

Knol: a Gateway to Encyclopedic Article

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Abstract

Knol means a unit of knowledge. It is a Google's project to create an open encyclopedia covering all aspect of human knowledge. Currently it is in beta mode. The project hopes to through out the use of inappropriate web content for research purpose, as it is happening now a day. The author(s) also can earn revenue from their intellectual contribution made to Knol if they want to do so. This paper is of review type of the articles published over internet from the announcement of knol i.e. 13th December, 2007 to 13th January, 2008, due attention is also given to describe the probable application of Knol in Library and Information Science.

Keywords: Knol, Internet Encyclopedia, Online Encyclopedia, Open Access Encyclopedia, Google

1. Introduction

'The web contains an enormous amount of information, and Google has helped to make that information more easily accessible by providing pretty good search facilities. But not everything is written nor is everything well organized to make it easily discoverable. There are millions of people who possess useful knowledge that they would love to share, and there are billions of people who can benefit from it' (Manber: 2007). Peoples are not simply sharing their knowledge due to non availability of appropriate platform in addition to lack of remuneration from their contribution(s). 'Popular online knowledge repositories like Wikipedia, Yahoo Answers, Squidoo, Mahalo and About.com have an exhaustive list of articles.'

Wikipedia's articles are of trivial nature but astonishingly its contents are moving wholesale to research papers due to the fact that it ranks number one on Google for an immense number of searches. The rank is not because of its inherent quality, but because of its immense number of inbound links it creates. Not to talk about the layman even some of the well reputed information science professionals now a day don't hesitate to write 'According to Wikipedia' or 'Wikipedia described it as', etc. like sentences in their research papers. All these facts must need to be stopped otherwise the whole research world will be full of inappropriate contents and it is good to see that Google's Knol is devised to challenge it.

2. What is Knol

According to Udi Manber, a Vice President of Engineering at Google the term knol, coined by Google to mean a 'unit of knowledge'. It refers to both 'the project and as an instance of an article interchangeably' (Manber: 2007). The project is planned by Google for user-generated

article and it was announced on December 13, 2007. 'Google will provide easy-to-use tools for writing, editing, and so on, and it will provide free hosting of the content. Writers only need to write' (Manber: 2007). The tool is still in development stages but is hoped to present all human knowledge in a well-organized, nicely presented format with distinct look and feel, but still knol is just a web page. While Google is currently testing this publishing platform, there has been no official announcement about when it would be released. 'The product doesn't have many users yet. It's in a 'closed beta', meaning only those with invites can create pages and those pages aren't yet available publicly. But it has garnered the attention of some smart people in the blogging world' (Klaassen: 2007). The knols will be release under a creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license and a search box will be there at each page of the knol to search for others knols.

3. Scope of Knol

'Google Knol is designed to allow anyone to create a page on any topic, which others can comment on, rate, and contribute to if the primary author allows' (Sullivan: 2007). So, Knol hopes to include articles on 'all topics, from scientific concepts, to medical information, from geographical and historical, to entertainment, from product information, to how-to-fix-it instructions' (Manber: 2007). Its 'goal is to encourage people who know a particular subject to write an authoritative article about it' (Manber: 2007). 'If the Knol page also includes links to the best relevant resources on the web, Knol may also -eventually -function as a topic directory, maybe replacing the Open Directory' (Pandia Search Engine News: 2007).

4. Why Knol

'The key idea behind the knol project is to highlight authors. Books have authors' names right on the cover, news articles have bylines, scientific articles always have authors - but somehow the web evolved without a strong standard to keep authors names highlighted' (Manber: 2007). If the web searchers can find articles and can be able to know who wrote that article it hope to significantly help users make better use of web content. In the piece Charles Arthur sets out the argument that Google is essentially annoyed that it can't make any money from Wikipedia and so has launched Knol to rectify this. '[Google] can't serve adverts on Wikipedia, and it makes its money from adverts, and since it can't buy Wikipedia (or doesn't want to try) there isn't much else to do but try to compete' (Ciaran: 2007).

5. How Knol will Grow

The site is currently in private beta, and requests to create 'knols' are by invitation only. It was launched by inviting a selected group of people to try. 'Once testing is completed, participation in knols will be completely open' (Manber: 2007).

