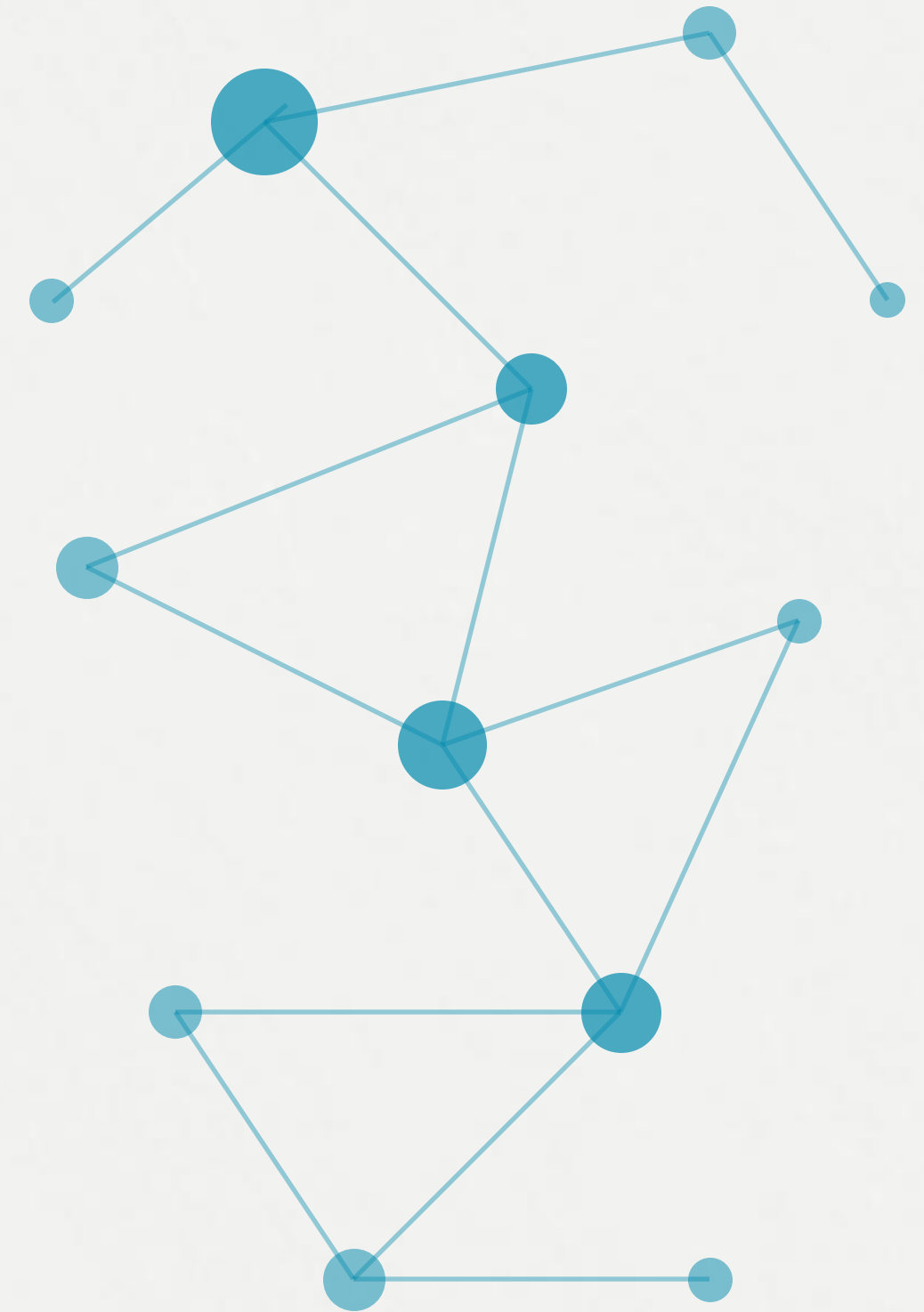


Navigating a New Era of Science Communication



Ottile Goodfellow | 24 June 2026

Agenda

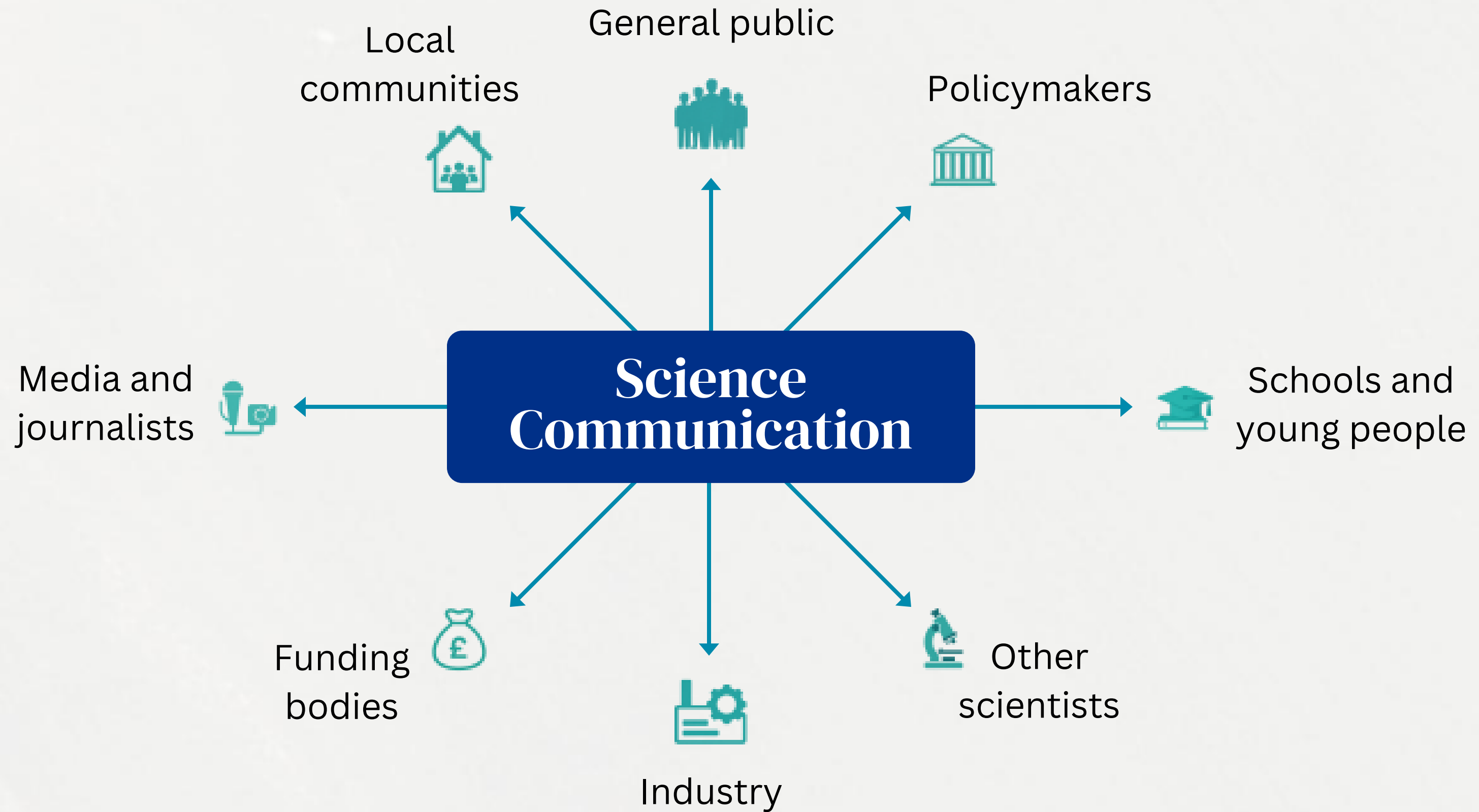
- 1 What is science communication?
- 2 What changes are impacting science communication?
- 3 What do people think about science & scientists?
- 4 What are the recommendations for this new era of science communication?
- 5 What comms does PPD do, and how can you get involved?



Physics with Astrophysics,
University of Bath
Science Communication
Industrial Placement, PPD

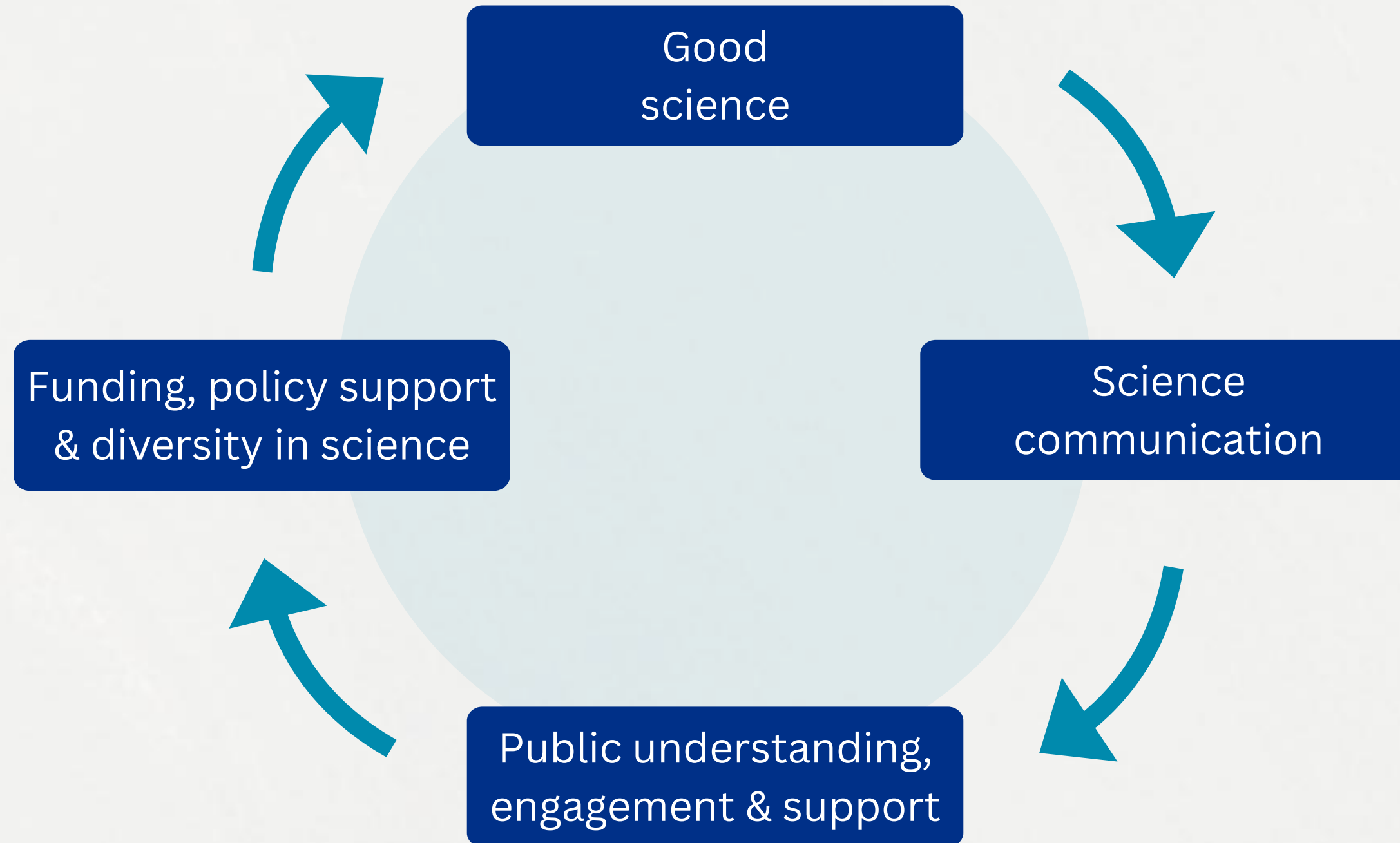
Agenda

- 1 What is science communication?



Method and purpose – who are you talking to?

How can we define good science communication?



