

Tim McCormick

publishing, reading, design, place

Experimental versus transparent

*comment posted on “[Crowdsourcing Best Practices for Experimental Journals: Transparency](#)” by **Adeline Koh**, August 31, 2013, regarding controversy with *Journal of Digital Humanities*.*

Addendum: followup discussion on Twitter, and maligned & blocked by Koh.



— Skunk Works (Lockheed Martin Advanced Development Programs), Palmdale, California

excellent ideas & topic, thanks for writing this. I like the **Slashdot/Reddit**

angle.. you may know there've been several interesting Reddit+scholarly projects already, like **r/scholar** for requesting papers, and the **Arxaliv** Reddit front-end to arXiv repository (now defunct I think).

There's an good study, or series of, to be done examining such new moderation structures across popular & academic peer-review systems, especially as new ones keep emerging all the time (like the just-announced **Libre** platform, new features in 3rd-party commenting networks, etc).

But more specifically about the experimental / transparency point, and without intending any judgment about any part of the JDH case, I was thinking about what general patterns may be seen here — or in the projects/orgs I've worked on, which have been all over the map in their processes.

It seems to me, and seems to be observed by others here, that '*experimental*' and '*transparent*' are *really separate axes*, and it's helpful not to assume they will coincide or one lead to the other.

For example, well-established & stable processes can be highly transparent (legislative process in Denmark or Finland, say) or highly opaque (how to get a city contract in Naples?).

Experimental (or relatedly, in engineering, '**agile**') processes can be transparent — open participation, all docs public, etc. — or they might be opaque, or opaque to some points of view — such as an agile team or experimental/skunkworks lab that deliberately operates under less supervision, doesn't work to pre-approved specifications, etc. In the latter type of case, experimentalism may well be opposed to transparency.

There are valid reasons various combinations of experimental or not, transparent or not might be chosen; but better they be chosen deliberately, and that one knows the arrangement.

Perhaps among the best ways to combine experimental & transparent is by *iterative* process. So a journal issue, or a software development cycle, or a year, might be set up with well-understood procedures and goals (as suggested by Scott, et al) but be very revisable for the next iteration. So this is, in a sense, transparent within the cycle, possibly opaque/negotiable across cycles.

Another idea one hears in software/project land is that a mixture of formal and informal guidances is needed, the latter being based more on factors like shared values, social behaviors, joint experience, & shared environment. These latter can't be all spelled out, but evolve organically, and are in a sense non-transparent.

That's a reminder of perhaps the first rule of process: do not talk too much about process.

—

Tim McCormick

@tmccormick tjm.org Palo Alto

Addendum: followup discussion on Twitter, and I'm blocked by Koh.



Adeline Koh

@adelinekoh

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Crowdsourcing Best Practices For Experimental Journals:
Transparency w s/o to @roopikarisam @scott_bot #JDH
adelinekoh.org/blog/2013/08/3...

6:47 AM - 31 Aug 2013

5 RETWEETS 4 FAVORITES



Adeline Koh @adelinekoh

31 Aug

Crowdsourcing Best Practices For Experimental Journals: Transparency w
s/o to @roopikarisam @scott_bot #JDH adelinekoh.org/blog/2013/08/3...



Tim McCormick

@tmccormick

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@adelinekoh @roopikarisam @scott_bot good post on
journal transparency. Added comment Tues
bit.ly/1dIqEpv think it's awaiting mod

8:32 AM - 5 Sep 2013

1 FAVORITE



Tim McCormick @tmccormick

05 Sep

@adelinekoh @roopikarisam @scott_bot good post on journal transparency.
Added comment Tues bit.ly/1dlqEpv think it's awaiting mod



Tim McCormick

@tmccormick

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@adelinekoh curious why my reply bit.ly/15GxLpp to yr
@JournalofDH post not posted, or reply. @roopikarisam
@scott_bot @foundhistory

3:26 PM - 6 Sep 2013





Tim McCormick @tmccormick

06 Sep

@adelinekoh curious why my reply bit.ly/15GxLpp to yr @JournalofDH post not posted, or reply. @roopikarisam @scott_bot @foundhistory



Roopika Risam

@roopikarisam

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@tmccormick @adelinekoh @JournalofDH @scott_bot
@foundhistory experimental & transparent are not mutually inclusive but they should be.

3:29 PM - 6 Sep 2013



Roopika Risam @roopikarisam

06 Sep

@tmccormick @adelinekoh @JournalofDH @scott_bot @foundhistory experimental & transparent are not mutually inclusive but they should be.



Tim McCormick

@tmccormick

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@roopikarisam @adelinekoh @scott_bot I think some experimental patterns aren't transparent: eg stealth proj, skunkworks, agile, culturehacks

3:44 PM - 6 Sep 2013





Tim McCormick @tmccormick

06 Sep

@roopikarisam @adelinekoh @scott_bot I think some experimental patterns aren't transparent: eg stealth proj, skunkworks, agile, culturehacks



Tim McCormick

@tmccormick

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@roopikarisam @scott_bot my reply to your post on JDH never appeared, and @adelinekoh is now blocking me, any idea why? It's rather opaque.

4:08 AM - 10 Sep 2013



Tim McCormick @tmccormick

5h

@roopikarisam @scott_bot my reply to your post on JDH never appeared, and @adelinekoh is now blocking me, any idea why? It's rather opaque.



