

SUMMARY AND QUICK FACTS

The Wikimedia Foundation communications staff manages verified social media accounts for the WMF and Wikipedia. The two largest are a 5 million-fan [Facebook page for Wikipedia](#), and a 320,000-follower Twitter account, [@wikipedia](#). Our social media strategy is to act as brand ambassadors, bridging the gap between a curious public and complex movement.

Contact:

If you see any problems with our social media, email digital communications manager Jeff Elder immediately at jelder@wikimedia.org, or email socialmedia-internal@wikimedia.org.

Team:

The social media team is led by Digital Communications Manager [Jeff Elder](#), who reports to Katherine Maher. Also working with the team are James Alexander, Juliet Barbara, Ed Erhart, Michael Guss, Zack McCune, Joe Sutherland, Heather Walls, and Andrew Sherman. Community members are welcome to suggest ideas and chime in on drafts of posts via a public email list, Social-media@lists.wikimedia.org.

How to submit ideas for posts on WMF and Wikipedia verified social media accounts:

1. Write proposed tweet or Facebook post and include link or photo link.
2. Send to Social-media@lists.wikimedia.org.
3. Clearly state any time factor.
4. Respond to questions from social media team or others on mailing list.

Note: General interest posts about Wikipedia content and Wikimedia projects or WMF news are welcome and encouraged. The social accounts are not a venue for advancing personal pet projects. Please keep our global audience in mind.

BEST PRACTICES

On WMF and Wikipedia branded accounts:

- Do not endorse any products
- Do not endorse any political candidates
- Do not engage in any dispute with other accounts
- Do not post sarcasm
- Do not post “snarky” or unfriendly tones
- Do not retweet or repost anything that contains any of the above
- Do not post media that is not either owned or co-owned by the WMF (such as photos we take), in the [Public Domain](#) or licensed [under](#) CC0
- Remember the [“five pillars” of Wikipedia’s fundamental principles](#), especially neutrality and civility.

- Check with the social media team before posting if you have any doubts about a post

If you work with WMF and Wikipedia social media accounts:

- Do not post anything on your personal accounts that could be confused with WMF and Wikipedia official messaging. Your personal accounts don't speak for the WMF or Wikipedia. [To help prevent confusion, you may want to include a notice on your social media accounts that you are posting on your own behalf and not as a representative of WMF.](#)
- Do not post anything on our branded accounts that is personally motivated, for instance a shout-out to an organization you like.

WMF employees on their personal social media accounts

WMF employees' social media accounts are their business—unless they are used in ways that inhibit their ability to do their jobs. For instance, fundraisers should not post anything unkind about donors; attorneys should not post anything controversial about ongoing cases; communications team members should not post belligerently about members of the press, etc. [You are ~~Please be an~~ brand ambassador for the Wikimedia movement and Wikipedia on social media.](#)

Contracting companies and agencies working with the WMF

Are asked to refrain from posting anything on their accounts that could appear to be part of their work with the WMF without consulting with the WMF first.

Community accounts that use WMF or Wikipedia branding

Community members and WMF staff are encouraged to check with the social media team before starting a social media account that could confuse the public by appearing official when it is not. [A possible source of confusion can be the use of the word "Wikipedia", the puzzle globe, or other Wikimedia trademarks in the name or profile picture of the social media account. We encourage the use of the Wikimedia Community Logo as a means of representing the movement on community accounts.](#) Please make clear on the account that it is run by a volunteer, community member, or staffer as an unofficial account. That said, we are an open-information movement, and it is not ~~in~~ our mission to ~~seek out police social media for~~ trademark violations or misbehavior on social media. [We rely on community volunteers to protect the Wikimedia brand identities by reporting trademark misuse.](#) If you see something on social media that you wish to report as abusing our brands, email legal-tm-vio@wikimedia.org~~trademarks@wikimedia.org~~ or fill out [the trademark violation reporting form](#) on Meta-Wiki. More information about the use of Wikimedia trademarks on social media is available in the WMF [trademark policy](#).

