



It's only a website... it's only a website...

## Criticisms of Wikipedia - A Compendium

[with 39 comments](#)

([This post](#) was submitted to the forum by *The Review's* resident Troubleshooter, **Gomi**, on January 1, 2008)

**Gomi:** *For the New Year, I decided to attempt to compile a list of Wikipedia Review's criticisms of Wikipedia. I have tried to approach this broadly — I don't agree with all of these myself, but this is my view of the complaints that come up over and over again. One thing that is clear, after looking at Wikipedia for several years, is that these problems are not getting better, they are getting worse.*

### **Wikipedia Content**

- 1. Wikipedia contains incorrect, misleading, and biased information.** Whether through vandalism, subtle disinformation, or the prolonged battling over biased accounts, many of Wikipedia's articles are unsuitable for scholarly use. Because of poor standards of sourcing and citation, it is often difficult to determine the origin of statements made in Wikipedia in order to determine their correctness. Pursuit of biased points of view by powerful administrators is considered a particular problem, as opposing voices are often permanently banned from Wikipedia. Wikipedia's culture of disrespect for expertise and scholarship (see below) make it difficult to trust anything there.
- 2. Wikipedia's articles are used to spread gossip, abet character assassination, and invade the privacy of the general public.** So-called "Biographies of Living Persons" are often the result of attempts by powerful but anonymous editors and administrators at humiliating or belittling those real-world people with whom they disagree. Wikipedia's "anyone can edit" culture has allowed baseless defamation of various individuals to spread widely through the Internet. When the family, friends, associates, or subjects of these biographies attempt to correct errors or insert balance, they are often banned from Wikipedia for "Conflicts of Interest". Subjects of these hatchet jobs usually must resort to legal action to get the articles removed or corrected, a course not available to all.
- 3. Wikipedia over-emphasizes popular culture and under-emphasizes scholarly disciplines.** Wikipedia contains more articles, of greater depth, on television shows, toy and cartoon characters, and other ephemera of popular culture than on many prominent historical figures, events, and places. Massive effort is spent on documenting fictional places and characters rather than science, history, and literature.
- 4. Wikipedia violates copyrights, plagiarizes the work of others, and denies attribution to contributions.** Wikipedia contains no provision to ensure that the content it hosts is not the work of another, or that content it hosts is properly attributed to its author. It contains thousands of photographs, drawings, pages of text and other content that is blatantly plagiarized from other authors without permission.
- 5. Wikipedia, frequently searched and prominently positioned among results, spreads misinformation, defamation, and bias far beyond its own site.** Wikipedia is searched by Google and is usually one of the top results. Its database is scraped by spammers and other sites, so misinformation, even when corrected on Wikipedia, has a long life elsewhere on the network, as a result of Wikipedia's lack of controls.

### **Wikipedia Bureaucracy and "Culture"**

- 1. Wikipedia disrespects and disregards scholars, experts, scientists, and others with special knowledge.** Wikipedia specifically disregards authors with special knowledge, expertise, or credentials. There is no way for a real scholar to distinguish himself or herself from a random anonymous editor merely claiming scholarly credentials, and thus no claim of credentials is typically believed. Even when credentials are accepted, Wikipedia affords no special regard for expert editors

contributing in their fields. This has driven most expert editors away from editing Wikipedia in their fields. Similarly, Wikipedia implements no controls that distinguish mature and educated editors from immature and uneducated ones.

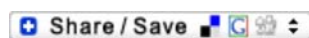
**2. Wikipedia's culture of anonymous editing and administration results in a lack of responsible authorship and management.** Wikipedia editors may contribute as IP addresses, or as an ever-changing set of pseudonyms. There is thus no way of determining conflicts of interest, canvassing, or other misbehaviour in article editing. Wikipedia's administrators are similarly anonymous, shielding them from scrutiny for their actions. They additionally can hide the history of their editing (or that of others).

