


Wikibookians in the Web 2.0: Exploring the Wonders of Collaborative Writing in the Wikibooks Website




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See <http://wiki-riki.wikispaces.com>



Sajjapanroj, S., Bonk, C. J., Lee, M., & Lin M.-F. (in press for March 2008). A window on Wikibookians: Surveying their statuses, successes, satisfactions, and sociocultural experiences. *Journal of Interactive Online Learning (JIOL)*.

What is Wikibooks?

- Wikibooks, previously called **Wikimedia Free Textbook Project** and **Wikimedia-Textbooks**, is a wiki for the creation of free content books. It is a **Wikimedia Foundation** project.
- Wikibooks is a **Wikimedia** project for collaboratively writing textbooks and related **non-fiction books** (with supporting books and booklets; such as annotated literary and other classics) about different subjects.



Compare Wikipedia and Wikibooks

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Statistics>
<http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Special:Statistics>

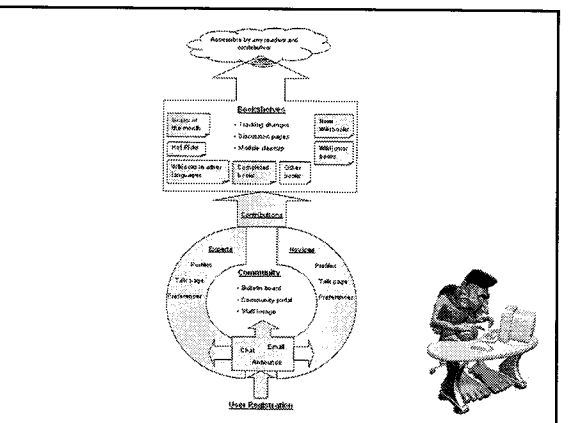
Characteristic	Wikipedia	Wikibooks
1. Date Launched	January 15, 2001	July 10, 2003
2. Historical Statistics (as of March 24, 2007):	<p>8,104,148 pages 6.4 million articles</p> <p>1,703,263 articles in English</p> <p>250 languages 121,944,043 edits 15.05 edits per page 700,001 media files 3,932,542 registered users 1,155 system admins</p>	<p>71,800 pages 26,000 modules or chapters</p> <p>Over 1,000 books, the largest category in English</p> <p>120 languages 817,941 page edits 11.26 edits per page</p> <p>66,862 registered users 36 system admins</p>

Wikibookian

A Wikibookian is someone who coordinates, edits, or contributes to a Wikibook project.

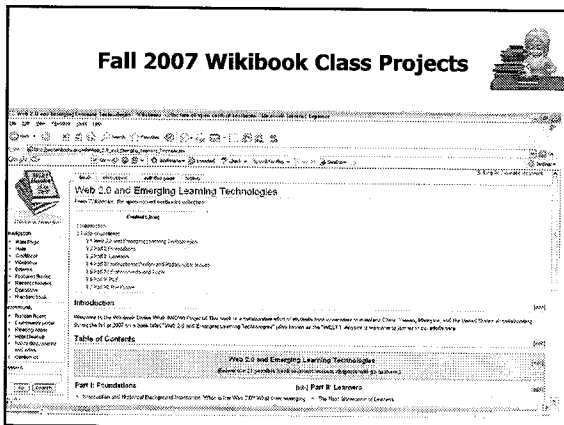



Think free. Learn free.




Sample Wikibooks

http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Main_Page



Wikibook Criticisms (Wikipedia, 2007)

- Wikibooks has many incomplete texts.
- Even the comprehensive texts are of poor quality.
- Wiki model encourages abortive book projects
- Hard to find any high-quality, completed books.
- HTML not suitable for the traditional printing of books with fixed page-width and page-length
- Wiki syntax is ill-suited for professional book editing.
- Wiki-style editing.





Thank you, Lector, Inc.

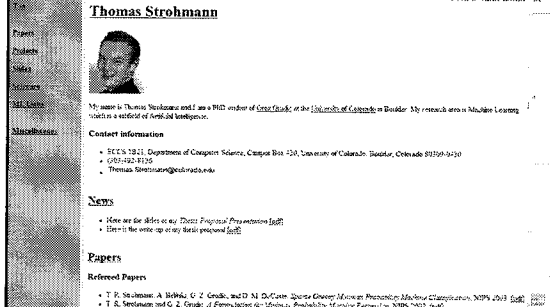
Our Basic Study

http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Main_Page

Survey of more than 80 Wikibookians about the creation and coordination of a Wikibook. Issues addressed include ownership, problems encountered, tools to facilitate online collaboration. (In addition, 8 were interviewed using email.)

