

# Wikipedia & Research: The innovative character of Wikipedia research and the new challenges (and opportunities) associated with it

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[http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Research\\_Committee](http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Research_Committee)

**Abstract.** The workshop will focus on addressing the stage of Wikipedia research and in general common - based peer production (less focused on the content than on the methodologies and research process itself) and the innovations, problems and new insights regarding (action) research on common-based peer production.

## 1 Content

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In 2011, Wikipedia celebrated its tenth anniversary as one of the worlds ten most visited websites and as one of the more active communities on the web. Particularly since 2005, there has been an increasing interest within the scientific community in researching Wikipedia. A recent review of Wikipedia literature resulted in 2,100 peer-reviewed articles and 38 doctoral theses related to Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Academic\\_studies\\_of\\_Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Academic_studies_of_Wikipedia)). Quantitative analysis of large data sets and on the English version of Wikipedia was the predominant approach in early empirical research on Wikipedia.,The focus was then expanded to conducting research on other language versions, covering a larger variety of issues, such as socio-political questions, and also adopting qualitative methods. In conjunction, the research on Wikipedia constituted a substantial body of research in itself which allowed researchers (and communities) to better and critically understand Wikimedia projects functioning from a plurality of perspectives, and to advance our knowledge on issues that go beyond Wikipedia itself. Research in a sense (and under certain conditions) is becoming a way of contributing to the Wikimedia movement. Furthermore, the community of (more or less committed) researchers on Wikipedia is growing, together with the willingness to collaborate, the synergy between research initiatives of various kinds, and the willingness to continue innovating (in what is already constitution one of the leading node of methodological innovation); a Wikimedia research "informational common" is growing, as it also increases the promotion of research from the Wikimedia Foundation (such as with the creation of the Research Committee) and Wikimedia chapters (such as the performance of surveys by Amical

Viquipedia or the German Wikimedia participation in the Render project). But new problems have also emerged, such as information overload, the lack of coordination between the various research efforts, and tensions between community members and certain researchers needs (for example on the question of subject recruitment, or on the publication policy of researchers and the need to maintain their positions in academia). In sum, Wikipedia research has increased substantially, and in the process has become an important area for experimentation and research innovation, but also faces new challenges associated with progression. The workshop will focus on addressing the stage of Wikipedia research and in general common - based peer production (less focused on the content than on the methodologies and research process itself) and the innovations, problems and new insights regarding (action) research on common-based peer production. The workshop is organized in collaboration between the Research Committee of the Wikimedia Foundation, German Wikimedia and Amical Viquipedia (Catalan Wikimedia). It will consist of a set of brief presentations (including Mayo Fuster Morell Research Committee WMF member and presentation from wikimedia chapters) and "networking" discussions towards action.

## **2 About the Author**

Mayo Fuster Morell is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Govern and Public Policies (Autonomous University of Barcelona) and visiting scholar at the Internet Interdisciplinary Institute (Open University of Catalonia). She is also member of the research committee of the Wikimedia Foundation and the Association Amical Viquipedia; is member of the scientific committee of the Critical studies in peer processes journal; and collaborates in research projects on Wikipedia with Science Po and the Berkman center of Internet and Society. Additionally, she is co-founder of the International forum on free culture and digital rights, promotor of Networked Politics collaborative research and developed techno-political tools within the frame of the World Social Forum. She recently concluded her PhD thesis at the European University Institute. She explored relationship between governance models of digital commons and participation and collaboration growth. She combined a large N statistical analysis and case study comparisons (World Social Forum, Flickr, Wikihow and Wikipedia). She co-wrote the books *Rethinking Political Organisation in an Age of Movements and Networks* (2007), *Activist Research and Social Movements* (in Spanish, 2005), and *Guide for Social Transformation of Catalonia* (in Catalan, 2003).