Digital Spaces // Topical Neighborhoods

related themes and supporting literature

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mraish / July 2021

Process

Conversations with stakeholders,

Identifying features, goals, and themes, and

Relating themes to external literature.

Why "neighborhoods?"

Ongoing efforts by Growth and
Campaigns;

Acknowledged inconsistencies of
WikiProjects;

How can editor labor be effectively
coordinated?

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What will neighborhoods do?

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Photo credit: Dietmar Rabich / Wikimedia Commons / "Santorin (GR), Akrotiri -- 2017 -- 2983" / CC BY-SA 4.0

Editors "want" to…

- Connect with mentors and like-minded peers,
- Peripherally observe experienced members, and
- Find articles and appropriate tasks to work on.

So, neighborhoods will…

- Group articles according to topic (automatic or manual),
- Provide Growth tools,
- Coordinate campaigns, and
- Provide semi-protected spaces.

Do neighborhoods already exist?

(What about WikiProjects?)

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What about WikiProjects?

Successful WikiProjects (Military History, Climate change, Women in Red, and Middle Ages) are already "neighborhood-like":

- Newsletters,
- Cross-language coordination of topic-focused editing,
- Task forces and campaigns,
- Robust and horizontal communication between members,
- Other "editing-adjacent" functions.

WikiProjects are arguably a good proxy for overall "health."[1: PDF]

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Effective WikiProjects: unique communication

Most WikiProjects have a hierarchical, hub-and-spokes network structure; egalitarian communication is rarer but more effective.

The efficacy of a Wikiproject's work is influenced by the structure of its private, not directly task related communication network.[p. 2874]
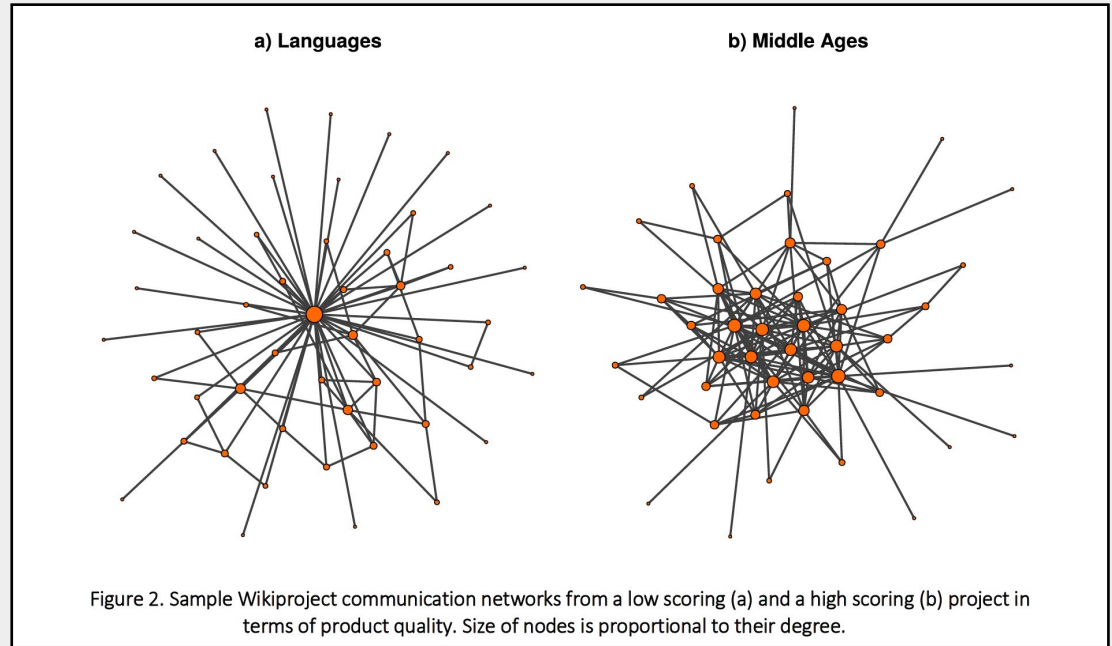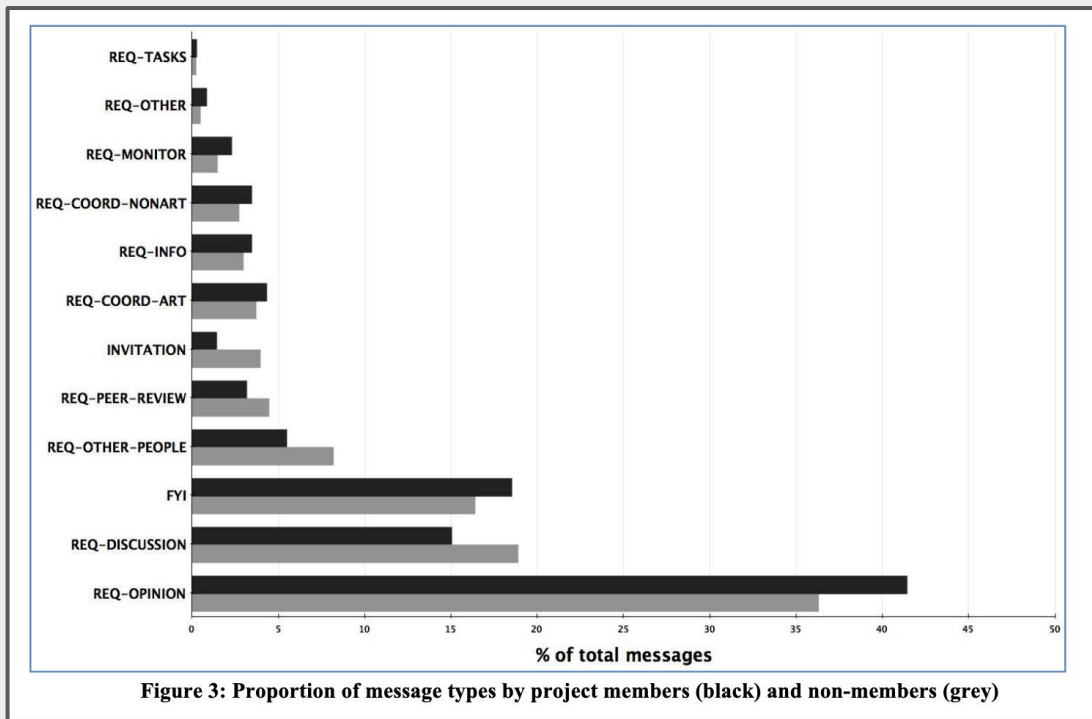
a) Languages   b) Middle Ages

