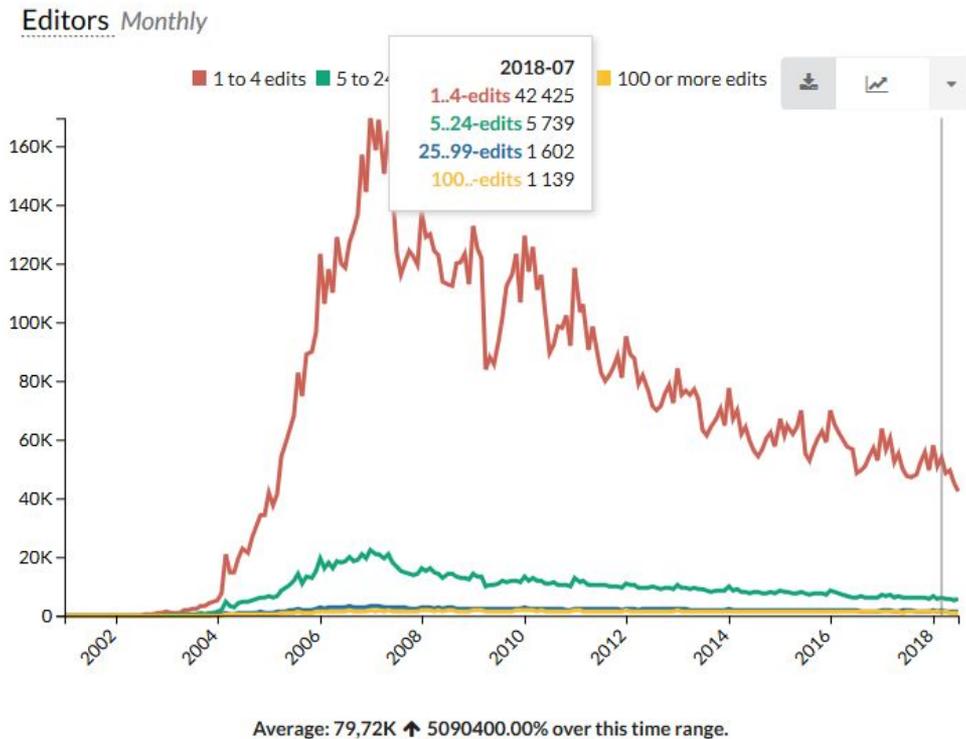


How to Retain New Editors?

Christine Domgörgen, Julia Kirchner,
Wikimedia Germany

Editor numbers are declining

Number of regular editors as well as casual editors in Wikipedia is declining.



Approaches to editor attraction

On-Wiki:
banner
campaigns,
competitions and
contests

Offline Events:
workshops
(photo editing,
editing),
trainings,
edit-a-thons,
camps,
conferences,
clubs...

