

Do you write boring papers? Of course not. Your papers are interesting. Right? Not right? Well, maybe once in a while a manuscript escapes that's a bit less than interesting, but it's certainly not boring. Right? How could your papers be boring? Your work's not boring, so your writing must not be boring. You read and reread your manuscripts, and each is interesting, concise, valuable, maybe even exciting. (Wow! Let's not get carried away.) In addition, your colleagues always say, "Interesting paper!" So, tell me, if your writing isn't boring, what is the font of boring papers? Other people, you say.

Consider other-people-not-me write boring papers. I have researched it. I've asked and been given the same answer: other people. Confused, I searched for the "other people" and have yet to find any. This means the density of "other people" is sparse and seemingly below the threshold for producing the existing density of boring papers. Hence, the other-people-not-me explanation fails.

So, we come back to same question: Who produces the boring papers? After further research, the only answers are: (a) a new property of the ether, that undetectable, all-pervasive "stuff" that 19th century scientists originally manifested to explain the confusing behavior of electromagnetism; or (b) there are those among us who are not aware of the condition of their papers! We can safely eliminate the former—just think of the authorship and copyright problems it would cause. Would you trust a paper written by undetectable stuff? Unfortunately, that leaves only the latter.

Are you wondering whether you are a member of that club? Perhaps it would help if you took a membership or qualification test. Funny thing, I just happen to have a boring test. However, first, let's make sure we're all on the same page. What makes something boring? Eric Haseltine writes ("The beauty of boredom" in the March 2000 issue of

good introductions? (Readers want