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Flashlight: Using Bizup's BEAM to Illuminate the Rhetoric of Research

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FLASHLIGHT

USING BIZUP'S BEAM TO ILLUMINATE THE RHETORIC OF RESEARCH

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THE CLASSIC QUESTION

WHAT IS A PRIMARY SOURCE?

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RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

1. Three academic books
2. Five peer reviewed journal articles
3. no more than two websites
4. no Wikipedia!

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INFORMATION SOURCES AS CONTAINERS

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A BIGGER ISSUE

WHAT DO WRITERS DO WITH SOURCES?

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JOSEPH BIZUP

BIZUP'S BEAM

Background	• Present Information, Establish Facts
Exhibit	• Explicate, Interpret, Analyze
Argument	• Affirm, Dispute, Refine, Extend
Method	• Critical lens; key terms, theory, style, perspective, discourse

KUNDAI CHIRINDO
PARTNER IN BEAM

OK, I GUESS I AM DOING THIS.

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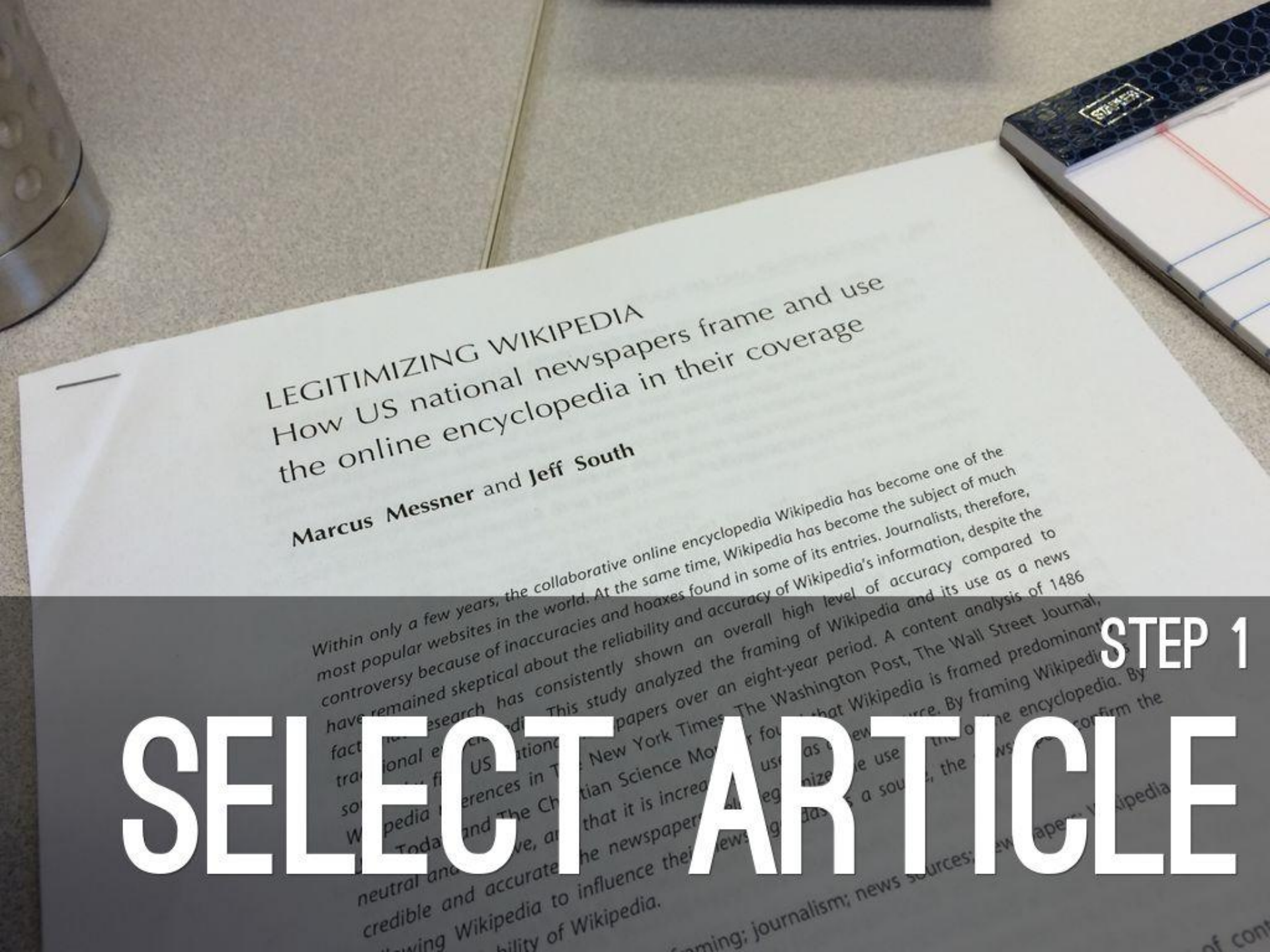
LEGITIMIZING WIKIPEDIA
How US national newspapers frame and use the online encyclopedia in their coverage
Marcus Messner and Jeff South
Within only a few years, the collaborative online encyclopedia Wikipedia has become one of the most popular websites in the world. At the same time, Wikipedia has become the subject of much controversy because of inaccuracies and hoaxes found in some of its entries. Journalists, therefore, have remained skeptical about the reliability and accuracy of Wikipedia's information, despite the
STEP 1
SELECT ARTICLE

