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New Google service to rival Wikipedia

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17th December, 2007

THE ARTICLE

Google has unveiled a new service that is set to rival Wikipedia, the Internet's most visited encyclopedia. Google's new product, called Knol, aims to knock Wikipedia off of its perch as the web's largest reference source. A Google spokesperson said the new project will get authors, experts and ordinary people "who know a particular subject to write an authoritative article about it". The added bonus for contributors is that Knol's writers will be able to put adverts on their work and take a share of the profits. This is a departure from Wikipedia, which relies on voluntary contributions. Knol is currently in a test phase but sources say it should be fully operational within months. It seems to be another step towards Google's mission "to organize the world's information and make it universally useful and accessible".

The name 'Knol' comes from the word 'knowledge,' and a 'knol' represents one written article. A spokesperson said: "A 'knol' is meant to be the first thing someone who searches for this topic for the first time will want to read...The goal is for 'knols' to cover all topics, from scientific concepts to entertainment." The main difference between Google's new service and Wikipedia is the lack of collaboration between authors. Knol hopes to encourage an element of rivalry among contributors. Authors will know there is a link between the quality of their writing and how much revenue their work might generate. Another difference is that on Knol, people will not be able to edit each other's work. Wikipedia's founder Jimmy Wales doubted whether Knol would be able to generate enough "quality content" and suggested that Knol articles would lack balance.

WARM-UPS

1. KNOWLEDGE: Walk around the class and talk to other students about knowledge. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you found out.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

rivals / encyclopedias / Google / Wikipedia / experts / profits / information / written articles / topics / entertainment / collaboration / editing / balance

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. EXPERTISE: You are now an expert on these topics. You have to give a short presentation on several/all of them. With your partner(s), decide on what you need to say in your presentation(s).

- Google
- Wikipedia
- Facebook or MySpace
- iTunes
- your country
- the English language
- bananas
- global warming

4. ONLINE ENCYCLOPEDIA: With your partner(s), rank the following features of an online encyclopedia. 10 = "It absolutely must have this," 1 = "I have zero need for this". Change partners and share your rankings.

- ___ a video clip that goes with every article
- ___ links to a bilingual dictionary for every difficult word
- ___ pictures
- ___ links to other sites that give information on your search
- ___ links to the pronunciation of words in the article
- ___ a discussion board to talk about the article/topic online
- ___ the e-mail address of the person who wrote the article
- ___ adverts related to the article

5. KNOWLEDGE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'knowledge'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. QUICK ROLE PLAY: Student A **strongly** believes that Google's new service Knol will be better than Wikipedia; Student B believes Wikipedia will always be better than Google's Knol. Change partners often. Change partners again and talk about your roles and conversations.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Google will soon launch its own online encyclopedia. | T / F |
| b. Google wants experts and ordinary people to submit articles. | T / F |
| c. Contributors will still earn more money by writing for Wikipedia. | T / F |
| d. Google's new service will be fully operational within months. | T / F |
| e. Knol is an ancient English alphabet used 3000 years ago. | T / F |
| f. Google's new product will cover everything except entertainment. | T / F |
| g. People will not be able to edit articles submitted on Knol. | T / F |
| h. Wikipedia's founder said Knol will be a top quality reference source. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. unveiled | a. working together |
| 2. authoritative | b. shift |
| 3. departure | c. widely |
| 4. operational | d. equals |
| 5. universally | e. ideas |
| 6. represents | f. factual |
| 7. concepts | g. competition |
| 8. collaboration | h. revealed |
| 9. rivalry | i. questioned |
| 10. doubted | j. usable |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. a new service that is set | a. article |
| 2. Knol aims to knock Wikipedia | b. among contributors |
| 3. write an authoritative | c. each other's work |
| 4. take a share | d. off of its perch |
| 5. organize the world's information and | e. balance |
| 6. The name 'Knol' comes from the | f. make it universally useful |
| 7. the lack of collaboration between | g. of the profits |
| 8. encourage an element of rivalry | h. authors |
| 9. people will not be able to edit | i. to rival Wikipedia |
| 10. Knol articles would lack | j. word 'knowledge' |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Google has _____ a new service that is set to rival Wikipedia, the Internet's most visited encyclopedia. Google's new product, called Knol, aims to _____ Wikipedia off of its perch as the web's largest reference source. A Google spokesperson said the new project will get authors, _____ and ordinary people "who know a particular subject to write an authoritative article about it". The added _____ for contributors is that Knol's writers will be able to put adverts on their work and take a _____ of the profits. This is a departure from Wikipedia, which relies on voluntary contributions. Knol is currently in a _____ phase but sources say it should be fully operational _____ months. It seems to be another step towards Google's mission "to organize the world's information and make it universally useful and _____".

