



Dr Adam Kane
Science Centre West
University College Dublin
Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland

Ionad Talmhaíochta agus Eolaíocht an
Chothaithe, UCD,
An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath,
Belfield, Baile Átha Cliath 4, Éire

adam.kane@ucd.ie; Tel: 01 716 2082

Dear editor,

We would like you to consider our manuscript ‘Patching Science – amending the literature through version control’ for publication as a ‘Biological science practice’. Our view is that the culture and process surrounding amendments to scientific literature is detrimental to the advancement of science. Corrections are viewed as a stigma and are difficult to implement once a person summons up the courage to do so.

But this is not just our own view. Here we report on a survey of 132 academics who A) agree with our perspectives and B) would support our suggestion of how amendments would work. We go on to detail this suggestion which is based on the idea of version control for manuscripts. This draws on the concept of semantic versioning from computer science to keep track of changes and allows for a published manuscript to exist as a dynamic document more in keeping with the digital age. One which is housed on a repository such as GitHub.

With sufficient uptake from the community, we believe our approach will improve the literature and remove the stigma surrounding corrections. Our proposal needs no new technology and comes at a time when science in general and biology in particular are moving towards open science frameworks.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Faithfully,

Adam Kane & Bawan Amin

P.S. We note that our manuscript is available as a preprint on bioRxiv here

<https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2022.04.13.487348v1>