



**Emerging reputation mechanisms and platforms for scholars: all change**

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## Could not be a more important scholarly topic

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*The main currency for the scholar is not power, as it is for the politician, or wealth, as it is for the businessman, but reputation (Becher, 1989).*

## But traditionally been *very* narrowly defined

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- **Built around just one scholarly activity (research)**, one output of that activity (publication in high-impact factor, peer reviewed journals/conference papers) and on one measurement of that output (citations).
- If anything, practice more **endemic in highly competitive, global digital environment in which scholars find themselves**. All trying to establish and enhance a global digital presence and more people competing within the same narrow band of scholarly activity.
- Appointments made on H index scores and conveniently supplied by Google Scholar to individual, online community and employer. Publish (in high impact factor journals) or perish.
- Clearly, such a narrow view of reputation marginalises all the other scholarly activities and this skews scholarship and academia. Audience a secondary factor.

## Open science: the *game changer*

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- Thanks to Web 2.0/Open science/Science 2.0 disruptive technologies shaking up science and research, giving rise to new ways of working. Open access to scientific knowledge, citizen science and open peer evaluation systems
- Now evaluating and measuring scientific reputation in digital age really becomes a big challenge/goal:
  - **Need a more holistic profile of scholarly activities** that not only emphasise scientific excellence through high-impact publications, but also covers other scholarly activities and their reputation building aspects such as *teaching, mentoring, peer-reviewing, communication and outreach*.
  - **Includes "new profiles" of scholars with non-traditional academic backgrounds** (e.g. free-lance scientists), or even "new actors" in the field of science, such as citizen scientists.
  - **Takes account of new formats** for conducting, publishing and disseminating scholarship – blogs, online communities etc.

## Which takes us to our project

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- Market has not been slow to take-up the challenge and come up with all kinds of emerging reputational platforms and mechanisms.
- EC, a major proponent of all things open, and emboldened by success with OA, commissioned an investigation of market and its stakeholders to stimulate growth and good practice encouraged (too important to leave to market)
- *Proceeding from the notion that in the globalised, competitive, Science 2.0 driven, knowledge-based society of today the future hinges on research, innovation and education for all, these initiatives call for a redefinition and reconstruction of the academic enterprise and the roles of its principal stakeholders, the Higher Education institutions and the scholars they employ. In this context, focussing on the quest for reputation, indubitably a central pursuit of the scientific endeavour on both the individual and the institutional level.*

# Definitions

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- First we need an audit of scholarly activities in the digital age. Identify ones that could/should/can/now contribute towards reputation.
- Second what are emerging platforms reputational and mechanisms and what are their characteristics?



# 1. Scholarly activities (58)

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- **The scholarship of research** (discovery): 24 discrete activities identified, including obtaining funding, dissemination and peer reviewing. Most activities – says a lot.
- **The scholarship of integration**, the arraying of extant knowledge, often within a wider, cross-disciplinary context. 10 activities, including literature reviews, textbooks, collaborative, inter- or multi-disciplinary projects.
- **The scholarship of application**, the application of disciplinary knowledge and skill to societal/practical problems. 10 activities, including consultancy and popularizing science.
- **The scholarship of teaching**, the conveying of the human store of knowledge to new generations. 9 activities, including PhD supervision and conducting a social networks based, participatory MOOC.
- **The scholarship of co-creation**, participating in scholarly research with the public (Citizen Science projects, for example). 5 activities.

*All the activities identified, bar none, found to have reputation-conferring goals and potentials.*

## 2. Emerging reputational platforms and mechanisms

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- Websites that utilise social media/networks/Web 2.0, which offer, usually as part of a portfolio of services, the opportunity to build, promote and measure reputation. Do by providing mechanisms for conducting various scholarly activities and enabling quality or impact of these activities to be measured, demonstrated, compared and, sometimes, rated in the form of scores that can be viewed by whole community.
- Identified 25 that made the grade (and available in EU). None comprehensive and any scholar would have to use a number.



