

What is science communication?

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“Communicating your project:

The beneficiaries **must promote the action** and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the **media and the public**), in a **strategic** and **effective** manner and possibly engaging in a two-way exchange.”

<http://ec.europa.eu/research>



“Science communication generally refers to public communication presenting science-related topics to **non-experts.**”

Wikipedia

“The art of science communication is to pitch something as complicated as quantum mechanics in a way that is not only **engaging** but also **faithful to the evidence.**”

The Guardian, UK



“How many different ways do you describe science communication in an ordinary day?

In the morning you may call it **outreach**, around lunchtime you reference **engagement**, and by the end of the day you’re having a heated discussion about **widening participation** or **sharing knowledge**. It can certainly be confusing... ”

www.sciloggs.com



“Sharing scientific work in a format which is **designed** for and **understandable** by your intended audience.”

“Any means by which scientific theory or practices are **shared and heard**.”

“Science communication is...making complicated concepts **accessible** for the general public.”

“Science communication is **taking research out of the lab** and into the wider arena, **influencing perspectives** of the world around us.”



What does science communication look like?

- School visits & presentations.....



- Competitions: I'm a Scientist



- 'Live' video links



- Science Fairs / Exhibitions



- Citizen Science



- Interactive / Online



- Animations/ Gaming



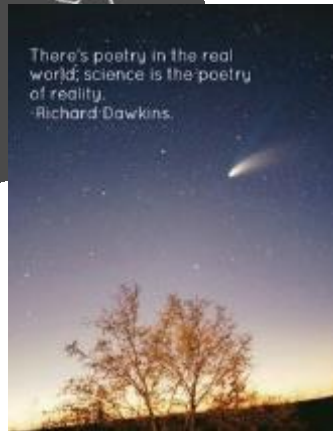
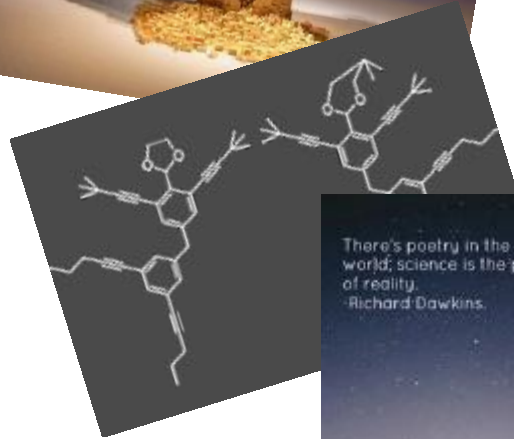
- Relevant/ Personal exchanges ...



What does science communication look like?

Creative arts – outreach & engagement through engaging with the emotions not only the intellect

Fun = lightbulb moments!



There's poetry in the real world; science is the poetry of reality.
Richard Dawkins.

Earth Day Mixup



I was telling my friend all about Earth Day
She heard me wrong and thought I said "birthday"
She said she would rush down to the mall
And buy a dollhouse or a doll.

I said she shouldn't buy all that stuff
The landfills are full of trash, enough!

Then she knew that she'd made a mistake
And said she would make a birthday cake.

I cheered about that, I said "hoosy!"
So that's how we're celebrating Earth Day.

Now she's learning about recycling trash
And not only that but she saved her cash!



What is science communication?



Focus on ROI -Return on Investment

- Communicate with 'purpose'
- Strategic planning from the start
- Match channel & activity to target group
- Build in measurable outcomes
- Think outcome not output
- Appropriate resource in place



Scientists and Communications

- ✓ Scientists are very good at science and research (they've been trained to do this)
- ✓ Scientists are very good at 'Dissemination' - research papers (these are measured & rewarded & they've been trained)



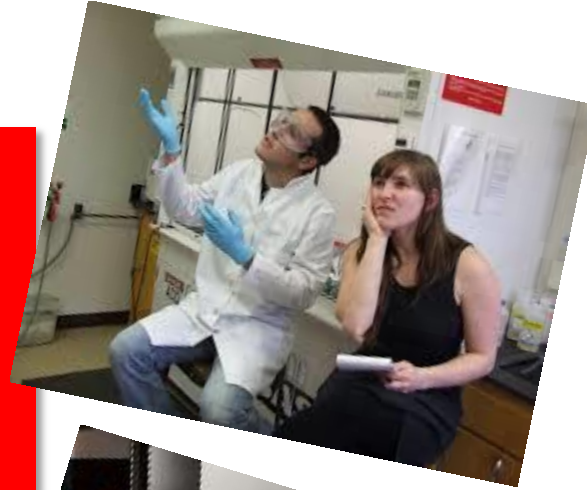
✗ But scientists are (usually) not good at Communications



Scientists and Communications

But scientists are (usually) not good at 'Communications'

- Not embedded (usually) into Science Curricula
- Not measured – nor rewarded – nor funded
- Not appreciated by Seniors (usually)
- Caution or worry about engaging with the media
- Hide behind IP / publication concerns



Communications & Dissemination

What is the difference?

Communications

- From the very beginning
- The question the research is asking
- Why this question is relevant and/or important for you & me
- How the question is being answered
- Who is 'doing' the asking & answering & where



Communications & Dissemination

What is the difference?

Dissemination

- Results focus – interim & final
- Specialist outlets
- Peer review process (mainly)
- At end of project (mainly)
- Impact factors
- Raise profile of scientists, group & institute as well as research issue (secure more funds!)



What is science communication?



Inform



Interest



Inspire



Activate



Scientists need more 'carrots' to enable them to make communications a priority - currently this activity is not acknowledged, supported or rewarded within the academic curricula – or often in funded projects.



Horizon 2020 has built in some 'stick' that will help focus the attention of Research Leads & prospective Project Co-ordinators



But Scientists & projects need on-going support to further their understanding of the difference between Communications, Dissemination & Exploitation to improve practice & outcomes



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Thank you for your attention!

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