Methodocracy Foundation Business Plan

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# Notes

The user base of our product, methodocracy.org, is effectively the same demographic as the donors to Methodocracy Foundation. Both groups will be treated interchangeably throughout this document.

# Executive Summary

Methodocracy Foundation is a technology nonprofit, a scientific and educational charity that develops a free website, methodocracy.org. methodocracy.org focuses on solving the world’s problems using the scientific method. It is a discussion network. Unlike discussion boards, which have a tree of posts, entries stand alone and can be connected together in limitless ways. Users collaborate to input data into a knowledge base.

The founder, chairman, and CEO is Zachary Hebert. Zachary, born in March 1994, was tested in the 99.9th percentile for intelligence, has accrued life experience in a variety of disciplines by taking risks and persisting, and is a highly motivated individual wanting to improve the world as much as possible before his death. Zachary’s principles are to lead an effective organization through delegation and trust, paced review of programs, introduction of data collection and visualization, and promoting a relaxed and fun working atmosphere.

The current academic community is broken. methodocracy.org will remove confirmation bias that is caused by being motivated to make headlines, ensure that experiments are designed, analyzed, and reported rigorously, ensure that experiments are replicated before being taken seriously, incentivize careful and proper peer review, make everything available for free, not tolerate sensationalism when reporting findings, host a web of debate surrounding science, involve the general population to take part in the debate as well as take part in citizen science, host bill drafting for the public sector, and host proposals for the private sector to implement any solutions that have converged using the scientific method to better problems in the world.

The general market is the industry of scientific publication, while the sub-sector (target audience) of that market that is being targeted is attendees and exhibitors of academic conferences. The target audience is chosen because it consists of both academics and policy makers.

Initial fundraising will cover 6 months of operating expenses, which is $149,039.82, plus a six-month operating reserve of $149,039.82. Crowd-funding and other initial funding will seek to raise $298,079.64.

Because Methodocracy Foundation receives most of it’s funding through the website, we kindly ask for you to endorse and refer your constituents to use methodocracy.org. Moreover, additional funding beyond the scope of the donation platform on the website is also needed, so we kindly ask for donations to Methodocracy Foundation.

# Product

## Elevator Pitch

methodocracy.org focuses on solving the world’s problems using the scientific method. It is a discussion network. Unlike discussion boards, which have a tree of posts, entries stand alone and can be connected together in limitless ways. Users collaborate to input data into a knowledge base.

## Business Overview

Methodocracy Foundation is a technology nonprofit, a scientific and educational charity that develops a website: methodocracy.org.

## Description

Users browse, search, and submit entries into the knowledge base. Entries can disprove, support, replicate, peer-review, allude to, expand upon, break down, summarize, etc. other entries. The website calculates and informs users the status of an entry's strength using this system. For example, an entry that has been replicated, peer reviewed, and where there are no entries attempting to disprove it is stronger. An entry is most meritable if it follows rigorous scientific, ethical, and practical philosophical methods. An entry is least meritable if it is just an opinion or comment, and is less visible when sorting. Lower merit entries should not be dismissed, however, because they often inspire more meritable entries to be submitted.

Methodocracy improves upon the idea of a discussion board. A discussion board merely has one type of connection relationship between two documents of information, the relationship between the parent and the child. Some discussion boards choose to order siblings based on post date, others choose to order siblings by vote count. There can be all kinds of relationships between two documents of information. Technology these days is full of knowledge bases, why not have the medium in which users are collaborating and debating be the very same knowledgebase that logs the resolutions for all time.

## Benefits

The number of benefits is far too great to list, focus will be put on the main points.

The current academic community is broken. methodocracy.org will:

1. Remove confirmation bias that is caused by being motivated to make headlines.
2. Ensure that experiments are designed, analyzed, and reported rigorously.
3. Ensure that experiments are replicated before being taken seriously.
4. Incentivize careful and proper peer review.
5. Make everything available for free.
6. Not tolerate sensationalism when reporting findings.

In addition, methodocracy.org does more than publish science. It hosts a web of debate surrounding that science and involves the general population to take part in the debate as well as take part in citizen science. The website will host bill drafting for the public sector and proposals for the private sector to implement any solutions that have converged using the scientific method to better problems in the world.

## Examples of Use

### Example 1

A research organization uses Methodocracy to upload their old experiments and create new entries for new experiments and the debate surrounding all of it. When a discovery is made and that something is causing harm in society, the organization---in collaboration with other organizations and the general public---get to work. They must be skeptical, not sensationalize their findings, find the complexities that are relatively closer to the truth than the initial black and white, and evaluate several possible action plans to remedy the problem. When ready, the project is presented to those who write laws and those who set company policies.

