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HAS WIKIPEDIA KILLED OFF THE TRADITIONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA?

Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, and Singapore (April 16, 2007) - Claims that the on-line community-created reference site, Wikipedia are killing off the traditional encyclopedia are totally unfounded. Rolf Janke, a vice-president of SAGE Publications, one of the world's largest academic and professional publishers challenges this claim when he launches SAGE e-Reference at the London Book Fair this week (16 April 2007)

In January this year, a US university voted to ban undergraduates from citing Wikipedia in their research papers. In March, an American student posed as a professor of religious studies and made more than 20,000 alterations to controversial topics on the site. This bogus professor became one of Wikipedia's most prolific "editors", trusted to adjudicate on factual disputes.

"Who can argue that the internet is the place to go for quick information on any subject at any time. And obvious choices are Google and Wikipedia," says Rolf. "But a random search on Google takes you to a billion places and Wikipedia will over define the topic and present inaccuracies and biases. Of course many entries will probably have been co-written by several people – how do we know if they are qualified to write on the topic?"

A traditional encyclopedia is written by scholars whose work is peer-reviewed by the general editor and it is this difference which Rolf argues is critical.

"The academic community needs authoritative content and this is where the Wiki world falls down. At SAGE, we specialize in peer-reviewed, subject-specific encyclopedias with an abundance of information available to students on each topic. Pages are organized in a way that is easy to find whereas most Google/Wikipedia searches land on just one page and do very little to support linking to like-topics."

"Most importantly, with the launch of SAGE e-Reference, over 40 of our works are now available on-line which makes them far more accessible and easier to update. Our ability to produce both quality and quantity in an on-line environment is certainly challenging the innovation of the Wikipedia world."

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SAGE Reference has been publishing authoritative and award-winning social science encyclopedias since Rolf Janke launched them in 2001. The launch of SAGE eReference this year offers all 48 titles on the internet including such titles as the *Encyclopedia of Anthropology* and the *Encyclopedia of Measurement and Statistics*. Among the new titles to launch in 2007 are the *Encyclopedia of Cancer and Society*, *Encyclopedia of Environment and Society* and the *Encyclopedia of Business Ethics and Society*.