

# A Career in Science Communication

Notes from the Workshop

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Most people associate science communication only with manuscript writing and science journalism.

While both of these are important facets of science comms., they represent only a part of this developing field.

# My journey so far



## Careers can take interesting detours **sometimes... just like an experiment**

- You plan an experiment, thinking you know what the outcome will be
- The experiment gives you an unexpected finding
- You find the observations reproducible
- You decide to see where the findings lead!





# The beauty of science communication: variety

- The variety of clients with whom you can work
- The variety of subjects on which you work
- The variety of audiences for whom you write



# Content for different audiences, to serve multiple purposes

| PHARMA & ASSOCIATIONS             | CONSUMERS   PUBLIC   PATIENTS       | DOCTORS                        | HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Press releases and notes          | Newspaper articles and advertorials | News updated on doctor portals | Newsletters              |
| Narratives                        | Website news stories (bylined)      | Visual aids and detail aids    | Training slide decks     |
| Briefing documents                | Consumer-friendly website content   | Publication summaries          |                          |
| Communications and brand strategy | Blogs                               | Website content                |                          |
|                                   | Social media posts                  |                                |                          |
|                                   | Patient cards                       |                                |                          |
|                                   | Brochures                           |                                |                          |

\*Content is co-created with the client and other experts and must receive all the necessary approval before being available in the public domain

# Perks of a career in this field

- A combination of science with communication and expression
- Opportunity for creativity
- Opportunities to pitch an idea/ strategy
- Intense, but a more proportional balance between effort and results



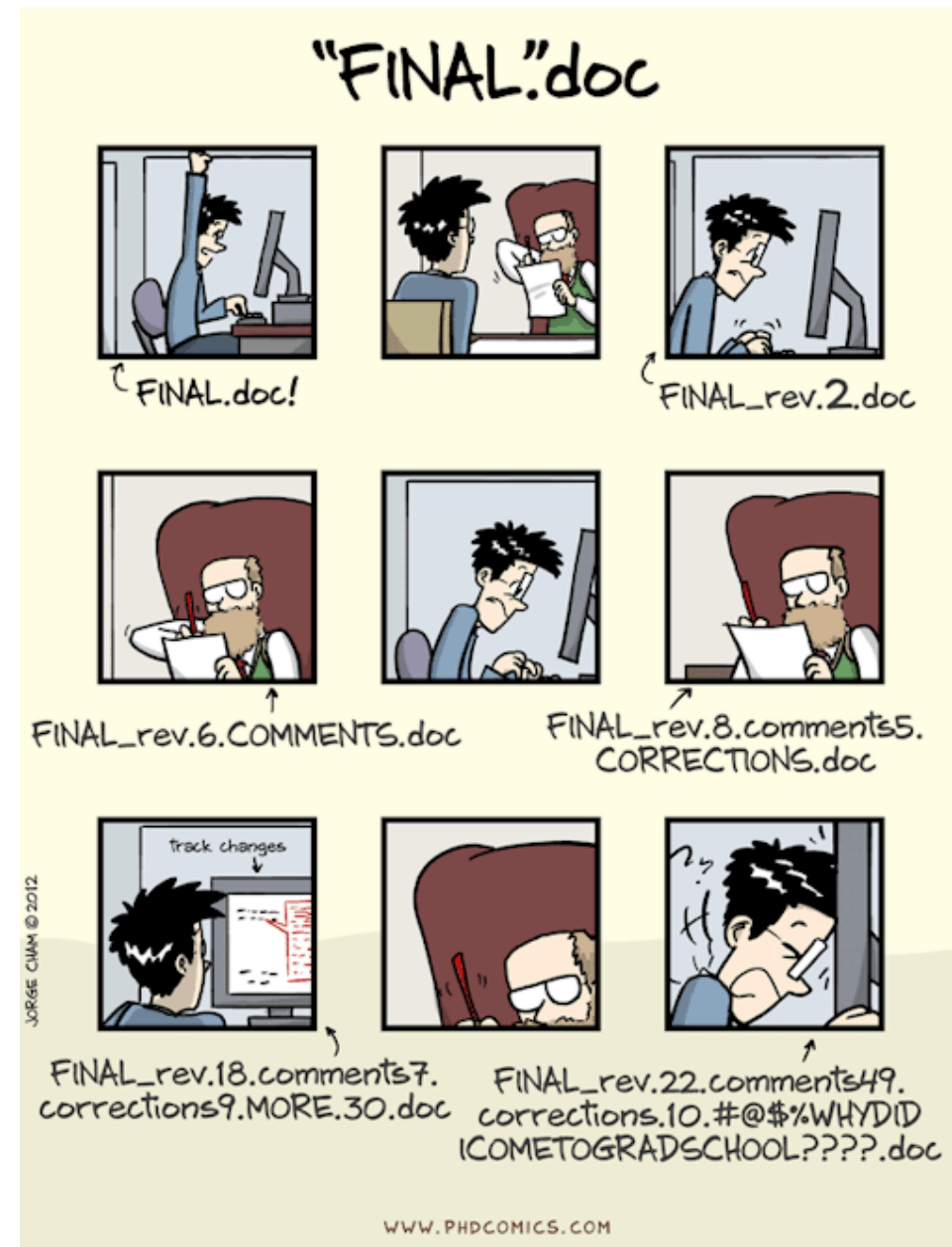
# What may seem challenging

- Tight deadlines, multiple stakeholders
- Having to delve into issues that are initially completely new to you
- Being required to switch communication styles many times a day, depending on your audience
- Knowing exactly what you need to communicate





