Wikimedia UK has travelled a long way since I contributed to the annual report a year ago. We now have nine staff, a growing number of Wikimedians in Residence (including at some of the UK’s most prestigious institutions) and an ambitious programme that I am certain we will be able to deliver. Best of all we are attracting new volunteers with more meet-ups and activities. With the appointment of our volunteer support organiser I know this will be an area of massive expansion in 2013.

It wasn’t until I attended the Chapters Conference in Milan that I realised quite how much progress we have made. We are now recognised by our international community as one of the leading chapters with a programme that is innovative and, best of all, worth learning from.

Behind the scenes we have established a raft of policies and protocols, excellent financial systems, smooth communications systems and started developing positive relationships with our donor base. We have also learnt a lot. Our governance review reported on all we had achieved and offered a range of proposals that we are working on.

Last year I expressed the hope that the community would use our base in London as a place to visit, use the WiFi and drink coffee. This has worked well and visitors have not been confined to the UK. We have entertained members of chapters from all over the world and all the senior staff of the Foundation. Long may this continue.

And in 2014, with London hosting Wikimania, we can look forward to being, for at least a week, the centre of the whole wikiworld.

Thanks to the volunteers, trustees and staff that have made my job so interesting.

It’s impossible to summarise a year in a mere 20 pages. So much has happened, so many projects completed, begun and discussed. So much volunteer time and effort has been put into sharing the sum total of the world’s knowledge with every human being on the planet.

So this, our review of 2012-13, is intended to provide a series of snapshots taken throughout the year, covering the whole range of the work Wikimedia UK does. Some projects you might already know, or even have taken part in - others you may be reading about for the first time.

There’s plenty of information about two core areas of our work, where we bring Wikipedia together with people in education and the GLAM sector (galleries, libraries, archives and museums). There are some excellent case studies from the past year, including our EduWiki conference, Wikipedia Takes Coventry and our Wikimedian in Residence programme.

It’s important to share details of other things, too. There are sections on membership and fundraising, for example, that show just how our charity’s work is paid for and how you can join us. There are also some details of the extensive review of Wikimedia UK’s governance conducted by Compass Partnership last November, which has produced valuable recommendations about how Wikimedia UK is run in future.

Most importantly, this review offers an opportunity to highlight the fundamental importance of our volunteers. The Wikimedia movement is based on the collaborative effort of tens of thousands of volunteers worldwide, united by a shared passion for the world’s knowledge. All of Wikimedia UK’s projects depend on our volunteers, and whatever your role has been over the last year, thank you.

I hope you enjoy the review.

“All of Wikimedia UK’s projects depend on our volunteers, and whatever your role has been over the last year, thank you.”
Hasina Khatun
“Any aliens watching the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Coventry, UK on that Saturday morning in September would have noted ‘observed dress code: denim jeans’. Undaunted by finding myself in a room full of people mostly around half my age, but glad of that last minute decision to don denim jeans, I adopted the other prevailing attribute, a purposeful expression, and set off happily with my companions into the characterful old streets of the city centre to photograph its heritage buildings, as they glowed in the late-summer sunshine.

“What better way can there be to see and to learn the beauty of an old city than to wander round in search of photographic inspiration, an activity that can be almost a meditation.

An impressive array of equipment in use by many of the participants bore testament to the seriousness of this concerted quest to provide images for Wikipedia, and hinted at the high standards that would be on show later. When I reached the intensely moving Reconciliation sculpture in the ruins of the old cathedral I slowly circled it several times to find the exact position that I needed. I wasn’t consciously thinking about it, just feeling, until I simply pressed the button. I’d had an odd sensation that the two figures were real and that I needed to respect their privacy. To my great surprise and pleasure this photo won a prize that day.

“I would just like to thank everyone at Wikimedia for welcoming me and helping me throughout my time here. I have learnt a lot from each member of staff and am humbled by how genuinely nice and patient they have been with me.”

Wikimedia UK intern Hasina Khatun

“I am old enough to hold a senior railcard. I am a Wikipedian.”

- Wikipedia Takes Coventry participant

“Thank you for existing!”
Anonymous donor

“If you’re serious about ensuring public engagement in your research then you need to make damn sure your work can be incorporated into Wikipedia. Wikipedia is the most important engagement channel for your research. It’s the top search result for most factual web searches, is the first port of call for most people looking for high quality information and has the sixth highest [I was looking at Alexa yesterday] traffic of any site on the web.

