



Media evaluation: Analysis of press coverage

The BA Festival of Science Press Centre is sponsored by:



British Association for the Advancement of Science
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Executive summary

- Overall media coverage highest since evaluation began in 1999
- National and regional newspaper coverage down on previous years. Possible reasons:
 - fewer press conferences
 - an absence of strong health and social stories for the tabloids
 - less controversial stories, resulting in a lower profile and fewer comment articles
 - reduced coverage by our regional media partner

- National and international radio coverage significantly up on last year
- Regional radio coverage the highest it has been since 2001, surpassing 2006 thanks to exceptional coverage on BBC Radio York
- National and regional TV down on 2006 (partly due to staff shortages and reduced presence of BBC News 24 at the Festival)
- Trade & technical coverage up 62% on 2006, returning to high of 2004 (identification of items through use of the Nexis database may be a contributing factor); general consumer at same level as last year
- Top three stories:
 1. The mystery of consciousness
 2. Chocolate: nice but naughty?
 3. UK's future in space (STFC press conference)

- Front page coverage in the Daily Telegraph, the Financial Times and the Irish Times
- 81% of stories contained reference to the BA (or a version of)
- 76% of stories contained reference to the Festival (or a version of)
- 65% of stories contained reference to York
- 23% of stories contained reference to the University of York

Media evaluation - BA Festival of Science 2007

1 Background to BA Festival of Science

1.1 The BA (British Association for the Advancement of Science)

The BA (British Association for the Advancement of Science) is the UK's nationwide, open membership organisation that exists to advance the public understanding, accessibility and accountability of the sciences and engineering. Established in 1831, the BA organises major initiatives across the UK, including National Science and Engineering Week, the annual BA Festival of Science, programmes of regional and local events, and an extensive programme for young people in schools and colleges.

1.2 The BA Festival of Science

The BA Festival of Science is the UK's longest-established science festival, attracting over 350 speakers and thousands of visitors. It has been taking place since 1831. Developments in many areas of science, engineering and technology, and their possible applications and social implications are publicly presented and discussed. The Festival reaches an audience of millions through its high media visibility and the many people visiting the Festival itself. Anyone can come to the Festival, and amongst the many that do are journalists and other people with an interest in science, either professionally or personally, including school students.

1.3 The BA Festival of Science 2007

In 2007, the presidential theme was 'Energy and Human Progress', as chosen by the BA's President, Lord Browne of Madingley. The Festival was hosted in York by the University of York and the city of York, returning to the city 176 years after its inauguration there. It was organised by the BA in partnership with the University of York, Science City York and the City of York Council. The Festival included over 350 top speakers from all fields of science, social science, engineering and technology, with talks, dialogue events, visits, exhibitions and hands-on workshops. Events took place on the University of York campus and across the city of York. This was the eighth time the Festival had taken place in York, having last visited the city in 1981.

1.3.1 Press Centre

The BA operates a Press Centre, sponsored by AstraZeneca, at the Festival from which journalists can work on a day to day basis. Facilities include:

- internet-enabled computers;
- telephones;
- network points;
- faxes;
- desk space;
- special facilities for broadcasters to establish outside broadcast facilities;
- interview rooms with ISDN connection for radio stations;
- press conferences;
- a team of staff able to contact relevant speakers on journalists' behalf;
- monitoring and display of press coverage achieved;
- supply of papers from speakers specially prepared for the media's needs (paper copies and internet database)

This year, 139 individuals registered to use the Press Centre or film on campus compared to 182 in 2006. However, actual attendance was around 114 (compared to 115 in 2006) as many of those registered did so to gain access to the press papers online.

2 Analysis of coverage

Below follows an analysis of the coverage generated by the BA Festival of Science 2007. The first section explains the classifications used, the second looks at the figures recorded and compares these to previous years, and the third evaluates the results and examines the possible reasons for some of them.

2.1 Classification/definitions

The classification system used was as follows:

Categories of coverage

News/feature:	Factual pieces, including features
Editorial/comment/letter:	Editorials, comment pieces, 'soapbox' pieces by speakers, letters to the editor
Preview/review:	General summations of the Festival or previews of the week ahead
Listing:	Diary item of Festival events
Other:	Not belonging to any of the other categories, including fun pieces based around Festival events and front page teasers

Definitions

Column inches	A measurement of text, headlines and pictures to provide an overview of print space devoted to the Festival measured as length in inches of columns.
Article	Classified as a self contained item on a particular aspect of the Festival. For example a box with 'Festival In Brief' would not count as one item but would be dependent on the number of items within the box. In effect, the number of different stories covered.
Item	A discrete broadcast relating to the Festival, e.g. within a news programme or a magazine programme. Magazine programmes featuring more than one Festival story in a broadcast would be separated into individual items (e.g. BBC World Service's Science in Action).

Evaluation method

Monitoring	An outside agency, Cision (formerly known as Romeike), was used to detect most broadcast and print coverage. The company used keywords ('British Association for the Advancement of Science', 'the BA' and 'Festival of Science') to identify Festival items. It is possible that some were missed. In particular, broadcast monitoring only included a short transcript around the mention of a keyword, so any separate items occurring within the same broadcast without an independent keyword mention won't have been picked up. Any stories that were reported
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without mention of one of the keywords were, in general, missed.

This year, we also used Nexis, a database of UK national and regional newspapers, trade press and many international newspapers and magazines. This resource was searched manually using the names of scientists who had received a lot of detected coverage, and 86 items that would otherwise have been missed were found.

Column Inches

This method gives a relative measure of the space a story takes up on the page. However, it is not an exact measurement and, since the width of columns can vary widely, there are some problems in making comparisons by column inches. Images and headlines were treated as if they were columns of regular text. For example, if an image is three columns wide and four inches tall, it was treated as 12 column inches total. The same applies to areas covered by headlines, no matter how large the text. However, it should be noted that this is imprecise as the media monitoring service often reduces oversize headlines to fit into an A4 document. No record of column inches was available for items found via Nexis.

Duplicate stories

Certain papers run identical stories in different geographical editions and in later editions of the same paper. Geographically different articles were counted as separate stories. Later editions were NOT considered separate stories and NOT counted more than once. However, if different stories ran in different editions, these were all recorded.

Broadcast stories reported at different times were reported as multiple items if they were from a different part of the show or from a different show. Teletext stories were only entered once, although certain identical stories ran for multiple days.

Region

National

UK nationwide media, excluding Irish Times and Irish Independent, including Metro (unless news content occurred only in one geographical edition – see 'Regional')

Regional

Local and regional media from the UK, including Evening Standard and all Scottish media, but excluding Metro (Metro has several geographical editions, generally featuring identical news content and hence was classed as one national publication – the exception this year was when an article appeared only in the Yorkshire edition it was classified as regional)

International

Non-UK media, excluding Irish

Irish

National, regional and local Irish media

The regions were separated into these categories in 2005 to provide greater clarity and more effective comparison. Figures from previous years were adjusted accordingly, with the exception of 1999, for which only limited information is available.

