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"Bioterrorist Pandemic or Publish: an alternative approach to resolving the dual use dilemma through considerations of justice"

The ongoing controversies over meaningfully and universally agreed upon ways of addressing dual use research of concern so that the public's right to scientific knowledge is given equal consideration with the security rights of sovereign nations has exposed the urgent need to move beyond the current paralytic condition of uncertainty, or dual use dilemma. Using the current highly publicized H5N1 gain of function research studies as a touchstone for their larger inherent yet unaddressed and invisible social justice questions, this paper introduces the concept of *knowledge justice* to describe the social justice issues inherent in the shaping or controlling of knowledge. By giving consideration to questions of justice we can avoid reducing the debate on research of international large scale socio-technological system complexity to simplistic arguments of securitized nationalistic binaries, such as the current dilemma of potential pandemic bioterrorism versus unfettered research publication, and begin building the urgently needed scientific and policy bridges to meaningfully resolve the dual use divide.

Biography

Phillip R. Egert is a PhD candidate at Virginia Tech in Northern VA. His area of research is related to policy issues surrounding dual use research of concern and the tradeoffs between open scholarship, justice, and security.