

= Conservapedia =

Conservapedia / kən'sɜːrvəˈpiːdiə / is an English @-@ language wiki encyclopedia project written from an American conservative , Young Earth creationist , and Christian fundamentalist point of view . The website was started in 2006 by American homeschool teacher and attorney Andrew Schlafly , son of conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly , to counter what he perceived as a liberal bias present in Wikipedia . It uses editorials and a wiki @-@ based system to generate content .

Examples of Conservapedia 's ideology include its accusations against and strong criticism of U.S. President Barack Obama , the Democratic Party , evolution , and Wikipedia 's alleged liberal bias , as well as views of the theory of relativity as promoting moral relativism , claims of a proven link between abortion and breast cancer , praise for a number of Republican politicians , support of celebrities and artistic works that it views as promoting moral standards in line with Christian family values , and acceptance of fundamentalist Christian doctrines such as Young Earth creationism . Conservapedia 's " Conservative Bible Project " is a crowd @-@ sourced version of the Bible which Conservapedia claims will be " free of corruption by liberal untruths " .

The site has received negative reactions from the mainstream media , as well as from notable political figures , including commentators and journalists , and has been criticized for bias and inaccuracies .

= = Background = =

Conservapedia was created in November 2006 by Andrew Schlafly , a Harvard- and Princeton @-@ educated attorney and a homeschool teacher . He started the project after reading a student 's assignment written using Common Era dating notation rather than the Anno Domini system that he preferred . Although he was " an early Wikipedia enthusiast , " as reported by Shawn Zeller of Congressional Quarterly , Schlafly became concerned about bias after Wikipedia editors repeatedly undid edits to the article about the 2005 Kansas evolution hearings . Schlafly expressed hope that Conservapedia would become a general resource for American educators and a counterpoint to the liberal bias that he perceived in Wikipedia .

The " Eagle Forum University " online education program , which is associated with Phyllis Schlafly 's Eagle Forum organization , uses material for various online courses , including U.S. history , stored on Conservapedia . Editing of Conservapedia articles related to a particular course topic is also a certain assignment for Eagle Forum University students .

Running on MediaWiki software , the site was founded in 2006 , with its earliest articles dating from November 22 . By January 2012 , Conservapedia contained over 38 @, @ 000 pages , not counting pages intended for internal discussion and collaboration , minimal " stub " articles , and other miscellany . Regular features on the front page of Conservapedia include links to news articles and blogs that the site 's editors consider relevant to conservatism . Editors of Conservapedia also maintain a page titled " Examples of Bias in Wikipedia " that compiles alleged instances of bias or errors on Wikipedia pages . It was , at one point , the most @-@ viewed page on the site .

= = Editorial viewpoints and policies = =

Conservapedia has editorial policies designed to prevent vandalism and what Schlafly sees as liberal bias . According to The Australian , although the site 's operators claim that the site " strives to keep its articles concise , informative , family @-@ friendly , and true to the facts , which often back up conservative ideas more than liberal ones " , on Conservapedia " arguments are often circular " and " contradictions , self @-@ serving rationalizations and hypocrisies abound . "

= = = Comparison to Wikipedia = = =

Shortly after its launch in 2006 , Schlafly described the site as being competition for Wikipedia , saying " Wikipedia has gone the way of CBS News . It 's long overdue to have competition like Fox

News . " Many editorial practices of Conservapedia differ from those of Wikipedia . Articles and other content on the site frequently include criticism of Wikipedia as well as criticism of its alleged liberal ideology .

Launching the online encyclopedia project , Schlafly asserted the need for an alternative to Wikipedia due to editorial philosophy conflicts . The site 's " Conservapedia Commandments " differ from Wikipedia 's editorial policies . Wikipedia 's policies include following a neutral point of view and avoiding original research . In response to Wikipedia 's core policy of neutrality , Schlafly has stated : " It 's impossible for an encyclopedia to be neutral . I mean let 's take a point of view , let 's disclose that point of view to the reader " , and " Wikipedia does not poll the views of its editors and administrators . They make no effort to retain balance . It ends up having all the neutrality of a lynch mob " .

In a March 2007 interview with The Guardian , Schlafly stated , " I 've tried editing Wikipedia , and found it and the biased editors who dominate it censor or change facts to suit their views . In one case my factual edits were removed within 60 seconds ? so editing Wikipedia is no longer a viable approach " . On March 7 , 2007 , Schlafly was interviewed on BBC Radio 4 's flagship morning show , Today , opposite Wikipedia administrator Jim Redmond . Schlafly raised several concerns : that the article on the Renaissance does not give any credit to Christianity , that Wikipedia articles apparently prefer to use non @-@ American spellings even though most users are American , that the article on American activities in the Philippines has a distinctly anti @-@ American bias , and that attempts to include pro @-@ Christian or pro @-@ American views are removed very quickly . Schlafly also claimed that the Wikipedia policy of allowing both Common Era and Anno Domini notation was anti @-@ Christian bias .

