

MAR14-2013-020561

Abstract for an Invited Paper
for the MAR14 Meeting of
the American Physical Society

The Future of the New Media in the Communication of Science

JOSEPH HANSON, PBS Digital Studios

New media, that which is based around social networks, ubiquitous consumer technology, and today's near-universal access to information, has transformed the way that science is communicated to the scientist and non-scientist alike. We may be in the midst of mankind's greatest shift in information consumption and distribution since the invention of the printing press. Or maybe not. The problem with predicting the future is that it's very hard, and unless you're Isaac Asimov, it's very easy to be wrong. When one predicts the future regarding the internet, that risk becomes almost a certainty. Still, we can apply lessons learned from the near and distant history of science communication to put today's new media evolution into perspective, and to give us clues as to where social media, digital journalism, open access, and online education will lead science communication in years to come. Most importantly, it remains to be seen whether this new media evolution will translate into a shift in how science is viewed by citizens and their policymakers.