

Impact Round-Up 19th July: Crafting Op-Eds, fixing peer review, and ethical frameworks for social media research.

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2014/07/19/impact-round-up-19th-july/

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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.

Now that summer is in full swing, this may be the perfect time to set aside that research article and consider some alternative forms of publication. **Tressie McMillan Cottom** recommends the Op-Ed as an “excellent way to bring your work and perspective to a broader audience”. [From Scholarly Research to Crafting an Op-Ed: A How To for Academics](#) at [Just Publics @365](#) offers a range of helpful tips for those unfamiliar with a more generalist style :

Consider every title, position, and publication you hold and highlight the ones that best represent you and the relevance for the topic. Each of these signal to editors and a general audience that you are expert. This is analogous to using citations efficiently in an academic article. The primary difference is that general audiences generally do not want a literature review or bibliography. Instead, they need to trust that you know the literature. To establish that; speak to who you are rather than what you know. [\[read more\]](#)

But returning to those pesky journal articles, **Rebecca Schuman** has a piece over at Slate on the inadequacies and frustrations with the outdated peer review process. [Revise and Resubmit! Peer review is slow. It's unhelpful. It's generally awful. Here's how to fix it:](#)

...what if in order to be eligible to submit an academic article to a journal, a scholar had first to volunteer to review someone else's article for that same journal? What if that review had only two requirements: It has to be [timely](#) (in academesese, by the way, this means three months). And that review has to be constructive. You want to publish and not perish? First you have to earn that right by making a punctual, non-petty investment into the publishing enterprise. Journals get better, more motivated reviewers; authors are more invested in actually reading and contributing the journals. Everybody wins. [\[read more\]](#)

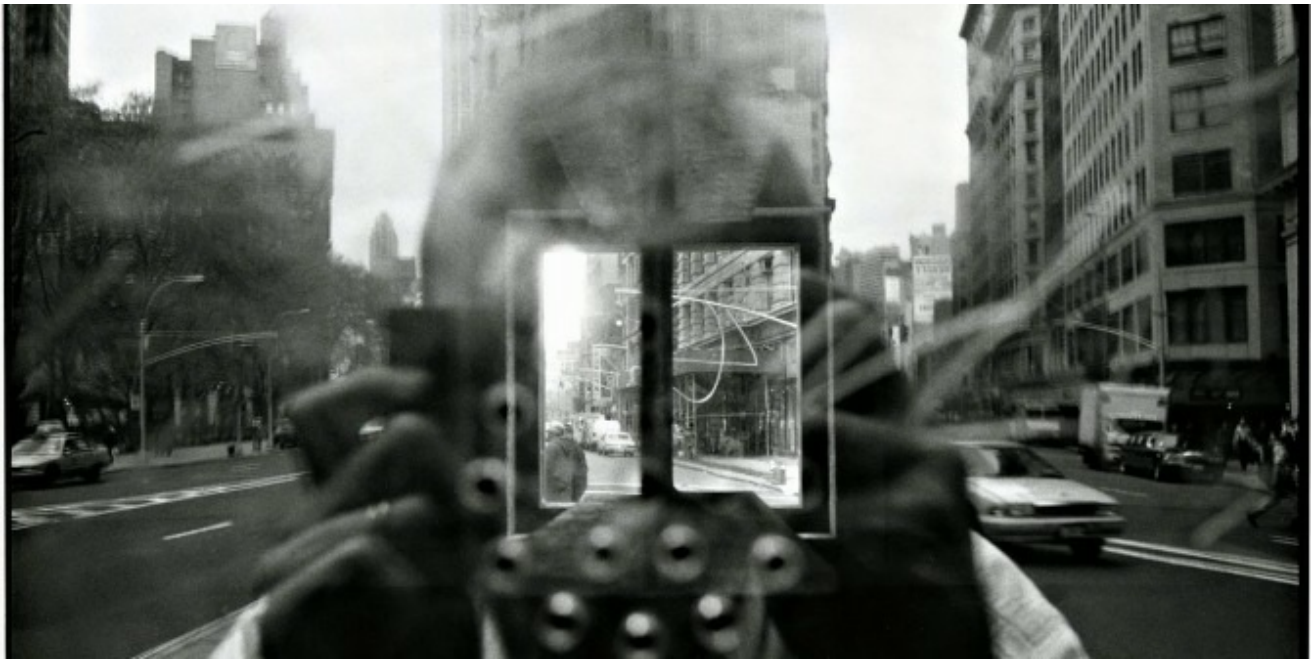


Image credit: Self-portrait with Alfred Stieglitz and John Hejduk by [Ben Ledbetter](#) (Flickr, [CC BY 2.0](#))

