

Wikimedia CEE Meeting 2014

Saturday, 20th December
Common legal threats
30 slides

SpeedyGonsales, Croatian Wikipedia

Goals

We have inherited similar bureaucratic way of thinking by (communist) authorities after Soviet era; this lead to similar legal threats such as problems with responsibility for content, over-control by government

Would be good to share the common experience regarding these issues and how we can help each other.

Example from Croatia

1. What happened

Dates of Jutarnji list articles about Croatian Wikipedia

10th Sept 2013

12th Sept 2013

12th Sept 2013

13th Sept 2013

14th Sept 2013

14th Sept 2013

17th Sept 2013

18th Sept 2013

26th Sept 2013

3rd Nov 2013

Titles of articles

- * Radical right wing overtook hr Wikipedia
- * We are uncovering who on Wikipedia is promoting Ustashe
- * Publishing of shortened & ridiculed demantee
- * Jovanović (former minister of culture) called for boycott of Croatian Wikipedia
- * Jimmy Wales – Serbs & Croats should not be allowed to have separate wikipedias

Images accompanying the text



What to say???

Have you seen your photo anywhere with your head rounded, and underneath written:

This men/woman is responsible for
(something bad, not murder, but political)

And here you are, completely innocent of it.

Innocent, you say?

Yup, as my work (30.410 edits on Croatian Wikipedia, on Wikimedia projects 32.572) is public, you can check every edit for yourself and find yourself if I'm responsible for what they are accusing myself, and sysops of Croatian Wikipedia.

User is responsible for his edits,
not for edits of someone else

Which applies to all users (sysops, bureaucrats,
checkusers, Wikimedia staff, Jimbo Wales)

Yes, I wrote that in demantee

They did not publish that.

Why?

Another journalist from Jutarnji

10 questions

1. *Speedy, when we spoke last time (a year ago) you told me that Wikipedia is free, open encyclopedia. What was/is your reaction on newspaper articles that "radical right wing overtook hr Wikipedia"?*

Everybody today use Facebook, from 7 to 77, IQ from 50 to 250. So you can find everything on Facebook. When you find everything in newspapers, that means journalists don't know their work. And their editors.

6. Have you edited some disputed article and how good is your knowledge about history/historic facts?

I edited some (disputed) articles, if they interested me, or if happened that sysop intervention is needed, and no other sysop reacted for a while.

I'm not historian, but I've read books of prof. Mirjana Gross about history as a science

I've read synthesis works of Croatian history of

Macan, Pavličević, Steindorff, Tanner, Šišić, Katić, R. and J.

Horvat, Goldstein, V. Klaić. These books does not make me historian, but I learned to differentiate myths from facts, and meaning of primary, secondary & tertiary sources.

9. What Wikipedia learned from this crisis?

If you have courage to work as volunteer 10 years (from 2004), you help people (Wikimedia users), you block vandals, you will get enemies. Today you are not allowed to be volunteer (in Croatia) if you have attitude.

10. What next?

We will continue as usual, users who are swearing or crossing Wikipedia rules - block, everybody who hides/alleviates crimes in Wikipedia articles, whichever side committed crimes - block. There is no better revenge to people who hates us than to calmly and peacefully continue to build what we are doing from 2003 onwards (this year we celebrated 10th birthday of Croatian Wikipedia) – to make free encyclopedia in Croatian language.

What do you think, did they publish
my responses?

:)

They published 10 questions

And 10 answers. But they published only what suited them.

Anybody here feels to be in a Kafka's novel?

Media coverage

Not all media took this witch hunt, biggest daily newspaper had one article 2 or 3 months later which was so minor that I read it and forgot what was in it. But there really was quite widespread witch-hunt:

OK, 1st part (what happened)
is over

Why that happened?

You remember goal from the 1st slide?

We have inherited similar bureaucratic way of thinking by (communist) authorities after Soviet era; this lead to similar legal threats such as problems with responsibility for content, over-control by (government or media funded by ...)

2. Why that happened? Abbreviated version

In Croatia as postcommunist state there was no lustration. Former communist politicians are still receiving beneficial (non-regular) pensions, they actively participate in Croatia's political life, together with members of secret service. Court process in Germany for killing of Stjepan Đureković in 1983. by UDBA (Yugoslav secret service) clearly show that former communist power structures still have power.

That seems too harsh?

Why in August/September 2013 (Croatia became EU member on 1st July 2013) EU almost put sanctions to Croatia?

Because prime minister decided to refuse extradition of Josip Perković to Germany.

Government activity on Wikipedia

Former minister of culture Jovanović admitted that webmaster of government edits Wikipedia articles and at least one person from government is actively participating in votings for sysops on Croatian Wikipedia.

<http://www.novolist.hr/Vijesti/Hrvatska/Jovanovic-Djeco-ne-baratajte-hrvatskom-Wikipedijom-jer-su-sadrzaji-falsificirani>

Siniša Varga (Ministry of health)
24.000 euros for CV & HZZO article

HZZO – government agency for health system

Does 24.000 euros seems too much for two articles of some 10 KB & 30 edits in total?

No comment.

Some economic numbers of Croatia

<http://liderpress.hr/biznis-i-politika/hrvatska/u-hrvatskoj-41-posto-zaposlenih-8-posto-nezaposlenih-i-50-posto-neaktivnih/>

4,5 million citizens (DZS)

1.503.867 people have jobs

292.282 does not have job

1.834.014 passive (kids, in pensions, other)

Median monthly netto salary is 725 euros. (DZS)

3. What we did?

Except 1st demantee and answer to 10 questions.

- * continued working on Wikipedia to the best of our abilities under heavy stress

- * two civil suits (2 sysops) are in process against (paper & online) publishers, editors & journalist

Current state of affairs

Croatian Wikipedia reached 150.000 articles 2 weeks ago

Wikimedia Croatia is having weekly meetings

Civil suits are in process, they should be over in 1-2 years (average length of suits of this kind)

Minister of culture attacking us was ousted from office.

Some good effects

Croatian Wikipedia was for the 2nd time (1st was in 2004) invited to HRT (Croatian public television) programme "Pola ure kulture", articles online & on paper defending us, support of off-wiki people ("If Jutarnji is against you, then you must do something good").

And some omitted things (death threats and threats of violence, minister of interior is informed, no answer till now).

Conclusions

You never can tell how low government or some media can go.

If state politics is in flux, you are not safe.

Copy/paste:

Russia's President Vladimir Putin has thrown the term "fascist" around a lot lately, especially against pro-Western Ukrainians. To him, Kiev's government is a "fascist junta," and Russian (state) TV likes to show them alongside footage of Nazi war criminals. ...

Ukrainians supporting democracy and European integration are as far away from fascism as you can get. ...

A brief look at the core features of fascism shows that Putin shares all of them.

It may be time to start calling Putin a fascist.

<http://www.worldpolicy.org/blog/2014/05/12/why-it%E2%80%99s-time-start-calling-putin-fascist>

Fascism?

Today when you want to attacks somebody, tactics often used is difamation, and to call your opponents fascists is **too often** used and misused.

Final conclusion

Wikipedia is important
If not, they would not attack us.

They do not understand Wikipedia, because if they do,
they would not attack us.

But people of power in states in flux who dislike
openness of informacy of Wikipedia kind, can & will
attack Wikipedia, sometimes in stupid ways &
sometimes in more clever ways. You are warned.
Be prepared!

Thank you!

Questions & (possibly) answers.