

# **Why individuals do not contribute to open content textbooks?**

## **A cross-cultural perspective**

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Understanding what motivates contributors to open software projects (Subramanyam & Xia 2008), open content projects (Nov & Kuk 2008), and open textbook projects (Sajjapanroj *et al.* 2008) is a central theme of Open Source research. A small number of researchers are concerned with ‘amotivation’. Deci & Ryan (2008, p. 182) define amotivation as ‘a lack of intention and motivation’. Just as motivation vary across cultures (Herzberg 1987); the status of amotivation may vary too. This presentation argues that reasons for amotivation to contribute to open content textbooks relate to both the lack of technical knowledge and sociocultural forces. However, sociocultural forces are especially significant in relation to contributors from developed countries.

# Why individuals do not contribute to open content textbooks? A cross-cultural perspective

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***Open textbooks*** are free texts which are available online. These texts without rights restrictions. Their users, the '*Wikipedia-like* volunteer' (Butler 2009), are allowed to customize, download, and print any part of the texts (Shkolnikova 2008).

### ***Examples***

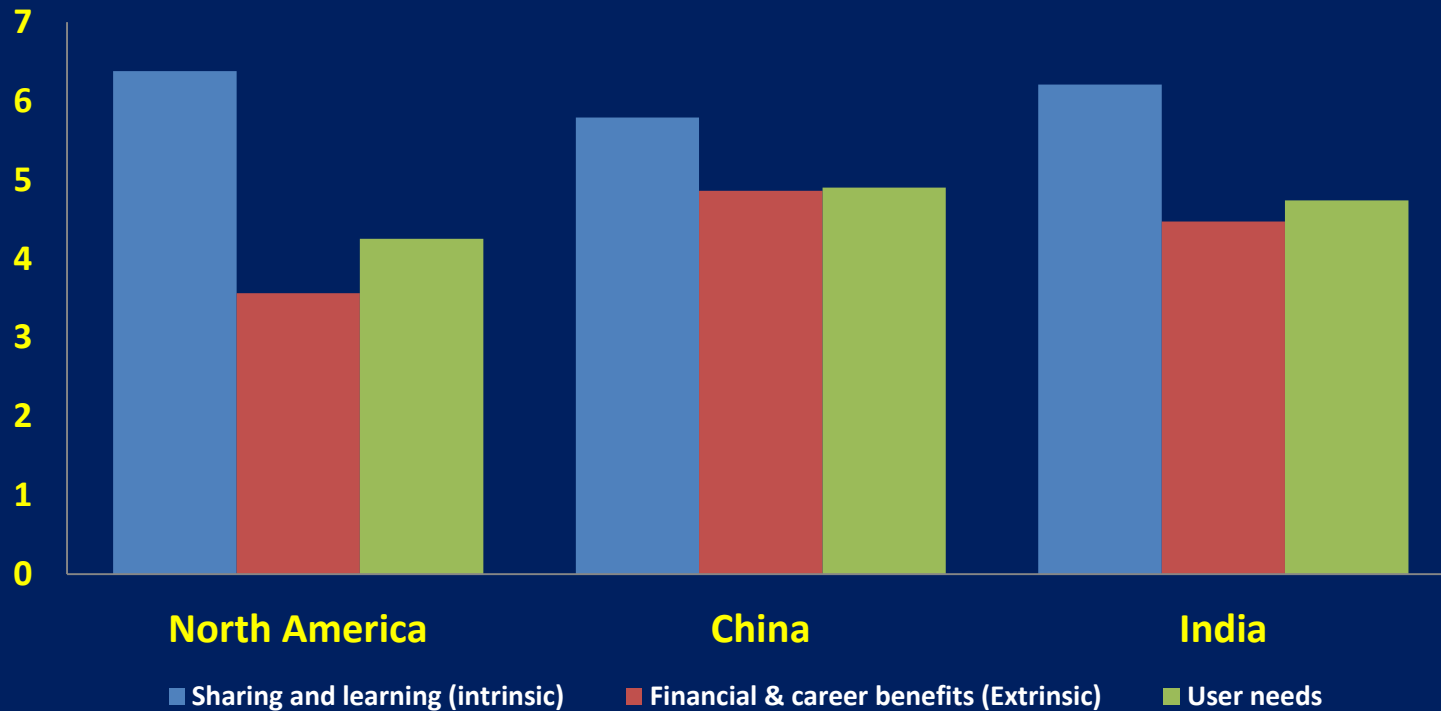
*Wikibooks* → [www.wikibooks.org](http://www.wikibooks.org) 

*Connexions* → [www.cnx.org](http://www.cnx.org) 

Sajjapanroj *et al.* (2008) on their study of *Wikibooks* contributors found that the top aspirations for contributing to *Wikibooks* is 'Making a learning contribution and sharing knowledge' across the two groups of contributors: from the classroom settings (the Novices) or from the general community (the Wikibookians).



