EAGLE FORUM

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The Energy and Information Cartels

It's Time for Nuclear

by Cornwall Alliance, guest article by Oliver Hemmers, Ronald Stein, and Steve Curtis

There is a lot of talk about nuclear power around the world today. However, except for China and maybe Russia, there is no action.

The answer to safe, continuous, uninterruptible, emissions-free electricity lies right in front of us. Locked in the nucleus of each uranium atom is a source of energy that is 50,000,000 times the amount released by burning an atom of coal.

Americans should use this natural uranium resource instead of just throwing it away. The commercial nuclear industry so far has leveraged only 3% of the energy available in nuclear fuel rods. We would not get very far buying an apple and just eating the peel. Yet that is what we do with our uranium.

It makes a lot of sense to make use of all the uranium since we went to the trouble of mining and refining it. Your cheap costs for electricity (worldwide) in past years have come at the price of taxes. In the United States, renewable subsidies over the years stand at $5 trillion (or so). This means that every person has paid $15,000 above their power bill for the luxury of having so-called "renewable" electricity. So, do you really wonder what will happen to your power bill when those subsidies are gone?

Perhaps the reason for inaction is the massive waste of government funding for nuclear power promises. Private capital produces many times more production than government funding does. Maybe if the money were left in the hands of the people, some sense of urgency could be realized. Moreover, to secure monopolies for those who own them, massive government roadblocks are placed in the way of any competition that could disrupt the profits from these monopolies.

Such is the case for government-subsidized wind and solar projects over the last two decades. Because of mismanagement and outright corporate theft, the sizzle has come off the idea of "just electricity" from renewables. Once private industry lost its government subsidies, wind and solar projects started shutting down. Some, of course, are still around, but no utility company will take even a single penny of risk on solar and wind production.

So, when the gravy train of government subsidies stops flowing, the profit centers move on. No gravy, no profits, no production. Then the citizens are left to clean up the mess. Citizens pay to make the mess, and now citizens pay to clean it up — all while enjoying the benefits of higher electricity costs. Maybe they will get tired of this scam and start to realize that they really need nuclear power.

Now we add the economic pressure of sharply rising demand (especially with the growth of data centers) with a stable or slightly reduced supply of electricity. It appears that we have to cover the cost of wind and solar renewables and the cost of competition for a vanishing resource at the same time.

Since data centers are profitable at $3.00 per kWh, how far do you think they will bid before residential customers give up bidding? Ironically, recycling slightly used nuclear

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fuel (SUNF) can result in retail prices around a penny per kWh ($0.01) because they do not require special equipment or engineering to work. So, we are either headed for penny-per-kWh power (recycling in fast reactors) or dollar-per-kWh power (wind and solar renewables and high data center demand).

Fast reactor recycling basically involves dumping chemically altered SUNF (already existing) into a vat of hot molten salt (or sodium). The magic of breeding allows uranium that is unusable in conventional reactors to produce 50,000,000 times more power than coal. This releases at least 90% of the uranium power instead of the current 3%.

Remember, countries are proposing to pay hundreds of billions of dollars to "bury" or throw this uranium material away. Even then, they cannot find a way to do so because the public does not want it in their backyard. We are proposing that we turn these hundreds of billions of dollars of liability into hundreds of trillions of dollars of electricity revenue. Sound impossible? Well, a reactor called Experimental Breeder Reactor-II demonstrated this capability with technology called pyroprocessing (extracting elements using voltage and chemistry) and fast reactor recycling. Modern technology allows this to be done with "liquid fuel" mixed right in with the molten salt (the best process). Of course, there are many different ideas of how this can be done.

The best way to find out which works best is to try it. Only privately capitalized industry tries things more than they talk.

All we have to do is crank up the free enterprise innovation engine. To do this, the government has to get out of the electricity business. Government subsidies only cloud the effectiveness of free enterprise and force the warp speed of private innovation to die in the face of the molasses of free government money. If no results are required, people get lazy. But business must have results, or they lose their investments. The only money the government loses is your tax money. So, we must find a way to encourage the innovation of free enterprise while eliminating the molasses of government free money, camouflaged as subsidies. What we need is a proposal submitted to the government to explain the logic of this, even in the face of enraging monopolistic interests.

Let's find those who are advocates of the people. Once investors see $100 trillion in assets, they can be very persuasive. So, what we need is a state governor willing to advocate for the people. So far, none has emerged. However, as prices go up, supply goes down, billionaires become trillionaires from government-funded monopolies, and citizens' quality of life degrades, hopefully someone will remember the great promise of recycling slightly used nuclear fuel the U.S. government actually has a fund of $50 billion collected from ratepayers, plus interest, to do only this. In the right hands, innovation can be realized. Believe it or not, the voices of citizens like you could make a difference.

