1. Specification
   1. The economy

The system is based on points serving as a virtual currency. There is no exchange of real-world currency involved and no initial or recurring membership fee – signing up and participating is free of cost for everyone. Since people have a very clear notion of the value of money but will most likely have difficulties assigning a value to their work using an unfamiliar system of points, one point is intended to have roughly the same value as one unit of the respective country's real-world currency. This will make it easy for people to understand the points concept, come up with realistic price estimations for their own offers and requests and put other people's prices in relation to that.

Everybody who signs up freshly starts out with an account balance of 0 points. Both negative and positive balances are allowed only to a certain limit. This will avoid the system to establish massive imbalances where some people accumulate too much credit without spending enough and other people go into enormous debt by constantly taking from the community but not giving anything back to it. When a user first signs up, the initial limit for negative balances is 50 points and the limit for positive balances is 250 points. This means users could initially earn up to 250 points before they would be forced to also spend some of their points if they want to be able to generate more earnings again. On the other hand, they are initially allowed to spend only 50 points before they would be blocked on spending until they have given something back to the community. Setting the initial negative limit relatively tight is intended to avoid large-scale exploits of the community through people who sign up once to have somebody do something for them and then just silently keep their accounts without ever giving anything back to the community. While this might still happen, the 50 points limit for first-timers will ensure that such exploits remain small and can't harm the system in profound way. Active participants who regularly give to and take from the community in a relatively balanced manner will get their credit and debt limits gradually increased. Similarly to the concept of credit ratings for bank accounts, those users have proven their trustworthiness to the community and are rewarded by being allowed bigger scales of transactions.

There is no interest associated with account balances – this means that there is no benefit from saving points and also no disadvantage from being in debt. Having a negative account balance should not have the same negative connotation that it has in the real world. In face, negative account balances are completely acceptable and even necessary for the system to even out – nobody could ever have a positive balance if there weren't at least some people with a negative balance. The objective for every participant should be to balance out their account as good as they can, taking a negative account balance as an incentive to apply themselves more by doing something (perhaps actively browsing nearby requests and see if there is something that they could take on) while a positive account balance should motivate them to spend some of their points. If all accounts within the community would be summed up, the outcome will always be exactly 0 points.

The system is generally based on the assumption that every person will be able to contribute something to the community according to their individual talents, interests and capabilities. Some people might have very specific skills like knowing how to fix a car or design a business card while others might prefer to take on tasks that are rather time-based than skill-based such as doing somebody's grocery shopping or walking somebody's dog.

However, all this only applies to a world full of able-bodied, mentally and physically healthy people. This is far away from reality. In our society, and in our direct neighborhood, there are people who rely on the help of others without being able to give anything back other than love and gratitude. Gladly, in most cases these people are supported by a net of social services and health care. But the social and political institutions backing this system only work up to a certain extend. They will do what is necessary, but often enough there is no money to go any further than that. Especially older people who have little or no relatives to help and support them often fall into poverty and loneliness.

The platform has great potential to establish some structures to care for and support people in need. With every transaction that two users engange in, both of them will be asked if they want to donate a share of the agreed points to the needy. If a service would be compensated with 50 points, the performer of the service can chose whether they want to receive the full 50 points or whether they would be willing to receive a smaller amount, for example 48 points, with the difference going directly into a virtual donation pot. Simultaneously, the receiver of the service has the option of donating by increasing the sum booked from their account by one or more points. Incorporating the donation call into the transaction process makes a lot of sense as people are already spending or receiving points anyway and will be much more likely to say "Sure, one or two points for the good cause, why not?" than proactively making an unprompted donation.

The donation pot will be used to compensate people for performing tasks for people in need. The people performing such tasks may of course choose to do them for free, but offering them at least a small amount of compensation for their efforts could turn out to be a highly effective way to give people an incentive to help others. Obviously, this aspect of the community will require working closely together with social institutions and aid organizations to figure out where help is needed most. In the best-scenario case of the community growing into a flourishing economy with many transactions taking place every day, this could turn out to be a powerful contribution to relieving social issues.