THESIS BRIEF: In Defense of Academic Agora

Meta-Documentation

Document Type: Thesis (Legal-Style Brief)
Deliberation: Platform Self-Justification — Academic Use Case
Release Version: v1.0.0
Status: DEFENDED (subject to challenge)
Author: Platform Development Team
Date: January 2026

Central Thesis

THESIS-001: *Academic Agora should exist and be developed as infrastructure for scholarly discourse—transforming academic debate from papers-as-PDFs to papers-as-debatable, composable claim graphs.*

Thesis Type: Practical (action-guiding)
Status: IN (grounded extension)

This thesis is supported by six primary prongs, each of which is itself a defended claim supported by structured arguments.

Table of Contents

Prong I: The Scholarly Discourse Deficit

Claim C-101

> **Academic discourse lacks infrastructure for sustained, structured public engagement with research.**

Claim ID: C-101
Status: IN
Confidence: 0.90
Type: Empirical/Descriptive

Argument A-101: Argument from Sign (Infrastructure Absence)

Scheme: Argument from Sign (Walton)

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ ARGUMENT A-101                                                  │
│ Scheme: Argument from Sign                                      │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                 │
│ PREMISES:                                                       │
│                                                                 │
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P1: Sustained scholarly discourse requires:
    (a) Claim-level engagement (not just paper-level)
    (b) Typed dialogue moves (not just comments)
    (c) Persistent record (not ephemeral threads)
    (d) Attribution and accountability
    (e) Cross-paper synthesis
    (f) Generative (not just reactive) discussion
    [Evidence: E-101a - derived from scholarly communication
     literature; Borgman, Scholarly Communication (2007)]

P2: Current platforms provide:
    - PubPeer: Paper-level comments, reactive/critical focus
    - Hypothesis: Scattered annotations, no threading
    - OpenReview: Conference-bounded, time-limited
    - Twitter/X: Ephemeral, unstructured, toxic dynamics
    - ResearchGate: Gamified, noisy, not structured
    - Email: Private, high friction, no public record
    [Evidence: E-101b - Platform documentation and analysis]

P3: The absence of (a)-(f) in available platforms is a reliable
    sign that infrastructure for scholarly discourse is missing

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CONCLUSION:

C: Infrastructure for sustained scholarly discourse is absent

RA-Node: Inference via Sign
Confidence: 0.90
```

Critical Questions for A-101

CQ	Question	Status	Response
CQ1	What is the strength of the correlation?	ANSWERED	Requirements derived from scholarly communication research; platforms demonstrably lack features
CQ2	Are there other explanations?	ANSWERED	Gap exists because no one has built for sustained intellectual exchange; not technical impossibility
CQ3	Is there counter-evidence?	CHALLENGED	See Attack ATK-101

Attack ATK-101: Peer Review Counter-Example

Attack Type: REBUT (presents contrary evidence)

```
ATTACK ATK-101
Type: REBUT
Target: C-101 (conclusion)
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ATTACKING CLAIM:

Peer review already provides structured engagement with research.
Journals facilitate expert evaluation and dialogue (via revisions
and responses). Traditional academic discourse infrastructure
exists-it's called the publishing system.
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| CA-Node: Conflict Application (rebut)                                |
|                                                                      |
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Defense D-101: Peer Review Limitations

Move Type: GROUNDS
Status: DEFENDED

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┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
| DEFENSE D-101                                                        |
| Type: GROUNDS (response to REBUT)                                    |
├──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
|                                                                      |
| 1. Peer review provides evaluation, not discourse:                   |
|    - Private (not public record)                                     |
|    - One-shot (typically 2-3 reviews, then done)                     |
|    - Pre-publication only (no ongoing engagement)                    |
|    - Gatekeeping function, not dialogue function                     |
|    [Evidence: E-D101a - Fyfe et al., "History of Peer Review"        |
|     (2017)]                                                          |
|                                                                      |
| 2. Peer review operates at paper-level, not claim-level:             |
|    - Cannot engage with specific assertions                          |
|    - Cannot build on prior reviews                                   |
|    - No structured argument types                                    |
|                                                                      |
| 3. Published responses are rare and slow:                            |
|    - "Comments" and "Replies" take months/years                      |
|    - High bar for publication                                        |
|    - No synthesis or accumulation                                    |
|                                                                      |
| 4. C-101 should be clarified: peer review exists but is NOT          |
|    infrastructure for sustained PUBLIC discourse.                    |
|                                                                      |
| ATTACK FORCE: Reduced; peer review serves different function         |
| REVISED CONFIDENCE: 0.90 (maintained with clarification)             |
|                                                                      |
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```

Claim C-102

> **The discourse deficit has measurable consequences for scholarly knowledge production.**

Claim ID: C-102
Status: IN
Confidence: 0.85
Type: Empirical/Causal

Argument A-102: Argument from Cause to Effect

Scheme: Argument from Cause to Effect (Walton)

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
| ARGUMENT A-102                                                       |
| Scheme: Argument from Cause to Effect                                |
├──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
|                                                                      |
```

```
PREMISES:

P1: Without structured public discourse, debates repeat across
    decades without resolution or synthesis
    [Evidence: E-102a - Recurrence of "same debates" in HSS
     documented by disciplinary historians]

P2: Without claim-level engagement, scholars talk past each other
    and misrepresent positions
    [Evidence: E-102b - Citation analysis showing frequent
     misattribution; straw-man prevalence in philosophy]

P3: Without persistent record, intellectual labor is lost:
    - Conference Q&A evaporates
    - Email exchanges remain private
    - Blog posts scatter and decay
    [Evidence: E-102c - Knowledge attrition studies]

P4: Without cross-paper synthesis, literature reviews are
    heroic individual efforts rather than cumulative resources

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CONCLUSION:

C: The discourse deficit causes knowledge production inefficiency
   and intellectual labor waste