WHAT HAPPENED TO CONSERVATION?

by Anne Schlafly, Chairman, Eagle Forum

For decades, the rallying cry of the climate alarmists has been conservation and the reduction of energy uses. "Put on an extra sweater in your cold house; bicycle to work, and don't flush the toilet too often" were some of the lifestyle suggestions to reduce our carbon footprint. However, with the rise of artificial intelligence and its requirements for vast amounts of energy, no one is talking about conservation anymore. Everyone is talking about how to produce vastly more energy to meet the new demands. Energy-hungry data centers are popping up everywhere.

The fallacy of "green" energy has now been exposed for the fraud it is. Wind and solar energy companies cannot exist without taxpayer support. Efficient energy production comes when the energy produced exceeds the energy needed for production. Ethanol, wind, and solar cost more to produce than the resulting energy.

The climate alarmists do not like coal, gasoline, and natural gas, which are very efficient producers of energy. Would they prefer that we return to the stone age? Or do the climate alarmists just want to diminish our American freedoms with expensive energy supported by the taxpayers. Cheap energy is essential to a free and productive economy.

Nuclear has always been a clean, carbon-free, and efficient form of energy. Best of all, we will never run out of atoms to produce nuclear energy. During the Cold War, the Left regularly rallied against the use of nuclear and that campaign served to tarnish the public image of this fuel source. Hollywood also tried to influence public opinion with Jane Fonda's "The China Syndrome", a popular movie that portrayed nuclear energy as dangerous.

Now is the time to follow the science so Americans can continue to utilize cheap energy.

THE RISE AND FALL OF WIKIPEDIA

by Jeffrey A. Tucker, America Out Loud Front Page.

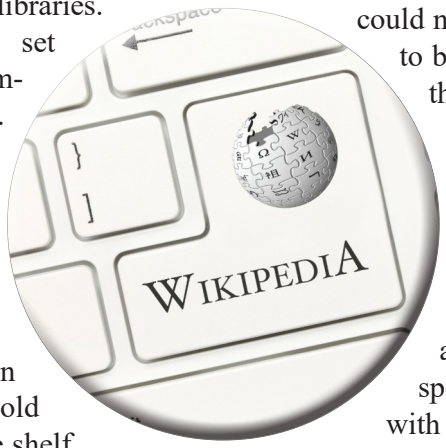
The year was 2001 and the dot-com bust was in the rearview mirror. New ideas were in circulation among young and visionary entrepreneurs.

The internet will change everything eventually, we were told. Technology, decentralization, crowd sourcing, and digital spontaneity will create an information landscape without gatekeepers. Everything will have to adapt. The experts of the old world will be replaced by a people's revolution. Whereas legacy elites waved credentials, a new class of revolutionaries will raise armies of servers and digits to move the center of civilization to the cloud.

Wikipedia was a headline feature, an experiment in crowd-sourcing knowledge in a way that was decentralized, able to scale in ways the old model was not, and drawing from the knowledge and passions of people the world over. The platform seemed to embody the principle of freedom itself. Everyone has a voice. The truth will emerge from the seeming chaos of competing points of view.

At long last, the anti-authoritarian outlook would be tested on a medium that had intrigued scholars since the ancient world: books containing all knowledge. Aristotle wanted to document everything he could about the world around him. Centuries later, following the fall of Rome, St. Isidor, archbishop of Seville, embarked upon a similar path. With the help of countless scribes, he spent his life writing "Etymologiae," a massive treatise on all that was known, compiled from 615 to 630AD.

As publishing with movable type took hold in the 15th and 16th centuries, the first similar work appeared in 1630: Johann Heinrich Alsted's "Encyclopaedia Septem Tomis Distincta." By the late 19th century, book publishing and distribution were democratized by markets and technology, and middle-class households could obtain real libraries. The encyclopedia set became a huge commercial success. Many companies were involved in making and selling them.



After the Second World War, it became common for every household to have a set on the shelf. They provided endless fascination for everyone, a reference tool for learning for all ages. One of the more salient memories of my own childhood was opening them randomly and reading as much as I could, on pretty much any imaginable topic.

Encyclopedias drew from the best experts, but always with gatekeepers to decide what was and was not credible information. The top editorial position at World Book, Britannica, or Funk & Wagnalls was a powerful place to be professionally. He could decide what was and was not true, who was and was not an expert, what people did and did not need to know.

When Murray Rothbard had finished his graduate studies at Columbia University and before he had a teaching position, he was looking for ways to bring in income. As a trained economic historian, he attempted to send in three entries to an encyclopedia company. The essays were promptly rejected simply because his take was different from the mainstream consensus, never mind that what he wrote was true.

This is the problem with gatekeepers. So long as printing remained the main means by which knowledge was preserved and distributed, they would be necessary.

