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Women's History in the Digital World

Women's History in the Digital World 2013

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New Challenges in Digital History: Sharing Women's History on Wikipedia

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Introduction: New challenges in digital history: sharing women's history on Wikipedia

I proposed this paper as a deliberate provocation: 'if we believe the subjects of our research are important, then we should ensure they are represented on freely available encyclopedic sites like Wikipedia'. Just in case you're not familiar with it, Wikipedia is a free online encyclopedia 'that anyone can edit.' It contains 25 million articles, over 4 million of them in English, but also in 285 other languages, and has 100,000 active contributors¹.

The genesis of this paper was two-fold. The 2008 exhibition 'Brilliant Women: 18th Century Bluestockings' at the UK National Portrait Gallery, made the point that 'Despite the fact that 'bluestockings' made a substantial contribution to the creation and definition of national culture their intellectual participation and artistic interventions have largely been forgotten'. As a computer programmer, reinventing the wheel and other inefficient processes drive me crazy, and I began to think about how digital publishing could intervene in the cycle of remembering and forgetting that seemed to be the fate of brilliant women throughout history. How could historians use digital platforms to stop those histories being lost and to make them easy for others to find?

[Screenshot – Caitlin Moran quote from *How to be a woman*: 'Even the ardent feminist historian, male or female – citing Amazons and tribal matriarchies and Cleopatra – can't conceal that women have done basically fuck-all for the last 100,000 years']

A few years later, by then a brand-new PhD student, I attended the Women's History Network conference in London in 2011 and learnt of so many interesting lives that challenged conventional mainstream historical narratives of gender. I wished that others could hear those stories too. But when I asked if any of these histories were available outside academia on sites like Wikipedia, there was a strong sense that editing Wikipedia was something that other people did. But who better to make a case for better representation of women's histories than the people in that room? Who else has the skills, knowledge and the passion? Some academic battles may have been won regarding the importance of women's histories, but representing women's histories on the sites where ordinary people start their queries is hugely important. The quote on this slide illustrates why – even if it was meant in jest, it represents a certain world view.

Of course, I'm not the first, and definitely not the most qualified to make this point. I would also like to acknowledge the work of many groups and individuals, particularly within Wikipedia, that's preceded this.²

Things move fast in the digital world and we're at a different moment than the one when I proposed this paper. Gender issues on Wikipedia had been discussed for a number of years but there's been a recent burst of activity, including the #tooFEW ('Feminists Engage Wikipedia') editathons – 'a scheduled time where people edit Wikipedia together, whether offline, online, or a mix of both' -³, held online and in person across four physical sites⁴ I was going to provocatively ask you to create

¹ Various. 'Wikipedia'. 2013. Wikipedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia>.

² See for example http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Women%27s_History
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia_talk:WikiProject_Feminism
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Meetup/DC_30

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:How_to_run_an_edit-a-thon

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Meetup/Feminists_Engage_Wikipedia

Wikipedia entries about the histories you've invested so much in researching, but some of that is happening already. As a result, this is version 2 of this paper, but my starting question remains the same – assuming we believe that women's history is important, what's wrong with our current methods of research dissemination and dialogue?

The case of the Invisible Scholarship

Cumulative centuries of archival and theoretical work have been spent recovering women's histories, yet much of this inspiring scholarship might as well not exist when so few people have access to it. Sadly, it's currently the case that scholarship that isn't deliberately made public is invisible outside academia. The open access movement, with all its thorny complications, is one potential solution. Engaging in new forms of open scholarship and disseminating research on sites where the public already goes to learn about history is another.

If it's not Googleable, it doesn't exist.

Most content searches start and end online. The content and links available to search engines inform their assumptions about the world, and they in turn shape the world view presented on the results screen. If the name of a historical figure doesn't show up in Google, how else would someone find out about them? While college students might be heavy users of Google's specialist Google Scholar search, it's unlikely that people would come across it accidentally, not least because there's a 'semantic gap' between the language used in academia and the language used in everyday speech. Writing for Wikipedia means writing in everyday language, and the site is heavily indexed by search engines – it doesn't take long for content created on Wikipedia – even on a user's talk page and not the main site – to show up in Google results. So one reason to take history on Wikipedia seriously is that it affects what search engines know about the world.

'Did you mean... hegemony?'

Scholarship and sources contained in specialist online archives and repositories are often off-limits to the Google bots that crawl the web looking for content to index. Because search engines normalise certain assumptions about the world, getting more content about women's histories in publically accessible spaces will eventually have an effect in the algorithms that determine suggestions for 'did you mean' etc. Contributions to sites like Wikipedia can eventually become contributions to the 'knowledge graphs' that determine the answers to questions we ask online.

If it's behind a paywall, it only exists for a privileged few

Specialist users will be able to find academic research via Google Scholar, but any independent scholars in attendance will be able to speak to the difficulties in gaining access to journal articles without membership of an institutional library. Journal articles obviously have a lot of value within academic communities, but the research they represent is only available to a privileged few.

Why does Wikipedia matter?

Wikipedia is one of the most visited websites in the world. As one commentator said, 'people turn to Wikipedia as an objective resource' but 'it's not so objective in many ways.'⁶

⁵ Barnett, Fiona. 2013. '#tooFEW - Feminists Engage Wikipedia'. *HASTAC*. March 11. <http://hastac.org/blogs/fionab/2013/03/11/toofew-feminists-engage-wikipedia>.

