

# *Facing Wikipedia in university teaching and learning ... a boost to reshape educational & scientific contents production and publishing*



*Formerly subtitled in seminar program: “assignments, skills, syllabus and outreach”*

by Tomás Saorín

# We agree, Wikipedia do matters ...

- We are interested in Wikipedia.
- We understand its benefits for student's learning processes and skills.
- We are seeing how the idea of Wikipedia as a teaching tool is becoming "from a preposterous idea to a respected innovation".
- We realize that Wikipedia is an encyclopedia, but our interests go after innovation in content production and social innovation.
- We may consider that Wikipedia could somehow be part of the alternative scholarly publishing models.
  - In fact, we consider open, transparency and collaboration as one of the better practices in academia and research.
- But, **is there anyone out there apart of us?** Are they freaks, outsiders or influential ones in the academic environment?

# Wikipedia sweet spot in university

- Riding the wave of the growing fields of educational innovation, digital literacy and e-learning.
- Panels in Wikimania or Wikisym and also in other long established scholarly events.
- Wikimedia education program, as a part of the Public Policy Initiative, since 2010.
- Wikipedia campus ambassadors and online ambassadors: increasing quality, increasing participation, increasing outreach.
- Wikipedia as a field of research from any kind of disciplines and methodologies. Specially attracting attention from Social & Information Sciences researchers.



# With Wikipedia we can work it out

- Piotr Konieczny, **Wikis and Wikipedia as a teaching tool: five year later**. Firstmonday, vol 17, n<sup>o</sup> 9, sept. 2012.
  - The tools are just at one click of distance.
  - Global audience; it's real and contributing is fun.
  - Difference between essay-like and fact-based, analytical, encyclopedic writing style.
  - Students strengthen their ability to search for reliable sources and evaluate them critically .
  - They learn how to work in a real-time, real-world collaborative community-of-practice environment; an experience that teaches them the value of objectivity and the collaborative process of negotiating over the content .
  - They improve their new media literacy and gain insights in the creation process of texts on wikis in general, an increasingly essential skill in a modern IT workplace.
- It's fine tuned for uses in classroom context (assignments, syllabus, etc.).
- **But it isn't enough**, let's explore together the side effects of this successful case, its externalities.

# Campus-wide spread of Wikipedia

- Take a step forward from “cool innovation” to the next stage.
- We realize that there is a coexistence between conventional academic practices (manuals, assessment, dissertation, journals, monographs) and a growing attention to digital communication cultures, such as blogs, wikis or moocs... but not everyone follows the same direction.
- There are needings, insights, but also there is a lack of structures, formats and rewards specifically targeted to Wikipedia’s core value proposition.
- Make visible what Wikipedia can teach Academia about spreading knowledge according with technologies and openness.
- We need institutional adoption of lessons suggested by Wikipedia, concerning how information flows, how to publish , how co-authoring and how to make evolve educational or research resources.



Oficina de Conocimiento Abierto



UNIVERSIDAD  
DE SALAMANCA

Involve existing **Open Knowledge and Software Departments** at Universities into Wikipedia's concerns.

### Entidades colaboradoras



MEDIALAB USAL



Ediciones Universidad  
**Salamanca**



Servicio  
Central  
de Idiomas



USAL TV

BIBLIOTECAS

### Oficinas de Conocimiento Abierto / Software Libre



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UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS PALMAS  
DE GRAN CANARIA



Establish policies with regard to Wikipedia at **Academic Press** and **Digital Collections Centers** level.

# Wikipedia is a source of insights

- ... they do not only bring with them **new technical means**, but also **new forms of knowledge creation and dissemination** within, across and outside academic disciplines.
- Text above is extracted from de manifesto “Young Researchers in Digital Humanities”, July 2013.
- Starting from Wikipedia as a teaching tool, can arise many opportunities to do the right things with technology-oriented innovation programs.

