

State of the MediaWiki Community



WIKIMEDIA
FOUNDATION

Chris Koerner

- Recovering MediaWiki admin
- MediaWiki Stakeholders' Group
- Foundation staff since 2016
- Likes cheese
- Lactose intolerant



I'm Chris. This slide includes humor.

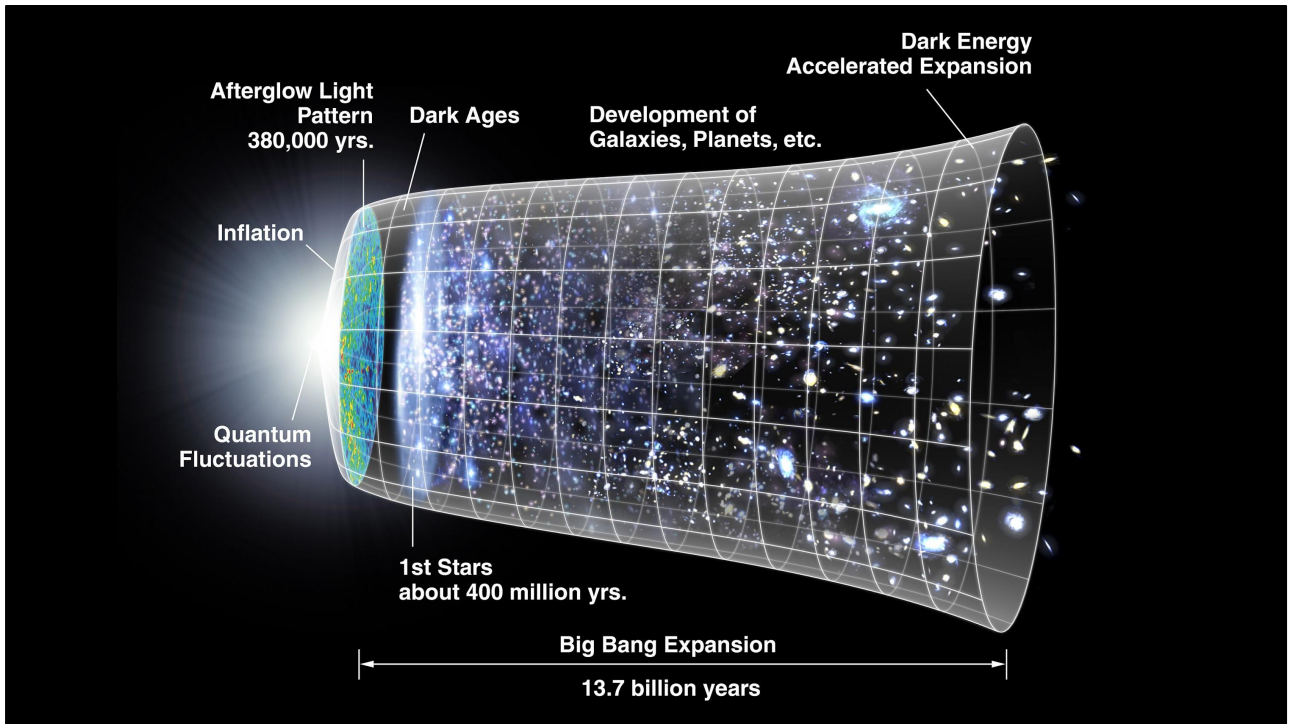
The Wikimedia Foundation is the non-profit organization that supports Wikipedia and other free knowledge projects.

Warning, this talk is subjective. I try to speak to facts, but this does contain opinion. I think I have a perspective on the community that is both unique, because I am me, but also shared in part with others. So, [[citation needed]]. In my slides I share as many references as possible for you to make up your own mind on the current state of things.

What I'd like to cover

- History
- Challenges
- Missing
- Some ideas

The last few years have seen some dramatic changes in the landscape of the MediaWiki community. Initiatives from the Wikimedia Foundation, user groups like the MediaWiki Stakeholders' Group, and individual contributors in organizations around the world have started to take notice - with more activity and involvement from all corners. What has happened recently? What challenges do our community face? What are we missing? Most importantly, what's next?



First, some history. I don't want to go back too far, so we'll start at about 380,000 years after the Big Bang. "During the first 377,000 years, the familiar forces and elementary particles emerged but the universe was too hot for neutral atoms and other structures to form, or photons to travel far, so the universe formed an opaque plasma. The cosmic microwave background radiation ("CMB") arose at the end of this period, known as recombination, when the universe cooled enough for neutral atoms to form and therefore became transparent." -

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronology_of_the_universe

I'm kidding.

