

Next Steps in Research Transparency

Next Steps in Research Transparency Where do we go from here?

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BITSS Summer Institute 2015



Outline

Next Steps in Research Transparency

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Activities

Manual of B

Practices
Ethical Research
Study Design and
Power

Publication Bias Registrations P-Hacking Pre-Analysis Plar

Pre-Analysis Plan Replication Project Protocol, Reporting Standards Workflow

Meta-Research Grant Initiative Leamer-Rosenthal Prizes

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ITSS Research

1 BITSS Activities

- Manual of Best Practices
- Meta-Research Grant Initiative
- Leamer-Rosenthal Prizes
- Developing Country Researcher Transparency
- Help Desk
- BITSS Research
- BITSS Education

2 Partner Activities

- Center for Open Science
- Other Orgs
- Badges
- Design-Based Publication
- Transparency & Openness Promotion Guidelines
- 3 You



Manual of Best Practices

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BITSS Activities

Practices
Ethical Research
Study Design and
Power
Publication Bias

Registrations
P-Hacking

Pre-Analysis Plan Replication Project Protocol, Reporting Standards Workflow Data Sharing

Leamer-Rosenthal Prizes Developing Country Researcher Transparency Help Desk

Our goal:

- Detailed hands-on how-to manual for transparent social science research.
- Cover all aspects of a transparent research project, from beginning (study design, hypothesis registration) to end (publication, data sharing).
- Keep the manual updated.
- Encourage participation from the community.

 http://github.com/garretchristensen
- Extend into short textbook.



Ethical Research

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Ethical Research

- Transparency is part of being an ethical researcher.
- Fraud exists (Simonsohn 2013), but mostly we should admit that we're human, subject to bias and motivated reasoning, transparency can help with this (Nosek, Spies, Motyl 2012).
- Since a lot of us run experiments, we should take IRBs seriously as part of transparency (Ch. 11–13 Morton & Williams 2010, Desposato 2014).



Study Design and Power

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Manual of Best Practices Ethical Research

Study Design and Power

Registrations

Pre-Analysis Plan Replication Project Protocol, Reporting Standards Workflow Data Sharing

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- Adequately power trials to help prevent spurious significant results.
- Practical suggestions:
 - Collaborate with other labs to mutually run each others' experiments (Open Science Collaboration 2014).
 - Maximize power subject to budget constraint by adjusting expensive treatment arm (relative) size (Duflo, Glennerster, Kremer 2007).



Publication Bias

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Activities

Manual of Best
Practices

Ethical Research
Study Design and

Study Design and Power Publication Bias

P-Hacking
Pre-Analysis Plan
Replication

Standards
Workflow
Data Sharing
Meta-Research
Frant Initiative
Learner-Rosenthal
Prizes
Developing Country
Researcher
Fransparency

Existence of the problem:

- Effect sizes diminish with sample size (Gerber, Green, Nickerson 2001)
- There is a higher fraction of rejected hypothesis tests in social compared to hard sciences (Fanelli 2010).
- Published null results are disappearing over time, in all disciplines (Fanelli 2011).
- Data on the complete set of experiments run shows strong results are 40pp more likely to be published, and 60pp more likely to be written up. The file drawer problem is large. (Franco, Malhotra, Simonovits 2014)
- If we only write up/publish significant results, and we have no record of all the insignificant results, we have no way to tell if our 'significant' results are real, or if they're the 5% we should expect due to noise.



Registration

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Registrations

Registration as Solution to Publication Bias:

- Publicly stating all research you will do, what hypotheses you will test, prospectively.
- Near universal adoption in medical RCTs. Top journals (ICMJE) won't publish if it's not registered.

http://clinicaltrials.gov

- Even better if registry requires outcomes from after study. Currently limited, but NIH is moving on this.
- Newer to social sciences, but:
 - AEA registry, currently only for RCTs. http://socialscienceregistry.org
 - EGAP registry
 http://egap.org/design-registration
 - 3ie registry, for developing country evaluations. http://ridie.3ieimpact.org
 - Open Science Framework http://osf.io





Meta-Analysis

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BITSS Activities

Manual of B

Ethical Research Study Design and Power

Registrations

P-Hacking
Pre-Analysis Plan
Replication
Project Protocol,
Reporting
Standards

Data Sharing Meta-Research Grant Initiative Leamer-Rosenthal Prizes

Prizes
Developing Country
Researcher
Transparency
Help Desk
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- Synthesize results systematically
- Cochrance Collaboration (medicine), Campbell Collaboration (policy), What Works Clearinghouse
- Funnel plots (Card & Krueger 1995)
- P-curve (Simonsohn et al. 2014)



P-Hacking

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BITSS
Activities
Manual of Best
Practices
Ethical Research
Study Design an
Power
Publication Bias
Registrations
P-Hacking

Project Protocol, Reporting Standards Workflow Data Sharing Meta-Research Grant Initiative Leamer-Rosenthal Prizes

Define the problem:

- Also called fishing, researcher degrees of freedom, or data-mining.
- Definition: flexibility in data analysis allows portrayal of anything as below an arbitrary p-value threshhold; significance loses its meaning.
- Not something only evil people do. It's subconcious, or simply built into statistics (Gelman, Loken 2013).



