

Decision Making in the Self-Evolved Collegiate Court: Wikipedia's Arbitration Committee and Its Implications for Self-Governance and Judiciary in Cyberspace

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Abstract

This article considers the extent to which non-legal factors (nationality, activity/experience, conflict avoidance, and time constraints) affect decision-making within collegiate courts, through the study of the Wikipedia's Arbitration Committee. That body is a self-evolved collegiate court of the Internet's fifth most popular website, whose judges (known as arbitrators) are volunteers. This study shows that the decision-making process of this body seems mostly unaffected by studied demographic factors and the acclimatization bias. Some evidence of conflict avoidance is found. Despite professed equality of members of the Committee, there is clear evidence that some are much more active (and thus, influential) than others. Compared to most traditional court settings, in the volunteer collegiate court studied here, time constraints play a much more significant role than previously suggested in literature.

Keywords: collegiate courts, decision making, cognitive biases, oligarchy, Wikipedia