Our Sample: Finding Wikibookians




The screenshot shows the user profile for Thomas Strohmann. It includes a profile picture, a bio stating he is a PhD student at the University of Colorado Boulder, and contact information for his department. There are also sections for "News" and "Referenced Papers".

Objective and Design:

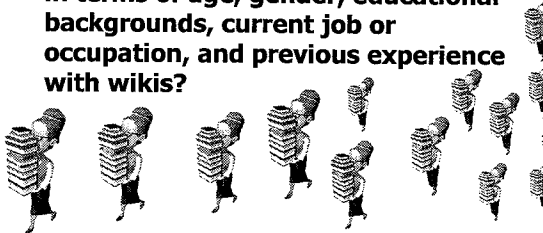
Surveying Wikibookian statuses, successes, satisfactions, and sociocultural experiences

- Explore the potential to use Wikibooks as a new instructional strategy to promote learning collaboration and social interaction across classrooms
- Find the success factors in the development of Wikibooks at the Wikibooks web site in order to improve the implementation of Wikibook projects



I. Statuses

1. Wikibookian Demographic or Status Questions: Just who are Wikibookians in terms of age, gender, educational backgrounds, current job or occupation, and previous experience with wikis?



Findings from Surveys (cont.)

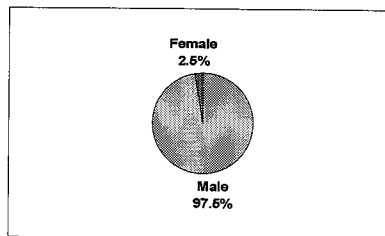
- Demographical data: 58% of Wikibookians were younger than 25 years old.

Age of Wikibookians

Age	Amount	Percentage
Under 18	15	19
18-25	31	39
26-34	20	25
35-50	9	12
51-65	2	2.5
Over 65	2	2.5



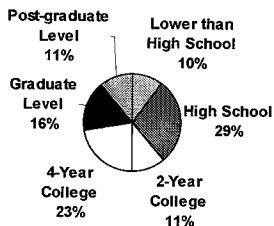
Demographical data: more than 97.5% were male



Findings from Surveys (cont.)

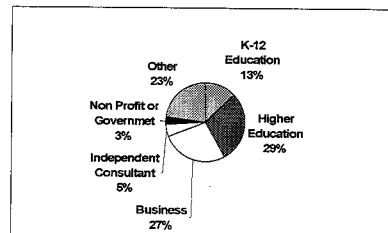
- Demographical data: many without a college education

Highest Year of Schooling



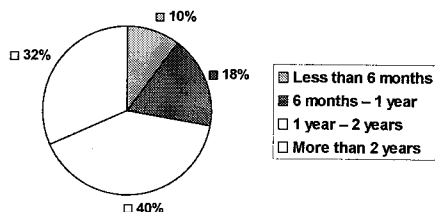
Findings from Surveys (cont.)

- Where Wikibookians were employed or working.



Findings from Surveys (cont.)

