

This is supplementary material for the webtext “Wikipedia as Editorial Microcosm” by Joshua DiCaglio et al., published in *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*, 29(1), available at <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/29.1/topoi/dicaglio-et-al/index.html>.

WP: FRINGE -- Editing Fringe Topics in Wikipedia

Wikipedians have to be careful, even suspicious about disputed topics. As per WP:NOT, wikipedia is not a forum or a place to work out disputed ideas.

As per WP:Notability, Wikipedia also has to be cognizant not only about balance, but also what ideas are actually notable. Thus, Neutral point of view does not mean that Wikipedia should give equal space to a marginal claim (The moon landing was staged!) disputing a widely accepted claim (The moon landing happened). While this may be obvious in cases such as the moon landing conspiracies, it becomes a lot more complicated for topics such as climate change.

However, fringe topics might actually be notable, even if they are not always capable of being positioned in the ways that those who support them do. This is particularly important for health topics such as controversial medicines, therapies, and supplements or beliefs such as astrology. These create particular issues for NPOV and are covered under a separate policy for Fringe Theories.

Such articles can be good topics for this project, as long as you carefully review the policies on Fringe theories.

Policy Pages

[WP:Fringe theories](#)

Major Issues

1. The challenge of developing a good fringe article

Example: Vampire Lifestyle ([Before](#) + [Deletion nomination](#))

This article has been nominated for deletion (several times) but the topic has received enough coverage that it has been deemed notable. However, no one has really come in and made it into a good article. Despite the fact that this article actually has some decent sources, no one has made the time to come in and clean this article up/add content that would make it better.

- What’s the challenge?
 - ❖ It needs good sources
 - ❖ Be appropriately balanced
 - ❖ Avoid fancruft or other things written from the perspective of someone who is an adherent.

Who has the editorial savvy to actually push this towards a good article?? As of yet, no one has materialized...

Ideology

General beliefs

The basic beliefs of Vampirism is the value of the individual is superior to that of any group or tribe or nation. In everything vampirists do, they believe in challenging anything opposing individual freedom.^[further explanation needed]

Consumption of blood

Some modern vampires believe in the tradition of consuming blood, either animal or human, though human is preferred.^[1] These vampires are referred to as "sanguinarian", and claim that the consumption of blood provides them with energy and strength.^{[citation needed][6]}

Sexuality and sexual practices

Sex researchers have documented cases of people with sexual (paraphilic) vampirism and autovampirism.^{[1][7][8]} However, not all vampires involved in modern vampire subcultures display a link between the vampire lifestyle and their sexual behaviour.

Members

Despite the assumption, members of the vampire subculture range beyond simply those who drink blood. Generally, vampirism is not considered a religion, but rather, a spiritual or philosophical path.^{[9][unreliable source?]} Many vampires will wear regular clothing, despite the subculture being linked to goth subculture.

There are several types of vampire lifestylers. Though many modern vampires are part of small clans, called *covens* or *houses*, there are also many that are not part of a coven, and live solitary in their lifestyle as a vampire.^[6]

- "Sanguinarian" vampires - those who consume the blood of others as a form of energy-taking.
- "Psychic" vampires - sometimes called "*psi vamps*", vampires in this role claim to attain nourishment from the *aura*, psychic energy or *pranic* energy of others.^{[4][6]} They believe one must feed from this energy to balance a spiritual or psychological energy deficiency, such as a damaged aura or chakra.^[1]
- "Hybrid" vampires - vampires who take both blood and psychic energy as a form of nourishment.^[6]
- Blood donors - though not vampires themselves, blood donors are people who willingly allow vampires to drink their blood. Within vampire society, vampires and donors are considered equal, though donors are expected to have some subservience to their vampires.^[10] Donors can prove difficult for those in the vampire lifestyle to find.^{[2][4]}
- Blood fetishists - members of the vampire community who use blood as a stimulant, or consider blood drinking a sexual fetish, sometimes using or drinking it during the course of *sadomasochistic* sex.^[6]

2. Handling policing of Fringe topics

When an editor is watching a Fringe article to protect from vandalism and other editors unaware of or unable to follow the Fringe article policies, it can sometimes result in an article that isn't as good or overly emphasizes the fringe nature of the topic.

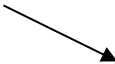
Example: Ghost Hunting ([Before](#) + [After](#) + [Talk Page](#))

An active editor was watching this page after it had a history of fringe editing. This, however, was making it very difficult for any other editors to come in and contribute. Because of this, the article focuses more on the paranormal investigators rather than the topic of ghost hunting which further obscures the article in an even more “fringe” direction, despite there being space for discussing Ghost Hunting as a broader cultural and historical phenomenon.

