

Science in the “media”

Part 1: Understanding “Media”



Questions we'll answer...

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- ▶ What constitutes 'media' today?
- ▶ What are the important concepts about media that I need to know to begin my study of science communication?
- ▶ What is 'freedom of the press'?
- ▶ What makes something newsworthy?
- ▶ What does the term 'agenda-setting' mean?

Mass media in Canada today

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- Newspapers in Canada
 - Total daily newspaper paid circulation is 30.6 million copies per week
 - There are 98 general interest daily newspapers in Canada
 - The largest circulation is the Toronto Star (436,694 each weekday)
- Television in Canada
 - Canadians average just over 21 hours of weekly viewing
 - Almost one-third of the viewing is news & public affairs
- Radio in Canada
 - Canadians listen to radio an average of just over 18 hours a week
 - Radio listening has been slowly but steadily falling

Roles played by media...

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- ▶ Gatekeeper
- ▶ Conduit
- ▶ Public



What makes something newsworthy?

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Traditional News Values

- Impact/significance
- Conflict
- Proximity
- Prominence
- Human interest
- Timeliness
- Novelty

News Values for Science News

- Relevance
- Bad news
- Good news
- Magnitude
- Surprise
- Entertainment
- Power Elite
- Follow-ups
- Media Agenda

Two Approaches to Science ‘News’

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- ▶ **News writing**
- ▶ **Feature writing**



Agenda-Setting & the Media

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The media agenda

- The issue is discussed in the media

The public agenda

- The issue is discussed and becomes a public issue

The policy agenda

- A public issue becomes important enough for it to make it to the public policy agenda.