ArchivesAt:
Using Wikidata to Enhance Access to Archives

Elizabeth Bassett & Heather Dean

May 29, 2023

Workshop hosted by the International Council on Archives Section on Archives of Literature and Art
Supported by the ICA Programme Commission
Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose territory we live and work, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.
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Today’s plan

- Introduction to linked open data, Wikidata, and the archival community’s use of Wikidata
- How to edit Wikidata
  - Signing up for a Wikidata account / signing in to your Wikidata account
  - Demonstration of how to edit Wikidata pages by adding “archives at” statements
- Time for editing!
- Wrap-up
Learning objectives

By the end of today’s session you will be able to:

● Define linked open data and its application in the archives sector

● Understand how archivists can use Wikidata to describe archival repositories, creators, and archival materials

● Edit in Wikidata manually
Introduction
Introduction: What is linked open data?

- **Linked open data (LOD)** is data that is **linked** with other data, and structured in a machine-readable way
  - With large webs of linked data, computers can query information much faster than humans can

- LOD is data that is **also open**; linked open data can be freely used and republished by anyone
Introduction: What is Wikidata?

- Wikidata is hosted by Wikimedia
- Wikidata is a “free and open knowledge base that can be read and edited by both humans and machines” (Wikidata, 2019)
- Data in Wikidata is open
- Data in Wikidata is structured in such a way that it is linked together, making it possible to run queries on large amounts of information
- Wikidata’s databank is constantly growing
Introduction: What is Wikidata?

- Wikidata has a built-in query service

- Wikidata Query Service allows you to query the database using SPARQL query language
Instance of Human
Occupation of Poet

WHERE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>WriterLabel</th>
<th>BirthplaceLabel</th>
<th>Birthdate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meister Altwert</td>
<td>Alsace</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 January 1350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johann Jacob Dusch</td>
<td>Celle</td>
<td></td>
<td>12 February 1725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilhelm Hey</td>
<td>Leinatal</td>
<td></td>
<td>26 March 1789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thassilo von Scheffer</td>
<td>Starogard Gdańsk</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 July 1873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John W. Grinnberg</td>
<td>Blyth Kamin</td>
<td></td>
<td>22 September 1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Hammill</td>
<td>Ealing</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 November 1948</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Showing 601 to 800 of 113881 rows  | 200 rows per page | (1 2 3 4 5 ... 570)
Introduction: How Wikidata works

- The number and accuracy of results for Wikidata queries depends on amount of data entered into database
- Wikidata editors are constantly adding data
- By the end of this workshop, we will all be signed up and contributing as Wikidata editors
Example item page:
Example statement:

Wikidata statements are made up of semantic triples: a subject (the item), the predicate (the property), and the object (the value).
employer (P108)

Person or organization for which the subject works or worked

Employed by | works at | working for | worked for | works for | worked at | working place | working at | organization | organisation

In more languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>employer</td>
<td>Person or organization for which the subject works or worked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American English</td>
<td>No label defined</td>
<td>No description defined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>employ(e) par</td>
<td>Personne ou organisation pour laquelle le sujet travaille ou a travaillé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Travaille pour travaillle à travaille chez lieu de travail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Value of statement is usually another item, with its own item page
Introduction: *How Wikidata works*

As Wikidata editors, we add to this web of data mostly in two ways:

- By creating new items
- By adding statements to existing items

The creation of new Wikidata properties involves a proposal process, and approval of Wikidata administrators.
Introduction: What to add to Wikidata

- Create new items for:
  - Archival repositories
  - Archival collections/fonds
  - Creators (individuals & corporate bodies)
Introduction: *What to add to Wikidata*

- If these are already in Wikidata...then you can enhance the items with additional information (statements):
  - Archival repositories
    - You could add the location/coordinates of the repository
  - Archival collections
    - You could add the size of collection
  - Creators (individuals & corporate bodies)
    - You could add what repositories hold the creator's archives (*Archives At (P485)*)
Introduction: *Wikidata & the archival community*

- WikiProject Archival Description
- WikiProject Archives Linked Data Interest Group
- LD4 Wikidata Affinity Group
Introduction: *Case Studies*

- **Creating new items for archival collections/fonds**
  - National Archives of Brazil
  - McGill University Library

- **Editing existing items by adding Archives At (P485):**
  - Single Institution
  - Across Institutions
    - Canadian archive of Women in STEM (University of Ottawa)
    - Municipal archives in France
    - World-Wide Directory of Repositories holding Artistic and Literary Archives (Section on Archives of Literature and Art, ICA)
Introduction: Case Study: World-Wide Directory of Repositories holding Archives of Literature & Art

World-Wide Directory of Repositories holding Archives of Literature & Art

Accessing information about archives of literature and art

You have several options for navigating our directory of repositories of archives of literature and art. The first is to search by geographic location using the map below. The second approach is click on one of the links beneath the map which will take you to lists of repositories by country, which include full street addresses and phone numbers for each institution. The last method, is to search or sort the list in the table at the very bottom of the page.

If there is a repository that you think should be added, or which contains incomplete or inaccurate information that should be amended, you can now submit this information directly via two online forms.
### Introduction: Archives At (P485)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Also known as</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>archives at</td>
<td>the institution holding the subject's archives</td>
<td>papers at, correspondence at, archive location, akvukwo na, akvukwo ozi na, ebe nchelwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>archivi par</td>
<td>institution qui collecte les archives concernant le sujet</td>
<td>localisation des archives archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>存檔於</td>
<td>擁有該主題檔案的機構</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>No label defined</td>
<td>No description defined</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction: Pros and cons of Wikidata

Wikidata can be used to create anti-oppressive, reparative, decolonized, inclusive archival descriptions and discovery. It can counter bias, misinformation, or error by providing supplemental metadata created by anyone.

Introduction: Questions
Editing in Wikidata
Editing in Wikidata

Manual edits

Batch edits
(such as Quick Statements & OpenRefine)

Cradles (forms)
Today’s task: Learn how to manually add *Archives At (P485)* statements for writers who have existing Wikidata item pages.

We’ll work together to add *Archives At (P485)* statements for writers included in the [Diasporic Literary Archives](https://research.reading.ac.uk/diasporicarchives/collections/) project.
Editing in Wikidata: *Signing up*

- We will take a five minute pause here for everyone to sign-up or sign-in to Wikidata.
  - Have you had a chance to sign up for a Wikidata account?
    - If not, no worries! We will send a link to the instructions in the chat.
  - If you have had a chance to sign up, please sign into your account now.

- Do you have any questions for us before we get started?
Editing in Wikidata: Archives At (P485) statements

- Before we begin editing – please sign up for one Archives At (P485) statement
  - See the spreadsheet link(s) in the Zoom chat
Demo: How to add an Archives At (P485) statement on Wikidata
Editing time:

Add more **Archives At (P485)** statements
Wrap-up
Thank you for joining us today!