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Web users going to Wikipedia for news

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8 September, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Web users going to Wikipedia for news

BNE: A new and very popular Internet news resource has emerged, from an unusual source. The online encyclopedia Wikipedia is now the number one choice for millions of web surfers who are looking for more in-depth analysis and background information about the latest news stories. Wikipedia attracted 22.3 percent of Internet users searching for information on the Gaza Strip when Israel withdrew its settlements in August. Five times more people went to Wikipedia than to Google News, Yahoo News and the BBC.

Wikipedia was started in 2001 and has quickly grown to contain almost 700,000 articles. Encyclopedia Britannica has just 80,000 references in comparison. Wikipedia can be edited in real time by anyone. Critics say this means some of the facts and statements on the site can be wrong. However, it is the community-based nature of its information posting policy that makes it successful. Its popularity is also because it has entries on almost anything, from the latest trends to up-to-the-minute coverage of Hurricane Katrina.

WARM-UPS

1. NEWS: In pairs / groups, talk about news. Why do you like it? Do you follow the news for any of these reasons?

a. To feel intelligent
b. To stay up to date
c. Because I'm a world citizen
d. News is very interesting
e. I love discussing current events

f. To kill time
g. To find out new things
h. The news is living history
i. It keeps my brain active
j. It's just a habit

2. SOURCES: Which of the following news sources do you value and trust most?

- Wikipedia
- Internet news sites
- Television
- Radio

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Family and friends
- Breaking News English.com

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Internet news sites / Wikipedia / encyclopedia / web surfers / in-depth analysis / news stories / Google News / Yahoo News / BBC / up-to-the-minute news

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. ENCYCLOPEDIA: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "encyclopedia". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. TWO-MINUTE DISCUSSIONS: Discuss each of the arguments below with a partner for just two minutes. Then move on to the next partner and discussion. Student A agrees with the first argument, Student B, the second.

a. News isn't important. vs. News is highly important.

b. The Internet is best for news. vs. Newspapers are best for news.

c. A lot of news reporting isn't true. vs. All news reporting is true.

d. News is too depressing. vs. News makes us understand the real world.

e. Wikipedia is best for news. vs. Traditional news sites are best.

f. International news is most interesting. vs. Domestic news is most interesting.

g. There's too much death in the news. vs. News isn't about happy stories.

h. TV news is better than other TV programs. vs. Dramas and comedies are best.

i. I'm fed up with news on terrorism. vs. News on terrorism affects us all.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

a.	News agencies go to Wikipedia to find the latest news stories.	T / F
b.	Wikipedia is the number one choice for news for many web surfers.	T / F
c.	Surfers chose Wikipedia over Google in August for news about Gaza.	T / F
d.	Five times more people chose Wikipedia than the usual news sites.	T / F
e.	Wikipedia has 100 times more articles than Encyclopedia Britannica.	T / F
f.	Wikipedia can be edited in real time by anyone.	T / F
g.	Only Wikipedia editors can post information on the site.	T / F
h.	Wikipedia has up-to-the-minute information on Hurricane Katrina.	T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

a.	emerged	detailed
b.	in-depth	rules
c.	attracted	developed
d.	withdrew	the latest
e.	went to	drew
f.	grown	visited
g.	edited	incorrect
h.	wrong	appeared
i.	policy	pulled out
j.	up-to-the-minute	corrected

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

a.	very popular Internet	has entries on almost anything
b.	the number one choice for	real time by anyone
c.	in-depth analysis and background	its settlements in August
d.	Israel withdrew	of Hurricane Katrina
e.	Five times more	on the site can be wrong
f.	quickly grown to contain	information
g.	Wikipedia can be edited in	news resource
h.	some of the facts and statements	almost 700,000 articles
i.	Its popularity is also because it	millions of web surfers
j.	up-to-the-minute coverage	people went to Wikipedia

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

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in-depth

source

times

latest

withdrew

emerged

attracted

choice

Wikipedia was started in 2001 and has quickly grown to _____ almost 700,000 _____. Encyclopedia Britannica has just 80,000 references in _____. Wikipedia can be edited in _____ time by anyone. Critics say this means some of the _____ and statements on the site can be wrong. However, it is the community-based _____ of its information posting policy that makes it successful. Its popularity is also because it has _____ on almost anything, from the latest trends to up-to-the-minute _____ of Hurricane Katrina.

coverage

articles

real

entries

comparison

nature

contain

facts

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms … for the words **'news'** and **'site'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning…?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "NEWS SITES" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about Wikipedia and other news sites.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- popular
- choice
- in-depth
- 22.3
- settlements
- five times

- grown
- Britannica
- edited
- critics
- posting
- trends

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

    a. What did you think when you first saw this headline?
    b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
    c. What do you think of Wikipedia becoming a major news source?
    d. Do you think there is a need for more background analysis on news sites?
    e. Do you get enough news information?
    f. Do you think Yahoo News, Google News and the BBC should change?
    g. Do you look at, read or watch the news every day?
    h. What news stories are you interested in most?
    i. What is your favorite news source?
    j. Do you prefer newspapers, radio, TV or the Web?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

    a. Did you like reading this article?
    b. What do you think about what you read?
    c. Do you feel different if you're not up to date with the news?
    d. How often does the news make you angry?
    e. How does the news change your view of life and the world?
    f. Do you get fed up with some stories?
    g. What do you think of a news site that anyone in the world can edit?
    h. Do you ever feel there is information overload?
    i. Would you like more news more often?
    j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

    a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
    b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
    c. Was there a question you didn't like?
    d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
    e. What did you like talking about?
    f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
    g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

WHAT KIND OF NEWS?

What kind of news stories do you choose to read, watch or listen to? Why?

Write a value of 1 (never read, watch, listen to) to 10 (always read, watch, listen to) in the middle column for each of the categories in the left column. Which is the best news source for each of these? Why?

CATEGORY	VALUE	NEWS SOURCE
World news		
Domestic news		
Gardening		
Motoring		
Politics		
Sports		
Science		
Entertainment		
Gossip		
Business		

In pairs / groups, share and compare your values. Ask each other to explain in full, with examples, exactly why you chose your scores.

Change partners and report what you heard from your first partners. Are there any similarities between different students' answers?

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on Wikipedia. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. WEB SITE COMPARISON: Make a poster comparing three different news web sites. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all find out about similar things?

4. NEWS DAY: Keep an account of how much time you spend looking at, reading, watching, discussing, thinking about, writing about, studying about news for one day in your life. Explain your findings to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all have similar news habits?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F   b. T   c. T   d. T   e. F   f. T   g. F   h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

a.   emerged   appeared
b.   in-depth   detailed
c.   attracted   drew
d.   withdrew   pulled out
e.   went to   visited
f.   grown   developed
g.   edited   corrected
h.   wrong   incorrect
i.   policy   rules
j.   up-to-the-minute   the latest

PHRASE MATCH:

a.   very popular Internet   news resource
b.   the number one choice for   millions of web surfers
c.   in-depth analysis and background   information
d.   Israel withdrew   its settlements in August
e.   Five times more   people went to Wikipedia
f.   quickly grown to contain   almost 700,000 articles
g.   Wikipedia can be edited in   real time by anyone
h.   some of the facts and statements   on the site can be wrong
i.   Its popularity is also because it   has entries on almost anything
j.   up-to-the-minute coverage   of Hurricane Katrina

GAP FILL:

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