

merchants of doubt

merchants of doubt is a term that has gained prominence in discussions about the deliberate spread of misinformation and confusion in scientific debates. This article explores the origins and meaning of merchants of doubt, examines their impact on public perception, and highlights key examples from history, such as the tobacco industry and climate change controversies. By dissecting their strategies and motivations, this comprehensive guide aims to provide readers with a thorough understanding of how merchants of doubt operate, why their influence persists, and what can be done to counteract their effects. Readers will also discover the psychological factors that make misinformation effective and learn practical steps to recognize and address doubt-mongering campaigns. Whether you're a student, researcher, or concerned citizen, this article offers valuable insights into the tactics used to shape public opinion and undermine scientific consensus.

- Understanding the Term "Merchants of Doubt"
- Historical Origins and Notable Examples
- Common Tactics and Strategies Used by Merchants of Doubt
- Impact on Science, Society, and Public Policy
- Psychological Factors and Why Misinformation Spreads
- How to Recognize Merchants of Doubt
- Combating Doubt and Promoting Scientific Integrity

Understanding the Term "Merchants of Doubt"

The phrase "merchants of doubt" refers to individuals, organizations, or groups that deliberately spread uncertainty and confusion about established scientific facts. The term gained widespread recognition from the 2010 book "Merchants of Doubt" by Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, which documented how a handful of scientists obscured the truth on issues from tobacco smoke to global warming. These merchants of doubt typically have interests—be they financial, political, or ideological—in maintaining the status quo and preventing regulatory action. By fostering doubt in the public's mind, they aim to delay or derail policies that could impact their objectives. The term has since become synonymous with orchestrated campaigns designed to undermine scientific consensus and sow confusion among the general public.

Historical Origins and Notable Examples

The Tobacco Industry and Health Risks

One of the earliest and most infamous examples of merchants of doubt in action is the tobacco industry's campaign to cast doubt on the link between smoking and health risks. For decades, tobacco companies funded research, hired public relations firms, and recruited scientific experts to dispute the growing body of evidence connecting smoking to lung cancer and other diseases. Their efforts successfully delayed regulatory measures and confused the public about the dangers of tobacco use.

Climate Change Denial and Fossil Fuel Interests

The tactics pioneered by the tobacco industry were later adopted by fossil fuel companies seeking to undermine the scientific consensus on climate change. These corporations funded studies, think tanks, and advocacy groups that promoted uncertainty about the reality and causes of global warming. By amplifying minority viewpoints and emphasizing scientific disagreement, merchants of doubt influenced public discourse and delayed comprehensive climate policies.

Other Areas Affected by Merchants of Doubt

Merchants of doubt have also played a role in debates over acid rain, ozone depletion, pesticide safety, and vaccine efficacy. In each case, their central goal has been to manufacture controversy where scientific agreement exists, thereby delaying action and protecting vested interests.

Common Tactics and Strategies Used by Merchants of Doubt

Funding Biased Research

Merchants of doubt often allocate substantial resources to fund research that supports their preferred narrative. This research may selectively report results, downplay risks, or emphasize uncertainties. Such funding creates a false impression of balanced debate, even when the scientific consensus is overwhelmingly clear.

Recruiting and Promoting Contrarian Experts

A common strategy involves hiring scientists or spokespeople who are willing to challenge mainstream scientific views. These contrarian experts are frequently presented as legitimate authorities, lending credibility to doubt-mongering campaigns and confusing the public about the true state of scientific knowledge.

Media Manipulation and Public Relations

Merchants of doubt use media channels to amplify their message. Through press releases, opinion pieces, and interviews, they emphasize uncertainty and controversy. Public relations firms play a crucial role in shaping narratives that cast doubt on scientific findings.

Cherry-Picking Data and Misrepresenting Findings

Another hallmark tactic is the selective use of data. Merchants of doubt often cherry-pick studies that support their position or misrepresent the findings of reputable research. This selective presentation can mislead the public and policymakers about the actual weight of scientific evidence.

- Funding skeptical researchers or institutes
- Highlighting scientific uncertainties out of proportion
- Attacking the credibility of consensus scientists
- Creating grassroots organizations that appear independent

Impact on Science, Society, and Public Policy

Delaying Regulatory Action

The primary impact of merchants of doubt is the delay or prevention of regulatory actions that could address public health or environmental risks. By sowing confusion and uncertainty, these actors make it politically difficult for lawmakers to enact evidence-based policies.

Undermining Public Trust in Science

Sustained campaigns of doubt have eroded public confidence in scientific institutions and experts. When the public perceives that scientists are divided or uncertain, trust in scientific recommendations diminishes, making it harder to address critical issues.

Economic and Health Consequences

The actions of merchants of doubt have led to tangible economic and health consequences. Delayed tobacco regulations resulted in millions of preventable deaths, while climate change denial has hindered efforts to mitigate environmental damage. The societal costs of misinformation are significant and long-lasting.

Psychological Factors and Why Misinformation Spreads

Cognitive Biases and the Appeal of Doubt

Merchants of doubt exploit common cognitive biases, such as confirmation bias and the tendency to favor information that aligns with pre-existing beliefs. Doubt-mongering messages are often emotionally resonant and easier to accept than complex scientific explanations, making them more likely to spread.

Repetition and the Illusion of Truth

A key psychological factor behind the success of merchants of doubt is the repetition of misleading claims. Repeated exposure to a message increases the likelihood that people will accept it as true, even in the absence of supporting evidence.

Fragmented Media Landscape

The proliferation of media sources and social networks enables misinformation to circulate rapidly. Merchants of doubt use this fragmented landscape to target specific audiences with tailored messages, further amplifying their influence.

How to Recognize Merchants of Doubt

Warning Signs and Red Flags

Recognizing merchants of doubt requires a critical and informed approach. Look for signs such as the consistent emphasis on controversy, the involvement of known industry-funded organizations, or the presence of contrarian experts with ties to vested interests.

Evaluating Scientific Consensus

One way to spot doubt-mongering is to compare claims against the broader scientific consensus. If a position is primarily supported by a small group of outliers, it may be driven by interests other than objective inquiry.

Assessing the Quality of Evidence

Assess the quality and source of evidence presented. Genuine scientific debate is based on peer-reviewed research and transparent methodologies, while merchants of doubt often rely on non-peer-reviewed reports or opinion pieces.

1. Check funding sources of research or experts
2. Investigate the track record of organizations promoting doubt
3. Compare claims to established scientific assessments
4. Look for patterns of selective data use or misrepresentation

Combating Doubt and Promoting Scientific Integrity

Strengthening Science Communication

Effective science communication is essential to counter the influence of merchants of doubt. Clear, transparent, and accessible messaging helps the public understand complex issues and recognize attempts to mislead.

Promoting Media Literacy

Educating the public and policymakers about how to evaluate sources and identify misinformation is a critical defense against doubt-mongering. Media literacy programs can empower individuals to spot red flags and demand evidence-based information.

Supporting Independent Research

Encouraging and funding independent, peer-reviewed research reduces the influence of vested interests. Transparency in funding and methodology builds public trust and reinforces scientific integrity.

Regulatory and Policy Measures

Governments and institutions can implement policies to improve transparency, regulate conflicts of interest, and hold organizations accountable for the deliberate spread of misinformation. These steps help ensure that scientific consensus informs public policy.

Questions and Answers about Merchants of Doubt

Q: What does "merchants of doubt" mean?

A: "Merchants of doubt" refers to individuals, organizations, or groups that deliberately spread misinformation and uncertainty about established scientific facts to protect their interests or delay

policy action.

Q: Who are some historical examples of merchants of doubt?

A: Notable examples include tobacco industry executives and scientists who questioned the health risks of smoking, as well as fossil fuel companies and think tanks that promoted doubt about climate change.

Q: How do merchants of doubt influence public opinion?

A: They use tactics such as funding biased research, recruiting contrarian experts, manipulating the media, and cherry-picking data to exaggerate uncertainty and create the appearance of scientific controversy.

Q: What impact have merchants of doubt had on society?

A: Their actions have delayed regulatory action on major public health and environmental issues, undermined trust in science, and contributed to preventable economic, health, and environmental costs.

Q: Why is misinformation from merchants of doubt effective?

A: Misinformation is effective because it exploits cognitive biases, is often repeated across media channels, and is tailored to resonate with specific audiences, making it easier for people to accept falsehoods.

Q: How can someone recognize a merchant of doubt?

A: Warning signs include an overemphasis on controversy, links to industry funding, reliance on contrarian experts, and the use of non-peer-reviewed or selectively presented data.

Q: What role do cognitive biases play in the spread of doubt?

A: Cognitive biases like confirmation bias make people more likely to believe information that fits their preconceptions, even if it conflicts with scientific consensus.

Q: What can be done to combat the influence of merchants of doubt?

A: Solutions include improving science communication, promoting media literacy, supporting independent research, and enacting policies to enhance transparency and accountability.

Q: Are merchants of doubt only found in environmental or health debates?

A: No, merchants of doubt have operated in various fields, including debates over pesticides, pharmaceuticals, food safety, and more—anywhere scientific consensus threatens vested interests.

Q: How does media literacy help counter merchants of doubt?

A: Media literacy equips individuals to critically evaluate sources, recognize misinformation tactics, and demand evidence-based explanations, reducing the effectiveness of doubt-mongering campaigns.

Merchants Of Doubt

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Merchants of Doubt: Unmasking the Masters of Misinformation

Are you tired of conflicting information, especially when it comes to critical issues like climate change, public health, and tobacco? Do you find yourself questioning the validity of seemingly credible sources? Then you need to understand the concept of "Merchants of Doubt." This in-depth exploration delves into the strategies and tactics employed by individuals and groups who deliberately sow uncertainty and confusion, often to serve their own agendas. We'll examine their methods, motivations, and the devastating consequences of their actions. This blog post will equip you with the tools to identify and combat misinformation, empowering you to make informed decisions based on factual evidence.

H2: Understanding the "Merchants of Doubt" Phenomenon

The term "Merchants of Doubt," borrowed from the title of Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway's groundbreaking book, refers to a network of scientists, lobbyists, and public relations experts who systematically cast doubt on established scientific consensus. Their actions aren't necessarily about

outright lies, but rather about strategically amplifying uncertainties, highlighting dissenting opinions (even if they are marginal), and generally creating an atmosphere of confusion. This manufactured doubt serves to delay or prevent policy changes that might threaten the interests of their clients, often powerful corporations or ideological groups.

H3: Tactics of the Merchants of Doubt

These individuals and organizations employ a range of sophisticated techniques to achieve their goals. Some of the most common include:

Cherry-picking data: Selecting only evidence that supports their predetermined conclusions while ignoring contradictory information.

Amplifying minority opinions: Presenting dissenting viewpoints as equally valid, even if they lack substantial scientific support.

Attacking the credibility of scientists: Discrediting experts by questioning their motives, affiliations, or funding sources.

Creating confusion through technical jargon: Using complex scientific terminology to obfuscate the issues and make them inaccessible to the general public.

Promoting conspiracy theories: Suggesting that scientific findings are part of a broader conspiracy to control or manipulate the population.

Manufacturing controversy where none exists: Creating the illusion of scientific debate even when a clear consensus exists within the scientific community.

H3: Motivations Behind the Doubt

The motivations behind the creation of doubt are diverse and often intertwined. Key drivers include:

Financial gain: Protecting profitable industries from regulations or lawsuits (e.g., the tobacco industry's denial of the health risks of smoking).

Ideological agendas: Promoting specific political or social viewpoints by undermining scientific evidence that contradicts them (e.g., climate change denial).

Power preservation: Maintaining the status quo and resisting changes that could threaten established power structures.

H2: Case Studies: Real-World Examples of Merchants of Doubt

Numerous examples illustrate the devastating impact of Merchants of Doubt. The tobacco industry's

decades-long campaign to downplay the link between smoking and cancer is a prime example. Similarly, the fossil fuel industry has invested heavily in campaigns to cast doubt on the reality and severity of climate change. These campaigns have cost countless lives and created immense environmental damage.

H2: Combating the Merchants of Doubt: How to Spot Misinformation

While the tactics of Merchants of Doubt are sophisticated, there are ways to identify and counteract their influence. Critical thinking skills are paramount:

Seek out reliable sources: Rely on reputable scientific journals, established news organizations, and government agencies for information.

Consider the source: Examine the funding and affiliations of the individuals or organizations presenting the information.

Look for consensus: Determine whether the claims are supported by the vast majority of experts in the relevant field.

Evaluate the evidence: Assess the quality and reliability of the evidence presented. Is it based on rigorous scientific studies, or anecdotal evidence?

Be wary of overly simplistic explanations: Complex issues rarely have simple solutions. Be suspicious of claims that oversimplify scientific findings.

H2: The Importance of Scientific Literacy

Combating the influence of Merchants of Doubt requires a scientifically literate public.

Understanding the scientific method, the nature of scientific consensus, and how to critically evaluate information are crucial skills in today's information-saturated world. Encouraging science education and promoting critical thinking skills are essential to protecting ourselves from the harmful effects of misinformation.

Conclusion

The "Merchants of Doubt" represent a significant threat to informed decision-making and public well-being. By understanding their tactics, motivations, and the devastating consequences of their actions, we can better equip ourselves to identify and resist their influence. The fight against misinformation is an ongoing battle, but by embracing critical thinking and relying on credible sources, we can build a more informed and resilient society.

FAQs

Q1: Are all skeptics Merchants of Doubt? No. Healthy skepticism is a crucial part of the scientific process. The difference lies in the intent and methodology. Merchants of Doubt deliberately spread misinformation to serve specific agendas, while genuine skeptics engage in rigorous scientific inquiry.

Q2: How can I identify a credible source of information? Look for sources that are transparent about their funding, methodology, and potential conflicts of interest. Reputable organizations will cite their sources and stand behind their findings.

Q3: What is the role of the media in combating misinformation? The media plays a critical role in informing the public and holding powerful institutions accountable. Journalists have a responsibility to report accurately and critically evaluate the information they disseminate.

Q4: What can I do to combat misinformation in my own community? Share credible information with your network, support science education initiatives, and engage in respectful discussions with those who hold differing viewpoints.

Q5: Is there a legal recourse against Merchants of Doubt? While difficult to prove, legal action can be taken in some cases, particularly if there is evidence of intentional fraud or defamation. However, the burden of proof often lies on the plaintiff.

merchants of doubt: Merchants of Doubt Naomi Oreskes, Erik M. Conway, 2011-10-03 The U.S. scientific community has long led the world in research on such areas as public health, environmental science, and issues affecting quality of life. These scientists have produced landmark studies on the dangers of DDT, tobacco smoke, acid rain, and global warming. But at the same time, a small yet potent subset of this community leads the world in vehement denial of these dangers. Merchants of Doubt tells the story of how a loose-knit group of high-level scientists and scientific advisers, with deep connections in politics and industry, ran effective campaigns to mislead the public and deny well-established scientific knowledge over four decades. Remarkably, the same individuals surface repeatedly-some of the same figures who have claimed that the science of global warming is not settled denied the truth of studies linking smoking to lung cancer, coal smoke to acid rain, and CFCs to the ozone hole. Doubt is our product, wrote one tobacco executive. These experts supplied it. Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, historians of science, roll back the rug on this dark corner of the American scientific community, showing how ideology and corporate interests, aided by a too-compliant media, have skewed public understanding of some of the most pressing issues of our era.

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rain, and CFCs to the ozone hole. Doubt is our product, wrote one tobacco executive. These experts supplied it. Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, historians of science, roll back the rug on this dark corner of the American scientific community, showing how ideology and corporate interests, aided by a too-compliant media, have skewed public understanding of some of the most pressing issues of our era.

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political fodder. Based on sound scholarship and yet unafraid to speak boldly, this book provides a welcome moment of clarity amid the cacophony of climate change literature.

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dioxide molecule of all the heinous crimes it is accused of.

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short chapters filled with intriguing historical anecdotes, personal asides, and rigorous exposition, readers learn the difference between how the world works at the quantum level, the cosmic level, and the human level—and then how each connects to the other. Carroll's presentation of the principles that have guided the scientific revolution from Darwin and Einstein to the origins of life, consciousness, and the universe is dazzlingly unique. Carroll shows how an avalanche of discoveries in the past few hundred years has changed our world and what really matters to us. Our lives are dwarfed like never before by the immensity of space and time, but they are redeemed by our capacity to comprehend it and give it meaning. The Big Picture is an unprecedented scientific worldview, a tour de force that will sit on shelves alongside the works of Stephen Hawking, Carl Sagan, Daniel Dennett, and E. O. Wilson for years to come.

merchants of doubt: Shifting Baselines Jeremy B.C. Jackson, Karen E. Alexander, Enric Sala, 2012-06-22 Shifting Baselines explores the real-world implications of a groundbreaking idea: we must understand the oceans of the past to protect the oceans of the future. In 1995, acclaimed marine biologist Daniel Pauly coined the term shifting baselines to describe a phenomenon of lowered expectations, in which each generation regards a progressively poorer natural world as normal. This seminal volume expands on Pauly's work, showing how skewed visions of the past have led to disastrous marine policies and why historical perspective is critical to revitalize fisheries and ecosystems. Edited by marine ecologists Jeremy Jackson and Enric Sala, and historian Karen Alexander, the book brings together knowledge from disparate disciplines to paint a more realistic picture of past fisheries. The authors use case studies on the cod fishery and the connection between sardine and anchovy populations, among others, to explain various methods for studying historic trends and the intricate relationships between species. Subsequent chapters offer recommendations about both specific research methods and effective management. This practical information is framed by inspiring essays by Carl Safina and Randy Olson on a personal experience of shifting baselines and the importance of human stories in describing this phenomenon to a broad public. While each contributor brings a different expertise to bear, all agree on the importance of historical perspective for effective fisheries management. Readers, from students to professionals, will benefit enormously from this informed hindsight.

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merchants of doubt: Golden Holocaust Robert N. Proctor, 2012-02-28 The cigarette is the deadliest artifact in the history of human civilization. It is also one of the most beguiling, thanks to more than a century of manipulation at the hands of tobacco industry chemists. In *Golden Holocaust*, Robert N. Proctor draws on reams of formerly-secret industry documents to explore how the cigarette came to be the most widely-used drug on the planet, with six trillion sticks sold per year. He paints a harrowing picture of tobacco manufacturers conspiring to block the recognition of tobacco-cancer hazards, even as they ensnare legions of scientists and politicians in a web of denial. Proctor tells heretofore untold stories of fraud and subterfuge, and he makes the strongest case to date for a simple yet ambitious remedy: a ban on the manufacture and sale of cigarettes.

