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Free software as a partnership

The case for investing in
a MediaWiki ecosystem

<http://bit.ly/wm19-partnerships-mediawiki>

MediaWiki is the software running behind the Wikimedia projects.

It is also widely used outside Wikimedia:

- 150K downloads / month
- 20-30K (?) public wikis - ~50% “market share”
- ~1 billion pages total ($\frac{1}{3}$ Wikimedia, $\frac{1}{3}$ Wikia, $\frac{1}{3}$ everything else)

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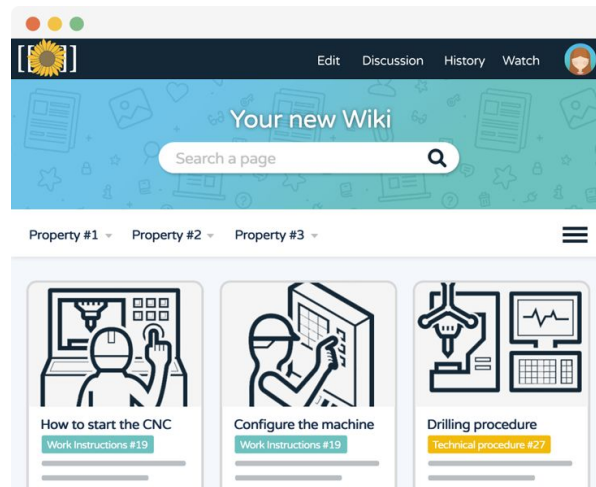
MediaWiki in government

- Intellipedia: US intelligence community wiki(s), started in 2005
- Diplopedia: US Department of State wiki, for their diplomatic and intelligence staff. Started in 2006, said to have 100,000 users.
- Powerpedia: US Department of Energy wiki - 4K users, 50K pages
- OpenEI - sharing of energy information (50K)
- Statipedia: US government statistics agency wiki (for sharing methodology and references)
- NASA wiki(s): 30K pages
- Bureaupedia: FBI wiki
- GCpedia: Canadian government's wiki (30K pages)
- SKYbrary: EU aviation safety information
- ...



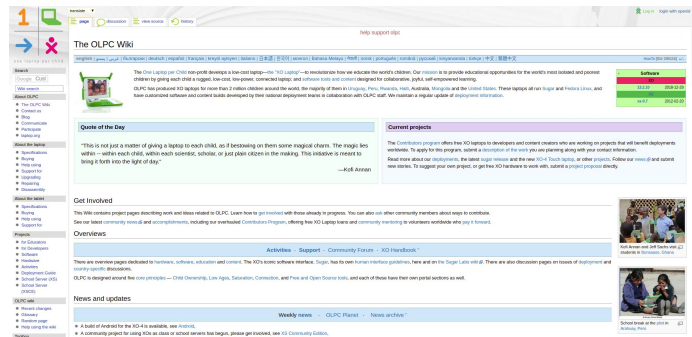
MediaWiki in industry

- VistaPrint: printing company, internal documentation wiki with 250K articles
- Genesys: customer experience company, public doc wiki with 50K articles
- Other corporate wikis: Novell, Intel, GE etc. etc.
- Semantic MediaWiki: bundle of ~50 extensions that turn MediaWiki into a semantic database; the precursor of Wikidata
- Dokit/WikiFab: custom MediaWiki distribution for manuals
- BlueSpice: enterprise-oriented MediaWiki distro (~60 custom extensions)



MediaWiki in culture/society

- Wikia / Fandom: for-profit ad-based pop culture-oriented wiki host, 400K wikis
 - Familypedia (genealogy, 250K), Proteins (50K), Geek feminism
- WikiHow: ad-based howto wiki, 10M pages
- FLOSS projects: Mozilla, Ubuntu, Debian, FSF directory, etc. etc.
- Ballotpedia: information about US politics (270K articles)
- SNPedia/Prothease: database of human genetic research (180K items)
- OpenWetWare: biology researcher collaboration, 45K pages
- NGO / social activism wikis: OLPC, Appropedia, ...



Why care about the use of MediaWiki outside Wikimedia?

- Some of these projects have goals and values aligned to ours.
- MediaWiki is opinionated software that steers its users towards free access and open collaboration.
- Outsources editor and developer on-ramping
- Influx of money and volunteer developer time into the ecosystem
- Source of innovation (technical and social)

Partnership vs. ecosystem

- Traditional partnerships: joint projects, or one organisation doing a project and the other supporting it (funding, etc)
- Ecosystem thinking: make your software easy to use & valuable for the world, others will come to depend upon it and invest in it, freeing up your resources

Strategic recommendation

Product & Technology working group recommendation #7:
Growing the Third-Party Ecosystem

“Successful open source projects tend to receive resources (money, staff and volunteer time, brand and marketing, etc.) from a diverse set of entities, which have different goals but work together to improve the tool they all need. MediaWiki on the other hand is a monoculture, almost entirely dependent on Wikimedia, even though there seems to be a much wider demand for the functionality it provides. The Wikimedia Foundation (or another movement entity with sufficient capacity) should research what blocks the development of such an ecosystem in the MediaWiki case.”

(Session: Sunday 9:30-11)