WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

Wikipedia:Wikipedia Signpost/2024-10-19/In the media

In the media

Off to the races! Wikipedia wins!

By Bri, Gråbergs Gråa Sång, Jonatan Svensson Glad, robertsky, Smallbones, and HaeB

"Politics of perception" persistence is perplexing, but proof is pending

The *Independent Journal Review*, borrowing from *The Daily Caller*, recently claimed (https://ijr.com/wikipedia-donations-go-toward-embedding-feminism-and-racial-justice-in-worlds-largest-encyclopedia/) that your Wikipedia donations might be funding "feminism and racial justice", instead of just keeping the lights on. *The Commune Mag* and *OpIndia* then joined the fray, alleging that Wikimedia's finances are tied to shadowy donors. Karah Rucker of *Straight Arrow News* listed left-leaning leaders (https://san.com/cc/wikimedia-donates-millions-to-left-wing-activists-that-edit-wikipedia-report/) like Art+Feminism and Black Lunch Table—programs we've previously highlighted in *The Signpost*. Meanwhile, in yet another familiar critique of Wikipedia's alleged political leanings, *Voz* branded the platform as "Wokepedia" (https://voz.us/en/society/240929/16769/wokepedia-is-the-world-s-largest-online-encyclopedia-politically-biased.html), saying it is the world's largest encyclopedia in one sentence, and it "now resembles a sort of Orwellian authority" in the next one.

At this point, it's like watching a rerun. Every few weeks, a new outlet accuses the free encyclopedia of the mind-numbing non-napping known as part

of the politics of perception (https://bigthink.com/the-present/perception-about-politics/). Next, Matt Walsh, a commentator for *The Daily Wire* (not the most reliable source, to be honest), described (https://www.dailywire.com/news/matt-walsh-recalls-critics-trying-to-get-him-arrested-using-wikipedia) a scene from his own movie *Am I Racist?*, where a supposed "white-guilt" group tries to get him arrested by reading the Wikipedia article about him to the police. See previous *Signpost* coverage on Walsh's commentary. – JSG, S

A Hoosier hurrah! Indy Wiki Conference video

WISH-TV reported (https://www.wishtv.com/news/local-news/wikipedia-conference-comes-to-indianapolis/) on the latest edition (https://wikiconference.org/wiki/2024/Main_Page) of WikiConference North America, which took place in Indianapolis from October 3 to October 6. The station interviewed Nigerian Wikimedian James Popoola—a frequent contributor to Wikidata and The WikiVibrance Project—Justin Clark, the digital initiatives director at the Indiana State Library, and the conference's organizer, Dominic Byrd-McDevitt. As further highlighted in the article, the mayor of Indianapolis, Joe Hogsett, proclaimed October 4 as "Wikipedia Day", while the IU Indianapolis Library received $280,000 from the local Library Fund in order to improve information on Indiana's digital heritage on Wikipedia. – S

Keeping AI at bay – with a little help from volunteers

Devex reported (https://www.devex.com/news/wikipedia-relies-on-army-of-volunteers-as-it-stares-down-ai-108437) on how Wikipedia's army of human volunteers is being hailed as its greatest weapon against the rise of artificial intelligence. Interviewed by the platform, Wikimedia Foundation CEO Maryana Iskander emphasized that while AI churns out a lot of "slop" by prioritizing speed over accuracy, Wikipedia's

crowdsourced approach has kept it a beacon of reliable information. Despite the hype surrounding the AI's quick progress, Iskander notes that Wikipedia's human editors remain cool and confident, because, well, it turns out that good old-fashioned community curation still works.

Additionally, *404 Media* has picked up (https://www.404media.co/the-editors-protecting-wikipedia-from-ai-hoaxes) on the formation of WikiProject AI Cleanup (see previous *Signpost* coverage), created by volunteers to tackle a growing problem: AI-generated content that introduces errors or misleading information into articles. *ExtremeTech* also highlighted the surge (https://www.extremetech.com/internet/people-are-stuffing-wikipedia-with-ai-generated-garbage) of "AI-generated garbage," including a fabricated article about a non-existent Ottoman fortress and incorrect information added to existing articles. Even with the challenges posed by AI, at least *this* human editor is confident that community-driven curation will remain the best guarantor of quality. – JSG

Massive pay to play

Ashley Rindsberg shows "How Wikipedia is Becoming a Massive Pay-to-Play Scheme (https://www.piratewires.com/p/how-wikipedia-is-becoming-a-massive-pay-to-play-scheme)" at *Pirate Wires*, writing that "a boomtown industry feeding an insatiable demand for services like article creation, editing, management and deletion has emerged." One of his first targets is Pakistani company Abtach, which is reportedly tied to "at least 130 different Wikipedia editing front companies that operate under domains like Wikicreatorsinc.com, Wikicreation.services, Wikipedia Pro, Wikipedia Legends, and USAwikispecialists.com." See this story in *The Signpost* for more details.

