
Statement of the rector of CU on the 'Students write Wikipedia' project

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The key mission of Charles University is the development and propagation of knowledge and education. The University can find the purpose of its existence laid out in the famous text, dear to the university, of Charles' deed of foundation, which states that those who "hunger for the fruits of knowledge" shall, in the university, find a "table laid out for their pleasure". The University has utilised appropriate means to meet this obligation over the centuries of its existence, and must continue to do so into the present day, at a time of unheard-of developments in technologies for the transfer, sharing, searching and dissemination of knowledge.



Every student of not only universities, but also secondary and, more often than not, primary schools, as well as their teachers, knows very well what an important position has been assumed in this space by Wikipedia in the few years of its existence. The value of this resource, however, is fundamentally dependent on the quality of articles provided by individual contributors. The need for complete, complex articles, based on and referring back to primary sources, is a logical area of interest for university students, who must learn how to work systematically and critically with facts in precisely this manner.

I am therefore very happy that many of my colleagues have become involved in the 'Students write Wikipedia' project and that they are helping to build a tool for the propagation of knowledge, while at the same time developing their own intellectual capacity. Amongst other things, it increases awareness that, for all its usefulness, it is necessary to treat Wikipedia (and other similar tools) critically and with the knowledge that it is not infallible. This highly appropriate, useful activity has my unequivocal support. I would like to encourage all those who, in the course of their pedagogical activities or studies, or in their free time, contribute to Wikipedia. I would recommend that all pedagogues at the University consider whether involvement in the 'Students write Wikipedia' project would not be a suitable way of supporting their educational goals.

The results of students' labours should not be hidden away in drawers. The goal of the whole academic community – naturally including all students – is foster the education of society. Wikipedia is one of the means of achieving this goal. In relation to this I would also like to thank the volunteers from the Wikimedia Česká republika civic association, who are unstinting in their cooperation with universities in the Czech Republic.