

How Australian places are represented in Wikipedia

The Annual Report of the Wikiphistories Project

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The Wikiphistories project would like to acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, and the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong peoples, upon whose ancestral lands our University campuses stand. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present, acknowledging them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for this land.



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0.1 Frequently Asked Questions

0.1.1 Which Australian places are most contentious?

Some Wikipedia pages are more controversial than others. Wikipedia contributors have argued for years over whether [Pavolva](#) was invented in Australia or New Zealand. By contrast, the page for the [Pacific Highway](#) has inspired virtually no debate. It is not easy to locate or rank contentious articles using computerised methods. Contention can take many forms: editors might ‘revert’ (i.e. undo) one another’s edits; they might debate topics in-depth on Wikipedia Talk pages; they might abuse one another ‘off-wiki’; they might accuse one another of misconduct, and be subject to administrative redress. For simplicity’s sake, we focus just on the first manifestation of contention, when Wikipedians ‘revert’ or undo each others’ edits.

In Figure 1, we have attempted to find 10 highly contentious Places using a simple metric. The figure shows the 10 Australian Places that have been edited at least 50 times, with the highest ratio of ‘reverted’ edits to human edits. For example, the little article on [Barmah National Park](#) has only had text added to it 70 times, but 39 of those edits have been reverted! The reason is a long-running dispute over whether horses in the national park should be considered as “wild” or “feral.” In other cases, our simple metric uncovers ‘edit wars’ that have little to do with social or political contention. The article for [Giru](#) appears in the list, for example, because some pranksters thought it was amusing to repeatedly amend the article to place Giru “1,283 km (797 mi) NNW of [Miley Cyrus](#)”, rather than “1,283 km (797 mi) NNW of [Brisbane](#)”, where conventional geography would place it.

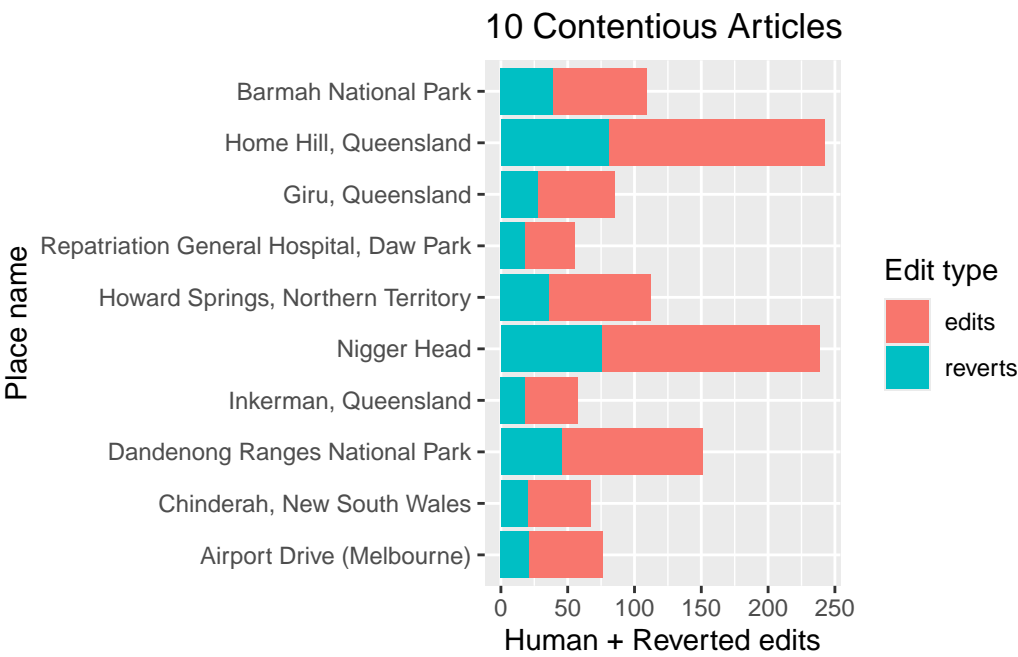


Figure 1: These 10 articles have the highest ratio of ‘reverts’ to ‘human edits’ in the dataset, of all articles with more than 50 edits. Are they the most contentious articles in the dataset? That question is impossible to answer by such a simple measure.

