

Beyond the meat grinder

building better new editor experiences through
research and dialogue



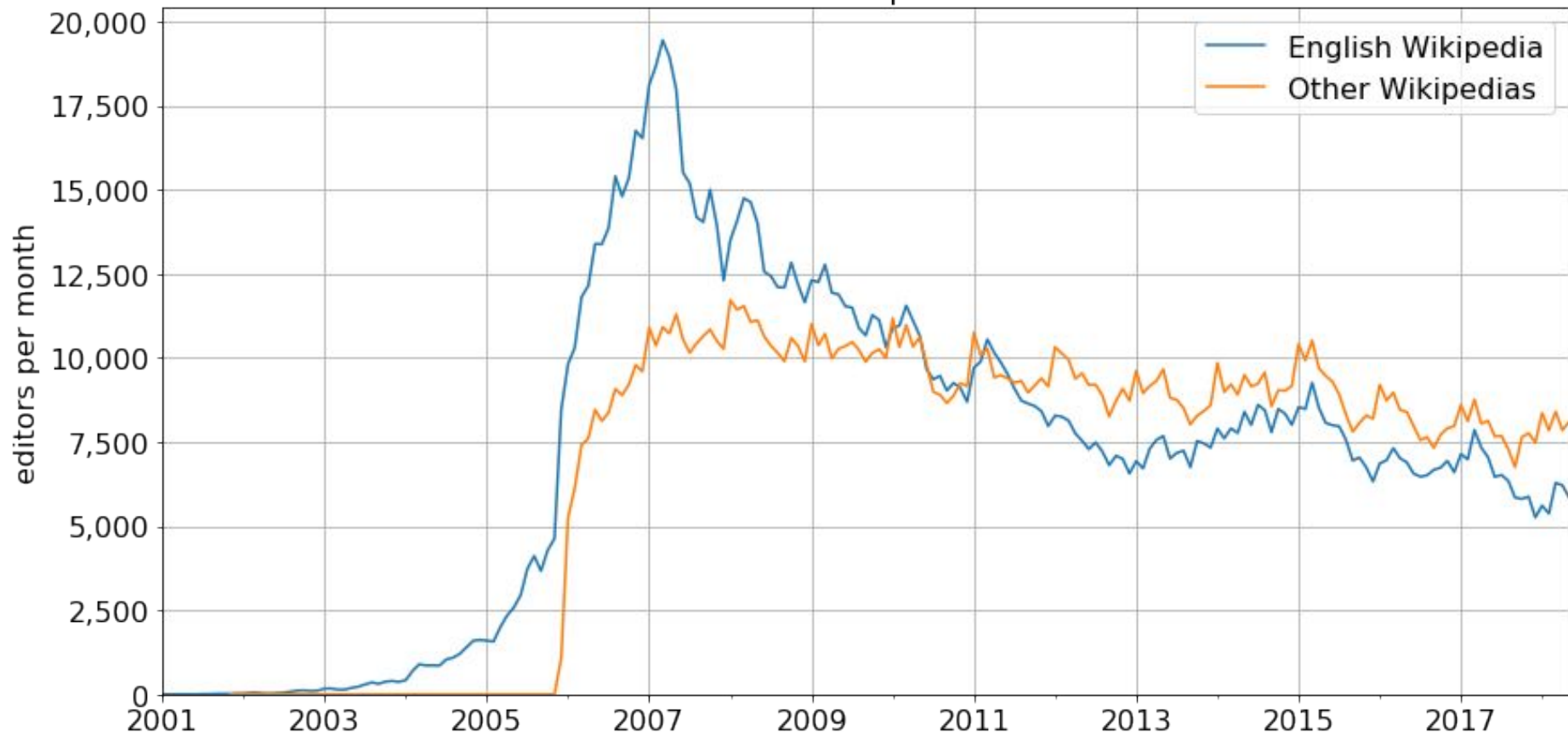
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The meat grinder, explained



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new active Wikipedia editors



