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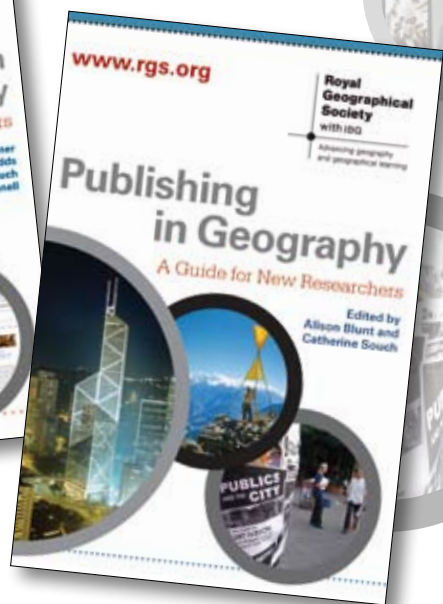
T +44 (0)20 7591 3000
F +44 (0)20 7591 3001
E journals@rgs.org

Communicating Geographical Research Beyond the Academy

A Guide for Researchers

**Rita Gardner
Klaus Dodds
Catherine Souch
Fiona McConnell**





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Rita Gardner is Director of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG).

Klaus Dodds is Professor of Geopolitics at Royal Holloway, University of London, and editor of *The Geographical Journal*.

Catherine Souch is Head of Research and Higher Education at the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG).

Fiona McConnell is Managing Editor: Journals at the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG).

1 Introduction

Rita Gardner, Klaus Dodds and Catherine Souch

Communicating research to audiences beyond the academy – to school teachers, young people, policy-makers, business, the wider public – is an important but largely unexplained part of academic life. While early career researchers are now receiving more guidance, many academic geographers have simply been expected to ‘learn on the job’. But there is nothing new in itself about communicating research to wider audiences; there is a long tradition of geographers engaging beyond the academy. What has changed is the increasing pressure on academic geographers to do it, and arguably more opportunities are available via established and new media technologies.

Whether motivated by raising the profile of the discipline, recruiting students, career development, commitment to pedagogy or policy, to critical praxis and activism, or requirements of funders to document ‘impact’, there are many good reasons to engage beyond the academy. However, there is little guidance in place on how to learn from past and present practice.

This guide seeks to bring together and share collective experience and learning, both from within and beyond the academy. This is not a blue-print or a ‘how-to’, nor is it intended to be comprehensive. Rather we hope the guide will encourage readers to reflect on motives, means and methods; to stimulate discussion; and to illuminate examples of good practice. Much of the advice given is straightforward but absolutely fundamental to success. Recurrent themes relate to thinking about audiences, access, and accountability and to the need for clarity of messages, brevity and the use of plain English.

The examples cited are just a few of the many available. The material presented is drawn largely on work in the UK and we recognise this does not reflect the excellent work occurring internationally. The supporting web pages will offer more examples and we encourage you to share your learning through that site (www.rgs.org/CommunicatingResearch).

The contributors come from a range of perspectives: that of a learned Society, The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), with a long tradition of engaging with a wide range of audiences; users of geographical research in government, business, education, schools and the media; academics reflecting on their successes and lessons learned; and those inherently concerned with public engagement in its widest sense, who have a political commitment to blending theory and practice and bringing the research to the researched. Each contributor provides their own reflections, perspectives and guidance.

On behalf of all the contributors, we hope that you will find this guide useful and that it encourages and inspires you to communicate your research beyond the academy, continuing to raise the profile of geography and geographical research.

1.1 Audiences, access and accountability

Rita Gardner

To ‘advance geography’, the mission of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), the Society has to communicate, engage and advocate effectively beyond both the membership of the organisation and the academy. The Society has done this in different ways, with varying success, over its 180 year history.

In the last ten years, these initiatives have been driven by three prevailing contexts:

- The need to engage with, and influence, policy audiences to promote and help secure the funding, position and recognition of geography at school and in higher education, and to raise the profile of geographical research in government
- The desire to reach out to public audiences, enhancing understanding of our changing societies and environments both locally and globally, and in doing so, to raise the profile and image of geography as a discipline
- The need to boost the teaching and learning of geography within schools so as to maintain the future health of the discipline.

The same forces and rationales apply just as strongly, in principle, to scholars in the academy. There are other reasons too for the academy to engage more widely. In the contexts of accountability for public funding linked to ‘research impact’ and institutional profile raising in a competitive HE sector, increasing emphasis is being placed on scholars to communicate research findings and engage new audiences.

The guide is framed in terms of audiences, access and accountability – all of which continually change and develop:

- *Audiences* are becoming more sophisticated. This is not only in how they access information, knowledge and understanding, but also in their expectations of what they want from research, their preferences as to communication tools, and their desire (or not) for interaction. The challenge goes far beyond simply identifying the intended audience; it is in understanding the segmentation of that audience – culturally, economically, ethnically, by generation, by education, by purpose and, at times, by gender. Above all, it requires understanding what the audience is seeking from your research
- *Access* to information, the methods for sharing it and the technical means of interaction with it evolve and diversify at ever increasing rates. This brings with it increasingly complex social, economic and geographical disparities in access and the challenges of getting one’s voice heard effectively above the background ‘noise’. The importance of accessibility in how information is presented cannot be over emphasised

- *Accountability* and how that is to be ‘translated’ into measures of ‘relevance’ or ‘impact’. In the UK, for example, the Research Councils ask researchers to identify the ‘beneficiaries of research’, plans for ‘user engagement’ and ‘impact’. It is likely that a significant fraction of the future funding to universities to support research from the Higher Education Funding Council of England will be linked to ‘impact’ on the economy, society, public policy, culture and quality of life.

Audiences

Understanding and targeting your audience appropriately is essential for successful communication and engagement. The first issues to consider include: Who is the intended audience(s)? What do they want or even expect from the research? Why might they be interested – as recipients, users, beneficiaries? What perspectives or context are they approaching the issue from? What do they bring in a two-way engagement? Then follows the more practical considerations such as how will you get their attention? Is there a ‘hook’ – an event, a topical issue, an anniversary? What prior knowledge do they have? What perspectives are they approaching the issue from? In what form are they most likely to understand, act on or make use of the knowledge and understanding? What are the opportunities to engage more deeply with them in the longer term?

One of the classic examples of failing to engage on an audience’s terms is in the creation of learning resources for schools. It is not uncommon to see teachers with book shelves of quality, free, information-heavy resources written with the best of intentions but never opened. Why? Because the content is not curriculum relevant, is pitched at the wrong level, or it requires too much time to be turned into ‘ready for use’ materials for the classroom. Research needs to be translated into user-friendly, targeted and curriculum-relevant classroom resources (see section 2.7).

Access

Today, the communication methods at your disposal are rich and diverse, both face-to-face and virtual. A number of these methods are covered briefly in this guide – from press and TV, to exhibitions, social networking, policy briefings, online teacher resources and public lectures. However, no matter how good your means of communication and how well planned and targeted it is in relation to the audience in question, unless your potential audience knows of the resources, events or publications the effort will be unrewarded. While marketing and PR is beyond the scope of this guide, it is not to be forgotten.

Accountability

Equally as important is being clear about your motives and the amount of effort you can afford to dedicate. Be honest. Is this a requirement for ‘outreach’ or an ‘impact’ statement for your funders? A commitment to inform? A desire to inspire? To give back to your research participants? To motivate people to act or become involved? Are you seeking one-way communication or a deeper engagement with your research? What outcomes do you want to achieve? How will you evaluate success?

