

# Wikipedia use—nothing to be ashamed about

February 11 2015

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Credit: Thinkstock/Monash University

Academics and students alike should be making better use of Wikipedia, a major study of digital technology use in Higher Education has recommended.

The Australia-UK collaboration led by Professor Neil Selwyn from Monash University's Faculty of Education found that while Wikipedia was is a popular background resource with [students](#), it had not supplanted traditional sources of intellectual scholarship and authority.

The study of more than 1600 students found that while Wikipedia was used by seven in eight students, the world's sixth most visited website wasn't seen as the most useful education resource. Google and other

[internet search engines](#), library websites, learning management systems and Facebook all ranked higher. Most students used Wikipedia for background research.

The researchers suggest that given the important but relatively background role Wikipedia plays in student life, universities should continue to consider ways of better integrating Wikipedia into their accepted modes of teaching and [learning](#) provision.

"There are clearly many ways in which universities need to engage more directly in supporting and enhancing the role that Wikipedia is now playing in students' scholarship," Professor Selwyn said.

"The early alarmist fears that Wikipedia would lead to a dumbing down of university study was not apparent. But neither is Wikipedia ushering in a new dawn of enlightenment and students and teachers creating their own knowledge.

"Lecturers should be encouraging their classes to edit and improve Wikipedia pages. At the very least, more academics should become Wikipedia editors - writing on their areas of expertise."

"Wikipedia is here to stay, and universities should be getting more engaged with it rather than just trying to deny its existence."

The study was one of a series on Technology Enabled Learning funded by the Australian Office of Learning and Teaching. Articles have been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management* and *Studies in Higher Education*.

Provided by Monash University

Citation: Wikipedia use—nothing to be ashamed about (2015, February 11) retrieved 7 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-02-wikipedia-usenothing-ashamed.html>

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