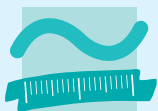


Wiki Dialogues

A concept for digital learning in
Wikipedia communities



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WIKIMEDIA
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ISBN 978-3-9816799-2-2

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I Introduction to Wiki Dialogues

I.1 What is a Wiki Dialogue, and where does this format come from?

A Wiki Dialogue is an online format for digital, dialogue-oriented learning. The Wiki Dialogue idea arose in early 2014, after the “Wikipedia Diversity” project, a joint effort by Wikimedia Deutschland e. V. and the Beuth University of Applied Sciences in Berlin, had defined in 2013 digital exchanges and learning opportunities as meaningful supplements to the work already being done in Wikipedia communities. The Wiki Dialogue concept was developed on the basis of considerations about promoting diversity within Wikipedia (cf. “[Charting Diversity](#)”, p. 14). Understanding and awareness of diversity, participation and involvement, appreciation and communication, openness and a welcoming culture as well as quality assurance in knowledge production were named as primary points of reference for continuous and sustainable utilization and strengthening of diversity within Wikipedia. Wiki Dialogues were initiated in 2014 by [Wikimedia Deutschland](#) (WMDE), [Wikimedia Österreich](#) (WMAT) and [Wikimedia CH](#) (WMCH).

The Wiki Dialogue concept took its inspiration from [cMOOCs \(connectivist massive open online courses\)](#), an open, digital format that enables participatory and self-guided learning in “[communities of practice](#)” (Wenger, 1998) cMOOCs foreground exchange on a particular topic and thus shared learning within a social, practice-oriented community. As cMOOCs, Wiki Dialogues follow the connectivist principles of collaborative production of knowledge through networked learning (cf. [connectivism](#)).

“The term “massive open online course,” or MOOC for short, refers to a special form of online course with a theoretically unlimited number of participants. MOOCs combine traditional forms of knowledge transmission

like videos, reading material and problem-setting with forums in which teachers and learners can communicate with each other and form communities. A distinction is made between xMOOCs and cMOOCs. While the former primarily consist of video recordings of lectures along with an exam, cMOOCs are based on the idea of connectivity and therefore take the form of a seminar or workshop.” ([Translation from German-language Wikipedia](#))

In the Wiki Dialogues on Wikipedia, Wikipedians discuss various topics related to Wikipedia and its [sister projects](#) and work on topics together. These topics go beyond writing Wikipedia articles to focus more on overarching aspects of working together within Wikipedia and on diversity within the Wikipedia community.

In contrast to the conventional, primarily asynchronous Wikipedia discussions, Wiki Dialogues aim for direct, and when possible synchronous exchange and collaborative creation of artifacts or knowledge products that serve as support, inspiration, templates and/or recommendations for working together within Wikipedia, such as:

- Quality criteria for Wikipedia articles (see example: [Quality](#)),
- Profile of requirements for the granting of awards (see example: [Zedler award 2015](#)),
- Event preparation (see example: [WikiCon workshop](#)).

An important characteristic of Wiki Dialogues is constructive collaboration in an atmosphere of appreciation. The artifacts created in the context of Wiki Dialogues can be made available to the community as open educational or learning resources (cf. [open educational resources](#)).

Dialogues is the emergence of a community of like-minded Wikipedians who can continue to work on diversity within Wikipedia even after the Wiki Dialogue is over. In Wiki Dialogues, dedicated individuals can actively participate in topics and projects relating to diversity within Wikipedia (including diversity of knowledge, diversity of perspectives, diversity of authorship, etc.) without having to travel. Because Wiki Dialogues enable flexible, location-independent participation by a large number of Wikipedians, they provide an opportunity to attract further dedicated individuals to Wikipedia.

Learn more about MOOCs and cMOOCs:

To learn more about MOOCs and cMOOCs, we recommend the book “MOOCs – Massive Open Online Courses” by Rolf Schulmeister. The entire book, including the chapter by Simone Haug and Joachim Wedekind on cMOOCs, can be downloaded as a PDF (in German) from Verlag Waxmann:

<http://www.waxmann.com/fileadmin/media/zusatztexte/2960Volltext.pdf>

1.2 Who are the Wiki Dialogue facilitators and what is their role?

Every Wiki Dialogue, inspired by the cMOOC approach, has a **facilitator**, who plays a key role as a communications guide in the particular Wiki Dialogue. Facilitators initiate and moderate the dialogue within a community, set the framework for the content, provide suggestions on topics and ideas and links to further information, organize accompanying online events (e.g. in Google Hangouts, Skype) and are responsible for the infrastructure (e.g. Wiki pages, Twitter, event calendars, synchronous meeting spaces) (cf. Haug und Wedekind, 2013).

The person who initiates a Wiki Dialogue generally also conducts that dialogue. Facilitators are responsible for selecting the topic and for the course and climate of the discussion within the particular Wiki Dialogue. Any Wikipedian can act as a facilitator to set up and hold a Wiki Dialogue. Pairs or small teams of facilitators can also divide the various tasks among themselves.

Facilitators define the specific goal of a Wiki Dialogue (e.g. writing a *Signpost* article, preparing a profile of requirements). They propose a binding schedule and the methods and media for working together on this goal. Thus, the topic, the goal, the form and the methods for working together are already clear before a Wiki Dialogue begins. However, all of these elements can be adapted to the wishes and preferences of the participants at the beginning or during the course of a Wiki Dialogue. The key point is that at first, the facilitators only define a guiding topic for the Wiki Dialogue; the specific content having to do with this topic is discussed and created together with the participants during the course of the Wiki Dialogue.

Setting up a new Wiki Dialogue:

To set up a new Wiki Dialogue, enter the topic/heading of your Wiki Dialogue in the “<Title of your Wiki Dialogue>” field and click on “Set up new Wiki Dialogue.” Then create a link to your new Wiki Dialogue in [Wiki Dialogues in preparation](#).

1.3 How are Wiki Dialogues structured and who can participate in them?

Wiki Dialogues consist of a series of open online seminars. Starting with the primary topic, “Diversity within Wikipedia” the individual Wiki Dialogues set forth a specific topic to be discussed or worked on and a schedule with predetermined content-based sections. Asynchronous (occurring at different times) discussions and synchronous (occurring at the same time) online events take place within the scope of an individual Wiki Dialogue. Each Wiki Dialogue is like a workshop during which a special topic (e.g. quality) and a shared goal (e.g. *Signpost* article) is foregrounded. A Wiki Dialogue can last several days to several weeks, but as a rule do not last longer than ten months. Topics, goals, content and interim steps of the collaboration are documented digitally if possible, e.g. on Wiki pages or in a database.

