

Jimmy Wales

- Founder, Wikipedia
- U.S. Internet Entrepreneur and Wiki Pioneer
- One of *TIME* Magazine's "100 Most Influential People"
- Wikipedia: The 5th Most Visited Web Site Worldwide

Ranked by *Forbes* Magazine as a "Web Celeb", Jimmy Donal Wales is a U.S. Internet entrepreneur, wiki pioneer, and technology visionary, who is best known as the Founder of Wikipedia, an international collaborative free content encyclopedia on the Internet, and the Wikimedia Foundation. He is co-founder of Wikia, a privately owned free web hosting service he set up in 2004.



The origins of Wikipedia began in March 2000, when Mr. Wales started Nupedia ("the free encyclopedia"), which was characterized by an extensive peer-review process designed to make its articles of a quality comparable to that of professional encyclopedias. With the addition of wikis (a collection of web pages designed to enable anyone who accesses it to contribute or modify content), the project was dubbed "Wikipedia." Mr. Wales laid down the founding principles and content, establishing an Internet-based community of contributors during that year. Wikipedia was initially intended to be a wiki-based site for collaboration on early encyclopedic content for submission to Nupedia, but Wikipedia's rapid growth quickly overshadowed Nupedia's development.

In a 2004 interview with *Slashdot*, Mr. Wales explained his motivations about Wikipedia, "Imagine a world in which every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge. That's what we're doing."

The success of the project has helped popularize a trend in web development (called Web 2.0) that aims to facilitate creativity, collaboration, and sharing among users. As Wikipedia expanded and its public profile grew, Mr. Wales took on the role of the project's spokesperson and promoter through speaking engagements and media appearances. His work with Wikipedia, which has become the world's largest encyclopedia, prompted *TIME Magazine* to name him one of its "100 Most Influential People," in 2006 in the "Scientists & Thinkers" category.

In 2003, Mr. Wales founded the Wikimedia Foundation, a nonprofit charitable organization dedicated to encouraging the growth, development and distribution of free, multilingual content, and to providing the full content of these wiki-based projects to the public free of charge. The Wikimedia Foundation operates some of the largest collaboratively edited reference projects in the world, including Wikipedia, the 5th most popular website in the world.

In 2004, Wales co-founded, with Angela Beesley, the for-profit company Wikia, Inc. Wikia is a wiki farm – a collection of individual wikis on different subjects, all hosted on the same website. As part of his work at Wikia, Inc., Mr. Wales is developing a human-powered search engine, Search Wikia, which will be based on the same open, transparent, community-driven principles of Wikia and Wikipedia.

The World Economic Forum recognized Wales as one of the “Young Global Leaders” of 2007. This prestigious award acknowledges the top 250 young leaders across the world for their professional accomplishments, their commitment to society, and their potential to contribute to shaping the future of the world.

Mr. Wales is a Fellow of the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard Law School. He serves on the Board of Directors of Socialtext, a provider of wiki technology to businesses and the non-profit organization Creative Commons. Mr. Wales has received an honorary doctorate from Knox College of Illinois and was presented with a Pioneer Award from the Electronic Frontier Foundation in 2006.

Mr. Wales received his bachelor's degree in finance from Auburn University and started with the Ph.D. finance program at the University of Alabama, where he left with a Master's. After that, he took courses offered in the Ph.D. finance program at Indiana University. He taught at both universities during his postgraduate studies, but did not write the doctoral dissertation required to earn a Ph.D.

From 1994 to 2000, Wales was the research director at Chicago Options Associates, a futures and options trading firm in Chicago.