If it is an ‘output’ that you seek, then consider contributing to a blog, work with your institution’s press office to profile your findings in a specialist magazine, or feature in something like the RGS-IBG’s ‘Today’ and ‘Now’ web-news sections. Writing a letter to a national newspaper can help to disseminate research findings (see section 5.2). All of these mechanisms provide opportunities to raise awareness.

If it is an outcome or, more difficult still, a genuine impact that you seek, measurable or not, your task will undoubtedly be tougher. Informing, inspiring, involving and influencing all require different strategies and skills. One way round this is to work in partnership with an organisation that already has well developed networks to particular audiences, has experience in communicating with those audiences, and which inspires their confidence. I would encourage you to collaborate with an organisation, such as the RGS-IBG, that works with audiences ranging from the general public, to schools and young people, ethnic minority and community groups, professionals and policy-makers.

Finally, the do’s and don’ts we have found to be most useful in communicating effectively:

- Do be clear about your motives and the messages you want to convey
- Do research the audiences you are trying to engage; understand what they seek and plan when and how best to reach them
- Do include rather than exclude through your style and language; avoid jargon, be concise and show enthusiasm
- Do learn from others and avoid reinventing wheels; seek partnerships and work collaboratively with experienced organisations
- Don’t expect it to be easy, especially if you seek measurable outcomes and impacts
- Don’t choose a medium you are not comfortable with
- Don’t be afraid to admit your mistakes and ask advice of others.

Rita Gardner is Director of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG).

2 Audiences

2.1 How to have an 'impact' on policy-making

Heaven Crawley

The concept of 'evidence-based policy' making has become something of a mantra within government circles. Within academia too, there is a growing emphasis on the 'relevance' of research to 'real world' issues and problems.

For those of us who have been directly engaged in what might be described as 'policy' or 'applied' research for many years, this shift in emphasis is welcome and very much overdue. But the increased recognition afforded to research evidence in the policy-making process belies a complex and difficult relationship between academics and policy-makers whose *modus operandi* is very different and who may have widely divergent motivations, objectives, methods and measures of 'success'. Attempts to bring these two worlds together are not without their problems as illustrated by the recent sacking of the UK government's chief drugs adviser who questioned the government's conclusions in relation to the effects of cannabis, and the on-going furore over the objectivity or otherwise of scientific evidence cited by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

There is no linear or straightforward relationship between research evidence and policy outcomes. The use of evidence in policy-making is often presented as if it were an objective or neutral process even though we know that the production of knowledge is profoundly shaped by economic, social and political context. Policy is developed in a fluid environment and is subject to competing vested and political interests. This has important implications for the ways in which questions are framed, the kinds of information that is viewed as 'relevant', and decisions about what 'counts' as evidence for the purposes of policy-making. Moreover, the use of research in policy-making is rarely direct. Research evidence is mediated by others, for example, think-tanks, lobbyists and advocates and the media, all of whom play a role in interpreting the findings of the research and promoting – or denigrating – the policy implications.

Given this context, what can researchers do to increase the possibilities that their research will have an impact on the policy-making process?

Perhaps the most important first step is to build the interests of policy-makers into the research design. It is not enough to think about 'impact' as the research comes to a conclusion. Policy-makers who are consulted at the initial stages of a research project tend to be more open to the findings and conclusions of the research since they can actively participate and hence have a stake in shaping the research questions. Regular interaction during the research process – for example, through a project advisory group on which policy-makers are represented – can help in adjusting the questions researched and the tools used to the needs of policy-makers.

Secondly, it is important that the findings of your research are understandable by those whose policies you are trying to inform. This is partly about writing style and

using simpler (less academic) language. But it is also about focusing on the things that matter to policy-makers rather than those that are important to academics. This does not mean that there is no place for theoretical reflection in policy research but rather that the emphasis should be placed explicitly on the implications of the research for policy rather than theory. It also means knowing what current policy debates are and explaining or interpreting the ways in which the findings of your research contributes to these debates or provides new insights.

Finally, and perhaps most controversially, think very carefully about where you publish the findings of your research. There is great pressure within academia to publish in the most prestigious, highly ISI-ranked journals. This matters in terms of career progression but not to policy-makers, few of whom understand the ways in which publication outlets are ranked within academia, much less care. This is not to say that journals are not worthwhile but rather that they simply won't be seen by those who policies you may be seeking to influence. Think about other places to publish instead of or alongside conventional academic outlets. This might mean publishing a policy report or briefing paper, drawing out the main findings in a concise executive summary which can be distributed electronically and made available online or producing short, snappy pieces for professional or interest group publications which highlight the key issues and alert others to the research.

Whilst none of this guarantees that your research will have an 'impact' on policy-making, understanding the context within which research evidence is produced and interpreted - and the implications of this context for the ways in which we undertake research, who we work with and where we publish - significantly increases the chances that it will.

Age disputed children in the asylum process, Heaven Crawley

Research into the experiences of asylum-seeking children whose age is disputed was undertaken on behalf of the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (ILPA) in 2006 and published as a research report the following year. The research was undertaken in collaboration with the UK Border Agency and 14 social service departments. A project advisory group was established which included UKBA, social workers, solicitors and representatives from children's organisations. The then Children's Commissioner for England, Professor Sir Al Aynsley-Green, was closely involved in the project and wrote a foreword to the report. The research, and more importantly, the process through which it was undertaken, resulted in the Home Office establishing an internal age assessment working group. Several of the research recommendations were included in a government policy paper published in 2008 and its findings referred to in an important Supreme Court decision. (See section 8 for web links.)

Heaven Crawley is Professor of International Migration at Swansea University.

2.2 Writing for policy-makers

Paul Wiles

What do policy-makers and government Ministers want from academic researchers? You have completed a peer reviewed research project with exciting new findings relevant to policy and you have sent it to the relevant government department. Can you now be sure it will be used?

Your findings will be of interest since a strong evidence base is vital for effective policy development and delivery. Government will rightly expect your research to be of high quality but quality alone is not enough to ensure that research findings are used. So what are the additional ingredients for research being used in policy?

- First, showing that 'if A then B' is not enough. We want to know if by changing A, we can change B and in what direction. The research design needs to help us identify causal links or provide a pilot demonstration
- Second, how confident are we about this effect and can we express it tangibly to a Minister who may make decisions about allocating public resources as a result? For some methodologies this can be straightforward but for others more difficult
- Third, if it works experimentally or in a pilot, how confident are we that it will work regionally or nationally, and why? Ideally, we need both outcome and process research combined so we can understand implementation issues
- Fourth, if it will work beyond the pilot, what is the size of the effect? Can we say, for example, that programme X is likely to reduce crime by Y per cent? Is it a modest contribution or a magic bullet? By the way, people like me are likely to advise that magic bullets are very rare and any such findings need scrutinising very carefully
- Fifth, how cost-effective is that effect size? We need to compare policy options, recognising that standard methods and costs are currently available in some but not all fields – an area for development?

If we can answer these questions, we can advise Ministers: 'This works. We are confident to X degree that it works; we know how it can be scaled up. It will produce this effect, to this degree, with this cost-effectiveness. For an investment of £X, we can reduce this problem by Y nationally.' This is the reality of working for very busy Ministers; they have limited time and a wide range of issues to confront within their respective portfolios.

But this isn't the end of the story. We also need to ask:

- Is the policy politically doable?
- Do we know how to manage implementation (will it require national training programmes and will it be easily accepted by practitioners)?

- How does the cost-effectiveness of this programme compare with alternatives and other ways of spending that amount of resource?

This is, of course, an 'ideal-typical' description of the policy process but it is what we aspire to.