5. Knol Contents

Each knol article will be written by a single author, and other users can edit it only with permission from the author (Sullivan: 2007). Manber said that Google hopes 'knols will include the opinions and points of view of the authors who will put their reputation on the line'. Manber also writes that 'Google will not serve as an editor in any way, and will not bless any content. All editorial responsibilities and control will rest with the authors'. Because of knol's format, some have said knol is more like About.com than Wikipedia (Frederick: 2007). Each knol page will be divided vertically into two sections. The left hand section will have the following contents in it.

a) Encyclopedic article:

Each Knol will present an encyclopedic article on the topic with the title in the top most position with option to get a print copy.

b) Authors identity:

The authors name and affiliation will follow the article. The page will also have Email link to the author.

c) View, edit and revisions:

How many times a particular article is view, edit and revisions will shows on each knol pages. The last revision will be shown on the top portion.

d) Article rating:

The overall article rating along with the current user rating will be shown at the top potion itself. It will follows by how many view a particular article received along with number of edits.

e) Peer reviews and Comments:

How many times a particular article has been peer reviews and how many comments are attached with a particular article will be shown at the top of the page itself.

f) Abstract: The names of the article will followed by a brief abstract.

g) Keywords or Search Terms:

The provision is also there to include the keywords and search terms by the author of the article.

h) Contents:

In the right hand side of abstract and search terms, Contents page of the article will be there.

i) Main Article:

The contents and search terms will follow by the main article.

j) More information:

It will include links to other Web resources.

k) Books about the topic:

The reference to the books dealing with the topic will be listed under this category.

l) References:

'Knols will also include references and links to additional information' (Manber: 2007).

m) Comments and Q / A:

This is the links to comment and Q/A, the user or viewer of the article wants to add or comments to.

The right hand section will have the following information

a) Authors details:

A photograph of the author along with the position held in the parent institutions will be shown at the top corner.

b) Links to create new Knol:

It will provide links to create new Knol by the author himself or herself.

c) Advertisement:

Links to Advertisement sites added by the Google.

d) Related Knols:

Related knol on the same subject along with title, name of the author and its rating.

e) Knols by the same author:

Articles by the same author along with number of views, reviews and comments and its rating will be shown in the next.

f) Peer review:

Name of the reviewer along with the photograph will follow the knols by the same author.

INSOMNIA

Risk factors, diagnosis and treatment

a Knol by **Rachel Manber**
Affiliation: Stanford University School of Medicine

last edited on December 4, 2007 view edit revisions

Email

Article rating: ★★★★☆ 3476 views | 245 edits
Your rating: ☆☆☆☆☆ 12 peer reviews | 43 comments

Insomnia is a common sleep disorder that can often be treated, sometimes with simple common sense techniques. This article explains the source of the problem, lists several misconceptions, and suggests ways for treatment.

Search terms: Insomnia, sleep disorder, insomnia treatment

Contents

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- [What promotes good sleep?](#)
- [Types of insomnia](#)
- [Is a laboratory sleep study necessary for diagnosing insomnia?](#)
- [Who is more likely to experience insomnia?](#)
- [How does insomnia start?](#)
- [How does insomnia persist?](#)
- [4 more...](#)

Introduction

Insomnia is a common sleep disorder, present in approximately one in ten adults in the United States. It has both night time and day time symptoms. Night time symptoms include persistent difficulties falling and / or staying asleep. Day time symptoms include diminished sense of well being and compromised functioning due to fatigue. The word persistent is emphasized because many people occasionally experience disturbed sleep at night but their problem is transient. Insomnia is diagnosed when the problems persist for at least one month and chronic insomnia is diagnosed when the symptoms persist for at least 6 months.

Insomnia involves difficulty sleeping despite being sleep deprived. Most people with insomnia are not able to catch up on lost sleep even if they try napping during the day. [1] In contrast, good sleepers who are sleep deprived are usually able to nap during the day. Interestingly, when people with insomnia are allowed to sleep only 80% of their average habitual sleep time, and therefore are even more sleep deprived than usual, they are better able to nap. [2]

Some people naturally sleep 5 hours or less per night and report feeling alert and well throughout the day. These short sleepers do not have insomnia. They do not need more sleep. The ideal length of sleep is the amount of sleep that optimizes the sense of alertness and well being during the day. Different people need different amounts of sleep. The distribution of actual sleep time in adults is bell shaped. The 2002 Sleep in America Poll conducted by the National Sleep Foundation reports that American adults sleep an average of 6.9 hours per night on weekdays and 7.5 hours on the weekend.

The focus of this write up is on insomnia in adults. Many of the principles described below apply to children and adolescents as well, but there are some [insomnia diagnoses specific to childhood](#) that require specific treatments that are not covered in this article.



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What promotes good sleep?

