Help a Reporter: Use Visual Content in Your Media Pitches and Press Releases

Meagan Phelan Executive Director, Science Press Package

Science MAAAS #prnews

@MeaganPhelan



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- We are a service of the American Association for the Advancement of Science
- We provide lay-language *Science* content to **10,000 reporters** weekly
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The New York Times The Wall Street Journal The Atlantic NPR Le Figaro

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Associated Press Asahi Shimbun The Guardian BBC Xinhua News Agency...

Boosting Coverage with Video



- The Science Press Package team has talked with reporters at The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, STAT, The Economist & other outlets
- Many say having video, in particular, can make the difference in their covering new research
- Video that shows the science in action is great
- "Talking head" video is not
- B-roll video is particularly valuable ...



What is B-roll Video?

• B-roll is supplementary video footage that supports interview footage



- It shows the science in action, by capturing a device at work or a procedure as it happens
- It makes a video something people will want to watch, start to finish
- The more "action" footage you can provide in B-roll submissions, the more "meat" reporters will have to work with, including in their own edited video packages, or even gifs derived from video snippets

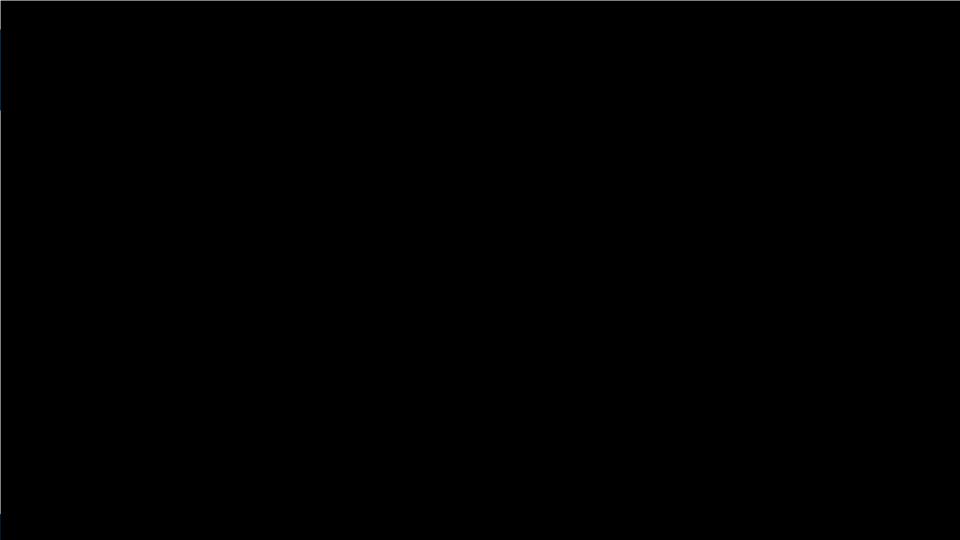


Examples of B-roll Video at Work



 An interview about a new surgical technique, without B-roll:





Examples of B-roll Video at Work



• Related B-roll:





