



Newcomer experience marketing pilot

Wikimedia Foundation | Ed Erhart
August 2022

01

A brief introduction

In a nutshell

As part of the Wikimedia Foundation's FY21–22 pilot projects—four short-term, hypothesis-driven experiments focusing on driving growth in Wikimedia contributors in emerging communities—the Marketing (Communications) and Growth (Product) teams tried various tactics to acquire and retain new Wikimedia editors on the Spanish Wikipedia:

- To **acquire new editors**, we used Facebook ads and an enhanced on-wiki landing page with the goal of driving new editors into the account creation process and the Wikimedia Foundation's [newcomer experience features](#).
- To **retain, reactivate, and/or engage newly registered editors**, we sent new editors a welcome email with inspirational content and a link to a personalized newcomer homepage. *(These went to all new editors who opted in, not just those who signed up through the off-wiki ads.)*



What are the newcomer features?

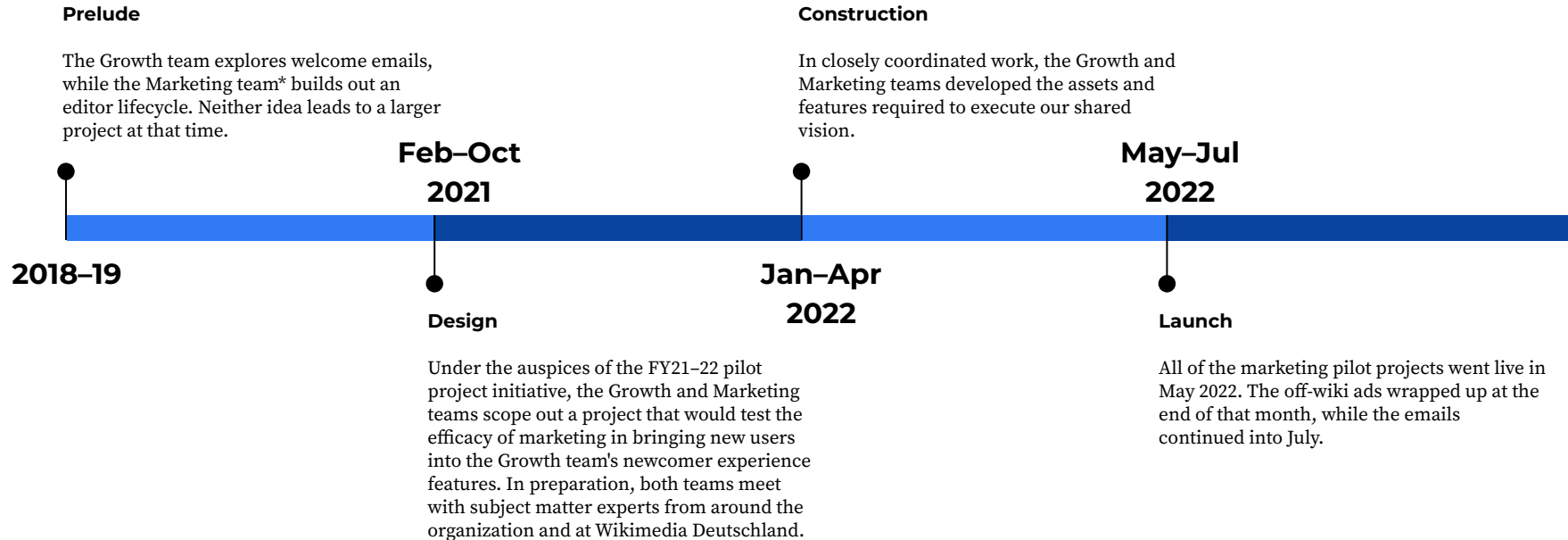
New users on Wikimedia projects often join with an idea of what they want to accomplish, but drop out after encountering problems along the way. Other times, new users struggle to complete an edit or find additional tasks to complete.

To combat these problems, the Wikimedia Foundation's Growth team built several newcomer-focused tools. These have been shown to increase the constructive activation (making one or more edits without being reverted), retention (returning to make an edit within two weeks), and edit volume of newcomers.

These start with the **newcomer homepage**. This central place hosts personalized **newcomer tasks**, which suggest easy-to-complete edits that new users are more likely to complete.