A final note on style and length – never under-estimate the power of brevity when communicating with policy-makers. Maximise the impact of your messages by communicating them accessibly and succinctly, drawing out key implications for policy and practice.

Paul Wiles is the former Chief Government Social Scientist and Chief Scientific Adviser at the Home Office.

2.3 Writing for business leaders and their advisers

Peter Newman

You believe that your recently completed academic research will be relevant to a wider community of business leaders, either directly or through their advisers. This audience is notoriously 'time poor', so capturing our attention in the first paragraph or two is essential if we are to stay focused to read on through the whole paper.

But, as busy executives and strategists, we are always hungry for ideas, new perspectives and analysis that might provide drivers for innovation and first mover, or early adopter, competitive advantage. Experience suggests that we often most value input from outside our own organisations. So, typically, we scan information sources on a very broad scale, looking for commercial potential that we might embrace in our own businesses or, as advisers, tailor to suit our clients.

If your interaction with us were oral, you'd do well to be prepared to make your points through the '30/3/30' routine. Articulate the key findings in the first 30 seconds to ensure you have our attention; summarise the whole proposition in 3 minutes; and then have the data set and analysis well organised to provide a convincing and supported case within 30 minutes.

In setting out your paper try to keep this same principle in mind, don't let our attention wander before we are securely 'hooked'. You don't need to extend your analysis to explore all the commercial possibilities... that's really our role. But you do need to make clear what you have discovered, why it might matter in the marketplace and what you actually did to gather your data and results. The scope of your research, both over time and area/population is going to be important to us in assessing the confidence that we might place initially on your results and conclusions.

If you can whet our appetite don't be concerned to indulge us with all the contents of your larder at first sitting...like Oliver, we'll be sure to call you for more if you've sparked an interest!

Peter Newman is a Board Director at Addax & Oryx Group and at Eclipse Shipping, and formerly Head of Oil & Gas at Deloitte.

2.4 Engaging with policy and business communities

Michael Bradshaw

For more than 25 years, I have worked on the regional development in Siberia and the Russian Far East, with a particular focus on the development of oil and gas resources. More recently, my research horizons have expanded to include energy issues in Northeast Asia and I am currently working on the relationship between global energy security and climate change policy. I find engaging with the policy and business communities, who are in part the subject of my research, an essential part of the research process.

Of course, thanks to the Research Excellence Framework (REF), what was previously seen as a distraction is now seen as a positive virtue as we are asked to demonstrate the 'socio-economic impact' of our research. The following outlines three elements of my engagement with the policy and business communities that I have found most rewarding.

Consulting and advisory work

Businesses are motivated by commercial interests, therefore, for them to engage your services they must perceive that you have something to offer that will promote their goals. You need to make your own judgement on whether this is the kind of activity that you wish to get involved in. As a strategy, I have restricted my involvement in commercial consulting to situations where my academic interests parallel those of the potential commercial partner (or government or international organisation). I have always been careful not to promise something that I can't deliver and have entered into work with a clear set of instructions and an understanding of the agreed timetable and deliverables.

In return, I have gained insights into commercial decision-making that would have been impossible to obtain from requesting interviews or conducting questionnaires. That said, I have been careful to keep an independent academic identity and to maintain a critical perspective. Of course, much of the information that results from this kind of activity is of a commercially sensitive nature and cannot be used directly when writing up research. But, I have found that the access I have gained through my involvement as a consultant has enabled me to better interpret information that is in the public realm.

Working with 'Think Tanks'

In the UK, I have worked with the Russia and Eurasia Programme at Chatham House in London. As an Honorary Research Fellow, I have been able to use Chatham House (short hand for the Royal Institute of International Affairs) to organise and host seminars to disseminate the findings of academic research projects. The unique convening power of Chatham House has enabled me to present my research findings

to a specialist audience from academia, government, commerce and the press. Involvement with Chatham House helps individual academics to consolidate both their public reputations and their professional networks. The benefit of such a forum is well recognised by the Research Councils and such activity has been a key element of my research dissemination strategy. This creates another 'win-win' situation as my activities bolster those of the research programme that relies on corporate sponsorship to cover its core costs.

Writing for the business press

Perhaps as a result of my other activities, I am often asked to write for business publications. Not only does such writing pay a lot better than academic publishing, it also demands a different way of thinking. Trying to distil a complex argument or identify key issues and drivers in 2,000 words presents a different challenge, just as writing an introductory textbook does. It also forces one to generalise and simplify, in much the same way as one does in the lecture theatre. When I wrote for the monthly publication *Business Russia*, I had a tight publishing schedule that required me to write something insightful on a key Russian region every month, this was very demanding and it convinced me that I did not want to become a journalist. Nonetheless, it did result in my having a near encyclopaedic knowledge of the economic geography of Russia!

Writing this short piece has forced me to think through why and how I have engaged with the policy and business communities. I have not done this as an addition to my academic research; rather, these activities are a crucial part of how I do my research.

The final point to make is that this is not something that can be developed overnight. All of the aspects that I have discussed above have reinforced one another over the years to raise my profile, create opportunity and provide access. Equally, it is important to accept that such activities are not for everyone, either because their research does not speak to the policy or business communities or, for various reasons, because they choose not to engage in them. My experience is that engaging with the policy and business communities is a rewarding and essential element of my academic work.

Michael Bradshaw is Professor of Human Geography at the University of Leicester.

- Research informs decision making but cannot normally determine socio-political decisions – both the researchers and the audience need to understand this from the outset
- The processes behind forming opinions and rationales for personal or organisational action do not always correspond to processes of academic reasoning, but reflecting with participants on their rationale for arguments and actions can be fruitful.

Public engagement challenges our own research agenda in stimulating ways. For example, for us, engaging in health impact assessment has provoked new and stimulating research questions. These include how change in complex environments relates to population health and what changes may improve (rather than damage) health and reduce health inequalities. It also allows for a mixed methods approach to scientific enquiry, combining scientifically evidence-based research with more participatory approaches to knowledge production.

Sarah Curtis is Professor of Geography at Durham University.

Mylene Riva is a Research Associate in Geography at Durham University.

See section 8 for web links.

2.7 Engaging with teachers

Steve Brace

The use of new research in the classroom can be invaluable to both teachers and students. It can be really powerful for a teacher to be able to say to their more advanced students '*here is new research from the University of X and it shows 'this' about that geographical issue or location*'. Understanding a subject as relevant to their lives can also empower students.

Many geography teachers share researchers' passion for geography and recognise the need for their pupils to engage with up-to-date and relevant case studies. However, for some teachers the last time they actively engaged with new geographical research may have been cramming for their undergraduate finals, while others will have kept up to date through journals and magazines. Either way there is a real opportunity to engage and there are a number of simple guidelines that will help you do this effectively.

It is essential these days that information targeted for teachers and students fits with the current curriculum and is pitched at broadly the right level. Curricula vary between Awarding Bodies (exam boards) and they have changed significantly in recent years. Topics such as superpower geographies and sustainable development were not to be found twenty years ago. So academics eager to work with teachers need to do their homework or better still contact those organisations that work directly with teachers (for example the RGS-IBG which also has a guide to current curricula on its website).

Do separate out your findings from your research process and highlight the former rather than the latter. While your research process is fundamental, from most teachers'

points of view the real need is for accessible information about 'what' you found and 'why' it is important, rather than 'how' you did it.

