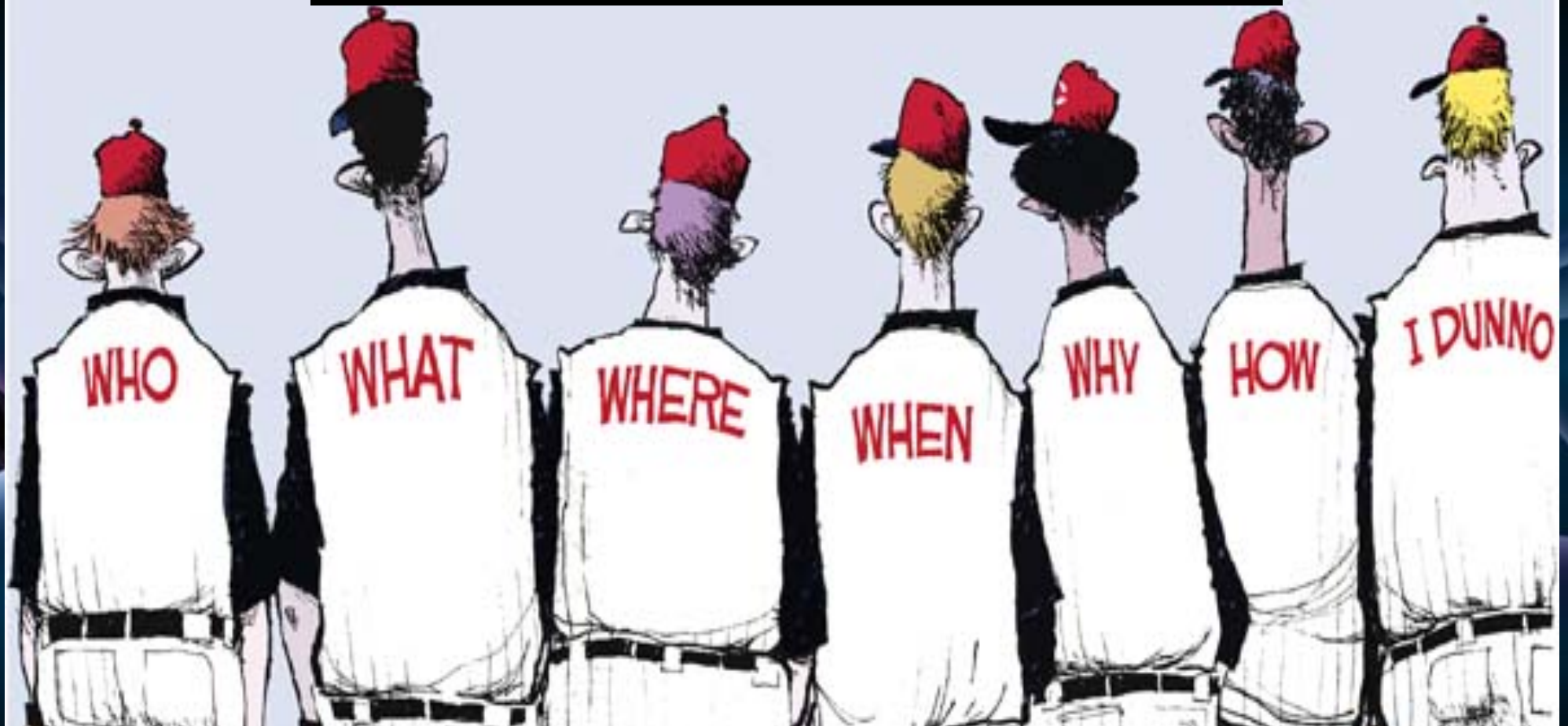


JIM BERGMAN
CALIFORNIA
ENGINEER
1945

Writing for the media

The «five Ws and an H», revisited



Fabio Turone
Science Writers in Italy
Science Media Centre

ICTP, Trieste, October 18th 2011

Cheerleader or watchdog?

Science journalism is under threat. What can scientists do to help?

What should any researcher expect from a journalist beyond the keen intelligence needed to see the newsworthiness of the researcher's work, and the ability to spell his or her name correctly?

For some scientists, the answer is probably 'Not much'. Many tend to think of science journalism as a kind of public-relations service, existing purely to explain new scientific findings to the masses.

And a minority, moving beyond perceived self-interest, will point to the deeper value of journalism, which is to cast a fair but sceptical eye over everything in the public sphere — science included.



Who is involved when the media write about scientific research?

- Policy makers
 - Scientific Institutions
 - Funding bodies/Agencies
 - Private companies
 - Special interest groups
 - Groups of scientists/specialties
 - Individual scientists
 - ... others
- (all with the respective agendas)*



The point of view of professional Science Writers

*(Chapters from part 2:
CHOOSING
YOUR MARKET)*

- Small Newspapers
- Large Newspapers
- Popular Magazines
- Trade and Science Journals
- Broadcast Science Journalism
- Freelance Writing
- Science Books
- Popular Audiences on the Web
- Science Audiences on the Web

Deborah Blum
Mary Knudson
Robin Marantz Henig
EDITORS

A Field Guide for Science Writers

The Official Guide
of the National Association
of Science Writers

SECOND EDITION



A basic tip

Depending on the outlet, moving the focus of a science story from a global to a very local perspective might make a huge difference.



A general rule for journalists dealing with an assignment sets the following priorities:

- 1) Deadline
- 2) Length
- 3) Content

The concept of «timeliness» is not an objective one when dealing with the media, especially with dailies.



- To respond to a specific request coming from the society (through the media)
- To prevent (dangerous) misunderstandings about research
- To increase the visibility of:
 - individual researchers
 - institutions
 - issues
- To affect the impact factor of a scientist's research



The NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL of MEDICINE

1180

THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE

Oct. 17, 1991

OCCASIONAL NOTES

IMPORTANCE OF THE LAY PRESS IN THE TRANSMISSION OF MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE TO THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY

Abstract Background. Efficient, undistorted communication of the results of medical research is important to physicians, the scientific community, and the public. Information that first appears in the scientific literature is frequently retransmitted in the popular press. Does popular coverage of medical research in turn amplify the effects of that research on the scientific community?

Every medical researcher develops systematic and nonsystematic mechanisms for reducing and filtering what would otherwise be an overwhelming flow of scientific information. Our evidence suggests that a lay publication may serve as one of these filtering mechanisms, even for scientists. This effect seems to persist for at least 10 years after a *Journal* article appears. It is not certain whether other lay media (e.g., newsmagazines and broadcast news programs) also function as filters of information derived from medical research, and whether the use of such lay filters prompts some scientists to overemphasize certain medical articles and deemphasize others.

It appears that the direct transmission of information in the medical literature (i.e., the *Journal*) is enhanced or amplified by secondary transmission in the lay press (i.e., the *Times*). Further research would be required to determine whether the lay press not only amplifies but also distorts the transmission of medical information to the biomedical community.



The NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL of MEDICINE

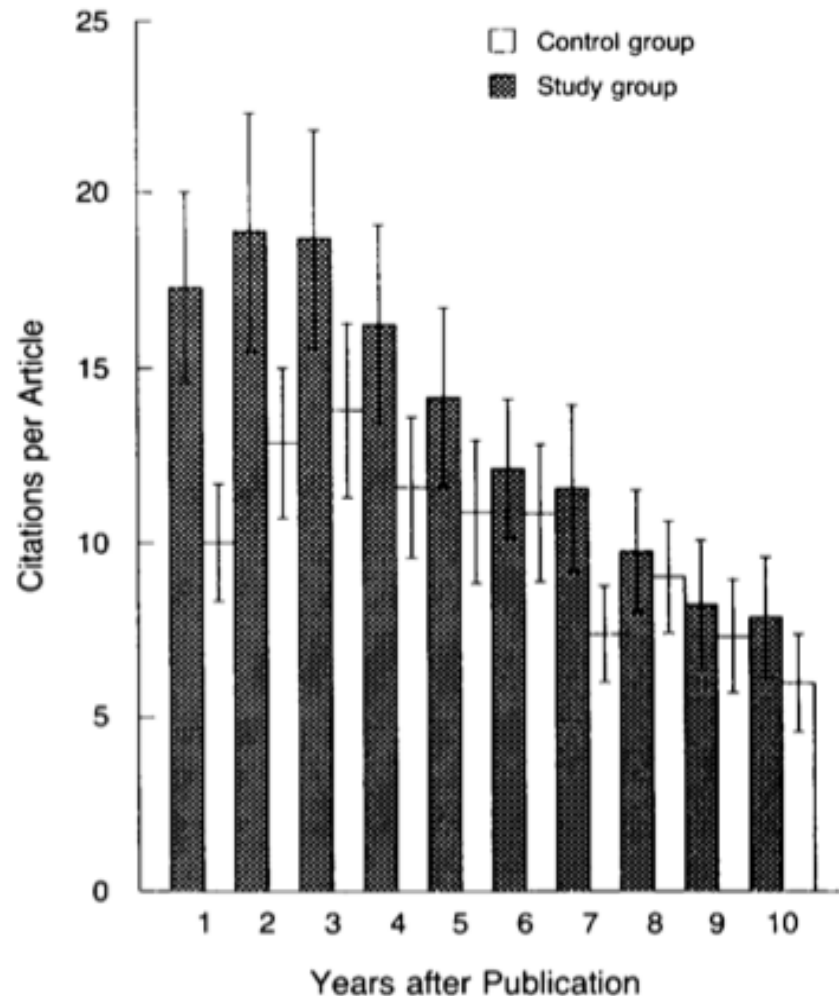


Figure 1. Mean (\pm SE) Number of Scientific Citations of 25 *Journal* Articles Covered by the *Times* (Study Group) and 33 *Journal* Articles Not Covered by the *Times* (Control Group). The articles were published in the *Journal* in 1979, and citations were tracked for the 10 years from 1980 to 1989.

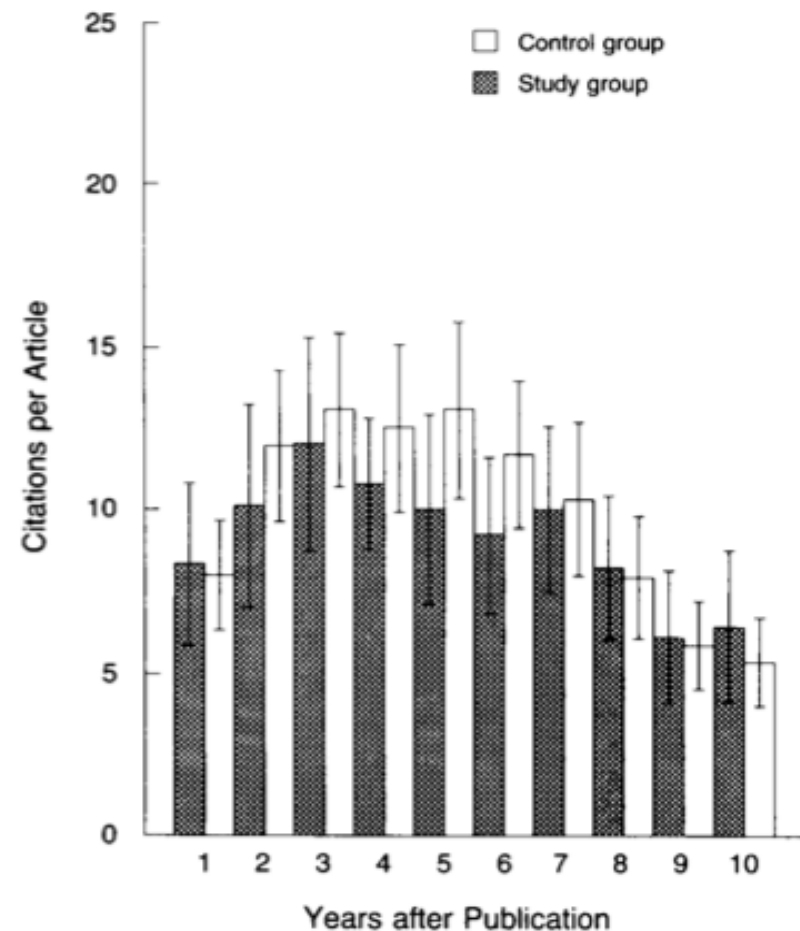


Figure 2. Mean (\pm SE) Number of Scientific Citations of 9 *Journal* Articles Covered by the *Times* during Its Strike (Study Group) and 16 *Journal* Articles Not Covered by the *Times* during Its Strike (Control Group).

The articles were published in the *Journal* during the strike period (August 10, 1978, to November 5, 1978), and citations were tracked for the 10 years from 1979 to 1988.

Recapitulating in simple words

Rossi & E-Cat Attracting Some Media Attention

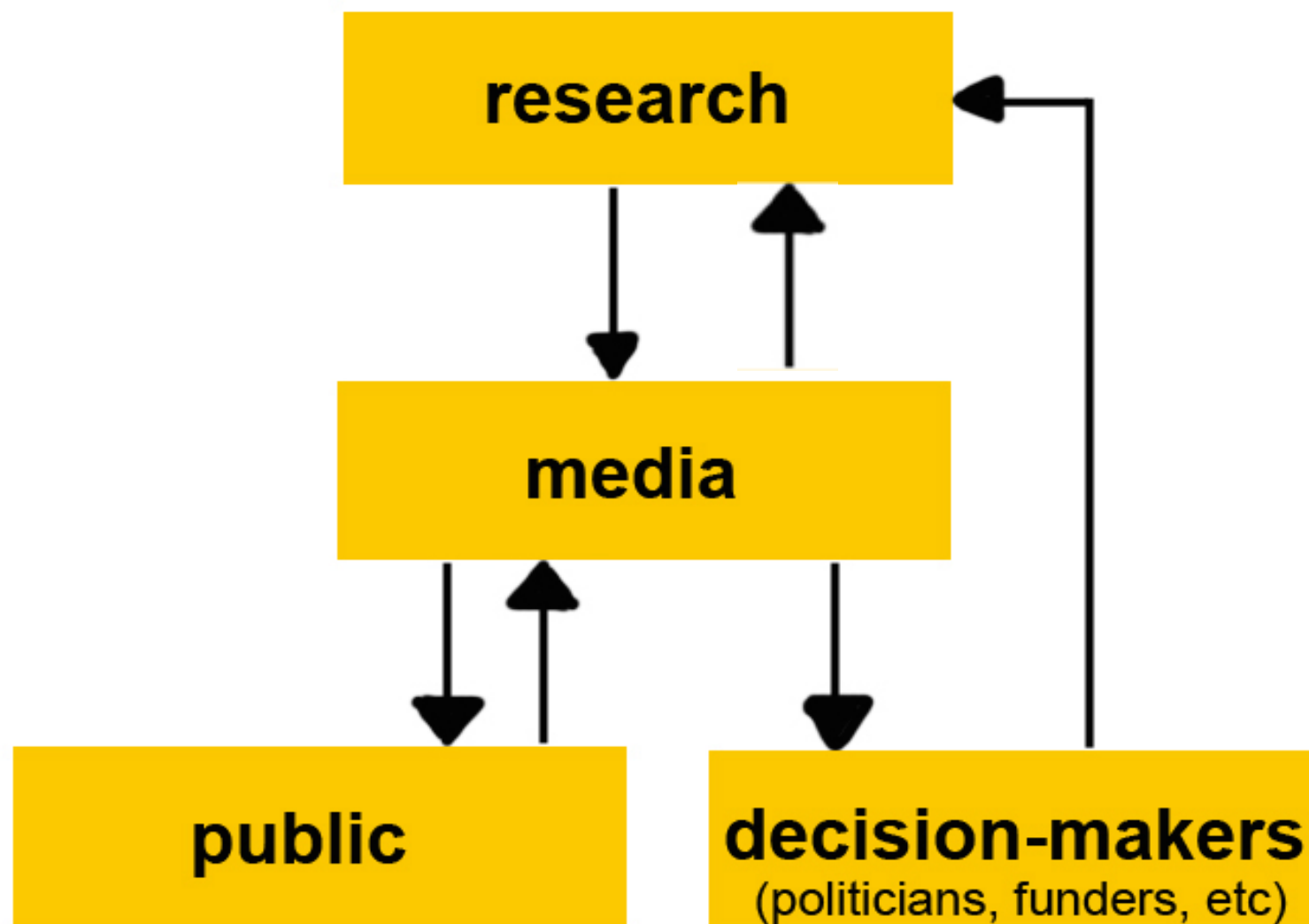
POSTED ON OCTOBER 15, 2011 AND FILED UNDER **AMPENERGO, E-CAT, FOCARDI, INVEST, NEWS, ROSSI.**

