

Offline Meetings in Wikipedia

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Deoband Community Wikimedia Conversation Hour

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Introduction

- Research fellow at the University of Warwick
- Wikipedia volunteer
- PhD thesis: «The Role of Offline Ties in Online Communities: The Case of Wikipedia»
 - Focus: German Wikipedia (one of the largest and most active language versions → 3.9 M registered users, 2.7 M articles)
 - Funding through the Wikimedia Foundation:
https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Grants:Project/nschwitter/The_Role_of_Offline_Ties_of_Wikipedians



The Struggles of Wikipedia: Establishing and maintaining an active userbase

- Very different levels of productivity: Less than 10% of authors are responsible for over 90% of edits (Ortega 2008a,b)
- Users are only active on Wikipedia for a short amount of time and make 1-2 edits
- Many free riders: 70% of American undergraduate students use Wikipedia several times a week - only 16% have ever edited anything (Antin and Cheshire 2010)

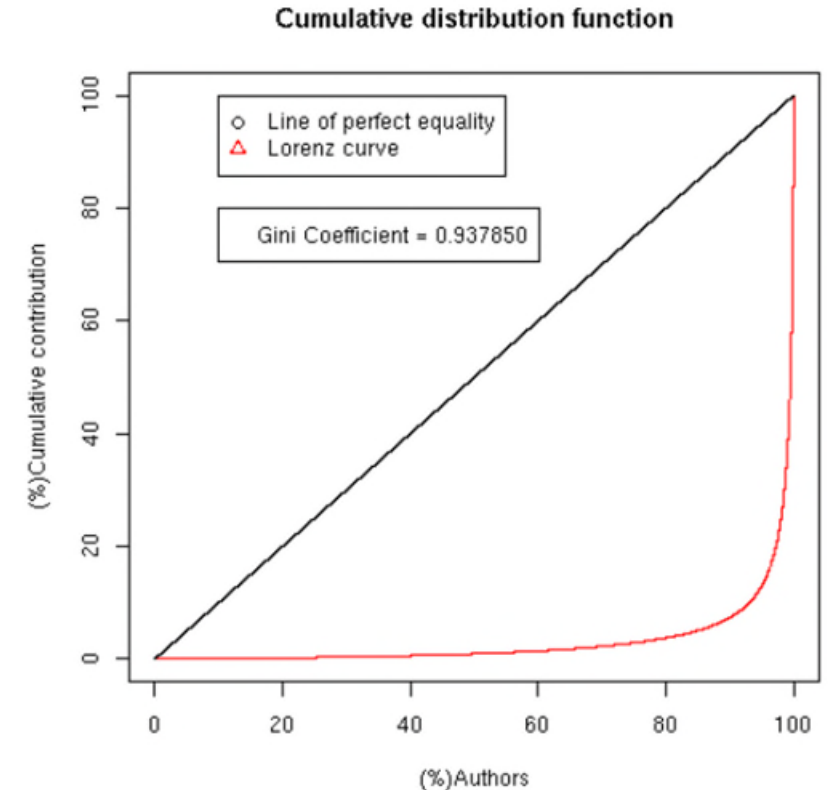
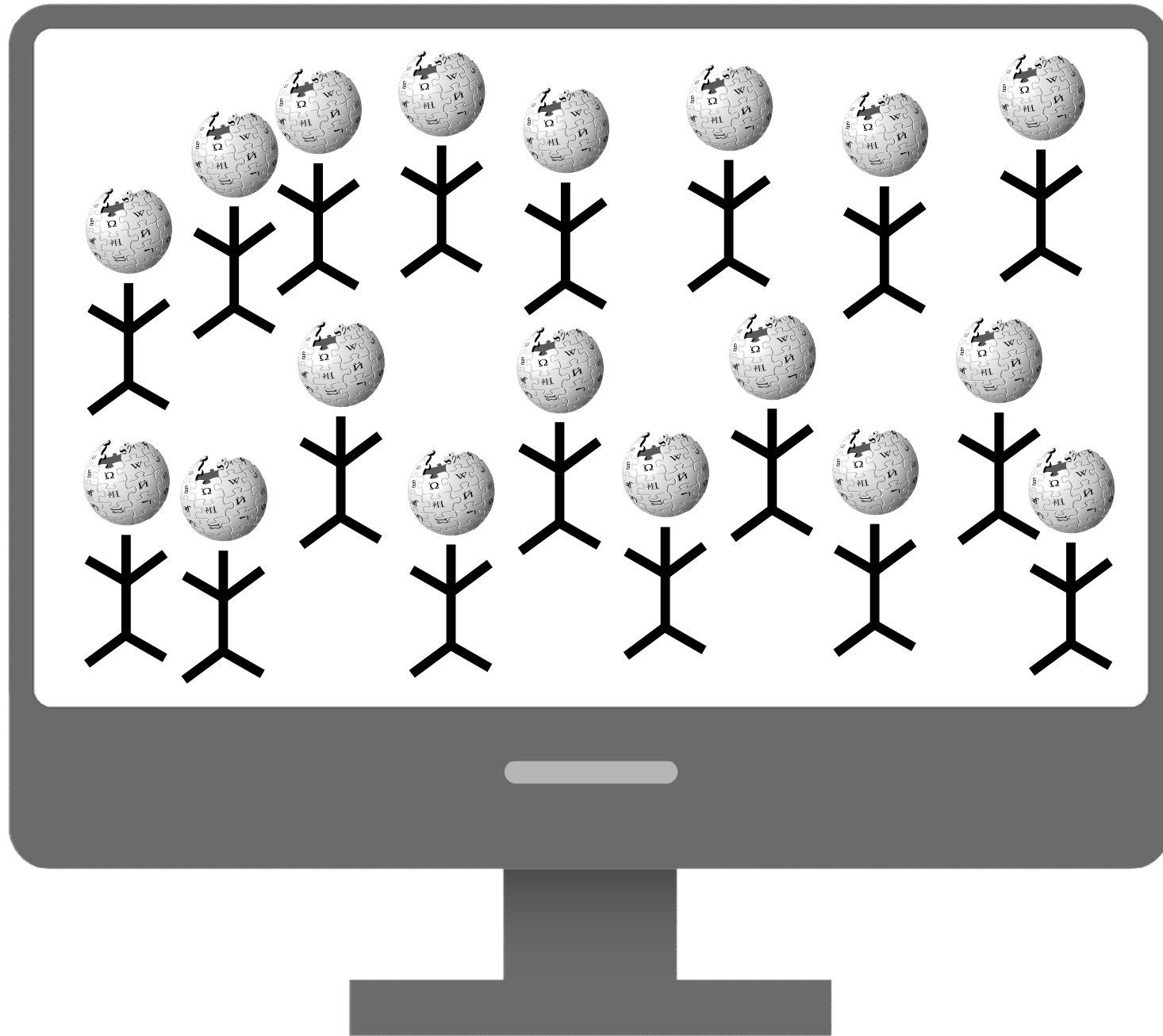
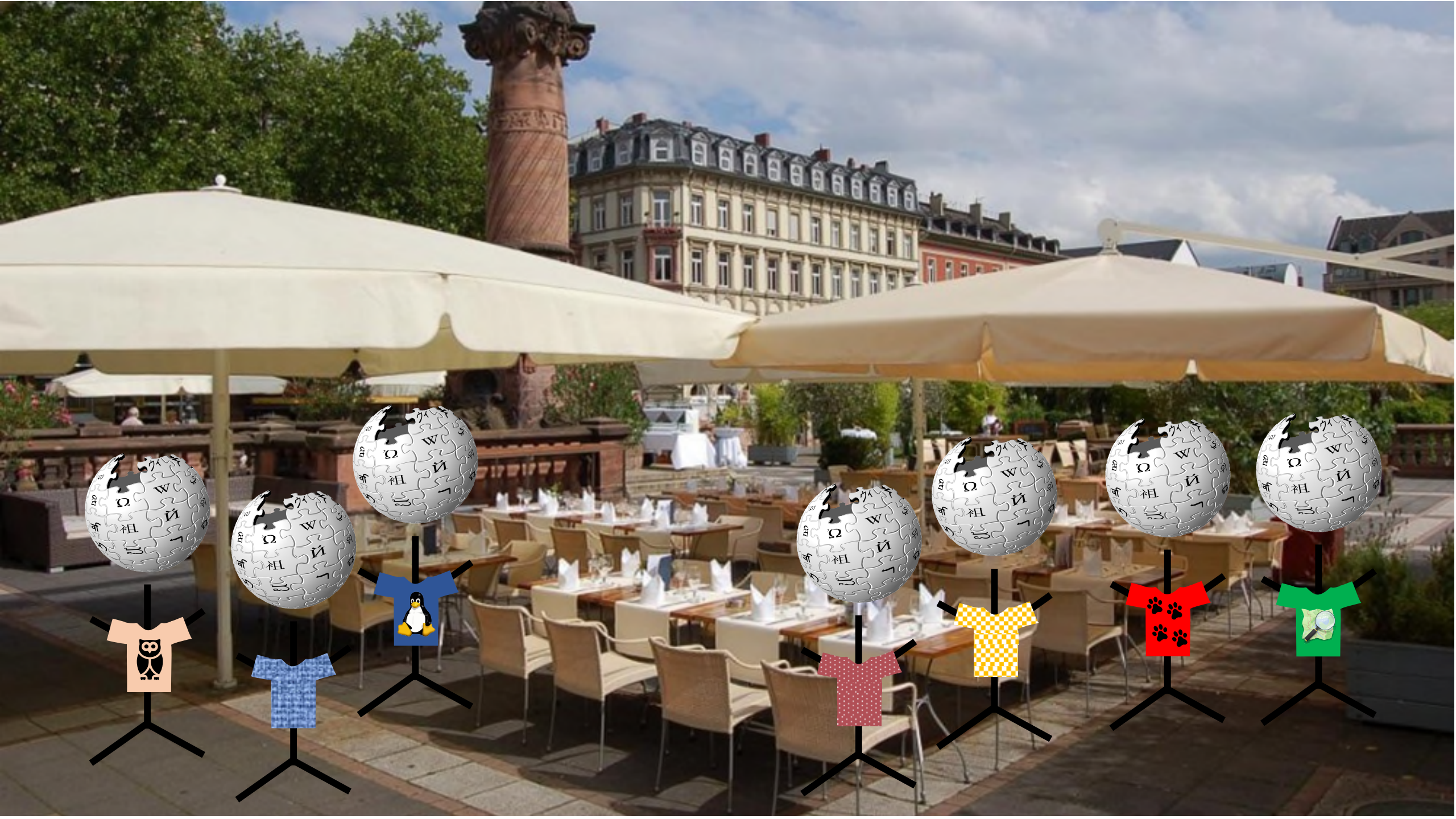


