

RESEARCH COMMUNICATIONS

Annual Report 2007



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Executive Summary

In 2007:

- Research Communications produced 122 stories, with 95 percent appearing in the print or broadcast media, and all achieving coverage on Web news outlets.
- 83 percent appeared in newspapers in the top 50 U.S. markets, in major magazines, or on national broadcast outlets.
- Our stories appeared six times in the *New York Times*, six times in the *Washington Post*, four times in *USA Today*, seven times in the *Chicago Tribune*, and six times in the *Los Angeles Times*. In addition, stories we released appeared on ABC, CBS, CNN and NPR.
- 103 stories were disseminated through EurekAlert and viewed a total of 179,008 times by reporters around the world. A similar number of stories posted to Newswise drew a total of 65,878 viewings.
- One story netted 122,916 viewings on EurekAlert and was deemed the third-most popular science story distributed by the service last year. The second most often viewed story was seen by 1,884 journalists. Our stories averaged at least 544 viewings apiece.
- Our stories were used extensively within University Relations: six were used as splash pages, and 24 were used as “redlinks” on the OSU homepage. OSUToday used 43 of our stories, while *onCampus* used 78.

Electronic Distribution

How we reach reporters, and how many we reach.

OSU Research Communications uses two national news release distribution systems as primary dissemination routes to science, medical and environmental reporters, writers, editors and producers – EurekAlert and Newswise.

EurekAlert, operated by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, offers a secure, embargoed access to 5,955 registered reporters and freelancers, from 64 countries. About half of those reporters are in the US while the other half are outside the US.

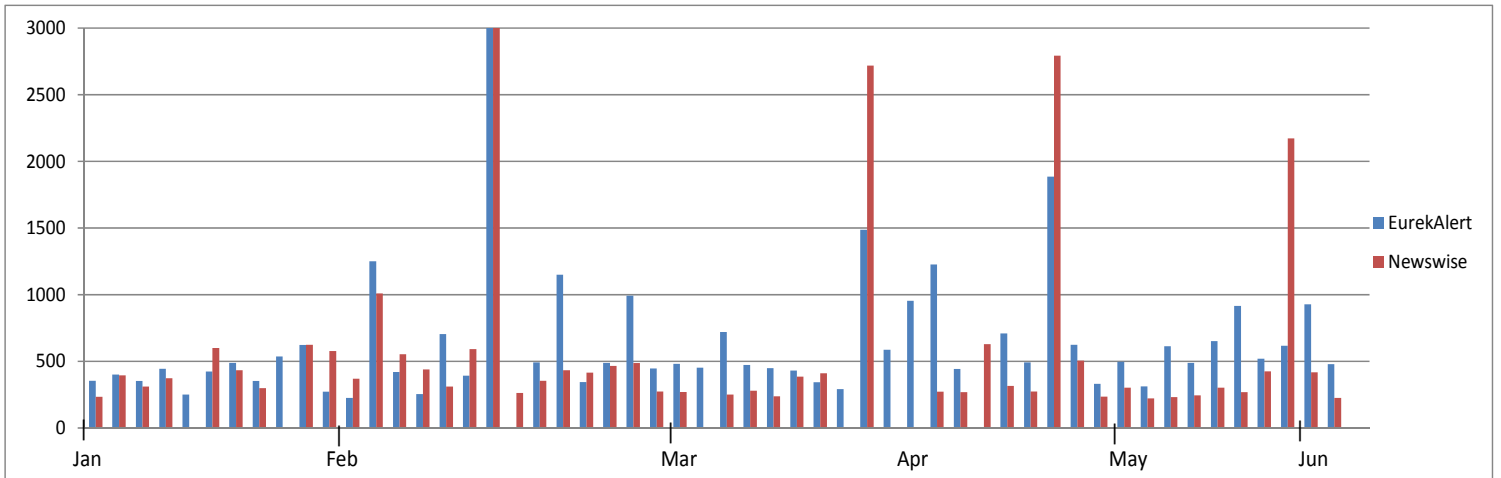
In 2007, 103 OSU research stories were disseminated through EurekAlert and viewed a total of 179,008 times. One story netted 122,916 viewings and was deemed the third-most popular science story distributed by the service last year. The second most often viewed story was seen by 1,884 journalists. Excluding these two outliers, OSU research stories averaged at least 544 viewings apiece.

