



Community, Consensus, Coercion, Control

*CS*W or How Policy Mediates Mass Participation*

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University of Washington

Information Dynamics Lab
Hewlett-Packard Labs

The many C's of CSCW



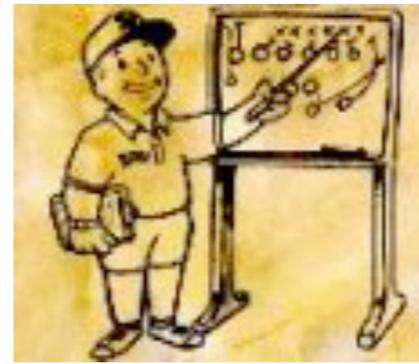
- Computer Supported Cooperative Work
 - Does “cooperative” always mean convivial?
- Work relations are multi-valent and comprise different social patterns of interaction (Kling, 1991)
 - Coordinated, competitive, coercive, combative, committed...

The many C's of CSCW



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The many C's of CSCW



images from the game *Fallout 2*

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* Kling, R. (1991). Cooperation, Coordination and Control in Computer-Supported Work. *Communications of the ACM*, 34 (12). pp.83-88.

Consensus in mass collaboration



- Mass participatory collaborations with high-stakes
 - one decision-making model is **consensus-based**
- We study Wikipedia as an example...
 - High stakes: widely used as a source of knowledge, if not truth
 - English version started in January 2001
 - ▶ 2,000,000+ articles
 - ▶ 700,000+ registered users
 - ▶ 1000+ administrators

Wikipedia: Control



- As the corpus and number of contributors increases...
 - How does the community protect itself from malicious activity?
 - How is content judged to be legitimate?
 - How is consensus achieved amongst the diversity of views and opinions?
- Technical
 - *Reverting revisions, locking pages, banning users*
- Normative
 - Socialization - “how we do it here”
 - Elaborate **policy environment**

Policy environment



- The **policy environment**...
 - Bounds legitimate activity and content
 - Referenced, rewritten
 - Violators may be subject to sanction (banning, blocking, etc.)
- Current hierarchical organization:
 - ~40 **official policies** (content, behavioral, enforcement, deletion, legal)
 - Hundreds of less strict **guidelines**
 - Numerous **informal essays** by community members

Research overview



- We examine the enactment of policy in Wikipedian discourse to ask...
 - How does the policy environment mediate the multi-valent nature of collaborative work?
 - How is consensus forged on discussion pages?
- How does wiki technology support consensus-seeking?

Outline

- Problem motivation
- **Anatomy of Wikipedia**
 - main page, article page, talk page, policy page ...
- Methodology
 - Sample and analyze active discussions
- Findings
 - Grounded example
- Implications



Anatomy: article pages



WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

navigation

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- [Current events](#)
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interaction

- [About Wikipedia](#)
- [Community portal](#)
- [Recent changes](#)
- [Contact Wikipedia](#)
- [Donate to Wikipedia](#)
- [Help](#)

search

toolbox

- [What links here](#)
- [Related changes](#)
- [Upload file](#)
- [Special pages](#)
- [Printable version](#)
- [Permanent link](#)
- [Cite this article](#)

[Leafman](#) [my talk](#) [my preferences](#) [my watchlist](#) [my contributions](#) [log out](#)

[article](#) [discussion](#) [edit this page](#) [history](#) [watch](#)

9,924 people have donated [\[Show more\]](#)

Jimmy Wales

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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Contents [\[hide\]](#)

- 1 Personal life
- 2 Education
- 3 Career
 - 3.1 Wikipedia and Wikimedia Foundation
 - 3.2 Wikia
 - 3.3 Media appearances and honors
- 4 Issues and Controversy
 - 4.1 Bomis
 - 4.2 Wikipedia biography
 - 4.3 Birthdate
- 5 Personal philosophy
- 6 Published work
- 7 References
- 8 External links
 - 8.1 Audio/video

Personal life

[\[edit\]](#)

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Anatomy: article pages



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article discussion **edit this page** history watch

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Anatomy: article pages

The screenshot shows the Wikipedia article page for Jimmy Wales, specifically the revision history section. The page layout includes a top navigation bar with links like 'article', 'discussion', 'edit this page', 'history', and 'watch'. Below this is a progress bar indicating that 9,925 people have donated. The main heading is 'Revision history of Jimmy Wales', followed by a sub-heading 'From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia'. The revision history table lists various edits with columns for 'timestamp', 'who', and 'comment'. Annotations with green arrows point to these columns: 'timestamp' points to the date and time, 'who' points to the username, and 'comment' points to the edit summary. The table includes a 'Compare selected versions' button and a list of revisions with their respective details.

	timestamp	who	comment
<input type="checkbox"/>	(cur) (last) 21:49, 30 October 2007	Jossi (Talk contribs)	m (36,148 bytes) (Reverted edits by Vondort (talk) to last version by Kathleen.wright5) (undo)
<input type="checkbox"/>	(cur) (last) 21:48, 30 October 2007	Vondort (Talk contribs)	(→Education) (undo)
<input type="checkbox"/>	(cur) (last) 21:48, 30 October 2007	Vondort (Talk contribs)	(→Personal life) (undo)
<input type="checkbox"/>	(cur) (last) 03:12, 30 October 2007	Kathleen.wright5 (Talk contribs)	m (36,148 bytes) (→Wikipedia and Wikimedia Foundation) (undo)
<input type="checkbox"/>	(cur) (last) 00:52, 29 October 2007	A.Z. (Talk contribs)	m (36,151 bytes) (Undid revision 167745491 by Shaggman47 (talk)) (undo)
<input type="checkbox"/>	(cur) (last) 00:51, 29 October 2007	Shaggman47 (Talk contribs)	(35,315 bytes) (→Personal life) (undo)
<input type="checkbox"/>	(cur) (last) 22:03, 28 October 2007	AlleborgoBot (Talk contribs)	m (36,151 bytes) (robot Adding: tg:Чимбо Вейлс) (undo)
<input type="checkbox"/>	(cur) (last) 17:22, 28 October 2007	Jhurlburt (Talk contribs)	(36,122 bytes) (→External links - Trimming excessive external links as per Wikipedia guidelines WP:EL.) (undo)
<input type="checkbox"/>	(cur) (last) 06:02, 27 October 2007	LaraLove (Talk contribs)	m (38,353 bytes) (→Wikipedia biography - Oops. Removing double closing parenthesis.) (undo)
<input type="checkbox"/>	(cur) (last) 06:01, 27 October 2007	LaraLove (Talk contribs)	(38,354 bytes) (→Wikipedia biography - Quotations per

Anatomy: article pages

Leafman my talk my preferences my watchlist my contributions log out

article **discussion** edit this page history watch

9,924 people have donated [\[Show more\]](#)

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Anatomy: talk pages



The screenshot shows the Wikipedia article for Jimmy Wales. At the top, there is a navigation bar with tabs for 'article', 'discussion', 'edit this page', 'history', and 'watch'. The 'discussion' tab is highlighted with a yellow circle. Below the navigation bar, there is a green progress bar indicating that 9,924 people have donated, with a link to '[Show more]'. The article title is 'Jimmy Wales', and it is described as 'From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia'. The main text of the article begins with 'Jimmy Donal "Jimbo" Wales (born 7 August 1966^[2] in Huntsville, Alabama^{[3][4]}) is an American Internet entrepreneur known for his role in founding Wikipedia^{[5][6][7]} and other wiki-related projects, including the charitable Wikimedia Foundation and the for-profit company Wikia, Inc.^[8]'. Below the main text is a 'Contents' section with a '[hide]' link, listing various sections of the article: 1 Personal life, 2 Education, 3 Career (with sub-sections 3.1 Wikipedia and Wikimedia Foundation, 3.2 Wikia, and 3.3 Media appearances and honors), 4 Issues and Controversy (with sub-sections 4.1 Bomis, 4.2 Wikipedia biography, and 4.3 Birthdate), 5 Personal philosophy, 6 Published work, 7 References, and 8 External links (with sub-section 8.1 Audio/video). To the right of the main text is a portrait of Jimmy Wales, a man with a beard wearing a red shirt, with the caption 'Jimmy Donal "Jimbo" Wales'. Below the portrait is a biographical information table with the following entries: 'Born August 7, 1966 (age 41) Huntsville, Alabama, U.S.', 'Occupation President of Wikia, Inc.; Board member and Chair Emeritus of the Wikimedia Foundation', and 'Spouse Christine^[1]'. On the left side of the page, there is a sidebar with navigation links (Main page, Contents, Featured content, Current events, Random article), interaction links (About Wikipedia, Community portal, Recent changes, Contact Wikipedia, Donate to Wikipedia, Help), a search box with 'Go' and 'Search' buttons, and a toolbox with links like 'What links here', 'Related changes', 'Upload file', 'Special pages', 'Printable version', 'Permanent link', and 'Cite this article'.

Anatomy: talk pages

The screenshot shows the Wikipedia interface for the talk page of Jimmy Wales. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'article', 'discussion', 'edit this page', 'history', 'move', and 'watch'. Below this, a green bar indicates that 9,927 people have donated, with a '[Show more]' link. The main title is 'Talk:Jimmy Wales' with the subtitle 'From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia'. A green arrow points to a yellow box containing the text '↓ Skip to table of contents ↓'. Below this, another yellow box contains a pencil icon and the text: 'Jimmy Wales has had a peer review by Wikipedia editors which is now archived. It may contain ideas you can use to improve this article.' A third yellow box contains a clipboard icon and the text: 'This page was previously nominated for deletion. Please see prior discussions before considering re-nomination:'. Below this, a fourth yellow box contains an information icon and the text: 'If you need to contact Jimbo about something, please do so at User talk:Jimbo Wales, not here. As Jimbo explains... "People who are trying to leave messages for me will likely be more satisfied if they leave messages on my user talk page than if they leave them here. This is the talk page for the article about me, not a place to talk to me. I rarely read this. --Jimbo Wales 06:05, 23 August 2005 (UTC)"'. A fifth yellow box at the bottom contains the text: 'This is the talk page for discussing improvements to the Jimmy Wales article. This is not a forum for general discussion about the article's subject.' The left sidebar contains navigation links, a search box, and a toolbox.

Leafman my talk my preferences my watchlist my contributions log out

article discussion edit this page + history move watch

9,927 people have donated [Show more]

Talk:Jimmy Wales

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

User-added template

↓ Skip to table of contents ↓

Jimmy Wales has had a [peer review](#) by Wikipedia editors which is now **archived**. It may contain ideas you can use to improve this article.

This page was previously nominated for deletion.
Please see prior discussions before considering re-nomination:

- **Speedy Keep**, 2007-08-31, see [discussion](#).
- **Speedy Keep**, 2007-08-14, see [discussion](#).
- **Keep**, 2005-05-31, see [discussion](#).

If you need to contact Jimbo about something, please do so at [User talk:Jimbo Wales](#), not here. As Jimbo explains...

"People who are trying to leave messages for me will likely be more satisfied if they leave messages on my [user talk page](#) than if they leave them here. This is the talk page for the article about me, not a place to talk to me. I rarely read this. --[Jimbo Wales](#) 06:05, 23 August 2005 (UTC)"

This is the [talk page](#) for discussing improvements to the [Jimmy Wales](#) article.
This is not a forum for general discussion about the article's subject.

