

Climate in the media [View Abstract](#)

- **A new model for reporting on climate change**
[Michael Lemonick](#), senior science writer, Climate Central
- **The evolution of media coverage of climate change**
[Julie Halpert](#), freelance journalist
- **A view from the ground**
John Flesher, Associated Press

Moderated by [Jim Detjen](#), director, MSU Knight Center for Environmental Journalism

SESSION ABSTRACT:

Research has shown that most of what Americans know about science comes from the news. But the recent history of news organizations has been marked by layoffs, cutbacks and bureau closings, and science desks have been among the hardest hit. What does this turmoil in the media industry mean for public understanding of climate change, and how can journalists adapt to ensure this important and complex beat is covered effectively? Panelists will discuss current challenges and emerging models for covering climate change.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS:

A view from the ground

John Flesher

Flesher will discuss his experiences covering climate-related stories and offer perspectives on media coverage of the issue.

The evolution of media coverage of climate change

Julie Halpert

My presentation will focus on how coverage has been affected by the recent significant downsizing in newspapers and print coverage generally. I will discuss the recent growth of websites that tackle the issue and how the quality compares to that found in print journalism. I'll also mention some communication vehicles that are filling the void in coverage, getting the word out on climate change in innovative ways, like through museum exhibits and prime-time entertainment television. I'll briefly provide my opinion on this sea change in coverage and what it means for how people get their climate change news.

A new model for reporting on climate change

Michael Lemonick

After 21 years of writing about science at TIME magazine--including the first major magazine story on climate change, in 1987--I've moved to a new organization called Climate Central. It's a nonprofit communications company, staffed by both scientists and journalists, dedicated to producing non-partisan, non-advocacy stories about climate based on the best available science. I'll talk about what we've done, how we're doing, and the problems we're wrestling with in trying to merge two very different cultures.

PRESENTER BIOSKETCHES

John Flesher

John Flesher is an Associated Press correspondent based in Traverse City. He has reported on environmental issues affecting the Great Lakes since 1989, when he began a three-year assignment as Michigan regional reporter for the AP's Washington bureau. After transferring to northern Michigan in 1992, he continued reporting on the environment and has developed numerous stories dealing with the potential effects of climate change in the region, particularly involving water levels and wildlife. During the winter of 2008, he journeyed to Isle Royale National Park to report on the possible ramifications of climate change for the wolves and moose that roam the Lake Superior archipelago. He recently was one of six

reporters chosen for a national AP environmental reporting team. Flesher was a Great Lakes Environmental Issues Fellow at the Michigan State University School of Journalism in 1997. He was awarded a year-long Ted Scripps Fellowship in Environmental Reporting for the 2002-03 academic year, and was a fellow with the Institutes for Journalism and Natural Resources in 2004, 2006 and 2009. Flesher is a member of the Society of Environmental Journalists.

Julie Halpert

Julie Halpert has covered the environment for over two decades. She began her career at Inside Washington Publishers, where she was the editor of *Inside EPA*, a Washington, D.C. trade journal focused on uncovering emerging environmental policy. She is a freelance journalist with extensive experience writing for national publications, including *The New York Times*, *Newsweek* and *The Washington Post*. Much of her coverage has focused on the environmental impacts of the auto industry and green technologies. Recently, she has become a regular contributor to Newsweek.com. She contributes often to The Yale Forum on Climate Change and the Media. She has reported on the air for many public radio programs, including The Environment Report, Marketplace and Living on Earth. She co-teaches a journalism class every fall in The University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment. Halpert is a founding member of The Society of Environmental Journalists.

Michael Lemonick

Michael Lemonick is senior science writer at Climate Central. Mr. Lemonick covered science and the environment for TIME magazine for nearly 21 years, and has also written for Discover, Scientific American, Wired, New Scientist and The Washington Post. Lemonick is the author of four books, and a cover story for TIME was featured in the anthology "Best American Science and Nature Writing 2007." He has taught science and environmental journalism at Princeton, Columbia, Johns Hopkins and New York Universities. He holds a Master of Science in Journalism from Columbia University.

Jim Detjen

Professor Jim Detjen joined the MSU Journalism School faculty in 1995 as the Knight Chair in Journalism, the nation's only endowed chair in environmental reporting. He is also the Director of MSU's Knight Center for Environmental Journalism and MSU's Environmental Journalism Program. Prior to joining MSU's faculty, he spent 21 years as a professional newspaper reporter and editor. He has won more than 50 state, national and international awards for his reporting, including the George Polk Award, the National Headliner Award for investigative reporting, the Thomas Stokes Award for natural resources reporting (twice) and the Edward Meeman Award for environmental reporting (five times).