

# How can we make the Wikimedia Incubator better

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Celtic Knot 2020  
The Internet / Limerick

# People, not just languages

Why is it important?

At stake:  
hundreds of millions  
of people

There are LOTS of languages without a Wikipedia,  
spoken by LOTS of people.

Hard to find an exact number...

# Much more than 136 million people without Wikipedia

... as an *example*, for a recent project for translating articles about COVID-19 we found more than 30 languages spoken by more than 136 million people in which there is no Wikipedia

MUCH more

<!-- Housekeeping -->

# My own presentation

Not the WMF, not the Language committee, not the Incubator community

# Follow up / Thanks to Peter Gallert

Wikipedia for Indigenous Communities,  
Wikimania 2018



# New wiki creation process

Mostly stuck in 2006 or so

# New wiki creation process

Must have ISO 639 code. Must be unique and living.  
Request page on Meta. Localization on translatewiki.

# Incubator

Get as many people as possible  
to write as many articles as possible.

No defined numbers.

# Approval

Good content + Localization + Expert verification =  
Language committee approval.

# Domain creation

Very manual. Done by volunteers and WMF Site Reliability Engineers (a.k.a. SRE or Ops.) Sometimes takes several weeks or even months and requires multiple Gerrit patches and deployments.

# Import from Incubator

Usually pretty quick, done by one of the volunteers.  
And then, actually start writing...

So, Incubator

בְּרֵאשִׁית

In the beginning there was no Incubator.



# Est. 2006

I'd like to create a separate wiki for these "test Wikipedia" pages so we can keep Meta clean more easily. If there's no objection I'll set this up later today and start moving things over.

-- brion vibber (brion @ pobox.com)

# Really, that's it

There's no deep community history  
behind the Incubator's creation

# Really, that's it

Some hoaxes and messy discussions got the  
Language committee created,  
but the technology is largely the same.

# Really, that's it

The Incubator certainly developed a certain local community culture and tools, but they can be better.

(probably correct)

# Assumption in 2006:

People who want to create a new wiki are probably familiar with some other wiki.

# Reality in 2020:

New people are often not familiar  
with wiki editing

People who want to create a new wiki are most likely  
not familiar with editing in another wiki.  
They are familiar with reading a Wikipedia.

# How does the Incubator work?

Lots of historically understandable,  
but rather arbitrary rules...

1 wiki, many languages

Manually divided.



# Categories

Every page has to be in a category, added manually:

```
[ [Category:Wp/fon] ]
```

```
[ [Category:Wp/ary] ]
```

# Prefixes

Every page title must have a prefix:

[ [**Wp/fon**/Ɖantɔkpa xi]]

[ [**Wp/ary**/التاريخ د المغرب]]

# Wikitext with prefixes

'''Mènde''' (òr ''''mèndé yia''''') na wan  
[[Wp/kri/Afrika|afrikakain]] [[Wp/kri/**Tòk**|  
**tòk**]] we gèt 1,5 million spikardèm, menwan na  
[[Wp/kri/**Sa Lon**|**Sa Lon**]] en [[Wp/kri/**Libèria**|  
**Libèria**]].

# Wikitext with prefixes

سلف بشري عمر و 400،000 عام  
في `[[سلا|سلا/Wp/ary]]`

Visual Editor  
with prefixes?

ي عظام متحجرة لواحد سلف بشري عمره 400,000 عام في **سلا**<sup>[1]</sup> وفعام 1991



## Edit link

Done

Wikimedia Incubator

External site



سلا



سلا

page does not exist yet

شبي عظام متحجرة لواحد سلف بشري عمرو 400,000 عام في سلا.<sup>[1]</sup> وفعام 1991

 Link



Edit



سلا/Wp/ary

 Text سلا

Change text

2006?

No Visual Editor then

With some effort it was enabled in 2014.



# 2006? No Wikidata

Wikidata  
assumes 1 language per 1 wiki.

2006?

# No Content Translation

Content Translation  
assumes 1 language per 1 wiki.

Would be particularly useful :(

Wikidata for auto-filling data and adding sitelinks.

Content Translation for easily creating  
articles in an empty wiki.

2006?

No modern statistics

Reading and editing statistics with modern Wikistats  
([stats.wikimedia.org](https://stats.wikimedia.org)) are not quite possible.

# 2011: WikimediaIncubator extension

*Thanks to User:SPQRobin.*

Some minor improvements: Helps with search, logo, checks whether the page is prefixed, etc.

# 2011: WikimediaIncubator extension

However, almost everything is still manual :(

No significant improvements since 2011.

*Reminder:*  
(probably correct)

## Assumption in 2006:

People who want to create a new wiki are probably familiar with some other wiki.

# Corollary:

We are demanding much more from the newest editors than from the experienced editors!



So?

Finally, how can we make it better?

# Before we go on...

Thanks to all the Incubator maintainers, volunteers, patrolers, importers, SWMT, Ops, Language committee and everyone involved now.

Turn the process around!

# Start from creating a wiki!

Also, make it easier to create.  
It should take *seconds*, not weeks.

Only for eligible languages

ISO 639 is still required.

# Only for existing families

New kinds of projects are not part of this proposal, although it will make their creation easier.

# No prefixes!!!

It would be such a huge relief.  
Easy titles, links, categories, etc.

# Knowledge equity!

The same default configuration files will apply to all languages, so everyone will get the same extensions.



# 1 language = 1 wiki

Makes using Wikidata, Content Translation, search, and statistics possible and easy.

# Major open questions

Open questions  $\neq$  Blockers!

# Sitelinks / Interlanguage links

Maybe allow interlanguage links to this wiki after  
expert verification?

Other suggestions welcome.

# Closing :(

What will be the criteria and the procedure for closing and deletion?

No activity? Failed expert verification?

And who makes the decision?

# Open to search engines?

Should probably be open.

The current Incubator is open to search engines,  
and it's not a problem.

# Patrolling

The activity may be low by definition, so patrolling for vandalism by volunteers from other languages is necessary. Must remain at least as easy as an Incubator or become easier.

# Current Incubator

How quickly will the current test sites in the  
Incubator be migrated there?

And will the Incubator be eventually closed?

# Naming the wikis

Will it be called  
“Wikipedia”, “Wikibooks”, “Wikivoyage”?



# Naming the wikis

Proposal: something generic, like “Test wiki encyclopedia”, “Test wiki textbook library”, “Test wiki travel guide”, and so on.

One name is easy to change when “graduating”.

# When to graduate?

Expert verification?

A better-defined activity level?

A list of completed translations?

*Something else?..*

reminder:

Open questions  $\neq$  Blockers!

At least some infrastructure  
work can start now

# Why not improve the Incubator as it is?

Gadgets, extensions, workarounds, help pages?  
There will just be more surprises.

# Who thinks it's a good idea?

Language committee, multiple people on Phabricator, people in the Incubator, SWMT, Site reliability engineers (Ops).

# Let's do it.

Hundreds of millions of people are  
waiting for a Wikipedia.  
It should be easier, not harder.

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<https://phabricator.wikimedia.org/T228745>

he : תּוֹדָה רַבָּה

ga : Go raibh maith agaibh

nqo : འོ ཡི ཡེ

alt : Быйан болзын

mni : ᎠᎵᎾᎿᎿᎾᎿ

blc : Stutwiniitscw