SCAN ME

CMS

Creating a new CMS Strategy for communications

Sofia Hurst on behalf of the CMS Collaboration

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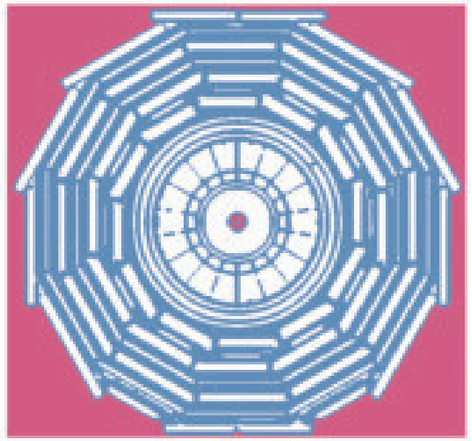

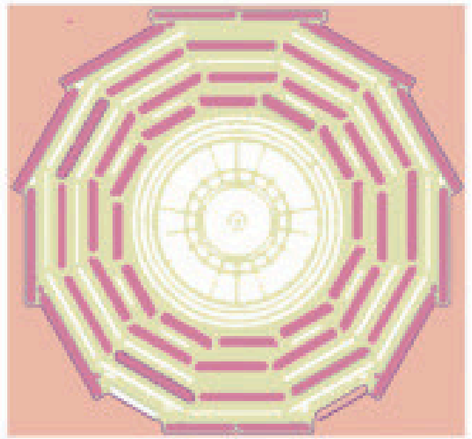

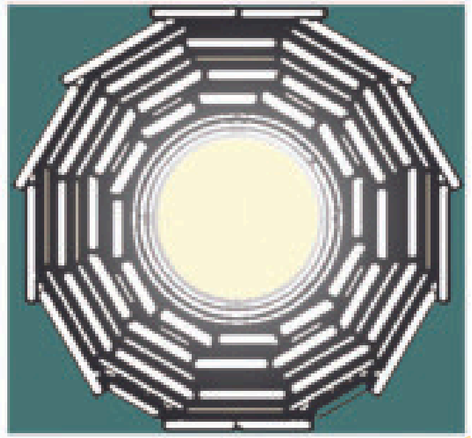

The Core Team

Head of External Communications

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Comms & Outreach

Sofia Hurst
Nefeli Stathaki
Thomas McCauley

Physics Communication

Ansar Iqbal
Andrés Delannoy

The Plan

Why create a new strategy?

How we went about it

Our key pillars / guiding stars

The challenges and how we are addressing them

The work we still have left to do

An ask for you

Our Why

- External **pressures on High Energy Physics** are currently making the future of the whole field very difficult. We need to be more effective than ever at putting out CMS' work and showing who we are to a range of different audiences across ages, geographical locations, and understandings of physics.

- The wider world is much more rife with **misinformation and disinformation**, as these campaigns are easily amplified. We need to be a consistent **voice of reason and science**!

The Document

Investigation via Design Thinking

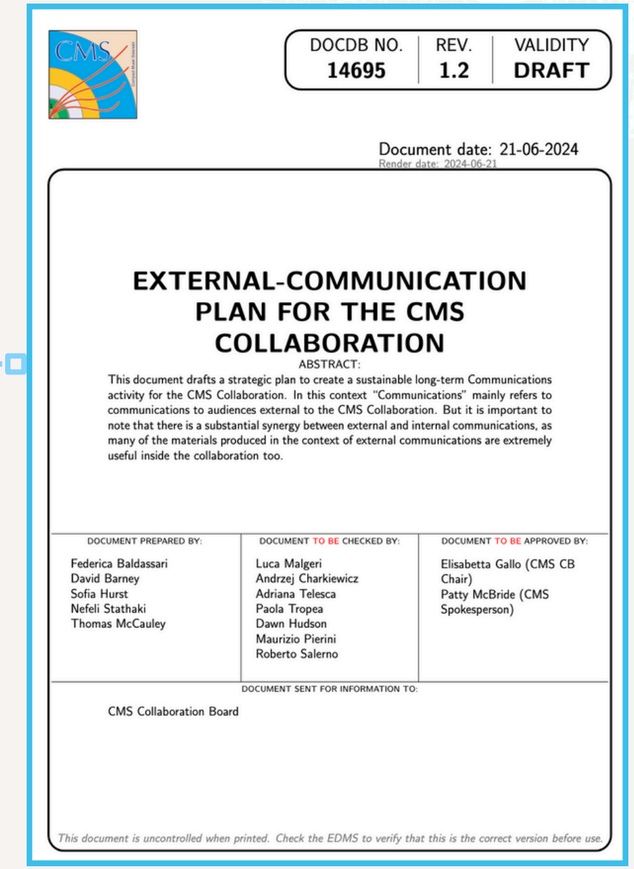
- Key messages & strategic priorities
- Evolution of current activities
- New Activities

Strategy Document

Approved by CMS Collaboration Board

Approved by RRB for needed resources

Implementation



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EXTERNAL-COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR THE CMS COLLABORATION

ABSTRACT:

This document drafts a strategic plan to create a sustainable long-term Communications activity for the CMS Collaboration. In this context "Communications" mainly refers to communications to audiences external to the CMS Collaboration. But it is important to note that there is a substantial synergy between external and internal communications, as many of the materials produced in the context of external communications are extremely useful inside the collaboration too.

