

Building the Core Community

On any platform, reaching a critical mass of users is always a challenge. This paper contains my views on the kind of user we should target in order to build our core community as well as to maximize user retention and user reach in a saturated market, with a suggestion of existing Reddit communities that we could 'steal' with limited effort. This also includes my considerations on an expected income concentration on DATT and my thoughts what is 'content quality'.

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Why we should Target the Best and the Brightest

Besides the obvious fact that we're building a complex technology and product, most of the media currently focus on infotainment. This might sound like the way to go in 2015, but then again, how do you look different? Why would people come on your platform for more animal videos, funny gifs and the same *world news* that you already see everywhere?

Reddit is mostly infotainment by its choice of default subreddits. Furthermore, if we look at the current alternatives to Reddit, like *Voat*, *Snapzu*, *Stackcity* or *Bitvoat*, they have **mostly** the same content, and also the same outdated and flawed content management system (Up/Downvoting).

Considering that most social media currently compete to attract the masses with dumb and shallow content, having **better content** – and by that I mean something that is clearly more interesting to anyone and customizable – would give us a **decisive competitive advantage**, as well as reinforcing our branding. In the current market, I believe the cost of attracting a smart user is **cheaper** than its counterpart.

Why is it Cost-Effective to market the platform to smart, 'knowledge-oriented' users?

- Knowledge and learning is fun/erotic to a lot of people
- Beside fun, these users use Internet specifically to increase their knowledge/understanding of the World as an existential strategy (life quality, building wealth, building skills, competitive advantage over peers and opportunity input – stuff that is highly knowledge-dependent, today).
- Smart people are **actively seeking knowledge sources** – at the specific condition that those are reliable, and easy to use (cost/benefit).
- Smartness **transcends** hobbies, income, interests and jobs – which allows us to maximize social outreach.
- Smart users (we assume) aren't exactly satisfied with Reddit nor with anything on the market right now. Furthermore, Quality content is unlikely to improve on Reddit (rather the opposite) or on any other concurrent platform.
- Smart people usually **care about governance, politics and content quality**, are against censorship.
- Smart people have **more influence** in society (opinion leaders / trend makers) – we want/need these people to kick start the project.

Good Content and Wealth Concentration

Good content is also a way to make sure users stay on DATT even if they don't make money.

We should be highly aware of users' expectations. Monetizing something (which is what we're doing) means that users tend to focus mostly on money-rewarding behavior rather than charitable behavior.

For instance, Wikipedia works well because *no one* gets paid to write articles – this makes content writers have no pecuniary expectations and they work because they care about specific topics and questions. However, on a monetized platform, **if users fail to generate a ROI**, considering the time, energy and the money they invest in the system for voting/posting/viewing, they *could* lose interest in our platform.

On DATT, a lot of people will be expecting to make some money with their content. When they will talk about DATT, **mainstream press** will focus on the income making aspects and success stories of people making huge money on DATT, rather than the community and decentralization aspects; this will exacerbate these expectations.

Most users will be pouring money in the platform (and that's just fine), and won't be able to **generate any money, of very little, even if they try as hard as they can. Why so?**

A) Money Related Reasons

- Posting content and interacting on the platform will cost money
- A lot of people won't be interested in strong interaction and will **just lurk** on the platform
- People compete for money (people even compete for karma...)
- Money is in limited supply (in absolute and on the platform)
- Individual accumulation is unlimited
- Success is highly talent/skill dependent. Some users are **better than others** to produce content and to understand what 'likable content' is.
- Some people will (at some point) become professional content producers/managers/curators and outcompete casual users (think AirBnB).

