

Market Research and Stakeholder Mapping for Liberata: Incentivized Open Access Academic Publishing

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BASS CONNECTIONS



HART LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

CURRENT STATE OF ACADEMIC PUBLISHING



- The misaligned incentive structure of today's academic publishing system obscures credit and undermines trust.
- 100M+ hours spent on peer review in 2020 (~\$1.5B unpaid labor)
- A 2016 Nature survey of 1,576 researchers found that over 70% reported failing to reproduce another scientist's results, and more than half had failed to reproduce their own.
- The top two journal houses (Elsevier & Nature Springer) get \$5 billion in annual revenues, with 30-40% profit margins, almost all taxpayer funding for science they will never be able to access freely.

REFERENCES

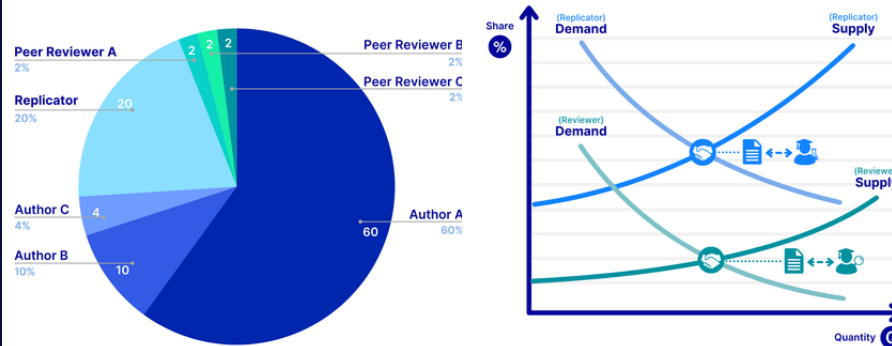
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LIBERATA ACADEMIC PUBLISHING SYSTEM

Shares Based Credit Academic Marketplaces



- Liberata aims to merge open access publishing with rigorous quality control for academic research by redesigning incentive structures.
- Supported by Duke University's Bass Connections Initiative.
- Traditional authorship positions replaced with contribution shares → transparent and accurate credit assignment.
- Shares traded on marketplaces for peer review and replication services → rewarding quality controllers for making the work better.

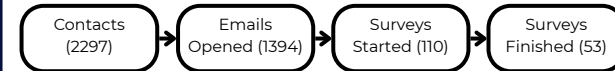
PROJECT GOAL

- Conduct Liberata's pre-launch market research initiative
- Identify all stakeholders in academic research and publishing.
- Understand pain points for all stakeholders
- Map existing Liberata features to pain points, identifying key value propositions and potential missing features.

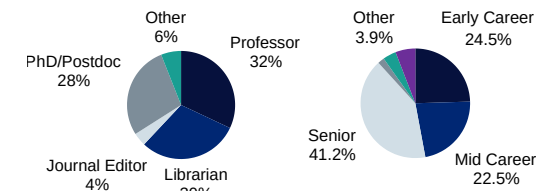
METHODOLOGY

- Randomly select ~2500 academic stakeholders across the 125 top ranked universities with the following breakdowns.
- By stakeholder group: (1.) professors 40%, (2.) postdocs 40%, (3.) librarians 10%, and (4.) journal editors 10%.
- By academic discipline: (1.) natural sciences & engineering 50%, (2.) social sciences & humanities 50%.
- 2-part design: 10 min Liberata explainer video → Qualtrics survey
- Design survey to capture nuanced feedback (open ended responses).
- Incentivize long form feedback and sincere effort.

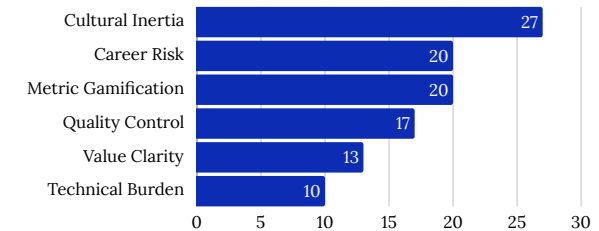
MARKET RESEARCH RESULTS



Respondent Breakdown



Primary Concerns



Identified Personas



Recommendations

- Reduce career risk with ORCID integration.
- Adoption from grant agency endorsements.
- Recognition from university tenure criteria.
- Explainers and simple demos of Liberata shares, marketplaces, incentives, & metrics.
- Release beta version for testing/feedback.
- Expand outreach to Reddit, Twitter/X, etc.)

Takeaways

- Leadership = listening before building.
- Systemic reform requires patience, humility, and advocacy.