

What makes a good physics news story?

On behalf of the InterAction Collaboration

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Our session

- Brief introduction to the media landscape
 - Some changes that affect us all
- The reporters' view – print, TV, radio, online
 - What they are looking for in a good physics story
 - What they need from you
- The PIOs' view
 - How they can help
 - Global cultural differences
- Questions and discussion

News sources

Mainstream daily:

- Newspapers
- Evening TV News
- Radio etc

Weekly:

- Sunday editions
- News magazines
- Weekly TV and radio feature/discussion programs etc

Longer form:

- Feature length documentaries
- Films, books, etc

Instant:

- Online news
- Radio breaking news
- TV live coverage
- Facebook, Reddit, Snapchat, Messenger etc

Key annual audience trends 2015 vs. 2014



Newspapers

↓ **7%**

daily circulation



Cable TV

↑ **8%**

combined average viewership
for prime-time news



Network TV

↑ **1%**

evening news viewership

↓ **2%**

morning news viewership



Local TV

↓ **5%**

late night news viewership

↓ **2%**

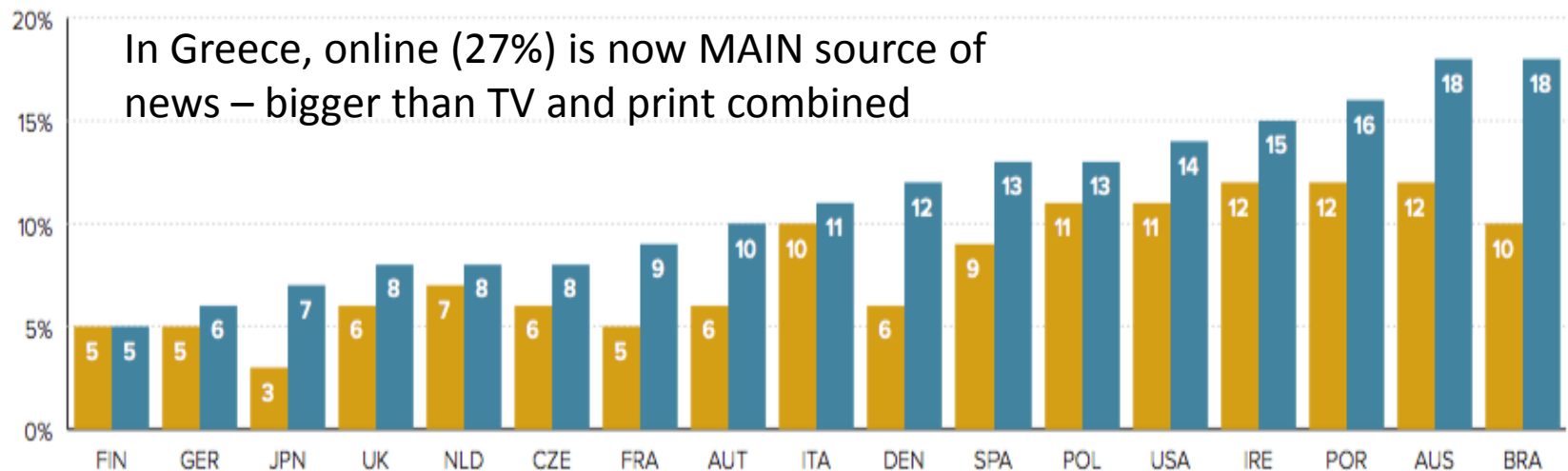
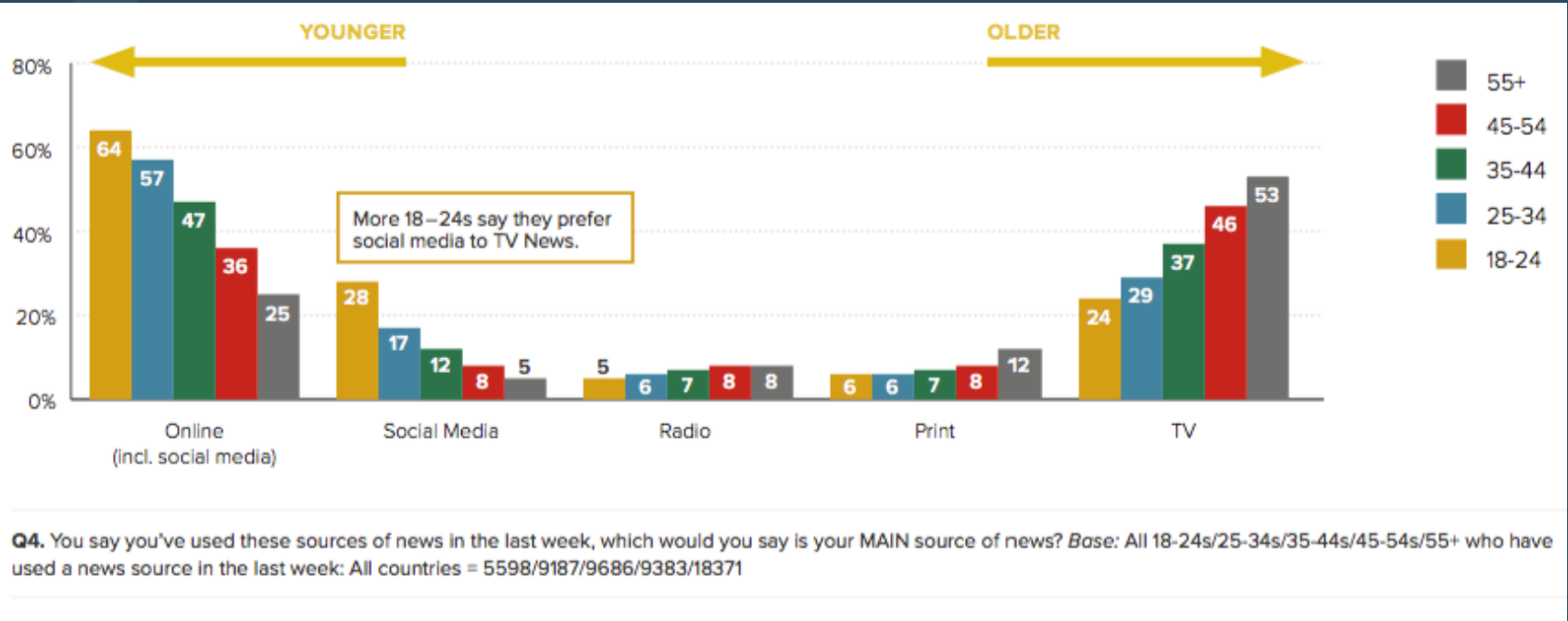
morning and early evening
viewership

