WMF Design Strategy **040122**

IP Editing in Bengali Wikipedia

HUREO USER RESEARCH COMPANY

WIKIMEDIA FOUNDATION

IP editing **IP editing in India** **related findings**

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IP editing in Bengali Wikipedia: Community open to “anonymous” edits

The Bengali editorial community report being open minded about IP edits and IP editors. The Bangladeshi Bengali editors that participated in the study presented the opinion that the content of the edit is important rather than the nature of the edit (IP or non IP).

‘Working on controversial topics’ ranks higher than ‘wanting to commit vandalism’ in the survey responses demonstrating the editors' beliefs as to the motivations of IP editors. There is some overlap between topics that are vandalized and constructively edited, for example, religious articles or articles about political figures. Editors who have concerns about government surveillance use IP editing and so do vandals who want to cause destruction.

Another major reason for IP editing is unawareness about the importance of logging in, where editors believe that many IP editors simply forget to check if they are logged in while making an edit. While the security risks of IP editing are known to editors, they feel that this group of IP editors may not be aware and hence must be educated about logging in while editing.

Interviewed editors found it difficult to prioritize IP editors' motivations which also reflects in the survey. However, all editors are of the opinion that regardless of the motivations, no one should be forced to log in to edit Wikipedia.

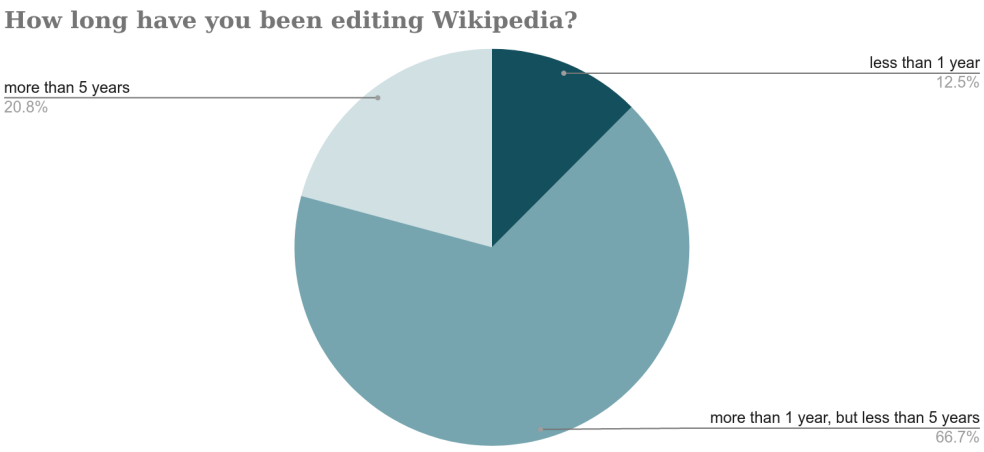
Introduction to Bengali editors

All interview respondents are editors of Bengali Wikipedia

All respondents are a part of the Bangladeshi Bengali Wiki community. Most of them discovered editing on Wikipedia when they corrected a mistake they noticed while casually browsing an article. A few editors discovered that they could edit through other channels — for example, through a local Wiki club in their college. They continued to edit as they felt a need to contribute to their language Wiki, for example, by editing, patrolling or teaching Wiki syntax to new editors.

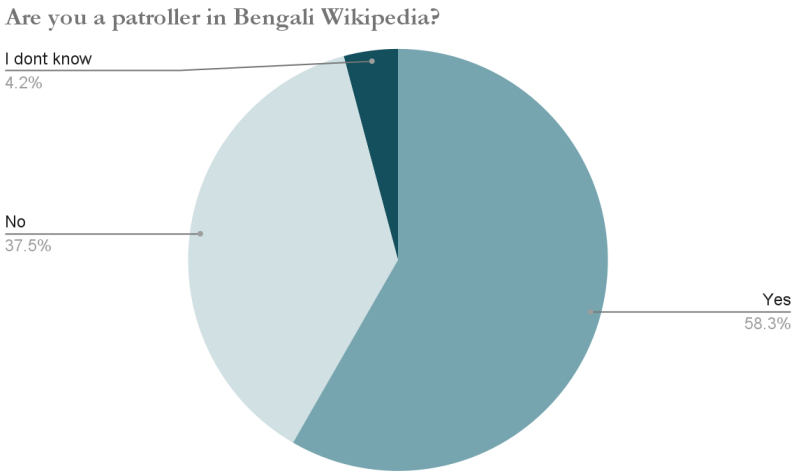
Some edit English Wiki, and a few edit Assamese, Santhali, Vishnupriya and Manipuri Wikis too. Few editors also work on Wikicommons and Wikidata as well.

Most editors have about 1 to 5 years of experience with editing Bengali Wikipedia.



Most editors are patrollers of Bengali Wikipedia

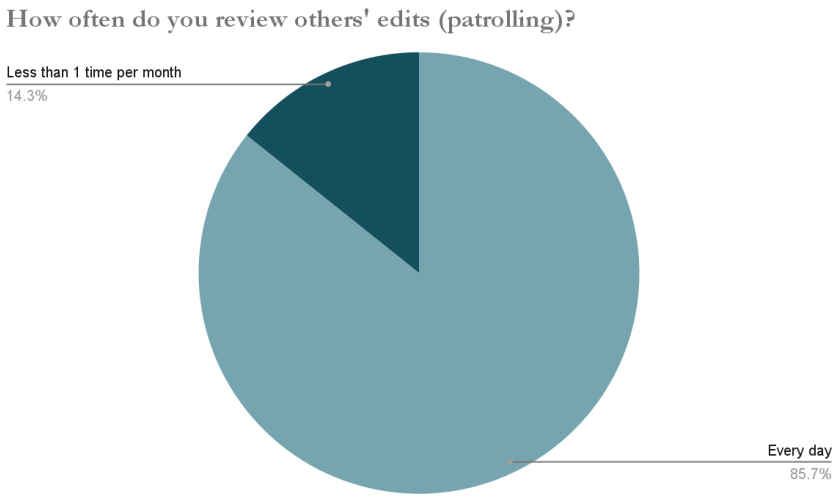
Editors started patrolling for various reasons. Some wanted to protect the existing content on Bengali Wikipedia and also reduce vandalism. A few also became patrollers because they liked the feeling of working collaboratively with other editors on improving Bengali Wiki. A few were interested in patrolling as their edits had got rejected and they were curious about the process.



It took a lot of time from an editor to becoming a patroller. An experienced editor can become a patroller, so once the community notices that I am becoming a good editor, I get the support or vote, which is more than 60%; that's when I can become a patroller. – interview participant

Editors patrol Wikipedia everyday using the recent changes option from the menu

Bengali Wikipedia editors review edits almost everyday or even multiple times a day. They look at the recent changes from the menu while patrolling and use the filters available to find IP edits and edits from new editors.



