



Wikimedia in the developing world

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WMF board members at work...



What is the legal status of this derivative work ?

Wikimedia Foundation Inc



An international non-profit organization

- dedicated to encouraging the **growth, development and distribution** of free, multilingual content,
- and to providing the full content of these wiki-based projects to the public free of charge.

A Radical Idea:



Imagine a world in which every single person is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge.

That's what we're doing.



A Radical Idea:

*Imagine a world in which
every single person is given free access
to the sum of all human knowledge.*

That's what we're doing.

.... Really ?



to the *sum of all human knowledge*.

- A requirement : Neutrality of point of view
- Addressing everyone's concerns
- Covering all topics...
and not only from a *tourist* point of view !

The screenshot shows a Netscape browser window displaying the Wikipedia article for 'Pommier de Sodome'. The article text describes the plant's scientific name, common names, and uses. A table on the right provides taxonomic classification.

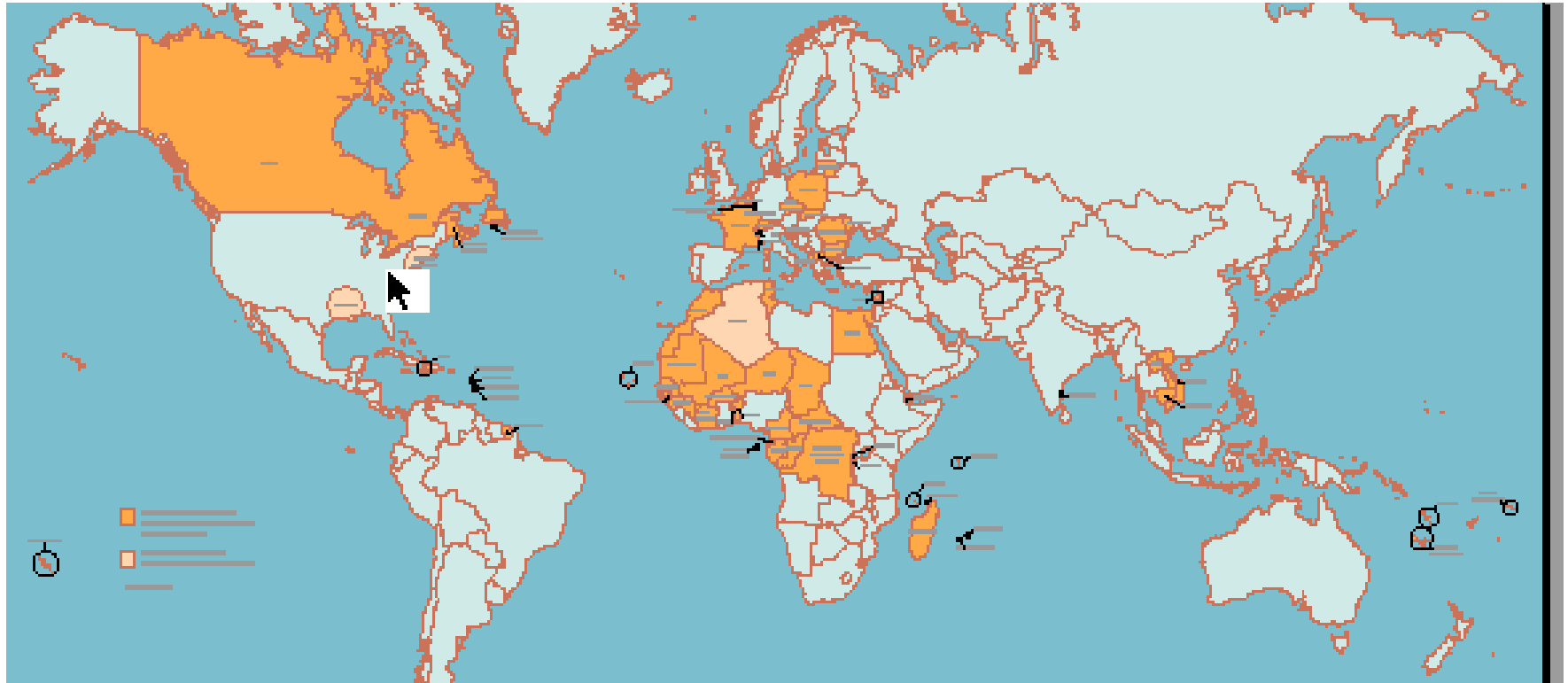
Classification classique	
Règne :	Plantae
Division :	Magnoliophyta
Classe :	Magnoliopsida
Ordre :	Gentiales

The example of *Calotropis procera*

to the *sum of all human knowledge*.



