“Wikipedia is not a democracy”:

Deliberation and Policy-Making in an Online Community

Abstract

Wikipedia has quickly become recognized as an important source of information as well as a social force that challenges traditional notions of expertise and knowledge construction. However, it is not often recognized as a vibrant online community that engages in complex self-governance through proposing, discussing, agreeing on, and enforcing their own policies. Despite their vehement claim that “Wikipedia is not a democracy,” much of what Wikipedians advocate in their description of policy-making is in line with theories of democratic deliberation. This paper compares the policy making processes on the English Wikipedia with the conceptual definition of democratic deliberation in order to understand how deliberative the policy making in Wikipedia is and also consider the ways in which the wiki environment challenges or expands our scholarly conceptions of deliberative interaction. Methods include a combination of content analysis of policy-making discussions and social network analysis of the wikipedians involved in these discussions. Content analysis shows that the discussions studied demonstrated a relatively high level of problem analysis and providing of information, but results were mixed in the group’s demonstration of respect, consideration, and mutual comprehension. Network visualizations of the discussion thread discern patterns in the interaction structure that can be useful in examining issues of equality and the influence that individual members have over the conversation. The combination of measures have implications for future research in deliberation in online and face-to-face settings.

While we try to respect consensus, Wikipedia is not a democracy, and its governance can be inconsistent. . . . However, those who edit in good faith, show civility, seek consensus, and work towards the goal of creating a great encyclopedia should find a welcoming environment. Wikipedia greatly appreciates additions that help all people.

-- Wikipedia:Policies and guidelines

Wikipedia, the "free encyclopedia that anyone can edit," has become recognized as an increasingly common source of encyclopedic information as well as a powerful social force that challenges traditional notions of expertise and knowledge construction (Lih, 2005; Stvilia, Twindale, Smith, & Gasser, 2005). What is often overlooked is that Wikipedia is also a vibrant online community that engages in relatively sophisticated self-governance. In addition to discussing article topics and encyclopedic projects, members of the Wikipedia community propose, discuss, agree on, and enforce the policies that guide all their interactions.

Despite their vehement claim that "Wikipedia is not a democracy," Wikipedians describe their decision-making as grounded in civil discussion and aimed toward consensus, which are key features of deliberative models of democracy. This paper examines the policy-making decisions in the English Wikipedia in order to assess the extent to which they demonstrate coherence with deliberative theory and to consider the question of how deliberative democracy might work in a wiki environment.

Deliberation and Online Communities

Deliberation is a way of communicating in groups that is based on democratic principles, such as those advanced by Dahl (1989). Theorists view deliberation as an ideal, a way of communicating that groups strive toward, but achieve only in degrees

(Gastil, 2000). Traditional conceptions of deliberation emphasize equality, fairness, analysis of ideas, and a focus on the public good (cf., Cohen, 1996, 1997; Habermas, 1989), and some theorists highlight the importance of deliberation's social aspects (Asen, 1996; Bohman, 1995; Burkhalter, Gastil, & Kelshaw, 2002; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; Pearce & Littlejohn, 1997).

Gastil and Black (in press) emphasize both the analytic and social aspects of deliberation when they argue that people are deliberating if they "carefully examine a problem and arrive at a well-reasoned solution after a period of inclusive, respectful consideration of diverse points of view" (Gastil & Black, in press, p. 1). The five analytic aspects of deliberation, according to this definition, are *creating an information base*, *prioritizing key values at stake*, *identifying a wide range of possible solutions*, *weighing the solutions*, and (in situations that call for decisions) *making the best decision possible*. Deliberation also involves four social components. All participants should have *equal and adequate speaking opportunities*, attempt to *comprehend one another's views*, make efforts to *fully consider each other's input*, and demonstrate *respect* for each other (Gastil & Black, in press).

The past fifteen years have seen a proliferation of deliberative forums such as National Issues Forums, Deliberative Polls (cf. Fishkin, 1991), and Citizen Juries (cf. Crosby, 1995) that gather groups of citizens together to discuss public or political issues of relevance to their community. These forums bring citizens together to engage in deliberation in small, face-to-face groups. The promise of these forums is that through deliberating together about important public issues, citizens can increase their political knowledge and confidence, understand perspectives that are different from their own, and make their voices heard to policy makers and other public officials.

Deliberation Online

The deliberative democracy movement is premised on the notion of face-to-face interaction (cf. Mansbridge, 1982). Yet, new media forms are having a large impact on contemporary social life and have become an important way that people engage in interpersonal and political communication. In 2006 The Pew Internet & American Life Project reported that approximately 72% of American adults used the internet at least infrequently and 65% percent of the American public reported using the internet daily. Correspondingly, recent years have seen an enormous growth in the study of new media and computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Soukup, 2000). A number of researchers have examined democracy online, including studies that assert that CMC has the potential to promote civility and democratic discussion (Papacharissi, 2004; Weiksner, 2005; Wilkund, 2005), revive the public sphere (Papacharissi, 2002), and encourage civic participation and engagement (Bucy & Gregson, 2001).

A handful of deliberative scholars have begun to turn their attention to online groups (c.f., Gastil & Levine, 2005; Stromer-Galley, 2007) and some forum organizers have begun to incorporate aspects of CMC to either supplement or replace face-to-face interaction (e.g., Lukensmeyer, Brigham, & Goldman, 2005). The bulk of the online deliberation scholarship focuses on forums that were designed and hosted by researchers or professional deliberative practitioners (e.g., Albrecht, 2006; Barbaras, 2004; Cappella, Price, & Nir, 2002; Coleman & Gotze, 2001; Dahlberg, 2001; Price, Nir, & Capella, 2006; Polletta & Lee, 2006; Stromer-Galley, 2007). These studies offer insight into the deliberative process as it occurs in online groups and how online deliberation influences aspects of public life. An assumption of all of these studies, however, is that although the

deliberation *occurs* online, the topics of deliberation are political or public issues in the offline world, such as presidential elections or American foreign policy.

Deliberative scholars have failed to recognize the importance of the naturally-occurring decision-making that occurs in online communities when they are engaging in their own self governance. Online communities are groups of people who gather together around some common purpose or activity and use CMC as one of their primary means of social interaction (cf. Baym, 2000; Rheingold, 2000; Smith & Kollock, 1999). Like physically collocated populations, these groups are faced with many community issues, including choices about how to govern their own interaction behaviors.

Members of online communities such as Wikipedia are not using CMC to deliberate about topics of general importance in the offline world, where they may or may not be directly involved with one another. Rather, these group members are actively engaging in deliberation about community issues and policies that are directly relevant to their interactions with one another in the community that they share. In this way, the policy making of online communities is analogous to the New England town hall meetings that are iconic to deliberative democracy (cf., Mansbridge, 1982), perhaps even more so than deliberative forums that use CMC as simply another means of communicating about public issues in the offline political realm.

Policy Making in Wikipedia

Wikipedia is a profoundly promising site for studying this kind of virtual deliberation. Not only does Wikipedia involve a large group of people who are organized around a common goal, but the Wikipedia Foundation records and makes available for download the full edit history of all pages on Wikipedia. This wealth of data has not gone unrecognized by social scientists, and a number of studies have focused on the

quality of Wikipedia's encyclopedic content and the collaborative knowledge construction processes that are specific to wiki environments (Chesney, 2006; Lih, 2005; Stvilia, Twindale, Smith, & Gasser, 2005).

The most obvious social aspect of Wikipedia's community has to do with the collaborative act of writing encyclopedic entries. This is the mainstay of Wikipedia's social interaction, but Wikipedians also engage a great number of other communicative acts. For example, they have lengthy discussions about articles they are writing, organize work that needs to be done, form groups around specific topics, arbitrate disputes among other community members, welcome newcomers to the Wikipedia community, and create and maintain personal pages with information about themselves and their edits. Some research on the social interaction aspects of this community has examined how Wikipedians change their behaviors as they spend more time in the community (Bryant, Forte, & Bruckman, 2005), how members are recruited and retained (Ciffolilli, 2003), how the community deals with problem behavior (Lorenzen, 2006), and how editors settle their article-specific disputes (Viegas, Wattenberg, Kriss, & van Ham, 2007).