2.2 Quantitative evaluation (see fig 1 for summary)

2.2.1 Printed media

*Figures for 1999 unadjusted

National (see fig 2)

	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999*
Unique national newspapers	13	12	15	12	15	13	13	13	<i>14</i>
No. of national articles	149	165	186	162	214	140	148	177	<i>185</i>
Column inches (national)	2481	3144	3241	2929	5156	3423	2855	2700	<i>1613</i>

Regional print media (see fig 3)

	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999*
Unique regional newspapers	41	56	55	74	81	42	74	34	<i>68</i>
No. of regional articles	296	423	213	446	377	154	262	72	<i>354</i>
Column inches (regional)	5137	7134	3407	6351	5139	2320	3709	752	<i>1965</i>

The greatest number of items was carried by our media partner for 2007, the Yorkshire Post (93, compared to 25 in 2006). This was followed by another York paper, the Press (34, none in 2006), the Express and Star (27, compared to 35 in 2006) and the Northern Echo (26, 1 in 2006). Our 2006 media partner, the Eastern Daily Press, carried 21 items, compared to 172 in 2006, and 30 in 2005.

International

Unlike 2005, when the Festival was in Dublin, we were not able to monitor Irish coverage with much degree of accuracy. We arranged for delivery of the Irish Times since one of their journalists and their Media Fellow were attending the Press Centre. They generated a full page of stories each day of the Festival.

There is no real measure of the level of international print or broadcast coverage achieved as this was not monitored. Most stories listed come from direct contact, e.g. representation in the Press Centre or contact with the Press Office. Therefore, no attempt has been made to log international newspaper coverage other than Irish coverage.

	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
Unique Irish newspapers	4	5	15	1	2	1	2	1	Figures unavailable
No. of Irish articles	27	31	123	1	28	15	22	15	Figures unavailable
Column inches (Irish)	790	641	2009	24	446	275	442	285	Figures unavailable

Trade & Technical/Consumer publications (see figs. 4 and 5)

	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003†	2002†	2001†	2000†	1999†
No. of Trade & Technical articles	47	29	45	48	<i>22</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>32</i>
Column inches (Trade & Technical)	216*	614	557	889	<i>207</i>	<i>1026</i>	<i>791</i>	<i>240</i>	<i>449</i>
No. of consumer articles	10	11	32	17					
Column inches (consumer)	246	139	520	567					

†1999-2003 – Trade & technical and general consumer figures combined

* As data was not available for 21 out of the 47 articles (as they were identified using Nexis), the actual number of column inches is likely to be far higher.

2.2.2 Broadcast media

Radio and Television (see fig 6)

As in previous years, broadcast monitoring proved problematic. We monitored TV and radio using a service offered by our cuttings agency Cision, but they did not pick up any of the confirmed TV broadcasts, and missed the majority of confirmed radio broadcasts. We also used our own log of confirmed interview requests (as has been done in past years). This does lead to inherent inaccuracy, but an underestimate is most likely as many may be missed. We also consulted one of the BBC attendees as to where/when their interviews had been broadcast, to try to get a more accurate record. The monitoring methods mean that no quantitative analysis of amount of coverage in minutes can be obtained.

	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
Radio									
No. of national/international items	89 (incl. 9 Irish)	64 (incl. 9 Irish)	107 (incl. 40 Irish)	91	38	57	48	30	Figures unavailable
No. of regional items	80	60	22	49	27	24	93	17	Figures unavailable
Television									
No. of national items	12	23	5	22	6	20	22	8	Figures unavailable
No. of regional items	4	9	1	7	9	1	13	1	Figures unavailable
No. of international items	5	0	17 (incl. 16 Irish)	0	0	0	0	0	Figures unavailable

2.2.3 Web-based media (see fig 7 and fig 8)

Web coverage was monitored using daily reports from Google News based on various combinations of keywords. Reports were also obtained through a trial of Meltwater News monitoring services, and by searching the websites of online national newspaper and broadcast companies directly. Some coverage was duplicated in print/broadcast, but many were unique.

This year the Daily Telegraph website reported the most items, with 37 stories (up from 4 the previous year). Coverage by the Guardian also increased, with 34 stories (up from 20 in 2006). The Times and the BBC News Online websites, which carried the most items last year, also increased their coverage: the Times website reported 28 stories (up from 22 in 2006), and BBC News Online featured 27 stories (up from 22 in 2006 and 14 the previous year).

The most popular BBC Online science story on Thursday 13th, Friday 14th, Saturday 15th, Sunday 16th and Monday 17th were all Festival pieces, and one event, 'X-ray vision: exploring the secrets of synchrotron science', made the BBC's top 5 most popular stories.

From data provided by the BBC (not ABC audited) about the number of page visits and views,

we see that this was the most popular Festival story and received 487,428 unique views. If we total the number of unique views, we find that during the Festival week stories were visited by over 2 million people (although some people may have viewed multiple Festival stories and so the number doesn't necessarily represent 2 million different individuals).

	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
Web items (news)	939	483	478	308	180	208	90	44	Figures unavailable

2.2.4 Stories covered (*see fig 9*)

The top ten session-based stories (excluding web coverage) were as follows:

1. The mystery of consciousness
2. Chocolate: nice but naughty?
3. UK's future in space (STFC press conference)
4. Non-stick chewing gum (Bristol University press conference)
5. X-ray vision: exploring the secrets of synchrotron science
6. Facing up to genetics
7. Disappearing selves? Bodies, minds and place
8. Virtual human evolution
9. Altering the genome of large animals (Professor Robert Winston attended as part of this event but gave his press conference on how red-tape is affecting the progress of transplant research in the UK)
10. The speaking and singing computer - will it ever sound human?

In total 76 different subject areas or stories (82 if web coverage is included) arose from the Festival. This figure is not precise as some stories were grouped together (e.g. 'The mystery of consciousness'). It equates to approximately 36% of the stories on offer.

Journalists who regularly attend the Festival had expressed a need for more 'genuinely new' stories, emphasizing that science stories now face increased competition. Therefore, we tailored press conferences to include new science stories that weren't part of the events programme. These included the Science Technology and Facilities Council (STFC) and Bristol University press briefings featured in the top ten stories.

2.2.5 Reference to the BA and Festival of Science (*see fig 1*)

We made a quantitative evaluation of reference to the BA and the Festival of Science, including variations on both, e.g. British Association, Science Festival, etc. Note that this has only been done for printed and web media.

