

# Re: JSH: Your funeral

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- *From:* marcus\_b <[marcus\\_bruckner@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:marcus_bruckner@xxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Mon, 17 Sep 2007 11:30:29 -0700
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On Sep 17, 12:45 am, JSH <[jst...@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:jst...@xxxxxxxxxx)> wrote:

On Sep 16, 8:22 pm, Jim Burns <[burns...@xxxxxxx](mailto:burns...@xxxxxxx)> wrote:

JSH wrote:

On Sep 16, 8:03 am, Jim Burns <[burns...@xxxxxxx](mailto:burns...@xxxxxxx)> wrote:

I fear that James has discovered The Secret:  
that his attempts  
at a factoring algorithm (or a short proof of  
FLT, and so  
on) have failed BECAUSE sci.math didn't  
accept it.

I'm only partly kidding here. Judging by the  
small percentage  
of his posts that I've read over the years,  
James seems to be  
infected by a particularly virulent form of  
social  
constructivism, wherein truths are true only  
BECAUSE of the  
social consensus that claims they are true.

No that is the rule that modern mathematicians use.

See: [http://www.maa.org/devlin/devlin\\_06\\_03.html](http://www.maa.org/devlin/devlin_06_03.html)

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That links to an article from a leading mathematicians that a mathematical argument is a proof when professional mathematicians say it is.

I think you might be referring to this (from Keith Devlin's article "When is a proof?"):

: What is a proof? The question has two answers. The right wing  
: ("right-or-wrong", "rule-of-law") definition is that a proof  
: is a logically correct argument that establishes the truth  
: of a given statement. The left wing answer (fuzzy, democratic,  
: and human centered) is that a proof is an argument that  
: convinces a typical mathematician of the truth of a given  
: statement.

[later]

: [...] An argument becomes a proof when the mathematical  
: community agrees it is such. [...]

First of all, I don't like the labels he chose, "right-wing" and "left-wing", as I think they repeat unthinking stereotypes about the political spectrum (not least of which is that there exists such a one-dimensional line that political opinions can be usefully pinned to). However, I do think the processes or objects or whatever that he has so distinguished do deserve labels (even if they are not to my taste).

I don't expect you to agree with me on this, but it seems to me that Devlin filled his monthly column with four pages of very un-remarkable descriptions of the way the field of mathematics works and then gave it just a little controversy, just a little spice, so that his readers wouldn't fall asleep in the middle of it.

If, everywhere in his article that he referred to something being or becoming a left-wing proof, he had instead referred to it being or becoming /accepted as/ a proof, then everything

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in his article would be completely uncontroversial. But where is the fun in that?

A "right-wing proof" is just what is usually referred to as a "proof", and a "left-wing proof" is a document that the mathematical community (as an entity, in some way) has a great deal of confidence in its being a "right-wing proof", that is to say, a proof. Any particular /alleged/ proof can be "right-wing" only (truly valid, but not accepted), "left-wing" only (accepted as valid, but in error), both, or neither.

However, let's assume that you do not accept my re-interpretation of Devlin's article. There is still the question of what this proof-process for a left-wing proof consists of. (In Devlin's terms -- in my terms, how does one create the consensus that one has a valid proof?) Every example that he mentions (and his article is mostly made of examples) is of mathematicians trying to convince others (and themselves, often) that what they have /is a right wing proof/.

Nowhere in his article will you find warnings of Consequences if a proof is ruled invalid. No one seems to bolster their case by trying to get someone else fired. No generals, no security agencies, no mobs, no market crashes, no ends of civilization. Just math. I'm sure you find it very peculiar.

Since you seem to be fond of Devlin's article, maybe you will consider taking the mathematicians he writes about as your models. That's right, James, go the social route! Finally forget about your beloved Truth and leap whole-heartedly into convincing the math world that you have a proof, just as those other mathematicians do.

Just as they do, which is to say, convince the math world by finding some convincing math and telling us all about it ... just as they do.

