

Abstract Submitted
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Superluminal Neutrinos: The Good Kind of Science Controversy

MICHAEL LUCIBELLA, American Physical Society — After OPERA released results indicating neutrinos were traveling faster than the speed of light, a number of scientists said that the team shouldn't have prematurely engaged in "science by press release." However, controversial claims like this, if handled properly, can actually be a boon to science. Getting the public interested in cutting edge physics is notoriously difficult, but the public is always interested in hearing about a controversy. The press conference and following debate becomes a great "teaching moment" which offers the public a unique opportunity to get an inside and in-depth look at how science works. Scientists willing to publicly engage in this kind of civil controversy are important because when other scientific controversies arise, ones with major public policy implications, the public starts out with a better understanding of how science works, and scientists have better practice managing questions from the public.

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