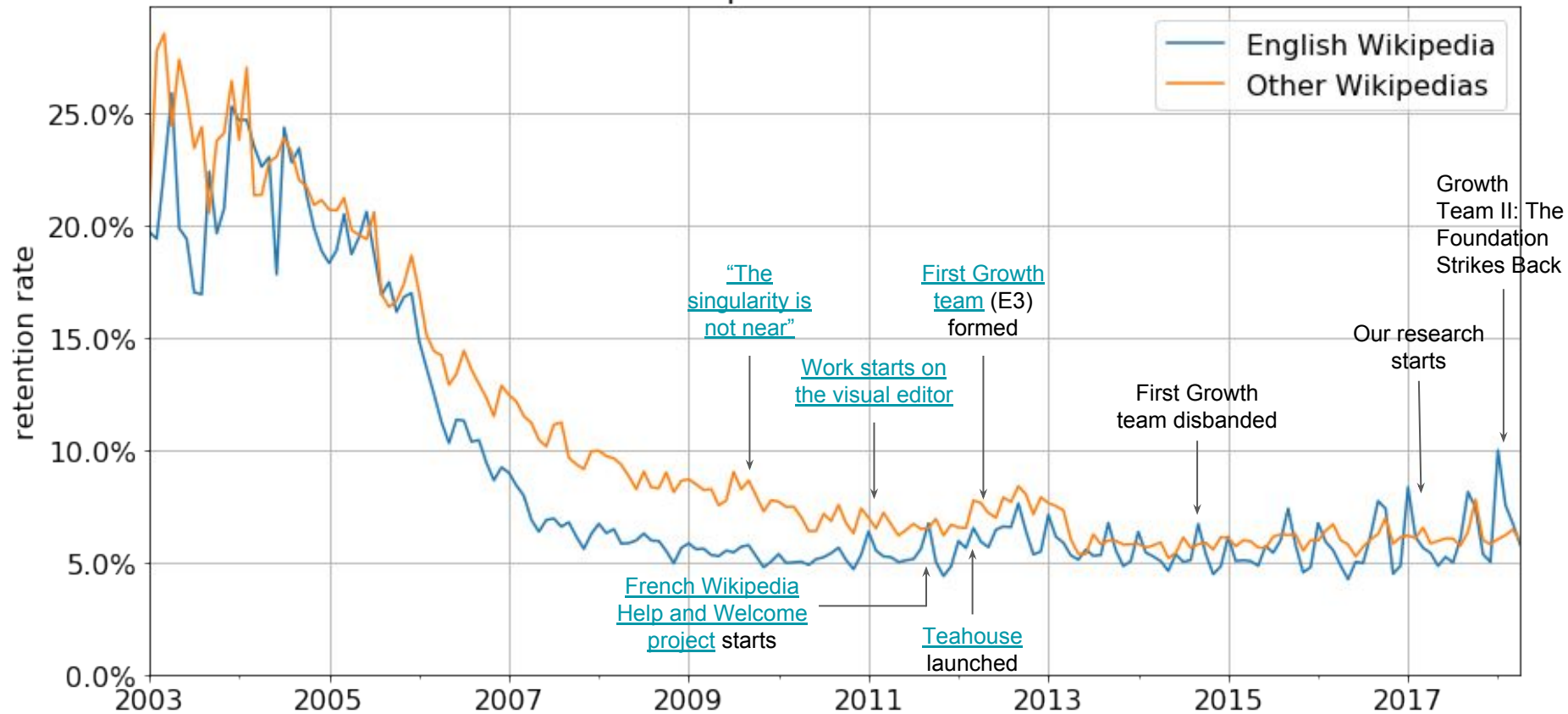
new Wikipedia editor retention





**94% of new editors
don't come back.**

new Wikipedia editor retention



The context of our research



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Goal

**Retain more new editors
in midsize Wikipedias**



Why?

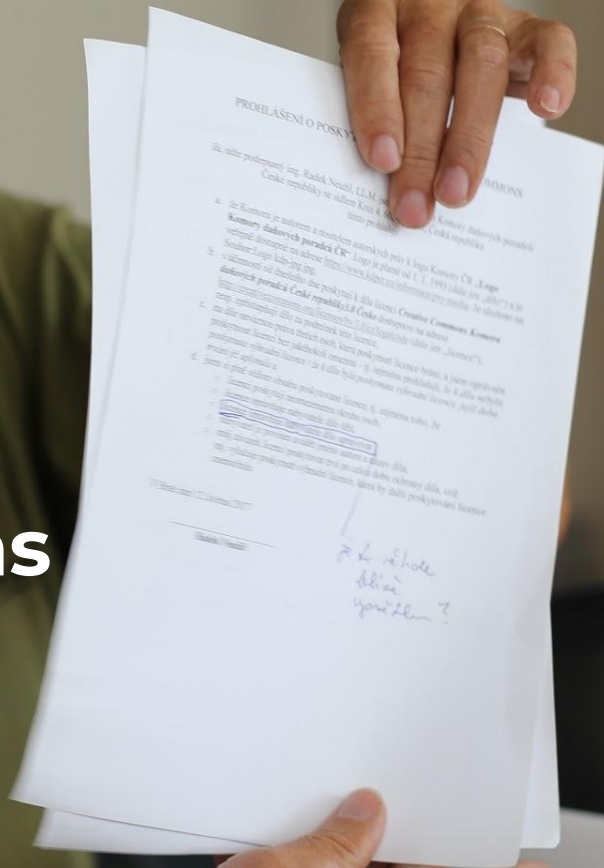
**To find out, we learned about new editors
from new editors**





We met Lenka in her local public library where she spends a lot of time.

