

# Op-eds and Earned Media

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June 26 , 2025 @ 2:00 P.M. ET



# By the end of this session, you'll be able to:

Develop a media relations strategy for proactive and reactive coverage

Find the right outlet for your story and create a compelling pitch

Apply persuasive writing principles





*What is media relations?*



# Why Earned Media Matters

01

Builds awareness  
+ credibility

02

Creates  
understanding of an  
issue or position

03

Develops a public  
image

04

Publicize a  
product, service,  
program or  
personal brand





# Media Relations Strategy

<b>Strategic Intent</b>	<b>Objective</b> What is the overarching purpose?		
	<b>Measurements</b> What does success look like?		
<b>Core Elements</b>	<b>Audience</b> Who are you trying to reach?	<b>Messaging</b> What do you want them to know, think or do?	<b>Tactics</b> How Will you Reach them?
	<b>Timing</b> When will each tactic launch?	<b>Media</b> Who will tell your story?	<b>Spokespeople</b> Who speaks for the organization?
<b>Execution</b>			

# Proactive vs Reactive

**Proactive pitching** is taking initiative

**Reactive pitching** is responding to news stories that are already happening

Examples of proactive outreach include:

- Sharing a company announcement
- Positioning executives or subject matter experts for interviews or thought leadership pieces.
- Offering exclusive content or data insights to a targeted journalist for a potential feature.

Examples of reactive pitching include:

- News cycle pitching
- Incoming requests
- Crisis communication



# Finding the Right Media Outlets

## National



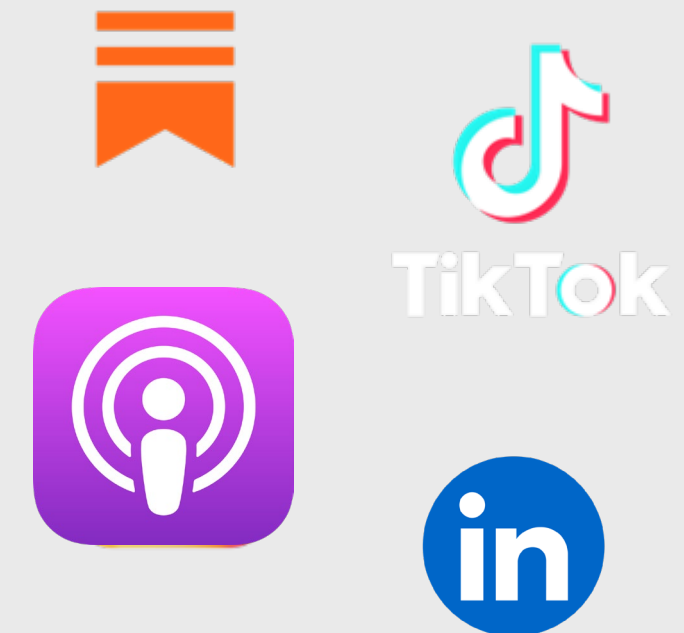
## Local



## Specialty



## Emerging



# Understanding reporters

Motives are simple:  
produce a good story,  
meet their deadlines, get  
editor approval, and go  
home

Choose this profession to  
serve a free and  
democratic society and  
expose wrongdoings

Driven by news,  
controversy, and useful  
information

Compete with other  
outlets and their  
colleagues







Often multi -task: write,  
blog, post on social,  
produce video, create  
slide shows, build their  
brand

Spend a lot of time  
gathering/processing  
info. Want go -to source  
that gives them good info  
quickly