Please sign and date your posts by typing four tildes

Article policies

Anatomy: talk pages

The image shows a screenshot of a Wikipedia talk page. The page title is "Talk:Jimmy Wales". The interface includes a top navigation bar with links like "Leafman", "my talk", "my preferences", "my watchlist", "my contributions", and "log out". Below this is a secondary navigation bar with "article", "discussion", "edit this page", "history", "move", and "watch". A progress bar indicates "9,927 people have donated". The main content area contains several messages from users, including Tualha, QuackGuru, greg park avenue, and Jimbo Wales. Two yellow ovals highlight specific text: "First sentence in the education section" and "Birthdate". On the left side, there are two orange text annotations: "conversation threads" and "manual threading". The left sidebar contains navigation, interaction, and search sections.

WIKIPE
The Free Ency

navigation

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- Conten
- Featured co
- Current ever
- Random arti

interaction

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search

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toolbox

- What links h
- Related cha
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- Special pag
- Printable ve
- Permanent l

Leafman my talk my preferences my watchlist my contributions log out

article discussion edit this page + history move watch

9,927 people have donated [Show more]

Talk:Jimmy Wales

explain the change and its purpose.
Tualha (Talk) 19:38, 13 July 2007 (UTC)

I will use a more relevant quote. Thanks for your concern. Please review. [QuackGuru talk](#) 20:05, 13 July 2007 (UTC)

That one will do, though it can be trimmed. Thanks. [Tualha \(Talk\)](#) 21:17, 13 July 2007 (UTC)

First sentence in the education section [edit]

That part I fixed yesterday in the education section is logically inconsistent. It reads like the school was donating the software to itself. It's not Jimbo's user page so I have right to fix it, right? Why has it been undone then? [greg park avenue](#) 13:23, 23 July 2007 (UTC)

Birthdate [edit]

I just blogged about this [↗](#).--[Jimbo Wales](#) 09:34, 8 August 2007 (UTC)

Supposedly, he was born on the 8th, and *Britannica* also thinks its the 7th. See [this blog entry](#) [↗](#) from *The Oregonian* newspaper. Also see [the previous, related blog entry](#) [↗](#) about an interview with him, [Ward Cunningham](#) and the newspaper, as well as a print article, [Open-source thinking](#) [↗](#). [Jason McHuff](#) 22:49, 27 July 2007 (UTC)

It looks like a reporter from a major newspaper has reported on a public records search, confirming what I have been saying for a long time. According to my birth certificate, August 7th is not my birthdate. Perhaps someday I will produce a note from my mom for another reporter. And perhaps I will just continue to have a bit of fun with this. :)--[Jimbo Wales](#) 09:12, 8 August 2007 (UTC)

[Mr. Wales](#) has stated that his birthday is Aug. 7th, 1966. Links to these admissions can be found [here](#) [↗](#) and [here](#) [↗](#). Also, both *Current Biography* and *Who's Who is America* list his birthday as being the 7th. [68.117.211.187](#) 07:21, 28 July 2007 (UTC)

I hope I am not the only one who is amused that this anonymous ip number calls a discussion of my date of birth an "admission". :) Perhaps I shall next confess to having brown hair. --[Jimbo Wales](#) 18:36, 8 August 2007 (UTC)

Thanks for the links. I don't think I saw the archive of this page when I came here. I'm not seeing the first edit you link to in the page history, but the second one does seem somewhat conclusive. Its interesting, because here (at your links) he seems pretty firm that its the 7th, yet the blog post (written by [a reporter](#) [↗](#) for a major metro newspaper, so hopefully a reliable source) really sounds like he said that its not the 7th. Overall, it does seem that a difference of a day isn't much to worry about. [Jason McHuff](#)

Anatomy: talk pages

It might also be worth noting that on [August 7](#) **we** list August 7 as his birthday. If this is incorrect, I think we look really, really stupid here. [John Carter](#) 20:34, 7 August 2007 (UTC)

Wikipedia isn't about truth, it's about providing [verifiable](#) information from [reliable, published sources](#). I really don't think it's something to worry about. [68.117.211.187](#) 21:40, 7 August 2007 (UTC)

His DOB is on August 8 according to Jimmy. Agreed? [Mr.Guru talk](#) 22:46, 7 August 2007 (UTC)

No. Sadly, Mr. Wales cannot be used as a reliable source since his statements about his DOB have been inconsistent. As previously mentioned only verifiable information from reliable, published sources can be used on Wikipedia. Even if that was not the case I can find no records where Mr. Wales has said that his birthday was on August 8th. If you can reference a source for that fact, which meets Wikipedia's guidelines, please do so. Till then I feel that we must continue to rely on the previously mentioned sources and keep his DOB as is. [Jhurlburt](#) 03:56, 8 August 2007 (UTC)

Yes! Happily, Jimbo can be used as a reliable source per [WP:SELPUB](#) policy. Cheers. [Mr.Guru talk](#) 05:12, 8 August 2007 (UTC)

You have failed to provide a source where Mr. Wales makes this claim. We can't just take your word for it. [Jhurlburt](#) 05:29, 8 August 2007 (UTC)

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un-linked policy references

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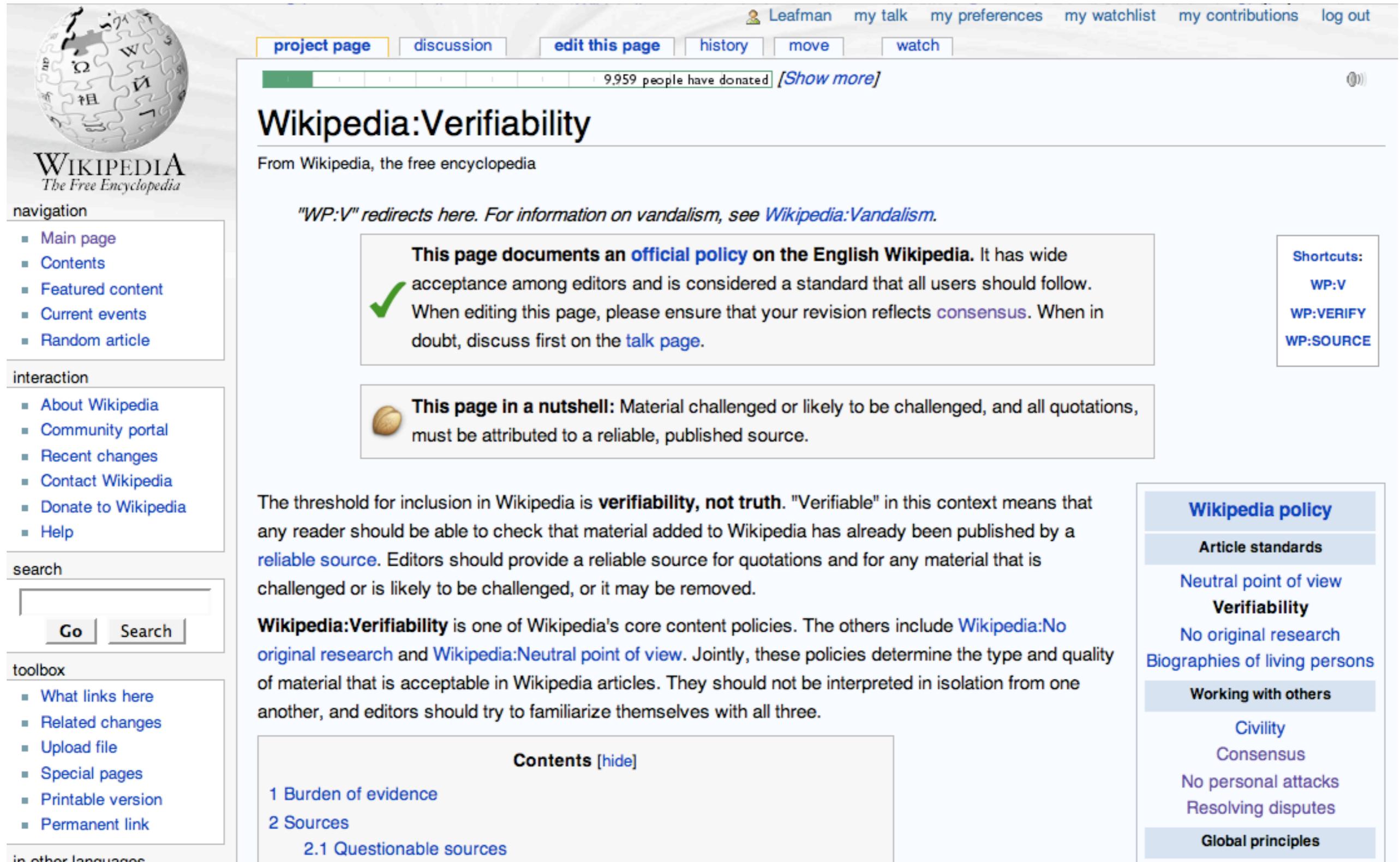
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Anatomy: policy pages



The screenshot shows the Wikipedia:Verifiability page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'project page', 'discussion', 'edit this page', 'history', 'move', and 'watch'. Below this, a green progress bar indicates that 9,959 people have donated, with a '[Show more]' link. The main heading is 'Wikipedia:Verifiability', followed by the subtext 'From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia'. A note states: '"WP:V" redirects here. For information on vandalism, see Wikipedia:Vandalism.' Below this, there are two callout boxes. The first, marked with a green checkmark, states: 'This page documents an official policy on the English Wikipedia. It has wide acceptance among editors and is considered a standard that all users should follow. When editing this page, please ensure that your revision reflects consensus. When in doubt, discuss first on the talk page.' The second, marked with a brown nut icon, states: 'This page in a nutshell: Material challenged or likely to be challenged, and all quotations, must be attributed to a reliable, published source.' To the right of these boxes is a 'Shortcuts:' section with links for 'WP:V', 'WP:VERIFY', and 'WP:SOURCE'. The main body of the page contains a paragraph: 'The threshold for inclusion in Wikipedia is **verifiability, not truth**. "Verifiable" in this context means that any reader should be able to check that material added to Wikipedia has already been published by a **reliable source**. Editors should provide a reliable source for quotations and for any material that is challenged or is likely to be challenged, or it may be removed.' This is followed by another paragraph: '**Wikipedia:Verifiability** is one of Wikipedia's core content policies. The others include [Wikipedia:No original research](#) and [Wikipedia:Neutral point of view](#). Jointly, these policies determine the type and quality of material that is acceptable in Wikipedia articles. They should not be interpreted in isolation from one another, and editors should try to familiarize themselves with all three.' At the bottom, there is a 'Contents [hide]' section with a list of links: '1 Burden of evidence', '2 Sources', and '2.1 Questionable sources'. On the left side of the page, there is a sidebar with a 'WIKIPEDIA The Free Encyclopedia' logo, a 'navigation' section with links to 'Main page', 'Contents', 'Featured content', 'Current events', and 'Random article', an 'interaction' section with links to 'About Wikipedia', 'Community portal', 'Recent changes', 'Contact Wikipedia', 'Donate to Wikipedia', and 'Help', a 'search' box with 'Go' and 'Search' buttons, and a 'toolbox' section with links to 'What links here', 'Related changes', 'Upload file', 'Special pages', 'Printable version', and 'Permanent link'. At the very bottom left, there is a link for 'in other languages'. On the right side, there is a 'Wikipedia policy' sidebar with a list of links: 'Article standards', 'Neutral point of view', 'Verifiability', 'No original research', 'Biographies of living persons', 'Working with others', 'Civility', 'Consensus', 'No personal attacks', 'Resolving disputes', and 'Global principles'.