Guide for staff using main Wikipedia and Wikimedia branded accounts:

When posting, please adhere to these steps or consult a member of the team on why you are deviating from them:

- Email Social-media@lists.wikimedia.org your general thoughts about a post or a draft of a post, adding any needed explanation—for example, if the post is motivated by an anniversary.)
- If needed, re-send the final draft you are posting to the list for the “Looks Good To Me” approval from at least one other member.
- Create a shortened link in Buffer so we save traffic metrics. (This process will change soon, we hope.)
- For those with direct access to our channels, post either through Buffer or on the native platforms. (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) Buffer is handy when scheduling posts in advance that other users need to see, because we all share the Buffer dashboard. Otherwise the platforms themselves are preferred.
- Check the post immediately after posting and periodically after it goes up to see if there is any major reaction, positive or negative. Respond appropriately checking in with the team on any issues or problems.
- If you schedule a post through Buffer or the native platforms, set notifications so that you or another team member can immediately look at a post after it publishes. Do not set a scheduled post and forget about it. That’s how bad things happen.
- Measure and track your post taking note of any noteworthy metrics or responses.
- Mini case studies with links, screenshots and and metrics are important.
- Any data or communications about our social accounts outside of the Communications team should be shared with Katherine and Jeff before it is shared outside the team. Otherwise we could be missing a major opportunity to explain our strategy and approach.
- Cultivating good relationships with other departments in the WMF, like-minded organizations and social media influencers is highly encouraged.
- When drafting posts, remember to be factual (we are an encyclopedia) and friendly (we are ambassadors). Other brands may snark; we don’t. Other parts of the Wikipedia and Wikimedia community may be vastly complex; on social we keep it simple.

Guide for other Wikipedia and Wikimedia branded accounts run by WMF employees:

- Please email Jeff Elder, the digital communications manager at jelder@wikimedia.org, to tell him the name of the account, who has access to it, and what its purpose is.
- Please provide sign-in information (email and password) for the account to be kept on fileserve1 with other account information.
- Never engage in angry exchanges on social media on a branded WMF or Wikipedia account.
- Do not post sarcastic or incorrect information.
- Do not promote businesses or brands.
- Do not repetitively post to promote a pet project not represented by the WMF.
- Do not criticize or insult the WMF or Wikipedians in posts.
- Do not espouse political opinions or advocacy.

- Do not compete with other WMF or Wikipedia social media accounts to post news first.
- Regularly check in with Jeff and other Comms team members about any questionable posts.
- When in doubt, check in with a team member. Do not make unilateral decisions about social media posts.

Likes, retweets and reposts:

We should be quick with likes, replies, and comments from our branded accounts, as long as they are constructive and helpful. They require little more than effort. Retweets and reposts are a bit trickier. We RT Wikipedians with big news, our own accounts (@wikipedia RTing @wikicommons, for example) or like-minded organizations sharing news that involves us in a way we support. We would like to explore RTing and reposting content more, but it should be done in discussion with the team.

Keeping track of accounts:

There are pages on Meta-Wiki for listing [Facebook pages](#) and [microblogging handles](#) run by WMF, Wikimedia affiliates, and Wikimedia communities. When creating a social media account, please add it to the relevant list. If the account is not managed by WMF or an affiliate, please include a username or other contact information for the account's manager.

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The WMF social media strategy:

We are ~~brand ambassadors~~ bridging the gap between a curious public and complex community. Millions of Wikipedia users don't know how to get more involved with websites and a movement they are coming to love. At the same time, devoted Wikipedians sometimes struggle to share their passion and excellent work with the world. As ambassadors of the brand, Wikipedia and Wikimedia branded social media accounts continually work to bridge that gap. **We help people become more involved with Wikipedia, the Wikimedia Foundation and related projects; and we help those entities reach out to the world.** Our mission is to help improve open-source information by using open social communications.

Tactics:

We engage with users, showcase content, demonstrate processes, provide calls to action and facilitate measurable conversion. Our general approach is engage; instruct; convert (for instance, drive traffic to a destination web page). We do not simply push content—and especially not self-serving content.

Engaging with the public on social media:

The Wikimedia community can be hard for newcomers to penetrate. Our verified social media accounts must act as brand ambassadors. The social media team should engage with people who comment on our posts. This is the direct responsibility of the person who posted (and will know most about it), but is the shared responsibility of the team. Friendly acknowledgment of

our social media community is highly encouraged, as are answering questions and providing helpful links. This brings direct results—from higher Newsfeed rankings on Facebook to greater brand loyalty and more participation in the movement.

Do not get entangled with trolls or unfriendly users. When in doubt, check in with Social-media@lists.wikimedia.org. Take a basic approach to problems of greet, acknowledge, suggest, provide email address. So that would look like this for us: <https://twitter.com/jckkrr/status/654778213680312321>. The voice and tone project has signed off on these basic guidelines: We are never sarcastic or combative. We should feel free to be polite and helpful.

