

October 29, 2003 2:30 p.m.
Editor, USA Today

We write to address false statements in the piece "Researchers question key global-warming study" (USA Today, October 29, 2003), by Nick Schulz of TechCentralStation. We also wish to inform your readers that late 20th century warming is unprecedented not only in the past six centuries (as shown by Mann and colleagues in 1998), but at least the past two millennia (see attached graph, which we request that you publish).

Mr. Schulz makes the false accusation that Dr. Michael Mann, lead author of the leading studies on 20th century warming, "never made his data available online nor did many of the earlier researchers whose data Mann relied upon for his research." In fact, the data used by Mann and colleagues have been in the public domain for nearly two years, at the readily accessible website: <ftp://holocene.evsc.virginia.edu/pub/MBH98/>.

Mr. Schulz draws on a recent article by Stephen McIntyre and Ross McKittrick that appears to contradict Mann's earlier work and the conclusion that the Northern Hemisphere is warming. Unfortunately, the data on which the McIntyre & McKittrick analysis was based, which was forwarded to them by a colleague of Mann's at the request of McIntyre & McKittrick, was inadvertently scrambled during tabulation for transmission to them, rendering the data for earlier centuries useless. Had McIntyre and McKittrick directly downloaded the data from the publicly available website which they were encouraged to do by Mann's team this would not have occurred.

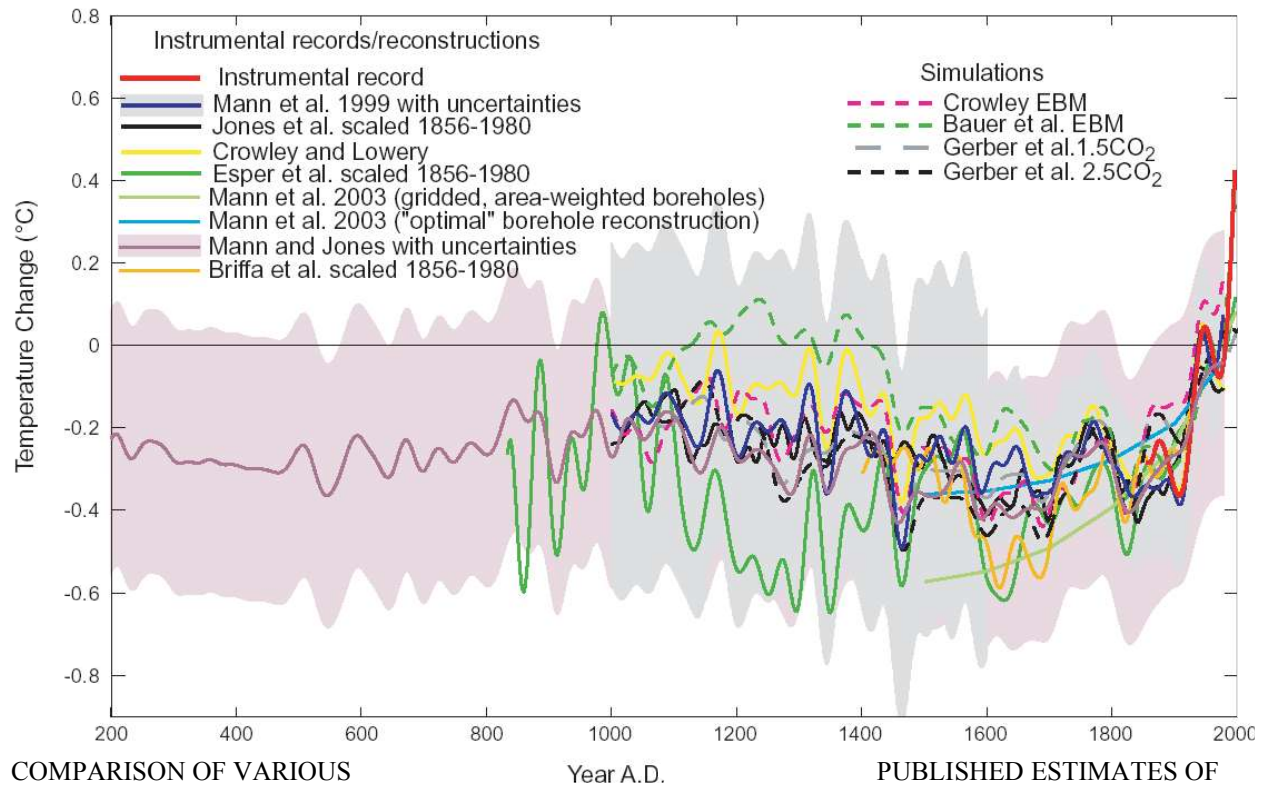
McIntyre & McKittrick then applied a flawed methodology to the scrambled data, and reached mistaken conclusions wildly at odds with the many peer-reviewed scientific studies.

Had the researchers themselves been experts, had they sought comments in advance from experts in the field (including Dr. Mann), had they submitted their paper to a reputable scientific journal all of which are standard procedures in scientific publication, the flaws would have been discovered. Instead, the authors, who are not scientists--one is a mining executive, the other an economist - published their article in a social science magazine that does not apply widely accepted standards of review by scientific experts.

Had Mr Schultz followed the standard procedure of getting his article reviewed, it would have become apparent that there was a problem with his story. Considering how such inaccuracies are propagated, it is perhaps relevant that Mr. Schulz's website, TechCentralStation.com, receives considerable funding from Exxon-Mobil, a corporation that has lobbied aggressively against caps on greenhouse gas emissions at home and abroad. In contrast, the notion that the Earth is warming has been endorsed not only by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) but also by the United States National Academy of Sciences, in a report prepared at the request of President George Bush.

Michael Mann, Dept. of Environmental Sciences, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.
Raymond Bradley, Dept. of Geosciences, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA.
Keith Briffa, Philip Jones, Climatic Research Unit, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK.
Malcolm Hughes, Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

(FIGURE ON FOLLOWING PAGE)



COMPARISON OF VARIOUS PUBLISHED ESTIMATES OF NORTHERN HEMISPHERE TEMPERATURE CHANGES OVER THE PAST ONE-TO-TWO MILLENNIA. GRAY SHADING INDICATES UNCERTAINTIES.

Reprinted from "On Past Temperatures and Anomalous Late 20th Century Warmth" by M.E. Mann, C.M. Ammann, R.S. Bradley, K.R. Briffa, T.J. Crowley, M.K. Hughes, P.D. Jones, M. Oppenheimer, T.J. Osborn, J.T. Overpeck, S. Rutherford, K.E. Trenberth, T.M.L Wigley, in the journal *Eos*, 84, 256-258, 2003 [(C) American Geophysical Union].