



Scicomm-Support

Contact point for attacks and unobjective conflicts in science communication

Emmy Noether Jahrestreffen

July 10, 2026

Julia Wandt (she/her) & Kristin Küter (she/her)

SCICOMMsupport

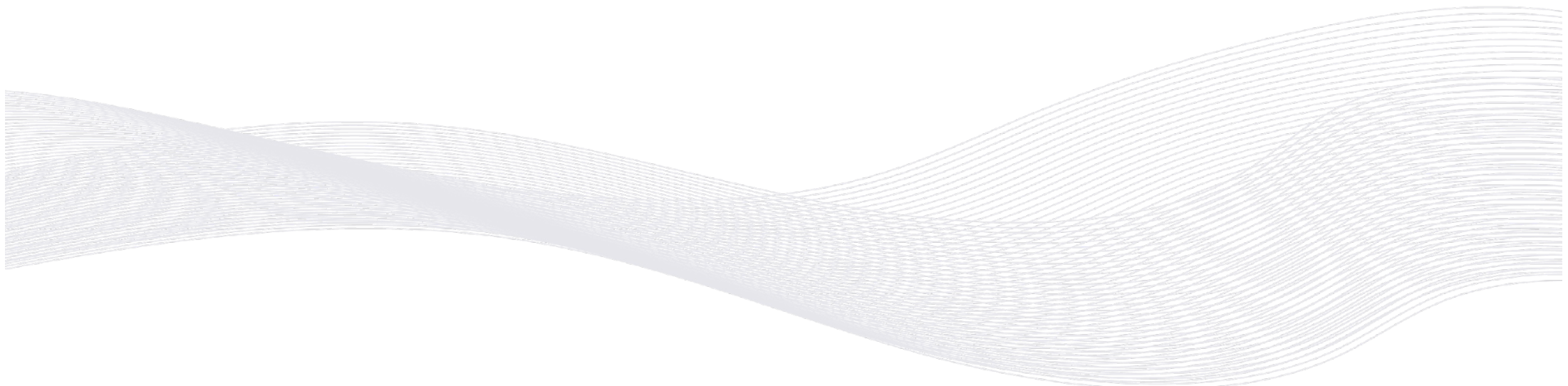
Hello!



Agenda

SCICOMMsupport

1. What is Science Hostility?
2. Who, why and then?
3. How does Scicomm-Support help?



H I

H A T E R S

*Hate Speech and
Science Hostility*

What is Science Hostility?

Four Dimensions of Science Hostility :

Anti-science

Scientific ignorance

Scientific skepticism

Science denial

Hate speech and science hostility

- Previous studies: Institute for Democracy and Civil Society (IDZ Jena), Nature (2021): 'I hope you die.'; Science (2022): 'In the Line of Fire'; DFG Research Project at HHU (2023), “Has the relationship between science and the public changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and if so, how?”
- First representative study for Germany (May 2024): 'Anfeindungen gegen Forschende. A representative study of the KAPAZ project‘.
- Project „Capacities and competencies in dealing with hate speech and hostility towards science“ (funded by the Volkswagen Foundation)
- Among 2,600 scientists; no reliable figures for Germany until then.

Hate Speech and Science Hostility

- Dimension „**experience**“: 45% have experienced at least one form of hostility towards science.
- Dimension „**perception**“: 70% perceive an increase in hostility towards science; however, 28% of these only perceive a slight increase.
- ⇒ Hostility towards science has increased, but is not a new phenomenon.

