



**Research Communications
Annual Report 2010**



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Executive Summary

In 2010:

- Research Communications produced 111 stories, with 89 of them (80 percent) appearing in the mainstream print, broadcast and Internet media.¹
- Our top stories for the year included new [strategies to prevent childhood obesity](#), Charles Darwin's [somewhat inbred family tree](#), the [social skills of an "only child,"](#) the [discovery of a mummified forest](#) in the Arctic, and a measurement of [just how far the earth moved](#) during the devastating 2010 Chilean earthquake.
- Our stories were picked up by the [New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#), [MSNBC](#), [Fox News](#), [AP](#), [UPI](#), and [ANI](#)², among many other traditional news outlets. Top Web outlets to use our stories included [Wired](#), [LiveScience](#), [Discovery.com](#), [Treehugger](#), and [Salon](#).
- We disseminated 110 stories through EurekAlert! and reporters around the world viewed them more than 360,000 times. A similar number of stories posted to Newswise drew nearly 54,000 viewings.
- Our stories were used extensively within [University Communications](#): Three were used as splash pages, and 64 were used as "redlinks" on the OSU homepage. OSUToday used 54 of our stories, while *onCampus* used 61.
- More than 41,000 visitors read our stories on the university Web site in 2010. Most were referred by a search engine or news outlets, and most people read only one story before leaving the site. That suggests that most visitors came to us in search of specific information.
- Our two blogs, [On Research](#) and [My Plan For Health](#), continued to extend our reach globally, attracting nearly 16,000 visitors from 120 countries worldwide.

¹ Our criteria for what we consider "major" have grown more strict this year. See the section on news coverage for details.

² An Asian news service similar to AP and UPI.

Distribution

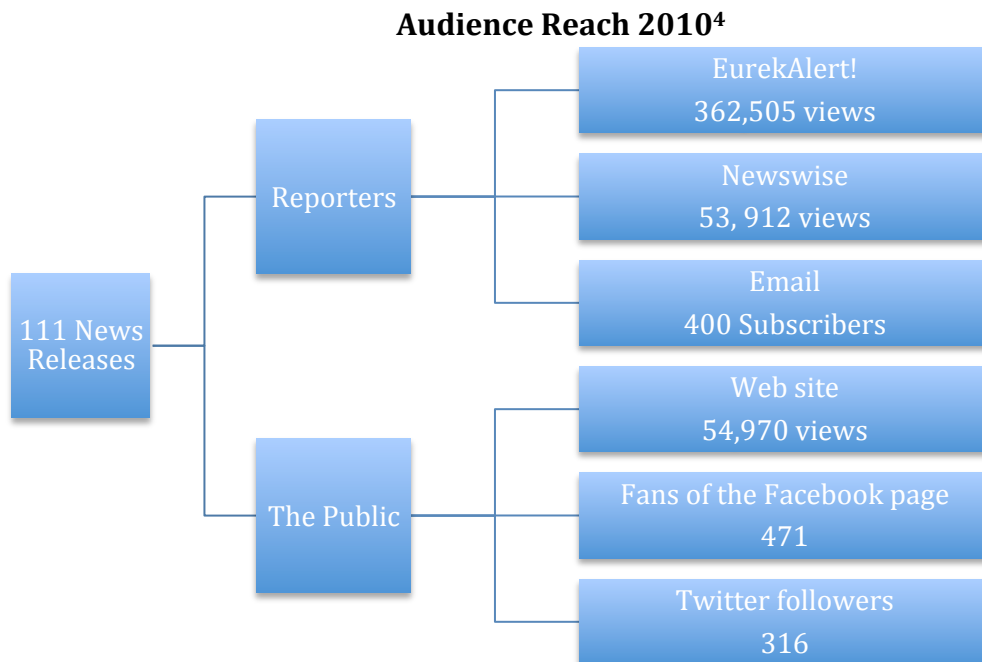
How we reach reporters and the general public

In 2010, news agencies blossomed onto mobile platforms, including smart phones and tablet computers. Most notably, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, FOX News, and MSNBC [tried to develop new revenue streams with online products](#) that offer exclusive content.