That’s tens of millions of people potentially looking at high quality information derived from your work, and if just a tiny fraction follow a link through to your paper that’s still potentially thousands of people, thousands of interested people, who would otherwise have never seen it.”

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MEMBERSHIP

“The charity is keen to support more opportunities for members to meet face to face and participate directly in debating both the future of the chapter and how members coordinate and stay in touch.”

Wikimedia UK is underpinned by a charitable company which is guided by our membership. We welcome membership applications from anyone interested.

Anyone wishing to join the charity can do so by filling out a form that promises if the company is dissolved they accept joint liability (up to £1) with other members, and agree to their name and address being recorded publicly on the register of members. The fee is a flat rate of £5, and when approved as a member by the board, members are eligible to apply for micro-grants, receive regular newsletter updates and have full voting rights in terms of the Charity’s business.

In May 2012, members demonstrated the importance of those voting rights by supporting resolutions brought at our Annual General Meeting. These changed the Charity’s name formally from Wiki UK Ltd to Wikimedia UK and updated our Articles of Association, which makes possible our registration as a Charity in Scotland, and increasing the term of serving members of the Board of Trustees from one to two years - and in April this year further resolutions enabled a larger Board and co-opting to cover skills-gaps.

Over the course of the year membership numbers fell slightly, but showed a small and steady increase over the second half of 2012, supported by efforts to increase both member retention and recruitment, particularly from within the UK editing community. In October 2012, the chapter conducted its first membership survey and, based on the results, developed a proposed strategy for recruiting members on a regional basis, tied to meetups and events. In January 2013 the first monthly members’ newsletter was distributed via email, featuring articles from Trustees and members of staff, providing updates on local meetups and news of members’ microgrant-funded work.

Looking forward, the charity is keen to support more opportunities for members to meet face to face and participate directly in debating both the future of the Chapter and how members coordinate and stay in touch. We will be supporting members to help write and distribute the membership newsletter directly, developing an online ‘welcome pack’ for new members, and work to increase the size of our membership in a sustained and permanent way.

FUNDRAISING

“We thank all of our donors for their generosity, without which we would not be able to work towards our goal of sharing the sum total of all human knowledge with every single person on the planet, for free.”

In 2011 Wikimedia UK directly ran the annual fundraiser, with the Chapter processing around £1 million in donations made by readers in the UK, and making a grant of half of the money we raised to the Wikimedia Foundation that hosts the servers and invests in the development of projects like Wikipedia.

In 2012 the Wikimedia Foundation ran the annual fundraiser for UK readers instead - the response was amazing with over £1.3 million being raised from UK donations in around three weeks. A portion of these funds will be granted to Wikimedia UK in the 2013-14 financial year. Alongside this, in 2012 donors continued to demonstrate their commitment to the Wikimedia mission and the work of Wikimedia UK by giving over £400,000 in direct donations separate from the money raised in the annual fundraiser.

Donations made directly to the UK chapter also attract gift aid, and this continues to be a significant additional stream of income as donors declare their gifts eligible. Regular gifts from donors who made the commitment to give little and often across the year to support the chapter in a sustainable way in the long term.

In 2013 the chapter will work to keep donors more regularly informed about the impact of their gifts, encourage more donors to make a valid gift aid declaration, and highlight the opportunities for regular giving and major gifts. Our commitment is to continue to ensure donors know their generosity is delivering an impactful programme, and benefiting the global Wikimedia mission.

We thank all of our donors for their generosity, without which we would not be able to work towards our goal of sharing the sum total of all human knowledge with every single person on the planet, for free.
Wikipedia Takes Coventry took place on 1 September as part of an ongoing relationship with Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Coventry. Delivered by our volunteers Rock drum and Harry Mitchell and supported by the office, this was the first time a “Wikipedia Takes...” event, in which participants take photographs of specific locations in a town or city, had been held in the UK.

The main purpose of the event was to get good-quality freely-licensed photographs of important and historic buildings in Coventry (of which there is a surprisingly large number) for use on Wikipedia and elsewhere, but also to teach people about Coventry’s long and varied history.

