

## Can scientists keep white nationalists from misusing population genetics research?

Stormfront and similar online forums, as well as the comment sections on “alt-right” news websites and Twitter accounts, regularly host what [University of Michigan bioinformatics graduate student Jedidiah Carlson] dubbed “informal journal clubs,” dedicated to dissecting population genetics papers and sorting them into those that support a white nationalist ideology and those that don’t. For more than a year, [Carlson] has followed the evolution of this strange, racist trend.

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Q: Do any of the white nationalists discussing these papers actually know what they’re talking about?

A: There’s a range of expertise and familiarity. Some are fairly familiar with some of the science. It behooves them to know the science so they can feel like they are going toe-to-toe with the people actually doing the science.

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Q: How do they misappropriate the work?

A: People will grab figures from scientific papers and edit them in several different ways to make them look like they support the white nationalist ideology.

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Q: Can scientists do anything to prevent their work from being misused by these groups?

A: [...]The genomic revolution is still well underway. But I think because of precisely that, we need to think more carefully about not just our own interpretation of the work, but anticipating how our work might be misinterpreted and trying to preemptively patch up the holes in that logic.

**Read full, original post:** [‘It’s a toxic place.’ How the online world of white nationalists distorts population genetics](#)