Addressing Wikipedia's Gender Gaps Through Social Media Ads

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Abstract

The 2020 Wikimedia Strategy aims to address the gender gaps and become more inclusive. To attract skilled women to join the Wikipedia community, a survey will be designed and targeted via social media ads to determine the willingness of female participants to contribute to Wikipedia. The performance of the ad's campaigns will be analyzed to develop a blueprint of strategies for reaching potential female editors on each social media platform.

Introduction

Wikipedia suffers from a wide range of knowledge gaps, defined as underrepresentation of certain groups in content coverage, readership, and contribution [13]. One of the best-studied knowledge gaps is the gender gap, with women being minority among both readers and editors [9, 2]. The 2020 Wikimedia Movement Strategy stresses the importance of closing the knowledge gaps in terms of gender representation and to ensure that the Wikimedia platforms become more inclusive [13].

This research aims to increase the gender representation in Wikipedia by proposing to target skilled women in social media platforms. In particular, the initiative seeks to test the hypothesis: "social media campaigns bring women to Wikipedia's front door".

We will design a survey to determine whether women are willing to contribute to Wikipedia based on their skills and knowledge. Social media ads will be used to target and invite participants to complete the survey.

The outcome will be a blueprint proposing a variety of targeting strategies for reaching out to female editors on each social media platform, by better understanding their willingness. The blueprint benefits the Wikimedia Foundation's research and development team. It also benefits researchers and experts interested in tackling gender gap issues.

We aim to start the project on June 1, 2024 and conclude it by June 30, 2025.

Related work

Several studies have identified a gender gap in the users' representation on Wikipedia. This gender gap pertains to disparities in different dimensions including: 1) content covering women [10, 13, 15, 16]; 2) the number of female readers [9, 13, 15]; and 3) the number of female editors [2, 11, 13]. The gender gap has been observed in several Wiki languages [7, 12]. Women avoid contributing to Wikipedia due to various reasons [3, 7, 3, 6].

Studies have had limited discussion on approaches and techniques to encourage more women to participate in Wikipedia, with only Edit-a-thons [4, 14], workshops [8], and social media campaigns [5] have been tested as potential methods. Recently, Wikimedia researchers have experimented with Facebook ads and found that they should continue using (or expand use of) paid media to reach Wikipedia audiences[1]. As a result of the findings from our

[1] https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Growth/Personalized_first_day/Newcomer_experience_marketing_pilot#What_kind_of_results_did_we_get?

previous study [1], we intend to test targeted social media advertisements on different platforms to locate and connect with prospective Wikipedia editors, specifically targeting women via a survey.

Methods

To achieve the research goal, we plan to follow the following steps:

1. **Survey:** Designing an online survey to assess willingness to read or edit Wikipedia articles aligned with skills, expertise, and domain knowledge. The survey will include questions on different constructs: demographics, skills, prior experience, willingness, and nudging techniques to contribute to Wikipedia.
2. **Campaigns:** Creating social media advertisement campaigns on 5 different platforms. These campaigns aim to target active users based on various traits (such as gender and interests) to invite them to participate in the survey.
3. **Analysis:** Evaluating campaigns' performance in terms of impressions, clicks, and survey response rate per platform.

Expected output

1. **Insights to inform decision making:** Suggesting insights covering blueprints of strategies to target female editors in multiple social media platforms to address the gender disparities in Wikipedia. The audience is Wikimedia Foundation's research and development team.
2. **Scientific publications & events:** Publishing in top-tier venues to showcase our findings and receive feedback. The audience is researchers interested in Wiki-related research or gender gaps. Potential venues include: The Web Conference, Transactions on the Web, ICWSM, and Wiki Workshop.

Risks

Trial and error risks: This risk involves that the social media targeting approach may not reach the intended audience and will need to be refined at multiple iterations. Moreover, platforms' pre-launch approval may take longer than planned. These risks may result in project slippage.

We tackled these risks by conducting a feasibility test [1]. These risks could be addressed through recommendations from the Wikimedia Foundation team.

Community impact plan

The proposed research seeks to partner with stakeholders from academia, industry, and governments (i.e., UN Women) who work on gender equality issues. Besides, we aim to communicate the findings via blogs, infographics, and reports (i.e Web Foundation report on Women's Rights Online). We intend to collaborate with Wikipedia affiliates to connect with stakeholders and develop educational resources.

Evaluation

1. **Originality:** The project aims to experiment with a new method using social media ads to locate and contact potential female editors via targeted surveys.
2. **Feasibility:** The project has a clear research plan and has been previously tested for feasibility and potential limitations [1].
3. **Success measures and impact:** Success is measured by engagement with our social media campaigns through

impressions, clicks, and completing the survey. Other measures include positive feedback from the Wikimedia Foundation team and stakeholders.

Budget

Average social media advertising pricing can cost anywhere from $450 to $6,000 per month[2]. Our funding will be mainly dedicated to setting up social media ads:

Platform	Ads Budget Request
LinkedIn	USD 6000
Google	USD 6000
Tumblr	USD 6000
Reddit	USD 6000
Twitter	USD 6000
Total	USD 30,0000

Prior contributions

The author's PhD thesis investigates editors' reactions to health-related Wikipedia articles during new disease outbreaks. Results have been published in top-tier venues. The author's PostDoc project aims to recruit skilled women using targeted advertising. Findings have been presented at the Wiki Workshop 2023. The project is ongoing, and we hope to experiment with and reach a larger audience with the support of the Wiki Grant.

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