



# The emergence of alternative scholarly reputation mechanisms and platforms and their impact

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## Could not be a more important scholarly topic

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*The main currency for the scholar is not power, as it is for the politician, or wealth, as it is for the businessman, but reputation (Becher, 1989).*

## But traditionally been *very* narrowly defined and measured

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- **For a long time built mainly around just one scholarly activity (research)**, one output of that activity (publication in high-impact factor, peer reviewed papers) and on one measurement of that output (citations).
- If anything, practice becoming more **endemic in highly competitive, global digital environment in which scholars find themselves**. Chinese, Malays, Arabs playing catch-up. Parallel scholarly universes
- Appointments made on H index scores and conveniently supplied by Google Scholar to individual, online community and employer. Publish (in high impact factor journals) or perish. University of Malaya
- Clearly, such a narrow view of reputation marginalises all the other scholarly activities and this skews scholarship and academia. Not surprising teaching quality such a big issue here and in Europe

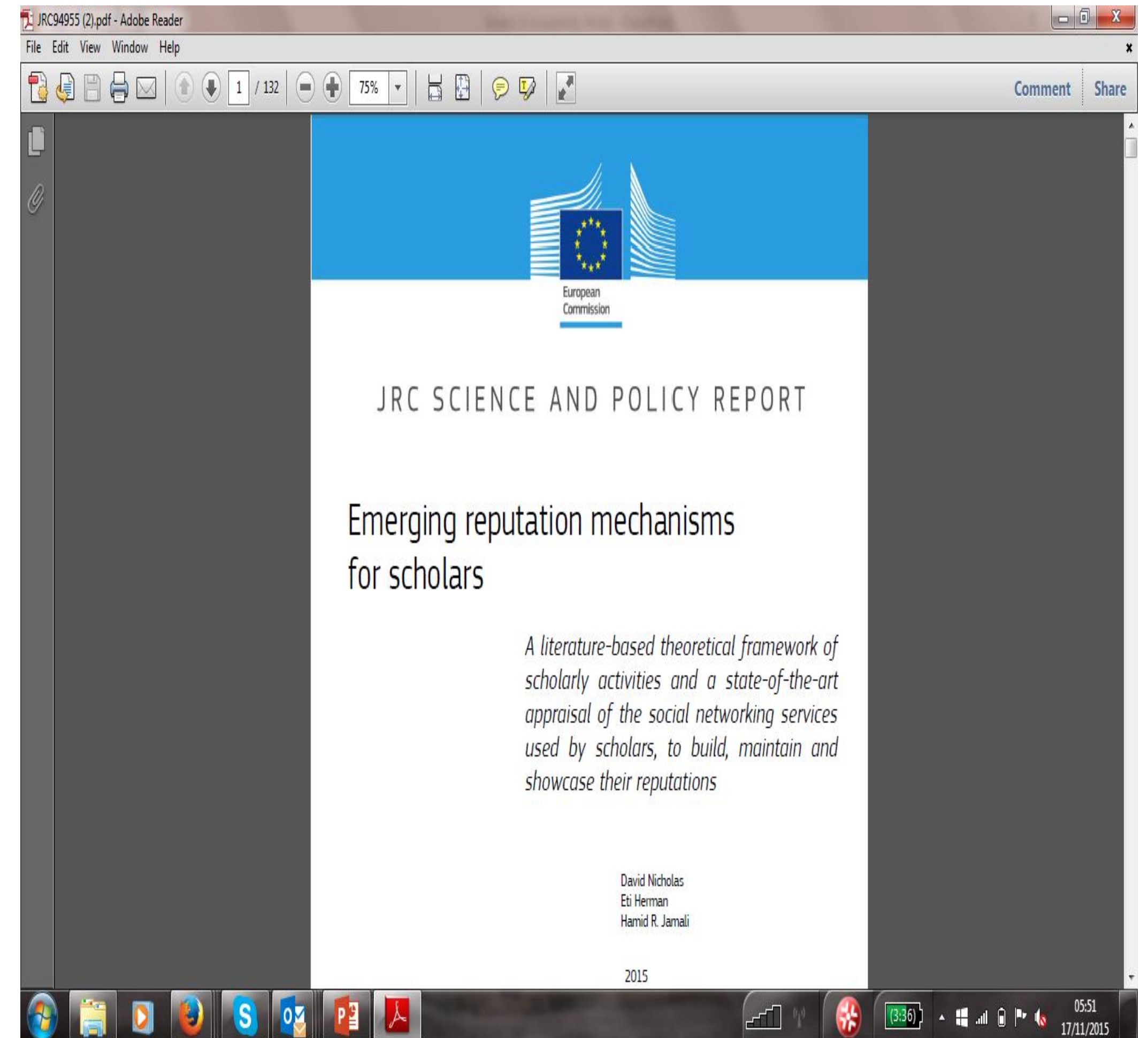
## Open science: the *game changer*

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- Web 2.0/Open science/Science 2.0 disruptive technologies giving rise to new ways of working, dissemination, measurement and ushers in new ‘actors’.
- Building and measuring scientific reputation in digital age faces some challenges/ new goals:
  - **Need a more inclusive definition of scholarly activities** that not only emphasise scientific excellence through high-impact publications, but also covers other scholarly activities and their reputation building aspects such as *teaching, mentoring, peer-reviewing, collaboration, communication and outreach*.
