



REVIEW

Science communication, an Italian job: reflections from the *Convegno Nazionale di Comunicazione della Scienza 2025*

Reviewed Conference

Convegno Nazionale di Comunicazione della Scienza – CNCS 2025
SISSA – Scuola Internazionale Superiore di Studi Avanzati
Trieste, Italy, 2–5 December 2025

Reviewed by

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Abstract

The 2025 edition of the *Convegno Nazionale di Comunicazione della Scienza (National Meeting on Science Communication)* gathered Italy's growing science-communication community in a four-day event characterised by vibrant discussions, experimental formats, and an atmosphere of collective exploration. Hosted at SISSA (International School of Advanced Studies) and across Trieste's Porto Vecchio district, the programme combined plenaries, dialogues, hands-on laboratories, and mosaic sessions, covering themes ranging from risk communication and environmental justice to museum mediation, playful science formats, and digital strategies. The conference showcased some of the most advanced research and applied techniques currently shaping the field and was marked by strong participant engagement, culminating in an appreciated social visit to the "Immaginario Scientifico" Science Museum in Magazzino 26 in the old port of Trieste. Overall, CNCS 2025 demonstrated a dynamic, evolving landscape in which science communication in Italy continues to expand, diversify, and renew itself.

Keywords

Public understanding of science and technology; Public perception of science and technology; Bridging research, practice and teaching

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1 - A vibrant and expanding community

The *Convegno Nazionale di Comunicazione della Scienza* (CNCS) has long been a reference point for science-communication professionals, researchers, educators, and institutions across Italy. The 2025 edition confirmed this role, bringing together an energetic, expanding community with a notably younger generation of Italian science communication scholars who are approaching and entering the scicomm profession. The active participation of such a lively community was perceptible from the opening plenary on *Scienza, comunicazione e partecipazione* (Science, communication and participation, 2 December) through the concluding reflections on 5 December.

The atmosphere was notably vibrant: sessions were consistently well attended, audience questions exceeded available time slots, and informal exchanges animated breaks and networking events. The city of Trieste, with its scientific heritage and welcoming public spaces, contributed to the sense of cohesion. Participants repeatedly expressed appreciation for the setting, particularly the evening activities at Magazzino 26 Science Museum, which served both as a cultural backdrop and as a reminder of Trieste's longstanding commitment to science.

2 - Trends, tensions, and playful turn in science communication

2.1 ▪ *Exploring contemporary challenges*

Several plenaries addressed structural challenges facing science communication. Dialogues on risk communication in the context of flooding and climate change, on activism vs. neutrality, and on ideological pressures in increasingly polarised environments, highlighted the need for nuanced, context-sensitive approaches.

Similarly, sessions on the deficit model's limitations, authoritarian ideologies, science-policy tensions and the decolonisation of science communication echoed themes emerging in international debates.

Questions such as *what should be the focus of risk communication? How to create an understanding of uncertainty in science? Is not taking positions already taking position? How to recognise the others and their knowledge even if it is not scientific?* were raised and discussed, sometimes in a provocative but yet open way.

2.2 ▪ *Playful, narrative and immersive formats*

A distinctive feature of CNCS 2025 was its strong focus on playful, experiential, and narrative-driven tools. Different game formats were considered, e.g. videogames, boardgames, escape rooms and books, exploring their potential for science communication. The importance to mix the expertise of scientists and game experts to create products that "do not look as teaching" was raised as a common and key element.

Workshops such as *Giocare con la scienza tra ecosistemi e pandemie*, *Navigare la comunicazione scientifica attraverso un gioco di ruolo*, and *La scienza come esplorazione: ispirarsi al metodo Keri Smith* illustrated the conference's shift toward experimentation with

creative pedagogies. This “playful turn” resonated well with participants, who praised the hands-on structure and the opportunities to test emerging techniques.

Museums were central to this conversation: the session *Il museo come medium privilegiato* and the inauguration of the exhibition *Un Nuovo Domani* demonstrated how cultural institutions act not only as disseminators but also as laboratories for participatory, affective, and multimodal engagement.

2.3 ■ *Cross-media, digital, and applied methodologies*

Several sessions offered concrete insights into applied science-communication techniques:

- Scientific crossmediality highlighted how formats intersect and generate new publics.
- Workshops on Telegram channels, metaphor cultivation, digital universities, and impact assessment illustrated practical and transferable methods.
- Discussions on future generations, health and environment, and justice and citizenship echoed broader societal transformations currently affecting science communication.

Across sessions, presenters showcased the latest research and experimental practices, evidencing methodological maturity and strong integration of communication theory with applied contexts.

3 - Participation, engagement, and the Trieste experience

Participants’ engagement was one of the conference’s most notable qualities. Attendance remained high throughout, and interactive sessions, from speed-date networking to small-group laboratories, were fully booked, confirming the need for participatory formats within the community.

The social events contributed significantly to the conference atmosphere. The visit to the “Immaginario Scientifico” Science Museum at Magazzino 26 was particularly appreciated, offering an immersive closure to the day’s discussions and showcasing Trieste’s commitment to innovative science mediation. The public book presentation of Massimiano Bucchi’s “*Idee che cambiano il Mondo – Ideas that change the World*” and the optional excursion to the beautiful cave Grotta Gigante reinforced the impression of a conference embedded in the territory and its scientific culture.

4 - Looking ahead: consolidation, innovation, and openness

CNCS 2025 underscored two converging dynamics. First, the field of science communication in Italy is consolidating, connecting academic research, institutional practices, cultural mediation, and public engagement. Second, the field is diversifying, expanding into playful methodologies, cross-media experimentation, community-centred approaches, and reflections on social justice and environmental futures. If any suggestion can be made for an even more engaging edition in 2027, that would be to recommend securing more time for Q&A in plenaries and for pitch sessions, a new format that certainly deserves more attention. Likewise, exhibition of visual and sound science communication assets and their art declinations could benefit from larger spaces.

About the authors

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