

Workshop Communication

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How to get the media interested in your scientific papers

Or:

How to get the general public interested in your work

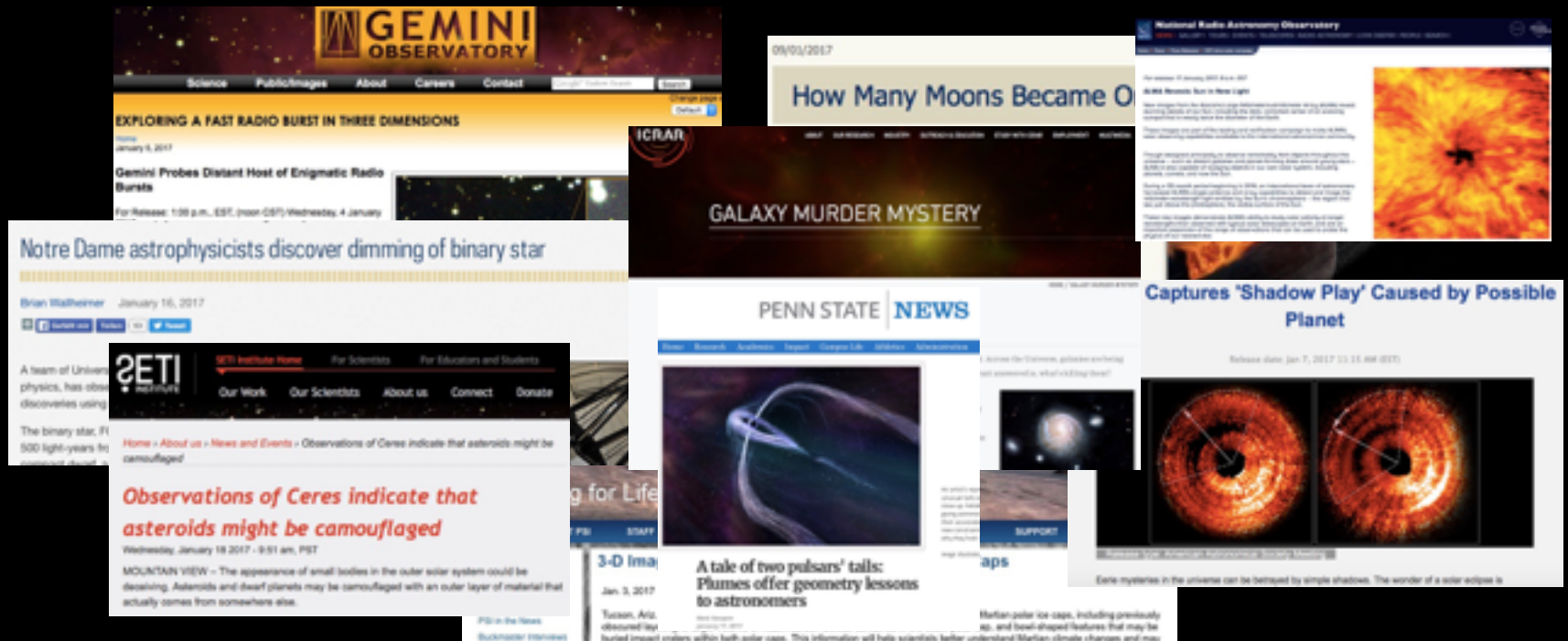
- Part 1 - Introduction
- Part 2 - Working in groups
- Part 3 - Presentation of group work and discussion

What makes a media release or science story?



Big news

What makes a media release or science story?



A random selection of media releases of January 2017

What makes a media release or science story?

- Paper has to be scientifically relevant.
- Topic should appeal to general public.
- Other reasons...

What makes a media release or science story?

- It's more a feeling than strict rules.
- Local stories work best.

What makes a media release or science story?

Planet S
Media Relations (E)

Media release, information for representatives of the media

Media releases

2017-05: Atmospheric chemistry on paper

Normally computers speed up calculations. But with his new pen-and-paper formula Kevin Heng of the University of Bern gets his results thousands of times faster than using conventional computer codes. The astrophysicist calculates the abundances of molecules formed in atmospheric chemistry in exoplanetary atmospheres. Ultimately, deciphering the abundances of molecules allows us to interpret if features in a spectrum are due to physics, geology or biology.

