

2014 AAAS SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING MASS MEDIA FELLOW

JANE HU

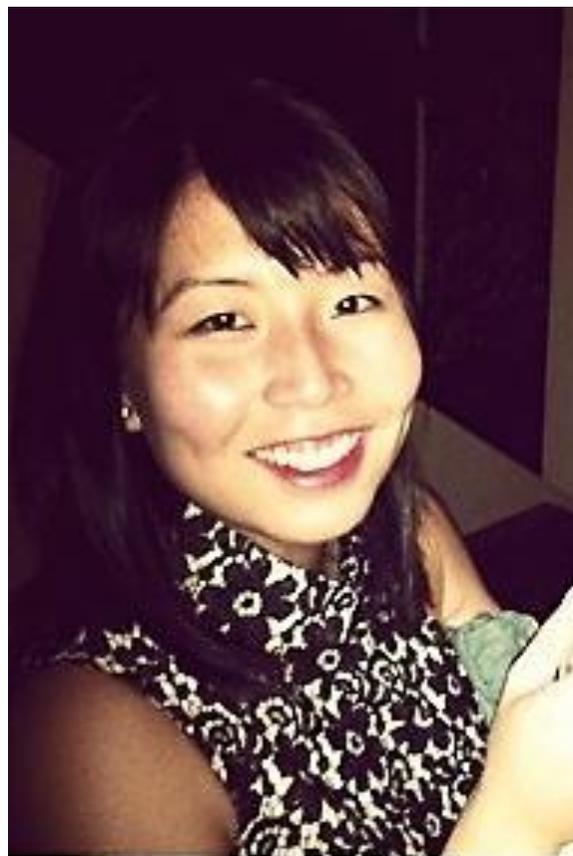
DEGREE: PSYCHOLOGY, PHD
SCHOOL: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
SPONSOR: AAAS
MEDIA SITE: SLATE

Research Focus: Social and statistical inference in preschoolers

Translation: My dissertation work examines how three- to five-year-olds learn from and about other people. Children are incredibly perceptive – for instance, they can learn about other people’s preferences just from observing what they choose – and they make complex evaluations about other people before deciding whether to learn from them.

What are your goals for the summer?

I want to write as much as possible. Much of my previous writing has focused on my area of research, so I’m looking forward to breaking out of my comfort zone and covering topics I’m less familiar with, like cell biology or physics. I also want to develop a better eye for stories, rather than just topics.



What are you most excited about?

I’m excited to have the luxury of an entire summer just to write and report!

Why are you passionate about science communication?

There’s so much fascinating research out there, but there’s way too much of it for a single person to wade through it themselves, and much of it is opaque to outsiders. Science communicators are the key to bringing that info to the general public.

Science communication has the potential to get everyday people interested or involved in science, or to help scientists make connections to other fields or areas they hadn’t yet considered.

Who is your favorite science communicator?

I love Ed Yong’s work. He strikes the perfect balance between writing clearly and engaging the reader with novel details, and he has a distinctive, clever voice.

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Do you have a link to an article you’d like to share?

When I began telling colleagues I was pursuing a career in science communication, I got a few raised eyebrows and a lot of questions, so I wrote an FAQ about my experience exploring different careers over at the PLOS Student Blog: <http://blogs.plos.org/thestudentblog/2014/04/22/faqs-about-non-academic-jobs-jane-hu/>

Describe your dream job.

I’m living it – my dream job is to spread science through writing and outreach. In another life, I would have loved to be a researcher who hikes the west coast to study redwoods.

Tell us about something you do outside of the lab.

I like to be outdoors whenever I can – backpacking, rock climbing, running, or taking my dog Maeby to the park.

Anything else you’d like to share?

George W. Bush’s paintings, the San Jose Sharks, McSweeney’s lists, Bulleit, Frank O’Hara, succulents, and Daniel Jones’s *Modern Love* column are some of my favorite things. Immanuel Kant is my academic great(x8)-grandfather.