⁶ Gobry, Pascal-Emmanuel. 2011. 'Wikipedia Is Hampered By Its Huge Gender Gap'. *Business Insider*. January 31. <http://www.businessinsider.com/wikipedia-is-hampered-by-its-huge-gender-gap-2011->

However, as the free online encyclopedia ‘that anyone can edit’, it also provides the ability to take direct action to fix the under-representation of women’s history. President of the AHA, William Cronon said, ‘Wikipedia provides an online home for people interested in histories long marginalized by the traditional academy’⁷ – this may not be entirely true yet, but we can hope.

Wikipedia is not yet encyclopedic

The English version of Wikipedia has over 4 million articles but it still has some way to go to become truly encyclopedic. Martha Saxton has noted the absence of women’s history content on Wikipedia and was distressed by ‘its superficiality and inaccuracies when present’⁸. Just as female assistants, secretaries, collectors, illustrators, correspondents, translators, salonists, cataloguers, text book writers, popularisers, explorers, pioneers and colleagues have been left out of traditional academic histories and gradually reclaimed by historians, they are often still invisible on Wikipedia. This may be partly because not enough women edit Wikipedia – as Wikipedia User Gobonobo says, ‘editors often contribute to topics they are familiar with and that concern them [...] This systemic bias has the potential to exacerbate an historical record that already gives undue emphasis to men.’⁹

The under-representation of women’s history undermines Wikipedia’s claim to be encyclopedic. Issues include missing entries or omissions in coverage for existing topics, entries with inaccurate content, a failure to represent a truly ‘neutral point of view’, and a representation of ‘male’ as the default gender.

Many notable women have been buried in pages titled for their husbands, brothers, tutors, etc. In 1908 Ina von Grumbkow undertook an expedition to Iceland. She later made significant contributions to the field of natural history and wrote several books but other than passing references online and a mention on her husband’s Wikipedia page, her story is only available to those with access to sources like the ‘Earth Sciences History’ journal¹⁰¹¹.

Some of the categories used in Wikipedia posit the default gender as male. There’s a separate ‘List of Fellows of the Royal Society’ and ‘List of female Fellows of the Royal Society’.

Wikipedia and the challenges of digital history

Wikipedia encapsulates many, but not all, of the challenges of digital history.

New forms of writing

Writing for Wikipedia calls upon historians to write engaging, intellectually accessible, succinct text that still accurately represents its subject. It not only means valuing the work and skills in writing public history, it requires the ability to write history in public.

1#.

⁷ Cronon, William. 2012. ‘Scholarly Authority in a Wikified World’. *Perspectives on History, American Historical Association*. February 7.

<http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2012/1202/Scholarly-Authority-in-a-Wikified-World.cfm>.

⁸ Saxton, Martha. 2012. ‘Wikipedia and Women’s History: A Classroom Experience’. *Writing History in the Digital Age*. <http://writinghistory.trincoll.edu/crowdsourcing/saxton-et-al-2012-spring/>.

⁹ Gobonobo. 2013. ‘User:Gobonobo/Gender Gap Red List’. *Wikipedia*.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Gobonobo/Gender_Gap_red_list.

¹⁰ Various.. ‘Hans Reck’. *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Reck.

¹¹ Mohr, B. A. R. 2010. Wives and daughters of early Berlin geoscientists and their work behind the scenes. *Earth Sciences History* 29 (2): 291–310.

Writing for a 'neutral point of view' – one of the key values of Wikipedia – is challenging for historians. Many may find difficult to believe that it's even possible, and it's difficult to achieve¹².

Unlike traditional historical scholarship, characterised by 'possessive individualism'¹³ and honed to perfection before publication, Wikipedia entries are considered a work in progress, and anyone who spots an issue is asked to fix it themselves or flag it for others to review.

It won't advance your career

While it might have a large public impact, editing Wikipedia is work that isn't credited in academia, and it takes time that could be used for projects that would count for career advancement. More importantly from Wikipedia's point of view, you can't promote your own work on the site, so writing about your own research is not straightforward if not many people have published in your area of expertise.

"On the internet, nobody knows you're a professor"

In a comment with 'pointers for academics who would like to contribute to Wikipedia' on a Chronicle article¹⁴, user 'operalala' said, "'On the internet nobody knows you're a professor."¹⁵ If you're used to deferential treatment at your home institution, you'll be treated like everybody else in the Wide Open Internet.¹⁶ Or in William Cronon's words, you must 'give up the comfort of credentialed expertise'. Anyone can edit, re-shape or even delete your work.

Just like academia, Wikipedia has ways of establishing the credibility and reputation of a contributor, and just like any other community, there are etiquettes and conventions to observe. As newcomers to the community, Claire Potter warns that it's important not to think of Wikipedia as 'another realm for intellectuals to colonize and professionalize'.¹⁷

The opportunities and challenges of women's history as public history on Wikipedia

Opportunities

Wikipedia uses red links to represent entries that could be created but don't yet exist. Women's history editathons often create lists of red-linked names as suggested topics that could be created¹⁸.

