ENGAGING WITH THE WORLD: STUDENTS OF COMPARATIVE LAW WRITE FOR WIKIPEDIA

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Improving students' computer literacy, instilling a critical approach to Internet resources and preparing them for collaborative work are important educational aims today. This article examines how a writing exercise in the style of a Wikipedia article can be used to develop these skills. Students in an elective unit in Comparative Law were asked to create, and review, a Wikipedia entry on an issue, concept or scholar in this field. This article describes the rationale for adopting this writing task, how it was integrated into the teaching and assessment structure of the unit, and how students responded to the exercise. In addition to critically evaluating the potential of this novel teaching tool, the article aims to provide some practical guidance on when Wikipedia assignments might be usefully employed.

I INTRODUCTION

Wikipedia is a multilingual web-based free encyclopaedia which is written and edited by countless contributors from around the world. Its use by students continues to divide, and at times enrage, academics. In principle, articles in Wikipedia are open to be changed by any user with access to the Internet, simply by clicking an edit button on each website. This 'open content' design differs radically from conventional sources of academic learning, such as textbooks and articles in scientific journals, which usually undergo rigorous editorial or peer-review processes before publication. The way in which Wikipedia controls the quality of its content is not through commissioning experts to write or act as referee, but

through a watchful army of interested persons from all walks of life and all levels of ability and knowledge. Despite occasional (and often only temporary) lapses in accuracy, the quality of much content in Wikipedia, in particular its rated articles, is increasingly acknowledged.[1] In many areas, it is now certainly more comprehensive and more current than many traditional encyclopaedias.

Some academics fear that the reliance on Wikipedia undermines academic standards, encourages poor scholarship and leads to uncritical use of its content.[2] This criticism is, of course, not limited to students' use of Wikipedia alone. It concerns the way in which students employ most information provided in electronic format, be it on the Internet or on subject-specific databases. However, there is no doubting that, since its creation in 2001, Wikipedia has grown rapidly in its size and user traffic. Wikipedia now has nearly three million articles[3] and has become the largest reference website on the Internet.[4] Recent studies confirm that Wikipedia holds particular appeal for younger users. In a recent German Internet usage survey, 94 per cent of the teenagers between 14 and 19 years indicated that they used Wikipedia at least sometimes, compared with 65 per cent of all users and 35 per cent of users of 60 years of age.[5] The ubiquity of Wikipedia has led teachers to explore ways in which students can be educated in using it safely and responsibly.[6] One way of doing so is transforming students from uncritical consumers of Wikipedia to creative contributors. This is in line with the basic rationale of 'wikis', a term used for collaborative websites that allow for easy creation and editing of content by a group of users.[7] Encouraging students to become 'Wikipedians' would also help to bridge the divide between active and passive users of Wikipedia, with currently only four per cent of users actively contributing to the development of the site.[8]

This article will describe the use of Wikipedia in the assessment of an elective subject, Comparative Law, in an undergraduate law degree at the University of Western Australia. Setting such exercises is no longer pioneering.[9] Wikipedia's 'School and University projects' website[10] currently lists about 75 past and over 30 current projects worldwide in which educators, generally at tertiary level and most often in North America, have used Wikipedia as a teaching and assessment tool. To encourage and to facilitate the preparation of such initiatives, the Wikipedia

Foundation now provides resources to assist teachers in creating open educational resources and incorporating Wikipedia into their classroom practice.[11]

There is now also a growing amount of educational literature on the use of wikis more generally (not just Wikipedia), in higher education.[12] The available studies demonstrate the value of wikis as a form of social software, which facilitates collaborative learning, which is student-centred and which supports social interactions. Learning with wikis has therefore the potential to increase student engagement[13] and to 'shift the focus to construction of knowledge, rather than the presentation of information'.[14]

II RATIONALE FOR AND DESIGN OF THE PROJECT

The Wikipedia exercise in Comparative Law was prompted by a number of considerations. First, the standard textbooks no longer fully reflected current knowledge on Comparative Law and their coverage did not coincide with the unit syllabus. Introductory material in this specialised field of study was thus quite difficult to come by. The exercise therefore did not ask students somewhat aridly to produce a further iteration of readily available material. Students researching and producing materials themselves received an immediate and tangible benefit from the exercise.[15]

Second, asking students to provide an account of the state of knowledge in a particular area is a valuable learning exercise. As experts in a field, we often underestimate how difficult it is to find a foothold, and a sense of direction, in new terrain. Introducing others to the fundamentals of an area requires not only solid knowledge but also the ability to structure and present information in an easily digestible form. Asking students to prepare introductory materials on issues that are fairly new, even to them, functions like a 'crash course' in the area and provides them with a strong basis from which to conduct further research and analysis.

