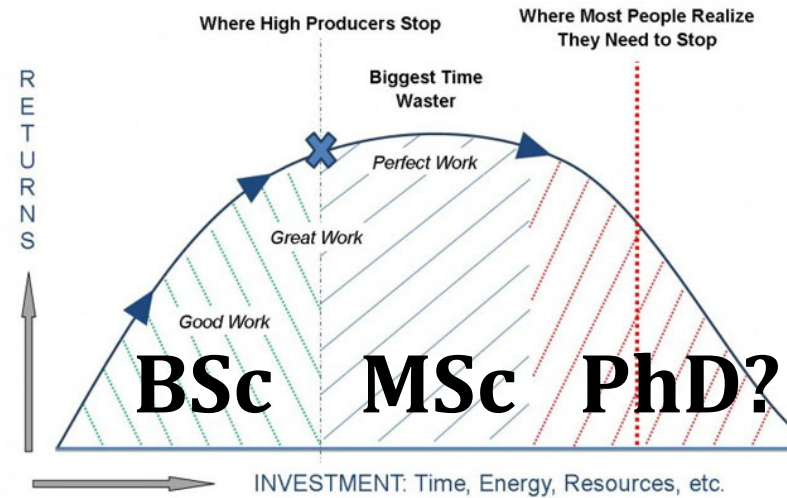


myphdidea.org, an academic
journal for students and their
research project ideas

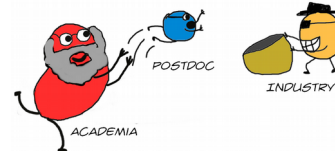
info@myphdidea.org

Introduction

- BSc → MSc: Diminishing returns?
- But ... MSc qualification for PhD
- \$1m question: Should I do a PhD?
- Discussed elsewhere (→ google),
personal advice: work ~ 2 years, can still return to Uni!



- Here: Focus on *similarities* not differences!
- Narrative: Military-industrial complex, commercialization of Uni
- Often, *illusion* of choice
- Hard to stop this development



19th century
scientist

I must find the
explanation for this
phenomenon in order
to truly understand
Nature...



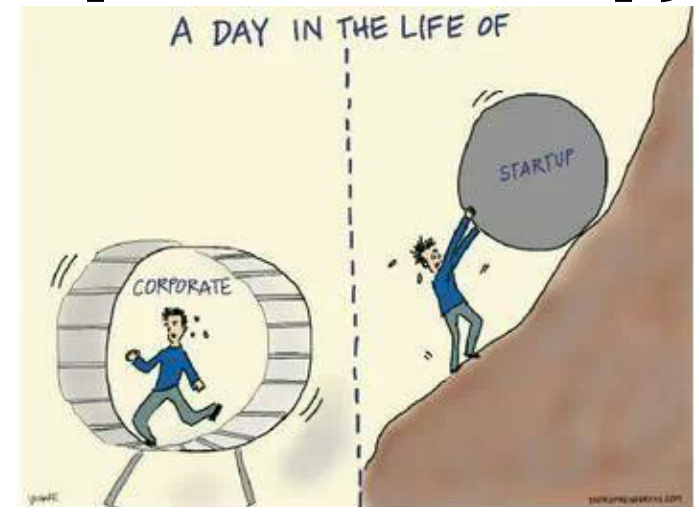
21st century
~~scientist~~
academic

I must get the
result that fits my
narrative so I can
get my paper into
Nature...



University of Entrepreneurship

- Re-phrase question: Who has got the better *project*?
- Industry: Tiers of ambition (megacorp, SME, start-up)
- Start-up sector as counter-weight to corporate 'low-risk' attitude



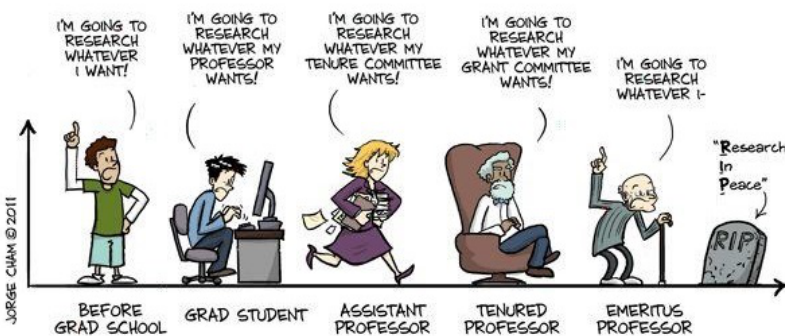
- Academia: Frequent 'spin-off' companies

EPFL INNOGRANTS

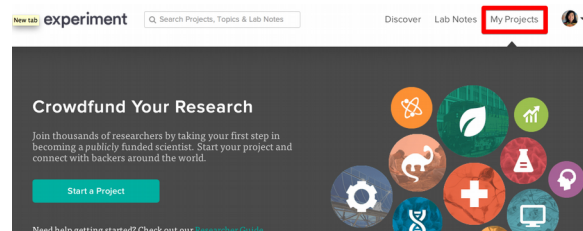


- Uni incubator: Can pitch idea to investors, but to *professor*?

