

Science Communication Unit

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Research

The activities of the Science Communication Unit span both academic research and professional media practice. Staff research interests include the media coverage of science and narratives of technological change. Please see our Staff pages for details of our individual research activities.

The Silences of Science

The Silences of Science was an AHRC-funded research network, running from July 2013 to June 2014, which examined different aspects of the paradox that science depends both on prolixity and on reticence. We sought to interrogate the assumption that open and efficient channels of communication are always of greatest benefit to science and to society. The project aimed to remind the research community of the creative importance of silence, of interruptions in communication, of isolation and of ‘stuckness’.

Through a series of three workshops and conferences, the research network brought together a range of scholars – from literary studies, anthropology, legal studies, religious studies, as well as from the history and philosophy of science and science communication studies – to draw on insights from their disciplines in order to examine the role of silence within the sciences. Details of the conferences can be found below.

As part of the project, audio producer Ed Prosser created '[The Sound in Silence, the Silence in Sound](#)' audio installation.

Minding Science Podcasts

(part of the SCU/Polish University collaboration)

Inuit communities understand whale behaviour in their waters better than the specialists from outside. Ambiguities in scientific messaging lead to deaths when an earthquake strikes in central Italy. Truth, trust and certainty are not a given. The relationship between science and society is not straightforward. In the face of all these interesting difficulties what is the role of the science communicator?

These podcasts, titled ‘Minding Science’, are a result of a collaboration set up in 2021 between Imperial’s Science Communication Unit and four Polish universities (the Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan; the Jagiellonian University, Krakow; the Medical University Gdansk; and the Warsaw University of Technology). The collaboration has so far involved meetings in Poznan, in Warsaw, at Imperial, and most notably, through a Summer School held in the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, in June 2023.

Every country does its science communication differently, and we are excited to be able to learn from, and share ideas with, our colleagues in Poland.

We want science communication to be an activity that brings people together, and that build bridges in Europe. At a time of war, nationalist fervour, isolationism and division, it seems more important than ever that we should work with our colleagues in Europe, exploring together the best ways of enriching science-society relations across the continent. We are delighted to be building friendships and projects with our Polish colleagues.

The podcasts show the Unit’s students at work. They reveal our belief that the best science communication training requires interactive teaching, strong input from the humanities, and serious coaching in advanced technical skills. It was these ideas that we explored in our June 2023 Summer School at The Jagiellonian University.

The podcasts were produced by Gareth Mitchell (SCU), Stephen Webster (The Good Science Project) and Urszula Kaczorowska (Polish Press Agency). They feature the voices of Jay Balamarugan, Sophie Burley, Laura Rodriguez Bello, Leigh West, Dave Warrell, Charlotte Burton, Isobel Chandler, Urszula Kaczorowska, Gareth Mitchell and Stephen Webster.

Follow this link to hear the podcasts: [Minding Science Podcasts](#)

PhD Projects

Geraldine Satre Buisson. 2022. Strategic Narratives and Climate Policy

Jared R. Keller. 2018. [A scientific impresario: Archie Clow, science communication and BBC Radio, 1945–1970](#)

Anna Lesher-Trevino. 2015. Community museums as potential instruments for social change and sustainable development in rural Mexico.

Sally Hancock. 2012. Political scientists? The UK knowledge economy and young scientists.

Alice Bell. 2008. Science communication as pantomime: explorations in contemporary children’s non-fiction books.

Sarah Davies. 2007. Scientists and the public: studies in discourse and dialogue.

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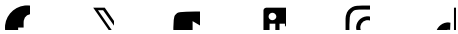
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