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Wikipedia's gaps in coverage: are Wikiprojects a solution? A study of the Cambodian Wikiproject

Abstract

Purpose: This article examines the rather unsuccessful Wikiproject for Cambodia. Despite its lack of success it is a case that can be used to draw lessons for dealing with the issue of geographical under-representation on Wikipedia as a whole. After presenting evidence of the Wikiproject's failure to achieve the goals for which it was created, I will discuss the pressing issues of imbalances in geographical coverage on Wikipedia as well as the deeper issues involved in remedying these imbalances; namely, the question of who gets to represent whom.

Design/methodology/approach: I take a broadly qualitative approach to the study of Wikipedia. For this study the Cambodia Wikiproject main page, as well as the various talk page archives associated with it, was downloaded in November 2016 and subjected to a content analysis. Descriptive statistics are also used when necessary to build the argument.

Findings: Wikiproject Cambodia has failed to appreciably improve the coverage of Cambodian topics. This is likely due to its inability to attract for a prolonged period of time a champion able to anchor the project and provide a sense that someone is listening. But the makeup of the project members also suggests that even if a champion could be found, the question of who gets to represent whom remains difficult to deal with. It is unlikely that Cambodia will anytime soon develop a strong community of Wikipedia editors given the economic and social constraints the country imposes on most of its population.

Originality/value: This work builds on the small, but growing body of literature dealing with coverage gaps in Wikipedia. Given Wikipedia's growing importance as part of the everyday information infrastructure people use, such gaps and potential solutions to these gaps should be a vital part of the information science community's agenda.

Introduction

In recent years, scrutiny of Wikipedia has gone beyond an initial concern for accuracy to include in addition concern over gaps in its coverage. Wikiprojects, communities of editors who focus on improving or adding to articles on particular topics or areas, present one mechanism by which these gaps in coverage could potentially be filled. This article examines the Wikiproject for Cambodia – not a particularly successful venture, but one that can be used to draw lessons for dealing with the issue of geographical under-representation. Afterwards I will discuss what can be done to deal with imbalances in geographical coverage on Wikipedia as well as the deeper issues involved in such efforts; namely, the question of who gets to represent whom. Before turning to these concerns, however, I will briefly survey the literature that presents the evidence for Wikipedia's content inadequacies.

Under-representation on Wikipedia

The issue of gender was one of the first gaps that caught the attention of Wikipedia and scholarly communities. Hence much of the literature on under-representation in Wikipedia deals with gender imbalances. One of the first studies of gender imbalance on Wikipedia was conducted by Lam et al (2011). Analysing a Wikipedia data dump they found that male and female editors focused on different content areas and that the coverage of topics traditionally of more interest to females was significantly less. Reagle and Rhee (2011) compared coverage of the biographies of women between the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and Wikipedia, discovering that “while Wikipedia has more biographies of women than does Britannica in absolute terms Wikipedia tends to be less balanced in whom it misses than Britannica...” (1155). Wagner et al., using computational methods to evaluate Wikipedia's gender bias, found women to be “slightly” overrepresented, “but the proportional differences in the coverage of men than women are not significant”. On the other hand, they also found “that the way women are portrayed... is starkly different from the way men are portrayed” with articles about women more often linked to those about men and the content of articles on women more likely to include romantic and family relationships. Finally, Klein and Konieczny have

developed the WIGI (Wikipedia Gender Index) to explore “worldwide longitudinal gender inequality trends.” Their study concludes that there has been “a steadily improving trend” in the inclusion of female biographies on Wikipedia, but that there are large differences if the analysis is broken down by cultural or linguistic community (Klein and Konieczny 2015).

Women are not the only group substantially under-represented on Wikipedia. Large swathes of the planet do not feature heavily in the encyclopaedia, but these other gaps tend to receive less attention. Cindy Royal and Deapina Kapila have noted disparities in coverage based on country population size, among other factors (2009). Taking up the issue of geographical coverage, Mark Graham has argued “that how places are represented and made visible (or invisible) in Wikipedia has a particularly immense bearing on the ways that people interact with those same places culturally, economically and politically” (Graham 2011). That there are geographical gaps was made clear in another study by Graham that sought to determine if a core –periphery pattern was discernible in terms of Wikipedia coverage of nations of the world. They suggested that this was indeed a case and that much of the pattern could be explained by three variables: country population, availability of broadband Internet, and the number of local editors, although certain countries performed above or below expectations.

