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### **Bringing Nano to the Public through Informal Science Education**

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Researchers in nanoscale science and engineering communicate all the time. We give talks, present lectures, and write papers regularly. But the general public—the consumers who will use the products of our work and the voters who indirectly set the national research agenda—do not often hear us. Informal science education—including museums, TV, public lectures, popular press, etc.—is a way to connect with broader audiences in a variety of fun and effective ways. Museums, which are visited by hundreds of millions of people each year in the U.S., are popular because they are skilled at making abstract and complex phenomena comprehensible to people from all walks of life and at making the whole experience fun. This talk will provide an introduction to the “informal science education” field, discuss the art of honing your message into clear and realistic learning goals, describe methods for understanding your audience and their background, and help researchers to appreciate the limits of what can be learned in one experience. It will also review what the public currently understands about nanoscale science and engineering and the challenges that these (mis)understandings create for museums and researchers.