



Graduate Student Blog *by and for math graduate students*



The AMS Graduate Student Blog, by and for math graduate students, includes puzzles and a variety of interesting columns, such as the one from October 2016 excerpted below.

blogs.ams.org/mathgradblog.

A Game With Mirrors

by DJ Bruce, University of Wisconsin

Throughout my grad school experience, from conference registration forms and university-wide surveys to actual grad school applications themselves, I have often run into the following question:

Gender? *

Male

Female

Always making me think: Why is this still a thing?

Okay, certainly there are legitimate reasons to collect demographic information, including information regarding gender. ... However, why must this information be collected in such biased fashion?

... As phrased above, the question “Gender?” takes complexities and nuances and smashes them; smashes them into two extremely narrow little circles. It takes individuals and smashes their agency, forcing them to squeeze themselves into a narrow space predefined by someone else.

Moreover, to some who are “gender-expansive,” this question is yet another instance of someone—a colleague, a peer, a fellow mathematician—neither recognizing nor accepting part of who they are.

... As the Human Rights Campaign notes, the least restrictive and most preferable option is to allow individuals to self-identify. For example, by re-phrasing the question as follows:

Gender? *

Your answer

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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