

Hi, I'm Ben.

About 13 years ago, Dr. Ludwig Slusky, an undergraduate professor at Cal State LA, was distributing his graded research papers to show students examples of quality work. On that same campus, I had started Papermache as an undergraduate, using student loans to pay developers (bad idea) and attending dance socials at Cal Tech to recruit users (good idea).

We joined forces and in 2012, and Papermache received positive reception from students, professors, and workforce development coordinators. We were doing it correctly: licensing the work under a Creative Commons Attribution license, getting buy-in from administrators, and interacting with students as they navigated classes.

The popularity left Papermache without a business model and technical debt. After only a few short months, we hit pause.

Today, the problem persists: students need to connect with each other around graded research papers intended to inspire original work and critical thinking. For too long, professors have been the sole audience to our peers' most profound thoughts, and perhaps only out of modesty do we rarely get to see the products. And yet, we have tools to guard against plagiarism, moderation to facilitate collaboration, and marketing infrastructure to ensure the lights stay on for good. It's time to bring back Papermache the best it's ever been.

I work in tech by day, and on nights and weekends I keep the site running to provide students with an experience I wish I had more of as an undergraduate: a source of knowledge, entertainment, and connection. Expect a spectrum of content, from first semester freshman general education rough drafts to tenured faculty thesis previously buried in a filing cabinet. The Papermache approach is one of access, not prestige. Authors absolutely should pursue publishing on other platforms if their careers depend on it, but on here, expect engagement from anyone academic. In fact, our initial student users are now professors!

I want users to feel emboldened to interact with any type of work at any level. Deadlines may have been met, but each uploaded portfolio paper is a living document. Even the most immovable concepts are vulnerable to yield through discourse, and I hope that papers are modified and reuploaded regularly as concrete thinking changes. Don't worry, your votes and comments earned will remain. Check out the "How to use Papermache" document to learn more.

Papermache is 100% free for users no matter what and eventually, will display sponsored papers and activity as advertisements. It is fortunate to not need revenue so urgently so sign up, sign up your peers, and show each other what you've been working on.

I guarantee you'll see them in a new light.

Happy thinking!