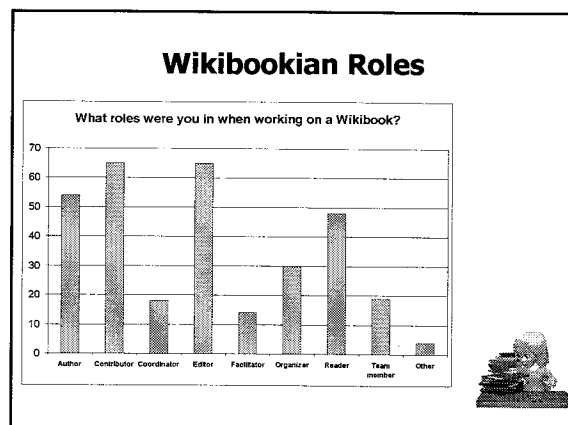
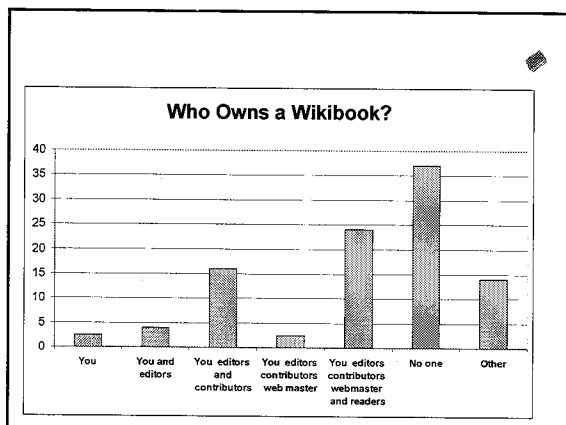
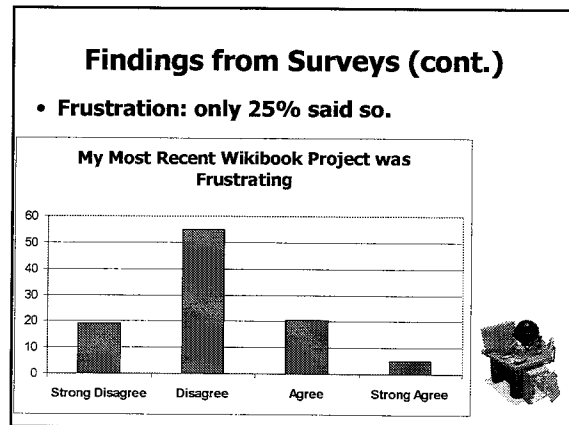
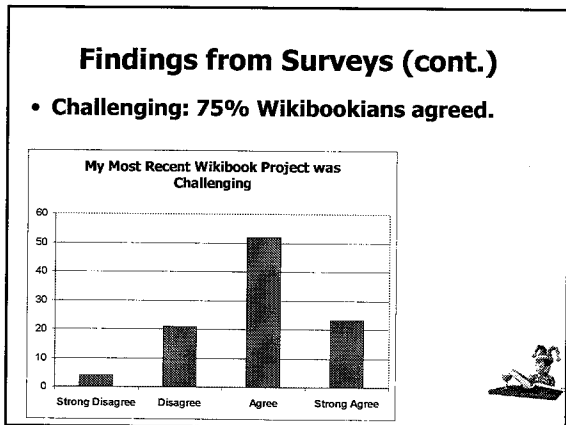
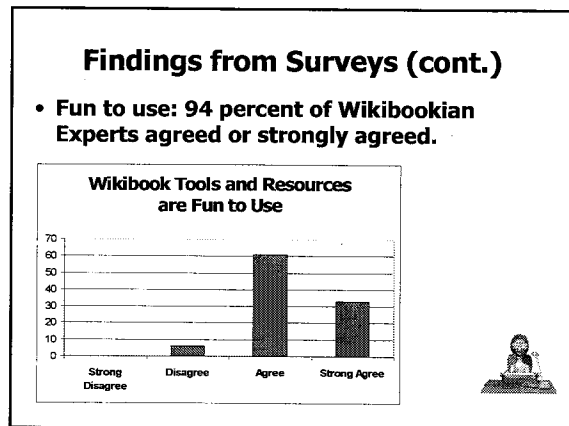
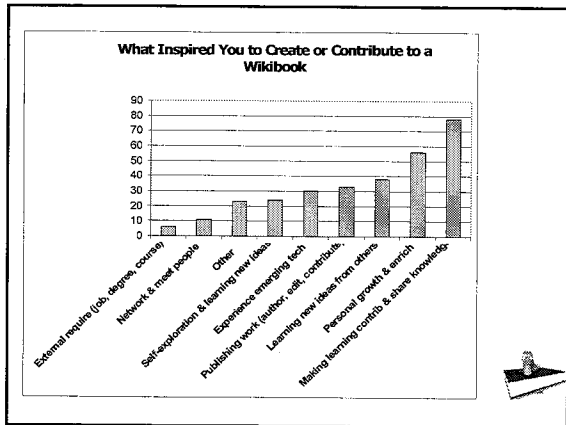
How long been involved in designing or contributing to a Wiki of any kind?



II. Successes

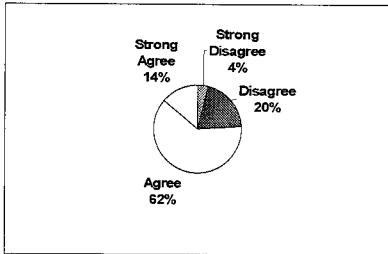
2. Wikibook Coordination and Success Questions: What are the key roles of a Wikibookian? What challenges, frustrations, and obstacles do they face within those roles? And what motivates Wikibookians to collaborate with others in the development of a Wikibook? Did they find their most recent Wikibook project a success? And can a Wikibook project ever be completed?





