

Podcasting for R2O: Sharing CIROH Science Beyond the Code

Connecting People, Research and Impact

Brock Parker and Kim Byers

Alabama Water Institute Communications



Meet the AWI Comms Team



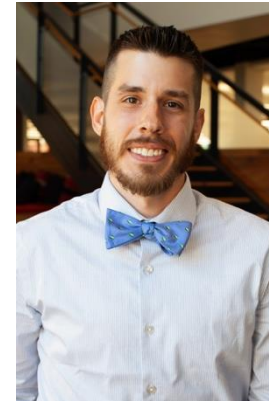
Brock Parker
Director of Research
Institute Communications



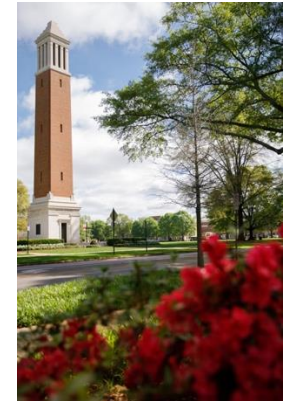
Kim Byers
AWI Communications Specialist
III



Irasema Quezada
Graphic Designer II



Ryan Ruiz
CIROH Communications Specialist II



Jasmine Porter
Web Strategist II



Riley Baird
CIROH Communications Specialist I



CURRENTLY HIRING
GWSC Communications Specialist I



Imtiaz Kamrul
Multimedia Intern



Roseline Soto Velazquez
Graphic Design Intern



Angelica Fiscella
Communications Intern

The Story

Brock Parker

Sharing CIROH Science Beyond the Code

Translating research into language people can understand, trust and use.



Why This Matters to R20

R20 does not end when the research works.

It continues when people can understand it, apply it and trust it.



The Common Problem

Researchers often begin with:

- The method.
- The model.
- The data.
- The technical improvement.

Most public audiences need to hear first:

What problem does this help solve?



Start With the Audience

Before explaining the research, ask:

- Who needs to understand this?
- What do they already know?
- What do they need to take away?



Find the ‘So What?’

The “so what?” is the bridge between research and relevance.

Ask:

- What does this make better?
- Who benefits?
- What changes if this succeeds?

CIROH
Cooperative Institute for Research
to Operations in Hydrology

**SCIENCE
MEETING
2025**

**Advance the predictive
capabilities of the National
Water Model**

Senior personnel:
Martyn Clark (University of Calgary)
Ray Spiteri (University of Saskatchewan)

With contributions from many others

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA | Alabama Water

NOAA

A Simple Translation Formula

Use this structure:

- What it is.
- What it does.
- Why it matters.



Example Translation

Technical:

“Improving coupled hydrologic and coastal modeling to support enhanced flood forecast guidance.”

Everyday language:

“We are working to improve flood forecasts in places where rivers and coastal waters meet, where water can move in complicated ways and create greater risk for communities.”



Plain Language Is Not ‘Dumbing It Down’

Plain language means:

- Clearer words.
- Stronger context.
- Fewer barriers.
- Better understanding.