  - **Include "new profiles" of scholars with non-traditional academic backgrounds** (e.g. freelance scientists), or even "new actors" in the field of science, such as citizen scientists. We are all researchers now thanks to the big fat information pipe.
  - **Take account of new formats** for conducting, publishing and disseminating scholarship – blogs, online communities etc.

# Which takes us to the project

- EC, a major proponent of all things open, and emboldened by success with OA, Open Science etc. commissioned investigation of emerging reputational market and its stakeholders to stimulate growth and to encourage good practice.
- Stages: Audit of scholarly activities; evaluation of reputation platforms/mechanisms and case study; user studies; expert workshop
- Outcome two EC policy documents. Plus three papers



## Fifty scholarly activities identified with reputation conferring potential\*

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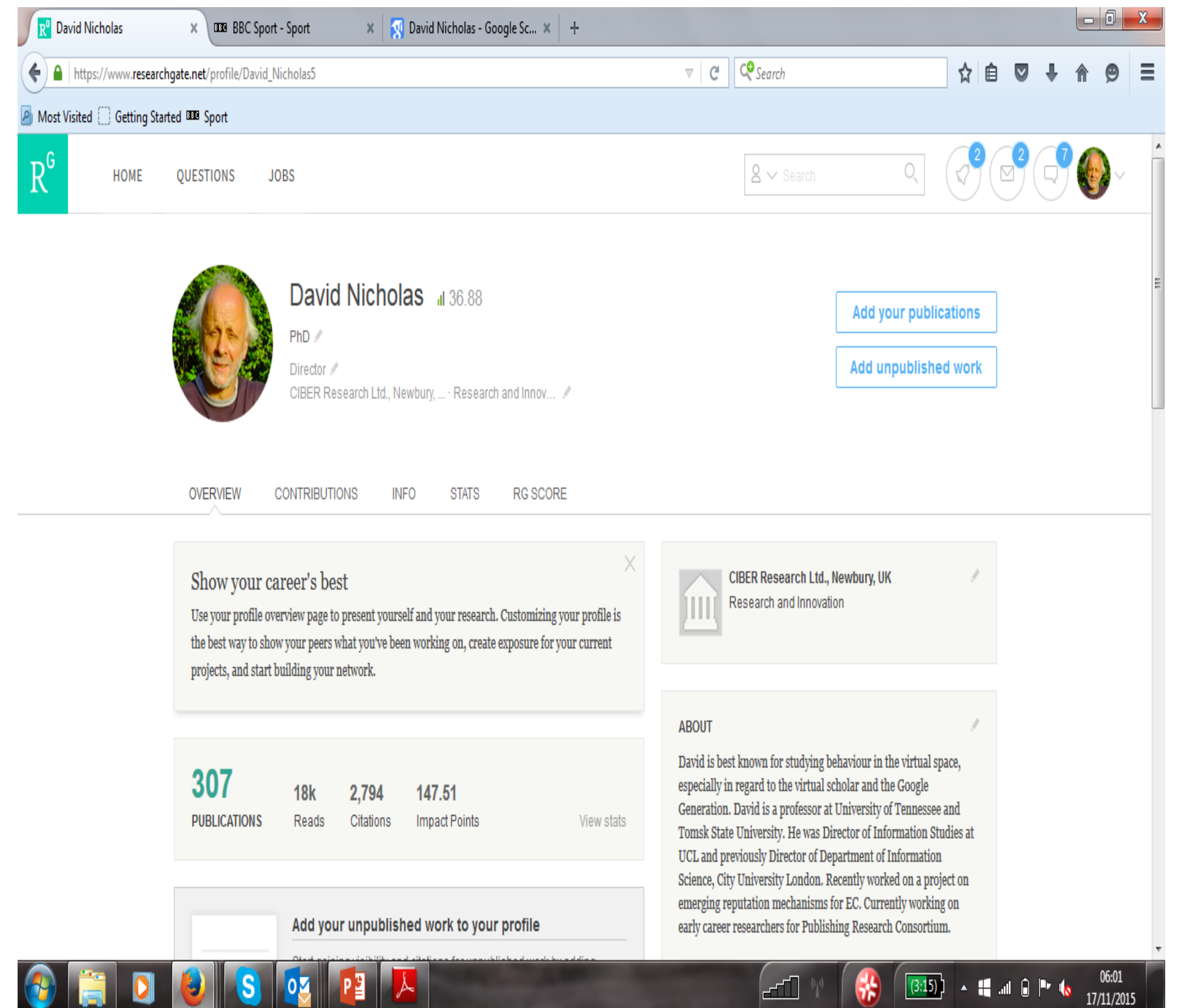
- **The scholarship of research** (discovery): *Nearly half* activities, including obtaining funding, dissemination and peer reviewing. Mature area.
- **The scholarship of integration**, the arraying of extant knowledge, often within a wider, cross-disciplinary context. *A fifth* of all activities, including literature reviews, textbooks, collaborative, inter- or multi-disciplinary projects.
- **The scholarship of application**, the application of disciplinary knowledge and skill to societal/practical problems. *A fifth* of all activities, including consultancy and popularizing science.
- **The scholarship of teaching**, the conveying of the human store of knowledge to new generations. *Less than a fifth* of activities, including PhD supervision and conducting a social networks based, participatory MOOC.
- **The scholarship of co-creation**, participating in scholarly research with the public (Citizen Science projects, for example). *About a tenth* of activities.
- **Management?**

