Inclusive, plural and diverse virtual knowledge cultures: how do we get there?

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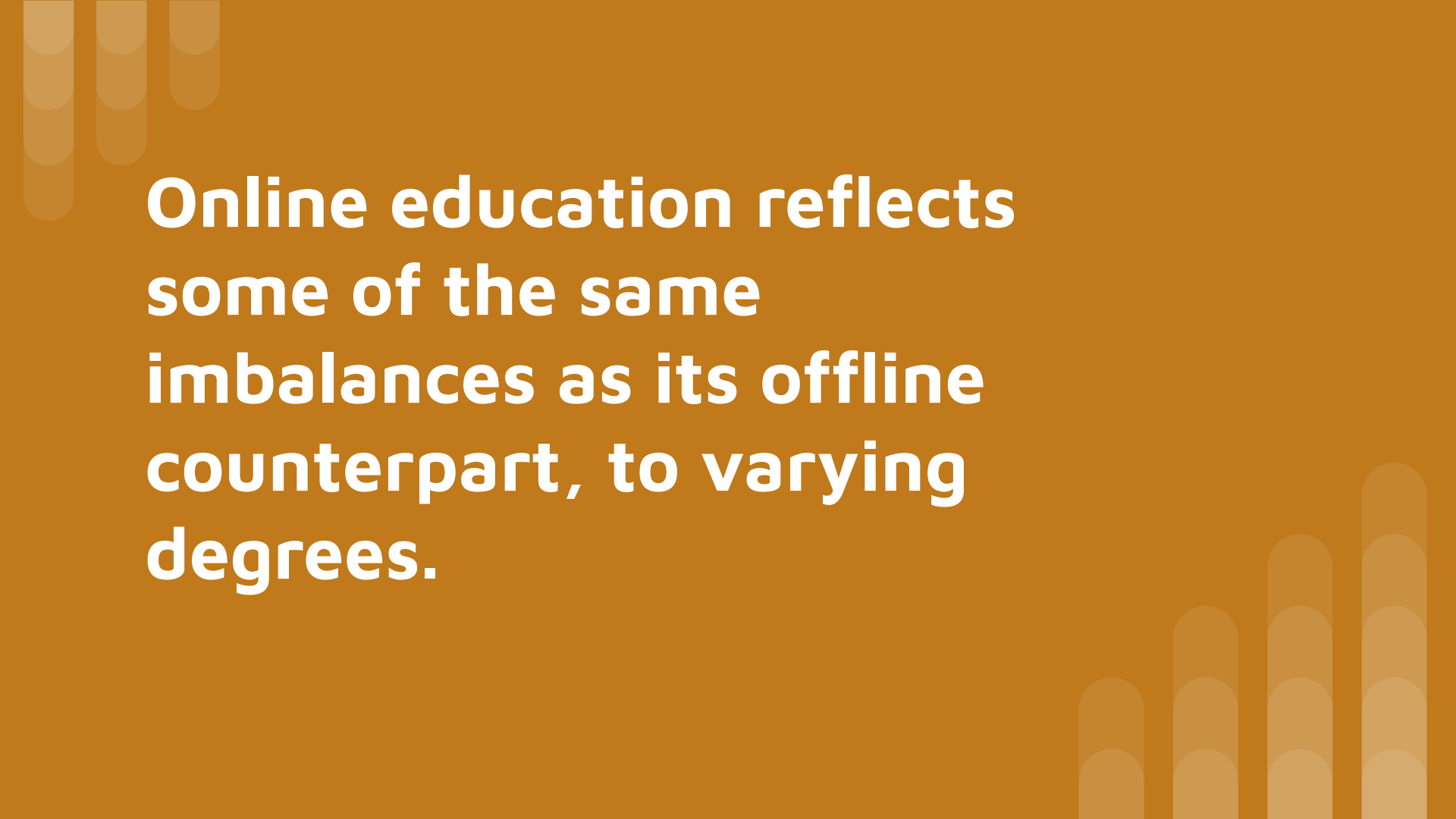https://about.me/rohini

Institute on Gender, Technology and Education
19 June 2022

Issues in the current education paradigm

-- Gap in enrolment and retention

-- Social barriers

-- Sexist hidden curriculum

-- Gender biased texts

-- Gender biased language

Online education reflects some of the same imbalances as its offline counterpart, to varying degrees.

Some of these factors exacerbated after the pandemic started.

Intentional Internet shutdowns

Online knowledge sources

-- Repositories and digital libraries (Closed/ proprietary) (https://www.theguardian.com/science/2012/apr/24/harvard-university-journal-publishers-prices; APCs)
-- "Alternative" sources such as SciHub and Zlibrary, which may be illegal or grey.
-- Open knowledge sources (Common concerns -- not reliable, may keep changing, prone to abuse and vandalism, among other things)

Restrictions on physical movement and prolonged lockdows prompted the use of more secondary and tertiary sources in education and research.

What is openness?