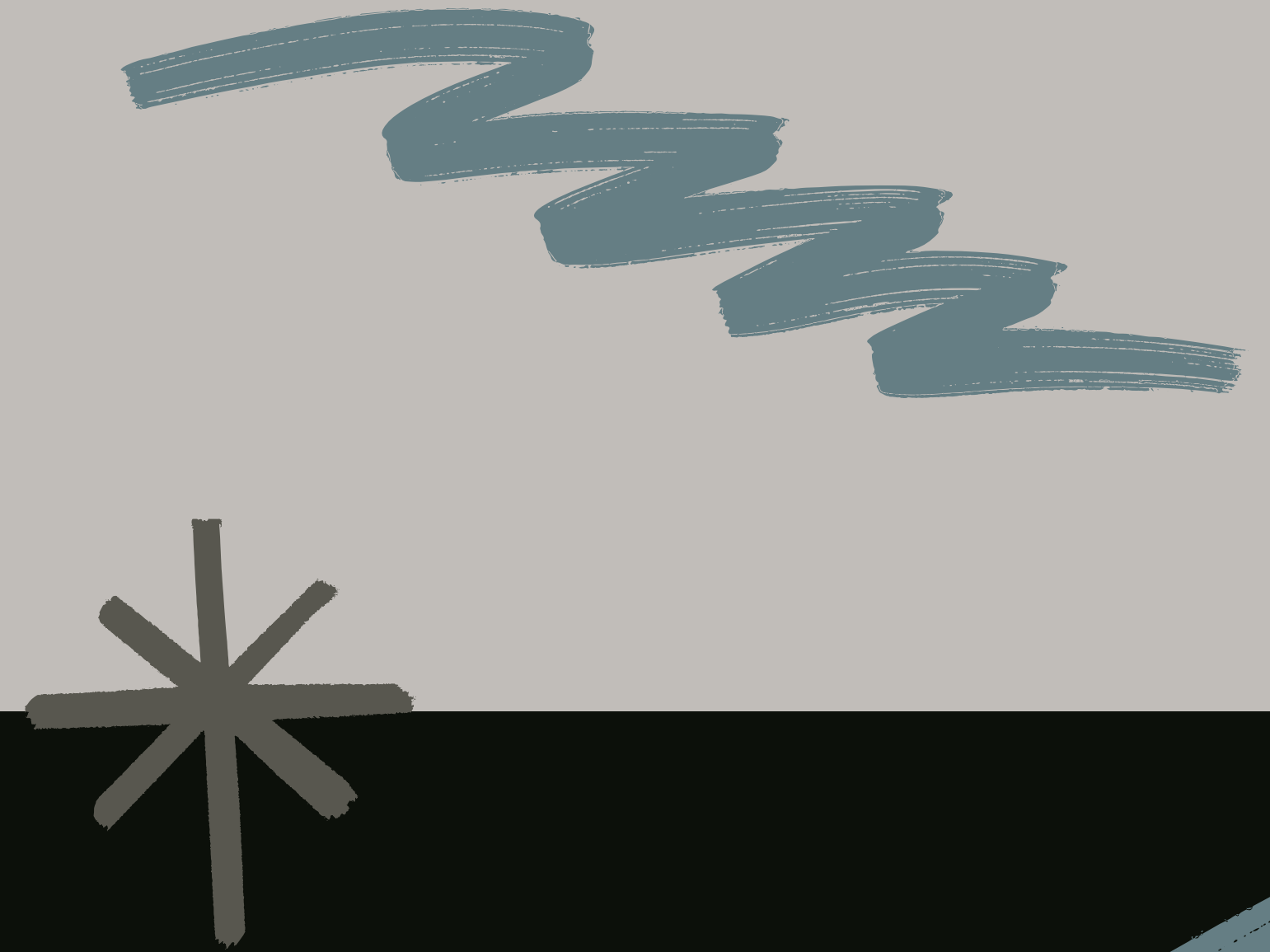
Need PR people – even if  
they deny it



# Stories that are newsworthy have:

 Prominence	 Timeliness
 Impact	 Unusual
 Proximity	 Conflict

# Anatomy of a Strong Pitch



## Effective strategies for successful outreach

- Craft clear and concise messages
- Respond promptly to inquiries
- Monitor media coverage regularly







# What reporters want for a story

News pegs and major announcements

Differentiators. First? Biggest? Best?

Why should readers care?