**3. Wikipedia's administrators have become an entrenched and over-powerful elite, unresponsive and harmful to authors and contributors.** Without meaningful checks and balances on administrators, administrative abuse is the norm, rather than the exception, with blocks and bans being enforced by fiat and whim, rather than in implementation of policy. Many well-meaning editors have been banned simply on suspicion of being previously banned users, without any transgression, while others have been banned for disagreeing with a powerful admin's editorial point of view. There is no clear-cut code of ethics for administrators, no truly independent process leading to blocks and bans, no process for appeal that is not corrupted by the imbalance of power between admin and blocked editor, and no process by which administrators are reviewed regularly for misbehaviour.

**4. Wikipedia's numerous policies and procedures are not enforced equally on the community — popular or powerful editors are often exempted.** Administrators, in particular, and former administrators, are frequently allowed to transgress (or change!) Wikipedia's numerous "policies", such as those prohibiting personal attacks, prohibiting the release of personal information about editors, and those prohibiting collusion in editing.

**5. Wikipedia's quasi-judicial body, the Arbitration Committee (ArbCom) is at best incompetent and at worst corrupt.** ArbCom holds secret proceedings, refuses to be bound by precedent, operates on non-existent or unwritten rules, and does not allow equal access to all editors. It will reject cases that threaten to undermine the Wikipedia *status quo* or that would expose powerful administrators to sanction, and will move slowly or not at all (in public) on cases it is discussing in private.

**6. The Wikimedia Foundation (WMF), the organization legally responsible for Wikipedia, is opaque, is poorly managed, and is insufficiently independent from Wikipedia's remaining founder and his business interests.** The WMF lacks a mechanism to address the concerns of outsiders, resulting in an insular and socially irresponsible internal culture. Because of inadequate oversight and supervision, Wikimedia has hired incompetent and (in at least one case) criminal employees. Jimmy Wales' for-profit business Wikia benefits in numerous ways from its association with the non-profit Wikipedia.



Written by The Review

January 4th, 2008 at 2:42 pm

Posted in [Administrators](#), [Articles](#)

« [Mr. Wales goes to Washington](#)  
[Wikia : Picks up where Wikipedia left off](#) »

## 39 Responses to 'Criticisms of Wikipedia - A Compendium'

Subscribe to comments with [RSS](#) or [TrackBack](#) to 'Criticisms of Wikipedia - A Compendium'.

1. This article is discussed by Michel Bauwens, here:

<http://blog.p2pfoundation.net/is-something-fundamentally-wrong-with-wikipedia-governance-processes/2008/01/07>



**The Review**

7 Jan 08 at [5:32 am](#)

2. [...] students & their use of Wikipedia. One of the most vocal critics of Wikipedia and student use pointed me to a website that listed criticisms of Wikipedia. I said I would follow up on those criticisms, so here goes. My [...]



### [Criticisms of Wikipedia « Eric Jennings](#)

14 Jan 08 at [8:53 pm](#)

3. I think you missed the main thing: the system of Wikipedia is thoroughly subject to gaming. There is nothing about how the project is run, including Jimbo Wales' personal oversight, that reliably prevents propagandists or just fun-seeking vandals from controlling it. And so they do.



### **Saltimbanco**

15 Jan 08 at [5:44 am](#)

4. [...] Wikipedia Review: Â» Criticisms of Wikipedia - A Compendium summary of major points of criticism towards Wikipedia (tags: wiki wikipedia criticism critical encyclopedia community) [...]



### [links for 2008-01-20 | Daily EM](#)

20 Jan 08 at [4:20 am](#)

5. [...] the project" What is the life expectancy of Wikipedia? Wikia : Picks up where Wikipedia left off Criticisms of Wikipedia - A Compendium Mr. Wales goes to Washington 2007 At The Review - "Wikipedia is a blog" Carolyn Doran : [...]



### [Wikipedia Review: Opinions and Editorials » Blog Archive » Wikipedia's Museum of Defamation](#)

25 Jan 08 at [6:43 pm](#)

6. [...] Not so long ago, Gomi did a pretty good summary of what was wrong with Wikipedia (enshrined in blogland now). In recent posts, there have been some [...]