¹² As commenter Operalala suggested, one challenge is recognising 'the difference between the plurality of academia and the singularity of a Wikipedia article'. Comment <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Undue-Weight-of-Truth-on/130704/#comment-437781354> on Messer-Kruse, Timothy. 2012. 'The "Undue Weight" of Truth on Wikipedia'. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. February 12. <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Undue-Weight-of-Truth-on/130704/>.

¹³ Rosenzweig, Roy. 2006. 'Can History Be Open Source? Wikipedia and the Future of the Past'. *The Journal of American History* 93 (1) (June): 117–46. <https://chnm.gmu.edu/essays-on-history-new-media/essays/?essayid=42>.

¹⁴ Messer-Kruse, 2012.

¹⁵ <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Undue-Weight-of-Truth-on/130704/#comment-437781354> on Messer-Kruse, 2012

¹⁶ Cronon 2012

¹⁷ Potter, Claire. 2013. 'Looking for the Women on Wikipedia: Readers Respond'. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. March 14. <http://chronicle.com/blognetwork/tenuredradical/2013/03/looking-for-the-women-on-wikipedia-readers-respond/>.

¹⁸ For example, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Gobonobo/Gender_Gap_red_list
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:T._Anthony/Women_in_Red
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Dsp13/Redlinks/Women>

Projects on and outside Wikipedia, and events at institutions like the Smithsonian and Royal Society and just last weekend at three THATCamps across the United States might be part of a critical mass of people learning how to edit Wikipedia to better include women's history.

Compared to the lengthy process of writing for academic publication, a new Wikipedia entry can be created in a few hours, allowing for time to structure the content and format the references as necessary to pass the first quality bar. An existing entry can be corrected in minutes. Each editathon or personal edit improves the representation of women's history, and there's something very satisfying about turning red links blue.

Adding the brackets that turn a piece of text into a red link, suggesting the possibility of an entry to be created is a small but potentially powerful intervention. Red links can render the gaps and silences visible.

Resistance

Creating or editing entries on women's history may be relatively easy, but making sure they stay there is less so. There are countless examples of women having to fight to keep changes in as other editors revert them, argue about their choice of sources, the significance or notability of their topic. Wikipedians are zealous in preventing spammers and crackpots polluting the quality of the site, which explains some of the rapid 'nominations for deletion', but some pockets of the site are also hostile to women's history or to women themselves.

Saxton said editing Wikipedia is 'not for the faint of heart' and 'a lesson in how little women's history has penetrated mainstream culture'. There's work to be done in sharing and normalising an understanding of the historical circumstances and cultural contexts that created difficulties for women. We might know that, as Janet Abbate said, 'The laws and social conventions of a given time and place strongly shape the kinds of technical training available to women and men, the career options open to them, their opportunities for advancement and recognition'¹⁹ but until other Wikipedians understand that, there will continue to be issues around 'notability'. Having those conversations as many times as necessary might be tiring and uncomfortable or even controversial, but it's part of the work of representing women's history on Wikipedia.

Tensions

'Reliable sources'

Wikipedians may have different definitions of 'reliable sources' than scholarly researchers. As one academic discovered:

"Wikipedia is not 'truth,' Wikipedia is 'verifiability' of reliable sources. Hence, if most secondary sources which are taken as reliable happen to repeat a flawed account or description of something, Wikipedia will echo that."²⁰

The same gatekeepers matter

As some academics have found, 'Wikipedia differs from primary-source research, from scholarly writing, and how it privileges existing rather than new knowledge'^{21,22} Wikipedia is not the place to

¹⁹ Janet Abbate, "Guest Editor's Introduction: Women and Gender in the History of Computing," *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing*, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 4-8, October-December, 2003

²⁰ Messer-Kruse, 2012

redress fundamental issues with silences in the archives or in the profession overall, not least because on Wikipedia, primary research is bad and secondary sources are good²³. This puts the onus back on to traditional academic publishing in peer-reviewed journals and books that can be cited in Wikipedia articles, though other published works such as 'credible and authoritative books' and 'reputable media sources' can also be cited.

'Notability'

'A person is presumed to be notable if he or she has received significant coverage in reliable secondary sources that are independent of the subject. [...] the person who is the topic of a biographical article should be "worthy of notice" – that is, "significant, interesting, or unusual enough to deserve attention or to be recorded" within Wikipedia as a written account of that person's life.'²⁴ 'The common theme in the notability guidelines is that there must be verifiable, objective evidence that the subject has received significant attention from independent sources to support a claim of notability.'²⁵ This creates obvious difficulties for some women's histories.

It's also difficult to judge where 'notability' should end. When does focusing on exceptional women become counter-productive? When do we risk creating a new canon? When does it stop being remarkable that a woman became prominent in a field and start being more accepted, if still not expected?²⁶ At what point should writing shift from individual entries to integration into more general topics?