RA-Node: Causal inference
Confidence: 0.85
```

Critical Questions for A-102

CQ	Question	Status	Response
CQ1	Is there a causal mechanism?	ANSWERED	Mechanism: absent infrastructure → impossible behaviors → negative outcomes
CQ2	Is the cause sufficient?	QUALIFIED	Infrastructure is contributing cause; other factors (incentives, time) also matter
CQ3	Are there intervening factors?	ANSWERED	Yes (academic incentives, time constraints), but infrastructure is independent contributor
CQ4	Is there counter-evidence?	OPEN	No direct challenge registered

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Claim C-103

> **Historical analysis reveals a missing layer in scholarly infrastructure evolution.**

Claim ID: C-103
Status: IN
Confidence: 0.80
Type: Historical/Theoretical

Argument A-103: Argument from Historical Pattern

Scheme: Argument from Precedent (Walton) — applied to infrastructure evolution

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ ARGUMENT A-103                                                      │
│ Scheme: Argument from Precedent (Infrastructure Evolution)          │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                     │
│ PREMISES:                                                           │
│                                                                     │
│ P1: Scholarly communication infrastructure has evolved through      │
│     identifiable layers:                                            │
│                                                                     │
│     1800s-1900s: Learned societies, correspondence, journals        │
│                  → Publication as unit of record                    │
│                                                                     │
│     1900s-2000s: Peer review, conferences, indexing                 │
│                  → Evaluation and discovery                         │
│                                                                     │
│     2000s-2020s: Preprints, OA, social media, annotation            │
│                  → Speed, access, informal commentary               │
│                                                                     │
│     [Evidence: E-103a - Shuttleworth (2016) on science periodicals; │
│      Royal Society historical work; BOAI declaration]               │
│                                                                     │
│ P2: Each layer addressed a scaling/coordination problem:            │
│     - Journal explosion → periodicals and disciplinary venues       │
│     - Information overload → citation indexing                      │
│     - Web era → repositories and identifiers (DOI/ORCID)            │
│     - Open science → data/workflow standards (FAIR)                 │
│     [Evidence: E-103b - Clarivate history; DOI handbook]            │
│                                                                     │
│ P3: The current problem—debates repeating, reasoning not            │
│     persisting, claims not addressable—has no layer addressing it   │
│                                                                     │
│ P4: By precedent, a new layer should emerge to address this gap     │
│                                                                     │
│ ─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────       │
│                                                                     │
│ CONCLUSION:                                                         │
│                                                                     │
│ C: A "claims/arguments as native first-class objects" layer is      │
│    the missing infrastructure that the evolutionary pattern         │
│    predicts                                                         │
│                                                                     │
│ RA-Node: Precedent-based inference                                  │
│ Confidence: 0.80                                                    │
│                                                                     │
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```

Critical Questions for A-103

CQ	Question	Status	Response
CQ1	Is the precedent genuinely similar?	ANSWERED	Each layer addressed coordination failure; current situation is coordination failure
CQ2	Are there relevant differences?	CHALLENGED	See Attack ATK-103
CQ3	Is there a counter-precedent?	OPEN	No counter-precedent registered

Attack ATK-103: Disanalogy (Market Forces)

Attack Type: UNDERCUT

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ ATTACK ATK-103                                                  │
│ Type: UNDERCUT                                                  │
│ Target: A-103 (analogy validity)                                │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                 │
│ ATTACKING CLAIM:                                                │
│                                                                 │
│ Previous infrastructure layers (journals, DOIs, preprint servers)
│ emerged because they had clear business models or institutional
│ support. The "argument layer" has no obvious economic driver.
│ The historical pattern doesn't predict what will be BUILT, only
│ what is NEEDED. The analogy from need to emergence fails.
│                                                                 │
│ CA-Node: Conflict Application (undercut on analogy)             │
│                                                                 │
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Defense D-103: Need Establishes Warrant

Move Type: GROUNDS
Status: DEFENDED

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ DEFENSE D-103                                                   │
│ Type: GROUNDS                                                   │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                 │
│ 1. The attack correctly identifies that need ≠ automatic emergence.
│                                                                 │
│ 2. However, the thesis is not "the layer will inevitably emerge"
│    but "Academic Agora SHOULD be built" (action-guiding).       │
│                                                                 │
│ 3. The historical pattern establishes:                          │
│    - The gap is real (need exists)                              │
│    - Solutions to such gaps have historically succeeded         │
│    - The type of intervention (infrastructure layer) is appropriate
│                                                                 │
│ 4. Business model concerns are addressed in Prong V (Risk).     │
│    Grant funding, institutional subscriptions, and federation   │
│    models have supported similar infrastructure (arXiv, ORCID). │
│                                                                 │
│ ATTACK FORCE: Reduced; establishes warrant, not prediction      │
│ CONFIDENCE: Maintained at 0.80                                  │
│                                                                 │
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```

Prong I Summary

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ PRONG I: THE SCHOLARLY DISCOURSE DEFICIT                        │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                 │
│ Claims Established:                                             │
│                                                                 │
│ C-101: Infrastructure for sustained discourse is absent      [IN]
│        └── A-101 (Argument from Sign)              Conf: 0.90   │
│            └── ATK-101 (Peer review exists)        [DEFENDED]   │
```

```
│                                                                    │
│ C-102: Deficit causes knowledge production inefficiency      [IN]  │
│        └── A-102 (Cause to Effect)                 Conf: 0.85      │
│            └── No undefended attacks                               │
│                                                                    │
│ C-103: Historical pattern predicts missing layer             [IN]  │
│        └── A-103 (Argument from Precedent)         Conf: 0.80      │
│            └── ATK-103 (Business model concern)    [DEFENDED]      │
│                                                                    │
│ PRONG CONCLUSION: Scholarly discourse deficit exists and     [IN]  │
│ a new infrastructure layer is warranted                            │
│                                                                    │
│ Aggregate Confidence: 0.85                                         │
│                                                                    │
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```

Prong II: Infrastructure Adequacy

Claim C-201

> **Academic Agora provides the architectural features necessary for structured scholarly discourse.**

Claim ID: C-201
Status: IN
Confidence: 0.90
Type: Technical/Descriptive

Argument A-201: Argument from Classification

Scheme: Argument from Classification (Walton)

```
┌────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ ARGUMENT A-201                                                     │
│ Scheme: Argument from Classification                               │
├────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                    │
│ PREMISES:                                                          │
│                                                                    │
│ P1: Scholarly discourse infrastructure requires:                   │
│     (a) Claim-level addressability with stable URIs                │
│     (b) Typed dialogue moves (ASSERT, CHALLENGE, DEFEND, EXTEND)   │
│     (c) Evidence linking with source specificity                   │
│     (d) Argumentation scheme support                               │
│     (e) Critical question generation                               │
│     (f) Commitment tracking                                        │
│     (g) Attack typing (REBUT, UNDERCUT, UNDERMINE)                 │
│     (h) Cross-paper/cross-deliberation synthesis                   │
│     (i) Versioned releases for citation                            │
│     [Evidence: E-201a - derived from C-101 requirements]           │
│                                                                    │
│ P2: Academic Agora implements:                                     │
│     (a) Canonical Claims with UUIDs via Claim model                │
│     (b) PPD protocol with DialogueMove types                       │
│     (c) Evidence model with locators and DOI integration           │
│     (d) 60+ Walton schemes in ArgumentScheme system                │
│     (e) Auto-generated CQs per scheme                              │
│     (f) CommitmentStore tracking per participant                   │
│     (g) CA-nodes with typed attack relations                       │
│     (h) Plexus architecture for cross-deliberation transport       │
│     (i) DebateRelease versioning with BibTeX export                │
```

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    [Evidence: E-201b - System Architecture Document]

P3: Systems implementing (a)-(i) are instances of scholarly
    discourse infrastructure

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CONCLUSION:

C: Academic Agora is an instance of scholarly discourse
   infrastructure

RA-Node: Classification inference
Confidence: 0.90
```

Critical Questions for A-201

CQ	Question	Status	Response
CQ1	Does Academic Agora actually have the properties?	ANSWERED	E-201b provides implementation evidence; properties verifiable in codebase
CQ2	Is the classification appropriate?	ANSWERED	Classification derived from established requirements (P1)
CQ3	Are there exceptions?	OPEN	Real-world scholarly adoption testing pending

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Claim C-202

> **The platform implements theoretically sound argumentation frameworks validated by decades of research.**

Claim ID: C-202
Status: IN
Confidence: 0.90
Type: Theoretical/Technical

Argument A-202: Argument from Expert Consensus

Scheme: Argument from Expert Opinion (applied to academic consensus)

```
ARGUMENT A-202
Scheme: Argument from Expert Opinion (Academic Consensus)
_____________________________________________________________

PREMISES:

P1: The computational argumentation research community has
    developed formal frameworks for representing arguments
    [Evidence: E-202a - COMMA conference series (2006-present);
     Argument & Computation journal; 40+ years of research]

P2: Walton's argumentation schemes are the standard taxonomy
    for argument patterns in informal logic
    [Evidence: E-202b - Walton, Reed & Macagno, Argumentation
     Schemes (2008); 10,000+ citations]

P3: AIF (Argument Interchange Format) is the standard ontology
    for argument representation
    [Evidence: E-202c - Chesñevar et al. (2006); Reed et al.
```

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(2010); AIFdb international adoption]

P4: ASPIC+ is the leading structured argumentation framework
    [Evidence: E-202d - Prakken (2010); Modgil & Prakken (2018)]

P5: Academic Agora implements Walton schemes, AIF, and ASPIC+
    [Evidence: E-202e - System Architecture Document]

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CONCLUSION:

C: Academic Agora's argumentation foundations are theoretically
   sound and validated

RA-Node: Inference from academic consensus
Confidence: 0.90
```

Critical Questions for A-202

CQ	Question	Status	Response
CQ1	Is there genuine expert consensus?	ANSWERED	AIF, ASPIC+, and Walton schemes are standard references with no competing paradigm
CQ2	Is implementation faithful to theory?	ANSWERED	Architecture document shows direct mappings; AIF compliance verified
CQ3	Does theoretical soundness imply practical utility?	CHALLENGED	See Attack ATK-202

Attack ATK-202: Formal Methods Adoption Failure

Attack Type: UNDERCUT

```
ATTACK ATK-202
Type: UNDERCUT
Target: A-202 (inference from theory to utility)

ATTACKING CLAIM:

Formal argumentation theory has existed for decades but has NOT
been adopted by working scholars. Academics don't use argument
mapping software, don't learn formal schemes, and find such
tools cumbersome. Theoretical soundness doesn't translate to
practical adoption. The field's own track record undermines
the inference.

