From the **Global South Technology Survey** to the **Global Majority Wikimedia Technology Priorities**

Éder Porto, Wiki Movimento Brasil
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Global South Technology Survey

Motivation

- From the Movement Strategy 2030, **Wikimedia will become the essential infrastructure of the ecosystem of free knowledge, and anyone who shares our vision will be able to join us**.
- In the next few years, we will also embody the concepts of ***knowledge as a service*** and ***knowledge equity***.
- Our approaches for prioritizing technology development in the Movement has been systematically skewed against underrepresented communities and their needs.
- In order to enhance sustainability of our Movement, the Global Majority's perspectives need to be incorporated into the tech development.
- This process was facilitated by Wiki Movimento Brasil, in collaboration with CIS-A2K, with inputs from other nine Wikimedia organizations.

What specific socio-technical infrastructure does the Global Majority communities envision to better serve their needs?

Having the hurdles of the Global Majority communities in mind, how do we overcome barriers that prevent communities from fully accessing and contributing to free knowledge, and foster an inclusive and effective socio-technical infrastructure?

Questions

Methodology

May — Assessment of Global South communities with tech activities
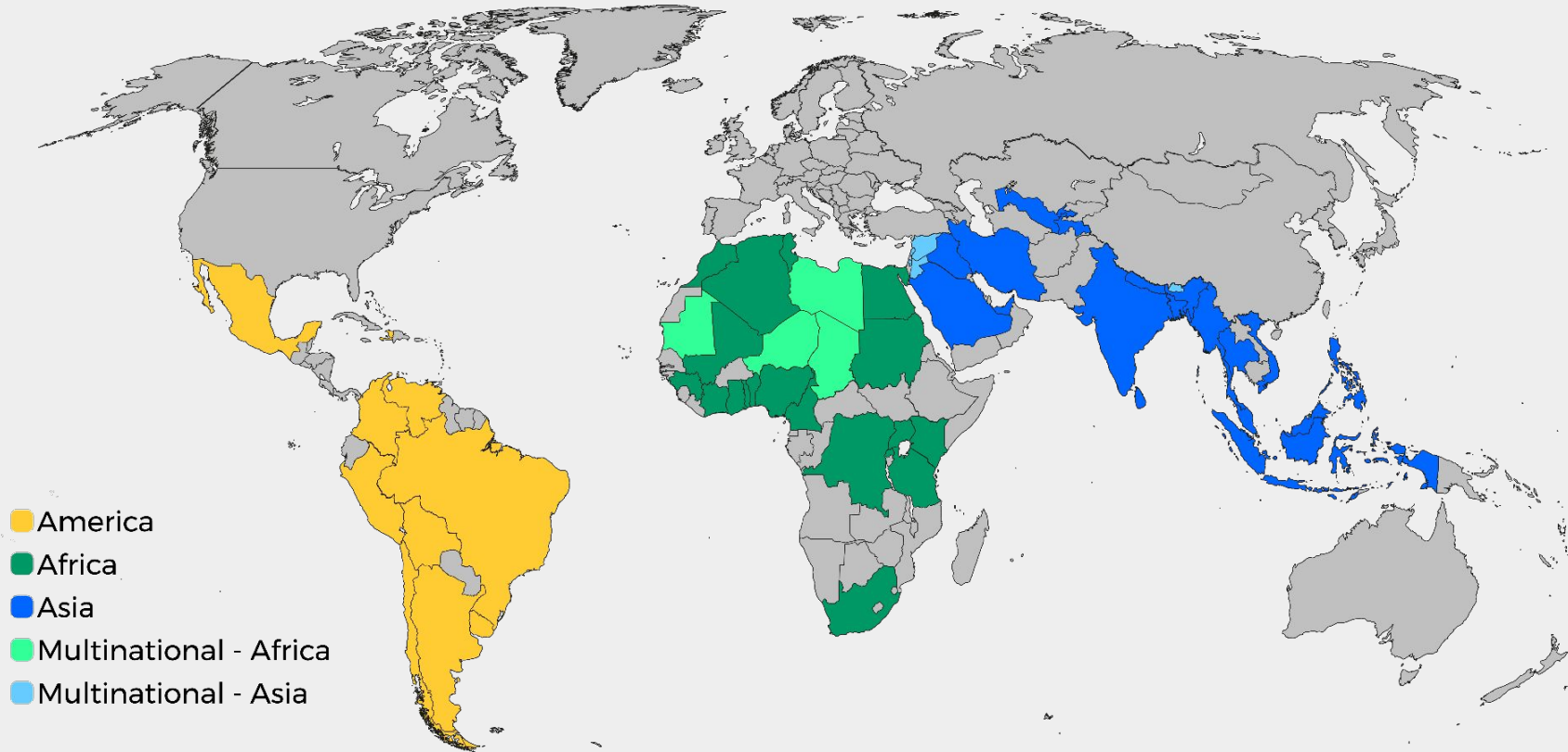
Aug — Interviews with selected Global South communities representatives