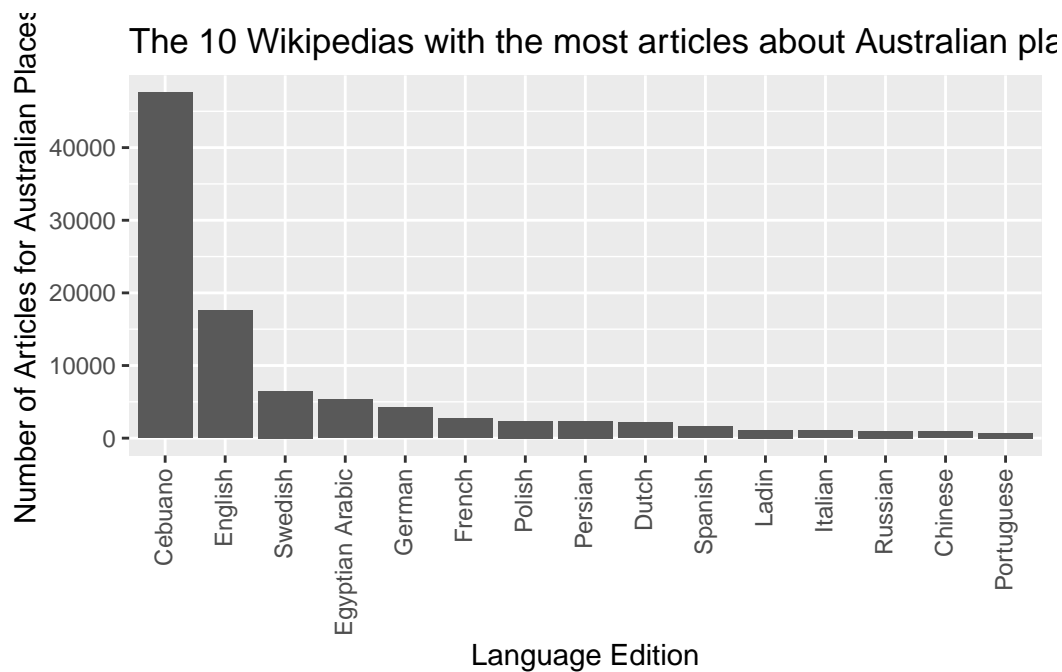


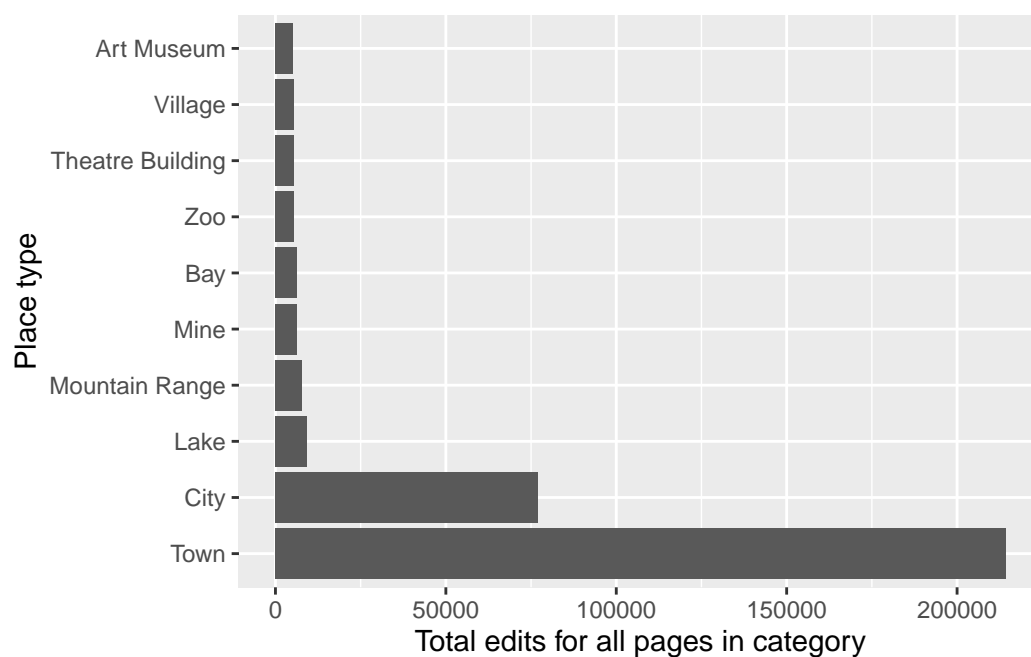
Figure 2: The Cebuano and Swedish Wikipedias have many articles written by a software program, lsjbot. Swedish Wikipedians have in recent years deleted most of lsjbot’s articles, but the small community of Cebuano editors in the Philippines have not done so in their encyclopaedia.

