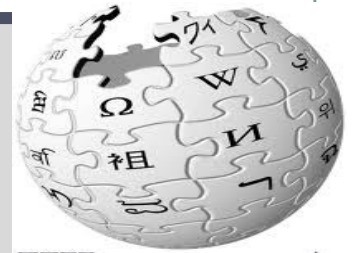


# WIKIPEDIA!



WIKIPEDIA  
*The Free Encyclopedia*

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# IS IT FOR YOU?

Mona Information Literacy Unit

© May 2011

# WIKIPEDIA



WIKIPEDIA  
*The Free Encyclopedia*

- **WIKIPEDIA** is an **online encyclopedia**. It is written collaboratively by contributors from around the world. The site is a **wiki**, that is anybody can write, edit and add information to an article. It is accessible via the Internet.

Source: [www2.plymouth.ac.uk/distancelearning/course/glossary.doc](http://www2.plymouth.ac.uk/distancelearning/course/glossary.doc)

- Online encyclopedias such as [Encyclopedia Britannica](#) are very popular information sources.

- **WIKIPEDIA** IS one of the top 10 most visited websites in the world, and is rated as the “easiest method of obtaining information on just about everything.”

Source: Lisa Burns “Writersnews weekly.com”

- But...

# Is it for You?

University students are expected to use scholarly sources, when producing their academic papers.

The quality of your written and oral presentations are judged on the information sources that you use.

**But what are scholarly sources?**

# Scholarly sources are:

[\(click on this link\)](#)

- well-structured information written by experts and intended for students, scholars and other experts in the field being examined
- presented in books, journals and websites having the content and style appropriate to scholarly rather than a popular audience

# They meet the following criteria:

- Authority
- Accuracy
- Currency
- Objectivity
- Reliability

# Authority

- Much of an article's credibility comes from its authors. These authors must be experts in their field and or affiliated with reputable organizations and institutions and therefore the information they present can be trusted
- The authors of scholarly works usually provide their credentials and their contact information

BUT...

# WIKIPEDIA

- Articles are written by volunteers and they do not need to have any special qualifications to make their contributions. This means that anyone from anywhere, in any age group in any culture can write these articles
- The history tab of the Wikipedia's website, indicates that the authors are almost always anonymous.

# Accuracy



## Accuracy

- The authors are experts in the field, that is they are faculty members or researchers
- Content of articles are in-depth primary accounts of original findings by the researcher(s)
- Information is specific with the goal of scholarly communication
- The articles are always well referenced, but ...



# WIKIPEDIA

- Authors are known to use unreliable sources such as blogs and personal web sites
- Articles tend to be superficial, lacking scholarly input and support, prone to vandalism because information in some articles [keep changing](#)
- Some of the articles are not well referenced, and there is always a request for persons to provide references for statements made in these articles

# Currency



- If the source is a website the content is updated regularly
- The source includes information on the regularity of updates
- The source also includes information on availability, but...

# WIKIPEDIA

- Older articles usually show evidence of balance and are more comprehensive while the newer articles have inaccurate information as they are prone to interference by vandals
- Any user can change an entry on Wikipedia and if he/she gets supporters then false information can be presented as truth

# Objectivity

- Articles are peer reviewed for correctness by experts in the field
- Articles are edited for content, format and style
- Articles are free from bias or limitations are explained and any bias justified/supported, but...

# WIKIPEDIA

- The articles tend to be biased, contain inconsistencies, and favours consensus over credentials of authors.
- Wikipedia's articles are criticized for [systemic bias](#), that is providing more detail for less important information than more important ones
- The fact that persons having personal agenda can and have [tampered](#) with Wikipedia articles
- Wikipedia also acknowledges that it should not be used as a primary source for scholarly academic research

# Reliability

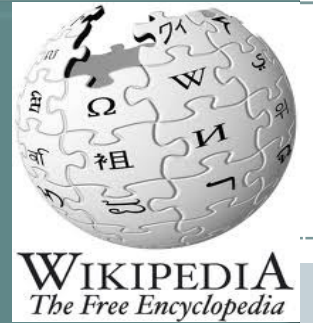
- The information must be dependable in that they are written by experts and the publications they write in must engage in a rigorous publication process, meaning that the writing must be peer reviewed
- The information must be well referenced showing support or proof of the accuracy and credibility of the information, but ...