Project timeline



*At that time, Marketing was named "Audience Engagement." Marketing has since been divided into two new teams in the Communications department: "Insights," and joining others in an "External Communications" team.



Theory of change

Paid media brings people to Wikipedia's front door, at which point they will create an account and be constructively activated and retained through our newcomer experience features or a welcome email.

Facebook ads

Using advertising on paid media, we specifically target audience segments that are more likely to become Wikipedia editors. Highly relevant messaging engages these audiences and brings them to our projects.

Wikipedia sign-up

People create a Wikimedia account, required for access to the newcomer features. To increase conversions, we create an enhanced landing page containing a video with messages from Wikipedia editors. This offers a better user experience than the standard account creation page.

Newcomer features

Once inside our ecosystem, new users are constructively activated through easily accomplished suggested edits.

Welcome email

New editors are retained or activated at higher rates after receiving a welcome email with inspirational content and useful tips directly from the existing motivated community who creates and curates it.



02

Off-wiki ads

Campaign overview

What (objective):

Use paid advertisements to bring potential new editors to the Spanish Wikipedia sign-up page.

How (tactic):

Test different target audiences and messaging to determine the best-performing campaign(s)

Where (channel):

Facebook

Dates:

3–31 May 2022

Market:

Spanish-speaking South, Central, and North America: ARG, BOL, CHL, COL, CRI, ECU, GTM, HND, MEX, NIC, PAN, PER, PRY, SLV, URY, VEN

Target audience:

18–45, at least college educated; interests include Wikipedia, writing, editing, learning, research, academic writing, basic research

Budget: US\$14.6K



Implementation

We worked with the digital agency Monsoon and Brand Studio to create five different Meta ads that would appeal to various audiences in Latin America. Our ad messaging and imagery called to shared interests: food, the environment, clothes, and events.

Creative approach:

- Regional pride: *"Changing what the world thinks about Latin America starts with changing what the world knows about Latin America."*
- Making a difference: *"By joining today, you can make a positive impact on the world."*

Formats: standard promoted posts and Canvas rich ad format



Campaign metrics

| | | |
|------------------------|---|---------|
| Impressions | → | 38.2M |
| Reach | → | 7.5M |
| Total spend | → | \$14.6K |
| Cost per mile (CPM) | → | \$0.38 |
| Link clicks | → | 439K* |
| Link clicks rate (CTR) | → | 1.15% |
| Cost per click | → | \$0.03 |

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|-------|
| Unique link clicks | → | 333K |
| Unique link clicks rate | → | 0.87% |

Our Facebook ads performed brilliantly:

- We reached **7.5 million people** and **induced 333,000 to click through**.
- Our **cost per click (CPC) was \$0.03**, far lower than our media agency's benchmark of \$0.15.
- Our **click-through rate was 1.15%**, above the [general average of 0.89%](#).



*Facebook's figure; we measured 308k successful pageviews on the Wikimedia side. There is more info on this difference in the appendix; it doesn't change our overall conclusions.

Learnings and recommendations

👍 The impressive performance of our paid media leads us to conclude that **we should continue using (or expand our use of) paid media to reach Wikipedia-aligned audiences, especially in areas of the world where such campaigns are cheaper.** However, we would recommend against objectives based around Wikimedia account creation.

🤔 What else could we accomplish by using paid media to reach these Wikipedia-aligned audiences? For example, we might consider a future campaign around using tailored paid media to accomplish a public policy goal, such as signing a petition.



03

On-wiki sign-up

Initiative overview

What:

Use inspirational content in the new editors' account creation page to increase registrations.

How:

Create audiovisual content (gif/video) to welcome visitors, provide more insight on the Wikipedia editor community, and use engaging copy to inspire them to sign up.

Where:

Spanish Wikipedia account creation page

Dates:

3–31 May

Implementation:

The Growth and Marketing teams collaborated to create a short video composed of interviews with seven members of the Spanish Wikipedia community.* We used this footage to create a small rich-media area within a special campaign-specific account creation page.

Notes:

People cannot access the newcomer experience features without being logged into a Wikimedia account.

The enhanced landing page was visible only to the people that clicked on the Facebook ads.



