The prospects of Wattpad: Virtual library of the future or a publisher's submission site?

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Abstract

The popularization of the internet has enabled the creation of a number of online publishing outlets. Peer-to-peer platforms allow readers and writers to interact with each other, seemingly eliminating the need for traditional gatekeepers in the form of the editor and publisher. These platforms, however, have been credited with the disturbance of the publishing ecosystem. One popular peer-to-peer site is Wattpad. Conversely, as discussed in this paper, the creators of Wattpad do not want to disrupt the traditional publishing infrastructure but become a part of it. The study analyzes the values incorporated in the design of Wattpad's website and the mobile app through utilizing the walk-through method of data collection. The researcher outlines how a writer-user and reader-user could potentially be prompted to utilize the platform by analyzing the vision, operating model, and governance of the platform. The study discusses that there are hierarchies at play with the writer-user valued to a greater extent as an individual than the reader-user who is seen by the company as a currency that can be bought and sold. The paper concludes that Wattpad does not want to disrupt the publishing ecosystem because the values incorporated in the design of the platform are similar to the values of traditional publishers.

Keywords: publishing industry, self-publishing, online publishing, Wattpad, peer-to-peer platforms, values in design, online users

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Background

Kevin Kelly (2006), one of the editors of *Wired* magazine had once proposed the idea of "liquid books" all housed in a universal library, which anyone might be free to access. A year after Kelly had expressed this idea, a platform emerged that made the concept of a universal library a viable possibility. Wattpad was originally a start-up founded in Canada by Allen Lau and Ivan Yuen in 2006. Originally a web site, the company later developed a mobile application in 2008, which is now easily accessed from any handheld device (Wattpad, 2020). It is a site for aspiring and experienced authors that provides an opportunity to connect with other writers and a potential audience base; it is also a site for readers that provides easily accessible content and a variety of niche genres (Ramdarshan Bold, 2018). It has now grown to an immense size by hosting 90 million users who spend 23 billion minutes on the site every month (Wattpad, 2020). Overall, Wattpad resembles a social media site for people who love to read and write where one can follow favourite creators and chat with them and other users. As Wattpad became popular, prominent authors started to become involved with the platform. Paolo Coelho, Margaret Atwood, and Hugh Howey have all created accounts and posted content which further legitimized the platform.

Wattpad provides young writers with the opportunity to gain an audience and potentially the prospect to become traditionally published. This exchange, however, works both ways. The platform has now provided the traditional publishing industry with a vast depository of manuscripts (Ramdarshan Bold, 2018) in addition to "a large audience base and talent pool" (Davies, 2017, p. 62). Part of the company's agenda is to help writers get a traditional contract from well-known presses (Nawotka, 2015). Wattpad is a gateway to getting traditionally published, and it is not there to disturb the publishing ecosystem (Atwood, 2012). Arguably, Wattpad is not a futuristic library of "free content" that revolutionizes the reading and writing

experience because the creators tend to promote the traditional publishing model of book production. It can be argued that Wattpad serves the writer-users to a greater extent than the reader-users, by utilizing the data of the readers to promote the content of individual writers. This study will employ the walkthrough method of analysis in order to assess whether this hypothesis is true. It will utilize both the website and the app as a writer and as a reader to assess the values embedded in the design of the platforms. The aim of this essay is to flesh out any technological and cultural biases present in the design of the website and the app that favours particular users over others.

Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Platforms

The current trend in the publishing industry is for traditional presses to invest their time and money into authors who produce "big books" instead of investing energy into writers whose works might not have the potential to become instant success stories (Thompson, 2012). There is a new cycle regulated by sales figures, which determines how much will be invested into marketing and the author's advance (Thompson, 2012). Authors, however, are now demanding new outlets for their work due to these restrictions (McIlroy, 2017).

Wattpad and other digital platforms for self-publishing have been linked to the disturbance of the conventional flow of the traditional publishing model of production-distribution-consumption. Digital platforms alter the way users read and write. Consumers are becoming "prosumers": individuals are not just consuming but also producing content (Simon, 2016). The line between amateur and professional is blurring because the cost of production has fallen to an affordable level (Simon, 2016). Publishing companies offer the financial means necessary to print out a book once the writers sign over their rights, but online platforms now provide similar possibilities for a lower price or even for free. McIlroy (2017) stated that more and more creators are believing that the environment in the publishing industry is "ripe for disruption" (p. 2). However, McIlroy pointed out that the system is not ready to be disturbed because it still functions properly; the only change that the startups are producing is accentuating the role of the reader as the group who deems a work legitimate. Authors are becoming more proactive in the way they interact with the readers and even have a better capacity to market their own work than the publishing houses (Simon, 2016). Similarly, on Wattpad, the success of a work is decided by the readers (Tirocchi, 2018). For peer-to-peer (P2P) platforms, there are no longer any gatekeepers (such as publishers) to judge the quality of the work except for other users of the sites. Potentially, the dismissal of gatekeepers can be an indication that the traditional publishing industry is losing its full control on the book trade.