\*Implicit added reputational value in doing something open, innovatively and collaboratively

# Emerging reputation platforms

- 25 emerging\* reputational platforms identified, which together supported half the scholarly activities, but heavily skewed towards research. Disparate lot
- Activities supported include:
  - **16** research (activities related to releasing and disseminating research outputs especially well-supported)
  - **3** teaching
  - **2** application
  - **1** integration
  - **0** co-creation

Have come a long way from Google Scholar Citations. Emerging platforms barely 5 years old, with at least 50 million scholarly users. And platforms still experimenting galloping growth and new ones coming online all the time.



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the ResearchGate profile of David Nicholas. The browser tabs include 'David Nicholas', 'BBC Sport - Sport', and 'David Nicholas - Google Sc...'. The address bar shows the URL 'https://www.researchgate.net/profile/David\_Nicholas5'. The ResearchGate logo is visible in the top left corner, along with navigation links for 'HOME', 'QUESTIONS', and 'JOBS'. The profile header features a circular profile picture of David Nicholas, his name 'David Nicholas', and a '36.88' score. Below the name are the titles 'PhD' and 'Director' at 'CIBER Research Ltd., Newbury, ...'. Two buttons are present: 'Add your publications' and 'Add unpublished work'. The main content area has tabs for 'OVERVIEW', 'CONTRIBUTIONS', 'INFO', 'STATS', and 'RG SCORE'. A prominent box titled 'Show your career's best' contains text about profile customization. Below this, a statistics box displays: 307 PUBLICATIONS, 18k Reads, 2,794 Citations, and 147.51 Impact Points. To the right, the 'ABOUT' section provides a biography of David Nicholas, mentioning his work at the University of Tennessee, Toms State University, UCL, and City University London. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows various application icons and the system clock indicating 06:01 on 17/11/2015.