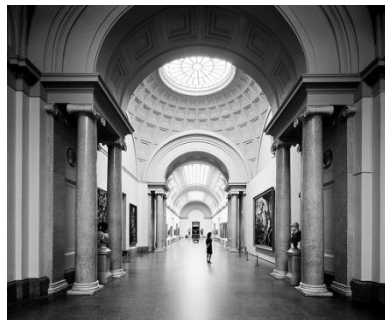
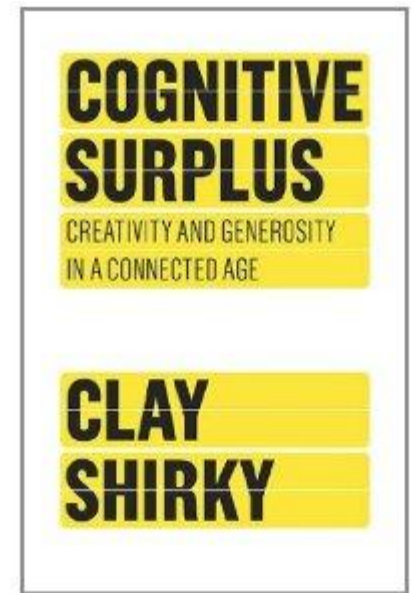
# University and Research Centers

- Previous speakers have talk about assignments, skills, syllabus, experiences with students, academics beliefs, quality perceptions, factors of Wikipedia usage as a teaching tool, Wikipedia usage as an information source for students...
- I'll focus on **institutional factors** where Wikipedia's values and practices may flourish and have effects on conventional models of scholarship.
- What does it lay beneath the label "University"?
  - I propose to move one step aside from teaching and learning, and reflect about how Wikipedia could help to reshape "scholarship", "publishing", "reputation" or "outreach".
- Beside Universities, we should point to research institutions in social, cultural and scientific domain.



# There is a surplus just out there

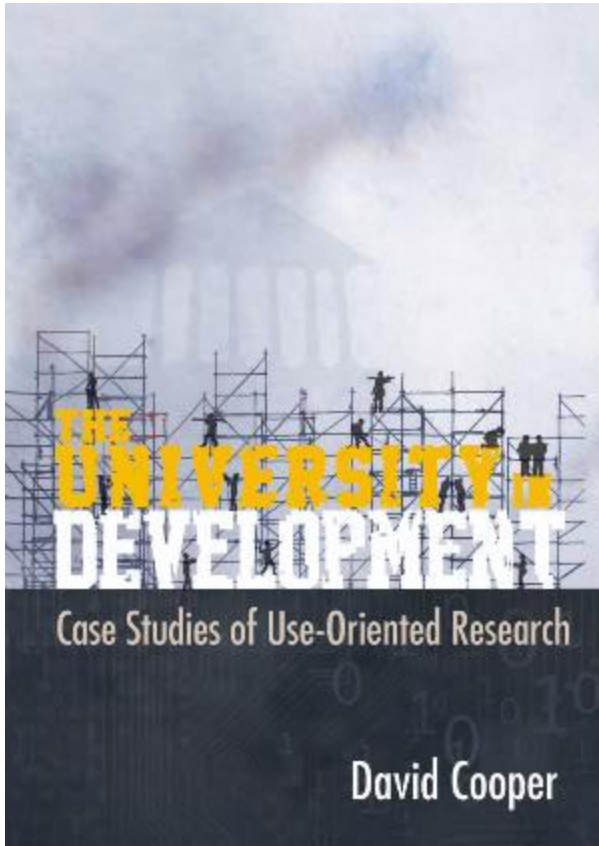
- Around universities, research centers and cultural institutions there is a “**cognitive surplus**” (as Clay Shirky understands it) that society as a whole can’t attempt to make the most of it.



