History of NCpedia [1]

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by Michelle Underhill and Kelly Agan (2010-2016)

"North Carolina," a brochure produced by the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources from the 1970s to the 1980s. It included brief essays about the state's history, information about the state's emblems and symbols, and images of historic and popular sites.   **Origins**

NCpedia has its origins in frequently asked questions (FAQs) about North Carolina history and government that librarians at the State Library would receive over the phone or by patrons visiting the library.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources developed glossy brochures that included basic historical information about the state. The brochures were handed out by the State Library to students and others who wrote asking for this information. Topics in these brochures included information about North Carolina's state symbols, historical highlights, economy, geography, higher education, state government and more. And the cover bore the image of the Hatteras Island Lighthouse, an iconic North Carolina image.

Screenshot of the original eNCcyclopedia website, ca. late 1990s.   **From brochure to electronic encyclopedia**

In the 1990s, the World Wide Web provided an ideal opportunity for gathering more North Carolina FAQs, including biographies of its governors, histories of important events and places, information about the state's geography and 100 counties, and more. And it provided the ideal vehicle for reaching a much larger audience. Librarians at the State Library shifted the content into numerous HTML pages on the library's fledgling web presence and the online encyclopedia of North Carolina was born. And with it, the brochures ceased to be printed. Staff were no longer limited by space and the content continued to expand as staff received more reference inquiries and and other agency staff made contributions from their research.

Birth of digital projects

In 2004, the online encyclopedia underwent a facelift and received a new logo to more closely incorporate North Carolina's state colors. It was called, somewhat catchilly, "eNCyclopedia". At this point, the resource included a few hundred static HTML pages.
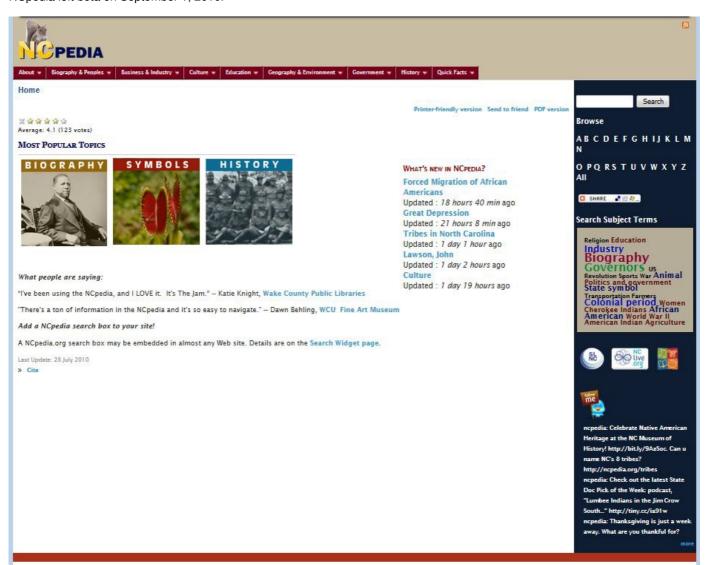
EN★CYCLOPEDIA
The State Library of North Carolina

Counties and Communities | Education | Geography | Health and Society | History | People | State Government | State Symbols

THE COUNTIES AND COMMUNITIES

EDUCATION

GEOGRAPHY

Screen shot of the eNCyclopedia home page, ca. 2004.   At the same time, the Libary's digital projects effort was created. Requests for scanned copies of resources no longer under copyright began coming in, along with requests for more information about popular topics. Staff in what was then called the Information Services Branch pulled together these more frequently requested resources and information on popular topics, and these became the State Library's first underline digital projects [2]. Topics include information about recipients of the North Carolina Awards winners, and other information that was routinely produced in state agency publications. These projects first appeared in the online encyclopedia.

Birth of NCpedia and re-homing in a content management system

By the late 2000s, the content in the online encyclopedia has grown to several hundred pages, and it was time to transition the resource to a content management system that would allow for growth as well as important usability features like search and browse. In 2009, the content was migrated to a content management system, called Drupal, and went online thanks to a partnership between the State Library and NC LIVE. And, of course, the encylopedia got an even better name change and the NCpedia was born! NCpedia left beta on September 1, 2010.

NCPEDIA

About | Biography & Peoples | Business & Industry | Culture | Education | Geography & Environment | Government | History | Quick Facts

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MOST POPULAR TOPICS

BIOGRAPHY   SYMBOLS   HISTORY

WHAT'S NEW IN NCPEDIA?
Forced Migration of African Americans
Updated : 18 hours 40 min ago
Great Depression
Updated : 21 hours 8 min ago
Tribes in North Carolina
Updated : 1 day 1 hour ago
Lawson, John
Updated : 1 day 2 hours ago
Culture
Updated : 1 day 19 hours ago

Search

Browse

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
All

SHARE

Search Subject Terms

Religion Education
Industry
Biography
Governors US
Revolution Sports War Animal
Politics and government
State symbol
Transportation Farmers
Colonial period Women
Cherokee Indians African
American World War II
American Indian Agriculture

What people are saying:

"I've been using the NCpedia, and I LOVE it. It's The Jam." -- Katie Knight, Wake County Public Libraries

"There's a ton of information in the NCpedia and it's so easy to navigate." -- Dawn Behling, WCU Fine Art Museum

Add a NCpedia search box to your site!