*It does **not** mean less accuracy.*



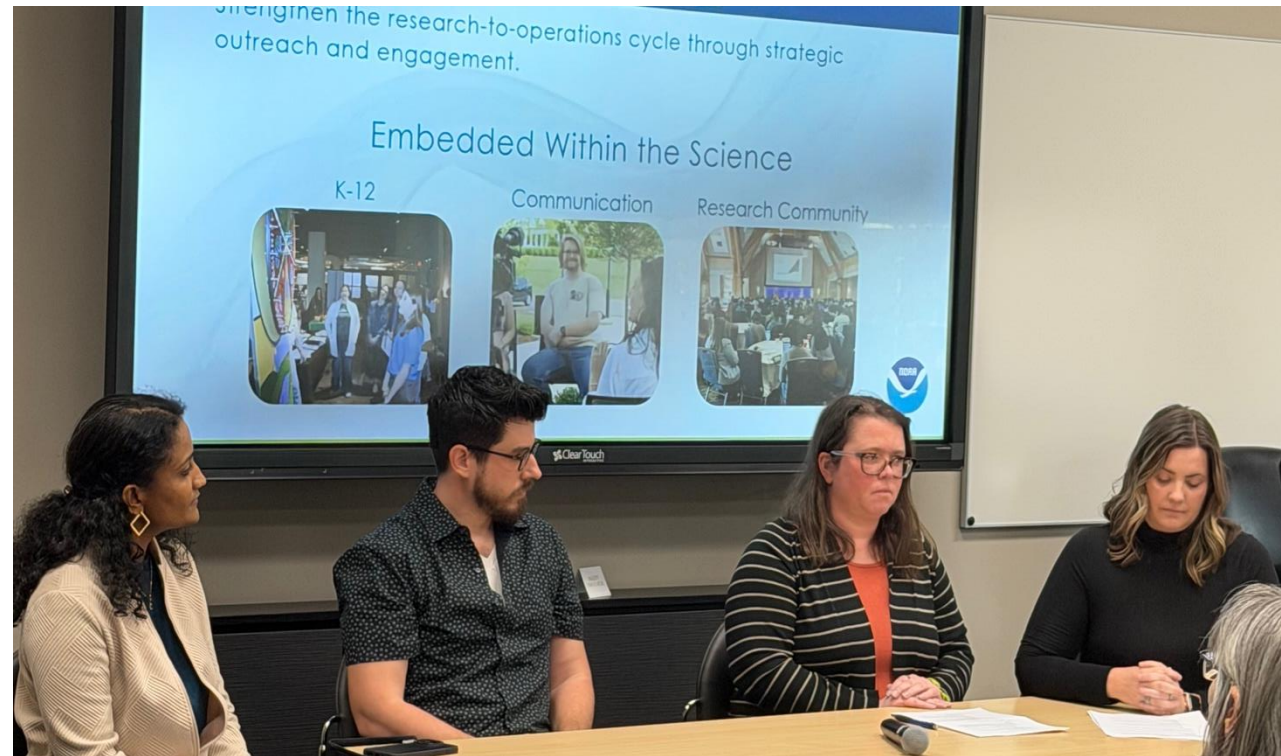
What to Cut, What to Keep

Cut first:

- Acronyms without explanation.
- Long method descriptions.
- Internal project language.
- Unnecessary qualifiers.

Keep:

- The problem.
- The people affected.
- The real-world use.
- The scientific value.



Turning Research Into a Story

A strong research story usually has:

- A problem.
- A person or community.
- A process.
- A potential impact.

Water-R2O Program Prepares Next Generation of Water Scientists with Real-World Focus



The University of Alabama's innovative Water Research-to-Operations program is preparing to welcome its third cohort of graduate students this August, continuing its mission to transform water prediction science into practical applications. This National Science Foundation-funded initiative, implemented by the Alabama Water Institute and Cooperative Institute for Research to Operations in Hydrology, combines intensive training in hydrology, artificial intelligence and decision science to address growing water challenges. Students from diverse academic backgrounds collaborate on capstone projects while engaging with water management professionals through study tours, seminars and international experiences.

[Read more](#)

[Program](#)

Why Podcasting Helps

Podcasting gives research a human voice.

It can help audiences hear:

- Why the work matters.
- How researchers think.
- What challenges they are solving.
- Where the science may go next.



Interview Questions That Translate

Helpful questions include:

- What problem are you trying to solve?
- Who could benefit from this work?
- What would be different if this succeeds?
- How would you explain this to someone outside your field?



A Three-Sentence Exercise

Try explaining your research in three sentences:

1. The problem.
2. The work.
3. The impact.



Example Three-Sentence Version

Flooding can be difficult to predict, especially when water moves through complex natural and built environments.

CIROH researchers are developing tools, models and workflows that improve how water information is gathered, processed and used.

The goal is to help forecasters, decision makers and communities make better decisions before, during and after water-related events.

The Communications Partnership

Researchers bring the expertise.

Communicators help shape the entry point.

The best results happen when both work together.



The Strategy

Finding your show. Writing the pitch. Showing up ready.

Kim Byers

Why Podcasts?

Established audience

Podcast hosts need content — every week

Credible, interesting, well-spoken guests are hard to find

A water scientist with a compelling story is not a burden to a host

You are not asking for a favor. You are offering one

Finding the Right Podcast

Who needs to hear your work?