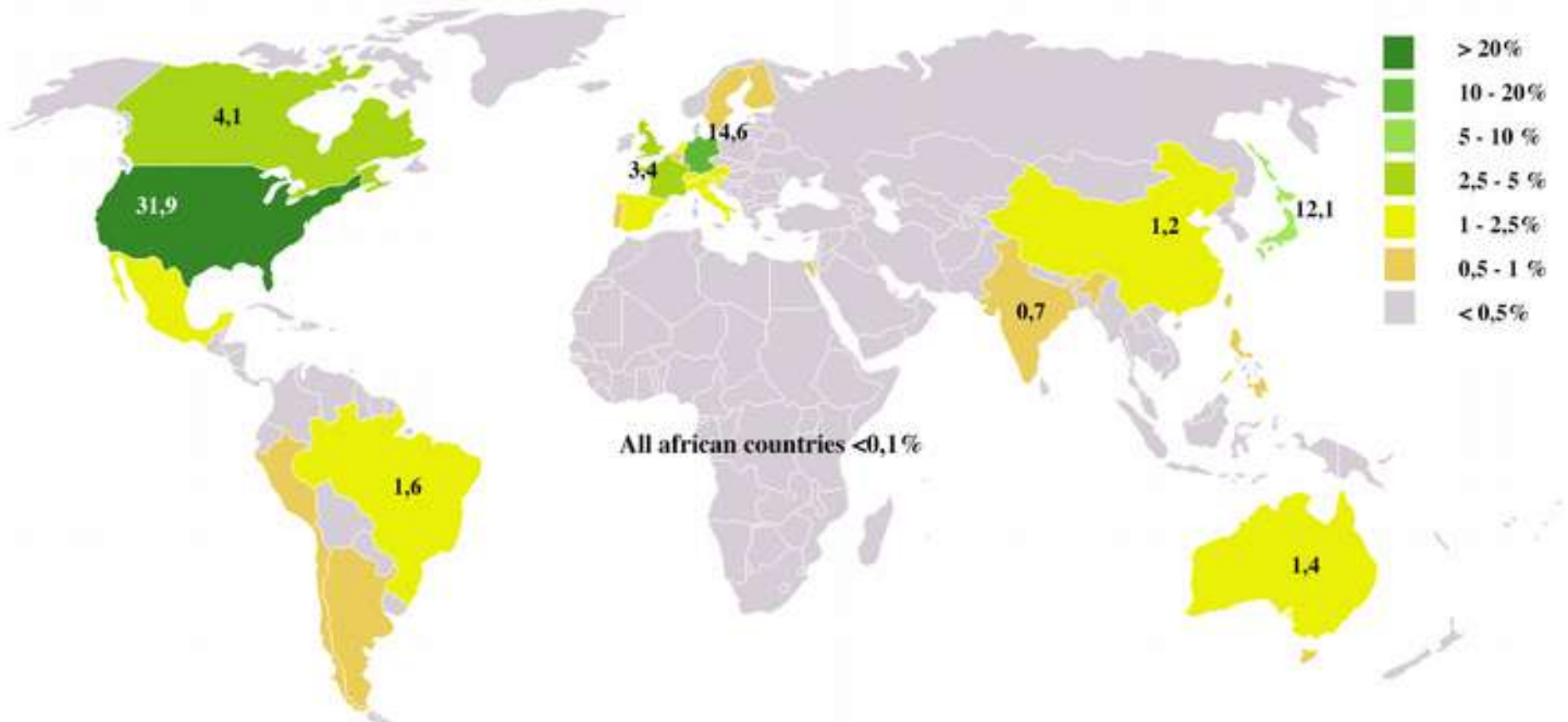
Practically, some editors seem to be missing...



