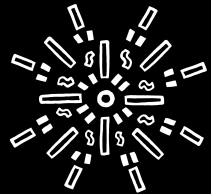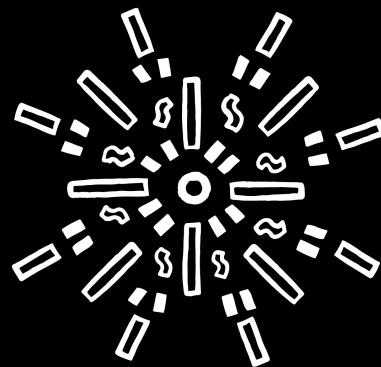# Growth // Positive Reinforcement

June-July 2022 Design User Testing
Mary Grace Reich

Purpose

Cross-cultural feedback on approaches to Positive Reinforcement through review of [static designs](#):

- **Impact**
  - Module
  - XTools data

- **Levelling Up**
  - Daily Goals
  - Learning Pathway

- **Personalized Praise**
  - Awards & Recognition

WIKIMEDIA
FOUNDATION

Scope

1 hour interviews conducted by: Criba Research (Spanish), WMF/M. Raish (English), UserTestingArabic (Arabic),

	Arabic (ar)	English (en)	Spanish (es)	Total
Countries	7	5	1	**13**
Readers	0	1	5	**6**
Editors	7	6	3	**17**

Some participants active in other communities: GitHub, Facebook Groups

WIKIMEDIA
F O U N D A T I O N

Editing // Reader Perspectives

Most readers participating were based in Argentina and use esWiki.

At the start of the conversation, they found **editing unappealing** because they:

1. Were **unaware** that editing is open to everyone.

2. Expected that editing requires **specialized knowledge and expertise**. Uncertainty around moderation processes was a factor tied to expectations of expertise.

3. Anticipate editing to be **complex**, *requiring time and energy.* Participants did not realize the possibility of minor edits, such as copyediting or translation.

"What do you mean by editing? I don't know if I can create a new article. I don't think so. What I'm thinking is, what about moderation? I mean, who is the moderator or who is... someone who arbitrates, because anyone can write anything? It's not like that."

-Argentinian reader

Editing // Editor Perspectives

Spanish Participants

Experts in a specialized field who believe they have unique knowledge to contribute—for example, updating topics they know well from dissertation level research.

People with a **personal connection** to the information compelled to correct an error, such as biographical information about a relation.

English Participants

Some motivated by a **contribution to a public good** but still had not thought of their editing as a volunteer activity.

Some got involved through reading related to **professional interests** or **professional development** programming. They tend to edit articles when they notice an issue while reading.

Photography interest led to uploading photos to **Commons** which led to editing Wikipedia.

Arabic Participants

Primarily motivated by **impact and developing professional skills** through research and writing. Several started editing to **fix inaccurate content** or were inspired to **enhance Arabic content** after learning its limitations relative to other Wikipedias (English, French).

"I think it is encouraging, but **this idea of editing for the sake of editing bothers me**. How does Wikipedia know what this person knows?...

Here, for example, this challenge to complete 60 easy edits feels like a game and nothing more, but there is supposed to be truthful information and all that... I feel it lacks a little more seriousness, so to speak."

-Spanish Reader, Argentina

"**It's definitely fun.** It's more fun that what I usually see Wikipedia be. The interface is quite conservative usually, but **I mean why not?**"

-Expert French and English Editor, Denmark

Observations & Opportunities
by design

Landing Page

Only one participant recognized it (es). While most English participants grasped each section, most Arabic and Spanish participants struggled.

Observations

Only few noted the top panel of options, but some expressed confusion between "Homepage" v. "User page".

Some misunderstood suggested edits as suggested articles to read (es). The count (345) seemed overwhelming (es), and participants wanted to be able to filter to **topics in which they are knowledgeable** (ar, es).

Many had difficulty understanding the **"Your Impact" terminology**. Some confusion around views vs. advancement as an author (ar, es).

Many had difficulty understanding **"Your Mentor"**. There was uncertainty about how a mentor got to be in that position, what authority they have (ar, es), and how they from the option to "Get Help" (ar).

Opportunities

Consider renaming "Homepage" to distinguish more clearly from user page.