THE EVOLUTION OF INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM



- In theory, assured by 'academic freedom', in practice, new strategies:



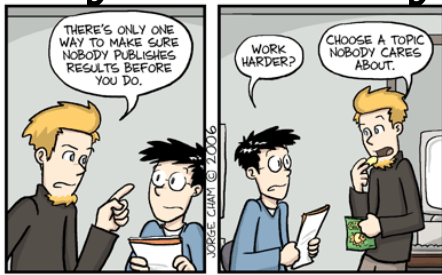
← Crowd-funding
(~ \$ 5000)

Private foundation →



Pitching your idea

- Pitching culture deficiency: Uni often high tech effort but boring product (numerical \nearrow in performance parameter)
- Easy to verify: Write up your idea & send to professors



1. Identify tech niche



2. Add 'Important Social Problem'



shake
&
stir



3. Bibliographize

Is idea
novel?



4. Draw up .ppt

2-3 months part-time

- Typical replies:

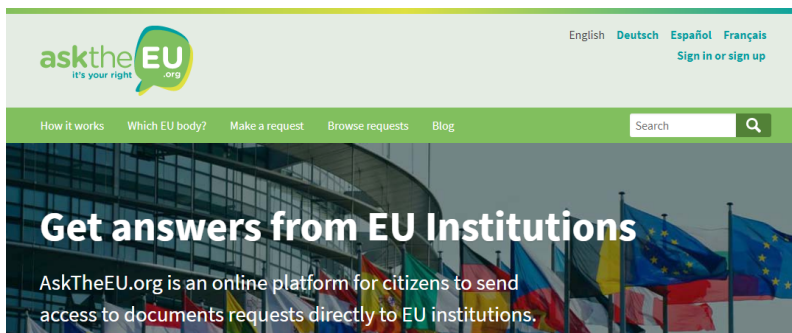


- No answer (50 %)
- 'I am too busy'
- 'How much funding have you got?'
- 'Get a PhD first, dumb student'

- Long-term goal: Secure dedicated funds for student ideas
- Short-term goal: Improve response etiquette!

The need for transparency

- How to motivate professors? Idea: Conduct 'public' pitch
- Uni ~ government, prof ~ public servant, students ~ people, graduation ~ citizenship, **quality control ~ media**
- Democracy fails without *transparency & free speech*



Freedom-of-information (FOI) request

Rental contract

Response by European Research Council Executive Agency to Peter on June 22, 2017.

✓ Successful.

Dear Mr Teffer, Please, find attached the second part of the file (Annexes) related to the rental contract. Yours sincerely, ERC...

Names of all recipients of ERC grants from 2007 to 2016 and the amounts assigned.

Request sent to European Research Council Executive Agency by guido romeo on January 11, 2017.

⚠ Long overdue.

null answer



→ website for pitch to professor?



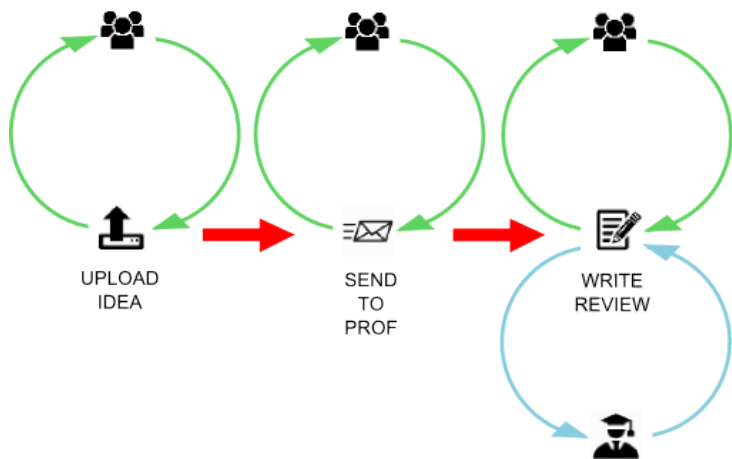
null answer

- Philosophy: Professors 'custodians' of knowledge

myphdidea.org

- Website for uploading ideas & requesting reviews
- Review request validated by crowd-sourced moderators
- Assures overlap of subject & minimum quality of material

