

Science: The Pursuit of The Truth Complicated by The Pursuit of Mortgages.

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Abstract

How we can align open communication seen on blogs with career-advancement garnered from publications. Three key aspects of scholarly communication need to be made available for bloggers: 1) DOIs, 2) Review, and 3) Archival.



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ABSTRACT

How we can align open communication seen on blogs with career-advancement garnered from publications. Three key aspects of scholarly communication need to be made available for bloggers: 1) DOIs, 2) Review, and 3) Archival.

READ REVIEWS

WRITE A REVIEW

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June 11, 2015

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10.15200/winn.142099.95350

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Scientists are, by and large, a group of people that want to solve problems and help mankind. They are good people. Scientists, however, also have to deal with paying mortgages, student loans, and other living expenses. This complicates how they approach scientific problems. Indeed, this “complication”—being a human and being alive—can cause scientists to behave in rather unscientific ways. They may choose to approach problems they already know the answer to instead of big unsolved questions, they may ignore or simply leave out an experiment that goes against five other experiments they have already performed, they may take one paper and slice it into five in order to increase their publication count, they may concede their copyright and publish behind paywalls because of the prestige of the journal. In short, they may focus on things that are peripheral to science but that they think are necessary to do in order to pay their bills... and we all have bills. It is because of this (and ego) that we care about things like impact factors, H-indices, and whatever metric of success we will come up with next. How can we improve this system, that even early grad students can recognize as severely flawed (Chuen 2014) or does a better system already exist?

DOES A BETTER SYSTEM ALREADY EXIST?

In truth a better system does already exist where writing and research is done to start discussions, not stop them. Where ideas are tossed around in their infant stage and improved from the crowd and where the truth is vigorously debated. It is a place where individuals are publishers themselves and the work is open for anyone to read and review—it is the scholarly blogosphere. Despite the wide range of blogs and their importance in scholarly discussions, they simply don't “count” (Nicholson 2014). There are probably multiple reasons for this: 1) they are called “blogs” an entirely informal name, 2) they are constantly disappearing and 3) they are missing some advantages that traditional publishers offer. This can be changed and we can align open discussion occurring on blogs with career advancement garnered from publications. We can transform posts into publications. (It should be noted that other platforms such as [Stack Overflow](#) also fit the above description and would benefit from the proposal below.) To transform posts into publications we need to do the following:

1. BE ABLE TO ASSIGN DIGITAL OBJECT IDENTIFIERS (DOI) TO BLOGS

A DOI is a unique alphanumeric mark (e.g 10.15200/winn.140268.84031) that signifies to the reader

and cite that content will be present and unchanged. This is important as it helps create order in an ever-changing dynamic environment—the Internet. It allows different parties to utilize content with confidence and is thus a great tool for the scientific community that relies on citations for building ideas.

2. BE ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE REVIEWS AND MAKE EDITS

The power of blogging comes from the ease of writing and responding to a post. This is also what can make your work “peer reviewed.” Have 10 different comments on your writing? That is probably more than most scholarly publications have. Of course, comments and reviews may not be identical in nature. Comments are typically informal questions or suggestions aimed at improving the overall topic whereas reviews are typically a more thorough analysis aimed at improving the idea and the paper. Both are valuable and both deserve to be evaluated openly by readers.

3. BE ARCHIVABLE

A key difference between blogs and publications is their lifespan. Blogs can come and go but journals, even if they disappear, are preserved. There are a variety of institutions that accomplish this, such as [Perma.cc](#), [Portico](#), and [CLOCKSS](#), all of which work by keeping lots of copies in different places under the control of the archival organization, libraries, and/or publishers.

So in an effort to start this transition, I hope that you will leave your reviews below on this “bloggication.” I also encourage you to read other “reviews” on the topic at the following links, which I hope may one day be archived:

1. <http://svpow.com/2009/06/08/blog-posts-papers-and-the-brave-new-digital-world-your-thoughts-are-welcome/>
2. <http://svpow.com/2009/06/11/blogs-papers-and-the-brave-new-digital-world-matts-thoughts/>
3. <http://svpow.com/2009/06/13/blogs-papers-etc-some-more-random-thoughts-from-mike-this-time/>
4. <http://svpow.com/2012/10/14/what-is-the-difference-between-a-paper-and-a-blog-post/>

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- Chuen, L. 2014. "Science is broken. Part 1." *The Winnower*. doi: [10.15200/winn.141680.08615](https://doi.org/10.15200/winn.141680.08615).
- Nicholson, J. M. 2014. "Making Scientific Blogging "Count"." *The Winnower*. doi: [10.15200/winn.140286.62987](https://doi.org/10.15200/winn.140286.62987).