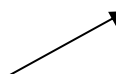
Reorganization of Article [edit source]

The main issue that I've seen with this article is that it neglects to do what Wikipedia is intended for -- explaining what the topic is. This article seems to address more of the controversy and opinions surrounding ghost hunting (specifically the skepticism and belief statistics section) rather than explaining what ghost hunting actually is. Although I concede that this sections are important and necessary, I believe that it is also important to keep the focus on the main topic, which is ghosting hunting, not the skepticism of ghost hunting nor the belief statistics of ghost hunting. Next week, I plan to begin edits on this article including adding sections that address ghost hunting in popular culture, such as ghost hunting television series that seem to be increasing in popularity, as well as books and movies that have been influenced by paranormal investigation, in neutral, encyclopedic language. I also think that it would helpful to explain, for the purpose of encyclopedic knowledge, how paranormal investigation is typically conducted. If anyone has any knowledge on these topics that would like to assist in this endeavor, it would be greatly appreciated. [Audentis.Fortuna.luvat](#) (talk) 19:25, 28 February 2019 (UTC) [reply]

"how paranormal investigation is typically conducted." Isn't this a [parapsychology](#) topic? [Dimadick](#) (talk) 19:32, 28 February 2019 (UTC) [reply]

 [@Audentis.Fortuna.luvat](#). The main topic (the belief you can detect spirits with gadgets) is a fringe theory, so the article falls under our [WP:FRINGE](#) guideline, which is part of [WP:NPOV](#). We are required to clearly identify how the fringe theory differs from the mainstream view. In this case, the mainstream view is that ghost hunting is a [pseudoscience](#). Which is why we can't characterize it a "controversy" or give "both sides" equal weight. - [LuckyLouie](#) (talk) 20:19, 28 February 2019 (UTC) [reply]

[@LuckyLouie](#). After looking over the two pages you linked ([parapsychology](#) and [WP:FRINGE](#)), I would have to disagree. [parapsychology](#) relies more on psychic, telepathy, and things of that sort rather than using specific equipment such as EVP recorders and EMF detectors, and full spectrum cameras to make observations intended to prove the existence of paranormal activity. Additionally, although ghost hunting is considered a [pseudoscience](#), I don't see that issue with explaining what ghost hunting is because, currently, the article doesn't really address this at all, despite that being the main topic. Whether or not someone believes ghost hunting to be real or a hoax, it is something that people engage in. By writing about what ghost hunting is and what it consists of, I don't believe that this would be violating any neutrality or the [WP:FRINGE](#) guideline. That's why I made a point to say that it's important to keep sections such as the skepticism section because it as important to the topic as explaining the topic, itself. — Preceding [unsigned](#) comment added by [Audentis.Fortuna.luvat](#) (talk • contribs) 21:08, 28 February 2019 (UTC) [reply]

 If you follow the policies I've referred to above and use reliable sources per [WP:RS](#) and [WP:FRIND](#), there shouldn't be any problem. - [LuckyLouie](#) (talk) 21:37, 28 February 2019 (UTC) [reply]

As you can see from the above talk page, the editor is barring progress under the belief that they are following correct guidelines. This issue would hopefully be solved by keeping the community involved in the decision making process on the talk page.

Notice: In the table of contents from the Before and After of the Ghost hunting article, the interaction resulted in the article being opened up to much more information that helps to focus on Ghost hunting as a whole, rather than sticking to paranormal investigators. Is this entirely appropriate?

See how it looks today. Did it find its way to more appropriate kinds of content?

Contents [hide]

- 1 History
- 2 Belief statistics
- 3 Skepticism
- 4 Methods and equipment
 - 4.1 Cold spots
 - 4.2 "Orbs"
- 5 See also
- 6 References
- 7 External links

2 Notable paranormal investigators

- 2.1 Semyon Kirlian
- 2.2 Harry Price
- 2.3 Ed and Lorraine Warren
 - 2.3.1 Notable Investigations
 - 2.3.1.1 Annabelle
 - 2.3.1.2 Perron family
 - 2.3.1.3 Amityville
 - 2.3.1.4 Enfield Poltergeist
 - 2.3.1.5 Demons
 - 2.3.1.6 Snedeker house
 - 2.3.1.7 Smurl family
 - 2.3.1.8 Werewolf
 - 2.3.1.9 Union Cemetery
- 2.4 John Zaffis