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Rocket Pool

Rocket Pool
Node Operator UX

—

User research report
January 2024

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

This document is the final report of a twelve week project where OpenUX supported Rocket Pool with user research on the node operator experience. Data gathering for this project was done through (1) a survey to community members and Rocket Pool node operators and (2) user shadowing, following a developer through the onboarding process, and (3) user interviews with node operators.

For info about the background of this project, including links to the grants proposal and survey report see the project hub: https://open-ux.notion.site/Rocket-Pool-x-OpenUX-Public-Project-Hub-Fall-23-c15a1feacfab4673b170a287896b8dcf?pvs=4

ABOUT OPENUX

OpenUX is a collective of web3 native user researchers working to make crypto applications more usable and user-aligned. Collectively we've contributed to 30+ leading protocols, applications, and DAOs including Ethereum Foundation, Maker, MetaMask and Lens Protocol.

https://openux.xyz/
https://x.com/OpenUX_xyz

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TL;DR – Overview

In this 12 week project OpenUX has explored how Rocket Pool can improve the node operator UX, and thereby grow the protocol.

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Why this report?

It enables strategic alignment

The report equips Rocket Pool with crucial user insights to better align and implement initiatives for node operators.

It's a hands-on guide to improving relevance

Serving as a practical guide, the report aims to inspire and streamline the ideation, prioritization, and execution of new initiatives, boosting operational efficiency.

It outlines how Rocket Pool can grow

The research insights focus on how Rocket Pool can grow through increased relevance. Concrete initiatives have been articulated aimed at the identified opportunities
(see chapter 4)

PRIMARY RESEARCH CONDUCTED

12h

Twelve hour long interview sessions with Rocket Pool node operators

6h

Six hours of user shadowing following a developer setting up a node from scratch

88

88 qualified survey responses

2.5h

Three interview sessions with the team and community members

PROJECT CHALLENGE STATEMENT

How might we understand the needs and behaviours of current and potential node operators so that we can design and build features that both enable node operator growth and enhance their user experience?

TL;DR – Insights & Take-Aways

Setting up a Rocket Pool node is never urgent

The research indicates that the lack of triggers or urgency for setting up a Rocket Pool node often leads to procrastination to set up a node. Once a user is procrastinating it can be difficult to bring them back to actively considering the idea of setting up a node.

RECOMMENDATION
It's crucial to create compelling triggers that help users go from interest to commitment to set up a Rocket Pool node.

Read more: Page 40

Launching a node is a front-loaded activity

The process of setting up a Rocket Pool node is very front-loaded, requiring substantial upfront effort, learning and investment from users before they reap any rewards. If users feel insecure about their technical abilities, they might feel insecure there will be any reward at all.

RECOMMENDATION
Help users to not feel overwhelmed but feed their curiosity to learn more through a well orchestrated learning journey throughout the onboarding.

Read more: Page 46

Enhancing the non-financial incentives

For users with 1-2 minipools, investing in home staking hardware is not always economically rational (compared to e.g. node-as-a-service alternatives). Their motivation lies more in the learning journey, community belonging and aligning with their values.

RECOMMENDATION
Strengthen the value proposition for users that stake in decentralized ways. Begin by offering social recognition and more learning opportunities as initial steps.

Read more: Page 24
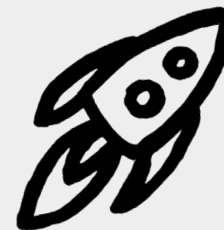
TL;DR – Insights & Take-Aways

Onboarding to governance participation

Rocket Pool currently lacks effective onboarding for understanding and participating in governance processes.

RECOMMENDATION

Design new ways to continue the onboarding of new users once their node is set up. The focus should be timely intros to governance and other topics that might not have a place in the technical setup guide.

Different personas have different needs

Rocket Pool consists of a diverse group of node operators. They vary in terms of their technical abilities, the amount of ETH they have bonded, and their level of motivation to run a node.

RECOMMENDATION

Rocket Pool needs to shape a bundle of benefits that can appeal to this diverse set of users with different requirements and motivations. Social recognition and learning resources for non-technical users are low hanging fruits.
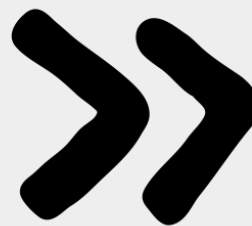
Six ideas for growing Rocket Pool

1. Methodology

1. Methodology

2. Segmentation & Insights

3. User Journey Insights

4. Ideas for Usability & Growth

1.1 Research Activities

Onboarding research Activities

TEAM & COMMUNITY MEMBER INTERVIEWS

- 3 interviews à 45-60 minutes were held with Waq, Maverick and Langers as an onboarding exercise to build context and get insights into how the pDAO, oDAO and the team works.

COMMUNITY AMA

- A Twitter spaces AMA session was held with the help from Maverick
- OpenUX presented the project, scope and the process and answered questions from the community.

SECONDARY RESEARCH

- Comprehensive secondary research encompassing ecosystem analysis via Discord, Rocket Pool's various channels, external reports, and Reddit discussions, along with a thorough review of existing literature.

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Community Survey

- 5 min survey distributed through Rocket Pool and OpenUX channels

- 88 qualified responses from Rocket Pool node operators

- Key findings published in Survey Findings Report

- Survey served as base for recruiting interview participants

Survey Responses

Incomplete responses
16.2%

17

Through OpenUX
8.6%

9

79

Through Rocket Pool
75.2%

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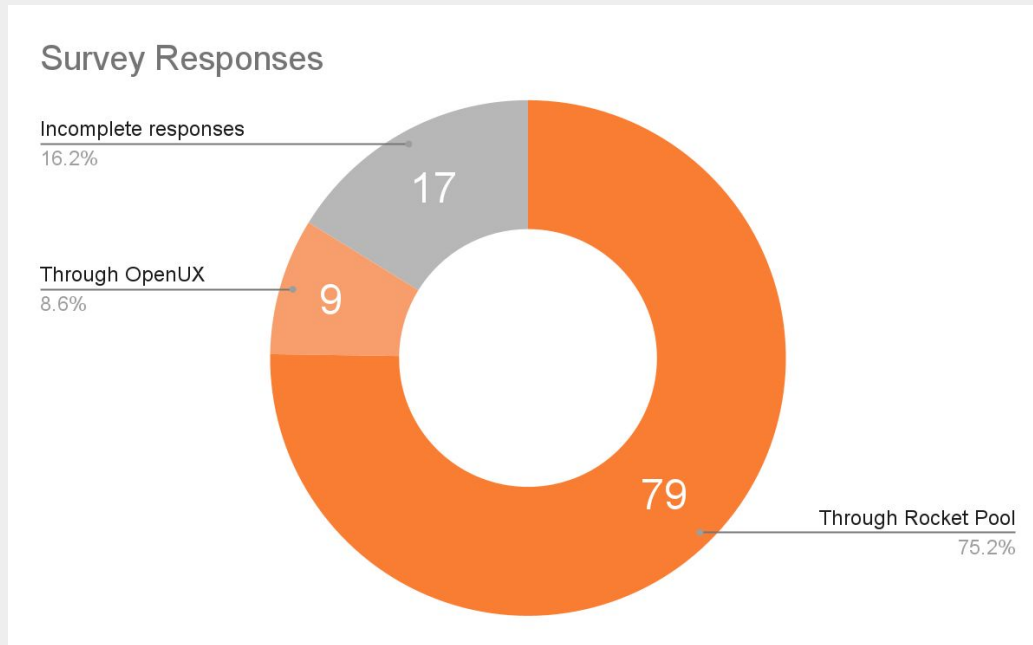
User Interviews

- 12 interviews, each 60 minutes long.

- Sessions performed over Google Meets with a semi-structured questionnaire focusing on each interviewee's journey with Rocket Pool.

- Recruitment optimized to achieve maximum spread across segmentation dimensions and emphasizing edge cases including two participants not active in the Rocket Pool Discord.

Higher technical ability

Less ETH bonded in RP nodes

More ETH bonded in RP nodes

Lower technical ability

DISTRIBUTION OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT PROFILES

| 8 – 31 ETH | 32 – 159 ETH | 160+ ETH |
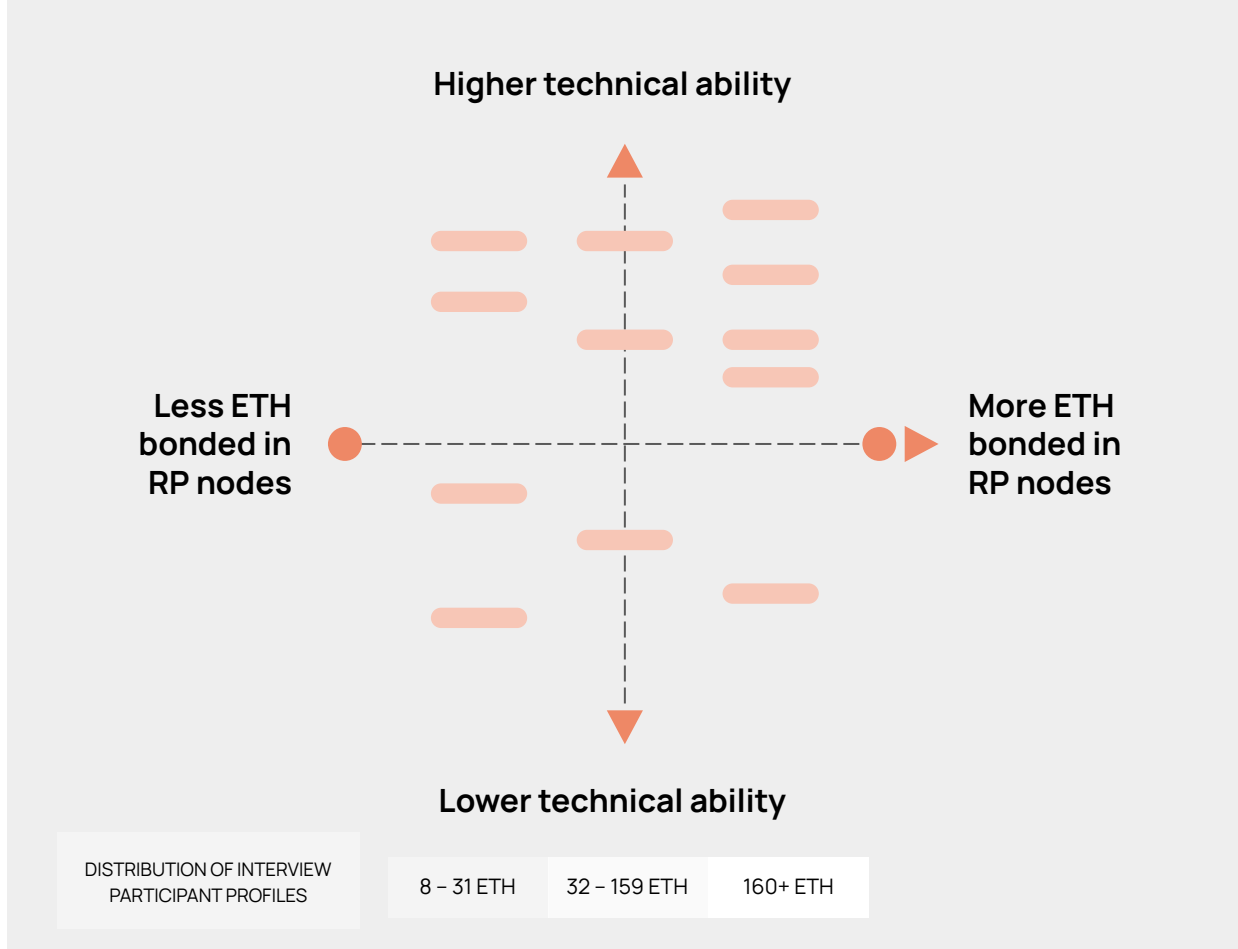
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User Shadowing

- A total of 6h of user shadowing was performed where OpenUX's user researcher followed a developer through the process of setting up a Rocket Pool node on Holešky using AWS.

- Tasks, decisions and pain points were documented along the process

- This research activity was a stretch goal and not included in the original scope

1.2 Methodology: User segmentation

This section provides an overview of the reasoning and methodology behind the segmentation of Rocket Pool's user base. It sheds light on the strategic approach used and highlights the key tensions within the community, laying the foundation for tailored strategies and solutions.

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Segmenting Users To Develop Insights

A segmentation was conducted to nuance the understanding of Rocket Pool's node operators and their unique pain points, and decision-making processes. The user base was divided in two dimensions with specific traits or behaviors, aiming to comprehend their perspectives. This approach, allows for ensuring the analysis is nuanced and inclusive of the community's diversity.

A more detailed description of how the segmentation was performed can be found in the appendix.