In terms of why your findings are important you should explain how they advance geographical discussions and understanding of topics or issues; and their relevance to major geographical themes, models and other case studies – particularly those that schools may be familiar with. So, if you've undertaken research into, for example:

- A river's carbon flux – do link this to the global carbon cycle and climate change
- New forms of urban redevelopment – do highlight how it updates urban models beyond the (dated) favourites of Burgess and Hoyte (still widely used in schools).

Graphs, maps and photographs will help teachers to bring your work to life in their classrooms. However, do focus on the most relevant information. If your findings are being shown against a graph of the norm, do you really need to include four other projections? If one chemical analysis shows the key conclusion, do you really need to discuss three other similar experiments? Whilst you properly might discuss the need for further research, what can you say with reasonable certainty now?

So the most important message is to make the material easy to use: target it to the curriculum; provide just the most important background information with references to where teachers and students can find out more; and collaborate with a teacher to develop a lesson plan and/or activities for use in the classroom. Also, make sure teachers will find the material. Don't create a new educational website – teachers are busy with multiple demands on their time. Most do not have time to search out material. Rather partner with organisations and link to existing resources websites that are well known and used already, such as Geography Teaching Today (www.geographyteachingtoday.org) and Geography in the News (www.geographyinthenews.rgs.org).

In addition to web-based resources, three good ways to get new research in to the classroom are to:

- Provide presentations on your work as part of training events for teachers and study days for 6th form students
- Appear as a geographical 'Ask the Expert' or write a short briefing paper on your work for a schools website
- Become one of our Geography Ambassadors and visit young people in their classrooms, inspire them about geography, and inform them about careers and future opportunities.

Steve Brace is Head of Education and Outdoor Learning at The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG). See section 8 for web links.

2.8 Engaging with young audiences: experiences from a DFID-funded project on forest management in central India

Bhaskar Vira

As part of a project funded between 2003 and 2006 by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), a range of strategies were adopted in order to communicate research findings to a wider audience. The project focused on differing stakeholder perceptions over forest management in a single district (Harda) in central India, which had become the focus of conflicting claims over the efficacy of the Indian government's flagship participatory forest management programme. The research sought to understand the reasons behind the contrasting positions that had been adopted by the major protagonists in the debate over forestry in the district. The project did not seek to establish any particular version of the Harda story as closer to 'reality' – indeed, it was premised that different stakeholders may perceive the same situation very differently, and that this may explain why conflict remains endemic in many field situations in forest and natural resource management.

The communication strategy included meetings and workshops at local (Harda), state (Bhopal) and national (Delhi) capital levels attended by local policy actors, NGOs, politicians and others with an interest in the sector. At the village level, project findings were communicated in a more accessible form by using street theatre, in collaboration with the Madhya Pradesh Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti. The street play was subsequently professionally filmed for wider distribution, and the songs from the play were made available on cassette and CD. The findings of the research were used to make a documentary film on forestry and livelihood issues in Harda, *Forest Dialogues*, produced with a Delhi-based film maker, Moving Images.

The project partners were very keen to reach young urban people, whose lives were increasingly distant from the complex political ecologies that surround Indian forests. To this end, we developed a comic, *The Spirit of the Forest* (in English and Hindi) in collaboration with a Delhi-based 'alternative' publisher, The Viveka Foundation. The Viveka Foundation is part of the global justice movement, and has been at the forefront of a 'comics movement' in India, using its publications to influence personal and social transformation.

The Spirit of the Forest was targeted at secondary school students and the wider public, and its more accessible medium aimed to generate greater awareness about forestry issues amongst a primarily urban-based audience. As such, the comic proved to be the right medium to engage with the right audience on the

right topic. The comic focused on four young urban children who set out for the forest as part of their school wildlife club, in order to see the tiger in its original habitat. When their train breaks down they are forced to take shelter in a lonely forest rest house, where they befriend a poor tribal woman, who introduces them to the forest from her perspective. As the story unfolds, our young protagonists slowly realise the complexity of issues surrounding Indian forests, and the plight of tribal and other communities who depend upon the forest for their livelihoods. Their intended safari turns into a far more profound and life-changing encounter with the 'spirit of the forest'.

The storyline for the comic was developed based on the findings of the research project. Illustrations were done by a leading cartoonist associated with a major Indian broadsheet newspaper. Since publication, *The Spirit of the Forest* has been widely distributed to schools and young people by the Indian project partners, all of whom are engaged in action research in the forestry and environmental sectors. The Viveka Foundation, through its own distribution networks, has also ensured a wide circulation. The comic was also adopted by a major Delhi-based NGO as part of its environmental education curriculum material for distribution to about 200 Delhi schools.

Bhaskar Vira is University Senior Lecturer and Fellow of Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge.

For further details of the collaborative UK-India team, the project and its outputs, see section 8 for web links.



3 Access

3.1 Geography on TV

Nicholas Crane

At various moments in the last five years, I've found myself explaining to millions of TV viewers the principles of fractal dimensions by attempting to measure the coast of Scotland using a one-metre wooden ruler, and the basics of isostasy using an air-bed and a rucksack. I've abseiled cliffs to explore the source of chalk and been battered by a sub-zero blizzard while performing a mountain-top 'show-and-tell' on freeze-thaw. It was all great fun, and that is the point. Geography is very tactile and visible. It's exciting, and you can see it happening around you wherever you are, and whatever you are doing.

I am biased, of course. My geography degree opened the door to journalism, initially travel articles and book authorship and then TV documentaries. Geography is a world view ('discipline' sounds too narrow a term for something so encompassing) which has informed and amused me ever since a gifted school-teacher called Mr Noble showed me why the river I canoed had bends and why the men in the centre of the local city all seemed to wear suits – a story, as it turned out, that went back to the Middle Ages.

In virtually all of my work, I've relied on 'geographical narratives': the ordering of geographical information into a story. Human beings are conditioned to absorb information through story-telling. It sounds simplistic, but explanations with a 'beginning', a 'middle' and an 'end' are the easiest to engage with.

My geographical narratives have two self-imposed rules. Acronyms and geographical jargon are out and I tread lightly on the middle ground, preferring to mix very elementary explanations with material which is challenging and mysterious. The reassurance of the familiar gets everybody on board, and then you take them on a heck of a journey.

Before I got involved in making television programmes, I took a 10,000 km walk across Europe. I'd always been interested in the cultural and physical role played by the Rocky Mountains as North America's dividing watershed and it occurred to me that Europe had a mountain watershed which ran from Spain to Turkey. So I walked across the continent, taking notes and photographs. Superficially, the book I wrote is the story of a 17-month mountain yomp over sierras, glaciers and Carpathian wolds, but beneath that dusting of snow and summer pollen is an attempt to describe how a mountain watershed divides and unites people and landscapes. I don't mind if *Clear Waters Rising* is described as a 'travel book'. To me, it's geography.

Nicholas Crane has presented over 60 'geographical' films for the BBC. His books, include *Mercator: the Man Who Mapped the Planet* and *Clear Water Rising: A Mountain Walk Across Europe*. He is currently working on *Coast*, a book to mark the fifth BBC series of the same name.

3.2 Talking to the press

Danny Dorling

Do talk to the press. If you are dithering over whether it might be worthwhile, whether the effort might be too great for the effect, all you need do is compare the numbers of people who read a newspaper or listen to the radio to the numbers who read academic journals or might listen to you give a lecture. For academics, it is far harder to place a story in a national newspaper than it is to have a paper accepted in a top academic journal. Again the arithmetic is simple. There are tens of thousands of pages printed in top journals every month; hundreds of thousands in other journals; millions of other pages printed in the most obscure of pamphlets and books. In contrast, the number of pages in national newspapers on issues concerning the findings of academic research is miniscule, as are the number of minutes given on radio and television.

