Wiki Education Monthly Report, August 2019

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Highlights

- Our longest-running Scholars & Scientists partnership has been with the National Archives and Records Administration. We just wrapped up the last two of the six Scholars & Scientists courses we offered with NARA’s partnership.

- We created seven training modules that explore different aspects of Wikidata, including Evaluating Data on Wikidata, Adding to Wikidata, and how to Query Wikidata.

- We confirmed an upcoming collaboration with the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Several UMass Lowell faculty will join a Wiki Scholars course this fall to add and expand biographies of women to Wikipedia. After this 10-week intensive training about how Wikipedia works, participating faculty will design Wikipedia assignments for their students, joining Wiki Education's Student Program in the following semesters.

Programs

Academics, other subject-matter experts, academic associations, universities, and Wikimedians from multiple parts of the world understand the value of bringing the most knowledgeable people to these public goods. That was one of the lessons Scholars & Scientists Program Manager Ryan McGrady learned when presenting about the program at Wikimania in Stockholm this month. Wikidata Program Manager Will Kent also presented — virtually — at Wikimania about how our program has engaged librarians to edit Wikidata. Outside of Ryan's own session, he attended several other sessions focused on engaging experts. How to do so is a question Wikipedia has wrestled with since its inception in 2001, and we continue to believe the Scholars & Scientists model is a fantastic model to achieve that goal, demonstrated by some of the article improvements detailed below.

Ryan also joined program leaders globally who use the Program & Events Dashboard, an open version of our Dashboard software for others in the Wikimedia movement. The group presented about how they use the Dashboard and what features it offers program leaders.

Wikipedia Student Program

Status of the Wikipedia Student Program for Fall 2019 in numbers, as of August 31:

- 297 Wiki Education-supported courses were in progress (172, or 58%, were led by returning instructors)
- 2,624 student editors were enrolled
- 68% of students were up-to-date with their assigned training modules.
- Students edited 44 articles, created 1 new entry, and added 24,300 words and 350 references.

The Fall 2019 term has begun for the majority of our courses, and students are beginning to learn that they'll be doing something a bit different this fall. Despite the fact that Wikipedia is an integral part of the student experience today, few have ever contributed to the site or even realized they could do so. As the next few months unfold, they'll realize that not only can they contribute, but that they can make a meaningful and lasting contribution.

As Wikipedia Student Program Manager Helaine Blumenthal was busy preparing for the Fall term, Wikipedia Experts were closing out our Summer courses. Though the summer is relatively quiet for us, around 700 students from 43 courses contributed 520,000 words to Wikipedia. While a fraction of what takes place during the Fall and Spring terms, we're nonetheless extremely proud of this cohort of students and instructors.

Courses are continuing to roll in at a steady pace for Fall 2019, and we're excited to see the great work that this group of students will do.

**Student work highlights:**

If you've spent time around the deli department at your local grocery store, you have likely seen [pancetta](#) for sale. A salumi made of pork belly meat that is salt cured, pancetta can be served as a cold cut or served as part of a dish. The production process takes a relatively long time, as the meat must brine for 10–14 days in a low temperature and high humidity environment and after further preparation, undergoes enzymatic reactions facilitated by exposure to a warm environment of 22-24°C for 24 to 36 hours. It is simultaneously exposed to cold smokes for desirable colors and flavors and to prevent moulding. In the final portion of the process the smoked pork is held at 12-14°C and 72-75% relative humidity for 3–4 weeks for drying. The resulting pancetta retains approximately 70% of its original weight. This August a University of British Columbia student in Judy Chan's [Exploring Our Food](#) added more than 13,000 characters to the article, adding content on this food item that wasn't there before, creating a more thorough article for readers.

Swimming through the water, what could it be? Is it a bass? An alligator? No, it's a [gar](#), an ancient holosteian order of ray-finned fish! A common addition to state aquariums and *Animal Crossing* games, there are seven different species of gar in two genera. The largest of these species is the alligator gar, so named because it was often mistaken as an alligator by locals. Adults can measure up to 10 feet long and weigh more than 300 pounds. Sadly, overfishing has made the gar extinct in some states. If you're in Florida, you may mistake two different species of gar for one another; the spotted and Florida gar have a similar appearance. Other gar include the shortnose and longnose gar, which differ in more ways than nose length! They differ in not only their lifespans for male and female gars, but also length. Like its nose, the shortnose gar is
far smaller than the longnose, which can reach up to 6 feet and 8 inches in length. Thanks to a student in Nicole Rosevear's writing class at Clackamas Community College, the gar article now has this valuable information in it.

