

# Transcript

[00:00] [music]

**Derek Bruff:** [00:05] Welcome to “Leading Lines,” a podcast from Vanderbilt University. I’m your host, Derek Bruff, the Director of the Vanderbilt Center for Teaching.

[00:11] In this podcast, we explore creative, intentional and effective uses of technology to enhance student learning, uses that point the way to the future of educational technology in college and university settings.

[00:22] In this episode, we have another interview from Open Access Week 2017. Cliff Anderson, on the Leading Lines team, and Associate University Librarian for Research and Learning, talks with Kelly Doyle, Wikipedian-in-Residence for Gender Equity at the West Virginia University Libraries.

[00:37] Kelly was at Vanderbilt during Open Access Week to talk about her work at West Virginia and to assist with the Wikipedia Edit-A-Thon here on campus. The Vanderbilt Libraries host a few Edit-A-Thons each year giving students, faculty and staff the chance to learn how to contribute to Wikipedia and to make some contributions to a particular topic on Wikipedia.

[00:54] Cliff, in the interview, talks with Kelly Doyle about her rather unique position at West Virginia University as a Wikipedian-in-Residence and some of the ways that she’s found to help students at West Virginia contribute to Wikipedia and make better use of it in their research.

[01:05] [background music]

**Cliff Anderson:** [01:09] Thanks for joining us, Kelly.

**Kelly Doyle:** [01:10] Thank you for having me.

**Cliff:** [01:12] Let's begin by talking about your current position at West Virginia. It's kind of a unique position. Could you talk a little bit about your role there?

**Kelly:** [01:19] Definitely. This is the first Wikipedian-in-Residence position that focuses exclusively on gender equity, and it came about through an Inspire Grant in 2015 from the Wikimedia Foundation.

[01:32] The thought behind it was, one, how can we bridge academic libraries and librarians and academia with Wikipedia and Wikipedians and all of that entails? Then, a further subset of that, and most importantly, is how can librarians and academia more broadly help to address the gender gap on Wikipedia.

**Cliff:** [01:53] Very cool. Just stepping back a bit, I'm wondering about in your own story how you got started editing Wikipedia. How does someone even think about a job like that?

**Kelly:** [02:04] Actually, I didn't edit Wikipedia until I got this position. I have more of a community organizing... I entered in archives during grad school, protecting and preserving knowledge, and creating momentum around this. Collections was my background.

[02:22] I brought those things to the position, but I actually have never edited Wikipedia. Since my Wikipedian-in-Residence position is about community organizing and advocacy, the editing piece came along with it, but it's not a content creation position.

**Cliff:** [02:39] It must have been interesting to be learning Wikipedia at the same time as you were helping others to get started.

**Kelly:** [02:44] Absolutely. It's a steep learning curve, learning not only the Wikipedia and Wikimedia community, but how the Wikimedia Foundation fits in. Then, also learning to edit Wikipedia as a new user, all the while having this goal that I'm trying to achieve on top of that.

**Cliff:** [03:03] We just had a Wikipedia Edit-A-Thon, and you made a presentation about how to get started as an editor. I noticed that you had nice clear examples of what all the parts of a Wikipedia page mean.

**Kelly:** [03:11] Yeah, yeah.

**Cliff:** [03:12] I think that's one of the challenges, of course, of Wikipedia as a community now. There's a lot of rules, in a sense, there's some simple guidelines, but then when you get into the details, it grows complex pretty quickly.

**Kelly:** [03:23] Yeah, there's a lot of in-the-weeds stuff. I think we need to not just advocate for Wikipedia, but also advocate especially for students with Wikipedia literacy. That's really what those slides were about, pointing out the various areas of the Wikipedia page that we tend to ignore and we go right for the content, but we ignore pieces of the Wikipedia page itself that could help us dive deeper and move away from Wikipedia to do better research.

