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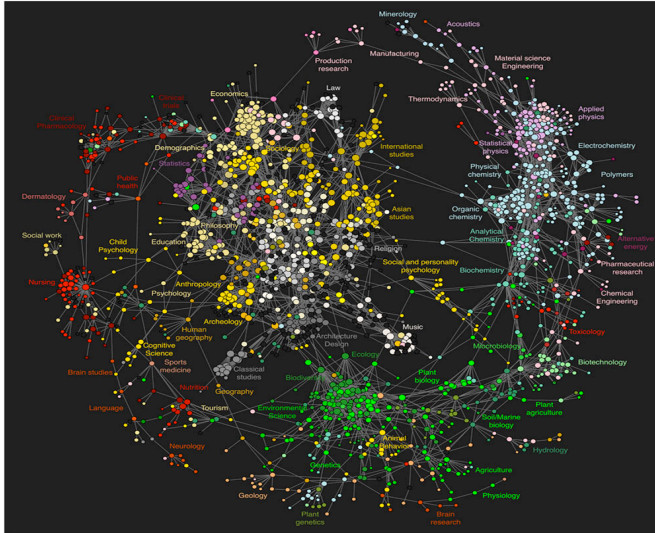
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Blog

The atlas of science



[The map of science](#) (click to see full-sized image)

By Michael Banks

Do you know that when you access a research paper via a "web portal" such as Elsevier's [Science Direct](#) your every "click" is being recorded?

Although this monitoring might at first seem a little scary and possibly unnecessary, Johan Bollen and colleagues from [Los Alamos National Laboratory](#) have put the data to good use.

They have [created](#) a "map of science" using over a billion so-called "click-throughs" - produced when going from the web portal to the actual full text paper or the abstract on the journal's website. The data was taken from 2007 to 2008.

After crunching the data through a so-called "clickstream model" they produced a map (see image above) with each circle representing a journal and the lines reflecting the navigation of users from one journal to another.

Maps showing the connectivity of science subjects have been made before, but they have often used citation data produced using the references in research papers. As it takes years for a new paper to generate lots of citations, the new method promises a more up-to-date map of science. This, the researchers say, can then point more quickly to emerging relationships between different branches of science.

The researchers also created a table of the most interdisciplinary journals, produced by how many connections it has with other areas of science, which placed [Science](#) top followed by [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#) in second place and [Environmental Health Perspectives](#) in third.

But don't worry, as confidentiality agreements prevent any information that could show the identity of the browser being used by a third party, your privacy is protected.

Posted by [Michael Banks](#) on Mar 12, 2009 5:27 PM | [Permalink](#)

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