Strengthening and unifying the visual identity of Wikimedia projects: a step towards maturity

Guillaume Paumier, Elisabeth Bauer

Wikimania 2007, Taipei

3 July 2007
Introduction

Six years of Wikimedia projects

2001  Wikipedia
2003  Wikimedia
2001-2006 opening of different projects and language versions
2007  review on visual identity, logos, names, and global appearance
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   - Evolution of the interface
   - Within the projects
   - Promotional material

2. **Wikimedia names and brands**

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Strengthening and unifying the visual identity of Wikimedia projects: a step towards maturity
Evolution of the interface

Evolution of the English-language Wikipedia main page

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Strengthening and unifying the visual identity of Wikimedia projects: a step towards maturity
Evolution of the English-language Wikipedia main page

Welcome to Wikipedia! We're writing a complete encyclopedia from scratch, collaboratively. We started work in January 2001. We've got over 3,000 pages already. We want to make over 100,000. So, let's get to work! Write a little (or a lot) about what you know! Read our welcome message here: Welcome, newcomers!

Some questions you might have have are answered below, but why not first explore a few links?

- Philosophy
- Mathematics
- Statistics
- Science
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Biology
- Astronomy and Astrophysics
- Earth Sciences
- Countries of the world
- History
- Linguistics & Language
- Politics
- Economics
- Geography
- Anthropology
- Archaeology
- Psychology
- Sociology
- History of Science and Technology
- Anomalous Phenomena
- Technology
- Architecture
- Engineering
- Computing
- Transport
- Business and Industry
- Law
- Agriculture
- Education
- Communication
- Library and Information Science
- Health Sciences
- Family and Consumer Science
- Public Affairs
- Entertainment
- Music
- Dance
- Film
- Literary Art
- Religion
- Recreation
- Sports
- Classics
- Critical Theory
- Visual Arts and Design
- Painting
- Sculpture
- Performing Arts
- Theater and Drama
- Games
- Hobbies
- Tourism

The above reflects only one of Wikipedia's category schemes.

Want to learn about something? Add the topic to our list of requested articles.

You're wondering:

- What is a wiki?
- How does one edit a page? Quick hint: press the "Edit text of this page" link at the top and bottom of every page! Practice editing pages in our Sandbox.
- How is Wikipedia related to Nupedia?
- What are your new topics? (The very latest can be found via the RecentChanges link at the top and bottom of every page.)
Evolution of the English-language Wikipedia main page

Evolution of the interface

Main Page | Recent changes | Protected page | Older versions | Special pages
Printable version
Other languages: Dansk | Deutsch | Esperanto | Español | Français | Nederlands | Polski | Português | Svenska

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Welcome to Wikipedia, a collaborative project to produce a free and complete encyclopedia in every language. We started in January 2001 and are already working on 93,566 articles in the English version, with more being added and improved all the time. Anyone, including you, can edit any article right now, without even having to log in. See the Wikipedia FAQ for more background information about the project, and the help page for information on how to use and contribute to Wikipedia.

The content of Wikipedia is covered by the GNU Free Documentation License, which means that it is free and will remain so forever. See wikipedia:Copyrights for the details and open content and free content for background.

This day in history: November 30
Ongoing events: Israeli-Palestinian conflict - War on Terrorism - terrorist incidents - Oil spill off Spanish coast
In the news: Henry Kissinger - Severino Antinori - Dept. of Homeland Security - Volkert van der Graaf
Recent deaths: Verne Winchell - James Coburn - Abba Eban - Myra Hindley

Philosophy, Mathematics, and Natural Science

November 2002

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February 2003

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Main Page
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Welcome to Wikipedia! We are building an open-content encyclopedia in many languages. We started in January 2001 and are now working on 240012 articles in the English version. Join us! Visit the Community Portal or try out the sandbox to find out how you can edit any article right now.

