Wikipedia
Awareness, Attitudes & Usage Research
USA

Project Context

As the Wikimedia movement begins defining their vision for the next fifteen years, they required foundational knowledge of their readers in high awareness countries, for their largest and most well-known project, Wikipedia. Among internet users, they required an understanding of Wikipedia's awareness, attitudes toward Wikipedia, and usage habits and patterns.

This presentation summarizes key findings and opportunities from online, quantitative survey research conducted in France, Germany, Japan, Spain, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, in June 2017. Wherever possible, the questions used mirrored past research to help establish global benchmarks.

This presentation was prepared by Wellspring Insights & Innovation, Inc., a research and innovation firm based in Miami, Florida. Full field data from this study has been shared with WMF.

Content

Objectives

- To better understand awareness, attitudes, and usage of internet users in high-awareness countries or regions to inform the movement strategy direction for the next 15 years

- Gain insight into GenX, GenY and especially GenZ - the unique perspectives of younger users, as they will be our future readers

- Gain insight into how respondents in high-awareness countries or regions and low-awareness countries or regions differ or are the same (in comparison to New Reader and other research completed in the past)

- Scope is not intended to gain a complete understanding of all countries or regions or insights that the movement might need for Brand identity research, product development, or other planned work streams.

- As applicable, a secondary benefit will be to help guide Wikipedia's future development and growth by identifying opportunities to expand awareness, attract new readers, improve positioning, and optimize product and service features.

Scope & Methodology

- The survey was fielded in France, Germany, Japan, Russia, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States via an online survey accessible on a PC, laptop or device (tablet, smartphone).

- A total of 1,150 surveys with internet users (individuals who can access the internet via any device type and connection) were completed in each country

- All respondents were between 13-49 years old; GenX 36 to 49 years, GenY 20-35, and GenZ 13-19

- Non-probability sampling was utilized.

- Participants were sourced from multiple online research panels to reduce bias by adding people from all socioeconomic levels, geography and interest.

- Quotas were established per country in order to balance the sample and provide a nationally representative population by age cohort, gender, ethnicity, household income and geography. All data has been weighted to reflect this balance.

Generation X, Y and Z definitions

	GENX 1965-1979 36-49 in our survey 66 Million	GENY 1980-1994 20-35 in our survey 79 million	GENZ 1995-2010 13-19 in our survey 75 million
Iconic Technology	VCR, Walkman, IBM PC	Internet, Email, SMS, DVD, Ipod, Xbox	Iphone, Ipad, Google, social media, 4KHD, VR
TV & Movies	M-TV, ET	Pay TV, Titanic	Smart TV, Avatar
Influencers	Pragmatic practitioners	Experiential peers	User-generated forums
Working Motto	"Balance work with family time"	"Never confuse your career with your life."	"We are the 'always on' generation."

Sources: McCrindle Research, Vision Critical. 2012, 2015.

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Key Findings

At the outset of this research our hypothesis was that, in the United States and other high-awareness countries, we would observe large differences in awareness, usage and attitudes toward Wikipedia between the generations; from Generation X's analog childhood to the digital natives of Generation Z.

By 2030, the oldest GenX'ers will be 63, heading toward their next, and perhaps final, career phase. The oldest GenY'ers will be 53, and have already made their mark on the world of technology, particularly in social media.

In 2030, the oldest members of Generation Z will turn 35, and they will have had a smartphone since they were about the age of 13. Already, they are being called the greatest visual communicators ever raised; creators, collaborators and curators of culture.

"Technology is an important component, but what's changed is this generation's (Z) relationship with culture. They are empowered, connected, empathetic self-starters that want to stand out and make a difference in the world." – the Wildness, 2015 research study.

Key Findings

In our survey we found that internet users in the US between the ages of 13 and 49 are five times more likely to think of Google over Wikipedia when they "think about finding information online." Over 80% mentioned Google as compared to the next tier of sites including Yahoo! (17%), Wikipedia (15%) and Bing (13%).

93% of Generation Z internet users are aware of Wikipedia, yet they are more likely to say that YouTube (64%) is one of top three sites that they go to when they want to find information than Wikipedia (47%).

Given their age, about 40% of GenZ first found out about Wikipedia at school, and regardless of the device they access it on, chances are they are doing homework. GenX and Y are more in-the-moment, looking up topics on Wikipedia that were referenced in the media or in passing conversation.

One of the most relevant findings of this research is the confusion surrounding Wikipedia. 41% percent of GenZ participants do not know it is non-profit; across all generations, half don't know how it's primarily funded, 20% think it's funded by advertising, and half don't know that its content is created by volunteers.

Key Findings

Regarding usage, only 45% of GenZ reads Wikipedia on a weekly basis, vs. 60% of GenX and 70% of GenY. This is despite the fact that GenZ is online as often or more often than GenY and GenX on their smartphones and laptops.

This may be owing to their focus on schoolwork, or to other factors such as how they approach websites and apps, or how they derive utility. It is an important question for Wikipedia to answer in the near future, given that GenZ association Wikipedia's values was the weakest of the three generations.

What readers find personally important is also what they most strongly associate Wikipedia with: being **useful**, **easy to read**, and **free**.

At the other end, transparency and neutrality were the words least associated with Wikipedia, especially by GenZ participants.

Free of advertising fell in the middle, however, it was ranked toward the bottom of personal importance; 7th or 8th out of nine.

Key Findings

Lastly, when it comes to enhancing Wikipedia readers' experience, the generations diverge. GenX's top enhancements would be improved site navigation (47%) more trustworthy and more visual content (41% each), while GenY equally (33% each) seeks more trustworthy content, improved readability, more neutral information, and higher quality content.

Meanwhile, almost 60% of GenZ readers would like to see more trustworthy content – fact checked and verified. And about two-thirds each would like improved readability and more neutral information.

Of little of no importance to Wikipedia readers across the generations is more interaction with other readers.