Hate speech and science hostility

Survey by

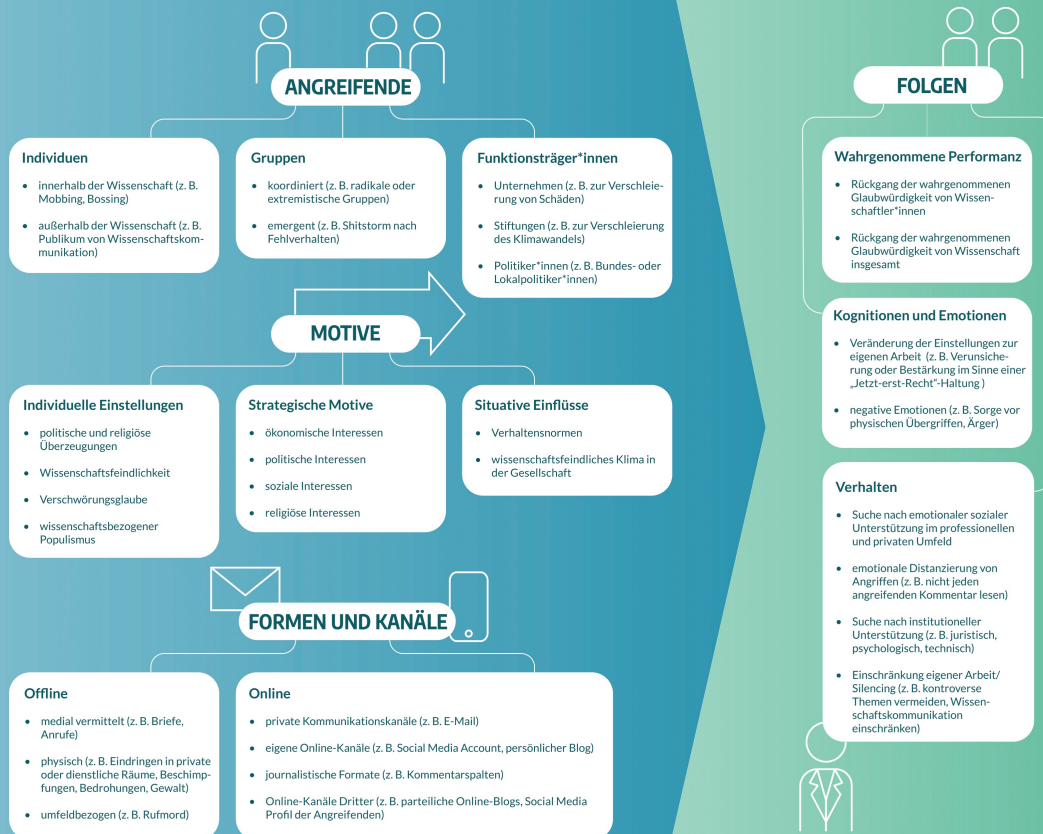
Blümel & Just, Deutsches Zentrum
für Hochschul- und
Wissenschaftsforschung (DZHW),
published in May 2024

Experiences of Scientists in Germany Forms of Experienced Hostility Toward Science (Multiple responses possible, N = 1170/2621)	Number of mentions:	Percent:
Hate speech / condescending remarks / questioning of competence as a scientist through degrading and deliberately hurtful criticism / verbal threats	1255	47%
Inappropriate reactions to scientific findings in public discussions (e.g., through trolling)	725	28%
Active personal discrimination against researchers (e.g., due to skin color, origin, sexual orientation)	307	12%
Attempts to prevent researchers from making public contributions ("silencing")	254	10%
Other (open responses)	225	9%
Criminal acts (e.g., threats of physical violence or death threats)	58	2%
Targeted damage to property, belongings ("vandalism")	58	2%
Total:	2882	110%

Links to the studies

- [1] [Nature \(2021\): 'I hope you die.'](https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-02741-x) <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-02741-x>
- [2] [Science \(2022\): 'In the Line of Fire':](https://www.science.org/content/article/overwhelmed-hate-covid-19-scientists-face-avalanche-abuse-survey-shows) <https://www.science.org/content/article/overwhelmed-hate-covid-19-scientists-face-avalanche-abuse-survey-shows>
- [3] [Blümel, Clemens. 2024: Anfeindungen gegen Forschende: Eine repräsentative Studie des Projektes KAPAZ. Kurzdossier über die Berichterstattung. Hrsg: Deutsches Zentrum für Hochschul- und Wissenschaftsforschung GmbH \(DZHW\): https://www.hiig.de/project/wissenschaftsfeindlichkeit-kapaz/](https://www.hiig.de/project/wissenschaftsfeindlichkeit-kapaz/)