Conversely, these startups and self-publishing sites are not necessarily benefiting the authors who are still earning pennies (McIlroy, 2017). Bauwens (2006) also mentioned the hierarchies involved in P2P platforms where the founders of the platform are often the ones setting the agenda and managing the users accordingly. Vadde (2017) proposed that the P2P platforms are not necessarily part of the gift economy but are an example of a sharing economy; companies exploit the users, and the "gifts" are turned into the company's profits (p. 31- 32).

The producers of the content on P2P sites normally do not receive income for their labour even if they do attain meaning from their work and gain other immaterial benefits (Bauwens, 2006). Amateur creators are exploited for their data, while they themselves try to figure out how

the system works in order to gain more opportunities for themselves (Vadde, 2017). Writers are trying to break out of the current system possibly because they reject the definition of authorship that is imposed by the traditional publishing industry (Vadde, 2017). Being a writer is a "role" that individuals take on that is part of their identity (Gouthro, 2014, p. 183). Platforms such as Wattpad, however, still advocate that their main goal is to open doors for writers into the traditional publishing industry. Therefore, the system of publishing is not becoming disturbed by P2P platforms such as Wattpad because these platforms want to be incorporated into the publishing sector themselves.

Technological Affordance

A number of case studies devoted to analyzing Wattpad specifically highlight the different technological affordances of the platform (Coelho et al., 2019; Contreras et al., 2015; Rahman and Iwan, 2019). Technological affordance are "features that can be seen by users as having a number of potential actions associated with them. Therefore, an affordance exists once a user has perceived it and perceived the potential actions associated with it." (Meredith, 2017, p. 43). Originally, Wattpad was created as a P2P platform for reading, writing and sharing stories. Users, however, have established their own way of utilizing the platform that does not reflect the goals of the designers and creators such as using it as a tool in the classroom (Korobkova and Collins, 2019) or as an outlet for coping with anxiety (Tirocchi, 2018).

The platform is linked with its educational potential by a number of scholars (Coelho et al., 2019; Rahman and Iwan, 2019). Rahman and Iwan (2019) specifically focused on incorporating technology into the classroom in order to stimulate the learning experience of students. The study proposed that because of its flexibility (portability and wi-fi-free access) individuals are able to utilize the platform anytime and anywhere catering to their own specific needs and habits (Rahman and Iwan, 2019, p. 29). This flexibility can be used to the advantage of educators who want to provide a more technologically enhanced learning experience (Rahman and Iwan, 2019). Coelho et al., (2019) also mentioned the current trend of using Wattpad in an educational setting. Their study specifically focused on Wattpad as a pedagogical tool that promotes the development of reading and writing practices in high school pupils. Even though the students were not enthusiastic about utilizing the platform at first as an educational tool, attitudes quickly changed when they started to create their own community, comment on each other's posts, and help fellow classmates with the learning process (Coelho et al., 2019). The students were able to appropriate the platform in order to fit their own needs.

Korobkova and Collins (2019) similarly pointed out that individuals utilize the platform to adapt to their own demands. What is interesting about Korobkova and Collin's study is that they specifically grouped the activities that users perform on the website into "multiple user types" (p. 392). Instead of having the original roles of reader and writer that the site promotes, the study also includes four other roles: reviewer, fan, friend, and graphic designer (Korobkova and Collins, 2019). Each role carries a specific set of affordances that the users bring with them. For instance, a graphic designer would specifically log onto the site to create book covers for other users, which would help develop their own graphic design skills and form connections (Korobkova and Collins, 2019). Users are able to alter the way they utilize the platforms in order to fit their own dispositions. The example of the graphic designer is a striking one since the platform was not created to appeal

to visual artists. On the other hand, users were able to incorporate their own practices into the way they employ the website. Similarly, Ramdarshan Bold (2018) also identified different roles that users took on when contributing to Wattpad. She focused her study predominantly on the writers, identifying five different roles: verified author, fan fiction authors, micro-celebrities, (Wattpad) award winners and/or charted authors (including Wattpad awards) and invisible authors. This categorization also leads to different affordances of the writers. For instance, verified authors such as Margaret Atwood have a much different use for the site than the invisible authors who are still trying to promote their work and generate a readership.

