



Top Stories



Nine dead, scores injured after bombing in Iran

AFP reports that that over one hundred people were injured and nine killed after a mosque in Iran was bombed.

Wikinews reports from 2008 Taiwan Open Source Development Conference

People involved in open source products from across Taiwan gathered together at the 2008



Taiwan Open Source Development Conference to present to others

Credit: Shoichi

a variety of research which is relevant to the open source community.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Teräsbetoni frontman J. Ahola on representing Finland at Eurovision 2008 & more

Jarkko Ahola talks to Wikinews on topics including on his band's representation of Finland at this year's upcoming Eurovision Song Contest and his involvement with



Credit: Cecil (CC-BY-SA)

supergroup

Northern Kings.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Wikinews interviews team behind the 2,000th featured Wikipedia article

Wikinews held an exclusive interview with the University of British Columbia's professor Jon Beasley-Murray and two of his students on their work to create Wikipedia's 2,000th featured article.

Wikipedia Current Events

Trevor Immelman of South Africa wins the 2008 Masters Tournament.

- Robert Zoellick, the president of the World Bank, calls for immediate action to tackle rising food prices which have caused rioting in several countries.
- Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo Hajredin Kuçi announces that the newly independent country plans to open 20 embassies abroad.
- The Prime Minister of Australia Kevin Rudd announces that current Governor of Queensland Quentin Bryce will become Australia's next Governor-General. Ms Bryce will be the first woman appointed to the role.
- Thousands of pro-China demonstrators gathered in front of the Canadian Parliament Building in Ottawa to show their support for the Chinese government and 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Nine dead, scores injured after bombing in Iran

According to Agence France-

Presse, ten people have been killed and 160 wounded in an explosion at a mosque in southern Iran.

The bomb exploded in the city of Shiraz, which, in addition to being the capital of the Fars Province, is the fifth most populous city in Iran.

Saideh Ghorbani, who witnessed the bombing, said that at "around 9:15 pm, after the sermon, the sound of an explosion resounded in the section reserved for men and a cloud of dust billowed up to the sky."

The perpetrators of the bombing are not yet known.

Wikinews interviews team behind the 2,000th featured Wikipedia article

This week saw the English-language version of Wikipedia, the collaboratively written online encyclopedia, reach 2,000 featured articles with the inclusion of the article El Señor Presidente. Featured articles (FAs) meet Wikipedia's highest standards for quality, accuracy, neutrality, completeness, and style, and thus are considered the best articles on Wikipedia.

The Wikipedia team that carries out the assessment and quality control before conferring the status of featured articles promoted five articles to FA status at the same time: Walter de Coventre, Maximian, El Señor Presidente, Lord of the Universe, and Red-billed Chough. With five

promoted at the same time, conferring the status of 2,000th on one is an arbitrary decision and in some respects any of these articles could actually make a claim to the honour.

The article *El Señor Presidente* was created and developed by a University of British Columbia class, "Murder, Madness, and Mayhem: Latin American Literature in Translation". While an important milestone, the 2,000th featured article is also symbolic of Wikipedia's growing role in the 21st century learning arena.

The professor of the class, Jon Beasley-Murray, began using Wikipedia as a collaborative space where his students could both do coursework and provide a type of virtual public service. Thus, he created a Wikipedia project, *Murder Madness and Mayhem*, that focussed on creating articles relating to the Latin American literature covered in his class. Not surprisingly, *El Señor Presidente* is considered one of the most important books in Latin American literature, written by Nobel Prize-winning Guatemalan writer, Miguel Ángel Asturias.

The Wikinews team contacted Prof. Beasley-Murray, who agreed to be interviewed for this story. His responses can be found below. Included are sections soliciting responses from three students who took the class and helped create and bring *El Señor Presidente* to Feature Article status. Thus far the project has created seven good articles in addition to the 2,000th featured article.

Murder Madness and Mayhem

Wikinews: Professor Beasley-Murray, thank you for giving us some of your valuable time and

agreeing to talk to us. Can you give some background on what prompted you to start this project?

Jon Beasley-Murray, Professor, University of British Columbia
Image: Jon Beasley-Murray.

Prof. Jon Beasley-Murray: I should say first that I've written some reflections at the project on Wikipedia itself, as an essay I entitled "Madness".

In short, however, I'd done some editing on Wikipedia a year ago. I'd got into that rather by accident--after finding to some surprise that some of my academic work had been written up at the site. I then spent some time trying to organize and expand articles and categories relating to Latin America, particularly Latin American culture, which is my area of expertise. I discovered that Wikipedia's coverage of this area was uneven at best. It was while I was involved in this that it came to me that students could usefully participate on the site. They use Wikipedia anyway; why not find ways in which they could also participate? And I'd come to realize that it's only by participating and contributing that you can really understand the Encyclopedia, both its strengths and its weaknesses but above all the way it comes to be how it is. And I've always been interested in using technology in teaching: mailing lists, websites, blogs, and so on. But I've never much liked "educational technology": programs such as WebCT that students only ever use as part of a course they are taking. By creating something of an educational ghetto, educational technology seems to me to miss out on the most interesting and exciting possibilities of the Internet: precisely the fact that it opens up to the world outside the classroom, and can reconfigure or

perhaps even break down: the rather limited relationship between teacher (supposed to be the expert and source of all authority) and the student (too often treated as the passive recipient of knowledge).

Overall, a Wikipedia assignment offered lots of possibilities, including: teaching students about Wikipedia, an important site that they use (and too often misuse) often improving Wikipedia itself, by generating new content on topics where its coverage is lacking encouraging students to produce something that had relevance outside the classroom, in the public sphere giving them tangible goals that were measured by something other than my own: professorial judgement changing their views about writing, by stressing the importance of ongoing revision teaching them about research and about how to use and evaluate sources

"we did get one "speedy deletion" tag. It was placed, within less than a minute, on an article that I created in front of all the students, during class time. For one horrible moment, in front of the whole class, I had a feeling that things might go terribly wrong."
—Professor Jon Beasley-Murray

WN: Did you consult with fellow academics or students prior to launching this project?

JBM: No, not really. Perhaps I should have! But off and on last summer I did discuss the idea with a friend who works in educational technology at UBC, who had helped me with the implementation of blogs in my courses. And this friend, Brian Lamb, was as always very encouraging and supportive of this

kind of experimentation. He looked into the possibility of helping me apply for a grant for the project, but it seems there aren't any for this kind of thing. I decided to go ahead anyway, essentially on my own.

And in January, as the project was getting underway, I signed up with Wikipedia:School and university projects. There were plenty of other previous and ongoing educational projects listed there, so I presumed I wasn't so alone and that what I was doing wasn't so innovative. It was only much later that I realized just how different and how ambitious this project was: we were aiming to create featured articles, ideally twelve of them, and no other educational project had ever set out to do that!

WN: I would assume the Wikipedia community was in favour of your project, did anyone outwith that community make notably critical comments about your idea?

