

Media Strategies for Scholars in Canada

working in the field of EU and European studies



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WHY and HOW

to engage with the media when dealing
with European topics in Canada



Scholars today need to know how to craft a message for a general audience and secure their position in the attention economy of the 21st century. Issues related to Europe and the EU pose additional challenges for those attempting to engage with a Canadian audience.

Whether on social media or through more traditional media outlets, establishing a presence outside of academia can give scholarly work new relevance and meaning. In an age of “fake news” and “false facts,” it also supports a public discourse built on accountability, transparency, and systematically-researched knowledge.”

“In times of fake news and systematic misinformation, it is essential that scholars make their knowledge available to the wider public and engage in public debates.”

OLIVER SCHMIDTKE, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA



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This general guide offers strategies for scholars who wish to engage in public discourse but don't know how or where to start.

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Tempted to get started or improve your media outreach? Connect with us! Sign up for an expert profile in our database and let us know if you are interested in working with the media. EUCAnet also invites you to share your media related experiences, concerns and suggestions.

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twitter: [#EUCAMedia](https://twitter.com/EUCAMedia)

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Why Engage with the Media?

There are **many reasons for scholars to engage with traditional and social media**, which we will speak to below. It must be said, though, that the field of EU and European Studies poses its own, specific opportunities and challenges. Importantly, Europe and Canada share some essential features when it comes to the economic, social and political fundamentals. This familiarity means that, in principle at least, a Canadian audience has a basic understanding and, hopefully, interest in what is happening in Europe.

Furthermore, these similarities can also open the door for meaningful comparisons. For instance, when we speak about political developments such as climate change policy or security concerns, it is relatively easy to explain European issues by establishing parallels with examples from a Canadian context. In addition, **Canada, the EU, and its member states share very similar policy challenges**. Speaking on media how issues of, for instance, the carbon tax, migration or social policies are addressed can fruitfully be done with a view to possible new insight coming from a comparative transatlantic policy. At the same time, experts in European Studies need to be aware: local and domestic issues tend to resonate more strongly with audiences. **One needs to make European issues interesting and appealing to find broad resonance in a Canadian context.**

When EUCAnet asked twenty scholars to share their reasons for engaging with the media with us, these were the main five that surfaced:

1. New Audiences

Moving in academic circles often leaves scholars feeling stuck in a loop, so opening to new audiences allows them to get back on track. The dissemination of scholarly work through public channels using accessible language expands the scholar's reach and allows other audiences to follow experts outside of the established circuits.

EDWIN HODGE, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

“More people will listen to a podcast or radio interview, or watch an interview on TV or online than will ever read any of our articles or monographs”.

2. New Conversations

Opening new channels for public discourse means opening the possibilities for new conversations. Whether through direct messaging on social media, Q & A's with an interviewer on TV, or more nuanced exchanges with communities built on shared interests and values, let's face it: a fresh exchange of ideas is exactly what we all need.

LAURENT PECH THE SCHOOL OF LAW AT MIDDLESEX,
UNIVERSITY LONDON, UK

“Engaging with media is not only essentially to communicate one's expertise to a wide and general audience, I have also found it a stimulating intellectual exercise, as it forces you to translate and condense your scholarly insight and tends to make you a better communicator.”

3. Greater Impact

Scholars have the opportunity to inform policy makers, shape public discourse, increase their visibility, gain prominence in their field, or simply cultivate a following by sharing their expertise. Academics have worked hard to take their research this far; circulating it through new channels will help them to take it even farther. This form of public outreach has the potential of securing greater societal impact for research findings and scholarly expertise.

WILFRID GREAVES, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

“I believe it’s especially important today for social scientists – especially political scientists – to help people better understand the complex, high stakes, and sometimes divisive issues that are currently front and centre within our political, economic, and social systems.”

4. Professional Development

Like it or not, media engagement has become an integral part of academic life. Universities increasingly demand a greater degree of outreach and community engagement from their scholars. Newspaper and magazine articles, TV and radio appearances, and social media followings add

value to organizations and demonstrate the scope of one’s influence. A media portfolio can help scholars advance their career by bolstering applications for promotion and tenureship or by providing them with marketable, translatable skills.

5. Combating Disinformation

In the age of “fake news” and “false facts,” it is important to share knowledge built upon evidence, transparency, and accountability. Scholars can help broaden democratic discourse by provoking discussion around key issues, drawing attention to harmful narratives, or countering disinformation campaigns by supplying systematically researched, peer-reviewed content.

ELISABETH VALLET, UNIVERSITY OF MONTREAL

“More than ever before, the public tends to mistrust science, scientists and academia. This era seems prone to conspiracy theories. Hence the public is looking for answers one can grasp without having to go through the entire literature on the matter.”



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Common Concerns

These are a few of the most common concerns raised by scholars about engaging in media outreach. Since the sources and solutions for each can be highly complex and circumstantial, it is important to be aware in advance of the unique risks and demands that you may encounter along the way.