News sources are changing - rapidly

- Majority now use social media for news
 - 10% say now their main source
- Rapid move to mobile news consumption shows no signs of slowing
 - Some countries now smartphone first
- Traditional brands struggle to remain noticed
 - But they remain important to news users

- Attribution: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2015 www.digitalnewsreport.org

The rise and rise of online news.....



Access to news online

ALL COUNTRIES

NEWSPAPER
BRAND



69%

BROADCASTER
BRAND



62%

DIGITAL
BORN*



45%









Q5B. Which, if any, of the following have you used to access news in the last week?

Base: Total sample

*Digital born brands like BuzzFeed and Huffington Post that produce their own content

Traditional brands matter

Online news: selected countries

UK 	JAP 	ITA 	USA 
BBC 36%	Yahoo News 49%	La Repubblica 11%	Yahoo News 12%
MallOnline 7%	NHK 5%	TGCOM 10%	Fox News 10%
Sky News 5%	Nikkel 4%	La Stampa 6%	CNN 6%
			

Main source of news using online platforms

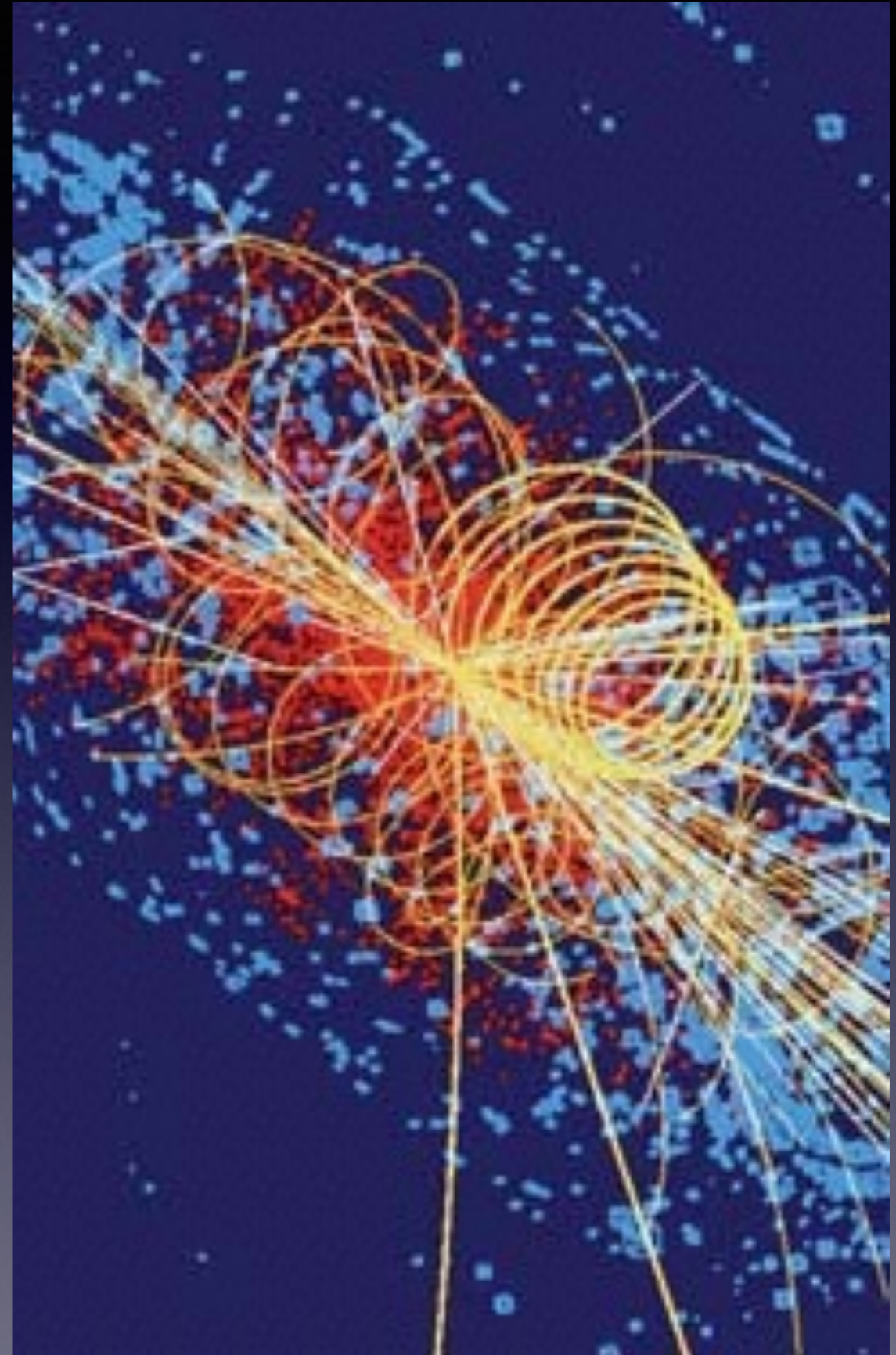
Rachel Feltman

Washington Post

Making good science
into a good story

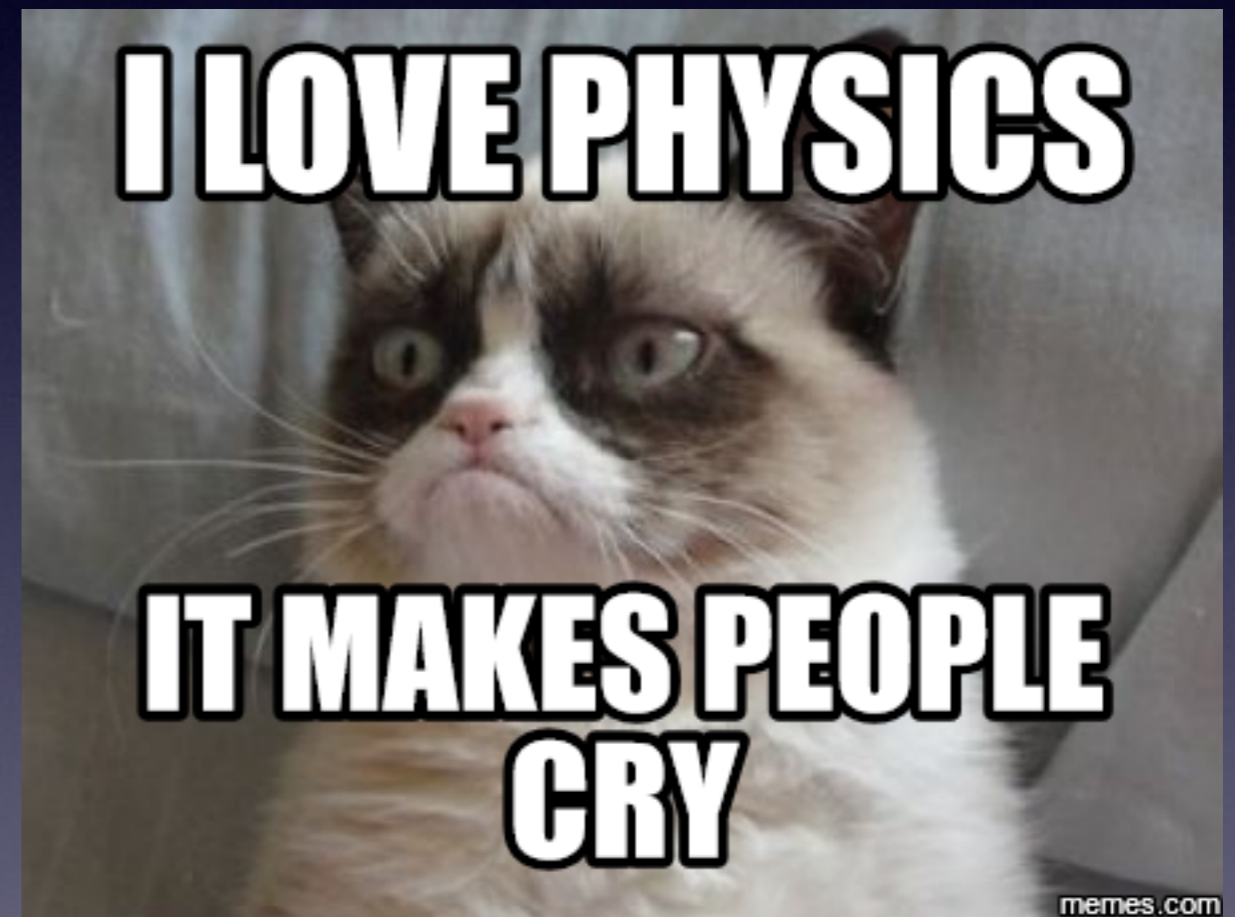
Physics is inherently interesting

- Physics findings tell us the biggest (and smallest) stories in the Universe
- Physics is, after all, the “knowledge of nature”



Physics is inherently intimidating

- For whatever reason, people are more at home with the life sciences
- There may not be a higher barrier to entry in terms of comprehension, but that doesn't matter



Help reporters help you

- Ask yourself: Who cares, and why?
- Know your narrative
- Be clear, but not condescending

Questions to answer (before we ask)

- Why does this finding excite you?
- Why will it excite others in your field?
- Why should it excite the rest of us?

Sometimes it's okay to embrace complexity...



