

# Position Specification

Society for Science and the Public

Editor in Chief, *Science News*



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## Our Client

The Society for Science & the Public (Society), a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, is a champion for science, dedicated to expanding scientific literacy and effective STEM education and scientific research. Its mission is to promote the understanding and appreciation of science and the vital role it plays in human advancement. Founded in 1921 by E.W. Scripps, the Society has conveyed the excitement of science and research directly to the public through our award-winning magazine, *Science News*, and world-class science competitions: the Regeneron Science Talent Search, Intel International Science and Engineering Fair and Broadcom MASTERS, which provide nearly \$8 million in awards annually.

Since 1921, the Society has published *Science News*, a vibrant and trusted source of science journalism that is concise and comprehensive. *Science News* stands out as one of the few consumer news magazines with a staff of science beat reporters, many with Ph.D.s, dedicated to identifying and reporting on the latest and most important published research across all fields of science. This allows a depth of coverage found in few other outlets. From cell biology to robotics, from climate change to quantum physics, *Science News* gives readers a sweeping view of the ever-shifting scientific landscape, putting individual discoveries in context and revealing connections between fields. In one place, readers gain a broad understanding of the leading edges of research. Beyond news, *Science News* features in-depth explorations of issues at the intersection of science and society, be it what research has to say about the environmental impacts of fracking, the safety of GMOs or the best ways to prevent gun violence.

*Science News* has more than 120,000 subscribers, more than 18 million unique website visitors during the past year, 2.7 million Facebook fans and 2.47 million Twitter followers.

While *Science News* (both print and digital) is at the heart of the Science News Media Group (SNMG), the group also includes:

1. *Science News for Students*, launched in 2003 as a youth edition and companion to *Science News*, is an award-winning free digital resource serving students, parents and teachers. Written at the middle school level, *Science News for Students* connects students to the latest developments in scientific research through more than 300 articles per year. No other news site publishes such timely science and engineering journalism targeted to a youth audience, with reporting and editing done by professional science journalists.

*Science News for Students* articles have won major writing awards and are regularly licensed for classroom use in countries throughout the Americas, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. It had more than 5.6 million visits during the past year, and has more than 1.1 million Facebook fans.

2. *Science News in High Schools* (SNHS) is a program that helps transform how high school students and educators interact with science in the classroom by providing them with current, real-world articles about science in action, providing both information and inspiration. For each issue of *Science News* published during the academic year, the program provides sponsored schools with 10 print copies of the magazine,

an online Educator Guide and digital access to the full *Science News* archive. During 2016–2017, SNHS reached more than 4,200 high schools (nearly 30 percent of public high school students in the United States).

3. *Science News Enterprise* includes the blog network, e-books and domestic and international licensing opportunities. These projects use new or existing journalistic content to expand the reach of the SNMG, fulfilling the Society’s vision to inform people about science.

SNMG is supported by a combination of subscribers, members, philanthropy, licensing and advertising.

To learn more about the Society, please visit: <https://www.societyforscience.org/>. For more information about *Science News*, please visit: <https://www.sciencenews.org/>.

## **The Role**

The next Editor in Chief of *Science News* will have an unprecedented opportunity to play a leading role in identifying, packaging and disseminating the most important science stories — ones that advance the field, make a difference in people’s lives, break new discoveries and debunk misinformation — at a time when trustworthy, accurate coverage of science news matters more than ever. The Editor in Chief will oversee the Science News Media Group.

As the Editor in Chief, s/he is responsible for maintaining intellectual quality and journalistic integrity across the Science News Media Group. The Editor in Chief will work closely with the Society’s Chief Executive Officer, who also serves as the Publisher of Science News Media Group, as well as with the Society’s Board of Directors, to ensure *Science News* fulfills its mission. S/he will generate and support innovative and entrepreneurial opportunities and work with the publisher and other departments to ensure financial sustainability, an enhanced digital footprint, a growing reach and new partnerships, while continuing to foster editorial creativity, credibility and integrity. Further, the Editor in Chief will ensure that *Science News* continues to be viewed as a well-respected, informative and inspiring print magazine, while strategically improving and expanding its delivery across digital media.

Skilled at hiring, mentoring and leading an energized, motivated and committed team, the Editor in Chief will foster a creative, entrepreneurial and results-focused working environment. Externally, s/he will serve as a strong and credible ambassador for the Science News Media Group.

*Specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to:*

- Works with the President and Chief Executive Officer and Publisher, and the Senior Management Team to sustain *Science News* as a premier science consumer publication;
- Oversees the quality and integrity of *Science News*’ existing magazines and the team of journalists, designers and producers responsible for them;
- Directs the investigation, development and implementation of new projects, including new modes of storytelling, designed to enhance *Science News*’ reach and relevance;

- Serves as the public voice of the organization through interactions with scientists, educators and the public;
- Provides leadership and guidance with respect to the successful development of new publications, services and other initiatives, with a particular focus on enhancing *Science News*' digital footprint;
- Understands and keeps current on developments and trends in publishing and technology, and the implications for publishing as they continue to advance; and
- Directs operations to ensure long-term financial stability of *Science News* while adhering to SNMG's mission.

## **Candidate Profile**

Given the rich history of *Science News*, and its important role in providing comprehensive, high-quality coverage from staff beat reporters who know fact from hypothesis and hypothesis from hype, the Editor in Chief will need to possess a special combination of skills. S/he must embrace the mission, brand, tradition and history of *Science News*, while also possessing the vision, entrepreneurial spirit, business acumen and management skills to lead SNMG to stay relevant in an evolving media landscape. S/he will work with the CEO and Publisher and senior executive staff to broaden the development and distribution of SNMG content into the future.

In selecting an Editor in Chief, the Society's CEO and Publisher, *Science News* and its Board of Directors will give weight to evidence of significant journalism/editorial experience and creativity, awareness of leading trends broadly in science and scientific communications, and managerial abilities.

S/he will have a profound commitment to maintaining and enhancing *Science News*' reputation as one of the most highly respected science magazines, supporting high-quality science journalism and promoting the understanding and appreciation of science. This reputation underscores and reflects the Society's commitment to the advancement of science and the vital role it plays in human advancement: to inform, educate and inspire.

*In terms of the performance and personal competencies required for the position, we would highlight the following:*

## **Upholding and Enhancing Editorial Standards**

The successful candidate must possess demonstrated journalism experience, both writing and editing, and a passion for science. Ideally, the candidate will have editorial experience as a professional journalist at a well-regarded media organization, which includes both print and digital properties. Polished editing skills and editorial judgment are required.

**Transformative Vision**

The successful candidate will have a demonstrated record of setting priorities and leading media properties to success. S/he will be a strategic thinker who will work with the newsroom, CEO and Publisher and senior leadership to establish a strategic plan; make sure that the quality of publications meets *Science News*' high standards; be an energetic, innovative thinker with the ability to analyze the mission and business drivers of SNMG, and develop a vision for the future that builds upon *Science News*' deep history and current strengths while leading the team to develop a strategy to move the media group forward in a fast-changing external environment; set compelling and ambitious, yet realistic, goals to achieve continuous evolution and positive change for SNMG; and pursue long-term visionary goals in tandem with short-term results.

S/he will possess excellent editorial judgment and rely upon SSP's core values and the highest editorial standards, goals and strategies when making decisions, balancing a variety of factors to achieve optimal outcomes.

**Business Acumen**

The successful candidate will have the business and financial acumen to generate and support innovative and entrepreneurial opportunities that further SNMG's mission, with awareness of the realities of the bottom line. Those opportunities encompass creating sustainable business models, evaluating financial opportunities and optimizing the enterprise aspects of SNMG programs and publications. S/he will have the digital literacy needed to recognize how to improve and advance the digital footprint of SNMG, driving its content, relevance, reach and broad public engagement.

**Leadership Style**

The successful candidate will be a collaborative leader who demonstrates the skills necessary to effectively manage and inspire an organization of highly intelligent, motivated professionals with a diverse set of skills and perspectives. S/he will have the interpersonal skills and intellect needed to recruit, retain and motivate a highly skilled staff of science journalists, designers and producers. The successful candidate will foster a culture of engagement and responsibility, convening and leading diverse constituencies from across the Society to achieve excellence. S/he will encourage transparency, openness and mutual respect. S/he will have the ability to set priorities decisively, delegate responsibilities, assure accountability and allocate resources to ensure results.

**Communication Skills**

S/he will be an inspiring communicator who can articulate the work of *Science News* to a wide audience as well as being effective one-on-one. S/he will have the ability to connect with both internal and external constituents, from interns to Society leadership to Nobel Prize-winning scientists to potential donors.

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**Passion and Shared Values**

The successful candidate will have a passion for journalism and will foster an environment that exemplifies the Society's core mission: to expand scientific literacy, effective STEM education and scientific research throughout the world for the benefit of all people.

**Contact**

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