Various digital media are used in Wiki Dialogues to support the dialogue and the collaboration, depending on the particular group’s preferences and needs. It is helpful to have at least one change of media within the dialogue in order to break up any threads of discussion that may be reaching a deadlock. In the case of more complex Wiki Dialogues, it can be helpful to define different roles in advance in order to be better able to oversee and document the discussion.

Any Wikipedian can participate in the Wiki Dialogues. The details of the topic to be discussed and of the organization of the dialogue are, in the spirit of active [participation](#), left to the participants themselves (cf. Haug and Wedekind,

2013). The participants set their own learning and working goals, determine the type of participation and the time frame of their involvement themselves, and independently determine which of the tools suggested by facilitators they will use to produce the artifacts. The provision of a range of different forms of learning and cooperation, along with the leeway that is left for individual decisions, reflect the principles of diversity. In addition, Wiki Dialogues always remain open to all interested parties, meaning new participants can join or leave a particular Wiki Dialogue at any time in accordance with the principles of openness.

Participating in a Wiki Dialogue:

To participate in a Wiki Dialogue, just enter your name on the list of participants for that particular Wiki Dialogue. Different Wiki Dialogues offer different participation modalities; in the [Wiki Dialogue on quality](#), for example, participants could take part as observers, as active contributors to the discussion, or in a documentation role.

2 Designing a Wiki Dialogue

2.1 What goals and topics are suitable for Wiki Dialogues?

We suggest the following [guiding principles](#) for designing individual Wiki Dialogues.

The first guiding principle of a Wiki Dialogue is to create a space in which contributions to diversity within Wikipedia can be generated. These contributions may cover a wide range of topics, from the inclusion of different authors in the creation of Wikipedia articles to the working environment and how we treat one another -- we welcome a broad diversity of topics for Wiki Dialogues in keeping with the primary topic of "Diversity within Wikipedia." Ideally, Wiki Dialogue topics will be based on the areas of activity suggested in "[Charting Diversity](#)".

The second guiding principle is personal networks and working groups, that are formed within the scope of Wiki Dialogues and can then continue their work within Wikipedia. Dialogue among participants can, over time, lead to the formation of communities of like-minded individuals and interest-based associations, which play an important role in driving collaborative work forward. However, the primary goal is to strengthen interpersonal relationships among Wikipedians. Getting to know each other better personally can help to overcome communication difficulties, dismantle prejudices and prevent conflicts.

The third guiding principle is the creation of shared artifacts (e.g. *Signpost* articles, profiles of requirements, bases for decision-making) that are prepared together as Wiki texts, images and/or videos. These artifacts or knowledge products can then be made available, after the end of the particular Wiki Dialogue, under a free [Creative Commons](#) license as [open educational resources](#), or OER, to the Wikipedia community and/or to the general public. These OER may be various auxiliary materials on the topic of diversity within Wikipedia, such as a guideline for conflict resolution or a tutorial on writing high-quality texts.

The fourth guiding principle is the initiation of new projects to strengthen diversity and improve the way diversity within Wikipedia is dealt with. By developing the discussion on diversity within Wikipedia further and together recognizing current problems and their causes, ideas for new activities and projects, such as new informational events, new methods for attracting and involving new Wikipedians, or new quality assurance tools, can come into being.

The four guiding principles for Wiki Dialogues mentioned above are represented visually in Figure 1.



Fig. 1: The four guiding principles for Wiki Dialogues, image by Ilona Buchem, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

As a rule, Wiki Dialogues are suitable for all topics. In the spirit of the recommendations set forth in “[Charting Diversity](#)” topics related to the five central areas of activity are especially welcome (cf. Fig. 2).

The five central areas of activity, which serve as guidelines for the thematic design of Wiki Dialogues, are:

1. Understanding and awareness of diversity within Wikipedia
2. Openness and a welcoming culture within Wikipedia
3. Appreciation and appreciative communication within Wikipedia
4. Participation and involvement by Wikipedians
5. Quality of knowledge production with regard to processes and products