Research Communications has distributed our main “product” – news releases – electronically for more than a decade. As the mainstream media continue to evolve, we are seeing our stories propagate widely across the Internet. We have also begun to offer a secondary product: research commentary, in the form of two blogs.

News Releases

First, we transmit our releases via two Internet wire services, [EurekAlert!](#) and [Newswise](#).³ Both offer embargoed releases to reporters, and non-embargoed releases to the general public. Second, we email releases to reporters who prefer to receive news that way. Lastly, we post all releases to [our Web site](#), which we then link to [our Facebook page](#) and [Twitter](#). So in many instances, we are able to deliver stories of Ohio State research directly to the public.



³ EurekAlert!, a paid service run by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, serves 7,800 reporters and freelancers from 89 countries, and receives 2 million visits each month, from an average of 1 million individual visitors. Newswise, a commercial service, boasts 5,500 subscribers; 2,400 media outlets follow this service daily.

⁴ URLs listed on the last page.

Research Commentary

While many institutions use blogs merely as a format in which to repackage their news releases, we go beyond that model to comment on larger issues and build a dialog with the public.

On Research

On Research is an analysis of research on campus and in the news. In it, we offer a broad picture of academic research by focusing on issues that either concern the scientific community or hold the potential to broadly impact the public. We also concentrate on issues of science communications that can help readers better grasp research issues.

Simply put, the blog endeavors to make readers think differently and more deeply about science news.

Some notable topics in 2010 included: [climate change](#), [reporting of medical studies](#), [scientific misconduct allegations](#), [news media behavior](#), and [holes on the moon](#).

In 2010, *On Research* drew 6,247 global page views, with 5,380 individual visitors from 80 countries.

My Plan For Health

My Plan For Health informs faculty and staff about the myriad health and wellness resources available at Ohio State and in the surrounding community. It includes original reporting based on interviews with Ohio State faculty and staff whose research touches on current health and wellness issues.

In 2010, *My Plan For Health* drew 19,912 page views (up 18% from 2009), and 9,438 individual visitors (up 12%) from 120 countries (up 24%). More than 400 Ohio State employees are now following the blog on Yammer.

In 2010, the blog promoted the [Faculty and Staff Fitness Program](#), [Your Plan For Health Educational Programming](#) (formerly known as “Lunch & Learn”), and the [university flu shot program](#).

Also in 2010, we began promoting the blog heavily on [Yammer](#), the university’s internal Twitter feed. The staff member who writes *My Plan For Health* is now the eighth most followed

person on the Ohio State network, out of more than a thousand users.

News Coverage

Our statistics for 2010, and an overview of coverage through the years

Research Communications produces an average of 100 news releases every year. During 2010, we produced 111, 80 percent of which achieved major news coverage.

How we define “major” has changed over the years. In the past, we only counted big-city newspapers and network television news. But today, the number of people who rely on the Internet for news is growing.

In a [recent Pew Research Center survey](#), 41 percent of people listed the Internet as a main source of news – up 17 percent from a few years ago. And according to the National Science Foundation’s 2010 edition of *Science & Engineering Indicators*, in 2008, 22 percent of the public relied on the Internet as their primary source of information, 28 percent of the public relied on it for “science and technology” information, and 54 percent of the public relied on it for “specific scientific issues.”

Indeed, science and technology publications were among the first to take full advantage of the Web, and so we have long targeted these publications with our news releases, and considered any resulting clips to be high-profile ones.

Yet, many Internet news sites today are simply “aggregators” – they republish original coverage that appeared elsewhere. In fact, mere minutes after we post our news releases on the Web, they reappear verbatim on aggregator sites all over the world.

