Wikimedia Foundation Press Kit

The Wikimedia Foundation

The Wikimedia Foundation is an international non-profit organization dedicated to the development and distribution of free multilingual content. It hosts various free-content projects, most notably Wikipedia, the award-winning online encyclopedia. Other online projects include Wiktionary, a multilingual dictionary; Wikibooks, a collection of free-content textbooks; Wikiquote, a repository of famous quotes; Wikibooks, a textbook-writing effort; Wikinews, a news analysis site; Wikispecies, a project to document all known scientific species; Wikisource, a repository for primary-source materials; and the Wikimedia Commons, a shared-media repository.

The Wikimedia Foundation was set up in June 2003 to serve and develop the necessary infrastructure for the constantly growing projects. It owns the Wikimedia servers and pays bandwidth and hosting costs. Local chapters have been set up in Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, Poland, and Serbia to support and promote the projects on a national level. Wikimedia is run mostly by volunteer staff and relies entirely on public donations and grants to meet its goal of providing free knowledge to every person in the world.

> *Imagine a world in which every single person is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge. That's what we're doing.*
> *-- Jimmy Wales*

Free content

All contents of the Wikimedia projects are available under a free license, the GNU Free Documentation License (GFDL). Anyone is allowed to copy, distribute, sell, and modify the content, on the condition that he credit the author and preserve the license which gives everyone else the same rights. This principle, coming from the free software world, is called "copyleft". The GFDL ensures that the contents remain free.

Wikis

Invented by Ward Cunningham in 1995, wikis are dynamic websites in which any user can edit a page, quickly and easily, using a web browser. The name is derived from the Hawaiian word "Wikiwiki", meaning fast. Wikis use a simple formatting language anyone can learn in just a few minutes. For example, Wikimedia wikis use two apostrophes to italicize text; three for bolded text, and enclose a word in two brackets to create a link to another page in the wiki
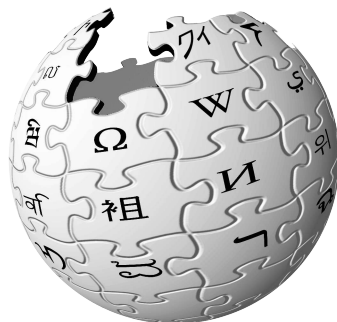

The wiki software used by the Wikimedia projects is called MediaWiki. MediaWiki is developed by volunteers with the goal of creating an encyclopedia. The MediaWiki software itself is published under a free license, the GNU General Public License (GPL), and can be freely used by anyone. In addition to the Wikimedia projects, MediaWiki has been deployed as a collaborative knowledge management tool by international organizations, universities, and companies.

Wikimedia Foundation Projects

Wikipedia

Wikipedia is founded on the belief that virtually everybody has some knowledge that they can share with others. It began as an English language project on January 15, 2001. It was soon joined by German and French language editions, and in a short time by many other languages. The online encyclopedia is written entirely by volunteers: anyone can create or modify an article instantly, so that no article has a single author. Instead, hundreds and even thousands of people work together, sharing what they know to edit and improve the content. The result is a never-ending "work in progress", always getting more thorough, and always getting better. Wikipedia's editors come from a wide range of backgrounds, students, teachers, enthusiasts in many subjects, each of them contributing a little towards helping make this the most well-rounded collaborative educational effort ever seen. Wikipedia believes that every single person has the right to learn, but also that every person has something that they can teach others. Contributors can create a personal account with a user name and a password, but this is not required. Some of Wikipedia's best work comes from anonymous users, many of them just passing through, who notice a minor flaw that they can tidy up. Many of them become hooked, and end up as integral parts of the volunteer community. Wikipedia's policy of maintaining a neutral point of view encourages people from diverse backgrounds to work together. All original material contributed to Wikipedia is considered to be free content under the GNU Free Documentation License. This means that all of its content can be freely used, freely edited, freely copied, and freely redistributed, subject to the restrictions of that license. Wikipedia is, according to alexa.com, one of the top 20 most popular sites on the Internet.
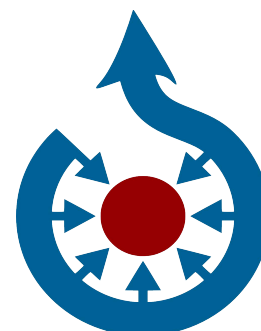•http://www.wikipedia.org