[03:50] The more that librarians and students educate themselves, and we help them to do that, about how Wikipedia works, maybe the perception of Wikipedia can continue to change because there is authority control at the bottom of the pages. You can get to WorldCat. You can look at the categories and do interdisciplinary research and really increase the way that you're using Wikipedia in tangible and amazing ways.

**Cliff:** [04:16] With your experience with students at West Virginia University, what have you found has been the most difficult aspect of onboarding them into Wikipedia? What are the challenges of getting them started as editors?

**Kelly:** [04:28] The challenge is getting students in the door, frankly. There so much that's being...Students are being pulled in so many directions with so many amazing things, especially at a big campus like WVU, so really it's finding that point of entry. Since I'm concerned with the gender gap, a natural point of entry was our sorority students. We have a lot of Greek life.

[04:49] I just started thinking about what can I offer students that would get them in the door, and that was volunteer credit service learning.

[04:58] That's been really helpful for me in thinking about the user, who we're trying to get to use Wikipedia, and what we can give back to them to get them to engage with Wikipedia, which is a huge bear of a thing to learn.

[05:12] But once they learn those skills, even if they never edit Wikipedia again after they

leave WVU, they still have these amazing skills and these literacy skills that they're bringing with them to tons of different fields. That helps them, but it also helps Wikipedia.

**Cliff:** [05:27] I'd love to hear more about your work with sororities on campus. What kind of events do you hold, and what kind of articles do you edit together?

**Kelly:** [05:37] The events originally were Edit-A-Thons. The students would come, I would do my training like we did today at any normal Edit-A-Thon, but it's gotten to a point where I really don't need to see those students as much. WVU has a platform called iServe where students log their volunteer hours, and then I approve them.

[05:58] Because of how Wikipedia works, I can look at their username and look at their contributions and see, "That was an hour worth of service." It's gotten to this really great, self-sustaining place where I don't necessarily need to check in with the students all the time, face to face.

[06:14] They don't need to necessarily come to Edit-A-Thons, though they do. It's something that they can do sitting on their couch at home, or it's something they can do in the library.

[06:24] That's what Wikipedia editors do, they do it at home. It's kind of an isolated thing and the students have really glommed on to that. I think it's something that they really like, and it's also a quiet activism because they're editing articles about women, and women that they think are important that are being marginalized. Their story's not told for whatever reason.

[06:45] In that way, it's become a sustained project that allows me to grow this at other universities because it's something that once they're trained, they can keep doing it. They can do it from home, and I can approve the hours.

**Cliff:** [06:57] I should say you'll be talking about this during our Open Access event tomorrow on campus, so we'll hopefully do something similar at Vanderbilt. Have you seen other campuses picking up this model?

**Kelly:** [07:07] There's a lot of interest in doing it. I actually have a grant starting in January from the Wikimedia Foundation to grow this to other universities because it is something that seems like it would be really scalable.

[07:20] The grant is to test it out at different types of universities, so we're testing at American University, which is a much smaller school in a metro area. Then, we're testing at Ohio State, which is a large state school to see if a certain type of culture needs to be present, if a Wikipedian-in-residence needs to be on campus every day for it to work.

[07:42] I think it could work at any school. Because this is self-sustaining right now at WVU, I don't think a Wikipedian-in-residence needs to be there every single day to make it work.

[07:52] The grant will allow me to, eventually, at the end of the year — the grant is a year term — to build really complete training materials, so that you could take those training materials. They'll be accessible through Creative Commons to implement it at your own school from the findings of the grant period.

**Cliff:** [08:10] That sounds terrific.

**Kelly:** [08:11] I'm really excited.

**Cliff:** [08:14] How about classrooms? What have you been doing at WVU to integrate Wikipedia into classroom teaching?

**Kelly:** [8:20] I've been doing a lot of what librarians would call "one-offs." I'm going into classrooms and talking about how students can use Wikipedia to do research. Or if they have an annotated bibliography, looking at a page that's really complete and looking for the scholarly sources there.