Consider adding additional explanation, including an indication of filtering capabilities at this stage.
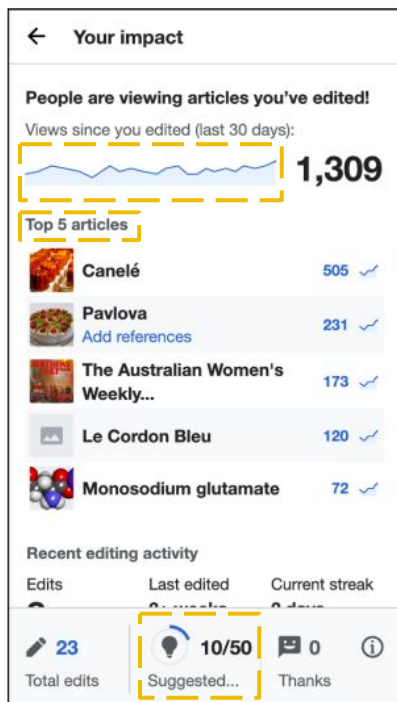
Consider different word choice and making the explanation at the bottom of the module more prominent.

Consider making purpose more prominent and then explaining the mentor. Maybe this could vary by localization, for example substituting "Your mentor" with "Community Support".
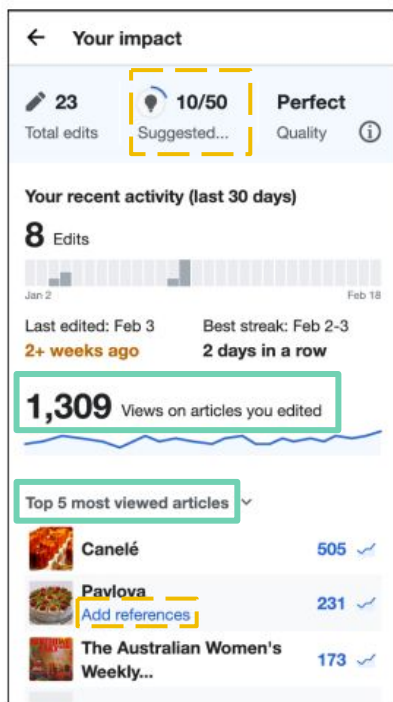
Impact // User Stats

Version A

Version B

Observations

Some uncertainty about whether the line chart is static or dynamic. Looks sleek but not that informative (en).

A few participants more quickly recognized 1,309 as views in version B (en, es). Seemed to visually skip the description at the top of A and deduce "Top" as views based on blue numbers to the right in version A (en, es).

"Suggested…" unclear. Likely not recognizable as edit count out of context and clipped in mock (ar, en).

Participants questioned why only "Pavlova" had an actionable link ("Add references") (en).

Opportunities

Consider adding additional detail to the line chart, e.g. axes numbers, to validate that the chart represents actual data.
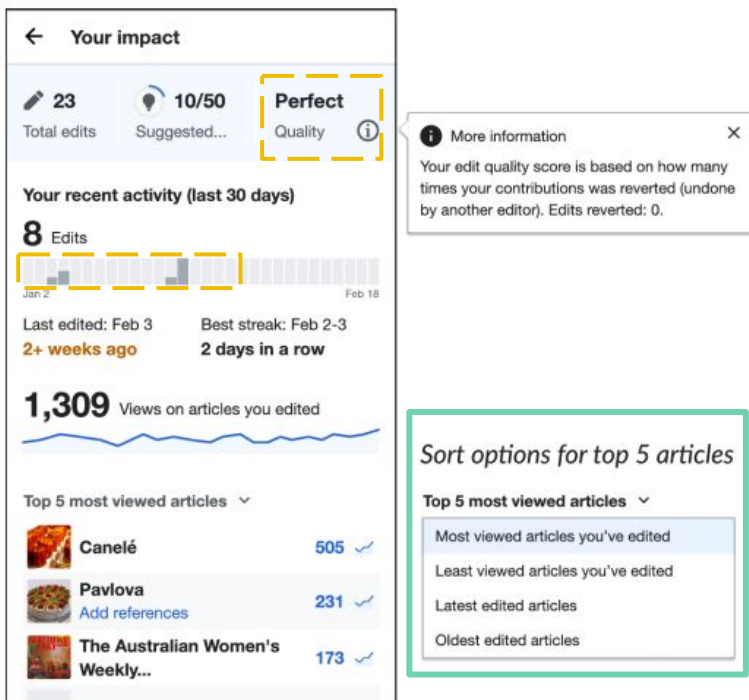
Consider maintaining descriptors in close proximity to numbers as in version B.

