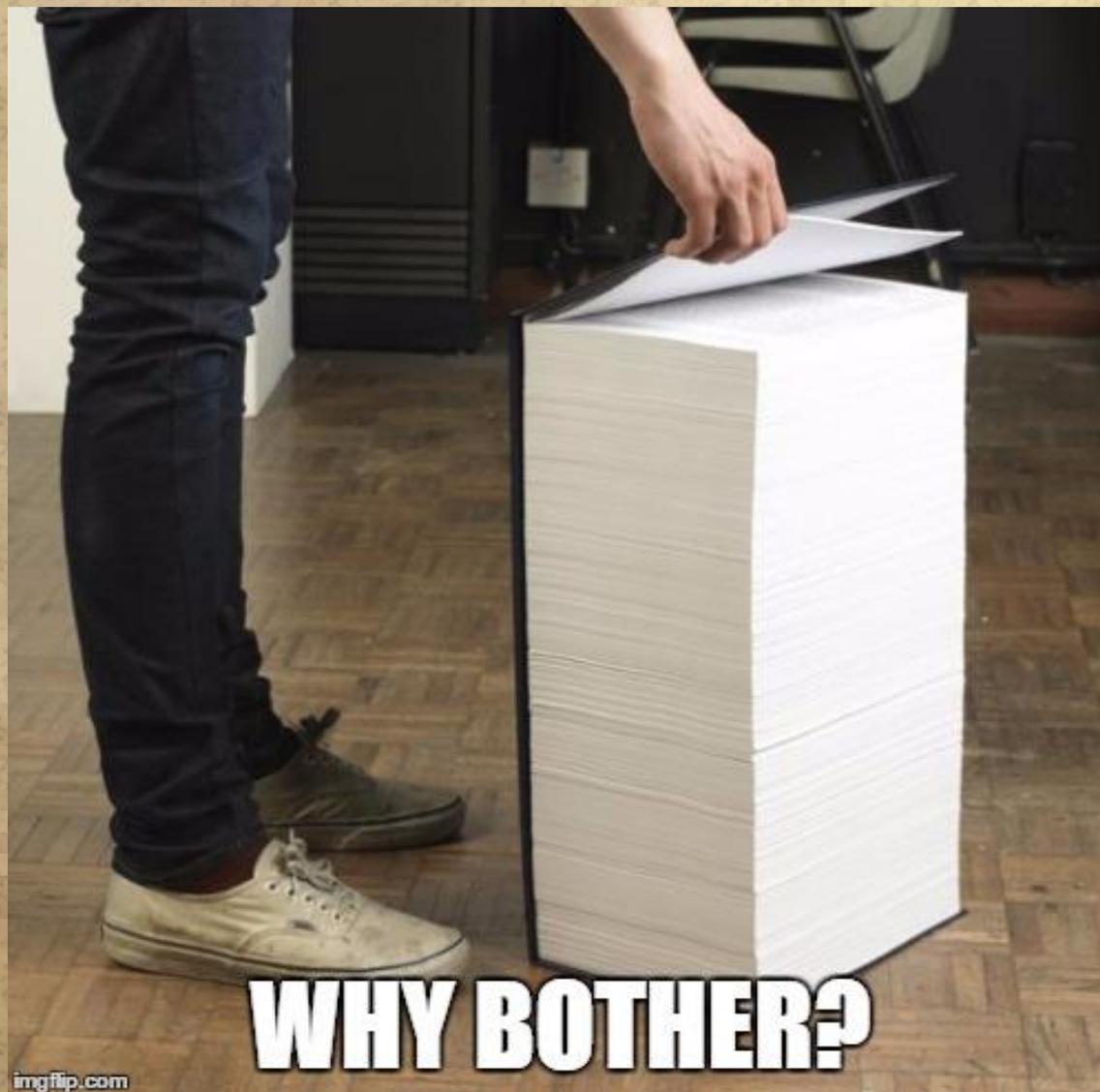


# WikiMotivation

Why do we use and contribute to  
Wikimedia?

Peter Sitnik

Wikimedia Poland, University College London  
piotr.sitnik.14@ucl.ac.uk



**WHY BOTHER?**

Starting point –  
Maslow's hierarchy of  
needs

Self-actualization

morality,  
creativity,  
spontaneity,  
problem solving,  
lack of prejudice,  
acceptance of facts

Esteem

self-esteem,  
confidence, achievement,  
respect of others, respect by others

Love/Belonging

friendship, family, sexual intimacy

Safety

security of body, of employment, of resources,  
of morality, of the family, of health, of property

Physiological

breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion

## Key motivational factors

„The most frequent factor (...) is achievement. (...) Each one of this group of stories revolves about successful completion of a job.”

