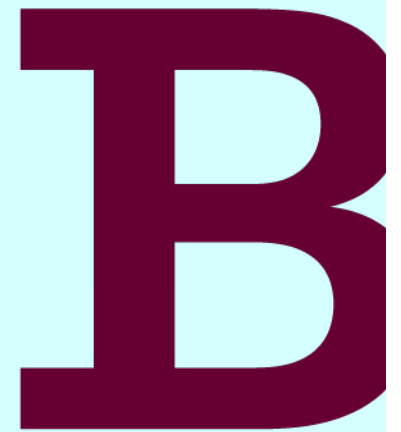


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Communicating your
research and creating
impact



Catherine Byerley,
International Press and PR Officer, University of Birmingham

Overview of presentation

- Who we are - The University Press Office
- What do we do?
- Why do universities engage with the media?

How to Achieve Success

- What makes a good story? 'Newsworthiness'
- Successful planning, approach and techniques
- The pitfalls and how to avoid them

The University Media Relations Team

- Team of 6

- Expertise

- Health
- Science and Technology
- Social Affairs
- Arts and Culture
- International

College of Life and Environmental Sciences sits broadly in science portfolio but also health and social affairs

What do we do?

- ❑ Corporate reputation of the University
- ❑ AND raising profile of research
- ❑ Build relationships: with journalists and academics
- ❑ Gatekeeper: good and bad
- ❑ Write: press releases, blogs, tweets, features, publications
- ❑ Record: podcasts, vodcasts
- ❑ Monitor: print, broadcast, web and social media – UK and international
- ❑ Oversee logistics: interviews, journalist visits, film crews and photography

Why do we engage with the media?

- ❑ Raises the profile of the University and its offering
- ❑ It's a lot cheaper than advertising and carries more credibility
- ❑ Gains attention of potential future collaborators / funders / industry partners
- ❑ Public duty to share research results when publicly funded
- ❑ Assist with recruitment of participants for studies
- ❑ Added value to academics' career development
- ❑ No better expert on research than the academics who do it
- ❑ Shows that the University and its academics are approachable and accountable

The changing landscape of the news industry

- “The Press” v “The Media”
- Increasing demands on News Desks
- Audience participation and interaction
- Social media
- What next?

How to achieve success

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Who are you trying to engage or influence?

- Identify your target audiences
- Match media outlets and channels to key audience
 - Not always a press release
 - Comment piece
 - Expert alert

What makes a good story?

- ❑ Unusual
- ❑ Timely
- ❑ Topical
- ❑ Undiscovered
- ❑ Controversial
- ❑ Visual
- ❑ Engaging spokespeople who are available
- ❑ On location

Unusual

‘World War Two Bombing Raids Offer New Insight into the Effects of Aviation on Climate’

Climate researchers have turned to the Allied bombing raids of the Second World War for a unique opportunity to study the effect that thousands of aircraft had on the English climate at a time when civilian aviation remained rare. The study reveals how civilian and military records can help assess the impact of modern aviation on the climate today.

Professor Rob MacKenzie, Professor of Atmospheric Science, School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Birmingham

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The pitfalls and how to avoid them

- ❑ Don't ask a journalist for copy approval – you don't have editorial control
- ❑ Don't ask a journalist for a list of interview questions – but you can ask for information on the kind of issues they want to cover
- ❑ Honesty is the best policy
- ❑ Always potential of your story being spiked by a breaking news story
- ❑ There is no such thing as “off the record”
- ❑ Ban the use of jargon, acronyms and industry technical speak
- ❑ Be appreciative of the deadlines that journalists work within

Any questions?

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