Conclusion

Sometimes it's hard to tell whether Wikipedia lags behind academia's acceptance and general integration of women's history into mainstream history or whether it is representative of the field's more conservative corners. Recent digital history projects are doing a good job in explaining some of the issues with key sources for Wikipedia like the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography²⁷, and I'd hope that this continues. As Martha Saxton said, 'integrating women's experience into broad subjects' is 'both more challenging intellectually and ultimately, more to the point of the overall project of bringing women into our acknowledged history'.²⁸

²¹ Anderson, Jill. 2013. 'A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll (Probably) Never Do Again'. *True Stories Backward*. <http://girlhistorian.wordpress.com/2013/03/16/a-supposedly-fun-thing-ill-probably-never-do-again/>.

²² Messer-Kruse, 2012

²³ Various. 2013. 'Wikipedia:No Original Research'. *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:No_original_research.

²⁴ Various. 2013. 'Wikipedia:Notability (people)'. *Wikipedia*. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Notability_\(people\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Notability_(people)).

²⁵ Various. 2013. 'Wikipedia:Notability'. *Wikipedia*. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:NOTE>.

²⁶ Or as Christie Aschwanden says when proposing the 'Finkbeiner test' for contemporary journalism about women in science, 'treating female scientists as special cases only perpetuates the idea that there's something extraordinary about a woman doing science'. Aschwanden, Christie. 2013. 'The Finkbeiner Test'. *Double X Science*. March 5. <http://www.doublexscience.org/the-finkbeiner-test/>.

²⁷ For a recent example, see 'An Entry of One's Own, or Why Are There So Few Women In the Early Modern Social Network?' 2013. *Six Degrees of Francis Bacon*. March 8. <http://sixdegreesoffrancisbacon.com/post/44879380376/an-entry-of-ones-own-or-why-are-there-so-few-women-in> and 'Gender and Name Recognition'. 2013. *Six Degrees of Francis Bacon*. March 20. <http://sixdegreesoffrancisbacon.com/post/45833622936/gender-and-name-recognition>.

²⁸ Saxton, 2012

But it's also clearly up to us to make a difference. If it's worth researching the life and achievements of a notable woman, it's worth making sure their contribution to history is available to the world while improving the quality of the world's biggest encyclopaedia. And it doesn't mean going it alone. It's still just Women's History Month²⁹ so it's not too late to sign up and join one of the women's history projects, or to plan something with your students³⁰.

I'd like to close with quotes from two different women. Executive Director of the Wikimedia Foundation, Sue Gardner: 'Wikipedia will only contain 'the sum of all human knowledge' if its editors are as diverse as the population itself: you can help make that happen. And I can't think of anything more important to do, than that.'³¹

And to quote Laura Mandell's keynote yesterday: 'Let's write and publish about each other's projects so that future historians will have those sources to write about. ... Nothing changes through thinking alone, only through massive amounts of re-iteration'.³²

²⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiWomen%27s_History_Month

³⁰ Potter, Claire. 2013. 'Priklopedia? Or, Looking for the Women on Wikipedia'. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. March 10. <http://chronicle.com/blognetwork/tenuredradical/2013/03/priklopedia-looking-for-the-women-on-wikipedia/>.

³¹ A comment on Gardner, Sue. 2010. 'Unlocking the Clubhouse: Five Ways to Encourage Women to Edit Wikipedia'. *Sue Gardner's Blog*. November 14. <http://suegardner.org/2010/11/14/unlocking-the-clubhouse-five-ways-to-encourage-women-to-edit-wikipedia/>.

³² Mandell, Laura. "Feminist Critique vs. Feminist Production in Digital Humanities." Keynote presented at the Women's History in the Digital World conference, Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania March 22 2013

Proposal: New challenges in digital history: sharing women's history on Wikipedia

Mia Ridge, Open University

Abstract: In 1908 Ina von Grumbkow undertook an expedition to Iceland. She later made significant contributions to the field of natural history and wrote several books but other than passing references online and a mention on her husband's Wikipedia page, her story is only available to those with access to sources like the 'Earth Sciences History' journal³³³⁴.

Cumulative centuries of archival and theoretical work have been spent recovering women's histories, yet much of this inspiring scholarship is invisible outside academia. Inspired by research into the use and creation of digital resources and the wider impact of digitality on historians and their scholarship, this paper is a deliberate provocation: if we believe the subjects of our research are important, then we should ensure they are represented on freely available encyclopedic sites like Wikipedia.

Wikipedia is the fifth most visited website in the world and the first port of call for most students and the public, yet women's history is poorly represented³⁵³⁶. This paper discusses how the difficulties of adding women's histories to Wikipedia exemplify some of the new challenges and opportunities of digital history and the ways in which it blurs the line between public history and purely academic research.

Bio: Mia is researching a PhD (Department of History, Open University) focusing on crowdsourcing and the collaborative digitisation of historical materials. She has published and presented widely on her research including design for participation in cultural heritage. She is Chair of the Museums Computer Group (UK), a member of the Association for Computers and the Humanities Executive Council and editor of the forthcoming volume 'Crowdsourcing our cultural heritage'. Mia also took part in the 2012 Wikipedia edit-a-thon at the Royal Society and has been exploring the user of digital tools for presenting the lives and work of early scientific women.

33 Various. 'Hans Reck'. *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Reck.

34 Mohr, B. A. R. 2010. Wives and daughters of early Berlin geoscientists and their work behind the scenes. *Earth Sciences History* 29 (2): 291–310.

