



# FOCUS

Professional development articles from  
the American Economic Association's  
Committee on the Status of Women  
in the Economics Profession.

2018 ISSUE II

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CSWEP Focus features articles originally published in the CSWEP News.

## FOCUS Working With the Media

### Introduction Catalina Amuedo-Dorantes

One of the key functions of academic institutions is to educate and inform the public. Therefore, it should not be surprising that the media turns to professors and researchers to inform the public about the impact of complex policies or simply to interpret data regarding the state of the economy. Despite the fact that most of us are well accustomed to speaking to large groups of students and colleagues, it is not uncommon for academics to feel uncomfortable about talking to the media. Yet, doing so can have significant benefits, including increased visibility of our research and the institutions we work for, and the opportunity to establish yourself as an expert.

CSWEP, which has a history of organizing mentoring activities, took notice of the challenges reported by many of us when talking to the media. In response, it has organized a number of events aimed at providing advice on how to speak to the media at recent national and regional economics association meetings. Collectively, these events generated so much interest that CSWEP decided to devote this issue of its News to the topic. In what follows, some of the panelists participating in these events kindly share their insights on how to communicate with news outlets and share our work. Specifically:

Gina Jacobs, Assistant Vice President, Divisional Communications & Strategy, Business & Financial Affairs

at San Diego State University, provides some tips on how to speak to the media.

Joni Hersch, Cornelius Vanderbilt Chair Professor of Law and Economics, and Co-Director, Ph.D. Program in Law and Economics, explains the various types of media coverage, how the media typically locates you, and how to convey key points about your research to news outlets.

Paul H. Rubin, Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor of Economics in the Economics Department at Emory University, discusses how to write op-eds and offers some useful tips, and Jennifer Bennet Shinall, Associate Professor of Law at Vanderbilt University, shares some advice on how to deal with the media when your research goes viral.

These contributions provide useful advice to academics and researchers at all career stages on how to talk to the media effectively, increasing the visibility of our work, while informing the public. We are grateful to the panelists for their contributions and hope you find them useful when preparing for your next media exchange. ■

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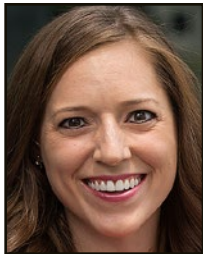
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# Tips & Tricks for Working with the Media

## Gina Jacobs

With the state of the economy a nightly news item, professors and researchers in the field have a particularly valuable role in helping explain complicated economic policies and practices and their impacts to the general public.

Having worked in a university media relations office for much of my career, I've found that for faculty who do regular hour-long lectures or presentations, speaking in quick sound bites is often out of their usual comfort zone. But, speaking with the media can be a great way to increase the visibility of your university, academic program and your own research. When presented with this opportunity, having a successful experience can set you up as an expert in the field that reporters can rely on in the future.

In many ways, preparing for an interview is much like preparing for a lesson in your classroom. Know what you want your students to walk away with and how that information can help them to better understand a particular topic or make a decision. Every interview is different but following these general tips and tricks will give you confidence and put you on the path to a successful experience.

## Be Prepared

When approached to do an interview either by your university/organization's media relations staff or by a member of the media directly, there are a number of questions you should ask before saying yes: What is the purpose of the interview? Do you have the information you need to answer the questions with confidence? What is the format of the interview—print, broadcast, etc.? Each format presents its own benefits and challenges, which I discuss briefly below.

If you agree to speak to a reporter, your first task is to determine your own

objective for the interview. Do not let a media person determine this for you.

Ask yourself what it is you want to get across about the interview topic and develop three key messages related to your objective. Your key messages should focus on what you want the reporter and the audience to walk away knowing about a topic. Make sure these key messages are concise and to the point, something you can easily remember and restate more than once. Of course, this won't be the only thing you say during an interview but they will be what you rely on for the basis of your responses. Often, anecdotes and examples can help make an abstract topic tangible and better engage the audience.

## Interview Types

While the goal of your interview should always be the same, an interview's format will influence how you use your key messages.

