

This guide offers you main points to consider before doing media work. It gives helpful hints that may be useful if you have to do interviews. For more information please contact the HGS MathComp pr office.

1 - Preparation

- 1.1. If you're interested in media work find your press officer. Keep the name, office and mobile number and make sure that the officer has your number.
- 1.2. Practice speaking about your work in jargon free language to non-scientists. Try to write about your current study in 150 words. Do not use acronyms: Your press officer will help you.
- 1.3. If you have an **important paper coming out** in a high profile journal find out if your press officer, Heidelberg University or even the journal is going to highlight your work in a press release. If yes, make yourself available for interviews around the publication date.
- 1.4. Before speaking to a journalist, decide on **3 key messages**, that you want to put across the interview. Try to get to the subject by using phrases such as "...what we must consider", "... the really important point is"
- 1.5. Think about whether anything about your research area is **controversial**. If there are tricky issues to deal with, you should think how to deal with questions on these issues.
- 1.6. If a journalist is phoning find out: what is the reason for writing this story? Is she or he calling from a newspaper, radio or TV? For which program or publication?

2 - Media Works with Newspapers: There is a journalist calling. What are you going to do now?

- 2.1. Find out what the deadline is – it could be in ten minutes. Ask for the opportunity to phone the journalist back in a few minutes to have the chance to collect your thoughts. Make sure to phone back in the time frame promised.
- 2.2 If the enquiry is not in your research area, recommend someone else who might be suitable.
- 2.3 Always take the journalist's contact details, so you can get back in touch later if necessary.
- 2.4 If you need more information, ask the journalist for the sources he is using for preparing the article. Ask to see the press release or related story.
- 2.5 Print journalists rarely check their copy back with scientists, do don't expect to see the finished article before it is published.
- 2.6. The tabloids (Bild etc) have very large circulations. So by speaking to them you will be getting your message to a larger audience and indeed to important stakeholders. But keep in mind that the tabloid journalist might highly simplify your science. If you are not sure, contact your press officer

3 – Media Works with TV or Radio: How to deal with live or pre-recorded interviews?

- 3.1 Although live interviews sound daunting they have the advantage of not being cut.
- 3.2 Get the contact details of the journalist to make your date in the TV or radio station organized.
- 3.3 If you are doing an interview on a controversial topic, ask if you will be head to head with the someone of the opposite. If so try to find out about their views on the subject.
- 3.4 Ask for the first question of the interview. This will help you to prepare and boost your confidence at the start of the talk.
- 3.5 Try not to repeat questions to the interviewer. Your answers should be able to stand alone as succinct statements.
- 3.6 If a camera team is coming, set some time aside – the crew needs to take a number of takes and therefore it will take longer than you imagine.
- 3.7 If you're travelling to a studio keep your key points with you.
- 3.8 Try to dress neatly and avoid wearing anything that may be distracting on screen.
- 3.9 Try to sit still during the interview. Avoid moving around and waving hands around. Smile and try to be aware of your body language