Bengali Wikipedia editors use tools like Global Rollback Access to patrol

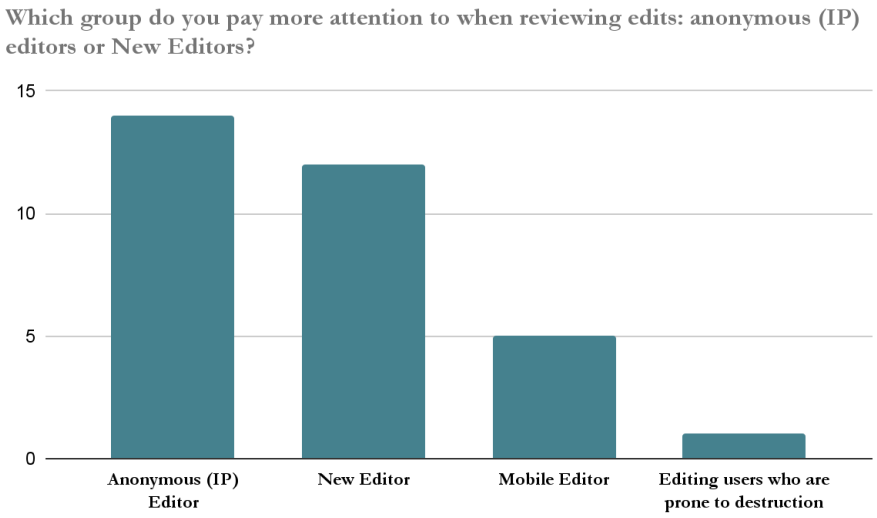
Editors with Global Rollback Access use it to patrol while the editors without it use Javascript. A few editors have used tools like Twinkle, User Script, and SWViewer.

In Bengali Wikipedia, there is a section called recent pages. I can look at real-time edits, and I use a filter that filters all the IP edits and new editors; I remove the experienced editors from that filter and only look at the IP edits

and new edits. That's when I look at what real-time changes they have made, and I focus on them, and there is a web app called SWviewer where I can look at multiple domains, the real-time edits. – interview participant

While patrolling, editors pay attention to IP editors and new editors to check for vandalism or any errors in syntax

Editors use the filter option to search for edits made by IP editors and new editors. This is reflected in the survey responses; Anonymous editors and new editors are paid the most attention.



Most editors focus on IP editors to catch vandalism and also focus on new editors as they don't know how to edit Wikipedia.

For patrolling- I work on topics related to religion as there is a lot of vandalism in these pages. A lot of times, after a person's name there is a phrase added called 'samaj rakshaks' and according to Wikipedia norms, it

should not be added. In such cases, I have to work on removing such edits. And when there is a topic that becomes viral, there is a lot of vandalism on that topic, and I have to specifically focus on such topics as there are a lot of uses of cuss words and slang in such cases. – interview participant on patrolling for vandalism

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Especially I focus on new editors because new editors often don't understand the Wiki formatting; few editors try to act as if they are writing in the newspaper, or a magazine, or a journal. They forget to do referencing; often, the new editors are not able to place media files, properly formatted in Wikipedia, they are not able to place things in Wikipedia editing.. – interview participant on reviewing edits of new editors

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Article Content:

Some editors pay attention to the content of the page; whether the information is correct, and whether it's a new page or edit to an existing page.

I look at two categories while accepting or rejecting edits; I focus on wrong information; if an editor is giving wrong information, I reject it, and second is about copywriting- sometimes they are giving correct information; however they are copying from someone else, so at that time I try to rearrange and re-edit the information. – interview participant

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Specific Topics:

Editors focus on specific topics that are known to receive IP edits such as religious topics, recent events or trending topics. Some focus on recent or new topics. Some editors have no specific focus; they work on varied or multiple topics.

In Bangla Wikipedia, I focus on various things. For reviewing, I focus on any event, if there is a new event, such as events that are of public interest, there are a lot of immediate edits and new reviewers often start editing so there is misinformation so these things I delete or reject the proposal. – interview participant

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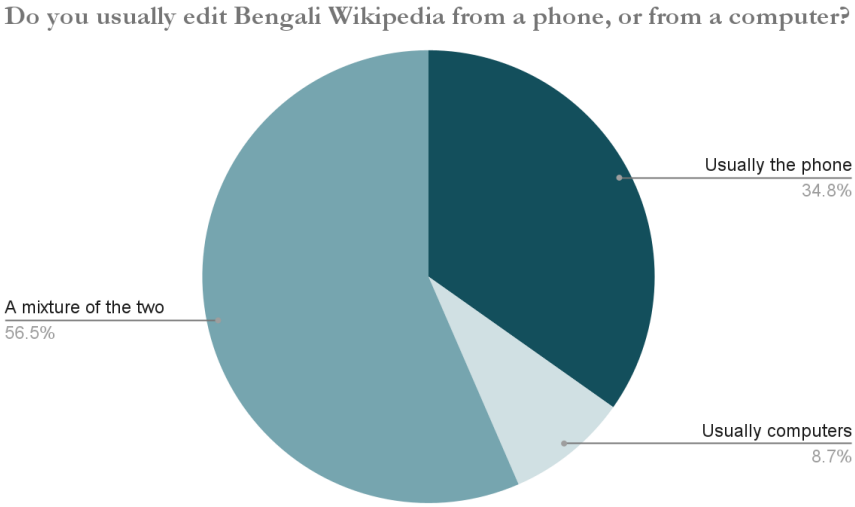
Device usage for editing depends on what device editors have access to

While the survey reports editors using both computers and phones, most of the interview respondents use their laptops for editing. This is likely due to them being experienced editors and having purchased (or being gifted) a computer for their editing work. Editors who use a laptop like it as it is easier to edit because there are many features available. Only a few of the interview respondents use a mobile phone for editing, primarily because that's the only device they have access to and they like the availability of Bengali keyboards.