Subramanyam and Xia (2008) identified three generic motivations (sharing and learning [intrinsic], financial benefits and career concerns [extrinsic], and satisfying personal needs [internalized extrinsic motivation]). They discovered that the three motivations are significant in the three regions.



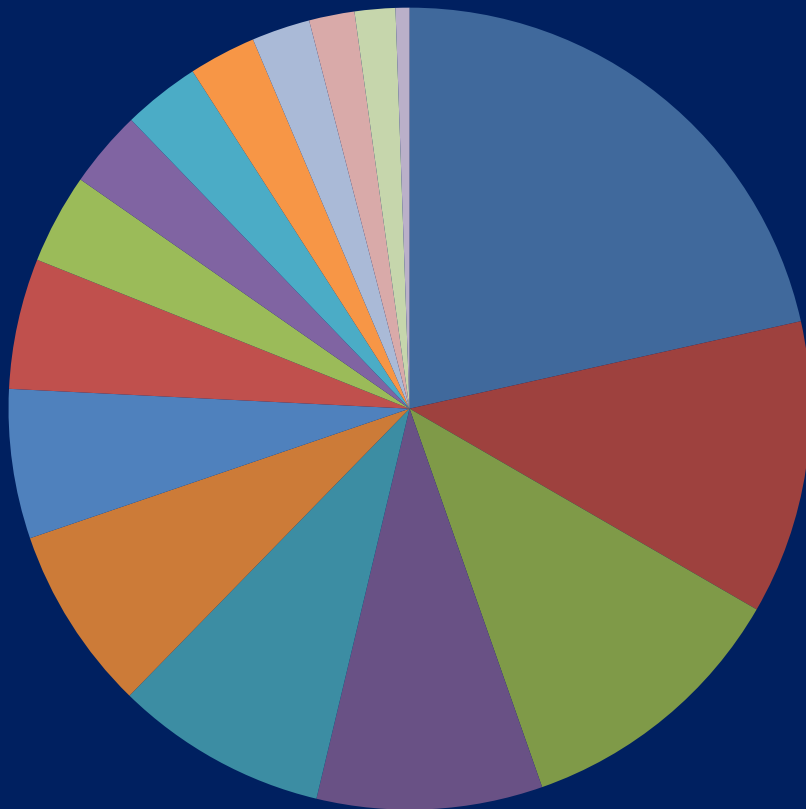


Nov & Kuk (2008) found that intrinsic motivation is negatively correlated with effort withdrawal intention.

To measure the effort withdrawal intention, Nov & Kuk (2008) used two steps survey: first, participants were informed that Wikipedia is operated under the GNU Free Documentation License, of which anyone (including corporations or people who don't contribute to Wikipedia) can copy and redistribute it commercially, without sharing the profits with the people who are part of the project.

Then, participants were presented with a scenario in which a publishing corporation, did not contribute to Wikipedia in any way, will take the content they have helped create, start distributing and charging money for it, and not share the profits with those who created it. In the second stage, participants were asked again, using the same set of items presented in the first stage.

Preece *et al.* (2004) have identified reasons for non participating in MSN bulletin board communities; and, they found:



- Reading and browsing are enough
- Need to know more about the group
- Shyness
- Nothing to offer
- There is no requirement to post
- Others have said the same information
- Want to remain anonymous
- No intention to post
- Not enough time
- Do not know how to post
- Low quality group (and/or messages)
- Delay of getting response
- Concern about aggressive responses
- Too many messages
- Fear of commitment
- Poor treatment from another member

Do motivational reasons differ across nations?