Advertisements for the event went out to Coventry secondary schools and a large number of local photography clubs. The team also worked with Visit Coventry and Warwickshire to promote the event. Despite initial anxieties about too few people coming, the day before the event there were around 60 people signed up, with promise of more. A more manageable 50-something turned up on the day, which was about physical and organisational capacity.

Thanks to in-kind donations, the final budget for the event stood at a little over £300 (from which there was even an underspend - events like this don’t have to be expensive!). The main paid-for items were prizes and refreshments for participants from the café.

During the day, goody bags were prepared for those taking part with materials to do with Wikimedia and The Herbert and also some merchandise. These materials were useful on the day, and also included information on contributing to Wikimedia projects after the event.

After the photography came the uploading. Using the Toolserver specially designed for this type of project and a designated IT suite, over 2,000 images were uploaded by those taking part – a remarkable achievement. The number of photos speaks for itself, but a big part of the event was the stories: it’s about the community. It’s about the IKEA manager who let 4 participants round the back of the kitchen to take a photo of the Coventry skyline. It’s about the families who participated in the event with their children and the people who came from miles away.

“Thank you all for [...] Wikipedia Takes Coventry, we enjoyed it very much and it was great to be back out as a family doing something creative! It’s been a while.”

Event participant

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Event participant
Wikimedia UK can deliver a real, lasting, positive impact in the realm of education. Obviously much of our work has a broad educational theme but we delivered a number of specific activities in this field in 2012-13. In 2013-14 we will continue to broaden our activity and delivery.

The highest profile educational project we worked on in 2012 was our EduWiki conference which took place at the University of Leicester in September. The event brought together Wikimedians, academics and technologists to look at Wikipedia, Wikiversity and related projects, not in terms of educational resources, but educational practice, including collaboration, open review, and global participation. It was a chance to talk about innovative work in classrooms, institutions and online communities, and shape the future of Wikimedia UK’s work in this area. Delegates explored the ways in which open educational projects can support innovative education. We discussed the Wikipedia Education Program (in which university students improve Wikipedia articles for course credit), learned from universities where the program is already embedded, exploring the educational opportunities and drawing lessons from the experience so far.

Another key piece of work was the development of an online Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The VLE has been created in order to support learning and training on topics related to Wikipedia. There has been substantial progress on the population of the VLE with course content and we expect the VLE to be released for use later in 2013. This will make it much easier for people to learn to interact with Wikimedia projects in a much more structured way that the learner can manage themselves.

A project related to this has been our “Train the Trainers” programme, specifically created to provide professional level training, giving Wikimedia UK volunteers the skills and confidence to go to institutions and deliver training to people new to editing Wikipedia and other Wikimedia projects. This is a sustainable way of ensuring that we always have a bank of trained trainers to call on when there is interest from groups or institutions to run a Wikipedia workshop.

We have found that student societies are an excellent way to reach out and improve understanding and participation of students related to our projects. In 2012 we supported Freshers’ Fairs at both Imperial College and Cambridge University. We are keen to extend this in 2013 so please get in touch if you’d like some support in establishing a society at your university.

In related work, we’ve recently embarked on a joint project with Demos and Digital Disruption with a focus on wiki literacy, critical thinking and digital fluency among young people in education. The project will assess these skills among both learners and educators and will utilise our projects to implement a programme of open educational resources (based on Wikimedia projects) to improve these skills.

To support our work in this area we have established an Education Committee which reports to the WMUK Board. Over 2013-14 the Committee will become more involved in helping to shape and progress our work in education.

“I’m very keen to see Wikimedia UK resources engaged appropriately across higher education. I’d also like to ensure that we provide appropriate support for the broader education sector, including school-age children, as well as those in lifelong learning environments and participants in the University of the Third Age.”

Dr Toni Sant, Wikimedia UK Education Organiser

“Not being an education provider or likely contributor to the event, I was thrilled to bits to be asked and even more thrilled to be able to attend. Leaving with increased enthusiasm towards the Wikimedia project, I have now applied to become a member and have gained just enough confidence to start contributing to articles.”

EduWiki attendee
Ada Lovelace Day first came to our attention in May 2012. It captured our imagination and we knew we had to get involved. Ada Lovelace Day is about sharing stories about inspirational women in the sciences. If a female scientist does not have an article on Wikipedia, it can be difficult to learn about her life and achievements—hence she cannot serve as a role model for others. This event was a step towards changing that, as well as encouraging more women to get involved with Wikipedia.