Wikipedians' self-governance occurs as they create, discuss, and make decisions about the policies they rely on to guide their own behavior. Policies are proposed by community members, discussed widely for some period of time, and then either accepted or rejected by Wikipedia's administrators, who are elected leaders of the Wikipedia community. Proposals can be accepted as policies, which are understood within the community as rules that everyone needs to adhere to, or guidelines, which are somewhat more flexible and prone to exceptions. Some of the policies and guidelines have to do with conventions about writing encyclopedic entries such as maintaining a "neutral point of view" and following procedures to fact-check and cite appropriate sources. Others

have to do with the rules for communicative conduct among Wikipedians such as "civility" and "don't bite the newbies."

Policies in the wiki environment are interesting in that they are never completely finalized because policies, even after they have been agreed upon, are still able to be edited –just like other content on Wikipedia. Editors are warned that they should not make changes to policies without first engaging in discussion and acting in line with the group consensus, but most policies are still open to being edited even after consensus is achieved. These policies also have strong discursive force in interactions between editors. Viegas et al. (2007) find that many times disputes among editors are quickly resolved with a reference to a Wikipedia official policy.

Research Questions

In this paper we investigate how policy making in the English Wikipedia relates to theories of deliberative democracy. On first glance, it seems that Wikipedians define their policy making in ways that are both convergent with and divergent from scholarly understandings of deliberation. They claim to make decisions by "consensus" reached through civil "discussion," which is very consistent with scholarly conceptions of deliberation. Yet, in one of the official policies of the English Wikipedia, they adamantly argue that "Wikipedia is not a democracy" because they do not rely on voting to make decisions. One of the official "guidelines" of the English Wikipedia reiterates this view and warns community members that "polling is not a substitute for discussion."

> Wikipedia works by building consensus. Consensus is an inherent part of a wiki process. When conflicts arise, they are resolved through discussion, debate and collaboration. Polling, while not forbidden, should be used with care, if at all, and alternatives should be considered. In addition, even in cases that appear to be

"votes," few decisions on Wikipedia are made on a "majority rule" basis.

(Wikipedia:Polling is Not a Substitute for Discussion, para. 1)

Our research addresses the general descriptive question: how deliberative are the policy-making discussions on the English Wikipedia? More specifically, this question can be understood in two parts. First, *how well do the policy-making decisions demonstrate the analytic and social components of deliberation as described by Gastil and Black* (in press)? We find Gastil and Black's definition useful because it is flexible enough to describe deliberation in a wide range of contexts and it provides a framework of analytic and social components that can serve as the basis for operationalizing deliberation.

The second part of our research question considers the participants who are central to these policy discussions. We ask: *What are the characteristics of the editors who participate in policy making discussions?* Where our first analyses seek to characterize the deliberative nature of the policy discussion, our second analyses differentiate among the contributors to the discussion and assesses who they are, the position they take in the discussion, and the deliberative nature of their contributions. We ask these questions as a way to get at the deliberative criterion of equality because we wonder if certain types of editors pay a disproportionate role in the discussion process and whether that makes a difference for the deliberative nature of the policy discussion as a whole.

Method

We examined the analytic and social deliberative components present in the discussion of a then-prospective Wikipedia policy, "No Personal Attacks." The data for this study are drawn from the early discussions that Wikipedians engaged in regarding

the “No Personal Attacks” policy. Our analysis focuses on the first archived discussion page, which represents the inception of the discussion on this policy.

The policy has since reached consensus and currently states: “Do not make personal attacks anywhere in Wikipedia. Comment on content, not on the contributor. Personal attacks will not help you make a point; they hurt the Wikipedia community and deter users from helping to create a good encyclopedia” (Wikipedia:No personal attacks, 2007). The page describing “No Personal Attacks” is now a widely accepted and utilized policy that guides editors’ interactions with one another as they edit articles and discuss articles and other community business. The talk pages are now locked, and no further edits can be made.

The discussions analyzed for this project occurred from April 2002 to September 2005 when the policy was first being proposed. In these asynchronous discussions members of the Wikipedia community proposed revisions to the policy document, provided feedback on others’ proposed revisions, discussed issues related to the policy (including, for example, defining what counts as “hate speech” and how that differs from “personal attack”), and asked and answered questions about the proposal. An excerpt of these early discussions is provided in Appendix A.

Each post was analyzed and coded using the newly-developed Group Deliberation Coding Scheme for Wikipedia Policy-making Discussions, found in Appendix B. For the purpose of this study, a “post” is defined as a single entry in the Wikipedia talk page. The posts were examined in the order that they appeared on the Archived talk page, which is not necessarily chronological in arrangement. In addition to coding the individual posts, discussion topics in their entirety were coded for overall summary judgments. These codes focused on the social and analytic components of the discussion as a whole.

Measures

Content Analysis Measures

To address our first research question, we developed and used a coding scheme to analyze the content of the discussion posts. In this analysis we attempted to measure how well the discussions manifest the social and analytic components of deliberation as indicated by Gastil and Black (in press) as they are relevant for political discussion. Gastil and Black's description is presented in Table 1. Because deliberation is understood as an "ideal" (Gastil, 2000), studies of actual groups inevitably demonstrate that they fall short of meeting all aspects of deliberative theory. With this study we are not attempting to simply discern whether or not the discussions are deliberative, rather we aim to examine the extent to which different aspects of deliberation are present in, and can help us understand the process of, the discussions.

The content analysis coding scheme was developed by the first author to directly operationalize variables from the conceptual definition. Coders were trained in the use of the coding scheme and went through several trials to develop an acceptably high level of interrater reliability (cf., Neuendorf, 2002). After three times of coding separately, comparing codes, and meeting to discuss differences in the codes given to messages, coders achieved at least 70% agreement on the codes for all of the content analysis variables. Kappa levels ranged from 1.0 to .63. For the final coding, messages were coded separately by two different coders and discrepancies were addressed by discussion between the coders. The final dataset for this study represents negotiated agreement between the coders.

The basic unit of analysis for the content analysis is the discussion post. Each post was assigned an identifying number and coders noted identifying information such

as the name of the participant who posted the comment and the topic of the discussion thread during which the comment occurred. Each post was then coded on eight of the nine dimensions of deliberation: creating information base, prioritizing values, identifying solutions, weighing solutions, making decisions, comprehension, consideration, and respect. These categories are not mutually exclusive.

Equality, the ninth dimension proposed by Gastil and Black (in press), requires analysis at the level of interaction, so this dimension was not included in the discussion post-level coding. However, equality is captured in the global ratings that coders made for each discussion thread, which are discussed below. The variables are discussed briefly here, and the full coding scheme is included as Appendix B.

Analytic dimensions of deliberation. The first measure was "Create an information base" [variable name "Info"], which was coded as a dichotomous variable. Posts that included facts, stories, evidence, or otherwise added information to the group discussion were coded as a 1 and those that offered no information were coded as 0.

The second analytic variable was "Values," which captures the extent to which a discussion post commented on the participant's values or values shared by the group. This variable was coded in the range from 0-2, with an assumption that zero was the least deliberative and two was the most deliberative. A code of zero indicated that no values were explicitly commented on in the post. A code of one meant that the post included a values statement, but did not link that stated value to the proposal being discussed. A code of two meant that the participant not only commented on a value, but also linked that value to some aspect of the proposal or recommendation being discussed.

The third analytic variable measured whether the discussion post identified possible solutions (variable name "Solution"). For this data set, the possible solutions

identified were typically changes to the policy proposal itself. Posts were coded as zero if they did not identify a possible solution. A code of one meant that a post proposed a new possible solution, and a code of two indicated that the participant made additions or revisions that built on another participants' recommendation. Again, the assumption is that higher values on this variable are indicators of higher levels of deliberation.

