



Contributing to Wikipedia: what are the benefits for scientists?

Samuel Guebo

19th May 2016



WIKIMEDIA
Community User Group
CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Introduction

Wikipedia, also referred to as *the free encyclopedia*, is the **6th most visited website**. According to a very recent article published by American Scientific, it represents an “**undeniable useful global asset**” thanks to the immensity and variety of topics it covers (American Scientific, 2016)

Every hour, 8 million of visitors access over 35 million articles in English but also in more than **250 other languages**. Scientists however, feel skeptical over the reliability of the “open” encyclopedia.

We will go over the **arguments generally raised**, counter them, and highlight **how beneficial** Wikipedia could be to scientists.



WIKIMEDIA
Community User Group
CÔTE D'IVOIRE

1

**It can be edited by anyone,
regardless of their level of expertise**

- Publishing and keeping an article “alive” on Wikipedia both implies some strict rules to follow.
- necessity of neutral point of view (NPOV) and the encyclopedic nature of Wikipedia.
- reliable sources that are independent of the subject.



WIKIMEDIA
Community User Group
CÔTE D'IVOIRE

1

It can be edited by anyone, regardless of their level of expertise

The article about [Barack Obama](#), for instance, has 418 footnotes.

African Hope 0 0 0 Talk Sandbox Preferences Beta Watchlist Contributions Log out

Article Talk Read Edit source View history Search

Barack Obama

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
(Redirected from [Barack obama](#))

"Barack" and "Obama" redirect here. For his father, see [Barack Obama Sr.](#) For other uses of "Barack", see [Barack \(disambiguation\)](#). For other uses of "Obama", see [Obama \(disambiguation\)](#).

Barack Hussein Obama II (US[ⓘ]/bəˈrɑːk huːˈseɪn ouˈbɑːmə/^[2]^[3] born August 4, 1961) is an American politician serving as the 44th President of the United States. He is the first African American to hold the office, as well as the first president born outside of the continental United States. Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, Obama is a graduate of Columbia University and Harvard Law School, where he served as president of the *Harvard Law Review*. He was a community organizer in Chicago before earning his law degree. He worked as a civil rights attorney and taught constitutional law at University of Chicago Law School between 1992 and 2004. He served three terms representing the 13th District in the Illinois Senate from 1997 to 2004, and ran unsuccessfully in the Democratic primary for the United States House of Representatives in 2000 against incumbent Bobby Rush.

In 2004, Obama received national attention during his campaign to represent Illinois in the United States Senate with his victory in the March Democratic Party primary, his keynote address at the



Barack Obama
44th President of the United States
Incumbent

414. ^ Pulliam, Sarah; Olsen, Ted (January 23, 2008). "Q&A: Barack Obama". *Christianity Today* (Carol Stream, IL). Retrieved January 4, 2013.
415. ^ Babington, Charles; Superville, Darlene (September 28, 2010). "Obama 'Christian By Choice': President Responds To Questioner". *The Huffington Post*. Associated Press.
416. ^ Video – "President Obama: 'I am a Christian By Choice'". ABC News blog. September 29, 2010.
417. ^ Garrett, Major; Obama, Barack (March 14, 2008). "Obama talks to Major Garrett on 'Hannity & Colmes'". RealClearPolitics. Retrieved November 10, 2012. "Major Garrett, Fox News correspondent: So the first question, how long have you been a member in good standing of that church? Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL), presidential candidate: You know, I've been a member since 1991 or '92. And – but I have known Trinity even before then when I was a community organizer on the South Side, helping steel workers find jobs...Garrett: As a member in good standing, were you a regular attendee of Sunday services? Obama: You know, I won't say that I was a perfect attendee. I was regular in spurts, because there was times when, for example, our child had just been born, our first child. And so we didn't go as regularly then."
- "Obama strongly denounces former pastor". MSNBC. Associated Press. April 29, 2008. Retrieved November 10, 2012. "I have been a member of Trinity United Church of Christ since 1992, and have known Reverend Wright for 20 years," Obama said. "The person I saw yesterday was not the person that I met 20 years ago."
 - Miller, Lisa (July 11, 2008). "Finding his faith". *Newsweek* (New York). Archived from the original on July 20, 2013. Retrieved November 10, 2012. "He is now a Christian, having been baptized in the early 1990s at Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago."
 - Remnick, David (2010). *The Bridge: The Life and Rise of Barack Obama*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. p. 177. ISBN 978-1-4000-4360-6. "In late October 1987, his third year as an organizer, Obama went with Kellman to a conference on the black church and social justice at the Harvard Divinity School."
 - Maraniss (2012), p. 557: It would take time for Obama to join and become fully engaged in Wright's church, a place where he would be baptized and married; that would not happen until later, during his second time around in Chicago, but the process started then, in October 1987...Jerry Kellman: "He wasn't a member of the church during those first three years, but he was drawn to Jeremiah."
418. ^ "Obama's church choice likely to be scrutinized". MSNBC. Associated Press. November 17, 2008. Retrieved January 20, 2009.
419. ^ Sullivan, Amy (June 29, 2009). "The Obamas find a church home—away from home". *Time*. Retrieved December 14, 2009.

2

There is no peer-review process



Wikipedia can be reviewed and corrected by the entire community, including experts, knowledgeable amateurs, and others devoted to Wikipedia's mission .

Several user types are constantly watching over Wikipedia
rollbacker, bot, oversight, checkuser, bureaucrat,
administrator.



