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Scientists as conveners and ambassadors for facts? Evidence co-creation for a hyper-complex post-fact politics

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Panelists: Kathryn Graham, Executive Director, Performance Management and Evaluation, Alberta Innovates; Jeremy Kerr, Professor of Biology, University Research Chair in Macroecology and Conservation, University of Ottawa; David Mair, Head of Unit, responsible for Science advice to policy and the Work Programme, European Commission, Joint Research Centre; Bob Walker, Retired Senior Executive, Former President and CEO, Canadian Nuclear Laboratories

Moderator: Monica Gattinger, Director of the Institute for Science, Society and Policy and Associate Professor at the School of Political Studies, University of Ottawa

Takeaways and recommendations

- As the world becomes smaller and more technology-driven, agreement over facts is becoming more divisive and time horizons are shortening.
- There's a growing crisis in science triggered by the challenge of reproducing scientific findings and vanity journals. These challenges have been captured by the recently produced Cognitive Bias Codex.
- Scientists are challenged in determining where in the policy cycle to focus, making it difficult to elevate science-based insights onto the political agenda.
- The political ecosystem must be engaged prior to elections as the policy agenda is set the day after the election.
- Work is required by knowledge vendors to change minds with facts in an ethical manner.
- The "Twitterization" of the scientific method has been years in the making but scientists were slow to see it coming. This resulted in policy being influenced more by the ideology and platform of the party in power. The consequences of those decisions can be addressed by the social sciences and humanities.
- The politicization of science can be offset by strengthening the role of Parliament and expanding the role of open science in support of decision-making.
- In a healthy democracy, Science can influence politics by conveying facts and carefully guarding credibility.
- Society invests in the work of scientists who have the responsibility to deliver factual information. Scientists must earn the privilege of being listened to "outside of the ivory tower"
- Scientific consensus and networking are a valuable methods for demonstrating scientific insight but must be aware of the increasing tendency to obfuscate the facts.