Managing conflicts between users in Wikipedia

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Wikipedia

- **An encyclopedia on the web**
  - Free editing, free access, free redistribution, free software,
  - But strong guidelines
- **A community of users**
  - With a common goal
  - But different ideas

Wikipedia guidelines

- The five *pillars*
  - A generalist encyclopedia project
  - A neutral point of view (NPOV)
  - A free content
  - A code of conduct
  - No firm rules besides the five general principles
- Informal rules
  - The Wikipedia Etiquette : a behavioral guideline
  - Content, editing, classification, talk guideline pages
- Tools to make users respect the rules
  - Talk pages
  - Template messages
  - Arbitration committee

The french wikipedian community

- The users : different level of access to Wikipedia
  - Anonymous users (IP number)
  - Accounts : logged-in users (pseudonym)
  - Administrators, bureaucrats, stewards, bots, arbitrators (elected users)
  - Developers, checkUsers (appointed users)
- Conflicts between users
  - Informal
    - Talk pages
    - Template messages at the top of article pages
  - Formal
    - Arbitration committee

Users in conflict and the Wikipedia guidelines

- **Template messages at the top of articles**
  - Featured articles : respect the official guidelines
  - Non-relevant articles : guideline 1, encyclopedia project
  - NPOV articles : guideline 2, neutral point of view
  - Protected articles : protect encyclopedia against vandalism (drawback generated by guideline 3)
- **Arbitration Committee**
  - Guideline 4 : the code of conduct

Corpus

- French Wikipedia : 2006/04/02 backup
  - 600,000 pages
    - 370,000 article pages
    - 40,000 talk pages
- Two subcorpora
  - Arbitration committee pages
    - 80 pages, 101 users in conflict (among 31,000)
  - NPOV pages
    - 1,000 articles, 1,600 contributors (who contributes also to 300,000 article pages among 370,000)

Arbitration committee

- **Serious personal disputes**
  - Contrary to the *code of conduct* (e.g. insults, systematic reverts …)
- **Organization**
  - Involved users
    - Arbitrators : elected by users
    - Involved parties
      - Initiating party : user who complains about someone else (the other party)
      - Other party
  - Procedure
    - Freely consultable arbitration page which contains:
      - Conflict description
      - Involved parties' arguments
      - Arbitrators' discussion
      - Verdict and sanctions

Typology of users in conflict (1/4)

- Involved parties : appearances before the Arbitration Committee
  - Some of them appears more often
  - Some of them are more often the initiating party

Appearances	Users	Initiating party	Other party	Both
3-14 (very frequent ones)	10	50%	30%	20%
2 (frequent ones)	17	12%	29%	59%
1 (occasional ones)	74	30%	70%	0%

Typology of users in conflict (2/4)

- Involved parties : contributions to article or to talk pages
- Article oriented: the number of contributions to talk pages is smaller than the difference between the contributions to talk and article pages
- Talk oriented: the number of contributions to article pages is smaller than the difference between the contributions to talk and article pages
- Both: the difference between the contributions to talk and article pages is smaller than the number of contributions to article (or to talk) pages

Contributions	Users	Article oriented	Talk oriented	Both
12,000-40,000 (major contrib.)	7	100%	0%	0%
2,800-12,000 (large contrib.)	23	96%	0%	4%
600-2,800 (middle contrib.)	31	81%	0%	19%
1-600 (minor contrib.)	40	70%	5%	25%

Typology of users in conflict (3/4)

- Involved parties : contribution size and appearances before the Arbitration Committee

  - Major and large contributors are more often very frequent protagonists, while minor contributors are more often occasional ones

Appearances	Contributors	Major	Large	Middle	Minor
3-14 (very frequent ones)	10	20%	50%	30%	0%
2 (frequent ones)	17	13%	29%	29%	29%
1 (occasional ones)	74	4%	18%	31%	47%

Typology of users in conflict (4/4)

- **Involved parties : role and contribution size**
  - Major contributors are more often the initiating party while minor contributors are more often the other involved party

Contributions	Users	Initiating party	Other party	Both
12,000-40,000 (major contrib.)	7	57%	29%	14%
2,800-12,000 (large contrib.)	23	39%	44%	17%
600-2,800 (middle contrib.)	31	32%	58%	10%
1-600 (minor contrib.)	40	15%	75%	10%