### Example 2

When two people in the real world are debating on whether a piece of information is correct, they can go to methodocracy.org to see what the community has come to a consensus on. This information is logged for all time so that it can be accessed through a centralized medium. Someone can choose to review the debate that occurred in the past to double check on its validity. Maybe new information causes the topic to be in controversy again.

### Example 3

Many groups of people want to reform society as a whole. In order for them to reach their goals, it is necessary to see if each one of their ideals is based on fact instead of opinion. Many fringe groups bring forth arguments that could easily be disproved by evidence on why things are the way they are. But having a platform like this allows these fringe groups the platform to debate in case there is some truth to be gleaned in order for society to improve.

## Mission Statement

To engage everyone in problem-solving, using the scientific method, ethics, and practical philosophy as the most meritable methods. To educate users on solutions by having the entire process transparent. To ensure that, through Methodocracy, humanity always has the ability to problem solve as much and as fast as possible.

## Vision Statement

To be known as the first place where thinkers and problem-solvers go. To ensure the survival of all. To take care of suffering and improve the quality of life for all now and in the future.

## Value Proposition

To connect research together into the larger debate.

## Future Development Plans

A section within the Methodocracy website will apply the same methods used on everything else to improve how Methodocracy Foundation is run, and to improve the design of methodocracy.org.

Once methodocracy.org is sufficiently providing better benefits than the current academic system, efforts will focus on gamifying the user experience. Note that the common conception of gamification is to make a product seem like a game by adding features that games tend to have. This is not necessarily true. Gamification has more of a user experience and flow approach to it, meaning it strengthens how much the experience of using the product engages the user.

Later, more AI algorithms will be used to apply meta-tags to the knowledge base. AI will also form connections and alter connections that would otherwise take human interaction to do. These tasks can be menial tasks that don’t require too much complex thought or algorithms to accomplish.

Eventually, Methodocracy Foundation will seek to provide a better social experience for the debates and collaboration that takes place within the methodocracy.org community.

## License and Git/GitHub Information

The open-sourced code and documentation of methodocracy.org and Methodocracy Foundation is protected by the GNU General Public License or GNU Free Documentation License. Methodocracy.org is free software: you can redistribute it and/or modify it under the terms of the GNU General Public License as published by the Free Software Foundation, either version 3 of the License, or (at your option) any later version. See [Appendix I: License](#_Appendix_I:_License) for more information. All code and documentation is available on the GitHub project at <https://github.com/methodocracy/methodocracy.org>

# Marketing Plan

## Market and Sub-Sectors of the Market Definition – Target Audience

The general market is the industry of scientific publication, while the sub-sector (target audience) of that market that is being targeted is attendees and exhibitors of academic conferences. The target audience is chosen because it consists of both academics and policy makers.

1. Scientific publications
   1. Attendees and exhibitors of academic conferences

## Trends of the Market

According to the article, “The 7 biggest problems science faces, according to scientists" (<http://www.clearerthinking.org/single-post/2016/08/30/The-7-biggest-problems-science-faces-according-to-scientists>) these are the issues the scientific community faces:

### **Academia has a huge money problem**

**Funding is difficult to receive, scientists start to rely on third party grants. This introduces problematic incentives for scientists.**

### **Too many studies are poorly designed**

There is pressure to make findings look more profound by verifying their hypothesis. Scientists use misleading tactics.

### **Scientists rarely replicate experimental results**

There is little incentive to replicate a study, producing new results is valued more.

### **Peer review doesn't work the way it's supposed to**

There is little incentive to carefully and properly peer review.

### **Scientific journal paywalls make reading results expensive**

Many publications are for-profit and but everything behind expensive subscription paywalls.

### **Science is often poorly communicated to the public**

Sensationalism is rampant with journalists and university PR departments, with scientists having little reason to correct the issue.

### **It's very hard to be a young scientist**

Long hours, low pay, short contracts incentivize conservative work, severe employer’s market, depression rampant.

## Need of the Product

Meetings between academics and policy makers allows the world to change according to our most recent findings. There is untapped potential within this demand, it could be utilized more often, with better and more research, and with better policy making tools.

