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Philosophy of Science in the Public Interest: Useful Knowledge and the Common Good

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Abstract

The standard of disinterested objectivity embedded within the US Data Quality Act (2001) has been used by corporate and political interests as a way to limit the dissemination of scientific research results that conflict with their goals. This is an issue that philosophers of science can, and should, publicly address because it involves an evaluation of the strength and adequacy of evidence. Analysis of arguments from a philosophical tradition that defended a concept of useful knowledge (later displaced by Logical Empiricism) is used here to suggest how the legitimacy of scientific findings can be supported in the absence of disinterested objectivity.

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