

Editing | New Wikitext Editor Testing Findings

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WIKIMEDIA
FOUNDATION

Background

As our users are using visual editor (VE), wikitext editor (WTE), and sometimes both, the team felt the drastic paradigm shift between the editors was not only distracting and did not offer benefits for users of one or both editors, but also did not follow the best design practices, namely that of visual consistency.

English Test Talk Preferences Beta Watchlist Contributions Log out

Page Discussion Read Edit View history More Search devwiki

Heading A Cite Insert Ω Save changes

Wombat


Template:Other uses→Template:Use Australian English→Template:Use dmy dates→Template:Taxobox→**Wombats** are short-legged, muscular quadrupedal marsupials that are native to Australia. They are about Template:Convert in length with small, stubby tails. There are three extant species and they are all members of the family *Vombatidae*. They are adaptable and habitat tolerant, and are found in forested, mountainous, and heathland areas of south-eastern Australia, including Tasmania, and as well as an isolated patch of about Template:Convert in Epping Forest National Park^[1] in central Queensland.

Evolution and taxonomy

Though genetic studies of the Vombatidae have been undertaken, evolution of the family is not well understood. Wombats are estimated to have diverged from other Australian marsupials relatively early, as long as 40 million years ago, while some estimates place divergence at around 25 million years. While some theories place I would now start copyediting. Wombats as a miniaturised relatives of diprotodonts, such as the rhinoceros-sized Diprotodon, more recent studies place the Vombatiformes as having a distinct parallel evolution, hence their current classification as a separate family.

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Characteristics



Wombats dig extensive burrow systems with their rodent-like front teeth and powerful claws. One distinctive adaptation of wombats is their backwards pouch. The advantage of a

Current VE¹

English Not logged in Talk Contributions Create account Log in

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Editing Wombat

Warning: You are not logged in. Your IP address will be publicly visible if you make any edits. If you [log in](#) or [create an account](#), your edits will be attributed to your username, along with other benefits.

B I Advanced Special characters Help

```

{{Other uses}}
{{Use Australian English|date=July 2013}}
{{Use dmy dates|date=July 2013}}
{{Taxobox
| name = Wombat<ref name=msw3>{{MSW3 Groves|pages=43–44}}</ref>
| fossil_range = {{fossil range|Late Miocene|Recent}}
| image = Vombatus ursinus - Maria Island National Park.jpg
| image_caption = Common wombat <br>{{Maria Island}}, Tasmania
| regnum = [[Animal]]ia
| phylum = [[Chordate|Chordata]]
| classis = [[Mammal]]ia
| infraclassis = [[Marsupialia]]
| ordo = [[Diprotodontia]]
| subordo = [[Vombatiformes]]
| familia = "Vombatidae"
| familia_authority = [[Gilbert Thomas Burnett|Burnett]], 1829
| subdivision_ranks = [[Genus|Genera]] and [[Species]]
| subdivision =
* [[Vombatus]]
* "[[Common Wombat|Vombatus ursinus]]"
* "[[Lasiorhinus]]"
* "[[Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat|Lasiorhinus latifrons]]"
* "[[Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat|Lasiorhinus krefftii]]"
* "[[Rhizophascolomus]]"
* "[[Phascolonus]]"

```

Current WTE²

Background

The creation of the new wikitext editor (NWTE) had 3 main goals:

- 1) Create a more seamless and consistent visual transition between WTE and VE
 - a) Reduce cognitive load on newer editors who started editing with VE and happen upon NWTE
- 2) Retain all WTE functionality so current users do not experience feature loss
- 3) Allow newer editors who start editing with NWTE to have access to familiar what you see is what you get (WYSIWYG) controls while being able to utilize the wider editing functionalities possible with using wikitext mode

Research Questions

- How do both newer and experienced editors feel about the NWTE experience?
- Can all participants complete common editing tasks (edit text, format text, add links, add citations, save edits) correctly in NWTE without significant confusion or hardship?
- Are editing actions and switching between NWTE and VE intuitive?
- Do editors have any feedback if this editing set-up were to be live? Are there any essential elements editors feel are missing or existing elements that could be improved?

