**The Alterhuman Wikipedia Editing Initiative**

**This project wants to improve the representation of alterhuman topics on Wikipedia, and therefore to the public in general.** It’s something that anyone (yes, including you!) can contribute to. You don’t have to be a formal volunteer with Alt+H and there aren’t any prerequisite skills or knowledge. **You also don’t have to report to us or ask us for the go-ahead to make changes** - this initiative is about empowering *you* to make a change, and providing community and guides is just a way to help you do that.

In this document we’ll cover some things you need to know to take part, mention some helpful resources, and let you know where you can find support if you run into any issues.

#### Quick Links

[**Google sheets job list**](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1_nxn8Fx37z8NiQFU77HAYP3C64hKce876OzVvBVQRdo/edit?usp=sharing) - to-do lists and progress tracking for specific tasks we’re working together on

[**Forum thread for this project**](https://forum.alt-h.net/thread-93.html) - for a more structured discussion space

[**The Alt+H Discord**](http://discord.gg/E9qudNS) - real-time communication about the project can go in **#alth\_projects**

[**List of relevant articles**](https://staff.alt-h.net/apps/onlyoffice/s/LHBxMWxJaCqfAcW) - existing articles that we have our eyes on

[**List of good sources**](https://staff.alt-h.net/s/HH8gbootkryDbrf)- sources that we know are acceptable to Wikipedia

Links to Wikipedia’s own documentation are attached to relevant sections. They are dense as hell (hence why we made this guide in the first place). That means they’re **optional reading**, provided mostly for interest’s sake.

**If you have questions about anything in this guide, or about editing Wikipedia in general, come join us in the Discord or on the forum (both linked above) to get help!** You can also reach out through our regular social media channels, or to an organizer directly. (The main people behind this initiative are Joey and mord, and they’d be stoked to make a Wikipedian out of you.)

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## Why should I contribute to Wikipedia?

**Wikipedia is the single most consulted source of information on the internet,** and for good reason. Despite what your teachers probably told you in school, it holds itself to rigorous standards to ensure the information it provides is fair and accurate.

That said, **bias still exists** on Wikipedia. Given the demographic of the average Wikipedian, many will be ignorant towards certain subjects and perspectives, even if most of them mean well. It’s fair to say the subject of alterhumanity and the perspectives of alterhumans fall under here. Therefore, we think **it’s important to increase coverage of alterhuman topics *and* the number of alterhuman voices contributing** to Wikipedia. In time, so many more people who are learning about alterhumanity for the first time will be doing so in a way that respects us, from a source that they trust.

**On Wikipedia:** [Systemic Bias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Systemic_bias)

## What can I contribute to?

The primary focus of this project is articles related to alterhumanity. **We maintain a list of the articles we consider relevant** [**here**](https://staff.alt-h.net/apps/onlyoffice/s/LHBxMWxJaCqfAcW)**.** Of course you can choose to tackle things that aren’t on this list if you decide they’re important; if you do, consider letting us know so we can direct more people’s attention to it.

We also recommend taking an interest in editing Wikipedia in general! You don’t have to be an expert - **if there are other topics that you care about, go ahead and contribute to them as well**. It will improve your standing on the site, and you’ll be doing a good thing in general.

## How do I contribute?

In more ways than you think! You don’t have to be an expert in something to help. If you’d like some guidance towards specific tasks, you can check the goals we have [on the Trello](https://trello.com/b/kkxNIgOE/wikipedia-editing-community-initiative), and see what people are asking about on the forum and in the server. But if you want to take more initiative, here are some broad types of activities you can do, in terms of least to most involved:

### Categorize

Put articles in their rightful categories. Pretty simple stuff!

**On Wikipedia:** [Categorization FAQ - Editing Articles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:FAQ/Categorization#Editing_articles)

### Copyedit

Simply fix grammar and spelling, and improve the readability of an article! Don’t underestimate how important this is – all the facts and sources in the world can’t educate someone if they’re difficult to read and understand. Even something as minor as adding a missing apostrophe leaves the article better than it was before.

**On Wikipedia**: [Basic Copyediting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Basic_copyediting)

### Revert Vandalism

Many Wikipedia articles are frequently vandalized, and it’s an unfortunate truth that alterhuman-related topics are often targeted by this. Luckily, reverting vandalism is super easy, because all you have to do is remove the offending content.

A lot of it is incredibly blatant (for example, changing the opening line of the Otherkin article to “Otherkin are a subculture of freaks who…”), but sometimes it can be more subtle (like making the words ‘subjective experience’ link to the article on psychosis). To catch these changes, it can help to [add the article to your watchlist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:Watchlist#Controlling_which_pages_are_watched), and check the diff to see what edits were made.

**On Wikipedia:** [Vandalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Vandalism#How_to_respond_to_vandalism)

mord has also written a slightly longer guide on the basics of dealing with vandalism and catching serial vandals [here](https://www.pillowfort.social/posts/2261403).

