

Working with the Media



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Today's Topics



- Why work with media?
- What are reporters looking for?
- How should I prepare for an interview?
- How can I build relationships with media?
- Who should respond?

What is News, Anyway?

- Out of the ordinary: unexpected, controversial, quirky, negative
- Important
- Timely
- Real: kids and wallet

RESEARCH TOPICS GUARANTEED TO BE PICKED UP BY THE NEWS MEDIA

Chocolate! Anything that validates the public's wishful thinking that chocolate is secretly good for you is *news gold*.



A chocolate lover reacts to news that her chocolate addiction is making her smarter *and* saving the environment.

Unrealistic Sci-Fi Gadgets
Everyone is still waiting for their jet-packs, flying cars, and teleporters. Get on it, Science!



Engineers test latest invisibility cloak prototype.

ROBOTS!! Everyone loves robots. In fact, news outlets are required by law to feature a robot story every 7 days.



Robotacist demonstrates nose-picking robot, says will soon replace humans.

Experiments That Might Blow Up The World
Nothing gets the crazies riled up like recreating conditions of the Big Bang in the only planet you have. Hope your math is right!



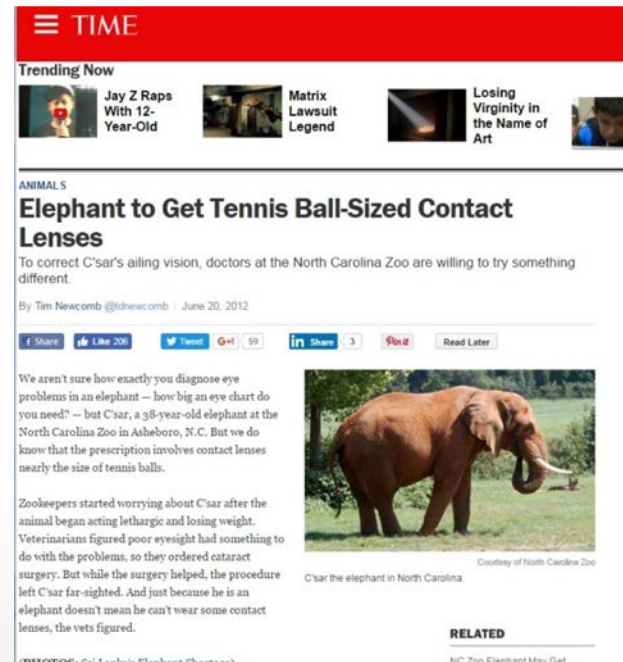
"Oops," say scientists-

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Why Reporters Want to Talk to You

- Expertise
- Research-based information
- Breaking news or controversy



Why You Want to Talk to Reporters

- Reach a larger audience
- Build a mutually beneficial relationship
- Become the go-to expert
- Publicize what's important to you
- Demonstrate your impact for decision makers



Reporters, in a Few Words

Deadline-driven: pressured to fill space and time

Quick studies: cover many topics

Skeptical: taught to seek confirmation, always

Translators: know how to make complex information understandable

When a Reporter Calls

- Find out what's needed.
- Set a time to talk.
- Make a referral if you can't help.
- Ask for advice if there's a crisis.

Before the Interview

Ask:

- Reporter's name and media outlet
- Deadline
- Topic
- Interview format and length
- Date story will run

Prepare, Prepare, Prepare

Write down two to three main points you want to make in the interview. Say them out loud.

Support your points:

- Information
- Examples
- Anecdotes

During the Interview

- Stay focused.
- Keep it simple.
- Be honest.
- Avoid “off the record” and “no comment.”
- Once you’ve made your point, stop talking.



Handling Tough Questions

Bridge: Move from the question asked to one of your points.

- “The most important thing to remember ...”
- “Another way to look at that ...”
- “The real issue is ...”
- “No, I wouldn’t say that. What I would say is ...”

More on Tough Questions

- Ask the reporter to clarify if a question is unclear.
- Decline to speculate or speak for someone else.
- Always keep your cool.



Zoom Interviews



Twitter.com/
zoom_us

- Check your background - make sure the setting is appropriate.
- Beware of “floating head effect” if using digital Zoom background.
- Avoid patterned or white clothing and shirts with logos or writing.
- Make sure your environment is quiet.
- Speak clearly.
- Wear pants.



After the interview

- Provide a business card.
- Confirm when the story is expected to run.
- Never ask to approve the story.
- Be available for follow-up questions.

Relationship Building with Reporters

- Know the outlets and reporters covering your beat. News Services can help.
- Most reporters prefer emails over phone calls.
- “Following up” with a call is a common PR tactic but is almost universally despised by reporters.
- Monitor social media for possible engagement.
- COVID-19 has shrunk the “news hole” for other stories.

Working with University Communications

- We are here to help. Keep us informed.
- Subject-matter experts are often the best people to respond.
- We can help you identify news outlets and reporters.
- Let us know early about new research findings.
- We can help you place Op-Eds.

Thank you for your time!



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