

Learning to **Speak** in **Wikipedia's** Language

Public Relations
and The Free Encyclopedia

[market research]

Who am I?

Jake Orlowitz

Volunteer editor

Ocaasi on Wikipedia

3 years

20,000 edits

15 articles created with over **150,000** views

Monitor Group, Occidental Petroleum, US Gov.

The Wikipedia Adventure

Plain and simple **conflict of interest** guide

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PR professionals can **save** themselves countless **hours** of **frustration** by learning the **best practices** for editing.

Imagine a world in which **every single person** on the planet is given free access to the **sum of all human knowledge.**

Wikipedia is **important**.

8 billion words in **21 million** articles

285 language editions

3,875,474 articles, **26,301,442** pages

50 times larger than Microsoft Encarta's
2002 Deluxe edition

517,319,601 edits, **250,000** per day

794,530 uploaded files

16,284,081 registered users

147,203 active in the last 30 days

1,507 administrators.

Why you should care.

Alexa rank: **#6** in the **world** in web traffic

2.7 billion pageviews, in the US, **monthly**

#1 most influential website in blog mentions

30-50% on **first** page of **Google** searches

In January 2012 alone

Krispy Kreme: viewed 25,119

BP: 75,014

Pepsi: 105,766

Walmart: 155,171

Lady Gaga: 1,101,475

What if these were one of your
clients?

Wikipedia is **trusted**.

Nature:

Wikipedia came **close to the level of accuracy** in Encyclopædia Britannica.

Other studies:

Compared Wikipedia to professional and peer-reviewed sources and found that Wikipedia's depth and coverage were of a **high standard**.

How Wikipedia **works**.

I say that **our revolution is like Wikipedia.**

Everyone is contributing content.

small pieces, bits and pieces.

We drew this whole picture of a revolution

no one is the hero in that picture."

--Wael Ghonim, in 2011 on the overthrow of
Mubarak

“The problem with Wikipedia is that
it only works **in practice**.

In theory, it can never work.”

What Wikipedia is.

The **free** encyclopedia that **anyone** can edit, whose mission is to **summarize published reliable sources.**

What Wikipedia **is not**.

a **dictionary**

a publisher of **original thought**

a **soapbox** or means of **promotion**

a **mirror**

a **blog** or **social network**

a **directory**

a **manual**

a **crystal ball**

a **newspaper**

an **indiscriminate collection**

censored

The Wikipedia **community**.

NOT

anarchy

democracy

bureaucracy

battleground

compulsory

IS

self-organized

consensus-seeking

practical

cooperative

voluntary

The Core Policies.

Neutral Point of View **(NPOV)**

Articles **mustn't take sides**, but should **explain** the sides, **fairly, proportionately** and **without bias**

Verifiability

(V)

Can another editor **check** the source?

Verifiability not **truth**

Cite **reliable sources** if challenged or likely to be **challenged**

Original Research
(OR)

For which **no reliable, published sources exist**

Analysis or synthesis of published material that serves to **advance a position**

Civility
(CIVIL)

Consideration and respect

Focus on **improving** the encyclopedia

Behave **politely, calmly and reasonably**

Do not **ignore** the positions of **others**

What is **Public Relations**?

“Public relations is a **strategic** communication process that builds **mutually beneficial** relationships between organizations and their publics.”

--PRSA definition

What does **ethical** public relations entail?

Advocacy

Honesty

Expertise

Independence

Loyalty

Fairness

Advocacy

Honesty

Independence

Loyalty

Fairness

The **History** of Paid Editing.