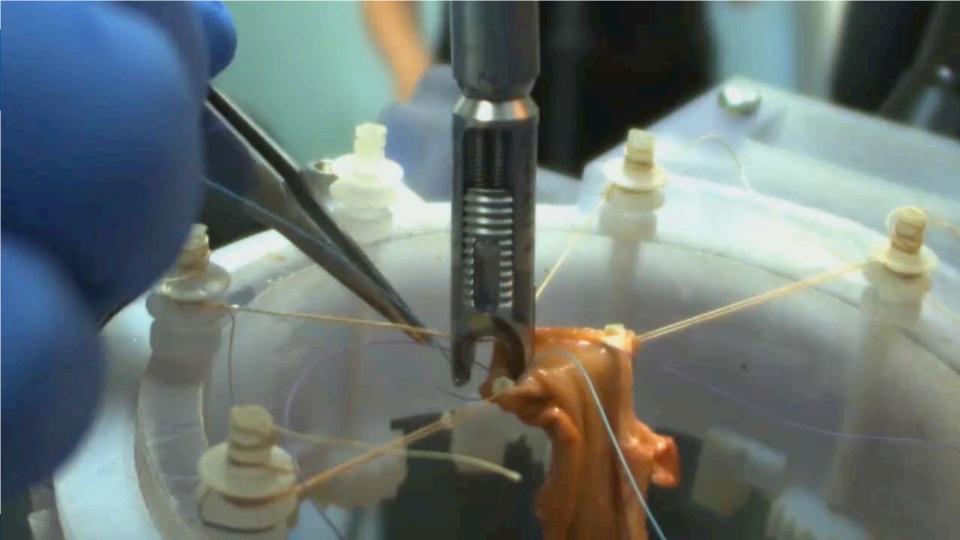
Examples of B-roll Video at Work



• A video combining the B-roll with the interview:



*Note: Elements of the B-roll sourced from the authors were turned into gifs by various news outlets



Tips for Capturing Good B-roll

- Capture a variety of shots
- Start wide and move in; pan shots help set the scene
- Keep the B-roll relevant to the research, institution/organization and the material covered in the paper
- Make sure each shot lasts at least 10 seconds
- Filming on an iPhone or Android works!
 - Film with the phone held horizontally
 - Film in a well-lit area
 - Stabilization is key





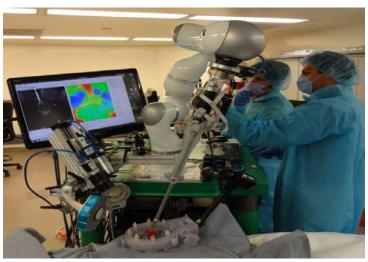
11

Boosting Coverage with Photos & Audio

- Still images are also useful to reporters
- Reporters *do not* want headshots, however
- As with video, they want shots of the science in action
- Audio files also useful; help convey if authors are interview-worthy
- Three examples where my team initially received headshots...(next slide)

12

Boosting Coverage with Photos & Audio









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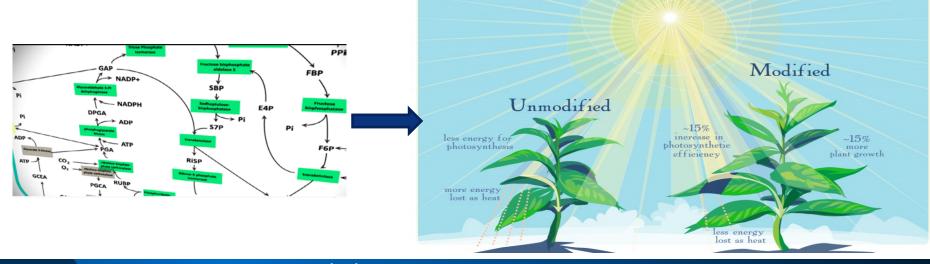
#prnews @MeaganPhelan

Infographics Represent Complicated Info; Do Well on Social Media

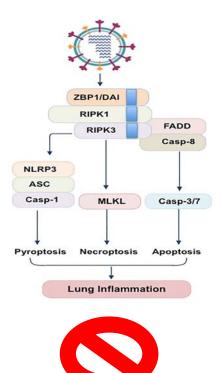
- Infographics are a great way to represent quantitative, complex content
- Reporters like to use them on social media
- Authors: "Content should be no harder than a 5th grade level. Should be digestible by non-English speakers at a glance."

