

A. _____?

The free online resource Wikipedia is about as accurate on science as the Encyclopedia Britannica, a study shows.

Studie ukazuje, že volný on-line zdroj Wikipedia je pro vědu asi tak přesný jako Encyklopedie Britannica.

The British journal Nature examined a range of scientific entries on both works of reference and found few differences in accuracy. Wikipedia is produced by volunteers, who add entries and edit any page. But it has been criticised for the correctness of entries, most recently over the biography of prominent US journalist John Seigenthaler.

Britský časopis Nature zkoumal řadu vědeckých údajů o obou dílech reference a našel několik rozdílů v přesnosti. Wikipedia je produkována dobrovolníky, kteří přidávají položky a editují libovolné stránky. To bylo kritizováno pro správnost údajů, v poslední době nejvíce přes biografii významného amerického novináře John Seigenthaler.

Open approach = Otevřený přístup

Wikipedia was founded in 2001 and has since grown to more than 18 million articles in 200+ languages. Some 3.5+ million entries are in English.

Wikipedia byla založena v roce 2001 a od té doby se rozrostla na více než 18 milionů článků v 200+ jazycích. Cca 3,5 milionů záznamů jsou v angličtině.

It is based on wikis, open-source software which lets anyone fiddle with a webpage, anyone reading a subject entry can disagree, edit, add, delete, or replace the entry.

Je založena na wiki open-source software, který umožňuje editovat webovou stránku, každý, kdo se přihlásí na vstup může nesouhlasit, upravovat, přidávat, mazat, nebo nahradit položku.

It relies on thousands of volunteer contributors, many of whom are experts in a particular field, to edit previously submitted articles.

Spoléhá se na tisíce dobrovolných přispěvatelů, z nichž mnozí jsou experti v daném oboru, k úpravám dříve předložených článků.

In order to test its reliability, Nature conducted a peer review of scientific entries on Wikipedia and the well-established Encyclopedia Britannica. The reviewers were asked to check for errors, but were not told about the source of the information.

Za účelem testu spolehlivosti, Nature provedla přezkoumání vědeckých údajů na Wikipedii, a zavedených Encyclopedia Britannica. Hodnotitelé byli požádáni, aby kontrolovali chyby, ale aby neřekli zdroj informací.

"Only eight serious errors, such as misinterpretations of important concepts, were detected in the pairs of articles reviewed, four from each encyclopedia," reported Nature. "But reviewers also found many factual errors, omissions or misleading statements: 162 and 123 in Wikipedia and Britannica, respectively."

"Jen osm závažných chyb, jako nesprávná interpretace důležitých pojmů, byly zjištěny v párech přezkoumaných článků, čtyři z každé encyklopedie," hlásil Nature. "Ale recenzenti také našli mnoho faktických chyb, opomenutí nebo zavádějících údajů: respektive 162 a 123 ve Wikipedii a Britannica."

Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales welcomed the study. "We're hoping it will focus people's attention on the overall level of our work, which is pretty good," he said.

Zakladatel Wikipedie Jimmy Wales uvítal studii. "Doufáme, že se pozornost lidí bude soustředit na celkovou úroveň naší práce, což je docela dobré," řekl.

Writing style = Styl psaní

Nature said its reviewers found that Wikipedia entries were often poorly structured and confused. The Encyclopedia Britannica declined to comment directly on the findings; but a spokesman highlighted the quality of the entries on the free resource. "But it is not the case that errors creep in on an occasional basis or that a couple of articles are poorly written," Tom Panelas, director of corporate

communications is quoted as saying in Nature. "There are lots of articles in that condition. They need a good editor."

Nature oznámila, že její hodnotitelé zjistili, že Wikipedia záznamy byly často špatně strukturované a zmatené. Encyclopedia Britannica odmítla přímo komentovat závěry, ale mluvčí upozornil na kvalitu údajů ve volném zdroji. "Ale to není pravda, že chyby se objevují příležitostně, nebo že pár článků je špatně napsaných," Tom Panelas, ředitel firemní komunikace je citován jako pořekadlo v Nature. "Existuje spousta článků v těchto podmínkách. Potřebují dobrý editor."