PAERI'26: Navigating Science Communication in a Shifting Landscape

18-20 March 2026 | EuXFEL and DESY



Ottolie Goodfellow | 24 June 2026

PAERI'26: Navigating Science Communication in a Shifting Landscape

18-20 March 2026 | EuXFEL and DESY



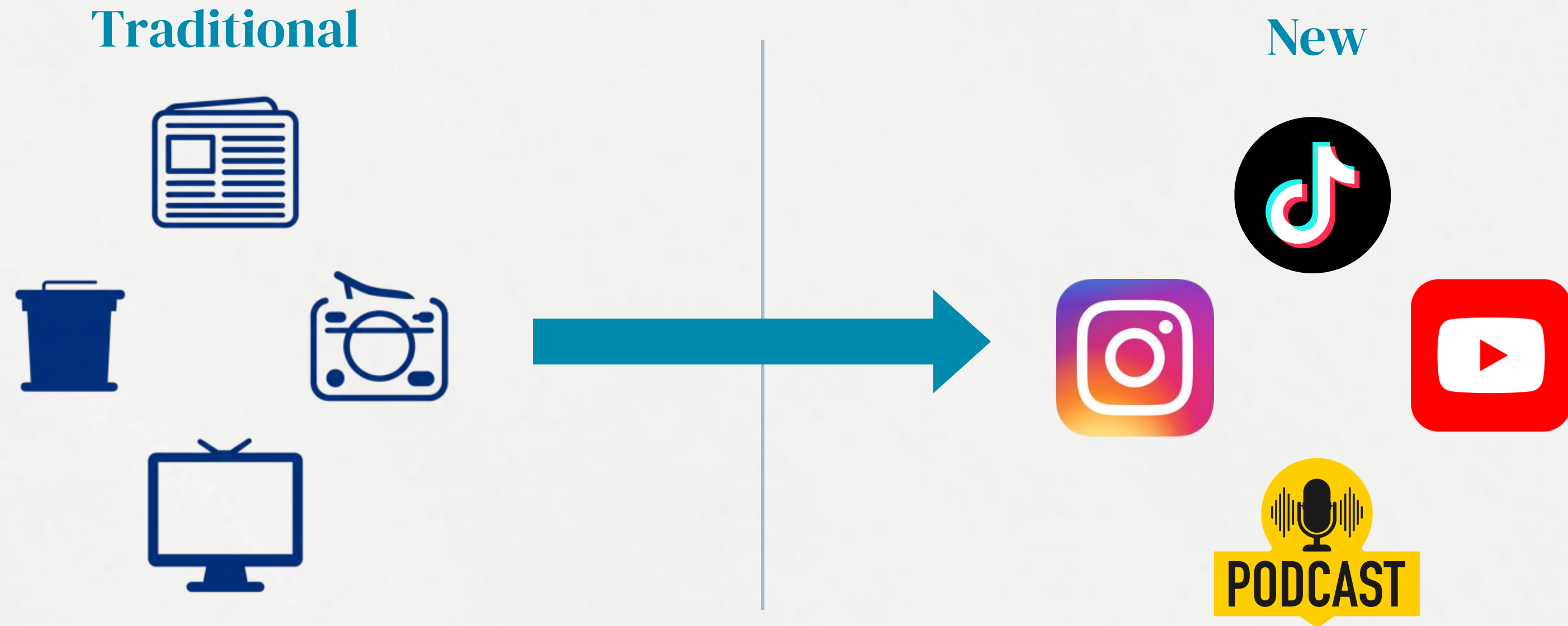
SCIENCE COMMUNICATION IS CHANGING



Agenda

- 1 What is science communication?
- 2 **What changes are impacting science communication?**

The shift from traditional to new media



Anyone can create and anything can be shared

Fragmented audiences

- More platforms with more creators = competing for attention
- Requires tailored, platform-specific content instead of a single, unified broadcast
- Harder and more time-consuming to disseminate accurate, interesting science information impactfully



Spread of mis- and disinformation

Misinformation

False or misleading information shared without intent to harm

Disinformation

False information spread deliberately to deceive or manipulate

- Very prevalent on social media
- Hard to police and verify credibility
- Vaccine safety, climate change, 5G etc.

Fake news travels faster

MIT study (Vosoughi, Roy & Aral, Science, 2018)

- 126,000 rumour cascades
- spread by ~3 million people
- 2006-2017



Fake news was:

70%

more likely to be reshared than true news

6X

faster to reach 1,500 people

CERN conspiracy theories

8 April 2024: LHC restart coincided with total solar eclipse over Canada and USA



Vision4theBlind @Vision4theBlind

So on April 8 the day of the Solar Eclipse, CERN will be starting up again.

On April 8, 1904 Aleister Crowley made contact with an entity (demon) called Aiwass. It was this entity that dictated Crowley's Book of Law.

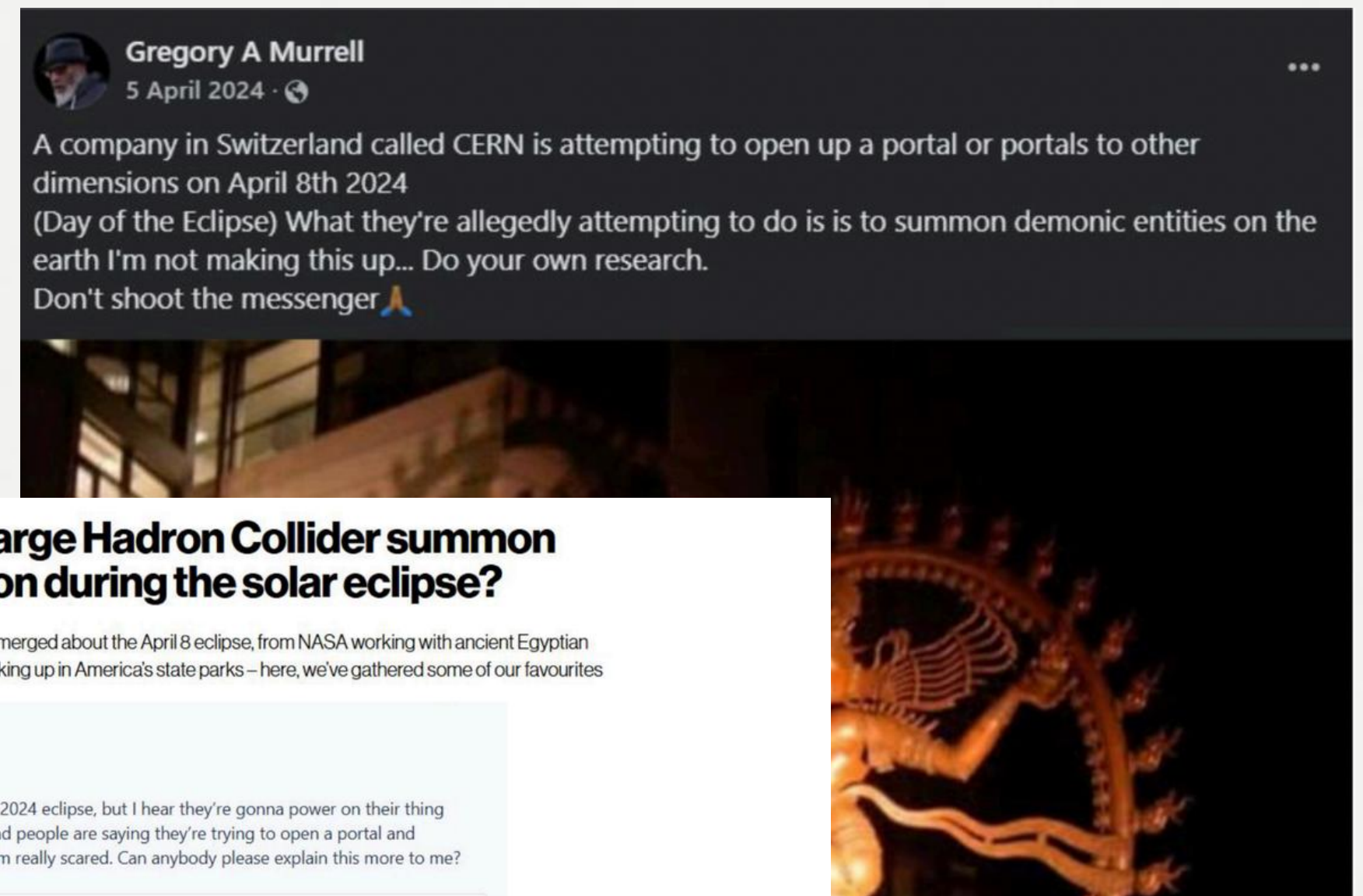
Is CERN trying to make contact with this demon?

Christopher Santiago @Chris_now88
Replying to @NickHintonn
make contact with Aiwass





Aiwass is the name given to a voice that the British occultist and ceremonial magician Aleister Crowley reported to have heard on April 8 and 10 in 1904. Crowley reported that the voice, which he considered originated with a non-terrestrial or aroreale being, dictated a text known as The Book of the Law.

Last edited 1:25 AM · Mar 28, 2024 · 608.9K Views



Gregory A Murrell
5 April 2024 · 🌐

A company in Switzerland called CERN is attempting to open up a portal or portals to other dimensions on April 8th 2024 (Day of the Eclipse) What they're allegedly attempting to do is to summon demonic entities on the earth I'm not making this up... Do your own research. Don't shoot the messenger 🙏



Will the Large Hadron Collider summon a demon during the solar eclipse?

Some conspiracies have emerged about the April 8 eclipse, from NASA working with ancient Egyptian deities, to sleeping giants waking up in America's state parks – here, we've gathered some of our favourites