== = Licensing of content == =

Conservapedia allows users to " use any of the content on this site with or without attribution . " The copyright policy also states , " This license is revocable only in very rare instances of self @-@ defense , such as protecting continued use by Conservapedia editors or other licensees . " It also does not permit " unauthorized mirroring . " Wikipedia co @-@ founder Jimmy Wales has raised concerns about the fact that the project is not licensed under the GNU Free Documentation License (GFDL) or a similar copyleft license , stating that " [p] eople who contribute [to Conservapedia] are giving them full control of the content , which may lead to unpleasant results . "

== = Vandalism == =

The site has stated that it prohibits unregistered users from editing entries due to concerns over vandalism , disruption or defamation . Brian Macdonald , a Conservapedia editor , commented that vandalism was intended to " cause people to say , ' That Conservapedia is just wacko . ' " Macdonald has spent many hours daily reverting , in the words of Stephanie Simon of the Los Angeles Times , " malicious editing " . Vandals had inserted " errors , pornographic photos and satire . " For example , U.S. Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales was said to be " a strong supporter of torture as a law enforcement tool for use against Democrats and third world inhabitants " .

== = Other editorial policies == =

Conservapedia states on its " Manual of Style " page that " American English spellings are preferred but Commonwealth spellings , for de novo or otherwise well @-@ maintained articles are welcome . " It prefers that articles about the United Kingdom use British English , while articles about the United States use American English , to resolve editorial disputes . Initially , Schlafly and other Conservapedia editors considered Wikipedia 's policy allowing British English spelling to be anti @-@ American bias .

The " Conservapedia Commandments " also require edits to be " family @-@ friendly , clean ,

concise , and without gossip or foul language " and that users make most edits on their site quality edits to articles ; accounts that engage in what it considers " unproductive activity , such as 90 % talk and only 10 % quality edits " may be blocked . The commandments also cite the United States Code as justification for legal action against edits that contain obscenities or are vandalism or spam . Conservapedia policies encourage its users to choose usernames " based on [their] real name or initials " , and users that have usernames deemed " frivolous " by the admins are blocked ; one of the site 's criticisms of Wikipedia is " silly administrator names " , which is claimed to reflect Wikipedia 's " substantial anti @-@ intellectual element " .

= = Conflict with scientific views = =

Various Conservapedia articles contradict established fields of science . On March 19 , 2007 , the British free newspaper Metro ran the article " Weird , wild wiki on which anything goes " , articulating the dismissal of Conservapedia by the Royal Society , saying " People need to be very careful about where they look for scientific information " . A Los Angeles Times journalist noted Conservapedia 's critics voiced concern that children stumbling on the site may assume Conservapedia 's scientific content is accurate .

= = = Creation = = =

Although not all Conservapedia contributors subscribe to a young @-@ earth creationist point of view ? former administrator Terry Koeckritz stated to the Los Angeles Times that he did not take the Genesis creation account literally ? sources have attributed the poor science coverage to an overall editorial support of the young @-@ earth creationist perspective and an over @-@ reliance on Christian creationist home @-@ schooling textbooks . In an analysis in early 2007 , science writer Carl Zimmer found evidence that much of what appeared to be inaccurate or inadequate information about science and scientific theory could be traced back to an over @-@ reliance on citations from the works of home @-@ schooling textbook author Jay L. Wile .

= = = Evolution = = =

Conservapedia 's article on evolution presents evolution as a naturalistic theory that lacks support and that conflicts with evidence in the fossil record that creationists perceive to support creationism . The entry also suggests that sometimes the Bible has been more scientifically correct than the scientific community . Schlafly has defended the statement as presenting an alternative to evolution .

= = = Environmentalism = = =

According to Conservapedia , global warming is a " liberal hoax " . An entry on the " Pacific Northwest Arboreal Octopus " has received particular attention , although Schlafly has asserted that this page was intended as a parody of environmentalism . As of March 4 , 2007 , the entry has been deleted .

= = = Abortion = = =

Conservapedia asserts that there is a proven link between abortion and breast cancer , while the scientific consensus is that the best studies indicate that there is no such association .

