

Meeting of Minds Programme 3rd- 4th December 2007

MEETING OF MINDS: INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON INTERACTIVE SCIENCE AND SOCIAL SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

This is follow up meeting to one hosted last year by the Centre for Genomics and Society, in Amsterdam, and is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. It is called 'Meeting of Minds' as our focus is on exchanging ideas with other centres, who have a similar mission in science and social science communication. This is the main reason we have organised this international workshop. As we all know science communication is not a recipe and a lot of different views exist on how to engage the public. We would like to exchange views on methods used, how to measure effects, discuss the possible differences between science communication and communication on genomics.

Monday December 3rd

12.00 noon Meet at Genomics Policy and Research Forum , Edinburgh,
for lunch.

For directions see <http://www.genomicsforum.ac.uk/default.aspx?pageName=contact>

1.00 pm Short presentations to learn about the communications work
of the other centres and institutions.

Participants from each institution represented will provide a 5-10 minute presentation the work of their institution, with reference to its communications strategy and activities. 10-15 participants will attend the meeting.

3.30 pm Tea, Coffee and Shortbread

4.00 pm How to get your research media coverage: What makes a
great story? Science in the news.
Panel style session with discussion.

This will be an interactive session where participants come with questions drawn from their own experience, which we will ask you to e mail us in advance. Questions can be about any topic or anything relating to how to publicise work, specific audiences or to encourage media interest, in different media. For those based in the UK, the session will be in the style of 'Question Time'. Questions can be addressed to one or all of the panel. Discussion including participants will be encouraged.

Panel to include

Stuart Blackman: Science writer and freelance journalist.

Stuart Blackman is Science Writer at the ESRC Genomics Forum where he is also managing editor of Genomics, Society and Policy Journal. As a freelance journalist he writes for the Scientist, BBC Magazines, THES, New Scientist and has written and presented programmes for BBC radio 4.

Tom Pringle: Disseminator of science through theatre

Having started working life as qualified secondary science teacher and chartered chemist, Tom Pringle (AKA Dr Bunhead) is now the UK 's most successful 'stand-up scientist'. He has worked professionally as a freelance science communicator for 11 years, bringing 100% pure live science into classrooms, theatres and TV sets around the world; performing in everything from grand opera houses to tin huts in outback Australia.

Jeremy Turner: TV director of science documentaries

Director of several science television documentaries, including Channel 4's 'Animal Farm', which looked at genetically modified animals Jeremy started, bizarrely as a costume designer and has worked on feature films like Neverland He is familiar with the process of getting academic research to the small screen.

5.30pm Close

7.30 pm Dinner for participants in Edinburgh

Venue: Black Bo's : 57-61, Blackfriars Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1NB
Tel: 0131 557 6136, just off The Royal Mile (very close to the Forum)
"Exciting Menu in Vegetarian Restaurant, Adjoining Bo's Famous Bohemian Bar,
Cool Music All Night Long, Exotic Global Beers"

Overnight stay for participants at Jurys Inn, Edinburgh.

<http://edinburghhotels.jurysinns.com/>

Tuesday 4th December

9.30 am Getting research into policy.
Hugh Bochel, Professor of Public Policy, University of Lincoln

Hugh will discuss where policy makers are positioned in relation to researchers (and other interests), and the role of those in the middle (such as civil servants). Then he will continue by discussing the ways in which governments use research, and the sort of priorities (such as inclusive, joined-up and evidence-based policy making) that are shared by many governments. He will also explain the frustrations of the research-policy relationship. And, finally he will make the point that ultimately decision making is, and probably should be, a political process. It may be evidence-based, etc., but has to be political. That means that there are other influences (the media, pressure groups, think tanks, etc.) and that perhaps researchers need to think about how they interact act with them, as well as with policy makers themselves. The simple assumption that 'research equals evidence' is therefore wrong.

10.45 am Coffee and muffins

11.15 am Assesing the impact of communications activities.
Veronica Littlewood, ESRC.

'How to measure the impact of communications activities? It is fine to issue policy briefs, but how to find out whether they are used? Who actually uses our publications and how do we measure this? How should we use feedback forms effectively?

12.15 pm Lunch: informal discussion about future collaborations,
chaired by Frans van Dam (Centre for Genomics and Society,
Amsterdam.)

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