

# How (not) to bring Wikipedia into the classroom

JSM 2020

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University of St Thomas

# Communicating data

Courses I've taught:

- STAT 98T: Data Visualization (UCLA, 2015)
- SDS 136: Communicating with Data (Smith, 2017)
- SDS 236: Data Journalism (Smith, 2018)
- STAT 336: Data Communication and Visualization (St Thomas, 2020)

**Visualizing** data

**Writing** about data

**Speaking** about data

# Writing about data

- “One number story” (Data Journalism, Data Communication)
- Science reporting (Data Journalism)
- “Standard story” (Data Journalism)
- ...
- Wikipedia article? (Data Journalism, Data Communication)



- Main page
- Contents
- Current events
- Random article
- About Wikipedia
- Contact us
- Donate
- Contribute
- Help
- Community portal
- Recent changes
- Upload file
- Tools
- What links here
- Related changes
- Special pages
- Page information
- Wikidata item
- Languages

# (Learning) goals for writing Wikipedia articles

## Editing Amanda Cox

### Notice about sources

This article must adhere to the **biographies of living persons policy**, even if it is not a biography, because it contains material about living persons. Take extra care to use high-quality sources. Material about living persons should not be added when the **journalism**; see **more information on sources**. Never use self-published sources about a living person unless written or published by the subject; see **WP:BLPSPS** and **WP:BLPSELF PUB**.  
Contentious material about living persons that is unsourced or **poorly sourced** must be removed immediately from the article and its talk page, especially if potentially **libellous**. If such material is repeatedly inserted, or if you have other concerns, please see **noticeboard**. If you are connected to one of the subjects of this article and need help, see **this page**.

*Content that violates any copyrights will be deleted. Encyclopedic content must be verifiable. Work submitted to Wikipedia can be edited, used, and redistributed—by anyone—subject to certain terms and conditions.*

```
}}
'''Amanda Cox''' is an American journalist and the editor of the ''[[New York Times]]'' [[data jou
of Journalism.<ref name="NYU18">{{cite web | title=Amanda Cox | website=NYU Journalism | date=Octo

== Life and education ==
Cox was born in Michigan in 1980, and raised by her accountant parents.<ref>{{cite journal|title=A
Society]]|journal=Significance|volume=9|issue=5|year=2012|doi=10.1111/j.1740-9713.2012.00605.x}</
|title=Building career connections in New York City |url=https://wp.stolaf.edu/news/building-caree
she received her master's degree in statistics from the [[University of Washington]].<ref>{{cite w

== Career and research ==
She began her career at the ''New York Times'' as a summer intern while in graduate school.<ref>{{
at-the-new/|publisher=SimplyStatistics|date=June 1, 2012}}</ref> Cox worked at the Federal Reserve
Times - Breaking News, World News & Multimedia | date=August 28, 2018 | url=https://www.nytimes.co
her years at the Times, Cox has worked on many stories using statistics and data visualization, ma
news|url=https://hbr.org/2013/03/power-of-visualizations-aha-moment|title=The Power of Visualizati
news|url=http://www.niemanlab.org/2016/03/from-service-desk-to-standalone-news-desk-how-the-new-yo
Times' graphics department has grown up|last1=Doctor|first1=Ken|publisher=NiemanLab|date=March 7,

On April 22, 2014 the ''New York Times'' website launched<ref>{{cite web|url=https://www.nytimes.c
New York Times]]|date=April 22, 2014|author-link=David Leonhardt}}</ref> its data journalism secti
york-times-launches-data-journalism-site-the-upshot|title=New York Times launches data journalism
news|url=https://qz.com/185922/the-upshot-is-the-new-york-times-replacement-for-nate-silvers-fivet
McDuling|date=March 10, 2014|work=Quartz}}</ref><ref name="John McDuling"/> Cox was named editor o
name="named">{{cite news|last=Baquet|first=Dean|title=Amanda Cox Named Editor, The Upshot|url=http

Insert  [bold] [italic] [link] [table] [code] [quote] [template] [reference] [cite] [help] [undo] [redo] [undo] [redo] [undo] [redo] [undo] [redo]
Cite your sources: <ref></ref>

Edit summary (Briefly describe your changes)
[ ] This is a minor edit [x] Watch this page
By publishing changes, you agree to the Terms of Use, and you irrevocably agree to release your contribution under the CC BY-SA 3.0

Publish changes Show preview Show changes Cancel
```

- A new form of typesetting.
- Quality reference-finding skills.
- A neutral writing style.
- Some form of versioning.
- Deep knowledge about a particular person.
- A new Wikipedia article!

