

# Wikimedia Deutschland Annual Report 2018





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## Dear friends of Free Knowledge,

Imagine a world in which everyone can share, use and multiply all of humanity's knowledge! We at Wikimedia Deutschland have been working on realizing this vision since the association was founded in 2004 – with the firm conviction that a world of Free Knowledge means a better future for all people.

We support thousands of volunteers who share their knowledge with everyone every day in Wikimedia projects like Wikipedia. And we try to inspire new volunteers to take part in these projects: Because everyone can participate! With free and open software, we also create and improve the necessary technical infrastructures and innovative products to ensure the best possible exchange of Free Knowledge.

We convince scientific, cultural and educational institutions of the advantages of Free Knowledge and work to improve the political and social conditions for Free Knowledge at the national and European levels.

We are not doing this important pioneering work alone, but in a large community, which more and more people are joining. In 2018, thousands of Wikimedia volunteers, over 70,000 members of Wikimedia Deutschland, around 360,000 donors and countless partner organizations within and outside of the Wikimedia movement joined us in our commitment to Free Knowledge. Thank you for that!

On the following pages you can look back with us on an impressive and eventful 2018.



## Wikimedia briefly explained

### WIKIMEDIA

Wikimedia is a worldwide movement for Free Knowledge. All Wikimedia projects, such as Wikipedia, are run by the non-profit Wikimedia Foundation based in San Francisco, USA. Almost 40 independent country organizations provide local support for Wikimedia projects.

### WIKIMEDIA DEUTSCHLAND – ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF FREE KNOWLEDGE E. V.

Wikimedia Deutschland is a non-profit organization with currently more than 70,000 members. We understand equal opportunities in access to knowledge and education as a human right and are working to ensure that projects such as the free online encyclopedia Wikipedia can continue to exist in the future.

### FREE KNOWLEDGE

Our vision is a world in which everyone can share, use and multiply all of humanity's knowledge. By Free Knowledge we mean knowledge that is available, changeable and reusable free of charge for everyone at any time. The best known source of Free Knowledge is the free online encyclopedia Wikipedia.

### WIKIPEDIA AND WIKIMEDIA

The German version of the free online encyclopedia Wikipedia went online in March 2001 and is created exclusively by volunteer authors. They write articles, keep information up to date, correct mistakes and share their knowledge with the whole world. The organization Wikimedia Deutschland was founded in 2004 by Wikipedia volunteers. The support of Wikipedia authors has been an integral part of the work of Wikimedia Deutschland ever since. But as the association for the promotion of Free Knowledge, we do much more: We support volunteers in all the Wikimedia projects, develop free software and technology, advocate for open science, education, and culture, and strengthen political conditions that enable free access to knowledge.

Learn more about Wikimedia on our website  
[www.wikimedia.de](http://www.wikimedia.de)

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# Looking back at 2018

2018 was a year in which we learned many new things, celebrated many successes and inspired even more people to join us in our vision. Making the world's knowledge freely available to everyone is an ambitious goal – in 2018 we made good progress.

We did important groundwork to successfully implement the goals of our movement – “Knowledge as a Service” and “Knowledge Equity” – for the German-speaking and international volunteer communities we support. We have looked at how the world around us is changing and what we need to do to actively promote Free Knowledge in the future. The [results of this process](#) form the basis for planning our work for the coming years. As the association for the promotion of Free Knowledge, we want to achieve major social changes, create sustainable effects and actively shape the future.

In addition to this important strategic work, we also achieved progress in 2018 in our three fields of action.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Supporting the volunteers in the Wikimedia projects has been an essential part of the work of Wikimedia Deutschland since its founding in 2004. In 2018, we successfully continued and further developed our support programs. For instance, we were able to raise awareness of the world's largest photo competition – Wiki Loves Monuments – considerably and to engage new target groups with offers such as youth photo workshops.

However, we were only partially able to achieve our goals in recruiting new volunteers. Although the tools we have created make it easier for newcomers to join Wikipedia and have received very positive feedback, we have not been able to reverse the trend of a decline in active Wikipedia editors. However, our expectations were greatly exceeded at the first transnational Wikipedia Day, which we implemented with great success in cooperation with the communities and Wikimedia organizations from Switzerland and Austria. 850 people interested in Wikipedia came to the local Wikipedia offices in 11 cities to take a look behind the scenes of the free encyclopedia.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

In 2018, we did a lot to further strengthen the technical infrastructure for Free Knowledge. Our free knowledge database Wikidata currently comprises around 56 million datasets and continues to develop extremely positively – both in terms of data volume and quality as well as data usage and community development. The newly created extension with lexicographical data (lexemes) within Wikidata offers numerous exciting possibilities to generate new knowledge. The software behind Wikidata – Wikibase – is increasingly used by institutions due to our measures. With the “Technical Wishes” we were once again able to significantly improve the usability of the Wikimedia projects.