Wikimedia Commons

Wikimedia Commons was launched to provide a central repository for video, images, music, and spoken texts, to be used by all Wikimedia sister projects. Commons now has hundreds-of-thousands of multimedia files. Wikimedia Commons received an honorary mention for Digital Community at the 2005 Prix Ars Electronica awards in May 2005. All files on Commons use free licenses, allowing them to be used for any purpose, even by non-Wikimedia projects.
•http://commons.wikimedia.org

Wiktionary

Wiktionary is a project to create free content dictionaries and thesauri in every language.
•http://www.wiktionary.org

a multilingual free encyclopedia

Wiktionary
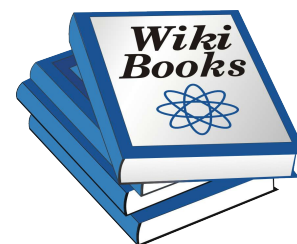[ˈwɪkʃənrɪ] *n.,*
a wiki-based Open Content dictionary

Wikibooks

Wikibooks aims to build a collection of free e-book resources, including textbooks, language courses, manuals, and annotated public domain books. It aims to help both (self-)instruction of students, and teachers in high-schools and universities.
•http://www.wikibooks.org

Wikiquote

Wikiquote is a repository of quotations taken from famous people, books, speeches, films or any intellectually interesting materials. Proverbs, mnemonics or slogans are also included in Wikiquote.
•http://www.wikiquote.org

Wikisource

Wikisource aims to build a collection of primary source texts. It serves Wikimedia's other projects as a useful archive of classics, laws, and other written material.

•http://www.wikisource.org

Wikinews

Wikinews's mission is to report news on a wide variety of subjects, providing a free-content alternative to commercial news; Contributors from around the world collaborate on news articles. The articles in the currently over 10 language editions are either original reports or summaries of news from external sources. All articles are required to be written from a neutral point of view.
•http://www.wikinews.org

Wikispecies

Wikispecies is a project to create a directory of all known species. Articles are named according to the standard genius-species name, and put into a hierarchy according to the Linnaean classification system.

•http://species.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Wikimedia Foundation Structure

The Wikimedia Foundation's policies are set by a five member Board of Trustees, according to the Wikimedia Foundation's charter. Day-to-day operations are handled by the Executive director. The Foundation employs software developers to write and maintain the MediaWiki code used on its projects, and system administrators to maintain the hardware infrastructure.

Jimbo Wales – Chair of the Board of Trustees

Jimmy "Jimbo" Wales is the founder of Wikipedia and the chairman of the Foundation's Board of Trustees. Wales was born in Huntsville, Alabama, and is a graduate of Auburn University and the University of Alabama. He worked as Research Director at Chicago Options Associates, a futures and options trading firm then located in Chicago. In 1999, Wales had the concept of a freely distributable encyclopedia, and founded a project called Nupedia. It failed primarily due to being a top-down "cathedral" model, as opposed to Wikipedia, which is the ultimate "bazaar". After more than two years of struggle with the Nupedia concept, Wikipedia was opened up to all and became an instant success. Wales lives in St. Petersburg, Florida, with his wife and daughter.

Florence Nibart-Devouard – Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees

Florence Nibart-Devouard is the Vice-Chair of the Wikimedia Foundation, re-elected by the Wikimedia community in July 2005. Florence was born in Versailles, France, and lived in several French cities, as well as Antwerp in Belgium and Tempe in Arizona. She is an engineer in Agronomy (ENSAIA) and also holds a DEA in Genetics and biotechnologies (INPL). She joined the Wikipedia adventure in February 2002 and is known under the pseudonym "Anthere". Florence is 37, and lives in Clermont Ferrand with her husband Bertrand and her two children.

Angela Beesley – Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees

Angela Beesley is an elected member of the Board of Trustees of the Wikimedia Foundation. She has been an active editor of Wikipedia since early 2003. Angela co-founded the free wiki hosting site, Wikia.com, with Jimmy Wales in 2004. She works as Wikia's Vice President of Community Relations, supporting over 30,000 registered users and developing over 1500 wikis, all of which follow the free content and open editing model of Wikipedia. Prior to her involvement with Wikipedia, Angela was a researcher and test developer for the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales.