The founding of Wikipedia in 2001 was about a vision to change that. The initial reaction was widespread and justifiable incredulity. It could never work for anyone to be able to change anything, so they said. It's not possible simply to wipe away the gatekeepers and for truth to emerge. For years, this perception dominated, as teachers and experts of all sorts spoke of Wikipedia only with disdain.

But gradually, something interesting began to happen. It actually seemed to be working. The entries became ever more voluminous and detailed. The rules of the road became more embedded, so that citations and documentation were required, and interest groups rallied around particular entries to guard them against corruption. Sure anyone can edit but your edits will be reversed immediately if you are not in compliance. For many entries, it became essentially impossible to change them without first going to the discussion pages and asking permission.

New gatekeepers emerged on the platform. How did they become that way? Through persistence, skill at Wiki code, deep knowledge of the platform, and a native ability to understand the culture of the platform. For a time, this only increased the credibility of the platform. As the proof of concept became ever more visible, it began to rank ever higher in search results. At some uncertain

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point, the critics quieted down and Wikipedia triumphed.

Were its earliest champions correct? Did the model of spontaneous evolution actually generate a better product than the old top-down system? In many ways, it did. In other ways, it did not. Wikipedia brandished crowd-source credibility — this is what the community has decided to be true — while giving rise to a new opinion oligarchy that was as bad or worse than what it replaced.

The targeting of the platform started right away. The topic was science, and global warming in particular. One of the founders, Larry Sanger, noted that this was happening early on. Some sources were deemed inadmissible while others were valorized as excellent for citation. The topic in particular was fraught with the problem of epistemological capture. The grants flowed to those pushing conventional narratives who were, in turn, published in the major journals, while dissidents were shoved aside and even tossed out of professional societies. Wikipedia perfectly manifested the same problem.

The whole point of Wikipedia was to permit crowdsourcing to break down traditional information cartels. In this case, and even more as the years went on, the cartels had reassembled themselves.

At least with old-style encyclopedias, readers knew the names of both the authors of entries and the editors. They signed what they wrote. With Wikipedia, 85% of the most powerful editors remained anonymous. This turned out to be a grave problem. It permitted powerful industries, foreign governments, deep-state agents, and anyone with the highest stake in a topic to control the messaging while banishing contrary points of view.

As politics became ever more contentious, Wikipedia in general went the way of mainstream media with a consistently leftwing bias on any topic that impacted on political outlook. After Trump won in 2016, the entire platform was swept up in the hate that followed. Editors made lists of credible and non-credible sources, thus banning any right-of-center media from being cited in the interest of balance. Indeed, balance disappeared entirely.

The COVID period proved that it was too far gone to be saved. Every entry echoed Centers for Disease Control and World Health Organization propaganda, and even the entry on masks advanced the most preposterous claims. The material on the COVID vaccines might as well have been written by the industry, and probably was. If you were looking for something objective — perhaps some common sense on dealing with a respiratory infection — the search was hopeless.

The platform had been fully captured during the greatest crisis of our lives. It was far worse than an older encyclopedia, which would at least preserve known information on natural immunity or therapeutics or strategies used in pandemics in the past. Wikipedia was so agile that it would be edited in real time to delete settled knowledge and replace it with whatever hullabaloo was being whipped up by industrial bureaucrats that morning. This was not a digital utopia; this was Orwell come to life.

The rise of Wikipedia was spectacular, implausible, and glorious. Its fall is equally disappointing, predictable, and inglorious. It's also paradigmatic. Every major venue failed in its emancipationist promise and instead became handmaidens of the propagandists and censors: Microsoft, Google, Facebook, and even Amazon. The information revolution turned gradually into a tool for shoring up the corporatist/state system.

The betrayal here serves as a tragic reminder that no technology is incorruptible, no method is not subject to abuse, no platform is permanently inoculated against capture. Indeed, the more credibility an institution earns, the more confidence it inspires, the more likely it is to attract bad actors who will flip its purposes on their head and push an agenda.

What I've reported above is no longer unknown. Most people today are aware of Wikipedia's biases. Regular people long ago gave up trying to save it from itself. You can spend a half-day on a small edit and see it reversed by the nameless editorial oligarchs who guard every entry that is even slightly controversial. Instead of broadening and including voices, it has narrowed and excluded them.

Fortunately, the wheels of technology have kept turning. Artificial intelligence dropped in the late COVID period, and at least one company, xAI, has devoted itself to providing the best tools to keep the dream of democratized information alive. Grokipedia, even in its first iteration, is already leagues above Wikipedia in balance and range of information sources. As it turns out, machines do a better job than anonymous oligarchs at getting us close to the truth. At least for now.

Welcome to the post-Wikipedia age. It was fun while it lasted. All hail its deprecation and replacement with something much better.

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