## Print/Online

Reporters for print or online media outlets often cover specific beats and have some background knowledge on general issues that apply to a story. When speaking to a print reporter on the phone or in person, you may feel more confident with your key messages printed in front of you to reference. In this scenario, always feel comfortable pausing and taking your time to answer. Be on the lookout for a reporter's pre-conceived conclusion and provide context where necessary. Although it may be tempting to ask, reporters will rarely share their story with you before it is published. That doesn't mean you can't offer to answer any follow up questions they have while working on their story.

## Radio/Television (Taped)

When speaking to a broadcast reporter, you may be asked to record a taped or live interview. When an interview is



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taped, you should state your key messages early and often in short soundbites of approximately 15-20 seconds. If you stumble, pause and start over. Broadcast reporters want their story to look/sound good as much as you want to appear knowledgeable, so they won't be likely to use any clips that aren't clear and concise.

### Radio/Television (Live)

The same approach should be taken with your key messages during a live interview—state them early and often—but know that you won't be able to start over and fix any mistakes so speak slowly, clearly and confidently. During television interviews in particular, maintain eye contact with the reporter while they ask their question and respond directly. Do not look at the camera, look at the reporter. A good live interview is the result of an engaging rapport with the reporter and allowing your passion for the topic to shine through.

### General Interview Tips

Regardless of the type of interview, there are some important things to keep in mind.

Nothing is ever “off the record.” Making small talk with a reporter before an interview can help calm nerves and give you an opportunity to practice key messages, but that time should not be used to talk about things you do not want a reporter to ask about during the formal interview.

Be brief and communicate key messages early and often. Don't be afraid to repeat yourself.

It's o.k. to say “I don't know.” Never guess. If you don't know the answer to a question, simply say so. Use this opportunity to bridge to a key message.

Be prepared to address the (perceived) other side of the story because the media is often looking for “both sides of the story.” Providing a brief history of the topic can be helpful in explaining the basis for a particular perspective.

Avoid technical terms, jargon and acronyms. In academic circles, these can be pervasive but a reporter and the public won't know what they stand for so keep it simple. Avoid them when you can and explain them when you can't.

Be prepared for the last question: “Is there anything else you want to add?” This is yet another opportunity for you to reinforce your key messages.

### When Interviews Get Tricky

Despite your preparation, interviews can often be tricky. That may be a result of the reporter not having enough background on a particular issue or because the topic itself is a controversial one. The following strategies will help you navigate through these situations and stay on message:

Don't play into negative questions or hypotheticals. “Bridge” back to your positive, key messages with these suggestions:

“I can't speak to this specific incident but what I can tell you is...”

“That speaks to a bigger point...”

“A really important thing to know is...”

“The one thing I want you to be sure you know is...”

“I don't feel comfortable hypothesizing.”

“My area of expertise is...what I can tell you is...”

When a reporter asks a multiple-part question, only answer the part you are comfortable with. Let the reporter follow up with the additional questions again.

The media relations professionals at your campus/organization are usually willing to help by providing media training or as a sounding board before interviews. Do not hesitate to contact them for assistance. ■

## What is CSWEP?

CSWEP (the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession) is a standing committee of the American Economic Association charged with serving professional women economists in academia, government agencies and elsewhere by promoting their careers and monitoring their progress.

CSWEP activities endeavor to raise the awareness among men and women of the challenges that are unique to women's careers and can be addressed with a wide variety of actions, from inclusive searches to formal and informal mentoring activities. CSWEP freely disseminates information on how the profession works as well as advice to junior economists. We intend this information to be of value to all economists, male or female, minority or not.

### Annually, CSWEP

- Organizes mentoring workshops, paper presentations sessions at the annual AEA Meetings, and professional development sessions at the annual meetings of the four regional economics associations (the Eastern, Mid-Western, Southern and Western);
- Conducts a survey and compiles a report on the gender composition of faculty and students in academic economics departments in the United States;
- Publishes three editions of the *CSWEP News*, containing a feature section written by senior economists that highlights career advice or other topics of interest to the economics profession; and
- Awards the Carolyn Shaw Bell Award, given to a person for their outstanding work to promote the careers of women economists as well as the Elaine Bennett Research Prize, given biennially to a young woman economist for fundamental contributions to academic economics.

