

Re: OT: interesting global warming quote found elsewhere

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.electronics.design/2008-08/msg01821.html>

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- *From:* [bill.sloman@xxxxxxxx](mailto:bill.sloman@xxxxxxxx)
  - *Date:* Sat, 9 Aug 2008 20:32:29 -0700 (PDT)
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On Aug 9, 3:33 pm, James Arthur <[bogusabd...@xxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:bogusabd...@xxxxxxxxxxxxx)> wrote:

Kris Krieger wrote:

James Arthur <[bogusabd...@xxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:bogusabd...@xxxxxxxxxxxxx)> wrote in  
[8x0nk.402\\$ZV1.380@trnddc07](mailto:8x0nk.402$ZV1.380@trnddc07): ">news:8x0nk.402\$ZV1.380@trnddc07:

[bill.slo...@xxxxxxxx](mailto:bill.slo...@xxxxxxxx) wrote:

On Aug 7, 3:53 am, Joerg  
<[notthisjoerg...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:notthisjoerg...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>  
wrote:

James Arthur wrote:

[bill.slo...@xxxxxxxx](mailto:bill.slo...@xxxxxxxx)  
wrote:

[...]

I haven't  
noticed  
Steve  
McIntyre,  
or

anybody  
else  
with  
concerns  
about  
the  
quality  
of

Re: OT: interesting global warming quote found elsewhere

refereeing  
in  
scientific  
journals,  
ever  
coming  
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Re: OT: interesting global warming quote found elsewhere

invested  
in  
work  
that  
will  
get  
them  
publications,  
grant  
money  
and  
promotion.

"... that will get them  
publications, grant money  
and promotion".

That is a nearly perfect  
description for a  
publish-or-parish gravy  
train mentality. And that's  
part of this whole problem.  
or in plain  
English: Selfishness.

We happen to live in a selfish society.  
Publishers like Elsevier who charge big  
bucks for the academic  
journals they publish, while paying nothing  
to the referees who do  
the quality control that makes the journals  
worth those big bucks,  
presumably also rate as selfish.

That's the  
most  
damning  
description  
of  
peer-review  
I've heard.  
If the  
reviewers  
aren't  
interested  
and don't  
have the  
time, maybe  
they  
shouldn't do

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it.

Exactamente.

Nevertheless, enough people do it, and do it well enough, that we do seem to have a growing body of useful scientific knowledge.

If you don't like the system, you are welcome to devise a scheme that might work better, and spend the time, effort and money required to get it working in competition with the existing structure.

No Bill, what you describe is a corruption, a sham, not peer-review.

Peer review is no guarantee of quality or accuracy—as it's intended to be and as you've touted it—if the reviewers aren't actually examining the data, methods, and checking calculations for errors.

By your description peer review is worthless; a Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval would be better; at least those products are checked for quality before being endorsed.

Cheers,  
James Arthur

I know someone who's published a number of scientific papers, and it's my understanding that the people who review papers on a given topic are knowledgeable enough so that they don't \*have\* to redo everything – they can spot methodological problems, wrroneous calculations, disjuncts of logic, and other erros without literally sitting down and redoing it all.

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Part of being an expert is having a certain dataset pretty much committed to memory.

That's not the case here. The reviewers didn't have the data and authors weren't giving it out. T'was secret. That's my gripe.

Nor were the methods disclosed. So there's no way reviewers could have actually checked the articles they supposedly checked.

And, it turns out, there *were* a whole bunch of mistakes, which wasn't discovered until 8 years later when some non-climatologists managed to get, then add up the numbers. And they didn't add up.

There weren't a "whole bunch of mistakes". There were quite a few things that McIntyre didn't like, but by no means all of them qualify as mistakes. There was one serious error in the way that Mann weighed his data which based the weighing only on the variability within a particular time period, as opposed to the entire period covered by that data – I myself don't know why this was wrong, but the statisticians don't like it at all.

McIntyre claimed that this meant that random data treated in this way would give you a hockey stick, which may be true, but in half the cases the steep bit would be at the start of the period, and in half the cases the steep bit would point down rather than up, which he fails to mention. As far as I can tell, the hockey stick persists in data that has been analysed in ways that statisticians do approve of, so McIntyre got himself excited over a fairly trivial point.

Eeyore doesn't seem to understand this, and carries on as if McIntyre had derailed the whole anthropogenic global warming apple cart. The deniers who show up on web-sites that have had covert funding from Exxon-Mobil should understand this, but aren't going to let that stop hem blowing up a minor controversy in the hope of discrediting the whole scientific case, in the style made popular by the pro-smoking lobby some twenty years ago.

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Bill Sloman, Nijmegen

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