

THE **C**ONVERSATION

**Taking research  
beyond researchers**

## The Conversation is:

- The world's largest publisher of original research-based content (source: [Altmetric](#))
- Non-profit, independent source of news analysis and expert opinion, written by academics working with professional journalists
- 10 editions operating in 14 countries worldwide
- Funded by 500+ universities and other sector partners

## We offer:

1. Collaborative editorial support for academics
2. Media training for academics
3. Readership metrics to demonstrate reach and engagement with research

# 1. What we do: bring expertise to the public

- **Expert pieces written swiftly**

*Analysis:* 800 words on current affairs or new research, published in a few days to a week

*Insights:* long reads of up to 4,000 words on unpublished investigatory research of public interest, or compelling stories

*Podcast:* The Conversation Weekly, The Anthill (series podcast)

- **We make it easy**

Editorial support from the start.  
Training sessions to help authors get to grips with it

- **Author approval**

Pieces must be signed off by the author



- **All content is open access, Creative Commons licensed**  
Free to read, and free for others to republish. Syndicated through PA and Reuters news agencies

# 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 stages:

- Writing and Editing:** A screenshot of a document editor shows the headline "Don't panic: the northern lights won't be turning off anytime soon" and the beginning of the article. The text discusses the northern lights as a magnificent light show caused by electrically charged particles from the sun.
- Publication:** A screenshot of the World Economic Forum website shows the article published with the headline "The sun's activity is changing, and the Northern Lights will change as well. Here's why".
- Post-Publication Activity:** A screenshot of a dashboard titled "All Post Publication Activity" shows two engagement records for the article "Don't panic: the northern lights won't be turning off anytime soon". One record is dated February 10, 2017, and the other is dated February 9, 2017. Each record includes details about the engagement type (Member of the general public or Media), contact name, and outcome.
- Engagement and Reach:** A screenshot of a social media dashboard shows engagement metrics: 6 articles, 219,167 readers, 13 comments received, and 5 comments made. It also features a pie chart showing the distribution of readers by country/territory: United States, Spain, United Kingdom, India, and other.
- Visuals and Data:** A screenshot of a news article includes a video player showing the northern lights and a line graph titled "400 Years of Sunspot Observations" showing the number of sunspots from 1610 to 2018.

# Audience

In 2024 the UK edition saw:

**118 million**

**pageviews**

recorded Jan–Dec

**3.1 million**

**monthly unique users**

**5.8 million**

**monthly pageviews**

**9.8 million**

**monthly pageviews of  
UK edition content**

including republication

- Around 80% of readership is outside UK and Ireland
- Anglosphere (US, UK, Canada, Australia, NZ, Ireland, South Africa) is largest audience
- Asia: India, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia
- Europe: France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Spain, Russia
- 18-34 age group makes up one third of readership

# Engagement and impact

Articles in The Conversation lead to follow-up for authors:

<b>63%</b>	were contacted by the media
<b>18%</b>	were contacted by NGOs, charities or campaigners
<b>19%</b>	were invited to or asked to speak at conferences
<b>14%</b>	contacted by policy makers, or asked to submit policy briefs
<b>13%</b>	were contacted by business or industry
<b>18%</b>	saw increased research citations
<b>36%</b>	used the article for teaching students
<b>54%</b>	discussed the topic with the public or colleagues

Liverpool John Moores University academic wrote *'Stranger danger' in the online and real world*

→ **contacted by the NSPCC, she ran workshops for charity to enhance its policies**

University of Reading academic wrote *The best time to water your plants during a heatwave*

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

Staffordshire academic wrote *The major source of ocean plastic pollution you've never heard of*

→ **trade association Plastics Europe saw repub in Newsweek, contacted her for consultancy on pellet management and pollution reduction**

Sheffield academic wrote *Greensill collapse may kill off a form of financing vital to global economy*

→ **invited to give evidence to MPs on Treasury Select Committee, and his expert commentary then appeared in committee's final report**

