DOWNLOAD PDF 101 THINGS YOU DONT KNOW ABOUT SCIENCE

Chapter 1 : Editions of Things You Don't Know About Science and No One Else Does Either by James S. T

The " Things," which amount to mini essays on scientific subjects, are organized into eight chapters ranging from the physical sciences through biology to technology. Trefil is by education a physicist and by inclination a science generalist.

Your perspective on yourself is distorted. Just peer inside and read: This notion is popular but is probably completely false! Psychological research shows that we do not have privileged access to who we are. When we try to assess ourselves accurately, we are really poking around in a fog. As a result, our self-image has surprisingly little to do with our actions. For example, we may be absolutely convinced that we are empathetic and generous but still walk right past a homeless person on a cold day. The reason for this distorted view is quite simple, according to Pronin. Because we do not want to be stingy, arrogant or self-righteous, we assume that we are not any of those things. As evidence, she points to our divergent views of ourselves and others. We have no trouble recognizing how prejudiced or unfair our office colleague acts toward another person. But we do not consider that we could behave in much the same way: Pronin assessed her thesis in a number of experiments. Among other things, she had her study participants complete a test involving matching faces with personal statements that would supposedly assess their social intelligence. Afterward, some of them were told that they had failed and were asked to name weaknesses in the testing procedure. Although the opinions of the subjects were almost certainly biased not only had they supposedly failed the test, they were also being asked to critique it , most of the participants said their evaluations were completely objective. It was much the same in judging works of art, although subjects who used a biased strategy for assessing the quality of paintings nonetheless believed that their own judgment was balanced. Pronin argues that we are primed to mask our own biases. Could it be that we are not really looking into ourselves, as the Latin root of the word suggests, but producing a flattering self-image that denies the failings that we all have? The research on self-knowledge has yielded much evidence for this conclusion. Although we think we are observing ourselves clearly, our self-image is affected by processes that remain unconscious. Your motives are often a complete mystery to you. How well do people know themselves? In answering this question, researchers encounter the following problem: Investigators use a variety of techniques to tackle such questions. They may ask other people, such as relatives or friends, to assess subjects as well. And they probe unconscious inclinations using special methods. To measure unconscious inclinations, psychologists can apply a method known as the implicit association test IAT , developed in the s by Anthony Greenwald of the University of Washington and his colleagues, to uncover hidden attitudes. Since then, numerous variants have been devised to examine anxiety, impulsiveness and sociability, among other features. The approach assumes that instantaneous reactions require no reflection; as a result, unconscious parts of the personality come to the fore. Notably, experimenters seek to determine how closely words that are relevant to a person are linked to certain concepts. They were also asked to press the same key as soon as they saw a word on the screen that related to themselves such as their own name. Of course, the words and key combinations were switched over the course of many test runs. The image that people convey in surveys has little to do with their lightning-fast reactions to emotionally laden words. On the other hand, questionnaires yield better information about such traits as conscientiousness or openness to new experiences. Conscientiousness and curiosity, on the other hand, require a certain degree of thought and can therefore be assessed more easily through self-reflection. Outward appearances tell people a lot about you. Much research indicates that our nearest and dearest often see us better than we see ourselves. As psychologist Simine Vazire of the University of California, Davis, has shown, two conditions in particular may enable others to recognize who we really are most readily: Our assessments of ourselves most closely match assessments by others when it comes to more neutral characteristics. The characteristics generally most readable by others are those that strongly affect our behavior. We are frequently blind to the effect we have on others because we simply do not see our own facial expressions, gestures and body language. I am hardly aware that my blinking eyes indicate stress or that the slump in my posture betrays how heavily something weighs on me. Because it is so difficult to observe ourselves, we must rely on the observations of others, especially those who know us well. It is hard to know who we are unless others let us