Newswise, a privately owned distribution service, is EurekAlert's chief competitor. More than 4,300 journalists, including more than 1,100 [freelance](#) reporters, currently subscribe to Newswise virtual wire services. Newswise also offers a secure, embargoed access for timed distribution of releases.

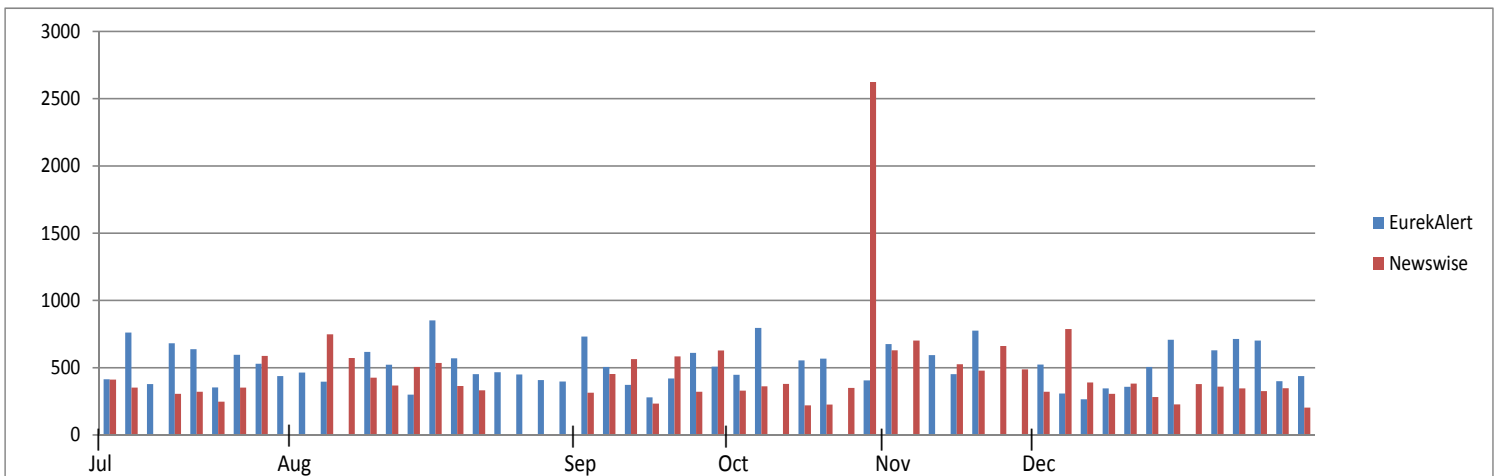
In 2007, 100 OSU research stories were disseminated through Newswise and viewed a total of 65,878 times. One story netted 18,521 viewings and was deemed the third-most popular science story distributed by the service last year. Excluding that outlier, OSU research stories averaged at least 488 viewings.

To provide a more realistic picture of the results of 2007 OSU research story usage by EurekAlert and Newswise subscribers, we've divided the year's data in half and presented it in the two graphs on the following page. [Note that the significant "overachieving" story rates "off the chart" in the first graph, during February.]

Viewings on EurekAlert and Newswise, January - June 2007



Viewings on EurekAlert and Newswise, July - December 2007



News Coverage

The percentage of our news releases which garnered news coverage in 2007, and an overview of coverage through the years.