WIKIMEDIA
FOUNDATION

* Shout-out to Isabel Zapico, who ran all of the interviews and made this part of the project viable!

Implementation

Landing page: We added brief lines of text and a rich-media area to the standard Wikimedia account creation page. Due to MediaWiki, time, and staff limitations, we were sharply limited in the changes we could make to these pages. In a larger project, we would like to add additional graphics and encouragement above the required user account information prompts—or create an entirely separate interstitial page to better prepare users for the next steps.

Video: Filmed remotely using webcams and cut together by a professional videographer. A Foundation staff member interviewed seven Spanish Wikipedia contributors from Latin America and asked them questions such as what motivates them to edit Wikipedia, what challenges did they face as new editors when they first joined, and what advice they have for newcomers.

Performance tracking: To measure the effectiveness of the initiative, we redirected all the traffic from the Facebook ads to two different landing pages:

- Treatment: the new/enhanced account creation page (80% of traffic, later 70%)
- Control: a clone of the standard account creation page (20% of traffic, later 30%)




New sign-up page creative

WIKIPEDIA

Crear una cuenta

Personas como tú son las que construyen Wikipedia.
Regístrate para contribuir.



Escribe tu nombre de usuario

Escribe una contraseña

Introduce de nuevo la contraseña

Escribe tu dirección de correo electrónico

CAPTCHA Comprobación de seguridad (¿qué es esto?)

solidcads

Actualizar

Escribe el texto que ves en la imagen

[¿No ves la imagen?](#)




WIKIPEDIA

Crear una cuenta

Miles de personas como tú son las que construyen Wikipedia.
¿Te unes a ellas?

Este es un mensaje de nuestros editores y editoras para ti:



Escribe tu nombre de usuario

Escribe una contraseña

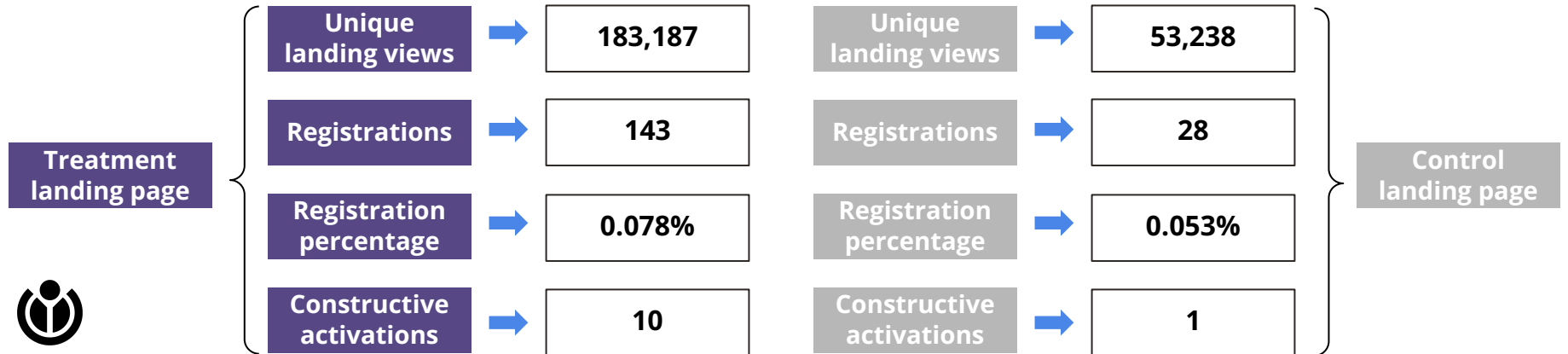
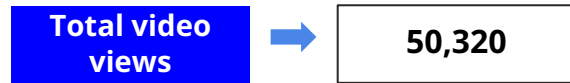
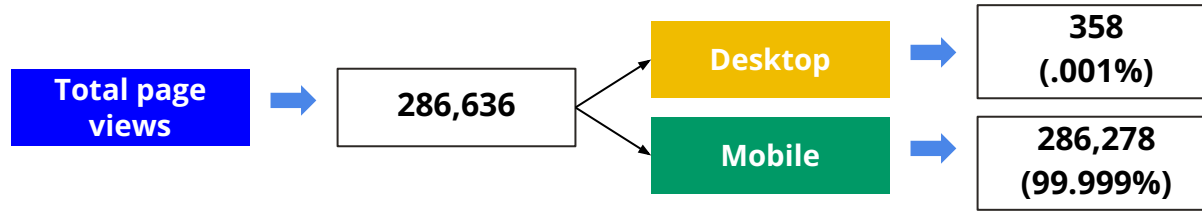
Introduce de nuevo la contraseña

Escribe tu dirección de correo electrónico

CAPTCHA Comprobación de seguridad (¿qué es esto?)