Consider removing suggested edit count or shifting to show full description.

Consider how to make calls to action sufficiently consistent to be clear in practice.

Impact // User Stats

Version B

Overall *slight* **preference for version B**, mainly because of additional information, including activity tracking and article sorting (en, es).

Observations

Remarked on **busyness**. Some elements, such as "Best streak", often initial missed in the mix (en).

Excited about feedback but have high expectations of the **significance of the "Quality"** score and questions about the process, e.g. how to recover a perfect score after a reversion (en, es).

Understood and interested in **activity timeline** but some difficulty orienting to meaning of solid bars (en).

Sorting by **views** was more interesting than recency (es). Suggested additional sorting options, including **most collaborative** to see where they have worked most with other editors on a single article and **most recently updated** by any editor (en).

Opportunities

Consider removing some information to simplify design.

Consider explanation of reversion and alternatives to account for severity of reversions, quality issues without reversion, and a path back to a "perfect" score.

Consider adding additional explanation to the activity chart. However, may be clarified by having personal context.

Consider adding additional sort options and condensing design to avoid an overly long list, such as adding a Most / Least sort option applicable across categories.

Impact // Authorship

The following two mocks were presented for higher level content review rather than design usability review.
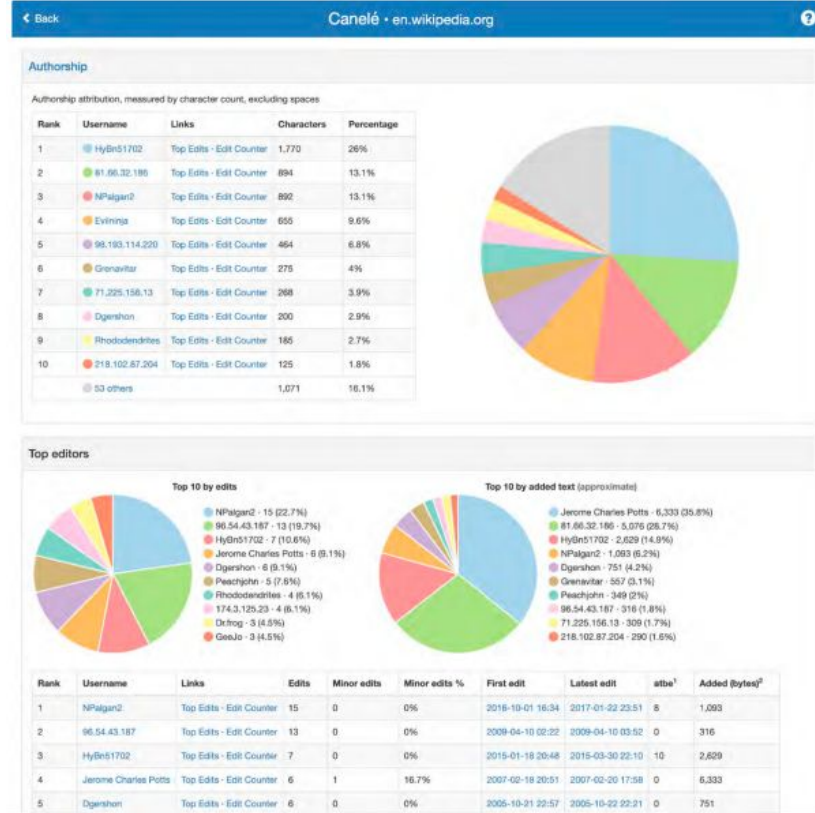
Several readers (es) were surprised by the ability to access this data. It communicated the **transparency and reliability** of Wikipedia.

Observations

Opportunities

Quantity v. Quality: Confusion about whether ranking is based on quantity or quality. For those who recognized ranking as quantity-based, some uncertainty about whether truly indicative of "top" editors (en).

Consider other indications of quality—i.e. references added, reversion rate, thanks received, collaboration.

