Wikipedia.org Portal Research
New Dropdown for Languages by Article Count

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Research Questions

Wikipedia.org Portal Page
* How do users reach the portal page? How often do they go there?
* What do they once they’ve arrived?
* Are they aware of the new footer (sister project links descriptive text)?

On-Wiki Search
* How/why do users look for information? Devices, browsers, methods?
* What are user’s impressions or experiences using Wiki search?
* When and what do users search for when using Wiki search?

Language list by article count dropdown
* How do users react to the language dropdown revamp of the portal page?
Testing process

- Created a protocol covering search behaviors, the existing portal page and a portal redesign prototype page
- Held 5 recorded participant research sessions over Google Hangouts on Air
### Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Profile Information of Research Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* 4 men; 1 woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* 5 use Wikipedia as their primary destination for learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* 2 ‘rabbit hole’ readers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* 1 former casual editor; 1 former active editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* 2 current students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* 1 primarily mobile/Wikipedia Zero user</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary devices used (by participants)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft tablet, no smartphone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary browsers used (by participants)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edge</td>
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</table>
Portal Page

- How do users reach the Wikipedia.org portal page? How often do they go there?
- What do they do once they’ve arrived?
- Are users aware of the portal footer (sister project links descriptive text)?
Getting to Wikipedia.org portal

- 2 typed ‘wikipedia.org’ into url bar
- 1 has it set as their homepage
- 1 has it set as a bookmark
- 1 typed it in url + uses bookmark (50/50)
### Users’ portal progression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Access Frequency</th>
<th>Usual Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1: Bookmark</td>
<td>P1: “Probably daily”</td>
<td>P1: Use portal search bar, click enwiki or other language link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2: Wikipedia.org in url</td>
<td>P2: “less than 10 [times total]”</td>
<td>P2: n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3: Wikipedia.org in url</td>
<td>P3: “pretty often”</td>
<td>P3: Use portal search bar or click enwiki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4: Wikipedia.org in url / bookmark</td>
<td>P4: “all the time”</td>
<td>P4: Use portal search bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5: Homepage</td>
<td>P5: “it’s my homepage”</td>
<td>P5: Use portal search bar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Haven’t scrolled down much... I’ve seen the sister project links... but haven’t clicked”

“Haven’t clicked those links before, but I know that they’re there”

“didn’t even know wikiprojects down here existed”

“I’ve clicked on [a few] very rarely. Wanted to know what they were”

Awareness of portal footer
On-Wiki Search

- How/why do users look for information?
- What are users’ impressions or experiences with Wiki search?
- When and what do users search for when using Wiki search?
Participants go to Wikipedia to learn background information, to research topics, browse for fun and interest and to find other references.

All 5 users use a search engine i.e.: google/bing/other site.

Adding ‘wiki’ or equivalent to a query is a method they use occasionally to filter for a Wikipedia specific result.
Do participants use the search function on Wikipedia?

5 of 5 participants have used wiki search (portal page and/or on a language specific wiki)
* 1 starts 80% of their searches using Wikipedia portal search
* 3 use wiki search sparsely
* 1 very rarely
User’s impressions and experiences with Wiki search

Participants expressed that they avoid longer queries while searching on wiki. Overall, they feel that wiki search is not robust and doesn’t have accompanying capabilities (filtering, etc.).

However, as a participant noted that when they recently used the Wikipedia app on a friend’s tablet, the autocorrect/predictive results on wiki search has improved over time.
Using Wiki search - the when and the what:

**When:** participants use wiki search when it suits specific scenarios and use cases.

**What:** participants tended to search for exact terms instead of longer queries using wiki search. Sometimes they will use a search engine first, for specific words or technical terms that they feel might not exist on Wikipedia. However, they sometimes also go directly to Wikipedia to search using other types of specific terms or topics.

“popular culture type thing, will go straight to wikipedia and search. technical terms, i will search with google first.”

“on wikipedia, i try to search direct terms. names. don't use to search longer queries.”

“when i open chrome and i'm at the homepage, and i want to search right away. most of the time i use url bar (90%)”
Language list by article count dropdown

- How do users react to the new language dropdown revamp of the Wikipedia.org portal page?
4 of 5 participants mention some preference for the prototype version; 1 participant was apathetic

Prototype version has less visual clutter and a higher potential awareness of sister project links
“Cool… but [dropdown] should push the other content down”

“Could be finicky on phone[s]”

“Doesn’t really make a difference for me… looks [similar] to normal homepage… [still] a lot of text.”

“new version is still kind of busy”

“I wouldn’t use this very often. Before I’d click on random languages… how is it now?”

“now i can actually see all the other stuff… not that i'd use it but i can try it now”
In Summary
**Research Questions**

**Wikipedia.org Portal Page**
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**Search**
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* What are user’s impressions or experiences with Wiki search?
* When and what do users search using Wiki search?

**Language Dropdown**
* How do users react to the language dropdown revamp of the portal page?

**Participant Answers**

**Wikipedia.org Portal Page**
* Majority of participants type wikipedia.org into url bar and access it often
* Use search bar
* Most are aware of the footer contents

**Search**
* To learn broad background information on topics
* Wiki search has improved slightly, but doesn’t come close to Google
* Specific search terms usually yield good results on wiki search, but they know better than to search longer queries

**Language Dropdown**
* Most think it offers some visual improvement, but there is also a good amount of apathy
Research Recommendations

- **Portal page**
  - Promote to production the new language by article count dropdown layout; most of the reaction is positive although there are some UI concerns and/or apathy
    - Confirm that the dropdown’s effect on other page content conforms to best UI practices
    - Test dropdown on mobile devices

- **Search**
  - Continue with any and all plans to optimize search
  - Determine viability / cost-effectiveness of building towards effectively supporting multi-word query-based searches
References

For additional information, please read the Community RFC page for the new language by article count dropdown and page layout here.

Learn more about work on the Wikipedia.org Portal page here.

Contact Daisy Chen with any questions about this research and analysis.

Contact Deb Tankersley with any questions about the Wikipedia.org portal page.

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