35 Garton Ash, Timothy. 2011. 'Look It up: Wikipedia Is Turning 10'. *Los Angeles Times*. January 14. <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jan/14/opinion/la-oe-0114-gartonash-wikipedia-20110114>.

36 Various. 'Wikipedia:WikiProject Women's History'. *Wikipedia*.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Women%27s_History.

Cohen, Noam. 2011. 'Wikipedia Ponders Its Gender-Skewed Contributions'. *The New York Times*. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/31/business/media/31link.html?_r=0.

Kennedy, Maev. 2012. 'Wikipedia Edit-a-thon Brings Women Scientists Out of the Shadows'. *The Guardian*. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2012/oct/19/wikipedia-edit-a-thon-women-scientists>.

Royal Society. 'Women in Science: Wikipedia Workshop'. *Royal Society*.

<http://royalsociety.org/events/2012/wikipedia-workshop/>.

Tony1. 2012. 'Wikipedia Signpost/2012-10-22/News and Notes'. *Wikipedia*.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wikipedia_Signpost/2012-10-22/News_and_notes.

New challenges in digital history: sharing women's history on Wikipedia

Mia Ridge, Open University @mia_out

Women's History in the Digital World,
Bryn Mawr College, March 2013

‘if we believe the subjects of our research are important, then we should ensure they are represented on freely available encyclopedic sites like Wikipedia

‘Despite the fact that 'bluestockings' made a substantial contribution to the creation and definition of national culture their intellectual participation and artistic interventions have largely been forgotten’

The screenshot shows the National Portrait Gallery website. On the left is a dark navigation menu with the gallery's name and various categories like HOME, VISIT, WHAT'S ON, etc. The main content area has a green header with the breadcrumb 'home / what's on / exhibitions / the bluestockings circle' and a search bar. Below the header is the exhibition title 'The Bluestockings circle' and a large purple banner with the text 'Brilliant Women 18th-Century Bluestockings' and a silhouette of a woman writing. The main text describes the exhibition, mentioning key figures like Elizabeth Montagu, Elizabeth Vesey, and Frances Boscawen. To the right, there are sections for 'Related portraits' and 'Related sitters' with a list of names and their portraits.

home / what's on / exhibitions / the bluestockings circle

All Results

National Portrait Gallery

HOME
VISIT
WHAT'S ON
- Exhibitions
Future
Current
Past exhibitions
Beyond the Gallery
Displays
Events
Late Shift
COLLECTIONS
LEARNING
RESEARCH
BEYOND THE GALLERY
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The Bluestockings circle

Brilliant Women

18th-Century Bluestockings

[Conference](#) | [Publication](#) | [Audio](#)

Exhibition: [Introduction](#) | [Celebrating Modern Muses](#) | [A Revolution in Female Manners](#)

The exhibition begins by introducing the fashionable Bluestocking Circle and exploring how a tight-knit group of women became a model for rational 'Enlightenment' forms of sociability. The Bluestockings met in the London homes of the fashionable hostesses [Elizabeth Montagu](#) (1718-1800), [Elizabeth Vesey](#) (c.1715-91) and Frances Boscawen (1719-1805) from the 1750s. Together these women, and the eminent men who supported their endeavours, invented a new kind of informal sociability and nurtured a sense of intellectual community and potential. Guests included the leading literary, political and cultural figures of the day, including the scholar and classical translator [Elizabeth Carter](#) (1717-1806), the critic and writer [Samuel Johnson](#) (1709-84), the poet [Frances Burney](#) (1769-1807) and the



Related portraits

[Portraits in the Characters of the Muses in the Temple of Apollo \(NPG 4905\)](#)

Related sitters

[Mary Howard \(née Finch\), Viscountess Andover](#)
[Elizabeth Carter](#)
[Frances d'Arblay \('Fanny Burney'\)](#)
[Mary Delany \(née Granville\)](#)
[Samuel Johnson](#)
[Elizabeth Montagu \(née Robinson\)](#)
[Hannah More](#)
[Hester Lynch Piozzi \(née Salusbury; Mrs Thrale\)](#)
[Margaret Cavendish Bentinck \(née Harley\), Duchess of Portland](#)
[Frances Reynolds](#)

‘Even the ardent feminist historian, male or female – citing Amazons and tribal matriarchies and Cleopatra – can’t conceal that women have done basically fuck-all for the last 100,000 years’

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How to Be a Woman
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bones—sexism runs deep in their generation, along with a liking for boiled puddings, spanking, and golf. Their automatic reaction is to regard women as “other.” The entrenched bias against the working, liberated female will only die out when they do.

Even those men born postfeminism, raised on textbooks and marches and their own mothers leaving each morning for the office, however much they might believe in the *theoretical* equality of women and respect those around them, are scarcely unaware of the great sweep of history that went before. A quiet voice inside—suppressed but never wholly silenced—says, “If women are the true equals of men, where’s the proof?” And it is not just a voice inside men. It is inside women, too.

Even the most ardent feminist historian, male *or* female—citing Amazons and tribal matriarchies and Cleopatra—can’t conceal that women have basically done fuck-all for the last 100,000 years. Come on—let’s admit it. Let’s stop exhaustingly pretending that there is a parallel history of women being victorious and creative, on an equal with men, that’s just been comprehensively covered up by The Man. There isn’t. Our empires, armies, cities, artworks, philosophers, philanthropists, inventors, scientists, astronauts, explorers, politicians, and icons could all fit, comfortably, into one of the private karaoke booths in SingStar. We have no Mozart; no Einstein; no Galileo; no Gandhi. No Beatles, no Churchill, no Hawking, no Columbus. It just didn’t happen.