The Compass of Diversity

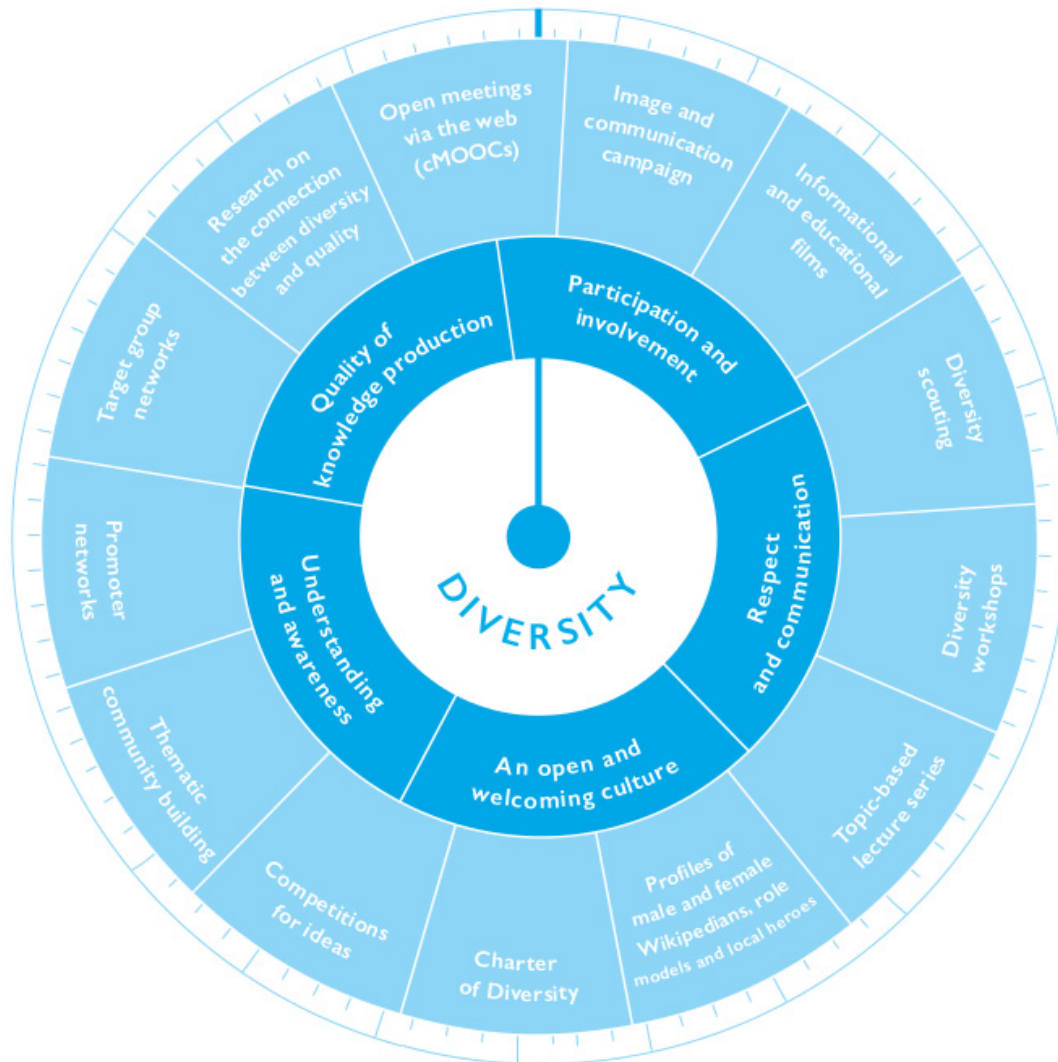


Fig. 2: The five areas of activity on diversity within Wikipedia: (cf. “Charting Diversity”), made by Nina Schuiki et al., CC BY-SA 4.0

Some suggested topics inspired by “Charting Diversity” include:

A. Topics of discussion concerning the definition of diversity within Wikipedia

- What do pluralism and diversity mean to us?
- How can we better deal with diversity within Wikipedia? How can we strengthen diversity?
- What are the positive and negative aspects that we associate with pluralism and diversity? What problems and potentials are associated with these terms?

B. Topics of discussion concerning openness and a welcoming culture within Wikipedia

- What do the terms “openness” and “a welcoming culture” mean to us?
- What is the current situation regarding openness and a welcoming culture within Wikipedia?
- How are openness and a welcoming culture connected with the quality of Wikipedia articles?
- How can we contribute to making sure existing and new Wikipedians feel welcome within Wikipedia and its sister projects? How can we contribute to making Wikipedia more open for all?

- What good examples (e.g. projects, initiatives) do we have of openness and a welcoming culture within Wikipedia and its sister projects?

C. Topics of discussion concerning recognition of work performed within Wikipedia

- Why is it important to recognize the work of other Wikipedians? What types of work are there, including work other than writing Wikipedia articles?
- How is work recognized within Wikipedia and its sister projects? What are the good examples? What is still missing?
- How can we help ensure that different types of work/contributions receive more recognition in the Wikipedia community?

D. Topics of discussion concerning conflict management within Wikipedia

- Why do conflicts arise within Wikipedia? What is the situation within its sister projects?
- What approaches to conflict management already exist in Wikipedia and in its sister projects (e.g. rules, arbitration)? What works well, and what works less well? What is still missing?
- How can we help ensure that conflicts are prevented more effectively and that conflicts are resolved better within Wikipedia? What helpful approaches are there outside of Wikipedia, and how can we use them within Wikipedia and within its sister projects?

E. Topics of discussion concerning hurdles to getting started

- What hurdles confront people who are just getting started in Wikipedia and in its sister projects? What are the main reasons for this?
- How do people typically get started, and how can these pathways be improved?

- What formalities are there with regard to getting started? What needs to be taken into consideration? What do we need to retain? What should change?

F. Topics of discussion concerning appreciative communication

- What communication problems are there within Wikipedia?
- What (written and unwritten) communication rules exist? Are these rules different for different types of communication (e.g. online, offline)? Which of these rules are essential for good communication?
- Which communication rules need to be adapted? How can that be achieved?
- How can we improve communication in Wikipedia?

G. Topics of discussion concerning roles within Wikipedia

- What roles do Wikipedians have (e.g., bureaucrats, administrators, viewers)? How are these roles distributed?
- What regulations are there concerning the exercise of particular roles? What needs to be taken into consideration? What needs to be retained? What may still need to change?
- What barriers are there to moving up, e.g. for an editor to become an administrator? How do people typically move up, and how can the current barriers to moving up be overcome?

H. Topics of discussion concerning distortion of knowledge

- What does “systemic bias” mean, and what examples of distortion in the representation of knowledge are there in Wikipedia and its sister projects?
- What are the reasons that distortions of knowledge occur, and what does “systemic bias” have to do with diversity and quality in Wikipedia?
- How can distortions of knowledge be reduced? What projects are there on this?

I. Topics of discussion concerning technology tips and tricks

- How do I handle technology in Wikipedia and in its sister projects? What barriers currently exist?
- What editing tools are available? What types of Wikipedia pages are there? How can I work with user pages?
- What tools are helpful for working within Wikipedia and its sister projects?

J. Topics of discussion concerning high-quality writing

- What constitutes high-quality texts within Wikipedia? What are the standards and rules? What are the good examples?
- Why is it important to write high-quality texts? What added value does this hold for me and for Wikipedia?
- How can I learn to write high-quality texts? What aids are there? Who can help me?

K. Topics of discussion concerning women in Wikipedia

- What initiatives are there for women who want to get involved in Wikipedia and its sister projects (e.g. women's portal, WomenEdit)?
- What is the current status of women's participation in Wikipedia and its sister projects? What good examples are there? What obstacles currently exist?
- What can we do to strengthen women's participation in Wikipedia and in its sister projects?

L. Topics of discussion concerning barrier-free access

- What initiatives are there for people with disabilities who want to get involved in Wikipedia and in its sister projects?
- What obstacles currently exist for people with disabilities and people with special giftedness (e.g. people with autism)?

- To date, what has worked well, and what has worked less well? What has proven effective, and how can the effective methods and techniques be expanded upon?

M. Topics of discussion concerning intercultural communication

- Why is intercultural communication important in Wikipedia and its sister projects?
- What works well, and what works less well, in intercultural communication?
- What are the good examples, and how can we strengthen intercultural communication (e.g. Commons)?

N. Topics of discussion concerning on-site participation

- What opportunities are there for on-site participation (e.g. regular gatherings, GLAM projects, conferences)? On-site projects introduce themselves!
- How can I participate? Who are the contact people? How can I get funding for my participation, e.g. in conferences?
- How can I myself contribute to more on-site participation (e.g. by setting up a regular gathering or a working group)? What type of support can I get from whom?

O. Topics of discussion concerning the sister projects

- What is the idea of sister projects, and what sister projects exist (e.g. Wikiversity, Commons)?
- What do the individual sister projects do? Sister projects introduce themselves and the main focus of their work!
- How can I participate? Who are the contact people?

P. Topics of discussion concerning Wikimedia community promotion

- What makes up the Wikipedia community? Who are Wikipedians?

- What does the Wikimedia Community Team do? The team introduces itself and the focus of its work!
- What community projects are there, and how can I participate?
- How can I get involved in Wikimedia and in the Supervisory Board?