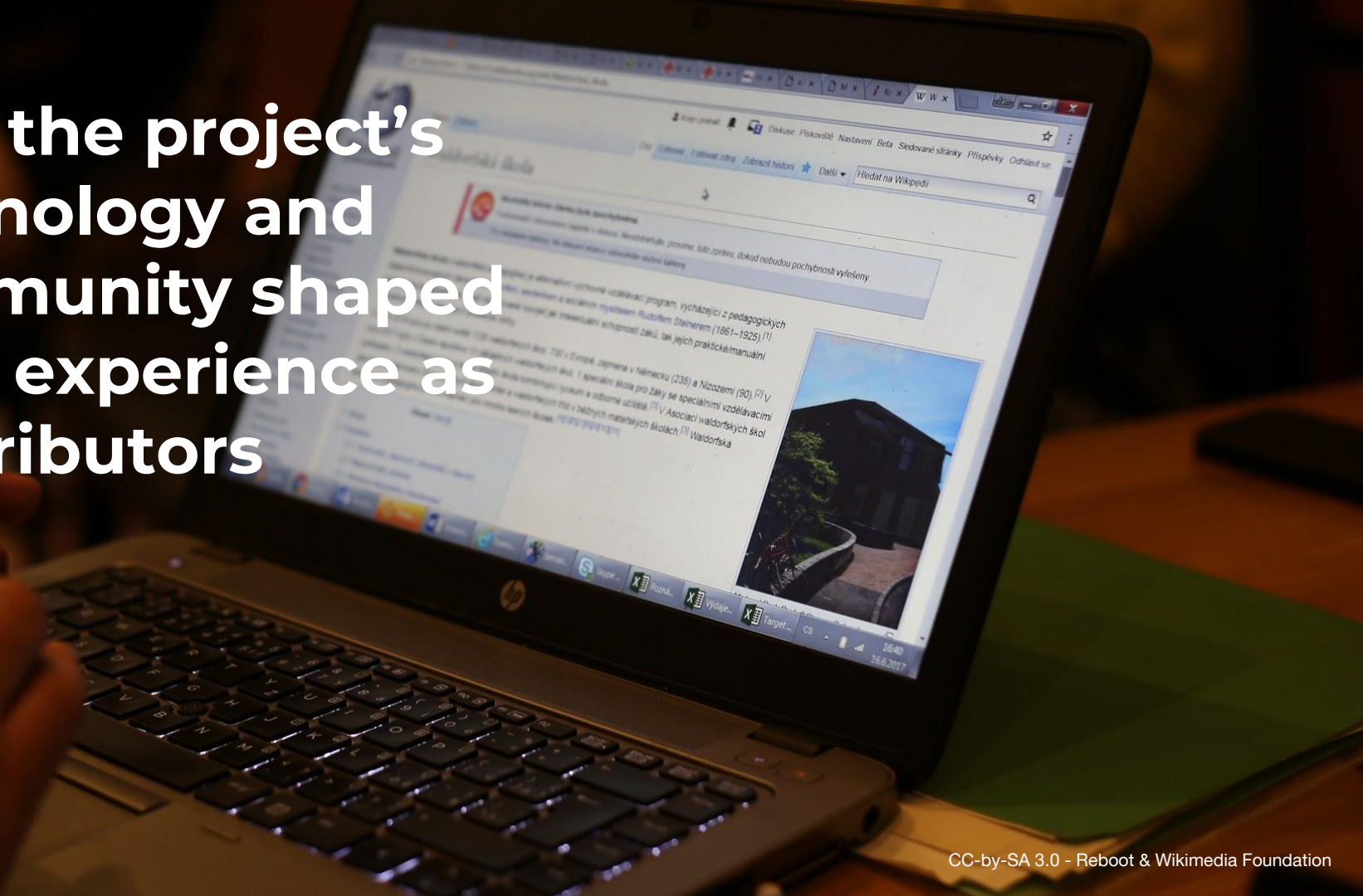
**Their motivations
and behaviors.**



Their engagement with Wikipedia



How the project's technology and community shaped their experience as contributors



Eleven findings



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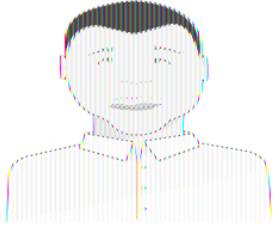
9	Editing processes and the mechanisms that support them are not intuitive or discoverable , making it difficult for new editors to learn and progress.	33	3	2	1	2		2	2	2	4	4		2	1	
8	New editors' greatest challenges are not technical but conceptual. They struggle to learn Wikipedia's policies and how to shape content "the Wikipedia way".	23	4		3	1	1		4		3	2		3	2	4
7	Successful editors tend to build their 'contribution skills' through iterative, progressive learning in safe spaces where the stakes are lower.	22		3			3		1		1	3	4	4	3	1
6	New editors go outside Wikipedia for help because they prefer targeted, and sometimes personal, support.	16		1					1				1			
5	Wikipedia's prominence is both its greatest strength and greatest weakness for attracting new editors.	11	1		2			1								
4	The complexity and separation of how Wikipedia is made , and the complexity behind it, make it difficult to convert new editors to experienced editors.	9														
3	The way in which feedback is framed is critical to whether it encourages new editors to continue the Wikipedia journey or disempowers and discourages them from further contributions.	9								3			2			3
2	People edit Wikipedia for diverse reasons , most of which serve purposes beyond editing Wikipedia.	8				3				4		1				
1	People must be confident in their content knowledge to edit Wikipedia.	8					2	3								2
0	Inspiring, trusted, and well-connected intermediaries are a critical asset in recruiting and supporting new editors.	6				4			3				3		4	
9	Many editors see the Korean and Czech Wikipedia as limited , and seamlessly supplement their information with more	5	2				4	4								

Prioritizing findings

New editors have diverse motivations



Reactive Cor
Josef



Audience B
Gong-Yoo



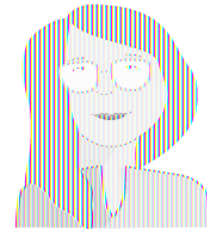
Box Checker
Mina



Joiner-Inne
Helena



Knowledge SI
Janko



Social Change
Jae-Hee

Finding 1

Basic info

Name
Languages spoken
Education
Technology used

Narrative

Background
Tech habits
Perceptions of Wikipedia



Social Changer
Jae-Hee

AGE: 27 years old
EDUCATION: University
LOCATION: Seoul, South Korea
LANGUAGES: Korean (fluent), Japanese (proficient), English (proficient)
OCCUPATION: Freelance graphic designer

