

Wiki Walks Guide

What is a 'Wiki Walk' when it's at home?

Well, it's a wander around with a camera or mobile phone, taking pictures, video and sound to upload to **Wikimedia Commons**.

OK, sounds good. What's Wikimedia Commons?

You've heard of Wikipedia, right? It's a free, collaborative online encyclopedia created by volunteer contributors. There are currently 46 million articles on Wikipedia, written, edited and verified by 200,000+ volunteers in over 300 languages. Not bad for 20 years work!

Wikimedia Commons is the world's largest free-to-use library/archive of illustrations, photos, drawings, videos, and music (currently 75 million media files in total). It adheres to the same principles as Wikipedia – namely, the creation of freely licensed, educational media content. Anyone can contribute **so long as they own the original copyright to the material** (e.g. they took the photo) and they're happy to licence it under a 'Creative Commons' licence. All content is attributed to the creator but is freely available for anyone else to use, share and modify as they please.

Why is Wikipedia and Wikimedia Commons Important?

For many people around the world, Wikipedia is a trusted, reliable source of information. When you search for a topic or person, chances are you'll go check a Wikipedia article as a first stop. It's become so commonplace we often don't even think about it. When you create a new entry for a person, place, topic or event on Wikipedia, or if you add content to an existing article that's short on

detail, you begin a process that helps raise awareness around that content. More people can find it, more people can read about it and in turn, more people (journalists, students, scholars) research and write about it. This creates more high-quality, citable references that can be fed back into Wikipedia - an amplifying effect that makes content more visible and accessible and helps address some of the systemic bias within our societies.

Wikimedia Commons – those images, videos and audio - are an important resource in their own right, but also help illustrate and support articles on Wikipedia, as well as other Wikimedia projects, such as Wikispecies, a free taxonomic reference and directory.

Are there any problems with Wikipedia or Wikimedia Commons?

Wikipedia *does* have a problem – there is a significant content gender gap on Wikipedia i.e. a heavy bias towards content associated with men and only one in ten editors are women. To address this, Wikipedia have set up an initiative called Women in Red, encouraging more women to become editors and creating more content relating to womens stories:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Women_in_Red

The Wikimedia Commons archive reflects similar social inequality and bias. This is something we want to address as part of our Wiki Walks. By uploading photos of places, buildings and events in your area, you are creating a findable, free resource that literally puts your community on the map.

Pre-walk Planning and Research

Why am I recording?

Before going out on your walk, take some time to consider what you want to photograph and do a little research. What value might your contribution have to others? With 75 million+ files there are a LOT of images, videos etc, out there and not all are good quality or relevant. It's important to avoid clogging up the archive with poor quality media. Review your shots when you get home and carefully evaluate and select the images or video before you upload.

Where am I recording?

Have a look at existing media on Wikimedia Commons – there may be poor-quality images of buildings or places that could be retaken. There may be places that have changed dramatically since they were photographed e.g. buildings that have been renovated or are deteriorating, graffiti, or places that have been landscaped or rebuilt. This is particularly relevant for urban locations where landscapes can change dramatically in short periods of time. Other subjects might be even more time-sensitive e.g. capturing seasonal change, weather phenomena, wildlife or events.

Other places or subjects might have very little associated media. A good starting point is to have a look at WikiShootMe – a map-based tool which shows the locations of Wikipedia articles, Commons images and other Wikidata:

<https://wikishootme.toolforge.org/> It's a useful tool for checking where there are gaps in Commons images and media and identifying images that could be updated.

Safety Tips

- Buddy up with a pal or get a few folks together - plan your route and tell someone where you're going.

- Bring along some water and snacks and make sure you have something waterproof you can pop your camera into if it starts to rain.
- Always bear in mind your own personal safety and the safety of others.
- Don't take any unnecessary risks – no standing in the middle of the road to get 'that perfect shot'!
- Never enter building sites or go near buildings that are structurally unsound.
- Be sensitive and respectful to wildlife.

West Boathouse project-specific: if you're taking images along the river, stay well clear of the water and avoid areas with Giant Hogweed. It's very prevalent along stretches of the riverbank, and the sap from the stems can cause severe skin burns.

How am I recording?

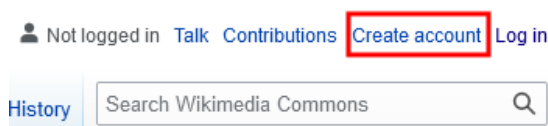
You can use a digital SLR, digital compact, smartphone camera, tablet or iPad. Most modern smartphones can take pictures that are decent quality – just make sure your camera is on the highest quality settings possible – this ensures your image can be reused widely. There are many photography guides online, and the settings will depend on your camera.

Tips

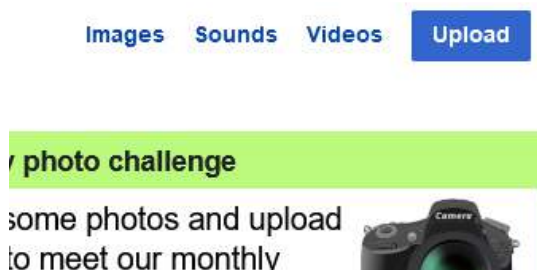
- We recommend sticking to automatic settings until you get comfortable, then you can experiment with manual settings.
- On sunny days, try shooting in the morning or early evening when the light is softer and more diffuse. Shoot with the sun behind you if you can.
- Try to keep your camera as still as possible and check your subject is in focus. Use a tripod if you have one.
- If you are photographing wildlife, be mindful of where you are walking and never stress or disturb the animals

How do I get my photos on Wikimedia Commons?

1. Go to the Wikimedia Commons main page:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
2. In the top right corner, select 'create account'



3. Set yourself a username and password and create your account.
4. Once you're logged in, look for the 'Upload' button on the right hand side of the browser, this will open up the Upload Wizard which will guide you through the rest of the process, step by step.



NOTES

Keep your title and caption short and descriptive, you can add more detail into the 'Description' section.

Categories – this information (what, where, when, who and how) helps people find your media on Commons. Think about where and what you've recorded, who might be in it, if you've used a particular style of photography, type of view, or even a dominant colour. You should always put your uploads into categories

and/or gallery pages according to topic, so your contributions can be found and used by others.

File formats

Commons only accepts files in formats that are not restricted by patents. These include:

- For photos: .jpg
- For graphics: .svg, .png
- For animation: .gif
- For audio: .ogg (or .oga), .flac
- For video: .ogg (or .ogv), .webm
- For printouts: .pdf

Example Image and Descriptions



Title: Gorbals high rises from the West Boathouse.jpg

Caption: Gorbals high rises from the West Boathouse on Glasgow Green.

Description: Looking across the River Clyde towards the Gorbals high rises from the balcony of the West Boathouse on Glasgow Green on a late autumn afternoon in 2019.

Categories: Glasgow, Glasgow Green, Gorbals, River Clyde, Autumn, Reflections, Boathouses, Rowing Clubs

Location

If your image or media didn't have a location embedded in the file, you can add it manually. Use a site like <https://www.latlong.net/> which will give you the coordinates in latitude and longitude, then copy them over into the location box.

Resources and Links

- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Contributing_your_own_work
- Edinburgh University Wikimedian in Residence Guide on How to Upload images to Wikimedia Commons: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMBeODoSZIE>
- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Policies_and_guidelines
- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Simple_media_reuse_guide