

# Wikimedia

*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



Wikimedia is an international non-profit organisation dedicated to the development and distribution of free multilingual content. It hosts various free-content projects, most notably Wikipedia, the award-winning online encyclopædia. Other online projects include Wiktionary, a multilingual dictionary; Wikibooks, a collection of free-content textbooks; Wikiquote, a repository of famous quotes; and Wikisource, a repository for primary-source materials.

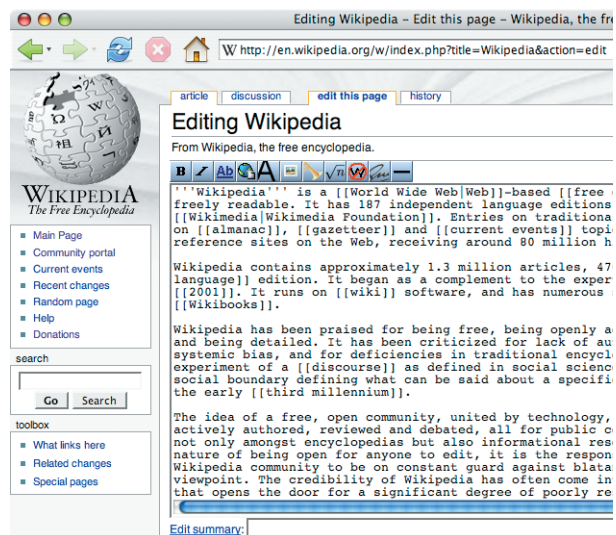
The Wikimedia Foundation was set up in June 2003 to serve and develop the necessary infrastructure for the constantly growing projects. It owns the Wikimedia servers and covers bandwidth and hosting costs. In Germany, France and Italy, local Wikimedia chapters have been founded to support and promote 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.

## Free content

All contents of the Wikimedia projects are available under a free licence. Everyone is allowed to copy, distribute, sell, and modify the content, on the condition that they credit the author and preserve the licence which gives everyone else the same rights. This principle, coming from the free software world, is called "copyleft". The GNU Free Documentation License 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, to italicise text, surround it with two apostrophes; use three for bolded text, and enclose a word in two brackets ([[ ]]) to create a link to another page in the wiki.



The software used by the Wikimedia projects is called MediaWiki, and was developed with the goal of creating an encyclopædia. The MediaWiki software itself is published under a free licence, the GNU General Public License (GPL). In addition to the Wikimedia projects, MediaWiki has been deployed as a collaborative knowledge management tool by international organisations, universities, and companies.

# Wikimedia 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 a German and French edition, and in a short time by many other languages.



The online encyclopædia 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 licence.

Wikipedia, one of the 50 most popular websites in the world (according to alexa.com), is now available in over 120 languages; in descending order, the largest are English, German, French, Japanese, Swedish, Dutch, and Polish. In total, there are more than 3 million articles, with 700 000 in the English edition, and 300 000 in German.

- <http://www.wikipedia.org>.

## Wikimedia Commons

Wikimedia Commons was launched in September 2004, to provide a central repository for free video, images, music, and spoken texts, to be used by all Wikimedia projects. The project allows its resources, images and sound files to be reused across other Wikimedia projects. As of June 2005, it has over 150 000 multimedia files. Wikimedia Commons received an honorary mention for Digital Community at the 2005 Prix Ars Electronica awards in May 2005.



- <http://commons.wikimedia.org>

## Wiktionary

Wiktionary is a project to create free content dictionaries and thesauri in every language. The project started in December 2002, and is now available in over 50 languages with almost 200 000 entries. The largest language edition is English, followed by Polish, Bulgarian and Dutch.



- <http://www.wiktionary.org>

## 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. The project started in July 2003 and has approximately 5,000 modules of 250 books across more than 35 languages.



- <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.

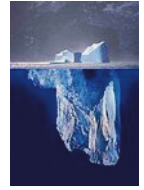


The project started in July 2003; As of July 2005, it includes nearly 18,000 pages in over 30 languages. The largest Wikiquote is in English with over 4,000 pages. The German, French, Polish, Bulgaria and Portuguese editions have each over 1,000 articles.

- <http://www.wikiquote.org>

## Wikisource

Wikisource, started in November, 2003, 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 started in December 2004 with the mission 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>

## Who is who in Wikimedia?

### Jimmy “Jimbo” Wales

Jimmy “Jimbo” Wales (born August 7, 1966), is the founder of Wikipedia and the President of the Wikimedia Foundation. 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 encyclopædia, 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 2 years of struggle with the Nupedia concept, Wikipedia was opened up to all and became an instant success.

