2017

Out of the Vault: Developing a Wikipedia Edit-a-thon to Enhance Public Programming for University Archives and Special Collections

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ABSTRACT

Academic libraries are more cognizant of their public program offerings than ever before. How does this shift impact the university archives and special collections? How does this area of the academic library meet the challenge of public programming that engages their users with their core missions? At Eastern Washington University (EWU), a regional comprehensive university, library and archives staff collaborated to develop a Wikipedia edit-a-thon that would provide an opportunity for undergraduate students to 1) expose them to archival materials, and 2) provide them with experience in collaborative knowledge creation. This article reviews the literature on the use of the Wikipedia platform and edit-a-thon events by cultural heritage institutions (libraries, archives, and museums), as well as the literature on public programming for archives and special collections. It details the steps taken to organize the event held at EWU, and reflects on the implications of this type of outreach and public programming event for archives and special collections in academic libraries.

In the 21st century, academic libraries have shifted focus away from being "quiet study chambers to vibrant centers for collaboration, debate and exploration."[1] In many libraries, book stacks have been replaced by learning centers or commons and makerspaces. Academic libraries are more cognizant of their public program offerings than ever before. These transitions have the potential for significant effects on the university archives and special collections. How does this area of the academic library

1. American Library Association, National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment, 2014, http://www.newknowledge.org/nilppa/wp-content/uploads/2014/NILPPA_White_Paper_FINAL_web.pdf (accessed January 9, 2017).

meet the challenge of designing public programming that engages their users with their core missions?

In recent years, university archives and special collections libraries have largely embraced the possibilities available on the digital frontier, and in many cases, have aggressively expanded their efforts to document and publicize their physical collections online. One potential element, then, in public programming for archives and special collections libraries is to engage their community in the work of bringing these collections more directly into the view of the wider public. While there are a number of potential means for accomplishing this work, one of the most broadly familiar and accessible is Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, which famously can be edited by anyone willing to volunteer. While libraries and librarians have taken a critical interest in Wikipedia as a reference tool ever since the project's inception more than a decade ago, the use of Wikipedia as a platform for connecting patrons with archival and special collections is still in its infancy—but the potential power of that partnership is evident.

At Eastern Washington University (EWU), a regional comprehensive university, the library and archives staff collaborated to develop a Wikipedia edit-a-thon that would provide an opportunity to 1) expose undergraduate students to archival materials, and 2) provide the students with experience in collaborative knowledge creation. This article reviews the literature on the use of the Wikipedia platform and edit-a-thon events by cultural heritage institutions (libraries, archives, and museums), as well as the literature on public programming for archives and special collections. It details the steps taken to organize the event held at EWU and reflects on the implications of this type of outreach and public programming event for archives and special collections in academic libraries.

Literature Review

Literature on Wikipedia editing events spans cultural heritage institutions or, as they are popularly referred to, LAMs (libraries, archives and museums), and the many configurations of these institutions and their sub-units: museum archives, special libraries, local history collections in public libraries, and archives and special collections departments in academic libraries. This literature review brings together information on many institutional types under the broad category of "cultural heritage institutions" because of the strong crossover in unique collection material types, as well as the shared public programming objectives of these institutions. Given the institutional context of this case study, however, the review will focus particularly on literature published about archives and special collections libraries operating on college and university campuses.

If Wikipedia editing events have a role to play in the public programming of a cultural heritage institution, defining that role requires an understanding of two broad avenues of inquiry. The first of these centers on Wikipedia itself: Why is this digital platform right for community engagement, for libraries in general, and for

archives and special collections libraries in particular? What do Wikipedia editing events do for these spaces and the professionals who work in them, and what best practices have been developed and documented to ensure that these events are successful? The second of these centers on public programming in archives and special collections libraries: Why do these institutions engage in public programming? What aims are intended when they hold a public event, and what kinds of programs are successful in achieving their intended goals? Ultimately, developing a cogent understanding of these two themes should offer an insight into how they can be fused together; how, in essence, to hold a successful Wikipedia editing event in the context of a cultural heritage institution that furthers that institution's mission.

The published literature on Wikipedia establishes it as a good platform for engaging with the community an institution serves. Wikipedia has long been one of the most widely used information resources on the Web, and in fact is perennially listed as one of the most visited websites of any kind: Alexa.com ranked it the 6th most popular site in the world, as of November 2016.[2] Research has shown that the site is an increasingly popular starting point for college students looking for background knowledge on a subject.[3] Wikipedia's structure, which makes consistent use of well-established text features like tables of contents and references sections, is considered appealing by casual users in search of information.[4] Its extensive reliance on clear citations provides the reader with easy access to the sources of the claims its articles make.[5]

In addition to its strengths as a platform for connecting with the community, the use of Wikipedia by librarians and archivists has proven successful in part because it draws on strengths already present in their skillsets and their institutions. As Kelly, Graham and Gray observe in their article on Wikipedia edit-a-thons, engagement with Wikipedia aligns well with the information literacy efforts that are central to the mission of most libraries.[6] They postulate that Wikipedia programming allows librarians to "take the information literacy question to where our readers are already

2. "Alexa Top 500 Global Sites," Alexa, http://www.alexa.com/topsites (accessed November 22, 2016).

3. Alison J. Head and Michael B. Eisenberg, "How Today's College Students Use Wikipedia for Course-Related Research," *First Monday* 15, no. 3 (March 2010), http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2830/2476 (accessed November 22, 2016).

4. Kate Lawrence and Deirdre Costello, "Usage and Your Collection — Google and Wikipedia: How They Form Expectations for Digital Discovery," *Against The Grain* 26, no. 5 (November 2014): 98.

5. Andrew Gray and Max Klein, "Wikipedia in the Library," *Refer: Journal of the ISG* 29, no. 2 (Summer 2013): 6-7.

6. Brian Kelly, Nancy Graham and Andrew Gray, "Wikipedia and Information Literacy," *CILIP Update* (July 2014): 27.

going."[7] Kathleen McCook uses librarians' historic connection to, and mastery of, reference works to argue that Wikipedia is a natural field for those talents, calling it "the world's largest and most used reference tool."[8] She suggests that librarian engagement with Wikipedia will "maintain the centrality of librarianship to knowledge management in the 21st century."[9] That engagement is consistent with two of the established purposes of the library—the use of space (originally physical, but increasingly digital space also) for the edification of its community of patrons, and the development of what John Shuler calls "sustainable information resources" on topics of interest to that community.[10] Evans, Mabey and Mandiberg defend these missional claims, as well, arguing that technology allows librarians to extend their reach beyond institutional boundaries into what they call an "expanded field" that reaches outside the boundaries of cultural heritage institutions.[11] They contend that information professionals "need to work in the expanded field because the public sphere now also encompasses online engagement,"[12] which has implications for any institution, whether a library, archive, or museum, that sees outreach to the public sphere as central to its identity and purpose. Collectively, these authors make a substantive argument that engagement with Wikipedia as a tool for reference, for information literacy, and for community education is central to the purpose of libraries in the current information environment.

