



# Science communication within research uptake:

## HOW TO TALK TO JOURNALISTS

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## Topic aims

- **understand the reasons for discussing scientific information to the media**
- **recognise the means of communicating with journalists**
- **provide tips for undertaking interviews**

# Science communication



Science communication describes a variety of practices that transmit scientific ideas, methods, knowledge and research to non-expert audiences in an accessible, understandable or useful way.

-Newcastle University definition

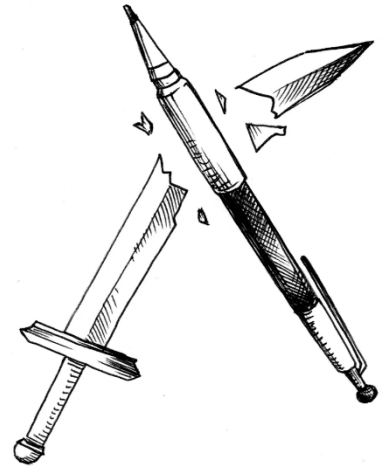


# Journalists are major stakeholders in science communication

1. They can communicate to a wide audience quickly with the ability to create change. (inform, enlighten, educate, entertain)

*"the pen is mightier than the sword"*-

Edward Bulwer-Lytton 1839



# Journalists are major stakeholders in science communication



2. They have a duty to inform and can be watchdogs

(when they are free, independent and pluralistic)



# Journalists are major stakeholders in science communication



3. They have a nose for news

(a cultivated sense or instinct of what is big news. Can see what others don't see)





# **How can Scientists/Researchers help Journalists tell stories?**



# Traditional Sources of News for Journalists



- Press releases, Reports, adverts, company/organizational websites, briefs
- Interviews
- Events

*(social media has added a new dimension to this)*







**Scientists can use traditional sources of news to share about their work.**

**There are some points to consider.....**



# Points to consider: LANGUAGE



Language is key-Kill jargon

*(any word or phrase that loses or changes meaning when you use it with people who aren't in your field should be avoided)*

- Most journalists are not specialized in science reporting
- Some concepts may be too novel





# Ways to kill jargon

- explain it immediately after you say it
- use online tools i.e., 'UP-GOER FIVE' text editor (<https://splasho.com/upgoer5/>)



# Points to consider: use analogies and metaphors



- a comparison between one thing and another, typically for the purpose of explanation or clarification-(analogy)
- a thing regarded as representative or symbolic of something else-(Metaphor)

# Points to consider: Give access



- to yourself
- to your study team

Social media has opened access. Consider a social presence either for your study, for yourself etc



# Points to consider: provide context



- Give background information
- Explain your scope and limitations
- Present clear facts
- present supporting information



## Points to consider: Be concise



- present main points clearly i.e.. Give headings, use bullet points, use visuals if possible
- plan what you want to say-can help avoid filler words and rambling

*\*these points all point to the standard practices for writing a press release*



# PRESS RELEASE



- Commonly used
- A press release is used to ‘accurately present and promote significant news





# Press Release: standard format



1. Heading
2. Dateline
3. Most important information first
4. Summary of key points (supporting information i.e., short description of the research, topline results, statistics, background).
5. Quotes
6. Contact information

# Social Media



-Gives a new dimension to how news is shared and sourced by Journalists and the general population





# Interviews

**How to handle interviews, before and during**



# Preparing for an interview



Research the media house,

- do they have a particular viewpoint?
- who is their audience



# Preparing for an interview



## Know the Topic

- the journalist should explain what they want to know
- can give you an opportunity to prepare a story angle that reflects your story



# Preparing for an interview with a Journalist



Ask for questions beforehand but prepare to be challenged

Prepare what you will say (facts, examples)



# Conducting an interview with a Journalist



Keep the audience in mind

- present main points clearly (number them if possible) and repeat main points whenever possible (call to action? Creating awareness?)
- use simple language and explain jargon



# Conducting an interview with a Journalist



Be truthful

- support your facts, state your limitations
- don't be afraid to say if you don't know the answer





# Conducting an interview with a journalist



Consider the mechanics

- Don't speak too quickly or too slowly
- Use the right tone and body language





**Thank you**