Figure 2. Sample Wikiproject communication networks from a low scoring (a) and a high scoring (b) project in terms of product quality. Size of nodes is proportional to their degree.

Diagram reproduced from Rychwalska, Talaga, and Ziembowicz, 2020, p. 2874.

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Active WikiProjects: "unstructured collaboration"

Figure 3: Proportion of message types by project members (black) and non-members (grey)

[T]he coordination of collaborative article editing organized at the project level is relatively rare. Instead, most requests reflect a more lightweight approach to collaboration. The largest request categories—REQ-OPINION and REQ-DISCUSSION, which do not contain explicit requests to edit content collaboratively—account for 54% of all messages in our dataset. Many REQ-OPINION messages implicate collaborative activities of a short-term and transactional nature on the article talk page itself.

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But, most WikiProjects fall short of the ideal.

Missing communication: Members work alone until problems arise.

Difficulty creating new WikiProjects: Formalized processes; core groups of editors.

The dormancy problem: Dependence on a small core leads to dormancy due to turnover.

The discoverability problem: Reliance on talk pages limits accessibility of WikiProjects.

WikiProject summary

WikiProjects are an enduring, successful structure that has been adopted in most Wikipedias.

At their best, **WikiProjects already resemble neighborhoods**.

However, **most WikiProjects fall short** due to hard-to-overcome structural limitations.

Beyond WikiProjects, **where else might neighborhoods be observed?**

WikiProject
Sri Lanka

Korean Wikipedia "Student Camp"

위키백과:학생 캠프

위키백과, 우리 모두의 백과사전.