# University in a broader sense

- Not only students under a syllabus, but scholars in research projects, faculty members conducting long-term research lines (Research university).
- Policy makers encourage improve (and rank) university's third mission: "contributions to society in a knowledge society".
- University as a place where social innovation may explore new approaches to information dissemination, storage, curation and production. That's exactly what Wikipedia is.
- Besides scientific research centers (Health, Bio-sciences, Energy)
  - Cultural Institutions that in many areas act connected with university departments (Art and History museums, National Libraries and Archives, GLAM, Science Museums).
  - Non-profit organizations that carry out surveys in their topic of interest, produce contents oriented to mass media and public opinion. Specially interlinked with universities are Learned societies, that often also act as professional bodies.
- Scholars that improve scientific knowledge about Wikimedia, open collaboration and peer-based production.

# University's three missions: Teaching, Research and Society



- There is a changing understanding of knowledge diffusion and circulation in university's life cycle.
- In academia, there is a barely explored world outside papers, monographs and conference proceedings, where Wikipedia is a milestone, a working model for a viable new balance between groups of interest, means and needs.
- Let's reflect in two different ways:
  - Any single little contribution to Wikipedia is a contribution to society.
  - By participating in an online community of practice, academia may release their potentials in knowledge sharing and diffusion in new shapes conform with technological changes.
- Once a scholar is involved in Wikipedia, he/she is probably likely to expand his skills to other fields of scholarly publishing system.

# Academia outreach

- Wikimedia Foundation Strategic Plan targets Academia in his Outreach section
  - ...working with community leaders to conduct focused outreach to groups with potential to bring new expertise to the projects
  - Support offline and social events to increase community cohesion and commitment to the projects
  - Reward excellent contributions that are not being recognized via established community mechanisms
- But how a global and online project is incorporated into academic structures and policies?
  - Cultural change, visibility of efforts, evidences of systemic benefits and return of inversion (at an individual and institutional level).
  - These questions can't be answered from the armchair, of course. They require experimentation and study.

# Scarcity of “participative energy”

- Wikipedia is fueled by mass participation, an “energy source” that has to be managed as a scarce resource. Gain and retain active editors is a continuous worry that Wikimedia Foundation Headquarters address with priority.
- Wikipedia normal functioning requires an incredible amount of such class of social energy that is shared with an increasingly number of internet project incorporating it.
- Technologies can multiply or transform the capabilities of catch involvement and effective participation, but there are limits in the system.

How many “wiki-ever” stuff we could raise?  
Not so many



# Everyone is invited

- So far Wikipedia has born and grow on the periphery of educational, scientific and cultural institucional structures, but nowadays is considered of social relevance in our informacion landscape.
- Nevertheless these institutions are also set up to fulfill a mission considered of social relevance. They are in alingment with what Wikipedia is delivering but they are reluctant to pay attention to Wikipedia.
- Wikipedia matters, it deserves social attention. But there are risks when institutions try to get into... Universities are needes, and **We need a deeper understanding of how to use its momentum, how academia (and GLAM) fits.**
- Wikipedia is a fragile ecosystem with delicate balances. Could it be harmful an excessive interest by scholars?

Can this long-lasting wiki-miracle afford the luxury of living apart universities and knowledge institutions?

Can we waste any drop of water?

IMAGE BY JOE N FLORIO.COM



A REVOLUTION DOESN'T HAPPEN  
WHEN SOCIETY ADOPTS NEW TOOLS,  
**IT HAPPENS WHEN SOCIETY  
ADOPTS NEW BEHAVIORS.**

- CLAY SHIRKY, US NOW.

# Wikipedia and OER and ...

- Wikipedia Education Program in the United States and Canada will officially move from being directed by the Wikimedia Foundation to being directed by a new nonprofit, the **Wiki Education Foundation** (WEF), as a “thematic organization”.
- An organization to drive cultural change into educational system, by better understanding its procedures and policies.
- The movement for Open Educational Resources has lessons to learn of Wikipedia experience: growth, sustainable, diversity, remix, open peer-production and open peer-evaluation.
- Open isn't enough, while the main problems are:
  - content transformations,
  - reuse in different contexts
  - content evolution
  - Content enrichment
  - Granularity of content-level links
  - Open and Libre to remix with any educational purpose



# Wiki textbooks at EOI

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**Os damos la bienvenida a Wiki EOI,**  
la colección de wikilibros de **documentación docente**  
de la **Escuela de Organización Industrial**.