In the 11 years since we in Research Communications began tracking our news coverage, we've written an average of more than 100 research stories each year. In 2007, the percentage of stories that achieved print or broadcast coverage reached its highest since 2004 -- 95 percent. Some 83 percent appeared in media outlets in the top 50 U.S. markets. Web coverage is averaging close to 100 percent.

Our success has been impressive, especially in light of the competition we face. On websites like EurekAlert, where universities from across the world offer their best research to science and medical reporters, it is not unusual for more than 30 new stories to appear each and every day. Despite this daily glut, Ohio State's stories stand out to reporters. That's obvious from the coverage we receive in the top media outlets in the country. For example, in 2007 our stories appeared six times in the *New York Times*, six times in the *Washington Post*, four times in *USA Today*, seven times in the *Chicago Tribune*, and six times in the *Los Angeles Times*. In addition, stories we released appeared on ABC, CBS, CNN and NPR.

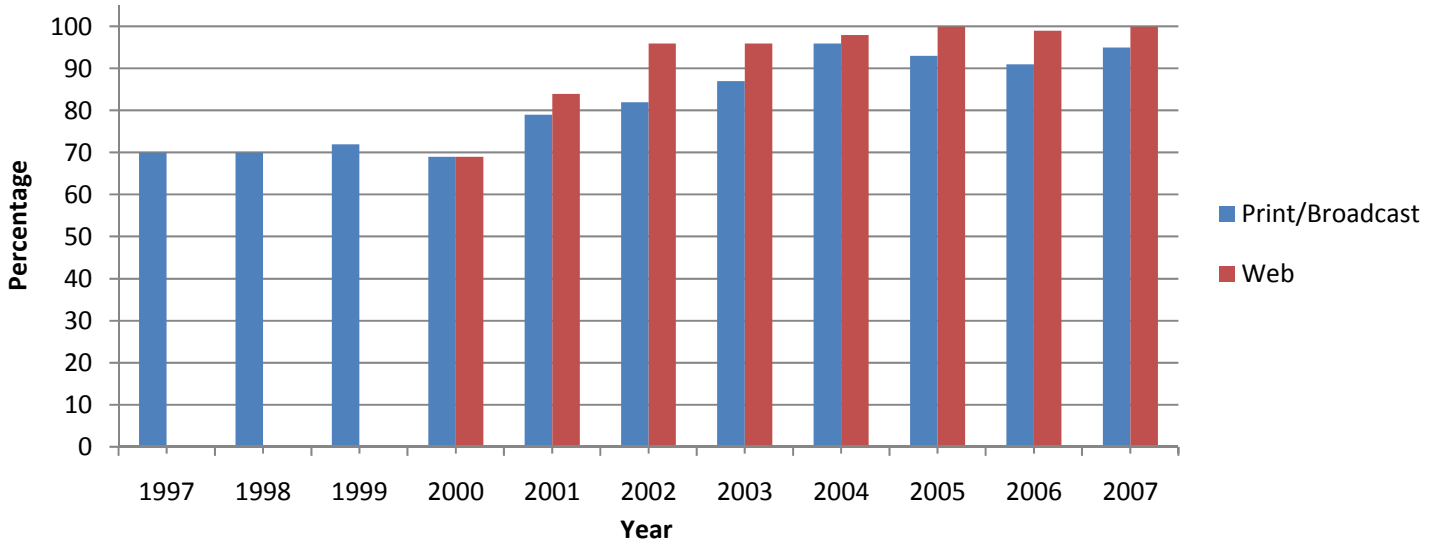
We measure our success through our monthly National News Report [<http://researchnews.osu.edu/natnews/>], which reviews all of the major coverage of Ohio State in the top 50 U.S. markets and selected international outlets, as well as stories in major consumer magazines. We also track our media hits through Lexis-Nexis, and Web search engines such as Google News.

To demonstrate the coverage we have achieved over the years, we include a table on the following page, with a breakout graph showing our percentage of print/broadcast coverage and Web coverage over that time.

