

Special:Contributions/newbies

- By Brianna Laughner (user:pfctdayelise)
- (“perfect day elise”)
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- A brief study into the behaviour
- of newly-registered users on the
- English Wikipedia
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- Taipei Wikimania 2007
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Disclaimers

- Deleted edits aren't available to the MediaWiki API
- One day's worth of users aren't necessarily representative
- Is the behaviour of new users six months ago likely to be similar to new users today?
- Individual != user account

Who registers? Part 1

- Early 2007: roughly 10,000 accounts registered each day
- **February 1st, 2007:** 10,641 new accounts registered
- 161 (1.5%) users register with '07' in their username (...do you think they are planning to stay?)

Who registers? Part 2

Do these people share our goals?

365hiphopstorm.com 5.5 Cigars 56th Street Records
ACCRINGTON PIPE BAND Ak trucking auctioneering Atlantic-
records-international Bnettv.com Coltsfan.com
Embermclain.org FUBAR-WEB.NET Microsoft Network (MSN)
MikeFutbol.com Mphagood.roaxis.com Pallstanley.com
ROSS MORRIS.COM Randy-Orton.Org Techie.net
www.com.com

Why do these people bother?

1232323232165465046 Aaa111234
Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa Deeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee
GFEBFDKSFUSYGGUGFHDGFHGFJSGFJHGFJGFGJHGJHFGJF
Hiiiiiiiiiiiiiii101 Kkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkk La la la la hey hey hey good bye!
Wajerghbryjmsgghfffgfdgs X6i8rfy8 jvjmiygjmkh b
Yaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa

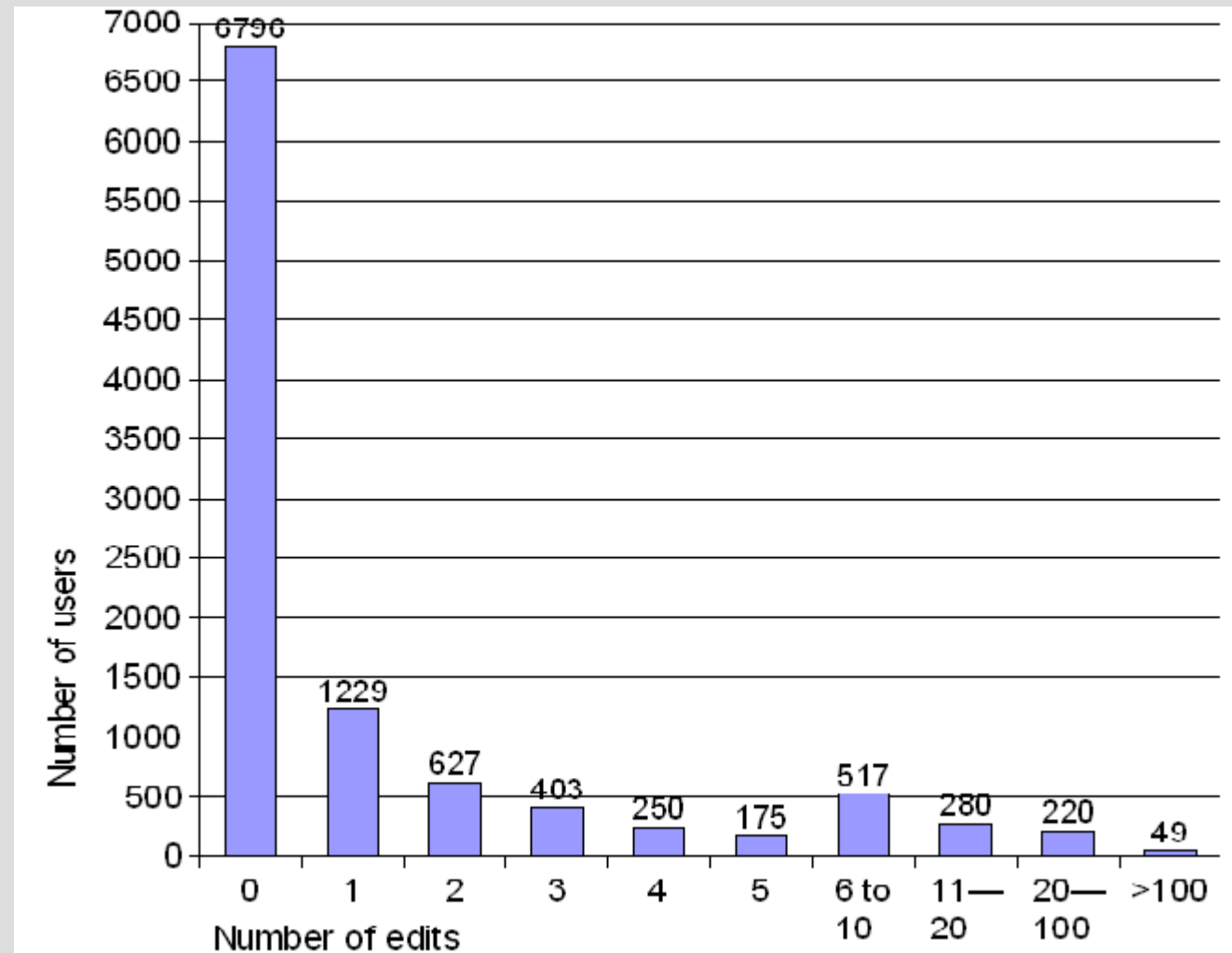
Who registers? Part 3

Not every new account is a new person...

