

Testing the System: A Brief History

Ethics and Trust in Journal Publishing: How sound is the system?



The Sokal Hoax

The Sham That Shook the Academy

TRANSGRESSING THE BOUNDARIES
Toward a Transformative Hermeneutic
of Quantum Gravity
Alan Sokal

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Transgressing the Boundaries:
Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics
of Quantum Gravity

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"So, to test the prevailing intellectual standards, I decided to try a modest (though admittedly uncontrolled) experiment: Would a leading North American journal of cultural studies [...] publish an article liberally salted with nonsense if (a) it sounded good and (b) it flattered the editors' ideological preconceptions?

The answer, unfortunately, is yes."

Sokal, A. D. 1996. A physicist experiments with cultural studies. *Lingua Franca* 6: 62-64.

“Would a publisher accept a completely nonsensical manuscript if the authors were willing to pay Open Access publication charges?”
The answer, unfortunately, is yes.

Davis, P. M. “Open Access Publisher Accepts Nonsense Manuscript for Dollars” *The Scholarly Kitchen*. 10 June 2009 <http://wp.me/pcvbl-194>

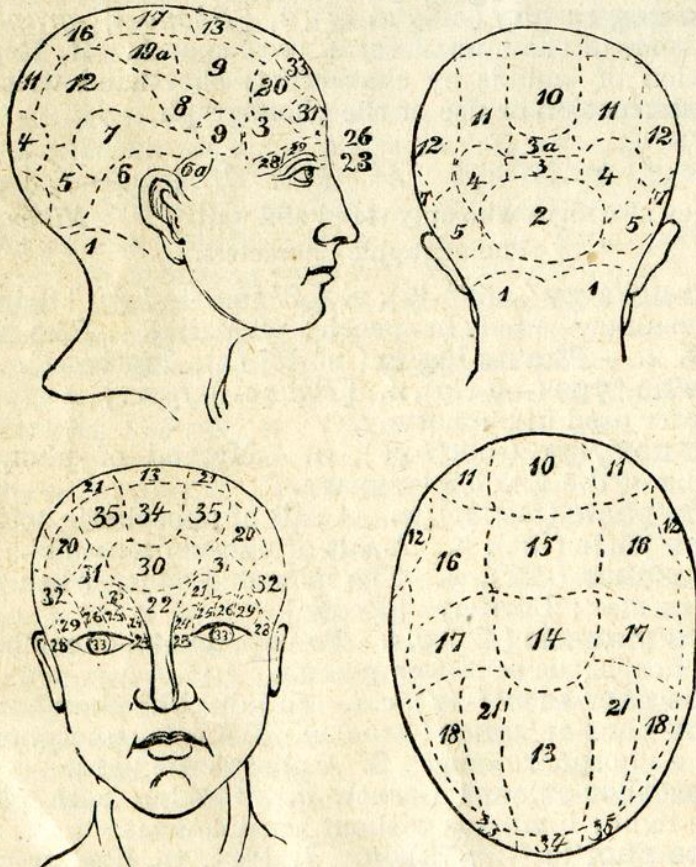
Deconstructing Access Points

David Phillips and Andrew Kent

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Phre-nol'o-gy (-nŏl'ō-jÿ), *n.* [Gr. φρήν, φρενός + *-logy*.] **1.** Science of the special functions of the several parts of the brain, or of the supposed connection between the faculties of the mind and organs in the brain. **2.** Physiological hypothesis that mental faculties, and traits of character, are shown on the surface of the head or skull; craniology. — **Phre-nol'o-gist**, *n.* — **Phren'o-log'ic** (frĕn'ō-lŏj'ĭk), **Phren'o-log'ic-al**, *a.*



