

Wikimania 2011  
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# Lessons Learned

from the Lessons Taught

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Keep it short,  
Vassia,  
20 minutes, no more!

# Introduction

- **Bulgarian Wikipedia (BG WP)**

- Established in December 2003
- #34 by number of articles (119 000+)
- #21 by speakers per article (76.50)
- #27 by edits per article (28.76)
- #12 by sample of articles



Author: NuclearVacuum,  
Wikimedia Commons

Language speakers :  
~9,1 million people

# University Wikiprojects in BG WP

- **In 3 BG universities:**

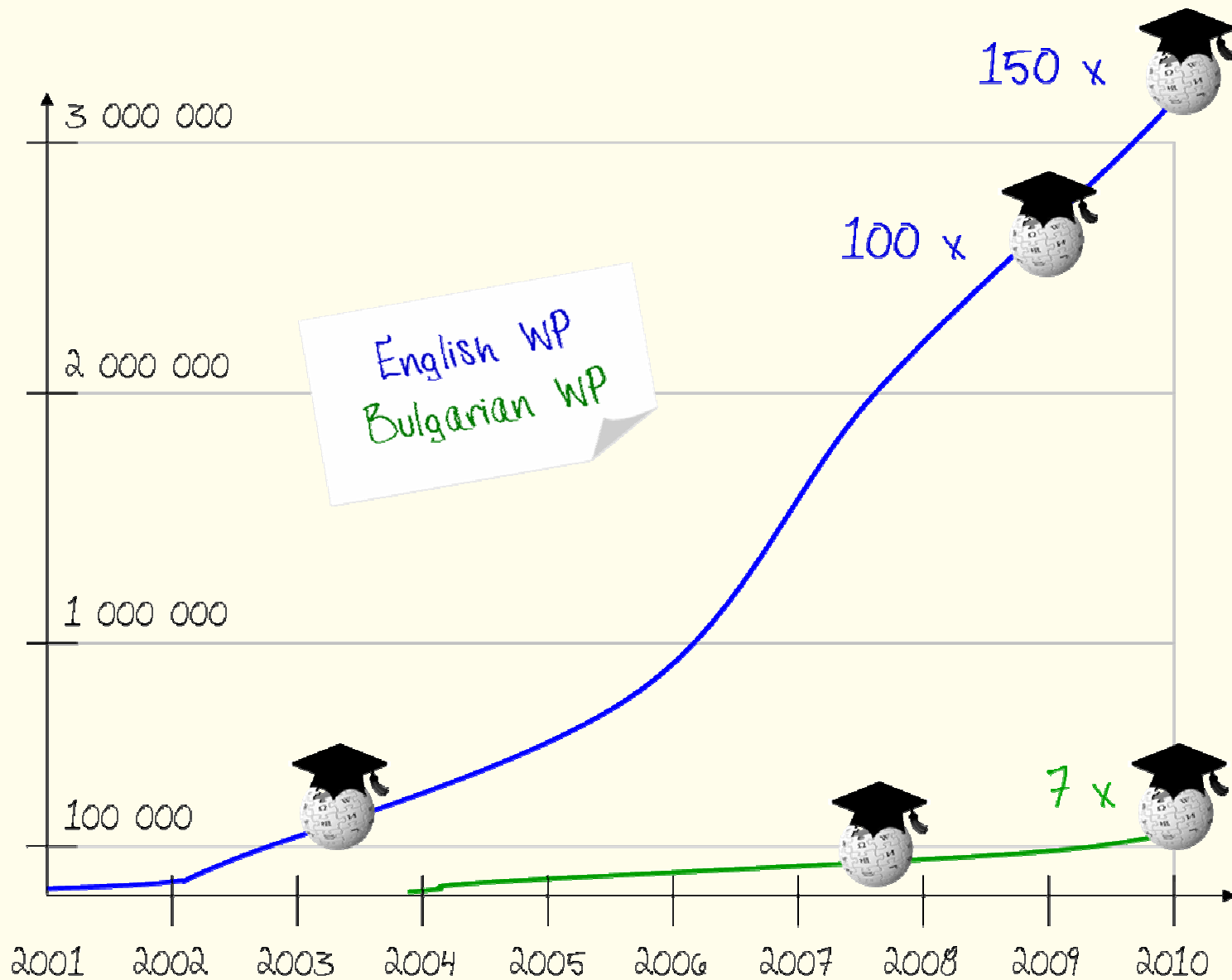
- New Bulgarian University
- Sofia University
- University of National and World Economy