Technology comfort level: High
Writing comfort level: High

Macbook Pro
PRIMARY USE: Graphic design work, maintaining her website, writing, editing Wikipedia

iPad
PRIMARY USE: Reading, looking for inspiration for her work, and quick internet browsing when she's not at home

iPhone 6S
PRIMARY USE: Calling, messaging friends on Kakao Talk, Twitter

Background

Jae-Hee graduated from university two years ago and currently works as a freelance graphic designer. She lives in the suburbs of Seoul, with her parents and younger sister. In her spare time, she works on her digital art and photography, which she publishes on her personal website, through WordPress. She loves reading, particularly fantasy and science fiction stories, in both Korean and

Japanese. While in university, she took a class on design and sustainability and became interested in environmental issues. Now she volunteers for an environmental advocacy non-profit which educates people about living a sustainable lifestyle, and shares similar lifestyle tips on her personal blog.

Tech Habits

She first started using a computer in grade school, and got her first smartphone in high school. She uses social media avidly, particularly Twitter to share her work and writing, and to follow other

environmental groups. She is well-known by her online username, "jigu". She learned basic HTML to run her website, and uses Adobe software for her graphic design and art.

Perceptions of Wikipedia

She first used Wikipedia in university, and then started to use it more frequently while researching fantasy literature and inspiration for her art. She mostly uses English and Japanese Wikipedia, because she often finds incorrect

translations or limited information on Korean Wikipedia. She sees Wikipedia as a formal, proper source of information, compared to other websites like Namuwiki which is more opinionated, but also more relaxed and collaborative.

Experience Goals

- To freely share her opinions and knowledge without conflict or rebuke, like she does elsewhere online

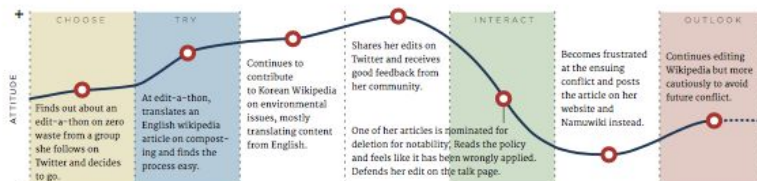
End Goals

- To raise awareness on environmental issues
- To collaborate with other environmentalists

Challenges

- Understanding Wikipedia policies like verifiability and notability. Frustrates her that she can't just write what she knows, like on her own website
- Social conflict seen and experienced on Wikipedia. Has received strongly negative responses to her edits.
- Translation takes a long time. The machine translation tool on Wikipedia only does so much, and she has to translate most of the content on her own.

Editing Journey



Comfort levels
Writing
Technology

Goals

Challenges

Editing journey



Knowledge Sharer

Yanko

AGE:
17 years old

LOCATION:
Olomouc, Czech Republic

OCCUPATION:
Student

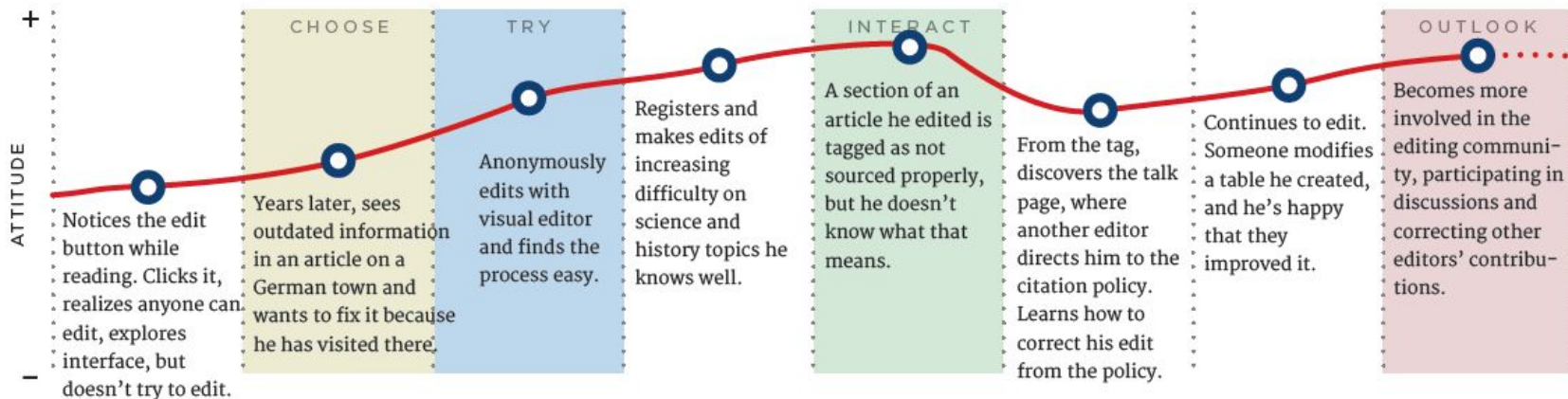
EDUCATION:
High School

LANGUAGES:
Czech (fluent)
German (conversational)
Slovak (basic)
English (basic)