Privacy

- a public persona can erode privacy and invite new forms of scrutiny and attention
- sharing personal details breaks down public/private barriers
- making visible daily routines can open scholars to uninvited advances

Support

- media engagement is often a self-driven, self-guided endeavour
- lack of institutional support in a specialized field exacerbates other, related challenges
- lack of experience or specialist training increases the burdens inherent to undertaking a new project

Security

- increased attention makes digital / online security an increasing concern
- physical security can be an issue for scholars working on controversial, politicized issues

Translation

- translating academic research for a public (non-academic) domain is a skill unto itself
- not all scholarship is relevant or interesting to a public audience
- in the act of translation, much of the nuance of scholarly research can be lost

Integrity

- lack of integrity in public discussions (e.g. uninformed or malicious responses) can poison discourse
- challenges to your intellectual legitimacy or position as an expert should be expected
- the rapid pace of the news cycle can lead to less rigorous standards than those to which academics are accustomed

Workload

- lack of time and resources challenges the ability of many scholars to sustain media engagement
- a disproportionate amount of work is required before there is any hope of reward
- the number of networks and platforms available for public engagement is overwhelming



Watch Prof. Dennis Pilon, York University, presenting on Navigating media biases
<https://youtu.be/qP4kjSpv-mI>



Watch Prof. Roberta Guerrina's talk on "Being a female public intellectual - risks and opportunities"
<https://youtu.be/AbgUEU5ShL4>

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How to Get Started

Tips from Academics with Media Expertise

So much depends on what you want to achieve and how you want to go about it that there is no single guide that can tell you exactly where to start. There are, though, general guidelines that will help you to think the process through and see more clearly for yourself what work will need to be done.

1. Figure out your aim

What do you want to talk about generally, and what do you want to say about it specifically? Equally important: what do you want to get out of this? Whether you want to drive attention to a published work or establish yourself as an expert in your field, most of your media engagement will take the form of content marketing in the sense that you're producing content designed to stimulate interest in yourself, your ideas, your products, or your services. This means that you'll need to figure out whose attention you want to grab and in which direction you want that attention to lead them.

WILFRID GREAVES, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

"I only do media appearances on topics that matter to me. I ask myself if I have something relevant to say, and if I am confident that the program will give me the space to do so. It is important to think ahead about the key points you want to make, but you should also be ready for unexpected lines of questioning"

2. Find Your Audience

Be where your audience is. Your colleagues might all be on Academia.edu, but your audience just might be on Instagram. CBC might be asking you for an interview, but your time just might be better spent speaking at a community event. The most prominent or "obvious" choices aren't always the best, depending on what exactly you want to achieve.

3. Know your approach

You can be a content creator, message disseminator, content aggregator, or network facilitator. You can act as a commentator, an educator, or an interpreter. The reality is that you'll most likely do a bit of everything — especially when working with digital media — but choosing a primary focus and then positioning yourself accordingly will help you to more clearly define your audience and the channels required to reach that audience, as well as helping your audience to understand your message.

AMELIA HADFIELD, UNIVERSITY OF SURREY, UK

"Most important is to start with basic training. Speaking on radio and appearing on TV are two very different things. It's key that academics understand how to construct and stick to 'toplines', how to balance a 30 second interview with a more extensive 5 minute one, the difference between speaking solo and on a panel, and more".



4. Define your public persona

This is one that many people struggle with (and against!). The reality is that economic globalization and widespread connectivity have made it even harder than before to stand out from the crowd. On the bright side, though, there are more crowds looking for someone to stand out among them. Having a clearly defined persona (however minimally contrived) that compliments the form and content of your messaging is key to establishing your position among competing voices. Think of it like an elevator pitch: you have the briefest of windows to convey to your audience what you want them to know about you. Without a clear image of who you are, how likely are they to listen to you rather than someone else?

5. Be locatable

In this day and age, having a website, blog, Twitter account, LinkedIn or Google Scholar profile, or any other form of personal profile page, is standard fare. The key is to establish an online, searchable, accessible base that will allow others to connect with you and your work without undue effort. This not only solidifies your image as a “real person” (truly, a 21st century problem) and legitimates your position in the information economy, but also affords you an additional opportunity to showcase your portfolio, broadcast your message, or advertise your products and services to the broadest-possible audience.

6. K.I.S.S.

Keep it simple, silly. This design principle applies so broadly that it’s almost cliché, but it’s always worth reiterating. So, keep what simple? Well, everything. Keep your content short and sweet: have a point and get right to it. Keep your online accounts streamlined: focus one project at a time and keep it focused. When building a new project, keep it connected to your other projects through clear links or references. Keep your eye on the prize: know what you want to achieve through media outreach and select the right tool for the right project. Work smart and the rewards will come.

FRÉDÉRIC MÉRAND, UNIVERSITY OF MONTREAL

“Do not overestimate how much the educated citizen knows about the issue. Use simple words and short sentences. Explain what you mean. You’re not talking to your colleagues and you won’t look stupid.”



7. Get support

Whether you decide to engage in public discourse through traditional or digital media, make sure you take advantage of the free services available to you that offer media training and networking opportunities such as your university’s communications services or other platforms such as EUCAnet.

