The Model of the Universal Encyclopaedia of a Region

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Purpose of the article – to develop a modern model of universal scientific encyclopedia for Russian regions. As shown in the study, the model is de-identified type of Wikipedia encyclopedia at the regional level has few prospects. In the face of falling demand for printed products universal encyclopedia of the region must be electronic and original, but it is necessary to take into account the experience of the creators of Wikipedia on the use of freelance writers. The study of local history in schools makes education a major consumer of regional encyclopaedias. Students and teachers, as well as other social groups should be able to not only readers, but authors of the articles of the regional electronic encyclopedias. That such features by a modern universal encyclopedia of the region.

Keywords: encyclopedia, wikipedia, regional studies, the Krasnoyarsk territory.

Introduction

The development of Russian regional encyclopaedia studies at its current stage has been the subject of serious analysis on scientific and practical conferences and in special summarizing researches (Problemy, 2004; Regional’nye, 2007; Istoricheskii, 2012; Riakhovskaia M.A., 2013).

It’s well known that during the Soviet era regional encyclopaedia studies wasn’t held in high esteem. In the late twenties and the early thirties of the last century the publication of three multi-volume encyclopaedias have been made and suspended. Only three volumes (of the five) of the Siberian Soviet Encyclopaedia and one volume of the encyclopaedic dictionary of Central Black Earth Region and the Ural Soviet Encyclopaedia were published. The Stalin’s policy of curtailing historical researches actually continued during the Khrushchev’s thaw and Brezhnev’s stagnation. Only in the late 1980s the first regional encyclopaedias in Russia began to be published. Since the second half of the 1990s the real encyclopaedic boom has started in Russian regions started.

As of September 2012 the regional encyclopaedias are available in 73 regions of the Russian Federation. According to the research conducted by the National Library of Russia, in February 2013 there were 355 regional encyclopaedias in Russia (Nikolaeva, 2013). Encyclopaedias published in regions are divided into two main types: universal and specialized
Regional encyclopaedists are intensifying their publishing activity. Not only universal encyclopaedias on a particular subject of the Federation, but also encyclopaedias on small administrative-territorial units (cities, districts and rural settlements) are leased.

On the other hand, the number of specialized encyclopaedias is increasing. We can distinguish two main groups of causes of the encyclopaedic boom in Russian regions. First of all, it is prestigious to have its own regional encyclopaedia. According to the widespread opinion any self-respecting state should have another, even not legalized, symbol such as its encyclopaedia in addition to state flag, emblem and anthem.

Scientific encyclopaedia of the region is not just a book. As a rule this is the result of the collective work of a large group of scientists and experts. It is impossible to create an encyclopaedia, if there is no serious scientific capacity in key sectors of local and regional studies. Well accomplished encyclopaedia is a sign of civilization, a sufficiently high level of humanitarian culture of a country and its regions.

Realizing this, the authorities of the majority of Russian regions have initiated the creation of summarizing encyclopaedic works on their territories.

The alliance of the authorities and science for creating encyclopaedias is trying to find different organizational forms. Thus, there is Institution of the Tatar Encyclopaedia that is taking up this issue in Kazan, as well as the scientific publishing complex “Bashkir Encyclopaedia” in Ufa, the departments of research institutes in Cheboksary, Izhevsk, Saransk and so on (Saitov, 2012: 15). But the most common form was perhaps the establishment of temporary research teams on the basis of higher education institutions and research institutes.

According to our calculations made on the basis of a list of regional encyclopaedias compiled by the National Library of Russia (Nikolaeva, 2013), the regional authorities were not just sponsors or orderers, but also co-publishers of encyclopaedias in 15 Russian regions, and higher educational and academic institutions in 32 ones.

In some regions the best ways of interaction between authorities and scientific community were found to create encyclopaedias. In Bashkortostan, Tatarstan and Chuvashia this cooperation was especially fruitful. In these republics the projects on the production of multi-volume encyclopaedias were implemented. As for the regions of Siberia and the Far East, the most interesting experience here is in Trans-Baikal region, whose multi-volume edition of the encyclopaedia is supported by the regional government.

