

## The public likes to take its science with objects, the bigger or stranger the better.

One thing that is clear in comparing the sciences and the humanities in the media is that in the case of discussion of science *objects* are the hook to catch public attention. In our [Collection 21](#) of 28,957 articles mentioning the “humanities” or “science(s)” studied using a [topic model](#), science topics (like [#68](#) on astrophysics) show that science circulates in public discourse as a galaxy of catchy objects--especially *big* or *strange* ones like distant exoplanets, dwarf suns, black holes, spacecraft, or space telescopes. (Harder to grasp, unseeable, or theoretical objects such as those in particle physics generally sink out of view in our topics models of media into the “long tail” of words at the bottom of the pile.)

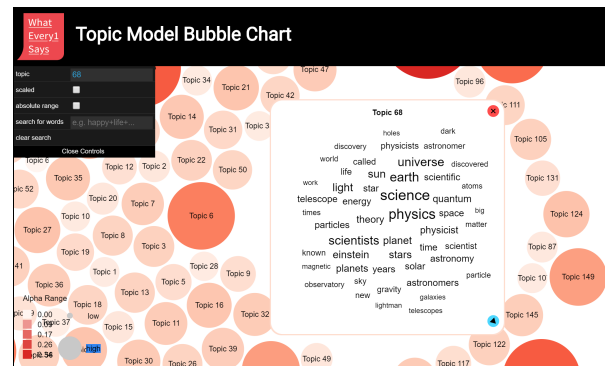
Of course, any *animated* object (e.g. actual animals in [topic #101](#)) is just as catchy. The public loves articles like this associated with topic #101: [“Rats Surprise Scientists by not Living Up to Their Name”](#) (“*researchers at the University of Chicago sought to find out whether a rat would release a fellow rat from an unpleasantly restrictive cage if it could. The answer: Yes.*”)

By contrast, the humanities seem to be object-poor. Basically, the humanities in the public view have just a single kind of object: *books*. Books come in for a great deal of attention in media on the humanities. (See also [KF-5-11](#), [KF-5-8](#), [KF-5-3](#).)

What other objects can the humanities show off to catch public interest?



A decade of discoveries from the High-Accuracy Radial Velocity Planet Searcher (HARPS).  
([WikiMedia Commons](#))



Topic #68 on astrophysics visualized in [TopicBubbles](#)

Document collection studied: [C-21 \(start page\)](#)

Topic model of this collection: [C-21.150](#) (150 topics)

Interesting sample topics: [#68](#), [#101](#).

Representative articles: [a](#), [b](#).

Reports & lab notes behind finding:

Lab-5 documentation, DOI [10.5281/zenodo.4831113](#)