## 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 or monthly call-out

Let your press team know you're keen

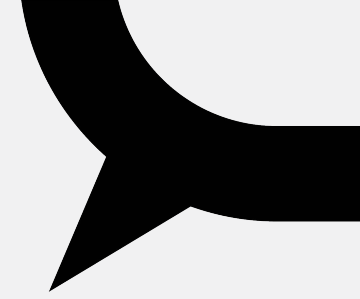
### Use your press office

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

## 2. What you do: the news value of expertise

### Good starting points

- **News:** insight/analysis of current affairs, or new angles on current or old stories



# 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. (20,000 reads)

## Led by events:

Respond to events or anniversaries to provide insight into story and its context. Easy to plan in advance for future events. (491,000 reads)

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Search analysis, research, academics...

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**Downing Street party: what the law actually said about work gatherings in May 2020**

Published: January 13, 2022 5:27pm GMT

EPA/Jessica Taylor/UK Parliament

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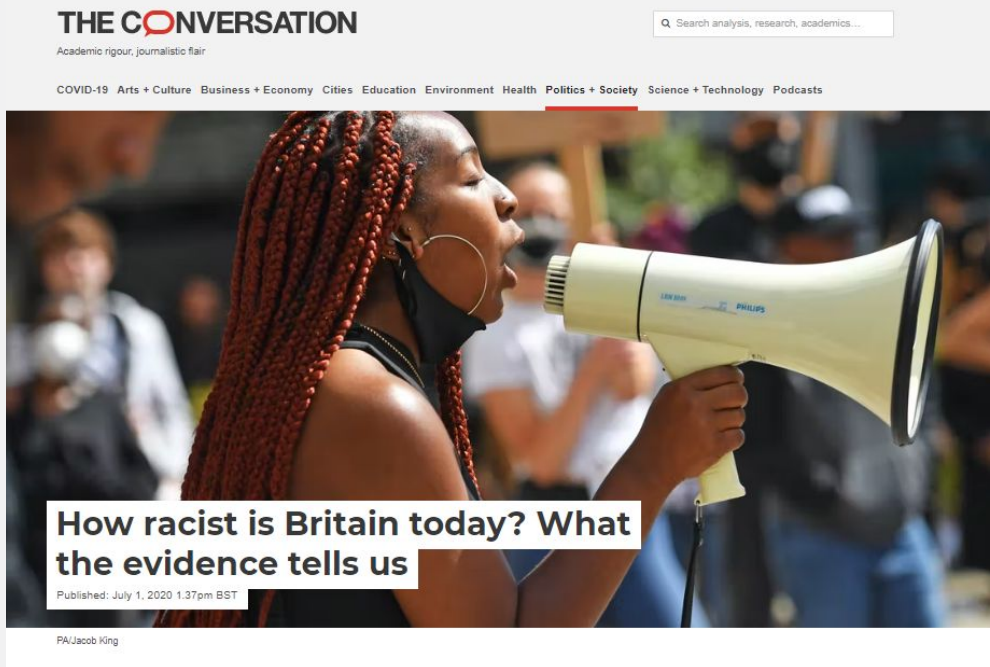
**Census 2021: why it's important to take part and what happens to your information**

Published: March 15, 2021 10:49am GMT

# Explanation

## Answer a question that's in the air:

Use your expertise to help readers understand details behind current debates. (162,000 reads)



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**How racist is Britain today? What the evidence tells us**

Published: July 1, 2020 1:37pm BST

PA/Jacob King

## Explainers:

A straightforward explanation of, for example, specialist terminology, processes, or current events in greater detail. (51,000 reads)



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**Why are British sausages being blocked from entry into Northern Ireland? The dispute explained**

Published: June 11, 2021 12:16pm BST



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Queen's University Belfast

**Disclosure statement**  
Billy Melo Araujo is a co-investigator in the ESRC funded "Governance for 'a place between': the multilevel dynamics of implementing the Protocol on Northern Ireland" project.