r/CERN · 2y ago · 10k · Poetry6064

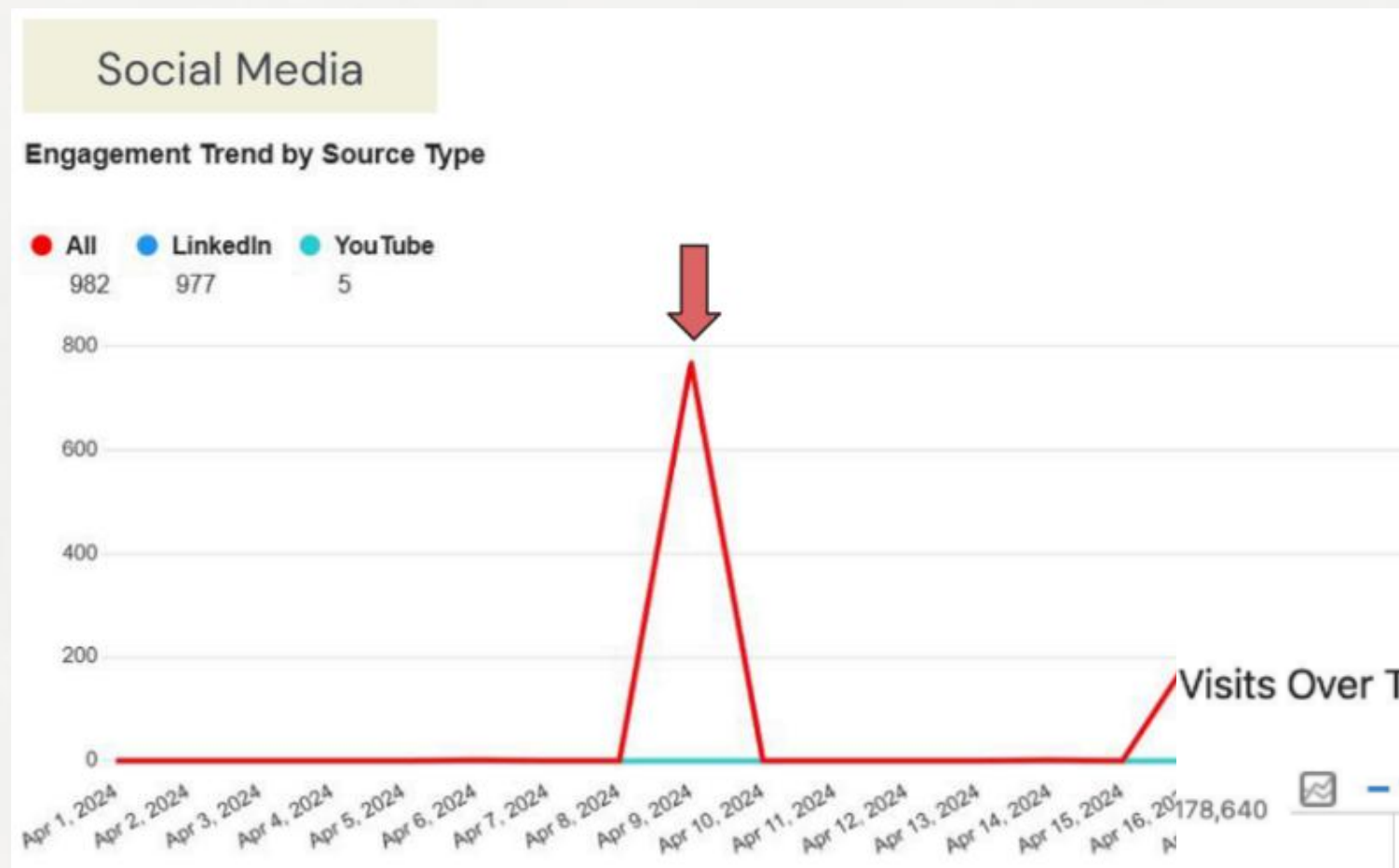
very worried

askCERN

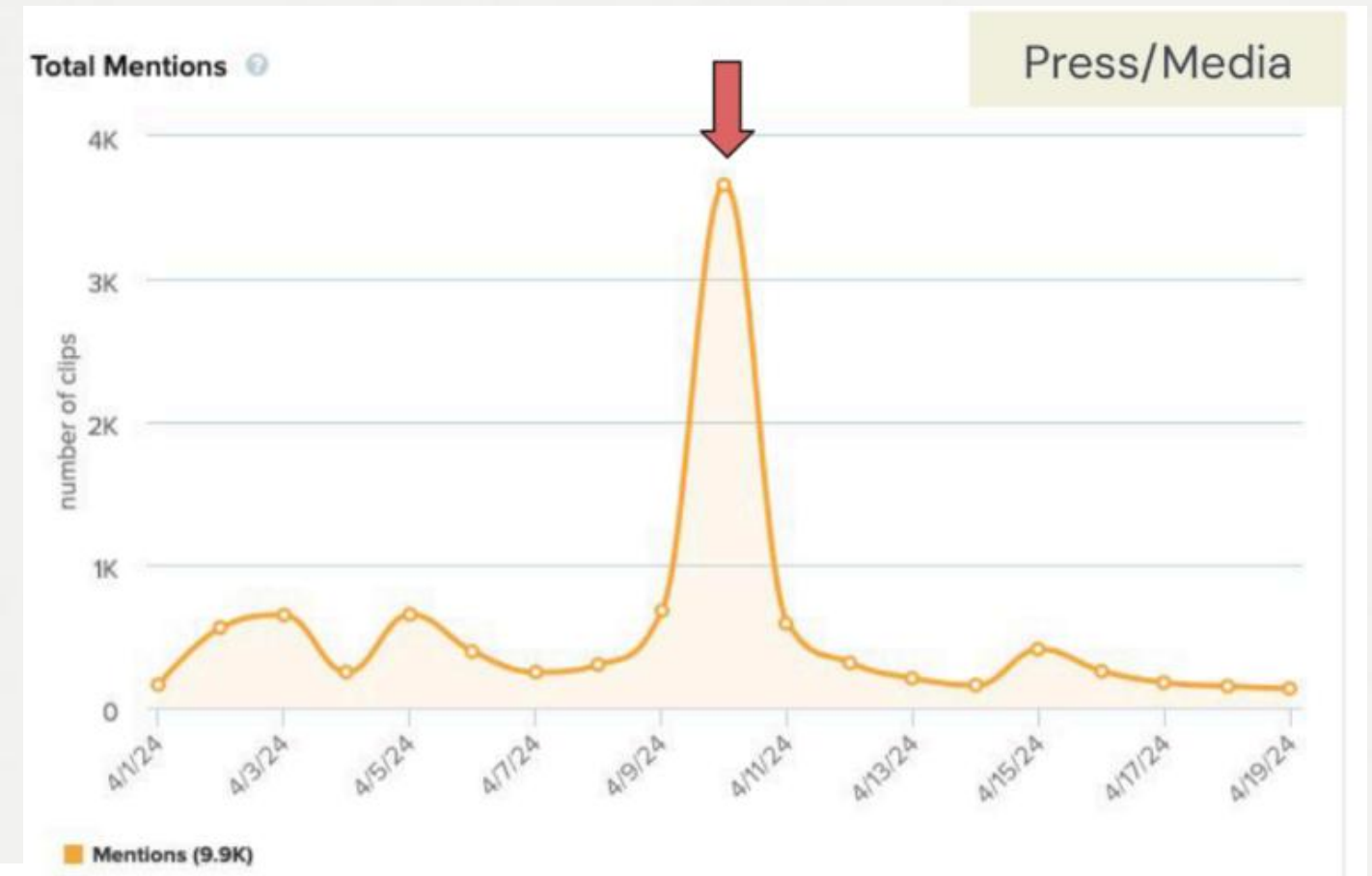
can anyone just soothe me real quick. ik about April 8 2024 eclipse, but I hear they're gonna power on their thing that's supposed to collide particles and dark matter and people are saying they're trying to open a portal and stuff.plus shift timelines and all that. I'm only 15, and im really scared. Can anybody please explain this more to me?

Example shared at PAERI'26 by Tyra Kaddu-Mulindwa (CERN), “Correcting the conspiracies: How CERN manages misinformation”

CERN conspiracy theories



Visits Over Time

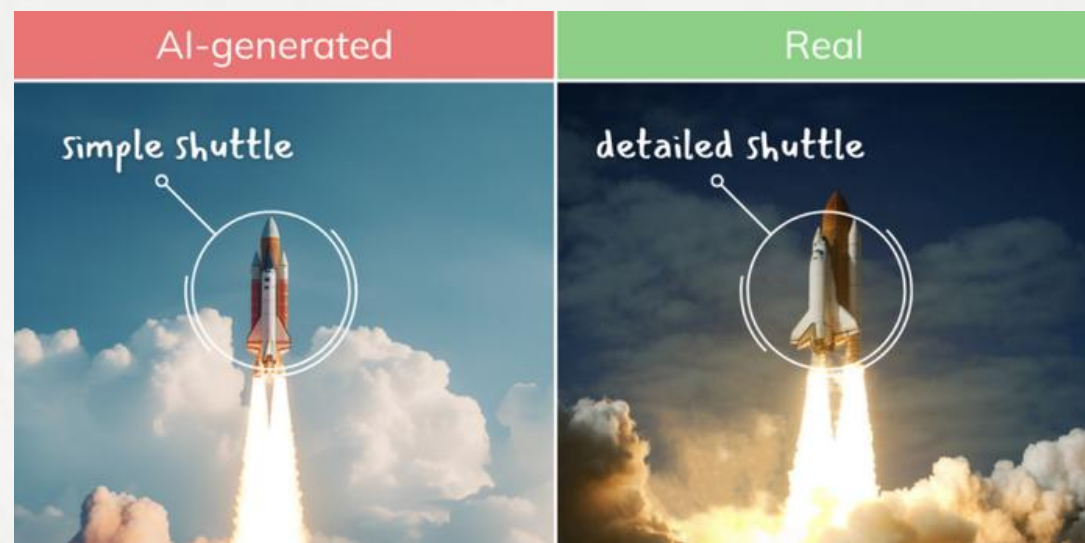


Figures shared at PAERI'26 by Tyra Kaddu-Mulindwa (CERN), "Correcting the conspiracies: How CERN manages misinformation"

GenAI: threat or tool?

Threat

- Synthetic text, images and video – indistinguishable from real
- AI search tools surfacing unverified claims as fact



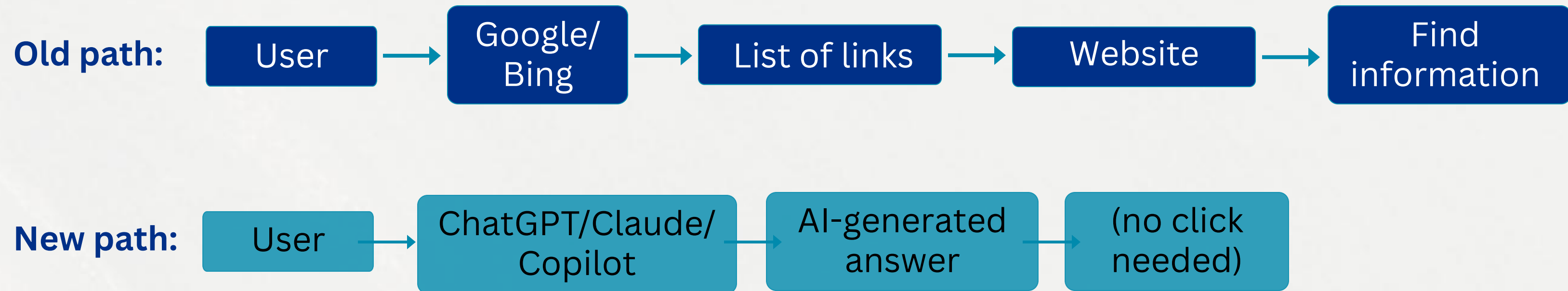
Tool

- Find and synthesise scientific literature
- Translation, summarisation, personalisation



Searching for information with GenAI

58% of people are replacing traditional searches with GenAI



Inspired by Nancy Jackman (Marketbridge), “A shifting landscape: Generative AI in research infrastructure comms”, PAERI’26

Generative Engine Optimisation

The practice of structuring and refining digital content so that AI-driven search and answer engines—like ChatGPT, Perplexity, or Google’s AI Overviews—can accurately interpret, summarise, and cite it.

- Functions differently from SEO
- URLs cited by AI rarely matches what Google/Bing ranks
- What influence is possible?



Inspired by Nancy Jackman (Marketbridge), “A shifting landscape: Generative AI in research infrastructure comms”, PAERI’26

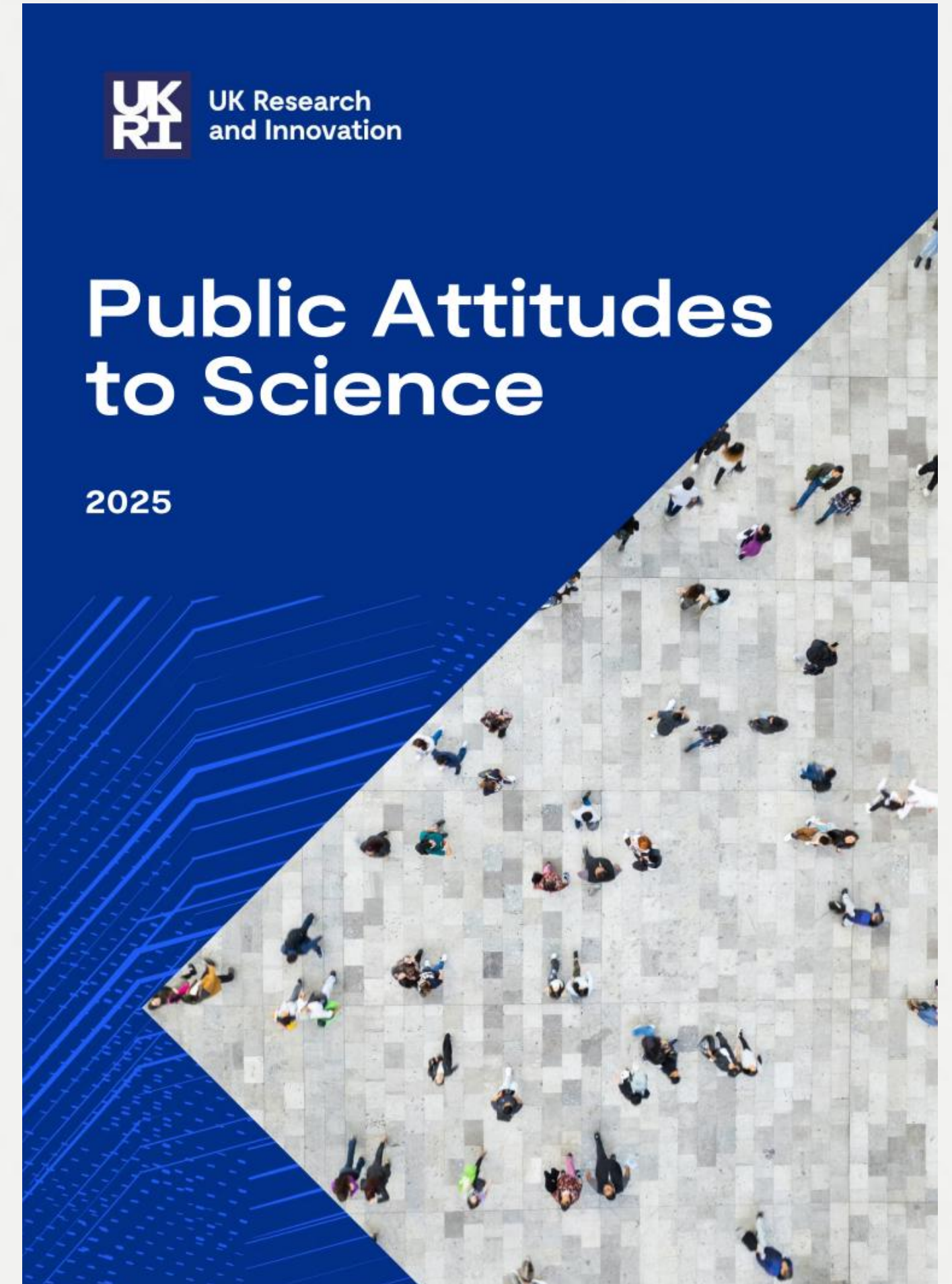
Agenda

- 1 What is science communication?
- 2 What changes are impacting science communication?
- 3 **What do people think about science & scientists?**

What does the UK public think?