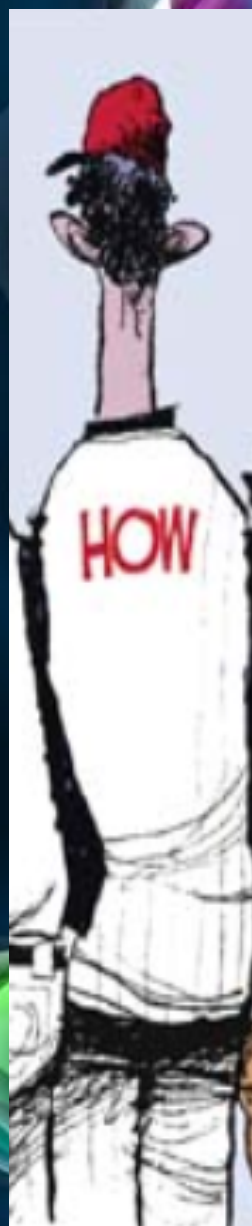
Andrea Rossi and his e-cat **invention** are finally getting some much deserved media attention. Not enough, considering the huge numbers of American reporters and TV cameras that were able to find their way to an obscure Italian town for the **Amanda Knox circus** but not to an event kids will probably be reading about in history textbooks someday.

E-Cat, l'energy catalizer di Andrea Rossi: il t...



The technology media has noticed it Computerworld's website contains a very interesting **article** by Mark Gibbs. Unlike most media observers Gibbs' grasps the importance of e-cat and cold fusion. He only mentions Rossi and AmpEnergio and doesn't mention other cold fusion efforts like those at Brillouin and **Defkalion** which also seem to showing results.





MEDICINE AND THE MEDIA

OBSERVATIONS

Two clicks away from Britney?

Can the health stories in the lay press maintain integrity when they are competing for attention with the antics of international celebrities? **Rebecca Coombes** reports from a conference

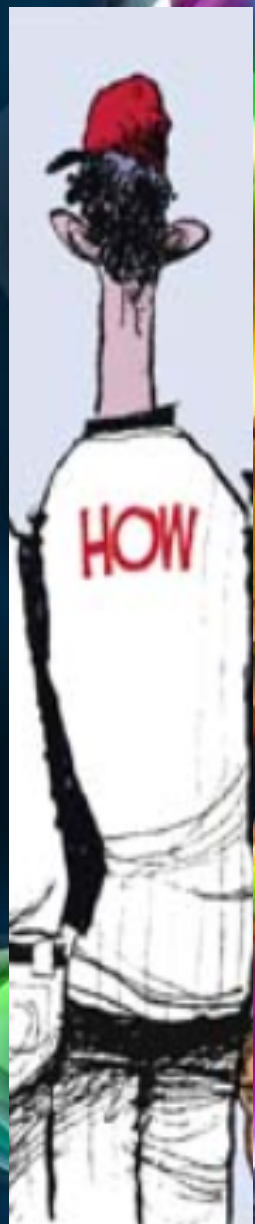
Any doctor who has ever snorted in derision at some less than accurate media health story would have enjoyed the spectacle last week of a group of newspaper journalists who turned out to answer for their trade's perceived sins at a national debate about standards in health reporting.



Stories by health journalists have to compete for readers' attention among reams of lifestyle and celebrity coverage

BMJ

BMJ | 14 FEBRUARY 2009 | VOLUME 338



Who helps journalists? - 1 Press Releases

Statistics

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U.S. Dollar Likely to Recover During Fourth Quarter According to FOREX.com

National 30-year Fixed Mortgage Rate Falls Below 5.00%; Half of Borrowers Request Refinance Loans

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[News Releases by Industry and Segment](#)

Speaking of quality - Press Releases

OPEN ACCESS Freely available online

PLOS one

Quality of Pharmaceutical Industry Press Releases Based on Original Research

Bindee Kuriya^{1*}, Elana C. Schneid², Chaim M. Bell³

Conclusions: Pharmaceutical company press releases frequently report basic study details. However, readers should be cautioned by the preliminary nature of the data and lack of identified limitations. Methods to improve the reporting and interpretation of drug company press releases are desirable to prevent misleading media coverage.

«Methods to improve the reporting and interpretation of drug company press releases are desirable to prevent misleading media coverage».

July 2008 | Volume 3 | Issue 7 | e2828

Media Coverage of Scientific Meetings

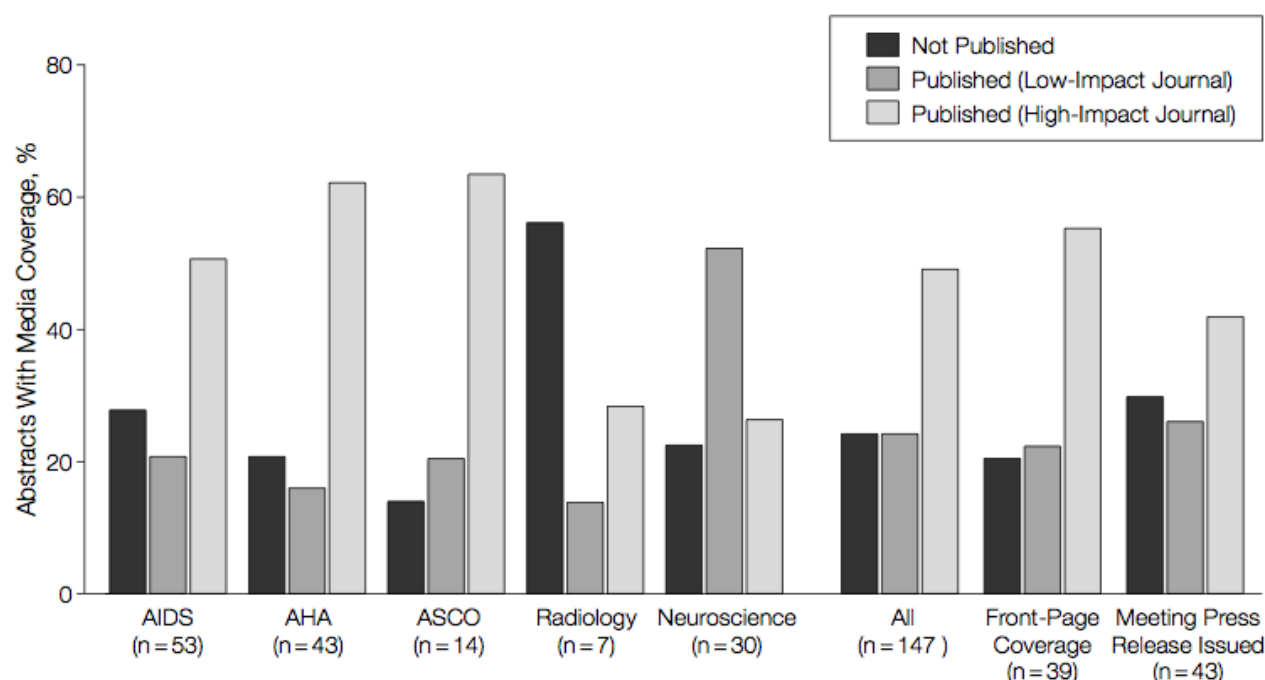
Too Much, Too Soon?