In the more specialized setting of archives and special collections libraries, engagement with Wikipedia helps advance the specific aims of those institutions. This is perhaps most evident in the area of digitized archival materials, where institutions have tested whether the provision of hyperlinks on Wikipedia articles helps drive traffic to their own existing online digital collections. The University of Houston Libraries Digital Services Department developed a pilot program to add images and links to Wikipedia articles that connected to their digital collections website.[13] They describe the results as "immediate" and comment on the "surprisingly

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7. Ibid.

8. Kathleen de la Peña McCook, "Librarians as Wikipedians: From Library History to 'Librarianship and Human Rights'," *Progressive Librarian* 42, (Summer 2014): 62.

9. Ibid., 61.

10. John Shuler, "The Civic Value of Academic Libraries and the Open Source University," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 33, no. 2 (March 2007): 301-302.

11. Siân Evans, Jacqueline Mabey and Michael Mandiberg, "Editing for Equality: The Outcomes of the Art+Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-thons," *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* 34, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 197.

12. Ibid., 198.

13. Danielle Elder, R. Niccole Westbrook and Michele Reilly, "Wikipedia Lover, Not a Hater: Harnessing Wikipedia to Increase the Discoverability of Library Resources," *Journal of Web Librarianship* 6, no. 1 (January 2012): 33-34.

high rate" of visitors arriving to their site from Wikipedia; by the end of their pilot, the volume of traffic from Wikipedia dwarfed the traffic from their library's website.[14] Ball State University's Archives and Special Collections found that every digital asset they linked to Wikipedia saw increased traffic in the year that followed, with an average increase in visitors of 610%, and some articles experienced a rise in traffic of over 5,000% higher than the previous year.[15] A similarly successful ongoing Wikipedia engagement project at the British Library has been documented on multiple occasions.[16] The collective weight of these experiences clearly establishes that connecting digitized archival assets to Wikipedia allows an institution to reach a much larger audience.

Formal engagement with Wikipedia pays other dividends for archivists and librarians, as well. Sally Ellis, in reviewing crowdsourcing projects at the British Library, argues that the collaboration with the community helps "create a sense of pride and ownership in cultural and information institutions."[17] Another potential benefit of Wikipedia engagement for archivists is addressed by an article originating from the work of the Remixing Archival Metadata Project (RAMP) team at the University of Miami Libraries. The team built a tool to facilitate the inclusion of better archival metadata in citations at Wikipedia: in doing so, they discovered interesting differences between the archival metadata standard they were using, Encoded Archival Context—Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families (EAC-CPF), and the conventions and uses of information on the Wikipedia platform.[18] Among the conclusions they reached was that engagement with Wikipedia would not only provide better access to digitized assets, but that "publishing archival metadata on Wikipedia can challenge librarians and archivists to evaluate the quality and accessibility of their own descriptive practice" as they consider how members of the public will interact with and understand the metadata supplied about their institutions' collections.[19]

Community events that incorporate the addition of text, images, and links to Wikipedia articles are increasingly popular as programming for cultural heritage

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14.   Ibid., 43-44.

15.   Michael Sjazewski, "Using Wikipedia to Enhance the Visibility of Digitized Archival Assets," *D-Lib Magazine* 19, no. 3/4 (March/April 2013), http://www.dlib.org/dlib/march13/szajewski/03szajewski.html (accessed July 27, 2016).

16.   Rob Green, "Is There a Wikipedian in the House?," *CILIP Update* (October 2012): 21; Sally Ellis, "A History of Collaboration, a Future in Crowdsourcing: Positive Impacts of Cooperation on British Librarianship," *Libri: International Journal of Libraries & Information Services* 64, no. 1 (March 2014): 8.

17.   Ellis, "A History of Collaboration, a Future in Crowdsourcing," 4.

18.   Timothy A. Thompson et al., "From Finding Aids to Wiki Pages: Remixing Archival Metadata with RAMP," *The CodeoLib Journal* 22 (October 2013): 11.

19.   Ibid.

institutions. Successful Wikipedia editing events are well documented at an internationally diverse array of institutions, including the British Library,[20] the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA),[21] the Centre Georges Pompidou,[22] the British Film Institute (BFI),[23] and many more.[24] Journals in the field of librarianship have begun to respond to this trend, publishing articles that attempt to establish some of the best practices learned from these combined efforts. Eric Phetteplace, in particular, draws on the structure of an ongoing Wikipedia project called Art+Feminism to articulate the basic outline of a Wikipedia edit-a-thon that he and his colleagues implemented at the California College of the Arts.[25] Kelly, Graham, and Gray describe a somewhat similar structure that they've used to train librarians in conducting Wikipedia events.[26] But this literature on best practices remains in its infancy. The events that have been documented largely consist of major cultural institutions in large cities reaching out to an existing community of Wikipedia editors living nearby, who can be counted on to bring their experience with the Wikipedia platform to the event, and this model may not be easily replicable outside of those circumstances. Moreover, no detailed approach has been articulated that clarifies how these events can be conducted to better address the specific concerns and aims of an archives or special collections library. For that reason, before entering into a description of the case and its implications for practice, the authors will first consider the literature on public programming for these institutions. They seek to identify what principles guide the effective design of programming for the communities served by these institutions, and how, consequently, a Wikipedia editing event could be integrated into an institution's long-term programming plan.

The literature on public programming for archives and special collections libraries is not extensive, which may in many ways be surprising, given that conducting outreach to the public is widely accepted as important to these institutions by the people who work in them. A 2002 survey of college and university archivists indicated that approximately 70% of them participate in outreach activities

20. Green, "Is There a Wikipedian in the House?," 20-21; Kelly, Graham, and Gray, "Wikipedia and Information Literacy," 27-29; Ellis, "A History of Collaboration, a Future in Crowdsourcing," 1-10.

