

'Cambridge Nights' enters second season of intellectual late-night TV

September 5 2012, by Lisa Zyga



Cesar Hidalgo, host of "Cambridge Nights," talks with Woodie Flowers, an emeritus professor of mechanical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Credit: MIT Media Lab

(Phys.org)—Usually, there's a clear distinction between "popular science" shows and the educational lectures and conference videos aimed specifically at scientists. An endeavor at MIT called "Cambridge Nights" attempts to bridge that gap by billing itself as an online late-night-TV-like video series where scientists from a variety of fields explain their work and why they're passionate about what they do in a casual, one-on-one environment.

["Cambridge Nights"](#) just began its second season with the launch of a new video featuring Steven Pinker, the [linguist](#) and evolutionary psychologist at Harvard University. Pinker talks with host Cesar Hidalgo, an assistant professor at the MIT Media Lab, about human nature and the role of individual responsibility (the full list of questions is written out next to the video).

Pinker's interview is the first of nine videos that make up Season 2 of the show, although the other videos will be released once per week on Wednesdays. The eight videos from Season 1 are also available on the website. All the videos are hosted by Hidalgo, and range from about 20 to 45 minutes.

The next episode will feature Rosalind Picard, a professor of Media Arts and Sciences at MIT, as she discusses affective computing, or machines that can interpret the [emotional state](#) of humans and respond accordingly. Like many of the interviews, the discussion spans interdisciplinary fields; in this case, computer sciences, psychology, and [cognitive science](#).

So far, the audience for "Cambridge Nights" is relatively small, numbering in the thousands, but then again it ventures a little deeper into ideas and theories at a somewhat slower pace than a typical TV show that must be edited for time. Aiming at a similar audience as the TED talks, "Cambridge Nights" offers more than a peek into some ideas that may not otherwise be as easily shared.

"Cambridge Nights" Season 2 Trailer

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Citation: 'Cambridge Nights' enters second season of intellectual late-night TV (2012, September 5) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2012-09-cambridge-nights-season-intellectual-late-night.html>

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