Wikibook Project a Success?

- 76% of Wikibookians agree that their recent Wikibook project was successful.

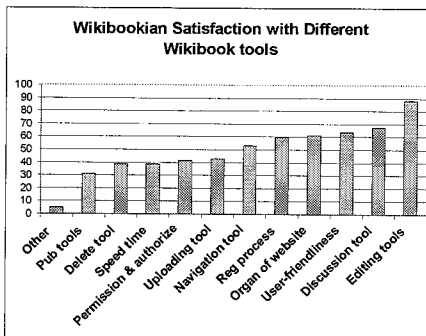


III. Satisfactions

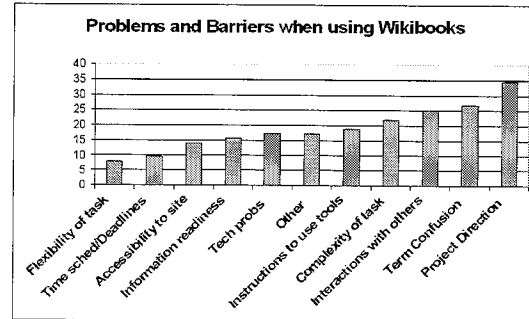
3. Satisfaction with Wikibook Environments and Tools Questions: How satisfied are Wikibookians with the existing suite of tools and resources? What improvements should be made to existing ones? What additional Wikibook tools and resources are needed?



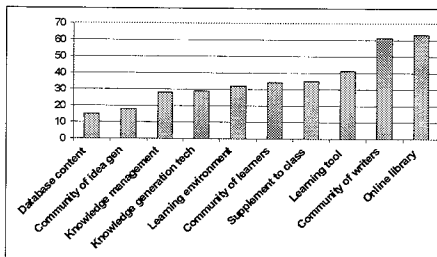
Tools Happy With...?



Any Problems or Barriers?



How Wikibookians would describe a Wikibook?



IV. Sociocultural Experiences

4. Wikibooks as a Sociocultural Phenomenon Questions: What types of learning approaches and experiences do Wikibook environments tend to encourage? How effective do Wikibook environments promote collaboration and social interaction? Do Wikibook environments foster a type of apprenticeship process?



Wikis in Teaching and Assessment: The *M/Cyclopedia* Project

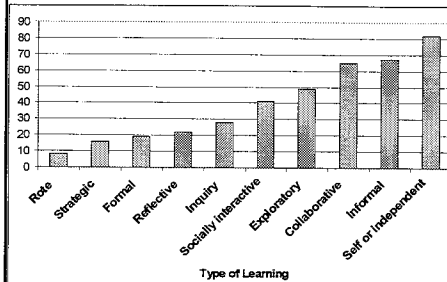
(Drs. Axel Bruns & Sal Humphreys, 2005, Queensland University of Technology)

Wikis present themselves as an interesting tool for enhancing social constructivist learning environments. As non-linear, evolving, complex and networked texts with multiple authors, they can provide a great opportunity for student collaboration, co-production of texts, argument, and interaction...

however, this flexibility and openness can also present significant problems and challenges to students and academics encountering the wiki environment.

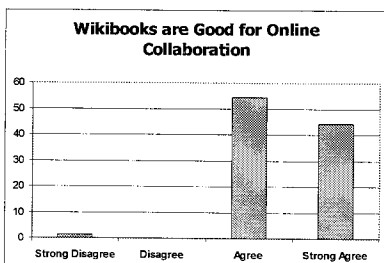


What type of learning does a Wikibook foster?



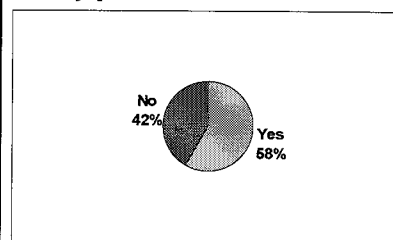
Findings from Surveys (cont.)

- Collaboration: 99% of Wikibookians agreed that Wikibooks promote online collaboration.



Findings from Surveys (cont.)

- Wikibook Completion: Can a Wikibook ever be completed? 58% of Experts say yes!



