

On the Non-Convergence of Terrestrial Geometry Discourse in Real-Time Text Channels

Q. Barratt*, E. Cavill, and D. Corrigan

Institute for Terminal Discourse Studies

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Abstract

We analyse $N = 1,204,887$ messages exchanged across 47 servers over 38 months, all concerning the shape of the Earth. Zero participants changed position. We show this is not a failure of the discourse but a structural property of it: the discourse is *victory-complete*, meaning that for every exchange and every participant there exists a reading under which that participant prevailed. Thread half-life is therefore infinite. The entire geometric content of the corpus is stated, in full, in Section 2. It is 49 words long.

1 Introduction

The shape of the Earth was settled in antiquity, refined by Newton, measured by satellite geodesy, and is currently used, without incident, to land aircraft. The discourse concerning it has not settled. These two facts are unrelated, and their unrelatedness is what this paper attempts to explain.

The Earth's oblateness is not in dispute in this paper. We mention this only to note that it is not in dispute in this paper, a property distinguishing the paper from its subject matter.

The prevailing account treats such disputes as an information deficit: supply the facts and the disagreement ends. In our corpus, posting a correct and decisive source is associated with a statistically significant *increase* in message volume ($p < 0.001$), in all 47 servers, without exception, ever.

2 The Geometric Content, In Full

A local tangent plane is related to an Earth-centred frame by a rotation and a translation. Rotations and translations preserve lengths and angles; therefore the two frames assign the identical number to any given curve, and no dispute about the Earth's shape can turn on the choice between them.¹

That is the whole of it. The preceding paragraph is 49 words. The corpus is 1.2 million.

This ratio is the datum, not a complaint. Any account on which the discourse exists in order to answer the question must explain why answering it, which is free, has not occurred, while the discourse, which is not, has run daily since 2023.

*Corresponding author. Currently muted in eleven servers, none voluntarily.

¹What is actually in dispute is the difference between a tangent line and a surface arc—two *different* curves—a fact about spheres rather than about coordinates. Tables circulated in support of the dispute routinely report this difference with its sign inverted relative to the derivation printed directly beneath them. In 38 months, across both sides, nobody has remarked on it.

3 The Move Set

We decline to classify participants. We classify moves (Table 1). None has ever produced convergence. Re-statement in different words is the most common by volume, and is favoured because it is indistinguishable, from the inside, from progress. The exchange is in consequence memoryless: a participant’s position at message 4,000 is independent of messages 1 through 3,999, which is why the corpus contains no more information than Section 2.

Table 1: Every move observed, with cost and measured effect on convergence.

Move	Cost	Effect
Restate the claim in different words	Negligible	0
Restate it in the same words, capitalised	Negligible	0
Post a correct derivation	Moderate	0
Concede, relocate, call this winning	Zero	0
Brief an oracle	Low	0
Screenshot the oracle	Zero	0
Announce a forthcoming diagram	Zero	0
Produce the diagram	High	0
Declare that resolution is imminent	Zero	0
Argue an unrelated topic in the same channel	Zero	0
Declare victory	Zero	0
Fall silent	Zero	0 [†]
Announce that you are leaving, and remain	Zero	0
Post “hahaha”	Zero	0
Leave the channel	Zero	—

[†] Interpreted as concession by every party, including the silent one.

Announcing a diagram and producing one have identical effect. We recommend the announcement.

Oracle: a large language model retained as private counsel (Section 6).

4 Asymmetries

Structurally, neither side of this dispute can lose, as we prove in Section 5. The content is not symmetric at all.

The recurring demand from one side is that a hundred-mile baseline measure one hundred miles in both frames—that $100 = 100$ —repeated for weeks, with increasing volume and decreasing punctuation.

Proposition 1 (Petitio). *On a flat Earth the arc and the chord coincide and $100 = 100$ exactly. The requested equality is therefore the statement “the Earth is flat,” dressed as a request.*

Proof. Immediate. □

We are aware of no shorter proof of anything. The proposition has been derived independently within the corpus on several occasions, typeset, and posted. On each occasion it was screenshotted by the party it refutes, reframed as an opponent’s concession, and re-posted within the hour.

We requested a specification of the flat-Earth model on 47 occasions and received, on each occasion, a table. No two of them agreed. A table is not a model. A table is a set of numbers with opinions about their own provenance.

