

# Science and the Media

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Dr. Marek Kukula  
University of Edinburgh

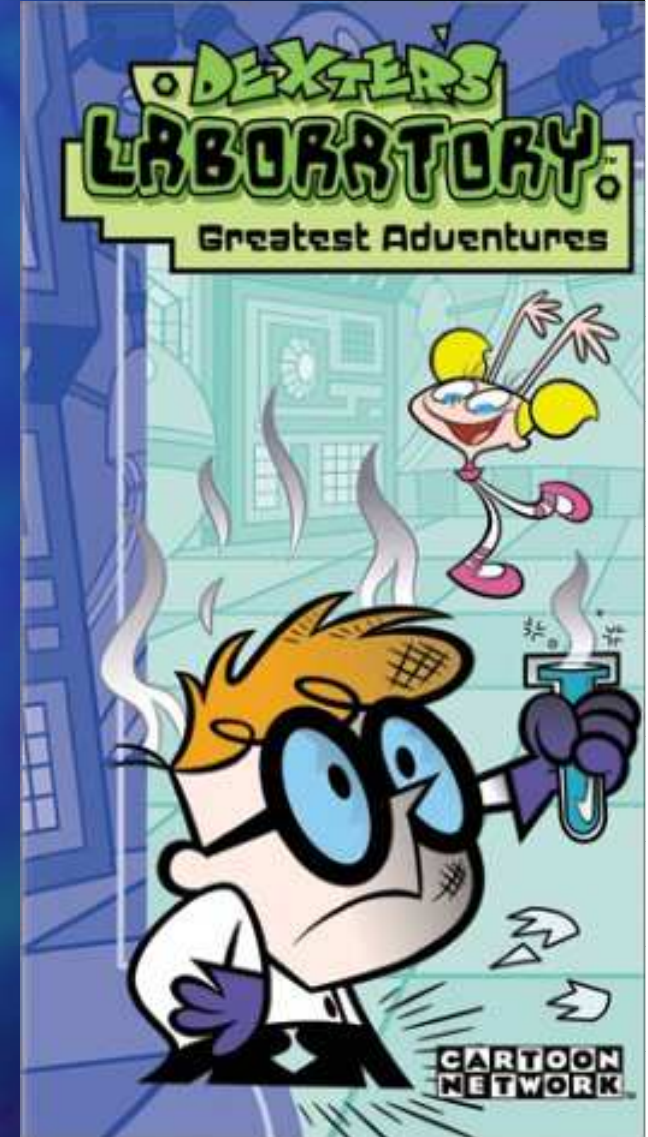
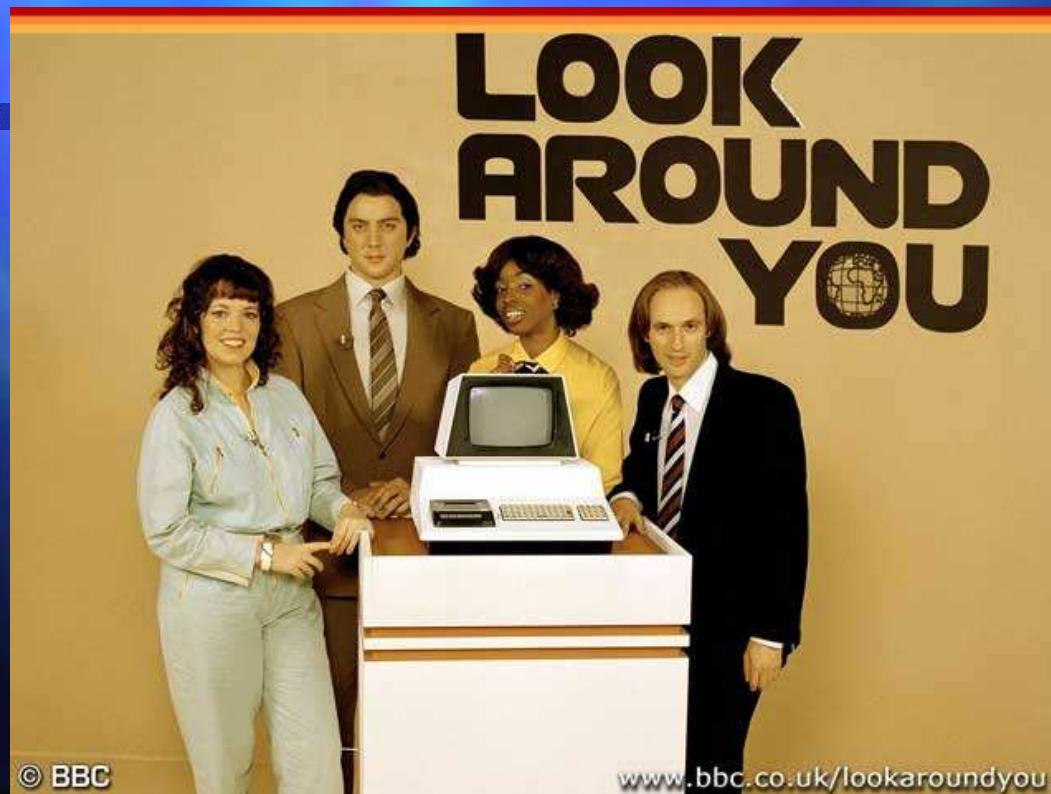
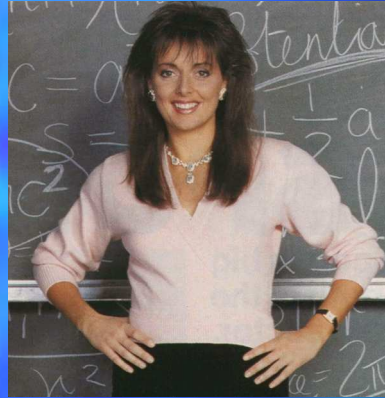
# Making your voice heard