B) Micro/Macrosociological Reasons

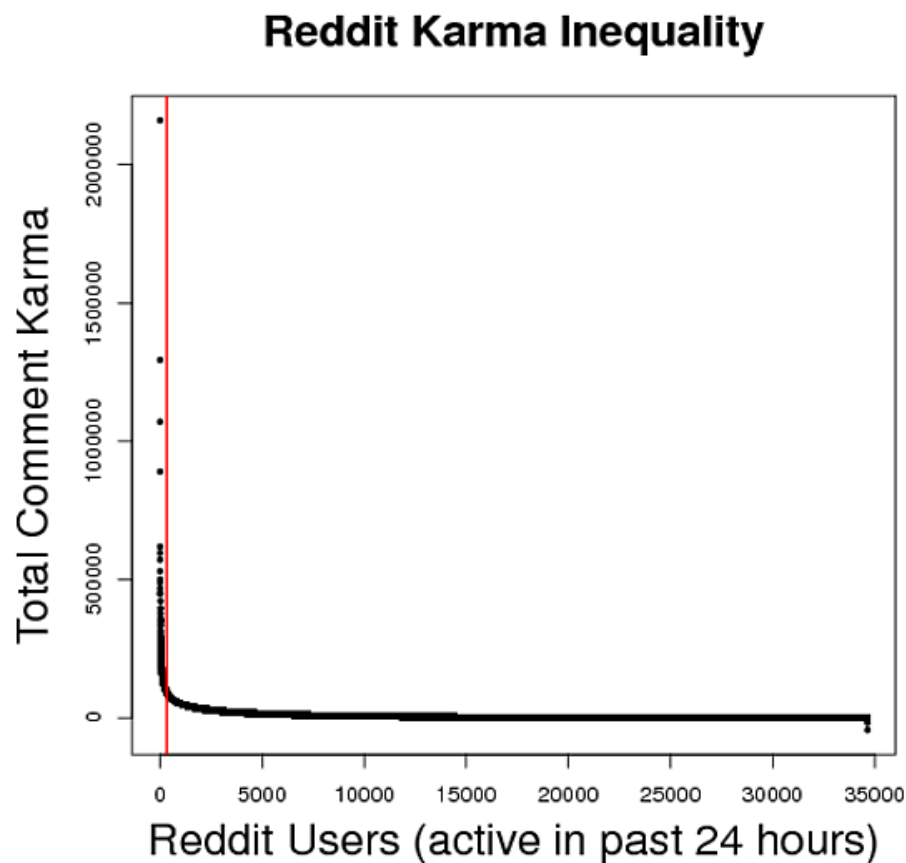
Humans community (digital or not) are inherently pyramidal. In a given social context, people at the bottom or at entry level positions always look at those at the upper layers (ex: rich people, celebrities, popular kids in high school, popular users, etc.) to infer norms and give meaning to social organization ; they also naturally tend to invest energy to get closer to them and know them better.

Furthermore, macroeconomics teaches us that entertainment – like food – is easy to substitute; multiple options can satisfy a single consumer.

Youtube is the perfect example of radical income disparities among content producing users: this happens precisely because most viewers don't spend a lot of time researching different channels to optimize their experience, and stick with popular content producers they hear about on the Web or are recommended by friends, as they satisfy their need in entertainment enough and allow additional socialization (something to talk about). This explains roughly why PewDiePie has **57 million followers**, despite the fact that there are certainly thousands of talented video game commentators trying very hard to become big on Youtube.

We can expect the same thing to happen on DATT: most users won't invest a lot of time and energy looking for less popular content/communities and will most likely stick with the most popular users/communities/curators on DATT; therefore participating to the wealth concentration.

Bottom line, **income distribution could look like Karma distribution on Reddit**. Here's a distribution of Karma on Reddit – and Karma has no actual use I know of. On Reddit, 1% of redditors have 20% of all the karma (also, data is 17 months old – shit is probably crazier by now).



Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/dataisbeautiful/comments/27zyh6/karma_inequality_1_of_redditors_have_20_of_the/

This redditor – despite analyzing limited data – estimates that the karma inequality is **drastically more severe**: https://www.reddit.com/r/theydidthemath/comments/3l4s9d/request_does_reddit_karma_follow_the_2080_rule/

However, we can definitely work our best to **design a product where money will be distributed** as much as possible on the platform. Besides that, I believe our best bet to keep users even if they don't make any money (which is, statistically speaking, very likely) is by have **outstanding content**.

What is Good Content/How do we Syphon the Elite?

Tough metaphysical question, right? I believe there are four dimensions to content quality:

1) Good content is specifically Tailored for you

By that, I wanna highlight the obviously subjective value of content; good content is good content for you only. This is the weakness of Reddit and the 'strength' of Twitter/Facebook.

I believe we can work around this problem precisely by introducing a system of content curators: Specialized users that you can follow: a bit like with Tumblr, your frontpage is updated following the content they picked recently and according to simple content hierarchy rules. I explained my idea of content curation in a **longer paper** that is on Github.

Currently, this **doesn't exist anywhere** on the web – this is raw competitive advantage.

2) Good Content is Exclusive Content

This is where Reddit shines: millions of users, experts on every topics; people with unique background/experiences; ask Reddit; AMA ; communities centered on the most specific, obscure topics, etc.

We should be able to do that once we have a big enough community (critical mass) – this is however definitely a deal breaker if we fail to do so... Have you come across a good *Ask Reddit* on Voat, yet? I doubt it.

Exclusive content is also the content people are most likely **down to pay for**.

3) Good content is Meaningful

People will click on memes and funny gifs if it's in front of them, but that shit will never make them dream, open new life opportunities and give them a feeling of mental satisfaction and communion with the world/universe. Infotainment is the shit we put in our brain when we fail to find something truly interesting.

