

spectrum

a publication of the national hearing conservation association

May 2020

Volume 37 (Issue 1)

NHCA's 45th Annual Conference February 11-13, 2021

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The NHCA Program Task Force recognizes that the Covid-19 pandemic has created uncertainty as we look week by week, let alone what will be by February, 2021. Please be assured that the health and safety of our members and attendees is always at the forefront. We will continually monitor governmental guidelines regarding Covid-19 precautions as we progress our conference plans. We are working hard towards developing another high-impact NHCA conference, with high quality scientific content presented by hearing conservation professionals. Please mark your calendars for February 11-13, 2021, for the 45th annual NHCA conference, where you'll find It's Quiet Up hEAR at the Marriott Albuquerque in New Mexico.

Planning ahead, we hEARd you for the 2022 NHCA annual conference. We are looking at a few promising (and warm) locations and will keep everyone posted as more details emerge and we confirm the date and location. Stay tuned for updates.



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Getting Some Attention for the International Year of Sound 2020: Millions of Readers

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Abstract

On January 31, 2020, the International Commission on Acoustics held the inaugural ceremony kicking off the [International Year of Sound \(IYS 2020\)](#). This is a global initiative to highlight the importance of sound and related sciences and technologies for all in society. Several events were planned for 2020; many have been postponed or extended to 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the activities that is still ongoing is the year-long effort to add sound-related content to the on-line encyclopedia, Wikipedia. The National Hearing Conservation Association (NHCA) is actively supporting the campaign. The *Hands-on workshop: How you (or your students) can contribute to Wiki4YearOfSound2020* was one of the workshops at the NHCA 2020 annual conference. It introduced participants to an [online platform](#) developed by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to facilitate the improvement of Wikipedia content for all topics related to sound. This makes it possible for individuals as well as organizations to contribute to the campaign. One can participate by promoting the project, suggesting a topic that should be a Wikipedia article, and improving or translating existing articles. Educational programs can count on Wiki Education Foundation tools to train students to contribute high-quality content to Wikipedia as a course assignment. The [Wikimedia outreach dashboard](#) allows anyone to contribute and monitor progress. Workshop attendees learned the basics of Wikipedia editing, made changes to Wikipedia articles within their area of expertise, and learned about the Wiki Education Foundation's classroom program.

Introduction

Researchers are often looking for ways to expedite the implementation of the best existing evidence by those who would benefit from it. It is harder than it seems, especially in this era of information overload. As more and more people are turning to Wikipedia for information (Smith, 2020; Thompson and Hanley, 2018), NIOSH is using several avenues to communicate research findings to the public. One of them involves improving health content on Wikipedia (See <https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2018/07/23/osh-wikipedia/>). This initiative is relevant not just for NIOSH's and NHCA's science communication efforts, but also to society at large (Morata et al., 2017; Matthew et al., 2013; Murphy, Morata & Sadowski, 2019).

This effort builds on the success of a previous campaign. NIOSH, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), organized [Wiki4WorldHearingDay2019](#) to improve the Wikipedia content related to hearing, hearing health services, hearing testing, and preventive and treatment interventions (Morata and Chadha, 2019). The effort also tracked the contributions of participants during January and February 2019 (see summary at the [WHO report on World Hearing Day 2019](#)). A few of the highlights were the development of an expanded article on tinnitus, and another on hearing protection fit testing. One can access exactly which Wikipedia articles were edited and when, the number of views of the edited articles, and review the extent and the text of the actual edits. One can also observe whether others engaged to further develop the page. This effort provided us with information on the topics that interest the public in general.

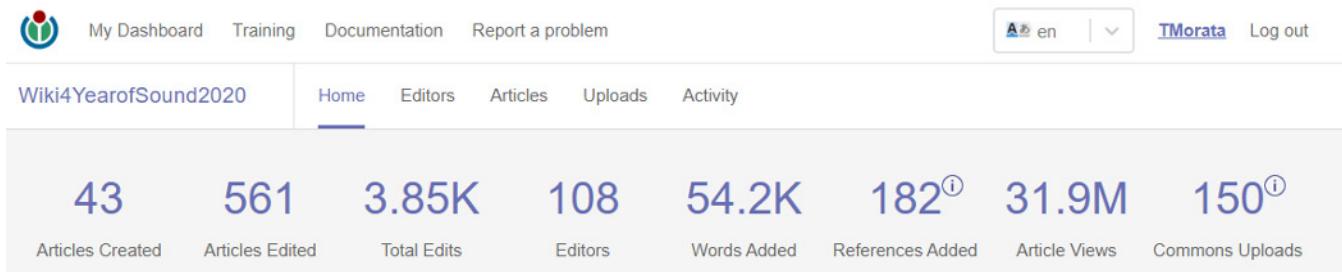


Figure 1. Screen capture of Wikimedia outreach dashboard which tracks contributions to the Wiki4YearOfSound2020 campaign, on April 27, 2020.

Wiki4YearOfSound2020

The International Year of Sound 2020 is raising awareness of scientific content from a wide range of subdisciplines, including aeroacoustics, audio, signal processing, architectural acoustics, bioacoustics, electro-acoustics, environmental noise, musical acoustics, noise control, hearing and psychoacoustics, physical acoustics, speech, ultrasound, underwater sound and vibration. Activities and events are regularly updated at <https://sound2020.org/>.