CA-Node: Conflict Application (undercut)
```

Defense D-202: Progressive Formalization + HSS Fit

Move Type: GROUNDS
Status: DEFENDED

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│ DEFENSE D-202                                                    │
│ Type: GROUNDS                                                    │
├──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                  │
│ 1. The attack correctly identifies historical adoption failure.  │
│                                                                  │
│ 2. However, previous tools required users to learn formalism     │
│    BEFORE contributing. Academic Agora inverts this:             │
│                                                                  │
│    - Progressive formalization: start informal, add structure    │
│      incrementally as complexity warrants                        │
│    - Formal infrastructure underlies system but is not required  │
│      for basic participation                                     │
│    - Schemes generate critical questions automatically—users     │
│      benefit without mastering formal theory                     │
│                                                                  │
│ 3. HSS disciplines (see Prong III) are ALREADY argumentation-    │
│    based. The platform maps to existing practice rather than     │
│    imposing foreign formalism.                                   │
│                                                                  │
│ 4. Prior tools were standalone; Academic Agora integrates with   │
│    existing scholarly workflow (DOI linking, ORCID, reference    │
│    managers, PDF annotation).                                    │
│                                                                  │
│ ATTACK FORCE: Reduced; design addresses historical failure modes │
│ CONFIDENCE: Maintained at 0.90                                   │
│                                                                  │
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```

Claim C-203

> **Academic-specific features address the unique requirements of scholarly discourse.**

Claim ID: C-203
Status: IN
Confidence: 0.85
Type: Technical/Descriptive

Argument A-203: Argument from Properties (Academic Features)

Scheme: Argument from Properties (specialized)

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ ARGUMENT A-203                                                   │
│ Scheme: Argument from Properties                                 │
├──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                  │
│ PREMISES:                                                        │
│                                                                  │
│ P1: Scholarly discourse has unique requirements beyond general   │
│     deliberation:                                                │
│     (a) Paper-to-claim extraction pipeline                       │
│     (b) DOI/ORCID integration for attribution                    │
│     (c) Quote nodes as first-class objects with interpretations  │
│     (d) Claim type classification (THESIS, INTERPRETIVE,         │
│         HISTORICAL, NORMATIVE, METHODOLOGICAL, EMPIRICAL)        │
│     (e) Fork/merge for exploring alternative readings            │
│     (f) BibTeX/RIS export for argument-level citation            │
```

```
|     (g) Release versioning for citable snapshots                          |
|                                                                           |
| P2: Academic Agora implements all of (a)-(g):                             |
|     (a) PDF extraction + AI claim extraction pipeline                     |
|     (b) Crossref/OpenAlex/ORCID integration                               |
|     (c) QuoteNode model with interpretation voting                        |
|     (d) ClaimType enum with HSS-specific categories                       |
|     (e) Fork/Merge system with typed fork purposes                        |
|     (f) BibTeX export for arguments and releases                          |
|     (g) DebateRelease versioning with semantic versioning                 |
|     [Evidence: E-203 - System Architecture Document, Phase 2]             |
|                                                                           |
| ------------------------------------------------------------------------- |
|                                                                           |
| CONCLUSION:                                                               |
|                                                                           |
| C: Academic Agora addresses unique scholarly requirements                 |
|                                                                           |
| RA-Node: Properties inference                                             |
| Confidence: 0.85                                                          |
|                                                                           |
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Critical Questions for A-203

CQ	Question	Status	Response
CQ1	Are the properties actually implemented?	ANSWERED	Phase 2 complete per development roadmap
CQ2	Are these the right properties?	ANSWERED	Derived from user research and disciplinary analysis
CQ3	Are there missing properties?	OPEN	Ongoing development; Phase 3-4 adds more

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Prong II Summary

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+---------------------------------------------------------------------------+
| PRONG II: INFRASTRUCTURE ADEQUACY                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                           |
| Claims Established:                                                       |
|                                                                           |
| C-201: Platform provides necessary architectural features    [IN]         |
|        └── A-201 (Classification)                  Conf: 0.90             |
|            └── No undefended attacks                                      |
|                                                                           |
| C-202: Formal foundations are theoretically sound            [IN]         |
|        └── A-202 (Expert Consensus)                Conf: 0.90             |
|            └── ATK-202 (Adoption failure history)   [DEFENDED]           |
|                                                                           |
| C-203: Academic-specific features address unique needs       [IN]         |
|        └── A-203 (Properties)                      Conf: 0.85             |
|            └── No undefended attacks                                      |
|                                                                           |
| PRONG CONCLUSION: Academic Agora is adequate infrastructure  [IN]         |
| for scholarly discourse                                                   |
|                                                                           |
| Aggregate Confidence: 0.88                                                |
|                                                                           |
+---------------------------------------------------------------------------+
```

Prong III: Natural Disciplinary Fit

Claim C-301

> **Humanities and Social Sciences scholarship is already argumentation-based, making Academic Agora a natural fit.**

Claim ID: C-301
Status: IN
Confidence: 0.90
Type: Descriptive/Disciplinary

Argument A-301: Argument from Analogy (Practice Mapping)

Scheme: Argument from Analogy (Walton)

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ ARGUMENT A-301                                              │
│ Scheme: Argument from Analogy                               │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                             │
│ PREMISES:                                                   │
│                                                             │
│ P1: HSS scholarship core activities are:                    │
│     - Making interpretive claims about texts/events         │
│     - Marshaling evidence (textual, archival, ethnographic) │
│     - Responding to other scholars' interpretations         │
│     - Defending positions against critique                  │
│     [Evidence: E-301a - Disciplinary self-descriptions;     │
│      graduate training curricula]                           │
│                                                             │
│ P2: Academic Agora core activities are:                     │
│     - Making claims with evidence linking                   │
│     - Constructing arguments using schemes                  │
│     - Responding via typed dialogue moves                   │
│     - Defending via GROUNDS moves against attacks           │
│                                                             │
│ P3: P1 and P2 describe the same activities with different   │
│     vocabulary                                              │
│                                                             │
│ P4: Tools that map directly to existing practice have lower │
│     adoption barriers                                       │
│                                                             │
│ ─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────── │
│                                                             │
│ CONCLUSION:                                                 │
│                                                             │
│ C: Academic Agora maps directly to HSS practice, making it a│
│    natural fit with low adoption barriers                   │
│                                                             │
│ RA-Node: Analogical inference                               │
│ Confidence: 0.90                                            │
│                                                             │
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```

Critical Questions for A-301

CQ	Question	Status	Response
CQ1	Are the similarities relevant?	ANSWERED	Core scholarly activities directly mapped
CQ2	Are there relevant differences?	CHALLENGED	See Attack ATK-301

CQ	Question	Status	Response
CQ3	Is the same relationship plausible?	ANSWERED	Platform vocabulary is scholarly vocabulary formalized

Attack ATK-301: STEM Exclusion

Attack Type: UNDERMINE

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┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ ATTACK ATK-301                                                   │
│ Type: UNDERMINE                                                  │
│ Target: P1 (HSS focus undermines generality)                     │
├──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                  │
│ ATTACKING CLAIM:                                                 │
│                                                                  │
│ By focusing on HSS, the argument concedes that STEM disciplines  │
│ (with data, replication, quantitative methods) are NOT a natural │
│ fit. This limits the platform to a minority of scholarship and   │
│ undermines claims of general scholarly infrastructure.           │
│                                                                  │
│ CA-Node: Conflict Application (undermine premise P1 scope)       │
│                                                                  │
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Defense D-301: HSS First, Not HSS Only