21. Evans, Mabey, and Mandiberg, "Editing for Equality," 194-203.

22. Sylvain Machefert, "Improving the Articles About Modern Art in Wikipedia: A Partnership Between Wikimedia France and the Pompidou Centre," *Art Libraries Journal* 40, no. 3 (January 2015): 34-40.

23. "Wiki Edit Gets Helping Hand from BFI Library," *CILIP Update* (March 2015): 9.

24. Sanhita SinhaRoy, "Libraries Tap Into the Crowdsource," *American Libraries* (November/December 2011): 22-23. SinhaRoy describes events connected with a wide array of institutions, including the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the Tom of Finland Foundation Library, the Chicago Public Library, and the U.S. National Archives.

25. Eric Phetteplace, "How Can Libraries Improve Wikipedia?," *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (Winter 2015): 110-12.

26. Kelly, Graham, and Gray, "Wikipedia and Information Literacy," 28-29.

at least twice a month, and 79% identified outreach as being "very important or extremely important" to their work.[27] Similarly, a 2006 survey conducted of college and university special collections libraries indicated that 86% of them use events (such as orientations or open houses) to help publicize their collections and services.[28] Since 1994, the Society of American Archivists has included public programming and outreach as one of the ten major categories to be assessed when an archives' staff is conducting a self-evaluation.[29] These activities are given priority for good reason: as Blais and Enns note, archivists "must forge links with the public, encouraging more immediate ties between it and the archival record" in order to ensure the kind of public support and funding advocacy that are "necessary for [the] survival" of archives as presently constituted.[30] Rare books and special collections libraries have similar imperatives to engage in outreach and public programming: Daniel Traister argues at length that economic scarcity and the need to demonstrate value to administrators on campus have made these kinds of programming a necessity.[31] Additionally, there are other benefits from the long-term effects of public programs, according to Sidney Berger, who describes them as "a crucial means of raising awareness and use of the rare book department," and who also notes that preparation for public programs builds the skills and experience of the staff conducting them.[32] By far the most common activities that archivists identify as "outreach" are presentations to classes or groups (whether meeting inside the archives itself or not), exhibits, and tours.[33] Florence Turcotte describes a very similar menu of activities in presenting her model of a successful outreach program for

27. Tamar Chute, "What's in a Name? Outreach vs. Basic Services: A Survey of College and University Archivists," *Journal of Archival Organization* 1, no. 2 (2002): 16.

28. Florence Turcotte and John Nemmers, *SPEC Kit 296: Public Services in Special Collections* (Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries, 2006), 52, e-book, http://publications.arl.org/Public-Services-Special-Collections-SPEC-Kit-296 (accessed January 9, 2017).

29. Society of American Archivists, "Guidelines for Evaluation of Archival Organizations," Society of American Archivists, http://www2.archivists.org/groups/standards-committee/guidelines-for-evaluation-of-archival-institutions (accessed August 18, 2016). Section 10 of the Guidelines headed as "Outreach and Public Programs" states, "The archives should identify its various constituencies in terms of its purpose, should plan and implement methods to assess the needs of these groups in relation to the resources of the institution, and devise outreach programs that will fit their needs. These programs may include workshops, conferences, training programs, courses, festivals, exhibits, publications, and similar activities, aimed at such groups as students, faculty members, scholars, administrators, researchers, donors, records creators, or the general community."

30. Gabrielle Blais and David Enns, "From Paper Archives to People Archives: Public Programming in the Management of Archives," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-91): 110.

31. Daniel H. Traister, "Public Services and Outreach in Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Libraries," *Library Trends* 52, no. 1 (June 2003): 87-108.

32. Sidney E. Berger, *Rare Books and Special Collections* (Chicago, IL: Neal-Schuman, 2014), 350-51.

33. Chute, "What's in a Name," 13.

special collections libraries.[34] A consensus is evident that a thriving archive or special collections library must be engaged in this kind of work to fulfill its mission.

Beyond these descriptions of widespread activity doing outreach and programming, however, there have been only infrequent attempts to articulate an underlying rationale for how an archives or special collections library should organize its outreach programming. Terry Cook, in a conscious attempt to establish a theoretical basis for archival public programming, does argue for a "materials-centred approach" in which researchers are given access not only to a document but also to "information about the contextual significance of that document."[35] Cook warns against being too anxious to supply only those things that users already know to ask for and suggests instead that the purpose of public programming should be to allow "outreach advocates [to] use their skills to convince users that what archives have is worthy of their attention."[36] More recently, Patricia Rettig has described an "integrative approach" to archival outreach, in which archivists focus on where their potential constituents already spend their time and energy and attempt to integrate themselves into those spaces in order to provide convenient information and access to their archives.[37] Rettig's integrative approach is echoed in many ways by the philosophy that Kate Theimer has labeled "Archives 2.0," which is based in part on the idea that archives need to focus on actively "attracting new users, not relying on users to find them."[38] Theimer's vision of the Archives 2.0 approach is of an energetic connection to the broader community and "requires that archivists be active in their communities rather than passive, engaged with the interpretation of their collections rather than neutral custodians, and serve as effective advocates for their archival program and their profession."[39] Collectively, these arguments for the purpose of public programming suggest that archivists and special collections librarians ought to seek out opportunities to directly engage their communities with the materials they hold. Where possible, these programs should reach community members in ways that feel well integrated into their normal routines and activities, and should dynamically connect the community to the institution in ways that clearly establish the practical value of the collection.

34. Florence M. Turcotte, "Outreach in Special Collections Librarianship," in *Academic Library Outreach: Beyond the Campus Walls*, ed. Nancy Courtney (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2009), 91-103.

35. Terry Cook, "Viewing the World Upside Down: Reflections on the Theoretical Underpinnings of Archival Public Programming," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-91): 130-31.

36. Ibid., 131-32.

37. Patricia Rettig, "An Integrative Approach to Archival Outreach: A Case Study of Becoming Part of the Constituents' Community," *Journal of Archival Organization* 5, no. 3 (2007): 32.

