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The Crisis of Mediators ? Science Communication in the Digital Age

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More than 25 years after the Royal Society report on Public Understanding of Science, there is hardly any doubt that science communication efforts aimed at non expert audiences have increased in quantity and intensity on a global scale.

Public engagement and outreach activities have now become a routine – when not a prominent - feature for several research institutions in Europe.

Budget and human resources are devoted to these activities, and researchers themselves are increasingly and even institutionally encouraged to pursue this ‘third mission’ alongside more traditional research and teaching duties. Does this ever more pressing public relations push, together with the increasingly central role of digital media and by research institutions, substantially undermine the role of traditional mediators of science communication(e.g. newspapers, magazines, TV/Radio shows and science museums and centres) as filters and warrants of the quality of information?

What are the key challenges in this new context of ‘Science Communication 2.0’?