Conclusions Abstracts at scientific meetings receive substantial attention in the high-profile media. A substantial number of the studies remain unpublished, precluding evaluation in the scientific community.

JAMA. 2002;287:2859-2863

www.jama.com

Figure. Profiles of Abstracts Receiving Media Coverage Within 3-3.5 Years



"High-impact journal" defined as a journal with top 10 impact factor ratings in the general medicine category, research and experimental medicine category, or the relevant specialty area (eg, oncology, neuroscience). Thus, low-impact journals did not appear on any of 3 top 10 lists. AIDS indicates 12th World AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) Conference; AHA, American Heart Association; ASCO, American Society of Clinical Oncology; Radiology, Radiological Society of North America; and Neuroscience, Society for Neuroscience.

Who «helps» journalists? - 1bis Disguised Press Releases



REUTERS

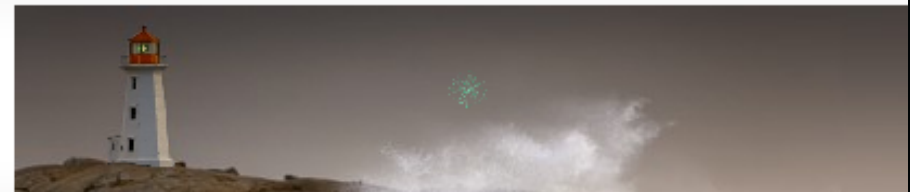
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DJIA

Beike Biotech Adds International Executives to Strengthen Current Technologies and...

Tue Sep 8, 2009 10:00am EDT

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Beike Biotech Adds International Executives to Strengthen Current Technologies and Develop Future Pipeline


SHENZHEN, China, Sept. 8 /PRNewswire-Asia/ -- Shenzhen Beike Biotechnology Co. Ltd. (<http://www.beikebiotech.com>), a leader in stem cell research and regenerative medicine, announced the appointment of two senior stem cell scientists to key positions in the company. Li Tao, Ph.D., joins as Lab Director of the iPS (induced Pluripotent Stem Cell) Laboratory, and Susan Jiang, M.D., Ph.D., has been named Chief Science Officer. Dr. Sean Hu, Ph.D., CEO and Chairman, will remain focused on furthering the company's research achievements while strengthening its position in the international biotechnology field.

Dr. Hu commented, "Beike has been at the forefront of stem cell technology in China and we are currently expanding throughout Asia. We are addressing a number of important factors to strengthen our credentials internationally, and we see Dr. Li Tao and Dr. Susan Jiang contributing greatly to this effort. Dr.

Who helps journalists? - 2 Publishers' PR offices



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Tuesday 6 October 2009 |

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Welcome

Welcome to the new **NPG Press site**.

As you can see, it's had a much-needed makeover and the navigation has been redesigned to make the basic way in which material is presented clearer.

Importantly, we have now moved from the Nature Reviews titles will now begin send most newsworthy material to you will need to update your

 You are logged in to Nature Publishing Group's Press site.



The NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL of MEDICINE

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VOL.478 NO.7369 DATED 20 OCTOBER 2011

EMBARGO:

1800 London time (BST) / 1300 US Eastern Time Wednesday 19 October

0200 Japanese time / 0400 Australian Eastern Time Thursday 20 October

Wire services' stories must always carry the embargo time at the head of each item, and may not be sent out more than 24 hours before that time.

Solely for the purpose of soliciting informed comment on *Nature* papers, you may show relevant parts of this document, and the papers to which it refers, to independent specialists – but you must ensure in advance that they understand and accept *Nature's* embargo conditions.

This press release contains:

- **Summaries of newsworthy papers:**

Astronomy: Stars that 'shouldn't exist'

Neuroscience: IQ may change during adolescence

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Comment: New changes to consent could harm research

Comment: Why we're less violent now than ever before

Cancer: Links between skin and kidney cancers

Materials science: Synthetic self-templating structures

Who helps journalists?

3 - Academia's PR offices



The screenshot shows the EurekaAlert! website. At the top, there's a red header with the EurekaAlert! logo on the left and the AAAS logo on the right. Below the header is a navigation bar with links for Home, About Us, a search box with a GO button, Advanced Search, a Help dropdown menu, and another GO button. On the far right of the navigation bar, it shows the date and time: 6-Oct-2009 17:36 Eastern US Time.

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- For Reporters:** Includes links for MY SETTINGS and LOG OUT. Below these, it says "F. Turone is logged in." There is also a list of categories: Press Releases, Embargoed News, Breaking News, Science Business, Grants, Awards, Books, Meetings, Press Conferences, News Media, and News by Subject.
- Embargoed News & Journals >>>** A yellow button.
- Breaking News:** Includes a link for TITLES ONLY. Below this, there are two news snippets:
 - "For safer emergencies, give your power generator some space >>"
 - "New computer security guide can help safeguard your small business >>"
- Portals:** A list of science topics with links: News for Kids, Marine Science, Nanotechnology, Disease in the Developing World, and Bioinformatics. Below this list are flags for France, Germany, Spain, and Japan, followed by a red button labeled "EurekaAlert! 中文版".
- El-Merging Topics:** Includes a link for Complementary and Alternative Medicine.
- My EurekaAlert!:** A yellow sidebar on the right containing three news snippets:
 - "Wildlife as a source for livestock infections >>"
 - "Exercise programs recommended as standard for rheumatoid arthritis >>"
 - "New biologic drug is effective against rheumatoid arthritis >>"At the bottom of this sidebar is a link for MORE NEWS.

Who helps journalists?

3 - Academia's PR offices

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Picture Kingston University

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First of its kind survey asks about foreign policy

06/10/2009

Members of the public are to be asked their views on a range of foreign policies as diverse as the deployment of troops to Afghanistan, giving aid to...

Essex, University of



Breakthrough for Swedish Vaccine Research

06/10/2009

Journal reference

A research group at the Department of Microbiology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) in Uppsala, Sweden has - in collaboration with J...

Vetenskapsrådet (The Swedish Research Council)

El receptor nuclear NOR-1 es clave para la supervivencia de las células a la hipoxia

06/10/2009

Journal reference

En la investigación llevada a cabo por el grupo liderado por el Dr. José Martínez-González, del Centro de Investigación Cardiovascular (CSIC-ICCV) de...

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Dr Thomas Scotto
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"Positive Studiendaten zur Behandlung
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Press Releases by Academic Medical Centers: Not So Academic?

Steven Woloshin, MD, MS; Lisa M. Schwartz, MD, MS; Samuel L. Casella, MPH; Abigail T. Kennedy, BA; and Robin J. Larson, MD, MPH

Background: The news media are often criticized for exaggerated coverage of weak science. Press releases, a source of information for many journalists, might be a source of those exaggerations.