위키백과
학생 캠프

단축: 백:학캠

위키백과 학생 캠프는 학생이나 어린이 사용자의 위키백과 활동을 돕는 것을 목적으로 만들어진 프로젝트입니다.
프로젝트를 돕고 싶으신 분은 누구나 환영합니다! 👋👋👋

이 문서도 다른 위키백과 문서와 같이 누구나 수정할 수 있습니다. 여러분이 프로젝트의 향상을 도와 주세요!

🔊 **필독**: 초등학생 사용자에게: 불필요한 많은 다중 계정과 관련하여, 계정은 하나만 쓰고, 모든 계정을 공개하세요

- 사용자 권한 신청은 충분한 경험이 있는 사용자가 권한을 신청하는 곳입니다. 권한을 신청하기 전, 사용자 권한 신청하기에 대한 조언을 읽고 자신이 정말 권한 신청을 해야 하는지 신중하게 생각해주세요.
- 혐오, 증오 표현이 들어간 유저박스를 만들지 말아 주세요. 다른 사용자에 의해 임의적으로 삭제될 수 있습니다.
- 무분별한 {{찬성}} 사용을 자제해 주세요. 사용자 관리요청은 다수결로 처리되는 것이 아닙니다.
- 필명 (서명에 들어가는 사용자명)의 잦은 변경은 자제해 주세요. 혼란을 끼칠 수 있습니다.
- 만 12세 미만 아동의 개인정보(소셜 미디어 계정 포함)는 사용자토론 문서를 비롯한 모든 문서에서 발견 즉시 삭제되어 기록보호 조치가 이뤄집니다.
- 사용자 문서와 사용자 토론 문서에 위키백과 편집과 관련 없는 개인적인 내용을 쓰는 것을 자제해 주세요. 일반 문서 등 다양한 문서의 편집을 시도하여 위키백과 품질 향상에 기여할 의사가 있음을 다른 사용자에게 알려 주세요.

Screenshots of Student Camp welcome message (7/14/21); English produced via Google Translate.

Wikipedia:Student Camp

文A language   ⭐ regard   ✏ edit

Wikipedia
student camp

Short: Back:Hakcam

Wikipedia Student Camp is a project designed to help students and young users of Wikipedia in their activities. Anyone who wants to help with the project is welcome! 👋👋👋

This article, like any other Wikipedia article, can be modified by anyone. Help us improve the project!

🔊 **Must read** : For elementary school users: In relation to many unnecessary multiple accounts , use only one account, make all accounts public

- The User Rights Application is where experienced users apply for rights. Before applying for permission , read our advice on applying for user permissions and think carefully about whether you really need to apply for permission.
- Please do not create user boxes containing hate speech or hate speech . It may be arbitrarily deleted by other users.
- Please refrain from indiscriminate use of {{ pro }}. User management requests are not processed by majority vote.
- Please refrain from frequently changing your pen name (user name in your signature). It can be confusing.
- Personal information of children under the age of 12 (including social media accounts) is immediately deleted from all documents, including user discussion pages, and records are protected .
- Please refrain from posting personal content that is not related to Wikipedia editing in user pages and user discussion pages . Let other users know that you are willing to contribute to improving the quality of Wikipedia by trying to edit various articles, including general articles.

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Korean Wikipedia "Student Camp"

[Sudden influx of children users](); Wikipedia is their gateway to the internet.

Community (still) divided on whether to block or accommodate; settled on "quarantine zone."

Substantial subset of nontraditional users socialized into community as productive, contributing members.

Screenshots of Student Camp "chat room" (right)—*snapshots of socialization.*

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^ Please take care of your creative documents!

🔍 The main article for this category is Wikipedia:Sarangbang/2020 Week 49 § About creation .