Third, requiring students to write on these topics for an online medium makes information on these topics available to a wider audience. It is peculiar that the Internet has developed quickly into one of the indispensable sources of information on foreign law,[16] yet the availability of electronic information on Comparative Law as a subject, its key concepts and major scholars, has not kept pace with this revolution. This assessment exercise was intended, in a

small way, to address this imbalance and give comparative law scholarship more prominence in mainstream Internet fora.

Fourth, the exercise was designed to give students an authentic task that would educate them in the self-reflective use of secondary sources and, at the same time, enhance their computer literacy and research skills at an advanced stage of their degrees.

Finally, the exercise was also influenced by the teacher's own recent experience of contributing to a conventional encyclopaedia,[17] which had caused him to reflect on the demands, and sense of achievement, that writing for a reference work can entail.

The assessment was divided into two parts. The first component of the exercise consisted in students drafting a Wikipedia article, and the second involved reviewing an article written by one of their peers on a different topic. Students were allocated a topic from a list of potential articles. At the time of creating the list, most of these articles were either non-existent or existed only in embryonic form (known in Wikipedia as a 'stub'). The list of suggested topics was diverse. Students had the opportunity of writing on an important concept, movement or an influential scholar or work in Comparative Law.

Fundamental concepts included: common core methodology; micro-/macro-comparison; mixed legal systems; legal transplants; legal families; legal culture; globalisation of law; unification of law; harmonisation of law; transnational law; European contract law; European tort law; European family law; and European Civil Code. Students who were assigned to write a biographical article needed to undertake research into the life and work of an eminent comparative law scholar, such as Ernst Rabel, René David, Rudolph Schlesinger, Max Rheinstein, F H Lawson, and H C Gutteridge. A final set of topics gave students the opportunity to prepare an account of an influential foreign legal code, such as the Dutch Civil Code, the Italian Civil Code or the Spanish Civil Code.

The fact that none of these topics had an entry that went beyond rudimentary content ensured that all students had a similar starting point. All articles had to be designed and researched from the ground up, and no student could (or had to) consider preparatory work done by others. Students who were nonetheless unhappy with their allocated keyword had the option to suggest writing on a different topic and, after receiving approval, work on the area of

their choice.

Each topic was assigned twice but students had to work independently. Students were referred to the information available on how to write and edit for Wikipedia, which also enabled those unfamiliar with Wikipedia to understand the task involved. Wikipedia itself contains a comprehensive range of clear, continuously updated guidelines on article writing. These guidelines address writing '[y]our first article',[18] include a '[g]uide to writing better articles'[19] and even explain how to write '[t]he perfect article'.[20] Students were instructed to comply with the Wikipedia standards and policies.[21] It was suggested to students that they actually upload their article to Wikipedia but they were not obliged to do so.

Assessment criteria for the first component of the exercise, the draft article, included the quality of the content of the article as well as its style; in particular, its compatibility with the Wikipedia policies and guidelines. This assessment item counted for 15 per cent of the overall mark in the unit. The second component of the exercise, the peer review, consisted of writing a review of another student's draft article. It is characteristic of Wikipedia to be a collaborative effort, and this assessment item aimed at mimicking this feature of Wikipedia. Students were asked to assess the quality of a draft Wikipedia article written by one of their peers and, where appropriate, to suggest amendments. Where a student suggested revisions, he or she was expected to explain why they would improve the article. Two criteria for assessment of the review article were stated: first, the degree to which content and style of the suggested revisions were in line with the Wikipedia policies and guidelines; and, second, the extent to which the revisions and comments served as helpful guidance in the assessment of the draft articles. This assessment item counted for five per cent of the overall mark in the unit.[22]

III ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS' WORK

Students reviewed the work of their peers without being aware of who was the author. They were encouraged to provide candid feedback but at the same time reassured that their assessment of their peers' work was by no means determinative. Even though the assessment instructions stated that the comments received from

fellow students were not binding, the idea of giving and receiving peer feedback needed some getting used to. The following student comment may well be representative:

> Reviewing another student's article was a novel experience. I think some students were cynical because they thought their mark would be a reflection of the quality of the other student's work. But it is rare you get to read what another student has written in its entirety, and it gives perspective to your own work. The process of critically evaluating another piece of work is a process that can easily be translated to reviewing your own work, and so should improve your own writing.

The articles for review and revision were allocated by the teacher, thereby ensuring that students gained wider exposure to fundamental concepts of the discipline area. The success of this strategy is evidenced by the following student feedback:

> Reviewing another student's article exposed us to another topic of Comparative Law. In that sense it was a great way to get us thinking about Comparative Law concepts — since obviously an introductory unit cannot hope to cover everything.

Having the reviews was of great assistance in the final marking process. Even though the teacher read the peer review only after reading the article and making a judgement on its merits, having the peer review provided the teacher with a valuable check on his own perceptions. Articles were returned with comments as well as the marked review. Reviews were returned with comments as well as the marked articles.

The standard of the submitted articles and reviews was, overall, very pleasing. A fair number of students had evidently developed great enthusiasm for the task and for their respective topics. They delivered excellent work. On the other hand, some other students' work had the kind of weaknesses that any form of student writing may suffer from. Such generic criticism related, for example, to the quality of research, the clarity of writing and lack of care taken with editing and referencing. Sometimes, factual statements were inaccurate, incomplete or out-of-date. Where students relied too heavily on a limited number of sources, their article tended to be patchy in its coverage or present a distorted view of the subject matter. Other common complaints concerned the clarity of prose or structure. Even though these deficiencies can often also tarnish conventional research essays, they are more concerning here. To be taken seriously, an encyclopaedia needs to strive for unassailable quality and meticulous exposition. Accuracy, comprehensiveness,

clarity and attention to detail were key, but not all students approached the task with that ambition, or succeeded in their efforts.

Most instructive for the current context is how students handled the conventions specific to Wikipedia. Some students evidently had difficulty coming to grips with the demands of writing in a novel format, and for an unfamiliar purpose. It became evident that not all students read the instructions or followed them. Broadly speaking, Wikipedia adopts many of the conventions of traditional encyclopaedias. Articles should begin with a lead section, containing the shortest possible definition or description of the subject-matter. The lead section should be able to stand alone and give a concise overview of the article. Often, a summary style is preferable, which means that important information should be dealt with first, then a summary should be given before the topic is explored in further detail. Some students also had difficulty finding the right tone for the article. The articles should be pitched at the educated layperson and adopt a neutral point of view. Writing should be concise and self-contained. Some of the guidelines for proper style also contain valuable lessons for other forms of legal writing.[23]

Some students disregarded the fact that academic papers and encyclopaedia articles have different purposes. Like conventional encyclopaedias, Wikipedia has three core content policies: (i) no original research; (ii) a neutral point of view; and (iii) verifiability. In relation to the first policy, the purpose of an encyclopaedia article lies in imparting knowledge, not in presenting an argument. As a result, articles should not consist of original research or personal opinion.[24] An encyclopaedia is not the place to engage in debates, even though it may be appropriate to describe divisions of opinion and uncertainties about the subject-matter. If opinions are relevant to a topic, their significance and origin need to be explained and documented, just like in academic writing. If opinions on a topic differ, these opinions need to be presented with impartiality. Adopting a neutral point of view means that all views need to be represented fairly, and as far as possible without bias.[25] As far as verifiability is concerned, Wikipedia's editorial policies insist on providing information only from reliable sources with appropriate references.[26] This means that students needed to consult the traditional sources of legal scholarship such as published

textbooks, journal articles and government reports, as well as other reference works, authoritative sources and documents, to obtain a comprehensive and reliable picture of their assigned subject-matter.