## **CONDITIONS**

With regard to the political and legal conditions, we saw that our growing network is increasingly enabling us to place our key arguments with institutions and decision-makers and we're being heard. Especially with regard to the EU copyright reform, we were able to establish Free Knowledge as an important topic at the European level. We have successfully continued and further developed our cooperation with cultural, educational and scientific institutions.

In 2018, we conducted our most successful fundraising campaign to date, in which around 360,000 people supported us. We were again able to welcome a large number of new members. More than 70,000 people (as of March 2019) have joined us in our commitment to Free Knowledge. On this basis, together with our partner organizations and the many thousands of volunteers of the Wikimedia projects, we will continue to actively shape the future of Free Knowledge in 2019.

This annual report is also available in an online version with many videos and links to more information.

[2018.wikimedia.de](https://2018.wikimedia.de)

# 850

visitors came to the Wikipedia day to 11 local community rooms in the German-speaking area to take a look behind the scenes of Wikipedia.

# 25.000

pictures were uploaded to the free media archive Wikimedia Commons in Germany alone as part of the photo competition Wiki Loves Monuments.

# 40.442

lexemes were created in Wikidata in 2018 (instead of the expected 5000).

# 496

Wikis use the advantages of the new search feature making it easier to find content.

# 70.000

members are supporting us in our advocacy of Free Knowledge.

# 100.000

audio files in 46 languages were recorded with the Wikibase installation Lingua Libre in 2018.

# 15

organizations from the Internet industry and civil society united in 2018 in an open letter against the controversial upload filters.

# 15

cultural institutions from Berlin to Zurich opened their doors in 2018 as part of GLAM on Tour events and other formats.

# 146

cultural institutions have provided a total of 218 data sets under a free license since the first Coding da Vinci event in 2014.

# 1

new data metaphor increases visibility of the common good in data policy.

# Visiting Wikipedia

For several years now, the number of voluntary editors who share their knowledge with everyone on Wikipedia has been declining. Wikimedia Deutschland has been actively trying to counteract this development since 2016. After all, if not enough people write articles in Wikipedia, correct mistakes, add pictures and keep information up-to-date, the quality of the free online encyclopedia will suffer. What Wikipedia urgently needs are new people who want to participate in the most famous knowledge project of our time.

In recent years Wikimedia Deutschland has therefore tried to attract more people to work on Wikipedia. This always includes fundamental educational work on the functioning of the encyclopedia: Many readers of Wikipedia are still not aware that everyone can participate and that Wikipedia is exclusively built on voluntary commitment. With large banner campaigns we have shown easy ways to participate, but with only moderate success: Even if many people understood that everyone can participate in Wikipedia – only very few took the step to long-term participation. Improved online help services for Wikipedia newcomers, such as explanatory videos or help pages, were also unable to reverse the trend of author decline.

In 2018, we tried several new approaches to get more people excited about working with Wikipedia. We have continued to focus on improved online services for newcomers, which have resulted in four guided training modules, amongst other things, teaching newcomers the basics of editing the encyclopedia. A new participation page shows in which fields of knowledge Wikipedia still has gaps and which articles are no longer up-to-date, so that new editors can directly start their collaboration on the encyclopedia with concrete tasks in mind.

The biggest activity to attract new Wikipedia volunteers, however, took place far away from the computer and focused on personal exchange: On Sunday, 28 October 2018, a total of 11 local communities from the German-speaking countries invited visitors to take a look behind the scenes of Wikipedia and talk to active authors on site. Together with Wikimedia Österreich and Wikimedia Schweiz, Wikimedia Deutschland supported the big Wikipedia day in planning and organising the event as well as by developing online banners that pointed to the individual venues. And with great success: The rush on the day took the volunteers in the local Wikipedia offices by surprise: More than 850 visitors jumped at the opportunity to visit volunteer communities in Ulm, Augsburg, Stuttgart, Munich, Cologne, Hanover, Hamburg, Berlin, Zurich, Linz and Vienna.

The programme on the Wikipedia day was designed by the volunteers themselves and could hardly have been more varied. In addition to questions about Wikipedia and introductory courses on working on articles, photos also played an important role. For example, visitors in Stuttgart were able to scan historical photos. Elsewhere, there were insights into drone photography. And in Cologne, traditional dishes such as ‘bean soup with half a chicken’ were first cooked and then photographed. The Augsburg community organized a photo walk, during which cultural-historical monuments and a museum were visited and documented for Wikipedia.



In all 11 cities, volunteers and staff drew a common conclusion: there is lots of interest in how Wikipedia works and getting to know the “real people behind it”.

It remains to be seen whether this interest will lead to a greater readiness to become active on Wikipedia as well. We will build on the success of the Wikipedia day in 2019 and try out further ways to ensure the quality and continuity of Wikipedia for the future.

