

Wikipedia as a tool for developing academic literacies: The case of Estonia

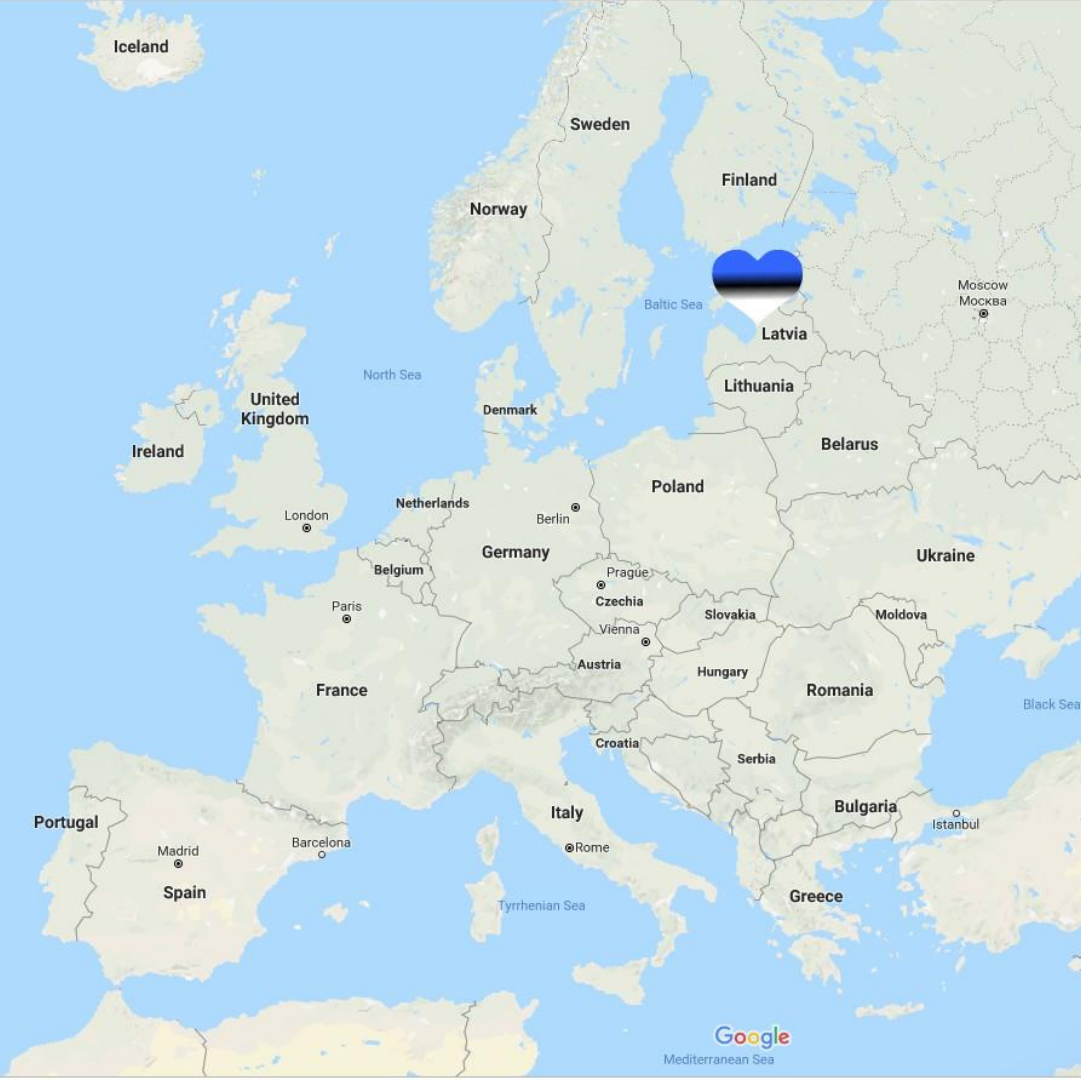


WIKIMEDIA
EDUCATION

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- Population: 1.3 million
- Native speakers around the world: 1.08 million
- 90% of population uses the Internet regularly
- 88% of households have computers
- 99% of services are online



Photo: Ivar Leidus (Wikipedia)

Wikipedia-based tasks

Courses	Curricula	Since	OK
<i>Estonian Orthography and Creative Composition</i>	Computer Engineering; Biology and Biodiversity Conservation; Physics; Gene Technology; Geography; Geology and Environmental Technology; Chemistry; Ecology and Biodiversity Conservation	2011	1577
<i>Estonian for Academic Purposes</i>	Special Education; Philosophy; Semiotics; Romance Studies; Literature and Theatre Research	2017	81
<i>Communication in Estonian for Computer Science</i>	Mathematics; Statistics; Computer Science	2017	201
<i>Estonian Orthography and Composition</i>	Law; Teacher of Vocational Training	2018	48
<i>Orthography of the Estonian Language and Communicative Writing Skills</i>	Entrepreneurship and Project Management; Tourism and Hotel Management; Administration of Social Work and Rehabilitation	2018	60

Research

Three focus group interviews with

- university teachers (N=5)
- teaching assistants (N=6)
- students (N=7)

Qualitative content analysis

Research questions:

- How is a wiki task organized?
- What are the strong points of a wiki task?
- What are the weak points of a wiki task?

Academic literacies and Wikipedia

„...student users gain the most from Wikipedia through active participation in its development, not passive consumption of its content.“ (Reilly 2011)

„The creation of a Wikipedia page mirrors the real-world research process: expressing interest in a topic, identifying a gap in the research, developing a proposal or outline, then researching, writing and publishing the work.“ (Dawe, Robinson, 2016)

„It [Wikipedia] embraces the process nature of reading and writing, preferring the constantly-evolving-but-neverfinishing to the static and rapidly obsolescing „product“.“ (Miller 2005)

„In producing a text for Wikipedia, students gain a real sense of audience and enjoy the satisfaction of seeing their work published on a high-traffic global website.“ (Tardy, 2010)

„Students are ambivalent about wiki assignments: some love them, some hate them, most are neutral...“ (Konieczny 2012)

Benefits to the students

- Study skills:
 - Technological skills
 - Information search
 - Information evaluation
 - Structuring the text
 - Writing skills
 - Paraphrasing
- Ability to handle constructive feedback
- Development of responsibility
- Motivation

„This task teaches them to handle feedback. Later, when they receive feedback on their Bachelor’s thesis or some other text, they won’t be so scared.“

„To feel responsibility – I do not write just to the lecturer and I do not write just to the couple of readers. This is entirely public text intended for Estonian people.“

Benefits to the teaching assistants

- Professional experience
- Teaching experience
- Wage
- Ability to give feedback
- Time management

„They will gain a better insight about how the students react to the feedback and how is a proper way of providing feedback.“

„Probably they obtained very good time management skills.“

Benefits to the lecturers

- Very comprehensive study task
- Very well planned teaching process

„It is a good task because it covers almost everything what we have to teach in our academic writing course.“

Problems

- Translating articles (Wikipedia → Vikipeedia)
- Plagiarism
- Frequent use of Wikipedia-based tasks at the university

„In my view, one weakness is that at least my students just take an article written in English and they just translate it into Estonian. It is an easier solution for them.“

„Vikipeedia-based task has become increasingly popular in some courses. My students just told me that they have written four Vikipeedia articles at the university and they are fed up of it.“

How to go on?

- To find out how effective is Wikipedia-based task in supporting students' academic literacies
- To adapt the Wikipedia-based task to the students' needs



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Thank you!



VIKIPEEDIA
Vaba entsüklopeedia

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