Nearly everything so far has been the creation of men—and a liberal, right-on denial of it makes everything more awkward and difficult in the long run. Pretending that women have had a pop at all this before but just ultimately didn’t do as well as the men, that the experiment of female liberation has already happened but floundered,



POST FEB. 15 TO FEB. 28

WIKIPEDIA: THE FREE ENCYCLOPEDIA

#tooFEW editathons



The Case of the Invisible Scholarship

- If it's not Googleable, it doesn't exist
 - *'Did you mean... hegemony?'*
- If it's behind a paywall, it only exists for a privileged few

If it's not Googleable, it doesn't exist

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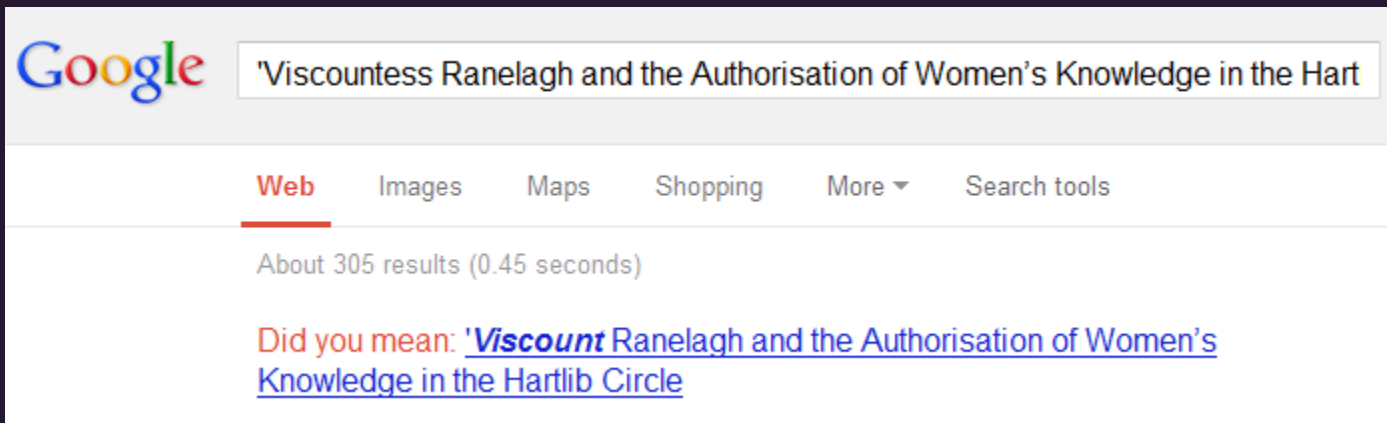
[Ina von Grumbkow – Wikipedia](#)
de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ina_von_Grumbkow - [Translate this page](#)
Viktorine Helene Natalie von Grumbkow, später Ina Reck (* 15. September 1872 in Övelgönne bei Hamburg; † 30. Januar 1942 in Berlin) war eine deutsche ...

[Hans Reck - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Reck
Hans Reck was charged with determining what had happened, and set out in June 1908 with two local guides and his fiancé, **Ina von Grumbkow**. The party ...

[Images for Ina von Grumbkow](#) - [Report images](#)



'Did you mean... hegemony?'



The image shows a screenshot of a Google search interface. The search bar contains the text: "Viscountess Ranelagh and the Authorisation of Women's Knowledge in the Hart". Below the search bar, the "Web" tab is selected and underlined. To the right of the "Web" tab are links for "Images", "Maps", "Shopping", "More" (with a dropdown arrow), and "Search tools". Below the navigation tabs, the search results summary indicates "About 305 results (0.45 seconds)". A prominent suggestion is displayed: "Did you mean: 'Viscount Ranelagh and the Authorisation of Women's Knowledge in the Hartlib Circle".

If it's behind a paywall, it only exists for a privileged few

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Volume 29, Number 2
2010



Wives and daughters of early Berlin geoscientists and their work behind the scenes

Journal	Earth Sciences History
Publisher	History of Earth Sciences Society
ISSN	0736-623X (Print) 1944-6187 (Online)
Subject	Geology , Earth sciences and History of Earth Science
Issue	Volume 29, Number 2 / 2010
Pages	291-310
Online Date	Thursday, April 21, 2011


