

**Abstract:**

Volcanoes, in the minds of many, have a malicious reputation. They see them as bringers of death and destruction, lava-spewing factories of fiery doom. We, of course, know that this often doesn't match up with reality. Sure, sometimes they can cause tragedies, but to most of the 800 million people that live within 100 kilometres of an active magmatic mountain, volcanoes for the majority of their lifetime are benevolent beasts. Despite the occasional dangerous convulsion, residents – and visitors – would agree that volcanoes bring far more social, economic, spiritual, adventurous and aesthetic benefits to the table. For many, they're simply home. That poses some challenging questions for both science communicators and science journalists: How do we properly convey that reality? How do we tell engrossing stories while underscoring the inherent duality of living with volcanoes? How do we make sure people are aware of their hazards while not giving volcanoes an unnecessarily terrifying reputation? How is the issue of risk, both relative and absolute, best communicated? And how do we ensure that facts and good journalism rise above malpractice and fearmongering clickbait? There aren't any easy answers, but having written a cornucopia of stories and having interviewed hundreds of experts, I have a few ideas in mind. Numbers and jargon have an understandable place in science, but explaining risk to the public works best when you make it relatable to the audience at hand. Using facts to push back against misinformation is vital, but is more effective when paired with humour, informality and engaging stories. Communicating science clearly to boost the public's trust works, but it's far more efficient when science journalists are invested in your research too. Ultimately, it largely comes down to telling a good story – and as we know, the most fascinating stories also happen to be true.