Microsoft

the CIA

US Republican Party

Industry Canada

US Senate

**Israeli government
Dow Chemical**

Anheuser-Busch

MySpace

DuPont

Fox News

Washington Post

Bell Pottinger

Newt Gingrich

MyWikiBiz, **Microsoft**, the Vatican, **the CIA**, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the US Democratic Party's Congressional Campaign Committee, the **US Republican Party**, Britain's Labour Party, Britain's Conservative Party, the Canadian government, **Industry Canada**, the Department of Prime Minister, Cabinet, and Defence in Australia, the United Nations, **the US Senate**, the US Department of Homeland Security, the US Environmental Protection Agency, Montana Senator Conrad Burns, Ohio Governor Bob Taft, **the Israeli government**, Exxon Mobil, Walmart, AstraZeneca, Diebold, **Dow Chemical**, Disney, Dell, **Anheuser-Busch**, Nestle, Pepsi, Boeing, Sony Computer Entertainment, EA, SCO Group, **MySpace**, Pfizer, Raytheon, **DuPont**, Anglican and Catholic churches, the Church of Scientology, the World Harvest Church, Amnesty International, the Discovery Channel, **Fox News**, CBS, the **Washington Post**, the National Rifle Association, News International, Al Jazeera, Bob Jones University, Ohio State University, **Bell Pottinger**, Portland Communications, Anheuser-Busch InBev, Stella Artois, **Newt Gingrich**, United Kingdom Parliament...

Those are **only** the ones that made
the **news**.

Why paid editing **matters.**

Real world consequences

Extreme media **embarrassment**

Public forum

Frequently reported in the media

Significant **public backlash**

Embarrassing PR

Risk of **alienating** clients

Taints Wikipedia's reputation

Arguments in **favor** of paid editing.

“You can **destroy** someone's
reputation in **one minute** and it will
take **years to rebuild.**”

-- Lord Bell, head of Bell Pottinger

Responsibility to be accurate

Can do real harm

PR pros have **time, access, and competence**

Different point of view

Arguments **against** paid editing.

"It is **difficult** to get a man to understand something, when his **salary** depends upon his **not** understanding it."

--Upton Sinclair

History of non-neutral edits

Accountable to employers, responsibility to make profit

Whitewash negative and promote positive

Neutrality is difficult

“Paid advocates do not make good editors.

They insert puffery and spin.

That is what paid advocates do.”

–Jimmy Wales, in 2012 responding to Phil
Gomes

“Responsible and respectful.

Acting in their **clients' best interests.**

A two-way street.

Do not believe that to be the case.”

--Gerald Corbett, head of PRSA

“Wikipedians have a **problem** with our
profession

Unfortunately **been earned.**

We can't change this **overnight**

We can make a **difference.”**

--Jane Wilson, head of CIPR

“People **shouldn't** do it, including me.

Staying **objective** is **difficult**.

You really want to **set it straight**.”

--Jimmy Wales, in 2005 on editing his own
article

What is a Conflict of Interest?
(COI)

An **incompatibility** between the aim of Wikipedia, which is to produce a **neutral, reliably sourced encyclopedia**, and the aims of an individual editor

Do not **promote your own interests** or those of other individuals, companies, or groups

Do not write about these things unless you are **certain that a neutral editor would agree** that your edits improve Wikipedia

Can you **edit** with a COI?

COI editing is **strongly discouraged**.

**Participation from COI editors is
welcome.**

COI editing done right.
(Best Practices)

Register with an independent username.

Represent you as an **individual**

One person, one account

Disclose your conflict of interest.

Be transparent

Gain the community's trust,

Get help

Avoid embarrassment

What does a **COI declaration** look like?

I would like to **disclose** here that these contributions are made on behalf of Monitor Group and in consultation with them, and I intend to **follow all of Wikipedia's guidelines.**

On **any pages** where I look for assistance, I will be sure **to disclose my relationship** to Monitor in the interests of transparency.

--CanalPark (talk) 22:12, 13 April 2011 (UTC)

I work for **Interprose Public Relations**.

While we **do not intend to directly edit** our clients' Wikipedia entries, we are happy to **act as a resource** for the editing community by **providing factual, non-advertorial information** and accompanying third-party citations.

--Mdrozdowski (talk) 15:28, 2 July 2010 (UTC)

Read the notability guideline.

Not every subject

**In-depth, significant coverage from
published, reliable, independent sources**

Sources, sources, sources.

Use: newspapers, magazines, books, trades, websites, tv, radio, journals; with a reputation for **fact-checking** and **accuracy**

Avoid: self-published blogs, press releases, and sources with a **direct connection** to the subject

Article sentence.<ref> ... </ref>

Barack Obama is the President of the United States.<ref>Blitzer, Wolf. “Obama Inaugurated”. CNN. January, 2008. Retrieved March 2012. <http://www.cnn.com/Obama-inauguration></ref>

Neutralize your conflict of interest.