### [Wikipedia Review: Opinions and Editorials » Blog Archive » So what if it is broken?](#)

11 Feb 08 at [9:17 am](#)

7. Wikipedia contributes nothing, it's a parasite in that it steals and plagiarizing content. Wikipedia hurts those whose bios are nothing more than character assassination, pov pushing editors/and admin, untouchable and out of control.



### **Joseph100**

16 Apr 08 at [7:38 am](#)

8. [...] roundup of concerns from someone who has been both participating in it and studying it (inspired by this list of concerns by another critic, but adding links to specific [...])



[Media @ LSE Group Weblog » Blog Archive » Two interesting wikipedia-related resources](#)

2 Oct 08 at [10:24 am](#)

9. You forgot to mention that Zionists work together to smear people who criticize Israel and its supporters, and white wash the articles of Zionists; they tag team like crazy to push their POV.



**wikieditor**

26 Nov 08 at [3:30 am](#)

10. I've been telling people all along that wikipedia cannot be trusted for truth and that it is used to smear people. I put an entry about myself once because someone quoted me (accurately for once) but they needed a citation. So I wrote a brief description about me. Well! No sooner that I did that, it appears as if there a people who paid (probably with our US tax dollars) to constantly monitor the entry on me and maintain the lies about me as well. Anyone who looks at my website <http://www.marwenmedia.com> and <http://www.exposingisraeliapartheid.com> can see that what they say about me on wikipedia cannot be true: since I adamantly say I am for completely equal rights for all regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, creed, gender, and there must be no double standards. As a political activist, I specialize in championing Palestinian human rights since our government allows Israel to deny them their rights. So you can guess who my political opponents are! It appears as if they are professional, paid character assassins! And wikipedia supports their mission. I am glad that more and more have come to be suspicious and distrustful of wikipedia, so that basically it has allowed itself to be discredited.



**Wendy Campbell**

2 Dec 08 at [10:18 pm](#)

11. The problem with Wikipedia is that it's being controlled by a bunch of hyper-sensistive registered users. I've been accused of vandalism several times after making small, correct, and good faith edits. Do they seriously expect that every sentence written in good faith require ample documentation? Apparently, these people are too lazy to use Google and require ons of documentation up front. Even after including proper citations, I never received an apology.

Another problem is that you have people patrolling articles in a subject (such as a county's local politics, etc.) that they know nothing about.



**Anonymous**

28 Nov 09 at [7:15 am](#)

12. Once a person is disconnected from the consequences of his actions, he cannot be expected to behave responsibly. And that, boys and girls, is the story of how Wikipedia lost its way. Stay away from anyone who hides behind a screen name, such as PURRUM.



**Onion Head**

23 Apr 10 at [11:40 am](#)

13. Yes, I have experienced the arrogance of Wikipedia user PURRUM. Deletes mega-referenced contributions of others

with its own personal opinions, incorrect, misleading, bias, misinformation and defamation against Ronald Ryan (the last man hanged in Australia). PURRUM disregards, manipulates, vandalizes and deletes the facts of scientific experts, lawyers and others with special knowledge concerning the possible innocent execution of Ronald Ryan. Wikipedia's administrators have become so blinded to PURRUM's bias distorted contributions that it bans other users who dare to contribute mega-referenced facts. Ronald Ryan is dead but Wikipedia might find itself on the wrong side of the law if Ryan's living family members decide to take action against PURRUM for the obvious reasons.



### **Wikipiddle**

24 Apr 10 at [1:06 pm](#)

14. A major, major problem is that you have editors and administrators patrolling disputed articles in a subject (such as a country's legal matters and people cases) that they know nothing about.



### **Wikipedia-Ex**

26 May 10 at [5:32 am](#)

15. I tried to add accurate referenced material on a wikipedia article. It was deleted the next day quoting 'banned user', yet I can still access and add material on wikipedia pages. I have never been banned from any site so why is this happening. I've heard of the same happening to other wikipedia users.