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- General public
- Schools & education
- The media: TV, radio, press...

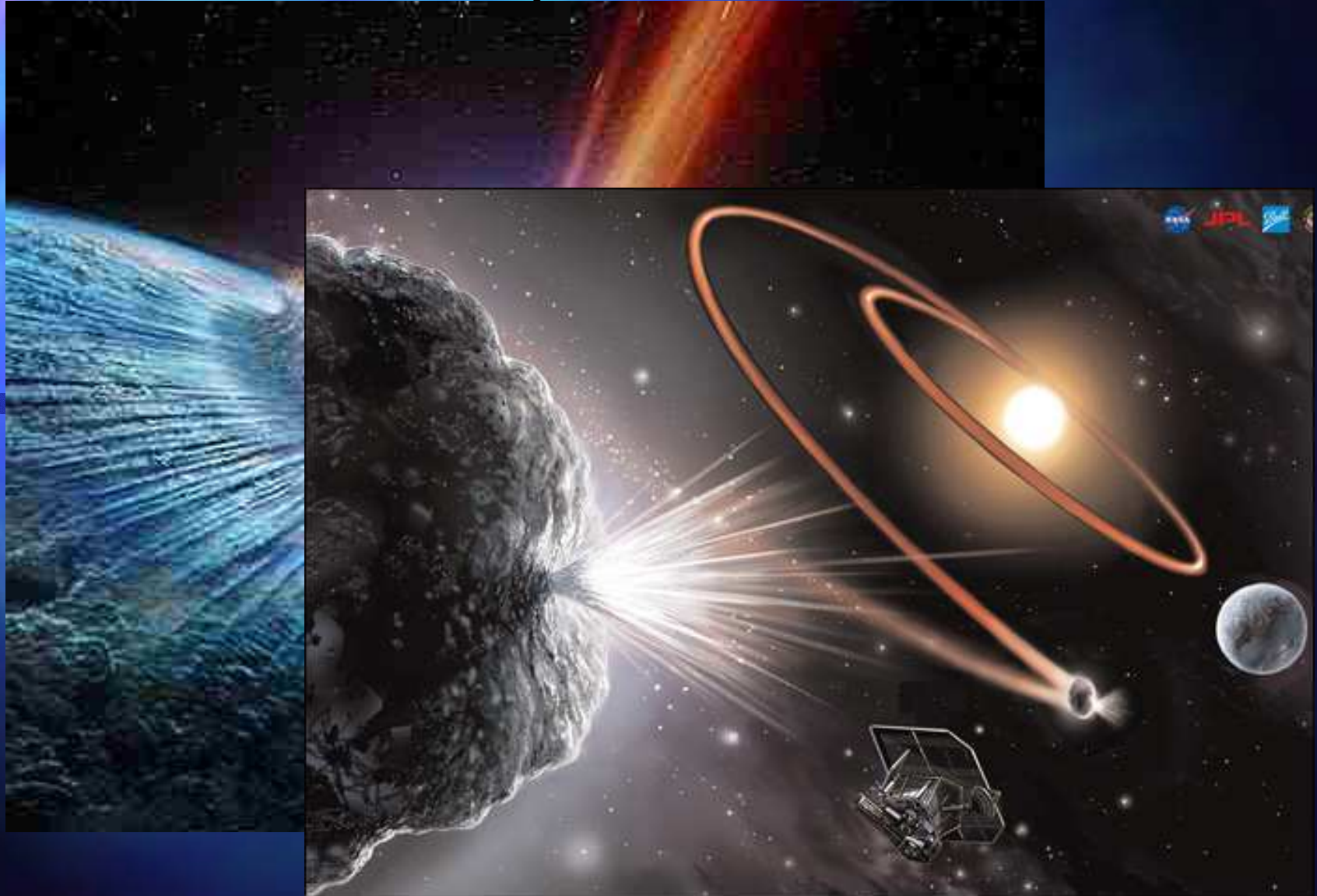


# Science in the media





# Astronomy in the media







# Two viewpoints:

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- "The biggest obstacle to improving the image of science is the attitude of scientists to the media." - Judith Hann, Daily Telegraph, March 2004
- "... in their choice of stories, and the way they cover them, the media create a parody of science, for their own means. They then attack this parody as if they were critiquing science." - Ben Goldacre, Bad Science column, The Guardian, Sept 2005

