

Taking research beyond researchers

Taking academic expertise outside academia

- The world's largest publisher of original research-based articles
- 8 editions worldwide
- ~500 university members

We offer:

- Collaborative editorial support
- Open-access publishing platform, republishing partners
- Media training for academics
- [Readership metrics](#) to evidence reach and reader engagement

UK edition

Year to June 2021:

174 million
reads

5.8 million
monthly unique users

9.6 million
monthly page views

14.5 million
monthly readers of
UK edition content

including republication

What we do

- **Independent source of news, analysis and expert opinion**, written by academics working with professional journalists
- **Short pieces written quickly**
Around 800 words on current affairs or new research, in 12-24-48hrs
- **We make it easy**
Editorial support you won't find elsewhere
- **Author approval**
Pieces must be signed off by the author



- **All content is open access, Creative Commons licensed**
Free to read, and free for other media to republish

Lifecycle of a story

- Editor approach or author pitch
- Agree brief and commission
- Write and edit
- Approve and publish
- Republishing in other media leads to further traction
- Audience recorded on dashboard
- Post-publication engagement/impact recorded

The collage illustrates the lifecycle of a story through several key components:

- News Article Snippet:** A screenshot from the World Economic Forum showing the headline "The sun's activity is changing, and the Northern Lights will change as well. Here's why" with an image of the aurora borealis.
- Article Content:** A screenshot of the full article titled "Don't panic: the northern lights won't be turning off anytime soon" by Nathan Case, dated February 3, 2017. The text discusses the relationship between solar activity and the northern lights.
- Analytics Dashboard:** A screenshot of a dashboard showing various metrics: 6 Articles, 219,167 Readers, 13 Comments received, 5 Comments made, 3 Engagements, and a pie chart showing the distribution of readers by country/territory (United States, Spain, United Kingdom, India, other).
- Post-Publication Activity Log:** A screenshot of a log showing engagement records. Two entries are visible: one from February 10, 2017, and another from February 9, 2017, both for the article "Don't panic: the northern lights won't be turning off anytime soon".
- Social Media Share:** A screenshot of a social media post sharing the article, with engagement metrics (6,941 likes, 4 shares) and a list of social media icons.

Engagement and impact

Professors Lorna Harries and Matt Whiteman (University of Exeter) wrote *Ageing in human cells successfully reversed in the lab* in Aug 2018.

-> **183,000 reads, industry interest led to £5m investment for a spin-out company**

Associate Professor Claire Gwinnett (Staffordshire University) wrote *The major source of ocean plastic pollution you've probably never heard of* in Feb 2019

-> **trade association Plastics Europe saw republication in Newsweek, got in touch to seek advice on pellet management and plastic pollution reduction**

The Conversation's articles cited in parliamentary select committees on topics such as Brexit, fisheries, human rights, ebola, EU-Russia relations

Hull academic **asked to give TEDx talk, invited to write book** for Royal Society of Chemistry

Associate Professor Alastair Culham (University of Reading) wrote *The best time to water your plants during a heatwave* in July 2018

-> **UK water regulator Ofwat asked him to write advice pages on water conservation**

The news value of academic expertise

Good starting points

- **News:** insight/analysis of current affairs, or new angles on current or old stories
- **Research:** discuss your new findings, or comment on other people's research
- **Timeless:** tell an interesting story, answer an interesting question
- **Unusual, surprising, counter-intuitive**
- **Personal stories, human interest**
- **List format:** "Five things you don't know about...", "Ten reasons why..."



News analysis, comment, opinion

Comment or analysis of topical issues:

Identify a topic, debate or question present in the news and offer greater detail or a new perspective on the issue.
(688,000 reads)

Led by events:

Respond to news stories, events, anniversaries to provide insight into story and its context. Easy to plan in advance.
(17,000 reads)

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Q Search analysis, research, academics...