Objective: To characterize research press releases from academic medical centers.

Design: Content analysis.

Setting: Press releases from 10 medical centers at each extreme of *U.S. News & World Report's* rankings for medical research.

Measurements: Press release quality.

Results: Academic medical centers issued a mean of 49 press releases annually. Among 200 randomly selected releases analyzed in detail, 87 (44%) promoted animal or laboratory research, of which 64 (74%) explicitly claimed relevance to human health. Among 95 releases about primary human research, 22 (23%) omit-

ted study size and 32 (34%) failed to quantify results. Among all 113 releases about human research, few (17%) promoted studies with the strongest designs (randomized trials or meta-analyses). Forty percent reported on the most limited human studies—those with uncontrolled interventions, small samples (<30 participants), surrogate primary outcomes, or unpublished data—yet 58% lacked the relevant cautions.

Limitation: The effects of press release quality on media coverage were not directly assessed.

Conclusion: Press releases from academic medical centers often promote research that has uncertain relevance to human health and do not provide key facts or acknowledge important limitations.

Primary Funding Source: National Cancer Institute.

Ann Intern Med. 2009;150:613-618.

For author affiliations, see end of text.

www.annals.org

Who helps journalists?

4 - Academia and Institutions



The European Initiative for Communicators of Science

The European Initiative for Communicators of Science (EICOS) welcomes you at EICOS-Online. EON is the virtual part of a programme that endeavors to improve the communication between journalists and scientists in the wider field of molecular biology and genetic engineering.

Apply for AHCJ-CDC Health Journalism Fellowships

The Association of Health Care Journalists has teamed up with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for this [national fellowship program](#) for journalists. Ten fellows are chosen to spend a week studying a variety of public health issues at two CDC campuses.

The AHCJ-CDC Health Journalism Fellows will:

- attend sessions on epidemiology, global disease prevention efforts, pandemic flu preparedness, climate change, vaccine safety, obesity, autism and more
- tour the CDC director's National Emergency Operations Center
- meet new sources on policy and research
- learn how to tap the agency's abundant resources to produce better stories



**Knight
Science Journalism
Fellowships at MIT**

—exploring science, technology, medicine and the environment

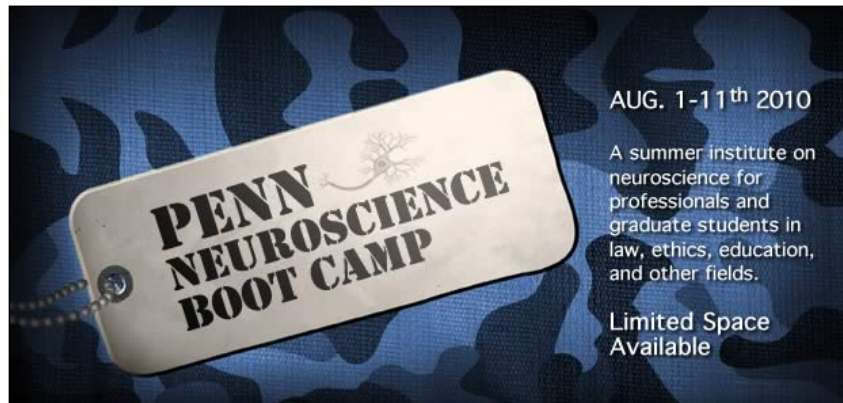


Center for Neuroscience & Society
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

formerly the Penn Neuroethics Program

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2010 Neuroscience Boot Camp



AUG. 1-11th 2010

A summer institute on neuroscience for professionals and graduate students in law, ethics, education, and other fields.

Limited Space Available

AAAS Mass Media Science & Engineering Fellows Program

Increasing public understanding of science and technology is a principal goal of AAAS, so it only makes sense that it recognizes the need for scientists who are well versed in communicating complex ideas to a general audience. Enter the AAAS Mass Media Science & Engineering Fellows program, which has thrived in this endeavor for more than 30 years.

The 10-week summer program places graduate and post-graduate level science, engineering and mathematics students at media organizations nationwide. Fellows have worked as reporters, editors, researchers and production assistants at such media outlets as the *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, National Public Radio, *Sacramento Bee*, and *Scientific American*. Participants come in knowing the importance of translating their work for the public, but they leave with the tools and the know-how to accomplish this important goal.



Who helps journalists?

5 - Professional organizations



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The Center is classified as a supporting 501(c)(3) for AHCJ, Inc. The purpose of the Center for Excellence in Health Care Journalism is to ensure that journalists are properly trained to cover news events, trends, and issues in all aspects of health care journalism, including the business of health care, public policy, medical research,



World Federation of Science Journalists



EUSJA

European Union of Science Journalists' Associations
www.eusja.org



Cristine Russell is a senior fellow at Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and president of the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing.

Science Journalism Goes Global

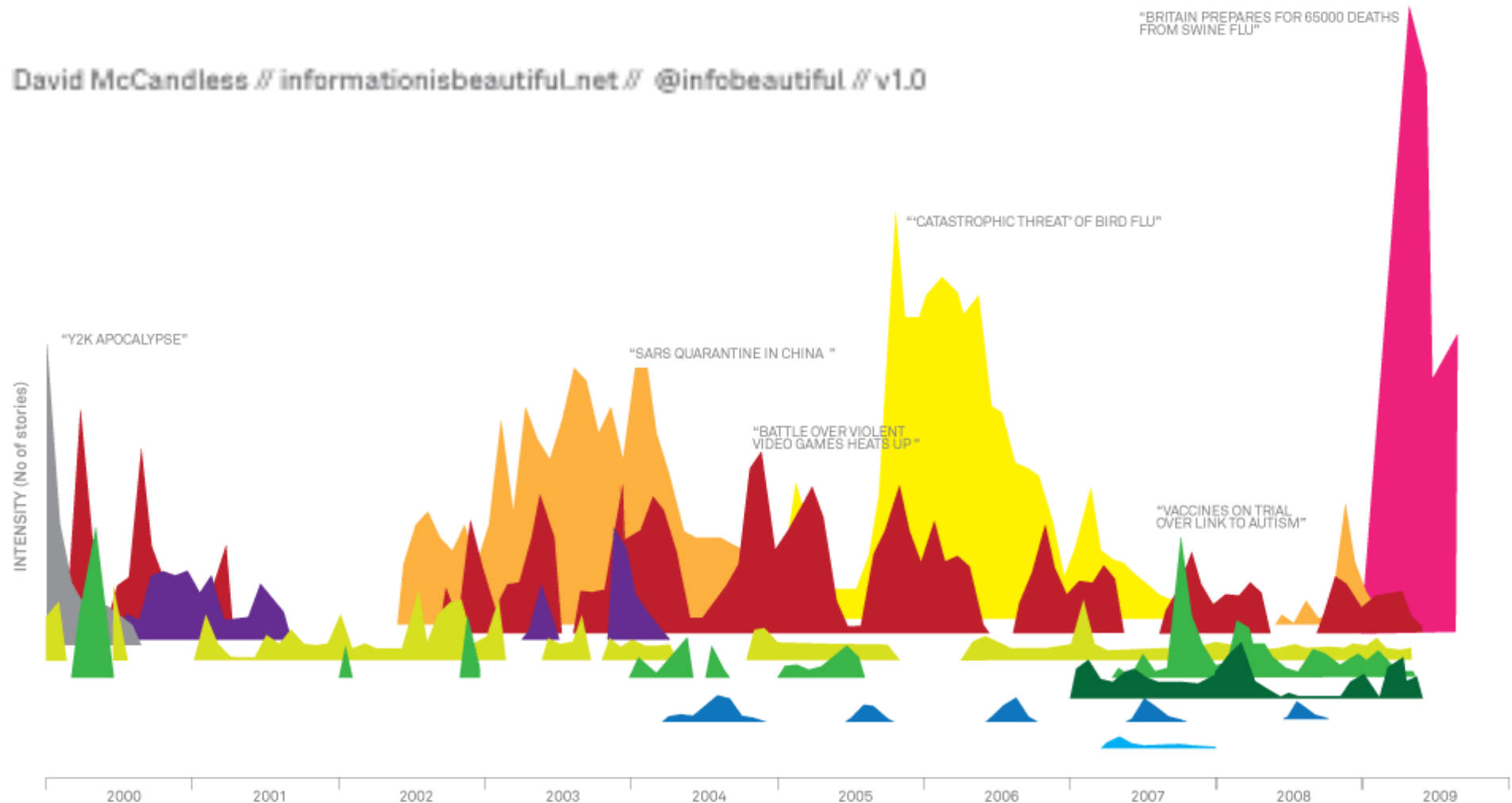
WHEN SWINE FLU STRUCK SWIFTLY IN MEXICO, IT CREATED A CHALLENGE NOT ONLY FOR international public health officials but also for journalists around the world assigned to follow the unfolding story. They needed to explain, in the face of great uncertainty and a nonstop news cycle, what the novel influenza A (H1N1) virus was and the potential dangers it posed. It was a difficult story handled most capably by experienced health and science reporters.

