Disseminating research through the media
Banksy unveils Tropicana show

Dismaland
Bemusement Park

1,000 FREE tickets for tomorrow's exhibition launch available ONLY through today's Mercury.

SCU | science communication unit

New Scientist
THE AGE OF PLENTY
We've built a civilization on the want of metals. How much longer can it last?

Men's Health
THE INCREDIBLE 24-HOUR FAT BURN!

The Economist
America's lost oomph
In this session

- Types of media
- Why communicate your research?
- What makes a good story?
- Basic principles of communicating your research
- Pitching your story
Types of media
Spectrum of specialism (in terms of breadth of science covered)
There are also blogs...
But why do this?

1. Raise awareness among patients
2. Raise awareness among healthcare professionals
3. Encourage a dialogue with patients
4. Raise profile both within and outside the scientific community
5. Attract interest in collaboration
6. Inform policy
7. Demonstrate the *impact* of your research
Some basic principles

Some simplification is necessary

Some explanation is necessary

Some dramatization is necessary

You need to find the ‘story’, ‘angle’, or ‘hook’
A good hook will...

- Get straight to the most important/interesting point straight away
- Say something counterintuitive
- Tell the ‘human’ side of the story (particularly with healthcare)
- Intrigue your reader
- Be timely
- Be succinct

It should also be the first thing you tell your reader...
What’s the hook for your research?

‘Sell’ your research in 25 words or fewer
Introducing the inverted pyramid

Most newsworthy info: the ‘hook’

Important details

Additional info, including quotes

Background info

More background
Think about your audience

The best way to write for a specific audience is to build as clear a picture as possible of someone from that audience...

...imagine you’re having a conversation with them.
Key factors to consider about your audience

• How much will they **know about this subject**?

• What are their **interests** (professional or private) and frames of reference likely to be?

• How capable will they be of understanding **complex material**?
Pitching your story

Anatomy of a pitch

Length – typically no more than **150 words**

Style – write *in the style of the publication you’re pitching to* and include a headline (but always make it lively!)

Questions to answer in your pitch:
1. What’s the story about? (This is your ‘**hook**’)
2. Why would these readers be interested in it?
3. Why should this story be covered now?
4. What’s the ‘payoff’ from this research?
Write a pitch for an editor about your research
A final thought...

“Anyone who believes they can present **complexity** and make it **understandable** is smoking crack.”

Malcolm Gladwell

*Slashdot, 2014*
...or perhaps this one’s better!

“A good explanation achieves a happy medium between too little and too much [detail]”

Carl Zimmer refers to what he describes as the ‘science writer’s dilemma’
If you’d like to know more
Thank-you!

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