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finds itself faced with perhaps the greatest challenges since Gutenberg. A combination of economic pressures and technological change is forcing publishers to alter their practices and think hard about the future of the books in the digital age. In this book - the first major study of trade publishing for more than 30 years - Thompson situates the current challenges facing the industry in an historical context, analysing the transformation of trade publishing in the United States and Britain since the 1960s. He gives a detailed account of how the world of trade publishing really works, dissecting the roles of publishers, agents and booksellers and showing how their practices are shaped by a field that has a distinctive structure and dynamic. This new paperback edition has been thoroughly revised and updated to take account of the most recent developments, including the dramatic increase in ebook sales and its implications for the publishing industry and its future.

merchants of doubt: Lying Sam Harris, 2013-10-23 As it was in Anna Karenina, Madame Bovary, and Othello, so it is in life. Most forms of private vice and public evil are kindled and sustained by lies. Acts of adultery and other personal betrayals, financial fraud, government corruption—even murder and genocide—generally require an additional moral defect: a willingness to lie. In *Lying*, best-selling author and neuroscientist Sam Harris argues that we can radically simplify our lives and improve society by merely telling the truth in situations where others often lie. He focuses on white lies—those lies we tell for the purpose of sparing people discomfort—for these are the lies that most often tempt us. And they tend to be the only lies that good people tell while imagining that they are being good in the process.

merchants of doubt: A Climate for Change Katharine Hayhoe, Andrew Farley, 2009-10-29 Most Christian lifestyle or environmental books focus on how to live in a sustainable and conservational manner. A CLIMATE FOR CHANGE shows why Christians should be living that way, and the consequences of doing so. Drawing on the two authors' experiences, one as an internationally recognized climate scientist and the other as an evangelical leader of a growing church, this book explains the science underlying global warming, the impact that human activities have on it, and how our Christian faith should play a significant role in guiding our opinions and actions on this important issue.

merchants of doubt: Requiem for a Species Clive Hamilton, 2010 First Published in 2010. Routledge is an imprint of Taylor & Francis, an informa company.

merchants of doubt: Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization (Substantially Revised) Lester Russell Brown, 2008 Provides alternative solutions to such global problems as population control, emerging water shortages, eroding soil, and global warming, outlining a detailed survival strategy for the civilization of the future.

merchants of doubt: Confronting Climate Gridlock Daniel S. Cohan, 2022-01-01 An atmospheric scientist explains why global climate change mitigation and energy decarbonization demand American diplomacy, technology, and policy Daniel Cohan makes a compelling case that the problem of climate change is solvable. Fixing the gridlock on global action requires fixing the gridlock here in the United States of America. Cohan shows how that can be done.--David Victor, University of California, San Diego Professor of environmental engineering Daniel Cohan argues that escaping the gravest perils of climate change will first require American diplomacy, technological innovation, and policy to catalyze decarbonization globally. Combining his own expertise along with insights from more than a hundred interviews with diplomats, scholars, and clean-technology pioneers, Cohan identifies flaws in previous efforts to combat climate change. He highlights opportunities for more successful strategies, including international climate clubs and accelerated development of clean energy technologies. Grounded in history and emerging scholarship, this book offers a forward-looking vision of solutions to confronting climate gridlock and a clear-eyed recognition of the challenges to enacting them.

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merchants of doubt: The Fight Against Doubt Inmaculada de Melo-Martín, Kristen

Intemann, 2018-07-02 The lack of public support for climate change policies and refusals to vaccinate children are just two alarming illustrations of the impacts of dissent about scientific claims. Dissent can lead to confusion, false beliefs, and widespread public doubt about highly justified scientific evidence. Even more dangerously, it has begun to corrode the very authority of scientific consensus and knowledge. Deployed aggressively and to political ends, some dissent can intimidate scientists, stymie research, and lead both the public and policymakers to oppose important public policies firmly rooted in science. To criticize dissent is, however, a fraught exercise. Skepticism and fearless debate are key to the scientific process, making it both vital and incredibly difficult to characterize and identify dissent that is problematic in its approach and consequences. Indeed, as de Melo-Martín and Intemann show, the criteria commonly proposed as means of identifying inappropriate dissent are flawed and the strategies generally recommended to tackle such dissent are not only ineffective but could even make the situation worse. The Fight Against Doubt proposes that progress on this front can best be achieved by enhancing the trustworthiness of the scientific community and by being more realistic about the limits of science when it comes to policymaking. It shows that a richer understanding of the context in which science operates is needed to disarm problematic dissent and those who deploy it. This, the authors argue, is the best way forward, rather than diagnosing the many instances of wrong-headed dissent.

