



Tips for Communicating with the Media (Press Releases)

Your scientific paper was press released: now what? If you have not dealt with reporters before, the tips below may come in handy.

Before the interview: prepare your message

- Have two or three key points about your research ready to communicate
- Prepare concise, simple quotes you would like to use to help communicate your message
- Prepare graphics (photographs, videos, etc.) or other supporting material to give to the journalist, if you think they will help make your research more appealing
- Be available and promptly return any calls or emails journalists send you: they may give up on covering your research if you don't, as they are almost always on tight deadlines

During the interview: keep it simple

- Be conversational and speak at a level a 15 year old would understand: assume your audience knows nothing about your research
- Avoid jargon and speak clearly and simply: everyday terms, examples and analogies will help get your message across
- Take your time to think about a clear answer and accurately explain your message, and don't be afraid to say "we simply don't know", if that's the case
- Focus on your message: if led outside your line of expertise during the interview, redirect the journalist back to the main points of your research
- Keep your answers brief and allow the journalist to interrupt you
- If being interviewed on TV, maintain good eye contact and voice projection
- Above all, be enthusiastic and passionate about your work and convey why your research is meaningful to you

After the interview: follow up

- Most journalists won't send you a draft of the article prior to publication because of rigid media deadlines and the need for media to report freely (without interference). But you can offer to do an accuracy check or to answer fact-checking questions
- Offer a polite correction to the journalist if the story contains a mistake. For more serious inaccuracies, follow Roberta Kwok's advice on Nature: "If an article contains an error or sensationalizes the findings, ask for a correction, write a letter to the editor, or respond on social media and tag the journalist".
- A compliment never hurts: if you like the story, tell the report or their editor

Adapted from AGU's <http://sharingscience.agu.org/inform-news/> by EGU Media and Communications Manager Bárbara Ferreira (media@egu.eu)