

### **Week 9: The Great Wiki Debate**

**Wikipedia is a multilingual, web-based, free content encyclopedia project. Wikipedia is written collaboratively by volunteers from all around the world. With rare exceptions, its articles can be edited by anyone with access to the Internet, simply by clicking the edit this page link. The name Wikipedia is a portmanteau of the words wiki (a type of collaborative website) and encyclopedia. Since its creation in 2001, Wikipedia has grown rapidly into one of the largest reference Web sites. (www.wikipedia.org)**

**In every article, links guide users to associated articles, often with additional information. Anyone is welcome to add information, cross-references or citations, as long as they do so within Wikipedia's editing policies and to an appropriate standard. One need not fear accidentally damaging Wikipedia when adding or improving information, as other editors are always around to advise or correct obvious errors, and Wikipedia's software, known as MediaWiki, is carefully designed to allow easy reversal of editorial mistakes.**

**There is a group of individuals that believe the end of Wikipedia is close as people use the tool to self-promote. Please read the article: Law Professor Predicts Wikipedia's Demise  
<http://www.informationweek.com/showArticle.jhtml;jsessionid=2ZYHJY4LGVHB OQSNDLRSKHSCJUNN2JVN?articleID=196601766&queryText=wikipedia>**

**Please read the article: Microsoft Tries To Influence Wikipedia Entry  
<http://www.informationweek.com/showArticle.jhtml;jsessionid=2ZYHJY4LGVHB OQSNDLRSKHSCJUNN2JVN?articleID=197001022&queryText=wikipedia>**

**Answer the following discussion question:**

**1) Where do you think the future of Wikipedia is headed?**

As always, you are encouraged to reply to other's postings.

Wikipedia isn't going anywhere. The idea that companies are going to write software to spam Wikipedia is ridiculous. If companies are able to accomplish that, then the whole Internet is doomed, because the same security measures in Wikipedia are the ones protecting comment threads and forums.

Human being have to edit Wikipedia entries, and that means corporations will have to hire armies of people to edit those articles. Staffers at the United States Congress tried to spam Wikipedia, and Congress' IP address got banned from further edits as a result:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Requests\\_for\\_comment/United\\_States\\_Congress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Requests_for_comment/United_States_Congress)

Wikipedia is a commons and people rely on it. Microsoft got burned with bad publicity for attempting to distort the truth. I have friends who edited wikipedia entries as a joke,

and their changes were gone within moments. Wikipedia has a devoted community of individuals concerned with the truth. Some of the most fascinating conversations I've ever read occur in the "discussion" tab behind wikipedia entries. The debate over the definition of the word "Terrorist" was fascinating as well as thoughtful.

A study in the journal <I>Nature</I> found Wikipedia and the Encyclopedia Britannica fairly even in their accuracy:

<http://www.wired.com/culture/lifestyle/news/2005/12/69844>

If Wikipedia dies, then we will all suffer for it.