Move Type: GROUNDS
Status: DEFENDED

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┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ DEFENSE D-301                                                    │
│ Type: GROUNDS                                                    │
├──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                  │
│ 1. The attack correctly identifies HSS-first strategy.           │
│                                                                  │
│ 2. HSS-first is a SEQUENCING choice, not a limitation:           │
│    - HSS has lower barriers (no data/replication infrastructure  │
│      required)                                                   │
│    - HSS practices map more directly to argumentation            │
│    - Success in HSS validates core infrastructure                │
│                                                                  │
│ 3. STEM expansion is planned (Year 4+) after HSS validation:     │
│    - Add schemes for statistical inference, replication          │
│    - Integrate with data repositories                            │
│    - Support empirical claim verification                        │
│                                                                  │
│ 4. Even within STEM, theoretical/methodological debates are      │
│    argumentation-based (philosophy of science, methods disputes).│
│                                                                  │
│ 5. C-301 should be scoped: "natural fit for HSS, with planned    │
│    expansion to STEM."                                           │
│                                                                  │
│ ATTACK FORCE: Reduced to scope clarification                     │
│ CONFIDENCE: Maintained at 0.90 for HSS fit specifically          │
│                                                                  │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Claim C-302

> **HSS scholars have documented frustrations that the platform directly addresses.**

Claim ID: C-302
Status: IN
Confidence: 0.85
Type: Empirical/Descriptive

Argument A-302: Argument from Evidence (User Research)

Scheme: Argument from Evidence to Hypothesis (Walton)

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ ARGUMENT A-302                                                  │
│ Scheme: Argument from Evidence to Hypothesis                    │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                 │
│ PREMISES:                                                       │
│                                                                 │
│ P1: HSS scholars report specific frustrations:                  │
│                                                                 │
│     F1: "Slow publication cycles—years between submission and   │
│          response"                                              │
│     F2: "Limited space for debate—journals rarely publish       │
│          responses"                                             │
│     F3: "Scattered discussion—blog posts, Twitter threads,      │
│          conference Q&A"                                        │
│     F4: "No synthesis—same debates recur across decades without │
│          resolution"                                            │
│     F5: "Invisible reasoning—published work shows conclusions,  │
│          not the path"                                          │
│     [Evidence: E-302a - User interviews; disciplinary commentary;│
│      Crooked Timber meta-discussions]                           │
│                                                                 │
│ P2: Academic Agora addresses each frustration:                  │
│                                                                 │
│     F1 → Immediate engagement, no publication delay             │
│     F2 → Unlimited space for structured dialogue                │
│     F3 → Centralized, persistent, searchable record             │
│     F4 → Versioned releases track resolution progress           │
│     F5 → Argument chains make reasoning visible                 │
│                                                                 │
│ ─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────── │
│                                                                 │
│ CONCLUSION:                                                     │
│                                                                 │
│ C: Academic Agora addresses documented HSS scholar frustrations │
│                                                                 │
│ RA-Node: Evidence-hypothesis inference                          │
│ Confidence: 0.85                                                │
│                                                                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Critical Questions for A-302

CQ	Question	Status	Response
CQ1	Is the evidence representative?	QUALIFIED	Based on available user research; larger studies needed
CQ2	Are there alternative solutions?	ANSWERED	Alternatives address subsets; platform addresses all five

CQ	Question	Status	Response
CQ3	Will addressing frustrations drive adoption?	OPEN	Empirical validation pending

Claim C-303

> **Interpretive pluralism in HSS makes structured dialogue more valuable, not less.**

Claim ID: C-303
Status: IN
Confidence: 0.80
Type: Theoretical

Argument A-303: Argument from Consequences (Interpretive Pluralism)

Scheme: Argument from Consequences (Walton)

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ ARGUMENT A-303                                              │
│ Scheme: Argument from Consequences                          │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                             │
│ PREMISES:                                                   │
│                                                             │
│ P1: HSS disciplines accept interpretive pluralism: multiple valid
│     readings of texts, events, and social phenomena can coexist
│     [Evidence: E-303a - Disciplinary norms; hermeneutic tradition]
│                                                             │
│ P2: In contexts of interpretive pluralism, unstructured discourse
│     produces:                                               │
│     - Talking past each other                               │
│     - Misrepresentation of positions                        │
│     - Inability to locate genuine disagreement vs. mere difference
│                                                             │
│ P3: Structured discourse with:                              │
│     - Explicit claim formulation                            │
│     - Quote nodes with competing interpretations            │
│     - Fork/merge for alternative readings                   │
│     - Commitment tracking                                   │
│     produces:                                               │
│     - Clear articulation of different positions             │
│     - Precise identification of where readings diverge      │
│     - Productive disagreement rather than miscommunication  │
│                                                             │
│ P4: Producing P3 outcomes rather than P2 outcomes is beneficial
│                                                             │
│ ─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────── │
│                                                             │
│ CONCLUSION:                                                 │
│                                                             │
│ C: Structured discourse is especially valuable in contexts of
│    interpretive pluralism like HSS                          │
│                                                             │
│ RA-Node: Consequentialist inference                         │
│ Confidence: 0.80                                            │
│                                                             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Critical Questions for A-303

CQ	Question	Status	Response
CQ1	Are the consequences accurately described?	ANSWERED	Derived from communication theory and disciplinary observation
CQ2	Are there negative consequences?	CHALLENGED	See Attack ATK-303
CQ3	Are the consequences sufficient to justify the action?	ANSWERED	Enabling productive disagreement is substantial benefit

Attack ATK-303: Formalization Constrains Interpretation

Attack Type: REBUT

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ ATTACK ATK-303                                               │
│ Type: REBUT                                                  │
│ Target: C-303 (conclusion)                                   │
├──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                              │
│ ATTACKING CLAIM:                                             │
│                                                              │
│ Formalizing discourse may CONSTRAIN interpretive freedom. The│
│ requirement to structure arguments into schemes, formulate   │
│ explicit claims, and respond to critical questions may exclude│
│ modes of interpretation that resist formalization (poetic,   │
│ performative, deconstructive). HSS values cannot be captured in│
│ formal structures.                                           │
│                                                              │
│ CA-Node: Conflict Application (rebut)                        │
│                                                              │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Defense D-303: Optional Formalization + Multiple Modes

Move Type: GROUNDS
Status: DEFENDED

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ DEFENSE D-303                                                │
│ Type: GROUNDS                                                │
├──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                              │
│ 1. The attack identifies a genuine tension.                  │
│                                                              │
│ 2. However, the platform is designed for OPTIONAL formalization:│
│    - Informal discussion remains available indefinitely      │
│    - Formalization is a choice, not a requirement            │
│    - Structure emerges when participants find it valuable    │
│                                                              │
│ 3. Multiple contribution modes are supported:                │
│    - Formal arguments via schemes                            │
│    - Informal commentary via discussion threads              │
│    - Quote interpretation voting                             │
│    - Narrative/testimonial contributions                     │
│                                                              │
│ 4. The platform claims to be valuable for SOME interpretive work,│
│    not ALL. Deconstructive practice that resists formalization│
│    can coexist outside the platform.                         │
│                                                              │
│ 5. Many HSS scholars DO want structured engagement—the platform │
```

```
|    serves them without forcing others.                          |
|                                                                 |
| ATTACK FORCE: Reduced; formalization is optional, not mandatory |
| CONFIDENCE: Maintained at 0.80                                  |
|                                                                 |
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Prong III Summary

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
| PRONG III: NATURAL DISCIPLINARY FIT                             |
|─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────|
|                                                                 |
| Claims Established:                                             |
|                                                                 |
| C-301: Platform maps directly to HSS practice              [IN] |
|        └── A-301 (Analogy: Practice Mapping)        Conf: 0.90  |
|            └── ATK-301 (STEM exclusion)             [DEFENDED]  |
|                                                                 |
| C-302: Platform addresses documented HSS frustrations      [IN] |
|        └── A-302 (Evidence: User Research)          Conf: 0.85  |
|            └── No undefended attacks                            |
|                                                                 |
| C-303: Structured discourse especially valuable for HSS    [IN] |
|        └── A-303 (Consequences)                     Conf: 0.80  |
|            └── ATK-303 (Formalization constrains)   [DEFENDED]  |
|                                                                 |
| PRONG CONCLUSION: HSS is natural fit for platform          [IN] |
|                                                                 |
| Aggregate Confidence: 0.85                                      |
|                                                                 |
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Prong IV: Theory of Change

Claim C-401

> **Making claims the atomic unit of discourse can transform scholarly knowledge production.**

