METHODOLOGY · V0.9 (DRAFT FOR COMMENT)

Participation Value Index

A proposed, falsifiable framework for measuring the value audiences create through participation.

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Abstract

The Participation Value Index (PVI) is a framework for scoring the value an audience member creates through participation — across three dimensions: **Reach**, **Signal**, and **Durability**. It is a starting point for a shared standard, published openly so it can be tested, criticized, and improved. This document defines the construct, proposes a scoring model, and states the conditions under which the framework would be wrong.

1. Why engagement metrics fall short

Conventional metrics — impressions, watch time, likes — measure *attention received*, not *value contributed*. They reward volume over usefulness and cannot distinguish a passive scroll from an act that grows or improves the product. As media shifts from attention to participation, the field needs a metric for the thing that is actually becoming scarce and valuable: productive audience action.

2. Definition

Participatory value is the quantifiable contribution an audience member makes to a platform's reach, signal quality, and durability. The PVI expresses that contribution as a normalized score so participants, operators, and analysts can compare it across people, products, and time.

3. The three dimensions

Reach — does this person expand the audience?

Referrals, invitations, shares, and advocacy that bring new participants in at low marginal cost. Reach credits *verified downstream activation*, not raw share counts, to resist gaming.

Signal — does this person improve what others see?

Early discovery, curation, ranking, moderation, and feedback that raise the quality of recommendation and surfacing. Signal rewards being *usefully early and accurate* — identifying value before it scales.

Durability — does this person make the audience last?

Retention, repeat participation, community-building, and governance that increase the lifetime and resilience of the audience. Durability captures the compounding, hardest-to-replicate contributions.

4. Scoring model (illustrative)

PVI is computed as a weighted, normalized composite of the three dimensions. The weights below are an **illustrative default**, not an empirical result; operators are expected to calibrate them to their context and publish them for transparency.

$$PVI = 100 \times (w_R \cdot \hat{R} + w_S \cdot \hat{S} + w_D \cdot \hat{D})$$

where $\hat{R}$, $\hat{S}$, $\hat{D}$ are each normalized to [0,1]; default w_R=0.30, w_S=0.35, w_D=0.35.

DIMENSION	EXAMPLE INPUTS	DEFAULT WEIGHT
Reach (R)	Verified referrals, activated invites, advocacy reach	0.30
Signal (S)	Early-discovery hit-rate, curation accepted, moderation actions	0.35
Durability (D)	Repeat participation, cohort retention lift, governance activity	0.35

5. Inputs & data sources

PVI uses first-party product events captured with consent: referral graphs, discovery/curation logs, contribution and moderation records, and retention cohorts. The framework deliberately avoids surveillance-based inference; value should be *earned and observed*, not guessed from tracking.

6. Worked example (illustrative)

Three hypothetical participants on the same product, with the default weights. Values are illustrative.

PARTICIPANT	R̂	Ŝ	D̂	PVI
"Connector" — refers many, curates little	0.80	0.30	0.40	49
"Scout" — early, accurate discovery	0.30	0.85	0.50	57
"Anchor" — sustains the community	0.40	0.45	0.90	59

Note how PVI surfaces different *kinds* of value — a frequent referrer, an accurate scout, and a durable community anchor can each score highly for different reasons. That is the point.

7. Falsifiability & validation

A metric that cannot be wrong is not useful. PVI makes testable predictions: higher-PVI cohorts should show **lower churn**, **lower blended acquisition cost**, and **higher-quality recommendation signal** than matched low-PVI cohorts. If, on held-out data, PVI fails to predict these outcomes better than existing engagement metrics, the framework is falsified and should be revised or discarded.

8. Limitations

- Weights and normalization are context-dependent; cross-product comparison requires shared calibration.
- Any reward-bearing metric invites gaming; verification (e.g., activated referrals, accepted curation) is essential.
- PVI measures contribution, not intent or identity; it should inform reward and product design, not surveillance.
- This is a draft (v0.9) for public comment, not a finalized standard.

> **Call for comment.** PVI is published openly so the category can pressure-test it. Send critiques, data, and proposed revisions to hello@viewereconomy.com.

References

1. Goldman Sachs Research, “The creator economy could approach half-a-trillion dollars by 2027,” April 2023. goldmansachs.com
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5. Nielsen, “Trust in Advertising” — recommendations from people you know, 2021. nielsen.com
6. Bazaarvoice, “Shopper Experience Index” (user-generated content & purchase behavior), 2022. bazaarvoice.com

Third-party figures are attributed to the sources above. Any model, index, or proposed study design is labeled as such and is not presented as a proprietary empirical finding.