Competition v. Collaboration: Some saw the leaderboard as fostering competition in contrast to collaboration. Others said motivating friendly competition is more likely with others they are connected to already (en).

Consider leaderboard based on project, topic area, or region rather than article edits to distance from article "ownership" but potentially increase shared personal connection. Ensure newcomer understanding of collaboration > competition.

Practical v. Motivational: Several suggested that this information rather be made available at the article level for context and identifying editors to contact (en). Participants hoped to be able to direct message users by clicking on their name (es).

Of the impact data presented, article authorship seemed least engaging as a motivational tool—consider as a lower priority or reframing with input above.

"I do like the information. I like to know that this person contributed that much. I just don't like the numbers here because **I feel like it's a competition, and it's meant to be a collaboration.**"

-Expert French and English Editor, Denmark

"And you can sort of go, ah **if I made a few more edits to this page, I can be here on the authorship chart**... **We're all working together I suppose** to make this the best damn Canelé article on the internet."

-English Editor, Australia

"It's good. What I would add is that on the left there are the ranking numbers and next to that the user names, so **maybe you could send a direct message, to make things more dynamic**, or ask where they got some piece of information or say thanks. And maybe you could develop a more dynamic bond with the other person, who might live in your city or your neighborhood, so I think it would be good to implement that."
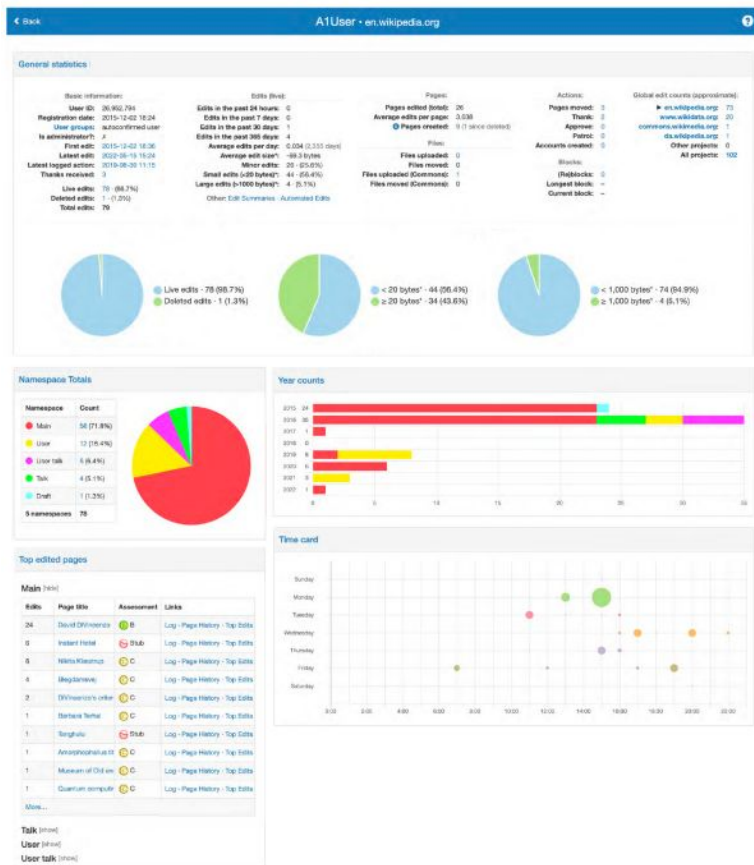
-Spanish Editor, Argentina

"Is this an area where you would be kind of **mutually appreciating** each other for contributing to the same article **OR** is this **a competitive space** where you want to be the sole author and best editor of that article?"

-English and Japanese Reader, United States

Impact // User Stats

Shared interest in seeing **comparative editing activity over time** (en). Most found the data interesting but some noted uncertainty about **what to do with it.**

Opportunities

As expected, an **overwhelming amount of information** to digest (en, es). While some participants adopted a "more is better" attitude, there are barriers to engagement with too much information.

Some information **too technical** for newcomers—for example, bytes, namespace (ar, en, es).

Time card / yearly counts least interesting data for Spanish speaking participants (es). **Month over month** editing activity more relevant framing than year over year or day and time for less active or less experienced participants (en).

Top edited pages and especially scoring interesting but **source of Assessment category** is unclear (en).

