

Submission to CRU Email Review

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I am an applied mathematician with research interests in fluid dynamics, mathematical modelling and large-scale numerical computations. I have no financial, professional or personal interests related to climate science, UEA or any of the individuals involved. I work at the University of Nottingham, but this submission is being made purely in a personal capacity.

The following sections address the questions raised in the first three numbered items of the Review Team's remit and "Issues for examination" document.

1 Manipulation or suppression of data which is at odds with acceptable scientific practice

1.1 "Hide the decline"

The most well known of the emails is 0942777075.txt. It is important to appreciate that this dates from 1999, only shortly after the "hockey stick" picture had been produced.

"Mike's Nature trick" refers to the idea [1] of merging together instrumental temperature measurements with proxy data such as tree-ring measurements.

If the instrumental measurements and proxy data are presented separately, the proxy data show a decrease in the late 20th century when the instrumental measurements show an increase. This would lead a thoughtful observer to question the accuracy and validity of the proxy data, and hence question the validity of the entire "hockey stick" picture. This is the "decline" that Jones is trying to "hide".

This is a clear attempt to mislead the reader and is completely unacceptable. No respectable scientist would ever attempt to hide anything. The correct way to present the data would have been to show the proxy data in its entirety, separately from the temperature data.

An example of the correct scientific use of proxy data is the use of radio-isotopes to estimate past levels of solar magnetic activity. See, for example, figure 1 of [2] or figure 4 of [3] (the academic members of the Review Team will have access to these papers). Here, proxy data sets are presented in their entirety along with the primary data, so that the reader can see the extent to which the proxy data matches the primary data. The two data sets are clearly visible, well separated, and not smoothed. In this field, I know of no papers where the proxy data has been merged into the primary data. It is of interest to compare this with the approach used by Jones, Mann and colleagues. In the WMO graph referred to here, proxy data is smoothly merged with primary data in an opaque way that is not clearly explained, would be difficult to reproduce and involves a number of subjective judgements by the researchers.

Almost as bad as the original hiding of data that did not support the story they wanted to tell are the various misleading attempts that have been made to defend this indefensible

behaviour. The statement in paragraph 3.5.5 of the UEA memorandum that CRU “never sought to disguise” the decline is simply absurd in view of the “hide the decline” phrase. The preceding paragraph 3.5.4 attempts to muddy the waters with irrelevant comments about the decline not being a decline in thermometer readings. It is also false to say that the divergence problem is well known; this was not the case in 1999. Why is it not mentioned in the WMO report? Why try to hide it?

Misleading claims about the word “trick” have also been written, for example in paragraph 3.5.6 of the UEA memorandum. It is true that mathematicians and scientist use the word “trick” in the context of solving a problem, *when the result of using the trick is the same as if the trick had not been used* (for a trivial example, a trick for dividing by 5 is to multiply by 2 and divide by 10). This is not the sense of the word “trick” in the Jones email.

It is ironic that the revelations of spin and distortion are met with further spin and distortion from those involved.

1.2 “Cut the last few points off”

Although the “hide the decline” email is the most notorious, it is not the only example of this misleading behaviour. In email 1225026120.txt, Mick Kelly (listed as a staff member of CRU, although I believe he is now in New Zealand) writes: “*Anyway, I’ll maybe cut the last few points off the filtered curve before I give the talk again as that’s trending down as a result of the end effects and the recent cold-ish years*”. Again this is an unacceptable suppression of data, in this case for a public talk.

