



It's the Society, Stupid!

Communicating Emergent Climate Technologies in the Internet Age

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Olaf Corry and David Reiner

Abstract Emergent or unproven technologies occupy a central role in post-Paris debates about climate change goals and their feasibility. New technologies have often faced major political and social challenges and the way they are communicated is changing as technical experts and scientists play a greater role in communicating directly online. We review the scope and key characteristics of communications on carbon dioxide capture and storage (CCS) technologies presenting data from a comprehensive survey of websites compiled to assess the state of global CCS communications. Our key empirical finding is that existing communications are techno-centric in their framing, overlooking economic, political and institutional aspects of CCS as a societal arrangement. We also find an overrepresentation of traditionally less trusted actors from business and government (resulting in a pro-CCS bias), rather than by independent academic researchers or NGOs. We offer some recommendations for how CCS and similarly emergent climate technologies might be better communicated in the age of the Internet, not just in terms of their technical features but also in terms of their societal impacts and the role they might play in a wider social and political context.

Keywords Emergent technologies, carbon capture and storage (CCS), climate change, public communications, epistemic community

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Contact oc@ifs.ku.dk, dmr40@cam.ac.uk

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