know how we affect them. We often understand only poorly the effect we have on others. Terry Mcclendon Getty Images 4. Gaining some distance can help you know yourself better. Keeping a diary, pausing for self-reflection and having probing conversations with others have a long tradition, but whether these methods enable us to know ourselves is hard to tell. In fact, sometimes doing the oppositeâ€"such as letting goâ€"is more helpful because it provides some distance. It helps, she noted, by overcoming two big hurdles: The practice of mindfulness teaches us to allow our thoughts to simply drift by and to identify with them as little as possible. Frequently, stepping out of oneself in this way and simply observing what the mind does fosters clarity. Gaining insight into our unconscious motives can enhance emotional well-being. For example, we should not slave away at a career that gives us money and power if these goals are of little importance to us. But how do we achieve such harmony? By imagining, for example. Try to imagine, as vividly and in as much detail as possible, how things would be if your most fervent wish came true. Would it really make you happier? Often we succumb to the temptation to aim excessively high without taking into account all of the steps and effort necessary to achieve ambitious goals. Those who view themselves at a distance from their selfâ€"for example, in solitudeâ€"may see themselves more clearly. We too often think we are better at something than we are. Are you familiar with the Dunning Kruger effect? It holds that the more incompetent people are, the less they are aware of their incompetence. Dunning and Kruger gave their test subjects a series of cognitive tasks and asked them to estimate how well they did. At best, 25 percent of the participants viewed their performance more or less realistically; only some people underestimated themselves. The quarter of subjects who scored worst on the tests really missed the mark, wildly exaggerating their cognitive abilities. Is it possible that boasting and failing are two sides of the same coin? As the researchers emphasize, their work highlights a general feature of self-perception: According to psychologist Adrian Furnham of University College London, the statistical correlation between perceived and actual IQ is, on average, only 0. By comparison, the correlation between height and sex is about 0. So why is the chasm between would-be and actual performance so gaping? It surely would spare us a great deal of wasted effort and perhaps a few embarrassments. The answer, it seems, is that a moderate inflation of self-esteem has certain benefits. According to a review by psychologists Shelley Taylor of the University of California, Los Angeles, and Jonathon Brown of the University of Washington, rose-colored glasses tend to increase our sense of well-being and our performance. People afflicted by depression, on the other hand, are inclined to be brutally realistic in their self-assessments. An embellished self-image seems to help us weather the ups and downs of daily life. People who tear themselves down experience setbacks more frequently. Although most of our contemporaries harbor excessively positive views of their honesty or intelligence, some people suffer from the opposite distortion: Experiencing contempt and belittlement in childhood, often associated with violence and abuse, can trigger this kind of negativityâ€"which, in turn, can limit what people can accomplish, leading to distrust, despair and even suicidal thoughts. It might seem logical to think that people with a negative self-image would be just the ones who would want to overcompensate. Yet as psychologists working with William Swann of the University of Texas at Austin discovered, many individuals racked with self-doubt seek confirmation of their distorted self-perception. Swann described this phenomenon in a study on contentment in marriage. He asked couples about their own strengths and weaknesses, the ways they felt supported and valued by their partner, and how content they were in the marriage. As expected, those who had a more positive attitude toward themselves found greater satisfaction in their relationship the more they received praise and recognition from their other half. But those who habitually picked at themselves felt safer in their marriage when their partner reflected their negative image back to them. They did not ask for respect or appreciation. On the contrary, they wanted to hear exactly their own view of themselves: The theory holds that we want others to see us the way we see ourselves. In some cases, people actually provoke others to respond negatively to them so as to prove how worthless they are. This behavior is not necessarily masochism. It is symptomatic of the desire for coherence: Likewise, people who consider themselves failures will go out of their way not to succeed, contributing actively to their own undoing. They will miss meetings, habitually neglect doing assigned work and get into hot water with the boss. But both camps are probably right: You deceive yourself without realizing it. According to one influential theory, our tendency for self-deception

stems from our desire to impress others. To appear convincing, we ourselves must be convinced of our capabilities and truthfulness. Supporting this theory is the observation that successful manipulators are often quite full of themselves.

Chapter 2 : calendrierdelascience.com: Customer reviews: Things You Don't Know About Science: And No

James Trefil takes the reader on a thrilling tour across the borders of current scientific knowledge-from astronomy to genetics, from information technology to cosmology, the great contested questions that preoccupy researchers today and will become headlines tomorrow.