The Royal Society in London shared our inspiration and partnered with us for an editing event on 19 October 2012. This was an ideal match as not only does the Royal Society have a wonderful library, including rich collections of works about scientists, but is also maintaining a network of “women in science.”

The main focus of the event was to run the editing session focused on creating articles about women in science. We also hosted a panel discussion about women in science to give context to the issues of women’s participation.

To say the initiative was popular is something of an understatement—we ran out of tickets within a few hours of announcing the event! The number of participants and their curiosity and willingness to contribute to Wikipedia was extremely inspiring.

It was even more encouraging to see how communities from around the world believed in the importance of what we were doing, so much as to organise their parallel events and link with us online. There were groups in India, Russia, and the United States.

During the editathon at the Royal Society, participants created or significantly expanded 20 articles, including Mary Edwards (human computer) and Emily Williamson. This added to 14 articles that were created even before the event started, thanks to the promotion of the editathon. Many of these are now the first results in online searches. There were more than 20 editors present, most of whom were new to Wikipedia. The online participants, of which there were about 25 from the UK and abroad, added even further to the pool of created articles.

The impressive media coverage highlighted both the importance of engaging women and the coverage of “female-oriented” topics on Wikipedia. The articles included pieces in Scientific American, The Independent, The Daily Telegraph, The Guardian, The Huffington Post, BBC (online and on radio with editathon participant Dr Nathalie Petorelli) and the Signpost.

The volunteers involved in the editathon made for a unique event. Special thanks to Andrew Gray, Katie Chan, Tom Morris and everyone who joined us online.

We continue to link with groups who work on increasing female participation on topics related to science, technology, engineering and maths. If you may be interested in hosting an event, or taking part, please get in touch. And remember—there is more work to be done!
One of the benefits of Wikimedia UK membership is the right to apply for microgrants to support work that furthers our objectives. Over the last year there have been several approved microgrants ranging in value from £5 to £250. While there isn’t space to highlight them all here, we can feature some good examples.

User: HJ Mitchell applied for a microgrant to improve articles related to the military operations known as Operation Flavius and Operation Barras. The microgrant was used to buy books relating to the operations. So far, two featured articles have resulted from the microgrant and more are in the pipeline.

User: Worm That Turned has an interest in a sand bank in Cornwall called Doom Bar. He had been working on the article for some time and found a book that would provide excellent source material. His microgrant application was successful and Doom Bar is now a featured article.

Deryck Chan is a student at Cambridge University and was keen to host a stall at the university’s Freshers’ Fair to promote the Cambridge University Wikipedia Society and Wikimedia UK. His microgrant allowed this to happen, while the charity also provided plenty of branded merchandise and even better, volunteers offered their time to help staff the stall! Over 200 people showed an interest at the Fair and some have even begun attending the established Cambridge meetup.

Tom Morris is a big fan of Open Street Map, an open source, freely licensed mapping project. Tom heard about an event called Operation Cowboy, an OSM “editathon” taking place in several locations simultaneously. His microgrant allowed him to host an event at the same time to join in the global collaboration. The event was for both experienced mappers and complete newbies and has led to an increase in participation.

All members of Wikimedia UK are eligible to apply for microgrants. See pages 6 & 7 for more about membership and visit wikipedia.org.uk to learn more about applying for a microgrant.

As a part of Wikimedia UK’s remit to support and promote Wikimedia projects, it’s important that not only are we able to encourage people to participate but that they can be taught to participate effectively. This is the role of our Training the Trainers programme. After all, who better to teach people to become Wikimedians than Wikimedians themselves?

The objective of the programme is to teach volunteer Wikimedians to deliver effective training. It’s an important, and difficult, skill and one that our volunteers went about learning with gusto.

To ensure that the programme was effective we put the delivery of the programme to tender, with the winning bid coming from an external training provider, Midas Training. An accreditation process was also put in place meaning that participants had to meet a good standard to receive certification.

To date over around 30 Wikimedia UK volunteers and staff have taken part in the programme and now have the skills and confidence to deliver Wikimedia-based training on behalf of Wikimedia UK. The programme, and the trainers, continue to play an important role in extending our reach and increasing participation in our projects. It’s helped to build our capacity to deliver events and led to some excellent training opportunities for volunteers.

