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On Zoom

**RESEARCH
SEMINAR**



EMPOWERING CHANGEMAKERS FOR A BETTER SOCIETY

**“COUNT EVERY WORD AND MAKE EVERY WORD COUNT:
A CRITIQUE OF THE DIKTAT OF CONCISION IMPOSED BY ACADEMIC
JOURNALS, AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE PRODUCTION OF SCIENTIFIC
KNOWLEDGE”**

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BY YVES GENDRON – UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL

ABSTRACT

The great majority of academic accounting and management journals now set length limits for submissions and/or insist on the importance of using a concise style. Our goal in this essay is to highlight the potential damaging side-effects of the increasingly widespread calculative practice of counting words in academic publishing. To this end, we undertake a critical analysis of a rarely studied body of literature, including but not limited to guides for authors, journal editorials, editors’ decision letters, etc. Through our arguments we show that what we call the “diktat of concision” as it is currently imposed on authors should be understood as an integral part of the system it forms with the performatization of science in the neoliberal age, and the propagation of the positivist approach and practices in the world of research. In the end, our analysis contributes to the academic literature on the detrimental consequences certain accounting “technologies” have for the production of knowledge. We therefore seek to engage with a literature that problematizes the supposed neutrality and harmlessness of accounting technologies in the broadest sense.