38. Kate Theimer, "What is the Meaning of Archives 2.0?," *The American Archivist* 74 (Spring/Summer 2011): 62.

39. Ibid., 60.

Taken as a whole, the published literature argues persuasively that Wikipedia-themed events, specifically events that will allow the community to use rare or archival materials in the production of content for Wikipedia, could be vitally important to the outreach plan of an archives or special collections library. Wikipedia is too powerful and ubiquitous a resource, and too easy to engage with, to be ignored by cultural heritage institutions, and the initial attempts to engage with Wikipedia have proven successful. Public programming is key to the future of archives and special collections libraries, and the aims of that programming—to engage users with the collection, to help them connect rare or archival materials to things they encounter routinely, and to encourage them to see the collection as a living and vital part of their community—are all present in the simple act of asking community members to use collected materials as sources for the production of content on Wikipedia.

The most reasonable response to the results of this literature review, then, was to design a Wikipedia event that applied these principles to our institution and its collections, in order to successfully reach out to our community. The most common model for Wikipedia editing events, based on the literature, is to connect existing Wikipedia volunteers (often called "Wikipedians") with the institution's collections and staff, either to leverage the Wikipedians' expertise to rapidly add large amounts of content to Wikipedia, or else with the goal of improving the staff's Wikipedia editing skills and their connections to the Wikipedia community.[40] However, given our interest in making the event a part of outreach programming aimed at our core constituency as an academic library and archives—our student body—we consciously chose to model our event on the examples we could find of edit-a-thons that sought to recruit people who had never edited Wikipedia before. Sanhita SinhaRoy's descriptions of edit-a-thons held in connection with Open Access Week indicate that major public libraries in cities like New York and Chicago did have success holding drop-in Wikipedia editing events. These events were designed to train members of the public in how to edit Wikipedia, and then to encourage those newly-trained participants to use materials from their closed stacks to add to the encyclopedia, often with a focus on articles connected to some unifying theme.[41] Sylvain Machefert's description of workshops held for the public at the Centre Georges Pompidou is similar in some ways: those workshops also focused on its own collections, but they appear to have required advance registration and expected participants to remain in place for the duration of the scheduled workshop session.[42] The most compelling

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40. Green, "Is There a Wikipedian in the House?," 20-21; Kelly, Graham, and Gray, "Wikipedia and Information Literacy," 27-29; Ellis, "A History of Collaboration, a Future in Crowdsourcing," 1-10; and "Wiki Edit Gets Helping Hand From BFI Library," 9; all describe events that broadly resemble this model. Phetteplace, "How Can Libraries Improve Wikipedia?," 110-112: describes an event that was intended to attract more participation from the general public, but he acknowledges that in the end the workshop's attendees were largely the library's staff.

41. SinhaRoy, "Libraries Tap Into the Crowdsource," 22-23.

42. Machefert, "Improving the Articles About Modern Art in Wikipedia," 34-40.

model we saw was the Art+Feminism edit-a-thon, which offered a clearly communicated theme, supplied research materials connected with that theme, allowed participants to drop in and receive training in Wikipedia editing without advance scheduling, and provided the support of an experienced Wikipedia editor to assist participants as they worked.[43] Our modification to this model, described in detail below, was to emphasize experience with the materials themselves as one goal of the event, and to limit our focus to the production of a single article. The narrowed focus not only helped us communicate the purpose of the event to our community, but it also encouraged collaboration and conversation between participants who could by necessity, see themselves all engaged in a common task, rather than working independently on separate editing activities connected only in the abstract by an event's theme.

Case Study

The inspiration for the Wikipedia edit-a-thon at Eastern Washington University (EWU) was our Education Librarian's experience helping to organize two similar events at Roosevelt University and Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago in 2013 and 2014. The idea for holding a similar event at EWU Libraries was conceived originally by the EWU Libraries' student liaison as an academically-rigorous outreach event for students; as volunteer librarians joined the event team, the focus of the event gradually became the university's archival collections and the opportunity to make students more aware of them.

To achieve our goals, EWU Libraries assembled a team of volunteers to plan and conduct the event, including the University Archivist, Education Librarian, Reference Coordinator (who is also liaison to the History department), the Metadata Librarian (a former archivist and special collections curator), and the Libraries' student liaison (a student employee charged with connecting the student body to the library via outreach events). Given the range of potential aims for an event that could be supported by the existing literature, the EWU team decided to focus on how to connect students to both Wikipedia and our institution's archives and special collections library. For that reason, the two main goals of the edit-a-thon event were to expose students to archival materials and provide students with experience in collaborative knowledge creation. In doing so, we believed we would be able to provide students with the kind of exposure to archival and rare books collections that might make them more willing to seek out those resources in the future, while also connecting unfamiliar materials to a website they use regularly, to ensure that our approach met students where they already are as consumers of information. We knew that to frame the event in this way would be to set aside other potentially worthy aims. In particular, our prioritizing student outreach and engagement meant that we did not focus on linking our archives' digital assets on Wikipedia, an aim which, as

43.   Evans, Mabey, and Mandiberg, "Editing for Equality," 194-203.

the literature review indicates, archives have successfully pursued in the past, in order to increase traffic to online digital collections. Conversely, the choice to emphasize outreach would, in our estimation, increase the likelihood of making a larger impact locally on student attitudes about archival materials, as well as increasing the broader campus community's awareness of the archives and its collections. At the team's initial meeting, it was agreed that the best way of meeting both objectives was to organize a single-day event in which students would be invited to use a wide range of materials from the archives and special collections library, in addition to other available library resources, to write a single Wikipedia article on a subject of interest and relevance to the university community.

The following sections describe the activities we undertook in preparing for our edit-a-thon, which included identifying a topic, assembling materials, contacting potential partners and participants, marketing, logistics (location, layout, materials), and determining how much of the event would include research skills as opposed to writing content for the Wikipedia article. In developing this approach, the team drew on successful practices that have been documented in the literature, as well as the Education Librarian's experiences in Chicago conducting events with a similar scope and similar aims. Post-event activities are also described. An analysis of the event's activities is included in the "Observations and Analysis" section.

Identifying a Topic

The planning team identified three main criteria for the selection of a topic that would help ensure a successful event. First, the subject needed to have either non-existent or insufficient coverage on Wikipedia at the time, thus allowing ample scope for students to contribute something visible and substantive at the event. Second, in order to make our recruitment of volunteer participants more successful, the topic needed to be of interest to our primary audience of EWU undergraduate students. Finally, since one of our chief goals for the event overall was to expose the students to a wide array of EWU archival materials, the Archives & Special Collections needed to have sufficiently deep archival holdings on the topic. We discussed several potential topics that would meet one or more of these criteria, including the Spokane fire of 1889, a 19th Century fight for the county seat between Spokane and Cheney (the locations of EWU's two primary campuses), and biographies of regional notable figures such as state Governor Clarence Martin and state Senator William Sutton.