Q. Topics of discussion concerning Wikimedia and the Supervisory Board

- What is Wikimedia? How do WMF, WMDE, CH, AT work together?
- What does the WMDE Supervisory Board do? Who are the members? How are the Supervisory Board members elected and what are its tasks? The Supervisory Board introduces itself!

The aforementioned suggestions for topics should be considered examples and inspirations. Every Wikipedian is free to define topics. What is important is that the topics are relevant for many people so that a group wishing to work on the particular topic can be formed.

2.2 What are the possible results of a Wiki Dialogue?

The results of Wiki Dialogues can vary greatly. It is, however, important that a concrete result be borne in mind when starting a Wiki Dialogue and that all participants wish to work together toward this result. The goal of every Wiki Dialogue should be to publish the results obtained on the central Wiki Dialogue page at the end of the particular Wiki Dialogue, and to make them available for discussion in the Wikipedia community. The results can take the following forms:

A. Suggestions for solutions on diversity

Suggestions for solutions for dealing with pluralism and/or for more diversity within Wikipedia may refer to various aspects, e.g. conflict management, obstacles to getting started, barrier-free access, participation by users with regard to gender, age, social origin. Suggestions for solutions may be developed together in various ways, including as instructions, guidelines, tutorials, position papers, concept papers or software solutions. It is recommended that suggestions for solutions that are prepared describe how the suggestions should be used and/or implemented.

B. Open educational resources (OER)

The content resulting from working together on a Wiki Dialogue can be prepared as open educational or learning resources. As such, it should

illuminate particular topics, provide an introduction to their use or explain how they work. Possible formats include text, video, audio, image and multimedia. More open educational or learning resources should be made available to the public under a Creative Commons license, or CC license, at the end of the Wiki Dialogue.

C. New projects on diversity

One possible result of Wiki Dialogues are new projects on diversity within Wikipedia. It should be possible to submit the new projects via the central Wiki Dialogue page or to present them on the website. An additional result is the linking of existing and/or new projects with each other, for example through networking of participants and inter-linking of activities.

D. Recording experiences with Wiki Dialogues

Experiences with Wiki Dialogues can be recorded and provided to others as reports on experiences and/or recommendations for action. Other facilitators can make use of these practical experiences when designing new Wiki Dialogues.

2.3 What do I need to consider if I wish to set up a Wiki Dialogue?

Wiki Dialogues follow the basic principles of **cMOOCs**, or connectivist massive open online courses, which are like online workshops.

Massive open online courses (MOOCs), are intended for large numbers of participants (“massive”) and because of their “open” format, generally allow for new digital (“online”) types of learning (for example in large, geographically dispersed and primarily virtual communities like Wikipedia). The rationale behind MOOCs is to serve as a vehicle for such massive, open, online formats.

The key characteristics of MOOCs are:

- Massive means that almost anyone, practically without limitations, can participate in them: Some MOOCs have several hundred participants, while others have thousands.
- Open means that there are no restrictions on access and that the learning materials are made available free of charge.
- Online means that the offerings take place mainly online.
- Course means that these are learning opportunities with a particular structure, a beginning and an end, a topical focus and a central contact point (cf. Figure 3).

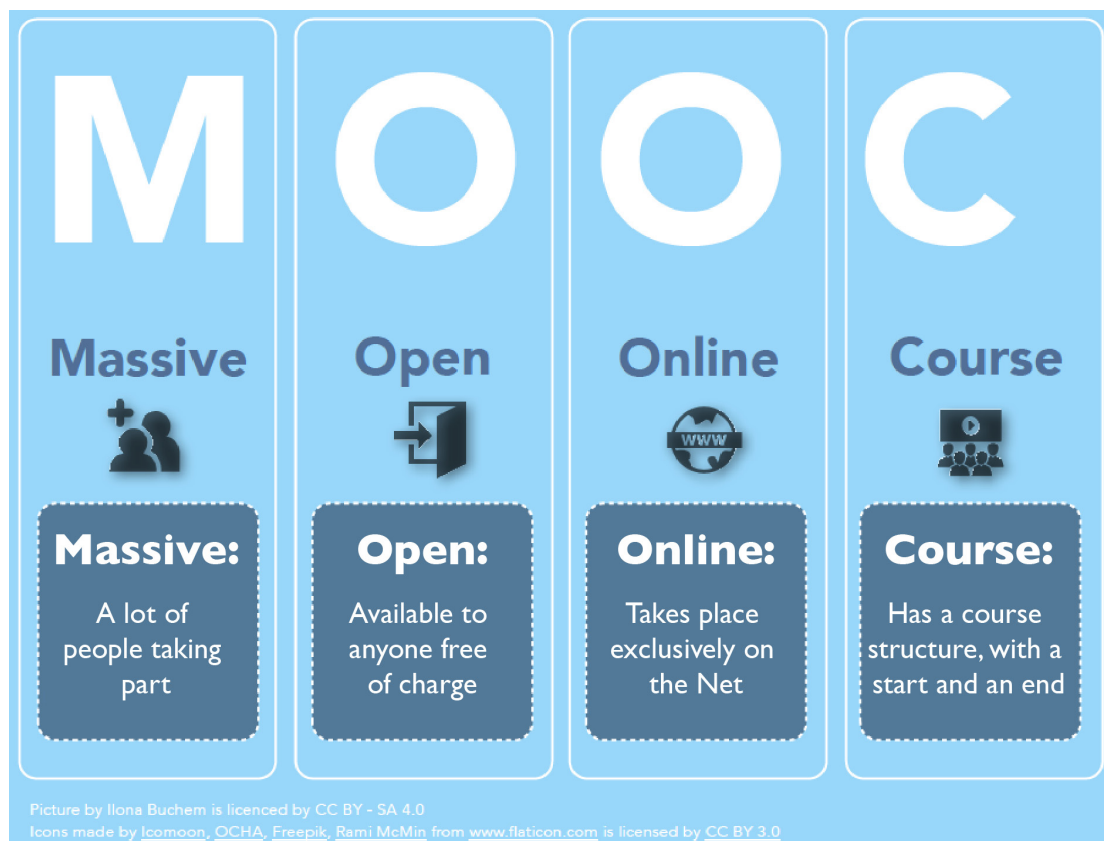


Fig. 3: Characteristics of massive open online courses, image by Ilona Buchem, CC BY-SA 4.0

The “course” element in particular can be designed in various ways with regard to instruction and is what ultimately distinguishes cMOOCs from xMOOCs. In xMOOCs the “course” is designed as a traditional course in which content is transmitted from teachers to learners based on a top-down principle and the knowledge that is acquired is checked (e.g. using tests) In cMOOCs, on the other hand, the courses are like workshops, in which topics and solutions are discussed and created together by a community of interested individuals based on a bottom-up principle. These are the most important distinguishing characteristics and also play a key role in Wiki Dialogues, which are inspired by cMOOCs.

