



Communicating about research

How do you go about it?

"Explaining what you are researching and why is really important for maintaining confidence in science."

HAN VAN KRIEKEN, RECTOR MAGNIFICUS
Radboud University



Click on the link to watch the video with Han van Krieken

Five reasons to engage in science communication

- A wide audience becomes aware of your research: this means that you draw more **attention** to your research topic. Sometimes this even puts a subject on the **political agenda**.
- Science communication can benefit your research: some researchers get a response to a news item, a public lecture or a social media post, for example. This can sometimes produce **new insights, collaborations or data**.
- You meet your responsibilities as a scientist by being **transparent** about the research that is being funded with taxpayers' money.
- You learn from this yourself: being able to explain the importance of your research well also gives you a better understanding of what you are doing and why. You **perfect your story**.
- It is therefore **good practice** for, say, writing funding applications, pitching your research or applying for new research positions.



"You can prepare as well as you can, but you also just have to do it."

KIANE DE KLEIJNE, ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST



"After I presented my research in a theatre, I received more and more requests to talk about my research at festivals and events."

LINDA DRIJVERS, LANGUAGE SCIENTIST



First determine your objective, target audience and message

1

Objective

What do I want to achieve with my communication? For example:

- Sharing results with scientists in my field or in other fields
- Creating awareness of a particular topic
- Attracting test subjects
- Securing funding
- Starting new collaborations
- Other, namely...

2

Target Audience

Whom do I want to reach? For example:

- Scientists in my field or in another field
- Funding providers
- Secondary school students
- People from Nijmegen
- Politicians
- General public
- Others, namely...

3

Message

How you will present your message depends on your target audience and objective. Think, for example, about what this audience already knows, or does not know, and considers important or unimportant. Formulate a clear and succinct message:

- What is my news? What has happened? What have I discovered? What am I working on?
- How did I do this?
- Why are the results relevant or of interest to the target audience?

Means: How will I achieve my objective?

Naturally, the most effective means of communication depends on your objective, target audience and message. For example, do you want to attract people from Nijmegen to participate in your research as test subjects? In that case, you will use other means of communication than if you want to share interesting new research results with fellow scientists. And politicians and policymakers, for their part, obtain their information from sources different from those of scientists and residents of Nijmegen. A few possible means of communication:

- Social media
- Blogs/vlogs
- Classes for (primary school) students
- Public lecture or presentation
- Press and media



You can read about the experiences of researchers at ru.nl

Want to start straightaway? Contact the Science Communication Team on +31 (0)24 361 60 00 or at media@ru.nl

Getting started

1 Fill-in-the-blanks exercise to perfect your story

It may help you to complete the following sentence for yourself:

"I want to persuade...

[target audience].....

of the fact that...

.....
.....
.....

2 See whether you can write down your message in a few (max. 3) short sentences

.....
.....
.....

3 Another fill-in-the-blanks exercise

My research is about...

.....

This is important because...

.....

The results are relevant to...

[person/group].....

because...

.....

SCIENTISTS IN THE MEDIA: DOS AND DON'TS

Ask for your specialism to be stated correctly

Immerse yourself in the medium

Make arrangements about the proceedings in advance.



Differentiate between opinions and conclusions based on research results.

Journalistic freedom

Journalists may approach their article from an angle that perhaps differs from what you had in mind. This journalistic freedom is their prerogative. Feel free to suggest corrections for factual inaccuracies, but leave the initiative to the journalist.

'Practice' by explaining your research to family and friends

Want more advice? Contact us.

Where can I get help?

 = Click on the link to contact us.



Press office and Science Communication Team

For general questions about science communication and contact with the press. Our people can help determine whether your research should be reported on television/radio or in a newspaper and can help generate publicity for your research.

Faculty communications officers

Approach the communications department of your own faculty if you want to share your research results with an audience outside your own field or to have your project written about on the website.



Radboud Reflects

Are you interested in giving a public lecture? Radboud Reflects organises lectures on a variety of subjects for non-academic audiences.



Communications department of Radboud University

For questions about house style, logos or the use of social media.



Science Education Hub

Do you want to tell primary school students about your research? The Science Education Hub will connect you with local schools and help you shape your story for this target audience.



Want to use social media?

Do you want to begin your science communication at a basic level? Contact us for advice on posting research on social media.

Want to share your research with the media?

Check out this web page or ask for more dos and don'ts for dealing with the media via media@ru.nl

Keen to know more? Visit www.ru.nl/en/contact/press-office



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