Arts + Culture **Business + Economy** Cities Education Environment + Energy Health + Medicine Politics + Society Science + Technology Brexit

The gig economy is nothing new – it was standard practice in the 18th century

July 18, 2017 11:58am BST



The uber pool of the 18th century. James Pollard / Google Art Project

Author

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Disclosure statement

Tawny Paul receives funding from The Huntington Library, San Marino; the National Endowment for the Humanities; the Economic History Society.

Partners

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University of Exeter provides funding as a member of The Conversation UK.

The Conversation UK receives funding from Wellcome, Wellcome SAGE, SFC, RCUK, The Nuffield Foundation, The Ogden Trust, The Royal Society, The Wellcome

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Bolsonaro wins Brazil election, promises to purge leftists from country

October 29, 2018 12:52am GMT Updated October 29, 2018 8:52pm GMT

Bolsonaro supporters celebrate outside his home in Rio de Janeiro after exit polls on Oct. 28 declared him the preliminary winner of Brazil's 2018 presidential election. AP Photo/Leo Correa

Explanation

Show how something is done:

The author explained the physics and engineering techniques behind the successful SpaceX rocket landing. (27,000 reads)

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How to launch a rocket into space ... and then land it on a ship at sea

April 13, 2018 11:12am BST

SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket blasts off. SpaceX/ Flickr

Author

Hugh Hunt
Reader in Engineering Dynamics and Vibration, University of Cambridge

Disclosure statement

Hugh Hunt does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond the academic appointment above.

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Explainers:

A straightforward explanation of, for example, specialist terminology, processes, or current events in greater detail. (34,000 reads)

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Explainer: what are 'tax havens'?

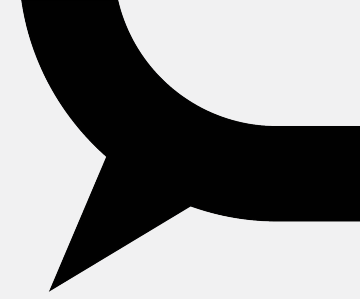
April 5, 2018 12:11pm BST

Katie Thebeau, CC BY

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New research

Topical new research:

Explain new findings, put them into context, and provide expert insight into why it's important or interesting. (20,000 reads)

New insights from interesting fields:

This introduced new research findings about happiness and how we feel about work, with insight into why it's important. (134,000 reads)

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New findings: anxiety is linked to death from cancer in men

October 18, 2016 10:38am BST



Author

 **Olivia Remes**
PhD Candidate, University of Cambridge

Disclosure statement

Olivia Remes received funding from the National Institute for Health Research.

Partners



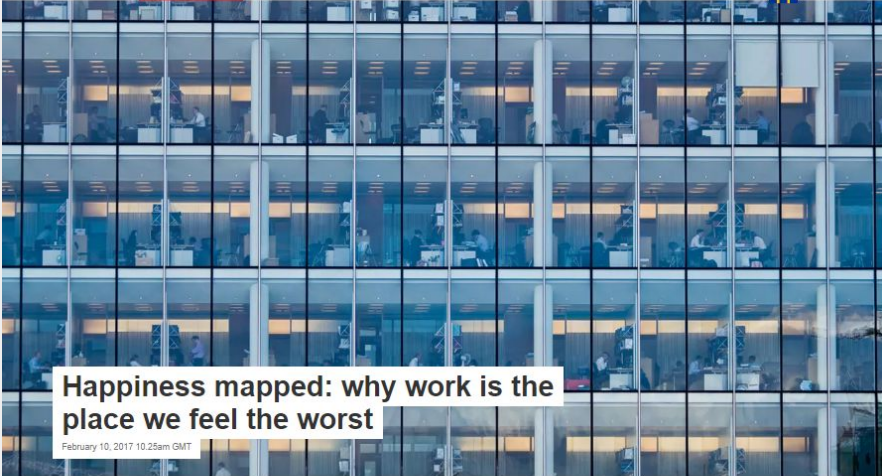
University of Cambridge provides funding as a member of The Conversation UK.