Swine flu is the latest in a string of important global stories across the spectrum of science: stem cell research, the human genome, climate change, new energy technologies, evolution, space exploration, and HIV/AIDS, to name a few.

In the face of this changing media landscape, journalism and science organizations need to explore better ways to train reporters, scientists, and other communicators around the world in the substance and process of science writing. In doing so, it is crucial that the old-fashioned virtues of good journalism—accurate information, multiple sources, context over controversy, and editorial independence—not be lost in the enthusiasm for communicating content in novel ways.

The media's roller coaster

David McCandless // informationisbeautiful.net // @infobautiful // v1.0



Story (worldwide deaths)



Mountains Out of Molehills
A timeline of global media scare stories.

Responding to uncertainty

Such problems arise in any scientific country. The SMC has made a particular contribution to mitigating them in Britain. The brainchild of Susan Greenfield, the director of the Royal Institution of Great Britain, which hosts it, its success can be credited above all to the robust leadership of its director Fiona Fox. It provides quotes from experts in immediate response to breaking stories, and in-depth briefings for longer-running controversies. It tutors scientists in communicating complexities such as risk with respectable but effective soundbites. In all of this it acts independently, on behalf of both journalists and scientists — but it ultimately serves the media.

"The UK Science Media Centre provides quotes from experts in immediate response to breaking stories, and in-depth briefings for longer-running controversies."



Does the media support or sabotage health?

Editorial

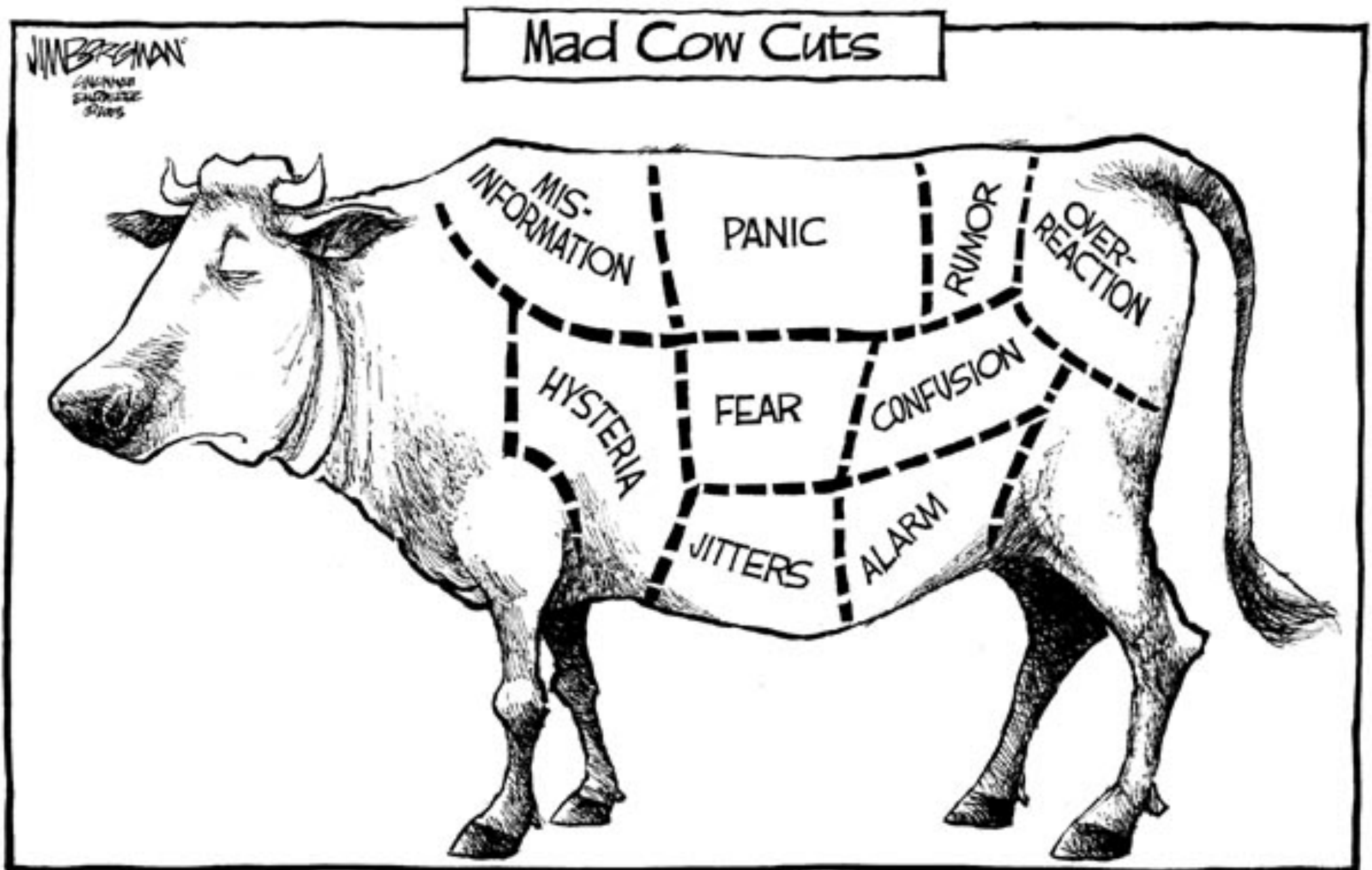


Perhaps the health-care sector is guilty of painting a caricature of journalists as unscrupulous hacks and ill-informed pundits, rather than as objective communicators of health information and informers of public debate. However, the more responsible the press appear, the less the general public seem to like it. People do not seem to be interested in straight reporting of health issues; mainstream media need to maintain their audiences, and controversy sells.

THE LANCET

www.thelancet.com Vol 373 February 21, 2009

Controversy sells



2845 ways to spin the Risk

Posted February 23rd, 2009 by gmp26 in [level 1](#), [absolute-relative-risk](#), [clinical-trials](#), [Fun Stuff](#), [risk-communication](#), [statins](#)

In the animation below we show how risks can be 'spun' to look bigger or smaller, how medical treatments can be made to seem useless or to be wonder cures, and how lifestyle changes might look worthwhile or not worth bothering with. All by changing the words used, the way the numbers are expressed, and the particular graphics chosen.



