# The talent we need.

WIKIMEDIA
FOUNDATION

We are growing the
free knowledge movement.

We are looking for
Board members to join us.

# The future of free knowledge

**The Wikimedia movement is based on a radical vision:
a world in which every single person can freely share in all knowledge.
We believe that world is within reach.**

Over the past 15 years, Wikipedia has become one of the world's most
beloved resources, reaching hundreds of millions of people each month
with reliable, free information, written by a community of critical thinkers.

**There are opportunities and challenges all around us.**

There is information everywhere you turn. Populations are changing around
the world. Literacy levels are rising. Internet penetration continues to grow.

Meanwhile, the web is less open and more commercial. Privacy is increasingly illusory.
The window of discourse is narrowing. The quality of our civilization's infosphere may
be at stake.

**We are serious about our vision.**

We must face the future with our communities, *as a movement*.

This photo lives on Wikimedia Commons, a repository of stunning images that are freely licensed for all to use.

## Where we came from.

It began in 2001 as a radical idea: an open and free encyclopedia that anyone could edit.[1] Let go of traditional notions of experts and peer review and allow anyone to create, edit, and discuss articles. Build an open platform, add reasonable rules of engagement,[2] and see what happens.

Lo and behold, contributors from all over the world arrived in waves. In the Spring of 2006, Wikipedia celebrated its 1 millionth article in over 100 languages.[3] And they were only getting started.

For the first few years, the work of the Foundation was done almost entirely by volunteers. In 2005, for example, we had two employees—a software manager and a coordinator. But as the projects grew, and the support those projects needed also grew, we brought in smart, purpose-driven people, got our organizational act together, and didn't lose sight of our communities of contributors and volunteers—*the very people that built the projects.*

## Where we are today.

Wikipedia is now 16 years old. *It is the largest collection of free, collaborative knowledge in human history.* It houses more than 35 million volunteer-authored articles in more than 290 languages.[4]

And the Wikimedia Foundation, originally powered by volunteers, now has a staff 280 strong with an annual operating budget of ±70M USD.[5]

# Current competencies:

## We engineer.

We support the servers that power the sites. We run technical security. We build new products and features for readers and editors: apps, editing interfaces, messaging and collaboration tools, uploaders, and viewing experiences.

## We fundraise.

We raise the money to support the infrastructure of our projects. Our fundraising model reflects our underlying philosophy: we can do more together than we can as individuals. Instead of relying on large donations or ads, 60% of our 70M USD annual operating budget comes from online donations that average 15 USD. Now we've launched an endowment to help support the growth of our projects *in perpetuity.*

## We share resources with our affiliates and communities.

Through grants, we currently give ±7M USD to contributors and affiliates who do important work in furtherance of the free knowledge movement.

## We defend free knowledge and the rights of our users around the world.

We fight censorship, we support open licenses and open access, and we defend our users' free expression and privacy rights around the world *on and offline.*

## We support. We inform. We collaborate.

We advocate, teach, run mass, multilingual consultations on our policies, initiatives, and products. We support trust and safety online and are investing heavily in anti-harassment work. We want to become a leader in civil discourse online. We pay attention to and support new, emerging, smaller wikis and their communities.

## Our path to grow.

But hold on. Zoom out a bit. *Our story is larger still*. The Wikimedia Foundation is an organization within a larger ecosystem of organizations.

We have ±150 affiliates and partners around the world (e.g. chapters, user groups, cultural and educational institutions). We think it is time we *all* step back and think *together* about where the world is headed over the next 15 years, how to be of service to it, and better coalesce and grow our efforts.

We need a "movement strategy", so throughout 2017, we'll get together with content contributors, experts, affiliates, board members, and new readers to think about how to make free knowledge an established way of life everywhere.[6]

## The role of the board.

We are an usual, centralised organization (funds, servers, TMs etc) operating in an unusual, decentralised movement. We are a multi-stakeholder ecosystem on the move. Control is not an appropriate leadership philosophy within our context. When Wikipedia was released into the wild the Wikimedia communities said to the world, "We trust you."

Board members play a vital role in shaping and approving our strategy, ensuring the we use our resources in pursuit of our mission, and championing our vision, mission, and values within our communities and in public.

The Board's role is to oversee the management of the Foundation, and advise, challenge, and support the Executive Director without crossing into management.

Wikimedians at Wikimania, our annual global conference, in Italy 2016. This photo lives on our free photography commons, under a Creative Commons license.

# The structure of the board.

The Board is structured to hold a range of experiences and differing expertise:
- three community-nominated volunteer seats,
- two affiliate-nominated volunteer seats,
- four appointed expert volunteer seats,
- Wales, the founder, retains an honorary seat.

