



Description

[ScholarlyHub](#) is the brainchild of Guy Geltner, a professor of medieval history at the University of Amsterdam. Along with other collaborators, he developed ScholarlyHub as a non-profit scholarly network and publishing platform. The aim of the website is to allow academics to publish, share, and access work without any financial constraints. This site also offers the potential to find and work with colleagues in similar fields and develop research/teaching projects. Furthermore, researchers can store datasets securely on the site and become a mentor to foster a proactive scholarly community.

How is ScholarlyHub Different?

Since an alternative to Academia.edu or ResearchGate was unavailable, ScholarlyHub marks a new focus entirely on scholarship alone. In addition, the timing of the non-profit site is also impeccable, since for-profit sites are having [recent conflicts regarding copyrighted materials](#). After two years of hard work, the site [launched recently](#), with a fund-raising campaign due in the next 10 days. According to [site functions](#), members will pay a small fee (\$25) to create a personal, project-related profile, with scholarly content. Members can also join existing networks or create new ones, and engage in a list of activities. Visitors can freely access content, search and download on the site, subject to a fair-use policy (per visit).

Presently, [venture-capital backed platforms](#) such as Academia.edu and ResearchGate are quite popular. However, they undermine a researcher's interest as their scholarly recognition is merely a product. Such profit-seeking entities can influence citation metrics that determine academic career success. Despite free alternatives, the reward of ScholarlyHub priced at \$25 per year, is the ability to own your own data.

Risks Involved in Venture-Capital Backed Platforms

Most academics are unaware of the potential pitfalls of for-profit platforms currently hosting their work. Foremost, [Academia.edu does not have an educational affiliation](#) despite the top-level domain. The site received [heavy criticism](#) after requesting a fee in exchange for site-based recommendations of academic publications. However, ScholarlyHub intends to waive the fees substantially to ensure access to a global network of academics. Although the fund raising target of €500,000 will be tough to reach, Geltner hopes scholars will share the projected vision.

The [premium feature](#), introduced in Academia.edu is yet another effort to charge academics for their work and “status”. Another motivation behind ScholarlyHub is to change the status quo of academics. It aims to prevent assigning status/percentile to rank scholars. This would lead to a better form of academic stratification.

Raising Awareness among Scholars

In order to accomplish this [shared vision of scholarly freedom](#), it is imperative that academics become aware of the existing platform’s undertones. While Academia.edu is not making a profit at present, venture capital backing means it will need to do so at some point. Otherwise, as a business model, it will be sold in parts or shut down.

Facebook and Google are clear examples of how free sites get transformed into for-profit sites. This would be the fate of for-profit [academic publishing](#) sites as well. The user then becomes a by-product to whom they sell ads while gathering information/analytics on the platform for the [academic publishing market](#). There is, however, surprisingly minimal awakening among academics to this parasitic relationship. Hence, they do not question the use of for-profit platforms as well.

ScholarlyHub aims to alert scholars to this existing business model, built on the free labor of academic input, including data and publications. Some academics have even considered regulating some sites to prevent commercial exploitation, although such efforts may only fuel the existing model. These sites are [not open access publishers](#) either, compared to University repositories; they just use the term to promote their portal. It is now time for academics to pay more attention and stop refusing to think about where they host their publications.

Collective Responsibility

As responsible academics, the goal of ScholarlyHub is to build a more ethical publishing system with shared governance. The effort to use scholarly labor in support of not-for-profit platforms is a practical alternative to the existing business model. ScholarlyHub encompasses this vision in collaboration with a diverse network of scholars. The success of such an effort will become plausible relative to the collective awareness and involvement of the academic community.

How do you think this initiative of ScholarlyHub will benefit the scientific world? Will it gain as much popularity as ResearchGate and Academia.edu?

Please share your thoughts in the comments section below.

Category

1. Promoting Research
2. Using Social Networks

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Author

daveishan