



## Communication of science to non-scientists

Ângela Guimarães Pereira and Tiago de Sousa Pedrosa

In policy relevant science, the ways in which scientific information is communicated to relevant social actors becomes a primary task for those involved in promoting public engagement in the policy making processes. New forms of dialogue and new mechanisms for introducing scientific issues to (most likely) non-scientific audiences call for radical design of *interfaces* between the scientific processes and products and the audiences. Neither marketing solutions nor science education approaches are appropriate, because the objective is not to engage the public in the product of the research but rather making them part of the process. Such *interfaces* go beyond the “public understanding of science” idea - widely explored in literature - behind the so called “deficit model” deemed responsible for science controversy.

In practice communication of science for societal debate within a policy making process, consists of the identification in each case of elements that make relevant and valuable the scientific information in order to assure the usefulness of such debates. Ensuring that the public access trustful and relevant scientific information in this context is a condition *sine qua non* for effective<sup>1</sup> public engagement in policy relevant science.

In this lecture we will explore the use of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to implement such interfaces. Beyond the visualisation power that such ICT may provide a number of other issues have to be considered namely the “interfaces for meaning”, accessibility, mediation mechanisms to collect information from the debates, etc. We will also look at specific principles to build such ICT tools that support dialogues of science in society.

### REFERENCES

N.B. Although, the bibliography is very restricted to communication of science to the media, which has a different type of objectives (namely raising of awareness, education, etc.) many of the principles are quite relevant for those who are engaged in participatory policy relevant science.

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<sup>1</sup> By effectiveness, in this case, we mean that upon access to scientific facts, uncertainties, processes, etc. the audience is able to engage in the specific debate, contributing with their own *knowledges* ensuring space for articulation of all relevant knowledge with the policy process.



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