Technology comfort level

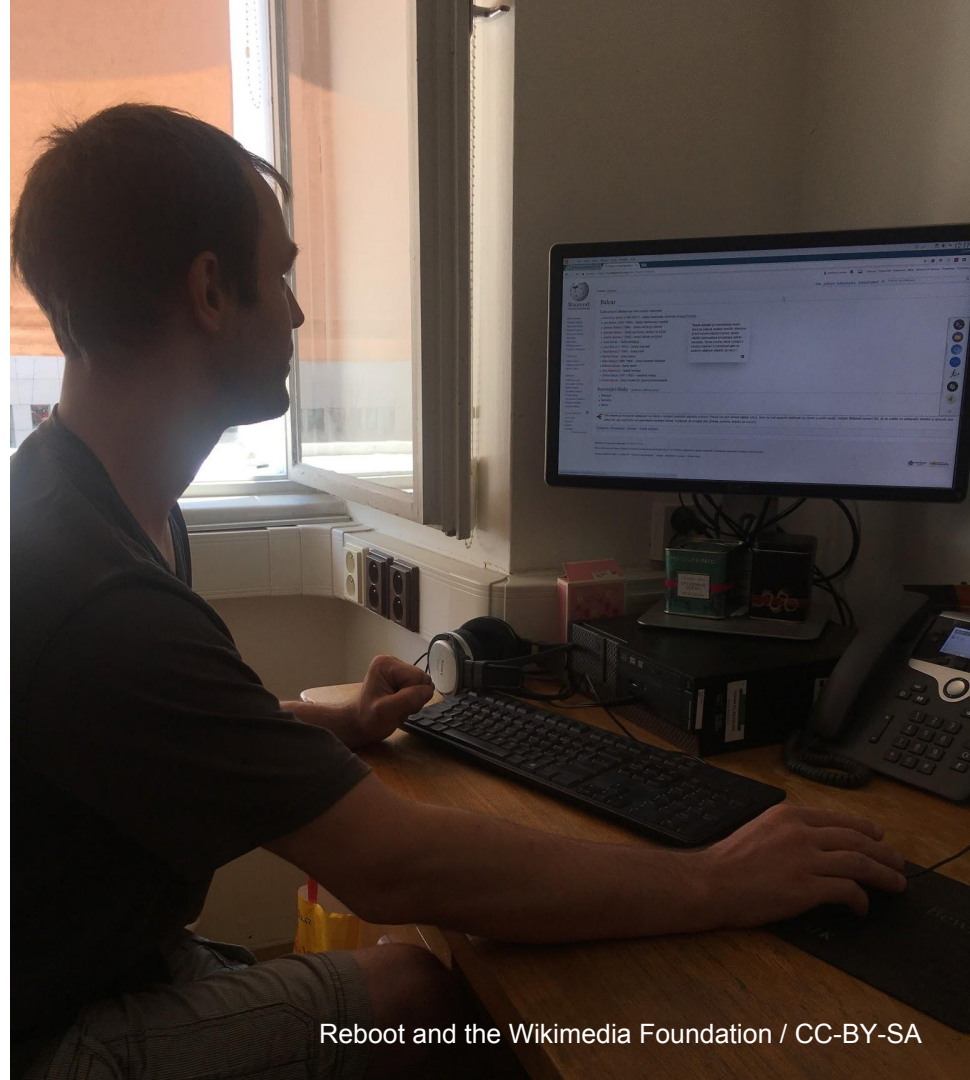


Writing comfort level



**New editors...
are confused
about how
Wikipedia
works and
separated from
its community.**

Finding 5



New editors... struggle with Wikipedia's policies.

Finding 8



Goal

Retain more new editors in midsize Wikipedias

Strategic focuses

**Conceptual
understanding
of Wikipedia**

[findings #5 and #8](#)

New editors... benefit from progressive learning.

Finding 7



**New editors...
have trouble
discovering and
easily using
editing tools.**

Finding 9



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**Conceptual
understanding
of Wikipedia**

[findings #5 and #8](#)