Wikipedia Awareness

US internet users by Generation
Total Base: 1150
Weighted Data

We asked internet users in the USA what website came to mind when they want to find information online.
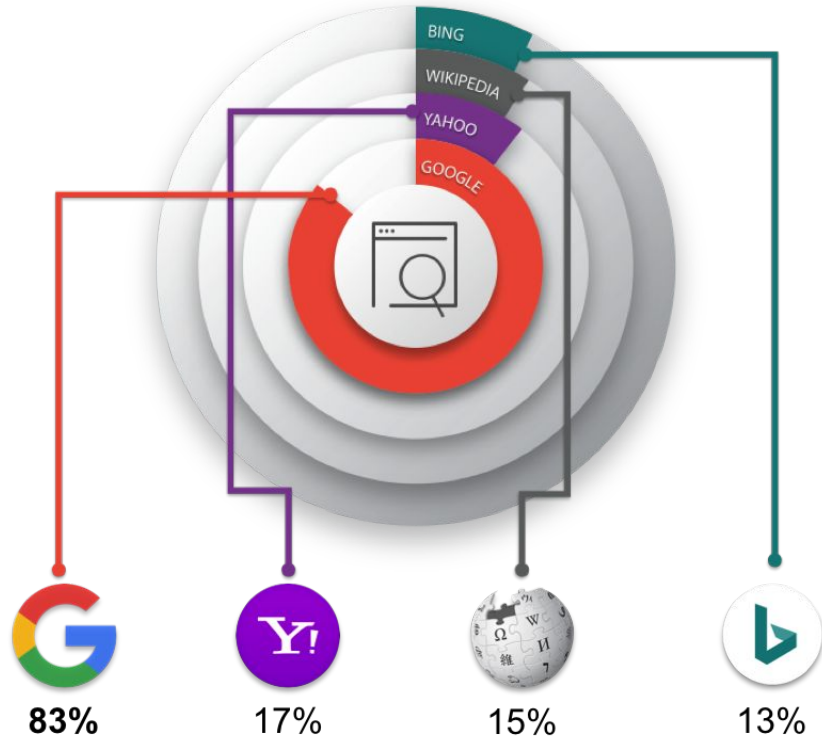
77% mentioned Google first.

6% mentioned Wikipedia.

In total mentions, Google had 83%.

Q6: When you want to find information online, what websites come to mind? Total Mentions. Base: 1150

83%   17%   15%   13%

Wikipedia may not be top-of-mind, but more than 80% of internet users are aware of it.

Yet less than half say it is one of the Top 3 sites to go to when they need information.

Top 3 Sites for Information

Q7a: When you want to find information online, what three
websites would you say you go to most often? Base: 1150

Less than half - across all three generations - include
Wikipedia as one of the top three sites they go to when they
want to find information online.

About one-third of GenX still includes Yahoo!, and close to
30% of Millenials include Facebook as one of their top three
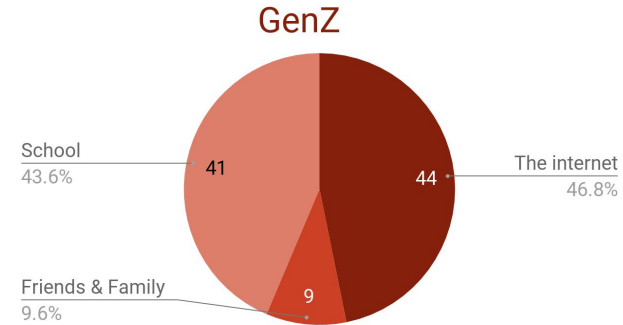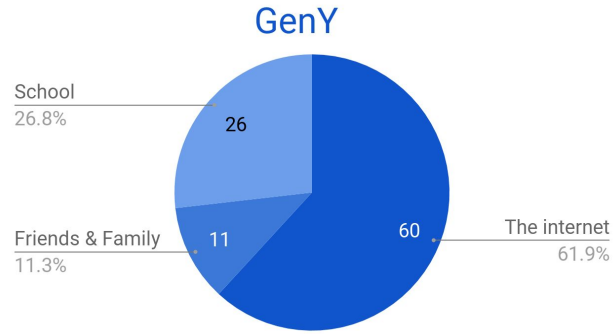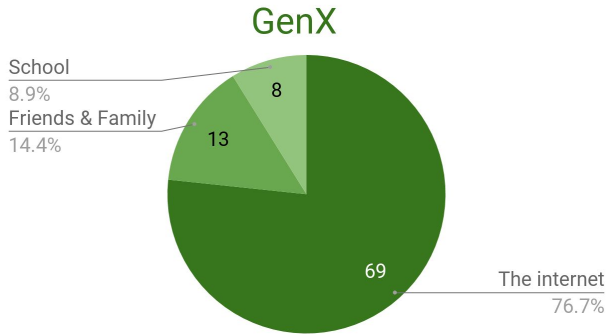sites for information.

Two-thirds of GenZ include YouTube.

	GenX	GenY	GenZ
Google	87%	89%	91%
YouTube	37%	48%	**64%**
Wikipedia	49%	47%	47%
Yahoo!	**38%**	19%	17%
Facebook	21%	**27%**	**11%**
Fox News	10%	8%	6%
Twitter	4%	**11%**	8%
Reddit	5%	9%	7%
WikiHow	2%	5%	**16%**

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While GenX and GenY first found Wikipedia online, GenZ is as likely to first find out about it at school.

Q8: Where did you first find out about Wikipedia?
Base: 1004 Aware Wikipedia.

GenX

School
8.9%
Friends & Family
14.4%
8
13
69
The internet
76.7%

GenY

School
26.8%
26
Friends & Family
11.3%
11
60
The internet
61.9%

GenZ

School
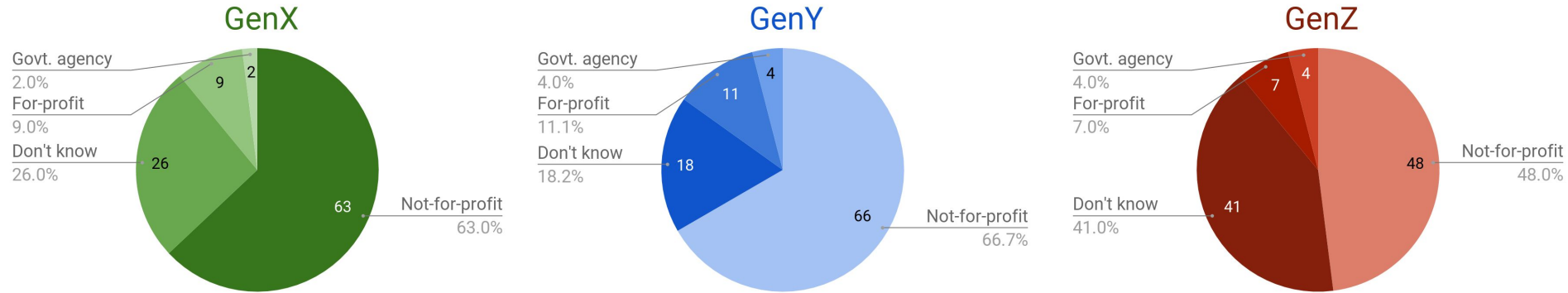43.6%
41
Friends & Family
9.6%
9
44
The internet
46.8%

Many internet users in the US remain confused about Wikipedia.

