



Top Stories



Polls: Cristina Kirchner becomes Argentinian President

BDSM as business: Interviews with Dominatrixes

In the second installment of our two part series on the S&M industry, Wikinews interviews three dominatrixes about both the mundane and shocking aspects of their

Featured story

Gay Talese on the state of journalism, Iraq and his life

Gay Talese has had trouble finding an agency to give him credentials to report in Iraq. "Even if I was on Al-Jazeera with a gun to my head, I wouldn't be pleading with those bastards! I'd say, 'Go ahead. Make my day,'" said the 75 year old legendary journalist.

Wikipedia Current Events

Israel reduces the flow of oil to the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.

•Scandinavian Airlines decided to immediately and permanently discontinue services based on the use of its 24 Dash 8 Q400 a after

Wikipedia Current Events

a series of crash landings.

•2007 Atlantic hurricane season: Tropical Depression Sixteen forms 195 miles (310 kilometers) south-southeast of Port Au Prince, Haiti. A tropical storm warning is issued for the southwestern peninsula of Haiti, and a tropical storm watch is issued for the southeastern coast of Cuba.

•Voters in Argentina go to the polls for the Argentine general election, 2007. Exit polls showed that First Lady Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner with a clear lead over Elisa Carrio.

Cristina Kirchner set to win Argentinian presidential elections

Cristina Fernández de Kirchner of the center political front Frente para la Victoria won over 45% of votes in today's Presidential elections in Argentina, according to exit polls of the national media agencies.

Elisa Carrió, her main adversary, is predicted to have won some 24% of the estimated 27 million votes. If this would be the case, 'Cristina' would win the elections in the first round, as the Argentinian electoral law states that to win the elections, someone has to obtain more than 40% of votes, and the difference with the next candidate has to be over 10%. The exit polls say the in the province of Buenos Aires, Daniel Scioli has gained more than half of votes.

Voting started this morning at 8:00 local time, and Cristina Kirchner was the favourite candidate to succeed her husband, current President of Argentina Néstor Kirchner, who decided not to run for a second four-year term, without giving any explanation. Mrs Kirchner consequently used her first name during her electoral campaign, just like in the United States, Hilary does -who is also a lawyer and a senator wanting to succeed her husband as President. But Cristina replied recently: "I don't want to be compared with Hillary Clinton or with Evita Peron, or with anybody... There's nothing better than being yourself."

Mrs Kirchner's husband is very popular because of the succesful economic reforms after the economy collapsed six years ago. The current President oversaw steep reductions in poverty and unemployment rates. This was the reason for Cristina's campaign slogan, Sabemos como hacerlo, 'we know how to do it.' However, accusations of corruption have emerged during the last year, and rising inflation rates are becoming problematic, while there are concerns that the government's inflation statistics are flawed. Crime rates have also been a key campaign issue.

Several voting offices had long waiting times and voting was extented for one hour until 19:00 local time (UTC 16:00). There were also various protests because of the lack of voting forms. A

spokesperson for candidate Roberto Lavagna, who might become third in the Presidential race, said there was a "systematic lack" of voting forms. Anibal Fernández, Minister of the Interior, said that this was the responsibility of the provincial authorities.

While voting, Mrs Kirchner told the press how important the right to vote was for her, in a reference to the military dictatorship of 1976-1983. "When I was 18 I couldn't vote, so this [voting] is very important... It's important that in the tranquility of democracy, citizens can decide in what kind of country they want to live," Mrs Kirchner said.

Eight new provincial governors and new members for half the parliament and a third of the senate will also be elected today.

Wikimedia Netherlands 2007 conference held on wiki's and education

Yesterday, a chilly Amsterdam hosted the Wikimedia 2007 Netherlands conference. Held at the Aristo centre in a suburb of the city and run by Wikimedia Netherlands, the conference was a short train ride from Amsterdam Centraal railway station. The topic, Wikis And Education (Wiki's En Educatie in Dutch). This was an opportunity for Wikimedians and people in education to come together and see how collaboration could help both.