Our business meeting is held during the annual AEA Meetings and is open to all economists. It is a time for us to recognize our award recipients, present the Annual Report on Women in the Economics Profession and to hear your input on CSWEP's activities. The CSWEP Board meets three times yearly and we encourage you to attend our business meeting or contact a Board Member directly to convey your ideas for furthering CSWEP's mission.

Visit [cswep.org](http://cswep.org) for more information.

# Talking To the Media About Your Academic Research

## Joni Hersch

Until about 10 years ago, I had very little contact with media. Most memorably, when I was at the University of Wyoming, my research on job risks was mentioned in the *Wall Street Journal*. The *Journal* mistakenly located me at the University of Wisconsin and later issued a correction. So, as my dean said, not only did I make the *Wall Street Journal*, I made it twice in a single week.

After many more years without any media involvement, in the past decade, major media outlets such as the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* have profiled several of my papers. Each of my experiences has been different, and the guidance I've seen has been too general to be very helpful. My advice below highlights some specific issues that I've learned in my experiences with the media.

The first time I received extensive media coverage was for my work on skin color discrimination against legal immigrants to the United States. Although I was coached by my university's media relations expert, I was very stiff and awkward in my initial interviews. I felt guarded in describing my methodology and findings and would try to answer questions as I would in an economics seminar. I was also concerned that I would be quoted out of context in a way that mischaracterized my research.

Although at the time it was surprising and somewhat uncomfortable to receive so much media attention, it turned out to be a very positive experience. It forced me to get over my discomfort with discussing my work in general terms with journalists—I simply did not have time to worry about what I would say or how I would be quoted, and I became far more conversational in interviews. By about the third interview, I felt more confident and comfortable,

and interviews flowed more easily and took much less time.

### Types of coverage

Media involvement can be broadly divided into two types: Media that is primarily about your research and media in which your role is as an expert commentator.

Most of my experience has been coverage of my research. Media that is primarily focused on your research may be developed over a period of weeks and may involve several rounds of questions and clarification with the journalist.

Commenting as an expert on current events or other research will be usually done under a deadline for the journalist, should not take much of your time, and should not require much preparation. These media contacts will be short, maybe a 20-minute interview, possibly with a follow-up for accuracy.

### How they find you

There are many ways that journalists may find you, and my experience doesn't indicate a clear pattern.

Sometimes, journalists will make initial contact with your university's communications department. Most universities have a media relations expert in their communications department who acts as a liaison between researchers at the university and the media and will often field requests for interviews. Media relations experts will work with you to write press releases about your work. Your university's communications department uses the press release to pitch the story directly to journalists and uses social media to promote the story to a wider audience, including journalists who may contact you for an interview.

You may be contacted directly by journalists who write regularly in an area (e.g., labor, education) and are

seeking a good story. Journalists may contact you after a conference presentation or because of a recent publication or working paper. Additionally, journalists may find you because of previous media coverage of your research, because your university promotes you as an expert on a topic, because you already are a well-known expert on a topic, or because you were referred by another expert in your field.

Once your research is covered by major media, you may receive many more interview requests, and your work may be picked up by other outlets without any additional involvement from you.

### Process

The initial contact will be directed either to you or to your university's communications department. Most of the time, the contact will be an email message with a brief explanation of why the journalist is interested in interviewing you. If it's not clear from the request, you can ask what the story is about. For example, is the story primarily about your work, or will the article include a discussion of others' research as well? It is also OK to ask for information about the types of questions you will be asked. The complete process may involve more than one interview and emailed follow-up questions, and it may span a few weeks. You should ask when they expect their article to run because your communications department will want to be ready.

Most interviewers will ask to record the conversation. Say yes. Even when they are recording the conversation, they will often also be typing as you talk.