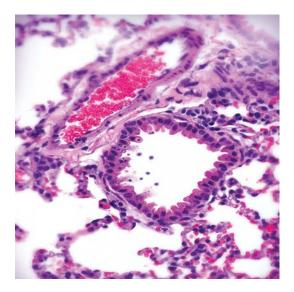
Infographics Represent Complicated Info; Do Well on Social Media

 Below is an infographic representing how to manipulate photosynthesis to increase plants' light-harvesting ability



Visuals Should Serve Beat Reporters AND the Layperson



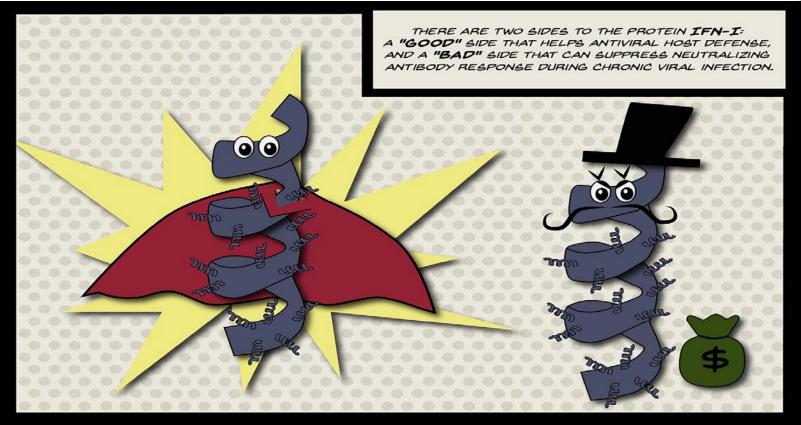








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Social Costs of Nitrogen Pollution Air Pollution How does nitrogen cause problems for people? · Fertilizer becomes ammonia and **Climate Change** nitrogen oxides. These end up in the · Some fertilizer ends up getting converted into N20, atmosphere as particulate matter and a potent greenhouse gas. This kind of nitrogen loss to the affect people breathing that air atmosphere causes climate change (and associated costs). in downwind communities. A farmer applies fertilizer to her farm field. That fertilizer boosts the yields of her crops. Surface Water Contamination · Fertilizer seeps into lakes, streams and coastal water causing eutrophication, degraded recreational quality, and impacts on fish and shellfish. The nitrogen in that fertilizer isn't very good at staying put. That's when nitrogen starts to have "social costs." Some of that nitrogen is absorbed by crops, but some is lost to the environment.

Groundwater Contamination

 Increased levels of nitrogen in drinking water leads
to increased treatment costs and health impacts.

Maintain Accuracy of Content, Even As You Simplify



19

- Maintain the accuracy of the content as you simplify
- Loop back to the researcher/subject to ensure nothing was misconstrued in the simplification process
- It's not only ok, it's exciting to have your creative work checked by others!



<u>Accessible Design Tools For Creating</u> <u>Simple, Effective Graphics</u>

- Adobe Creative Suite
- Piktochart
- Infogr.am
- Canva

20

Cultivate Relationships On Twitter

- 62% of U.S. adults overall now get news on social media sites like Twitter (Pew 2016 *State of the News M*edia Report)
- Most science reporters are on Twitter, so it's a great place to develop relationships

"Twitter has become basically another major newspaper for me."

-- Robin Lloyd, Scientific American news editor, 2013 EurekAlert! PIO seminar

• Seek out reporter handles; recognize them for responsible coverage of your content with tweets incorporating their personal handles

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Science Press Pkg @scipak · Nov 17 This Is How Fracking Can Cause Earthquakes via @dvorsky



This Is How Fracking Can Cause Earthquakes It's generally believed that hydraulic fracturing is behind the recent spate of earthquakes in regions not usually associated with seismic activity, but th... gizmodo.com Key Takeaways

- Create action-packed b-roll **video** for reporters; you can even do this with your iPhone!
- Capture **photos** of processes in action; if your contact gives you a headshot, ask them to go back and recreate a process shot
- Remind your source that **infographics** are options for particularly dense content; this can allow you to avoid charts/graphs
- Maintain the accuracy of your content as you simplify
- To **build relationships** with those who use your content, recognize their responsible coverage of your content on Twitter with their personal handles