

# A case for Goobledygook

Martin Fenner, Gobbledygook

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Today I decided to rename my blog from Publish or Perish 2.0 to Goobledygook. The old name explained the topics of this blog pretty well, so why the change after only 4 months of blogging on Nature Network? And there are already many blogs with the same name.

I simply like the new name. The word Goobledygook was invented by the U.S. congressman Maury Maverick and used in a New York Times article published May 21, 1944. Maury Maverick was fed up with the vague, pompous and repetitive language used in Washington at the time and invented this new word for it. He was fighting against the all too common use of Gobbledygook. The following text is from his New York Times article:

Plain and simple speech appeals to everyone because it indicates clear thought and honest motives. Here is the point: anyone who is thinking clearly and honestly can express his thoughts in words which are understandable, and in very few of them. Let's write for the reader and not for ourselves. Make the writing do what it is intended to.

This text might as well be from a recent editorial about scientific writing. We had a very lively discussion about this topic in the Ask the Nature Editor Forum. I first came across the word Gobbledygook when I wrote about readability tools. The Nature Literacy Trust has created such a tool and called it SMOG or Simplified Measure of Gobbledygook.