Another characteristic of the platform is having the potential to be a social network where users become friends. This phenomenon has also been recognized by some researchers (Contreras et al., 2015; Davies 2017; Tirocchi, 2018). In the work by Tirocchi (2018) the participants of the study reported potential reasons as to why they use Wattpad, which were linked to expressing their emotions, needs, and discomforts. For instance, one of the users stated that they published content centered around anxiety. For them Wattpad is not only a creative outlet, but also a channel that they use to aid in their struggles with mental health. Wattpad becomes a community that individuals turn to in order to gain support and express their emotions in a harmless way (Tirocchi, 2018). Contreras et al. (2015) have discovered a similar finding. After conducting interviews with users of Wattpad, the researchers determined that individuals employ Wattpad in order to lighten their mood, which can involve a way to get over sadness or heartache. Therefore, Wattpad is used as a therapy method for some users. Additionally, Wattpad has been used as a site to promote political causes such as *The Unslut Project* created by a girl who went through bullying and slut-shaming at school (Davies, 2017). There are certain ways that the users of Wattpad are able to adopt the platform in order to suit their own needs. Therefore, it must not be assumed that they have no agency in how they want to utilize the different functions of Wattpad. However, through analyzing each study, it should be noted that none of the research specifically examines the difference between a writer-user and a reader-user, which this study undertakes. Specifically, there is no in-depth mention of hierarchies at play on the platform. The overwhelming majority of the platform's users are readers, with only 10% being writers (Ramdarshan Bold, 2018). As this paper will discuss, however, the design of the platform does seem to cater to the minority writer-user over the readers.

Methodology

This study employs the walkthrough method in order to gather data and analyze Wattpad, which is used to investigate whether there are any biases, technical or cultural, in the design of the platform. By employing the walkthrough model, this study specifically focuses on any indicators of the website's vision, operating model, and governance. The vision of the designers can be perceived through analyzing the platform's "purpose, target user base, and scenarios of use" (Light et al., 2018, p. 10). Specifically, this study explores the layout of the platform and the prompts that facilitate the user experience. "How interactive media is structured and configured greatly affects its social affordances, enabling and promoting certain usage patterns while hindering others" (Latzko-Toth, 2014, p. 578). One way to analyze the vision of the creators of the platform is to specifically observe the mediator characteristics, which can illustrate the technical and cultural influences of the platform (Light et al., 2018). Some mediator characteristics include: user interface arrangement (e.g. placement of buttons), functions and features (e.g. pop-up windows,

links to other accounts), textual content and tone (e.g. the order of the drop-down menu), and symbolic representation (e.g. branding, layout colour, font choice) (Light et al., 2018). The operating model can reveal the political and economic interests of the platform and is examined by observing the company's business strategy and revenue sources (Light et al., 2018). This is where the feature of paid stories is important to highlight as a new addition to the website's function, which was unveiled in 2018 (Perez, 2018). The paid stories feature is not considered by recent studies conducted on Wattpad. Finally, the governance of a platform is analyzed through studying the guidelines of the site and what rules are enforced by the developers, in addition to whether there are users who are not able to access the site because of intentional boundaries (Light et al., 2018).

The data was collected over a one-week period through the Wattpad.com website, the mobile app, and the corporate site that can be found at business.Wattpad.com. Wattpad has been linked with convenience and flexibility because it can be accessed using any mobile device (Ramdarshan Bold, 2018). Younger readers tend to log onto Wattpad using a smartphone, which also shapes the way they interact with the platform (Korobkova and Collins, 2019). Therefore, analyzing only the website version of Wattpad would leave out a significant number of users who can only access the site via a mobile device. Additionally, since Wattpad specifically created a website for business it is also important to analyze the corporate platform in order to explore the company's operating model further. The walkthrough process was started by registering on the website, reading stories other users uploaded onto the site, utilizing the writing feature to post a story, and finally deleting the account. Stories were read and posted on both the website and on the mobile app. By conducting the walkthrough method, it is possible to understand how a typical user employs and perceives the platform. Through this, it is possible to detect the company's values and whether there are any hierarchies present between the writer-user and the reader-user.