The final analytic variable measures the whether the discussion posts weighs pros and cons of policy proposals being discussed. This categorical variable assigned a value of zero to posts that did not involve any discussion of pros or cons. A post was given a code of one if it only raised advantages of a proposal, two if it only raised disadvantages, or three if it included discussion of both advantages and disadvantages.

Social dimensions of deliberation. The social components of deliberation involved measures of several different indicators. We coded two variables that assess what Gastil and Black (in press) call "comprehension." The first is "Clarification," which measures whether or not the post includes a request for someone else to clarify something. A code of zero indicates that there was no request for clarification, and a one indicates that such a request was present. After coding a number of discussion posts we decided to include a code of negative one (-1) for posts that included a request for clarification but did so in an obviously antagonistic or sarcastic way, ostensibly with the goal of discrediting the previous speaker rather than genuinely request clarification. The second measure of consideration was an explicit statement of understanding. This was coded from negative one (demonstrates a lack of understanding) to one (explicit demonstration of understanding), with a code of zero given to posts that had no explicit statement demonstrating understanding.

To measure how well participants were listening to and considering the perspectives of other people we measured “consideration” and “other consideration.” Consideration measured the extent to which a post demonstrated that the participant was considering others’ views. Discussion posts were given values ranging from 0-3, with higher scores indicating more consideration. A code of zero meant that the post contained no evidence of consideration. A code of one indicated that the post contained explicit statements that demonstrated consideration. Another way people can show that they value and give consideration to other people’s opinions is to ask others for feedback on one’s contributions. Posts that included request for feedback were coded as a two on consideration, and posts that included explicit evidence of consideration and also a request for feedback were given the value of three.

We noticed that participants sometimes commented on whether or not a different member of the group was giving other people’s perspectives adequate consideration. The variable “Other consider” measured this by giving posts a negative code (-1) if the speaker indicated that a different group member was not listening or being considerate and a positive code (1) if the speaker indicated that a different group member was doing a good job of being considerate. Posts that contained no statements about other group members’ consideration were coded as neutral (zero).

The final social dimension, respect, was also measured through two variables. The first was a measure of the level of respect demonstrated in the dicsusion post with negative code (-1) indicating that a post was disrespectful and a positive code (1) indicating that the post included some explicit evidence of respect. Posts with no evidence of respect or disrespect were coded as neutral (zero).

As with consideration, we noticed that group members sometimes commented on other people's level of respect. So, the variable "other respect" captures the extent to which a post evaluates some other group members behavior as disrespectful (-1) or respectful (1). Posts that did not include any comments about other group members' level of respect were coded as neutral (zero).

General assessments of deliberation. Coders also made overall summary judgments of the deliberative quality of the discussions. These variables were coded at the level of the discussion thread. Each thread contains multiple posts and represents one topic of the conversation. Coders looked at the discussion thread as a whole and rated it on a five point scale to indicate how often the discussion demonstrated the analytic components of deliberation (0= never to 4= constantly). Coders also rated the discussion on how often it demonstrated the social components of deliberation using the same five-point scale. These indicators allowed us to see aspects of the conversation that might not be captured by measuring aspects of individual messages.

Social Network Analysis Measures

To address the second part of our research question we used Social Network Analysis (Wasserman & Faust, 1994) to examine characteristics of the participants in our selected policy discussion. We generated social network data from the reply structure of the policy discussion, which allows us to identify central participants and characterize all participants by their position in this policy discussion. This network data can give us a sense of which editors are the most powerful in the discussion and what various roles participants play in the deliberative process.

We are interested in understanding the characteristics of policy-making discussants and the network structure of their discussions in order to help assess the

deliberative aspect of equality in the policy making process. Theoretically, the wiki environment provides equal and adequate speaking opportunity to anyone who wishes to be part of the community discussion, simply by the design of the technology. However, we expect that participants will play different social roles in the policy making decisions and that these roles may be tied to the nature of their contributions in the larger Wikipedia community. Our hope is that understanding these roles can help us discern interaction patterns that are conducive to deliberative policy-making discussions in online communities.

To operationalize a tie between participants in the discussion we created an edgelist dataset that recorded the reply relationships between each message, and then summed the number of directed replies within each dyad, nested within each thread. This allows us to assess the strength of relationship between actors as they were embedded in the particular threads. That structure of relationships can be represented as a social network where a comment by person "B" that replies to statements made by person "A" is coded as a tie or directed edge that emanates from node "B" to node "A". The weight of that directed tie can be defined as the number of replies sent from "B" to "A". We created network visualizations for the discussion as a whole as well as for individual threads that had notable codes in the analytic or social aspects of deliberation. Comparing the structure of the interactions of conversations that were coded as highly deliberative with those that were given lower scores, allows us to discern the extent to which deliberative conversations show distinct structural features from conversations with lower quality analysis or lower levels of respect, consideration, and mutual comprehension.

Results

Describing the Conversations

Our first research question is a descriptive question that is best answered by means of descriptive statistics. The results were separated into three parts. First, we focused on determining how effectively the messages and threads on Wikipedia display analytic components of deliberation. Secondly, we examined the social components of deliberation evident in the posts and the threads. This was assessed through analyzing the social features of messages as well as the factors that focus on people giving comments about others. Finally, we explored the extent to which the social and analytic components co-occurred at the level of the threads.

Table 2 illustrates the frequency that each analytical component was evident in the forum posts. As evident, information was provided in two-thirds of the posts. This is important to deliberation, as it adds to the knowledge base. Most (72%) of the posts included no statements about values held by the group. However, when values were revealed, over half of the statements linked the values to a solution. Nearly half of the posts included a solution, and half of these built on previous solutions. This indicates that people were considering others' solutions and adding their own ideas to them. Pros and cons of any solution were weighed one third of the time. When evaluating a solution, disadvantages were mentioned the most often (20% of total posts), compared to advantages (7% of total posts). Rarely did anyone point out both advantages and disadvantages (5% of total posts).

The frequency of social components evident in the posts are presented in Table 3. Requests for clarification were evident in nearly 20% of the posts. Almost half of these requests were sarcastic in nature, which is not conducive to positive deliberation. Evidence of understanding was evident in only 10% of the posts. When noted, usually the

user was demonstrating understanding as opposed to a lack of understanding. Participants displayed some degree of consideration 77% of the time. In nearly 8% of the posts, the user asked for feedback, and in 6% of the posts, the user considered others' previous statements and also asked for feedback. Approximately 14% of the posts indicated a lack of respect, and only 10% of the posts included explicit evidence of respect.

The components that included a reference to another user's consideration or respect are shown in Table 4. Usually, users did not post any statements that included the behavior of others with regard to consideration or respect. In 8% of the posts, a participant indicated that a user was not considering the ideas of others. In only one instance, a person pointed out that another user did a good job of considering others' ideas. Messages that included someone discussing a user's lack of respect for others were only evident in 10% of the posts. No one mentioned that a participant was being respectful toward others.

Analytic and social components were also examined at the thread level. The code frequencies can be found in Table 5. Thirty one percent of the threads were coded as "rarely" exhibiting analytic components, and 49 % exhibit social elements only "rarely." In 20% of the threads, analytic components were regarded as constantly occurring, while only 11% of the threads exhibited social components that occurred constantly.

Finally, correlations between the number of posts in a thread and the social and analytic components of the thread are displayed in Table 6. This sought to determine if thread length matters to the prevalence of social or analytic deliberative components. This table indicates that analytic and social elements are highly positively correlated ($r=.72$) and significant at the 0.01 level. That is, threads' analytic and social scores tended to vary together such threads with high levels of analysis also tended to demonstrate

relatively higher levels of deliberation's social components. Additionally, the length of threads was positively related to the analytic quality (r=.47), but it had no relationship to social aspects of deliberation.

