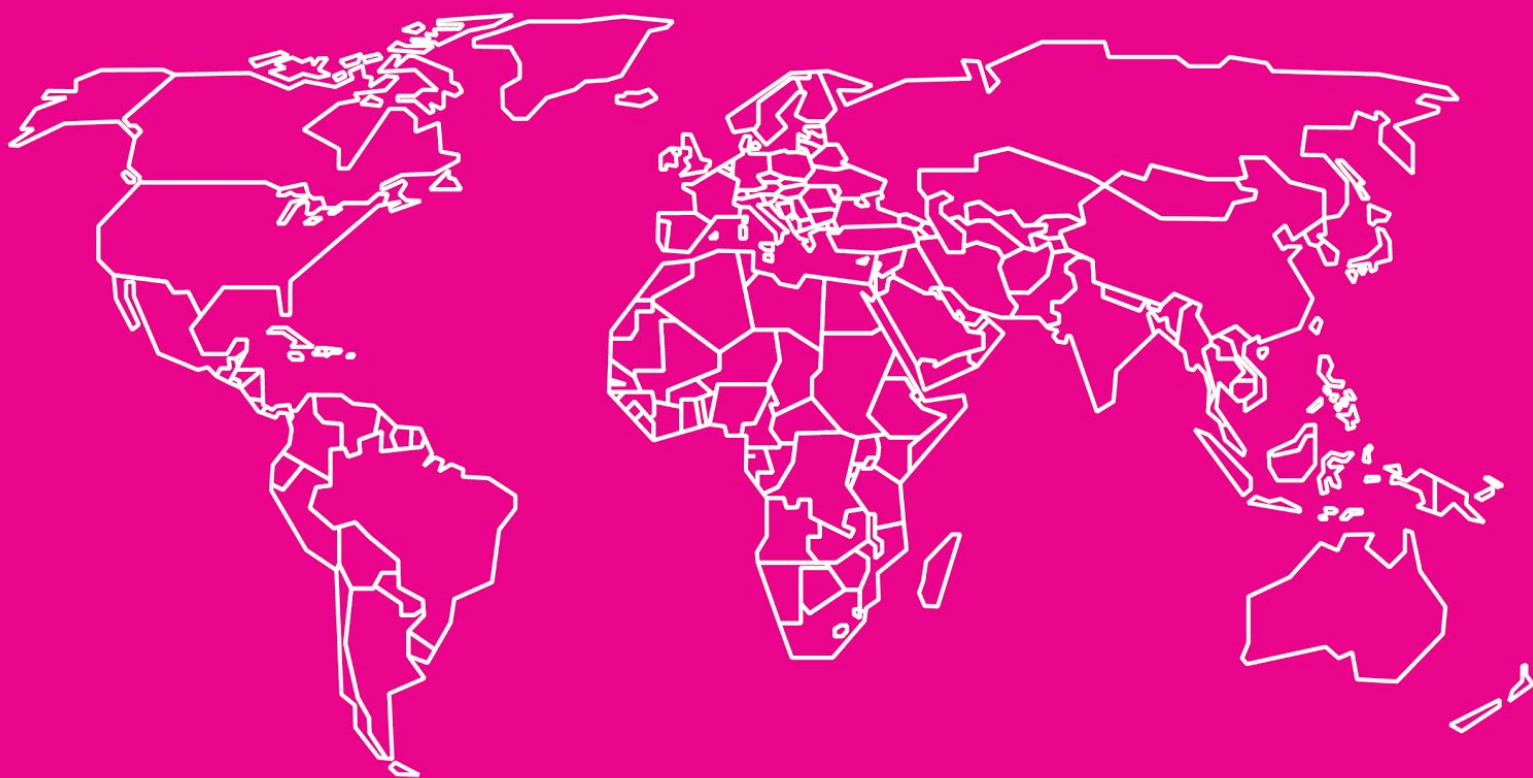


WIKIMEDIA BRANDS

A report on community perceptions

June 2016



Introduction

Wikimedia is a complex brand system.

The name is shared by the Wikimedia Foundation, Wikimedia communities, and the Wikimedia projects. Each is represented by the same logo mark. Only wordmark differences indicate these separate, yet deeply linked, identities.

Within the Wikimedia projects, 15 additional brand systems use unique names, colors, and logo marks to represent individual projects. Of those 15, Wikipedia is the most well-known project, and the most recognizable Wikimedia project brand.

The Wikimedia brand system has been built largely by volunteers.

Taken as a whole, we call these volunteers “Wikimedia communities.” As individuals, we call them “Wikimedians.”