Do you want to participate in Wikipedia? Learn more on [wikipedia.de/lernewikipedia](https://www.wikipedia.de/lernewikipedia)



# Wiki Loves Monuments in the European Year of Cultural Heritage

Everybody knows Wikipedia. Every day, millions of people search the largest collectively created digital knowledge collection of our time. But the encyclopedia could be a lot more colorful. Photos allow people to experience the world's knowledge in a vivid way. That's why every year in September, the international Wikipedia community invites everyone to join Wiki Loves Monuments and share images of cultural monuments with the world.

According to the Guinness Book of Records, Wiki Loves Monuments has been the largest photo competition in the world since 2012 and is organised by Wikipedia volunteers. Every year in Germany alone about 20,000 images are uploaded under a free license to the media archive Wikimedia Commons and are thus freely available for use in Wikipedia and elsewhere. The competition makes a major contribution to the protection of historical monuments and the preservation of cultural diversity.

In 2018, Wiki Loves Monuments was dedicated to the European Year of Cultural Heritage. Supported by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, Wikimedia Deutschland, together with Wikimedia volunteers, implemented various measures to make the photo competition even better known and more attractive to the public. For example, an international special prize was awarded to draw attention to European cultural heritage and its history: Where can traces of common European history be found? What monument near me testifies to our divided history? The special prize invited people of all ages to explore cultural heritage in pursuit of clues.

A youth photo workshop held in Erfurt in June was aimed in particular at a younger audience. Here, young people were enabled to recognise monuments, to take good-quality photographs and to upload the pictures for the competition. After a theoretical introduction, the photography enthusiasts were able to put their newly acquired knowledge directly into practice during a photo walk through the historic city centre.



1st place European Special Prize, Cathedral of Gloucester



# Lexicographical Data on Wikidata: Words, Words, Words

Language is what makes our world beautiful, diverse, and complicated. Our free knowledge database [Wikidata](#) is a multilingual project, serving the more than 300 languages of the Wikimedia projects. This multilinguality at the core of Wikidata means that right from the start, every entered Item about a piece of knowledge in the world and every property to describe that Item can have a label in one of the languages we support, making Wikidata a polyglot knowledge base that speaks your language.

Expanding Wikidata to deal with languages is an exciting new application. While structured data about the sum of all human knowledge may help machines and artificial intelligence to understand the world, teaching Wikidata to also represent languages can help them understand how humans express their knowledge in words. And just think about all the things that are possible with all the language combinations we have in Wikimedia projects: translations from Estonian to Maltese or Tamil to Zulu — while a printed dictionary for these combinations probably doesn't exist, direct translations between these languages may become possible with structured data about languages.

Items in Wikidata describe a thing, a person, or concept in this world. What Wikidata didn't offer until 2018 was the linguistic side of things: the words to describe these entities as they appear in a language, their grammatical forms and meanings. Starting in 2017, we developed features in Wikidata and the software that powers it, Wikibase, to de-

scribe data about words. We call it lexicographical data. Lexicographical data within Wikidata were introduced in May 2018. Time to take a closer look.

Lexicographical data means just that: data that can appear in a lexicon. What we're dealing with here is the linguistic side of words. As the word "word" is already very loaded, we use the linguistic term Lexeme — a [Lexeme](#) is an entry in a dictionary.

The first Lexeme to be entered into Wikidata was the Sumerian word for "mother". As Sumerian is one of the oldest languages we know, and the word for mother is one of the most basic words in any language, this may very well be one of the earliest utterances in human history.

Every Lexeme has Senses, which tell you what a word means in various languages. It also has Forms, which describe how the Lexeme can change grammatically — just think of the 15 cases a noun can be used in in the Finnish language.

As any other data, of course, you can also query lexicographical data. With queries you can also build amazing applications. One of the greatest pains for learners of German are the articles accompanying nouns: der, die, das. There is very little logic involved meaning articles mainly have to be memorized. Fortunately, there is a game that uses lexicographical data from Wikidata to help you with the memorizing: [DerDieDas](#). Can you make it through 10 randomly selected German nouns guessing the correct article? For those who already speak German, there is also a [French](#) and a [Danish](#) version.



# Advanced Search for Wikipedia & Co.

Together with Wikipedia volunteers and the Wikimedia Foundation, Wikimedia Deutschland is improving the software behind Wikipedia & Co. in the Technical Wishes project. The results are of benefit to everyone who is involved in Wikimedia projects as well as the many thousands who use Wikipedia every day to search for information. A good example of the great effect of such software improvements is the new specialized search mask.

The German-language Wikipedia alone has more than 2.2 million articles (as of December 2018). Attempting to find specific content can sometimes feel like the proverbial search for the needle in the haystack.

That's why if you go and search the world's largest encyclopedia, you will see a new interface that provides several common search terms. No longer will people looking for their favorite type of salad be faced with the dilemma of 50,000 search results for rocket.

