

Research Ready

Wikipedia Chapter

e-book

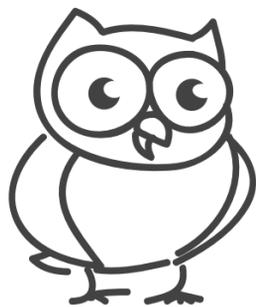
Wikipedia

Lesson Overview

Bubo the owl and Scott the student are writing a research paper, but Bubo doesn't know anything about Wikipedia. In this lesson, Bubo will learn:

- ✓ How big is Wikipedia?
- ✓ How are Wikipedia articles created?
- ✓ Where do you look in the article to see if it is credible?
- ✓ And the final question - is Wikipedia reliable?

So what's the deal with Wikipedia? It always comes up towards the top of my search results. That must mean it is a pretty good source.



Not necessarily. Remember, in the first course we learned that just because a website is near the top of your search results, it does not mean that the website is a good one to use in your research paper. Wikipedia articles can have a lot of great information, but because their content is user-generated, you should always be suspicious of what you find there.



Wikipedia

Wikipedia's Popularity

Because we now know that *anyone* can publish to the web, this is a good time to talk about Wikipedia.

It is a BIG web site and it is consistently ranked in the top 10 of most-visited web sites around the world.



Wikipedia is more popular than Twitter, LinkedIn, and Bing!

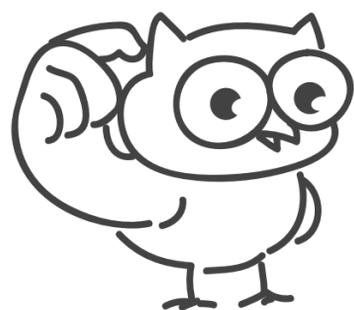


Wikipedia

Millions & Millions of Articles

Wikipedia has over
3.8 Million
articles on its English-language site.

With that many articles available, Wikipedia probably has information about your research topic. It is even more likely that it will pop up in the top five results when you use a popular search engine to find information on your topic.



It still sounds like a great resource to me. So what's the problem?

Wikipedia

Is Wikipedia Reliable?

The big issue with Wikipedia is that **anyone** can publish information to it, and **anyone** can go in and change what someone else has published. Sometimes they do not even have to be a registered user to make these changes.

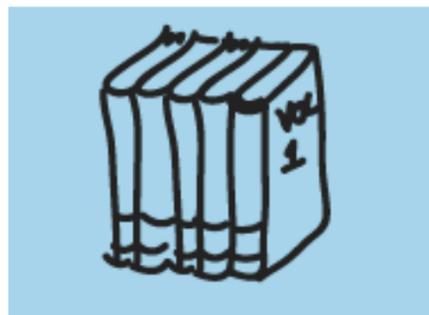


There is much discussion among educators and librarians about whether or not Wikipedia is a reliable reference source. The fact of the matter is, sometimes it is, sometimes it is *not*.

Wikipedia

Evaluating Wikipedia Articles

Professional studies have shown that certain content on Wikipedia is just as accurate and well-researched as other authoritative sources, like encyclopedias.



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That does not mean, however, that all 3.8 million articles on Wikipedia are of the same **depth, integrity, and accuracy**. This is why you need to evaluate the information you find there.

Wikipedia

Check the Sources

Review the References, Footnotes and Bibliography at the bottom of each entry for cited sources that may be useful in your research.

This is where "Wikipedians" cite websites and other sources they use in articles.

Wikipedia articles may have a combination of references, footnotes and a bibliography, just one, or none at all.

References

1. ^ Groves, C. P. (2005). Wilson, D. E.; Reeder, D. M. eds. *Mammal Species of the World* (3rd ed.). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. pp. 64 & 66. OCLC 62265494. ISBN 0-801-88221-4.
2. ^ "Kangaroo Industry Background Kangaroo Industries Association of Australia. July 2008". Kangaroo-industry.asn.au. 31 July 1997. Retrieved 5 April 2009.
3. ^ Dow, Steve (26 September 2007). "An industry that's under the gun". *Sydney Morning Herald* (Fairfax Media). Retrieved 2 October 2011.
4. ^ "Coat of arms". *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*. Australian Government. Retrieved 2 October 2011.
5. ^ "Our currency". *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*. Australian Government. Retrieved 2 October 2011.
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7. ^ "Etymology of mammal names in English". *IberiaNature*. Retrieved 18 June 2011.
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25. ^ *ab* "Kangaroos". *Natural History Notebooks*. Canadian Museum of Nature. 3 May 2011. Retrieved 2 October 2011.
26. ^ McGuinness, Keith (25 November 1996). "Re:

Wikipedia

Check the Sources

You may find additional reading on the subject.

