



CREATING KNOWLEDGE 2018

The Archives of Babel A Wikipedia - Workshop

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In September of 2012, the American novelist Philip Roth published an open letter to Wikipedia in *The New Yorker*. “I am Philip Roth,” it began, and proceeded to explain how the editors of Wikipedia had gotten the inspiration for his novel *The Human Stain* wrong. Though the article had in fact only mentioned a theory about his sources, Roth was adamant that it did not belong anywhere in a discussion of his novel. He wanted the idea removed entirely. This, it turns out, was a profound misunderstanding of the editorial practices of Wikipedia, and the theory that Roth would prefer we forget remains in the article to this day. His letter in *The New Yorker*, of course, is duly cited. How well should librarians understand the editorial process behind Wikipedia’s articles?

In this workshop, we will take a practical approach to the problem and have a look at what goes on behind the scenes, even edit some pages if we feel so inclined. The workshop will be led by Thomas Basbøll, a philosopher and writing consultant who has spent a few years working as a volunteer editor at Wikipedia and even has even been banned from editing certain pages for a time. The overall goal of the workshop is to demystify one of the most accessed sources of knowledge in the world and help librarians decide how to best help people like Philip Roth, and his readers, make sense of its “authority”.

Thomas Basbøll is the resident writing consultant at the Copenhagen Business School Library. He holds an MA in philosophy from the University of Copenhagen, and a PhD from the Copenhagen Business School. He works closely with students, teachers and researchers in their attempts to master “the craft of research” and is an avid blogger (blog.cbs.dk/inframethodology/).