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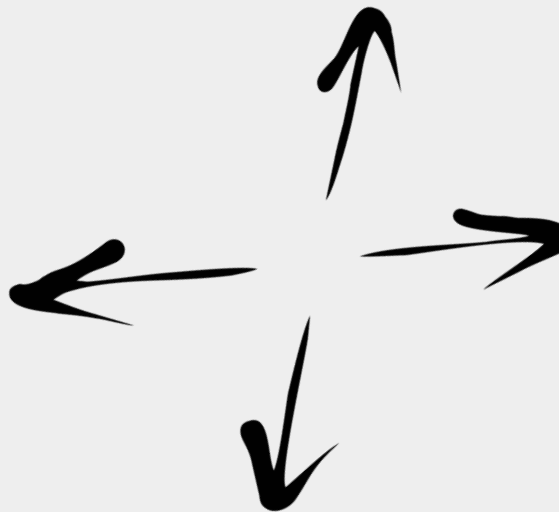
How Users Were Segmented

ETH BONDED IN RP NODES
Rocket Pool's unique value proposition includes enabling users to set up a staking node with less than 32 ETH, which is a significant draw for some. However, for many node operators, this aspect of Rocket Pool doesn't hold much relevance. By closely examining the behavioral patterns and needs of these varying groups, we gain a deeper understanding of their distinct requirements and preferences.

By aligning communications and feature development to meet the specific needs of these diverse segments, we can improve Rocket Pool's relevance and user experience.

TECHNICAL ABILITY
Differences between users with varying technical abilities were analyzed to understand their respective motivations to run a Rocket Pool node. Technical ability was graded based on a set of self-assessment questions in the user survey.

SPREAD OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS ACROSS (1) 'AMOUNT ETH BONDED' BRACKETS AND (2) ON A SCALE OF TECHNICAL ABILITY

RPS = RESPONDENTS

Amount of ETH bonded in RP nodes

Less ETH bonded in RP nodes

28 RPS (35%)	39 RPS (48%)	14 RPS (17%)
8 – 31 ETH	32 – 159 ETH	160+ ETH

More ETH bonded in RP nodes

Level of technical ability

Lower

Higher

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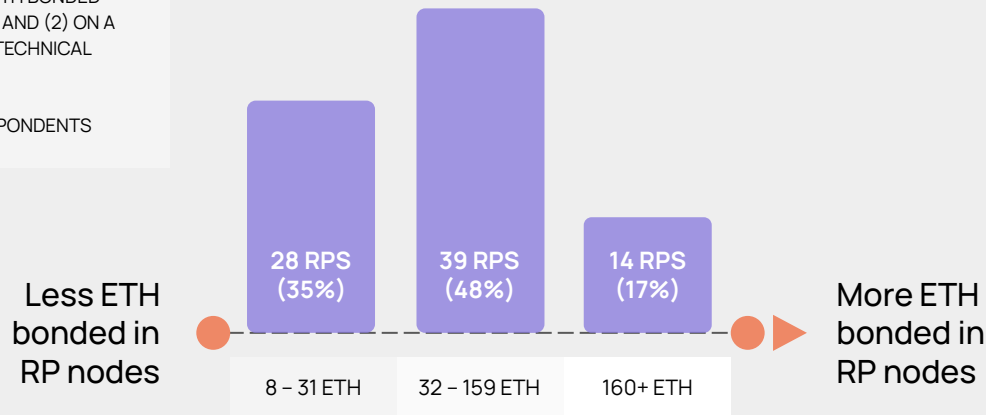
A Model To Deepen User Understanding

The concept of democratization is a central aspect of Rocket Pool's value proposition. It enables a wider range of users to operate a node, specifically catering to those with less than 32 ETH and individuals who may lack the technical expertise or confidence for solo staking. These unique selling points (USPs) differentiate Rocket Pool in a significant way. However, it's equally important to examine the segment of users drawn to Rocket Pool for reasons other than these USPs—namely, those possessing more than 32 ETH and a high level of technical proficiency. What characteristics define this user group? Which specific benefits of Rocket Pool appeal to them the most, and what alternatives do they consider alongside Rocket Pool in their decision-making process? Understanding these aspects can provide deeper insights into Rocket Pool's broader appeal and strategic positioning.
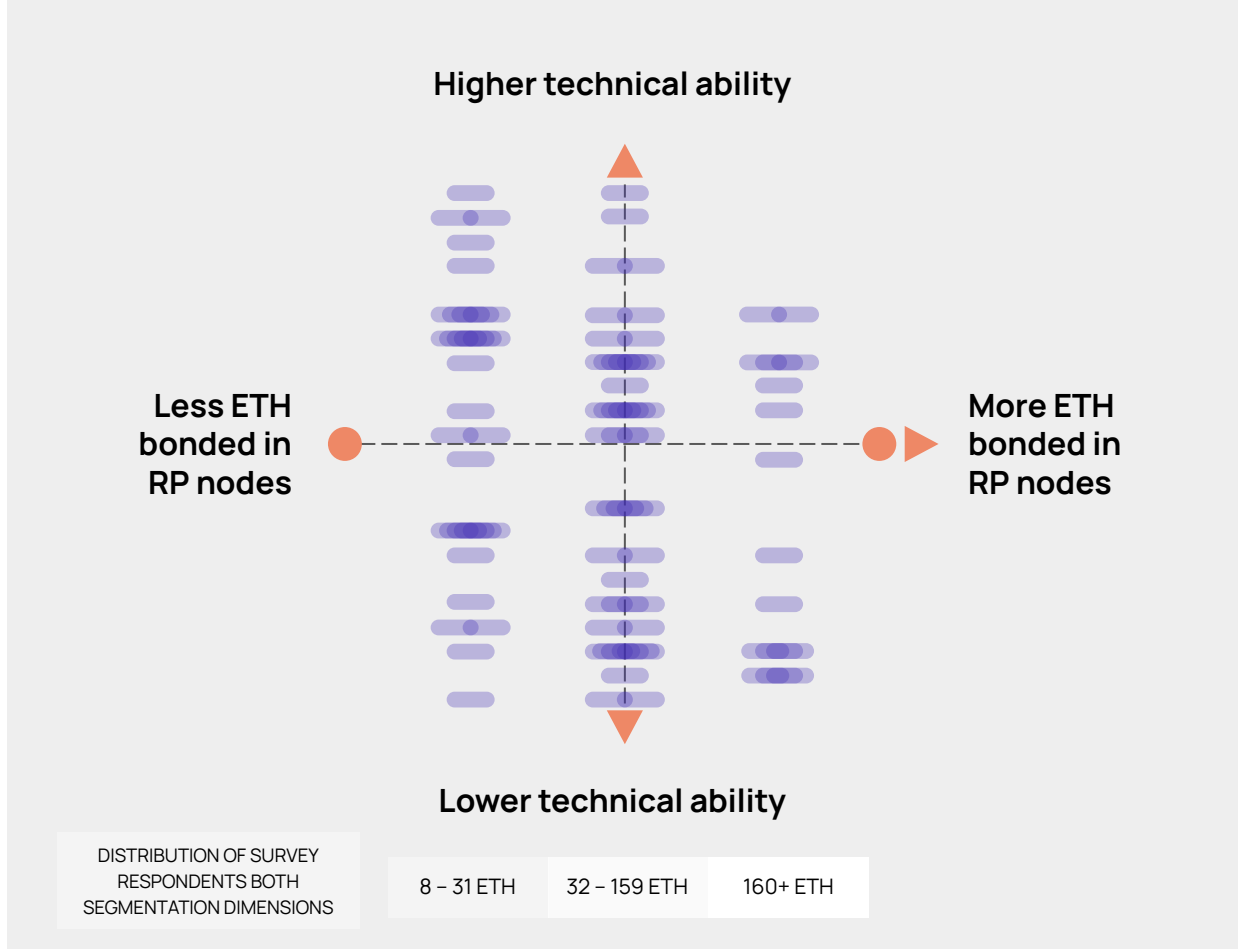
Higher technical ability

Less ETH bonded in RP nodes

More ETH bonded in RP nodes

Lower technical ability

DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS BOTH SEGMENTATION DIMENSIONS

| 8 – 31 ETH | 32 – 159 ETH | 160+ ETH |

2. Segmentation & Insights

2.1 Ideas To Improve: Amount ETH Bonded

The amount of ETH that a user bonds in their node significantly influences their decisions, and there are unique needs and pain points. For example, users with more ETH bonded might think differently about risk factors, tax and optimizing rewards. Meanwhile those with smaller stakes face different decisions,e.g. the ROI on fixed cost investments such as hardware might be quite slow. This section explores how these needs and pain points differ between the two groups.

Effort & Reward for Different Users

There are a lot of questions to be answered before someone is ready to commit to set up and run a Rocket Pool node; one component of it is the cost-benefit-analysis. For users with a lot of ETH, the investments in hardware and effort are spread out across multiple minipools, yielding a quicker return on investment on any fixed costs such as hardware compared to smaller-scale participants.

That said there are a many reasons to be a Rocket Pool node operator beyond the strictly financial. This section goes through some of the key questions and hesitations new users might have and highlights the opportunities to serve users in each segment better.

Amount of ETH bonded in RP nodes

Less ETH bonded in RP nodes

| 28 RPS (35%) | 39 RPS (48%) | 14 RPS (17%) |

| 8 – 31 ETH | 32 – 159 ETH | 160+ ETH |

More ETH bonded in RP nodes

DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS
ACROSS 'ETH BONDED' BRACKETS.
RPS = RESPONDENTS

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User need	Why it matters	How it's a threshold or pain point	Opportunities to improve
What is it like to run a node? *Giving users a sense of what it's about, sparking curiosity while setting realistic expectations*	Onboarding to Rocket Pool is a big commitment. Users invest in hardware upfront and put a lot of hours into it before they reap any rewards at all. For users with less ETH bonded in RP nodes the reward for their effort can be quite low. We don't know all the reasons why people drop off throughout the onboarding journey, but we do know that for the ones that make it through Rocket Pool is about so much more than the ETH yield. It's about community, exploring and learning about crypto, it's about helping to keep Ethereum decentralized. Making sure we do a good job in communicating all of these benefits is essential to scaling and growing Rocket Pool. One (externally) underappreciated aspect of Rocket Pool is that it's one of the most Ethereum value aligned communities there are. Not only is it centered around decentralizing the network, the community is well educated on how Ethereum works and actively seek opportunities to improve decentralization.	**To all users, especially less ETH bonded** If we fail to communicate the softer benefits of Rocket Pool people might rely solely on a rationalistic cost/benefit analysis. In that case alternatives with less effort, upfront investment and responsibilities will seem attractive in comparison. **To all users, especially less ETH bonded** Along the journey users will commonly find out that setting up a Rocket Pool node requires more effort than they first expected. The more motivated people feel by the vision, mission and other soft aspects of Rocket Pool, the higher the chance that they still want to do it.	How might Rocket Pool do an even better job at communicating the vision, mission and other 'softer' reasons to be a node operator? How might Rocket Pool highlight how its community are heroes of decentralization and seek ways to highlight and celebrate this both internally and externally?

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2.1 IDEAS TO IMPROVE: AMOUNT ETH BONDED

User question or need	Why it matters	How it's a threshold or pain point	Opportunities to improve
Can I do home staking? What if …? *Getting a sense of what running a Rocket Pool node requires (and not)*	Few decisions we make require us to take on responsibility for an unforeseeable future. The thought of this can be daunting for people, especially in combination with an often inflated view of how hard it might be and the risk of getting slashed. Communicating what running a node is about in a way that gives a sense of proportion to this is essential. This includes addressing realistic and imagined 'what if'-scenarios such as 'what if I go on vacation'. There are also a few things that a potential node operator might want to check early in the process, such as if they have good enough internet connection and reliable power. Realizing such important factors late in the process can be very discouraging.	**To all users, especially less ETH bonded** The prospect of ongoing responsibility and unforeseen issues and lifestyle limitations can overwhelm and discourage aspiring Rocket Pool node operators. When considering the effort/reward ratio of carrying this responsibility, users with little ETH might be discouraged. **To all users, especially less ETH bonded** Late discovery of limiting factors like unreliable internet connectivity or local legal limitations, can be a major setback discouraging people who have started their onboarding journey. Once again, the effort/reward ratio makes users with less ETH more vulnerable to abandoning their plans in this situation.	How might Rocket Pool guide users to more quickly get a nuanced understanding of what it's actually like running a Rocket Pool node? How might Rocket Pool help people to discover potentially important considerations earlier in the user journey?
Do I have the funds necessary? *Thinking about time frame & longer-term commitments*	Deciding to run a Rocket Pool node involves assessing not just a short term deposit, but a longer time commitment together with potential upfront investment(s). In some cases the commitment also comes with increased recurring expenses, such as improved internet connectivity. Moreover, the fact that each LEB8 requires an equivalent of >2.4 ETH in RPL tokens can be a surprise that some users learn even after they've invested in the hardware to run a node.	**To all users, especially less ETH bonded** The required long-term financial commitment can be daunting for new Rocket Pool node operators. **To all users, especially less ETH bonded** Learning about the RPL token requirement for running a Rocket Pool node can be negative, especially if it comes as a surprise late in the process (this happened to one interviewee in the research).	How might Rocket Pool simplify and clarify the financial commitment Rocket Pool node operators make in order to make the onboarding process more transparent? How might Rocket Pool inform about the RPL token requirement in a proactive way that give users a nuanced understanding of what it means and why it's there?