Subscribe to media releases

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Medienveröffentlichungen

2017: Atmosphärenchemie kurz notiert

Normalerweise lassen sich Berechnungen mit dem Computer viel schneller durchführen als von Hand. Auch mit einer einfachen Formel erzielt Kevin Heng, Astrophysiker an der Universität Bern, seine Resultate tausende Male schneller als mit herkömmlichen Computersimulationen. Heng berechnet die Häufigkeit bestimmter Moleküle in der Atmosphäre von Exoplaneten. Diese Atmosphärenchemie ist aufschlussreich über die physikalische, geologische oder biologische Prozesse hinter beobachteten Messungen stehen.

Der Professor und die Zauberformel

Der 37-jährige Kevin Heng ist der neue Direktor des Weltrauminstituts der Uni Bern und Nachfolger von Kathrin Altmegg. Er hat eine Formel entwickelt, die in der Fachwelt für Furore sorgt.



Artikelm zum Thema

Dieser Forscher geht dem Wasser auf den Grund



Bern. Woher kommt das Wasser auf der Erde? Was macht das Wasser im Erdinneren? Und können Satelliten künftig vor Hochwasser warnen? Solche und andere Fragen rund ums Wasser beschäftigt einen Forscher aus unterschiedlichen Fakultäten der Uni Bern. Mehr...
Von Urs Rothrich 05.07.2018

Astrophysiker, Direktor und Professor Kevin Heng tippen Computer berührt. Ist er komplette Gleichungen von Hand an der Wandtafel. 6-10. April 2018

Wie er schreibt, versteht kein Mensch, jedenfalls keiner, der sich nicht mit der Atmosphärenchemie von Exoplaneten beschäftigt. Kevin Heng steht an der Wandtafel in seinem Büro und flüstert mit der Kreide über den Schiefer. Nach wenigen Sekunden steht eine drei Meter lange Zeile da, voller Buchstaben, Zahlen und Symbole.

«Ja, das wäre», sagt er und grinst. Die Formel ist das Resultat aussergewöhnlicher Denkarbeit. Und sie verhilft die Fachwelt in dem Masse, wie sie Laien raten lässt. Mit Hengs Formel lassen sich komplizierte Berechnungen tausendmal schneller durchführen.

«Ich sehe nicht nur Zahlen, wenn ich in den Himmel schaue»

Bern. Willy Benz versucht Dinge zu verstehen, die man nicht sehen kann, weil sie Milliarden Kilometer weit weg sind. Der renommierte Weltraumforscher der Uni Bern sucht nach Leben ausserhalb unseres Sonnensystems. Mehr...
Von Urs Rothrich 21.08.2012

26.08.2018

Facebook (14)

Twitter (3)

LinkedIn (3)

Instagram (1)

Local reference, people involved.


What makes a media release or science story?



Latest news of NCCR PlanetS.

Find all our media releases on the PlanetS Website.

<http://nccr-planets.ch/media-outreach/media/>



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Media Releases

- 04.01.2017 – UniGe – Michel Mayor et Didier Queloz lauréats du prix Wolf en physique
- 22.12.2016 – ESO – Orbit of Proxima Centauri Determined After 103 Years
- 06.12.2016 – ESA – ExoMars Orbiter images Phobos
- 29.11.2016 – Uni Bern – CaSSIS sends first images from Mars orbit
- 29.11.2016 – Uni Bern – CaSSIS schickt erste hoch aufgelöste Bilder vom Mars
- 09.11.2016 – Uni Bern – “Chury” ist viel jünger als angenommen
- 09.11.2016 – Uni Bern – Chury is much younger than previously thought
- 27.10.2016 – ETH Zürich – How Planets like Jupiter form
- 27.10.2016 – ETH Zürich – Wie Riesenplaneten entstehen
- 24.10.2016 – Uni Bern – Preferentially Earth-sized planets with lots of water
- 24.10.2016 – Uni Bern – Entstehung von erdgrossen Planeten simuliert
- 30.09.2016 – Uni Bern – Rosettas fulminantes Ende
- 30.09.2016 – Uni Bern – Rosetta's momentous end
- 21.07.2016 – Uni Bern – Atmospheric chemistry on paper
- 21.07.2016 – Uni Bern – Atmosphärenchemie kurz notiert
- 29.06.2016 – PlanetS – How planetary age reveals water content
- 29.06.2016 – PlanetS – Wie das Planetenalter den Wassergehalt verrät
- 29.06.2016 – PlanetS – Ce que l'âge des planètes nous apprend sur leur teneur en eau

