



Emerging reputation mechanisms and platforms for scholars

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Could not be a more important scholarly topic

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

- 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. Means that audience is now a secondary factor.

Open science: the *game changer*

- 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. freelance 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

- Market has not been slow to take-up the challenge and have 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 and open data, commissioned an investigation of this market and its stakeholders to see if growth could be stimulated and good practice encouraged (too important to leave solely 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.*

First we need to establish what we mean

- What scholarly activities could/should/can/now contribute towards reputation in today's 'open' digital age? Need to establish the new ground
- What are emerging platforms and mechanisms and what are their characteristics?

1. Scholarly activities (58)

- **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 for industry or government and popularizing scientific research.
- **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.

2. Emerging reputational platforms and mechanisms

- 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. Undertaken by providing mechanisms for conducting various scholarly activities and enable the quality or impact of these activities to be measured, demonstrated, compared and, sometimes, rated in the form of scores that can be viewed by the whole community.
- Identified 25 that made the grade (and available in EU), covering 22 (58) of the scholarly activities identified (next slide for list). None comprehensive and any scholar would have to use a number.

Individual emerging reputational platforms

| 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

- From **58** activities: **22** are **supported (but heavily skewed)**
- 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

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

What do scholars make of them?

- 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 towards reputation with conducting research, disseminating research results via journal articles/books and research collaboration receiving highest ratings, with **over 95%** of scholars rating as very important/important.
- **Disseminating research via blogging/tweeting** was least important of the 18 activities listed (**24% important/very important**). Could be a reputational risk
- **Disseminating research via social networks** fared better with a score of **45%**.
- Another activity regarded lowly, but not as lowly as blogging, is **management/administration**, with **25%** of respondents saying its important/very important.
- **Employers** rate social networking and blogging lower than scholars. Biggest difference in perceptions 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

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

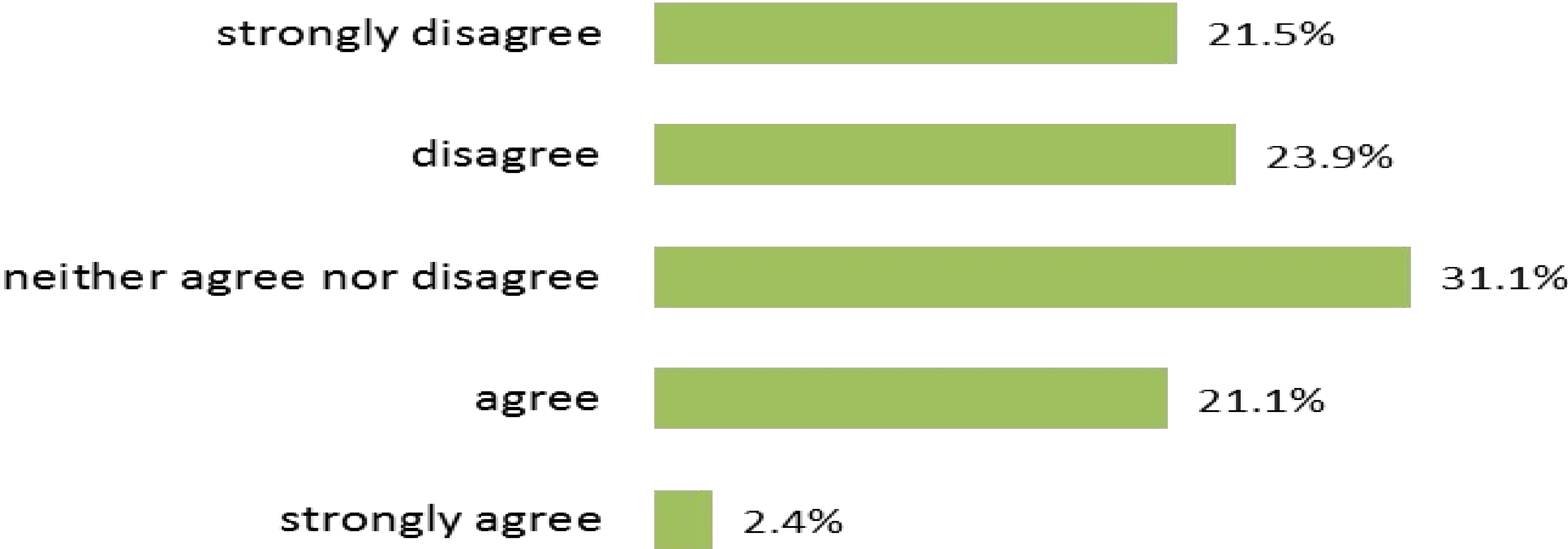
Platform weaknesses

- 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

- Main reason preventing researchers from using reputational platforms is a lack of time. Researchers say have very tight working schedules and find it difficult to find time to use these platforms “enough” or “fully”. This situation holds true, even for researchers who are convinced of the usefulness and impact of these platforms.
- Another drawback, related to above, lies in that they 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?