= = = Relativity = = =

Conservapedia has also received criticism for its articles regarding the theory of relativity , particularly on their entry titled " Counterexamples to relativity " , an article that lists examples

purportedly demonstrating that the theory is incorrect . Attention was drawn to the article by a Talking Points Memo posting , in which they reported on Conservapedia 's entry and stated that Andy Schlafly , Conservapedia 's founder , " has found one more liberal plot : the theory of relativity " . New Scientist , a science magazine , criticized Conservapedia 's views on relativity and responded to several of Conservapedia 's arguments against it . Against Conservapedia 's statements , New Scientist stated that one is unlikely to find a single physicist that would claim that the theory of general relativity is the whole answer to how the universe works , and said that the theory of relativity has passed every test it has been put through .

University of Maryland physics professor Robert L. Park has also criticized Conservapedia 's entry on the theory of relativity , arguing that its criticism of the principle as " heavily promoted by liberals who like its encouragement of relativism and its tendency to mislead people in how they view the world " confuses a physical theory with a moral value . Similarly , New Scientist stated at the end of their article that :

In the end there is no liberal conspiracy at work . Unfortunately , humanities scholars often confuse the issue by misusing the term " relativity " . The theory in no way encourages relativism , regardless of what Conservapedia may think . The theory of relativity is ultimately not so much about what it renders relative ? three @-@ dimensional space and one @-@ dimensional time ? but about what it renders absolute : the speed of light and four @-@ dimensional space @-@ time .

In October 2010 , Scientific American criticized Conservapedia 's attitude towards the Theory of Relativity , assigning them a zero score on their 0 to 100 fallacy @-@ versus @-@ fact " Science Index " , describing Conservapedia as " the online encyclopedia run by conservative lawyer Andrew Schlafly , [which] implies that Einstein 's theory of relativity is part of a liberal plot . "

Another claim is that " Albert Einstein 's work had nothing to do with the development of the atomic bomb " , and that Einstein was only a minor contributor to the theory of relativity .

= = Ideology = =

The Guardian of the United Kingdom has referred to Conservapedia 's politics as " right @-@ wing " , although it is sometimes described as far @-@ right or New Right .

= = = Liberalism = = =

Many Conservapedia articles criticize values that its editors associate with " liberal ideology " . The article " Liberal " once began with text originating from Schlafly personally : " A liberal (also leftist) is someone who rejects logical and biblical standards , often for self @-@ centered reasons . There are no coherent liberal standards ; often a liberal is merely someone who craves attention , and who uses many words to say nothing . " Leonard Pitts quoted it in a critical comment saying " You may judge Conservapedia 's own bias by reading its definition of liberal " . Conservapedia 's entry on ' Liberal ' has since been changed to begin with :

A liberal is someone who favors censorship of Christianity plus increased government spending and power , as in ObamaCare . Increasingly liberals side with the homosexual agenda , including same @-@ sex marriage . Many liberals favor a welfare state where people receive endless entitlements without working . Liberals are often anti @-@ Christian , or otherwise disagree with moral or social principles held by many American Christians . The liberal ideology has worsened over the years and degenerated into economically delusional views and intolerant ideology . Some liberals simply support , in knee @-@ jerk fashion , the opposite of conservative principles without having any meaningful values of their own .

= = = Partisan politics = = =

Schlafly said in an interview with National Public Radio that Wikipedia 's article on the history of the Democratic Party is an " attempt to legitimize the modern Democratic Party by going back to Thomas Jefferson " and that this statement is " specious and worth criticizing " . He also has

claimed that Wikipedia is " six times more liberal than the American public " , a claim that has been labeled " sensational " by Andrew Chung of the Canadian newspaper the Toronto Star .

John Cotey of the St. Petersburg Times observed that the Conservapedia article about the Democratic Party contained a criticism about the party 's alleged support for same @-@ sex marriage , and associated the party with the homosexual agenda .

The Conservapedia entries on former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and President Barack Obama are critical of their respective subjects . During the 2008 presidential campaign , its entry on Obama asserted that he " has no clear personal achievement that cannot be explained as the likely result of affirmative action " . Some Conservapedia editors urged that the statement be changed or deleted , but Schlafly , a classmate of Obama , responded by asserting that the Harvard Law Review , the Harvard University legal journal for which Obama and Schlafly worked together , uses racial quotas and stated : " The statement about affirmative action is accurate and will remain in the entry " . In addition , Hugh Muir of the British newspaper The Guardian mockingly referred to Conservapedia 's assertion that Obama has links to radical Islam as " dynamite " and an excellent resource for " US rightwingers " .