share
knock
accessible
bonus
unveiled
test
within
experts

The name 'Knol' _____ from the word 'knowledge,' and a 'knol' represents one written article. A spokesperson said: "A 'knol' is _____ to be the first thing someone who searches for this topic for the first time will want to read...The goal is for 'knols' to _____ all topics, from scientific concepts to entertainment." The main difference between Google's new service and Wikipedia is the _____ of collaboration between authors. Knol hopes to encourage an element of _____ among contributors. Authors will know there is a link between the quality of their writing and how much revenue their work might _____. Another difference is that on Knol, people will not be able to edit each other's work. Wikipedia's founder Jimmy Wales _____ whether Knol would be able to generate enough "quality content" and suggested that Knol articles would lack _____.

cover
rivalry
balance
meant
doubted
lack
comes
generate

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

Google has _____ that is set to rival Wikipedia, the Internet's most visited encyclopedia. Google's new product, called Knol, aims to knock Wikipedia _____ the web's largest reference source. A Google spokesperson said the new project will get authors, experts and ordinary people "_____ to write an authoritative article about it". The added bonus for contributors is that Knol's writers will be able to put adverts on their work and _____ profits. This is a departure from Wikipedia, which relies on voluntary contributions. Knol is currently _____ say it should be fully operational within months. It seems to be another step towards Google's mission "to organize the world's information and make it _____".

The name 'Knol' _____ 'knowledge,' and a 'knol' represents one written article. A spokesperson said: "A 'knol' is meant to be the first thing someone who searches for this topic _____ to read...The goal is for 'knols' to _____, from scientific concepts to entertainment." The main difference between Google's new service and Wikipedia is the _____ between authors. Knol hopes to encourage an element of rivalry among contributors. Authors will know there is a link between the quality of their writing and how much _____ might generate. Another difference is that on Knol, people will not be able to edit each other's work. Wikipedia's founder Jimmy Wales doubted whether Knol would be able to generate enough "quality content" and suggested that Knol articles _____.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**ordinary**' and '**people**'.

ordinary	people
-----------------	---------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set • knock • particular • added • within • organize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • represents • goal • element • link • edit • balance
---	--

STUDENT KNOWLEDGE SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about knowledge in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
 - b) Are you a big fan or user of Google and Wikipedia?
 - c) What do you think of the new Google service?
 - d) Do you think 'Knol' is a good name for the new product?
 - e) Do you think Knol will overtake Wikipedia as the world's largest source of reference material?
 - f) Why do you think Wikipedia doesn't offer any financial reward to people who put articles online?
 - g) Do you use and like any of Google's other services?
 - h) What do you think of Google's message?
 - i) How do you think Wikipedia and Knol will help people in the future?
-

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you prefer paper encyclopedias or online ones?
- c) What was the last thing you looked up or searched for in an encyclopedia (offline or online)?
- d) Do you think Google's idea for authors to be in competition with each other is a good one?
- e) What do you think of the idea of being able to edit an online encyclopedia to correct things that are wrong or out of date?
- f) Do you agree with Wikipedia's founder that Knol articles would lack balance?
- g) Would you ever consider writing an article for Wikipedia or Knol?
- h) What questions would you like to ask Jimmy Wales?
- i) Did you like this discussion?

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

Google has unveiled a new service that is set to (1) _____ Wikipedia, the Internet's most visited encyclopedia. Google's new product, called Knol, aims to knock Wikipedia off of its (2) _____ as the web's largest reference source. A Google spokesperson said the new project will get authors, experts and ordinary people "who know a (3) _____ subject to write an authoritative article about it". The added (4) _____ for contributors is that Knol's writers will be able to put adverts on their work and take a share of the profits. This is a (5) _____ from Wikipedia, which relies on voluntary contributions. Knol is currently in a test phase but sources say it should be fully (6) _____ within months. It seems to be another step towards Google's mission "to organize the world's information and make it universally useful and accessible".

