

Shaw Webmail

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RE: Our next science policy webinar is this Thursday!

From : alana westwood
<alana.westwood@hotmail.com>

Fri, Jun 16, 2017 04:25 PM

Subject : RE: Our next science policy webinar is this
Thursday!

To : William Warren Munroe
<dynamicanalytics@shaw.ca>

Cc : Kathleen Walsh
<kathleen@evidencefordemocracy.ca>

External images are not displayed. [Display images below](#)

Hi William,

I have moved on from my role as staff E4D, although I am continuing to volunteer with the organization. We haven't yet tackled training specifically for journalists, but it is a very good idea. I am not sure if further webinars are planned at this time, but I am cc'ing Kathleen, our Policy Director, on this message.

Thanks for the suggestion!

Alana Westwood

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De : [William Warren Munroe](#)

Envoyé le : June 13, 2017 9:19 PM

À : [alana westwood](#)

Cc : [Evidence for Democracy](#)

Objet : Re: Our next science policy webinar is this Thursday!

Thank you for your webinars addressing Evidence for Democracy.

Regarding an earlier webinar where in the science writer Carolyn Brown explained (E4D Comms for Scientists 102 Webinar - Media Releases - 56:27) how scientists should communicate with journalists: I am curious about the statements:

"Do not even mention methodology"

"if you are writing about a study, generally you don't mention the methodology"

"it is very rare that the journalist is going to ask about methodology"

"essentially the public trusts scientists to have had a credible authoritative evidence based methodology" (perhaps this assumption should be tested - wwm),
"so it is rarely mentioned"
also "numbers and statistics, a lot of people don't really learn using numbers and statistics so I say to use them sparingly like one or two per release." (except for hockey number and stats - wwm)

Just a suggestion but could there be a webinar on how journalists could learn how to communicate with scientists and the public.

I propose this in light of what a writer for the Economist calls the "replication crisis" (studies that can not be replicated – studies used to justify practices and procedures. Perhaps it is time to return to emphasising the importance of verification, replication, methods and data used to come up with findings, and evidence for decision making and democracy.

Also in light of what Yanis Varoufakis calls this a "conspiracy without conspirators" where "the journalist spreads what ever the functionary (i.e. bureaucrat) gives to the journalist without checking whether this is a true story, whether this is simply spreading rumors that are functional to the particular to the functionary."

"And when you have this ... you have a web of subterfuge and power that is beyond scrutiny, beyond transparency"

" .. it even manages to imprison those who are occupying the nodes and make it impossible for them to leave that system without loosing a great deal of political and economic capital..."
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1BNn614T98>

Former Chief Statistician, Ivan Fellegi asked "How can society intelligently participate in the setting of local to national priorities if the population does not understand where we are and where we are heading on current trends".

To take this to the next step, how can the population understand if we cannot see how findings were created - not only to understand the strengths and weaknesses but to understand what the findings represent. Perhaps it is time to make science better understood.

The interchange between the scientist and the journalist to the public needs to be addressed.

For example, the Provincial Government of British Columbia confirmed that for over 10 years incorrect methods and data accompanied unfounded population numbers (including numbers used to justify closing public schools as well as provided to Statistics Canada for a study of methods and data to determine equalization payments). Since then, my requests for an explanation received replies such as " disclosure harmful..." and "we see no value in discussing this further".

This issue (incorrect or no methods and data to accompany so called findings) has impacts at the local level. For example, in response to my question about how come the new enrolment forecast was so much lower than the previous forecast, the Superintendent of schools replied "any attempt to imply a grassy knoll conspiracy theory is disrespectful..."

The local newspaper editor wrote a front page article about me and dismissing my numbers (statcan numbers) referring to me as a "local amateur statistician" (I served as the Population Analyst for BC Statistics).

4 of 15 public schools were closed in 2014 – enrolment increased in 2015, 2016, and 2017.

Scientists are being hammered by some people in positions of government authority as well as media. There is little or no interest in methods, data, verification (the editor did not call me before printing his article). Even societies and organizations with the goal of promoting science dismiss discussion of methods and data – the fundamental foundation of what is called science. see the video "... a welcome alternative to people who do not care and may degrade, devalue, cheapen, and / or damage the study and development of the science of demography."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrCZrBOaCDI>

Recall Chris Turner pointed to this “Your message and the science it represents must remain consistent with our policy and electoral goals” “taking the civil service ... and putting it in the business of shaping political messages that are favourable to the current government.” With the media affiliated more with the functionary rather than the public.

Is this topic - improving understanding of scientific findings, of interest to Evidence for Democracy?

William Warren Munroe
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examining where we are and where we are heading on current demographic trends
providing verifiable well-defined population projection scenarios for Canada's census areas

----- Original Message -----

From: Stephanie Taylor, Evidence for Democracy <stephanne@evidencefordemocracy.ca>
To: William Warren Munroe <dynamicanalytics@shaw.ca>
Sent: Tue, 13 Jun 2017 08:05:28 -0600 (MDT)
Subject: Our next science policy webinar is this Thursday!

Evidence for Democracy

Evidence for Democracy

Hi William Warren,

Our second science policy webinar is happening in two days! Dr. Susanna Fuller will give a one-hour webinar on Thursday June 15th at 2 pm ET. [Register now](#), and share the link with your colleagues!

Dr. Fuller's webinar uses a paper she wrote with colleagues on at-risk marine fish populations as a case study on how to translate original scientific research into concrete political action and improved policy. She will walk through basic steps of this process, outlining common obstacles and strategies to overcome them, as well as providing insight into how science can best inform policy.

Bring your questions for the Q&A after the talk! If you missed the previous Network of Experts webinars on science policy and science communication, [click here](#) to see recordings of all our previous webinars.

This looks to be a great webinar, and I hope to see you there.

Stephanne Taylor

Program Coordinator, Evidence for Democracy

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