The best way to reach even other academics is through national media. Academics read more pages of newspapers and listen to more national radio than they read the thoughts of their colleagues in learned journals and listen to them in seminars. At the same time, talk and write through these channels more and you will have to talk and write in a language that is not so cryptic that only a tiny number of your peers think they can understand you. Journals and seminars are enormously important. How else do you share the ideas you have with others and check them for plausibility? How else could you get to read and hear so much on the subjects that are of great interest to you but not to most? However, to do just that but dismiss talking to and through and with the press as somehow 'cheap' is both elitist and short-sighted.

Don't talk about things you have not studied if you are talking under the label of an academic expert. You can always talk as a 'commentator' on any topic, but you are more likely than usual to embarrass yourself and waste the time of others if, when being asked about an aspect of a subject you have not looked into, you speculate. Suggest other people the journalist can talk to, even do this on air if you have to. Say that there is no monopoly on knowledge and even people with fancy titles don't know much about most things.

Concentrate on what you think you know about and you will be able to talk or write more easily with more conviction and eventually authority. In the end, on aggregate, much more good than bad usually comes of discussing your work and ideas more widely and openly. If you are successful you will find you are ridiculed at various points. The world would be a far more boring place without ridicule, also you can protect yourself from excess ridicule by sticking to what you think you know about.

Finally, be aware that some subjects are far harder to discuss at certain times than others. In 2009, to my knowledge, no British academic succeeded in publishing estimates of the numbers of children being killed by foreign troops in countries in which the British army is currently at war. Because none succeeded you cannot easily find out if any estimates were made. During the Vietnam war protestors used to chant

to their president 'hey hey LBJ how many kids have you killed today?' In many ways we are now less free to talk than we were then.

Above all: Don't keep quiet.

Danny Dorling is Professor of Human Geography at the University of Sheffield.

See section 8 for web links.

3.3 Getting into the mainstream media

John Williams

So is what you have to say interesting?

To fight your way into this information jungle you must say something which is new, compelling and interesting to people who know nothing of your speciality. And it must be easily comprehensible.

Try summarising your findings into one sentence and apply a simple test as in: 'Did you know that the earth is getting flatter?' Is the claim interesting? Will others think so?

Attracting attention

Targeting your material is much more likely to get a result than firing it off randomly to a news editor.

See if your outlet has a science/environment-type correspondent. Call them or send them an email briefly outlining your research and pointing out that it's new and exciting.

If there's a peg to hang it on – such as an upcoming conference or a notable anniversary – so much the better.

If your institution has a press office, take advice from them and let them present your findings; the media like pre-digested information because it's less hassle.

Doing it yourself

Follow these writing rules in a press release:

- Use one idea per sentence and one sentence per paragraph
- Keep sentences short and simple – no more than 20 words
- Avoid using long words and technical terms that an intelligent but non-specialist reader would not understand
- Prioritise the information – make an impact with the main point in the first sentence: *The earth is getting flatter and cooling faster than expected, according to new research*
- Put your name and institution in the second or third paragraph
- Try a quote in the next paragraph: 'We were astonished by these results...'

- Don't write more than one sheet of A4 – if they want more information they will ask for it
- Have you answered the five basic questions journalists ask: *who, why, what, where, when?*

Following up

Papers have news editors, broadcasters have news-gathering departments. You may have to call these if there is no specialist correspondent. Contact details can be found on their websites. If they are interested they will ask you to email more information.

If nothing comes of the initial approach, make only one follow-up call. Journalists hate being hounded.

Good luck!

John Williams is a media consultant and former Managing Editor BBC Radio News.

3.4 Writing for the wider public

Simon Reid-Henry

Writing for a 'mass' audience can be each of exciting, important and satisfying. It does not, as some assume, begin with style and end with content. But there are two basic rules of thumb that are worth bearing in mind. First, everything you write must be of the leanest possible meat. There is flabbiness to cut from all writing, without precluding nuance, and you will get your points across more successfully if you know where to take the knife yourself.

Second, those of us who aren't experts with names the media instantly recognise have to fight to get our voices heard. In practical terms, this means that there are people to convince prior to the public – editors if you are writing journalism, or publishers, marketers and perhaps even agents if you are writing a book – that your work is both important and of wider interest. As with everything, a lot depends on who you get to know. But when you do get to 'know' one of these individuals, it then pays to be strategic. We are accustomed to giving funding bodies a little of what they want in exchange for what we want; with the media it is just the same.

Even so, there are plenty of pitfalls. I have before now failed to win over editors about things I felt to be important (using HIV/AIDS instead of 'Aids', as is media convention, for example). And I have learned to avoid misrepresentation only through (sometimes painful) experience. The speed at which one can be asked to 'deliver' can also be a little frightening at times. In writing a news story, or an issues piece to run alongside one, I have had as little as an hour to turn round 800 proofed and polished words. This is certainly worth bearing in mind before you pitch an idea. But even an article that has sat pre-prepared on the shelf for weeks may need updating or developing at the very last minute.

3.7 Exhibitions

Caroline Bressey

In the lead up to 2007, I was able to contribute as a curator, co-curator and advisor to the development of several exhibitions connected to the bicentenary of the abolition of the British slave trade. Although distilling academic arguments down to 35 word captions was challenging, the public engagement with the projects was very rewarding. Not all research is going to lend itself easily to engagement with a wider public and the reasons why your passion will be interesting to broader audiences is something curators, publishers, programme makers and editors might need to be persuaded of.

Anniversaries are a good hook for research and an opportunity to link up with a museum, archive, gallery or popular publication. These organisations are interested in events that will make articles or programmes 'current'. Public programmes in museums and galleries and magazines all have a publication deadline that is organised several months in advance though, so you need to let organisations know you'll be available to give a lecture or provide an article in good time.

Although the media can be reactive, museums and galleries plan the use of their major spaces two to five years in advance. Some of these spaces will be fee paying (even if initial entrance to the museum is free). Subsidising the cost of entrance to such exhibitions may be part of a research council grant application, but more likely it will require additional grant applications to funding bodies such as the Arts Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund. Working with a team of curators or as an advisor to an exhibition that has already been scheduled is perhaps a more realistic way of contributing content to a major exhibition. Smaller scale exhibitions are easier to curate yourself. A series of posters can be developed to create a moveable exhibition which can be viewed online or lent to local schools or libraries with you giving a lecture or leading discussions around it.

Museums have been working on how to get broader publics into their spaces for some time, and working in partnership with a local museum or gallery can be a way to tap into their outreach networks. You could share a series of workshops or public lectures with a local museum. Your institution could help shoulder the cost of events by providing speakers and content, and your events will benefit from their public programme advertising and outreach networks.

A great deal of research and activism is undertaken by scholars located within local, national and globally networked communities. However, community based scholars do not have the resources or institutional capacity to put together grant applications (e.g. to fulfil employment law requirements for research assistants). Here, researchers based in universities have relevant skills and resources and can offer a genuine partnership with community groups in support for the development of research projects and funding applications.

Caroline Bressey is Lecturer in Human Geography and Director of the Equiano Centre at University College London. See section 8 for web links.

4 Engaging communities in research

4.1 Engaging the public in research

Rachel Pain and Kye Askins

As academics committed to participatory approaches to Geography, for us engaging wider audiences in research means a two-way dialogue. In what has come to be called the co-production of knowledge, this involves non-academic partners as collaborators throughout the research process.

