

Ladies and gentlemen, dear guests,

it's a pleasure and a great honour for me to welcome you on behalf of Wikimedia Germany here in Gotha as one of its Board members.

I want to give you a brief overview of Wikipedia and Wikimedia, their history and connection with data. The idea of a free, collaborative, multilingual Internet encyclopaedia existed long before Wikipedia was created. Its predecessor Nupedia for example, an English-language Web-based, free encyclopaedia whose articles were written and reviewed by volunteer experts, was founded in 2000 by Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger. Only a year later they started a similar but wiki based project that anyone can edit, to guarantee Nupedia's growing—Wikipedia. But they had to face the fact that this supporting project became much more successful than ever expected, having reached 18 language editions by the end of 2001 and about 300 today. While Sanger quit facilitating these projects, Wales together with his web portal company Bomis, Inc. funded Wikipedia for the moment by purchasing web servers. When this was not affordable anymore, Wales decided in 2003 to set up a non-profit charitable organization, the Wikimedia Foundation, currently based in San Francisco. It would be able to raise funds from their web sites to guarantee the accessibility of Wikipedia and its sister projects, add to the reputation of these projects and spread the idea of free knowledge.

With the expansion in new language communities by means of new language versions, people all over the world started to support their projects, met each other in real life, and founded national associations in order to support this approach. The first of these local entities, called chapters, has been Wikimedia Germany which was founded in 2004 and today there are 40 organizations around the world. The purpose of these entities is to support the creation, collection and distribution of Open Content in a non-profit way, to support the equal opportunity to access to knowledge and the education. At the beginning mostly driven by a volunteer Board, both, the Wikimedia Foundation and several Wikimedia Chapters, improved their fundraising, grew, and hired staff to realize their plans. By now, the Foundation has more than 100 staff members and Wikimedia Germany, the largest membership-based organization within the movement with more than 1'500 members and a budget of 3.3 million Euros, hired about 40 employees. The main problems the Wikimedia movement is facing right now are the decrease in authors and unequal social representation.

To accomplish its operative goals, Wikimedia Germany developed for the first time in 2011 an annual plan together with its regular Chapter members, changed its legal structure, and planned a new organizational structure with departments for community support, lobbying, for education, technics, public relations, fundraising, etc. Our project manager for lobbying, Mathias Schindler, participates in this conference. Further, a community project budget of 200'000 Euros has been established last year to support ideas with a minimum budget of 5'000 Euros coming out of the community and going back into the community. A committee whose member I've been last year, recommended projects like photo flights, an international photo contest and a television production about Wikis to the Board of Wikimedia Germany and its Executive Director. Also this

conference on the visualization of data has been approved by these persons, and thereby continues Wikimedia's work to connect Wikipedians and scientists—an approach which was realized for the first time with non-discipline specific Wikipedia Academies around the world. In 2011, Wikimedia Germany supported a congress called Wikipedia meets Antiquity which has been organized by me and some fellows. It has been the first Wiki conference about a special topic and still connects Wikipedians and scientists of this very topic. We are cooperating for example with the German Archaeological Institute, a corporation under the auspices of the federal Foreign Office of Germany.

Therefore, connecting with institutes that visualize data and whose representatives participate in this conference is a great opportunity for our association too. This topic is so important for Wikimedia Germany because as of this month our international team of software developers and designers starts to create a new sister project for Wikipedia, named Wikidata. Its lead software architect Daniel Kinzler takes part in this conference and will provide more information about his project in a presentation. But let me give you a brief summary of it: Wikidata will be the first new type of Wikimedia projects since 2006 and the first one ever developed by a Wikimedia Chapter. The project will provide a collaboratively edited and free-licensed database with one common source of structured data that can be used in all articles as well as for other purposes outside of the Wikimedia projects. Wikidata is based on an extension of Wikipedia's software MediaWiki, called Semantic MediaWiki, whose co-founder Dr. Denny Vrandečić is the leader of the Wikidata team. The initial development of this project is being funded with a major donation of 1.3 Million Euros, provided in half by the Allen Institute for Artificial Intelligence, and in a quarter each by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation and Google, Inc.

Besides Wikidata, Wikimedia Germany became part of the RENDER – Reflecting Knowledge Diversity project funded by the European Union that has set up a case study with the goal to implement and test the project's tools that shall facilitate the management of diversity in Wikipedia content. This project too deals with structured data but extracts them from the Wikimedia projects and makes them visible while Wikidata only offers an editable database that anyone can edit and use without extracting data in advance. To fill the database with verified information extracted from Wikimedia projects or external databases, users insert data manually or with support of an automated script whose creation could be supported by the Wikidata team. Hence, cooperation with projects that visualize data would not only be reasonable but could, in my opinion, also be very fruitful.

I want to thank on behalf of Wikimedia Germany as well as personally Dr. Olaf Simons, his colleagues Prof. Dr. Martin Mulso and Kristina Petri, and the Forschungszentrum Gotha for making the discussions over the coming weekend possible. Thank you and please enjoy the conference. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask me.