

# Walk the Walk or Talk the Talk: Getting Ahead in Wikipedia



Iris, Erin, Sarah, Dina, Gina,  
Binaebi, Rosemary

Advisors: Bob, Moira, Carolyn, Ben, Jacqueline

# Research Question

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- How does Wikipedia promote people to adminship?
- How does the written criteria compare to actual decision-making?

# A little bit about Wikipedia and RfAs

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- Online encyclopedia with user-created and -edited content
- Admins have special powers, mostly technical
- To become an admin a Request for Adminship (RfA) must be created
  - can be self-nominations or nomination by any other editor
- 1347 admins currently, ~1000 unsuccessful RfAs, ~1,000,000 editors

# A little bit about Wikipedia and RFAs

## (cont.)

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- Becoming an administrator is not supposed to indicate superiority or leadership
  - Jimbo Wales, founder of Wikipedia, said in regard to admins "I just wanted to say that becoming [an admin] is \*not a big deal\* ...I want to dispel the aura of "authority" around the position. It's merely a technical matter that the powers given to [admins] are not given out to everyone. I don't like that there's the apparent feeling here that being granted [admin] status is a really special thing."
- Shouldn't be based on how much you contribute, but rather how you handle conflict and whether you can contribute something of value
- Does this hold?

# How is Wikipedia structured

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- Separated into 20 sections by content
  - Sections are called namespaces
  - e.g. Article, Media, Talk, Wikipedia (policies and rules)
  - Each content namespace has a talk namespace associated with it
    - talk namespace is a discussion page
    - e.g. User, User Talk

# Why this is an important problem

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- ❑ Studying an important phenomenon:
  - Wikipedia processes generalize to other organizations
  - Reveals the criteria an organization uses to promote members (behavior and self-presentation)
  - Written record of the process and criteria, which may only occur orally in other organizations or interviews
- ❑ Changing how wikipedia is run
- ❑ Good application of text mining

# Our Method

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- Used machine learning to find patterns in successful vs. unsuccessful RfAs
  - Patterns in behavior
  - Patterns in language
- How we got the data
  - 400 applicants for administrator status, half accepted, half rejected. Contained their statement, numbers of article edits, talk page edits, etc.
- The tool we used: Tag Helper

# Two Kinds of Data

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## □ Behavioral

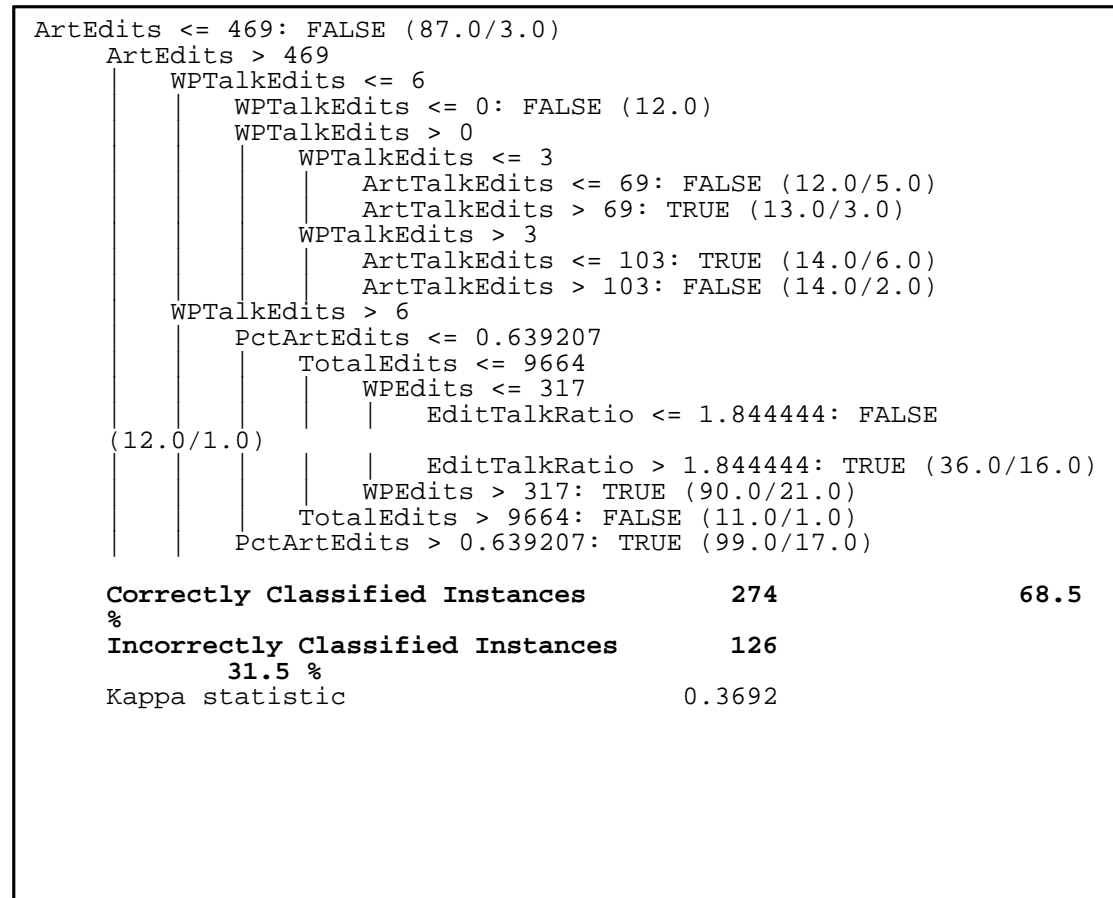
- # of edits to articles
- # of edits to talk pages