To understand insomnia it is helpful to know what factors promote good sleep. The following three conditions need to co-exist for best sleep:

- 1) Attempts to sleep should be made only after sufficient time has elapsed since the last sleep period.** This is seldom an issue, except for people who sleep a lot during the day.
- 2) Attempts to sleep should be made only when feeling sleepy and calm.** Feeling sleepy is a sign that the biological system that promotes wakefulness is operating at a low level. The biological systems that promote wakefulness and sleep are distinct. They do not constitute a single system with an on-off switch but the two systems interact. The wake promoting system can trump the sleep promoting system. This is adaptive. It allows us to adequately respond to dangerous threats that emerge at night. Therefore, when we perceive threat in our environment, such as when we experience distress, it is difficult for us to sleep. On the other hand when our stress is under control at bedtime we are likely to fall asleep easily. People differ in how they respond to stress.
- 3) Bed time and rise time should match the biological clock that regulates sleep and wakefulness** (also known as the [circadian rhythm](#) or the [circadian clock](#)). This clock operates by sending alerting signals across the 24-hour day. The signal increases during the day and at some point in the evening it starts decreasing. The best time to go to bed is after the alerting signal starts decreasing. The magnitude of this signal keeps going down during the night and then, approximately 2 hours before we naturally wake up, it starts going up.

Sometimes this biological clock is out of phase with society. People who describe themselves as "night owls" (approximately 10% of the adult population) often have a delayed circadian clock relative to most others. This means that the night owl's alerting signal starts decreasing later than it does for most people. Night owls who go to bed when most people do are essentially trying to sleep before the decrease of their alerting signal. At that time their alerting signal is still too high and therefore they have difficulty falling asleep. But if they wait and go to bed later they fall asleep much faster because their alerting signal is already decreasing. This is because their clock's alerting signal starts decreasing later than it does for most people. "Night owls" also have difficulty waking up in the morning. This happens because at the time they try to wake up the alerting signals generated by their biological clock are not yet strong enough. There are also individuals who have clocks that run early. They typically describe



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Voice your opinion,
Write your own Knol

Google ad #1
This is a description of a Google ad. This is a description of a Google ad. [www.google.com](#)

Google ad #2
This is a description of a Google ad. This is a description of a Google ad. [www.google.com](#)

Google ad #3
This is a description of a Google ad. This is a description of a Google ad. [www.google.com](#)

Ads by Google

The author of this Knol does not endorse these ads

Related Knols [see more](#) (This is not real)

- Idiopathic Insomnia** ★★★★☆
by [Udi Manber](#)
- Psychophysiological Insomnia** ★★★★☆
by [Michael McNally](#)
- Transient Insomnia** ★★★★☆
by [Soham Mazumdar](#)
- Periodic Insomnia** ★★★★☆
by [Ray Su](#)

Rachel also wrote [see all 7](#) (This is not real)

- Sleep onset insomnia** ★★★★☆
493 views | 13 reviews | 5 comments
- Food Allergy Insomnia** ★★★★☆
493 views | 13 reviews | 5 comments
- Environmental Insomnia** ★★★★☆
493 views | 13 reviews | 5 comments
- Toxin-Induced Sleep Disorder** ★★★★☆
493 views | 13 reviews | 5 comments

Peer Reviews [see all 12](#) (This is not real)

- ★★★★☆ **Concise and well written**
by [Ziga Mahkovec](#) 
- ★★★★☆ **Excellent source from a...**
by [Alexis Battle](#) 
- ★★★★☆ **A must read for students**
by [Cedric Dupont](#) 
- ★★★★☆ **Well researched and written**
by [Bill Strathearn](#) 

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Fig: A screenshot of Google's Knol taken from http://www.google.com/help/knol_screenshot.html

6. Knol Vs Wikipedia

Many experts see this initiative of Google's 'as an attack on the widely used Wikipedia communal encyclopaedia (BBC: 2007). A different concern was raised by Jimmy Wales, co-founder of Wikipedia: That the profit incentive could turn Google's collection of knols into a magnet for pages about highly commercial subjects instead of more academic topics. Wales gave an example: 'You may see an awful lot of articles about Viagra' (Liedtke: 2007). The non-profit Wikimedia Foundation, which owns Wikipedia, welcomed the Google knol initiative saying that 'The more good free content, the better for the world' (Levy: 2007). Charles Arthur feels that 'If really good knols appear, Wikipedia will feed off them and even produce meta-versions of multiple knols on the same topic. And that will mean that it will remain dominant. Google may have met its match'. 'What this ignores of course is why Wikipedia is so dominant, which is the fact that it ranks #1 on Google for an immense number of searches. And the reason for that is not because of its inherent quality, but because Wikipedia has such an immense number of inbound links pointed at it that even some of the worst pages can rank highly against very competitive search phrases'. Michael Arrington of TechCrunch has the opinion that 'Very soon we are going to see a lot of Wikipedia content moving wholesale to Knol'. 'Anyone writing for Knol is likely to at least peruse Wikipedia content before publishing. And if they see anything good, they are at liberty to simply lift and copy it over to Knol, and get a adsense check for their time.' 'But it is definitely worth bearing in mind that Wikipedia's dominance has, to a large extent, been built on Google and if anyone will be able to damage that dominance, it's likely to be Google'. Though not exclusively, the Knol will be different from the Wikipedia's article in following respect