When you are in doubt whether your paper is suitable:

- Tell your story your children/parents/friends who are non-experts. Can you motivate them to ask questions?
- Remember a science story in another field than astronomy (biology, medicine, archeology...). Why did you read it? Has your story a similar touch?

Do not underestimate the audience.

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Shaking the topological cocktail of success

12.11.2014 | Press release

Take ultracold potassium atoms, place a honeycomb lattice of laser beams on top of them and shake everything in a circular motion: this recipe enabled ETH researchers to implement an idea for a new class of materials first proposed in 1988 in their laboratory.



A Möbius strip can't be transformed into a normal strip without cutting. (Illustration: Gregor Jotzu / ETH Zurich)

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A quantum channel made of light

30.12.2014 | News
By: Barbara Vonnard

In experiments using ultracold atoms and laser light, ETH researchers have measured a stepwise change in conductivity as the atoms pass through tiny structures. This is the first time that this quantum effect has been observed for electrically neutral particles.



A point contact through which neutral, ultracold atoms flow. According to the laws of quantum physics, conductivity can only change in discrete steps. (Illustration: Group Tilmann Esslinger)

Even complicated topics can make news.

The usual procedure

- Researcher informs communication people at his/her institution (PlanetS), answers questions or writes draft press release.
- Institution prepares press release and sends it out to media, journalists, news agencies such as SDA and distribution services such as AAS, Eurekalert, AlphaGalileo, idw.
- Some media might contact researcher for further explanations/comments.
- Hopefully news is picked up by newspapers, TV, online services.

The usual procedure

- Please inform your communication people as early as possible.
- A&A, ApJ: Press releases/stories can be published when your paper is accepted.
- Science, Nature: Press releases/stories are under strict embargo until the paper is published.

What kind of information do the communication people need?

Questionnaire of Keck Observatory to be answered by researcher

1. What did you discover?
2. Why is this important?
3. How does it change our understanding of the Universe?
4. How did Keck Observatory contribute to the finding?
5. What instrument did you use and what did it show you?



What kind of information do the communication people need?

Most important:

1. What's new?

What's the result of your scientific paper?

What did you discover?

2. Why should we care?

Why is it interesting? Why is this important?

Is it useful?

Does it change present understanding?