The tips, published in Nature , have been compiled by William Sutherland, a zoologist, and David Spiegelhalter, a mathematician â€" both are from the University of Cambridge â€" and Mark Burgman, an ecologist at the University of Melbourne. Burgman told Guardian Australia that he and his British colleagues had noted that politicians, broadly speaking, struggle to critically examine scientific advice. They tend to link statistical significance with importance, which has almost nothing to do with each other. Differences and chance cause variation The real world varies unpredictably. Science is mostly about discovering what causes the patterns we see. Why is it hotter this decade than last? Why are there more birds in some areas than others? There are many explanations to such trends, so the main challenge of research is teasing apart the importance of the process of interest for example, the effect of climate change on bird populations from the innumerable other sources of variation. No measurement is exact Practically all measurements have some error. If the measurement process were repeated, one might record a different result. In some cases, the measurement error might be large compared with real differences. Thus, if you are told that the economy grew by 0. Bias is rife Experimental design or measuring devices may produce atypical results in a given direction. For example, determining voting behaviour by asking people on the street, at home or through the internet will sample different proportions of the population, and all may give different results. Bigger is usually better for sample size The average taken from a large number of observations will usually be more informative than the average taken from a smaller number of observations. That is, as we accumulate evidence, our knowledge improves. Correlation does not imply causation It is tempting to assume that one pattern causes another. For example, ecologists at one time believed that poisonous algae were killing fish in estuaries; it turned out that the algae grew where fish died. The algae did not cause the deaths. Regression to the mean can mislead Extreme patterns in data are likely to be, at least in part, anomalies attributable to chance or error. The next count is likely to be less extreme. For example, if speed cameras are placed where there has been a spate of accidents, any reduction in the accident rate cannot be attributed to the camera; a reduction would probably have happened anyway. Extrapolating beyond the data is risky Patterns found within a given range do not necessarily apply outside that range. Thus, it is very difficult to predict the response of ecological systems to climate change, when the rate of change is faster than has been experienced in the evolutionary history of existing species, and when the weather extremes may be entirely new. Beware the base-rate fallacy The ability of an imperfect test to identify a condition depends upon the likelihood of that condition occurring the base rate. Controls are important A control group is dealt with in exactly the same way as the experimental group, except that the treatment is not applied. Without a control, it is difficult to determine whether a given treatment really had an effect. The control helps researchers to be reasonably sure that there are no confounding variables affecting the results. Randomisation avoids bias Experiments should, wherever possible, allocate individuals or groups to interventions randomly. Comparing the educational achievement of children whose parents adopt a health program with that of children of parents who do not is likely to suffer from bias. Seek replication, not pseudoreplication Results consistent across many studies, replicated on independent populations, are more likely to be solid. The results of several such experiments may be combined in a systematic review or a meta-analysis to provide an overarching view of the topic with potentially much greater statistical power than any of the individual studies. Scientists are human Scientists have a vested interest in promoting their work, often for status and further research funding, although sometimes for direct financial gain. This can lead to selective reporting of results and occasionally, exaggeration. Peer review is not infallible: Multiple, independent sources of evidence and replication are much more convincing. Significance is significant Expressed as P, statistical significance is a measure of how likely a result is to occur by chance. Typically, scientists report results as significant when the P-value of the test is

