

Media and Social Media Communications Toolkit

Produced by the **IET Communications team** to help **volunteers**
and **members** promote their work **through the media**.

www.theiet.org



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1 Introduction

IET Communities are the face and ambassadors of the IET at a local level and have the potential to bring engineering and the IET to a much wider audience. Local Network events support the IET's mission to inspire, inform and influence – and are an opportunity to promote the value of engineering to the public, so it is always good to promote your work as widely as possible.

Using the media and social media will allow you to:

- Get your messages across to a larger audience
- Promote your events and other newsworthy stories
- Grow awareness for both your community's work and the wider work of the IET

The IET Communications team can identify relevant journalists so that you can develop these relationships. The team is on hand to offer you support and advice on how to approach the media and what to do if they approach you.

This short guide highlights what you need to know about engaging with the local media and who you can ask to for advice. It contains key information about the IET that will help when speaking to your local media.



2 Promoting your events

We want to help all IET Communities to use their local media and social media to promote their activities and events:

- Print media: local papers, specialist press (e.g. academic journals) and trade publications
- Social media: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and others
- Local television
- Local radio
- Online media

This guide will help you build relationships with your local media. If you are contacted by national and international media, or think you have a story they may be interested in, please contact the IET Communications team who can help you with next steps.



3 Press releases

The main way to communicate a story to the local media is by a press release. A press release can be used to communicate a story that comes from you (proactive), or it can be your comment on a story that already exists (reactive).

Often, a journalist will receive hundreds of press releases in a day. So it is crucial that your press release is excellent and stands out from the crowd. That means it should be written in a journalist-friendly way, with a catchy headline and a strong opening line. It should answer the obvious questions about your event such as: what, when, why, who and where. It should also be in the IET's house-style. That way, your stories will beat the competition.

We have found from experience that the best way to do this is by following the steps below:

- Discuss with the IET Communications team the story you would like to run a month prior to the event
- Write your press release
- Send it to the Communications team at least two weeks prior to the event
- The Communications team will suggest improvements so that it fits the in-house and journalistic style
- The Communications team may be able to assist you with contact details of local journalists in your area
- You approve the press release and make any final tweaks
- You send it to relevant local media at least three days prior to your event. If the press release is not about an event, the IET Communications team can advise on timing
- We can also offer advice on how to 'pitch' the story should you want to call your local paper or a specialist publication

Press releases can also be sent to journalists immediately after an event with photographs.



As a guide, a good press release should include the following:

- A compelling headline in bold
- An opening paragraph that includes the most attention grabbing element of your story
- Answer the questions 'who, what, when, where and why'
- Any necessary further details and facts
- Always include a quote from the organiser/Local Network chair/IET volunteer or IET Trustee as appropriate
- Below the 'ENDS' line, some 'notes to editors' that will give journalists more information they may require, but that it may not be appropriate to publish
- Contact details for whoever is handling media for your IET Community
- The press release ends with a "boilerplate"
- The final document should be approximately one side of A4
- Recent IET press releases can be viewed [here](#)



Example press release based on Local Network event

News release

[Date that you are sending out the release]

Local robot triathlon event open to the public

The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) has teamed up with Derby's Silk Mill Museum to host a Robot Triathlon event for local teams to design and race robots in a series of challenges.

The free event has been organised by the IET's West Midlands Birmingham Local Network on Saturday 12 March and will kick start British Science Week, which takes place across the country on Friday 11 March – Sunday 20 March.

[Insert key quote here]

Visitors can watch robots compete in three challenges, from drag racing to navigation, to see which emerges as champion. They can also take part in a range of free activities such as learn about the IET's FIRST LEGO League and program a LEGO robot, build their own ChickBot and or program a CNC machine with nothing but a hand drawing.

To find out more about the event, please visit <http://www.theiet.org/events/local/227870.cfm>.

ENDS



Media enquiries to:

[Insert name and contact details for whoever will be handling media enquiries]

Notes to editors:

- Interview opportunities are available with IET spokespeople from a broad range of engineering and technology disciplines including cyber-security, energy, engineering skills, innovation, manufacturing, technology, transport and women in engineering.
- The IET is one of Europe's largest professional engineering bodies with 169,000 members across more than 150 countries. It is also the most interdisciplinary – to reflect the increasingly diverse nature of engineering in the 21st century. Energy, transport, manufacturing, information and communications, and the built environment: the IET covers them all.
- The IET is working to engineer a better world by inspiring, informing and influencing our members, engineers and technicians, and all those who are touched by, or touch, the work of engineers.
- We want to build the profile of engineering and change outdated perceptions about engineering in order to tackle the skills gap. This includes encouraging more women to become engineers and growing the number of engineering apprentices.
- For more information, visit www.theiet.org.
- Follow the [IET on Twitter](#).