It's a point I evoked earlier: users use Internet specifically to increase their knowledge/understanding of the World as an existential strategy (life quality, building wealth, building skills, competitive advantage over peers and opportunity input – stuff that is highly knowledge-dependent, today).

Good content is enlightening or useful; good content helps you becoming a better person and feel better. Good content improves your life like an intense philosophical or science discussion does.

4) Good Content is Concentrated

There's no randomness. Good content happens for specific reasons, in specific locations. Reddit, a bit like Oxford University, currently acts like a '**gravitational intellectual center**' for many different topics, attracting people looking **for optimal content sources in optimal social environment (gain/benefit)**.

Therefore, it's all about DATT being a better platform (no-censorship, P2P, etc.) that is more cost effective for our users (ease of use, awesome content) than Reddit. Then we pull users on DATT like gravity....

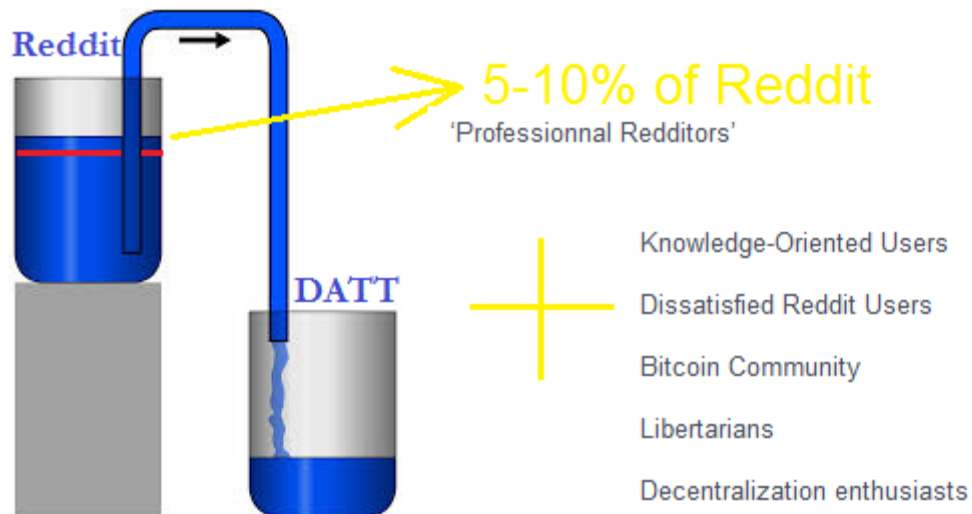


How to Syphon Smart Users in our Gas Tank?

This is where things get political

There are over 36 million registered users on Reddit. However, not all users contribute the same to the community. Considering current Karma distribution (see graph), we can assume there's **an elite fraction of users** that produce most of the best content we find. This is the ***soul*** of Reddit. If we get this 5-10% of users, we can also assume their departure will affect Reddit's content quality and slowly trigger an **unstoppable mass migration** towards our platform – like a Pythagorean cup.

Furthermore, if these “elite users” – that are significantly better than others to produce good content – can choose between a platform where they **make money** and another one where they don't, where will they go? The choice is obvious.



Critical Mass / Core Community

Targeting Existing Reddit Communities

Many communities of people are actively looking for platforms and institutions to promote what they do. Reddit, for instance, is implicitly down with most communities (neutral), but do not take a clear position in favor of them (what we could do). **Still in a micro-economic approach, if users have to choose between two platforms, in which one is neutral and the other one is supportive, they have an incentive to migrate.**

This means that for our initial growth step, we could attract a lot of people with minimal effort just by supporting what they do, rather than designing new features on DATT. As I exposed this earlier, the main strategy being to syphon each community to the point that we create a bigger '**gravitational intellectual center**' that will slowly pull everyone until the original subreddit runs dry. **Winner takes all; this is the law of Internet.**

Ideally, to maximize efficiency and user reach, chosen communities should be:

- (1) Currently looking for additional legitimacy and visibility; their common practices/interests are not mainstream (yet). Basically, we can offer them something Reddit or the rest of Internet does not.**
- (2) Somehow coherent with our technology/product (Experimental, Bitcoin; P2P money distribution).**
- (3) Big enough – obviously
- (4) Members share intellectual/personality/lifestyle characters (homogeneity of the population).
- (5) Not entertainment-based: users are in the community because they believe in something or have a direct advantage in belonging here – not just because it's only fun or cool. Fidelity and adhesion level is therefore higher – we can take advantage of this by supporting what they do.
- (6) 'Tight': interactions are positive and supportive, rather than trolling/defensive. People 'care' more about others in some communities than in others. Cohesion and solidarity will facilitate a mass, collective migration.**

My best bets for tight communities – each community obviously require a specific marketing approach.