When designing Wiki Dialogues, care should be taken to ensure that they are like workshops and support exchange within the community based on a bottom-up principle.

What else should be taken into consideration when designing Wiki Dialogues? Further comparison of xMOOCs and cMOOCs clarifies the key principles:

- In xMOOCs, participants rarely have direct access to facilitators. In xMOOCs, processes are standardized and similar for all participants. Topics are provided and learning content prepared without involvement by participants. In cMOOCs, on the other hand, direct contact with facilitators and other participants as well as involvement by participants in design and implementation play an important role.

- In xMOOCs, participants are rarely involved in design and implementation. In cMOOCs, on the other hand, participants take part in the joint definition and development of topics, create content together and can make decisions, including those about media selection and course procedures. Participation itself is viewed as learning; in other words, cMOOCs assume that people learn from each other and not from the transmission and testing of knowledge.
- Another difference between cMOOCs and xMOOCs is the fact that in cMOOCs (in contrast to xMOOCs), performance is not evaluated. cMOOCs offer flexible, individualized types of learning (for example, participants can take part actively in discussions or create content together, or they can just watch and read). In cMOOCs, performance is considered a subjective variable, since the learners rather than the teachers are able to set their own learning objectives. Although performance is not evaluated in cMOOCs, it is recognized and praised, for example using [Open Badges](#).

Open Badges:

Open Badges is an open standard from Mozilla with which digital badges can be flexibly integrated into different online systems, e.g. Mediawiki. The Swedish Wikipedia project is a good example of the use of Open Badges to recognize skills digitally within Wikipedia. In Sweden, Open Badges are awarded to students and teachers who edit Wikipedia and thereby acquire important skills such as communications and media skills.

More on the [“Wikipediapedagog 2014”](#)



Fig. 4: Example of an Open Badge from the “Wikipediapedagog 2014” project, image by Sara Mörtzell at [CC BY-SA 3.0](https://blog.wikimedia.org/2015/01/29/badges-for-swedish-students-and-teachers/), source: <https://blog.wikimedia.org/2015/01/29/badges-for-swedish-students-and-teachers/>

Figure 5 summarizes the most important distinguishing features of xMOOCs and cMOOCs and draws attention to the important aspects of Wiki Dialogues based on the cMOOC approach.

	cMOOC	xMOOC
Direct access to the facilitators:	✓	✗
Involvement of all participants:	✓	✗
Evaluation of performance:	✗	✓
Distinction between accredited and online participants:	small	large
Flexible, individual curriculum:	✓	✗
Topics defined and developed collectively:	✓	✗

Fig. 5: Differences between cMOOCs und xMOOCs, image by Cornelia Picht, [CC BY-SA 4.0](http://neue-lernwelten.de/was-ist-ein-mooc/). source: <http://neue-lernwelten.de/was-ist-ein-mooc/>

Like cMOOCs, Wiki Dialogues foreground networking, collaboration and exchange among Wikipedians and all individuals interested in the topic of diversity within Wikipedia. In other words, the focus is not on knowledge transmission via the traditional “teacher-student” model as in xMOOCs, but on the joint creation of ideas and suggestions for solutions for increasing diversity within Wikipedia.

Based on this understanding, Figure 6 shows the key principles for setting up Wiki Dialogues as a list of “Dos” and “Don’ts”.

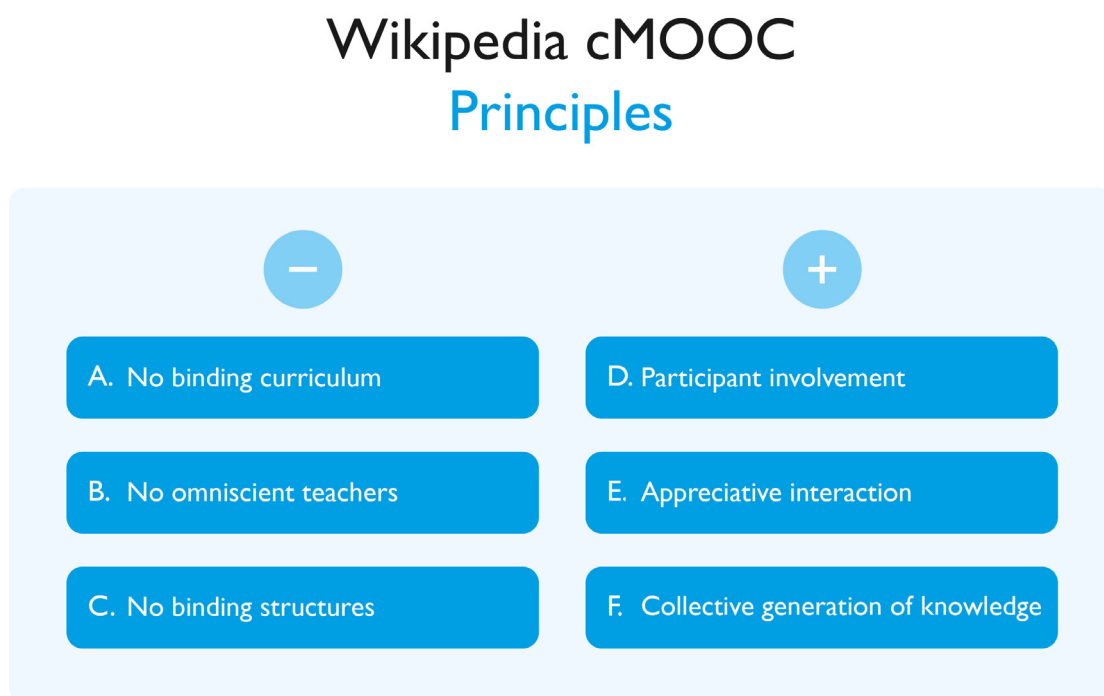


Fig. 6: Dos & Don'ts for setting up Wiki Dialogues, image by Ilona Buchem, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Individual principles are explained in more detail below:

A. No binding curriculum

In Wiki Dialogues, knowledge is not transferred or transmitted using a uniform standard; instead, it grows through exchange and dialogue. Participants themselves decide what they wish to discuss and in what breadth and depth they wish to discuss it. Participants create new suggestions for solutions together but do not need to come out with the same knowledge in the end.

B. No omniscient teachers

Facilitators of Wiki Dialogues are not “topic gurus” but instead provide inspiration and moderate the discussion. They use their interests and previous experiences with the particular topic to stimulate interesting discussions and provide inspiration, thereby supporting dynamic and stimulating exchange and collaboration.