Wikilibro: **Gestión de proyectos**

Este wikilibro introduce al lector la terminología, entorno, roles, procesos, técnicas y herramientas utilizadas para maximizar el éxito en los proyectos a través de 12 secciones clasificadas en 2 grandes bloques:

- Capítulo 1: Fundamentos. La defi
- > [Seguir leyendo...](#)

Tiene: 2 capítulos, 13 secciones.



Wikilibro: **Dirección de personas y habilidades**

> [Seguir leyendo...](#)

Tiene: 3 capítulos, 20 secciones.

# Textbooks, Wiki Monographs

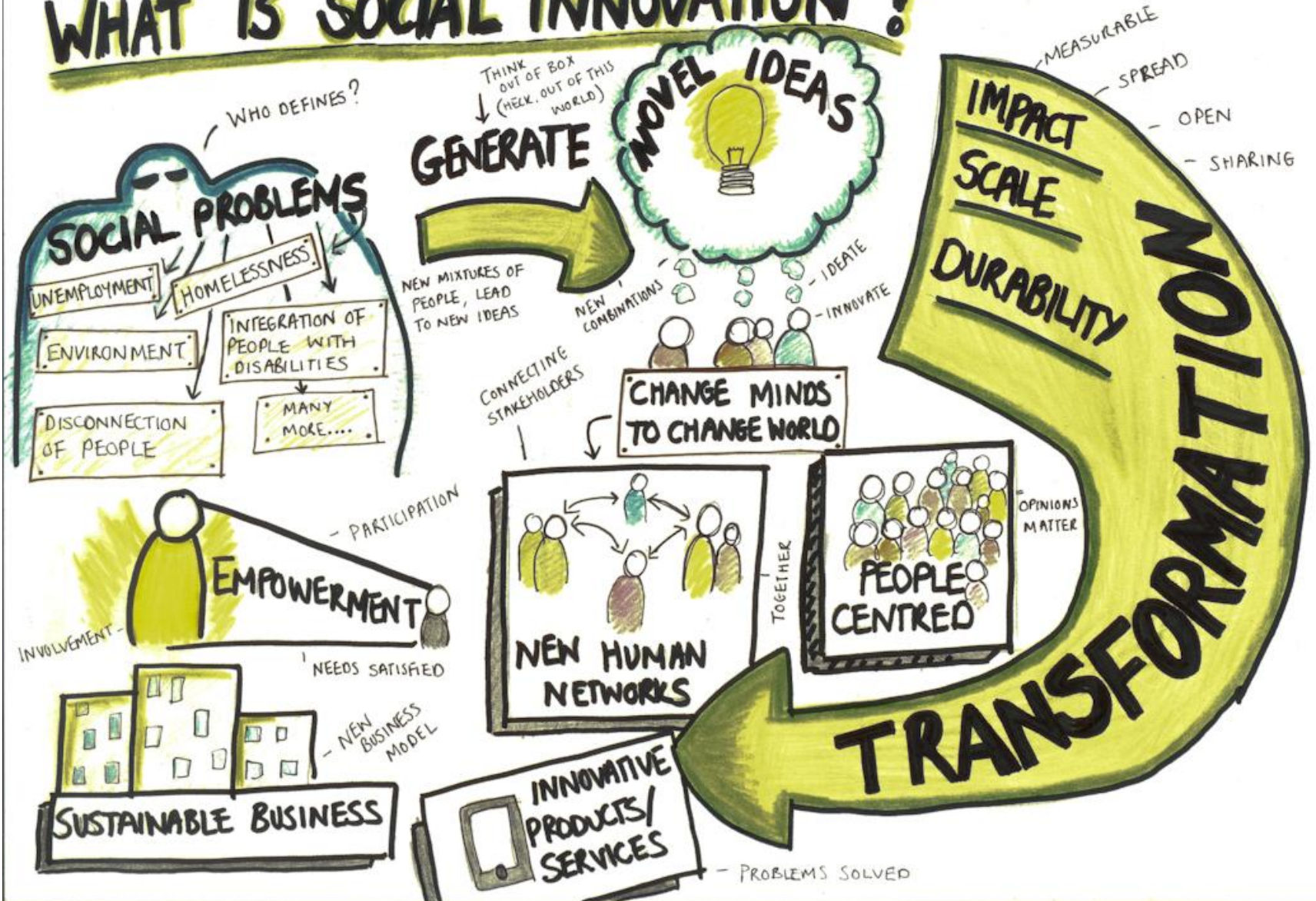


- A project that explores sustainability of open textbooks, built on top of Semantic MediaWiki.
- Content platform where professors of EOI (School of Industrial Organization) develop, update and adjust textbooks.
- Technology is easy, the critical point is the cultural change and the wiki skills that are involved. The outcomes are public, and the outputs tangible.
- There are others platforms dealing with remix, reuse and openness in textbooks, (v.g. **Flatworld Knowledge**). Open monographs should be more than “open access”, and that’s another battleground where lessons learned in Wikipedia may be useful.



# WHAT IS SOCIAL INNOVATION?

- ACCORDING TO LUSIC (WWW.LUSIC.SE)



# Social innovation

- Media technologies are embedded in ongoing social processes that affect their evolution.
- There are new ways to maximize each piece of information by facilities of coordination, connections and reuse.
- Ergo ... shifting from hierarchical control structures to networked mechanism.
- Reallocate funds and resources where maximum social benefit is produced. Change business models.
- **New Ways of Creating and Sharing Knowledge**
  - The process of knowledge creation is based on incremental contributions; indeed, at the end of a project, it can be surprising how every small contribution finally adds up to a much wider base of knowledge.
