

Conducting a successful edit-a-thon

From the personal experiences of
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Define edit-a-thon

Marathon of editing particularly in Wikipedia

Outreach event that brings together wiki editors old and new alike

Done in a collaborative environment

Popular event in the Wikimedia movement

A typical edit-a-thon

Lasts between 3 to 5 hours

Averaging 16 participants

Produces 24,000 characters on the average

Held at educational or cultural facilities

Can contain training lessons, talks or demo

Has a budget amounting to USD 360 on the average

Has a theme (e.g. Feminism or Art) or focused on a particular project (e.g. English Wikipedia, WikiVoyage)

Planning your edit-a-thon

1. Determine goals

What do you want to achieve?

Usual goals:

- Increase in contributions
- Improve editing skills
- Getting new editors/contributors
- Increase positive awareness of Wikimedia

1. Determine goals

You can use the S.M.A.R.T. method

- It stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound
- Example: *Generate 50,000 characters of contributions in a 6-hour event by at least 15 participants*

1. Determine goals

You can think for a theme or project

- Decide on what would be your theme or target Wikimedia project that you want to improve



○ Through

- Fellow Wikipedians or Wikimediaians
- Wikimedia Affiliates or Wikimedia Communities
- Other institutions or potential partners especially like-minded organizations

2. Form a team



- When you have partners
 - Set a dialogue first
 - Write a letter of intent to conduct an event
 - They may mobilize participants

2. Form a team

3. Team composition

Project Lead

Partners/Venue Coordinator

Presenters/Speakers

Logistics

Facilitators

Registration

Documentation

3. Team composition

Recommended:

- A Wikipedia Administrator with account creator access

Optional

- Subject matter expert (such as a librarian, linguist, professor)
- Contributions reviewer

Based on experience, minimum of 3 persons can organize an edit-a-thon

4. Team communication

Team meetings

- In-person
- Online communication

Primarily discuss

- The status of final date and venue
- Challenges
- Budget
- Expected number of attendees
- Checklist

5. Target audience

Recommended: 15-45 persons

Experienced-to-new editors ratio

- Personal experience: 1:15
- Recommended: 1:5 to 1:10

Different set of participants may have different set of needs.

5. Target audience

Participants can be

- All Wikipedians, all new editors or mixed
- A particular group of people such as all students, all educators, all librarians or all writers.

6. Venue and target date

Venue must have computers/laptops with internet access; and having a projector is a plus.

If technology can't be provided by the venue, ask participants to bring laptops and Internet Wi-Fi routers.

The project team or your partners can provide the technology needed.

Schools or universities are excellent choice for a venue.

6. Venue and target date

Target date must be reasonable enough for your team's preparations.

Based on experience, two months before the target is recommended especially if you applied for a grant.

The date may be agreed upon between your team and your partners.

The event can be whole day, consecutive days or a series of events that could last for months

6. Venue and target date

Prepare a schedule

Example:

- 8:00 am to 8:30 am – Registration
- 8:30 am to 12:00 pm – Talks and demo
- 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm – Lunch break
- 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm – Edit-a-thon proper

7. Prepare a budget

Whether your event is grant funded or not, you will need a budget.

Typical budget line items:

- Refreshments
- Venue and facilities rental
- Swags/merchandise or give-away prizes
- Event paraphernalia (such as posters, printing of manuals, certificates etc.)

7. Prepare a budget

You may apply for Wikimedia grant for your event.

It is recommended to limit your budget.

One way to do this is to ask partners for free venue or shoulder other expenses.

Due to the spirit of volunteerism in the Wikimedia movement, avoid paying your team members for the work they have done. Although, you may give tokens of appreciation for a great job.

8. Getting the word out

Create a Wikipedia meet-up page

Social media

Online event website (such as Eventbrite or meetup.com)

Prepare banner or poster that will be posted at the venue. (Ask permission first)

Partners can help getting the word out

8. Getting the word out

Aside from the usual 5W 1H, your event announcement may include:

Instructions to create a Wikipedia user account before the event

Instructions to bring laptops and/or Wi-Fi router

Challenges you may encounter

1. Venue and date

Venue and/or date is difficult to finalize.

During the edit-a-thon, actual length of time was shorten due to unforeseen circumstances.

2. Participants

Not all attendees participated on the actual edit-a-thon

Not all who registered showed up

Some participants are vandalizing pages

3. Technology

Internet does not work

Internet connection is slow or intermittent.

Six-account limit

Best practices

1. Evaluate your event

Collect	Collect the usernames of participants and check their contributions using Special:CentralAuth page in Wikipedia to determine if you have reached your goal.
Prepare	Prepare an evaluation form
Ponder	Ponder on what worked well and what didn't
Know	Know your actual expenses
Assess	Assess your goals

2. Give swags/merchandise

To motivate attendees to edit, give away Wikimedia merchandise or swags to them.

You may use the merchandise as prizes for the person who has the most number of contributions or has written an excellent article.

3. Appreciate partners

A simple certificate or plaque of appreciation can be given to the partners that may help in future collaborations.

You may include them in the program to do welcoming remarks.

They may be one of the judges for determining the most well-written articles.

4. Document your event

Documenting your event will help you and other edit-a-thon organizers on conducting future events.

Post a project report on meta or in other means such as blogs or social media

Take photos of the event

If your event is grant funded, submit your official report on time.

5. Use resources wisely

Money usually comes from donations. So, spend it wisely.

Do not overspent.

Do not spend it on unnecessary expenses that are not aligned to your goal.

6. Organizing requires team effort

Conducting an edit-a-thon is not a one-man-show.

The success of the event depends on each project team members.

7. Keep attendees active

Explain	Explain clearly the basics of wiki editing to new editors during talks by engaging your audience
Allot	Allot some time for asking questions
Approach	Approach participants during the actual edit-a-thons and ask them if they need some help on their work

8. Keep a friendly and safe space

- Be alert on the interactions between participants.
- If there's any untoward incident, call the security of the venue.
- Respect privacy of attendees



More information



Edit-a-thons conducted

Open Web Day (includes Bikol Wikipedia edit-a-thon)

- https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikimedia_Philippines/Projects/Open_Web_Day

Waray Wikipedia edit-a-thons

- https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikimedia_Philippines/Projects/Waray_Wikipedia_Edit-a-thon
- https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikimedia_Philippines/Projects/2nd_Waray_Wikipedia_Edit-a-thon
- https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/3rd_Waray_Wikipedia_Edit-a-thon
- https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/4th_Waray_Wikipedia_Edit-a-thon
- https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/5th_Waray_Wikipedia_Edit-a-thon
- https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/6th_Waray_Wikipedia_Edit-a-thon
- https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/7th_Waray_Wikipedia_Edit-a-thon

Pangasinan edit-a-thons

- https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/WikiProject_Pangasinan/2014_Pangasinan_Wikipedia_Edit-a-thon
- https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/2nd_Wikipedia_Edit-a-thon_in_Pangasinan



- How to run an edit-a-thon
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:How_to_run_an_edit-a-thon
- Edit-a-thon training module
 - <https://outreachdashboard.wmflabs.org/training/editathons>
- Edit-a-thon Program Evaluation
 - https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Learning_and_Evaluation/Evaluation_reports/2013/Edit-a-thons

You can visit the following:

You can contact me at:

- Wikipedia:
 - User:Jojit fb
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Jojit_fb
 - Leave a message here:
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User_talk:Jojit_fb
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Happy wiki editing 😊

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