Some Themes from Email Interviews



Theme #1: Introduction to Wikibook

- *I helped found Wikibooks when I started writing an Organic Chemistry textbook on Wikipedia. Jimmy Wales agreed to start another site where we could write textbooks.*
- *I found Wikibooks about Wikipedia, after I realised that my project on which I was working got too long for Wikipedia.*



Theme #2: Initial Expectations about Wikibook

- *My expectation was to help create a free, collaboratively written textbook. At this point I have done almost all of the work on the book. Admittedly, word about the book hasn't gotten out, but hopefully once it does others will begin to contribute. Until that happens, my expectations will not, technically, have been met.*



Theme #3: Important Features and Activities Necessary for Collaborative Environments from a Wikibookian's Perspective

- *A way for people to communicate with each other, a way to track the contributions of each person, a way to make the information accessible to newcomers, a simple interface that an average person can learn very quickly or even use intuitively.*
- *a special area where one set group of people can take over a book for a time, for example, to enable one class or one group of professors develop materials*



Theme #4: Differences Between the Wikibook Environment and Other Collaborative Environments Online

- *"Working with people I've never met...Typically, the people I collaborate with at Wikibooks differ from my perspective more than people I would collaborate with in a more traditional context."*
- *"There is not one person in charge..."*



Theme #5: The Notion of Wikibook Not as a Product but a Process

- *No wiki is ever complete, because it is ever evolving. That's one of the best things about wiki's. I personally think that paper is dead and in many ways the ideas contained within them too. I want my ideas and thought evolved and allowing others to improve them makes the work alive.*
- *Theoretically a wikibook could be complete, depending on the subject. If, for instance, the book is about the Iran/Contra scandal...*



Theme #6: Toward Collaborative Knowledge Construction: Issues of Ownership and Disputes over Editing

- *So revert it :) It's a Wiki, so everybody can edit it. When s.o.'s edit doesn't apply to my standards, I can revert it. And that person can revert me too. When we both find it important, we can start talking through the talkpage...*
- *This has happened to me. In my experience, changing the material back is pointless, and will just cause dispute.*



Theme #7: Suggestions for Promoting Learning Collaboration in Wikibook Environments

- *I would suggest a better organized starting of books. I think authors have to make concepts before they write a book and think about it, because it's not only an article like in Wikipedia.*
- *Start with planning, and work on existing books rather than create a new one.*



Theme #8: Advantages and Disadvantages of Wikibooks

- **Advantages:** Openness, accountability, record of changes and attributions, easiness of use, free license, formatting buttons, levels of permissions, formatting shortcuts, templates, and navigation, ...
- **Disadvantages:** There are not mechanisms in place that convince educators of the value of Wikibooks as a teaching or learning tool. No structured way to lead groups by the hand through the collaborative book-writing process.



Theme #9: Wikibook Recommendations

- I'd suggest getting several co-authors from the get go and deciding on a template for the book chapters so it is uniform from the beginning. It's bound to change over time, but you may as well start with a plan.
- Get help. Don't try to do it on your own, it's a too big amount of work and you will definitely loose the overview.



Theme #10: The Future of Wikibooks and Other Comments

- Community-written textbooks in every American classroom as well as around the world, students and teachers involved in the production of textbooks on occasion as a part of the development process, better textbooks then we have ever had before, teaching materials shared for free in many languages all over the globe, the end or dramatic change of much of the textbook industry (cartel) as it currently exists.
- I don't think the concept will catch on except among small niches until there are some very well-developed textbooks available on the site.



Limitations

- Volunteer sample
- Number of Wikibooks started and completed not collected
- Sample size modest
- Exploratory nature of study (many survey questions)
- Email-based interviews
- Class and community proved not to be comparable

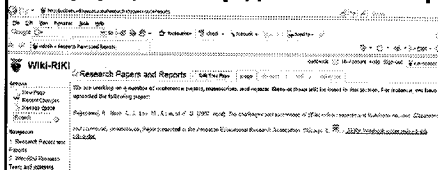


Final Participant Quotes and Paper

"Go rockin' on!"

"I love wikis they're truly the closest example of the purest form of democracy."

For paper, see <http://wiki-riki.wikispaces.com>



Audience Questions

- Have you ever read or edited an entry in Wikipedia? How about a Wikibook—have you ever read a Wikibook or helped write one? Have you ever collaborated with others to put a Wikibook together?
- Who owns a Wikibook? The chapter authors? The readers? The book coordinators? All of the above?
- Can a Wikibook every be completed? Why or why not?