# WIKIPEDIA

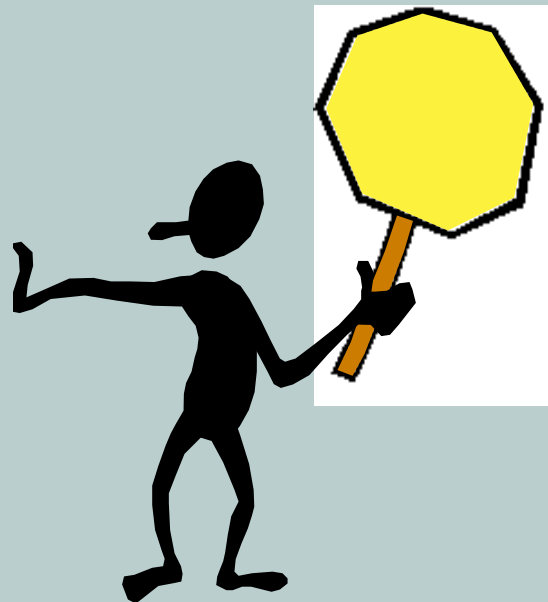
- Wikipedia articles are written by volunteers who do not need to have any special qualifications to make their contributions. This means that anyone from anywhere, in any age group in any culture can write these articles
- Reliability and accuracy of articles are often questioned

So does Wikipedia meet the criteria of: **Accuracy, Authority, Currency, Objectivity and Reliability?**

Does **WIKIPEDIA**  
meet this criteria?



**Absolutely NOT!**





# **Wikipedia Lacks Authority!**

**Who are the people who write  
these articles?**

**Are they experts in the field?**

**No-One Knows!**



# Wikipedia Lacks Accuracy!

## How accurate is the content on Wikipedia?

This is very difficult to verify as the articles are written by anonymous volunteers



# Wikipedia Lacks Objectivity!

**Are the articles peer-reviewed  
and free from bias?**

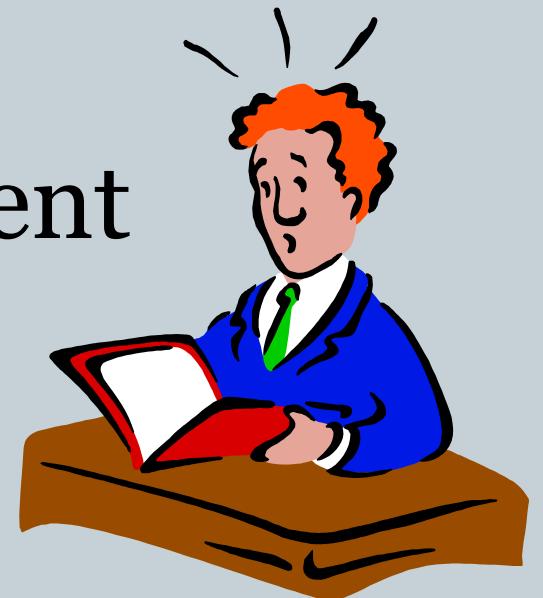
**How could they when no one  
knows who they are?**