  - Emergence of 'peer production' systems.

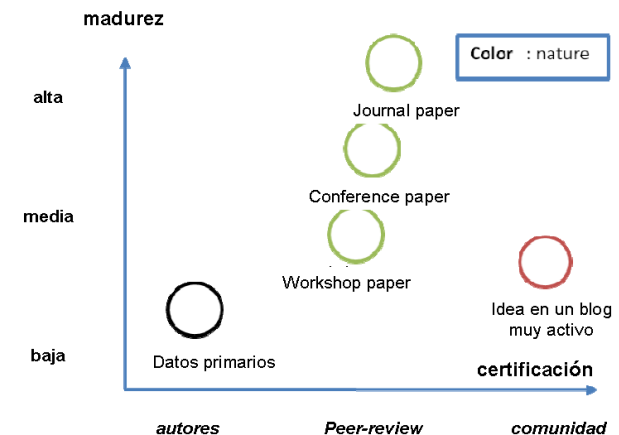
# Dynamic publishing environments

- Mietchen, Hagedorn, et al. **Wikis in scholarly publishing**. Information Services and Use. Volume 31, Number 1-2, 2011
- From the open access movement there are many reports and proposals to adapt and evolve the academic publishing system to meet new fulfillments.
- But moving beyond ACCESS concerns to DEEP CHANGES in the scientific information lifecycle is a great deal.
- **LiquiPub** (Liquid Publications: Scientific Publications meet the Web) contains achievements and concrete recommendations to different stakeholders hanging the way scientific knowledge is produced, disseminated, evaluated, and consumed.



# Digital publishing is asking for changes

- Experimenting with digital publishing projects that do not fit into the standard book and journal formats.
- Scholars are increasingly using digital technologies to conduct, organize, and display their research; but methods of disseminating and such work are only beginning to emerge.
- University press projects are experimenting with publication methods that would take advantage of the full range of features made possible by digital technology.



# Wikifying Roles in publishing value chain

- Author. Co-Author.
- Blind-reviewer and Open-review.
- Editor. Sponsor.
- Article curators.
- Post-publication stages:
  - Ongoing articles; commenting, updating, expand and significant interlinking practices. Editor's dynamization as a new task.
- Add open Peer-production strategies in every step of the process.
  - Like in Wikipedia not only articles are part of the wiki, but also policies, negotiation, evaluation, feature, conflicts resolution...
- So could the “open commentary” replace the peer-review?  
Is it possible to build the review system on the Wiki idea?