Featured article
Joshua Abraham Norton was a famous, impoverished and highly eccentric citizen of San Francisco, California in the mid-to-late 19th century. Among his many celebrated and curious activities, he most famously anointed himself as "Emperor of the United States" in 1859, becoming Emperor Norton I. Other notable activities include his ordering the dissolution of the United States Congress and his numerous (and prophetic) decrees that a bridge be built across San Francisco Bay. The King in Mark Twain's The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is reportedly modeled after him.

Did you know...
...that Bodega Bay in California was the setting for Alfred Hitchcock's film The Birds?
...that rattlesnake venom contains hemotoxins?
...that Ernest Duchesne discovered penicillin's antibiotic powers 32 years before Alexander Fleming?
...that Indriks chronicles are the oldest written history of Latvia and Estonia?

Archive | All new articles...

In the news

March 2004

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Welcome to Wikipedia, a free-content encyclopedia that anyone can edit. In this English version, started in 2001, we are currently working on 439,314 articles.

BROWSE: CULTURE | GEOGRAPHY | HISTORY | LIFE | MATHEMATICS | SCIENCE | SOCIETY | TECHNOLOGY
Browse Wikipedia - Article overviews - Alphabetical index - Other category schemes

Find out how you can help those affected by the recent Indian Ocean earthquake.

Today's featured article
Johnny Cash At San Quentin Johnny Cash was an American country music singer and songwriter, known to his fans as "The Man In Black." In a career that spanned almost five decades, he was the personification of country music to many Americans and others around the world who had no other knowledge or interest in that art form. His gravelly voice and the distinctive boom chicka boom sound of his Tennessee Two backing band were instantly recognizable to millions.

Recently featured: Alchemy - Planetary nebula - Max Weber

Selected anniversaries

In the news
- The death toll from the 9.0 magnitude earthquake and subsequent tsunami on December 26 exceeds 150,000 in 13 countries surrounding the Indian Ocean. An international charitable effort is underway to help the victims estimated to be over 5,000,000 in number. New Year's celebrations in many countries are muted, cancelled, or used to raise aid money.
- Turkey introduces the New Turkish Lira, a new

January 2005

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Evolution of the English-language Wikipedia main page

January 2006

Welcome to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia that anyone can edit.
In this English version, started in 2001, we are currently working on 894,028 articles.

Today's featured article

Dinosaurs are vertebrates that have ranged from reptile-like to bird-like. Dinosaurs dominated the terrestrial ecosystem for over 160 million years from around 230 million years ago until 65 million years ago, at the end of the Cretaceous period, when all non-avian dinosaurs became extinct. Knowledge about dinosaurs comes from both fossil and non-fossil records, including fossilized bones, teeth, trackways, gastroliths, feathers, impressions of skin, internal organs and soft tissues. Dinosaur remains have been found on every continent on Earth, including Antarctica, showing that all land masses were at one time connected.

In the news

- Tropical Storm Zeta continues activity in the Atlantic Ocean, becoming only the second tropical cyclone to exist across two calendar years.
- Based on a July determination by the IERS, a leap second has been added to clocks as of midnight UTC.
- Police in the Indian city of Bangalore have launched a manhunt for the perpetrators of Wednesday’s...
Evolution of the interface

Evolution of the English-language Wikipedia main page

Welcome to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia that anyone can edit. 1,768,307 articles in English

Overview · Editing · Questions · Help

Today's featured article

Giwell Park is a campsite and activity centre for Scouting groups, as well as a training and conference centre for Scout Leaders. The 44 hectare (110 acre) site is located in Sewardstonebury, Epping Forest close to Chingford, London. In the late Middle Ages, it started as a farm, growing to a wealthy estate that fell into disrepair towards 1900. It was given in 1919 by Scout Commissioner William De Bolis Maclaren to The Scout Association of the United Kingdom to provide camping facilities to London Scouts, and training facilities for Scouters. As Scout Leaders from all countries of the world have come to Giwells Park for their Wood Badge training, it is one of the great landmarks of the world Scouting movement. The site contains campsites for a small patrol up to a 1200 people camp. Indoor accommodations, historical sites, monuments of Scouting, and activities suitable for all sections of the Scouting Movement. It can accommodate events for up to 10,000 people. Accommodation of Giwells Park can also be hired for non-Scout activities such as school group camping, wedding receptions and