Claim ID: C-401
Status: IN
Confidence: 0.75
Type: Theoretical/Causal

Argument A-401: Argument from Analogy (Citation Networks)

Scheme: Argument from Analogy (Walton)

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
| ARGUMENT A-401                                                  |
| Scheme: Argument from Analogy                                   |
|─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────|
|                                                                 |
| PREMISES:                                                       |
|                                                                 |
| P1: Citation networks transformed scholarly discovery:          |
|     - Before citation indexing: discovery via bibliography chains,  |
```

```
|       expert recommendation                                          |
|     - After citation indexing (1955–1964): discovery via forward/    |
|       backward citation traversal, impact measurement                |
|     [Evidence: E-401a - Garfield on citation indexing history;        |
|      Clarivate ISI history]                                           |
|                                                                       |
| P2: The transformation occurred because citation made PAPERS          |
|     the networked unit: addressable, linkable, traversable            |
|                                                                       |
| P3: Currently, claims/arguments are NOT the networked unit:           |
|     - Not addressable (no stable URIs)                                |
|     - Not linkable (embedded in prose)                                |
|     - Not traversable (no cross-paper argument graph)                 |
|                                                                       |
| P4: If papers-as-networked-unit transformed discovery, then           |
|     claims-as-networked-unit could transform discourse                |
|                                                                       |
| ═══════════════════════════════════════════════════════════════       |
|                                                                       |
| CONCLUSION:                                                           |
|                                                                       |
| C: Making claims the atomic unit can transform scholarly discourse    |
|    (by analogy to citation networks)                                  |
|                                                                       |
| RA-Node: Analogical inference                                         |
| Confidence: 0.75                                                      |
|                                                                       |
└───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Critical Questions for A-401

CQ	Question	Status	Response
CQ1	Are the cases genuinely similar?	ANSWERED	Both involve making scholarly objects addressable/linkable
CQ2	Are there relevant differences?	CHALLENGED	See Attack ATK-401
CQ3	Is the transformation beneficial?	ANSWERED	Discovery transformation was beneficial; discourse transformation would be analogously beneficial

Attack ATK-401: Claims Are Not As Stable As Papers

Attack Type: UNDERCUT

```
┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
| ATTACK ATK-401                                                        |
| Type: UNDERCUT                                                        |
| Target: A-401 (analogy validity)                                      |
|═══════════════════════════════════════════════════════════════════════|
|                                                                       |
| ATTACKING CLAIM:                                                      |
|                                                                       |
| Papers are stable, citable objects with clear boundaries. Claims      |
| are fuzzy—they can be reformulated, interpreted differently,          |
| paraphrased. Citation networks work because papers don't change.      |
| Claim networks would be unstable, with boundary disputes and          |
| reformulation problems. The analogy fails on a crucial dimension.     |
|                                                                       |
| CA-Node: Conflict Application (undercut on disanalogy)                |
```

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                                  │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Defense D-401: Canonical Claims + Versioning

Move Type: GROUNDS
Status: DEFENDED

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ DEFENSE D-401                                                    │
│ Type: GROUNDS                                                    │
├──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                  │
│ 1. The attack identifies a real difference: claims are more fluid│
│    than papers.                                                  │
│                                                                  │
│ 2. The platform addresses this through:                          │
│                                                                  │
│    - CANONICAL CLAIMS: Once formulated, a claim has a stable UUID.│
│      The claim text is fixed; new formulations create new claims.│
│                                                                  │
│    - VERSIONING: Claims can be versioned. Modifications create   │
│      new versions with tracked changes and provenance.           │
│                                                                  │
│    - CLAIM EQUIVALENCE: Phase 3 includes detection of "same claim│
│      differently formulated" with cross-linking.                 │
│                                                                  │
│    - QUOTE ANCHORING: Claims can be anchored to specific passages,│
│      reducing ambiguity about what's being asserted.             │
│                                                                  │
│ 3. Papers also have boundary problems (which claims in a paper   │
│    does a citation endorse?). Citation networks work despite this.│
│                                                                  │
│ ATTACK FORCE: Reduced; design addresses stability concern        │
│ CONFIDENCE: Maintained at 0.75 (still uncertain)                 │
│                                                                  │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Claim C-402

> **Versioned releases enable cumulative knowledge production rather than repetitive debate.**

Claim ID: C-402
Status: IN
Confidence: 0.80
Type: Functional/Descriptive

Argument A-402: Argument from Mechanism (Accumulation)

Scheme: Argument from Cause to Effect (Mechanism)

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ ARGUMENT A-402                                                   │
│ Scheme: Argument from Cause to Effect (Mechanism)                │
├──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                  │
│ PREMISES:                                                        │
│                                                                  │
```

```
| P1: Debates repeat because prior state is not preserved:              |
|     - Conference discussions evaporate                                |
|     - Blog posts scatter and decay                                    |
|     - No "state of the debate" document exists                        |
|     [Evidence: E-402a - Repeated debates in HSS; disciplinary         |
|      self-commentary on amnesia]                                      |
|                                                                       |
| P2: DebateRelease versioning creates:                                 |
|     - Stable snapshots (v1.0, v1.1, v2.0)                             |
|     - DEFENDED/CONTESTED/UNRESOLVED status per claim                  |
|     - Changelogs showing what shifted between versions                |
|     - BibTeX citations for referencing specific states                |
|     [Evidence: E-402b - System Architecture Document]                 |
|                                                                       |
| P3: With versioned snapshots:                                         |
|     - New entrants can start from current state, not scratch          |
|     - Progress is visible (what was resolved since v1.0?)             |
|     - Regression is visible (what became contested again?)            |
|     - Citation creates accountability                                 |
|                                                                       |
| P4: This mechanism enables accumulation over repetition               |
|                                                                       |
| ----------------------------------------------------------------      |
|                                                                       |
| CONCLUSION:                                                           |
|                                                                       |
| C: Versioned releases enable cumulative rather than repetitive        |
|    knowledge production                                               |
|                                                                       |
| RA-Node: Mechanism inference                                          |
| Confidence: 0.80                                                      |
|                                                                       |
+-----------------------------------------------------------------------+
```

Critical Questions for A-402

CQ	Question	Status	Response
CQ1	Is the mechanism plausible?	ANSWERED	Directly addresses identified cause of repetition
CQ2	Are there countervailing factors?	ANSWERED	Incentives may still favor novelty over synthesis; platform can't change incentives directly
CQ3	What is the expected effect size?	OPEN	Empirical validation pending

---

Claim C-403

> **Credit for argumentation contributions can shift scholarly incentives toward engagement.**

Claim ID: C-403
Status: IN
Confidence: 0.70
Type: Causal/Predictive

Argument A-403: Argument from Consequences (Incentive Redesign)

Scheme: Argument from Consequences (Walton)