Apr — Presentation of the proposal

Internalization of the document

Assessment

America
Africa
Asia
Multinational - Africa
Multinational - Asia

Global Majority Wikimedia Technology Priorities

"**At the end of the day, it's the pilot who has full control of that AI autopilot because AI only makes a decision based on any existing data, based on any existing pattern**. But for any new input data, it's the human at the end of the day who will make the judgment whether this one is worth to be keyed in inside the AI or not, or if there is any new problem, a new topic in which AI never sees it before. And then it's still the human who makes the decision on how to move forward, especially within Wikipedia, how to handle this."

"AI is changing. It's going to change the way people have access to information. I mean, and it could be really beneficial. We can take a lot from that, **but we have to create a strategy to face that.**"

Promote epistemic diversity in Wikimedia's Artificial Intelligence coordination efforts by prioritizing representation of Global Majority communities.

"advocacy and everything is a main thing that Wikimedia has to have. And I think that in the AI things that we are facing now. The part of advocacy is not shown. [...] **they have to go to OpenAI and set that you have to set where are you or where does your information come from, because the main database is Wikipedia.**"

"And basically, of course, definitely, if you talk about this AI, or more specifically, large language models such as GPT, eventually it goes back to us because most of, in many of these LLMs, large language models essentially are also feeding, Wikipedia is actually feeding them. So basically in the future, What we can, maybe you can observe is maybe **you're gonna focus even more on the quality aspect of Wikipedia articles because if we can maintain the security, if we maintain the article integrity of quality of our contents, then, well, later on the AI is also be good as well.**"

"**Help in terms of content contribution, generating content at large. So with these kinds of contents that are being generated, sometimes we need to be able to also proofread most of the contents that editors do publish.**"

Advocate for ethical standards in Artificial Intelligence technologies by engaging in initiatives such as mandating disclosure of information sources, promoting fair working conditions in the AI development ecosystem, developing best practices to address colonial biases in AI, and proactively recommending regulatory frameworks for AI that respect indigenous knowledge, cultural perspectives from the Global Majority, and other marginalized communities.

"I don't know, **maybe it would be better to have a local community that better understands what our needs are**, that can communicate in our languages **so that they can focus on the specific needs that we may have in our regions.**"

"If we need to have a committee or a council, I think that **would be better if we have a focused Wikisource council or focused Wiktionary council**, where if the foundation wants to put somebody there, they need to find someone, they need to hire someone who will be dedicated to Wikisource. And **we will find someone who will be dedicated to Wikisource into that council so that the focus will only be Wikisource and nothing else**. Similarly for Wiktionary, similarly for Wikiboys or any other projects which need that council, I think a separate technical council will be fine."

"So just maybe, should I say, let me summarize it in this way. **It's going to bring about decentralization and accountability when it comes to tools development, software development, like the infrastructure we use**. Because for now, the idea I have in my head is that WMF develops tools they feel we need. And they have, like, the sole saying in what tools we need."

Prioritize decentralized, diverse and inclusive software development by enhancing accountability, fostering project-based working groups and ensuring developments echo communities needs, as well as internet consumption and content production practices prevalent in the Global Majority.

"The thing is, **how do we make sure that the opinions, the ideas of the whole community are represented in these organisms that decide how resources are distributed**?"