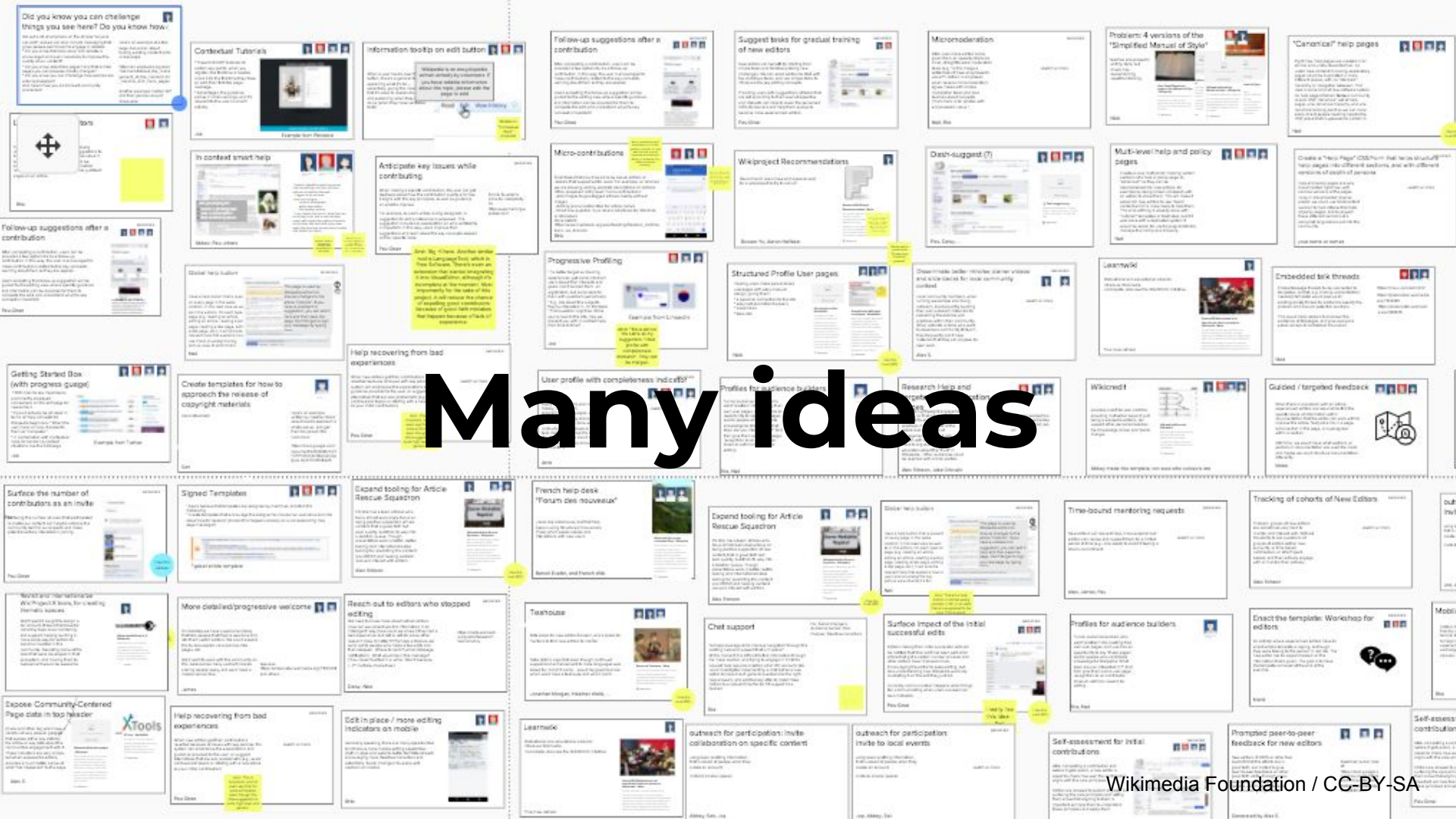
**Progressive
pathways
to editing**

[findings #7 and #9](#)

What we recommend



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Many ideas

Goal

Retain more new editors in midsize Wikipedias

Strategic focuses

**Conceptual understanding
of Wikipedia**

[findings #5 and #8](#)

**Progressive pathways
to editing**

[findings #7 and #9](#)

Tactics

**Human to human
help and
mentorship**

**In-context
help**

**Task
recommendations**



Roan Kattouw
Principal Software Engineer



Stephane Bisson
Senior Software Engineer (Contractor)



Kosta Harlan
Senior Software Engineer



Jazmin Tanner, Program Manager



Elena Tonkovidova
QA Engineer



Benoît Evellin
Community Relations
Specialist (Contractor)



Marshall Miller
Product Manager, Growth



Ryan Kaldari
Director of Engineering

What you can do



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**Help us build
better help**



www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Growth

A young boy and girl in school uniforms are standing in a sun-dappled forest, each holding and reading a book. The scene is peaceful and educational, with sunlight filtering through the trees and illuminating the children and the grass around them.

**Read and share the
report**

A photograph of two children, a boy and a girl, standing in a lush green forest. They are both wearing white short-sleeved shirts and dark shorts or skirts. The boy is on the left, holding a pink book, and the girl is on the right, holding a blue book. They are both looking down at their books. The background is a dense forest with sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a soft, hazy atmosphere. The text is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

[www.mediawiki.org/wiki/
New_Editor_Experiences](http://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/New_Editor_Experiences)

Try methods like these



Listen and learn!



Questions?