- a) **Knol articles will be authentic:** 'Knol looks set to foster rivalry. Contributors to knol will not be able to contribute anonymously and will not be able to edit each other's work' (Blakely: 2007) which is lacking in case of Wikipedia. Again 'since Knol pages will be authored, users won't, presumably, be able to dive in and edit another page. They'll be able to submit edits to the author for approval, though' (Needleman: 2007) the author may except or reject the modifications.
- b) **Knol will present multiple articles on any topic:** 'While Wikipedia is a collective effort by anyone interested in contributing, Knol would have individual and competing articles on the same subject' (Raghunath: 2007). On 'Wikipedia, readers find only one entry on, say, the First World War, on knol authors will submit separate pieces that will compete for advertising dollars' (Blakely: 2007). Google believes that 'knowing who wrote what will significantly help users make better use of web content' (Manber: 2007).
- c) **Knol articles will be biasness:** While Wikipedia articles are written collectively under a 'neutral point of view' policy, knol will highlight personal expertise by emphasizing authorship

(Blakely: 2007) and, like articles provided in Everything2 and Helium.com, knols will contain the personal opinions of the author (Manber: 2007) (Murrell: 2007).

- d) Knol would paid revenue to the author:** While Wikipedia is not-for-profit service and anyone is free to contribute and edit the contents published. 'Google's offering comes with a commercial interest' (Raghunath: 2007). The authors will be able to decide whether advertisements will appear on their knols or not, if there will be ads, a 'substantial revenue share from the proceeds of those ads' (Manber: 2007) will be given to authors. While it is not yet known if authors are allowed to run ads from companies other than Google, according to Sullivan, Manber there is a possibility.

7. Knol and Google Search Engine

Google combines page rank with sophisticated text-matching techniques to find pages that are both important and relevant to a search. At the heart of Google search 'page rank relies on the uniquely democratic nature of the Web by using its vast link structure as an indicator of an individual page's value' (Google: 2003). In other words, if a Web site receives a number of links from other sites it will rank higher. Google also uses the number of times a term appears on a page and examines all aspects of the page's content to determine if it is a good match for a query or not.

Is Knol going to change Google's relevance in presenting search result? There are many controversial opinions were raised regarding this question. Some points out that Google's recent announcement regarding Knol pages are 'meant to be the first thing someone who searches for this topic for the first time will want to read', hopes to raises some critics that a 'shift could compromise Google's objectivity in presenting search results' (Helft: 2007). Some others also have debated whether Google search results can remain neutral because of possible conflict of interest (Greenberg: 2007). According to Danny Sullivan, an editor of Search Engine Land, 'Google's goal of making Knol pages easy to find on search engines could conflict with its need to remain unbiased' (Helft: 2007). Jeff Chester, executive director of the Center for Digital Democracy, raised similar concerns: 'At the end of the day, there's a fundamental conflict between the business Google is in and its social goals. What you're seeing here, slowly, is Google embracing an advertising-driven model, in which money will have a greater impact on what people have ready access to' (Schiffman: 2007).

As a response to above concerns it can be said that Google already hosts large amounts of content in sites like YouTube, Blogger and Google Groups (Greenberg: 2007) and with these sites till now there appears no difference, so that there is no significant difference in this case (Hof : 2007) also. Nicholas Carr, a frequent technology commentator, dismissed predictions of Google manipulating results saying that Google is hoping that the most popular knol pages will rise naturally through the search results, challenging Wikipedia and providing another area of content that can carry Google ads (Carr: 2007) (Scott Morrison: 2007).

According to Wolfgang Hansson, a writer at DailyTech, knol may have been planned for About.com originally when it was up for acquisition. Hansson reported that several sources close to the sale said Google was planning to acquire About.com, but the executives at About.com learned Google was planning to move from About.com's model to a wiki-style model. That would have meant layoffs for all 500 or so 'Guides' at About.com (Hansson : 2007).