### **Angela**

9 Jun 10 at [1:33 am](#)

16. Saltimbanco, you are wrong; it is not subject to gaming as I know from experience. Jimmy Wales is biased against Christians and surrounds himself with administrators and editors with the same biases, and has Catholics and liberal Christians on a leash. You cannot put intelligent design or creationism in any, let alone good, light there, nor the Bible. When it comes to Christian persecution, its own article on that subject doesn't mention the blatant persecution of Christians on Wikipedia itself, which is ongoing, not a one time thing, but ongoing. What do you expect when a narcissist atheist is the head of such a website? I've had a massive amount of edits WHICH STAYED, uncredited to me because THE ADMINISTRATORS COMPLETELY DELETED ONE OF MY PROFILES DESPITE THERE BEING NOTHING ON IT BUT A SHORT REBUKE OF THEIR TROLLING ME THAT HAD NO "CURSE" WORDS IN IT. And one time when I was editing a certain page, a troll blanked it, not a surprise because it was a high profile Christian person, an enemy of Reformed Christianity, and I had shown clear references to him having been a plagiarizer and liar. Now when I clicked on this vandalizer's profile, I FOUND A HUGE, LONG, VERY LONG, LIST OF "STOP" signs and vandalism warnings on his profile against him. Yet when a Christian like me makes valid contributions, that are even kept, yet has his accounts repeatedly deleted EVEN THOUGH I DO NOT IDENTIFY MYSELF, and on many different pages, merely after A FEW EDITS, how is that "gaming"? No: that is Jimmy Wales and his mentally ill servants with no lives being evil. It's a sickening website filled with sick servants of evil who copy truths and truths mixed with lies (often not giving credit to the ones they copied from let alone giving references, especially when it comes to claims like "this river is millions of years old" and other stupid claims) to make themselves look scholarly.

It should be regularly attacked so that it can't be used for propaganda anymore.



### **Daniel Knight**

19 Feb 11 at [1:37 am](#)

17. Wikipedia is propaganda gone mad. editors and admin contribute the biggest BS stories based on ficticious materials



**Henry**

10 Mar 11 at [12:00 am](#)

18. Organisations and governments outside of Wikipedia can pay individuals to write and edit the policies and there is nothing that anyone can do about that. Those individuals then fill the policies full of ambiguities and loopholes, and then use them to control content. An example is where one group of editors organises an edit war, and then acts as nitpicking trolls until their 'target' responds in kind and is banned for 'trolling' and 'edit warring'. The equivalent of the bank robbers putting the police in jail for arresting them.



**[xeron](#)**

14 Apr 11 at [5:46 am](#)

19. If you live in a coastal community of a region known for catastrophic seismic activity and tsunamis if you feel the earth move you get to high ground you dont wait for an official to tell you what to do.



**[Demetrius Gehle](#)**

9 Nov 11 at [10:08 am](#)

20. BlogWiki.ro, Blog cu informatii utile, Stiri Media. Concursuri 2011



**[blogwiki](#)**

10 Nov 11 at [1:10 pm](#)

21. WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE ON RONALD RYAN

I urge everyone to read the long history records on the Ronald Ryan article and discussion pages. There have been defamatory and false edits against Ryan and his living family members. We know meatpuppets are using various fake IPs to add false material and to removal of factual material. In one of many recent disgusting edits by meatpuppet/s, Ryan was accused of having sexual relations with his own daughter. In another disgusting edit Ryan was accused of being born a homosexual. Ryan is dead but his family members are alive to take legal action against these meatpuppets.

Ryan's surviving members of his family will continue to correct the distorted, manipulated opinions and views of one book author Mike Richards, whilst all other referenced material is ignored, vandalized and removed. The scapegoat/excuse being used by these meatpuppets is wrong as it is outrageous. Members of the Ryan family are alive and well.

Supporters of Ronald Ryan will forever unite on the facts of his case and execution. We will continue to contribute the facts, based on the hundreds of references that disagree with Richards personal views. Facts like: There is no scientific evidence whatsoever to prove Ryan fired a shot.

To put it bluntly, the meatpuppets refuse to allow any contributions on the facts of the Ryan case. Their hatred for Ryan is rather sick and disturbing to say the least.