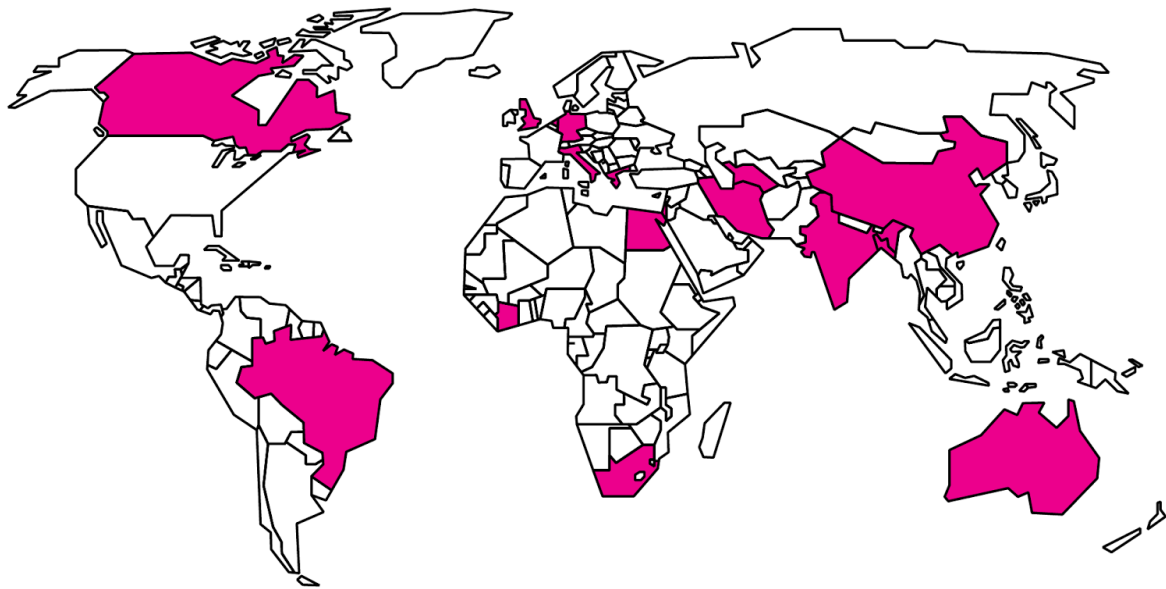
Over 15 years, Wikimedians have shared more than 35 million free photos, written more than 38 million free articles (in over 280 languages), and offered everything from free travel information to fully free university courses.

The brand value of Wikimedia comes from these people and the work they do. The brand assets (logos, names, colors) of Wikimedia are also community-created.

What does the community think of Wikimedia brands today?

In June 2016, the Wikimedia Foundation set out to learn about current Wikimedia brand system perceptions within the Wikimedia community. We wanted to better understand how the experienced volunteers behind Wikimedia understand the linked system of visual marks, project names, and associated values/identities.

During Wikimania in Esino Lario, Italy, we interviewed 20 key members of the community, including 2 members of the Fund Dissemination Committee and several former or current national chapter leaders. The group represented 16 countries and 12 languages. There were 10 men and 10 women.



Countries

1. Brazil
2. India
3. Netherlands
4. UK
5. Italy
6. China
7. Egypt
8. Iran
9. Bangladesh
10. Ghana
11. Israel
12. Germany
13. Canada
14. Australia
15. Greece
16. South Africa

Languages

1. Portuguese
2. Punjabi
3. Dutch
4. English
5. Italian
6. Chinese
7. Arabic
8. Persian
9. Bengali
10. Hebrew
11. German
12. Greek

Research methodology and analysis

Our interviews were 30 minutes in length and semi-scripted. The interviews were free response: participants could offer any answer of any length to explain their perspectives. 19 conversations were in English, with one interview conducted in Spanish. Notes were taken during the interviews for later review and analysis. The conversations were not recorded.

In reviewing the notes, common themes, phrases, and descriptions emerged. We have grouped these patterns in the sections titled “by the numbers.”

Because the interviews were free-response, the groupings are not mutually exclusive- one participant could give several answers. That means that response groupings do not total 20 (e.g. 1 answer per participant) but rather show repetition among respondents during one question.

To review the project’s research script, including the questions asked, please visit:

https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Communications/Wikimedia_brands/Perceptions/2016/questions

Limits of data and findings

This study and its findings are limited by participant scope and methodology. With 20 interviews logged, this data cannot be considered a comprehensive view of the Wikimedia movement. Research participants were highly experienced Wikimedians who had been editing Wikimedia projects for an average of 6.8 years. Just one participant identified as a reader. This suggests that participants had deep familiarity with Wikimedia projects, particularly Wikipedia, and that responses may be different in newer community members still learning about the projects.

