

Using Social Media to Promote Public Understanding of Technological Convergence

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Abstract

Convergence between emerging technologies—such as nanotechnology, biotechnology, personalized medicine and information technologies—has created new opportunities for science and society, as well as enormous governance challenges. While researchers have focused attention on regulations, partnerships and capacity-building, we argue that social media can also be utilized to facilitate the process of technological convergence. Social media platforms draw on the power of Internet to engage stakeholders. Online social media platforms not only disseminate knowledge and generate interactions effectively. They can also augment other governance mechanisms such as those mentioned above. Nonetheless, the literature has yet to develop widely accepted metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of social media platforms developed specifically for promoting emerging technologies. In this research, we examine the social media platforms developed by the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering in SUNY-Albany (SUNY-CNSE). We analyze a number of qualitative and quantitative properties within SUNY-CNSE's social media platforms, such as its Youtube channel and Facebook fan page. After reporting the findings of our analysis, we will also discuss how our methods may be reused and/or modified to build useful evaluative metrics for further studies.