Numbers correspond with the in-text citations (you will see linked numbers in the text) and show specific sources used in the entry.

You may be able to use these external sources as part of your research, but make sure you evaluate them first. We'll learn more about evaluating sources in the next course.



References

- ¹ [^] Groves, C. P. (2005). Wilson, D. E.; Reeder, D. M. eds. *Mammal Species of the World* [\[3rd ed.\]](#). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. pp. 64 & 66. OCLC 62265494 [\[4\]](#). ISBN 0-801-88221-4.
- ² [^] "Kangaroo Industry Background Kangaroo Industries Association of Australia. July 2008" [\[5\]](#). Kangaroo-industry.asn.au. 31 July 1997. Retrieved 5 April 2009.
- ³ [^] Dow, Steve (26 September 2007). "An industry that's under the gun" [\[6\]](#). *Sydney Morning Herald* (Fairfax Media). Retrieved 2 October 2011.
- ⁴ [^] "Coat of arms" [\[7\]](#). *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*. Australian Government. Retrieved 2 October 2011.
- ⁵ [^] "Our currency" [\[8\]](#). *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*. Australian Government. Retrieved 2 October 2011.
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- ²⁰ [^] Flannery, T.F. (1989). "Phylogeny of the Macropodoidea; a study in convergence". In Grigg G., Jarman P., Hume I.D.. *Kangaroos, Wallabies and Rat-kangaroos*. Sydney: Surrey Beatty. pp. 1–46. ISBN 0-949324-22-1.
- ²¹ [^] Dawson, Terence J. (1995). *Kangaroos: Biology of the Largest Marsupials*. Cornell University Press/Comstock Publishing. ISBN 0-8014-8262-3.
- ²² [^] <Please add first missing authors to populate metadata.> (June 2006). "Captain John Gore" [\[11\]](#) (PDF). *FRIENDS* (National Museum of Australia) **17** (2): 18. ISSN 1323-5826 [\[12\]](#). Retrieved 2 October 2011. [\[dead link\]](#)
- ²³ [^] Cowley, Des; Hubber, Brian (2000). Barnes, John; Burt, Sandra. eds. "Kangaroo" [\[13\]](#). *The La Trobe Journal* (66): 4–5. ISSN 1441-3760 [\[14\]](#). Retrieved 2 October 2011.
- ²⁴ [^] [^] [^] Penny, Malcolm (2002). *The Secret Life of Kangaroos*. Austin TX: Raintree Steck-Vaughn. ISBN 0-7398-4986-7.
- ²⁵ [^] [^] [^] "Kangaroos" [\[15\]](#). *Natural History Notebooks*. Canadian Museum of Nature. 3 May 2011. Retrieved 2 October 2011.
- ²⁶ [^] McGuinness, Keith (25 November 1996). "Re:

Wikipedia

Look for Prompts

Wikipedia tells you if it believes there are not enough citations or credits given in an article to determine its credibility.

This box is a warning, and you should probably skip the article and find another source.

Copyright law of Ireland

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



This article **needs additional citations for verification**. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. *(October 2007)*



Remember, just because there is not a notification at the top, it does not mean the article is 100% accurate.

Wikipedia

Browse the Article's History

If you want to take a look at the information added and the edits made to an article, check to see how the article was modified by clicking the "View History" tab.



The history tab lets you see what was changed, when it was changed, and who made the changes.

Wikipedia

Browse the Article's History

Wikipedia tells you if it believes there are not enough citations or credits given in an article to determine its credibility.

Normandy landings: Revision history

[View logs for this page](#)

Browse history

From year (and earlier): From month (and earlier): Tag filter:

For any version listed below, click on its date to view it.

For more help, see [Help:Page history](#) and [Help:Edit summary](#).

External tools: [Revision history search](#) · [Contributors](#) · [User edits](#) · [Number of watchers](#) ·

[Page view statistics](#)

(cur) = difference from current version, (prev) = difference from preceding version,

m = minor edit, → = section edit, ← = automatic edit summary

(latest | earliest) View (newer 50 | older 50) (20 | 50 | 100 | 250 | 500)

Most of the time, registered users make the changes.

