

## Actor Mapping

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### Training Resource



Tools to Introduce Themes  
Tools for Discussion, Reflection  
and Learning: Quick Tools  
Tools for Discussion, Reflection  
and Learning: Deep Dives

### Research Insights



Making Sense of Science  
Evaluating & Promoting Science  
Communication Quality Online  
Barriers to & Opportunities for  
Reaching Audiences

### Competence Framework



Picture of the World  
Professional Norms & Roles  
Working Knowledge

### Required Prior Knowledge



Not required, but basic understanding of  
science and public communication could be  
an advantage.

### Description

As a result of digital transformation, science communication has changed tremendously. In this context, actors who communicate about scientific issues have also diversified. Accordingly, a broad range of actors, such as universities, scientists, journalistic media, political actors, NGOs and corporations, communicate about science-related issues. Their communication on issues such as climate change or health influence how science is perceived by the broader public. Understanding and keeping track of this complexity of the science communication landscape is essential for professional science communicators and scientists.

This task aims to map the actors involved in the public communication of science-related issues. Students work individually or in small groups to develop actor maps for specific science-related communication issues such as climate change, nutrition, endangered species, gentech or vaccination. Their task is to search for the 10, 15 or 20 most visible communicators associated with these issues via a search engine (e.g., Google or Bing) or on social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook or Instagram). As a starting point, students should discuss and agree on the search string(s) used before starting the research. In addition, students can code actor types, linked content/references, potential objectives (societal vs strategic), etc. The definition of these and further categories could either be given by the trainer or developed in class. Results of the research can be presented in class. The discussion could also focus on differences in the structures of the respective topical actor maps.

## Actor Mapping

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### Learning Objectives

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- Realising the diversity of actors involved in the public communication of science
- Developing a realistic understanding of the competition for public attention in science communication
- Recognising the dual role of actors as audiences and science communicators
- Improving in carrying out systematic searches on the web

### Technical Requirements and Preparation

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- Internet access and notebooks for students (at least one per group)
- In case of group work: sufficient space or breakout rooms
- Flipcharts or online equivalent
- Depending on platform used, personalised settings can lead to different results for the same search strings. This is not a problem in the context of the training setting, but students should be made aware of this.

### Sample Schedule

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10–15 minutes	Introduction
Minimum 30 minutes, actual tasks need to be tailored to available time	Optional: Development of search strings and/or categories for coding
Minimum 30 minutes, depending on number of actors to be included in the research, actual tasks need to be tailored to available time	Online search for actors
Minimum 30 minutes	Presentation and discussion of results and their implications for science communication as a professional field
10–15 minutes	Wrap-up and conclusion