Reference	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
The BA	81% (69% if excl. web)	83%	90%	95%	70%
Festival of Science	76% (64% if excl. web)	72%	72%	82%	64%

2.2.6 Reference to the hosts (*see fig 1*)

Once again, we also made a quantitative evaluation of reference to the host city and university. Reference to the University of York, which hosted the main Festival programme, was either through mention of the location of the Festival or as the research institute of a particular speaker. Reference to York occurred either as the Festival location or in the context of the University of York.

The mention of the host city is highest for the years when it occurs additionally in the context of the university name (2007, 2005 and 2004).

Reference	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Host university (e.g. University of York)	23% (21% if excl. web)	23% (27% if excl. web)	33%	32%	Figure unavailable
Host city (e.g. York)	65% (57% if excl. web)	57% (61% if excl. web)	83%	77%	48%

2.3 Evaluation of results

2.3.1 Print coverage

2.3.1.1 National print coverage

As is clear from above, national print coverage was significantly down on last year. In particular, the amount of column inches fell for the second year in a row. To investigate further, we conducted an in-depth comparison of the newspapers that regularly carry multiple Festival articles. Below are some observations and possible explanations.

	Difference in total number of items in 2007 relative to 2006	Difference in number of news/feature items in 2007 relative to 2006	Difference in amount of column inches in 2007 relative to 2006
Financial Times	+ 4	+ 5	10% increase
The Guardian	- 1	+ 3	2% decrease
The Times	+ 1	+ 7	4% decrease
The Independent	- 1	- 1	98% increase
The Daily Telegraph	- 2	- 3	44% decrease
Metro	- 9	- 10	29% decrease
The Daily Express	- 6	- 7	84% decrease
The Daily Mail	- 4	- 4	significant decrease*
The Daily Mirror	+ 5	+ 5	37% increase
The Sun	- 1	0	66% decrease

*Missing data on too many items (identified by Nexis) to make comparison meaningful

Column inches

While the number of column inches appears to be significantly down on the past seven years, it is not meaningful to make a direct comparison to total column inches prior to 2005 as there was an increase in compact editions of certain broadsheets between 2003 and 2005. Nonetheless, as stated above, the number of column inches was significantly down this year, and the average number of inches per item decreased compared to 2006. As the above comparison shows, the reduction wasn't reflected across all newspapers to the same extent – and some even committed more space to Festival stories.

The reduction in column inches occurred predominantly in the Daily Mail, Daily Express and Daily Telegraph coverage, but also in the Metro and Sun. For the tabloids this is likely to be due to a lack in this year's Festival of strong health and social stories for them to cover, as these particular topic areas have been heavily covered in the past – an effort should be made to include suitable events along these themes next year, if possible. It may also reflect increased competition in the tabloid market.

It is not totally clear why the number of column inches reduced so much for the Daily Telegraph – the predominant reason seems to be a lack of images to go alongside the stories covered, as well as competition from other stories. The lack of images is despite encouraging scientists to provide them in advance and the Daily Telegraph sending an agency photographer. Extra effort needs to be put in next year to help scientists think about the visual element of their talks and the provision of props for photo opportunities. It is true to

say that this is a perennial problem and one that is not particular to the BA Festival but for science stories in general.

On the positive side, coverage in the Daily Mirror increased significantly, and the Independent almost doubled the amount of space dedicated to Festival stories.

Press conferences

This year, as a result of feedback from journalists following the 2006 Festival, fewer press conferences were held each day. The journalists had argued that there were too many in previous years and events were included that they believed didn't justify a press conference. Instead, what they were looking for were about three really strong stories featuring 'genuinely new science', with a maximum of six press conferences per day, and only two on Friday (to finish before 11 am, as later than that they were unlikely to be included in their papers by the time the articles had been written). With this in mind, five to six press conferences were held on Monday to Thursday, and only one on Friday (with a shared interview taking the place of a second press conference, due to the unavailability of the scientist).

An effort was made to ensure the press conferences arranged were strong enough to generate coverage and it seems that we were broadly successful - the number of news items dropped by only five, despite far fewer press conferences. However, some of the coverage was generated by a couple of strong stories that weren't presented at press conferences ('Chocolate: nice but naughty?' and 'Disappearing selves? Bodies, minds and place' had been discounted for press conference material because they did not appear to contain anything new). These were covered particularly by the tabloid newspapers which suggests that the focus on 'truly new' science stories meant that a couple were overlooked that could possibly have achieved wider coverage in the tabloid press.

Comment pieces

This year there were far fewer editorial/comment/letter articles (10 compared to 26 in 2006). This appears to be the main impact on the total number of items relative to 2006 (as there were only 5 fewer news/feature items but 16 fewer editorial/comment/letter items).

This also potentially contributed to the reduced number of column inches. A particular example is the Times. As in recent years, the paper dedicated 1-2 pages of coverage each day. Editorial/comment/letter articles tend to be spread out in other areas of the newspaper and not restricted to the space available on the 'Festival page' and so have the potential to drive up the number of column inches. This year, the Times articles covered fewer total column inches, despite the fact that the number of items actually increased. Since it carried 7 fewer editorial/comment/letter articles this year, this is likely to have been a contributing factor.

Last year, the three stories primarily responsible for stimulating the large amount of discussion were the BA Presidential Address, an event on the paranormal, and an environment-related session, each of which was first reported towards the start of the week. This year, the Presidential Address (which was last year's top story and the second most-popular in 2005) wasn't very widely reported due to the BA President being unable to attend the Festival press launch and not giving his Presidential Address until the end of the Festival (this traditionally happens on the Monday). There weren't equivalent controversial or climate change sessions at the start of the week. If possible, an effort should be made to address this when planning the content of the Festival programme.

Front page stories

In general Festival coverage appeared on the inside pages. However, stories again broke onto the front page: the Daily Telegraph featured the Non-stick gum story on its front page and the Financial Times carried a mention of the Foetal testosterone and child development story within its front page 'News in brief' section that then led to an inner article. However, the

front page presence was lower than in 2006. This appears to be due to the absence of a big BA Presidential Address news story this year and particularly due to the lack of a big health story for the tabloids to cover.

Sunday newspapers

Little coverage was achieved in the national Sunday papers, primarily as there were no events held on the Saturday that the Sundays could cover exclusively. Following a successful collaboration with the Sunday Times in 2005, a meeting was held with journalist Jonathan Leake to try to identify interesting stories that could be offered specifically to the Sundays. One such story went ahead exclusively in the Sunday Times, but unfortunately didn't generate further coverage. An attempt was made to create a specific story to offer more widely to the Sundays, however problems arose with the elected story (as the scientist did not wish to share his data, as they were not yet published in a peer-reviewed journal) and so the idea could not be pursued, and time and resources did not allow for another attempt. Efforts should be made again next year, if possible.