WISSENSCHAFTSBEZOGENE ANGRIFFE: FORMEN UND FOLGEN



Basierend auf: Seeger, C., Frischlich, L., Obermaier, M., Schmid U. K. & Schulze, H. (2024). Hate Speech und Angriffe auf Wissenschaftler*innen – Ein Forschungsüberblick. Berlin: Transfer Unit Wissenschaftskommunikation

transferunit.de

Who, why and then?

Source: <https://transferunit.de/thema/hate-speech-und-angriffe-auf-wissenschaftlerinnen/>

Who, why and then?

Attackers:
individuals, groups, representatives

Motives:
individual beliefs, strategic motives, situational factors

Forms and channels:
offline, online

Consequences:
perceived performance, cognition and emotions, behavior



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*How does
Scicomm-Support help?*

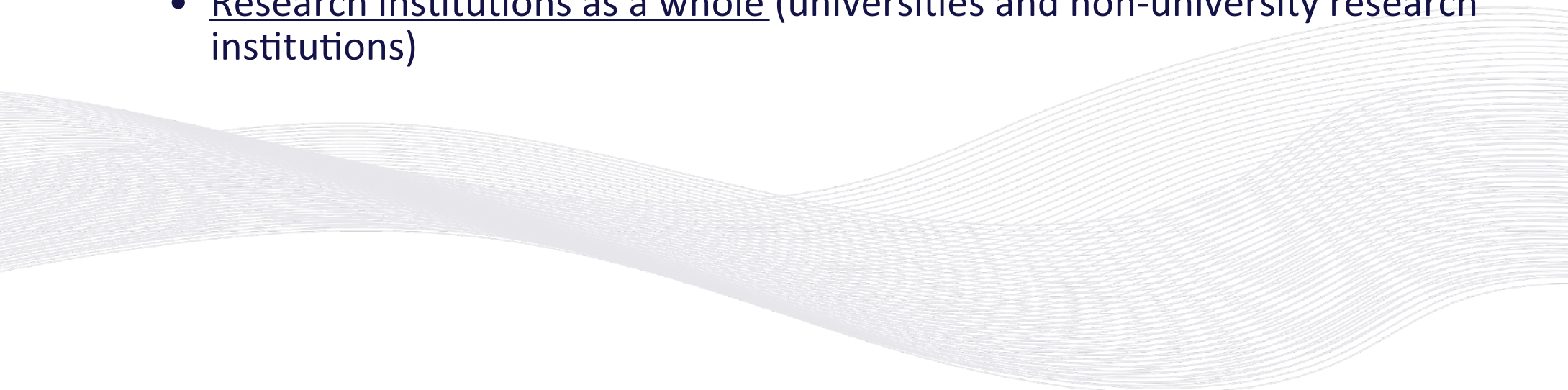
About Scicomm-Support

SCICOMMsupport

- National contact point („Nationale Kontaktstelle“) for attacks and unobjective conflicts in science communication
 - Objectives of the institution:
 - (1) Strengthening the resilience of the science system against hate speech, hostility towards science and other forms of attack
 - (2) Preventing the disengagement of scientists and scientific institutions from public communication.
- 

About Scicomm-Support

SCICOMMsupport

- Target groups:
 - Scientists at universities and non-university research institutions
 - Science communicators at universities and non-university research institutions
 - Research institutions as a whole (universities and non-university research institutions)
- 

Our Support Services

SCICOMMsupport

1) Information on website, including guidelines: www.scicomm-support.de

2) Workshop and training offer

- Support and advice for groups and institutions

3) Telephone advice: every day (incl. weekends and holidays), 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

[+49 157 92344804](tel:+4915792344804)