Observations

Prioritize key indicators and consider how to make the data actionable. Link to goal-setting? Enable users to pick indicators interesting to them?

Consider as lower priority data that would benefit from additional explanation.

Consider monthly or configurable intervals for comparison of editing activity over time.

Provide an explanation of article quality assessment.

"You have all the statistics, which are a lot, and the same things represented in different charts. I think it is complete, it even gives you the information in bytes, I don't really know why**, but it's good. I don't think I would add anything to this statistics section."

-Spanish Editor, Argentina

"When I log in to Wikipedia, you can see the last edit I did, and it actually shows you the article that you edited. It shows the time, but it's all in a bunch of lines. There's no color, no GUI, no representation of all those things. **So this would be very motivating for the community if it were to show you a real page. Because it is more detailed and more precise."**

-English Editor, Nigeria

Suggested Edits
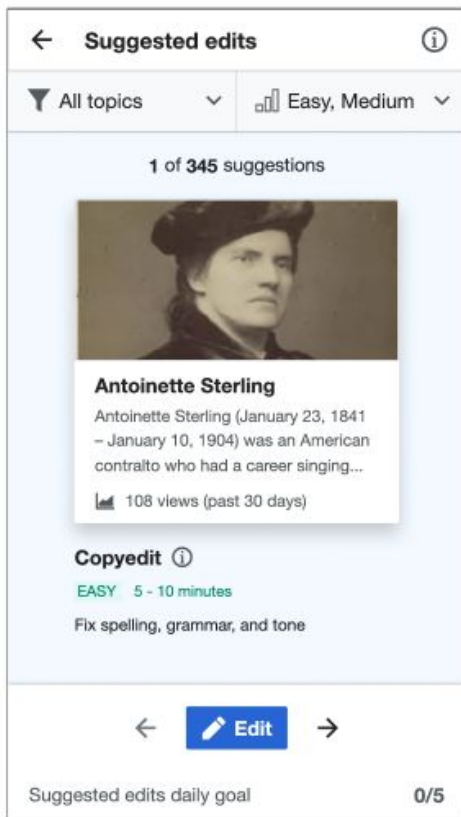
None of the participants were familiar with suggested edits, but they quickly understood the purpose (en, es).

Observations

Some participants expect that editing requires domain knowledge, so found **suggestions outside of their areas of expertise discouraging**, even as an example. They did not notice the text explaining that this article would only require copyediting (es) and requested specific topic filtering (despite the filter shown) (ar, es).

No participants remarked on the **daily goal note** at the bottom of the screen (en).

Some participants expected the time and difficulty score to be based on assessment of the edits needed for the particular article (en).

Opportunities

Consider reinforcing on this page or preceding it that no domain expertise is required. Emphasize the explanation of "Easy" and perhaps mention that external research is rarely required at this level —though tone may complicate that.

Consider making daily goal more prominent.

Consider removing projected time to manage expectations.

Leveling Up // Daily Goals
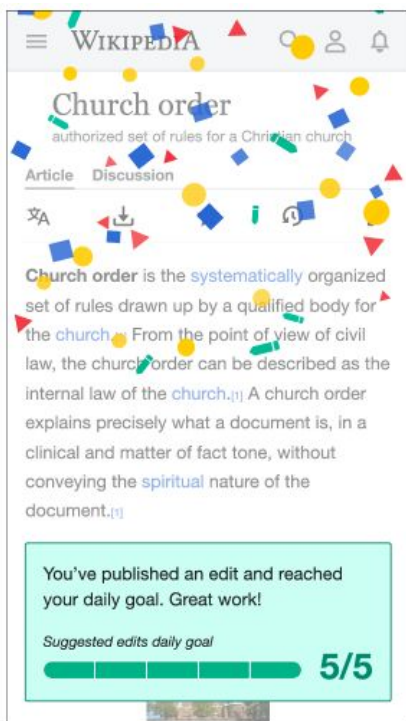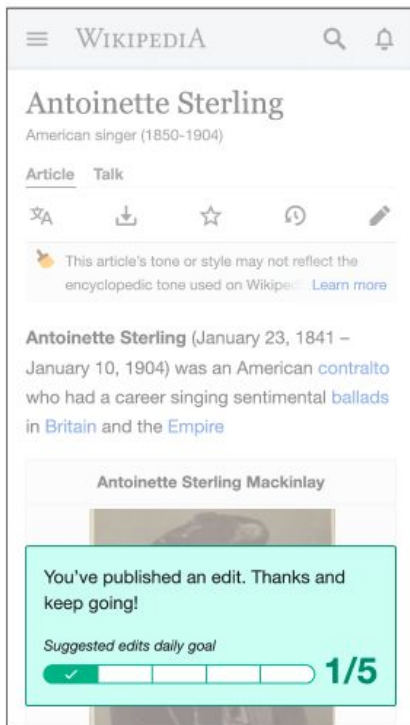
Participants understood the daily goal and confetti as an **acknowledgment** (ar, en, es). English and Arabic participants reacted *positively*. Spanish participants felt *neutral* at best about the designs—unlikely to be motivated but not annoyed.