To remove the effect of news aggregators from our data, we now count as major only those clips from sites that create original content. Otherwise, our percentile would automatically reach 100 percent every year, which is not particularly informative.

Further, we previously didn’t count as major any local Ohio newspapers, such as the *Columbus Dispatch* or the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, since their circulation doesn’t match that of papers read around the country or around the globe, such as the *New York Times*. Since we feel that reaching Ohio media is now more important than ever, we have begun to include Ohio papers.

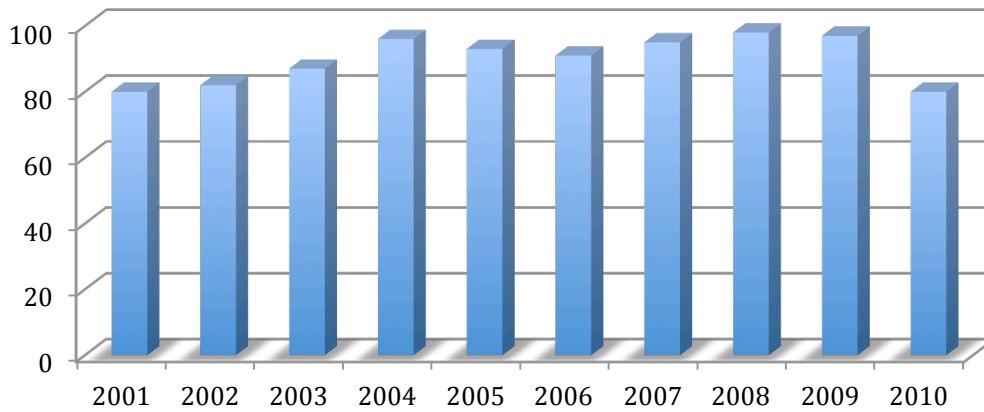
The following table and charts detail our coverage by year starting in 2001⁵, and by month for 2010. We include statistics on internal university use of our stories.

⁵ We have partial data starting in 1997, available upon request.

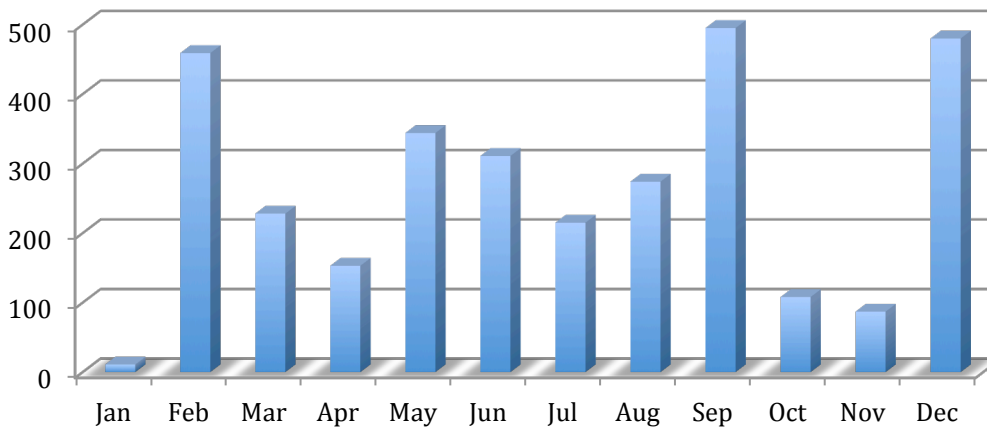
Research Communications Coverage

Year	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10
Number of Stories	93	82	121	130	98	119	111	122	99	111
No. w/major coverage (new criteria, 2010)	74	67	105	125	91	108	105	119	96	89
News Briefs		22	24	23	18	15	11	7	16	6
Splash Pages	13	12	10	14	10	7	6	5	4	3
Homepage Redlinks					8	7	24	26	35	64
onCampus Stories	45	53	72	72	69	85	78	81	81	61
OSUToday Stories	52	65	49	67	91	67	43	50	39	54

Percentage of Stories that Achieved Coverage, 2001-2010



2010 Media Mentions by Month, Meltwater Statistics⁶



⁶ Courtesy of University Communications' Media Relations Unit.

