Participation, Engagement and Diversity : a study of Wiki's community building & integration practices in GLAM projects.

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Abstract

The study aims to investigate participation patterns, community engagement, and retention strategies within Wikimedia's GLAM projects. Building on existing studies, the research addresses:

- challenges faced by new editors, especially contributors from GLAMs and under-represented members of their audience
- learning gaps on museum workflows, participatory knowledge-sharing projects, and institutional partnerships among experienced Wikimedians

It examines how community-engagement strengthens museums' Wiki-related strategies and deepens their involvement in Wikimedia projects.

While the study will focus on GLAM-Wiki partnerships in Germany, it will also consider other selected regions.

Anticipated outputs:

a) recommendations for onboarding & integrating museum staff as editors, b)case studies on community building in GLAM-Wiki initiatives, and c)recommendations / insights for developing Wikimedians' capacity to lead sustainable GLAM collaborations.

Introduction

GLAMs have fostered enduring collaborations with Wikimedia projects, like Wikipedians in Residence (WiR) programs, Art+Feminism editathons, and image donations. Instances of [WiRs transitioning to permanent roles in museums](#) and museum-professionals [becoming adept Wiki editors](#), showcase Wiki-GLAM's transformative potential. However, in the German museum landscape, partnerships with Wikimedia are in early stages, not integrated into museum plans despite shared goals.

The research aims to comprehend participation patterns, community engagement, and retention strategies in GLAM projects, examining their impact on the evolving GLAM-Wiki partnership in Germany (primarily) and selected English-language communities. Participation impacts content about cultural heritage; existing studies on Wikipedia editor dynamics, collaboration structures, and non-monetary incentives inform the research context, emphasizing challenges faced by new editors. The study will evaluate user participation, diversity, and engagement in

Wiki-GLAM projects, addressing evolving needs of GLAMs in Germany. It seeks to contribute insights for effective strategy-building to sustain community participation and user integration within the Wiki-movement.

Thematic investigations will guide the study:

Theme 1: Participation and Engagement Strategy
- How can GLAM-Wiki projects effectively engage existing and new contributors?
- How can the integration of GLAM-staff contributors be optimized?
- What challenges do editors face in initiating and leading GLAM projects?
- What learning gaps exist in building collaborations with museums?
- How can retention of new contributors, especially from under-represented communities, be enhanced?
- How can sustained participation and engagement be fostered among new editors?

Theme 2: Collaboration Dynamics between Wikimedia and GLAMs
- How do participation patterns impact the relationship between GLAMs and Wikimedia?
- Does continued engagement and retention of a Wiki-editor community strengthen a museum's Wiki strategy or deepen their engagement with Wikimedia projects?

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Related work

The existing literature underscores the proven value of collaborations between Wikimedia and GLAM institutions, citing their substantial impact on museum practices.

A recent report from the UK reveals shared goals but highlights limited awareness and reservations within GLAMs regarding Wiki-partnerships, signifying a critical gap that necessitates participant-focused studies.

Prior research by Wikimedia Foundation emphasizes the role of volunteer support for successful GLAM collaborations, urging attention to learning gaps among volunteers, specifically in understanding museum workflows and challenges faced by new editor-museum staff.

In the German context, there is a lack of insight into new editor engagement, marginalized community participation (e.g in Wikimedia DE's GLAMOnTour activities), and Wikimedia volunteer involvement in leading GLAM collaborations.
Despite substantial data donations to Commons, an information gap persists in comprehending these dynamics.

Methods

The initial stage involves a comprehensive review of GLAM-Wiki projects in Germany and selected English-language communities to discern diverse approaches and associated tasks.
- dashboard analysis and user-contribution study
- purposeful sampling to identify GLAMs with independent or Wiki volunteer-supported projects.
- Webinars and focus groups will be conducted on community-building, diverse audience engagement, and retention strategies.

In collaboration with the Institute for Museum Research
- museum staff (purposeful sampling) will undergo group workshops

- - Longitudinal research
    - Usability testing
  - structured interviews, exploring workflows, collaboration expectations, strategic directions, and staff-wiki literacy.

Museum professionals will participate in Wikimedia project sessions, and their integration journeys will be mapped.

Structured interviews with Wikimedia volunteers, and Affiliates will follow, addressing learning and collaboration gaps.

Expected output

1. insights and recommendations for onboarding and integrating editors with museum staff positions
   - Can potentially [inform technical considerations](#) and the
   - development of a toolkit or database tailored for integrating museum professionals.
2. Publication: case studies / best practices from GLAM-Wiki initiatives on community building.
3. recommendations for capacity building of Wikimedia volunteers in developing, leading, sustainable GLAM collaborations.
   - insights can inform innovative collaborations, paths for developing communication channels with GLAM professionals, support the outreach strategy of Wikimedia volunteers, chapters, and projects involved or intending to work with GLAMs.

The findings will benefit both the German-language Wiki community, and the larger Wiki community of Affiliates and volunteers working with GLAMs; GLAMs hosting Wikimedia projects.

Possible presentations at platforms such as Wikimania; also to the German museum sector via the Institute's publication series and & related events; social media and website.

Risks

- Slow response time from GLAM institutions / professionals.
- If the participation of newcomers or under-represented communities has been low in GLAM projects it will limit the depth of data.
- Retention of new editors is a Wiki-wide challenge, so finding successful strategies that have worked within GLAM projects specifically might be challenging.

Community impact plan

- Debrief / presentation with Wikimedia DE and other regional partners (Wikimedia Österreich, Wikimedia CH)
- presentation with Wikimedia's GLAM Team
- Targeted sharing with organizers like Art+Feminism who work with GLAMs.

Evaluation

- high level of participation / engagement from Wikimedians, GLAM professionals
- positive feedback from participants, indicating that the research findings align with their experiences and needs.
- successful dissemination and utilization of the research outcomes within the Wikimedia community, and the wider German museum sector.

Budget

48,500-49,000 USD

Stipend: 33,000 (part-time, 11 months, 2-3 days a week). Other costs include gratuity for respondents, Software (survey, transcription, zoom), Workshop & focus group meeting, Publication costs.

Prior contributions

by Medhavi

 toolbox: "Building innovative approaches to Digital Collections through participatory engagement and collaboration with audiences" based on researching 3 museums (NEO Collections, Germany)

Participatory Engagement & Methods In Digital Humanities (Learning by Doing, Routledge, 2024 UK/India) (scheduled for publishing in January)

Instagram and the community participation in telling history. https://www.degruyter.com/serial/mdg-b/html?lang=de#volumes Scheduled for publishing Autumn, 2024 / funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research; based at the Universities of Hamburg and Bochum

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