Not all students felt equally comfortable with being required to write in a format that differed from a traditional essay-style assessment. One student frankly admitted after the exercise that she 'appreciated the content, but didn't like the format' of the Wikipedia assignment. Another student was more self-reflective when he described his experience:

> The wikipedia article, and particularly the review was met with a degree of cynicism at first, because it seemed very 'high school'. However once you sit down to write the article, you realise there is much more to it — it takes longer and more effort to write about a potentially complex legal topic in a way that sounds simple and is pitched at a lay audience. That was probably the most valuable learning experience.

In contrast to text-based reference works, Wikipedia as an online resource allows for multi-media content. Articles can be hyperlinked to related articles, external links and websites as well as be illustrated with pictures, videos, diagrams and so on. Only a small number of students made use of these possibilities and enriched the description of their topic with non-textual materials. In some other cases, students needed to be reminded that copyright regulation also applies to the Internet, including to Wikipedia.

IV EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

The project was evaluated from the student perspective, teacher perspective, from the perspective of skills development in law students (in particular in relation to media literacy and collaborative work), and from the broader perspective of engagement of students with a community of knowledge.

A Student Feedback

On the whole, students reacted very favourably to this novel type of assessment. In anonymous surveys after completion of the unit, students described the assessment as 'original and thought provoking' and commended the unit for its 'diversity of assessment'. As a new form of writing, it caught students' attention. An obvious advantage of Wikipedia is that students are engaged in a 'real life exercise'. If students see that their writing

has significance beyond the assessment, they are likely to be personally more engaged. The strong correlationship between authenticity, student motivation and achievement has long been recognised in educational literature.[27] The connection to the 'real world' is one of the hallmarks of student learning activities that have been described as having '"thick" authenticity'.[28]

In an end-of-semester unit evaluation, the statement that 'the assessments provided me with diverse and challenging tasks' scored a mean of 4.27 (out of 5.00), and the statement that 'the Wikipedia Assignment was an innovative and useful learning experience' scored 4.26 (out of 5.00).[29] One student made the following instructive observations after the end of the unit:

> The wikipedia article was certainly a unique assessment piece, and one particularly well suited to Comparative Law. It helped us understand snippets of an area of study with which none of us were particularly familiar.

A number of students were critical of certain aspects of the exercise. Some commented that, in light of the workload involved, the exercise should have been worth more than the allocated 20 per cent of the final mark. Others would have preferred greater guidance on how to write for the Wikipedia assignment. These are valuable suggestions that should be borne in mind for the design of similar exercises in the future.

The fact that students were free to write and publish to Wikipedia, or could opt to present their Wikipedia article as a Word document, apparently also caused confusion. Requiring actual publication may probably have been more straightforward, would have added further authenticity to the exercise and would have ensured that more articles found their way onto the Internet. Now that Wikipedia provides even more step-by-step information on this process there is probably little reason why students should not be required to upload their work to Wikipedia. Where this course is chosen, students should be made aware of their legal obligations when posting materials on the Internet. Students should not be left in doubt about the consequences of posting unlawful content such as material in breach of copyright, privacy, defamation and discrimination law.[30]

B Demands on Teacher

While the workload involved with the exercise was

considerable, this was partly due to the fact that not only students, but also the teacher, had to become familiar with the writing process in the Wikipedia environment. Where students are likely to need much guidance, the exercise might be more suited to smaller classes. A limited group size also allows each student, or a small group of students, to work on individually-assigned topics. While having a multitude of topics increases the marking load, compared to an assignment with a single topic for the whole cohort, there are a number of options to facilitate the assessment process. One option is, as described above, to ask students to review one another's articles and take this peer feedback into account in the assessment. Another option is to nominate the article for peer review on Wikipedia.

