WikiBreathing

How communities respond to changes in public engagement with wikis

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Outline

● Introduction
  ○ The first decade of wikis
  ○ Reader incursion
  ○ WikiBreathing

● Case study:
  EnWiki unprotections
  ○ Methodology
  ○ Results
  ○ Discussion

● Conclusions
Introduction
The first decade of wikis

Data from the World Bank
Reader incursion

- Kiene, Monroy-Hernández, and Mako Hill (2016) findings from r/NoSleep
  - Strict and consistent enforcement
  - Participation of long-time members
  - Technical infrastructure
- Social regulation is critical
- Challenges previous findings which suggest rules and enforcement are harmful to Wikipedia
WikiBreathing

- Wikipedia’s success catalyzed reader incursions on smaller wikis
- Ward’s Wiki restricted access using an edit code word system
  - Similar to a captcha
  - Sometimes no code was given
  - Trusted contributors had codes which would work even when none was provided
- Referred to as “WikiBreathing” by MeatBall contributors
Case study: Unprotections on the English Wikipedia
Methodology

- All articles protected prior to 2010
- 55 articles reviewed
  - 19 were edit protected
- 7 articles unprotected
  - Monitored for 31 days with active interventions
  - Left to community maintenance since
- Edits counted by hand
  - Included if not AC when edit was made
  - Non-AC edits inspected manually
Methodology

- Edits described as
  - Good faith: intended to be helpful but may have formatting problems, etc
  - Bad faith: intended to harm the article or disrupt its maintenance
  - Constructive: helped build the article
  - Unconstructive: were not particularly useful
Summary of results
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Daily views</th>
<th># Edits</th>
<th># non-AC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>Indef semi</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>Unprot</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beckham</td>
<td>Indef semi</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dragon</td>
<td>Unprot</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower</td>
<td>Unprot</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frog</td>
<td>Indef semi</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picasso</td>
<td>Unprot</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary data for pages during the period they were unprotected
Individual page case studies
Currently protected
Cattle

Results

- Protected 30 May 2008
  Unprotected 2 May 2021
- 25 edits in first 7 days
  - 6 good faith non-AC edits, 4 constructive
  - 4 bad faith non-AC edits
- 3 day protection on May 11
- 29 edits following protection expiry
  - 1 constructive non-AC edit
  - 14 unconstructive
- 3 day protection on May 23
  - 9 unconstructive non-AC edits
- Indefinite protection restored on May 27
David Beckham

Results

- Protected 7 January 2009
  Unprotected 2 May 2021
- 17 edits in first 9 days
  - 9 non-AC edits, none constructive
- PC protected May 11
  - 11 non-AC edits, one constructive
- Disruption continued in June
- Indefinitely protected on 30 June
Frog

Results

- Protected 5 January 2009
  Unprotected 2 May 2021
- 11 edits in first 40 hours
  - 7 were spam, 4 reverted spam
- Indefinitely protected 3 May 2021
Individual page case studies
Currently unprotected
Dance

Results

- Protected 15 January 2009
  Unprotected 3 May 2021
- 6 edits in first 7 days
  - Three by non-AC, all good faith
- 63 edits since May 13
  - Long gaps of inactivity
  - 24 non-AC edits, 4 constructive

Outcomes of constructive non-AC edits

- 26 Jul: reverted, warned, IP got no response when replying to the warning
- 6 Jun: new account edited, reverted after 1 minute, no warning, no further edits
- 16 Jul: changed “though” to “however”, blocked for having “bot” in username 26 minutes later, unblock declined because template syntax
Dragon

Results

● Protected 17 January 2009
  Unprotected 4 May 2021
● 43 edits by 1 June
  ○ 18 non-AC edits, none constructive
● One week protection until 8 June
● 36 edits since protection expiry
  ○ 17 non-AC edits, 6 good faith

Outcomes of constructive non-AC edits

● 29 June: IP tries to simplify language, reverted with detailed explanation
● 8 July: IP adds info to lead, reverted 11 days later with detailed explanation
● 4 Aug: IP corrects factual error
● 6 Aug: IP improves hatnote
Flower