# What scholarly activities are thought to contribute towards reputation?

- **Research** contributes most, with conducting research, disseminating research results via journal articles/books and collaboration getting highest ratings, with **95%** of scholars rating as very important/important.
- **Disseminating research via blogging/tweeting** least important of 18 activities (**24%** important/very important). Could be a reputational risk
- Another activity regarded lowly, but not as lowly as blogging, is **management/administration**, with **25%** saying important/very important.
- **Employers** rate social networking and blogging lower. Biggest difference regarding **management**, which is considered much more important by employers.

Activity	Ranking
Conducting research	1
Disseminating research results via journal articles/books	2
Collaborating in research	3
Disseminating research results via conferences	4
Peer reviewing	5
Taking part in inter- or multi-disciplinary projects	6
Serving one's community through activities such as editorship, society posts	7
Production of literature reviews and textbooks	8
Conducting application-oriented research	9
Teaching	10
Consultancy for industry and government	11
Popularisation of scholarship	12
Designing courses and programmes	13
Production of open educational resources	14
Conducting research with lay participants	14
Disseminating research via social networking	16
Administration and management	17
Disseminating research via blogging/tweeting	18



# Social media: for and against

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## FOR

- *Today, social media has a better reach than any other communication tool to disseminate information. Therefore, good social media management will translate into a better reach of your target market or your report. You may be able, in an easy and inexpensive way, to get people to discuss your ideas.*
- *They represent a social impact, and a scholarly impact sometimes more interesting than the normal article/paper impact, because they enable a more fluid information exchange and a potential for network creation between researchers higher than by the regular academic channels.*

## AGAINST

- *They are more related to personal use, I do not want that my activity is related to how much I talk to other people. This is good to have a beer at pub, not for professional activity; not reflective of academic status or impact.*
- *Would only benefit researchers with a certain type of outgoing personality and be very detrimental for timid researchers, whom sometimes prefer to take more "thinking" time to dwell on research questions*

# Implications of reputation platforms for academic community

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- **Clear benefits:**
  - a) greater opportunities for *collaboration*;
  - b) better understanding of who are most valuable *contacts* in their specialism;
  - c) more efficient *access* to research;
  - d) attract *attention* of colleagues to your research/publications;
  - e) make research and its impact more *visible* to a larger audience;
  - f) be spotted by editorial teams, scientific authorities for jobs, collaborations;
  - g) build a dynamic *digital identity* can control.
- **Young scholars drivers of change.** Have a more encompassing view of reputation. Consider serving one's community, the production of literature reviews and textbooks, and the production of open educational resources to be more important for their careers. **Fast-track.**
- **Even non users think they are the future**

# Negatives

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- **Skewed towards research.** Platforms reflect that reality. Runs counter to today's changing societal priorities, which see the future in the globalised knowledge society as hinging not only on research/innovation, but also on education for all.
- **Teaching elephant in room.** Much neglected. Very little excuse for this, in view of the goals and ensuing policy initiatives that have been driving the EC academic enterprise, which see research and teaching not only as mutually dependent and reciprocally reinforcing, but also as equally important.
- **Palpable mistrust of the social media and the open** what it can deliver in the way of reliable metrics and this stops a lot of scholars using emerging mechanisms. **Hippy science!**
- **Very little in the way of institutional support.** The usage of the platforms is very much left down to the initiative and skills of the individual scholar. Could be changing
- **Transparency.** An issue.
- **Tower of Babel.** Confusing multiplicity of ways of providing recognition for scholarly work. They vie with each other to establish their own reputation. Hierarchies once clearly established at the academy have become defunct.

# More information

For the full reports and PowerPoint see:

[http://ciber-research.eu/CIBER\\_projects.html](http://ciber-research.eu/CIBER_projects.html)

And papers see:

- Jamali, H. R., Nicholas, D., & Herman, E. 2016. Scholarly reputation in the digital age and the role of emerging platforms and mechanisms, *Research Evaluation*, accepted in press. [doi: 10.1093/reseval/rvv032](https://doi.org/10.1093/reseval/rvv032)
- Nicholas, D.; Herman, E.; Jamali, H. R.; Bravo, B. R.; Boukacem-Zeghmouri, C.; Dobrowolski, T., and Pouchot, S. 2015. New ways of building, showcasing, and measuring scholarly reputation, *Learned Publishing*, 28 (3), 169-183
- Nicholas, D. [Reputation mechanisms and platforms: views of an expert panel on their future use, role and influence](#) CIBER Working paper 1