Media outreach:
public relations,
social media
campaigns

Institutions:
GLAM projects,
cooperations
with schools and
universities

New Editors' Journey



Awareness

Interest

Action

Registration

WMDE Approach: Banner campaigns

2017 - 2018 Results

7 Banner campaigns in Wikipedia

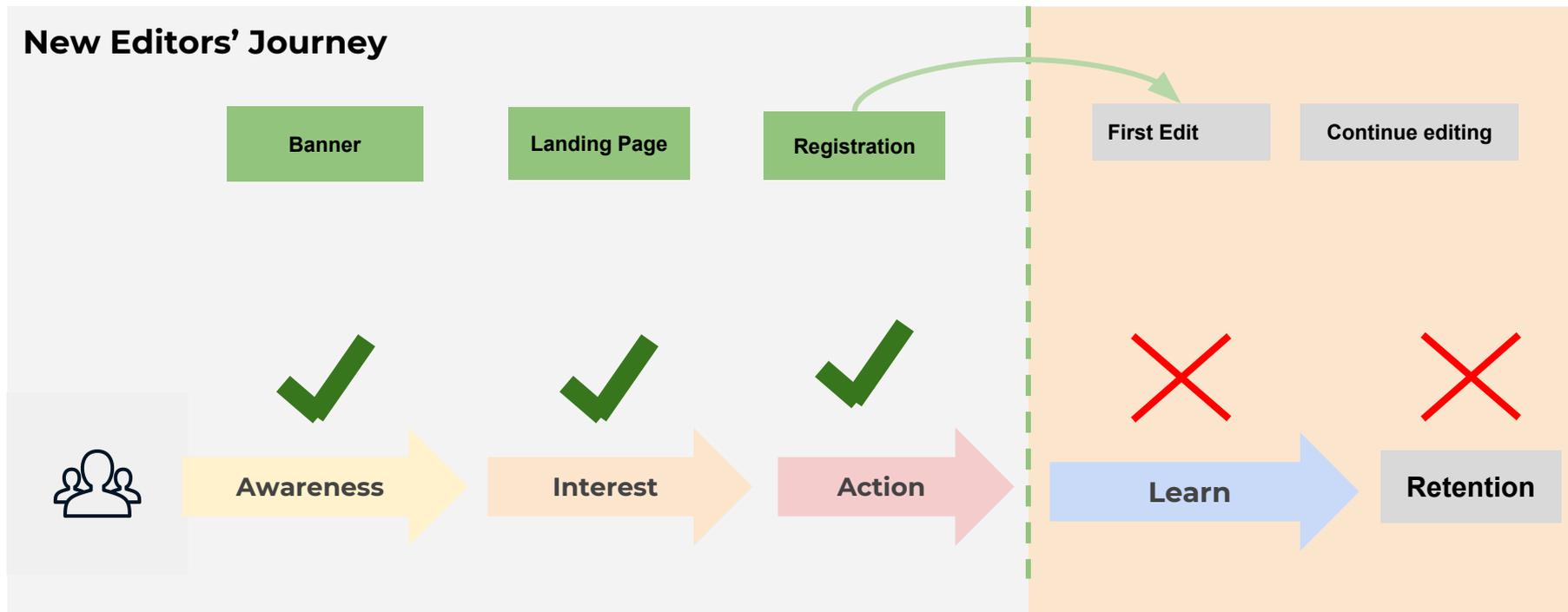
3.006 new users

(ca.) 350 users with 1 edit

38 users with 10+ edits



Where do we lose new contributors?

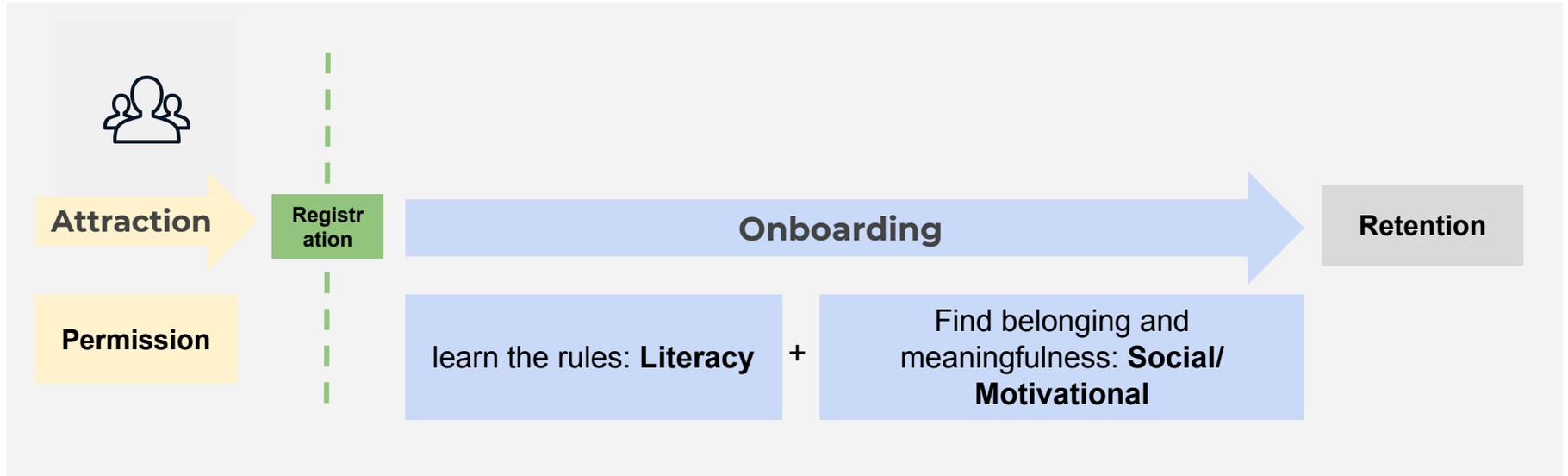


Attraction is not the problem, retention is!