Forty-one percent of GenZ internet users in the USA don't know it is a non-profit, across all generations half don't know it's funded primarily by reader donations, 20% think it's funded by advertising, and half don't know that its content is created by volunteers.

About two-thirds of GenX and GenY know it is a not-for-profit, while four of ten GenZ internet users "don't know."
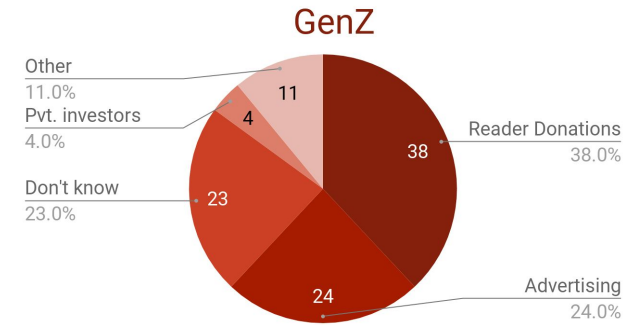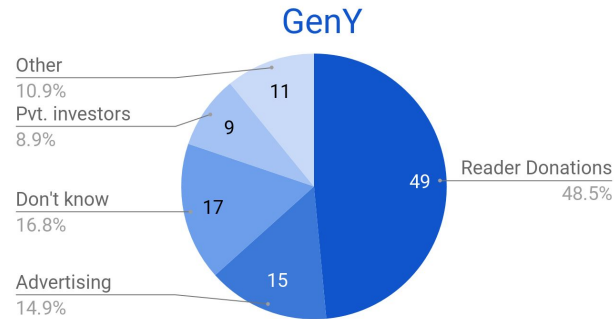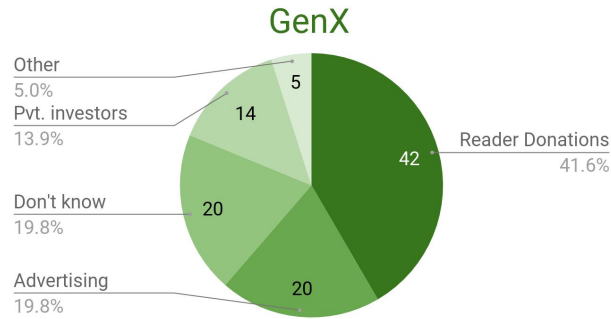
Q9: To the best of your knowledge, which of the following best describes
the organization that manages Wikipedia? Base: 1004 Aware Wikipedia.

GenX

Govt. agency
2.0%
For-profit
9.0%
Don't know
26.0%
26
9
2
63
Not-for-profit
63.0%

GenY

Govt. agency
4.0%
For-profit
11.1%
Don't know
18.2%
18
11
4
66
Not-for-profit
66.7%

GenZ

Govt. agency
4.0%
For-profit
7.0%
Don't know
41.0%
41
7
4
48
Not-for-profit
48.0%

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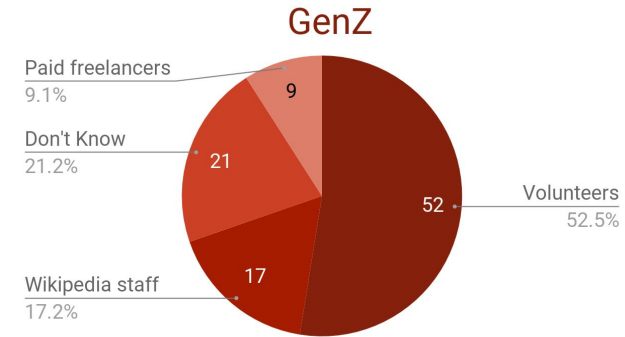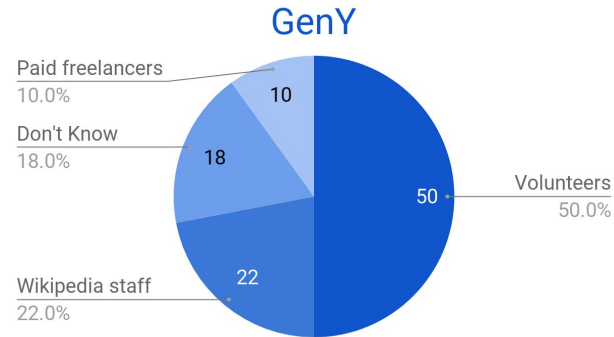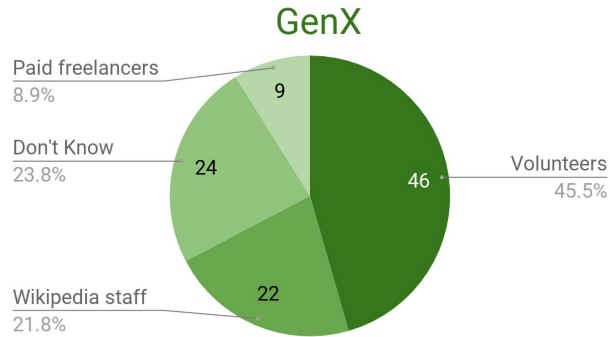# One quarter of GenZ internet users think Wikipedia is funded by advertising, and other 23% "don't know"

Q10: How do you think Wikipedia is primarily funded?
Base: 1004 Aware Wikipedia.