What to post:

Our posts generally fall into two categories: Crowd-pleasing content, and explanations of the Wikimedia movement.

Crowd-pleasing content: People know us for our content—primarily our Wikipedia articles. They respond enthusiastically to that content on social media. We can demonstrate how to share Wikipedia articles, Wikimedia Commons media, Wikiquotes and more. More than perhaps any other part of the WMF, we can change how people think about Wikimedia projects. We can help them see the movement as open information they can freely create, use, shape and share—rather than thinking of us as simply a search engine.

- We are international, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual. Our content should reflect that. All efforts should be made to connect with and reflect a global and diverse audience, including outreach to underrepresented communities, translations of blog posts and social media messaging, and efforts to include content from around the world.
- We have an important challenge to reach out to more women. Our Facebook fans are 69% male, and female fans can feel outnumbered in comment streams, based on comments we have received on our Facebook posts. Our content needs to include concerted efforts to include women of history, science, business, government, sports and the arts, as well as topics that are universal rather than those traditionally more appealing to men (such as military history).
- We also need to be careful around any messaging that could be insensitive to gender, race, age, or disability.
- We share ~~pPublic dDomain~~ and ~~CC0Creative Commons Zero~~-licensed images and link to their Wikimedia Commons pages to show people how to legally share images on social media.

Explanations of the Wikimedia movement: Wikipedia fans on Facebook and @wikipedia followers on Twitter are primarily readers, rather than editors. They want to know more about the Wikimedia movement, and they may not have even basic knowledge about it.

- By intermingling basic explanations of the movement with the content they have come to love, we can grow readers into editors, donors, community members, Wikipedians.
- On two large accounts—the 5 million-fan Facebook page and the 320,000-follower @wikipedia Twitter account, we have our best platforms to explain the movement. We must guard those platforms against the boring and overly complicated. We must be

friendly explainers and guides. The Wikimedia movement can be very complicated, and at times even unfriendly. We have to keep it gracious and simple.

- There's room for community announcements and events on our two main channels, but we should be sensitive to our audiences. While we welcome suggestions for posts from the WMF staff and the Wikipedian community, announcements of anniversaries or pet projects are not the focus
- Blog posts, videos and wiki pages that walk beginners through the basics are ideal.
- @wikimedia on Twitter is a good place for more complicated community news and foundation news. The audience there is often more sophisticated about how the movement works.

Real-time news and disasters: Increasingly Wikipedians are choosing to update and read article pages on breaking news events because our articles are updated so thoroughly and so quickly. Those articles are a significant resource for readers and journalists as breaking news unfolds. News is often unpleasant, and we want to be sensitive to that.

When news breaks, our social media team works with the WMF public relations and communications team to craft straight verbiage and links to articles without sentiment or elaboration—if those articles are developed enough to help readers.

Case study:

In the case of the Paris terror attacks, the article page had dozens of sources and hundreds of edits within an hour. Dozens of verified Twitter accounts linked to it, including journalists who cited it as an important resource:

<https://twitter.com/morgenpost/status/665302304887734272>

<https://twitter.com/fuzheado/status/665305853709324288>

<https://twitter.com/francediep/status/665297547850682368>

<https://twitter.com/harikunzru/status/665292726741688325>

https://twitter.com/lan_Fraser/status/665297944875282433

For this reason, we linked to the article in a tweet:

<https://twitter.com/Wikipedia/status/665297897450135552>

Twitter users clicked the link in that one tweet 1,300+ times—more link clicks on one tweet than any other in our accounts' histories.

Tweet Activity

Wikipedia @Wikipedia
Wikipedians are updating information on terror attacks in Paris. English:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/November_2015_Paris_attacks ... Other languages:
<https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q21479779>

 **Reach a bigger audience**
Get more engagements by promoting this Tweet!

[Get started](#)

