



# Why the academic world still does not trust Wikipedia and how can trust be increased?

<https://w.wiki/ejN>

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# Why don't scholars use Wikipedia more?



# Is Wikipedia reliable?

- 2005 Nature study
- many other studies since (with mixed results)
- complex problem: multiple versions, topics, knowledge standards
- nevertheless, the numbers speak for themselves: Wikipedia is reliable enough
- research also shows that Wikipedia shapes academic language (even if they deny using it)



# Merton (1938) ideal of "organized scepticism"

scientific claims should be exposed to critical scrutiny, one should be able to check them independently

<https://w.wiki/efV>



# Some academics embrace Wikipedia

- American Psychological Association,
- Association for Psychological Science,
- great work by WikiEd Foundation...



**And yet, most don't.**

One of the main reasons is the PERCEIVED unreliability.



# Why is Wikipedia perceived as not reliable?

anyone can edit

distrust

fakes

not peer-reviewed

everyone can edit

no credentials

gaps

it does no longer happen

openly editable

no-cost

famous examples of fake entry

vandalism

awareness

not reviewed by academics

from commoners

lots of low quality

everybody can edit

anybody can edit

no authorship

not-academia


it's easy to find errors

'unreviewed'

## Common academic misconceptions:

- association with plagiarism,
- misunderstanding the continuous release approach,
- historic bias,
- lack of credentials,
- distributed authorship.