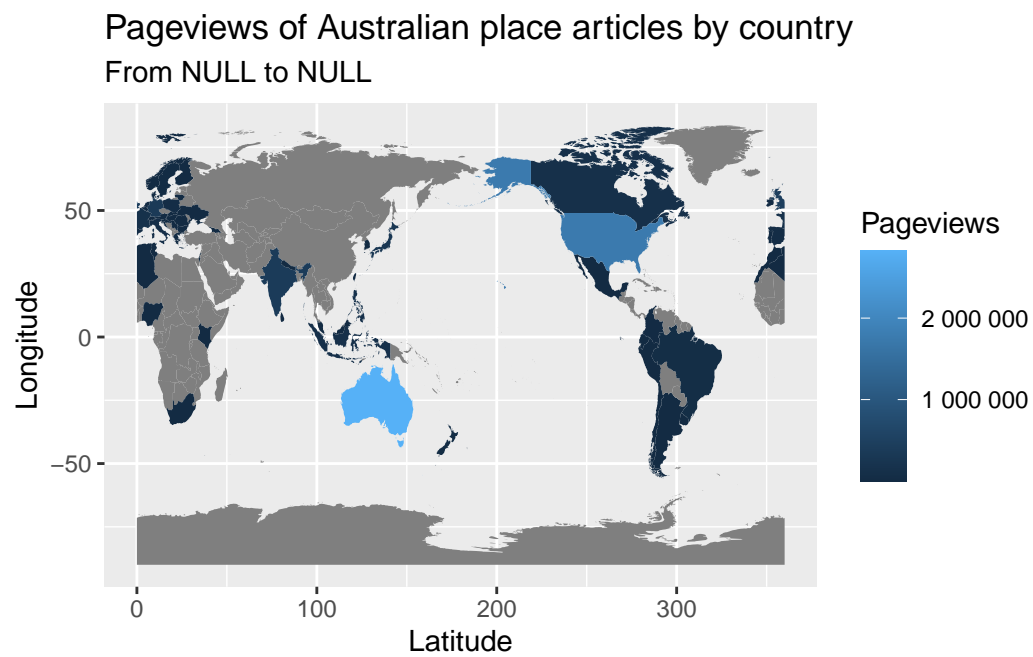
0.1.2 Which language edition has the most Australian places?

Wikipedia is available in more than 300 languages. You might expect that English Wikipedia would have the most articles about Australian places—but you’d be wrong. Figure 2 shows that [Cebuano Wikipedia](#) has by far the largest number of articles about Australian places. Tens of thousands of Australian places, such as [Molecap Hill](#), [Dindum Island](#) and [Mount Finlayson Range](#), have articles *only* in Cebuano Wikipedia. Why is this?

It is *not* because the speakers of the [Cebuano language](#) in Philippines are obsessed with Australian geography.

0.1.3 Which are the ignored places?



0.1.4 Who reads the articles about Australian places?**0.1.5 Which Australian places exist?**