

Wikimedians in Residence programme review

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The Wikimedian in Residence (WIR) programme is seen as one of Wikimedia UK's (WMUK) strongest, most impactful programmes, but is it really so? Over the first half of 2014 we have evaluated to find out.

What's a Wikimedian in Residence?

Usually a Wikimedia contributor who accepts a placement within an institution to:

- » facilitate close working **relationship** between the Wikimedia movement and the host organisation.
- » facilitate **content** improvements on Wikimedia projects, e.g. via exploring sharing institution's digital resources on Wikimedia Commons.
- » serve as an **ambassador** for open knowledge and its benefits. Assist change within the host organisation.
- » deliver the above via a range of **activities**, both internal (e.g. staff training and talks) and public-facing.

WMUK has been involved with WIR, with varying degrees of support and supervision, since the creation of the WIR programme in 2010. We evaluated seven WIR projects that were delivered through a systematic process of applications, agreements and reporting.

What did we evaluate and why?

The aim of the review was to assess the programme delivered to date and identify next steps in its development.

We looked at:

Model

- » Length, costs and funding
- » Assessment of the WMUK's choices of partner institutions

Hosts

- » Assessment of WMUK support
- » Perception of effectiveness of the residencies

Residents

- » Assessment of skills
- » Experience of the project
- » Assessment of WMUK support
- » Documentation / reporting

Benefits and measurement

- » Analysis of the delivery on objectives
- » Assessment of the benefits as seen by the residents/hosts/community
- » Analysis of impact so far and the potential

Who did we involve and how?

- » Residents
- » Residency hosts – esp. line managers
- » Wikimedia community
- » Assistance from Programme Evaluation & Design – esp. survey creation
- » Volunteer reviewer

Methods and aims:

- » Online questionnaire for residents – to explore initial opinions on the issues above
- » Online questionnaire for residents' line managers – to explore initial opinions
- » Follow up meetings with the host institutions – in-depth discussions about challenges and solutions
- » Online questionnaire for the Wikimedia community (mostly UK) – to explore their opinions
- » In-person meeting of the residents – to develop SWOT analysis and open to wider dialogue
- » Existing data: residents' monthly reports and final case studies – to assess impact so far
- » Producing final review report – for wider dissemination

What did we find out?

From the surveys and meetings we learnt that:

- » The programme strengths lay in the good reputation of past projects and the Wikipedia 'brand'.
- » It leverages the prestige of host organisations, their commitment to the open agenda, working with the web projects.
- » The programme is faced with challenges:
 - Obstacles to change within the host institution.
 - Insufficient tools for demonstrating metrics.
 - Community can only support a limited number of projects.
 - Small pool of potential residents.
 - Limited capacity from WMUK to support and help resolve the issues above.

From the reports we found that the impact is strong:

- » Residents create open knowledge awareness through media coverage, training and outreach events.
- » They advocate for change within their host institution, and other organisations in their networks.
- » They produce resources about open knowledge for the host organisations, and the global Wikimedia movement.
- » They facilitate crucial content improvements by supporting media uploads, distributing content already available, and supporting article creation on Wikipedia.
- » See the infographic!

Along the way, we had some surprising discoveries:

- » It can take a couple of months for the resident to understand fully what their role is and how to deliver it.
- » The residents don't necessarily network with each other – this needs support.
- » It is important to the success of the project to have a 'team' within the institution working with the resident.

...What will we do now?

To build on the potential of the programme, we have a series of recommendations:

- » WIR programme should continue.
- » Duration of residencies – should be longer to ensure impact (e.g. 9-12 months for larger organisations).
- » Supporting the programme – additional capacity is needed for this. It will be considered in the future.
- » Sharing of information – set up a forum for the sharing of advice, information and best practice between institutions and between residents.
- » Project goals – should be clearer for each residency to improve assessing impact. They should be reflected on the job description. Better reporting should follow.
- » Resident skills – training, teaching, working independently, tact, advocacy – should be reinforced in the job description.
- » Project format – consider alternative residency formats to increase the potential resident pool.

LOOKING INTO: WIKIMEDIANS IN RESIDENCE

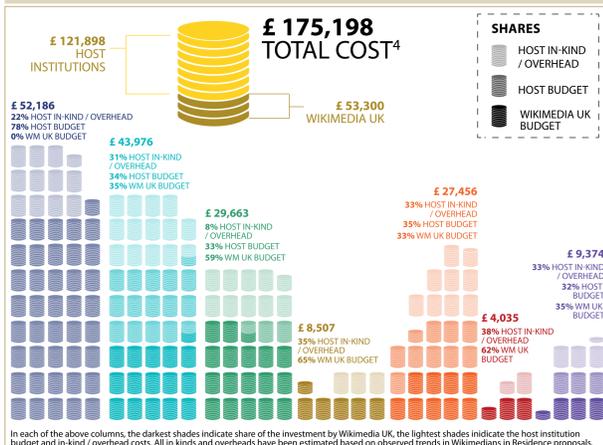
After six months of research that involved reporting from residents, host institutions, and the community, Wikimedia UK has produced an in-depth report of a well known program: Wikimedians in Residence.