Research Questions (related)

- Further regarding switching editors; did users notice cursor positioning on pages while switching, and how do they react in regard to whether their edits are preserved or not?
- How do users feel about the link inspector functionality?
- Do editors tend to default towards VE controls or WTE 'code' to perform editing tasks?
- What do 'Save Changes' and 'Publish Changes' mean to users in the wiki context?

What was tested

'Wombat' test page
on visualeditor-test
wiki.³



English Test Talk Preferences Beta Watchlist Contributions Log out

Page Discussion Read Edit source View history More Search devwiki

Wombat

Template:Other uses Template:Use Australian English Template:Use dmy dates Template:Taxobox **Wombats** are short-legged, muscular **quadrupedal marsupials** that are native to **Australia**. They are about Template:Convert in length with small, stubby tails. There are three extant species and they are all members of the **family** *Vombatidae*. They are adaptable and habitat tolerant, and are found in forested, mountainous, and **heathland** areas of south-eastern Australia, including Tasmania, as well as an isolated patch of about Template:Convert in **Epping Forest National Park**^[1] in central Queensland.

Contents [hide]

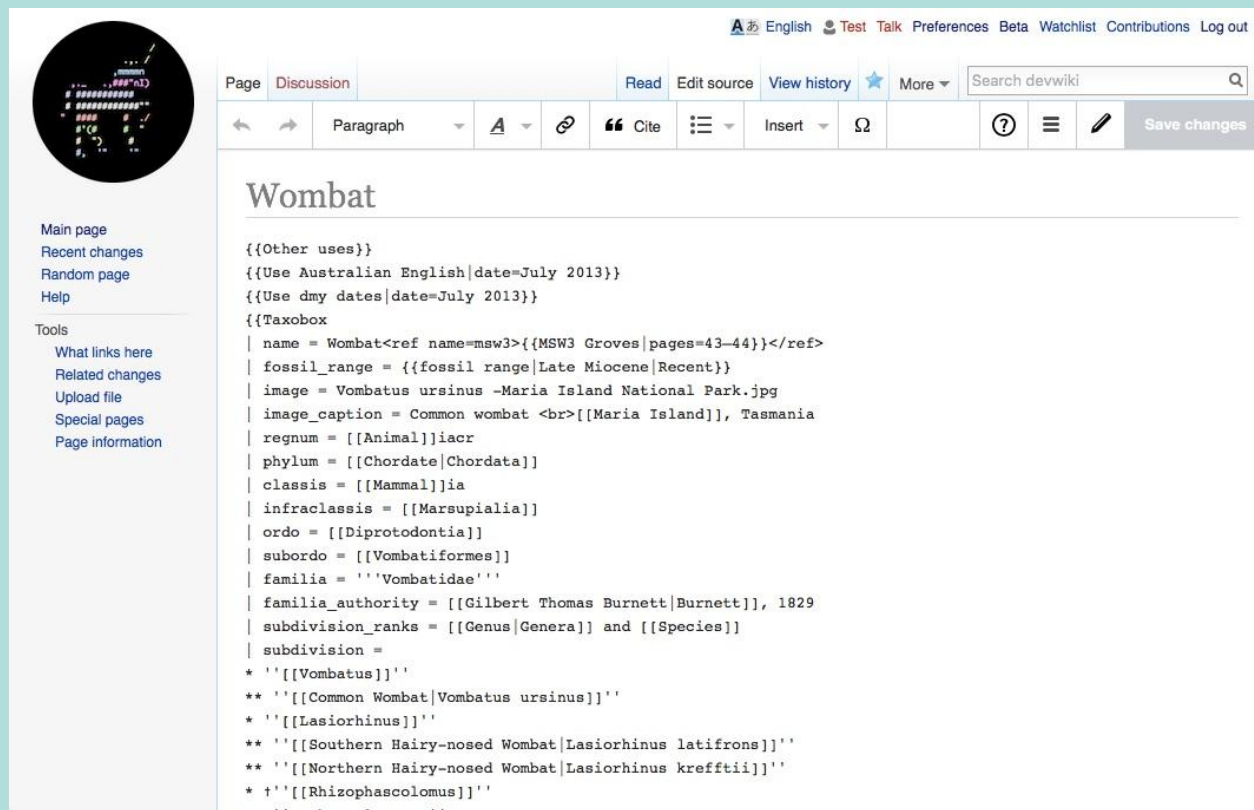
- Evolution and taxonomy
- Characteristics
- Ecology and behaviour
- Species
- Human relations
 - History**
 - Attacks on humans
 - Cultural significance
 - Conservation
- References
 - Further reading
- External links
- Wombat, *Vombatus ursinus*
- Wombat, *Vombatus ursinus*