- Views on scientists
- Responsible and ethical science
- New and emerging technologies
- Consumption of science
- Participation in science
- Science capital

Source: Ipsos / UKRI, Public Attitudes to Science 2025.
Figures in slides 19 to 30 from PAS 2025.



Key findings of PAS 2025

A public that continues to value science, research and innovation



A new backdrop of uncertainty, ambivalence and loss of trust



Fewer people feeling informed in an evolving media landscape



A younger generation more divided about science's place and contribution



Women continue to feel less informed and approach science differently



A desire for public involvement, dialogue and representation



Science capital: how to deepen a sense of connectedness to science

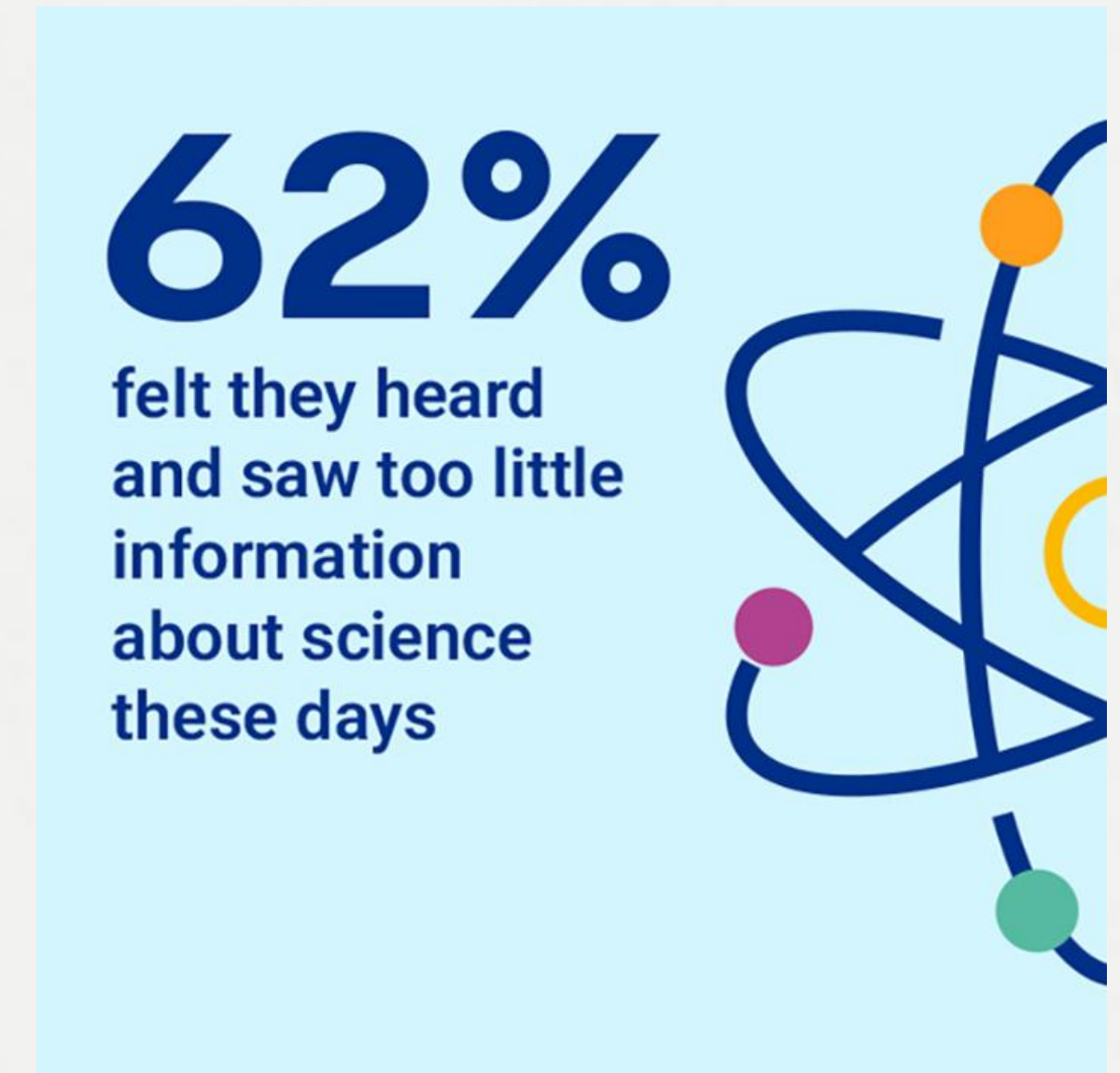
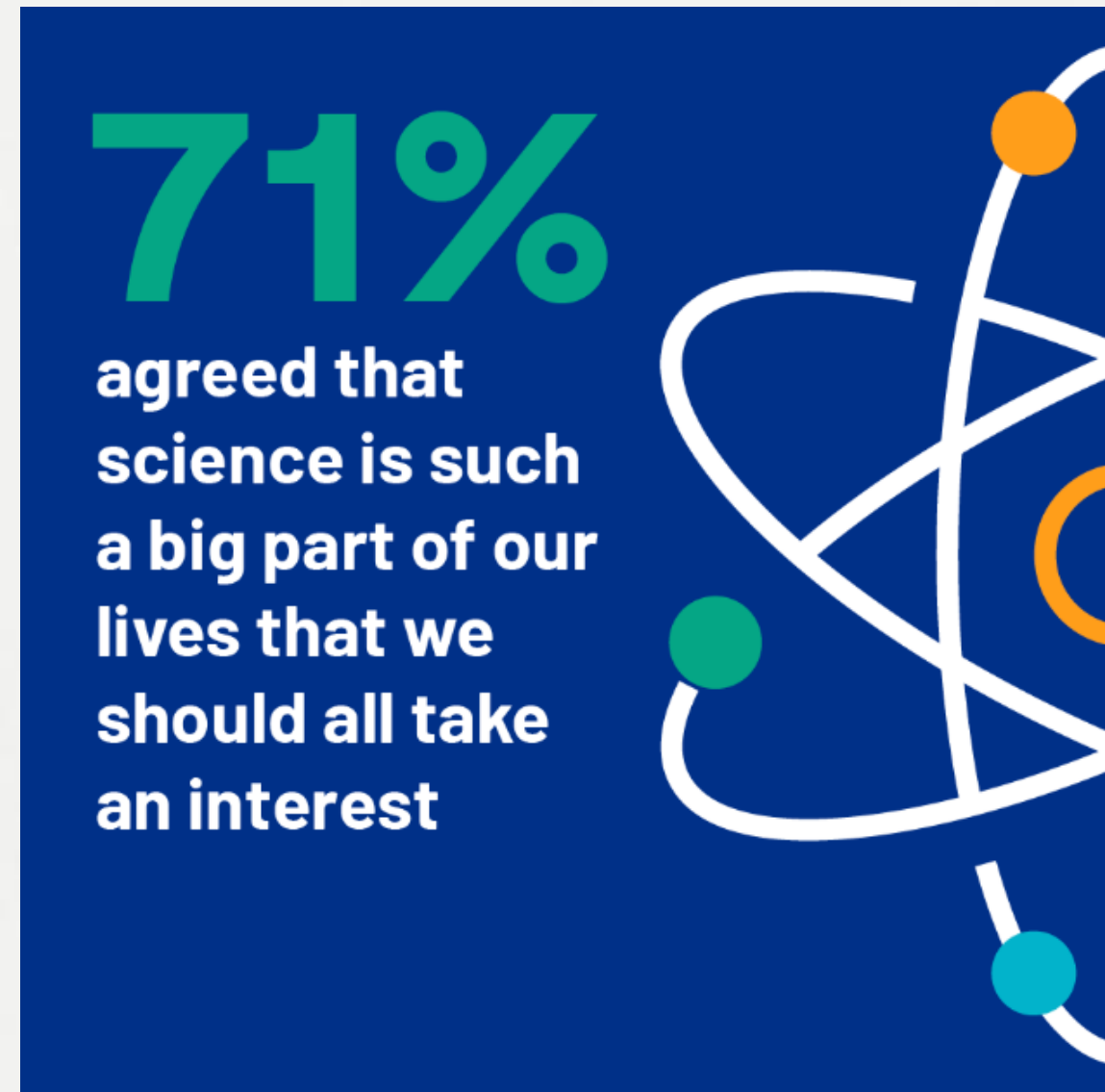


Conclusions: a different era for public attitudes to science



What science means

- We should all be interested in science
- Shift from outright disengagement to passive engagement
- Fewer people are feeling well informed
43% from 51% in 2019



Views on scientists and researchers

82% agreed that scientists...

74% agreed that researchers...

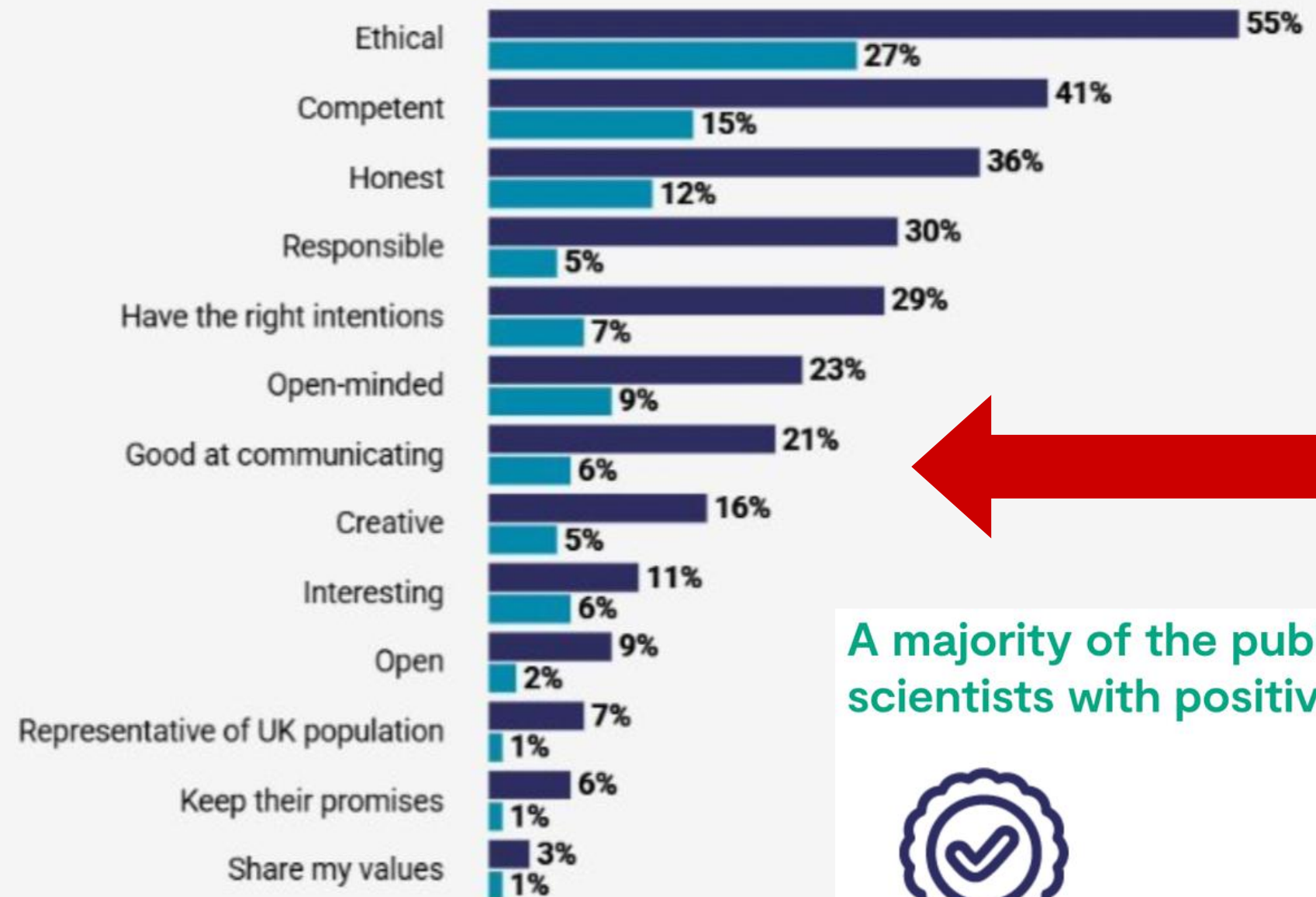
69% agreed that people working in innovation roles...