Anatomy: policy pages

The screenshot shows the Wikipedia:Verifiability page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'project page', 'discussion', 'edit this page', 'history', 'move', and 'watch'. Below this is a green progress bar indicating that 9,959 people have donated. The main heading is 'Wikipedia:Verifiability' with the subtitle 'From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia'. A red note states: '"WP:V" redirects here. For information on vandalism, see Wikipedia:Vandalism.' Below this is a green box containing a green checkmark and the text: 'This page documents an official policy on the English Wikipedia. It has wide acceptance among editors and is considered a standard that all users should follow. When editing this page, please ensure that your revision reflects consensus. When in doubt, discuss first on the talk page.' To the right of this box is a 'Shortcuts' section with links for 'WP:V', 'WP:VERIFY', and 'WP:SOURCE'. Below the green box is a yellow box with a warning icon and the text: 'This page in a nutshell: Material challenged or likely to be challenged, and all quotations, must be attributed to a reliable, published source.' The main body of the page explains that the threshold for inclusion is 'verifiability, not truth' and that material must be published by a 'reliable source'. It also lists other core content policies like 'Wikipedia:No original research' and 'Wikipedia:Neutral point of view'. At the bottom, there is a 'Contents' section with links to '1 Burden of evidence', '2 Sources', and '2.1 Questionable sources'. On the right side, there is a 'Wikipedia policy' sidebar with a list of policies including 'Article standards', 'Neutral point of view', 'Verifiability', 'No original research', 'Biographies of living persons', 'Working with others', 'Civility', 'Consensus', 'No personal attacks', 'Resolving disputes', and 'Global principles'. On the left side, there is a navigation menu with links for 'Main page', 'Contents', 'Featured content', 'Current events', 'Random article', 'About Wikipedia', 'Community portal', 'Recent changes', 'Contact Wikipedia', 'Donate to Wikipedia', and 'Help'. There is also a search box and a toolbox with links for 'What links here', 'Related changes', 'Upload file', 'Special pages', 'Printable version', and 'Permanent link'.

Leafman my talk my preferences my watchlist my contributions log out

project page discussion edit this page history move watch

9,959 people have donated [Show more]

Wikipedia:Verifiability

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

"WP:V" redirects here. For information on vandalism, see Wikipedia:Vandalism.

This page documents an official policy on the English Wikipedia. It has wide acceptance among editors and is considered a standard that all users should follow. When editing this page, please ensure that your revision reflects consensus. When in doubt, discuss first on the talk page.

This page in a nutshell: Material challenged or likely to be challenged, and all quotations, must be attributed to a reliable, published source.

The threshold for inclusion in Wikipedia is **verifiability, not truth**. "Verifiable" in this context means that any reader should be able to check that material added to Wikipedia has already been published by a **reliable source**. Editors should provide a reliable source for quotations and for any material that is challenged or is likely to be challenged, or it may be removed.

Wikipedia:Verifiability is one of Wikipedia's core content policies. The others include [Wikipedia:No original research](#) and [Wikipedia:Neutral point of view](#). Jointly, these policies determine the type and quality of material that is acceptable in Wikipedia articles. They should not be interpreted in isolation from one another, and editors should try to familiarize themselves with all three.

Contents [hide]

- 1 Burden of evidence
- 2 Sources
 - 2.1 Questionable sources

Shortcuts:
WP:V
WP:VERIFY
WP:SOURCE

Wikipedia policy

- Article standards
- Neutral point of view
- Verifiability**
- No original research
- Biographies of living persons
- Working with others
- Civility
- Consensus
- No personal attacks
- Resolving disputes
- Global principles

navigation

- Main page
- Contents
- Featured content
- Current events
- Random article

interaction

- About Wikipedia
- Community portal
- Recent changes
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- Help

search

Go Search

toolbox

- What links here
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in other languages

Anatomy: policy pages

The screenshot shows the Wikipedia:Verifiability page. At the top, there are navigation tabs: [project page](#), [discussion](#), [edit this page](#), [history](#), [move](#), and [watch](#). Below these is a progress bar indicating that 9,959 people have donated, with a [\[Show more\]](#) link. The main heading is **Wikipedia:Verifiability**, with the subtext "From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia".

Below the heading, there is a red text box: *"WP:V" redirects here. For information on vandalism, see Wikipedia:Vandalism.*

The main content area contains two summary boxes. The first box, marked with a green checkmark, states: **This page documents an official policy on the English Wikipedia.** It has wide acceptance among editors and is considered a standard that all users should follow. When editing this page, please ensure that your revision reflects consensus. When in doubt, discuss first on the [talk page](#). This box is annotated with a green arrow pointing to it from the word "Status".

The second box, marked with a brown egg icon, states: **This page in a nutshell:** Material challenged or likely to be challenged, and all quotations, must be attributed to a reliable, published source. This box is annotated with a green arrow pointing to it from the word "Summary".

On the right side, there is a "Shortcuts:" section with links to [WP:V](#), [WP:VERIFY](#), and [WP:SOURCE](#).

At the bottom of the page, there is a "Contents [hide]" section with a table of contents:

- 1 Burden of evidence
- 2 Sources
 - 2.1 Questionable sources

On the right side, there is a "Civility" section with links to [Consensus](#), [No personal attacks](#), [Resolving disputes](#), and [Global principles](#).

Large text overlaid on the bottom half of the page reads: "Material challenged or likely to be challenged, and all quotations, must be attributed to a reliable, published source."

Outline

- Problem motivation
- Anatomy of Wikipedia
 - Main page, article page, talk page, policy page ...
- **Methodology**
 - **Sample and analyze active discussions**
- Findings
 - Grounded example
- Implications



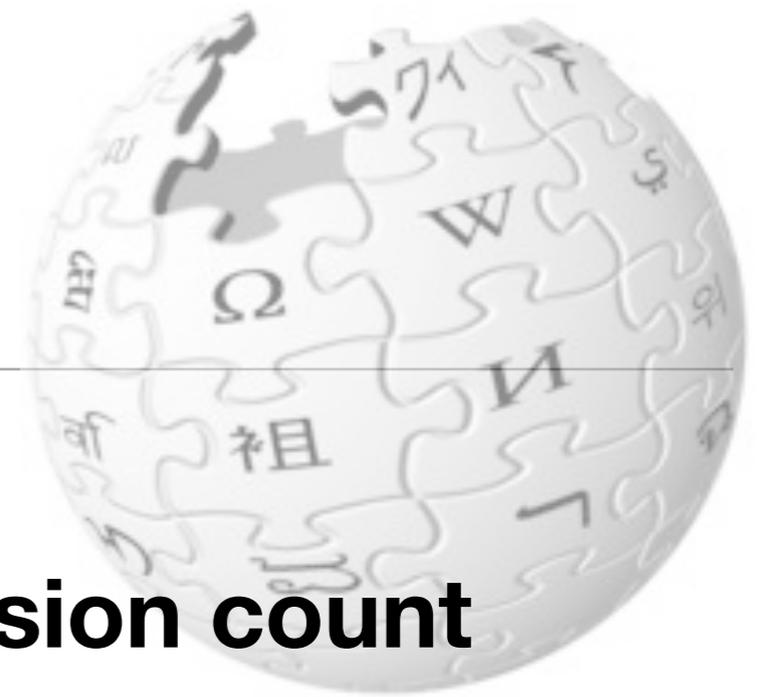
Methodology



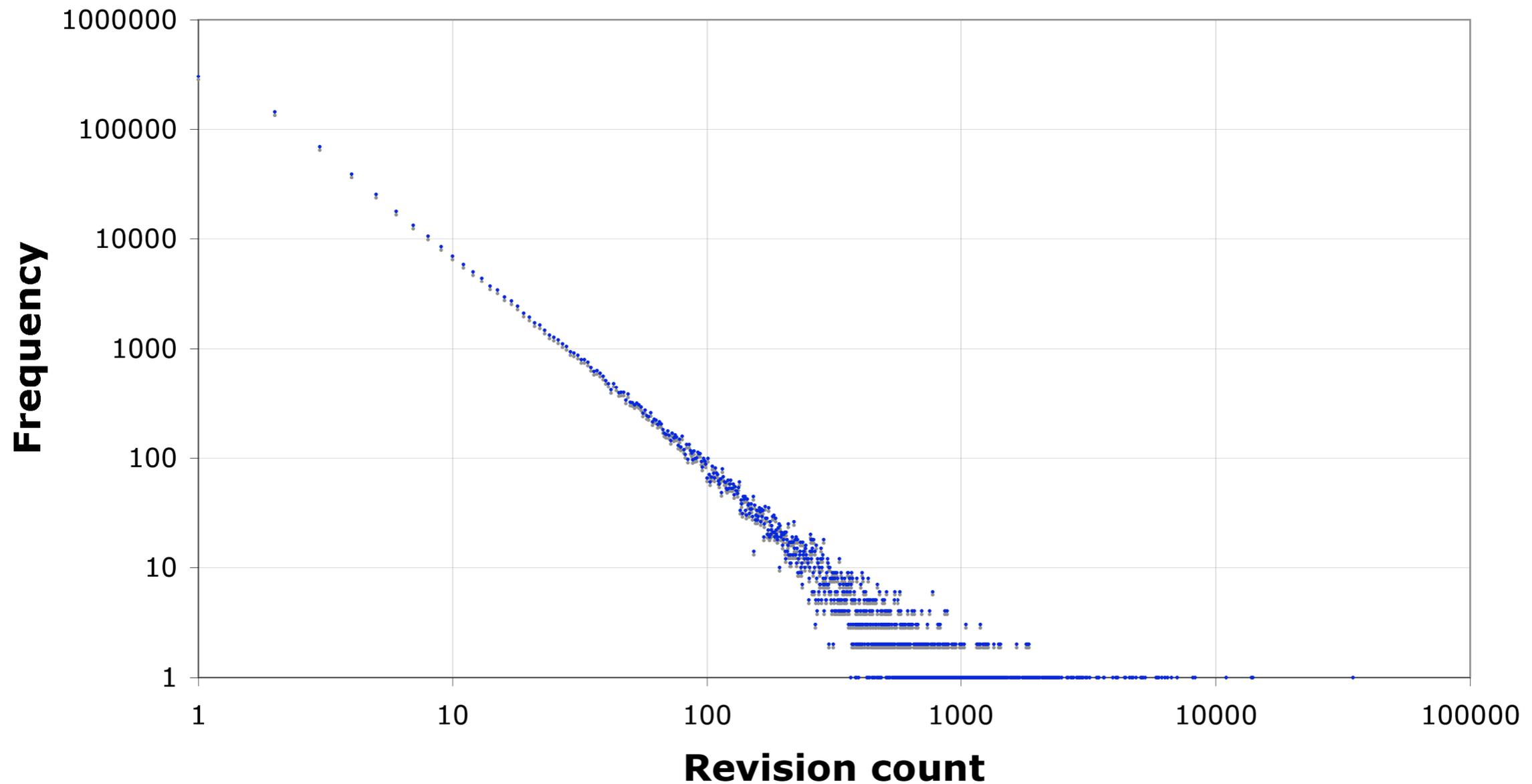
- Use grounded approach to study how multi-valent relations are implicated and handled through the enactment of policy
- Focus on talk pages
 - “all [Wikipedians] stated that talk pages were their primary communication medium”*
 - Too much discussion, need to focus...
 - Sample “critical sections” of very actively discussed pages
 - Mine Wikipedia database dump (November 2006)

* Bryant, Forte, Bruckman (2005) “Becoming Wikipedian: transformation of participation in a collaborative online encyclopedia” GROUP 2005. pp 1-10.