Three Cs: Compelling characters, context/relevance, conflict

Exclusive content

Behind the scenes access

Balance and truth

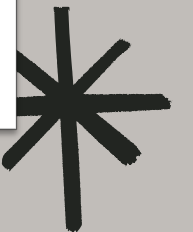
Subject matter experts and good quotes

Innovation

Trends

Aha moment

Stories that get them on the front page or evening news



# Building a Strategy from Scratch

Case Study #1





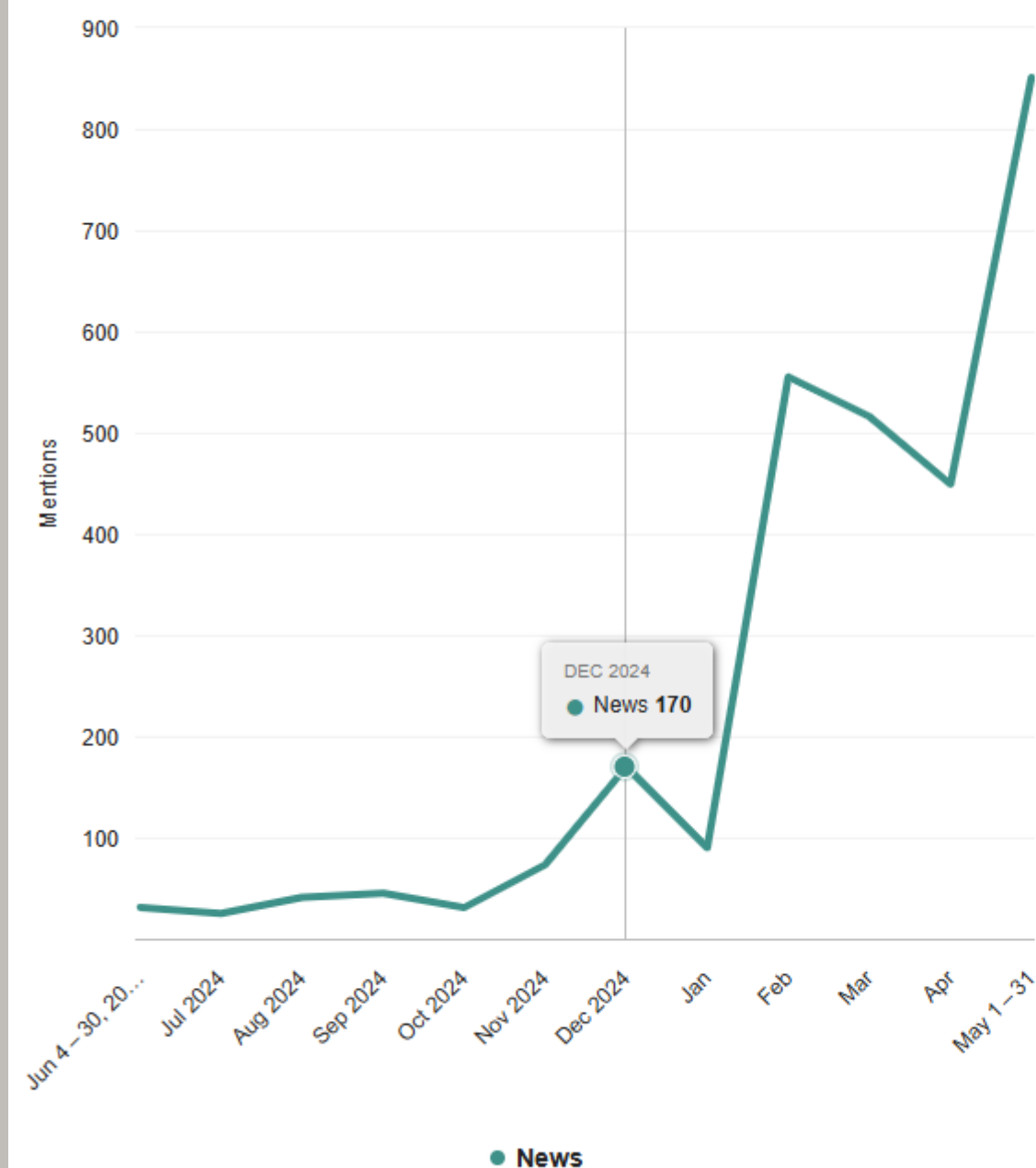
# Media & Public Affairs Strategy

Strategy	Tactics
Prioritize and establish thought leadership as a regular effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expand bench of experts</li><li>• Host a media training</li><li>• Bring the SME voice to life in specific settings</li></ul>
Implement Integrated Communications Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Align public affairs and media in cross -departmental campaigns</li><li>• Leverage common key activation moments for integrated campaigns</li><li>• Host quarterly meetings with media -related constituencies</li></ul>
Demonstrate AAAS programmatic value through a proactive news engine to shape public debates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evolve how we leverage the Media Landscape Newsletter</li><li>• Align strategy with the AAAS.org newsroom's new vision</li><li>• Build relationship with key press, including emerging outlets, and strengthen core list</li><li>• Leverage social media presence to help inspire story ideas and reinforce AAAS' reputation, leadership and unique POVs in the digital space</li></ul>
Demonstrate influence and embrace AAAS as a convener	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leverage Annual Meeting Newsroom</li><li>• Host non -transactional deskside media briefings</li><li>• Partner with organizations on newsworthy moments</li></ul>
Contain and diffuse reputational -related issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Refine issues preparedness playbook</li></ul>