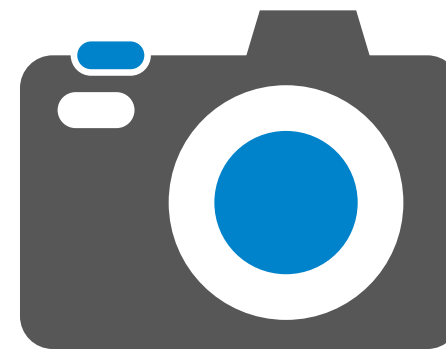
4 Photography and safeguarding of young people and adults at risk

High quality photos will improve the chances of a press release being published by a journalist. This might mean hiring a professional photographer, or relying upon someone in your IET Community who has a high level of skill in photography. Given that it can be costly to hire a professional photographer, it is worth noting that a good amateur photographer could produce high enough quality pictures. You can get guidance on when it might be necessary to hire a professional photographer from the IET Communications team.

Written consent from a parent, legal guardian or carer must be obtained before using an image of young people and adults at risk. For guidance and clarification, please contact the IET Communications team, preferably before any picture is taken that you feel might be affected by safeguarding policies. The IET takes its responsibilities in safeguarding of young people and adults at risk very seriously. Our safeguarding policy and forms including a photography consent form are available at:

<https://www.theiet.org/volunteers/active/how-iet-works/safeguarding-children-and-adults-at-risk.cfm>

As a rule of thumb always seek written permission from a parent or carer before using an image of a child or vulnerable adult. For guidance and clarification, please contact the IET Communications team, preferably before any picture is taken that you feel might be affected by safeguarding policies.



5 IET key messages

Below are three key messages about the IET which should be included, where possible, in press releases. They help to illustrate the purpose of the IET.

- The IET is one of Europe's largest professional engineering bodies with 169,000 members across more than 150 countries. It is also the most interdisciplinary – to reflect the increasingly diverse nature of engineering in the 21st century. Energy, transport, manufacturing, information and communications, and the built environment: the IET covers them all.
- The IET is working to engineer a better world by inspiring, informing and influencing our members, engineers and technicians, and all those who are touched by, or touch, the work of engineers.
- We want to build the profile of engineering and change outdated perceptions about engineering in order to tackle the skills gap. This includes encouraging more women to become engineers and growing the number of engineering apprentices.



IET key themes

In order to have a more strategic approach to communications, we are planning campaigns around the following key themes:

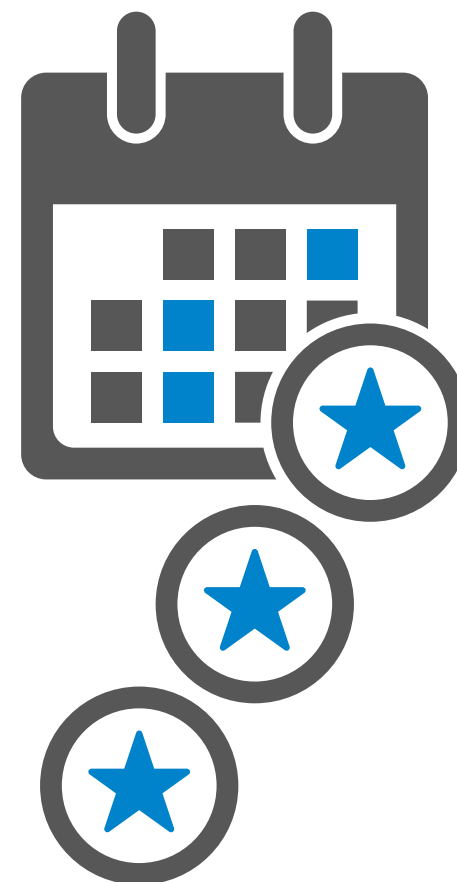
- Engineers change the way we live
- The changing face of engineering (to become more multi-disciplinary)
- Next generation of engineers
- Real engineers – dispelling some of the myths of engineering
- Cyber security
- Women and engineering
- Diversity in engineering
- Skills gap
- Continuing professional development
- Smart cities
- Energy challenges
- Engineering as a profession
- Key engineering projects
- Apprentices
- Digital economy and telecoms networks
- Transport infrastructure
- Resurgence of manufacturing



Key dates and campaigns

The IET runs numerous events and awards throughout the year and there are often national days/weeks/events that celebrate engineering.

- **National Apprenticeship Week** – March
- **British Science Week** – March
- **Big Bang Fair** – March
- **International Women in Engineering Day** – 23 June
- **IET Young Woman Engineer of the Year Awards closing date** – 8 July 2018
- **IET Faraday Final** – 11 July 2018
- **IET Engineering Open House Day** – 3 Aug 2018
- **Michael Faraday's birthday** – 22 September 1791
- **Tomorrow's Engineers Week** – November
- **IET Young Woman Engineer of the Year Awards** – 6 December 2018



6 Social media

Social media tips for IET members and local networks

Over the last few years, the IET's presence on social media has grown rapidly and we have been able to connect with engineers and technicians from across the globe, promoting the important professions we represent.

While a corporate presence on social media is important, the voices of our members and volunteers on popular platforms allow for a personal connection with those who may be considering a career in engineering or are interested in the work that the IET does.

Using social media effectively will help you to connect with other engineers, and give an insight into the work of our volunteers. It only takes a few minutes to set up an account.

