

## Executive Summary

For a long time authors and publishers have been losing money due to the lack of a payment platform for mobile devices and websites to integrate their articles with. Clerk is the solution. With Clerk, authors and publishers will be able to integrate a donation service into their websites, and publish their articles to the news reading app that gives back rather than only allowing content to be consumed. Clerk is a news reading app that will allow users to quickly and seamlessly donate a few cents, and offer a new way for publishers and independent authors to monetize their work.

## Our Team

We are two high school students who want to make a difference. Our dream is to lead the next generation of technology and media, and to achieve our dream, we are creating an app that we currently call Clerk.

Rushir, the lead designer for Clerk, has interned at Massive Health, and contributed to the design of [The Eatery](#). Rushir has studied user experience design with his mentor Aza Raskin, VP of [Jawbone](#); through Aza he has learned a significant amount about the importance of user experience. Rushir then interned at Teens in Tech, where he worked on web interfaces and designed their incubator and their YouTube page. Rushir received a paid internship at [BestFit Mobile](#) working on mobile app design, and has led the design for two projects. Rushir's most recent project has been for [Fresenius Medical Care](#), a company that acts as the largest dialysis provider in the world.

Logan, the lead developer for Clerk, has a paid internship at BestFit Mobile as a software developer, and has been the lead developer for an app for Fresenius Medical Care, a company with 55,000 employees, and has also created a conference room booking app for tablets. He has past experience developing an email client, and previously worked as a freelance web developer and designer. Logan was mentored by Kyle Simpson, the author of [You Don't Know JS](#), and Nathan Kontney, the creator of [Draft](#).

## Our Advisors

- Pascal Finette, the past Chair of the Board of Mozilla, has acted as the product advisor for our venture. He currently works at Google Giving.
- Charlie Harding, a program manager at Google, is our business advisor.
- Aza Raskin, Vice President of Jawbone, has acted as another advisor to our startup.

## The Problem

Independent writers and publishers are losing money through apps like Flipboard and Feedly, which do not reimburse the content creators. Apps like Feedly and Flipboard take away money from publishers, and in doing so take away money from writers, yet they are two of the most successfully funded news reading apps. Because of this independent writers and publishers are removing their content from these apps, as evidenced by Condé Nast pulling full articles from Wired Magazine and The New Yorker from these apps. Such publishing companies are missing out on a value rich market.

## The Solution

We aim to be marketing partners for independent writers and publication houses. We want to be the go-to-partner of publishers and independent writers. We are disrupting the traditional internet model of unsupported media with our startup, and replacing it with a tip-as-you-go model. We plan to offer a new, innovative funding source for independent authors, while simultaneously supporting publishing companies with a subscription model. We will have a positive impact on the industry, while profiting.

Our platform directly supports independent writers and publishers using microdonations. Whenever a user likes or shares an article, they are able to seamlessly donate to the writer. Microdonations (small recommended donations are optionally paid, in much the same way that Lyft works) for quality articles encourage the creation of more articles of such quality, and also provide a way to monetize the massive user base that news reading apps have garnered.

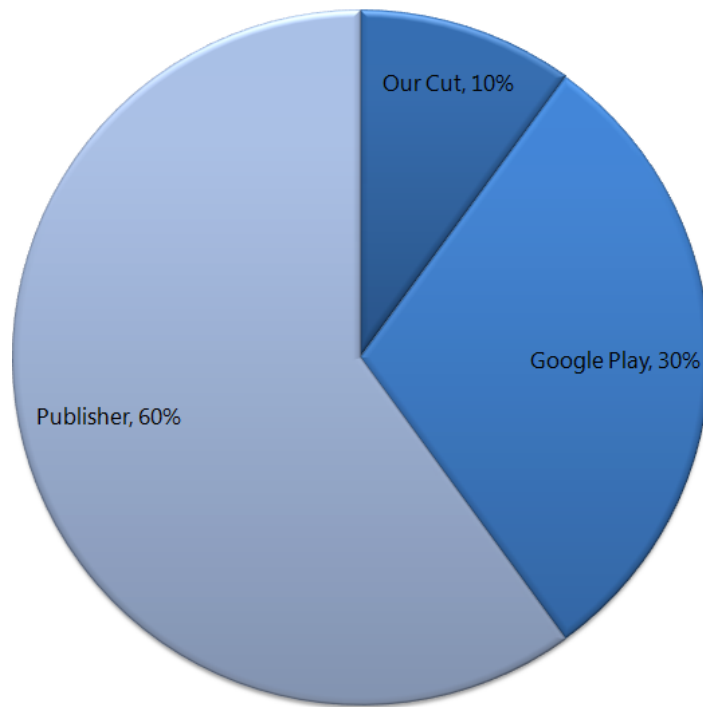
For publishers we offer a subscription service, allowing users to subscribe to their favorite publications, and offer a new revenue source to publishing companies. Previously, readers had to visit the publication's website and read either a summarized version of the article, or pass through a paywall. With Clerk, paywalls are built into the platform at the publication's request.

## The Market

Our market is two years old, and has approximately 200 million users. Our main competitors are Flipboard, Feedly, and Newsstands.

- *Flipboard* - Publishers are pulling support from Flipboard because they are losing money from the full page ads that Flipboard sells.
- *Feedly* - Feedly does not currently offer any sort of reimbursements to authors, however they do have a subscription feature, which gives integration with Pocket and Evernote, as well as speed boosts, and the ability to search within articles.
- *Newsstand* - Newsstand supports publishers, but does not support or reimburse independent authors.

## Our Business Plan



Users of our platform will be able to easily donate to independent authors after reading their articles. The default donation amount will be \$0.10 so as to have very little friction impairing the act of donating. We intend to generate revenue by taking a 10% cut of all donations made to independent authors. We will offer a subscription service to publishers, and take a cut from each subscription. We will negotiate with publishers to provide their readers the best experience possible on our platform, while still allowing a high profit margin for publishers. The first step to profitability is to have publishers sign on, and to do this, we will begin negotiations with publishing companies as we accumulate a user base.

## **Growth**

Two years after Flipboard was released, the company had 20 million users, and no means of generating revenue. Clerk will have a means of generating revenue immediately upon launching, and as the user base grows, revenue will increase accordingly. Once deals with publishers have been made so as to allow users of Clerk to pay to access the publishers' premium content, revenue will be generated at an even faster rate.

Once Clerk has accrued 20 million users, the platform will be generating revenue at an optimal rate of \$1,450,000 per month from independent authors alone, and donating \$8,700,000 per month to independent authors. This revenue projection is under the assumption that each user will donate \$0.10, less than once a month, or to be precise, this revenue projection is made under the assumption that each user would donate .725 times per month. This prediction is based on other social reader's statistics on [article sharing](#).

We will allow publishers to set their own subscription prices; users will subscribe to publications through the platform, and pay a subscription fee for access to the publishers' content each month. This will act as another source of revenue, and function as a paywall for the publishers' content. We expect that publishers will charge slightly more for their subscriptions than they would traditionally, because our company will take a small cut of the revenue per month.

## **Social**

Two of our key features will be the ability to make microdonations to authors and our integration with social media. Upon donating to an article, the article will be optionally shared to linked social media accounts with a message about the donation through Clerk. This will encourage other people to not only read the article, but also to try the app and donate.

Users will be able to follow their friends who also use the platform. Users will be able to follow the stream of articles their friend donates to, in conjunction with the authors they follow and the publishers they follow. This feature will show users that their friends are donating as well, and will allow users to share their favorite articles easily with their friends by donating. This social feature will act as the keystone for our platform, acting as a way to increase engagement and encourage more donations.