

## PRESS RELEASE

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# Wikipedia Starts Offering Books

**The free encyclopedia's newest feature lets users create their custom printed books based on Wikipedia content**

**The world's most popular collection of knowledge has a groundbreaking new feature: Wikipedia offers books. Users can now create their own customized books from over 3 million articles in English alone – with exactly the knowledge they choose and for the price of a paperback. The service provided by PediaPress, a partner of Wikipedia, starts in the US on the 6th of May.**

"The service provided by PediaPress is an extremely important way of making sure that the free educational content of Wikipedia is available to all, everywhere, in areas with connectivity and without. Books made with the PediaPress service are a great asset to further the mission of Wikipedia: allow every single human being to share in the sum of all human knowledge," says Jimmy Wales, Internet entrepreneur and founder of Wikipedia.

Users can create the book without leaving Wikipedia. A "create a book" button was added in the print/export section of Wikipedia's left navigation sidebar that brings them to the book creator. They are browsing the site as usual – by clicking the "Add this page" button and can fill the book as they go. In the end, they can arrange the order of their articles. To add the final touch, the users can choose a cover photo and give the book its title and an editor's name. The price of the unique books depends on the number of pages – it starts at US \$8.90. Payment is via credit card or PayPal. The books are ready for shipment within two working days.

"When I came up with the idea, my colleagues told me my shower was probably too hot. But I was tired of reading on the screen. I believe that in this hectic age people cherish their offline moments more and more. You wish you could access the most extensive and up-to-date knowledge in offline moments – on the train, at the seafront, in your bed. That is now very simple," says Heiko Hees, managing director of PediaPress, Wikipedia's service partner for printing.

A new kind of book for the 21st century? Hees is confident of its success: "Whether you want to learn about climate change or you're seeking information about your new travel destination – reading long texts on paper is not old fashioned, it is more comfortable, plus it's plain smart: people read 10 to 30 percent faster on paper than on screen. And you have no distractions: no chats, no emails. On the web, people are skimming for information. But when reading on paper, they can take their time to tackle a subject in depth."

It is easy to be optimistic, because it already works. The service has started up in 17 languages and books have been delivered to 33 countries. Experts think that wikis in print will play an important new part in the book market of the future.

A big part of the business is books as gifts. If somebody shares with a friend the love for the New York Yankees, Pearl Jam and Gibson Guitars, they now have the opportunity to generate a book with the world's shared knowledge on these topics. Add a picture of Eddie Vedder and the friend's name on the cover and you have a unique present for a special person. The book creator gives the users a good look at what they're about to order: they can preview the first 30 pages. If they like what they see, they can order.

But is the knowledge collected in Wikipedia accurate enough to be put into print? Critics might ask. Wikipedia's 15 million articles in more than 200 languages have been written collaboratively by thousands of volunteers around the world and are edited, used and trusted by academics, journalists and experts in almost any given field. Studies have shown that the accuracy of Wikipedia articles comes close to the level of traditional encyclopedias. The information is far more up-to-date, as users revise articles within seconds of actual events. The wealth of details is unmatched: An encyclopedia with the English Wikipedia articles would encompass more than 5,000 volumes.

Currently, PediaPress offers paperbacks, but plans to add hardcovers with color images soon. Furthermore, it will be possible for users to add own content like a foreword. There seems to be no limit to the possibilities of creating personal books.

"One of our personal projects is to bring affordable quality textbooks to corners of the world, where education is still a luxury for the few," says Heiko Hees. Maybe it is a sign that, though the printing is done in the US, PediaPress is based in Mainz, Germany. Mainz is the small city in which Johannes Gutenberg changed the world forever by inventing modern printing with movable type. 500 years later, the mission is still the same: making knowledge available for all.

### About PediaPress

PediaPress brings wikis to print. The web-to-print service enables users of Wikipedia to create custom books based on their individual content selection from the free encyclopedia. Books can be created on the Wikipedia website with articles in 272 languages and are delivered to customers in more than 100 countries.

The PediaPress web-to-print service works with most of the more than 100.000 wikis worldwide, which are frequently used to collaboratively create and share content on the web and within organizations.

The company established a long term partnership with the Wikimedia Foundation which operates several wiki-projects, including Wikipedia with its more than 350 million unique users per month. PediaPress was founded in 2007 as a subsidiary of brainbot technologies AG and is located in Mainz, Germany.