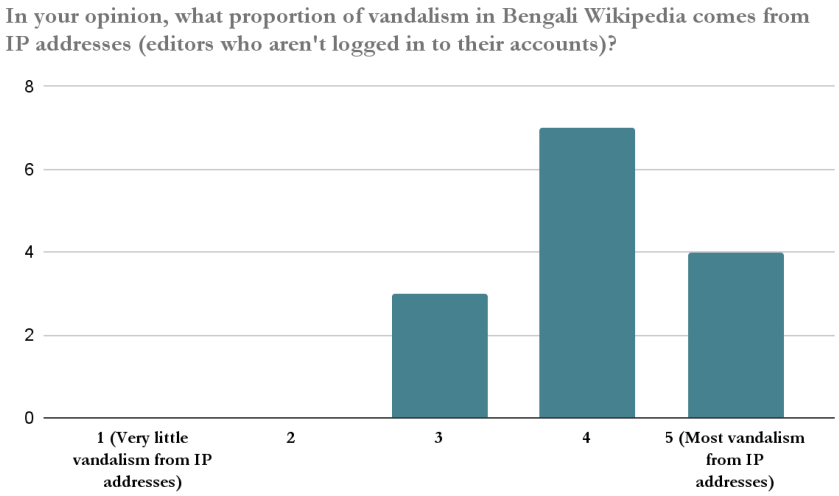


56% of the survey respondents prefer to use both phones and computers for editing

IP editing in Bengali Wikipedia

Editors are open to IP edits as long as they are not vandalism

Most survey respondents believe that vandalism forms a large part of IP edits. While that is accurate, interviewed Bengali Wikipedia editors propose a view which is seen later in the survey as well, that there is also legitimate IP editing in Wikipedia. These editors believe that IP edits can be made by a new editor unaware of Wiki process as much as vandalism.



78.5% of the survey respondents feel that the vandalism comes from editors who aren't logged in

When interviewed editors see an edit, they either accept, reject or accept with a change. This is true for both IP and non-IP edits. Editors' motivation to accept or reject an edit depends on the content of the edit. However, a few editors report that other editors may not follow this line of thinking and reject IP edits simply because they are IP edits.

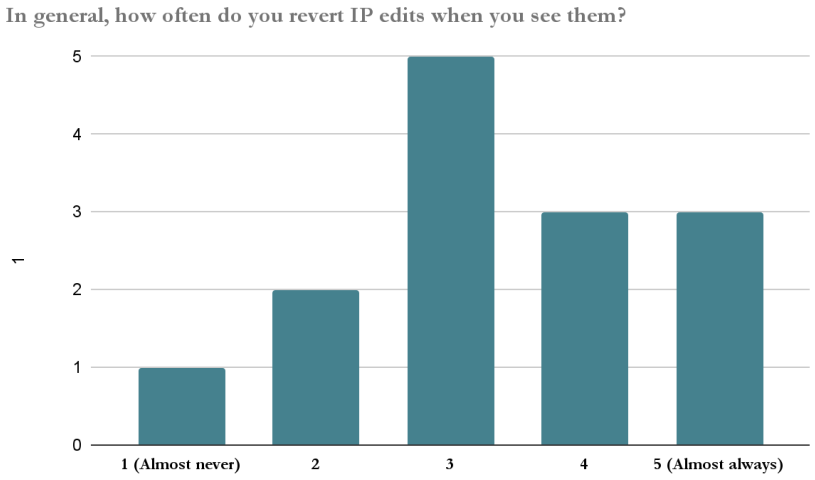
So I never really look for whether it's from an IP or from a user, I always look at the content or the merit of the article and merit of that edit. — interview respondent

Editors tend to accept suggestions which have (what they believe to be) correct information.

If IP edits are made by a new editor and happen to have a few mistakes, then editors make changes and accept the edits. A few editors believe that even if an editor is a vandal, some of their edits might be accurate. They try to respect that contribution and not revert all the changes.

Cause for rejection of IP edits is mainly vandalism or misinformation.

Editors also check for usage of curse words, promotional messages, spam links, or if the content from the article has been deleted for no reason.



Twice the number of survey respondents revert IP edits regularly than those who revert IP edits rarely

Editors would prefer to educate new and legitimate IP editors about editing

Few interviewed editors believe that IP edits take place mostly out of unawareness and so don't see it as a reason to reject the edit. The editors believe that because it's small, the Bengali Wikipedia community is very cooperative. Editors help each other, especially new editors learn the syntax and teach them to edit, and to form a community. For IP edits, editors tend to accept these or make changes to them as required rather than revert. It's difficult for editors to know the motivations of IP editors, but unless they are sure that it is a vandal, most editors report being cautious about reverting edits.

IP editors don't typically participate in community discussions

Editors believe that new editors don't know how to take part in discussions and IP editors who are doing vandalism are not accepted in discussions.
Interviewed editors report vandalism and IP editing from banned editors being discussed in the editorial community but not in particular about the security issues with IP editing or banning IP editors.

Yes, we have a discussion board where the Bangla editors are actively working. There may be one or 2 IP editors that are a part of it but the majority of IP editors are not even aware that there is some discussion board that actually exists in the Bangla Wikipedia community so they are not really part of it. – interview participant

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There is no discussion of banning IP edits and editors are not receptive to banning IP edits either

Interview participants are not receptive to the idea of banning IP edits as IP editing can also be constructive. They feel that it will hinder the growth of Bengali Wikipedia and it goes against the principles of Wikipedia. Typically the community discussion is about IP editing in general such as banning a new account or if an experienced IP editor is doing vandalism and if the community needs to ban them.

In my opinion, I feel IP editing should not be banned. Wikipedia is based on the idea that it's open for everyone and that everyone should have access to it. Since IP editors and anonymous editors are human beings, they should also be given access and sometimes anonymous editors give lots of good suggestions. I have noticed good articles, Wiki articles and that's why. Discussion has happened about the banned users who use IP addresses to make edits. However, ordinary IP addresses who are making edits or banning them have never been discussed but from banned users if they are making IP edits, they have been discussed. – interview participant

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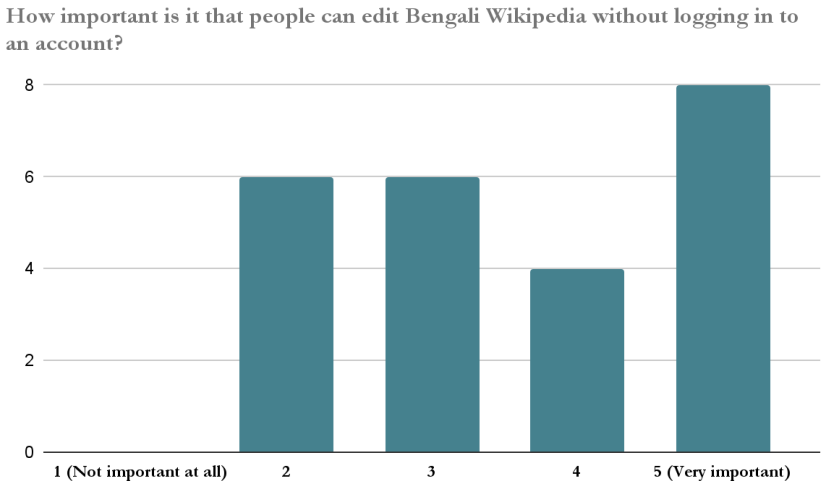
Despite IP vandalism, editors are also opposed to forcing people to log in to edit Wikipedia

Editors are against forcing people to log in to edit Wikipedia. They feel that Wikipedia is open source and this would go against the rules and ideology of ‘anyone can edit’. A few editors feel that forcing people to log in may detract editors from making small edits or casual editing because they wouldn't want to bother logging in. A few editors thought it was

a personal choice since it was the editors' personal info that would be shared through IP. Interviewed participants prefer to stay logged in since they edit regularly on the same devices and also like that their editing history is in one place.



