

Logical Ghost Hunting

An article by Neal Bardell for [Ghost Science](#)

Having been in the field of ghost investigations for over 10 years, I have come across my fair share of books related to the subject and when I was starting out as a young and impressionable 20 year old, I took on board a lot of what these so-called experts had written.

In the years that have passed since then, and with age, I hope I have grown a little wiser. Instead of reading ghost hunting books, I now prefer to download the latest episode of [Skeptoid](#), a skeptic and critical thinking podcast, and listen to author, Brian Dunning, tear apart the latest piece of pseudoscience to hit the web. In turn, this has led me to start thinking about ghosts and other paranormal topics in a more critical light.

Now this makes me sound as if I have turned my back on the ghost hunting community and fallen into the arms of the skeptics and debunkers, which is kind of true. However, I still believe that there is the possibility that ghosts exist, we just need to apply some logic to our investigations.

For example, EMF meters are potentially helpful and very popular pieces of research equipment. They can help to indicate potential areas of high electro-magnetic activity which might provide an alternative explanation for some people's experiences – or highlight the poor circuitry of next door's TV! However, if I had a pound for every time I have seen a ghost hunter waving around an EMF meter thinking that it is a ghost detector, I would be a very rich man by now.

This is not meant as a slight against those ghost hunters, but as a community we need to have some form of education and that is partly what Ghost Science is about, trying to give a little bit of experiential knowledge back into the ghost hunting community. Hopefully, in time we can then throw off some of the stigma that skeptics and debunkers put our way.

Some of this criticism is well deserved. When I read in such book as Trent Brandon's "Ghost Hunters Bible - Definitive Edition" that EMF meters are listed under the heading of "Ghost Detection Devices", it make my skin crawl. The following is a quote from Brandon's book:

“EMF (Electro-Magnetic Field) Detectors:

These devices can pick up electronic and magnetic fields over different frequencies. When ghosts are present, they disrupt the electromagnetic fields.”¹

The first part of this statement is correct, EMF meters do measure electromagnetic fields, after all this is what they are designed to do. However, “When ghosts are present, they disrupt the electromagnetic fields”, is unhelpful and misleading. Ghosts do not disrupt any fields known to physics, that is simple fact. Any statement to the contrary is wrong.

Another point that I would like to draw your attention to in Brandon's book is his section about thermal scanners. Now I must admit that it is not totally clear if Brandon is talking about infra-red thermometers or thermal imaging devices. However, he does give us some clue by the price range that he suggests these devices will cost. He states that these thermal scanners will cost in the region of \$99 to \$500 which makes me believe that he is indeed talking about infra-red thermometers.

If this is the case, then once again he has spread more pop culture inaccuracies by stating that they can “save time by accurately pin pointing abnormal cold or hot spots in the area”.²

¹ Page 10, Trent Brandon, 'Ghost Hunter's Bible – Definitive Edition', 2002 (Publisher: [zerotime.com](#))

² Page 10, Trent Brandon, 'Ghost Hunter's Bible – Definitive Edition' 2002 (Publisher: [zerotime.com](#))

I am concerned that this statement makes it sound as if you can wave the device around and get an accurate reading. Again, this is not quite true.

The majority of these devices can only measure the temperature of a surface and not the ambient temperature of a small area.

Some people reading this will think that I am singling Trent Brandon out here. That is not my intention. However, Brandon's book does illustrate the sheer amount of misinformation that is out there, and is just the tip of the iceberg. When we venture onto the internet, we are bombarded with tips for ghost hunters. Some of these include placing talcum powder in an area where ghost activity is said to occur to try and capture the footsteps of said ghost.

For this method to work, the ghost has to be a solid physical object for it to leave any physical footprints in the talc. If ghosts were solid physical objects, surely science would have been able to capture evidence of them by now?

Again, I accept that all of this sounds very sceptical, but that mustn't be seen as a purely negative trait. As methodical researchers we should not just blindly accept everything that we see, hear or read.

When you hear of such ghost hunting tips, sit back and think about it for a while. Try to think of the physics behind the idea. Try to apply known scientific theories to it and try to explain it away.

A true sceptic is someone who looks at things in a critical light but remains open-minded to the idea that something unusual may be occurring. Is this not what all ghost hunters should be doing rather than automatically accepting the latest fad?

If the community were to think a little more critically and apply these thoughts into our investigations, we may just start to gain some respect and credibility for the field of ghost research and even ourselves.

Simply put: Logic is the order of the day!

Do you agree or disagree with my comments? Have you say on the [Ghost Science forums](#).