### Add sources

Good sources are the key to Wikipedia’s integrity as a resource, but many articles still contain facts with no supporting evidence. You can help by tracking down reliable sources which back up what’s being said. You don’t have to provide a source for literally every claim, but Wikipedia describes five types of statements which *always* need citations:

1. direct quotations,
2. statistics,
3. published opinion,
4. counter-intuitive or controversial statements that are likely to be challenged, and
5. contentious material relating to living persons.

#### How do I know if my source is good?

The page on [Perennial sources](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Reliable_sources/Perennial_sources) has a list of sources that editors agree are always reliable – the same list says which sources are always *un*reliable, or good for some types of info but not others. You’ll have the easiest time figuring out if something is a good source if it’s on this list.

##### For anything else, **ask yourself these questions:**

1. Does the source have a publisher which…
   1. is different from the author?
   2. has a quality control structure, strong editorial oversight, or peer review process?
2. Does the source mention the subject directly, and not just in passing?
3. Is the source independent enough from the subject to avoid bias or conflict of interest?
4. Is the source old enough to have the full facts, but new enough to not be outdated?

The more of these boxes you can tick, the more likely it is that the source is good. But, context matters, and these are guidelines, not hard rules. They should always be used to inform your own personal judgment.

**On Wikipedia:** [Reliable sources](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Reliable_sources)

### Expand Stubs

Many articles on Wikipedia are stubs: they provide some useful information, but they’re too small for an encyclopedia. Add more content to these by going beyond the basics. What to include depends on what the article is about – try looking at articles about similar things to see what they felt was worth including. You might also find content in the article’s existing sources - learn about how to do that later in the guide!

**On Wikipedia:** [Stubs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Stub)

### Create new articles

This is one of the more difficult tasks on Wikipedia, and you’ll have more success if you help out with other things first, to get a feel for how it all works. This guide talks about how to get a new article off the ground further down below.

**On Wikipedia:** [Your first article](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:Your_first_article)

## How to not look like a troll

It’s important to make it clear you’re acting in good faith, both to regular users and bots (which can automatically flag or revert your actions if they look suspicious).

### Create an account

This probably goes without saying, but an edit tied to a username looks more legit than one tied to an anonymous IP. It also gives you a chance to do a tutorial upon account creation, which is good for getting your first edit under your belt.

**On Wikipedia:** [Why create an account?](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Why_create_an_account%3F)

### Put something on your user page

Even just your name and pronouns makes you look friendlier. Remember userboxes? Those started on Wikipedia! You can find ones to add to your profile on [the Userboxes page](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Userboxes). You can also add {{User:Vagabondsun/Userboxes/Alterhuman}} to your page to display this one:



### Write something in your edit summary

When you make a change to an article, describe what you did, even if it was just fixing a spelling mistake. It saves other editors time in checking what happened, and shows that you’re trustworthy and acting in good faith.

**On Wikipedia:** [Edit summaries help](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:Edit_summary)

### Make multiple small changes rather than one big one

Edit summaries for small changes are more useful and more accurate, so they’re less likely to be challenged. On the flip side, big edits invite big reversions – if you add 2,000 words to an article, it’s easy for someone to remove 1,000 of those words for a vague, singular reason.

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|  | Be Bold! The worst thing that can possibly happen if you make an edit is that it gets reverted. This isn’t anything to be ashamed of or worried about! It happens to everyone eventually. When an edit *does* get reverted, the person doing so will explain why in their edit summary. You’ll then know what you need to do differently if you want to try again.  **This trial-and-error process is a normal and expected part of Wikipedia.** So if you find yourself wondering *‘is this edit acceptable?’* the best way to find out is to submit it and see what happens! |  |
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### Use the Talk page

Every article on Wikipedia has a Talk page. It’s a useful place to make suggestions about how the article could be improved and ask questions about edits you plan to make. You probably also want to go here if an edit you make gets reverted to ask why and figure out what you can do differently to make the edit stick. If you need to do this, you can use the format {{re|username}} to @ the username that reverted your edit.

You also have a Talk page! People might use it to let you know if there are problems with your edits, or if important things are happening to pages that you’re watching.

Using Talk pages is significantly easier if you have ‘discussion tools’ enabled in your beta features tab. It will let you write a topic right on the page, add a reply button to other people’s messages, and automatically add your signature to your posts. Your signature should always be included, so if you’re not using discussion tools, you can type four tildes (~~~~) to insert it instead.

As a little bit of fun, your signature customized from your preferences page. You can use the same markup you use anywhere else on Wikipedia to color it, make it bold or italic, or whatever you want (within reason! make sure it’s not an eyesore).

On Wikipedia: [Talk pages help](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:Talk_pages), [Talk page guidelines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Talk_page_guidelines), [Signatures](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Signatures)

## Goals of the project

### Editing existing articles

There are plenty of article on Wikipedia already which are of interest to us. While not many are directly about alterhuman subjects, there are plenty that intersect with alterhumanity or touch on alterhuman ideas. We want to improve and maintain the quality of articles like this, and be on the lookout for more articles where it’s relevant to add information on alterhuman topics .

