החוג לניהול מידע וידע

The Department of Information
and Knowledge Management

הפקולטה לניהול
Faculty of Management

אוניברסיטת חיפה
University of Haifa
جامعة حيفا

Inclusion and Exclusion in the Administrative Culture and the Editing of Wikipedia

Lydia Jiryes

Advisor: Prof. Sheizaf Rafaeli, Haifa University

Managing Wikipedia involves two approaches: inclusion and exclusion. While accepting new articles to the encyclopedia does not normally result in controversy, many conflicts arise when it comes to deleting articles. In fact, we can point to a clash between two principles or goals. On the one hand, we want Wikipedia to be open and accessible for all and to encourage democracy and participation, and on the other hand, we want to ensure quality and prevent immersion in the dump of unnecessary information. The tension between the principle of notability and the principle of free and open to all underpin the discussion in this study. In addition, Dividing the Wikipedians nto "includers" and "deleters" can serve as a useful practice of categorization in exploring the behavior that concerns the deletion of articles, as well as the discussion around such decisions.

The purpose of this research is to examine how administrators at Wikipedia behave along the continuum of inclusion v. exclusion that is conveyed by the deleting of articles.

The research will examine characteristics, norms and behavior of Arab, English and Chinese Wikipedia, and their influence and reflection on decisions that pertain to deleting articles in Wikipedia. This is based on the two cultural dimensions suggested by Hofstede, 1) the dimension of collectivism versus individualism, and 2) the dimension of femininity versus masculinity. These dimensions operate on computer-mediated communication (CMC) and they may provide insight into activities of people who use Wikipedia.

The sample includes 1305 Wikipedia administrators and 150 Wikipedia articles (50 per language) which were suggested for deletion and about which discussions were held. Research questions and hypotheses are concerned with the duration of discussion, articles selected for deletion, and with the statistics of deletion performed by administrators.

The research will focus on Wikipedia documentation of the administrators' activity, and the data will be collected from two sources: 1) personal administrators' pages ("user pages"), by looking for information concerning gender and location and downloading their activity data from Wikipedia; and 2) articles for which discussions concerning deletion were held, by collecting data and examining each article.

This research may assist the understanding of the editing processes and the factors influencing them. It will enable us to examine theories of intercultural differences concerning the conduct of creating new sources of knowledge and disseminating it; the conclusions may help achieve a deeper understanding of tacit behavior "behind the scenes", and assist in improving the comparatively small size of the Arabic Wikipedia.