Technology, Research and Ethics

Seminar I

Group 2
Ethics of publishing

Publication as a measure of research quality
Basic premises

- The quality of a researcher’s research can only be judged from the quality of what he publishes.
- The quality of a researcher’s publications can be judged by bibliometrical properties (i.e. quantity, number of citations, journals of publication etc.)
Issues - research issues

- Promotes easy, safe research.
  - replication of similar results
- Promotes splitting results in several papers.
- Hunting for citations.
  - feedback loop.
- Topics become fashionable
  - creating bubbles.
- Difficult to separate signal from noise.
Issues - systemic issues

- Luxury journals, trying to maximize their impact factor, create incentive for spectacular and ill-funded research.

- Open access journals, whose business idea is to publish as much as possible, might be tempted relax their quality control, and start publishing doubtful research.
Ethical implications

● Individual-level implications
  – Cynicism w.r.t the scientific project.

● Scientific community
  – Disconnect with society as a whole. Small clique understands the “rules”.

● Society at large
  – Increasing distrust for science and scientists.