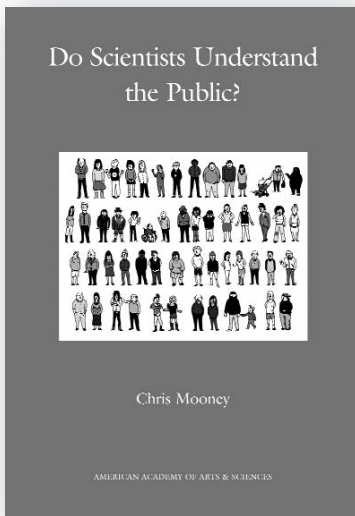


Science in American Society



Several recent Academy projects and studies focus on science in American society: How much does the public know about science and where does it get its information? Do scientists communicate effectively with the public about their work? What role do the media and our education system play in advancing Americans' scientific literacy?

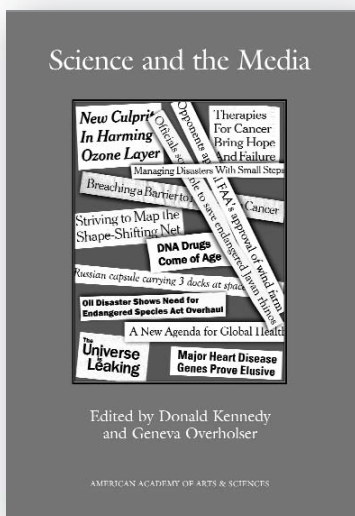
Two recent publications examine these questions.

Do Scientists Understand the Public? is based on the Academy study Improving the Scientific Community's Understanding of Public Concerns about Science and Technology. The volume explores scientists' understanding of their obligation to the broader social contexts in which their work is received; it also considers ways to improve engagement between scientific and public communities. Author **Chris Mooney**, a science journalist and contributing editor to *Science Progress*, contextualizes the discussions of four off-the-record workshops that examined subjects where there is considerable concern about scientific work: The Next Generation of the Internet, Public Perceptions of Nuclear Waste Repositories, The Spread of Personal Genetic Information, and The Risks and Benefits of Emerging Energy Technologies.

Mooney sums up the recommendations that came out of the workshops, asserting that members of the scientific community should demonstrate their interest in the public's views during the early stages of technology development; consider the public's value-based concerns in addition to technical concerns; employ data from social scientists to better understand public attitudes toward science and technology; and generate scientist-citizen dialogues to establish the public's trust.

The essay is reprinted in this issue of the *Bulletin* (see pages 5–14).

The Academy thanks the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation for its generous support of the project on Improving the Scientific Community's Understanding of Public Concerns about Science and Technology.



A second publication, *Science and the Media*, part of the Academy's project on The Media in Society, gathers scientists, journalists, and leaders of scientific institutions around the question of how to cultivate Americans' engagement with science and technology. The essays in this volume examine the responsibility of scientists, journalists, and public information officers in communicating about science and technology; demonstrate the relationship between education and scientific literacy; and address the conflicts between journalistic and scientific conventions. As coeditors **Donald Kennedy** (Stanford University) and **Geneva Overholser** (University of Southern California) state in their preface, "[Journalists'] need to grab and hold attention, to write tight stories or produce short segments, can come at the cost of context and nuance."

The volume emphasizes that as advances in science and technology become integral to public policy, widespread scientific literacy is essential to sound policy responses – on issues from climate change to energy policy to new methods of treating disease.

The volume's authors include **Alan Alda** (New York City), **Robert Bazell** (NBC News), **Rick E. Borchelt** (U.S. Department of Agriculture), **Cornelia Dean** (formerly of *The New York Times*), **Lynne T. Friedmann** (Friedmann Communications), **Alfred Hermida** (University of British Columbia Graduate School of Journalism), **Earle Holland** (Ohio State University), **Donald Kennedy** (Stanford University), **Jon D. Miller** (Michigan State University), **Cristine Russell** (Council for the Advancement of Science Writing and Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School), and **William A. Wulf** (University of Virginia).

The Media in Society project is supported by a generous grant from the Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands.

Online versions of these new publications are available on the Academy's website at <http://www.amacad.org/publications/occasional.aspx>. ■