Research Communications News Coverage

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total Research Stories	93	108	92	101	93	82	121	130	98	119	111
Number that achieved print/broadcast coverage	65	76	66	70	74	67	105	125	91	108	105
<i>Percentage of total</i>	70	70	72	69	79	82	87	96	93	91	95
Number that achieved World Wide Web coverage				70	78	79	116	127	98	118	111
<i>Percentage of total</i>				69	84	96	96	98	100	99	100
Research News Briefs						22	24	23	18	15	11
OSU Homepage Splash Pages					13	12	10	14	10	7	6
OSU Homepage Redlinks									8	7	24
onCampus Stories					45	53	72	72	69	85	78
OSUToday Stories					52	65	49	67	91	67	43

Percentage of Stories that Achieved Coverage



Research Areas

The colleges and research centers that we publicize.

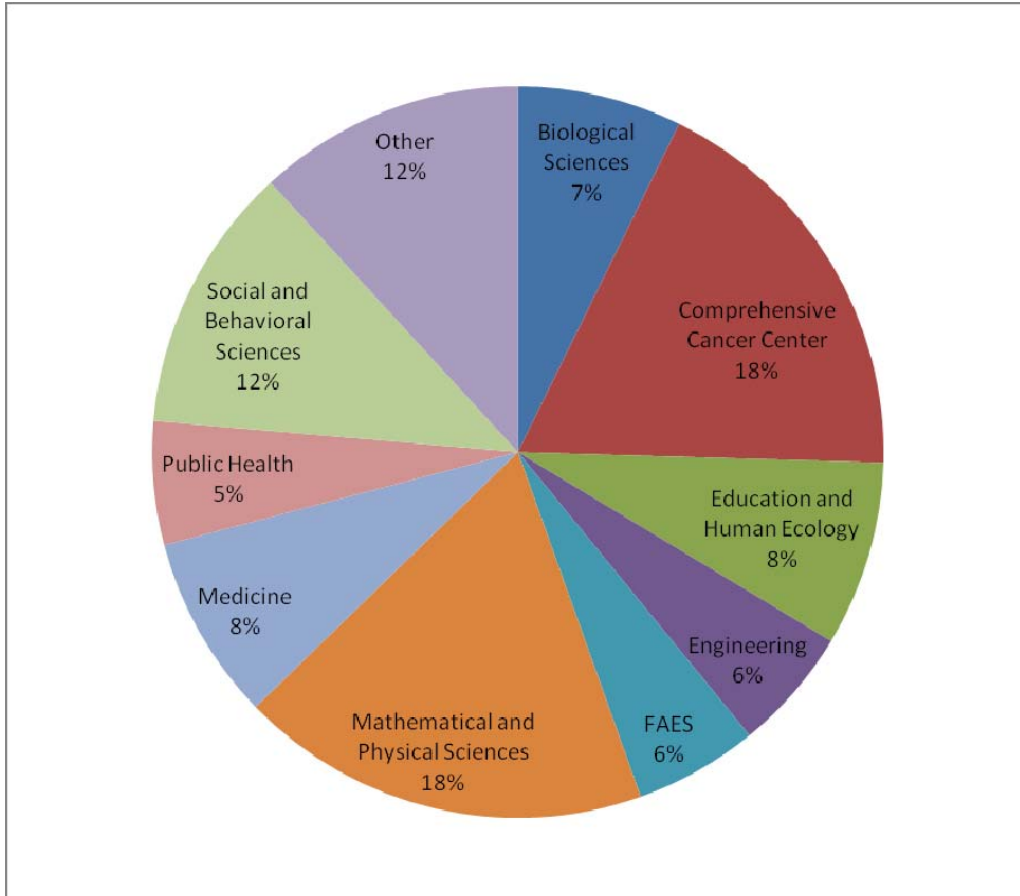
Research Communications promotes research from all corners of the university. The particular set of colleges and research centers that we cover in any given year varies by the newsworthiness of research emerging from the faculty of that area.