In addition to NHCA, several institutions joined Wiki4YearOfSound2020 by either promoting the event or contributing content to Wikipedia, including the International Institute of Acoustics and Vibration, the Acoustical Society of America, the International Society of Audiology, the European Acoustics Association, the Federacion Iberoamericana de Acustica, the Asociacion de Acusticos Argentinos, the American Academy of Audiology, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Hear in Cincinnati, and Make Listening Safe of the WHO.

The [Wiki4YearOfSound2020](#) platform was officially launched at the 178th Meeting of the Acoustical Society of America, which took place in December 2019 (Murphy, Morata and Sadowski, 2019). So far (on April 27, 2020) tracking indicated that over 54,000 words were contributed

to 561 existing and 43 new Wikipedia articles and 150 media files were donated to the open access repository WikiCommons. Articles are being created or expanded in several languages, including English, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Chinese and French. At the time this article was submitted for publication, the Wikipedia pages related to sound had received more than 30 million views. [It is important to keep in mind that as articles were edited at different times during the campaign, the duration of the tracking period varied widely.]

Results

Every little contribution helps.

The first hands-on workshop for Wiki4YearOfSound2020 was held at the NHCA 2020 annual conference. Guidance available in the online platform was demonstrated to the eight participants. Often, Wikipedia articles will include a notice about how the article may be improved. For example, adding citations is one way that articles can be improved. The Wikiproject page for acoustics is a good place to start to find existing articles related to sound: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Physics/Taskforces/Acoustics. It includes a list of acoustics-related Wikipedia articles.

Wikipedia Article	Number of Views since NHCA workshop
International Space Station (see Noise section https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Space_Station#Crew_health_and_safety)	329,923
Hyperbaric medicine	28,056
Hearing aid	22,079
Earplug	10,190
Diplacusis	4,266

Table 1. Number of views of Wikipedia articles which were expanded during the 2020 NHCA workshop.

Five of the workshop participants started to develop their Wikipedia editing skills, by following the recommendation to start with small edits. Five pages were edited during the workshop; one month later, collectively, these pages had been read more than 450,000 times (see Table 1). Data gathered at [https://outreachdashboard.wmflabs.org/courses/National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health/Wiki4YearofSound2020/articles/edited](https://outreachdashboard.wmflabs.org/courses/National%20Institute%20for%20Occupational%20Safety%20and%20Health/Wiki4YearofSound2020/articles/edited) on April 27, 2020 at 1 PM).

Plans for other hands-on workshops are on hold, given the COVID 19 pandemic. An online training will be offered later in the year, and we will inform the NHCA members once it is confirmed.

Incorporating Wikipedia Assignments in your course

Three participants of the NHCA workshop were interested in learning about Wikipedia's strategy to partner with university and training programs in the use of the platform developed by the [Wiki Education Foundation](#). The Wiki Education Foundation provides instructors with tools, so Wikipedia editing is one of the course assignments.

Using the platform does not require instructors to become Wikipedia editors themselves, and it does not add much time to the instructors' workload. Instructors can remain focused on the subject matter of their course and rely on the resources and staff of the Wiki Education Foundation to help students with the mechanics of writing for Wikipedia. This includes an assignment management software, tutorials about how to contribute to Wikipedia, and staff guidance.

NIOSH researchers and Wikipedians-in-Residence offer an extra layer of support pertinent to articles on occupational safety and health, including suggesting topics (see NIOSH Science Blogs [The Powerhouse: Students' contributions towards expanding and improving occupational safety and health content in Wikipedia](#) and [NIOSH, Wiki Education Foundation, and Harvard University Work Together to Make Occupational Safety and Health Content Accessible to All](#)). Information on a wide range of occupational health topics were covered through these activities. Wikipedia articles related to hearing and acoustics have been expanded and improved by students in various courses since 2016 (complete metrics can be seen at the corresponding links):

- University of Cincinnati (Occupational Epidemiology course in [2016, 2020](#) and Noise and Hearing, in [2019](#))

- University of Northern Colorado (Hearing Loss Prevention course in [2016](#) and [2017](#))
- University of Nebraska (Hearing Conservation course in [2017](#) and [2018](#))

Feedback received from partners, including both faculty and students, has been consistently positive. NIOSH staff not only provided suggestions and additional training, but also followed up with the students as needed. They can assist students to further develop a Wikipedia article that was created or edited in a previous course. One of our partners reported that NIOSH's involvement "gave students a sense that their work was valued, worth their time, and needed by the community." This probably explains their enthusiasm towards the project, along with the perception that their article would showcase their science communication skills. A common response among students was that they enjoyed writing "to be read" and not just "to be graded."

Conclusion

While there are numerous avenues for researchers and academics to publish scientific writing professionally, there are many reasons to take time to expand the scientific content into Wikipedia. These include the ability to provide a public service, contribute solid, verifiable knowledge about their field to the public, and eliminate misinformation. Those who are interested in science communication benefit from having access to metrics on the number of page views and the interaction with other Wikipedia editors. It is also an opportunity to learn about which topics within a discipline attract public interest.

By using the Wiki Education platform when teaching, instructors are also helping students to improve their science communication skills and digital literacy -- tools which could be helpful in their future careers. Furthermore, the transparency of the actions and editorial processes on Wikipedia make it easier for researchers to address any concerns they might have regarding participation.

The breadth and accuracy of the Wikipedia coverage of the sciences varies widely, and this is a chance to make significant contributions to the field of acoustics. This campaign is an opportunity to make content in acoustics one of the better-developed areas within Wikipedia, while providing quality information to everyone in the world -- where they are actually looking for it.

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