To further understand Wikimedia brands, this qualitative research should be complemented by broad quantitative surveys to logged-in users on Wikimedia projects. Research should also be undertaken on “general public” awareness for Wikimedia brands and brand meanings, reflecting the perspectives of readers or general internet users on Wikimedia identities.

On Wikimedia projects

Key findings

Participants prefer explicit symbolic connection between project branding and project purpose.

Participants most often cited “Wikidata” as a great project logo.

“Wikitionary” and “MediaWiki” were most disliked project logos.

Wikimedia project logos, 2016





Community perspectives

8 of 20 responses selected Wikidata as an ideal example of project branding. One participant said “In terms of semantics it’s perfect- the color, font, and barcode.” Others explained “Wikidata has nice symbolism,” “it is simple and obvious,” and “it is quite clever. It spells ‘Wiki’ in morse code.”

Nearly half of participants (9 of 20) cited clear symbolism between project logos and their meanings as what made branding “good,” “great,” or “perfect.” 11 of 20 responses documented “confusion,” complained about lack of “connection,” between visual assets (logo or colors) as reasons for why participants disliked a brand.



Community perspectives

7 of 20 participants reported disliking the Wiktionary logo. Another 7 of 20 participants disliked MediaWiki’s logo. One participant said “Wiktionary is the worst. It feels like an early stage free software startup. Too amateur.” On MediaWiki, four different responses complained about the lack of connection between the sunflower and the project. One participant said “the sunflower has nothing to do with anything.”



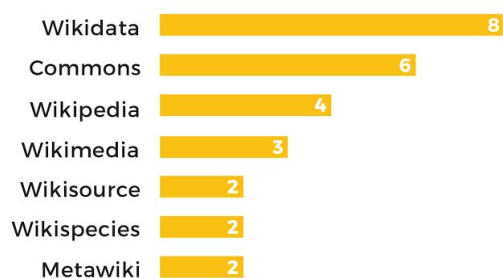
By the numbers

During this part of the Wikimedia brands interview, participants were shown a printed sheet with all 16 Wikimedia project logos. The sheet's contents are reproduced on page 6.

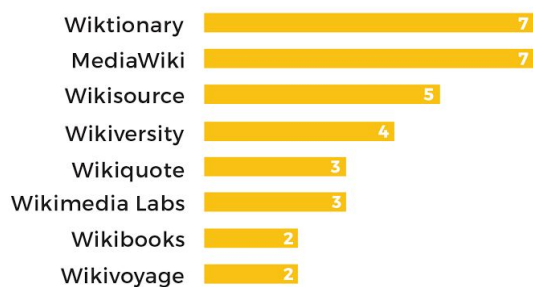
Participants were asked to indicate the project logos they liked and disliked, then explain why. In analysis, project logos that were only mentioned once, such as Wikinews and Wikimedia Incubator, were dropped from the groupings.



Which Wikimedia project brands do you like?



Which Wikimedia project brands do you dislike?



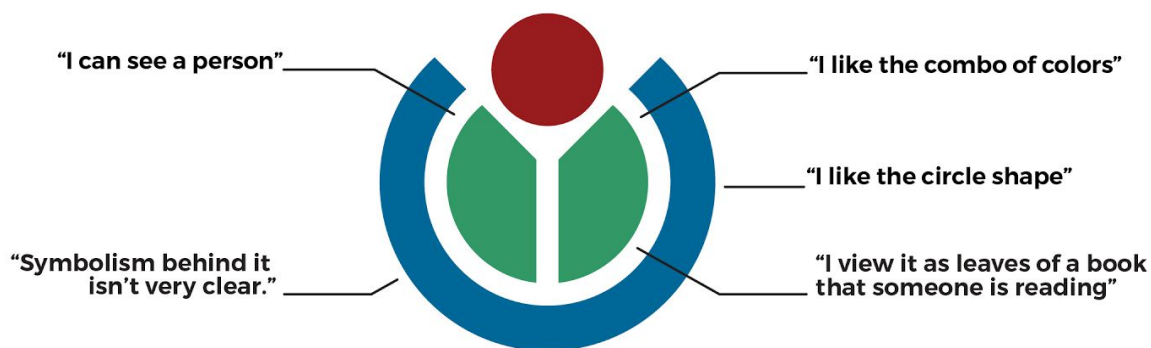
On Wikimedia

Key findings

Participants most often defined Wikimedia as an “organization of support” for Wikipedia.

