Motivating volunteers and retaining newcomers

Case study of Wikimedia Ukraine’s “wiki condensed milk” program

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How can we ensure Wikipedia volunteers are appreciated for their work?

- Editing Wikipedia is often a solitary job. When you’ve done something great – like proofreading a long article – it’s not always appreciated by others, and the appreciation is often not manifested.
- In other words, newcomers and experienced editors alike don’t get enough positive feedback (and they do get negative feedback).
How can we ensure Wikipedia volunteers are appreciated for their work?

- There are different efforts in place to ensure editors receive more appreciation – on the design level (e.g. system congratulations when you reach a certain edit threshold) & on community level (e.g. virtual barnstars)
- But the problem still remains, and there should be more efforts to address it. One case study – Wikimedia Ukraine “wiki condensed milk” program
The concept

- Identify most active users over the past month – divided by the categories of newbies and experienced users
- Offer them a physical package containing condensed milk [sweet dessert] with Wikipedia-branded souvenirs & a thank-you note
The concept

- We offer separate awards for functionary & technical work: admins, patrollers, bot operators – because their work often goes unrecognized
- There are some material resources required, but not a lot: a small amount of money for materials and postal expenses + a few hours of staff time monthly for organizing the process
In 2022 we rewarded: 41 newbies, 12 experienced users and 12 patrollers, 15 administrators & 5 bot operators
• Impact of the program: showing newcomers that their work is appreciated + giving an additional boost to experienced editors
  ○ Some of the newcomers who’ve received the award go on to become active editors & community members
• Of course, this program won’t resolve big issues itself, but it’s part of our broader work to support the volunteer community
Thank you!

- Read the Diff article for more details: w.wiki/7Ehn
- I’ll be happy to share more or learn about your work — reach out at anton.protsiuk@wikimedia.org.ua

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