Most survey respondents feel it is important to be able to edit without logging in.

Bengali IP Editors

Bengali IP editors

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Motivations for IP editing are varied according to the editors. There is no one main reason for IP editing. Bengali IP editors have both vandalism and legitimate reasons, such as activism, for not logging in.

How important are the following reasons for explaining why some editors don't log in?	mean	SD	#
Working on controversial topics	2.61	0.58	23
Wanting to commit vandalism	2.39	0.78	23
Forgot to log in	2.30	0.76	23
Disputes with other editors	2.25	0.79	24
Forgot password	2.17	0.82	24
Making minor edits (punctuation)	2.08	0.65	24
Not wanting a personal edit history	1.96	0.64	23
Avoid government surveillance	1.88	0.68	24
No profit on account	1.87	0.63	23
Avoid advertisers	1.67	0.82	24

For each motivation, respondents were asked to select *not important at all*, *somewhat important*, or *very important*, to which scores of 1, 2, or 3 were respectively assigned.

The Activist

BENGALI IP EDITOR

Age, Gender: Anonymous
Location: Anonymous
Languages
Speaks - Bengali, English*
Reads - Bengali, English*

GOAL

To be anonymous while editing articles on controversial topics.

To contribute to Bengali Wikipedia by creating new articles on sensitive topics

> In terms of controversial topics, religious topics, they (some editors) don't want to reveal the identity, which may increase the possibility of the government not liking it; they want to be anonymous.
>
> *- Bengali editor on IP editing*

CHALLENGES

- Concerned about government surveillance due to their work on religious or political topics
- Concerned about edit history being public and hence being targeted by government or individuals

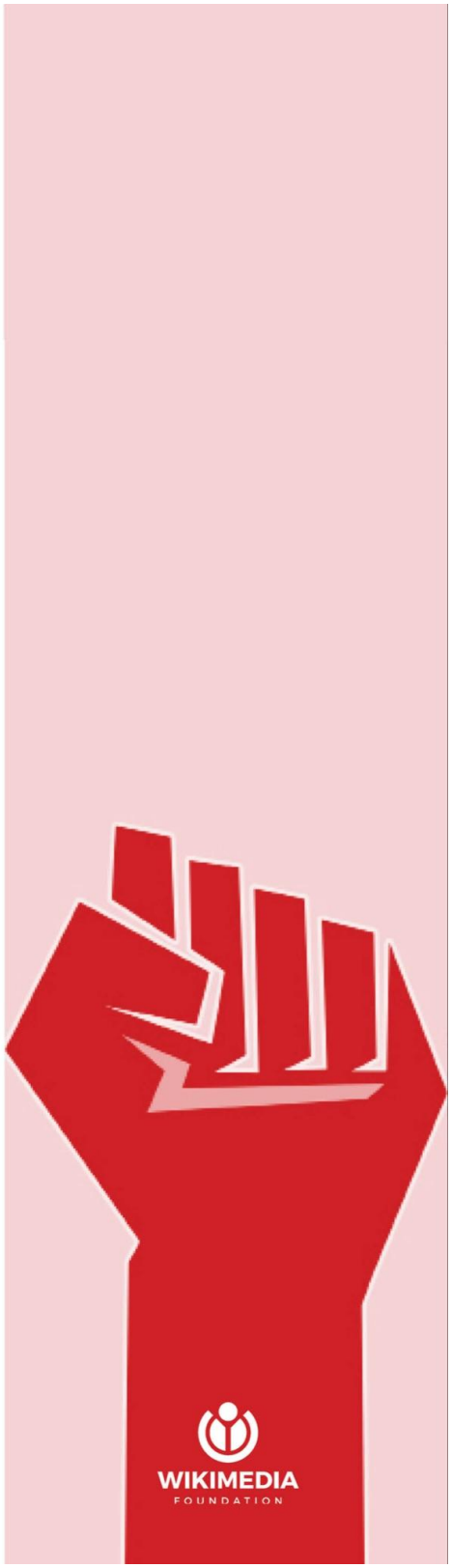
TASKS ON WIKIPEDIA

Edit or create articles on controversial or sensitive topics

STORY

The Activist is an IP editor who works on editing or creating new articles on controversial topics. They work mainly on religious or political topics that can catch the attention of the government or law enforcement. Usually they are experienced editors who want to contribute to Bengali Wikipedia but are afraid about the consequences of editing certain topics. The Activist want a way to continue editing anonymously as they consider this to be "good work" or constructive editing.

*Likely, fluency unknown



HUREO

Created by Hureo for the Wikimedia Foundation. Image above provided by Hureo.

The Activist

Editors want to work on controversial topics

Some editors think that some IP editors may be concerned about their privacy and edit history. These IP editors are editing or creating new articles on controversial topics like politics and want to remain anonymous so that they're not targeted by the government or law enforcement. Editors see this as “good work” and believe that IP editing is understandable in this scenario.

There are some laws which protect one or a family of a political party. So what happens is that even if you think something is not right you can't say that, So what happens if I want to make an edit on my own name, even if it's a normal topic, but it's about some politics, then I might be tagged, I might be targeted. — interview respondent