Back in 2005, Wikipedia came under fire from prominent US journalist John Seigenthaler. The founding editorial director of USA Today attacked a Wikipedia entry that incorrectly named him as a suspect in the assassinations of president John F Kennedy and his brother, Robert. The false information was the work of Tennessean Brian Chase, who said he was trying to trick a co-worker. Wikipedia responded to the criticisms by tightening up procedures through testing new mechanisms for reviewing the accuracy of its articles.

V roce 2005, Wikipedia se dostala pod kritiku prominentního novináře USA John Seigenthaler. Zakládající ředitel redakce v USA dnes napadl Wikipedia vstup, který nesprávně jmenoval jej jako podezřelého v atentátu na prezidenta John F. Kennedy a jeho bratra, Roberta. Nepravdivé informace byly dílem Tennessean Brian Chase, který řekl, že se snažil přispět jako pomocník. Wikipedia odpověděla na kritiku zpřísněním postupů prostřednictvím testování nových mechanismů pro přezkoumání správnosti jeho článků.

Adapted from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4530930.stm>

B. _____ ?

Encouraging signs from the Wikipedia project, where co-founder and überpedian Jimmy Wales has acknowledged there are real quality problems with the online work.

Criticism of the project from within the inner sanctum has been very rare so far, although fellow co-founder Larry Sanger, who is no longer associated with the project, pleaded with the management to improve its content by befriending, and not alienating, established sources of expertise. (i.e. people who know what they're talking about.)

Meanwhile, criticism from outside the Wikipedia camp has been rebuffed with a ferocious blend of irrationality and vigor that's almost unprecedented in our experience: if you thought Apple, Amiga, Mozilla or OS/2 fans were, er, ... passionate, you haven't met a wiki-fiddler. For them, it's a religious crusade.

"We don't ever talk about absolute quality," boasted one of the project's prominent supporters, Clay Shirky, a faculty tutor at NYU. But it's increasingly difficult to avoid the issue any longer.

Especially since Wikipedia's material is replicated endlessly on the web: it's the first port of call for "sploggers" who create phoney sites and spam blogs to promote their clients in Google.

Wales was responding to author Nicholas Carr, who took time out to examine the quality of two entries picked at random: Bill Gates and Jane Fonda. He wasn't impressed by what he saw. "This is garbage, an incoherent hodge-podge of dubious factoids that adds up to something far less than the sum of its parts," he wrote.

Something that aspires to be a reference work ought to be judged by the quality of the worst entry, he said, in response to the clock-stopped, right-time defense of the project, not by the fact it's got some good articles.

"In theory, Wikipedia is a beautiful thing - it *has* to be a beautiful thing if the Web is leading us to a higher consciousness," writes Carr.

Only it isn't.

"An encyclopedia can't just have a small percentage of good entries and be considered a success. I would argue, in fact, that the overall quality of an encyclopedia is best judged by its weakest entries rather than its best. What's the worth of an unreliable reference work?"

Surprisingly, Wales agreed that the entries **weren't up to snuff**.

"The two examples he puts forward are, quite frankly, a horrific embarrassment. Bill Gates and Jane Fonda are nearly unreadable. Why? What can we do about it?" he asked.

Traditionally, Wikipedia supporters have responded to criticism in one of several ways. The commonest is: If you don't like an entry, you can fix it yourself. This is rather like going to a restaurant for a date, being served terrible food, and then being told by the waiter where to find the kitchen. But you didn't come out to cook a meal - you could have done that at home! No matter, **roll up your sleeves**.

As a second line of defense, Wikipedians point to flaws in the existing dead tree encyclopedias, as if the handful of errors in Britannica cancels out the many errors, hopeless apologies for entries, and tortured prose, of Wikipedia itself.

Thirdly, and here you can see that the defense is beginning **to run out of steam**, one's attention is drawn to process issues: such as the speed with which errors are fixed, or the fact that looking up a Wikipedia is *faster* than using an alternative. This line of argument is even weaker than the first: it's like going to a restaurant for a date - and being pelted with rotten food, thrown at you at high velocity by the waiters.

But the issue of readability poses even greater challenges. Even when a Wikipedia entry is 100 per cent factually correct, and those facts have been carefully chosen, it all too often reads as if it has been translated from one language to another and then into to a third, passing an illiterate translator at each stage. Here the problems begin, because readability is a quality that can't be generated by a machine, or judged by one. It's the kind of subjective valuation that the Wikipedians explicitly hate: subjectivity is scorned for failing the NPOV test.

