Organizing a student-driven Wikipedia Edit-a-thon

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Collaboration & PR

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These facts matter when we consider that roughly half of American internet users utilize Wikipedia to find information. The numbers increase when we look at college-educated users – 70% indicate they use Wikipedia on a regular basis (Bates, 2016).

We set out to organize a Wikipedia Edit-a-thon to help raise awareness, add content to profiles of women and non-binary, and create new pages. This event was organized and led by Lily, the Student Engagement & Outreach intern.

Introduction

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Resources & Preparation

To prepare participants, we created a Wikipedia Meetup page that contained all essential information (see Meetup contents box, to the right).

Lily created the Meetup page two months in advance to provide a home base for all participants and welcome everyone, regardless of their skill level with editing.

Many of our suggestions for pages to edit or create came from Modern HERstory. This book, along with others from our Leisure Reading collection, served us practically and theoretically, offering a carefully curated list that served the purpose of our Edit-a-thon. Using these books provided novice editors with a framework that centered knowledge creation, as it focused on mostly people or color and queer people.

Best Practices

We believe that a successful Edit-a-thon relies on strong collaborators. When planning your own Edit-a-thon, set goals early, which will influence your framing of the event, and the collaborators you seek out. Remember your network will help make these collaborations successful, but you shouldn't forget about reaching out to those outside your immediate network.

Other best practices include:
- Make a meetup page and utilize the dashboard to support and keep track of participants.
- Provide levels of "getting involved" for participants: from a simple page edit to citation hunt, or full page creation.
- It’s okay to not know everything about editing Wikipedia; Wikipedia can be HARD (and remind participants of that, too)

References


Timeline for hosting an Edit-a-thon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 months out</th>
<th>2 months out</th>
<th>1 month out</th>
<th>Your edit-a-thon!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Secure collaborators inside &amp; outside the library</td>
<td>➢ Create meetup page, with pages to be edited or created</td>
<td>➢ Finalize pages to edit or create during the edit-a-thon</td>
<td>➢ Use the Dashboard to track progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Create informational handout</td>
<td>➢ Provide instruction &amp; informational sessions to collaborators</td>
<td>➢ Heavily market the event to campus community</td>
<td>➢ Encourage participants and celebrate successful edits!</td>
</tr>
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The Event

The Edit-a-thon ran from 9am to 5 pm in a multipurpose room in the library. The two classes that required participation book-ended the day, with the larger class attending at the end of the day. This timing worked in our favor, as we learned about Wikipedia throughout the day and were able to apply the skills in assisting the large class. The event was a success, with 75 participants coming from a variety of backgrounds, including undergraduate and graduate students, professors, and library staff.

By using the Outreach Dashboard, we were able to easily track the number of participants who edited pages and other statistics from our event.

Books used to discover pages to edit or create from our Leisure Reading Collection. Images collected through Google Image search.

The contents box on our meetup page. See the full page at: tinyurl.com/wgss-wiki-edit

An example of the PR we used to promote the event.

Where are all the women, Wikipedia?