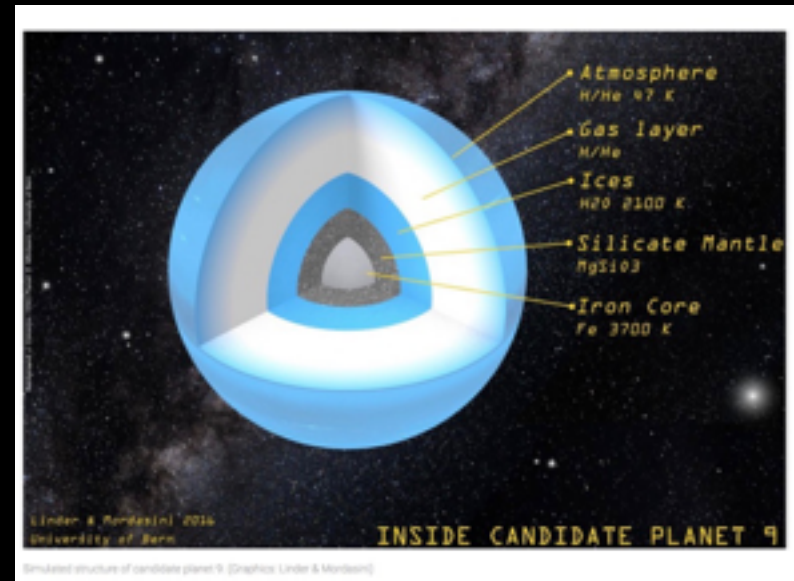
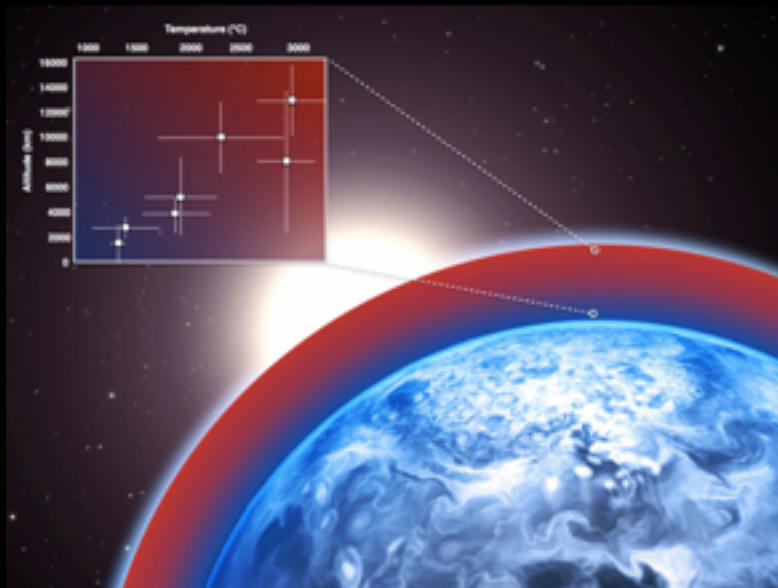
What kind of information do the communication people need?

Most important:

- News first. Then explain impact.
- Keep it simple and short.
- No technical terms.
- Be aware that your readers are non-experts.
- Who is the principal author (Swiss or Swiss University member)?

What kind of information do the communication people need?

Almost as important:
Illustration: Images, graphics



What kind of information do the
communication people need?

Almost as important:

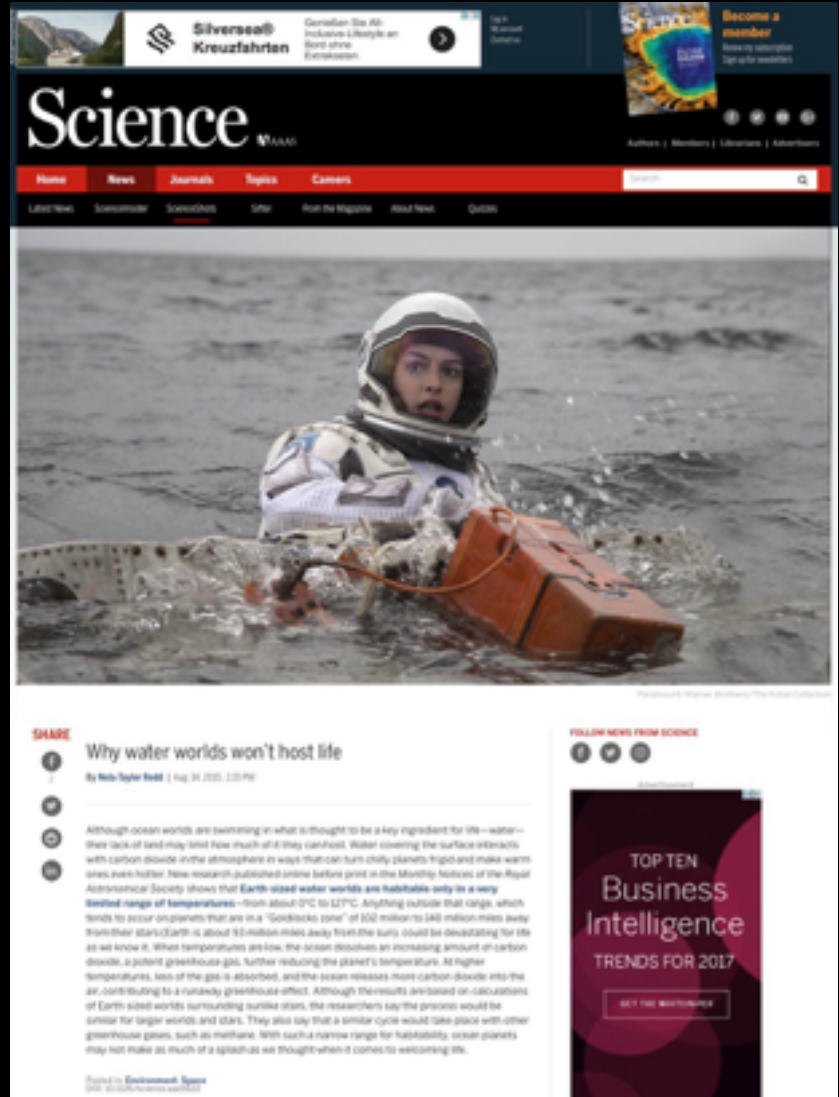
Illustration: Images, graphics, videos, animations

