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Existential Threat: How Scientists Can Work With The Media To Communicate Complex Systemic Crises

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Today, our world of 8 billion people and countless other species faces planetary crises that are interconnected, complex, and existential in scale and comprehension, including climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, nitrogen, and poverty. Scientists are at the heart of designing the studies to understand these threats, producing the data that calibrates them, and interpreting the those data. They are among the first members of society to recognise these threats and often the most committed to preventing their worst outcomes. For action on these crises, the general public, and policymakers representing them, need to understand the risks and also care about the outcomes: a job for the media, authors, artists and filmmakers. However, science and the media have very different communication styles and approaches, something that scientists often find uncomfortable. How can scientists best manage their public outreach, and work with the media to ensure their expertise and knowledge helps society navigate a better future?