Speaking of Science

Schrödinger's cat just got even weirder (and even more confusing)

...or absurdity

Speaking of Science

The biggest scientific instrument in the world was brought down by a tiny weasel

Pallab Ghosh

BBC

Working with the media

The role of the Public Information Officer

Saeko Okada

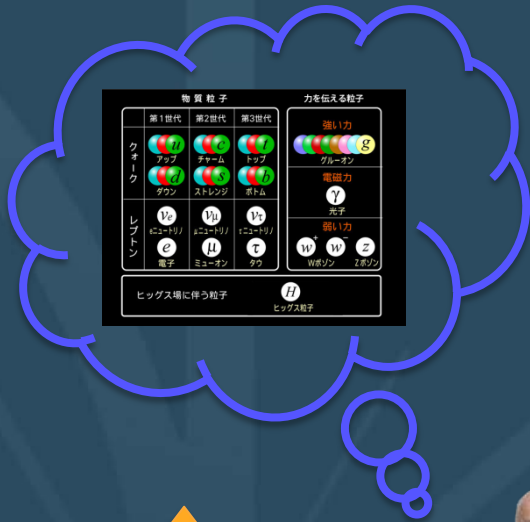
Head of PR office, KEK

Media communications

- What reporters need from you
- How PIOs can help
- Global cultural differences

THE VERY FIRST STEP

“Science Communication”



media
report
criticize

PIOs



Funding
Staff
Campus



What is “media relations”?

- Building trusting relationships with reporters
 - Fostering mutual understanding, sometimes acting as source of informal advice
- Proactively informing the media of news
 - Eg issuing press releases
- Disseminating the news
 - Interviews by email or phone, face to face, or in front of the camera

WHAT DO THE MEDIA NEED FROM YOU?

Scientists start with the detail...



The media want the entire picture



Scientists like to discuss all details...



Media ask “what’s the point?”



You are not alone!

HOW PIOs CAN HELP

PIOs will help...

- Build relationships with the media
 - Provide background and identify the key points
- Supplement what you did not say
- Help explain the result without using equations, by metaphor and so on
 - Translate the jargons
- ... in order to open the door and welcome the media to your science!

GLOBAL CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Paul Modrich

American Nobel Laureate 2015 in Chemistry. Searches on Washington Post from Oct.7 to Dec. 10, 2015

[Nobel Prize in chemistry awarded to three scientists](#)

The Nobel Prize in chemistry was awarded to Swedish scientist Tomas Lindahl, American scientist Paul Modrich and Turkish scientist Aziz Sancar for their work on the mechanisms of DNA repair. Health and science | Oct 7

[Nobel Prize in chemistry awarded to American, Swedish and Turkish scientists](#)

Swedish scientist Tomas Lindahl, U.S. scientist Paul Modrich and U.S.-Turkish scientist Aziz Sancar won for their work on the mechanisms of DNA repair. Health-Environment-Science | Oct 7



[Nobel Prize in chemistry shared by American, Swedish and Turkish scientists for DNA repair](#)

The men are honored for their work on DNA repair.

Rachel Feltman and Brady Dennis | speaking-of-science | [Oct 8,](#)



Takaaki Kajita

Japanese Nobel Laureate 2015 in Physics. Searches on Yomiuri shinbun from Oct. 6 to Dec. 10, 2015

ノーベル物理学賞に梶田氏...ニュートリノに質量

ノーベル物理学賞の受賞が決まり、記者会見で笑顔を見せる東京大学宇宙線研究所の梶田隆章所長(6日午後8時45分、東京都文京区の東京大で)＝伊藤紘二撮影 ノーベル物理学賞に梶田氏...ニュートリノに質量 スウェーデン王立科学アカデミーは6日、2015年のノーベル物理学賞を、謎の多い素粒...



2015年10月06日 22時00分[まとめ読み「NEWS通」]

梶田さんノーベル賞、地元喜び...埼玉

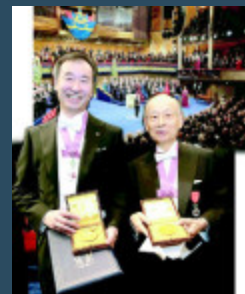
東京大学宇宙線研究所所長の梶田隆章さん(56)のノーベル物理学賞受賞が決まって一夜明けた7日、母校の埼玉県東松山市立南中学校や県立川越高校などでは、後輩たちが快挙を祝った。東松山市立南中学校では、7日朝から、「ニュース見た?」と生徒たちは梶田さんの話題で持ちきり。午前10時頃、校内マラソン...



