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# Alternative Interfaces for Deletion Discussions in Wikipedia: Some Proposals Using Decision Factors

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## **Author Keywords**

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## **ACM Classification Keywords**

H.5.3 [Group and Organization Interfaces]:  
Computer-supported cooperative work.

## **General Terms**

Design; Human Factors

Content deletion is an important mechanism for maintaining quality in online communities. In Wikipedia, deletion is guided by complex procedures<sup>1</sup>. Controversial cases (~12% [4]) are sent to special community discussions called “Articles for Deletion” (AfD)<sup>2</sup>. Deciding the outcome of these deletion debates can be difficult<sup>3</sup>. Further, deletion seems to be a point of friction, which demotivates new editors without sufficiently informing them about Wikipedia’s values and standards.

Even though a complex, multi-tiered architecture of

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<sup>1</sup>Based on Wikipedia policy documentation, we created a detailed workflow diagram of the process, available at [http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Deletion\\_process\\_on\\_English\\_Wikipedia\\_\(flowchart\).jpg](http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Deletion_process_on_English_Wikipedia_(flowchart).jpg).

<sup>2</sup><http://enwp.org/WP:AFD>

<sup>3</sup>[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wikipedia\\_Signpost/2012-03-19/Discussion\\_report](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wikipedia_Signpost/2012-03-19/Discussion_report)

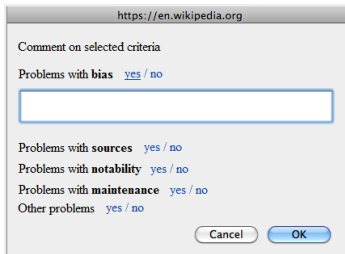
essays, policies, and guidelines [5] expressing these values and standards are commonly cited in discussions [1], significant simplification is possible. In deletion debates, almost all comments (over 90%) focus on just four factors: Notability, Sources, Maintenance, and Bias [6]. 70% of deletion debates can be completely decided based on these four factors [6].

Based on these findings, we are currently experimenting with alternative interfaces for deletion debates. Our goals are threefold. For newcomers, we would like to support and scaffold increased, and informed participation<sup>4</sup>. For debate closers, we would like to provide summaries and overviews, to aid decision-making. For archived debates, so far, only text archives and visualizations of vote sequencing [7] are available; we would like to show the key issues that need to be addressed before the article is recreated.

At WikiSym, we envision showing several static mockups and paper prototypes of interfaces, and are hoping to get reactions from the community about:

- Visceral reactions to the idea of an alternative interface to AfD, and to our interface proposals.
- What is lost by replacing certain features of the familiar interface.
- What is gained with simplification – and other approaches to simplification.
- Whether our interfaces provide more guidance or better affordances regarding what is important in deletion debates.

<sup>4</sup>Previous research has called for increased socialization of newcomers [2, 3].



**Figure 1:** Scaffold commenting, by providing the decision factors.

Our initial mockups, shown here, will be iterated upon. As shown, our ideas include asking editors to indicate which issues are important in the discussion (Figure 1); we could also determine factors discussed in a comment without human effort, for instance based on machine learning trained on our annotated dataset [6]. Discussions could then be summarized by decision factor. An overview could show the topics discussed (discussion summary in Figure 2), and comments could be sorted by decision factor (Figure 3).

The audience would benefit by engaging with concrete examples, and we hope for lively discussion.

## Acknowledgements

This work was supported by Science Foundation Ireland under Grant No. SFI/09/CE/I1380 (Líon2).

## References

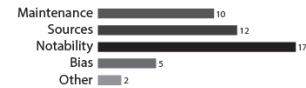
- [1] I. Beschastnikh et al. Wikipedian self-governance in action: Motivating the policy lens. In *ICWSM*, 2008.
- [2] R. S. Geiger and H. Ford. Participation in Wikipedia's article deletion processes. In *Proceedings of the 7th International Symposium on Wikis and Open Collaboration*, WikiSym '11, pages 201–202, 2011.
- [3] S. K. Lam et al. The effects of group composition on decision quality in a social production community. In *Proceedings of the 16th ACM International Conference on Supporting Group Work*, GROUP '10, pages 55–64, 2010.
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## Wikipedia:Articles for deletion/St. Andrew's Episcopal School (Amarillo, Texas)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia  
< Wikipedia:Articles for deletion

### Discussion Summary

Each bar represents a number of comments referring to the corresponding criteria



The following discussion is an archived debate of the proposed deletion of the article below. **Please do not modify it.** Subsequent comments should be made on the appropriate discussion page (such as the article's talk page or in a deletion review). No further edits should be made to this page.

The result was **no consensus**. There is liberty to redirect or merge to a school district if desired; such a proposal can be discussed on the talk page. [Stifle](#) (talk) 10:48, 8 February 2011 (UTC)

#### St. Andrew's Episcopal School (Amarillo, Texas)

[\[edit\]](#)

[St. Andrew's Episcopal School \(Amarillo, Texas\)](#) (edit | talk | history | links | watch | logs) – (View log)

(Find sources: "St. Andrew's Episcopal School (Amarillo, Texas)" – news · books · scholar · JSTOR · free images)

This primary school fails the [WP:GNG](#), and, as it is not a high school, is not inherently notable. Contested PROD. Prod removed without comment/reason. [Ravendrop](#) (talk) 14:09, 29 January 2011 (UTC)

