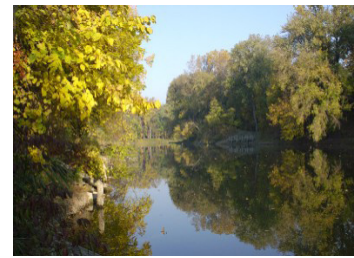




RISK SCIENCE CENTER

Health and Communication
www.umriskcenter.org



Message from the Director

In early December, I found myself in the bizarre position of giving a public lecture on risk science at the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center. Despite the seemingly strange juxtaposition of art, risk and science, together with my wife's admonitions of "what do you know about art anyway?!" it was an immensely gratifying event - not least because it forced me to think about what risk science means to people who aren't in the risk business.



The question of what risk science is was one that I had tackled a couple of weeks previously at the inaugural Charles and Rita Gelman Risk Science Professorship lecture (see below). Here, I argued that in a complex world, blindly following our instincts can actually increase the chances of people being harmed. What we need is a systematic and unbiased way of addressing human health risks. Science provides a great solution here - by focusing on prediction, evidence and correction, it factors human foibles out of the decision-making process; at least in principle. Hence "risk science" as a basis for evidence-driven decision-making.

But then I asked - is this vision of risk science enough to keep us healthy, wealthy and wise in the 21st century? The answer was no. Hard data are clearly critical to informed decision-making. But the numbers just aren't enough when it comes to making decisions within increasingly complex and highly interconnected systems. In today's society, we also need to understand and respond to a whole host of other factors that influence the effects associated with certain courses of action. In other words, if we are to make effective decisions on human health risks in the 21st century, our concept of "science" in "risk science" needs to expand to cover expertise in the social, economic and political sciences and beyond.

As you might imagine, this was the starting point for some interesting conversations at the Contemporary Arts Center. And one that particularly intrigued me was the question of how you help people make good decisions on risk in the face of all this complexity and interconnectedness? How do you forge connections between people that increase the chances of them making evidence-based and socially-responsive decision-making? One of the answers was - unsurprisingly given the setting - through art. Where facts fail, art enables connections to be made and understanding to flow between people in ways that circumvent our struggle to make sense of cold numbers.

Which begs the question - is "risk science" broad enough to embrace the arts as well, or do we need to start thinking about a complimentary field of "risk arts?"

Save the Date - 2011 Risk Science Center Symposium

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

September 20-21 2011



For thousands of years, humanity has progressed on the back of technology innovation. Yet for all our inventiveness, we stand at a crisis point in human history. In today's increasingly complex and interconnected world, the path between innovation and solution is being confounded by fear of new health risks and uncertainty over potential outcomes. Yet this is happening at a time when we are more dependent than ever on innovation-driven solutions to

global health challenges. If science and technology are to continue to drive social development and economic growth, we need to re-examine and re-think the relationship between risk, uncertainty and innovation. This symposium will bring together leading thinkers from industry, government, academia, the media and other non-governmental sectors to explore new ideas on integrative approaches to health risks, uncertainty and innovation, as we look to develop sustainable solutions to global challenges in an increasingly fragile world. For more information go to: <http://www.sph.umich.edu/riskcenter/index.htm>

December 2010

Message from Risk Science Center Director

2011 Risk Science Symposium

2010 Professorship Lecture

2011 Fellowship Competition

International Handbook

The University of Michigan Risk Science Center provides a forum in which researchers assemble to address scientific and social issues posed by human exposure to various health hazards.

Director:

Andrew D. Maynard

Editor:

Hilda McDonald



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2010 Professorship Lecture

On November 17th RSC Director Andrew Maynard gave the inaugural Charles and Rita Gelamn Lecture on Risk Science. The lecture Building a Sustainable Future - The Role of Risk Science can be viewed at <http://lecb.physics.lsa.umich.edu/CWIS/browser.php?ResourceId=3568>.



Summary:

By 2050, over nine billion people will be placing unprecedented demands on the earth's resources – a demand that will only be met through developing and using new technologies. But in today's complex and interconnected world, the safety and success of technology-based solutions is by no means assured. As we strive to build a sustainable future, we need to think differently about how rapid social and technological change are leading to new risk-challenges, and how they are best addressed. In effect, we need a new risk science for a new century. Professor Maynard talks about the new challenges of enabling sustainable development in a complex, interconnected and risky world.

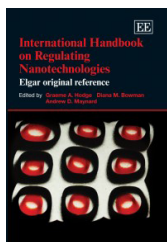
Dr Maynard used a complex pendulum to illustrate the challenges of addressing human health risks in the 21st century

2011 Fellowship Competition

The annual competition for Risk Science Fellowships provides summer stipend support for students from the School of Public Health (SPH). UMRSC fellowships enhance education and training in the environmental risk sciences and prepare public health students to pursue careers in the field of risk analysis. These awards are made possible through generous support to the Risk Science Fellowship Fund.

Eleven applications were received and are currently under review. Award notifications will be made January 5, 2011.

New Book



Risk Science Center Director Andrew Maynard is co-editor of the International Handbook on Regulating Nanotechnologies. The Handbook draws on contributions from leading nanotechnology regulation scholars around the globe. It goes beyond articulating how certain nanotechnologies are currently regulated and the significance of existing regulatory gaps, to assessing how the future regulatory landscape may evolve. As well as considering potential legislative responses that could be employed by governments, the Handbook examines a range of other options available to stakeholders. The Handbook is published by Edward Edgar Publishing.

Two Tenure Track Professor Positions

The University of Michigan Risk Science Center is seeking applicants for two tenure track positions, to be appointed at the Assistant Professor level in the School of Public Health. The Risk Science Center is a growing cross-disciplinary center dedicated to fostering new thinking, new understanding and new tools to support evidence-informed and socially relevant decisions on both emergent and extant risks to public health. As the center develops, the appointed faculty will be expected to make a significant contribution to its future direction and impact. Candidates are sought from a wide range of backgrounds who have a strong and proven interest in risk science, and who have an ability to work synergistically across disciplines. Candidates must have a doctorate (e.g., PhD, ScD, MD, DrPH) in a field related

to public health and risk science, demonstrate evidence of independent and collaborative research potential, demonstrate interest and ability in teaching at the graduate level, and have a record of peer reviewed publications and presentations commensurate with experience and rank.

Review of applications will begin December 1 and continue until suitable candidates are found. A start date on or before September 1, 2011 is anticipated. For further details, please contact Hilda McDonald at hildiris@umich.edu or visit <http://www.sph.umich.edu/riskcenter/positions.htm>.

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