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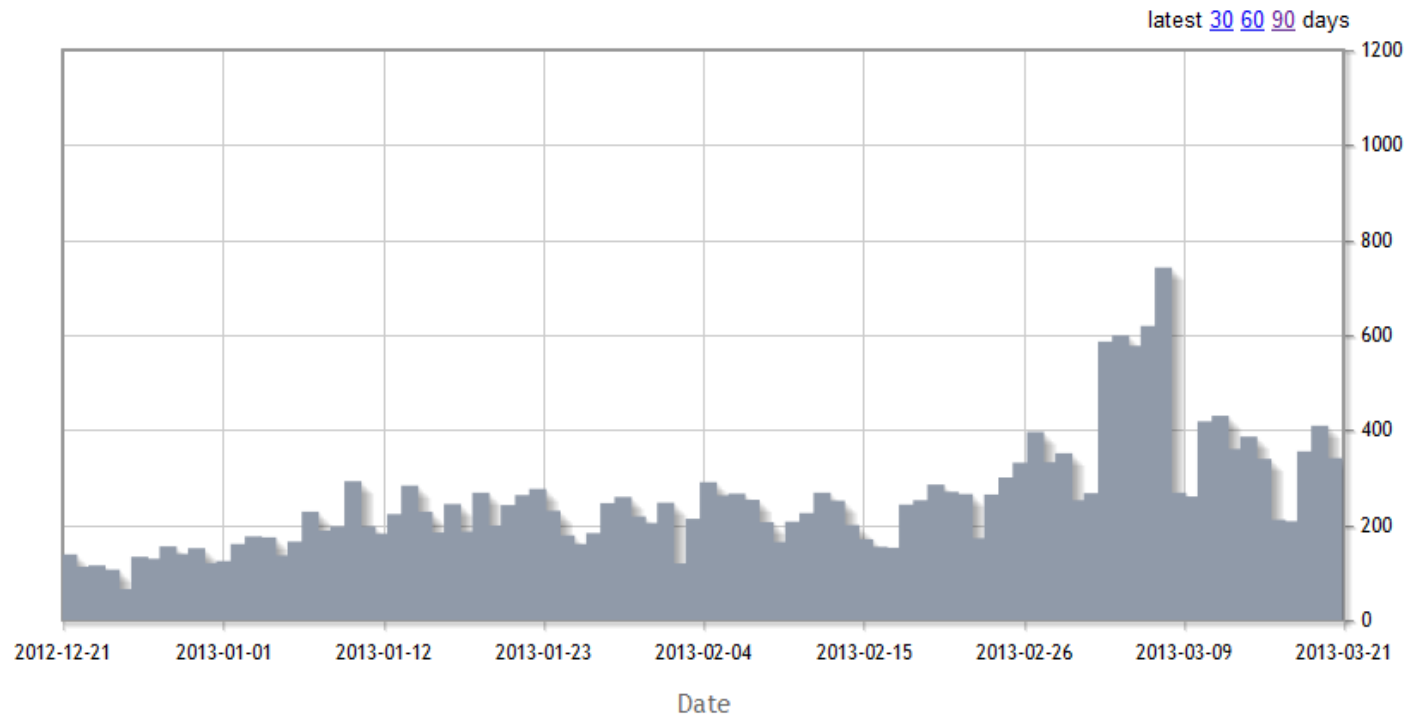
Why does Wikipedia matter?

English Wikipedia			
English Wikipedia at a glance <i>January 2013</i>			
	Data	Yearly change	Monthly change
Page Views per Month	8,588,758,085	--	--
Article Count	4,209,203	+9%	+1%
New Articles per Day	863	--	--
Edits per Month	3,604,378	-1%	+7%
Active Editors	33,469	-3%	+6%
Very Active Editors	3,414	-1%	+6%
New Editors	6,028	-14%	+3%
Speakers	1,500,000,000	--	--
Editors per Million Speakers	22	--	--

Why does Wikipedia matter?

Wikipedia article traffic statistics

[women's history](#) has been viewed 22591 times in the last 90 days.



Wikipedia is not yet encyclopaedic

Hans Reck

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Hans Gottfried Reck (24 January 1886 - 4 August 1937) was a German [volcanologist](#) and [paleontologist](#). In 1913 he was the first to discover the ancient skeleton of a human in the [Olduvai Gorge](#), in what is now [Tanzania](#). He collaborated with [Louis Leakey](#) in a return expedition to the site in 1931.

Contents [hide]

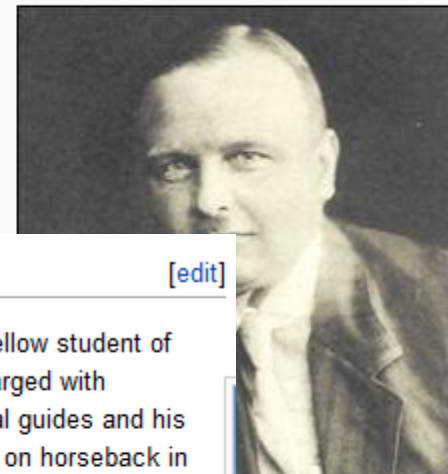
- 1 Birth and education
- 2 Iceland
- 3 First East African Expedition
- 4 World War I
- 5 Later career
- 6 Bibliography
- 7 Notes and references
- 8 Sources

Iceland

In the summer of 1907 the geologist Walther von Knebel, a friend and fellow student of Reck's, disappeared during a field trip in Iceland.^[1] Hans Reck was charged with determining what had happened, and set out in June 1908 with two local guides and his fiancée, Ina von Grumbkow. The party traveled 1,500 kilometres (930 mi) on horseback in eleven weeks.^[2] Reck and the Icelander Sigurour Sumarliðason were the first people ever to reach the summit of the [Herðubreið](#) volcano, 1,060 metres (3,480 ft) above the surrounding plain.^[3]

