

Want to create a scandal? Just add “gate” to the end of any noun. Climategate is a good example. Real Climate has an excellent [post](#) dissecting the charges of error in the IPCC report, which turn out to be quite insignificant (and some of them not even errors at all.) Of course, if you come through three large dense volumes carefully enough, you can find some glitches.

For example, here’s the scoop on one of the few actual errors, on Himalayan glaciers:

Himalayan glaciers: In a regional chapter on Asia in Volume 2, written by authors from the region, it was erroneously stated that 80% of Himalayan glacier area would very likely be gone by 2035. This is of course not the proper IPCC projection of future glacier decline, which is found in Volume 1 of the report. There we find a 45-page, perfectly valid chapter on glaciers, snow and ice (Chapter 4), with the authors including leading glacier experts (such as our colleague Georg Kaser from Austria, who first discovered the Himalaya error in the WG2 report). . . . The problem is that a WG2 chapter, instead of relying on the proper IPCC projections from their WG1 colleagues, cited an unreliable outside source in one place. Fixing this error involves deleting two sentences on page 493 of the WG2 report.

Of course, as previous posts have indicated, the real question isn’t substantive but PR. And the real problem isn’t even that — it’s a political culture that makes spin so much more important than substance. *And perhaps even more fundamentally, an education system that makes it possible for so many millions of Americans to lack any understanding of science, including such basic questions as how the human race got to be here.* Of course, even best efforts sometimes fall on barren soil — don’t forget that Sarah Palin’s father was a science teacher.