Evolution and taxonomy [edit source]

Though genetic studies of the Vombatidae have been undertaken, evolution of the family is not well understood. Wombats are

What was tested

NWTE on
visualeditor-test
wiki.⁴



The screenshot shows a MediaWiki page titled "Wombat" in the "visualeditor-test" wiki. The page is displayed in the visual editor, showing a toolbar with various editing options like Paragraph, Bold, Link, Cite, List, Insert, and Omega. The main content area displays the article's title "Wombat" and a code view of the article's content, which includes taxonomic information and references. The code is as follows:

```
{{Other uses}}
{{Use Australian English|date=July 2013}}
{{Use dmy dates|date=July 2013}}
{{Taxobox
| name = Wombat<ref name=msw3>{{MSW3 Groves|pages=43–44}}</ref>
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| image = Vombatus ursinus -Maria Island National Park.jpg
| image_caption = Common wombat <br>[[Maria Island]], Tasmania
| regnum = [[Animal]]iacr
| phylum = [[Chordate|Chordata]]
| classis = [[Mammal]]ia
| infraclassis = [[Marsupialia]]
| ordo = [[Diprotodontia]]
| subordo = [[Vombatiformes]]
| familia = ''Vombatidae''
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| subdivision_ranks = [[Genus|Genera]] and [[Species]]
| subdivision =
* ''[[Vombatus]]''
* ''[[Common Wombat|Vombatus ursinus]]''
* ''[[Lasiorhinus]]''
* ''[[Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat|Lasiorhinus latifrons]]''
* ''[[Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat|Lasiorhinus krefftii]]''
* ''[[Rhizophascolumus]]''
* ''[[Rhizophascolumus]]''
```