Twitter is best for immediate updates, Facebook is best for sharing images, Engineering Communities is good for reaching other IET members and LinkedIn Groups are best for discussions.

If you are setting up a social media account, please ensure that no other groups created for the same purpose currently exist. You can also engage with existing IET social media accounts. For example, if attracting younger members to your network is your objective, the IET Early Career Twitter account will be able to help.

Here are some key IET social media accounts that you could share your content to:

- @TheIET
- @IETCommunities
- @IETEarlyCareer ■
- @IETawards
- @IETevents

The IET has a social media policy and guidance for volunteers and members – please visit [here](#).



7 Some helpful dos and don'ts when dealing with the media

If you are asked to be interviewed by a journalist for a newspaper/magazine/radio/television then please contact the Communications Team who can provide support. Here are some general tips for interviews:

It is quite legitimate for journalists to ask awkward questions. Do not get flustered.

If you are successful in creating relationships with the media and become a “source of information” on your issue, you will get calls for interviews.

- Ask when their deadline is. Call them back promptly.
- It is best if you already know what kind of story the reporter tends to do, and what kind of questions they ask. If you have time, look up some of their work.
- Prepare as much as you can. If you know what they are calling about, get some background information.
- Be helpful. Ask what kind of story they are doing, how much information they need, if they would like to speak to a person directly affected by the story (unless that is you).
- If you are setting up another interview (with a subject expert), make sure you understand what questions the journalist wants to ask. When will they call or visit? Who else are they interviewing on the subject? Be sure any confidentiality issues are settled before the call or visit.
- Relax. If you are nervous or this is your first time talking to a reporter, it is OK to say so. A good reporter wants to get it right, not to embarrass you
- Listen carefully to the question. Take a few seconds to frame your answer
- Speak slowly and avoid jargon. Speak with confidence and enthusiasm
- Smile when you speak. Even if they can't see you, it comes through
- Don't be thrown off but you may hear them typing while you talk, if it's a telephone interview. There may also be pauses after you answer a question -



it doesn't necessarily mean they are looking for more, they may just still be writing what you said.

- Be brief. Keep to major points and broader issues. Don't spend ten seconds on the point and two minutes on the exceptions.
- If you don't know an answer, say so. Ask if they would like you to look into it and get back to them. Ask how much time you have.
- If it seems that you have been misunderstood, fix it immediately. Be gentle, but fix it.
- Be clear about your position and/or that of the organisation you represent. Provide materials if possible.
- Nothing is ever off the record. Assume that anything you say or give them could end up in the story. Be careful making jokes.
- If you are quoted in an article, clip and save it.
- If you aren't quoted, don't take it personally. If you were helpful, they may call again.

Deal with the negative element of the question, then bridge back to one of your positive messages: "This crash was your fault, wasn't it?" e.g. "No, safety is our first priority which is why we have completely revised our procedures in the light of this situation."

Do not treat the discussion as a casual conversation. You cannot afford to wait for the right question to get your points across – it may not come along. Deliver key messages right from the start.



For television and radio appearances:

- Learn as much as you can about the show - Will it be live or recorded? Will there be call-in questions? Will there be an audience? Will there be other guests, if so, who? How long is the show, and how long will you be on?
- Check the style of the show beforehand. Is it confrontational or conversational? Are personal stories or statistics more common? Is there a specific audience or issue targeted?
- Dress conservatively for television. Avoid bright white and checks. Consider a place for a microphone to be clipped, e.g. jacket lapel.
- Be on time.
- Get a tape if you can. Other outlets may replay it.

When speaking with journalists, remember to control the conversation. Always acknowledge the question and use the bridging technique to communicate your key message.

Bridging is a powerful means for taking charge of and controlling an interview. The goal of a media interview is to focus the reporter on a few key messages that are true, accurate, clear, concise, brief and memorable. If done well, bridging significantly increases the probability that your key messages will appear in the final news story. By using bridging techniques, a spokesperson can re-focus or re-direct the interview to what is most important, relevant and critical. Examples of bridging are:

- “And what’s most important to know is...”
- “However, what is more important to look at is...”
- “However, the real issue here is...”
- “And what this all means is...”
- “And what’s most important to remember is...”

Finally, leave something **dangling** that the journalist feels they must ask you about; and use **examples** that bring **colour** and the human touch to your interview.



8 Media training

Media training may be available for key members, volunteers and staff who are likely to interact with the media on a regular basis, particularly around the IET's key themes.

We are always looking for IET spokespeople to be interviewed on key subjects relevant to the IET. These experts should:

- Be able and willing to represent the IET – and the IET's position on engineering topics.
- Have wide and up-to-date expertise, with many years of experience in the subject area – and an objective perspective.
- Be engaging, personable and confident speaker.
- Be willing to attend a day's media training in central London.
- Be good at delivering short, succinct sound bites.
- Be flexible and able to respond to requests for media interviews at short notice.
- Ideally have some prior experience of speaking to the media (although this is not essential).



9 The IET Communications team

The IET Communications team is responsible for internal and external communications. They work with volunteers, members and staff to help communicate important messages about the IET and engineering both within and outside the IET.

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