

inclusion

What do “diversity” and “inclusion” mean in the context of product?

Diversity in this context is in reference to having a variety of social stratifications within a collective, namely class, race, sexual orientation, age, disability and gender. An important aspect of diversity to consider in the context of the movement which traverse across these various groups are differences of ideological viewpoints which informs the types of knowledge considered for inclusion.

Inclusion is recognizing the need for greater diversity across the following groups in Wikimedia:

- > Contributors of content
- > Beneficiaries of content (i.e., Readers and Consumers of content)
- > Movement Organisers and Representatives (i.e. at an Institutional level, in policy-making & decision-making)

Ultimately, the drive for inclusion of different contributors, beneficiaries and movement leaders is to ensure diversity of knowledge. That is, broadening perspectives of the various forms of content that we consider as valid and valuable part of the knowledge space.

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Why diversity matters

Besides being one of the core values of the Wikimedia Foundation, [1] diversity helps us to reach towards the goal of being able to share “all” knowledge, as well as ensuring greater quality of the content that is shared. Direct examples of diversity directly improving knowledge is seen in two recent studies from 2017, the first study saw that Political, Social Issues, and Science articles whose editors were comprised of more diverse political viewpoints (across Democratic & Conservative) were of higher quality than those with politically homogeneous editor groups.[2] Similarly, a separate second study noted that language-specific topics on Wikipedia are generally better quality on relevant language-editions of Wikipedia, and could be leveraged to improve the knowledge base across language editions. [3]

What’s holding us back?

Conceptual barriers/issues

- > Ambiguity and Subjectivity of Inclusion and Diversity – There is no end game but only an ongoing pursuit of greater inclusion and diversity. Resource constraints and biases as identified above means that there is continuing work to help recognize marginalized groups. But it is hard to reach consensus as to which groups are of higher or lower importance/need and what targets should be set (for example, the number of articles of a particular language).
- > Individual Biases (Conscious and Unconscious/Implicit) – a common example is the notion of notability of BLP articles as being assessed based on

criteria that often leads to underrepresentation of certain groups.

- > Systemic bias – processes and organizational structures set up in a certain social-cultural groups leads to decisions that under-represent other groups
- > Lack of Awareness – that certain communities exist (I don’t know who I don’t know), and vice versa (Community X doesn’t know how or why WMF is of value to them).
- > Lack of understanding and attitudinal differences between groups – Group X feels unwelcome, excluded or harassed by Group Y.

Internal organizational/resource constraints

- > Gaps in Accessibility (at a high level, web content is considered Accessible when it is Perceivable, Operable, Usable, and Robust) [4]
- > Providing resources so content that meets Web Accessibility Guidelines for content users
- > Providing tooling for Contributors who are have Accessibility needs
- > Gaps in Content – Languages, Topic areas, Media, etc
- > Human Capital – people are also a limited resource. There are trade-offs to be made to promote greater diversity and inclusivity without diminishing/diluting overall impact.

External factors

- > Access to resources: Internet and technology is inequitable depending on geography, socioeconomic background, etc. This is consistently reported in

multiple studies, including a recent report from the UN noting that there is still less than 50% of the world's population who are online as of 2018, and moreover there is a trending decline in internet growth.[5]

- > Differing interests/traditions: Certain communities may not want to participate, share, or be “served” for their own individual reasons and interests. Some Wikimania 2018 sessions touch upon some of these reasons for disengagement from communities - from differences in communication norms (e.g., communities which have a stronger oral tradition[6][7]), distrust due to a history of being marginalized,[8] to fundamental differences in cultural conceptions of what is an appropriate channel for knowledge-sharing.[9]

Reducing Barriers to Inclusion

How can we identify and correct for biases that exist within the Foundation or community? OR: Ideas to reduce barriers to inclusion.

Prioritize gaps in representation at higher leadership and decision-making levels within the Movement.

It's important to have more diversity at the leadership level as it not only helps reduce systemic and unconscious bias, but also encourages greater participation from top down.

Investment in more research and socializing commonly agreed upon definitions.

We need to establish some commonly agreed upon definitions or baseline for

measurement. For example, assessing our success in making knowledge accessible to every person is dependent on what we define as knowledge, diverse, and what it means to be accessible. [10]

Broadening measurement and research means both including currently identified underrepresented voices [11] and understanding what ways they feel excluded from participation, but also continuing to research where there are still existing unidentified gaps in representation.

Open and influence positive channels of communication across communities

Besides representation, one of the ways to reduce the conceptual biases of Communities is for the Wikimedia Foundation to facilitate better lines of communication in general across groups. Part of this involves continuing research to show benefits of diversity in advancing knowledge quality as well as equity (see above “Why diversity matters” section).

A second part is to continue investing in tools and programs to that encourage civil discussions and fostering more positive relationships in our communities. This relate to our work in [anti-harassment tools](#), as well as initiatives that strive to provide better help and support for new members (e.g, [New Readers](#) program, and the [Growth Team](#)).

Cultivate effective Partnerships

Recognizing that Wikimedia has limited resources to provide and some factors are outside of our control, we should explore

strategic partnerships that optimize our reach.

Technology and tools

As detailed in the next section, we can utilize technology to both attract more voices as well as helping to fill content gaps.

How do we attract and retain contributors from those marginalised areas? OR: Ideas to promote participation from marginalized groups

Representation with welcoming and diverse voices

Adding representation in Movement is not only important in reducing barriers to inclusion but also as a way to be seen as welcoming to newcomers.