Continuing on the trend of expanded articles, the article on the Bodo cranium was expanded by several UC Berkeley students in Marianne Brasil and Catherine Taylor's Human Biological Variation class this August. Discovered in the 70s, the Bodo cranium is a fossil of an extinct type of hominin species and was discovered along with Acheulean tools and animal fossils. Only a few of the tools were discovered near the skeleton, which was found in pieces during several surveys conducted by the Rift Valley Research Mission. The cranium has cuts that show the earliest evidence of removal of flesh immediately after the death of an individual using a stone tool and are believed to have been purposely done for either cannibalism purposes or polishing mortuary practices. Some researchers have also speculated that the de-fleshing was done in order to remove the mandible. The odd shape of the cranium has led to debates over its taxonomy and its exact location in the human evolutionary tree is still uncertain despite appearing to represent a lineage between Homo erectus and anatomically modern humans.

Menstruation is a natural part of life where individual experiences the regular discharge of blood and mucosal tissue (known as menses) from the inner lining of the uterus through the vagina. The first period, or menarche, typically occurs between 12 and 15 years of age but can occur in females as young as 8 years old. There are many cultural, societal, and religious traditions and taboos, as some religions believe menstruating women to be impure and the discussion of menstruation is seen as a taboo subject in some countries. This can make it difficult for them to receive a thorough and proper education, particularly if they come from a disadvantaged group and/or a lower or middle income country that also lacks easy access to resources such as birth control and menstrual products. Due to the aforementioned taboos and traditions it's hard for some to discuss the topic of menstruation but not so for UCSF students in Dorie Apollonio's Foundations II class, as they were more than ready to tackle this topic on Wikipedia.

During this summer several students in multiple different courses chose to create new articles. One of these students was in Emily Ginier's Improving Medical Communication Through Wikipedia class at the University of Michigan Medical School, who chose to create an article on Muscle Tension Dysphonia (MTD). This term describes a dysphonia caused by increased muscle tension of the muscles surrounding the voice box: the laryngeal and paralaryngeal muscles and is a unifying diagnosis for a previously poorly categorized disease process. This voice disorder typically occurs during middle age and its symptoms present as vocal changes such as a hoarse or breathy voice. Wikipedia's readers now have more detailed information about the disorder.
Scholars & Scientists Program

This was a busy month for Wiki Scholars and Wiki Scientists contributing to public knowledge on Wikipedia and Wikidata. We wrapped up five courses altogether, with some excellent results.

Wikidata

August was a busy month for our new Wikidata program. Our two Wikidata courses that began in July wrapped up. In six short weeks, 23 participants made a big impact on Wikidata, editing more than 2,500 items. Coming from libraries, museum libraries, Wikimedia, and a research company, these participants brought a wide range of skills, needs, and questions to these courses. Each course was six weeks long, meeting an hour a week. One course was designed for participants who may be new to linked data while the other was more project-based, designed for participants with some familiarity with linked data.

We created seven training modules that explore different aspects of Wikidata, including Evaluating Data on Wikidata, Adding to Wikidata, and how to Query Wikidata. Our once a week meetings created an opportunity or participants to ask questions, clarify concepts, and test tools and processes. Each week built off the previous week to ensure that participants would be able to learn Wikidata policy and best editing practices before beginning to edit Wikidata. We did not assume any prior experience with Wikimedia projects so we were sure to spend time contextualizing the Wikidata community, explaining how to best work with others on this project.

Items like Archives de l'État de Neuchâtel (Q2860433) and Mabel Ping-Hua Lee (Q50745528) demonstrate the grasp participants have on a wide range of properties and their usage on Wikidata. Having experts apply their skills to modeling these items will make them appear more accurately in queries. Improving the data quality of items on Wikidata will allow future editors to use the well-modeled items as templates and will allow for better representation on Wikidata.