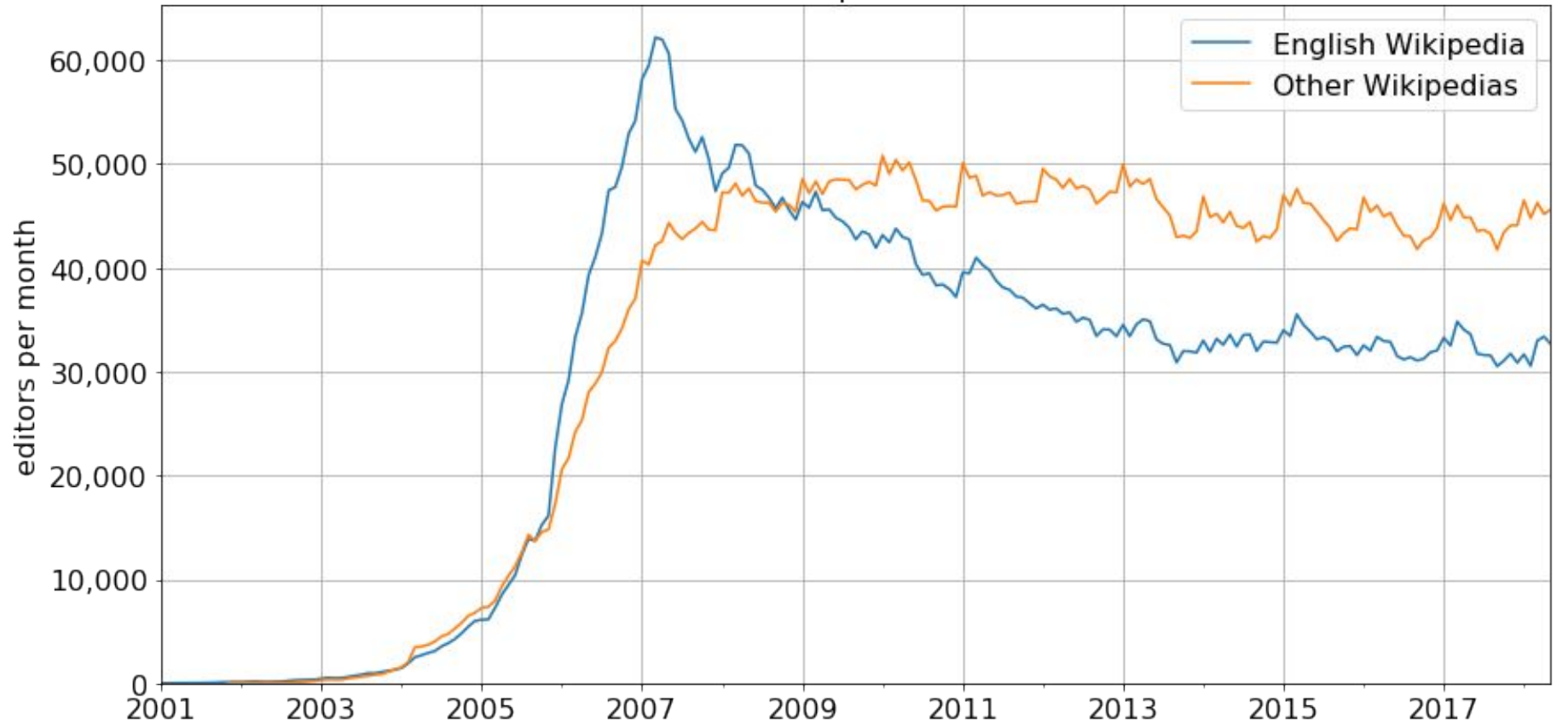
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Appendix