Anxiety: damages the body, too. Shutterstock

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Happiness mapped: why work is the place we feel the worst

February 10, 2017 10:25am GMT

shutterstock.com

New research

Use a news story to introduce your research:

Interest in North Korea presents an opportunity to introduce the author's research involving accounts of escapees. (135,000 reads)

How-tos or expert advice:

Readers are always interested in expert advice based on research findings. (845,000 reads)


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What happens to North Koreans who flee their country – and what can they tell us?

September 7, 2017 9:49am BST




Author

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Disclosure statement

Alexander Dukalskis' research on North Korea has received funding from the Korea Foundation, the East Asia Institute, the University of Notre Dame, and University College Dublin.

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Could be better: daily life in Pyongyang. EPA/Frank Robichon

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Want to be popular? You'd better follow some simple moral rules

April 8, 2016 3:26pm BST

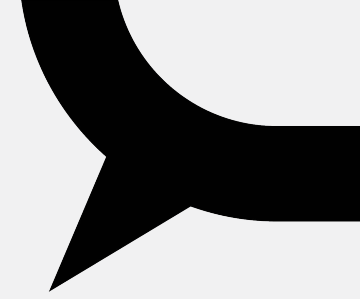
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Timeless stories, questions

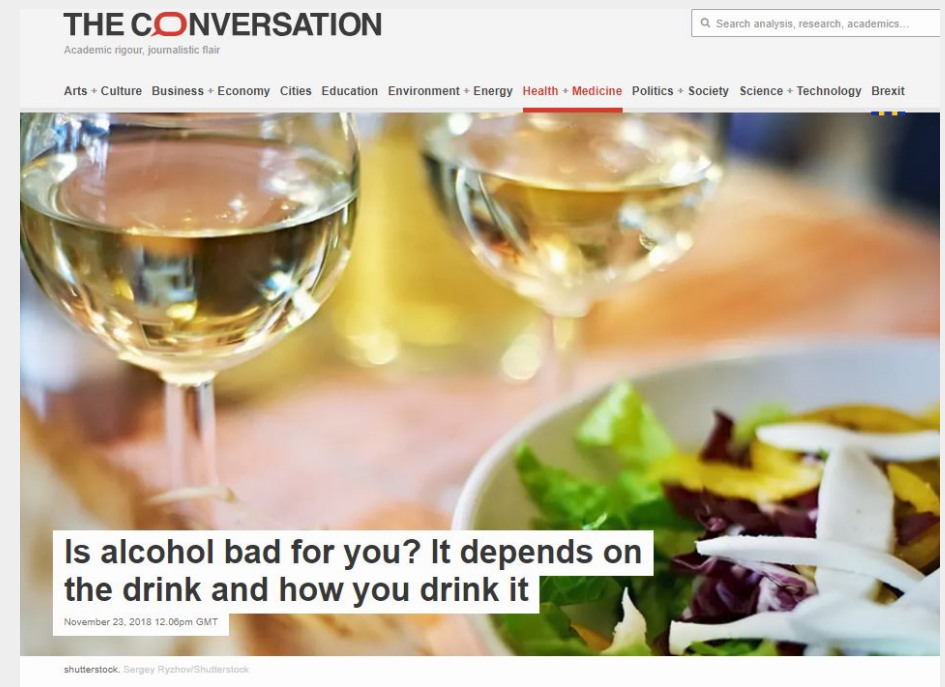
Tell an interesting story:

Research can lead to uncovering interesting stories that can be told any time. (20,000 reads)



Answer an interesting question:

Tackle a question that the reader might have considered, or which is discussed in the media by those with dubious expertise. (9,000 reads)