“Attending Training the Trainers is a great way to spend a weekend. What I enjoyed the most was learning about the different learning style each of us have, how that affects the way we deliver training, and the effect it has on receptiveness of an audience.”

Katie Chan
In September 2012, Wikimedia UK and the Wikimedia Foundation jointly commissioned a governance review. Conducted by Compass Partnership, the review was intended to help Wikimedia UK to establish good governance practices after some issues around conflicts of interest. The review took an in-depth look at our charitable governance with a view to making recommendations to improve processes and procedures. For a charity in its first year after receiving recognition from the Charity Commission the review was a very valuable process and led to a set of 50 recommendations to improve our charitable governance. The implementation of these recommendations is well under way and includes allowing for the co-option of trustees with specific skills and the establishment of various committees to oversee specific activities of the charity. Steps taken so far include the instigation of a trustee recruitment process and the establishment of a Governance Committee.

Another benefit of the governance review is the benchmark it provides for other organisations within our global movement. The review and the recommendations have been made publicly available and other Wikimedia chapters are encouraged to read the report and assess how their governance compares to the good practices it outlines.

Wikimedia UK is continuing to take proactive steps to improve and enhance its governance practices and policies and makes these steps public wherever possible. For more information about the review please visit our website.

In the past year we have seen more and more galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAMs) working with Wikimedia UK. Within the sector, the drive to share collections and information to increase the sum of human knowledge is very strong. The scope of the institutions’ involvement can be varied – many are releasing their images to Wikimedia Commons, opening their doors to show their collections to Wikimedians, hosting editing workshops.

Perhaps one of the most powerful expressions of this drive is our Wikimedian in Residence programme. This is a high level collaboration model where an in-house Wikimedian works with the staff of an institution to improve the content of Wikimedia projects, potentially making a very impactful contribution to public knowledge. This could be done in various ways, such as editing training workshops, editing events and backstage passes. The Wikimedian can also assist with helping the institution understand the general benefits of open culture and work on long lasting collaboration between Wikimedia UK and the GLAM.

2012-13 saw a year-long residency at the British Library, funded by AHRC – the first time such a project has secured public funding. Andrew Gray, the Wikimedian, has been working tirelessly on a Wikimedian projects training projects training programme, reaching four hundred people from dozens of institutions across the country. He has also been reviewing all British Library content on Wikipedia, and been working with curators and the copyright group to identify suitable collections that can be released openly. He has also helped the British Library host a World War I editathon where Jisc and Wikimedia UK were involved. This successful event of about 30 attendees focused on improving Wikipedia articles related to the conflict. This prompted a number of institutions to reach out to us about future collaboration, and we are looking to run a high profile education project with Jisc in 2013.

In 2013-14 we will be building on these strong foundations and running many partnerships with prestigious cultural institutions. We will have Wikimedians in residence at Natural History Museum & Science Museum, Tyne and Wear Archives & Museums, and National Library of Scotland (our first ever major partnership with a Scottish Institution). The scope for outreach, exploring the collections and using GLAMs’ knowledge is very inspiring.
2013-14 is a very important year for the open knowledge movement in general and for Wikimedia UK in particular. The charity has an extensive activity plan in place and will be working very hard, led by volunteers, to deliver a programme that is ambitious, positive and makes a valuable contribution to our movement, both at home and abroad.

The most important aspect of our activity is going to be supporting the volunteers that currently work with the charity and recruiting lots of new volunteers. Key to this is making sure that our programme is compelling to our community and offers exciting opportunities to lead projects for the charity to help further its objectives.

Wiki Loves Monuments this summer is an excellent opportunity to encourage lots of new contributors to Wikimedia Commons. The world’s largest international photography competition is a simple and accessible way to get involved. We’re excited to be taking part for the first time in 2013.

On the subject of excitement, we’re thrilled that Wikimania, the annual conference of Wikimedians, is taking place in London in 2014. The charity is looking forward to helping the volunteer bid team, who secured the conference for the UK, in the delivery of the event. For the first time, Wikimania in London will feature a large-scale outreach element to encourage more people to become Wikimedians.

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The image on the front cover shows a detail from Man’s Struggle, a piece of artwork in Coventry city centre. The photo won first prize in the Wikipedia Takes Coventry competition and was taken by Team Mattley (CC-BY-SA 3.0)

Review created by the volunteers, trustees and staff of Wikimedia UK.

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