Structure of the Conversations

We use social network visualization to describe the structure of conversations in the No Personal Attacks policy discussion. Figure 1 displays a graph of reply relationships recorded for all threads in the "No Personal Attacks" (NPA) Archive 1 discussion page and reveals a number of interesting features of the conversation. First, although the conversation is asynchronous and multi-threaded there are only two threads that are disconnected from the main component, in other words, only two of the conversations involved participants who did not also contribute to one or more of the other threads. Interestingly, the conversation (bottom, center) involving Larry Sanger and Claudine was the earliest thread in the archive and the thread (upper right) involving ThislinkisBroken and SlimVirgin was the most recent thread in the archive. This suggests that these threads are disconnected largely due to temporal edge effects.

The second notable feature of the graph is that low intensity ties (few messages exchanged within the dyad) are prevalent and that most participants have only a few ties. This suggests that most participants in this discussion were involved in relatively brief conversations with a few others, likely being involved in only one or two threads. The third notable feature refers to participants who deviate from this general pattern of a few low intensity relationships. There are three salient conversations that involve participants with intense ties: top center with Al and PaulBeardsell, center right with SamSpade and FredBauder, and center left with Snowspinner and Charles. These intense ties range from 6 to 20 messages exchanged between particular pairs. Overall, in the conversation

there is a striking inequality in the intensity of relationships that emerge in the discussions: the great majority are low intensity, while a few are quite intense. It is noteworthy the three sub-conversations with intense ties are, for the most part, not directly connected to each other (the exception is Sam Spade's tie to Al). Hyacinth plays an interesting role of being the shortest bridge between all three of the intense conversations while displaying a conspicuous absence of intense ties himself.

Figure 2 provides a composite of network visualizations from 6 of the larger threads, ordered by the average levels of analytic and social deliberation coded from the conversations. The left hand column includes three threads that were high on both analytic and social deliberation while the right hand column includes cases that were a bit lower on analytic and scored near the bottom for social deliberation. There are no consistent and obvious structural distinctions between cases with high and low levels of deliberation. However, one theme, though imperfect, is that threads where we observe low levels of social deliberation are often accompanied by a prominent intense tie between two of the participants. It turns out that the major exception to this rule, the thread called "Sept. 10 Addition," includes a conflict between Snowspinner and orthogonal, but Jwrosenzweig enters the conversation and actively resolves the conflict with comments that strongly raise the social deliberativeness of the thread. This suggests that tie intensity may act as a signal for the presence of conflict in threads, and that unless some parties can alleviate that conflict then the conversation is unlikely to be socially deliberative.

Deliberative Contributions and Centrality

Figure 3 reports scatter plots and univariate distributions for measures of degree centrality and deliberative level of all participants in the NPA discussion on Archive 1.

Directed edges calculates the number of reply relationships each participant has, adding together their inward and outward ties. This distribution ranges to about 20 and is strongly right skewed with the vast majority of cases having fewer than 5 reply relationships (directed edges). The deliberation total is the individual's total score for the combined analytic and social deliberation across all of his or her messages. This distribution is even more strikingly skewed and exhibits a range up to about a score of 80. Average deliberation is simply deliberation total standardized by number of posts. This distribution is roughly normal, centered on about 4, and ranging up to about 6.

Our measure of directed edges represents one kind of centrality in social networks—it indicates how many relationships a participant has, and thus is one way to conceptualize the size of one's impact on a conversation space. Not surprisingly, this measure is positively correlated with the total amount of deliberation a person contributes. What is interesting, and perhaps surprising, is that, while the total amount of deliberative contributions a person makes is positively related to their edge centrality, average deliberation is negatively related to edge centrality. In other words, actors at higher levels of relationship tend to exhibit lower average deliberation.

The negative relationship between average deliberation and directed edges is not strong, and is shaped by a couple of influential points. However, the with the exception of a few points, the data strongly suggests that the relationship between average deliberation and edges is curvilinear, and that the most deliberative contributors will tend to have moderate rather than large or small numbers of relationships.

Discussion

The results of the content analytic measures give us a mixed answer to the question about the deliberativeness of the conversations. Although group members

provided a great deal of information and proposed and built on one another's solutions, they were heavily skewed to finding faults with the proposed solutions rather than raising advantages or weighing both pros and cons.

They also very rarely talked about their personal values or the values of the group. This result is not surprising given that overt discussion of values is relatively uncommon, and members of deliberative groups often find it difficult to talk openly about values, particularly if they are in conflict. Despite the relative lack of conversation about values, coders noted that almost half (46%) of the discussions demonstrated good analysis at least "frequently" and another twenty percent provided good analysis "occasionally." Remembering that deliberation is an *ideal* that groups can strive toward and achieve only in degrees (Gastil, 2000), we can say that this Wikipedia policy making discussion did a reasonably good job at the analytic aspects of deliberation.

Our results show less positive tendencies for the social aspects of deliberation. Coders noted that the discussion threads largely did not provide evidence of high levels of the social aspects of deliberation. Over half of the threads (51%) demonstrated social aspects "rarely" or "not at all" and for most of the individual discussion posts there was not adequate evidence to make a judgment about the level of respect or comprehension.

Some direct evidence of the social dimensions came from our measure of group members' comments about other people in the group. These metacommunicative comments were not that common, but when they did happen they were largely critical of another member's lack of respect ("let's play nicely, shall we?") or consideration ("you don't understand what I mean.") The lack of explicit evidence indicates the difficulty of judging social aspects of interaction in an online environment, but also demonstrates that

the coding scheme used in this study needs to be further developed and refined if it is to be useful in judging respect and comprehension in online discussions.

A few (21%) of the threads were coded as "frequently" or "constantly" demonstrating high levels of the social aspects of deliberation. Additionally, we saw good evidence of consideration in the discussions as group members responded to each other's comments, built on one another's suggestions, and asked for feedback on their proposed recommendations. This kind of interaction is encouraging about the potential that wiki environments hold for collaborative work. Because any participant in the discussion was able to make edits to the policy, and provide new content, there were relatively few barriers to group members' ability to contribute to the conversation. It is encouraging to see that they often seemed to take other people's suggestions seriously and work collaboratively toward improving the policy as a whole.

The analysis of network structure suggests that certain types of dyadic relationships and network structures may help us identify contributors that are more or less deliberative. First, intense ties may be a signal of conflict and therefore of low levels of social deliberation in that part of the discussion. However, such back and forth discussion may attract the attention of others who are more skilled in deliberation, who subsequently diffuse the conflict.

Second, actors' positions in the larger network setting might help indicate variation in deliberative contribution. One possibility is that people who bridge multiple discussions, especially when they lack the intense ties, may be more reasoned and deliberative contributors. Finally, a contributor's tendency towards deliberation may actually depend on the number of their relationships, and here the golden mean may spell greater deliberation. These possible themes will require further investigation, but they

are suggestive of ways that structural attributes of contributors may help us predict where we will find greater levels of deliberation.

Conclusion

This research project can advance group communication research by investigating deliberation in online communities, which have thus far been overlooked by group deliberation scholars. Additionally, this research has implications for deliberative theory by investigating whether aspects of the wiki environment can challenge or enhance our scholarly conceptualization of deliberation. Wikipedia is known for the collaborative approach to creating and editing of encyclopedia entries. Wikipedians' use of the wiki technology to collaboratively create and edit policies to govern their own community could serve as a model for new and innovative deliberative forums and community governance in other communities as well.

This paper represents the starting point in our study of the Wikipedia policy making processes. As a first step it provides a baseline description of the deliberativeness of one policy discussion and makes two methodological contributions to the study of deliberation in online communities. First, the content analysis coding scheme is based on current deliberative theory and provides a way for deliberative scholars to examine both the social and analytic contributions of individual group members. Previously published content analysis coding schemes have been useful in examining analytic aspects of deliberation (e.g., Steenbergen, Bachtiger, Sporndli, & Steiner, 2003; Stromer-Galley, 2007), but do not give adequate emphasis to the social processes such as respect and consideration. The coding scheme we are developing here, although in the early stages of its use, provides a way to examine how these social

aspects are present in group members' discourse and their metacommunicative comments about each other's contributions to the conversation.