Voices for and against

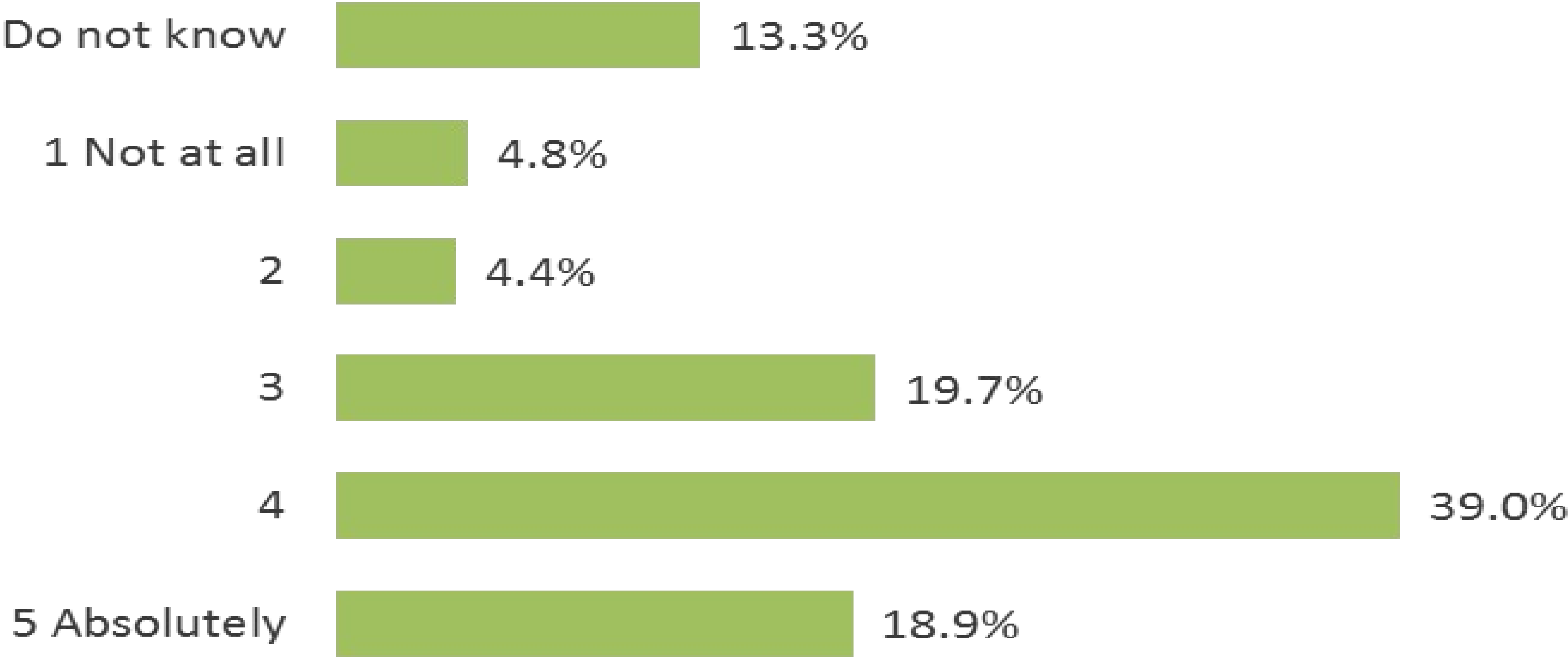
FOR

- *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

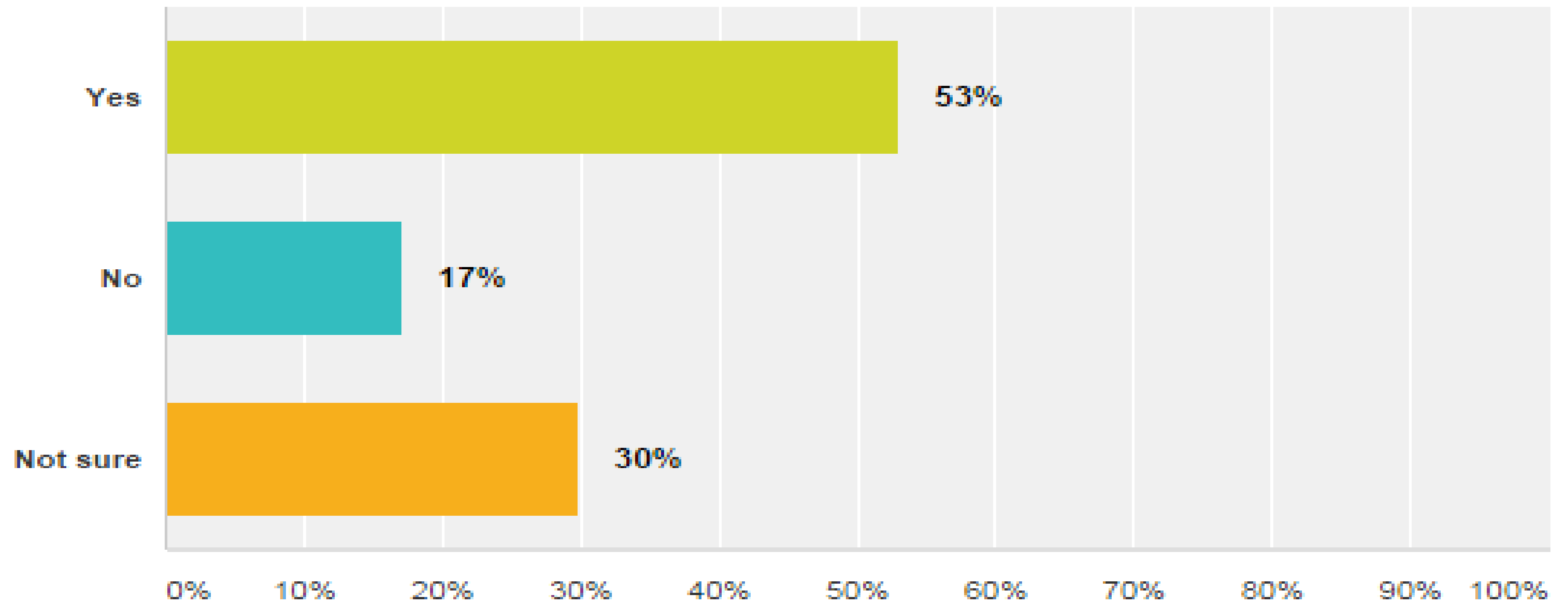
- *They are more related to personal use, I do not want that my activity is related to how much I talk to other people. This is good to have a beer at pub, not for professional activity; not reflective of academic status or impact.*
- *Would only benefit researchers with a certain type of outgoing personality 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?



Do you think that online services that help build, maintain and showcase scholarly reputation benefit young scholars more than established scholars?

Answered: 187 Skipped: 1



What are the implications (positive and negative) for the academic community?

Positives:

- **Reputational platforms will have lasting impact.** As quest for prestige is inherent to scholarly undertaking, scientists are understandably interested and curious about practices that can furnish them with additional information as to how they perform against their 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.
- **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.
- **Clear benefits:** a) greater opportunities for *collaboration*; b) better understanding of who are most valuable *contacts* in your specialism; c) more efficiently *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.

Positives

- **Improvements on way.** Soon reputational platforms to embrace a 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.** Kudos data show strong country representations for UK, Italy, Germany and Spain. Women and social scientists are shown to be more favourably dispossessed towards the social media and Science 2.0 activities.
- **Strong reputational market here to stay.** The emerging mechanisms market is large and getting larger, with several dozen, substantial reputational platforms available to European scholars. RG and Kudos are European.
- **Even non users think it's the future**

Negatives

- **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 to participants from the entire range of the professional-amateur-citizen spectrum.
- **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 what it can deliver in the way of reliable metrics and this stops a lot of scholars using emerging mechanisms.
- **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.** Too many voices.

And implications for libraries (and publishers)?

- 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 something?

More information

For the full reports and PowerPoints see:

<http://ciber-research.eu/>; http://ciber-research.eu/CIBER_projects.html.