More specifically, [search pages](#) now have an additional visual interface that provides several common search options. For instance, when you type space, Nasa, and missile into the field "Not this text" and salad into "One of these words", you can narrow your search for rocket down to [little more than 100 results](#). Other options are to search in page titles, for exact text, to look for pages in certain categories, with a particular template, etc.

These changes, called [Advanced Search](#), were developed by Wikimedia Deutschland with support from the Wikimedia Foundation. The idea for this feature was born in a workshop series with authors in Germany. From there, it was developed together with the different language communities with the help of prototypes and feedback rounds. It became the new default interface for the search page for all Wikimedia wikis in November 2018.

Learn more about the Technical Wishes project on [de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Technische\\_Wünsche](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Technische_Wünsche)



Sharing knowledge more easily: In the project Technical wishes the software of Wikipedia & Co. is improved.

# The Wikibase Software as a Basis for new Knowledge Projects

Wikimedia's free and collaboratively maintained knowledge database Wikidata structures the knowledge of the world in language-independent data objects that can be enriched with various types of information. Both humans and machines can access this treasure trove of data and generate new knowledge. Wikibase, the software behind Wikidata, is also available as free and open software for all. In 2018, we continued to work on making Wikibase even easier to use for others. Additionally, we offered workshops to interested organizations to explain the use of Wikibase for open knowledge projects.

One of the many examples of an open data project created with Wikibase is [Lingua Libre](#). The directory of free audio voice recordings aims to preserve the sound of the world's languages and the pronunciation of their words in the form of structured data and to make them freely available to everyone. The project originated in France,

where the initiators were keen to promote endangered regional languages. The great thing about Lingua Libre is that everyone can add to the spoken vocabulary – be it with a few words, proverbs or whole sentences. Thus, even people who are not familiar with phonetic transcription can hear how individual words are pronounced at the push of a button.

Up to 1,200 recordings per hour can now be recorded via the online application and uploaded directly to the free media archive Wikimedia Commons. Via the connection to Wikidata, the recorded sounds enrich Wikimedia projects such as Wikipedia or the free dictionary Wiktionary in particular – but they also support linguistics specialists in their research.

Learn more about Wikibase on  
<http://wikiba.se>



How does that word sound?  
The Wikibase installation  
Lingua Libre structures and  
preserves spoken language.

# Data is the new Groundwater: Towards a Focus on the Public Interest in Data Policy.

When debating data policy, too much emphasis is put on who is earning money with data and how. Whilst these are important questions, equally important aspects of data policy to do with Free Knowledge are often overlooked: Who should benefit from public data and its processing? How can data be protected as a resource and become a sensibly used public good? We believe much more needs to be said about the common good in data policy-making. Which is why we put forward a new data metaphor:

## **DATA IS THE NEW GROUNDWATER.**

Data is not a “new oil”, it is created at all times, changes without being used up and may only become a commodity under certain conditions. For the information society, data is therefore much more like groundwater. Just as a world without water is inconceivable, data as a transportable form of information forms the basis for Free Knowledge and thus also for Wikipedia.

In order to better illustrate our demand to regard data politically not only as a commodity or power factor, but also as a public good, we had the data groundwater pump built in 2018. There is a display at the top of the pump. When the pump is operated, the “water basin” fills with blue LED light until the water level reaches the screen. There, predefined queries from our free knowledge database Wikidata are displayed: e.g. a world map with all airports named after women, or the average age of current members of the Bundestag – all live via the Internet.

Wikimedia Deutschland regards access to knowledge and education as a human right. With the metaphor of “data as groundwater” introduced in 2018, we demonstrate that data about our world (such as weather, traffic, demographic data) should be freely available to everyone as a public good.

Learn more about our political work on  
[meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/DE\\_policy](https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/DE_policy)



A tangible metaphor: The new data groundwater pump puts a spotlight on the common interest in data policy.

# From Niche Topic to Social Debate: 15 Organizations against Upload Filters

Wikipedia thrives on the free exchange of information. The online knowledge collection reflects what is presented in books, media and scientific articles and is the result of the worldwide exchange of new ideas. That is why we are passionately committed to a free Internet that promotes exchange and cooperation.

As part of the European reform of copyright law, which will also bring some important improvements for the free access to knowledge, the introduction of upload filters to prevent copyright infringements was propagated for the first time in 2016. No matter whether text, picture or video contribution – all contents of individual users on larger Internet platforms are to be examined for alleged copyright infringements before the actual upload even takes place. Those that are automatically detected as potentially infringing should be blocked. Sophisticated judgements about what is legally permitted or not – be it criticism, satire or art – cannot, however, be achieved by these filters. That is why they are a threat to freedom of expression and diversity on the Internet.