### How to talk to journalists

It may seem obvious to say that the way to prepare is to be familiar with your research, and although this is certainly true, this actually isn't very helpful



advice. Journalists are trying to tell a story, and the technical points of your research won't add much to the story. Think in terms of the one-sentence takeaway, and be prepared for follow-up questions to explain how you got to that result or conclusion. Although there is a risk that your work will be mischaracterized or quoted out of context, journalists really do want to accurately communicate the message of the research. If you are accurate, they will be too. Remember that they are trying to shape a story, not make you look bad.

Journalists who are writing a story to make a specific point will typically have a short list of questions, and will ask those questions only, seeking specific quotes that they can insert into the story. I have found that experienced journalists usually begin by providing an overview of the story and an open-ended question to prompt me to start talking, and the interviews become more conversational and interactive after that. Listen carefully to the questions and try to be responsive. Just as with student questions, some questions can't be answered as posed, so try to understand the point of the question so that you can respond appropriately.

When journalists ask questions about your work, don't recite memorized answers. If you do, you will sound awkward. However, it may be helpful to keep brief notes on the facts you want to convey, especially if you are dealing with statistics that you want to get right. Your goal is to communicate. Talk as you would to a family member. Avoid jargon so that your quotes can be used for the audience. Don't talk down either—journalists routinely talk with academics and are used to our vocabulary.

Remember that everything you say or put in an email message is fair game for being quoted. You can't make anything "off the record" retroactively, and it is not necessarily clear that a request to make something "off the record" will be respected.

### Benefits of talking to the media

The main benefit of talking to the media about your research is that you have a chance to bring your message to an audience far beyond academic outlets. It is gratifying to hear from people who found my research to be of value to their lives. It is an efficient way for your colleagues and university to understand what you are doing, and your university will like the recognition. Media coverage of your research may also increase downloads and citations of your work. In addition, the process of articulating your research to the media in a concise, straightforward way can help you clarify what's important and how to position your work for publication.

Speaking to the media can have other personal and professional benefits. Because most of my work is about women in the labor market, I've had the opportunity to speak with many women in the media who are passionate about this and similar topics. Most of my interviews have been with journalists who are very knowledgeable about the topics they cover and have first-hand information to supplement the data we analyze. They will be attuned to the important questions that haven't yet been answered and be knowledgeable about academic research both inside and outside economics.

### Downsides of talking to the media

It takes time to prepare for and talk to journalists. Even if the interview is about your recent work, you will need time to review and prepare for questions that you are likely to be asked. Because journalists often have questions that go beyond the specific results reported in your paper, you might get questions that you are not prepared to answer. When I am asked a question that I could answer with more time, I offer to get back to them with an answer. The timing for interviews may not be convenient, and it is OK to decline or to offer to talk with them at another time when it is convenient for you.

While media coverage may give you the personal and professional benefits

that I list above, do not expect it to have a major impact on your career. Although your family might be impressed that you are in the news, don't expect much personal payoff beyond that. No matter how intense your media experience is, you become old news very quickly.

### Final tips

Timing the university's press release to coincide with a conference presentation is often an effective way to call attention to your work. It provides a rationale for issuing a press release before the work is published. The press release can include your quotes that can be used directly in media. The possible inconvenience is that you may be called for interviews while at the conference.

Do what you can to be sure that your coauthors are included in any media coverage about your joint work. But remember that you don't control what survives the editing process. Don't be disappointed if you or a coauthor isn't named or quoted.

I have found phone interviews to be a more efficient use of my time than answering questions by email. Television and radio involve a larger time commitment and scheduling constraints.

Don't speculate on topics that go beyond your research—or if you do, be clear that you are making informed speculation.

If you have a strong viewpoint that is informed by your research, don't hold back. For example, I know the reasons economists are reluctant to attribute unexplained gender disparities in the labor market to discrimination. But informed by my research that goes back nearly four decades, if asked, I am quite clear that I consider discrimination to be the primary source of the remaining unexplained gender labor market disparities.