Traditionally the head of the editorial board of Encyclopaedia of Trans-Baikal is the governor of Trans-Baikal region. Authors’ team (over 4,000 people) is mainly represented by scientists, university and academic stuff, employees of libraries, local history museums, science centers and others. Several volumes of regional encyclopaedias have been published. Since 2006 there has been its online version. The leading organization of the project is Transbaikal State University (that was called Trans-Baikal State Humanitarian Pedagogical University named after N.G. Chernyshevsky until 2012). Interestingly the former governor of Trans-Baikal Territory R.F. Geniatulin received the award of the Government of the Russian Federation in the field of culture for his work in December 2012 as an editor of Encyclopaedia of Baikal region. His successor K.K. Il’kovsky has also became the editor of the project2.

They went on the same way in Khakassia. In 2003 A. Lebed, Prime Minister of the Republic, signed a decree on the publication of the Encyclopaedia of the Republic of Khakassia within
the events for the preparation and celebrating of the 300th anniversary of Khakassia’s voluntary entry into the Russian State (June 2007). The main executor of the project was Khakassia State University named after N.F. Katanov. Its rector V.A. Kuzmin became the chairman of the Scientific Editorial Board that was obliged to “ensure a high scientific level of publications cooperating for this purpose with the Russian Academy of Sciences, Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, with other research centers in Siberia, ministries, agencies and academic institutions of the Republic of Khakassia, as well as the Scientific Editorial Board to publish the Great Russian Encyclopaedia”.

A. Lebed said later that almost 500 authors had been working on the Encyclopaedia. 5 million rubles from the national budget were spent on the creation of the encyclopaedia. In 2007-2008 two volumes of the encyclopaedia were issued with a circulation of 5,000 copies (Entsiklopediya, 2007-2008). Some of the copies of the encyclopaedia were purposefully directed to schools and municipal libraries of the Republic for schoolchildren and students to use its proceedings to write essays and research papers.

However, the effective union of science and power on the basis of the establishment of regional encyclopaedias failed in some regions. The stable readers’ demand for the encyclopaedia was the most important reason of including private publishers into releasing these books. Such firms don’t always have the ability to rely on the scientific potential of the regions. And sometimes they have no desire to use science to create encyclopaedias as the work of scientists is expensive. As a result, a significant part of encyclopaedias are issued on the needs of the day.

Two types of modern encyclopaedias, “official-bureaucratic” and “criminal”, were highlighted during the round table devoted to the development of encyclopedia studies in Russia and held in November 2011 at Moscow State University. “Encyclopaedias of the first type are usually created by the direct solution of scientific institutions or under their auspices, they are “solid”... and intended to be given as a present, kind of shelf decorations (not for reading). The second ones are mostly unprofessional. The accumulated and sometimes outdated stuff is used in their entries. Moreover they take liberties with someone else’s texts” was noted at the round table (Zubov, 2012).

Unfortunately, encyclopaedia studies in Krasnoyarsk region has not escaped such a lack of commercial professionalism.

**Attempts to create encyclopaedias in Krasnoyarsk region**

Krasnoyarsk region was one of the first to stand on the path of “the encyclopaedic rush” in the post-Soviet period. In 1990 the famous Krasnoyarsk composer, teacher and public figure O.O. Meremkulov founded and headed the Krasnoyarsk Association “The Russian Encyclopaedia» (Averin, 1998: 384). A bit later the editorial board of the Yenisei Encyclopaedia was formed and headed by Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor N.I. Drozdov. In 1994 the Wordlist of the Yenisei Encyclopaedia consisting of 25,000 words was released. As it was mentioned in the preface, the work on the Yenisei Encyclopaedia assumed three stages: “Wordlist, Dictionary and Encyclopaedia” (Eniseyskaia, 1994: 4).

The Yenisei Encyclopaedia was published in 1998. It contained more than 50,000 entries (Eniseyskii, 1998). The publication was carried out with the financial support of Krasnoyarsk region administration. However, the project wasn’t continued. Due to lack of funds the work on the Yenisei Encyclopaedia was suspended, and Krasnoyarsk Association “Russian Encyclopaedia” ceased to exist.
The Yenisei Encyclopaedia was an important milestone in the development of regional encyclopedia studies. Previously there weren’t any precedents of gathering of such serious scientific efforts to write a summarizing scientific work in the history of Krasnoyarsk region. More than 250 scientists and experts were the authors of the Yenisei Encyclopaedia. Each entry in this dictionary has a signature of an author or authors’ group. The formats of writing different types of entries were elaborated.