David Spiegelhalter
"Professor
of Risk Encouragement"

<http://understandinguncertainty.org>

U.U. Spinning the Risk Print Help Full Screen

What's the Risk? Personalise

Bacon sandwiches Back Next

☒ Absolute
☐ Relative
☐ No. Needed to Treat

☒ Chance
☐ Population
☐ Possible Futures
☐ Percentage
☒ Natural Frequencies
☐ out of 10
☐ out of 100
☐ out of 1000

☐ Positive
☒ Negative

Texts Pie Column Bar Icons

Harms of eating bacon

Your chance of experiencing bowel cancer without Bacon sandwiches is 1 in 10, which is increased to 1 in 10 with Bacon sandwiches.

experience anyway Blobs Tallies Faces
 harmed by Bacon sandwiches Random Smilies
 avoided anyway

Does the media support or sabotage health?

Editorial

The media are integral to getting people involved in their own health by promoting and highlighting health issues, and rolling public discourse will allow health topics to become central issues of democracy. However, the public need clear and accurate information. Responsible reporting should not only fall on the shoulders of reporters, but also on scientific publishers, scientists, and health-care workers who can promote evidence-based medicine in the media. For example, in the UK, scientists can use the Science Media Centre, which is committed to encouraging and supporting experts to become more effective at engaging with the media, to debunk the myths around big controversial stories that hit the headlines.

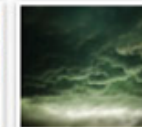
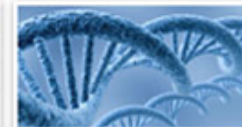
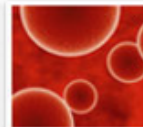
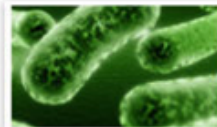


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Our aim is to promote accurate, bias-free reporting on science and technology by helping the media work more closely with the scientific community.

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In the News



Speed camera needed for neutrinos?

Posted in [In the News](#) on September 23rd, 2011.

Physicists have said – [in a paper](#) and in a seminar at the European Center for Nuclear Research (CERN) – that subatomic particles known as neutrinos can break the the speed of light Albert Einstein held up as a cosmic speed limit 106 years ago.

1
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They said the neutrinos raced from a particle accelerator outside Geneva, where they were created, to a cavern underneath Gran Sasso in Italy, a distance of about 730km, about 60 nanoseconds faster than it would take a light beam. That tiny deviation of about 0.0025 percent (2.5 parts in a hundred thousand) could open up the theoretical possibility of time travel.

Physicist David Krofcheck, at Auckland University, said that if the research was correct, he was "absolutely stunned and shocked" and New Zealander Stephen Parke, who is head theoretician at the Fermilab near Chicago and was not part of the research, said: "It's a shock. It's going to cause us problems, no doubt about that – if it's true."

CERN researchers are now looking to the United States and Japan to confirm the results, perhaps through a similar neutrino experiment at Fermilab. Alvaro DeRejula, a theorist at CERN, called the claim "...flabbergasting: If it is true, then we truly haven't understood anything about anything," he said, adding: "It looks too big to be true. The correct attitude is to ask oneself what went wrong."

See examples of NZ media coverage [here](#).

Our colleagues at the UK SMC collected the following commentary from physicists:



SMC BLOG

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Veteran science journalist joins the SMC

Journalists covering science-related stories now have an extra resource to draw on with former NZPA reporter Kent Atkinson joining the team at the Science Media Centre. Atkinson ranks among the country's most experienced reporters having spent 27 years at the New Zealand Press Association which shut its doors this week after 132 years of operation. [...]

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An abstract, colorful, wavy pattern on the left side of the page, featuring shades of blue, purple, pink, orange, and green, resembling a stylized flame or smoke.

Our colleagues at the UK SMC collected the following commentary from physicists:

Prof Jim Al-Khalili, Professor of Physics at the University of Surrey, said:

"The scientists are right to be extremely cautious about interpreting these findings. If the neutrinos have broken the speed of light, it would overturn a keystone theory from the last century of physics. That's possible, but it's far more likely that there is an error in the data. So let me put my money where my mouth is: if the CERN experiment proves to be correct and neutrinos have broken the speed of light, I will eat my boxer shorts on live TV."


Prof Stefan Soldner-Rembold, Professor of Particle Physics at the University of Manchester, said:

"Neutrinos are elusive particles that have fascinated physicists for decades, ever since they first appeared in the beta decay of nuclei. There are three types of neutrinos, often called "flavours" and one of the unique properties of neutrinos is that they can change their flavour when travelling over long distances. Many experiments are being performed to measure these oscillations. One of them, called OPERA, detects neutrinos produced at the European Laboratory for Nuclear Research (CERN) in an underground laboratory in the Gran Sasso tunnel in central Italy. The neutrinos travel through the Earth on their way to Gran Sasso since they hardly ever interact with the matter in their way.

"Neutrinos only have a tiny mass, much lower than the mass of electrons, and they should therefore propagate with nearly the speed of light. From Einstein's theory of relativity we know that the mass-less photons travel exactly with the speed of light and any particle that has mass can only come close to the speed of light, but never fully reach it.

"The distance between CERN and the Gran Sasso tunnel is 730 km and has been measured very precisely. The time of flight of the neutrinos between the two laboratories can be determined using precise atomic clocks and GPS systems. From this, the OPERA scientists measured the speed of the neutrinos and found that the neutrinos travel slightly faster than the speed of light. This result is completely unexpected. A previous experiment at Fermilab close to Chicago (MINOS) had published a similar result in 2007, where they measured a similar speed difference as OPERA but an uncertainty much larger than OPERA. In 1987, a much smaller upper limit on the speed of neutrinos reaching Earth from a Supernova was found. These neutrinos have much smaller energies than the ones from accelerators which could be an explanation for the difference.

"Particle physicists are still struggling to find theories explaining the effect. Neutrinos might propagate in a warped space-time, whereas light propagates in ordinary space-time. In this way neutrinos can shortcut space, unlike light, make them appear faster than the speed of light. Other explanations are more mundane, related to the measurement process, and all these have to be understood first before any claim for a discovery can be made. At this point, the OPERA scientists say they have found no such explanation and they therefore present the result for the wider science community to scrutinise. If the results are confirmed, though, it would be revolutionary for physics and science."



Professor Dave Wark, STFC Director of Particle Physics, and leader of the UK group on the T2K neutrino experiment in Japan said:

"If this result is right, it calls into question the laws of Special Relativity that provide the basis for most of modern physics. We will require a very high standard of proof and confirmation from other neutrino experiments around the world."

Professor Jenny Thomas, UCL and co-spokesperson for the MINOS neutrino experiment at Fermilab in the USA, said:

"The impact of this measurement, were it to be correct, would be huge. In fact it would overturn everything we thought we understood about relativity and the speed of light."

Examples of NZ coverage so far:

TV 3 News: [Roll over Einstein: Law of physics challenged](#)

TV 3 News: [Challenging Einstein is usually a losing venture](#)

Radio New Zealand: [Particles found to break speed of light](#)

Yahoo NZ News: [Faster than light" particles may be physics revolution](#)

Otago Daily Times: [Scientists stunned as particles break speed of light](#)

New Zealand Herald: [Light-speed result stuns scientists](#)

Stuff.co.nz: [Roll over Einstein: Pillar of physics challenged](#)

TV3 news: [Scientists claim 'faster than light' particle detected](#)

Listen to Simon Mercerpt [interviewing](#) University of Auckland Physicist David Krofcheck about the implications of this discovery on Radio New Zealand's *Morning Report*.