In 2018, we joined forces with numerous partners in an open letter to fight against the introduction of upload filters. In addition to Wikimedia Deutschland, 14 other organizations from civil society and the Internet industry (including Bitkom, Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband and the Open Knowledge Foundation) have addressed their concerns to the German government and EU parliamentarians, thereby sending a public signal. Wikipedia was ultimately exempted from the filter requirement, but we continued to work with the Wikipedia volunteers to lobby for a reform that provides better conditions for Free Knowledge.

Together with numerous Internet organizations, we have repeatedly provided information about the problematic aspects of the reform and alternative proposals. By 2019 at the latest, a complex “niche issue” has turned into a broad social debate about [freedom and regulation of the Internet](#). Before the vote in the EU Parliament, thousands of mainly young people took to the streets all over Germany to protest against upload filters. The filters have nevertheless received the support of the Parliament, but the implementation of the directive is now taking place under the critical eye of an interested and informed public.

Learn more about our political work on [meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/DE\\_policy](https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/DE_policy)

Together for a free Internet: In 2018, we joined forces with partners from the Internet industry and civil society to campaign against upload filters.



# How works of art find their way into the digital world

Galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAMs for short) preserve and impart knowledge. Wikimedia Deutschland's goal is to make this knowledge freely and openly available to everyone online with the help of [Wikimedia projects](#) and the commitment of culture enthusiasts. The concept is striking a cord: 15 cultural institutions from Berlin to Zurich opened their doors for GLAM on Tour events in 2018. We were especially pleased about the invitation to another jewel of the Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation: the Grunewald Hunting Lodge.

The Amsterdam [Rijksmuseum](#), the [Art Institute of Chicago](#), most recently the [Cleveland Museum of Art](#): they have all published thousands of works from Hokusai to Edward Hopper online under open licenses. The German cultural scene is also looking for new ways of interacting with its audience and completely new target groups – not just on-site.

As the most popular collection of knowledge on the Internet, Wikipedia is the first port of call for information for millions of people and therefore also an important medium for cultural institutions. This common interest of the cultural scene and Wikipedia volunteers has resulted in a very active GLAM community: With the expert support of the inviting institution, Wikipedia volunteers document, photograph and write articles on collections, institutions

and individual works. Wikimedia Deutschland acts as an organiser and contact for museums and foundations and supports the volunteers locally. Ideally, individual events lead to long-term partnerships.

One of these is the cooperation with the Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation, which invited Wikimedia volunteers to Caputh Palace for the first time in 2015. A weekend as guests at the Grunewald Hunting Lodge followed in 2018: The “Chatelaine” herself led the guests through the historic building and its history in honour of the occasion, while an art historian from the Foundation contributed to the revision and recreation of over 50 Wikipedia articles by the volunteers with his enormous knowledge of the lodge's Cranach Collection. This successful partnership will be continued in 2019 with a trip to Sanssouci park.

Learn more about GLAM on Tour on [de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:GLAM/GLAM\\_on\\_Tour](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:GLAM/GLAM_on_Tour)



Making cultural treasures accessible through Wikipedia: This 360-degree shot was taken at the GLAM on Tour event in the Grunewald Hunting Lodge.

# Coding da Vinci – How Cultural Institutions become Platforms for Cultural Exchange

Together with the [German Digital Library](#), the [Open Knowledge Foundation Germany](#) and the [Research and Competence Center Digitization \(digis\)](#), in 2014 Wikimedia Deutschland for the first time brought together cultural institutions such as museums and archives with artists from software development and design for a creative competition based on open data – the first cultural hackathon Coding da Vinci. The recordings of bird voices provided by the Berlin Museum of Natural History were used to create the [zzZwitscherwecker](#), for example, in just six weeks. The app wakes you with cheerful chirping, which only stops once the right bird species has been assigned to the sound.

Six further Coding da Vinci Hackathons have since taken place in various regions of Germany – a total of 146 cultural institutions have made their hidden treasures available to more than 1,600 creative people via 218 digital data sets. More than a hundred great prototypes and web applications, apps and games have emerged as open source projects.

Coding da Vinci makes the creative potential of digital cultural assets visible and helps to unfold it. This experience is particularly important for the participating cultural institutions – they learn about the opportunities offered by the digital opening of their collections. The innovative applications not only increase the attractiveness of cultural assets and the visibility of cultural institutions. Open cultural data also invite new target groups in to deal creatively with cultural heritage and to generate new knowledge. From places of preservation, conservation and storage, museums are now turning into platforms for cultural exchange – on-site and online.

The German Federal Cultural Foundation also sees the positive effects of Coding da Vinci for the digital transformation of cultural and memory institutions: It has decided to support the further development of the hackathon in the next few years with 1.2 million euros.

Learn more on Coding da Vinci on [codingdavinci.de](http://codingdavinci.de)

Successful combination: The Kulturhackathon Coding da Vinci brings together cultural institutions and creative people from design and software development.



