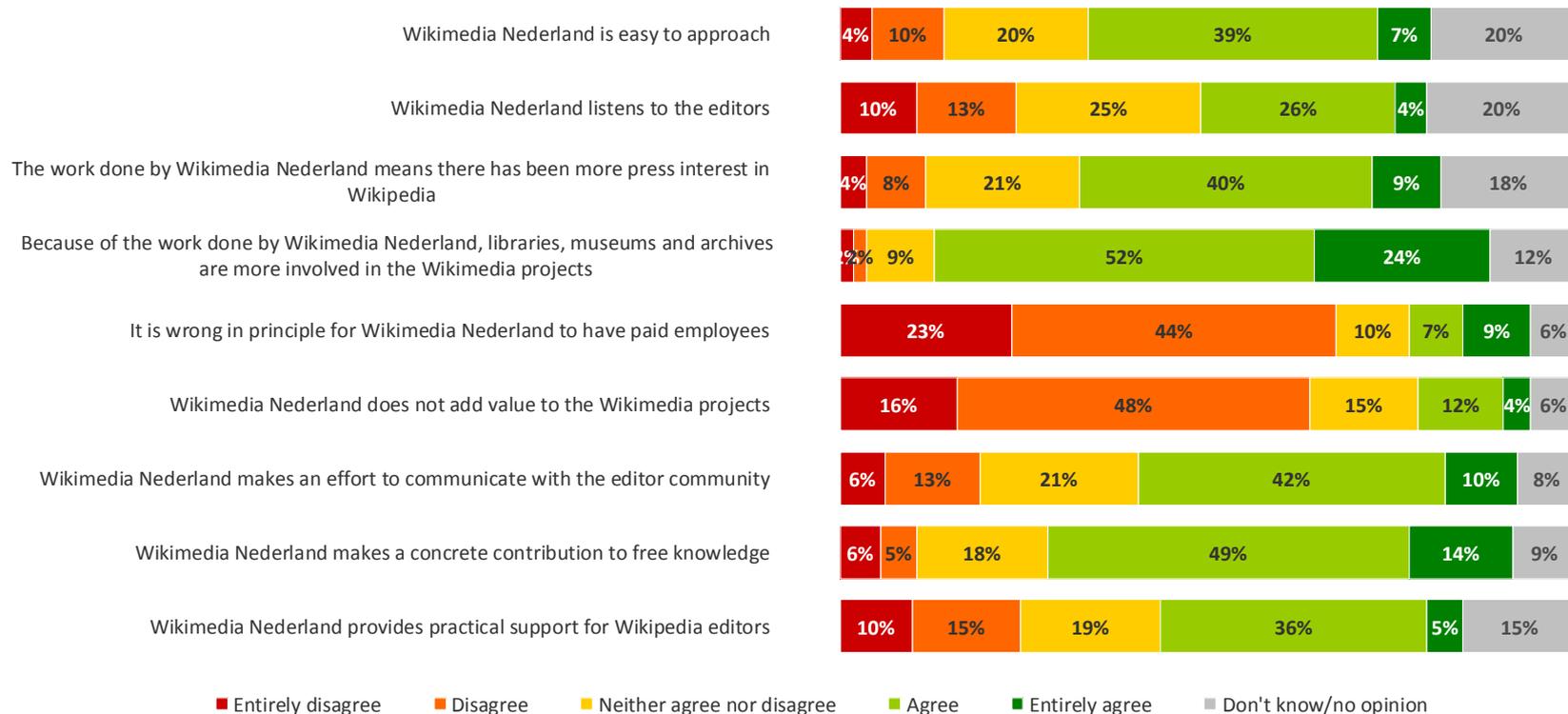


- Belgians were less well informed in this respect and they also know less about the activities of Vereniging Wikimedia Nederland.

Do you know that there is a Wikimedia Nederland association? (n=451)



To what extent do you agree? (n)



Editors who are aware of the activities of the Vereniging Wikimedia Nederland....:

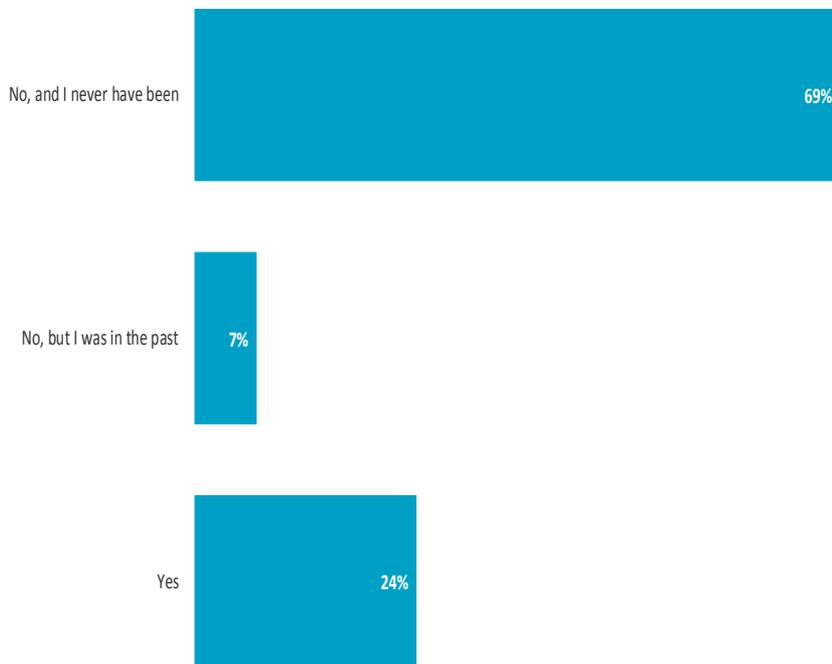
- are generally positive about the work of the association and in particular about:
 - getting libraries, museums and archives involved
 - the concrete contribution to free knowledge
- see, to a reasonable degree:
 - that the association makes an effort to communicate with the editor community
 - that the work done by the association means there is more press interest in Wikipedia
 - that the association provides editors with practical support
- find, to a very limited extent, that:
 - it is wrong in principle for the association to have paid employees
 - the association does not deliver any added value

N.B. The responses for women and Belgians were too limited for these questions as a basis for analysis.



A quarter of the editors are also members of Vereniging Wikimedia Nederland.

Are you a member of Wikimedia Nederland? (Base - Knows about the work of the Wikimedia Nederland association, n=163)



One tenth of the editors are also members of another Wikimedia chapter.

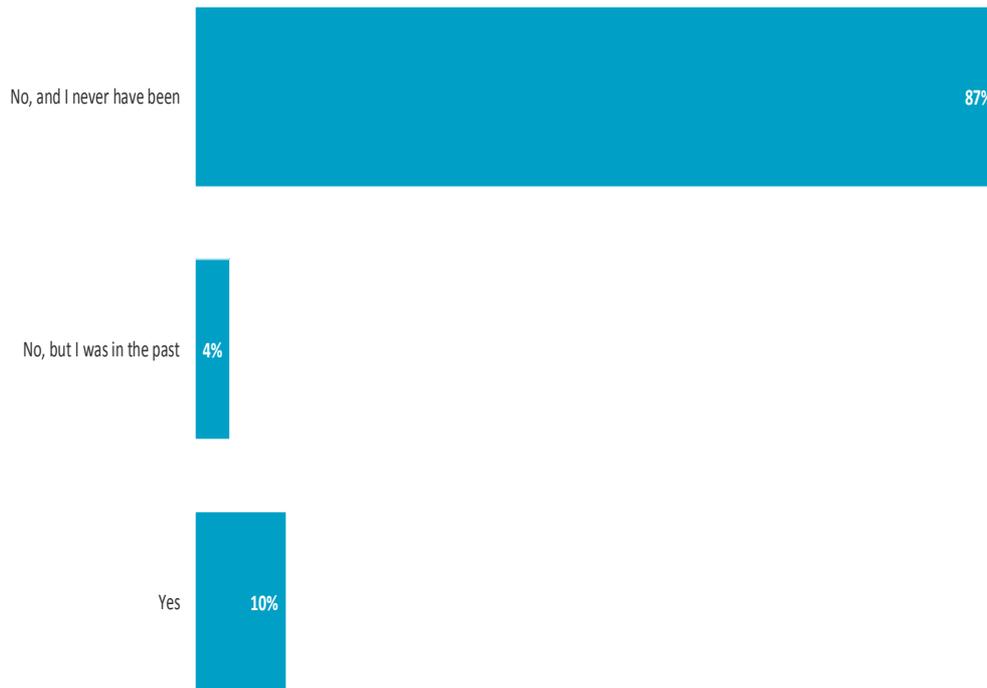


- This applies more often to men (11%) than women (0%).



- And more often to Belgians (38%) than to the Dutch (4%).

Are you a member of another Wikimedia chapter? (Base - Knows about the work of the Wikimedia Nederland association, n=163)





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