The news cycle is rapid. There is no need to worry about whether you perfectly expressed yourself or if the journalist chose the quotes you wish she had.

Finally, remember this: In the grand scheme of your academic career, media coverage is really not that big of a deal. Just have fun with it! ■

# Tips on Publishing Newspaper Op-Eds

## Paul H. Rubin

I am writing this because I have written a few dozen op-eds, mostly in the *Wall Street Journal*. My first op-ed was in 1987, when I resigned from the Consumer Product Safety Commission. The op-ed described some difficulties in the CPSC process. Then in 1989 I presented a paper on tort reform at the Manhattan Institute. The Deputy Editor of the Editorial page of the *Journal* was in the audience, and he suggested I write an op-ed based on that paper. From then on, I submitted my op-eds to him. He by no means accepted all of them, but at least they got a reading. So the first tip is to try to get the name of a person and submit to that person, rather than submitting blindly. Given the number of op-eds submitted to a major source, the first task is to get your submission read.

As I was writing this note, a nice op-ed by Bret Stephens (formerly of the WSJ, now at the NYT) called “Tips for Aspiring Op-Ed Writers” was published. You can find this op-ed if you search the *Times*’ website, and you will learn more from this op-ed than from me. But I want to elaborate a little on a few of his points, particularly for economists.

### Bret Stephens’ Points

The two most important points for you as an economist that Stephens makes are: (1) “Why does your topic matter? Why should it matter today? And why should the reader care what you, of all people, have to say about it?” and (2) “Authority matters. Readers will look to authors who have standing, either because of expertise in their field or unique experience of a subject. If you can offer neither on a given topic you should not write about it...”

These two points represent what I think of as the “double hook” view of op-eds. You need a hook to the news, and you need a hook to yourself. Simply being an economics professor will not do it. Assume that Mary Smith has written

an op-ed on, say, a current steel shortage. A very important part of an op-ed is the little tag line at the end. This is usually two sentences. The first is simple “Mary Smith is an economics professor at Old Siwash University.” But the second sentence is the money sentence: “Her book on the steel shortage of 1948 has just been published by Widget University Press.” There are other possible hooks: “She was the Chief Economist for the Iron and Steel Institute” or “She was the Steel Analyst at the Department of Commerce,” but there must be a hook which shows why she has something to say about steel.

It takes both parts. If Professor Smith has published the book but there is currently no steel shortage, then no one is interested in the steel shortage of 1948. If she feels passionately about steel but has not written anything about it, then no one cares what she thinks. It takes both hooks.

Note that the first hook (to the news) must be timely—it is the “news.” But the second need not be current. I have sometimes taken an old article of mine and written an op-ed when the topic of the article has made the news. Mary’s book may have been published ten years ago, and the steel shortage is now, but the book is still a good hook.

Who is the reader? You should probably aim at the level of a good college freshman who has yet to take economics. If you use any jargon, you should define it. Even better, you should try to avoid it. You are not writing for or to your colleagues, and readers are not interested in the minutiae of debates among professionals. They are interested in what you have to say about some real-world issue. If you are trying to advance a professional debate the place is a professional journal, not an op-ed.

Stephens: “A newspaper has a running conversation with its readers. Before pitching an op-ed you should know

when the paper last covered that topic, and how your piece will advance the discussion.”

More generally, you should read the outlet you are aiming at with some frequency, so that you understand their viewpoint and editorial voice. But you should be careful here as well. If you tie your op-ed too closely to a recent article in the paper, they will send it to the “Letters” editor.

### Additional Points

An important decision is the submission decision: Where should you send it? If you have a contact, then that is a good starting point. If not, an outlet that has expressed an interest in your topic is a natural. I prefer national outlets such as the NYT or the WSJ, as op-eds here will generate more readers and more attention. However, there is more competition here and so it is harder to get published. Your university may have a press office that can help you decide and may have links to particular outlets so that you can be sure your effort gets early attention.