Wikidata entities used in this page  
Pages transcluded onto the current version of this page (help)  
This page is a member of 4 hidden categories (help)

# How ~~not~~ to do this assignment

- ~~First assignment of class~~
- ~~Guidance supplied by professor~~
- Guided by Wiki Education
- ~~Scaffolded by professor~~
- Scaffolded using deadlines and milestones from Wiki Education
- ~~Students think of people to write articles about~~
- Professor generates list of potential people

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Wiki Education dashboard for a course titled "Data Communication and Visual". The URL is <https://dashboard.wikiedu.org/courses>. The dashboard is currently on the "Timeline" tab. The main content area shows "Week 2" for the dates "02/09 - 02/15 (Mon, Wed, Fri)".

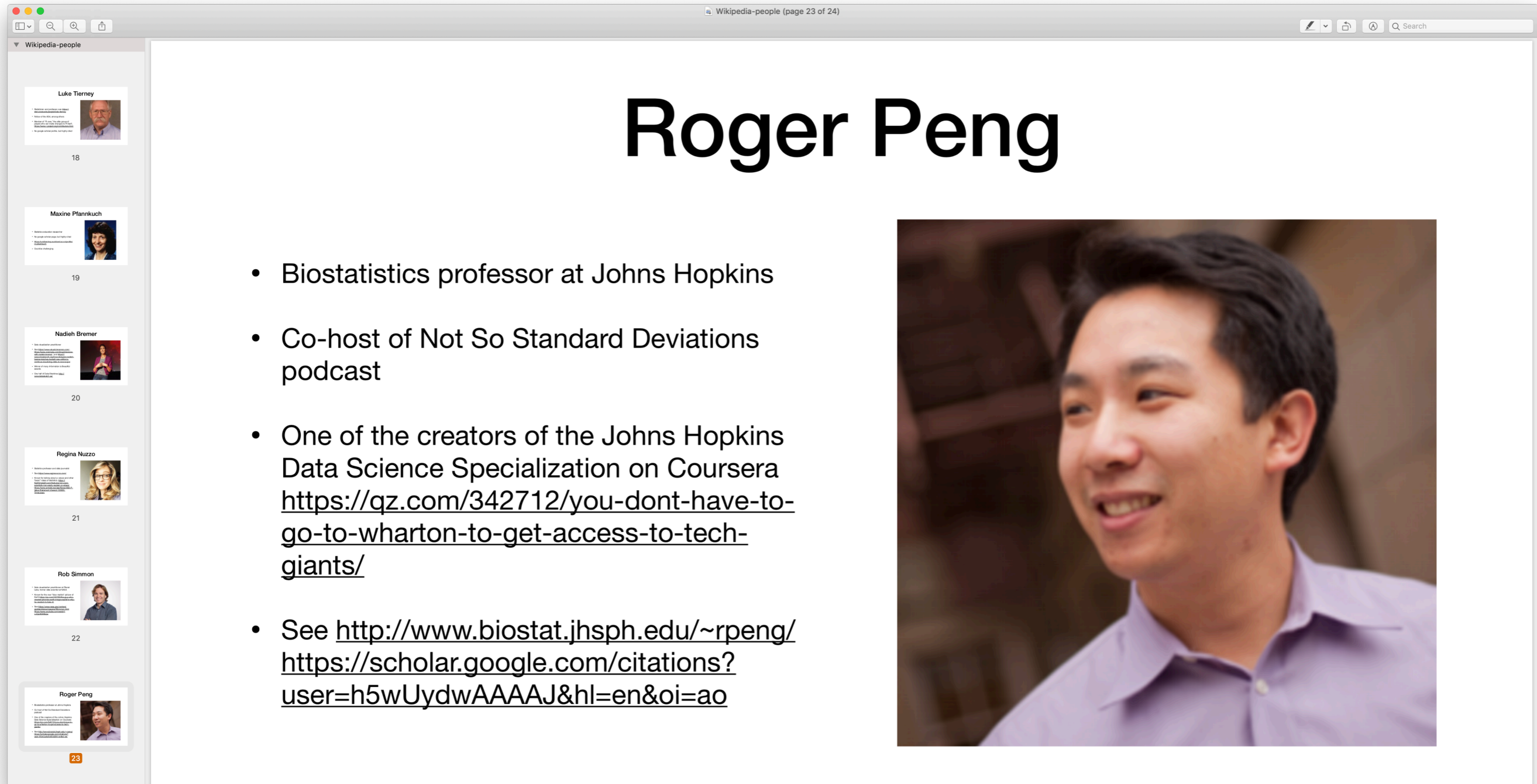
Under "Week 2", there are three main sections:

- Introduction to the Wikipedia assignment** (In Class):
  - Welcome to your Wikipedia assignment's course timeline. This page guides you through the steps you'll need to complete for your Wikipedia assignment, with links to training modules and your classmates' work spaces.
  - Your course has been assigned a Wikipedia Expert. You can reach them through the **Get Help** button at the top of this page.
  - Resources:
    - [Editing Wikipedia](#), pages 1-5
    - [Evaluating Wikipedia](#)
- Get started on Wikipedia** (Assignment):
  - Training**
    - [Wikipedia policies](#) (Start →)
    - [Sandboxes, talk pages, and watchlists](#) (Start →)
  - Create an account and join this course page, using the enrollment link your instructor sent you. (Because of Wikipedia's technical restraints, you may receive a message that you cannot create an account. To resolve this, please try again off campus or the next day.)
- Everyone has a Wikipedia account** (Milestone):
  - This week, everyone should have a Wikipedia account.

On the right side of the dashboard, there is a sidebar showing a list of weeks and their corresponding dates:

Week	Dates
Week 2	02/09 - 02/15
Week 3	02/16 - 02/22
Week 4	02/23 - 02/29
Week 5	03/01 - 03/07
Week 6	03/08 - 03/14
Week 7	03/15 - 03/21
Week 8	03/22 - 03/28
Week 9	03/29 - 04/04
Week 10	04/05 - 04/11
Week 11	04/12 - 04/18
Week 12	04/19 - 04/20


# List + brief bio helps students get started



The screenshot shows a browser window with the title 'Wikipedia-people (page 23 of 24)'. On the left side, there is a vertical list of people with their names and small profile pictures. The names listed are Luke Tierney, Maxine Pfannkuch, Nadieh Bremer, Regina Nuzzo, Rob Simmon, and Roger Peng. The number 23 is highlighted at the bottom of this list. On the right side of the browser window, the name 'Roger Peng' is displayed in a large, bold, black font. Below the name, there is a large portrait photograph of Roger Peng, a man with dark hair wearing a light purple button-down shirt, smiling slightly. To the left of the photograph, there is a bulleted list of information about him.

## Roger Peng

- Biostatistics professor at Johns Hopkins
- Co-host of Not So Standard Deviations podcast
- One of the creators of the Johns Hopkins Data Science Specialization on Coursera <https://qz.com/342712/you-dont-have-to-go-to-wharton-to-get-access-to-tech-giants/>
- See <http://www.biostat.jhsph.edu/~rpeng/> <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=h5wUydwAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=ao>



# Articles that made it

Spring 2018

Amanda Cox

Giorgia Lupi

Janaya Khan

Jeff Leek

Jenny Bryan

Jer Thorp

Kim Rees

Lena Groeger

Lynn Cherny

Mark Hansen

Meredith Broussard

Stefanie Posavec

Victoria Stodden

Spring 2020

Adam Harvey

Andreas Buja

Antony Unwin

Catherine D'Ignazio

Colin Ware

David Robinson

Jen Christiansen

Karl Broman

Kyle McDonald

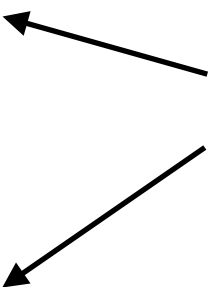
Nadieh Bremer

Regina Nuzzo

Robert Simmon

Roger Peng

Relevant to  
today's session!