8. Knolstuff and Knol

Knolstuff (<http://knolstuff.com>) is a brand new social networking community for Google's Open Encyclopedia (<http://knolstuff.com>). It is a community of the Authors, Bloggers, Web Publishers, Web Masters and Advertisers to discuss and learn about Knol and take advantage of what Google is soon offering. This site also supports the new Google OpenSocial Platform, share with others updates and insights about Knol. Knolstuff created this social network on Ning (<http://www.ning.com>). When user will log over the Knolstuff then it will present a screen that will have the links to

- a) Main: It is the link to the home page of Knolstuff.
- b) My Page: It is the home page of the member or user log on to the system.
- c) Members: It will show the total number of members already registered with Knolstuff. Presently it is 2,664 (Two Thousand Six Hundred Sixty four) (As on 11th January, 2007 at 16.20 hours).
- d) Forum: Currently Google Knol News (15), Making money as a Web Author and Content Writer (2), Business Forums (6) and General (69) Categories of Forum are there over the Knolstuff.
- e) Gadgets: Presently Gadgets is in Beta.
- f) Groups: At present a total of 92 (ninety two) Groups are there over Knolstuff.
- g) Photos: Present collection is 1990 photos.
- h) Videos: A total of 92 videos are there as on 11th January, 2007 at 16.20 hours.
- i) Invite: Links to invite others people to Knolstuff.

9. Knol and Library and Information Science

As 'Knol' will be a composition system; a discussion medium; a repository; a tool for collaboration, it will have a tremendous application in Library and Information Science. In this digital environment the librarian and information scientist can utilized the Knol pages as a means of packaging and repackaging of information, for electronic publishing, for reference purpose, to advice the user about the strategy to identify relevant electronic sources, etc. The librarians of all types can used it as a substitute of our traditional encyclopedias in providing ready reference service to the user. Its other uses will includes

- a) **Online articles:** The professionals can use this medium to create online articles on various topics with appropriate references.

- b) Archive:** The Library and Information Science Professionals can submit their already published works to Knol and can keep track of their revisions with the support of automatic back-ups.
- c) Repositories:** Knol can also be used as repositories for class assignment of the students. The librarian or teachers can take the leading role in making aware of the students to Knol by inviting them to publish their class assignment to Knol for future references.
- d) Documentation:** Knol also can be use internally to manage documentation and project planning when team member includes hundreds of people in various locations. In simple it will change the way to collaborate, to communicate with each other.
- e) User Study:** Regarding any new project, Knol can be used as a document management tool for user study.
- f) Referral Service:** The Library and Information Science Professional can refer the user to Knol pages for getting a rough idea on any concept than to Wikipedia- the most widely used fake sources of information over the internet.
- g) Information Service:** With the arrival of Knol the librarian will be at a position to provide information services at instance.

10. Is Knol going to be a successful project?

Aaron Wall points out that 'what person who gets paid to create content is going to prefer putting it on Google Knol for free UNLESS Google gives Knol preferential treatment? If you are producing content out of passion with no profit motive, why would you put it on Google instead of your own server? If you desire peer review with your name attached to it why not publish it on YourName.com?' (Wall: 2007). Content media expert John Blossom opined that 'How can Google provide a balanced and truly credible topical-guide service if the responsibility of verifying and updating individual guides is left only to the author? How can Google best manage and serve the most appropriate 'Knol' when there will be multiple guides on the same topic? How can Google guarantee a quality information service with Knol if it designs it as a for-profit business?' (Blossom: 2007). So, finally we have nothing than to wait.

11. Conclusion

Knol has been described both as a rival to encyclopedia sites such as Wikipedia, Scholarpedia and About.com (Riley: 2007) (Blakely: 2007) (Frederick: 2007) and as a complement to Wikipedia (Masnick: 2007) (Manjoo: 2007) (Levy: 2007). Google's trying to organize information in a speedy to search and brows able order but since its announcement in December 2007 regarding Knol, there has been speculation on Google's motives and its position as an organizer of content rather than a producer. The Guardian's Jack Schofield argued that 'Knol represents an attack on the media industry

in general' (Schofield: 2007) as it will shift user behavior where they hopes to turn their hands to knol than to printed sources of information that are in general hard to find and get. Finally, it is sure that, after launching of the Knol projects, it will shift from a mere online encyclopedia to a source of information on the concepts that also have not been vouched for in any sense. Again, it hopes to push the top ranking, Ad-Free Wikipedia results down on Google rankings automatically and will provide the world an authentic source of information, what they are looking for after the arrival of Wikipedia- a more widely used inappropriate source of information.

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