STEP 2

FLAG TEXT

websites. The problem with this compilation of citations, however, is the same as with Wikipedia itself. The list was created by Wikipedia contributors and is by no means a comprehensive collection.

Previous research has not attempted to systematically quantify and evaluate the use of Wikipedia as a news source on a broader scale. The goal of this study, therefore, was to examine the framing of Wikipedia and the use of it as a news source. A content analysis of national newspapers—*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today* and *The Christian Science Monitor*—was conducted to explore how the encyclopedia is covered, and how it is used. The results of this study lead to a better understanding of whether Wikipedia is still greeted with skepticism or whether it has been accepted by the newspapers as a credible source of information. The framing and use by newspapers also has agenda-setting implications on the public's view on Wikipedia, as certain frames of media coverage and news sources have the potential to shape public opinion. Overall, this study helps to evaluate the level of legitimization for Wikipedia.

Framing of Wikipedia

McCombs (2005) defined five stages of agenda-setting theory: (1) issue agenda-setting, (2) attribute agenda-setting, (3) psychology of agenda-setting effects, (4) sources of the media agenda, and (5) consequences of agenda-setting. This study explores two of these areas: how attributes in media coverage frame the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, and how the media use it as a source.

According to Gamson (1989), framing theory helps to analyze how certain attributes of information are emphasized over others. It is important to understand how the media frame an issue when there are a variety of options to present the information. The selection of specific facts and their interpretation have the potential to shape public opinion and influence the public's agenda (Mahon and Wartick, 2003). When journalists choose a frame for an issue, they make a consequential decision that will influence the story, but also its reader's perception of the issue (McCombs and Shaw, 1993). Wanta et al. (2004) stressed that the public learns the importance of an issue based on the amount of