Focus on heavily edited talk pages



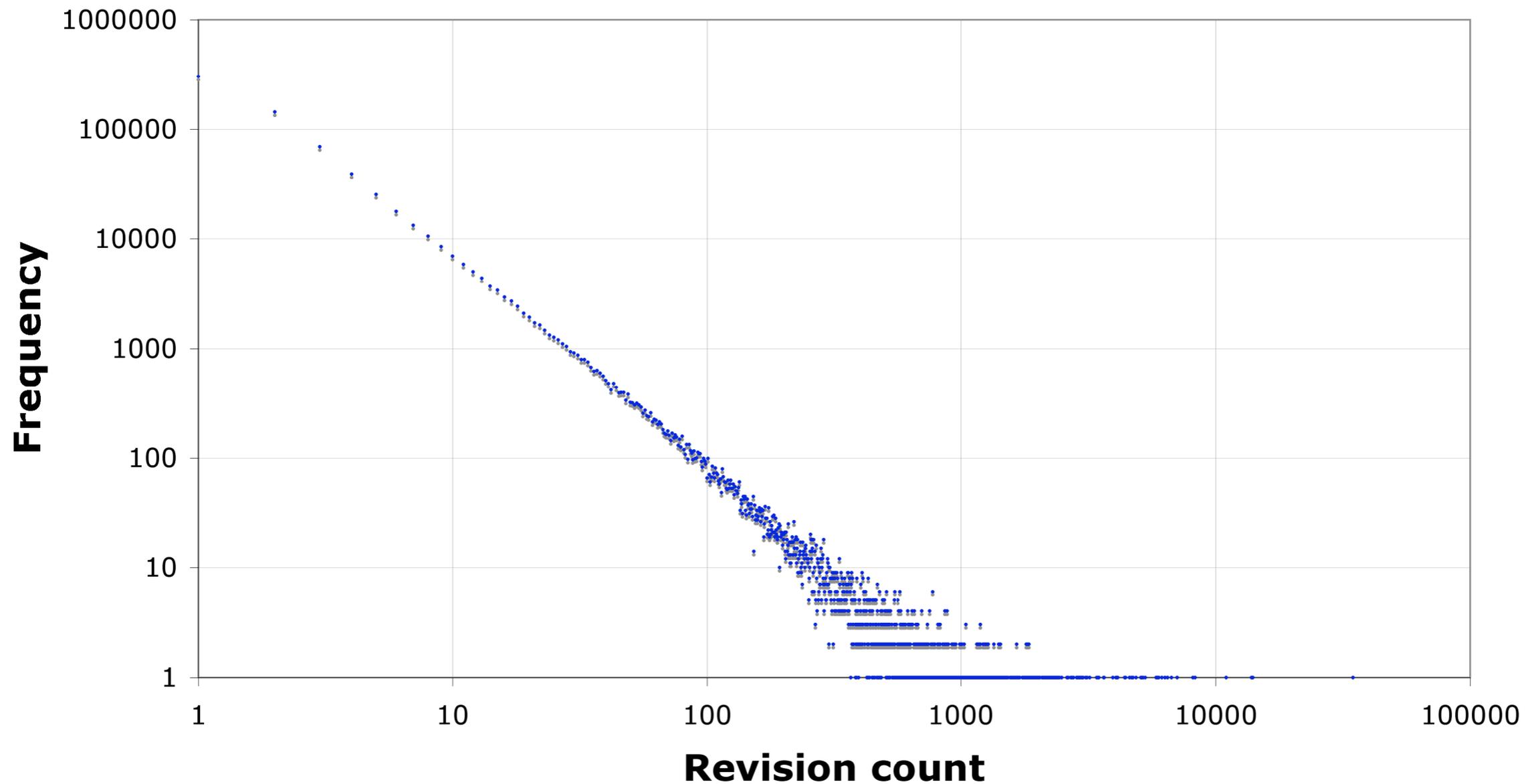
Distribution of talk pages by revision count



Focus on heavily edited talk pages



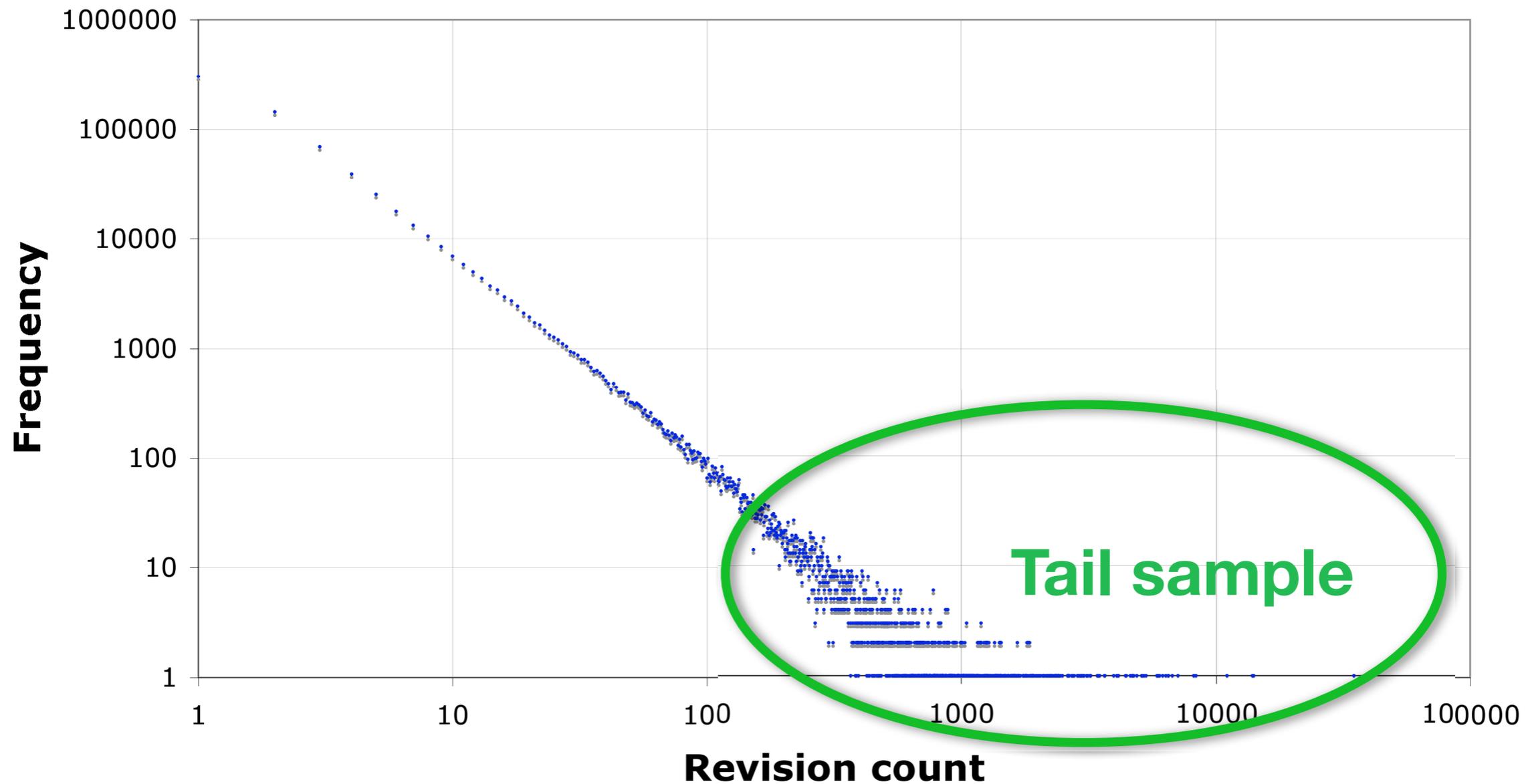
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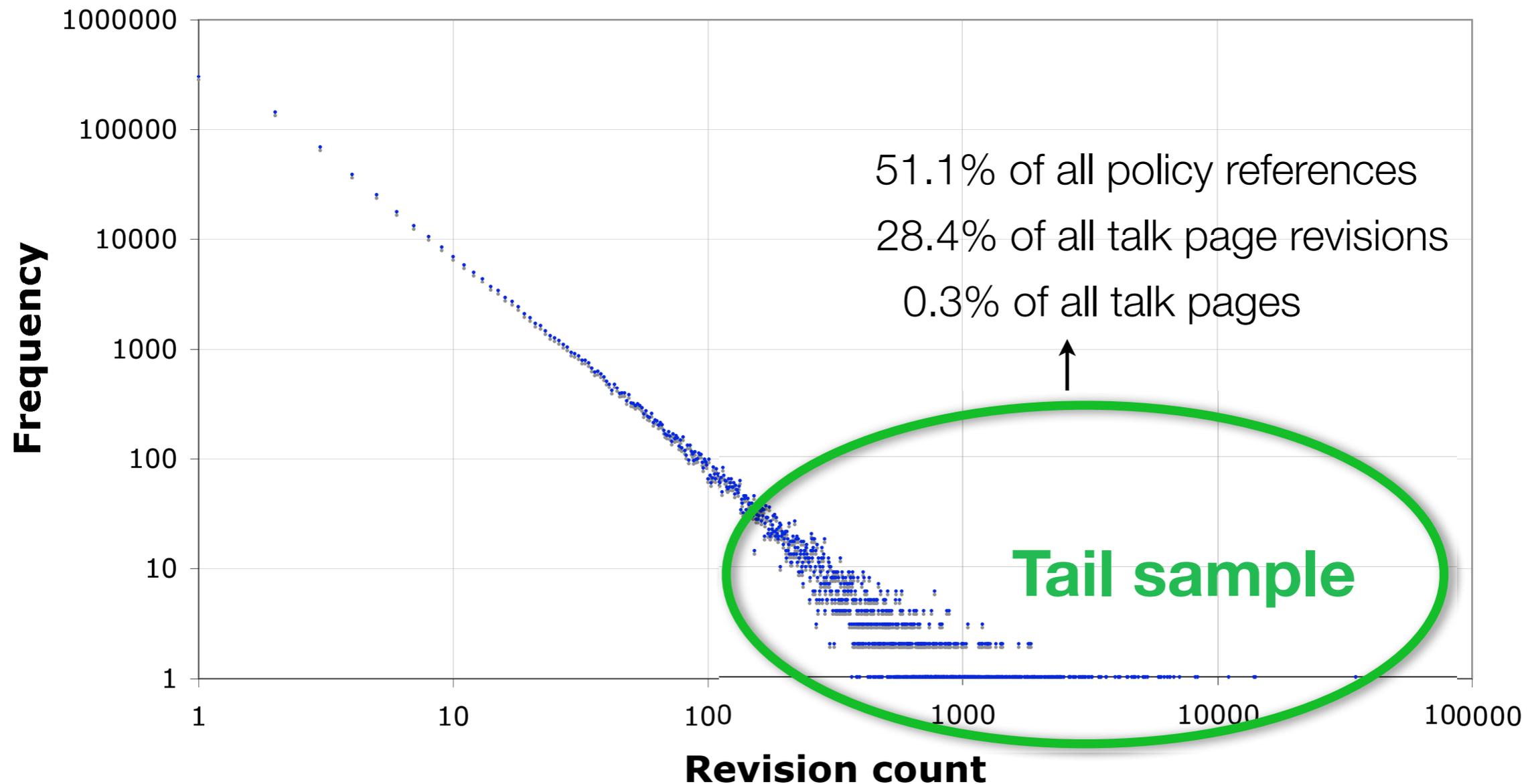
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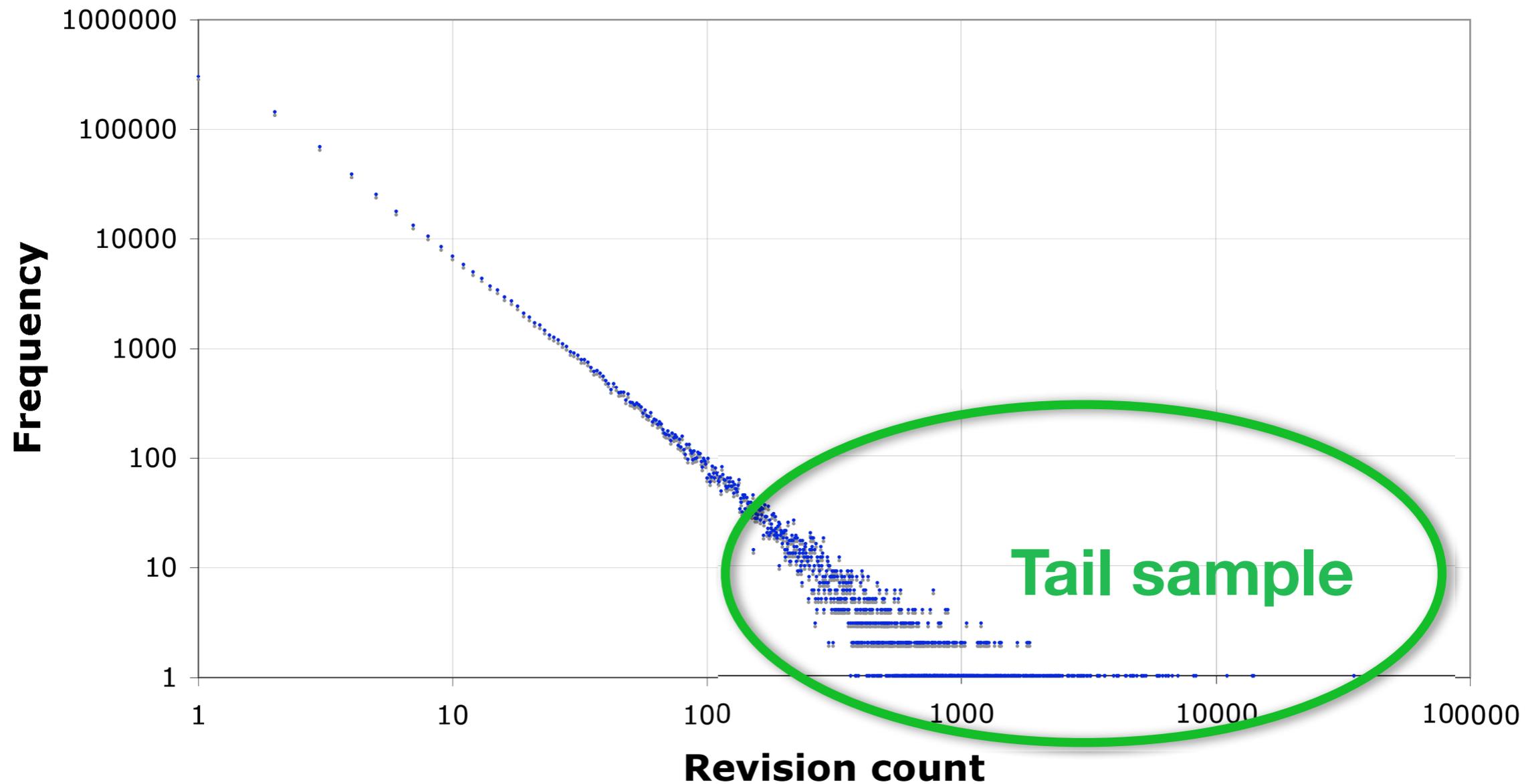
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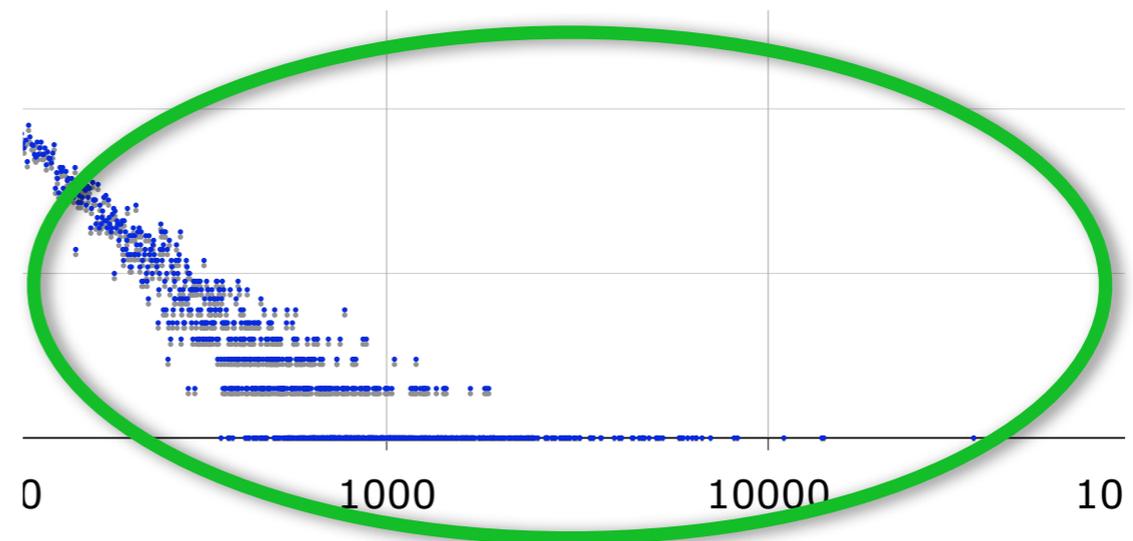


