



If Our Science is Sound, Why Don't They Hear Us? (Part 2)

Back in May 2006, I wrote an [article](#) for *free-range thinking* with the same title you see above. At that time, the subject was the debate over evolution that scientists were frequently losing to creationists despite having literally eons of evidence on their side. So, why were they losing? Sadly, it was due to a problem that continues to dog scientists today, whether they're warning about the dangers of climate change or emphasizing the necessity for vaccinations: *too many facts and not enough story*. Fortunately, in the nine years since that article appeared more advocates for storytelling in science have made their voices heard, and now there are more resources than ever for scientists willing to tap the power of narrative. [Full Story](#). Please note: Apple Mail users may need to scroll down manually.



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Tapping the Power
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Communications:
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the Clutter

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Randy Olson has been scolding scientists for years about their neglect of narrative, and when I first wrote about this subject in 2006, his documentary, "Flock of Dodos: The Evolution-Intelligent Design Circus" had just premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival. Olson's follow-up to the film was the book, *Don't Be Such a Scientist*, which *Nature* magazine called "An excellent explanation of why scientists often have problems communicating with the public."

And now Olson has written *Houston, We Have a Narrative - Why Science Needs Story*, continuing to build his case for storytelling. And a strong case it is: "The costs of poor communication," Olson writes, "range from students getting bored with their science classes to the inability of the scientific community to deal with the growing antiscience movements for subjects such as climate science, evolution, and vaccination policy."

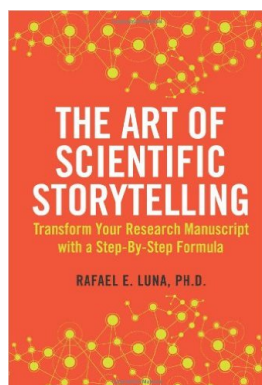
Olson offers step-by-step instruction for building stories around science, invoking time-tested models (from Aristotle to Robert McKee) and offering his own template as well. Whether your organization is steeped in science or simply presents scientific findings from time to time, *Houston, We Have a Narrative* offers both the encouragement and guidance you need to get started telling your stories.

Launched in 2010 by two physicists, Ben Lillie and Brian Wecht, [The Story Collider](#) is what you get when you mix *The Moth* with science and season liberally with personal revelations. Comparisons to the *Moth* are no accident - Lillie is a StorySLAM champion - but he launched the Story Collider because he wanted a forum for stories about science, and more specifically, how science affects people's personal lives.



"People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care," said Teddy Roosevelt, and the quote could be the guiding spirit of The Story Collider. The stories featured in live shows and podcasts are less about how science changed the world and more about how science affected the storyteller personally. And so you get funny, sad and moving stories such as "[My Dad & His Mice](#)," in which Erica Ferencik tells how her father's obsessive search for monogamy in the animal kingdom steadily took him further and further from his own family.

If you can't get to live shows (coming up this month in Cambridge, Chicago and San Francisco), check out the [podcast](#), or watch Lillie and Story Collider senior producer Erin Barker explain why scientists need to tell personal stories in this [TEDMED talk](#).



Regular readers of this newsletter will recall our first mentioning *The Art of Scientific Storytelling* in our [October 2014 issue](#). Written by Rafael E. Luna, Ph.D., the book offers a step-by-step process for translating research findings into stories that professional journals are likely to publish. Dr. Luna's slim paperback is a fast read with practical advice and makes a nice companion piece to Olson's latest book.

[^back to top](#)

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free-range thinking is written by Andy Goodman and edited by Celia Hoffman. To read back issues, download free publications, and to learn more about our work, please visit www.thegoodmancenter.com.

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