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DOCUMENT SENT FOR INFORMATION TO:

CMS Collaboration Board

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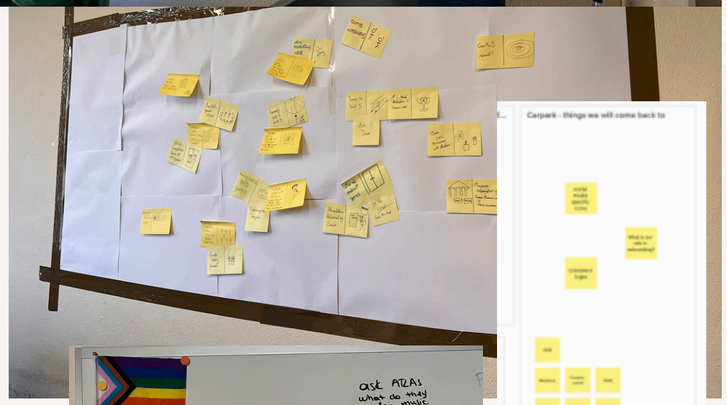
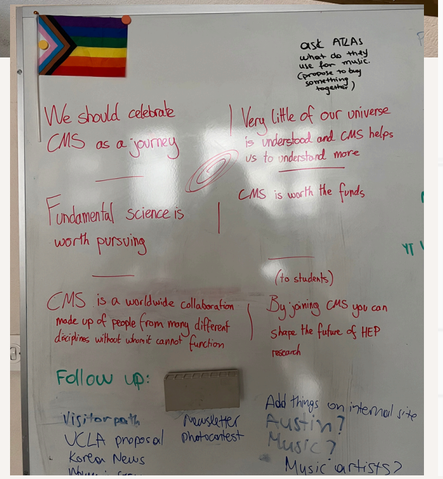
The Investigation
Design Thinking

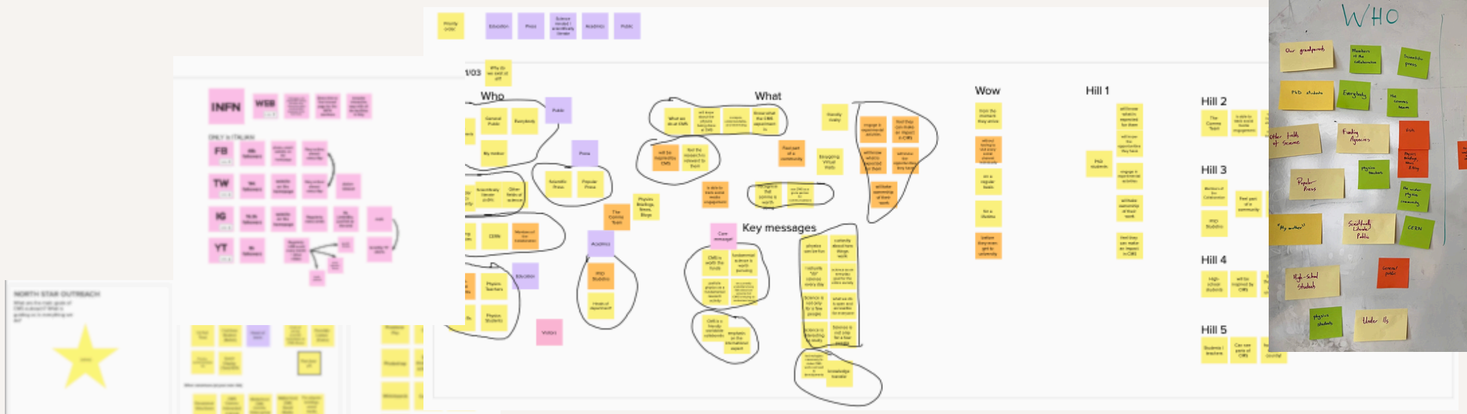
*Design thinking is a methodology that starts with **empathy for the audience**, and builds up from there. It offers a set of tools to really, deeply, **question problems**, and encourages **creative thinking** when coming up with solutions.*

> "Designers don't try to search for a solution until they have determined the **real problem**, and even then, instead of solving that problem, they stop to **consider a wide range of potential solutions**. Only then will they finally converge upon their proposal."
>
> *- Don Norman, author of The Design of Everyday Things*

How we went about it







We used it to:

- **map out** the disparate parts of the communications landscape
- starting with the audiences, we pulled out the **key messages** and **guiding principles** for the team
- understand the **underlying problems** causing painpoints for the team and creatively approached how to address them

Key Messages

The Public are fascinated by our research. Particle physics is the modern equivalent of “where are we going?”