JBM: No, but then as I say I hardly talked to anyone about it!

I should mention, however, that it's not necessarily a given that the Wikipedia community was in favour. I've noticed that with some other educational projects, the initial reaction from Wikipedians has not always been so favourable. In part that's because students are encouraged to write a new article on anything they can come up with, and these are swiftly marked for deletion. In part that's because they write essays offline, then upload them, and naturally enough they are not in Wikipedia format or do not follow Wikipedia conventions (about "original research," for instance). Those articles are soon laden with tags, and their talk pages filled with warnings or reproaches. We managed to avoid that on the whole... mostly by accident! But

we also avoided those problems, I think, because I'd spent a fair amount of time on Wikipedia already and was aware of some (but far from all) the habits of the site. And more importantly because we had quite definite aims: students weren't editing Wikipedia for the sake of it. Even so, we did get one "speedy deletion" tag. It was placed, within less than a minute, on an article that I created in front of all the students, during class time. For one horrible moment, in front of the whole class, I had a feeling that things might go terribly wrong. The article tagged for speedy deletion was El Señor Presidente... which is now, as you know, Wikipedia's Feature Article number 2,000.

WN: How significant a percentage of the mark you were giving for the class came from Wikipedia contributions?

JBM: Originally, the Wikipedia assignment was to have represented 30% of the total grade for the course. Just over half-way through the semester, progress had still been relatively slow, and I was getting worried. So I proposed to the class that we change the course assessment, and that we scrap the planned final essay or term paper. This would mean that the other elements (a mid-term, blogs and participation, and Wikipedia) would all come to be worth more. We talked about the proposal, and I gave them some time to think about it. We then had a secret ballot, and I said in advance that we would only go ahead with the change if two thirds (66%) were in favour. In the end, 85% of the class voted for increasing the significance of the Wikipedia project to 40% of the overall course grade.

WN: As a member of the Wikimedia Foundation's communications committee I (Brian McNeil) frequently see both sides of the conflict over how relevant or reliable Wikipedia is. This ranges from queries coming in from students working on their school paper who want a response to their librarian and teachers effectively banning use of Wikipedia, to the other extreme such as a recent case where a teaching surgeon in the UK asking for permission to quote extensively from Wikipedia for a paper on the site's relevance and potential use for undergraduates in medicine. I have a stock answer detailing how to check Wikipedia sources; that Wikipedia is a great starting point for research, and that if you disallow Wikipedia you should disallow Britannica. Is this something you would agree with?

JBM: Over the course of this semester, I've come up with a response of my own: to this question. If a Wikipedia article is a good one, then you won't need to quote it, as it will have links to all the relevant sources. And if it doesn't have those links, then it isn't a good article, and shouldn't be quoted in any case.

Before this semester, I explicitly banned students from quoting Wikipedia articles in their essays. And I will continue to do so. I also look askance at them citing dictionary definitions. And though they don't quote Britannica (I think Wikipedia has now for all intents and purposes replaced Britannica), I would likewise be unimpressed if they were to do so. On the other hand, of course, as you say, Wikipedia can be an excellent starting point for research. I personally use it often precisely for that reason.

WN: Was the experience of using a wiki for collaboration something

you would repeat? There have been suggestions for something you might call "EduWiki" for the collaborative development of course material. Would you get involved with something like that? Do you see potential for use of the MediaWiki software in other areas of education? Such a project could be hosted under Wikimedia Foundation projects such as Wikibooks or Wikiversity. Would you favour that over a closed project within academia where contributors' credentials could be verified?

JBM: I'm not sure. As is perhaps already obvious, I'm horribly suspicious of almost anything that has "edu" in the title. And I say that with all due respect to my friends who are in "EduTech"-- though I should add that they are often equally suspicious, if not more so! I've had a couple of other experiences with wikis, in relatively closed environments, and they weren't particularly successful. I think that was because there was never a critical mass. The one thing that Wikipedia really has going for it is critical mass. (Even then, of course, only a tiny fraction of the people who read Wikipedia ever edit it.)

The other thing is that too many academics still don't get the wiki ethos. It's hard for them (us) not to be possessive about our work. This I think is what causes most of the antagonism and frustration when academics do get involved in Wikipedia. The issue is seldom "expertise," and much more often ownership. I realize I'm talking in broad strokes here, but for instance a wiki was set up in my faculty, and it proved impossible to edit anyone else's texts. We might as well have been putting up .pdfs. It was an exercise in presenting position papers, rather than in collaborative writing.

Meanwhile, as for the topic of credentials, which I know has been much debated on Wikipedia, I think that's a real canard. I don't think credentials matter much. My students don't have much in the way of credentials, but they've done superior work.

WN: Would you describe your students as receptive to the idea of doing coursework where the general public could view their works in progress?

JBM: I'd often asked students to write blogs in previous courses, which are also of course visible to the general public. But not too many people bump into such student blogs, except on rare occasions. Here, the point wasn't so much that the Wikipedia articles were public, but that they were editing one of the Internet's top ten sites. So one day I'd poked around and found out how many people had visited particular pages that we're editing. (I compiled and later updated these numbers here.) And the next class we played two little guessing games. One involved what percentage of Wikipedia's articles they thought were classified as "Good Articles"; they started at 30%, and it took them a while to get doWN: to 0.15%. This was just after El Señor Presidente had made Good Article status, so it gave them a sense of the achievement, I think. The other little guessing game concerned how many page views they thought their articles attracted per month. I can't remember exactly the figure they started off with in this case, but I can tell you it was a lot lower than the 50,000 plus that Gabriel García Márquez actually receives. When we figured out that that article must have something over 600,000 visits a year (I know reckon it's almost three-quarters of a million), the team who were

editing that page were somewhat shocked. But my sense is that the realization was also rather exciting. And I know that the students who will shortly find their article on the mainpage of the English Wikipedia (it'll be there on May 5th) are absolutely thrilled. Though frankly I think they (and the other students) are less interested in the fact that the "general public" can see what they've done, than in telling their friends and family to take a look at their work.

WN: Did any students fail to fit in and find themselves unable to work with Wikipedia?

JBM: Yes. There was a wide range of responses. Some were very enthusiastic. Others took a while to get into it. And there were a few who never really found themselves at home editing Wikipedia. I'm not sure of the reasons in each case. For some the technology stayed too intimidating, or rather (I suspect) they just didn't put in enough time to get past that first hurdle. As this was group work, however, some of the effects could be worrisome at times. So it's something I'd have to think over before trying a similar experiment again.

WN: Do you feel that doing this part of the course in such a radically open way encouraged any of the students to work to a higher standard than the might otherwise have?

