

Beat: Arts

Wikipedia, Princess of Asturias Award for International Cooperation

Free encyclopedia compiled by volunteers

Madrid, 17.06.2015, 17:14 Time

USPA NEWS - The free encyclopedia Wikipedia, which contains over 37 million articles written in 288 languages by volunteers around the world, was honored Wednesday with the Princess of Asturias Award for International Cooperation 2015.

Wikipedia was created in 2001 by American entrepreneur Jimmy Wales with the help of the philosopher Larry Sanger and since 2003 is managed by the Wikimedia Foundation. It has about 500 million unique visitors per month and 73,000 active editors, and is among the ten most visited websites in the world. The candidature was put forward by Hans Meinke, Jury member for the 2015 Princess of Asturias Award for the Arts.

Established in 2001, Wikipedia is an free-access digital encyclopedia written in a variety of languages by volunteers around the world, whose articles can be edited by registered users. It uses wiki technology, which facilitates content editing and storage of the page's history of changes. Wikipedia started on 15th January 2001 as a complementary project for Nupedia, an encyclopedia written by experts whose articles were peer-reviewed. The latter was designed to create articles of a quality comparable to that of professional encyclopedias thanks to the participation of scholars, mainly PhD students and academics, who were asked to contribute on a volunteer basis.

Due to the slow progress made on the project, a wiki linked to Nupedia was created in 2001, initially intended to expedite the creation of articles in parallel before undergoing the peer-review process. Both projects coexisted until the success of Wikipedia ended up eclipsing Nupedia, which ceased operations in 2003. Created in 2003 with headquarters in San Francisco (USA), the Wikimedia Foundation controls and manages Wikipedia.

It also has other projects that complement the encyclopedia, all of which are multilingual, open and supported by wiki technology: Wiktionary, aimed at creating an open dictionary; Wikibooks, which makes open-content textbooks, manuals and instructional guides available for free to any Internet user; Wikiversity, a free and open online education platform allowing the creation of learning projects at all levels of education or the development of didactic material such as examinations and practical exercises, and Wikiquote, a compendium of quotations and sayings in every language, which also includes their sources.

Also Wikinews, an open-content news source; Wikisource, an online library of original texts that have been published under a free licence or in the public domain; Wikimedia Commons, a database of images and multimedia material for other projects; Wikispecies, a free and open directory of biological species; Meta-Wiki, a website to support other Foundation projects; Wikidata, a database, and Wikitravel, a travel guide.

Twenty-four nominations ran for the Award this year, from Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Morocco, Mexico, Nepal, New Zealand, Portugal, the United States and Spain. This is the seventh of eight Princess of Asturias Awards to be bestowed this year, now in their thirty-fifth edition. Each of the Princess of Asturias Awards comprises a Joan Miró sculpture ""representing and symbolizing the Awards"", a cash prize of 50,000 Euros, a diploma and an insignia. The awards will be presented in the autumn in Oviedo at a grand ceremony chaired by TM The King and Queen of Spain.

HM King Felipe VI has been the Honorary President of the Foundation since it was established in 1980. Following his proclamation as King of Spain on 19th June 2014, HRH Leonor de Borbon y Ortiz, Princess of Asturias, is now the Honorary President of this institution which annually convenes the Princess of Asturias Awards. The Board of Trustees of the Foundation decided at an extraordinary meeting in Oviedo last October to rename the institution and its awards, which are now called the Princess of Asturias Foundation and Princess of Asturias Awards, respectively.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-4321/wikipedia-princess-of-asturias-award-for-international-cooperation.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSiV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Jose A. Martin

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