

Science Communication

Science communication in practice

Rui Mata, HS 2026

Version: October 29, 2026

Course structure

Session information

Sessions take place Thursdays, 8.15–9.45, Biozentrum, Hörsaal U1.131.

#	Date	Topic	Instructor(s)	Material	Exercise
1	17.09.2026	What is science communication?	Mata	pdf	
2	08.10.2026	Models and elements of science communication	Mata	pdf	
3	15.10.2026	Scientific uncertainty and trust in science	Mata	pdf	
4	22.10.2026	Guidelines for science communication	Mata	pdf	
5	29.10.2026	Science communication in practice	Mata	pdf	
6	05.11.2026	Why do we visualize?	Hil/Lachenmeier		
7	12.11.2026	Structured content	Hil/Lachenmeier		A
8	19.11.2026	Content dimensions and categorization	Hil/Lachenmeier		B
9	26.11.2026	The identity of a dot	Hil/Lachenmeier		C
10	03.12.2026	Networks and relationships	Hil/Lachenmeier		D
11	10.12.2026	Visual language and cultural context & Areas and hierarchies	Hil/Lachenmeier		E
12	17.12.2026	Exam			

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION IN PRACTICE

ASK THE EXPERTS

October 29



Loreen Tisdall
Researcher

Cognitive and Decision Sciences
Faculty of Psychology



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Communications Officer
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Communications Department
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Reto Caluori
Head of Communications

What is my research about?

Let's talk about: risk



What are the **neural correlates**?

How do individuals differ in their **attitudes towards risk** and their approaches to **managing** it?

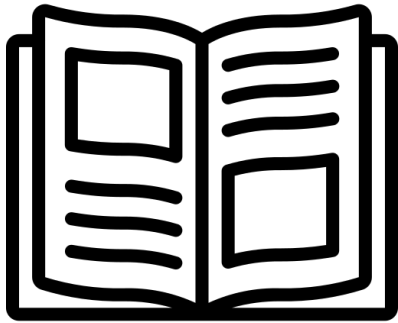
How to **measure** risk preference, risk taking, risk perception?

How do **features of the urban environment** (e.g., light, accessibility, disorder) impact our perception of **safety**?

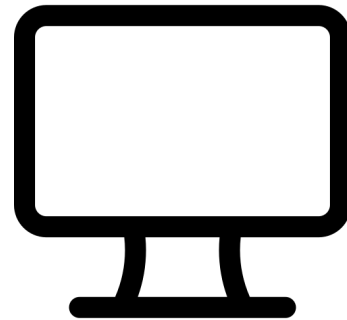
What role does perceived risk to personal safety play for **bystander intervention**?

Experience with science communication

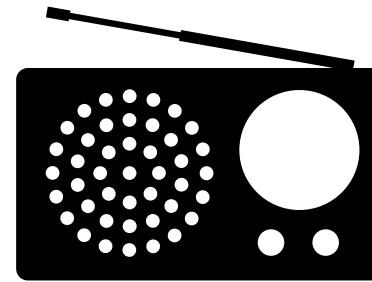
Let's talk about: formats



- Interview on open science practices
- Research(er) profile



- Personal website
- Quickfire Q&A video (research)
- SRF TV documentary
- Research(er) profile (publishers)



- Scientific perspective on a current topic



- Research(er) profile

Podcast icons created by Magnific - Flaticon

Magazine icons created by Smashicons - Flaticon

Computer icons created by Iconjam - Flaticon

Personal insights & take-aways

Let's talk about: effort & compromise

Preparing for

... takes time (depending on format ...)!

Doing it

... can be nerve-wracking!

The aftermath

... may require compromise (though not on accuracy)!

Personal insights & take-aways

Let's talk about: effort & compromise

Preparing for

(1) Get to know the specific **format** and **host** (examples); **(2)** Ask for an **outline** in advance (contents, questions); **(3)** Prepare a few **key statements** you can use as scaffolding; **(4)** Ask to see the product before it goes out and reserve the **right to change/veto**

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Doing it

(1) Ask for a redo immediately if you are not happy with your answer; (2) You can refuse to answer a question; (3) Stay within your area of expertise; (4) It's ok to show your are human

The aftermath

... may require compromise (though not on accuracy)!