The second methodological contribution is our integration of social network analysis with content analysis to assess issues of equality and influence in the deliberations. Network analysis heightens our attention to measures of 'relational inequality' and increases the range of ways that we can conceptualize participants in interaction as having more or less influence on discussion. For instance, people can have the same number of messages, or even the same number of relationships and exhibit radically different amounts of influence on the larger conversation. When we compare Gkhan's seven ties to Hyacinth's six, we see that Hyacinth's messages reached several different conversations while Gkhan's contributions are concentrate in a relatively small portion of the archived conversation. Another type of relational inequality stems from the differences between in and out ties. A large number of inward ties means that, for whatever reason, a contributor has managed to spark attention and active response from many of his or her colleagues. In contrast, a larger number outward ties may indicate an attempt to reach out, but might not actually represent actual influence.

Limitations and Future Directions

An important limitation of the current project is that, as a case study of one policy discussion, it is unable to offer general observations about the quality of deliberative discourse in Wikipedia as a whole. As such, it cannot offer firm predictions about the conditions in an online community that are most likely to promote deliberative policy making. Our future work in Wikipedia policy making will address this limitations as well as build on the contributions our current paper has to offer.

Our next step in this research is to apply the content analysis codes to a wider sample of about a range of different policy proposals, which will allow us to investigate the deliberativeness of Wikipedia policy making more generally. It may also allow us to compare different types of discussions and examine whether the quality of deliberative discourse may be influenced by features such as topic, time, or length of discussion.

We will also make efforts to get information about the participants beyond their contributions to the particular contributions to the policy-making discussions. Because Wikipedia data includes every edit ever made to Wikipedia, we will be able to track the editing career of each participant prior to this policy discussion, and thus characterize how, to what degree, and with whom they tend to contribute to Wikipedia. We plan to measure editor characteristics through the information that is available through downloading and parsing the Wikipedia data dump. This rich biography of participation in an online community can reveal a great deal about the social roles participants play (Welser et al., 2007). A more complete characterization of the social roles and activity levels of individual contributors, combined with network visualizations of the policy discussions, will help us understand the extent to which status in the larger community plays an important role how much an individual member influences the decision-making.

Our hope is that other deliberative scholars will find value in this methodological approach and use it to investigate other deliberative settings. As CMC becomes increasingly important as a way for people to engage in the political process, we think that the attempts made by Wikipedians to govern themselves are notable and the methods used in this paper, as well as the insights about deliberation in the wiki environment, will be useful for deliberative research and practice in other venues.

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Table 1

Key Features of Deliberative Conversation and Discussion (from Gastil, In press)

Analytic Process	**Conversation/Discussion Behavior**
Create Information Base	Discuss personal and emotional experiences, as well as facts.
Prioritize Key Values	Reflect on your own values, as well as those of others present.
Identify Solutions	Brainstorm a range of different solutions.
Weigh Solutions	Recognize limitations of your own preferred solution and advantages of others.
Make Best Decision	Update opinion in light of what you have learned. In some discussions, no joint decision need be reached.
Social Process	**Conversation/Discussion Behavior**
Speaking Opportunities	Take turns in conversation or ensure a balanced discussion
Mutual Comprehension	Speak plainly and ask for clarification when confused.
Consideration	Listen carefully to others, especially when you disagree.
Respect	Presume other participants are honest and well-intentioned. Acknowledge their unique experience and perspective.

Table 2

Frequencies of Analytic Components in Posts

Component	Percentage	Frequency
Info		
None	33.7	95
Some	66.3	187
Values		
None	71.6	202
Given; not linked to solution	11.7	33
Given; linked to solution	16.7	47
Solution		
None	53.2	150
New solution	22.0	62
Builds on previous solution	24.8	70
Weigh Pros/Cons		
None	67.4	190
Advantage only	7.1	20
Disadvantage only	20.2	57
Both pro and con	5.3	15

Note: N=282

Table 3

Frequencies of Social Components in Posts

Component	Percentage	Frequency
Clarification		
Sarcastic request	7.4	21
Neutral/None	81.2	229
Request	11.3	32
Understand		
Lack of understanding	2.5	7
Neutral/None	90.8	256
Demonstrates understanding	6.7	19
Consider		
Neutral/No evidence	23.0	65
Some consideration	63.1	178
Asks for feedback	7.8	22
Show consideration and asks for feedback	6.0	17
Respect		
Lack of respect	14.2	40
Neutral/No evidence	76.2	215
Show good respect	9.6	27

Note: N=282

Table 4

Frequencies of "Other" Related Components in Posts

Component	Percentage	Frequency
Other Consideration		
Other person not considering	8.2	23
Neutral/No evidence	91.5	258
Other person showing consideration	0.4	1
Other Respect		
Other person not respectful	9.6	27
Neutral/No evidence	90.4	255
Other person showing respect	0.0	0

Note: N=282

Table 5

Overall Summary Code Frequencies for Analytic and Social Components of Threads

	Analytic		Social	
Code	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency
Not at all	2.9	1	2.9	1
Rarely	31.4	11	48.6	17
Occasionally	20.0	7	17.1	6
Frequently	25.7	9	20.0	8
Constantly	20.0	7	11.4	4

Note: N=35

Table 6

Correlation Between Number of Posts in Thread and Social/Analytic Components

	Analytic	Social	Total Posts
Analytic	--	.716***	.468**
Social		--	.016
Total Posts			--

Note: N=35

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 1

Network Graph of Discussion Page for 'No Personal Attacks', Archive 1

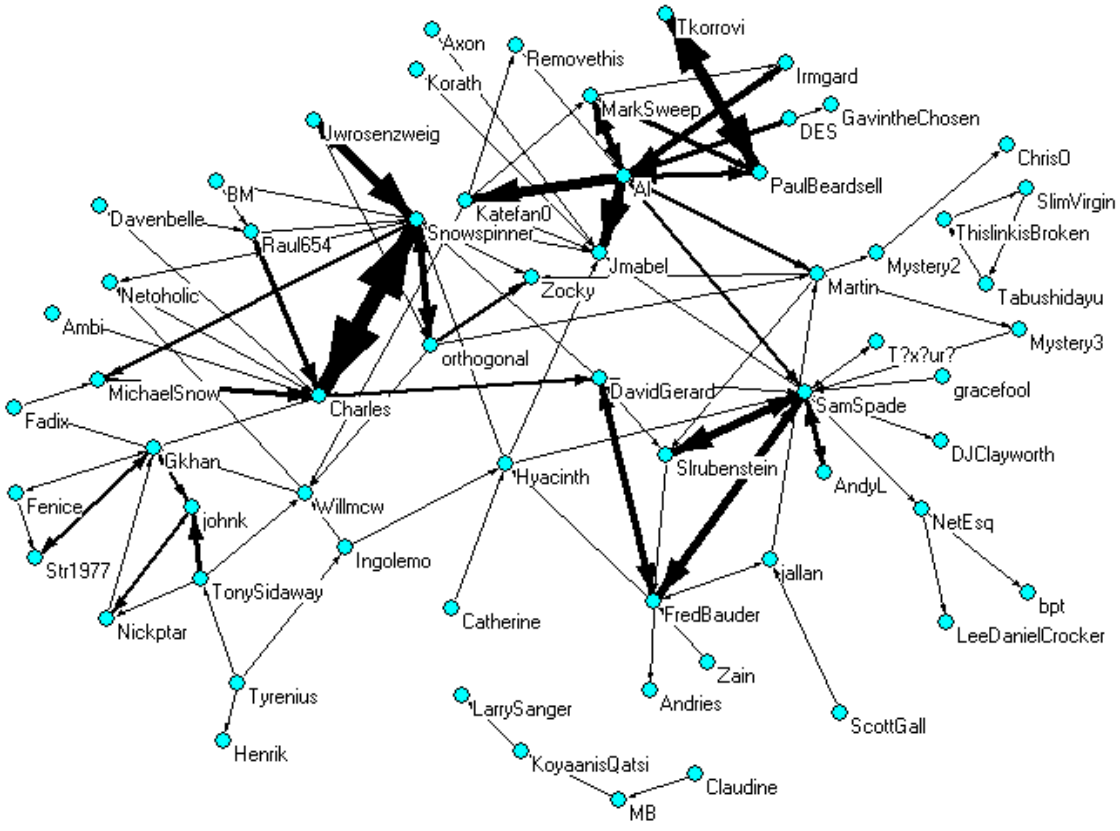
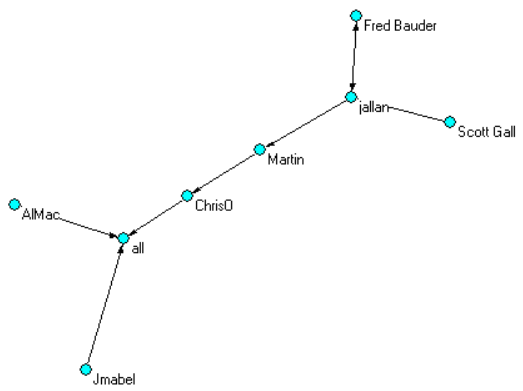