Observations

Most participants related to daily goals on other platforms, especially learning apps, but **have not been or do not expect to be motivated by them (en, es)**.

None of the participants who have edited set specific goals, even the most active. Their past editing activity was determined by the time they had available (en).

Some participants felt that the design was **too "fun"** and out of place for a platform as serious as Wikipedia (es).

Nigerian participants did not recognize "confetti" but instead related the design to other online ads and recognition. The design was still perceived positively.

Opportunities

Not surprising that participants don't expect it to be a major motivator since it's designed to be a nudge. Consider testing first as a lightweight feature—perhaps just confetti?

Consider making the goal configurable with a suggested default at likely a lower threshold than 5 per day. Perhaps link to impact data?

Consider testing more or less "playful" designs. Consider how newcomers can grasp how WP can be both fun and serious.

No changes needed—anticipate that animation will make celebration clearer.

"**It's definitely fun.** It's more fun that what I usually see Wikipedia be. The interface is quite conservative usually, but **I mean why not?**"

-Expert French and English Editor, Denmark

"There are places that give you the thumbs up, but let me tell you, I have been on the Internet for so long that I pay no attention to that. It's not that I have a prejudice regarding whether it is good or bad, **I think that it is neither good nor bad, it feels like an irrelevant detail somehow**."

-Spanish Editor, Argentina

"For me, **from an academic point of view, adding all kinds of effects like confetti is not something that helps with something that you want to do**. Of course, there will surely be some things to correct, but I am very strict about this, I mean, if this is aimed at a certain type of people, it should be done in the most professional way possible."

-Spanish Reader, Argentina

"I don't know if this is intentional, these shapes. When I see this, it seems like it's a mistake. **I don't know why those shapes are there**… *Okay, wait.* It looks like when you open a website and you do something, and they congratulate you with some kind of sprinkles or something."

-English Editor, Nigeria

Leveling Up // Learning Path

Requirements and rewards were clear to English participants but caused some confusion for Spanish and Arabic participants.

Observations

Some participants **did not grasp the meaning** on their first review (es). Others expected a **physical reward** (ar).

Difficulty levels based on **high quantities** (e.g. 60 edits) were discouraging to some. Levels felt **subjective** and intimidating, and aligned with gaming, which is less serious than WP (es).

Some participants expected that a **another path** would open up after completing the new editor journey (en).

Some participants noted the **unreverted** requirement but commented that it was discrete, and others did not note it (en).

Participants requested **more color** (en, es).

Opportunities

Consider an engaging tutorial to introduce the feature.

Clarify types/levels of difficulty of edits. Consider lower thresholds for advancement and/or highlight a variety of paths to advance—e.g. Editing content, adding references, adding images, etc.

Consider what additional levels would look like or how the path will be introduced to manage expectations.