The team finally settled on William "Red" Reese, EWU's most well-known coach and athletics director because (at the time) Wikipedia had no article about Reese's life. EWU's main basketball facility, Reese Court, is named after him, and the planning team thought that students might be intrigued to know more about the person for whom this campus location is named. We also believed that choosing someone associated with the athletic program might attract interest from the Athletics Department and give us an advantage in recruiting participants. Reese was also a part of the early leadership of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) in the 1940s and 1950s, which lent the article a level of significance that extended beyond the local region. In addition, Reese coordinated the U.S. Army's

physical fitness program during World War II, another item of national significance. Finally, Reese was a somewhat controversial figure at EWU, having been a central figure in the "Reese Affair" of 1953, a university scandal which ultimately made national headlines. Given the extent of his career and activities at the university, the choice of Reese as a subject also meant that participating students would see and work with a wide range of documents, and the team hoped that Reese's experiences would prove interesting to students unfamiliar with him.

Marketing to Potential University Partners

Because we designed our event primarily to attract undergraduate students as participants, undergraduate students were our primary target when it came time to recruit potential partners for planning and conducting the event. We contacted the university's chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, the national history honor society, in the hopes that they would participate, as well as help spread the word about the event. We also did general marketing to the student body via the Library's social media channels, the University's information outlets, fliers, and posters. Given Reese's contributions to university athletics, and the combination of materials that documented his life (including student and city newspapers), the team elected to contact faculty in the departments of History, Journalism, Communications, and Physical Education, Health and Recreation. Our student liaison made repeated efforts to connect with the athletics programs, especially football and basketball.

These recruitment efforts met with partial success. The students in the university's Phi Alpha Theta chapter, in particular, were enthusiastic about the event, and offered to assist both by encouraging their members to attend and by announcing details about the event in the classes they were then enrolled in. Despite high initial hopes, however, we could not find a faculty member outside the library who was able to act as a partner. A combination of poor timing in the academic quarter and school year, along with some apparent misunderstandings about the nature of the event, may have contributed to these difficulties.

Assembling Materials and Planning for Student Engagement

Having identified our event's focus and communicated that focus to potential partners in our campus community, we then turned our attention to identifying the documentary materials that we would ask participants to engage with as they contributed to the authoring of the article. In terms of archival materials, the University Archives & Special Collections contains a wealth of material about Reese himself, as well as about athletics at EWU he was so closely identified with throughout his career. The materials selected for use included student yearbooks, athletics programs, photographs, university publications including *Light for an Empire* (the 19th anniversary history of the university) and *Centennial Album* (a publication celebrating the university's centennial), the school newspaper, the city newspaper, a thesis written about the "Reese Affair", and various University Archive

collections, such as the Board of Trustee Minutes.[44] We also collected copies of regional newspaper articles about Reese from Google News Archive and searched Google Books for references made to Reese in any electronic publications. We also searched the digital collections at Washington State University, Reese's alma mater, and found scans of archival materials there that could be used to document Reese's life. The team intentionally sought out a wide variety of sources in order to give participants many different types of materials with which to engage.

In preparing for the event, we discussed how to structure the experience that participating students would engage in. Was our objective to teach them how to perform archival or library research, complete with the use of finding aids and gain the experience of having to search archival collections for relevant documents? Or was our objective instead to have them come into contact with pre-selected archival materials that would allow them to engage in the creation of content? After discussing these questions at length, the planning team arrived at the conclusion that the priority goal would be to ensure that the students successfully contributed content to the Wikipedia article, and that we would therefore streamline much of the research process to put useful sources into their hands rapidly.

Our rationale was that we had intentionally chosen the creation of a Wikipedia article as our primary goal. If the article was successfully completed, the contributing students would be able to point with satisfaction to their contributions. Wikipedia is a source all students are familiar with, and we reasoned that their familiarity with the resource would only increase their pride in having added to it. A positive experience like that would, we hoped, lead students to associate their experience using archival documents with a feeling of success, and encourage them to return to the university's library and archives again in the future, when those archives-specific information literacy skills could be developed at more length. Conversely, an event that failed to produce a readable article would likely be discouraging to the participants. As the members of the planning team knew from experience, archival research can frequently be slow and painstaking. The work is often richly satisfying in the long run, but it would be very difficult to ensure positive outcomes for students engaging in it, particularly in the brief span of time that a participating student might be able to spare from their classes and other obligations. For these reasons, we needed to take whatever steps we could to help ensure students could begin making contributions to the article rapidly and confidently, and to provide them with successful encounters with archival materials that would, for many of them, be their introduction to working with that kind of source.

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44. In some cases, these materials had been digitized and made available via EWU's digital collections website, but the team intentionally planned to include physical materials even in those cases out of a desire to give students direct experience handling archival documents. While other institutions (as documented in the literature review) have used engagement with Wikipedia intentionally to drive traffic to their digital collections, that was not particularly intended as an outcome of this event.

In part, this decision was a necessary consequence of our structuring the event as a drop-in event that was unaffiliated with any one course. It broadened the reach of the event to students from all departments and classes, but one side effect was that participants had no external motivators (like a grade) to encourage them to invest the kind of time and energy needed to do real archival research, and participants might not have adequate free time to devote to that work. The planning team felt that few students would persist in the more arduous search process needed to find archival sources, and therefore elected to directly supply the students with source material. Students engaged in the event would primarily spend their time reading and engaging with the materials made available to them and would write up their findings as well-cited contributions to the Wikipedia article. Determining these details about the event was critically important as it helped to establish space and technology needs for the event.

Logistics

Our event was held during Winter Quarter 2016, on a Wednesday from 10:00am to 3:00pm. The day and times were chosen based on when most students are physically on campus, as EWU has a high commuter population and campus becomes noticeably emptier in the late afternoon and evening.

We chose to locate the event near the main entryway of the library in a space used for occasional events and rotating exhibits. Since this was a drop-in event, we wanted it to be highly visible to anyone entering the library. We set up a large television monitor to display the latest version of Reese's Wikipedia page to participants as the article was being written. A second smaller monitor near the entry displayed the same image to provide visual appeal and attract people into the space.

