

Google donates \$2 million to support Wikipedia

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(AP) -- Google Inc., the Internet's most profitable company, is giving \$2 million to support Wikipedia, a volunteer-driven reference tool that has emerged as one of the Web's most-read sites.

The donation announced Wednesday matches the largest grant made so far to Wikimedia Foundation, the nonprofit group that oversees the 7-year-old Wikipedia. Ebay founder Pierre Omidyar also donated \$2 million to Wikimedia six months ago through one of his investment arms.

The latest largesse has catapulted Wikimedia beyond its \$10.6 million revenue target for its fiscal year ending in June. That goal had looked ambitious, given that it represented an increase of more than 20 percent from \$8.7 million a year earlier.

But the worst recession since World War II evidently didn't dampen support for the Internet's most popular encyclopedia, which has more than 14 million entries written and edited by some 100,000 unpaid contributors in about 270 languages.

Wikimedia, which gets most of its revenue from donations, has collected contributions from more than 240,000 individuals so far this fiscal year, mostly in small sums.

The outpouring has allowed Wikipedia to expand while keeping its Web site commercial free, spokesman Jay Walsh said. "We intend to keep it

that way, too."

Wikimedia, based in San Francisco, plans to spend about \$9.4 million of its revenue this year, mostly to pay salaries and benefits to a staff of more than 30 people. The second-biggest expense is for operating Wikipedia's Web site.

The donation is a pittance for Google, which ended December with \$24 billion in cash. Google makes much of its money from ads that run alongside Internet search results, many of which send people to Wikipedia.

In a statement, Google co-founder Sergey Brin hailed Wikipedia as "one of the greatest triumphs of the Internet."

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