

**Reply to the Comments of Referee 2 on “Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?: Despite evidence to the contrary, the American Economic Review concluded that all was well with its archive”**

I thank the referee for his considered remarks.

Referee’s preliminary remark: “the AER has recognized the problems with its archive and is recruiting for a data editor. That renders the investigative reporting aspect of the paper moot.”

My response: By no means is the investigative aspect rendered moot. Given the AER editors’ collective thirty-year track record of paying mere lip service the idea of reproducibility while continuing to publish articles that are not reproducible, are we to believe that this time the AER is really going to do something? We should believe it when the AER archive is independently audited and shown to be publishing reproducible research.

I now respond to the referee’s numbered points.

(1) The past is prologue. The AER has a thirty-year track record of pretending to care about replicability, meanwhile publishing articles that only occasionally are reproducible. Moffit is not the only AER editor who valued replication in name only.

(2) “Hiring someone with no experience” is not about Glandon, but about Moffit and the way that various AER editors have repeatedly refused to ensure that they publish reproducible research.

The referee remarks: “I don’t see working with archives as being experience that would be expected of any economist, at least not at that time. The point is really that we need people who specialize in this so that going forward we can audit archives.”

My response: Such experience would not be expected of any economist, but there were several economists who had such experience at that time, and Moffit should have chosen one of them. Hiring a grad student with no experience is something that might be expected of a C journal, not the flagship journal of the profession. Of course, an experienced person would almost certainly have concluded that the archive was not working, and perhaps that’s why an experienced person was not selected.

(3) Moffit is the person who publicly used the audit to assure readers that the archive was functioning well. It was not the editorial board who did so, neither was it the executive committee. There is no reason to tar them for something that Moffit did.

(4) I shall have to consider this and decide whether to reorganize the paper.

(5) The binary rule needs to allow for differences, as Referee One (Chang) also notes. I will clear this up in my rewrite.

(6) Actually, a perfect archive would have made her work reproducible. It’s not just “data and code” but a data dictionary, including rules for hand-crafted variables. I shall have to explicitly mention this.