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WP:NOT - What Wikipedia is Not

Wikipedia is an encyclopedia--so says Pillar #1 of the 5 Pillars. But what exactly does that mean? The key definition here is primarily given in a negative sense--by what it is NOT.

The policy page WP:NOT is probably the most useful policy page on Wikipedia. Many of the problematic edits and content on Wikipedia are, in some way or another, using Wikipedia to do something other than be an encyclopedia. Thus, WP:NOT is both your best guide in considering what should be on Wikipedia and your most powerful ally in justifying bold edits (particularly in deleting content -- see document on deleting content).

This handout will discuss some ways in which you might need and use WP:NOT, as well as provide a few examples.

Policy Pages

[WP:What Wikipedia is not](#)

Major Issues

1) Types of WP:NOT problems

Instructional -- When an article becomes instructional or a guidebook

Example: Havanese Dog ([Before](#)) - This article about a dog breed quickly became a pet care guide as one section started going into depth about how to groom and take care of them.

Care

The profuse coat needs to be thoroughly combed at least twice per week. A Havanese with a dense or curly coat will be more prone to tangling and matting, thus requiring more frequent combing, than one with a silky, slightly wavy coat. If not showing the dog, it can be trimmed shorter to require less brushing. Many pet owners clip their dogs into a 1–2 inch long "puppy cut" for ease of maintenance.

If they go out in the snow, ice clumps will stick between their paw pads; just rinse off in warm water or buy booties. When owners give them a bath, they must make sure to dry them. Some in shorter clips can blot and air dry, but most will need to be blown dry. Owners can also comb their hair out after bathing so as not to dry in mats. Use high air but low heat to protect their sensitive skin. Hot air can damage the skin.

Hair that grows on the bottom of their feet between the paw-pads needs trimming to allow traction on smooth floors. Some develop tear staining. A veterinarian might suggest treating red yeast issues to help diminish or eliminate staining; sometimes diet allergens are to blame and switching to a food without common allergens can be helpful. Excess tearing is sometimes a result of hair getting into the eyes; it is recommended that hair below eyes be allowed to grow out instead of shaved out. Havanese can wear a topknot or small braids to keep the hair out of their eyes during everyday activities.

As with any dog with dropped ears, the ears must be kept clean to help prevent ear infections. A cottonball can be placed just inside each ear before bathing to prevent excess water from entering in. After bathing, since it may be moist, pluck a few hairs inside the dog's ears to let air circulate through, preventing fungus from building.

The Havanese is not a yappy dog, but will alert its owners to approaching people. Usually acknowledging that you have heard their alert is enough to make them cease. Some have strong attachment issues, known by their owners as "velcro dogs", following household members everywhere, even into the bathroom.

[After](#) student edits: This "Care" section was retitled as a grooming section, however that still **does not** address the larger issue at play here -- that Wikipedia is NOT a pet care guide and that this content should have been removed from the page rather than rebranded.

TMI -- Too much information that is specific to a particular group or interest.

WP:NOT is also designed to prevent unnecessary information on Wikipedia. You can think of these as violations of WP:NOT and cite it in addressing these.

In the Rowing article example below, there was too much information regarding the specific types of rowing that detracted from the article and made it hard to follow. In the "Way Before" link, you will see TMI in the "Venetian Rowing" section.

Example: Rowing -- [Way Before](#) + [Before](#) + [After](#)

COI/PROMO

The issue with conflicts of interest is that they are often promotional and are

Example: Yahoo! Mail ([Before](#)), remove all pricing and promo features, like storage capacity here, should be removed if presented in this context.

The following section clearly violates WP:NOT and could also be seen as WP:PROMO. An article over topics such as these should not include pricing and storage information. This type of information could easily become promotional as the article is trying to give information that might lead to future sales. PROMO content is not necessary in an article over the topic of the organization/service as a whole, and WP tells us it **should be removed**.

Features

The service comes in two configurations, free and business.