Fig. 2. Gini coefficient and Lorenz curve for the total number of contributions made by registered authors (German Wikipedia).

Why do people contribute?

- Theory of motivation for contributing user-generated content (Crowston and Fagnot 2018)
 - Helping behaviour + social movement
 - Precursor conditions:
 - Individuals must recognise a need to help.
 - Individuals must have the capabilities and feel the obligations and/or responsibility to help.
 - Individuals must weigh their obligation and capability of helping favourably against its (social an tangible) costs.
- Survey results: strong belief about the idea of free knowledge, altruism, curiosity, found need for improvement, personal improvement, it is considered a fun activity with addictive qualities (see e.g. Algan et al. 2013, Anthony et al. 2009, Balestra et al. 2016, Kuznetsov 2006)







Organising offline meetings

Regelmäßiges Mainz-Treffen

[Abonnieren]

- **Zeitpunkt:** 29. Februar 2020 (Samstag) um 19:00 Uhr („Come Together“ 18 bis 19 Uhr, wer früher kommen möchte)
- **Ort:** Pizzeria Venezia in Mainz-Mombach
 - **Adresse:** Auf der Langen Lein 2a, 55120 Mainz (an der Bezirkssportanlage Mombach, Entfernung ca. 200 m von der Bushaltestelle *An der Langen Lein* der Linie 62 und ca. 700 m von der Haltestelle *Westring* der Buslinien 60, 61 und 63)
 - **Webseite:** <http://www.pizzeria-venezia-mombach.de/>
 - **Reservierung:** Es ist der Nebenraum für Wikipedia reserviert.

Ja, ich nehme teil

1. –Mombacher (Diskussion) 19:31, 14. Feb. 2020 (CET) [Beantworten]
2. –Jivee Blau 20:45, 14. Feb. 2020 (CET) [Beantworten]
3. –Nixus Minimax (Diskussion) 08:01, 15. Feb. 2020 (CET) [Beantworten]
4. –Symposiarch Bandeja de entrada 17:06, 15. Feb. 2020 (CET) [Beantworten]
5. –HumbleAlien (Diskussion) 14:11, 22. Feb. 2020 (CET) [Beantworten]
6. kandschwar (Diskussion) 16:41, 23. Feb. 2020 (CET) [Beantworten]
7. Benutzer im Exil