"Open means anyone can freely access, use, modify, and share for any purpose (subject, at most, to requirements that preserve provenance and openness)."
Source:

Openness is many things: Overarching concept, practice, philosophy, and a movement.
Cornerstones: Transparency and collaboration

Openness refers to "accessibility of knowledge, technology and other resources; the transparency of action; the permeability of organisational structures; and the inclusiveness of participation".

Open content, open knowledge

1. User-generated content (Quora, Yahoo Answers, Wikipedia...)
2. "The term knowledge is taken to include:
    1. Content such as music, films, books
    2. Data be it scientific, historical, geographic or otherwise
    3. Government and other administrative information"

   Source: https://opendefinition.org/od/1.0/en/

Open access, open data

"**Open access** is a broad international movement that seeks to grant free and open online access to academic information, such as publications and data."

"**Open access** is a publishing model for scholarly communication that makes research information available to readers at no cost, as opposed to the traditional subscription model in which readers have access to scholarly information by paying a subscription". Source: https://www.openaccess.nl/en/what-is-open-access

"**Open data** is data that can be freely used, re-used and redistributed by anyone - subject only, at most, to the requirement to attribute and sharealike." https://opendatahandbook.org/guide/en/what-is-open-data/

Many open movements, concepts and practices

- open source software
- open science
- open educational resources
- open hardware
- open innovation
- open government
- …..

For more, see:
http://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Openness#List_of_Open_Concepts_and_Practices

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeTlXtEOplA

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Licenses for content (text, audio, video, images, etc), software, databases

Open Knowledge

Wikipedia as an example

What Wikipedia is

Wikipedia is an encyclopedia:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wikipedia_is_an_encyclopedia

Encyclopedias are secondary or tertiary sources**.

No encyclopedia accepts original research [WP:NOR]

Wikipedia requires all sources cited on it to be evaluated.

Every Wikipedia has its own policies for notability + what constitutes a reliable source .

*Primary, secondary and tertiary sources:
https://web.archive.org/web/20130627182408/http://www.lib.umd.edu/ues/guides/primary-sources

An encyclopedia may be a place to start research. It is never a good place to end it.

What Wikipedia is not

What Wikipedia is not [WP:NOT, English Wikipedia policy]

Wikipedia is not a reliable resource
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wikipedia_is_not_a_reliable_source

See also

Five pillars of Wikipedia:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Five_pillars

List of academic sources citing Wikipedia as a source:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wikipedia_as_an_academic_source

Wikipedia:Replies to common objections
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Replies_to_common_objections

Known issues with Wikipedia's content

- Copyright violations (plagiarism)
- Factually incorrect information
- Unverified information
- Unverifiable information
- Cyclical reporting a.k.a Citogenesis: https://www.explainxkcd.com/wiki/index.php/978:_Citogenesis
- Hoaxes
- Revenge editing http://www.salon.com/2013/05/17/revenge_ego_and_the_corruption_of_wikipedia/, https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/08/wikipedia-editors-for-pay/393926/
- Blatant vandalism and subtle vandalism
- **Different types of biases (systemic, ideological, social, etc)**
- And more...

Most of these issues exist in other, 'conventional' systems of knowledge production as well.

Bias in open knowledge sources

Who can participate? (Participation gap) Whose knowledge is considered knowledge? Who and what content gets illuminated? (Content gap)

- **Anglocentric**
- **Gender bias**
- **Caste bias**
- **Racial bias**
- **More...**

Bias in Wikipedia

- Who writes Wikipedia:
  https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Who_writes_Wikipedia%3F
- Systemic bias
  https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_Wikipedia#Systemic_bias_in_coverage
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia#Coverage_of_topics_and_systemic_bias

Gender gaps in Wikipedia

-- Disparity in women's and gender diverse person's access to the Internet and devices

-- Wikipedia's gender gap (content gap, participation gap and bias in how women are written about)

-- Common justifications for normalising the existence of the gender gap

Inclusivity interventions

Friendly space policy, Code of conduct

-- Linguistic inclusivity (327 editions, with 316 currently active and 11 closed -- June 2022)

-- Technical decisions for inclusivity (the basic barebones look of the pages on Wikipedia)

-- Gender interventions

      Community interventions, such as editathons, workshops

      More funding

      Making the interface less 'intimidating'

-- Common backlash against inclusivity interventions:

      -- It is discriminatory towards men and dominant groups

      -- It has a chilling effect on the freedom of expression/ it is censorship

      -- It impinges on the freedom of expression of the people while privileging people of certain political persuasions and social bent.

      -- "Harassment does not happen in our community/ space/ organisation/ institution. Accepting such a set of rules implies otherwise. It implies that the community is not safe, friendly or welcoming and we find the implication offensive."