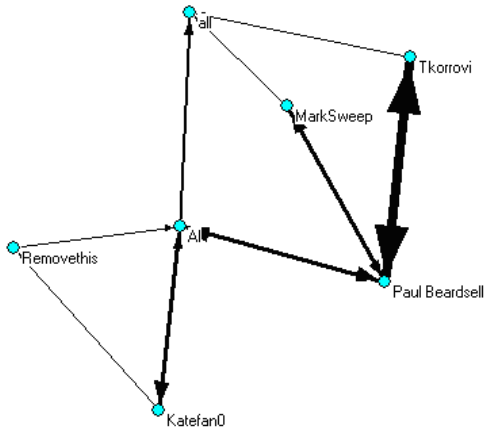
Figure 2

Network Graphs for NPA Threads

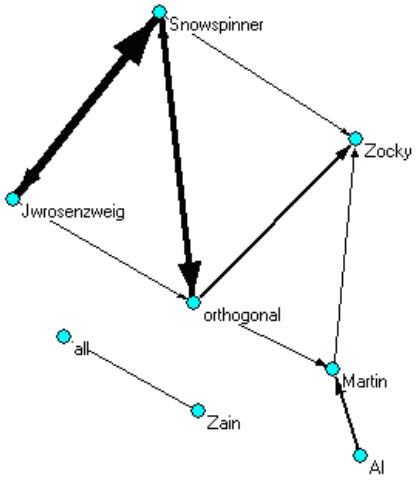
Proposed Revision (A 4) (S 3)



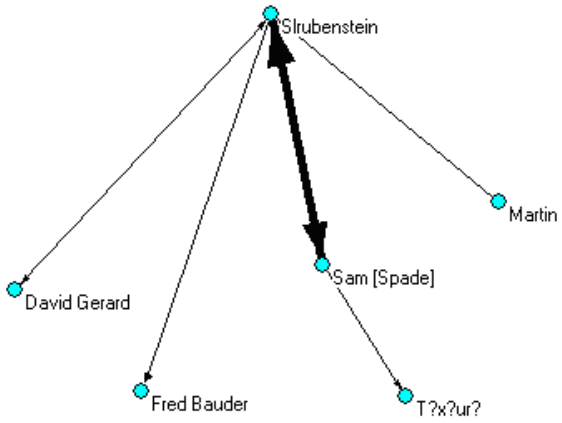
Personal Comments (A 3) (S 1)



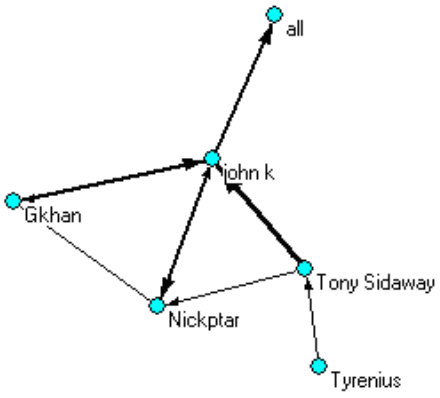
Sept 10 Addition (A 4) (S 3)



Hate Speech (A 3) (S 1)



Profanity (A 3) (S 2)



Attacking Statement (A 1) (S 1)

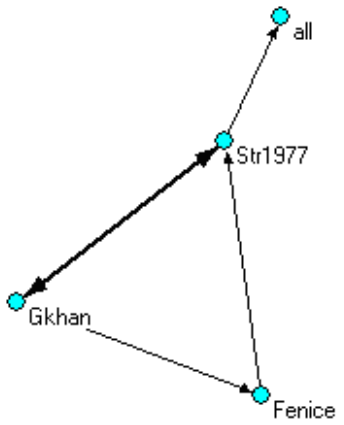
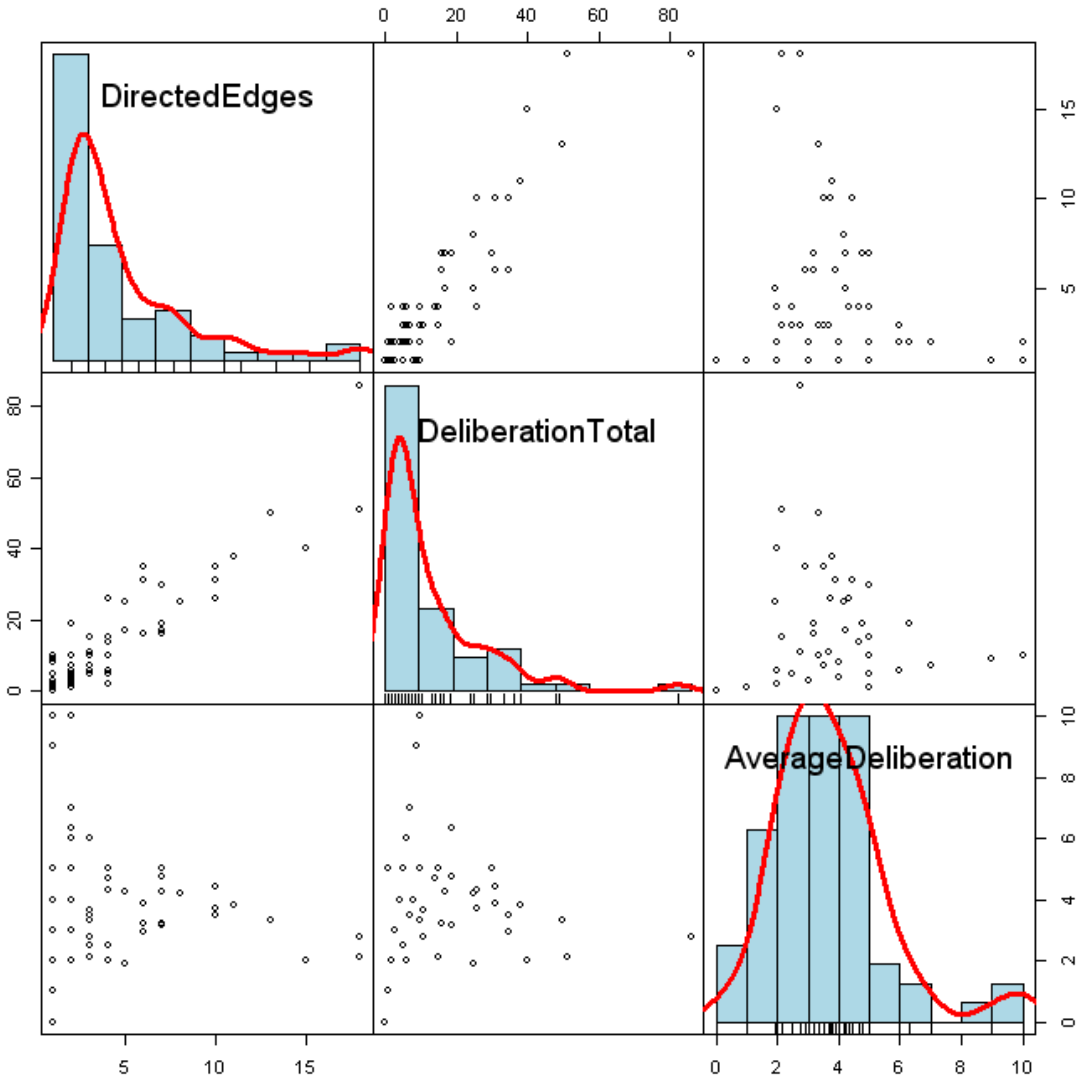


Figure 3

Scatterplots and Histograms for Directed Edges, Total Deliberation, and Average Deliberation.