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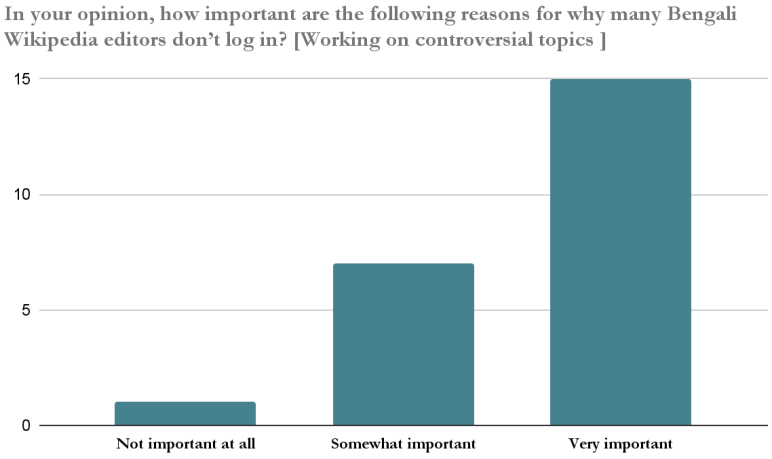
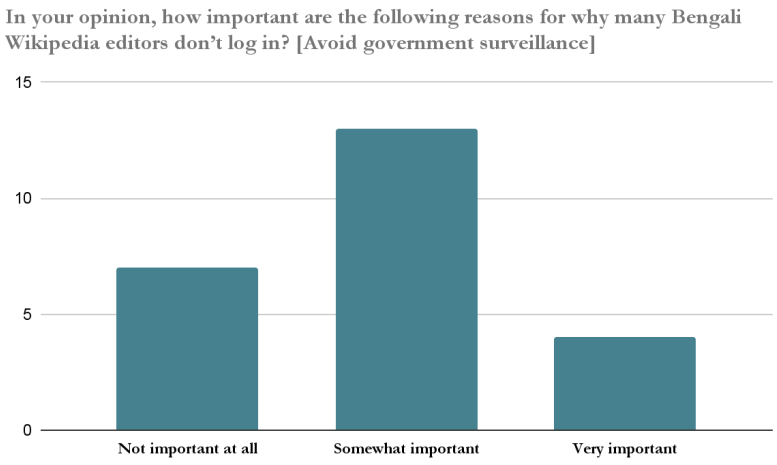
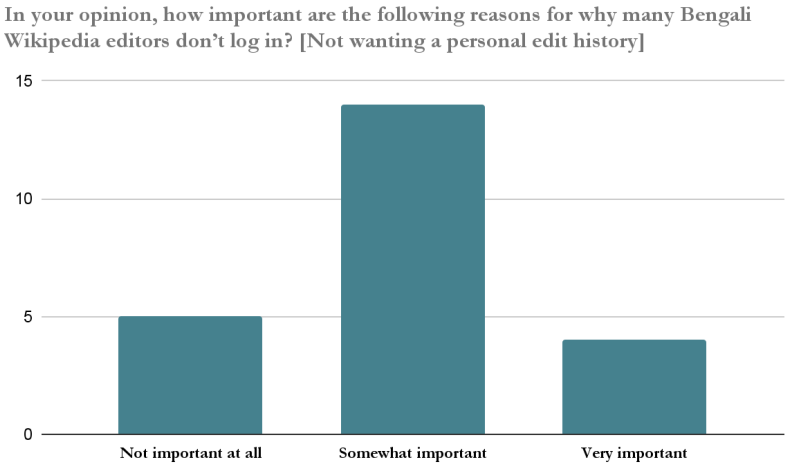


65% of the survey respondents felt it is a very important reason to not login when working on controversial topics.



50% of the survey respondents felt that it is a somewhat important reason to not login to avoid government surveillance.



60% of the survey respondents felt that it is a somewhat important reason to not login as editors didn't want a personal edit history.

In IP editing, you don't have to give an email id, and if you're doing the edits without the IP editing and with an account, you have to give an email id. A lot of people do IP editing if the topic is sensitive and the experienced editor or someone may get offended. That's when they do IP editing. —
interview respondent

The Vandal

BENGALI IP EDITOR

Age, Gender: Anonymous
Location: Anonymous
Languages
Speaks - Bengali, English*
Reads - Bengali, English*

GOAL

To spread a certain philosophy or point of view by giving biased information

To defame an article of a personality

To gain notoriety by editing an article and posting screen-shots on social media

> Suppose they don't like one idea or topic, they want to go to that topic and add something that isn't correct, that doesn't have a reference. Or they want to remove information from a page because they know that there is no way that someone can trace them back.
>
> *- Bengali editor on IP editing*

CHALLENGES

- Frustrated about being targeted/ blocked or banned by other Wiki editors while editing articles.

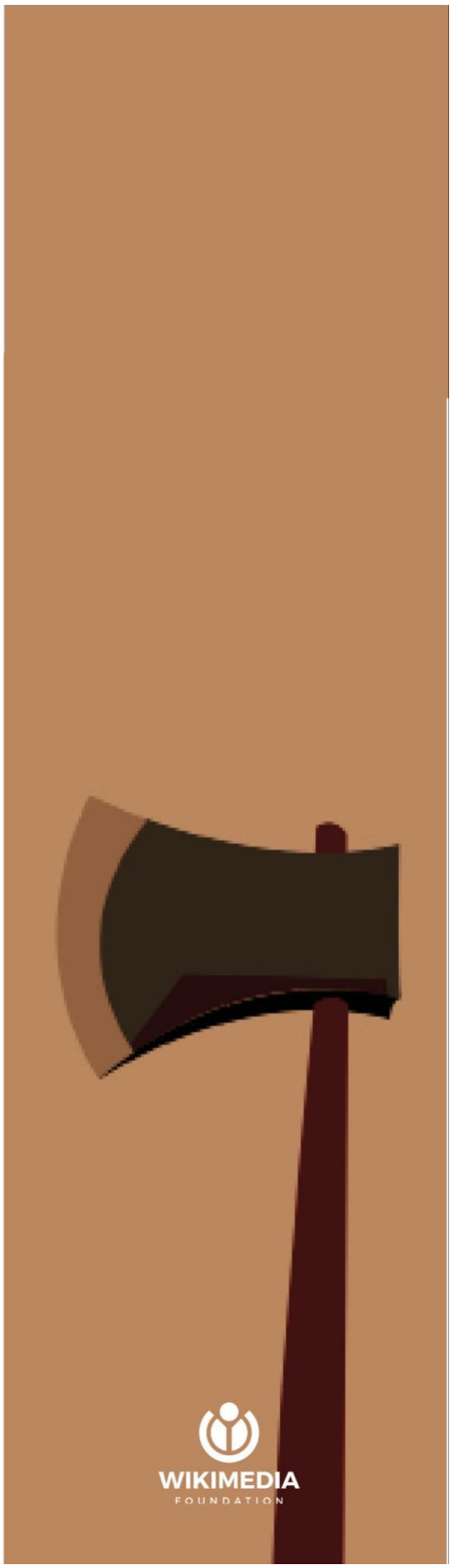
TASKS ON WIKIPEDIA

Use IP editing for destruction of articles

STORY

The Vandal is an experienced IP editor who wants to destroy articles because they don't like the content of the article and want to promote a certain viewpoint. They often target personalities like actors or celebrities or articles on trending topics. Their work gets discussed in the community and they often get banned or blocked by the admins. To navigate this, they open another account so they can continue to edit anonymously.

