



WIKI PORTRAITS

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WikiPortraits Launches Initiative to Enrich Wikipedia with Freely-Licensed Photos of Notable Figures

(July 28, 2025) - WikiPortraits, a pioneering initiative dedicated to addressing the critical shortage of high-quality, freely-licensed images of notable figures on Wikipedia, announces its continued efforts to capture and provide high-quality, copyright-free photos for the world's largest online encyclopedia and its sister projects, all thanks to the growing group of volunteer photographers.

The Challenge

Wikipedia and other Wikimedia projects require images to be freely licensed for use. However, the vast majority of published photos of notable individuals are press images protected by full copyright and restrictive licenses. This results in countless biographies on Wikipedia lacking images or featuring poor-quality visuals—a problem widely recognized and previously highlighted by the New York Times in its 2009 article, "[Wikipedia May Be a Font of Facts, but It's a Desert for Photos](#)." Over a decade later, the issue persists.

The Solution

WikiPortraits tackles this challenge by sending credentialed photographers to major festivals, conferences, and events, where notable individuals are most accessible. The team also sets up photo booths at select events, inviting anyone with a Wikipedia page—whether they are speakers or attendees—to have their portrait taken. This innovative approach ensures that Wikipedia's coverage of notable figures is both visually rich and legally compliant.

Highlights

WikiPortraits photographers attend major festivals, conferences, and award ceremonies—such as Sundance, SXSW, Cannes, Eurovision, Jaipur Literature Festival,

and the Nobel Prizes—offering attendees the opportunity to have their portrait taken for use on Wikipedia and Wikimedia Commons. All images are released under free licenses, making them accessible for use across the Wikimedia ecosystem.

Media Recognition Across Languages

WikiPortraits' efforts have been highlighted in leading international publications, underscoring the initiative's global impact:

- English:
 - BBC: "[WikiPortraits: The photographers fixing Wikipedia's worst celebrity photos](#)"
 - 404 Media: "[Photographers are on a mission to fix Wikipedia's famously bad celebrity portraits](#)"
 - Fast Company: "[This volunteer crew is on a mission to fix Wikipedia's worst celebrity photos](#)"
 - Engadget: "[Volunteer photographers are fixing Wikipedia's terrible celebrity headshots](#)"
 - PetaPixel: "[WikiPortraits is on a mission to fix bad Wikipedia celebrity portraits](#)"
- German:
 - Zeit Online: "[Wikipedia-Fotos: Wie WikiPortraits die Bildersuche revolutioniert](#)"
- French:
 - Radio France: "[Culture Internet](#)" podcast spotlights WikiPortraits' innovative approach

About WikiPortraits

WikiPortraits is a volunteer-driven initiative dedicated to improving the visual representation of notable figures on Wikipedia and related projects. By providing high-quality, freely-licensed images, WikiPortraits not only enhances the visual quality of Wikipedia but also supports the broader Wikimedia movement's commitment to open knowledge and accessibility.

For more information, visit WikiPortraits.org and explore their 2024 report or browse their extensive collection on Wikimedia Commons.

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