In the news

- The Ulster Volunteer Force, a loyalist paramilitary group in Northern Ireland, renounces the use of force.
- Five men arrested in Operation Crovico in 2004 are convicted of plotting to deploy fertilizer bombs in terrorist attacks across the United Kingdom.
- A second mass rally in support of secularism in Turkey is held in Istanbul, protesting against the candidacy of Abdullah Gül (pictured) in the presidential election.
- Ivo Račan, the previous Prime Minister of Croatia, dies of kidney cancer less than three weeks after resigning as leader of the opposition Social Democratic Party.
- The Bronze Soldier, a Soviet Red Army war memorial in Tallinn, is removed by Estonian authorities amid political controversy and violent protests.

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Evolution of the English-language Wikipedia main page

Observations

- very basic interface in the early ages
- design improved in 2004
- still the same as of today
Evolution of the English-language Wikipedia main page

Observations

- very basic interface in the early ages
- design improved in 2004
- still the same as of today

Current possibilities

- Wikimedia wikis: editing one’s own CSS
- all others: using one of the many skins created for MediaWiki (or creating one)
Evolution of design within the projects

Within the projects, there have been separate ways with very few attempts of homogeneity. The main pages have been very different, which has not really been a problem for us. However, the spreading of good ideas has been a positive aspect.
Within the projects

Evolution of design within the projects

Separate ways

- very few attempts of homogeneity
- very different main pages
- not really a problem for us
- spreading of good ideas
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Promotional material

Promotional material

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Promotional material

Review

- some successes: leaflet, cheatsheet
- outdated, not maintained
- very specific
- lack of promotional material of good quality & on a broader range than Wikipedia
- difficulty to get local communities involved
About the Marketing committee
About the Marketing committee

Role

- creation of good-quality material
- quality and visual identity guidelines
- advisory committee to the board for logos, visual identity & design
About the Marketing committee

**Role**
- creation of good-quality material
- quality and visual identity guidelines
- advisory commitee to the board for logos, visual identity & design

**Review**
- not much known, nor solicited by chapters or communities
- projects started (guides)
- this review
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   - To translate, or not to translate?

3. Logos & skins

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To translate, or not to translate?

Localized names

Should projects names be localized?

- Wikilivres, Wikinotizie, Wikcionario...
- too anglocentric?
- external facing vs. internal colloquial use
- separating our wikis from the others
To translate, or not to translate?

Localized names

Conclusions & proposals

- one color per project
- cross-project navigation bar: type of content rather than names
- official name, localized motto and transcription
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Choosing good logos

Process & criteria

Choosing good logos

- a community process
- criteria
  - good message
  - good graphic quality (good looking, scalable)
  - fitting in the visual identity of the global structure
- colors: unique in a family
Choosing good logos

Process & criteria

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Choosing good logos

Examples

Wikibooks proposed logos
Choosing good logos

Examples

Wikiversity proposed logos

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Choosing good logos

Proposals

Proposals for improvement

- a community process
Proposals for improvement

- a community process
- involving the marketing committee to follow visual guidelines
- daring to ask for external help
Proposals for improvement

- a community process
- involving the marketing committee to follow visual guidelines
- daring to ask for external help
- being bold and imaginative to create aesthetic proposals
Proposals

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Wikimedia and non-Wikimedia MediaWikis

Wikis and MediaWiki
Wikis and MediaWiki

Quick stats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>only the logo is different</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>similar to very similar design</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different to very different design</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Statistics generated before the change of skin on Wikia.

