
Subject: Getting Help in On-Line Communities
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 01 Mar 2012 01:15:30 GMT
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Folks,

PLoS Computational Biology has a good article on how to get help from on-line scientific communities. It occurs to me that this might be good advice for our community. :-)

<http://www.ploscompbiol.org/article/info:doi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pcbi.1002202>

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.idlcoyote.com/>
Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

Subject: Re: Getting Help in On-Line Communities
Posted by [Craig Markwardt](#) on Sun, 04 Mar 2012 17:20:34 GMT
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On Wednesday, February 29, 2012 8:15:30 PM UTC-5, David Fanning wrote:

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> to get help from on-line scientific communities. It
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It's a nice article, and it's cute that the article was written collaboratively on a wiki.

<rant>

But how did this get into a computational biology journal? The editor should have flagged this as an off-topic paper to begin with. What next, "How to remove bio-slime from your indoor plumbing?" I strongly believe how-to information doesn't belong in scientific journals.

And beyond that, 99% of what is said in that paper is redundant to Eric S. Raymond's "How to Ask Questions the Smart Way" from a decade ago. Why write a whole 2000 word paper about this subject when the following paper would have sufficed?

> Do this: [1].

>

> [1] Raymond, Eric S. 2001, "How to Ask Questions the Smart Way"

The bio-unique element of the paper, a list of 15 vaguely bioinformatics-related mailing lists, is tucked away in a separate supplemental document without any real commentary or editorial basis. Why did they choose some mailing lists and not others? How about including a map between bio-informatics specialties and mailing lists?

I think the authors' article strongly deserves to be written, but it should have stayed on a wiki or on the web, not in a scientific journal.

</rant>

Subject: Re: Getting Help in On-Line Communities

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Sun, 04 Mar 2012 23:23:19 GMT

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Craig Markwardt writes:

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> </rant>

Oh, Geez, I don't care *which* article people choose to read,
but clearly Raymond's article is not getting as many eyeballs
as we need! ;-)

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

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