Write without bias

So your **biggest competitor** would think it was **fair and balanced**

So it's **impossible** to tell that someone who **works** for the company **wrote** it

Avoid advertising or promotion.

Inform and reference, not promote or sell

Not commercial, not marketing

Start with a draft.

New article **wizard**

Userspace draft

Article's **Talk** page

Have other editors review your work.

Ask for **feedback**

Talk page, Live help channel , Conflict of interest noticeboard, Paid Editor Help

{{subst:submit}} for new article drafts

{{requested edit}} for **existing** articles

Don't make direct edits to live articles.*

The **safest** way

Especially for **controversial** information

Instead, **propose** drafts and let **others**
make the changes

Don't use other articles as excuses.

Do **not** use them as **justification**

Make your **own** content **better**

Then it will **last**

Don't rush.

Months, years, and **decades**

Seek the **community's feedback**

Articles about **living people** come first

Negative and **unsourced** information goes

Join the community.

WikiProject **Cooperation**

Corporate Representatives for Ethical Wikipedia
Engagement (**CREWE**)

The **Signpost**

What to do if something goes **wrong**.

If your article was deleted.

Understand and fix the issues

Talk to the administrator, ~~~~

Deletion Review

Userspace copy

If no good sources exist for your article.

Do more research

Reference Desk

Ask good sources to write about it

Wait and try again

If someone is editing your article.

Nobody owns an article

Engage others in **civil** and **constructive**
dialogue

If there's a mistake in your article.

Minor... fix it yourself

Major... seek input from other editors, let them do it

If you want to make changes to an article.

{{Edit request}} on the **Talk page** using

WikiProject Cooperation's **Paid Editor Help**

Conflict of Interest **noticeboard**

If someone is vandalizing your article.

Revert **obvious** vandalism **yourself**

Intentionally destructive changes

For significant changes, **discuss** it with other editors **first**

Page protection

If you disagree strongly with other editors.

Stay **civil**

Read the relevant **policies**

Seek the **input** of other **uninvolved** editors

Use the **dispute resolution** process

If you requested feedback but haven't received a timely response.

Be transparent about your COI

Talk pages, COI noticeboard, Admin noticeboard, Paid Editor Help

info@wikipedia.org

If your account was blocked.

Stay calm

Ask the administrator

Appeal the block , {{unblock}}

Acknowledge if you made a mistake, and correct it

If you're overwhelmed by Wikipedia's interface and policies.

Take your **time**

Ask for **help** – **Help Desk, live chat , search**

WP: and Help:

We're here to **assist** you

What does the **future** hold?

Wikipedia **matters**

PR and Wikipedia can **work together**

You can **use Wikipedia effectively**

Imagine a world in which **every single person** on the planet is given free access to the **sum of all human knowledge**.

That's our **commitment.**

You can **help.**

Links

- **A free, online copy of this presentation**
<http://goo.gl/8LsKW>
- **The Wikipedia guideline on COI editing**
<http://enwp.org/WP:COI>
- **The Plain and simple conflict of interest guide**
<http://enwp.org/WP:PSCOI>
- **WikiProject Cooperation**
<http://enwp.org/WP:COOPERATION>
- **Corporate Representatives for Ethical Wikipedia Engagement, CREWE**
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/crewe.group>
- **The history of COI editing on Wikipedia**
http://enwp.org/COI_editing_on_Wikipedia

Questions

Is it more efficient to just edit in secret?

Does Wikipedia care about the truth?

Are paid editors treated more unfairly than unpaid advocates?

Does Wikipedia protect living people more than corporations?

Is Jimmy Wales' stance stronger than the actual policy?

What do you do if a reliable source is wrong?

Are PR ethics in conflict with Wikipedia policies?

Are the interests of the client the same as the interests of the encyclopedia?

Is the client's interest to avoid embarrassment or fix articles? Is there a COI in working on the encyclopedia for profit?

Is it deceptive to make changes without disclosure?

How do we engage ethical PR editors while dealing unethical ones?

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