As time progresses and knowledge accumulates it is bound to become more difficult for students to write new articles on areas that have not already found some treatment in Wikipedia, yet meet Wikipedia's notability standards. The collaborative and public nature of Wikipedia also stands in the way of setting assignments on substantially similar topics in consecutive years, especially if students do indeed upload their work. This does not necessarily limit the use of Wikipedia because it may even be preferable for students who are Wikipedia beginners to critically analyse existing articles and to identify and correct any errors they find.[31] In this way, Wikipedia's characteristic of not having authoritative content control can be turned into an object of study and used to educate students to engage with it critically.[32] Teachers who prefer a discipline-specific online encyclopaedia under the auspices of legal academics may also consider Jurispedia.[33] This alternative to Wikipedia is an emerging resource focusing on law, legal and political science and has the ambitious aim of providing information on all legal systems of the world. Another legal wiki project is Wex, by Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute, which aims to build a law dictionary and encyclopaedia but only invites authors with demonstrated expertise in the area.[34]

Wiki beginners, be they students or educators, can now draw on a well-developed range of online support materials. These resources not only cover the first steps but also contain guided tours, suggested exercises, guidelines and instructions, templates, and a help desk.[35] They include Wikiversity, an online centre which sees its mission in the creation and use of free learning materials

and activities.[36]

C Improving Research, Media Literacy and Writing Skills

The Wikipedia assignment encouraged students to reflect on the differences between various types of sources, how they are produced and when it is appropriate to use one rather than another. In this way, the use of wikis fosters a deeper style of learning, which goes beyond the traditional recitation of 'what we know' by inviting consideration of 'how we know'.[37] Furthermore, the exercise helped to improve students' skills to engage critically with material they found online and provided them with tools to evaluate the trustworthiness of information. Being involved in the production of online content provided students with a change of perspective. Even for students who are aware that everyone can change content on Wikipedia, it is a vastly different experience to actively participate in this process and themselves create or improve information available online.

It is a valuable lesson for law students to become proficient in a range of media, formats and styles.[38] Being able to adapt to the specific requirements of diverse writing tasks is an important generic skill for their later professional lives, whether in law or elsewhere. Quite apart from drafting letters, contracts and other legal documents, legal professionals now increasingly need to be able to write reports, submissions to government or law reform inquiries, and company or law firm newsletters, to name a few. Law schools should therefore expose students to a variety of writing tasks. Writing in a clear and succinct style and being able to explain difficult concepts to an uninitiated audience is challenging yet indispensable. Lawyers need to be able to communicate effectively not only with their peers but also with the community. The fact that plain language — understood as clear, simple yet precise writing — is now firmly established as a desirable attribute of legal writing[39] is a testament to this. A Wikipedia assignment can be used to require students to express technical legal issues in a way that is accessible, informative and understandable for an audience of non-lawyers.

D Collaborative Learning

Wikis help to create a new learning environment that emphasises collaboration, rather than individualism and competitiveness.[40] The Wikipedia exercise described here made only limited use of the collaborative aspects of wikis. It did so mainly by asking students to peer review a draft article and then to post it to Wikipedia where it would be subject to further evaluation and refinement. Other projects described in the educational literature show that wikis are often used for more intensive collaboration; for example, in group research projects, reflective learning, preparation and sharing study notes.[41]

While wikis are useful tools to collate, update and store existing knowledge, it is the interactive development of knowledge that presents the greatest shift from conventional classroom and assessment activity.[42] There is little doubt that collaborative work practices and information-sharing environments are likely to become of increasing importance in our social and professional lives.[43] Being a responsible contributor to this 'public exchange of reasoned ideas and arguments'[44] requires students to learn the social norms that apply to teamwork and, more specifically, to providing and receiving feedback in these collaborative settings. Developing mutual understanding, sensitivity and respect poses particular challenges in cross-cultural or global collaborations, which web-based wikis readily allow for. Considering that professional legal practice is becoming increasingly international, technology-driven, team-oriented and cross-disciplinary,[45] it is particularly appropriate that we instil in graduates the values and skills needed to prosper in these environments.