Appendix A

Top of page for “No Personal Attacks” Discussion Page, Archive 1

Excerpt from threaded discussion on “No Personal Attacks” Discussion page, Archive 1

Addition of a policy which has been followed in certain cases

I have added the following to the article: "* Threats or actions which expose other Wikipedia editors to political, religious or other persecution by government, their employer or any others. Violations of this sort will result in severe sanctions which may be applied immediately by any sysop upon discovery. Sysops applying such sanctions should confidentially notify the members of the Wikipedia:Arbitration Committee and User:Jimmy Wales of what they have done and why." This has its origin in the practice which were followed in a certain case where such a treat was made which could have exposed a user to criminal and religious persecution in a certain country. Fred Bauder 14:45, Jul 30, 2004 (UTC)

Proposed ammendment

I've mentioned this on Wikipedia talk:Blocking policy but figure I should bring it up here as well - what would people think of the following:

> At their discretion, and only after warning the user, sysops may use temporary blocks to enforce a "cooling down" period for users who repeatedly make personal attacks. Blocks made under this policy should be short term – one to three days normally, and a week at most. Sysops blocking under this policy may not block users for making personal attacks in the course of disputes that the sysop is involved in, and especially not for personal attacks made against them, unless the personal attacks also constitute clear and unambiguous vandalism (i.e. replacing their userpage with "U SUCK!!1!1!!").

Snowspinner 13:23, Aug 12, 2004 (UTC)

> As this is taken verbatim from Wikipedia:Blocking_policy/Personal_attacks#Proposed_policy, lacking only the first sentence of that section, and as that proposal failed to gain consensus, it seems clear that we already know "what would people think of" this.
>
> As that proposal failed, and as Snowspinner knows that, he being the author of that failed proposal, why try for a "second bite of the apple" here? -- orthogonal 07:44, 27 Sep 2004 (UTC)

The addition from 10 September 2004

The recently proposed changes include 3 points which are at least controversial:

- *"Specific examples of personal attack include: Assertions of negative or malicious intent outside of dispute resolution."*
  - This is just way too wide. It means that comments like "You knew this was POV before you inserted it" or "I think you are a troll", or an edit summary saying "Reverted - stop inputting false information" are personal attacks.
  - And it would make what TimStarling and others said on the Anarion RfA a personal attack when they wondered if he was a Sockpuppet.
    - And what Makkalai and Geogre (and many others) said about the Coronado hoaxes personal attacks
    - Others are encouraged to add more examples. -- orthogonal 22:46, 10 Sep 2004 (UTC)
      - I am unable to figure out how "you are a sockpuppet" or "you are inputting false information" (a factually verifiable statement) has anything to do with assertions of intent. Snowspinner 23:11, Sep 10, 2004 (UTC)

Appendix B

Group Deliberation Coding Scheme for Wikipedia Policy-making Discussions

Every discussion post in the policy making discussion should be coded on the following dimensions.

Basic Identifying Information

1. *Post ID*
   Give the discussion post an identifying number, as they appear on the screen. First post on oldest archived page should be #1, next post down is #2, etc.

2. *Topic*
   Enter the discussion topic that post occurs in, as noted by the header of that discussion thread.

3. *Participant ID*
   Enter the screen name or IP address of participant

Analytic components of deliberation

4. *Create an Information Base* [Variable name "Info"]
   To what extent did the discussion post include relevant facts and or personal experiences that could inform the discussion? This includes providing evidence to back up an argumentative claim. If someone clarifies an argument by providing additional information and/or making their reasoning more clear, that also counts as creating an information base.

   0 **No information contributed**
   Examples: assert opinion without providing evidence, state agreement or disagreement, etc.

   1 **Contributed some information**
   Examples:
   In the few debates I've followed in which participants spill a substantial amount of ink questioning each other's integrity, intelligence, and (probably) taste in clothes, I've noticed that no fruitful plans tend to develop for the improvement of the article under consideration. Occasionally, I myself have been such a participant, and I judge the exercise to be a waste of time for all concerned. *(provides story as evidence to back up claim)*

   An absolute prohibition on personal attacks would violate the proposed ignore all rules rule and would more than likely give rise to a culture of forced politeness, hypocrisy, and passive aggressive behavior. *(provides fact about a contradictory rule that is already in place)*

5. Prioritize Key Values [Variable name “Values”]

To what extent did the discussion post comment on the editors own values or values of others involved in the discussion? Values must be explicitly stated (i.e. truthfulness is “good”) rather than simply implied

0 No explicit comment on values

1 Commented on values, but does not use these values to support an argument or analyze positions.
Examples:
I *really* don't want Wikipedia to become another debate forum or flame-fest.

I simply oppose hate speech and anti-Semitism in all forms because it is wrong.

2 Clearly link values to proposed solutions or positions
Examples:
The work is the important thing, and suffering personal attacks is an inescapable part of holding one's work up to the scrutiny of one's peers *(value is the quality of the work)*

There is no excuse for such attacks on other contributors; the key issue is the content of the articles, not the character of the person writing them. (*value is the content of the work)*

If calling a troll a troll or pointing out someone's statements to judge their credibility helps produce better articles, then an occasional personal attack is warranted, as long as it serves our goal….All "zero tolerance" rules are bad; human beings should exercise judgment, and not be afraid to stand behind those judgments. *(value is flexibility of rules, no ‘zero tolerance’)*

Also, there are many who consider this process, or the role of the "troll", to be constructive and necessary, like the "devil's advocate" or "shaitan" or "defense attorney" or "opposition leader" or "Supreme Court minority opinion author", to reduce groupthink and identify values divisions across which people cannot cooperate constructively anyway, and can only ever agree to just disagree.

5. *Identify possible solutions* [Variable name "Solution"]
Did the discussion post include a recommendation or possible solution to the proposal being discussed? This includes both big-picture recommendations to the main problem facing the group and also suggestions about how to revise or clarify specific parts of the policy being discussed.

0 No recommendation

1 Included a new recommendation/ advocate a new position
Examples:
I think we will work best if we avoid all unnecessary controversy, and if we *must* engage in controversy, that we practice wikipetiquette as far as we are able. I think it would be great if we all made it a habit of saying, when appropriate, "Hey, this is getting a little too unpleasant for Wikipedia, which is supposed to be a nice place focused on creating an encyclopedia. I'll write you privately. (Or: My e-mail address is X@Y.Z. Could you write me, please, or post your address, so we can resolve this amicably in private?)

Not being a net techie I don't know how hard this would be to set up, but what about a "usenet" group? Alt.pedia.debate (not alt.wikipedia to prevent it turning up in search engines). Then we could legitimately say "take it to usenet". Just a thought

Would a mailing list be a good 'middle ground' between fully public discussion and private email?

In the following draft, I've proposed an absolute rule prohibiting "racial, sexual, religious or ethnic epithets" and profanity directed against other contributors. [he then includes a long listing of proposed solution]

2 Builds on or suggests revisions to previously posed position/solutions
Examples:
Agreed. These issues should go into the policy amendment however, not in the messagebox itself.

I agree, but I think "you are acting like an XYZ" is a bad way to go. Much better to say "hey, I saw you had some conflict w another user, perhaps you should review [applicable policy XYZ]" or "I'm sorry, but ad hominems are not a part of a useful debate. That's why I removed them. Please review Wikipedia:No personal attacks."