- Consultants = experienced science communicators

Our Support Services

Three levels of advice:

- 1) Communication
- 2) Legal Advice
- 3) Psychological Counselling

Confidential, independent, anonymous if desired

Free of charge

Guideline Insights



1. Who is the target group of the helpline?
2. Recognizing the threat situation
3. Understanding the threat situation
4. Taking action
 - 4.1 Informing trusted persons and involving the community
 - 4.2 General communication and in Social Media
 - 4.3 Documenting the situation
 - 4.4 Data protection and privacy
 - 4.5 Psychological factors
5. Law enforcement and legal assistance
6. Helpful contacts and further information

Network

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- **Partners** are the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the Bundesverband Hochschulkommunikation (,German national association of communications professionals in higher education')
 - **Funded by** the Volkswagen Foundation, the ZEIT FOUNDATION BUCERIUS, the Gerda Henkel Foundation and the German Bundestag
 - **Initiated by** Bundesverband Hochschulkommunikation and Wissenschaft im Dialog
- 

Network

SCICOMMsupport

- **National Network:** HateAid, bukof, ZEIT Stiftung Bucerius, Bucerius Law School, Klaus Tschira Foundation, mbr Berlin, LKA Baden-Württemberg ("Toleranz im Netz"), victim counseling Rhineland, Stark im Amt, Amadeu Antonio Foundation, Initiative Democratic Science (WissDem), Institute for Higher Education Research Halle, Gerda Henkel Foundation, Volkswagen Foundation
- **International Network:** All countries that already have such a contact point or that are interested in setting one up.
Members so far are: Sweden, Finland, USA, Austria, Estland, Netherlands, Norway, France, probably Spain in the future

Our Numbers

Persönliche telefonische Beratung

146

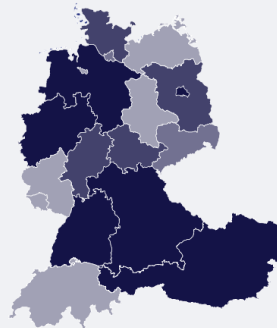
Beratungsfälle gesamt

21 davon abgelehnte Fälle

25 davon präventive
Beratungsfälle

59 davon mit Rechtsberatung

Die Beratungsfälle bestehen aus unterschiedlich häufigen Kontaktpunkten mit teilweise längerer und aufwendigerer Betreuung. Manche Personen beraten wir über mehrere Monate. Die Anzahl der Kontaktpunkte pro Fall sind im Folgenden dargestellt (inklusive der abgelehnten Fälle).



Örtliche Verteilung Beratungsfälle

Fortgesetzte Beratungsfälle



www.scicomm-support.de
Retrieved: July 9, 2026

Trainings und Weiterbildungen, Konferenzen

197 Anfragen Trainings

132 Trainings durchgeführt

65 Trainings terminiert oder in Planung

2.929 Teilnehmer*innen bisher (gerundet)

20 Paneldiskussionen

8 Konferenzbeiträge

2 Anhörungen Bundestagsausschüsse

Informationsangebote auf der Web- site

66.455 Aufrufe Website insgesamt

5.281 Aufrufe und Downloads Leitfaden

Social Media: LinkedIn

1.240 Follower*innen

Wissenschaft

"Niemand muss sich solche Angriffe gefallen lassen!"

Seit dem Sommer gibt es eine Notfallnummer für Wissenschaftler im Shitstorm – die Nachfrage ist groß. Ein Anruf bei der Mitinitiatorin Julia Wandt

Interview: **Anna-Lena Scholz**

Aktualisiert am 24. November 2023, 17:35 Uhr ⓘ / [134 Kommentare](#) /

AUS DER ZEIT NR. 49/2023



Wissenschaftler kommunizieren heute viel öffentlicher und werden dadurch häufiger angefeindet. © Studio Pong für DIE ZEIT

DIE ZEIT: Frau Wandt, Wissenschaftlerin zu sein – ist das heutzutage gefährlich?

