



Research in practice(s),
seminar of April 1, 2025

Research Excellence à la Française

Fifty How-Tos for Students and Professionals

Minh Ha-Duong, CNRS, CIRED

Introduction



<https://minh.haduong.com/realf.html>

Why document practices?

- Facilitate integration of newcomers
- Transform chaos into reproducible processes
- Create an accessible reference guide

Objective: Share proven methods to excel in the French system

Structure of the presentation

1. Documentary quality as a sign of excellence
2. Notes on the French research landscape
3. Build your scientific reputation
4. AI in the research production cycle
5. Conclusion: sustainable excellence

1: Documentary quality (ch. 1)

RE: ECONOMICS JOURNAL SUBMISSION
WE HAVE RECEIVED YOUR MANUSCRIPT
"THE BIZARRE ECONOMICS OF ACADEMIC
PUBLISHING: WHY VOLUNTEER PEER
REVIEWERS SHOULD RISE UP AND DEMAND
PAYMENT FROM FOR-PROFIT JOURNALS."
WE HAVE ELECTED NOT TO SEND IT
OUT FOR REVIEW.



The four levels of quality

1. **Universal identification:** Title + Author + Date
2. **Acceptable:** + On time + Format + Language corrected + Paginated...
3. **Careful:** + Abstract + Proofread + Legal + Bibliography...
4. **Professional:** + Styles + Compliant + Re-proofread + Reproducible + Metadata...

Choose a level for each version.

In practice: Improving a draft

1. Proofread while cleaning up layout with styles
2. Reorganize sections & paragraphs (conclusion -> intro)
3. (Re)think the main contribution and key messages
4. Regenerate abstract, section titles
5. Regenerate the title (tournament method)
6. Print and lay out the paper plan

When in doubt, correct it (peer review would notice).

Tournament method: compare 16 title proposals in elimination rounds and give me the top three

Zotero: Your external memory

- Automatic import of metadata
- Storage of complete PDFs
- Management of citations and bibliographies
- Thematic collections vs. tags
- Synchronization between devices and collaboration

Investing today = hundreds of hours saved tomorrow

[My library](#)

2: The French research landscape (ch. 5)



MME CURIE AND HER DAUGHTER IRÈNE. 1925

The French research ecosystem

- **National institutes** (CNRS, CIRAD...): excellence in research
- **Universities** (Sorbonne, Paris Saclay...): mass higher education
- **Grandes écoles** (Ponts, Agro...): training of elites
- **Companies**: applied research and development
- **Joint Research Units (UMR)**: laboratory with multiple supervisory bodies

Demonstration Thursday

Research careers French-style

- **Teacher-researcher:** Associate Professor → Professor
- **Full-time researcher:** Research Fellow → Research Director

Characteristics:

- Highly competitive recruitment
- Tenure from entry
- Peer evaluation
- Guaranteed academic freedom

Cultural codes for success

- Formal use of "vous" until invited to use "tu"
- Valuing intellectual integrity and critical debate
- French work-life balance
- Importance of convivial moments (coffee, lunch)

3: Building your scientific reputation (ch. 8 and 9)

LE
MONDE
DE
M^R DESCARTES,
OU,
LE TRAITÉ DE LA
LUMIERE
ET
DES AUTRES PRINCIPAUX
objets des Sens.

*Avec un Discours de l'Action des Corps,
& un autre des Fièvres, composez
selon les principes du même Auteur.*



A PARIS,
Chez Michel Bobin & Nicolas le Gras, au
troisième pillier de la grand'Salle du Palais,
à l'Espérance & à L. Couronnée.

M. DC. LXIV.
Avec Privilège du Roy.

Ne extra hanc Bibliothecam efferatur.
Ex obedientiâ.

Strategic publication

- Priority being cited > journal prestige
- Prepare a "hit list" of 5 target journals
- Deposit in HAL
- Never pay

Visibility and accessibility = more citations

<https://mjl.clarivate.com/manuscript-matcher>

Researcher's digital identity

- Choose a consistent "pen name"
- Create and maintain (add & deduplicate): ORCID, Google Scholar, RepEc
- Only sustainable practice: Your personal page on your domain