less than 0. A small study may not have the power to detect a real difference. For example, tests of cotton and potato crops that were genetically modified to produce a toxin to protect them from damaging insects suggested that there were no adverse effects on beneficial insects such as pollinators. Yet none of the experiments had large enough sample sizes to detect impacts on beneficial species had there been any. Effect size matters Small responses are less likely to be detected. A study with many replicates might result in a statistically significant result but have a small effect size and so, perhaps, be unimportant. The importance of an effect size is a biological, physical or social question, and not a statistical one. Data can be dredged or cherry picked Evidence can be arranged to support one point of view. To interpret an apparent association between consumption of yoghurt during pregnancy and subsequent asthma in offspring, one would need to know whether the authors set out to test this sole hypothesis, or happened across this finding in a huge data set. Extreme measurements may mislead Any collation of measures the effectiveness of a given school, say will show variability owing to differences in innate ability teacher competence , plus sampling children might by chance be an atypical sample with complications , plus bias the school might be in an area where people are unusually unhealthy , plus measurement error outcomes might be measured in different ways for different schools. However, the resulting variation is typically interpreted only as differences in innate ability, ignoring the other sources. Study relevance limits generalisations The relevance of a study depends on how much the conditions under which it is done resemble the conditions of the issue under consideration. For example, there are limits to the generalisations that one can make from animal or laboratory experiments to humans. Feelings influence risk perception Broadly, risk can be thought of as the likelihood of an event occurring in some time frame, multiplied by the consequences should the event occur. For example, people in the US underestimate the risks associated with having a handgun at home by fold and overestimate the risks of living close to a nuclear reactor by fold. Dependencies change the risks It is possible to calculate the consequences of individual events, such as an extreme tide, heavy rainfall and key workers being absent. However, if the events are interrelated, for example a storm causes a high tide, or heavy rain prevents workers from accessing the site then the probability of their co-occurrence is much higher than might be expected.

Chapter 3 : things you don't know about science and no one else does either (edition) | Open Library

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Store these away for future pub quiz nights. Welcome to my salon. This is Mental Floss on YouTube. Nikola Tesla said of Thomas Edison, he "had no hobby, cared for no amusement of any kind and lived in utter disregard of the most elementary rules of hygiene. Another pair of famous enemies: Speaking of addition, the sum of the numbers on a roulette wheel is There is a genus of ferns named after Lady Gaga, which means that 19 ferns start with the word "Gaga. You have a 1 in 9. The giant inflatable rat that shows up at union protests is named Scabby. Our rat is also named Scabby. Then members of the club read the newsletter, you know, whenever they get around to it. The Tony awards started in as the Antoinette Perry awards for excellence in theatre. Winners received a scroll as well as a cigarette lighter if they were male or a silver compact case if they were female. Hawaiian Punch was originally developed in as a tropical-flavored ice cream topping. Albert Einstein never learned to drive a car. In , a California pastor urged his congregation to go to bars and try to convince young people to delete their Myspace accounts. Remember when we all had Myspaces? Anyway, when fruit flies are infected with a parasite, they self-medicate with booze; they seek out food with higher alcohol content. In , the iTunes store sold an app called "I Am Rich. Eight copies were sold, and then Apple shut it down in less than a day. John Cazale died in Every film he appeared in was nominated for Best Picture. Due to a shortage in raw materials like paper and leather, and an increase in war-time piety, the United States faced a bible shortage in In colonial America, lobster was not a delicacy. It was actually so cheap and plentiful that it was often served to prisoners. You hear that, Mr. Between and , Tug of War was an Olympic event. As were art competitions between and Medals were awarded for architecture, music, painting, and sculpture. The tallest jockey on record: The nursery rhyme never actually states that Humpty Dumpty is an egg, so, for all we know, he is a pterodactyl. Today, each of those copies is worth between 20 and 40 thousand dollars. He put is own name in the company name? In Walmart pulled Listerine off the shelves after a woman claimed it burned her mouth, but after testing it was restocked because it turns out: There was a lot of infidelity in his marriage? By the way, after coffee beans are decaffeinated, the caffeine is sold to soft-drink makers and pharmaceutical companies. Caffeine, by the way, can be a very effective treatment for low cerebral spinal fluid headaches, as I recently learned. Coffee was banned in Mecca in the 16th Century because it was believed to stimulate radical thinking. George Washington insisted his Continental Army be permitted a quart of beer as part of their daily rations. And speaking of booze, college students spend more than 5. There is no patent. Could you patent the sun? Until I discover an element: The Pledge of Allegiance was written as part of a plan to sell flags to schools. When he was younger, Jake Gyllenhaal got driving lessons from a family friend. That friend was Paul Newman Paul Newman, by the way, both a race car driver and a race car owner. But speaking of celebrity friends, Larry King and Snoop Dog hang out. Jeopardy contestants stand on platforms that are adjusted so they all appear to be the same height. Richard Gere went to UMass Amherst on a gymnastics scholarship. The light emitted by , galaxies makes our universe a shade of beige that scientists call "cosmic latte. But why would you want 75 New Jerseys? In other geography news: Reno is west of Los Angeles. Deipnophobia is the fear of dinner conversations. I have that one, but then again, I do have most of them. Yawning is so contagious that it can spread from humans to dogs or chimpanzees. In , 4 years before the Constitution recognized her right to vote, Jeannette Rankin became the first woman elected to Congress. Speaking of politics, in Larry King smashed into John F. JFK said he would forget the whole thing if King promised to vote for him when he ran for President. The very first webcam watched a coffee pot so researchers at Cambridge could monitor the coffee situation without leaving their desks. The last time a Republican was elected President without a Nixon or a Bush on the ticket was In , Detroit presented Saddam Hussein with a key to their city. I picture him rolling on the floor, that stovepipe hat falling off. A baby can cost new parents hours of sleep in the first year. That seems low, actually. Only two non-humans have ever testified before Congress: Elmo and Ben Affleck. On a slow news day in , BBC Radio simply reported "There