Not good enough - so what do we do?

Re-working Wikipedia so it presents the user with something minimally readable will be a mammoth task. Although the project has no shortage of volunteers, most add nothing: busying themselves with edits that simply add or takeaway a comma. These are housekeeping tasks that build up credits for the participants, so they can rise higher in the organization.

And Wikipedia's "cabal" has become notorious for deterring knowledgeable and literate contributors. One who became weary of the in-fighting, Orthogonal, calls it Wikipedia's HUAC - the House of Unamerican Activities prominent in the McCarthy era for hunting down and imprisoning the ideologically-incorrect.

So right now, the project appears ill-equipped to respond to the new challenge. Its philosophical approach deters subjective judgements about quality, and its political mindset deters outside experts from helping.

This isn't promising.

One day Wikipedia may well be the most amazing reference work the world has ever seen, lauded for its quality. But to get from here to there it will need real experts and top quality writing - it won't get there by hoping that its whizzy technical processes remedy such deficiencies. In other words, it will resemble today's traditional encyclopedias far more than it does today.

Adapted from www.theregister.co.uk

A. Vocabulary

1. Match the verbs from the text to their definitions:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. to creep in (part A) | a. to argue for a claim |
| 2. to fiddle with (part A) | b. to get in without anyone noticing |
| 3. to pelt (part B) | c. to make stricter, to improve |
| 4. to plead (part B) | d. to make small changes, to try to repair |
| 5. to rebuff (part B) | e. to refuse to accept |
| 6. to scorn (part B) | f. to show disrespect |
| 7. to tighten up (part A) | g. to throw a number of things quickly at |

2. Look in text B and find expressions to match the following words and phrases:

- a. fierce, violent
- b. strength, energy, enthusiasm
- c. a confused mixture of different things
- d. a not-entirely-true or documentable "fact"
- e. fault, mistake, or weakness
- f. a group involved in a plot, or in intrigues
- g. famous for something bad
- h. preventing or discouraging sb. from doing sth., e. g. by threatening them
- i. praised
- j. over-flashy, exaggerated

3. Part B contains some IT slang expressions. Are you able to explain their meaning?

- a. phoney site
- b. splog
- c. dead tree encyclopedia
- d. NPOV

4. Can you guess the meaning of the following idioms *highlighted* in part B?

- a. to be up to snuff
- b. to roll up your sleeves
- c. to run out of steam

B. Comprehension check

1. Decide whether the following statements are true or false, based on the text.

Part A

- a. Nature examined entries on Encyclopedia Britannica and Wikipedia and found out that the latter is more accurate.
- b. Wikipedia founders welcomed the study.
- c. The weakest point of Wikipedia entries is their lack of accuracy.
- d. Wikipedia has responded to criticisms by making their rules stricter.

Part B

- a. Jimmy Wales does not admit to any objections to the quality of some Wikipedia entries.
- b. Nicholas Carr finds Bill Gates and Jane Fonda entries as a badly-written mixture of problematic facts.
- c. The text suggests that the overall quality of any encyclopedia should be judged by the quality of its average entries.
- d. Readability is a thing that cannot be generated by a machine.

2. Find answers to these questions in the text.

Part A

- a. What was the incentive for starting the research project on Wikipedia and Britannica?
- b. What was the procedure?
- c. What was the ratio of errors in both sources? What were the main problems in Wikipedia entries?

Part B

- a. Who are the following people? Nicholas Carr, Clay Shirky
- b. What does the author suggest to be the most common reactions of Wikipedians to criticism? Does he find them persuasive? Why does the author consider the "readability" of entries so important?
- c. Why is Jimmy Wales referred to as an "überpedian"?
- d. What does the author suggest to Wikipedia for improvement?

C. Independent Writing Task

1. Create titles for each text.

2. Compare the two texts. What are the main differences between them?

Some hints to help you:

- what is the tone of each part?
- why were they written?
- what type of language do they use?
- which one do you like better and why?

3. Write a short essay of 100 – 150 words expressing your attitude to Wikipedia.