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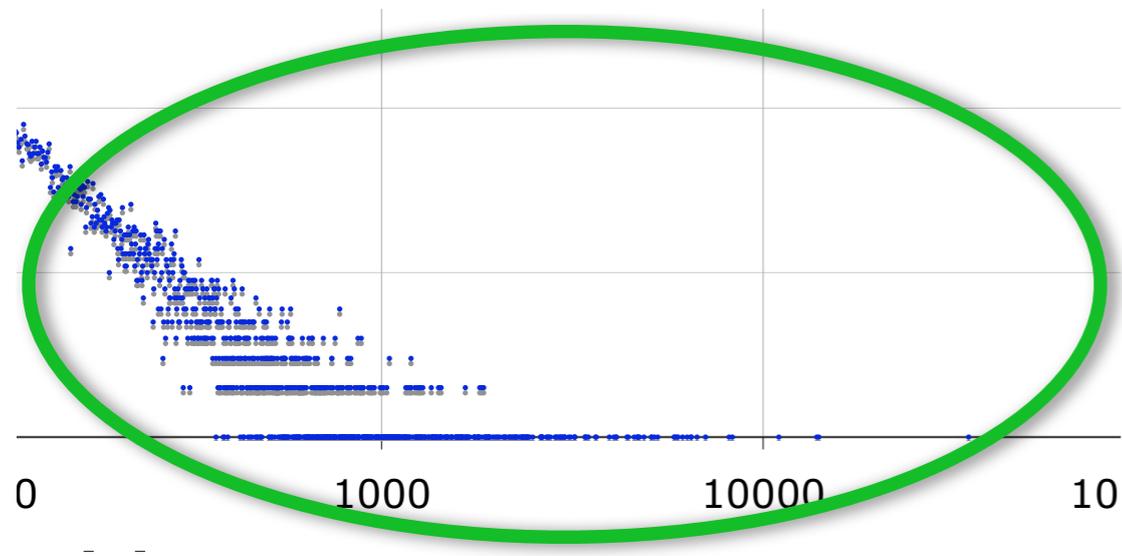
Isolate critical sections

