

Some biologists shun new media

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An online survey of neuroscientists in Germany and the United States found that, although in both countries researchers believe "new media" such as blogs and online social networks are important in influencing public opinion and political decisions, the researchers make little use of new media themselves.

Although [biologists](#) think that "new media" such as blogs and [online social networks](#) have an important influence on public opinion and political decisions, they aren't much inclined to use them themselves to stay informed about developments in science. Rather, they prefer traditional outlets such as newspapers and television. That seems, at least, to be the implication of a study published in the April issue of *BioScience*.

The study, by Joachim Allgaier of the Jülich Research Center in Germany and four coauthors, examined the opinions of 257 [neuroscientists](#) working in Germany and the United States who completed an [online survey](#). Although [German scientists](#) had a slightly lower opinion of the influence of new media than US scientists, most researchers in both countries thought new media were important even though they made "lackluster" personal use of them. Scientists under 40 made slightly more use of them than older scientists.

The findings could be misleading if those who replied are not typical of neuroscientists, and it is possible that neuroscientists' attitudes are different from those of other biologists. Still, the study is a significant addition to what is known about scientists' communication habits. It

suggests, the authors write, that scientists "continue to value the vetting process to which information is subject in media channels."

Provided by American Institute of Biological Sciences

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