Gender and, to a lesser extent, geographical under-representation issues on Wikipedia have not gone unnoticed by Wikipedia’s leadership. Jimmy Wales, the encyclopaedia’s co-founder, in an NPR interview spoke of his disappointment that efforts to increase the number of female editors have not been more successful and expressed his desire “to have more diversity in the community, because we believe that it brings more quality” (Selyukh 2016). Certain Wikipedians have taken up Wales’ call for more diversity by developing activities designed to attract a new and diversified set of editors. One of these is the edit-a-thon: “an organized event where editors edit and improve a specific topic or type of content, typically including basic editing training for new editors” (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edit-a-thon). Wikipedia records a total of 110 edit-a-thons from the first,

held at the British library in 2011 up to 2016, an event held at the Mount Pleasant library in Washington D.C. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:How_to_run_an_edit-a-thon#See_also). Interestingly the vast majority of these took place in the United States and the United Kingdom, again emphasizing the disparities in the Wikipedia world.

Another means used to overcome the disparity in coverage on Wikipedia are wikiprojects. As noted previously, these are basically groups of editors who are especially interested in improving particular topics, locations or even tasks. What provides the “glue” to hopefully cement together such a group of editors are the WikiProject pages: “... A central place for editor collaboration [where they] develop criteria, maintain various collaborative processes, keep track of work that needs to be done and act as a forum where issues of interest to the editors... may be discussed”

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia_WikiProject). WikiProjects are not a new feature for the online encyclopaedia. The first appears to have been created by Manning Bartlett on the topic of sports in 2001 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia_Signpost/2013_04_01/WikiProject_report) and today there are an estimated 2000 such projects in various states of activity, so many in fact, to warrant the operation of a coordinating committee: the WikiProject Council (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Council).

By concentrating and coordinating the energies of interested editors WikiProject's are supposed to lead to an overall improvement in terms of quality and quantity of articles in whatever area the project delimits. While it is difficult to ascertain how well any of these projects have contributed to such lofty goals it is possible to get a sense of their functioning or lack thereof by examining their talk pages and changes over time to their main pages.

The aim of this article then is to explore these artefacts for the Cambodian wikiProject. In previous work I demonstrated the uneven coverage of that country's history (Luyt 2013). Given this uneven coverage it is not perhaps surprising that a wikiProject was established¹. Certainly the uneven

¹ Two key texts that are helpful in understand Cambodia are Chandler (2008) and Slocomb (2010).

coverage galvanized one editor to get involved with the project. Writing on his user page, Paxse declared, “As I wandered around the places where I may be able to add some information to this wonderful Wiki project – I found to my distress that many important and topical articles related to Cambodia like – Khmer Rouge and Pol Pot – are currently in a sad state indeed. The information included is scant. Poorly cross-linked, and contains gaping holes ...” (User talk page, Paxse, Archive 1). The question whether the project has contributed much to solving the problem is, however, more problematic.

The article is thematically divided into two principle sections. In the first the actual project is analysed. Here, I would compare my method of studying Wikiproject Cambodia to a medical examination or anatomical dissection, depending on whether one sees the page as sick or dead. I rely on descriptive rather than inferential statistics in this task.

After observing the various parts of the Wikiproject, that is, carefully reading the Wikiproject’s texts, both content and paratext, I specifically targeted for further analysis the talk page and that part of the article page concerned with the lists of articles that are deemed in need of creation or improvement as these two areas (organs, if you will) appear vital to the operation of the project as they coordinate its activities and functions. Data collected from the talk page includes the number of comments, total and per editor, from 2008 to 2016 as well as the actual text of the comments themselves. This text was subject to a thematic analysis to determine what functions individual comments performed. Lists of articles put up for improvement or created constituted the principle data collected from the main page. This data was also collected for the period stretching 2008 to 2013.

In the second half of the article, I account for the project’s lack of activity by calling upon the work of scholars concerned over the overall decline of participation. Wikiproject Cambodia’s problem is a lack of participation, hence the theoretical and empirical work of these scholars is very likely pertinent to an explanation of the project’s failure. Finally in this section I reflect on the further

problems that the diagnosis – lack of a substantial number of champion editors for the project – presents to those concerned with issues of representation and identity on Wikipedia.