Periods when article and talk editing is significant



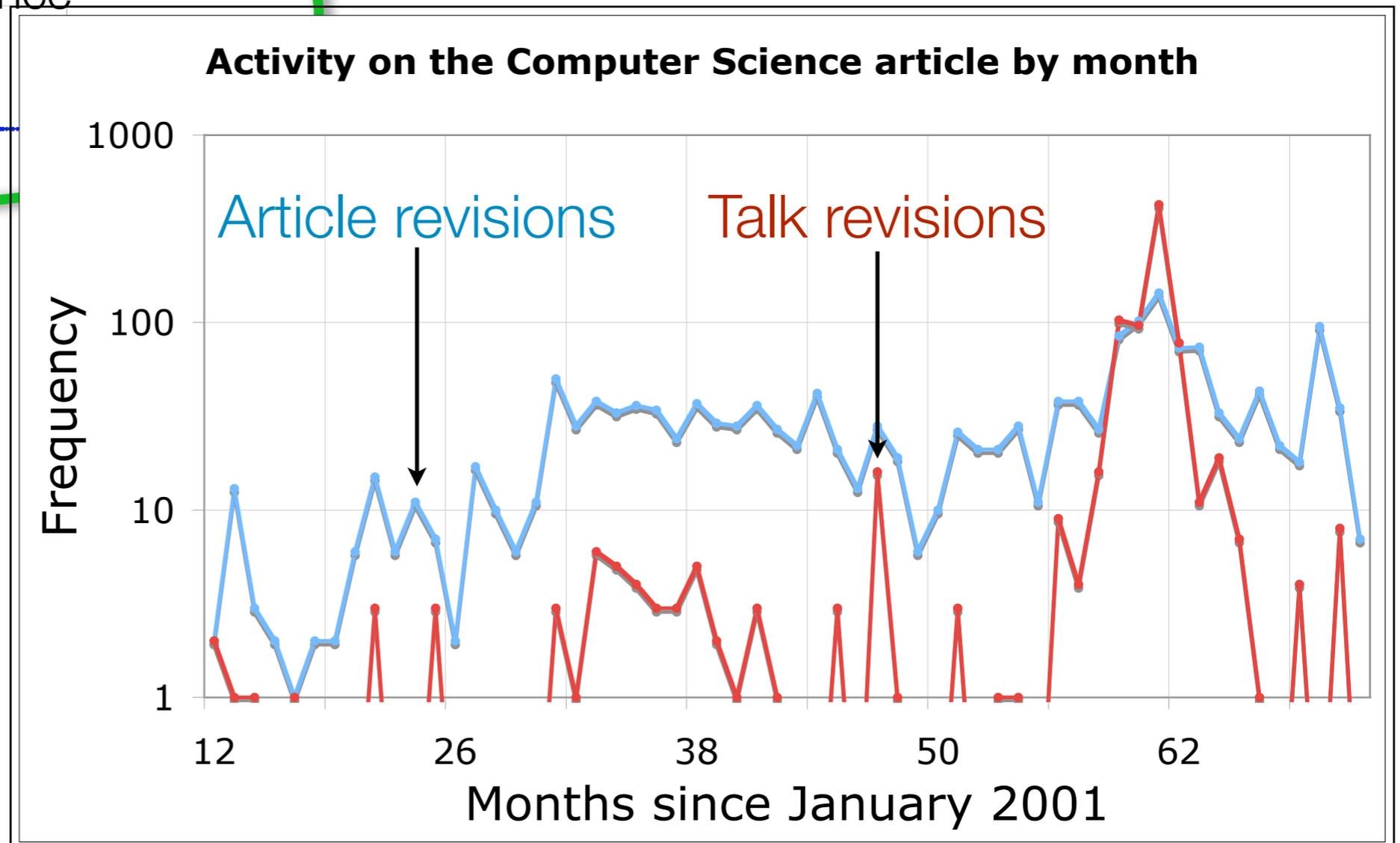
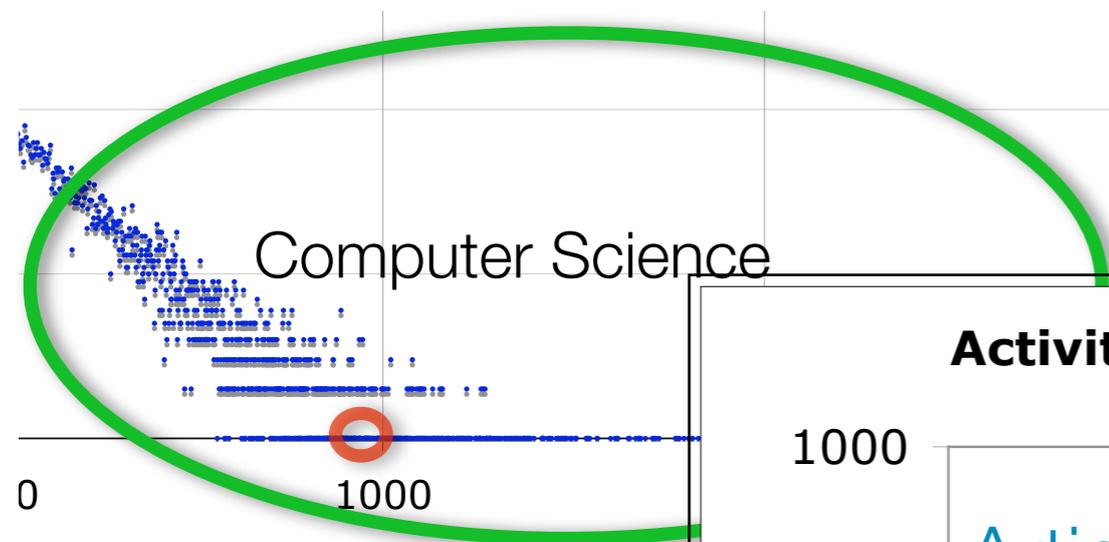
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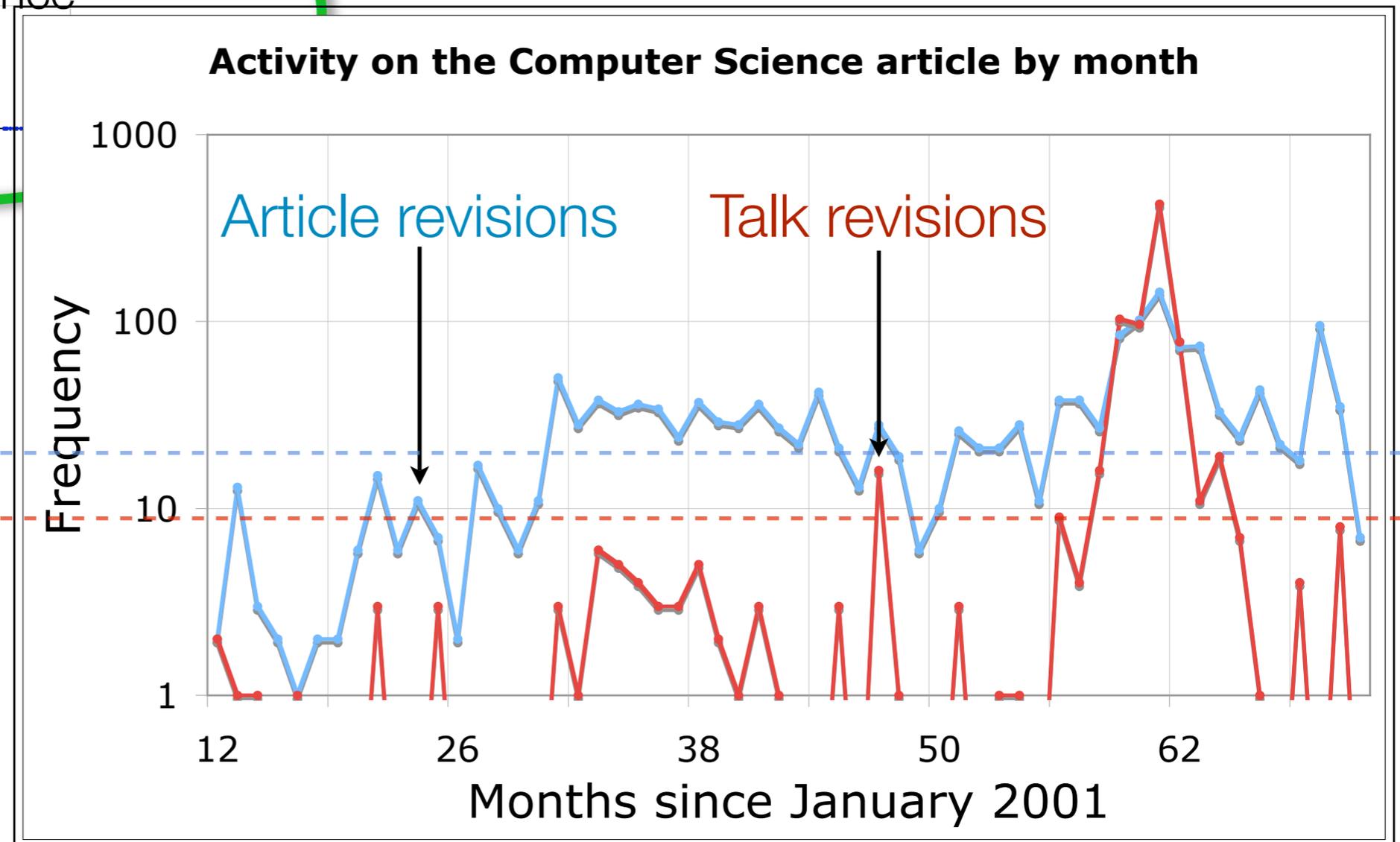
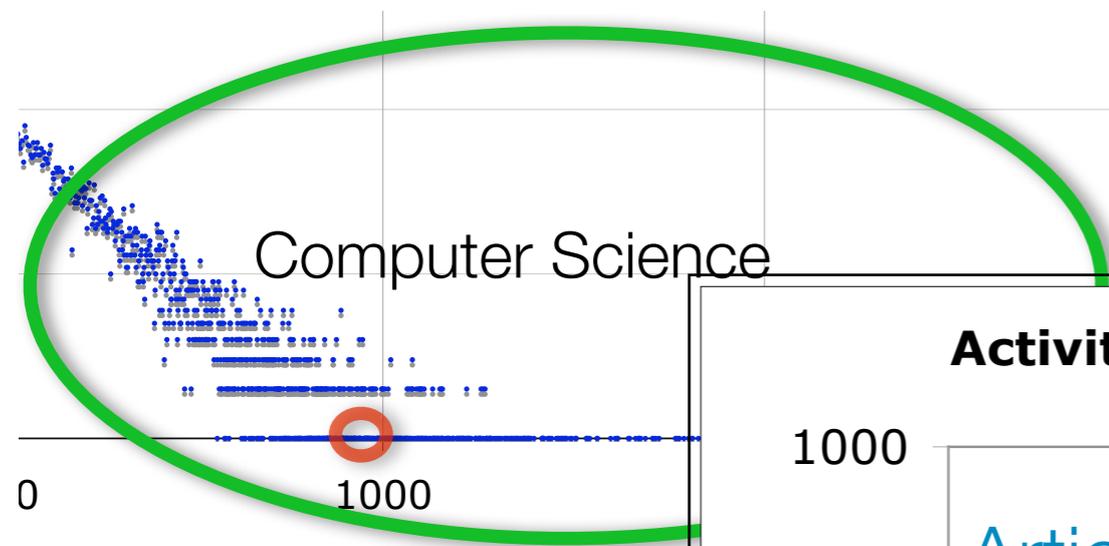
Periods when article and talk editing is significant



