

# FACT SHEET

## ABOUT THE GENDER BIAS ON WIKIPEDIA (AND BEYOND)

Equality = representation in knowledge

cotation needed!

One of the biggest source of knowledge today is Wikipedia, the online free and collaborative encyclopedia, which is one of the top 7 most visited websites in the world, with more than seven billion visits per month.

→ "Alexa Top 500 Global Sites", New Statesman, 26.05.2015

In other terms, Wikipedia has a **HUGE IMPACT** on how we see the world.

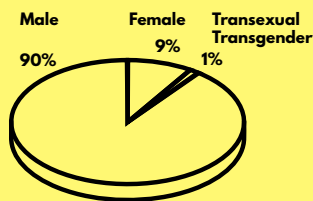


But since 2009, the Wikimedia Foundation (WMF) has made surveys on Wikipedia's users which gave alarming results:

**9 to 16%** of Wikipedia's contributors only identify as women.

→ Wikimedia Survey, 2011

This situation means that the "encyclopedia that anyone can edit" is in fact mainly edited by the same group of people.



"The main thing is to bring in people of all different backgrounds. If you do that, you increase the knowledge base of the site, which can only be a good thing"

Jimmy Wales, The Independent, 2001

"We've completely failed"

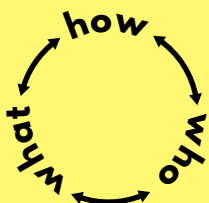
Jimmy Wales, BBC News, 2014

"Everyone brings their crumb of information at the table. If they are not at the table, we don't benefit from their crumb." Sue Gardner, executive director WMF

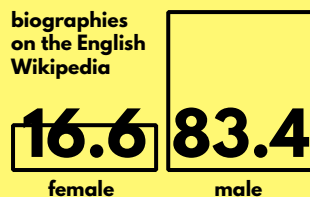


Table setup in "The Dinner Party", by Judy Chicago

The three levels of who writes, what is written and how the knowledge is represented are related.



This has an impact on the contents of the encyclopedia



Noam Cohen, New York Times, 2011

"The marginalisation becomes circular and self-perpetuating"

women are badly or not at all represented in history books and then on Wikipedia

women are not represented in some domains

women are less likely to identify to some positions

Jenny Kleeman, The New Statesman, 2015

This is not only true for Wikipedia, it is part of a long history of writing:

newspapers, history books, commercials, everyday communications, ...

that continues today.

75.8 percent of history books published for general readers in 2015 are written by male authors, and subjects were 71.7 percent of the biographies are about male figures.

→ Andrew Kahn and Rebecca Onion, Slate, 2016

Wikipedia is often seen as:  
**collaborative horizontal neutral**

But these words shouldn't hide the fact that there are power structures in Wikipedia (on top of those we inherit from the society, education, ...)

stewards  
admins  
...  
users

more power  
(block users, delete pages, etc)

See Jo Freeman, The Tyranny of Structurelessness, 1972

Of course surveys too can be biased : the WMF 2011 survey says that "just 4% of women editors in the sample said that they had been stalked online". Using the word "just" when talking about stalking (when it is known that most people who are victims of harrassement don't dare to say it) is very reductive.

Everyone can be part of solving this problem !

Think about it when you write, when you communicate about any subject, use writing guides ref guides

ask for more information ref info ?

## RESOURCES

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender\\_bias\\_on\\_Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_bias_on_Wikipedia)  
[https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Editor\\_Survey\\_2011/Women\\_Editors](https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Editor_Survey_2011/Women_Editors)  
Gender Bias on Wikipedia - An analysis of the affiliation network, S. K. Lam, A. Uduwage, Z. Dong, S. Sen, D. R. Musicant, L. Terveen, and J. Riedl. "WP:clubhouse? an exploration of Wikipedia's gender imbalance." In Proc. of WikiSym, 2011.  
"Alexa Top 500 Global Sites". Alexa Internet. Retrieved September 4, 2016.  
"Wikipedia seeks women to balance its 'geeky' editors", Kevin Rawlinson, The Independent, 08.08.2001  
"The Wikipedia wars: does it matter if our biggest source of knowledge is written by en?", Jenny Kleeman, The New Statesman, 26.05.2015  
"Wikipedia 'completely failed' to fix gender imbalance", BBC News, 08.08.2014  
"Is History Written About Men, by Men?", Andrew Kahn and Rebecca Onion, Slate, 06.01.2016  
Jo Freeman, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness", The Second Wave Vol. 2, No.

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