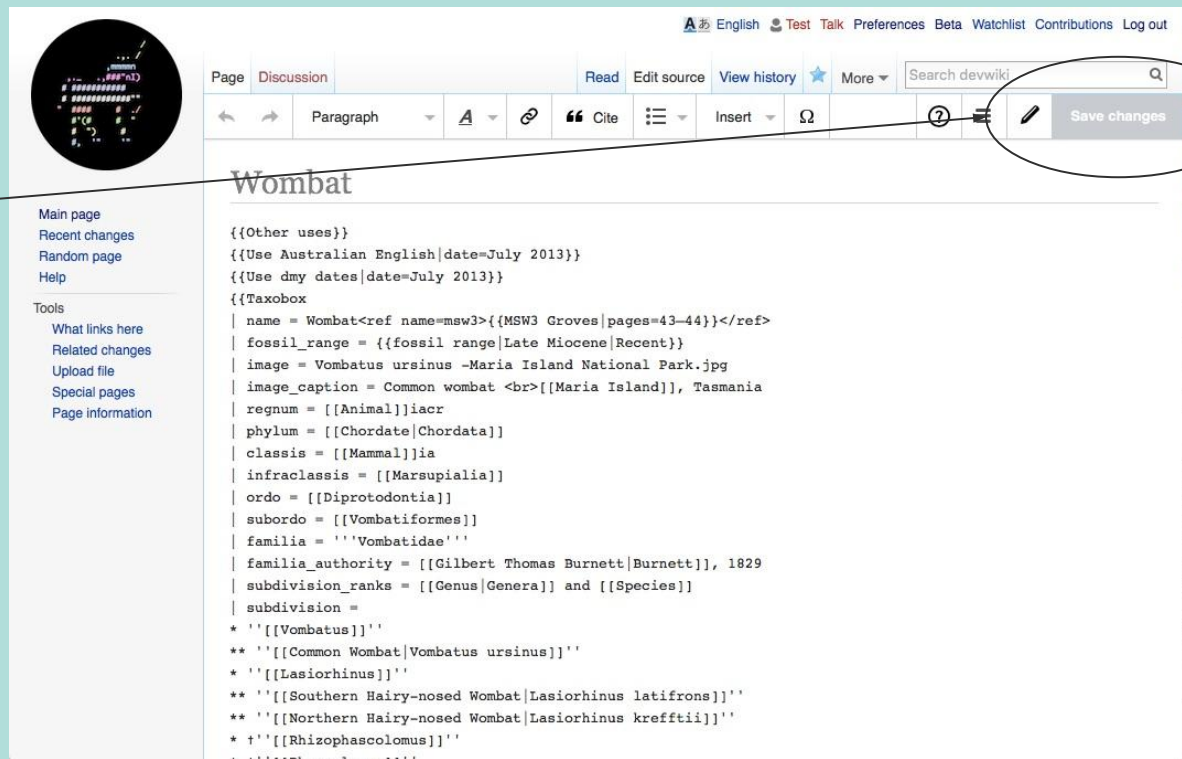

What was tested

Link inspector on
visualeditor-test
wiki.⁵



What was tested

‘Save changes’ on
visualeditor-test
wiki.⁶



The screenshot shows a MediaWiki page editor interface. At the top right, there are navigation links: English, Test, Talk, Preferences, Beta, Watchlist, Contributions, and Log out. Below these are tabs for 'Page' and 'Discussion'. A search bar labeled 'Search devwiki' is present. The main editing toolbar includes buttons for Paragraph, text formatting (bold, italic, underline), link, quote, list, insert, and symbols. A red circle highlights the 'Save changes' button, which is accompanied by a pencil icon. The page content is a Wikitext template for 'Wombat', including taxonomic information and a list of subspecies.

```
Wombat

{{Other uses}}
{{Use Australian English|date=July 2013}}
{{Use dmy dates|date=July 2013}}
{{Taxobox
| name = Wombat<ref name=msw3>{{MSW3 Groves|pages=43–44}}</ref>
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* '+' ''[[Rhizophascolomus]]''
* '+' ''[[Rhizophascolomus]]''
```

About the testing

- NWTE hosted on visualeditor-test wiki
- 5 moderated research sessions
- 5 Participants
 - 4 men, 1 woman
 - 4 more experienced editors, 1 newer editor
 - 2 WTE editors, 2 VE users, 1 uses both regularly
 - 3 US, 1 Uruguay, 1 Scotland
- Research protocol
 - Discuss participants' involvement on the wikis and preferred current editor
 - Complete common editing tasks using NWTE
 - Further probe regarding link inspector functionality and 'save changes' wording

Editing Tasks on NWTE



**Findings &
Recommendations**

What does 'Edit source' mean?



Main page
Recent changes
Random page
Help

Tools

What links here
Related changes
Upload file
Special pages
Printable version
Permanent link
Page information

English Test Talk Preferences Beta Watchlist Contributions Log out

Page Discussion Read **Edit source** View history More Search devwiki

Wombat

Template:Other uses Template:Use Australian English Template:Use dmy dates Template:Taxobox **Wombats** are short-legged, muscular **quadrupedal marsupials** that are native to **Australia**. They are about Template:Convert in length with small, stubby tails. There are three extant species and they are all members of the **family** *Vombatidae*. They are adaptable and habitat tolerant, and are found in forested, mountainous, and **heathland** areas of south-eastern Australia, including Tasmania, as well as an isolated patch of about Template:Convert in **Epping Forest National Park**^[1] in central Queensland.

Contents [hide]

- 1 Evolution and taxonomy
- 2 Characteristics
- 3 Ecology and behaviour
- 4 Species
- 5 Human relations
 - 5.1 **History**
 - 5.2 Attacks on humans
 - 5.3 Cultural significance
 - 5.4 Conservation
- 6 References
 - 6.1 Further reading
- 7 External links
- 8 Wombat, *Vombatus ursinus*
- 9 Wombat, *Vombatus ursinus*

Evolution and taxonomy [edit source]

Though genetic studies of the Vombatidae have been undertaken, evolution of the family is not well understood. Wombats are

After clicking 'Edit source', all participants expect to see either the current WTE or some slightly altered version of it.⁷