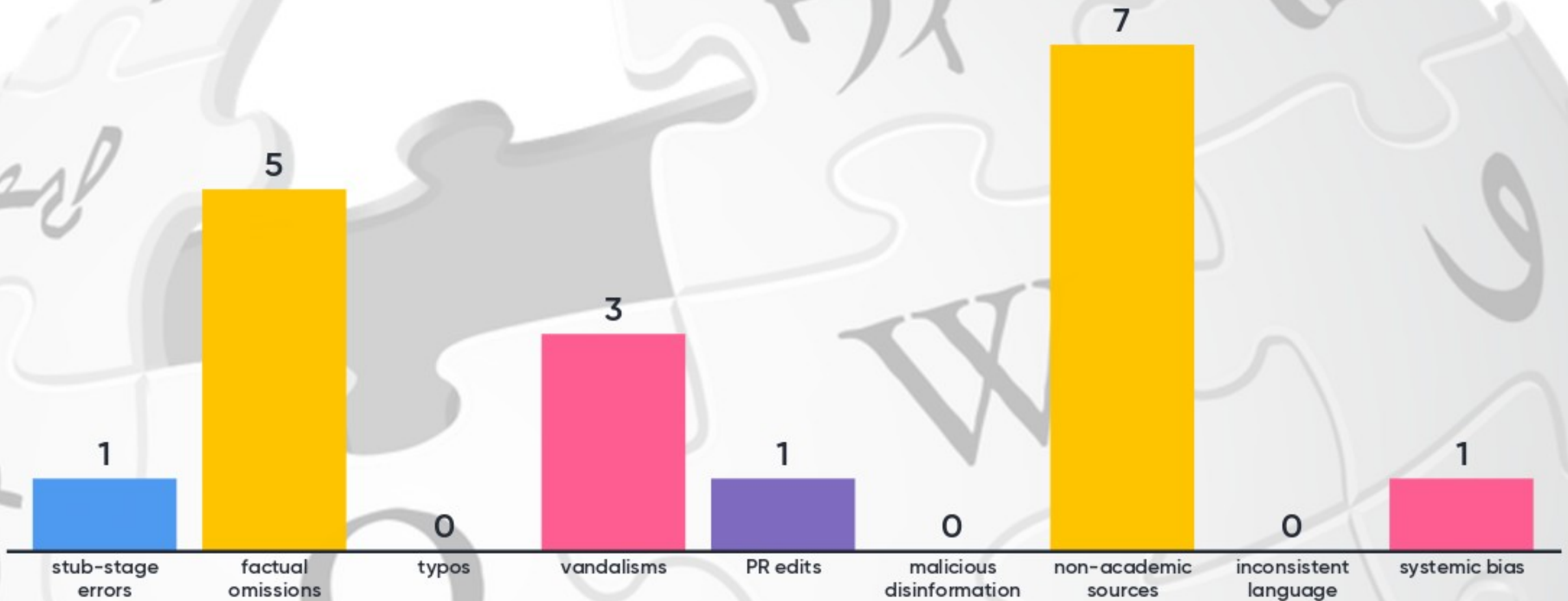




**Yet, Wikipedia's  
image is also  
tarnished by some  
actual errors**



# What type of errors deters scholars most?





# **Traditional encyclopedias are prone to other errors**

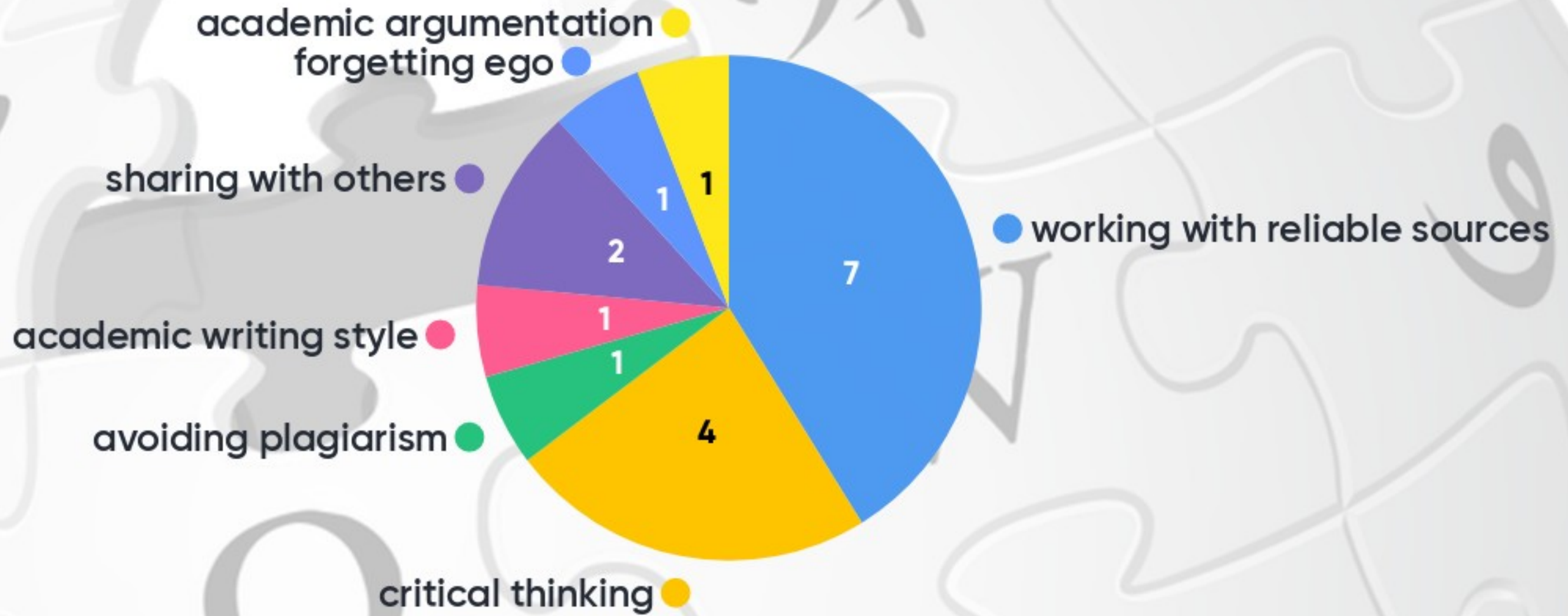
- outdated information,
- expert bias,
- lack of transparency in sources,
- lack of correction possibilities.

## Real problems:

- blatant vandalisms undermine the overall perception of quality,
- misunderstanding how Wikipedia works makes it difficult to trust it,
- knowledge gate-keeping is related to power, which academics used to wield,
- Wikipedians notoriously don't recognize credentials, just street cred, almost as if Wikipedia was a RPG.



# What can Wikipedia teach best in classroom?



## Why is Wikipedia a perfect classroom tool?

- it teaches synthesis and critical thinking,
- it saves professor's time on plagiarism checks,
- it teaches scientific reasoning and using reliable sources,
- it is a knowledge solidarity tax - an informational Robin Hood,
- student essays don't end in a shredder but serve billions,
- writing for the general public is a powerful motivator,
- it minimizes the ego, teaches dispassionate argumentation.





# Let's welcome academics in Wiki worlds

- acknowledge, not diminish their fears and misconceptions,
- engage projects in overseeing classroom use,
- provide more specific support to newcomer professors and students,
- possibly even, engage Wikimedians in grading!



## **Related sources:**

- **Wikipedia: why is the common knowledge resource still neglected by academics? : [bit.ly/Wik-academics](http://bit.ly/Wik-academics)**
- **Wikipedia As A RPG, Or Why Some Academics Do Not Like Wikipedia: [bit.ly/Wik-RPG](http://bit.ly/Wik-RPG)**
- **Bridging the Gap Between Wikipedia and Academia: [bit.ly/Wik-bridge](http://bit.ly/Wik-bridge)**
- **BOOK: Wikipedia@20 Stories of an Incomplete Revolution: [wikipedia20.pubpub.org](http://wikipedia20.pubpub.org)**





# Questions? Comments? Insults?

**0 questions**  
**0 upvotes**