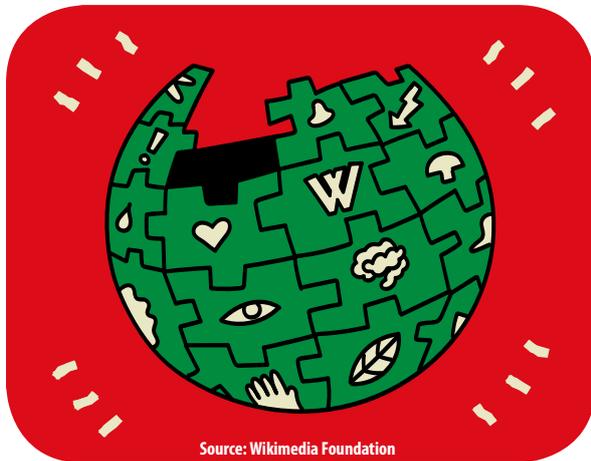


NEWS

FROM AROUND THE GLOBE



Source: Wikimedia Foundation

20 years of Wikipedia: Launched on 15 January 2001 by Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger, Wikipedia is “the free encyclopedia that anyone can edit” and has grown to comprise more than 55 million online articles in over 300 languages that is accessed by 1.5 billion unique devices every month, making it one of the most popular websites globally and the largest collection of open knowledge in history.
See bit.ly/3tbLJCz

INNOVATION

USING AI TO TACKLE COVID-19

With the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine underway and focus turning towards assessment of responses implemented during the pandemic to increase preparedness for future crises, the role of big data and artificial intelligence (AI) is under analysis. According to an article by Neelima Arora, Amit K Banerjee and Mangamoori L Narasu in *Future Virology* (November 2020), the response to this outbreak was augmented significantly by various digital technologies and AI and there are several applications of interest.

On the role of AI in prediction, tracking and contact tracing, the authors state that AI can “be harnessed for forecasting the spread of virus and developing early warning systems” and can “augment mobile health applications where smart devices like watches, mobile phones, cameras and range of wearable devices can be employed for diagnosis, contact tracing and efficient monitoring”. They provide examples such as BlueDot identifying a cluster of pneumonia cases and predicting the geographical location of an outbreak of COVID-19, and applications like AI4COVID-19 that use audio samples of coughs for use in telemedicine.

On the use of AI for early diagnosis and monitoring of patients, the authors describe how “AI was used for the detection and quantification of COVID-19 cases from chest x-ray and CT scan images” among other techniques which may be applied to reduce the burden on healthcare resources. Remarking that “never before has mankind witnessed such a race for the development of a vaccine against a pathogen” the authors state that “AI techniques can boost and complement traditional technologies by reducing the time required in bringing a drug from bench to bed by speeding up lead discovery, virtual screening and validation processes by a huge margin”.

On AI in curbing spread of misinformation, the authors note that “machine learning techniques can be used to identify trends and sentiment analysis and provide information regarding the origin of false information and help in curtailing misinformation”.

The authors conclude that “several bottlenecks in harnessing AI to its full potential in the current scenario are availability and sharing of clinical and epidemiological data, computational resources, scalability, privacy and ethical concerns”.

See [doi: 10.2217/fvl-2020-0130](https://doi.org/10.2217/fvl-2020-0130)

CYBERSECURITY

NIGERIA

Building upon a 2014 policy, the Nigerian Government has released its National Cybersecurity Policy and Strategy 2021 to provide Nigeria with the necessary platform to confront dynamic threats in cyberspace, a framework to harness the efforts of private sector, academia and industry towards progressive economic and national development and a roadmap for technical education, digital skills acquisition and indigenous technology production to create job opportunities and boost the economy by positioning Nigeria for the African cybersecurity market estimated at over \$4.5 billion.

See bit.ly/3qvXMsm

COMPETITION

EPIC GAMES V APPLE

Epic Games, a US-based video game company, has filed antitrust lawsuits against Apple in a range of jurisdictions in relation to app distribution and payment processes through Apple’s iOS platform, which Apple is defending. The lawsuits are in response to a decision by Apple to block updates to the popular game Fortnite following an attempt by Epic Games to implement a direct pay option within Fortnite that would circumvent Apple’s in-app payment system, in breach of App Store guidelines. The UK lawsuit has been dismissed, the US hearing is set for May 2021 while actions in Australia and the EU remain in progress.