French speaking countries

French wikipedia : > 200 very active editors
0 from Africa

every single person is given access...



From Wikimedia projects access hits stats

Few hits from Africa, Eastern Europe...

every single person is given access...



Talking to people in their mother language

- Fulfude : <http://ff.wikipedia.org> - 2 articles
- Wolof : <http://wo.wikipedia.org> - 4 articles
- Yorube : <http://yo.wikipedia.org> - 40 articles
- Bambara : <http://bm.wikipedia.org> - 67 articles
- Kiswahili : <http://sw.wikipedia.org> - 70 articles
- Lingala : <http://ln.wikipedia.org> - 72 articles

- Arab : <http://ar.wikipedia.org> - 4000 articles
- Afrikaans : <http://af.wikipedia.org> - 4000 articles

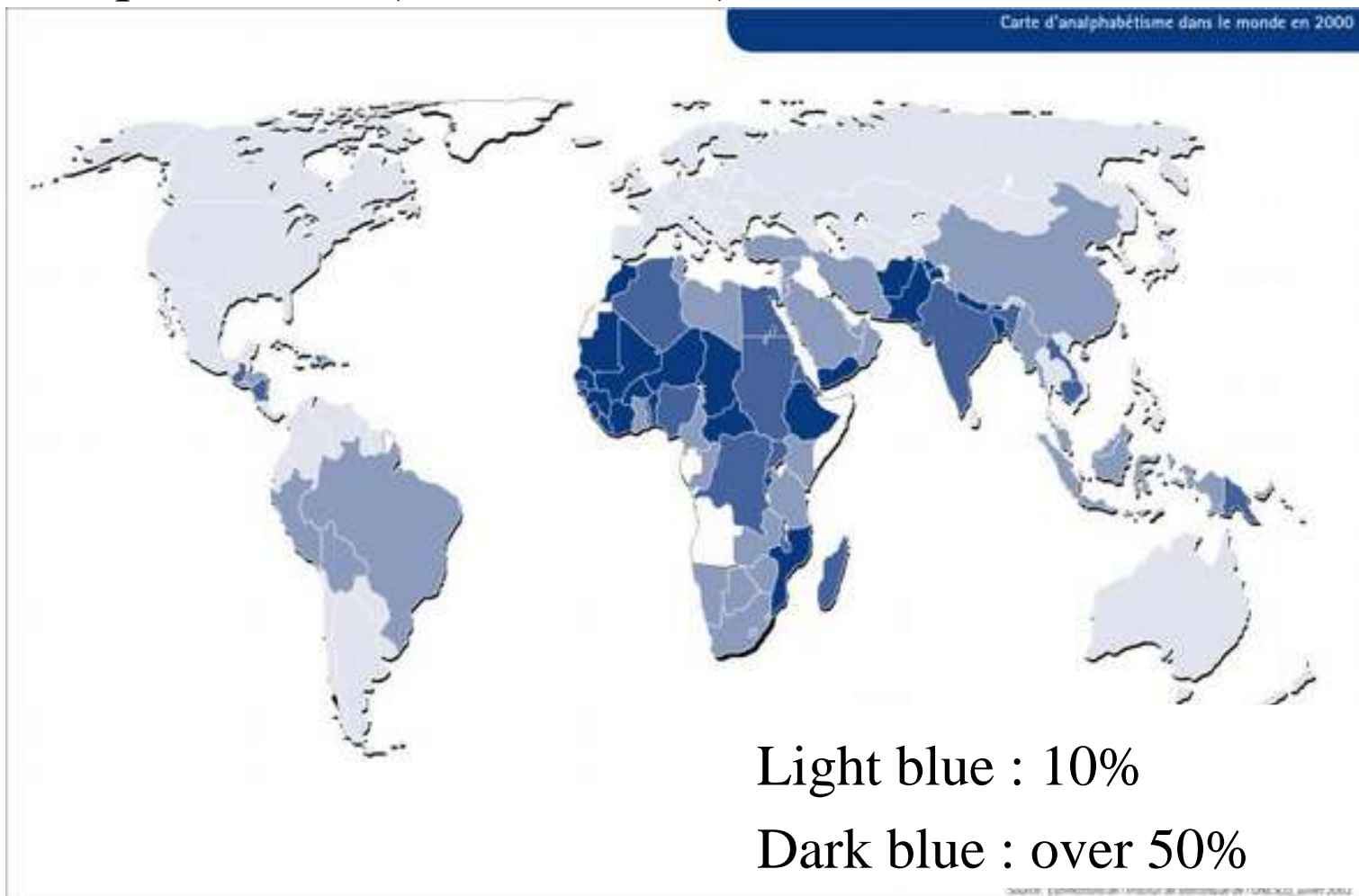
- Portuguese : <http://pt.wikipedia.org> - 59 000 articles
- French : <http://fr.wikipedia.org> - 138 000 articles
- English : <http://en.wikipedia.org> - 650 000 articles

