Wikiversity: a project struggling with its own identity

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What is Wikiversity?

Set up to host & develop two things:

• Learning materials
• Learning activities & communities

For example:

• Resources for self-learners & peer learners
• Resources for teachers, including lesson plans
• Spaces for people to learn collaboratively
How big is Wikiversity?

11 languages:
(Czech, German, Greek, English, Spanish, Finnish, French, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian)

Also, ‘Beta Wikiversity’ for incubating new language projects

English Wikiversity: 12000 articles; French: 6600; German: 2000
Welcome to Wikiversity
Set learning free
with 12,643 learning resources and growing.

Wikiversity is a Wikimedia Foundation project devoted to learning resources, learning projects, and research for use in all levels, types, and styles of education from preschool to university, including professional training and informal learning. We invite teachers, students, and researchers to join us in creating open educational resources and collaborative learning communities. To learn more, try a guided tour or start editing now.

Today's Featured Project
Trade Finance

Trade Finance is a 240-page wikified coursebook for use at university level. The course was developed as a foundational part of Michigan State University's Open CourseWare project and was published on Wikiversity (as well as on the Michigan State University's Open CourseWare site) as part of the project. This is an example of government grant money being used directly for the creation of open educational resources. The course comprises 8 modules: Political and Economic

Educational Picture of the Day
Prehistoric Rock Art

This is an example of rock art from the cave of El Tajo de las Figuras in southern Spain. The painting depicts deer, birds and people. The art in the cave comes from the paleolithic and neolithic eras. Click on the image for a full size version which you can freely reuse and modify. Print it and use
Portal:Reading groups

What are Wikiversity Reading Groups? [edit]

Wikiversity Reading Groups are learning projects oriented around generating discussion and notes around specific books, texts, videos, or entire courses that users find of interest.

Starting a Reading Group [edit]

Please add [[Category:Reading groups]] to any newly created Reading Group. If the book or text has a page on Wikipedia please consider adding the Wikiversity Template to the appropriate Wikipedia page.

Weekly chat session [edit]

There is a weekly chat session in the weekend on Wikiversity:chat for social bonding and to discuss the future of the reading groups.

Organization Brainstorming IRC Session 30 Dec 2007 18:00 CET draft agenda

Reading groups [edit]

- Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War. Discussion every weekend on IRC.
- Ivan Illich: Deschooling Society - a reading group on Illich's 1971 discourse on education.
- John Seely Brown on new learning contexts
- Is consciousness a chemical process?
- Worldpolitics - a reading group on topics dedicated to major issues in worldpolitics: the influence of religion, humanism, depletion of resources, economy.
- Islamic Feminism: Contemporary Debate
- Many-worlds interpretation
- Michel Foucault reading group
- Molecular Paleontology Reading Group

Reading groups
Courses on filmmaking:

http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Filmmaking
Wikiiversity: Developing Wikiiversity through action research

This page is to coordinate activities in this collaborative action research project to develop and, in some senses, define Wikiiversity. Essentially, it asks: "What are we doing to learn and facilitate learning on Wikiiversity, and how can we improve what we are doing?" Some background to this research can be found on the "About" page and, on a more personal level, here. (Disclosure: this research constitutes the bulk, if not the whole, of my empirical research towards a PhD in education - however, I do not claim any 'ownership' over the research whatsoever. Cormaggio talk 22:51, 6 February 2008 (UTC)) Discussion about this project can be found and continued on the talk page, and if you wish to add yourself as an interested participant, please list yourself on the participants page. But again, please, edit this page to make it a truly collaborative research project...
First (and only) Wikimedia project to be set up through formal processes

‘Incubated’ in Wikibooks
  => proposed for deletion August ‘05
  => year-long proposal writing process
  => set up August ‘06
Wikiversity’s scope broader than any other WMF project

However, its scope overlaps with every WMF project, since *all* WMF projects are educational!
From the beginning, Wikiversity aimed to be and do ‘something different’, ‘something new’...

“As you know, this isn't the English Wikipedia nor do we strive to be, act or look like it.”

“We must perform a fundamental conceptual transformation by which we shift our thinking away from conventional university courses and towards collaborative wiki editing projects that facilitate learning”
Many deep challenges...

- How does Wikiversity fit with other WMF projects?
- How do we manage roles (e.g. teachers, researchers)?
- What is appropriate learning material?
- What is a legitimate learning project?
- What is a ‘wiki way’ for learning?
- What kinds of research can/should it support?
In an editable environment, is a resource ever ‘finished’?

Can anyone edit this material; should there be some level of control?

Can a resource be ‘not good enough’?

What is quality; what is ‘good’? (For whom, and who decides?)
Wikiversity should be person-oriented rather than content-oriented (Leinonen, Vadén & Suoranta, 2009)

There is tension between these poles:

• Is deleting a resource cutting off someone’s ability to learn through developing the resource?

• How do we manage this tension?

Where are the boundaries?

Wikiversity has tried to be as inclusive as possible, but we can’t include everything (Bomb-making 101? Creationist history of the world?)

Particular boundary case: learning projects about other people, or other Wikimedia projects

Raised issues of ethics and civility: how much flexibility does one person have, in relation to the community?
Learning the wiki way

- to be able to participate in a collegial, collaborative space
- to be able to co-define how that space works
- to learn through interaction and collaboration with others
- to be able to specify what and how you want to learn
- to be subject to the values of the community
- to be subject to colleagues’ right to participate and learn
In other words...

We have personal freedoms, but also responsibilities to other community members.

There is a limit to the openness and personalisability of Wikiversity.

Wikiversity can learn from experience of other larger wikis, like Wikipedia (e.g. BLP).
I welcome your input...

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