Fabiola Gianotti at ICHEP panel session 2024

Key Messages

WE SHOULD **CELEBRATE CMS AS A JOURNEY**

FUNDAMENTAL SCIENCE IS **WORTH PURSUING**

CMS IS A **WORLDWIDE** COLLABORATION OF PEOPLE FROM MANY **DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES**, WITHOUT WHOM IT WOULD NOT FUNCTION

VERY LITTLE OF OUR UNIVERSE IS UNDERSTOOD & **CMS HELPS** US TO UNDERSTAND MORE

CMS IS WORTH THE FUNDS

Key Messages

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Key Messages

CMS IS WORTH THE FUNDS

"...the higher the awareness of CERN, the higher is the likelihood of paying for its research activity."

F. Giffoni, M. Florio

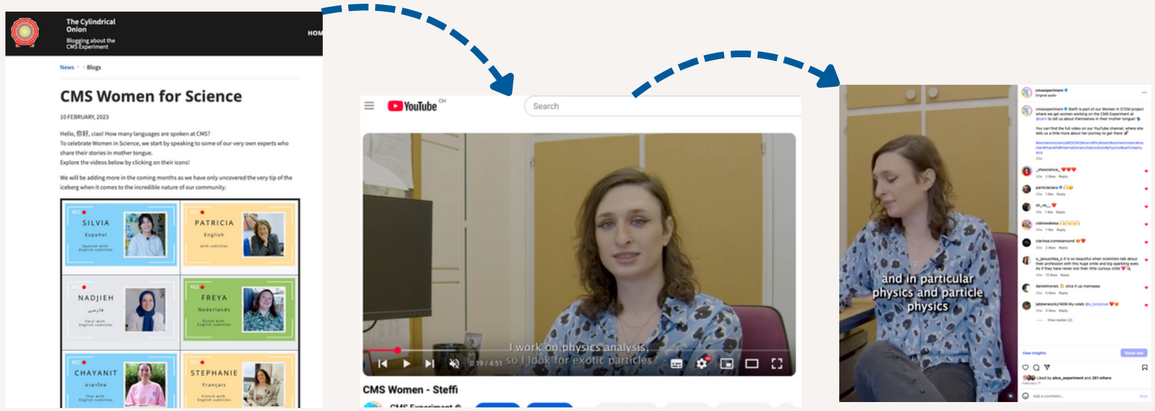
Guiding Principles

Sustainability

Activities should be **sustainable in the long term** meaning that they can be actioned and improved over time with the resources available.

Adaptability

Activities should have a **well defined audience**, but, where possible, should be **adapted to fit with other audiences** and channels.



The Pain Points

We aimed to:

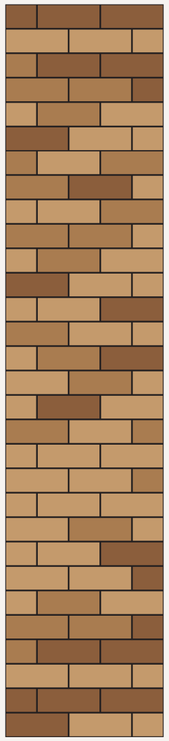
- see what was working and make sure to keep doing it, or do it more
- see what was NOT working and uncover why that was the case
- see what gaps in our activities existed and decide how to fill them

By continually asking why something painful in one of our processes existed, we identified several underlying problems and worked to address them. We look at three examples in the following slides.

#1Information Flow

Surface level pain points indicated that there was an issue with information flow from the many CMS teams to the communications team!

The Comms Team had to rely on one or two people to ask about what was happening, and often too late to do much about it.