25% of participants said they never describe Wikimedia outside of the Community.

More than 50% of participants “love” the Wikimedia colors and the logo’s round shape.



Community perspectives

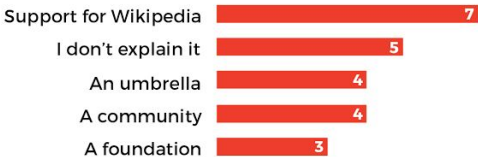
Half of all participants defined Wikimedia by relating it to "Wikipedia" explicitly. Others described Wikimedia as an "umbrella" organization (4 of 20 responses) or as a "movement" (4 of 20 responses).

A quarter of participants said they never describe Wikimedia outside of the community. These participants expressed difficulty in succinctly describing what Wikimedia is, and how it is different from projects like Wikipedia. One participant said "I don't want to explain that there's stuff other than Wikipedia because it's such a long story."

Regarding the Wikimedia logo design, the "simplicity" of the logo colors were cited by 13 of 20 respondents as positive attribute of the Wikimedia brand system. 10 of 20 responses praised the round logo shape for suggesting "unity" "softness," "a globe," or "harmony."

By the numbers

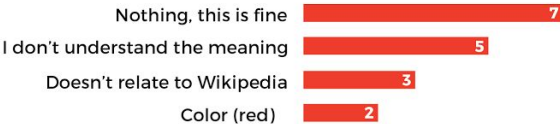
How does the community define Wikimedia?



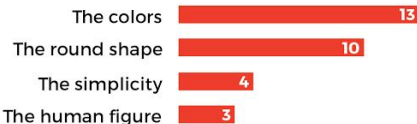
What are the characteristics of Wikimedia?



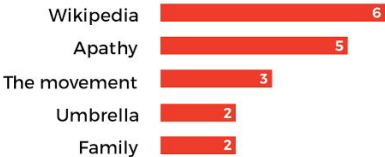
What does the community dislike about the Wikimedia logo?



What does the community like about the Wikimedia logo?



First thoughts or associations when you see the word 'Wikimedia'



First thoughts or associations when you see the logo



Most important thing a person should feel when they look at the Wikimedia logo or word



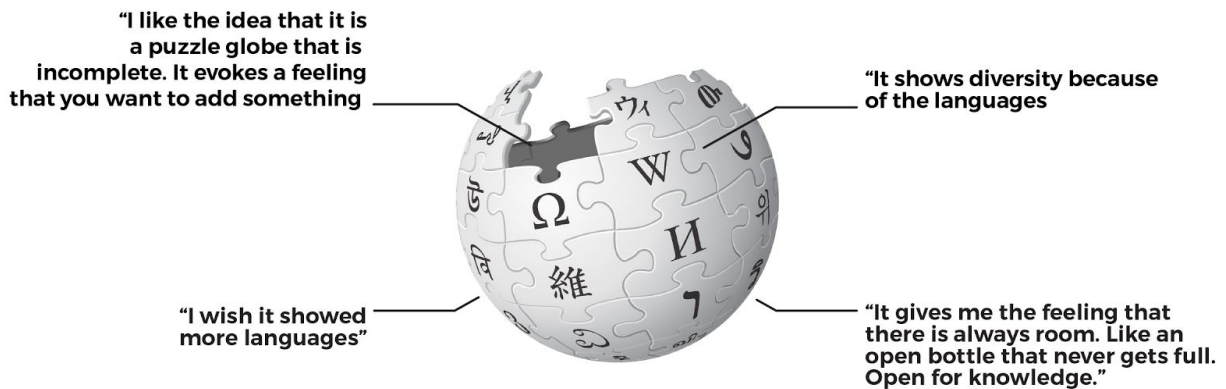
On Wikipedia

Key findings

Half of all participants said they never need to explain what Wikipedia is.

The Wikipedia logo's "incomplete" section was the most praised part of its visual design.

One third of participants wish the Wikipedia logo included more languages.



Community perspectives

Participants across regions reported that Wikipedia brand awareness was very high, approaching ubiquitous familiarity. However, some participants (4 of 20 responses) explained a frequent need to explain how Wikipedia “works” including “how we edit” and how information is produced.

11 of 20 responses explicitly celebrated how the “idea that the puzzle globe is incomplete ... evokes a feeling that you want to add something” or that “the puzzle is almost complete but missing you.”