...make a valuable contribution to society

Traits associated with scientists

What are the top 3 traits the public feel are the most important for scientists to have?

■ % selecting trait among their top 3 priorities for scientists ■ % selecting trait as their top priority for scientists



Base: 5,281 UK adults age 16 or over

A majority of the public associated scientists with positive traits.



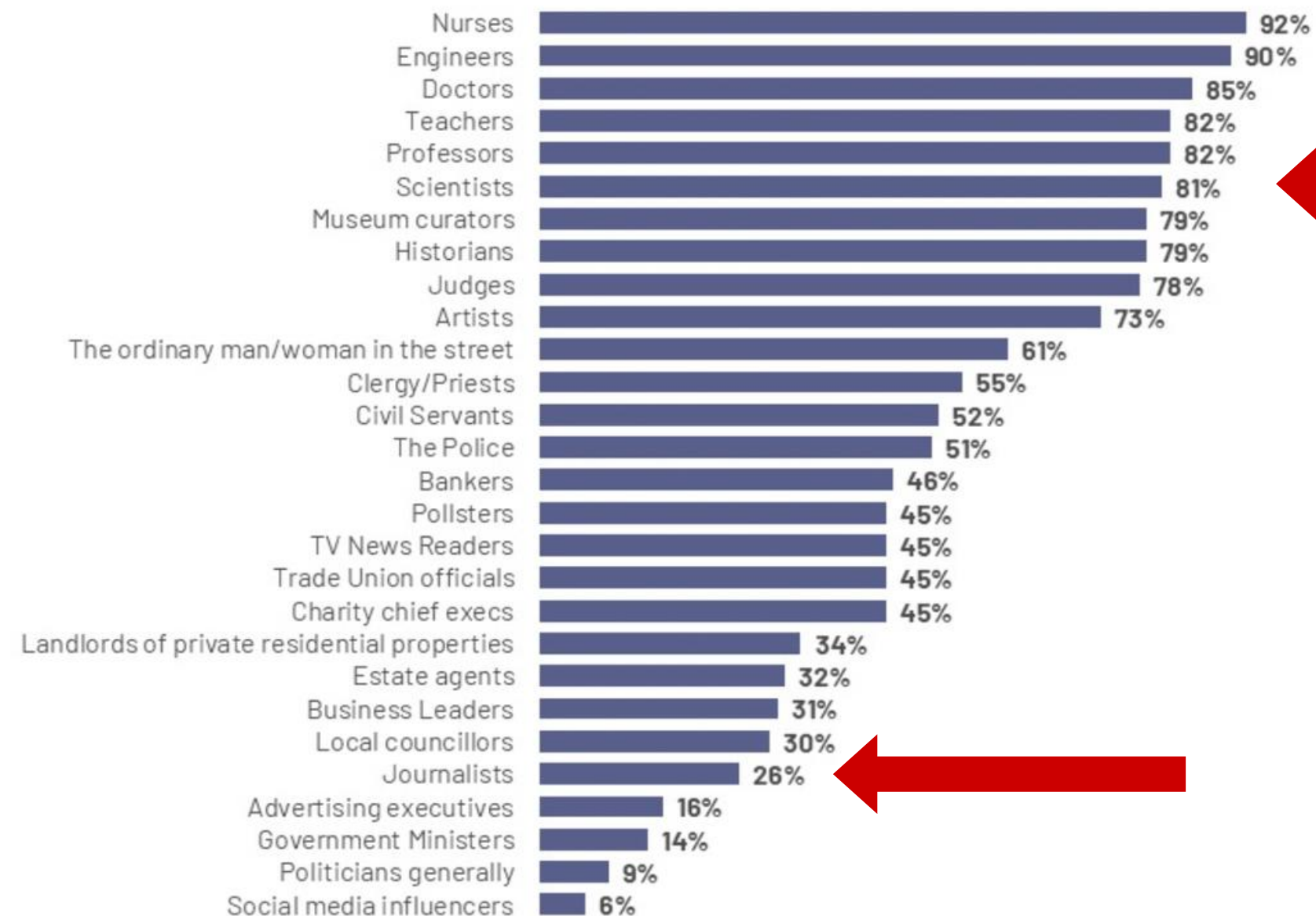
Scientists vs communicators

2025 Veracity Index

All professions

“Now I will read you a list of different types of people. For each would you tell me if you generally trust them to tell the truth, or not?”

% trust to tell the truth



We need scientists to get involved in communications!



Base: 1,022 British adults aged 16+, interviewed by telephone 5 - 11 November 2025

© Ipsos | Veracity Index 2025 | November 2025 | Version 1 | Public

2



Embracing technology - with reservations

67%

agreed that technology is improving people's lives



42%

agreed that the speed of development in science and technology means that it cannot be properly controlled by government



33%

felt the benefits of AI outweighed the risks



36%

felt the risks outweighed the benefits

Communicating with the public

76%

agreed that those who regulate science need to communicate with the public. This sentiment was, however, less strong among young people aged 16 to 24 (63% agreed).

59%

agreed that they would like more scientists to spend more time discussing the social and ethical implications of their research with the public – a statement that resonated similarly across genders and age groups.

56%

agreed that scientists should be rewarded for communicating their research to the public.

Shifts in the media landscape

- 16-24s: new media has surpassed TV, radio and newspapers
- Top platforms: Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter)

65%

had actively sought out scientific information in the last 2 weeks

77%

had passively come across scientific information in the last 2 weeks

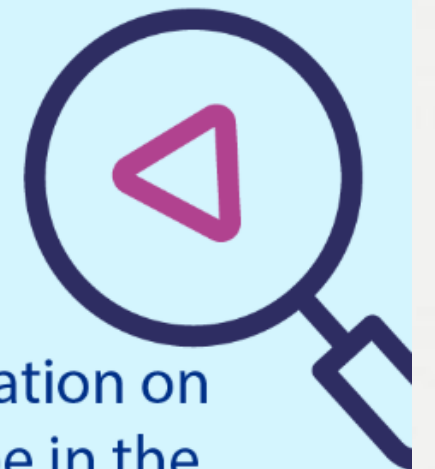


36%

actively sought out science-related information on social media or YouTube in the last 2 weeks

40%

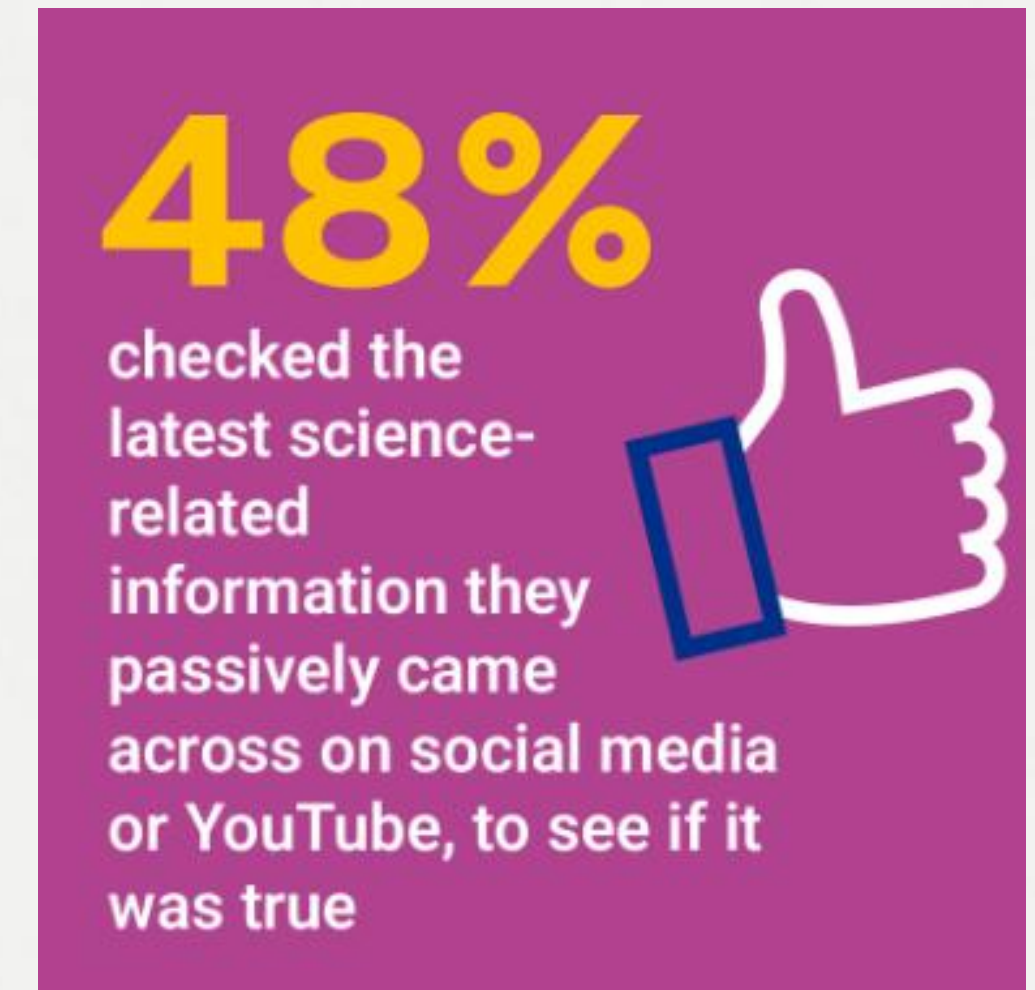
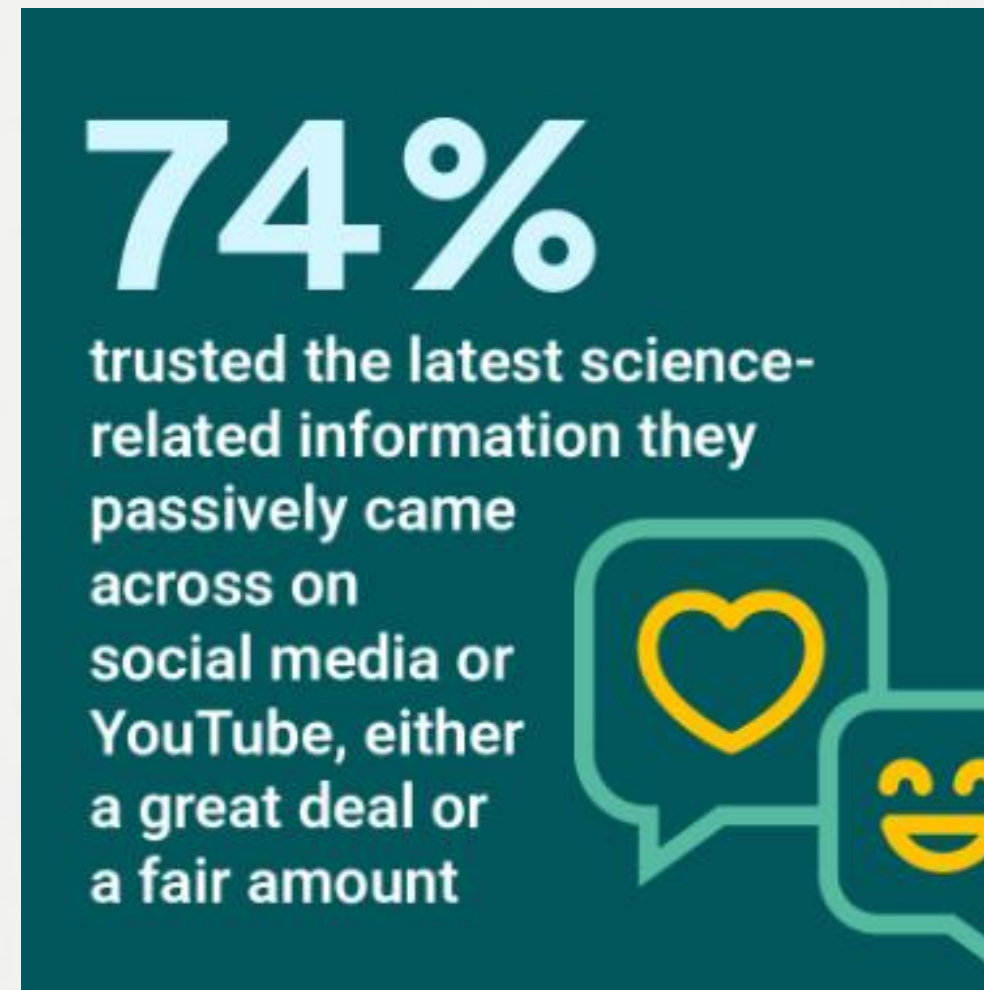
passively came across science-related information on social media or YouTube in the last 2 weeks



Who are people trusting for science-related information?