94% of the newly registered users do
not come back

Why is this a problem?

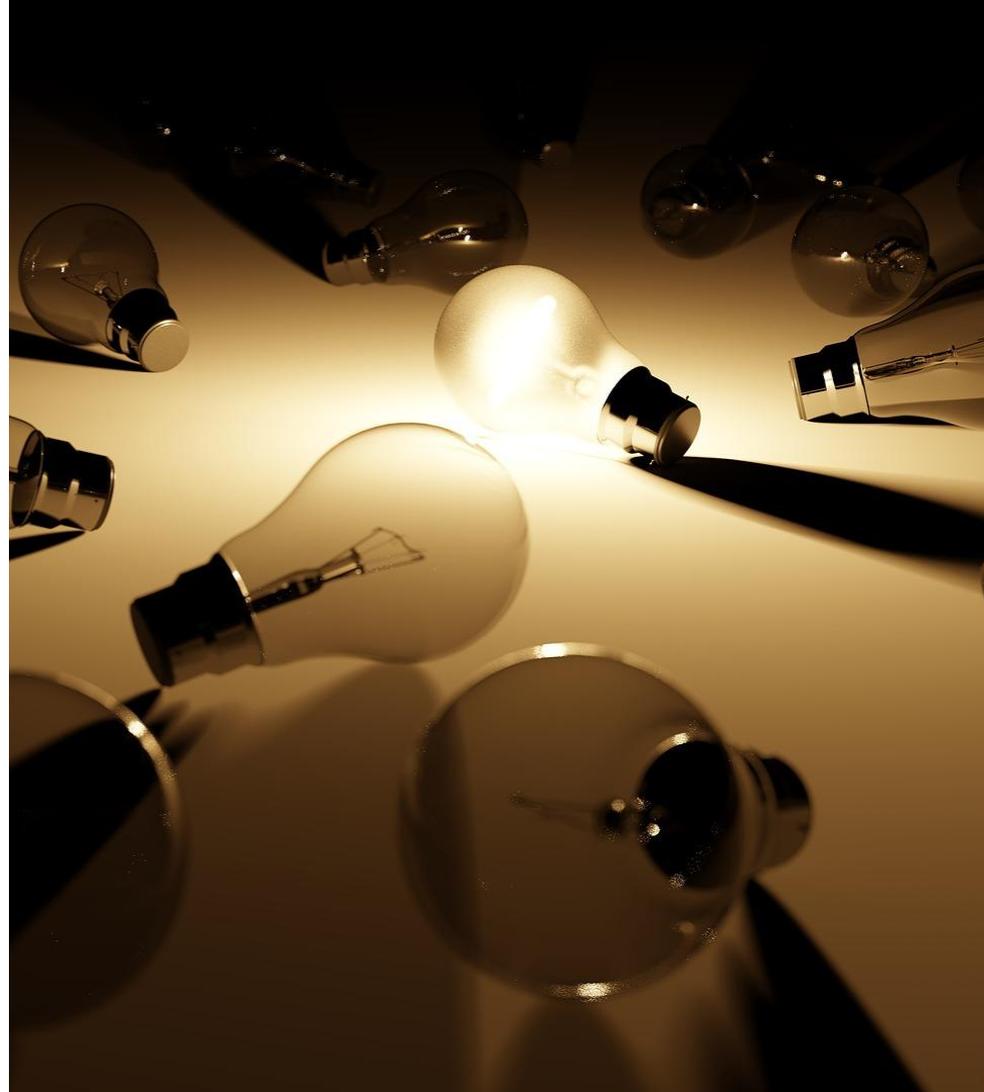
New Editors' Journey



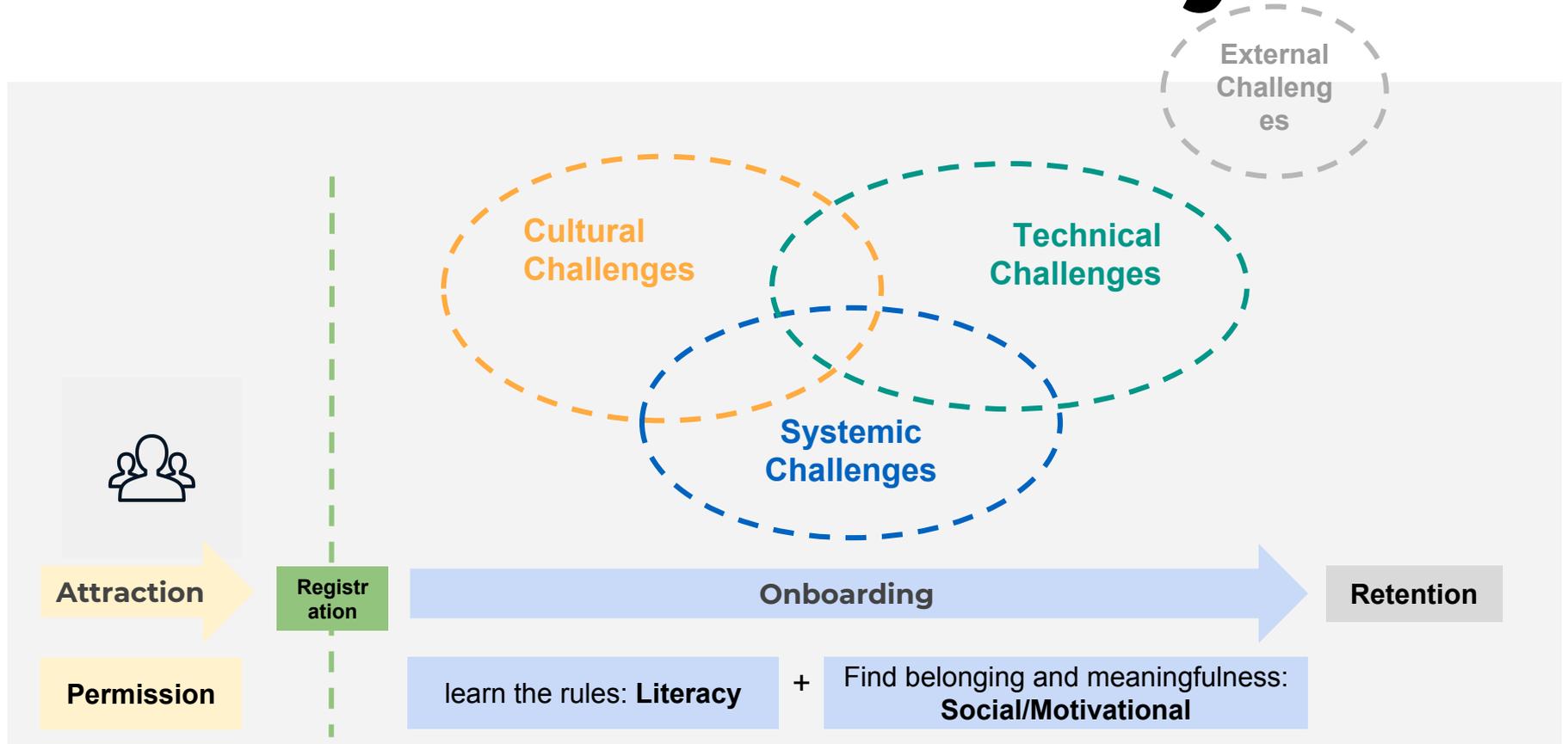
CEE Survey

28 participants from 16 chapters or user groups answered 3 questions:

- What do you think is the biggest challenge in retaining new editors?
- What does your community do to engage new editors?
- How successful are your activities so far?



New Editors' Journey



Results: Challenges for new editors

Cultural Challenges

- ❖ unwelcoming and hostile environment (III)
- ❖ negative attitudes of older editors (III)
- ❖ no welcoming culture (help, goodwill, openness) (II)
- ❖ uncommented deletion of newbie contributions (II)
- ❖ conflicts about edits
- ❖ very closed community
- ❖ discussing on personal discussion pages - no access for outsiders
- ❖ too little physical recognition
- ❖ not enough mentors

Technical Challenges

- ❖ technical difficulties (II)
 - ❖ wikitext

Systemic Challenges

- ❖ complexity and amount of rules (II)
- ❖ lack of moderation tools/roles for conflicts
- ❖ lack of understanding about how WP works
- ❖ difficulties in citing sources
- ❖ Flagged Revisions - need a lot of time
- ❖ outdated and too long help pages
- ❖ outdated policies

Findings WMF Research: New Editor Experiences

64 qualitative in depth interviews with new editors in South Korean and Czech Wikipedia

New editors do not understand how Wikipedia works and do not feel they belong to the community. #5

New editors benefit from iterative, progressive learning in safe spaces. #7

The biggest challenges for new editors are not technical but conceptual. #8

The framing of feedback is crucial and decides whether new editors are encouraged or discouraged. #11

Research Findings WMDE

Survey on welcoming culture: The majority of experienced editors thinks newbies are not supported well enough (62%) and most of them were not welcomed friendly themselves (47%) [[Source](#)]

Onboarding helps (I): tracking of users who registered through a banner campaign and were offered online newbie training: these users need less days until the 10th edit - only 103 instead of 1533.