Then again,  
some challenges stay the same  
no matter where you go! ☺



# Skills and Qualifications



# A science communicator's toolkit

A strong scientific background\*

A passion for research

Scientific accuracy

An ability to simplify complex scientific concepts

Readiness to work on diverse topics

Language skills

Strong vocabulary

An an eye for detail#



\*Personal opinion

#Did you catch the typo?

# Tips to sharpen your skills

Read as much as you can about the subject

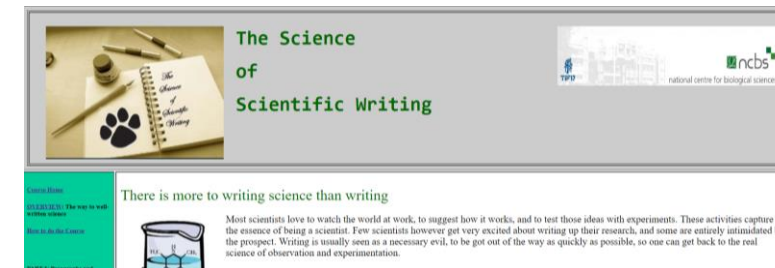
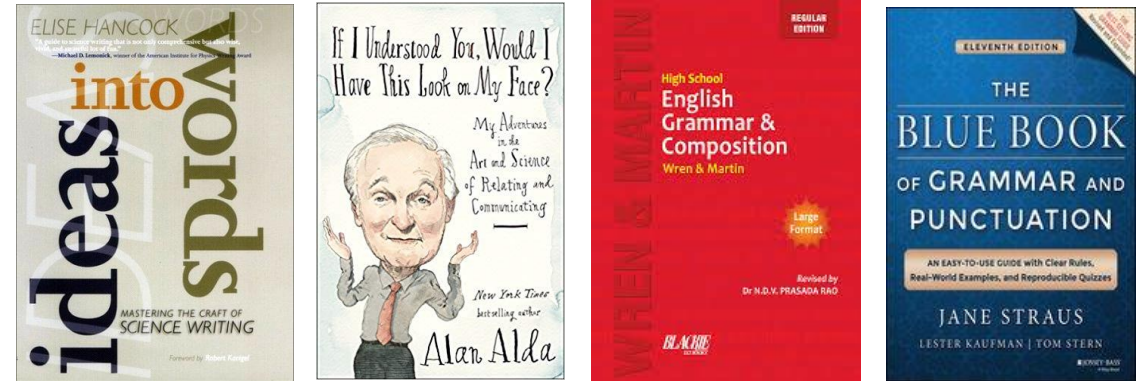
Just – read!

Never neglect grammar

Do an online course or a formal course

Practice

Find a mentor





# Qualifications

Any Masters or Ph.D. degree in science

Any medical degree

Then again, there is no rule here. There are brilliant science communicators who do not have a science degree but effectively communicate science with clarity, accuracy and simplicity.





## A high science degree e.g. a Ph.D. is valuable...

... for the following reasons:

- It teaches you to think, critique, troubleshoot, problem solve and grasp new information quickly
- It teaches you to be scientifically accurate
- You know where to look for credible information
- The degree lends credibility to the work you do.
- You can easily interact with the experts in your client team



# Jobs to Consider





## Some job openings to consider

### Medical communication agency

Develop collateral largely for in-clinic use, doctors, healthcare professionals; may also include patients and consumers.

### Public Relations agency

Work with clients to strategically communicate with various stakeholders, primarily through media.

### Newspaper or News portal

Write news stories for newspapers; or news portals of popular journals/ scientific websites.

### Publication support firm

Support the communication of research findings and clinical data to the scientific community.

### Pharmaceutical writer

Develop non promotional medical content to support clinical trials; may include some promotional material too.

### Journal publication

Plan journal and magazine themes and topics and take part in the review process.

In recent years particularly, there has been quite a bit of overlap between these careers

# Points to remember





- Careers are not set in stone. It is ok to shift tracks. It is also ok if things don't work out.
- Know what you're good at. It helps to have a second opinion.
- Look for the right kind of mentor.
- It's ok not to have a 10-year plan at the start of something new. Go where the “results lead you”.
- If you have the necessary skill set and mindset, then a career in science comms may be just what the **‘doctor’ ordered!**