# Results & Ongoing Evaluation

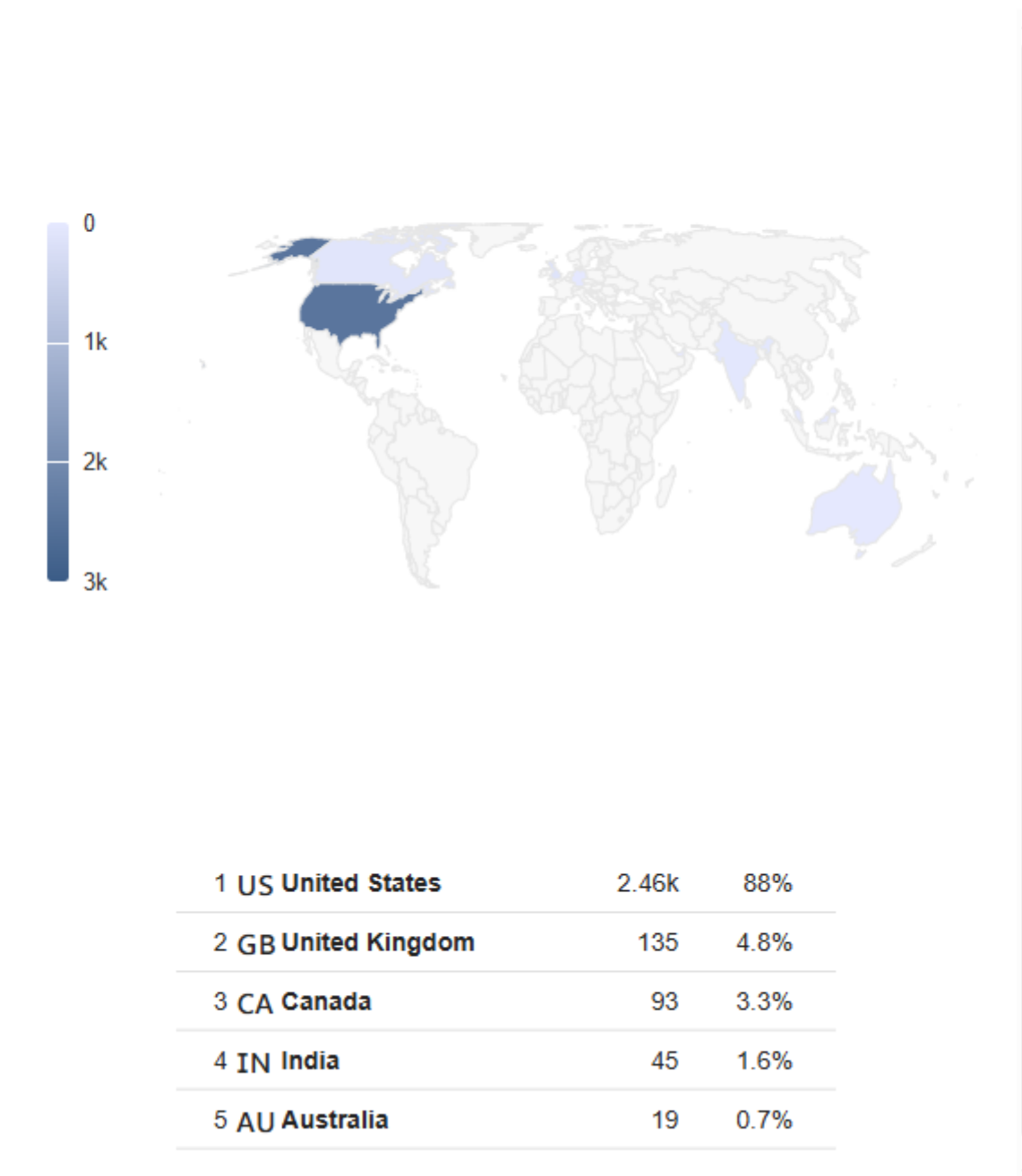
## Mentions Trend by Source Type

Jun 