*Likely, fluency unknown



HUREO

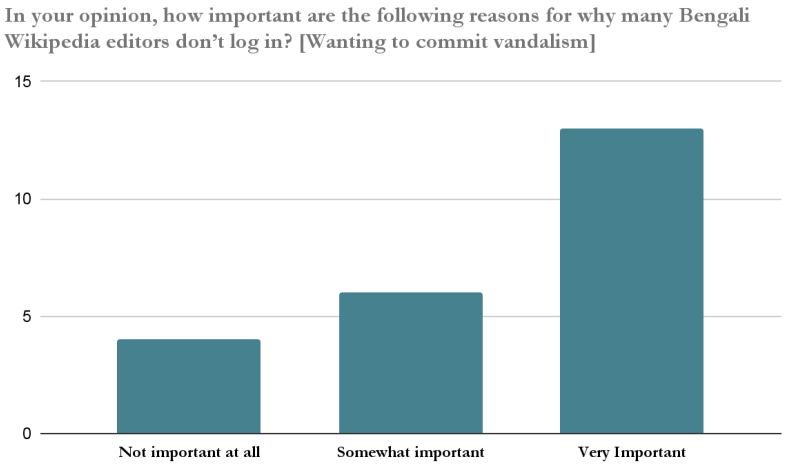
Created by Hureo for the Wikimedia Foundation. Image above provided by Hureo.

The Vandal

Editors want to vandalize articles

IP vandalism is quite common in Bengali Wikipedia as per the editors interviewed. Interview participants have seen IP editors create multiple accounts to commit vandalism. A few editors think minor vandalism (deleting a sentence or changing a word) is seen quite often as opposed to major destruction of articles.

Interviewed editors have multiple opinions on why vandalism occurs. One thought is that certain editors want to spread a certain philosophy or give biased information. Sometimes editors want to defame someone, for example, a university chancellor. A few IP editors also make edits for fame where they edit an article and then post screenshots on social media.



56% of the survey respondents felt it is a very important reason to not login when committing vandalism.

Sometimes someone who wants to do vandalism such as editing on some actor's profile. Few editors, IP editors make edits related to the Bangladesh navy, army or air force and they take screenshots of these edits and spread it across social media such as Facebook. — interview respondent

Bengali IP editors

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Tackling Vandalism

A few editors reported banning of IPs to stop vandalism occurring from those IPs. However, the challenge with banning IPs is that other people who are not IP editors can also get blocked. As a result, these editors believe that the best way to tackle vandalism is to encourage experienced editors to patrol for vandalism.

The Casual Editor

BENGALI IP EDITOR

Age, Gender: Anonymous
Location: Anonymous
Languages
Speaks - Bengali, English*
Reads - Bengali, English*

GOAL

To quickly edit small errors on Wikipedia

> People who want to edit only once or occasionally they do not see the requirement to open an account. Such people don't have so much time and the patience to log in and edit. They are just casually browsing.
>
> *- Bengali editor on IP editing*

CHALLENGES

- Unaware that they are not logged in while editing

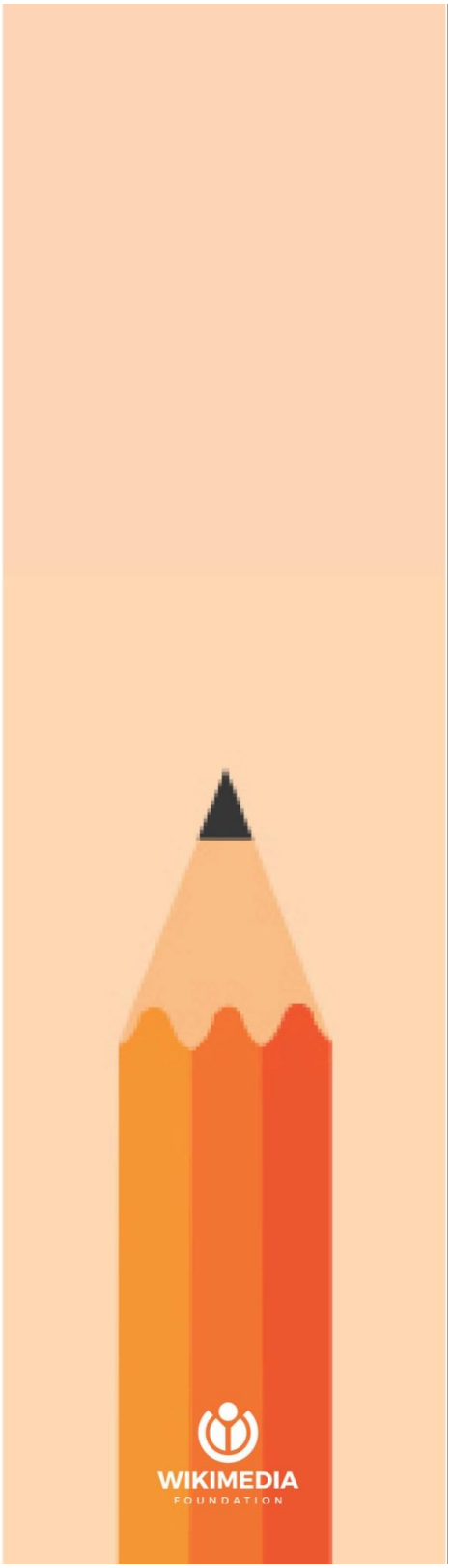
TASKS ON WIKIPEDIA

Make quick, infrequent edits on Wikipedia mainly to correct grammar or small mistakes

STORY

The Casual Editor is an IP editor who may or may not be very experienced. They make small edits when they are casually browsing articles and if they see a minor error like a grammatical mistake. They may or may not be very frequent users of Wikipedia. Since their editing is irregular and minor, they don't see the value in creating an account. Even if they do have an account, they don't bother to check if they are logged in while editing.

*Likely, fluency unknown



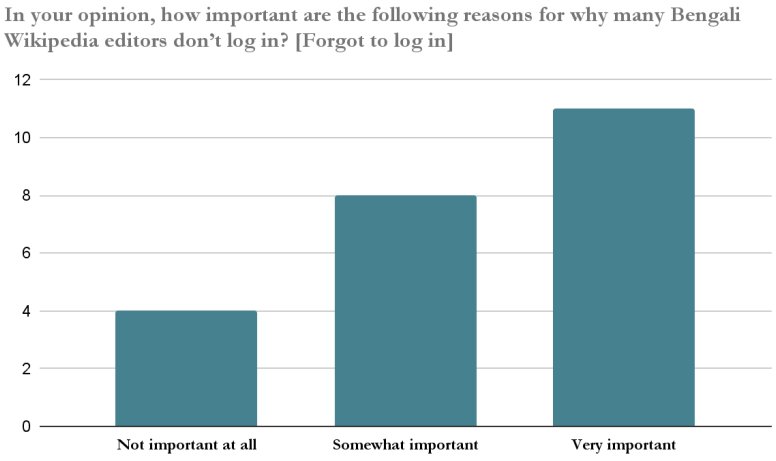
HUREO

Created by Hureo for the Wikimedia Foundation. Image above provided by Hureo.

