How to Motivate Older People to Become Active Wikipedians?

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Why Seniors Outreach?

- Seniors represent a large pool of potential contributors with a long-term perspective.
- Seniors are strongly under-represented among contributors.

  - Users over 50 represent only 5.8% of all Wikipedia contributors (above 60 years: only 1.9%)
  
  - In comparison: 26% of Europeans over 60 use the Internet frequently, with large differences between countries, ranging from over 50% (e.g. NL, NO) to less than 10% (e.g. RU, PL, BG)
    Source: European Social Survey Round 5 (2010)
## Typology of Approaches

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“Silberwissen” - “Silver Knowledge”

„I am a retired person and I gained several experiences in geography and the history of Norway and now I want to do my bit to Wikipedia."

User:Kvikk, Mär. 2011

Gaining knowledge of an experienced generation!
„Education and knowledge“ @ WMDE

• Knowledge: start in Wikipedia and the sister projects
• Education: Workshops, support, lectures, …
• Who? everybody, who has knowledge to share or wants to share knowledge

Motivating different people for the idea of free knowledge!
Internal collaboration

School program: **WIKIPEDIA MACHT SCHULE**
**Target group:** Teachers

The correct and critical handling of Wikipedia in school education

**“Silberwissen.”**
**Target group:** Elderly people

Getting people with an extensive professional- and life experience to become Wikipedia authors.

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**University program**

**“University program”**
**Target Group:** Professors and Teachers

Students edit Wikipedia articles. Subject-specific requirements of the studies.

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Shared consultants’ network

- Experience exchange between consultants within and among programs

Shared organizational resources

- Effective deployment of personal resources in the office
- Ensuring a long-term efficiency
External collaboration

Finding Partners:

• Senior- Universities
• Senior- Academies
• Senior-Clubs
• Senior-Computer-Clubs
„Silver knowledge“ – giving time

**Workshop 1**
Introduction in Wikipedia

**course:**
- Inform
- Awaking desire to edit
- How Quality works
- Free Knowledge
- First steps in editing

**Workshop 2**
Edit in Wikipedia (I)

**course:**
- Wikipedia-Syntax and formatting texts
- My own account
- Texting
- Quotes and rules for an article
- citation

**Workshop 3**
Edit in Wikipedia (II)+ Wikimedia Commons

**course:**
- Uploading 2-4 pictures and linking them to an article
- Basic information about licensing
- Introduction to Wikimedia Commons
Conclusions:

- Support and build a network
- Invitation
- Personal contact
Everybody has a topic to give!

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Mobilizing seniors for Wiki Loves Monuments

- Mobilization of seniors for the WLM photo contest via partner newsletters and online forums
- Picture safaris for mixed publics
- Workshops for seniors
- Discussion and assistance in Seniorweb CH forum
Mobilizing seniors via Wiki Loves Monuments – An approach with great potential

- In 2011: over 5‘000 participants (80% new users)
- Easy way to participate and improve Wikipedia in one‘s neighbourhood
- WMDE, WMCH, WMNL made special efforts to include senior participants
- Some photographers’ communities reluctant to «share» their photos
- Participation rate of 50plus – preliminary results from survey
  - All the countries: 23% (n = 146/642)
  - NL: 41% (n = 15/37)
  - DE: 32 % (n = 35/111) (CH numbers too small for analysis)
- In 2012 WMDE, WMNL will pursue their seniors outreach via WLM; situation in CH still unclear due to organizational issues related to WLM; further chapters are invited to join the effort!
Mobilizing seniors via Wiki Loves Monuments – Best Practices, Main Insights

- Improve usability of photo upload (matching photos with official number from monument list)
- Organize picture safaris with heterogeneous target groups – address seniors communities, historians’ associations, Wikipedians alike
- Organize follow-up workshops (e.g. Wikipedia/Wikimedia Commons introductory workshops at the Award Show or afterwards)
- Intensify cooperation with seniors communities and associations; appoint 1-2 «liaison persons»
Old Heritage Associations and Wikipedia

Findings from a two years initiative to get them involved as active Wikipedians

By Anders Wennersten, Sweden (64 years old)

Wikipedian (very active) and active member in several old heritage associations

Presented by Jan Ainali, Chairman, Wikimedia Sverige
Swedish Old Heritage Associations and Wikipedia - Background

- Around 2 500 parishes in Sweden 1950
- 2 000 old heritage associations for these areas
- Active persons often very old, 70+, 80+
- Interest areas: Old cottages, old farm/household appliances and also books of the local area
- Very uneven IT-knowledge, 1/3 do not have a home page, less then half can manage e-mail correctly
- Extremely negative to the idea of free licenses
The Project

- Write articles for all local parishes (~3 000)
- For each, mail local old heritage association for feedback
- Only 15% responses, some valuable but very often not. No signs of will to improve or expand
- Seminars and presentations for Senior Nets

- Conclusion after 2 years: hopeless for 75+, they do not have necessary basic IT knowledge
New Approach

- Get GLAM institutions actively involved in providing info to Wikipedia (good progress)
- Tell Old heritage associations they are part of GLAM sector and that they should follow suit (they have high esteem of museums etc, low esteem of IT ”brats”)
- Long time perspective: trust their grandchildren to tell them of WP and the articles, and wait a couple of years for a new generation, more IT competent (now in the early 70ies), to take over
Strategic Partnership Wikimedia CH - Seniorweb CH

- Seniorweb is an online community for the generation 50+ (around 6000 members)
- Outreach in relation to the WLM photo contest
- Wikipedia/Wikimedia introductory workshops
- Shared stand presence at a seniors fair
- Plans for the participation of seniors in GLAM-related activities
- Plans for shared memberships and shared office space
Introductory workshops for Seniorweb users

- Seniorweb‘s education program „Free Cruise on the Internet“ provided an opportunity for such workshops
- Located in a shopping mall in Bern
- Targeted at readers but also at new contributors
- The same approach has been used for a series of workshops at a University for the Third Age
Summing Up (1)

- Seniors outreach is **worthwhile**, but not without **challenges**!

- Requires **committed volunteers** and a certain **organizational capacity** to be sustainable:
  
  - Use of synergies
  - Know-how management and transmission
  - Long-term commitment, trial-and-error
  - Partnerships, setting up of a network
Summing Up (2)

- Invitation, personal contact, responsiveness are important to **build trust**
- **Activate, guide,** and **reward** the new users
- Catch the **low hanging fruits:**
  - Build upon existing initiatives (WLM, GLAM, etc.)
  - Identify easy ways to contribute (e.g. photo contest)
  - Target potential multipliers and «liaison» persons
Documentation of the Experiences

- Outreach-Wiki: http://outreach.wikimedia.org (upcoming)

Main Target Publics:

Wikipedians and organizations who would like to implement one or several of these approaches. – If you are interested, please get in touch so we can tailor the documentation to your needs!

- www.thirdageonline.eu (research reports)
Group Workshops

- **Group A:** I’m a Wikipedian/Wikimedian and I want to reach out to older adults. What approach would I choose? What inputs/support do I need from the project TAO, my chapter, other volunteers, etc.? How can I get the support?

- **Group B:** Bringing seniors outreach on a chapter’s agenda: What are the challenges? / What are possible solutions?

- **Group C:** What are the major pitfalls in reaching out to «seniors»? How can we avoid them? / What would be great opportunities to reach out to «seniors»?
Contact

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www.thirdageonline.eu