JBM: Absolutely. No question of it. The most active students, at least, have helped produce articles of c. 4,000-8,000 words that are comprehensively researched, repeatedly revised, and with a meticulous attention to detail. The standard of every single article is far better than any term paper that they would have written otherwise. Of course, some

students have been more actively engaged, and so have both learned more and been pushed more than others. But the constant reminders and questions from other Wikipedia editors, particularly the members of the FA-Team who have done much of the copy-editing, has forced them consistently to reflect upon what they are saying, how they are saying it, and what their sources are.

WN: In reflecting on the project, is there anything you would have done differently?

JBM: There were aspects of the groupwork that didn't work out as they could have. And we did get off to a rather slow start: I'd have to think about how to remedy that. Moreover, once the project is over, the FA-Team and I (plus, of course, any students who are interested) plan to have a post-mortem on all aspects of the collaboration. So there are certainly things that could be improved. I know I've also learned a lot on this project, and next time would hope to benefit from what I've learned.

WN: You've hit about 6,000 edits personally, have you caught the "wiki bug"? Will you keep editing?

JBM: 7,000 now! I'll need to stop editing for a while once the project is over: it has been very time-consuming. But I plan to be back in the Fall.

WN: In light of the apparent success of your project what would you say to other academics to try and persuade them to try similar experiments?

JBM: Absolutely. I don't want to come across as too much of a Wikipedia booster. I can understand exactly why many academics' engagement on the encyclopedia has proven to be

disappointing or frustrating or worse. But I think that, especially if academics take some time to understand aspects of Wikipedia's culture, there are forms of engagement that can be very rewarding. We were rather fortunate to run into the FA-Team, a group of experienced Wikipedia editors that had recently been established in order to help others promote articles to Featured Article status. Their involvement has been an absolute Godsend.

But I see no reason why something similar (or even unpredictably different, and perhaps better) might not emerge in other circumstances.

WN: Before moving on to bringing your students into the discussion, I'd like to close with your thoughts on making this a regular part of the curriculum. Do you intend to do so? Do you feel other institutions should examine your project with a view to emulating it?

JBM: I certainly intend to repeat the experiment. The one downside for an instructor is that, if it is to be done right, it is very labour-intensive. On the other hand, in terms of capital resources it is essentially free. My university (and many others) pays millions of dollars per year for site licences for educational software such as WebCT. That's a massive waste of money, as far as I'm concerned; though it's a lucrative racket for the people selling the software. It's also, I'd say, an abdication of an important aspect of the university's mission: to invest in the Commons. The trend in contemporary academia is too often towards privatization and enclosure. (Though I should note that there are valiant exceptions, and my former colleague John Willinsky's work on open access is exemplary.) The more universities

engage with Wikipedia, and the more they realize that they can do so without necessarily dropping the high standards of research and academic rigour that it is also their duty to safeguard, the more they benefit not only their oWN: students, but also the public good.

Good and Featured Articles

Wikinews: In addition to the one featured article, seven made "Good Article" status. How much of an encouragement was that to those of you involved in the project?

Monica Freudenreich: I honestly cannot speak for the rest of the class but I think that everyone involved was a little bit weary (Ed: wary?) of this project. None of us had ever embarked on this sort of thing in our undergraduate careers before and to say the least, were unsure of how this would all turn out. Being students, we are prone to leave things to the last minute and with this project that was definitely not a possibility. So, despite a slow start in general, I think the status most of the articles in our project achieved is really impressive and that is a huge encouragement in itself
Katy Konyk: I can't speak for the rest of the class but I think seeing so many articles achieve good status proved that the goal was very achievable. I think the only downside was that in class people are going to work at their oWN: speeds so having others reach good article status, if you are not there yet, sometimes added to the pressure.

Elyse Economides: I think it was a form of encouragement, but also made the task seem a bit daunting. It was exciting to see that so many of the groups could attain the goal of "Good Article" status at the end of four months, but it also spoke to the amount of time and effort needed to reach

that point. Hopefully seeing their classmates achieve "Good Article" status encouraged the individual groups that the same achievement was also possible.

WN: How long were you involved with Wikipedia before you really felt Good or Featured was achievable?

MF: I created a user account in January, along with almost all of the class as it was the first time I realized that one could edit wikipedia. The page I believe was created, with the help of Dr. Beasley-Murray on January 15th. After we got a "speedy deletion" tag put on our page, I thought I should get some content up there to make sure that it wasn't deleted, as I have no idea how to create a page. So, we were involved with Wikipedia for about 3 months before we were put up for GA review and then it was just under 4 months when we were awarded the FA gold star. I do not think length of time with Wikipedia is important before achieving Good or Featured articles but rather quality of the content and willingness of other wikipedians to collaborate on the project. I relied on the more experienced Wikipedian users to let us know when Good or Featured Article status was achievable and create checklists for us to complete before getting to either stage.

KK: When we were first presented with this assignment in the middle of January I admit we were very determined to get a featured article and I don't think I really realized how much overall work and reworking of the article would be required to attain that goal. In mid-February we spent a couple days trying to read every English source we could get our hands on and we were dumping the contents onto the page. It was at this time that others really started to take

an interest by making suggestions and doing heaps of editing themselves. To be honest it felt a little overwhelming, realizing how strict Wikipedia rules are and all the editing we needed to do. While the extensive requirements were overwhelming at first they also made good and feature article status feel achievable because we were able to see exactly what we needed to do.

EE: Once Professor Beasley-Murray seriously encouraged us to start working on our articles, by assigning us to make one edit, large or small, to our article, creating an article on Wikipedia seemed slightly less intimidating, although it was still a huge endeavor. Most of the framework and information that carried through the editing process was formed during late February, and that's when the status of "Good Article" became more of a tangible goal. The input from outside contributors and Wikipedia experts also became quite salient at this point, and it continued on through the entire process.

WN: If you could improve the guidelines for people wanting to take articles up to Featured status, what would you change?

KK: I think the guidelines are fair and are what make Featured Articles such reliable sources. My only comment would be that the Manual of Style was extremely inaccessible to lay users, like myself and if there hadn't been professional editors who knew what they were doing I don't know if we could have gotten over that obstacle.

EE: Although I probably didn't work as closely with the guidelines as the other members of my group, from what I experienced, there are a fair amount of technical and professional level requirements that is appropriate

for the commitment to continuity and reliability, but difficult for beginning users to understand and properly use. The guidelines are a necessary component of Wikipedia, and Wikipedia provides comprehensive resources to explain these tools. Perhaps the best way to feel confident in using the guidelines is to practice making use of them and look at other articles for examples.

WN: Do you feel that having anything you did immediately viewable by anyone on the Internet encouraged you to aim for a higher standard than you might have with a more conventional paper that only the professor would see?

MF: Not really. I think what pushed us to achieve higher standards were the other wikipedian editors. They were constantly pushing us to find better references and to reference everything. In working towards GA and FA they set the bar incredibly high. Blogs and other internet sites such as facebook are also readily viewable to anyone and they often have a very low standard, if any standard at all. So, I do not think that it was because the article and our work was being shown on the internet that we worked so hard at this project. The support of the other wikipedians along the way was critical for me to both keep working at it and to set the standard very high indeed.