# More than 70,000 Members – a strong Foundation

As the association for the promotion of Free Knowledge, we are engaged in numerous ways to realize our vision of a world in which the sum of all knowledge is freely available to all people. Above all, this is made possible thanks to the support of our members. Besides the thousands of donors, they are a fundamental pillar for Wikimedia Deutschland and our commitment to Free Knowledge.

The number of people who continually support us in our work is growing from year to year – as of March 2019, we count more than 70,000 members. They not only give an important foundation to our objectives, but also actively shape the organization and its future, as could be seen at the general assemblies held in Karlsruhe and Berlin in 2018:

More than 250 visitors and members came together in May at the Zentrum für Kunst und Medien in Karlsruhe. Through an interactive exhibition space, short lectures and open discussions, they were able to get to know the world around Wikipedia and Wikimedia more closely.

In December, the 23rd general assembly was held in Berlin. In addition to the election of a new volunteer supervisory board, major decisions on the future of the organization were also made.

In future, members will have a direct say in the strategic direction of the organization within the framework of the general assembly. In this context, the general assembly decided on the [strategic directions for the three fields of action](#) (volunteers, technology, conditions), which will significantly shape Wikimedia's work in the coming years.

A further innovation is the decision of the members to meet only once a year for the general assembly from 2019 onwards. It will then become part of an entire Wikimedia weekend – for the first time on 15 and 16 June 2019 in Berlin. On Saturday we invite members, partners, friends, volunteers and the public to the big day of Free Knowledge to get to know the organization and the Wikimedia projects a little better. The formal general assembly takes place on Sunday and will thus conclude the first Wikimedia weekend.

Would you like to learn more about membership or become a member of Wikimedia Deutschland yourself? Visit our website at [wikimedia.de/de/mitglied-werden](https://wikimedia.de/de/mitglied-werden)



Participate in decisions: At the general assembly of Wikimedia Deutschland, important decisions on the future of the organization are made.

# Outlook: These are our plans and ideas for 2019 and the years to come

Our vision is a world in which all people can freely share, use and increase the sum of all knowledge. This great idea also requires great changes within our society.

Projects like Wikipedia are great examples of Free Knowledge put into practice. We must continue to develop them over the next few years and ensure that they remain relevant.

But we also know that the world does not only consist of Wikimedia projects. We want to inspire more people and institutions for free access to knowledge. We must connect with other organizations, carry our vision out into the world and ensure that Free Knowledge becomes a part of our everyday lives.

For the work in our three fields of action, this means the following for the coming years:

## **VOLUNTEERS**

We support the Wikimedia communities – the volunteers who share their knowledge with the whole world in projects like Wikipedia or Wikidata – where they need help. We actively support them in welcoming and integrating new volunteers and in incorporating new technologies and formats.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

We want to see our free knowledge database Wikidata become a central hub and the software Wikibase an essential element in a network of open structured data. We are working on this together with Wikimedia volunteers, the Wikimedia movement and partner organizations. The more people use this network, the more benefit the whole world will gain from it.

## **CONDITIONS**

We want to ensure that more content can be used as Free Knowledge. This includes, for example, digital reproductions of works of art that are no longer protected by copyright as well as tax-financed knowledge such as studies commissioned by the state.

In a network with partner organizations, we also strengthen our political impact at the international level and expand our cooperation with cultural institutions. We want people to develop a critical awareness for information on the Internet and to be able to participate in the digital space. Only then can they actively contribute to Free Knowledge and join our vision.



Looking ahead: these are our plans for the years to come.

# Finances

**From a financial point of view, 2018 was a very good year for Wikimedia Deutschland.**

## REVENUES

According to accounting, revenues increased to EUR 8.9 million in 2018 (compared with EUR 6.8 million in the previous year). Revenues from membership fees increased significantly to EUR 3.2 million (previous year: EUR 2.5 million), as the number of members rose to 65,439 as of December 31 (previous year: 52,650). Although donation revenues dropped nominally to EUR 1.1 million (previous year: EUR 2.3 million), other revenues increased to EUR 4.5 million (previous year: EUR 1.9 million). This was mainly due to the fact that an inheritance of EUR 1.9 million from 2013 was not recognised in the profit and loss statement until 2018 due to previous legal uncertainty.

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## EXPENDITURES

Expenditures increased to EUR 8.9 million (previous year: EUR 6.8 million). Personnel costs increased to EUR 4.4 million (previous year: EUR 3.5 million). Operational costs also rose to EUR 4.4 million (previous year: EUR 3.2 million), of which EUR 0.8 million are costs related to the aforementioned inheritance, including payments to a legatee.

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The summary “Use of funds” on [page 27](#) of this report provides more detailed information on the use of funds.

