

The OBGYN Bootcamp in Boston does Wikipedia  
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## Abstract

In April 2014 a group of eight medical students specializing in obstetrics and gynecology wished to participate in a typical instance of the Wikipedia Education Program's classroom outreach project. A Wikipedia trainer visited the class on one day for three hours to present on the topic of Wikipedia and health and to coach the students on editing Wikipedia. Seven students participated as Wikipedia editors and after two weeks, all of their contributions to Wikipedia had been reviewed and accepted by the community.

The total contribution of the students was several paragraphs of information among seven Wikipedia health articles. Typical web traffic to these articles could be estimated by the 139,000 pageviews these articles got in March 2014. This is presented as a useful experience to all involved.

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## Summary

Eight students of obstetrics and gynecology participated in a three-hour workshop in which they learned about Wikipedia and contributed health information to articles in their field of medicine. Their work and the impact of it were assessed two weeks from that workshop.

Seven students contributed to Wikipedia, with each of them looking at one Wikipedia health article and all of them reviewing each other's articles. Of the students who participated, all of them made information contributions in accordance with Wikipedia community guidelines by adding a health statement with a citation to an appropriate health information source.

In the case of five of seven articles, Wikipedians with no relationship to the event spontaneously appeared to develop the articles further immediately after the students made their article contributions. This paper argues that because these articles had little attention before, that the students edited the articles attracted others to join and magnify the impact what the students did. To think so would be in accord with typical understanding of Wikipedia, as would considering collaborative work to be something for which all participants may take credit.

As the students' edits passed routine community review, it is very likely that their contributions will remain as they presented them. In March 2014 the articles which the students edited collectively received 139,000 pageviews. Monthly pageviews on Wikipedia vary by time of year, but as an estimate, it would be reasonable to assume that the students' contributions will be reaching an audience requesting information on their very specific topics about 139,000 times per month indefinitely.

The outcome of the project is that the student participants better understand how their future patients get health information online and how this information comes to be where it is found. The Wikipedia community received good content contributions from the student in alignment with project goals. This event and exercise was only atypical because of the high level of expertise of the students and because of the weighty nature of their contributions in an important field of outreach, but otherwise, this was how the Wikipedia Education Program does outreach.

## Background

Tuesday 8 April Lane Rasberry, a Wikipedian and author of this paper, visited the OBGYN bootcamp for medical students at Harvard. The event was hosted by Celeste Royce and L. Renata Vicari. Rasberry gave a presentation to eight students, each of whom was to review a Wikipedia article in their field of interest, add some content to it, and then follow the community response to it within the week. Now the bootcamp is over the results of this Wikipedia meetup are reported.

## Intervention

Fourth-year medical students with some or no prior experience contributing to Wikipedia were given a 12 minute presentation on the popularity of Wikipedia's health content with the intent to provide a rationale for motivating them to believe that their contributions to Wikipedia would be read by people seeking health information. The students were shown the parts of a Wikipedia article, given general instructions to add statements followed by citations to Wikipedia articles of their choosing, then were free to do this over the remainder of the three-hour workshop.

After making some edits, the students were reminded that anyone in the Wikipedia community could modify anything that they have done, and that they should check back in a week to see the community response. The students asked questions on a range of topics or for help executing specific actions on Wikipedia.

## Results

Eight students made Wikipedia accounts and participated in the program. One student declined to participate during the event period. The seven remaining students adopted stewardship of the following articles, one each: Vaginitis, Lichen sclerosus, Candidal vulvovaginitis, Vaginismus, Cervical cancer, Cervical incompetence, and Vaginal birth after cesarean. The students developed these articles on the day of the workshop and sometimes responded to article developments in the next week and a half.

Article developments included all of the article contributions made after and while the students were editing. As Wikipedia is a collaboratively written encyclopedia, anyone may join anytime and modify anything anyone has previously done. No one was individually prompted to respond to the students' edits. Most probably, those who responded were people who patrol Wikipedia health content in some or all fields. Notice of the class itself was made in appropriate channels on Wikipedia, like this list of classes in the education program and in WikiProject Medicine, which is the community forum for those Wikipedia contributors interested in health content.