Pre-Analysis Plan

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Pre-Analysis Plan

Explain the solution:

From 3ie: "A pre-analysis plan is a detailed description of the analysis to be conducted that is written in advance of seeing the data on impacts of the program being evaluated. It may specify hypotheses to be tested, variable construction, equations to be estimated, controls to be used, and other aspects of the analysis. A key function of the pre-analysis plan is to increase transparency in the research. By setting out the details in advance of what will be done and before knowing the results, the plan guards against data mining and specification searching. Researchers are encouraged to develop and upload such a plan with their study registration, but it is not required for registration."



Replication

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Replication

The Problem (JMCB Project)

Project Protocol, Reporting Standards

3 Organizing Workflow

Code & Data Sharing



Project Protocol, Reporting Standards

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Activities

Manual of Best

Practices
Ethical Research
Study Design and
Power
Publication Bias

P-Hacking
Pre-Analysis Plan
Replication
Project Protocol,
Reporting
Standards

Meta-Research Grant Initiative Leamer-Rosenthal Prizes Developing Country Researcher Transparency Help Desk Make sure you report everything another researcher would need to replicate your research.

- Find the appropriate reporting standard for your field and follow it: http://www.equator-network.org/
- Report the nuts and bolts of the project implementation in a detailed protocol:

http://www.spirit-statement.org



Workflow

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Activities

Manual of Best
Practices

Ethical Research
Study Design and
Power
Publication Bias
Registrations
P-Hackling
Pre-Analysis Plan

Workflow

"Reproducibility is just collaboration with people you don't know, including yourself next week"

—Philip Stark, UC Berkeley Statistics

Practical coding and organizational suggestions

- Long (2008) The Workflow of Data Analysis Using Stata
 - Making any changes to a file that has been posted/shared means it gets a new name.
 - Use version commands to ensure others get same results.
- Literate programming (extensive commenting, making the aim of code reading by a human)
- Dynamic Documents (R Markdown): integration of analysis and output.





Data Sharing

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Activities Manual of Best Practices

Practices
Ethical Research
Study Design and
Power
Publication Rias

Registrations P-Hacking Pre-Analysis Plar Replication Project Protocol,

Data Sharing Meta-Research Grant Initiative Leamer-Rosenthal Prizes

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Researcher
ransparency
telp Desk

Post your code and your data in a trusted public repository.

- Find the appropriate repository: http://www.re3data.org/
- Repositories will last longer than your own website.
- Repositories are more easily searchable by other researchers.
- Repositories will store your data in a non-proprietary format that won't become obsolete.



Meta-Research Grant Initiative

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Activities

Manual of Best
Practices

Ethical Research
Study Design and
Power

P-Hacking
Pre-Analysis Plan
Replication
Project Protocol,
Reporting
Standards
Workflow
Data Sharing
Meta-Research
Grant Initiative
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Funding will be primarily directed to methodological research projects that advance understanding and design of new approaches for reproducibility and reliability. (\$15K-\$30K)

- Laura and John Arnold Foundation
- RFP this summer!
- Analysis of various pre-specification practices, including impacts on reported research findings;
- Application of specification curves to existing influential studies in economics;
- Experiments involving the research community to reveal the effects of a researchers' degrees of freedom on study outcomes;
- Cumulative meta-analyses, to track the evolution of a body of evidence over time;

Also, recent small grants from Sloan Foundation for data



Leamer-Rosenthal Prizes

Next Steps in Research Transparency

Christensen

- Activities

 Manual of Best
 Practices

 Ethical Research
 Study Design and
- Study Design and Power Publication Bias Registrations
- P-Hacking
 Pre-Analysis Plan
 Replication
 Project Protocol,
- Project Protocol,
 Project Protocol,
 Reporting
 Standards
 Workflow
 Data Sharing
 Meta-Research
 Grant Initiative

Grant Initiative
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Prizes
Developing Country
Researcher
Transparency
Help Desk
BITSS Research

- Emerging Leaders in Open Social Science Research up to \$15,000 □ ■
- Focusing on young scholars, this prize will reward graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and junior faculty who have (i) authored papers demonstrating exceptionally transparent and reproducible research practices, or (ii) engaged in projects advancing our understanding of research transparency and/or methodological tools to achieve this objective.
- Leaders in Open Social Science Education up to \$10,000
- This prize will reward university instructors at top-tier research institutions who have developed a curriculum on research transparency, or incorporated at least three lectures on the topic into a relevant course.
- Templeton Foundation





Open Research from Developing Countries

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BITSS Activities

Practices

Ethical Research

Study Design and

Publication Bias Registrations P-Hacking

Pre-Analysis Pla Replication

Standards Workflow Data Sharing Meta-Research

Meta-Research Grant Initiative Leamer-Rosentha Prizes

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Transparency
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Potential new initiative

- Incorporate transparency with CEGA, train African researchers
- EASST Scholars
- Hewlett Foundation
- More developing country students here.



