

Nanotechnology is poised to be one of the most significant scientific and industrial transformations of the 21st century. How, then, do you engage the public in a topic they can't see, that requires a science background most people lack, and is so new that many haven't even heard of it? To address this challenge, CNS-ASU provides informal science education through monthly Science Cafés and collaboration with the Nanoscale Informal Science Education Network (NISE Net). The public is also invited to deliberative engagements such as the National Citizens' Technology Forum.



The National Citizens' Technology Forum process was designed to give average citizens ample opportunity to become informed about human enhancement technologies. Participants were provided substantive background reading and participated in two weekends of face-to-face working sessions. They also attended nine, 2-hour Internet discussion forums, in which they learned about nanotechnology from experts as well as citizens at other locations.



CNS-ASU collaborates with NISE Net to integrate social science research into the museum and outreach projects that NISE Net develops. For example, NISE Net distributed CNS-ASU's white paper on public engagement and education regarding nanotechnology and society to over 100 science museums as part of its Nano Days kits; the paper is also posted on NISE Net's website. Other synergistic CNS-NISE activities include cross-participation in projects, programs and forums.

CNS-ASU sponsors a monthly Science Café at the Arizona Science Center. These are informal discussions that bring together members of the community and university scientists to discuss how science and technology can change the future. A physical scientist is paired with a social scientist, ethicist, or philosopher, in order to bring multiple perspectives to societal concerns.