#1Information Flow

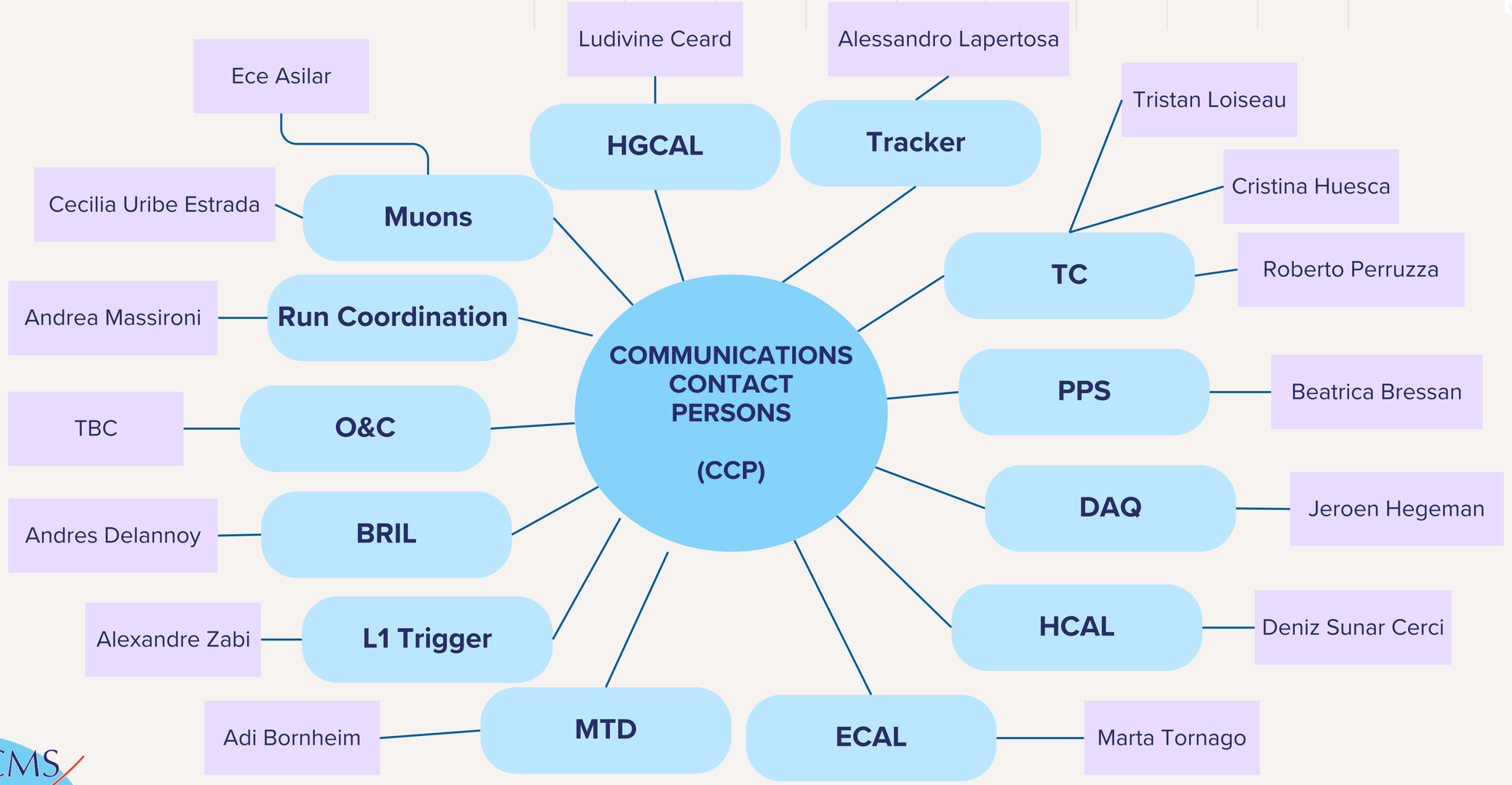
We moved to a system where we have contacts across the different areas of CMS that let us know what is going on and help to collect the key stories from their teams!