Personal insights & take-aways

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Preparing for

(1) Get to know the specific **format** and **host** (examples); (2) Ask for an **outline** in advance (contents, questions); (3) Prepare a few **key statements** you can use as scaffolding; (4) Ask to see the product before it goes out and reserve the **right to change/veto**

Doing it

(1) Ask for a redo immediately if you are not happy with your answer; (2) You can refuse to answer a question; (3) Stay within your area of expertise; (4) It's ok to show your are human

The aftermath

(1) Your aim for **accuracy** may compete with **editorial decisions**; (2) Show the result to **someone you trust** before it goes out; (3) Prepare for **feedback** (good and critical); (4) Move on :)

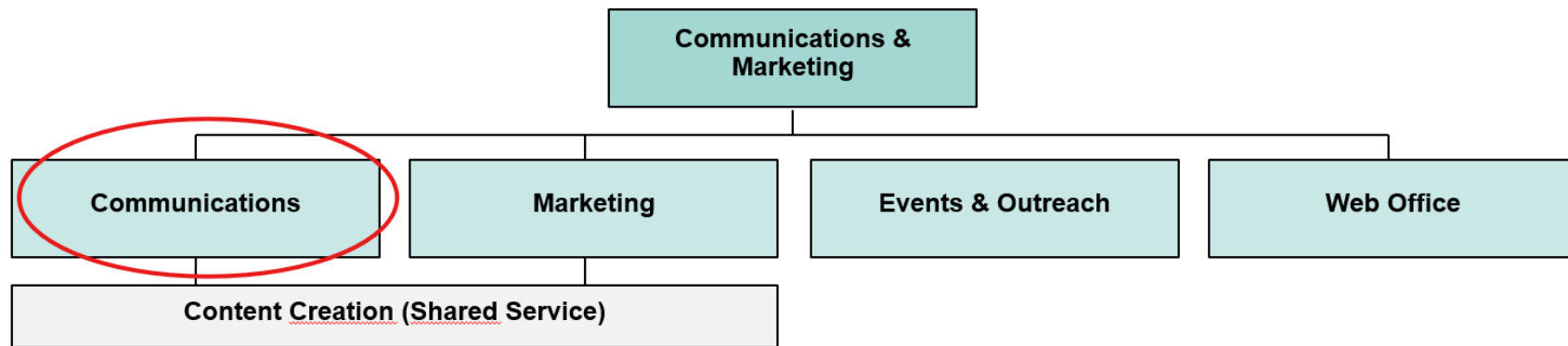
Thank you

Let's talk about: your ideas, questions, etc.

Science Communication at the University of Basel

Reto Caluori and Angelika Jacobs, 29 October 2026

Who we are.



Reto Caluori



Angelika Jacobs



Noëmi Kern



Sebastian Gibis



Catherine Weyer

Preliminary remarks.

- Science communication is a form of contact between science and non-science*
- Corporate communications aims to create a positive perception among the stakeholders on whom the organization depends*

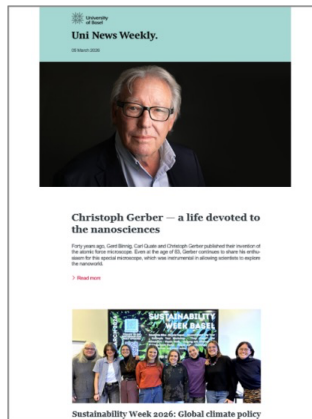
What we do.

- Institutional and Science Communication
- Media relations and expert placement
- University media