A Geography that is shaped by its publics, as well as impacting on them, offers the chance to use research to deploy geographical ideas and methods for outcomes that in some way contribute to a more socially just world, especially where we collaborate with people whose voices are often marginalised. While public engagement is currently big news in Geography, participatory engagement of this type has been around for decades, developing over time alongside critical pedagogy, feminist approaches and some strands of radical geography.

Getting started

Time and relationships are the two vital ingredients for such collaborative approaches. Good participatory engagement is slow research. Spend time finding which groups and organisations relevant to your research interests are out there and listening to their needs and goals. Build up networks and possible collaborations at a pace appropriate for those involved. Opening up the question of what geographical research could and should be about, means that the development of research questions is crucial. What do potential research partners want research to be about, and how can your knowledge and skills as a geographer contribute to this? Don't gloss over differences in agendas, rather explore them and how to work across them (Pratt 2007). We can't over-emphasise the importance of building trust in the research process.

Things to consider:

- Be honest in making commitments. No one can change the world alone
- Ask what you can offer in terms of time, expertise, skills and/or resources. Maybe you can help research participants create a GIS to affect planning outcomes? Or maybe you always remember the coffee, juice and biscuits? But 'taking from' without 'giving back' steadily undermines any public engagement with research/researchers in general
- Be open to other opinions, needs, knowledges and outcomes. If you are wedded to certain research questions, or insistent that the findings will support a certain philosopher, you may get nowhere

- The research process includes dissemination. Limited numbers read articles in an academic journal. There are many more effective ways to present Geography to wide audiences (see Cahill and Torre 2007); keep collaborating with research participants on this
- Engaging with publics in such sustained ways remains largely unvalued within academic circles, despite the rhetoric – we need to change this. Joining forces with like-minded researchers and community partners is one way of scaling up participation.¹ Public engagement with/in teaching – giving students the chance to learn by doing – is another (see Kindon and Ellwood 2009; see Wills below)
- Practice critical humility. Keep reflecting on what you're doing, admit your mistakes, and don't take yourself or Geography too seriously... but don't underestimate the difference that can you make either.

¹ Join the Participatory Geographies Research Group (www.pygywg.org), or form a research centre at your institution (e.g. www.dur.ac.uk/beacon/socialjustice).

Cahill, C. and M. Torre (2007) Beyond the journal article: representations, audience, and the presentation of Participatory Action Research. In Kindon, S. Pain, R. and M. Kesby (eds) *Connecting People, Participation and Place: Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods* Routledge, London, 196-206.

Kindon S and Elwood S (2009) More than methods – reflections on Participatory Action Research in geographic teaching, learning and research. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 33, 1, 19-32.

Pratt, G. (2007) Working with migrant communities: collaborating with the Kalayaan Centre in Vancouver, Canada, in Kindon, S. Pain, R. and M. Kesby (eds) *Connecting People, Participation and Place: Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods* Routledge, London, 95-103.)

Rachel Pain is Reader in the Department of Geography at Durham University.

Kye Askins is Senior Lecturer in Human Geography at Northumbria University.

4.2 The living wage

Jane Wills

In April 2001, I first encountered the London living wage campaign in Walthamstow Assembly Hall, East London. Workers were standing on a stage in front of more than a thousand local people, politicians and corporate leaders, testifying about the impact of low pay on their lives and those of their children, and expressing their hopes for the future. They demanded a living wage – an hourly rate that reflected the true cost of living in the UK capital – rather than the National Minimum Wage. Geography matters.

Since that event in 2001, the idea of a living wage established a new ethical standard for employment in London, spreading to other UK cities. More than 5000 workers and their families have benefited directly from the campaign and an extra £25 million has been put into the pockets of low waged Londoners. My own institution has declared itself to be the first living wage campus in the UK and whereas Queen Mary University of London once left its cleaners to the laws of the market, they are now paid well above the London living wage with the same holiday entitlement, sick pay and access to a pension scheme that academic staff take for granted.

The alliance behind the living wage, London Citizens (www.londoncitizens.org), comprises more than 150 different community organisations that are willing to work together with a shared commitment to change. My understanding of politics has been transformed by seeing this alliance in action while engaging students through membership. The London Citizens alliance demonstrates how very different groups can find common cause with each other. Geographical proximity can provide the grounds on which solidarity can be carefully nurtured between faiths, communities and organisations. As such, the living wage campaign has opened the door to my learning about politics and solidarity in London today.

My experience would suggest that being an active researcher in ongoing campaigns can have a number of benefits. First, it makes for better research. In my case, it has provided access to people who have an important story to tell. Second, it can facilitate better scholarship and, in my case, the experience has changed the way I understand the city in which I live and work, and the prospects that exist for progressive political organisation and change. Third, it can provide new opportunities for teaching. For example, at Queen Mary, joining London Citizens has allowed us to engage our undergraduates in research for their degrees. Their experience of active citizenship may not only shape their future careers but also can be life changing. Fourth, and more generally, it can change the world in which we conduct our research. Finally, such activity also helps to break down the artificial barriers that often exist between universities and the wider society. Stepping out of the ivory tower is not only good for research, scholarship and teaching but it also raises the social status of the university and the people who work there.

Jane Wills is Professor of Human Geography at Queen Mary University of London. See section 8 web links.

4.3 Creative practices – weather permitting

Kathryn Yusoff and Jennifer Gabrys

Weather Permitting is a collaborative creative research practice with artists that investigates cultures of climate change and weather. Weather Permitting employs creative practice both within its research and in its outcomes. For ‘young’ researchers, such a collaboration can pose some difficult choices about how to spend time and particularly where and in what form outputs are generated (if at all). Our advice is:

Do: Communicate with potential collaborators about the nature of the academic environment and the expectations of academic research. Most people do not understand the recent changes in the higher education environment and the pressures on academics time: often other professionals will expect academics to be ‘talking heads’ or to deliver ‘content’ that can be used by others (often without recognition or funding). Be aware of how you are being collaborated with.

Understand what counts as your Intellectual Property (IP). Artists are used to freely using a range of ‘resources’ and making these into their own or re-authoring work by presenting it in different contexts. Similarly, the media and NGOs are also looking for ‘content’, but unless you are a recognised ‘expert’ then it is unlikely that you will be recognised as a contributing author in your own right. Make sure you are clear about the boundaries of IP and have agreed terms of collaboration. For unpublished academics, we would caution against fully disclosing your research findings/ideas until you have some experience working with your collaborator and know you can trust them to respect your authorship!

Recognise that all collaborations involve a certain ‘bleed’ of ideas. Make sure this is generously recognised in both your own work and others.

Acknowledge that the best collaborations are open-ended investigations that bring together professionals in their respective fields to co-investigate a set of ideas/problems. These usually work best where the power differential is not too extreme; i.e. that you are both of an equal professional footing.

Don’t: Expect collaboration to be fast. It takes time to learn each other’s language and modes of practice. It also takes time to build up trust, ways of working together and shared projects. Collaboration, when it works, has its own momentum. Let it go along at its own speed.

Expect the outcomes to be known in advance. Collaboration is explorative and being open to changes in your research agenda is a good thing. It is not a collaborative project if you are not changed by the experience.

Give away more ideas than you can afford to lose in a burst of enthusiasm. After the wasteland of lone PhD working, synergies are sexy things. Be mindful that good collaborations are both exciting and professional relationships.

Kathryn Yusoff is Lecturer at the Department of Geography at the University of Exeter.

Jennifer Gabrys is Lecturer in Design at Goldsmiths, University of London.