### Creating more alterhuman articles

There are plenty of alterhuman topics which don’t have their own Wikipedia articles, but something has to hit a few requirements to be considered article-worthy. By far the biggest factor is *notability*.

#### What makes a subject notable?

To quote Wikipedia itself:

If a topic has received **significant coverage** in **reliable sources** that are **independent of the subject**, it is **presumed** to be suitable for a stand-alone article or list.

* [Wikipedia:Notability](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Notability)

We reckon that there are at least a few alterhuman topics that this is true for, just nobody’s thought to get all the information in one place yet. For many others, though, nobody important or impartial enough has talked about them at a great enough length. So we have to employ a number of tactics.

#### How do we make alterhumanity notable?

##### Start by adding content to existing articles

Wikipedia goes on to say:

If a topic does not meet these criteria but still has some verifiable facts, it might be useful to discuss it within another article.

This is probably true of a *lot more* alterhuman topics. For example, there might not be enough notable material for an article on phantom shifts, but the existing article on phantom limbs would benefit from including what information exists on this phenomenon in nonhumans.

##### Mine sources

‘Mining’ a source means to methodically search it for *all the knowledge it can possibly provide*, instead of just using it to back up a single fact in a given article. You might find a furry demographic survey, an otherkin history timeline, or a journal about online subcultures in trying to support a statement you’re making. But it almost certainly has much more to say than just that! If you have the patience to thoroughly read the whole thing, you may be able to create a list of facts which can be added to this article and others.

**On Wikipedia:** [How to mine a source](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:How_to_mine_a_source)

##### Advocate!

Simply put, if the coverage doesn’t exist from major academic and news institutions, we can make some noise until it does. The gaps we find here - what we think ought to be notable but isn’t - can inform the kind of advocacy Alt+H does, and where we put our focus.

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|  | What about an article on Alt+H? We talked about third-party sources and conflicts of interest further up - the same idea applies to creating and editing articles as well . Even if staff and volunteers have the best intentions, we can’t write about Alt+H without rubbing a little bias in there. People acting as part of a project that Alt+H directs are probably too close to the subject for Wikipedia’s liking too. So for as long as this project is under Alt+H’s direction, **an article about Alt+H itself will not be part of our scope.** | |  |
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### Creating an ‘Alterhuman’ article

This gets specific attention because it’s the article that describes the single, overarching thing Alt+H is about, but it’s also probably the hardest to create. As an umbrella term - and an intentionally very permissive one at that - we have to be able to describe what alterhumanity is and what it covers, which very likely means having fleshed out articles for a lot of individual alterhuman groups first. Even then, there has to be notable use of the word itself. We know for a fact that some academics and journalists have the word ‘alterhuman’ on their radars, and a couple of things have been published which use it, but there’s still not enough to base a whole article on.

There’s not much else to say about this right now. While it’s a good goal to keep in our sights, we’ll probably have to do a lot of other work first before we can tackle it.

### Creating a WikiProject

A WikiProject is a group organizing to achieve specific editing goals, usually related to a specific field of knowledge. It’s pretty much what we’re doing right here already - so why do we want this? There’s two primary reasons:

1. **They’re more integrated with Wikipedia.** WikiProjects give their members a whole host of tools to make their job easier. We could maintain this guide, the list of relevant articles, the to-do lists and the discussion spaces in a central location, along with bots to alert us when articles and edits with key words are created, the ability to petition for articles to become featured or given quality ratings, and much more - all from inside Wikipedia itself.
2. **They’re more impartial.** An alterhuman WikiProject would *no longer be under Alt+H’s direction.* This isn’t a bad thing! It would attract a greater diversity of contributors, allow other people to step into important management roles, and become more fair and unbiased as a result.

In a way, WikiProject Alterhuman is the end goal of this initiative, after which it will have graduated into something else.

#### What do we need to make this happen?

Basically, we need to be able to prove there’s a point to it. We would at the very least need to identify enough articles that would fall under the project’s interest to prove that the scope isn’t too narrow. We’d also have to show that there were enough people interested to keep the project going, and that it won’t peter out any time soon.

**An article on alterhumanity itself probably needs to exist first for this to work.** Every WikiProject we’ve seen has had a ‘main’ article with roughly the same name, and while there’s no rule we can find that says we have to have one, it feels a little weird not to. Further investigation is required!

#### What would Alt+H’s role be after this?

Mostly drawing attention to the project and encouraging more people to get involved. It would still be in our capacity as an organization to host [edit-a-thons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edit-a-thon): basically this project in limited-time event form. We’d also still link to the project from the site as a way for our audience to help alterhuman advocacy.

And of course, we’d still be in there contributing as our individual selves, and we hope you will be when the time comes too!