**Partners**  
  
Queen's University Belfast provides funding as a founding partner of The Conversation UK.  
The Conversation UK receives funding from these organisations  
[View the full list](#)

Brexit means the UK can't currently export bangers to, well, itself. Darren Staples/EPA-EFE

# 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



# New research

## Topical new research:

Explain new findings, put them into context, and provide expert insight into why it's important or interesting. (29,000 reads)

## New insights from interesting fields:

New research into pupils' feelings about science subjects, and the factors that lead to whether girls pursue them. (83,000 reads)

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**Racism in football: new research shows media treats black men differently to white men**

Published: May 14, 2021 12:36pm BST

England players celebrate at the Spartak Stadium, Moscow in 2018. PA Images / Alamy Stock Photo

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**There are reasons girls don't study physics – and they don't include not liking maths**

Published: May 9, 2022 2:21pm BST

shutterstock, Pixel-Shot/Shutterstock

# New research

## Use a news story to introduce your research:

A developing news story offers opportunity to introduce relevant research, providing readers with an expert perspective. (27,000 reads)

## How-tos or expert advice:

Readers are always interested in expert advice based on research findings. (74,000 reads)

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**Thinking of welcoming a Ukrainian refugee into your home? Our research can help you be a good host**

Published: March 15, 2022 10:56am GMT

People wait for a train to Poland at Lviv railway station, Ukraine, in February 2022. Bumble Dee / Shutterstock

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**How parents should talk to their children about sex**

Published: September 22, 2020 12:35pm BST

Talking about sex doesn't have to be awkward. pixelheadphoto digitalskillet/Shutterstock

# 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 a story, answer a question, dive into an interesting topic



# Timeless stories, questions

## Tell an interesting story:

Research can lead to uncovering interesting stories that can be told any time. (373,000 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. (105,000 reads)


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### Black troops were welcome in Britain, but Jim Crow wasn't: the race riot of one night in June 1943

Published: June 22, 2018 9:56am BST



**Author**  
 **Alan Rice**  
Professor in English and American Studies, University of Central Lancashire

**Disclosure statement**  
Alan Rice receives funding from Arts Humanities Research Council, British Association for American Studies, Lipman-Milband Trust, the European Union and The Embassy of the United States. I have volunteered for the Labour Party, am Co-Director of the Institute for Black Atlantic Research at UCLAN and am on the boards of the Centre for the Study of International Slavery and the Lancaster Jazz Festival. He was a talking head for the documentary, Chocolate Soldiers from the USA (Cook & Izon, 2013).

**Partners**  
 University of Central Lancashire provides funding as a member of The Conversation UK.

Black American GIs stationed in Britain during the war; these in Bristol, were given a warm welcome by their hosts but treated harshly by their white US Army comrades. brizzebomandred, CC BY-NC-SA

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### What if the world was one country? A psychologist on why we need to think beyond borders

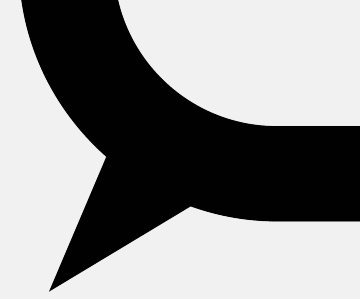
Published: January 15, 2021 12:53pm GMT

shutterstock Aphelion

# 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 a story, answer a question, dive into an interesting topic
- **Surprising**, counterintuitive, contrary



# Unusual, counterintuitive, contrary

A quirky way of applying academic expertise to and providing a new perspective on a familiar subject. (36,000 reads)

Pose a head-scratching question that may have occurred to others and use expertise to answer it. Best with questions that have unpredictable answers. (95,000 reads)

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**Selfie culture: what your choice of camera angle says about you**

Published: March 30, 2021 9:49am BST

Camera angles and selfie composition are proxies for how you might position yourself in a room PxHere, FAL

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**Will coronavirus be the turning point for globalisation?**