16

Articles Created

19

Articles Edited

353

Total Edits

19<sup>i</sup>

Student Editors

15.8K

Words Added

249<sup>i</sup>

References Added

143K

Article Views

2<sup>i</sup>

Commons Uploads

Last statistics update: 2 months ago. [See more](#)

## Data Communication and Visualization

[Edit Description](#)

This is a data communication course. Students will be learning to visualize data, write about data, and speak about data. I'm hoping to have students write/contribute to articles (as a writing assignment) as well as create visualizations from Wikipedia tables (as a visualization assignment). I'm not sure if the visualization piece will make sense to do through this platform.

## Details

[Edit Details](#)

**Instructors:** [AmeliaMN](#) (Amelia McNamara / amelia.mcnamara@stthomas.edu — Instructor)

- 16 articles created
- 19 articles edited
- 353 total edits
- 19 student editors
- 15.8k words added
- 249 references added
- 143k article views
- 2 commons uploads



# Articles that made it

Spring 2018

[Amanda Cox](#)

[Giorgia Lupi](#)

[Janaya Khan](#)

[Jeff](#)

**I am super proud of my students' work. They clearly made valuable additions to Wikipedia!**

[Jenn](#)

**And, perhaps added to the diversity of the site**

[Jer Thorp](#)

[Kim Rees](#)

[Lena Groeger](#)

[Lynn Cherny](#)

[Mark Hansen](#)

[Meredith Broussard](#)

[Stefanie Posavec](#)

[Victoria Stodden](#)

Spring 2020

[Adam Harvey](#)

[Andreas Buja](#)

[Antony Unwin](#)

[David Robinson](#)

[Jen Christiansen](#)

[Karl Broman](#)

[Kyle McDonald](#)

[Nadieh Bremer](#)

[Regina Nuzzo](#)

[Robert Simmon](#)

[Roger Peng](#)

**But...**

# Bringing Wikipedia into the classroom isn't always fun

- Editors are often brusque and/or rude
- Notability guidelines are both clear-cut and very open to interpretation
- Students do unexpected things
- It can be hard to see something you've worked on get deleted
- The instructor needs to be extremely plugged in to watch and manage pages, even when using the Wiki Education framework

# Wikipedia:Conflict of interest

Wikipedia has guidelines about conflicts of interest. You shouldn't write an article about yourself, your friends, your employer, etc.

I come up with a list of suggested people for my students to write articles about (I don't think this is a conflict of interest?) and often, that is the first time a student has heard the person's name

Still, a common criticism of articles my students write is “self promotion”

“the page is nauseating in terms of its self promotion”

“overtly promotional”

# Wikipedia:Notability (people)

People are presumed **notable** if they have received significant coverage in **multiple published secondary sources** that are **reliable, intellectually independent** of each other, and **independent of the subject**.

- If the depth of coverage in any given source is not substantial, then multiple independent sources may be combined to demonstrate notability; trivial coverage of a subject by secondary sources may not be sufficient to establish notability.
- Primary sources may be used to support content in an article, but they do not contribute toward proving the notability of a subject.

People who meet the basic criteria may be considered notable without meeting the additional criteria below. Articles may still not be created for such people if they fall under exclusionary criteria, such as being notable only for a single event, or such as those listed in [Wikipedia:What Wikipedia is not](#).

# Wikipedia:Notability (academics)

Academics meeting *any* **one** of the following conditions, as substantiated through reliable sources, are notable. Academics meeting none of these conditions *may* still be notable if they meet the conditions of WP:BIO or other notability criteria. The merits of an article on the academic will depend largely on the extent to which it is verifiable.

