

Stephen Hawking launches medal for science communication

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Cosmologist Stephen Hawking, seen December 16, 2015 at the London launch of a science-communication award bearing his name, says he's been gratified to learn that the public has "an incredible appetite" for scientific understanding

Renowned British cosmologist Stephen Hawking on Wednesday launched an award for science communication that will bear his name.

The "Stephen Hawking Medal for Science Communication" will be awarded to those who help promote science to the public through media

such as cinema, music, writing and art.

"I'm happy to say I'm here today not to accept a medal but to announce one," Hawking joked as he launched the medal at an event at the Royal Society, Britain's de-facto academy of sciences.

"When I wrote 'A Brief History of Time' I was told that no one would want to read a hardback book about physics. Fortunately for me, it turned out not to be true," he added, referring to his best-selling popular science book.

"People worldwide display an incredible appetite of [scientific information](#)... The public want to know, they want to understand."

The first medals will be awarded next summer in three different categories: the scientific, artistic and film communities.

The winners will be announced at the Starmus Festival, a gathering celebrating art and [science](#) in Spain's Canary Islands that will take place from June 27 to July 2 next year.

One supporter of the festival, which will have its third edition next summer, is Brian May, guitarist of the legendary British rock band Queen, who also attended the press conference on Wednesday.

"When I was a boy I had two separate dreams, two passions. One was to be an astronomer and the other was to be a musician," May said.

"I returned to astronomy about eight years ago and completed to become a doctor in astrophysics."

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