2.3.1.2 Regional print coverage

Regional print coverage was disappointing this year, down almost a third compared to 2006. The following are some possible explanations:

Media partner

In 2006, our media partner, the Eastern Daily Press, gave an exceptional amount of space to the Festival – carrying 173 articles (compared to 30 in 2005). In addition to double page spreads throughout the Festival week, they also carried regular articles based around the Festival in the months running up to it. In comparison, this year's media partner, the Yorkshire Post, carried 93 articles (compared to 25 in 2006), the majority of these falling within the Festival week. An effort was made by the BA Press Officer to get coverage in advance of the Festival, and a few features were published in advance, but not on the same scale as 2006 when the pre-Festival coverage was generated by the Eastern Daily Press in direct collaboration with the host institution. Such a direct collaboration could be further encouraged next year.

As in 2006, in addition to our coverage in the local media, the BA delivered copies of a 'Best of the Fest' magazine, Ignite, to homes in the Festival area through our media partner. A print run of 80,000 was delivered to homes in the York area prior to the Festival.

Fewer individual publications

The majority of regional publications only cover one or two stories from each Festival, and this year saw fewer individual publications carrying Festival stories (41 compared to 56 last year). The reason for this is not entirely clear, but comparing the coverage of the top three stories of 2006 and 2007 shows that two out of the three were more widely covered in the regional press last year compared to this year. This suggests that the papers covering only a couple of stories may just be picking up on the top stories and that this year they didn't have a high enough profile to achieve wider coverage.

Key regional publications

The biggest impact was in some of the syndicated regionals. For example, in 2006, the Express & Star covered 35 stories – this was down to 27 this year. Likewise, the Western Mail was down from 11 to 4.

2.3.1.3 Irish media

The level of Irish print coverage remained broadly similar to last year, with articles primarily in the Irish Times thanks to the continued support of Dick Ahlstrom, who again attended the Festival with his BA Media Fellow.

The number of articles in the Irish Times was slightly fewer than 2006 and it could be seen to be a direct reflection of the reduced number of press conferences held – particularly on the Friday. However, the number of column inches increased by more than 20 per cent, suggesting that the journalist was able to cover the stories in more depth and that the newspaper's editor deemed the stories stronger and allotted them more space. A full page of coverage was achieved each day but seeing as this was also the case last year it suggests that less space was allotted to adverts on the pages.

The Irish Times also had a front page item devoted to The mystery of consciousness session, and this covered more column inches than last year's front page item.

2.3.2 Broadcast coverage

Due to the unreliability of broadcast monitoring, radio and television coverage is difficult to examine and there are inherent inaccuracies. In addition, many broadcast stories do not reference the BA or Festival, making them particularly difficult to identify.

All radio coverage was up significantly on last year. National radio was up two thirds on 2006 – this may partly be due to getting direct feedback from one of the BBC's Festival attendees as to where their items were broadcast. This suggests that coverage was under-reported last year and may explain why levels have returned to the highs of 2005, lower only than 2004. This higher coverage was despite the BBC news correspondent having to leave mid-week due to an outbreak of Foot and Mouth elsewhere in the country. His colleague continued to feed him stories, but coverage certainly tailed off towards the end of the week, suggesting higher levels of coverage could have been achieved if the correspondent hadn't had to leave. International and Irish coverage combined was second only to 2005 (when the Festival took place in Dublin).

Regional radio coverage was also significantly higher than in recent years, and came second only to the exceptional levels of 2001. The increased coverage was primarily due to unprecedented support from the local BBC radio station. The BA Press Officer liaised directly with the producers of three daily programmes to set up interviews for each day of the Festival, and also worked closely with the Naked Scientists (a group of scientists who have a weekly slot on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire) who had arranged to broadcast Festival and science items on BBC Radio York between 6 and 7pm.

National TV coverage was approximately half that of 2006. This was primarily due to the BBC News 24 reporter only being able to attend one day of the Festival compared to three last year. One strong story that Channel 5 were very interested in was missed because the scientist didn't wish to do broadcast interviews. No stories were covered by ITN or Sky, despite contacts being invited to attend the Festival. Last year, Sky sent a crew down to conduct interviews if a particularly high-profile story broke. This suggests the stories this year were lower profile in terms of TV. The local TV station also covered fewer stories compared to 2006, but international coverage went up (partly due to notification by scientists).

This year, the BA Press Officer was approached by researchers for two magazine-style TV programmes that were potentially interested in featuring the Festival: ITV's The Alan Titchmarsh Show and the BBC's One Show. Despite a lot of preparation work, in the end The Alan Titchmarsh Show selected other regional events to feature, while a higher priority news

story came along for the One Show on the day of the broadcast (an interview with one of the McCann's) so we were dropped from the schedule. Such opportunities could be investigated in future, as they would potentially open up the Festival to new audiences. However, it should be borne in mind that they are 'high risk' ventures as they require the investment of a relatively large amount of time and effort with no guarantee of success.

2.3.3 Trade and technical

After a significant decrease last year, coverage (in terms of numbers of items) by trade & technical publications returned to previous levels but coverage in consumer publications remained the same. The increased amount of consumer coverage in 2005 and 2004 appears to be due to regional publications, therefore an attempt should be made to secure coverage in local consumer publications next year. As proposed in last year's media evaluation, subject-specific press releases were issued earlier this year. However, this didn't result in increased registration to attend the Festival or access press papers, which suggests that the increased coverage was a result of press releases prepared by the universities whose scientists were attending the Festival. The fact that the majority of articles were about only a few events supports this. Also, 21 of the 47 items were identified using Nexis, which hasn't been used in previous years. Therefore, the items identified this year might have been missed in previous years. Nexis doesn't allow measurement of column inches, which is why the column inch coverage is so low compared to the increased number of articles.

2.3.4 Online coverage

Web coverage is increasing year on year, with a significant increase this year. A small percentage of this increase may have been due to the inclusion of blogs and podcasts, but otherwise the same monitoring methods were used as last year (Google News and an online monitoring agency). It seemed appropriate to include blogs and podcasts when their use is growing and infiltrating more traditional sources – for example the Guardian's online site has a weekly science podcast and is making increasing use of blogs. The Festival featured extensively in both this year.

The various national newspapers increased their online coverage of Festival stories, and the Telegraph even set up a dedicated page which it referenced in the newspaper – so extra traffic may have been driven to stories that were only reported online. The Festival story X-ray vision: exploring the secrets of synchrotron science was one of BBC News online's top stories, receiving 487,428 unique visits during the week. Festival stories were the BBC's top science/nature story on five consecutive days from Thursday onwards.

2.3.5 References to the BA and Festival

Since most print stories and web coverage were identified either by a media monitoring service or ourselves, using terms such as 'British Association', a high proportion of references to the BA and the Festival should be expected. Any associated stories containing no reference to either would be missed. The percentage of references to the Festival increased slightly compared to last year, while the references to the BA decreased slightly. The cause of this is unclear, although it was noted that where a banner was included, the reference often wasn't duplicated within the main body of text, particularly for shorter articles. The use of Nexis to identify Festival stories based on searches of scientist name identified 86 items that would otherwise have been missed.