Vielleicht

- –Hmwpriv (Diskussion) 08:59, 15. Feb. 2020 (CET) (aber die Tendenz geht eher zur Nichtteilnahme) [Beantworten]
- Leserin:Wegwarte

Nein, bei mir klappt es leider nicht

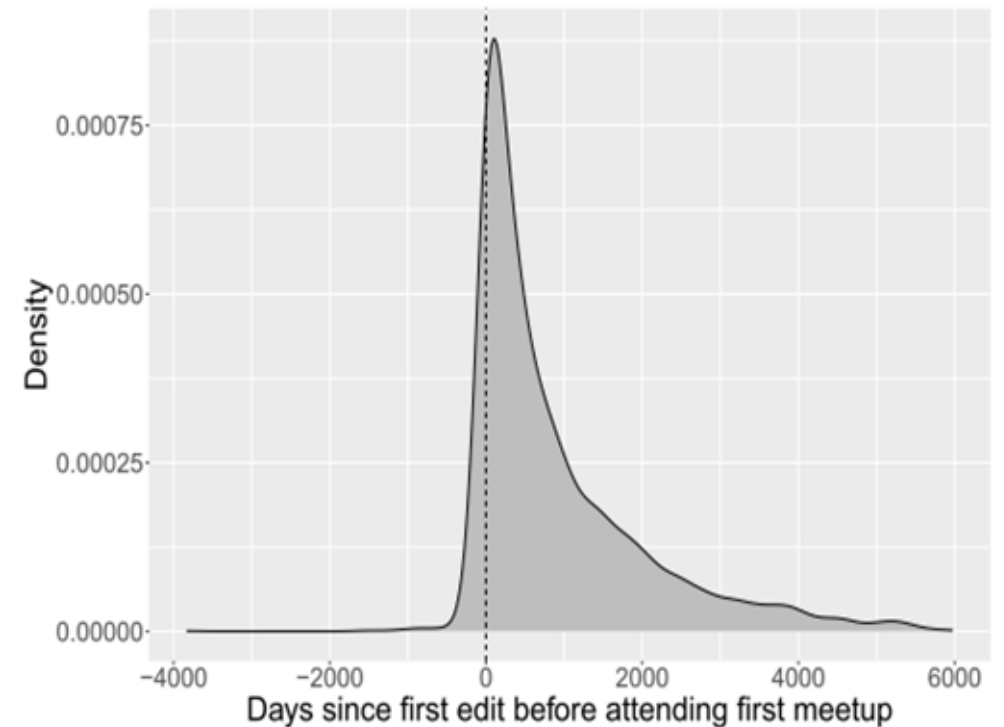
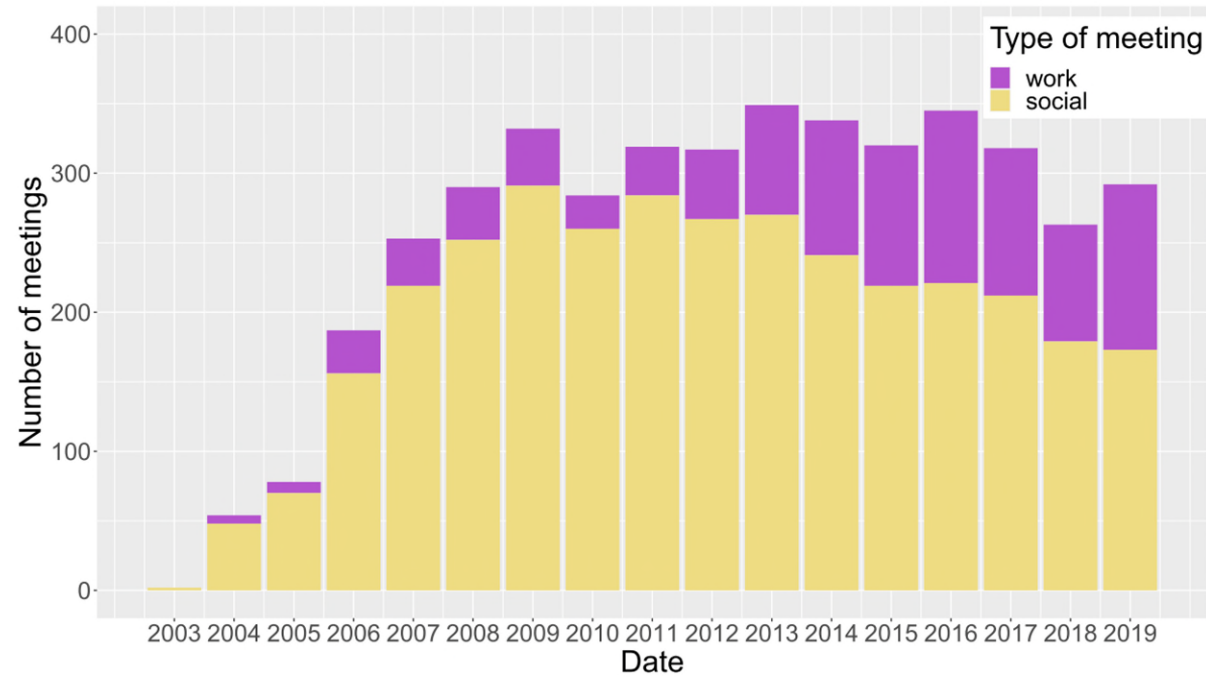
1. – Reinhard Dietrich (Diskussion) 15:08, 15. Feb. 2020 (CET) [Beantworten]
2. –Hvd69 (Diskussion) 16:29, 17. Feb. 2020 (CET) [Beantworten]
3. –Pratz53 (Diskussion) 15:47, 21. Feb. 2020 (CET) [Beantworten]
4. Olaf Kosinsky (Diskussion) 14:16, 22. Feb. 2020 (CET) [Beantworten]
5. PhilEOS (Diskussion) 22:57, 25. Feb. 2020 (CET) - ich würde aber gern mal teilnehmen, also setzt mich, wenn möglich, auf die Benachrichtigungsliste! Danke!! [Beantworten]