A) r/nootropics (1++) (2++) (3) (4+) (5+) (6++)

Also called smart drugs (addheral, modafinil, fish oil, semax, etc). Very big for information workers and students, who want to increase their productivity, learning abilities and creativity. Booming industry but regulation is still a struggle. r/nootropics has 57k+ users and the LongeCity forum (dedicated to users interested in extending their lives/increasing their cognition) has 20K+ users.

Who uses nootropics ?

- Curious/Avant garde people/Risk takers/productive
- People that are generally interested into science, technology, futurology.
- Proactive people: you have to order that online and can't find most molecules in your drugstore
- People with extra money to spend
- Libertarian: generally hostile to regulations

Basically: **Exactly the users we want on DATT**

What do they care about?

- More research
- Lower cost, more accepted, more reliable sellers. In a nutshell: **getting noots' mainstream. This is where we can help.**

B) r/futurology : r/singularity, etc. (1++), (2++), (3+), (4+) (5+) (6)

If technology and futurology interest a lot of people, with many related news making the headlines of mainstream newspapers, more philosophical and speculative topics (singularity, for instance) are still reserve to an avant-garde.

If we can create THE place where are all the avant-garde, knowledge-savy people come discuss the latest news, ideas and discoveries, Reddit – which is a at the moment a major intellectual hub for these topics – will start declining. We can take advantage of the fact that content quality is quite low on Reddit.

Furthermore, tech-savy people are down with Bitcoin, and are the **perfect population** to try a blockchain-based experimental social media.

C) r/Gone Wild + related subreddits (1) (2+++ (3+++ (4-) (5- -) (6++)

Well, indeed, this is self/homemade porn. This might sound like a risky move, but embracing ethical, DIY, body positive porn, could be very smart - especially considering '**performers**' **can be tipped** for the content they produce.

- 800k+ members
- Cam porn is already a 'job' for many self-employed people + DATT wants to professionalize internet content production: this is the perfect match.
- Teenage selfie-porn is very controversial – which is good marketing.
- Possibility to attract of lot of people that are not even on Reddit right now.
- Fit in a libertarian, DIY, no middle-man, business, no censorship perspective.
- Porn is actually a content a lot of people are **down to pay for**, especially if it's cheap (micro-payment), easy, and if they know the money goes directly to the performer.
- **However, this might not be the kind of users we want.**

D) r/boardgames (1++) (2+) (3+) (4+) (5+/-) (6++)

I guess you guys were not expecting this one. The boardgame community is actually thriving: never have we seen so many new games (kickstarter helps a lot), blogs, youtube game reviews, new mechanics, boardgames café, etc.

The boardgame community seems to **unconditionally support** stuff that is boardgames related – boardgames are **almost political**; actually, they are if you consider BG are a resistance to digitalization of leisure, socialization and gaming.

Boardgames players are exactly what we're looking for: geeky, relatively independent from mainstream culture and smart.

Others alternative:

E) Crypto-currency + Libertarian + Anti-Reddit archipelagos

All these subreddits are made of people that are already down with what we do – ideologically or peculiarly. **We don't have to convince them**, we just have to say “Hey, we're there!” – which is still some PR work.

r/anarcho-capitalism

r/darknetmarkets

r/conspiracy

r/bitcoin

r/torrent

r/blackout2015

How to Make Good Content Blossom?

General guidelines:

- 1) **Having smart users.** This is the key. Smart people will want to see smart content and post smart content themselves. More smart content = more smart people. We're creating a virtuous circle / upward spiral.
- 2) **Setting standards:** If we ask our community to post cat pictures and dead bodies, they will. However, if we encourage them to discuss topics that are enlightening, mind opening and radical, they will too. Reddit, in its early phase, was initially seeded with **fake profiles posting links to simulate activity**. The key was that the links being posted were the kind of content the founders wanted to see on the site over time. That's a power we have as administrators: sharing our ideal of what good content is.
- 3) **Directing new users** towards community and curators we find the most interesting and thriving. This include having a set of 'default communities' for new users – this should also be the content you see on DATT if you're not registered yet. This is extremely important to have 'high quality default content', as potential users will come “**lurk**” become their join.
- 4) Find a fair way to deal with **undesirable content** (remember r/fatpeoplehate?) and also content we don't think promote DATT efficiently.

Basically, **engineering the 'contrast' between DATT with Reddit.**

In a nutshell, I believe that if we can create a product that's specifically designed to be better than Reddit (our *dumb* cousin that nobody takes seriously), with superior content, superior content organization (through our unique system of curators and communities) and monetary incentives to migrate and stay, **half of the marketing work** will already be done. Users will have **no single good reason** to stay on Reddit.

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