"But you can also have another path dedicated only to editors, **tools for editors in our own language or maybe translate another tool to function in Spanish Wikipedia or any other projects in Spanish**, because, yeah, not every editor knows English"

"And we also try to, you know, **to hear from the community, the Wikimedia community about their needs and we see that there are some kind of needs and desires from the community for new tools** for their contribution to the Wikimedia movement"

Empower inclusive development by fostering Global Majority communities to co-create tools that address their needs, making an equitable distribution of funds and nurturing ownership and mentorship for sustainable progress, and prioritizing Wikimedia projects that are chronically underfunded and underdeveloped.

"I think it goes in the direction that you were mentioning before of **having like a distributed, like a federation of stakeholders working on** [...] **the software**."

"**Collaborate with the Wikimedia Movement and with external stakeholders to develop open technologies that share the strategic direction of knowledge as a service**"

"This is actually a great thing because **previously the ones who are developing the tools are coming from Global North, from the Europe, from the America**"

Establish a federated network of stakeholders to develop the Wikimedia projects and tools based on a three-year development plan that prioritizes the Global Majority needs and that decenters Wikimedia tech development from the Global North.

"I think I actually do like this question because it's kind of related to the presentation I had during the Wikimania conference. **So we talked about IP blocks and how it affects contribution to free knowledge**. So one technical issue we've had, actually, I thought it was just Africans that have been having the issue of IP blocks. And then during the session, **I heard experiences of people from Malaysia, we had from India, we had from different places and I'm like, oh wow, so you guys also experienced this.**"

"**So this is one thing that actually limits people from contributing to free knowledge**. And also, I wouldn't say accessing the free knowledge, because if you're blocked, you're still able to access Wikipedia, like you can read, but you cannot contribute.

So it just stops that enthusiasm and that willingness to contribute to the free knowledge. […] **And yeah, even as an organizer, […] it just takes a toll on you**. And for funded projects, you get to realize that you don't even get to meet up to target."

"**There are so many IP address blocking, especially when we do it in university or in public spaces,** because probably there used to be one or two people who vandalized Wikipedia. Therefore, the IP address got blocked. So for, let's say, like a half day meetup session, even to settle those two things takes up almost half of our meetup time. So that's the biggest hindrance in terms of technology-wise."

Take immediate action to mitigate IP blockage effects by implementing robust circumvention tools, especially for outreach activities in the Global Majority.

"**Internet access is a big challenge everywhere**, even in the Global North."

"I think that Wikimedia movement or perhaps the stakeholder, the related stakeholders can invest their time in improving mobile editing and reading for Wikimedia project because this is something that **we cannot rely people to use PC or laptops but more people are now using a smartphone or perhaps mobile devices that they cannot bring laptops for only to access Wikipedia only, but smartphone in this era is like an integral part of the people**"

"I think when it has to do with tables and all that, it's actually tough editing on mobile. **But you can also use the mobile editor. It's just that it takes, sorry, the visual editor. It's just that the difference is that it takes a whole lot of time for you to pinpoint where exactly the table is, where it stops and all that. So it makes it difficult.**"

"I was hoping that this **Wikipedia project would be like the mobile-first design, because we know that the mobile device has dominated internet access. So the Wikipedia design should be even more mobile-friendly.**"

"**If we lose the opportunity of catching the mobile audience, we will be deprecated.**"

Considering that 70% of people from the Global Majority exclusively access the Internet using mobile devices, **break down barriers that hinders access and contribution to the free knowledge ecosystem** by optimizing the mobile infrastructure and prioritizing the development of the visual editor for mobile devices.

Invest in core development within the Global Majority by prioritizing capacity building, fostering the growth and sustainability of its technical community, and cultivating a culture of innovation.

"**The content context in the United States is very different from Latin America. I mean, we have many people that don't have access to internet, they don't own a computer and everything**. […] **But I think that they have to oversee that every, not every country, but every continent or every region, right, is represented in that council. because otherwise we will be having all of the tools in English, all of the tools only working in English Wikipedia and everything.**"

"they shouldn't be much more authoritative, but they should be much more flexible, **they should be open to some form of a democratic governance in terms of they receiving feedback from, in terms of any decision that they do make, It should be rather much more open to the community**"

"I think what the technological council **needs to be concerned is the needs of the community**, not just on the general community, but also more specific for each community, **especially the underrepresented and the minority communities**."

