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ACADEMIA.EDU IS A PLATFORM FOR ACADEMICS TO SHARE RESEARCH

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Academia.edu is a social networking website for academics. It was launched in September 2008 and had over 21 million registered users as of April 2015. The platform can be used to share papers, monitor their impact and follow the research in a particular field. Academia.edu was founded by Richard Price, who raised \$600,000 from Spark Ventures, Brent Hoberman and others. It is not a university or institution for higher learning and so under current standards would not qualify for the EDU top level domain. The domain name "Academia.edu" was

registered in 1999, prior to the regulations which required .edu domain names to be held by accredited post-secondary institutions. All .edu domain names registered prior to 2001 were grandfathered in and not made subject to the regulation of being an accredited post-secondary institution. It is a participant in the open science or open access movements, responding to a perceived need in science for instant distribution of research and the need for a peer-review system that occurs alongside distribution, instead of occurring before it.



Richard Price-Founder & CEO



Ben Lund-CTO



Kevin Wu-Software Engineer

Figure-1: Core personnel of Academia.edu

Academia.edu is a platform for academics to share research papers. The company's mission is to accelerate the world's research. Academics use Academia.edu to share their research, monitor deep analytics around the impact of their research, and track the research of academics they follow. In November 2011, Academia.edu raised \$4.5 million from Spark Capital and True Ventures. Prior to that, it had raised \$2.2 million from Spark Ventures and a range of angel investors including Mark Shuttleworth, Thomas Lehrman, and Rupert Pennant-Rea. As of March 2014, Academia.edu claimed to have raised \$17.7 million from Khosla Ventures, True Ventures, Spark Ventures, Spark Capital and Rupert Pennant-Rea.

Table-1: Academia.edu

Headquarters	San Francisco, California
Area served	Worldwide
Founder(s)	Richard Price
Employees	19
Website	academia.edu
Alexa rank	829
Type of site	Platform for sharing research papers
Registration	Free
Available in	English
Launched	September 2008
Current status	Active

For about five years, Richard Price and the team at Academia.edu have been quietly building a social networking platform for academics and researchers. For years, it was slow going. It took three years for the company to get its first million users while mainstream consumer social networking platforms like Twitter were taking off. But now, Academia.edu boasts 4.3 million users — perhaps around one-quarter of an estimated 17 million academics globally. They have been picking up about 1 million new users every three months. And to mark that progress, the company is picking up \$11.1 million in funding led by Khosla Ventures, with participation from previous investors like Spark Capital and True Ventures. Khosla’s newest partner Ben Ling joins the company’s board. The ultimate goal is to change the way scientific research is distributed and validated. Price envisions a platform where every research paper ever published will be freely available to the public.



Figure-2: Academia.edu as follow research & share research

The issue is right now, under the traditional peer review model where a handful of journals hold an overwhelming amount of power, research can be delayed by months or years before it can be consumed by academics in the field or even the public. Price says peer review is too limiting. A recent study reported that 88% of peer-reviewed medical literature isn't reproducible, making it hard for pharmaceutical companies and other medical device or health care companies to place bets on research. It is an open access to research will make it faster for academics to discover flaws. On the platform, academics manage a social networking profile but they can also publish papers and send out updates about upcoming talks or conferences they're attending. The platform sees about 150,000 articles uploaded every month, including a few that have gone viral like this one on medicinal mushrooms or this paper titled. It has been established in a field, the core way you do that is to share your work. Papers uploaded to @academia get 83% more citations. Academia.edu is building a new way for scientists to publish and peer review academic papers. It's widely thought that science is too closed and too slow. Academia.edu is trying to change that. To date, over 18,000,000 academics have joined.

Academia.edu for its part is reportedly encouraging authors of affected papers to sign this Elsevier boycott petition despite the fact that their own terms of use prohibit the posting of content that infringes on the copyright or license of publishers such as Elsevier. Both Elsevier and Academia.edu are for-profit companies in the scholarly communications industry. Elsevier is a publisher while Academia.edu is a platform for scholars that, among other things, allow them to post copies of their articles online for the entire world to see. Both are trying to make money by adding value within the scholarly communications ecosystem. There is absolutely nothing wrong with that. They are a for-profit company that certainly understands exactly what their customers are doing. On the other hand, this is a stark reminder to authors just who owns their research outputs. It's not the researchers; it's not the repositories where they might post copies of their articles. It's the publishers like Elsevier who own their research outputs.



Figure-3: Platform for academics and research

Authors are caught between these two for-profit companies, one a massive dinosaur trying to protect its profit margins as it recalibrate to a new, more open world. The other a nimble start-up, trying to be a part of that new world. The road to that new world is full of bumps and false starts and blind alleys. Hopefully Elsevier and Academia.edu's troubles will help raise awareness about the fundamental unfairness of the current scholarly communications ecosystem. Academia.edu, however, is not an institutional repository. Nor is it a subject-based repository like PubMed Central. Nor is it a noncommercial pre-print server like the arXiv or the new bioRxiv. Nor, despite its ".edu" domain address, is it a not-for-profit academic initiative of any kind. Academia.edu is a venture capital-backed software company that seeks to derive revenue by selling analytics about the activities of its installed user base, much like Facebook, LinkedIn, Mendeley and many others. Central to its success, however, is the sharing of papers and the metrics around that activity. Or at least one might suppose it is central given this activity is enshrined in the organization's tag line: "Share Research."

Academia.edu, however, likely does not have the legal right to host much of the research that is being shared, both systemically and for its own commercial purposes, on its network. So how has Academia.edu managed to attract funding when its business model hinges on being able to share content that it may not have the right to share? Part of the answer lies in the "safe harbor" provision of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act that limits the liability of companies like Academia.edu (YouTube, Facebook, etc.) that often host content under copyright to third parties (like publishers) provided the content was posted by their users and provided they respond to take down notices from rights holders. Writing an academic paper is an undoubtedly arduous process. Getting it published and reviewed, however, is even more so. Academic papers are generally diffused through journals, which utilize an elaborate vetting process to make sure the best and the brightest papers get published. Journals choose the best works to review and then ask a peer group of two to three other academics to meticulously comb over the work.

This doesn't sound terrible, right? But on the other hand, the number of PhDs given each year is increasing, so we're it has been focusing a huge influx in papers written and research performed. This is causing some academic new-comers to fear that they may not be able to get their scholarly voice heard in the old peer review process.

Richard Price, CEO and founder of the startup Academia.edu, thinks now is the time to change this and today he is getting an extra boost, because the company has raised an \$11.1 million Series B round of funding led by Khosla Ventures. Academia.edu is an open-sourced platform for academics to submit and review papers.

CONCLUSION:

Academia.edu is a platform for academics to share research papers. The company's mission is to accelerate the world's research. Academics use Academia.edu to share their research, monitor deep analytics around the impact of their research and track the research of academics they follow. 22,424,563 academics have signed up to Academia.edu, adding 5,983,904 papers and 1,569,544 research interests. Academia.edu attracts over 36 million unique visitors a month. Academia.edu's motto, "share research," may sound like a godsend to scholars who want to do everything possible to make sure their work echoes far beyond the ivory tower. The pared-down social network lets users connect with colleagues, post their own publications and track the readership of their work—all without having to dig through photographs of people's cats and reactions to whatever is on TV.

It's a message with resonance, as the site's growth bears out. More than 7 million people have created academic profiles on the site, says Richard Price, the company's founder and CEO, with more than 800,000 joining each month. "Around 25 percent come back each month," he says, "which is a return rate comparable to Twitter's."

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