Michael Davis – Treasurer of the Board of Trustees

Michael Davis is the treasurer of the Foundation Board of Trustees. Formerly the CEO of Chicago Options Associates, a futures and options trading firm in Chicago, Michael is Chief Operating Officer of community-focused wiki hosting service Wikia, and lives in St. Petersburg, Florida. He is a graduate of Williams College and the University of Chicago.

Tim Shell – Secretary of the Board of Trustees

Tim Shell is the secretary of the Board of Trustees. Shell is an internet entrepreneur with an interest in self-organization, and decentralized order, as exemplified by Wikipedia. In 1996, Tim left his studies in computer science to go into business, joining up with Jimmy Wales to start Bomis. Shell currently resides in Las Vegas.

Brad Patrick – General Counsel, Interim Executive Director

Brad Patrick serves as general counsel to the Wikimedia Foundation, and on an interim basis as Executive Director. He previously practiced law with Fowler White Boggs Banker PA in Tampa, Florida, where he specialized in intellectual property litigation, computer law, technology and internet issues. Prior to joining Fowler White Boggs Banker, Brad practiced law in Seattle, Washington with Preg O'Donnell & Gillett, a civil litigation firm with a great view of Lake Union. He began his career in Redmond, Washington with the law firm of Magnuson Lowell, P.S. Brad graduated from Colgate University in Hamilton, New York and Boston College Law School in Newton, Massachusetts.

Brion Vibber – Chief Technical Officer

Brion Vibber is the lead developer and release manager of MediaWiki, the wiki software used on all the Wikimedia projects. He is 26 years old and lives in California, USA. He has been involved as a developer for about three years, and has probably poked his finger into every development task, including maintenance of servers, performance improvement, development of features, debugging, and user interface.

Danny Wool – Grants Coordinator

Danny Wool is the Wikimedia Foundation grants coordinator. He has worked in the past as a translator and script writer for television and film in Israel, has published several books, and worked in museums and in informal education as an educator and trainer.

Foundation finances, fiscal year 2005-2006

Income (from Donations/Grants/Sponsorships): $1,275,000

Expenses:
  Server hosting: $204,000
  Payroll: $98,000
  Travel: $68,000[A]
  Office expenses: $19,000
  Bank fees: $48,000[B]
  Corporate and legal fees: $21,000

Expenditures on equipment: $370,000
Total Equipment at cost: $560,000
Increase in assets (i.e. - cash in the bank): $448,000
Assets as of June 30, 2006: $590,000

A – Mostly related to Wikimania 2005 travel and hostel lodging
B – Mostly Paypal, which charges approximately 4% on donations

Project Statistics

Detailed statistics for most Wikimedia Projects can be found at http://stats.wikimedia.org/

Selected statistics, as of May 2006:

Project Name	Started	Size, all languages	Active contributors, all languages [A]	Very active contributors, all languages [B]
Wikipedia	January 2001	4,300,000 articles	64936	8873
Wiktionary	December 2002	833,000 entries	679	215
Wikiquote	July 2003	42,000 pages	351	32
Wikibooks	July 2003	35,000 modules	655	53
Wikisource	November 2003	97,600+[C] texts	11	0
Wikispecies	September 2004	56,000 articles	39	9
Commons	September 2004	741,391 files[D]	N/A	N/A
Wikinews	December 2004	22,000 articles	259	31

A – An active contributor is one who has 5 or more edits in a month
B – A very active contributor is one who has 100 or more edits in a month
C – The statistics generator only counts articles with one internal link. Wikisource articles rarely contain links and are thus vastly under-counted. As of August 9, 2006, the ten largest Wikisource languages had a combined 97,600 articles.
D – As of August 9, 2006

Press Contact Information

Please direct general press inquiries to:
Press@Wikimedia.org

This includes questions, comments, and general requests for interviews. Email sent to that address is handled by the Foundation's Press Committee.

Additional press resources, including press contacts by country, can be found at:
http://wikimediafoundation.org/wiki/Press_room

Foundation contact information:
    Wikimedia Foundation Inc.
    200 2nd Ave. South #358
    St. Petersburg, FL 33701-4313
    USA
    Phone: +1-727-231-0101
    Fax: +1-727-258-0207