MAKING RESEARCH REAL
HINTS AND TIPS FOR REPORTERS

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Elements of a good research story

- Preparation
  - Read the research beyond the abstract
    - Look at secondary sources beyond Wikipedia
    - Understand the terms
  - Be aware of the audience and the focus
    - Discuss the article with the editor and define what you want to achieve with the story
  - Ask for background images – graphs, maps, research picures, Google maps as a way of illustrating a location, etc. take a flash drive along
  - Consider how you present yourself to the researcher. Bring along samples of your previous work or send links

Elements of a good research story

- Interview and writing
  - Find interest in the research (what do you find interesting in the research?)
  - Have a clear focus of what you want to achieve
  - Ask researchers to explain in simple terms what they found from the research.
  - Avoid jargon
    - What, why and how
    - Find colour, images and detail to give a human angle to the story
    - Ask questions about the qualifiers, practicality of the research
    - Identify recommendations and implications by asking the WHY question
    - Through questions, try to understand the scientific process – HOW?
    - Use your ethical and gender lenses

Elements of a good research story

- Use archives for background
- Find oher sources
- Speak to people affected by the research to make the science real and show how this is/or could change lives
- Other sources can also be archives
- The researcher should be the first person to ask about other sources.

Elements of a good research story

- Have a plan – avoid the vomit structure (where everything you have just spills over the copy)

- Attribute sources

- Support points by quotes and remember your target audience

- Avoid acronyms

- Don't plagirise (don't lift verbatim from the report unless you put it in quotation marks). Attribute information to sources.

Review

- Ask the researcher to check for factual inaccuracies (if needed) – did I get the science right? Send this on to the editor at the same time.

- Make it clear to the researcher that the editor will be the only one to change the story.

- Get someone else (other than your editor) to read it critically and listen to their comments.