For examples of slightly more sophisticated paid editing, Rindsberg provides links to articles about British investment immigration consultancies, Canadian frozen foods producers, cellulite-busting self-massage accessories, custom T-shirt retailers, Swedish online travel agencies, German disinfectant brands, industrial waste management companies, RegTech software firms, as well as packaging producers, electronic device recyclers, and self-storage chains. That's just what he considers "black hat" paid editing.

The more sophisticated "white hat" editors are linked to articles on Bain & Co, Yelp, Qualcomm, Kaspersky Lab, software company Forcepoint, the RSA Conference, as well as a *New York Times* exec and corporate clients like Reddit, MetLife, Accenture, Intel, IBM, Hubspot, Hilton, Vox Media, Dick's Sporting Goods, United Airlines, Amdocs, Gallup, Allergan, Breyers, Vimeo and Waymo.

Along the way, he mentions several of the better known scandals involving paid editing, including MyWikiBiz (see related *Signpost* coverage), Legal Morning (see previous *Signpost* coverage) and WhiteHatWiki (see see previous *Signpost* coverage). It's an excellent introduction to paid editing on Wikipedia, and you shouldn't be surprised if you see some of these names again.

In the words of Rindsberg, "the question this leaves us asking is whether we can really apply the historic term 'encyclopedia' to a sprawling network of thousands of articles carefully pruned by the PR departments of billion dollar companies, or if Wikipedia is something else entirely." – S

From clickbait to culture

A crossword (https://eu.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/puzzles/crosswords/sally-hoelscher/2024/10/01/daily-crossword-analysis/75360889007/) published in *USA Today* by constructor Ada Nicolle featured an unexpected nod to Wikipedia. One clue highlighted Annie Rauwerda, founder of the popular Depths of Wikipedia accounts on Instagram and other social media platforms, which showcase quirky and obscure content from the site. Other clues celebrated Icelandic-Canadian heritage, such as a reference to Gimli, Manitoba—the Canadian town with the highest population of Icelanders outside of Iceland itself.

In a recent interview (https://www.michigandaily.com/statement/exploring-and-building-the-depths-of-wikipedia/) with *The Michigan Daily*, Rauwerda reflected on how her account has grown into a hub for curious readers and Wikipedia enthusiasts, emphasizing the thrill of discovering—and correcting—obscure content. She also discussed the unique challenges of maintaining the account while navigating Wikipedia's complex editing rules, and the role her platform plays in demystifying the editing process and encouraging new contributors. From clickbait headlines to deep dives into obscure history, Depths of Wikipedia has evolved into a cultural phenomenon that brings new visibility to the weird and wonderful corners of our beloved encyclopedia. – JSG

Kamala Harris accused of plagiarizing from Wikipedia in co-authored book from 2009

According to a report (https://plagiatsgutachten.com/blog/plagiarism-by-kamala-harris/) by Stefan Weber, an Austrian media researcher noted for his work as a "plagiarism hunter", current US Vice President and presidential candidate Kamala Harris "copy-pasted a Wikipedia article" into her 2009 book *Smart on Crime* (co-authored with Joan O'C. Hamilton), alongside plagiarism from other sources. The allegations were publicized (https://christopherrufo.com/p/kamala-harriss-plagiarism-problem) by US conservative activist Christopher Rufo in what may be intended as an October surprise ahead of the November 5 presidential election. (Rufo and a co-author had previously investigated plagiarism in academic publications by Harvard University president Claudine Gay, contributing to her resignation.)

The New York Times summarized (https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/14/us/christopher-rufo-kamala-harris-book.html) a different plagiarism expert's initial reaction as stating that "the errors were not serious, given the size of the [book]." However, a day later the same expert (Jonathan Bailey, who runs a site called "Plagiarism Today") followed up (https://www.plagiarismtoday.com/2024/10/15/the-kamala-harris-plagiarism-scandal/) to clarify that his statement had been based on the examples provided in Rufo's post only, and that after reviewing the full dossier by Weber, he judged "the case [to be] more serious than I commented to the New York Times" although he still maintained that "the pattern points to sloppy writing habits, not a malicious intent to defraud." Specifically, Bailey stated that

> "The most serious allegation concerns Wikipedia. Harris' book contained roughly two paragraphs copied from Wikipedia without citation. To be clear, that is plagiarism. It's compounded by the fact that Wikipedia is typically not seen as a reliable source, and, according to Weber, there was an error in the information."