Free version

- Email storage capacity: 1 TB^[14]
- Email attachment limit: 25 MB (up to 100 MB via the built-in 'Attach Large Files' app)^[15]
- Account expiry on inactivity: 12 months.^[16] The account can not be retrieved.
- Supported protocols: POP3 in Asia or via YPOPs!, IMAP via IMAP proxy or via Zimbra, SMTP, Mail Forwarding in some countries. US Users gained free POP3 and Forwarding access in 2013.^[17]
- 100 filters to automatically sort incoming messages (200 filters for the Plus version)
- Spam and virus protection. (See: *DomainKeys*)
- Advertising is displayed on the screen while working with the email account. Text ads are added to the footer of outgoing messages, as of February 2011.

2) Addressing WP:NOT issues

Addressing minor WP:NOT problems is often easy: you just make the change and, ideally, put [[WP:NOT]] as part of your justification in the edit summaries.

However, more significant WP:NOT issues need to be broached to the community via the talk page, particularly if you make a major deletion (see Deleting content document) or if there are questions about whether or not a deletion is appropriate.

Example: Centaur ([Before](#) + [After](#)) Here, an extensive table was added to the article that would be TMI or fancruft as it targets fans of particular centaurs.

The student removed the table from the page entirely. They created a sandbox to place it in as a courtesy and linked that in the talk page in case the original creator of the table wanted to retrieve it (since it was evident that building the table took a lot of work).

List of Centaurs

Names	Sources						Fight against		Killed by	Notes
	<i>Hesiod</i>	<i>Diodorus</i>	<i>Ovid</i>	<i>Apollodorus</i>	<i>Valerius</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Lapiths</i>	<i>Heracles</i>		
Abas			✓				✓			fled Pirthous wedding after fighting
Agrius				✓						repelled by Heracles in a fight
Amphion		✓						✓	Heracles	tried to plunder Pholus of his wine
Amycus			✓				✓		Pelates	son of Ophion
Anchius				✓						repelled by Heracles when he tried to steal the wine of Pholus
Antimachus			✓				✓		Caeneus	

Example: Jake the Dog [Before](#) + [After](#) + [Talk Page](#)

Here, the student deleted the red bracketed sections below aiming to remove content that was OR (“original thought” on WP: NOT page), but did not create a good talk page post or edit summaries on the history page to explain their edits. As you can see on the Talk Page, this led to a misunderstanding with another editor that was unproductive overall.

Jake is generally laid-back and tends not to worry about things. He's funny, loyal, supportive, friendly, good-hearted, easygoing, selfless, and plays like a loving big brother type for Finn. He relies heavily on his powers (or Finn) to get him out of any dangerous predicament. While he often cracks jokes at serious times, Jake always has a lecture or a song to cheer Finn up if he feels disheartened. Acting as Finn's world-wise mentor, Jake is always willing to give input and advice about a situation. Still, his suggestions are usually inconsistent, ranging from encouraging and helpful tips to ridiculous nonsense. He can be somewhat irresponsible, frequently leaving Finn to fight most of a battle on his own, but he always pulls through when he is needed most.

Pendleton Ward said that the personality of Jake was partly inspired by "Bill Murray's sardonic camp counselor in the 1979 movie *Meatballs*, a cooler-than-cool older-brother figure who can laugh at his charges without being mean and whose teachable moments are anything but cloying".^[4]

Jake loves to eat. He likes junk food, especially [pie](#), [burgers](#), and [ice cream](#), but he states in "[Slumber Party Panic](#)" that eating chocolate or fudge would probably kill him, much like a normal dog. This has been contradicted in several episodes after "[Slumber Party Panic](#)", as Jake is sometimes shown eating chocolate. He is not afraid to try new foods (as seen in "[Her Parents](#)") and invents many of his foods. There is evidence of his ability to cook; he makes Korean food for Finn at the beginning of [Apple Thief](#), and he cooks all the food that he uses to make the [Everything Burrito](#). He makes coffee in [Beautopia](#), bacon pancakes in "[Burning Low](#)" and also scrambled eggs in "[Frost & Fire](#)". He uses his cooking skills to create an incredible sandwich in "[Time Sandwich](#)" that contains several unusual and original ingredients such as lobster soul and a bird from the kitchen window.

Bottom line is that following up your edits with solid explanations is essential for working on Wiki.