Initial reactions to NWTE

==Earthquake==
The earthquake struck on 05:03 a.m while many people were still sleep
Diguncang Gempa 6,4 SR[url=http://regional.kompas.com/read/2016/12
December 2016]]</ref> Hundreds of people panicked and ran through t
crying and screaming as their memory of the [[2004 Indian Ocean earth
the shaking was similar to the 2004 quake. Hundreds of people evacuat
web|title=Gempa Cukup Kuat Guncang Aceh[url=http://www.republika.c
aceh|publisher=Republika|accessdate=7 December 2016]]</ref>

Even though the earthquake was categorized as a shallow earthquake, t
that there was no potential for a tsunami to occur. The shaking was stro
The quake could be felt within the entire Aceh region.<ref>{{cite web|ti
Tsunami[url=https://news.detik.com/berita/d-3364638/gempa-64-sr-g
2016]]</ref><ref>{{cite web|title=Meski Merusak Bangunan, Gempa AC
Tsunami[url=http://nasional.kini.co.id/2016/12/07/18953/meski-merusal
Kini|accessdate=7 December 2016]]</ref>

Insert

Edit summary (Briefly describe your changes)

By saving changes, you agree to the [Terms of Use](#), and you ir
[License](#) and the [GFDL](#). You agree that a hyperlink or URL is su

Save changes Show preview Show changes Cancel

2 participants like
the removal of the
edit boxes that are
present on current
WTE⁸

1 participant
indicates an
immediate
preference for
NWTE to WTE

“i like this. this is a mix of the
code and the more [visually] rich
interface.”

Initial reactions to NWTE

1 participant
doesn't pinpoint
any differences
between NWTE +
WTE.

2 participants
don't indicate a
strong preference
for NWTE or WTE.

2 participants
indicate a
preference either
for VE or WTE.

“i'm not used to working with this
type of editor. I could adapt, but if
i can use the [visual] editor i
would use that”

“for me personally, i don't like
[that NWTE looks like an offline
word processor]. perhaps for
someone who has just started
editing, it's a good thing”

Findings; Text Formatting

4 of 5 participants default to using wikicode to edit first...

...but realize that using the menu functions work for them as well.

“quicker” to do formatting with menu controls

“intuitive” to use formatting button

“If i can do both [wikicode and menu buttons] at once, that’s pretty cool”

“helpful”, particularly when doing text formatting combinations or when an OS renders apostrophes differently¹

Findings; Text Formatting

5 of 5 participants complete task without major concern.

Findings; Internal link

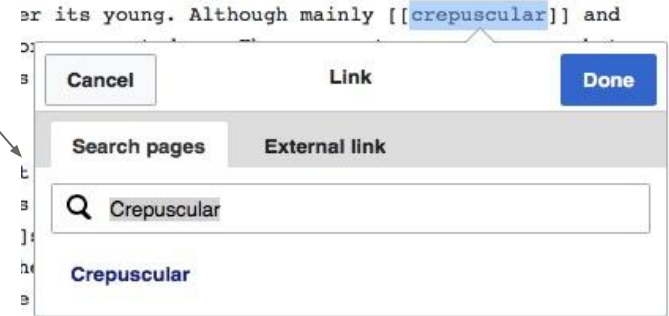
5 of 5 participants complete task without major concern.

1 participant comes away with more understanding of wikicode from completing this task.

Findings; Internal link

1 participant has an expectation of an 'undo' functionality with menu buttons.

1 participant added double sets of brackets during an attempt to remove the link.⁹



The only way to undo adding a wikilink is to manually delete the inserted brackets.

Recommendation

With the help of designers and design guidelines, answer whether this sufficiently violates UI consistency.

Determine whether the ability to quickly 'undo' or 'return' should be applied to the wikilinking functionality and other similar functionalities.

Findings; Citation

5 of 5 participants complete task without major concern.

3 of 5 participants went for the menu bar icon first.

2 of 5 participants completed the task with wikicode first.

Findings; External link

5 of 5 participants complete task without major concern.

4 of 5 participants default to completing task in wikicode; the remaining participant completed the task smoothly.

Findings; External link

When exploring the link icon to complete the same task, the same 4 felt there was no way to add display text in NWTE without typing it in manually after the fact.