Good morning! I'm here to bring some news to our student users who love Wikipedia and always contribute to its development. In Wikipedia, when you edit documents related to the areas you are mainly interested in, such as animation or comic books, you can add manga or animation content as a direct source. When inserting the source, please write <ref>~Publisher~Manga 00, 00 pages (20xx year)</ref>! If you just type <ref>, a separate window will appear, and you can enter that information there. Thank you!— **Apostle Paul**《☎ | ✎ | X》 Dec 4, 2020 (Fri) 23:46 (KST)

@ Apostle Paul : Now, the first source is also acknowledged to some extent! Thanks ;D -- WHITE.T. December 5, 2020 (Sat) 09:45 (KST)

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^ student camp

I wonder if there is a separate registration system for the student camp as well. If not, can I just participate? Nangja (Discussion) December 7, 2020 (Mon) 21:51 (KST)

Yes. It's just a place to chat. -- G. lupus (Discussion | Contribution) Monday, December 7, 2020 21:54 (KST)

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^ How is it?

Company:-Tony/four

I made my first essay, but it seems to be lacking a lot.. -- TøÑÝ- ʟʟʟ ⚡ December 9, 2020 (Wed) 12:10 (KST)

Well done!— YÐÐ_ ∪•т December 9, 2020 (Wed) 13:23 (KST)
How about making a shortcut?— YÐÐ_ ∪ т December 9, 2020 (Wed) 13:24 (KST)
@ Yeondudan : 1. Thank you for the compliment! 2. ʜᴏᴡ to make shortcuts?-- TøÑÝ- ʟʟʟ ⚡ December 9, 2020 (Wed) 13:36 (KST)
For instance the example essays Company: State short / essay / Guidebooks , but using a shortened four: State-stage / Book can be done - YÐÐ_ ∪ • т December 9th, 2020 (Wed) 14:34 (KST)

```
{{Essay|(title to be shortened)}}
```

— YÐÐ_ ∪ т December 9, 2020 (Wed) 14:36 (KST)

What are the potential upsides?

Upside. **Photo credit: Mattbuck, CC BY-SA 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons**

Newcomer reception

Personal welcomes encourage identity-based commitment—i.e., being labeled part of the in-group.[1]

Receiving a reply improves retention,[2] but "canned" welcome messages (lists of policies and guidelines) are not helpful.[3; 4:PDF]

Wikipedia Teahouse
Teahouse guests made more edits, over more time, to more articles, than non-participating invitees;[5: PDF] and invited editors were retained at a higher rate than uninvited editors.[6]

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Institutionalized socialization

Li et al. (2020) measured the impact of Wiki Ed(PDF) and its successful *Institutionalized socialization*:

- New members socialized as a group, rather than individually.
- New members are a "good fit" for the community and mission.
- Detailed guides and tutorials help them adapt to new community.
- New members connected to experienced (and like-minded) mentors.

Wiki Ed membership was associated with:

- Higher production.
- Higher quality contributions.
- Higher rate of collaboration.
- Higher rate of editor retention.

Logo credit: Bob the Wikipedian, CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Access to editing tasks of varied granularity

- Top contributors to online peer production communities have an intrinsic motivation to participate;[1: PDF] but for everybody else, a mix of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic rewards may be desirable.[2: PDF]
- Newcomers especially benefit from having a variety of tasks to choose from that are modular and have varied degrees of granularity.[3]

The Wikipedia Adventure

- A gamified, automated experience for new editors that was favorably rated, but that was not associated with significant long-term outcomes.[4]

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Facilitating lurking

- *Legitimate peripheral participation* helps newcomers learn local norms and etiquette.[1]
- Lurking is safe;[2] it helps them build trust.[3]
- Inactive, nonproductive tasks help newcomers become full members.[4]
- *Potential* new members orient to leaderboards, article lists, etc. when deciding if they want to join a community.[5]
- Silent exploration *before* self-introduction leads to greater contributions and commitment.[6: PDF]

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Space for peripheral observation. **Photo credit: Pudelec (Marcin Szala), CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons**

All of this can help neighborhoods become sites of emerging digital subcultures.

- Desirable, because it promotes intrinsic desire to edit.
- Knowledge production in Wikipedia is inherently collaborative, and quality articles show a combination of collaboration and "abrasion."[1]
- Horizontal communication is crucial for fostering group identity and engagement.[3]

Identity-based engagement with neighborhoods may help the work endure, even if the editors turn over.

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What are the potential downsides?

Neighborhoods, or fiefdoms?

