Macromolecular Engineering (ME) is a process comprising rational design of (co)polymers with specific architecture and functionality, followed by precise and efficient polymer synthesis and processing in order to prepare advanced materials with target properties. We employed radical polymerization for ME due to its tolerance to many functionalities although radicals are difficult to be controlled, since they have very short life times (<1 s) and are involved in side reactions. Taming free radicals was accomplished via dynamic equilibria between minute amounts of radicals and large pool of dormant species using copper-based ATRP (atom transfer radical polymerization) catalytic systems. By applying new initiating/catalytic systems, Cu level in ATRP was reduced to a few ppm and ME provided polymers with precisely controlled molecular weights, low dispersities, designed shape, composition and functionality as well as block, graft, star, hyperbranched, gradient and periodic copolymers, molecular brushes and organic-inorganic hybrid materials and bioconjugates. These polymers can be used as components of various advanced materials such as health and beauty products, biomedical and electronic materials, coatings, surfactants, lubricants, additives, sealants as well as nanostructured multifunctional hybrid materials for application related to environment, energy and catalysis.

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