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User need	Why it matters	How it's a threshold or pain point	Opportunities to improve
Tokenomics *Understanding key tokenomic concepts such as inflation and the risk and reward of the RPL token*	The required exposure to RPL makes many potential users feel hesitant about becoming a node operator. While the token is volatile, it also comes with a high yield for RP node operators. Therefore it's important to nuance the understanding of RPL through making sure the upside is clearly communicated. The general topic of tokenomics can also be hard to grasp. Making sure it's pedagogically explained and key benefits are highlighted is important in order to communicate the full potential of being a node operator.	**To all users, especially more ETH bonded** Concerns about the RPL required to run a Rocket Pool node risks being inflated if the benefit and bull case is not clearly communicated (in a nuanced way). **To all users, especially more ETH bonded** The complexity of tokenomics can cause misunderstandings or unnecessary hesitation for users considering becoming a Rocket Pool node operator.	How might we effectively communicate the benefits and positive aspects of RPL token requirements in a nuanced manner to address and reduce inflated concerns? How might we simplify and demystify the concept of tokenomics for users to alleviate misunderstandings and hesitations?
What about taxes? *Understanding how rewards from running a node is taxed and how it affects the rewards*	As a Rocket Pool node operator, it's vital to understand how taxes work in one's local jurisdiction and how that affects profitability. Getting straight answers is often complicated by the fact that it's a new field, so laws and rules can be unclear, especially for non-standard setups or in smaller countries. Moreover the fluctuating nature of cryptocurrency values, including ETH and RPL tokens, adds to complexity both to handling taxes and calculating rewards.	**To all users** Questions about how taxes work and what kind of effort it entails can be important for people to understand in order to judge how much effort running a Rocket Pool node means to them. If it's hard to reach clarity of these questions, many users will pessimistically assume that it will be a lot of effort. **To all users, especially more ETH bonded** Taxes can have significant impact on the profitability of running a Rocket Pool node. If a user perceives that it's hard or impossible to get clear answers it can become a major blocker for taking the step to set up a node.	How might Rocket Pool assist users in comprehending tax implications and provide practical guidance on managing their tax responsibilities? How might Rocket Pool help people to get clarity on tax rules and how it affects rewards (for relevant jurisdictions)?

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Is It Worth It?

Calculating the rewards of running a staking node is notoriously difficult due to the many factors that go into the equation:

- How many minipools would the user run?
- What kind of initial investments does the user need to make? Would it incur any recurring cost such as upgrading their internet connection?
- What is the user's time frame?
- How does the user value their own time & effort?
- How will the price of ETH and RPL develop?
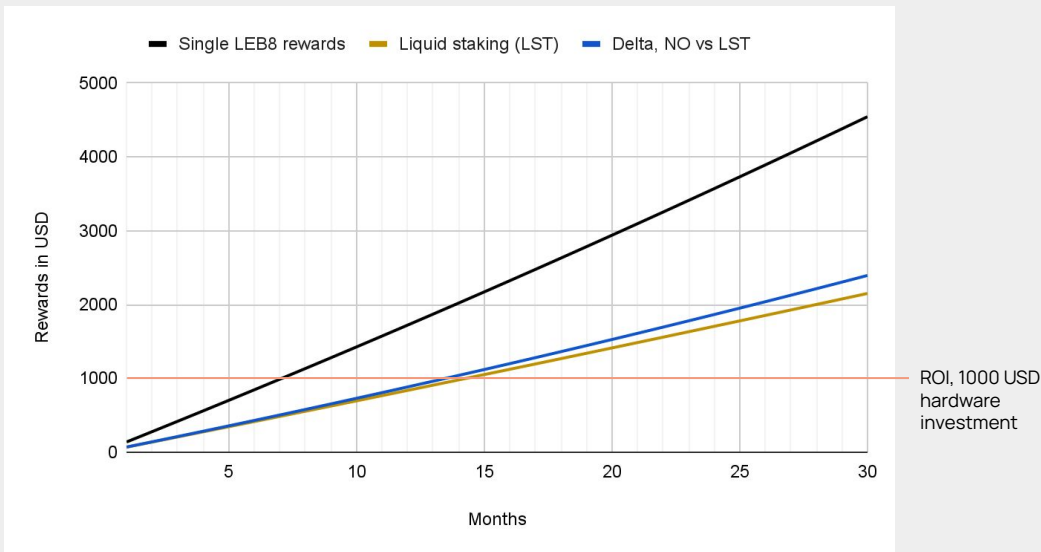- How are staking reward taxed in the user's specific jurisdiction?

How might Rocket Pool simplify the understanding of staking rewards to get new users a sense of scale and a feel for which factors affect rewards?

The graph below offers a sense of scale to how much a user who invests 1000 USD in homestaking hardware can expect to earn as compared to holding rETH. If the user would set a monetary value to their time investment the ROI would be very slow.

Calculations are based on data from 19 December, 2023

Assumptions

- RPL to an equivalent value of 2.4 ETH bonded in LEB8 (the minimum)
- Node ETH APR: 7.24%
- Node RPL APR: 7.75%
- Liquid staking APR: 3.58%
- ETH price 2250
- Gas, tax and recurring costs excluded

Legend: ■ Single LEB8 rewards ■ Liquid staking (LST) ■ Delta, NO vs LST

Y-axis: Rewards in USD (0, 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, 5000)
X-axis: Months (5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30)
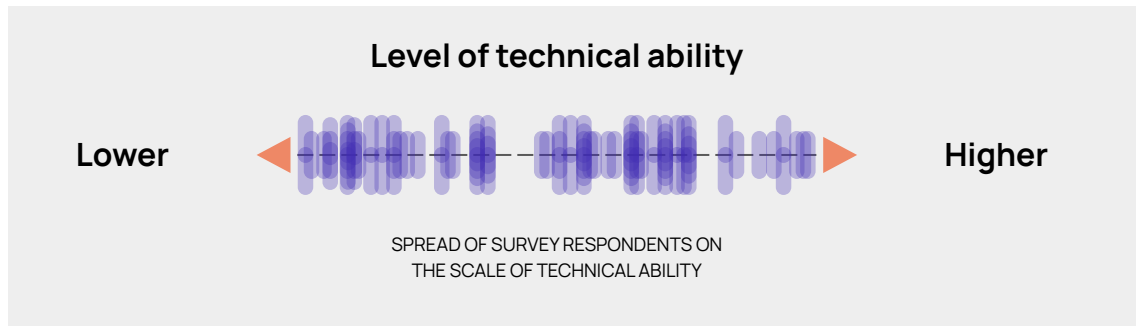
ROI, 1000 USD hardware investment

2.2 Ideas to improve: Technical Ability

This section explores how user needs and challenges vary with their technical ability. It highlights the importance of supporting users with both a conceptual and hands-on understanding of the key concepts related to running a Rocket Pool node.

Technical Ability: Guiding Users

Many non-technical people successfully set up and run RP nodes. Still, it's often perceived as a daunting task that can dissuade many wishing to set up a Rocket Pool node. The daunting feeling can further be emphasized by the diversity of concepts that a node operator needs to understand and handle. The lack of overview of the process and unclear expectations going into the process can create a sense of being overwhelmed or discouraged, as users may continually find that there are unanticipated decisions and tasks they need to go through.

Rather than a binary, "do I have the the skills necessary", it would be beneficial to guide the user to understand that few people have *all* the necessary skills to be a node operator. A more constructive perspective might be: "Am I interested in investing the time to learn new skills that will enable me to run a Rocket Pool node?"

Level of technical ability

Lower   **Higher**

SPREAD OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS ON
THE SCALE OF TECHNICAL ABILITY

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Segmentation Insights – High vs Low Technical Ability

User question or need	Why it matters	How it's a threshold or pain point	Opportunities to improve
Choosing and setting up node hardware *Choosing hardware, building it, fixing if something breaks*	Among the first thing that people expect with being a node operator, is setting up the hardware for the node. For some this might also be considered the 'point of no return' since the purchase of hardware can make up the first hard commitment to become a node operator. The fact that there are out-of-the-box options is a democratizing factor. Among the interviewees some had encountered pain points in choosing hardware, but overall it was not considered especially difficult or as a major blocker.	**To all users, especially lower tech. ability** The choice of hardware is essential for many to proceed in the process. Yet, it has dependencies on the choices made later in the process such as the execution- and consensus clients used. This can lead to procrastination and make it hard to make a commitment. **To all users, especially less ETH bonded** For users only planning to run 1-2 minipools the cost can be a major threshold.	How might Rocket Pool guide users to ask the right question at the right time? E.g. not elaborating on choice of hardware before they've confirmed they have a good enough internet connection. How might Rocket Pool guide users to get a sense of the key dimensions affecting hardware configurations such as consensus- & execution clients?

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Segmentation Insights – High vs Low Technical Ability

User question or need	Why it matters	How it's a threshold or pain point	Opportunities to improve
Configuring the server *Installing and managing Ubuntu, troubleshooting (e.g. disk partitions)*	Configuring the server is a skillset and set of tasks that most people expect come with running a node. While it might feel daunting upfront, especially for non-technical users, many people find that it's not as bad as they thought.	**To all users, especially lower tech. ability** Even many technical users interviewed in this study reported that they had to learn managing Linux. While not complex per se, trying to learn it during the setup can be a stressful experience and potentially lead to mistakes. RP community member Patches who has guided many users on Discord commonly recommends people to spend some time getting familiar with common Linux commands before they deep dive into the install and settings.	How might Rocket Pool create an intuitive learning journey that equips users with essential knowledge and skills, ensuring they are adequately prepared at each stage of the setup process?
Interacting with Ethereum *RP smartnode, consensus client, execution client, Ethereum gas*	The concept of consensus and execution clients is something that even most technical users need to learn in the onboarding journey. While this requires conceptual understanding of how Ethereum works, it also translates to tangible decisions with consequences for people since the choice of clients affect hardware requirements and performance.	**To all users, especially lower tech. ability** Navigating from the abstract concept of Ethereum's workings and the roles of consensus and execution clients to the practical decision of choosing a specific client can be challenging. **To all users, especially lower tech. ability** Sometimes it's hard to know what's a reasonable gas cost given transaction complexity and seasonal trends (monthly, daily, hourly). This can cause users to pay unnecessarily high fees setting up their Rocket Pool node.	How might Rocket Pool orchestrate the learning journey and serve people with adequate guidance at the right time to better guide new users through the necessary decisions? How might Rocket Pool guide people to get a sense of what's reasonable for a gas cost given seasonal trends?

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Segmentation Insights – High vs Low Technical Ability

| User question or need	Why it matters	How it's a threshold or pain point	Opportunities to improve
Managing security *Private key management, hardware wallets, two-factor authentication*	The worst UX imaginable is losing funds or becoming the victim of a hack or a scam. Rocket Pool does a good job in terms of teaching security concepts and guiding in the how-tos; that said there's always more that can be done. Several interviewees had their own, higher standards of how to secure their node, including hardware-based two-factor authentication devices and hard drive encryption. Looking ahead: Thus far Rocket Pool is mostly onboarding either crypto native users and/or technically savvy users. If this would change, e.g. during a bull-run when new users enter crypto, further guidance might be needed.	**To all users, especially lower tech. ability** Having guidelines can create a sense of security. Meanwhile, lack of awareness of additional measures such as hardware-based two-factor authentication devices, verifying PGP signatures for updates, and hard drive encryption, can lead users to miss these opportunities to improve their setup further.	How might Rocket Pool guide users to improve the security of their Rocket Pool node beyond the basics, without overwhelming users who don't want to do more than the standard recommendations? How might Rocket Pool ensure that security guidelines meet the needs from users as best practices evolve and/or the profile of users change (e.g. to include more people new to crypto)?
Managing network & access *SSH, network ports, firewall, VPN*	Network and access are essential to managing the node and doing so safely. Still, this is a common area where even uses with higher technical ability have to learn new concepts and misunderstandings were not uncommon.	**To all users, especially lower tech. ability** Misunderstandings about how network ports work were relatively common and could lead to issues, or if not handled securely, expose users to security risks. Though no interviewee reported that they had been victim to a hack, the documentation could benefit from some dedicated user testing to ensure it's effective.	How might Rocket Pool improve the guidance on network and access topics? How might Rocket Pool further guide users to verify that their network port settings are correct?

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2.3 Personas

The personas section presents profiles of target users and provides crucial context for what matters to them in their decisions and behaviours. This understanding is vital for tailoring strategies and enhancing user experiences.

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Increasing relevance to the most- and least motivated users

This chapter delves deeper than the previous one and examines the edge case users. Central to this analysis is the users' level of motivation, encompassing various motivators, from yield percentages to a sense of community belonging.

Very High Motivation

Ellie the Explorer

Vanilla-node Vincent

Node-as-a-service Noah

Paul the Postponer
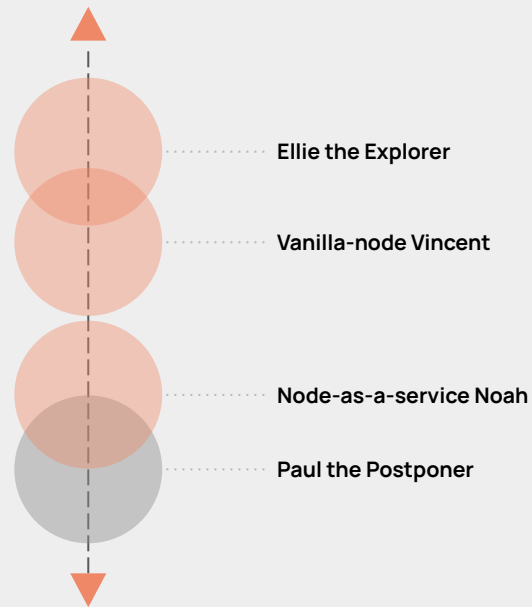
Very Low Motivation

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Ellie the explorer

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Ellie found Rocket Pool when ETH staking came online. By that time it was all the rage. Now the frontier has moved on and so has Ellie's attention.