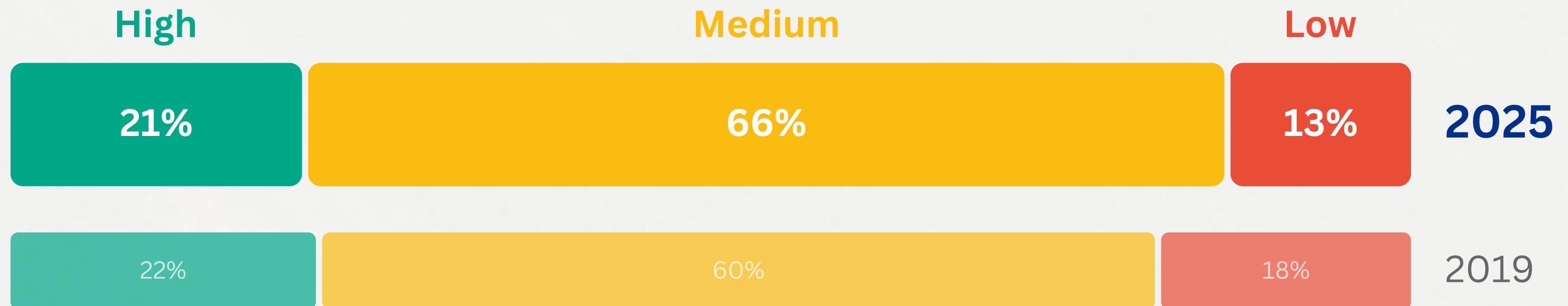
- Trust equal across all channels
- Based on institutional confidence, not verification

**Institutional credibility =
currency**



Science capital – who has it?

The sum of an individual's science-related knowledge, attitudes, experiences, and social connections that influence their engagement and aspirations in science



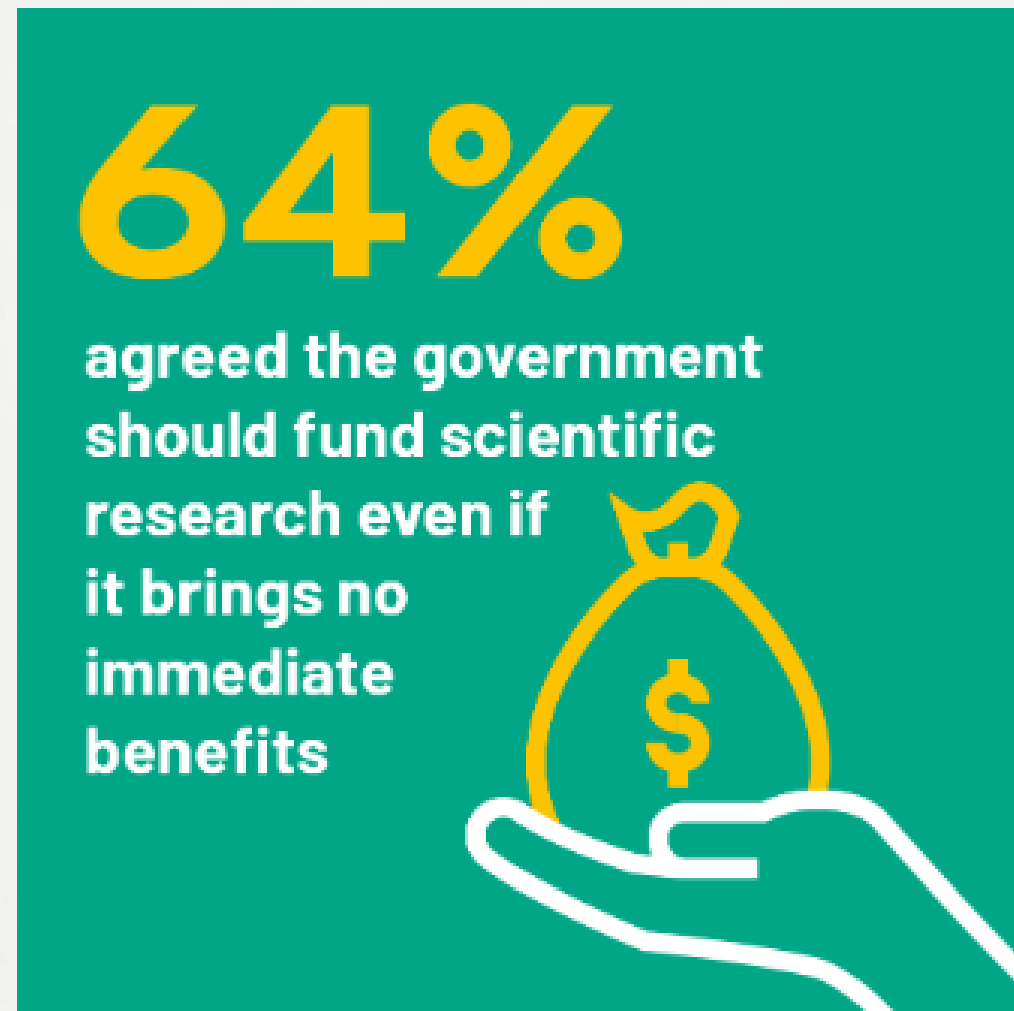
The middle is growing – but the top isn't

Links between science capital and attitudes towards science

| | High Science Capital | Low Science Capital |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|
| Support for govt. funding of blue-sky research | 84% | 44% |
| Sought out science-related information | 91% | 17% |
| Agreed science increased personal prosperity | 84% | 13% |

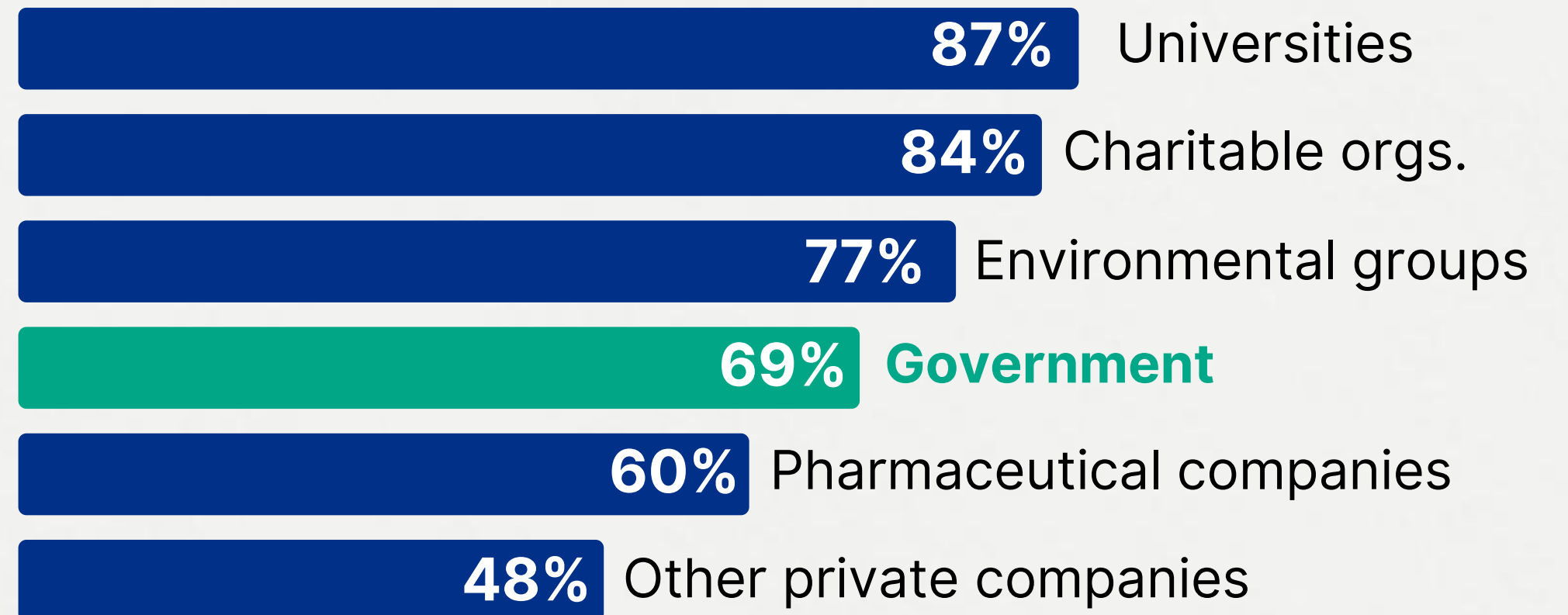
To improve general attitudes towards science, we need to improve science capital

Blue-skies research and institution type



Down from 76-79% in previous surveys

Public trust by institution



Conclusions from PAS 2025

- ① The public values science and wants to hear more about it
- ② Scientists are broadly trusted, respected and associated with positive traits
- ③ Consumption of science is shifting fast from traditional to new media
- ④ More access hasn't led to more understanding - uncertainty is rising
- ⑤ Science capital is the strongest predictor of support for science

What can we do with this data?

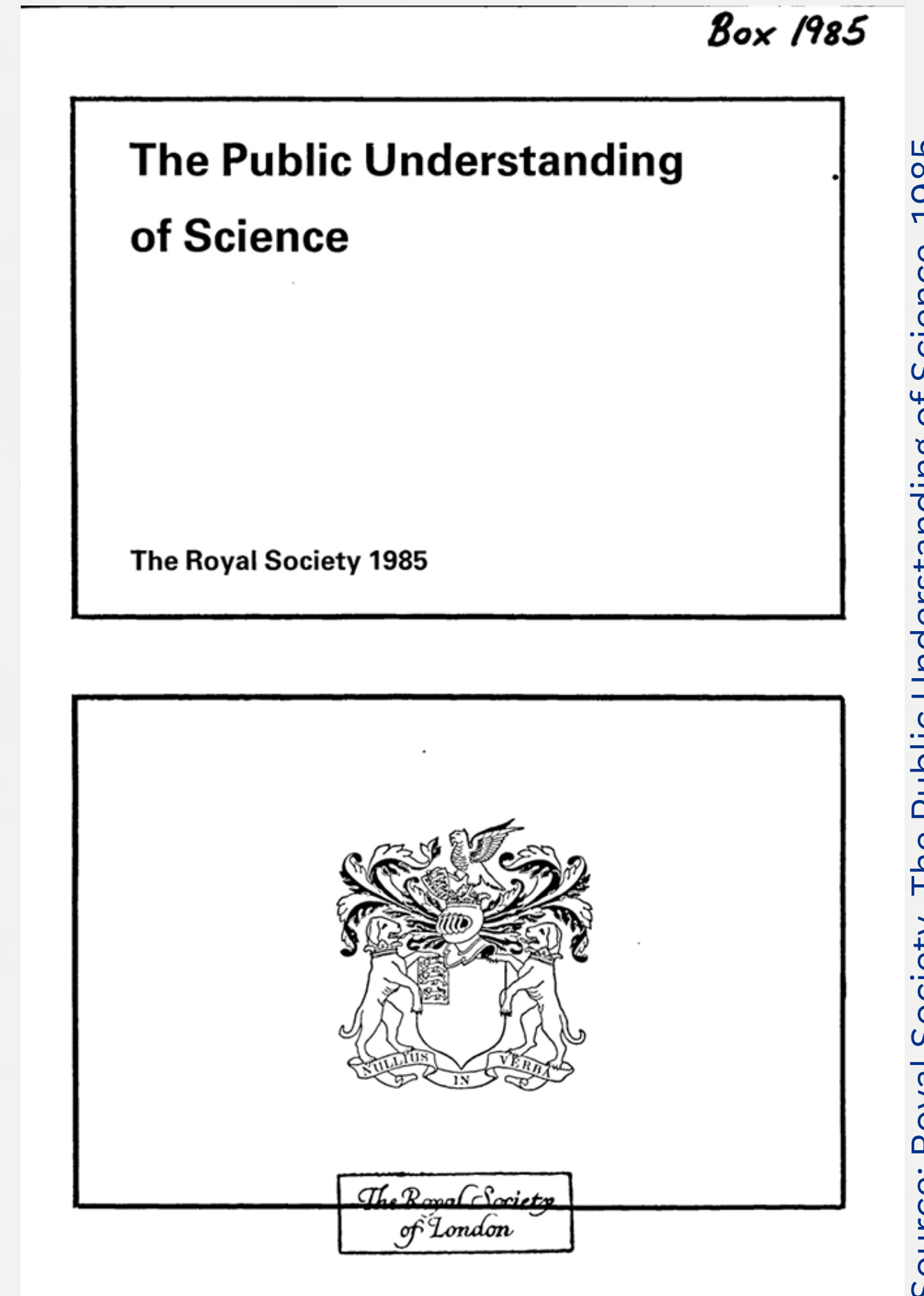
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The first recognition for science communication?

