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Demystifying Wikipedia at SMU

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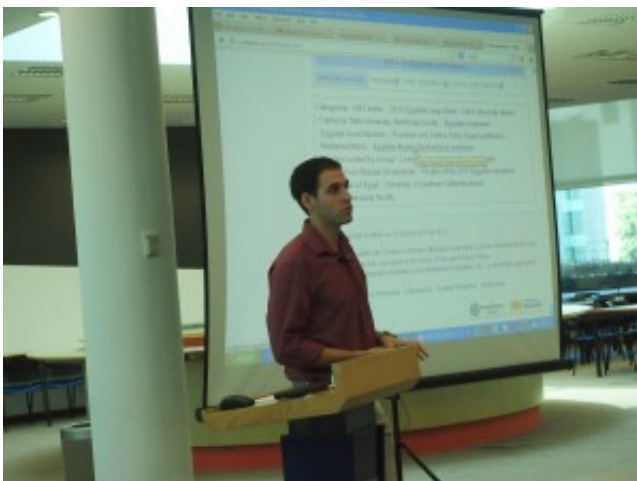🏠 **Home** > **Asia Pacific** > Demystifying Wikipedia at SMU

Demystifying Wikipedia at SMU

By Low Jiaxin

(10 October 2013) Are there any students who don't use Wikipedia for their research? Recognizing the role of Wikipedia as the first stop for many students conducting research, the Singapore Management University's Li Ka Shing Library hosted "Demystifying Wikipedia: Tips for Information Literacy" on 22nd August 2013.

About 50 librarians, educators and researchers from local and overseas institutions participated. Speakers included Mr. Maximilian Klein and Dr Jack Tsen-Ta Lee who discussed using Wikipedia for information literacy as well as in teaching and learning.

Wikipedian-in-Residence at OCLC Research, Mr. Maximilian Klein, took participants through the structure of a Wikipedia article using his short video.   Max then showed how to go "under the hood" of an article to its history and talk pages to discover the development of an article and the surrounding editors' discussions. He used the article on Prince George of Cambridge as a timely and entertaining example, much to the delight of the captivated audience.

Maximilian Klein enthuses about Prince George of Cambridge

Max also talked about Wikipedia's Five Pillars and ended his presentation with the thought-provoking Zeroth Law of Wikipedia: "The problem with Wikipedia is that it only works in practice. In theory, it can never work." Worth pondering upon!

Next, Singapore Management University's Assistant Professor of Law, Dr. Jack Tsen-Ta Lee discussed managing the SMU Constitutional and Administrative Law Wikipedia Project. He shared with participants the logistics of running the project and well as the challenges that he faced, such as running out of topics to assign students!

Read more about his experience in the Wikimedia Education Portal's newsletter.

After the presentations, both Max and Jack led a hands-on session where participants worked in small groups to edit articles in sandboxes – "preparation areas" for unpublished articles. Attendees used the newly-introduced Visual Editor that allows editors to make changes directly in a What-You-See-Is-What-You-Get (WYSIWYG) interface instead of a text editor that uses wiki markup language. Most participants, being new to Wikipedia editing, appreciated this new feature as there was no new code to be learnt.

Dr Jack Tsen-Ta Lee

During the session, participants tried out basics of editing such as inserting links to other articles, creating references, and uploading media content with metadata to Wikimedia Commons. Being a law professor, Jack also mentioned copyright and Creative Commons licenses with respect to contributions to Wikipedia and Wikimedia Commons.

All participants took away useful knowledge, either as beginner editors of Wikipedia, as librarians recognizing the role of Wikipedia in information literacy and research, or as educators who may be inspired to adopt a new tool in the classroom. My parting thought from the workshop: students – and most of us – are using Wikipedia almost every day. Rather than viewing Wikipedia as an unreliable source, why not harness its full potential and create more learning opportunities with this powerful resource?

The crowds get demystified

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This entry was posted in Asia Pacific, Information literacy and tagged Jack Tsen-Ta Lee, Li Ka Shing Library, Low Jiaxin, Maximilian Klein, SMU, Wikipedia on October 10, 2013 [http://librarylearningspace.com/demystifying-wikipedia-at-smu/] .

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