Wikimedia and non-Wikimedia MediaWikis

Introduction

Context

Names & brands

Logos & skins

New design

Conclusion

Credits & authors

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Wikis and MediaWiki

Why a change is necessary

- MediaWiki default layout is used by many wikis.
- Advertising, non-free content, bias
- Wiki-X, Z-pedia...
- Wikimedia wikis must be clearly distinguishable and identified as Wikimedia projects.
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   • Strengthening the bonds within families
Maturity for the Foundation and the content

Maturity for the Foundation

- changes in its administrative structure
- positions created and staff hired
- reforms about decision-making processes
Maturity for the Foundation and the content

Maturity for the Foundation
- changes in its administrative structure
- positions created and staff hired
- reforms about decision-making processes

Maturity for the content
- maturation plate on most developed projects
- stable versions
- Wikipedia 0.5, 1.0
The time of maturity

Showing we evolve
The time of maturity

Showing we evolve

Reliability & credibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>reliability</th>
<th>credibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>content of the facts</td>
<td>of the projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation sustainability</td>
<td>towards external partners</td>
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The time of maturity

Showing we evolve

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Changing our default layout is

- necessary for marketing reasons
- a chance to improve accessibility
- ⇒ proposed specifications for a new design
## Designing a new skin: a challenge

An overloaded interface with new features constantly integrated leads to disclaimers, policy links, and interwiki links. Different expectations from editors (approximately 4.6%) and readers are a challenge. A more professional design is needed to strengthen and unify the visual identity of Wikimedia projects, moving towards maturity.

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Strengthening and unifying the visual identity of Wikimedia projects: a step towards maturity
Designing a new skin: a challenge

An overloaded interface
- new features constantly integrated
- disclaimers, policy links, interwiki links
- different expectations from editors (∼ 4.6%) and readers

Example of a personalized interface for an editor

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Preparatory work

A more professional design

Relations with the community
  necessity of getting input from the community
  setting up a process with timelines
  Global review in terms of accessibility
  identifying accessibility issues
  developing collaborations

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Strengthening and unifying the visual identity of Wikimedia projects: a step towards maturity
A more professional design

Preparatory work

Relations with the community

- necessity of getting input from the community
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Preparatory work

Relations with the community
- necessity of getting input from the community
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Global review in terms of accessibility
- identifying accessibility issues
- developing collaborations
A more professional design

Specifications / One color per project

One color per project

- improving projects identification and own identity
- a common frame coming in a variety of colours: one per project
A more professional design

Specifications / One color per project

One color per project

- improving projects identification and own identity
- a common frame coming in a variety of colours: one per project

Examples

- WIKINEWS
- WIKIPEDIA
- Wikisource
A more professional design

Screenshots
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Wikipedia and “the others”

Attracting visitors to all projects

- the shadow of Wikipedia
- “small sister projects”
- cross-projects templates
Strengthening the bonds within families

Wikipedia and “the others”

Attracting visitors to all projects

- the shadow of Wikipedia
- “small sister projects”
- cross-projects templates

Pages sur ce thème sur les projets Wikimedia :

- Ressources multimédia sur Commons.
- Inventaire de l’espèce sur Wikispecies.
- Définition sur Wiktionnaire.
- Connaissances universitaires sur Wikiversité.
- Livre pédagogique sur Wikilivre.
- Texte sur Wikisource.
- Citations sur Wikiquote.
- Article d’actualité sur Wikinews.
- Coordination des projets sur Meta-Wiki.
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Cross-project navigation bar
Cross-project navigation bar

**Navigation bar**

- more visible links
- thematic consistency
- working like interwiki links
- also addresses the localization issue
Strengthening and unifying the visual identity of Wikimedia projects: a step towards maturity

Cross-project navigation bar

- more visible links
- thematic consistency
- working like interwiki links
- also addresses the localization issue
In a nutshell

- Issues in terms of visual identity, marketing and graphics have been identified.
- Solutions have been drafted.
- Feedback is necessary before going any further.
Thank you for your attention

Questions session
Credits & authors

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