The Harris campaign rejected the plagiarism allegations outright as "a partisan attempt to weaponize a 15-year-old work", as summarized in a *Washington Post* article (https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/10/15/kamala-harris-plagiarism-allegations-christopher-rufo/). Conversely, Harris' political opponent JD Vance seized on them by posting on Twitter/X "I wrote my own book, unlike Kamala Harris, who copied hers from Wikipedia." The WaPo article also reported an unnamed source as claiming that while Harris' involvement in the book included "reviewing drafts", she "was not involved in the formatting of outside excerpts and citations".

The Wikipedia article in question is Midtown Community Court, which according to Weber was plagiarized in this revision (https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Midtown_Community_Court&oldid=291329366). – H

In brief

- **Wikipedia paces to victory**: In an unexpected twist, Wikipedia isn't just for late-night research dives anymore—it's also the name of a harness racing horse! *Standardbred Canada* reports (https://standardbredcanada.ca/news/9-26-24/blazing-belle-wikipedia-wow-oss-gold.html) the nobly named Standardbred pacer, a three-year-old son of Mcwicked, came from five lengths back in the stretch (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDJ9XZ-7ImM) to win an Ontario Sire Stakes Gold division race, overcoming Crush Kill Destroy, Unrivaled Hanover, Legal Attack and Chain Gang. The next time someone will say "Wikipedia is fast," they won't just be talking about the servers.

No one has uploaded a photo of racehorse Wikipedia yet, so here is Rysdyk's Hambletonian, great-great-etc. grandsire of Wikipedia

Not yet! Still nobody has uploaded a photo of racehorse Wikipedia. So here is Bret Hanover, his great-great-great grandsire

- **Camille Herron's race for wiki supremacy**: Multiple magazines and news outlets, including *Runner's World (https://www.runnersworld.com/uk/news/a62364599/camille-herron-wikipedia/)*, *Canadian Running Magazine (https://runningmagazine.ca/the-scene/u-s-ultrarunner-camille-herron-involved-in-wikipedia-controversy/)*, *Women's Health (https://www.womenshealthmag.com/life/a62408500/camille-herron-wikipedia-controversy/)*, and *Athletics Illustrated (https://athleticsillustrated.com/camille-herron-caught-manipulating-wikipedia-information-on-herself-and-editing-killian-jornets-profile/)* all reported that ultrarunner Camille Herron

went from trails to keyboards, getting flagged for editing her own Wikipedia page to emphasize her achievements, as well as removing some of the achievements in the article about Kilian Jornet — turning this into a race of reputation, rather than endurance. Wikipedia's neutrality got a workout as Herron's edits sparked controversy over athletes curating their own narratives. Actions have consequences, though—Herron was swiftly dropped by her primary sponsor,

A pacing racehorse. May we ask anybody who enjoys Ontario racetracks to take and upload a photo?

Lululemon, making this yet another high-stakes lesson in online reputation management gone wrong.

- **Recent research piece picked up**: *The Arabian Post* picked up (https://thearabianpost. com/perception-of-credibility-favors-voice-agents-over-wikipedia/) on a study comparing how people perceive credibility between Wikipedia, ChatGPT, and Alexa. While their coverage didn't mention *The Signpost* directly, it did link back to our *Recent research piece* from two issues ago. So, even though we weren't named, *The Signpost* served as a bridge between the original *Nature* article (https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-024 -67829-6) and international media coverage.

- **Wikipedia "winner" goes viral!**: A viral screenshot of a Wikipedia page claiming Abhijeet Sawant as the winner of *Bigg Boss Marathi* season 5 has stirred up social media, leading to debates on whether it's true or just another case of Wikipedia vandalism. The buzz even got coverage (https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/other/abhijee t-sawant-is-bigg-boss-marathi-5-winner-nikki-tamboli-4th-runner-up-real-or-fake/ar-AA1r b2da?ocid=BingNewsVerp) by *The Free Press Journal*, which pointed out the ongoing confusion.