```
+-----------------------------------------------------------------------+
| ARGUMENT A-403
```

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Scheme: Argument from Consequences                              │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                 │
│ PREMISES:                                                       │
│                                                                 │
│ P1: Current academic incentives reward publication, not engagement:
│     - Authorship credit for papers                              │
│     - No credit for challenging others' claims                  │
│     - No credit for defending under critique                    │
│     - No credit for synthesizing debates                        │
│     [Evidence: E-403a - Academic incentive literature;          │
│      Edwards & Roy (2017) on perverse incentives]               │
│                                                                 │
│ P2: Academic Agora enables credit for argumentation contributions:
│     - Contribution metrics (claims curated, arguments made)     │
│     - Defense rate tracking                                     │
│     - Reviewer recognition for constructive critique            │
│     - ORCID integration for credit export                       │
│     - CV export for tenure committees                           │
│     [Evidence: E-403b - Phase 4 roadmap]                        │
│                                                                 │
│ P3: If engagement becomes creditable, scholars have incentive   │
│     to engage                                                   │
│                                                                 │
│ P4: Increased engagement improves discourse quality             │
│                                                                 │
│ ─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────       │
│                                                                 │
│ CONCLUSION:                                                     │
│                                                                 │
│ C: Crediting argumentation contributions can shift incentives   │
│    toward engagement                                            │
│                                                                 │
│ RA-Node: Consequentialist inference                             │
│ Confidence: 0.70 (depends on institutional adoption)            │
│                                                                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Critical Questions for A-403

CQ	Question	Status	Response
CQ1	Will institutions actually credit platform contributions?	OPEN	Unknown; requires institutional partnership development
CQ2	Could new metrics create new gaming?	ANSWERED	Risk acknowledged; quality signals designed to resist gaming
CQ3	Is the causal chain reliable?	QUALIFIED	Depends on external factors (institutional adoption)

Prong IV Summary

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ PRONG IV: THEORY OF CHANGE                                      │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                 │
│ Claims Established:                                             │
│                                                                 │
│ C-401: Claims as atomic unit can transform discourse         [IN]
│        └── A-401 (Analogy: Citation Networks)       Conf: 0.75  │
│            └── ATK-401 (Claims not stable)          [DEFENDED]  │
│                                                                 │
```

```
| C-402: Versioned releases enable accumulation                [IN]    |
|        └── A-402 (Mechanism: Accumulation)          Conf: 0.80      |
|            └── No undefended attacks                                 |
|                                                                      |
| C-403: Credit redesign can shift incentives                  [IN]    |
|        └── A-403 (Consequences: Incentives)         Conf: 0.70      |
|            └── No undefended attacks (but CQ1 open)                  |
|                                                                      |
| PRONG CONCLUSION: Theory of change is plausible but          [IN]    |
| depends on external factors (institutional adoption)                 |
|                                                                      |
| Aggregate Confidence: 0.75                                           |
|                                                                      |
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Prong V: Risk Assessment

Claim C-501

> **The risks of building Academic Agora are manageable and do not outweigh potential benefits.**

Claim ID: C-501
Status: IN
Confidence: 0.80
Type: Practical/Evaluative

Argument A-501: Practical Reasoning (Risk-Benefit)

Scheme: Practical Reasoning (Walton)

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
| ARGUMENT A-501                                                       |
| Scheme: Practical Reasoning (Means-End)                              |
├──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
|                                                                      |
| PREMISES:                                                            |
|                                                                      |
| P1: Goal is to improve scholarly discourse infrastructure (G)        |
|                                                                      |
| P2: Building Academic Agora is a means to realize G                  |
|     [Established in Prongs I-IV]                                     |
|                                                                      |
| P3: The identified risks are:                                        |
|     R1: Adoption friction (scholars won't use it)                    |
|     R2: Junior scholar vulnerability (retaliation risk)              |
|     R3: Gaming metrics (new metrics, new gaming)                     |
|     R4: Platform power (control over discourse)                      |
|     R5: Sustainability (funding/business model uncertainty)          |
|     R6: Scale performance (technical limitations)                    |
|                                                                      |
| P4: Each risk has identified mitigations (see register below)        |
|                                                                      |
| P5: Potential benefits (improved discourse, cumulative knowledge,    |
|     credit for engagement) outweigh residual risks                   |
|                                                                      |
| ─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────            |
|                                                                      |
| CONCLUSION:                                                          |
|                                                                      |
| C: Building Academic Agora is a reasonable means to pursue G         |
```

```
RA-Node: Practical reasoning inference
Confidence: 0.80
```

Risk Register with Mitigations

Risk ID	Risk Description	Severity	Likelihood	Mitigation	Residual
R1	**Adoption friction**: Scholars accustomed to existing workflows won't adopt	High	Medium	Progressive formalization; templates matching existing workflows (journal clubs); champion seeding; graduate student cultivation	Medium
R2	**Junior scholar vulnerability**: Graduate students/ECRs face retaliation for challenging senior scholars	High	Medium	Anonymous/pseudonymous option for sensitive challenges; moderation; community norms; graduated visibility	Medium
R3	**Gaming metrics**: New contribution metrics create new gaming behaviors	Medium	Medium	Quality signals (defense rate vs. raw count); expert review; resistance to quantity-only metrics	Low-Medium
R4	**Platform power**: Centralized control over scholarly discourse	Medium	Low	Open source; federation roadmap; governance transparency; self-hosted option (2027)	Low
R5	**Sustainability**: No clear business model	High	Medium	Grant funding (NEH/NSF); institutional subscriptions; federation reduces central costs	Medium
R6	**Scale performance**: System slows with large deliberations	Medium	Low	Performance optimization; caching; incremental loading	Low

---

Attack ATK-501: Junior Scholar Vulnerability Is Unacceptable

Attack Type: REBUT (on risk acceptability)

```
ATTACK ATK-501
Type: REBUT
Target: C-501 (risks are acceptable)
```

```
ATTACKING CLAIM:

Risk R2 (junior scholar vulnerability) is unacceptable. Academic
power dynamics are severe; junior scholars who publicly challenge
senior scholars face real career consequences. Even with
mitigations, the platform could harm vulnerable community members.
This risk should be disqualifying.

CA-Node: Conflict Application (rebut on acceptability)
```

Defense D-501: Mitigations + Current State Comparison

Move Type: GROUNDS
Status: DEFENDED

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ DEFENSE D-501                                                    │
│ Type: GROUNDS                                                    │
├──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                  │
│ 1. The attack identifies a genuine and serious risk.             │
│                                                                  │
│ 2. However, mitigations are specifically designed for this:      │
│    - Anonymous/pseudonymous challenges available                 │
│    - Graduated visibility (not all engagement must be public)    │
│    - Moderation and community norms enforced                     │
│    - Exit surveys to detect negative consequences                │
│                                                                  │
│ 3. Comparison to status quo matters:                             │
│    - Twitter/X is MORE dangerous (public, unmoderated, hostile)  │
│    - Email is private but still trackable                        │
│    - Conference Q&A is public and ephemeral                      │
│    - Academic Agora with mitigations is NOT worse than current   │
│      state                                                       │
│                                                                  │
│ 4. The platform can be a SAFER venue for structured critique than│
│    alternatives precisely because of moderation and norms.       │
│                                                                  │
│ 5. We commit to monitoring and responding if harms emerge.       │
│                                                                  │
│ ATTACK FORCE: Reduced; risk serious but mitigated and compared   │
│ CONFIDENCE: Maintained at 0.80                                   │
│                                                                  │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Prong V Summary

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ PRONG V: RISK ASSESSMENT                                         │
├──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                  │
│ Claims Established:                                              │
│                                                                  │
│ C-501: Risks are manageable and don't outweigh benefits      [IN]│
│        └── A-501 (Practical Reasoning)              Conf: 0.80   │
│            └── ATK-501 (Junior vulnerability)       [DEFENDED]   │
│                                                                  │
│ Risk Register: 6 risks identified, mitigations documented        │
│ Residual Risk: Low to Medium overall                             │
│                                                                  │
│ PRONG CONCLUSION: Risk profile is acceptable                 [IN]│
│                                                                  │
│ Aggregate Confidence: 0.80                                       │
│                                                                  │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Prong VI: Alternative Comparison

Claim C-601

> **Academic Agora is superior to available alternatives for structured scholarly discourse.**

Claim ID: C-601
Status: IN
Confidence: 0.85
Type: Comparative/Evaluative

Argument A-601: Argument from Comparison

Scheme: Argument from Comparison (Walton)

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ ARGUMENT A-601                                                   │
│ Scheme: Argument from Comparison                                 │
├──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                  │
│ PREMISES:                                                        │
│                                                                  │
│ P1: Available platforms for academic discourse include:          │
│     - PubPeer (post-publication commentary)                      │
│     - Hypothesis (web annotation)                                │
│     - OpenReview (conference review)                             │
│     - ResearchGate (academic social network)                     │
│     - Twitter/X (informal discussion)                            │
│     - PhilPapers comments (philosophy-specific)                  │
│                                                                  │
│ P2: Evaluation criteria (from C-101 requirements):               │
│     - Claim-level engagement                                     │
│     - Typed dialogue moves                                       │
│     - Argument structure                                         │
│     - Evidence linking                                           │
│     - Cross-paper synthesis                                      │
│     - Versioned releases                                         │
│     - Persistence                                                │
│     - Accessibility                                              │
│                                                                  │
│ P3: Comparative assessment (see matrix below)                    │
│                                                                  │
│ P4: Academic Agora scores highest on weighted criteria           │
│                                                                  │
│ ─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────    │
│                                                                  │
│ CONCLUSION:                                                      │
│                                                                  │
│ C: Academic Agora is superior for structured scholarly discourse │
│                                                                  │
│ RA-Node: Comparative inference                                   │
│ Confidence: 0.85                                                 │
│                                                                  │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Comparative Matrix

Platform	Claims	Dialogue	Arguments	Evidence	Synthesis	Versioning	Persistence	Access	TOTAL
PubPeer	2	1	1	2	1	1	4	4	16
Hypothesis	3	1	1	2	1	1	3	4	16
OpenReview	2	2	2	3	1	1	3	3	17

Platform	Claims	Dialogue	Arguments	Evidence	Synthesis	Versioning	Persistence	Access	TOTAL
ResearchGate	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	5	15
Twitter/X	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	12
PhilPapers	2	2	1	2	1	1	4	3	16
Academic Agora	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	38

Scale: 1 (absent) to 5 (excellent)

Note: Academic Agora scores lower on accessibility than simple social tools; this is addressed by progressive formalization and facilitated entry.