Some quantitative conclusions demonstrate that there was significant enthusiasm around editing Wikidata. These 23 participants created 228 items, edited more than 2,500 items, and made more than 9,200 individual edits. You can follow this link to see more detailed statistics about these two courses. These results far exceed the requirement of editing five to seven items per person.

We are also pleased to share that every single course participant edited Wikidata. Qualitatively, we had an approved property proposal for the Archives Directory for the History of Collecting in America, P7128, an interesting discussion on post-conviction relief on Project Chat, as well as some newly-created queries (this one for labels exist in one language but not another). This level of engagement reflected well on the course participants but also underscored our thoughts that interest in Wikidata is at a tipping point and this is an exciting time to bring in new editors.
Lastly, at least seven of the twenty-three participants have edited Wikidata since the end of the courses.

As we transition from summer to fall, we are excited to be offering more Wikidata courses starting in *September and October*.

**Wikipedia**

Our longest-running Scholars & Scientists partnership has been with the National Archives and Records Administration. We first teamed up with them last fall to train academics, archivists, librarians, and independent researchers to improve Wikipedia articles about women's suffrage in the United States. NARA was planning an exhibit, *Rightfully Hers*, which celebrates the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution. They knew that when members of the public would visit the exhibit, anyone who wanted to learn more would likely turn to Wikipedia, so they understood the value of a focused program to target those articles. We began with a plan to run four courses. Interest was great enough and the impact high enough that we would up running six, the last two of which wrapped up this month. Here are just a few of the highlights from among the entries Scholars developed this month:

- **Nora Houston** (1883-1942), painter, women's right advocate, and suffragist from Virginia.
• **Maud E. Craig Sampson Williams** (1880-1958) was an African-American suffragist, teacher, civil rights leader and community activist in El Paso.

• A new section on Texas in the article on *women's suffrage in states of the United States* as well as a major expansion of the article about the *Texas Equal Suffrage Association*.

• A new article about *women's suffrage in California*.

• **Adolphine Fletcher Terry** (1882-1976), political and social activist in Arkansas named as one of the state's 15 most significant figures in its history by the Arkansas Historical Association.

• Major improvements to the article on **Juno Frankie Pierce** (1864-1954), African-American educator and suffragist who opened the Tennessee Vocational School for Colored Girls in 1923.

• **Dorothy Dix** (1861-1951), journalist and columnist who was the country's highest paid and most widely read female journalist when she died.

![Dorothy Dix](Image in the public domain via Wikimedia Commons)

• **Annie Heloise Abel** (1873-1947), historian and suffragist who was among the earliest professional historians to study Native Americans.

• **Orra Henderson Moore Gray Langhorne** (1841-1904), writer, reformer, and suffragist in Virginia.
● **Mary Johnston** (1870-1936), novelist and suffragist from Virginia who was a popular author, including novels that served as the basis for three silent films.

● **Grace Wilbur Trout** (1864-1955), suffragist who was president of two prominent Illinois suffrage organizations.

Another article created by a NARA Wiki Scholar was featured in the Did You Know section of Wikipedia's Main Page this month with the following hook: "[Did You Know] ... that when Virginia suffragist **Anna Whitehead Bodeker** was not allowed to cast a ballot in the 1871 municipal election in Richmond, she put a note in the ballot box claiming her right to vote?"

We also finished our first course with the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries. Participants made improvements to a wide range of topics, including **Florence Knoll**, classical reception studies, **Black Girl Magic**, **Maxine Greene**, **Great Lakes Theater**, **Vivian Yeiser Laramore**, and **Milicent Patrick**.

One of the two courses we are running in connection with the Society of Family Planning finished this month, with some excellent improvements to Wikipedia. The second course still has a few weeks left, but has been active in making contributions to articles related to abortion and contraception. Here are some of the highlights:

● A Scholar expanded the article on **unintended pregnancy**, refining the definition of the term, improving statistical information, improving referencing, and adding
content about factors associated with unintended pregnancy, among other improvements.