## UNUSED DONATIONS / RESERVES

Wikimedia Deutschland applies the HFA 21 accounting standard. A special feature of this standard is that revenue from donations is only posted at the time of the donations’ disbursement. Therefore, the item “Unused donations” on the liabilities side of the balance sheet is an important benchmark for assessing the financial situation of Wikimedia Deutschland. This amount increased to EUR 7.3 million (previous year: EUR 5.0 million). The total is shown in full as a tax reserve in accordance with §62 AO (German Fiscal Code).

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## GEMEINNÜTZIGE WIKIMEDIA FÖRDERGESELLSCHAFT MBH (WMFG)

The organization has a wholly owned subsidiary whose exclusive purpose is to procure donations. Donation revenue rose to 10.9 million euros (previous year: 10.3 million euros). Personnel and material expenditures rose slightly to EUR 0.8 million (previous year: EUR 0.7 million). This allowed 8.5 million Euro (previous year: 8.4 million Euro)

could be passed on to the Wikimedia Foundation in the USA and 2.4 million Euro (previous year: 1.9 million Euro) to the organization in Germany. The surplus for the year of EUR 0.1 million (previous year: EUR 0.2 million) will be transferred to the reserves.

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## USE OF FUNDS

Wikimedia Deutschland, like many fundraising organizations, strives to ensure that funds are maximized to benefit substantive work and that costs for indirect project expenses such as for general public relations, advertising and administration are minimized. Nevertheless, the latter are necessary and appropriate as they organise the use of funds and provide accountability and transparency. The expenses for general public relations and advertising of Wikimedia Deutschland and Gemeinnütziger Wikimedia Fördergesellschaft amounted to 1.6 million Euro in 2018. The administrative expenses amounted to 2.8 million Euro. After deducting the expenses for the aforementioned inheritance, which are regarded as an extraordinary item, they amounted to EUR 2.0 million. From this perspective, the share of administrative costs and costs for advertising and general public relations for both organizations was 20.4 percent.

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## AUDITING

Wikimedia Deutschland voluntarily allows audits of internal processes, the allocation of donations as well as the assets, earnings and financial situation. The audit of Wikimedia Deutschland - Gesellschaft zur Förderung Freien Wissens e. V. and Gemeinnützige Wikimedia Fördergesellschaft mbH was conducted by KWP Revision GmbH Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft Berlin in December 2018 and March 2019. An unqualified audit certificate was issued. Accordingly, the accounts of the organization and the Fördergesellschaft were kept properly and with due diligence, and the audit did not lead to any objections.

# Wikimedia Deutschland e. V.

## Balance sheet

ASSETS	31.12.2018	31.12.2017	31.12.2016
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Intangible assets	49.984 €	66.929 €	24.460 €
Tangible assets	320.938 €	338.408 €	222.560 €
Investments	25.655 €	25.655 €	25.655 €
<b>Current assets</b>			
Claims for forwarded funds	2.446.731 €	1.667.383 €	1.581.856 €
Accounts receivable	88.950 €	67.435 €	64.567 €
Other assets	298.386 €	180.326 €	97.152 €
Securities	16.500 €	104.198 €	107.164 €
Cash and bank deposits	5.181.003 €	3.453.485 €	2.552.120 €
<b>Deferred items</b>	67.414 €	55.459 €	48.322 €
<b>Balance sheet total</b>	<b>8.495.561 €</b>	<b>5.959.277 €</b>	<b>4.723.856 €</b>

<b>LIABILITIES</b>	<b>31.12.2018</b>	<b>31.12.2017</b>	<b>31.12.2016</b>
<b>Unused donations</b>	7.298.764 €	4.968.500 €	4.349.061 €
of which fiscal reserves according to §62 of the Fiscal Code	7.298.764 €	4.968.500 €	605.246 €
<b>Accrued liabilities</b>			
Tax accruals	106 €	54 €	198 €
Other accruals	627.306 €	222.110 €	143.626 €
<b>Accounts payable</b>			
Payments received	188.336 €	280.206 €	0 €
From trade payables and other accounts payable	313.903 €	289.630 €	111.057 €
Other accounts payable	67.147 €	198.777 €	99.701 €
<b>Deferred items</b>	0 €	0 €	20.213 €
<b>Balance sheet total</b>	<b>8.495.561 €</b>	<b>5.959.277 €</b>	<b>4.723.856 €</b>