5 Perspectives

5.1 Getting people to take notice

Nigel Thrift

Communicating with the public can be a fraught and difficult affair. To begin with, of course, there is no one public to communicate with. There are many. Not only is it difficult to aim content at these publics but often you find the message taken up by others you hadn’t even thought of. What is crucial is availability. If you really want to communicate you have to accept the responsibility to be available that comes with it. Academics that I know who get their work out into the media are never snobbish. They will consider almost any outlet as a possible line out in to the world. They will pick up any phone call and answer any email. This does not suit everybody but it is the only way to build a high media profile. In particular, it means you constantly build relationships with the various publics and as an ‘expert’. When it comes to communicating policy, I have three main pieces of advice. First, make sure that you are speaking to the right people, the people who can do things. Ministers, certainly, relevant civil servants, think tanks, and so on. If you haven’t done the ground work, and got some formal agreement in advance, not much will happen. Second, remember that policy has to be condensed into something that is likely to happen; a document with vast numbers of recommendations will be heading for the scrap heap before it starts its life. Third, never imagine that the changes you want to institute are revelations. Most of the time, someone will have thought of them before – and discarded them. You need to find out why and then take a different tack.

So, given the complexities, I have only one piece of real and certain principle: try to communicate honestly about the things that you believe in. I think it is easy to detect the kind of calculated insincerity that has become a stock-in-trade of the modern world. And, at least if you do put the message out in a straightforward way, no one can accuse you of hanging back or of not making a stand when one needs to be made.

Always remember, there are people out there who have paid for your research and teaching, some of whom have never been to university and they want to know what is going on. They have legitimate matters of concern which universities should be addressing, especially in an era of freedom of information. When all is said and done it is your (legal) duty to communicate with them and it can be a pleasure.

What will help you fulfil that duty? Media training, of course (especially for TV work) and, in particular, exposure to the kind of rapid-fire questioning techniques journalists sometimes use is vital. Good writing skills. Don’t leave it all to a Press Officer but listen to them when they tell you the possible misinterpretations even a single phrase might elicit. Retain a willingness to consider putting a message into a series of media forms; podcasts, *YouTube*, *iTunes*, and so on. Resilience; things won’t always go your way and persistence is vital. Finally, a kind of self-assurance; if you have important things to say, people will listen. Good luck!

Nigel Thrift is the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Warwick.

5.2 Some confessions and reflections

Klaus Dodds

I enjoy communicating and engaging with audiences whether it be working with students, engaging with government officials or editing *The Geographical Journal*. It really is one of the most pleasing aspects of my chosen metier. Over the last fifteen years or so, therefore, I have been fortunate enough to enjoy a variety of experiences, which have tried and tested my communicative and engaging abilities.

It is important to acknowledge two fundamental things. First, the element of luck cannot be under-estimated. I have quite literally been in the right place at the right time. Second, I have, over that time, been able to take advantage of opportunities as my career has developed. Being a professor makes a difference. I am quite certain more people contact me now that I have achieved that professional rank. When I was a temporary lecturer at Edinburgh University, the phone rarely rang.

So for some of us, we may well have up to forty years to be involved in all kinds of communication and engagement opportunities.

My do's would include the following:

- **Seize the moment.** Let me give you an example. I write letters to newspapers like the *Guardian* when I think I can contribute something extra to a news story affecting the Polar Regions and/or global geopolitics. In one case, I recall, my letter was published and then in the aftermath other news media wanted my views on Antarctic geopolitics
- **Pitch ideas.** Another example. I wrote to the then deputy editor (Geordie Torr) of the *Geographical Magazine* about an idea for a regular column called 'hotspots'. He liked it but the then editor was not ready to move with it. Some years later, the deputy editor was promoted and I am pleased to say that Geordie came back to me and ran with the proposal. Since December 2006, I have been writing a regular column for the magazine
- **Learn from other professionals.** Most academic geographers are not trained in media and communication skills. We are not, therefore, professional journalists. When I wrote and presented some radio programmes for BBC Radio 3 and 4, I had the privilege of working with some very talented individuals. They taught me about the medium of radio and what audiences expected from a national broadcaster. I was also tremendously fortunate to have had wonderful academic mentors such as the late Denis Cosgrove

- **Show empathy.** You really do have to have a 'feel' for different audiences and their needs. I routinely talk on the one hand, to small children about the Antarctic (armed with my toy penguins) and on the other hand, present on Arctic geopolitics to Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials. If you are not certain about your intended audience then for goodness sake ask for advice so that you can tailor your message

My don'ts would include the following:

- **Be a prima donna and/or primo uomo.** Please don't be either. In media circles, presenters and 'talking heads' are called 'talent'. This is a double-edged term. If you are going to engage and communicate with audiences then combine expertise with knowingness. No one likes a presenter who is 'precious' about his or her expertise
- **Stray.** Be careful about commenting about things when you really don't have any more insight than the average well informed reader/listener. We can all potentially read *The Economist* and/or listen to *BBC World Service*. It is OK to say this is not my area of expertise. You are an academic not a journalist
- **Miss deadlines.** Don't promise to deliver things that you know is not going to be possible. Media professionals hate people who don't deliver copy or turn up to recording studios on time. Never let schools down, especially if they have given up valuable lesson time for you
- **Forget your current limitations.** It may well be that one of the things you need to recognise is your limitations. Are you really a good public speaker? Do colleagues and students recognise your communicative qualities? You may well be better at writing for academic journals than communicating and engaging with diverse audiences
- **Neglect training.** Many universities now offer media training courses, increasingly directed at postgraduates and early career researchers. This can give you both added confidence and really help develop a broader portfolio of skills and experiences.

I don't want anyone to be put off engaging and communicating with audiences. I love it and it really gives me a buzz. It can be great fun and I would be the first to admit that I have made mistakes and sometimes, quite literally, been lost for words while live on air!

Klaus Dodds is Professor of Geopolitics at Royal Holloway, University of London, and editor of *The Geographical Journal*.

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6 RGS-IBG scholarly publications

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6.1 Area

Edited by Professor Kevin Ward and Dr Louise Bracken

Area publishes ground breaking geographical research and scholarship across the field of geography. Whatever your interests, reading *Area* is essential to keep up with the latest thinking in geography. At the cutting edge of the discipline, the journal:

- Is the debating forum for the latest geographical research and ideas
- Is an outlet for fresh ideas, from both established and new scholars
- Is accessible to new researchers, including postgraduate students and academics at an early stage in their careers
- Contains commentaries and debates that focus on topical issues, new research results, methodological theory and practice and academic discussion and debate
- Provides rapid publication.



www.rgs.org/journals

6.2 Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers

Edited by Professor Alison Blunt

Transactions is one of the foremost international journals of geographical research. It publishes the very best scholarship from around the world and across the whole spectrum of research in the discipline. In particular, the distinctive role of the journal is to:

- Publish 'landmark' articles that make a major theoretical, conceptual or empirical contribution to the advancement of geography as an academic discipline
- Stimulate and shape research agendas in human and physical geography
- Publish articles, 'Boundary crossing' essays and commentaries that are international and interdisciplinary in their scope and content.



www.rgs.org/journals

6.3 The Geographical Journal

Edited by Professor Klaus Dodds

The Geographical Journal has been the academic journal of the Royal Geographical Society, under the terms of the Royal Charter, since 1893. It publishes original research papers and review articles, all of which are refereed. The papers range across the entire subject of Geography, with particular reference to public debates, policy-orientated agendas and notions of 'relevance'. Emphasis is placed on:

- Publishing articles that make a major theoretical, conceptual and/or empirical intervention to the advancement of both geography and ideas pertaining to 'public relevance'
- Stimulating and shaping future public and policy-orientated agendas across human and physical geography
- Publishing a range of articles, editorial interventions and other forms of commentaries, which investigate why problems, issues and solutions are posed in particular ways
- Evaluating the manner in which geographical knowledge is used to influence and underpin local, national and global policies
- Attracting articles and other contributions that communicate 'cutting-edge' research in an accessible manner.



www.rgs.org/GJ

6.4 RGS-IBG Book Series

Edited by Professor Kevin Ward and Dr Jo Bullard

The Book Series publishes work that emphasises distinctive new developments in human and physical geography. The Series places strong emphasis on theoretically-informed and empirically-strong texts. Reflecting the vibrant and diverse theoretical and empirical agendas that characterise the contemporary discipline, contributions are expected to inform, challenge and stimulate the reader.