Using Wikipedia in the classroom/ library

References for teachers and librarians

Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Research_help/Librarians_and_Teachers

- "Teaching beginning researchers how to evaluate Wikipedia, within its editorial standards -- the guide File:Evaluating Wikipedia brochure.pdf is a good guideline for workshops or classes."
- "Teaching students and patrons how to use Wikipedia as a "starting point" for research, showing how to use information, footnotes and external links to guide searches in library resources."
- "Showing students and patrons how to use article histories and discussion pages to evaluate the articles current status within the Wikipedia community."

Wikipedia education program

https://outreach.wikimedia.org/wiki/Education

Student assignments:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Student_assignments

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Education_program

(Caution: There are process to do this right. Research and education initiatives should be not be disruptive towards the Wikipedias and their communities.)

Sister projects of Wikipedia

Sister projects of Wikipedia

- **Wikimedia Commons**: media repository (photos, maps, illustrations, etc)
- **Wikiversity**: Open educational resources (OER) community, courses, learning resources projects and research
- **Wikisource**: Free library of source texts which are in the public domain or legally available for free redistribution
- **Wikidata:** semantic, machine-readable multilingual database
- **Wikibooks:** collection of open content textbooks that anyone can create and edit
- And more

File:Magnetic Sensor (5940478977).jpg

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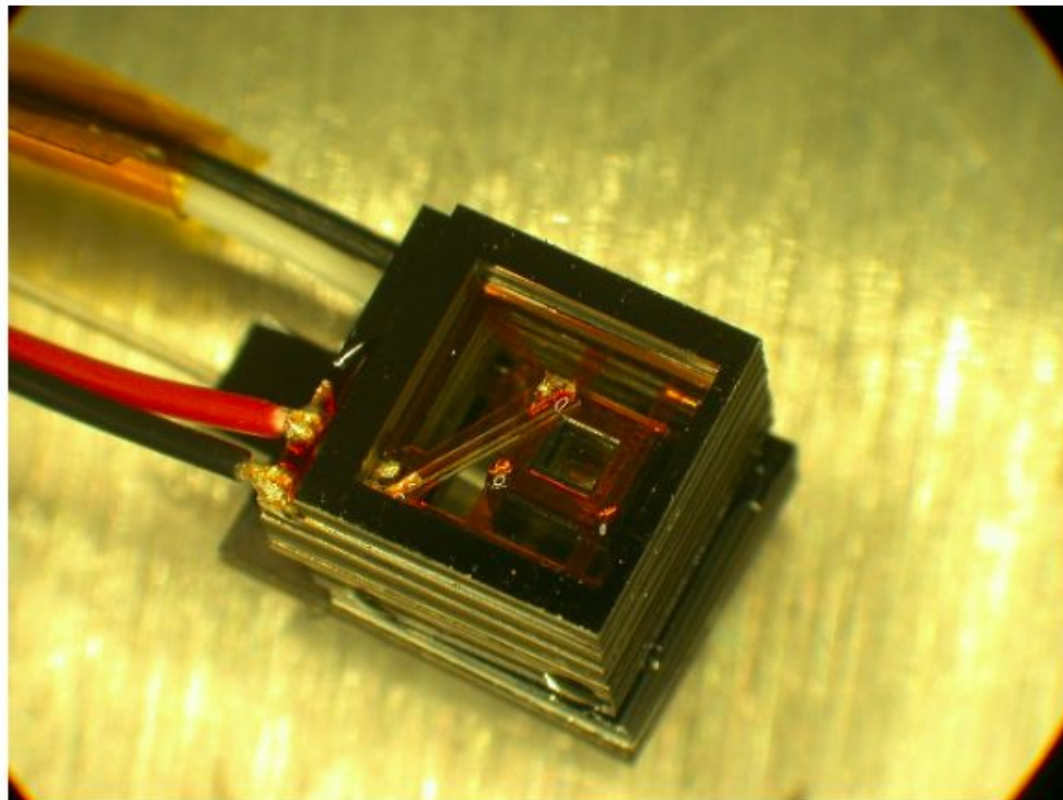
No higher resolution available.

Magnetic_Sensor_(5940478977).jpg (640 × 480 pixels, file size: 284 KB, MIME type: image/jpeg)

Description	NIST's miniature magnetic sensor is about the size of a sugar cube. The lid has been removed to show the inner square cell, which contains a gas of rubidium atoms. The diagonal bar is an electrical connection to the cell's heaters, which are powered by the red, black and white electrical wires. The clear optical fiber extending from the middle bottom of the sensor connects to a control box. Credit: S. Knappe/NIST **Disclaimer:** Any mention of commercial products within NIST web pages is for information only; it does not imply recommendation or endorsement by NIST. **Use of NIST Information:** These World Wide Web pages are provided as a public service by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). With the exception of material marked as copyrighted, information presented on these pages is considered public information and may be distributed or copied. Use of appropriate byline/photo/image credits is requested.
Date	15 July 2011, 12:27
Source	Magnetic Sensor⊠
Author	National Institute of Standards and Technology⊠

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Such a lovely place

So much empty space

Plenty of work at the Hotel Wikipedia

Any time of year

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