Establishing more strategic partnerships

- > Embedded community groups - Cultivate partnerships with local experts and embedded members of a particular community who have more access to content, people and support.
- > GLAM institutions – help external organizations in preserving collections without taking on the burden of maintenance.
- > Content distribution platforms - working to be a source of knowledge with content distribution platforms where more and more users are seeking content. This includes Search platforms (eg., Google), News media organizations (e.g., NYTimes), and Social Media sites (e.g., Twitter, Facebook)
- > Education groups - working with MOOCs and other institutions in adapting Wikimedia content to newer

learning courses tailored to helping improve digital literacy in marginalized communities

Invest in new technology and tools that help attract new voices for CONSUMPTION

Content tailored to newer methods and behaviors of consumption, sharing and learning will enable more people in low reach areas to become aware of and start accessing our knowledge. As noted in “Brand awareness, attitudes, and usage”[12], awareness and familiarity with Wikipedia is a main area of concern. Some areas where we can invest to increase awareness of the overall Wikipedia brand that can broaden reach in low awareness groups (eg. those with limited internet access, Gen-Z users) include:

- > Better mobile content design (improved readability, more interactive/visual content and overall design improvements can increase its shareability) [13]
- > Optimized mobile content (delivering content more accessible to newer users in areas where data, internet and technology access are restricted)
- > Better sharing of Wikimedia content on Social Media (for example, bringing content to Facebook in Cambodia, where 30% of users access their information) [14]
- > Better sharing of content on other online communication platforms (for example, in countries where messaging apps like Whatsapp, WeChat, Telegram etc are vital ways to share information)

- > Enabling news media partners to reference and cite content
- > Enabling machine-translation and creation of articles in languages with a smaller content pool

Invest in new technology and tools that help attract new voices for CONTRIBUTION

A second part of awareness is know that Wikipedia as a participatory tool. Another recent paper “The Pipeline of Online Participation Inequalities: The Case of Wikipedia Editing” highlights participation is limited earlier in the ‘pipeline’ of possible editors based on income and racial biases, then by technical knowledge, and finally a gender gap in awareness of its participatory nature. [15]

With that in mind, some contribution tools and aids that can help attract newer voices include:

- > Translation tools to help multilingual users
- > Tools that recommend articles for creation/expansion for new editors
- > Mobile contribution tools to help groups in places with limited access to internet data & storage
- > Ensure tools conform to Accessibility guidelines (so, for example, vision impaired users are not excluded from reading and contributing)
- > “Micro-contributions [16][17] that reduce the technical expertise needed to start editing (as it has been identified that

many underrepresented groups struggle to participate due to such barriers.) [18]

Programmatic Initiatives

Per above, another way we can continue to increase contribution is to specifically targeting marginalized or underrepresented communities with Outreach efforts such as in-person, off-wiki awareness events to recruit newcomers, and Edit-a-thons to expand content in identified underserved topic areas.

Notes

- [1] https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Values/2008#Wikimedia_Foundation_values
- [2] <https://arxiv.org/abs/1712.06414>
- [3] <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-9709/4/4/43>
- [4] WCAG "POUR" Accessibility principles - <https://developers.google.com/web/fundamentals/accessibility/>
- [5] Sample, I. (2018-10-18). "[Exclusive: dramatic slowdown in global growth of internet access](#)". the Guardian. Retrieved 2018-10-21.
- [6] Wikimania 2018 presentation: "[Wikipedia and Bhutan can learn from each other](#)"
- [7] Wikimania 2018: presentation: "[The quotation of oral sources in a decolonization context](#)"
- [8] Wikimania 2018 Panel: "[Centering Knowledge from the Margins: A Whose Knowledge? discussion](#)"
- [9] Wikimania 2018 presentation: "[Wikipedia for Indigenous Communities](#)"
- [10] [UNESCO's Fostering inclusive knowledge societies report](#) particularly focuses on the importance of definitions and measurements for what it means to be inclusive, have access to knowledge, etc; and stresses the need for establishing common definitions so their members states can aim for common goals.
- [11] See [Brand awareness, attitudes, and usage - Executive Summary](#)
- [12] See [Brand awareness, attitudes, and usage - Executive Summary](#)
- [13] "In 2016 Internet/Facebook became the most important channel through which Cambodians access information (30%) – surpassing TV (29%) and almost doubling radio (15%)" – from "Mobile Phones and Internet Use in Cambodia 2016" http://www.open.org.kh/research/phones_2016.pdf
- [14] Already identified underrepresented groups are those discussed in the references, including but not limited to: groups in other Western-European regions (per "[Geographies of the world's knowledge](#)"), Women and Non-binary (per "[Gender equity report 2018](#)"), and those in areas with limited internet access (per "[UNESCO's Fostering inclusive knowledge societies report](#)").
- [15] See [Brand awareness, attitudes, and usage - Executive Summary](#)
- [16] See [Brand awareness, attitudes, and usage - Executive Summary](#)
- [17] "In 2016 Internet/Facebook became the most important channel through which Cambodians access information (30%) – surpassing TV (29%) and almost doubling radio (15%)" – from "Mobile Phones and Internet Use in Cambodia 2016" http://www.open.org.kh/research/phones_2016.pdf
- [18] Hargittai, E., & Shaw, A. (2018). "The Pipeline of Online Participation Inequalities: The Case of Wikipedia Editing". *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 68, Iss. 1, 1-Feb-2018, pp143–168, doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqx003
- [19] https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Mobile_design/Micro_contributions
- [20] https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Reading/Readers_contributions_via_Android
- [21] Hargittai, E., & Shaw, A. (2015). "Mind the skills gap: The role of Internet know-how and gender in differentiated contributions to Wikipedia". *Information, Communication & Society*, 18(4), 424–442. [doi: 10.1080/1369118X.2014.957711](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2014.957711)

Sources

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