[08:39] Following those bread crumbs back to the library and working smarter, not harder. The thought there is meeting students where they are, and then bringing them into the library context.

[08:49] Also at WVU, we have a university library class that all of our journalism students have to take. Wikipedia's actually been integrated into that course completely, which is really exciting.

[09:02] The students, while they won't edit Wikipedia, they'll have two weeks where they learn Wikipedia literacy, how it's constructed, how to move away from it by using Wikipedia to our library system.

[09:16] They'll also learn about Creative Commons, licensing, all the stuff that makes Wikipedia great. Open Access is in that block of time, which is really exciting that it's institutionalized in that way.

**Cliff:** [09:28] Yeah, that sounds terrific. For information literacy courses, I think we should all integrate something on Wikipedia.

**Kelly:** [09:33] Definitely.

**Cliff:** [09:35] You mentioned libraries. Your own background is not out of librarianship. Can you talk a little bit about what it's been like to work in a library?

**Kelly:** [09:42] Yeah, sure. I have a master's degree in English Lit. I don't have an MLS, but it's been exciting to work in a library, especially one that serves such a huge student population. We have so many librarians and so many different types of librarians. It's been a lot of fun.

[10:01] I've learned a lot from, especially our instructional design librarians, in thinking about how can we more cohesively easily integrate Wikipedia into the way that we do our one-offs, or the way that we do new student orientation, or new faculty orientation, which the library handles at WVU.

[10:21] It's been a really great learning experience, and I think it's a natural place for a position like this to be housed.

**Cliff:** [10:27] There's been some criticism in the library community, and this is changing, about Wikipedia. The mantra that used to be repeated by librarians is, "Don't cite Wikipedia, cite reliable sources." Have you encountered any of that in your work with librarians?

**Kelly:** [10:41] Yeah, I mean, I think there's always, especially in academia, an old guard and then a not so old guard. Even with Wikipedia, even in that old guard sect, there's a shaking off of that. People are really starting to reassess their previous assessments of Wikipedia, or stereotypes of Wikipedia, especially because positions like mine are buzzing.

[11:10] The National Archives has a Wikipedian-in-Residence. The Smithsonian is doing lots of Wikipedia work. I think as more institutions continue to embrace Wikipedia, it's something that librarians will continue to have to confront, and hopefully, find what we've all found --

that it's something that our students are using.

[11:30] It's something that really matches with the ethos of libraries. The sum of all human knowledge is something that librarians and Wikipedia are sort of in lockstep on.

**Cliff:** [11:44] What about the peer review process for Wikipedia? I think there's a lot of misunderstanding about how that works, and how people work on sourcing and making sure that statements are reliable and credible. Can you talk a little bit about how that process works?

**Kelly:** [12:01] There are tiers of editors, I guess is the best way to say it. There's administrators on Wikipedia who make sure that if there's any disputes about content, they'll come in and try to resolve a dispute. On top pages, things get fleshed out like we were talking about earlier at the Edit-A-Thon. How do we present "X" appropriately?

[12:26] The peer review process, as it were, is more people who really care about a certain topic and they're watching those pages. They are making sure through various means that they have the best information.

[12:40] Maybe, they're using the Wikipedia Library — which is a part of the Wikimedia Foundation to get access to scholarly sources, information beyond paywalls -- to make that content the best it can be.

**Cliff:** [12:51] Now, you've also taken an active role in the Wikipedia community, and the community, of course, has lots of events where people meet in person as well as online. Can you talk, in particular, about WikiConference North America since you're one of the organizers now, I understand?

**Kelly:** [13:05] Yeah. WikiConference North America, we've had two years. Previously, it was just WikiConference America, United States. In 2015, a decision was made to bring in Canada and Mexico and share in our partners in those countries. It's been really exciting.

[13:28] We've committed ourselves to being inclusive, to having programming that sheds light on the gaps in Wikipedia and that Wikipedia is not complete. That's really important, especially in the academic and the library world. Wikipedia's not complete, we need your help.