8. Track your efforts

Tracking your media interaction in a personal archive or on your website/blog/social media allows you to “own” your media efforts. It also maximizes the distribution of your message to your networks. Live links disappear quickly and you might not be able to track your content even right after your interview on Radio or TV. By asking the editors to send you a direct link to your interview for future reference you will be able to share the content with your chosen audiences at any given point.



Watch the talk of Doug Saunders, The Globe and Mail,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-xlu-UN4Ekk&list=PL8ADW6xXt9VW-6YX-8A5HFENkJzDj7q8Fj&index=2&t=0s>



Basic Tips for Crafting a Message

The struggle of translating (academic) English into (non-Academic) English is real, but not insurmountable. Even recognizing the need to adjust one's language according to one's audience is half the battle. Here we outline a few of the fundamentals for crafting a message destined for public consumption.

“Our life is getting more and more complex and it is part of the job of academics to be a public intellectual whose expertise can help to translate scientific insights into everyday language. Moreover, the deconstruction of complexity is something we do in the classroom and should be the art of our culture outside the classroom.” Kurt Huebner, University of British Columbia

1. Know your audience

Identifying your audience as clearly as possible in advance will enable you to reflect upon differences in age, nationality, religion, education, or socio-economic circumstance that may impact how they receive (or fail to receive) your message. What language, voice, or tone is appropriate to your audience? To which beliefs, values, or attitudes should you appeal? Which should you avoid? Familiarizing yourself with the communities into which you are entering, and adjusting your message accordingly, will help them hear what you want to say.

2. Timing

Be current with current issues. Be sensitive to sensitive issues. Be aware that the timing of your message will have a major impact on how that message is received. There's as much of an art to knowing when to say something as there is to knowing how to say it.



3. Create meaningful content

Whatever individual work you're producing, consider that it has the potential to reflect upon your entire body of work, for better or for worse. The upside of this is that you can use that article, presentation, interview, or infographic to drive traffic and attention to your other projects. Creating

meaningful content will attract a different caliber of reader who is sick of the influx of junk mail and empty articles that bombard us all.

4. Have a clear call to action

Even if it's as simple as “for more information about this subject visit my website at www.website.com” or “sign up for my newsletter to receive 10% off my new book,” tell your audience in no uncertain terms what they can do to stay engaged with you or how they can benefit by taking the steps you suggest. If you've captivated your audience, and there is a genuine motivation or reward for the action you've suggested, it will work. *(Message us using the hashtag #EUCAMedia if you disagree ;)*

5. Make it sexy

Say more with less with a potent metaphor, witty remark, rhetorical question, or gently contentious heading (like this one) when possible. A catchy sentence can go a long way, and a sound bite that can easily be shared can go even further.

6. K.I.S.S.

Again (and always), **keep it simple**. Have a point and get right to it. You may need a dash of rhetorical flourish to grab your audience's attention, but the underlying message should be simple and clear.

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Why Blog and How to Start

Gone are the days when blogs were thought of as stand-alone diary-like pages. The reality is that the internet is a massively complex network and your blog is one node among many. The key to its success is to connect it with others.

Because of its role as an intermediary between large and small platforms, blogging is now a mainstay of internet culture and backbone to a global conversation.

Scholars, for instance, often link to published books and articles in their blog posts, then create links to those posts through social media. These links are then shared across platforms, through news streams, and within communities of interest. This cycle not only helps academics to reach non-academic audiences, but also to engage with wider academic audiences as well.

MIRIAM MUELLER-RENSCH,
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCE ERFURT, GERMANY

“Ideally, academia offers intellectual space to comprehend the world and its challenges beyond political and economic pressures and day-to-day quarrels. Make use of this wonderful gift and share your insights, ideas and alternative perspectives with media representatives and outlets to uncover the agenda of interest-driven individuals and groups. You can be one of many independent, critical voices boosting peoples’ confidence and motivation to also contribute to public debate and face current socio-political challenges in the local contexts of their daily lives.”

You can “translate” your research into non-academic terms, or fully embrace academic jargon and culture. This is your blog — what matters is that it reaches and resonates with your target audience.

As we’ve pointed out in our Media Strategy Guide, the real question is: which audience do you want to engage, and

why? Once you’ve answered that question, you will want to consider what type of blog will work best for you.

Check out the EUCAnet blog at blog.eucanet.org!

Types of Blogs

According to our survey of EUCAnet scholars, there are 3 main types of blogs:

1. Independent

You are writer, editor, and publicist. Everything is up to you, which can be very (dis)empowering.

2. Multi-author

There is a general editor (or team of editors) publishing posts from any number of authors, showcasing a range of perspectives and approaches on a given theme.

3. Collaborative

Whether editing duties are centralized or shared, a number of authors contribute to discussion on a given topic, informing one another (and others) along the way.

There are pros and cons to each, but the basic principle behind all blog types is that involving more contributors and collaborators will generally require less work from each participant, while also giving them less freedom over content and direction. Independent blogs, on the other hand, give their creators greater control but also require far more labour to support the blog’s production and promotion.

The question then becomes: What do you want to achieve with your blog?

Why Blog

Blog writing is an excellent exercise in translating scholarly research into short, accessible, impactful segments.

