

Does DIY synthetic biology promote science, or distort it?

The [Do-It-Yourself synthetic biology movement](#) (or, DIY synbio) is mixed up, in a naive and dangerous way. What it's advocating is not "[citizen science](#)," let alone "[democratizing science](#)." It's not about science or democracy.

The folks promoting DIY synbio — [Counter Culture Labs](#), in Berkeley, for instance — are actually discouraging people from practicing science. Science is a quest to understand the nature of reality, with an appreciation with each new insight of how much more remains to be comprehended. It's a serious quest, because the stakes of misunderstanding reality are so high. But the goal in synbio is not about understanding reality, or one's own ignorance. It's about trying to fundamentally change reality, based on one's own narrow perspective and fantasies.

Rejecting reality is really at the root of synbio. Some synbio engineers go so far as to strive to [rid our species of aging and death](#), which are essential aspects of being alive. Yes, there's an eagerness for more knowledge — but only the tidbits about the extremely narrow slice of reality that synbio engineers think they need to know to force an organism to do whatever they desire to force it to do. The word "hacking" captures the inherent violence of this mindset.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: DIY Bio-Engineering: Disrupting Democracy