Recommendation

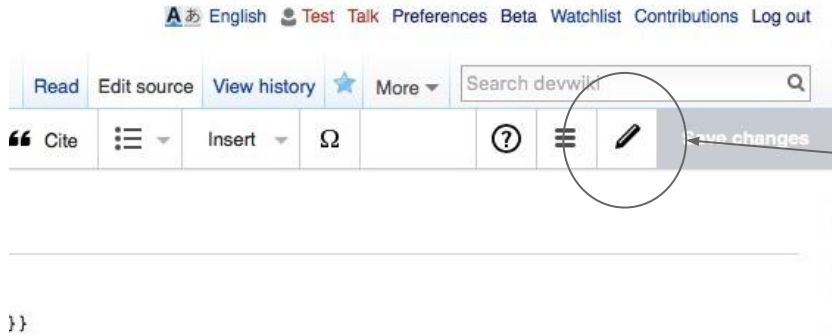
The smoothest way to add an external link with display text is to add in said text, highlight, and add the external link.

However, this does not necessarily seem to be an intuitive workflow. See External link (VE) findings on slides 28-31 for further information.

Findings; Switching editors

5 of 5 participants complete task without major concern.

Findings; Switching editors



4 of 5 participants had not seen this icon before, but didn't have trouble finding it.¹⁰

Findings; Switching editors

1 participant verbalized a desire to save changes first before switching.

The participant remembered seeing a warning dialog in a similar context before in past editing experience that 'all changes would be lost'.

Recommendation

There already are blue indicator dots to help users understand the link and cite icons. A dot could be added under the pencil (VE) or brackets (WTE) icon to inform users of their meanings and also to reassure them that changes will be retained while switching between editors.

Findings; External link (VE)

The same 4 participants who puzzled over how to add display text with an external link using the menu icon in NWTE tried to replicate/complete the task in VE.

All 4 had issues doing so.

Findings; External link (VE)

1 gave up trying.

1 tries the Link and Insert buttons, muses about wanting to switch back to WTE to add the display text, before remembering ability to edit a link label WYSIWYG-style.

2 edit existing external links' display text smoothly, but cannot easily replicate the workflow of adding an external link with display text.

“there needs to be an easier way”

“unnecessarily confusing [...] seems backwards to me”

“[trying to add display text] was quite uncomfortable”

Findings; External link (VE)

3 of 4 participants were baffled by the 'add label' button.

3 of 4 participants want the addition of an 'add display text' field, or a way that makes clear how to add the text label in-line in all scenarios. The 4th participant suggests a more vague simple (currently in VE) and complex mode for the link inspector.

Recommendation

The way the add label button appears currently in the workflow is thoroughly unintuitive, as is the workflow of typing in display text first, highlighting, then adding the link.

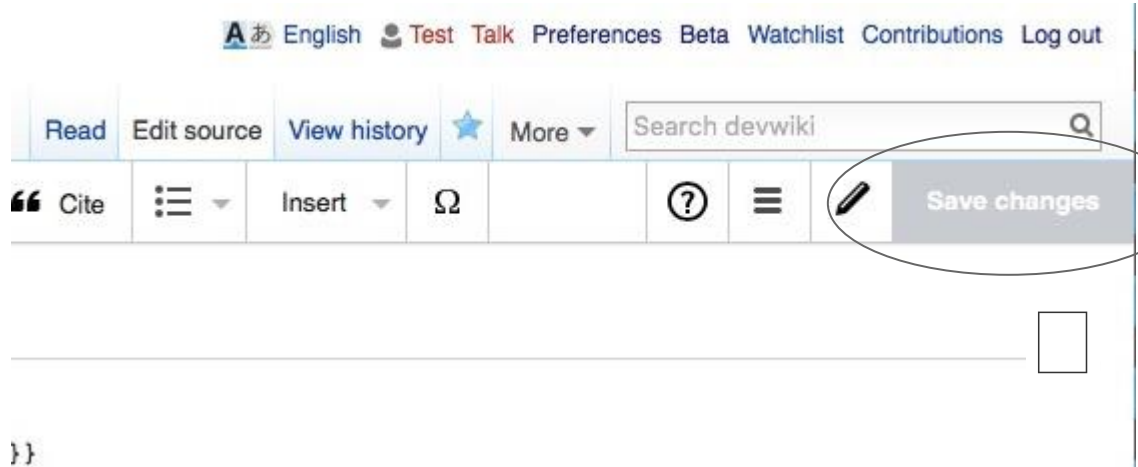
In some scenarios, typing in the display text in-line is not possible (i.e. when an external link is first added and it is displayed as [1]).

