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of the State Library of NSW

Wiki GLAM Rock Tour 2015

Wikipedia isn't just a fabulous resource to be passively consumed. As MICHAEL CARNEY and KATHRYN BARWICK of the State Library of NSW report, you can also contribute to the world's most popular encyclopedia.

Who said working in a library meant you couldn't go on tour like a rock star? We were the trainers for the National Wikipedia Editing Workshops organised by ALIA in partnership with the State Library of NSW. Between February and April this year, we jetted around the country to Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Canberra, Adelaide and Darwin.

Many people were mystified when we told them we were teaching Wikipedia: 'Don't you just hit edit and that's it?' was a typical response.

You could, but we were interested in teaching how to contribute quality information backed up by reliable sources. What better place to make use of our libraries' fantastic collections than in the world's most popular encyclopedia?

The State Library of NSW, where we both work, has had an active WikiProject since 2012. It began with editing workshops provided by Wikimedia Australia and developed into staff being trained to edit and create articles relating to historic NSW newspapers and topics aligned with our collection strengths. The Library hosted Australia's first GLAM Wikipedian in Residence in 2013.

Our one-day training sessions were divided into four segments (obviously determined by coffee breaks).

We started with an introduction to Wikipedia's principles – which include neutrality, referencing and editing etiquette – and a discussion of the culture of the Wikipedia community, including the various WikiProjects that libraries can subscribe to.

Next, how to improve an existing Wikipedia article by adding information verified by third-party sources and determining what a reliable source is and how to avoid self-referencing.

This was followed by an introduction to Wikimedia Commons, the online repository of free-use images, sound and other media files, and how to upload images from library collections. This led to discussions about copyright, as all uploads must either be in the public domain or released under an appropriate copyright licence.

Finally, how to create a Wikipedia article from scratch, relevant to the locale of where the workshop was hosted. Most topics were historical subjects, people and places, which allowed us to upload public domain photographs from library collections.

Some of the articles created during the workshops included Darwin Pioneer Cemetery, Luna Park Glenelg, *The Blue Mountains Advertiser*, *The Port Fairy Gazette*, Sidney Edwin Hocking (founder of *The Kalgoorlie Miner*) and author and poet Capel Boake.

The training sessions showed how to shift from being a passive consumer of Wikipedia to becoming an active participant. Rather than using encyclopedia articles simply to research facts, the live and interactive nature of Wikipedia invites the reader to question the information presented to them. If there is a concern about the reliability of information, it's easy to just jump in and make an edit. Now there are many more staff with an in-depth knowledge of library resources who have been equipped with the technical editing skills to make a difference.

Some of the most common questions that arose included:

CAN I HAVE A WIKIPEDIA ACCOUNT FOR MY LIBRARY TO SHARE?

No. Wikipedia accounts are for use by individuals, not groups.

CAN I WRITE AN ARTICLE ABOUT MY ORGANISATION OR PROMOTE OUR ACTIVITIES AND SIGNIFICANCE?

Articles must be written from a neutral point of view. Editors should not write about their employer, as there is a conflict of interest. You can make suggestions using the Talk page, and other Wikipedians who don't work at your organisation can decide what information should be included. Check the Wikipedia Conflict of Interest guidelines.

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED WITH THE WIKIPEDIAN COMMUNITY?

There are thousands of WikiProjects for different tasks, locations and topics, each of which usually has a list of interested editors (you can add yourself), discussions about the topic and relevant articles and lists of tasks to be done.

HOW CAN I GET IN TOUCH WITH EDITORS NEAR ME?

There is a WikiProject for Australia, each state and territory, and some for capital cities and geographic regions. Local Wikipedians often organise 'off-wiki' gatherings and events – keep an eye out for these meet-ups.

Wikimedia Australia is the Australian chapter of the Wikimedia Foundation. You can find out more on their website and join up if you're interested.

WHAT MAKES A RELIABLE REFERENCE?

It is usually:

- a secondary source
- published
- reliable and reputable
- third-party (not directly affiliated with the article's topic).

I'VE FOUND AN IMAGE IN MY LIBRARY COLLECTION/ONLINE AND WANT TO USE IT IN AN ARTICLE. HOW CAN I DO THIS?

You need to upload it to Wikimedia Commons, but only if it is in the public domain or the creator has given the image an appropriate open content licence (e.g. images with a licence prohibiting commercial or derivative works cannot be uploaded).

For more information, check the Australian Copyright Council Copyright Duration factsheet and the Wikimedia Commons Licensing page.

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