

Our Audience Is Up 700% - And Anti-Science Groups Are Going Nuts



By Hank Campbell — May 30, 2016

A few weeks ago I [noted](#) [1] that [a dreary millennial at Newsweek](#) [2] took to Twitter to demand that a science outlet stop linking to the American Council on Science and Health. It seemed odd to have a random person just issue forth something so bizarre, especially someone who, if asked, would likely not only claim to believe in freedom of the press but would also claim to be pro-science.



Doug Main @Douglas_Main · Apr 22

Why does [@RCScience](#) link to stories by the Amer. Council on Sci & Health? They're a blatant industry front group [.j.mp/1NFy7Uo](#)



If you read his rationalization, he protests against anyone critical of NRDC, claiming we must be shills for a 75 year old pesticide because NRDC gets nothing correct about toxicology. That lack of critical thinking or research is why no one reads modern corporate science journalism.

It didn't take long to guess what might be going on: We are educating a whole lot of people about the differences between health scares and health threats and doing it well - our audience is up 700 percent in the past year - and the groups being paid to promote fear and doubt about science, like SourceWatch and NRDC, don't just have connections at obvious places like Mother Jones, they also have lazy-brained journalists like this, who are educated by Google, on their ideological side. This is a journalist *who works for a corporation entirely funded by other corporations*. The irony is obvious.

The desperation among the anti-science faction got even funnier after [Dr. Alex Berezow and I wrote an article in USA Today](#) [3] wondering what science policy might look like in a Trump administration. [Those same militants persistently nipping at the heels of scientists went into a complete meltdown and demanded that USA Today also censor science writing](#) [4]. Censor and libel and smear, it is the same old tactics.

The Internet was perplexed that these little kneebiters were so far out in left field they didn't even bother to read the article they demanded should not be published:

US RTK accuses [@ACSHorg](#) [5] of being a corporate front group for criticizing

Trump for thinking vaccines cause autism. <https://t.co/0yxu4jk6u9> [6]

— Stephan Neidenbach (@welovegv) May 26, 2016 [7]

USA Today may be happy *Truth Out* readers are looking at a science article, almost certainly for the first time in 2016, because it's a lot of new eyeballs for their publication. What won't be a shock to readers here is that, unlike *USA Today*, *Truth Out* will let bloggers post articles without any fact-checking at all.

It was so nonsensical and poorly written, I thought at first it was a Will Ferrell-type spoof, like a caricature of a response to our article. It's pretty hard to disagree with anything we write in the piece unless you truly are anti-vaccine and want higher energy costs for poor people plus more CO2 emissions. And they want both. They criticize me for criticizing Trump for wanting more coal and referred to Trump's anti-vaccine nonsense as simply "unpleasant", placing them once again in defiance of the much larger scientific consensus than exists on global warming.

And the screed is so factually wrong in so many ways I don't see how anyone can trust any of their claims. The US Right To Know blogger claims *USA Today* is the most widely read paper in America, for example, which is sure to irk the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times* - even Wikipedia could have informed her otherwise. And she uses the term "naval gazing" as some attempt at flowery, post-modern prose.

Naval. Gazing.

I was in the Army in the '80s and '90s, so if anyone in my unit looked longingly at aircraft carriers, it was strictly Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

Obviously she meant "navel-gazing", though even with proper spelling she used the term incorrectly, and it just tells a literate audience she must have written her polemic in the kind of unhinged fever dream that besets these anti-science marketing teams when they are on an ideological bender.

It was so junkyard doggy I assumed it was the former Clinton lawyer who runs the political attack site SourceWatch putting her up to it. But Lisa Graves is not that stupid. No one who wrangles \$500,000 in dark money funding while convincing their donors that groups who are transparent about funding (like us) are hiding something can be truly stupid.

I don't want to legitimize this tiny group of muckspouts - they are completely funded by organic corporations to demonize science and giving them attention just checks off the boxes they need to check off to keep those trade rep checks coming in. Instead, if you want a detailed examination of everything that ails them, [read Stephan Neidenbach here](#) [8].

Instead. I will just say thanks to all of you for making us so popular these groups are apoplectic about their deceptions and fear-mongering being undermined. And thanks for showing that being a pro-science educational non-profit is still worthwhile. We are stacked up against \$1 billion in anti-science activism revenue while we have a fraction of that. Unlike the groups writing nonsense about scientists, we take no dark money, nor do we have Google employees making hundreds of

private donations so the benefitting NGO can claim they take no corporate money.

We're honest about our funding, and these groups weaponize that transparency against scientists.

In revenue, it's our 1 against their 1,000, so the odds are just about even. But let's not rest. Please keep reading and donating so we can keep on testifying before government science panels, writing our peer-reviewed books, and being trusted guides for the public on what are admittedly complex science and health topics.

Meanwhile, our critics will continue to rant on fringe political sites that science should be censored.

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Links

[1] <http://acsh.org/news/2016/05/02/health-news-update-weekend-briefs-6/>

[2] https://twitter.com/douglas_main/status/723545727885033472

[3] <http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2016/05/22/donald-trump-science-president-column/84544242/?source=acsh.org>

[4] <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/36208-usa-today-fail-donald-trump-science-column-by-corporate-front-group?source=acsh.org>

[5] <https://twitter.com/ACSHorg>

[6] <https://t.co/0yxu4jk6u9>

[7] <https://twitter.com/welovegv/status/735623699949309952>

[8] <http://welovegv.com/stacy-malkan-organic-corporate-front-group/?source=acsh.org>