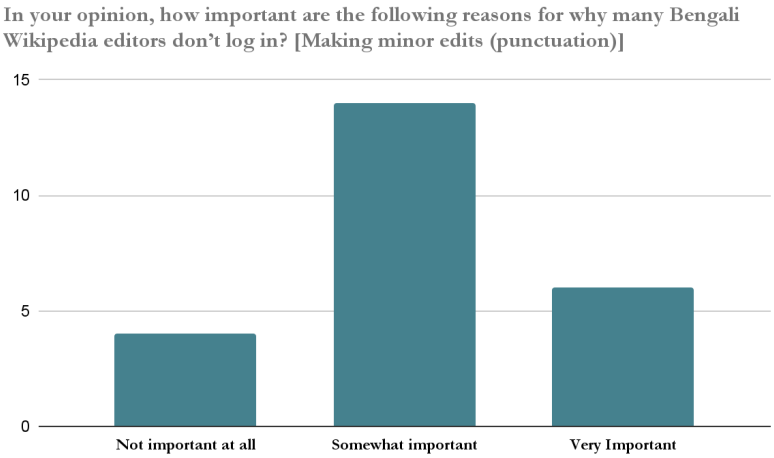
The Casual Editor

Editors forget to log in

Editors believe that a lot of IP edits come from new editors who are not aware about the importance of logging in. They make minor edits such as correcting grammatical errors and forget to log in when they make these edits.



48% of the survey respondents felt that it is common that editors just forgot to login

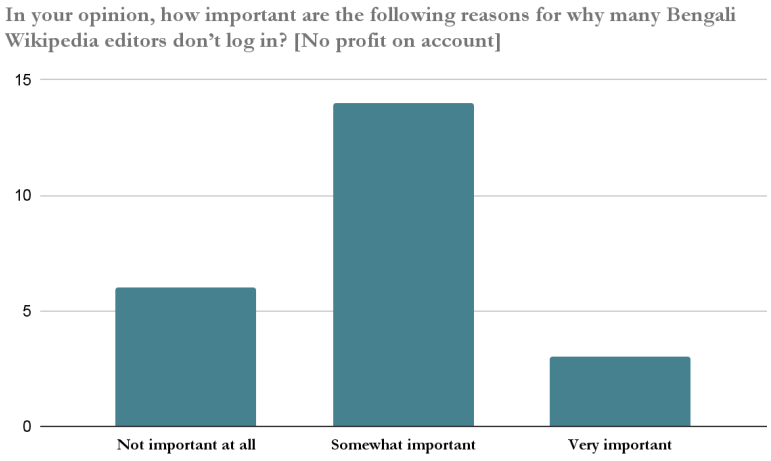


58% of the survey respondents answered that it is a somewhat important reason that editors didn't login as they were making minor edits

The most prominent one is that there is a lack of awareness, and the awareness has to be created by the Wikimedia Foundation; there is no other alternative to create awareness. It's up to them to create awareness among the IP editors to start editing with logging in. – interview participant

Editors don’t want to create an account

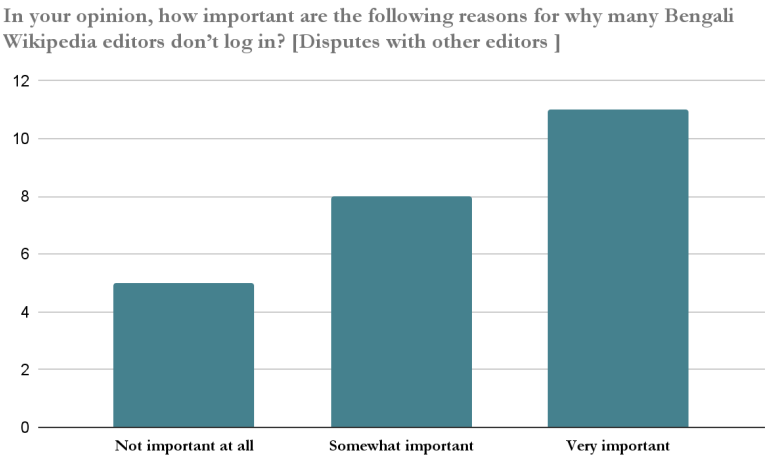
Editors believe that IP edits come from users who don't see the need to create an account because they don't edit Wikipedia regularly. They make small edits and don’t edit often enough to validate creating an account. A few editors also believe that the language used in account creation is dissimilar to other social media (more archaic or “correct” Bengali) which may dissuade people from creating accounts.



60% of the survey respondents felt that it is a somewhat important reason to not login as there is no profit in creating and maintaining an account

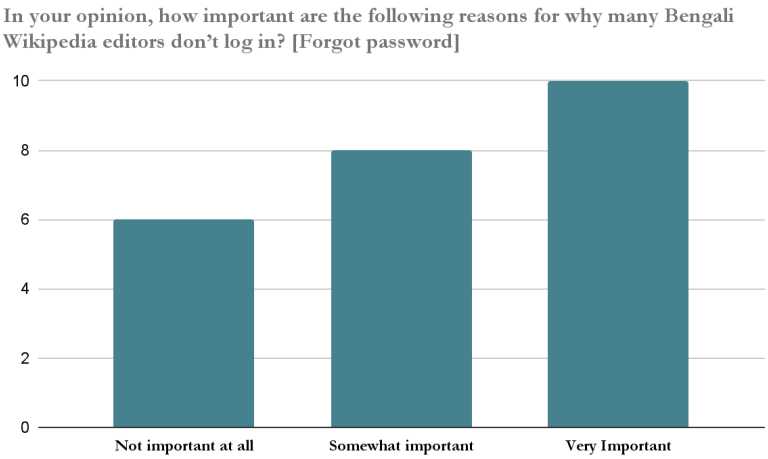
Disputes, forgetting password and avoiding advertisers are other reasons for IP editing

While a few interviewed editors report disputes as a reason for IP editing, it ranks fourth in the survey. Editors have observed disputes using IP edits but don't believe it to be a major reason for IP editing.