"Act from a Global South perspective for **global Wikimedia Movement discussions about access, user experience and innovation across platforms.**"

Build and sustain the Technology Council as an instance that bridges communities through inclusive representation, deep democracy principles, decolonial agenda-setting practices, and transparent governance, ensuring equitable participation from underrepresented projects and Global Majority communities. **Establish a multi-stakeholder executive committee** to guide technological priorities, ensuring equitable representation of stakeholders from the Global Majority while the Technology Council is not yet formed.

"And then he **trained them on how to make use of the tool for developing**. So **now we are able to develop with the tools on the Igbo language Wikipedia**. And here, another of the mentee from Ghana, with that, **has also been incorporated into the Dagbani language Wikipedia. We're still trying to expand to more languages.**"

"Strengthen a **culture of documentation and sharing of processes and learning**, including the creation of training spaces"

"**And we are the only few communities who have, very few Wikisource communities who have integrated everything, almost everything with Wikidata.**"

Considering that subsidiarity is crucial for advancing decentralized technology development, **create and run events to showcase Global Majority's tech abilities and foster the talent** via a systematic and sustainable structure.

https://t.ly/GMWTP

Conclusion

- The ten priorities outlined orbit two main concepts:
  - **Promotion of epistemic diversity**
  - **Decentralization of tech development**
- Our proposed immediate actions moving forward are:
  - **Decenter the Wikimedia Hackathon from the Global North;**
  - **Initiate discussions** with the Wikimedia Foundation, affiliates and other Wikimedia Movement bodies **to advocate for the incorporation of these priorities into their strategic plans**.

Next steps

Timeline

04 **Presentation**	• Presentation of the research results • Coordination of the next steps
04-16 **Comments**	• Comment on the document and ask questions (via google docs and telegram)
17 **Publication**	• Publication of the finalized document on Meta (https://w.wiki/7GoG, under construction)

Timeline

18	**Wikimedia Summit presentation**	• Presentation to Wikimedia EDs at the Summit, in Berlin
17-02	**Internalization and signature**	• Internalization of the document • Signature on Meta of the organizations and individuals • Comment on the diff post draft
end of April	**Meetings**	• Participation in meetings (to be confirmed)
04	**Outreach**	• Publication of the post on Diff • Advocacy in the Wikimedia Hackathon in Estonia for the decentralization of the Hackathon from the Global North

Notes

- The Wikimedia Foundation has just released its annual technology development plan (https://w.wiki/9eu5), and we could post on the talk page;

- The Movement Charter guides the formation of the tech council to advise on strategic actions in technological development in Wikimedia (https://w.wiki/7JiF), and we can have an impact in this process by sharing our priorities in this space and guide the process;

- Who will be at the Wikimedia Hackathon in Estonia (https://w.wiki/8CvG) to discuss the decentralization of the event from the Global North? What is the better way to do this?

- Who would like to participate in meetings with other organizations by the end of this month to discuss the points of the document, including the WMF (TBC)?

- We have requested an opportunity to discuss this process on the WikiMove podcast (https://w.wiki/9euG), which presents the Movement's strategic guidance;

- We can have a recurring action, such as a bimonthly meeting, to assess the impact of our network and brainstorm new collaborations.

https://t.me/gmw_tech_priorities

Ratification model on Meta

Who should sign: Anyone who agrees with the document, as an individual and/or on behalf of an affiliate group or other organizations.

Format for organization signature: Organization name - Name (username)

- Example: [[Wikimedia Antarctica]] - Peng Wynn ([[User:Penguin]])

Format for individual signature: ~~~~, affiliation or project

- Examples:
  - ~~~~, Wikimedia Antarctica → [[User:Penguin|Penguin]], Wikimedia Antarctica
  - ~~~~, Wikidata editor → [[User:John Doe|John Doe]], Wikidata editor

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