is no news," and then they played piano music. Oh gosh, imagine if Fox News did that today. But then we decided that the Hartford Whalers were enough of a joke on their own. The last time the French government used the guillotine to execute a convicted criminal was in In an Australian man tried to sell New Zealand on eBay. By the way, the first item sold on eBay was a broken laser pointer. Canadians eat more donuts per capita than any other country. In , the mayor sued Warner Brothers for using the name without permission. The necktie originated in Croatia. Fox and then animators switched the model to Tom Cruise. The state vegetable of Oklahoma is watermelon. Pull it together, Oklahoma! In Christopher Columbus thought he saw mermaids. He wrote that they were quote, "Not as pretty as they are depicted, for somehow in the face they look like men". They were probably manatees. The average American three year old child can recognize about a hundred brand logos which means that my child is above average. General George Custer graduated last in his class at West Point in In , a Senate sub-committee predicted that by Americans would be working 20 hours a week with more than seven weeks of vacation per year. The Iron Man edition of Mr. Potato Head is named Tony Starch. Well according to Disney, Goofy was created as a human character as opposed to Pluto who was a pet On the Czech Republic census, 15, people listed their religion as "Jedi". Before Beverly Hills was known for rich people, it was known because its soil is great for growing lima beans. After he won the Nobel Prize, Niels Bohr was given a perpetual supply of beer piped into his house. There are ways to make change for a U. Chase designed the first one dollar bill in , he put his own face on it. Thanks for watching Mental Floss here on YouTube, which is made with the help of all of these nice people. Every week we endeavour to answer one of your mind-blowing questions. Specifically a Pizza Hut pizza bought in If you have a mind-blowing question, please let us know in comments and we will endeavour to answer as many as possible.

Chapter 4 : The Edge of the Unknown - Wikipedia

things you don't know about science and no one else does either by James S. Trefil, , Houghton Mifflin edition, in English.

