

Wikipedia vs Academia

A clash of cultures

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Disclaimer

These are my personal views.

No recording please.

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Wikipedia

- Publication
- Community
- **Culture**
- Foundation
- Wiki
- Software base

Justified true belief

The screenshot shows the Wikipedia page titled "Questionable and self-published sources". The page content is as follows:

Questionable and self-published sources
 Main page: [Wikipedia:Verifiability § Reliable sources](#)

Questionable sources

Questionable sources are those with a poor reputation for checking the facts, or with no editorial oversight. Such sources include websites and publications expressing views that are widely acknowledged as extremist, that are promotional in nature, or which rely heavily on rumors and personal opinions. Questionable sources are generally unsuitable for citing contentious claims about third parties, which includes claims against institutions, persons living or dead, as well as more ill-defined entities. The proper uses of a questionable source are very limited.

Sources of sources which sound reliable but don't have the reputation for fact-checking and accuracy that WP:RS requires. The *Journal of 100% Reliable Factual Information* might have a reputation for "pretentious" behavior, which includes questionable business practices and/or peer-review processes that raise concerns about the reliability of their journal articles.^[RE1]

Self-published sources (online and paper)
 Main page: [Wikipedia:Verifiability § Self-published sources](#)

Anyone can create a **personal web page** or **publish their own book**, and also claim to be an expert in a certain field. For that reason self-published media—whether books, newsletters, personal websites, open wikis, blogs, personal pages on social networking sites, internet forum postings, or tweets—are largely not acceptable. This includes any website whose content is largely **user-generated**, including the Internet Movie Database (IMDb), CSDB.com, content farms, collaboratively created websites such as wikis, and so forth, with the exception of material on such sites that is labeled as originating from credited members of the site's editorial staff, rather than users.

"Blogs" in this context refers to personal and group blogs. Some news outlets host interactive columns they call blogs, and these may be acceptable as sources so long as the writers are professional journalists or are professionals in the field on which they write and the blog is subject to the news outlet's full editorial control. Posts left by readers may never be used as sources; see [WP:NEWSLOG](#).

Self-published material may sometimes be acceptable when its author is an established expert whose work in the relevant field has been published by reliable **third-party publications**. Self-published information should never be used as a third-party source about another living person, even if the author is a well-known professional researcher or writer; see [WP:BLP#Reliable sources](#).

Self-published and questionable sources as sources on themselves

Self-published or questionable sources may be used as sources of information about **themselves**, especially in articles about themselves, without the requirement that they be published experts in the field, so long as the following criteria are met:

- The material is neither unduly self-serving nor an **exceptional claim**.

There are two floating callout boxes on the right side of the page:

- One titled "Shoutout: WP:QUESTIONABLE WP:QUESTIONABLE" with a blue background.
- Another titled "Shoutout: WP:USINGQUESTIONABLE WP:USINGQUESTIONABLE WP:USINGQUESTIONABLE" with a blue background.

Below the second callout box is an image of a hand holding a green umbrella on a yellow background. To the right of the image is a text box:

Reliable sources must be strong enough to support the claim. A lightweight source may sometimes be acceptable for a lightweight claim, but never for an extraordinary claim.

At the bottom right of the page, there is a "Shoutout: WP:RS/SOURCE" box.

Culture

- Self-organising
- Simple
- Reputation economy
- Privileging anonymity
- Collective (ir)responsibility
- Emergent
- Open
- Flat
- Small

Weaknesses

- What's the object?
- Are we there yet?
- Vandalism
- Motivated distortion
- Obscure editorial stance
- Behavioural enforcement of values
- Lack of civility
- Lack of expertise
- What's the plan?

Problems for academics

- Eternal vigilance
- Asymmetric reputational risk
- Idiosyncracies
- Unaccountability
- No Original Research
- Conflict Of Interest
- Civility — or lack thereof

Culture

- Structured
- Heterogeneous
- Complicated
- Reputation ecology
- Identifiable
- Individual responsibility
- Many layered
- Innovative
- Divergent
- Large

Funding

- **Someone has to pay**
- Research output — discrete publication
- Research impact

Weaknesses

- p -hacking
- Unfunded key processes
- Covert motives
- Incrementalism
- Over-specialisation
- Non-reproducibility
- Fraud

Innovation

- Rich documents
- Semantic linkage
- Living documents
- Interaction
- Subsidiary publication
- Structured presentation
- Collaboration at scale
- Interdisciplinarity

IMA

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Questions?

Comments!