

LCG-related press releases

Background and plans for future

The challenge of press communication

- What is the objective of a press release?
 - The Press (!!)
 - The Public (!)
 - Politicians and policy makers
 - Funding agencies (?)
 - Scientific community (??)
- What is the scope?
 - Pass one clear and catchy message
 - It must fit into first para (ideally, in the title!)
 - 1st rule of journalism: simplify and exaggerate
- Special boundary conditions for large collaborations like LCG:
 - Cannot credit all participants (100+ sites + NRENs + projects...)
 - Multiple lengthy quotes can be counter-productive
 - Current situation with multiple Grid projects is complex
- This problem is not new to HEP!
 - Interactions.org partners have a working model
 - Trust can only be based on experience

The interactions.org model

- **Process**

- The source laboratory/institute should advise collaborating partners of the intent to issue a press release at least two weeks in advance of the proposed date.
- In agreeing the date of issue consideration should be reached on the exact timing of the release in order to align different time zones with the media deadlines of any particular country. Embargoes can be employed in such situations.
- The source laboratory/institute would be responsible for producing the initial first draft of the press release.
- This should incorporate a 'boiler plate' paragraph at the end that qualifies and acknowledges all collaborative partners and institutes involved in the project/experiment by their full name and country of origin.
- This 'boiler plate' statement should also specify all partner press officers and provide full contact details. This would facilitate journalists from partner countries establishing a national angle or quote even if the collaborating partner in that country did not issue an individual release.
- Once the initial draft release had been prepared it should be circulated to collaborating partners in order for them to have the opportunity to produce a national version of the story.
- Partner organisations could then craft a 'national' variant of the release to incorporate quotes from their particular scientists and emphasise the national contribution to the project.
- The national version should include the 'boiler plate' paragraph confirming ALL partners involved in the project plus all partner press officer contacts and details.
- The national version should also include at least one quote from the source laboratory to add credence and bring out the international, collaborative nature of the project.
- The national version should be approved by the source laboratory prior to issue.
- The source laboratory's version that is posted to any internet news service provider should also carry one quotation from a lead scientist in each participating collaborator's country. Journalists picking up the story from such online sources would be able to identify their own particular country's involvement and develop a national angle if inclined.

(courtesy of Judy Jackson)

Reviewing the SC press release process

- Questionnaire sent to communication partners:

Thank you again for your participation in the recent press release on the Service Challenge. In order to make sure that future press releases of this kind are handled efficiently, we would appreciate your feedback on the process via the following short questionnaire.

- Process of preparing the press release:
 - 1) From your perspective, was the process clearly explained? [Y/N]
 - 2) Were all relevant communications officers in your country/region contacted? [Y/N]
 - 3) Was there adequate time to prepare and clear your own version? [Y/N]
 - 4) Did postponing the release a few days present any difficulties? [Y/N]
 - Additional comments:
- Contents of the press release:
 - 5) Was there adequate technical information? [Y/N]
 - 6) Were all relevant organisations/projects credited properly? [Y/N]
 - 7) Were the quotes appropriate and well-balanced? [Y/N]
 - 8) Was the diagram accurate and helpful? [Y/N]
 - Additional comments:
- Reaction to the press release:
 - 9) Did you get any reaction from your national/regional press? [Y/N]
 - 10) From your local scientific community? [Y/N]
 - 11) From your funding agencies? [Y/N]
 - 12) From your direct management? [Y/N]
 - Additional comments:

In the future, we think it would be useful to define one main contact person per lab for Grid-related press and public communications activities, with a list of other persons who should be copied on all correspondence. If possible, please define such a main contact person for your lab, as well as a list of the persons to be copied.