

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ghost of Isaac Newton Vandalizes Rival's Wikipedia Article

THE INTERNETS — One of the greatest academic rivalries of all time, long thought ended, has been reignited as the ghost of British natural philosopher [Sir Isaac Newton](#) (1643-1727) has somehow gained access to the internet and made several unfavorable edits to the Wikipedia entry of his German contemporary [Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz](#) (1646-1716).

According to the Wikipedia archive dated 7 March, while they were alive, Newton and Leibniz disputed over scientific matters like whether Leibniz's calculus was discovered independently of Newton's, the meaning of the theory of universal gravitation, and the philosophical tenet of hylozoism. According to the Wikipedia archive dated 16 March, their dispute centered largely around Leibniz's body odor, his sexual impotence, and whether he would have been better described as a "pompous horfe's ass" or a "right pompous horfe's ass".

The distinctive changes were not noticed until after they had been copied and pasted into 2,783 high school physics essays throughout the world. Claimed one teacher, "This is why I tell you never to use Wikipedia. You never know who edited it, including the disembodied essence of a mean spirited 17th-century scientific genius out for revenge."

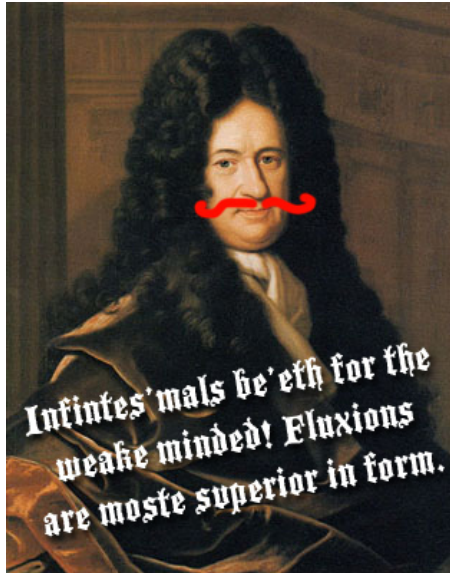
The changes have all since been traced back to a single account – TrinityLad43 – which has been confirmed through investigations by Dr. Egon Spengler (formerly of Columbia University) as the ghost of Isaac Newton himself. Spengler described one of the first items that tipped them off. "While historians of science believe Leibniz did wear an unbelievably massive flowing wig, of a style extreme even for his time, there is considerable doubt that he ever wore a ridiculous crimson moustache." Added Dr. Spengler, "Despite his having been dead for several centuries, it seems our Mr. Newton had no trouble acquiring at least some rudimentary Photoshop skills."



"You know, Ike, I actually thought you were characterized unfairly in *The Baroque Cycle*. But even as a ghost, I see you're still the same old shifty bastard. You and Gottfried were both geniuses in the eyes of God, so just let it go. Also, don't cross the streams."

Additional text edits made to both the English and Latin Wikipedia articles on Leibniz by TrinityLad43 include:

1. Replacing all mentions of the title of Leibniz's book "Theodicy" with "The Idiocy".
2. Adding "[citationem necitatae]" after almost every sentence related to Leibniz's work on calculus.
3. Changing "List of Publications" to "List of Plagiarizations".
4. Replacing "mathematician" with "imbecilic wretch" and "philosopher" with "addle-pated bvffoon".
5. Adding an entire section on lewd jokes about Leibniz's mother, supposedly popular during the 1710s.



Vandalized Wikipedia Image of German Mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Experts claim to have found some content digitally added to the original portrait by Christoph Bernhard Francke, circa 1700.

TrinityLad43's only other edits have involved augmenting the article "[Isaac Newton in Popular Culture](#)", and adding details on the care and grooming of [Powdered Wigs](#), although Wikipedia staff are on the lookout for suspicious changes to the pages on [Alchemy](#), [Astrology](#), and [Biblical Prophecy](#), occult matters which Newton increasingly dabbled in late in life, in addition to his more lasting contributions to physics and mathematics. "He was also a bit of a bastard when he was alive," explained

Wikipedia staffer Christopher Boo, "So naturally, we're carefully monitoring the [Asshole](#) and [Douchebag](#) pages for the kind of changes a mean ghost would make."

Despite the profound implications this development has for the afterlife, theology, spirituality, and the human condition, most of the response among the Wikipedia community has exclusively focused — as it always does — on how it impacts Wikipedia's editing and citation policies. The article on Leibniz has been temporarily locked to further editing, as a council of Wikipedians discusses at agonizing length the legitimacy of the edits. Additional debate centers around whether Wikipedia policy on "biography of living persons" should be amended to exclude "living".

The ghost of Leibniz has yet to make his presence known on the web, most likely since the eminently reasonable scientist and philosopher probably let the whole calculus battle thing slide centuries ago. TrinityLad43 himself could not be reached for comment, as he was now evidently thoroughly engaged in a flame war regarding "The New Phyzicks" on the Cambridge Rindge & Latin School AP Calculus message board.