GenX

- Other 5.0%
- Pvt. investors 13.9%
- Don't know 19.8%
- Advertising 19.8%
- Reader Donations 41.6%

Values shown on slices: 42, 20, 20, 14, 5

GenY

- Other 10.9%
- Pvt. investors 8.9%
- Don't know 16.8%
- Advertising 14.9%
- Reader Donations 48.5%

Values shown on slices: 49, 15, 17, 9, 11

GenZ

- Other 11.0%
- Pvt. investors 4.0%
- Don't know 23.0%
- Advertising 24.0%
- Reader Donations 38.0%

Values shown on slices: 38, 24, 23, 4, 11
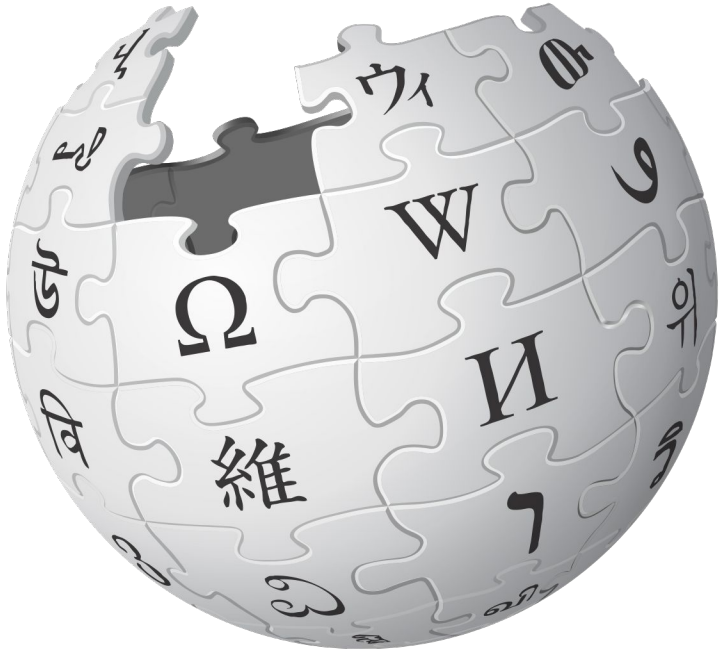
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About half think content is created and maintained by volunteers, and another 20% say Wikipedia staff.

Q17: To the best of your knowledge, how is information primarily created and maintained on Wikipedia? Base: 957 Wikipedia Readers.

GenX

Paid freelancers
8.9%

Don't Know
23.8%

Wikipedia staff
21.8%

Volunteers
45.5%

9

24

22

46

GenY

Paid freelancers
10.0%

Don't Know
18.0%

Wikipedia staff
22.0%

Volunteers
50.0%

10

18

22

50

GenZ

Paid freelancers
9.1%

Don't Know
21.2%

Wikipedia staff
17.2%

Volunteers
52.5%

9

21

17

52

Wikipedia Usage

US internet users by Generation
Total Base: 1150
Weighted Data

Awareness & Usage Summary

With the highest awareness of Wikipedia, GenZ is most likely to say they never read it, while GenX has the highest non-reading population due to lack of awareness.
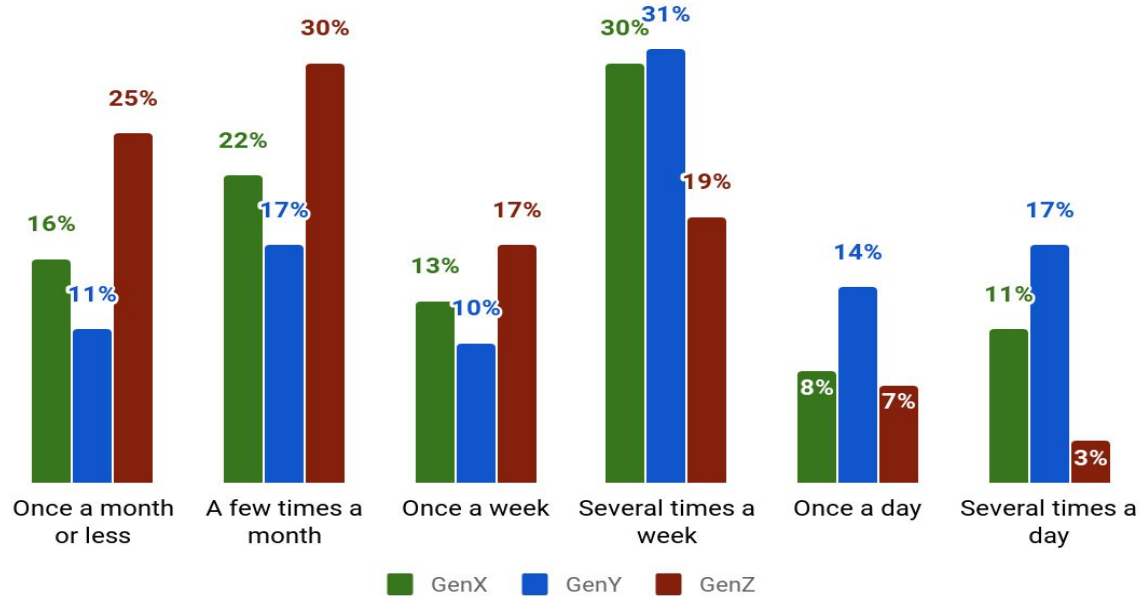
	GenX	GenY	GenZ
Aware of Wikipedia	82%	88%	93%
Read Wikipedia	96%	99%	89%
Never read Wikipedia	4%	1%	11%
Unaware of Wikipedia	18%	12%	7%
Total non-reading population	21%	13%	17%

Only 45% of GenZ reads Wikipedia on a weekly basis, vs. 60% of GenX and 70% of GenY.

Q14: How often do you read Wikipedia?
Base: 957 Wikipedia Readers.