In contrast , the articles about conservative politicians , such as former U.S. Republican president Ronald Reagan and former British Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher , have been observed as praising their respective subjects . Mark Sabbatini of the Juneau Empire considered the Conservapedia entry on Sarah Palin , the Republican vice @-@ presidential candidate for the 2008 U.S. presidential election , a " kinder , gentler " and " far shorter and less controversial " reference for one wishing to learn about Palin in contrast with the corresponding Wikipedia entry , which Sabbatini found to be plagued by disputes over inclusion of potentially controversial details about her life .

= = = Atheism = = =

In July 2008 , American Prospect associate editor Ezra Klein derided the Conservapedia article on atheism in his weekly column : " As Daniel DeGroot notes , you 've got to wonder which ' unreasonable ' explanations they rejected when formulating that entry " .

The website sometimes adopts a strongly critical stance against figures that it perceives as political or ideological opponents . For instance , in May 2009 , Vanity Fair and The Spectator reported that Conservapedia 's article on atheist Richard Dawkins featured a picture of Adolf Hitler at the top .

= = Reception = =

The Conservapedia project has come under significant criticism for numerous factual inaccuracies and factual relativism . Wired magazine noted that Conservapedia was " attracting lots of derisive comments on blogs and a growing number of phony articles written by mischief makers " . Iain Thomson in Information World Review wrote that " leftist subversives " may have been creating deliberate parody entries . Conservapedia has been compared to CreationWiki , a wiki written from a creationist perspective , and Theopedia , a wiki with a Reformed theology focus . Fox News obliquely compared it with other new conservative websites competing with mainstream ones , such as MyChurch , a Christian version of social networking site MySpace , and GodTube , a Christian version of video site YouTube .

Tom Flanagan , a conservative professor of political science at the University of Calgary , has argued that Conservapedia is more about religion , specifically Christianity , than conservatism and that it " is far more guilty of the crime they 're attributing to Wikipedia " than Wikipedia itself . Matt Millham of the military @-@ oriented newspaper Stars and Stripes called Conservapedia " a Web site that caters mostly to evangelical Christians " . Its scope as an encyclopedia , according to its founders , " offers a historical record from a Christian and conservative perspective " . APC magazine perceives this to be representative of Conservapedia 's own problem with bias . Conservative Christian commentator Rod Dreher has been highly critical of the website 's " Conservative Bible Project " , an ongoing retranslation of the Bible which Dreher attributes to "

insane hubris " on the part of " right @-@ wing ideologues " .

The project has also been criticized for promoting a false dichotomy between conservatism and liberalism and for promoting relativism with the implicit idea that there " often are two equally valid interpretations of the facts " . Matthew Sheffield , writing in the conservative daily newspaper The Washington Times , argued that conservatives concerned about bias should contribute more often to Wikipedia rather than use Conservapedia as an alternative since he felt that alternative websites like Conservapedia are often " incomplete " . Author Damian Thompson asserts that the purpose of Conservapedia is to " dress up nonsense as science " .

Bryan Ochalla , writing for the LGBT magazine The Advocate , referred to the project as " Wikipedia for the bigoted " . On the satirical news program The Daily Show , comedian Lewis Black lampooned its article on homosexuality . Writing in The Australian , columnist Emma Jane described Conservapedia as " a disturbing parallel universe where the ice age is a theoretical period , intelligent design is empirically testable , and relativity and geology are junk sciences . "

Opinions criticizing the site rapidly spread throughout the blogosphere around early 2007 . Schlafly appeared on radio programs Today on BBC Radio 4 and All Things Considered on NPR to discuss the site around that time . In May 2008 , Schlafly and one of his homeschooled students appeared on the CBC program The Hour for the same purpose .

Stephanie Simon of the Los Angeles Times quoted two Conservapedia editors who commented favorably about Conservapedia . Matt Barber , policy director for the conservative Christian political action group Concerned Women for America , praised Conservapedia as a more family @-@ friendly and accurate alternative to Wikipedia .

Wired magazine , in an article entitled " Ten Impressive , Weird And Amazing Facts About Wikipedia " , highlighted several of Conservapedia 's articles , including those on " Atheism and obesity " and " Hollywood values " , amongst others . It also highlighted Conservapedia 's " Examples of bias in Wikipedia " article , which encourages readers to contact Jimmy Wales and tell him to " sort it out . "

Conservapedia 's use of Wikipedia 's format to create a conservative Christian alternative encyclopedia has been mirrored by other sites , such as Tangle.com (formerly GodTube) , QubeTV and MyChurch , which adopted the format of the more prominent Facebook , YouTube and MySpace , respectively .

