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NEWS

STUDY IS CRITICAL OF SOME SCIENCE NEWS SOURCES

. . . "If news organizations exaggerate the health risks of new diseases, nuclear power accidents or toxic waste spills, the fault is probably in their sources of information, not their ways of operating, according to a recent study conducted for the Twentieth Century Fund. . . . The chief culprits are often scientists who 'make sweeping judgements on the basis of incomplete, and hence inadequate, data, said the study, 'Science in the Streets'. The researchers said some scientists involved with industry, government or environmental groups emphasized a specific view and might suppress or minimize conflicting evidence. The study said large news organizations could diminish a dependence on biased sources of information by training reporters in complex scientific issues. The researchers said smaller organizations that could not afford specialists could use, such resources as the directory of experts that the scientists' inst. for Public Information, established after the 1979 accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania." (Reproduced with permission from *Press Digest, Current Contents*®, Number 32, August 6, 1984, p. 14, Copyright by the Institute for Scientific Information® Philadelphia, PA, USA).

WHY LEARN MORE ABOUT SCIENCE

. . . "Science should be taught not simply as a body of useful knowledge clothed in technical vocabulary but as a mode of inquiry into the nature of the perceived world, as an intellectual framework to guide us in the adoption of tentative interpretations of what is observed, and as a world view that is not ultimate truth but is applicable and acceptable only in the context of a given set of available facts. If that point of view is also encouraged in situations beyond technical problems, we may see a world where there is less dogmatism and greater mutual understanding. Science should be taught because of its criteria for the acceptance of points of view as valid propositions—not because of its potential exploitable results, or even for its beautiful and powerful theories. Science taught without reference to the scope and limits of human knowledge, without alluding to the collective nature of the enterprise, is incomplete." (Reproduced with permission from *Press Digest, Current Contents*®, Number 32, August 6, 1984, p. 14, Copyright by the Institute for Scientific Information®, Philadelphia, PA USA).