It can free you from the constraints of academic conventions, allow you to try out different voices, or grant you the freedom to develop new ideas and explore new subject areas.

Blogs can promote your products and services or establish your expertise in a field. They can give you a “home base” for your online presence and provide you with a direct channel for communicating with your audience.

To decide whether blogging is right for you, we recommend that you review EUCAnet’s Media Strategy Guide and consider from an informed perspective whether blogging is the right approach for what you want to accomplish.

Tips for Blogging

EUCAnet scholars offered the following tips for scholars who wish to write for a blog.

1. Write clear, concise sentences. Have a clear point to each post. Be clear with your audience about what you want them to take away from your post.

2. Make titles that grab the reader’s attention and pull them in. Titles are responsible for prompting readers to click through to your post. They’re also what will most likely be shared through social media. A bit of research and trial-and-error for blog titles that work will go a long way.

3. Use (non)academic language strategically. Your tone, voice, and terminology should complement the purpose and character of your blog, which should resonate with your target audience.

4. Engage Your Audience. Invite responses, respond to comments, and initiate conversations through social media as much as possible. You can also invite other bloggers to contribute to your blog or write reflections on your posts. The more engagement you can encourage, the better. Think of your blog like a stranger at a networking event. Standing in the corner waiting for someone to come to you is not the way to make new connections.

5. Watch the metrics. Page views, link clicks, and download numbers will help you know if your message is getting out there, what sort of titles are effective, if your media engagement is working, and so on. Understanding what drives traffic to or from your blog is essential to its continued success.

6. Read other blogs regularly. As a blogger, it will help if you keep an eye on trends and take note of practices that work (or don’t!) to reproduce on your own blog. As a blogger, it will help if you keep an eye on what others are doing in the blogosphere and then adjust your own strategies accordingly.

7. Most importantly: keep writing! Make a posting schedule, however loose, so that you know when to start working on your next post and your readers know when to expect it. Blogging success comes when the writers have as much of a habit of writing as the readers have of reading.

Platforms

Choosing the right platform from the start is important because changing later can pose major challenges. Most people without formal training want something that is easy to setup and maintain, without any coding skills required. As the blog evolves, however, they may also want something flexible enough to accommodate new growth. Here are a few of the most common platforms that EUCAnet scholars use for blogging, with a few important details on each.

1. Wordpress

Wordpress is a major player in the online world, powering more than 1/3 of all websites. It’s easy to setup, easy to customize, and easy to expand. There are also thousands of tutorials online that can help you to add whatever functionality you desire.

Note that there are two ways to run a wordpress website:

i) www.wordpress.org

Home of the Wordpress software development team. This is the option if you have some experience in web development and want full control of your site. If you download Wordpress from here, you’ll need your own web hosting account with a provider like GoDaddy or HostGator to install it. If that means nothing to you, consider the next option.

ii) www.wordpress.com

A hosting provider for Wordpress websites, created by a co-founder of Wordpress. This site offers free blog hosting services with option to pay for certain premium upgrades. This is ideal for scholars with little experience with websites or blogging and who may want to expand later on.

2. Blogger

Blogger is a free blogging service owned by Google. Regular users of the Google eco-system may want to use it for that reason. It's also an excellent option for scholars who want to spend less time setting up their blog and more time writing for it. As a basic blogging tool, however, the trade-off for that quick setup is a limited ability to handle advanced functionality as your blog evolves.

3. Medium

Medium offers bloggers a free, easy-to-use platform within a fairly active community of writers, journalists, and experts. Although it is limited in terms of the functionality that it offers, Medium integrates social networking features into its blogs that will help you to connect more readily with other communities within its ecosystem. This is a great option for scholars looking for cross-sector engagement.

4. Squarespace and Wix

We're lumping these two together because both offer users without any knowledge of coding or design principles the ability to create beautiful websites. Unlike the other options listed above, however, neither are free and both were developed primarily for small-business owners. The ubiquity of their ads tends to put them at the forefront of many peoples' minds, which is why we've included them here. For most scholars, the other (free) options are far more suitable.

5. Tumblr

A less obvious choice in this context, Tumblr is a free microblogging platform with social networking features that make post-sharing quick and simple. It is generally more suitable for visually-oriented content producers than for those focused solely on the written word. Although its features are limited, its community is quite active. This is a great option for scholars who are ready to embrace its unique, particular environment.



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Why Social Media and How to Start

Social media has changed the game for a lot of industries, and the academy is no exception.

Despite its pitfalls, the last decade has proven that social media creates valuable opportunities to share information, form partnerships, engage with the broadest audience ever known to humankind, and build communities irrespective of geographic locale.

Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit facilitate transactions between scholars, laymen, government agencies, public and private institutions, policy makers, journalists, and other researchers, with multi-directional communications occurring at every level.

We asked EUCANet scholars who use social media to engage in public outreach what they wish they had known when starting out. These are the tips they offered for Canadian scholars considering using social media.

AMELIA HADFIELD, UNIVERSITY OF SURREY, UK

“...academics need to think about the social media palette on offer and how they want to use each of these tools to their best advantage: Twitter works for one thing, Instagram another, your own blog page separate again.”



