

Proposal to Create a Parapsychological Data Bank

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This particular file was created on May 17, 2012, but I believe that was a slight updating from a much earlier version. That earlier version was probably typed directly with a typewriter or created in WordStar, a file format very popular with the first personal computers. The motivation to create some guidelines was motivated by my earlier discovery of a phenomenon I called trans-temporal inhibition, a possible information sharpening process for ESP. My basic idea was that older parapsychological data that had contained some significant data on ESP leading to publication in one of the journals might contain more unrecognized patterns that would stimulate discovery. But an investigator puts in a huge amount of work to do an experiment in the first place, and while not planning to do further analyses with this old data, has a proprietary interest in it.

The following, originally conceived as a proposal to the Parapsychological Association (which did not have the resources to do anything with it back then), was an exploration of ways to save data in a parapsychological data bank and suggest some fair ways of both sharing such data and any publication credit which resulted from others exploring it. With much data being automatically stored on computers nowadays, the proposal is much more practical for some organization to undertake.

One reason for posting this now (March 14, 2017) is that I am referring to this in an article soon to be published (Tart, C., **On the resurrection of Trans-Temporal Inhibition**, *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, Vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 29–48). As this proposal may also be of historical interest, I have not altered anything in the 2012 file, reproduced below.

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Purpose

In order to enhance the free flow of information in parapsychology, the Parapsychological Association (PA) will establish a data bank in which parapsychological data may be deposited by original investigators and withdrawn by new investigators for further analyses. This shall be known as the Parapsychological Data Bank. The provisions for deposits and withdrawals are outlined below. In addition to the general goal of promoting the free flow of scientific information in parapsychology and thus the possibility of new discoveries, the provisions (described below) for feedback of information to the original investigator and sharing of publication credit will act as a further inducement for depositing data, conferring benefits on both the original investigator and the new investigator.

Deposit Procedure

After publication of results on a parapsychological experiment in a refereed PA affiliated journal, or any refereed, scientific journal affiliated with a component section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, an original investigator may deposit a complete copy of the raw data of his experiment, along with a copy of the original (and any subsequent) published articles based on this data, and any necessary instructions to allow a new investigator to adequately work with the deposited data. This data might be in the form of IBM cards of targets and responses, Xeroxes of drawings and free response tests, photographs or slides of target materials, etc. The cost of providing these materials is to be borne by the original investigator.

In recognition of the original investigator's contribution in collecting the data in the first place and his possible interest in doing further analyses on his own data, an original investigator is allowed to set a time limit as to when data may be withdrawn from the Parapsychological Data Bank, i.e., he may stipulate that no one may draw upon this data for X years after the data of receipt.* *[The advantage of allowing the original investigator to impose this time limit for giving out the data is to encourage original investigators to put data in as soon as possible, to eliminate the possibility that they might die before depositing the data or inadvertently lose it, and so make it permanently unavailable. Upon the death of an original investigator who has deposited data, all time limitations on withdrawals shall be terminated.] Additionally, whether or not he sets such a time limit, he may also specify, as part of the material to be provided with withdrawals of the data, that he plans to or is currently working on certain specified analyses of the data and so he has publication priority for X number of years on any discoveries resulting from these specified analyses. Ordinarily a reasonable time limit should be put on doing such analyses, say a 3 year maximum.

Data Bank Officer

Deposits shall be made to a Data Bank Officer, a member or associate member of the PA, appointed by a majority vote of the PA Council. This officer shall be responsible for accepting and acknowledging the data deposits, preparing annual lists for publication in PA affiliated journals of what data is available in the Parapsychological Data Bank, and handling or supervising the work of providing the data to qualified investigators who wish to make withdrawals from the data bank. He shall also communicate any limitations of the sort discussed above on data use.

Withdrawal of Data

After the stipulated time limit (if any) on withdrawal of particular data, any new investigator who agrees to abide by the conditions set out below may receive a complete copy of specified data from the Parapsychological Data Bank. The new investigator shall reimburse the Parapsychological Data Bank, in advance, for the amount of the Data Officer's estimate of the actual cost of reproducing the data, plus a 50% surcharge to build up a fund for miscellaneous expenses that the Parapsychological Data Bank incurs.

When a withdrawal is made from the Parapsychological Data Bank, the Data Bank Officer shall notify the original investigator as to who has made such a withdrawal.

The new investigator, as a condition of withdrawal, agrees to the following conditions.

(a). The new investigator will provide the original investigator with full, understandable copies of all analyses done on the withdrawn data, as soon as possible, regardless of whether the new investigator plans to publish anything based on these analyses. Costs of providing these copies shall be borne by the new investigator.

(b). If the new investigator* *[The terms original investigator and new investigator also apply to teams of original and new investigators.] feels that the discoveries resulting from his analyses warrants submitting a paper for publication, he will ordinarily offer the original investigator a junior authorship on such a paper in recognition of the original investigator's efforts in collecting the data. The original investigator may accept this junior authorship or not, as he wishes. If he accepts a junior authorship, it is presumed that the ordinary type of collegial collaboration will follow, producing a paper for submission that is satisfactory to both the new and old investigators.