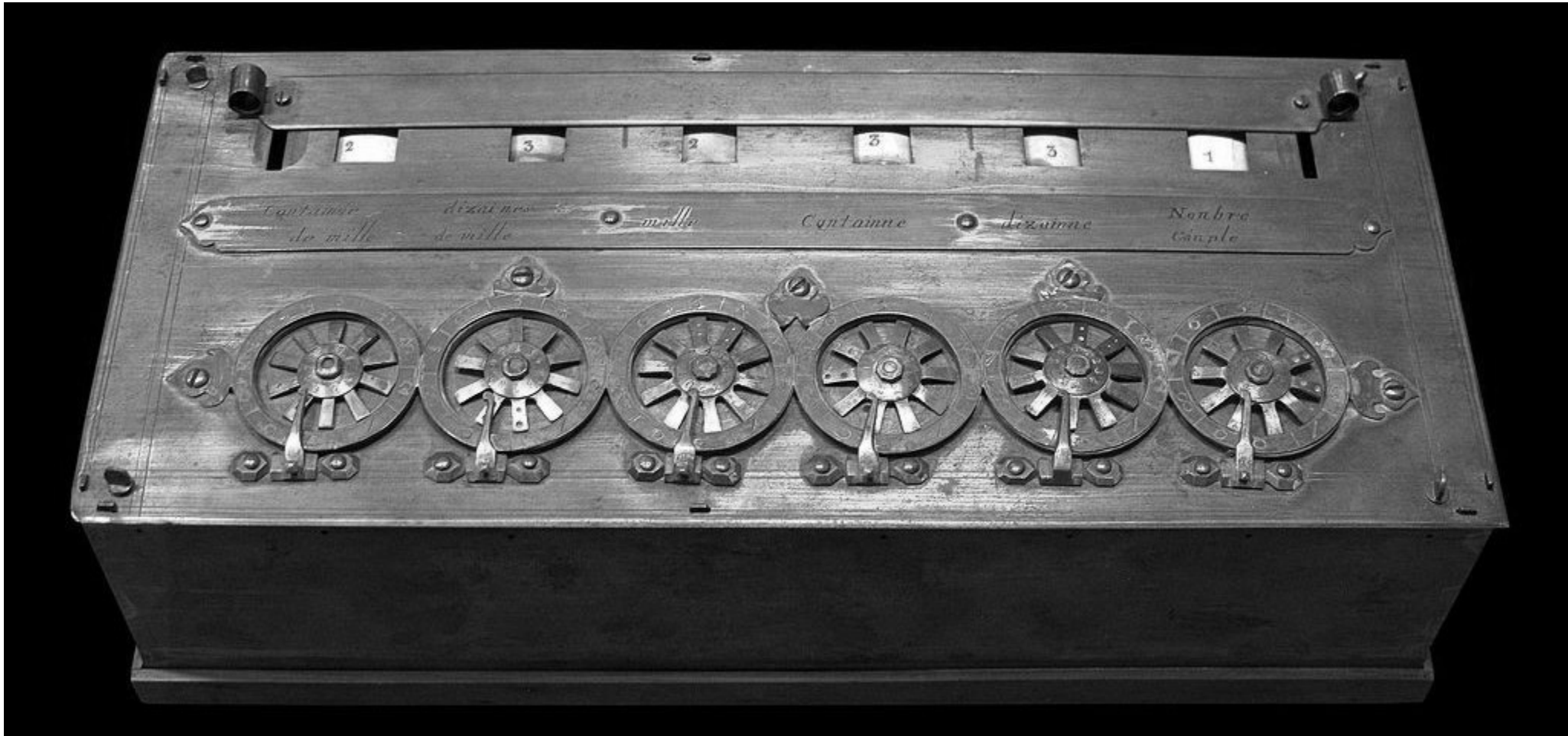
Control what's visible when someone "googles" you

Effective communication

- **Presentations:** Adapt to audience and format
- **Media interviews:** Your main message (+ bridge to the question)
- **Social media:** Targeted and coherent strategy
- **Teaching:** Rigorous and adaptive preparation

Each interaction contributes to your personal brand

4: AI in the research production cycle (ch. 2 and 3)



From idea to publication

1. Initial discussion -> defining the contribution
2. Literature review -> angle and key messages
3. Data collection and analysis -> Technical report, figures, tables
4. Internal then external presentations -> Working document
5. Archiving, submission and revisions -> Accepted version

In practice: numerous back-and-forths

AI tools

1. Initial discussion: chat with Research-Augmented Generation
2. Literature review: Deep research agents
3. Data collection and analysis: Coder agents
4. Internal and external presentations: Language tools

Models prefer Markdown format

Research-Augmented Generation (RAG)

- The LLM will use reference documents in addition to its knowledge
- Documents: Provided by the user or found on the web

Claude Projects, Bot de Poe, OpenAI GPTs, NotebookLM...

