## Wikipedia in Namibia, Namibia on Wikipedia

Namibia Scientific Society

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#### **Chapter Outline**

- 🚺 Wikipedia Overview
  - Size and influence
  - Common misconceptions
- Namibia on Wikipedia
  - Articles
  - Article Quality
- Wikipedia in Namibia
  - Wikipedians
  - Available resources





## The 21<sup>st</sup> century encyclopedia

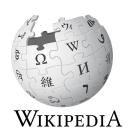


- Started 2001, open source, content licensed under CC-BY-SA
- 36 million articles, 301 languages
- Written by about 90,000 volunteers
- 2005: accuracy comparable to Encyclopædia Britannica
- 16 billion page views, largest edition: English, 5.9 million articles
- the Internet's largest and most popular general reference work
- A new kind of knowledge repository
- 21<sup>st</sup> century's outline, bibliography,





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- Never cite Wikipedia in a scientific context!
  - Well, never cite any encyclopædia. Information levels
    - First level: pictures, observations, interviews, measurements, press releases ⇒ data
    - Second level: Academic and popular articles, news, bulletins ⇒ interpretations
    - 3 Third level: Text books, almanachs, encyclopædias ⇒ collections
- ② Something is incorrect on Wikipedia! Well, Wikipedia's organisation necessitates mistakes. Obscure topics ⇒ mistakes and omissions
- A scheme for leftists and liberals to explain the world their way! Well, everyone can contribute





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#### Current status

- Wikiproject Namibia: ≈ 1,500 pages about Namibia
  - including articles like Rock dassie, SADC, Bantu
  - but also quite specific entries: Turnhalle Conference, Lake Otjikoto,
    B1 Butcher, Hannes Smith, Affirmative Repositioning
  - all cities, towns, villages, constituencies, major roads, National Parks
  - most parties and politicians, deputy minister and above
  - many plants and animals
- Red links: articles that should exist but don't. For example:
  - Geographical features like Omatako Mountains, Cuvelai Basin, Huab River, Otavi Triangle
  - Large businesses and their leaders like John Meinert Printing and John Meinert, NamibRe, NamDeb
  - Specific Namibian topics like German colonial architecture, Willing buyer, willing seller, Pass Laws, Old Bay Road
- Everything notable should exist. Notable = multiple, independent sources write about it

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- Featured Good B C Start Stub Unassessed
- Featured for Namibia:
  - Giraffe
- Good for Namibia:
  - Common Eland, Sitatunga, Wildebeest, Serval
  - Namib Desert Horse
  - Twyfelfontein
  - Angolan Civil War
- All the rest has serious issues!
- A lot of What, unclearly structured, and very little Why
  - Legare Stadium
  - Telecommunications in Namibia
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  - ... the native tongues of former and current colonial masters
  - Three editors actively writing about Namibia—two Germans, one Afrikaner
  - ⇒ 'Namibian narrative' again told from an alien perspective
- Setswana Wikipedia: 603 articles
- Other Namibian indigenous languages are in Incubator at best
  - Otjiherero: 80 articles
  - Oshindonga: 54 articles
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- **Knowledge–That:** Few people know how Wikipedia is made
- - For instance, ===History=== will create a headline, <br/> a line
  - There is a "Visual Editor" that doesn't work
  - Some page's code can be really scary
- - Old hands feel they have done all the important work
  - New users are often vandals or paid editors
  - Difficult to distinguish incompetence from mere beginners' mistakes
- 4 1000 rules:
  - Established to induce order amongst almost 100m contributors
  - Impossible to adhere to all, impossible to remember all





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#### Namibian Stumbling Blocks

- License and copyright misunderstood
  - CC-BY-SA: Creative Commons, acknowledge the author, redistribute under similar license (copyleft)
  - Cannot accommodate copyrighted material, fights plagiarism and close paraphrasing
  - Pictures, graphics, maps: from an open license, or your own work
- Bad legal environment for pictures
  - Namibian law: Anything man-made is creative, anything creative is art, no art may be reproduced.
  - Unless you can prove the creator is dead for 70 years
  - You may take—but not publish—a picture of your own house!
  - Wikipedia's picture database (Wikimedia Commons) situated in the US, very careful not to get sued
- Small pool of people with spare time, money, and energy
  - "Saving the world" is not very Namibian
  - Working without immediate, tangible reward is not Namibian
  - Wikipedia is the hobby of a tiny minority, worldwide



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#### If you want to start?

- Start reading! Ardent readers (automatically) become newbie writers
- Don't worry about the rules too much, but read your talk page
- The Missing Manual: step—by—step introduction to the editing interface and some important rules
- Email me: Editing workshop, remote support, individual help (pgallert@nust.na)
- There is a network, there are funds!
- Knowledge wants to be free





#### **End of Presentation**

"Imagine a world in which every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge. That's what we're doing."

—Jimbo Wales

# Any questions?

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