# Individual emerging reputational platforms

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Type of platform	Name of platform
Altmetrics	ImpactStory
Citizen Science	FoldIt, Socientize
Code repository	GitHub
Data repository	Dryad
Discipline specific	BiomedExperts; Epernicus; myExperiment; Scitable
Electronic laboratory notebook	Labfolder
Multidisciplinary social networking	Academia; Academici; LabRoots; MyNetResearch; MyScienceWork; Profology; ResearchGate
Open Peer review	Peer Evaluation
Outreach	Kudos
Professional social networking	LinkedIn
Q & A Sites	Stack Overflow
Reference management & social media	BibSonomy; Mendeley
Review system for MOOCs	CourseTalk
Social learning	Edmodo

# Scholarly activities supported

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- From **58** activities identified **22** are **supported (but heavily skewed towards research)**
- Activities supported include:
  - **16** research (activities related to releasing and disseminating research outputs especially well-supported)
  - **3** teaching
  - **2** application
  - **1** integration
  - **0** co-creation

Have come a long way from Google Scholar and emerging platforms barely 5 years old, with nearly 30 million scholar users. And platforms still experimenting and growing.

## What do scholars make of them?

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- Literature review
- Focus groups and interviews in 4 EC countries (France, Spain, Poland, Switzerland) from humanities, social science and science
- Questionnaire survey – all subjects and all European countries

# Scholarly activities contributing towards scholarly reputation

- **Research** contributes most with conducting research, disseminating research results via journal articles/books and collaboration getting highest ratings, with **over 95%** of scholars rating as **very important/important**.
- **Disseminating research via blogging/tweeting** least important of 18 activities (**24% important/very important**). Could be a reputational risk
- **Disseminating research via social networks** fared better with **45%**.
- Another activity regarded lowly, but not as lowly as blogging, is **management/administration**, with **25%** saying its important/very important.
- **Employers** rate social networking and blogging lower. But biggest difference regarding **management** which is considered much more important by employers.

Activity	Ranking
Conducting research	1
Disseminating research results via journal articles/books	2
Collaborating in research	3
Disseminating research results via conferences	4
Peer reviewing	5
Taking part in inter- or multi-disciplinary projects	6
Serving one's community through activities such as editorship, society posts	7
Production of literature reviews and textbooks	8
Conducting application-oriented research	9
Teaching	10
Consultancy for industry and government	11
Popularisation of scholarship	12
Designing courses and programmes	13
Production of open educational resources	14
Conducting research with lay participants	14
Disseminating research via social networking	16
Administration and management	17
Disseminating research via blogging/tweeting	18

# Use of emerging platforms

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- ‘Lite’ and patchy usage commonly associated with platforms and used for other purposes, such as accessing publications (but so too for Scopus and GS). Not many engaged or ‘social’ users.
- ResearchGate (2008/9-) used most. 77% used it a lot or a little, with only 10% saying never heard of it. LinkedIn second most popular (69%), but one most had heard of.
- Early days, scholars still uninformed but growing rapidly. Exploratory stage of tech change
- Academia.edu boasts 18 million users and ResearchGate 6 million. Kudos has doubled users in last year. Galloping growth. We have ‘runners’.
- In contrast, 75% used Google Scholar, so not so bad and that been around 9 years

# Platform weaknesses

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- One quarter thought there are none and half did not know enough to say
- Biggest weaknesses:
  - They're not trustworthy'
  - 'They are open to gaming'.
  - 'Don't cover all my activities'