Onboarding helps (II): new editors who do one or more training modules edit more.

Research on onboarding materials: videos (screencasts, tutorials) and training modules are evaluated as most helpful [[Source](#)]



What can we do?

Hypotheses: Challenges

1. Technical difficulties (e.g. wikitext, outdated user journey) discourage and frustrate new editors.
2. New editors experience the community as hostile and unfriendly environment.
3. New editors have difficulties understanding how the community works (e.g. communication channels, roles) and cannot find access to it.
4. New editors do not receive sufficient positive feedback and recognition for their contributions.
5. New editors have difficulties understanding the complex rules (e.g. neutrality, citing sources) of Wikipedia.

Discuss with your neighbour: which of the hypothesis is the most important for your community? (5 Minutes)

1. Technical difficulties (e.g. wikitext, outdated user journey) discourage and frustrate new editors.
2. New editors experience the community as hostile and unfriendly environment.
3. New editors have difficulties understanding how the community works (e.g. communication channels, roles) and cannot find access to it.
4. New editors do not receive sufficient positive feedback and recognition for their contributions.
5. New editors have difficulties understanding the complex rules (e.g. neutrality, citing sources) of Wikipedia.

**Now, get together with
another pair!**

Groups of 4 people

**Choose one hypothesis
and brainstorm: How
can you tackle this
challenge? (15 Minutes)**

Let's hear your ideas!

Thank you!

christine.domgoergen@wikimedia.de

Appendix

CEE Participant Survey

28 participants from 16 chapters or user groups answered 3 questions:

- What do you think is the biggest challenge in retaining new editors?
- What does your community do to engage new editors?
- How successful are your activities so far?

Results: Challenges for new editors

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Systemic/Conceptual Challenges

- ❖ complexity and amount of rules (II)
- ❖ lack of moderation tools/roles for conflicts
- ❖ lack of understanding about how WP works
- ❖ difficulties in citing sources
- ❖ Flagged Revisions - need a lot of time
- ❖ outdated and too long help pages
- ❖ outdated policies

Technical Challenges

- ❖ technological difficulties (II)
- ❖ wikitext

External Challenges

- ❖ no volunteering culture in society (III)
- ❖ lack of motivation (II)
- ❖ lack of time
- ❖ no chapter/user group strategy
- ❖ lack of chapter resources for outreach

Results: Approaches to new editor engagement

On-Wiki:

- ❖ competitions and contests (5)
- ❖ Tutoring project (1)
- ❖ Recognition by admins, but only if editors are very active (1)
- ❖ Expand help pages (1)
- ❖ Change of rules (1)
- ❖ Games (1)

Offline Events:

- ❖ Camps and conferences, weeks, edit-a-thons (8)
- ❖ Introductory workshops (photo, editing, etc.) (8)
- ❖ Personal support in regular WikiClubs (2)
- ❖ Personal tutoring (1)