2.3.6 Top stories

From the list of the top stories from this year's Festival, the following observations can be made:

Launch stories

This year one of the three launch stories featured in the top ten (Facing up to genetics). The other two received much less coverage (one of the topics changed the day before the launch, and this probably had some impact on the coverage it received), but web coverage pushed them up to 17th and 20th place. A couple of the stories that the BA Press Officer had identified for the launch simply weren't possible due to the availability of the scientists, however they did receive a high level of coverage later in the week (10th and 12th place), suggesting they would have been good launch stories. For the past two year's the BA Presidential Address has proved a strong launch story (top story last year and second most-popular the year before) but this wasn't an option this year.

Comment pieces

There were far fewer comment pieces this year compared to 2006 when the top two stories (The BA Presidential Address and Beyond the brain: making science personal) provoked a lot of opinion articles and letters.

The power of the press conference

Each year, the BA Press Office selects what it considers to be the most newsworthy stories to highlight at press conferences. This year, press conferences were given for 22 sessions. Each of these received coverage in non-web media (27 per cent were reported in 20 or more articles; 45 per cent in 15 or more; 55 per cent in 10 or more; 77 per cent in 5 or more). Only one item was reported just once.

This year non-press conference stories did have a greater impact than last year – 2 of the top 10 stories generated coverage independently of a press conference, although they appeared to be quite old news stories. One of the stories was missed by the BA Press Office due to lack of detail in the press paper. They were picked up primarily by tabloid and broadcast media. The coverage was due in large part to the scientists' willingness to give interviews and production of a press release by the scientist's university (in the case of the story that received the second highest coverage overall). It suggests that stories should not be discounted next year if they don't look particularly new as if there are no stronger alternatives for the tabloid media they are likely to cover them. However, it is not necessary to allocate a press conference. Instead, the university should be encouraged to distribute a press release.

The impact of externally arranged media briefings

During a feedback session, the journalists who regularly attend the Festival expressed a need for more 'genuinely new' stories, emphasizing that science stories now face increased competition. Therefore we decided to try to expand on our previous collaboration with the journals Science and Nature and to encourage universities to announce new research at the Festival.

An extended list of journals were invited to pick a story that would be suitable for us, including the British Medical Journal, the Lancet, Biomed Central journals, Elsevier journals and New Scientist. However, only Nature and Science were able to provide a suitable paper whose publication coincided with the Festival. A call was also put out to university press officers about the opportunity of publicising published work during the Festival. The Universities of Bath and Sheffield came to us with a paper being published in a new edition of the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B, while Lancaster University and Bristol University approached us with new research announcements. The Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC), who were involved in other Festival events, requested a press conference to announce the outcome of a major new report on the future of the UK in

manned space activities.

The STFC press briefing was very successful and was the third most-reported Festival story. The Bristol University announcement about 'non-stick' chewing gum was also very successful. It was the fourth most reported Festival story, becoming the top story if web items are taken into account. The Nature paper was less successful than in previous years, probably because it had to be conducted via video conferencing that experienced some technical hitches. However, it was still reported in six non-web items. The Science paper again failed to achieve coverage in national newspapers or on national radio, but was reported internationally in seven non-web items. However, only one of these items can be totally attributed to their involvement at the Festival.

The success of the other press conferences was variable. The Lancaster University announcement wasn't picked up by the national newspapers but was reported in 8 items, including one national radio interview, one national TV interview and two international broadcasts. A second Bristol University announcement about detection of cocaine on banknotes was covered in 10 non-web items, including one national newspaper, one Irish newspaper and one international broadcast. The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B research was only picked up by one regional newspaper.

In most cases, with the exception of the Science story, these news items were reported as being presented at the BA Festival of Science.

2.4 Conclusions

This year's Festival was certainly a success in terms of radio coverage: national coverage was significantly up on 2006; international coverage (including Irish) was second only to 2005 when the Festival was held in Dublin. Regional radio coverage reached the highest level to date, although the impact was primarily in the York area due to exceptional coverage by BBC Radio York. They featured a variety of Festival topics on a range of programmes throughout the day, which gave science far more airtime than news items generally would and allowed for more in-depth discussions which in terms of the BA's overall mission is of vital importance.

National TV coverage was down on last year, mainly as the BBC News 24 reporter was only able to attend one day, compared to three last year. Sky news didn't cover any items this year, despite our contact being very positive about the Festival press operation last year. He was kept informed of this year's Festival, as were ITN news, and an effort was also made to promote particular items in advance to BBC TV. The lack of success suggests stories were deemed not to have a high enough profile or not to be visual enough. This is despite making extra effort to try to identify advance filming opportunities. Local BBC TV was also contacted about filming opportunities at the Festival, however they were suffering staff shortages which may explain why their coverage was less than hoped. The lack of health-related stories may also have had an impact.

As discussed above, a reduced number of press conferences were held in response to feedback from journalists. This was viewed favourably by the press pack but may have had some impact on the level of newspaper coverage, particularly at the weekend. However, the main reason for the reduced number of national newspaper items appears to be a lack of 'controversial' stories this year and the reduction in focus on the BA Presidential Address, leading to a big reduction in the number of editorial/comment/letter articles. This was also apparent in the regional newspapers, although the significant fall in regional coverage seems most likely to stem from not having as many 'high-profile' stories. To address the reduction in national newspaper column inches, which occurred predominantly in the tabloids, an effort should be made to include strong health and social stories in the Festival programme. This would also benefit regional news coverage.

The effort to incorporate more 'truly new' research this year was broadly successful. At least one piece of new research was presented Monday to Thursday in collaboration with a journal or university press office. While a couple of the press conferences generated limited coverage, two were in the top four stories.

Feedback from the journalists after the Festival suggests that the type of story required by newspapers differs between the end and beginning of the week. Editors of the broadsheets are looking for more lightweight stories to print on the Saturday, and weightier subjects, even if identified as interesting by the science correspondents, can miss out on coverage if reported on the Friday. 'Developing new treatments using animal experiments: separating fact from artefact' was an example of this. If possible, this should be taken into consideration when preparing the Festival programme. The BA Press Officer will be involved in the programme planning process at a far earlier stage in future.

Coverage in trade and technical publications seems to have been successfully returned to previous levels, but consumer levels could possibly be boosted next year by early approaches to local consumer publications.

Although the number of journalists using the press centre has remained stable over the past couple of years, there is a downward trend in the numbers registering to use the online facilities. This is unlikely to have had a significant impact on coverage as the majority is generated by a small proportion of attending journalists, in particular, the broadsheet science correspondents and the news agency correspondents. However, this does not mean that more should not be done next year to try and attract additional journalists as this will inevitably lead to more coverage. In advance of next year, an assessment of the information made available to journalists online will be made, to see if there are ways of improving it.

