

Wikinews in a University Classroom

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What is Wikinews?

Wikinews provides opportunities to travel and interview interesting people.

Wikinews is not a home to press releases.

Wikinews is a
citizen reporting news
source anyone can
contribute to.

Wikinews is global and local.

Wikinews has no space constraints because it is not a paper based newspaper.

Wikinews does not publish editorials or opinion pieces.

Wikinews offers people a chance to bring attention to important stories not being covered by other media organizations.



Why use Wikinews in a university classroom?

Demonstrating the ability to think critically, creatively and independently

Providing evidence of critical analysis and creative thought

Providing materials for review that can pass a plagiarism, close paraphrase and copyright check

Providing evidence of critical analysis and creative thought

Researching and fact-checking content for articles

Achieving an awareness of the questions of authorship, legitimacy and reliability raised by different forms of digital publishing

Practicing their proficiency in English grammar and mechanics

Practicing their ability to write cogent, clear and concise prose

Providing evidence of critical analysis and creative thought

Providing an opportunity for real world type collaboration with people who will critically assess materials for publication



Wikinews involves a symbiotic relationship between reporter and reviewer

Stories are not published without undergoing a thorough review with the reporter and reviewer working together to get an article published.

1. compliance with the style guide,
2. neutrality,
3. verifiability,
4. newsworthiness and
5. lack of copyright violations or plagiarism.

Review Criteria

The review process requires all articles to be checked against 5 criteria in less than 24 to 48 hours.

Case Study: University of Wollongong

University of Wollongong students participated on English Wikinews as part of a class in Semester 1 and 2 of 2013.

Overall findings

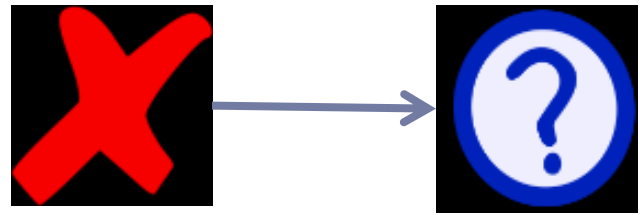
Students, new users and regular reporters have similar rates of copyright violations and plagiarism for not ready articles at between 10 and 16%. Accredited reporters had low rates at 4%.

Students and new reporters had a rate of around 50% not ready for compliance with the style guide.



Students performed better than new reporters in verifiability, and worse in neutrality.



Case Study: University of Wollongong



At the end of the first semester, a few Wikinews reviewers decided to make changes in our reviewing practices. This included:

- ▶ Changing the not-ready mark from red  to blue  ;
- ▶ Trying to provide more extensive feedback to students to make it more explicitly clear what needed to be fixed and where they can find additional information;
- ▶ Providing screencasts of a few reviews so students can see things from a reviewer perspective; and
- ▶ Creating instructional materials for students.



Case Study:

University of Wollongong

There were a few differences between student performance from semester 1 to semester 2. They include:

- ▶ Twice as much semester 2 student work was published.
- ▶ Semester 1 students were more likely to work to overcome copyright violations to get an article published.
- ▶ Twice as many total Semester 2 student articles had copyright violations. Same percentage: 16%.
- ▶ Semester 2 students published work was marked ready 43% of time for style reasons first compared to 17% of semester 1. No difference in published works.
- ▶ Semester 2 students were less likely to have a story marked not ready because it was not newsworthy.



Case Study: University of Wollongong

There were fewer reviewer complaints by students on the project during semester 2.

Volume wise, semester 2 students were more likely to plagiarize.

Interesting points

We do not actually know the impact of our changes because of the number of variables at play.

Semester 2 students were less likely to try to get an article published than semester 1 after it had been dinged for plagiarism.

Semester 2 students were less likely to resubmit following a failed review.

This hurts reviewer morale because it makes it seem like students do not care, so why should volunteers put the effort into serious reviews of their work?

Case Study:

University of Wollongong

With little instructor involvement, the following are areas where there is **room for improvement**:

- ▶ Better student preparedness. They need to understand the reviewing process, read the style guide, read the content guide and read examples of published work.
 - ▶ Students need to know how to review article histories to see what reviewers did.
 - ▶ Students need to communicate with reviewers, and be unafraid to ask questions if an article is marked not ready.
 - ▶ Wikinews reviewers need to provide more detailed feedback, develop more tools and guides for students, provide more praise and build in more effective ways to communicate with students.
 - ▶ **The changes in reviewing practices between semester 1 and semester 2 saw similar improvements for new reporters. What is good for students is good for the whole community.**
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Thank you!

[http://en.wikinews.org
/wiki/WN:EDU](http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/WN:EDU)

Any questions?

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