visual editor’s effect on newly registered users

Aaron Halfaker
ahalfaker@wikimedia.org
[[User:EpochFail]]
[[User:Halfak (WMF)]]
The decline in new contributor growth is the single most serious challenge facing the Wikimedia movement.

Removing avoidable technical impediments associated with Wikimedia's editing interface is a necessary pre-condition for increasing the number of Wikimedia contributors.

From https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/VisualEditor (CC-BY-SA 3.0)
The decline in new contributor growth is the single most serious challenge facing the Wikimedia movement.

Removing avoidable technical impediments associated with Wikimedia's editing interface is a necessary pre-condition for increasing the number of Wikimedia contributors.

From https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/VisualEditor (CC-BY-SA 3.0)
technical impediments

[[User:Howief_(WMF)]]
technical impediments

entry barriers

[[User:Howief_(WMF)]]

[[User:EpochFail]]
1. Entry barriers
1. Entry barriers

2. VisualEditor & technical literacy
1. Entry barriers

2. VisualEditor & technical literacy

3. Experimental results & discussion
Part 1. Entry barriers
THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

The Internet
THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

The Internet

Permission  Literacy  Social / Motivational
The Internet

THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

Permission

Literacy

Social / Motivational
Permission

THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

- Anyone can edit
THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

- Anyone can edit
- Only trusted users can delete
The Internet

THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

- Anyone can edit
- Only trusted users can delete

Generally not an issue for newcomers
The NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

A key to Wikipedia’s success

The Internet

THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

Permission

Literacy

Social / Motivational
THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

The Internet

Permission  Literacy  Social / Motivational
THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

- Did you know you could edit?
The Internet

THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

- Did you know you could edit?
- Do you know how to format?

Permission  Literacy
THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

- Did you know you could edit?
- Do you know how to format?
- Do you know what content belongs in Wikipedia?

The Internet

Permission  Literacy
THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

Did you know you could edit?

Do you know how to format?

Do you know what content belongs in Wikipedia?

Where do I go to … ?
The New Active Editor Funnel!

The Internet

Permission

Literacy

WP:BLP?

WP:PROF?


The Internet

THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

Permission

Literacy

WP:BLP?

WP:PROF?

CSD/PROD/AFD?


The Internet

Permission

Literacy

Social / Motivational

THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!
The Internet

THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

Permission  Literacy  Social / Motivational
Did you make friends?

THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

Social / Motivational
The Internet

THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

- Did you make friends?
- Do you find the work rewarding?
The Internet

THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

- Did you make friends?
- Do you find the work rewarding?
- Do you identify with the community?

Social / Motivational
THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

Social / Motivational

[[m:Research:The Rise and Decline]]
The Internet

THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

Permission  Literacy  Social / Motivational
Part 2. VisualEditor & technical literacy
WikiText is hard for newbies
The decline in new contributor growth is the single most serious challenge facing the Wikimedia movement. Removing avoidable technical impediments associated with Wikimedia's editing interface is a necessary pre-condition for increasing the number of Wikimedia contributors.
• Reduce technical impediments
• Reduce technical impediments

WYSIWYG
● Reduce technical impediments

WYSIWYG

“Wissy Wig”
What
You
See
Is
What
You
Get
WikiText

What You See Is What You Get
What you see is a bunch of “markup”

What you get is a Wikipedia article.
What You See Is What You Get

WikiText

Visual Editor
Significant technical literacy barrier
Significant technical literacy barrier

- What’s a template?
- How do I bold?
- How do I split one paragraph into two?
- How do I add a citation?
- What is this nonsense?: “{”, “|”, “||”, etc.?
Minimized technical literacy barrier

Visual Editor
1. Familiar experience: Microsoft Word -- Google Docs

Minimized technical literacy barrier

Visual Editor
1. Familiar experience: Microsoft Word -- Google Docs

2. Literacy baked into the UI

Minimized technical literacy barrier

Visual Editor
1. Familiar experience: Microsoft Word -- Google Docs

2. Literacy baked into the UI
   a. How do I add a reference?

Minimized technical literacy barrier

Visual Editor
1. Familiar experience: Microsoft Word -- Google Docs

2. Literacy baked into the UI
   a. How do I add a reference?
Good new editors

Technically literate people

Good new editors
What happens when we give it to new editors?
What happens when we give it to new editors?

H1. More of them will contribute productively.

(assumes technical literacy is a limitation)
What happens when we give it to new editors?

H1. More of them will contribute productively.  
   (assumes technical literacy is a limitation)

H2. There’ll be way more damage!
What happens when we give it to new editors?

H1. More of them will contribute productively.
   (assumes technical literacy is a limitation)

H2. There’ll be way more damage!
What happens when we give it to new editors?

H1. More of them will contribute productively.  
   (assumes technical literacy barrier)

H2. There’ll be way more damage!
Part 3. Experimental results & discussion
English Wikipedia
English Wikipedia
English Wikipedia
English Wikipedia

Week 1

Week 2
H1. More productive?
H1. More productive?

● Productive edits?
H1. More productive?

- Productive edits? *no significance*
H1. More productive?

- Productive edits? *no significance*
- Article edits?
H1. More productive?

- Productive edits? *no significance*
- Article edits? *no significance*
H1. More productive?

- Productive edits? *no significance*
- Article edits? *no significance*
- Editing sessions?
H1. More productive?

- Productive edits?  *no significance*
- Article edits?  *no significance*
- Editing sessions?  *no significance*
H1. More productive?

- Productive edits? *no significance*
- Article edits? *no significance*
- Editing sessions? *no significance*
- Time spent editing?
H1. More productive?

- Productive edits? no significance
- Article edits? no significance
- Editing sessions? no significance
- Time spent editing? no significance
H1. More productive?

- Productive edits? *no significance*
- Article edits? *no significance*
- Editing sessions? *no significance*
- Time spent editing? *no significance*

**No change in productivity.**
H2. More damage?
H2. More damage?

- More newcomers blocked for vandalism?
H2. More damage?

- More newcomers blocked for vandalism?
  - Not significant
H2. More damage?

- More newcomers blocked for vandalism?
  - Not significant

- Reverted edits?
  - Significantly fewer -- but tiny effect.
H2. More damage?

- More newcomers blocked for vandalism?
  - Not significant

- Reverted edits?
  - Significantly fewer -- but tiny effect.

No change or slight reduction in damage.
Good new editors

Vandals

Technically literate people
Good news
editors
Vandals
Technically literate people
Reducing technical literacy barriers does not seem to make it easier to vandalize Wikipedia.
H1. More productive?

- Why no improvement in productivity?
THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

The Internet

Permission

Literacy

Social / Motivational
The Internet

THE NEW ACTIVE EDITOR FUNNEL!

Permission

Literacy

Social / Motivational
The Internet

WP:BLP WP:PROF PROD

Rewarding experience for newcomers

Literacy

Social / Motivational

Permission
The Internet

Permission

Literacy

Social / Motivational

Some day...
The Internet

Some day...

necessary precondition

Permission

Literacy

Social / Motivational
Thanks!

Aaron Halfaker
ahalfaker@wikimedia.org
[[User:EpochFail]]
[[User:Halfak (WMF)]]
“halfak” on IRC

The Internet

Permission  Literacy  Social / Motivational

Read more: [[Research:VisualEditor's effect on newly registered editors]]