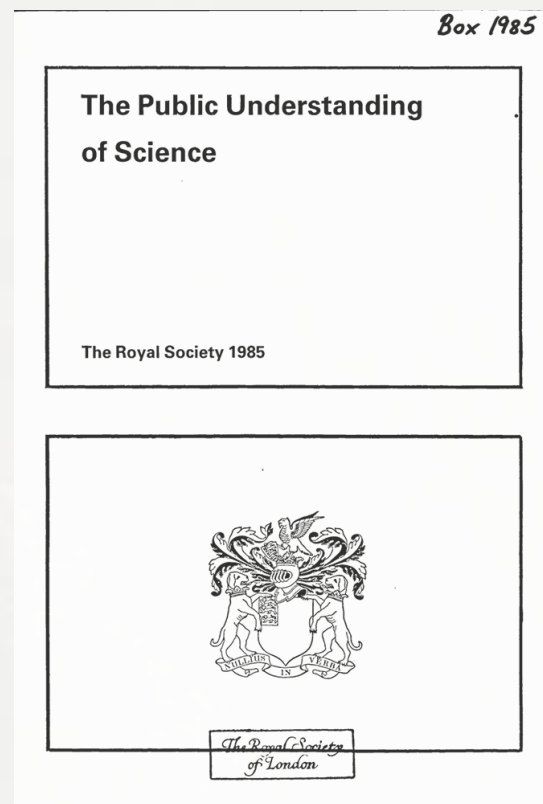
Turning point – public engagement became a legitimate part of being a scientist

- 📅 National Science Week created
- 📄 PE statements required in grant applications
- 💰 Research Councils funded public understanding
- 🎤 Faraday Lecture introduced



Source: Royal Society, The Public Understanding of Science, 1985

Bodmer revisited: the Science for society report



The Public Understanding of Science, 1985

40+ years



Science for Society, 2026

Source: Royal Society, Science for society, 2026

What Bodmer couldn't have predicted



The Digital World

- 1985: 13% of homes had a computer
- 2026: Instant access to almost all human knowledge



AI

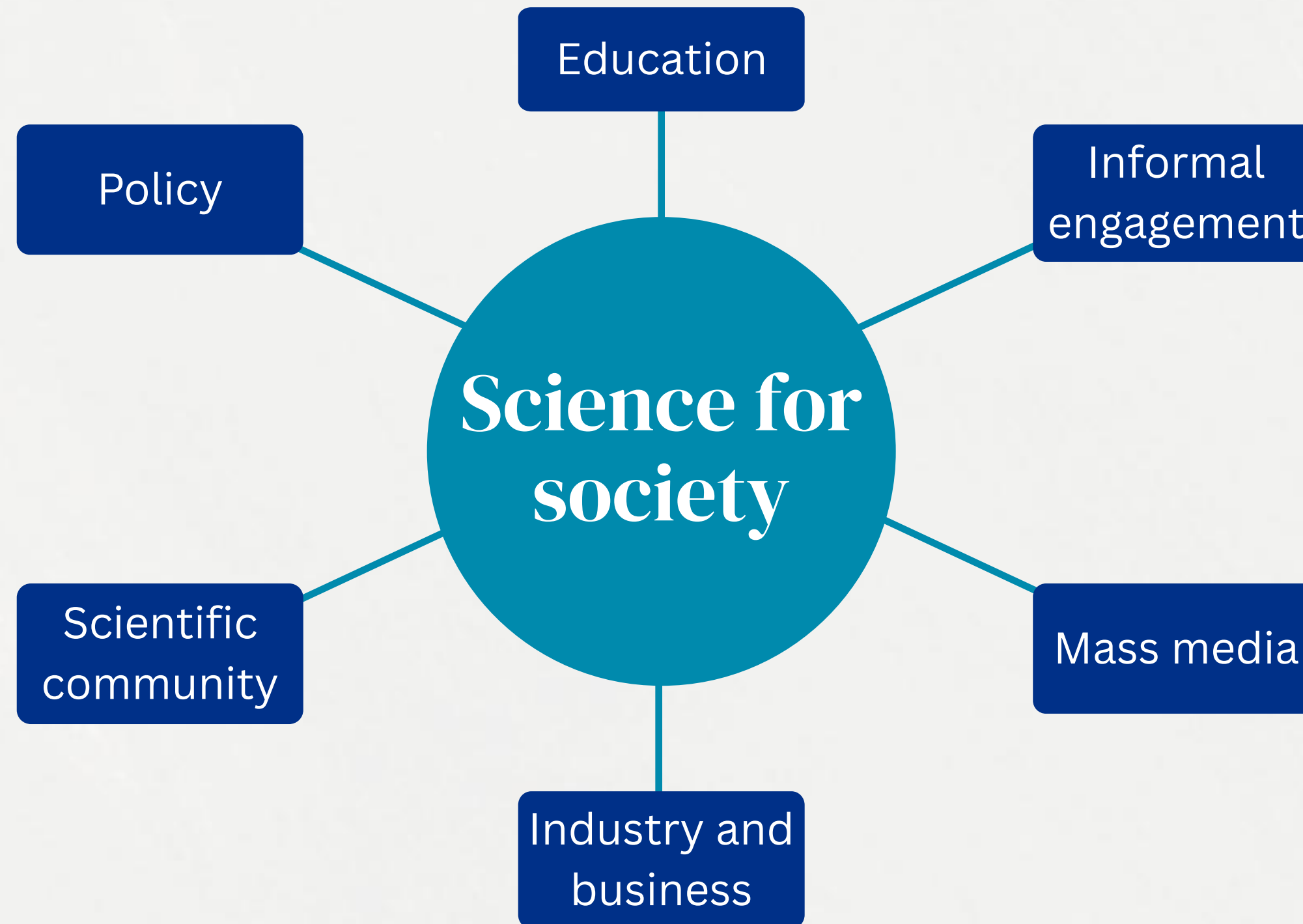
- The new report's equivalent unknown
- Could accelerate scientific discovery
- Public deeply polarised on benefits vs. risks



Misinformation at Scale

- Unlimited content = democratised access
- Competition for trustworthy information

Key Themes & Recommendations



The gap between wanting to and being able to

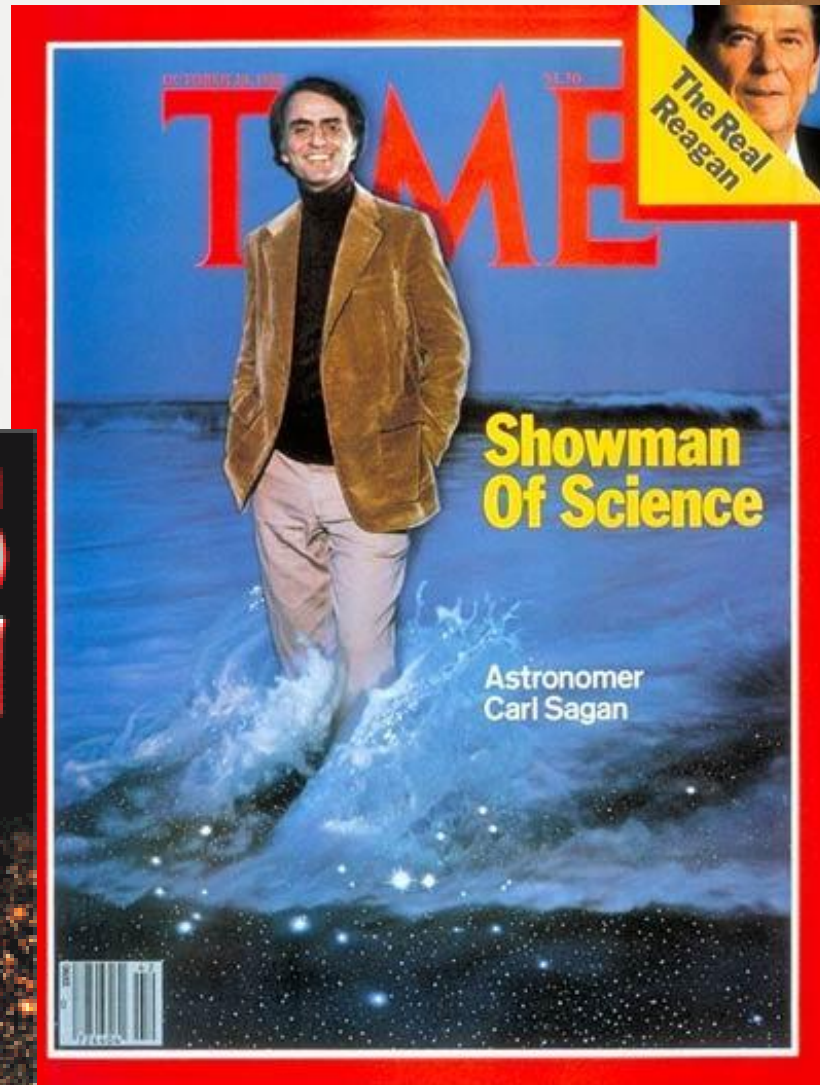
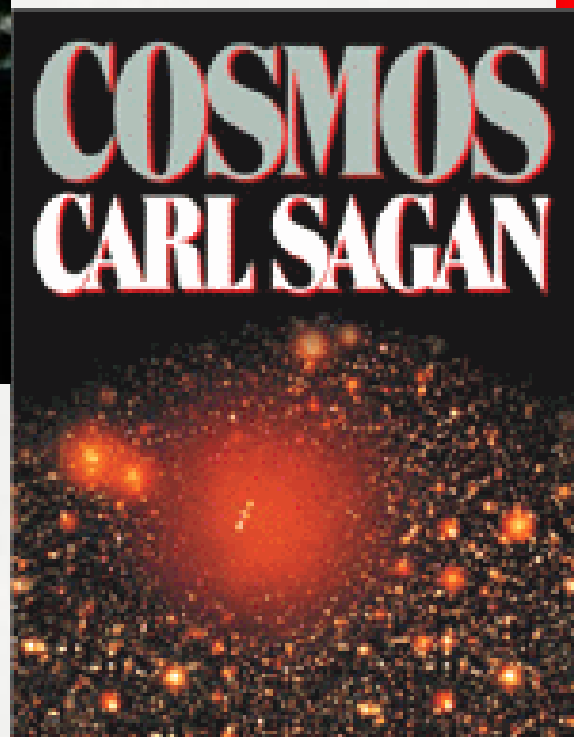
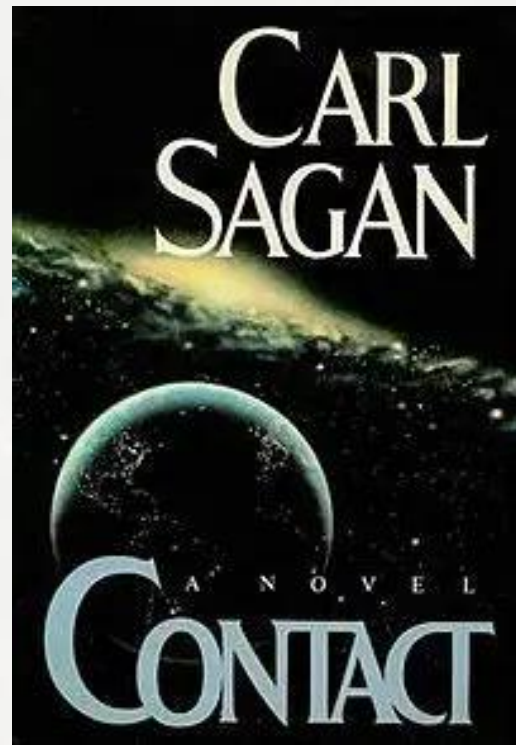
How do we bridge the gap?

- Sci comm training
- Career progression criteria
- Protected time
- Explicit outreach budgets



The Sagan effect

Too public to be taken seriously?



Science is a two-way street

The 'Deficit model' of science communication

- expert to audience
- criticised in House of Lords Science and Technology Committee's 2000 report

New era:

- Citizen science (e.g. Big Butterfly Count)
- Participatory research
- Dialogues on ethics and implications



My sightings

Edit your species sightings

| | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
|  | Large White 8 Remove |  | Small White 39 Remove |
|  | Comma 2 Remove |  | Red Admiral 1 Remove |
|  | Peacock 1 Remove |  | Common Blue 1 Remove |

Agenda

- 1 What is science communication?
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- 3 What do people think about science & scientists?
- 4 What are the recommendations for this new era of science communication?
- 5 **What comms does PPD do, and how can you get involved?**

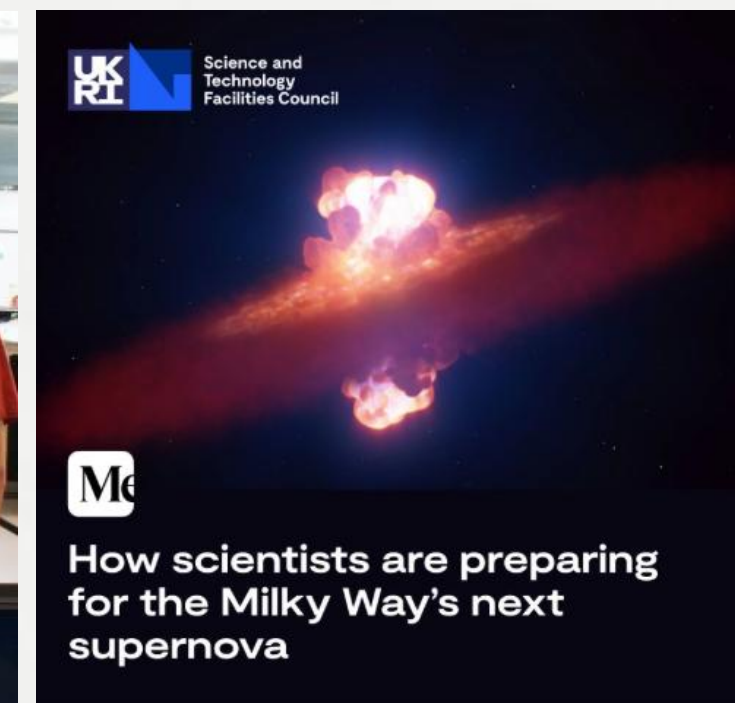
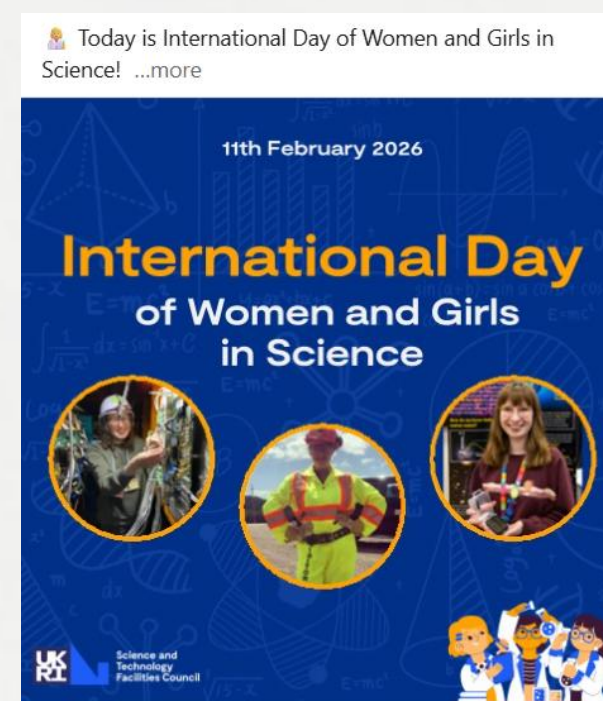
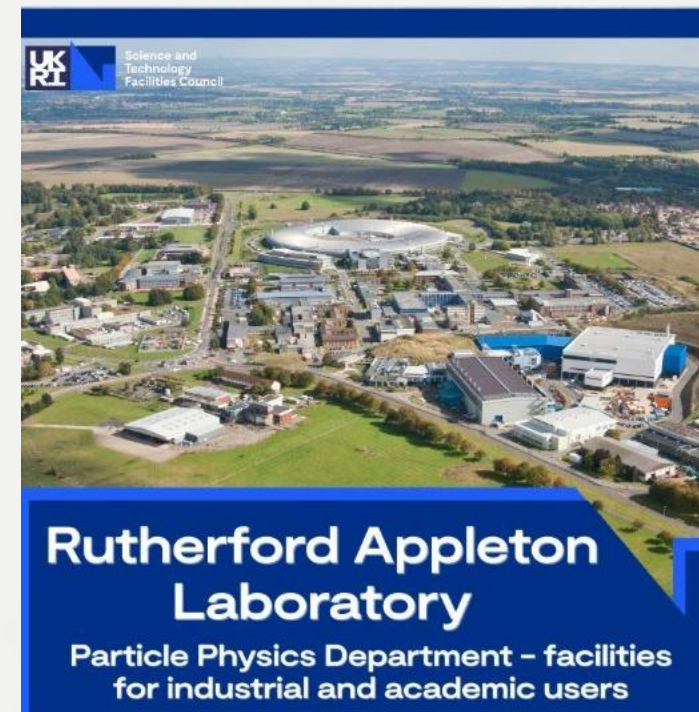
Science communication at PPD

External Comms

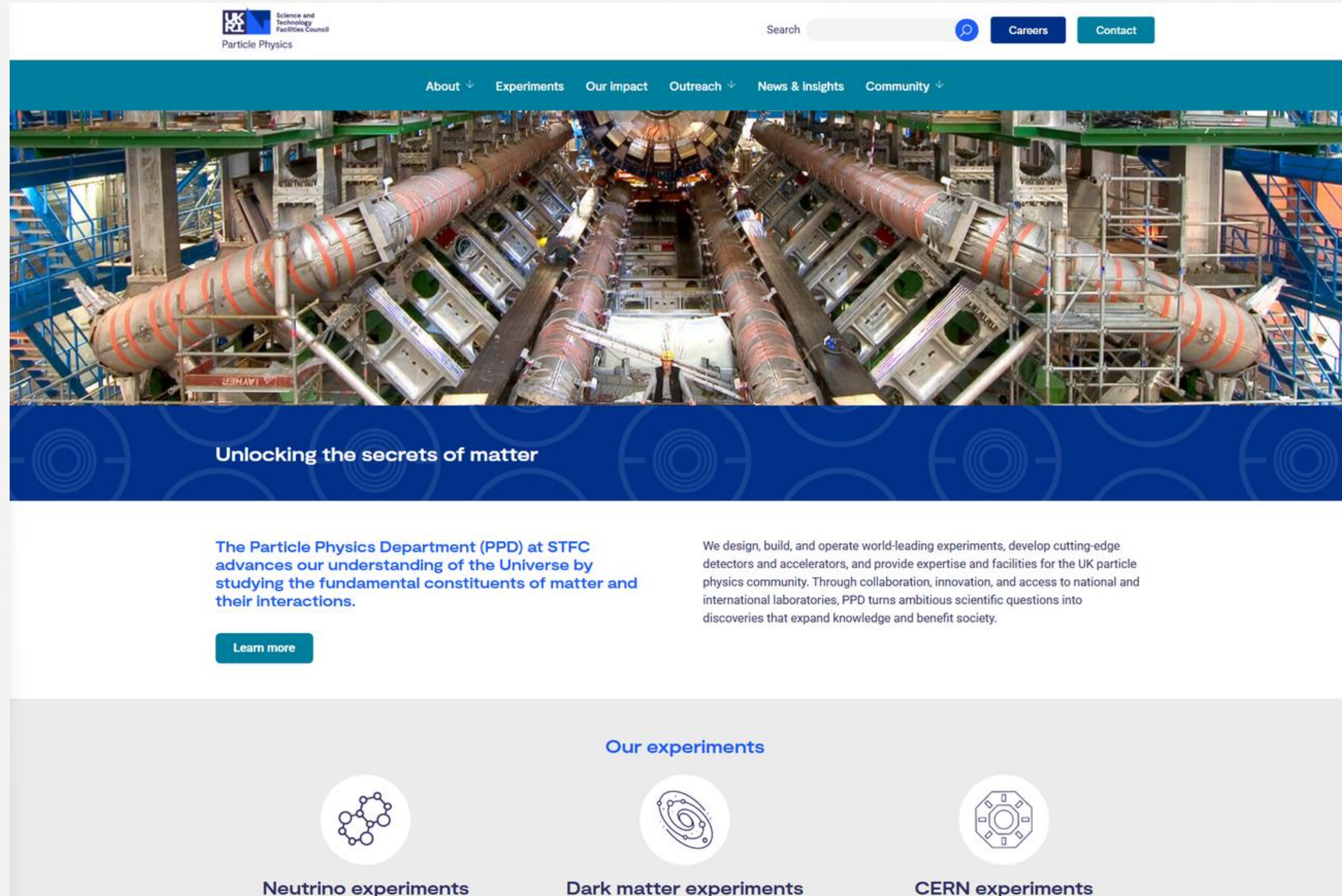
- LinkedIn
- Website
- Articles and press releases
- Photos, videos, posters

Internal Comms

- Monthly newsletter
- TV news screens
- Quarterly highlights for EB
- The Source and STFC webinars



New PPD website!



Science communication at PPD

Public Engagement

- Masterclasses
- Work & Engineering Experience programmes
- Visits and tours
- Public access days



How YOU can get involved

- PPD Public Engagement meetings
- Volunteer at events – masterclasses, access days etc.
- Register as a STEM Ambassador – mailing list
- Become a Summer Work Experience supervisor



How YOU can get involved

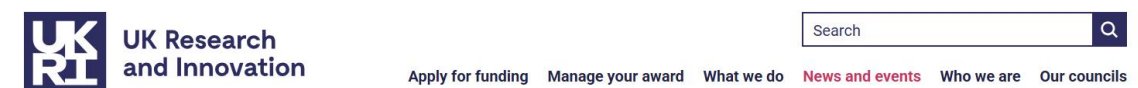
- Upcoming result, paper, or milestone? Share early!
- No ideas too small
- Engage! Follow us on LinkedIn

ATLAS ITk Strip Collaboration review

In September, the ATLAS ITk Strip Collaboration passed its Repeat Production Readiness Review for the barrel module assembly and stave loading of the new ITk Strip Detector.

In RAL's R115 cleanroom, PPD and TD teams, together with international partners, have been making and testing strip modules and staves, which will form the outer region of the new ITk detector.

The successful review formally approved full-scale production ahead of installation at CERN.



[Home](#) > [News](#) > [UK scientists at heart of new heavy proton discovery at CERN](#)

UK scientists at heart of new heavy proton discovery at CERN



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Particle Physics

AION collaboration marks step towards search for dark matter and gravitational waves with quantum sensors

Summary

- ① Sci Comms is no longer one way – it's a dialogue between science and society
- ② Landscape has shifted: new media, AI and misinformation have changed the game
- ③ Public support for science is real and needs nurturing
- ④ Building science capital builds positive attitudes towards science
- ⑤ You can (and should!) get involved with public engagement

Thank you. Questions?