

Dr Angela Druckman was an invited speaker at the Science Museum's Dana Centre event to mark the launch of Jack Challoner's book "Desirable Future? Consumer Electronics in Tomorrow's World". Angela's role was to present and discuss the environmental aspects of electronic gadgets. In her talk, entitled "*Gadgets up the Gum Tree? The Unintended Consequences of Electronic Gadgets*", Angela questioned whether our consumer habits are compatible with a sustainable future.

The event commenced with short presentations from each of the panel. Following this the 80 or more members of the audience divided into three discussion groups and members of the panel rotated between the groups. The evening concluded with a plenary question and answer session. The other members of the panel were:

- Jack Challoner, author of "Desirable Future"?
- Dr James Intriligator, Centre for Experimental Consumer Psychology, Bangor University
- Tom Dunmore, Editor in Chief, "Stuff" magazine

In his book, Jack Challoner takes a thought provoking look at the powerful industry of consumer electronics. He unmasks consumer obsession with the latest gadgets and gizmos, and paints a picture of a technological utopia 50 years into the future. But Jack also makes readers of his book question whether a techno-utopia is a realistic vision of the future, although at the event he left it to Angela to juxtapose the wonders of new innovations against their environmental impacts.

The other speakers talked about diverse aspects of electronic gadgetry. Dr James Intriligator discussed how gadgets' features satisfy or often frustrate us, and also talked about why some consumers develop an insatiable desire to acquire the latest gadgets.

"Stuff" is one of the UK's bestselling gadget magazines, and Tom Dunmore, who has the perhaps highly enviable job of reviewing the latest gadgets, concluded in his talk that purchasing gadgets is often more about fashion than utility.

It was revealed at the final plenary session that discussions in all three groups had predominantly focused on the environmental impacts of our obsession for gadgets.

The Dana Centre has a winning formula for running events such as this, providing a forum for lively, informative debates.