„Second in the order of frequency of mention is **recognition**. (...) Recognition can come from many sources: sueprvisors, peers, customers or subordinates. An important aspect of the effectiveness of recognition for producing high job attitudes is some achievement as a basis for the recognition”

Next:

- Work itself
- Responsibility
- Possibility for growth

## Work itself

The „work itself” factor stands for specific aspects of one’s job one finds give them tremendous satisfaction. These aspects are related to the nature of their work and were rewarding in themselves with or without specific achievement or recognition

„Frequently cited desiderata were creative or challenging work, varied work, and an opportunity to do a job completely from beginning to end”

# Responsibility

Stories include:

- being allowed to work without supervision
- being responsible for one's own efforts
- being given responsibility for work of others
- being given a new kind of job, with new responsibilities but no formal advancement

„Rarely do [factors of work itself and responsibility] cause a change that is merely transient. (...) [They] are almost always associated with long-term changes in job attitudes. (...) Contrariwise, changes in job attitudes resulting from events involving achievement or recognition are significantly more often of a short-range variety. Work itself and responsibility are more singularly potent, as measured by their lasting effects, than either recognition or achievement. Since long-range attitude changes are also associated with greater performance effects, (...) the former duo of factors are also more singularly potent for improving job effectiveness”

# Possibility of growth

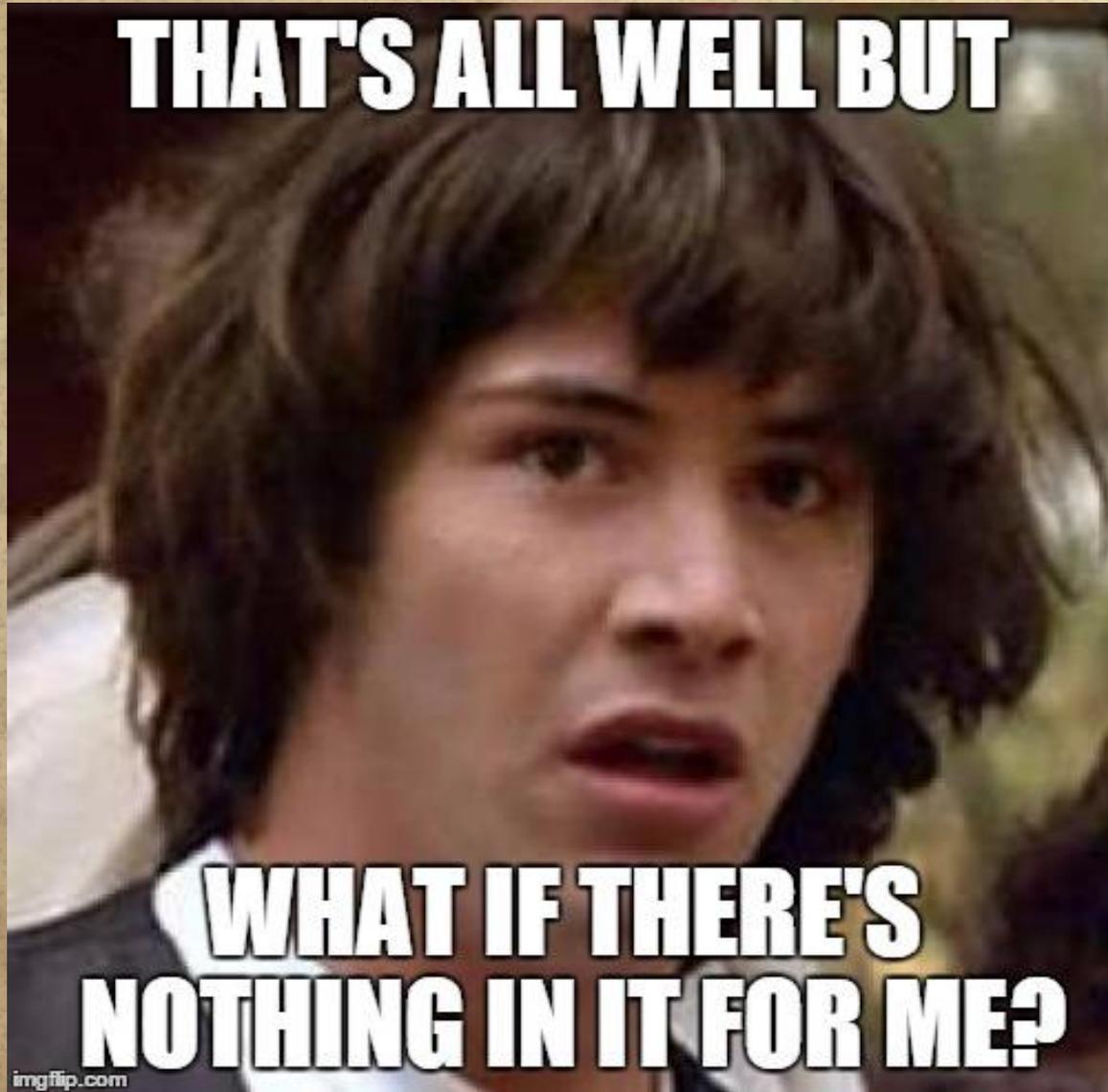
- Prevalence in long-lasting motivational attitudes
- Accompanies recognition and achievement
- Long-lasting
- Arguably the most effective motivator