merchants of doubt: The Lomborg Deception Howard Friel, 2010-03-16 In this major assessment of leading climate-change skeptic Bjørn Lomborg, Howard Friel meticulously deconstructs the Danish statistician's claim that global warming is "no catastrophe" by exposing the systematic misrepresentations and partial accounting that are at the core of climate skepticism. His detailed analysis serves not only as a guide to reading the global warming skeptics, but also as a model for assessing the state of climate science. With attention to the complexities of climate-related phenomena across a range of areas—from Arctic sea ice to the Antarctic ice sheet—The Lomborg Deception also offers readers an enlightening review of some of today's most urgent climate concerns. Friel's book is the first to respond directly to Lomborg's controversial research as published in *The Skeptical Environmentalist* (2001) and *Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist's Guide to Global Warming* (2007). His close reading of Lomborg's textual claims and supporting footnotes reveals a lengthy list of findings that will rock climate skeptics and their allies in the government and news media, demonstrating that the published peer-reviewed climate science, as assessed mainly by the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, has had it mostly right—even if somewhat conservatively right—all along. Friel's able defense of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* against Lomborg's repeated attacks is by itself worth an attentive reading.

merchants of doubt: Science-Mart Philip Mirowski, 2011-04-29 This trenchant study analyzes the rise and decline in the quality and format of science in America since World War II. Science-Mart attributes this decline to a powerful neoliberal ideology in the 1980s which saw the fruits of scientific investigation as commodities that could be monetized, rather than as a public good.

merchants of doubt: Science on a Mission Naomi Oreskes, 2021-04-19 A vivid portrait of how Naval oversight shaped American oceanography, revealing what difference it makes who pays for science. What difference does it make who pays for science? Some might say none. If scientists seek to discover fundamental truths about the world, and they do so in an objective manner using well-established methods, then how could it matter who's footing the bill? History, however, suggests otherwise. In science, as elsewhere, money is power. Tracing the recent history of oceanography, Naomi Oreskes discloses dramatic changes in American ocean science since the Cold War, uncovering how and why it changed. Much of it has to do with who pays. After World War II, the US military turned to a new, uncharted theater of warfare: the deep sea. The earth sciences—particularly physical oceanography and marine geophysics—became essential to the US Navy, which poured unprecedented money and logistical support into their study. *Science on a Mission* brings to light how this influx of military funding was both enabling and constricting: it resulted in the creation of important domains of knowledge but also significant, lasting, and consequential domains of ignorance. As Oreskes delves into the role of patronage in the history of

science, what emerges is a vivid portrait of how naval oversight transformed what we know about the sea. It is a detailed, sweeping history that illuminates the ways funding shapes the subject, scope, and tenor of scientific work, and it raises profound questions about the purpose and character of American science. What difference does it make who pays? The short answer is: a lot.

merchants of doubt: Global Health and International Relations Colin McInnes, Kelley Lee, 2013-05-02 The long separation of health and International Relations, as distinct academic fields and policy arenas, has now dramatically changed. Health, concerned with the body, mind and spirit, has traditionally focused on disease and infirmity, whilst International Relations has been dominated by concerns of war, peace and security. Since the 1990s, however, the two fields have increasingly overlapped. How can we explain this shift and what are the implications for the future development of both fields? Colin McInnes and Kelley Lee examine four key intersections between health and International Relations today - foreign policy and health diplomacy, health and the global political economy, global health governance and global health security. The explosion of interest in these subjects has, in large part, been due to real world concerns - disease outbreaks, antibiotic resistance, counterfeit drugs and other risks to human health amid the spread of globalisation. Yet the authors contend that it is also important to understand how global health has been socially constructed, shaped in theory and practice by particular interests and normative frameworks. This groundbreaking book encourages readers to step back from problem-solving to ask how global health is being problematized in the first place, why certain agendas and issue areas are prioritised, and what determines the potential solutions put forth to address them? The palpable struggle to better understand the health risks facing a globalized world, and to strengthen collective action to deal with them effectively, begins - they argue - with a more reflexive and critical approach to this rapidly emerging subject.

merchants of doubt: *Air Con* Ian Wishart, 2009 Award-winning investigative journalist Wishart breaks open the global warming debate into easily understood chapters that first explain the latest scientific discoveries, and then explain the agenda behind the climate scare.

merchants of doubt: *Merchants of Truth* Jill Abramson, 2019-02-07 The gripping and definitive in-the-room account of the revolution that has swept the news industry over the last decade and reshaped our world. The last decade has seen the News industry face unprecedented change. The sometimes-century old institutions which were once the bastions of truth have had their dominance eroded by vast innovations in viral technology and, as millennial appetites force the industry to choose between principles of objectivity and impartiality, the survivors must confront the horrifying cost of their success: sexual scandal, fake news, the election of President Trump and the shaking of democracy. Taking us behind the scenes at four media titans - BuzzFeed, VICE, The New York Times and The Washington Post - Abramson reveals the human drama behind this shift: one involving deal-making tycoons, thrusting reporters, hard-bitten editors, egomaniacs, bullshitters, provocateurs and bullies, with some surfing and others drowning in the breaking wave of change. 'A cracking, essential read... Abramson knows where most of the bodies are buried and is prepared to draw the reader a detailed map' Guardian

merchants of doubt: *The Climate Swerve* Robert Jay Lifton, 2017-10-10 Longlisted for the PEN America/E.O. Wilson Prize for Literary Science Writing Well worth the read. . . . [A] prescient handoff to the next generation of scholars. —The Washington Post From one of the world's foremost thinkers (Bill Moyers), a profound, hopeful, and timely call for an emerging new collective consciousness to combat climate change Over his long career as witness to an extreme twentieth century, National Book Award-winning psychiatrist, historian, and public intellectual Robert Jay Lifton has grappled with the profound effects of nuclear war, terrorism, and genocide. Now he shifts to climate change, which, Lifton writes, presents us with what may be the most demanding and unique psychological task ever required of humankind, what he describes as the task of mobilizing our imaginative resources toward climate sanity. Thanks to the power of corporate-funded climate denialists and the fact that with its slower, incremental sequence, [climate change] lends itself less to the apocalyptic drama, a large swathe of humanity has numbed themselves to the reality of

climate change. Yet Lifton draws a message of hope from the Paris climate meeting of 2015 where representatives of virtually all nations joined in the recognition that we are a single species in deep trouble. Here, Lifton suggests in this lucid and moving book that recalls Rachel Carson and Jonathan Schell, was evidence of how we might call upon the human mind—our greatest evolutionary asset—to translate a growing species awareness—or climate swerve—into action to sustain our habitat and civilization.

merchants of doubt: A Marriage Proposal Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, 1942 The story tells of the efforts of a nervous and excitable man who starts to propose to an attractive young woman, but who gets into a tremendous quarrel over a boundary line.

merchants of doubt: Storms of My Grandchildren James Hansen, 2011-01-04 _____
'When the history of the climate crisis is written, Hansen will be seen as the scientist with the most powerful and consistent voice calling for intelligent action to preserve our planet's environment' - Al Gore 'Few people know more about climate change than James Hansen ... This unnerving and fluently written book is the definitive one to read' - BBC Wildlife 'Anyone concerned about the world our children and grandchildren must inherit owes it to themselves to read this book' - Irish Times _____
An urgent and provocative call to action from the world's leading climate scientist Dr James Hansen, the world's leading scientist on climate issues, speaks out with the full truth about global warming: the planet is hurtling to a climatic point of no return. Hansen - whose climate predictions have come to pass again and again, beginning in the 1980s when he first warned US Congress about global warming - is the single most credible voice on the subject worldwide. He paints a devastating but all-too-realistic picture of what will happen if we continue to follow the course we're on. But he is also a hard-headed optimist, and shows that there is still time to take the urgent, strong action needed to save humanity. _____ 'James Hansen gives us the opportunity to watch a scientist who is sick of silence and compromise; a scientist at the breaking point - the point at which he is willing to sacrifice his credibility to make a stand to avert disaster' - LA Times

merchants of doubt: Unsettled (Updated and Expanded Edition) Steven E. Koonin, 2024-06-11 In this updated and expanded edition of climate scientist Steven Koonin's groundbreaking book, go behind the headlines to discover the latest eye-opening data about climate change—with unbiased facts and realistic steps for the future. Greenland's ice loss is accelerating. Extreme temperatures are causing more fatalities. Rapid 'climate action' is essential to avoid a future climate disaster. You've heard all this presented as fact. But according to science, all of these statements are profoundly misleading. With the new edition of *Unsettled*, Steven Koonin draws on decades of experience—including as a top science advisor to the Obama administration—to clear away the fog and explain what science really says (and doesn't say). With a new introduction, this edition now features reflections on an additional three years of eye-opening data, alternatives to unrealistic “net zero” solutions, global energy inequalities, and the energy crisis arising from the war in Ukraine. When it comes to climate change, the media, politicians, and other prominent voices have declared that “the science is settled.” In reality, the climate is changing, but the why and how aren't as clear as you've probably been led to believe. Koonin takes readers behind the headlines, dispels popular myths, and unveils little-known truths: Despite rising greenhouse gas emissions, global temperatures decreased from 1940 to 1970 Models currently used to predict the future do not accurately describe the climate of the past, and modelers themselves strongly doubt their regional predictions There is no compelling evidence that hurricanes are becoming more frequent—or that predictions of rapid sea level rise have any validity *Unsettled* is a reality check buoyed by hope, offering the truth about climate science—what we know, what we don't, and what it all means for our future.

