

Press Release

Berlin, May 30th, 2012

Wikipedia meets Archaeology

First Wikipedian in Residence at the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (German Archaeological Institute)

As of June 1st 2012, an active Wikipedian editor will be hired as a mediator between a German scientific institution and the free online encyclopedia for the first time. With the so-called Wikipedian in Residence the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (<http://www.dainst.org/de/>) (DAI) realizes an international project by the Wikipedia community in Germany. During the next six months, the long-time Wikipedia Marcus Cyron will professionally encourage and care for an exchange between the DAI and the voluntary Wikipedia community. One of his first tasks will be the presentation of Wikipedia and the access to free knowledge at the Lange Nacht der Wissenschaften (Long Night of the Sciences) at the DAI headquarters in Berlin. With this project, the DAI takes a leading role in Germany after the British Museum and the Chateau Versailles already integrated a Wikipedian in Residence into their scientific work in the past.

“The Deutsches Archäologisches Institut offers an extensive collection of source work and a great amount of highly specialized scientific publications dealing with classical studies that non-experts have not had access to until now. Wikipedia closes an important gap for general scientific communication. It can, for example, offer great introductory articles about the acropolis in Athens, in which not only early photos of excavations but also to the newest literature regarding the acropolis could be linked. In doing so, Wikipedia with all of its activities fulfills another function: that of a distinct infrastructure for antiquity sources which spans across institutions,” Prof. Reinhard Förtsch from the DAI explains.

Marcus Cyron’s core tasks as Wikipedian in Residence will be identifying the DAI’s wealth of knowledge for Wikipedia as well as realizing workshops with curators, scientists and other employees of the institute. It will be his goal to enable all these groups to create articles and to contribute to Wikipedia. Moreover, he will organize conferences and meetings between Wikipedians and scientists. Additionally, tours with volunteers are planned that could lead to the production of information or pictures for articles.

The cooperation is expected to have a positive effect for the scientific institution as well as the active Wikipedia community. The exchange about the DAI’s work and the scientific insights can improve the quality of Wikipedia further. In case the linkage between Wikipedia articles and the relating sources in the DAI system becomes the rule, the visibility of the DAI’s work and the frequency of page requests on their website will increase. Wikimedia Commons, the free media archive that today already holds 12 million freely licensed pictures, graphics and other media files integrated into Wikipedia, can play an important role here. Selected records and collections of the DAI that are not protected by copyright and are approved for publication can be made accessible to the public – in Wikipedia and beyond.

Wikimedia Deutschland supports the cooperation between the DAI and the Wikipedian in Residence. Free access to culturally valuable content is one of the association’s main goals. As early as 2008, the release of more than 100,000 selected pictures could be achieved in collaboration with the Federal Archives of Germany. The publication of 60,000 image files from the Deutsche Fotothek followed in 2009 (<http://www.de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:GLAM>). Potential content for the DAI could be images of more than 70 years of age that are not protected by copyright and might reveal important, but partially unpreserved conditions and connections. The same holds for digital reproductions of printed work from the Baroque period or descriptions and plans from early archives that originated before the rise of photography.

The model of the Wikipedian in Residence is a prime example of the ongoing liberation of content and will hopefully be established in Germany. Another job posting, by the Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin,

can be found on Wikimedia Deutschland's website
(http://www.wikimedia.de/wiki/Wikipedian_in_Residence_%28m/w%29).

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About the Deutsches Archäologische Institut:

The Deutsches Archäologische Institut is a scientific institution that, as a Federal Institute, belongs to the area of responsibility of the Federal Foreign Office. The headquarter of the institute is in Berlin and it has a number of committees and branches at home and abroad. It conducts archaeological excavations and research all around the world and cultivates contacts to international scholars. The institute organizes scientific conferences, colloquies, and conventions and informs the public about their work through exhibitions, tours and the media.

Website: www.dainst.org/de/
Facebook: www.facebook.com/dainst

About Wikimedia Deutschland:

Wikimedia Deutschland e.V. is a non-profit organization that encourages the promotion of free knowledge. Since its establishment in 2004 the organization has supported different Wikimedia projects – most of all Wikipedia. The organization encourages free access to free knowledge and campaigns for the basic human right to education. Wikipedia is, just like the other Wikimedia projects, independent, ad-free and is made possible thanks to voluntary work and donations.

Website: www.wikimedia.de
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Best wishes,
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Spokeswoman