

# Peer Production and Academia: Faculty Perception and Practices about Wikipedia

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Panel 25: Peer production and open collaboration: revisiting closure,  
stabilization and black boxing through unfinished artefacts

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# Research topic

- Present initiatives: open access publication, open research, citizen science, etc.
- Peer production and science: similarities and differences

## Research questions:

Are peer production and science compatible?

How is Wikipedia perceived by university faculty?

# Methods

Qualitative: 12 interviews to faculty members

Quantitative: online survey with 50 questions to all faculty members of two Spanish universities (913 valid responses)

Descriptive analysis, statistical relationships, cluster analyses, structural equation modeling

Variables: attitudes and practices towards Wikipedia as function of personal, professional, institutional and social factors

Blog: <http://oer.uoc.edu/wiki4HE/>

# Results (descriptive analysis)

1. Wikipedia is mostly seen as a useful tool for teaching but actual teaching use is scarce. Only 9% have used it (mostly for preparing teaching materials).
2. Most faculty are regular users for information seeking (both for personal and professional matters: 60%). Though few of them edit (5,5%).
3. Unexpected rate of registered users: 13,5%. Catalan pop.: 0,4%.
4. Most faculty don't recommend it to students (46%). Only 27% do.
5. Quality is mostly considered positively (updated, reliable). But articles are not seen as complete.
6. Trust in editing/reviewing/publishing system is not clear. Little knowledge?
7. Most faculty think the use of Wikipedia is not well considered by colleagues. They think colleagues don't use it much.

# Results (correlations)

Factors correlated with the teaching use of Wikipedia:

1. Hard sciences and engineering correlate with higher teaching use and better quality perception.
2. Academic position, age, teaching experience and PhD are not relevant. Slight gender correlation.
3. Colleagues as a strong role model – both for teaching use and positive assessment.
4. High correlation with the use of other 2.0 tools.
5. Teaching use correlates with quality perception.

# Results (cluster analysis)

## Cluster 1: ACTIVE (233)

- Mostly men
- Part time teachers
- Engineering and hard sciences (STEM)
- Create and share open resources
- Many edit Wikipedia and are registered users
- Cite Wikipedia and see good quality

## Cluster 2: FRIENDLY (253)

- They use Wikipedia for preparing their teaching
- Not for teaching activities with students
- Not against students using it

## Cluster 3: LOW (153)

- Low use of Wikipedia for teaching
- Frontier between clusters 1 and 4?

## Cluster 4: RELUCTANT (218)

- Mostly women (slightly)
- Full time and part time teachers
- Not in STEM fields
- They do not create or share open resources
- Low (passive) use of Wikipedia
- No active use (editing)
- Never cite Wikipedia
- They see bad quality

# Final remarks

- Colleagues as strong role models: even quality perception depends heavily on peers
- Private use though public silence: Wikipedia is seen as not belonging to scientific culture
- Active faculty are also involved in other professional cultures
- Different cultures within academia/science: disciplines matter!
- Teaching uses of Wikipedia do not depend on some factors traditionally associated with 2.0 tools