We call them CCPs - **Communication Contact Persons**

Some of the photos and stories collected through the CCPs

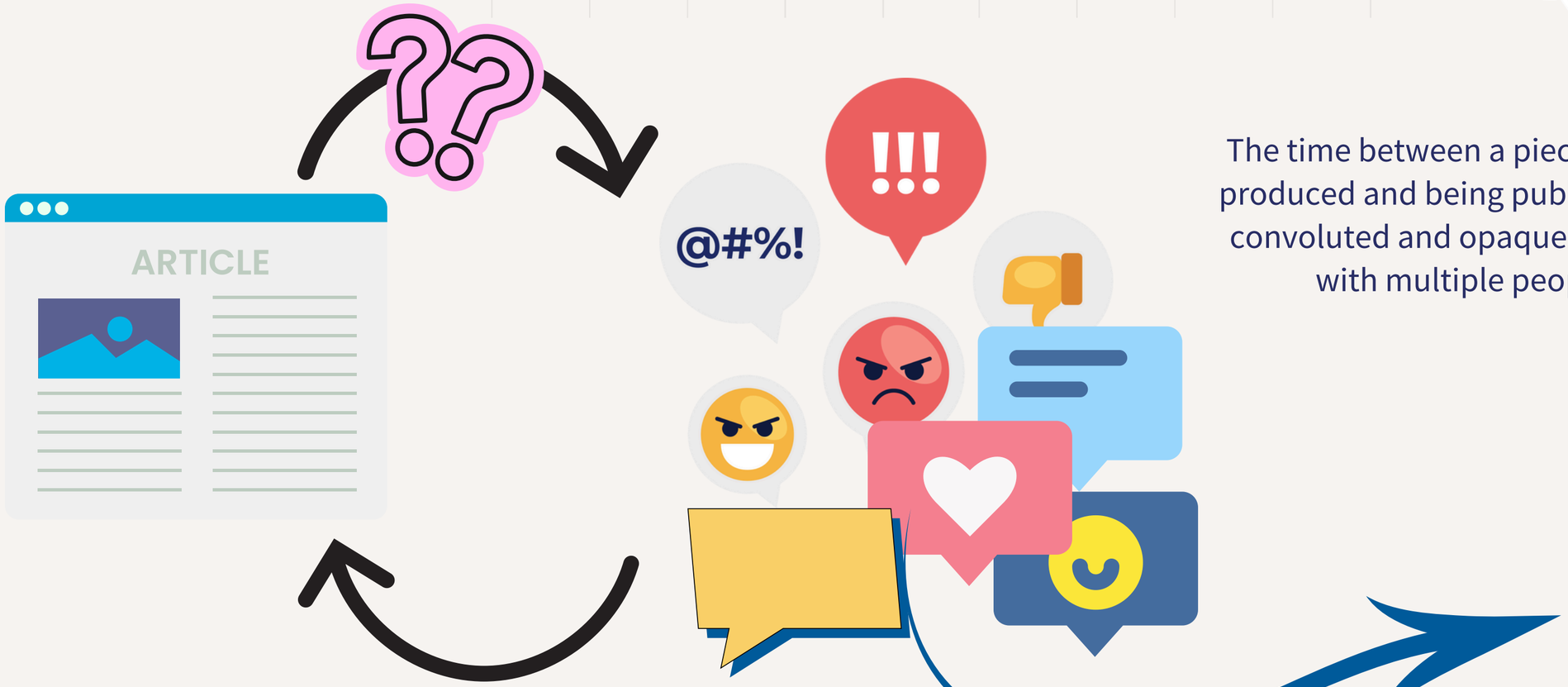
The challenges and how we are addressing them

#1 CCPs



- feed information about important milestones to the central communications team for articles, pictures, videos, timelapses etc
- encourage their subsystems to create and share footage with the communications team e.g. through dedicated comms sessions
- collect entries for the image of the month competitions

#2 Time to Publish



The time between a piece of communications being produced and being published was often long due to convoluted and opaque approvals processes, often with multiple people having to sign off.

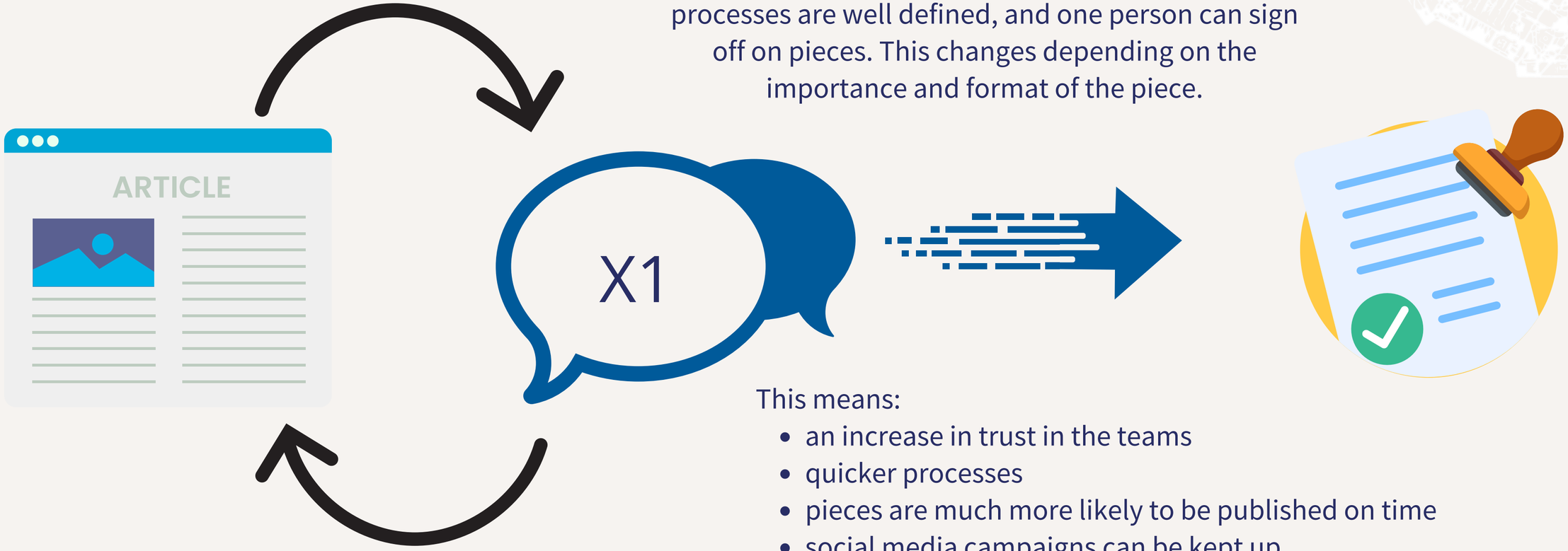
Piece of communications produced

Long, laborious approvals and edit process, often with contradicting edits

Piece published with long delays

#2 New Editorial Process

The new editorial process means that the approvals processes are well defined, and one person can sign off on pieces. This changes depending on the importance and format of the piece.

