

## Apps help argue the case for peer-reviewed climate science

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During a recent repeat of SBS's excellent *Insight* program, in which the late Stephen Schneider courageously squared up to an audience of 52 climate change 'skeptics', the discussion turned to the issue of maintaining clear and civil communication in the public debate. Schneider was Professor of Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies at Stanford University, and an internationally recognised leader in research and communication on climate change.



At around the same time as this repeat, *Ecos* reviewed SkepticalScience.com, created by physics-trained John Cook in defence of the peer-reviewed science on climate change.

While the language of the site's content may have an 'us and them' ring to it, Cook's approach to arguing his case is simple and effective – stick to the peer-reviewed science, make the topics easy to navigate, and leverage the latest communication technology.

SkepticalScience.com's home page features a list of the 10 most common Skeptic Arguments (eg 'Climate's changed before'), presented in the form of a thermometer. Above this is a link to a page listing 163 arguments, each paired with a 'What the science says' link. Click on one of the latter and you arrive at a longer explanation (with basic and advanced options) that argues the scientific evidence against that skeptic argument.

If you prefer to track down a typical skeptic argument by way of logic rather than frequency of online occurrence, the site offers a systematic category structure – or taxonomy, as Cook puts it. Another way of navigating the arguments is via 'skeptic argument short URLs', purpose-designed for tweeting and posting.

This smart use of technology is what sets SkepticalScience.com apart from similar sites. It offers free apps for mobile phones, which allow you to view the full list of skeptic arguments and scientific counter-arguments, along with graphs and other visuals. Each skeptic argument is also accompanied by a Twitter icon, so users can tweet the scientific

refutation from a mobile.

Cook has also co-authored a recent book, *Climate Change Denial: Heads in the Sand* with Dr Haydn Washington, which dissects objections to the peer-reviewed science in even more forensic detail. If you like what you see on SkepticalScience.com, this is a great way of digging deeper into the issue.

(Note that *Climate Change Denial* is available from CSIRO Publishing – see [www.publish.csiro.au/pid/6811.htm](http://www.publish.csiro.au/pid/6811.htm) ISBN: 9781849713368, price: AU\$34.95)

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