However this dictionary is not the best option for the region from the scientific and practical point of view. First of all, it is very brief. The vast majority of entries published there have just one paragraph. The authors and the editorial board limited themselves in volume and thus reduced the practical value of published information. For example, it is important for the region to know not only years, but the dates of life, as well as the place of birth of certain people who received public recognition and the right to be mentioned in the encyclopaedic issue. This information is very useful for preparing the plans of events, etc. But there are no dates of life in this dictionary, and people’s places of birth are missing or hidden somewhere in the text.

We should also mention another very important point. Again, the publishers refused to publish the references of the articles due to space saving and having limited financial resources, as well as relying on the fact that they would still manage to leash the multi-volume Yenisei encyclopaedia. It is known to dramatically reduce the value of any scientific publication.

Therefore this dictionary became a dead end from the view point of further scientific research. It did not solve the problem of creating a universal encyclopaedia of Krasnoyarsk region as an “attribute” of statehood at the regional level.

In 2008 The Encyclopaedia of Krasnoyarsk Region. South was published in Krasnoyarsk. The head of the project for the publication was Minusinsk regional museum of local lore named after N.M. Martyanov was (Entsiklopediya, 2008). The extensive local history materials of seven areas in the south of Krasnoyarsk region are compiled and summarized in this serious popular science issue.

However, by and large its name doesn’t match its contents. At its core, it is not a “scientific reference book of all or selected branches of knowledge in the form of a dictionary” (the definition of an encyclopaedia from Ozhegov Russian Language Dictionary – V.P.), but rather a collective solid monographic popular and scientific work on the south of Krasnoyarsk region.

In 2010, the Krasnoyarsk publishing house “The Letter C” issued a three-volume Great Encyclopaedia (GE) of Krasnoyarsk Region (Bol’shoi, 2010). In the first volume entries on personalities were published. The second volume contains the information about companies, political, social, cultural, scientific and educational organizations, institutions, parties, towns and cities. The third one is dedicated to nature, flora and fauna of Krasnoyarsk region. The preface to the first volume pretentiously stated: “This publication is the first attempt to give a complete picture of Krasnoyarsk region” (Bol’shoi, 2010,1:5).

The authors of this three-volume work have done a great job. However, it is no coincidence they called their work is an encyclopaedic dictionary, not an encyclopaedia. Articles of the dictionary with the exception of those that precede each of the volumes do not have signatures. That is, by and large – the anonymous publication, although it has an extensive editorial board. To quote a phrase from the final part of the first volume of the dictionary: “In preparing the BES Krasnoyarsk region benefited from a variety of sources, paying tribute to the work of the author, call them names.
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...” (Bol’shoi, 2010,1:493-495). Below there is a three-page list of names. There are no titles of the works.

In encyclopaedia studies there is a rule to put the subject of the entry in its very beginning, as well as the information on what or whom the entry is. Namely in this dictionary every entry on a personality begins standard: one was born then and there, or their years of birth are given. Only later while reading readers can understand why the personalities got into the dictionary and what they are famous for. Why was such an unprofessional approach taken as the basis? I will assume that the Yenisei Encyclopedia was taken as a source to write many entries on personalities. The biographies there were written in accordance with generally accepted standards. But how can a note be borrowed without getting accused of plagiarism? It is necessary to modify slightly the structure of the note.

An example of such borrowing and changing the places of the words is given in the Table 1.

According to our estimates 85 entries with the letter A, 86 entries with the letter B, etc. migrated from the Yenisei Encyclopaedia to the first volume of the GE of Krasnoyarsk region which was dedicated to personalities with only a small rearrangement of words in sentences and stylistic editing. In general, the Yenisei Encyclopaedia is the unnamed primary source of about 30-50 percent of entries from the first volume of the GE of Krasnoyarsk Region. The second volume of GE Suffers has direct borrowings from the Yenisei Encyclopedia as well.

It is clear that such a three-volume edition with the questionable authorship can not be a worthy symbol of the statehood of Krasnoyarsk region. The region is one of the few “strong” subjects of the Russian Federation that do not have their valuable multi-volume encyclopaedia.

