Wikipedia is afraid of governments

...more accurately: English Wikipedia naming conventions are obliged to local governments

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6 August 2011
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Wikipedia is afraid of governments

Deryck Chan
The problem: page title edit wars
  • Page title edit wars of geographical locations
  • Especially places of multiple or disputed heritage
  • Danzig or Gdańsk?

**Talk:Gdansk/Vote**
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
</Talk:Gdansk>

This page is an archive. Do not edit the contents of this page. Direct any additional comments to the current talk page.

This vote has ended. Please do not vote any more.
The voting period was 18 February 2005 to 4 March 2005. Comments and discussions should be added to Talk:Gdansk/Vote/discussion.

This page is affected by the Gdańsk (Danzig) Vote. The following rules apply in the case of disputes:
  • For Gdańsk, use the name Danzig between 1308 and 1945
  • For Gdańsk, use the name Gdańsk before 1308 and after 1945
  • In biographies of clearly German persons, the name should be used in the form Danzig (Gdańsk) and later Danzig exclusively
  • In biographies of clearly Polish persons, the name should be used in the form Gdańsk (Danzig) and later Gdańsk exclusively.
  • For Gdansk and other locations that share a history between Germany and Poland, the
Written policy

- WP:Neutral point of view, section “Naming”:
  - “While neutral terms are generally preferable, this must be balanced against clarity.”
  - Read: Ignore neutrality if necessary
Written policy

- WP:Naming conventions (geographic names)
  - “When a widely accepted English name, in a modern context, exists for a place, we should use it.”

1. The title: When a widely accepted English name, in a modern context, exists for a place, we should use it. This often will be a local name, or one of them; but not always. If the place does not exist anymore, or the article deals only with a place in a period when it held a different name, the widely accepted historical English name should be used. If neither of these English names exist, the modern official name, in articles dealing with the present, or the modern local historical name, in articles dealing with a specific period, should be used. All applicable names can be used in the titles of redirects.

- What I'll try to show:
  No, no, it's all about the government!
Observed practice

- Voivodeships of Poland
  - Issue raised in Wikimania 2010
  - "English" word invented by the Polish government
  - Even official translation guides recommend "province"

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**Voivodeships of Poland**

*From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

The **volvodeship** or **province**\(^1\) (Polish: **województwo**) has been a high-level **administrative subdivision** of **Poland** since the 12th century. The word "volvodeship" appears in some larger English dictionaries, such as the **OED** and **Webster’s Third New International Dictionary**, but it is not in common usage. Thus, to facilitate understanding outside Poland, the word "province" is a recommended translation.\(^2\)[3][4][5]
Senkaku Islands

The neutrality of this article's title, subject matter, and/or the title's implications, is disputed.

This is a dispute over the neutrality of viewpoints or other implications of the title, or the subject matter within its scope, rather than the actual facts stated. Please see the relevant discussion on the talk page. (July 2011)

"Diaoyutai" redirects here. For the Chinese state guesthouse, see Diaoyutai State Guesthouse.

The Senkaku Islands (尖閣諸島 Senkaku Shotō), variants: Senkaku-gunto[1] and Senkaku-retto[2]), also known as the Diaoyu Islands or Diaoyutai Islands (simplified Chinese: 钓鱼岛及其附属岛屿; traditional Chinese: 釣魚台群島; pinyin: Diáoyútái Qúndāo) or the Pinnacle Islands, are a group of disputed uninhabited islands in the East China Sea. They are located roughly due east of mainland China, northeast of Taiwan, west of Okinawa Island, and north of the southwestern end of the Ryukyu Islands.