2007 was a typical year, in that the coverage was broadly dispersed around the University. The table below lists the number of stories we did for each college or research center covered that year. The pie chart on the following page shows what portion of our total effort went into each area. The “other” category includes the School of Architecture; the Colleges of Business, Communication, Optometry, Pharmacy, and Veterinary Medicine; and the Center for Human Resources Research.

Research Communications	
Number of stories by college/research ctr. 2007	
College of Biological Sciences	8
Comprehensive Cancer Center	20
College of Education and Human Ecology	9
College of Engineering	6
College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences	6
College of Mathematical and Physical Sciences	20
College of Medicine	9
College of Public Health	6
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences	13
Other	13

Research Communications

Coverage by college/research center 2007



Ancillary Work

Other ways we use our stories, aside from national news coverage, and other ways we interact with reporters.

We also publish numerous “Research News Briefs” which are not necessarily meant to garner news coverage, but to inform the media about important issues. We published 11 Research News Briefs in 2007. Some of them dealt with faculty awards and grants, while others detailed serious events such as one of our researchers being involved in a plane crash in Antarctica.

Our stories are also used elsewhere in University Relations; they appear in every issue of *onCampus*, and provide the content for many OSUToday items, splash pages, and “redlinks” on the OSU homepage. In addition, we provide public relations counsel and communications support to university units. Lastly, we interact with reporters through professional activities such as science meetings and reporters’ workshops.

These three major “ancillary” activities -- efforts within University Relations, issues management, and professional activities -- are detailed below.

Efforts within University Relations

Our activities within University Relations in 2007 were typical of most years; six of our stories were used as splash pages, and 24 were used as “redlinks” on the OSU homepage, directly linking people who browse the university Web site to our content. OSUToday used 43 of our stories, while *onCampus* used 78.

In every issue of *onCampus*, we provide content for the Discoveries page and two 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 and grants and visiting speakers.

Issues Management

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 efforts to staffing of events where research leaders or national media figures visit campus.

In 2007, support was provided for the following episodes:

- In January, the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission chairman Dale Klein visited campus, assessing the university's nuclear engineering program and inspecting the institution's nuclear reactor, following news media reports that raised questions about its safety;
- Ongoing requests from animal rights organizations such as PETA, PCRM, HSUS and POET demanded public records relating to the university's use of animals in research;
- Final court decision in the "Boysen case" involving the retirement and transfer of research chimpanzees from OSU to a refuge in Texas, and ongoing public demands for return of the animals;
- PR planning for the annual Spinal Cord Injury Training Program and response to media and public inquiries involving the program;
- Communications/media support for events surrounding the near loss of the university's accreditation by AAALAC of its animal research program and the subsequent regaining of accredited status;
- Planning for the return of anthropological materials including blood and tissue samples retrieved from the indigenous Yanomami tribe in Brazil and commensurate media readiness;
- Preparation for public and news media response to joint project between the university and the Franklin County Coroner's Office involving the dosing and euthanasia of adult hogs to test drug residues in the animals over time;
- Response to public outcry against the use of cats as models for training paramedics in intubation techniques – project was focus of national campaign by PCRM opposing this work;
- Dispute within the Veterinary Medicine College over the proposed adoption program which would release dogs formerly used in research;

