Jimmy Wales

Tim Kelly
Student no. 19334940

Jimmy Wales is a programmer and internet entrepreneur, best known for being a founder of Wikipedia. Wales was born in Huntsville, Alabama. He earned a bachelor's degree in finance from Auburn University and master from University of Alabama. In college, he learned a bit of Fortran and C. In graduate school, Wales taught at two universities; however, he departed before completing a PhD to take a job in finance and later worked as the research director of a Chicago futures and options firm. When he was working in finance in Chicago, he learned Perl so that I could begin to make websites.

The Creation of Wikipedia

Bomis, a partner on a previous project, provided the initial funding for the free peer-reviewed encyclopaedia, Nupedia. Nupedia had had a seven-step article approval process and was intended to be better than an encyclopaedia, but one of the first articles to get through had to be taken down for plagiarism and the writing of content for Nupedia was extremely slow, with only 12 articles written during the first year.

On January 15, 2001, with Larry Sanger and others, Wales launched Wikipedia, a free open-content encyclopaedia that enjoyed rapid growth and popularity. Jimmy Wales switched to the Wiki editor system (pioneered in 1995 by Ward Cunningham.) and the number of articles soared. It was when they switched to the wiki system, in which anyone can edit, that Wales tested out the system and typed out the classic test phrase "Hello World." Wikipedia was intended to complement Nupedia, an online encyclopaedia project edited solely by experts, by providing additional draft articles and ideas for it. In practice, Wikipedia quickly overtook Nupedia.

Early in Wikipedia's development, it began to expand internationally. The first subdomain created for a non-English Wikipedia was deutsche.wikipedia.com, only two months after the original launch. At this time Wikipedia established the "neutral point of view" policy for spreading information. In January 2002, about ninety percent of all Wikipedia articles were written in English. By January 2004, less than fifty percent were in English. This internationalization continued to increase as the encyclopaedia grew. By 2014, about eighty-five and a half percent of all Wikipedia articles are contained within non-English Wikipedia versions. In 2005, Wikipedia

became the most popular reference website on the Internet with the English Wikipedia alone exceeding 750,000 articles. Jimmy Wales confirmed Wikipedia would never run commercial advertising in 2002 after the loss of funding from Bormis. A formal fundraiser held in the first quarter of the year 2005 and raised almost US$100,000 for system upgrades to handle growing demand. China again blocked Wikipedia in October 2005.

The next decade and a half were consistent growth, regular controversies, but in this time, Wikipedia cemented itself as a pillar of the internet.

Jimmy Wales' Impact

somewhat disputed (crediting himself and Larry Sanger as cofounders), what is undisputed is what impact his ideas have had on the world. Jimmy Wales credits himself as the sole founder of Wikipedia, and although this is

Wales created Wikipedia with the mission of spreading the sum of human knowledge worldwide. Wales sees Wikipedia as a portal for collecting verifiable information, and he sees a need for future collaboration between professional journalists and Wikipedians as society shifts to online news markets. Wikipedia currently receives more visits per month than readers of the world's twenty most popular newspapers combined. (I would like to mention three times when researching this essay, I was blocked by pay walls on newspaper sites.) Wikipedia's probably greatest achievement is how many barriers it has removed in terms of giving access to information to the developing world.

Wikipedia launched its Wikipedia Zero program in 2012, partnering with ninety-seven mobile carriers in seventy-two countries who waived data fees to access the online encyclopaedia. This program provided access to Wikipedia with no data cost to more than eight-hundred-million people in countries where many people are not be able to afford the regular access. This allowed students to study, professionals to develop their skills, and gave citizens access to an unbiased news source. Although this campaign eventually came to an end in 2018, Wales citing issues with a lack of notoriety of Wikipedia outside of Europe and North America, rapidly changing mobile industry, and its contradictions with Net Neutrality, it still shows Wales' dedication to the original mission.

Awards

Jimmy Wales has received many awards and distinctions for what he's achieved with Wikipedia and these can all be viewed on his Wikipedia page. A few of his most

notable are being awarded the President's Medal of the British Academy in 2017 "for facilitating the spread of information via his work creating and developing Wikipedia, the world's largest free online encyclopaedia". In 2006, Wales was listed in the "Scientists & Thinkers" section of the TIME 100 and number 12 in Forbes "The Web Celebs 25".

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