



Wikipedia Admins & Templates

The Organizational Capabilities of a Peer Production Effort

Matthijs den Besten & Max Loubser

OeRC

OII

Distributed Problem Solving

Wikipedia

Exciting

Crowd-Sourcing

Community
Engagement

Opp



WIKIPEDIA

...by his reason, but
...regular passion for
...other animals, which is a lack
...of mind, that by a perseverant
...of delight in the continual and
...indefatigable generation of
...knowledge, exceeds the short
...scheme of any carnal
...pleasure.



...to be regarded as
...teaching. I never
...less of this immortal be
...which are in their essen
...lightness of treatment—let
...as one of them. Novel
...I have permitted
...only as



WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

Cho

Nupedia
The open content encyclopedia.

Outsourcing

Engineering

Boring

Simple

Complex

The Evolution of Wikipedia



- How has the organization changed over the years?
 - More and more like a firm;
 - ... *a soft!*
- Why has it changed?
 - Due to its success;
 - Due to its failures;
- Should it change again?
 - Probably.

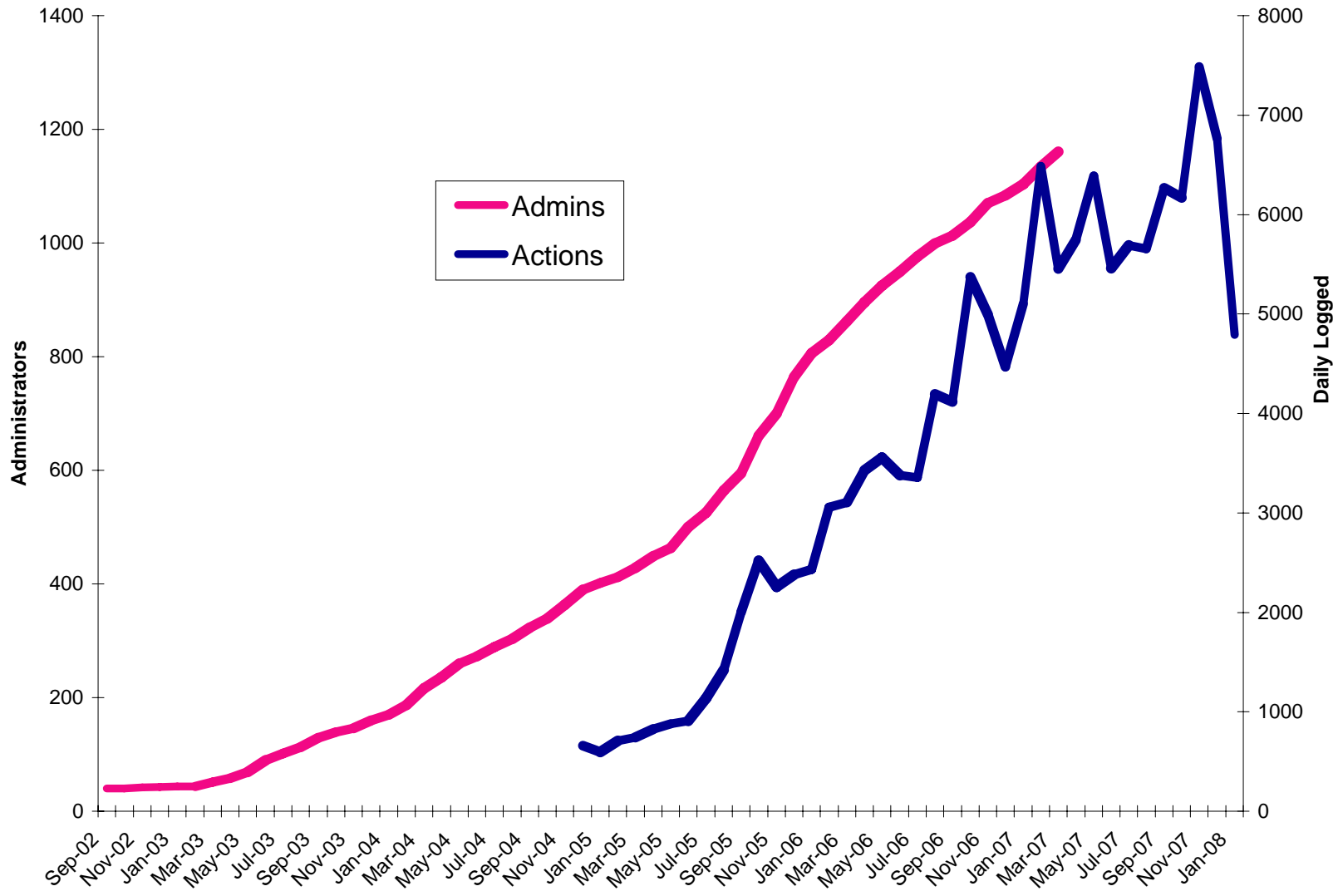
Wikipedia as a Firm



- The encyclopedia that anyone can edit;
- With managers
- Who issue directives,
- Convene task forces,
- Or initiate projects,
- Without pay.



