

# Wikimedia Foundation 2009/2010 Communications Support

Request for Proposals from leading communications firms

May 2009



## The Opportunity

Wikipedia is the 4<sup>th</sup> most visited web property in the world and the most comprehensive general reference work ever developed. It is sustained by a community of more than 150,000 volunteers world-wide and operated by a small non-profit organization, the Wikimedia Foundation. The radically open model of volunteer collaboration upon which Wikipedia is built represents a paradigm shift in how human knowledge is compiled and summarized. It is also a unique opportunity.

Firstly, the Wikimedia Foundation wants to position itself clearly as a credible charity supporting volunteer-created, open educational media. As part of this process, it wants to contribute to an improved understanding, especially among key stakeholders, of Wikipedia's model of knowledge creation as a path to high quality information. We are seeking support through research and the development and implementation of communications tactics. We are labeling this the "*Credibility Campaign*".

Secondly, we are looking for support in executing a successful annual giving campaign in the fiscal year 2009-10. Wikimedia is funded by hundreds of thousands of donors who give an average of \$33. Most gifts are made during our annual giving campaign, which typically lasts from late October to early January. With its global audience of more than 320 million visitors every month, Wikimedia has no difficulty reaching people - but we need to significantly improve our messaging, especially on our web sites, in asking for public support. We are labeling this the "*Annual Giving Campaign Support*".

## About the Wikimedia Foundation

The Wikimedia Foundation is a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization based in downtown San Francisco. Founded in 2003 by Jimmy Wales (also the founder of Wikipedia), its mission is to empower and engage people to collect and develop free knowledge. It carries this mission out primarily via its flagship project Wikipedia, handling in excess of 320mm unique visitors a month (comScore, Media Metrix, March 2009). At under 30 staff and supported by more than 150,000 volunteers, the Wikimedia Foundation epitomizes the power of distributed volunteerism.

The Wikimedia Foundation employs a technology team, administrative staff, and experts in law, business development, public outreach, communications, and volunteer engagement. The vast majority of the Wikimedia Foundation's annual budget is derived from its annual giving campaign, which drives up donations primarily through prominent campaign notices on every page of Wikipedia during the 60-75 days of the campaign, running from late October to January. In total, in the fiscal year 2008-09 to date, WMF has received more than \$5,000,000 in gifts smaller than \$10,000. Other major sources of funding include grants from philanthropic foundations, major individual gifts, and earned income from business development.

Wikipedia has rapidly grown to be the most comprehensive, most-current, and most accessed source of free information on the planet. These communication campaigns aim to both financially sustain the project and to foster a deeper sense of credibility and trust in the Wikimedia Foundation and its projects.

## **Challenge Statement / Project Objectives**

Through the upcoming 2009-10 fiscal year, the Wikimedia Foundation is facing two major, ongoing communications challenges:

### **1. Credibility Campaign: Develop and execute a United States-focused long-term credibility campaign for the Wikimedia Foundation**

- Provide an understanding of the leadership space the Wikimedia Foundation should aspire towards through the campaign
- Assist the Foundation in determining the criteria for a successful credibility campaign
- Develop a specialized benchmark report outlining credibility-enhancing tactics, including a trend forecast and a list of key individuals and institutions that can speak to the Foundation's credibility
- Provide an overall communications strategy that will guide the Foundation towards improved credibility in all of its public-facing activities (public speaking, event participation, visual design/products, fundraising, business development, etc.), and that will position the Foundation as a global leader and as a volunteer-driven, technology oriented educational charity

### **2. Annual Giving Campaign Support: Develop and execute a marketing strategy to support the Wikimedia Foundation's 2009 annual fundraising campaign.**

- Increase number of new donors on a weekly basis (from 2008)
- Increase daily fundraising totals (from 2008)
- Reach or exceed the 2009 community giving goal of \$6.5mm USD

## **Anticipated tactics**

The Foundation anticipates that any of the following specific tactics may be considered in the execution of these campaigns:

- Creative/studio design for on-line marketing of fundraising on Wikipedia and the Wikimedia Foundation donation module ([donate.wikimedia.org](http://donate.wikimedia.org))
- Direct to user engagement (300mm users+ per month through fundraiser)
- Direct to donor outreach (130K+ mailing list)
- Video production
- Engagement of high-profile endorsers
- Social-media involvement
- High quality web/on-line marketing design
- Proactive media relations
- Mainstream media appearances (high viewership opportunities)
- Participation in high-profile events
- Interviews with volunteers, users, and stakeholders
- Strategic research

## Audience

### Key Credibility Campaign audiences

- Current and prospective funding foundations
- Thought-leading traditional and on-line media outlets
- Major donors
- Higher education institutions
- Potential content-sharing stakeholders and sponsors (e.g. museums, archives)
- Technology sector business leaders
- Policy makers, legislative experts

### Key Annual Giving Campaign audiences

- Wikipedia users around the world (prospective donors)
- Previous donors (community donors to major donors)
- Prospective offline donors

## Project Schedule

Engagement of agency scheduled to commence **July, 2009** and last through **June 30, 2010**.

- Proposals will be accepted up to June 5, 2009
- Agency interviews will take place through early to mid June, 2009

### *Draft project time-line*

#### **July 30, 2009 – early October, 2009**

##### **Parallel development of Credibility and Annual Giving Campaign strategies**

- Advance planning for upcoming annual giving campaign operations
- Media production (video/podcasts etc)
- Development of a credibility benchmark
- Media activity benchmarking
- Research as necessary
- Creative/studio design for on-line donation module and Wikipedia fundraising notices
- Evaluation of pre-campaign 'credibility' opportunities

#### **October 2009 – early January 2010**

- Media activities to support annual giving campaign
- Credibility activities
- High profile endorsements
- Execution of online creative / themes and messages

#### **January 2010 – June 30, 2010**

- Review of successes from annual giving campaign
- Refocus on credibility campaign, development and execution of credibility strategy
- Further high profile media opportunities and engagements

## **Anticipated measures of success**

The successful agency will ultimately be measured against the following criteria on a month-to-month basis following the first three months of engagement:

### ***Specific to the Credibility campaign:***

- Delivery of a benchmark report outlining the Wikimedia Foundation's prospective credibility opportunities / environment
- Delivery of a clearly defined strategy
- Increased visibility of key Wikimedia personnel, at high visibility, credibility-building events through FY 2009-10
- Increased amount of positive tone coverage (based on agency's early benchmark report)
- Increased number of third-party supporters speaking broadly to the credibility of the Wikimedia Foundation and Wikipedia
- Increased mentions of jointly established keywords and concepts (based on agency's early benchmark report)
- Increase positive media (traditional and on-line media) coverage of the programs and initiatives of the Wikimedia Foundation

### ***Specific to the 2009 Fundraising campaign:***

- Increased number of new donors on a weekly basis (from 2008)
- Increased daily, fundraising totals (from 2008)
- Increased number of click-throughs from Wikipedia banners to donation module
- Increase in number of click-throughs from non-Wikipedia projects to donation module
- Reach or exceed the 2009 community giving goal of \$6.5mm USD
- Increased positive media coverage of campaign and/or increased discussions of campaigns in the social media space.

## **Project budget**

The Wikimedia Foundation has allocated a monthly agency retainer budget, as well as fees for ancillary production and media services/consultation.

Division of the budget between the fundraising and credibility campaigns should be discussed in the proposal. Agencies interested in only one of the campaigns should assign a realistic budget within this framework.

As the non-profit organization that operates Wikipedia, one of the most recognized brands on the Internet, the Wikimedia Foundation offers the successful agency an opportunity to participate in a visionary communications project that will have enormous global impact. Your creative strategy will influence both the Wikimedia Foundation and hundreds of millions of people around the world.

We welcome creative proposals blending paid services and pro-bono support that allow us to showcase your agency's involvement with Wikipedia and Wikimedia's mission and our projects.

## **Client's resources / capacity**

The Wikimedia Foundation is comprised of less than 30 staff, augmented by a volunteer force exceeding 150,000 people. Although our projects receive enormous on-line traffic and incredible levels of participation, the Wikimedia Foundation itself has limited resources to share amongst our essential programs and priorities.

The Wikimedia Foundation can provide support primarily through the project manager, the Head of Communications, under the leadership of the Chief Programming Officer. We will also provide staff support in the form of several full-time fundraisers, supporting communication staff, and local interns. The Wikimedia Foundation will provide the agency with strong data from the 2008 annual giving campaign as well as a history of best practices.