Reck climbed down to the edge of what would later be called Lake Knebel (now [Öskjuvatn](#)), a boiling sulphurous lake where von Knebel's death had been reported, but found no remains.^[4] However, they concluded that von Knebel had died in an accidental drowning when his boat overturned. Reck used what he learned about volcanoes on this expedition in his doctoral dissertation. He graduated from the [University of Munich](#) in November 1910 and took up a post in the Berlin Museum of Natural History.^[2]

Hans Gottfried Reck



[\[edit\]](#)

Apparently the default is 'male'

Fellows

[edit]

Main articles: [List of Fellows of the Royal Society](#) and [List of female Fellows of the Royal Society](#)

The Society's core members are the Fellows: scientists and engineers from the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth selected based on having made "a substantial contribution to the improvement of natural knowledge, including mathematics, engineering science and medical science".^[54] Fellows are elected for life, and gain the right to use the postnominal Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS) title. The rights and responsibilities of Fellows also include a duty to financially contribute to the Society, the right to stand for Council posts, and the right to elect new Fellows.^[55] Forty-four Fellows are elected each year, and there are currently 1,314 in total.^[27] Election to the Fellowship is decided by ten Sectional Committees (each covering a subject area or set of subjects areas) which consist of existing Fellows.

The Society also elects Royal Fellows, Honorary Fellows, and Foreign Members. Royal Fellows are those members of the [British Royal Family](#), representing the [British Monarchy](#)'s role in promoting and supporting the society, who are recommended by the Society's Council and elected via postal vote. There are currently five Royal Fellows: [The Duke of Edinburgh](#), [The Prince of Wales](#), [The Duke of Kent](#), the [Princess Royal](#), and [The Duke of Cambridge](#).^[56] Honorary Fellows are people who are ineligible to be elected Fellows, but nevertheless have "rendered signal service to the cause of science, or whose election would significantly benefit the Society by their great experience in other walks of life". Six Honorary Fellows have been elected to date, including [Baroness O'Neill of Bengarve](#).^[57] Foreign Members are scientists from non-Commonwealth nations "who are eminent for their scientific discoveries and attainments". Eight are elected each year by the Society, and also hold their membership for life. Foreign Members are permitted to use the post-nominal ForMemRS (Foreign Member of the Royal Society) title, and currently number 137.^[27]

Wikipedia and the challenges of digital history

- New forms of writing
- It won't advance your career
- “On the internet, nobody knows you're a professor”

Women's history as public history on Wikipedia

- Opportunities
- Resistance
- Tensions

Opportunities

- **London event - created or significantly expanded the day**
- [Hertha Marks Ayrton](#)
- [Anne Elizabeth Ball \(DYK\)](#)
- [Mary Barber \(natural historian\) \(DYK\)](#)
- [Rosa Beddington](#)
- [Lucy Everest Boole](#)
- [Phyllis Clinch](#)
- [Aline Ehrlich](#)
- [Alice Everett](#)
- [Ida Freund \(DYK\)](#)
- [Florence Sarah Lees](#)
- [Mary Edwards \(human computer\)](#)
- [Sylvia Lawler](#)
- [Margaret Meyer \(DYK\)](#)
- [Janet Niven](#)
- [Eva Philbin](#)
- [Eliza Phillips \(DYK\)](#)
- [Rosalind Pitt-Rivers \(DYK\)](#)
- [Sydney Mary Thompson \(DYK\)](#)
- [Nanny Wermuth](#)
- [Emily Williamson \(DYK\)](#)



RSocLive Royal Society Live

The volunteers at the Royal Society adding and editing wiki articles about women in science #WomenSciWP pic.twitter.com/c0ICpirR

Details

[[Small edits]]

Hans Reck

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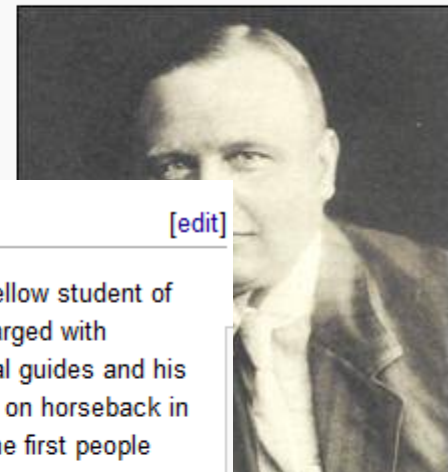
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Hans Gottfried Reck



[\[edit\]](#)

Tensions

- 'Reliable sources'
- The same academic gatekeepers matter
- 'Notability'

‘Wikipedia will only contain ‘the sum of all human knowledge’ if its editors are as diverse as the population itself: you can help make that happen. And I can’t think of anything more important to do, than that.’

— Sue Gardner, Executive Director of the Wikimedia Foundation

‘Let's write and publish about each other's projects so that future historians will have those sources to write about. ... Nothing changes through thinking alone, only through massive amounts of re-iteration.’

— Laura Mandell, yesterday

Talk notes at

<http://openobjects.blogspot.co.uk/2013/03/new-challenges-in-digital-history.html>

Thank you!

Mia Ridge, Open University

<http://openobjects.org.uk/>

@mia_out