Administrator Actions

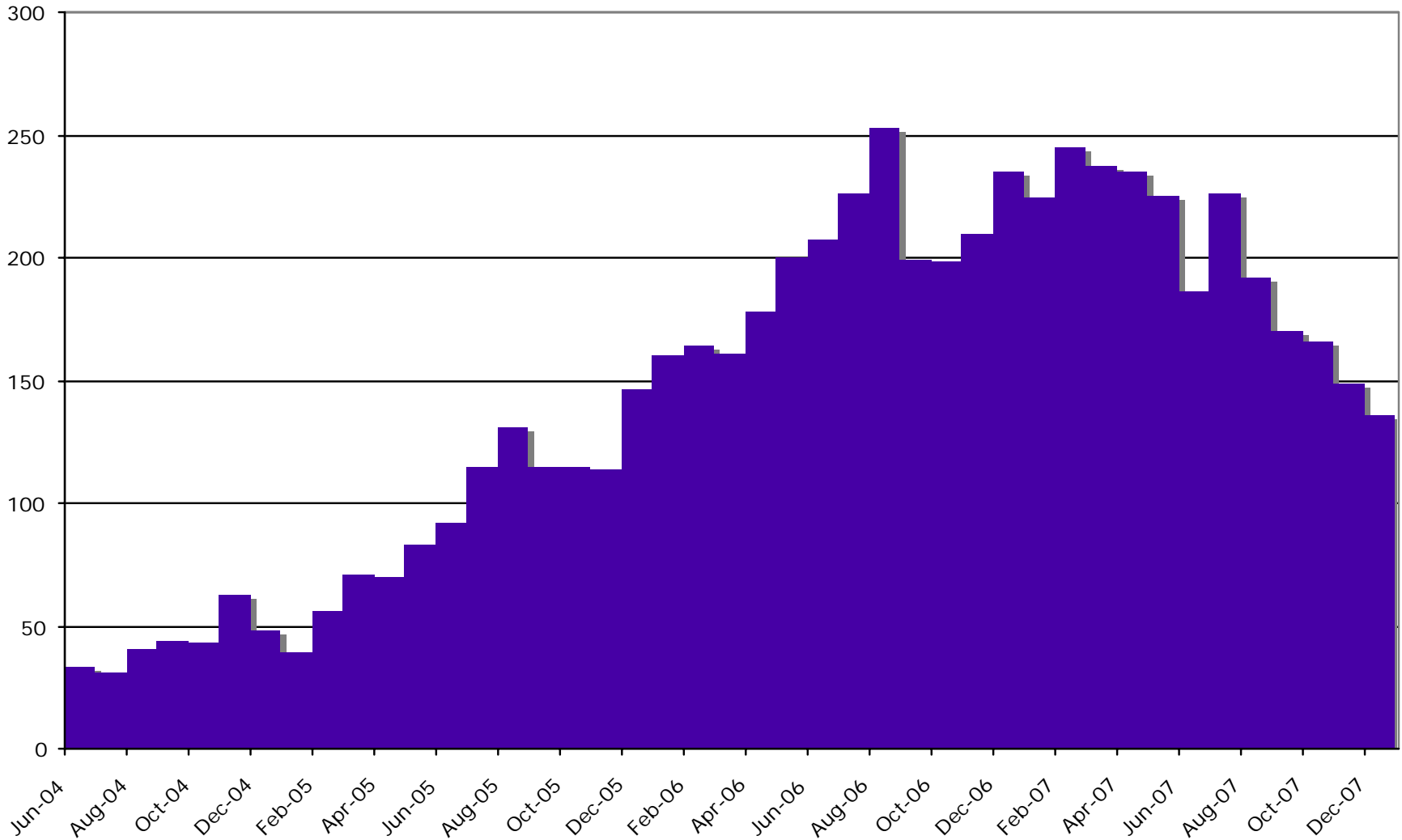


Template Directives



- **Stub:**
 - Expand text;
- **Unsimple/Complex:**
 - Improve readability (Simple Wikipedia);
- **Regional:**
 - Remove bias (Chinese Wikipedia);
- **Featured article / barn star:**
 - Reward.

Articles tagged “Controversial”



Task forces & Projects



- **Projects:**
 - Multiple languages;
 - Wikibooks, Wiktionary, etc.
- **Task forces:**
 - Topic-centred coordination;
 - Anti-vandalism squads;
 - Inclusionists vs. deletionists.

What problem does this solve?