# Wikipedia Lacks Reliability!

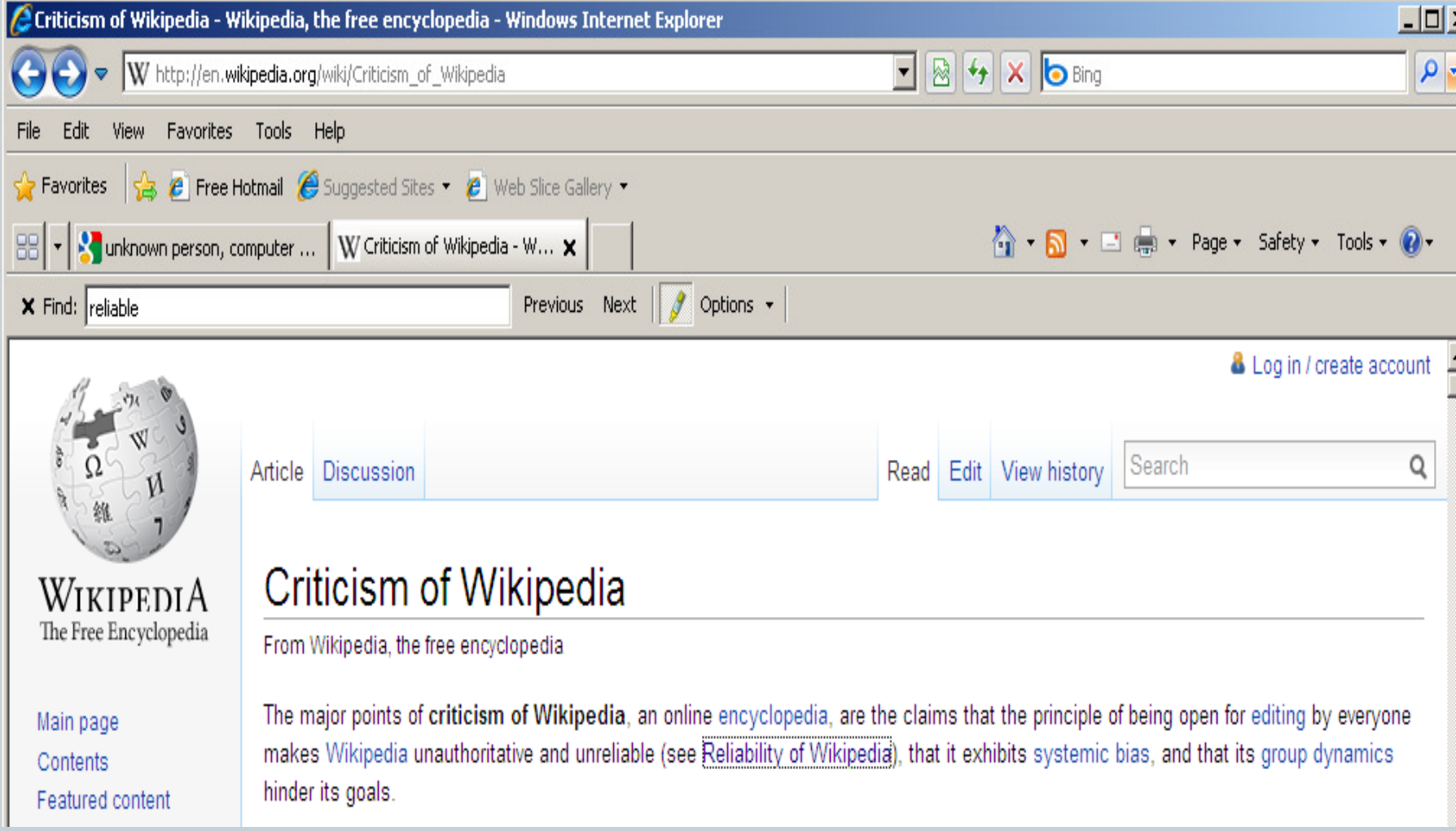
Is the goal of these contributors to share scholarly information?

Wiki admits that its content is not suitable for serious research



# WIKIPEDIA CRITICISED

([click on this link](#))



The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window. The title bar reads "Criticism of Wikipedia - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia - Windows Internet Explorer". The address bar contains the URL "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism\_of\_Wikipedia". The browser's menu bar includes "File", "Edit", "View", "Favorites", "Tools", and "Help". Below the menu bar are "Favorites" and "Suggested Sites" sections. The search bar contains the text "reliable". The main content area displays the Wikipedia article for "Criticism of Wikipedia". The article title is "Criticism of Wikipedia" and it is described as "From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia". The article text begins with "The major points of criticism of Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia, are the claims that the principle of being open for editing by everyone makes Wikipedia unauthoritative and unreliable (see Reliability of Wikipedia), that it exhibits systemic bias, and that its group dynamics hinder its goals." The browser's status bar at the bottom shows "Page Safety Tools" and a "Log in / create account" link.

Criticism of Wikipedia - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia - Windows Internet Explorer

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism\_of\_Wikipedia

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Favorites Free Hotmail Suggested Sites Web Slice Gallery

unknown person, computer ... Criticism of Wikipedia - W... x

Find: reliable Previous Next Options

Log in / create account

Article Discussion Read Edit View history Search

## Criticism of Wikipedia

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The major points of **criticism of Wikipedia**, an online **encyclopedia**, are the claims that the principle of being open for editing by everyone makes **Wikipedia** unauthoritative and unreliable (see **Reliability of Wikipedia**), that it exhibits **systemic bias**, and that its **group dynamics** hinder its goals.

## DID YOU KNOW???

Some universities automatically fail students who cite Wikipedia!

WIKIPEDIA'S founder Jimmy Wales [warns students](#) not to cite WIKIPEDIA?



# SO.....



- Avoid using Wikipedia for anything other than a general overview of a topic you are researching
- Go to the sources mentioned in **WIKIPEDIA** for the 'correct' information
- Do **NOT** cite **WIKIPEDIA** in your academic papers
- Make use of the many scholarly resources that are available at your campus libraries, in electronic databases and on authoritative websites

# STILL LOST?



Watch this video for more  
information on Wikipedia

[Wikipedia tutorial: a guide for students](#)