KK: I don't think that it was because our work would be immediately visible that we aimed for a higher standard. Personally, I think what allowed us to aim for a higher standard was the ability to receive feedback and continually rework the page, which is very unlike a paper where you only have the opportunity to submit it once and cannot fix the paper according to the comments. In this

sense, Wikipedia was a much better learning tool than a paper, we were actually able to engage with the comments from other editors.

EE: I would almost say it has the opposite effect. While many users on Wikipedia are careful about the material they post, Wikipedia is a fairly anonymous resource, which means an individual's contributions may not be directly linked back to that person. Wikipedia is also constantly changing as editors come and go, so the information one contributes is never truly permanent. A paper is always directly linked to the individual and unlike Wikipedia, the information placed within it is permanent.

WN: Do you believe that contributing something to a 'digital commons' gives you more of a sense of achievement than just turning in a term paper?

MF: Undoubtedly yes. This page will be read by countless people over the course of its existence. Because I have worked so hard writing and re-writing it, I am extremely proud of the finished result, I almost can't believe I helped write it when I look back over it. Term papers I have handed back end up in a binder and files sit on my computer unopened ever again. This wikipedia page will be seen and likely used by others in the future. After all, I am quite confident that the references list is a comprehensive list of nearly everything published in English on the subject. Any student or person looking to read more about El Senor Presidente no longer has to look any further than our references list. Now that is something truly amazing!

EE: Yes and no. While contributing to the creation of a "Featured Article" means disseminating that

information to a virtually unlimited number of people, the creation of a term paper is also a feat in and of itself that requires a great deal of research and editing. It is true that within the forum of Wikipedia, an exponentially larger amount of people will see and recognize an individual's work, but it is equally impersonal. I find each to inspire a sense of achievement (and perhaps mixed with a sense of relief as well).

WN: Have you caught the "wiki bug"? Will you keep editing?

MF: I am not completely sure. I think Wikipedia is a great resource and I have a lot of admiration for all those out there that work to make Wikipedia a thorough and reliable resource but I don't know quite yet if I will keep editing. I would like to say yes but between two jobs and five courses right now I will have to stop or cut back until the semester ends. As for the summer, with three jobs and a couple classes, again I don't know how much time I will be able to dedicate to Wikipedia but I think as I read novels in my spare time or do research for future term papers, I will definitely add references and information about future subjects and topics I study. I do not think I will completely stop editing all together but I will undoubtedly have to cut back.

KK: I don't know if I will keep editing, only because I now know the immense amount of work and research that is required to produce quality work. I have caught the 'wiki bug' in the sense that I have a lot more respect for other Good and Feature articles out there. While I may not be able to quote them in my papers I have learned that they are excellent resources and can lead me to other academic papers. Wikipedia will still be my first internet stop for an area that I know nothing

about; if it can lead me to other sources than I know it is a good page.

EE: I think I will continue to edit, though most likely it will be in the form of minor edits, such as spelling and grammar errors, because that's my strongest area of interest. I think changing something on Wikipedia, no matter how minor it may be, gives the user a tiny sense of accomplishment.

WN: Assuming Professor Beasley-Murray repeats this project in subsequent years, what advice would you give to students following in your footsteps and starting on Wikipedia?

MF: I would advise them to start early and start with doing research. Along with Wikipedia, we also had weekly reading responses to hand in. I would advise students to approach Wikipedia as something that is due weekly as well and recommend that they spend at least one hour editing Wikipedia each week or doing research on the topic. To begin, online journal databases work really well but the reality is that many articles published about novels are not online and so consulting the research librarian is an invaluable tool. I think I visited them three times for how to get the information I was looking for. And also, I would advise them not to be too overwhelmed by the process. The Wikipidians set very high standards but those standards are achievable. Have faith that even as an undergraduate who is not majoring in English, you can make an incredible contribution and get real results from your hard work.

EE: I would also encourage them to begin their research early and get as much information onto the page as quickly as possible. It seems that the veteran and

experienced Wikipedia editors and users gravitate towards pages that show substantial activity. I would also encourage them to pace themselves (something I should have practiced more) and look for guidance on other article pages and through other users. Finally, I would encourage them to contact their group members early on and form a plan for the research and editing.

WN: Which would you describe as the harder 'marking authority'? Other professors where you've submitted conventional term papers, or the teams assessing Wikipedia contributions with a view to awarding Good or Featured status?

MF: No competition. Our Good Article review was extremely intense and I actually was very overwhelmed by it initially. After working through each bullit point though, I can now see why those suggestions for improvement were both necessary and important. The hard work most definetly did not stop after GA review. Infact, before GA review had even ended another editor went through the article for us, line by line and came up with an even longer list of needed improvements, and once we did that, another thourough copyedit was done. At times I was very discouraged by the mountain or work infront of me and not entirely confident that I could fix the problem areas but with their continued support and help we did it. Professors on conventional term papers make a few comments and hand it back to you. In nearly four years of University, I have only had one professor hand back term papers and give students the option to revise, rework and re-write problematic areas in the essay. And personally, I find this process of re-writing, clarifying and improving prose to be

extremly helpful. Over the course of the last few months I have learned so much about writing I cannot even express... and it shows. I have been a B+/A- student throughout my entire undergraduate carreer, and my last two papers have been A's! I think the grades speak for themselves.

KK: Wikipedia was definitely more intense but I think it was probably a fairer process. I don't have a problem with someone being a tough critique when we have the opportunity to fix the problems. This is exactly what I enjoyed about the Wikipedia process and think this is what made it such a great learning tool.

EE: Wikipedia seems to hold more consistent and constant standards across the board, whereas professors can sometimes mark in an unexpected manner. However, in my experience with Wikipedia and my professors, each expect a high quality of work and challenge the contributor to create such work.

WN: Was there significant input from other Wikipedians not taking your course? If so, was this valuable?

MF: In the beginning we were mostly on our oWN: but as we grew more comfortable with how to edit on Wikipedia and started doing research on the subject, we found ourselves supported by a great number of other Wikipedians, complete strangers willing to help us on the ambitious goal of Feature Article. This help was extremley valuable, in fact I do not think that Feature Article would have been possible without their assistance and guidance along the way. I cannot thank each and everyone of them enough for looking out for us and pointing us in the right direction when we hit road bumbs along the

way.

EE: There was definitely significant input from other users on Wikipedia, even before our group neared the "Good Article" mark. One of the greatest components of Wikipedia is the sense of community that is cultivated among all the users. When they recognize an area of need, they are quick to offer aid and support.

WN: As a fairly open-ended question, would you see any use for wiki technology in any of your other study areas, or even where you may hope to eventually end up in employment?

MF: I think Wikipedia is a great resource to find concise, compiled information and given the fast pace of society today, it will only grow in importance for people needed to quickly check the names of certain people or places when working on projects or reports in the workplace. I already use Wikipedia for quick reference checks, to clarify what something or who someone is that I am not familiar with.

