1620 Interview Marino van Zelst en Hans van Dijk

•             voorstellen

*Marino and Hans 😊*

•             doel is om macht terug te geven aan wetenschap? Hoe gaat dat?

*(HANS) No, we aim for something a lot bigger 😊 We consider the lack of open science and the dependency on publishers as a symptom of larger problems. [enter slide with 4 points] Specifically, the current scientific system (1) stimulates hypercompetition such that 100 scientists around the world are competing to be the first to come up with an idea, whereas the world would benefit a lot more if those 100 scientists would collaborate to address the world’s biggest problems, (2) obstructs and delays the dissemination of scientific knowledge, not just by paywalls, but also by causing researchers to withhold their ideas until they are published,  (3) is elitist and exclusive such that scientists mainly focus on issues that help them publish in academic journals and that are of interest to academics rather than what would be relevant for practice, and (4) relates to the health epidemic in science, where early career researchers cope 6times as much with depression and anxiety compared to the general population. All these matters are related, so focusing on one specific issue provides a patchwork solution that may yield some improvement, but doesn’t solve the overall, systemic problems. (MARINO) We are therefore working on an entirely novel publication system that stimulates scientists to collaborate with each other as well as with practitioners in addressing and solving the world’s most pressing problems. And this happens in a way that they can immediately spread their ideas and insights in an open and for everyone accessible manner. Specifically, we are collaborating with Liberate Science, which is designing a digital platform where scientists as well as other stakeholders can ask questions and provide answers to those questions by publishing their research on that digital platform. Rather than outsmarting the other, the focus is on collectively trying to address whatever question or problem is presented. They don’t need to write papers anymore, because contributions can come in many forms and shapes: hypotheses, theories, datasets, data analyses, and even individual data points, drawings, videos, audio files – whatever. In reviewing each other’s contributions and responding to contributions, science becomes much more of a debate rather than the series of monologues that it currently is. Our online platform thus stimulates (1) collaboration, (2) provides a way in which scientists instantly disseminate their research, (3) it is not just open but actually inclusive in that any person in the world can access contributions as well as provide contributions, and (4) we think it can also address the health crisis because the focus on solving problems collaboratively by interacting with practitioners will reduce the competitiveness and provide more sense of meaning.*

•             willen wetenschappers het wel? Het oude systeem geeft wetenschappers ook macht en aanzien?

*(MARINO) Haha well we just wrote a paper in which we show that scientists become increasingly dissatisfied with the publication process with longer publication times – so the time between the submission of a paper and after rejection and review rounds it finally being accepted. That may not be surprising, but when we look at the differences between tenured and untenured faculty, we see that untenured staff members indeed become very dissatisfied with longer publication times – because their career may be crushed in case a reviewer or editor is in a bad mood or just doesn’t look at the paper for a long time. In contrast, for tenured staff members, longer publishing times don’t lead to more dissatisfaction. They accept it as a given – for them it doesn’t seem to matter anymore.*

*(HANS) So the title of the paper is Comfortably Numb, and we start with the last sentences of the song from Pink Floyd, which basically say that when I was young I used to dream, but now I’ve become old and have become comfortably numb. And we think that that’s what’s happening here: in particular tenured staff members – which I’m part of – have become institutionalized and consider what we have as imperfect, but the best we have. But we’ve had the same system of writing papers and submitting them to journals for peer review since 1665 – more than 350 years! So we think it’s ridiculous that science, which basically is about new ideas and innovation, keeps holding on to such a system that’s waaaaaayyyy outdated. But as long as those in power to change the system – the professors, deans, rectors, editors – are comfortable in the old system, they have no incentive to change it.*

•             Cliche: het draait allemaal om geld en macht. Waar?

*[HANS] Yes and no. Sure, a new system is threatening for those who have become successful in the old system, and in particular for those who still benefit from the old system. But there has also been a lack of feasible alternatives. For understanding where to go, you need a clear vision of what a better future may look like, and a roadmap regarding how to get there. That has been missing until now, but we’ve already shared our vision and ideas with quite some researchers, and even very established and currently successful researchers are highly enthusiastic about it. So we’re convinced that once our system is ready, people will start seeing the many benefits compared to the old system.*

•             Wat is volgens jullie belangrijkste stap naar meer open science en open access?

*[MARINO] Well, that’s easy: start publishing in the new system 😊. But regarding the old system: It should simply be the standard in science that everything is open, unless there are pressing reasons why that cannot happen. So funders (that includes universities via first money-stream) should require that publications are always open and cannot be put behind paywalls (Plan S is a start towards this goal, but also limited in its execution). OA negotiators, such as those making the deals on behalf of Dutch universities, should not accept anything less than 100% open. Journals should start to massively adopt open science principles and require the ‘open, unless’ principle.*

•             Oproep aan de zaal?

*[HANS] We’d love to hear what you think about our ideas and are open to any input or suggestions, so please let us know after this session or via email.*

*[MARINO] Open science needs everyone’s involvement. To help you with it, you can join the* Open Science Community Tilburg or join the ReproducibliTea Club here in Tilburg.