This does not mean that the region is poorly explored from the scientific point of view. Quite on the contrary. In the course of recent years alone, there have been many summarizing scientific papers on various aspects of the development of Krasnoyarsk region. The history of the region is thoroughly elaborated in the modern researches by G.F. Bykonia (Bykonia, 1997, 2007, 2012), V.I. Fedorova (Fedorova, 1999), B.E. Andiuseva (Andiuseva, 2006), L.E. Mezit (Mezit, 2001) and others. Over the last decade, many summarizing scientific and popular publications were issued, including the three-volume textbook on the history of Krasnoyarsk region (Drozdov, 2005, 2006, 2008), several collective books on the history of Krasnoyarsk and Krasnoyarsk region (Krasnoyarsk, 2003; Bezrukikh, 2012).

Table 1. Comparative analysis of the texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Yenisei Encyclopaedia *</th>
<th>The Great Encyclopaedia of Krasnoyarsk Region **</th>
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<tr>
<td>Albanov Valery Ivanovich (1882-1919), the navigator of the Russian arctic expedition led by G.L. Brusilov aboard the schooner Saint Anna (1912-14), he saved extracts from the ship’s logbook of the missing expedition. Later he was a second-in-command aboard the steamboats The Ob and North on the Yenisei River. Pozdnjakov A.I.</td>
<td>ALBANOV Valery Ivanovich (1882-1919). Since 1912 he had been the navigator of the Russian Arctic expedition led by G.L. Brusilov aboard the schooner Saint Anna. He managed to save the extracts from the ship’s logbook of the missing expedition. Second-in-command aboard the steamboats The Ob and North on the Yenisei River.</td>
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** Source: Bol’shoi, 2010,1:29.
In the course of this century the summarizing monographs were leashed (Chekha, 2004; Shaparev, 2002), as well as tutorials on the physical geography of the region (Bezrukikh, 1993,1995, 2005), its flora and fauna were actively explored (Baranov, 2012; Krasnaia, 2011, 2012). The textbooks necessary for studying of discipline “Nature and ecology of Krasnoyarsk region» were published (Baranov, 2004). The economic aspects of the development of the region weren’t ignored too (Shadrin, 2011, 2012), as well as its culture (Shapovalova, 2006; Elinskaia, 2009) and sport life (Usakov, 2001, 2008), etc.

In other words, there is a very good basis for the preparation of the scientific universal encyclopaedia of the Yenisei Siberia. It is therefore logical that the international scientific and practical conference “The geography, history and geo-ecology in the service of science and innovation education” that was dedicated to the 110th anniversary of the Krasnoyarsk Regional Branch of the Russian Geographical Society and the World Earth Day took place in Krasnoyarsk in April 2011 and adopted the resolution on the necessity of the creation of working groups on writing and publishing the Encyclopaedia of Krasnoyarsk and the Yenisei Encyclopaedia6.

Not the fact that the projected encyclopaedias should be multi-volume editions. It should be recognized that the time of paper encyclopaedias is out. The global transition from the printed encyclopaedia format to electronic publications can be observed. In March 2012 it was announced that the owners of the Encyclopaedia Britannica – the oldest universal encyclopaedia in English – refused to release the “paper” version of the publication and went over to the multimedia format (Bosman, 2012). There is no doubt that this world’s leader in encyclopaedic business will be followed by other publishers. In the age of the Internet publishing paper encyclopaedias becomes less profitable.

### The value of Wikipedia

In our time, without considering the factor of Wikipedia it’s impossible to build a regional policy of encyclopaedia studies. Wikipedia was posted on the Web in January 2001 and today this is the largest and most popular directory on the Internet. The Wikipedia site is the fifth most visited website in the world. Russian Wikipedia takes the 8th place in the number of articles among all language sectors of Wikipedia (after English, German, French, Italian, Dutch, Polish and Spanish Wikipedias) and has today more than 1 million articles.