See bit.ly/3bozSut

CONTENT

PORNHUB PURGE

Adult website Pornhub removed millions of videos from its platform after public interest journalism reporting drew attention to widespread availability of illegal content, including non-consensual material, rape and child sexual abuse material. With 20 million registered users and averaging over 100 million daily visits to its site, Pornhub states that it now sets the standard for safety and security policies across tech and social media with industry-leading measures for verification, moderation and detection. The enhanced compliance program implemented by Canadian parent company MindGeek includes measures such as banning unverified users from posting content, eliminating downloads and partnering with leading non-profit organisations to flag content that may violate Terms of Service.

See nyti.ms/30o7KS8 and bit.ly/38mko8v

HUMAN RIGHTS

CHOOSE TO CHALLENGE

International Women's Day (IWD) is a global day to acknowledge the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women that has occurred for over a century and been officially recognised by the United Nations since 1977. Marked annually on 8 March, the IWD theme this year is "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world" to highlight the efforts by women and girls in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the gaps that remain. According to the UN Secretary-General's recent report, women are still underrepresented in public life and decision-making: "Only 24.9 per cent of national parliamentarians

are women and, at the current rate of progress, gender equality among heads of government will take another 130 years" meanwhile "women are also at the forefront of the battle against COVID-19, as front-line and health sector workers, as scientists, doctors and caregivers, yet they get paid 11 per cent less globally than their male counterparts".

See bit.ly/3sW4FVC

Alongside this, a social media campaign #ChooseToChallenge encourages people to call out gender bias and inequality as well as seek out and celebrate women's achievements because "a challenged world is an alert world and from challenge comes change".

See www.internationalwomensday.com

DEVICES

SMART PRODUCTS

The OECD has released a report on the digital security of "smart products" that contain code and can connect, from smartphones and desktop computers to consumer IoT products and cloud services. The report, *Understanding the Digital Security of Products: An in-depth analysis* (February 2021) notes that code is vulnerable and, because all smart products contain code, they are all, to some extent, vulnerable: "Between 2017 and 2020, an average of 40 new vulnerabilities in widely used products such as Android, iOS or Windows were publicly disclosed every day – and probably many more were discovered but undisclosed. The exploitation of vulnerabilities in smart products can have severe economic and social consequences". The report shows that economic factors play an important role in the relative "insecurity" of smart products. It develops an analytical framework based on the value chain and lifecycle of smart products and applies the framework to three case studies: computers and smartphones, consumer Internet of Things (IoT) devices and cloud services. It demonstrates that "complex and opaque value chains lead to a misallocation of responsibility for digital security risk management, while significant information asymmetries and externalities often limit stakeholders' ability to behave optimally".

See bit.ly/3rxFnY

ADVERTISING INFLUENCERS

The German Federal Cabinet has approved a draft law submitted by the Federal Minister of Justice and Consumer Protection to strengthen consumer protection in competition and trade law. The draft law is to improve the transparency of online retailing for consumers. It clarifies the cases in which content must be labelled as commercial communication. This provides greater legal certainty to influencers and bloggers on when they have to mark recommendations made by them as advertising: "Posts have to be marked advertising if there is something in return so that consumers can better assess how a recommendation came about and whether they want to trust it". Next the draft law passed by the Federal Cabinet will be forwarded to the Bundesrat for comment and, following a counter-statement by the Federal Government, will be forwarded to the German Bundestag and discussed there.

See bit.ly/20tScDP

IIC EVENTS

1 March, Sydney

IIC Australia chapter Webinar: Unpacking the Media Reform Green Paper

11 March, online meeting

IIC UK chapter Webinar: From rules-setting to principles-based regulation: what are the challenges and opportunities?

23rd - 24th March, virtual event

Middle East and North Africa Telecommunications & Media Forum

26th - 27th May, Virtual event

IIC/BEREC Telecommunications & Media Forum 2021

iicom.org/events/

Check website for updates

IN BRIEF

CHIP SHORTAGE

Taiwan is working to help resolve a global shortage of chips impacting the manufacture of cars and electronic devices with the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company Ltd (TSMC), the world's largest dedicated semiconductor foundry, key to supply efforts.

NEWS MEDIA

BARGAINING CODE

Facebook reversed its decision to restrict people in Australia from sharing news on its platform after reaching agreement with the Australian Government on provisions of the legislated News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

The Solomon Islands Government has signalled it won't proceed with a ban on Facebook which Prime Minister Sogavare had said was necessary for national unity.

C-BAND

The FCC announced winning bidders in the US C-band auction of 3.7 GHz service licences which yielded over \$81 billion in gross bids and provides mid-band spectrum for 5G services.

NOBEL PRIZE

The Prize in Economic Sciences was awarded to Paul R Milgrom and Robert B Wilson "for improvements to auction theory and inventions of new auction formats" such as the Simultaneous Multiple Round Auction (SMRA) used for the sale of radiofrequency spectrum.