Performance overview



Landing page / account creation metrics (mobile treatment)*

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| Landing page views | → | 220,198** |
| Unique landing views | → | 183,187 |
| Registrations | → | 143 |
| Registration percentage | → | 0.078% |
| Constructive activations | → | 10 |
| Constructive percentage | → | 7% |



- With its information about the Wikimedia movement and the editing process, we believe that the treatment page offers a higher growth potential than the control page. Even people who bounce are walking away with something useful.
- The absolute number of constructive activations is too low to allow for a "safe" assumption and more testing would be needed to establish statistical significance in the constructive activation rate.

*Desktop stats: 710 page views, 535 unique users, 7 registrations, 1 constructive activation

**This number is in reality a bit higher. See the appendix. This does not change our conclusions.

Landing page / account creation metrics (mobile current/control)*

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|----------|
| Landing page views | → | 66,438** |
| Unique landing views | → | 53,238 |
| Registrations | → | 28 |
| Registration percentage | → | 0.053% |
| Constructive activations | → | 1 |
| Constructive percentage | → | 3.6% |



*Desktop stats: 179 page views, 114 unique users, 1 registration, 1 constructive activation

**This number is in reality a bit higher. See the appendix. This does not change our conclusions.

Learnings and recommendations

💡 We didn't manage to convert over 99% of the people who clicked through from Facebook and landed on our account registration page. Putting that another way, *over 300k people indicated an interest in Wikipedia but dropped before registering*. As a result, they never experienced our newcomer features.

We have come to four conclusions based on this point:

1. There is a need to **redesign our registration pages and process**, particularly for users that are not motivated by a specific on-wiki action (e.g. fixing a typo)
2. We should explore **making newcomer experience features available to editors without an account** to simplify the process of recruiting potential new editors
3. We would **not recommend using paid media to influence Wikimedia account creation**, as the transition from browsing those sites is too stark
4. If future experiments in this vein are undertaken, they should **trial a true interstitial page** to soften the landing after departing the ad channel (e.g. Facebook)



Learnings and recommendations

😊 The landing page video featured Wikipedia contributors describing what it means to be part of and supported by a global community, as well as how easy it is to start editing Wikipedia. Over [50k people](#) opened the video from the account creation page and learned more about our movement/its core principles. **This video strategy could be easily replicated by other Foundation initiatives.**

💡 In future social media campaigns that rely on Wikimedia-side metrics, **we should send everyone to Wikipedia's mobile site.** A large majority of people use their phones to browse social media, and this account avoids a Wikimedia-side issue with counting pageviews after a desktop -> mobile site redirect.



04

Welcome emails

Campaign overview

What:

Welcome new editors to the Wikipedia community and induce them to constructively activate

How:

Sent a welcome email (through MailChimp) to all new editors within one week of signing up

Dates:

10 May – 5 July 2022

Approach:

We aimed to inspire the new editor by thanking them for signing up and highlighting the community they've joined, then we emphasized that it was easy to start editing and that there were a few simple tasks that they could accomplish

Budget:

\$393 (MailChimp)



Implementation

Creative: We worked with our media agency Monsoon to create a basic email template, and collaborated with the Growth team on the text that should fill it* and the method by which we would acquire these email addresses. When accompanied with a longer cut of the video that appeared on the account creation page, we had a new rich-media experience.

Optimization: Over time, we made small optimizations to the email, including a changed subject line and modified design, to improve performance.

User parameters: These emails were sent to all new user accounts on the Spanish Wikipedia who:

- Entered an email address, regardless of confirmation
- Registered between mid-May and early July
- Opted-in to receive an email (~50%)

Out of the final tally, the Growth team held back 20% of accounts as a control group.