KK: I totally see use for wiki technology. Wikipedia is often the first source I go to when I have a question. While I cannot cite Wikipedia in my school papers I have learned that if it is a good article then it can be a great database for other academic works that I can use and if not it is normally a great source to give me some basic knowledge. I think if more and more articles can reach at least Good status Wikipedia might start to be acknowledged as a reliable source.

EE: I have always appreciated Wikipedia as a resource to provide me with background information for many of my areas of study. While it is not acknowledge as a strictly academic source, I use it to familiarize myself with a topic before delving in to deeper

research. I also find Wikipedia to be a useful resource for non-academic subjects, which is, in essence, the beauty of Wikipedia.

The 2,000th

How did you feel when "El Señor Presidente" was made up to Featured Article (FA) status? Did you have a celebratory drink or a party?

MF: I was (and still am) extremely excited. Before this semester started in January, I was not even aware that anyone could edit Wikipedia, let alone create a page and build it from scratch. I honestly did not know if it would make it through FAC but we have had so much help with copyediting and technical Wikipedia aspects of creating the article that it really would never have been possible to get a feature article if it had not been from the help of a few key other Wikipedians. Unfortunately there was no celebratory drink or party as the work of a student never seems to end but I will admit I have been rather shamelessly bragging about it to family and friends.

KK: It was very exciting but to be honest I had gotten used to editing Wikipedia for over 2 months that it was almost a little sad that the entire process was over. Creating a Wikipedia article is such a group process that I did feel a little sad to be leaving after working so intensely with such an amazing group of people. We have not had a celebratory drink, unfortunately it has been overshadowed by all the other work that school entails but I definitely think one is in order once school is done. I also don't think that it has really set in.

EE: It was rather a surreal feeling. It's hard to believe an article that was created in January is now deserving of "Featured Article" status less than four months later.

Our whole class had a party of sorts to celebrate the end of the class, which I suppose could encompass the wrapping up of Wikipedia editing.

WN: Were you disappointed that more of your articles didn't make FA status?

MF: I have not been involved with the other articles so I cannot say that I feel strongly one way or another. Perhaps this question would be better suited for Dr. Beasley-Murray, who has indeed been involved in every article.

"I think FAs [Ed: Featured Articles] deserve more credit in the academic community because they are excellent sources of information."—Katy Konyk

WN: Was getting the article up to that status harder than you expected?

MF: To be honest, I don't really know what I was expecting. When the project first began I took a good look at other articles on books that achieved Feature Article status and they looked really impressive so I knew from the beginning it was going to be a challenge but I was ready for that challenge and excited to give it a go. Basically, I jumped rather blindly into "editing" and the whole world of Wikipedia.

KK: I would not say that it was harder than I expected but perhaps more work. Luckily, we had an amazing group of Wikipedia users and editors on our side who helped make it very clear what was expected for the article. Honestly, without them guiding us I think this whole process would have been a lot more difficult if not impossible. This experience has taught me that if you are willing to put in the work and time than it really is not impossible.

EE: It required a commitment of

considerable time and effort, but I think that's to be expected for a highly recognized article. We were fortunate enough to be guided at every turn by experienced editors, who most likely the reason the article progressed so far, so quickly.

WN: Does the lack of credit on Wikipedia concern you?

MF: Not at all. Wikipedia is such a group effort that I think it would be extremely difficult to give credit to only a few people. I may have been one of the principle editors tirelessly working away at this article but at the same time it would never have reached FA without the overwhelming support from other collaborators who helped us out with many aspects of the article. What still impresses me is how thoroughly they were able to copyedit the article and really focus on sentences of weakness so that the finished product is rather remarkable.

KK: Personally, it does not concern me because I did this as an assignment for a class. Therefore, only having edited one article any lack on individual credit is not a worry for me, especially because this is such a group effort. What does concern me is the lack of credit Wikipedia is given in the academic community. Many people worked tirelessly on this article, and of course all the other FAs, to make sure it was all properly supported by academic sources yet it still has a bad reputation. I think FAs deserve more credit in the academic community because they are excellent sources of information.

EE: Not particularly. The goal of Wikipedia is to share and spread information, not formulate new ideas or pose arguments. Ultimately, users are merely compilers, gathering information and organizing it into a cohesive

page. While some users may contribute more than others, all users are working towards a common goal, which doesn't precipitate the need for individual recognition. Additionally, Wikipedia has in place its own: sort of recognition and awards system that can give credit where credit's due.

WN: Academia is often characterised as "publish or die". Do you believe the educational establishment should embrace Wikipedia or wiki technology as a way of making this publishing requirement less onerous?

MF: Being an undergraduate, I don't really feel as though I am faced with this "publish or die" thinking. I do think though that this has been a very valuable assignment and I see a lot of merit in doing it. It is a chance for us students who never have anything we write published to publish something on Wikipedia. I also think there are many valuable skills that one acquires from editing on Wikipedia because one does not write something once and never look at it again. Wikipedia encourages multiple revisions and re-writing or going back to the original research to further clarify points one makes. I think it also teaches valuable writing skills and helps on improve on areas of weakness in his/her writing. So, I do not know if I have answered the question per se but yes, I do think that the education establishment should embrace Wikipedia as a valuable education tool for students. Seeing that a person's name is not directly linked to any given article and one's proper name is not used while editing, I find that it would be extremely difficult for Wikipedia as it functions right now to diminish the onerous requirement of publishing articles.

EE: I think Wikipedia should be acknowledge for providing a (in some cases, somewhat comprehensive) background on certain academic subjects. And it would be nice for students of all levels of education to cite Wikipedia as an academic source for papers and projects. However, I recognize the difficulty in allowing Wikipedia to be considered a rigid academic source, since it is open to changes from academics and non-academics alike. I believe Wikipedia should continued to be used as a starting place for research and information and as a stepping stone to further resources.

WN: How has working on getting something to FA status changed your opinion of Wikipedia from that you held prior to the start of this project?

MF: As I said before, I did not even know a person could edit Wikipedia before the start of the project, so, my views of Wikipedia have changed drastically. After working on this page for so long, and achieving FA status, I now have so much respect for all of the editors working to improve the information out there. Wikipedia is a great source and I have no doubt that it will only continue to get better. Because I have been told not to cite Wikipedia information in academic writing, before the project began I had the idea that Wikipedia is rather untrustworthy. At the same time, one of my professors this year included in our course readings some Wikipedia articles such as "The Big Bang Theory" and I was shocked. I think the lesson I have learned from this is that Wikipedia can be an extremely valuable research tool and, at least with the Good and Featured Articles, they can provide the reader with a

rather extensive list of academic work to references reliably. In the end, I can't say enough how much I respect all those working on Wikipedia articles day after day, compiling resources and information and really doing something remarkable. Whether professors like it or not, Wikipedia is a widely used tool by students to quickly check facts about a person, place, event, or work and I think with the help of dedicated editors, it will only continue to improve and impress.