Julia Wandt: Ich hoffe nicht! Aber wir sehen seit einigen Jahren, dass Forscherinnen und Forscher für ihre Arbeit angegriffen werden.

JULIA WANDT

ZEIT: Für ihre Erkenntnisse?

<https://scicomm-support.de/medienecho/>

Frankfurter Allgemeine

01.12.2023 - Aktualisiert: 05.12.2023, 09:39 Uhr
<https://www.faz.net/-gyl-bitv6>

Angefeindete Wissenschaftler

„Wir haben stark aufgeladene Debatten mit Trigger-Worten“

Wissenschaftler werden häufig Opfer von Beleidigungen und Einschüchterung. Das hat Konsequenzen – für Berufe in der Forschung und für die Wissenschaft an sich. Doch es gibt Hilfe.

Von HENRIK POMERANZ



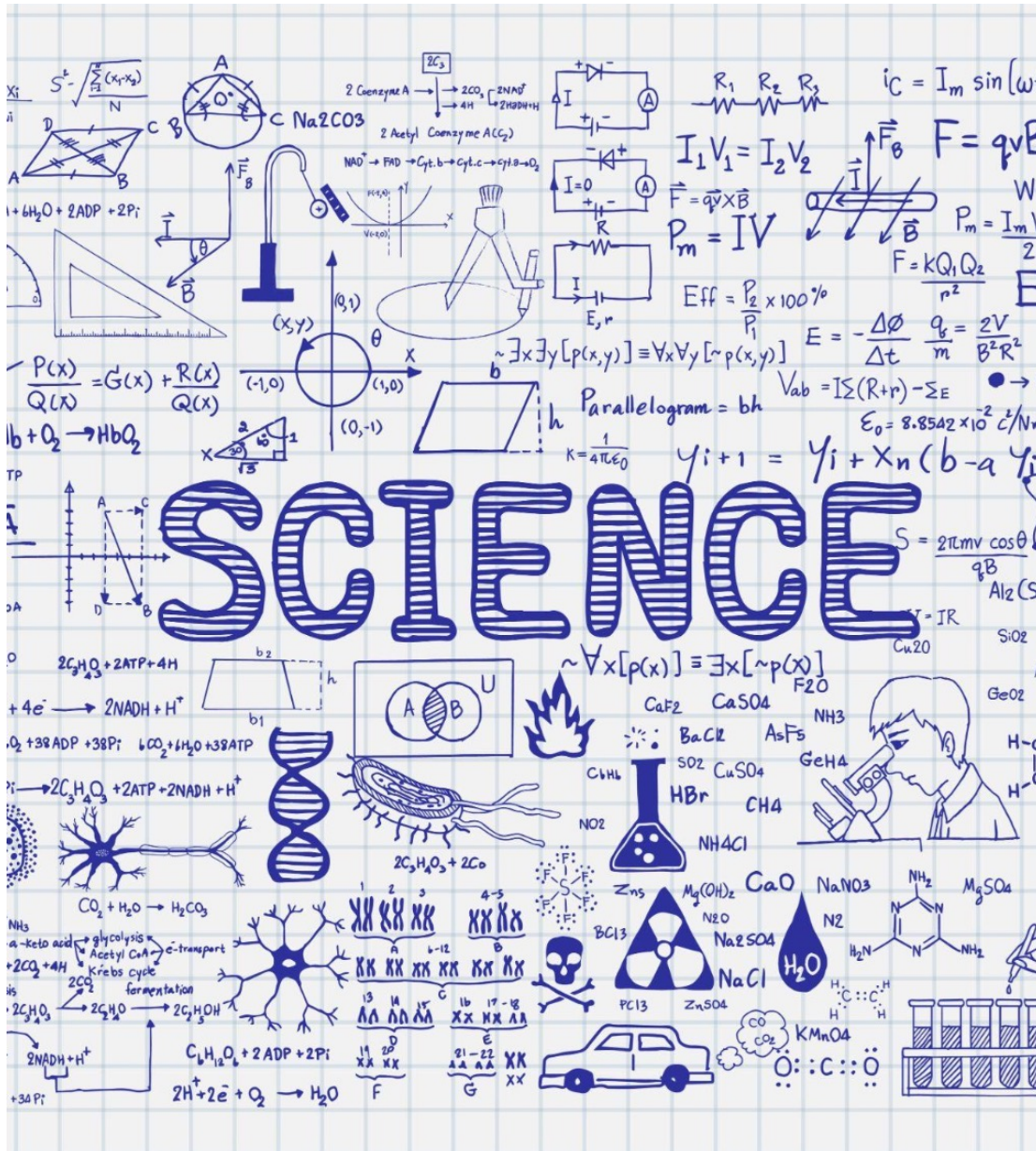
Verängstigt und bedroht: So fühlen sich immer mehr Wissenschaftler, die Ziel von Hassnachrichten werden. © Plainpicture