Perhaps you will say that you've been there and done that.

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Well, one possibility to consider is that what you have is not a right-wing proof, and others who know more math than you can see that, even if you can't. If they can see that it isn't a right-wing proof, then convincing them that it is one (which, remember, is all that the mathematicians in Devlin's article did) is sort of swimming against the tide, isn't it?

Another, more hopeful possibility is that you have never seriously tried to make a mathematical argument that what you have is a right-wing proof. Oh, sure, you've "tried", if "trying" means trying to win a race after tying your own legs together. You've never begun to study even the most basic material that you're supposedly interested in. Is that seriously trying?

Why not — Hey! Just for the fun of it! — sit down and work through some math textbooks? Are you doing anything else with your /next/ ten years?

That is why "pure math" is so dangerous!

Applied mathematics can be tested in the real world to see if it has real value.

I can only assume you mean "is correct" by "has real value" here, since this subthread is about the correctness of various pieces of math, not their value.

The situation with applied math is not as simple as you make it out to be. If something goes wrong with a particular application of math to the real world, it could be the math was incorrect, but it could also be that the math did not model the real world as well as it was hoped to be.

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While so-called pure math is just about people's professional opinion.

See, I just don't get this. Of course, I disagree with you, but, even assuming you're right, what's so dangerous about /pure/ math being people's professional opinion? Let's say it were some other profession, like art criticism. I'd be willing to get behind saying that's a lot of professional opinion. But I don't see what's so dangerous about art criticism, even so. Do you care to clear that up for me?

Jim Burns

I skimmed as you seemed to be just dodging the irony of that link as it described what you accused me of, as actually being the position of a leading mainstream mathematician.

Now my problem with math people is the refusal to accept even the most basic proofs or direct demonstrations of value with mathematical ideas they do not want.

Like the amazing arguments I have been in about my prime counting function, where like I'll say there is no other known "prime counting function" that relies on summing a partial difference equation.

That seems rather direct to me! But the babbling or outright lies in response tell the real story of how your community operates.

Proof after proof that I have is denied and simple facts are denied, like with my prime counting function or my new way to factor I call surrogate factoring.

Or with new techniques I introduce like non-polynomial factorization or tautological spaces so that people like you can simply say what you feel like, whenever, where I catch you repeatedly and it does not matter like your babbling on about Devlin's column.

Publication didn't even matter! You people just changed the rules on the fly!

Your community learned to lie about math and it likes the way that makes it feel.

And now you like lying. It is addictive like a drug because it is easy.

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The modern mathematical community learned that it was easier to lie about math than keep discovering it.

And proof is useless in convincing you when you prefer the lies that keep you happy.

James Harris

Let's talk about lies.

You have said your "theory" proves that you can factor a target T by factoring at most 16 "surrogates".

I asked you to show how this works with  $T = 9524208139$ . This is an RSA-like number on a small scale.

You reported back that your method required 454 surrogates to come up with the factors of T. This was at least one thing you didn't lie about. Of course, 454 surrogates translates into that many factorization problems and probably 2,000 or more trial divisions.

So actually you do NOT have a theory that 16 surrogates will suffice. Perhaps in fact you cannot even provide an upper bound on the number of surrogates required. But here you keep claiming that you have a theory and a competitively efficient factoring method. You want recognition for it. You keep BEGGING AND WHINING for recognition. But recognition has to be earned, not granted because you beg and whine. The coin of the realm is rigorous proof (ALL of the proofs you have given without exception are bogus) and numerical demonstrations. Here evidently you want recognition even though your theory is clearly wrong and you cannot provide any convincing numerical data either. You want the math world to bow down to your superior powers without any evidence. With in fact a huge amount of evidence to the contrary.

You can factor this particular T in seconds using trial division. If you use Fermat's method, you need less than 200 trials. And Fermat's method is by no means state of the art.

So you keep lying. At the same time, you keep accusing everyone else of lying.

Do you ever think about the definition of 'irony'?

Marcus.

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