

efforts do not have the Wikipedia community to sustain what they do. Wikipedia is not simply a source of up-to-the-minute content on every given topic—it is also a global patchwork of humans working together in a million different ways, in a million different capacities, for a million different reasons. While many have tried to guess what makes Wikipedia work as well it does, the fact is there is no single explanation. “In a movement as large as ours, there is an incredible diversity of motivations,” Stephen said. For example, there is one editor of the English Wikipedia edition who has corrected a single grammatical error in articles more than forty-eight thousand times.¹

Only a fraction of Wikipedia users are also editors. But editing is not the only way to contribute to Wikipedia. “Some donate text, some donate images, some donate financially,” Stephen told us. “They are all contributors.”

But the vast majority of us who use Wikipedia are not contributors; we are passive readers. The Wikimedia Foundation survives primarily on individual donations, with about \$15 as the average. Because Wikipedia is one of the ten most popular websites in terms of total page views, donations from a small portion of that audience can translate into a lot of money. In the 2015-16 fiscal year, they received more than \$77 million from more than five million donors.

The foundation has a fund-raising team that works year-round to raise money, but the bulk of their revenue comes in during the December campaign in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. They engage in extensive user testing and research to maximize the reach of their fund-raising campaigns. Their basic fund-raising message is simple: We provide our readers and the world immense value, so give back. Every little bit helps. With enough eyeballs, they are right.

freely share in the sum of all knowledge. They work to realize this vision by empowering people around the globe to create educational content made freely available under an open license or in the public domain. Stephen and Luis said the mission, which is rooted in the same philosophy behind Creative Commons, drives everything the foundation does.

The philosophy behind the endeavor also enables the foundation to be financially sustainable. It instills trust in their readership, which is critical for a revenue strategy that relies on reader donations. It also instills trust in their community.

Any given edit on Wikipedia could be motivated by nearly an infinite number of reasons. But the social mission of the project is what binds the global community together. “Wikipedia is an example of how a mission can motivate an entire movement,” Stephen told us.

Of course, what results from that movement is one of the Internet’s great public resources. “The Internet has a lot of businesses and stores, but it is missing the digital equivalent of parks and open public spaces,” Stephen said. “Wikipedia has found a way to be that open public space.”

Web link

- 1 gimletmedia.com/episode/14-the-art-of-making-and-fixing-mistakes/

The vision of the Wikimedia Foundation is a world in which every single human being can