4, 2024 - May 31



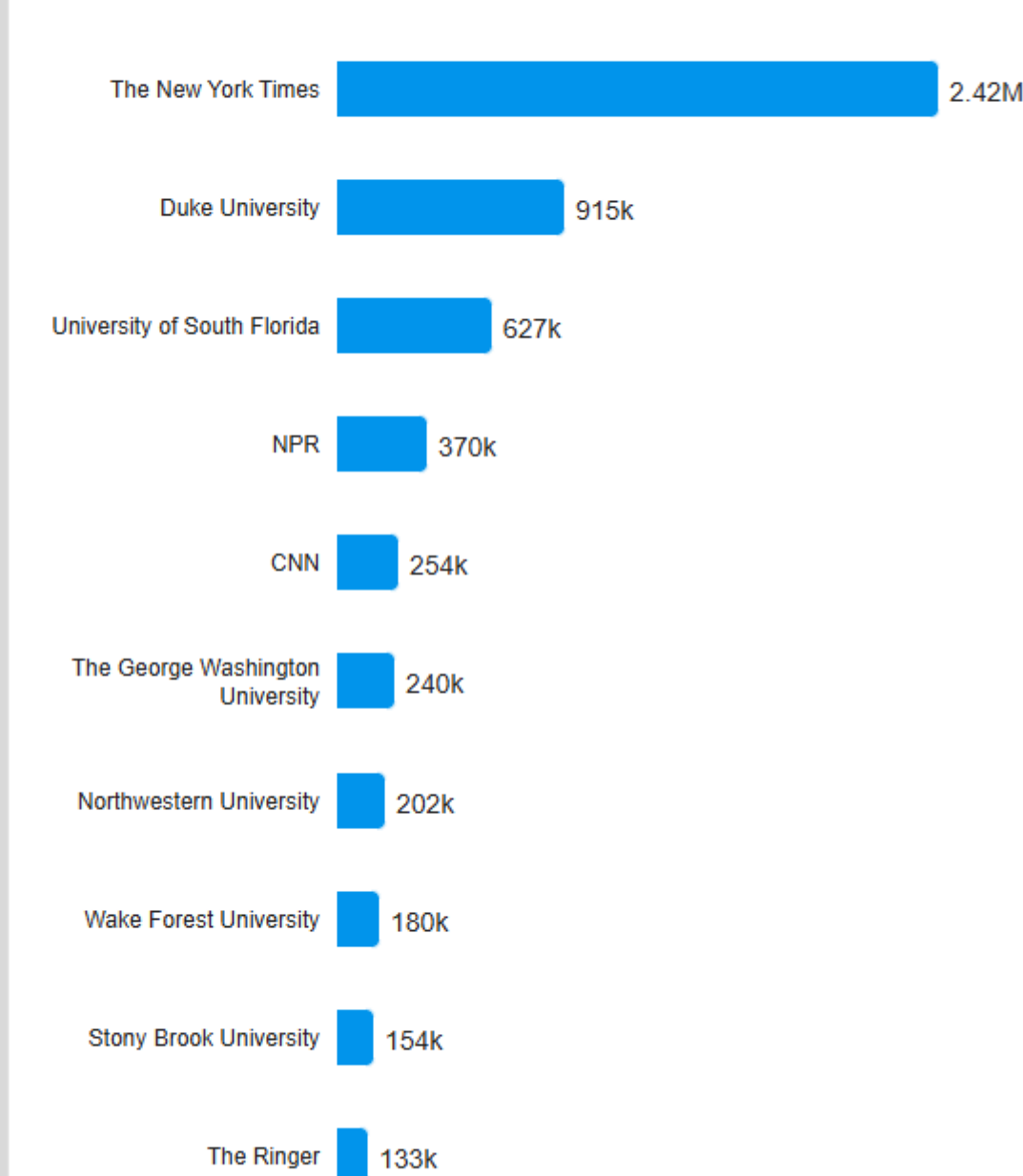
## Top Locations

Jun 4, 2024 - May 31



