

Editorial

The other fields also exist

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The great Latin-American poet Mario Benedetti cried at the end of his poem ‘The South Also Exists’:

(...) the whole world
would know
That the South,
That the South also exists.

This was a passionate indictment to the frequent ignorance from the developed North to the problems of the South. But here I want to call the attention to other type of ignorance to which I have been confronted once and again as an Editor, a reviewer or an author of scientific papers in the field of network theory. It is about the ignorance of authors in one discipline to papers published by authors in a different but related area of research. This problem creates an unnecessary duplication of results that contributes to slowing down the healthy development of this field of research. It also contributes to segregate the field into several subfields, in which researchers do the same kind of work, using similar techniques, but without speaking to each other.

Network science, the field of our journal, is proud to be a highly interdisciplinary area of research. However, without integration between the different sub-disciplines that contribute to it, the field is not other thing than a fragmented landscape, far from a truly interdisciplinary one. Today, the technology allows us to scan the whole area of research in the blink of an eye. The number of contributions in each topic is huge, and we cannot cover all of them in just a few hours. But, we all, Editors, Reviewers and Authors, have the responsibility of avoiding the ignorance of works that crosses the narrow sub-discipline of the authors and help them to visit the ‘other fields’ that also exists.

Just to give one single illustration of what all of this is about I will show a picture (see Fig. 1) of the network of citations of papers containing the phrase ‘Small-World’. It is easy to identify the different subfields that conforms the ‘communities’ in this citation network, but it is not my intention here to make such specific analysis. What it is obvious from this picture, which is worth a thousand words, is that the authors in one sub-discipline hardly cite those in another.

Then, when you write your papers, review the papers of others or edit the papers reviewed by others, please be aware that:

(...) the whole discipline
would know
That the Other Field,

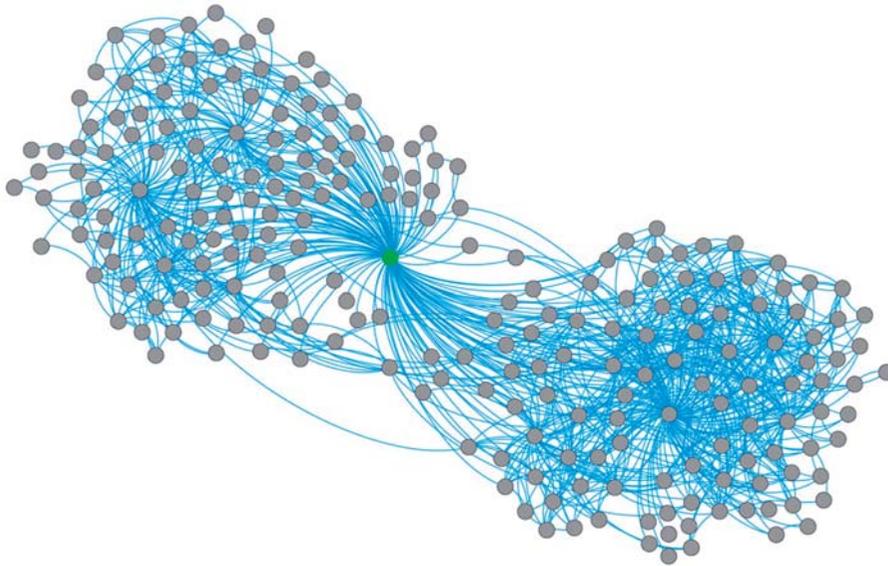


FIG. 1. Illustration of the citation network in the field of 'Small-World' networks [1]. Every node represents a paper and two nodes are connected if one cites the other. The central node is Milgram's 1967 paper [2].

That the Other Field also exists.

REFERENCES

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