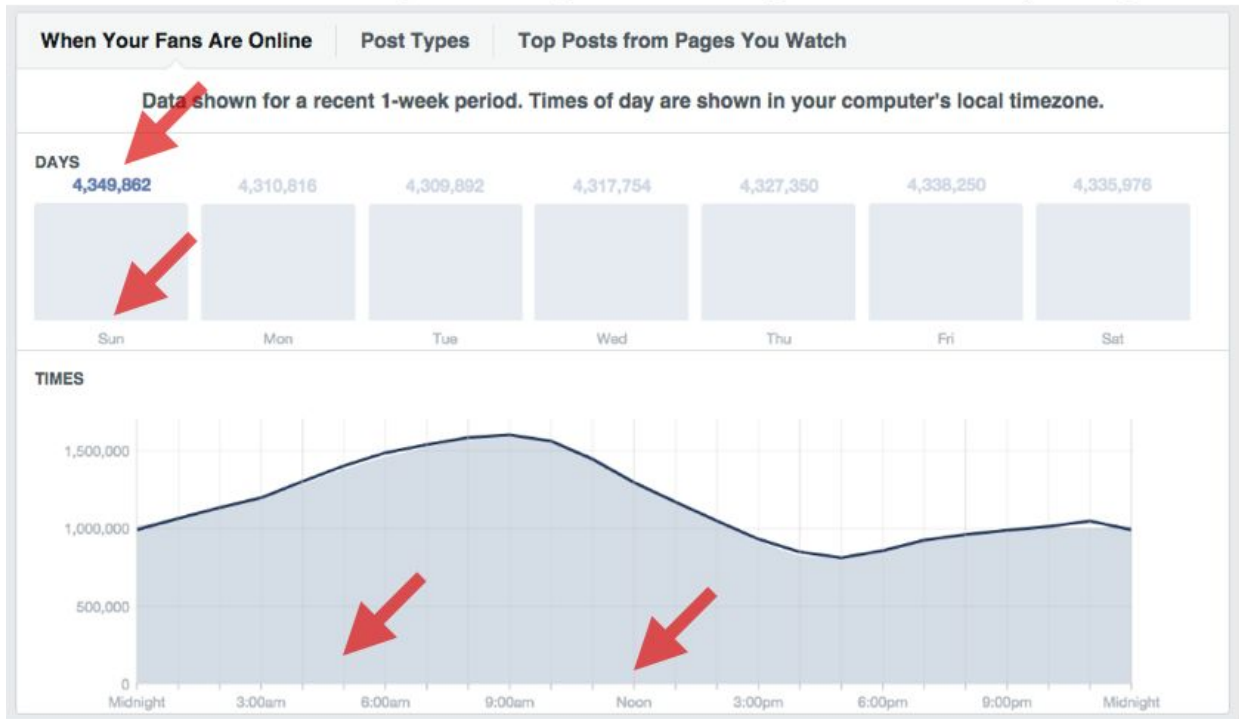
Impressions	96,775
Total engagements	2,789
Link clicks	1,315
Detail expands	1,065
Retweets	157
Profile clicks	143
Likes	87
Follows	18
Replies	4

We do not promote articles about disasters to compete with news agencies or get clicks or retweets. We state that Wikipedians are updating the article as a way of reflecting the community's involvement and to provide our article page as a resource of real-time, ad-free, crowd-sourced information for all.

When to post:

We tend to post in the middle of the afternoon and the middle of the week, and the reasons are obvious: That's when we are in the office, when we discuss ideas, when we have time and resources. The problem is that every measurement of our Facebook posts indicates this is the worst time for us to post. We should post when our fans are online and engaging, not when it's convenient for us. On Facebook, timing can be crucial on getting traction for a post. We do not see the same timing pattern on Twitter, where engagement doesn't seem to follow such a pattern.

Our fans are online most from 4 a.m. to noon Pacific time, and Friday through Sunday are the top days.



Examples of posts:

Example of a Facebook [link post](#).

Example of a Facebook [photo post](#).

Example of a Facebook [engagement status update](#).

Example of a [link tweet](#).

Example of a [customer service tweet](#).

Voice and tone:

Our voice is smart, crisp, energized, factual, principled — with a pinch of nerdery. We don't do sarcasm or snark, profanity or slang, flame wars or gushing compliments. We are a fact-based platform and our messaging should have similar focus. Wikipedia and social media are fraught with partisan debate; we don't get involved. We rise above the fray, consult managers (and above) and craft a statement addressing a conflict (if necessary). That can be done swiftly, but should never be done rashly. Do not unilaterally engage with anyone on social media as the brand if there is any hint of conflict or dispute. Check in with team members before you respond.

Other platforms:

Our YouTube channel needs better branding and oversight. We are moving forward with a public domains project on Pinterest and discussing Line and WeChat for distributing content in Asia. We are talking with Snapchat about content-posting. We want to be open to new platforms and projects and to encourage Wikipedians to pursue those channels unofficially as well.

List of social media accounts can be found [on the office wiki here](#).