WIKIMEDIA
Community User Group
CÔTE D'IVOIRE

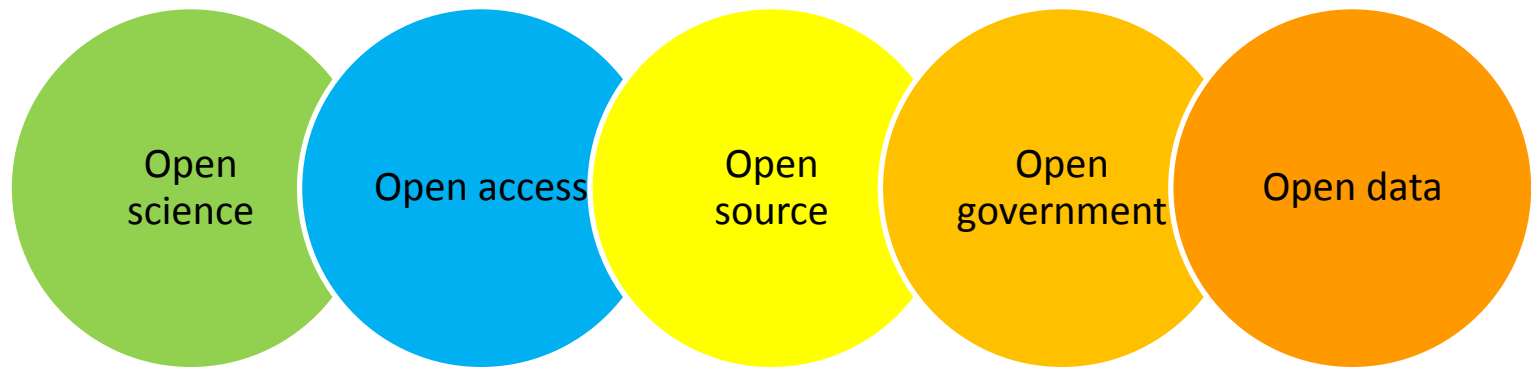


8

reasons why
scientists should
edit Wikipedia

1

Understanding the Open movement or ending up outdated



2

Citing your own work as a reference, increasing your visibility

- Your work could be mentioned if it matches some requirements. For instance, it should be published in a reputable resource.
- Having your work mentioned in an article that is viewed thousands of times a day might surely increase your visibility.



3

Practicing the scientific method

The Wikipedia editing is similar to the scientific method in several points. It requires **observable**, **empirical** and **measurable evidence** : references.



WIKIMEDIA
Community User Group
CÔTE D'IVOIRE

4




Gaining access to a larger spectrum of sources

- 35 million articles in english but also in more than 250 other languages
- A wide database of reliable sources : Every article is the sum of several sources on a specific subject.
- Wikipedia can be a starting point for research




5

Joining a scientific community on Wikipedia and beyond

 African Hope  0  0 [Talk](#) [Sandbox](#) [Preferences](#) [Beta](#) [Watchlist](#) [Contributions](#) [Log out](#)

Project page [Talk](#)

[Read](#) [Edit source](#) [View history](#)  [More](#) ▾



Wikipedia:WikiProject Science

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

For a directory of science-oriented WikiProjects, see: [WikiProject Council: Directory – Science](#)

WikiProject Science

[Topics list](#)

[Target articles](#)

[Guidelines](#)

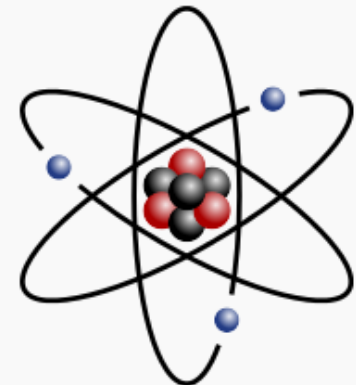
[Templates](#)

[Members](#)

Contents [\[hide\]](#)

- [1 Scope and goals](#)
- [2 How you can help](#)
- [3 Article alerts](#)
- [4 Categories](#)
- [5 Members](#)
- [6 Parentage and related WikiProjects](#)
- [7 Related pages](#)
- [8 Older project pages](#)
- [9 Scientific Peer Review](#)
- [10 Collaboration of the Month \(inactive\)](#)
- [11 Tools](#)
- [12 Sister projects](#)

WikiProject Science



Stylized Lithium atom

Shortcuts [WP:SCIENCE](#),
[WP:WPSCI](#)

Category [WikiProject Science](#)

6

Using the wiki software as a tool for working collaboratively



- With Mediawiki, the open source software powering Wikipedia, scientists can work simultaneously, and remotely.
- It is free to install use



WIKIMEDIA
Community User Group
CÔTE D'IVOIRE

7

Getting your research projects funded

- The Wikimedia Foundation, the institution behind Wikipedia, provides grants to projects and researches that show a relevant impact on Wikipedia



WIKIMEDIA
FOUNDATION

8

Helping local wiki initiatives by editing or providing sources

Participate in our current projects...



Or initiate custom ones:

In 2014, researchers from Los Alamos National Laboratory were able to make extremely accurate forecasts about the spread of dengue fever in Brazil and flu in the U.S., Japan, Poland and Thailand by examining Wikipedia search data (LA Times, 2014).



JOIN US #WIKICIV !





WIKIMEDIA

Community User Group

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

*An Independent Group of
Volunteer Wikimedians*



Wikimedia Côte d'Ivoire



Wikimedia_CIV



www.wikimedia.ci