

Bringing Research to LIFE

Upcoming Events

LUNCH AND LEARN

Intellectual Property: Who Owns It?

Presenters:

Dr. Darren Fast
Director, Technology Transfer Office
University of Manitoba

Dr. Dan Polonenko
Principal, Patent Agent
Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP

Lisa Sim
Associate Counsel, Patent Agent
Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP

Come and learn about the new direction of the Technology Transfer Office and discover how the University of Manitoba is actively working on your behalf to enhance valuable industry partnerships and collaborations.

The workshop will also feature an interactive intellectual property seminar with Dr. Dan Polonenko, a principal and patent agent with Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP, one of Canada's leading law firms.

Sim, associate counsel and patent agent with Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP, will share her knowledge of intellectual property and provide insight on how to protect your ideas!

Thursday, June 13

10:30 am – 1:00 pm

10:30 - networking

10:45 - presentation

Lunch to follow

Theatre C

Basic Medical Sciences Building
Bannatyne Campus

RSVP to Phyllis Brown
tto@umanitoba.ca
204-474-6200

Get started on your entry for the
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Poster Competition**

(It's never too early!)

October 30, 2013

Watch for additional information
on registration at:

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Making magic, making connections

Social scientist takes unusual approach to educating about public health issues

BY KATIE CHALMERS-BROOKS
For The Bulletin

Joseph Kaufert's CV is eclectic: he is a member of the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada's Ethics Advisory Committee—and a member of the Order of Merlin.

He admits he's not your typical magician. The mild-mannered academic, a public health and ethics researcher in the Faculty of Medicine, does work grounded in fact. But when sharing his findings with medical and graduate students in the department of community health sciences, and with colleagues and peers at conferences around the world, he does magic tricks.

The medical anthropologist explores pressing issues like improving access to palliative care, research ethics, Aboriginal health and the rights of people with disabilities. Magic, Kaufert explains, gives him a light opener to heavy topics. "You tread that boundary between trivializing it and motivating and engaging people. I think sometimes it's a way around the PowerPoint," he says.

Going beyond journals

More and more, researchers are looking for ways to better connect with the public to get their findings out of the lab and into the hands of people who can benefit. They're recognizing the need to go beyond academic journals and get creative; it could be a stage play, a poem set to music or a YouTube video. For 25 years Kaufert has been using magic to educate, making him a pioneer in knowledge translation. "It gives you a teachable moment," he says.

When educating the public about sodium intake, he'll pour salt into his closed hand. Within moments the salt vanishes only to reappear from the other hand and begin pouring nonstop. The spectacle provides a metaphor, one he hopes will get people thinking about their salt consumption and the lack of control we have as consumers within today's sodium-rich food industry.

Kaufert's magic trick at a national meeting of disability organizations? Turning a round hole cut into a newspaper into a square opening, illustrating barriers to community participation and the misrepresentation of people with disabilities in the media.

Improving dialogue

Magic works well, he says, to get a conversation going between groups that have different viewpoints. He used the classic linking rings effect at a workshop bringing together intensive care doctors and people with disabilities who fear the physicians may not fully understand the true quality of their lives. At times the rings appear to join seamlessly; other times they don't fit at all. "When dealing with circles that don't overlap, perceptions may be very, very separate.