E Engagement with a Community of Knowledge

One of the most impressive aspects of the Wikipedia project is that it aims to engage individuals from around the world to form a global community collating and disseminating knowledge. Research into Wikipedia suggests that there is often a natural progression in which Wikipedia users generally begin as seekers of information, but gradually become increasingly active with Wikipedia by proofreading and fact checking, before eventually authoring new content.[46] An assignment which requires students to become acquainted with the production of Wikipedia breaks down

the barrier between passive consumption and active contribution.[47] It also gives students the opportunity to 'publish' their work on Wikipedia and contribute to the sharing of knowledge. In this way, learning activities involving use of online collaboration, enable students to feel as a part of this community of inquiry and provide 'a unique opportunity for student writers to enrich public discourse in a way that serves a real purpose and engages a real audience'.[48] Contributing to this process of sharing knowledge with others improves student autonomy, their media literacy skills and encourages them to engage in a collaborative effort to create, edit and disseminate knowledge. It also contributes to unlocking legal scholarship from the 'walled garden'[49] of commercial journals and databases, and can be seen as part of a wider movement towards free and open access to the law.[50]

The idea of Wikipedia as a global community of knowledge had a particular appeal in this unit. Comparative legal studies, by its very nature, spans beyond jurisdictional borders. Comparative law not only aims to provide us with knowledge of the laws in place in foreign jurisdictions. It also enables a better understanding of our domestic law by contrasting it to the solutions adopted elsewhere and providing us with potential solutions for social problems and legal issues. When lawyers from different jurisdictions come together, they may even occasionally gain insights about the universal nature of law and its development, and ultimately deepen our understanding of different societies and cultures. As one student commented perceptively:

> The Wikipedia format, being internationally 'accepted' and recognised, ties in well with the concept of studying and comparing foreign legal systems.

The aims of comparative law thus resonate particularly well with the basic premise of Wikipedia.

V CONCLUSION

Wikipedia assignments are a welcome addition to the traditional writing tasks for students. Requiring students to engage actively with the content of Wikipedia, its production and limitations will enable students to become more critical and self-aware in their use of this now ubiquitous online resource. It also improves student skills in writing in a different environment and for a wider

audience, while at the same time improving student engagement through a 'real world' exercise.

The skills which writing for Wikipedia requires vary, but are not in all respects different, from those practised in standard writing assignments. All authors need to adapt their writing to the intended audience and the purpose of their communication. Writing for an online encyclopaedia affects format and tone, in particular. As a reference text, Wikipedia should not contain original research, be neutral and fact-based. But as in other forms of academic writing, students still need to thoroughly research traditional scholarly materials to arrive at a sound knowledge of the subject area. They will also need to continue to provide appropriate references to the sources they use, and they remain accountable for their quality and currency.

Writing for wikis creates a new learning environment that emphasises teamwork and collaboration, rather than individualism and competitiveness. Students are encouraged to build on one another's work and to become part of a community of enquiry. The opportunity to 'publish' their work on Wikipedia allows them to share their work with the world and to critically engage with the process of knowledge production. Collaborative learning and active engagement with the views of others prepares students for a professional practice that is becoming increasingly technology-driven, cross-cultural, and cross-disciplinary.

There are now even more resources at hand to allow teachers unfamiliar with the potential uses of wikis in the classroom to test the water and incorporate them into their teaching. Students in the project discussed here responded, on the whole, very favourably to being set an innovative and challenging task that really engaged them.

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1 Bill Wedemeyer, 'The Quality of Scientific Articles on the English Wikipedia' (Paper presented at the Wikimania 2008 conference, Alexandria, 19 July 2008) <http://www.kaltura.com/devwiki/index.php/The_quality_of_scientific_articles_on_the_English_Wikipedia> at 23 December 2009.

2 See further R Stuart Geiger, 'Conceptions and Misconceptions Academics Hold about Wikipedia' (Paper presented at the Wikimania 2008 conference, Alexandria, 19 July 2008) <http://www.stuartgeiger.com/wordpress/conference-presentations/2008/07/18/conceptions-and-misconceptions-academics-hold-about-wikipedia/> at 23 December 2009.

3 See *Wikipedia: Size of Wikipedia*

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Size_of_Wikipedia> at 23 December 2009.

4 Wikipedia is among the ten most popular sites on the Internet and the most widely used reference website; see *Alexa Top 500 Global Sites* <http://www.alexa.com/topsites> at 23 December 2009.

5 Kathrin Busemann and Christoph Gscheidle, 'Web 2.0: Communitys bei jungen Nutzern beliebt' (2009) *Media Perspektiven* 356, 360 (referring to the ARD/ZDF-Onlinestudie 2009).