EE: It showed me the draw of using Wikipedia not only to access information, but to share it as well. It also showed me how much "behind the scenes" effort goes into creating, maintaining and editing pages. Wikipedia had always seemed like a resource dominated by experts or at least people fanatic about a certain subject. However, working on an article has shown me that truly anyone can contribute his or her bit to Wikipedia and make a significant impact.

Wikinews: I'd like to thank you all for taking the time out of your busy schedules to help on this Wikinews article. Who knows? It too could end up featured.

2008 Taipei AMPA: IT industry will pulse the growth of automotive industry

2008 Taipei AMPA, not only showcased automotive parts and accessories, but there were also several seminars in progress at the TWTC Nangang. In addition, the "Taiwan IT Solution Pavilion", organized by IT industry including Industrial Technology Research Institute and the other 14 companies, showcased not only solutions for automotive industry including manufacturing, e-commerce, and logistic management, but also industrial

applications like RFID, Barcode, and ERP.

According to some statistics by TAITRA, the export value of service industry reached USD\$284 millions, more than 67% ratio of GDP in Taiwan.

After the Taipei AMPA, the TAITRA scheduled to promote this cross-industry solutions in not only Taiwan but also China, Japan, Hong Kong, and South-east Asia countries by participating different trade shows like Tokyo Game Show in Tokyo, Japan and AMAZIA, the first-ever gaming and entertainment industry trade show in Hong Kong.

2008 Boao Forum for Asia starts with sectors on enonomy, environment, and Internet

"2008 Boao Forum for Asia", participated with governmental and industrial executives world-wide, started two days ago in Bo'ao, Hainan, China. Because revolutions in the Web 3.0 era made a major impact on global economy, several elites from Internet industry like Kai-Fu Lee did forecasts on this key industry in this forum.

By the way, after the 2008 Taiwan Presidential Election, Vincent Siew, the vice-president-to-be, focused by media world-wide including Taiwan, participated in this forum with non-official identity. But two coalitions (Pan-Blues and Pan-Greens) declared different comments on Siew's participation.

But due to a hot topic of environment and greenhouse effect, Rajendra Kumar Pachauri, winner of 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, commented on this forum: "There were several sectors on energy-saving, not governments, but the

public should play a great role in this global warming era."

3000 homeless after fire breaks out in Chad refugee camp

A fire broke out in a refugee camp in eastern Chad Friday, leaving 3,000 people homeless and injuring 10, according to the United Nations (UN) refugee agency United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Refugees have been living in the camp as a result of the conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan.

The fire started in the Goz Amer camp triggered by a cooking fire that had gone unwatched. The fire moved quickly through the camp due to high winds. Many of the refugees lost all of their belongings and food rations in the blaze. After receiving tents from the UNHCR in 2004, many of the refugees built traditional dwellings out of sticks and mud, and these shelters burned rapidly in the fire.

In a UNHCR press release, Emmanuel Uwurukundo, acting UNHCR head in Koukou-Angarana said: "Everybody around, refugees and all our partners alike, rushed to the spot and tried to extinguish the fire with whatever they had: clothes, extinguishers and water. The teamwork was outstanding."

"The refugees have already suffered so much tragedy and now face yet another trauma."
—António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

In Geneva the UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres commented on the situation: "The refugees have already suffered so much tragedy and now face yet another trauma. I am deeply relieved that there

was no loss of life in this devastating fire. We will do everything we can to help and to get shelter and food supplies to them as quickly as possible."

Families affected by the fire were housed at three area schools, and the UNHCR announced on Friday that it planned to deliver aid supplies including sleeping mats, blankets and kitchen sets. The World Food Programme was also asked by the UNHCR for an extra monthly food ration to be delivered to the families whose homes were destroyed in the blaze.

The Goz Amer camp houses about 20,500 refugees, and is located approximately 70 kilometers from the Sudanese border. Goz Amer is one of 12 UNHCR-run camps along the Chad-Sudan which all told contain over 240,000 refugees from Darfur.

Chad and Sudan signed a peace agreement on March 13 in an attempt to end a five-year conflict, and the leaders of both countries agreed not to back rebel groups that are active near their borders.

Approximately 2.2 million people from the Darfur region have left their homes since the beginning of the violence in 2003. The UN puts the number of deaths due to the Darfur conflict at over 200,000, and the Sudanese government has said that only 9,000 have died.

Bristol Central Library reopens after being closed due to fire

The main library in Bristol, United Kingdom may be partially reopened on Monday after being closed for over a week due to a fire.

Most of the ground floor of the library will reopen, although the first floor will remain closed.

Bristol City Council reported last week that it was possible the library would reopen on Tuesday, although after the inspection on that day, it was decided it would remain closed.

The head of Library services at Bristol City Council commented on the fire last week. She said "we [the Library service] apologise to our customers for this inconvenience but it is not possible to open the library as there remains problem's with power to parts of the building and there is a need to give contractors clear access to clean smoke damage in some public areas. We will review the situation again on Monday morning and issue further updates when further information is available."

Teräsbetoni frontman J. Ahola on representing Finland at Eurovision 2008 & more

Teräsbetoni means "steel-reinforced concrete", and is also the name of a Finnish heavy metal band formed in 2002. Their music, which centres on an honourable warrior lifestyle or on metal itself, quickly became popular in 2003 on the Internet, resulting in a petition by fans being sent to several record labels demanding a recording deal. In late 2004 the band signed to Warner Music Finland, and the following year debut single *Taivas lyö tulta* rose to number one in the Finnish charts, and debut album *Metallitotuus* hit number two and went platinum, and has now sold over 32,000 copies.

The band, who sing exclusively in Finnish, have just released their third album, *Myrskyntuoja*. The lead single on this album is *Missä miehet ratsastaa*, which Teräsbetoni decided to enter in the

Finnish selections for the 2008 edition of the Eurovision Song Contest, where it was selected to go on to the semi-final in Belgrade, Serbia as Finland's representative this year. Although Finland has seen limited success in the contest, their only victory was with a comparable group. In 2006 hard rock band Lordi - whose monster costumes and pyrotechnic displays are famed - achieved a record 292 points in the final with *Hard Rock Hallelujah*.

Teräsbetoni's frontman, vocalist and bass guitarist Jarkko Ahola's fame extends beyond the band he heads. He also features in Finnish symphonic power metal cover supergroup Northern Kings, alongside Marco Hietala of Nightwish and Tarot, Tony Kakko of Sonata Arctica and Juha-Pekka Leppäluoto of Charon.

Wikinews was able to conduct an exclusive interview with Jarkko Ahola to discuss these various achievements. This interview is now published below for the first time.

Interview

Note: This interview contains some strong language. Wikinews does not censor such content, please see our content disclaimer for details.