Source management remains manual: selection, format

Deep Research agents for literature review

- The system will develop a research plan, implement it, and present the results.
- Best: [ChatGPT 4.5](#)
- Specialized: [Scispace](#)
- Beta: [Manus](#)

Coder agents

- AI expert in [data science](#).
- AI expert in [Python](#).

Conclusion: sustainable excellence (ch. 11)

YOUR FUTURE IS HARD TO SEE.
I CAN MAKE OUT SOME HAZY
DETAILS IN THE CENTER, BUT
THE OFF-AXIS COMPONENTS
ARE PARTICULARLY UNCLEAR.



WIZARDS NEVER DID FIGURE OUT
HOW TO FIX SPHERICAL ABERRATION

Fundamentals of productivity

- Quality sleep (4-6 complete cycles per night)
- Air quality and work environment
- Hybrid time management: paper + digital
- Researcher/manager balance

Table of Contents

Act I. Quality production.....	
Chapter 1 How to write quality manuscripts.....	
How-to 1: Identify all documents.....	
How-to 2: Deliver a plausibly acceptable document.....	
How-to 3: Write a document carefully.....	
How-to 4: Write professionally.....	
How-to 5: Manuscript-improving tips.....	
How-to 6: Typography 101, staying safe with type.....	
How-to 7: Add copyleft, relevant and beautiful photos.....	
Chapter 2 How to research.....	
How-to 8: Activities in the research production cycle.....	
How-to 9: Deliverables in the research production cycle.....	
How-to 10: Get the grants.....	
How-to 11: Write a reading note.....	
How-to 12: Self-archive electronic supplements in Zenodo.....	
Chapter 3 How to use AI assistants.....	
How-to 13: Discuss with a language model.....	
How-to 14: Prompt to summarize a paper.....	
How-to 15: Polish text with an online language tool.....	
How-to 16: Prompt to polish an academic text.....	
How-to 17: Leverage AI for data analysis.....	
Chapter 4 How to manage your e-library.....	
How-to 18: Access paywalled articles.....	
How-to 19: Manage documentation 1 - use an e-library.....	
How-to 20: Manage documentation 2 – know the core fields.....	
How-to 21: Manage documentation 3 - Document types.....	
How-to 22: Manage documentation 4 – e-library hygiene.....	

Entracte.....	
Chapter 5 The French research landscape.....	
Note 23: The French research institutions.....	
Note 24: Research careers à la Française.....	
Note 25: The European higher education progression.....	
How-to 26: Work like a French.....	
Note 27: A humanist way to excellence.....	
What One Needs for Happiness.....	
Act II. Win the reputation game.....	
Chapter 6 How to join a research group.....	
How-to 28: Setup a doctoral project.....	
How-to 29: Assemble a complete application.....	
How-to 30: Onboard in person.....	
How-to 31: Onboard the team's IT.....	
How-to 32: Keep colleagues friendly.....	
Chapter 7 How to present your work.....	
How-to 33: Choose a venue to present.....	
How-to 34: Pack your conference bag.....	
How-to 35: Attend a conference.....	
How-to 36: Wrap up after an event.....	
How-to 37: Get refund of expenses.....	
Chapter 8 How to Publish.....	
How-to 38: Choose journals to submit to.....	
How-to 39: Submit a manuscript.....	
How-to 40: Self-archive the preprint.....	
How-to 41: Revise a manuscript.....	
How-to 42: Clean up after acceptance / publication.....	

Chapter 9 How to optimize your personal brand?.....	61
How-to 43: Choose a pen name and own your ORCID.....	62
How-to 44: Archive all your productions.....	63
How-to 45: Use internet and social networks.....	64
How-to 46: Formalize your communication strategy.....	65
How-to 47: Accept an interview request.....	66
Chapter 10 How to speak.....	67
How-to 48: Speak clearly.....	68
How-to 49: Speak without violence.....	69
How-to 50: Answer a question in the media.....	70
How-to 51: Prepare a teaching intervention.....	71
Afterword.....	73
Print exclusive bonus.....	75
Chapter 11: Productivity life hacks.....	75
Note 52: The universal key to excellence.....	76
How-to 53: Sleep well.....	77
How-to 54: Breath quality air.....	78
How-to 55: Manage time productively.....	79
How-to 56: Break procrastination and get started.....	80
How-to 57: Control stress at work.....	81

Questions and discussion

What experience would you like to share about France, research, or AI?

Contact: minh.ha-duong@cnsr.fr

Book available: <https://minh.haduong.com/real.html>

Research excellence
à la Française

Fifty How-Tos for Students and Professionals

MINH HA-DUONG