Watch Prof. Laurent Pech, from Middlesex University London, explaining the opportunities of using Twitter for academics

<https://youtu.be/GwJt1CI797k>

Choosing a Platform

Choosing the right social media platform can be a real challenge, as new platforms constantly appear while old ones disappear or fluctuate in and out of favour. The nuances of each platform's particular culture and core functionality only serve to complicate the fact that it takes a lot of effort to establish and maintain an account. Here we list in alphabetical order the main platforms identified by EUCANet scholars as potential avenues for outreach.

Academia.edu

Very similar to ResearchGate but with a broader academic audience. Recent criticisms around the monetization of users are worth considering.

Facebook

The most obvious choice for many, with over 2 billion users. Follow “friends” (connected accounts) and share any form of multimedia with your own.

Google Scholar

Search for articles, explore related works and authors, and track developments in whole areas of research. Creating a public author profile here is an excellent alternative to setting up your own independent website.



Humanities Commons

Like Researchgate but for the Humanities, and like Academia.edu but strictly open-access, open-source, and not-for-profit.

Instagram

Image- and video-centric, this sometimes-superficial platform boasts a highly active user-base that, with some skill, can be rallied for great results.

LinkedIn

A professional networking site with an increasingly strong integration of social media components, LinkedIn is great for developing professional networks and connecting with very particular communities of practice.

Mendeley

Combine one-part reference manager with one-part social networking tool and you have the notably useful academic platform that is Mendeley.

Quora

Ask a question or provide an answer. Quora is a powerful tool for conducting research or sharing expertise, with an active, healthy community behind it.

Reddit

A platform where users can submit questions, comments, links, images, or videos, and then discuss or vote upon their relevance. The ability for anyone to create “subreddits” (i.e. dedicated forums) that connect with the larger community makes for a radically active and diverse audience to draw from.

ResearchGate

The largest social networking site for academics in terms of active users, though mostly from the physical sciences. Post, share, or find content. Follow others, engage in conversation, or leave comments.

Tumblr

Social media meets microblogging. Post text, images, or videos to your account and follow others who do the same. Tumblr offers an active if idiosyncratic audience whose value is now often overlooked and underestimated.

Twitter

While its 280 character limit doesn't promote the most rational dialogue, twitter is exceptional for spreading real-time updates and media releases quickly and easily.

Youtube

For the video-centric among us, Youtube users watch over a billion hours of videos every day. The comments section can be toxic, but the opportunity for a global audience is real.

BEATE SHMIDTKE, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

“A general tip is to ask your colleagues what social media they use and why. Platforms come and go, and with so many options, it is difficult for us to say what will work for you. A bit of independent research and trial-and-error will be required here”

Getting Started

After you've read EUCAnet's Media Strategy Guide for Canadian Scholars to figure out your aim for engaging in public discourse, then researched social media platforms to find your audience and determine what sort of content you will produce, you'll be in strong position to get started.

Because there are so many platforms, channels, and approaches, it is difficult for any one guide to tell you what you “should” do. For this reason we've isolated some general principles and best-practices applicable to most situations.

1. Create Your Profile

If you've read our Media Strategy Guide you'll know the importance of having a clearly defined persona that complements the form of your content, suits the context in which you're working, and serves the purposes you need it to serve. Profiles can matter more (like LinkedIn) or less (like Reddit) depending on the platform, but important for all platforms is that you consider in advance how you'd like to present yourself to the public.

2. A Little (Content) Planning Goes a Long Way

Do you aim to share research, provoke meaningful discussion, build new networks, or establish your expertise? Will you write articles, or reviews, or reflections? Thinking through the range of ways that you can engage with social media will help you to more meaningfully strategize what content you will produce. Having a plan from the get-go will strengthen your account in the long run.

3. Build Your Network

All social media is predicated upon user connectivity and interaction. Connecting your account to others by liking, friending, or following is the key to making all your efforts worthwhile. Start with people you know, accounts you admire, and organizations you value or simply run wild with it. There is no right or wrong way to do it. Just keep in mind that gaining followers is the primary objective of most social media operators.

Another good networking opportunity for academic users on social media is to join discipline-specific communities, such as **#twitterstorians** for history scholars and a position-specific network, such as **#phdpostdoc**.

4. Stay Engaged

Following others, “liking” content, and leaving comments all have one thing in common: they are all means of engagement on social media. For this reason, inviting comments, likes, and follows is standard fare in the digital world. The aim is to develop relationships, invite responses, or capture attention in a manner that will ultimately help drive traffic to

your account. Staying engaged will help keep you near the centre of the conversation.

5. Observe What Works

Find users that are doing what you want to do (or what you don’t want to do) and study what they’re doing right (or wrong). Internet trends move fast and with great gravity. Keeping an eye on what does and does not work anymore will help you stay ahead of the curve while providing you with the creative stimulus necessary to keep productive and engaged.