- Emergency managers
- Infrastructure engineers
- Water policy professionals
- Educators and communicators

Start small on purpose

- Smaller shows = more targeted audiences
- Lower stakes, a chance to find your footing
- Niche beats broad when your topic is specialized
- Build confidence, then go bigger

Vet the show. Build the list.

Three quick checks before you pitch:

- Still active?
- Established?
- Right fit?

Build your target list:

- Identify three shows. Listen to at least one full episode each
- Note the host's name, interview style and typical guest type
- You would not send the same proposal to every funding opportunity, podcasts are no different

One-Pager / 30-Second Story


- Sales professionals call it the elevator pitch. The golden rule is 30 seconds.
- Translation problem? Correct it first.
- Answers three questions:
 1. What is the problem?
 2. What are you doing to address it?
 3. How does it help the listener?
- Raw material for every pitch.

COOPERATIVE INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH TO OPERATIONS IN HYDROLOGY

NextGen In A Box
From Weeks to 30 Minutes




CIROH

Hydrologic models turn data into forecasts, which helps predict floods, manage water, and protect communities. Making these tools faster and easier to use means better decisions that can be made sooner.




BEFORE NGIAB	AFTER NGIAB
Complex Setup	Pre-configured System
Weeks to Configure	Laptop to Cloud
Limited to Specialists	Automated Workflows
Slow Progress	Ready in 30 Minutes

IMPACT

-  **30 Minutes**
Model Setup
-  **Expanded Access**
More Users
-  **Research to Operations**
NOAA Alignment

IN ACTION: PROVO RIVER BASIN



A complex water system requiring extensive modeling. NGIAB enabled rapid deployment and visualization

- Setup completed in 30 minutes
- Immediate visualization of results
- Enhanced collaboration between teams
- Significant research time saved

CIROH | COOPERATIVE INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH TO OPERATIONS IN HYDROLOGY | UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

The Hosts Only Question

“Why would my audience care about this?”

Anatomy of the Pitch

- The HOOK
 - Lead with the problem
- The Credential
 - Anchor to the work, not the title
- The Value Offer
 - Knowledge, Lives saved
- The Ask
 - Propose a conversation, keep pressure low, offer one-pager

Being a Great Guest

- The pitch gets you in. The performance keeps you there
- Know your three points
- Practice each in two sentences or less
- No matter where it goes, find your way back
- Best guests stay on message

Translate. Deliver.

- Build the bridge before you cross it
- Acronyms are a great example



Show Up Ready

- Test your audio before recording day
- Find a quiet room, phone off
- Prep from host questions
- After the episode drops: post, tag, share

Not Just For Podcasts

- Same pitch strategy works in all the rooms
 - Conference committee
 - Municipal water board
 - Legislative staffer
 - Journalist

- Get on the "Expert List"

Just Start

- Create the one-pager
- Research podcasts
- Listen to podcasts
- Take action

Wrapping Up How to Pitch

The public does not need less science.

It needs a clearer way into the science.



Start Your Own Podcast

Brock Parker

Starting Your Own Podcast

How do I share research on my own?

- Make an outline of points.
- One topic per episode?
- One topic over several episodes?



Starting Your Own Podcast

You need equipment!

- Do you already have it?
- You have the bare minimum with your phone!



Starting Your Own Podcast



Starting Your Own Podcast



Starting Your Own Podcast



Starting Your Own Podcast

- Log (write out) your interview.
- Note soundbite timecodes.
- Find a quiet place to record.
- Test your equipment.
- Avoid background noise.
- Mistakes are easy to fix!

Starting Your Own Podcast

- Listen to your first recording.
- Get to know your editing tools.
- Save often!

Starting Your Own Podcast

- Choose appropriate music.
- Don't rely too much on sound effects.
- Always give credit.

Starting Your Own Podcast

- Choose a host.
- Choose a title.
- Categorize and tag.
- Upload as an MP3.



Starting Your Own Podcast

Share!

- Share with coworkers, friends and family.
- Use social media to promote.
- Respond to listeners.

Thank You



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