C. No binding structures

Participants in Wiki Dialogues can structure the particular topic as they themselves envision it. Schedules, templates and instructions can be created for support. Participants can and should adapt content and processes to their own needs.

D. Participant involvement

Wiki Dialogues flourish when people who are interested in particular topics actively participate and generate new content together. Facilitators should therefore pay special attention to active participant involvement. That involvement can be strengthened using motivating suggestions, questions and a focus on the objective.

E. Appreciative interaction

The essence of good communication is appreciative interaction. A diversity of perspectives is especially important in Wiki Dialogues, which seek to come to a shared understanding and create new solutions. Therefore, individual perspectives and opinions should always be welcomed. At the same time, everyone must adhere to the rules of appreciative communication, e.g. respect others and communicate in a non-violent way (cf. [Nonviolent_Communication](#)).

F. Collective generation of knowledge

As is the case in Wikipedia, Wiki Dialogues are about shared generation of knowledge. In the foreground is the shared creation of contributions on a particular topic, e.g. “Our suggestions for quality assurance.” One of the most important facilitator tasks is to support the process of collective knowledge generation in a constructive working atmosphere.

2.4 What digital media can I use in a Wiki Dialogue?

Various digital tools can be used as communication and working media in Wiki Dialogues to support long-distance exchange and collaboration. Examples of media can be found in the various cMOOCs (cf. list of cMOOCs in annex), in which a mixture of different digital tools is often used. For example, the following course media are used in the cMOOC entitled [MOOC Maker](#):

- Wordpress blog/CMS (course page): <http://howtomoooc.org>
- Twitter account (updates): <https://twitter.com/howtoMOOC> (twitter wall, twibbon, hawksey: [Stats & archive](#), GoogleDocs: [Stats](#))
- Google+ page (for live events): <https://plus.google.com/u/0/113977825584085938262/posts>
- Google+ community (discussion forum): <https://plus.google.com/u/0/communities/102395295255858079882>

- YouTube channel (for live events and recordings): <http://www.youtube.com/user/howtomoooc>
- Wiki (for handbook): <http://howtomoooc.org/wiki>
- Soundcloud (for audios): <https://soundcloud.com/howtomoooc>
- Templates: [Image template](#) for Google+ participants Hangout
- Flickr group (for photos etc.): <http://www.flickr.com/groups/2131322@N24/>
- Blog aggregator: <http://howtomoooc.org/mmcl3-blog-aggregator/mmcl3-teilnehmer-beitraege-thematisch/>

More about the use of digital media in cMOOCs:

The MOOC matrix in Google Docs, which was created in the MOOC Maker cMOOC, provides an overview of various cMOOCs and the course media used.

Other digital media include *asynchronous tools* (e.g. Wikis, newsletters) and *synchronous tools* (e.g. real-time editors, chats). Special tools that may be used in the context of a Wiki Dialogue include:

- [BigBlueButton](#) is an open-source solution for video calls, etc.;
- [Google Hangout](#) is suitable for group discussions and video calls;
- [etherpad](#) is an open-source editor that makes it possible to write notes collaboratively. Hint: When the notes are complete, the text should be copied onto a Wiki page, because etherpads are regularly, if infrequently, deleted and therefore do not ensure lasting documentation;
- [WebRTC](#) via Wikimedia servers in order not to become dependent on commercial providers (see Google Hangouts);
- [Twitter](#) can be a useful communications instrument for a Wiki Dialogue. Among other things, links and news can be shared here;
- [WordPress](#) – this can be used to set up and administer blogs; theoretically a Wiki Dialogue can take place entirely within a blog platform, for example as a loose sequence of inter-connected blog contributions by different participants, but it can also be used to document results;
- [IRC](#) – IRC can also be a suitable place for a Wiki Dialogue or portions thereof. Many Wikipedians are already registered with [WP:IRC](#).

The use of digital tools for networking and collaboration within Wiki Dialogues can take place in various cooperation formats.

The possible cooperation formats for Wiki Dialogues include:

A. Online / offline

Wikipedians and interested individuals can participate in Wiki Dialogues that take place primarily online without having to travel. Depending on resource availability, online meetings can be organized with local meetings, e.g. along with events or at regular gatherings.

B. Synchronous / asynchronous

Synchronous communication can take place in the form of live web meetings (e.g. in Google Hangouts, Skype, Adobe Connect, Flashmeeting). Asynchronous work and creation of content can take place within Wikipedia and/or in Wiki-based systems. Google Docs and web-based editors (e.g. etherpad) can also be used to jointly edit documents. Announcements and links can be exchanged via Twitter. Twitter can also be used to analyze usage data. To do this, a hashtag is often put into place for the entire cMOOC, e.g. [#MMCI3](#). With the hashtag, various activities within the Wiki Dialogue become visible and can be automatically recorded and analyzed later.

C. Offering content / generating content

Existing free resources can be used as open educational resources (OERs) for designing Wiki Dialogues; these include professional articles, blog entries, YouTube or Vimeo videos. Other digital tools can be used for collaborative generation of content that will later be made available as an OER (e.g. “Our suggestions for conflict management”); such tools include mind mapping tools for brainstorming and for structuring knowledge (e.g. MindMaster); Wiki-based systems for writing texts; recording software for preparing content in video and audio formats; free video creation tools (e.g. Popcorn Maker, YouTube Editor); tools for creating open e-book formats (e.g. ePUB programs).

D. Giving / accepting feedback

Various functionalities for giving and accepting feedback can be built into the course media, e.g. commentaries, evaluations using stars, “likes,” and other similar functions. Digital badges, which can be used to recognize performance, creative ideas, work successes and skills, also offer an interesting option. Badges can also be awarded as a seal of approval, for example for

especially valuable contributions. Open Badges are a special type of badge based on an open standard from Mozilla: <http://openbadges.org>. Open tools can be used to create badges, e.g. <http://www.makebadg.es/badge.html> or <https://www.openbadges.me>.

3 Support for Wiki Dialogues

3.1 What is a Wiki Dialogue canvas and how can I use it?

A digital design template, known as a Wiki Dialogue canvas, has been developed to support and guide the process of designing Wiki Dialogues (cf. Fig. 7). The design template makes it possible to plan Wiki Dialogues in a structured way and to keep a close eye on key aspects, such as goals and

benefits, potential cooperation partners, audiences, topics and contents, activities, resources, media and methods, results, and performance indicators.