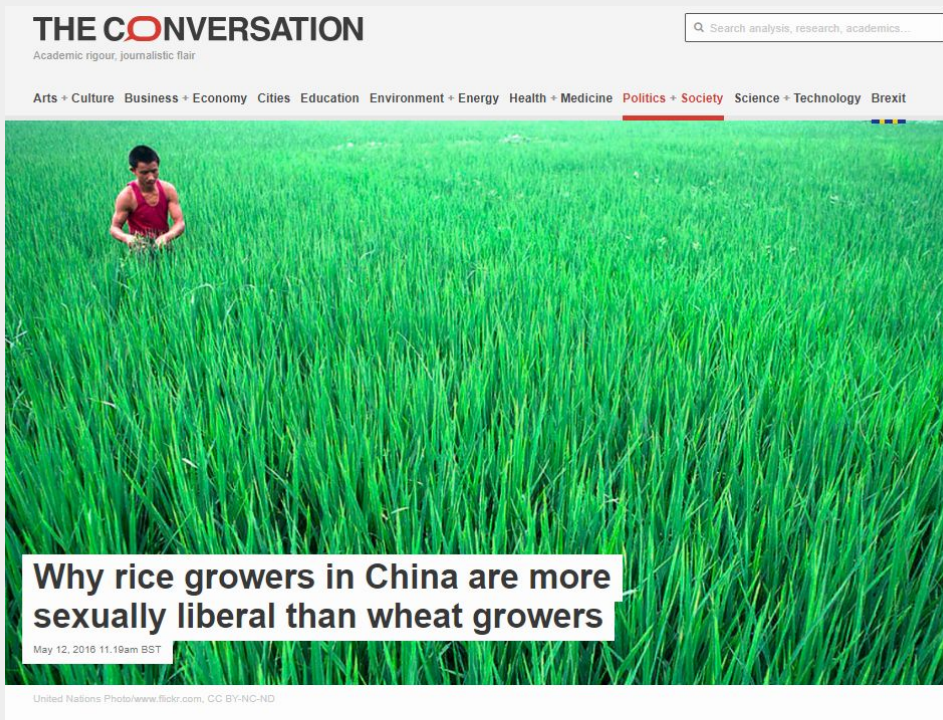
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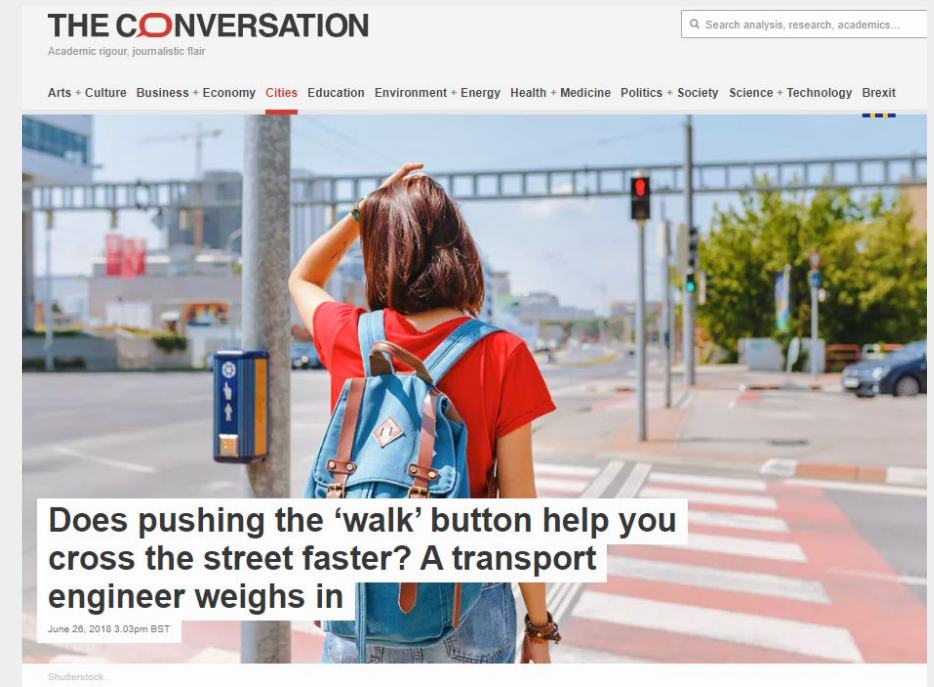
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Quirky, unusual, counterintuitive