Help Desk

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Practices
Ethical Research
Study Design and

Power
Publication Bias
Registrations

P-Hacking Pre-Analysis F

Replication
Project Protocol,
Reporting
Standards

Data Sharing Meta-Research Grant Initiative Leamer-Rosentha Prizes

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BITSS collaborates with Center for Open Science to provide free statistical/reproducibility consulting. Link

- Free one-one-one consulting
- Workshops



BITSS Research

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Manual of Best Practices

Ethical Research Study Design and Power

Registrations

P-Hacking Pre-Analysis Pla

Project Protocol, Reporting Standards

Data Sharing
Meta-Research
Grant Initiative
Leamer-Rosentha

Developing Country Researcher Transparency

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BITSS Education

- Christensen, Dafoe, Miguel: Data Sharing and Citations
- BITSS Annual Meeting (December, open call)
- BITSS-organized session at AEA/ASSA meeting
- APPAM, APSA, OpenCon?



BITSS Education

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- Econ 270D
- Available as Youtube Playlist Imb
- EdX MOOC under contstruction (BITSS/J-PAL)



Partner Activities

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Manual of Best Practices Ethical Resear

Study Design and Power Publication Bias

Registrations
P-Hacking
Pre-Analysis Pla

Replication
Project Protocol,
Reporting
Standards
Workflow
Data Sharing
Meta-Research

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- Center for Open Science
 - OSF suggestions welcome. COS Community
 - Pre-Reg Prize (Get \$1000) Link
 - Badges
 - Design-based Publication (Registered Reports)
 - TOP Guidelines
- Berkeley Institute for Data Science (BIDS)
 - Also at UW, NYU.
- Meta-Research Innovation Center at Stanford (METRICS)
- Teaching Integrity in Empirical Research (TIER)
 - Small teaching grants, October workshop (apply now!)



Badges to Acknowledge Open Practices

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3 Badges Link

- Tech based on http://openbadges.org/
- 9+ journals
 - Open Data
 - Open Materials
 - Preregistered







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Reporting
Standards
Workflow
Data Sharing
Meta-Research
Grant Inhitative
Learner-Rosenthal
Prizos
Developing Country
Researcher
Transparency
Help Dask
BITSS Research
BITSS Education



Design-Based Publication

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Manual of Best Practices Ethical Research Study Design and

Publication Bias Registrations P-Hacking

Pre-Analysis Plan Replication Project Protocol,

Standards
Workflow
Data Sharing
Meta-Research
Grant Initiative
Leamer-Rosenthal

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Prizes
Developing Country
Researcher
Transparency
Help Desk
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AKA Registered Reports, moves peer review before data gathering, results, and analysis.

- Design a project
- 2 Submit
- Reviewed based on importance of question and quality of design
- Get in-principle acceptance
- 5 Follow through, and nulls get published

14 Journals, 4 more with Special Issues Link



Transparency & Openness Promotion Guidelines

Next Steps in Research Transparency

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- BITSS
 Activities
 Manual of Best
 Practices
 Ethical Research
 Study Design and
 Power
 Publication Bias
 Registrations
 P-Hacking
 Pre-Analysis Plan
 Replication
 Project Protocol,
 Reporting
 Standards
 Workflow
 Data Sharing
- November 2014 COS, AAAS, BITSS Meeting
- Guidelines for journals on citation standards, data & code & materials sharing, design, registration of study, pre-analysis plan, replication.
- Forthcoming in *Science* at the end of the month.
- 50+ journals endorsed already.



Your Research

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Activities

Manual of Best Practices

Study Design and Power Publication Bias

Registrations P-Hacking

Pre-Analysis Plan Replication Project Protocol, Reporting Standards Workflow

Grant Initiative
Leamer-Rosenthal
Prizes
Developing Country
Researcher
Transparency

Register your trial.

- Write a PAP.
- Write code (not Excel).
- Literate Programming (i.e. comment the hell out of your code).
- Use version control.
- Write reproducible dynamic documents.
- Share your data.
- Submit reproducible code when you submit your paper?
- Include meta-analysis/replication in your work.



Your Participation

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Activities Manual of Best Practices Ethical Research

Ethical Research
Study Design and
Power
Publication Bias

Registrations
P-Hacking
Pre-Analysis Pla
Replication
Project Protocol.

Reporting
Standards
Workflow
Data Sharing
Meta-Research
Grant Initiative

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ransparency
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- Last year's Summer Institute Participants
 - Brazil: opinion piece in *Revista Política Hoje*. Link
 - Sweden: transparency training Link
 - Berkeley: P-curve the What Works Clearinghouse, Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research, published observational PAP. Link
 - Spain: Barcelona Graduate School of Economics presentatation on PAP
- Organize a conference session?
- Stay in touch (awais@berkeley.edu, garret@berkeley.edu). New: Jenn, Shyan.
- Blog for us!
- Tweet @UCBITSS!