The Wikiproject

The Cambodian wikiproject was initially established in 2007 by editor CanCanDuo, a Cambodian – American student, according to his user page. In his description of the project, he wrote that “this is the WikiProject for those interested in Cambodia, its people, it’s art and culture. This is to bring Wikipedians together to make Cambodia more important in the Wikipedia.” (Archive 1, Cambodia discussion from Wikipedia: Wikiproject Council/Proposals). CanCanDuo had previously worked on Wikipedia articles about the Reamker (a Cambodian epic poem, based on the Sanskrit Ramayana) and the Khmer empire. From this experience he must have encountered other editors at least marginally interested in Cambodian topics whom he proceeded to invite over the following months to join the project. By June 2007, 10 editors had signed up. Two of these assumed important roles (as measured by the number of their contributions to the talk page) in the future of the project: William Thweatt and Paxse. Ironically CanCanDuo himself faded away soon after the start of the project.

As of November 2016 the project’s main page was divided into nine major headings: purpose, scope, departments (article assessments generated by a bot at periodic intervals), things to do, articles, members, templates, related WikiProject’s and tools.

For our purposes what is key is the section on articles. Here we find a variety of lists: article alerts, requests for new articles, articles in need of expansion and clean-up, articles scheduled for deletion and translation requests². By comparing these lists over time we can gauge the progress of the project in achieving its goals. After this analysis is presented we shall turn to the project’s talk page for further insight.

² From 2008 to 2013, the year of the last recorded edit on the Wikiproject, there was only one translation request offered. It is ignored for the purposes of this study.

Requested articles and those needing expansion

Under this heading, editors could create a wish list of articles that they would like Wikipedia to offer in the future. If the project was attracting attention and doing its job helping to concentrate the energies of Wikipedians it is likely that the turnover in this section would be fast. In other words the list would be relatively stable in length, but with its contents rapidly changing as articles were written up as stubs or start class and replaced by new requests. Unfortunately, that is not what we observe. Table one presents the data. From it we can see that the initial influx of articles was not maintained. More articles were removed in the early years (2008 to 2011) without additions being made to the list. Afterwards an equilibrium was reached with little change over the succeeding years. People were neither working on the requests nor thinking about adding requests of their own. If an improvement in Wikipedia's coverage of Cambodia was taking place it was not being coordinated by the project.

Reinforcement of this conclusion is provided by an analysis of the articles listed as requiring urgent expansion because they were "particularly tiny stubs". Table two presents the data. There is very little movement in this category of request and most of the movement has been on the addition side of the scales. Few editors appeared to take up the challenge of adding material to these articles, or if they did, neither they nor others bothered to update the list.

To check for this last possibility (that articles were improved, but that editors didn't update the list), all the articles found on the most current version of the expansion request list, dated November 19th, 2016, were checked to see if they remained stubs. Of the 22 articles, only six had changed status. A further two no longer existed, likely victims of deletionist editors at some point in the past.

Deleted articles in need of re-creation

WikiProject Cambodia included a list of articles that had already been deleted, but which were deemed, by those interested in Cambodian subjects, worthy of a second chance and therefore

should be created again. Much like the other lists, however, this one was very stable over time. In 2009 ten subjects were included on the list (see Table 3). A year later one more was added, while the year after that saw a removal bringing the total back to ten. A further two articles were recreated between 2011 and 2012, but one of these reappeared on the list subsequently.

Talk pages

If we turn to the talk pages we find that the archives run from 2007 to 2011 so that comments dated 2012 to 2016 remain on the current talk page. Table 4 presents a quantitative overview of the comments made on these pages while Table 5 provides a list of editors making more than three comments on the talk pages. From Table 4 we can divide the comments into three periods: an initial energetic phase (2007 -2008) where the average number of comments totalled 20 per year, quickly followed by a rapid and severe decline stretching from 2009 to 2013 that saw the average number of comment decline to five per year. The final period (2014 – 2016) sees an upturn, but not nearly approaching the volume experienced during the first two years. The average number of comments per year during this last period comes to nine. This is what the numbers tell us. Reading the talk page itself suggests that they perform the following functions: providing notice, making requests, asking questions and thanking.

