AcaWiki Seeks Summaries of Top 100 Academic Papers

Cambridge, MA — Thursday, 16 June 2011 - The AcaWiki project has announced their summer drive to gather summaries for the top 100 academic papers around the world. The AcaWiki website (http://acawiki.org) features an updated logo and theme that brings it into alignment with Wikipedia and other popular Wikis. AcaWiki continues to make strides in improving global access and exposure to academic research and scientific findings. When completed this new list of top papers, along with the over 500 summaries already available, will provide a solid base to fill the needs of many students and academics doing research.

"Our goal for this summer is to collect a clear set of summaries of the top papers from every field," explained AcaWiki's founder, Neeru Paharia. "This is a huge task, and one that we will not be able to achieve without the active participation of students and academics from every discipline. While AcaWiki has a growing collection with well over 500 Creative Commons licensed summaries of academic papers, we want more coverage in fields such as economics, psychology, sociology, business, and computer science. In order to do this, we need leaders, and readers, in all major fields of research to join us."

The AcaWiki project addresses two key problems in the public access and understanding of modern academic research. While the overall volume of significant, cutting-edge research is growing apace, the dissemination of important findings and results is mostly limited to traditional, subscription-based publishing outlets and peer-reviewed journals. Even research that is publicly funded is often not made readily available to the general public, while universities in developing countries are often cut off from access to knowledge by exorbitant subscription fees for standard journals. Since a lot of academic research is couched in jargon that can only be understood by experts, the problem of limited access to knowledge is compounded by a very real deficit in communication between academia and the general public, as well as between academic disciplines themselves.

AcaWiki offers a workable solution to both of these problems by making use of social software and leveraging a community of graduate students, academics, and citizens, to write summaries and long abstracts of academic papers. Contributors are encouraged to write two-to-three paragraph summaries of academic papers and contribute them to the AcaWiki pool. Unlike the original articles themselves, the copyright for these summaries belongs to the contributor. AcaWiki stipulates that all entries on the site be licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution license, so they are free for international distribution via the Internet or in hard copy. Other contributors can annotate, comment, or append information to the original entry, adding greater nuance or clarity.

Along with community leaders Mike Linksvayer, Jodi Schneider, Reid Priedhorsky and others, the open production company, Fabricatorz is improving AcaWiki and growing the project. "By updating the AcaWiki logo with the great design by Aleksander Stachurka, we hope to crystallize the reality of the project," said Jon Phillips, Fabricatorz Founder. "And, by switching to the default MediaWiki theme, as seen on all Wikimedia Foundation Wikis, we are making it easier to be compatible with the majority of real Wiki communities and developers. We want to collect more high quality academic summaries and to encourage more students and researchers to use the site and help us achieve our goal."

The project has released a public roadmap for the next three to six months on its website at: http://acawiki.org/Roadmap Beyond summarizing academic papers, the Roadmap is an open plan for others to help by filing bugs and developing plans for making AcaWiki a better resource and community.

Targeted List of Disciplines

- Anthropology
- Arts and Literarure
- Astronomy
- Biology
- Business
- Chemistry
- Clinical Research
- Computer Science
- Economics
- Education
- Engineering
- Geosciences
- Health
- Mathematics
- Medicine
- Neuroscience
- Philosophy
- Physics
- Psychology
- Sociology

For More Information

- http://acawiki.org
- http://acawiki.org/Top_100_Papers

About AcaWiki

AcaWiki is like "Wikipedia for academic research" designed to collect summaries and literature reviews of peer-reviewed academic research, and make them available to the general public. AcaWiki is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with seed funding from the Hewlett Foundation. We've just launched, and there are lots of ways to communicate about the site.

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Press Kit

- http://acawiki.org/about