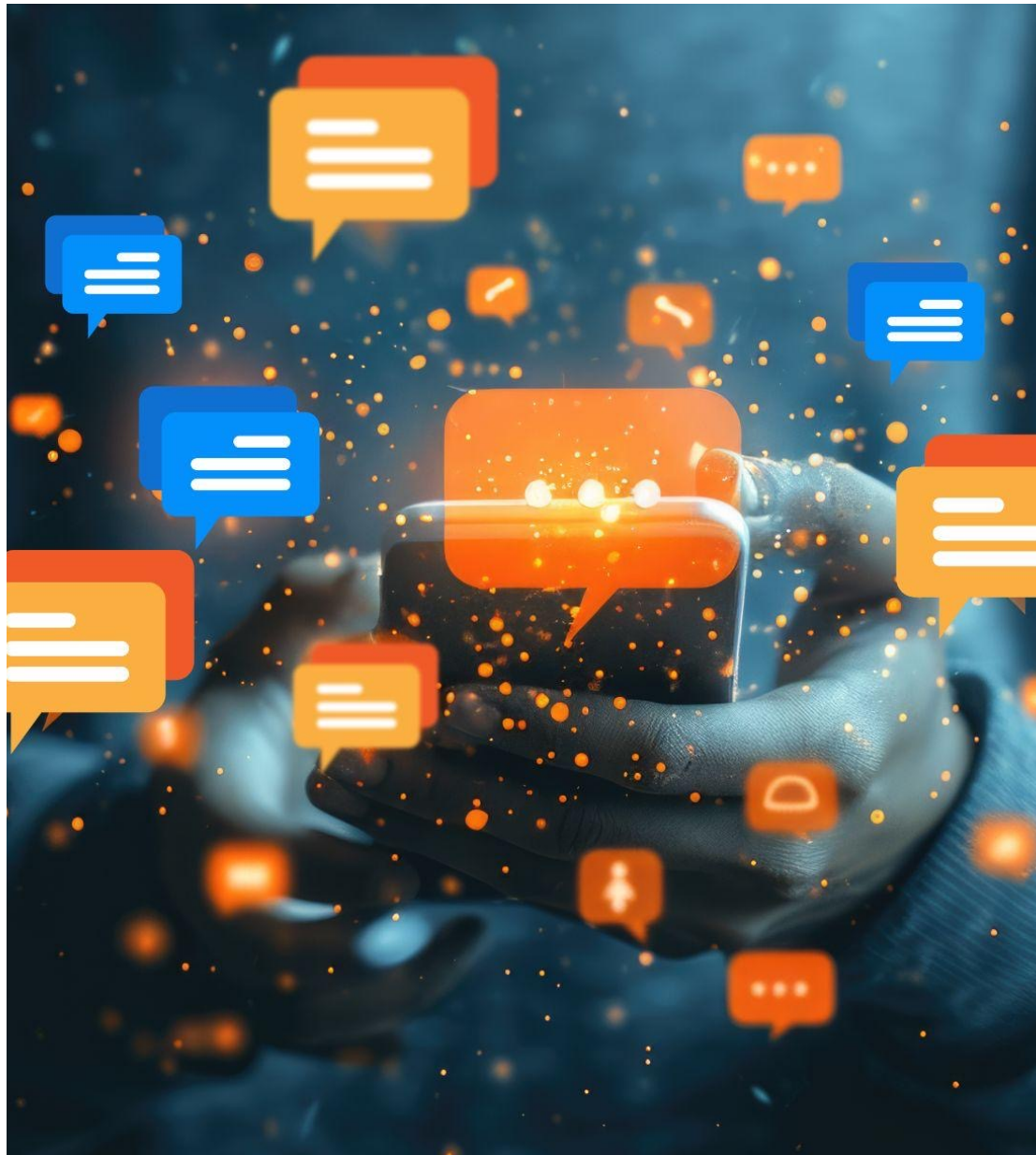
Es war am Ende dieses aufreibenden Tages, als Professor Mark König zusammenbrach. Am Morgen hatte ein Mann als Reaktion auf sein Interview mit einer Nachrichtenseite Hasstiraden auf den Anrufbeantworter des Sozialwissenschaftlers gesprochen: dass es Konsequenzen für ihn geben werde und dass sie – vermutlich waren er und seine Kollegen