On the early days

Wikinews: Desite the fact that you focus on a lifestyle set in historic times, your band's name means "steel-reinforced concrete". Why did you choose that name?
 Jarkko: We got together and had a little conversation about the name of our band. Pretty soon V. Rantanen suggested the name "Teräsbetoni". We all thought it sounded great and it described our music well in a way that made people think "what the hell is this?

..." (And here you have to understand that word "Teräsbetoni" sounds and IS much cooler than "steel-reinforced concrete".) I guess the name was okay, 'cause we didn't have a tendency or need to write songs about historic times, those kind of songs just came out. There are also songs that aren't set in the past, more into this day or this moment.

Wikinews: How did you come up with the concept for the band?

Jarkko: Mostly it just happened. We all must have had some kind of vision about the music and the looks for sure and we all agreed about the leather and skin. That's how it all began. We wrote songs we thought were good and metallish. We played them as metal should be played: loud'n'proud. There must have been something special about our music and live performances, 'cause the fan crowds just kept growing and growing. And while the band evolved, the concept evolved on its own.

Wikinews: Which artists would you say inspired you?

Jarkko: We all have our inspiration. I can't tell who have inspired other band members, but I've always been inspired by the hard rock bands of the seventies: Deep Purple, Rainbow, Uriah Heep, Black Sabbath... you know, all the 70's classics. From the eighties bands like Dio, Manowar, Helloween, Accept have been on my CD-player. Nowadays I'm inspired just by good music. No matter what kind of music it is, if it sounds great.

Wikinews: Did the early reaction on the Internet surprise you?

Jarkko: It sure did. We knew we had something special on our hands, but there's always

something special somewhere all the time, you know. We had this "not-so-pro"-looking site with a picture of us and three demo songs...and that was enough! All the basic pieces were so fit, that nothing else was needed. And of course there was also this "Are these guys serious?"-thing going on. It still is.

Wikinews: When you made your debut releases you became an instant hit in Finland. What was that like for you at the time, and how is it now, still being a big success there?

Jarkko:Well, you always tend to think that when you hit big, your life changes and everything is cool and crazy. But to us it really didn't change. After our first hit song "Taivas Lyö Tulta" reigned the air, we were still playing in the small clubs with low prices. I guess many facets believed that we were just a fucking joke. It took some time for the gig organizers to realize that people wanted to see and hear us live. Anyway, it was all clear when we visited summer festivals and got huge audiences. Since then it has been pretty steady.

Now with all this Eurovision stuff and publicity it's much more bigger than it was with our first hit and first album. Of course we aren't newbies to success and publicity now, so we take it casually. None of us really love being some kind of small celebs, but what we like is playing our music to our fans that never seem to let us down. It's great to meet them after gig and have few beers. So, if publicity is required for that, we'll accept it happily.

Wikinews: Some people have described your music as "corny" or "camp". How do you respond to that? Would you agree with the view by some people that much of

what you do is in fact a parody? Jarkko:Let's put it this way. If we would sing in English, that kind of thinking would be much less common. The problem seems to be the fact, that most of the people actually seem to understand our lyrics and they think that we can't be serious with this stuff. Hell, thousands of bands do the same thing in other language and nobody's laughing. Of course we have fun when play live or give interviews, but when we write new songs and record them, it's all real and true.

On Eurovision

Wikinews: What does it feel like to be selected to go to Eurovision, especially considering it is mostly an English language pop contest? Is that daunting at all?

Jarkko:Daunting? No way. I'm proud of being the representative of Finland. Finland has never done too well in Eurovision Song Contest, but Lordi gave the whole show a nice slap in the face. You know, it doesn't have to be pop to win the number one slot - you can actually play rock music there. We might seem a bit odd to European viewers, 'cause we have our leatherish looks, metallish music and we sing in Finnish. But in the end, I wish that people will like it.

Wikinews: What is the song about?

Jarkko:The song is set in the Teräsbetoni-world with certain lyrical style. So, there are horses, heroes and battlefields. But in the end the song is about harshness of life, the call of duty and responsibility.

Wikinews: How do you expect Europe to react to a metal song in Finnish?

Jarkko:Well, you can only guess. I believe they react like Finnish people do - they hate it or love it.

Hopely most of them will love it.

Wikinews: Of course, Finland has a history of similar Eurovision entries. Nightwish were second choice to represent Finland once with Sleepwalker, and of course Lordi won the whole contest in 2006. What do you think of those entries?

Jarkko:Both of the bands have strong image and style. I'm not too fond of their music, but you can't really deny their achievements.

Wikinews: Of the entries so far, excluding yourself, who to win?

Jarkko:I haven't heard any other entries yet. We'll check them out when we go to Serbia, 'cause we'll be there for two weeks. That's enough of full time Eurovision song focus.

Wikinews: Do you reckon you have a chance of victory yourself?

Jarkko:You'll have to believe in your self if you go to a fight. This is also one of the themes of our ESC-song Missä Miehet Ratsastaa.

Wikinews: A video for the Eurovision campaign planned to be shown to the press was deemed "too burly" for the contest. Was that annoying?

Jarkko:You mean our music video? I think the first version of the video was a bit heavy stuff for the people who don't us. But the new version doesn't really differ too much from the original, so in that perspective it was a bit annoying... or maybe better word is pointless.

Wikinews: Many people reading this will be thinking about who to vote for at the contest. Why should they vote for you?

Jarkko:Because what we do is true and pure. We come as we are and play from our hearts.

That seems to be pretty rare in nowadays music, especially in pop genre where glamour and glitter seems to be essential. ...And our song is good, too!

The new album

Wikinews: How has the reaction to your latest album been?

Jarkko: Well, it reached the position number 1 in Finland's album chart. Most of our fans have thanked us for the best album so far. I've seen few reviews and they weren't too flattering. On the other hand, they've never been 'cause most of the reviews tend to discuss our looks, image and the lyrics. But it's all right, that kind of criticism have never affected to our listeners.

Wikinews: What sort of things are the songs on this album about?

Jarkko: We are still fighting for metal music, so there are traditional songs about playing this music and calling all our brothers and sisters to get together. The other subjects vary from nightmares to galley slavery, from possession to burden of believing in your cause etc.

Wikinews: Talk us through the writing process for the album.

Jarkko: This time we had much more time to write new songs than we did with our second album "Vaadimme Metallia". On the other hand the recording process' schedule was more shattered than it was with V.M.

The cycle of writing must be a bit different with each writer, but for example I might come up with an idea of a title of the song or just a guitar riff. From there I start to develop the song. Mostly it comes out pretty easy. Sometimes there's just a special mood that evolve to a song. When the rough version of song is in my mind, I record a

demo of it. While recording I start hearing how the song should be sang and played. I also arrange the song in the demo phase. I make the demos ready & polished and send them to band members, A&R and producer. I believe A. Järvinen and V. Rantanen, song writers as well, work pretty much the same way.