The factor of special influence of Wikipedia can not be ignored. In 2010, the British Museum organized a special tour for Wikipedians. The number of the museum’s site visitors turned out to reduce rapidly. People read articles about the exhibits of the museum on Wikipedia more often. Therefore, the museum administration headed for the knowledge distribution about the museum exhibits among Wikipedians. At the same time, some measures were taken to monitor the reliability of Wikipedia publications about the museum7. More recently, the British Library and the National Library of Scotland announced the vacancies for Wikipedia-librarians, whose main task is to upload materials of libraries including scanned documents in Wikipedia and its related resources8.

It is clear that in the nearest future the experience of involving Wikipedians for posting information of a variety of organizations in Wikipedia will be common for Russian regions including the Krasnoyarsk region. In June 2013 the Russian Wikipedia announced for the first time a competition with cash prizes that was called “The Hall of Fame of South Russia and East Ukraine”. The prize fund is 250,000 rubles. The event is dedicated to writing articles and uploading images on the history, geography, nature, culture and famous people of the Southern
Federal District (SFD) and the North Caucasian Federal District (NCFD) of Russia and Kharkiv, Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine. The prize funds were allocated by one of the youth social organizations in the south of Russia.

Formally, all the Wikipedia authors write articles for free. If someone turns out to be paid, then comes the punishment – the article is removed. But announcing tenders for increasing the authors’ activity is not forbidden. Accordingly, any region can find the funds to negotiate with the leaders of Russian Wikipedia, to announce the contest and thus solve the problem of their promoting on the Internet to a large extent.

It’s really possible. So Kazakh Wikipedia was recognized to be the best Wikiproject on the annual international conference of Wikipedians Wikimania-2011. Its rapid growth was initiated by a non-profit organization WikiBilim, which found significant funds that were spent on the developing and editing of the Kazakh section of Wikipedia, digitizing of the sources and transferring of copyright of other publications. Due to this the right for posting articles in the Kazakh Encyclopaedia in the Wikipedia section was obtained. In addition, 100 laptops were allocated for rewarding the activists of Kazakh Wikipedia who wrote the first 100 articles (Kazaar, 2013).

Do we need a similar competition in Krasnoyarsk region?

In October 2011, we analyzed randomly the articles about Krasnoyarsk region published in Wikipedia. In the course of this work we concluded that the Russian Wikipedia represents Krasnoyarsk and Krasnoyarsk region no less than other Siberian regions, but still less than Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ekaterinburg, Novosibirsk as well as Sverdlovsk and Novosibirsk regions (Panteleev, 2011). The situation didn’t change afterwards, but the intensity of Wikipedians’ activity in writing articles about the region increased. Wikipedians have especially great interest to the regional center. During the first half of 2013 the article on Krasnoyarsk was edited more than 400 times. It is obvious that if there is a competition for writing Wikipedia articles about the region, it may take the lead on this resource.

Note, however, that opportunities for promotion of various projects using Wikipedia have their limits. Editorial policy of this site to determine not the region, and the community Wikipedians who have a fairly complex hierarchy. And very often the case that this community does not allow the various stakeholders to submit information in Wikipedia angle.

For example, let us read the final phrase of the article about Krasnoyarsk in English-language Wikipedia: “Many important industrial cities of Krasnoyarsk krai, such as Krasnoyarsk, Norilsk, Achinsk, Kansk, Zheleznogorsk, and Minusinsk, suffer from environmental pollution” (Krasnoyarsk, 2013). There is no other Siberian region in the English-language Wikipedia to have so unflattering reviews from the view point of ecology. It is clear that this information doesn’t promote the growth of inbound tourism business in the region. But not every Wikipedian will dare to remove it. There is no guarantee that the information won’t be restored, and the Wikipedia account of the person who tried to remove it won’t be banned.

Therefore, it is logical that the regional Wikiprojects occur. Sometimes the actions like this are caused by some people’s desire to determine the information policies of the encyclopaedia independently on those who are hierarchically higher in Wikipedia. Essentially, anyone can download the software and create their Wikipedia virtually in any language. But then they face unavoidably the problem of attracting sponsors to the project. This is one of the reasons that the regional Wikiprojects tend to languish and grow slowly (Nuriev, 2012).
Of the most successful Russian Wikiprojects is Krymology10 (the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Ukraine), the Internet encyclopaedia of Ivanovo region11. At the same time Irkipedia, the Encyclopaedia of the Irkutsk region, began initially as a wikiproject, but then its creators came to the conclusion that the author’s electronic encyclopaedia is the more acceptable option12.