- **In 5 different subjects:**

- Art and Culture - 2007/08 (**18 students**)
- Electronic Learning - 2008/09 (**8**)
- Political Philosophy - 2009/10 (**14**)
- Online Media & PR:
  - 2009/10 (**53**)
  - 2010/11 (**71**)
- Political Sciences:
  - Fall 2010/11 (**62**)
  - Spring 2010/11 (**37**)

Total number of  
participating  
students : 263

# University Wikiprojects in BG WP



# Lessons Taught

Lesson learned: Preparing a multimedia presentation for the intro lecture is better than just speaking

- The most successful of our university wikiprojects started with an **introductory lecture**, aiming to educate students about:
  - Our content policies: Verifiability, Neutral point of view, No original research, Biographies of living people
  - Copyrights and free licenses
  - Starting and developing an article
  - How to write in an encyclopedic way
  - Community's experience with detecting copyright violations and vandalisms

# Lessons Taught

- The lecture provides time for answering students' questions. Some of the frequently asked questions are:
  - Is Wikipedia reliable? How reliable is it, given that anyone can edit it?!
  - Why is Wikipedia often reported to be forbidden in schools/universities?
  - How to discriminate between good articles and bad articles?
  - How to choose the subject for my article?

Lesson learned:  
Don't hide or belittle  
the problems of  
Wikipedia. It does  
no good for anyone.

Lesson learned:  
Help but  
don't overhelp!

# Lessons Taught

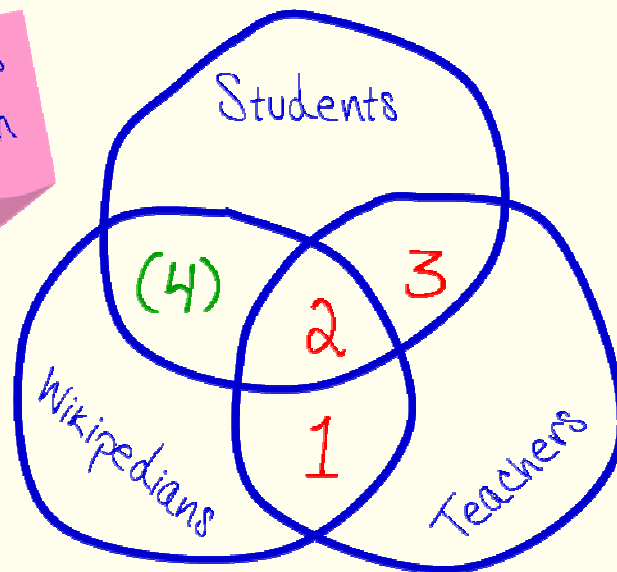
- During the wikiproject, mentors try to be constantly in touch with students, help them and address their concerns.
- Most often, students ask:
  - How to format my article?  
Why is formatting so difficult?
  - What's the problem with verbatim copying from the relevant sources?
  - How to cite my sources?
  - Someone is editing my article; what can I do to stop them?
  - Why is uploading and using images so difficult?



# Lessons Learned

- **About organization and time management**

- Ideally, the **stages** of a university wikiproject are:



This diagram was first published in our paper [3].

- 1 Design and preparation – setting up the rules and time schedule
- 2 Content development – implementing the wikiproject
- 3 Evaluation and scoring
- (4) Sometimes, students remain in the community as long-term contributors

- Good students and articles **come first**, and vice versa.

# Lessons Learned

- **About organization and time management**
  - **Don't force** students to write in Wikipedia, let this assignment be optional. Provide alternatives.
  - Some students can't formulate article titles well. Teachers and wikipedians can help them with a **sample list** of articles for creating or improving.
  - Provide students with **regular feedback** on their progress: mark articles with ✓ and ✗ (plus comments on talk pages)

Preserving the spirit of volunteering is important for us!

# Lessons Learned

- About organization and time management
  - Set up a **realistic** time schedule, considering the students' group and individual capabilities, workload, etc.

20 October

30 November

1 January

20 January

Expect less  
to get more!

