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Coloring Wikipedia entries by "reputation"

POSTED BY DAVID PESCOVITZ, AUGUST 3, 2007 10:00 AM | # | [DISCUSS \(0\)](#)

UC Santa Cruz researchers are developing a program that color codes phrases in Wikipedia according to "reliability" based on the the "reputation" of the writer. The software calculates a Wikipedian's reputation score by analyzing the individual's editing history. If the individual's previous contributions have stood the test of time without being edited, her reputation score is higher. Computer scientist Luca de Alfaro created a demonstration site with a few hundred Wikipedia pages colored according to the "trustworthiness" of the writer. From a press release:

The program works from a user's history of edits to calculate his or her reputation score. The trustworthiness of newly inserted text is computed as a function of the reputation of its author. As subsequent contributors vet the text, their own reputations contribute to the text's trustworthiness score. So an entry created by an unknown author can quickly gain (or lose) trust after a few known users have reviewed the pages.

A benefit of calculating author reputation in this way is that de Alfaro can test how well his reliability scores work. He does so by comparing users' reliability scores with how long their subsequent edits last on the site. So far, the program flags as suspect more than 80 percent of edits that turn out to be poor. It's not overly accusatory, either: 60 to 70 percent of the edits it flags do end up being quickly corrected by the Wikipedia community.

[Link](#) to press release, [Link](#) to Wikipedia trust coloring demo

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