



In Search of Better Health

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION BEYOND JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS WORKSHOP

"Science not shared is science lost!"

Date: 19-21 February, 2024

Venue: Uganda Virus Research Institute

www.eaccr.org



EACCR3 is part of the EDCTP programme supported by
European Union under grant agreement : CSA2020NoE-3102.



Uganda
Virus
Research
Institute



In Search of Better Health

Science reporting for radio/radio talk shows for science communication

Dennis Ernest Ssesanga

Research Scientist/ Knowledge Management Officer- UVRI

dssesanga@uvri.go.ug



Uganda
Virus
Research
Institute

Introduction

- **Science communication** is the practice of conveying **scientific knowledge**, **research findings**, and the **scientific process** to **non-expert audiences**. It's crucial for fostering public understanding of science, informing policy, and promoting scientific literacy.
- **Science reporting for radio** involves **crafting engaging, informative content** that can capture the attention of listeners **who might be doing other activities** while tuned in.
- **Radio talk shows** serve as an excellent platform for science communication due to their accessibility, the personal connection they foster with listeners, and their ability to reach a broad, diverse audience.

Principles of Science Communication

- i. **Clarity:** Use plain language, avoid jargon, or explain technical terms when they are necessary.
- ii. **Relevance:** Connect scientific concepts to everyday life or current events to make them more relatable.
- iii. **Accuracy:** Ensure the information is correct; misinformation can harm public trust in science.
- iv. **Engagement:** Use storytelling, analogies, or interactive elements to captivate the audience.
- v. **Inclusivity:** Consider diverse audiences, including different cultural backgrounds, ages, and educational levels.

Tools and Techniques in Science communication

- 1) **Storytelling:** Use narratives to explain scientific concepts, making them memorable.
- 2) **Analogies:** Compare scientific ideas to familiar concepts.
- 3) **Hands-on Demonstrations:** Physical or virtual demonstrations can illustrate scientific principles.
- 4) **Data Visualization:** Transform data into charts, graphs, or maps to make trends and relationships clear.
- 5) **Citizen Science:** Involve the public in scientific research, giving them a stake in the science.
 - How can we involve the public in scientific research? –Online polls before the talk show.

Challenges in Science Communication

- **Misinformation:** Combatting pseudoscience and misinformation requires careful, persistent communication.
- **Complexity of Science:** Simplifying without oversimplifying is a delicate balance.
- **Public Trust:** Building and maintaining trust, especially in contentious areas like national census, climate change or vaccine efficacy.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Science communication must respect and navigate cultural differences.

Content Selection and Preparation

- **Choose Accessible Topics:** Select science stories that are relevant to everyday life, like health, technology, environment, or space exploration. Explain complex concepts in simple terms.
- **Storytelling:** Use narrative techniques to tell a story around the science. This could involve the journey of a discovery, personal stories of scientists, or the impact of scientific findings on society.
- **Interviews:** Engage with scientists, researchers, or local experts. Pre-interview them to ensure the conversation will be understandable and interesting.
- **Sound Bites:** Use short, memorable quotes or explanations from interviews that can be easily understood out of context.

Production Techniques

- **Scripts:** Write scripts that are conversational rather than academic. Avoid jargon unless it's explained in lay terms.
- **Voice:** Your voice should convey enthusiasm and curiosity. Pace your delivery to match the complexity of the information but keep it engaging.
- **Sound Effects:** Use appropriate sound effects to make the science come alive, like water sounds for oceanography or static for space topics.
- **Music:** Subtle background music can set the mood but shouldn't distract from the content.

Delivery



Clarity and Brevity: Radio listeners might not give you their full attention, so your message needs to be clear and concise.



Repetition: Without being redundant, revisit key points in different ways to ensure comprehension.

Povtoreniya – mat' ucheniya- Repetition is the mother of learning! ~ Russian proverb



Engagement: Ask rhetorical questions or pose scenarios to keep listeners thinking about the topic beyond the broadcast.

Technical Considerations

- **Quality Audio:** Ensure all audio, especially interviews or field recordings, is of high quality. Poor audio can disengage listeners from even the most fascinating stories.
- **Timing:** Know the length of your segment and fit your content within that time frame. Radio is very time-sensitive.
- **Live vs. Pre-recorded:** Decide if your piece will be live or pre-recorded. Live segments offer immediacy but require you to be adept at handling unexpected situations.