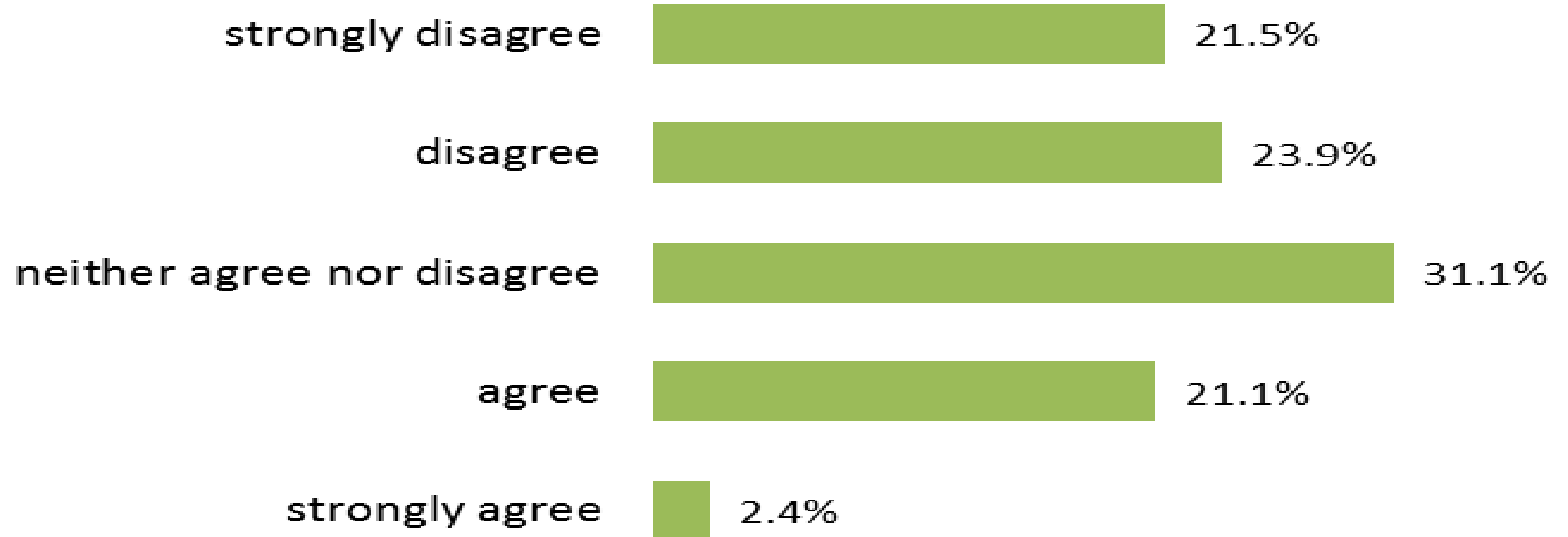
## Other reasons for none use

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- Lack of time. Researchers say have very tight working schedules and find it difficult to find time to use these platforms “enough” or “fully”. Holds true, even for researchers who are convinced of the usefulness and impact of these platforms.
- They currently do not carry the weight and authority of ‘official’ places where reputation and recognition can be gained

# Should social media metrics be counted towards your scholarly reputation?

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# Voices for and against

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## FOR

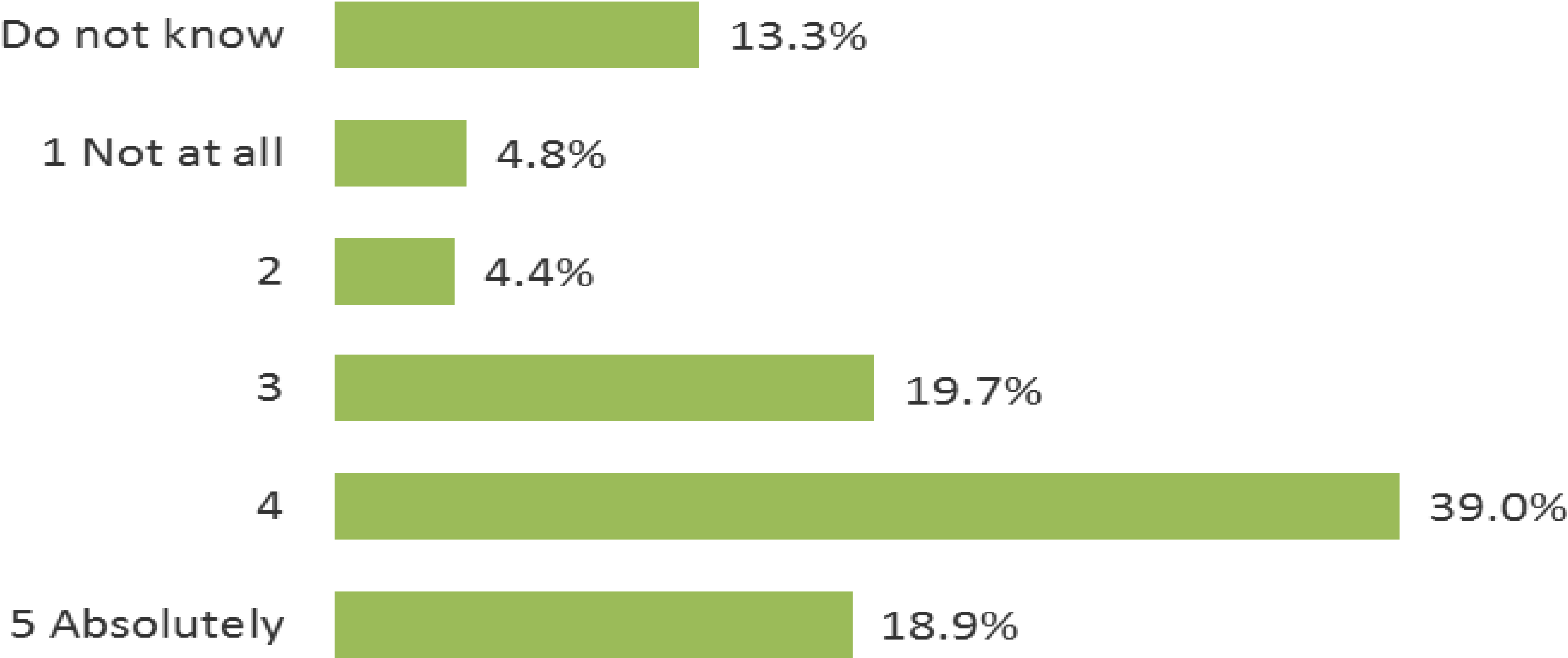
- *Today, social media has a better reach than any other communication tool to disseminate information. Therefore, good social media management will translate into a better reach of your target market or your report. You may be able, in an easy and inexpensive way, to get people to discuss your ideas.*
- *They represent a social impact, and a scholarly impact sometimes more interesting than the normal article/paper impact, because they enable a more fluid information exchange and a potential for network creation between researchers higher than by the regular academic channels.*

