

Making environmental sustainability issues newsworthy through advocacy journalism

Friday, 5 June 2026 13:15 (15 minutes)

Environmental communicators today are under pressure to overcome issue displacement and a sense of fatigue with sustainability-related messages. This presentation reviews selected scholarship that explores environmental discourses produced by media, popularisers and activists to identify effective discursive strategies and dominant patterns used in environmental advocacy. It also reports on a discourse analysis of The Conversation's environment-oriented award-winning newsletter Imagine to illustrate some ways in which environmental coverage is made newsworthy again. This analysis draws on the discursive approach to news values and a taxonomy of legitimization and intensification strategies. The study finds how current issues in environmental advocacy are newsworthy primarily through impact-driven stories and how actionable recommendations are rationalized with science and embedded in culturally resonant frames. The study offers further evidence-based guidelines for environmental communicators.

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Session Classification: Environmental Humanities & Societal Futures: Narratives That Shape Transitions

Track Classification: General sessions: Environmental Humanities & Societal Futures: Narratives That Shape Transitions