- **Note** - This debate has been included in the list of Texas-related deletion discussions. -- [Gene93k](#) (talk) 14:42, 29 January 2011 (UTC)
- **Note** - This debate has been included in the list of Schools-related deletion discussions. -- [Gene93k](#) (talk) 14:43, 29 January 2011 (UTC)
- **Keep** - Although this is not a primary school (which usually ends at grade 2 or 3), it's not a high school. However, the school's performance in the national middle school science bowl is a distinctive that would make this school notable. I'd like to see some third-party reliable sources (and less promotional language in the article), though, to establish *general notability*. --[Orlady](#) (talk) 15:32, 29 January 2011 (UTC) I see that the Middle School Science Bowl information was added to the article after this AfD was started. --[Orlady](#) (talk) 15:42, 29 January 2011 (UTC) PS - Since the above comment was posted, I and others have added several third-party reliable sources to the article. [I'm no longer concerned about the absence of sources. --[Orlady](#) (talk) 05:40, 31 January 2011 (UTC)]
- **Delete** Not notable. If sufficient third party sources are found to establish notability, then the article can be reinstated. Until then, it's of little encyclopedic value. Disagree that the "school's performance in the national middle school science bowl" is reason enough to make it notable. [Dominus Vobisdu](#) (talk) 15:38, 29 January 2011 (UTC)

**Figure 2:** Summarize the decision factors.

- International Conference on Supporting Group Work*, GROUP '10, pages 165–168, 2010.
- [6] J. Schneider et al. Deletion discussions in Wikipedia: Decision factors and outcomes. In *Proceedings of the 8th International Symposium on Wikis and Open Collaboration*, WikiSym '12, 2012.

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[St. Andrew's Episcopal School \(Amarillo, Texas\)](#) (edit | talk | history | links | watch | logs) – (View log)  
(Find sources: "St. Andrew's Episcopal School (Amarillo, Texas)" – news · books · scholar · JSTOR · free images)

[edit]

#### Standard Group by criteria

#### Notability (17 comments)

This primary school fails the [WP:GNG](#), and, as it is not a high school, is not inherently notable. Contested PROD. Prod removed without comment/reason. [Ravendrop \(talk\)](#) 14:09, 29 January 2011 (UTC)

- **Keep** - Although this is not a primary school (which usually ends at grade 2 or 3), it's not a high school. However, the school's performance in the national middle school science bowl is a distinctive that would make this school notable. I'd like to see some third-party reliable sources (and less promotional language in the article), though, to establish [general notability](#). --[Orlady \(talk\)](#) 15:32, 29 January 2011 (UTC) I see that the Middle School Science Bowl information was added to the article after this AfD was started. --[Orlady \(talk\)](#) 15:42, 29 January 2011 (UTC) PS - Since the above comment was posted, I and others have added several third-party reliable sources to the article. I'm no longer concerned about the absence of sources. --[Orlady \(talk\)](#) 05:40, 31 January 2011 (UTC)
- **Delete** Not notable. If sufficient third party sources are found to establish notability, then the article can be reinstated. Until then, it's of little encyclopedic value. Disagree that the "school's performance in the national middle school science bowl" is reason enough to make it notable. [Dominus Vobisdu \(talk\)](#) 15:38, 29 January 2011 (UTC)
- The article now cites several third-party sources that tell about the school's participation and success in the [National Middle School Science Bowl](#). Although there has never been agreement on notability guidelines for schools, past outcomes at AfD and the various failed proposals listed at [Wikipedia:Schools](#) all indicate a presumption of notability for pre-secondary schools that have received various awards deemed to be significant, such as the [Blue Ribbon School](#) designation. Since it is more common to be a Blue Ribbon School than it is to consistently placing near the top in a national competition (because there are many more Blue Ribbon Schools each year than there are finalists in these competitions), it seems to me that this achievement is an indication of notability. --[Orlady \(talk\)](#) 20:42, 29 January 2011 (UTC)
- It may be notable enough for your local newspaper, but not for WP, in my opinion. Sorry, you haven't convinced me, and I stand by my vote for "Delete". [Dominus Vobisdu \(talk\)](#) 20:51, 29 January 2011 (UTC)

[see more](#)

#### Sources (12 comments)

- **Keep** - Although this is not a primary school (which usually ends at grade 2 or 3), it's not a high school. However, the school's performance in the national middle school science bowl is a distinctive that would make this school notable. I'd like to see some third-party reliable sources (and less promotional language in the article), though, to establish [general notability](#). --[Orlady \(talk\)](#) 15:32, 29 January 2011 (UTC) I see that the Middle School Science Bowl information was added to the article after this AfD was started. --[Orlady \(talk\)](#) 15:42, 29 January 2011 (UTC) PS - Since the above comment was posted, I and others have added several third-party reliable sources to the article. I'm no longer concerned about the absence of sources. --[Orlady \(talk\)](#) 05:40, 31 January 2011 (UTC)
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- It's not in my local newspaper, since I don't live anywhere near Amarillo. Regardless -- in addition to coverage in Amarillo, the school's success is documented on US Department of Energy websites about the science bowl. --[Orlady \(talk\)](#) 20:58, 29 January 2011 (UTC)

Don't you think this addition was a teensy bit over the top. "in 2008 a team from the school placed third overall", sourced to the... St. Andrew's Episcopal School website? [Dominus Vobisdu \(talk\)](#) 21:44, 29 January 2011 (UTC)

[see more](#)

Figure 3: Organize comments by decision factor.

Wikipedians' comments from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St.\\_Andrew%27s\\_Episcopal\\_School\\_\(Amarillo,\\_Texas\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Andrew%27s_Episcopal_School_(Amarillo,_Texas)) are used.