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## Wikipedia edit labeling Snowden a ‘traitor’ came from a House of Representatives computer

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They say that history is written by the winners, but in the age of Wikipedia and Twitter, history is flexible, changeable, mutable, and not necessary written by the winners or even by the sane.

This is the takeaway from a strange campaign by some House of Representatives members or staffers to rewrite and revise Wikipedia articles to their political liking and a new Twitter account set up to tweet out the edits immediately.

The most recent episode came today when someone using a House IP address revised a Wikipedia page about Edward Snowden to refer to him as an “American traitor who defected to Russia.”

The Wikipedia page was that of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay. Pillay had said during July that the world owes a “great deal” to Snowden and called him a “human rights defender.”

The rogue editor in the House wrote in that Pillay had taken “criticism for referring [*sic*] to Edward Snowden, the American traitor who defected to Russia, as a ‘Human Rights Defender’ and saying that he should not face trial for his crimes.”

News that the edit had been made was quickly tweeted out on the @congressedits Twitter account.

The “traitor” reference was immediately zapped by another Wikipedia user, who said the entry used “loaded wording.”

The Snowden edit is just the latest in a string of Wikipedia “history management” edits emanating from House offices, and it’s thought that the existence of that Twitter account, @congressedits, might be egging on the crafty editors in the House to do more, and get more attention.

The last one came on July 24, when someone in the House called the news site Mediaite “a sexist transphobic outlet.” The revisionists were banned from editing Wikipedia pages for 10 days.

And before that, someone using the same IP address edited Wikipedia pages about “Moon landing conspiracy theories,” and the ice cream “Choco Taco.”

Most of the edits picked up by @congressedits are minor: fixes for punctuation, spelling, and citation errors. But it’s interesting to see what Wikipedia pages are viewed by people working in Congressional offices.

Today on @congressedits you can see edits to a pages about the Kennedy assassination, the Cato Institute, the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, the “Right to be Forgotten,” and Chelsea Manning.