I want to get us all on the same page - useful history for new folks, and a reminder for old folks on just how far things have progressed

History

- 2003 - MediaWiki
- 2005 - Semantic MediaWiki
- 2005 - First WMF employees
- ~~~~~
- 2010 - First SMWCon
- 2011 - WikiApiary
- 2013 - Wikidata
- 2014 - MediaWiki Stakeholders' Group
- 2015 - MediaWiki User Survey
- 2015 - Developer Relations
- 2016 - EMWCon - NYC
- 2016 - CTO hired at WMF
- 2017 - EMWCon - Washington D.C.
- 2017 - MediaWiki Product Manager
- 2017 - TechCom
- 2017 - Code of Conduct
- 2017 - Discourse pilot
- 2018 - Pingback data
- 2018 - EMWCon - Houston

A lot of good stuff happened between 2005-2010 but for the sake of brevity (fossils)
First SMWCon proper in Boston, Massachusetts, USA

https://wikiapiary.com/wiki/Main_Page - Started by Jamie Thingles now a MWStake project

2014 SMWCon Montreal is the first where I met Cindy, Yaron, Mark, and others

https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/MediaWiki_Stakeholders%27_Group - Marcus and Mark

https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/2015_MediaWiki_User_Survey - Wikimania 2015

https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Developer_Relations

First EMWCon, and offshoot of SMWCon hosted by Yaron and Wikimedia NYC

https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/EMWCon_Spring_2016

Victoria! Much needed leadership for a position that remained understaffed for far too long

Second EMWcon hosted by Cindy and Bernadette in DC

https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/EMWCon_Spring_2017

Cindy Cicalese joins WMF as PM for MediaWiki

TechComm's revised charter (and newsletter)

https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Wikimedia_Technical_Committee

https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Newsletter:TechCom_Radar

https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Code_of_Conduct

<https://discourse-mediawiki.wmflabs.org>

<https://pingback.wmflabs.org/#unique-wiki-count>

https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/EMWCon_Spring_2018

And more

2018 - Wikibase user group - showing interest in the software

https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikibase_Community_User_Group

Yaron's podcast

<http://betweenthebrackets.libsyn.com>

https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/MediaWiki_Stakeholders%27_Group/Blog/2018-03-07

Community stats (Note: stats for "Independent" on wikimedia.biterg.io also include bots (like pushing translation updates). So the part of the pie chart gets way smaller when applying "author_bot:false" in the search field.)

<https://wikimedia.biterg.io/>

Roadmap Cindy discussed

Tech:

SMW 3.0, elasticsearch and more

<https://sourceforge.net/p/semiawiki/mailman/message/36248747/>

TinyMCE extension and support in PageForms

<https://sourceforge.net/p/semiawiki/mailman/message/36262203/>

Mermaid:

<https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Extension:Mermaid>

JADE:

<https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Extension:JADE>

Related tools from the community health initiative (like the interaction timeline, better anti-harassment tools, etc.) that build a better platform for public uses of MediaWiki.

https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Community_health_initiative

<https://tools.wmflabs.org/interaction-timeline/>

As mentioned, TechComm newsletter:

https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Newsletter:TechCom_Radar

I think we're healthy and moving in the right direction, but let's not just pat ourselves on the back...

Challenges



WIKIMEDIA
FOUNDATION



Challenges

- Finding and getting involved in the community is difficult
- We have been historically Wikimedia focused
- Historically English/Western focused
- We don't have a single place to congregate
- Wikis are a one-to-many relationship unlike other FOSS projects
- Third-party leadership really needs to show their value to partners

- Finding and getting involved in the community is difficult
- WMF resources focused toward Wikimedia efforts leave little time for MediaWiki as it's own thing
- Language barrier? Little known how MediaWiki is being used across the world
- We don't have a single place (or even a small number) to congregate
- Wikis are one to many in most cases, unlike other OSS projects where there is a many to many relationship (firefox, wordpress, react, etc).
- Third-party really needs to show their value - finish something on the wishlist - more new people at events (offline and on)

What is Missing?

- Stronger liaising between WMF and community (This is happening!)
- More third-party presence in decision making
- Better publication of the work
- Stats on usage of the software
- Too many unanswered talk page questions
- Better installation support
- The eternal better extension maintenance support
- Documentation

- PM for MediaWiki! CLs trying to better support Technology (including the MW platform team)
- More third-party presence in decision making with regards to MediaWiki's future
- Better publication of the work of both third-party users and WMF initiatives
- Stats on usage of the software - metrics help convince people!
- Too many talk page questions go unanswered on Extension pages
- Better installation support

Opportunities

- Show up and participate!
- More regional events?
- We miss out on having diverse voices involved
- More partnerships with like-minded communities

- Show up and participate - we need to figure out how to get folks to events, meetings, talk pages, etc.
- More events - other FOSS communities have more than two or three events. How ca
- We miss out on having diverse voices involved - where are the 40k admins!? WHere are folks from the rest of the world? Non NA, European?
- Like minded - what was the last non-MediaWiki event where you talked about mediawiki? How do we give and take with other groups?

Thank you!



WIKIMEDIA
FOUNDATION



References

- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Koerner,_Chris_January_2017_01.jpg
- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wikimedia_Foundation_logo_-_vertical.svg
- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CMB_Timeline300_no_WMAP.jpg