How can the media promote EQUAL research?

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Outcomes

• Explore benefits and pitfalls of working with the media
• Explore the image of older people in the media
• Identify key ingredients of a good news story
• Consider process of creating a press release
• Discuss implications of media engagement for your work

Why bother with the media?

• Improved communication skills
• Reach mainstream and specialist audiences
• Local, regional, national and international reach
• Influence opinion and behaviour
• Boost reputation on personal and corporate level
• Can lead to more work
• Better not to leave explanations to feature journalists

Why the media bothers with you

• Need material to fill pages / airtime
• High demand for expert opinion
  – NB Science Media Centre
• Interesting research / developments / events make good news.

However...

• Can’t control what media says
• Journalists love controversy
• Your work can be misinterpreted.
How?
- Acting as an ‘expert’
- Self-generated news stories
- Presenting documentaries
- Writing
- New digital technologies

Acting as an ‘expert’
- Television, radio, newspapers
- Need to react quickly and give pithy soundbites
- Dumbing down
- Being misrepresented

“It is hoped that the experiment might indicate the type of voice to which plants respond best. Trevor Cox, a professor of acoustics at the University of Salford, said: ‘It appears that low-frequency sound might vibrate the plant and so affect its growth. So my recommendation would be to impersonate Barry White ... to maximise the chances of success.”

Presenting
- BBC Radio – offers round twice a year
- Television – much harder
- New digital technology
  - Youtube, podcasts, Wikipedia
  - Specialist digital channels – Teachers TV

Sell the series to the audience in one sentence (128 characters max):
Every city in the world is in danger of losing its own distinctive sounds and audible character. Now acoustic ecologists are fighting to preserve the planet’s cornucopia of sound.

Description of content, format & treatment of series:
The sirens, the drills, the people, the cars, the dogs… the familiar sounds of a city are usually thought of as annoying noise. But now a group of acoustics experts is arguing for the preservation of sounds that give a unique character to an urban environment. They say that it’s important to maintain the individual sounds of London or Delhi, Beijing or New York. If not, the cultural diversity will disappear, another victim of globalisation ...

Producer Biography (no more than 3 lines):...
What makes a good story?

- Is it groundbreaking?
- Can it be easily explained?
- Is there a human angle?
- Does it surprise?
- Is it topical?
- Is it visual?
- Can it be backed up with facts?
- Is it controversial?
- Does it provoke a reaction?
- Punchy headline and first paragraph?
- Where, when, what, why and how?

What doesn’t?

- Over-technical jargon
- Anything without news ‘hook’
- Research without clear aims/outcomes
- Something that doesn’t affect people
- Something that’s been done before
- Anything that’s boring!

Activity: what’s your story?

- News hook?
- Headline?
- First paragraph?
- Photo/film opportunity?
- Target audience?