Analysis and Discussion

The following section of the paper explores any technical and cultural biases identified in the design of the Wattpad website and app based on the three categories outlined: vision operating model, and governance. The study concludes that there is an evident bias towards catering to the writer-user more than to the reader-user.

Vision

Wattpad can be used both on a computer and on a mobile device such as a tablet and smartphone. Registering an account on the app and the desktop version carries the user through the same process: providing an email address, birthday, gender, creating a username, and identifying oneself as a reader, writer, or both. When clicking on "reader", the site takes the user to the next screen with opportunities to start reading and adding books to their library. The reader-user can utilize the browse function or go through a list of stories that are popular. In contrast, when users click on "writer" the site takes them to another screen with further options: 1) I mostly write for fun 2) I'm exploring opportunities for my work(s) 3) I'm pursuing a career as a writer 4) I am a professional writer, and 5) Not quite any of these. Once the writer-user clicks on one of the options, they are also taken to the screen with the option to browse stories. There are more options

created for the writer-user to identify with from the initial stages of registering on the platform, which already indicates some hierarchies that are present.

The two versions of Wattpad (website versus application) are distinctive in their interface layout. The only similarity is the structure of the home newsfeed. The "paid stories" are located as the first category when a user scrolls down the home newsfeed on a computer; on the app the paid stories are right after "Top picks for you." As a reader there is an overwhelming amount of information and categories offered when scrolling through the home page. The categories featured are the same on the app and the desktop version, which include: Talk of the Town, Editors' Choice, Trending, Available in Book Stores, and Undiscovered Stories. There is an evident hierarchy in the way content is featured on the website. For instance, the category "Editor's Choice" reminds readers of the traditional publishing system where editors deem what content is worthy of publishing.

The difference between the website and mobile versions are the buttons that lead directly to other parts of the platform. On the mobile app, there are five buttons conveniently located at the bottom of the screen: return to the home newsfeed, reader's library, write, notifications, and personal profile. On the desktop version, there are only four direct buttons: browse, community, search, and write. The user's library and notifications are part of the dropdown menu options when individuals click on their profile picture at the top right-hand corner. Arguably, the app layout enables readers to quickly access their reading material, while the desktop version is structured in a way that prompts users to either browse content or use the writing function.

It was detected that the interface is rather chaotic when using Wattpad as a reader. It is problematic to click on random stories because the platform starts to generate similar suggestions for future reading even if the reader wanted to quickly browse through the book and not add it to their library. There is the option of searching the site by using tags or titles of stories. However, this is problematic as well, since writers can use the same title for books and create tags that are not completely relevant to the content. Ramdarshan Bold (2018) pointed out that even though the tagging system generates fluidity and puts the authors in command of the genre, it can also lead to mis-categorization. For instance, the story that was published for this study was tagged with the following: young adult, romance, bad boy, high school, love triangle, frenemies, perfect, drama, youth, teen fiction. However, these tags are very common, and the story is difficult to find just by searching the title and the tags. In contrast, writing the story was a relatively straightforward experience. By clicking on the "write" button the user is directed by prompts to post the story. It can be argued that the writer-user can utilize the platform quicker than the reader-user, who is prompted to discover new content and stay on the site for as long as possible.

Functions and features include linking the account to Facebook, Twitter, Lulu, Smashwords, and a personal website. Both Lulu and Smashwords are well-known self-publishing platforms. They are specifically used by writers who want to publish their books both in electronic and print formats. Both of the companies offer services and packaged deals to help an author produce a book out of their manuscript. Both Lulu and Smashwords feature books for sale on their platforms. The fact that Wattpad specifically has an option to link to Lulu and Smashwords indicated that it is catered towards users who are serious about their writing. For instance, there is

no option to link the account to other sites catered towards connecting reader-users such as Goodreads.