6. Analytics Are Your Friend

Data-driven marketing is ubiquitous for a reason. Seeing where traffic is going and how users are engaging with your work is as important as understanding the key demographic details about your audience. Quantitative analysis can come from native tools like Facebook’s Insights or Google’s Analytics, or third-party solutions like Clicky. Not interested? That’s OK. A strong intuition for social media can take you farther than analytics, but analytics can also take you farther than intuition alone.

3 Rules for Life Online

Let these serve as both a warning and a set of guiding principles. According to our conversations with regular social media practitioners, these are 3 rules to live by online.

1. Don’t Feed the Trolls

Trolls are people who say something controversial or inflammatory just to get a rise or provoke a reaction out of others. Their presence and power online should not be underestimated. Keep in mind that not every comment needs (or deserves) a response.

2. Stay on Top of Comments and Replies

This is the inverse of rule 1, which warns against potentially toxic interactions: keep the good conversations going. The volume or force of responses can sometimes be overwhelming, and a good conversation can quickly go south. Staying on top of comments is crucial for shaping the narrative, constructively handling criticism, dispelling myths in real-time, and preventing your account or website from being overrun by trolls.

3. What Goes Online Stays Online

You can always delete a page off your site, but maybe the Internet Archive already got to it first. You can always delete a comment off of Reddit, but that won’t stop sites like Removeddit from publishing it anyway. Avoid sharing too much personal information — especially details about financial matters, family members, your location, itinerary, or regular routines — or airing opinions and grievances that may one day come back to haunt you. The internet always remembers.

“... Social media can also be a trap, a place where an academic exposes him or herself more than necessary. As an academic, there is also the need to be careful in retweeting or reposting information, in order to avoid anything that would induce a perceived bias in his or her research in the future.”

MIRIAM MUELLER-RENSCH,
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCE ERFURT, GERMANY

Media Strategies for Scholars in Canada

working in the field of EU and European studies



Why Traditional Media and How to Start

Why Media Outreach and How to Start

Media Outreach is exactly what it sounds like: you are reaching out to the media to pitch a story, idea, or perspective that you think will be interesting to their audience. And, if the media outlet agrees, you'll be invited to share that story with that audience.

You can reach out with press releases, telephone calls, or emails to one outlet in particular or to all of them. You can provide interviews (e.g. on radio, TV, or podcasts), give talks in public or private forums, write editorials or articles, or act as a media commentator.

It's never too late or too early to start. Both senior and junior scholars can find success through media engagement with a bit of effort and know-how.

Why Engage with the Media?

We asked EUCANet scholars their reasons for engaging with the media. These are the top responses that they provided.

- Share expertise
- Show the public the value of academic research
- Enrich your own scholarship through engagement
- Draw attention to your work
- Disseminate knowledge built on evidence, transparency, and accountability.

RUBEN ZAIOTTI, DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

"Reaching out to a broader public has always been an important task for academics. This is truer than ever today, when expertise is under attack from multiple fronts. Media engagement remains the most effective tool to contribute to an open and informed public discourse."

How to Get Started

The following steps assume you've already studied our Media Strategy Guide for Canadian Scholars, established your purpose for engaging with the media, and determined what audience you would like to address.

1. Find your target audiences

Conduct a bit of research to identify the media that will give you the most exposure to your target audiences. Organize them according to medium (e.g. radio, TV, newspaper, podcast) and then according to your own priorities.

2. Create and maintain a media list

From your list of potential media outlets, research contact details for editors, producers, writers, or other points of contact who might help you to achieve your goal. This will give you a growing directory for future pitches that you can develop and refine over time.

3. Familiarize yourself with your target media outlet

Once you have identified the particular organization to which you would like to pitch your idea, familiarize yourself with their formatting to gain an understanding of how they do things and what sort of language they use. This will also help you to determine what sort of stories they might be looking for.

4. Approach your university's media department

The odds are that your university has a media department that would love to work with you. Let them know you're interested in and available for media engagements. As an official intermediary between scholars and local, regional, and national print and broadcast media, you are likely to find from them a wealth of support, resources, and media training options.

5. Develop Your Pitch

Your pitch should be concise and compelling, clearly stating why it's relevant to the media outlet's audience. Highlight also the details that make this story relevant for the current moment while covering the basics questions of who, what, where, when, why, and how. Less detail is more at this point; all that matters is that you grab your reader's attention and convince them of the newsworthiness of your topic.

6. Be Assertive and Tireless

Conducting media outreach can be exhausting and demoralizing. Don't be phased if you don't get the response you were hoping for. It's important to stay the course and keep sending out your pitches – sooner or later, your efforts will pay off.

Appearing on TV, Radio, or Podcast

There are no hard and fast rules for appearing on TV, radio, or podcasts, which is perhaps part of what makes it so challenging for some. For this reason we asked our scholars what general guidelines they wish they had known from the start.

Be Available

Make yourself available and be flexible with your timing when you interact with television and radio. Journalists work on a very different schedule than academia. One

basic skill interacting with media outlets is the ability to adapt to their news cycle and mode of communication.

EMMANUEL BRUNET-JAILLY, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

“When producers contact you, don't say no”

Be Prepared

Like any lecture or presentation, being well prepared for your appearance on the media is essential. Do your research, refine your talking points, and rehearse in advance if possible. You may not feel confident in front of the camera or microphone, but viewers and listeners will still leave with a positive impression if you're confident about what you're saying.

