

SYMPAB - (16749) - SCIENCE COMMUNICATION: PUTTING THE THEORY INTO PRACTICE

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Short Abstract

From the 1990s, the discipline of science communication began to develop theoretical frameworks to address the challenges of communicating science to a variety of audiences. Universities began to offer courses, for prospective scientists and prospective professional communicators, in the art of successfully addressing the complexities of 'translating' science for the public. John Gilbert first began to take an interest in this area at a very early stage, an interest which had profound consequences for the discipline and for students across the world.

At the turn of the 21st century, there were already some journals about science communication but they generally had a strong focus on science journalism and media issues. None dealt with matters such as informal learning in places like science museums or in the community. None, at that time, considered public engagement from the perspective of the public themselves. The need for another journal seemed obvious, but making it happen was a battle which John fought with determination and tenacity. *The International Journal of Science Education Part B: Communication and Public Engagement* was launched in 2010. John Gilbert and Sue Stocklmayer were joint Editors in Chief. The Journal has been very successful, providing a vehicle for international researchers to publish work ranging from citizen science to outreach programs, from informal learning to the communication of critical issues in science.

John became concerned with the obvious lack of knowledge about communicating issues, such as climate change and infectious viruses, and ethical problems such as risk and belief. The result was an edited book *Communication and Engagement with Science and Technology: Issues and Dilemmas*. The book, intended as a reader in the discipline, has five sections which we saw as facets of science communication today: models of science communication; challenges in communicating science; major themes; informal learning; and contemporary issues.