There are few pop-up windows when using the site as a reader. One of them appears when accessing the profile the first couple of times. The site prompts the user to keep track of the coins that can be used to unlock the paid stories. If the user is a writer there are a number of pop-up windows that guide them through the process of posting a first story. The website prompts the user to include a cover photo stating: "Stories with a cover image get 23x more reads than ones without". There are similar prompts when putting in the Description: "Stories with descriptions get 100x more reads than ones without. Write a short description that will excite your readers and hook them in", Tags "Adding 10 or more tags can help increase discoverability. Tags should be a word or concept, reflective of your story's themes and subgenres", Target Audience "this information will not be shown to your readers. Instead, this information will be used to help Wattpad more easily discover your story". There is a clear emphasis on encouraging writers to get discovered. The writer-user is always being reminded that the main goal of posting the story is to generate more views. However, on the app version, writing is more difficult. There are no pop-up windows. The user is given only three categories to fill in: Cover image, Titles, and Description. It is difficult to publish large portions of the book on the mobile device because it is assumed that the user is typing the story by utilizing the touchscreen keyboard, which can be small and burdensome to use in the long run. This model of frequently uploading a chapter one at a time is supposed to build suspense and devotion from readers, echoing the 19th century publishing model that Charles Dickens utilized (Vadde, 2017). Arguably, the app version of the platform provides a better user experience for readers and the desktop version is catered to a greater extent towards writers.

When a writer shares their story on Wattpad, the platform tracks the number of views, comments, and votes for each specific piece. A writer-user can track the exact date the story received the greatest number of views and utilize this data in the future to understand what prompts more interaction from the reader-users. Writers are surrounded by data through the site's tracking of readers, votes, and comments per story. Therefore, there is a hierarchy system present in terms of the writer-users as well that prompts them to not only post to obtain feedback and a supportive audience but to gain more followers to advance in the ranking system (Laquintano, 2016). Even though anyone can publish on Wattpad, there are still hierarchies at play because the site utilizes algorithms in order to promote certain content, which can be viewed as another form of gatekeeping similar to traditional publishers (Ramdarshan Bold, 2018).

Overall, the readers' attention is seen as the currency that can be converted into monetary value (Davies, 2017). The app version of Wattpad was easier to browse as a reader and did not have as many options for writers. However, the desktop version of the platform offered features that made the writing experience extremely easy for writer-users, but there were no special features for readers that were detected. Arguably, Wattpad views the writer-users as superior to the reader-users by helping them develop their stories and by using the readers as a currency that attracts potential investors and collaborators from traditional media outlets.

Operating Model

The paid stories feature was introduced by the platform in 2018. Wattpad prompts users to buy "coins" (the Wattpad currency) in order to support favorite writers (Perez, 2018). When users obtain the coins, they can unlock stories by authors of the platform who were signed on by traditional publishers. The coins can unlock a full story or specific chapters. Additionally, a user can also subscribe to a premium plan, which grants access to ad-free content, bonus coins, and provides more flexibility with customizing the profile by changing the colour themes. Moreover, the readers are prompted to subscribe to premium in order to have more than two stories available for offline reading, a feature that was a prominent reason why many users logged onto Wattpad for its accessibility (Kirci, 2014). The coins and the premium experience can only be purchased on the app version of Wattpad. As was discussed in the previous section the app version of the platform is geared more towards the readers than writers. Arguably, both the coins and the premium subscription packages that can be purchased on the app are also specifically geared towards readers because they do not offer any additional services specifically for writers.

There is a paid feature promoted on the desktop version that is directed at writer-users. When clicking to edit the story or add a new section the website prompts the writer to access "Wattpad Story Insights", which is an additional feature developed in order to provide writer-users with feedback from the platform itself. The feature includes an analysis of the writing style and how to develop patterns of success. However, this feature is promoted only on the desktop version of the site, cementing the observation that the app is geared more towards reader-users and the website version towards writer-users.

Another source of revenue for Wattpad is the introduction of Wattpad Books in the fall of 2019. This new feature is specifically catered towards the writer-user. Essentially, Wattpad has turned into a traditional publishing press. The company emphasizes that books being published under the Wattpad Books imprint are "data-backed" and have a "built-in audience" (Wattpad Books, n.d.). Wattpad is utilizing data collected from its readers in order to promote the writer-user's work. However, it is unclear whether Wattpad books will only be available on Wattpad as paid eBooks or whether there is a print version coming.

On the business platform of Wattpad (business.wattpad.com) it also appears that the site's main focus is to encourage users to write. The company attracts potential businesses to invest in the platform and collaborate with writer-users by stating that they have the necessary data to see what the current trends are (Wattpad Studios, 2021). The site offers publishers the option to advertise their own work on their site by connecting them with millions of readers. Some of the partnerships include Simon and Shuster, Hachette Book Group, MacMillan, HarperCollins, NBC, and others (Wattpad Studios, 2021). The stars of the platform that are featured as success stories are all writer-users who have attracted thousands and even millions of readers. The company takes a percentage from a work that has been turned into a book, film, and TV series (Israelson, 2019). There are more than 1000 writers who have been discovered on Wattpad (ibid). Arguably, the site's goal is not to alter the publishing world but be incorporated into the traditional book trade industry and work with publishing companies. The reader-users are utilized by the platform as a data set that can be sold to potential partners, and the writer-user is prompted to stand out as a unique individual.