Providing notice

These comments can be subdivided into two further categories: those dealing directly with Cambodian issues and those advertising wider Wikipedia concerns. Examples of the latter include a message announcing draft guidelines for company lists by country (Archive 2, Draft guidelines for lists of companies by country – feedback requested, Rich80 21:09, 25 May 2008) and another informing that the “popular pages tool” had been updated (Current archive, Popular pages tool update, Mr. Z-man, 04:56, 23 February 2014). These will not be considered further. Notices related to Cambodian subjects included announcements that articles were being put up for promotion to

featured good article status, new articles just written or planned, or that an editor wished to share certain resources with others.

Making requests

Requests were made to contribute to particular articles or participate in debates taking place elsewhere on Wikipedia's Cambodia articles. Because the Khmer language has its own script there were also requests to use particular encoding schemes for the transcription of Khmer. Translation requests were also made.

Asking questions

These comments ranged from a query about what to do with unreliable statistics to the nature of Cambodian circle dance music and a synopsis of the political situation in 1992 Cambodia. A large subset of these questions dealt with issues surrounding articles nominated for deletion, an increasing worry for marginalized topic areas on Wikipedia not immediately understood as important in relation to more dominant mainstream (for example, western) concerns (Geiger and Ford 2011).

Thanking

The final category of comments provided encouragement for the activities of other editors in the form of a "thank you" message or more general praise. There were only a handful of these however.

Considered as a whole the comments on these talk pages are not surprising. They deal with the issues that a WikiProject is supposed to concern itself with – coordination of activity, the provision of resources and awareness of what is happening to the articles in the project's subject space. Why it is then that WikiProject Cambodia appears to be unsuccessful in its goal to improve the country's representation on Wikipedia?

A lack of dialogism

One reason may be that the WikiProject is not sufficiently dialogic. Halfaker et al., in quest of an understanding of why Wikipedia's editor base is no longer growing, argue that a large part of the problem stems from the way newcomers are welcomed. That analysis persuasively suggests that the use of automated reversion tools has made the rejections experienced by newcomers over their first edits much less personal than in the past when the norm was for the reverting editor to personally comment on the revision, thereby allowing for a dialogue to develop between the two editors. Halfaker's analysis has been influential, legitimatizing, for example, the Teahouse Project. Established in 2012, this project aimed to create a place where new editors can meet those more experienced in a friendly environment encouraging of dialogue (Morgan 2013).

In contrast to the Teahouse, if we group the Cambodian Wikiproject talk page comments together as clusters of conversations a disturbing pattern emerges. Table 6 presents the data. What is shown is a generally low level of dialogism ranging from none of the comments being part of a dialogue to a maximum (in the first year) of sixty percent of the comments (4/7) being in a dialogue. At the peak of activity on the talk pages in 2008 only three dialogues took place. What this suggests is that the WikiProject never became a place for community building, remaining more as a bulletin board occasionally referred to by passers-by, but holding little significance in their lives and activities. And this at a time when such a community space was increasingly needed as earlier norms of personal interaction gave way to more bureaucratic and automated responses.

If we examine more closely the dialogues that do appear in the record we find that many are anchored by the two top contributors to the talk page (see Table 7). In the first year, for example, a year that had a much better than average level of dialogism, editor Paxse was involved in all dialogues. In the last few years this anchoring role appears to have been undertaken by William Thweatt (Table 8 presents their respective quantitative editing histories). The particularly "dark" years of the project (2009 – 2011) lack the presence of either of these two founding members, suggesting that they provided a key element in the project's infrastructure in terms of its potential

to move beyond being a neglected bulletin board. Paxse disappears from view at the end of 2008, but most of his contributions to the talk page took place in 2007. William Thweatt, although a founding member, does not start to really participate until 2014. In between their active years lies a period of dormancy. Nobody could or would answer queries, thank contributors and generally build the sense within the WikiProject that someone was listening. This would suggest that a WikiProject really requires a champion to survive and prosper. Without such a dedicated editor the project withers. But since Wikipedia functions on a volunteer basis, champions can and do pull out on a regular basis. While WikiProject Cambodia appears to have a new champion now, it is impossible to say how long that situation will last. Hence the best possible situation for the project is to have a sizable number of champions so that if a few retire the project as a whole will not suffer.