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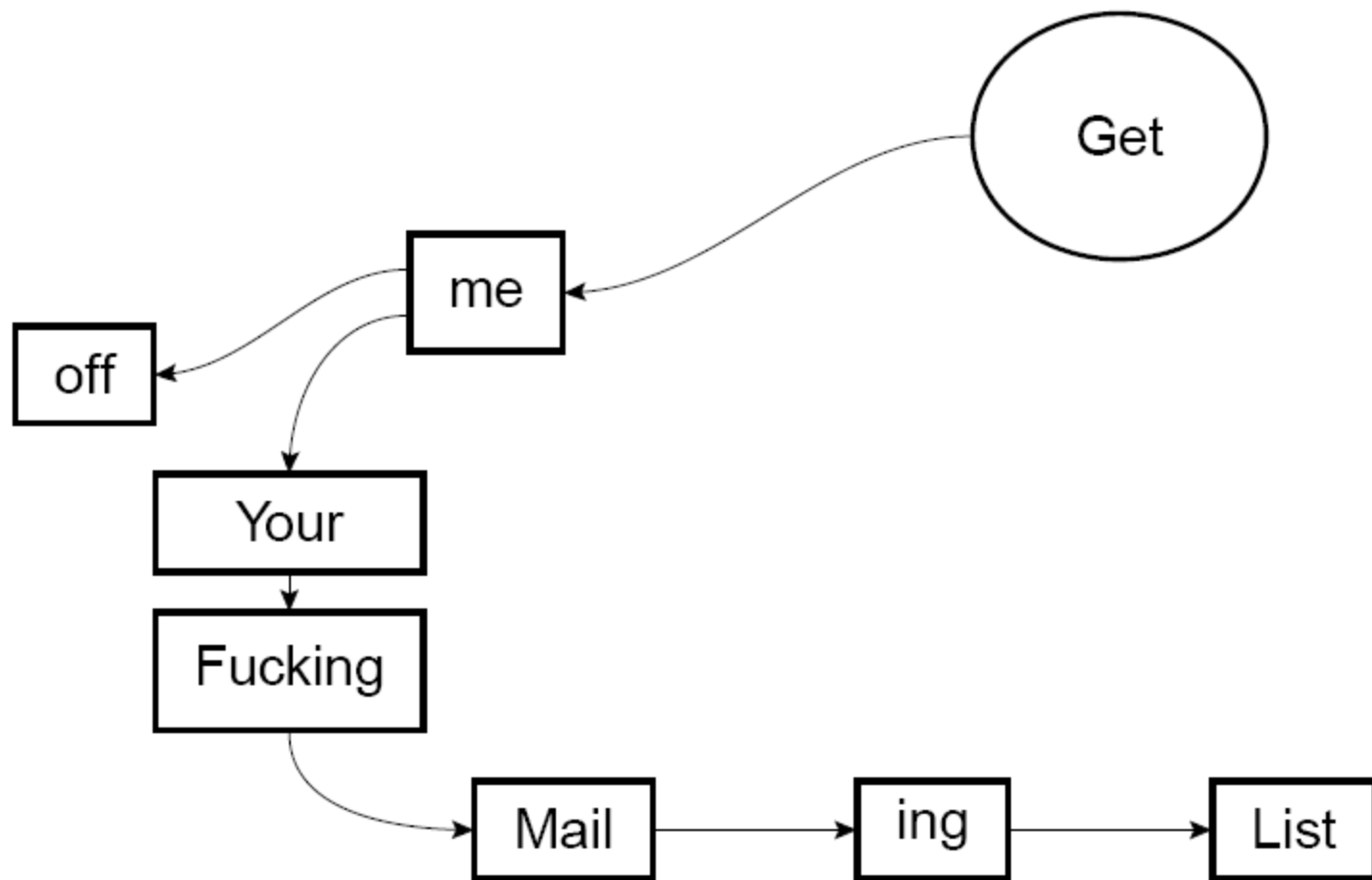


Figure 1: Get me off your fucking mailing list.



Peer Review Practices of Psychological Journals: The Fate of Published Articles, Submitted Again

Douglas P. Peters and Stephen J. Ceci

A growing interest in and concern about the adequacy and fairness of modern peer review practices in publication and funding are apparent across a wide range of scientific disciplines. Although questions about reliability, accountability, reviewer bias, and competence have been raised, there has been very little direct research on these variables.

The present investigation was an attempt to study the peer review process

Confirmational Response Bias Among Social Work Journals

William M. Epstein

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Method

The present study directly measures response bias among social work journals. A positive stimulus and its negative mirror image, both modeled after a well-cited scientific paper published in 1969, were submitted to randomly assigned groups of social work journals and two comparison groups of journals drawn from associated disciplines.

TABLE 1. Samples

	<i>Stimulus</i>	
	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
Social Work:		
Relevant	37	37
Not relevant	17	17
Allied Disciplines	20	18
Total	74	72

Table 3. Publication Decisions Among “Relevant” Social Work Journals

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Positive version</i>		<i>Negative version</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Accept for publication	6	35.3	4	25.0
As is or minor revisions	5		2	
Moderate or extensive	1		2	
Possible acceptance	2	11.8	0	0.0
Reject for publication	9	52.9	12	75.0
Not Relevant	4		2	
Substantive reasons	3		6	
Both	1		2	
No reasons provided	1		2	
Total Reviewed	17	100.0	16	100.0

