

## **The Phases and Future of the Noosphere: Segment 10**

**David Sloan Wilson:** Anne, this project is part of a series of conversations that are built around the concept of the noosphere by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a kind of a thinking, brain-like entity, which can expand to the entire globe. Do you think at all, and your brethren there at Wikipedia about Wikipedia as being something like the memory of a global brain or something like that? Is that part of the conversation?

**Riskier/Anne Clin:** Well, certainly that's part of our objective, our mission, is to be one of the information centers of the world, the globe. We aren't all the way there yet. We continue to develop. We know that we have some parts that are well-developed and some parts that are just in their infancy. But yes, this is part of our goal. So we do see ourselves as part of the information base that the world will use.

**DSW:** So, Anne, Wikipedia stands in such contrast to other major social media sites like Facebook and so on. Are there lessons to be learned there, that how other social media sites that are so rampant and so pathological can learn from Wikipedia?

**R/AC:** We're fundamentally different from them. They operate under a profit motive. Somebody's making a lot of money from them. So their motivation is about money, not information exchange. They have a completely different motivation. I can't think of a social media site that isn't for profit. And I think the reason that Wikipedia works and is more balanced than most of these sites is that we have no motivation to keep you from reading the article on Senkaku Islands, which would be motivating if we were a Chinese company because we don't want you to know the Senkaku Islands exist. Those sorts of things.

We don't have a motivation to show you articles about the heroes of some war because we're going to generate more advertising that way. We don't advertise. And that is probably the biggest change and the biggest difference is that because it's volunteer-driven and it's not monetarily focused and it's not trying to make money for anybody, it's just trying to keep itself running like the Internet Archive. All those externalities that make websites like Facebook, like Twitter, like Parler—whatever they're calling themselves now—operate, just isn't a motivation for us.

**DSW:** Right. And it's interesting, Anne, that you mentioned in your reply much more than financial motivation. So there's a profit motive, but there's also might be a political motive, there might be an ideological motive, all kinds of motives that basically tear away at the truth. So you have a motive, Wikipedia has a motive. It's a motive to provide accurate information. That's its motive. It goes to say that unless that's your motive, then don't expect any other motive to lead to a repository of accurate information. You get what you aim for.

And so that, I think, is the fundamental message. We have to have generally prosocial motives, in this case, accurate information. And if you don't have a prosocial target, then there's no invisible hand that's going to get you there. So that resonates very deeply with me for all things prosocial and accurate information is one of those prosocial things. So that's awesome.