6. *Weigh solutions: Pros/cons* [Variable name “Weigh”]
Did the discussion post weigh the pros and cons of at least one solution proposed?

0 No pros or cons discussed
This includes stating a preference (agree/disagree) without providing any reasons.

Example:
I would rather say something like "violating this rule will result in the offending comments being deleted, edited for common courtesy, or returned to your user talk page. Repeated violations of this rule may result in further sanctions".

1 Raises only advantages of a proposal.

Examples:
If more of us did this, I think Wikipedia could become a much more pleasant place to work on this worthy project. Please, let's not let such a great project be slowed down by personal difficulties. I really do think we can avoid that.

I like that because *anyone* can delete offensive comments, so this means the problem is solved at the lowest level. If we tell people that we will solve a particular problem with a ban, this tends to be the cue for incessent whinging. I would rather empower users to fix problems themselves, rather than expecting them to come cap in hand to some "authority" figure who will pronounce, Oracle-like, on the Truth of the matter.

2 Raises only disadvantage of a proposal

Examples
Starting a group in the traditional 'Big 8' hierarchy involves a long, fussy procedure; starting one in the alt hierarchy is easy but getting news servers to carry it is not so easy. I don't think it's appropriate for a world-distributable newsgroup, anyway. It may be possible to set up a newsgroup on the Nupedia server and have it archived by Nupedia (not quite a 'private' newsgroup, but not fully public - keep Google out of it). I find it significantly less understandable, and strongly suggest that if they *were* enforced your suggestion of policy change would be more obvious in its lack of utility. The problem here is that the lack of enforcement of current rules suggests to some (yourself it would seem) that new rules are the answer. I clearly disagree in the utmost.

3 Raises both advantages and disadvantages of a proposed solution.

Social components of deliberation

7. *Comprehension/clarity* [Variable name “Clarific”]
Post includes a request for clarification, either of the way something is worded or of the argument being made. Also includes requesting clarification about the policy itself.

-1 Asks for clarification but does so with a sarcastic or antagonistic tone. This includes rhetorical questions posed to discredit a previous speaker or point out problems with a proposal.

Examples:
[In response to: Do you at a minimum agree that enforcement of current policy would be advantageous?] I don't understand the question. Advantageous to whom? As opposed to what? Are you asking if I think we should *not* enforce current policy? Of course not, we should continue to enforce current policy. Are you asking something else?

The dog who barks "Sl, you are a dirty Jew" would surely be anti-Semitic, *and* making a personal attack. That personal attack would be covered by current policy, and would surely be judged more harshly than "Sl, you are dirty"?

0 Neutral –does not include a request for clarification

1 Includes a request for clarification
Example:
Is being *called* an anti-semite hate speech?

What do you mean by personal attack? I’m not sure I understand

Does indicating that someone has vandalized a page constitute an attack? "Vandal" is usually seen as an insult, but we need a way to discuss this.
Does calling someone a "leftist" or a "rightist" constitute an attack? From some people, those words can clearly be insults (especially when applied to someone who doesn't see him- or herself as such). In other cases, they may be very useful shorthands to identify the two sides in a disagreement over a politically controversial subject.
Is it a personal attack to claim of a certain contributor that all of his or her edits appear to be for the purpose of affecting the political slants of articles? How about for the purpose of disseminating a pet theory as widely as possible throughout wikipedia, regardless of its appropriateness to the article topics? How about outright trolling?

Do you at a minimum agree that enforcement of current policy would be advantageous?

8. *Comprehension: Demonstrates Understanding* [Variable name "Underst"]
Participant explicitly demonstrates that s/he understands what someone else has said in a previous post. This must be explicitly stated.

-1 **Explicit demonstration that participant does not understand something said by another participant**
Example:
I am unable to figure out how "you are a sockpuppet" has anything to do with assertions of intent

0 **No explicit statement demonstrating understanding**

1 **Explicit demonstration of understanding**
Example:
So, you mean that this would already be covered under the current policies. Right?

I understand your argument, I just don't agree.

9. *Consideration* [Variable name "Consider"]
Post exhibits that participant is listening to and considering others. Consideration means being attentive to group members' words and perspectives and taking them seriously. Consideration is not the same as agreement.

0 **Neutral –no explicit evidence that speaker is "listening" to or ignoring others.**

1 **Post contains explicit statements that demonstrate participant is considering others' positions.** This includes comments that are made in direct response to the content of a previous post.

Examples:
I concur with Lee Daniel Crocker on this issue, and I offer my own thoughts here as a supplement.

That is an excellent example of a situation where a prohibition against personal attacks would chill spirited debate. [referring to an example given by another poster]

2 **Post contains a request for other people's feedback / consideration**

Examples:
How does that look?
Anyone else is welcome too.

3 **Post contains <u>both</u> evidence of consideration and a request for feedback or consideration from others**

10. Others' consideration [Variable name "O_consid"]
Participant comments on whether or not a different group member is considering and listening to others.

-1 **Speaker indicates that a different group member was not listening to or considering others.**
Examples:
Before you advocate a new rule, you really should prove the old one doesn't work. You haven't.

You aren't listening to me! Did you read my post?

0 **Neutral: Post does not contain any comment on how well another group member was listening or considering others' perspectives.**

1 **Speaker indicates that another group member did a good job of listening or considering the speaker's (or a third group members') perspective.**
Example:
That was a great summary of JimmyB's argument.

11. Respect [Variable name "Respect"]
Post seems to presume that other participants are honest and well intentioned.

-1 **Demonstrates lack of respect. Disregard or dismiss others' perspectives or experiences, make personal insults, etc.**
Example:
Slrubenstien: what the hell is stopping you from going through the dispute resolution over WHEELER's egregious offensiveness, and seeing if it actually fails, *before* asserting we need another rule? The time you spent on the above could easily have been used on something to actually deal with the alleged problem. And establish that the alleged problem actually falls within the remit of the present mechanism for dealing with problem users. Which I maintain it does

0 **Neutral –not clearly respectful or disrespectful.**
Posts with no reference to other participants should be marked as neutral.

1 **Demonstrates respect: explicitly acknowledges others' perspectives and/or experiences**
Example:
For this reason I respectfully disagree with Anthere's sympathetic remarks.

12. Others' Respect [Variable name "O_Resp"]
Post evaluates some other group member's behavior as respectful or disrespectful.

-1 **Indicates that someone else was being disrespectful**
Examples:
I also don't see how you can think that it is the lack of enforcement that seems to suggest to me that there is a need for a new rule, when I have stated explicitly that this is not the case. That seems to show serious lack of respect for a contributor who has strived to respond to your comments patiently and clearly.

Please stop cutting up my text. Repeating back to you what I understand from what you said is a **good** habit, it helps w communication. If I'm wrong, tell me so politely. Please stop being rude, I don't appreciate it.

Let's play nicely, shall we? I know you two have a history, but we can let that go, I hope.

0 **Neutral- no comment about whether someone else's behavior is respectful**

1
Indicates that someone else was showing respect
Example:
Thank you for respecting my views.

Overall Summary Judgments
These two codes should be made at the level of the discussion topic (not the individual post). This is the title of the discussion that organizes the group of individual posts. If topic areas have multiple sub-headings, use the top-most heading level.

13. Analytic Components
Looking at the discussion as a whole, how often do you think the discussion of this topic demonstrated the analytic components of deliberation? That is, during this discussion how often did the group create a good information base, prioritize their values, come up with a range of solutions/recommendations, and analyze these recommendations?

0 **Not at all**
1 **Rarely**
2 **Occasionally**
3 **Frequently**
4 **Constantly**

14. *Social Components*

Looking at the discussion as a whole, how often do you think the discussion of this topic demonstrated the social components of deliberation? That is, during this discussion, how often did the group promote mutual understanding of each other's perspectives, listen to and consider each other's views, and demonstrate respect for each other?

0 Not at all
1 Rarely
2 Occasionally
3 Frequently
4 Constantly