Results

- Protected 13 January 2009
  Unprotected 3 May 2021
- 35 edits in first month
  - 17 non-AC edits, 2 constructive
  - Spamming incident led to protection
- Protected one week expiring June 3
- 100 edits since expiry
  - 23 non-AC edits, 8 good faith
- Relatively quiet, still unprotected
Pablo Picasso

Results

- Protected 25 January 2009
  Unprotected 22 May 2021
- 76 edits since unprotection
  - 32 non-AC edits, 14 good faith
  - 4 test edits, 10 constructive edits

Outcomes of constructive non-AC edits

- 5 Jul: IP adds info death, edit still up
- 18 June: IP removes uncited info causing editor to add new citation
- 8 June: IP adds info w/ bare URL cite, reverted for “unconventional sourcing”
- 7 June: “committed” -> “died by”, still up
- 28 May: IP changed full name causing 4 editor discussion and better sourcing
Discussion and conclusions
Discussion

- Kiene, et al. (2016)
  - Strict and consistent enforcement
  - Participation of long-time members
  - Technical infrastructure
Discussion

Strict and consistent enforcement

- Contradicts first point of Keine, et al. (2016)
- Overzealous enforcement rejects good edits
  - Cited info rejected for having bare url
  - Dance case shows biting
- Helpful in some cases
- Requires *interaction*
Discussion

Participation of long-time members

- IP editing has indirect benefits
- Imperfect edits prompt edits
  - IPs at Picasso prompted watchers to add two new citations
- IPs create PageChurn
  - Edits bring in RC patrollers
  - Edits bring page to top of watch lists
  - IP edits bring additional scrutiny
  - Added attention makes improvement more likely
Discussion

Technological infrastructure

- Active tools are helpful
- Passive tools are critical
  - Many reverts performed by ClueBot
  - AbuseFilters prevent vandalism before it posts
- Passive tech reduces burden on editors
  - Less stressed editors are more likely to engage with newcomers
  - Further development is recommended
Discussion

WikiBreathing as a cultural encounter

• WikiBreathing is a context
  ○ Wiki subculture has prevailing views on readers
  ○ Reader culture has prevailing views on wikis

• The outcome of these encounters constitutes WikiBreathing

• Breathing Out
  ○ Suspicion and Antipathy
  ○ Restrictions and disruption

• Breathing In
  ○ Trust and Apathy
  ○ Privilege and co-construction
Conclusion

- Readers are not evil
- Unprotected articles benefit from more than just typo fixes
- How we respond is important
- Try unprotection


Thank you!

Questions?
On-wiki: https://w.wiki/3rwL
Email: brickhouse@stanford.edu
Additional slides
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currently protected</th>
<th>Currently unprotected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Views</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rank</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10K</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8K</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

U = 3

Wilcoxon ranks for page views by current protection level
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currently protected</th>
<th>Currently unprotected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>!AC/Edit</td>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>0.30</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$$U = 2.5$$
The first decade of wikis

- **2003:**
  - 100k articles on EnWiki
  - 500k global articles

- **2004:**
  - Size doubled: over 1 million global articles
  - Wikipedia cited in US federal court opinion

- **2005:**
  - Fastest growing and largest educational site
  - 12 million annual readers, up from 3 million
  - Final 9 months saw 20 million edits
The first decade of wikis

- Wikis were an integral part of the early internet
- In 1995 internet usage was at:
  - 10% in the US
  - 1% in Europe
  - 1% in the rest of the world
- By 2000 in the United States the internet was used by
  - 53% of Whites
  - 38% of Blacks
  - 81% of those making >$75k
  - 34% of those making <$30k
  - 67% of those with some college
  - 40% of those with only high school
Reader incursion

- Growth is the goal
  - Are there only upsides?
- Success brings new members to the community
  - A “reader incursion” when large numbers of readers simultaneously begin to contribute
- New members need to be socialized
- Community may not scale
- What does a successful strategy look like?
During a "breathe out" the access to a wiki is made a little more difficult. For the regulars this will not be a problem. Others will feel repelled or slightly offended and will move on, looking for other communities that fit themselves better. This may be necessary for a successful community which has attracted too many people.

-- WikiBreathing, Meatball contributors