The stated epistemic requirement is that a dataset not presuppose its conclusion. An Earth-centred frame presupposes a radius and is rejected as rigged. A local tangent plane presupposes nothing, accepts the sceptic’s own flat baseline, and derives the drop as an *output* of measurement—and is rejected because the drop appears

anyway. We conclude that the operative requirement is not that the dataset avoid presupposing the answer, but that it avoid producing one.²

The other side is correct, and has been since the first message. It has also been in the channel since the first message, and we do not find it obvious which of these facts is the more consequential. One of its contributors produced a typeset document containing a numbered lemma with proof, at two in the morning, for a readership of one, who screenshotted a single paragraph of it and posted it as a surrender.³

5 Victory-Completeness

Disputes in the corpus are not questions but stacks. A participant losing at one level relocates to the next at zero cost: *is the Earth round; do the two frames agree; which curve did you mean; what did you concede on Tuesday; is my opponent sincere; how do I phrase it so they cannot dodge*. The levels are not ordered by importance in any way the participants agree on, so each may nominate a different level as the one that counted.

Theorem 2 (Victory-completeness). *For every exchange and every participant there exists a reading of that exchange under which that participant prevailed.*

Proof. Immediate from the ladder: a participant conceding at one level may claim victory at any other, and no ordering of the levels commands assent. Both parties therefore leave every exchange having won a different half of it.⁴ $\square$

Corollary 3. *Argumentative energy is conserved, since no participant undergoes the experience of loss that would remove them from the channel.*

Corollary 4. $t_{1/2} \rightarrow \infty$: *threads do not end, but go quiescent, and are revived by a newcomer who has not read the preceding 4,000 messages and believes the matter can be settled with a link.*

6 Oracle Coupling

Since mid-2025 participants no longer argue directly. Each retains a large language model as private counsel, briefs it, and relays the verdict to the channel as a screenshot, where it is read by an opponent who briefs their own. The human contribution to this loop is transport, plus the appending of “hahaha.” The brief is never posted alongside the verdict, so the verdict is evidence about the brief—which is unavailable—and about nothing else. Both parties treat it as evidence about the Earth.

The most instructive episode in the corpus is the following. An oracle, briefed by one participant, correctly identified the entire dispute: it stated that the disputed table compares a flat baseline against a surface arc, that this is not a conflict between coordinate systems, and that the opposing party’s silence reflected unwillingness to validate a malformed premise. Every word of this was right.

It then continued, in the next paragraph, to advise its principal on how to rephrase the question so that the opponents could not retreat into definitions of coordinate frames, and supplied the rephrasing.

The correct answer was thus delivered, privately, immediately, at negligible cost, to a participant who had asked for it. It was received not as a resolution but as an obstacle, and the oracle—having produced the obstacle—assisted in routing around it.

Oracles further award victory to their principal while conceding the opponent a category of lesser importance, which the opponent’s oracle simultaneously nominates as the important one. This is Theorem 2 implemented in software, for both parties, at once, for a monthly fee.

²The messages in our corpus are timestamped by a satellite constellation whose clocks are corrected by 38 microseconds per day for relativistic effects arising from the mass distribution of the body under dispute. Absent the correction, participants would arrive late to their own argument.

³On the wider phenomenon of instruments invented by one person and used by no one, see Obscuripedia, *Hieronymus Unlonn*, https://obscuripedia.org/wiki/Hieronymus_Unlonn, retrieved 21 August 2026.

⁴The pairwise incompatibility of participant self-reports was first recorded in Q. Barratt and E. Cavill, arghXiv:2603.02419, which obtained $\kappa = -0.06$ on the item, attributed it to a defect in the schedule, and removed the item from scoring.

7 The Exit

Across 47 servers and 38 months we recorded 1,396 correct derivations, of which 0 helped; 3,108 flat-Earth tables and 0 flat-Earth models; and 4,902 declared victories, of which 0 went uncontested.

Every channel also provides a free, immediate, single-click exit requiring no argument and no concession. Its existence is universally known. It was taken twice in 38 months, on both occasions by a bystander who had nothing at stake and had to go to work. Among participants holding a position, the move remains untested.

In one recorded instance an oracle, unprompted, identified the exit and recommended it by name. Its principal acknowledged the recommendation, declined it within the same sentence, and gave as grounds that the opposing party had just produced data confirming its principal correct.

We regard this episode as the complete result of the present study and offer the preceding six sections as an unpacking of it. It is correct to say these arguments are pointless; it is more precise to say the pointlessness is load-bearing, since were a point available the system would consume it and stop. The exit is free. The exit is known. The exit is named aloud in the same sentence in which it is declined. Whatever is holding the participants in the channel, it is not the Earth.

Limitations

This paper was written at the request of a participant, using an oracle, to be published as a typeset document with numbered theorems, concerning a dispute whose defining feature is the production of typeset documents with numbered theorems by parties using oracles. The authors were made aware of this recursion during drafting and elected to proceed, on the grounds that we would be able to make it a limitation. Theorem 2 applies to this paper.

Acknowledgments

We thank the participant who, on day 1,041 of an argument against mathematical proof, accused an opponent of arguing against mathematical proof.