Typology of users who appeared before the Arbitration committee: conclusion

- **Appearance frequency and role in the procedure**
  - Protagonists who very frequently appear before the arbitration committee are more often the initiating party
- **Contribution size: article page or talk page**
  - All of the major contributors contribute more to article pages than to talk pages
  - Some of the minor contributors contribute more to talk pages than to article pages
- **Contribution size and appearance frequency**
  - Major and large contributors = more often at least 3 appearances
  - Minor contributors = more often 1 appearance
- **Contribution size and role in the procedure**
  - Major contributors are more often the initiating party
  - Minor contributors are more often the other party

Protagonists and NPOV article pages (1/2)

- Protagonists who appear before the Arbitration Committee among the NPOV contributors, by contribution size
  - 1,637 contributors to the 1,000 NPOV article pages
  - An average of 27 contributors by article
  - 101 protagonists who appear before the Arbitration Committee

Contribution size	NPOV contributors	Protagonists
Major contributors	30	7 (100% of 7)
Large contributors	151	21 (91% of 23)
Middle contributors	335	27 (84% of 31)
Minor contributors	1,121	23 (57% of 40)
Total	1,637	78 (77% of 101)

Protagonists and NPOV article pages (2/2)

- Protagonists who appear before the Arbitration Committee among the NPOV contributors, by appearance type

Protagonists	In Arbitration Committee	In NPOV articles
Very frequent	10	10 (100%)
Frequent	17	12 (70%)
Occasional	74	56 (76%)
Initiating party	29	26 (90%)
Other party	60	44 (73%)
Both	12	8 (67%)

Contributors to NPOV articles: conclusion

- All of the protagonists who appear before the AC and who are major contributors, also contribute to NPOV articles
- All of the protagonists who appear before the AC at least three times, also contribute to NPOV articles
- Almost all the protagonists who appear before the AC as the initiating party, also contribute to NPOV articles
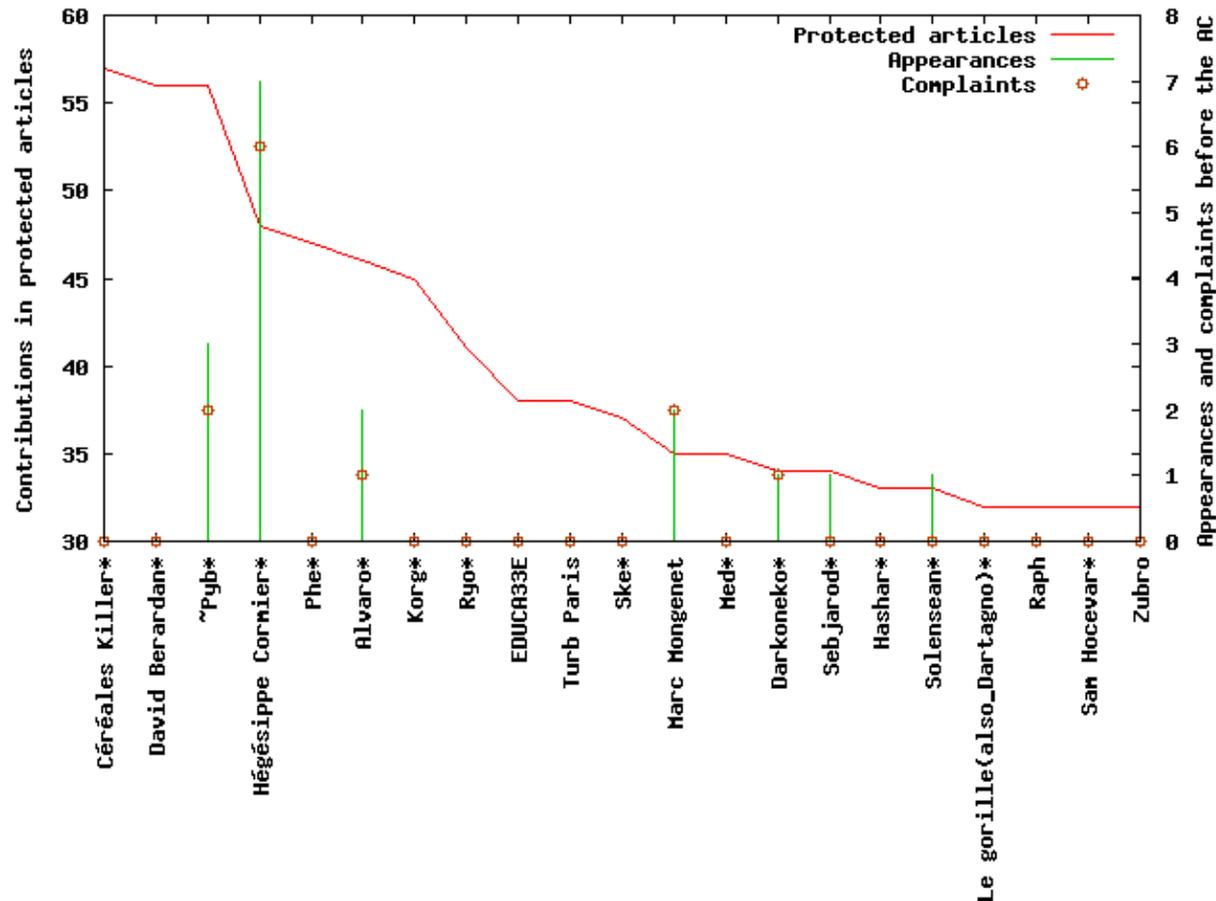- Conversely, less than 2/3 among the minor contributors who appear before the AC, contribute to NPOV articles