Web coverage continues to increase year on year, bringing the Festival and science to the attention of hundreds of thousands of people around the world. One Festival story (X-ray vision: exploring the secrets of synchrotron science) achieved over 487,400 unique visits alone during the week on BBC News Online. The Festival achieved coverage through a variety of new media, including blogs and podcasts.

Lisa Hendry
Press Officer, the BA
5 December 2007

Fig 1: BA Festival of Science 2007 – Summary of all media coverage

Summary of all media coverage 2007	Number of Items	Column Inches	News/ Feature	Editorial/ Comment/ Letter	Preview /Review	Listing	Other/ Not Specified	BA	Festival	York	University of York
National Newspapers	149	> 2481	130	10	2	4	3	80	88	64	10
Irish newspapers	27	> 790	26	0	1	0	0	17	26	10	3
Regional Newspapers	296	5137	231	1	46	17	1	230	210	192	87
Trade & Technical Publications	47	>> 216	34	1	7	5	0	41	23	37	13
General Consumer	10	> 246	8	0	1	1	0	5	5	4	2
Web-based Media	939	n/a	886	6	35	4	8	828	782	664	226
National Radio	46										
International radio	43										
Local Radio (UK)	80										
National TV	12										
International TV	5										
Regional TV	4										
Other (Teletext, etc)	9	n/a	9	0	0	0	0	9	8	7	0
TOTAL	1667	8870	1324	18	92	31	12	1210	1142	978	341

Fig 2: BA Festival of Science 2007 – National Press Coverage

National Press Coverage 2007	Number of items	Column inches	News/ Feature	Editorial/ Comment/ Letter	Preview/ Review	Listing	Other/ Not specified
Financial Times	16	217.75	14	1			1
Financial Times Weekend Magazine	1	n/a	1				
Metro	5	> 41.25	4		1		
The Daily Express	7	> 49.25	6	1			
The Daily Mail	14	>> 196	13		1		
The Daily Mirror	6	> 72.75	6				
The Daily Telegraph	25	379	22			2	1
The Guardian (including Education pages)	18	> 246.75	18				
The Independent (including Extra)	17	> 541.5	11	5		1	
The Observer	1	n/a		1			
The Sun	3	14.25	3				
The Sunday Times	1	29.5	1				
The Times (including Body and Soul and Times2)	35	> 692.7	31	2		1	1
Total	149	2480.7	130	10	2	4	3

Fig 3: BA Festival of Science 2007 – Regional Press Coverage

Regional press coverage 2007	Number of items	Column inches	News/ Feature	Editorial/ Comment/ Letter	Preview/ Review	Listing	Other/ Not specified
Argus Lite	1	10.5	1				
Bath Chronicle	2	n/a	2				
Birmingham Post	2	20	2				
Bristol Evening Post	1	n/a	1				
Bristol Observer	3	97	3				
Chester Evening Leader	1	4	1				
Daily Post (Liverpool)	1	n/a	1				
Daily Record	5	>> 10	5				
Darlington & Stockton Times Cleveland	1	0.75	1				
East Anglian Daily Times	3	4.5	3				
East Riding Mail	1	7.5			1		
Eastern Daily Press	21	394.1	19		2		
Evening Post	2	35.75	2				
Evening Standard	12	> 133.75	12				
Evening Times (Glasgow)	1	n/a	1				
Express & Star	27	142.75	26		1		
Flintshire Evening Leader	1	4	1				
Gazette & Herald (Ryedale & Scarborough)	1	3			1		
Hampshire Chronicle	1	4.5	1				
Herald Express (Torquay)	1	n/a	1				
Huddersfield Daily Examiner	2	12	2				

Hull Daily Mail	2	> 7.5	1		1		
Liverpool Echo	1	n/a	1				
Manchester Evening News	1	n/a	1				
Metro (Yorkshire)	4	5.5				4	
Nottingham Recorder	1	33	1				
South Wales Evening Post (Swansea)	1	4.75	1				
The Courier and Advertiser	1	20.3	1				
The Didcot Herald	1	27	1				
The Herald (Glasgow)	4	> 27	4				
The Journal	5	>> 12.5	4			1	
The Northern Echo	26	100	9		15	2	
The Press	34	> 698.75	11		12	10	1
The Press & Journal	2	> 13	2				
The Scotsman	9	222.5	9				
The Star	10	212	10				
The Western Mail	4	458	4				
Western Daily Press	4	162.75	4				
Wrexham Evening Leader	1	4	1				
York Star	2	44	1		1		
Yorkshire Post	93	> 2200	80	1	12		
Total	296	5136.65	231	1	46	17	1

Fig 4: BA Festival of Science 2007 – Trade and Tech. Publications Coverage

Trade and technical publications coverage 2007	Number of items	Column inches	News/ Feature	Editorial	Preview/ Review	Listing	Other/ Not specified
Biotech Business Week	1	n/a	1				
Biotech Law Weekly	1	n/a	1				
Biotech Week	1	n/a	1				
BioWorld International	1	n/a	1				
Business Link (Yorkshire & Lincolnshire)	1	8			1		
Chemist & Druggist	1	n/a	1				
Chemistry & Media	1	25.5	1				
Child Care	1	n/a	1				
Chocolate & Confectionary International	1	10	1				
Diagnostic Update	1	n/a	1				
Drug Law Weekly	1	n/a	1				
Drug Week	1	n/a	1				
Farmers Guardian	1	6	1				
Fuel oil news & road tanker transport	1	9	1				
Geoscientist	2	26			2		
GP Incorporating Medeconomics	1	12	1				
Health & Medicine Week	1	n/a	1				
Law & Health Weekly	1	n/a	1				
Life Science Weekly	1	n/a	1				
MBA News	1	n/a	1				
Obesity, Fitness & Wellness Week	1	n/a	1				

Pharma Business Week	1	n/a	1				
Pharma Investments, Ventures & Law Weekly	1	n/a	1				
Pharma Law Weekly	1	n/a	1				
Pharma Marketletter	1	14	1				
Research Fortnight	3	1.5				3	
Science in Parliament	2	3.5	1			1	
Science Letter	1	n/a	1				
Security Management	1	n/a	1				
Surgery Litigation & Law Weekly	1	n/a	1				
TES	1	5.25				1	
The Engineer	2	n/a	2				
THES	7	56	5	1		1	
Yem - Your Entrepreneur (Yorkshire & Hum)	2	20				1	1
Conference News	1	19.5				1	
Total	47	216.25	34	1		7	5
							0