In addition:

* The academic community is broken.
* There is no centralized environment for opinionated ideologies to debate using evidence so that we may glean truth from any of them.
* There’s not enough data analytics and performance metrics in policy making and policy review. Evidence-based research can start the process, which can lead to better performance management.
* All problem-solving results will be readily available. A knowledge base of this caliber does not exist.

## Direct Competitors

Scientific publications are our direct competitors. There are many of them so competitive forces are low. Because of the many problems in the academic field, competition should not be too difficult at first, it is possible to coexist with our competitors as yet another publication. We would be the first digital publication that is extremely robust and in-depth. Once our organization inspires others we may face more targeted competition.

## Competitive Advantage

The competitive advantage is the same as the benefits of the product. Having them one and the same makes competition easier. There are more aspects than what is listed below in which methodocracy.org will fix problems in the academic community, but these are the ways in which methodocracy.org will compete at launch.

The current academic community is broken. methodocracy.org will:

1. Remove confirmation bias that is caused by being motivated to make headlines.
2. Ensure that experiments are designed, analyzed, and reported rigorously.
3. Ensure that experiments are replicated before being taken seriously.
4. Incentivize careful and proper peer review.
5. Make everything available for free.
6. Not tolerate sensationalism when reporting findings.

In addition, methodocracy.org does more than publish science. It hosts a web of debate surrounding that science and involves the general population to take part in the debate as well as take part in citizen science. The website will host bill drafting for the public sector and proposals for the private sector to implement any solutions that have converged using the scientific method to better problems in the world.

## Distribution Channels and Promotional Efforts

The main distribution channel to bring new users and potential donors to methodocracy.org is current users posting links to methodocracy.org to back up their claims on the internet. Another distribution channel is endorsements and referrals by reputable sources, which can be achieved through press releases of accomplishments made through Methodocracy, and by networking. Once a user is engaged, they are likely to return to the website on their own accord.

The main way of soliciting donations is directly on methodocracy.org, similar to how Wikimedia does it with Wikipedia. The difference, however, is that the process is going to be properly gamified. Traditional methods for seeking funding will be used as well.

The most appropriate promotional efforts would be to crowd-fund with a site similar to Kickstarter, but with an alternative that best suits our needs. The focus of this promotion would be less on funding, and more on establishing brand recognition.

Funding will be encouraged to take place through the website or other public means so that Methodocracy Foundation meets the Public Support Clause of 501(c)(3) organizations.

# Operational Plan

## Objectives

* Ensure enough funding is coming in.
* Deliver on our competitive advantages, benefits, and value proposition.
* Problem solve and execute solutions within and surrounding methodocracy.org as much as possible.
* Use the very same methods that are used on everything to improve the design of methodocracy.org and to improve how Methodocracy Foundation is run.
* Adhere to our mission, or vision, and our values.

## Capital Equipment

* 3 computers
* 1 server

## Location

At launch, employees and volunteers would be working from home as a distributed team. This is most appropriate for this kind of work and also cuts down on costs.

# Organizational Structure and Management Team

## Organizational Structure

The board of trustees oversees the CEO (Zachary Hebert) while delegating control of the organization to the CEO. The CEO will hire two positions at launch, one web developer, and one grant-writer/fundraiser.

Board of Trustees

Zachary Hebert

CEO/CTO

Grant-Writer/

Fundraiser

Web Developer

## Management Team Description

### CEO – Zachary Hebert

Zachary, born in March 1994, was tested in the 99.9th percentile for intelligence and was put into the Seminar education program in K-12. Seminar is an advanced class program within the larger and more inclusive advanced program: G.A.T.E.. Zachary has accrued life experience in a variety of disciplines by taking risks and persisting, and is a highly motivated individual wanting to improve the world as much as possible before his death. Zachary’s principles are to lead an effective organization through delegation and trust, paced review of programs, introduction of data collection and visualization, and promoting a relaxed and fun working atmosphere. Refer to [Appendix II: Zachary Hebert Resume](#_Appendix_II:_Zachary).

## Board Description

N/A

## Expansion Plans

When Methodocracy Foundation receives enough funding, expansion will take place by hiring more web developers to start, then a CFO.

Board of Trustees

Zachary Hebert

CEO/CTO

CFO

Grant Writer

Web Developer

Web Developer

# Major Milestones

1. Assemble board and launch organization.
2. Finish prototype.
3. Secure initial funding using crowd-funding in addition to other sources.
4. Implement donation system on website.
5. Design website with goal of securing stable medium-term funds.
6. Implement design allowing for societal problems to be solved.
7. Solve a problem in society.
8. Promote methodocracy.org based on success of societal solution.
9. Secure stable long-term funds.