(c). If the original investigator disagrees with the interpretation of the new investigator's findings and so does not wish to have a junior authorship on a submission for publication by the new investigator, as much cooperation as possible should nevertheless occur between the new and old investigators. For example, if the old investigator feels that the new investigator's interpretations are based on a misunderstanding of the experimental procedure or the like, because something was not clear enough in the original publication about the experiment or in the material submitted to the Parapsychological Data Bank, he should notify the new investigator of such information. The basic idea here is to facilitate cooperative relationships and to avoid wasting journal space on factual misunderstandings.

(d). If collaboration is not possible or desirable, but the new investigator goes ahead and submits an article based on Parapsychological Data Bank data for publication, he should, in his manuscript, thank the old investigator for the provision of the original data and any collaborative effort, and indicate that the old investigator does not agree with the interpretations of the data in this submitted article and may submit a separate manuscript for publication with a different interpretation. The new investigator should also communicate this to the editor of whatever journal he submits his own manuscript to, and suggest to the editor of whatever journal he submits his own manuscript to, and suggest to the editor of such journal that he might wish to invite the old investigator to submit an article with a different interpretation. In such a reply article by the original investigator, he may draw upon any or all of the analyses the new investigator has done and which the new investigator has supplied to him.

(e). Priority of publication: In the case of new discoveries resulting from analyses by the new investigator, he will ordinarily have priority of publication for writing something about these under the arrangements discussed above, even though he has supplied copies of these analyses to the old investigator. If the new investigator does not wish to submit any manuscripts for publication based on his analyses, or does not do so within some reasonable time, say two years after undertaking the analyses, the old investigator, who has been provided with copies of all the new investigator's analyses,

may refer to or present these analyses in manuscripts submitted for publication of his own, with appropriate credit to the new investigator. If such a publication by the old investigator rests primarily on analyses by the new investigator, then the old investigator should offer the new investigator a junior authorship. If the new analyses are relatively minor points in new publications by the old investigator, that do not present the new analyses in such detail that it would undermine the new investigator's chances for publication, a footnote of credit and thanks would be appropriate, and a time limit on the old investigator referring to them is unnecessary.

Restrictions on Secondary Distribution of Data

As a condition of withdrawing data from the Parapsychological Data Bank, a new investigator must agree that he will not further copy the data and pass it on to any other investigator. Other investigators who wish the data must make direct withdrawals from the Parapsychological Data Bank, taking on the conditions specified earlier for data withdrawals.

Costs

The PA shall bear any initial costs of starting the Parapsychological Data Bank project, but it should become more than self-supporting. Excess earnings shall go into the general PA treasury. Ideally, the Data Bank Officer should be a volunteer member of the PA, but if he needs reimbursement for his time or secretarial time involved in direct operation of the Data Bank, such costs shall be a part of the cost to new investigators of withdrawing data from the Parapsychological Data Bank.

Loss of Data Bank Privileges

If, in the opinion of the Data Bank Officer, any depositor or withdrawer from the Data Bank seriously violates the rules governing the use of the Parapsychological Data Bank, the Data Bank Officer shall try to obtain voluntary compliance from the offender. If unsuccessful, he shall recommend to the PA Council that the offender be barred from further deposits into or withdrawals from the Parapsychological Data Bank. The Council shall, after hearing both the Data Bank Officer's complaint and the alleged offender's case, decide by majority vote whether he shall be barred from further deposit and withdrawal privileges, and for what period.

Publicizing the Data Bank

Upon establishment of the Parapsychological Data Bank, the Data Bank Officer shall have printed a small brochure explaining the purposes and rules of operation of the Parapsychological Data Bank, as outlined above. This brochure will be sent to the editors of all PA affiliated journals, along with an explicit request for investigators currently having useful data to deposit it in the Parapsychological Data Bank. Extra copies of the brochure will also be

sent out to the editors of PA affiliated journals with the request that they send a brochure to the (senior) author of each accepted manuscript from now on, as a reminder to such authors that a deposit is desirable.

Further notice of the existence of the Parapsychological Data Bank to the general scientific community shall be made when the Data Bank Officer feels it is appropriate.

The Data Bank officer shall prepare a yearly report of what data has been deposited, with respect to what published article(s), and the approximate cost of duplication, and request that the editors of various PA affiliated journals publish this. A copy shall also be sent to each member of the PA Council.

Ambiguities

Any ambiguities in the actual operation of the Parapsychological Data Bank shall ordinarily be resolved by decision of the Data Bank Officer, bearing in mind the primary goals of the project, namely to promote scientific discovery by enhancing the flow of the information, with appropriate professional credit to all parties involved. Any ambiguous cases the Data Bank Officer feels unable to reach a decision on may be referred to the PA Council.