8020rule Administrator5.0 Bklyn babii luv 23)-':
BlaBlaBla is cool!!! Chewbacca snatch dumpling
Cold Cereal Pwns You Frostilicus was taken :(
My password is Redzone My password is qwerty
Stephen Colbert rules Wikipedia StephenColbert11
Stephencolbert232 Stephencolbertisagenious
Steven&thecolberts Stevencolbert5
Stevencolbertroxmysox SuperColbert
TAWKER SUCKS
Thugzsufferfromimpotenceanderectileproblems
Woot Hoot the owl aka WOOOOOOT

Who sticks around?

- ~ 2/3 of 10000 users made no edits
- Only 5% of users had more than 10 edits
- (Remember: deleted edits aren't counted)



Images?

Upload log data available from MediaWiki API

- 1379 files uploaded
- 551 now deleted (40%)
- Some very troubling cases:
 - 58 uploaded, 57 deleted
 - 39 uploaded, 36 deleted
 - 24 uploaded, 24 deleted
 - 24 uploaded, 20 deleted
 - 10 uploaded, 8 deleted
 - 8 uploaded, 8 deleted

Wikipedia = social networking?

1,468 users had talk pages (14% of total registered)
Edit summaries of (up to) first 10 talk page edits:

- Warning/notice about page deletion: 209 (14%)*
- Warning about vandalism, behaviour: 533 (36%)*
- Warning/notice about image deletion: 279 (19%)
- Welcome message: 298 (20%)
- User created their own talk page: 107 (7%)

* Probably an underestimate

Wikipedia = lifeline?

What can I do if DCFS has taken my baby using an AMBER ALERT to put me in jail and charge me with a felony, then tried to deport the baby's mom. Claiming that we had kidnapped our own baby -- further using this information to proceed with giving him up for adoption. My baby is 7 months old and I have seen him 4 times. I AM SCARED TO DEATH !!!!!!!!!!!!!!! can you help me.

Community dynamics

- “All the low-hanging fruit have been picked”
(Andrew Lih)
- Vandalism, wiki defenders and protectors
- Backlogs backlogs backlogs! Panic!
- “We're here to write an encyclopedia”
- Community has collectively (subconsciously) freaked out at the “unmanageable” growth and now seeks to limit growth?

“Don't bite the newbies”

Is experimenting vandalism????

[[Wikipedia:Vandalism]]: *Vandalism is any addition, removal, or change of content made in a **deliberate** attempt to compromise the integrity of Wikipedia.*

{{uw-test-2}}: *Please refrain from making test edits in Wikipedia articles even if your ultimate intention is to fix them. **Such edits appear to be vandalism** and have been reverted. If you would like to experiment again, please use the sandbox. Thank you.*

Your answering machine?: *“Please hold. Your edits are important to us. To find out about the purpose of Wikipedia, read 1. To find out about why your article was deleted, read 2, 3 and 4. To find out why your image was deleted, read 5, 6 and 7. “*

“Assume good faith”

{{uw-agf1}}: Welcome to Wikipedia. We invite everyone to contribute constructively to our encyclopedia. However, we must insist that you assume good faith while interacting with other editors. Take a look at the welcome page to learn more about contributing to this encyclopedia. Thank you.

Is this message from the Queen?

The new user must assume good faith -- what about the person who leaves this message?

Now, when we go into the store, don't touch ANYTHING!

{{Uw-sandbox}}: Welcome to Wikipedia. I would just like to remind you in a friendly way not to remove the information header at the Wikipedia sandbox, and other sandboxes, or make any other inappropriate edits. You are free to test your editing skills there but please follow the instructions stated on the page. Good luck with your editing and thank you for your co-operation.

Wikipedia:WikiProject user warnings

Orientation:

(new) users are doing things wrong, templates are a way to systematise their scoldings before reaching a standard blocking

NOT:

“The goal of this WikiProject is to provide a means to socialise new users into becoming community members who share our goals (which are X, Y, Z)”

What are the goals of Wikipedia?

- Write an encyclopedia, and...
- Encourage the participation of new users? OR:
- Protect the wiki from new users?
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- Create a community? OR:
- Prevent a community from developing? (because it distracts from writing the encyclopedia??)
-
- Do we value correct formatting -- or new content?
How do we reward behaviour we want to encourage? --> prominence

“Anyone can edit”

- No technological restriction
- Social barrier

- Wiki ethos = radical openness, radical trust
- If almost everyone new is discouraged from editing, are you really building a wiki -- or just using a wiki to build a website?

Laugher's Law

- **If you're going to act as if X is not allowed (existing social restriction), you may as well stop letting people do X (introduce technological restriction).**
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- Software doesn't make people feel disheartened and leave a community in disgust: people do. (e.g. Lack of upload button vs warnings, deletions and blocks after the fact)

Recommendations

- Change the community attitude, OR
- Introduce simple values/licensing test that people must nominally pass before they are technologically allowed to edit(create) pages/upload files, OR
- Stop calling English Wikipedia a wiki

- Develop values/aims/goal statement
- Re-evaluate all guidelines/policies/templates etc in line with this statement
- Recognise, reward and promote behaviour in line with this statement
- Encourage WikiProjects on topic areas

Questions?

- Notes on API use to follow (available at Commons/Wikimania wiki)
- Do a study like this for users on your wiki, or for users from a different date, and publish on meta: let's learn from each other
- **Contact**
- {en, meta, commons}[[[:user:pfctdayelise]]]
- brianna.laughter@gmail.com