# Capital Structure Description

Methodocracy Foundation does not currently have any outstanding debt, loans, holdings, bonds, or endowments. There are no subsidiary relationships. Methodocracy Foundation cannot offer equity as it is a 501(c)(3) organization.

# Financial Plan

## Startup Expenses

A Statement of Financial Activities is used to calculate the startup expenses for the first year. The salary of the web developer is based on the average starting salary of about 60k. The salary of the grant-writer/fundraiser is based on the average starting salary of a grant writer, which is about 50k. The salary of the CEO will be 60k.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statement of Financial Activities** | | | | |
| **Methodocracy Foundation, Year Ending in 2015** | | | | |
| Changes in Unrestricted Net Assets: | Unrestricted | Temporarily | Permanently | Total |
| restricted | restricted |
| **Revenues and Gains:** |  |  |  |  |
| Public Contributions | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Program Service Revenue: | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Investment Income: | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Net Assets Released from Restrictions: | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| **Total Revenues, Gains, Other Support: (A)** | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Expenses:** |  |  |  |  |
| Program Services: | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Salaries and Wages | $ 170,000.00 | $ - | $ - | $ 170,000.00 |
| Employee Benefits | $ 75,510.00 | $ - | $ - | $ 75,510.00 |
| Payroll Taxes | $ 22,469.64 | $ - | $ - | $ 22,469.64 |
| Insurance | $ 15,000.00 | $ - | $ - | $ 15,000.00 |
| Rent | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Utilities | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Depreciation and Amortization | $ 300.00 | $ - | $ - | $ 300.00 |
| Office supplies | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Travel and entertainment | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Postage | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Equipment maintenance and Rental | $ 2,400.00 | $ - | $ - | $ 2,400.00 |
| Interest | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Furniture and equipment | $ 2,400.00 | $ - | $ - | $ 2,400.00 |
| Marketing | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Fund raising: | $ 10,000.00 | $ - | $ - | $ 10,000.00 |
| **Total Expenses and Losses: (B)** | $ 298,079.64 | $ - | $ - | $ 298,079.64 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Increase in Net Assets: (C = A-B)** | $ (298,079.64) | $ - | $ - | $ (298,079.64) |
| Net Assets as Beginning of Year: (D) | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |

Initial fundraising will cover 6 months of operating expenses, which is $149,039.82, plus a six-month operating reserve of $149,039.82. Crowd-funding and other initial funding will seek to raise $298,079.64.

# Considerations

Because Methodocracy Foundation receives most of it’s funding through the website, we kindly ask for you to endorse and refer your constituents to use methodocracy.org. Moreover, additional funding beyond the scope of the donation platform on the website is also needed, so we kindly ask for donations to Methodocracy Foundation.

# Appendices

## Appendix I: License

Copyright 2014 Zachary Hebert, Patrick Gillespie

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## Appendix II: Zachary Hebert Resume

Zachary Hebert

29055 Blake Ct.

Highland, CA 92346

M: (909) 270-6891

DOB 3/11/1994

alwayskeepcontents@yahoo.com

Skills

99.9 percentile intelligence, passionate, altruism, entrepreneurship, project management, social media, management, non-profit administration, leadership, strategic partnerships, business development, marketing strategy, start-ups, video games.

Education

San Bernardino Valley College, Business, Computer Science, Spring 2013 – Spring 2016

Homeschooled

Experience

FarSight Studios January 2013 – March 2014

Quality assurance (QA), promoted QA lead, promoted design work, producer

Snow Summit November 2012 – April 2013

Snowboard instructor

Various hospitality

Volunteer Experience

2014-present Founder, Chairman of the board, and CEO of Methodocracy Foundation

2016-present Pro Bono Strategic Partnerships

2009-2012 Home-front San Diego

2010 YMCA Volunteer Assistant Coach

2010 Habitat for Humanity

Interests

Entrepreneurship and business, setting up scientific and educational nonprofit: methodocracy.org, programming, web development, designing video and board games, creating adventures and being a dungeon master in Dungeons & Dragons, snowboarding, piano and composing, writing, Cub scouts arrow of the light, Boy scouts, improving the world.

References

Jose L. Cruz

Mentor – San Diego Counsel on Literacy (CEO)

(619) 277-5673

Norman Stepansky

Supervisor – FarSight Studios

(951) 201-4791

Jay Obernolte

Employer, Mentor, District Representative – FarSight Studios

jay@farsightstudios.com