*For the full text of the welcome emails in Spanish and English, see the appendix.

Welcome email creative



Clear Wikipedia branding



Color-filled graphic header



Action button ("view your homepage")



Inspirational, welcoming copy



Extended video cut of Spanish Wikipedia community affirmations



Continued copy



Second action button ("view your homepage")



MailChimp email campaign metrics

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|-------|------------------|---|-------|
| Total sends | → | 5554 | Homepage clicks* | → | 189 |
| Total opens | → | 1297 | Video clicks | → | 47 |
| Total clicks | → | 247 | Cost | → | \$393 |
| Unique opens | → | 934 | | | |
| Uniq. opens percentage | → | 16.8% | | | |
| Unique clicks | → | 165 | | | |
| Unique clicks percentage | → | 3% | | | |



*Homepage clicks went to the newcomer experience features (Special:Homepage) on the Spanish Wikipedia

Wikimedia email campaign metrics*

- **Effects on retention:** Welcome emails increased the likelihood of newcomers returning to edit articles for newcomers who registered on the mobile platform, but there was no effect on desktop users. In the month after registering, welcome emails increased the chance of a user's return by over 20%.
- **Productivity** (the number of edits made over a certain time period): There were a significant increase in the number of mobile edits made by users who received a welcome email. Again, there was no effect on desktop users.
- **Activation** (making at least one edit): Welcome emails had no effect on 24-hour or 1-week activation rates.



*Many thanks to the Wikimedia Foundation's Product Analytics team for this analysis. More info is available at [:mw:Growth/Personalized first day/Newcomer experience marketing pilot/Welcome emails experiment, September 2022](https://www.wikimedia.org/wiki/mw:Growth/Personalized_first_day/Newcomer_experience_marketing_pilot/Welcome_emails_experiment,September_2022).

Learnings and recommendations

🥳 We were thrilled with the performance of these emails. Of those that received the welcome email, 16.8% opened it. While that's lower than [MailChimp's non-profit marketing benchmark](#) (25.2%), **3% of everyone who received the email clicked on a link in it** (which equates to 17.7% of those who opened it). That's in line with benchmarks despite the lower open rate.

While we did do minor optimization and testing during the course of this pilot, we'd recommend ramping that up for future iterations of this project. More thorough testing and iterating on the subject lines, graphics, and copy would lead to increased open rates and improved clickthroughs.

🤔 **It's surprising that the Wikimedia movement does not already have a proper welcome email.** These are a staple feature on many apps and websites. When coupled with the worldwide availability of Wikimedia features tailored specifically to newcomers, the performance of our emails suggests that **there is a significant opportunity around creating and iterating on welcome emails on Wikimedia projects.** These could include a traditional singular welcome email, or an ongoing series of emails sent to new users that would encourage deeper engagement over a sustained period of time.



05

Recommendations for the way forward

Off-wiki ads

The off-wiki ads were enormously successful in redirecting people from Facebook to our account creation page.

However, they didn't manage to drive registrations (of the 333K clicks that the campaign attracted, only 171 people signed up).

We should continue/expand our use of paid media to reach Wikipedia-aligned audiences, but not with the goal of converting users to Wikipedia editors.

Account creation

The enhanced (treatment) landing page provided to the audience that clicked on the social media ads valuable information about both the editing process, as well as our movement and its values.

Despite the low absolute number of registrations, there is an indication that this rich-content paged managed to convince more people to sign up as new editors.

Present the enhanced landing page to everyone visiting the Spanish WP sign up page, for a specific period of time (e.g. 1 month) to test how it performs against the standard landing page.

Welcome emails

The welcome emails were successful in inducing recipients to click through to their newcomer homepage and contributed to a better understanding about our editor community and their work.

The results indicate that we should consider implementing a welcome email—a staple on most websites with user accounts—for all new editors.





THANK YOU

06

Appendix

Differences in data measurement, Facebook vs. Wikimedia

Facebook measured 439k link clicks heading to the treatment and control pages, while our internal tools measured 308k pageviews. (Eagle-eyed readers will note that this is not the same total of views from slides 17–19. The 308k figure is an estimate reached after [accounting for a Wikimedia issue](#) with counting redirects between our desktop and mobile sites.)