Fig 5: BA Festival of Science 2007 – General consumer publications

Consumer publications coverage 2007	Number of items	Column inches	News/ Feature	Editorial/ Comment/ Letter	Preview/ Review	Listing	Other/ Not specified
Big Print	1	52.75	1				
Focus	2	14.5			1	1	
Mensa Magazine	1	132	1				
New Scientist	2	n/a	2				
News Letter	2	41.75	2				
PC Pro	1	n/a	1				
Psychologies	1	5	1				
Total	10	246	8	0	1	1	0

Fig 6: BA Festival of Science 2007 – Broadcast Coverage

Broadcast coverage 2007	Number of items
National radio	
BBC Asian Network	1
BBC Radio 1	3
BBC Radio 2	5
BBC Radio 3	3
BBC Radio 4	22
BBC Radio 5 Live	12
TOTAL	46
International radio	
ABC Radio National	16
BBC World Service	12
CBC Radio (Canada)	2
Dueche Welle Radio	1
New Zealand Radio	1
Radio Live Auckland	1
Voice of America	1
TOTAL	34
Irish radio	
BBC Radio Belfast	1
Dublin ILRS Radio	1
KCLR (Kilkenny Radio)	1
NewsTalk Radio	2
Radio Aire	1
Real Radio	1
RTE Radio	2
TOTAL	9
Local/Regional radio	
BBC Radio Berkshire	1
BBC Radio Bristol	2
BBC Radio Cambridge	3
BBC Radio Essex	1
BBC Radio Leeds	1
BBC Radio London	1
BBC Radio Manchester	1
BBC Radio Oxford	1
BBC Radio Scotland	5
BBC Radio Solent	1
BBC Radio Stoke	1
BBC Radio Tees	1
BBC Radio Three Counties	1
BBC Radio Wales	2
BBC Radio West Midlands	1

BBC Radio York	52
Durham FM	1
Fox FM	1
Leicester Sound	1
Minster FM	1
Original Bristol	1
TOTAL	80
TOTAL RADIO ITEMS	169
Broadcast coverage 2007	
National TV	
BBC 2	1
BBC News 24	10
CBBC	1
TOTAL	12
International TV	
BBC World	1
CBS News	1
CNN	1
Danish TV2	1
Good morning America	1
TOTAL	5
Regional TV	
BBC 1 North	3
BBC London	1
TOTAL	4
TOTAL TV ITEMS	21

TOTAL BROADCAST ITEMS	190
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Fig 7: Online coverage by national newspapers and broadcast organisations, 2007 vs 2006

2007	Number of items
Daily Telegraph online	37
The Guardian Unlimited	34
The Times online	28
BBC News Online	27
Daily Mail online	17
FT.com	12
Channel4.com	11
The Independent online	8
Daily Mirror online	5
Metro online	2
TOTAL	181

2006	Number of items
The Times online	22
BBC News Online	22
The Guardian Unlimited	20
The Independent online	12
FT.com	9
Daily Mail online	8
The Telegraph online	4
Daily Mirror	3
Daily Express	1
Financial Times Weekend Magazine	1
TOTAL	102

Fig 8: 2007 Festival stories included in BBC News Online's 'Top 50 Science/Nature stories' during the BA Festival of Science 2007

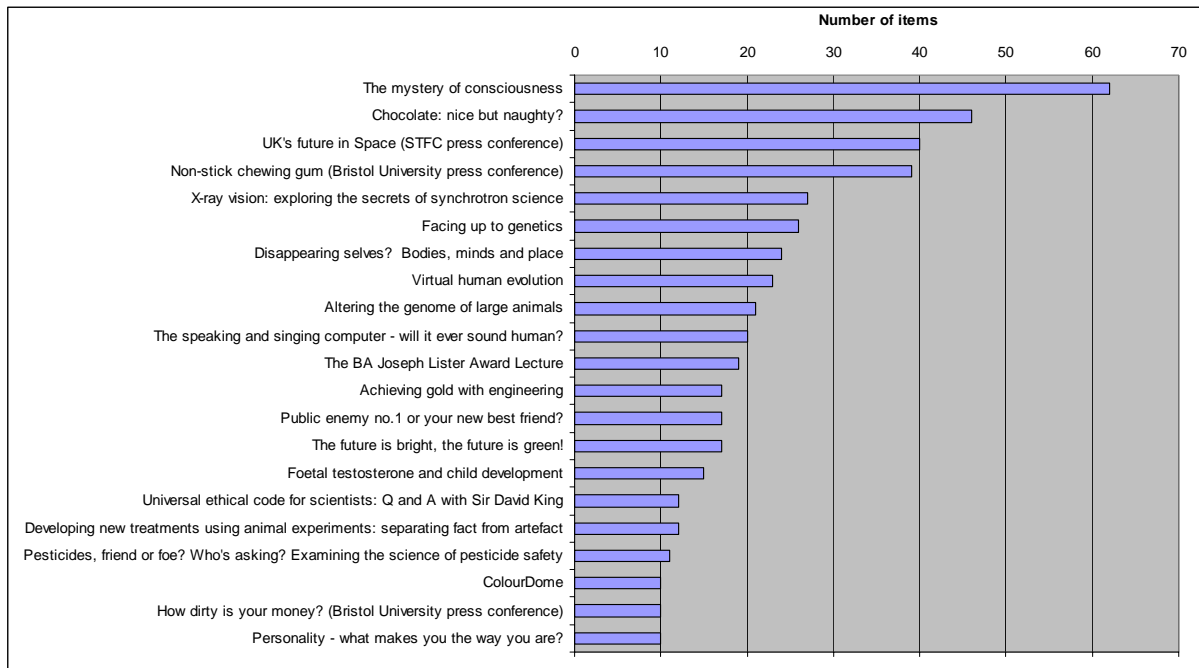
			unique views						Item total views	Story total views
Day posted	Story (Session name)	Top 10 science story?	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Item total views	Story total views
Sun	What eye movements tell us about the brain and language	Yes	183,886	29,686	3,557	2,971	829	486	221,415	221,415
Sun	Facing up to genetics	Yes	100,700	14,971	3,800	2,014			121,485	127,428
Sun	Facing up to genetics (film)	Yes	2,386	3,557					5,943	
Sun	The BA Charles Lyell Award Lecture (film)	Yes	34,400	5,400					39,800	75,614
Sun	The BA Charles Lyell Award Lecture	Yes	23,971	9,157	2,686				35,814	
Mon	Kavli Prize	Yes	21,657	15,100					36,757	36,757
Mon	Altering the genome of large animals		3,557	5,657					9,214	9,214
Mon	When science and journalism collide' (a comment piece related to the Festival)	Yes	3,557	20,400	1,457				25,414	25,414
Mon	York science festival in video' (BBC News 24 coverage of multiple Festival stories)		2,857	4,329					7,186	7,186
Tues	The mystery of consciousness	Yes		221,100	7,129				228,229	229,300
Tues	The mystery of consciousness (film)			1,071					1,071	
Tues	Foetal testosterone and child development	Yes		63,371	24,614				87,985	87,985
Tues	The BA Joseph Lister Award Lecture	Yes		17,700	46,286	5,829	1,986	957	72,758	72,758
Wed	Virtual evolution				31,557	6,129			37,686	40,000
	Virtual evolution (film)				2,314				2,314	