The article developments were as follows: Two days after the Sporter04 added content to the “vaginitis” article, volunteer TylerDurden8823 responded by completely copyediting the entire article. Cwhite617 developed “Candidal vulvovaginitis” and volunteer Jmh649 made minor factual changes to various sections in the article five days later. Simoni217 edited Vaginismus and the next day a completely new Wikipedian Pepacik rewrote a section of that article. Medstudent2014 developed a section of Cervical cancer and volunteer Johnbod copyedited the student’s work and asked the student to clarify something in that article’s discussion forum. Skabett edited Vaginal birth after cesarean and that same day Kephir put the work into a queue to have the reference formatting fixed by someone who understood Wikipedia’s manual of style. These are typical Wikipedia interactions and response times and are all recorded for anyone to see in each article’s history log. The table “Summary of student interventions and responses” gives more details about these interactions and also notes when these articles had last been developed before the students came to them. Often the articles had not been touched in weeks, then when the students arrived and took action, other action from other people followed.

All of the students contributions passed review and were accepted by the Wikipedia community.

In looking at the article’s pageviews as a measure of the impact of sharing the information the students contributed, in March 2014 Cervical cancer had 54654 pageviews and Vaginal birth after caesarean section had the fewest at 2960. The rest of the pageviews for that one month are in the table in the appendix. Historically on Wikipedia articles get approximately the same pageviews in any month, so one may choose to assume that the students’ work will perpetually get viewed by an audience of a size which can be estimated by the pageviews any article receives. The impact in health education that these contributions could have would be related to the size of the audience using the information.

## Conclusions

Everyone had a nice morning participating in Wikipedia. For the rest of their careers the students will have greater understanding of how their patients get information from the Internet than they would have had they not participated in the generation of popular online health media.

Wikipedia was improved by the students contributions as it can be presumed that they students had a level of expertise equal to or greater than typical contributors to these articles, as typical contributors were unlikely to be experts in the field of obstetrics and gynecology. The Wikipedia community seems to have enjoyed receiving the students’ contributions as the individuals who responded did so in a constructive way.

## Appendix

## Summary of student interventions and responses

Wikipedia name of student	article edited by student	pageviews in March 2014	last edit prior to class	student edit	date of follow up	Wikipedian doing follow up	follow up action
Sporter04	Vaginitis	24892	15 March 2014	4/8/2014	4/10/2014	TylerDurden 8823	full article review and copyedit
Jrwalter240	Lichen sclerosus	13628	4/9/2014	4/17/2014	none to April 24		
Cwhite617	Candidal vulvovaginitis	9583	2/17/2014	4/17/2014	4/22/2014	Jmh649	minor factual changes in multiple sections
Simoni217	Vaginismus	29421	1/31/2014	4/17/2014	4/18/2014	Pepacik	revision of a section of the article
Medstudent 2014	Cervical cancer	54654	4/3/2014	4/8/2014 and 4/17/2014	4/17/2014	Johnbod	copyedited student work
Tariro07	Cervical incompetence	4840	4/1/2014	4/17/2014	none to April 24		
Obmd	Gestational thrombocytopenia			no edit			
Skabbett	Vaginal birth after cesarean	2960	4/3/2014	4/8/2014 and 4/17/2014	4/8/2014	Kephir	noted problem with citation formatting

## Websites where this is documented

- Wikimedia Education Program course listing, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education\\_Program:Harvard\\_University/Obgyn\\_bootcamp\\_\(April\\_2014\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_Program:Harvard_University/Obgyn_bootcamp_(April_2014))

This is the primary listing wherein the class's work is presented on Wikipedia. Here the students register to participate and name the Wikipedia articles which they will develop. The Wikipedia community can monitor the class to the extent anyone wishes to do so from this page.

