

# customization

Customized and Personalized user experiences are the new norm in consumer products, but are they appropriate for Wikipedia? A Personalization-focused strategy would conflict with Wikipedia privacy policy, [product principles](#) and Movement [equity goals](#), but Customization could contribute to greater usability for readers, communities and editors and for this reason must be considered as part of product modernization overall. In terms of the reading experience, the platform should support a set of user-modifiable customization options and a set of community-modifiable customization options (to allow for language-specific and culture-specific preferences). In terms of the editing experience, the platform should support customization based on common usage patterns and contributor activities at scale, and across whole groups of wiki projects. By making customization options part of the platform, it is possible to serve a more diverse set of needs and preferences without forking the main product. This approach will make scaling much more achievable, and the process of integrating new customization features less dependent upon the technical resources of regional communities.

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## Customization vs. Personalization

Customization and Personalization are sometimes used interchangeably but are fundamentally different in terms of user experience. **Personalization** is the automatic adaptation of a system to the behaviors and preferences of a user. Because Personalization requires much less explicit input from the user, it is appealing to non-expert users - their experience is automatically tailored without additional effort on their part. But a truly satisfying bespoke experience can only be delivered with a more technically sophisticated system, and requires sign-in, or another form of user identification, and the ongoing collection of user behavior data over time. This approach would be unfeasible and incompatible with the principle of [intentional transparency](#).

**Customization** refers to the degree to which a user can tailor their use of a product through overt controls and settings. Customization features allow a user to optimize their experience through preferences, defaults and conditionals. But unlike Personalization, Customization requires the user to *take action* in order to have a more optimal experience and hence is most appropriate in products where users are highly motivated to make such adaptations. Customization tends to result in greater satisfaction among power users, and lower satisfaction among non-power users. [3]

## The Reading Experience

### Customization For Individual Users

The *Customized* aspect of consumption experiences may not be differentiating or particularly memorable, but multiple studies [2] [3] suggest customization features are a factor in user satisfaction, enjoyment, and perception of usefulness.

In the context of Wikipedia, it is tempting to treat customization for individuals as a matter of agency (i.e. that it is self-evident that a user *should* have control over what they are being shown, how information is presented, and how the context they're in affects the modes of presentation). However while basic levels of customization in reading experiences have been shown to result in quick wins, [x] the considerable effort required to implement them may not result in a commensurate impact. So while the product landscape may have set an expectation of agency over...

- > Aesthetics
- > Accessibility
- > Data control
- > View modes for comfort, by screen
- > Short form/long form reading
- > Implicit topical interests
- > Control of notifications
- > Abuse filters

such settings will not necessarily result in *sustained* or *significantly greater* satisfaction with the product.

### Customization For Communities

Reading habits and aesthetic preferences are drastically different in different cultures. [3] communities should be able to customize the reading experiences for their language wikis drastically as well There is a small subset of contributors who work towards reading audience, (main page designers, maintainers, template designers) We need to give more choices and agency over how they present content to their communities [not edited at all]

when but it at the same time fragments experiences which is a big issue in scaling. Thus customization must be considered in parametric ways within frameworks that are well defined and scalable [not edited at all]

So while Customization *can* be a good thing for readers and communities, in an ecosystem with limited resources, the **return on investment** (in terms of change in user satisfaction) must be considered against the potential hit to **scalability**. When should considerations around agency

prevail over considerations of scalability? when but it at the same time fragments experiences which is a big issue in scaling.

**Reco:** Thus customization must be considered in parametric ways within frameworks that are well defined and scalable

### The Editing Experience

#### Customization For Individual Editors

In spite of the fact that customizing how a system behaves is a superficial change in the medium, it has been shown to lead to greater retention and satisfaction. [1]

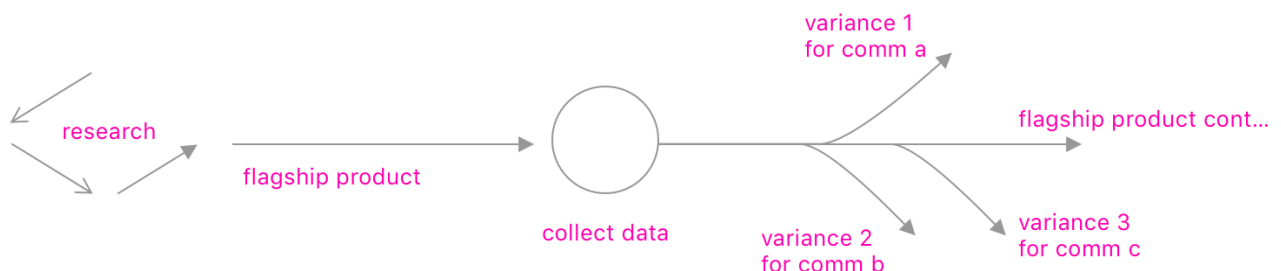
#### Customization for Communities

Create community personas that show similar behavior, stage, reactions etc.

Build main product conceived by research, which solves problems that are lowest common denominator

Collect information on specific communities on usage of the product

Fork and Modify the main product to match community needs



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## Experience

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These will be specific efforts and intervention for target communities to see a particular change in that community fork when community needs are determined to be different enough to warrant a shift.

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### Notes

- [1] Because Personalization requires a high degree of technical sophistication it would likely only be implemented in communities with a high degree of technical acumen and the developer resources to enable and support it. [K. Sweet and K. Wirth](#)
- [2] Customization leads to perceived ease of use and perceived ease of use leads to perceived usefulness. A user's perception of control positively affects their attitudes toward the product and the creator of the product. [H. Lee and E. Chang](#)
- [3] This pattern holds in "low privacy" contexts, but the opposite is true in "high privacy" contexts. [S. S. Sundar and S. S. Marathe](#)

### Sources

N. Pangarkar : [Research and Insights](#), Other contributors<sup>1</sup>: A. Baso, C. Gauthier, A. Hollender, D. Horn, R. Isler, J. Katz, J. Minor, T. Negrin, M. Novotny, N. Pangarkar, O. Vasileva

K. Sweet and K. Wirth : [One-to-One Personalization in the Age of Machine Learning](#)

H. Lee and E. Chang : [Consumer Attitudes Toward Online Mass Customization: An Application of Extended Technology Acceptance Model](#)

S. S. Sundar and S. S. Marathe [Personalization versus Customization: the Importance of Agency, Privacy, and Power Usage](#)

[Exploring the Relationship between Reading Habits and Aesthetic Preferences in Different Cultural Contexts and Design Practices](#)

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<sup>1</sup> If your name was left off the list by mistake please contact JMinor or MNovotny