Op-ed editors are faster than journal editors, so you will usually hear within a week. (Some have a negative default: “If you have not heard within 10 days, assume we are not interested.”) This means that you usually have time to re-submit the op-ed while the issue is still timely. (My record is submission, rejection, and resubmission in one day, with publication the next day.) But some issues are local, and so a local newspaper is more relevant as the starting point. (For a local newspaper, the second hook—to you—is less important. Being a professor at a local university may be enough.)

There is generally no R&R for op-eds. They take it or not. If they take it, they may edit it, but they will not give you a second chance to submit it, so give it all you can the first time. ➔

Write it and then try ruthlessly to shorten it. 750 words is about the desired length of an op-ed, and shorter is OK as well. The writing style must be simpler than for a journal—shorter sentences and words.

### Some Caveats

Three warnings. First, you should probably not begin to seriously write op-eds until you at least have tenure, and maybe even until you are a full professor. They are fun and while the administrators of your university may like them and the publicity they generate, most departments give little if any credit for op-eds. Some may even count them negatively. Moreover, op-eds (at least mine) are very seldom cited, so they won't help you there either.

Second, if you begin seriously to think in terms of op-eds, you may have trouble thinking in terms of journal articles or blogs. (I tried to blog but found that my mind did not work that way.) If you start to see issues in terms of potential op-eds, you may not see them in terms of potential articles, and this may hurt your productivity. This is another reason why you may not want to start until you are more established.

Third, an op-ed expresses an opinion, and the opinion may be controversial. (I have written several pro-Trump op-eds.) Your opinion may alienate some in your department or your university, so you should think carefully about the opinions you are expressing. Again, tenure offers some protection here.

But it is fun to know that any one of your op-eds will be read by more people than all of your journal articles together. And as economists, we should have something to say about relevant issues, and op-eds are a good way to contribute to actual policy debates.

*Paul H. Rubin is the Dobbs Professor of Economics at Emory University and past President of the Southern Economic Association. [Money sentence] He has published about 50 op-eds in papers including the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal.* ■

# When Your Research Goes Viral

## Jennifer Bennett Shinall

Suppose you have mastered the important lessons offered by other articles in this newsletter—you have written a great paper, worked with your institution's media relations team to publicize your research, developed a salient media pitch, and learned how to communicate effectively with journalists. You not only survive your first interview with a media outlet; you feel confident about it. But then the perfect storm ensues: on a slow news day, other media outlets see your stellar first interview, and suddenly, every media outlet wants to interview you. Your research has gone viral.

Isn't going viral the best-case scenario? It is exciting, to be sure—at long last, your family may finally understand what you do for a living! But it can also be fatal to your career, especially if you are pre-tenure. Requests for media interviews tend to grow exponentially, and an unchecked willingness to accommodate journalists may soon lead to them taking over your life. Rather than working on the next paper you need for your tenure file, you may instead find your research stagnating as you rehash the same five sentences about an old paper to media outlets.

Of course, research going viral does have some professional benefits; it increases your visibility within the department and within the profession. Your institution will almost certainly smile upon the favorable attention it receives as a result of your work. Consequently, it is important to establish ground rules that balance the benefits against the burdens of media attention. In this spirit, below are ten rules I have developed for dealing with the media that will allow you to receive all the attention you deserve—without causing you to lose your job in the process.

### 1. Don't be afraid to say no.

This first rule is, in many ways, the rule from which all others flow. It is okay to

say no to a journalist, and you *should* say no to a journalist whenever a request makes you uncomfortable. Whenever you are contacted by a media outlet, clearly define the bounds of what you are and are not willing to do, and never forget that you hold the ultimate power in this process to decline a journalist's request.

### 2. Block out research and teaching time.

Your assistant may see your calendar, but journalists do not. For this reason, be firm with journalists about the hours in which you are comfortable talking to them. If you need an hour to prepare for your next class, do not be afraid to tell journalists that you are unavailable at that time. If you find yourself struggling to keep up with your research between media interviews, then actually block out a few hours of research time on your calendar. Most importantly, stick to these self-imposed research and teaching blocks. Journalists will often insist to speak to you at a time that is convenient to them and lament an impending deadline. Do not give in! Make them accommodate your schedule.

