

## Introduction to Data Science - Assignment 1

Wikipedia has been a popular and convenient resource for information because of its accessible design for readers and editors. Yet because of its collaborative editing feature, much of the content could lack credentials and is subjectively based on the editors' preference on choosing the references. Despite English being an international language, the ethnicity of editors for English Wikipedia pages still lacks diversity.

### Limehouse, London

Two Wikipedia pages titled "Limehouse, London" and "Opium Dens" contain descriptions and references with biased perspectives on Han Chinese. These pages demonstrated partial facts which could reinforce negative stereotypes of Han Chinese.

A passage from Limehouse, London Wikipedia page:

*"These were established by the crews of merchantmen in the opium and tea trades, **particularly Han Chinese**. The area achieved notoriety for opium dens in the late 19th century, often featured in pulp fiction works by Sax Rohmer and others..."* ('Opium Den', 2022)

The description above suggests that Han Chinese, amongst all the merchants, were the majority dealing opium business. While historically, the impression on smoking opium wasn't entirely negative, the passage referred to fiction works by Sax Rohmer, the creator of Dr Fu Manchu that consolidated negative stereotypes on Han Chinese, or in a broader sense, East Asians. Referencing literature and fiction that lack credibility shows that these Wikipedia pages are presenting skewed perceptions and could potentially harm a certain group of people.

#### References [\[ edit \]](#)

- <sup>1</sup> <sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup> "Opium Museum (archived)" [\[ cite \]](#). Archived from the original on 2018-08-25.
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- <sup>3</sup> <sup>a</sup> Commissioner Jesse B. Cook (June 1931). "San Francisco's Old Chinatown" [\[ cite \]](#). *San Francisco Police and Peace Officers' Journal*. Retrieved 2007-09-22.
- <sup>4</sup> <sup>a</sup> Nick Tosches, M.D. (September 2000). "Opium Dens" [\[ cite \]](#). *Vanity Fair*. Retrieved 2009-11-24.
- <sup>5</sup> <sup>a</sup> H.H. Kane, M.D. (1881-09-24). "American Opium Smokers" [\[ cite \]](#). Retrieved 2007-09-22.
- <sup>6</sup> <sup>a</sup> Jane F. Murphy (1922). "The Black Candle" [\[ cite \]](#). Archived from the original [\[ cite \]](#) on 2012-07-30. Retrieved 2007-09-22.
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- <sup>9</sup> <sup>a</sup> Martin, Steven (2007). *The Art of Opium Antiques*. ISBN 978-974-9511-22-0.
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Figure 1 Reference List from Opium Den Wikipedia Page

### Existing Information and its Potential Issue

#### Numeric Data

Given that some data-centric analysis requires numeric values, the record would mostly be about financial and legal records. These results often tend to overstress the importance of financial or legal reasons. Further, some analysis methods require only binary values, such as true or false values. This neglects the data that aren't naturally presented as binary values. These could lead to reductionism and could overlook other important factors such as cultural and personal factors.

Accessibility is also a potential reason that causes the researchers/editors to overlook certain information. For example, several records related to the opium trade in London are held in the National Archive, which is for public viewing, however, due to a considerable amount of the documents haven't been digitalised, which leads to a limitation on the convenience of accessibility.

Catalogue description

**Licensing of opium dens. Code 87 file 6307**

Reference:	FO 371/23585/6307
Description:	Licensing of opium dens. Code 87 file 6307
Date:	1939
Held by:	<a href="#">The National Archives, Kew</a>
Former reference in its original department:	File 6307
Legal status:	Public Record(s)
Closure status:	Open Document, Open Description

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Figure 2 Licensing record from the National Archives, Kew

### Oral history

There is an official record of the British parliament debating whether opium should be legalised. The document is a valuable asset to understand the authority during that period. However, editors need to be aware of its historical background, also, whether the content was highly affected by political interests.

In *Chinatown Annie: The East End Opium Trade 1920-35: The Story of a Woman Opium Dealer*(1986), it mentioned that “No records seem to exist of Yuen Lai's trial or deportation (newspapers seem not to have reported it, while wartime bombing of the East End destroyed the Court records). Local street directories reveal an unlisted gap at the address Annie gives during the period 1925-30. Annie and Yuen couldn't openly publish their trade.” This passage is indeed the evidence that an amount of data could be missing due to its lack of legitimacy.

Wikipedia page is an open and collaborative platform that recording and preserving data is no longer a privilege to the power. Therefore, people must be aware of their right to generate information and be conscious of the content they're absorbing. This way, collaboration could lead to inclusion, and inclusion could lead to diversity.

## Reference List:

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