We chose not to locate the event in the Archives & Special Collections Reading Room since the archives' location is far away from the building's entrances and any associated pedestrian traffic. Because many of the pre-selected materials were facsimiles, we didn't have the same concerns about security of the materials that we likely would have had about bringing a large number of archival originals to the lobby. Also, because we pre-selected materials and didn't expect student participants to request access to archival collections for the selection of materials, we didn't need to be in close physical proximity to the collections themselves. Finally, using the lobby space (along with relying almost exclusively on facsimiles) meant that we could serve refreshments in the same space as the event without risk of damage to original materials, adding a further enticement to passing students to volunteer as a participant.

In order to provide information online about our event, our Education Librarian developed a LibGuide that included information about the event (date, time, location, etc.), links to digital resources, and information about Wikipedia and how

to do markup in Wikipedia.[45] The guide was based on a template he had used for previous Wikipedia events in Chicago, and was designed to be used both for publicity leading up to the event and for active use by event participants in guiding them through their experience at the event itself.

Descriptions of what happened at the event itself, along with reflections on the event's strengths and weaknesses, and how the planning team intends to alter the event in the future, are included in the "Observations and Analysis" section. The additional actions taken by the librarians immediately after the event offer a complete image of the work our team engaged in and ultimately assessed, once everything had been concluded.

Post Event Activities

The only work done immediately after the event was a clean-up of the Reese article itself. The crowdsourcing of a single article by nine student contributors, most of them working independently of each other, left behind many loose ends to resolve, including sentences and paragraphs that didn't quite reach a conclusion and some inconsistencies in citation style or structure that had to be standardized and clarified. This task was left to our Education Librarian, the member of the team with the most experience using Wikipedia's markup to compose and edit articles. Within an hour or two, the article was comprehensive and readable enough to be shared enthusiastically with supervisors, peers, and partners on campus as evidence of the success of the event.[46]

In the days that followed the event, the team's last task was to see whether the article could be ushered through Wikipedia's vetting process for new articles to briefly appear in the encyclopedia's main page section "Did You Know?". Getting an article included is highly competitive and requires an investment of time and energy submitting the article, as well as responding to any critiques it receives. Again, the Education Librarian took responsibility for this work, given his familiarity with Wikipedia's internal processes and standards. The article was accepted for inclusion in this category and was featured for eight hours on the main page of Wikipedia on March 11, 2016, several weeks after the event had occurred. Engaging in this process ensured that the work done by the student participants had met Wikipedia's standards of quality, and those brief hours on the encyclopedia's main page ultimately drew hundreds more visitors to the article than would normally view it in an average day.[47] These final steps were important in helping to establish whether or not the event had truly met the goals we had set out to achieve.

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45.   The guide used for this Wikipedia edit-a-thon can be found at http://research.ewu.edu/allredevent.

46.   The current version of the article can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Reese.

47.   The sudden increase in the article's traffic during its day on Wikipedia's main page, as compared with the days before and after, can be seen using the tool found at this link: https://tools.wmflabs.org/pageviews/?project=en.wikipedia.org&platform=all-access&agent=user&start=2016-03-01&end=2016-03-12&pages=Red_Reese.

Observations and Analysis

The two main goals of the edit-a-thon event were to expose students to archival materials and provide students with experience in collaborative knowledge creation. The team paid particular attention to how successfully the event had achieved those goals, both while it was taking place and afterwards, in order to determine what we had learned and what to implement differently for future edit-a-thon events. The following discussion summarizes the observations made by the team and the conclusions they drew from those observations.

Goal #1: Expose Students to Archival Materials

Students were generally intrigued by, and in some cases greatly enjoyed exploring, the archival materials available at the event, regardless of whether they were original materials or facsimiles. Students proved most interested in how the campus and student life had changed over the last fifty to seventy-five years. They were easily distracted from the primary topic of research—Red Reese—by such subjects as the student dress code (e.g., women could only wear pedal pushers on certain days of the week in certain dormitories) and unfamiliar student activities (e.g., the sport of Jollyball, which was played by female students at EWU from the 1920s through the 1950s). In addition, the novelty of the microfilm reader was a source of interest, especially for students who currently wrote for the student newspaper and were curious to see earlier versions of the paper. Given the current expectations for the sources used in undergraduate research, most students never need to use a microfilm reader, even as history majors. The event was a great way to introduce them to this technology and educate them about the fact that many historical primary source documents are only available on microfilm.

Although we had observed that the event was successful in exposing participants to archival and special collections materials, we also felt in retrospect that we could do more to give students a wider range of encounters with archival materials at our next edit-a-thon. For example, because we held the event physically away from the archives and special collections, participating students didn't have the opportunity to experience the closed stack environment or learn firsthand some of the other special precautions archives put in place to protect unique materials. Offering an option for students to go on a behind-the-scenes tour of Archives & Special Collections might be an enriching activity to add to a future edit-a-thon, especially if students are able to stay for additional time. However, we are also cognizant of the reality that the drop-in aspect of the event may make adding that kind of experience too difficult to implement, as some students had only fifteen to thirty minutes of time to devote to participation.

Increasing the number of students who actively participate is an area targeted for improvement, but also an area that will take more careful planning. We had a small number of attendees, which we had anticipated, as this was the first time the library had hosted an event of this kind. A total of eleven students interacted on some level with the event team and materials, with nine students actually contributing language

to the article. Even that small number represented a wide range of majors, including History, Journalism/Communications, Computer Science, Engineering, Psychology and Mathematics. The participating History majors were all members of the Phi Alpha Theta honor society, to whom we had done targeted outreach, and many of the other participants were library student workers who participated before or after their shifts in the library. This pattern suggests that familiarity and comfort with the librarians organizing the event may play a crucial role in the willingness of students to participate, and therefore has some implications for how we will conduct our outreach efforts for next year's event.

We would ideally attract several dozen participants over the course of the full day of the event. An area of concern, however, is that those participants could not all effectively participate simultaneously since we observed that as the number of people working on the article at the same time increased, it became much more difficult for them to avoid crossing digital paths in the Wikipedia platform. This resulted in "edit-conflicts," in which two authors have submitted different and overlapping changes to the same section. Edit-conflicts can be resolved, but not easily, and the work of resolving these conflicts generally requires more advanced familiarity with the Wikipedia interface and markup. One way the team may deal with this is to offer several related article topics for students to choose from, which would dramatically reduce the possibilities for edit-conflicts. Of course, the negative consequences of that approach would be that more materials would need to be prepared before the event; the event might be harder to advertise and coordinate; and, after the event, there would be more articles for the planning team to polish up to meet Wikipedia's published standards. Some of these negative outcomes could perhaps be ameliorated if we had a graduate student in History or a related field to assist with the preparation of materials, as well as the article clean-up after the event.