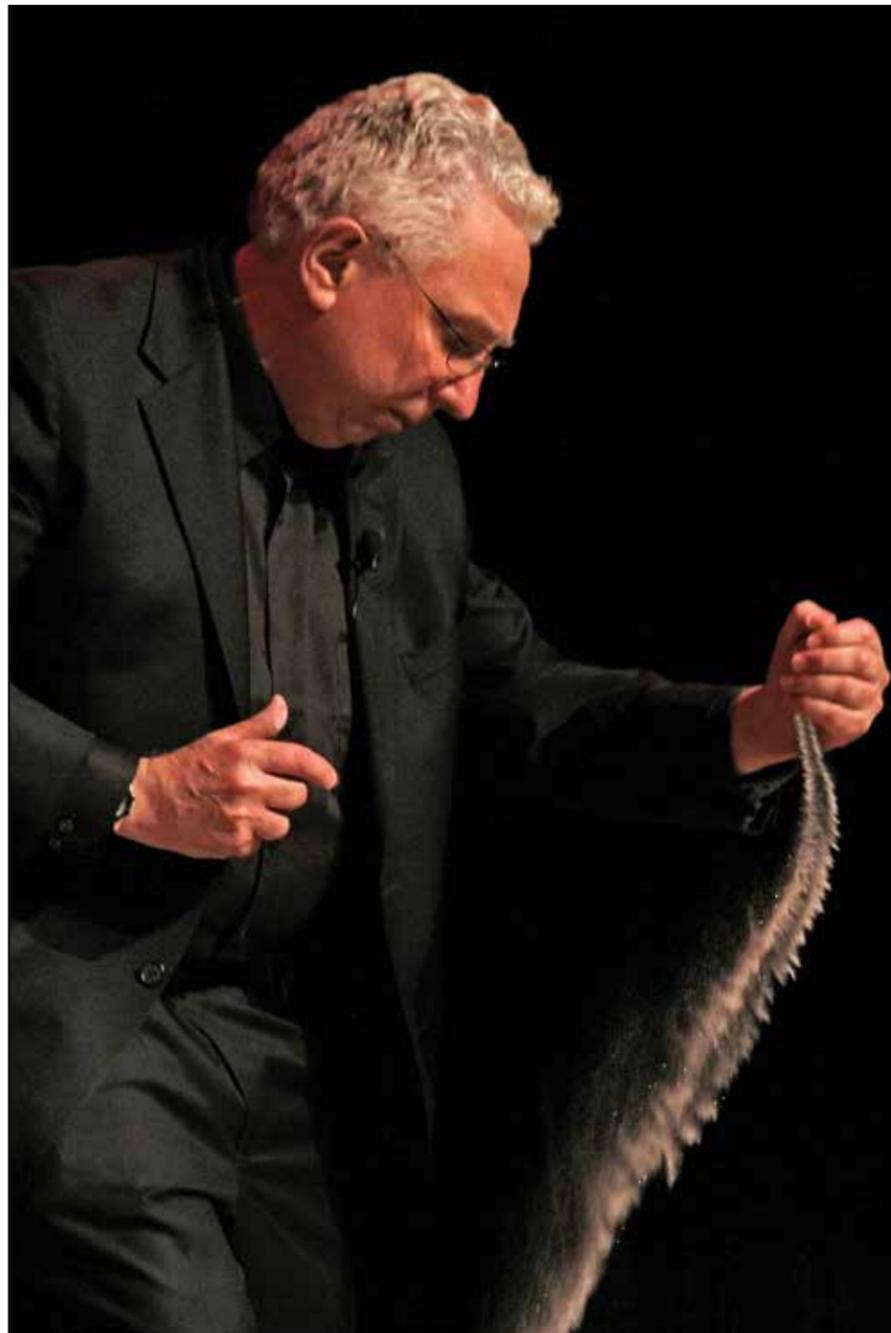


Photo by James Carey Lauder Photography

Community health sciences Prof. Joseph Kaufert

That's not to say that there will ever be total agreement but by exploring the boundaries in those two rings, it may be possible to talk about how we make that dialogue better," says Kaufert.

He uses this same trick when discussing guidelines for research ethics at universities, and the challenge to combine different frameworks across disciplines in social sciences, natural sciences and medicine. "The ethics don't always fit together," he says. "(Magic) is a way of using performance to talk about

issues and not trivializing them but recognizing that for a lot of issues there are two or three sides to it."

The great nephew of a Vaudeville magician, Kaufert got hooked on magic when he was just six years old. As a teen he belonged to a magic group and had to sneak into the nightclubs to see magicians perform. Kaufert put himself through university performing magic tricks, even when he was in Ghana as a grad student doing fieldwork.

Today, he is interested in exploring how it can be used to promote health in children and seniors. He sees it as a medium for inviting people to see things in new ways. "It's the understanding of illusion and reality, not necessarily fooling people but recognizing that it's drawing people into a situation where their knowledge base may be opened up. It may be a powerful teaching situation."

"You tread that boundary between trivializing it and motivating and engaging people. I think sometimes it's a way around the PowerPoint."