Using an odd and attention-grabbing trend as the headline, this piece unpicks social survey data to explain the cultural trends behind it. (19,000 reads)



Pose a head-scratching question that may have occurred to others and use specialist expertise to answer it. Best with questions that have unpredictable answers. (167,000 reads)



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Personal stories


Personal stories of your own, or from your work:
Insights from your own life, or those from your research can be a way into a topic. (8,000 reads)

Voices drawn from your research:
Drawing on people encountered in fieldwork offers other voices to the reader. (2,000 reads)

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Scientists at work: living on a simulated Mars

February 4, 2014 5:16pm GMT

Life on Mars won't be boring. Kai Staats


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Young people explain why they're shunning the benefits system

November 1, 2018 12:02pm GMT



Walking on by. 1000 words/Shutterstock.


Author

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Disclosure statement

Katy Jones receives funding from Salford City Council.

Partners

 University of Salford provides funding as a founding partner of The Conversation UK.

The Conversation UK receives funding from Hefce, Heflow, SAGE, SFC, RCUK, The Nuffield Foundation, The Ogden Trust, The Royal Society, The Wellcome

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The list approach

Headlines that promise a handful of bite-sized pieces of information appeal to time-poor, attention deficit readers, but this doesn't alter the research rigour of the 800 words that follow. (630,000 reads)

The list approach also works well with articles that explain techniques or approaches, or offer advice and guidance. (1.5 million reads)



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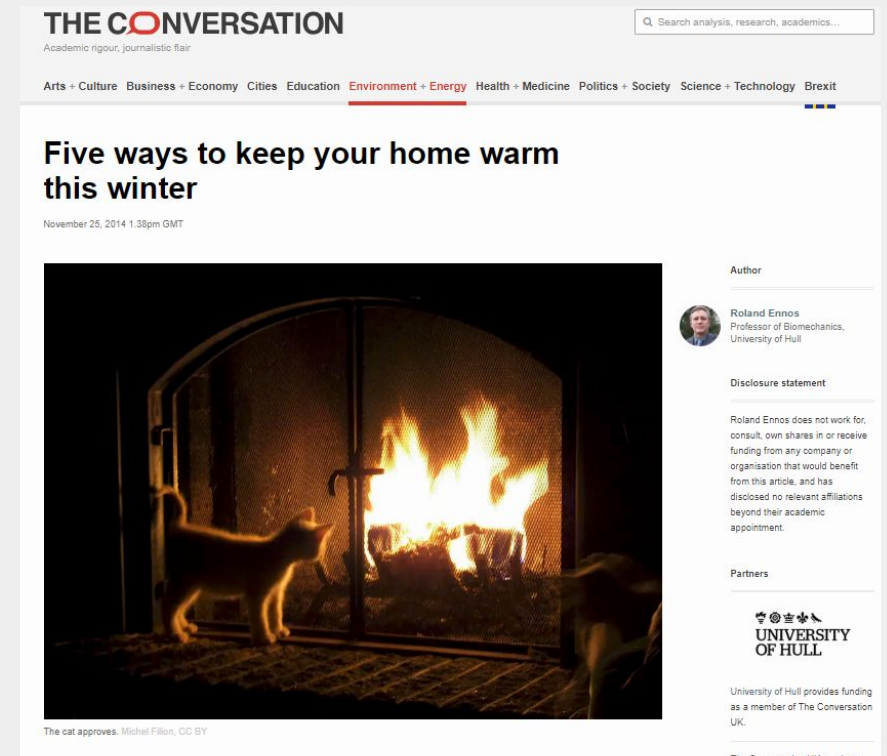
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Five laws about the dead that may spook you

June 14, 2016 12:44pm BST

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Five ways to keep your home warm this winter

November 25, 2014 1:38pm GMT


Author

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Disclosure statement

Roland Ennos does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond their academic appointment.