A surprising finding during the edit-a-thon event was that participants expressed far more interest in, and invested much more time in, looking at physical copies of materials rather than at equivalent digital versions online. We had spent significant time linking newspaper articles from Google News Archive to the LibGuide created for the event, but ended up printing copies during the event for participants to use, as the online links simply didn't hold the attention of the student participants. The team will almost certainly spend less time preparing digital links and invest more time in preparing physical facsimiles for next year's event.

One practice we developed during the event itself was the preparation of physical copies of materials—for instance, the printed copies of newspaper articles—by highlighting key names, incidents, and other pieces of factual information. We did this in response to two realizations: the first was that we had more than enough staff for our level of student turnout, which left librarians with free time they could use to contribute to the work being done. Rather than write material for the article itself, we felt that it might be more appropriate to prepare sources with potential for use by students who would arrive later. The second was that, with busy class and work schedules, many students only had a limited amount of time to spend working on the

article. We decided to try highlighting some materials to make it easier for an arriving student to immediately begin engaging with a document when they arrived. We hoped this approach would allow them to get up to speed quickly, especially as most students were unfamiliar with Reese's career on arrival, and make it easier for them to contribute to the writing of the article. Since we saw the students' engagement in writing—the thought processes they would engage in as they strove to determine what stories the sources told, and how best to convey them in the Wikipedia platform—as a critically important outcome of the event, we felt that taking some steps to increase the time students could devote to that work were justifiable.

Goal #2: Provide Students with Experience in Collaborative Knowledge Creation

We felt that this goal was achieved successfully by the event staff acting as both facilitators and experts. In the facilitator role, staff helped inform students about the project and provided them with options regarding which topics or areas of the article they wanted to engage with. For example, some students were particularly interested in Reese's time in the military as the Army's physical fitness program creator; others were more interested in particular sports he coached at EWU, such as football, track, and basketball. Many students asked what they were supposed to write about. We explained that they could write whatever they wanted, as long as they could document the information they added to the article with a source. We saw that freedom as an important factor in helping them learn to engage critically with the source material, while the obligation to rely on sources helped them be cognizant that they were creating content on a globally-accessible platform. One student observed, "I've used Wikipedia plenty of times. … You just think, oh Wikipedia is there, it has tons of information, but you never think about how it gets there. Being a part of actually adding something new that's never been on Wikipedia before [was] really interesting. I learned how information is archived and shared between people. I definitely have a different perspective on how all of that works."[48]

At times, the sources offered conflicting accounts of events. A particular challenge arose when a student attempted to document on what date Reese had begun to serve as EWU Athletic Director. Materials authored by Reese indicated that he had taken on the role of Athletic Director at a much earlier date than was documented in other university sources. In this kind of situation, the practice for Wikipedia is to document the conflict, rather than attempting to determine which source is correct or incorrect: it was a good learning experience for the students to recognize the existence of these kinds of challenges, and to learn a little more deeply about how Wikipedia attempts to address them fairly.

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48. Erin Rebar, "William 'Red' Reese continues educating EWU students," Easterner, published February 27, 2016, http://easterneronline.com/37056/eagle-life/william-red-reese-continues-educating-ewu-students (accessed July 27, 2016).

Staff also served as facilitators by including students in the decision-making about the article's organization. In preparing for the event, staff created an outline with sections, based on similar Wikipedia entries. During the edit-a-thon, we found that the headings were not an ideal fit for the topics students were discovering in the sources: for example, should Reese's contributions to the NAIA be included in the "Coaching career at EWCE" section, "Career as athletic director at EWCE" or the "Honors and accomplishments" section?[49] Students helped identify that section headings needed to be modified. Students collaborated in developing better section headings. For example, "Coaching career at EWCE" became "Collegiate coaching career," and "Career as athletic director at EWCE" became "Professional career" and included his teaching at EWCE/EWU and contribution to the NAIA. The students' conversation about these changes reflected the subtlety of the work they were engaged in, as they considered how very simple changes in wording would alter how readers might look for information in the article, or might interpret that information as they encountered it.

The other role that staff took on was that of "expert". We identified two areas of expertise that students were likely to need assistance with, EWU's history and Wikipedia markup and policy. Our University Archivist is an expert in EWU's history, and therefore could easily have inadvertently overwhelmed students with information that might intimidate them into feeling that there would be little of substance for them to contribute. That risk, however, had been anticipated and the Archivist was ready to provide expert knowledge as requested, while exercising sufficient restraint so that students still felt confident in what they were learning from the documents. His expertise was critically important in providing the necessary context for documents, allowing students to make sense of critical details such as the institution's name changes, or differences in practice between past eras and the modern era that were evident in the documents.

The second way staff acted as experts was in the use of the Wikipedia platform. This was especially true for how to use the Wiki markup to insert footnotes or "See also" references. In addition, the staff person who was our Wikipedia expert was able to advise on areas that would otherwise have taken time to research, such as how Wikipedia policy governs a situation in which source materials give conflicting information. The presence of someone with Wikipedia expertise to resolve such questions, whether a staff person or an experienced Wikipedia editor from the surrounding community, is definitely advisable for any library or archives that intends to hold this type of event.

Because we had set up the edit-a-thon to produce a single group-authored article synchronously in real time, we did find that it became important to visually display basic information that students needed to reference as they wrote. Examples of this

49. The abbreviation "EWCE", which appears in these subject headings, refers to EWU's name in that era: Eastern Washington College of Education.

kind of information include what years Reese worked at Eastern and the dates on which the school changed names (as well as what those names were). This was information that all participants asked for repeatedly, and that could have been prepared ahead of time and added to during the event as questions arose. Librarians might think of this information board as their "ready reference" information for the article topic.

Engaging students in this kind of creative work was also an explicit goal of our event because the team saw the event as an extension of our library's teaching mission. As shown in the literature review, many of the events in the published literature on Wikipedia edit-a-thons have focused on recruiting existing Wikipedia editors in the area to attend an event where they rapidly add content to the encyclopedia, often using sources they may not have previously known about or had access to. For this event, we prioritized instead the importance of recruiting novices who would likely only have used Wikipedia as a reader in the past—and in fact, all of our student participants mentioned that they had never edited Wikipedia before, even though almost all of them also acknowledged that they knew Wikipedia could be edited by anyone. We felt that the most important benefits we could realize for our community would be these students gaining a deeper understanding of where their information comes from, who puts it there, and how the materials held in a library, particularly archival materials, are relevant to that work.