Intro lecture  
on Wikipedia

Deadline for  
selection of topics

Deadline for  
work on articles

Final scoring,  
closing lecture

Choosing article topics

Research and preparing the articles

Review of published articles, discussions, corrections

Evaluation

# Lessons Learned

- **About Wikipedian Community and newbies**

- In the best scenario, teachers have **personal experience** with Wikipedia.

- If not, then **recruiting** experienced wikipedians for mentors is an important premise for success.

- **Coordination page** is needed to prevent edit conflicts and help the Wikipedian community keep track of the project.

University students are often considered very promising and potential wikipedians.

# Lessons Learned

- **About Wikipedian Community and newbies**

- Teachers can save themselves a lot of trouble if they **inform the community** in advance about their intention to organize a university/school project.

Community's lack of tolerance to newbies is often a problem.

- Most of the wikiproject discussions should be carried out **publicly** on the Wikipedia talk pages.
- For the purpose of the wikiproject, students can be tipped to register with **likewise usernames**, e.g. NBUPolSci...

# Lessons Learned

- **About Wikipedian Community and newbies**
  - The wikipedians who serve as project **mentors are volunteers**, too, so students should be made aware of that and treat them with respect.

Mentors can treat good students with e-goodies :)



Author: David.Monnaux,  
Wikimedia Commons



Author: Fmelikov,  
Wikimedia Commons



Author: Codice1000,  
Wikimedia Commons



# Lessons Learned

- **About multimedia**

- **Copyright issues** often prevent students from uploading/using images.
- Teachers/students should be encouraged to **make the most of the free content** of Wikimedia.

For instance, foreign language teachers/students can use **spoken articles** as dictations or exercises for listening comprehension.

Maya discussed this possibility in her paper 121.

# Lessons Learned

- **About the wiki technology**

- Creating/improving Wikipedia's articles is not the only way to introduce **wiki in education**.

- Students in informatics can use wiki for coordination, technical documentation and user manuals.

- Students in project management can practice teamwork.

- Students in psychology and philosophy can explore conflicts, group dynamics, and individual motivations.

Considered in details in paper [5].



# Lessons Learned

- **About students themselves**

- Students are often **indiscriminate and uncritical** of their information sources.
- Many students have major problems in **defining basic concepts** which they are supposed to use on a daily basis.
- They are used to submitting **verbatim copied texts and compilations** for their genuinely own works.
- Some students seem to believe that **machine translation services** are substitute of knowing foreign languages.

Wikiprojects raise many questions which students often face for the first time!

# Our Publications (in Bulgarian)

1. **Atanassova, V.**

**Wiki technologies in education**

Annual of the Informatics Section of the Union of Bulgarian Scientists, Vol. 1, 2008, pp. 116-122, ISSN 1313-6852.

<http://www.wikimedia.bg/downloads/research/Atanassova-2008.pdf>

2. **Marinova, M.**

**Wikipedia: An opportunity of implementing a new worldwide recognized educational resource in the formal English language education in Bulgaria.**

Proc. of Conf. "The Dialogue between the generations and the social structures mediated by the school institution", April 16-17, 2010, Sofia, pp. 626-633, ISBN 978-954-552-068-6.

<http://www.wikimedia.bg/downloads/research/Marinova-2010.pdf>

# Our Publications (in Bulgarian)

3. **Marinova, M., V. Atanassova**

**Innovations in higher education: The Wikipedia experience**

8<sup>th</sup> Conf. "Management of Innovations", July 1-2, 2010, Varna, pp. 100-105, ISBN 978-954-635-004-6.

<http://www.wikimedia.bg/downloads/research/Marinova,Atanassova-2010.pdf>

4. **Marinova, M.**

**Application of Wikipedia in education. Analysis of a successful university wikiproject in Bulgaria**

Proc. of Int. Conf. "E-learning, Distant Education or... the Education of 21<sup>st</sup> Century", April 6-8, 2011, Sofia, pp. 62-69, ISBN 978-954-9526-75-2.

<http://www.wikimedia.bg/downloads/research/Marinova-2011.pdf>

# Our Publications (in Bulgarian)

5. Atanassova, V., D. Orozova

**Project based learning on databases in a wiki**

Proc. of Conf. "Interaction: Theory and Practice",  
June 24-25, 2011, Burgas (in press).

to be continued... :)

don't forget to thank  
the Wikimedia Foundation  
for the scholarship!

Thank you for your attention!

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