Legend: GenX (green), GenY (blue), GenZ (red)

Category	GenX	GenY	GenZ
Once a month or less	16%	11%	25%
A few times a month	22%	17%	30%
Once a week	13%	10%	17%
Several times a week	30%	31%	19%
Once a day	8%	14%	7%
Several times a day	11%	17%	3%

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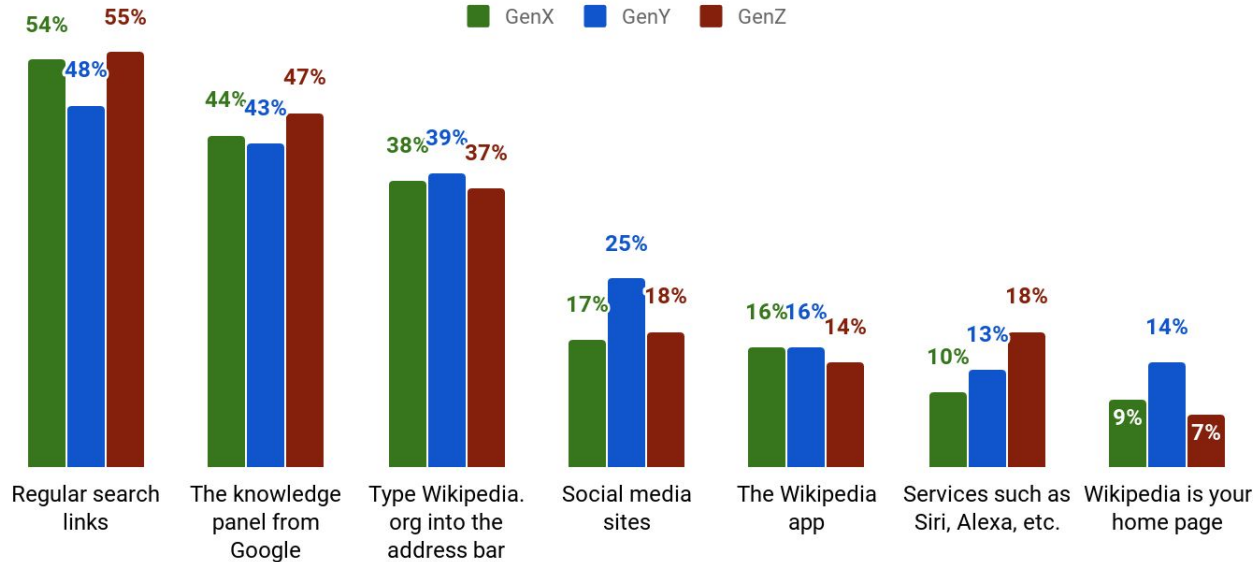WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

GenX is about information seeking, GenY is most likely to want to discover, and GenZ is doing their homework.

Q15b: Overall, would you say you use Wikipedia primarily to _____.
Base: 957 Wikipedia Readers.
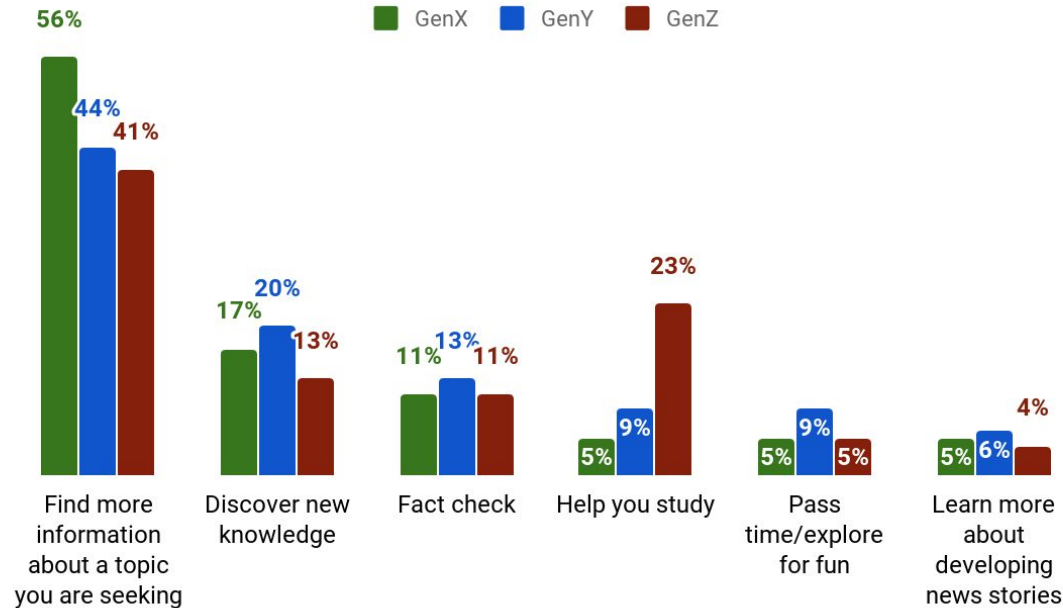
Most follow search links or click on the knowledge panel, and over two-thirds continue to go directly to the site.
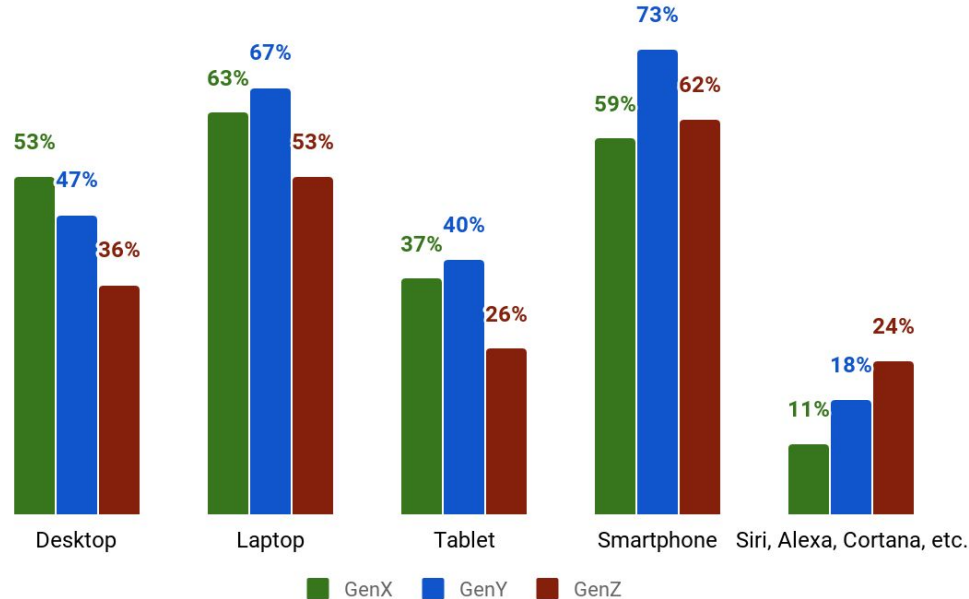
Q16: What are all of the ways you find Wikipedia articles, or get to
Wikipedia articles? (Answer all that apply) Base: 957 Wikipedia Readers

