

ART + FEMINISM

Formal Statement for Wikimedia UCoC Drafting Committee

August 14, 2020

Art+Feminism has led a community consultation process, including project founders, lead co-organizers, regional ambassadors and staff, as well as local organizers, participants and project allies, and **we strongly believe that a Universal Code of Conduct will have a positive impact on the Wikimedia movement.**

We see this as a vital step towards building a better Wikipedia (and sister projects) in which cis and transgender women, non-binary and queer people, Black people, Indigenous people and people from the global south, as well as all those identities outside the typical Wikipedia editor, can be part of the Wikimedia community freely and fearlessly.

In July 2020 we shared [a survey](#) with our community (via our [Meetup page](#), email and social media) looking for feedback regarding the use, role and implementation of the proposed UCoC. Of those who responded to the survey, **37% of respondents express that they don't feel safe on Wikipedia.** We received 32 responses from users of ten Wikipedia language versions (Bikol, Dutch, English, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, and Tagalog).

We also conducted an open-invitation sharing hour via Zoom, at which Mervat Salman, Trust & Safety (Policy) Facilitator from the Wikimedia Foundation, was present.

Select comments from the survey results and from that community discussion have been incorporated (edited for anonymity) into this document.

We believe the Wikimedia Universal Code of Conduct should contain:

1. A statement about the Wikimedia Foundation's commitment to establishing a culture of zero tolerance for abuse, harassment and uncivil behavior among editors based on any protected classes including those that may not be covered by law such as gender and sexuality.
2. The UCoC should include LGBT and gender spectrum-friendly language.

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3. Specific definitions and examples of behaviors that are considered unacceptable, ranging from racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, cissexist, and ableist behaviors to Wikimedia-specific aggressions, micro-aggressions, and harassment, such as wikipounding or intimidation of new users.
4. Detail the mechanisms to be used to report cases of harassment, both for those who suffer it and for those who witness it. This should include contact information for the teams in charge of enforcing the Universal Code of Conduct.

Benefits of a UCoC

1. Increased perception of safety - it will act as a guiding document for those involved in harassment cases. The Pillars note what Wikipedia is and isn't, but it doesn't go far enough with regard to policy.
2. Reduce hostility on talk pages - Currently, the talk pages of controversial topics become hostile spaces, in which many users are afraid to participate, especially with regard to contributions that may be considered potentially controversial.
3. Clear defined and regularly updated definitions of harassment. There are different conceptions about what constitutes harassment and the current reporting structures on Wikipedia place the burden of the ones who are subject of harassment.
4. Stronger sense of community. A UCoC can help to promote a collective working culture of respect and kindness, which does not focus solely on content production, as is the case in the current state, but also on the well-being of the people who build and make possible the Wikimedia movement.

Overall Suggestions

The creation of a UCoC ultimately can help users access information already available about issues covered by the UCoC. The goal of the UCoC should be to make it easier, clearer and faster to understand what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and how to access aid and resources. This information should be prominently displayed and also, mandatory reading for all users. For example, when someone creates an account they need to sign a statement acknowledging having consulted the UCoC. Many of the comments we received asked for tools that are already in place but unknown or inaccessible.

The UCoC should be people focused and therefore not solely concerned with protecting the Foundation from a legal position. We encourage that a mentorship program be put in place for those wishing to engage in administrative roles.

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Enforcement Suggestions

The UCoC should specify the mechanisms for its enforcement. Based on our community consultation process, this can include:

- a. A list of penalties for those who violate the UCoC, and reference to those in charge of enforcing and overseeing it (administrators and/or dedicated committee).
- b. Aspects like high edit count shouldn't be considered as factors in exempting those who violate the Code of Conduct.
- c. We encourage a mentorship system for those wishing to engage in administrative roles.
- d. We encourage the Foundation to support mediation training for administrators.
- e. We noted a lot of concern around anonymity - and suggest greater protections in place so that Usernames are not linked to real identities unless the user expressly wishes it.
- f. A new space and/or team to deal with UCoC enforcement should be created as current users do not trust ANI and ARBCOM.

This statement was written by the Art+Feminism Anti-harassment working group, consisting of Amber Berson, Richard Knipel, Mohamed Sadat, and Melissa Tamani. Members of the Art+Feminism global community participated anonymously on the different spaces for community consultation between July and August 2020.