Share1 Shares 56K Here at listverse we love fun facts. But even more than fun facts, we love unknown facts â€" things which make us seem a little smarter than the average person when we pull them out at parties. This list looks at 15 fascinating facts that you probably are unaware of at least we hope so! Be sure to add any of your own to the comments. Armadillos of the Dasypus genus give birth to four genetically identical quadruplets. This is the only reliable manifestation of polyembryony two or more embryos developing from a single fertilized egg in mammals. Of the entire human body, around 3 pounds of the weight is microbial life; in other words, parasites and the like. Many of these are essential to the functioning of the body. The germs in feces can pass through up to ten layers of toilet paper. They have membranous wings folded underneath short forewings which they can use for limited flight. They are not particularly good at it but sufficiently good to move about if necessary. Although they cannot see color, they can perceive the polarization of light, which enhances their perception of contrast. They have full use of their eyes before they are born. The pyramids were originally covered with a highly polished white limestone so they would glisten from a distance. Some of these albeit worn are still visible at the top of the Pyramid of Khafre pictured above. Female koala bears which are marsupials not bears have two vaginas. Male koalas have a forked penis. No doubt their mating practices would be similar to those of these two humans who had the most bizarre relationship in history. Human eyes contain a blind spot. The brain fills in with surrounding detail and with information from the other eye, so the blind spot is not normally perceived. To see the blind spot in action, go here. The avocado is a ghost of evolution. It was originally consumed by large creatures in the Pleistocene period when modern humans appeared. Creatures the size of wooly mammoths would have eaten the avocado whole, and excreted its seed in their dung. As these giant creatures died off, man cultivated the avocados for his own use and it is this cultivation which meant the avocado survived extinction. Many traffic lights and lift buttons are actually placebo buttons â€" in other words, they do nothing at all when pressed. They exist to give the presser the feeling of control. When tickled, rats laugh. Here is an excellent video clip demonstrating this fact. Having said that, one day on Mercury is earth days. In his lifetime, Adolf Hitler had four relationships three confirmed and one suspected. Of those relationships, all four women attempted suicide at least once, and two succeeded. Sand sharks have a very unique gestation. A mother shark develops two embryos when impregnated. The stronger of the two embryos eats the other before it is born. It will also eat any other eggs that exist in the mother at the time. The center of a rainbow is the shadow from your head. A primary rainbow is always somewhere on an arc 42 degrees around the shadow of your head called the anti solar point. So brightly illuminated rain must be in this direction away from you to see a rainbow.

Chapter 5 : Amazing Facts Everyone Should Know | Mental Floss

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A rat can last longer without water than a camel. Your stomach has to produce a new layer of mucus every two weeks or it will digest itself. The dot over the letter "i" is called a tittle. A raisin dropped in a glass of fresh champagne will bounce up and down continuously from the bottom of the glass to the top. A female ferret will die if it goes into heat and cannot find a mate. Chewing gum while peeling onions will keep you from crying. On average, 12 newborns will be given to the wrong parents daily! That explains a few mysteries The number of possible ways of playing the first four moves per side in a game of chess is ,,, There are no words in the dictionary that rhyme with orange, purple and silver. Astronauts are not allowed to eat beans before they go into space because passing wind in a spacesuit damages them. If one places a tiny amount of liquor on a scorpion, it will instantly go mad and sting itself to death. Who was the sadist who discovered this?? Bruce Lee was so fast that they actually had to s-l-o-w film down so you could see his moves. The first product Motorola started to develop was a record player for automobiles. At that time, the most known player on the market was Victrola, so they called themselves Motorola. Roses may be red, but violets are indeed violet. By raising your legs slowly and lying on your back, you cannot sink into quicksand. Celery has negative calories. It takes more calories to eat a piece of celery than the celery has in it to begin with. Charlie Chaplin once won third prize in a Charlie Chaplin look-alike contest. An old law in Bellingham, Washington, made it illegal for a woman to take more than three steps backwards while dancing! The Guinness Book of Records holds the record for being the book most often stolen from public libraries. The glue on Israeli postage is certified kosher. Bats always turn left when exiting a cave! Thanks to Deborah for submitting this!! Hence we have "the rule of thumb" The first couple to be shown in bed together on prime time TV were Fred and Wilma Flintstone. Men can read smaller print then women can; women can hear better. It is impossible to lick your elbow. The State with the highest percentage of people who walk to work: Alaska The average number of people airborne over the US any given hour: The first novel ever written on a typewriter: Spades - King David Clubs -Alexander, the Great Diamonds - Julius Caesar If a statue in the park of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air, the person died in battle. If the horse has one front leg in the air the person died as a result of wounds received in battle. If the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes. Half of all Americans live within 50 miles of what? If you were to spell out numbers, how far would you have to go until you would find the letter "A"? What do bulletproof vests, fire escapes, windshield wipers, and laser printers all have in common? All invented by women. When you pulled on the ropes the mattress tightened, making the bed firmer to sleep on. Mead is a honey beer and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the honey month, which we know today as the "honeymoon". In English pubs, ale is ordered by pints and quarts So in old England, when customers got unruly, the bartender would yell at them, "Mind your pints and quarts, and settle down. When they needed a refill, they used the whistle to get some service. They came submitted to me by email and are all in good fun!

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