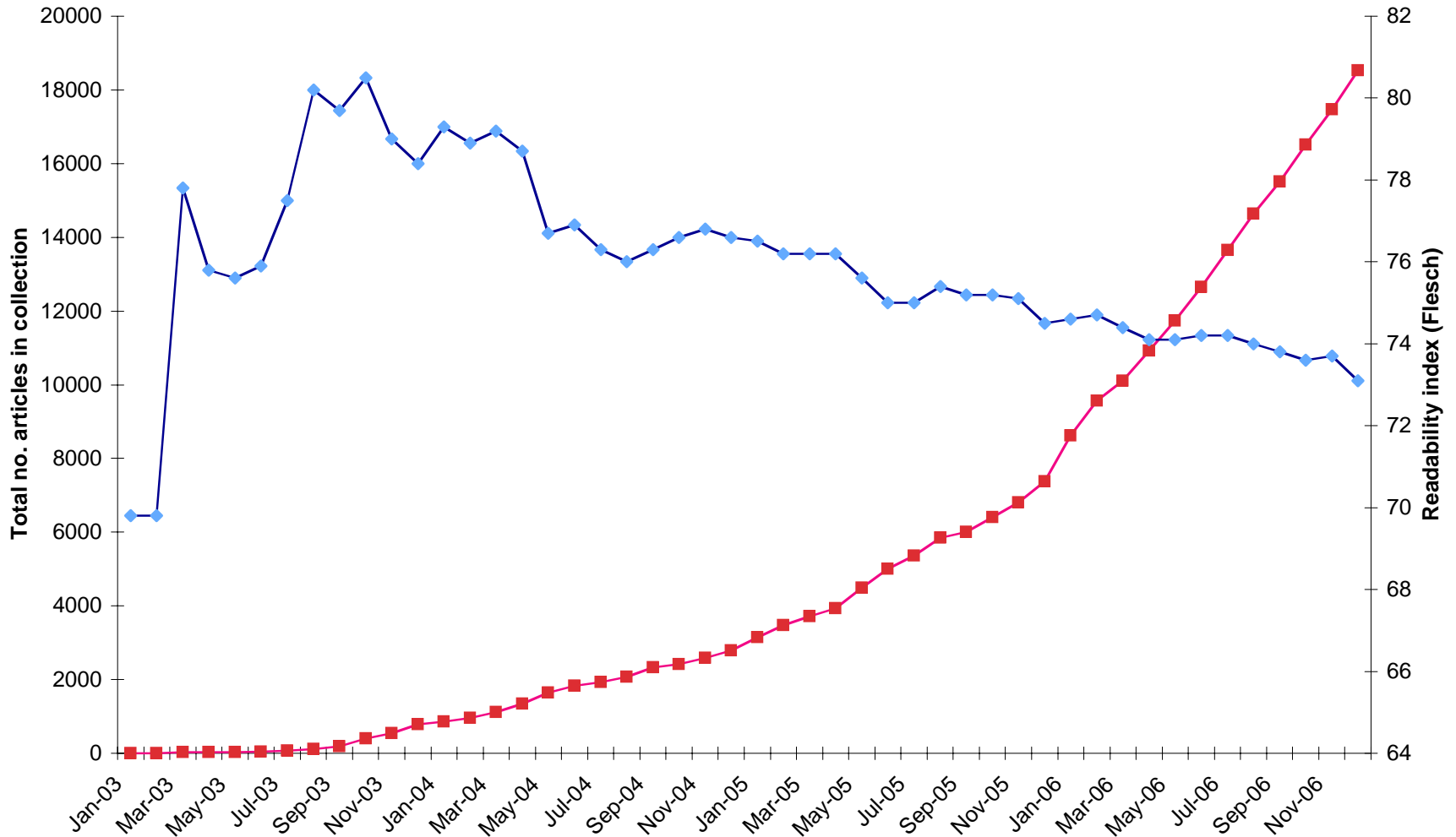
- A. In its growth, Wikipedia also does more and more **peripheral** activities;
- B. After tremendous growth, Wikipedia enters a **new phase** of consolidation;
- C. Now that it is highly visible and attracts more contributions from the less initiated, Wikipedia needs to devote more effort to **police** the editors.

And to what effect?

Evolution of Simple Wikipedia; 2003 - 2006



Articles Readability



Future Research






- How has the quality of Wikipedia evolved in recent years?
- What has been the effect of the organizational changes within Wikipedia?
- Where can automation / paid labor improve matters?



Further Reading



- Max Loubser and Matthijs den Besten, “Wikipedia Admins and Templates: The Organizational Capabilities of a Peer Production Effort”, April 2008. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1116171>
- Nicholson Baker, “The Charms of Wikipedia” *The New York Review of Books* 55(4), March 2008.
- Marshall Poe, “The Hive”, *The Atlantic*, September 2006.

Action	Anon	User	Admin 
Edit page			
Create page			
Edit semi-protected page			
Edit full protected page			
Move (rename) a page		>4d	
Block a user			
Delete a page			
Delete history			
Protect a page			
Rollback			
Undelete 			THE JAMES MARTIN 21ST CENTURY SCHOOL UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD