

Cases for Teaching Responsible Communication of Science

Debating evolution? Actual communication choices & outcomes

As most students will know, Nye did debate Ham, at an event sandwiched between the Super Bowl and the Olympics in February, 2014. The fairly civil debate stretched over two and a half hours, with some of the best moments occurring in the course of (relatively) spontaneous answers to audience questions.

In addition to the apparently mixed live audience of about 1,000, a half a million viewers are reported to have checked in on the live stream. The YouTube video has received close to 5 million hits, and more have probably watched at least part of the debate on other outlets.

Reaction to the debate split along predictable lines, with supporters of both positions declaring their side the victor.

It is noteworthy that several commentators who had criticized Nye for being willing to debate nevertheless confessed themselves satisfied with his performance. Several of them went on to warn: Don't Try This At Home!, arguing that ordinary defenders of evolution wouldn't share Nye's advantages.

Both Nye and Answers in Genesis published books about the debate within the year; Nye's *Undeniable* through a mainstream press, AiG's *Inside the Nye-Ham Debate* through in-house publishing. Each sent the other a copy of his book for Christmas in 2015.

Also in 2015 Ham managed to complete raising money for his life-size recreation of Noah's Ark, claiming that the debate had given the Creation Museum and other AiG efforts a significant fundraising bump.