- Ellie is a big believer in decentralization and thinks that Rocket Pool is among the best protocols in the ecosystem. She couldn't imagine leaving the project completely.

- New ideas are what's inspiring to Ellie, and so far she's gained reputation and gained rewards from being one of the very first to use different protocols. While Rocket Pool is developing, she's running out of ideas and incentives for how and why to explore the protocol further.

RISKS

- There's a risk that users like Ellie lose interest over time and drift to explore new opportunities.

- The time and effort invested in onboarding Rocket Pool works as a lock-in threshold (sunk cost). For users with high motivation and high technical ability that threshold is lower.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Ellie has spent a lot of time in the Rocket Pool community. She loves it and is very aligned with the mission. Finding ways to keep such users inspired and motivated is important to keep the interest up over time.

- Decentralization is great for the ecosystem, but choosing less common setups can be expensive for the individual. This can be a threshold even for users with the motivation and knowledge to do so. Finding ways to celebrate people who contribute to decentralization can go a long way, even without financial incentives.

HIGH MOTIVATION TO EXPLORE THE LATEST

Ellie loves exploring the frontiers of crypto. She ran a Rocket Pool node when it was still in beta and is known in the community as a great contributor. However, her attention has started to drift away from traditional ETH staking. New opportunities like re-staking and other novel opportunities in DeFi are catching more of her attention. She feels an itch to sunset a couple of her minipools to explore new stuff.

Vanilla-node Vincent

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Vincent had to learn quite a few concepts in order to get onboarded to RocketPool: Linux, setting up a server, RP tokenomics and not least how consensus & execution clients works.

- Last bull market Vincent got burnt from attempts at trading. Holding ETH might be his best long term strategy. The steady yield from his Rocket Pool node makes him feel less FOMO. And compared to his trading excursions, staking is very low risk.

- Vincent supports Ethereum's ethos. But sometimes he wished there was some recognition for people running nodes in decentralized ways.

RISKS

- Now that Vincent is up and running there is not much need to spend time in the community. There's a risk he might get less engaged over time if there's not something drawing him in.

- If better rewards are offered elsewhere, such as through re-staking, it will be challenging to justify the ongoing responsibility and lack of liquidity associated with maintaining a Rocket Pool node.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Through the process of reading up on Rocket Pool and onboarding the protocol Vincent has become very loyal to Rocket Pool. There's an opportunity to engage him further in relevant community tasks and initiatives.

- A lot of other protocols are jealous of the competent and loyal community that Rocket Pool as amassed. There are opportunities for collaboration with other projects that want to reach an Ethereum aligned community.

MODERATE MOTIVATION TO EXPLORE THE LATEST

Vincent loves the Rocket Pool smart node stack. It makes running a node so much more approachable and it significantly decreased his onboarding time and effort. On the other hand it also means that he doesn't know all the details of his setup.

Vincent could have run his node through a node-service, but he loves to learn new things so he saw the effort spent onboarding as an opportunity to learn more about how Ethereum works. And through home staking he makes a contribution to decentralizing Ethereum which matters to him.

Node-as-a-service Noah

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Noah did the ROI calculation of buying an NUC, it would be more than a year before RP commission on his 10 ETH would have paid for the cost. Then he found that he didn't need to buy an NUC, it's financially more efficient to just subscribe to a node-as-a-service.

- Noah wants to maximize his yield. Since staking through a node-as-a-service is a lower investment and lower effort he finds it hard to justify to do it any other way.

- The fact that he doesn't need to stay on top of updates makes him forget to check in on the Rocket Pool Discord.

RISKS

- Even though Noah is quite disconnected from the community, Rocket Pool still runs a reputational risk if something goes wrong. The larger the group of node-as-a-service node operators, the larger the risk.

- Noah is focused on maximizing yield. That means he is more vulnerable to join another protocol if he finds a better way to maximize reward/effort.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Rocket Pool has a strong value proposition, both in making staking available to more users, and through adding value on top of standard staking rewards. Developing incentives that makes it worth it to stake from home could have a big impact on user behaviour.

- Many people in this group might actually be value aligned and agree that what they do is not optimal from a decentralization standpoint, but still find it inaccessible to run a node in another way. Relevant incentives and targeted communication could cause them to 'upgrade' to homestaking.

- Social incentives such as a decentralization leaderboard could be a soft incentive that could help, especially if linked to rewards or opportunities for high performing users.

LOW MOTIVATION TO CONTRIBUTE TO ROCKET POOL

Node-as-a-service Noah thinks he's found a lifehack. He can earn Rocket Pool commission without having to spend the money and effort to set up a node in his home. The node even manages itself, no need for constant checking for updates.
Node-as-a-service options are not well regarded by the Rocket Pool community but he doesn't spend much time there anyway.

Paul the Postponer

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Paul is intrigued about the opportunity to be a node operator but has not committed to set up a node.

- New, emerging opportunities in the crypto space creates FOMO, which acts as a barrier to investing the time and ETH required to set up a node.

- Since he did not yet read up on Rocket Pool in a structured manner his views may be a blend of facts, prejudice and misconceptions.

- This persona exists across all of the technical ability spectrum. For people with lower technical ability a higher level of motivation is needed to make the commitment.

RISKS

- New (low effort) opportunities can make Paul commit to other things. Once bought in on another opportunity, convincing him to switch will be harder.

- If he decides that setting up a Rocket Pool node is too much work, it will be hard to change his mind about the topic in the future.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Articulating softer parts of Rocket Pool's value proposition make him see the benefits of making a longer term commitment. This could further be emphasized if a retention incentive could be developed.

- Developing distinct triggers that help people curious about Rocket Pool to make a commitment can have a big impact if the user is reached at the right time.

- Low effort options like staking through a node-as-a-service supplier or NodeSet are attractive options if Paul is focused on optimizing effort vs. reward.

INSUFFICIENT MOTIVATION

Paul the Postponer has read up about Rocket Pool, he's really intrigued about the idea to be a node operator. But there's a lot of opportunities in crypto so he never commits to the idea. While Rocket Pool seems really attractive, it also seems like more effort compared to other opportunities so he postpones the idea to the future.

Chapter 2: Takeaways

Tailor To User Segments

Rocket Pool should tailor its strategies, onboarding resources and support process to cater to users with different technical abilities, as well as recognizing different unique needs and motivations.

Enhance Communication and Support

Focus on effectively communicating the broader value proposition of Rocket Pool, including community aspects and the contribution to decentralization. Work with these topics to strengthen user engagement. This is especially important to motivate users with smaller ETH bonds.

Streamline Onboarding and Technical Support

Simplify the onboarding process for users with lower technical ability. Try tailored approaches and separate conceptual learning from hands-on onboarding guidance. This will help aspiring node operators get their questions answered more quickly.

**3.** User Journey Insights

Overview of User Journey Stages

This chapter is divided in the four stages of the user journey, awareness, consideration, onboarding and node launched. Understanding users in the context of where they are in the user journey is essential to understanding how to serve them well.

User Journey Divided Into Phases

| AWARENESS | CONSIDERATION | ONBOARDING | NODE LAUNCHED |
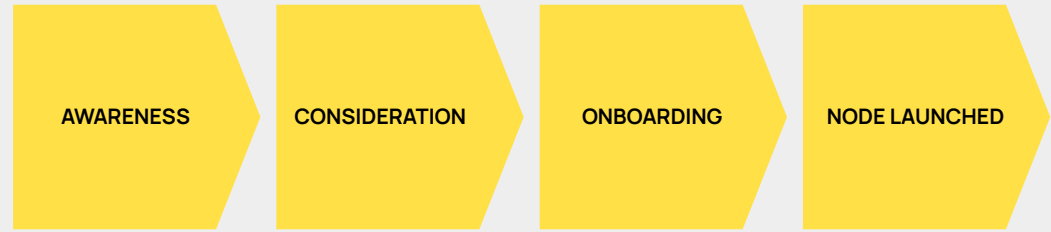
AWARENESS
A user first learns about Rocket Pool, exploring its features and potential benefits.

CONSIDERATION
The user goes on to evaluate if running a Rocket Pool node is attractive for them and what it would entail.

ONBOARDING
The user goes on to set up their node. Learning, deciding, installing, etc.

NODE LAUNCHED
The node operator manages and optimizes their node & participates in DAO governance.

3.1 The User Journey: Awareness

In the awareness phase of the user journey, people learn about Rocket Pool. While some users systematically research the best way to stake ETH, most just stumble upon Rocket Pool and the idea of running a node sparks their interest. It's important to be able to serve both groups and to build a strong brand with public awareness. In the awareness phase, serving each group well means effectively addressing the distinct needs and curiosities of both informed seekers and casual discoverers.

The triggering event

People need a triggering event to change their behaviour. The trigger can be internal or external, but we rely on some force to set out on a new course of action.
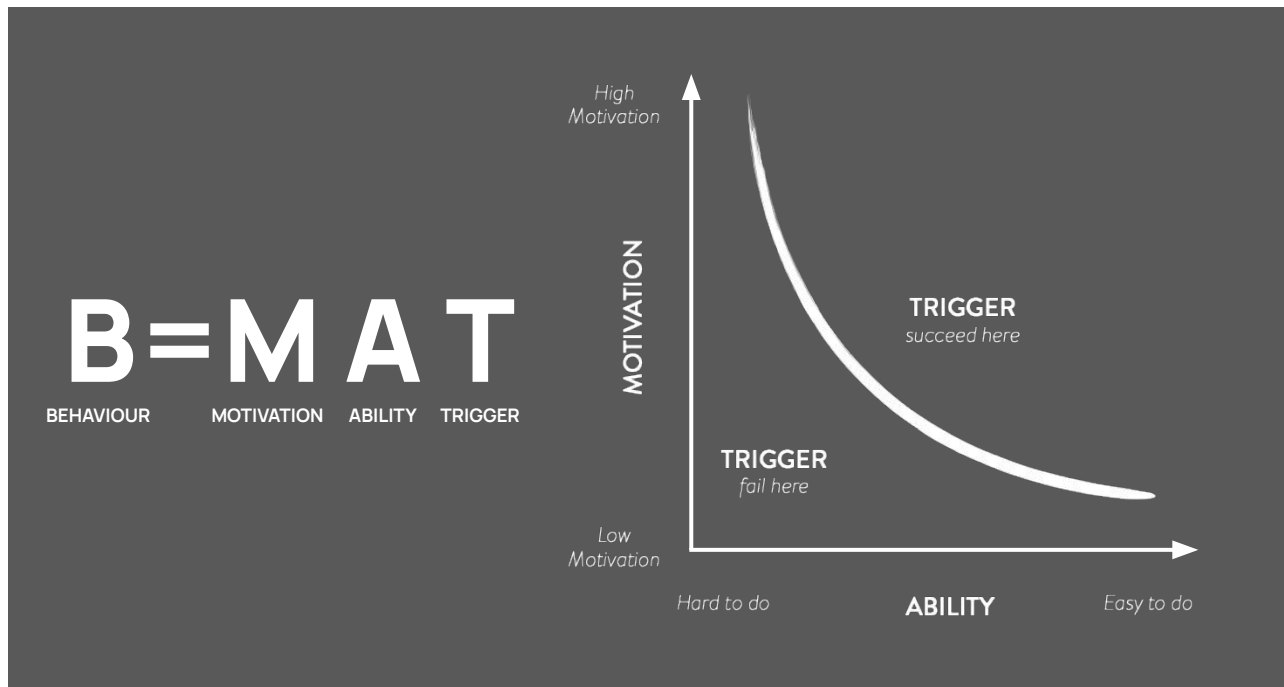
The fact that there is no urgency or natural seasonality to setting up a node can make people delay the decision.

Here are some of the triggering events that people reported from the interviews:
- Rocket Pool beta went live
- Rocket Pool was launched
- LEB8 was announced
- Staked ETH was enabled

All of these are one time events, and while we have more updates in the roadmap leaning on such rare events can be a limiting factor for Rocket Pool's growth.

How might Rocket Pool use relevant triggers to help people act on their intent to learn more?

B=MAT

BEHAVIOUR   MOTIVATION   ABILITY   TRIGGER

High Motivation

MOTIVATION

TRIGGER
succeed here

TRIGGER
fail here

Low Motivation

Hard to do   **ABILITY**   Easy to do

Fogg's behaviour model is a good mental model for how behaviours are not only shaped by motivation, but also by a person's ability and the strength of the behavioural trigger

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Past & future sources for user acquisition

As Ethereum miners sought new opportunities in Ethereum's transition to proof-of-stake, many found Rocket Pool as a logical next step. The Shanghai/Capella upgrade enabling staked ETH withdrawals was another such one-off event. Now, as the landscape evolves, it's natural to ask "where does our next cohort of users come from?"

Also, as challenger protocols arrive to the scene, now might be a good time to start thinking defensively of how to make sure users stay in the community even if they would be targeted in a vampire attack.