The name 'Knol' comes (7) _____ the word 'knowledge,' and a 'knol' represents one written article. A spokesperson said: "A 'knol' is (8) _____ to be the first thing someone who searches for this topic for the first time will want to read...The goal is for 'knols' to (9) _____ all topics, from scientific concepts to entertainment." The main difference between Google's new service and Wikipedia is the lack of collaboration between authors. Knol hopes to encourage an element (10) _____ rivalry among contributors. Authors will know there is a link between the quality of their writing and how much revenue their work might generate. Another difference is that on Knol, people will not be able to edit each (11) _____ work. Wikipedia's founder Jimmy Wales doubted whether Knol would be able to generate enough "quality content" and suggested that Knol articles would lack (12) _____.

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1. | (a) rivalry | (b) rival | (c) rivals | (d) rivaled |
| 2. | (a) patch | (b) peach | (c) perch | (d) parch |
| 3. | (a) particular | (b) particulars | (c) particularly | (d) particle |
| 4. | (a) addition | (b) add | (c) plus | (d) bonus |
| 5. | (a) exit | (b) flight | (c) departure | (d) flee |
| 6. | (a) operator | (b) operational | (c) operation | (d) operations |
| 7. | (a) from | (b) to | (c) via | (d) around |
| 8. | (a) meaning | (b) mean | (c) meant | (d) means |
| 9. | (a) recover | (b) uncover | (c) discover | (d) cover |
| 10. | (a) of | (b) with | (c) for | (d) by |
| 11. | (a) others | (b) other's | (c) others' | (d) other |
| 12. | (a) balancing | (b) balanced | (c) balance | (d) balances |

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information about Knol. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. KNOWLEDGE: Make a poster about the history of how and what people used to increase their knowledge. Show your poster to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all include similar things?

4. RIVALRY: Write a magazine article about the new rivalry between Wikipedia and Google's new service Knol. Include imaginary interviews with the CEOs of both companies.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down new words and expressions.

5. LETTER: Write a letter to the bosses of Google. Give them three suggestions on what they should do to create a better online encyclopedia. Give them three reasons why they should take your advice. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. T c. F d. T e. F f. F g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. unveiled | a. revealed |
| 2. authoritative | b. factual |
| 3. departure | c. shift |
| 4. operational | d. usable |
| 5. universally | e. widely |
| 6. represents | f. equals |
| 7. concepts | g. ideas |
| 8. collaboration | h. working together |
| 9. rivalry | i. competition |
| 10. doubted | j. questioned |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. a new service that is set | a. to rival Wikipedia |
| 2. Knol aims to knock Wikipedia | b. off of its perch |
| 3. write an authoritative | c. article |
| 4. take a share | d. of the profits |
| 5. organize the world's information and | e. make it universally useful |
| 6. The name 'Knol' comes from the | f. word 'knowledge' |
| 7. the lack of collaboration between | g. authors |
| 8. encourage an element of rivalry | h. among contributors |
| 9. people will not be able to edit | i. each other's work |
| 10. Knol articles would lack | j. balance |

GAP FILL:

New Google service to rival Wikipedia

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The name 'Knol' **comes** from the word 'knowledge,' and a 'knol' represents one written article. A spokesperson said: "A 'knol' is **meant** to be the first thing someone who searches for this topic for the first time will want to read...The goal is for 'knols' to **cover** all topics, from scientific concepts to entertainment." The main difference between Google's new service and Wikipedia is the **lack** of collaboration between authors. Knol hopes to encourage an element of **rivalry** among contributors. Authors will know there is a link between the quality of their writing and how much revenue their work might **generate**. Another difference is that on Knol, people will not be able to edit each other's work. Wikipedia's founder Jimmy Wales **doubted** whether Knol would be able to generate enough "quality content" and suggested that Knol articles would lack **balance**.

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - b 2 - c 3 - a 4 - d 5 - c 6 - b 7 - a 8 - c 9 - d 10 - a 11 - b 12 - c