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To Blog or Not to Blog-Blogs and Research

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the DA-RT leaders are doing new things individually, so in some ways DA-RT has evolved through the actions of different people. I'm now an official part of COS, serving as its chair and **Colin Elman** and **Diana Kapiuszewski** of Georgetown run this amazing summer institution on qualitative research. The things we learned from DA-RT are infused in all of this.

I'm not sure how many more DA-RT-inspired initiatives we're going to see, but DA-RT has changed the conversation in political science. Now it's on everybody's lips and I think that's all you can ask for. And other organizations like **COS** and the Association for Psychological Science are working along the same lines by encouraging preregistration, where researchers register the design of their studies before conducting them in an online repository — another great effort that promotes openness and transparency.

My view with transparency is it's never going to be one-size-fits-all. You're always going to have this trade-off between how much extra work it is and what's the value to your stakeholders. My goal is to make it easier for them and the work I'm doing with a number of organizations tries to create the infrastructure to help people who want to be more transparent.

EM: In your opinion, what role do librarians play in these issues?

AL: I think that most researchers don't understand the critical role that librarians play in distributing research, making it accessible and so forth. I think far too many researchers think of librarians as an afterthought in this process instead of an essential part. Librarians are on the front line of important conversations about the value of different types of information. Every day, they are faced with shifting pressures about the types of information for which various constituencies want to pay — which affects libraries' abilities to collect, archive and distribute information. A lot of the pressures that the scientific field is facing as a whole in terms of people thinking, "I can get this information on my phone so I don't need to pay you for it," or, "An interest group is telling me what's real so I don't need science," librarians feel in a way that most researchers don't.

Part of the importance of transparency is building a more general narrative about the value of research and scientific information, which librarians can and do play a significant role in. Together, we need to share that the information we provide is reliable and valid because of the scientific method's properties — a critical task in a competitive marketplace for information and as people navigate between real facts and fake news.

Librarians are at the front lines of these conversations. Researchers can support them by sharing with them our efforts to increase sharing and openness and its effects on the reliability of the research that follows.

EM: Any advice on how librarians can get that message out and ultimately engage more in these efforts?

AL: I'm not sophisticated in the frontiers of library science, nor am I sophisticated in the current best practices in archiving but to me, it seems there's no fine line anymore between data archivists and librarians. Archiving's a huge thing right now and goes beyond quantitative data to include the qualitative documentation of what evidence is. Again, folks who think that transparency is some sort of "quantitative takeover," need to know it's so not that! Librarians can help our cause by learning how to accurately and effectively convey what a data set is and what it isn't — what a piece of evidence is and what it isn't — and the value of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Ultimately, there are many opportunities for people to better curate, more effectively distribute, and more accurately describe the kinds of research products that we're putting out. If we're not fundamentally committed to doing so, then people really should just go to Google for everything. But if researchers, librarians, universities, and publishers find opportunities to communicate that our commitment to transparency means that we provide information that has a set of qualities that can be relied on — then the result can improve knowledge and quality of life for people all over the world. That's the basis of our service to the world and why a commitment to transparency is so important. 🍌

To Blog or Not To Blog — Blogs & Research

by **Pat Sabosik** (General Manager, ACI Scholarly Blog Index; Phone: 203-816-8256) <psabosik@aci.info>

Researchers have made a place for scholarly blogs and commentary in the wheel of research. Frequently, blogs are a convenient form for commentary on published research, new developments, and trends in the academic realm. They can be seen as a continuation of a research project after an article has been published and in other cases, the blog itself is original research with the author choosing this form of publication over a journal. Here are a few examples of the role scholarly blogs play in the wheel of research.

Kevin Outterson is the **N. Neal Pike Scholar** in Health and Disability Law at **Boston University** and the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*. He is also a blogger and contributes frequently to the blog *Bill of Health* which explores the intersection of law, healthcare, biotech and bioethics. Prior to writing for the *Bill of Health* blog, he was an active contributor to the blog, *The Incidental Economist*, which covered the U.S. healthcare system and its organization. **Professor Outterson's** frequent journal articles address the same issues in more depth and his academic work in the classroom, as a journal editor, scholar, and blogger can be seen as a continuum of scholarly activity.

Linguist **Claire Bovern**, Associate Professor of Linguistics at **Yale University**, studies and teaches about Australian indigenous languages building on her original research on the historical morphology of complex verb constructions in non-Pama-Nyungan languages. In her blog, *Anggarrgoon, Australian Languages on the Web*, she updates her field work and discusses her scholarly activity, updates on her research, and her role as the editor of a book series on historical linguistics to be published by **Routledge**. **Professor Bovern's** blog is an active extension of her specific field of research.

The world of statistics is an interesting place where data underlies concepts as simple as currency conversion or as complex as genomics. *Simply Statistics* is a blog written by **Rafael Irizarry**, **Roger Peng**, and **Jeff Leek**, three biostatistics professors and data scientists. They make the world of statistics interesting and understandable to a broad audience. **Roger Peng**, one of the contributors, is Professor of Biostatistics at **Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health**. His research focuses on the health effects of air pollution and climate change and he covers some of these topics through

the lens of data science in his blog posts as well in his more formal academic writing. **Peng** is also a co-director of a data science program offered online through Coursera and he produces a data science podcast. The blog *Simply Statistics* is an extension of **Professor Peng's** academic activity.

These three examples show how scholarly blogs are used in the academic endeavors of researchers. They become extensions of their research, continuing commentary on topics, such as climate change, health care developments, and linguistics beyond individual journal articles. These authors' blog posts are accessible to a wider audience and cover a broader range of issues than their journal articles which focus on narrow slices of research. Their scholarly blogs play a communications role in their individual wheels of research. 🍌

Column Editor's Note: Blogs mentioned in this article can be found in the **ACI Scholarly Blog Index**. — **PS**