For marginal topics, of course, this is problematic as they wouldn't be marginal if they could attract a sizable number of interested editors in the first place. From this perspective therefore a division could perhaps be made between those topics that are currently marginal but able to attract a core nucleus of support. Two areas that perhaps fall into this category are women and LGBG issues. The Cambodian WikiProject itself is a testimony to the ability of these topical areas to attract the necessary level of attention to become sustainable as several of the automated comments in the archives are invitations to get involved in various activities being sponsored: Wiki Women's History Month in 2012; Wiki Loves Pride in 2014 and the Women in Red group in 2016 (Current talk page, Wiki Women's History Month, Sarah Stierch, 21:34, 1 Feb. 2012; Current talk page, Wiki Loves Pride, Another believer 21:13 June 2014; Invitation to Women in Red's special November activities, Ipigott 10:44, 21 October 2016).

On the other hand, marginalized topics such as those surrounding Cambodia and most likely many other parts of the world will struggle to attract the level of support necessary to raise their marginalized status through efforts such as envisaged by the WikiProject movement –efforts to rely solely on volunteer efforts among pre-existing editors. Most likely these topics and geographical

areas will fall further and further behind in relative terms as WikiProjects and other efforts boost a certain group of more visible “minority” subjects.

But even if the Cambodian WikiProject was more successful in attracting volunteer interest, there is a deeper problem of representation; of answering the question, who is to represent whom? As noted above, this is an issue that in the context of Wikipedia has been explored mostly in relation to the paucity of female editors. But it has a geographical component as well (Hogan et al.) while Maja van der Velden notes that “articles about Indigenous knowledge, artefacts and peoples are categorized in a manner that fragments Indigenous knowledge and makes it invisible as a body of regular, rational, and systematic knowledge” (van der Velden 2013, 311).

In a previous article I wrote about the dominant discourse that permeates Cambodian history articles on Wikipedia – a discourse based on French and American foundations and which occludes other ways of viewing the country’s history (Luyt 2013). The dominance of foreign discourse is a product both of the background of those editing the articles and the nature of the sources used.³ In the case of the Cambodian WikiProject it is clear that most of the editors are related to Cambodia only through interest. There are a few exceptions. As already mentioned, the founder of the project was a Cambodian – American student and another prominent editor was a long-term resident of the country, but most of the members do not share such characteristics. That so few editors have a deeper connection to Cambodia is problematic in terms of fairness, in that it seems inherently unjust for the act of representation of a national community to be dominated by those outside or with little connection to the community. But it is also problematic in that it limits the range of representations on offer on Wikipedia, thus reducing the ability of the online encyclopaedia to achieve its potential as a depository of all human knowledge” (Pfister 2011).

³ Hence one solution to the problem would be for current editors to consciously expand the range of resources they use. More on this later.

If we take these concerns seriously, the question who should represent Cambodia will have no easy or simple answer except that it is best to have a diversity of editors writing about any particular topic. In the case of Cambodia, it is easy to see that as well as nationality, gender, class, and ethnicity could and should be considered when evaluating the diversity of editors (Chandler 2008).

But putting in place such a diverse set of editors is a daunting task. I have already noted one likely reason for this difficulty – a lack of proper socialization (Halfager et al. 2013). More prosaically there are equally serious barriers posed by lack of language and technical skills. Hargittai et al. (2015), in a study conducted in the United States found that the lack or perceived lack of Internet skills was a significant predictor of whether a person, male or female, would participate on Wikipedia. The authors noted that since it was precisely middle class men who tended to possess the skills, such a finding could explain the lack of female editors. It also serves to remind of the class barriers to entry on Wikipedia; frequently overlooked in the discussion on the lack of Wikipedia's diversity in the "developed" world, but very visible in places such as Cambodia.

