

Review of: "Visual Science Communication: The next generation scientific poster"

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This article has an interesting topic: visual science communication. I agree with the authors that such communication is important, especially when dealing with members of the public. I know several children who enjoy going to science museums and pursuing interactive presentations such as the ones suggested in the article. The literature that the authors cite is appropriate to the topic, and it provided me with one or two interesting references that I intend to pursue. The citations backed up the authors' focus on the importance of visual science communication. Additionally, the article was well written and clear.

The authors state that the purpose of their article is to describe the type of interactive visual communication in which they are interested, and to give examples of it. They have fulfilled this purpose. However, they did not propose that they should study the effectiveness of their communications. I think this remains as an (important) unanswered question. A communication cannot be judged as "successful" because the creator approves of it. It must serve its purpose and actually communicate. Even if the authors might view this as a "next step" - one which is not their immediate concern - they should be discussing the issue. Recipients of a communication might see it in a totally different way than that intended by its designers. For example, an interactive visual communication on "human digestion", when viewed by the children mentioned above, served to confirm, for its viewers, that human beings fart. All the additional details of the communication (which dealt with digestion) remained irrelevant for the children.

My main point in reaction to this article is that it should go further in its discussion of the evaluation of interactive visual communications. I do not believe that we can fully consider a communication if we do not cover its entire pathway, from sender to message to receiver.