Why do female editors leave Wikipedia?

A qualitative analysis of gender bias in the Spanish Wikipedia

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Wikipedia: community-based sum of all human knowledge

50 million articles in more than 300 languages

5th most popular web site and **1st page** of results generated by search engines

Primary source of information where books are not available & for high school students

Spanish Wikipedia 8th according to size (1,5 M pages) and 4th according to registered editors (>18,000)

Wikipedia's bureaucracy. System of governance: roles and policies

Wikipedia's Bureaucracy

The volunteers who produce the encyclopedia have created a complex system of governance. Here are some of its roles.

Administrators
Elected; have powers including deleting pages and blocking or giving roles to other users.

Account creators
Exempt from restrictions on registering accounts in bulk.

Autopatrollers
Trusted to bypass some screening processes applied to new articles.

Bots
Software that patrols and makes edits, such as removing vandalism.

Bureaucrats
Elected; have powers over other accounts, including the power to deploy bots.

Checkusers
Can view the IP addresses used by other editors.

Edit filter managers
Manage tools to detect unwanted edits and warn those who made them.

File movers
Can rename images and other media files.

Importers
Can copy articles between different editions of Wikipedia.

IP-block exempt
Can bypass blocks on editing from certain Internet connections.

Oversighters
Can hide deleted content from the history logs of article pages.

Ombudsmen
Investigate complaints that bureaucrats used their role to infringe an editor's privacy.
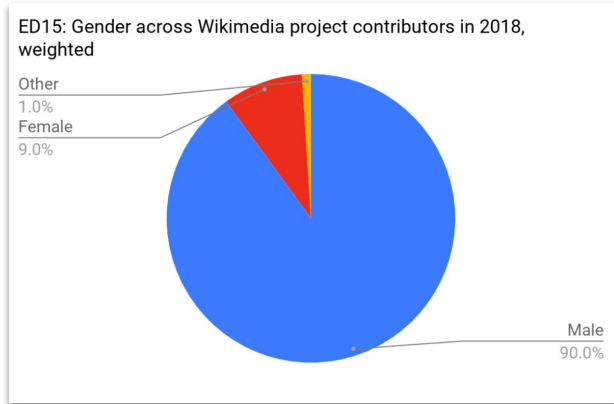
List of policies and guidelines of Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:List_of_policies_and_guidelines

Source: Simonite, T. (2013). "The Decline of Wikipedia", en: MIT Technology Review, https://www.technologyreview.com/s/520446/the-decline-of-wikipedia/

Neutral point of view Policy

Poorly representation of the world diversity.

Gender bias on Wikipedia: Editor community: primarily male contributors (≈ 90%)
Female Editors (≈ 10%) and with higher dropout rate

Corresponding gender-oriented disparity in the content of Wikipedia's articles. Only about 18% of Wikipedia's biographical articles are about women

Wikipedia Foundation has not achieved the 2015 Goal o increasing up to 25% female editors

Though the proportion of female readership to male readership on Wikipedia is roughly equal (47%)

ED15: Gender across Wikimedia project contributors in 2018, weighted

Other
1.0%
Female
9.0%

Male
90.0%

Source: Survey on who is editing Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 2018

R&I

Analyzing Gender Bias in the Spanish Wikipedia: Quantitative Perspective

Research Questions and Methodology:

- **How many editors are female in WP? In disguise? Early dropout?**
  - **Manual coding of gender or real name**:
    - Sample of registered users (Dump 1st Oct 2017). Registered users, User Page, editors during the last 5 years with at least 50 edits: 13,210
    - Sampling: User page size and number of edits
    - Manual coding instrument using only the User Page content (no username): 4,746 coded. (Reliability 2 coders=0,96)
    - Explicit saying gender or real name: 295 women, 2,029 men, 2,422 unknown
  - **Automatic gender extraction** from Wikipedia API (Spanish: Usuario/Usuaria):
    - 181 women, 1,661 men, 2,904 unspecified
- When combined: 353 women (7.44%), 2,792 men (58.83%), 1,601 unknown (33.73%)
- No **discrepancies were found between the two coding methods**

Analyzing Gender Bias in the Spanish Wikipedia: Qualitative Perspective

Research Questions and Methods:

- **What are the practices, perceptions, motivations and feelings of female editors in WP?**
  - socio-demographic (education, time spent on care, type of work, etc.)
  - motivation to participate and reasons to abandon
  - experiences as editors
  - gender positioning
- 353 female users (All contacted, 90 responded and 12 accepted to be interviewed: 4 current female editors and 8 former editors (4 short-term and 4 long-term)

Socio-demographic profile of participants

- Age: 23-63 years old
- 8 different nationalities across Europe and Latin America
  - Argentine, Basque, Bolivian, Catalan, Mexican, Spanish, Uruguayan and Venezuelan
- All of them with higher education:
  - 3PhD, 3 higher education, 3 secondary, 2 master, 1 higher education student
- Domestic chores: 100%-60%-0%
- Working hours: 50h-30h/per week

