

# “Industrial Distraction”

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**Abstract:** There are myriad techniques industry actors use to shape the public understanding of science. While a naive view might assume these techniques typically involve fraud or outright deception, the truth is more nuanced. This paper analyzes industrial distraction, a common technique where industry actors fund and share research that is accurate, often high quality, but nonetheless misleading on important matters of fact. This involves reshaping causal understanding of phenomena with distracting information. Using case studies and causal models, we illustrate how this impacts belief and decision making even for rational learners, informing science policy and debates about misleading content. In particular, this sort of technique points to the need for broad tent understandings of what can count as misleading content.



UW MADISON-DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

**Friday, April 11th @ 3:30 pm**  
**Helen C. White Room # 7191**