Wikinews freelance reporter Brian McNeil caught a train from Brussels in Belgium and attended, making an impression on the Wikimedia Foundation chairwoman Florence Devouard by spilling her coffee over the first two speakers approximately three minutes before they were supposed to

officially open the conference.

Morning sessions

Kicking off at 10:00 a.m., the opening speaker was Elly Waterman. The introduction was a mixture of Dutch and English, with Elly commenting on how Wikimedia, or more specifically Wikipedia, is gaining increasing coverage in mainstream press. Not all this coverage is positive, one anecdotal case was a town mayor being described as "boring" in the Dutch Wikipedia. Unfortunately, this made headline news in one of the country's papers. One of Elly's slides referred to "Living in exponential times", a sound bite that encapsulates the explosive growth of available information as well as the computing power to sift through and process it.

Following Elly was the Foundation chairwoman, Florence Devouard. Her speech was on "The Wiki Potential for Education". This was a new presentation with a video used a number of times in the past, but as Florence admitted she deviates from the script and rewrites parts a day or two before giving her presentation. At an early stage in her presentation, she pulled up a photo from Wikimania 2007, highlighting a couple of people huddled over laptops and unwilling to leave the virtual world long enough to look into the camera. Following this those with laptops were requested to close them and stand up, the attendees then were told to introduce themselves to each other. Later on, a prolonged period speaking caused Florence's laptop to start up its screensaver, revealing the more human side with pictures of her children, and some of her favourites from Wikimedia Commons.

After a brief recess for coffee, and

trips outside for those with a nicotine addiction, the conference split into a number of talks. Cormac Lawler, from the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom, introduced the Wikimedia Foundation's youngest project, Wikiversity. Cormac, who is writing his PhD thesis on Wikiversity discovered the Wikipedia project about three years ago and was fascinated. He described how Wikiversity was initially incubated within the Wikibooks project and properly launched in August 2006, like Wikinews there is scope for original research, but as was admitted this is not yet clearly defined. In delving further into how Wikiversity may end up working, Cormac highlighted one aspect of online resources which differs from hardcopy. An axiom of all projects is "wiki is not paper", so despite the "iversity" suffix that most people will assume means tertiary level material, an online resource can cover everything - right down to how to paint your house.

In parallel with Cormac's talk, the first lightning 10 minute talks session was given, speakers included Walter Vermeir who spoke on the topic of Wikimedia Stewards, and Harm Dillen who discussed the competition for MediaWiki, the software used for Wikipedia and its sister projects. Another room held Erwin Kroekenstoel's presentation about the Toolserver, a special server which is used to write software to automate wiki editing and analysis tasks. Erwin's session was shared with Bryan Tong Minh speaking about MediaWiki. An extended session kicked off in room D, a workshop on MediaWiki.

After another coffee break for all but those in the workshop, a set of

Dutch-only presentations were given; Creative Commons while in school by Martijn Arnoldus and practical applications of a school wiki by Dries Declercq. Room B saw Inge Habex giving a presentation on Wikibooks, with Walter Vermeir giving a presentation entitled A Wikimedia Community? Conquering Babel, about the difficulties of communication between Wikimedia-communities. There have been some initiatives, like the Wikimedia Embassy and the Wikizine, the success of which, however, has been limited.

Afternoon

Lunch was followed by three sessions running in tandem. A shorter MediaWiki workshop was held again in room D, Merlijn van Deen spoke on pywikipediabot, and the main room held Eliane Metini's talk, "The Global educators' Open course". Eliane is the director of the International Education association, a Lebanese NGO. She is also chair of iEARN (International Education And Resource Network). She discussed at length the challenges of preparing both students and tomorrow's teachers for the 21st century. Bob Hoffman from the Netherlands also spoke briefly, one of Eliane's colleagues on the project. iEARN has been running for 20 years, and is active in 115 countries.

After the last keynote speech by Eliane, the three-track program continued with sessions going more into the education. Presentors from the Free University of Amsterdam and the Radboud University of Nijmegen explained how they used the Wiki in their education as a tool in room A, and in room B the focus was on how Kennisnet, a Dutch NGO focussing on internet in education,

is using Wiki's in it's projects, why Kennisnet is so involved with Wiki's and the Wikimedia projects, and WikiKids, a Dutch website where kids write together on an encyclopedia for kids. At the same time, in room C the second session of the Lightning Talks started, including a presentation about Wikinews, Jurispedia, Wikipedia in study books and Wikimedia Commons.