# Profit and loss statement

	31.12.2018	31.12.2017	31.12.2016
Donation revenue	1.147.760 €	2.339.176 €	3.218.133 €
Membership fees	3.229.156 €	2.542.663 €	1.632.360 €
Other income	4.498.984 €	1.891.880 €	265.760 €
Other operational income	73.159 €	34.044 €	61.096 €
Income from others investments and other interest	7 €	2.367 €	360 €
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>8.949.066 €</b>	<b>6.810.129 €</b>	<b>5.177.709 €</b>
Personnel expenditures	-4.409.092 €	-3.510.509 €	-3.095.159 €
Depreciation	-149.054 €	-115.931 €	-78.572 €
Other operational expenditures	-4.385.005 €	-3.183.689 €	-2.003.978 €
<b>Total expenses from ordinary business activity</b>	<b>-8.943.151 €</b>	<b>-6.810.129 €</b>	<b>-5.177.709 €</b>
Depreciation on financial assets and securities held as current assets	-5.915 €	0 €	0 €
Taxes on income and earnings	0 €	0 €	0 €
<b>Annual Surplus</b>	<b>0 €</b>	<b>0 €</b>	<b>0 €</b>
Allocation to reserves	0 €	0 €	0 €
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>0 €</b>	<b>0 €</b>	<b>0 €</b>

# Gemeinnützige Wikimedia Fördergesellschaft mbH

## Balance sheet

ASSETS	31.12.2018	31.12.2017	31.12.2016
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Intangible assets	0 €	0 €	0 €
Tangible assets	0 €	0 €	0 €
<b>Current assets</b>			
Receivables and other assets	100.807 €	50.980 €	569.171 €
Bank deposits	9.112.142 €	8.278.607 €	7.765.241 €
<b>Deferred items</b>	2.973 €	5.326 €	1.820 €
<b>Balance sheet total</b>	<b>9.215.921 €</b>	<b>8.334.913 €</b>	<b>8.336.232 €</b>

LIABILITIES	31.12.2018	31.12.2017	31.12.2016
<b>Equity</b>			
Subscribed capital	25.000 €	25.000 €	25.000 €
Surplus reserves	310.881 €	217.141 €	0 €
<b>Reserves</b>	178.430 €	178.581 €	218.785 €
<b>Accounts payable</b>			
From forwarded funds	8.669.837 €	7.866.353 €	8.065.148 €
From trade payables and other accounts payable	25.002 €	45.693 €	24.517 €
Other accounts payable	6.772 €	2.145 €	2.782 €
<b>Bilanzsumme</b>	<b>9.215.921 €</b>	<b>8.334.913 €</b>	<b>8.336.232 €</b>

# Profit and loss statement

	31.12.2018	31.12.2017	31.12.2016
Donation revenue	10.948.538 €	10.281.485 €	10.363.878 €
Other operational income	879.505 €	954.522 €	26.784 €
Other interest and related revenue	78 €	123 €	761 €
Expenditure from forwarded funds	-10.948.538 €	-10.281.485 €	-9.702.226 €
Personnel expenditures	-332.491 €	-257.404 €	-179.321 €
Depreciation	0 €	0 €	-180 €
Other operational expenditures	-453.352 €	-480.100 €	-509.695 €
<b>Annual Surplus</b>	<b>93.740 €</b>	<b>217.141 €</b>	<b>0 €</b>
Allocation to reserves	-93.740 €	-217.141 €	0 €
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>0 €</b>	<b>0 €</b>	<b>0 €</b>

# Use of funds

	WMDE <sup>1</sup>	WMFG <sup>2</sup>	ADJUSTMENTS	CONSOLIDATED
<b>Revenues</b>	<b>8.949.066 €</b>	<b>11.828.120 €</b>	<b>-2.476.848 €</b>	<b>18.300.338 €</b>
Donations (cost-effective)	1.147.760 €	10.948.538 €	-2.446.731 €	9.649.567 €
Membership fees	3.229.156 €			3.229.156 €
Project support	2.567.173 €	850.180 €		3.417.354 €
Thereof Wikimedia Foundation	2.073.753 €	850.180 €		
WMFG subletting	30.117 €		-30.117 €	
Other	1.974.860 €	29.402 €		2.004.262 €
<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>-8.949.066 €</b>	<b>-11.734.380 €</b>	<b>2.476.848 €</b>	<b>-18.206.598 €</b>
Field of action Volunteers	-1.680.784 €			-1.680.784 €
Field of action Technology	-2.179.505 €			-2.179.505 €
Field of action Conditions	-1.496.328 €			-1.496.328 €
Public relations and advertising	-805.415 €	-755.725 €		-1.561.140 €
Administrative costs <sup>3</sup>	-2.787.034 €			-2.787.034 €
Distribution of funds WMFG		-8.501.807 €		-8.501.807 €
Distribution of funds WMDE		-2.446.731 €	2.446.731 €	
WMFG sublease		-30.117 €	30.117 €	
<b>WMFG Annual surplus: Transfer to other Revenue Reserves</b>		<b>-93.740 €</b>		<b>-93.740 €</b>

<sup>1</sup> Wikimedia Deutschland e. V.

<sup>2</sup> Gemeinnützige Wikimedia Fördergesellschaft mbH

<sup>3</sup> 797,524 € of these expenditures are due to the extraordinary item "inheritance" from 2013. Due to previous legal uncertainty, this was not recognised in the profit and loss statement until 2018.

# Imprint

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