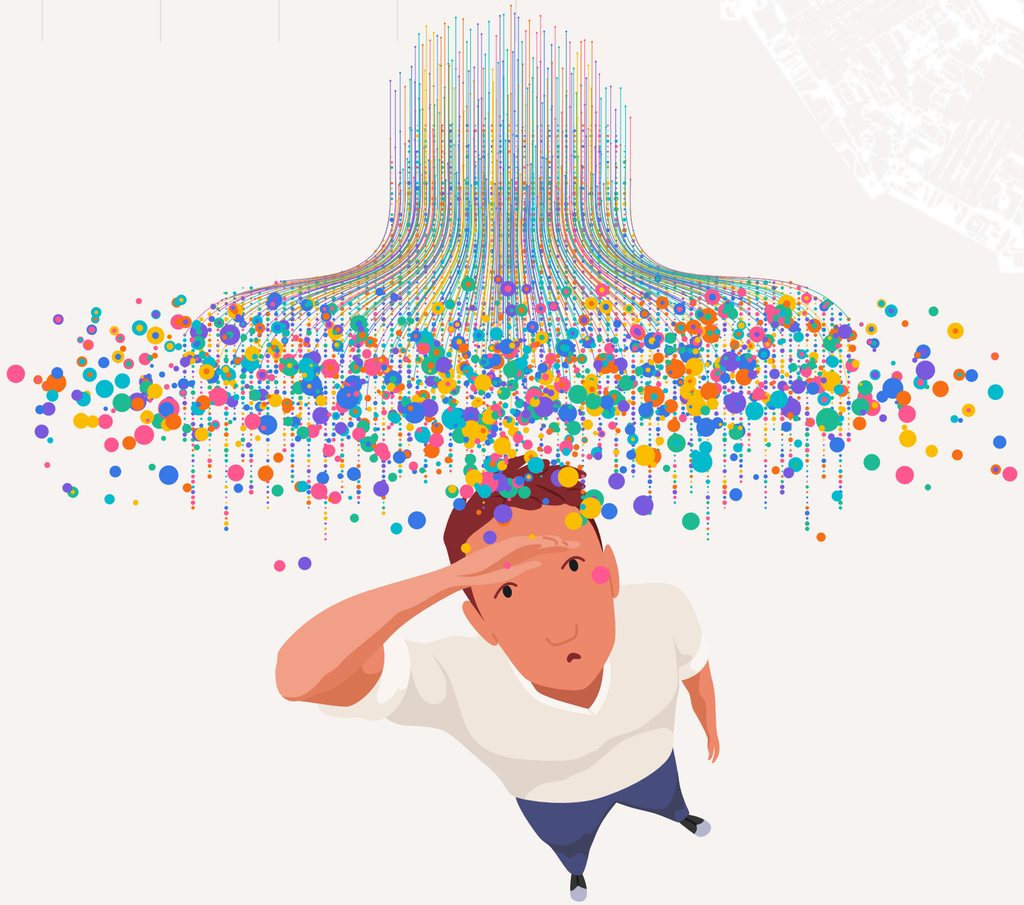


This means:

- an increase in trust in the teams
- quicker processes
- pieces are much more likely to be published on time
- social media campaigns can be kept up

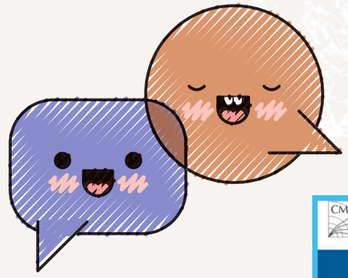
#3 Top-Down

Passively posted information and very little interaction meant that the audiences, both internal and external, could not engage with us in a meaningful way.

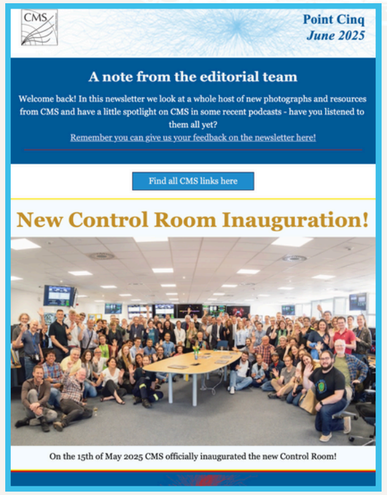


#3 Shift to Dialogue

Creating dialogical relationships *for example* → Being social on socials!