Contributions of protagonists from AC

to 4 different types of article referring to Wikipedia guidelines

- Articles with a template message
  - Protected articles
  - NPOV articles
  - Non-relevant articles
  - Featured articles
- Types of protagonists from the AC among the 20 major contributors to the 4 types of article
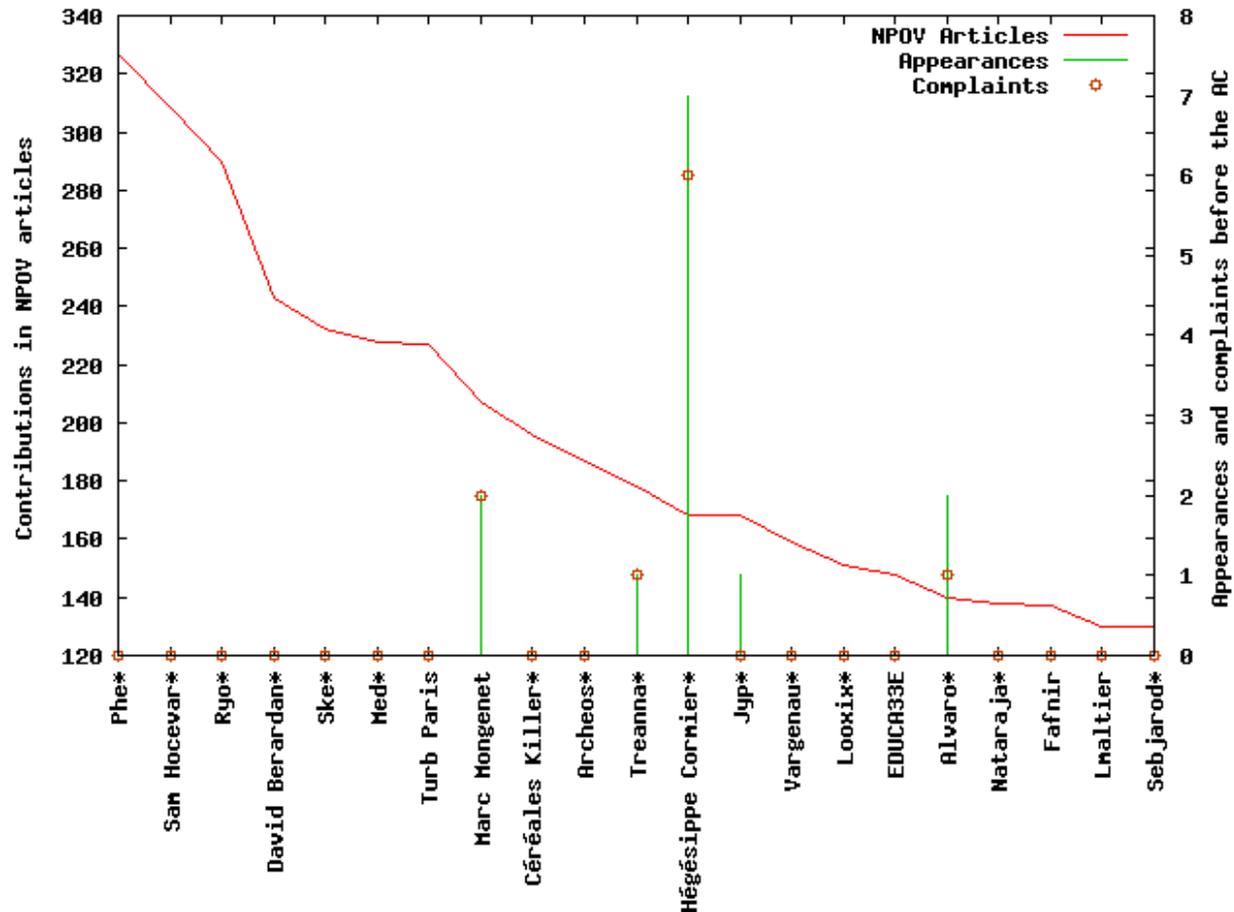
Protected articles