Conclusion

The impersonal Wiki-encyclopaedia can hardly attract a large scale of respectable authors. Only the author’s encyclopedia can gather scientific resources. The best modern universal encyclopaedia of the region should be electronic and authorial. It’s the matter of vanity and money whether the paper version of the encyclopaedia is published at the same time.

However, it would be unwise not to use the elaborations of Wikipedia. Its success in the global encyclopaedic market is largely caused by the fact that its leaders were able to elaborate typical patterns of writing articles with different content. Therefore, this project is relatively easy to work on for non-professionals. The pattern does not allow to relax, to have literary delights. It simplifies the preparation process of articles. A new version of the Wikipedia visual editor to Wikipedia has already been announced. That will simplify the work with the patterns13.

Similar Wiki-technologies would be very useful to apply in the author’s encyclopaedia of the region. They can make it possible to reach a new level of an electronic encyclopaedia. One of the advantages of electronic encyclopaedias compared with the paper ones is that it can be continuously replenished. We consider that the basic part of conceptual articles of the encyclopaedia should be written by scientists and specialists. Readers should have the opportunity to express their opinions about the article and the author. If the latter agrees with the remarks they should amend the article. Modern Internet technologies allow us to do it relatively easily. By the way, the editors of the electronic version of Encyclopaedia Britannica from 2009, allows registered users to post their articles on its website. After moderating these articles are public domain14.

We should also note another advantage of electronic encyclopaedias over their paper versions. Electronic encyclopaedias may be used as a quite convenient means of teaching. The investigations made in KSPU named after V.P. Astafev have shown that the use of electronic encyclopaedias in teaching mathematics for science students leads to more effective lessons, increases the memorability of educational material (Kalitina, 2013).

The use of Wiki-technologies enables users to participate directly in the creation and editing of the site and can be considered as an essential element of improving the quality of educational services (Rogushina, 2008).

The analysis shows that the main consumer of regional encyclopaedias is the system of education. Relying on regional encyclopaedias schoolchildren and students conduct scientific and research work on local history under the guidance of teachers. For this reason these publications come primarily to school and municipal libraries in the regions where regional authorities are involved in the creation of encyclopaedias.

However, it seems that students and teachers can be not only the readers, but also the authors of the regional electronic encyclopaedias. Very interesting experience was gained in Ivanovo region, the Internet encyclopaedia of which is a Wiki-project created by the initiative and supervised by the regional Department of Education. In this encyclopaedia the teachers’ and students’ articles on local history topics
have been published since 2007. The articles are usually written within the framework of local history competitions held in the region.

Current standards involve writing the encyclopedic articles about each participant of the Great Patriotic War. These articles are capable of being written at a school level. The similar experience occurred in Krasnoyarsk. Thus, in the People’s Encyclopaedia “My Krasnoyarsk” posted on the Web in 2003, but not updated since then, the articles about the participants of the Great Patriotic War presented by Krasnoyarsk schools were published.

Schoolchildren under the guidance of adults and in collaboration with them can write encyclopaedic articles about the local honored employees of certain sectors, etc. In the conditions, when the patterns for writing encyclopedia articles are created and elaborated, this work becomes less time consuming and requires no special qualifications. Involving schools in filling of a regional adult encyclopaedia can be an impulse to improve the system of patriotic education, to develop the local history studies and to promote local history knowledge.

References


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Цель статьи – выработка современной модели универсальной научной энциклопедии для российских регионов. Как показано в исследовании, модель обезличенной энциклопедии типа Википедии на региональном уровне малоперспективна. В условиях падения спроса на печатную продукцию универсальная энциклопедия региона должна быть электронной и авторской, но ее создателям необходимо учитывать опыт Википедии по использованию внештатных авторов. Изучение краеведения в школах делает систему образования одним из основных потребителей региональной энциклопедической литературы. Школьники и учителя, как и другие социальные группы, должны иметь возможность быть не только читателями, но и авторами статей электронных региональных энциклопедий. Именно такими особенностями должна обладать современная универсальная энциклопедия региона.

Ключевые слова: энциклопедия, википедия, краеведение, Красноярский край.