Governance

There are no rules or guidelines outlined when an individual first starts using Wattpad. Potentially, if a user does not feel safe on the platform the resources available are difficult to find. The help button at the bottom of the screen takes the user to a support page that displays fifteen categories with Policy and Safety being at the bottom of the page. After clicking on the Policy and Safety button the user is transferred over to a page with further links, such as Copyright FAQ and Code of Conduct. At the bottom of the page there is an option to click on "What should I do if I am being bullied or harassed on Wattpad", which provides a step-by-step guide on how to mute a user. However, this option does not have its own personal button on the user's profile, it is listed under other options. A user also has the option of reporting a story if it does not abide by the site's code of conduct. "Apps may enlist users in enforcing governance through mutual surveillance facilitated by reporting systems" (Light et al., 2018, p. 13). Wattpad does not enforce its code of conduct but gives that role to the reader-users by providing them with the option to flag a story. Arguably, it is time-consuming to flag a story by finding the correct buttons, reading the code of conduct, and filling out the form.

For writer-users the site provides some rules when posting a story, but they do not stand out from the other instructions. The writer has to indicate that a story is for a mature audience if it has explicit sex scenes, self-harm themes, and graphic depictions of violence (Wattpad Help Centre, 2020). However, in order to read these guidelines and rules, a user has to navigate away from the original page where they post the story. This can cause users not to click on the "Learn more" option. Therefore, through a cumbersome process of flagging a story and not promoting their rules of conduct, it appears that Wattpad wants to keep as many stories on their site as possible. The experience of the reader-user when dealing with abusive content is not straightforward. In contrast, the writer-user is not necessarily discouraged to post inappropriate content by the site.

The company has created an image that it is a free site that welcomes all users who have access to a desktop or a mobile device. However, as it was discussed thus far in the paper, the app version is arguably geared more towards readers and the desktop version is geared towards writers. There are hierarchies at play. Even though Wattpad is accessible on mobile devices that can be shared, the target audience of the site is still predominantly middle to upper class individuals (Vadde, 2017). There are boundaries that are created by not allowing users to add more than two titles to their list of offline reading material or having to purchase coins in order to unlock certain stories. There are more features available for free to the writer-user than to the reader-user. Arguably, those users who do not have a computer and who can only access Wattpad from a mobile device are at a disadvantage as writers because of the limited features and cumbersome task of writing on a smaller screen. However, as readers, these users are further contributing to the commercial success of the platform and treated as currency.

Conclusion

Wattpad is a platform designed for readers and writers to freely connect, read, and share stories. Both the reader-user and the writer-user are participating in a gift economy where the readers provide feedback and contribute to the popularity of a work by viewing and rating it in

exchange for free content. Similarly, the writers are contributing this free content in order to receive feedback. This relationship, however, between the writer-user and the reader-user has been changing. As described through the analysis of the platform's vison, operating model, and governance, Wattpad is building hierarchies by facilitating some users' experience to a greater extent than others. Wattpad introduced new features such as Wattpad books, paid stories, and story insight in order to help writers become discovered and earn money. The writers are prompted to build a community by employing these newly presented opportunities. Wattpad utilizes the data and money of readers in order to promote the works of writers and partner them with various media outlets such as publishing houses and streaming services. Writers are specifically prompted to utilize Wattpad as a means to jump-start their writing career by creating a community around their work. Arguably, the role of the writer-user is not simply to obtain feedback, but to rise in the ranks of other writers. However, Wattpad also obtains a cut when writers are given a contract by any media outlet. Therefore, Wattpad has created more developments that situate the reader-user and the writer-user as currencies that can be sold off to partner organizations and bring in a source of revenue. Nonetheless, the reader-users are treated like data to a further extent than the writer-users, who still have a chance to stand out on the site. Through this analysis it becomes evident that Wattpad is certainly not disturbing the traditional publishing ecosystem but works alongside it by promoting such values as catering to a mass audience and obtaining a traditional publishing contract. Arguably, Wattpad is not a "liquid library" but a boot-camp for writers.

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