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Scientists stick close to their specialties when looking for answers

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A first "map" of science journal use highlights how social sciences such as psychology, anthropology and economics, bridge the natural sciences, say researchers. Looking at about 1 billion "clicks" on science study databases by scientists over the last two years, a team led by Johan Bollen of Los Alamos (N.M.) National Laboratory analyzed how researchers travel to and from studies when they retrieve information. "The promise of the deriving maps of science from usage log data lies in its ability to track scientific behavior as it takes place and track contemporary trends in scientific activity," says the study.

Although published studies usually contain a "reference" section suggesting that researchers cast a broad net in searching out information, the new map suggests that, in reality, they stick very closely to their specialties. "There can exist stark differences between what people claim they do and what they actually do," write the study authors, who hope to expand their analysis to deeper looks at how researchers collect data. "Our map of science derived from clickstream data may thus run counter to accepted wisdom," they conclude.

By Dan Vergano

Posted at 05:00 PM/ET, March 11, 2009 in Science fairs and education | Permalink

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dapoooh (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 21h 33m ago
Oh come on -- where's a link to the map? Or at the very least to the study, which may or may not have a map?

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