Potential directions:

- 1) Add a display text field in the inspector¹ and consider the need for a simple/complex division for link inspector².
- 2) Consult with engineers to allow adding linked text even in the [1] scenario mentioned above, and consult with designers to make this functionality more visually apparent and intuitive.

Findings; Save vs Publish changes

4 of 5 participants agreed that 'publish changes' meant that it was final; that "everyone will see this version". The 5th felt save/publish were comparable.¹¹



Findings; Save vs Publish changes

“honestly first time i [hit save changes], i was surprised my changes were already there”

“publish changes makes it clear. [it] makes more sense”

“change if it is common for [sites to use ‘publish’ in similar contexts]”

Participant thoughts

“[publish] is a word that isn't easily translatable to all languages”

“people might get confused by word publish. might think it's a magazine or book.”

Recommendation

This issue is worth some further exploration, particularly into the cons of difficult translation and the potential for confusing the wikis with other media.

However, the immediacy and finality of the current 'Save' action appears better represented by 'Publish changes'. Test deployments on selected wikis could validate or surface glaring objections to this potential change.

Wrap-up reactions to NWTE

“less intimidating [...] more intuitive than i thought”

“i would prefer this NWTE to current one. just because it gives me additional options. i can treat it exactly like usual WTE, so i don't lose anything, but have additional VE-like features... still have keyboard shortcuts. it's really so similar to existing WTE with a couple extra features.”

“it is nice to have the same bar in both modes. not like when you change modes, it's a totally different page.”

“i have no problems with [making NWTE live]. i'm happy with this. this is pretty good. everything's there, just looks different.”

A quote from each participant

“think it's an improvement”

Wrap-up reactions to NWTE

“can be quite
frightening to people
who've never used
before”

“maybe [NWTE is] the
worst of both worlds
though: it's neither fish
nor fowl since it
displays some raw and
confusing wikicode”

But the overall positivity
was not without some
reservation...

Recommendation

The positive comments directly address the goals initially set out for NWTE.

The reservations, though valid, are difficult to avoid when the source editor will be retained in general and the potential for newer editors to come across it exists.

Overall, the NWTE achieves its goals. The release of NWTE to initial beta for experienced users can be implemented.

Additional Recommendations



User Recommendations

Elements / Functionalities

(+1 indicates that the suggestion was seconded)

- Add text 'Link' to link button (similarly to 'Cite' on cite button)
- Date field in manual citation form should surface a calendar pop-up for date selection, allows for standardized format
- Access date field in manual citation form should be auto-generated to current date +1
- Save action a la Microsoft Word or similar, so edits can be quickly saved and editing can immediately resume
- Make page preview an icon or otherwise standalone, not buried in save changes window

User Recommendations

Consistency

- 'Save', check marks, 'done', 'insert', etc. More consistency in terms of language, appearance, and presence of these change-actualizing buttons
- Save changes window has a 'Resume Editing' button; should be replaced with 'cancel' or an 'x' or simply a window that users can click off of to exit
- Pop-up window for Cite is attached to the cursor location, the manual Cite pop-up is in the center of the page. All pop-ups to be centered on page for consistency
- Allow for more common keyboard shortcuts (e.g. Ctrl+Shift+E to open the editor) across editors

Miscellaneous / Related User Recommendations

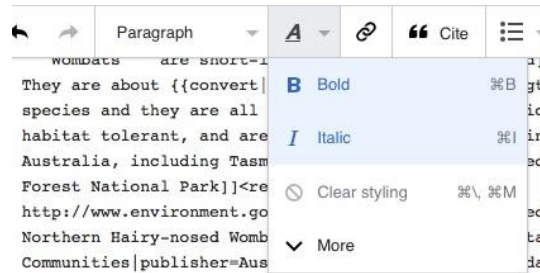
- Make 'save changes' button still more obvious, especially on VE
- On VE, introduce carriage return; currently can't press enter to save or tab over to the save changes button to save
- Add bracket matching for WTE
- Expire the 'Your edit was saved.' pop-up box after a certain number of edits