- **Goa's newest archive**: Indian outlet *Goamankat Times* highlighted (https://www.gomant aktimes.com/lifestyle/documenting-goas-past-and-present-on-wikipedia) local Wikipedian Tanmay Pereira Naik's efforts to expand and improve articles related to Goa on Wikipedia, which include everything from documenting local history and politics to covering underrepresented topics like traditional cuisine and Goan personalities.

- **Wikipedia training camp**: Nigerian newspaper *The Punch* reported (https://punchng.co m/group-trains-20-participants-in-wikipedia-editing/) that a group of 20 participants attended a Wikipedia editing workshop in Nigeria, hosted by the Tyap Wikipedia User Group. The workshop aimed to improve digital literacy and expand representation of Nigerian topics on the encyclopedia.

- **Portland City Auditor reopens Gonzalez case**: After initially determining there was insufficient evidence to determine that the Portland, Oregon mayoral candidate broke campaign finance law by hiring a firm to burnish his Wikipedia page, the city auditor reopened the case (https://www.koin.com/news/portland/gonzalez-wikipedia-spending-investigation-reopens-after-new-information/). KOIN reports that "Gonzalez's office had paid a company called Codename Enterprises, operating under WhiteHatWiki, to assist with edits and contentious matters on Gonzalez's Wikipedia page." See also the report (https://www.oregonlive.com/politics/2024/10/portland-auditor-to-reconsider-whether-mayoral-candidate-rene-gonzalezs-wikipedia-edits-broke-campaign-finance-rules.html) in *The Oregonian* and previous *Signpost* coverage here, here, and here. The next installment of this long running saga is expected with the release of the revised City Auditor's report on or before Halloween.

- **"Under the radar" page move rankles**: Scholar Asaf Romirowsky criticised the article on Israeli apartheid in an interview for the *Jewish Journal*, saying that the Wikipedia article's title and opening paragraph are "a work of fiction (https://jewishjournal.com/commentary/opinion/375347/wikipedia-editors-title-article-israeli-apartheid/)"; the same article also claims that the Requested move to the current title was accomplished "under the radar". This is not the first page move controversy reported by *The Signpost*; find more about previous instances here, and here.

- **Spotlight on Bangladeshi Authors**: An article (https://www.thedailystar.net/star-literature/news/bangladeshs-writers-wikipedia-abbasuddin-ahmed-and-humayun-kabir-3719096) in *The Daily Star* explored how Wikipedia categorizes prominent Bangladeshi literary figures like Abbasuddin Ahmed and Humayun Kabir. The piece highlighted issues with labeling writers based solely on linguistic or geographical ties, which sometimes results in misclassifications—such as identifying them only as "Bengali" or "Indian", rather than acknowledging their heritage. The article argues for more precise representation on Wikipedia to honor these authors' contributions to the cultural and literary history of Bangladesh, and to avoid losing the nuances of their identities due to historical geopolitical changes.

- **High interest in 5784**: In its year-end Internet culture wrapup (https://www.jpost.com/business-and-innovation/article-822955), the *Jerusalem Post* noted that "Israel's Wikipedia entry... [got] approximately 14,769,946 views in a year, more than Israel's entire population." Other Wikipedia pageviews were noted, as well as Google search and YouTube popularity, to gauge interest in various Israel-related topics (and some Jewish public figures in the US and elsewhere).

- **If sockfarms don't succeed, try, try again**: University of Sydney researcher Olga Boichak writes in *Foreign Policy* about "How Russia Invaded Wikipedia (https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/10/04/russia-ukraine-putin-wikipedia-ruwiki-disinformation/)",

commenting on the nationwide splinternet and the creation of Ruviki, the government-backed fork of ru.wiki.

- **The silent majority?**: The Wikipedia article for the 2024 *Silent Hill 2* remake was recently locked after persistent disruptive editing aimed at lowering review scores. According to *IGN* (https://nordic.ign.com/silent-hill-2-remake/87825/news/silent-hill-2-remake-wikipedia-page-locked-down-after-persistent-disruptive-editing-lowers-review-sc), the edits skewed the ratings from various sources to make the remake

Who's been trolling who?

seem less well-received. In a move straight out of the game's own playbook, admins had to put the page under "lock and key"—much like the puzzles and locked doors players navigate in *Silent Hill 2*—to keep the chaos at bay.

