

Wikipedia eyes India for language growth

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The online encyclopaedia currently has versions in more than 20 languages spoken in India, but the number of pages compared with English, and considering the size of India's 1.2 billion population, is small.

"Today, we have 50-100 million Internet users and 700-800 million mobile users (in India)," Hisham Mundol, India programmes consultant for the non-profit Wikimedia Foundation, told a news conference in

Mumbai.

"There's going to be a lot more people who will be more comfortable in their mother tongues than English, so it (developing language pages) is hugely important."

The founder of the user-generated website, Jimmy Wales, predicted last year there could be at least 100,000 new articles in the top 10 Indian languages by 2015.

Mundol said applications were required to boost access to the site via smartphones as well as older handsets without [broadband wireless](#) access.

The Internet and Mobile Association of India on Tuesday said that there were 112 million Internet users by September and the country was adding five to seven million new users every month.

The industry body predicted that the number of users could leap to about 600 million in the next five years -- if government plans to widen [Internet infrastructure](#) come to fruition.

India had 866 million [mobile phone subscribers](#) as of August 31 this year, according to the latest [government data](#).

The Wikimedia Foundation's India operation is the organisation's first office outside the United States and was created to tap into the country's [open Internet](#) culture.

A three-day national conference for existing and potential contributors is being held in Mumbai from November 18.

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