

Fear impedes development of new technology



Andrew Kindiger

If you are now reading a copy of the Index, then congratulations, the universe is still intact. Wednesday, the largest particle accelerator ever built emitted its first beam in an effort to begin experiments that have the potential to unify physics. There was also a potential that tiny black holes would be created and possibly implore the planet, but if you still exist in your known dimension, such theories have been disproved.

The Large Hadron Collider, known as the LHC, is something many people outside the physics community know little about. It is the world's largest particle accel-

erator. The European Organization for Nuclear Research, also known as CERN, constructed the LHC near Geneva, Switzerland with financial assistance from several European nations and also with additional help from Canada. I heard about it through a friend who happens to be a physics major, and for him and others who love applied mathematics, yesterday was a bit of a holy day.

The LHC project should garner more interest in physics and surely will in months and years to come. The knowledge gained from experiments performed with the particle accelerator will not only expand the field of physics exponentially, it also will have the potential to increase technology in the way of alternative fuels and other devices that will assist our everyday lives.

However, some scientists thought that experimenting with the LHC was going to be dangerous. A former nuclear safety inspector named Walter Wagner

actually filed a lawsuit against CERN, which has some of the most qualified scientists in the world working on its projects. I would trust the people working on the LHC more than any outside investor or safety inspector.

I think it is beneficial for scientists outside the project to investigate negative aspects of the experiment, but to try and stop the experiment based on evidence that the LHC staff already considered and monitored throughout the experiment is just wasting time on the part of those like Wagner. Luckily the LHC went ahead, but this sort of rebuking also turns a project that is supposed to focus on discovery into something political.

Those in the scientific community should be increasing our

understanding of the universe and of new technology as efficiently as possible, not worrying about roadblocks established by fellow scientists. Humans currently are in a disposition where technology and industry need to be trans-

formed to help ease the stress we are putting on our own environment. We should not be afraid to evolve, even at the expense of something possibly going wrong with an experiment.

CERN representatives even commented that surges of energy and dangerous phenomena occur in nature all the time. Not to say that no one should have any concerns, but problems that are proposed to happen as a result of activating the LHC have the potential to also occur naturally. Experiments in

a global sense will only continue to get riskier, but the risk of living without the benefits from the experiments is a danger in itself. If we constantly worry about the threat of an experiment involving nuclear energy we will forever be running into limits concerning scientific discovery.

The potential knowledge from the LHC is something that should be respected and encouraged. CERN invested millions of dollars and many years into this machine, and that energy should not be dismissed by a lawsuit or by frustrations from scientists who are not directly involved with the project. As projects like the LHC continue to test our understanding of the universe, scientists offering criticism should be careful not to potentially damage a project that could change the world.

Andrew Kindiger is a sophomore English major from Liberty, Mo.

GRE causes seniors unneeded stress, fails to reflect learning



Jackie Gonzalez

I entered this semester in an especially unusual fashion — overly enthusiastic and completely in control. I guess it stems from the fact that I am a graduating senior, and come May I finally will have that undergraduate degree. And although there are many months until that time comes, I and many other seniors are being forced to sit down and think about where we'll be in a year from now.

It's the time of the season for graduate school applications. As of late, I've constantly been revising my graduate school list. I'm terrified I won't get accepted anywhere. I know this is likely the lament of most seniors, but it's true. I have a decent GPA but it's not fantastic. My activities are strong but not especially relevant to my field of study. But there is one thing that is the most frustrating of all: the Graduate Records Examination, most commonly referred to as the GRE.

Two weeks ago, I had to take that awful exam. And after three painstakingly long hours of writing, math and vocabulary, I clicked through the final pages and received my dreaded score. Granted, it wasn't incredibly awful, but it essentially sealed my fate: My graduate application soon will reek of mediocrity.

I left that dim test room in Violette Hall full of angst and dissatisfaction. I blamed myself for focusing too hard on certain parts and was convinced I was just too nervous. Who could blame me? It's hard to relax during an exam that could make or break your entire scholastic future. Although others choose to not to obtain a post-graduate degree, my career goal as a college professor requires one thing above all: a doctoral degree.