How might Rocket Pool identify ways to extend its value proposition and user acquisition channels to grow the size of the community?

How might Rocket Pool protect against vampire attacks targeting its community?

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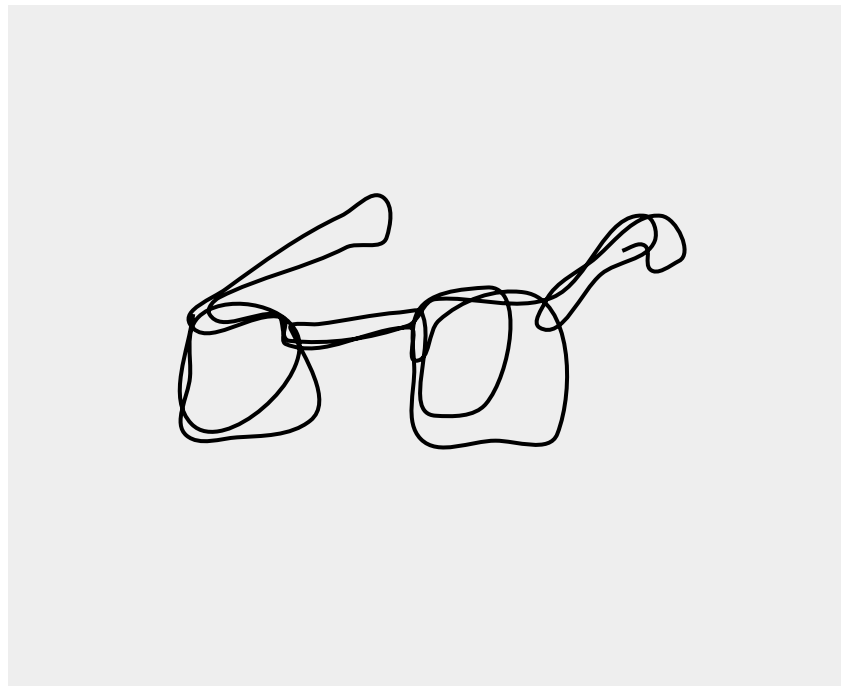
Clarifying Rocket Pool's Dual Offerings

In the awareness phase, it's crucial for Rocket Pool to clearly articulate what we offer, ensuring people understand our 'products' and their respective value propositions. This is complicated by the fact that we offer two distinct products designed to cater to two different needs: the mainstream liquid staking product, rETH, aimed at general investors seeking easy access to staking rewards, and the node operator infrastructure, targeted towards technically inclined users who want to actively participate in and support the network infrastructure. Rocket Pool is one brand, but we have two distinct value propositions – the better we can be at making that clear, the more effective our marketing effort will be.

> " *… you can either be a node operator or liquid staker. I mean, you can do both, but it's two completely separate things. In the beginning that was confusing to me. I thought I have to hold 16 rETH (to be a node operator). The concepts swirled into a mental blur.*

– Rocket Pool node operator

Clarifying Rocket Pool's Dual Offerings

The fact that setting up a Rocket Pool node is hard increases the emotional stakes of the process. Many users, especially those with lower technical abilities feel insecure during the process, and therefore feel a need for confirmation. This triggers what's called 'extended problem solving' where the user tries to evaluate many criteria in search of the perfect solution.

Compare this to the process of buying rETH. For users with some experience of using crypto it's a simple swap done in a few seconds. In these situations we lean heavily on habits and the default behaviours that we have learned through time.

Limited Problem Solving

Reasons

- Low perceived risk (financial, emotional, time & effort, functional)
- Limited complexity (few factors to consider, easily comparable options)
- Perceived as limited cost

Leads to

- Lower involvement, limited information search
- Weakly held beliefs
- Fewer evaluation criteria used
- Aspiring for good-enough solution

Extended Problem Solving

Reasons

- High perceived risk (financial, emotional, time & effort, functional)
- High complexity (many factors, hard to compare options, social aspects)
- Perceived as high cost

Leads to

- High involvement, extensive search
- Strongly held beliefs
- Many evaluation criteria used
- Aspiring for "perfect solution"

Rocket Pool is a two-sided platform, that means we have two marketing jobs

Think about a person's decision to buy rETH like buying a coffee. It's low cost, low complexity, low risk, and it does not come with any long-term commitment.

Think about a person's decision to become a node operator like buying an espresso machine. It's high cost, high complexity (many factors to consider), high risk (time, effort, money). What's more, you'll live with the outcome of this decision for a long time.

How might Rocket Pool creatively differentiate its marketing strategies to build mass-market demand for rETH while also increasing its relevance towards enthusiasts who want to become node operators?

3.2 The User Journey: Consideration

In the consideration phase of the user journey, people begin to properly evaluate the idea of running a Rocket Pool node. Decisions and behaviour change are fueled by positive forces like curiosity, inspiration and feeling momentum. If one has made a commitment to finish something it might spark some disciplined effort too. That said, the positive momentum in learning about Rocket Pool, taking the necessary decisions and putting in the legwork to get things done is a finite resource.

Hard choices, ambiguity and misaligned expectations are common drains to the positive momentum that drives users forward. There's a good amount of work that goes into onboarding as a node operator – and it's Rocket Pool's job to make it as smooth, easy and fun as possible.

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From Daunting to Doable

The prospect of becoming a Rocket Pool node operator can be quite daunting, especially considering it involves managing complex technical systems unfamiliar to most users early in the process. There are numerous components to understand and layers of risk to evaluate, not to mention the long-term commitment required to maintain this "Tamagotchi-like" node, ensuring its health and functionality for an unforeseeable future.

If milestones could be defined throughout the onboarding process, these could serve as external validation that the user is making progress towards the goal of setting up their node.

How might Rocket Pool help users to feel a sense of progress and external validation that they're getting closer to their goal? Think milestones, but what would they look like?

> " I think launching a node is overwhelmingly a front loaded activity. You've got to learn a lot, you've got to go through all the docs, you've got to follow the instructions to a tee — but then once you're done, I put in virtually no effort.

– Rocket Pool node operator, lower technical ability

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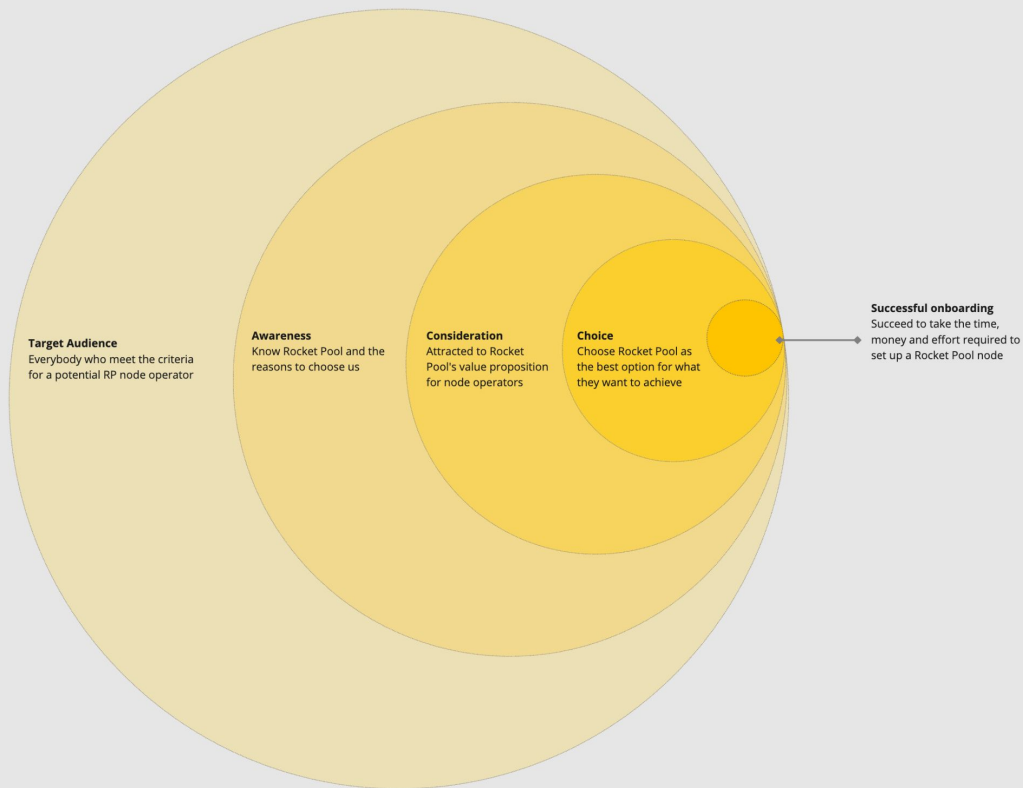
Target Audience

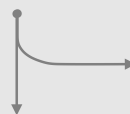Everybody who meet the criteria for a potential RP node operator
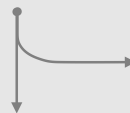
Dropoffs (indicative, non-exhaustive)

- **Not aware of Rocket Pool** People who meet the criteria of being a node operator but who are not aware of Rocket Pool and the benefits of running an RP node.

Awareness

Know Rocket Pool and the reasons to choose us

- **Overlooked** Knows about Rocket Pool but knows or assumes it doesn't meet their needs, preferences or that they can't set up a Rocket Pool node (for whatever reason)
- **Indifferent** Thinks that the effort or risk is not worth the (perceived) reward
- **Unacceptable** Have evaluation criteria that Rocket Pool doesn't meet. The criteria can have many reasons such as technological, legal, practical, ideological, social or cultural

Consideration

Attracted to Rocket Pool's value proposition for node operators
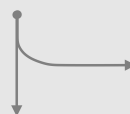
- **Tokenomic & risk concerns** Chooses another option due to tokenomic and/or security concerns, smart contract risk, dissuaded by feedback from others, complex financial modelling
- **Protocol & features concerns** Thinks that the protocol or DAO is not setup in a good way; governance or other DAO-related concerns, does not meet evaluation criteria, overwhelming options
- **Decision & motivation barriers** Gets stuck in decision due to complexity, lack of information or motivation; reasons may include inadequate support, improvement delta too small, decision paralysis, procrastination

Choice

Choose Rocket Pool as the best alternative
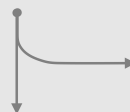
- **Complexity and Usability Barriers.** Fails to go through onboarding due to steep learning curve, inadequate onboarding resources/guidance, overwhelming interface.
- **Lack of time, skill, motivation.** Get stuck in process or can't find the time or motivation to take the time to onboard despite having the intention to do so.
- Resource barriers. Fails to go through the onboarding due to lack of resources, either financial to fund the minipool, or to set up the node in the intended way.

Successful onboarding

Succeed to take the time, assets and effort required to set up a Rocket Pool node

Testnet Trials

To get a sense of how things actually work, trial and error often pose as the best method of learning. Setting up a testnet node in Rocket Pool offers a hands-on experience that comes with invaluable learnings of what it's like running a real node.

I was a bit afraid that my skill set was not appropriate ... But I tried the beta and I managed to set up a working test node, it was validating, I found my ways with CLI. Yeah, I wasn't really worried much after that!

Getting a node up on the testnet not only demystifies the process but also builds confidence and competence, paving the way for a smoother transition to managing a live node in the future. However, some users encounter a catch-22 situation: they need to commit to buying hardware before they can realistically set up a node on the testnet.

How might Rocket Pool make a hands-on experience such as running a node on a testnet more accessible to people who do not have the hardware?

Different points of reference

The community survey indicated that holding a liquid staking token would be by far the most attractive alternative for RP node operators with lower technical ability. The difference between users with lower and higher technical ability was large.

Meanwhile, among RP node operators with higher technical ability being a solo validator would be the primary alternative for most. Given that not all respondents with high technical ability have the funds to be staking solo this alternative is likely even higher from a preferential standpoint.

3. If you were not running a node with Rocket Pool, what would you have chosen to do with your ETH instead? If you might have done more than one of these, choose the one most likely for you.
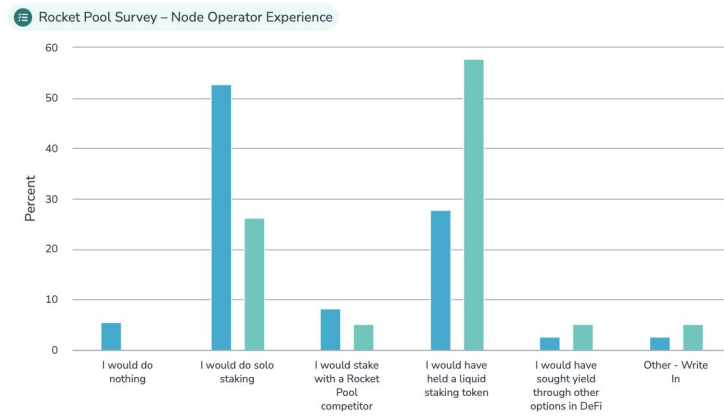
The graph illustrates data from complete survey responses that have marked that they run a Rocket Pool node.