Wed (?)	X-ray vision: exploring the secrets of synchrotron science	Yes				25,314	369,529	81,614	10,971	487,428	
Thurs	X-ray vision: exploring the secrets of synchrotron science (film)						13,857	5,171	471	19,499	508,170
	Diamond Light Source synchrotron (Image)						1,243			1,243	
Wed	Universal ethical code for scientists: Q and A with Sir David King					22,029	5,100			27,129	27,129
Thurs	UK's future in space (STFC press conference)	Yes					49,771	6,086	1,529	57,386	81,200
Thurs	UK's future in space (STFC press conference) (image)	Yes						11,743	12,071	23,814	
Thurs	Nature journal press conference	Yes					23,400	51,029	3,357	77,786	77,786
Thurs	How dirty is your money? (Bristol University press conference)						4,671	7,929	1,629	14,229	14,229
Fri	Chocolate: nice but naughty?	Yes						158,086	17,414	175,500	175,500
Fri	Non-stick chewing gum (Bristol University press conference)	Yes						140,514	16,371	156,885	156,885
Fri	Science journal press conference	Yes						45,257	67,743	113,000	113,000
Fri	The speaking and singing computer - will it ever sound human?	Yes						42,914	13,214	56,128	56,128
										TOTAL	2,143,098

Number of unique views for written stories only	2,067,484
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Fig 9: BA Festival of Science 2007 – Top 20 stories

(A) Excluding web coverage



(B) Including web coverage

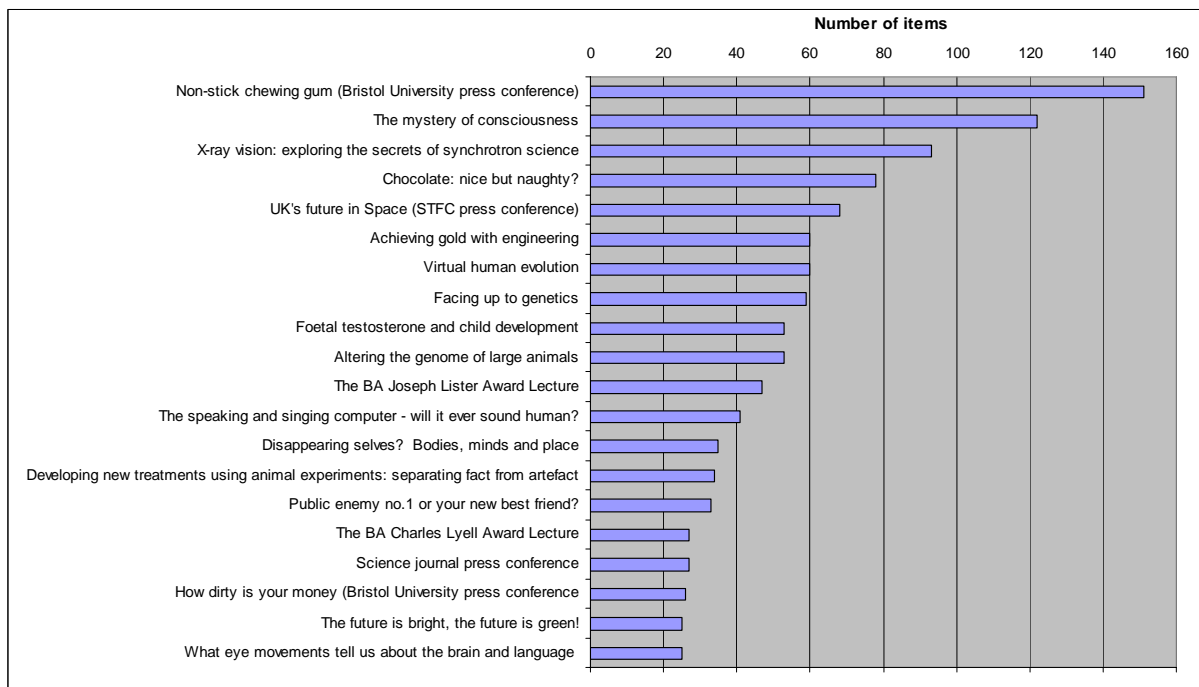


Fig 10: Top 3 stories – Type of coverage (excluding web)

(A) The mystery of consciousness

Media	Number of items	Coverage	Number of items	News/ Feature	Editorial/ Comment/ Letter	Preview/ Review	Listing	Other
newspaper	30	National	15	13	2			
		Regional	12	12				
		Irish	2	2				
		International	1	1				
trade and technical	0							
consumer	1			1				
tv	6			6				
radio	25			25				
other	0							
TOTAL	62			60	2	0	0	0

(B) Chocolate: nice but naughty?

Media	Number of items	Coverage	Number of items	News/ Feature	Editorial/ Comment/ Letter	Preview/ Review	Listing	Other
newspaper	32	National	4	4				
		Regional	23	23				
		Irish	2	2				
		International	3	3				
trade and technical	2							
consumer	0							
tv	2							
radio	10							
other	0							
TOTAL	46			32	0	0	0	0

(C) UK's future in space (STFC press conference)

Media	Number of items	Coverage	Number of items	News/ Feature	Editorial/ Comment/ Letter	Preview/ Review	Listing	Other
newspaper	31	National	12	10	2			
		Regional	19	18			1	
		Irish	0					
		International	0					
trade and technical	0							
consumer	1							
tv	1							
radio	6							
other	1							
TOTAL	40			28	2	0	1	0

Fig 11: Summary of past coverage – Number of articles/items

	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Printed								
National newspapers	149	165	186	162	214	140	148	177
Regional newspapers	296	423	213	446	377	154	262	72
Irish newspapers	27	31	123	1	28	15	22	15
Trade & technical	47	29	45	48				
Consumer	10	11	32	17	22	47	44	35
Radio								
National/international	89 (incl. 9 Irish)	64 (incl. 9 Irish)	107 (incl. 40 Irish)	91 (incl. 2 Irish)	38	57	48	30
Regional	80	60	22	49	27	24	93	17
Television								
National	12	23	5	22	6	20	22	8
Regional	4	9	1	7	9	1	13	1
International	5	0	17 (incl. 16 Irish)	0	0	0	0	0
Web								
Web items (news)	939	483	478	308	180	208	90	44
Other								
Other (e.g. Teletext)	9	3	0	11	1	Figures unavailable	Figures unavailable	Figures unavailable