

## 15.567 Reading Guide

### Session 14: Wikipedia

The Wikipedia is a fascinating example of a collaborative project that has emerged on the Web. How does it work, both the technology and the economics? What advantages and disadvantages does this have? Is it sustainable? What's next? We'll explore these issues in this class.

#### **Readings**

##### **Required:**

- Wikipedia case (2009), Northwestern University (Greenstein and Devereux)

##### **Optional:**

- Eric S. Raymond (2001). "The Cathedral and the Bazaar" in *The Cathedral & the Bazaar*. O'Reilly.

##### **URLs:**

<http://www.wikipedia.org>.

#### **Study Questions**

Please think about the following questions as you do the readings.

1. Before class, please visit Wikipedia and read a few articles on topics where you are knowledgeable or even an "expert". Make a positive contribution to one article, either by correcting a mistake or providing additional useful detail. For this assignment, your change can be very minor, but do make an actual (and constructive) change of some sort to the Wikipedia. Please come prepared to briefly describe the contribution you made to Wikipedia.
2. What is a wiki and how do they work? What are the similarities and differences between Wikipedia and other websites?
3. What kinds of division of labor have emerged at Wikipedia? How do revision wars get started and settled?
4. What other aspects of Wikipedia etiquette are important?
5. Is this a good way to arrive at truth? Is it a good way to create a useful website?
6. How can businesses learn from Wikipedia? Can Wikis be run on a profit-based model? If so, how? If not, why not?

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