Wikipedia 's co @-@ creator Jimmy Wales said about Conservapedia that " free culture knows no bounds " and " the reuse of our work to build variants [is] directly in line with our mission " . Wales denied Schlafly 's claims of liberal bias in Wikipedia .

== RationalWiki ==

In April 2007 , Peter Lipson , a doctor of internal medicine , repeatedly attempted to edit Conservapedia 's article on breast cancer to include evidence arguing against Conservapedia 's claim that abortion was a major cause of the disease . Conservapedia administrators " questioned his credentials and shut off debate " . Several editors whose accounts were blocked by Conservapedia administrators , including Lipson , started another website , RationalWiki , a sometimes satirical and sometimes serious wiki website with articles written from a secular , progressive perspective .

RationalWiki 's self @-@ stated purpose is to analyze and refute " pseudoscience " , the " anti @-@ science movement " , and " crank ideas " , as well as to conduct " explorations of authoritarianism and fundamentalism " and explore " how these subjects are handled in the media . "

According to an article published in the Los Angeles Times in 2007 , RationalWiki members " monitor Conservapedia . And ? by their own admission ? engage in acts of cyber @-@ vandalism . "

== Lenski dialogue ==

On June 9 , 2008 , New Scientist published an article describing Richard Lenski 's 20 @-@ year E.

coli experiment , which reported that the bacteria evolved the ability to metabolize citrate . Schlaflly contacted Lenski to request the data . Lenski explained that the relevant data was in the paper and that Schlaflly fundamentally misunderstood it . Schlaflly wrote again and requested the raw data . Lenski replied again that the relevant data was already in the paper , that the " raw data " were living bacterial samples , which he would willingly share with qualified researchers at properly equipped biology labs , and that he felt insulted by letters and comments on Conservapedia which he saw as brusque and offensive , including claims of outright deceit . The Daily Telegraph later called Lenski 's reply " one of the greatest and most comprehensive put @-@ downs in scientific argument " .

The exchange , recorded on a Conservapedia page entitled " Lenski dialog " , was widely reported on news @-@ aggregating sites and web logs . Carl Zimmer wrote that it was readily apparent that " Schlaflly had not bothered to read [Lenski 's paper] closely " , and PZ Myers criticized Schlaflly for demanding data despite having neither a plan to use it nor the expertise to analyze it . During and after the Lenski dialogue on Conservapedia , several users on the site were blocked for " insubordination " for expressing disagreement with Schlaflly 's stance on the issue .

The dialogue between Lenski and Conservapedia is noted in Richard Dawkins ' The Greatest Show on Earth : The Evidence for Evolution in a chapter concerning Lenski 's research .

= = Conservative Bible Project = =

Conservapedia hosts the " Conservative Bible Project " , a project aiming to rewrite the English translation of the Bible in order to remove terms described as " liberal bias " . The project intends to remove sections of the Bible which are judged by Conservapedia 's founder to be later liberal additions . These include the story of the adulteress in the Gospel of John in which Jesus declares " Let him who is without sin cast the first stone " . The project also intends to remove Jesus 's prayer on the cross , " Father , forgive them , for they do not know what they are doing " , since it appears only in the Gospel of Luke and since , according to Schlaflly , " the simple fact is that some of the persecutors of Jesus did know what they were doing . This quotation is a favorite of liberals but should not appear in a conservative Bible " .

The Bible project has met with extensive criticism , including from fellow evangelistic Christian conservatives . Rod Dreher , a conservative editor and columnist , described the project as " insane hubris " and " crazy " ; he further described the project as " It 's like what you 'd get if you crossed the Jesus Seminar with the College Republican chapter at a rural institution of Bible learnin ' " . Ed Morrissey , another conservative Christian writer , wrote that bending the word of God to one 's own ideology makes God subservient to an ideology , rather than the other way around . Joseph Farah , editor @-@ in @-@ chief of WorldNetDaily , stated : " I 've seen some incredibly stupid and misguided initiatives by ' conservatives ' in my day , but this one takes the cake " and " There 's certainly nothing ' conservative ' about rewriting the Bible " . Creation Ministries International wrote " Forcing the Bible to conform to a certain political agenda , no matter if one happens to agree with that agenda , is a perversion of the Word of God and should therefore be opposed by Christians as much as ' politically correct ' Bibles . "

On October 7 , 2009 , Stephen Colbert called for his viewers to incorporate him into the Conservapedia Bible as a Biblical figure and viewers responded by editing the Conservapedia Bible to include his name . This was followed by an interview between Colbert and Schlaflly on December 8 , 2009 .