## AGAINST

- *They are more related to personal use, I do not want that my activity is related to how much I talk to other people. This is good to have a beer at pub, not for professional activity; not reflective of academic status or impact.*
- *Would only benefit researchers with a certain type of outgoing personality and be very detrimental for timid researchers, whom sometimes prefer to take more "thinking" time to dwell on research questions*

# Do you think 'reputational platforms' will become a more important force in the future concerning career development/progression?

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# Implications (positive and negative) for academic community

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## Positives:

- **Reputational platforms are here to stay.** As quest for prestige is inherent to scholarly undertaking, scientists understandably curious about practices that can furnish them with additional data as how they perform against colleagues. Platforms, enabling scholars to see statistical evidence on impact, usage, or influence of their work without too much effort, have potential to serve their reputational goals.
- **Clear benefits:** a) greater opportunities for *collaboration*; b) better understanding of who are most valuable *contacts* in specialism; c) more efficient *access* to research; d) attract *attention* of colleagues to your research/publications; e) make research and its impact more *visible* to a larger audience; f) be spotted by editorial teams, scientific authorities for jobs, collaborations etc.; g) build a dynamic *digital identity* you can control.
- **Young scholars will benefit most/ drivers of change.** Generally have a more encompassing view of reputation. Consider serving one's community, the production of literature reviews and textbooks, and the production of open educational resources to be more important for their careers. **Fast-track.**

## Positives (cont)

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- **Improvements on way.** Platforms embracing wider range of scholarly activities. Thus Kudos is addressing the 'esteem factors': editorial board membership, role as a reviewer, society posts, invites to speak at conferences, etc.
- **Some diversity, possibly showing early leaders/best practice.** Data shows strong involvement in UK, Italy, Germany and Spain. Female scholars and social scientists more favourably disposed towards social media and Science 2.0 activities.
- **There is momentum.** The emerging mechanisms market is large and getting larger, with several dozen, substantial reputational platforms available to European scholars. RG and Kudos are European.
- **Spurs on the democratisation of the academic community.**
- **Even non users think it's the future**



# Negatives

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- **Reputation skewed towards research.** Platforms reflect that reality. Runs counter to today's changing societal priorities, which see the future in the globalised knowledge society as hinging not only on research/innovation, but also on education for all, and calls for the opening up of scholarship.
- **Teaching elephant in room.** Much neglected. Very little excuse for this, in view of the goals and ensuing policy initiatives that have been driving the EC academic enterprise, which see research and teaching not only as mutually dependent and reciprocally reinforcing, but also as equally important.
- **A palpable mistrust of the social media and the open** what it can deliver in the way of reliable metrics and this stops a lot of scholars using emerging mechanisms. **Hippy science!**
- **Very little in the way of institutional support.** The usage of the platforms is very much left down to the initiative and skills of the individual scholar.
- **Algorithm add transparency.** An issue.
- **Tower of Babel.** Confusing multiplicity of ways of providing recognition for scholarly work. They vie with each other to establish their own reputation. Hierarchies once clearly established at the academy have become defunct.

## **And implications for libraries (and publishers)?**

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- Pure players driving the market
- Publishers playing catch-up
- Academic libraries beginning to offer bibliometric advice and providers of statistics (University of Leicester)
- Maybe there are other things, please volunteer...?

## More information

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For the full reports and PowerPoints see:

<http://ciber-research.eu/>; [http://ciber-research.eu/CIBER\\_projects.html](http://ciber-research.eu/CIBER_projects.html)