Scholarship in the field of Slavic linguistics inevitably draws upon earlier data and analyses in some form, be it to contextualize new data or to add a new interpretation to an ongoing discussion. However, the reference work that is the necessary precursor to new scholarship is time-consuming, requiring scholars to comb through printed books and journals, scanned photocopies, and searchable online versions of texts to reference the work of others correctly. This time takes away from the time the scholar can devote to the intellectual content of the research. This paper focuses on two case studies where graduate students have collaboratively helped to build a public scholarly reference wiki as part of their coursework and exam preparation. This wiki has been structured in such a way as to present a unified framework for organizing topics that are the focus of scholarly discussion, and to mitigate the copyright concerns that often accompany the free dissemination of information.

The wiki contains two kinds of content: article/monograph summaries that lay out the major claims of a particular work, and topic-based pages that bring together both undisputed facts and various conflicting scholarly claims on the topic, drawn from articles and monographs. Both kinds of wiki pages include copious, specific footnotes referencing the source material, both to enable factchecking and to allow the scholar to cite the original material rather than the wiki if desired.

The two presenters, graduate students in different Slavic linguistics programs, describe their respective experiences using the wiki while preparing to take their Master’s exams, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of including scholarly wiki development both as part of coursework, and as a stand-alone tool for independent study.

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