- Territorial power users already exert malicious control over articles, topics, and the right to edit; this may be a more serious problem in smaller Wikis.
- Once entrenched, patterns of territoriality are difficult to change.
- Newcomers are particularly vulnerable, lacking knowledge of rules and norms, and lacking access to mentorship and support.
- In other contexts, newcomers are fertile ground for reinforcing pre-existing patterns of toxicity.[1]

However,

- Territorial power users thrive in the absence of transparency that neighborhoods are poised to alleviate.

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Neighborhoods, or ghost towns?

- Automated processes on Quora drive user attention to a small number of questions.[1: PDF]
- Many Reddit users are only active within a single subreddit[2: PDF]; i.e., editors may put down roots in their first neighborhood.

The use of automated processes to direct editors toward neighborhoods may exacerbate existing gaps and inequalities rather than alleviate them.

On Reddit, specific design features create "toxic technocultures".

Actually it's about ethics in game journalism. Photo credit: cafuego, CC BY-SA 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Easy-to-create, pseudonymous accounts.

Gamification and Karma points: opaquely calculated but easy to game.

Ease of subreddit creation.

A small proportion of mods control a large proportion of subreddits.

Automated "front page" system shunts traffic toward large "default" subreddits; smaller toxic subs avoid scrutiny.
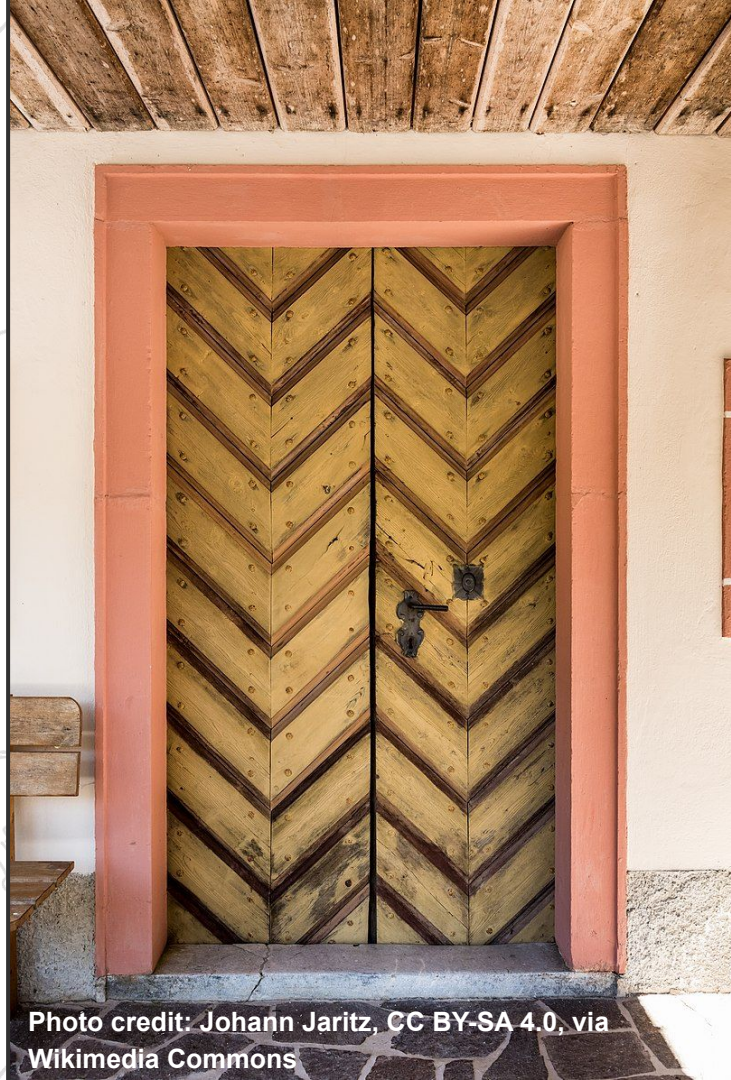
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Learnings?

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Neighborhoods are...

A potential benefit editors of all experience levels.

A logical extension of WikiProjects.

In line with external scholarship of online peer production communities.

But,

Major changes to the way editor labor is coordinated run the risk of reinforcing existing gaps and inequalities.

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THANK YOU