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## Book review

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Chan, L. et al. 2002. Budapest Open Access Initiative. New York: Open Society Institute. Available at: <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml> [Accessed: 18 November 2015].

**Proffitt, M. (Ed.) 2018. *Leveraging Wikipedia: connecting communities of knowledge*. Chicago: ALA Editions. 256pp. 978-0838916322. \$68. Pbk.**

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*Leveraging Wikipedia* explores the mutual benefits of Wikipedia and libraries working together to connect various communities of scholars and experts, and help make the world's fifth most visited website a central hub of human knowledge. Edited by Merrilee Proffitt, an active wikipedian and senior manager at OCLC Research, the publication is a compelling collection of informative and inspiring case studies that illustrate how libraries and Wikipedia are natural allies. The book is divided into 15 chapters and contributors come from diverse backgrounds including higher education, archives and libraries as well as the wider volunteer-based Wikimedia community. The authors frequently share what personally prompted them to get involved with the Wikimedia movement (Chapters 10, 14 and 15 in particular). Wikipedia has the visibility on the internet that libraries lack. As a result, it offers libraries a unique opportunity to promote their collections where the patrons, users (or more broadly learners) are.

This book encourages library professionals to address content gaps in Wikipedia with links to reliable sources and improve existing articles, many of which are essentially 'work in progress' filled with 'citation needed' tags. Chapter 3 is a noteworthy case study of how the Pritzker Military Museum & Library staff in Chicago participated in Wikipedia. Theresa Embrey, the chief librarian at the institution, explains how libraries that hold specialist collections can bring depth and quality to Wikipedia articles. For a librarian, Embrey argues, every 'citation needed' tag is an unanswered reference question.

A particular strength of the book is Chapter 4, in which Alex Stinson and Jason Evans argue that 'Wikimedia-related initiatives work best when coalitions of different types of contributors – professionals and volunteers, experienced Wikimedians and local knowledge enthusiasts – come together to enhance public access to knowledge' (p.32). The authors make a compelling case why Wikipedia needs librarians. Stinson, an active Wikipedia contributor, developed the [#1lib1ref](#) campaign that engages librarians in improving Wikipedia's references. What makes librarians effective in engaging their patrons overlaps with the skills of the most desirable Wikipedia editors, that is 'an interest in and understanding of quality research materials; an interest in effective citation and attribution of those research materials; and clear communication with the public' (p.31).

The publication acknowledges the fact that Wikipedia is not without its flaws. For example, there is an ongoing need to redress the invisibility of women on the platform. Less than 17% of English Wikipedia content relates to women and less than 10% of Wikipedia contributors identify as women. A specific project called [Women in Red](#) has been designed to close the gender gap by creating bot-generated lists of women for whom there are no articles, but for whom pictures and other data have been submitted to related Wiki initiatives such as Wikidata or Wikimedia Commons. Women in Red is used by staff at the Pritzker Museum (Chapter 3) where interns and volunteers use the lists as an index for articles that need to be created. In Chapter 5, Kelly Doyle, the Wikipedian in Residence for Gender Equity at West Virginia University Libraries, writes how academic libraries can work to bridge content and user imbalances. She points out

that librarianship is an overwhelmingly female profession, so it is only natural to look to libraries as partners in correcting the knowledge and participation gaps.

Chapter 7 shows how Wikipedia can be particularly useful for instruction librarians. Lianna Davis argues that libraries can provide new cohorts of active participants (editors) to Wikipedia. Davis discusses the impact of the Wikipedia Education Program (WEP), established in 2010 to build a more formal relationship with higher education institutions. The WEP partnership with the National Women's Studies Association has involved 2,500 women's studies students in digital creation; producing 2,400 articles related to women's, gender and sexuality topics. This case study can serve as an inspiration for teaching librarians to engage students in evaluating content gaps in academic subject areas, followed by adding in the missing information and linking to reliable, published sources. The process of researching and writing for Wikipedia demonstrates to students how knowledge is created, curated and contested. Working with other editors helps students find a more neutral voice and can make them more critical consumers of information beyond Wikipedia. Considering that women now outnumber men on university campuses, involving students in Wikipedia editing can help to effect change on Wikipedia in terms of improving the diversity of authors. When an article is edited by many contributors with different perspectives, it is more likely that it will be more balanced. Finally, Wikipedia editing assignments 'live' longer and students can communicate what they learn in their discipline to wider, non-specialist audiences.

In conclusion, *Leveraging Wikipedia* outlines a wide range of exciting opportunities for librarians (and students) to connect with a community that builds and sustains meaningful *open* content online. Wikipedia is deeply integrated into the everyday practices of internet users and more suitable to their information seeking behaviour. We should leverage it, not avoid or compete with it. Wikipedia articles turn up among the top search results, thereby increasing one's chance of choosing a useful, factual and balanced source of information among the possible choices. This publication provides library and information services staff with an opportunity to define the next step in their professional development, ensuring their expertise benefits a wider community of learners. Chapter 14 presents several case studies of how Wikipedia helped public librarians to expand the boundaries of their librarianship. Chapter 6 reveals how longtime editors recognise that the quality of Wikipedia largely depends on the ability of its volunteers to access the best and most reliable scholarship in a topic. Librarians are the most critical consumers of Wikipedia content. We also hold access to quality research. It really makes sense for us to start contributing more. Every librarian as Proffitt notes in the final chapter is already a Wikipedian; they just don't know it yet.