- About 120 protected articles
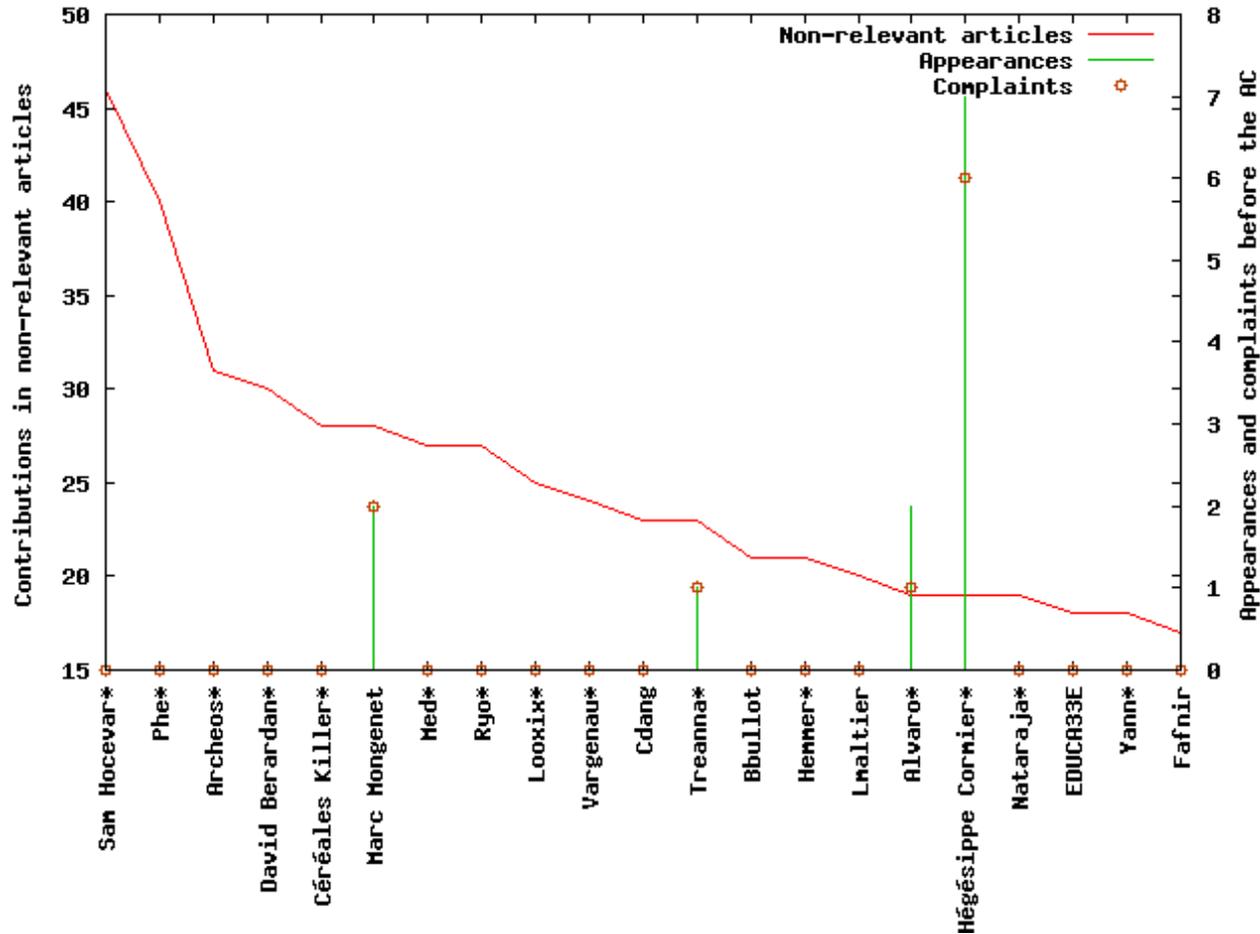- An average of 56 contributors by article

