

National Science and Technology Week 2011 October 14 to 23

Celebrate Science and Technology in
Canada...host a



National Café Scientifique 2011 Topic:

Science in Society: For Better or for Worse?

Scientific and technological discoveries have changed the world. Many discoveries — such as penicillin, vaccines, and electricity — have been highly beneficial to humans. Others, however, have had irreparable repercussions, with ongoing and serious consequences for people and the environment: we now live with a hole in the ozone layer, pesticides in our foods, and superbugs. The question is whether new discoveries will be for better or for worse. Although scientific advances offer a glimmer of hope towards solving some of our current global challenges, can science hope to patch up all the world's ills? Or will science contribute to the creation of even more catastrophic results, taking the planet to the point of no return? Are the potential consequences serious enough that we should put the brakes on research? And how can we ensure that new research is and will be used wisely? Do you have an opinion? Join us for drinks, discussion, and debate.

Join the Canada Science and Technology Museum and host your own Café Scientifique event this October in celebration of National Science and Technology Week.

It's easy and we will show you how.

You too can host a Café Scientifique -- simply follow these

6 easy steps!



Step 1: Select your location

Look for a setting that already attracts the people you want as your audience. Size matters – your venue should hold 20 to 50 people. Sound can also be a big issue. You want the café to be secluded from other conversation/music noise of your venue.

Food + Drink + Seating = Great Café Location

STEP 2: Find your speakers

When choosing your panel look for a variety of perspectives. Ensure that your two or three speakers are well-informed comfortable with debate and dialogue. Your panel of speakers should stimulate café participants to consider different sides of the question.

Work from contacts you have – even if they can't participate they are often able to introduce you to someone who can. Create a template invitation and keep track of these contacts. We bet you will want to host more and having a roster of good speakers is half the work.

Here is a sample of an email that we have used to invite potential speakers – if you are having trouble contact us – we can try to help and use our contacts to find someone suitable in your area.

Hello **insert name**

We would like to invite you to be part of our upcoming Café Scientifique. It will be held on Tuesday **insert date** from 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. at the **insert location and address**

A Café Scientifique is a place where, for the cost of a cup of coffee or a pint of beer, anyone can participate in a conversation about science and technology. Every Café has a facilitator and 2-3 experts who help to engage participants in the conversation about the selected topic. The café starts with each expert presenting a short talk (no longer than ten minutes). This serves as a starting point for the rest of the evening's discussion and questions. The Cafes are very informal, normally last for about 2 hours, and are typically attended by 20-50 participants.

Our topic this month is **insert topic**. With your background and experience we think you would be an excellent speaker who would bring a valuable perspective to the discussion.

Please contact me if you are interested in participating in this engaging outreach opportunity!

Thank-you,

Insert name

Insert organization

Insert contact information

Tips

- Be sure to start looking for speakers early.
- Don't get discouraged if you have trouble finding speakers. You may need to contact a number of people to secure each presenter.
- Whether they agree to be a part of your plans or not be sure to ask prospective speakers if they can recommend anyone else who might be interested
- Search University listing for good speakers.
- Don't forget about industry and writers as a source of experts.

Typically speakers are given a gift certificate to the venue so they may purchase a drink or food – they are not generally paid.

STEP 3: Set the style

Powerpoint and overhead presentation are not used in Café Scientifique. Remember this is a (group) conversation. Limit speaking time. Remind them:

It's a discussion –not a lecture! Ask provocative question to engage the audience
It's OK to go beyond your expertise to spark debate- you can preface your remarks with any disclaimer you wish
The audience may not agree with you – That's okay!

STEP 4: Spread the word

Use your website, post it online at cafescientifique.ca. Create a poster and share this. Email your network and ask them to pass it on. Ask your venue to display a poster. Contact your local entertainment newspaper. They often have a system for posting local listings. Ask the host venue to promote the event

STEP 5: Plan to be a good host

Create signs to hang at your venue to direct participants. While it is best to not use a sound system some venues might need this - have one if you can. Ensure the room encourages discussion- avoid arranging the chairs so they all face the speakers.

STEP 6: Discuss!

As the host you are the moderator. Many participants will want to speak. Encourage them to put their hands up and do your best to keep track of who is next , You may need to intervene to focus away from the experts and give the conversation back to the audience .

**Ready to be a part of our National Café during Science and Technology Week?
Want to know more? We are here to help – contact us and we would be happy to guide you and help you create your own Café!**

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What is Café Scientifique?

Held in informal setting such as pubs or coffee houses cafés are a guided discussion on a predetermined question. The atmosphere is casual and conversational – it is not formal nor a presentation. All participants are considered to be equals and all opinions are welcome. “Experts” are there to seed the conversation with informed opinions and keep the dialogue flowing. Cafés are moderated.

Cafés begin with words of welcome by the moderator who introduces the question. Moderators may need to hold speakers to a time-limit as they introduce their perspective and opinion. After a short break where informal groups talk amongst themselves the café resumes. Moderators monitor the interest of participants, ensures those who wish to speak “have the floor” and that no one person dominates the conversation. The moderator will wrap up the evening when time has elapsed – more often than not the conversation continues at individual tables and sub-groups.

Inspired by a movement called Café philosophique in France they have evolved into a number of spinoffs including this one focussed on science and technology. Cafés, whether philosophique or other, involve the gathering of a group of people around a question and are characterized by debate, sharing and open dialogue. Many of the questions covered have no generally agreed-up answer. The objective is to create a public forum where people are comfortable sharing opinions and open to those of others.

Adapting to Different Audiences

The Café Scientifique style is one that works well for many different audiences. When planning your café, take into account your audience’s background, knowledge level, interests and experiences. Hosting a café for high school students will require different considerations than hosting for retirees or for young professionals.

When inviting experts to act as panellists, ensure that they will connect with your specific audience but also aim to have a difference of opinion and ensure as many sides of the question are represented. Select a setting and setting ambiance appropriate to your audience. Other than this you would use the same approach as a typical café — arrange the room to avoid the focus being on the front of the room, set up tables in chairs in clusters and groups. The basic values are the same... respect — everyone’s opinion is valid with a focus on ideas and questions.

Resources

Cafescientifique.org has its own how-to list

Cafescientifique.ca lists people who can help you out