https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia_Diskussion:Mainz

Meetings

- 4418 meetups organised on the German Wikipedia (2001-2020)
- 4122 users have attended meetups
 - On average, meeting-goers attended 9.2 meetings (range 1 to 289)
 - On average, meeting-goers were active on Wikipedia for 921.2 days before their first meeting



How do offline meetups influence online activity?

- People tend to remain more active on Wikipedia when introduced through an editathon (Farzan et al. 2016) → Friendships made are considered important for users (also Littlejohn et al. 2019)
- Users attending a meetup are much more likely to start contributing again after a meetup if they have not been editing articles before.
- It is not necessarily the case that users increase their contributions after a meetup in comparison to before the meetup, but their reduction in contribution is less than the reduction a comparable control group experiences.
 - Users remain more active than those not attending meetings

Negative aspects of meetings

- Meetings are generally friendly spaces, but conflicts exist and new issues can arise:
 - Exclusion of newcomers and minorities (young editors, women, etc.)
 - Transparency regarding meeting recordings
 - Discussions regarding Wikimedia and community spaces
 - Handling of blocked users
 - Personal conflicts
 - Meetings with only 1 attendee can be demotivating

How do offline meetups influence election participation (RfA)?

- Meetup-goers are more involved in Wikipedia online elections: more likely to run as administrator, more likely to vote, etc.
- Candidates who have met many others are more likely to become administrators.
- The direction of voting is also influenced by this: those who meet more pro-voters also tend to vote pro; and those who meet more anti-voters tend to vote anti.

Meetings matter for Wikipedia

- Relationships in the «real world» matter for the online editing experience
- Those going to meetings often belong to the core of the project
- Meetings can provide friendly introduction to the rules and norms of the platform
- Work meetings (like editathons) can provide direct benefits (additional edits on specific, pre-selected topics)



Best practices for meetings I

- Organise meetings online
 - Always set the date for the next meeting
 - Keep a list of attendees
 - Advertise meetings on user talk pages
 - Document past meetings with reports/photos
- Organised excursion attract users (e.g. guided tours to places of interest, etc.)
 - Direct benefit for Wikipedia: Attend excursions to places of interest and add new information/photos to Wikipedia (mosques, historical buildings, etc.)



Best practices for meetings II

- Meetings should contain social components
 - Meetings should aim at building a community for longer-term involvement
- Meetings need to be inclusive and offer friendly spaces for newcomers
 - Rounds of introduction, etc.
- Collaborate with organisations close to the movement of free knowledge
 - Museums, galleries, libraries
 - Universities (students and staff)
- Request funding from Wikimedia when possible



Thank you for
the invitation!

Questions?

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Literature

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