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A canvass of print media since 1999 shows that the number of articles about nanotechnology has increased dramatically, while the percentage of those articles that address both nanotechnology *and* risk has remained disproportionately low. This is in

keeping with
nanotechnology
being in the early
phase of its "issues
cycle," in which
media coverage
tends to focus on
the scientific and
economic aspects
of a new technology.

## Number of articles about "nanotechnolog\*" Percentage of articles about "nanotechnolog\*" AND risk 100 90 80 -70 -60 -30 Percentage of articles about "nanotechnolog\*" AND risk 10 0

1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007

## Media Coverage of Nanotechnology – What will Happen Next?



Scientists have traditionally been reluctant to talk to journalists about nonscientific aspects of new technologies. Nevertheless, journalists, scientists and policymakers have a key window of opportunity to proactively bridge potential communication disconnects, if they are willing to engage in true dialogue about later issues cycle concerns.

However, as with previous emergent technologies, the issues cycle will progress, and both public discourse and media coverage will eventually reframe around ethical issues and uncertainty.

Our research indicates that citizens use cognitive shortcuts or heuristics, such as ideological predispositions or cues from mass media, to form judgments about emergent technologies. Our findings suggest that the influence of new information on attitudes toward nanotechnology may be minimal if people rely on strong emotional heuristics to process the information.

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