- Another Scholar expanded osmotic dilator, including taking two pictures and uploading them, as the article previously lacked any illustrations.
- The article on reproductive coercion is now greatly improved after Scholar rewrote the lead and other parts of the article, adding for example information on prevalence.
- Multiple Scholars worked to improve or add several sections of the article on dilation and evacuation.
- A Scholar improved the doula article, writing more than half of the current high-impact entry that gets nearly a thousand pageviews every day. Whereas it previously only referenced doulas regarding childbirth, the new summary paragraphs reflect that doulas are involved in other processes, however, including miscarriage, abortion, and end-of-life care.
- The article for vaginal bleeding also saw impressive growth, with a Scholar adding more than 2,500 words. They are now also responsible for half of this article, which is considered "top importance" in Wikipedia articles related to women's health. The section on vaginal bleeding in premenopausal women is dramatically expanded, with detailed and specific information conditions that can cause vaginal bleeding.

**Visiting Scholars Program**

The Long Island Tercentenary half dollar was a commemorative coin struck in 1936 celebrating the 300th anniversary of the first European settlement on Long Island. Unfortunately, the coins were not struck until months after the tercentenary celebrations. This month George Mason University Visiting Scholar Gary Greenbaum successfully brought the article up to Featured Article, a designation reserved for only the best articles on Wikipedia by quality.
Rosie Stephenson-Goodknight, Visiting Scholar at Northeastern University, continued adding biographies of women to Wikipedia, including:

- **Margaret Hunt Brisbane** (1858-1925) was a poet from Mississippi who wrote for national magazines and New Orleans newspapers.
- Another poet, **Adelaide George Bennett** (1848-1911) of New England, is known for her poems describing Native American life and the Red Pipestone Quarry.
In August, we confirmed an upcoming collaboration with the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Several UMass Lowell faculty will join a Wiki Scholars course this fall to add and expand biographies of women to Wikipedia. After this 10-week intensive training about how Wikipedia works, participating faculty will design Wikipedia assignments for their students, joining Wiki Education's Student Program in the following semesters. We're excited to work with departments at UMass Lowell on the three major components: 1) faculty learning how to
edit Wikipedia together; 2) student participation in Wikipedia; and 3) expanding public knowledge of notable women.

We spent the month recruiting participants for a Wiki Scientists course in collaboration with the New York Academy of Sciences. Most accepted applicants are early career scientists and graduate students looking to add Wikipedia-editing to their science communication toolkit.

Finally, we worked with the National Science Policy Network (NSPN) to recruit outstanding early career scientists eager to edit Wikipedia's science policy articles. NSPN sponsored 15 seats for their members, and we received applications from more than 30 graduate students and faculty. We are excited about early scientists' enthusiasm to join the Wikipedia community and rebuild the public's trust in science.

**Fundraising**

In August, we received our second grant payment of $166,667 from the Wikimedia Foundation. We also received a matching payment of $166,667 from the Stanton Foundation, in addition to $726 in individual contributions. These grants and donations support our Student Program and are so critical to our success. We are extremely grateful for the support we receive from these excellent partners and from other supporters in the community.

We had several conversations with potential funders in August, including a visit to our office from the President of the WITH Foundation, Ryan Easterly. Mr. Easterly and Chief Programs Officer LiAnna Davis discussed our programs in detail, as part of the WITH Foundation's proposal review process. We expect to hear in late September whether we will be awarded a $40K grant from the WITH Foundation to improve information on Wikipedia related to healthcare and disability issues.

Chief Advancement Officer TJ Bliss and Chief Technology Officer Sage Ross had productive conversations with a Program Officer at the Michelson 20MM Foundation and resulting in an invitation to submit a full proposal to the SPARK Grant competition. This $25K proposal, if funded, will support improvements to our Dashboard.

TJ had a good conversation with our Program Officer at the Moore Foundation and provided a report on the success of our Communicating Science efforts over the past year. He specifically requested renewal of our current grant before the end of 2019. The outlook for this renewal is positive. TJ also spoke with a hedge fund manager who is interested in funding work related to K-12 education. He developed and submitted a concept note to this potential funder, as well as to a contact at Red Hat, describing our proposed efforts to develop a professional development offering for teachers focused on using Wikipedia to teach information literacy to K-12 students.