Delivering information in a more targeted way → Point Cinq CMS Newsletter



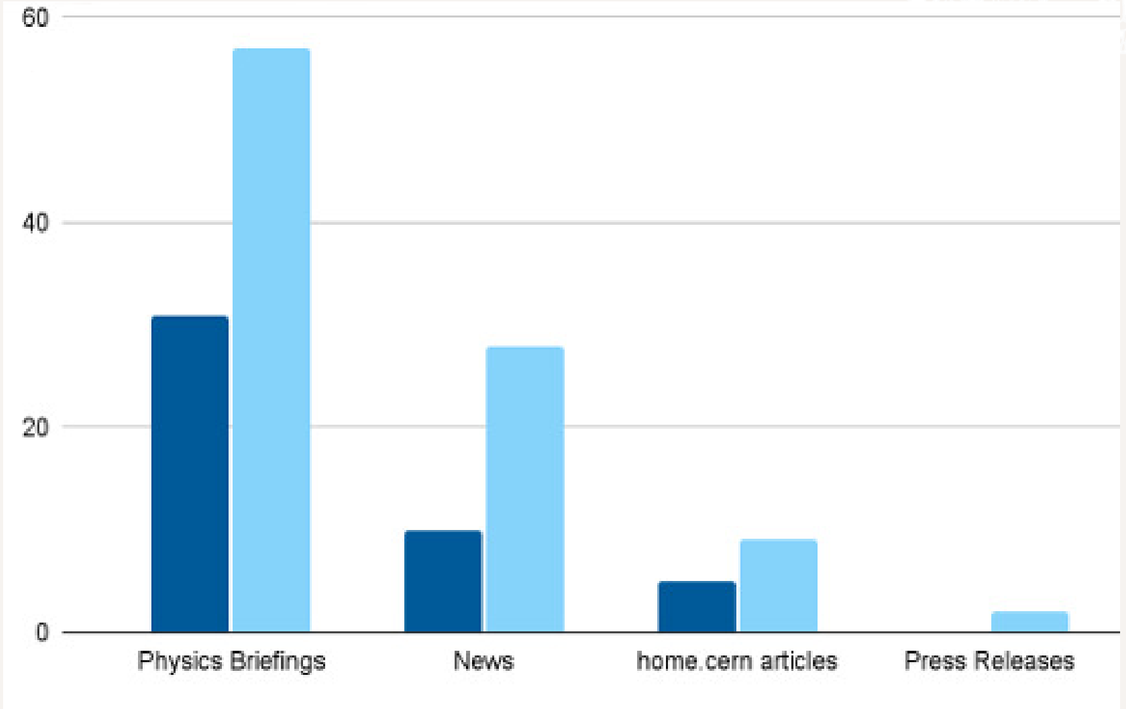
Proactively reaching out to specific audiences with dedicated materials → Local events

Has it worked?

The strategy document passed through the collaboration board in late 2023…

In 2024, we had:

More articles
More social media posts
(and more platforms!)
More CMS events organised
More time lapses & photographs
More of CERN's coverage for wider journalists to pick up on



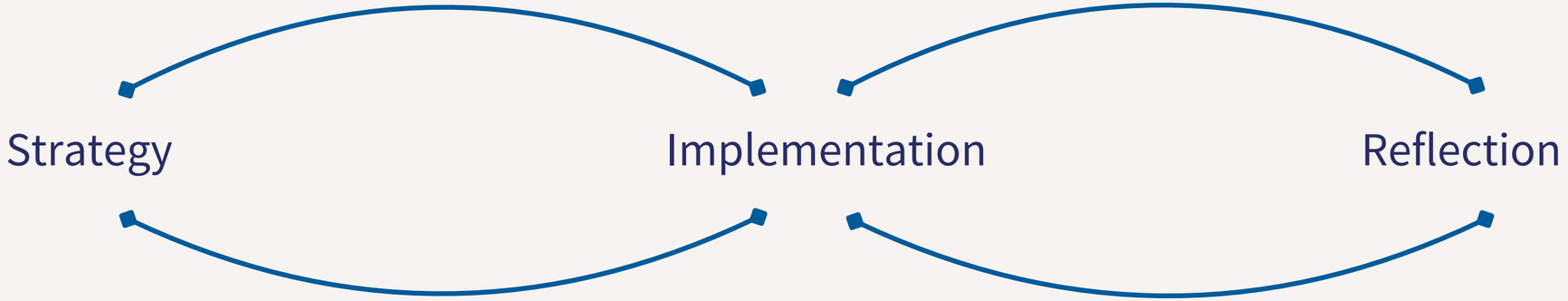
Has it worked?

