

# Understanding Collaborative Tools: An Interview With PaperHive

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In the last few years, there has been an increase in the number of collaborative publishing tools that are available for researchers. Each of these tools have their own unique features and shortcomings. As part of our interview series on *Connecting Scholarly Publishing Experts and Researchers*, we had the opportunity to speak with Alexander Naydenov, co-founder and Head of Marketing at PaperHive. PaperHive is an online scientific collaborative platform that enables researchers to simplify research communication and make reading more interactive, social and productive.

**EA:** How is PaperHive different from other collaborative tools? What benefits does it offer researchers and publishers?

**Alexander:** PaperHive makes reading collaborative by enabling researchers and students to discuss academic articles and books while also allowing them to add questions, reactions, and ideas in the [margin of texts](#). This helps research groups to collaborate, drive dialogues across communities, assist professors in their teaching activities, and helps authors structure their thoughts and ideas.

You should definitely use PaperHive if:

- You want to publicly share your perspective about a research topic but have no time to write a full article.
- You are a member of a journal club or a research group.
- You are a professor and want to get your students to read academic literature.
- You want to increase your visibility in the academic community.

**EA:** Can you tell us some of the advantages for researchers in using PaperHive as a platform?

**Alexander:** With PaperHive great ideas don't get lost under piles of paper. You have them right next to the text and can share them not only with your colleagues but also with the entire world. Authors get a chance to hear the opinions of their readers and find collaborators for new projects. Research groups can streamline their communication and keep a safe record of their discussions. University teachers observe an increase of student's engagement with learning content.

**EA:** At present, is the usage of PaperHive free for researchers? Do you see this changing in the coming years?

**Alexander:** PaperHive is free for researchers. There will be premium features for institutions in the future.

[Introducing PaperHive](#) from [paperhive](#) on [Vimeo](#).

**EA:** Does PaperHive cater to research published in languages other than English? How can PaperHive help ESL researchers?

**Alexander:** Absolutely, there are 15 million research articles and books in our system and a significant part of them is not in English. One important way in which we help ESL researchers is that we make their voices heard even if they don't have the chance to attend a big conference. Also, PaperHive helps research groups that are distributed across the world.

**EA:** How is PaperHive beneficial to publishers and repositories?

**Alexander:** PaperHive helps publishers to start campaigns in order to increase the attention to high-quality content: Q&A sessions with authors of new publications or

Annotated Classics campaigns for groundbreaking titles. Moreover, public annotations keep articles up-to-date and can help improve their quality—addendums and corrections can be easily added.

**EA:** What are some of the misconceptions that researchers and publishers have in adopting such collaborative reading tools?

**Alexander:** Different disciplines and different age groups have a different willingness to adopt technology. Some researchers continue printing out the articles they read and no technological benefit can change their mind. Regarding publishers, they are curious about new technologies but rather slow at implementing them.

**EA:** Could you give us more details on the technology that is powering PaperHive?

**Alexander:** PaperHive is built on the latest web technologies—we use JavaScript frameworks AngularJS and Node.JS. We support and rely on a large community of open source developers. In fact, our frontend is completely open source.

**EA:** Do you see PaperHive enabling the visibility and impact of research that is published in international peer-reviewed journals?

**Alexander:** Absolutely! Discussions lead to increase in downloads, citations, and other metrics. If a reader has the chance to discuss a paper, they will most probably cite it in their own research. Also, sharing comments and direct links to important paragraphs on social media is an incredibly easy way to bring new readers directly into the text. In order to succeed, authors should annotate their texts with updates, interesting new information, and engage more people in discussions around their publications. Finally, when you annotate articles by others, you show your own expertise and lead readers to your research.

**EA:** To increase the adoption of PaperHive in the coming years, what are the challenges that you need to overcome?

**Alexander:** Raising people's awareness about a new startup is generally hard. The additional challenge in the research world is that different fields don't interact much with each other, so you need to work with each of them separately.

**EA:** What are the future plans for PaperHive in terms of collaborations with various organizations?

**Alexander:** Collaboration is the only way to succeed not just as a researcher but also as a company in research communication. We are about to start new integrations with several publishers and a few technology companies. A recent partnership that we are proud of is with PubFactory, an O'Reilly Media company that supports De Gruyter and Oxford University Press among others.

**EA:** In the last decade, a number of organizations like Kudos, PaperHive, Publons, ReadCube, Academic.edu, ResearchGate, and Overleaf have had a tremendous impact on [academic publishing](#). Do you see this trend continuing in the coming decade?

**Alexander:** Definitely. In 5 years, most new content will be open access, then repositories and universities as publishers will have a much more central role. Post-publication peer review tools and tools for filtering content will be needed. Technological developments in other spheres of life will also inspire a number of new research tools.

**EA:** For PaperHive, what are the primary areas of focus in this year?

**Alexander:** Initiating partnerships with more academic publishers is a main priority. We are also inviting university professors to join our early access program allowing them to use teaching features before their official release. Researchers from all disciplines and languages are welcome to shape the future of teaching [here](#).



*(From L-R): Andre Gaul at a Library Conference in Amsterdam and Alex Naydenov along with Nobel Prize Laureate Alvin Roth in Berlin*

**EA:** At PaperHive, you recently featured the new platform called Channels. Can you share some insights with us about this development?

**Alexander:** Channels allow private group conversations on research documents. It supports the work of research groups and university professors. Private channels are a great tool for working with textbooks in lectures or seminars and a way to encourage students to actively engage with suggested readings.

**EA:** *As the co-founder of PaperHive, how do you see it evolving as a product in the coming years?*

**Alexander:** Our goal is to make PaperHive the main reading and discussion platform for researchers and students.

*It was a great pleasure to talk to Alexander Naydenov. We sincerely thank him for taking the time to be part of this interview and also wish [the entire team](#) at PaperHive all the very best.*

*(This interview is a part of our interview series of Connecting Scholarly Publishing Experts and Researchers.)*

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