Common features: current and former female editors

- High **personal satisfaction** with their contribution to Wikipedia
- Few feminist: only 2, and 3 feminist activist (explicitly expressed)
- Most of them stand for **Usuaria**, although some did not know the possibility
- Concerns:
  - little female editor presence
  - low rate of female bio entrances and family/personal issues are more present than professional features in bio female entrances
  - easy nominations for deletions
  - contribute to the equal education of new generations
  - increase the use of non-sexist language

UOC R&I

Main reasons for leaving Wikipedia:

	Sue Gardner "9 reasons why women don't edit Wikipedia"	Reasons for leaving (or editing) from our data
Women Role	2.Not having enough time	-Child care and domestic chores. **+But part time job, sick leave, retirement: editing stages**
Harsh environment	6. Misogynistic atmosphere 7. Wikipedia culture is sexual, it is off-putting 9.Fewer opportunities than other sites for social relationships and a welcoming tone 8. Being addressed as male is off-putting to women whose primary language has grammatical gender	-Non-inclusive language, gender perspective -Usuario-Usuaria (User male/female) -Unjustified male criticism -Insecurity in an environment where you are the minority -Tone in communications: "an abrupt environment"/"environment that generates insecurity"/"gender conflict" -Visibility of female bios **+Wikipedia with smaller communities smooth environment**
Editing process	4. Aversion to conflict, edit wars 5. Belief that contributions are likely to be deleted	Difficulty justify relevance of female information sources Substancial info sources Need for time to edit discussions / or not willing to
ICT & content competencies	1.Lack of user-friendliness editing interface 3. Lack of self-confidence	Most of them feel competent with ICT and with their expertise Only editors are critics with the platform though it is easy to learn

Main reasons for editing (or leaving) Wikipedia:

	Reasons for editing	Reasons for leaving
Editathon	Main entrance for editing Training Meeting place, social Gender gap task force	Main reason to leave when the community or project ends

Kelvin Smith Library and the Cleveland Museum of Art Ingalls Research Library partner up for

Art+Feminism
Wiki Edit-A-Thon 2018

Wikimedia's gender trouble is well-documented. While the reasons for the gender gap are up for debate, the practical effect of this disparity, however, is not. Content is skewed by the lack of female participation. This represents an alarming absence in an increasingly important repository of shared knowledge.

Source: Kevin Smith Library
https://artscimedia.case.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/63/2018/02/20141520/artwomen2018.jpg
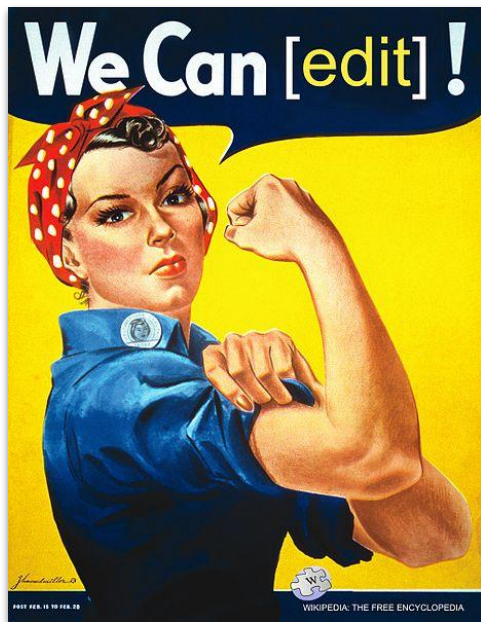
R&I

Conclusions

- Difficulties in making female editors concerns visible:
  - Response rate for the interviews quite low (3%. 354 sampled-90 contacted-12 response)
  - Off the record regarding gender issues and situations with male editors
- Feelings of insecurity in an environment where women are a minority
- Gender bias
  - Visibility of female bios (all editors and ex-editors)
  - Difficulty to justify the relevance of female information sources. Don't reach WP quality scores
  - Interpersonal communication is associated with the continuity of women to edit in Wikipedia, through collective experiences of editing; HARSH ENVIRONMENT
  - Non-inclusive language nor gender perspective
  - Usuario-Usuaria (User male/female)
  - Injustify male criticism according to some participants

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Recommendations

- **Editathon's role**
  - Provide more autonomy and security to participants
  - Carry out more stable projects and promote initiatives that facilitate the persistence of female editors into Wikipedia
  - Think about how to facilitate the reentry of female editors into Wikipedia

- **Communication**
  - First to thank for the contribution
  - Agreeable tone in communications, discussions, comments on user pages or justification of corrections

- Need from the **public sphere** (media/universities, etc.) promotion of equal content and practices from a gender perspective

We Can [edit] !

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Thank you for your attention
Questions and comments more than welcome!

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Source: T. Morris https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:We_Can_Edit.jpg

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