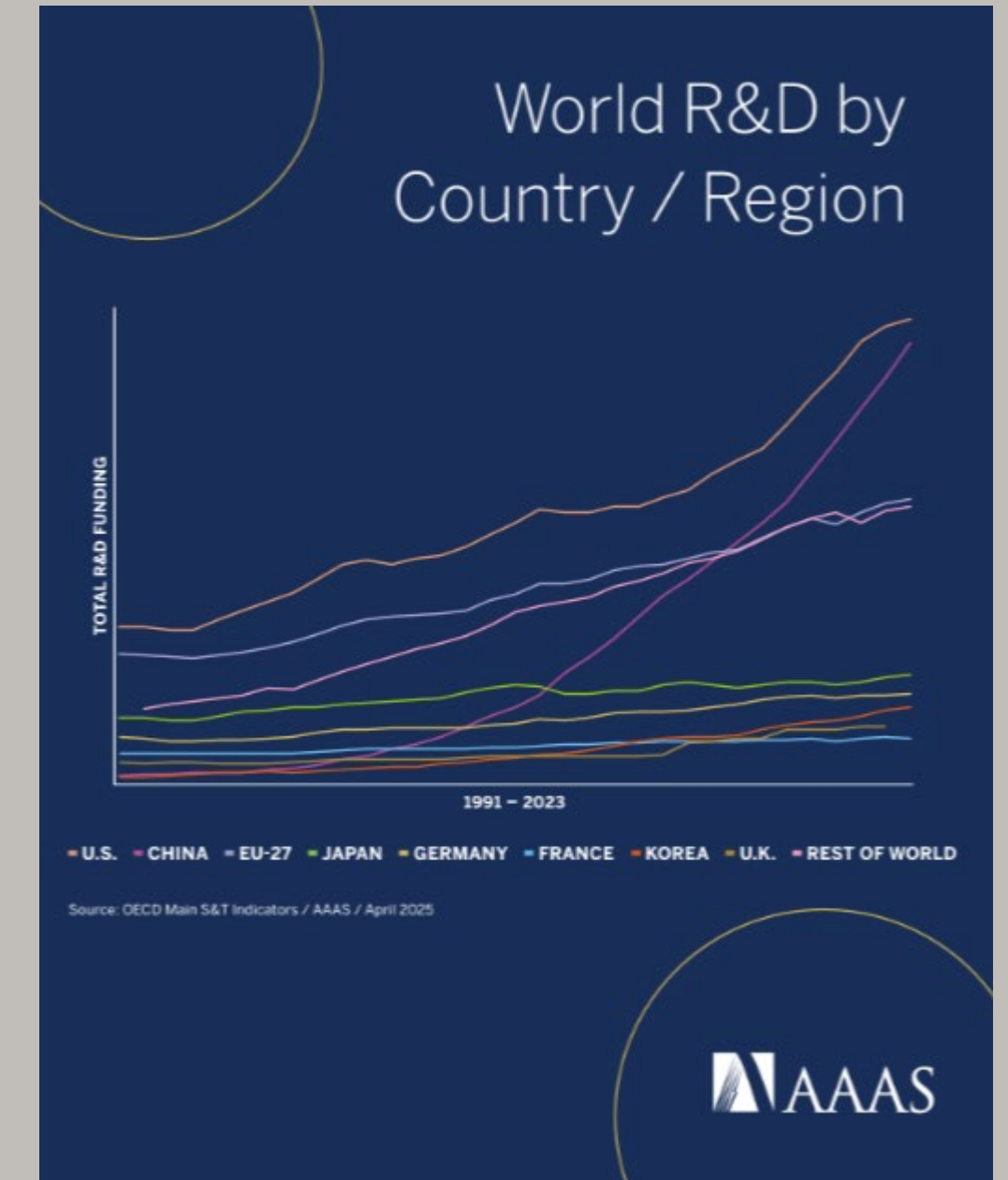
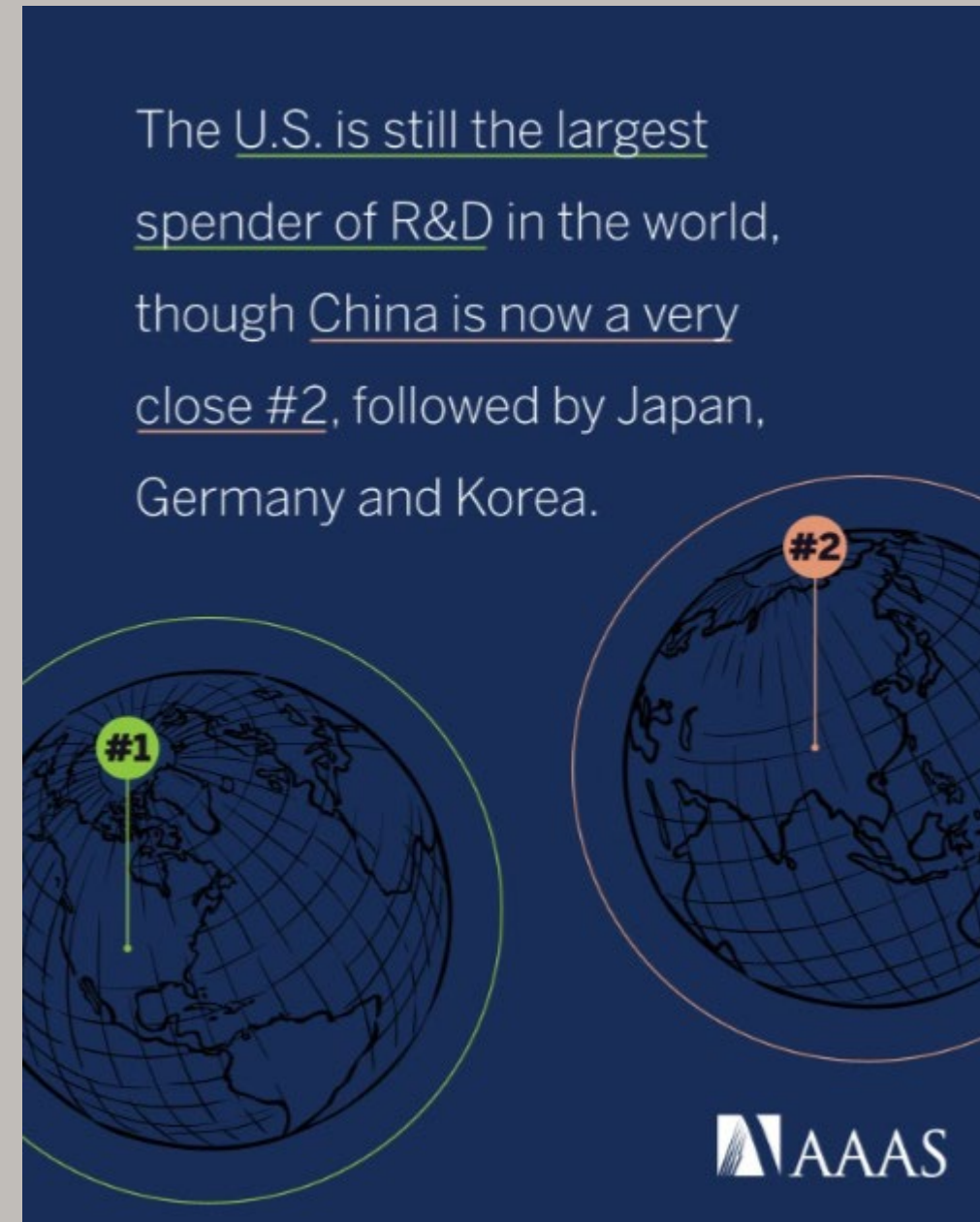
## Top Publications by Estimated Views