6 See, eg, Beth Simone Noveck, 'Wikipedia and the Future of Legal Education' (2007) 57 *Journal of Legal Education* 3; Henry Jenkins, 'What Wikipedia Can Teach Us about the New Media Literacies' (Keynote Address presented at the National Media Education Conference 2007, St Louis, 25 June 2007) <http://www.henryjenkins.org/2007/06/what_wikipedia_can_teach_us_ab.html> at 23 December 2009.

7 The name Wikipedia is a portmanteau of the words wiki (from the Hawaiian wiki-wiki, meaning quick) and encyclopedia: see *Wikipedia* http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia at 23 December 2009. Wikis are already used in legal education as part of learning management systems such as Blackboard.

8 Busemann and Gscheidle, above n 5, 361.

9 The exercise took place in semester two, 2007 at the University of Western Australia, Law School. It appears to have been among the first to use Wikipedia for assessment in a law course. For other early projects, see Esther Hoorn and Dore van Hoorn, 'Critical Assessment of Using Wikis in Legal Education' (2007) 1 *Journal of Information, Law and Technology* <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/elj/jilt/2007_1/hoorn> at 23 December 2009; David Thomson, 'Using a Wiki to Increase Student Engagement in Administrative Law' (2008) 15(1) *The Law Teacher* 5.

10 See *School and University Projects* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schools_and_universities_project> at 23 December 2009.

11 See, eg, the so-called Wikiversity at <http://en.wikiversity.org> at 23 December 2009.

12 See, eg, Alison Ruth and Luke Houghton, 'The Wiki Way of Learning' (2009) 25 *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* 135; Irina Elgort, Alastair G Smith and Janet Toland, 'Is Wiki an Effective Platform for Group Course Work?' (2008) 24 *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* 195; Noveck, above n 6; Hoorn and van Hoorn, above n 9; Sheung On Choy and Kwok Chi Ng, 'Implementing Wiki Software for Supplementing Online Learning' (2007) 23 *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* 209.

13 Thomson, above n 9.

14 Ruth and Houghton, above n 12, 136.

15 Other studies have also referred to the lack of a suitable textbook as a reason for setting a wiki task: see, eg, Ruth and Houghton, above n 12, 147. However, encouraging a class to prepare a common set of notes can also encounter resistance from the more competitive students: Thomson, above n 9.

16 For an early assessment, see Normann Witzleb, Dieter Martiny, Ulrich Thoelke and Tim Frericks, 'Comparative Law and the Internet' (1999) 3 *Electronic Journal of Comparative Law* <http://law.kub.nl/ejcl/32/art32-1.html> at 23 December 2009.

17 F A Brockhaus, *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie* (21st ed, 2005–6).

18 *Wikipedia: Your First Article* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Your_first_article> at 23 December 2009.

19 *Wikipedia: The Perfect Article* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:The_perfect_article> at 23 December

2009.

20 *Wikipedia: Guide to Writing Better Articles* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Guide_to_writing_better_articles> at 23 December 2009.

21 Students were referred to the policies of Wikipedia at *Wikipedia: List of Policies* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:List_of_policies> at 23 December 2009 and other relevant Wikipedia websites.

22 Other assessment items were a critical review of a journal article (15 per cent), a research assignment (35 per cent) and a take-home exam (30 per cent).

23 For example, Wikipedia cautions against the use of 'Weasel Words' (such as, 'it is widely regarded as' or 'some have claimed'), through which an author expresses an opinion veiled as fact; as well as against the use of 'Peacock Terms' (such as, 'beautiful', 'well-known', 'significant', and 'obvious'), which contain unverifiable evaluations: see *Guide to Writing Better Articles* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Guide_to_writing_better_articles> at 23 December 2009.

24 See *Wikipedia: No Original Research* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:No_original_research> at 23 December 2009.

25 See *Wikipedia: NPOV* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:NPOV> at 20 October 2009.

26 See *Wikipedia: Verifiability* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Verifiability> at 23 December 2009.