We've been running a summer interview series on the Impact blog on the [Philosophy of Data Science](#), which reflects on the social and methodological underpinnings of how we can understand Big Data. The interviews with leading academics in the field have explored the importance of [interdisciplinary collaboration](#), how [liquid metaphors](#) (like "drowning in data") seek to familiarising technology, and why [the semantic web](#) can inform our understanding of social theory. Here are two articles from the week that similarly reflect on the aims of our popular series in relation to the Facebook Emotions experiment and data commercialisation.

1. [When Science, Customer Service, and Human Subjects Research Collide. Now What?](#) by **Mary Gray** at [Ethnography Matters](#)

We have only just started (like, last week) to think through what might be comparable practices for data scientists or technology designers, who often never directly talk with the people they study. That means that clear, ethical frameworks will be even more vital as we build new toolkits to study social media as sites of human interaction and social life...Considering that more and more of social media research links universities and industry-based labs, we must coordinate our methodologies and ethics no matter who pays us to do our research. None of us should be relieved from duty when it comes to making sure all facets of our collaborations are conducted with an explicit, ethical plan of action. There are, arguably, no secondary data sets in this new world. [\[read more\]](#)

2. [With Big Data Comes Big Responsibility](#) by **Om Malik**, the founder of Gigaom:

I am actually delighted about the possibilities of what can happen with all that data and sensors. I can't wait for future of better medicine to arrive. I also can't wait for Google Cars to become common place. What I don't care about is that all these changes are happening with nary a thought about its impact on our society...It is important for us to talk about the societal impact of what Google is doing or what Facebook can do with all the data. [\[read more\]](#)

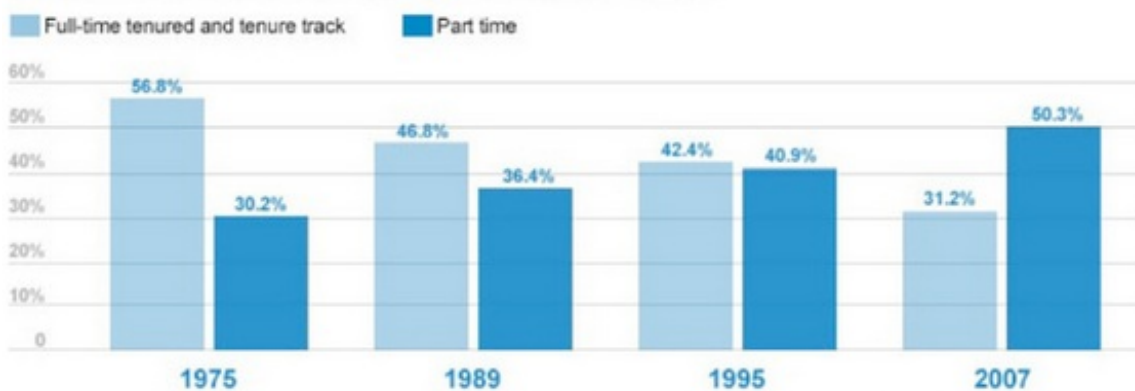
Are people clicking more and reading less in this age of digital sharing? **John Borthwick** digs into the data in [You gotta read this! Thoughts about reading and internet media use](#), much of which suggests long-form reading may actually be on the up:

We ran our analysis over the past year. And looked at millions of Instapaper reads—“a read” is defined as when people completed more than 75% of the article. We then focussed on the domains that people were spending time on, ie: reading vs. skimming. We then correlated the data to changes in daily active users, to make sure that changes in reading wasn’t actually a change in the use of Instapaper (due to a new feature or product release). What we saw is interesting. Reads are increasing over time for all domains and for some domains they are increasing a lot. [\[read more\]](#)

Our final recommended read for the week is from **Martin Smith** at [the Atlantic](#) which reflects on the innovations and restructuring taking place across Higher Education. In the music industry, the top 1% of artists make 77% of revenue. With academic positions facing similar stratification, [Are Universities Going the Way of Record Labels?](#)

Tenure-Track Faculty Members Yield to Part-Timers

Shown are national totals for all degree-granting institutions for selected years.



Source: U.S. Dept. of Education, IPEDS Fall Staff Survey, Compiled by the American Association of University Professors. Graphic by Ron Coddington

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