

Storytelling & Comedy in SciComm

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My journey in informal SciComm



Science Showoff, February 2015. Photo by Robin Andrews

Dr Jiggs Bowson's Charming Science Friends



Top row photos by Steve Cross; Bottom row photos by Ed Moore



Dr Jiggs Bowson's Charming Science Friends



Photo by Steve Cross

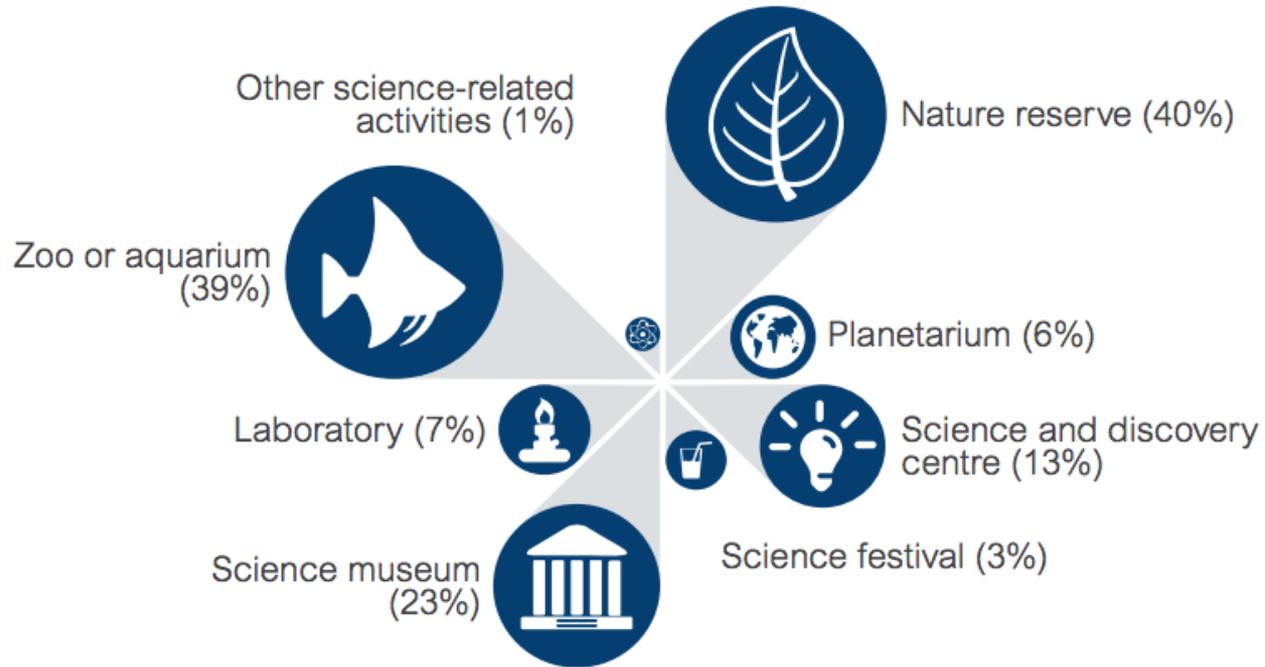


Photo by Lucy Eckersley

Why use storytelling &
comedy?

Figure 8.1 – science-related leisure or cultural activities people have undertaken

Q. Which, if any, of the these have you visited or attended in the last 12 months?



Base: 1,749 UK adults aged 16+

How can we make SciComm more inclusive?

- 80% of ABs have undertaken a science-related activity in the past year, compared with 67% UK average. Among C2DEs, this drops to 55%
- White people are also more likely than those from ethnic minorities to have done a science related activity over this period (69% versus 51%)

We should use storytelling & comedy in SciComm because...

- We can reach new audiences, and inspire thought & change in existing audiences
- Intellectual intrigue-based humour = Good
- Emotional engagement with a subject = BETTER*

*IMO

But, lots of people really like traditional SciComm?

Yes, but – which people?

And...



Storytelling tips

Story structure

Stories need:

- A beginning
- A middle
- And an end

Stories also need:

- A protagonist
- A challenge, complication, or an antagonist
- Change/Conflict
- Resolution

Plot tropes as inspiration

Stories need:

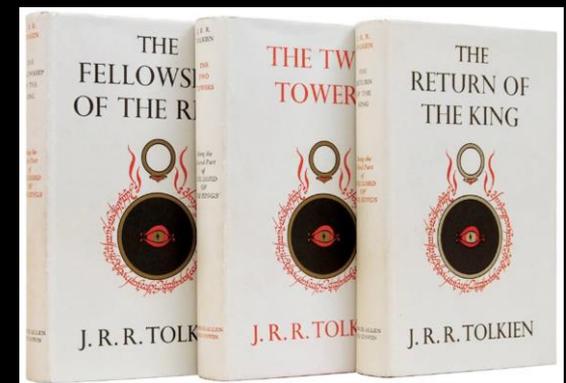
- A beginning
- A middle
- And an end

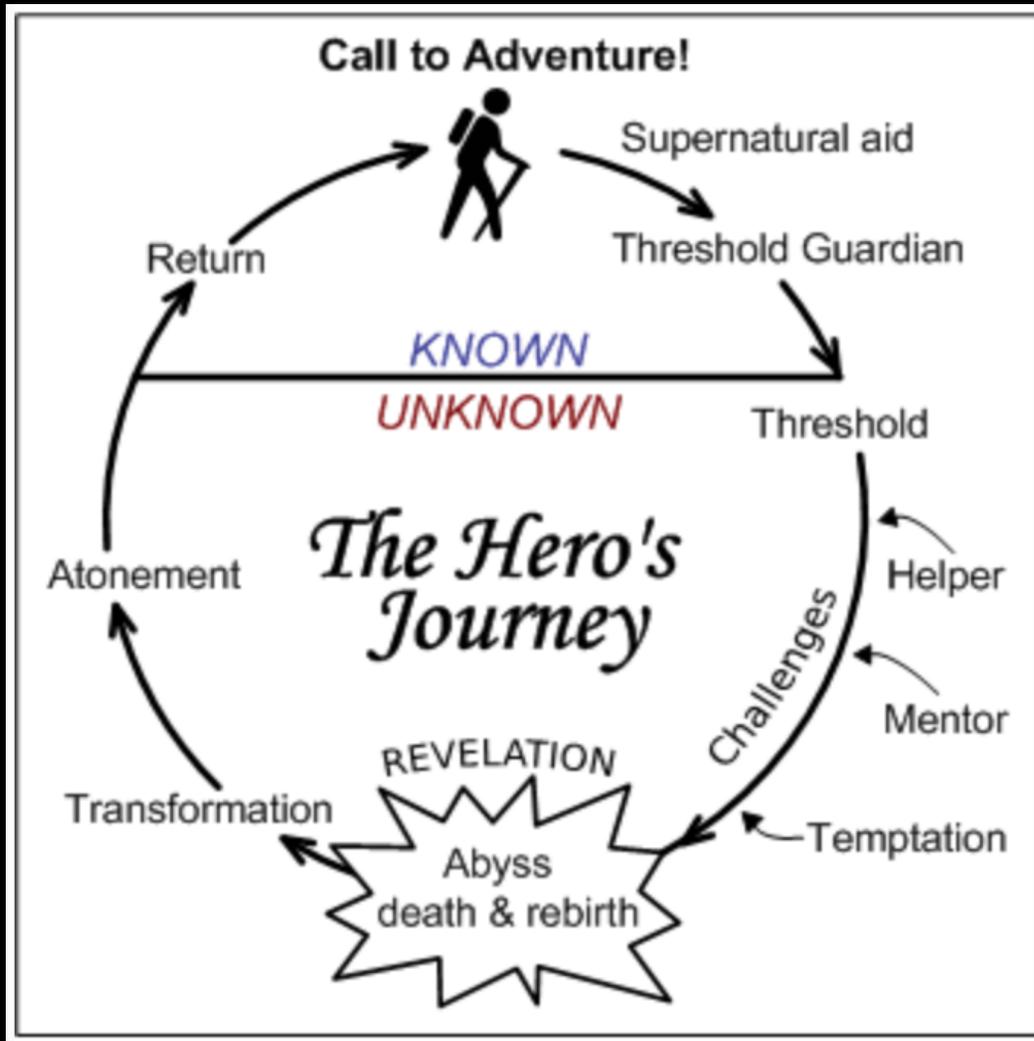
Stories also need:

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The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories – Christopher Booker

1. Overcoming The Monster
2. Rags To Riches
3. The Quest
4. Voyage & Return
5. Comedy
6. Tragedy
7. Rebirth





Storytelling & Comedy tips

- Find out who your audience will be
- Find out about your audience at the start of your gig
- Get your audience comfortable and ready to make noise
- Stand in the light 😊

Storytelling & Comedy tips

- Comedy is subjective
- Always “punch up”
- There are two parts to a joke – the set up and the payoff
- Strong opinions & attention to detail always makes the joke/story funnier

www.annaploszajski.com

SCIENCE
SHOWOFF

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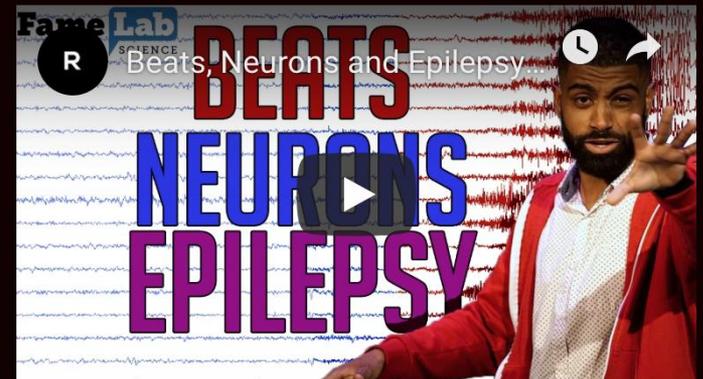
www.alexlathbridge.com



HERE'S SOME
STUFF I DO

COMEDY

TALKS



www.cerysbradley.com

About Cerys

Cerys is a PhD student in the Crime and Security Science Department at UCL. They study the people who buy drugs on the internet and the efficacy of law enforcement attempts to stop them. In their spare time, they are a comedian, a podcast producer, editor and presenter, and freelance science communicator.



STAND-UP COMEDY



Photo credit Alex Lathbridge

PODCASTING



TEACHING



Bright Club Dublin

@BrightClubDub

Follow



Clams, snakes, and other dangerous aliens from [@RobOSullivan](#) at our last [#BrightClub](#) in Cork:



Rob O'Sullivan - Aliens

Rob O'Sullivan takes to the stage to talk clams, snakes, and other dangerous aliens at Bright Club Cork in The Poor Relation on 12th July 2017. Filmed and ed...

[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)



Tarquin_Bear_69

29 • London, United Kingdom • Man

My self-summary

A Tardigrade looking for a TardiBABE 🔥👉 I don't actually have a circulatory system so it's impossible to break my heart lol



**STARTED FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE FOOD
CHAIN NOW WE'RE HERE**

In conclusion...

Storytelling & comedy are powerful tools for:

- Challenging the status quo
- Showing scientists as flawed, emotional, complex humans
- Reaching new audiences

Thank you 😊

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