



Communicating Science to the News Media

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Why Talk to the News Media?

- Obligation to taxpayers
- Share your passion
- Improve the image of scientists
- It's good for your institution



Why Talk to the News Media?

It is suicidal to create a society dependent on science and technology in which hardly anybody know anything about science and technology.

Carl Sagan



Where the Public gets its Science News

- Television – 44%
- Magazine – 16%
- Newspaper – 16%
- Internet – 9%
- Other – 5%
- Radio – 3%
- Books – 2%
- Family-Friends-Colleagues – 3%



The Job of the Reporter

- Inform, not educate
- What is the difference?
- Blip on a radar screen
- Signals a topic
- Investigate on your own



What is Newsworthy?

- Current event or incident
- Significant
- Unique
- Impact on people's lives
- Human interest
- Timely



Types of Stories

- News or feature articles
- Opinion piece
- Articles by columnists
- Editorials



Science News Outlets

- National and Metropolitan Newspapers
- Publications for the lay reader
- Publications for scientists
- National broadcast outlets
- Local news media



How to Tell Your Story

- Avoid jargon
- Define your terminology
- Microns
- Order of magnitude
- Model
- Analogies
- Work with Public Affairs Officer



Recommended Article

*Weapon of Mass Attraction:
Scientists should embrace, not
fear, television news*

Eliene Augenbraun
Nature, Vol. 433, 1/27/05
pp. 357-358