Reaction from the scientific community

Framing the story

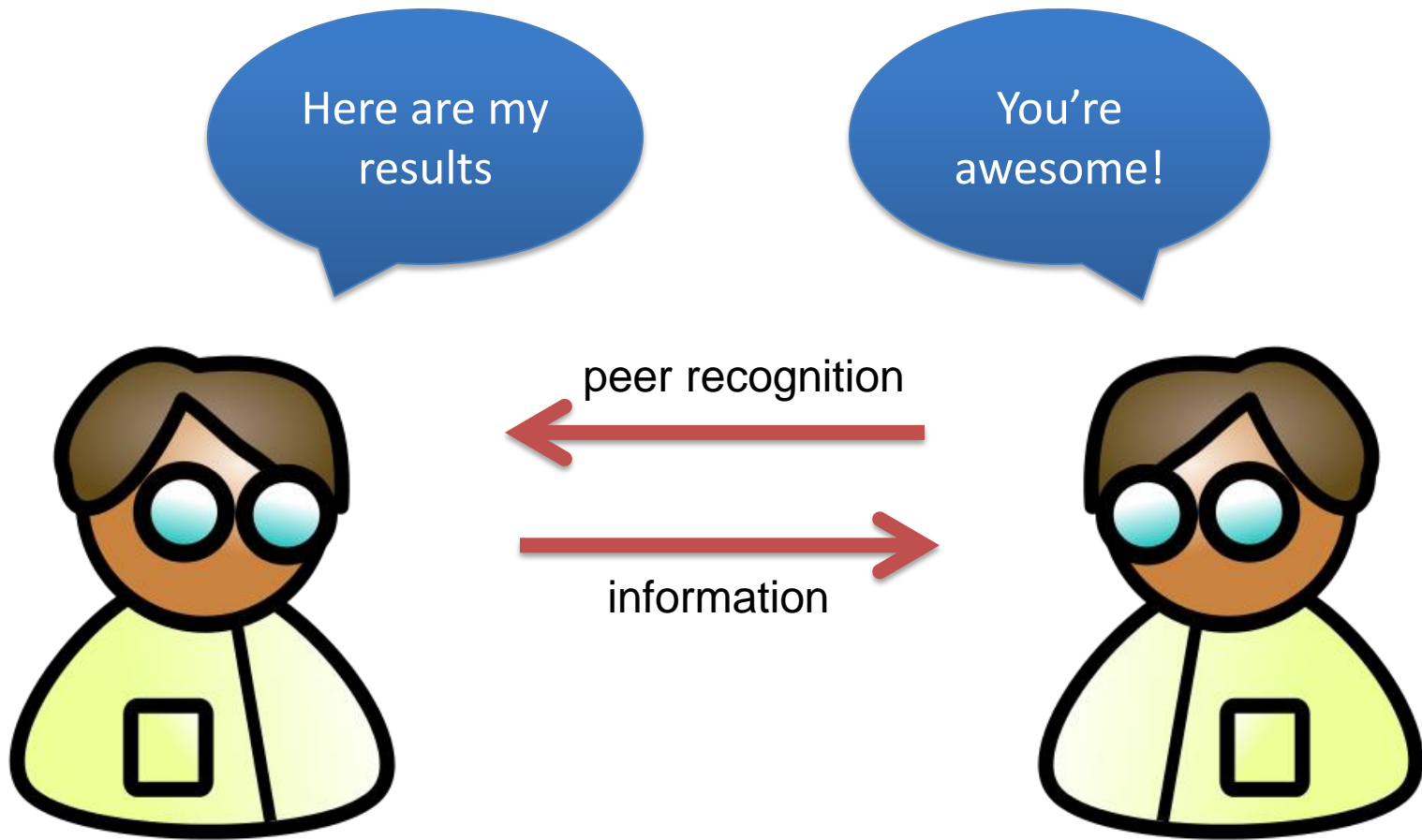
- Hoax or prank?
- Experiment or test?
- Parody or satire?
- Deception or fraud?

Uncertainty strengthens known brands

“Stick with the established publishers such as *Science*, *Nature*, and *Cell*, even though their costs are high.”

Blinded by scientific gobbledegook: How fake research journals are scamming the science community. Tom Spears, *Ottawa Citizen*, 21 April, 2014. <http://www.ottawacitizen.com/technology/story.html?id=9757736>

“The organization of science consists of an exchange of social recognition for information.”¹



¹ Warren Hagstrom, 1965. *The scientific community*. NY: Basic Books, p.13.

Publication builds status

“A scientist adds his list of publications to his curriculum vitae rather as a headhunter dangles scalps round his waist.”

—A.J. Meadows, 1974.
Communication in science (p.54-5).
London: Butterworths.



Reputation is slow to build, quick to destroy

[D]espite the sense of moral outrage stirred by cases of scientific fraud, there are few tools to punish its authors besides firing them, denying them access to future funding, or, in certain cases, asking them to pay back the funds they have misused. Most of these actions are, in effect **forms of exile or ostracism from the scientific community, but carry few or no tangible legal consequences.**”

—Mario Biagioli. 2003. *Scientific Authorship: Credit and Intellectual Property in Science*. Routledge. p.260.

Recommendations to Publishers

- Work within the reputation economy
- Work with communities where reputation matters (societies, associations) and the institutions that have authority over authors (universities, funders)
- Work with journalists
- Work against perverse incentives (cash bonuses for publication, paying editors per accepted manuscript, British RAE/REF funding system)