ComPost

Alexandra Petri puts the 'pun' in punditry

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Posted at 03:31 PM ET, 09/22/2011

Law-breaking particle at CERN exceeds the speed of light

By [Alexandra Petri](#)



CERN, where the offender was launched.
(FABRICE COFFRINI - AFP/GETTY IMAGES)

in non-English: CERN (that's the European Organization for Nuclear Research to you, American) has just measured a neutrino (that's a subatomic particle to you, uh, Multicellular Organism) that traveled from Geneva, Switzerland, to a destination in Italy and managed to exceed the speed of light by 60 nanoseconds — with a margin of error of only 10 nanoseconds.

"Something exceeds the speed limit in Italy, and somehow this is news?"

Stop the presses!

Hold the phones!

If you don't have a phone or a press, find a hipster who does!

The speed of light is broken!
CERN has just measured subatomic particles traveling at [faster than the speed of light](#)! Or,



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ULTIMI TITOLI

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« Il ritorno della carboneria

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Più veloce della luce: genesi di una notizia

Tutto è cominciato questa mattina, con una sibillina intervista ad Antonino Zichichi su "Il Giornale". I neutrini sono più veloci della luce? Però. Così le redazioni sono entrate in fibrillazione.

Non perché mezzo mondo abbia letto la notizia su "Il Giornale", ma perché molti sapevano che, presto o tardi, il Cern e l'INFN ne avrebbero dato l'annuncio. Questa notte, con un articolo postato su arxiv.org, e domani mattina presto, in una conferenza pubblica. Per tutto il giorno i responsabili dell'esperimento sono stati assaliti dalle telefonate. E infine, nel pomeriggio, la Reuters ha allegramente rotto l'embargo. E con quello si sono rotti gli argini.

In verità, siamo a conoscenza dei risultati da più di una settimana, e abbiamo avuto modo di discuterli a lungo con i diretti interessati, ma per rispetto delle regole della comunità scientifica e delle persone con cui abbiamo parlato, e a cui abbiamo dato la nostra parola, non ve lo racconteremo fino a domani.

Stay tuned.



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«Reuters happily broke the embargo»

Reuters ha allegramente rotto l'embargo.

The embargo on this story has been broken and so the embargo is lifted effective immediately.

The embargo exists to ensure that as little time as possible elapses between media coverage of a news story and the full paper being available, and to provide journalists and others in the media with time to research and write about the story ahead of the article publication. As such we take any breaks very seriously and will be investigating.

Shift Work in Teens Linked to Increased Multiple Sclerosis Risk
Circadian Disruption and Sleep Restriction Contributing Factors

Researchers from Sweden have uncovered an association between shift work and increased risk of multiple sclerosis (MS). Those who engage in off-hour employment before the age of 20 may be at risk for MS due to a disruption in their circadian rhythm and sleep pattern. Findings of this novel study appear today in [*Annals of Neurology*](#), a journal published by Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the American Neurological Association and Child Neurology Society.

Embargo Watch

Keeping an eye on how scientific information embargoes affect news coverage

Did Reuters and the BBC break the embargo on the neutrinos–speed of light story?

with 2 comments

Unless you've been living under a rock — or then again, this being particle physics, maybe even then — you've by now heard about what is being heralded as a finding that may overturn Einstein's theory of relativity. With the caveat that the results need to be confirmed, a group of physicists working on an experiment known as OPERA, run by CERN and Italy's Gran Sasso Laboratory, say they have observed neutrinos traveling faster than the speed of light.

And as a number of people have suggested, a [story](#) by a colleague of mine at Reuters seemed yesterday to violate far more mundane rules, those of the embargo. (Or, as a few jokesters said, the new findings may have allowed the story to travel back in time.)

But it's far more complicated than that. Sort of like particle physics.



Ivan Oransky

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[Darren Osborne \(@sci... on Astronomy meeting reveals the ...](#)

2 Responses

Subscribe to comments with [RSS](#).

Interesting account but you neglect to mention that rumours starting appearing in blog comments from the 15th By the 19th there were detailed posts on some science blogs. I don't think the MSM can be expected to keep an embargo about something that is already being openly discussed on the internet.



Philip Gibbs

October 6, 2011 at [5:03](#)

[pm](#)

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In response to that post, James Gillies, the head of CERN's communication group, [tweeted](#):

“

@ivanoransky Anyone watching closely enough would have seen the story in the public domain long before the BBC and Reuters reported it.



Ivan Oransky



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«To tell you the truth we knew about these results more than a week ago, and we could discuss them with the researchers, but as a form of respect for the rules of the scientific community and for the people we talked to - and to whom we gave our word - we will not tell you until tomorrow.
Stay tuned.»

An Unhealthy Bond: Embargoes and the Ingelfinger Rule

Science Writers in New York
September 26, 2011

Ivan Oransky, MD
Executive Editor, Reuters Health
Blogger, Embargo Watch
<http://embargowatch.wordpress.com>
ivan-oransky@erols.com

Why Journals Say They Embargo

NEJM, a typical policy:

The Journal embargo policy is designed primarily to ensure that physician subscribers have their copy of the Journal at about the same time their patients hear about new research through the news media. It also gives the media time to learn about a topic, gather relevant information, and interview authors and other experts so they can accurately report complex research findings.

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The Criticism

“...important science news often is more a produce of news management by the journals that publish peer-review research, than of any one reporter’s special expertise or investigative energy”

– Robert Lee Hotz, quoted in Kiernan V.,
Embargoed Science (2006), p 77

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What's In It For Journals?

“...coverage [by the New York Times] of JAMA increased by 50 percent after the journal’s publication date was shifted from Friday to Wednesday in April 1990.”

– Kiernan V.
Embargoes and the New York Times’
coverage of the Journal of the American
Medical Association.
Science Communication, June 1998

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Do Embargoes Mean More Coverage?

American Geophysical Union's unembargoed journals get nearly no coverage in newspapers, compared to Science and Nature, which appear nearly every week.

– Harvey Leifert, quoted in Kiernan, pp 104-105

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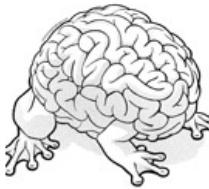
It's About Control

Suggested Embargo Policy Text

Our embargo policy is in place to ensure as much coverage of research [in our journal/by our society's members] as possible.

This may divert attention from other important issues in science and medicine. Provided we have a reasonable interval between the release of material and the embargo time, it may also help reporters do a better job covering these studies.

However, policies that bar pre-publication publicity of scientists' work can also have a chilling effect on the spread of scientific knowledge.



Tipi umani da giornalista scientifica / 5: lo Scienziato Che Vuole Rileggere & brother

BY SILVIA, ON OCTOBER 13TH, 2011

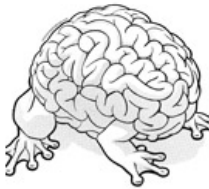


«The Scientist-Who-Wants-to-Read-in-Advance (the story or the interview with his quotes) has a radio brother named Scientist-Who-Wants-to-Know-the-Questions-in-Advance. Their family name is Scientists-Who-Don't-Trust», and often you cannot even think that they are that wrong. Very often they are meticulous scientists, sound, generously available, and often - scientifically speaking - they are the best around.

But if you're a science journalist they can both result in a Cosmic Calamity, and often you end up not calling them anymore.

What a pity.

Control Freaks,beware!



Tipi umani da giornalista scientifica / 5: lo Scienziato Che Vuole Rileggere & brother

BY SILVIA, ON OCTOBER 13TH, 2011



«Essentially, the Scientist-Who-Wants-to-Read-in-Advance looks endearing: he doesn't know how to live, since he only knows microscopes and white coats. And above all he hasn't realised yet that when he gets out of his laboratory he is just a newspaper reader himself, and he needs stories written the way you write them. **Not the way he would**».



Thank you!

turone@agenziazoe.it

www.twitter.com/fabioturone

www.sciencemediacentre.it