Wales is currently the President and Chair of the Wikimedia Foundation. He lives in St. Petersburg, Florida, with his wife and daughter.

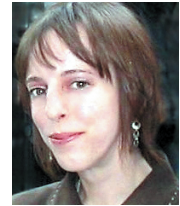
### Florence Devouard

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, Paris, 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 36, and lives in Clermont Ferrand with her husband Bertrand and her two children.



### Angela Beesley

Angela Beesley is the Executive Secretary of the Wikimedia Foundation, re-elected by the community in July 2005. Angela was born in Norwich, England, in 1977 and grew up in Maidstone and Colchester. She holds an honours degree in psychology. During a year out from Aston University, and for a period after graduating, Angela worked as a research assistant in the Aston Dyslexia and Developmental Assessment Centre. She then worked for the National Foundation for Educational Research, based in Berkshire, as a developer of the national statutory assessments for England and Wales. Angela currently lives in Berlin, and manages Wikicities, which she founded with Jimmy Wales in October 2004.



### Brion Vibber

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 3 years, and has probably poked his finger into every development task, including maintenance of servers, performance improvement, development of features, debugging, and user interface.



### ...and more than 50 000 other authors from all over the world

You can find them on <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wikipedians>. All logged-in users in the Wikimedia projects have a user page where they can publish information about themselves.

## Awards

### Wikipedia

- Grimme Online Award 2005 for the German Wikipedia
- Intel Publikumspreis for the German Wikipedia
- Golden Nica for "Digital Communities" at the Prix ars electronica 2004
- Webby Award 2004 for "Best Community"
- Web Creation Award 2004 for Japanese Wikipedia
- Top 10 reference sites - The UK Daily Mirror, October 2003

## Press clippings

"Thousands of volunteers [have] written a breathtaking 500,000 articles in 50 languages since 2001—all thanks to the defining feature of wikis." (Businessweek, June 2004)

"Wiki sites that work include the impressive Wikipedia, a collaborative encyclopaedia covering every topic imaginable. It puts the wiki concept to practical use, drawing on the combined knowledge and experience of all its contributors to create something informative and authoritative." (The Guardian, April 1, 2004)

"What is perhaps most fascinating about Wikipedia is its demonstration in practical anarchy. It is an ever-shifting, voluntary, collaborative enterprise. If it is in the long run successful, it would show that people can make amazing things together without being commanded, constrained, taxed, bribed or punished...if Wikipedia grows into the greatest reference work ever made, it will suggest that great things are possible when you merely let people go and see what happens." (Crispin Sartwell, Los Angeles Times, May 4, 2005)

"One of the most fascinating developments of the Digital Age... extraordinary..." (Dan Gillmor, San José Mercury News, January 29, 2004)

"It's called Wikipedia and, like Google, it is one of the wonders of the world." (John Naughton, The Observer, September 12, 2004)

## More information & Contact

### On the web

- Wikimedia Foundation  
<http://www.wikimediafoundation.org>
- User statistics  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wikistats/EN/Sitemap.htm>
- Usage per country  
<http://www2.knams.wikimedia.org/country-stats>
- Access and traffic statistics  
<http://www2.knams.wikimedia.org/stats>
- Media kit (logos and photos)  
<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Press>

### International press contacts

Jimmy Wales  
President, Wikimedia Foundation  
Email: [jwales@wikimedia.org](mailto:jwales@wikimedia.org)  
Phone: (+1)-727-527-9776

Elisabeth Bauer  
Press Officer, Wikimedia Foundation  
Email: [elian@wikimedia.org](mailto:elian@wikimedia.org)  
Phone +49 (0)173-355-8645

### Contacts in France

Florence Devouard  
Vice chair, Wikimedia Foundation  
Phone: +33 (0)4-73140069

Yann Forget  
Press contact, Wikimedia France  
Phone: +33 (0)450-387843

Email: [info-fr@wikimedia.org](mailto:info-fr@wikimedia.org)

### Contacts in Germany

Kurt Jansson  
Chairman, Wikimedia Germany  
Phone: +49 (0)30-610 74 581

Arne Klempert  
Vice chairman, Wikimedia Germany  
Phone: +49(0)175-93 542 93

<http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Pressepress-de@wikimedia.org>