merchants of doubt: Cat Wars Peter P. Marra, Chris Santella, 2016-09-20 Why our cats are a danger to species diversity and human health In 1894, a lighthouse keeper named David Lyall arrived on Stephens Island off New Zealand with a cat named Tibbles. In just over a year, the Stephens Island Wren, a rare bird endemic to the island, was rendered extinct. Mounting scientific

evidence confirms what many conservationists have suspected for some time—that in the United States alone, free-ranging cats are killing birds and other animals by the billions. Equally alarming are the little-known but potentially devastating public health consequences of rabies and parasitic *Toxoplasma* passing from cats to humans at rising rates. *Cat Wars* tells the story of the threats free-ranging cats pose to biodiversity and public health throughout the world, and sheds new light on the controversies surrounding the management of the explosion of these cat populations. This compelling book traces the historical and cultural ties between humans and cats from early domestication to the current boom in pet ownership, along the way accessibly explaining the science of extinction, population modeling, and feline diseases. It charts the developments that have led to our present impasse—from Stan Temple's breakthrough studies on cat predation in Wisconsin to cat-eradication programs underway in Australia today. It describes how a small but vocal minority of cat advocates has campaigned successfully for no action in much the same way that special interest groups have stymied attempts to curtail smoking and climate change. *Cat Wars* paints a revealing picture of a complex global problem—and proposes solutions that foresee a time when wildlife and humans are no longer vulnerable to the impacts of free-ranging cats.

merchants of doubt: *The Attention Merchants* Tim Wu, 2017-09-19 From the author of the award-winning *The Master Switch*, who coined the term net neutrality—a revelatory, ambitious and urgent account of how the capture and re-sale of human attention became the defining industry of our time. Dazzling. —Financial Times Ours is often called an information economy, but at a moment when access to information is virtually unlimited, our attention has become the ultimate commodity. In nearly every moment of our waking lives, we face a barrage of efforts to harvest our attention. This condition is not simply the byproduct of recent technological innovations but the result of more than a century's growth and expansion in the industries that feed on human attention. Wu's narrative begins in the nineteenth century, when Benjamin Day discovered he could get rich selling newspapers for a penny. Since then, every new medium—from radio to television to Internet companies such as Google and Facebook—has attained commercial viability and immense riches by turning itself into an advertising platform. Since the early days, the basic business model of “attention merchants” has never changed: free diversion in exchange for a moment of your time, sold in turn to the highest-bidding advertiser. Full of lively, unexpected storytelling and piercing insight, *The Attention Merchants* lays bare the true nature of a ubiquitous reality we can no longer afford to accept at face value.

merchants of doubt: *Human Compatible* Stuart Russell, 2019-10-08 The most important book on AI this year. --The Guardian Mr. Russell's exciting book goes deep, while sparkling with dry witticisms. --The Wall Street Journal The most important book I have read in quite some time (Daniel Kahneman); A must-read (Max Tegmark); The book we've all been waiting for (Sam Harris) A leading artificial intelligence researcher lays out a new approach to AI that will enable us to coexist successfully with increasingly intelligent machines In the popular imagination, superhuman artificial intelligence is an approaching tidal wave that threatens not just jobs and human relationships, but civilization itself. Conflict between humans and machines is seen as inevitable and its outcome all too predictable. In this groundbreaking book, distinguished AI researcher Stuart Russell argues that this scenario can be avoided, but only if we rethink AI from the ground up. Russell begins by exploring the idea of intelligence in humans and in machines. He describes the near-term benefits we can expect, from intelligent personal assistants to vastly accelerated scientific research, and outlines the AI breakthroughs that still have to happen before we reach superhuman AI. He also spells out the ways humans are already finding to misuse AI, from lethal autonomous weapons to viral sabotage. If the predicted breakthroughs occur and superhuman AI emerges, we will have created entities far more powerful than ourselves. How can we ensure they never, ever, have power over us? Russell suggests that we can rebuild AI on a new foundation, according to which machines are designed to be inherently uncertain about the human preferences they are required to satisfy. Such machines would be humble, altruistic, and committed to pursue our objectives, not theirs. This new foundation would allow us to create machines that are provably deferential and provably

beneficial.

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