

The startling numbers behind Africa's Wikipedia knowledge gaps

 By [Andy Walker](#)

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Wikipedia is one of the internet's most trafficked websites. We've likely all visited it at least once, and spent countless nights travelling through informational rabbit holes. But as the flagship project of the Wikimedia Foundation, Wikipedia is the key conversational pivot on which the Wikimania 2018 conference - now just a month away - will centre.



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Cape Town has won the rights to host the 14th edition of the event, and it's a pretty big deal too; the event moves from country to country each year, so it's likely that this will be South Africa's first and last time hosting the event.

A few of the foundations local members drove this point home on Wednesday at an intimate event in Cape Town.

In attendance was Wikimedia South Africa's president Douglas Scott and chair of Wiki In Africa Isla Haddow-Flood who

revealed a notable set of numbers behind Wikipedia's success thus far, and how much information remains unfilled in African society.

So just how big is Wikipedia?

- 15-billion: for starters, that's how many page views Wikipedia receives each month. And that itself is a conservative estimate
- 200 000: the number of volunteer editors working on the site at any one time during the month
- 46-million: any idea how many articles are on the free encyclopedia right now?
- 300: the number of languages used for articles. Incidentally, English is the language with the largest set of articles

But for Africa, and specifically African women, these numbers are less than impressive. For instance, the stories told of African women are few and far between, let alone the pieces that are edited by women:

- Less than 20% of Wikipedia's editors are women
- 16% of all biographies written on Wikipedia in English are about women
- Scarier still, just 0.318% of biographical entries on women are about African women
- 12% of biographies in Sub-Saharan Africa are about women

Africa's involvement in the Wikipedia movement is also at a standstill:

- In three months, more edits are made from Hong Kong than the continent of Africa
- There are 100-times more geotagged articles in France than Africa
- Just a quarter of all edits of Sub-Saharan Africa originate from Sub-Saharan African editors

The duo noted that Wikimania 2018 conference is set to "catalyse a conversation around bridging knowledge gaps" on Wikipedia, especially on the African continent. The conference will begin on 18 July in Cape Town's Cape Sun Hotel.

ABOUT ANDY WALKER

Camper by day, run-and-gunner by night, Andy is editor at Memeburn and prefers his toast like his coffee -- dark and crunchy. Specialising in spotting the next big Instagram cat star, Andy also dabbles in smartphone and game reviews over on Gearburn.

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