Promotion and Feedback

- **Toll-free hotline:** If your organization has a toll fee hotline, make sure it's on and has standby people ready to respond to people's questions.
- **Text messages:** Use text messages to promote the key messages from the radio talk show.
- **Promotional poster:** This poster is good for social media promotion about the talk show.
- **Radio mentions:** These ones are scripted messages that could be read by hosts at different talk shows.

Promotion and Feedback

- **Radio adverts:** These are scripted and voiced adverts focusing on the cues to action.
- **Social Media:** Use platforms like X (formerly Twitter) or Instagram to promote your segment before and after airing, perhaps with a teaser or a follow-up fact.
- **Listener Interaction:** Encourage listeners to send questions or comments, perhaps through social media or by calling in, for future segments or to gauge interest.

Example Script Snippet:

"Imagine having a family you can afford and take care of even when you get to your retirement. Having an affordable family is the desire of the average Ugandan in these current economic times. Today, we're diving into the latest from the Marie Stopes counselor-sharing about having children by choice, not chance."



How can you effectively use radio talk shows for science communication?



- Format and structure
- Content development
- Engagement techniques
- Promotion and accessibility
- Ethical consideration
- Technical aspects

How to effectively use radio talk shows for science communication

1. Format and Structure

- **Interviews**: Host scientists or experts in various fields to discuss recent discoveries, ongoing research, or science-related news. These can be one-on-one or panel discussions.
- **Q&A Sessions**: Allow listeners to call in with questions, fostering a two-way communication that can demystify science.
- **Discussion Panels**: Bring together experts from different disciplines for a more comprehensive view on complex issues like climate change or AI ethics.
- **Themed Segments**: Have regular segments like "Tech Tuesday" or "Space Sunday" to cover specific areas of science consistently.

How to effectively use radio talk shows for science communication

2. Content Development

- **Storytelling**: Use storytelling to make science relatable. Discuss the human aspect of scientific endeavors, the historical context, or the implications for everyday life.
- **Current Events**: Tie science communication to current events or news stories to make science seem relevant and urgent.
- **Debunking Myths**: Address common misconceptions or myths with science-based facts, but do so in an engaging, non-condescending manner.
- **Ethics and Policy**: Include discussions on the ethical, political, or policy dimensions of science, which can be particularly engaging for audiences concerned with societal impact.

How to effectively use radio talk shows for science communication

- **Engagement Techniques**
 - **Interactive Elements**: Use polls or quizzes via social media or phone-ins to engage listeners before, during, or after the show.
 - **Guest Interaction**: Allow guests to interact directly with listeners, perhaps through live calls or pre-recorded questions from the audience.
 - **Contests**: Host science trivia or puzzles where listeners can win prizes, incentivizing learning and engagement.

How to effectively use radio talk shows for science communication

- **Promotion and Accessibility**
 - **Social Media**: Promote episodes or segments through social media, using snippets of content or teasers to build anticipation.
 - **Podcast Availability**: Make episodes available as podcasts for those who miss the live broadcast, broadening your reach.
 - **Accessibility**: Ensure content is accessible by explaining jargon, providing transcripts, or summarizing key points at the end of discussions.

How to effectively use radio talk shows for science communication

- Ethical Considerations
 - **Accuracy:** Commit to delivering accurate information, and if unsure about something, promise to follow up in a future segment.
 - **Balance:** Present balanced views, especially on controversial topics, by inviting experts with different perspectives.
 - **Sensitivity:** Be sensitive to how science intersects with cultural, ethical, or religious beliefs, aiming for educational rather than confrontational dialogue.

How to effectively use radio talk shows for science communication

Technical Aspects

- **Sound Quality**: Invest in good audio equipment to ensure clear sound. This includes quality microphones for guests and hosts.
- **Preparation**: Guests should be prepped on what to expect to keep the conversation flowing smoothly.
- **Editing**: For pre-recorded segments, editing can help cut out long pauses or clarify points but maintain the natural flow of conversation.

Personal connection through voice!

- Remember, radio is an **intimate medium** where the voice of the reporter can create a **personal connection with the audience**, making science both accessible and exciting.



Summary/Take Aways

1. Draft and have a colleague review your Talking points
2. Share the talking points with the radio host earlier before the show.
3. Know your audience before and during the show.
4. Your contact for follow-up.
5. Set your key objectives earlier before for the radio talk show.
6. Don't forget to measure your impact after the talk show
7. Radio managers can share the talk show recording with you if you ask.
8. Repetition is key!

Thank you!



f Better Health