**Before applying these criteria, see the General notes and Specific criteria notes sections, which follow.**

1. The person's research has had a significant impact in their scholarly discipline, broadly construed, as demonstrated by independent reliable sources.
2. The person has received a highly prestigious academic award or honor at a national or international level.
3. The person has been an elected member of a highly selective and prestigious scholarly society or association (e.g., a National Academy of Sciences or the Royal Society) or a fellow of a major scholarly society which reserves fellow status as a highly selective honor (e.g., Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers).
4. The person's academic work has made a significant impact in the area of higher education, affecting a substantial number of academic institutions.
5. The person has held a named chair appointment or distinguished professor appointment at a major institution of higher education and research, or an equivalent position in countries where named chairs are uncommon.
6. The person has held a highest-level elected or appointed administrative post at a major academic institution or major academic society.
7. The person has had a substantial impact outside academia in their academic capacity.
8. The person has been the head or chief editor of a major, well-established academic journal in their subject area.

# Notability

“He seems to be notable, based on the very highly cited papers shown in Google Scholar. Seeing them, after I had determined that the book was self-published, I was rather skeptical, & checked the contents, because statisticians are frequently joint authors for papers in biomedicine, but contributed to the work as a statistician only, not as the person who conceived the project. In earlier years, the statistician was usually acknowledged at the end of the paper; under current practice, the statistician is a co-authors [sic]. That seems to be the case for some of the papers, but the 4 most highly cited are papers about biostatistics. The most [sic] highly cited is a rather pedagogical review article, & such articles have extremely high & uncharacteristic citation counts. The next three however are research papers, and are highly cited because they are the foundations for very important & widespread biological work.”

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??



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# Jeff Leek

[FOLLOW](#)

Professor of Biostatistics, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health  
Verified email at jhsph.edu - [Homepage](#)

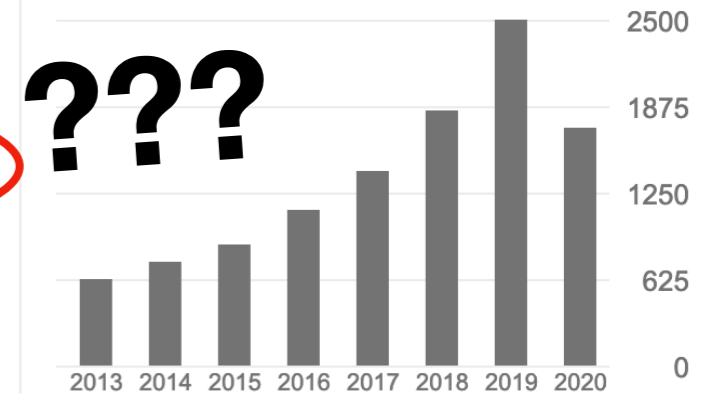
[Statistics](#) [Computing](#) [Genomics](#) [Personalized Medicine](#) [Scientific Communication](#)

Cited by

[VIEW ALL](#)

	All	Since 2015
Citations	12498	9550
h-index	40	37
i10-index	64	63

TITLE	CITED BY	YEAR
<a href="#">The sva package for removing batch effects and other unwanted variation in high-throughput experiments</a> JT Leek, WE Johnson, HS Parker, AE Jaffe, JD Storey Biominformatics 28 (6), 882-883	1568	2012
<a href="#">Capturing heterogeneity in gene expression studies by surrogate variable analysis</a> JT Leek, JD Storey PLoS Genet 3 (9), e161	1348	2007
<a href="#">Tackling the widespread and critical impact of batch effects in high-throughput data</a> JT Leek, RB Scharpf, HC Bravo, D Simcha, B Langmead, WE Johnson, ... Nature Reviews Genetics 11 (10), 733-739	1338	2010
<a href="#">Transcript-level expression analysis of RNA-seq experiments with HISAT, StringTie and Ballgown</a> M Pertea, D Kim, GM Pertea, JT Leek, SL Salzberg Nature protocols 11 (9), 1650	1235	2016
<a href="#">Significance analysis of time course microarray experiments</a> JD Storey, W Xiao, JT Leek, RG Tompkins, RW Davis Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 102 (36), 12837-12842	644	2005
<a href="#">Temporal dynamics and genetic control of transcription in the human prefrontal cortex</a> C Colantuoni, BK Lipska, T Ye, TM Hyde, R Tao, JT Leek, EA Colantuoni, ... Nature 478 (7370), 519-523	591	2011
<a href="#">Bump hunting to identify differentially methylated regions in epigenetic epidemiology studies</a> AE Jaffe, P Murakami, H Lee, JT Leek, MD Fallin, AP Feinberg, RA Irizarry International journal of epidemiology 41 (1), 200-209	439	2012
<a href="#">Cloud-scale RNA-sequencing differential expression analysis with Myrna</a> B Langmead, KD Hansen, JT Leek Genome biology 11 (8), R83	364	2010



# Notability

“He seems to be notable, based on the very highly cited papers shown in Google Scholar. Seeing them, after I had determined that the book was self-published, I was rather skeptical of the contents.”