Our Experiences

- Science hostility, attacks and harrassment can lead to withdrawal from science communication
- Science hostility also serves as a political tool
- The Scicomm-Support filled a gap
- It can affect almost all scientific disciplines and is not a new phenomenon
- Through orchestration and online discourse, radicals appear louder and in the majority
- BUT: there is plenty of science communication free of hostility, and there is support!

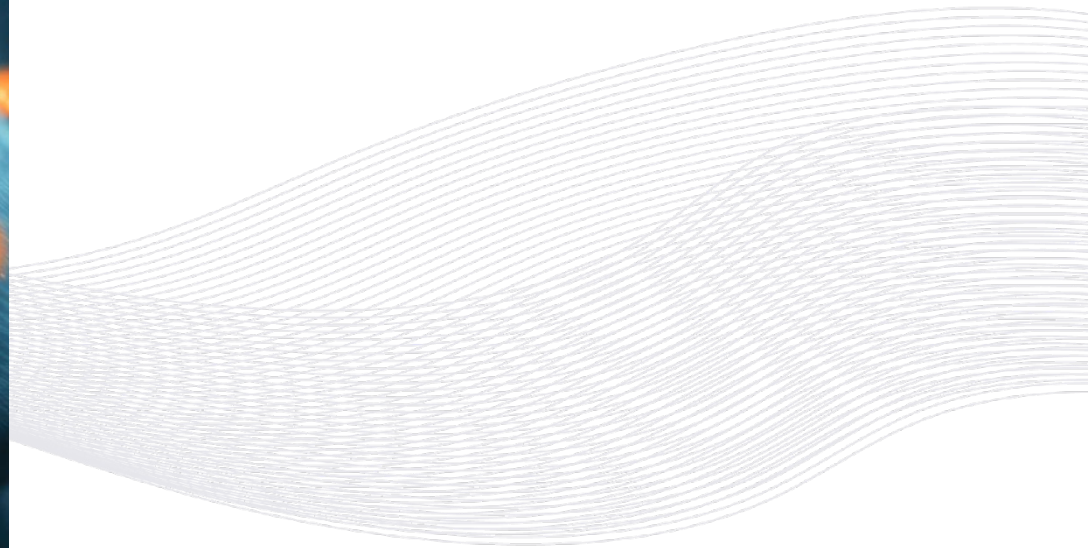
*Do you have any
questions, experiences,
or comments?*





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What can we do?



What can we do?

1. Recognizing and understanding the situation
2. Options for action
3. Communication factors
4. Psychological and legal factors

Recognizing & Understanding the Situation

- What is the specific situation?
- Are there signs of a dynamic situation?
- What exactly happened?
- Who needs to be contacted or informed?
 - Authorities? Police?
 - The institution—management level? The communications department?
 - Your own immediate circle?
 - **Scicomm-Support for assistance**

Recognizing & Understanding the Situation

What is the context of the situation?