Community and affiliate-nominated members bring deep knowledge of our movement, but may not have previously participated in board governance. Members appointed by the Board bring subject-matter expertise, yet may know little about the culture and complexities of our movement.

It's not a job for the faint of heart. For those willing to invest, however, it could be the ride of a lifetime. We currently reach nearly a billion users a month and we're making plans to reach more.

At the moment, we are looking to fill two appointed expert seats.

## Specific talent needs

### 1/3. Growing a Global Movement: Supporting humans on a large scale.

Have you grown a movement before? What can you teach us about scaling a culture of decentralized volunteerism?  The "Growing a Global Movement" Board seat will help us build a distributed, decentralized infrastructure and inspired culture, while preserving our altruistic heart.

You would likely have some or all of these kinds of experiences:

- You have successfully scaled a culture and structure to support a growing movement. You can create a global, sustainable resource allocation and distribution model.
    - Perhaps you have worked for a global NGO (e.g., growing Amnesty International or the International Red Crescent / Red Cross movement).
    - Perhaps you have worked on a national election campaign or movement, architecting volunteer teams and resources at scale (e.g. civil rights movement, presidential campaign).
    - Perhaps you worked in an international, philanthropic campaign (e.g. Product Red).
- You can assess complex situations with multifaceted problem sets and design simple, elegant solutions that withstand the test of time— you would prefer to draft a constitution, not a tax code.
- You have contributed to the Wikimedia movement in some way, through donations, edits, uploads, or organizing community-driven efforts.

# Specific talent needs

## 2/3. Engaging New Communities: Mobilizing for the world of 2030.

It's clear where one significant growth path lies: engaging new audiences in emerging markets, the people we have not yet reached. The "Growing New Communities" Board seat will help us identify and enter new, developing markets—not just one, but many.

You would likely have some or all of these kinds of experiences:

- You see the opportunities, challenges, and risks particular regions present, are "in touch" with the general needs of the people we hope to serve, and have a sense for the right partnership coalition.
  - Perhaps you have led entry into multiple developing markets
  - Perhaps you have worked in international development or led program or product evolution
  - Perhaps you have worked in a multinational organization handling international business development in new markets for new programs, products or services
- You have applied cultural insight and local knowledge to develop meaningful, mission-driven programs or products.
- You know youth in the markets we hope to serve.
- You have been a board member for a social sector organization or company that has faced similar challenges (e.g. growth in the social sector, entering new markets while staying true to the brand, shifting an organization to think toward the future).

The Wikimedia Chapters Conference in Berlin, 2016.
Our people are passionate! Board Members will have the chance to get to know us when they attend two of our annual conferences. The passion, sense of service, and genuine altruism is a marvel in itself.

# Specific talent needs

### 3/3. Social Sector Governance: More than process.

Our governance practices and processes must evolve to meet our changing environment and needs. Yet good governance is about far more than process. We need intelligent, social sector change management too. The "Social Sector Governance" Board seat will us help us tackle our governance challenges with the big picture in mind.

You would likely have some or all of the following experience:

- You have successfully led a social-sector organization through some tricky inflection point (e.g. significant growth, major evolution in strategy) by improving governance at the executive or board level.
  - Perhaps you have worked as advisors to executives and governments.
  - Perhaps you have been an executive yourself.
  - Perhaps you have worked in public radio, television, the Library of Congress, or other media.
- You have taught, spoken, or written about governance.
- You are seasoned through years of service with other boards.
- You have contributed to the Wikimedia movement in some way, through donations, edits, uploads, or organizing community-driven efforts.

# The commitment

Board members serve for three-year, renewable terms. Each year, the Board convenes four times in person at different locations around the world and three to six times online as necessary. Meetings require coordination with members across the world and across time zones.

Overall, the time commitment for standard service is roughly 75 hours per year (not including travel). Board members may additionally choose to dedicate time to one or more Board committees, supporting and providing counsel to the Executive Director and her team, or promoting the Wikimedia movement through speaking engagements and connecting with the Wikimedia communities. All Board positions are unpaid and provided in service of the movement.

**Help us make free knowledge an established way of life everywhere.**

# References

1. For more information, see
   https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikimedia_Foundation#History.

2. For our basic rules of engagement, see The Five Pillars of Wikipedia.

3. Read more about our millionth article at
   https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Millionth_article_FAQ#What_is_thi
   s_FAQ_about.3F.

4. For more information about the history of Wikipedia, see
   https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia.

5. Wikimedia Foundation Audit Report
   https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/foundation/4/43/Wikimedia_Foun
   dation_Audit_Report_-_FY15-16.pdf

6. Michelle Paulson, Interim General Counsel, in a meeting of the Wikimedia
   Executive team, September, 2016.


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