- WikiProject Medicine talk page, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia\\_talk:WikiProject\\_Medicine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia_talk:WikiProject_Medicine)

WikiProject Medicine is the Wikipedia community forum wherein medical topics are discussed. If one searches for "OBGYN bootcamp" in the archives then discussions about this class can be found.

- Wikimedia New York City, [https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikimedia\\_New\\_York\\_City](https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikimedia_New_York_City)

Wikimedia New York City is a local community chapter of the Wikimedia community. As the facilitator of this class lives in New York, the New York City chapter was informed of his participation in this class as a courtesy and local record.

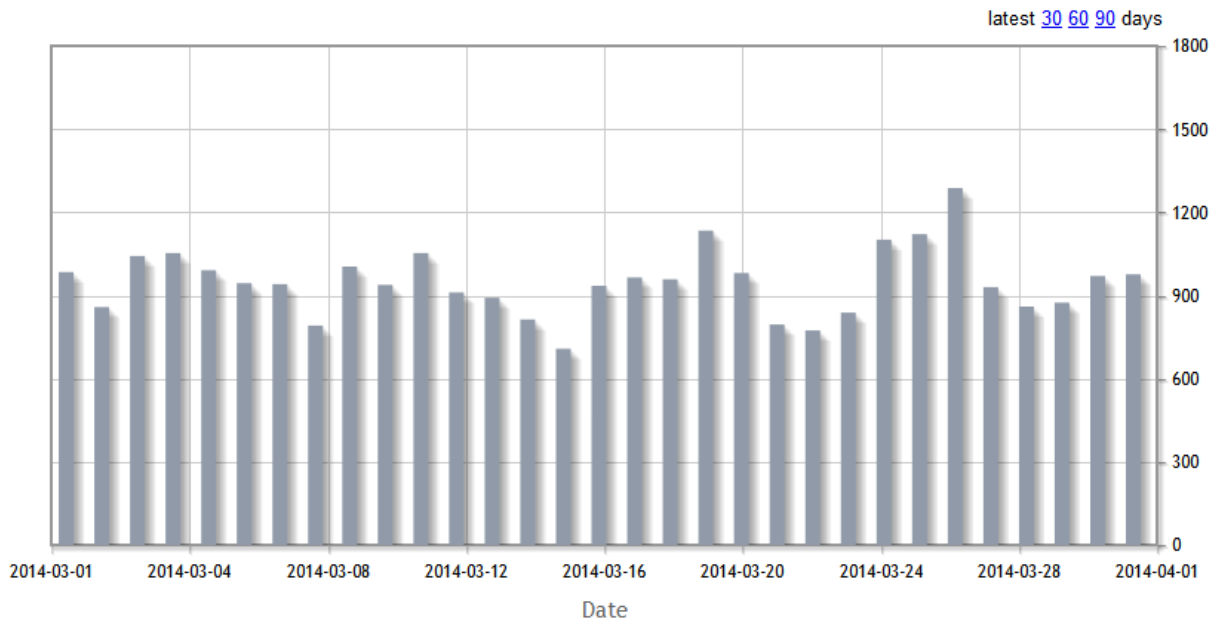
- WikiProject Consumer Reports, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject\\_Consumer\\_Reports](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Consumer_Reports)

Consumer Reports sponsored the presentation to this class and this project is noted in the listing of Consumer Reports' activities on Wikipedia at the WikiProject for that organization.

## Example of a pageview report

### Wikipedia article traffic statistics

[Vaginismus](#) has been viewed 29421 times in 201403.



Pageview reports are available for any month for any Wikipedia article to any user. To access a report follow these steps:

1. Visit the Wikipedia article for which one wishes to know pageview count
2. Click "View History" in a top tab, somewhere near the center
3. Click "page view statistics" somewhat lower on this history page
4. A graph like the above will appear. Reports for any month may be selected.