

Last night's panel on science policy

Last night's panel discussion on informing science policy for scientists and engineers was very interesting. I'm so grateful to the key players that made this happen: Brian Wee, NEON, Steve Aulenbach, Peter Backlund, Dan Baker, Alice Madden, and Andy Schultheiss.

There is one idea in particular that I want to share: a decadal survey for data. What is the current state and where do we want to be in ten years? A cross organizational, collaborative document. I plan to bring this up within ESIP.

Here are a few other salient points for me:

At the end of the discussion I felt pessimistic. The level of discourse around science is even worse than I thought. Andy pointed out that years ago we had debates around the KW part of the DIKW model, now we debate the D. And, in some cases not only is D irrelevant, citing D reinforces a contrary belief. Alice quoted, "Head-on attempts to persuade can sometimes trigger a backfire effect, where people not only fail to change their minds when confronted with the facts - they may hold their wrong views more tenaciously than ever." [Chris Mooney]

We need stories and narratives to illustrate what data has enabled. This is not always easy for geeks to convey.

Science is only one factor in science policy. It's also economics, fear, ambition, ...

BUT, we were advised to carry on carrying on no matter what. Don't let people not believe data. Don't let things go. Things change all the time. Things that in the past we never imagined have happened.

Dan spoke of his experiences including recently completing the recent NRC report on the Decadal Strategy for Solar and Space Physics (Heliophysics). This helped seed the data decadal survey idea. One good new idea or connection is my criteria for a successful BESSIG meeting! It seemed like others made some connections too...