

Impact Round-Up 25th January: Anonymity, metadata, and tacit knowledge vs reproducible results.

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Managing Editor **Sierra Williams** presents a round-up of popular stories from around the web on higher education, academic impact, and trends in scholarly communication.

1. The role of anonymity in the blogosphere and in science took centre stage this week when a senior editor of a scholarly journal “outed” the identity of an anonymous blogger. Michael Eisen provided background on the issue and on the wider power dynamics shaping university interactions in his post [On anonymity in science and on Twitter](#). The editors of the anonymous, multi-author blog [Tenure, She Wrote](#) wrote [An open letter to Nature editor Philip Campbell](#) about the incident:

As the members of a collaborative, pseudonymous blog about women in academia, we were appalled and alarmed by such behavior from an editor at an important scientific journal (and one with which some of us have professional relationships). There are many reasons why a scientific or academic blogger might want to write under a pseudonym instead of their name; it is no coincidence that a majority of such writers are women and others from groups that are disproportionately underrepresented in science and the Academy. [\[read more\]](#)

For more on the history of faculty and students standing up to those in power and how “the penalty for raising hell is not the same for everyone”, Tressie McMillan Cottom’s piece [Academic Cowards and Why I Don’t Write Anonymously](#) is certainly worth a read as is Janet Stemwedel’s reflection in [Adventures on Ethics and Science on Civility, respect, and the project of sharing a world](#), which concludes with the following:

And this leaves us with the challenge: how to interact with each other in ways that are welcoming enough that people don’t give up before they start, yet honest enough that people can share their thoughts and experiences, where we can all work hard to get smarter together without puking from the adrenaline overdose we’d get from being at constant war with each other. [\[read more\]](#)

2. [Going Meta on Metadata](#) by Michael J. Kramer. Part of a series of papers on [Digital Historiography & the Archives](#) delivered at the 2014 AHA conference.

If primary sources exist as one kind of archive requiring more careful attention to methods of access and analysis, secondary sources are also an archive of sorts, brought together through interpretive practices, characterizations, and interventions in the field of history itself. What a digital archive might do is provide a space for bringing these two kinds of archives into play with each other...

A new kind of useful fluidity might emerge among linked open-source archives and scholarship using the materials in those archives. The digital archive, with an expanded notion of what it does, has the opportunity for enriching history by more dynamically linking primary sources and their subsequent interpretations, and in doing so, of raising the question of what a source is exactly, and how we appraise, to use Josh’s term, the relationship of evidence to argument, sources to interpretations and

ongoing conversations. [\[read more\]](#)

3. [That Time We All Talked About Peer Review Together](#) by Lucianne Walkowicz on starting the #SixWordPeerReview Twitter hashtag and how the outpouring of satire and sarcasm suggests it is time to re-think peer review.

4. [The changing face of psychology](#) by Chris Chambers provides five key disciplinary developments to watch out for in 2014: Replication, Open Access, Open Science, Bigger Data, Pre-Registration.

5. [New Truths That Only One Can See](#) by George Johnson in the New York Times Science section:

It has been jarring to learn in recent years that a reproducible result may actually be the rarest of birds. ..The fear that much published research is tainted has led to proposals to make replication easier by providing more detailed documentation, including videos of difficult procedures. A call for the establishment of independent agencies to replicate experiments has led to a backlash, a fear that perfectly good results will be thrown out.

Scientists talk about “tacit knowledge,” the years of mastery it can take to perform a technique. The image they convey is of an experiment as unique as a Rembrandt...But that can work both ways. Embedded in the tacit knowledge may be barely perceptible tweaks and jostles — ways of unknowingly smuggling one’s expectations into the results, like a message coaxed from a Ouija board. [\[read more\]](#)

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