



Lessons learnt from the Climate Dialogue initiative

Marcel Crok (1), Bart Strengers (2), and Eleftheria Vasileiadou (3)

(1) Freelance science journalist, (2) Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL), (3) Eindhoven University of Technology

The weblog Climate Dialogue (climatedialogue.org) has been an experimental climate change communication project. It was the result of a motion in the Dutch parliament, which asked the Dutch government “to also involve climate sceptics in future studies on climate change”.

Climate Dialogue was set up by the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI), the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL), and Dutch science journalist Marcel Crok. It operated for slightly more than two years (From November 2012 till December 2014). Around 20 climate scientists from all over the world, many of them leading in their respective fields, participated in six dialogues.

Climate Dialogue was a moderated blog on controversial climate science topics introducing a combination of several novel elements: a) bringing together scientists with widely separated viewpoints b) strict moderation of the discussion and c) compilation of executive and extended summaries of the discussions that were approved by the invited scientists.

In our talk, we will discuss the operation and results of the Climate Dialogue project, focusing more explicitly on the lessons learnt with respect to online climate change communication addressing the question: “To what extent can online climate change communication bring together climate scientists with widely separated viewpoints, and what would be the advantage of such communication practice?”

We identify how Climate Dialogue was received and perceived by the participating scientists, but also by different scientific and online communities. Finally, we present our ideas on how Climate Dialogue could evolve in a novel way of contributing to (climate) science and what steps would be necessary and/or beneficial for such a platform to survive and succeed.