[13:45] It's sort of an outstretched hand to not only the Wikimedia community, but beyond that. It's been really exciting. We've had a lot of great feedback about the conferences, and I'm really excited about 2018.

**Cliff:** [14:00] Fantastic. We'll look forward to learning more. In terms about your own thought about where your career is going -- Wikipedia career but also your personal career -- how does this fit in? Where do you see as next step for you?

**Kelly:** [14:13] You know, I never would have imagined that I would have been a Wikipedian-in-Residence for Gender Equity, and I'm so happy that I am. It would almost be foolish to say that I know what this will turn into.

[14:26] I hope that what this turns into is something that keeps me solidly advocating for a bridge between tech, Open Access, gender and content gaps, and our education system, so that could be many things.

[14:44] I'm open to how this will progress. I don't have a crystal ball, but I can see Wikipedians-in-Residence in the future being a standard in a lot of academic libraries and, maybe, even large public library systems. While there aren't many of us now in academic libraries, I think this is something that will grow, which is very exciting.

**Cliff:** [15:08] It is super exciting. As I say, it's a model that we should really think about here, so it's great to learn about it. We always ask our guests what their favorite analog educational technology is. Apart from anything digital, what's your favorite analog technology?

**Kelly:** [15:24] I love flash cards and the ability to color code flash cards is a lot of fun. It's a great visceral learning tool, so I'd have to say that.

[15:34] [music]

**Cliff:** [15:34] Awesome. Well, thank you, Kelly. This has been really terrific. We really appreciate your time.

**Kelly:** [15:38] Thank you for having me.

**Derek:** [15:40] That was Kelly Doyle, Wikipedian-in-Residence at the West Virginia University



Libraries. Thanks to Cliff Anderson for speaking with Kelly while she was on campus for Open Access Week.

[15:49] See the show notes for more on Kelly's work at West Virginia. For more on teaching with Wikipedia, see Episodes 13 and 18 of Leading Lines, featuring interviews with Tim Foster and Carwil Bjork-James, respectively.

[16:00] Both had really compelling stories about Wikipedia assignments in their classes and are part of what I would see as a growing movement of the use of Wikipedia in really intentional ways in higher education. I can only see that growing as Wikipedia becomes an even more robust partner in higher education through the work of folks like Kelly.

[16:20] I'll also add a link in the show notes to an interview I did way back in 2007 for a previous podcast from the Center for Teaching with Vanderbilt History Professor, Michael Bess. Michael, at the time, asked his history students to analyze the discussion tab on the Wikipedia entry on the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

[16:39] Those discussions were all about how to talk about and represent those atomic bombings on the main page in the main entry. Michael used those discussions to help his students learn to think and reason like historians.

[16:52] I found it to be a really fascinating assignment, and I've been sold on the educational value of Wikipedia ever since. Again, I'm glad to hear scholars, like Kelly Doyle, continuing to build bridges, as she says, between Wikipedia and higher education because there's just a ton of potential here.

[17:07] If you have thoughts about teaching with Wikipedia, let us know. You can leave a comment on our website, [leadinglinespod.com](https://leadinglinespod.com), or connect with us on Twitter where our handle is @LeadingLinesPod, or email us a voice memo at [LeadingLinesPod@Vanderbilt.edu](mailto:LeadingLinesPod@Vanderbilt.edu). We'd love to hear from you.

[17:21] If you can take a moment to rate and review us on iTunes, that would be really helpful. That helps other people find our podcast.

[17:28] Leading Lines is produced by the Center for Teaching, the Vanderbilt Institute for Digital Learning, the Office of Scholarly Communications, and the Associate Provost for

Digital Learning.

[17:34] This episode was "Rhedited" by -- "Rhedited," ha. This episode was edited by Rhett McDaniel. It was "Rhedited." Look for new episodes the first and third Monday of each month. I'm your host, Derek Bruff. Thanks for listening.

[17:44] [music]