STEP 3

FLAG CITATIONS

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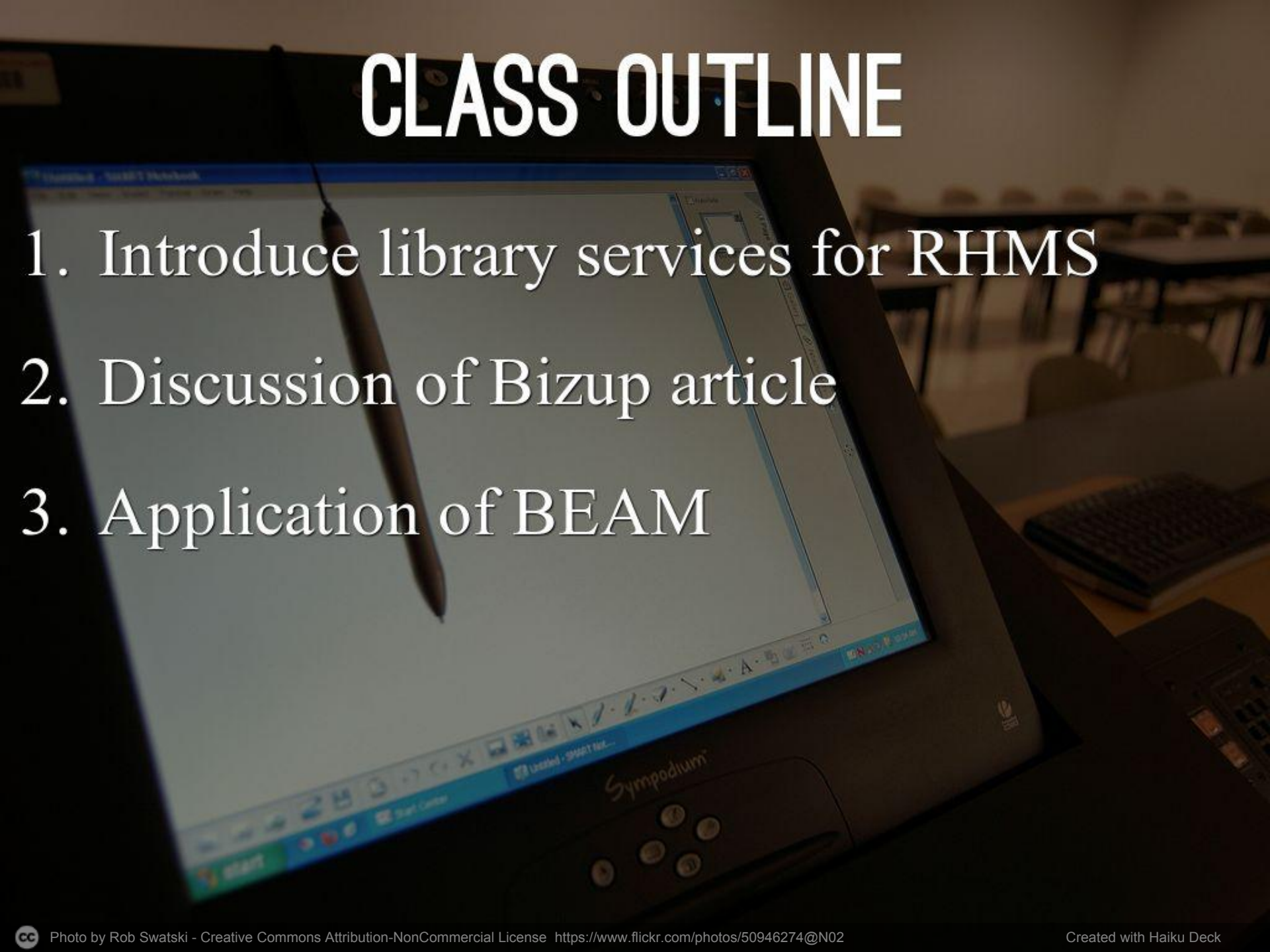
CLASS OUTLINE

1. Introduce library services for RHMS
2. Discussion of Bizup article
3. Application of BEAM



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APPLICATION OF BEAM

1. Distribute flagged articles
2. Student volunteer reads abstract
3. Independent analysis
4. Groups of three discuss
5. Groups report out

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HOW IT WENT

- Students engaged
- Students reticent
- Aha moment

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OUTCOMES

- 19 research consultations
- Quality of papers increased
- A professor converted
- An effective inroads established

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REFLECTION

- BEAM for reading AND writing
- BEAM for practicing rhetorical criticism
- Application for other disciplines?

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OTHER LIBRARIES USING BEAM

Bard High School Early College - Manhattan
Brookdale Community College
California State University Maritime
The George Washington University
High Point University
Illinois Wesleyan University
St. Olaf College
Portland State University
University of Baltimore
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Wisconsin Milwaukee
Westminster College
Worcester State University

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Portrait of Kundai Chirindo by Kate Rubick.

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