News and press releases



Newsletters



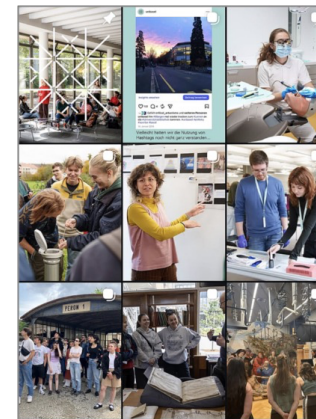
Science Magazine



Podcast



Social Media



Videos

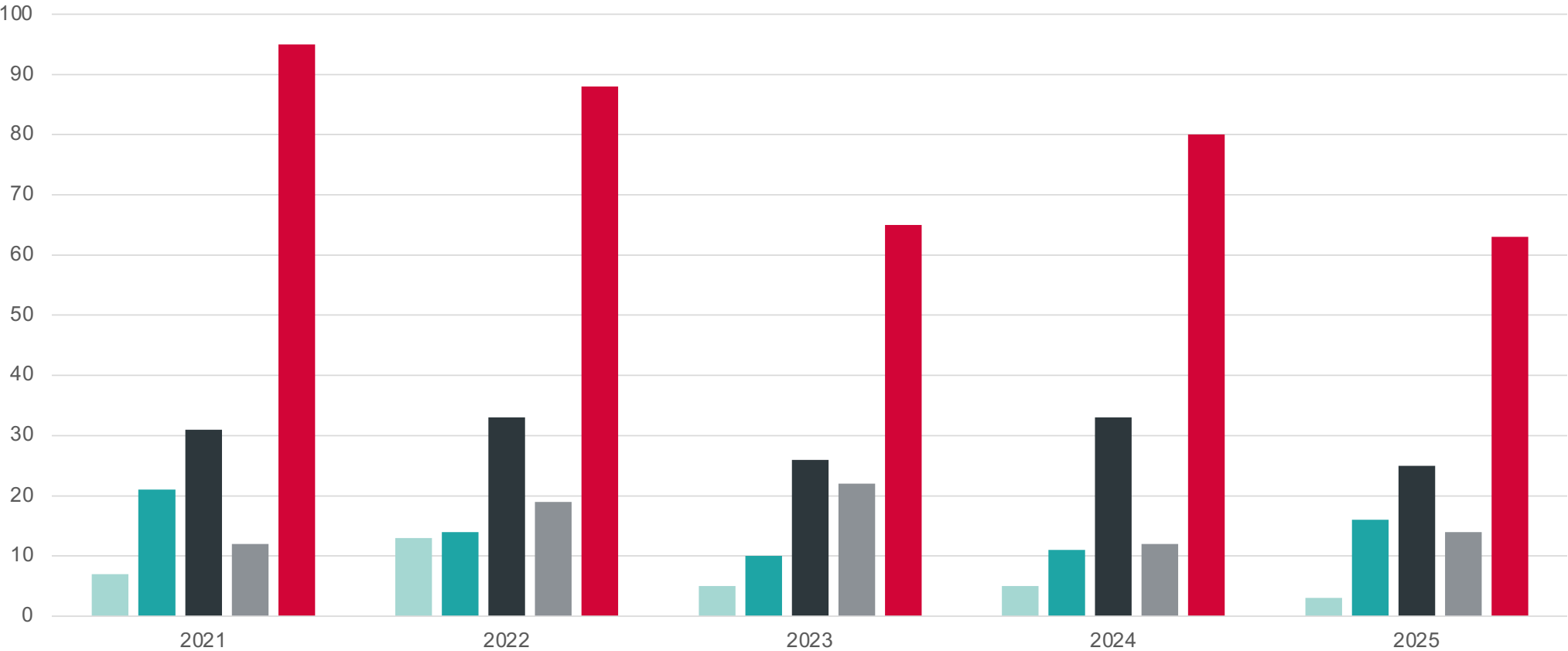


Uni News DE/EN, 2021–2025.



News DE 2025.

Agenda Campus Info People Research



Top Research-News 2026.



A mini robot to simplify dental treatment



“For me, Alzheimer’s is a disease of lost connections.”



Spring fatigue cannot be empirically proven



Improved tiger mosquito control in Basel-Stadt thanks to a master’s thesis

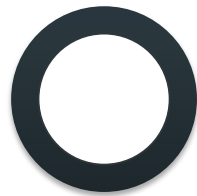


“The year 2026 marks a turning point for our forests.”

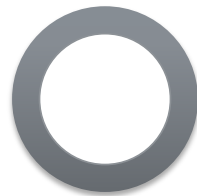
News value.



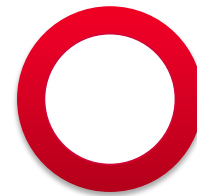
Novelty



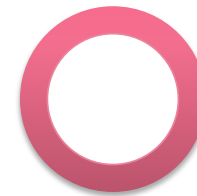
Meaningfulness



Curiosity



Proximity



Timeliness

Top Research-News 2026.

Novelty



A mini robot to simplify dental treatment (23 June 2026)

Meaningfulness



“For me, Alzheimer’s is a disease of lost connections.” (3 June 2026)

Curiosity



Spring fatigue cannot be empirically proven (9 March 2026)

Proximity



Improved tiger mosquito control in Basel-Stadt thanks to a master’s thesis (8 October 2026)

Timeliness



“The year 2026 marks a turning point for our forests.” (6 August 2026)

Science journalism.

Science journalism.

