

MEDIA TOOLKIT FOR PLOS AUTHORS

PLOS is the Open Access publisher of seven journals. This toolkit is designed for authors of accepted papers at PLOS journals to help you direct attention to your upcoming article and speak to the media.



Publicizing Your Work

Demonstrating that your research is of interest to a wide audience can help you raise your career profile, secure funding and connect with collaborators. Publishing your work is important, but helping people to see, read, and cite your work matters too!

Information Required to Correctly Promote Your Research

Publication date information: As soon as your paper has been accepted, reach out to the PLOS Media Team at onepress@plos.org to inform us of your promotion plans and to inquire about your publication date. We'll aim to assign your paper a publication date with advance notice for you to prepare press materials.



NOTE: PLOS articles publish at 2 p.m. US Eastern Time.

Embargo information:

All PLOS papers are under a strict press embargo until the time of publication. This allows journalists time to research their stories, and gives authors and press officers time to coordinate press plans. Research under embargo cannot be discussed publicly, including via social media, until the article publishes. However, trusted members of the media can be sent embargoed materials in advance to prepare stories.



NOTE: Authors can still discuss research with colleagues for scientific purposes prior to acceptance (e.g.: at conferences or via a preprint server).

Institutional support for press plans:

Many institutions have a dedicated press office with public information officers (PIOs) who work to promote their institute's upcoming research. We encourage authors to work with their institutions - if you have a press office, they may be able to help you promote your article. We recommend copying your press office into your communication with the PLOS Media Team. We are happy to provide your press office with advance press copies of your article, as well as publication date and embargo information.

Your press office may be able to assist with:

- Writing press releases
- Distributing press releases to journalists and media outlets
- Preparing social media outreach
- Organizing press briefings
- Organizing interviews with journalists



How to promote your research

Press Release:

A press release is a brief descriptive blurb for journalists, outlining the main impact of your research and why the media/public should be interested (without overstating your conclusions). Press releases are sent to trusted journalists or posted on platforms such as EurekAlert or AlphaGalileo under embargo a few days prior to the publication date. Your institution's press office may assist you, or you can write a press release yourself. Here are some tips; visit plos.org/media-toolkit for additional reading.

- Brevity is best! Aim for a 200-400 word press release. Start with your most exciting finding in your title and subtitle, then briefly explain your background, methods, and conclusions.
- Most press releases also contain an author quote.
- Clearly state the embargo date, so journalists know when to publish coverage of your work.
- Be very careful not to overstate the conclusions of your research.
- Most journalists are not scientists, so it may help to imagine that you are explaining your work to a fellow cocktail party guest. Try to avoid technical terms in your release.



NOTE: Please include in your press release:

Journal name, e.g.: *PLOS ONE*; *PLOS Medicine*; *PLOS Genetics*.

Article URL: The PLOS Media Team can provide you with a link to the article.

Social Media:

Twitter, ResearchGate, LinkedIn, and other scientific or general social media communities can be a great place to discuss your research. Visit plos.org/media-toolkit for additional reading on how to amplify your social media presence.



Twitter-specific tips:

- Post your new paper on Twitter, Facebook, ResearchGate and LinkedIn. Sharing your full article immediately upon publication is allowed under our CC-BY license.
- Tag @PLOSONE for extra impact and use #PLOSONEauthor for searchability! We constantly reshare work to our 100,000+ followers.
- Tag or message individuals or groups that would be interested in your work so they can help share it. This may include your institution, lab mates, societies and relevant interest groups.



General tips:

- Add your new paper to your email signature to share with your contacts.
- Update departmental web pages and lab websites.
- Update your personal website, blog, or vlog with information and a link to your new paper!
- Ask your co-authors to promote your paper via their social media channels, too.



Speaking to the Media

By speaking to the media, you can demystify your work for the public, build relationships with news outlets, improve the accuracy of science reporting, and even set the news agenda. Here are some dos and don'ts to prepare you to be contacted by journalists about your upcoming research. Further tips can be found below.

- 👍 **DO** respond quickly to journalists – reporters have tight deadlines and may move ahead without your input if you can't get back to them.
- 👍 **DO** prepare in advance: write down 1-2 main points you want to highlight. Ask the journalist about the background, context, purpose of the interview and their audience.
- 🗨️ **DON'T** use technical terms, and look for analogies to explain complex ideas - for instance, the human heart might be described as an “engine”.
- 🗨️ **DON'T** comment on anything outside of your expertise – feel free to say “I don't know”. Instead, return to your main points – for instance, you could say “I can't speak to that point, but I can confirm that my main findings were...” This will make you less likely to be inadvertently misquoted or quoted out of context.
- 👍 **DO** make clear your publication date and time (the embargo information).
- 👍 **DO** also reach out to your institution's press office for their help and advice.

Additional Resources

Visit plos.org/media-toolkit for links and resources.

Get in touch with us!

Our Media Team is always happy to assist – just email onepress@plos.org.



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