How to Engage the Media to Build Public Perceptions of Geoscience

28th February 2014
The Media Landscape
Tactics

- Reactive and proactive news generation
- Internal advocacy
- Online/blogger outreach
- Targeting regular regional, vertical, national and trade slots
- Tactical online and offline support
- Speaker opportunities
- Media 121s
- Awards
- Business association meetings
- Sector profiling
- Testimonials & case studies
- Profiling and commentary
- Scheduled and negotiated features
Ireland – Radio, TV & Print
Northern Ireland

- News Letter, Irish News & Belfast Telegraph
- BBC One Northern Ireland, BBC Two Northern Ireland & UTV
- BBC Radio Ulster, Downtown/Cool FM, U105, Citybeat & Q Network
United Kingdom

- 14 daily papers
- 15 Sunday papers
- Specialist magazines
- Television & Radio
- Digital Services
- Internet/online media
- News agencies
HARD NEWS VS. SOFT NEWS
Inverted Pyramid News Writing

Critical info must go at the beginning

Information they MUST have to know what happened

Additional information that helps them understand but isn’t essential

Information that’s interesting or nice to have

They could stop reading at any time
Hard News - Fracking

• No fracking in Ireland until two-year study is complete (Irish Independent)

• NI could be at forefront of 'fracking revolution' amid huge opportunity for cheap energy (Belfast Telegraph)

• Fracking safety report unlikely to sway opponents (Irish Times)

• NI fracking decision 'Executive issue' says Foster (BBC)

• Fracking: It could be coming to YOUR back yard... Prime Minister David Cameron says the government is “going all out for shale” as part of its plan to boost Britain’s economy (Liverpool Echo).
Hard News - Sinkhole

Family car disappears down 30ft sinkhole in driveway (BBC)
Hard News - Flooding

Thousands of sandbags are being used to protect homes as more heavy rain and gale-force winds hit southern Britain (BBC)
The Anatomy of a Soft News Story

- Topical
- Local Interest
- Human Interest
- News hook/Fresh angle
- Reader Empathy
- Facts and Figures
- Quotes
- Visual Impact
Interview Strategy

CONFIDENCE → CONTROL → CREDIBILITY
7 Tips for Success

1. Set clear purpose
2. Profile your audience
3. Decide format
4. Create messages and source evidence
5. Introduce visual & vocal impact
6. Practise for perfection
7. Go do it
Soft News - Tellus South West

Video: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-23634921
## Messaging

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cornerstones 15%</th>
<th>Clusters 75%</th>
<th>Conclusion 10%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headline Messages 1</td>
<td>Body of Evidence 1, 2, 3</td>
<td>Headline Summary 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Windfarms

HEADLINES AGAINST

• This is the shocking map that shows the relentless spread of wind turbines across Northern Ireland’s countryside (Belfast Telegraph)

• A key NIEA department has blasted plans to build a huge wind farm on Binevenagh mountain and sharply criticised the developer Windyfields Group for providing ‘totally unacceptable’ environmental information and attempting to ‘disguise’ the visual impact of its proposal (Binevenagh SOS)
HEADLINES IN FAVOUR

• New wind farm will generate electric power for 8,000 homes (Irish Times)
• The new turbines propelling us towards a greener future (Belfast Telegraph)
• Answer blowing in the wind after politicians praise new wind farm (News Letter)
1. What is the best possible outcome of the project?
2. Could you explain why the research is in the interests of the public?
3. Have you considered the impact of science – communications plan (KPIs)?
Practical Tips

• Do your homework
• Never go off the record
• Be prepared / get trained up
• Be pro-active (pitch, call, follow-up)
• Be available
• Nurture relationships
• Understand news and journalism
• Respect Deadlines
• Speak up
• Be visible
• Liaise with press office