

Wikimedia Foundation v. NSA
No. 15-cv-0062-TSE (D. Md.)

Plaintiff's Exhibit 31



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Founding principles

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Wikimedia projects have certain **founding principles** in common. These principles may evolve or be refined over time, but they are considered ideals essential to the founding of the Wikimedia projects – not to be confused with the Wikimedia Foundation (which also arose from the Wikimedia projects). People who strongly disagree with them are nonetheless expected to either respect them while collaborating on the site or turn to another site. Those unable or unwilling sometimes end up leaving the project.

These principles include:

1. Neutral point of view (NPOV) as a guiding editorial principle.
2. The ability of almost anyone to edit (most) articles without registration.
3. The "wiki process" as the final decision-making mechanism for all content.
4. The creation of a welcoming and collegial editorial environment.
5. Free licensing of content; in practice defined by each project as public domain , GFDL, CC BY-SA or CC BY.
6. Maintaining room for fiat to help resolve particularly difficult problems. On a dozen projects, an Arbitration Committee has the authority to make certain binding, final decisions such as banning an editor.

Variants [edit]

Not all projects follow these principles in the same way.

- Some apply neutrality by allowing a plurality of items which are individually not neutral (Commons , which says "Commons is not Wikipedia, and files uploaded here do not necessarily need to comply with the Neutral point of view"), or have a simpler principle of 'being fair' (Wikivoyage , which says "Travel guides should *not* be written from a neutral point of view").
- Some allow non-wiki modes of collaboration and decision-making in some parts of their process (MediaWiki).
- Some allow limited use of fair-use media or other media that are not freely licensed.

See also [edit]

- [Wikimedia Foundation mission statement](#)
- [Wikimedia values](#) — The six values of the Wikimedia Foundation
- [In a nutshell, what is Wikipedia? And what is the Wikimedia Foundation? — The Wikimedia Foundation](#)

Categories: [Community](#) | [Global policies](#)

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