Another likely obstacle to encouraging a more diverse set of editors are different ways of knowing. Gruwell, again seeking to understand why there are few women editors suggests, for example, that Wikipedia's rules governing the production of knowledge "often run counter to feminist ways of knowing and writing and can exclude rhetorical acts that are embodied and experiential" (2015, 125). Other scholars have suggested that ways of knowing can differ even between groups of women. Wendy Luttrell, in her study of ways of knowing of black and white working class women, noted "that there is overlap [in these ways of knowing], but also differences" due to their different life contexts (Luttrell 1989). Indigenous people are also likely at a disadvantage on Wikipedia due to their own particular ways of knowing with Maja van der Velden writing that "Wikipedia's design does not allow for Indigenous communities to use Indigenous concepts and structures to tell a story and to present and organize knowledge" (van der Velden 2013. 311).

Conclusion and Implications

To recap what has been said so far (and see Table 9 for an overview). Our analysis of Wikipedia project Cambodia has suggested that it has failed to appreciably improve the coverage of Cambodian topics. This is likely due to its inability to attract for a prolonged period of time a champion able to anchor the project and provide a sense that someone is listening. But the makeup of the project members also suggests that even if a champion could be found, the question of who gets to represent whom remains difficult to deal with. It is unlikely that Cambodia will anytime soon develop a strong community of Wikipedia editors given the economic and social constraints the country imposes on most of its population⁴.

Here, technical issues may be the easiest to solve⁵. Internet access is growing and it is always possible to develop programs to teach local people how to edit. But once equipped with the technical skills a much more difficult step remains – how to reconcile what are likely differing knowledge communities. To adequately deal with the problem would require a major epistemological shift on the part of the overall Wikipedia community; a shift that would involve developing an increased awareness of and appreciation for different ways of knowing the world. In the short to medium term this is unlikely to happen. If making Wikipedia a more comfortable place for women from the developed world has generated so much resistance what chance is there of adjusting Wikipedia's epistemological stance in ways that could accommodate peasant farmers or factory workers from Cambodia?

Some indication of the conflict that is likely if other ways of knowing were to be extensively used to construct articles can be gleaned from the experience of the article on *surr*, a north Indian game introduced to Wikipedia as part of Achal Prabhola's project to use interviews as a means to

⁴ Cambodia ranked 143 on the Human Development Index for 2016.
<http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/KHM>.

⁵ But even technical efforts to improve the capability of Wikipedia to accept new editors have not always met with success. Unveiled in the summer of 2013, a new WYSIWYG editor designed to reduce the steep learning curve for new and especially nontechnical editors who likely had much to contribute to the underrepresented areas of Wikipedia was roundly rejected by more established Wikipedians (Simonite 2013).

overcome the paucity of written sources in many parts of the world. In her dissertation, Heather Ford documents the result of this experiment, noting that opposition was based on whether Wikipedia was to model itself on traditional encyclopaedias or not; the ideal relationship between Wikipedians and the knowledge they represented; and finally, the role of the subjects of knowledge in the process of representation. Although the article has survived (perhaps due to its association with an official Wikimedia project) its future is not assured as the debate could potentially erupt again in the future. Ford concluded her analysis by warning that the project “presents an enormous challenge, not only to Wikipedia but to Western ideals about who has the authority to represent facts ...” (195).⁶

The story of the oral history project suggests that it will take much effort to alter the epistemological basis of Wikipedia sufficiently to allow forms of knowledge other than those expressed in print to coexist. The mission of making Wikipedia a “respectable” encyclopaedia was perhaps a legitimate response to the early days when it was heavily criticized for its inaccuracies. Unfortunately, the criticism appears to have pushed the encyclopaedia into adopting a rather traditional notion of what an encyclopaedia should contain and the rules by which it should be constructed. Given this pessimistic assessment of the possibilities of deep epistemological change on Wikipedia, is there anything that can be done to somewhat alleviate the balances between geographical regions and other forms of under representation?

