Author(s): Paul Conway, PhD, 2010

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SI 410 ETHICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Week 4b: Wikipedia and Credibility
THEMES

- Open.Michigan and SI 410
- How does Wikipedia work
- Credibility comparison
- Examples

“What about the ‘collective intelligence’ or ‘collective wisdom’ argument: That given enough authors, the quality of an article will generally improve? Does this hold true for Wikipedia?

EB: No, it does not.”  

Riehle, 2007, p. 6
WIKIPEDIA STATS

- 7th most popular site: Alexa Web Rankings
- 9,979,962 views per hour: Wikipedia Stats
  - [http://stats.wikimedia.org/EN/Sitemap.htm](http://stats.wikimedia.org/EN/Sitemap.htm)
- 134,023 active registered users: Special
- 634 active bots
WIKIPEDIA: AN INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

1. Wikipedia
2. Credibility
3. Examples

- Interview with three Wikipedians
- Roles
  - Many overlapping (name some)
- Processes
  - Manual of Style
  - Deletion processes
  - Policy development
- Quality assurance
  - Recognition
  - Knowledge communities, wisdom of crowds
- Growth challenges
Experts and non-experts evaluating credibility (author, article, site) controlling for cynicism.

Credibility measure:
- Believability, accuracy, trustworthiness, bias, completeness.

Conclusion: experts found the articles more credible than non experts

Conclusion: 13% error rate
TRUST AND WIKIPEDIA

1. Wikipedia
2. Credibility
3. Examples

Simon lays out a model of trust derived from the sciences and then applies it to Wikipedia.

- Trust comes from assessment of honesty and competence.
  - Honest = disinterested and free
  - Competence = proxies or indicators

“... the reason why people trust the content of Wikipedia is that they trust the processes – procedural trust, not trust in persons.” (p. 6)
TRUST TOOLS IN WIKIPEDIA

  - Members of Congress or CEOs editing their biographies.

- WikiDashboard
  - Social dynamics of editing in given articles