Ancillary Work

Other ways we use our stories and interact with reporters.

Our stories are used elsewhere in University Communications. They appear in every issue of *onCampus*, and provide the content for many *OSUToday* items, splash pages, and “redlinks” on the *OSU homepage*. We also publish numerous “Research News Briefs” which are not necessarily meant to garner news coverage, but to inform the media about important issues. Lastly, we interact with reporters through professional activities such as science meetings and reporters’ workshops.

Efforts within University Communications

In 2010, the New Media Unit used three of our stories as splash pages, and 64 as “redlinks” on the OSU homepage. *OSUToday* used 54 of our stories, while *onCampus* used 61.

In every issue of *onCampus*, we provide content for the Discoveries page and two Discoveries news briefs. But we also write other stories specifically for *onCampus* that appear in other sections of the paper throughout the year, including stories on major faculty awards, grants, and visiting speakers. Earle also was featured in an [“Ask the Expert” column about “climategate.”](#)

Issues Management

We published seven “Research News Briefs” in 2010. The majority dealt with faculty awards and grants, but others detailed serious issues such as the use of animals and humans in research.

Not all research events and issues involved a News Brief, however. An important part of the role of Research Communications is to provide public relations counsel and communications support to university units facing challenges related to the research enterprise. These instances can range from crisis communications to staffing events where research leaders or national media figures visit campus.

In 2010, we provided support for the following episodes:

- Assisted with problems over lack of clear policy on the adoption to the public of animals used in research by investigators within the College of Veterinary Medicine;
- Advised and responded to concerns and accusations levied at long-standing primate research by investigator John Buford;
- Provided counsel concerning national news media interest in ongoing litigation within the College of Pharmacy regarding research faculty;

- Served as institutional point-person for responses to campaign by an animal rights organization, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), against long-standing and highly regarded research by investigator George Billman's use of dogs in cardiac studies;
- Provided counsel to Graduate School and the College of Education and Human Ecology regarding continuing issue over former doctoral student's claims of unfair treatment while working toward his degree because of linkage to intelligent design;
- Provided counsel to University Lab Animal Resources and to the Wexner Center regarding problems surrounding the use of live animals (sheep) in an exhibit at Wexner;
- Provided counsel to Legal Affairs and the Office of Research in responding to demand by a Louisiana animal sanctuary, Chimp Haven, claiming that Ohio State owed them a partial endowment to support research primates formerly associated with the university;
- Advised the President's Office and responded to demands by an animal rights organization, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), that the university join in a pledge to remove pain from all animal research done at the institution;
- Worked with reporter Charlie Ornstein, Pulitzer winner and editor at *ProPublica*, on medical conflicts of interest series.

Professional Activities

Throughout the year, we attend meetings where we mix with both scientists and reporters as colleagues, and forge new relationships. These activities provide long-term payoffs in news coverage. We also serve the university in various capacities, as committee members and invited speakers.

Here is an overview of our professional activities in 2010:

- Served on national advisory committee to the Office of Legislative and Public Affairs at the National Science Foundation [Earle]
- Served on the national advisory committee for Eurekalert, a service of the American Association for the Advancement of Science [Earle]
- Member of the university Chemical Security Committee, including work involving federal inspection of Ohio State by representatives from the Department of Homeland Security [Earle]
- Served as source for story on university research magazines published by widely respected Neiman Storyboard website

(<http://niemanstoryboard.us/2010/05/25/in-the-shadow-of-the-ivory-tower-what-can-university-magazines-offer-narrative-journalists/>) [Earle]