Consider making explanation of "unreverted" more prominent.
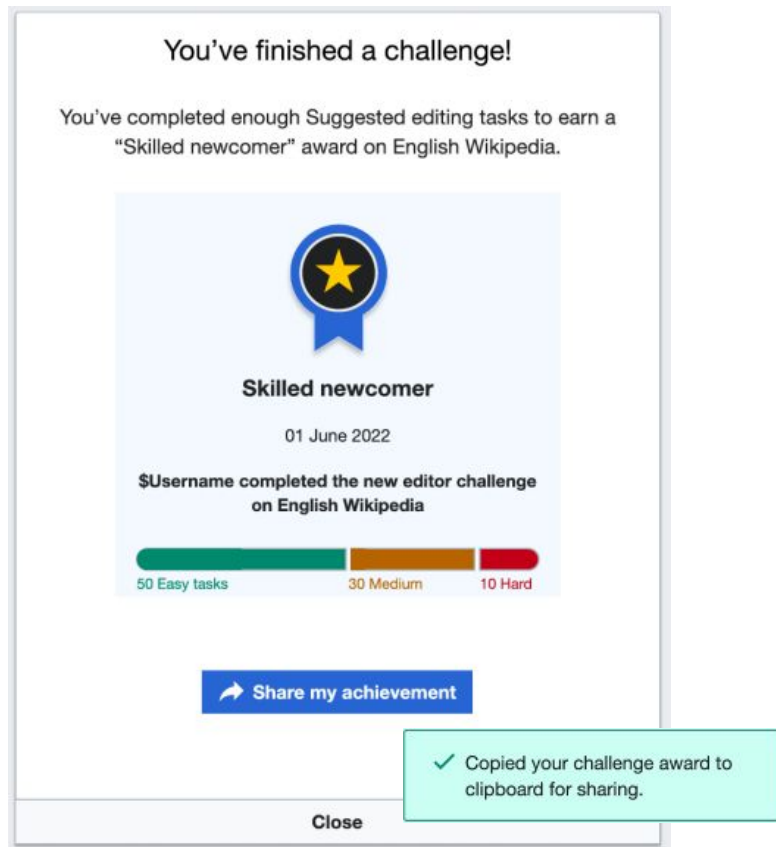
Consider how to make the learning path more vibrant.

"I think it is encouraging, but **this idea of editing for the sake of editing bothers me**. How does Wikipedia know what this person knows? I feel that it should have on the platform itself...If it wants to encourage people to continue editing and learning, **it should provide on the platform a section where it can offer sources on different topics or categories**.

Here, for example, this challenge to complete 60 easy edits feels like a game and nothing more, but there is supposed to be truthful information and all that. It's too appealing, but I feel it lacks a little more seriousness, so to speak."

-Spanish Reader, Argentina

Leveling Up // Badges

You've finished a challenge!

You've completed enough Suggested editing tasks to earn a "Skilled newcomer" award on English Wikipedia.

Skilled newcomer

01 June 2022

$Username completed the new editor challenge on English Wikipedia

50 Easy tasks | 30 Medium | 10 Hard

➤ Share my achievement

✓ Copied your challenge award to clipboard for sharing.

Close

Participants recognized as a typical virtual certificate (en, es) but had a range of reactions to it. Some may desire and pursue it while others may not find it motivational (en, es).

Observations	Opportunities
Some participants perceived the award to be **childish**—misaligned with a serious platform like Wikipedia (es).	*Consider comparatively testing a slightly more serious, mature design.*
Two new-editors noted the award's potential **protective value** when dealing with experienced community members—anticipating that the award would show they are well intentioned and trying (en).	*Consider how other more experienced editors could see and would perceive newcomer badges.*
Participants expected that it could be added to the user page or a visible "**reward shelf**" (en, es).	*Consider how the badge placement will be introduced before and after receiving it.*
On terminology—Arabic participants requested using "New Skilled Editor" rather than "Newcomer".	*Consider adding additional context for localization.*
Most Spanish and English participants would be unlikely to share outside of WP—several expressed preference not to share much online. Most Arabic participants would share on social media. Some interest in its utility as a demonstration of professional skill (ar, en, es).	*Consider how badges could demonstrate professional skills. For example, Arabic participants requested a certificate with their names, edits, and leveling as an editor that could be shared on LinkedIn or on a CV.*

"Aw yeah, cute. You can share it. I probably would share that to my Talk page. I'm showing people, yes I'm a skilled newcomer. **If you come to my talk page to tell me off about something, know that I'm not an idiot, I've done the bare minimum to win this award**... It would let people know, *Hey, I'm new here, but I'm trying*, so that would explain if I make a mistake."

-English Editor, Australia
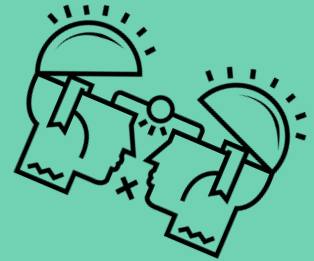
"If it's for children… Is it for adults? (Laughs.) If it's for children, it's alright. Honestly I feel it's not… It's virtual congratulations…It feels like something virtual."