**In the blog post I wrote about this assignment, I characterized these comments as “charitable” which I think is some indication of the level of vitriol my students were getting on all the other articles...**

...the case for some of the papers, but the 4 most highly cited are papers about biostatistics. The most highly cited is a rather pedagogical review article, & such articles have extremely high & uncharacteristic citation counts. The next three however are research papers, and are highly cited because they are the foundations for very important & widespread biological work.”

# Notability

She played a small role as a student on a widely used statistical package, `sva`, has high Google Scholar citations for that one thing, and won a student award. But she hasn't become an academic, and that's not enough for academic notability by itself, so we need to look for general notability instead for her post-academic career. The only evidence we have of this is this interview, which is in-depth, independent, and reliably published. But it's only one source and we need multiple sources like that.



# Hilary Parker

Ph.D., Department of Biostatistics, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health  
Verified email at jhsph.edu - [Homepage](#)

[Biostatistics](#) [Genomics](#) [Batch Effects](#)

FOLLOW

	All	Since 2015
Citations	1908	1793
h-index	8	7
i10-index	7	7

TITLE	CITED BY	YEAR
-------	----------	------

**The sva package for removing batch effects and other unwanted variation in high-throughput experiments** 1568 2012  
 JT Leek, WE Johnson, HS Parker, AE Jaffe, JD Storey  
 Bioinformatics 28 (6), 882-883

**sva: Surrogate variable analysis** 180 2017  
 JT Leek, WE Johnson, HS Parker, EJ Fertig, AE Jaffe, JD Storey, Y Zhang, ...  
 R package version 3 (0), 882-883

**Removing batch effects for prediction problems with frozen surrogate variable analysis** 39  
 HS Parker, HC Bravo, JT Leek  
 PeerJ 2, e561

**Preserving biological heterogeneity with a permuted surrogate variable analysis for genomics batch correction** 36  
 HS Parker, JT Leek, AV Favorov, M Considine, X Xia, S Chavan, ...  
 Bioinformatics 30 (19), 2757-2763

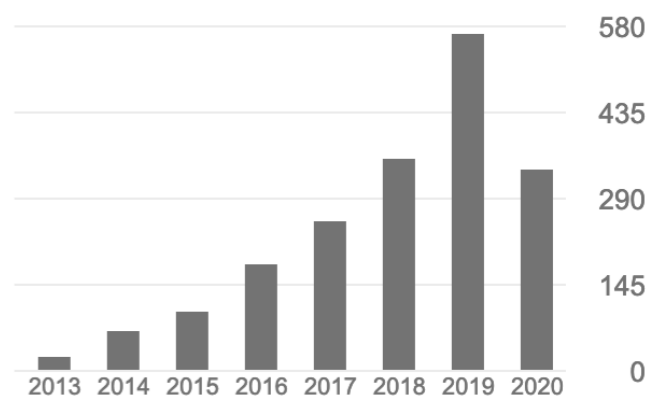
**The practical effect of batch on genomic prediction** 27  
 HS Parker, JT Leek  
 Statistical applications in genetics and molecular biology 11 (3)

**sva: Surrogate Variable Analysis R package version 3.10. 0** 24  
 JT Leek, WE Johnson, HS Parker, AE Jaffe, JD Storey  
 DOI 10, B9

**Sva: surrogate variable analysis. 2015** 15  
 JT Leek, WE Johnson, HS Parker, EJ Fertig, AE Jaffe, JD Storey, Y Zhang, ...  
 R package version 3 (0), 25-27