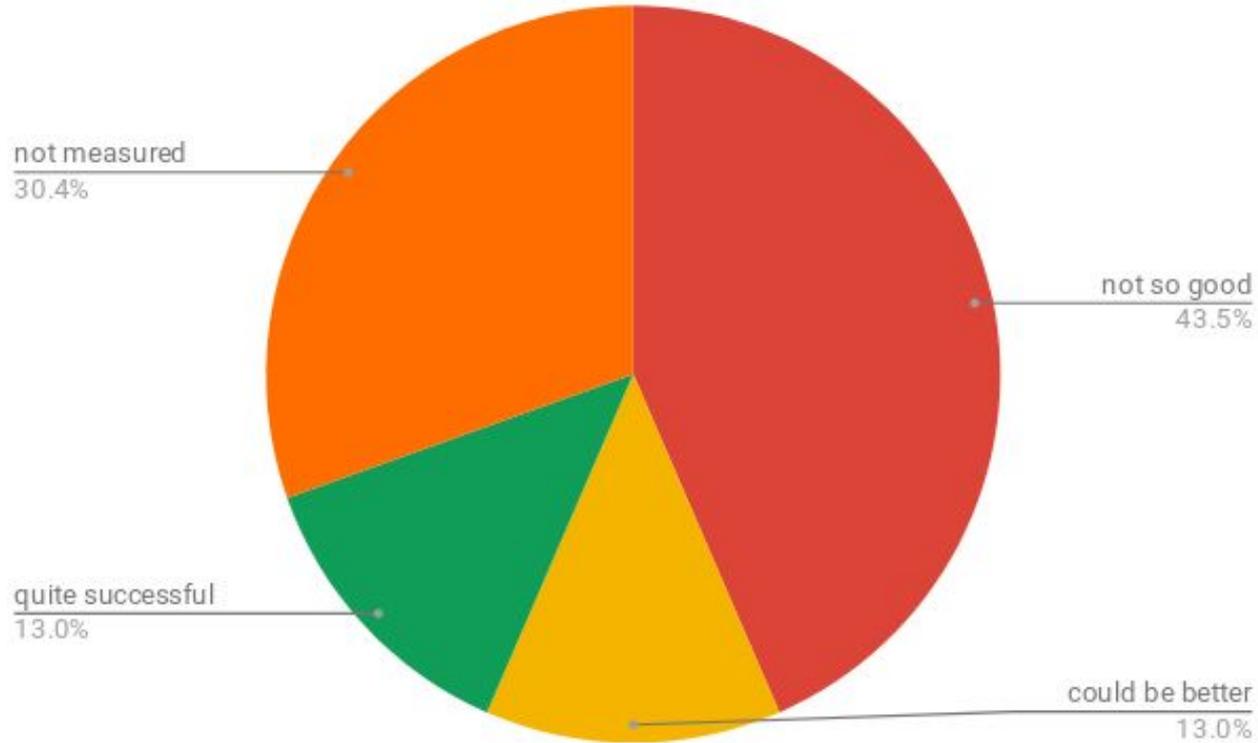
Media outreach:

- ❖ Media outreach (2)
- ❖ Outreach on Facebook (1)

Partnerships:

- ❖ GLAM cooperations (2)
- ❖ Events for teachers/courses in schools/universities (5)

Success - Table of Results



Success - some quotes

“The results are not big. About 1% of people participating in them [workshops] edit Wikipedia later.”

“We don't control new users - we don't feel that we have big influence on number of new users.”

“I believe that a large percentage of people are interested in editing Wikipedia, but a small percentage remains to edit.”

“On the scale from 0 to 10 - maybe 4. That's my personal opinion - there is no tool in [our] Wiki to measure this.”

“GLAM Macedonia activities are very successful in engaging a new editors. We trained more than 380 new editors so far, including around 130 teachers. At least around half of them are still active.”

Onboarding Materials WMDE

We had some good experiences with two online onboarding materials:

- We implemented several [guided tours](#) which explain the surface of Wikipedia and have some integrated tasks (e.g. edit in the sandbox). (Source in German)
- We translated four English online **training modules** and adapted them to the German Wikipedia. They are available on the [Outreach Dashboard](#). (Source in German)

Future Plans:

- We are trying to offer newbies a starting point with a tool, which proposes tasks for them to absolve: <https://tools.wmflabs.org/mitmachen/>