Please note, this definition of high vs low technical ability is different from the scoring shown in other parts of this presentation

HIGH TECHNICAL ABILITY

Fulfills at least ONE of the following criteria (self assessed)
- Programming (any language)
  - Proficient - Skilled
  - Expert - Highly skilled

- Solidity smart contract development
  - Proficient - Skilled
  - Expert - Highly skilled

- Software, how to setup & run a server
  - Expert - Highly skilled

LOW TECHNICAL ABILITY

Fulfills at least ONE of the following criteria (self assessed)
- Programming (any language)
  - None - I don't know this
  - Novice - Beginner

- Solidity smart contract development
  - None - I don't know this

- Software, how to setup & run a server
 - None - I don't know this
  - Novice - Beginner

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Different points of reference

Rocket Pool's value proposition has three main pillars: good yield, it's technically accessible, and requires less ETH to run a node. This attracts different types of users, with different points of reference. One such discrepancy is visible whether users see solo staking or holding a liquid staking token as the primary alternative to running an RP node. This preference correlates with users' technical abilities where users with higher technical ability more commonly use solo staking as their primary reference.

RP node vs. solo staking

+ Higher yield
+ Requires less ETH per node
+ Technically easier (smartnode stack)
+ Audited contract and lindy effect
+ A great community including support
+ RPL rewards

- Forced RPL exposure
- Third party dependencies and/or smart contract risk

Higher technical ability

PRIMARY ALTERNATIVE
Solo staking

PRIMARY ALTERNATIVE
Liquid staking token
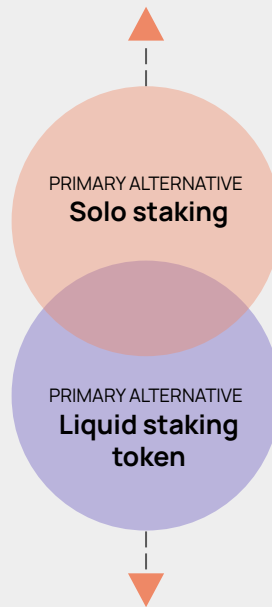
Lower technical ability

RP node vs. holding a liquid staking token

+ Higher yield
+ Be part of a community
+ RPL rewards

- Less liquid position
- More work / effort
- More personal responsibilities
- Requires 8 ETH + additional RPL
- Forced RPL exposure
- Third party dependencies and/or smart contract risk

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Bond Size Matters

The community survey showed that solo staking was by far the most popular alternative to running an RP node for respondents with 160+ ETH bonded (400+% compared to second most popular alternative). This was further validated through the user interviews where multiple large stakers had already been solo staking, either waiting for Rocket Pool to launch on mainnet or for staked ETH withdrawals to be enabled.
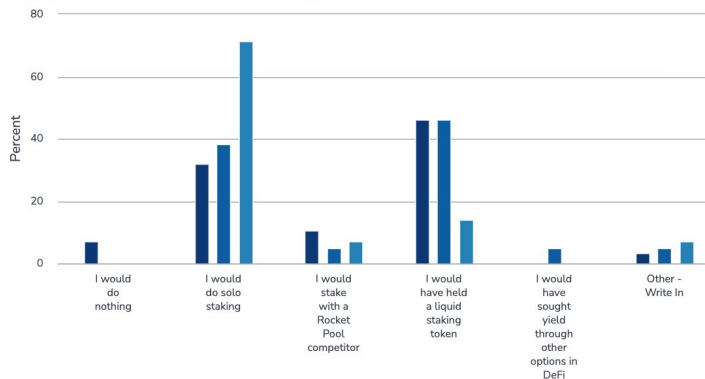
While also popular for respondents with less ETH bonded the preference to solo stake correlated with bond size among the respondents.

It's interesting to note that there seem to be a distinct difference in preference between large vs small and medium sized stakers indicating that they have distinctly different attitudes and/or behaviours. Yet, we do not know if this difference is due to rational incentives to maximize yield and/or a difference in values with these users emphasizing decentralization.

How might Rocket Pool make the protocol more attractive to large stakers who see solo staking as their primary alternative?

3. If you were not running a node with Rocket Pool, what would you have chosen to do with your ETH instead? If you might have done more than one of these, choose the one most likely for you.

The graph illustrates data from complete survey responses that have marked that they run a Rocket Pool node.

APPROXIMATELY HOW MUCH ETH DO YOU HAVE BONDED IN YOUR ROCKET POOL NODE(S)?

- 8 – 31 ETH BONDED
- 32 – 159 ETH BONDED
- 160+ ETH BONDED

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~~Either or~~ Both and

Positioning Rocket Pool as relevant to different audiences with different points of references can be a challenge, especially since all users go through the same onboarding journey. The questions each user group needs answers to and their level of background knowledge will vary.

When I first saw Lido, a protocol that got commission for staking for others, I wanted to build something similar. But then finding Rocket Pool ... I could do the same but didn't have to do any of the programming myself.

– High technical ability user

I was going to run on AllNodes, but after hanging out in Discord and the community cheered me on and convinced me [to run my own node]. And after much support I got my node up!.

– Low technical ability user

How might Rocket Pool increase our relevance to users with high technical ability?

How might Rocket Pool increase our relevance to users with low technical ability?

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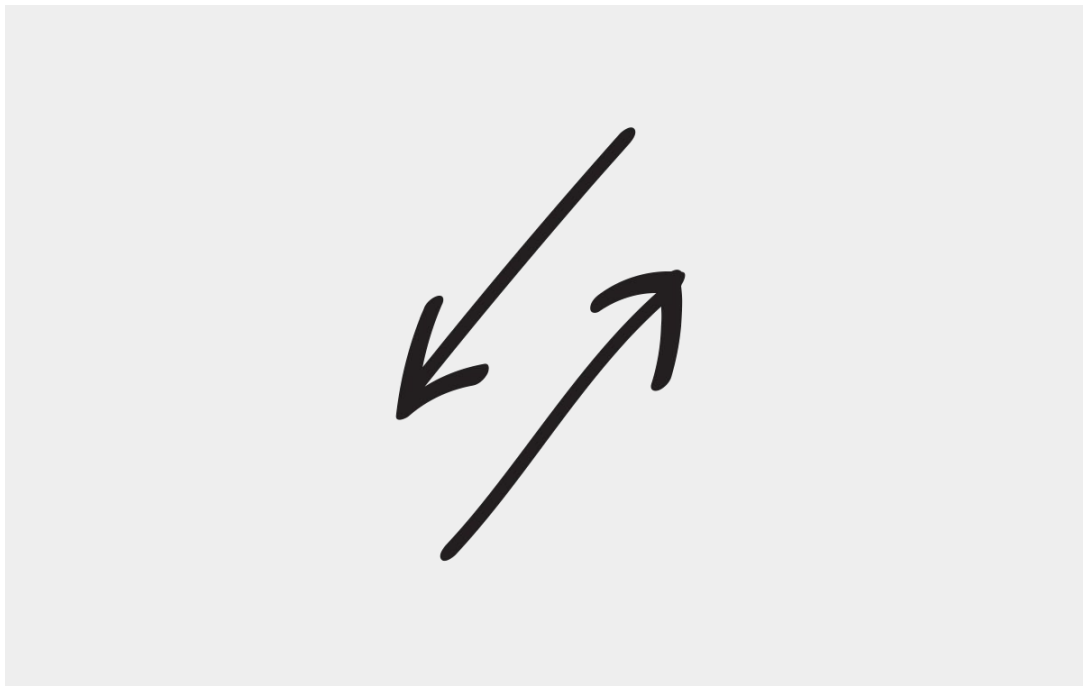
No Solution = No Action

Sometimes people just get stuck. We're overwhelmed. The patience runs out from all of the decisions. Or the lack of a perfect solution leads people to not take any decision at all.

"I looked into Rocket Pool very actively, but I had a few concerns so I put it aside."
– Node operator who joined Rocket Pool after 9+ months of deliberation

The lack of urgency to setting up a Rocket Pool node can further fuel our perfectionist wish for the optimal solution.

How might Rocket Pool invite users to make a small commitment that helps them progress in their research & onboarding process?

Common reasons to hesitate, postpone or be perfectionist include:

- Obsession with optimal investment
- Hesitation over long-term commitment or fear of making irreversible errors
- Legitimate or imagined fear of technical failures
- Pressure for flawless execution
- Uncertainty in risk assessment ("did I think about everything")
- Anxiety about legal or tax questions

How might Rocket Pool create a friendly sense of urgency to make progress in the onboarding?

> " *Procrastination is the lazy cousin of fear. When we feel anxiety around an activity, we postpone it.*
>
> – Noelle Hancock

3.3 The User Journey: Onboarding

Even though Rocket Pool is guiding users through a very complex onboarding, interviewees throughout the study were consistently very positive about the onboarding. From the docs to using the smartnode stack to the support in Discord, the interviewees praised the onboarding process.

Still, there are always opportunities to improve how users are supported through the onboarding, in this onboarding phase we take a look at how the support is delivered, coordinated and scales.

Onboarding users love the documentation...

Rocket Pool's documentation is highly regarded by its users, with many interviewees praising its clarity and thoroughness. It manages to teach key concepts while providing hands-on guidance and is accessible enough to bring users with lower technical ability along the journey.

Still, there are opportunities to improve things further.

> " *This Node Operator guide documentation, it was good, it was better than good!*
>
> – Rocket Pool node operator

... but there are still opportunities to improve

- Some of the concepts that users learn about in the onboarding are relevant already in the consideration phase. However, the detailed format of the docs can be overwhelming when you're looking to get an overview. Improving the taxonomy and findability of information could help here.

- One user reported that he heard about the LEB8 update, but when he wanted to know more he only found references, including in the docs to 16 ETH minipools. Better ways to update info throughout all channels would help Rocket Pool better guide users.

- There are a lot of resources surrounding Rocket Pool but they are not always easy to find. book.sprocketpool.net/ is a good first attempt (great job Patches!), but there is no reference to this in the docs and the coordination of these resources is still insufficient leaving many of them underutilized.

How might Rocket Pool improve its documentation and learning resources to provide users with the appropriate level of information, whether conceptual or practical, for their specific stage?

How might Rocket Pool more effectively manage and update its information across various channels and guides to ensure consistency and avoid confusion?

How might Rocket Pool better coordinate channels and resources in the ecosystem and help people find them at the right time? E.g. rocketpool.support during the onboarding.

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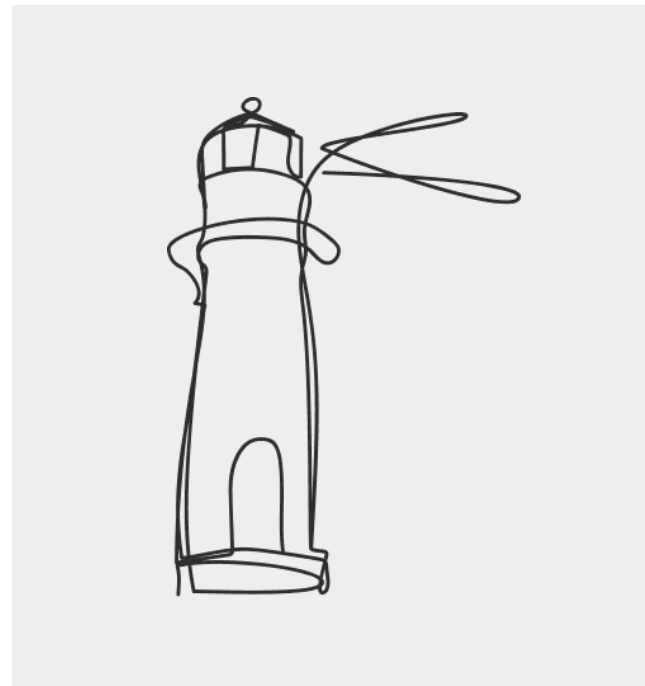
Discord support is great, but can we be more effective?

Rocket Pool's community is active and supportive, particularly on Discord. This support is well-regarded, as evidenced by positive feedback from user interviews. However, many questions are repetitive, and utilizing highly knowledgeable community members for basic queries, such as Linux navigation, isn't efficient. There's significant potential to boost efficiency, perhaps by employing generative AI models trained on our comprehensive documentation and Discord support interactions.

How might Rocket Pool work in more scalable ways in providing support to its users?

Language can be a barrier

Crypto and DeFi has taken off as global phenomena. In a recent report by Chainalysis [1], it revealed that low- and middle-income countries are the only category whose grassroots crypto adoption has not only recovered but surpassed pre-bull market levels, making them the leaders in their Global Crypto Adoption Index. Almost none of the low- and middle income countries that stand out in the report have English as an official language. Meanwhile, in the EU German, Spanish and French are all bigger languages than English.

And language can be a real challenge for users, even those who speak English as a second language, especially when learning complex concepts and navigating high stakes decisions.

How might Rocket Pool make learning and onboarding more accessible for people who don't speak English as a first language?