Xhosa, Zulu, Twi (tw), Akan (ak), Gikuyu (ki), Ewe (ee), Igbo (ig), Hausa (ha)...

every single person is given access...



Analphabetism (Unesco, 2002)



every single person is given access...



Photo : Photoshare

Women

- Lower levels of literacy
- Cultural perceptions of women's roles
- Heavy workload, limited time for other activities (childcare, housework...)
- The need to address basic amenities as the first-priority (food ...)
- Perception of computer (technical issues) and internet (safety issues)



Africa : the dark side...

- 800 millions people
- The world poorest continent
- Widespread famines
- Diseases (AIDS, measles, paludism)
- Marginalization of ethnic groups



50 km east of Tamanrasset (Algeria)



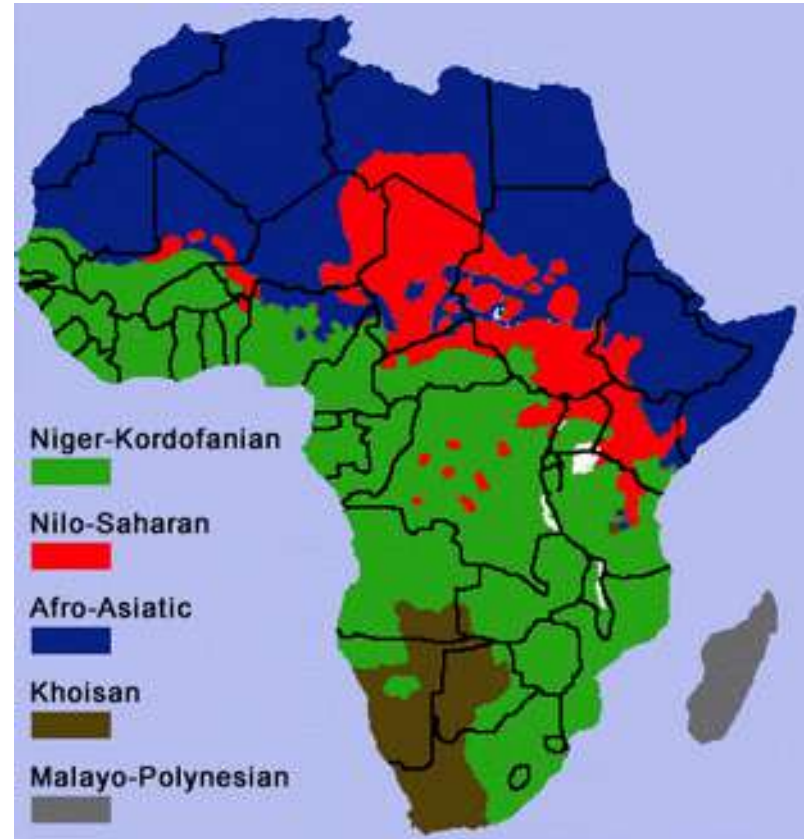
Africa : the dark side...

- Frequently hampered by instability, corruption and violence
- Lack of foreign investment
- Poor knowledge of market
- Capital flight
- Little autonomy of research
- Information access controlled by the State

Diversity of indigeneous languages



- 1800 african languages
- Only a couple of dozen are spoken by more than a million people
- Languages versus dialects
- Variety of sign languages



Languages families in Africa

How many have an encyclopedia ?