Session Documentation



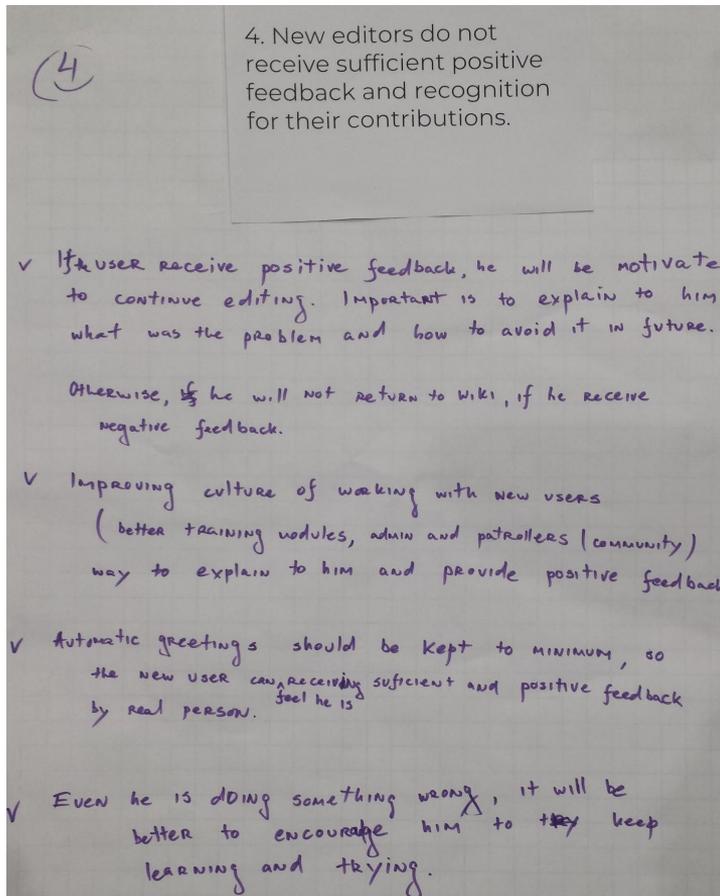
5. New editors have difficulties understanding the complex rules (e.g. neutrality, citing sources) of Wikipedia.

✓ To prioritize
RULES - most crucial
→ less important ones
(not only editing but also ethical)

✓ To mention names of one
or two experienced editors
in the welcome message,
who will be ready to answer
??? and guide through editing
process.

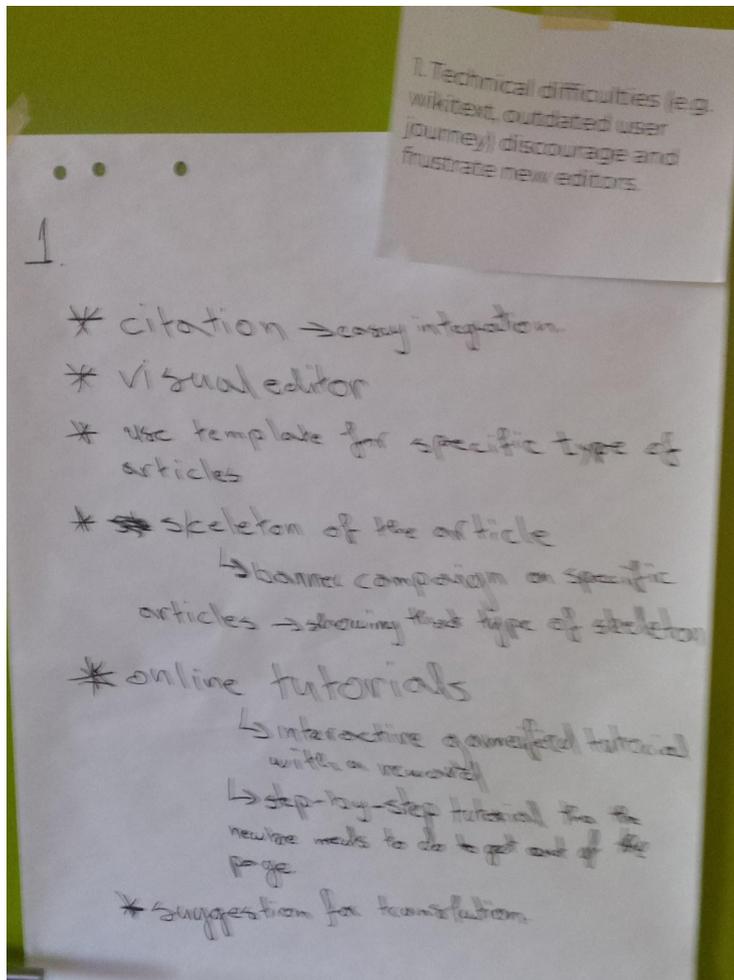
Hypothesis: New editors have difficulties understanding the complex rules (e.g. neutrality, citing sources) of Wikipedia.

- To prioritize rules - most crucial to less important ones (not only editing but also ethical)
- To mention names of one or two experienced editors in the welcome message, who will be ready to answer ??? and guide through editing process



Hypothesis: New editors do not receive sufficient feedback and recognition for their contributions.

