



CLIMATE COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP

Date: May 29, 2013

NOAA's National Climatic Data Center

Asheville, NC



Susan Joy Hassol's list of words that mean different things to scientists than they do to laypeople

				<u>Acronyms</u>
Enhance	Discipline	Recruitment	Control	SST
Aerosol	Fresh	Settlement	Law	THC
Ozone	Suggest	Welfare	Gray	PDF
Exotic	Idealized	Anomaly	Trick	SLR
Positive	Secular	Constrain	Degrees of freedom	LA
Negative	State	Constituents	Bootstrap	ET
Feedback	Delivery	Transport	Jackknife	PET
Radiation	Degenerate	Tolerance	Monte Carlo	
Model	Mitigation	Attribute	Lasso	
Sensitivity	Contribute	Community	Temperate	
Manipulation	Return period	Variable	Resolve	
Theory	Waiting time	Morbidity	Cruise	
Reservoir	Recover	Vector	Flux	
Sink	Abstract	Basic	Host	
Regime	Legend	Fry	Budget	
Value	Literature	Volatile	Institutionalize	
Proposal	Work	Homogenize	Mobilize	
Sign	Power	Harmonize	Basin	
Significant	Force	Novel	Impacted	
Species	Export	Eccentric	Proxy	
Risk	Cyclone	Station	Cultured	
Uncertainty	Negative	Process	Stock	
Bias	Costs	Signal	Pool	
Catastrophic	Leakage	Evolution	Litter	
Nutrient	Spillover	Should	Conversion	
Organic	Human	Historical	Least squares	
Loading	activities	Dynamic	Consumer	
Enrichment	Commitment	Extra (as in	Autonomous	
Exploitation	Disruptive	extra-tropical)	Surveillance	
Terrestrial	Viral	Concentration	Insular	
Fix	Fiber	Stimulate	Artifact	
Sequester/ Sequestration	Degradation	Departure	Fine	
Scheme	Productivity	Sensible	Juvenile	
Skeptic	Agent	Respect	Academic	
Ecology	Driver	User	Instrument	
Organism	Forcing	Fossil	Plastic	
	Services	Consensus	Astronomical	

For alternatives to some of these words, see Susan Hassol & Richard Somerville's 2011 piece in *Physics Today*: "Communicating the Science of Climate Change"; and Susan's 2008 piece in *Eos*: "Improving How Scientists Communicate Climate Change."



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TERMS THAT HAVE DIFFERENT MEANINGS FOR SCIENTISTS AND THE PUBLIC

Scientific term	Public meaning	Better choice
enhance	improve	intensify, increase
aerosol	spray can	tiny atmospheric particle
positive trend	good trend	upward trend
positive feedback	good response, praise	vicious cycle, self-reinforcing cycle
theory	hunch, speculation	scientific understanding
uncertainty	ignorance	range
error	mistake, wrong, incorrect	difference from exact true number
bias	distortion, political motive	offset from an observation
sign	indication, astrological sign	plus or minus sign
values	ethics, monetary value	numbers, quantity
manipulation	illicit tampering	scientific data processing
scheme	devious plot	systematic plan
anomaly	abnormal occurrence	change from long-term average

This table is from Susan Joy Hassol & Richard Somerville's 2011 piece in *Physics Today*: "Communicating the Science of Climate Change".