# Scholarpedia



- How wikipedia model can fit in an academic journal?
  - “the peer-reviewed open-access encyclopedia, where knowledge is curated by communities of experts”.
- Wikipedia as a complementary training ground for further publications based on revisions and collaborative content-production.





# Scholarpedia

- Combined roles applied in articles workflow. Power of sharing tasks and radical transparency.
- Visibility for Established faculty and researchers acting as curators or article sponsors
- **If not now, when?**
  - Scholars are often asked to write and present similar treatments of the same information in different contexts. An online wiki-based scholarly encyclopedia, however, only requests the contribution of an article once. If every established scholar were to write one brief review on a topic of their expertise, we could produce a dynamic, permanent, accessible, scholarly, and authoritative online encyclopedia in a matter of months. It would instantly become one of the most useful resources ever created, and its benefits to humanity would only increase as its entries were revised and its contents elaborated.



SCHOLARPEDIA  
— blog —

## RECENT POSTS

Wikifying  
scholarly canons

Announcing the  
winners of the Brain  
Corporation Prize

Ten reasons to  
participate in  
Scholarpedia's \$10k  
Brain

Corporation contest

A couple small changes  
to Scholarpedia

This week's

## A couple small changes to Scholarpedia

We're happy to announce two changes to the Scholarpedia interface.

### Any of the article's authors can publish it

We noticed that, after spending weeks writing collaborating and writing an article together, no member of the team of authors would ever do anything that would hurt their relationships with their coauthors. Thus, rather than restrict publication privileges to the article's "established expert" (as decided by the article's Sponsor(s)), as of now any of the article's authors can choose to publish it, doing so in active consultation with the other writers of the article.

### Authors choose Curator at time of publication

At time of publication, the publishing author [1] explicitly chooses who, from among the existing authors, becomes the article's Curator. Of course, in order for the article to have been initially sponsored, a Sponsor needed to vouch for the fact that an established expert was among the authors. As with publication of the article itself, this is a move that will need to be made in close communication with the other authors of the article.

<http://blog.scholarpedia.org/2012/12/02/a-couple-small-changes-to-scholarpedia/>




## Digital content project inspired in “the Wiki way”

- Bringing close “digital content” and “scholarly publishing” with “collaborative production”.
- Recommendations are intended to provide some food for thought for the different stakeholders involved in supporting digital content, whether on campus or in the cultural sector:
  - **Academic project leaders**
  - **Institutional managers at universities and cultural institutions**

# Recap.... Key areas for attention

- It's not about Wikipedia itself; it's a mean to an end: wikifying university's content creation and diffusion, making it as open, collaborative and sustainable as possible.
- Involving students, teachers, researchers – and cultural curators and scientific communicators– in Wikimedia projects is a useful way to join the long-running process of change in academic publishing.

# A bunch of suggested readings

- Piotr Konieczny, **Wikis and Wikipedia as a teaching tool: five year later**. Firstmonday, vol 17, nº 9, sept. 2012. 
- Clay Shirky, **Cognitive surplus: creativity and generosity in a connected age**. Penguin Press, 2010 (Or with a suggestive different subtitle in 2011, “How Technology Makes Consumers into Collaborators”). 
- Mietchen, Hagedorn, et al. **Wikis in scholarly publishing**. Information Services and Use. Volume 31, Number 1-2, 2011 
- Saorín Pérez, Tomás; de Haro de San Mateo, M<sup>a</sup> Verónica, Pastor Sánchez, Juan Antonio. **Possibilities of Wikipedia in higher education: collaborative knowledge construction** (*Posibilidades de Wikipedia en la docencia universitaria: elaboración colaborativa de conocimiento*). Ibersid, vol. 5, 2011, pp. 89-97. 