Partners


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University of Hull provides funding as a member of The Conversation UK.

The Conversation UK receives...

The cat approves. Michel Filon, CC BY

A journalistic approach

Think about your audience:

Intelligent, educated, curious

...but not interested in wading through dense, academic prose

It's not about 'dumbing down'

...but ideas need to be expressed clearly for non-specialist readers

What would *most interest the reader?*

It may or may not be what is most *academically* interesting.

The 'top line' test

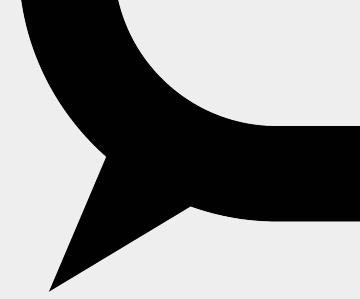
- You know you've got a good story if you can summarise it in one sentence
- Work out what the right angle is by identifying the most important or interesting aspect *to your readers* and focusing on that
- Make a point or two - not all of them. Get used to leaving things out
- Tell me something I don't know...
- ...and tell me why it matters. Why should I care?

Now you try the 'top line test'

“Doomsday scenarios surrounding a robot apocalypse abound in popular science fiction, from Battlestar Galactica to Terminator. But working with machine intelligence in the lab can uncover innovative designs that can help humanity and enable us to learn how our own intelligence came about.

“My recent work included designing a ‘mother’ robot that can manufacture its own ‘children’ without human intervention. In the process it uses principles from nature including natural selection to produce incrementally superior generations that improve in performance on a specific task.”

**How we built a robot that can evolve -
and why it won't take over the world**



Style and tone

- **Get to the point!**

Start at the end: latest events, findings, implications, conclusions.

- **Battle for the reader's attention**

from the opening sentence.
Get important elements in early on

- **Be clear, be concise**

Use active sentences, not passive.
Cut words ruthlessly

- **Polish your intro and payoff**

Write and re-write your opening and final lines until they sparkle, and speak directly to the subject

- **Use plain English**

Get a feel for the informal – how you'd explain to a friend in the pub, or to a teenager

- **Offer examples**

Make the abstract concrete

- **Your piece should answer more questions than it poses:**

who, what, where, when, why - sometimes how

- **The reader does not know the subject like you do**

Explain (or avoid) technical terms. Don't assume the reader's knowledge

How to pitch editors

Tell us, in 200 words or so:

- **What's the story?**
In a nutshell, what are your conclusions or findings, or the takeaway for the reader?
Be succinct, be clear, be bold
- **Why should the reader care?**
Why is it interesting or significant to an audience that aren't specialists in the field?
- **Why now?**
What is it relevant to – breaking news?
A broad topic of current interest?
A recently published paper? A future event you're pitching in advance of?
- **The key points** of your argument
- **Why are you the person to write this?**
What expertise informs your view? What can you bring to the story that others can't?

Give your story the hard sell

A good pitch is written like a good story
A strong headline that interests the reader, and opening paragraphs compelling them to read on

...and the same rules apply

Be clear, be succinct, no jargon, and don't assume the reader knows the topic

But here, your reader is the editor

Convince us why what you want to write is important and interesting

Try to convey in your pitch some of the enthusiasm you have for your work

If you can make us like the story, together we can produce a piece that readers will like too.

Ways to get involved

Direct commission

We will contact you for your expertise

Pitch your ideas

Tell us about your new research,
comment or explain current affairs

Respond to the expert request

Let your press team know you're keen

Use your press office

They can help you sharpen your ideas
or pitch on your behalf

News, by experts

theconversation.com/uk

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