- If a user receives positive feedback, he will be motivated to continue editing. Important is to explain to him what was the problem and how to avoid it in the future. Otherwise he will not return to wiki, if he receive[d] negative feedback.
- Improving culture of working with new users (better training modules, admin and patrollers (community)) way to explain to him and provide positive feedback.
- Automatic greetings should be kept to minimum so the new user can feel he is receiving sufficient and positive feedback by [a] real person.
- Even [if] he is doing something wrong, it will be better to encourage him to keep learning and trying.



Hypothesis: Technical difficulties (e.g. wikitext, outdated user journey) discourage and frustrate new editors.

- Citation → build an easy integration
- Visual editor [as default]
- The template for specific type of articles
- Skeleton of the article → banner campaign on specific articles → showing that type of skeleton
- Online tutorials → interactive gamified tutorials with a reward
- Step-by-step tutorial to the newbie how to do right out of the page
- Suggestions for translation

4. New editors do not receive sufficient positive feedback and recognition for their contributions.

feedback & recognition

- ask active experienced editors: how did they overcome initial obstacles?

- exp. editors are "selfish": they may be reluctant to let newbies swim in their pool

- ~~not~~ give exp. editors tasks (in UGs, in event organizations) so they don't bother newbies :) keyword: rotate

- Elder (senior), ^{Wiki-}Wisemen/women

↳ impossible to show bad ^{board of trustees} example!

MACREANU IULIAN
14.10.2018 LUV CEEV

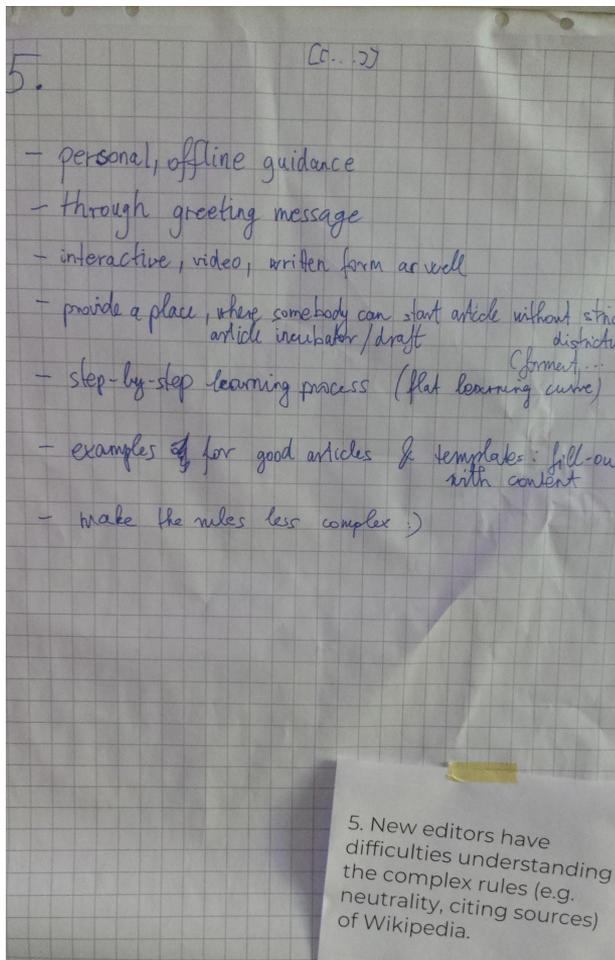
- new editors with good contibcs need to receive:

- + user rights (auto patrol)
- + certificate, souvenir, etc.

- if newbies are bullied, risk is they will become bullies themselves

Hypothesis: New editors do not receive sufficient positive feedback and recognition for their contributions.

- Ask active experienced editors how did they overcome initial obstacles?
- Experienced editors are “selfish” - they may be reluctant to let newbies swim in the pool
- Give experienced editors tasks (in UGs, in event organizations) so they don't bother newbies :-)
- Elder (senior)- wise men and women - board of trustees → impossible to show bad example
- New editors with good contributions need to receive:
 - User rights (auto patrol)
 - Certificates, souvenirs, etc.
- If newbies are bullied, risk is they become bullies themselves



Hypothesis: New editors have difficulties understanding the complex rules (e.g. neutrality, citing sources) of Wikipedia.

- Personal, offline guidance
- Through greeting message
- Interactive, video, written form as well [teaching materials]
- Provide a place, where somebody can start article without strict districion → article incubator
- Step-by-step learning process (flat learning curve)
- Examples for good articles & templates: fill-out with content
- Make the rules less complex :-)