

Making Scientific Blogging “Count”

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We are, as a culture, obsessed with counting things. From the number of "likes" and "followers" we have to the number of "retweets" and "shares" we get. It's how we measure our popularity and in some cases our success. Scientists are no different, we count the number of publications we have and the number of citations we receive. Being scientists, we have even come up with a formula so that we can count these two things more effectively (Hirsch 2005). Some have argued that this "counting" can be problematic in certain situations (Lawrence 2007). Indeed many things we count don't matter and many things we don't count do matter. So how do we make what matters "count?"

First, we should define what we mean when we say something "counts". We mean that something, whatever it is, is beneficial to the career advancement of the individual pursuing it.

So what is something in science that doesn't "count" but should and how can we help? Scientific blogging. Scientific blogging is performed by thousands of scientists in various places from personal homepages to organized forums. Many blogs have thousands of followers and are important in public discussions, to the point of being referred to in major scientific journals and news outlets. But do they count to the individual that wrote them? Do scientists list them on their CVs for promotion and tenure or when applying for grants? For the most part, the answer is: no.

HOW CAN WE CHANGE THIS?

We can make blogs into publications. Many are already of equal quality to typical scientific publications and would make more of an impact than a standard publication. Of course, some blogs will need formalizing and tweaking (i.e. using appropriate references with DOIs as opposed to hyperlinks) to become a paper but most are not far off. Previously, this would have been very difficult with the cost of publications (thousands of dollars), the slow process of peer review, and the inability for anyone to read it. But not anymore! Now with The Winnower you can make your blogs count by making them into scientific publications.

Go ahead and [try it](#) -we just did!

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