Languages of former colonial powers



- English, French, or Portuguese
- Initially, election of one official language in a search of national unity
- In many states, the primary language of government, law, education, media, army...



BUT the majority of people in the nation rarely speak these European languages fluently enough to participate.

Africa and Internet



- Few Africans have access
- “What is Internet ?”
- A weak infrastructure
- Internal digital divide
(cities and countryside)
- No material in a language
Africans can understand
- State and governmental impact



Public phone and internet in Marrocco



Africa's assets

- Increasing number of democratic governments
- Independent judiciaries and human rights recognition
- Wealth from natural resources (oil, diamonds...)
- A major economical success : South Africa
- Increasingly awareness of the importance of linguistic diversity
- Increased networking
- Alternative communication system uses
- A desire to reduce the divide



Cher and his turaya

Africa's needs...



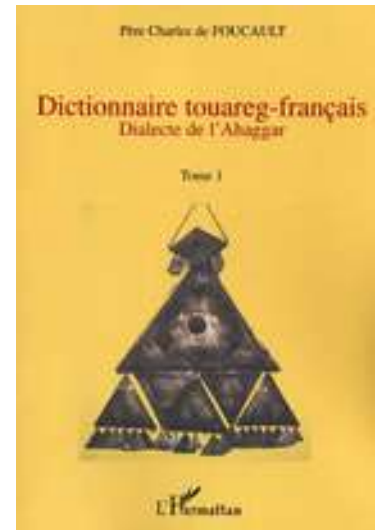
- A need for investment, trade rather than just aid and debt forgiveness
- A need for low cost or free stuff
- A need for recognition by and sharing with other continents
- A need for better communication networks
- A need for personal empowering rather than official knowledge

How Wikimedia projects could help...



- Building a collection of African knowledge (often unknown or underestimated)
- Making it available to African people
- Sharing it with everyone else
- Increase ability to participate on a more equal level in the social, political and economic sphere.

But Africans must be the leaders !



*Tuareg-french dictionary
by Foucault*

Adopt an african language wikipedia



The screenshot shows the Wikipedia Lingala interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for 'ekavoli / article', 'ntembe / discuter', 'kabalusa / éditer', and 'likambo / histoire'. The main title is 'Lonkásá ya liboso'. Below it, there is a search bar and a 'Traducteur français - lingala recherché! contact' link. The main content area is titled 'Mb? t?!' and contains a welcome message in Lingala: 'Boyéi bolému na ebandéli ya wikipedia, buku ya liboso ya lingála s? ki bolobaka lingála mpe s? ki bokanisí ete buku ya lingála ekozala malému, bok?nd? na Kotámbole ya liboso.' It also mentions 'Bienvenu sur les débuts de Wikipédia, la première Encyclopédie en lingala. Si vous le parlez, et vous pensez qu'une encyclopédie lingala serait une bonne chose, allez vous à meta:How to start a new Wikipedia'. The sidebar on the right features a map of Africa with the Congo region highlighted in green, and a section titled 'Wikipedia Lingála' with a sub-section 'Óyo nini?' and a 'Mibéko' section.

- 10 millions of speakers... 74 articles...
- Victim of vandalism if not taking care of
- Interface in 3 languages !

Dictionaries, books...

- Translations of languages
- Books, wikireaders (educational content)
- CD Roms in libraries
- Audio content
- Free wiki engine

Content and delivery of information must be appropriate and practical.

a multilingual free
encyclopedia
Wiktionary
[ˈwɪkʃənəri] n.,
a wiki-based Open
Content dictionary
Witien [ˈwɪtʃənəri]



Think free. Learn free.



WIKINEWS



How could the Foundation help ?



- Promotion of projects in developing countries (media coverage, participation to meetings...) --> Elia
- Contact with researchers, educational system, states, NGOs, immigrant associations, students unions...
- Open Society Institute fund to help participation to brainstorming Wikimania event
- Financial support for special projects (Ossetian or Bambara languages) ? --> Danny
- « Lobbying » for encoding issues ? Audio, video... --> Erik
- Hiring « editors-in-chief » ?