A NCpedia.org search box may be embedded in almost any Web site. Details are on the Search Widget page.

Last Update: 28 July 2010
» Cite

ncpedia: Celebrate Native American Heritage at the NC Museum of History! http://bit.ly/9AzSoc. Can u name NC's 8 tribes? http://ncpedia.org/tribes
ncpedia: Check out the latest State Doc Pick of the Week: podcast, "Lumbee Indians in the Jim Crow South..." http://tiny.cc/ia91w
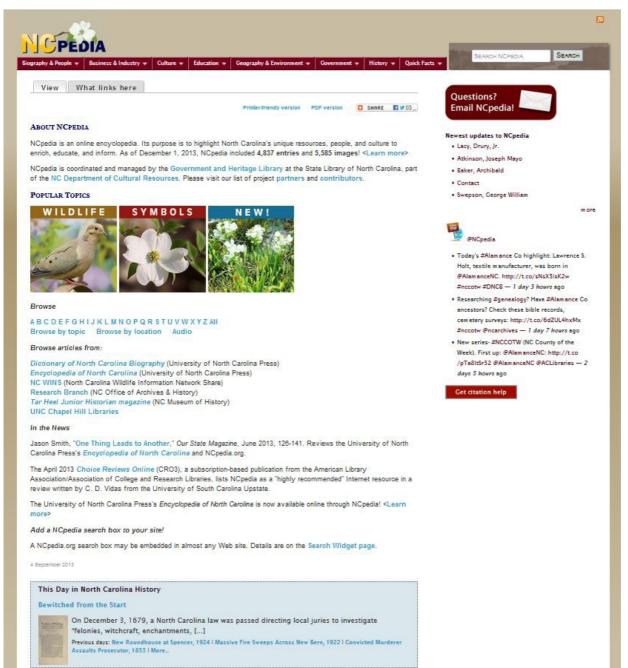ncpedia: Thanksgiving is just a week away. What are you thankful for?
more

Snapshot of the NCpedia homepage from the very beginning in 2010, from the Wayback Machine.

[3]Many new content partnerships and collaborations began to be formed over the next five years. These included entries from the Research Branch of the North Carolina State Archives on topics such as biographical information about all of North Carolina's past governors and historic events. In 2012, NCpedia partnered with the University of North Carolina Press [4] to integrate content from the *Encyclopedia of North Carolina* and *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*. This expansion took about three years and was made possible by a Library Services and Technology Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The

Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. Integration of the *Encyclopedia of North Carolina* was completed in December 2012. And integration of all entries from the *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* came next, with completion in September 2014. The *North Carolina Gazetteer* was made available through NCpedia in March 2014. Inclusion of this content from the Press resulted in a rapid growth of NCpedia by more than 5,000 entries.

NCpedia has been strengthened and increased by many other content partners and collaborations. These have included the North Carolina Museum of History's *Tar Heel Junior HistorianI* magazine, with content written especially for late elementary and middle school students. Curators and historians at the museum have contributed additional content as well. NCpedia also has numerous contributions from the University of North Carolina Library's, as well as librarians at other institutions such as North Carolina State University. Content has come from a wide range of historians and experts in fields such as biology and natural history, geography and anthropology.

Snapshot of the NCpedia homepage, from the Wayback Machine, December 2013. [5]Additional partnerships are being continually formed to add more content, images and media about North Carolina to this expanding resource. If your agency or institution is interested in becoming a partner, contact information for Government & Heritage Library staff may be found at /contact [6]. Individuals who are interested in contributing articles or images to NCpedia may learn more about how to do so at https://ncpedia.org/contribute [7].

NCpedia present and future: sustaining and upgrading technology

NCpedia left beta on September 1, 2010, and aside from a slight redesign in the summer of 2012 to improve usability on mobile devices, the user interface went largely unchanged until December 2016.

By the fall of 2010, NCpedia included between 900 and 1,000 pages. And at the conclusion of 2014, it included more than 6,800 page, and at that point staff at the State Library knew that a redesign would be just around the corner to accommodate the growth and to upgrade technology for an improved user experience.

In 2015, staff began to plan and design a new user interface, to respond to user needs and to include results from a usability study conducted in 2014. NCpedia would still have its home in Drupal, but with a new look and feel, more browsing features and graphical elements, and up-to-date responsiveness for mobile devices and tablets.

TSnapshot of the redesigned NCpedia site homepage, December 2016.   he redesign was about a year in the making, from concept, to design, programming, testing, user feedback and all the rest. The new site went live on December 9, 2016. Check out the images with this article to get a great visual on these historical changes in a website's development!

Authors:
Agan, Kelly [8]
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From:
NCpedia. [10]

16 July 2012 | Agan, Kelly; Underhill, Michelle Czaikowski

Links
[1] https://ncpedia.org/history-ncpedia [2] https://digital.ncdcr.gov [3] https://web.archive.org/web/20101120181337/https://ncpedia.org/ [4] https://ncpedia.org/university-north-carolina-press [5] https://web.archive.org/web/20131203232453/http://www.ncpedia.org/ [6] https://ncpedia.org/contact [7] https://ncpedia.org/contribute [8] https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/agan-kelly [9] https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/czaikowski-michell [10] https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/ncpedia