While 8 of 20 responses praised the inclusion of a range of language characters in the logo, 7 of 20 called for more. One participant explained “When I first saw it, I didn’t like that it was only a few languages. We need to show more languages.” Another suggested “make the [puzzle] pieces smaller to show more...”

By the numbers

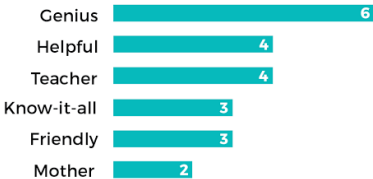
How does the community define Wikipedia?



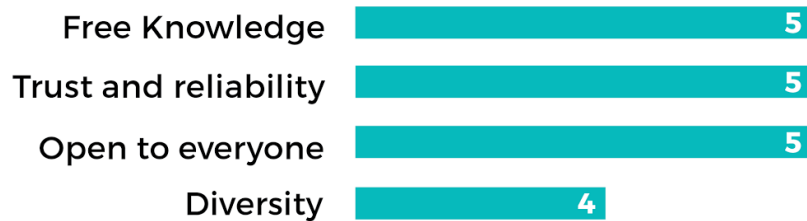
How often does the community explain Wikipedia?



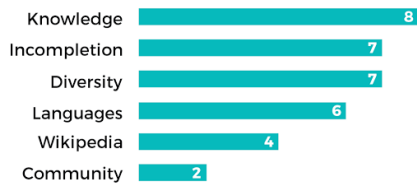
What are the characteristics of Wikipedia?



Most important thing a person should feel when they look at the Wikipedia logo or word



First thoughts or associations when you see the logo?



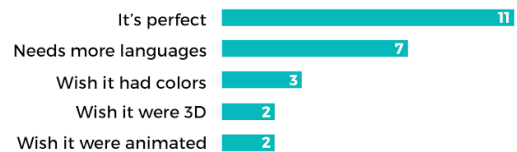
First thoughts or associations when you see the word 'Wikipedia'?



What does the community like about the Wikipedia logo?



What does the community dislike about the Wikipedia logo?



Conclusions

Ideal Wikimedia project logos clearly symbolize project activities or attributes.

Research participants praised Wikimedia project logos that had clear visual references to their project purpose, activities, or values. Wikidata was the most liked logo, with participants celebrating the symbolic link between a barcode design and the concept of digital data.

Research participants were also most likely to criticize Wikimedia project logos that failed to have clear rationales for visual choices. In the two most disliked project logos- Wiktionary and Mediawiki- participants complained that letter blocks and sunflower elements in the respective designs had no clear link to the project activities. This was the primary reason participants gave for disliking these logos.

The Wikimedia brand identity is limited.

Wikimedia is associated most strongly with supporting Wikipedia, but there is no clear consensus on who leads the support. 25% of participants reported “never” explaining Wikimedia to non-community members, citing the difficulty in attempting to quickly do so. 40% of participants complained that they “do not understand the meaning” of the Wikimedia logo or dislike that the Wikimedia logo “does not relate” to Wikipedia.

Still, the Wikimedia name and logo do hold significance for community members. 30% of participants answered that they thought of the “movement” first when seeing the logo. Over half of participants also said they liked the colors and shape of the Wikimedia logo.

The Wikipedia logo’s language elements and incomplete section are its most popular features.

Over half of research participants praised the Wikipedia puzzle globe’s incomplete section and the message of ‘unending knowledge construction’ that it communicated. The puzzle globe’s language characters were praised by 40% of participants, although 35% also believe the Wikipedia logo needs more languages on it.

Participants hope “free knowledge”, “trust” and “openness to all” are associated with Wikipedia.

Speaking of Wikipedia as more than a website, research participants emphasized the free, open, and participatory values of the project as the most urgent attributes. Trust and reliability were also cited, with participants expressing a hope that people around the world will come to find Wikipedia more constant as a knowledge source.

Learn more

Research findings, details, methodology:

https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Communications/Wikimedia_brands/Perceptions/2016

Research script (questions and conversation guide):

https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Communications/Wikimedia_brands/Perceptions/2016/questions

Research data:

https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Communications/Wikimedia_brands/Perceptions/2016/Research_data

Wikimedia project trademarks:

https://wikimediafoundation.org/wiki/Wikimedia_trademarks

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This report was created by Blanca Flores, Zachary McCune, and Heather Walls. The research and analysis was undertaken by Greg Varnum, Zachary McCune, Heather Walls in Italy. Special thanks to Jaime Anstee and Edward Galvez for their guidance and advice. Our deepest thanks to the 20 Wikimedians who shared their time, experience, and perspectives with us in Esino Lario.

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