

Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science (COPUS)

What is COPUS?

- An ongoing communication network of science interested parties
- Objectives:
 - Provide a shared appreciation of science
 - Inform and engage the public in and about science
 - Make science more accessible to everyone

Three Strategies

■ COPUS Network

Ongoing communication & collaboration network for sharing information and best practices about the public understanding of science

■ The Year of Science 2009

12 months of activities and celebrations of science registered in the COPUS Web site's publicly searchable database of events & programs

■ Understanding Science

New content-rich Web site being developed at the University of California Museum of Paleontology (set to launch later in 2008) for science educators and the general public to clarify what science is, how it works, and misconceptions about science



Why is COPUS important?

- A recent National Science Board poll reports that two-thirds of Americans do not understand what science is, how it is conducted, and what one can expect from it.
- A recent Gallup poll reports widespread and increasingly prevalent belief in pseudoscience.
- There is a growing public complacency about and disengagement from science.
- The Business Roundtable of major U.S. companies notes that the scientific and technical building blocks of our economic leadership are eroding at a time when many other nations are gathering strength.



How is COPUS unique?

- COPUS is a national coalition—a **peer network**—that facilitates communication and collaboration among a diverse audience interested in science.
- Never before has there been such a concerted effort to engage so many disciplines of science, along with business, industry, and the humanities in a united effort to celebrate science and its discoveries and processes.



Who is participating?

The following types of organizations across the scientific spectrum:

- Scientific Societies
- Formal and Informal Education Organizations
- Arts and Humanities Groups
- Business and Industry
- Museums and Science Centers
- Government Agencies
- Media and Communication Specialists

What is involved with participation?

- There is NO COST to your organization.
- There is NO OBLIGATION to your organization, other than to collaborate with the rest of COPUS, when feasible, to:
 - Support the development of regional coalitions and partnerships in your area
 - Share best practices and evaluation data about those practices with the rest of the COPUS network
 - Work with the COPUS network to develop common messages and themes
 - Promote and embrace the full spectrum of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics as critical to our societal well-being

What are the advantages?

- There are many advantages for an organization to become a part of the COPUS network, including:
 - Participation in a collaborative network of organizations sharing a common mission
 - Participation in a national effort to promote the public understanding of science in a year-long celebration: Year of Science 2009
 - Increased audience through the COPUS website
 - Opportunity to share best practices and learn from others
 - A role in growing the COPUS community, providing input on COPUS direction and activities



How do I join?

Register online at
www.copusproject.org/register

or

contact: Sheri Potter
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www.copusproject.org

Progress in science has been so great that it is taken for granted, and even breeds a widespread complacency... The biggest challenge to the scientific enterprise today is not to achieve deeper understanding of genomes or ecosystems or black holes—that understanding is coming along just fine. The challenge that matters now is to make sure that science is taken seriously. Scientists need to convince people that we have developed honest procedures for understanding how the world works, that we can put confidence limits around most of our conclusions, and that our track record shows we have achieved reliable, if still incomplete, knowledge. —
["Science's Greatest Challenge"](#)

