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Global Warming Scandal Makes Scientific Progress More Difficult, Experts Say

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The trustworthiness of the scientific community's global warming data pool is being called into question as the scandal over climate data continues to unfold.

The latest revelation came on Sunday with the publication of a report by *The Sunday Times* of London that scientists at the University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit in the United Kingdom confessed to [throwing out most of the raw temperature data](#) on which the theory of global warming is founded.

The discarded data isn't lost permanently, since archives exist in other locations, notably servers at the [Global Historical Climatology Network](#). Yet CRU's actions make it more challenging for other scientists to cross-check the facts.

"They are making scientific progress more difficult now," says Willie Soon, a physicist, astronomer and climate researcher at the solar and stellar physics division of the Harvard University-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. "This is a shameful, dark day for science," he said in an interview with FoxNews.com.

Soon also suggested that there has been systemic suppression of dissenting opinion among scientists in the climate change community, ranging from social snubs to e-mail stalking and even threats of harm.

[The Climatic Research Unit \(CRU\)](#) was forced to reveal the loss of data from weather stations around the world after it was sought under a U.K. freedom of information law. In a statement now on its Web site, the CRU said: "We do not hold the original raw data but only the value-added — quality controlled and homogenized — data."

Many in the environmental policy community are outraged about the disclosure that the data has been lost. "The scientific process has become so appallingly corrupted," James M. Taylor, senior fellow in environment policy at The Heartland Institute, told FoxNews.com.

Heartland is a libertarian think tank in Chicago that recently produced a conference featuring scientists and policymakers, like Jose Maria Aznar, the former prime minister of Spain, and Václav Klaus, the president of the Czech Republic, who dispute the theory of global warming.

The report in the *Times* quoted Roger Pielke, a professor of environmental studies at the University of Colorado, who requested the original records from CRU.

"The CRU is basically saying, 'Trust us.' So much for settling questions and resolving debates with science," Pielke told the *Times*. He did not return repeated phone calls seeking additional comment. The university's publicist also was unable to answer additional questions about the story.

"This closed-door conspiracy is harming everyone," says Soon. "I thought I had seen it all. Now I have."

A back story is also starting to emerge, depicting a rough world of suppression of dissenting opinion. Soon, who has been involved in climate change research for 15 years and has published in the field, said there was a general consensus that global warming was possible in the late 1990s. But at the time, the research community wanted to look back not just 150 years but 1,000 years, to see what the long-term trends had been.

Soon says some scientists became staunch advocates for their position that global warming was occurring, and that they dug in and started refusing to publish papers with contradictory viewpoints.

"I read a paper on increasing heat in the ocean and asked the scientist in France for the backup data," Soon says. "She told me she did not distribute data to people who didn't agree with her conclusions."

Soon says he has been victimized by other "ugly" personal attacks from leading scientists in the global warming world when he has simply raised questions, as any scientific colleague would, about the veracity of the data.

"Seeing all of this controversy in the news is no different than dealing with them in person," he said. "There's a lot of personal ugliness."

Taylor, who is also outspoken in his questioning of climate change theory, says he too has encountered ugliness from global warming enthusiasts, including "e-mail stalking" and "people making thinly veiled threats to physically harm me and my family." He said his opponents at public forums have refused to shake his hand or even acknowledge his presence.

Much scientific research corroborates what the CRU has been reporting, despite the missing data. "It's true that GISS (NASA's [Goddard Institute for Space Studies](#)) and NOAA ([National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#)) ground-based temperature reports show temperature increases similar to CRU," Taylor said.

But then the CRU scandal erupted.

Hackers uncovered e-mails between leading global warming advocates, which expressed concerns that the temperature figures from the last decade simply did not demonstrate that global warming was continuing, as theorized.

Now, some critics are questioning even the seemingly reliable data from the U.S. government.

"The GISS and NOAA reports suffer from the same reliability concerns as the CRU ground-based temperature reports," Taylor says. "And, more importantly, are similarly staffed by outspoken global warming activists who are likely engaging in the same data rigging and data hiding as CRU."

But global warming backers aren't so sure.

"I don't think this is a big deal," Nick Berning, director of public advocacy and media relations for

Friends of the Earth, an environmental group, based in Washington D.C., said. "These are people who want to get their panties in a bunch, so they've gotten their panties in a bunch."

Editor's Note: An earlier version of this story incorrectly implied that the Climatic Research Unit had lost climate-change data forever. In fact, the data is still stored on servers outside of the CRU.

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