Published: March 27, 2020 3:42pm GMT

Shutterstock

# 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 a story, answer a question, dive into an interesting topic
- **Surprising,** counterintuitive, contrary
- **Personal stories,** human interest

# Personal stories

## Personal stories of your own:

Insights from your own life, or those from your research can be a way into a topic. (18,000 reads)


## Voices drawn from your research:

Drawing on people encountered in fieldwork offers other perspectives and voices to the reader. (299,000 reads)

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**Walking is a state of mind – it can teach you so much about where you are**

Published: May 13, 2022 5:00pm BST

Walking connects you to your city. Cerqueira | Unsplash, FAL

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**'I have a job but I'm homeless' – the working poor who can't afford to rent**

Published: November 7, 2019 12:04pm GMT

shutterstock/Inhabitant

# 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 a story, answer a question, dive into an interesting topic
- **Surprising,** counterintuitive, contrary
- **Personal stories,** human interest
- **List format:** "Five things you don't know about...", "Ten reasons why..."

# 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. (77,000 reads)

The list approach also works well with articles that explain techniques or approaches, or offer advice and guidance. (56,000 reads in English and Spanish)

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**Brexit: five essential reads to help you understand Britain's relationship with the EU right now**

Published: April 12, 2019 2:21pm BST

EPA/Neil Hall

This screenshot shows the top portion of a web page. At the top left is the logo 'THE CONVERSATION' with the tagline 'Academic rigour, journalistic flair'. To the right is a search bar. Below this is a horizontal navigation menu with categories: COVID-19, Arts + Culture, Business + Economy, Cities, Education, Environment, Health, Politics + Society, Science + Technology, and Podcasts. The main content area features a large image of a crowd holding European Union flags. Overlaid on the bottom of the image is a white text box with the headline 'Brexit: five essential reads to help you understand Britain's relationship with the EU right now'. Below the headline, it says 'Published: April 12, 2019 2:21pm BST'. At the very bottom left, there is a small credit: 'EPA/Neil Hall'.

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**12 best ways to get cars out of cities – ranked by new research**

Published: April 14, 2022 12:46pm BST

A stretch of the Champs-Élysées around the Arc de Triomphe in Paris is due to be pedestrianised by 2030. Shutterstock

This screenshot shows the top portion of a web page, identical in layout to the first one. It features the same logo, tagline, search bar, and navigation menu. The main content area features a large image of a busy street in Paris, the Champs-Élysées, with the Arc de Triomphe in the background. Overlaid on the bottom of the image is a white text box with the headline '12 best ways to get cars out of cities – ranked by new research'. Below the headline, it says 'Published: April 14, 2022 12:46pm BST'. At the very bottom, there is a small credit: 'A stretch of the Champs-Élysées around the Arc de Triomphe in Paris is due to be pedestrianised by 2030. Shutterstock'.


# Insights

Long reads of up to 4,000 words.  
Has to be a story that can hold the reader over the full length.

- Yet-to-be-published investigative research with news lines that are of strong public interest
- Human stories with compelling narrative arcs and case studies that grab readers' attention
- The 'inside story' of a researcher's journey, including personal ups-and-downs

Insights is run by journalists  
Paul Keaveny and Mike Herd

[insights@theconversation.com](mailto:insights@theconversation.com)



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## 'They put a few coins in your hands to drop a baby in you' – 265 stories of Haitian children abandoned by UN fathers

Published: December 17, 2019 4:45pm GMT

Marie\* was 14 years old and enrolled in a Christian school when she met and became involved with Miguel, a Brazilian soldier working in Haiti as a UN peacekeeper. When she told him that she was pregnant with his baby, Miguel said

Author: Sophia Lee  
Professor in Modern History, University of Exeter

**The U.N.'s Tainted Legacy in Haiti**  
The agency's peacekeepers left a trail of cholera and fatherless children in the Western Hemisphere's poorest country.

Dec. 16, 2019



By **The Editorial Board**  
The editorial board is a group of opinion journalists whose views are informed by expertise, research, debate and careful deliberation (op-ed). It is separate from the newsroom.