'virtual economy' →



- Publications timed anonymity
- 3 randomly chosen moderators
- Reviews published at campaign end

The screenshot shows the myphdidea.org website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and a category dropdown set to 'Researchers'. Below the navigation bar, the user profile for 'alias "superuser"' is displayed, showing a rank of 'Superuser' and a 'Next deadline' of '0d 1h 59m'. The 'Notifications' section lists three task proposals, each with a text snippet, a timestamp, and a rank of 5. The 'Tasks' section includes buttons for 'Active Tasks', 'History', 'New Campaign', 'New Feature', 'Shadowed Campaign', 'Shadowed Feature', 'Profile', 'Settings', and 'Logout'. A table in the 'Proposals' section shows a 'Student' proposal with a 'Requested' time of 2017-09-01 17:48:38, a 'Due' time of 2017-09-01 20:48:38, and a 'Remaining' time of '0d 1h 59m'. The 'Judge' column shows a judge icon.

Type	Requested	Due	Remaining	Judge
Student	2017-09-01 17:48:38	2017-09-01 20:48:38	0d 1h 59m	

Academic publishing industry

- Aligned with movement towards more open journals

	Standard journal	'Post-publication peer review'
Editor-role	Pre-screening & final 'grade' (reject or not)	Pre-screening
Editor motivation	Build network & monopoly	(salary)
Review status	Confidential	Public
Reviewer motivation	Curry favour with editor	Public recognition for review
Anonymity	Reviewers	n/a
Authors	Reviewers' peers	Reviewers' peers
Scope	Narrow on topic and quality	Narrow on topic, lower barrier to entry

- Publication in 'Nature' academic equivalent of Wall Street bonus
- Requires good standing with editor



Comparison with myphdidea.org

- Main innovation: Replace editor → Crowd-sourcing

	Standard journal	'Post-publication peer review'	myphdidea.org
Editor-role	Pre-screening & final 'grade' (reject or publish)	Pre-screening	n/a (pre-screening handled by moderators)
Editor motivation	Build network & monopoly	(salary)	n/a (earn points for own publications)
Review status	Confidential	Public	Public
Reviewer motivation	Curry favour with editor	Public recognition for review	Public recognition positive & negative
Anonymity	Reviewers	n/a	Authors, moderators
Authors	Reviewers' peers	Reviewers' peers	Students
Scope	Narrow on topic and quality	Narrow on topic, lower barrier to entry	Early stage proposals on any topic



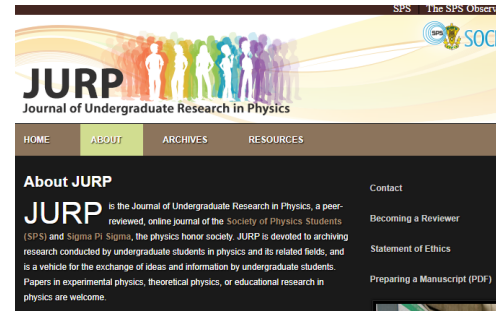
WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia



prof →
student
hierarchy

Crowd-sourcing & student journals

- Hardly world's 1st student-run journal
- Elimination of hierarchy “editor ↔ peers” completed by tapping student population
- Desirable for *any* journal, but why for student journal?
 - Students should be edited by other students
 - No rift “editor ↔ peers” that could distract from class struggle “prof ↔ student”
 - Wider range of topics, movement fragmentation ↘
 - Can lower barrier to entry to encompass early stage proposals ('Ideas')
 - Without fear of career-threatening reprisals, can criticize powers-that-be more openly



Conclusion

- Battle against commercialization of university likely lost
- However, lack of true research innovation scene (beyond 'spin-offs') to mirror industrial start-up culture
- Need to encourage students to pitch ideas to professors
- For this purpose, proposed post-publication peer review academic journal with crowd-sourced editor system
- Crowd-sourcing helps movement present united front, without divisions due to topic, hierarchy or qualifications
- Next goal: Build up numbers of registered users
- Need help with recruiting, promotion, organizing events
- Trying to reach student unions from other universities
- Would like to hand over site management in a year