WIKI DIALOGUE DESIGN TEMPLATE				
Developed for: Wikimedia Deutschland e.V.		Developed by: Ilona Buchem		Date: Iteration #
GOALS and BENEFITS <small>What are the main goals of the Wiki Dialogue? Who will benefit from it and in what way?</small>	PARTNERS <small>Which individuals or organizations could take part in designing and/or running a Wiki Dialogue?</small>	AUDIENCES <small>Who is the target audience? What previous knowledge do they have? What are the group's common interests?</small>	TOPICS and CONTENTS <small>What is the Wiki Dialogue's central topic? Are there any sub-topics? What content is key to the Dialogue?</small>	ACTIVITIES <small>What is the procedure (e.g. phases, time markers)? What activities are key to each respective phase?</small>
Text	Text		Text	
	RESOURCES <small>What educational and informational resources are being used? What CERs are available?</small>		MEDIA and METHODS <small>What media are being used, and for what purpose? What methods are being applied?</small>	
	Text		Text	
RESULTS <small>What results are you expecting? Make a list of the key results.</small>			PERFORMANCE INDICATORS <small>How can you measure the success of the Wiki Dialogue? Make a list of the key performance indicators.</small>	
Text			Text	

<http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wiki-Dialogue>

Fig. 7: The Wiki Dialogue canvas as a design template for planning Wiki Dialogues: canvas and image by Ilona Buchem, CC BY-SA 4.0

Wiki Dialogue Canvas:

The Wiki Dialogue canvas can be found in the following online document: [GoogleDoc Wiki Dialogue canvas](#).

The Wiki Dialogue canvas can be used to generate ideas for planning Wiki Dialogues and as a communication tool for discussing and coordinating the design process of a Wiki Dialogue with others. The individual points are entered in the canvas in a short and concise form, e.g. as bullet points, providing a quick overview of the key aspects involved in planning and organizing Wiki Dialogues.

3.2 What is Wiki Dialogue coaching?

Coaching is a support measure used to prepare Wiki Dialogue facilitators in designing, planning and running Wiki Dialogues. People can be coached either individually or in groups. Coaching sessions take place as and when required, either as one-day sessions or as several shorter meetings (on site or online). The aim of coaching is to support the facilitators individually in drafting their own concepts for Wiki Dialogues and in planning the implementation of the dialogues using the Wiki Dialogue canvas.

The coaching sessions for Wiki Dialogue facilitators are based on a resource-oriented approach, i.e. the advice and support provided by the coaches draws on the participants' previous experiences, ideas and goals. With the resource-oriented coaching approach, Wiki Dialogue facilitators are encouraged to develop their own concepts and implementation plans, and to use the Wiki Dialogue canvas to consolidate their ideas.

This is achieved by mobilizing available resources. This includes, among other things, contacting Wikipedians, asking them to support or participate in the running of Wiki Dialogues, or drawing on previous experience of online communications in other contexts, and experience in moderation. A sense of fun and enjoyment is a very important aspect of the resource-oriented approach, given that a person's own resources are best mobilized in a positive atmosphere, which is achieved by appreciative communication and constructive collaboration.

A full-day coaching session may look something like this:

11 – 11 a.m.: Start of the session, coffee

11 – 11.30 a.m.: Introduction

- Topics that interest me ...
- My Wikipedia experiences ...
- My understanding of cMOOCs and Wiki Dialogues ...
- My topic for the Wiki Dialogue ...
- Previous experience that could be useful for the cMOOC ...

11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.: Introduction to cMOOCs and Wiki Dialogues

- Where does the idea for the Wiki Dialogue come from?
- What do we mean by “diversity” in Wikipedia?
- What are cMOOCs? What is special about them?
- What is a good example of a cMOOC?
- Planning Wiki Dialogues with the Wiki Dialogue canvas

Lunch break

2 – 4 p.m.: My Wiki Dialogue topic

- Key questions and individual steps to designing Wiki Dialogues using the Wiki Dialogue canvas
 - Outlining the goals and benefits
 - Potential cooperation partners
 - Audiences and their attributes
 - Outlining topics and content
 - Planning and structuring course activities
 - Resources, media and methods
 - Findings and performance indicators

Coffee break

4:30 – 5:30 p.m.: Presentation of Wiki Dialogues

Brief presentation of ideas and feedback

3.3 What are topic teams and how can I initiate one?

All information on initiating a Wiki Dialogue can be found on the [Wikipedia project page](#). By clicking the “Create a new Wiki Dialogue” button, participants can launch their own Wiki Dialogues and learn more about designing and running them. On the discussion pages, community members can get further information on the dialogue and get the first discussions going.

Topic teams can be set up to plan and run Wiki Dialogues. The two to three people in the teams can be allocated different tasks in their respective Wiki Dialogues, e.g. someone comes up with the content, a second person moderates the discussions, and another is responsible for running the live online meetings.

The teams are put together by the facilitator. The Wiki Dialogue facilitators design and conduct their respective dialogues with the help of the subject-area teams. It is normally preferable for facilitators to work with people they already know and trust. The subject-area teams support the facilitators in all content-related, organizational and technical areas, e.g. they process informational and educational materials, answer questions from the participants and deal with technical difficulties.

Topic teams:

To find new team members, have a look at the discussion pages of previous Wiki Dialogues or on other Wikipedia project/discussion pages.

4 Results and reports on experiences with Wiki Dialogues

In 2014, three Wiki Dialogues were set up and tested in the pilot phase of the Wiki Dialogues project. The subjects of these dialogues were:

- Wiki Dialogue: [Quality](#) – Quality criteria for Wikipedia articles,
- Wiki Dialogue: [Zedler Prize 2015](#) – Requirements profile for awarding prizes,
- Wiki Dialogue: [WikiCon workshop](#) – Preparing events.

A page on the subject of Wiki dialogues was set up on Wikipedia ([Wikipedia: Wiki Dialogues](#)) with key information and links to the first Wiki dialogues.

At the end of 2014, Wiki Dialogues were evaluated in:

- telephone interviews with Wiki Dialogue facilitators
- an online survey of Dialogue participants

The feedback gained in the evaluation process and experience reports from participants are summarized below.

4.1 Assessment and recommendations by Wiki Dialogue facilitators

In general, the feedback from facilitators was certainly positive. Facilitators were very appreciative of the new opportunities the forum presents for groups wishing to tackle a specific problem together in a structured, results-oriented way in a relatively short time frame. The downside of the system as it stands, however, is the time and effort involved in communicating and moderating topics.

According to the facilitators, the benefits and challenges of Wiki Dialogues are:

Benefits

- Working out solutions together: “Wiki Dialogues give us a much better chance to work towards finding solutions to obvious, clearly defined problems in a constructive and collaborative way.”
- Results-oriented: “The great thing about Wiki Dialogues is that cMOOCs are geared to produce re-usable results, i.e. things are not left at a loose end, as is so often the case on discussion pages.”
- Constructive: “If participants really join in the

dialogue, the result can be very constructive indeed. All participants reported that they learnt a great deal in the process.”

