

Vision for next 5-10 years

1) Broaden volunteer base

Today the community members are mostly early adopters. However, in the long term, it's going to be much more of a growing community with people with modest passion who can find a way to contribute. New joiners shouldn't have to fight their way through tension, or require unusual skill sets. They should be part of a human community, not a tech community.

Now the community is getting a bit closed-culture. It's become progressively harder to contribute, especially for the new comers. The community needs to be more inclusive and new comers don't have to fight their way into the community.

- 1/10 of population represents lots of people, who can do lots of things. Encyclopedia has become such a normal resource to normal people and it needs to be supported by the mainstream. It takes contribution that's going to fit in.
- Wikipedia can be more social in order to become more inclusive. If people join a club to do hard work together, it's more enjoyable. Amateur scholarships can potentially sustain encyclopedia for decades.
- Example from Ward's own experience: "Wiki Wednesday" get-together. People get together to work on pages. Even though there is no famous academic scholarship, people enjoy the work.
- Can take form of junior chamber of commerce in every town. Support group for someone doing projects, discuss and work through the process together. This might be a 10 year goal for regular meetings of authors. We have to assume we're not done yet with the greatest thing in Internet. It'll be a living/ongoing thing

2) Major gaps to fill in next 10 years for a near-to-be-ready state: 3 areas of work required

- Encyclopedia gets deeper, clear writing, more sources, something well-explained, subsidiary articles, etc; new media: better pictures, videos, etc.
- Keeping current – as the world and technology changes, so should Wikipedia
- Over time, the way we talk about stuff, the terminology, the language we use in our articles should fully evolve to attract people. Writing style is influenced by the community and readers.

Risks that threaten/detract value and strength of Wikimedia

- Right now Wikipedia is doing quite well overall. Policies are made fast enough to solve emerging issues. Writing overall is sound.
- Most important is to have a sufficient & stable source of funding so that Wikipedia has right level of financial resource and can continue the growth. The strong impact on fundraising by WMF is great. It's been very lucky in first 8 years to do so much. It'll take an endowment to guarantee to do what it needs to do – software/hardware (servers), to match the changing Internet.

Role of WMF in the community

- Compare wiki to blogosphere
 - o Blog is clearly a community, web of blogs. There is a conversation going on, it's a community that happens to produce some work in some cases
 - o Wiki is first of all work that happens to be created by community. Work of wiki persists in the fundamental community. People can come and go in the community, work stays.
 - o What we've seen in any wiki tools: Shift from early adopters who launch the wiki to different kind of person who continue editing and keep it going
- Foundation's responsibility:
 - o Ensure constant service to readers. They have to set up something so that the service is there. Some other property can come along, e.g., Facebook v9, but Wikipedia will have to continue to exist.
 - o Wikipedia is going through these transitions. And beyond that, tensions will wax and wane. It'll be periods and years that people forget what they do to keep Wikipedia healthy. A coming and going over period of years as people find time, inclination and skills to build it.
 - o Preservation/distribution of resource worldwide, not necessarily pioneering technology. . Natural evolution is to boom and plateau. Technology will give you new opportunity. But I hope that the foundation supports careful march of technology. Most importantly, they should keep the content and themes interesting. It should always be something that an amateur (vs. a scientist) can contribute and put it into popular words. This is something the foundation should put their money on
 - o *Concerns on quality*: Reality follows perception. If people think Wikipedia is going to be in trouble, it will be. In one of the Wikimania meetings, Jimmy Wales called for a shift of focus from to quantity to quality. The community indeed took a turn afterwards. There could be some steering there, e.g. using videos for better illustration of articles, etc.

Different processes to build encyclopedia due to the limited size of smaller language speakers (hence contributors)

Ward's caveat: this is only my speculation: one thing that could be very valuable is two-way slow motion conversation between cultures

- Culture can be rooted in language. They move together. The smaller the languages, the more people are multilingual since people have to survive. Open licensing allows translation
- Small language content changes should be routinely reviewed and brought into larger language so that the English/German encyclopedia represents the thoughts of more than just English speakers. e.g. a Pacific Island language that happens to be important for ecological species distribution.
- Natural language processing will have more impact technologically on Wikipedia. Inversely, Wikipedia will have impact on natural language processing too.
- Small language work tends to be more original. Translations /revision can make this work ongoing, and cultural communication via channels like Wikipedia transcends language.

Other things on Ward's mind:

- English Wikipedia is a non-governmental existence. It just happened. But I see it as a national resource for many nations. I wonder what's the relationship between governments, especially those less sophisticated ones, and Wikipedia. Of course we don't want too much government interventions. But it will be useful to hide against censorship and fending off special interest group. I don't know what that relationship should be and how independent should Wikipedia be. But this issue should be on the map
- Intellectual leadership of Wikipedia has been great so far. Again it's a happy circumstance that people have set the course well. But it's going to need more attention than they have. A philosophical foundation for core policies of the foundation and operations/editorial bodies are needed
- Tapping more into the expertise/resource of the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board should provide access to resource; they contribute only if they were asked. Foundation should reach out more to them and play strengths of advisory board on a regular basis
 - o The Advisory Board had one get-together in Taiwan as a group. It was a long and meandering conversation. Not sure it's the right way
 - o One suggestion: Sue and Erik, as they travel, can spend extra day in Europe, Asia, South America, etc. to gather Advisory Board locally for one-day events for 4-5 times a year.

Craft an agenda that fits the people who can attend. Something like a small workshop with 5-6 people may work the best. Ideally, not too much travel required.

- o Ward's own experience: In my company, we do retrospective reviews routinely. Finish a one-hour discussion, have someone summarize with a 45-second video and make a little recap for <5 minutes. This practice keeps people in different offices in the loop. This can be a formula for doing it that's not too disruptive to people's daily life/job. There could be something similar to make the Advisory Board have an ongoing stimulating conversation through all channels.