EDITING FROM ANTARCTICA: THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL EDIT-A-THON FROM THE SOUTHERNMOST CONTINENT

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This poster in a nutshell: The first **edit-a-thon from Antarctica** is presented: **seven researchers** (of different nationalities) aboard the Italian icebreaker RV Laura Bassi decided to join the Wikipedia cause in **January-February 2024**, during an oceanographic campaign in the Ross Sea, in the framework of the Italian National Antarctic Research Program. They worked off-line due to limited Internet access and collaborated with Wikimedia Italia for publishing and formatting their articles. They created articles on Italian and English Wikipedia on topics related to Antarctica, the environment, and climate change. The Italian Wikipedia community followed their example, by launching a month of contribution on those topics, creating or improving more than 150 articles. Besides the "coolness" of the event, it was a remarkable example of how academic personnel can learn the importance (and fun) of promoting scientific dissemination and spreading free knowledge through Wikimedia projects.

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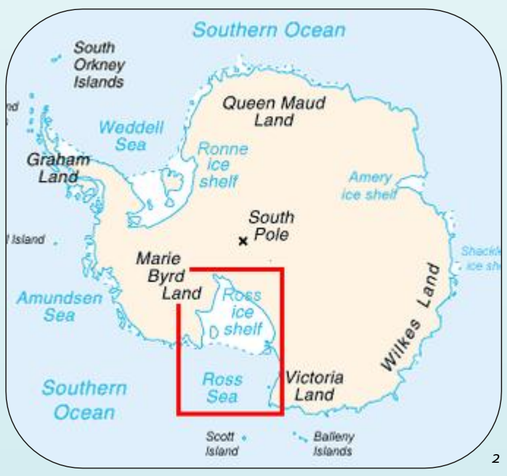

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WHAT

An edit-a-thon dedicated to topics related to Antarctica, the environment, and climate change.

WHEN

January-February 2024.

WHERE

In Antarctica (!), aboard the Italian research vessel *Laura Bassi*, which was involved in a scientific campaign in the Ross Sea

WHO

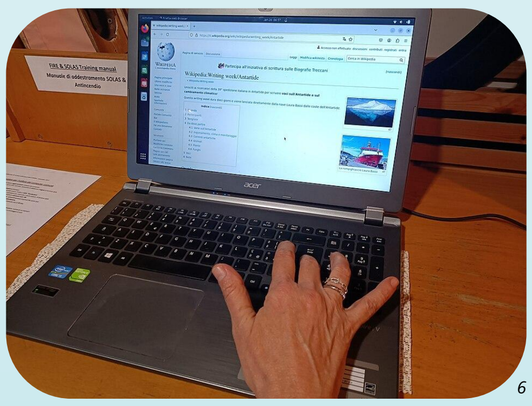
Seven researchers from different institutions (Italian and New Zealand) and countries (Italian, New Zealand, Australian, Dutch, German, American).

WHY

- Edit-a-thons are an important tool to improve the content of Wikimedia projects and engage external people in the Wikimedia world.
- On Italian Wikipedia and in other languages, articles dedicated to Antarctica and more generally to climate change often proved to be absent or superficial.
- To engage academic researchers for reliable scientific dissemination through Wikimedia projects.

HOW

Ok, there were difficulties related to working shifts during the campaign, as well as weather conditions (winds, waves, ice etc.).
Yet, the biggest obstacle for a Wikipedian was technical, i.e. limited Internet access: except for the devices used by navigation and logistics services, only three computers had access to a complete connection. So, the participants worked off-line with the sources they had available, coordinating with Wikimedia Italia to publish and format articles when they were finalized.



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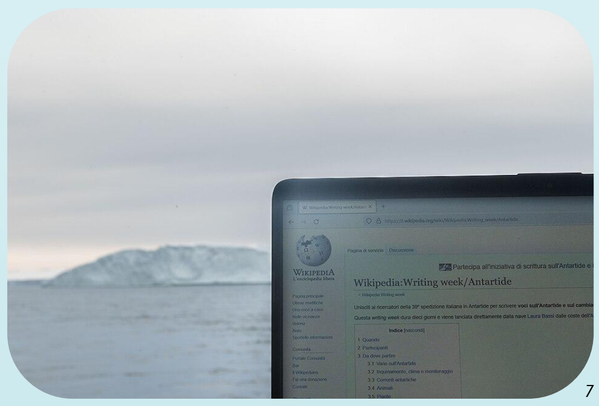

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AND NOT JUST THAT!

Moreover, the Italian Wikipedia community was proposed to participate in a week of contribution about Antarctica and climate change, and the response exceeded the expectations: the week became a month, and then a whole new stable WikiProject on Italian Wikipedia, specifically dedicated to Antarctica, was launched, along with its "Antarctic Base" for discussions.

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RESULTS

From the wikimedian point of view

- First Wikimedian event in Antarctica.
- 6 new articles created on Italian and English Wikipedia by the researchers from Antarctica.
- 7 pictures of the event uploaded on Wikimedia Commons.
- 150 articles created or expanded by it.wiki community.
- Articles created by researchers in Italian language were not translated from English Wikipedia, but they were created from scratch based on scientific sources (*i.e.* "Terra Nova Bay Polynya", "High Salinity Shelf Water", and "Suspendend particulate matter", but also "Rain-on-snow event", written by a user in Italy). These articles represent a pride and an added value for the entire Wikimedian community, being absent in all projects before their creation on the Italian version.

What about the academics?

- Great example of wikipedian and academic collaboration (also international, with researches from different countries).
- Wikimedian projects benefit from the work of high-profile academic personnel.
- Qualified researchers realised the importance of reliable scientific dissemination even through non-institutional means like Wikipedia, allowing the spread of free knowledge and important discoveries to as wide an audience as possible.

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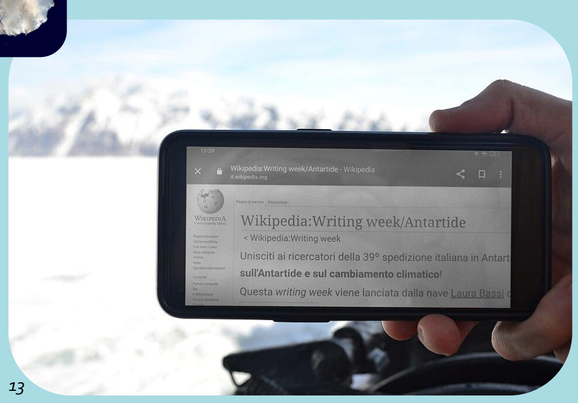

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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