- **Are press releases news?**: Outlets such as *Business Standard* and *NewsTap* both covered the Wikimedia Technology Summit 2024, with the former publishing a press release (https://www.business-standard.com/content/press-releases-ani/wikimedia-technology-summit-2024-brings-together-tech-enthusiasts-and-developers-to-bring-inclusivity-to-wikipedia-and-wikimedia-projects-124100800340_1.html) and the latter seemingly slightly rewriting it (https://www.newstap.in/telangana/wikimedia-technology-summit-2024-held-in-hyderabad-focuses-on-inclusivity-and-innovation-1554029?infinitescroll=1). The summit was hosted with IIIT Hyderabad and focused on enhancing inclusivity and innovation within Wikipedia and other Wikimedia projects. The press release highlighted sessions on developing tools to better support diverse communities and promoting equal participation in tech development.

- **Check the stats first**: *UnHerd* reported that (https://unherd.com/newsroom/wikipedia-labels-grooming-gang-scandal-moral-panic/) Wikipedia recently renamed its article on the UK's grooming gang scandals to "Grooming gang moral panic in the United Kingdom", sparking controversy. The change, which was based on discussions citing sources like a 2020 Home Office report (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5fd87e348fa8f54d5733f532/Group-based_CSE_Paper.pdf), was intended to reflect how the media and public framed the issue. Critics argue that the new title downplays the severity of the abuse, causing debate over whether Wikipedia is succumbing to political correctness at the cost of historical accuracy. The Wikipedia article highlights another government report and statistics that show that White men in the UK sexually abuse children more than Muslims or South Asians.

- **The court reads**: Following the last issue's coverage of the ongoing legal case between India's Asian News Network and the Wikimedia Foundation, a dedicated article was written and published on 10 October 2024. However, the article has now been mentioned in the court on 14 October, and wasn't exactly well-received, as reported by *Bar and Bench (https://www.barandbench.com/news/litigation/delhi-high-court-slams-wikipedia-refusal-divulge-identity-those-edited-ani-page)* and *Live Law (https://www.livelaw.in/high-court/delhi-high-court/delhi-high-court-wikipedia-ani-defamation-cant-threaten-judge-272349)*. On 16 October, the court pretty much ordered (https://www.livelaw.in/high-court/delhi-high-court/prima-facie-contemptuous-delhi-high-court-orders-deletion-of-wikipedia-page-on-pending-defamation-suit-by-ani-272578) a deletion of the article, which was snow-kept at a short-lived AfD.

Do you want to contribute to "In the media" by writing a story or even just an "in brief" item? Edit our next issue in the Newsroom or leave a tip on the suggestions page.

+ Add a comment (https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?editintro=Wikipedia:Wikipedia_Signpost/Templates/Comment-editnotice&title=Wikipedia_talk:Wikipedia_Signpost/2024-10-19/In_the_media&action=edit&preload=Wikipedia:Signpost/Templates/Signpost-article-comments-end/preload)

THESE COMMENTS ARE AUTOMATICALLY TRANSCLUDED FROM THIS ARTICLE'S TALK PAGE. TO FOLLOW COMMENTS, ADD THE PAGE TO YOUR WATCHLIST (HTTPS://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/W/INDEX.PHP?TITLE=WIKIPEDIA_TALK:WIKIPEDIA_SIGNPOST/2024-10-19/IN_THE_MEDIA&ACTION=WATCH). IF YOUR COMMENT HAS NOT APPEARED HERE, YOU CAN TRY .

The Jewish Journal article on the WP page on Israeli apartheid is quite ridiculous, to be honest. Chill, not everyone who portrays Israel harshly is some sort of Hamas supporter. --Firestar464 (talk) 18:30, 19 October 2024 (UTC)

> In what can perhaps only be viewed as tragic irony, the author leads an academic organization whose founder ranked among the most notorious denialists of the Armenian Genocide. TrangaBellam (talk) 16:21, 20 October 2024 (UTC)

At the time of me writing this, *Asian News International vs. Wikimedia Foundation* has been taken down by the WMF. There might be a media-mention on this at some point. Wikipedia:Village_pump_(WMF)#WMF_action. Gråbergs Gråa Sång (talk) 04:44, 21 October 2024

(UTC)

The WMF *has* dedicated a sizeable portion of its donations to activist programs unrelated to Wikipedia and its sister projects, and it isn't helpful to lump it in with the "Wokepedia" nonsense. See meta:Knowledge Equity Fund and the 2023 Signpost article on the issue. Thebiguglyalien (talk) 03:55, 22 October 2024 (UTC)

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