

AWM Wikipedia Edit-a-thon, January 17, 2020

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Some Background

According to the WikiProject Women in Red, in November 2014, only about **15%** of the English Wikipedia's biographies were about women. As of January 7, 2019, **17.80%** of those biographies were about women.

Between August of 2015 and August of 2017 there were 73 new biographies of women mathematicians on Wikipedia. As of August 30, 2016 there were 37 pages (i.e., people) in the *Category:American women mathematicians*. If we assume every woman in the *Category:American women mathematicians* is also in the *Category:American mathematicians* (which is not the case), the percentage of women in the *Category:American mathematicians* was about **17%** at that time. We can do better!

There is also a need for more women editors on Wikipedia. A survey conducted by the United Nations University and Maastricht University in collaboration with the Wikimedia Foundation demonstrated that in 2008 only **12.64%** of Wikipedia editors worldwide were women. A follow up survey in 2011 showed that things hadn't improved: 9% of editors worldwide and **15%** of those from the US were women. We can do better!

The Basics

Setting Up an Account

Go to <http://en.wikipedia.org> and click on "Create an account" in the righthand upper navigation area. This isn't mandatory but Wikipedia encourages you to do so. Take care in choosing a "Username" since this name will be displayed on your "User page" and on the "History" page of every article that you create or edit.

After logging in to your Wikipedia account, you will see a link to your "Sandbox" in the top navigation area. You can work on a draft of a page in your "Sandbox." If an editor wants to work on two articles at the same time, she can create a second "Sandbox" by creating a page entitled "User:YourUsername/sandbox2."

Pages to Work On

You will find a list of pages that either need to be created or need improvement on the Women in Red page on mathematics

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Women_in_Red/Mathematics.

You can find a template for a bio on a woman mathematician at

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Mvitulli/sandbox2>.

There is another page which lists pages of women mathematicians that need to be created or improved here

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Year_of_Science/Computer_science,_technology,_and_math .

You can find links to all of these pages on my User page

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Mvitulli>.

Reference: Marie. A. Vitulli , Writing Women in Mathematics into Wikipedia

<https://pages.uoregon.edu/wmmmath/Statistics/WikipediaVitulli2017.pdf>

(an abbreviated [version](#) of this appeared in the March 2018 issue of the Notices of the American Mathematical Society.)

Academic Notability (the *professor test*)

Wikipedia demands that in order to merit a Wikipedia page an academic must meet one of 9 criteria. The first 3 criteria are:

- The person's research has made significant impact in their scholarly discipline, broadly construed, as demonstrated by independent reliable sources.
- The person has received a highly prestigious academic award or honor at a national or international level.
- The person is or has been an elected member of a highly selective and prestigious scholarly society or association (e.g., a National Academy of Sciences or the Royal Society) or a fellow of a major scholarly society which reserves fellow status as a highly selective honor (e.g., Fellow of the IEEE)

The full list of criteria is here [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Notability_\(academics\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Notability_(academics)).

Reliable Sources

A contributor must demonstrate notability using *reliable sources*. In general, reliable sources include mainstream news media and major academic journals, both of which are subject to some sort of editorial control. For Wikipedia purposes, published original research articles are considered primary sources; expository articles or summaries of the current state of affairs in a particular research area are considered to be secondary sources. Unlike the case in academic publishing, Wikipedia administrators frown on the use of too many primary sources, as I found out the hard way.

How to Publish a Page from your Sandbox (from

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/86/Classroom_handout_-_moving_out_of_your_sandbox.pdf)

- Create a title for your article, perhaps the simplest statement of what the article is about.
- Click “Sandbox” in the upper right navigation links after you log in to Wikipedia. In the “More” pulldown menu, choose “Move.”
- You’ll load a new page, with a box in the center. At the top of this box, it will say “Move page:” and the name of the page you are about to move, “YourUserName/sandbox.” Beneath that, you’ll see “To new title:” and a dropdown menu. “User” is the default; click it and change it to say “(Article)”.
- Take the title you’d like your new article to have and type it into the “To new title:” input box that currently says “YourUserName/sandbox.”
- In the “Reason: box,” explain why you are moving the article. For example, “I’m moving my sandbox article into Wikipedia.”
- Click the gray “Move page button.” Brava, you’re done!

To move a page into Wikipedia (or create a new article directly, which is another option) your account must be at least 4 days old with at least 10 edits. If you aren't able to move the page yourself, you can ask another editor to do it for you.