**U.N. Peacekeepers in Haiti Said to Have Fathered Hundreds of Children**  
Women and girls were left behind to face poverty, social stigma and single motherhood in the Western Hemisphere's poorest country.


By **Ethan Patten**  
Published Dec. 16, 2019 Updated Dec. 16, 2019

United Nations peacekeepers in Haiti fathered and left behind hundreds of children, researchers found in a newly released academic study, leaving mothers struggling with stigma, poverty and single parenthood after the men departed the country.



**U.N. peacekeepers fathered, then abandoned, hundreds of children in Haiti, report says**


By **Michael Brice-Saddler**  
December 16, 2019 at 9:42 p.m. EST



U.N. peacekeepers in Haiti allegedly fathered children with women and girls before abandoning them, according to a new report, building on

**Chilean Army to Investigate Abuses During Haiti Peace Mission**

03 December 2019



SANTIAGO – A special commission will investigate alleged abuse by Chilean soldiers during the peace mission in Haiti. The Conversation recently reported Chilean troops were involved in the abuse of Haitian women and minors. The same report said Chilean soldiers fathered at least 20 children in Haiti. Chilean troops were involved in the abuse and sale of Haitian women and minors during the 13-year peace mission in that country, a report by The Conversation said. The US-American news platform conducted an investigation, interviewing 2,000 Haitian women and girls about their experiences of living in communities that hosted peace support operations. The outcome was shocking, investigators said. "Girls as young as 11 were sexually abused and impregnated by peacekeepers and then, six or more put it, 'left in misery' to raise their children alone, often because the fathers are repatriated once the pregnancies become known."

**Haiti government demands justice for women and girls abused by U.N. peacekeepers**

By **Sonia Elias** 3 MIN READ



**UN peacekeepers in Haiti 'fathered hundreds of babies' then abandoned mothers**

Ten Haitian women are taking groundbreaking legal action against the UN to establish paternity and make child support claims, reports Sean O'Neill



UN peacekeepers on patrol in Port-au-Prince after the Haiti earthquake

Tuesday December 17 2019, 3:00pm, The Times

Share Comment Like Retweet

United Nations peacekeepers fathered hundreds of babies in Haiti then abandoned young mothers to lives of single parenthood and poverty, the academic leading a research study has told *The Times*.

### 3. A journalistic approach

#### Think about your audience:

- What do they want?
- What interests them?
- In what style and tone are they expecting to be spoken to?

#### Think about your subject:

- What is it about this subject that would most interest the reader?
- It may not be what is most *academically* interesting
- Structure the story to focus on that element (the story's "angle")
- How do I answer or preempt their question: "SO WHAT?"

#### The 'top line' test

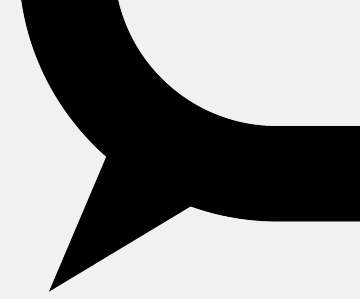
- You know you've got a good story if you can summarise it in one sentence
- Identify the most important or interesting aspect *to your readers*, and focus on that
- Make a point or two – not all of them. Get used to leaving things out
- What is it about the story that is **new, interesting, relevant, timely, unusual, surprising, counterintuitive?**
- Tell me something I don't know...  
...and show me why it matters  
  
= *why should I care about this?*

## 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**





**Now, your turn!**

# 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 direct, 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 – never “*more research is needed*”

- **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

## 4. How to pitch editors

- **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 readers 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 (briefly)
- **Why are you the person to write this?**  
What expertise informs your view?  
What can you bring to the story?

### **A good pitch is written like a good story**

A strong headline to interest the reader, opening lines compelling them to read on

### **The same rules apply**

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

### **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.

**Ready? Head to:**

**<https://theconversation.com/uk/pitches>**

# News, by experts

[theconversation.com/uk](http://theconversation.com/uk)

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