KURT HUEBNER, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

“Media are generally catchword-hungry and looking for the right phrase. So, preparing a good opener can be helpful for conveying a more complex message during the interaction. It needs quite some discipline and constraint to be parsimonious but it is worth it in order to have an impact.”



Have a Point and Make it

If you've prepared in advance, then you should have a clear idea about what exactly needs to be conveyed. Keep your message simple and uncluttered by jargon that might complicate rather than clarify your meaning. For a general audience, simple words and short sentences will go a long way.

COSTANZA MUSU, UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

"I am often invited by media to comment on rather controversial topics ... As such, my first priority is to give balanced and nuanced answers, and avoid using the interview as a pulpit to promote a specific political position or argument. As academics I believe our contribution is to help listeners understand complex issues that are often rooted in obscure facts and grievances."

Talk About What You Know

No one expects you to be a generalist. The odds are that you've been invited to contribute as a specialist. Stick with what you know and don't be afraid to decline commenting on what you don't. This will also help you to stay confident about what you're saying and avoid being called to account later on.

ANDREA WAGNER, MACEWAN UNIVERSITY

"Be knowledgeable and neutral, well prepared and have a balanced approach."

Have Fun

Yes, it can be stressful in front of an audience, video camera, or microphone. But embracing the moment will help you to stay lucid and appeal more strongly to your audience. Try to relax and enjoy what will likely be a unique experience.

COLIN BENNETT, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

"It's fun...even when you get misquoted!"

Cultivate Relationships

Most scholars we surveyed for this guide insisted on the interpersonal dimension of conducting media outreach: by developing relationships with editors, producers, and show hosts you will find it easier to grow as a media professional while expanding your networks and establishing your position as a trusted source for media outlets.

COLIN BENNETT, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

"... try to cultivate certain journalists so that you can call them if you have a likely news story; ensure that they follow you on Twitter; invite interested journalists to scholarly conferences and events."



Watch the talk of Doug Saunders, editor and journalist for The Globe and Mail on the imperfect relationship between scholarly researchers and journalists. He suggests to build meaningful relationships with editors and journalists.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-xIuUN4Ekk&t=1s>

Ask for Feedback

Everyone has a unique sense of what works and what doesn't work on the media. Ask producers and interviewers for feedback on your own performance to gain understanding of a variety of perspectives that will inform your future efforts.



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Examples of Media Expert Profiles in Canada and Europe

The Canadian media is interested in various types of expertise when it comes to issues related to Europe. We asked EUCAnet experts to share with us their recent media outreach activities. Below are links to the responses from 20 experts from Canada and Europe, who specified the topics media representatives recently asked their expertise on, provided an example of their media contribution, shared some tips about how to engage with media, and explained why it's important for them to engage with the public.

Tips for Media Engagement by:



Costanza Musu
Associate Professor
Public and International Affairs
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Ottawa
Recommended Media Tips



Oliver Schmidtke
Director of the Centre for
Global Studies (CFGs), Professor
of Political Science and History
Jean Monnet Chair in European
Politics and History
University of Victoria
Recommended Media Tips



Elisabeth Vallet
Associate Professor and
Research Director
Geopolitics at the
Raoul-Dandurand Chair
University of Quebec, Montreal
Recommended Media Tips



Kurt Huebner
Professor and Chair for German &
European Studies, Director at the
Institute for European Studies
University of British Columbia,
Jean Monnet Chair for European
Integration and Global Political
Economy
Recommended Media Tips



Amelia Hadfield
Head of the Department
of Politics and Chair in European
and International Affairs at the
University of Surrey
Recommended Media Tips



Achim Hurrelmann
Associate Professor of Political Sci-
ence, Jean Monnet Chair “Democ-
racy in the European Union” and
Associate Director of the Centre
for European Studies (CES)
Carleton University
Recommended Media Tips



Frederic Merand
Director of CÉRIUM,
the Montréal Centre for
International Studies, and
Professor of Political Science
University of Montréal
Recommended Media Tips



Will Greaves
Assistant Professor of
International Relations
University of Victoria
Recommended Media Tips



Colin Bennett
Professor,
Department of Political Sciences,
University of Victoria
Recommended Media Tips



Miriam Mueller-Rensch
PostDoc-Researcher
Research Group on
Macro-Violence
Hamburg Institute for Social Research
Recommended Media Tips



Laurent Pech
Professor of European Law
and Head of the Law and
Politics Department
Middlesex University
Recommended Media Tips



Valerie D'Erman
Postdoctoral fellow,
Department of Political Science
University of Victoria
Recommended Media Tips



Ruben Zaiotti
Director of the European
Union Centre of Excellence
and Associate professor in the
Political Science department
Dalhousie University
Recommended Media Tips



Edwin Hodge
Postdoctoral researcher
Centre for Global Studies
University of Victoria
Recommended Media Tips



Amy Verdun
Professor of Political Science,
Jean Monnet Chair ad Personam,
University of Victoria
Recommended Media Tips