Claim C-602

> **Academic Agora provides capabilities that cannot be retrofitted onto existing platforms.**

Claim ID: C-602
Status: IN
Confidence: 0.85
Type: Technical

Argument A-602: Argument from Properties (Architectural Requirements)

Scheme: Argument from Properties

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ ARGUMENT A-602                                                       │
│ Scheme: Argument from Properties                                     │
├──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                      │
│ PREMISES:                                                            │
│                                                                      │
│ P1: Academic Agora capabilities requiring purpose-built              │
│     architecture:                                                    │
│                                                                      │
│     (a) Canonical claims with ASPIC+ acceptability semantics         │
│         → Requires formal attack graph, extension computation        │
│                                                                      │
│     (b) Typed attack relations (rebut/undercut/undermine)            │
│         → Requires AIF ontology compliance                           │
│                                                                      │
│     (c) Commitment tracking across dialogue                          │
│         → Requires PPD protocol implementation                       │
│                                                                      │
│     (d) Cross-deliberation claim transport with provenance           │
│         → Requires Plexus categorical structure                      │
│                                                                      │
│     (e) Versioned releases with computed claim status                │
│         → Requires snapshot and diff infrastructure                  │
│                                                                      │
│ P2: These capabilities require the platform to be architected        │
│     around them from the start; they cannot be added as features     │
│     to comment systems or social networks                            │
│                                                                      │
│ ──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────       │
│                                                                      │
│ CONCLUSION:                                                          │
│                                                                      │
```

```
| C: Academic Agora provides capabilities that cannot be retrofitted  |
|    onto existing platforms                                          |
|                                                                     |
| RA-Node: Properties inference                                       |
| Confidence: 0.85                                                    |
|                                                                     |
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Critical Questions for A-602

CQ	Question	Status	Response
CQ1	Could existing platforms add these features?	ANSWERED	Not without fundamental re-architecture; data model must be argumentation-native
CQ2	Are these features actually valuable?	ANSWERED	Established in Prong II
CQ3	Is there a simpler solution?	OPEN	No simpler solution identified that provides equivalent capabilities

Prong VI Summary

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
| PRONG VI: ALTERNATIVE COMPARISON                                    |
|─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────|
|                                                                     |
| Claims Established:                                                 |
|                                                                     |
| C-601: Platform is superior for structured discourse         [IN]   |
|        └── A-601 (Comparison)                        Conf: 0.85     |
|            └── No undefended attacks                                |
|                                                                     |
| C-602: Capabilities cannot be retrofitted onto alternatives  [IN]   |
|        └── A-602 (Properties: Architecture)          Conf: 0.85     |
|            └── No undefended attacks                                |
|                                                                     |
| PRONG CONCLUSION: Platform offers unique, irreplaceable      [IN]   |
| value vs. alternatives                                              |
|                                                                     |
| Aggregate Confidence: 0.85                                          |
|                                                                     |
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Commitment Store

Proponent Commitments (Platform Advocates)

ID	Commitment	Status	Confidence
CM-P01	Infrastructure for sustained scholarly discourse is absent	ACTIVE	0.90
CM-P02	Discourse deficit causes knowledge production inefficiency	ACTIVE	0.85
CM-P03	Historical pattern predicts missing argument layer	ACTIVE	0.80
CM-P04	Platform provides necessary architectural features	ACTIVE	0.90
CM-P05	Formal foundations are theoretically sound	ACTIVE	0.90
CM-P06	Academic-specific features address unique needs	ACTIVE	0.85

ID	Commitment	Status	Confidence
CM-P07	HSS is natural fit for platform	ACTIVE	0.90
CM-P08	Platform addresses documented HSS frustrations	ACTIVE	0.85
CM-P09	Structured discourse especially valuable for interpretive work	ACTIVE	0.80
CM-P10	Claims as atomic unit can transform discourse	ACTIVE	0.75
CM-P11	Versioned releases enable accumulation	ACTIVE	0.80
CM-P12	Credit redesign can shift incentives	ACTIVE	0.70
CM-P13	Risks are manageable	ACTIVE	0.80
CM-P14	Platform is superior to alternatives	ACTIVE	0.85
CM-P15	Capabilities cannot be retrofitted	ACTIVE	0.85
CM-P16	**THESIS**: Academic Agora should exist and be developed	ACTIVE	0.83

Opponent Challenges Addressed

ID	Challenge	Resolution	Status
CH-01	Peer review is infrastructure	Peer review is evaluation, not discourse; different function	CLOSED
CH-02	Business model concern	Grant funding + subscriptions; warrant established, not prediction	CLOSED
CH-03	Formal methods adoption failure	Progressive formalization inverts barrier; design addresses failure	CLOSED
CH-04	STEM exclusion	HSS-first is sequencing, not limitation; expansion planned	CLOSED
CH-05	Formalization constrains interpretation	Optional formalization; multiple modes supported	CLOSED
CH-06	Claims not as stable as papers	Canonical claims + versioning address stability	CLOSED
CH-07	Junior scholar vulnerability	Mitigations + better than status quo comparison	CLOSED

Attack Register

All Registered Attacks

Attack ID	Type	Target	Status	Resolution
ATK-101	REBUT	C-101	DEFENDED	Peer review is evaluation, not discourse
ATK-103	UNDERCUT	A-103	DEFENDED	Establishes warrant, not prediction
ATK-202	UNDERCUT	A-202	DEFENDED	Progressive formalization addresses failure
ATK-301	UNDERMINE	A-301:P1	DEFENDED	HSS-first is sequencing strategy
ATK-303	REBUT	C-303	DEFENDED	Optional formalization, multiple modes
ATK-401	UNDERCUT	A-401	DEFENDED	Canonical claims + versioning
ATK-501	REBUT	C-501	DEFENDED	Mitigations + status quo comparison