But what we like to see most of all are moments like this:

Bonjour,
Moi c'est Sacha,
J'ai 8ans, j'ai aimé la visite, la rapidité de l'ascenseur, c'était impressionnant.
J'aurais aimé qu'on m'explique avant les protons et les électrons, car c'est un grand mystère, car ***j'ai envie de devenir scientifique****.*
On a pas vu ça à l'école primaire.
Sacha

Hello,
I am Sacha,
I'm 8 years old, I loved the visit, the speed of the lift, was impressive.
I would have liked to have had protons and electrons explained to me before, because it is a great mystery, because ***I want to become a scientist.***
I had never seen this in primary school.
Sacha

A long way to go



- **More is not always better** when we have such a tight team - we are shifting to a greater focus on prioritisation and quality especially in terms of physics briefings
- We are now in a situation where we have **too many things** to post sometimes!
- As activities become more efficient in this team, we need to maintain some sort of **documentation** as we go along so that future handovers can be smooth.

Some questions for you when we chat after this:

- What do you find useful interaction with experiments you are not part of?
- Have you implemented some of these in your own organisations?
- When creating a strategy, what kinds of analysis did you do?
- Let’s collaborate! We love reaching people we don’t usually reach and are keen to collaborate on socials or cross post articles - if you have an idea we are all ears.

Any questions for us?

Website
cms.cern

Blog
cylindricalonion.web.cern.ch

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Social Media
@CMSExperiment

LinkedIn
CMS Collaboration

TikTok
@cms_experiment

Back- up slides

Subscribe to our newsletter!

- A monthly newsletter straight to your inbox
- Find out about all CMS news - including physics results, events, collaboration news, art initiatives, and award winners
- Take part in quizzes and stand the chance to win prizes

CMS

Point Cinq
July 2025

A note from the editorial team

We are currently in the unique and exciting oxygen and neon run! In this newsletter we also look back on the June CMS week, and we have a very exciting wordsearch with the names of 40 women scientists who will be added to the Eiffel tower.
Remember you can give us your feedback on the newsletter here!

Find all CMS links here

CMS Group Photo

During the CMS week in June, a new group photo was taken with many of the people attending! What a wonderful moment bringing the collaboration together! Of course, there are many many more collaborators to CMS spread across the world, but it is wonderful to get so many people together in the same place.

Some interesting studies

"the higher the awareness of CERN, the higher is the likelihood of paying for its research activity."

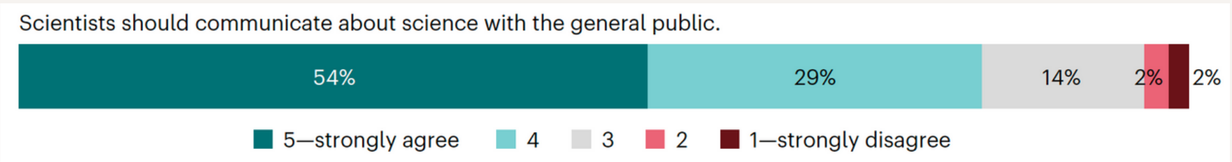
"No relevant differences exist between the two countries [Switzerland and France] because the statistically significant determinants are the same. Apart from income and controlling for individual traits, they are related to the following issues: i) awareness of CERN; ii) scientific interest; iii) CERN permits to increases knowledge of universe; iv) The research activity at CERN should increase in the coming decades."

Francesco Giffoni, Massimo Florio,
Public support of science: A contingent valuation study of citizens' attitudes about CERN with and without information about implicit taxes,
Research Policy,
Volume 52, Issue 1,
2023,
104627,
ISSN 0048-7333,
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2022.104627.

→ A study asking Swiss people what they would be willing to pay in taxation for CERN research and comparing it to similar survey done in France

"Anti-science attitudes, even if held by only a minority of people, raise concerns about a potential crisis of trust in science, which could challenge the epistemic authority of science and the role of scientists"
Cologna, V., Mede, N.G., Berger, S. et al.

"Public perception of scientific integrity—one of four components of trust—is somewhat high, but perceptions of scientists' openness are lower. Therefore, scientists wishing to gain public trust could work on being more receptive to feedback and more transparent about their funding and data sources, and invest more effort into communicating about science with the public—which we found to be desired by 83% of respondents. We recommend avoiding top-down communication but encouraging public participation in genuine dialogue, in which scientists seek to consider the insights and needs of other societal actors."



Cologna, V., Mede, N. G., Berger, S., Besley, J., Brick, C., Joubert, M., Maibach, E. W., Mihelj, S., Oreskes, N., Schäfer, M. S., Abdul Aziz, N. I., Abdulsalam, S., Shamsi, N. A., Aczel, B., Adinugroho, I., Alabrese, E., Aldoh, A., Alfano, M., Ali, I. M., . . . Zwaan, R. A. (2025).
Trust in scientists and their role in society across 68 countries.
Nature Human Behaviour, 9(4), 713-730.
https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-024-02090-5