



Constitutional Court meets Wikipedia

Wikipedian in Residence at the Austrian
Constitutional Court

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Verfassungsgerichtshof
Österreich

Why at a Constitutional Court?

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GLAM-Institutions normally: Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums

Courts are also providing public services, producing knowledge (this especially applies to courts in Common Law Countries)

Constitutional Courts are (trans-)forming the rules that apply for a society
– therefore historical interest in Court rulings



How can Wikipedia benefit from collaborating with a Constitutional Court?

The knowledge is already there – find it! Speak to the people that prepare the findings, to the librarians, eventually to the judges themselves

Pictures. Most courts provide high-quality photographs of their judges (also historical ones)

Library. Almost every larger court has a specialised library containing tons of books focusing on jurisprudential topics (which sometimes aren't publicly available)




How can Courts benefit from collaborating with Wikipedia?

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Courts normally do not defend their findings in public – they stand for themselves

Public opinion and acceptance of the courts rulings are nonetheless important – therefore explanations of reasons are helpful

Wikipedia could be a great source of information about a courts rulings



What are the difficulties?

Copyright laws! – Especially Courts are very sensitive when it comes to copyright-laws. Explaining free licenses to them can be time-consuming as they look at it from a very specific perspective.

Privacy! – The parties involved in a lawsuit have personal rights and these often are standing against a public usage of information.

Obligation of discretion! – In many countries public authorities and courts are obligated to keep specific information under official discretion.

What do the Outcomes look like?

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Pictures

Biographies of former and present judges

Articles about famous findings of the Court

Lists about judges, findings, etc.

References for other Wikipedia-articles

Wikidata, Wikisource, ...



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A brief conclusion and some hints

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Think outside the box – non-GLAM-institutions might be willing to work with Wikipedians in Residence and offer great opportunities for us!

Keep special difficulties in mind that can occur due to the nature of the institutions – such as privacy or the obligation of discretion at courts

Clearly specifying the goals of a WiR-project before it starts is difficult but nonetheless worth trying (but don't limit yourself too much with such plans)

Any questions?

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Picture sources

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Title slide: *Consultation room 2 of the Austrian Constitutional Court 01.jpg*

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Background of all other slides and large picture of the closing slide: *Austrian Constitutional Court building 02.jpg*

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2nd example picture at slide 6: *Courtroom of the Austrian Constitutional Court 01.jpg*

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