### 3. Schedule press releases.

Typically, a media blitz begins with your institution issuing a press release about your research. Unless your research is extremely time sensitive, press releases can easily be delayed a few weeks. Work with your institution's media relations team to find a date for the release that is convenient for your schedule. Make sure that you do not have any impending deadlines during the two weeks that follow the press release date.

### 4. Learn to share.

If your paper is coauthored, you should *not* be doing all the media interviews—even if you did most of the work on the paper, and even if you are much better

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at talking to journalists. Divide and conquer, but in a way that plays to each co-author's strengths. If you are better on camera, take the television interviews; your coauthor can take the lead with print media. Most importantly, if your coauthor is tenured, but you are not, ask them to take the majority of the interviews.

### 5. Limit your media outlets.

Countless media outlets already exist, and still new ones seem to emerge every day. As such, the cost of saying no to an interview with a single media outlet is effectively zero, so do not be afraid to do so. If a media outlet you have never heard of contacts you for an interview, a quick internet search can help you determine whether it is worth your time. Furthermore, if a media outlet with a particular political or ideological bias contacts you for an interview, do not forget that its audience will be limited to those who share that bias, and your research (no matter how flawless, and no matter how convincing) is unlikely to change that outlet's preexisting bias.

### 6. Limit your mediums.

Limit your interviews to formats that cast you in your most ideal light and that work well with your schedule. Live interviews that utilize high-quality HD or ISDN feeds require the most time since they require you to travel to a studio, while Skype interviews can be conducted from the comfort of your office or home. Nonetheless, you are likely to look and sound best on a high-quality feed. In contrast, non-live interviews for print outlets allow you the most control since you can edit and correct your statements, especially if you are responding to a journalist's questions via email. In sum, each interview medium has its pros and cons; how these pros and cons balance is dependent upon your individual strengths and preferences. Determine your most preferred medium(s), and do not hesitate to limit your interviews to these medium(s).

### 7. Prioritize interviews.

Understandably, your ability to be demanding diminishes with the prominence of the media outlet. It might be worth it to set aside some of these ground rules—or at least to relax them—for the *New York Times* or *Wall Street Journal*. Along these lines, do not be afraid to reschedule an interview with a lesser-known media outlet in order to accommodate a well-known one. Major media outlets will generate the biggest audience for your research and should always remain the priority.

### 8. Push back.

When your research goes viral, at least one interview will inevitably make you cringe after the fact. While you cannot do much to correct your own flub or misstatement, you *can* correct a journalist's flub or misstatement. If a journalist incorrectly quotes you or misstates your findings, you have the right to insist that the media outlet issue a correction. Contact the journalist first to demand a correction; if the journalist refuses to act, then contact the media outlet.

### 9. Make sure your colleagues know.

Even if you implement all these ground rules, media interviews can nonetheless be quite time consuming. Consequently, make sure your colleagues know how interested the public is in your research, and how much media attention you are receiving. This rule is particularly important if you are pre-tenure. Do not be embarrassed to inform members of your department about the media frenzy surrounding your research. Casually mention how busy you are with your interviews in national print and television media outlets around the faculty water cooler. Get credit for your hard work.

### 10. Ignore the trolls.

Time is already precious once your research goes viral. Yet a common, related trap can ensnare the unsuspecting researcher and steal even more of their time: the comments section. Most media outlets now feature reader/viewer comments sections on their websites,

which allow the public to post their views of your research anonymously. Do not—I repeat, DO NOT—waste time reading them. Some of these comments will be positive, but more often than not, the comments will make you depressed about the public's reception of your research and the state of humanity more generally. Even if you believe your research has an intuitive outcome and is uncontroversial, the internet trolls will come for it, and sometimes, they will come for you personally. Remember that the purpose of disseminating your research in the media is to inform the public about your important findings and to spark policymakers' interests. Despite going viral, your research need not satisfy every mean-spirited individual who can hide behind a computer; the priority remains for your research to satisfy your colleagues, your institution, and yourself. ■