Data is collected by web-based survey

**Canada**

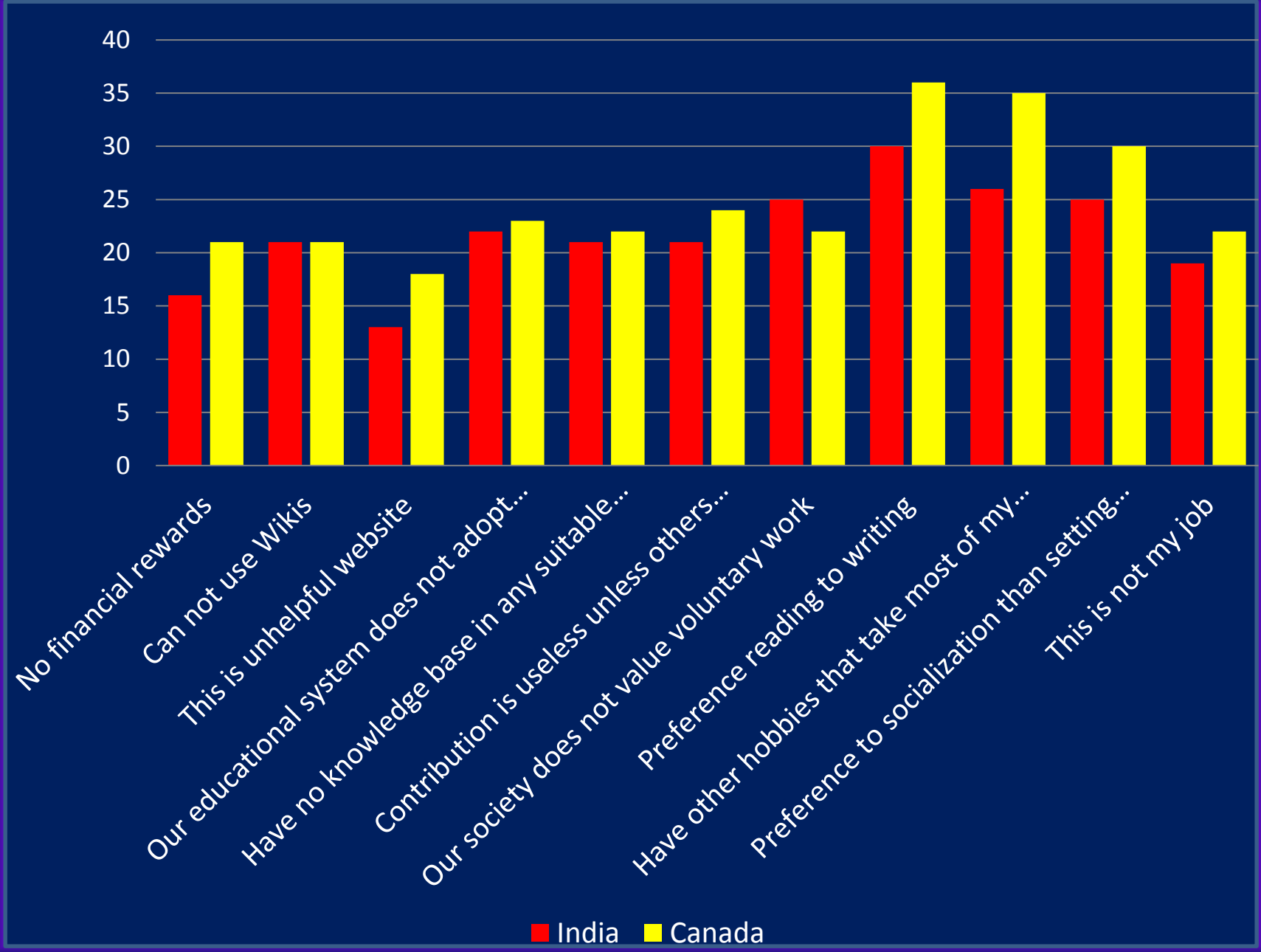
Western/developed/individualist country

X

**India**

Eastern/developing/collectivist country





India Canada



## Findings:

ICT literacy is an issue for both developing countries and developed countries.

Social engagement like socialization activities and practicing some hobbies (or sport activities) may distract individuals from contribution from developed countries.

Free-riding is high in both developed and developing countries.



Individualism may impact people not to contribute ('No financial rewards' and 'It is not my job').

## References:

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Jeffrey, AR, Il-Horn, H & Sandra, AS 2006, 'Understanding the motivations, participation, and performance of open source software developers: A longitudinal study of the Apache projects', *Management Science*, vol. 52, no. 7, p. 984.

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Thank You

Questions!

