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Headline and summary

The Story of an Introverted High School Student to Wikipedian

My name is Justin Du, a high school student from the US. I'd like to tell you about my story from never touching a line of code before to getting the chance to contribute to the Mediawiki software that powers Wikipedia, the book of endless knowledge anyone can write a story in. Ideally three to ten words, the headline to your piece will show up in social media shares and on the blog's homepage. The summary will appear separately in italicized text underneath the headline; that can be up to fifty words.

Author - Justin Du

Who is authoring the piece?

Image(s)

Will upload some more soon... I'm going to draft this now and hold off for the next week. I have a big college app due Wednesday.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aaron_and_Justin_at_wikimania17.jpg

If you have freely licensed images in mind, please put them here. While we don't use screenshots as lead images, we're more than happy to place one or more in the body of the post.¹ Good image repositories: Commons [featured](#), [quality](#), [valued](#); [Unsplash](#).

Body

My name is Justin Du, and I'd like to share my experience with the Wikimedia Foundation, starting with Google Code-in.

Life is like a garden. There are so many things to explore, so many things to do, so many things to learn. So I decided to branch out of my introverted shell and delve into the world of free and open source software. What better way to do that than join the Wikimedia community? Coming from a family who works hard to provide and support everything for me, I understand the need and benefit of receiving a good education. I wanted to see why my teachers took such a negative stance towards Wikipedia, a site powered by the Mediawiki software. But when I decided to read about Western Blots (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_blot) on the English

¹ Please also put links to or email any images/screenshots to blogteam@wikimedia.org, as downloading them directly from a Google Doc is rather time-consuming!

Wikipedia, it had 17 sources, all from scientific journals. I knew this was what I wanted to contribute to.

I strongly believe in the Wikimedia Foundation's statement.

"...To bring about a world in which every single human being can freely share in the sum of all knowledge."

Let me just say, if it weren't for the warm, wonderful, and welcoming Wikimedia community, I probably wouldn't be contributing to Open Source. Before I started, I was completely lost. Sure, I knew the ABCs of programming, but hardly anything more. I didn't know what IRC, or vagrant, or gerit, or many other things were. (Not even command prompt commands!) I remember the first time when I went on IRC and posted my first message, something to the effect of

"Hi. I'm participating in GCI this year and need help setting up a vagrant environment."

and people immediately flooding me with messages, links, and documentation. Although it took a while, once I set up my dev environment, with vagrant, gerit, and a text editor, everything started to run smoother. I eventually created a Google Doc titled "helpful stuff" which contained useful hints regarding setting things up and git commands.

The help I received meant all the more to me when I found out that most of these people were just volunteers contributing to a global project. These people would answer my questions very quickly, and they never said "You're stupid" or "Go figure it out yourself" on purpose. They held my hand when I needed it, and threw me in the open when I needed to learn. They are dedicated and passionate, and I am very fortunate to say that I have been able to connect with them on a deeper level.

"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." – Arthur Ashe

I realized that everyone in the Wikimedia Foundation is essential to its success. It's kind of like a jigsaw puzzle. Everyone has their own skillsets, their own talents, their own idiosyncrasies. That's what makes Wikimedia special. Everyone is awesome, and everyone has something to begin with, and it's up to them to decide what to do with that. I am glad to say I did that, and it's made me a stronger person.

At the Wikimedia Hackathon in Austria,

So after two years of participating in Google Code-in, I was fortunate to be named a Grand Prize Winner, meaning I would be treated to a trip to Mountain View and San Francisco for about a week. I would finally be able to visit San Francisco, to meet my peers who had worked so hard, but most importantly, to meet one of my mentors for the past two years, Sam Reed. I knew I had to say hello to him as well as to the Wikimedia Foundation office sometime. After

eating lots of food (way too much, you're never hungry at Google) and exploring San Francisco and Mountain View, the trip was finally over.

But for me, it had only begun. That night, I pulled out Google Maps and walked to the Foundation's office. After I had the chance to tour the office space and meet some more of my mentors from Google Code-in, I settled down with Roan and we hacked on the blacklist feature that I started on at the Wikimedia Hackathon back in Vienna.

What do you want to tell the world? **Write it here.** Ideas on introductions and writing style can be found in our [community guidelines](#).