In addition to these conversations, TJ traveled to Stockholm, Sweden to attend the 2019 Wikimania Conference. He presented about Wiki Education's extensive partnership work as an
example to other organizations and had conversations with funders and other leaders in the Wiki movement. While in Sweden, TJ finalized negotiations with the Smithsonian Institute to collaborate on a project to improve the representation of women in science on Wikipedia.

**Communications**

**Student Program**

August was a busy month for our blog!

Quite a few students who have completed Wikipedia assignments shared their experiences. Sienna Stevens wrote, "I cannot stress enough how much I learned from this project. I truly believe it gave me a chance to push myself, my writing, and my research skills." Hilary Wilson told us that the assignment inspired confidence and motivation. And Philip Marr shared why he thinks the Wikipedia stigma is undeserved.

Past and current instructors in our Student Program also lended their voices to our blog this month. Dr. Kathleen Sheppard took us through her biggest take-aways from last term. Janice Airhart speaks to how effective a Wikipedia assignment was for her freshman composition students. And Dr. Carolyn Cunningham shared what it was like for her media students to join the "Wikipedia ecosystem."

It's invaluable to hear from instructors and students, and it's encouraging that they gain such personal (and professional) fulfillment from making Wikipedia a better resource for everyone. We're proud to support them and be part of the effort!

In general, instructors are increasingly drawn to the ways the Wikipedia assignment challenges students, hones 21st century skills, and inspires passion. And there are quite a few peer-reviewed journal articles that confirm the value of the assignment. We published a blog this month about how academia is changing its mind about Wikipedia, which was widely circulated in our community.

**Scholars & Scientists**

Participants in our Scholars & Scientists courses also took to our blog to highlight their experience becoming Wikipedians. Valerie Catrow wrote about imposter syndrome: "the parts of my life that made me feel not qualified to participate are exactly what make me a good fit for this huge public service project." And we featured the work of Colleen Denny, MD, an OB/GYN and Wiki Education-trained Wiki Scientist who improved the accuracy of an article about a medical procedure she performs on a weekly basis, one which receives 500 page views every day.

**Blog posts:**

- [Engaging students with Wikipedia](august1) (August 1)
- [Creative thinking education for early career scientists](august5) (August 5)
Looking ahead: our plan for 2019-2020 (August 6)
Early career scientists advancing the role of science in policy making (August 6)
Why a Wikipedia assignment: a student’s perspective (August 9)
An emerging movement of health professional students contributing to Wikipedia (August 12)
Monthly Report, June 2019 (August 12)
Ask Alice? Not about medical content! (August 13)
Academia is changing its mind about Wikipedia (August 13)
Data for all: share your collection (August 14)
The ancient Middle East and the ethics of archaeology (August 16)
Wikipedia assignments are perfect for my Freshman Composition students (August 19)
The Dashboard now counts references (August 19)
Expanding the reach of your library collections through Wikidata (August 20)
GLAM professionals excited about the possibilities of Wikidata (August 22)
Me, a Wikipedian? (August 23)
When social media savvy students write for Wikipedia (August 23)
Life on Mars? Planetology students inform us on Wikipedia! (August 26)
Building student confidence and sharing knowledge outside the academic silo (August 27)
Why this student says Wikipedia’s stigma is undeserved (August 29)

External media:

An engaging way of teaching science communication through Wikipedia. Cassidy Villeneuve. Genes to Genomes: a blog from the Genetics Society of America. (August 9)

Join Wiki Education's Student Program to Share Deep Carbon Science with the Public. Deep Carbon Observatory. (August 28)

Technology

In August we wrapped up our three summer internship projects, shipping some very exciting new features along with the beta launch of an experimental Android app for the Dashboard. The headline feature for Khyati Soneji's project is that "The Dashboard now counts references!", and in August Khyati also added integration with the powerful category-based PetScan tool so that
contributions can be tracked within just the specified content area — useful for thematic edit-a-thons and content drives, especially. Amit Joki completed his project to improve multi-wiki support, adding a stretch goal that has been a frequent request from edit-a-thon organizers: you can now exclude specific articles from tracking, so that if a stray unrelated edit ends up alongside the articles you care about — a bit of idle vandalism reversion, perhaps — it's easy to clean up the stats. Ujjwal Agrawal's Android app is up and running, and we're gathering feedback from the beta release before distributing it more widely.