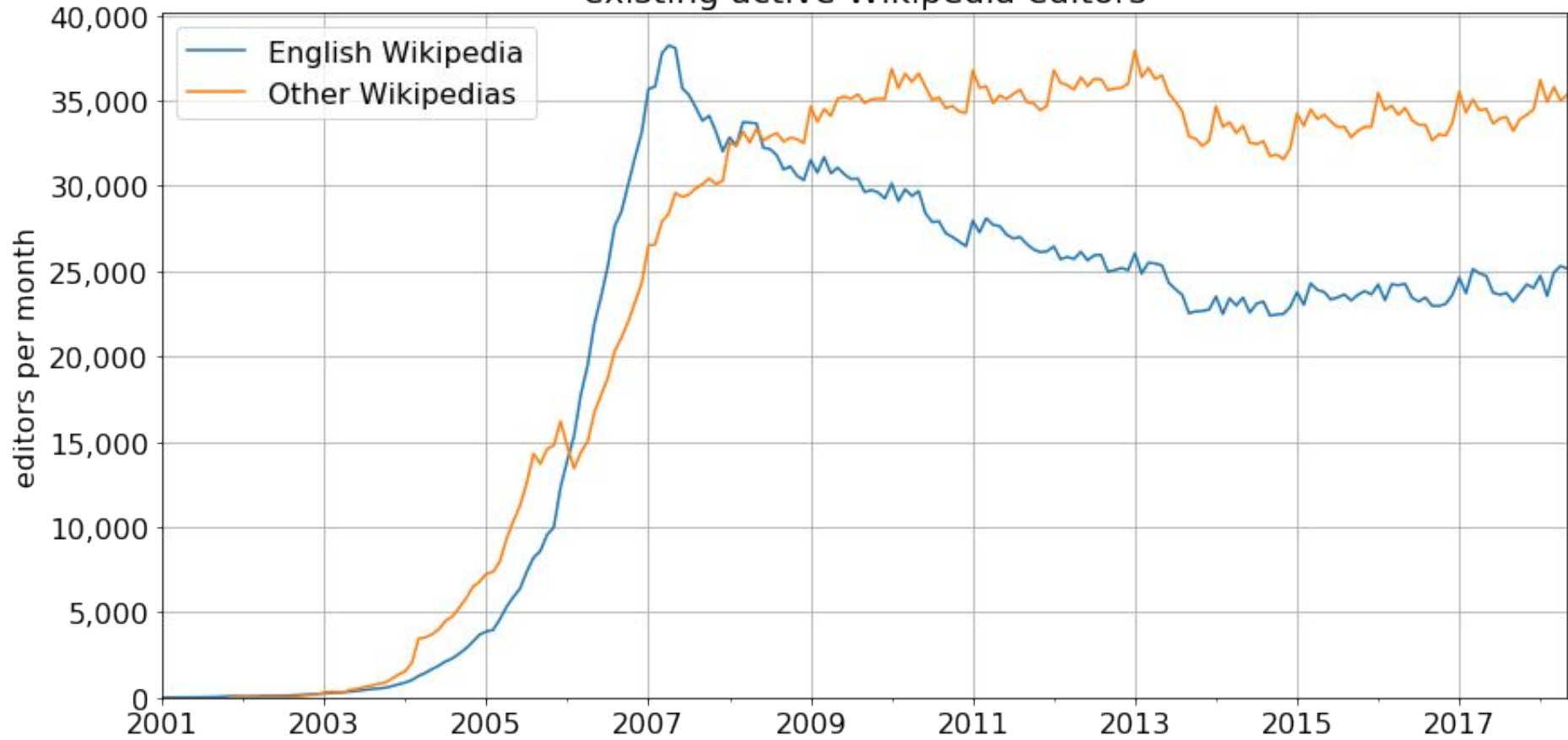


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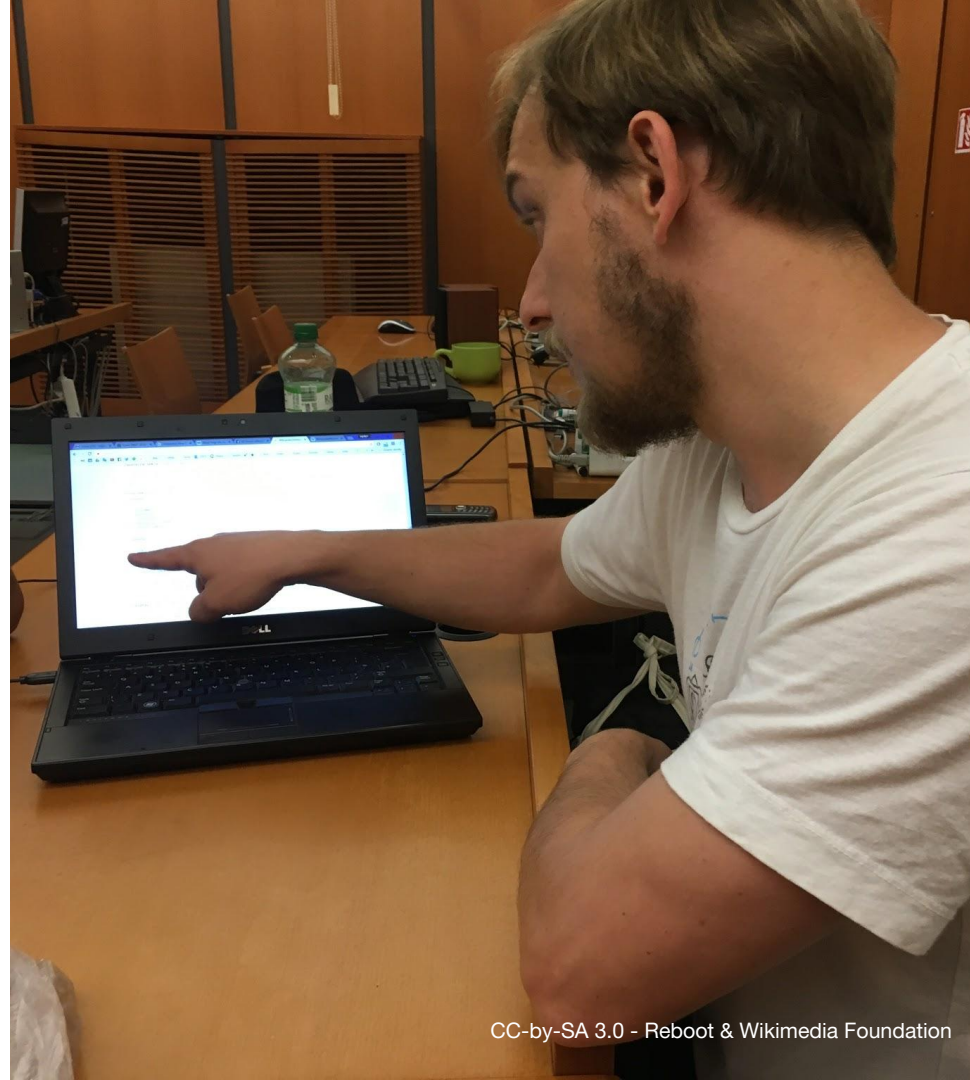
active Wikipedia editors



existing active Wikipedia editors



Inspiring, trusted, and well connected intermediaries are a critical asset in recruiting and supporting new editors.



Many editors see Korean/Czech Wikipedia as limited, and seamlessly supplement its information with other sources.



People must be confident in their content knowledge to edit Wikipedia.

Finding 6



**New editors go outside
Wikipedia for help
because they prefer
targeted and
sometimes
personal, support.**

Finding 10



**New editors...
are strongly
affected by the
tone of the
feedback they
receive.**

Finding 11