In this infographic, we showcase some of the program outcomes.

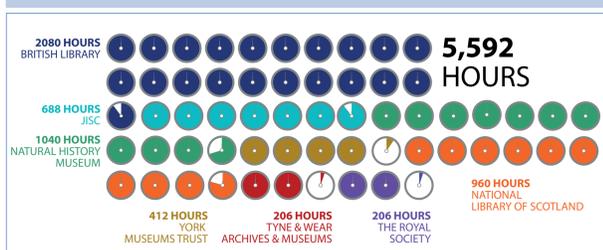
Follow the color-coding to see each residencies reported^{1,2} contributions!

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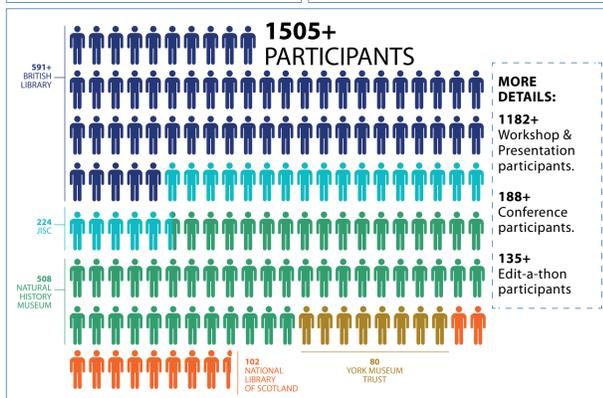
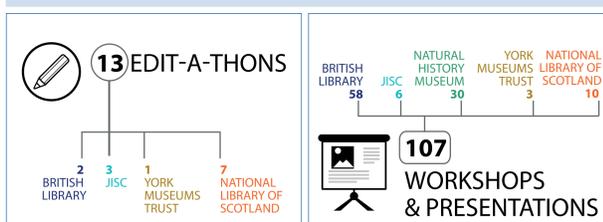
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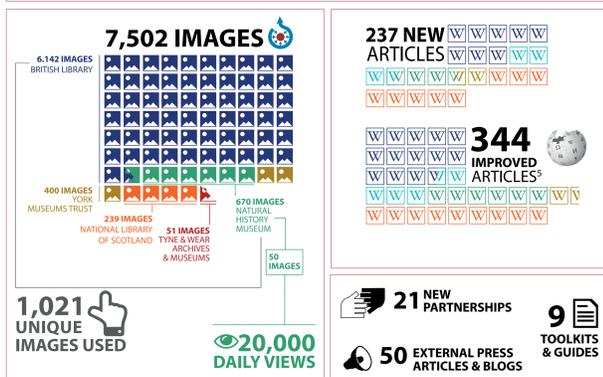
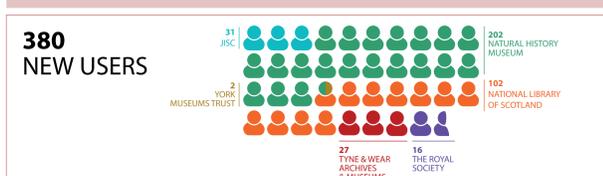
RESIDENT HOURS LEVERAGED



OUTPUTS



OUTCOMES



Legend



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Further information

Full review: https://wikimedia.org.uk/wiki/Wikimedian_in_Residence_2014_review

Contact me: [https://wikimedia.org.uk/wiki/User:Daria_Cybulska_\(WMUK\)](https://wikimedia.org.uk/wiki/User:Daria_Cybulska_(WMUK))

¹ Data presented as reported through May 2014.
² Reporting of contributions may be only partially complete; not all residents tracked and/or reported all metrics consistently.
³ Not all residents engaged in all types of outreach activities.
⁴ Wikimedia UK support time was distributed across six staff members, some with just limited admin support activity. It is not currently possible to break down the hourly investment of time per residency, and investment varies depending on the number and scope of residency. However, in their last quarter, staff support was estimated at 300 hours (approximately £5,300). This is both time spent to support current residencies, and work on pursuing and setting up prospective ones.
⁵ Reporting on new articles created and improved articles is an estimate based on edit-a-thons, and workshops and presentations participants, and the work carried out during those events. This data is new and was pulled for the specific purpose of this infographic, hence, it is not in the final report.
This infographic was a collaboration of WMF evaluation team members Maria Cruz & Jaime Anstee, and Wikimedia UK program manager Daria Cybulska.