The Great Gender Divide
Art+Feminism Community Hours

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AGENDA

1. Wikipedia’s Content Gender Divide
3. Bridging the Gap: The work of feminist interventions
4. Implications for editing
5. Q&A
Wikipedia’s Gender Divide

There are ~1,800,000 Biographical Articles on the English Wikipedia...

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\begin{array}{c}
\text{\[ \square \] = 10,000 Articles} \\
\end{array}
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Wikipedia’s Gender Divide

There are ~1,800,000 Biographical Articles on the English Wikipedia...

... Only ~20% are about woman + non-binary people
Wikipedia’s Content Gender Divide

- **Missing content**
- **Linguistic Bias**
- **Asymmetrical linking**

- Fewer women have biographies on Wikipedia
  - Reagle & Rhue, 2011
  - Adams, Bruckner, & Naslund, 2018

- Women’s biographies more likely to be nominated for deletion
  - Tripodi, 2021

- Women’s content has less coverage than men’s content
  - Lam et al, 2011
Wikipedia’s Content Gender Divide

- **Missing content**
- **Linguistic Bias**
- **Asymmetrical linking**

Women’s pages include more information about their family and relationships than men’s pages.

*Wagner et al, 2015; Wagner et al, 2016*
Wikipedia’s Content Gender Divide

- **Missing content**

- **Linguistic Bias**

- **Asymmetrical linking**

  → Women remain on the edges of Wikipedia. They are less visible and their knowledge is marginalized.  
  
  *Ford & Wajcman, 2017*

  → Women link to men, but men don’t link back.

  *Wagner et al, 2015; Wagner et al, 2016*
Wikipedia’s Content Gender Divide

Wikipedia’s Content Gap

Quality of Information Search

Wikipedia

Google Knowledge Graph

SIRI, ALEXA, & others

Consequences
Wikipedia’s Content Gender Divide

Wikipedia’s Content Gap

Quality of Information Search

Wikipedia

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Quality of Data

Research

GPT-3

Art & other projects

Consequences
Studying Wikipedia

- Focus on the work being done (not the lack of it).
- Content gap > editor gap
Wikipedia has a well-known gender divide affecting its biographical content. This bias not only shapes social perceptions of knowledge, but it can also propagate beyond the platform as its contents are leveraged to correct misinformation, train machine-learning tools, and enhance search engine results. What happens when feminist movements intervene to try to close existing gaps? Through a quantitative analysis of over 11,000 Wikipedia articles, we provide an evaluation of two popular feminist interventions designed to counteract gender inequality within digital information projects. We find that the interventions are successful at adding content about women that would otherwise be missing, but they are less successful at addressing structural biases that limit the visibility of that content. This leads us to argue for a more granular and cumulative analysis of gender gaps in collaborative environments. We also discuss the implications for future scholarship on digital inequalities.
Main Findings

Question #1: Do the feminist movements achieve success in “telling women’s stories?”

The interventions produce longer & more viewed articles than we would otherwise expect to see.

Question #2: Are inequalities within structural features like infoboxes and link networks addressed by the movements?

Inequalities within structural features continue to persist.
A. Articles by Gender

- **women**: 6000
- **men**: 4000

B. Articles by Gender within Profession

- **artists**
  - men: 1500
  - women: 2500

- **scientists**
  - men: 1000
  - women: 2000

- **athletes**
  - men: 4000
  - women: 5000

- **politicians**
  - men: 1000
  - women: 2000
RQ1: Success in telling Women’s stories?

Success measured by Length, Average Monthly Views, and page quality (not pictured). Editor count and page age are used as controls.
RQ1: Success in telling Women’s stories?

Intervention articles are longer and receive more views than men’s pages.
RQ2: Structural features – INFOBOX

A. Number of Articles with Infoboxes

- men
- women

Number of Labels in Infoboxes

- artists
- scientists
- athletes
- politicians

Number of Articles with Infoboxes

- men
- women

Number of Labels

- artists
- scientists
- athletes
- politicians

Number of Labels vs. Number of Labels
RQ2: Structural features – INFOBOX

Significant improvement in infobox presence is likely an artifact of the data. Quality of inboxes remains the same.
RQ2: Structural features – Link Network

Anne Bosworth Focke

Frank Morley

Clara Latimer Bacon
RQ2: Structural features - Link Network

Ratio of Incoming and Outgoing Links

- athletes
- artists
- politicians
- scientists

Incoming / Outgoing:

- incoming
- outgoing
RQ2: Structural features – Link Network
RQ2: Structural features - Link Network

Women’s articles (& especially those edited by the interventions) remain at the periphery.
Implications for Editing

Interventions are changing Wikipedia!

Content + Structure

Edit pages around target article

→ Use “What links here tool”

→ Make asymmetrical links, symmetrical!
Thank you!
Find me on Twitter: @Ilangrock
Further Reading