One of the latest sessions was about using the wiki-module in Moodle, presented by Hans de Zwart. Moodle is an open source program to structure learning. It can also use wikis in such a way that students can work on reports or assignments on one or more wikis specially created during and for this course (even per student). OpenUniversity have adopted Moodle for their courses and will add a more suiting wiki (non MediaWiki) as of the 1.9 versions of Moodle. At the same time, in room B, Delphine Ménard was explaining the true meaning of 'free' and Cormac Lawler explained more thoroughly what Wikiversity actually is. In room C Finne Boonen and Kim Bruning explained more about the technical infrastructure behind Wikimedia, and Gerard Meijssen said what Wikidata is all about in a more technical session.

Finally the conference was ended by a grand discussion, involving all attendees and led by Oscar van Dillen. The discussion was a wrap-up of the whole conference, which was very well visited with roughly 110 visitors from the Wikimedia Communities, the Dutch educational sector and other interested people. This has been a major increase compared with the edition of 2006, which drew 45 attendees. An evaluation will follow soon.

Suspect "Rembrandt" sold for £2.2 million in English auction house

On Friday afternoon in Moore Allen & Innocent's Cirencester, England auction house a suspect "Rembrandt" painting was sold for £2.2 million, after being estimated by many experts at just £1000 to £1500. This is the most expensive Rembrandt to ever be sold in a provincial auction house in all England's auction history.

Bidding started at £4500 and quickly galloped upwards, by the time it had reached £1 million bidding was rising in £100,000's. However by the £1.8 million mark had slipped down to increasing by £50,000 a time, by this point the pace had slowed remarkably, all 8 phone bidders had stopped and it was left between 2 people still in the room.

When the hammer went down a round of applause rose up, staff looked stunned to silence and the room quickly emptied with people calling friends to tell of the news. Considering the original owner of the piece had kept it in their family house for generations thinking it nothing but a copy by one of Rembrandt's pupils it was an amazing result. The buyer of the piece has been left anonymous even to the auctions owners however the 9.5 by 6.5 inch painting labeled "The Young Rembrandt as Democratizes the Laughing Philosopher" is sure to now be verified for sure. If it is a true Rembrandt then the buyer will have a relative bargain as it will then be worth in the region of £8-10 million.

2007 Major League Soccer Playoffs: New York Red Bulls vs. New England Revolution

New York Red Bulls and New England Revolution played to a 0-0

draw in in Leg 1 in the Eastern Conference Semi-Finals.

New York had greater possession in the 1st half and had a 10 shots in the opening half while New England only had 2. New York thought they had a penalty shot when the ball deflected off Avery John's arm in stoppage time. However, the referee disagreed and called a foul in favour of New England.

The return leg is next Saturday at New England.

Today in History

1268 – Conradin, the last Duke of Swabia, was beheaded in Naples after failing to reclaim Sicily for the House of Hohenstaufen from Charles of Anjou.

1787 – The opera Don Giovanni, based on the legendary fictional libertine Don Juan and composed by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, premiered in the Estates Theatre in Prague.

1923 – Mustafa Kemal Atatürk became the first President of the Republic of Turkey, a new nation founded from remnants of the Ottoman Empire.

1956 – The Suez Crisis began with Israel invading the Sinai Peninsula and pushing Egyptian forces back toward the Suez Canal.

1998 – After more than three decades, 77-year old John Glenn returned to space aboard the Space Shuttle Discovery on STS-95, to study the effects of space flight on the elderly. October 29 is Republic Day in Turkey

Quote of the Day

This is a terrific outburst. And since it doesn't have a tail right now, some observers have confused it with a nova. We've had at least two reports of a new star.
~ Brian G. Marsden

Word of the Day

casanova; n

1. A man considered romantic and gallant, especially one who gives amorous attentions to women.
2. A promiscuous, philandering man.

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