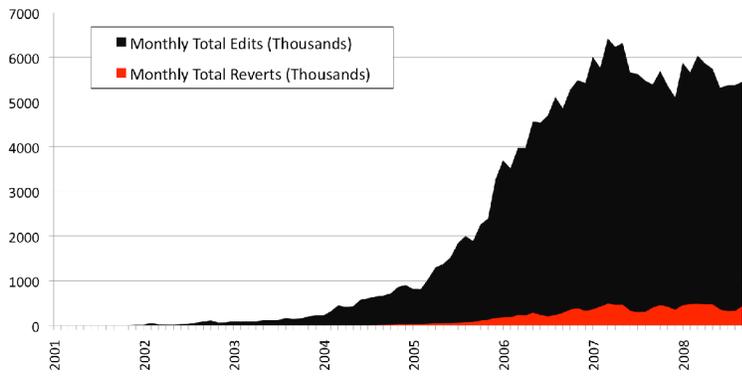


What are your thoughts on the decline in active contributors?

Number of edits/mo. has stabilized or plateaued. Why is # of edits not growing anymore?

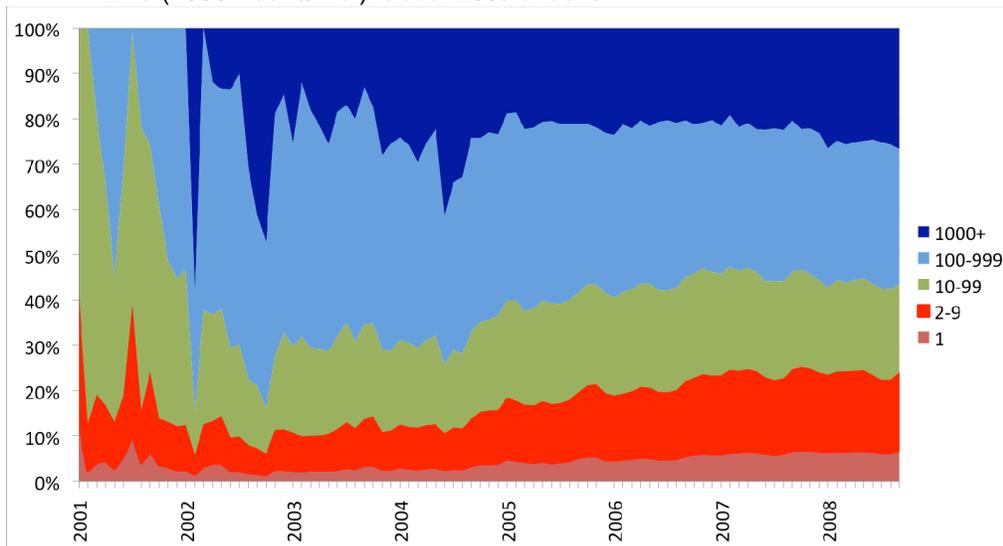


The two most prolific classes of editors (100-999 and 1000+) account for only about 1% of the population, but they contribute about 55% of edits (33% and 23% respectively).

Population in Wikipedia has shifted over time. Novice editors still growing (still decent amount of them), and very dedicated “elite” editors have also been growing their edits, but concern is major finding: middle class (10-200 edits or so) have been declining in their influence over time. Fewer in number, fewer in number of edits over time.

Pyramid shape is what constitutes a “healthy” community—and this is changing a lot. Right now, edits break down in following way:

- Novice users (<10 edits): about 25% of all edits
- Middle-class contribution: about 55% of all edits.
- Elite (1000+ edits/mo.): about 20% of edits



Why am I concerned about middle-class (“bourgeoisie”)? There needs to be mobility in the community. Decline suggests there’s a “glass ceiling” for newbies to progress into bourgeoisie, and middle-class will have difficulty going into elite. If there is a disproportionate amount of elite users, this may skew the type of info that we get.

Why has this plateau happened? Ed's opinion: Pendulum may have swung too far in favor of est'd procedures. Feeling less confident about answer to this question. Wiki "lawyering" – make edit and then cite the rules.

What are implications of this decline?

It's possible that what's happening to Wikipedia is just fine! As it's filled out its mission, and as it's become more mature, perhaps the community CAN change. Perhaps it can become more of a "elite group tending to it." Like when you build a garden. After built, you just need maintenance.

Two possible explanations

- (1) Refinement view of history (maintaining garden) OR
- (2) Living, breathing community issue (a fork will put dagger in own heart)
 - a. Contribution rate not growing anymore
 - b. Middle-class being squeezed out (barrier in place)
 - c. BUT monolithic community does not keep healthy pop mixture

What is going on with vandalism?

There is a correlation b/t vandalism and protection measures. Conclusion is that these techniques seem to work and are fairly effective. There are no good data on vandalism, but if you're trying to measure over time, counting RV and RVV seems to be reasonable way of computing vandalism rates. Rates of vandalism seems surprisingly low: 1-2% of edits.

What motivates users?

There has been some hypotheses and research here. General consensus is that there are two reasons: (1) Some people find it fun/entertaining, esp people who derive pleasure from watching edit become knowledge. (2) Somewhat of a religious effect—people think of noble goal of free info for all. Many of these people are the elites who think of their work as a higher calling.

What have you found regarding participation on other social networking or mass collaboration sites?

WikiHow: one thing they're been concerned about is they were recently off the iGoogle homepage. They've noticed drop in new contributors to the site. Worried they would lose the vibrancy of community. Keeping vibrancy of the community is an important aspect of a healthy site.