One idea would be to reform the Wikiproject concept by adjusting, to a limited extent, the reliance on volunteers. I have argued in this article that Wikiprojects to be successful likely need a champion to ensure that visitors are welcomed, their questions answered and their contributions praised. In short, there needs to be a guarantee that someone is listening. This, at least, is the conclusion to be drawn from the current failure of the Cambodia Wikiproject. The Teahouse project was founded on

⁶ Gallert et al. (2016) demonstrate that authoritative and reliable citations can provide information to fill coverage gaps on Wikipedia, in this case, regarding an OvaHerero community in Namibia, but it is not clear from their paper if the resulting articles were actually added to Wikipedia and, if so, what was their subsequent fate.

a similar premise. It would seem that projects such as Cambodia, unable to ensure continuity in terms of the presence of a champion, should be provided with one. Those with specialized knowledge of the area, perhaps librarians working in institutions with large Cambodian collections could be recruited to take on the role of champion for the Wikiproject. It would be best if they were also Wikipedians with some level of editing expertise, but if not, training could be provided to make them reasonably competent as editors. Then as a stable core for the Wikiproject they could set about growing the community. Such a vision requires institutional support – both from Wikipedia and the organization employing the potential champion. But libraries have started to involve themselves with Wikipedia, albeit slowly (see for example: Orlowitz and Earley 2014; Paulas 2016; Tennant 2016). Getting librarians and other information workers to act as Wikiproject champions would only be an extension of these efforts, one building on the expertise acquired through working with their institutional collections.

Using librarians working within institutions with a focus on Cambodia as part of their mission might also help address part of the diversity problem due to their awareness of a wider range of sources. Currently, Wikipedia operates on a policy that all claims be verifiable through citations to authoritative written texts. In previous work I have shown for at least one case, the subset of sources used by Wikipedians is far less than could reasonably be expected. I argued that this was due to a view common among the editors that sources are interchangeable and do not need to be contextualized or interrogated before use as citations (Luyt 2012). A more diverse set of perspectives could likely emerge on Wikipedia if a wider set of sources were consulted in the writing of articles and if the contextualization and interrogation of sources became more of a standard practice among Wikipedians. In the case of Cambodia, for example, there is a dominant discourse that is expressed in many of the most commonly available resources but with awareness and a bit of digging it is possible to find sources that present alternative viewpoints. The larger problem is again to develop an awareness and appreciation of these sources – not an easy task. But one that could also be undertaken by Wikiproject champions.

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Tables

Table 1: Requests for new articles

Year	Articles removed from the list	Articles added to the list	Total number of articles on the list
2008	0	0	17
2009	4	1	14
2010	2	1	13
2011	3	1	9
2012	0	1	10
2013	1	0	11
2014	0	0	11

Table 2: Requests for stub expansion

Year	Articles removed from the list	Articles added to the list	Total number of articles on the list
2008	0	0	18
2009	1	2	17
2010	0	0	17
2011	0	0	17
2012	0	1	18
2013	3	0	21
2014	1	0	22

Table 3: Deleted articles in need of re-creation

Year	Articles removed from the list	Articles added to the list	Total number of articles on the list
2009	0	0	10
2010	0	1	11
2011	1	0	10
2012	2	0	8
2013	0	1	9

Table 4: Number of comments made on talk pages

Year	Total number of comments	Comments other than bot messages or general messages
2007	19	18
2008	28	22
2009	12	6
2010	10	6
2011	4	4
2012	7	4
2013	7	6
2014	13	10
2015	9	8
2016	10	9

Table 5: Editors making more than three comments on the talk pages

Editors	Number of comments
Paxse	14
William Thweatt	13
Wikirictor	6
Calliopejen	4
Civil Affairs	4
Riccardo Fabris	4
RightCowLeftCoast	4

Table 6: Talk page dialogues and monologues with a dialogue defined as a comment followed by one or more responses.

Year	Number of talk page dialogues	Number of talk page monologues
2007	4	3
2008	3	15
2009	0	8
2010	0	7
2011	0	4
2012	0	7
2013	1	8
2014	2	8
2015	2	5
2016	3	2

Table 7: Number of dialogues joined by the two top participating members of the WikiProject

Editor	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Paxse	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
William Thweatt	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
Total # of dialogues taking place in the year	4	3	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	3

Table 8: Total number of comments made by the two top participating members of the WikiProject

Editor	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Paxse	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
William Thweatt	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	3	2	4

Table 9: Why did WikiProject Cambodia fail?

Lack of dialogism	Halfaker and Greiger
Lack of champions	
Reliance on volunteerism	
1) Lack of diversity	Lam; Royal and Kapila; Graham
2) Lack of technical/language skills	Hargittai
3) Different ways of knowing	Gruwell; Luttrell; van der Velden; Ford