Legend: GenX, GenY, GenZ

	GenX	GenY	GenZ
Regular search links	54%	48%	55%
The knowledge panel from Google	44%	43%	47%
Type Wikipedia.org into the address bar	38%	39%	37%
Social media sites	17%	25%	18%
The Wikipedia app	16%	16%	14%
Services such as Siri, Alexa, etc.	10%	13%	18%
Wikipedia is your home page	9%	14%	7%

GenY and GenZ point to the future (smartphones and digital voice assistants) while many still use desktops and laptops.

Q15: Please indicate how often you use each the following devices
to access and read Wikipedia.
Base: 957 Wikipedia Readers.

Legend: GenX, GenY, GenZ

Device	GenX	GenY	GenZ
Desktop	53%	47%	36%
Laptop	63%	67%	53%
Tablet	37%	40%	26%
Smartphone	59%	73%	62%
Siri, Alexa, Cortana, etc.	11%	18%	24%

Top reasons for reading Wikipedia don't vary much by device. GenZ skews to school assignments, while GenX and GenY are more focused on topics that are referenced in the media or come up in conversation.

|		GenX	GenY	GenZ
Desktop		A topic I want to learn more about **59%**	A topic referenced in media **58%**	Work or school assignment **69%**
Laptop		A topic referenced in media **59%**	A topic referenced in media **52%**	Work or school assignment **66%**
Tablet		A conversational topic **54%**	A conversational topic **45%**	Work or school assignment **48%**
Smartphone		A conversational topic **63%**	A conversational topic **58%**	Work or school 52% A conversational topic 51%
Digital Voice Asst.		A conversational topic **45%**	A conversational topic **47%**	A topic referenced in media **41%**

Q15a: When you access Wikipedia on your _____, what do you read it for? Base: Access Wikipedia via device.

Across the generations only 2 out of 10 have tried to edit a Wikipedia article.
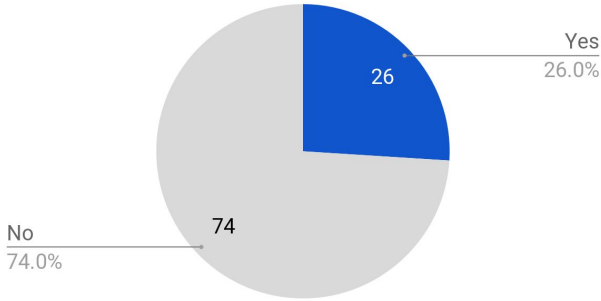
Q18a: Have you ever tried to edit a Wikipedia article?
Base: 678 Readers who know anyone can edit.

GenX

Yes
15.0%

15

No
85.0%

85

GenY

Yes
26.0%

26

No
74.0%

74

GenZ

Yes
20.0%

20

No
80.0%

80
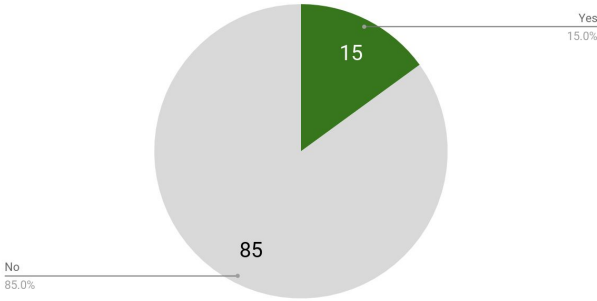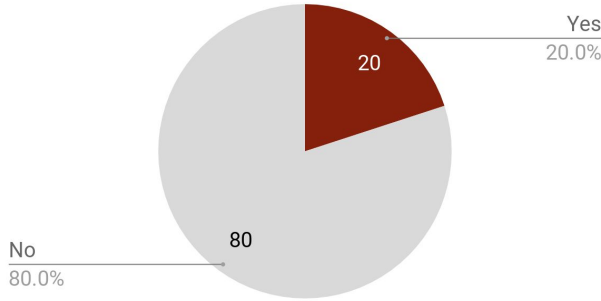
Two factors prevent most people from trying; a lack of interest or the fear of making mistakes.

Q18b: Which of the following best explains why you have never tried to edit a Wikipedia article? Base: 531 Readers who have never tried to edit.
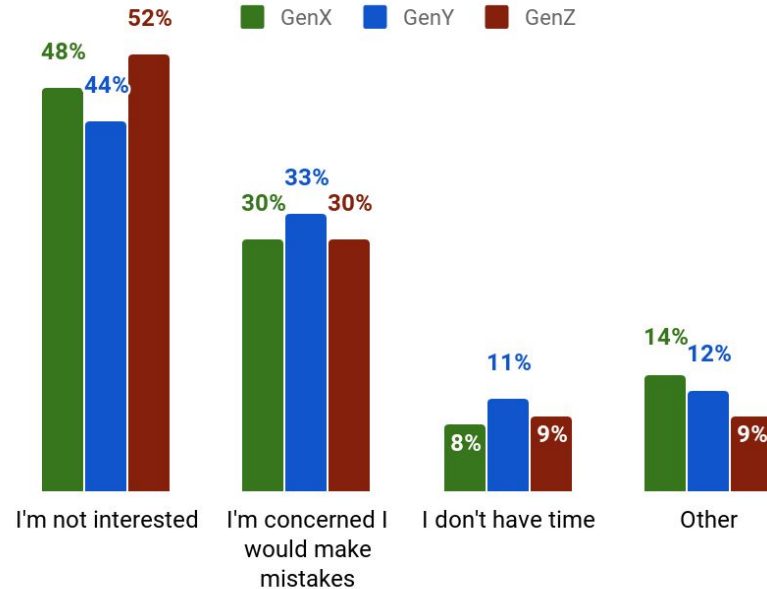
Across the generations, about nine out of ten readers have never made a donation to Wikipedia.