Assessment

As the first ever Wikipedia editing event in our library, the goals our team set for the event were modest. We wanted to see EWU students voluntarily take time to come to the library and engage with archival materials. The desired outcome of that engagement was a Wikipedia article collaboratively authored by those students and using those archival materials as sources. We wanted the article to be of sufficient quality to be a good representation of some important events in our community's past—in this case, Red Reese's contributions to the university and to the country while working at EWU.

By those standards, the event was undeniably a success: the nine undergraduate students who were full participants all worked directly with archival materials and responded to them with the interest and enthusiasm we had hoped. They each contributed some language to the article on Reese's life, which by the end of the day had gone from a blank space to a good, brief biography that addressed his major accomplishments. That article was written well enough, with sufficiently adequate citations, that it successfully passed through Wikipedia's internal review process to become one of the featured new articles on the encyclopedia's main page.

Having had this success with the initial event, we anticipate a slightly more ambitious set of goals for our next event, possibly including a larger number of participants and creating more than one article over the course of the event. We also hope to collect data from participants that helps us gauge how their experiences at

the event impacted their perspective on the university's archival collections, as well as on Wikipedia as a resource. That said, we've taken the general success of the initial event as an indication that the power of Wikipedia editing events for archives as a tool for outreach and engagement is as significant as we'd hoped. The impact of this realization has real implications for our practice as an institution, and for institutions like ours in other communities.

Facilitating an "Experience": Implications for Practice

Most literature on archival outreach and public programming consists of activities in which the archivist creates content that is presented to the public, such as an exhibit, public presentation, online exhibit, or publication. The creation of content about collections in the form of finding aids can also be included in this category. Adding a Wikipedia edit-a-thon to an academic archives' or special collections library's outreach and public programming repertoire changes this dynamic to one in which the archivist facilitates the creation of content by others. In the facilitated event, archivists and librarians spend significant time in the preparation of the event, including identifying a viable topic and source materials, determining the appropriate format for source materials, designing a potential outline for the article, marketing and advertising, cultivating stakeholders, and determining logistics. During the event, archivists and librarians continue to facilitate by working with participants to locate relevant materials, discussing sources and article structure, and asking provocative questions that help students recognize the tensions and conflicts present in the sources with which they engage. Since the event is not structured to require participants to arrive at a perfectly polished article, post-event activities also require time, including time to complete the article, check citations, and work within the Wikipedia system to promote the article. Because archivists and librarians play such strong facilitator roles in these events, the time commitment may be much higher than an archivist needs to create an exhibit, develop a lecture, or write an article.

The payoff of high staff time investment is in the participants' experience developing ownership in the content and the collection materials, as identified by Sally Ellis in her analysis of crowdsourcing activities at the British Library and Sarah Snyder in her analysis of implementing Wikipedia events at the Archives of American Art.[50] Similarly, students who participated in the EWU event took ownership in the creation of content, as shown by their concern about writing accurate statements that were well-cited. In addition, choosing a topic closely connected to the students'

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50. Sally Ellis, "A History of Collaboration, a Future in Crowdsourcing: Positive Impacts of Cooperation on British Librarianship," *Libri: International Journal of Libraries & Information Services* 64, no. 1 (March 2014): 1-10, doi: 10.1515/libri-2014-0001; Sara Snyder, "'Wikipedia Is Made of People!' Revelations from Collaborating with the World's Most Popular Encyclopedia," in *Outreach: Innovative Practices for Archives and Special Collections*, ed. Kate Theimer (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 9.

campus experiences helped foster interest in the university's history and historical materials.

While this article does not attempt to identify best practices for holding Wikipedia edit-a-thons, it should be noted that, whether running an edit-a-thon for experienced Wikipedians to increase content in Wikipedia or developing an edit-a-thon for novices who have never authored on Wikipedia, a primary role for archivists and librarians is to act as facilitators who provide access to archival materials. The execution of the event may vary for these different audiences. For example, an event for Wikipedians who are working on different topics and all need access to different archival collections may be better-suited in an archives and special collections reading room where it is easier for staff to retrieve materials from closed stacks. For any Wikipedia editing event, it is critically important for the archivist or librarian to identify the event's intended purpose in order to determine how best to act as a facilitator in that context.

Finally, developing a Wikipedia edit-a-thon meets the objective of meeting people where they are, in the places they already look for information. As was mentioned in the literature review, the research published on this subject shows that traffic to digitized collections increases when these collections are linked to Wikipedia articles, and that college and university students—as well as the general public—use Wikipedia frequently. Therefore, providing undergraduate students with the opportunity to create content for a site they use frequently, as well as using archival materials to do so, gives them the opportunity to actively engage in creation, rather than passively listening to a presentation or looking at an exhibit. Facilitating the active engagement of students is one of the major potential benefits to an archives or special collections library planning to host a Wikipedia edit-a-thon event.

Conclusion

As archives and special collections in academic libraries consider how they might develop public programming that engages users with their core missions, it is our position that holding a Wikipedia edit-a-thon is a successful means of exposing users to archival materials and to issues in collaborative knowledge creation. At EWU, we chose to hold an opt-in event that neither impacted students' grades nor required much of their time to participate, in order to extend awareness of our archival collections to an audience beyond the traditional History majors reached by traditional instruction sessions held in the archives. We found that students enjoyed looking at historical documents about the university and student life on campus. They also took seriously the responsibility to create accurate statements and cite source materials for the article, knowing that Wikipedia is one of the most widely used information sources on the Web.

Implementing a Wikipedia edit-a-thon for undergraduate students requires staff to facilitate the experience of content creation as part of their institution's public programming and outreach menu. Archivists interested in implementing this type of

event will need to clearly identify that their objective is to facilitate an experience with archival materials and collaborative content creation. Taking this approach has implications for all parts of the planning process, as well as the logistics of the event itself, and requires a planning team with the right combination of expertise and willingness to engage with students. However, the payoff for archival staff is an event that meets users where they are and instills ownership and pride in the content they produce, as well as the archival and special collections with which they come into contact.