# Why do it?

## It's good for science

- Raises public profile of astronomy
- Helps to justify public funding
- Gets young people interested

## It's good for you

- Learn presentation skills & confidence
- Helps to see your subject in context
- Looks good on your CV
- It's fun

# Engaging with the general public

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- Science Festivals (eg Royal Society Summer Science Exhibition, Edinburgh International Science Festival)
- Public lectures
- Museums & Science Centres
- University Open Days
- Local astronomy societies



# Schools & Education

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- Researcher in Residence programme (PPARC & EPSRC)
- Contacts with local schools
- Training science teachers via the National Science Learning Centres

# The media: press, TV & radio

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- Media may approach you for a comment or soundbite on a story relevant to your field of research.
- You may approach the media either with a press release on a new result or an idea for a more in-depth piece relating to your research.



# Publicising your research

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## Press releases:

- Press officer at your department/institution
- PPARC & the Royal Astronomical Society also have press offices
- Conference organisers
- Press releases can be issued in advance and embargoed until an official announcement of the results or publication in a scientific journal.

# ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

— Advancing Astronomy & Geophysics



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Tuesday, 06 September 2005

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Thursday, 01 September 2005					RAS PN05/38: September Astronomy & Space Digest Peter Bond
Thursday, 01 September 2005					Astronomers Discover Fastest Intergalactic Space Traveller Peter Bond



# Articles or news items in "trade" journals

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- PPARC "Frontiers" magazine
- RAS "Astronomy and Geophysics"
- University newsletters

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## editorial

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Physicists have laid down the first plans for building the world's next big particle experiment

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### **BaBar's fantastic fifth birthday**

The BaBar experiment to search for small differences between matter and antimatter is going from strength to strength

*Christos Touramanis*

### **Aurora**

Europe is planning an ambitious programme of planetary exploration investigating conditions for life beyond the Earth

*Monica Grady*

### **Physics and the City**

Theoretical physicist Alasdair Gill explains how he set up a company that helps businesses succeed

*Nina Hall*

### **Superconducting quarks**

Particle theorists and astronomers are investigating the densest known state of matter

*Jack Cheyne, Greig Cowan and Mark Alford*

### **Keeping the UK in the premier league**

Ian Halliday looks back at 7 momentous years of carrying forward the PPARC vision

*Nina Hall*

### **The future's very energetic**

The H.E.S.S. gamma-ray telescopes have produced their first images

*Paula Chadwick*

### **UKIRT**

The world's most powerful infrared telescope celebrates its silver jubilee

*Douglas Pierce-Price and Andy Adamson*



# Approaching the media

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- National press - "big" stories, sometimes in depth articles, perhaps with contributions from several scientists.
- Local press - stories with a "local" angle, promoting or reviewing a public lecture.
- TV - "newsworthy" stories, breakthroughs, striking images etc, documentaries.
- Radio - debates, phone-ins.

# Shaping a story


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- Know your audience
- Find a newspeg – why is it interesting/relevant?
- Have a Unique Selling Point – local angle, amazing image, cool simulation etc





$T = 160 \text{ Myr}$

A simulation showing two galaxies at a time of 160 Myr. The galaxies are depicted as glowing, diffuse spheres with a bright, concentrated central core. They are set against a black background, with a faint, colorful nebula-like structure visible in the upper left corner. The galaxies appear to be in the early stages of formation or interaction.

Springel et al. 2005

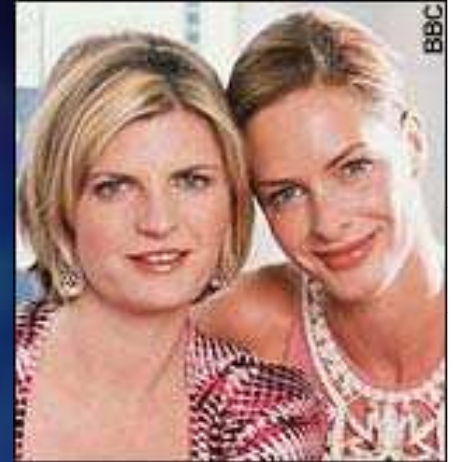
# Interview tips

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- Do:**
- rehearse your key points & stick to them
  - research your audience
  - ask how you'll be introduced & what the first question will be

- Don't:**
- use obvious notes
  - drink the free booze until afterwards

# What to not wear



## Yes!

- Plain, subtle colours
- Long socks
- Look like you've made an effort
- Take cues from the presenters/other guests

## No!

- Checks, stripes
- Bright reds & yellows
- Blue (if using bluescreen)
- Strong contrasts (eg black/white)
- Dangly earrings