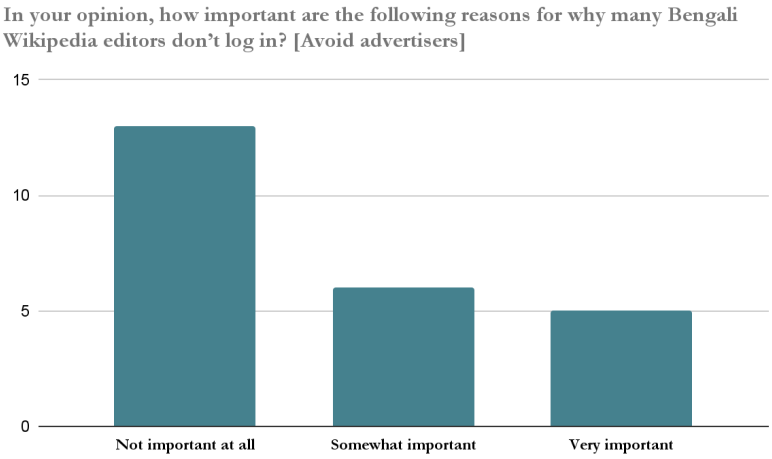
45% of the survey respondents felt it is a very important reason to not login when there is a conflict of opinion or interest

'Forgot password' is another reason for IP edit and a few interviewed editors believe that since an email address is not mandatory, editors often fail to recover their forgotten passwords.



45% of the survey respondents felt that forgetting password is a very important reason for editors to not login.

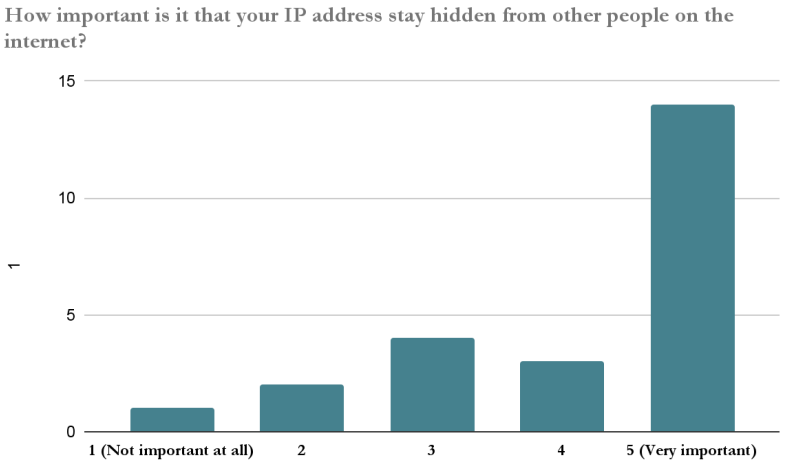
IP editing to avoid advertisers is not of importance for survey respondents or interview participants.



54% of the survey respondents didn't feel that editors didn't login to avoid advertisers.

Privacy in Bengali Wikipedia

Overall, most editors believe that Bangladeshis are not concerned about privacy. In the Bangladeshi community, privacy is a relatively new need as per the interviewed editors. Most Bangladeshis are not very concerned about their privacy but the younger population is becoming more aware.



70% of the survey respondents felt it is important to hide their IP

People are not that aware or conscious about privacy in Bangladesh; however, things would have been different if they were concerned, but slowly, privacy concerns are increasing. – interview participant

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Editors are aware that their IP reveals information about them. Some interview participants report being concerned about the visibility of their IP address and hence ensure that they remain logged into their account.

45% of the survey respondents felt that IP addresses reveals significant amount of information about them

Editors use their real names or part of it for their Wikipedia account and don’t have concerns about logging in.

In general interview participants are not concerned about their privacy while editing Wikipedia as logged in editors.

Some interview participants are concerned about editing sensitive topics (political parties or media personalities) or that their editing activity will reveal personal information about them. However, they don't want to use IP editing because that reveals their location. They also believe this is a personal choice and Bengali Wiki is very receptive to anonymous editors so editors should have a choice whether or not to log in.

79% of the survey respondents are always or most of the time logged in to their Wikipedia account when they are editing

IP Editors may not be aware of the risks with IP editing

Some interview participants believe that IP editors are unaware of the security risks associated with IP editing, especially when they commit IP edits unintentionally. Some believe that even editors who log in are not very concerned about their security since in general in Bangladesh, privacy is not a concern for most people.

Since there is no worry and concern about the normal editors who are logging in with their account, even the IP editors don't have such worry. IP editors may not even know that it's revealing their IP address often, they may not be aware that even after multiple years their location may be known through the IP. Since in Bangladesh, there is no concern about privacy in general and there is a lack of awareness the IP editors also probably do not know about it. — interview participant

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Tackling IP editing

Bengali Wikipedia editors have many thoughts on how IP editing can be tackled.

Create awareness about opening an account

Editors believe it is important to create awareness about the benefits of opening an account. Editors must also be taught how to create an account if they are unable to.

Create awareness about the importance of logging in

Editors believe there is a lack of awareness about the importance of logging in. Wikipedia Foundation must create awareness about logging in, for example, by giving regular pop ups to an editor who is making IP edits.

If someone is making regular edits from an IP address, Wikipedia foundation can actually create a pop-up, a pop up may show up that you can create an account or Wikipedia profile and start editing with that and that pop up can be more frequent. – interview participant

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Gamification of editing

Gamification by adding perks, badges or some sort of point based system was also proposed by the editors. They believe this will encourage editors to log in while editing.

IP masking for those who are not comfortable with logging in

Interview participants believe that there is no way to force someone to log in if they are not logging in intentionally. IP masking by the Wikimedia Foundation is one such way to tackle IP editing.

Recently, I noticed, the foundation started, that there is an IP masking project. That could be one of the ways to deal with it such as masking the IP address. – interview participant

Conclusion

Bengali editors agree with the WMF statistics that IP edits are reverted at a medium rate compared to the other Wikis and the Bengali community is more accepting of IP edits. Bengali editors tend to be more accepting of IP edits because:

- They understand that there are legitimate reasons for IP editing
- The community is small and wants to encourage new editors
- Focus is more on the content of the edit than the nature of it

The community also agrees that vandalism also comes from IP edits, but are against banning IP edits or forcing editors to log in. Editors believe that forcing people to log in will discourage casual editing and they also want to protect constructive editing that comes from IP edits.

This research indicates that editors are cognizant of the fact that IP editing poses security risks, even though IP editors themselves may not be aware. Editors who had observed the current WMF solution of masking the IP address were approving of it.

As a result of these differing views, editors often recommend a more neutral path to tackling IP editing where there is awareness created about the importance of logging in but the option of not logging in is provided to those who choose not to.

Appendices

Appendix A: About the project

This study was conducted with Bangladeshi Bengali editors. It included 24 survey respondents and 8 in-depth interviews.

1. A survey distributed on-Wiki and in off-Wiki networks (24 responses).
2. Semi-structured, recorded interviews with active editors (8 interviews)

The goals of the study were:

1. To understand IP editor motivations for not logging in;
2. To understand IP editors beliefs and values about anonymity, government surveillance, and other factors that may argue for or against account creation;
3. To uncover and interpret any language-specific trends
4. To uncover and explore community opinions—how do other editors feel about this issue, and how do they see it interacting with other trends they've observed in their communities?
5. To identify areas of opportunity for further engagement, collaboration, and research.

Appendices