**Surrogate variable analysis** 8 2007  
 JT Leek

**Opinionated analysis development** 6 2017  
 H Parker  
 PeerJ Preprints 5, e3210v1



# I could go on and on

Many articles required intervention (either by me or others) to make it to the mainspace

## Spring 2018:

Amanda Cox

Jenny Bryan

Kim Rees

Lena Groeger

Lynn Cherny

Meredith Broussard

## Still needs work:

Julia Silge

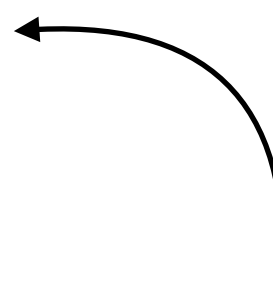
## Spring 2020:

Nadieh Bremer

## Still need work:

Hilary Parker

Irene Ros



*This list is shorter.  
Maybe that's good?*

# Wikipedia:No amount of editing can overcome a lack of notability

When articles are listed for deletion on the grounds of the topic's notability, the creators of such articles often ask how they could write better articles about that topic. But they are, in fact, asking the wrong question. There are many notability guidelines for different types of articles, but when a notability issue is invoked, no matter what the topic is, it always boils down to this question: *should we even have an article about that topic?*

This means that unless information is added to an article to show that its topic meets the relevant notability guideline, or unless the notability issue was invoked in error, there is nothing that can be done to save the article. Not a better writing style. Not a more neutral wording. Not surrendering the redaction to another person to circumvent conflict of interest guidelines. Not the removal of material potentially regarded as promotional. Not a more explicit referencing from primary sources, press releases, or interviews. Not even a promise that, soon, the subject will meet the notability guidelines. Nothing. None of these things address the problem. The problem is not with the article itself: the problem is what the article is about.

Editors who protest against deletion nominations of articles they create are often closely related to the subject. Our conflict of interest guidelines do not prevent anyone from creating or editing articles about themselves, but the very act of creating an article often arises from such a relationship, and the creator often overestimates the notability of the subject. However, people who create articles about themselves or projects they are involved in can do something when their articles are deleted on notability grounds. *But it can only be done off-wiki.* They can get others to notice them or their projects *first*.

# Wikipedia:No amount of editing can overcome a lack of notability



the grounds of the topic's notability, the creators would write better articles about that topic. But they There are many notability guidelines for different issue is invoked, no matter what the topic is, it *could we even have an article about that topic?*

added to an article to show that its topic meets ss the notability issue was invoked in error, there article. Not a better writing style. Not a more edaction to another person to circumvent conflict of material potentially regarded as promotional. primary sources, press releases, or interviews. Not

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# **A short list of things that don't confer notability**

- Giving keynote talks at major conferences
- Having many listeners to your podcast
- Being a journalist who has worked on front-page stories

# **One thing that really does confer notability**

- Being an ASA fellow

# So what?

## If you want to do this assignment

Practice by writing some articles yourself. It's harder than it looks!

Prep by generating a list of ideas of people. It's harder than it looks!

Sign up to be part of the Wiki Education project (deadline has passed for fall semester, but they may accept on a rolling basis)



As higher education plans for a potential virtual term in Fall 2020 in the United States and Canada, Wiki Education is expecting to have an extremely high demand for our Student Program, where we support faculty who assign Wikipedia editing as a class assignment.

While we would love to support everyone who's interested in teaching in our program, the financial realities of being a small, grant-funded nonprofit means we have [limited staff capacity](#) to support classes. Therefore, for the first time ever, we are instituting an **application process for Fall 2020**. If you are interested in teaching with Wikipedia during the Fall 2020 term, you must submit your course page by July 26, 2020.

We anticipate that we will be able to support the vast majority of courses that apply and are instituting these new procedures to ensure that we can provide meaningful support to all of our students and instructors.

### Who does this apply to?

Any instructor who wishes to teach with Wikipedia through Wiki Education's Student Program in fall 2020 must apply to participate. This application process applies to both returning instructors who have taught with our program in the past, and those new to the program.

# So what?

**If you want to increase the representation of stats folks on Wikipedia**

- Nominate people as ASA fellows!
- Work to get journalistic coverage of things your colleagues do
- Watch pages of people, and jump into “Articles for deletion” discussions

**Thank you**