



FRAMEWORK

The Participation Stack

Discovery, Curation, Advocacy, Governance — a reference model
decomposing audience contribution into measurable, designable layers.

Abstract

“Participation” is too broad to design or measure as a single thing. The Participation Stack breaks it into four layers — **Discovery, Curation, Advocacy, Governance** — each with its own mechanics, metrics, and value. The stack is the design surface for the Viewer Economy and the input map for the Participation Value Index.

The four layers

1 · Discovery

Surfacing and identifying valuable content before it scales. The audience acts as an early-signal network.

2 · Curation

Ranking, organizing, and improving what others see — raising the quality of the feed through human judgment.

3 · Advocacy

Referrals, invitations, and reputation-backed recommendations that expand the audience at low marginal cost.

4 · Governance

Voting, moderation, and collective decision-making through which a community steers the media it supports.

Layer → action → metric → value

LAYER	EXAMPLE ACTIONS	WHAT TO MEASURE	PVI DIMENSION
Discovery	Early saves, submissions, “found it first”	Early-discovery hit-rate	Signal
Curation	Ranking, tagging, accepted edits	Curation accepted / quality lift	Signal
Advocacy	Referrals, invites, shares	Verified activated referrals	Reach
Governance	Votes, moderation, proposals	Governance participation / retention lift	Durability

How the layers compound

The layers are not independent. Discovery feeds curation; curation makes advocacy credible; advocacy grows the community that governance sustains. A product that instruments all four converts loose attention into a compounding, self-improving audience — the core mechanic of the Viewer Economy.

Design rule. For each layer, ask three questions: How does a participant *act*? How do you *measure* the contribution? How do you *return* value for it? A layer with no reward decays; a reward with no measure gets gamed.

Using the stack

- **Audit:** map your existing features onto the four layers; most products instrument one and ignore three.
- **Instrument:** add first-class metrics per layer (see table) and feed them into a PVI score.
- **Reward:** design upside-sharing per layer (see “Audience Equity”).

Companion documents: *Participation Value Index — Methodology* and *Audience Equity*.