## □ Language

- Words used in personal statement, particularly:
- Conflict e.g. (consensus, debate, resolve)
- Help e.g. (vandal, version, verify, revert, clean, help)
- Promises e.g. (I would, I could, I should)
- Acronyms e.g. (copyvio, CFD, TFD, AFD, VfD, COTW, FARC, '3RR', NPOV, CSD, FAC, FA, GA, WP, CVU)

# Results

## Behavior only decision tree



# Results

## Conversation only decision tree

```
WPArticle <= 3
  |
  | ForDelete <= 1
  |   |
  |   | WPWikipedia <= 0: FALSE (161.0/51.0)
  |   | WPWikipedia > 0
  |   |   |
  |   |   | ForDelete <= 0: TRUE (78.0/33.0)
  |   |   | ForDelete > 0: FALSE (17.0/7.0)
  |   | ForDelete > 1: TRUE (16.0/4.0)
  | WPArticle > 3: TRUE (128.0/42.0)
  |
  | Number of Leaves :      5
  |
  | Correctly Classified Instances      250    62.5    %
  | Incorrectly Classified Instances    150    37.5    %
  | Kappa statistic                     0.2495
```

# Results

## Personal Statement + Behavior

```
ArtEdits <= 469: false (87.0/3.0)
  |
  |--- ArtEdits > 469
  |   |
  |   |--- wikifi <= 0
  |   |   |
  |   |   |--- certainli <= 0
  |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |--- today <= 0
  |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |--- project <= 0
  |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |--- english <= 0
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- move <= 0
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- particip <= 0
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- enjoi <= 0
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- patrol <= 0
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- wpusertalk <= 0
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- polici <= 0
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- ArtEdits <= 2796: false (51.0/10.0)
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- ArtEdits > 2796
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- line_length <= 0.1472: false (20.0/8.0)
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- line_length > 0.1472: true (11.0/1.0)
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- polici > 0: true (13.0/5.0)
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- wpusertalk > 0: true (11.0/4.0)
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- patrol > 0
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- user <= 0: true (19.0/5.0)
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- user > 0: false (11.0/4.0)
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- enjoi > 0: true (16.0/4.0)
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- particip > 0: true (18.0/4.0)
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- move > 0: true (34.0/8.0)
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- english > 0: true (11.0/1.0)
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- project > 0: true (42.0/7.0)
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- today > 0: true (14.0/1.0)
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- certainli > 0: true (25.0/2.0)
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |--- wikifi > 0: false (17.0/4.0)
  |
  |--- Number of Leaves : 16
  |--- Size of the tree : 31
  |
  |--- Correctly Classified Instances          268          67          %
  |--- Incorrectly Classified Instances       132          33          %
  |--- Kappa statistic                        0.3397
```

# Results

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<b>Parameters</b>	<b>% Correct</b>	<b>Kappa</b>
<b>Behavior Only</b>	69%	.369
<b>Everything</b>	67%	.340
<b>Statement Only</b>	58%	.155

# Summary

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- Walking the walk matter more than talking the talk
  - Behavior matters
  - Self-presentation does not have a large affect on selection
- Self-presentation may affect other outcomes
  - Recruiting
  - User's feeling of fair play

# Practical Implications

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- A Guideline/screening process to future candidates is plausible
- Make the RfA discussion/interview process fairer by using constant set of decision rules
  - As the language model addition to the behavior-model suggests self-presentation brings unreliability to the system

# Next Step

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- Results garnered from small set of predictors
- Other factors may impact selection
  - How many times the user applied to be an admin
  - Nature of the user's work (a bot welcoming new users, or was the user avoiding/resolving conflict?)