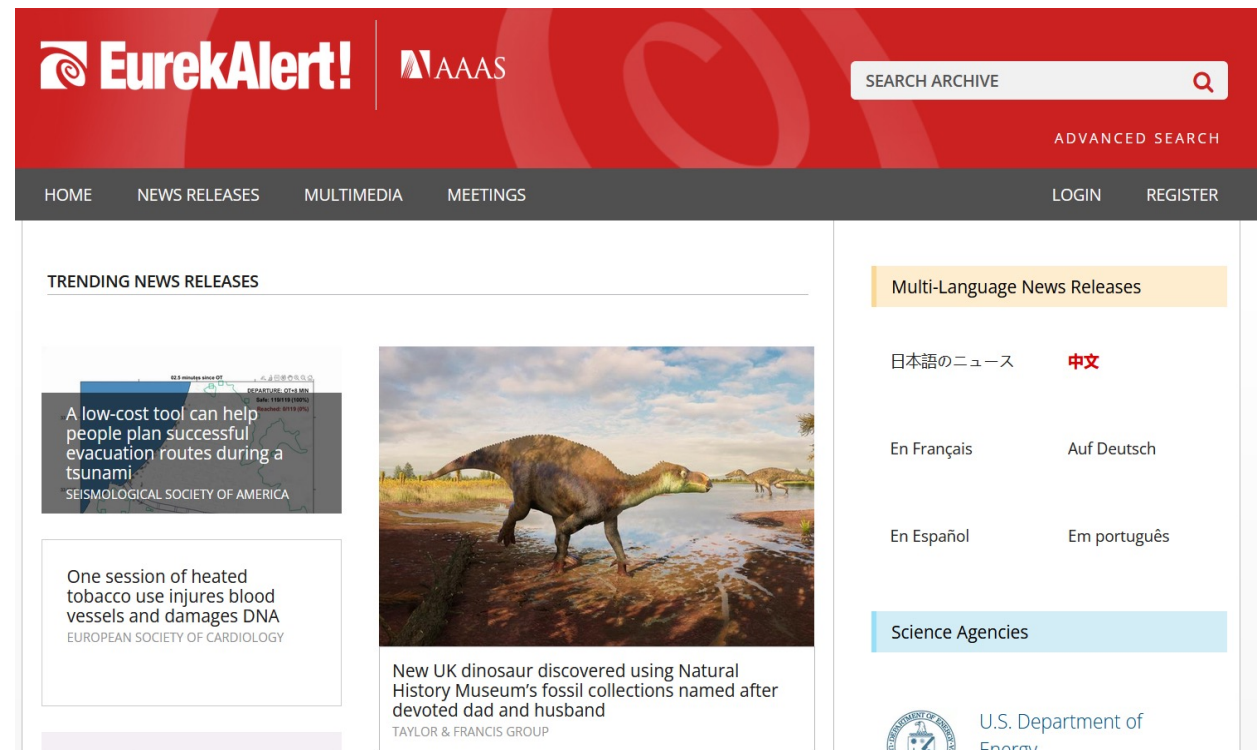
Where do science journalists get their stories?

Classical sources

- Press releases
- Platforms like EurekAlert
- Journals
- Conferences

Trending topics & issues

- Scientific perspective
- Fact checking



Science journalism.

What happens when a journalist asks you for an interview?

First of all:

Congratulations!

It's not easy to get noticed by journalists.

Factors that drive topic choice:

- Novelty / unusualness
- Timeliness
- Proximity
- Impact
- Surprise / unexpectedness
- Prominence
- Conflict
- Human interest
- ...

Your role, their role.

- You are the expert on your research.
- The journalist is the expert on how to bring your story to her/his audience!

You can help them:

- By being fast in responding.
- By knowing what you want to say.
- By making your story clear, compact and as accessible as possible.

The power of the clear message.

“I successfully executed a geographically consequential relocation of my corporeal presence, undertook a comprehensive perceptual assessment of the prevailing circumstances, and subsequently actualized an unequivocal outcome of strategic supremacy.”

The power of the clear message.

“Veni, vidi, vici.”

~ Gaius Julius Caesar, 47 BC

How to prepare.

- Ask the journalist about the format (20 seconds quote, 2 minutes piece, print interview, background ...)
- Do your research on the medium and the segment / section / program.
- Ask if they could send you the questions in advance. (Be aware that new questions arise during the interview.)

Try this exercise, using a stop watch.

1st round:

Give an answer in 60 seconds.

2nd round:

Give an answer to the same question in 30 seconds.

3rd round:

Give an answer in 15 seconds.

How to prepare.

- Don't get stuck on details.
- Short sentences, no jargon.
- The most important message first, then a short explanation.
- Use metaphors and images.
- Be transparent: You don't know everything. And not everything is known.

Headline gold:

«You can't turn a beech tree into a cactus.»

~ Prof. Ansgar Kahmen on the drought and its effects on forests.

What happens after the interview?

Written media:

- You have the right to check direct quotes before publication!
- The journalists are not obliged to let you check indirect quotes or the whole article. But you can ask.
- Edit only what is clearly wrong or could cause misunderstandings! Remember that the journalist is the expert on storytelling. And that they are writing for the public, not your research colleagues.

Audio/Video:

Not much you can do afterwards. But during the interview:

You can always ask for another take.

How we can support you.

- Pitch your story to the media.
- Uni News / press release
- Expert lists
- Story placement, Op-eds
- Trial run for an upcoming interview



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Thank you
for your attention.