[1] https://go.chainalysis.com/geography-of-cryptocurrency-2023.html
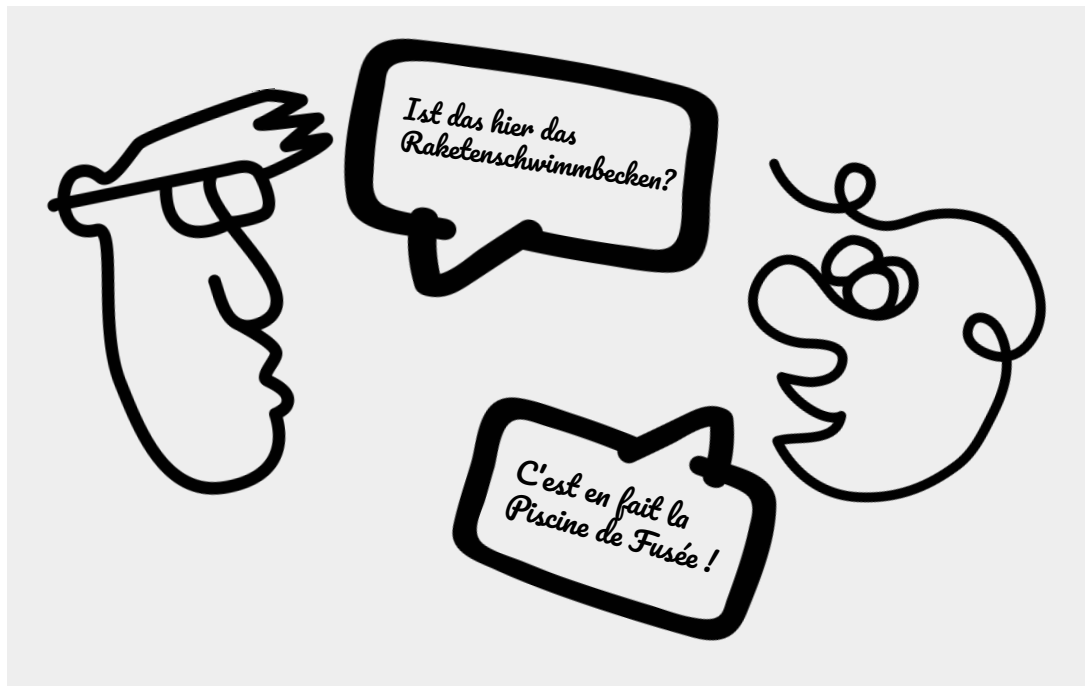
3.4 The User Journey: Node Launched

Some node operators are very hands off, and that is usually part of why they love Rocket Pool. For others though, the onboarding is just the start, then they go on to write scripts to automate manual tasks, participate in Discord and governance discussions, or take on building and sharing even more ambitious community contributions.

This section is about what needs to be done once the node is up and running, and all the opportunities to take things further.

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We Are a Community of Decentralization Heroes

Rocket Pool's success is greatly attributed to its community members who innovate and contribute to a strong, decentralized system. Their crucial role goes beyond enhancing the protocol; they create a supportive environment, especially where learning is challenging and stakes are high. Recognizing these community heroes is vital. We already use grants, bounties, and POAPs, but how else can we thank them? We should explore more ways to appreciate community contributions.

How might Rocket Pool celebrate and highlight the achievements of boundary-pushing individuals in our community? What are different ways to do this that celebrate different types of contributions?

> " *If you're a node operator it is cool to be on top of your game. To really know what you're doing*

– Rocket Pool node operator

A Missed Opportunity To Onboard To Governance

A user probably closes the browser tab to the docs once the node is up and running. But there's more to learn and do (governance for example).

One interviewee raised that he was disappointed that the onboarding did not give a better intro to how community governance works. He highlighted that he wished the process guided new community members to understand who to delegate to, and how to vote themselves.

Part of this challenge is logistical; how and where do we continue to educate and guide new users when the urgency of setting up their node is resolved?

How might Rocket Pool effectively introduce new community members to governance, ensuring they have adequate context understand the importance of their participation?

> " *When you onboard you get an intro, here's how you delegate your vote. And you're provided with a list of delegates ... and it's actually, I would say pretty poor. It's a list of people but if you're a new node operator, you will undoubtedly have never heard of these people. It says nothing about [the delegates views on] policy or how they see the future of the network.*

– Rocket Pool node operator

Navigating Staking For Others

Rocket Pool is a platform where users are not only staking for themselves but also stake on behalf of others, such as family members or as part of a business model. This expansion presents a new dynamic in the ecosystem, where trust and responsibility is seen in a different light.

While Rocket Pool is a neutral protocol that can be utilized for different purposes by its users, the situation poses the question 'Do we choose to lean into this? If yes, should we develop features or support for these use cases?'

The question is timely with NodeSet in the roadmap and the decentralization of Lido starting to be rolled out.

Should Rocket Pool support people and businesses staking for others? If yes, how might Rocket Pool be competitive in doing so?

> " My mother is like always very emotional. She swapped some Bitcoins to start staking Ethereum – and now she's asking me *"Why did I do that? Now Bitcoin is up in price compared to Ether?"*
>
> – Rocket Pool node operator

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Chapter 3: Takeaways

Timely Communication

Tailor marketing and information delivery to suit users at different stages of their journey, focusing on topics relevant to them at specific times. This approach will increase user engagement and simplify the onboarding process.

Seek ways to reach the marginal user

Rocket Pool has already onboarded many of its best users. If now needs to seek ways to make itself more relevant and approachable to more users, whether that be users who are not strong in English, less technical users, or users with other limiting factors.

Focus on Community Building

Seek further ways to recognize and reward community contributions, fostering a sense of belonging and appreciation. This is crucial for long-term user engagement and loyalty.

4. Ideas for Usability & Growth

1. Methodology

2. Segmentation & Insights

3. User Journey Insights

4. Ideas for Usability & Growth

NO Intro Course – Available In Foreign Languages

MOTIVATING & ENABLING
USERS WITH LOWER TECHNICAL ABILITY

A four week course where attendants learn the key concepts of running a node. Students follow a curriculum that gives them the theoretical foundation and the hands on skills needed to set up their own node (on the testnet or mainnet). Each week has a specific theme and students can attend a group call to ask questions or share their experience.

KEY COMPONENTS

- Specific start dates, becomes a **triggering event** and creates a **friendly sense of urgency** to take action on the will to learn more

- Use the early inspiration to **make a commitment** to learn what RP is really about.

- **Offering the course in different languages** lowers the threshold for people with English as a second language.

OPPORTUNITIES

- How might Rocket Pool use relevant triggers to help people act on their intent to learn more?

- How might Rocket Pool help users to feel a sense of progress and external validation that they're getting closer to their goal? Think milestones, but what would they look like?

- How might Rocket Pool make learning and onboarding more accessible for people who don't speak English as a first language?

EXPERIMENT

A one off test session with the docs as the foundation and a weekly Discord AMA with an experience member from the community.

SCALED VISION

Recurring courses through a tested and optimized setup offered in an array of languages.

Decentralization Scoreboard

MOTIVATING, DRIVES AWARENESS
ALL USERS, ESPECIALLY HIGHER TECHNICAL ABILITY

A decentralisation score-board highlighting nodes/users that excel at running a decentralized node. The score takes choice of execution- and consensus client as well as attestation completion rate. An optional POAP or NFT can be claimed for achievements like 'decentralized node of the month'

KEY COMPONENTS

- A public scoreboard which highlights and *celebrates Rocket Pool node operators* that push the boundaries in terms of decentralization

- The scoreboard is communicated both internally and externally, *showing in a tangible way how Rocket Pool contributes to decentralization*.

- An optional NFT or POAP with associated merch only available to top *performing nodes enabling* outstanding node operators to add it to their 'crypto CV' and allowing for bragging rights at crypto events and conferences.

OPPORTUNITIES

- How might Rocket Pool highlight how its community are heroes of decentralization and seek ways to highlight and celebrate this both internally and externally?

- How might Rocket Pool do an even better job at communicating the vision, mission and other 'softer' reasons to be a node operator?

- How might Rocket Pool identify ways to extend its value proposition and user acquisition channels to grow the size of the community?

EXPERIMENT

A POAP is airdropped to all nodes that run both a minority execution client and a minority consensus client.

SCALED VISION

A full scaled scoreboard with automatic airdropped NFTs/POAPs to top performing node operators.

Conference Countdown Collaborations

MARKETING, FRIENDLY SENSE OF URGENCY
ALL PROSPECTIVE USERS

Collaborate with chosen conferences and run community events. Have a countdown before the conference and rewards, bounties or raffles for Rocket Pool nodes created during the countdown period.

KEY COMPONENTS

- Collaboration with external events that gather attention in the community. Seeking win-win collaborations beneficial to the event & to Rocket Pool.

- Creating a friendly sense of urgency for users to act on dormant intent to try Rocket Pool out.

- A symbolic incentive such as entrance to an after party, a special POAP or a raffle ticket as small trigger to act on intent

OPPORTUNITIES

- How might Rocket Pool invite users to make a small commitment that helps them progress in their research & onboarding process?

- How might Rocket Pool creatively differentiate its marketing strategies to build mass-market demand for rETH while also increasing its relevance towards enthusiasts who want to become node operators?

- How might Rocket Pool use relevant triggers to help people act on their intent to learn more?

EXPERIMENT

A one-off countdown to an already planned conference. A low effort incentive is added such as a POAP or raffle ticket.

SCALED VISION

Part of a larger marketing strategy with continuous events across global and local conferences. More ambitious incentive structures for onboarding node operators.

Personalized Learning Journey

ENABLING, LOWERS THRESHOLD, INSPIRING
ALL USERS, ESPECIALLY LOWER TECHNICAL ABILITY

A Personalized Learning Journey tailored to the unique needs of each user. Beginning with an assessment of the user's skills and preferences for node operation, this tool guides to a customized learning path and setup guide. It aims to streamline the process of becoming a node operator, ensuring that each user is equipped with the knowledge and resources best suited to their specific circumstances and abilities.

KEY COMPONENTS

- *Skills Assessment*: An initial questionnaire to evaluate the user's technical expertise and understanding of key concepts.

- Gives users' an *overview of what they need to learn* and guides to adequate resources to do so based on the assessment results.

- Progress Tracking: Monitors learning, *celebrates learning milestones* and gives the user a sense for where they are on their learning and onboarding journey.

- Can be combined with other tailored user journey components e.g. a personalized setup guide

OPPORTUNITIES

- How might Rocket Pool improve its documentation and learning resources to provide users with the appropriate level of information, whether conceptual or practical, for their specific stage?

- How might Rocket Pool help users to feel a sense of progress and external validation that they're getting closer to their goal? Think milestones, but what would they look like?

- How might Rocket Pool better coordinate channels and resources in the ecosystem and help people find them at the right time? E.g. rocketpool.support during the onboarding.

EXPERIMENT

Basic quiz that gives users a sense of what knowledge gaps they want to fill including links to learn about these topics.

SCALED VISION

Skills assessment and learning guide that guides the user through the node onboarding process. Includes personalized curriculum based on the users skills and goals.

ROI Calculator, incl. Investment ROI & Tax Guide

ENABLING, GIVES SENSE OF CONTROL
ALL USERS

An ROI calculator allows users to explore the ROI breakdown for their RP node. Users can enter fields such as hardware investment cost and recurring costs, and explore scenarios with different yield percentages. They can also see how ETH and RPL token prices would affect ROI. The calculator includes alternative options, such as solo staking or holding a liquid staking token, to simplify comparisons.

KEY COMPONENTS

- *Investment ROI Calculation:* Inputs for initial investment, operational expenses, and reward projections to calculate expected returns.

- *Customizable Scenarios:* Ability to adjust variables for different scenarios and market conditions.

- Option to estimate the tax rate impact on yield.

OPPORTUNITIES

- How might Rocket Pool simplify the understanding of staking rewards to get new users a sense of scale and a feel for which factors affect rewards?

- How might we effectively communicate the benefits and positive aspects of RPL token requirements in a nuanced manner to address and reduce inflated concerns?

- How might Rocket Pool assist users in comprehending tax implications and provide practical guidance on managing their tax responsibilities?

EXPERIMENT

Basic ROI calculator with essential inputs for quick, preliminary investment analysis.

SCALED VISION

Advanced, dynamic ROI and tax planner with real-time data and customizable scenarios.

Email Newsletter Extended Onboarding

ENABLING, COORDINATES THE LEARNING JOURNEY
ALL USERS

A personalized newsletter designed to continuously support Rocket Pool users through a series of educational and informative emails. This service allows users to opt-in for email updates when their onboarding is finished. The newsletters provides timely guides on key aspects like reward claims, governance participation, and tax filing. This approach aims to enhance user understanding and engagement, making their journey smoother and more informed.

KEY COMPONENTS

- *Timely learning updates:* Updates are sent out the first time a newly onboarded node operator encounters a topic such as claiming rewards.

- Emails *customized based on user progress and interests*

- *Feedback Mechanism*: Option for users to provide feedback or request specific topics

OPPORTUNITIES

- How might Rocket Pool orchestrate the learning journey and serve people with adequate guidance at the right time to better guide new users through the necessary decisions?

- How might Rocket Pool effectively introduce new community members to governance, ensuring they have adequate context and understand the importance of their participation?

- How might Rocket Pool guide users to improve the security of their Rocket Pool node beyond the basics, without overwhelming users who don't want to do more than the standard recommendations?

EXPERIMENT

Basic email series covering key Rocket Pool features and initial steps for new users. Fixed schedule, e.g. one update per week after onboarding.

SCALED VISION

Comprehensive, personalized email journey with tailored guides based on preferences of the user and profiling of their node.