- Transferrable: “The Wiki Dialogue format can easily be applied to Wikipedia sister projects.”

Challenges

- Time and effort: “It’s a lot of work for the facilitator. Some issues are definitely worth it, but the format hasn’t really been used much so far in practice.”
- Steering: “Someone has to steer the debate in a constructive direction, otherwise it may not produce an actual result.”
- Participation: “Participant numbers were relatively low. It would be nice to see people join in who don’t already participate in other ways.”
- Information: “We should really publicize Wiki Dialogues and get people in the Community enthusiastic about the new forum, so it can really take off. The first year was limited to a few pilot projects.”

4.2 Assessment and recommendations by Wiki Dialogue participants

In an online survey conducted in the final weeks of 2014, Wiki Dialogue participants were asked for feedback and recommendations. Their views are summarized in the following key points:

1. Structure and features

- Discussions not courses: “The Wiki Dialogues so far were basically just group discussions with a clear topic, a beginning and an end, and usually a concluding vote or something similar. There wasn’t really a “course” as such; “in general, course structures are difficult to implement in Wikipedia, as Wikipedia authors are not active at the same times.”
- Need for course structure: “On some issues, the debate escalates very quickly, stays at the same level and then pans out at a lower level. It probably makes sense to shorten this process in some cases.”
- Fostering collaborative learning: “There is a central topic, a challenge everyone has to think about, and everyone learns a lot in the process.”
- Fostering active participation: “There is a great determination to shape and develop, to get things moving. The Wiki discussion page and project pages in the Wikis are of help here.”
- Open access of dialogues suits Wikipedia: “It’s open-access, just like other Wikimedia projects”; “limiting access would clash with the whole philosophy of Wikipedia.”

2. Opportunities and potential

- Improving the Wikipedia project: “The process of jointly working out a solution can encourage people to continue working together in the same way. After all, Wiki Dialogues are not primarily about learning together, or for oneself, but about steadily improving Wikipedia as a whole.”

- Documentation and sustainability: “Wiki Dialogues remain in the system permanently.” “That creates a huge reference body of decision-making processes.”
- Open access: “There are no structural obstacles that prevent people from participating.”
- Mass participation: “The larger the number of participants, the higher the diversity of opinions and the more interesting the discussion gets.”

3. Risks and challenges

- Balancing openness and clear structures: “Wikipedians obviously prefer clear structures and processes, which is why many of them were skeptical about the open structure of the Dialogue process at first.” “The format shouldn’t be too open though. Everyone needs structures to follow.”
- Core community instead of mass participation: “Wikipedia is one big MOOC anyway. Wiki Dialogue is more of a little think-tank within it, attracting few participants. I think mass participation would obstruct rather than facilitate the process. The Dialogue is essentially there to help a core community of about 500 people reach a consensus.”
- Handling potential conflicts: “It’s a huge challenge to reconcile so many different opinions and avoid conflicts in the process.”
- Handling potential attacks: “Openness is always an invitation, also for trolls. It hasn’t been a problem so far because the Dialogues focused on a few rather low-key aspects. But that could soon change if more controversial or fundamental issues are discussed.”

5 The cooperation partners

The Wiki Dialogue project was launched by Wikimedia Deutschland, Wikimedia Österreich and Wikimedia CH in 2014. The goal of the project was to strengthen cross-chapter cooperation and reach more German-speaking community members.

A team of organizers consisting of employees and members of Wikimedia Deutschland, Wikimedia Österreich and Wikimedia CH was set up to collectively design and coordinate the Wiki

Dialogue project activities. The first Wiki Dialogues were conceived and realized in collaboration with Prof. Ilona Buchem, visiting professor of Digital Media & Diversity at Beuth University of Applied Sciences in Berlin. The team helped to organize and run the dialogues, and to make use of the results.

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Appendix

List of English and German-language cMOOCs

Examples of German-language cMOOCs

- OPCO 2011: <http://blog.studiumdigitale.uni-frankfurt.de/opco11/>
- OPCO 2012: <http://opco12.de>
- How to MOOC: <http://howtomooc.org>
- OCWL 2011: <http://ocwl11.wissensdialoge.de>
- COER 2013: <http://www.coer13.de>
- Ichkurs 2013: <http://ichkurs.de/>
- SOOC 2013: <http://www.sooc13.de>
- Collaborative eLearning 2014: <http://www.uni-hildesheim.de/mooc2014/>
- Hanse MOOC: <https://www.hanse-mooc.de>
- VHS MOOC: <http://www.vhsmooc.de/>
- Exif13: <http://www.fernunihagen.de/videostreaming/exif13/>

Examples of English-language cMOOCs

- PLENK 2010: <http://connect.downes.ca/>
- CCK 2008: <https://sites.google.com/site/themoocguide/3-cck08---the-distributed-course>
- CCK 2009: <https://sites.google.com/site/themoocguide/4-cck09---the-students-teach-the-course>

- PLN 2009: <http://plnlab.pbworks.com/w/page/17277257/FrontPage>
- PLENK 2010: <http://connect.downes.ca>
- Critical Literacies: <https://sites.google.com/site/themoocguide/7-critical-literacies-2010---the-language-of-multimedia>
- CCK 2011: <http://cck11.mooc.ca/>
- LAK 2011: <http://www.learninganalytics.net/?p=28>
- LAK 2012: <http://lak12.mooc.ca>
- ocTEL: <http://octel.alt.ac.uk/>
- MobiMOOC: <http://mobimooc.wikispaces.com>
- Digital Storytelling: <http://ds106.us/open-course/>
- Social Media & Open Education: <http://eci831.ca>
- eduMOOC: <https://sites.google.com/site/edumooc/>
- ePortfolios MOOC: <http://epcopmooc.ning.com>
- CHANGE 2011: <http://change.mooc.ca/>
- CARPE DIEM: <http://www.gillysalmon.com/carpe-diem.html>
- MOOC MOOC: <http://www.moocmooc.com>

List of xMOOC providers

- iversity: <https://iversity.org/>
- Hasso Plattner: <https://openhpi.de/?locale=de>
- IMC AG: <http://www.opencourseworld.de/>
- Coursera: <https://www.coursera.org/>
- edX: <https://www.edx.org/>
- Udemy: <https://www.udemy.com/>
- Oplerno: <http://www.oplerno.com/>
- University of the People: <http://uopeople.edu/>
- World Education University: <http://www.theweu.com/>
- Class2Go: <https://class.stanford.edu/>
- Open2Study: <https://www.open2study.com/>
- FutureLearn: <https://www.futurelearn.com/>

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