The Wikimedia Foundation will carry out the hands-on technical operation of the online fundraiser, including implementation of the entire donation management system and communications activities on Wikipedia and other projects.

## **Content Licensing**

All publicly shared content created through the scope of this project will need to be licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution/Share-Alike License (CC-BY-SA). This licensing requirement aligns with the Wikimedia Foundation's free-knowledge mission, as well as the open-licensing structure on the Wikimedia Foundation wiki, Wikipedia, and the Foundation's other projects.

For more information about creative commons licensing:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative\\_Commons\\_licenses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative_Commons_licenses)

## Submission of Proposals

Applicants are welcome to apply for one or both of the campaign projects listed above. We appreciate that these are distinct projects requiring specific forms of communications and consultancy experience.

### ***Proposals must be post-marked no later than June 5, 2009.***

Submitted proposals:

- must not exceed 5 pages in length, single-sided, not including case studies
- must include proposed strategies, tactics, and a draft time-line
- must include a list of recent clients and references
- may be submitted as printed documents or as PDFs
- must include a project budget

### **Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:**

- Clarity, understandability and persuasiveness of the proposal
- Demonstrated understanding of Wikipedia and the Wikimedia Foundation
- Tactics, including minimal reliance on Wikimedia staff for execution
- Experience -on the part of staff directly assigned to this project- with similar organizations (which might include non-profits with global scope and impact; non-profits primarily funded via many small individual online donations; non-profits with core values including transparency, freedom, diversity, independence, openness and collaboration; non-profits providing educational/informational materials to a general user base.)
- Cost
- Proximity of the firm's office to Wikimedia Foundation headquarters (alternative arrangements relating to remote collaboration may be considered).

#### *For the Credibility Campaign only:*

- Explanation of how you would propose to measure success for the credibility project
- Include a case study with specific tactics of how you have increased the credibility of a client
- Explanation of at least three specific strategies you propose to improve the perception of the Foundation's credibility.

#### *For the Annual Giving Campaign Support project only:*

- Explanation of what media assets you feel you would need for the annual giving campaign support project
- Include a case study of a fundraising/marketing campaign that you have undertaken for a non-profit or charitable organization.
- Describe at least three narrative or visual themes you may propose to the Foundation

*Firms are free to submit proposals for either or both projects. Proposals will be judged on their own merits in accordance with the criteria above. If all else is equal, we will choose a firm which can do both projects rather than two separate firms.*

### **Submit two copies of your proposals in print to:**

Head of Communications

Wikimedia Foundation

PO Box 78350, San Francisco CA 94107

(contact via email to obtain courier delivery information)

Or submit electronically to Jay Walsh, Head of Communications, [jwalsh@wikimedia.org](mailto:jwalsh@wikimedia.org)

## Further Background

Wikimedia Foundation

<http://wikimediafoundation.org/>

Current Wikimedia Foundation 'Donation module'

<http://donate.wikipedia.org/>

Wikimedia Foundation 2007 Annual Report

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/foundation/2/2a/WMF\\_20072008\\_Annual\\_report.pdf](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/foundation/2/2a/WMF_20072008_Annual_report.pdf)

Wikimedia/Wikipedia key facts

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/foundation/4/4e/WP\\_Key\\_Facts\\_Feb\\_2009.pdf](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/foundation/4/4e/WP_Key_Facts_Feb_2009.pdf)

Wikimedia Foundation recent press announcements

[http://wikimediafoundation.org/wiki/Press\\_room](http://wikimediafoundation.org/wiki/Press_room)

Real-time donor comments

<http://wikimediafoundation.org/wiki/Special:ContributionHistory>

2008 Annual Giving Campaign design drafts

[http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Fundraising\\_2008/design\\_drafts](http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Fundraising_2008/design_drafts)

Frequently asked questions

[http://wikimediafoundation.org/wiki/Frequently\\_Asked\\_Questions](http://wikimediafoundation.org/wiki/Frequently_Asked_Questions)

Wikimedia Foundation Board of Trustees

<http://wikimediafoundation.org/wiki/Board>

Wikimedia Blog

<http://blog.wikimedia.org/>