Unregistered users are only identified by their IP address.

Wikipedia

Browse the Article's History

- (cur | prev) 04:14, 6 June 2011
- (cur | prev) 03:06, 6 June 2011
- (cur | prev) 02:53, 6 June 2011
- (cur | prev) 02:50, 6 June 2011
- (cur | prev) 02:48, 6 June 2011
- (cur | prev) 02:12, 6 June 2011
- (cur | prev) 02:10, 6 June 2011

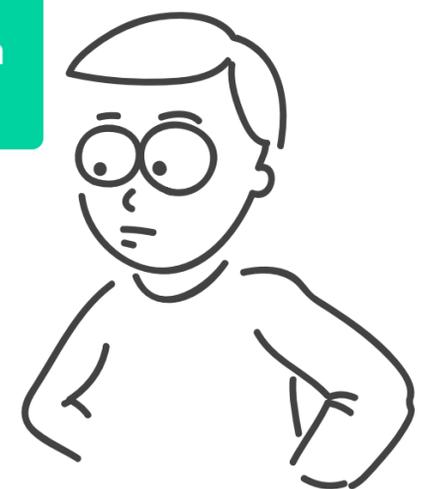
If you see a lot of edits within a very short amount of time (in this example, a matter of minutes), this could imply editing abuse and false information.



Abusing the Internet! Who would do such a thing?

Trolls? On the Internet? How good can the broadband connection be under bridges?

There are a lot of trolls putting false information on the Internet.



Wikipedia

Locked Articles

When articles are frequently vandalized, Wikipedia "locks" them and allows only the top contributing editors to make changes.



This article is locked; only top Wikipedians can edit the article.



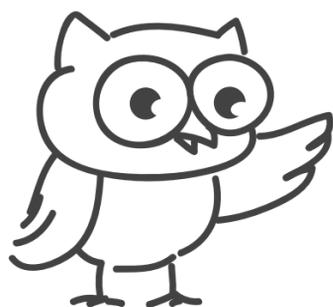
Because locked articles had a history of false information, they are more likely to be accurate now. You should still evaluate the content, though.

Wikipedia

Should You Use Wikipedia in Your Research?

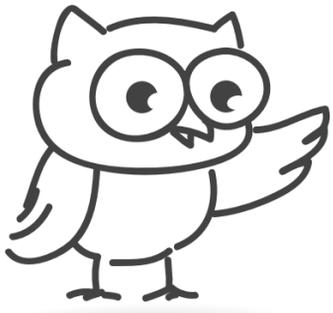
Wikipedia tells you if it believes there are not enough citations or credits given in an article to determine its credibility.

So I've looked at the Wikipedia article on the capybara - they are quite a delicacy, you know - and although the article is not locked, it seems pretty credible. How can I use this in my research?



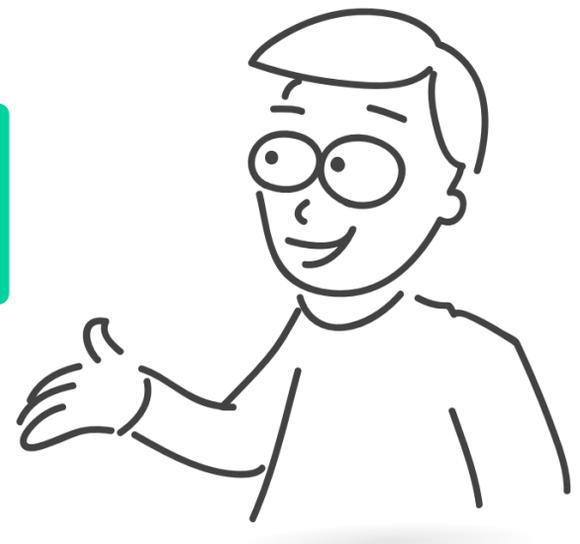
Well that really depends. First, you should ask your teacher or your librarian to see if they have a policy on using Wikipedia in your research papers. If you can't use it in your paper, you can read the article and get some background information on your topic. You can also look at the References list to see if the contributors used a source that might be appropriate for your paper.





What else can
you teach me?

There's so much
more to learn!



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