2015年10月08日 11時32分[教育]

「賞の重み感じた」ノーベル・梶田教授帰国

ノーベル物理学賞を受賞した東京大学の梶田隆章教授がスウェーデン・ストックホルムでの授賞式を終え、14日午後、日本に帰国し、妻の美智子さんとともに喜びを語った。「大変華やかで、すばらしい授賞式で、改めて賞の重みを感じました」などと述べた＝(C)NNN 2015年12月15日公開 再生回数 ...



Arthur B. McDonald

Canadian Nobel Laureate 2015 in Physics. Searches on National Post from Oct. 6 to Dec 10, 2015

[Canadian Arthur McDonald co-winner of Nobel Prize in physics for revolutionary neutrino discovery](#)

... 2015 Nobel Prize for Physics. **McDonald** , and Japanese scientist Takaaki ...
change identities. Canadian **Arthur B . McDonald** ½ #NobelPrize in Physics ...
Postmedia News files April 11, 2008: **Arthur B . McDonald** with then-Governor
General ...

National Post - Tuesday. Oct. 6, 2015

Sir John Gurdon

British Nobel Laureate 2012 in Medicine . Searches on The Guardian from Oct. 6 to Dec 10, 2012

[British scientist Sir John Gurdon wins Nobel prize – video | Science ...](#)

Oct 7, 2012 ... British scientist **Sir John Gurdon** wins the Nobel prize in physiology or medicine. He shares it with Shinya Yamanaka from Japan for their work ...

[Nobel prize in physiology or medicine 2012: as it happened ...](#)

Oct 7, 2012 ... **Sir John Gurdon** has issued a statement on his Nobel prize win: ... Sir John Burn, professor of clinical genetics at Newcastle University said the ...

[Did teachers write you as bad a school report as this Nobel ...](#)

Oct 8, 2012 ... British developmental biologist **Sir John Gurdon** was told in school report that his ambition to become a scientist was ridiculous. Photograph: ...

Different cultures, different reportage

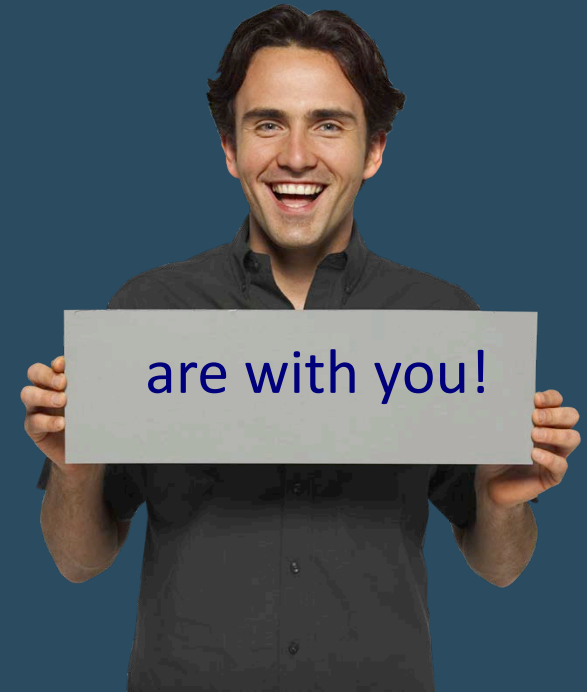
- Japanese treat Nobel Laureate as almost royal
 - Even the details of private matters
 - British media reports private matters a little
 - North American media does not report private matters
- **Media reflects the culture in which they operate**

* Background in Japan:

A newspaper home delivery system
= media has to target everybody



Please keep in mind...



Questions for the panel

Checklist:

1. Is your “news” really interesting to non-physicists?
 - Would your mother be excited by this - if she’s not a physicist!
2. Have you considered the timing of the announcement?
 - Good stories need preparation time to become great stories
3. Have you talked with your lab/uni PIO/comms team?
 - Some news is better suited to TV than print, some are best pushed through social media. They can advise.
4. Is there a personal or technology angle as well?
 - A “hook” to attract the reporter’s attention to the physics
5. Are there pictures, videos or graphics (not charts)?
 - Pictures really do say a 1000 words
6. Remember the media are not homogeneous – and they’re not (necessarily) out to trip you up