Knowing that the words "pusillanimous" or "conflagration" or dozens of other words I've never used in my life might be on the exam is stressful to say the least. It is hardly a strong representation of one's scholastic abilities. It just demonstrates who has studied Greek or Latin.

The pressure to do well on that lousy test is almost unbearable, yet the real determining factor for exam success simply comes down to whether or not you're a good test-taker. My best friend, for example, scored 100 points higher than me with no preparation at all. I sulked about that for days, as I had dedicated hours of my life to getting the highest score I possibly could. I spent a huge chunk of my summer in a prep course, completed hundreds of

problems, only to find myself with a seemingly average test score.

I'm experiencing my high school senior SAT and ACT woes all over again. The test measures things you learned years ago, and unless you have a photographic

memory and memorize prefixes for fun, you likely will experience an ego check and begin to make excuses for your less-than-anticipated performance. I just keep telling myself not to worry, it's just another bump on the way to reaching the exciting world of post-undergraduate academia. Besides, I'm not going to let a number stop me from believing in myself — since when do I need to know how to handle exponents and functions in communication studies? Any graduate admissions board should know better than to assess an applicant's knowledge via a computerized multiple choice exam. Perhaps they'll reminisce about their own scores, be sympathetic and make a joke or two. And maybe in a few years I'll be able to laugh with them. But until then, I'll just continue to be bitter about standardized testing while hoping for the best.

Jackie Gonzalez is a senior communication and history major from San Diego, Calif.

AROUND THE QUAD

Have you spent any time in the SUB Quiet Lounge since it was renovated?



"Yeah, I like it. It's very classy and well put-together."

Victoria Bradley
freshman



"Yes, this summer. It's really nice."

Maddy Kulkarni
junior



"No, not really."

Jessica Spencer
freshman



"Yeah, the chairs are really hard. I wish they were softer."

Andy Cochran
sophomore

Religious T-shirts trivialize faith, demonstrate American values



Kelsey Landhuis

I saw this T-shirt the other day that made me mad. It was tasteless and pointless. Some people would even call it offensive.

No, I didn't see this shirt on a fraternity member walking across campus. I saw it — or rather, a friend saw it and later told me about it — in a storefront on the Square. The T-shirt in question had the words "Jesus: Meant to Die for You!" printed on it, with "Meant to Die" in a font that parodied the "Mountain Dew" logo.

The message wasn't what bothered me. What bothered me was the commercialization and trivialization of religion, which should be one of the most personal and serious aspects of a person's life.

This isn't a new trend but it is a growing one, evolving from cross-shaped jewelry to the "WWJD?" bracelets that were popular when I was in middle school to entire Web sites devoted to selling religious apparel. What does wearing these T-shirts accomplish? It certainly won't prompt

people to suddenly change religions — nobody is going to read a T-shirt with the words "Jesus Rules" and think, "Yeah, that sounds right." I'm totally becoming a Christian now!"

Evangelism is out of the question, so the only other possible reason for religious apparel would be to identify the wearer as a member of that religion. It's true that people have been publicly declaring their faith through clothing for centuries. Many Jewish men wear skullcaps. Some Muslim women wear veils. However, this apparel is based on long-standing traditions and ancient scripture, not on the logo for a popular sugary drink. Religion shouldn't be a punch line.

The problem of commercialization is most obvious with Christianity because for many people, Christianity is central to the American identity. Whether or not it should be is a topic for another column, but the fact of the matter is that many people take the phrase "one nation, under God" at its most literal meaning: Going to church Sunday morning is as American as baseball and apple pie.

We often like to think of the U.S. as a land of religious tolerance and diversity, but in reality, Christianity is the dominant religion. Events throughout the presidential election season have made this glaringly obvious — John McCain and Barack Obama attended a forum that took

place at a church and was hosted by a prominent pastor, speakers at both conventions ended with the phrase "God bless America" and persistent rumors that Obama is a secret Muslim have forced him to continually demonstrate his Christian values.