Christian Leuprecht
Visiting Bicentennial Associate;
Professor of Canadian Studies;
Associate Professor,
Royal Military College of Canada
Queen's University
Recommended Media Tips



Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly
Professor at the School of Public
Administration and Director of the
Jean Monnet Centre
University of Victoria
Recommended Media Tips



Pablo Ouziel
Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Centre
for Global Studies
University of Victoria
Recommended Media Tips



Andrea Wagner
Assistant Professor
MacEwan University, Edmonton
Recommended Media Tips



Patrick Leblond
Associate Professor,
Graduate School of Public
and International Affairs,
University of Ottawa
Recommended Media Tips



Dennis Pilon
Associate Professor,
Department of Political Science
York University
Recommended Media Tips



Professor Amelia Hadfield in an interview on Brexit

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EUCAnet media archive

Selection of examples for media work of academics

This media archive shows examples of scholarly outreach mostly with traditional media.

Please click on the respective contribution to watch, listen to, or read the actual media interview or contribution. If you have outreach examples on EU and Europe related topics with Canadian media and would like to be included in our media archive, please connect with us and send us the direct link to your media appearance (info@eucanet.org).

August 2019

WATCH *TV Appearance*, **Amelia Hadfield** on BREXIT

WATCH *TV Appearance*, **Oliver Schmidtke** on Italy

READ *Print Media*, **Christian Leuprecht** on Handgun control

READ *Print Media*, **Edwin Hodge** on Racism

READ *Print Media*, **Colin Bennett** on Voter Surveillance

July 2019

READ *Print Media*, **Achim Hurrelmann** on BREXIT

LISTEN *Podcast*, **Andrea Wagner** on Women in Politics

June 2019

READ *Print Media*, **Élisabeth Vallet** on America

May 2019

READ *Print Media*, **Amy Verdun** on Euroscepticism

WATCH *TV Appearance*, **Patrick Leblond** on the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement

READ *Print Media*, **Dennis Pilon** on Canadian Politics

April 2019

WATCH *TV Appearance*, **Ruben Zaiotti** on BREXIT

March 2019

WATCH *TV Appearance*, **Oliver Schmidtke** on BREXIT

READ *Print Media*, **Edwin Hodge** on Racism

READ *Print Media*, **Pablo Ouziel** on the future of democracy

February 2019

READ *Print Media*, **Costanza Musu** on Israel

LISTEN *Podcast*, **Wilfrid Greaves** on Canadian Foreign Policy

LISTEN *Radio Interview*, **Pablo Ouziel** on political developments in Spain

January 2019

WATCH *TV Appearance*, **Laurent Pech** on European Law

READ *Print Media*, **Élisabeth Vallet** on America

December 2018

WATCH *Webinar*, **Valerie D'Erman** on the European Budget Crisis

November 2018

LISTEN *Public Lecture (Radio)*, **Miriam Müller-Rensch** on Religious Fundamentalism

READ *Print Media*, **Achim Hurrelmann** on BREXIT

READ *Print Media*, **Kurt Huebner** on BREXIT

October 2018

READ *Print Media*, **Laurent Pech** on Poland

WATCH *TV Appearance*, **Christian Leuprecht** on NATO

WATCH *TV Appearance*, **Dennis Pilon** on Elections in Ontario

READ *Print Media*, **Frédéric Merand** on Catalonia

WATCH *TV Appearance*, **Oliver Schmidtke** on the planned resignation of Angela Merkel

September 2018

WATCH *TV Appearance*, **Élisabeth Vallet** on America

LISTEN *Radio-Interview*, **Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly** on Immigration

July 2018

WATCH *TV Appearance*, **Patrick Leblond** on economic issues between Canada and the USA

June 2018

WATCH *TV Appearance*, **Frédéric Merand** on the G7-summit

READ *Print media*, **Frédéric Merand** on the G7

WATCH *TV Appearance*, **Oliver Schmidtke** on Migrant Issues in the EU

READ *Print Media*, **Élisabeth Vallet** on the migration politics of President Obama

May 2018

READ *Print Media*, **Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly** on History of Borders

April 2018

READ *Print Media*, **Achim Hurrelmann** on Canada-Europe relations after Orban's Victory in Hungary

October 2017

WATCH *TV Appearance*, **Costanza Musu** on the Syrian Civil War

September 2017

LISTEN *Public Lecture*, **Ruben Zaiotti** on Immigration

READ *Print Media*, **Frédéric Merand** on Angela Merkel

READ *Print Media*, **Patrick Leblond** on the Boeing-Bombardier dispute

WATCH *TV Appearance*, **Oliver Schmidtke** on German Far-right



EUCANet.org Contact: Beate Schmidtke, Management and Communications, beates@uvic.ca

EUCANet offers a selection of services for scholars that are interested in engaging with media outreach or improving their media connections. Contact us to

- add your profile in our open access Expert database;
- contribute to our Blog;
- invite your students to start conversations on our public platform;
- do a media alert with us - we are connected with over 100 journalists and editors who may be interested in your expertise
- share with us your stories on social media @CdnEurDialogue

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