- Participated in university-wide crisis training exercise [Earle, Jeff, Pam, and Emily]
- Provided day-long training in crisis communications related to laboratory animal issues for the senior officers and board of directors of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science (AALAS) [Earle]
- Participated as member of the board of directors for three meetings of the pro-research group Americans for Medical Progress (AMP) [Earle]
- Participated in planning for and conducting emergency/crisis drill at the University's nuclear reactor laboratory [Earle]
- Gave presentation on science communications and media relations to faculty and graduate students at the College of Optometry [Earle]
- Provided counsel to the College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences involving communications issues surrounding their new PAAR facility, a BSL3/AG3-level laboratory now under construction on the Wooster campus [Earle]
- Wrote story on emerging science communications project/website, *Futurity*, for newsletter of the National Association of Science Writers [Earle]
- Provided rapid counsel and support for researchers reporting findings immediately following last year's severe earthquake centered in Chile [Earle]
- Worked with West Virginia Public Television team to produce documentary highlighting the accomplishments of Lonnie Thompson and Ellen Mosley-Thompson, West Virginia natives and University Distinguished Scholars at Ohio State [Earle]
- Worked with, and provided counsel to, Department of Anthropology faculty and leadership in preparation for the repatriation of tissue samples from members of the Yanomami tribe in Brazil [Earle]
- Co-wrote chapter in "white paper" on "*Science and the Media*" (<http://www.amacad.org/publications/scienceMedia.aspx>) published by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences [Earle]
- Gave presentations to senior journalism class making up staff of student newspaper, *The Lantern* [Earle]
- Wrote "*Wishful Thinking, Primitive Reasoning*" essay for package of articles appearing in *The Chronicle Review*, a supplement to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, (<http://chronicle.com/article/Animal-Research-Activists/125247/>) [Earle]
- Member of the Web Committee of the National Association of Science Writers [Earle and Pam]

- Regular columnist for NASW magazine *ScienceWriters* [Pam]
- Attended annual meeting of American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) [Earle, Jeff, Pam, Emily]
- Mentored young science writers at the AAAS meeting [Emily and Pam]
- Attended ScienceWriters 2010, an annual meeting combining the National Association of Science Writers Workshops and the New Horizons in Science Press Briefing sponsored by the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing [Earle, Jeff, Pam, Emily]
- Attended the American Astronomical Society (AAS) meeting, acted as deputy AAS press officer, and facilitated an Ohio State press conference [Pam]
- Attended the American Geophysical Union (AGU) meeting, managed the AGU press room, and facilitated an Ohio State press conference [Pam]
- Wrote 35 posts for the *My Plan For Health* blog [Pam]
- Member of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Science Writers [Jeff]
- Co-chaired the Education Committee of the National Association of Science Writers, including management of the organization's Travel Fellowship, Mentorship Program and Internship Fair [Jeff];
- Invited speaker to a graduate class on research methods in the College of Education and Human Ecology [Jeff];
- Judged research communication posters prepared by graduate students in a Human Ecology class [Jeff].
- Gave presentation on working with the media, and on services provided by Research Communications, to members of the Initiative in Population Research. [Earle and Jeff]
- Provided audio interviews of Ohio State faculty discussing their research to US Department of Health and Human Services for their radio news service "HealthBeat." [Jeff and Emily]
- Participated in quarterly PIO Network Teleconferences led by the National Institutes of Health [Emily]
- Live-blogged the Personalized Health Care National Conference sponsored by Ohio State University Medical Center [Emily]
- Board member of the Association of Staff and Faculty Women [Emily]
- Member of Branding Work Group [Emily]
- Member of 'Year of Alumni' advancement committee [Emily]

Goals

Our 2010 accomplishments, and future plans.

Telling Stories Visually

We continue to work with Joe Camoriano in Media Relations to give [on-camera training to researchers](#) whose work and communication skills make them a good fit for television or Web video.

