Evaluating the impact of the Teahouse on new editor retention

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Wikimedia Research
October 21, 2015
Agenda

- Newcomers and entry barriers
  - Wikipedia’s newcomer problem
  - Barriers to entry

- The Teahouse
  - Guests, Hosts & HostBot
  - … as an efficient Wikipedia sub-system

- Effect on newcomer retention
  - Methods → Results
  - Discussion & Next steps
Background
What is the Teahouse?

A wikiproject on English Wikipedia, developed in 2012 by WMF fellows and staff, run by editors, designed to:

- reach out to new editors (esp. women)
- foster peer support
- decrease intimidation
- increase new editor retention
Woah woah woah! All the newcomers are leaving!

Woah woah woah! All the newcomers are leaving!


We forgot about socializing newcomers!

Woah woah woah! All the newcomers are leaving!


We forgot about socializing newcomers!

Wikipedia is hard for newbies
Collier, B., & Bear, J. (2012). Conflict, criticism, or confidence: an empirical examination of the gender gap in wikipedia contributions. CSCW.

New editor engagement initiatives
THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

The Internet

Permission  Literacy  Social / Motivational
The Internet

VE’s effect

WP:BLP
WP:PROF
PROD

Rewarding experience for newcomers

Literacy

Social / Motivational

Permission
The Internet

VE’s effect

TH’s effect

Permission

Literacy

Social / Motivational
The Internet

Permission

Literacy

Social / Motivational
The Teahouse approach
Social Q&A

- scalable compared to mentorship (many-to-many, opt-in)
- widespread internet pattern (Yahoo Answers, StackExchange, etc)
- it’s social (duh)
Focus on community
6,000 newcomers per day
Welcome to the Teahouse! We are here to help new editors become accustomed to community culture, ask questions, and develop community relationships – supporting you on your journey to become experienced Wikipedians.

Ask a question right now

Recent questions—

Hi, does the Simple English Wikipedia follow the same guidelines as this one does? AutomaticStrikeout (talk) 17:25, 10 July 2012 (UTC)

Find the answer here

...see another question

Meet your hosts

"I grew up using computers in the 1980s, and live in Bristol in South West England. Collaborating as part of the Wikipedia community is remarkable! As well as Wikipedia, I occasionally venture into other Wikipedia Foundation projects. I hope you enjoy being here!"

Linda

"Hi, I'm new to this website, but I have been looking at it for a long period, it's really neat! I'm a big fan of the collaborative nature of the project."

(Talk to me!)
Dear new editors, no question is too basic for our Q&A board. If you need help, just click the link below! And if you have some helpful advice for someone else, go ahead: be bold! Click the "edit" button to the right of his or her question and start the conversation.

I thought that one's sandbox was a private space

Up until this evening, I had thought that one's sandbox was a private space. Then this: happened! somebody that I had never even heard of before now. I feel invaded. — Gareth Griffith-Jones (talk) 19:57, 12 July 2012 (UTC)

Hello Gareth Griffith-Jones. According to WP:UP#OWN, "Traditionally Wikipedia offers wide latitude to users to manage their user space as they see fit. However, pages in user space belong to the wider community. They are not a personal homepage, and do not belong to the user. They are part of Wikipedia, and exist to make collaboration among editors easier. Other users and bots may edit pages in your user space or leave messages for you. If you dislike the change, then feel free to revert it. Also, your "sandbox" page looks a lot like a talk page, so the other editor may have felt that the change was appropriate. In conclusion, there are no truly "private spaces" on Wikipedia, though most editors will leave most of your user pages alone, except for talk pages. Hope this helps. Cullen [328]

Let's discuss it 20:48, 12 July 2012 (UTC)

Deleted edits, what are they?

In edit counter tool I found that I have three deleted edits. What are deleted edits exactly? It can't be undone edits because I've got more than three edits undone by other editors. Krystaleen 18:54, 12 July 2012 (UTC)

Welcome, Krystaleen. It isn't undone or reverted edits, as a tool can't detect them. It is similar to deleting entire pages, except it's only one edit to the page. This can only be done by oversight and means nobody can see the diff of what the edit was, except administrators. See WP:SUPPRESS for more information of deleted edits. Rsrisprinter (tell me stuff) @ 16:57, 12 July 2012 (UTC)

It's not just that though. Rsrisprinter is describing revision deletion and oversight, but the "deleted edits" count also counts other things. Specifically, it counts edits when the entire pages are themselves deleted later. The important thing is that it doesn't mean that your edits were a problem. Like, if you see a bad article and tag it for deletion, and it gets deleted, that tag addition will count towards the deleted edits. So, for example, I do a lot of speedy deletion tagging; since I'm making a lot of edits to pages that get deleted, I get a lot of edits that are tagged for deletion. This really is the whole reason why I added the "Deleted edits" to the edit counter. --David A. Carrier (talk) 17:25, 12 July 2012 (UTC)
Dear new editors, no question is too basic for our Q&A board. If you need help, just click the link below! And if you have some helpful advice for someone else, go ahead: be bold! Click the "edit" button to the right of his or her question and start the conversation.

Ask a question

You can put your question in the textbox below.

Short summary of your question: Help! IronHolds keeps deleting my edits

A user called IronHolds keeps deleting my edits to the "Scotch Whisky" article. He says I'm vandalizing the article because I accidentally misspelled "Whisk(e)y" ONE TIME. What should I do? ~~~~

On Wikipedia, you should sign all of your posts by ending them with four tildes (~~~~)

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All Teahouse guests are welcome to introduce themselves here, whether you're just passing through or you plan on hanging around a while. Tell us all a bit about yourself: what are you interested in? What do you do for fun? Who's your favorite encyclopedist?