A. Appendix

Appendix A. Opportunity Library

Opportunity Library

*Comprehensive list of all opportunities
listed throughout the report.*

- How might Rocket Pool do an even better job at communicating the vision, mission and other 'softer' reasons to be a node operator?

- How might Rocket Pool highlight how its community are heroes of decentralization and seek ways to highlight and celebrate this both internally and externally?

- How might Rocket Pool guide users to more quickly get a nuanced understanding of what it's actually like running a Rocket Pool node?

- How might Rocket Pool help people to discover potentially important considerations earlier in the user journey?

- How might Rocket Pool simplify and clarify the financial commitment Rocket Pool node operators make in order to make the onboarding process more transparent?

- How might Rocket Pool inform about the RPL token requirement in a proactive way that give users a nuanced understanding of what it means and why it's there?

- How might we effectively communicate the benefits and positive aspects of RPL token requirements in a nuanced manner to address and reduce inflated concerns?

- How might we simplify and demystify the concept of tokenomics for users to alleviate misunderstandings and hesitations?

- How might Rocket Pool assist users in comprehending tax implications and provide practical guidance on managing their tax responsibilities?

- How might Rocket Pool help people to get clarity on tax rules and how it affects rewards (for relevant jurisdictions)?

- How might Rocket Pool simplify the understanding of staking rewards to get new users a sense of scale and a feel for which factors affect rewards?

- How might Rocket Pool guide users to ask the right question at the right time? E.g. not elaborating on choice of hardware before they've confirmed they have a good enough internet connection.

- How might Rocket Pool guide users to get a sense of the key dimensions affecting hardware configurations such as consensus- & execution clients?

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Opportunity Library

*Comprehensive list of all opportunities
listed throughout the report.*

- How might Rocket Pool create an intuitive learning journey that equips users with essential knowledge and skills, ensuring they are adequately prepared at each stage of the setup process?

- How might Rocket Pool orchestrate the learning journey and serve people with adequate guidance at the right time to better guide new users through the necessary decisions?

- How might Rocket Pool guide people to get a sense of what's reasonable for a gas cost given seasonal trends?

- How might Rocket Pool guide users to improve the security of their Rocket Pool node beyond the basics, without overwhelming users who don't want to do more than the standard recommendations?

- How might Rocket Pool ensure that security guidelines meets the needs from users as best practices evolve and/or the profile of users change (e.g. to include more people new to crypto)?

- How might Rocket Pool improve the guidance on network and access topics?

- How might rocket Pool further guide users to verify that their network port settings are correct?

- How might Rocket Pool use relevant triggers to help people act on their intent to learn more?

- How might Rocket Pool identify ways to extend its value proposition and user acquisition channels to grow the size of the community?

- How might Rocket Pool protect against vampire attacks targeting its community?

- How might Rocket Pool creatively differentiate its marketing strategies to build mass-market demand for rETH while also increasing its relevance towards enthusiasts who want to become node operators?

- How might Rocket Pool help users to feel a sense of progress and external validation that they're getting closer to their goal? Think milestones, but what would they look like?

- How might Rocket Pool make a hands-on experience such as running a node on a testnet more accessible to people who does not have the hardware?

Opportunity Library

*Comprehensive list of all opportunities
listed throughout the report.*

- How might Rocket Pool make the protocol more attractive to large stakers who see solo staking as their primary alternative?

- How might Rocket Pool increase our relevance to users with high technical ability?

- How might Rocket Pool increase our relevance to users with low technical ability?

- How might Rocket Pool invite users to make a small commitment that helps them progress in their research & onboarding process?

- How might Rocket Pool create a friendly sense of urgency to make progress in the onboarding?

- How might Rocket Pool improve its documentation and learning resources to provide users with the appropriate level of information, whether conceptual or practical, for their specific stage?

- How might Rocket Pool more effectively manage and update its information across various channels and guides to ensure consistency and avoid confusion?

- How might Rocket Pool better coordinate channels and resources in the ecosystem and help people find them at the right time? E.g. rocketpool.support during the onboarding.

- How might Rocket Pool work in more scalable ways in providing support to its users?

- How might Rocket Pool make learning and onboarding more accessible for people who don't speak English as a first language?

- How might Rocket Pool celebrate and highlight the achievements of boundary-pushing individuals in our community? What are different ways to do this that celebrate different types of contributions?

- How might Rocket Pool effectively introduce new community members to governance, ensuring they have adequate context understand the importance of their participation?

- Should Rocket Pool support people and businesses staking for others? If yes, how might Rocket Pool be competitive in doing so?

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Appendix B. Segment Definition

Defining Technical Ability

How would you assess your skills in the following areas?

Skills and how they were weighted in the technical ability score

0 – 8 points Programming (any language)

0 – 8 points Solidity smart contract development

0 – 4 points Hardware, how to set up and run a server

0 – 4 points Software, how to set up and run a server

In a sentence or two, please tell us what you do for work.

Occupations related to programming, IT or other technical jobs added another 4 points to the technical ability score.

Survey respondents and interviewees' technical ability was assessed based on the following survey questions, with each question generating 4 to 8 points. The chart below shows the spread in technical ability among the survey respondents. Though it's an imperfect measurement, the technical ability score was added to get a sense of scale for the diversity among Rocket Pool's node operators.

Level of technical ability

Lower   Higher

SPREAD OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS ON
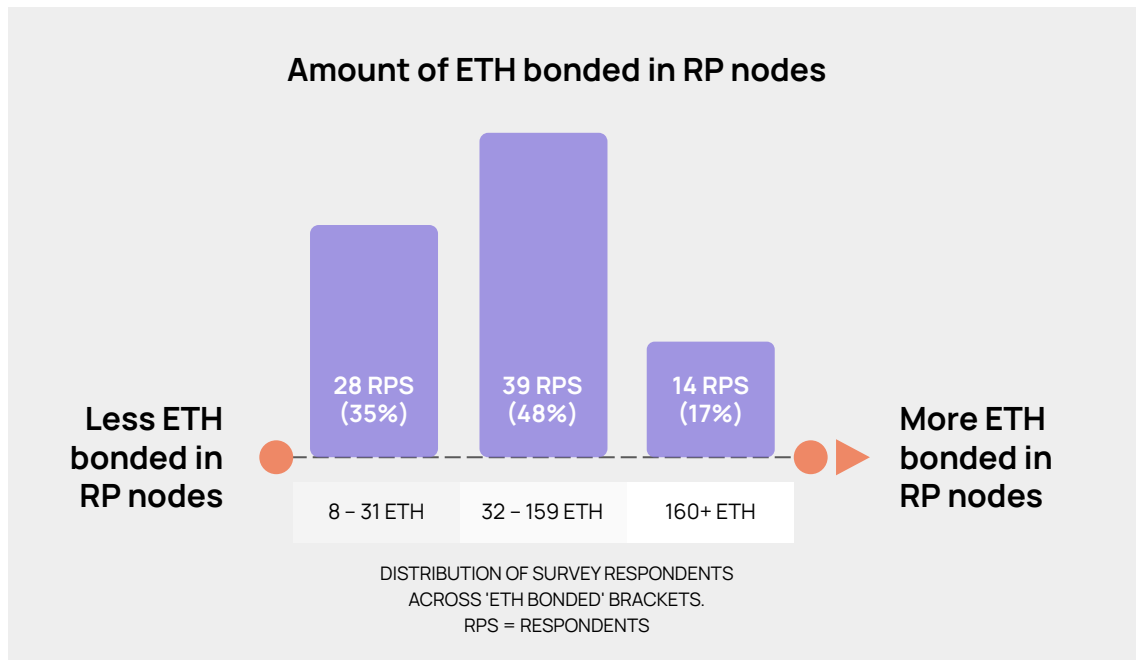THE SCALE OF TECHNICAL ABILITY

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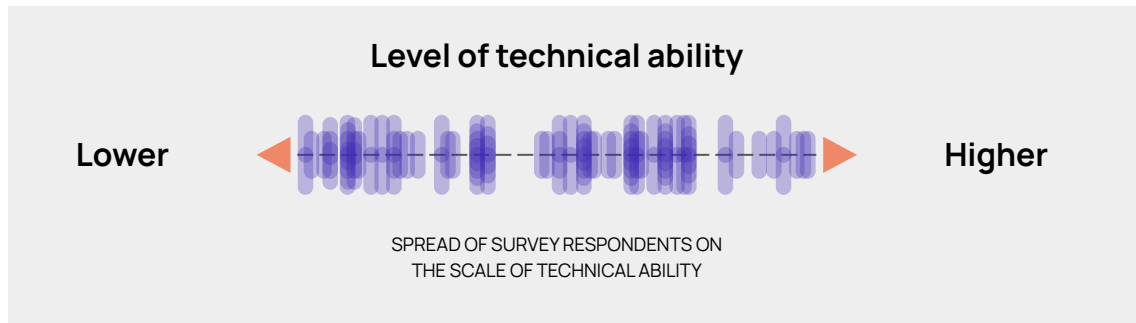
Defining 'ETH Bonded in RP Nodes'

The survey asked for the respondents amount of bonded ETH. This was done in three categories to preserve respondents privacy. A fourth option, 0-7 ETH was added to filter out spam answers, this answer only received one answer which was filtered out.

***Approximately how much ETH do you have bonded in your Rocket Pool node(s)?***

0 – 7 ETH Designed to filter out spam answers

8 – 31 ETH Too little to solo stake

32 – 159 ETH Solo staking is a realistic option

160+ ETH Benefits from more advanced optimizations

Amount of ETH bonded in RP nodes

Less ETH bonded in RP nodes

28 RPS (35%) — 8 – 31 ETH
39 RPS (48%) — 32 – 159 ETH
14 RPS (17%) — 160+ ETH

More ETH bonded in RP nodes

DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS ACROSS 'ETH BONDED' BRACKETS.
RPS = RESPONDENTS

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Appendix C. Nodeset Tokenomics

Nodeset Tokenomics Model

As a research activity in understanding Rocket Pool's future, Nodeset's tokenomics model was mapped. The chart pictures key token flows as of November 2023.

Infographic by OpenUX
openux.xyz
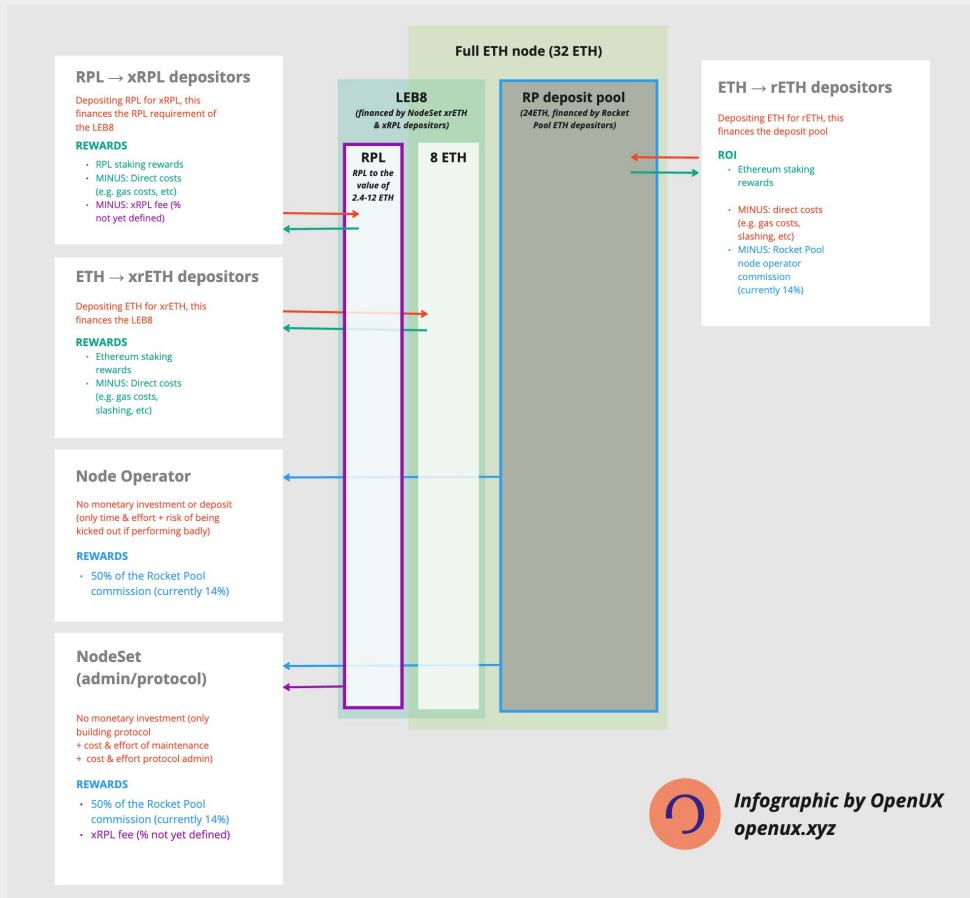
What's Next

OpenUX Report Presentation and AMA
Details will be shared through Discord and X shortly.

Future Collaboration Grant Proposals
OpenUX is open to further opportunities to collaborate with Rocket Pool. We believe there is more potential to enhance Rocket Pool's growth through increased relevance and usability.

January 2024

Rocket Pool Node Operator UX

Lead User Researcher   Victor Länsman

Additional user researchers   Georgia Rakusen
Manansh Shukla

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