Japan controlled these islands from 1895 until her surrender at the end of World War II. The United States administered them as part of the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands from 1945 until
Observed practice

- Prasat Preah Vihear (Khmer [Cambodia])
  Prasat Phra Viharn (Thai)
  - Disputed territory, UNESCO heritage site
  - Nominally Cambodian; occasional military conflicts
  - UN adopts “Preah Vihear” in official listings

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Prasat Preah Vihear is the compound of words Prasat, Preah and Vihear. Prasat (ปราสาท) means "castle", sometimes "temple"; in Sanskrit प्रशात. Preah (พระ) means "sacred". "Vihear" (วิหาร) means "shrine" (the central structure of the temple). The term Vihear could be related to the Sanskrit word Vihara (विहर) which means "abode."

Prasat Preah Vihear is transcribed into Thai as Prasat Phra Viharn (ปราสาทพระวิหาร) or Prasat Khao Phra Viharn (ปราสาทเขาพระวิหาร). Prasat (ปราสาท) has the same meaning in Khmer, Thai, and Sanskrit ("castle", sometimes "temple"; in Sanskrit प्रशात), and Khao is the Thai word for "hill" or "mountain" (In Khmer: "phnom" (ភ្នំ). Cambodians occasionally refer to it as "Phnom Preah Vihear" (ភ្នំព្រះវិហារ) and Thais usually call it "Khao Phra Viharn"). The words "Preah" (พระ) and "Phra" (พระ) mean "sacred", and the roots "Vihear" or "Vihara" (วิหาร) mean "shrine" (the central structure of the temple).
Observed practice

- Guangzhou (Mandarin)
  Canton City (Cantonese)
- “Canton” is losing popularity, but still in use
- Endorsement of government usage over local usage

Guangzhou

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

For other uses, see Guangzhou (disambiguation).

Guangzhou (simplified Chinese: 广州; Mandarin pronunciation: [kyunnŷŋʂou̯], known historically as Canton or Kwangchow,[4] is the capital and largest city of the Guangdong province in the People's Republic of China. Located in southern China on the Pearl River, about 120 km (75 mi) north-northwest of Hong Kong, Guangzhou is a key national transportation hub and trading port.[5] One of the five National Central Cities,[6] it holds sub-provincial administrative status.
Observed practice

- Côte d'Ivoire, Ivory Coast
  - Their government insists that the French name must be transliterated phonetically, not translated semantically
  - BBC and CNN still use Ivory Coast exclusively
  - ... in disregard for common usage!

Côte d'Ivoire

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (/koʊt dɪ'vwar/; French: [kɔt dɪ'vwaʁ]) is a country in West Africa. It is commonly known in English as Ivory Coast (/aɪvərɪˈkɔʊst/) It has an area of 322,462 square kilometres (124,503 sq mi), and borders the countries Liberia, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana; its southern boundary is along the Gulf of Guinea. The country's population was 15,366,672 in 1998[6] and was estimated to be 20,617,068 in 2009.¹ Côte d'Ivoire's first national census in 1975 counted 6.7 million inhabitants.⁷
Observation

- Article names always follow the name used by the governmental regime of the place
- In disregard for neutrality and English common usage if necessary
Caveat

- “Use English”
  - Cologne, not Köln
  - Rome, not Roma
- Correct observation, wrong explanation!

- Governments of these places use the English form of the name in their official English communication
Observation, revised

● Article names always follow the official English name used by the governmental regime of the place

● In disregard for neutrality and English common usage if necessary
Solution: policy

• <sarcasm> Let's go and mass-edit articles! </sarcasm>
  • No, enough people have been banned by ArbCom for behavioral issues while enforcing policies
• Policies are descriptive, not prescriptive
  • Change the guidelines – a painful process
• Volunteers, anyone?
Solution: technical

- Automatic character conversion: Did the Chinese and Serbian Wikipedias offer a way out?

- Opens up a new can of worms

- Automatic dialect conversion
Conclusion

- War is damaging, hence dispute resolution
- Consensus wants *commonly accepted, neutral names*
- Actual practice uses *government-endorsed names*
- Rule change is costly
  Technical allowance is more costly
- Description not prescription:
  Every rule has exceptions
- **What do you think?**