Q19: Have you made a financial donation to Wikipedia?
Base: 957 Wikipedia Readers.

GenX

Yes
11.0%

11

No
89.0%

89

GenY

Yes
15.0%

15

No
85.0%

85

GenZ

Yes
7.0%

7

No
93.0%

93
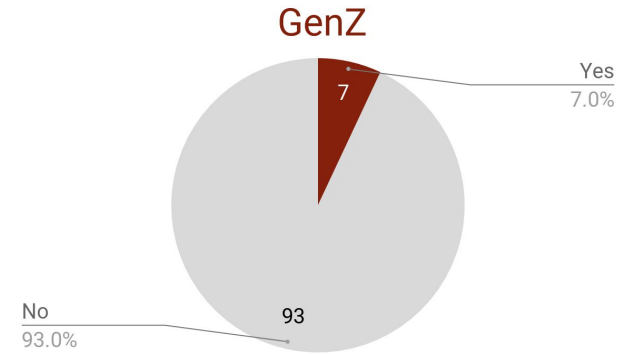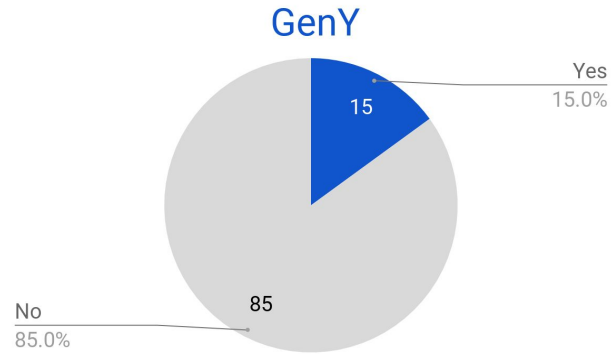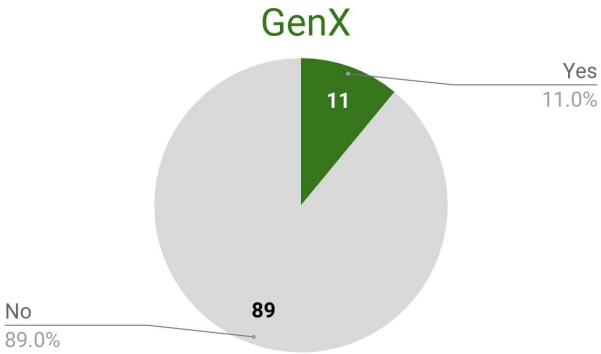
About four out of ten say they either didn't know Wikipedia relied on donations, or what the donation would be used for.

Q20a: Which of the following best explains your decision NOT to make a
donation to Wikipedia? Base: 842 never donated.

	GenX	GenY	GenZ
I don't usually donate to anything	27%	26%	34%
I didn't know Wikipedia relied on donations	26%	21%	20%
I don't know what it would be used for	17%	20%	32%
I am uncomfortable making online donations	17%	22%	23%
I do not use Wikipedia that often	13%	19%	28%
Wikipedia probably gets enough donations, they don't need mine	5%	14%	9%
I found Wikipedia's fundraising appeal too intrusive	5%	5%	5%