B. Mausner, B.B. Snyderman, F. Herzberg, *Motivation to Work* (1st, Transaction Publishers, 1993) p. 69-71

## Corollaries of Herzberg's research

- Interrelationships
- Scarcity of factors pertinent to determining the roots of one's motivation
- Need for personal growth and the work itself central to forming motivational attitudes
- Do those last? How do they become entrenched in one's psyche?
- Overarching truth - a sense of personal growth and of self-actualization is the key to an understanding of positive feelings about the job

**THAT'S ALL WELL BUT**



**WHAT IF THERE'S  
NOTHING IN IT FOR ME?**

# Sense of community

„Wikipedia’s achievements may be attributed to its socio-technical structure that motivates contributions, promotes discussions, promotes quality work, builds on norms, and facilitates peripheral participation.”

„Studies have revealed a reciprocal relationship between Wikipedia’s content and its contributors.

- On the one hand, interactions among contributors improve content quality
- On the other hand, the complex proces of creating and nogitiating content promotes more interactions”

Xiaoli Zhao, M. J. Bishop, 'Understanding and supporting online communities of practice: lessons learned from Wikipedia' [2011] Educational Technology Research and Development Vol. 59, No. 5 (October 2011), 711-735

WikiMotivations include „reputation, recognition, and ownership of contribution. Kollock (1999) proposed that the desire for prestige within a community can serve as a motivation for making contributions. [Others] agreed, suggesting that authors of long-lived Wikipedia contributions gain reputation over time”

Importance of practice: „**Practice generates content. And practice promotes and provides a context for individuals’ interactions**”

„As practice continues, more interactions evolve as required by the task of content making. Interactions can foster individuals’ attachment to other members and to the community and thus interactions become the social basis of the community through which people are connected”

## Bottom line community argument

„At the center of the model is community (...) The community is defined by social practice, has a shared goal of content building, and is built on interactions”

„A consistent theme expressed by most participants was the notion of „all working together for the greater good” by „building the repository of information for the next generation”.

Wikipedians have a great passion for bringing knowledge to everyone; as one of the participants noted, „I continue to contribute because I have a thirst for knowledge and I want to add to the worldwide knowledge pool. (...) **Respondents were proud how quickly Wikipedia continues to grow and liked being part of a „highly structured community with altruistic value, the community moves at a breakneck pace”.**

# Wikimedia peculiarities

- Instant gratification (new editions published immediately)
- User-friendly interface
- Strong community identity – shared purpose and goal among members of the community
- „Wikimedia flow” – the more you contribute the more immersed you become
- Inclusiveness – everybody allowed to edit
- Relatively easy transition from reader to editor (inclusiveness)
- Trial-and-error culture
- Main vs metasites?

**SMUG**

**CONFESSIONS**

## One scientific

„Though its appeal may not be readily understandable for those outside of this community, „reverting vandalism” was frequently reported as a favourite activity. (...) The motivation for that would probably be „defending the wiki” or „defeating the vandals, the competition can be fun”. Wikipedia administrators are likened to janitors (...), yet curiously, this work is satisfying. One respondent indicated that what he found most exciting was „being insulted and called racist for attempting to keep some nut material out of Wikipedia”

## And one anecdotal

- Conquering depression and nihilism
- Accommodation of social clumsiness
- Releasing creative juices
- Keeping myself busy
- Later on: wikipedians as the ultimate good