**Rock**

11 Nov 11 at [12:55 am](#)

- 22. [...] <http://wikipediareview.com/blog/20080104/criticisms-of-wikipedia/> §459 · dinsdag 26 februari 2008 · knipsels, wikipedia · Tags: [...]



**[Criticisms of Wikipedia – A Compendium | Achille van den Branden](#)**

21 Nov 11 at [7:14 pm](#)

- 23. Wikipedia’s days are numbered and for many reasons.

Thousands of IP addresses have been or are continually being banned/blocked, which will leave a few editors to contribute.

Seems like some people have had a gutfull of Wikipedia and loading the site with payback!



**Wiki Sheet**

27 Nov 11 at [4:17 am](#)

- 24. Hello just thought its interesting.. This is twice now i’ve landed on your blog in the last 3 weeks searching for completely unrelated things. Spooky or what?



**[zoloft lawsuit](#)**

6 Dec 11 at [11:44 am](#)

- 25. May I suggest that those interested read my piece on one of my Google blogs – Wikipedia and the Virus of Zionist Disinformation: An Essay on a Global Infectious Disease.



**[Victor Sasson, Ph.D.](#)**

8 Dec 11 at [3:56 pm](#)

- 26. Zoloft Birth Defects are a bitch. 😞



**[Zoloft Birth Defects 2012](#)**

17 Jan 12 at [7:15 am](#)

- 27. Aaron Hernandez Jersey, Authentic Super Bowl XLVI Aaron Hernandez Jersey from Packers Store



**Autjentic Eli Manning Jersey**

1 Feb 12 at [12:15 am](#)

28. @ Rock

Are you really surprised when a couple of contributors have been confirmed as family members of two deceased prison guards involved in the escape.



**Amos**

6 Feb 12 at [8:27 am](#)

29. Wikipedia editorship and adminship is easy to abuse, a lot of rotten apples who behave in a cult-like manner, hiding behind a false pretense of policing. Censorship is easily hidden and reclassified as cleaning up vandalism.

Please Make Wikipedia free of abusive editors and admins



**Please Make Wikipedia free of abusive editors and admins**

22 Feb 12 at [6:41 am](#)

30. Only in Wikipedia... is the big bang theory primarily a tv show... an encyclopedia by the tv people for the tv people... i hope they ban the use of wikipedia in teaching science at schools



**Only in Wikipedia...**

13 Mar 12 at [4:46 am](#)

31. is turning, or has turned, to the “American television watchers’ encyclopedia”!



**Wikipedia...**

24 Mar 12 at [4:23 am](#)

32. Wikipedia is a community with inconsiderate editors that are terribly nasty and can be insane to others. And plus editors show terrible misunderstandings and can assume bad faith.



**WPEditor1**

25 Mar 12 at [6:02 am](#)

33. I have to say that for the past couple of hours i have been hooked by the impressive posts on this blog. Keep up the great work.



**[Brigette Sdoia](#)**



21 Apr 12 at [4:08 am](#)

34. i need to start my own blog your is vert gd



[Jannet Rando](#)

25 Apr 12 at [10:54 pm](#)

35. Appreciate your hard work!



[Jordan Ogasawara](#)

10 Jun 12 at [12:33 pm](#)

36. [...] Wikipedia Review itself has a huge collection of opinion, nicely compiled by Gomi, on January 1, 2008. In 2009, another good thought was published as Wikipedia criticism. Sam Vaknin in another article, nicely explained his view. Robert McHenry, former editor-in-chief of Encyclopædia Britannica said in November 2004 : [...]



[Wikipedia : The Wrongly Self Labeled Encyclopedia](#)

3 Sep 12 at [8:37 am](#)

37. Go to the Gameboy\_Electronics Forum if you need some help getting your Gameboy projects up and running.



[Tereasa Doorley](#)

17 Sep 12 at [6:07 pm](#)

38. I like your blog very much, i think it's awesome.



[New Nike NFL Jerseys](#)

18 Sep 12 at [10:02 am](#)

39. Some genuinely fascinating details, nicely written and typically user genial .



[cheapest sat nav deals](#)

16 Nov 12 at [6:43 am](#)

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