



## **The challenge for broadcasters in communicating climate change uncertainty**

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Perceptions about climate change are overwhelmingly based on second-order belief, since very few people are themselves climate researchers. For the general public, the importance of television weather presenters in the climate change discussion has been documented in surveys conducted in several countries, making it essential that broadcasters have a clear vision of the situation. Numerous workshops about climate change, including those by the American Meteorological Society and private sector organizations in the US, and the 2014 International Weather Forum/IPCC workshop involving TV presenters from 70 countries in Paris, are intended to distribute knowledge and information to broadcasters. Among the specific problems broadcasters must address is the recently described “pause” or “hiatus” in global surface temperature trends, and the scientifically-inherent existence of uncertainty and how to express it. Popular media frequently focus on possible worst-case scenarios when reporting on climate change. Perhaps a better strategy is to focus on the generally-accepted, such as effects categorized as “virtually certain” or “very likely” in IPCC AR5. We also suggest a “bottom-up” explanation of causation, in which climate change reporting is built upon scientific principles television viewers might have learned in school at an early age.