Scott Weingart

@scott_bot

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@tmccormick @roopikarisam @adelinekoh I imagine you mean her post, not mine? I'm very sorry if I accidentally stuck your comment in spam.

4:36 AM - 10 Sep 2013



Scott Weingart @scott_bot

4h

@tmccormick @roopikarisam @adelinekoh I imagine you mean her post, not mine? I'm very sorry if I accidentally stuck your comment in spam.



Roopika Risam

@roopikarisam

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@scott_bot @tmccormick @adelinekoh I am not sure, Tim. I don't have any access to Adeline's personal site.

5:22 AM - 10 Sep 2013





Roopika Risam @roopikarisam

3h

@scott_bot @tmccormick @adelinekoh I am not sure, Tim. I don't have any access to Adeline's personal site.



Tim McCormick

@tmccormick

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@roopikarisam doesn't approve comment, then doesn't reply to my or your tweets, then blocks me.. just silencing an alternate view, I'd say.

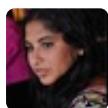
5:33 AM - 10 Sep 2013



Tim McCormick @tmccormick

3h

@roopikarisam doesn't approve comment, then doesn't reply to my or your tweets, then blocks me.. just silencing an alternate view, I'd say.



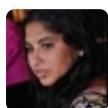
Roopika Risam

@roopikarisam

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@tmccormick Just so you know, I have nothing to do with this. I'm not sure what exactly is happening on her end.

5:34 AM - 10 Sep 2013



Roopika Risam @roopikarisam

3h

@tmccormick Just so you know, I have nothing to do with this. I'm not sure what exactly is happening on her end.



Tim McCormick

@tmccormick

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@roopikarisam phaps partly that I discussed precedent Slashdot/Reddit scholarly proj, like the DHthis proj she's about to announce. +

5:43 AM - 10 Sep 2013





Tim McCormick @tmccormick

3h

@roopikarisam phaps partly that I discussed precedent Slashdot/Reddit scholarly proj, like the DHthis proj she's about to announce. +



Roopika Risam

@roopikarisam

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+@tmccormick Tim, as I mentioned, I have no control over what Adeline does. If this were #dhpoco, it would be my business. But it's not.

5:49 AM - 10 Sep 2013

1 RETWEET



Roopika Risam @roopikarisam

3h

+@tmccormick Tim, as I mentioned, I have no control over what Adeline does. If this were #dhpoco, it would be my business. But it's not.



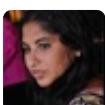
Tim McCormick

@tmccormick

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@roopikarisam yes, I understand.

5:52 AM - 10 Sep 2013



Roopika Risam @roopikarisam

3h

.@tmccormick As someone who is jr. and untenured, unlike A, I'd hope you'd be careful about publicly blaming me for your problems with her.



Adeline Koh

@adelinekoh

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.@tmccormick please stop harassing @roopikarisam. your issue is with me and not her, and i'd prefer to no longer have any contact w you.

5:53 AM - 10 Sep 2013





Adeline Koh @adelinekoh

3h

.@tmccormick please stop harassing @roopikarisam. your issue is with me and not her, and i'd prefer to no longer have any contact w you.



Adeline Koh

@adelinekoh

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.@tmccormick your comment is in. i hadn't checked my blog/moderated comments for a week. semester started, & i'm busy. @roopikarisam

5:57 AM - 10 Sep 2013



Adeline Koh @adelinekoh

3h

.@tmccormick your comment is in. i hadn't checked my blog/moderated comments for a week. semester started, & i'm busy. @roopikarisam



Tim McCormick

@tmccormick

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@adelinekoh ah, right, now you do.. I've seen you plenty active on this topic all week. But, what's with unexplained blocking & accusations?

5:58 AM - 10 Sep 2013



Adeline Koh @adelinekoh

3h

.@tmccormick your comment is in. i hadn't checked my blog/moderated comments for a week. semester started, & i'm busy. @roopikarisam



Adeline Koh

@adelinekoh

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.@tmccormick i would appreciate no more interaction with you. thank you. @roopikarisam

5:57 AM - 10 Sep 2013





Adeline Koh @adelinekoh

3h

@tmccormick i would appreciate no more interaction with you. thank you.
@roopikarisam



Tim McCormick

@tmccormick

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@adelinekoh thanks Adeline, for the example of silencing and marginalizing others without explanation.

5:59 AM - 10 Sep 2013



Tim McCormick @tmccormick

3h

@adelinekoh thanks Adeline, for the example of silencing and marginalizing others without explanation.



Tim McCormick

@tmccormick

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@adelinekoh also, if you make public accusations, you don't necessarily get to end the conversation. It goes beyond you.

6:00 AM - 10 Sep 2013



3 comments

livefyre



tmccormick

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roopikarisam @roopikarisam from Twitter

06 Sep

@tmccormick @adelinekoh @JournalofDH @scott_bot @foundhistory experimental & transparent are not mutually inclusive but they should be.

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06 Sep

@roopikarisam @adelinekoh @scott_bot I think some experimental patterns aren't transparent: eg stealth proj, skunkworks, agile, culturehacks

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roopikarisam @roopikarisam from Twitter

06 Sep

@tmccormick @adelinekoh @JournalofDH @scott_bot @foundhistory I haven't seen your comment, Tim. Thanks for posting it. I agree that +

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