Jan 1 - Jun 4



# Research & Development Funding

## Case Study #2



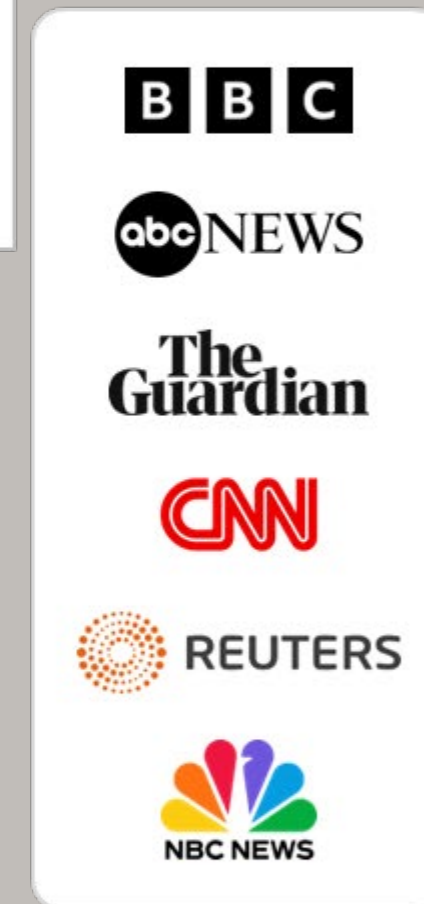
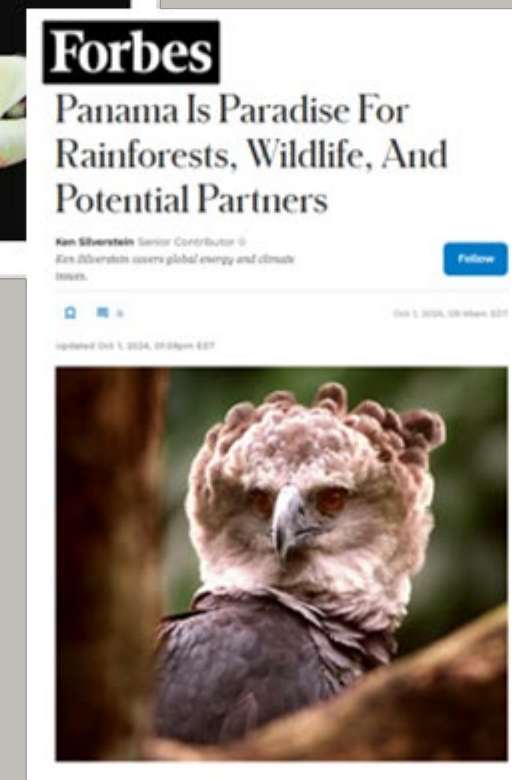
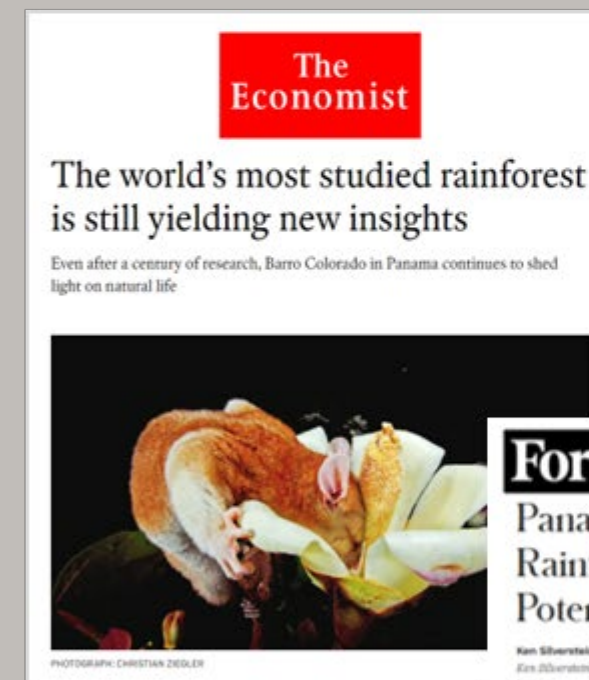


# Six Months of Support

## Case Study #3

## Objective

Create broader, global awareness for Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute with the end goal of educating policymakers and attracting donors.






# From Pitch to Thought Leadership

Op-eds still matter, but they're not the only way to build  
thought leadership



# Anatomy of a strong op -ed

 Compelling Lead	 Clear Purpose
 Strong Point of View	 Evidence + Examples
 Strong Conclusion	 Editorial Fit
 Avoids Self -promotion	 Author Credibility



## [TRIPLE PUNDIT]



### Can a Global Forest Network Equip Carbon Markets to Work for Our Planet?

Unless satellites are calibrated by the same measurements in forests all over the world, carbon markets can't measure carbon with the accuracy the world needs. A coalition of scientists is working on a solution.