-Spanish Editor, Argentina

"It looks like a little certificate, and it could be used as proof that you know how to edit online… It would be useful to show, on one hand, that I am ok. Even though I'm a disaster with computers, I can still do something with it. **It could give me some credibility."**

-Spanish and English Editor, Spain

Awards & Recognition

Participants recognized Awards as automated and Thanks and Wikilove as community driven (en, es). For those experienced with Thanks, being able to revisit in one place was exciting (en).

| Observations	Opportunities
Some could not recall **specifics** of awards and were interested in unfulfilled badges (en). Some did not notice Awards at first or did not grasp the trajectory of achievement (es).	*Consider how to explain completed and uncompleted award requirements. Add color to draw attention to awards.*
The **difference** between Thanks, Wikilove, and messaging (Talk/Discussion) was confusing, despite the description in introductory screen. Most participants were not familiar with Wikilove (ar, en).	*Consider how the current design will convey Wikilove templates versus free form messages? Interactive tooltip may be adequate but assume limited prior knowledge.*
Once understood, participants valued Wikilove over Thanks because of **the substance of the feedback**. Thanks was likened to a Facebook like (es).	*Consider how to further productize and promote Wikilove.*
Wanted additional information to relate thanks to a particular edit (en).	*Consider referencing or linking to content/topic/section of edit and date rather than precise timestamp.*

"I've seen on other people's personal pages, they've got whole screens full of rewards and stuff. And I know they're just pixels on the screen, but I got one for making a bunch of good edits that weren't reverted, and **that felt pretty good**.

I guess **rewards from humans have more value** because a person has taken time out to look at your stuff, and they deemed it good enough to give you a star."

-English Editor, Australia

High Level Opportunities I
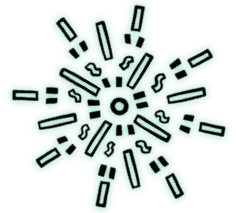
1

Make impact data actionable.

Impact data was a compelling feature for participants with more experience editing, which several related to their interest in data—an unsurprising quality for a Wikipedian. For those new to editing, impact data, beyond views and basic editing activity, may be more compelling if linked to goal-setting and optimizing impact.

2

Evaluate the ideal editing interval.

Across features, daily intervals seemed likely to be overly ambitious for new and casual editors. Participants also reflected on ignoring similar mechanisms on other platforms when they were unrealistic. Consider consulting usage analytics to identify "natural" intervals for new and casual editors to make goals more attainable.

3

Ensure credibility of assessments.

Novice editor participants were interested in the assurance of their skills and progress the quality score, article assessment, and badges offer. Some hoped that badges could lend credibility to their work reviewed by more experienced editors. With that potential, it could be valuable to evaluate that the assessments are meaningful measures of skill and further explore how best to leverage them to garner community trust of newcomers.

High Level Opportunities II
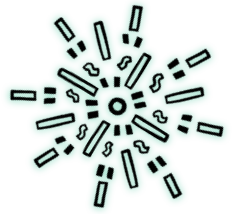
4

Reward quality and collaboration over quantity.

Both editor and reader participants from esWiki were more interested in recognition of their knowledge or expertise (quality) than the number of edits they have made (quantity). Similarly, some Arabic and English editors are motivated by their professional interests and skill development to edit. Orienting goals and rewards to other indicators of skilled edits, such as adding references or topical contributions, *and* collaboration or community involvement may also help mitigate concerns about competition overtaking collaboration.

5

Prioritize human recognition.

While scores and badges via Growth tasks is potentially valued, recognition from other editors appears to be more motivational. Features which promote giving, receiving, and revisiting thanks seemed most compelling, and editors may benefit from selecting impact data which demonstrates engagement with readers or editors most compelling to them.

6

Experiment with playfulness of designs.

While some positive reinforcement features can be seen as the product of "gamification", some participants (primarily from EsWiki) felt that simple, fun designs were overly childish or playful for the seriousness of Wikipedia. Consider experimenting with visual designs that vary in levels of playfulness to evaluate broader reactions to "fun" on Wikipedia.