

Overview of the Foresight Institute

The Foresight Institute is an excellent resource for information regarding nanotechnology's risks and benefits. This organization began in 1986 when nanotechnology was still somewhat in a junior phase, more of a concept than what we can see today as a branch of science which is providing many new applications and concerns to the societies around us. Foresight is concerned primarily with guiding nanotechnology research, policy analysis and education to the public and surrounding communities within the world of nanotechnology.

The Foresight Nanotechnology Challenges, which is basically the set of goals with which the institution handles the content that it analyzes and the education it wishes to propagate to the public, contains six different areas that are most important to the institute. From 1 – 6 in a seemingly respective order they are:

1. Meeting global energy needs with clean solutions
2. Providing abundant clean water globally
3. Increasing health and longevity of human life
4. Maximizing productivity of agriculture
5. Making powerful information technology available everywhere
6. Enabling the development of space

<http://www.foresight.org/challenges/index.html> - The list can be found at this address with the proper elaborations for each section.

The next section on the site is the “Roadmap” section which basically outlines the members on Foresight's executive steering board. This section also covers details of the

main funding sponsors and some of the third parties involved with the Foresight Institute. The following is a quote on the top of the page which outlines what the “roadmap” means to the institution:

"The Technology Roadmap for Productive Nanosystems will chart a path beginning with current nanotechnology capabilities to advanced systems. The Roadmap will detail a step-by-step course of development that must take place to move from one stage to another, with milestones for achieving each step. With the support and collaboration of our partners, The Waitt Family Foundation and Battelle, we will be able to identify the gap between the basic nanostructured materials of today, and the potential of productive nanosystems."

—Marc Lurie, President, Foresight Nanotech Institute

In the next section entitled “About Nanotechnology,” there are multiple sections on the history of nanotechnology as well as breakdowns for the “General Reader” and the “Technical Reader.” There is also an included Frequently Asked Questions section that goes over nanotechnology and also the emerging molecular manufacturing. There are also four essays which are entitled “Why you should care about nanotechnology” which offer some great ideas for getting the public interested in the topic.

The resources section of the website has an abundance of information in different sections which include resources for researchers, investors, policies, websites and blogs, publications, conferences and events, associations and institutes, student resources and plenty more. There is a section following that is for members and shows how one could be become a member of Foresight through a monetary donation. The last section on the

website is an online store with books and publications for sale concerning the technology itself and directories of businesses involved with nanotechnology.

The Foresight Institute offers a wide variety of information concerning nanotechnology and anyone could find some useful reading on the website. They seem to be very concerned with the effects of nanotechnology and the research that is going in to it and for the most part offer an unbiased look at how nanotechnology is emerging and where it is headed. It seems to be a great resource and something that Insight should try and take some tips and direction from.

Wilson Center

The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars is an organization that was originally developed by the United States Congress in 1968 to study and facilitate discussion and research among the issues that are important to the world. They are nonpartisan and funded privately and publicly. Their concern with nanotechnology is only a part of what the Center takes on to research and discuss, but lately has been showing some great signs of progress and always sparking new interest with different people and associations because of its high standing.

The best publication that has come out as of late from the Wilson Center's Project on Emerging Technologies was written by Dr. Jane Macoubrie, a senior advisor within the project. She outlined several of the concerns that are arising because of nanotechnology and attempted to capture the public's sentiments on the situation at hand. It would appear from her article that many are less informed in the area of nanotechnology than what they are comfortable with and there surely is distrust in

government shown by the survey subjects within the study. This study should be read by anyone who is interested in educating the public on nanotechnology because it shows just how little most people know, their lack of trust for the private and public entities that control the emerging technology, and also the great interest within these people (which is a sample representing the “general public”) to be educated on the topic. The report was published in September 2005 and can be found here:

<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/news/docs/macoubriereport1.pdf>

Other information that can be obtained from the Center’s website includes news and updates on projects that are occurring through other major organizations like Foresight, as well as what government are saying and publishing about nanotechnology. There are many news articles that are posted to the website that deal with nanotechnology and a recent list was documented showing 200+ first generation nanotechnology products available in stores or via the internet for purchase. That list can be found here:

www.nanotechproject.org/consumerproducts.

The Wilson Center is a great resource for information regarding nanotechnology as well. The Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies is a great resource for unbiased information that is widely credited by major organizations and government around the globe. It is a resource that should be trusted and looked at very closely for upcoming news and events relating to nanotechnology. To view the website that is the Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies, go here: <http://www.nanotechproject.org/>