1.3 Other examples

These examples are but two of many examples of the manipulation of the presentation of data to exaggerate global warming that is widespread in the field. There are many examples of this in Chapter 3 of the 2007 IPCC report, for which Phil Jones was responsible as lead author. These include:

- The misleading comparison of 25-year, 50-year and 100-year trends to convey the false impression that warming is accelerating (page 253, inserted into the final version of the IPCC report *after* the expert reviews).
- The false claim on page 249 that the world’s surface temperature continued to increase between the 3rd IPCC report and the 4th (2001-2007). In fact there was no warming in this period as Jones has recently acknowledged in a BBC interview.
- The false claim on page 252 that in the late 20th century warming temperatures rose “more strongly” than in the early 20th century. Again this is not true, as acknowledged by Jones in the BBC interview. This is followed immediately by another false statement about an increasing rate of warming in the last 25 years.

2 CRU’s policies for disseminating data and research

The Briffa email referred to in the Issues document seems to show a breach of accepted scientific practise and an abuse of his position as journal editor. Briffa may try to claim that the referee had already recommended rejection and he was just asking for the justification (and if he does claim this he should be asked to provide evidence), but this does not seem to be the case, since he says “I have to nag about that review” indicating that the reviewer has not yet sent his review. If the referee had already sent a comment, this would be clear from the email (which would have said something like “to support your recommendation of rejection”).

In over 20 years refereeing well over 100 papers, I have never had such a comment from a journal editor. Another curious feature of the email is the word “confidentially”. It goes without saying that communications between an editor and a referee are confidential (in my experience the word is never used), so why was this superfluous word used here? It suggests that Briffa was aware he was doing something wrong.

The Jones email mentioned in the Issues document about keeping papers out of the IPCC report even if this means redefining the peer reviewed literature is clearly inappropriate for the lead author of Chapter 3 of IPCC AR4. The fact that he did not get away with it, and that the papers did eventually appear in the report, is not relevant to the present Review of the behaviour of CRU and its director.

Equally worrying is the instruction from Jones to colleagues to delete emails relating to AR4, followed by the remark that he had deleted many emails. I hope the Review Team will ask Jones why he said this, what was in those emails, and why he was so anxious to delete emails relating to a hugely influential report that was going to be read by policy makers.

3 CRU compliance or otherwise with FOIA

The ICO has now confirmed that there was a breach of the FOIA. A number of false claims have been made about this, not least by the University. Contrary to the UEA statements, the ICO’s letter of 29 January confirms that they are not withdrawing the statement made to the Sunday Times and that the statement was accurate.

CRU may try to claim that they were inundated by FOI requests. This was not the case - one of the climategate emails refers to “double figures” which is hardly an inundation.

The only instance where excessive requests were made was in July 2009 when blogger Steve McIntyre unwisely advised his followers each to send FOI requests regarding confidentiality agreements for five different countries. The Review Team should focus on requests made before this inappropriate sequence of requests.

It is important to appreciate that the only reason that several FOI requests were made is because of CRU’s refusal to comply with the earlier ones. For example, the requests for confidentiality agreements were made because Jones had tried to use these as an excuse for not supplying data.

Furthermore, one should ask why these FOI requests were made at all. The reason is that CRU had previously refused to supply data when requested politely and informally. And in turn, these earlier informal requests were only necessary because CRU had not followed accepted scientific practise of making full data and methods available in their scientific papers and supplementary information.

The contempt with which Jones and UEA dealt with the FOI requests is revealed in the emails. In email 1182255717.txt (June 2007) he claims to have persuaded UEA to ignore FOI requests that are related to Climate Audit – obviously this is not a valid reason. Similarly in 1228330629.txt (Dec 2008, the “double figures” email) he says that the UEA FOI person at first said he had to comply, but that he then convinced them “what CA was all about” which again is no valid reason for refusing requests.

References

- [1] M. E. Mann, R. S. Bradley and M. K. Hughes, Global-scale temperature patterns and climate forcing over the past six centuries, *Nature* **392**, 779-787.
- [2] D. Volobuev, Solar Activity Record from Archeomagnetic Data, *Solar Physics* **224**, 387-392.
- [3] I. G. Usoskin and G. A. Kovaltsov, Long-Term Solar Activity: Direct and Indirect Study, *Solar Physics* **224**, 37-47.