



# **Science Communication and and SC-Training in Austria**

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## Personal Background



Ph.D. in history and sociology of science („Making science public in Vienna 1900“)

Founder of a science magazine (*heureka!*, since 1998)

Co-Founder of a post-gradual course programme in science-communication (since 2001)

Teacher/advisor of science communication for students, journalists-to-be

Experiences in media trainings for scientists

Books and articles on popular science/scientists

Currently...

# Current SC-activities



- Science editor of daily newspaper *Der Standard* (<http://derstandard.at/>)
- Co-editor of popular science-magazine *heureka!* (bi-monthly) (<http://www.falter.at/heureka>)
- Trainer at postgradual SC-course-programme *SciMedia* (<http://www.scimedia.at>) for science journalists and science-PR-experts
- Blogger on Science Communication (in Austria) <http://www.sciblog.at/>

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# Why Communicating Science? A



## History and the political agenda:

Many prominent scientists in history were „public scientists“

End of the 19th century: popularization of science as a means to promote the natural sciences (and to substitute religion)

(Since 1980 in GB): Public Understanding of Science

Core argument: The more to know about science, the more positive people think positive about science (and to counter doubts in science because of ecological crisis, atomic energy, genetic engineering)

# Why Communicating Science? B



But: simple correlation does not exist.

Today's concepts, coordinated by EU: Public Awareness of Science, Public Dialogue with Science

Agenda of EU today:

To attract more young people to begin studies in the (natural) sciences and technology

To know (more) about (controversial) science and technology is a democratic need/duty

A good part of science is paid with money of us taxpayers.  
Therefore: the public has a right to know what is done with the money (accountability)

# Why Communicating Science? C



- Promotion of the place, i.e. the country/region (Singapore...), a university (ETH Zurich) or the institute
- To promote the scientific impact of a new finding and the journal (press-coverage is good for citations and the impact-factor)
- To ensure the further funding of the institute, the university, etc.
- To ensure a critical feedback of science or science policies (argument of journalism)
- Scientific knowledge is part of the general education („Bildung“)

# Science Communication in Austria, A



Some Contexts of a Booming Field: Massive investments in PR for R&D: Programme “Innovatives Österreich” (innovative Austria) 20 Mio. Euro between 2000 and 2006 for SC

Austria is undergoing a rapid growth in (expenditures in) research and development (R & D) (from 1,8 % of the GNP in 1998 to almost 2,8 % in 2008)

More investments of private companies in R & D

Austria's universities became autonomous in 2004; are less dependent on the ministry (more PR?!)

Liberalization of the media-market (private TV, private radio)



## Science Communication in Austria, B



A quite big boom since circa ten years: Since then, newspapers and magazines began to include regular pages on science, medicine, technology

A lot of new popular science magazines were founded.

Austria's big problem: Most of them (*heureka! at.venture*, *Forschen & Entdecken*, *Innovativ*, *economy*) rely on (financial) cooperations with ministries, companies, institutes

The same holds for supplements in daily newspapers (such as *Der Standard*, *Die Presse*)

# Science Communication in Austria, C



Other Austrian peculiarities:

Very good radio programmes on science, but very bad TV-programmes on science by ORF

Quite a few PR-companies are specialized on science communications

Not too much PR at the universities

Good institutes have their own PR office

A few very “public” scientists

# SC-Training: Where, What, and How (A)



Different audiences:

For science journalists to be

For PR experts in R & D

For scientists

Different modes of institutionalization in Europe:

## **SC-Training: Where, What, and How (B)**



For Science Journalists / PR experts:

Germany: Training for journalists (not at university;  
exception: Bremen and Dortmund)

GB: Special course programmes

Italy, Spain e.g.: Training as specialization of  
media studies

USA: Training in journalism for scientists

## **SC-Training: Where, What, and How (C)**



For Scientists:

Part of the gradual training of scientists-to-be?

Not very well developed in Austria

Subject of choice for students in molecular biology  
in Vienna

OR: Media trainings for scientists (how much  
training for whom?)

# SC-Training: Where, What, and How (D)



Some essentials in media trainings for scientists

How journalists „tick“

How a newspaper/radio/TV/magazine works

How to write a press release

The importance of the pictures

Interview-trainings

# SciMedia. Austrian SC-Course Programme, A



Background: own (non-) experiences; experiences as editor of science magazine

Where to institutionalize it? Academic Course-Pgm.

For whom? postgradual; journalists AND PR experts to be

For how many? Max. 15 persons

For how much? 1500 Euro per term (2, 3 terms)

What to teach and by whom? copropmise

# SciMedia. Austrian SC-Course Programme, B



What to teach and by whom?

Professionals, but also academics of University (sociologists of science,...)

Many different teachers, many guests

Mixed bag of theory and practice: (60 hours ECTS)

**PRACTICE:**

Writing skills, writing workshops

How to tell and how to illustrate

**THEORY:**

How science works: politics, organisation

Media, science, public: relations and tensions



## **SciMedia. Austrian SC-Course Programme, C**



Two course-programmes until today

28 alumni; all of them found a job in the field

But: how many professionals does the field need in Austria?

## **How would the ideal SC-situation look like?**



(Initiated a contest, but received no applications)

For scientists:

For journalists:

For politicians:

For PR experts:

For the public:

For Slovakia:

# Science Communication in Austria



**A quite big boom since circa ten years: Since then, newspapers and magazines began to include regular pages on science, medicine, technology**

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**Austria's big problem: Most of them (*heureka! at.venture, Forschen & Entdecken, Innovativ, economy*) rely on (financial) cooperations with ministries, companies, institutes**

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# Tageszeitungswissenschaftsjournalismus



**Wie kommt man zu den „Geschichten“?**

**Was über die (Nachrichten-)Agenturen läuft:**

<https://www.aom.apa.at>, <http://idw-online.de/public/ticker.html>

<http://www.wissenschaft.de>

**Was die großen Wissenschaftszeitschriften bringen (werden):**

<http://www.eurekalert.org>, <http://press.nature.com/>

**MO: PNAS..., DI: Royal Soc..., MIT: Nature..., DON: Science, Cell...**

**Orientierung an den internationalen Medien:**

[www.spiegel.de](http://www.spiegel.de)

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

[www.nyt.com](http://www.nyt.com)

# Kleine Medienkunde



## Österreichische Printmedien mit Wissenschaft

Der Standard inkl. Forschung Spezial / Medizin Spezial,  
Die Presse; Salzburger Nachrichten; Kurier; Krone

heureka! (<http://www.falter.at/heureka>)

Universum-Magazin (<http://www.universum.co.at>)

Economy (<http://www.economy.at>)

at.venture (<http://www.universum.co.at/at.venture/index.asp>)

Forschen & Entdecken (<http://www.forschen-entdecken.at/>)

sciQ (<http://www.sciq.at>)

## Audiovisuell

viel auf Ö1; weniger auf FM4; ORF-Fernsehen: die Newton-Krise; Online: jede Menge

# Science Communication and Politics