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6.5 Submission guidelines

The RGS-IBG Journals

All submissions to RGS-IBG journals should be made via ScholarOne manuscripts, an online submission and peer-review system that aims to streamline the administrative and reviewing processes involved in scholarly publication. The many benefits include:

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Access each journal on ScholarOne manuscripts with the following links:

- <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/area>
- <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/geoj>
- <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/tran>

Each journal's ScholarOne manuscripts Welcome Page links through to its Wiley-Blackwell homepage, which features detailed submission guidelines and further information about each journal. Brief submission guidelines are below.

The target length of papers is 8000-10,000 words (inclusive of notes and references) for *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 8,000 for *The Geographical Journal*, and 5000 for *Area*. Commentaries range from 1500-5000 words across the journals.

Typescripts should be double-spaced with wide margins and should feature a title page, abstract and key words. Spelling should be in UK English.

Illustrations should be submitted as eps or tiff files wherever possible. All scale lines should be labelled in km and maps should feature a North arrow. Tables must be typed using few horizontal rules and no vertical rules and be numbered consecutively using Arabic numerals (Table 2, etc). Titles should be concise, but as informative as possible. The approximate position of Tables and Figures in the text should be marked in the typescript.

Authors must use the Harvard referencing system, in which authors names (no initials) and dates are given in the main body of the text, with specific pages indicated if required. References are listed alphabetically at the end of the paper.

Book reviews

Area and *The Geographical Journal* publish invaluable book review sections, keeping geographers up-to-date with the latest publications in the discipline. In addition to short reviews, they publish Book Review Forums consisting of longer, comparative reviews of groups of books related to their scope. Contact: journals@rgs.org for more information.

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All three journals are included in Wiley-Blackwell's EarlyView service. EarlyView articles are complete full-text articles published online in advance of their publication in a printed issue and are fully citable.

Wiley-Blackwell's author services

Author Services enables authors to track their articles – once accepted – through the production process to publication online and in print. Authors can check the status of their articles online and choose to receive automated e-mails at key stages of production.

RGS-IBG book series

Book proposals should be approximately 10-15 pages in length and should include:

- An overview
- An outline of the book's structure and content
- A realistic assessment of readership
- Competing titles
- An explicit statement on how the proposed book fits with the *RGS-IBG Book Series*
- Other relevant information; e.g. timetable, current stage, estimated completion date; length of manuscript etc.

For more information on exactly what to address and how to submit a proposal go to <http://www.rgsbookseries.com>

7 Membership of the RGS-IBG

The RGS-IBG is the largest geographical society in Europe and one of the largest and most active in the world. It exists to advance geography. It is actively involved in supporting geographical research through grants, research groups, conferences and journals; supporting geographical education in schools, universities, and professional settings; informing the public about the benefits of geographical learning and skills and educating people of all ages for life as local and global citizens in a rapidly changing world; and placing geography firmly in the debates about the future of places, environments and communities.

Membership is open to geographers and all others interested in peoples, places, cultures and world environments committed to supporting the Society's work on behalf of geography.

Members will benefit from its:

- Publication of the best international scholarship in geography in, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *The Geographical Journal* and *Area*. Popular material is also published in the *Geographical Magazine*
- Research and study groups, linking you with other specialists in your field and fostering debate
- News and events bulletin, keeping you up-to-date with Society developments and all forthcoming events
- Frequent national and regional events, including lectures, conferences, seminars and workshops, exhibitions and social events
- Annual conference, attracting established and new geographers throughout the world
- Expertise and networks working with schools, policy and the wider public, with opportunities to work in partnership
- Extensive information resources in its library, map room, picture library and expert staff advice on fieldwork and local learning
- An online directory of geography courses and supported teaching materials, provision of careers advice, in-service training and much more.

For more information about membership eligibility or to apply visit www.rgs.org/joinus or contact membership@rgs.org

RGS-IBG: Communicating geographical research beyond the academy

- **Public Engagement**
Raising the profile of geography and the understanding of our changing world with the public through lectures, debates, exhibits and a popular magazine
- **Education and Schools**
Working to inspire young people, support teachers and to ensure the health of geography in schools
- **Policy, Advocacy and Lobbying**
Advocating and lobbying for geography and showcasing the relevance of geography and geographers.

For more information: www.rgs.org

Contact the Society and get involved. **E:** journals@rgs.org



8 Acknowledgements and web resources

We wish to thank Rhiannon Rees and the design team at Wiley-Blackwell for their assistance. The images on the front of this guide (front right to back left):

- RGS-IBG Challenges of the 21st Century: www.21stcenturychallenges.org/
- Bhaskar Vira Spirit of the Forest – Comic Book: www.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/harda/outputs/comicbook/
- Image of Human Poverty, Worldmapper.org © 2006 SASI Group (University of Sheffield) and Mark Newman (University of Michigan) www.worldmapper.org/
- Publics and the City, Kurt Iveson (2007) RGS-IBG Book Series;
- Rita Gardner at the opening of the exhibition for Hidden Histories of Exploration www.rgs.org/HiddenHistories

Web resources

Links to projects and reports referred to in this guide:

- 1.1 RGS-IBG Communicating research beyond the academy
www.rgs.org/CommunicatingResearch
- 2.1 'When is a child not a child? Asylum, age disputes and the process of age assessment' by Heaven Crawley www.icar.org.uk/download/ILPA_%20Exec_Summary.pdf
- 2.6 Urban regeneration and urban health indicators www.rgs.org/UrbanRegeneration
- 2.7 Web resources and advice for teaching and learning geography in schools
www.rgs.org/Schools
- 2.8 Incorporating stakeholder perceptions in participatory forest management in India
www.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/harda/
- 3.2 Press coverage of the Social and Spatial Inequalities Group, University of Sheffield
sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/publications/in_the_news.htm
- 3.5 Project Revere blog projectrevere.blogspot.com
- 3.5 David Campbell: photography, multimedia, politics
www.david-campbell.org/photography/atrocity-and-memory/
- 3.5 'Making the Connection' blog makingtheconnectionresources.wordpress.com/
- 3.7 London, Sugar & Slavery: Revealing our city's untold history – Museum in Docklands 2006-2007 www.museumindocklands.org.uk/English/EventsExhibitions/Special/LSS/Default.htm
- 3.7 Portraits, People & Abolition – National Portrait Gallery
www.npg.org.uk/learning/digital/history/abolition-of-slavery
- 4.1 Participatory Geographies Research Group www.pygywg.org
- 4.2 London Citizens Living Wage Campaign www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/livingwage
- 4.3 Weather Permitting www.weatherpermitting.org/
- 5.2 Klaus Dodds' editorial, The Geographical Journal March 2010
www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/123275289/HTMLSTART

Links to all the case studies and reports referred to in the guides are provided online www.rgs.org/CommunicatingResearch

If you wish to reproduce any part of this guide, please contact the RGS-IBG **E:** journals@rgs.org

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