ABSTRACT
Science communicators are turning to social media to promote engagement and learning, tracking “impressions” and similar metrics to assess content effectiveness. Despite this increased reliance on analytics, there is limited evidence to suggest that social media enhances learning. How do science communicators know whether effort spent on social media is truly helping users learn or engage? Research shows that social media can promote learning in classrooms, using a semi-structured, community-based approach. But can this work in an informal setting?

In collaboration with NOVA/WGBH Boston, we explore how to measure informal science learning and how to moderate a social media space to enhance learning. We present findings from two studies: a three-day social media community experiment, where we compared two host facilitation styles, and a six-week “live” experiment where NOVA changed its social media facilitation style during the broadcast of NOVA Wonders. These findings have implications for how media producers, educators, and social media managers can use social media to increase impact.

This project is funded by the National Science Foundation.

BIOS
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Lisa brings experience in broadcast science media, communication research, and environmental policy to the Bren School. Previously, Lisa worked for NOVA/WGBH Boston, where she co-developed proposals for new television programs, oversaw media evaluation and impact studies, and conducted editorial research.

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Heather is a postdoctoral scholar at the Bren School, interested in how public opinion and politics influence policy design and implementation. Using theories from communication and social psychology to analyze the public’s relationship to policy through information streams, she uses these findings to explain this relationship via their interactions with agencies and managers.