Comet 67P/C-G shape formation
by sub-catastrophic collisions

M. Jutzi, W. Benz

What kind of information do the communication people need?

Almost as important:
Illustration: Images,
graphics,
videos, animations,
illustration ideas.



What kind of information do the communication people need?

Goodies: Emotions, personal statements that illustrate your excitement.

...«We were quite nervous but it looks as though almost everything functioned as we planned it. The resulting images are really sharp», says Antoine Pommerol...

...«The first images we received are absolutely spectacular – and it was only meant to be a test», says Nicolas Thomas...

What kind of information do the communication people need?

Goodies: Anecdotes, the story behind it.

...“We were speechless when we saw the image for the first time in the control room at the observatory in Chile,” remembers Christian Thalmann...“No one had expected to find such well-defined, long-ranged and detailed structures. At first, some members of the team thought the observation must have been jittered by accident.” ...

What kind of information do the communication people need?

Goodies: Comparisons that allow people to relate to unfamiliar facts/dimensions.

...“It looks as if someone had smudged a freshly painted picture into a wavy line with their finger,” says ETH astrophysicist Christian Thalmann.

...«We saw Hebes Chasma at 2.8 metres per pixel», says Thomas. «That’s a bit like flying over Bern at 15’000 kilometres per hour and simultaneously getting sharp pictures of cars in Zurich.»...

What kind of information do the communication people need?

The screenshot shows the top of the Blick news website. The header is red with the 'Blick' logo in white. To the right of the logo, it says 'Zürich -5°' with a sun icon, a search bar with 'Suche', and a login link 'Anmelden'. Below the header is a navigation bar with links: Home, News, Sport, People, Ratgeber, Life, Gesundheit, Virtual Reality, Auto, Video, Services. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: 'LESERHIER: HOME > LIFE > WISSEN > ASTRONOMIE: KOMET «TSCHURI» ENTSTAND DURCH KOLLISIONEN IM VELO-TEMPO'. A red banner for 'IM JACKPOT' features '2.1 Mio.', 'SWISSLOS', 'JETZT SPIELEN', and a 'LOTTO' logo. The main article is titled 'Astronomie' in red, followed by 'Komet «Tschuri» entstand durch Kollisionen im Velo-Tempo' in large black font. The text below reads: 'BERN - BE - Der Komet «Tschuri» entstand vermutlich durch «sanfte» Kollisionen. Computersimulationen deuten darauf hin, dass vor Milliarden von Jahren zwei eisige Objekte im Velo-Tempo aufeinandergestossen sind.'

What kind of information do the communication people need?

Goodies: Associations/images that allow people to relate to unfamiliar facts/dimensions.

...Willy Benz compares the neck of the comet with the stem of a glass: "A dishwasher has to clean very gently, so that the stem of the glass does not break," says the astrophysicist. Obviously, the solar system did not handle this aspect as carefully...

...“So far, it has been assumed that comets are original building blocks - similar to Lego,” says Willy Benz. "Our work shows that the Lego blocks no longer have their original form, but the plastic that they consist of is still the same as in the beginning.“...

What kind of information do the communication people need?



...«...“It’s a bit like looking at a bunch of people”, says Yann Alibert. “You see how tall and how heavy they are, and you try to think about what you would be able to find out if you knew their age – maybe that in general young people have more muscles.”

How could the mass, the radius and the age of exoplanets give away some information about their internal structure?....

- Questions
- Feedback