Christianity and patriotism are so intertwined that other American values have inevitably rubbed off on the religion. Take the country's entrepreneurial spirit for example. Capitalism and individualism are key American values, but they aren't found in the Bible. Jesus encouraged the formation of community and threw out of the temple the merchants who were trying to sell goods there. How would he react to a "He Saves" T-shirt or an entire store that specializes in religious merchandise?

When two sets of values are blended together in this manner, there's a good chance that neither one will survive intact. Separation of church and state goes out the window when God gets thrown into the mix. Biblical principles fall by the wayside under pressure to achieve financial success.

This doesn't mean you shouldn't wear your "Got Jesus?" T-shirt anymore — freedom of expression is another basic American value. Just think about what it is you'll be expressing.

Kelsey Landhuis is a senior English major from Cedar Rapids, Iowa

End of online streaming limits radio station's possibilities



Brenna McDermott

Since news of KTRM's departure from online streaming broke last week, I've been thinking about its predicament.

To stay online, the station must monitor a ridiculous amount of music in addition to the number of people listening to that music — which KTRM calls an impossible task. This has to be frustrating, especially after all the struggles KTRM went through last year to get its station set up. After all, online radio is very accessible to students. KTRM still broadcasts on the normal radio, but that doesn't provide nearly as much exposure.

Broadcasting the station only on the radio might work fine in a place like St. Louis, where driving a good distance is an everyday necessity and having some tunes is necessary as well. But here in Kirksville, I don't drive my car more than once or twice a week. And even then, anywhere I would

go is reachable within 10 minutes. Even most students who live off campus are within walking or biking distance of Truman's campus. That isn't much exposure for the DJs and producers who work so hard to bring us entertainment. Unfortunately, radio just isn't the way to reach students in a small college town like Kirksville. In fact, I would say that traditional radio is almost pointless here. Why broadcast something students won't hear?

So online radio is the best way for KTRM to reach students' ears. Without it, a campus organization, a student-run business underneath the umbrella of our University, is rendered useless.

When will the University start shielding KTRM from the elements?

I've heard no mention of the University offering assistance or suggesting ideas to help the radio station. It is a student organization, so why aren't the people who help students helping? The only way KTRM will prosper is to keep up with the technology of radio. The University should be helping KTRM shoulder the cost of online radio. And if the problem isn't cost, but the detailed record keeping, can't our school find a way to help keep those records? Whether by buying a needed filter, paying students to help KTRM collect

its data or offering scholarship jobs to students in exchange for their services to the station, the University must step in, at least temporarily, to help KTRM stay relevant.

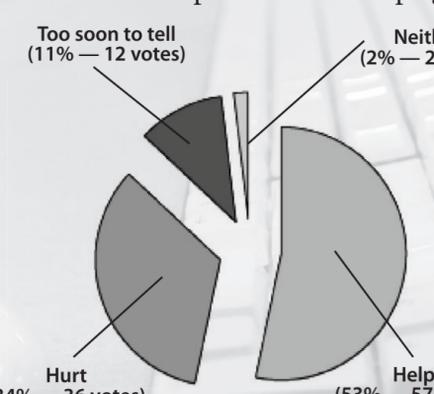
Some people might argue that it isn't the responsibility of the University to help KTRM. Maybe it isn't the University's responsibility, but it is in the University's best interest. Having a state-of-the-art, student-run, online streaming, successful radio station is just one more attribute Truman can advertise to potential students. It shows off students' commitment, helps boost the image of the communication department and shows that although Truman is a small school, it still can have successful programs that rival those of other schools.

KTRM is a great aspect of student life at Truman, but without the new technologies available to the radio station, this no longer will be the case. The station will become a fossil. The University needs to keep that from happening by offering assistance to KTRM. This station is an organization for entertaining the student body, so please don't stop the music.

Brenna McDermott is a sophomore English and political science major from St. Louis, Mo.

WEB POLL

Do you think John McCain's vice presidential choice will help or hurt his campaign?



This week's question:
Have you ever attended a home football game at Truman?

Vote online at trumanindex.com