Listen vs. Look
Getting Science/Health Stories on the Radio

Listen vs. Look

- Which stories are covered and why
- Getting your story covered
- Elements of a story for radio
- Before you talk to a reporter
- What reporters look for in a relationship

“...The new view trickled forth, tentatively at first but with more confidence later on, in a series of highly technical taxonomic and anatomical monographs, published mostly in the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, London, the oldest scientific journal in English (dating back to the 1660s), but scarcely an item on the shelf of your corner drugstore, or even your local library, and not the sort of publication scrutinized by the journalists responsible for selecting the tiny part of scientific activity destined for public notice.”
Yoda: an old mouse

Strong PR important, but not too strong.

Which Stories are Covered and Why

- Peer-reviewed publication
- Clear reason for story (or research)
- Strong PR (but not too strong)
Getting Your Story Covered

• What’s the story?
• Different sides? Outside comment?
• Practice telling it (more on this later)
• No one likes a deadline

8

Elements of a Story for Radio

Introduction
Background
Methods
Comment

Structure: SNOWs adhere to a 4-paragraph format:

Introduction - catchy/eye catching
Background - what has been done and the significance of the study + what is new
Methods - what experiments were undertaken
Comment - you should speak to all stakeholders and ask them if a SNOW is an appropriate choice

Some tips on interviewing sources:

- Both primary researchers and outside experts can be used, so ask them if the story is something they would like to know about
- During the interview, ask for examples or anecdotes
- Make sure that the interview is not too long and that it is clear

ME, FOR NPR

AAAS ScienceNOW
Elements of a Story for Radio

- Scene: radio seeks to take you there
- Characters tell the story for the reporter
- Describable
- NLNA -- no lingo, no acronyms
- Only one or two new words
Before You Talk to a Reporter

17

• What’s the story?
• Different sides? Outside comment?
• Practice telling it
• No one likes a deadline

18

• Introduction
• Background
• Methods
• Comment
What are others going to say?

19

• The Paper
• The Abstract
• The Lay Paragraph
• The Sentence

20
Before You Talk to a Reporter

The Lesson from Betty Crocker

What Reporters Look for in a Relationship

• Peer-reviewed publication

• Clear reason for story (or research)

• Strong PR (but not too strong)

You’ve Just Heard It
What Reporters Look for in a Relationship

• What’s the story?
• Different sides? Outside comment?
• Practice telling it
• No one likes a deadline

What Reporters Look for in a Relationship

• The Paper
• The Abstract
• The Lay Paragraph
• The Sentence

What Reporters Look for in a Relationship

• Scene: radio seeks to take you there
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No. it’s not a piece of cake....

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