Impact Round-Up 11th January: Social science fiction, systematic reviews, and #MLA14

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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 Modern Languages Association conference is in full swing this weekend. The #MLA14 Twitter hashtag has been very active and is definitely worth tuning in to. Also worth a browse, the precarious faculty—a new majority blog has compiled a schedule of all sessions that will be covering adjunct staff related issues. Some interesting sessions include Making Digital Counterpublics on Saturday 11 January 10:15 – 11:15 Central Time (#s544) and the Vulnerability and Survivalism of the Humanities in Corporatized Academia session (#s418).

2. Enhance! Ugly Websites, Flip Phones, and the Trouble With Technology in Storytelling. by David Banks & Sarah Wanenchak at Cyborgology.

> *As a genre, science fiction and fantasy are prime avenues for sociotechnical critique…In addition to being prime avenues for such critique, many writers explicitly employ the narrative tropes and tools of the genre specifically and consciously to engage in that criticism; "sociological" science fiction is not the end-all-be-all of SF&F, but it's a major player and it has a very long history. From Heinlein and Asimov to LeGuin and Delaney to Gibson and Atwood, even the most sciency stuff has usually had some form of social component. These aren't just narrative tools; they're thinking tools, established ways of working through the implications of something, of setting up thought experiments.*

Image credit: Kristina Alexanderson (CC-BY-NC-SA)

3. Blogs, twitter, and finding new research by Brayden King at orgtheory.net

> *ASQ's editor, Jerry Davis, said in a recent email to the editorial board that they recognize that "younger scholars connect with the literature in ways that rarely involve visits to the library or print subscriptions." To maintain relevance in today's academic "attention economy" (for lack of a better term), journals have to be active on multiple platforms. ASQ gets it; Sociological Science's (hyper)active tweeter (@SociologicalSci) gets it too. In the end, everyone hopes the best research will float to the top and get the attention it deserves, but if the best research is hard to find or is being out-hyped by other journals, it may never get noticed.*

4. Off with the old and on with the new: the pressures against cumulative research by Dorothy Bishop Professor of Developmental Neuropsychology, University of Oxford at BishopBlog

> *We need good syntheses of past research, yet these are not valued because they are not deemed novel…We need a rethink of our attitude to reviews. Medicine has led the way and specified rigorous criteria for systematic reviews, so that authors can't just cherrypick specific studies of interest. But it has also shown us that such reviews are an invaluable part of the research process. They help ensure that we do not waste resources by addressing questions that have already been answered, and they encourage us to think of research as a cumulative, developing process, rather than a series of disconnected, dramatic events.*

5. Turn your data into a story by Teresa Tocewicz at Jisc

> *We have more data than ever available from many internal and external sources which can be overwhelming and difficult to digest. Charts and graphs are, in most cases, the best way to display this information turning complex pages of words and numbers into striking visual stories.Wisely-chosen charts which follow good design principles can help with understanding your data and empower management teams to base their decisions on evidence rather than common wisdom. The science of data visualisation is relatively new and the skills required have to be learned and practised.*