Researcher Observations

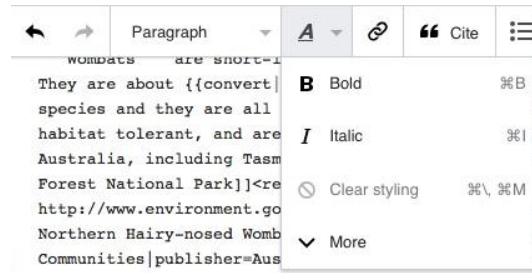
1. Page jumping
 - a. After adding a link or citation, the page jumps back to the top in some browsers (safari, not chrome, etc.)
 - b. Switching from NWTE to VE usually put users on the bottom of the page
2. Edit issues around switching
 - a. Make unsaved edits in NWTE, switch to VE, switch back to NWTE, then click 'Read' to get back to article; there is no dialog to ask users if they want to save/discard edits
 - b. Edits made in VE, after switching back to NWTE, are saved but the 'Save changes' button is grayed out in NWTE mode
3. Dialog 'Are you sure you want to switch to [X] editor?' occurred during testing
4. Confusion noted around which formatting options were activated (double-clicking for visual confirmation)

Researcher Recommendations

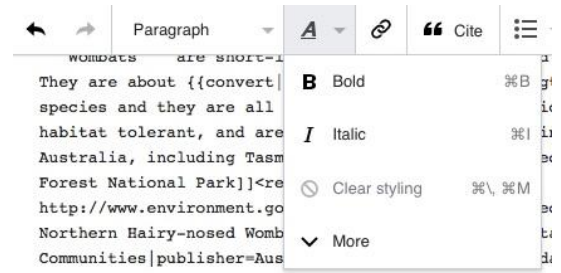
1. Place users where their edit/cursor was when adding link/citation or switching editor
2. Confirm logic of these potential workflows are corrected before proceeding
3. Clarify reasonable purpose for dialog if it is meant to occur, otherwise remove
4. Determine if there is a way to keep the bold or italics active state indicators apparent in the formatting dropdown even without continuation



Immediately after formatting
selection (with continuation)¹²



Highlighted after the fact
(without continuation)¹³



Highlighted after the fact
(without continuation), ex. 2¹⁴

The tl;dr takeaway



The NWTE successfully achieves more visual consistency across editors, retains existing WTE functionalities, and allows newer editors an opportunity to use familiar tools and learn elements of wikicode. Recommendation is to implement the NWTE initial beta for experienced users.

The link inspector requires further evaluation and refinement around link display text for external links.

‘Publish changes’ has a more appropriate connotation for users, but potential drawbacks like translatability that need to be evaluated.

Resources

General

- [NWTE research plan draft](#)
- [Save/publish research plan draft](#)
- [Participant recruiting Spreadsheet](#)
- [Wombat test wiki page](#)

Participant* Videos

- [P1](#)
- [P5](#)

* list shows only participants who did not limit sharing

1. View of wombat page in visual editor.jpg | https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:View_of_wombat_page_in_visual_editor.jpg
WMF Labs | CC BY SA 4.0
2. Current wte.jpg | https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Current_wte.jpg
WMF Labs | CC BY SA 4.0
3. View of Wombat article on test_wiki.jpg | https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:View_of_Wombat_article_on_test_wiki.jpg
WMF Labs | CC BY SA 4.0
4. New wikitext editor.jpg | https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:New_wikitext_editor.jpg
WMF Labs | CC BY SA 4.0
5. Link_inspector_in_new_wikitext_editor.jpg | https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Link_inspector_in_new_wikitext_editor.jpg
CC BY SA 4.0
6. See 4.
7. See 3.
8. Wteboxes.jpg | <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wteboxes.jpg>
CC BY SA 4.0
9. Wikilink_link_inspector.jpg | https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wikilink_link_inspector.jpg
CC BY SA 4.0
10. Nwtcropped.jpg | <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nwtcropped.jpg>
CC BY SA 4.0
11. See 10.
12. Formatexample.jpg | <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Formatexample.jpg>
CC BY SA 4.0
13. Formatexample2.jpg | <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Formatexample2.jpg>
CC BY SA 4.0
14. Formatexample3.jpg | <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Formatexample3.jpg>
CC BY SA 4.0

THANK YOU



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