SOCIAL SELECTION

Popular articles on social media

The benefits of being a big name

Scientists develop reputations that often work to their advantage. A study suggests that the presence of a well-known scientist on a list of authors can drive citations of the paper, regardless of the merits of the research — especially soon after its publication. The report rapidly started an online discussion. "How scientists too can be famous for being famous," tweeted Ed Rybicki, a virologist at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. Naupaka Zimmerman, a microbial ecologist at the University of Arizona in Tucson, took to Twitter to ask: "Do we cite papers b/c of what they say, or b/c of who wrote them?"
Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. USA 111, **15316–15321 (2014)**

Based on data from altmetric.com. Altmetric is supported by Macmillan Science and Education, which owns Nature Publishing Group.

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were asked to move a robot in front of them using their finger. A second robot behind them mimicked the movements by touching their back. The participants were blindfolded and wore headphones so that they could not see or hear the robots moving.

When the rear robot moved immediately, most participants felt that they were touching themselves on the back with their own finger, even though their arms were stretched forward. But when there was a half-second delay, they felt that the touch was coming from someone, or something, else. The illusions were caused by a mismatch between the expected and actual sensory information, the authors say.
Curr. Biol. **http://doi.org/wzb (2014)**

AGRICULTURE

Pasture plants are also weeds

Land used for pasture is at risk of becoming a breeding ground for weeds that invade natural areas.

Roughly 30% of land worldwide is devoted to growing forage plants for livestock, and as demand for meat rises, farmers are moving towards more-productive and hardier plants. Don Driscoll at the Australian National University in Canberra and his colleagues looked at data on pasture species promoted by 17 agribusinesses and government agriculture agencies on six continents, and found that 91% of the plants were classified as potentially invasive weeds — often in the same country in which they were developed and marketed. Only one of the 17 institutions had a formal process for identifying possible weeds.

The researchers suggest solutions for this problem, including making the organization that promotes the pasture species financially liable for controlling it if it becomes invasive.
Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. USA **http://doi.org/wxq (2014)**
For a video on the research, see go.nature.com/gqxoed

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