Wikimedia and the Smithsonian

Why we are approaching the Smithsonian

Key Facts about the Smithsonian on Wikipedia

- 100, 000 hits on the 155 Smithsonian-related articles already categorized as such each month

- Over 2000 images of the Smithsonian on the Commons used in 6000 pages which reaches dozens of language Wikipedias

- Comparison:

  - 693 articles with United States Army Center of Military History Public Domain text get over 500,000 hits

  - British Museum-related pages gets nearly 500,000 hits a month

  - The British Museum has nearly 3,000 images used in 15,000 articles

Wikipedia has gone far in developing the model of modern collaborative encyclopedia written by volunteers and the interested public. However, this model also has its shortcomings: volunteers don't necessarily have the expertise to develop well-balanced and properly presented scholarly resources. In order to do take this next step, though, Wikipedia has to reach out to rely the pillars of traditional scholarship: academia and cultural institutions.

The Smithsonian in its vast size and store of expertise is one of the paramount cultural institutions in the world, supported by its donors and by the American public. For a long time we have relied on the knowledge which you have made available to the public, writing articles about the institution and its collection, using Smithsonian publications to reference articles, and relying on the public access of your institutions to acquire first hand familiarity with your collection.

Now, realizing that your articles reach thousands of viewers every day and your publications offer thousands more snippets of information to our readers, we wish to formalize and strengthen that relationship in order to generally improve the quality of Wikipedia and the visibility and accessibility of the Smithsonian's collections.

Quick Facts About Wikipedia

- Over 90,000 active Users and over 15 Million Articles in over 250 languages
- Nearly 7 million Media Files

- Receives 14% Percent of Global Web Traffic
- Number 6 Website in the World

Possible Collaborative Projects with the Smithsonian

What types of collaboration can happen between the Smithsonian and Wikimedia:

- Events
    - Meet-ups at the Smithsonian for in-person development of high-importance Smithsonian collection content
    - Wiki-Academies where Wikipedians teach SI staff how to interact with Wikipedia and the Wikipedia community
    - SI staff workshops with Wikipedians to increase their awareness and use of SI resources in article writing
- Volunteer Support
    - Wikipedian in Residence — A Wikipedian who can:
        - Connect Wikipedians with curators and other SI staff for collaborations
        - Analyze and manage content on Wikipedia to best benefit the missions of both the SI and the Wikipedia community
        - Coordinate competitions to improve SI-related text and media content on Wikipedia
    - Improved access to Smithsonian resources, such as libraries and archives, in turn allowing volunteers to improve research for Wikipedia content
- Content Development
    - Wikipedian organization and development of Smithsonian-related content on Wikipedia
    - Clearer identification and attribution of media from and by the Smithsonian Institution on Wikimedia sites
    - Image restoration and development for Wikimedia and Smithsonian shared use
    - The sharing of Smithsonian media, such as images, animations and sounds, with Wikipedia to increase visibility of collections and use of materials

Wikipedians to Contact

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