27 Myunghee Ju Kang, Hee-Jung Yoon and Ji Sim Kim, 'Relationships among Learning Authenticity, Motivation, and Achievement in Web-Based Project Learning' in Michael Simonson (ed), *31st Annual Proceedings of Selected Research and Development Papers Presented at the Annual Convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology* (2008) 274.

28 Other dimensions of 'thick' authenticity are that learning is personal, related to the discipline and aligned with assessment: David W Schaffer and Mitchel Resnick, '"Thick" Authenticity: New Media and Authentic Learning' (1999) 10 *Journal of Interactive Learning Research* 195.

29 Where 5 is 'strongly agree' and 1 is 'strongly disagree'.

30 The Law Research Program of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation (CCI) has released a *Blog, Podcast, Vodcast and Wiki Copyright Guide for Australia* which contains useful guidance on copyright issues at <http://cci.edu.au/content/blog-podcast-vodcast-and-wiki-copyright-guide-australia> at 23 December 2009. See, more generally, Peter Black, Hayden Delaney and Brian Fitzgerald, 'Legal Issues for Wikis: The Challenge of User-generated and Peer-produced Knowledge, Content and Culture' (2007) 14 *eLaw Journal* 245.

31 Phoebe Ayers, Charles Matthews and Ben Yates, *How Wikipedia Works* (2008) app B: Wikipedia for Teachers <http://howwikipediaworks.com/apbs03.html> at 23 December 2009.

32 Diane Murley, 'In Defense of Wikipedia' (2008) 100 *Law Library Journal* 593.

33 See *Jurispedia* <http://en.jurispedia.org/index.php/Main_Page> at 23 December 2009.

34 See *Wex* <http://topics.law.cornell.edu/wex> at 23 December 2009.

35 See *Wikipedia: School and University Projects*, above n 10.

36 See *Wikiversity* <http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Wikiversity:Main_Page> at 23 December 2009.

37 Ruth and Houghton, above n 12, 149.

38 Pamela Lysaght and Danielle Istl, 'Technology: Teaching Students to Communicate in Another Medium' (2004) 10 *Journal of the Legal Writing Institute* 163.

[39] Kathryn O'Brien, 'Judicial Attitudes to Plain Language and the Law' (2009) 32 *Australian Bar Review* 204.

[40] Noveck, above n 6; Hoorn and van Hoorn, above n 9.

[41] See further S Pixy Ferris and Hilary Wilder, 'Uses and Potentials of Wikis in the Classroom' (2006) 2 *Innovate — Journal of Online Education* <http://innovateonline.info/index.php?view=article&id=258> at 23 December 2009.

[42] Ruth and Houghton, above n 12.

[43] Axel Bruns and Sal Humphreys, 'Building Collaborative Capacities in Learners: The M/Cyclopedia Project, Revisited' (Paper presented at the International Symposium on Wikis, Montréal, 21–23 October 2007) <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/10518/> at 23 December 2009; Camille Broussard, 'Teaching with Technology: Is the Pedagogical Fulcrum Shifting' (2008–2009) 53 *New York Law School Review* 903, 906–7.

[44] Noveck, above n 6, 4.

[45] Paul Maharg, 'On the Edge: ICT and the Transformation of Professional Legal Learning' [2006] 3 *Web Journal of Current Legal Issues*, <http://webjcli.ncl.ac.uk/2006/issue3/maharg3.html> at 23 December 2009.

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[47] See also Elgort, Smith and Toland, above n 12, 199.

[48] Andrea Forte and Amy Bruckman, 'From Wikipedia to the Classroom: Exploring Online Publication and Learning' (Paper presented at the proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Learning Sciences, Bloomington, 1 July 2006) 182–88, <http://www.cc.gatech.edu/~aforte/ForteBruckmanFromWikipedia.pdf> at 23 December 2009.

[49] Dan Hunter, 'Walled Gardens' (2005) 62 *Washington and Lee Law Review* 607; see also Hoorn and van Hoorn, above n 9.

[50] Ian Gallacher, 'Aux Armes, Citoyens: Time for Law Schools to Lead the Movement for Free and Open Access to the Law' (2008–2009) 40 *University of Toledo Law Review* 1, 47–9.