Where does this disconnect come from? We will never have a solid answer, but current theories include:

- A number of people clicked the ad, saw that it was loading a webpage outside of Facebook, and closed the window before ever reaching our servers. Theoretically, this would register a click on Facebook but not a pageview on a Wikimedia site—a potential problem that would be more prevalent in areas with slower internet access, [like Latin America](#).
- Variations in definitions across different websites. According to one of the Wikimedia Foundation's data scientists, "I've heard reports from folks working with different external vendors where the counts reported differ substantially from what we find. [Facebook] appears to be no different in this regard, although that doesn't mean we should see very large differences."



The standard sign-up page (desktop)

Crear una cuenta

Idioma: [Deutsch](#) · [English](#) · [Esperanto](#) · [Français](#) · [Italiano](#) · [Nederlands](#)

Piénsalo dos veces antes de registrarte con tu nombre real, el nombre de usuario que escojas será público y no podrá hacerse privado después.

Usuario [\(ayúdame a elegir\)](#)

Utilizar una contraseña aleatoria temporal y enviarla a la dirección de correo electrónico especificada

Contraseña

Se recomienda emplear una contraseña única que no utilices en ningún otro sitio web.

Confirma la contraseña

Dirección de correo electrónico (recomendado)

Se requiere un correo electrónico para recuperar tu cuenta si pierdes tu contraseña.

Motivo (registrado públicamente)

Personas como tú son las que construyen Wikipedia.

144 139 425
ediciones

1 787 297
páginas

13 962
colaboradores recientes

The standard "welcome" email

This email is currently sent to all new users who enter an email while registering. Its purpose is only technical.

Hello

Welcome to Wikipedia! You've joined the English-language version of the free encyclopedia that anyone can edit.

To confirm your email address, please open this URL in your browser:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:ConfirmEmail/0>

This link expires at 20:11, 6 February 2020 (UTC).

Confirming your email address will allow you to:

- * reset your password via email
- * exchange emails with other Wikipedia editors
- * receive notifications about activity on Wikipedia relevant to you, such as when someone leaves you a message

If you wish to be able to recover your account but don't want to receive other email, visit your preferences at:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Preferences>

Thanks, and once again, welcome!

This email is generated automatically, and does not accept replies. If you didn't register an account on Wikipedia, feel free to disregard this message or click this link:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:InvalidateEmail/0>



Welcome email text (Spanish)

¡Te damos la bienvenida a Wikipedia!

Estamos encantados de que hayas decidido unirme al movimiento del conocimiento libre de Wikipedia. A partir de ahora, puedes llamarte orgullosamente wikipedista. Te unes a un movimiento de voluntarios que, como tú, aportan su tiempo para construir el mayor repositorio de conocimiento del mundo.

Esto es lo que otros voluntarios y voluntarias dicen sobre sus inicios en Wikipedia y lo que significa formar parte de esta comunidad.

[Video]

Si todavía no has editado ningún artículo, [ve a tu página de inicio](#) donde verás unas cuantas tareas sencillas que puedes realizar ahora mismo. Por ejemplo, puedes empezar añadiendo enlaces o imágenes a los artículos de Wikipedia existentes sobre los temas que te interesen. Incluso con unos pocos minutos al día puedes ayudar a enriquecer los contenidos de Wikipedia.

Juntos, compartimos el compromiso de poner el conocimiento libre a disposición de todo el mundo.

¡Gracias por unirme y esperamos que lo disfrutes!



Welcome email text (English)

We welcome you to Wikipedia!

We are thrilled that you have decided to join Wikipedia's free knowledge movement. From this moment on, you can proudly call yourself a Wikimedian. You are joining a movement of volunteers, just like yourself, who are giving their time to building the world's largest source of knowledge.

Here's what a few other volunteers have to say about getting started on Wikipedia and what it means to be part of this community.

[Video]

If you have not made an edit yet, [head to your homepage now](#) to see a few simple tasks you can complete right away. For example, you can start by adding links or images to existing Wikipedia articles in topics that interest you. Even a few minutes every day can help enrich Wikipedia's knowledge repository.

Together, we share a commitment to making free knowledge available to everyone in the world. Thanks for joining and we hope you enjoy it!