Isolate critical sections



Periods when article and talk editing is significant



Months > mean

18, 20-3, 25-6, 28, 31,
43-4, 46-51, 53, 56-7

34, 45-9, 51

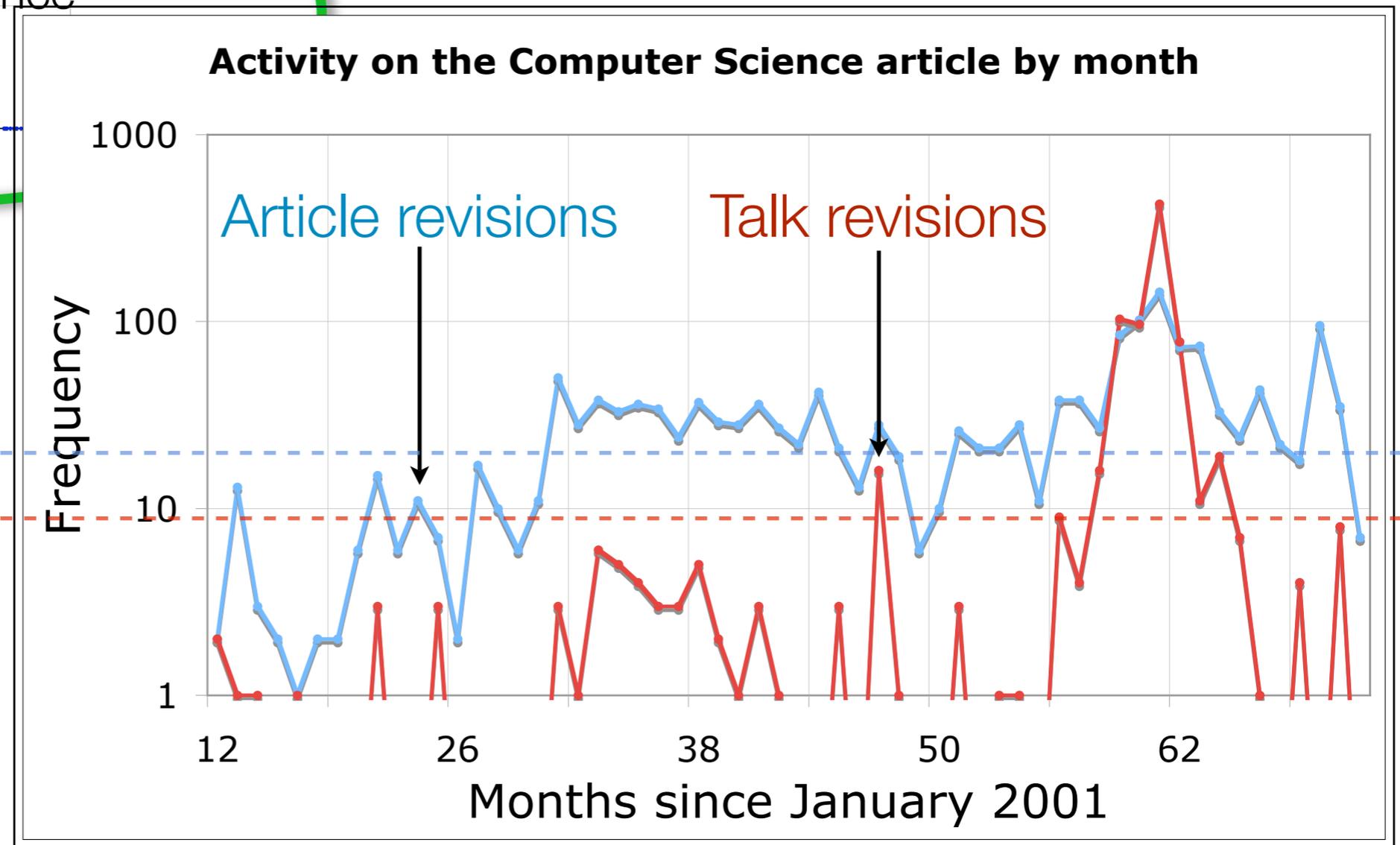
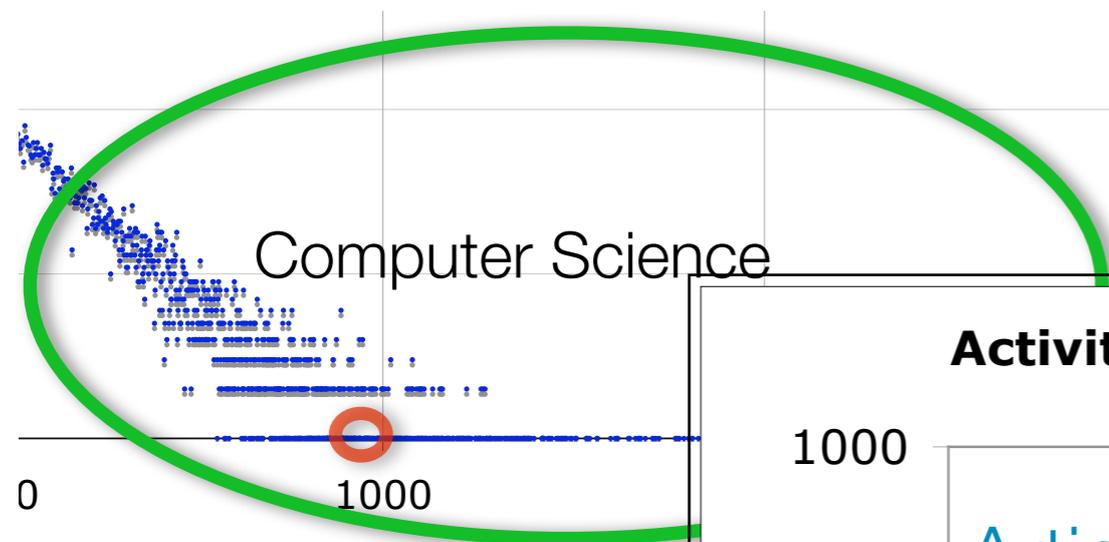
$\mu=28.3$

$\mu=14.8$

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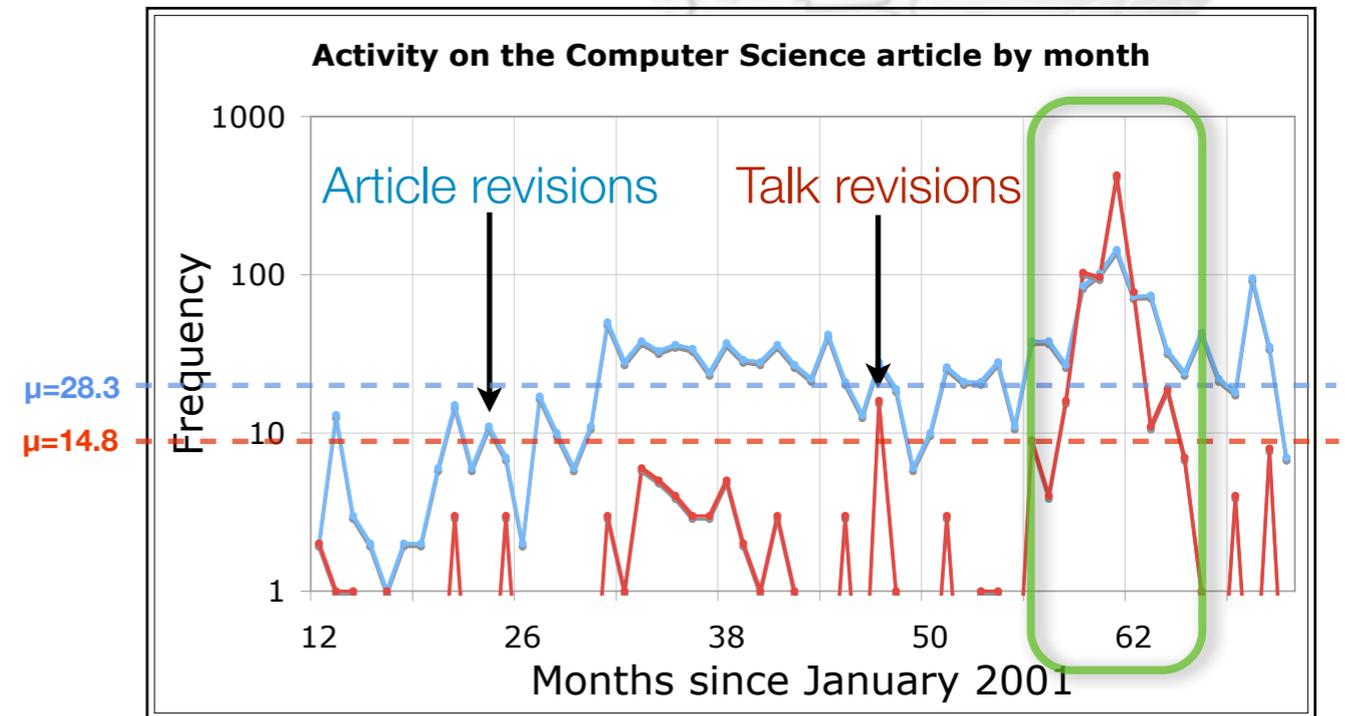
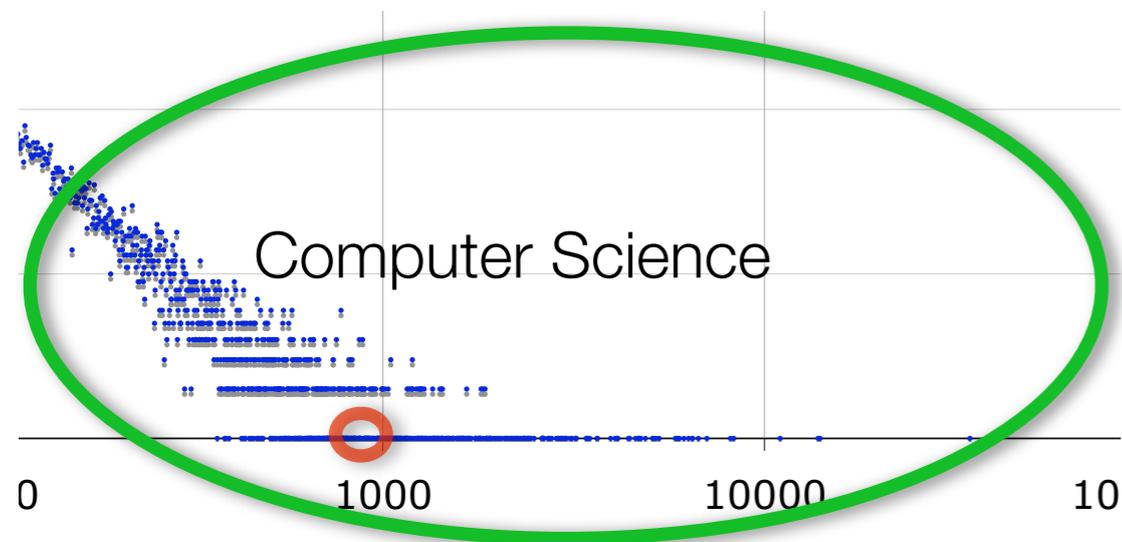


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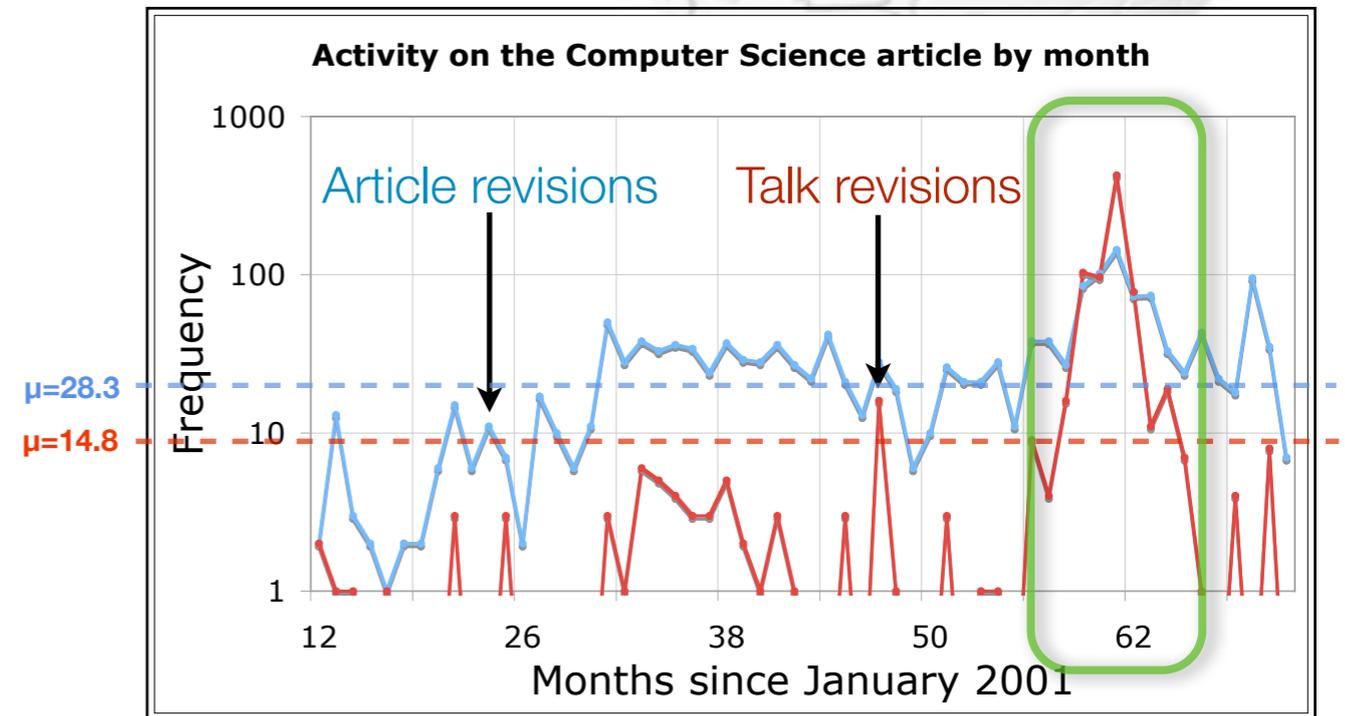
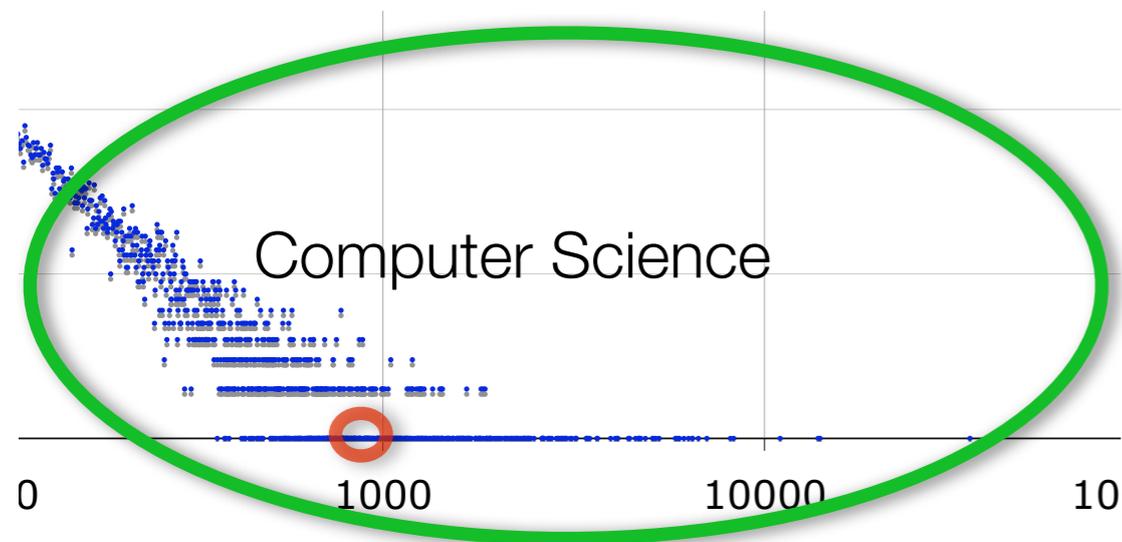
Critical Sections:

46-49

51

Isolate critical sections

Periods when article and talk editing is significant



Months > mean

$$\begin{matrix} 18, 20-3, 25-6, 28, 31, \\ 43-4, 46-51, 53, 56-7 \end{matrix} \cap \begin{matrix} 34, 45-9, 51 \end{matrix} =$$

Critical Sections:
46-49
51

****This is not the *exact* definition of critical section****

Sample critical sections



- Categorize critical sections
 - Natural categories
 - ▶ featured, controversial
 - Synthetic category
 - ▶ policy-laden
- Use stratified sampling to sample 69 critical sections
 - 10-100 pages of printed text each

Analyze critical sections



- Use a grounded approach*
- Perform open coding
 - Carefully read critical sections
 - Identify interesting dynamics
 - Generate rough categories
- Perform axial coding
 - Synthesize categories
 - Understand how categories relate

* Strauss and Corbin (1990). Basics of qualitative research. Sage.

Outline

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Excerpt from debate over article scope (2005)

- Begin with extended example
 - Unpack later
 - Excerpt from an argument on a contentious scientific topic
 - Anonymized the topic
 - Policy links are in **red**

Excerpt from debate over article scope (2005)



Excerpt from debate over article scope (2005)

This page is about paleocentrism as a scientific theory and controversies that this theory has with religion doesn't need 1/3 space in the article. . .[specific changes]...I do not want to do these changes before getting feedback. . .



Aye



Yep



Agreed



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And on it goes...

Findings: Power Plays

- As Wikipedians collaborate, they take actions
 - e.g. edit, revert, ignore another contributor
- **Power play:** Rhetorical strategy an individual makes to claim the legitimacy of an action
- Consensus is often a product of power plays
 - Often enacted point-counterpoint
 - Competing claims to legitimacy



Power plays

Legitimacy of contributor

Traits of contributors are used to bolster or undermine a position

Prior consensus

Decision made in the past is presented as absolute and incontrovertible

Article scope

Central and peripheral content strictly defined

Legitimacy of source

The cited source is discredited

Power of interpretation

One sub-community commands greater authority than another

Threat of sanction

Threatening to use sanctioning mechanisms (e.g. blocking)

Practice on other pages

Content organization on other articles is used to validate or discredit contributions

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presented



Article scope

Legitimacy of source

The cited source is discredited

Power of intent

One sub-community commands greater

Threat

... **EB writes a few select articles about important subjects in great depth; fine. That's not what Wikipedia does.**

The reason why so many people feel that this article should be only about the scientific aspects of paleocentrism is that

Practice

Wikipedia articles are written about a SINGLE SUBJECT. . . You are proposing to mix two VERY DIFFERENT subjects. . . contributions



Power plays

Legitimacy of contributor

Traits of contributors are used to bolster or undermine a position

Prior consensus

Decision made in the past is presented as absolute and incontrovertible

Article scope

Central and peripheral content strictly defined

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The cited source is discredited

Power of interpretation

One sub-community commands greater authority than another

Threat of sanction

Threatening to use sanctioning mechanisms (e.g. blocking)

Practice on other pages

Content organization on other articles is used to validate or discredit contributions

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Findings: how policy mediates mass collaboration



- Policies are **enacted** to interpret and apply to complex situations
 - Common language and strategies for action*
 - Policies justify actions by appealing to authority and precedent
- Policies are **ambiguous**
 - Relevant policy does not necessarily translate into obvious action
 - Policy enactment does not always resolve disputes
 - Contributors must argue for the relevance and saliency of a policy
- Recall use of **wiki is not paper** policy in example
 - *Enactment*: to understand whether social ramifications should be included
 - *Ambiguity*: divergent interpretation of “importance to topic”

* Viegas, Wattenberg, Kriss, van Ham (2007) “Talk before you type: coordination in Wikipedia” HICCS 2007.

Findings: how policy mediates mass collaboration



- Power plays vary in their conformity to the policy environment
 - Within bounds
 - Borderline
 - ▶ our example
 - Outside the bounds
 - ▶ see paper for example

Findings: how policy mediates mass collaboration



 Is the mean ... not considered original research?

 It doesn't look like it to me, it looks like the original research was done by [gov't agency] or am I missing something?

 If the [gov't agency] has not published the actual mean, us "calculating" it would be OR, no? I'm not sure.

 No, why would it be? Extrapolating data from info already available is not OR.

 From **WP:NOR**: "articles may not contain any new analysis or synthesis of published arguments, concepts, data, ideas, or statements that serves to advance a position." For what's worth...

Findings: how policy mediates mass collaboration



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Outline

- Problem motivation
- Anatomy of Wikipedia
 - Main page, article page, talk page, policy page ...
- Methodology
 - Sample and analyze active discussions
- Findings
 - Grounded example
- **Implications**



Implications: design mindset



- Designers must be careful in evaluating organizational overhead posed by consensus-based communities
 - We should avoid repeating the “process loss” framing criticized by McGrath[†]
- Rather, treat consensus as **fundamental** to Wikipedia’s success
 - CS*W interaction patterns are endemic to mass collaboration
 - These C-words must be worked through when seeking consensus
- Tools should be designed to support the fundamental role that this discursive work performs

[†] McGrath (1984). Groups: interaction and performance. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

Excerpt from debate over article scope (2005)

Excerpt from debate over article scope (2005)

Apparently  doesn't bother to read carefully what others actually wrote. Scroll up to the top of this section and you see that I voted to keep a smaller section on the social aspects of paleocentrism instead of removing it entirely and leaving just a link

4 days of a
single
conversation
thread

On an
article that
has been
around for
5 years

** In our talk, we had the full text of the text scroll by at this point, and it was very very long **

Implications: tool design



- * Kittur, Suh, Pendleton and Chi (2007) “He says, she says: Conflict and coordination in Wikipedia” CHI 2007. pp 453-462.
- ° Viegas, Wattenberg, and Dave (2004). “Studying cooperation and conflict between authors with history flow visualizations” CHI 2004. pp 575-582.

Implications: tool design



- For awareness
 - Consensus-seeking is informed by prior arguments
 - Awareness of prior and ongoing consensus not supported well
 - ▶ Current mechanisms are minimal (watch lists, diff)
 - Awareness may help align power plays with policy environment
 - Other tools that may raise awareness of activity (and conflict) have been designed*^o

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- For reputation

- Can be used as a potential guide to quality[†]
- Can also provide awareness of other editors during consensus seeking
 - ▶ Who am I talking to? Who is this person that started the article?

* Kittur, Suh, Pendleton and Chi (2007) “He says, she says: Conflict and coordination in Wikipedia” CHI 2007. pp 453-462.

^o Viegas, Wattenberg, and Dave (2004). “Studying cooperation and conflict between authors with history flow visualizations” CHI 2004. pp 575-582.

[†] Adler and Alfaro (2007) “A content-driven reputation system for the Wikipedia” WWW 2007. pp 261-270.



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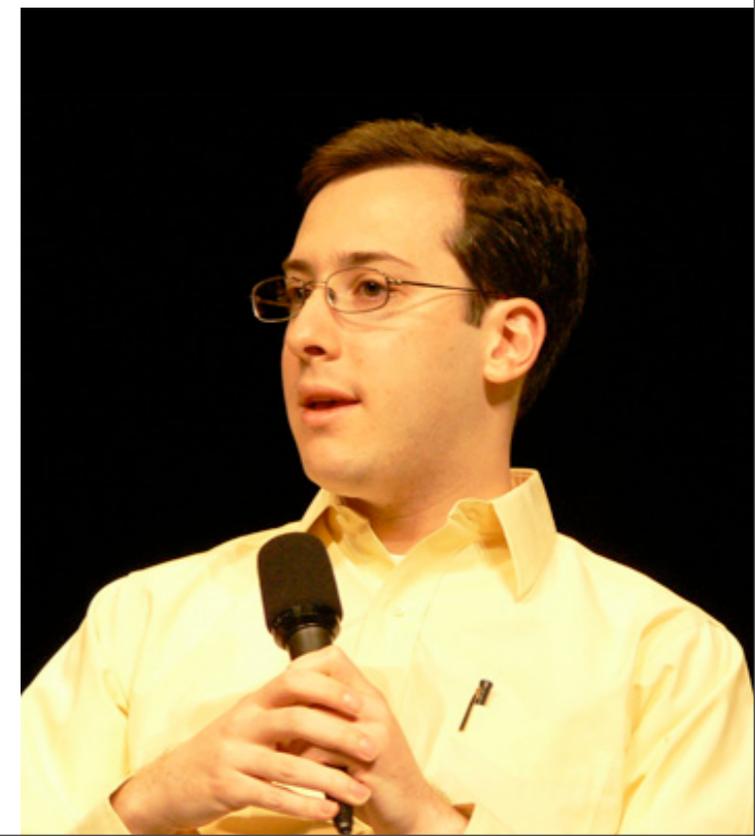


Questions?



David W. McDonald

Scott A. Golder





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