We also deployed a batch of improvements to how and where the Dashboard points students to complete Wikipedia exercises and draft their articles. New templates provide dedicated sandbox pages and a preloaded outline for the "evaluate an article" exercise and for building a bibliography, and students working in groups will all be directed to the same shared sandbox page to draft their article together. Meanwhile, design and development work picked up for bigger changes to the student user experience, which we're aiming to complete and release just before the Spring 2020 classes begin.

Finance & Administration

Overall expenses in August were $177K, ($8K) less than the budgeted plan of $185K. Programs were under by ($10K) due to a wage correction ($3K) and Indirect Expense allocation ($7K). General and Administration were under by ($4K) due to a combination of items including an increase in travel +$3K, under in Meetings ($3K), Professional Services ($4K), and an uptick in Shared expenses +$8K. Fundraising was over +$1K relating to Travel for a conference. And Governance was under by ($1K) relating to payroll adjustments.
The Year-to-date expenses are $341K ($33K) under budget of $374K. Fundraising, is right on target. The Board is under by ($1K) relating to a payroll adjustment. General and Administration is under by ($4K) due to Operational Expenses($8K), Payroll Adjustments ($2K) with an uptick in shared expenses +$14K. Programs are under by ($28K) due to Travel ($9K), Communications ($4K) and Payroll Adjustment ($1K).

Office of the ED

- Current priorities:
  - Improving the coordination of work between the Advancement and the Programs department
  - Mapping of Wiki Education’s services
  - Financial reporting and projections

August is traditionally the month of Wikimania, the annual Wikimedia conference. This year, the event was held in Stockholm, Sweden, and Frank attended the conference together with Ryan
and TJ. The conference was centered around the theme "Stronger Together: Wikimedia, Free Knowledge and the Sustainable Development Goals” and attracted about 900 attendees from all parts of the Wikimedia universe. Among the 200 different presentations, workshops, and panel discussions were 5 organized by Wiki Education staff. TJ participated in a panel that discussed the question "Why should we care about UNESCO's SDGs and how can this framework help Wikimedians transform Education?” and presented about the topic "Lessons learned from five years of partner building at Wiki Education”. Ryan held a presentation about Wiki Education’s new Scholars & Scientists Program. Will joined a panel discussion about "Integrating Wikidata into Education” remotely. Upon invitation by the track’s organizers, Frank gave the keynote of this year’s quality track, titled "How to measure a giant squid and other thoughts about Wikipedia’s quality”. However, one of the most important aspects of Wikimania is the interaction with other Wikimedians and all three staff members had many opportunities to do so.

A few days after Wikimania, Frank participated in the quarterly meeting of the board’s finance and audit committees. Frank and Jordan (SFBay Financials) provided the attending board members with a year-end report for fiscal year 2018–19 and also walked the board through some new accounting rules for non-profits. With Wiki Education’s audit being scheduled earlier this year, Jordan provided the committee members with an update on the timeline and next steps.

In order to further improve the coordination of work between the Advancement and the Programs department, Frank, LiAnna, and TJ formed the new “Services Steering Group”. This new group will meet every other week and discuss everything related to the different services our organization offers (e.g. services for academics, services for students, etc.) One of the first exercises the group engaged in was a mapping exercise intended to provide better clarity on which services Wiki Education will offer to its different target audiences over the course of the next two years. As next steps the steering group will work on prioritizing the development of new services and create a “services roadmap” in order to create better alignment among staff.

Also in August, Frank met with Tilman Bayer (former Senior Analyst) and Katy Love (former Director of Community Resources) who recently left the Wikimedia Foundation, in order to catch up and to explore potential opportunities for future collaboration.

Visitors

- Katy Love, former Director of Community Resources at the Wikimedia Foundation
- Ryan Easterly, WITH Foundation
- Naniette Coleman, University of California, Berkeley and students

In August, Naniette Coleman, Doctoral candidate at UC Berkeley, made what has now turned into her annual pilgrimage to Wiki Education's office. Naniette has been working with students to improve Wikipedia since 2016, and we're always delighted to hear about what her students are
up to. This summer, two of her students highlighted their work on translating Wikipedia articles and the challenges therein and their attempts to build a database of scholarship related to issues surrounding privacy.