SEP 17, 2024 By Joshua Tewksbury



(Image: [Ken Shono](#)/Unsplash)

One of the 19th century's great scientific minds, William Thomson, better known as Lord Kelvin, famously said, "If you cannot measure it, you cannot improve it." More than a century later, his maxim is being ignored, and as a result, the global community is failing to take all the steps necessary in the battle to reduce carbon emissions and prevent runaway global warming.

Most of the world's governments and major companies are lining up to make carbon neutrality pledges and looking for ways to invest in carbon sequestration in order to remove this climate-warming gas from our atmosphere. Businesses are joining the effort, leaning into voluntary carbon markets and investing in projects that trap carbon as a way of offsetting the emissions they create elsewhere. And celebrities purchase carbon credits in an attempt to offset their carbon footprint as private jets whisk them from airport to airport.

## Inside Philanthropy

### Why Philanthropy Should Recommit to America's National Parks

Will Shafroth, Guest Contributor | July 30, 2024



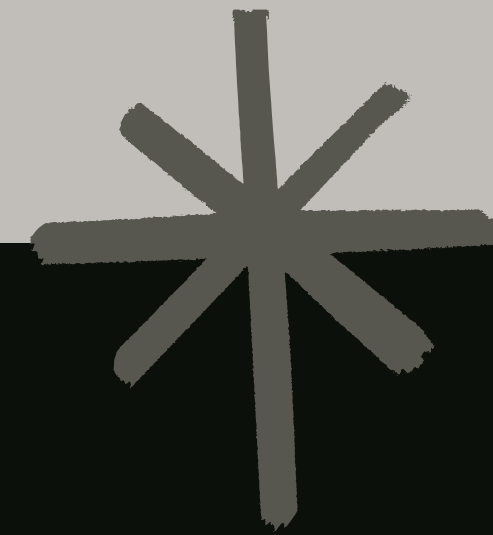
ANTON\_IVANOV/SHUTTERSTOCK

In recent years, and particularly in the last few weeks, we have witnessed tangible impacts of the polarizing and divisive discourse heard all too frequently. And in an era when people often emphasize what divides us, we must not forget the power of what we share — our American story.

To truly honor all that America is, we must recognize the natural beauty and inspiring stories that shape our American identity. We owe it to ourselves to explore and embrace what we hold in common, rather than what drives us apart. There is no better place to do that than in America's national parks.

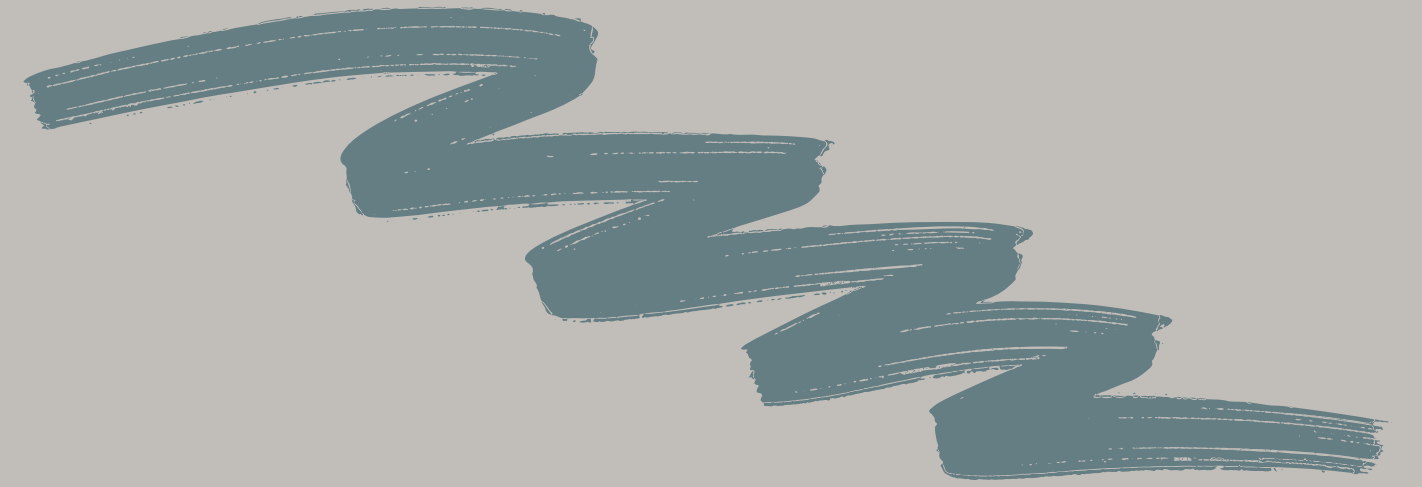


# But what if your op-ed doesn't get placed?



Consider other places where it can live:

- LinkedIn
- Company Blog
- Newsletters
- SubStack



# Pulling it all together

Both a strong pitch and op-ed can be a part of your media relations strategy

Never lose sight of your objective and audience



*Any questions?*

