

Comment to *Publish in Wikipedia or perish* by Declan Butler at *Nature News* 16 December 2008

Finn Årup Nielsen

December 17, 2008

Apart from the issue of "no original research" consensus policy on Wikipedia as well as the problem of vandalism the adding of scientific information in Wikipedia may face another problem: Notability. Some months ago I started Wikipedia articles about individual single nucleotide polymorphisms, see, e.g., <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rs6313>. For the ordinary encyclopedian this may seem as an obscure topic, and indeed other Wikipedians questioned the notability of these articles, i.e., they called for a deletion.¹ However, the articles have so far survived for several months. My first article on the bioinformatics Web-site SNPepia was on the other hand deleted according to the notability criterion, though it now survives after reconstruction with more information added.

Recently, I have asked how wikipedians would welcome Wikipedia articles for individual scientific peer-reviewed articles.² I imagined that such articles would present summaries of the research in the scientific articles that would allow researchers and the public free access to the scientific information that otherwise would be hidden behind publisher's fee. I also imagined that such articles could put the research in context, linking and explaining research updates. Finally, the most interesting point I imagined would be to add the quantitative results contained in the scientific article to the so-called Wikipedia templates. That would allow scripts to automatically harvest the quantitative information and build meta-analysis upon them. Of the four other Wikipedians that joined the discussion all were negative.³

¹see discussion on Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia_talk:-WikiProject_Molecular_and_Cellular_Biology/Archive_1&oldid=258531059#SNPs

²For an example see my sandbox area, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Fnielsen/Sandbox/-Right_Temporoparietal_Cortex_Activation_during_Visuo-proprioceptive_Conflict

³see Wikipedia discussion, [http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:-Village_pump_\(proposals\)&oldid=258529459#Articles_for_individual_scientific_articles](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:-Village_pump_(proposals)&oldid=258529459#Articles_for_individual_scientific_articles)