At this point we give each other comments and criticism about the songs we've written. With the help of the producer and A & R we choose the songs that should be recorded on the album. Of course the whole process is more complex but basically the it goes like that.

Wikinews: Did all the recording, production etc go smoothly?

Jarkko: Yea it did. Hiili Hiilesmaa, our producer, and the band knew each other already and we had discussions about the sound and direction of the new album. The working habits were familiar to us from the Vaadimme Metallia-sessions, so from that point of view things went smoothly. Our guitarists actually did some solos and backing vocals at home! I think that's a great example of relaxed way of producing.

Wikinews: Do you plan a tour this year to support the album?

Jarkko: We're already gigging around Finland and summer tour is in the making. Visiting countries abroad would be great, too.

Northern Kings

Wikinews: How did you come to be involved with Northern Kings?

Jarkko: The whole thing began with Raskasta Joulua -tour that I was in. We also did an album called "Raskaampaa Joulua". Anyway, there was some talk about doing something else together. You know, not just Christmas carols in metal mode. Nobody really had the

time to start writing new songs, so a cover album seemed to be a nice way of proceeding.

Everybody agreed that the album should sound massive and orchestrated. At first we had no other direction than covering the music we liked. I did a demo of Procol Harum's "Salty Dog" with Erkka Korhonen. It was a good example of what we should sound like, but our record label's A & R Osku Ketola thought that we should do something more defined. After few thoughts we decided to concentrate on pop hits of the 80's. That's how it all began. I had a chance to arrange my own acts which was lots of fun.

Wikinews: What's it like working with the other three established rockers?

Jarkko: Unfortunately we didn't see each other while making the record. That may sound crazy, but that's how it goes nowadays. It's so easy to record your parts and send them to the studio for mixing. Happily, we saw each other while the photo & video shoot. Marco Hietala, Tony Kakko and J-P Leppäluoto are all great musicians and great persons. If we ever get to do any shows together, I'm sure it would be wonderful in music and in brotherhood.

Wikinews: Is it hard to divide your time between the projects?

Jarkko: It all depends on what you have going on already. While making Northern Kings album "Reborn" Teräsbetoni was having a break. I try to do things smoothly and avoid booking too much stuff on my calendar. You shouldn't be too greedy and accept all the stuff offered.

Of course there are exceptions. For example while we were recording Myrskyntuoja, I had to leave studio early or not go there at all 'cause of promotional actions

agreed by our record label. I can understand the meaning of promotion, but nothing sucks more than bothering an intensive studio session with another project. It screws up your focus. But fortunately that kind of shit is rare enough, so I don't care complaining about it. And the bottom line is that projects like Northern Kings bring great variety to your life as an artist.

Wikinews: Is co-ordinating things with the other members hard when they've all got their projects, too?

Jarkko: Well, luckily I didn't have to do that. That's producer's and A&R's business. But what I've seen from aside, it does seem a bit hard to fix up meetings, promo sessions etc. Somebody is always going somewhere!

Wikinews: What do you think personally of the covers you've produced?

Jarkko: I'm very satisfied with the results. We all got to do arrangements and songs that looked like us. I've heard few cover albums and they've rarely been interesting. I think we managed to reach that point.

Wikinews: What about the work of the others in their bands? Do you like their music as well?

Jarkko: I give all the guys my sincere respect for their work. I think Marco Hietala's Tarot is one of the Finnish heavy metal legends and it still rocks. I'm not so much into Nightwish, anyway. There's something that doesn't quite please my ears. Maybe I should listen to it more. Charon is good on its field and so is Sonata Arctica, while its style is not the style I prefer to listen in metal music.

The future and final words

Wikinews: Except for an appearance at Germany's Wacken Open Air, you haven't done much international stuff prior to now. Might we see some gigs abroad in 2008, and if not when?
Jarkko: All I can say is I WISH! There might be few gigs in the summer, but we'll see.

Wikinews: You said Missä miehet ratsastaa wouldn't be translated into English simply because it was designed to work in Finnish. Does that mean we could see some songs written specially in English in the future?

Jarkko: With Teräsbetoni I doubt it. We are pretty much focused on our own language. It would be pretty hard to see us singing in English and still be Teräsbetoni, you know.

Wikinews: What do you expect Eurovision to do for you? Have you seen any changes already?

Jarkko: I hope we can get our music out as widely as possible. Even though it's just one song, I believe that it evokes interest in watchers and listeners. The local media has been interested in us since we won the finale, but nothing special hasn't yet happened.

Wikinews: Loads of people in the music industry have been complaining that downloading illegally is killing the industry. Do you agree?

Jarkko: I believe it affects the industry and its sales. Still, it's hard to believe that it's killing the industry. Of course I also have rights that the illegal downloaders violate. So, even though it's not killing the industry, it's totally wrong. The whole system has to change somehow, that's for sure.

Wikinews: What does it mean to you to be in these bands?

Jarkko: It means I can be who I am, a musician, a songwriter and an artist. I've done other stuff in my life and I can tell you there were times when I thought that life just sucked. I am grateful for being in this position.

Wikinews: Any final words for any of your fans reading this?

Jarkko: All that ever comes to my mind is THANK YOU. You really are the air I breathe. Please, keep on giving it to me. I'll keep on giving you music.

Wikinews reports from 2008 Taiwan Open Source Development Conference

People involved in open source products from across Taiwan gathered together at the 2008 Taiwan Open Source Development Conference to present to others a variety of research which is relevant to the open source community.

A variety of different issues were discussed at the conference. This included Google Gears, which describes itself as an "open source project that enables more powerful web applications."

Graphical User Interfaces and various hardware issues were also discussed at the conference.

Another Google Product that was discussed was Google Code, which allows people to search open source code.

Today in History

1471 – Wars of the Roses: The Yorkists under Edward IV defeated the Lancastrians near the town of Barnet, killing Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick.

1865 – Actor and Confederate sympathizer John Wilkes Booth

shot U.S. President Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C.

1931 – King Alfonso XIII left Spain. The Second Spanish Republic was proclaimed by a provisional government led by Niceto Alcalá-Zamora.

1956 – The use of the quadruplex videotape was first demonstrated in public.

1970 – An oxygen tank aboard Apollo 13 exploded, causing the NASA spacecraft to lose most of its oxygen and electrical power.

1978 – Thousands of Georgians demonstrated in Tbilisi against an attempt by the Supreme Soviet of the Georgian SSR to change the constitutional status of the Georgian language.

April 14 is Pohela Baishakh in Bengal, Vaisakhi in India, N'Ko Alphabet Day in West Africa.

Quote of the Day

What really matters is that there is so much faith and love and kindness which we can share with and provoke in others, and that by cleanly, simple, generous living we approach perfection in the highest and most lovely of all arts. ... But you, I think, have always comprehended this.
~ James Branch Cabell

Word of the Day

persiflage n

1. Good-natured banter; raillery.
2. Frivolous, lighthearted discussion of a topic.

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