



Swiss National Library creates new digital collection / Cooperation with Wikimedia CH

Wikipedia-articles with Switzerland reference for eternity

Switzerland (17 July 2023) – To ensure that the Wikipedia source of knowledge is securely preserved and accessible for future generations, the Swiss National Library is building a digital collection in which it compiles Wikipedia content related to Switzerland, archives it permanently, and makes it freely available online. The Wikipedia collection is listed in the library catalog Helveticat and can be searched and consulted in e-Helvetica Access, the entry portal to the Swiss National Library digital collections.

Wikimedia CH, the association for the promotion of free knowledge in Switzerland, welcomes and supports this new digital collection. The two organizations are working closely together to realize it.

Difference from live article

The difference between the archived form of the article and the live Wikipedia article is that the archived article is "frozen" and no longer changed in the long-term archive. The live Wikipedia article, on the other hand, can evolve at any time thanks to the collaboration of volunteer contributors. Just because Wikipedia is online does not mean that this online encyclopedia is secured for all eternity. This can only be guaranteed by a memory institution with a corresponding mandate. The Swiss National Library has this mission. It is based on the Swiss National Library law and is to be considered infinite within this framework.

The challenge of Switzerland reference

The National Library collects the articles regularly. In a way, it creates from these articles a sort of snapshot at a given moment. For technical reasons, the display can be slightly different visually, or some features can be disabled. The goal is to represent the live article as well as possible in the archive. The big challenge, however, is to identify the articles with a reference to Switzerland. What is considered to be related to Switzerland and what is not? Where to draw the line?

Per PET-scan into the long-term archive

Technically, the articles with reference to Switzerland are identified with the help of the query tool PET-scan and the categories "Switzerland" including their subcategories. Subsequently, the URLs or the contents are obtained via script, copied, downloaded, fed into the long-term archive system and processed.

Selection by the National Library

The selection of the contents as well as the accumulation of this digital collection is the sole responsibility of the National Library. It takes over the Wikipedia articles directly from Wikipedia, indexes them in its catalog, ensures their permanent archiving and makes them freely available via the Internet. The National Library is also responsible for the maintenance and further development of the collection. No practical involvement of Wikimedia CH or the Wikipedia community is required for this. Content is collected in the four national languages, i.e. from Wikipedia in German, French, Italian and Romansh. The collection of content in other languages is not excluded in the long term. The partners also have internal organizational procedures and measures in place to ensure that reports of potentially infringing content can be processed quickly.

No claim to completeness

The project was initiated at the end of 2020. In 2021 and 2022, the foundations were laid for collecting, archiving and communicating the Wikipedia content. After that, the development of the collection has begun. The representative compilation does not claim to be exhaustive. In addition to the text, the National Library will include all images, graphics, audios, videos contained in the Wikipedia articles, the list of contributors and the applicable license terms, etc., including their metadata. Not collected will be project pages, pages from Wikipedia which are not part of the encyclopedia (e.g. user pages), banners and other messages from Wikimedia (e.g. donation calls), redirects and disambiguation pages (pages with explanations of terms).

Definitions:

[The Swiss National Library \(NL\)](#) is a federal memory institution. It has the legal mandate to collect, index, disseminate and preserve information with a connection to Switzerland (Federal Law on the Swiss National Library/NBibG, Art. 2; SR 432.21). The information collected by the National Library in digital form includes not only books, standards, university publications and journals, but also websites from Switzerland. This also includes Wikipedia articles with a reference to Switzerland.

The term [e-Helvetica](#) designates the digital collections of the National Library. Therefore, the platform on which the digital collections of the National Library are accessible is called e-Helvetica Access. e-Helvetica is also the name of a service of the National Library in which born-digital content is collected, made accessible, preserved and disseminated.

[Wikimedia CH](#) is a non-profit organization that brings people together with the goal of spreading free knowledge for a neutrally informed and open society. The organization enables Wikipedia volunteer authors and contributors to share knowledge and connects them to the Wikimedia universe. Recognized by the Wikimedia Foundation as a Chapter, Wikimedia CH remains a financially and legally independent entity, subject to Swiss regulations and laws.

Further links

- <https://www.nb.admin.ch/snl/en/home/collections/library-collections/wikipedia.html>
- <https://www.e-helvetica.nb.admin.ch/>

Contacts for further questions:

- Swiss National Library: Barbara Signori, Head of the department e-Helvetica, Email: barbara.signori@nb.admin.ch, Tel.: +41 58 464 03 07
- Wikimedia CH: Kerstin Sonnekalb, Outreach & Communication, Email: press@wikimedia.ch, mobile: +41 78 813 13 26

End