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Recent Comments

[yakky d](#): Some guys in dark suits and sunglasses probably showed up at his door and “advised” him to take...
[ECM](#): Right. He received missives from those that found it “objectionable” because there were...
[Lenoxus](#): Q: Why did so much diverse life appear on Earth within such a relatively short amount of time? A: Someone...
[Dave Wisker](#): Hi mad doc, So you think an 11% increase in mean fitness after 10 generations (the progeny measure), and...
[DeLurker](#): Joseph#50 Using the description of cumulative selection along with the illustration using the weasel...
[yakky d](#): I wager it was “objectionable” to many because Behe made his case well...am I close? I watched the first few...

Recent Entries







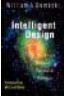
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19 August 2009

[New Peer-Reviewed Pro-ID Article in Mainstream Math/Eng Literature](#)

William Dembski

William A. Dembski and Robert J. Marks II, "Conservation of Information in Search: Measuring the Cost of Success," *IEEE Transactions on Systems, Man and Cybernetics A, Systems & Humans*, vol.39, #5, September 2009, pp.1051-1061.

*****For the official listing, go [here](#).

*****For a pdf of the article, go [here](#).

P.S. Our critics will immediately say that this really isn't a pro-ID article but that it's about something else (I've seen this line now for over a decade once work on ID started encroaching into peer-review territory). Before you believe this, have a look at the article. In it we critique, for instance, Richard Dawkins METHINKS*IT*IS*LIKE*A*WEASEL (p. 1055). Question: When Dawkins introduced this example, was he arguing pro-Darwinism? Yes he was. In critiquing his example and arguing that information is not created by unguided evolutionary processes, we are indeed making an argument that supports ID.



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This entry was posted Wednesday, August 19th, 2009 at 9:28 am and is filed under [Informatics](#), [Intelligent Design](#). Both comments and pings are currently closed.

9 Responses

[1](#)

Indium

08/19/2009

10:37 am

Dr. Dembski: Congratulations from Germany! This is a nicely written and very “readable” paper. I agree with many of your thoughts therein.

A few small remarks:

- The formulas for p and q in the first few paragraphs of chapter II are strange. How is, for example, $q = 1/(3117/3125) = 2.56 \times 10^{-3}$?

- Did Dawkins really use a Partitioned Search? From my limited knowledge it seems he did not. He used a evolutionary strategy that could better be discussed in your “Random Mutations” chapter. Your main point (active information is present) might still be valid of course!

- Surprisingly (for me, at least!), you seem to agree with those Darwinian biologists out there: The environment selects the fittest children of a generation and therefore provides some of the active information which is needed for evolution. So, at which point enters the I-Designer the equation? When designing the environment?

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[2](#)

David v. Squatney

08/19/2009

10:37 am

Not that this hasn't been beaten to death already, but the algorithm described in the paper includes “latching”, or “freezing” correct letters in place, which isn't mentioned by Dawkins in his book.

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[3](#)

Sal Gal

08/19/2009

10:46 am

You and Marks turned Dawkins' Weasel example into targeted search. He definitely did not present it as that. Instead, he sought to help the general reader understand how a simple evolutionary process could yield an accumulation of fit traits in the population. This is why he referred to *cumulative selection*.

The active information you measure is not introduced by Dawkins, but by you in treating the Weasel sentence as an all-or-nothing target of the evolutionary process. The fact is that many sentences have some degree of fitness in Dawkins' example. This is intrinsic to the problem that Dawkins set up. You make Dawkins “active” by saying, in effect, that he extrinsically introduced degrees of fitness *in order* to make the Weasel program achieve the “real” end he had in mind. Again, this is not what he did.

[4](#)

Sal Gal

08/19/2009

10:53 am

David [1]:

Good catch. Dembski and Marks actually did leave the “latching” error in the article, rather than tell the associate editor that they needed to make a minor change.

[5](#)

William Dembski

08/19/2009

11:09 am

Sal Gal: “He definitely did not present it as that.” Quite right, he did not present it — as in portray it — as a targeted search. But in his articulation, it was a targeted search and our critique applies.

Squatney: I would re-read the paper. I know your side has quibbled about our characterization of Dawkins’ algorithm (which he did not clearly lay out in THE BLIND WATCHMAKER) as to whether it locks in correct characters or allows for their random alteration after they’ve been achieved. As I showed [here](#), it doesn’t really matter.

[6](#)

Learned Hand

08/19/2009

11:19 am

As I showed here, it doesn’t really matter.

It appears to me that you merely asserted, without a careful analysis, that the Weasel algorithm does latch: *Thus, since Dawkins does not make explicit in THE BLIND WATCHMAKER just how his algorithm works, it is natural to conclude that it is a proximity search with locking (i.e., it locks on characters in the target sequence and never lets go).*

I do not see where you show, or even attempt to show, that “it doesn’t really matter.” Nor do I see where you refute, or attempt to refute, the careful analyses in that thread that showed that your assumptions were unwarranted. It may be that you don’t need to do that, if the distinction truly doesn’t matter, but where have you established that?

[7](#)

[William Dembski](#)

08/19/2009

11:34 am

Hand: “Doesn’t matter” in the sense that the algorithm has the target sequence embedded in it, checks proximity to it, and converges quickly to the target. Locking or non-locking doesn’t affect any of these. Gentlemen/Ladies, methinks you are quibbling about minutiae and missing the bigger problem, which is that the information needed to drive evolution does not derive from evolution.

[8](#)

ppb

08/19/2009

11:43 am

The information needed to drive evolution is provided by the environment the organism finds itself in. Consider it a proximity search towards the optimal conditions for survival.

[9](#)

William Dembski

08/19/2009

11:46 am

NS: Get a textbook on general relativity, and you will typically find a math textbook devoted mainly to Riemannian geometry. So by your reasoning, it actually isn't about the structure of spacetime.

ppb: And the environment creates the information required for evolution to successfully locate a target how? Lots of environments lack the active information to conduct successful targeted searches.

I'm growing weary of these quibblings and thus shutting the comments off.

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