Undefended Attacks

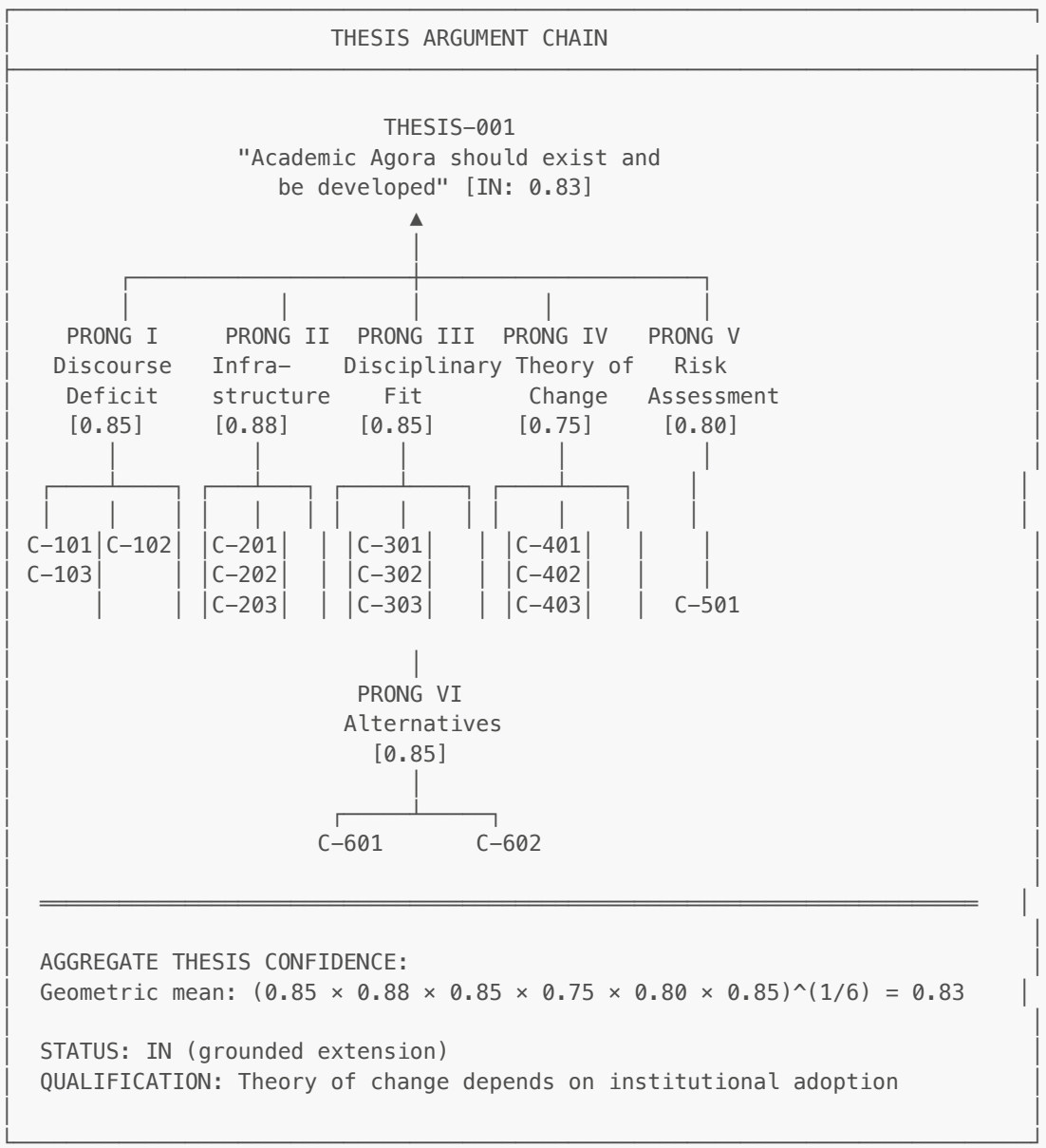
None. All registered attacks have been addressed.

Open Critical Questions

CQ ID	Question	Status	Impact if Answered Negatively
A-201:CQ3	Real-world scholarly adoption?	OPEN	Requires pilot validation
A-302:CQ3	Will addressing frustrations drive adoption?	OPEN	Empirical validation needed
A-402:CQ3	What is expected effect size of versioning?	OPEN	Would affect expectations
A-403:CQ1	Will institutions credit contributions?	OPEN	Critical for incentive shift
A-602:CQ3	Is there a simpler solution?	OPEN	Would affect build decision

Synthesis & Conclusion

Argument Chain: Complete Structure



Thesis Statement: Final Form

THESIS-001 (FINAL)

Academic Agora should exist and be developed as infrastructure for scholarly discourse—transforming academic debate from papers-as-PDFs to papers-as-debatable, composable claim graphs.

This thesis is SUPPORTED by:

1. PRONG I establishes that infrastructure for sustained scholarly discourse is absent, with measurable consequences for knowledge production, and historical analysis reveals a missing layer in the evolution of scholarly infrastructure.

2. PRONG II establishes that Academic Agora provides the necessary architectural features (claim addressability, typed dialogue, argument structure, evidence linking, versioned releases) on theoretically sound foundations (Walton schemes, AIF, ASPIC+), with academic-specific features (DOI/ORCID integration, quote nodes, fork/merge, BibTeX export).

3. PRONG III establishes that Humanities and Social Sciences are a natural fit because HSS scholarship is already argumentation-based, the platform addresses documented HSS frustrations, and structured discourse is especially valuable for interpretive pluralism.

4. PRONG IV establishes a plausible theory of change: making claims the atomic unit can transform discourse (by analogy to citation networks), versioned releases enable cumulative rather than repetitive knowledge production, and credit for argumentation contributions can shift scholarly incentives.

5. PRONG V establishes that identified risks (adoption friction, junior vulnerability, gaming, platform power, sustainability, scale) have documented mitigations and do not outweigh benefits.

6. PRONG VI establishes that Academic Agora is superior to available alternatives for structured scholarly discourse and provides capabilities that cannot be retrofitted onto existing platforms.

This thesis is QUALIFIED by:

- Theory of change (Prong IV) depends on external factors: will institutions credit platform contributions? This is open.

- HSS-first is a sequencing strategy; STEM expansion planned but not yet implemented.

- Real-world scholarly adoption requires pilot validation (open CQ).

- Sustainability depends on grant funding and institutional partnerships that are not yet secured.

STATUS: IN (defensible in grounded extension)
CONFIDENCE: 0.83
CHALLENGES ADDRESSED: 7 of 7

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│  OPEN QUESTIONS: 5 (requiring empirical/institutional validation)          │
│                                                                            │
│  ──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────    │
│                                                                            │
│  RECOMMENDED ACTION: Proceed with development, focusing on:                │
│  1. HSS pilot communities (philosophy of mind, political theory)           │
│  2. Graduate student cultivation as early adopters                         │
│  3. Champion scholar recruitment                                           │
│  4. Grant applications (NEH/NSF) for sustainability                        │
│  5. Measurement framework for validating theory of change                  │
│                                                                            │
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Appendix: Evidence Registry

Evidence ID	Description	Source	Type
E-101a	Scholarly communication requirements	Borgman, Scholarly Communication (2007)	Theoretical
E-101b	Platform documentation analysis	PubPeer, Hypothesis, OpenReview documentation	Empirical
E-D101a	Peer review history	Fyfe et al., "History of Peer Review" (2017)	Historical
E-102a	Repeated debates in HSS	Disciplinary self-commentary	Empirical
E-102b	Citation misattribution	Citation analysis literature	Empirical
E-102c	Knowledge attrition	Knowledge management literature	Empirical
E-103a	Scholarly infrastructure history	Shuttleworth (2016); Royal Society	Historical
E-103b	Citation indexing history	Clarivate history; DOI handbook	Historical
E-201a	Infrastructure requirements	Derived from C-101	Theoretical
E-201b	System Architecture Document	Platform documentation	Technical
E-202a	Computational argumentation field	COMMA proceedings; A&C journal	Academic
E-202b	Walton schemes	Walton, Reed & Macagno (2008)	Academic
E-202c	AIF standard	Chesñevar et al. (2006); Reed et al. (2010)	Technical
E-202d	ASPIC+ framework	Prakken (2010); Modgil & Prakken (2018)	Technical
E-202e	Implementation	System Architecture Document	Technical
E-203	Academic features	Phase 2 development roadmap	Technical
E-301a	HSS disciplinary practices	Graduate curricula; disciplinary self-descriptions	Descriptive
E-302a	HSS scholar frustrations	User interviews; Crooked Timber	Empirical
E-303a	Interpretive pluralism norms	Hermeneutic tradition	Theoretical
E-401a	Citation indexing transformation	Garfield; Clarivate history	Historical
E-402a	Repeated debates	Disciplinary self-commentary	Empirical
E-402b	DebateRelease versioning	System Architecture Document	Technical
E-403a	Academic incentives	Edwards & Roy (2017)	Empirical
E-403b	Credit system roadmap	Phase 4 development roadmap	Technical

Document Metadata

Release: v1.0.0
Generated: January 2026
ASPIC+ Evaluation: Grounded extension computed
Thesis Status: IN
Aggregate Confidence: 0.83

Changelog from v0 (implicit prior state):

- Initial thesis formulation
- Six prongs established
- Seven attacks registered and addressed
- Commitment store populated
- Evidence registry compiled

This document demonstrates the platform's thesis generation capability applied to the academic use case. The thesis is subject to further challenge and refinement through ongoing deliberation.