NPOV articles

- About 1,000 NPOV articles
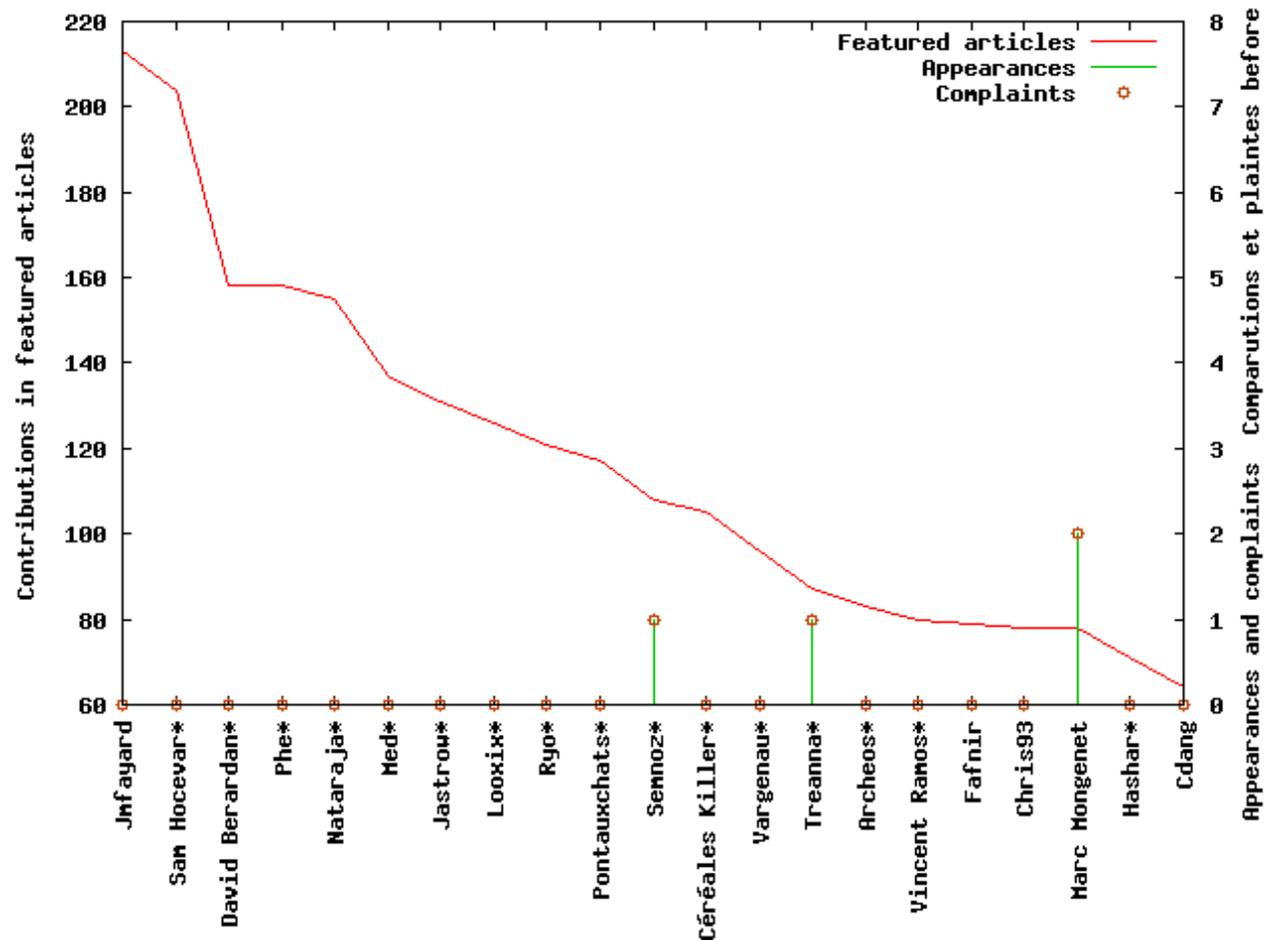- An average of 27 contributors by article

Non-relevant articles

- About 160 non-relevant articles
- An average of 26 contributors by article

Featured articles

- About 370 featured articles
- An average of 46 contributors by article

Conclusion

- Wikipedia: a community of users
  - Following a small number of strong rules
  - Based on consensus and votes
  - Divided in different user groups according to different access rights
- A group of active users
  - Major contributors
  - High level of access to Wikipedia
  - Initiating party at the Arbitration Committee
- Tools to manage conflicts in the Wikipedian community
  - Five official guidelines
  - Warning messages on articles that do not respect the guidelines
  - Arbitration Committee