In February 2010, we partnered with Media Relations and MediaSource, a local production company, to produce [a video news package](#) to accompany Emily's print news release about childhood obesity research in the College of Public Health. The story aired on CNN's Headline News and in multiple television markets, including some of the country's largest: New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Washington, DC.

The estimated TV audience for the story was 4.7 million people; an estimated 4.4 million people saw the story on the Internet or in print (via the video package and/or coverage generated by news releases).

Emily collaborated with the Medical Center on the production of video packages to accompany two additional news releases in 2010. Similar collaboration can be expected in 2011 as circumstances allow.

Promoting Technologies to Industry

American business values Ohio State research so much that the university [ranks second nationwide](#) in industry sponsorship. But to make the most of that substantial investment – more than \$750 million annually – we must transfer the technologies we develop back to American industry.

Research Communications is committed to drawing industry attention to the patented technologies that the university makes available for license, by promoting those technologies to the media.

While we have always partnered with the [Office of Technology Licensing and Commercialization](#) (TLC) to some extent by sharing our news releases with them, our relationship has evolved over the years. Currently, we ask TLC licensing associates to review relevant stories with the idea that we can help safeguard proprietary information and communicate a technology's patent status correctly.

In 2011, we hope to build on that relationship by coordinating with TLC on the release dates for our stories. This way, TLC can prepare their own marketing materials to go out to industry at the time a particular technology is making headlines, thus increasing the likelihood that business will take notice.

Partnering with National Agencies

In the past, we've partnered with The National Science Foundation to develop ways to promote research to the public. One example is [Science360](#), a Web site that provides a daily overview of science news from institutions. The site is a hybrid – part news releases, part commentary – and NSF provides a daily e-mail newsletter to subscribers.⁷ In 2010, *Science360* cited Ohio State research stories five times. We've since begun to intensify this relationship and hope to increase our coverage in *Science360* in 2011.

We've also intensified our partnership with NASA's public information offices, by volunteering to produce news releases and manage press conferences on joint NASA-Ohio State research. For two of our stories in 2010, we received increased visibility as NASA promoted our research, along with access to NASA's [elite staff of visual artists](#), who produced [high-quality artwork](#) for us.

Facilitating Press Conferences

In 2010, we enjoyed continued success with press conferences at national science meetings. In January, one of our most prominent scientists spoke to the media at the American Astronomical Society meeting. His quest to determine [the possibility of life in other solar systems](#) garnered national and international attention.

Most notably, an Ohio State geologist's [discovery of a mummified forest](#) in the northernmost reaches of Canada made a big splash at [a press conference at the American Geophysical Union meeting](#) in December. With nearly 24,500 people reading the supporting news release on EurekAlert!, and hundreds of news stories resulting around the world, this was easily one of our biggest stories of the year – and one of our most-read news releases on EurekAlert! ever.

In each case, we gave our researchers media training, wrote news releases, and – if possible – facilitated the press conferences in person. These efforts have raised our reputation with our colleagues in the press offices for these meetings, who appreciate our assistance and have come to rely on it. As a result, they value our suggestions for future news conferences, and broaden our opportunities to raise the profiles of our researchers and the university.

⁷ More than 2,300 subscribers receive the newsletter. Most are journalists, news media outlets, and public information officers at research institutions. The accompanying Web site averages about 21,000 views per month by as many as 11,000 individual visitors.

URLs

Important Web pages mentioned in this report.

EurekAlert! <http://www.eurekaalert.org>

My Plan For Health: <http://researchnews.osu.edu/pamfrostgorder>

Newswise: <http://www.newswise.com>

Ohio State University on Yammer: <https://www.yammer.com/osu.edu/>

On Research: <http://researchnews.osu.edu/blog>

Research Communications: <http://researchnews.osu.edu>

Research Communications on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/osuresearch>

Research Communications on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/osuresearch>

Science360: <http://science360.gov>

