

**Wikipedia: The World's
largest and most successful
open-access knowledge
project**

New enclosures

- costly
 - Rutgers: \$300,000 per year?
- closed
- busy work



blogs

- updated response papers
- mimicked by EduTech
- a possible opening to the new public sphere

Wikipedia

- One of the top-ten Internet sites (No. 7)
- 10% of global Internet users
- 684 million visits per year
- 2,582,065 articles
- Web 2.0 classic



Wikipedia and Education

- Should students quote the site?
 - is it reliable?
- Should professors contribute to it?
 - is it scholarly?

“As educators, we are in the business of reducing the dissemination of misinformation [. . .] Even though Wikipedia may have some value [. . .] it is not itself an appropriate source for citation.”

(Qtd. Scott Jaschik, “A Stand Against Wikipedia.”
insidehighered.com, Jan 26, 2007)

“Teachers have little more to fear from students’ *starting* with Wikipedia than from their starting with most other basic reference sources. They have a lot to fear if students *stop* there.”

(Roy Rosenzweig, “Can History be Open Source? Wikipedia and the Future of the Past.” *The Journal of American History*, June, 2006)

“I propose that all academics with research specialties, no matter how arcane [. . .] enroll as identifiable editors of Wikipedia.”

(Mark A. Wilson, “Professors Should Embrace Wikipedia.” insidehighered.com, April 1, 2008)

“Absurdity upon absurdity. Self appointed pundits who have no scientific competence whatsoever casting aspersions upon precise and pertinent remarks by experts in the field.”

(Dr. John Harnard, qtd. on insidehighered.com, April, 2008)

Wikipedia and Education

- Students *do* “stop” with Wikipedia
 - a problem that does not lie with Wikipedia, but with educators
- Wikipedia is “semi-scholarly”
 - like any encyclopedia, it is a short-cut that relies on scholarship but does not contribute to it

Wikipedia and Education

- We have to deal with Wikipedia, like it or not
- Wikipedia has to deal with us, whether it likes it or not
- Rather than mutual disdain: positive engagement

“The more universities engage with Wikipedia, and the more they realize that they can do so without necessarily dropping the high standards of research and academic rigour that it is also their duty to safeguard, the more they benefit not only their own students, but also the public good.”
(Jon Beasley-Murray)

Traditional technologies

- students are losing basic research skills
- but these are enhanced, not degraded by Wikipedia
- at the same time that universities become neoliberal enterprises
- open access offers a revitalization of knowledge production

Conclusions

- Wikipedia offers a challenge and an opportunity to educators
- It *is* educational technology: just not as we know it
- Educators should be leaders, not opponents