- Are there posts on social media platforms?
- Are there threatening phone calls, emails, or letters?
- Do these contain sensitive or private information?
- Are there specific threats against the institution, colleagues, buildings, or events?
- Are there any political tensions or activities within the institution?

Options for Action

What information is publicly available?

- Address, workplace, other locations, etc.
- How are your (private) social media accounts protected?
- What information appears in a Google or AI search?
- Photos? Email addresses? Phone numbers?
- Block on access to information in the resident registry

Options for Action

Counter-strategies: Organizing support and assistance

- (Public) Statements
- Counter Statement
- Practical support for affected individuals and teams
- Self-care and mental health for the entire team

Involve the communications department (and the university's management)

Options for Action

Strategies for the Online Space:

- Counter-narrative
- Objective Confrontation
- Ignoring (“Don’t feed the troll”)
- Legal action—legally compliant screenshots
- (Online) Privacy Check: What data is publicly visible?

Mental Health & Legal Factors

Take care of yourself (and your colleagues)!

- Try to gain some perspective on the situation
- Talk or write about the situation
- Zoom out (this isn't directed at you personally, but rather serves as a projection)

Seek legal advice!

- Screenshots and written accounts can support a complaint
- Be aware of deadlines (criminal charge and request to prosecute)
- **Via the Scicomm-Support**

Hand-drawn science collage on graph paper featuring:

- Mathematics:**
 - Trigonometry: $\sin^{-1} \frac{y}{r}$, $\cos^{-1} \frac{x}{r}$, $\tan^{-1} \frac{y}{x}$
 - Calculus: $\frac{d}{dx} \ln(x) = \frac{1}{x}$, $\frac{d}{dx} \ln(x^2) = \frac{2}{x}$
 - Algebra: $x^2 + y^2 = r^2$, $\frac{1}{K} = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}$
 - Geometry: Parallelogram area bh , $K = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}$
- Physics:**
 - Electricity: $I_1 V_1 = I_2 V_2$, $P_m = IV$, $Eff = \frac{P_2}{P_1} \times 100\%$
 - Magnetism: $\vec{F} = q\vec{v} \times \vec{B}$, $\vec{F} = \vec{q} \times \vec{B}$
 - Optics: $\epsilon_0 = 8.8542 \times 10^{-12} C^2/Nm$
- Chemistry:**
 - Metabolism: $2C_2H_5OH + 2ATP + 4H^+ \rightarrow 2NADH + H^+$, $2C_2H_5OH + 2CO_2$
 - Acid-Base: $CO_2 + H_2O \rightarrow H_2CO_3$
 - Redox: $2H^+ + 2e^- + O_2 \rightarrow H_2O$
- Biology:**
 - Cell Diagram: Labeled with A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z
 - Microscopy: Drawing of a person using a microscope
 - Genetics: DNA double helix, Punnett square
- Other:**
 - Radioactivity: $PC13$, $ZnSO_4$, $NaCl$, H_2O
 - Chemical Elements: CaF_2 , $CaSO_4$, $BaCl_2$, AsF_5 , NH_3 , GeH_4 , CH_4 , NH_4Cl , SO_2 , $CuSO_4$, $NaNO_3$, $MgSO_4$, Na_2SO_4 , Na_2CO_3 , Na_2O , CaO , $Mg(OH)_2$, Zn , PCl_3 , PCl_5 , PCl_3 , PCl_5 , PCl_3 , PCl_5

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Q&A

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hallo@scicomm-support.de

(for any inquiries)

www.scicomm-support.de

(For further information and workshop inquiries
via our online form)

Personal, telephone case consultation:
in cases of attacks and unobjective conflicts in
science communication – every day (incl.
weekends and holidays), 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

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SCIENCE