30
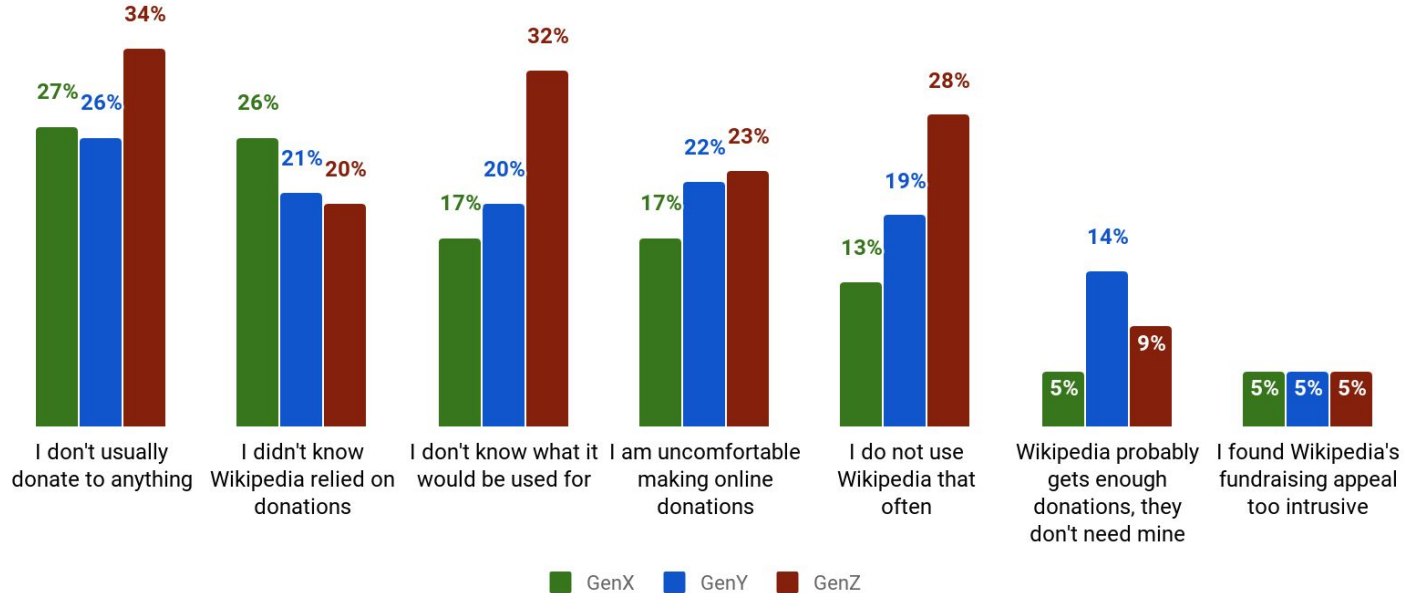
Attitudes toward Wikipedia

US internet users by Generation
Total Base: 1150
Weighted Data
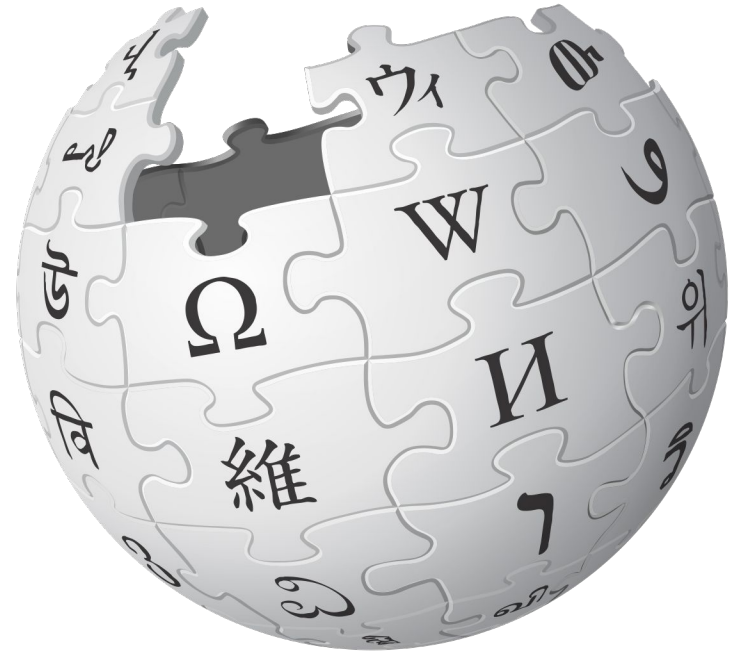
What readers find personally important is also what they most strongly associate Wikipedia with: being useful, easy to read, and free.

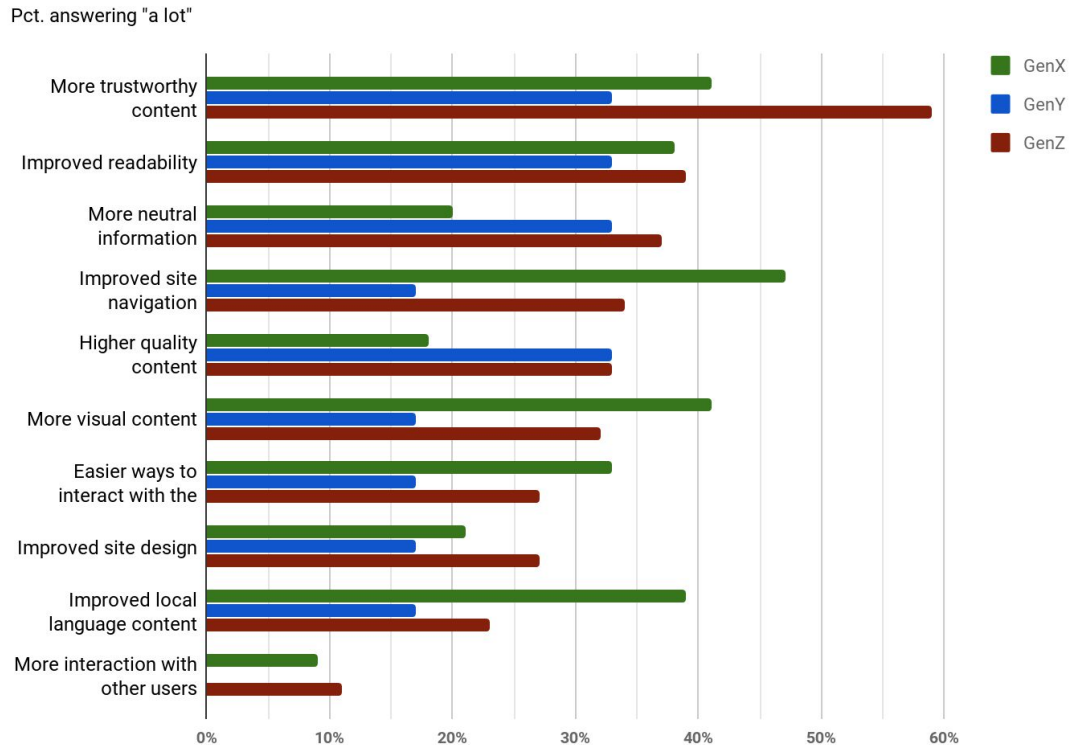|	GenX		GenY		GenZ	
	Mean Association Rating	Personal Importance Ranking	Mean Association Rating	Personal Importance Ranking	Mean Association Rating	Personal Importance Ranking
Useful	8.4	1	8.2	1	7.1	1
Easy to read	8.4	2	8.3	2	7.2	2
Free knowledge for every person	8.7	3	8.3	T3	7.9	3
High Quality	7.5	4	7.3	T3	**5.9**	4
Comprehensive	7.8	5	7.5	4	6.4	T6
Neutral, unbiased content	7.2	6	6.8	T5	**5.8**	T6
Professional	7.5	7	7.0	T5	**5.6**	5
Free of advertising	7.5	8	7.1	7	**5.7**	7
Transparency	7.2	9	7.0	6	**5.6**	8

(Note that GenZ gave Wikipedia much lower association scores across the board.)

Q11: On a scale of 0-10, please rate how strongly you associate Wikipedia with each of the following words or phrases, where 0 means you don't associate Wikipedia with the word or phrase at all and 10 means you associate Wikipedia with _____. Base 1005 Aware of Wikipedia. Q12: When it comes to Wikipedia, how important are these words or phrases to you personally? Please arrange them in order of importance to you, personally, from most to least. Base 1005 Aware Wikipedia. "T" = Tied.

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GenZ is more likely to say more trustworthy content, improved readability, and neutral content will enhance their experience "a lot."

Q22a: As a Wikipedia reader, please indicate how much each of the following changes would enhance your personal experience? A lot, a little, or not at all. Base: 957 readers.

Pct. answering "a lot"

Legend: GenX, GenY, GenZ

Categories: More trustworthy content, Improved readability, More neutral information, Improved site navigation, Higher quality content, More visual content, Easier ways to interact with the, Improved site design, Improved local language content, More interaction with other users

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THANK YOU