**Introduce yourself**

----

(Talk to me) **Mohamed Al-Hakeem**

"Always wanted to take part in the editing "MACHINERY" of Wikipedia, after being just as lazy reader! But still feeling Wikipedia is too BIG to a rookie like me."

*visited: 00:58, 19 June 2012 (UTC)*

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(Talk to me) **Lauren**

"I like dogs. I also like politics and anywhere I have lived. I tend to edit on those topics. My current project is bringing the Japanese Spitz article back up to Good status."

*visited: 11:00, 19 June 2012 (UTC)*

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(Talk to me) **Zoe**

"I'm a fan of the community and want to get more involved."

*visited: 12:00, 19 June 2012 (UTC)*

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Browse the Guest book to see more fellow Wikipedians!
Worm That Turned (or WormTT) is a UK Wikipedian who's been around for nearly four years. The majority of his work is in adoption, and he has proclaimed himself the most prolific adopter on Wikipedia. He's also an administrator and has spent a lot of time helping new users, students, unhappy subjects of articles and anyone else he can find that needs help.

Writ Keeper's been editing Wikipedia for about six months. Currently working on writing user scripts for the Teahouse host interface, WK can often be found around the third opinion noticeboard, and also doing some recent changes patrol from time to time.

Chico Venancio has been editing Wikipedia since 2006, though he has moved to use the Portuguese Wikipedia as his home wiki. Chico started using Wikipedia as a High School student and found it to help him in the college entrance exams. He likes to

"Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction."
-- John Crawford Crosby

"I think it's time for us to recognize the differences we sometimes fear to show."
--Rush, "Entre Nous"

"Teahouse seems like a wonderful initiative to me and I want to help it! I have been a new editor and still remember it."
Hi RyanHarmy! Thanks for contributing to Wikipedia. Be our guest at the Teahouse! The Teahouse is a friendly space where new editors can ask questions about contributing to Wikipedia and get help from peers and experienced editors. I hope to see you there! Doctree (I'm a Teahouse host)

Visit the Teahouse

This message was delivered automatically by your robot friend, HostBot (talk) 17:22, 20 October 2015 (UTC)

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**Host**: an experienced Wikipedian who helps new editors at the Teahouse

Our five host expectations

1. Welcome everyone
2. Be polite and patient
3. Keep it simple
4. Avoid over-linking
5. Leave a talkback notification
WP:Teahouse, 2012-2015

Activity

- ~100 invites per day (140,000+ since launch)
- 12 questions per day (12,000+ since launch)
  - 2-3 answers per question
- 2 new profiles per day (2000+ since launch)
- 15-20 hosts participating per week
Previous research

Findings

● survey
  ○ 78% of newcomers ranked experience above average
  ○ 29% female-identified

● activity & retention (visitors vs. invitees)
  ○ visitors made significantly more edits, to more articles
  ○ visitors remained active more than two weeks longer on average

:m:Research:Teahouse

Limitations

- self-selection biases (no true control)
  - host decided which candidates to invite
  - invitees decided to visit Teahouse
- short term retention analysis (< 2 months)
Current study

:mad:Research:Teahouse long term new editor retention
Goal: understand the longer term impact on new editor retention

Question: do Teahouse invitees (including visitors) edit more, for longer?
Methods

Sampling

- 14,766 new editors who joined between October 19, 2014 and January 12, 2015
  - HostBot-delivered invites
  - 11,674 invited to Teahouse, 3,092 not invited (control)
  - invite criteria: at least 5 edits, no blocks, no serious warnings
Pre-invite

Registration

24-48 hrs

Treatment

90% of new editors
90% of new editors

24-48 hrs

Pre-invite

Registration

Treatment

Host Bot

79%

21%
90% of new editors

Pre-invite

Registration

24-48 hrs

Treatment

Host Bot

79%

21%

TeaHouse (survival metrics)

Observation

1 to 2 months

2 to 6 months

3 to 4 weeks
Findings

- 1 to 2 months
- 2 to 6 months
- 3 to 4 weeks
Findings

- 1 to 2 months
- 2 to 6 months
- 3 to 4 weeks

**Teahouse**
Findings

1+ edits
$\chi^2 = 3.9, \ p = 0.048$

1 to 2 months
2 to 6 months
3 to 4 weeks

teahouse
Findings

1+ edits
\( \chi^2 = 3.9, p = 0.048 \)

5+ edits
\( \chi^2 = 4.6, p = 0.031 \)

1 to 2 months
2 to 6 months
3 to 4 weeks
Findings

Short term 1+ edit survival: +13%

Long term 5+ edit survival: +16%

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VE’s effect

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Literacy

Social / Motivational

Permission
The Internet

Permission

Literacy

Social / Motivational
Some day...

The Internet

Permission

Literacy

Social / Motivational
Next steps

Is this addressing a gap?

- does Teahouse help retain more female editors?
- does it help editors working in particular content areas?
- does it support editors with particular motivations?
- does it support editors who face particular social/technical challenges?
Next steps

Follow up analysis

- larger sample, longer survival term
- understand contextual factors that influence retention and/or mediate effect of Teahouse invitation
- interaction effects
  - talkpage warnings
  - reverts
  - article deletions
  - mobile vs. desktop editing
Q & A
Attributions

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