- Numerous protests and objections to Professor George Billman's project that tested heart responses in dogs run on treadmills, the target of an opposing campaign by both POET and PETA;
- Worked with Government Relations to fend off attacks on grants to social science researchers awarded by the National Science Foundation;
- Communications staffing surrounding the awarding of the National Medal of Science to Professor Lonnie Thompson;
- Counsel surrounding the College of Veterinary Medicine's transfer of its student training program from the Franklin County Dog Shelter to the Columbus Area Humane Society;
- With Medical Center Communications, counseled researchers involved in investigations involving the use of human cadavers and organs in simulated crash testing;
- Ongoing efforts surrounding the controversy over PhD student Bryan Leonard's attempt to earn his doctorate and its linkage to organized support for intelligent design;
- Provided recommendations and counsel to leadership in the College of Veterinary Medicine pertaining to an alumni-driven effort to unseat college leadership and thwart development efforts;
- Handled media responses to suspected containment breach at the West Campus Biocontainment Facility and the potential exposure of staff to the organism *Franciscella tularensis*, a federally controlled select agent. There was no actual breach;
- Communications challenges surrounding the resumption of a controversial research project involving the interaction of methamphetamine-like drugs and viruses like HIV;
- Communications strategy and preparation surrounding several deaths occurring as part of gene therapy trials underway on campus;
- Planning and communications efforts to inform the campus of stringent new federal regulations regarding the use of chemicals on campus, regulations that resemble the constraints now present for serious biological or radiological agents;
- Communications surrounding the crash of an aircraft in a remote area of Antarctic which carried an Ohio State researcher;
- Visit by National Public Radio science reporter Joe Palca to campus.

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 by establishing strong personal/professional relationships which ultimately lead to better news coverage.

Here is an overview of our professional activities for 2007:

- Participation as member of national advisory committee for EurekAlert! [Earle]
- Participation as member of National Science Foundation's public affairs advisory committee [Earle]
- Participation as member of board of directors of Americans for Medical Progress [Earle]
- Authored chapter "*Working with Science Information Specialists*" in the Handbook On Communicating And Disseminating Behavioral Science, Sage press, 2007. [Earle]
- Judged annual (2007) Michael E. DeBakey Journalism Awards, sponsored by the Foundation for Biomedical Research. [Earle]
- Invited participant on panel, "Preparing the Scientific Enterprise for a Pandemic," 2/17/07 at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in San Francisco. [Earle]
- Co-chaired the Education Committee of the National Association of Science Writers, including management of the organization's "Mentorship Program" and "Internship Fair." [Jeff]
- Regular columnist for National Association of Science Writers' magazine *ScienceWriters*. [Jeff]
- Attended annual meeting of American Association for the Advancement of Science [Earle, Jeff, Pam, Holly]
- Attended annual New Horizons in Science Press Briefing sponsored by the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing [Earle, Jeff, Pam, Holly]
- Attended the American Psychological Association meeting [Jeff]
- Attended the American Astronomical Society meeting [Pam]
- Attended the American Geophysical Union meeting [Pam]
- Attended and staffed VIP visit/tour to Mount Graham Observatory and the Large Binocular Telescope [Pam]

New Initiatives

New activities in 2007, and what we plan to do in the future.

Our efforts continued to evolve in 2007, as we enhanced our relationship with New Media. We purchased three video cameras for New Media, and together we offered them to faculty and students who travel to exotic locations to do research. We gave the researchers media training -- how to use the camera, how to be on camera, and how to interview their cohorts. The first and most notable result is the video shot by geologist Terry Wilson's student, Christina Millan. The video showcased Ohio State research in Antarctica:

<http://www.osu.edu/features/2007/antarctica/>

In 2007, we began producing our own Research Communications videos a little differently as well. The latest two utilized New Media to add live video and voice-overs to the animations and screen-captured graphics that we were using before. Both of these videos were then used by New Media as splash pages.

This story on mapping the spread of the avian flu:

<http://researchnews.osu.edu/archive/flumap.htm>

...led to this splash page on "Map Mashups":

<http://www.osu.edu/features/2007/mapmashups/>

And this one on remote-control microscopes:

<http://researchnews.osu.edu/archive/remotesci.htm>

...led to this splash page on "Remote Science":

<http://www.osu.edu/features/2007/rice/>

..so that while roughly the same number of Research Communications stories were used as splash pages in 2007 as in the previous year, the impact of those stories was much greater.

We plan to continue producing videos for our stories, and finding new ways to disseminate those videos on the Web and on television.