

TECH NEWS

15 biggest Wikipedia blunders

Wikipedia's just announced plans to restrict the editing of some of its articles. Here are 15 of the biggest errors the new editing system might have prevented.



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By JR Raphael

Wikipedia's just announced plans to restrict the editing of some of its articles. Under the new system, any changes made to pages of still-living people will have to be approved by an "experienced volunteer" before going online.

The change marks a significant shift in the philosophy of the openly edited user-controlled encyclopedia – and that may not be a bad thing. Here are 15 of the biggest Wikipedia blunders the new editing system might have prevented. These false facts, according to widely published accounts, all appeared on the Wikipedia site at some point.

1. Robbie Williams eats domestic pets in pubs for money.

To be fair, we can't disprove this statement, which popped up on the singer's Wikipedia page in 2006. But we'll give him the benefit of the doubt.

2. David Beckham was a Chinese goalkeeper in the 18th century.

And you thought scoring Posh Spice was impressive.

3. Paul Reiser's dead.

If you fell for this 2008 Wikipedia hoax, well – let's just say I'm not so mad about you.

4. Sinbad's dead.

Couldn't tell ya what he's actually doing these days, but contrary to a 2007 Wikipedia claim, Sinbad is still around.

5. **Sergey Brin's sexy, dating Jimmy Wales, and dead.**

The Google god's Wikipedia page has seen more changes than his company's seen betas. Remarks on Sergey Brin's bio have claimed he's gay and dating Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales; he's dead, having ended his life in Moscow; and he's "sexy."

(I'll leave the judgment on the last one up to you.)

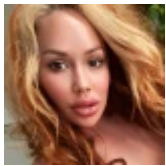
6. **Tony Blair worships Hitler.**

The former British prime minister was a regular target for Wikipedia tampering. That's what we read on Wikipedia, anyway.

7. **The Duchess of Cornwall's Christian name is Cow-miller.**

Anyone else suddenly have a hankering for a hamburger?

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8. **The University of Cincinnati's former president is a whore.**

Former University of Cincinnati president Nancy Zimpher was listed as a "prostitute" and a "witch" on her Wikipedia page. Good thing it wasn't true, as that would make for one dangerous combination.

9. **Robert Byrd's dead.**

United States Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia was pronounced dead by Wikipedia in January of this year. The senator was resurrected by a Wikipedia correction a short time later.

10. **Ted Kennedy died in January.**

Months before this week's news that Ted Kennedy had passed away, his Wikipedia page reported

his death. The entry said Kennedy had died following his seizure at January's presidential inauguration.

11. John Seigenthaler helped assassinate John and Robert Kennedy.

The retired journalist wrote a full editorial about his Wikipedia ordeal, in which he was accused of being somehow involved in the assassinations of both John and Robert Kennedy. The errant info, Seigenthaler says, was on the site for four and a half months.

12. A yacht killed British TV presenter Vernon Kay.

That's a rough way to go. Especially when it never happened.

13. Conan O'Brien assaults sea turtles while canoeing.

Stephen Colbert was to blame for this hoax. I can't decide which is more unbelievable: that Conan assaulted a sea turtle, or that he went canoeing.

14. British TV gardener Alan Titchmarsh published a new version of the Kama Sutra.

He did, however, slap stickers on a bikini model for ratings.

15. Sienna Miller has modeled nude.

I don't care if it's not true – I'm still going to require proof on this one. 🦋

— JR Raphael

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