WORLD CONGRESS OF
SCIENCE & FACTUAL PRODUCERS

National Geographic's Tom McDonald to Headline with Fireside Chat at WCSFP Tallinn 2026

World Congress of Science and Factual Producers (WCSFP) today announced that **Tom McDonald**, Executive Vice President of Content at National Geographic, will join this year's Congress in Tallinn for an in-depth fireside chat exploring how factual storytelling is evolving beyond the traditional confines of the genre.

McDonald's remit at National Geographic spans far beyond documentary and unscripted programming encompassing print magazines, social platforms, podcasts, digital and streaming, giving him a rare vantage point on how a single brand's IP can travel and take shape across an entire ecosystem.

The conversation will explore how unscripted storytelling is expanding beyond any one format or box, and how ideas can evolve as they move across mediums, with National Geographic's own approach offered as a case study the wider industry can learn from.

McDonald joined National Geographic in 2022 following a decade at the BBC, latterly as the MD of Factual at BBC Studios. Since joining National Geographic, his team has created some of the most successful and award-winning unscripted franchises on Disney+ and Hulu, earned more than 227 television and film awards, including 54 Emmys, as well as 213 publishing and 32 social awards, and launched series & franchises with some of the world's best known talent, including Chris Hemsworth, Stanley Tucci and Tom Hiddleston.

Tom is also the Chair of the Grierson Trust, the UK's leading charity supporting documentaries and documentary makers globally.

The session will be moderated by WCSFP's Editorial Director Sara Ramsden, who will lead a wide-ranging conversation.

Tom McDonald, National Geographic:

"Factual storytelling keeps finding new ways to reach people via new platforms, new formats and new talent and creators. Congress has always been at the cutting edge of industry change so I am looking forward to being with this incredible community in Tallinn."

Sara Ramsden, WCSFP:

“We're thrilled to welcome Tom to Tallinn. His perspective on the global factual landscape makes him a perfect fit for this year's programme. And I look forward to grilling him about his past and future TV passions."

This comes off the back of the announcement of a keynote speech from **Mai Thi Nguyen-Kim,** celebrated science communicator with over 1.5 million subscribers on YouTube, who has successfully transitioned to broadcast. WCSFP will also welcome acclaimed BBC presenter **Jim Al-Khalili**, who will talk about launching his new YouTube channel, **Timothy Caulfield**, author of *Is Gwyneth Paltrow Wrong About Everything?*, who will dig into social media misinformation, and **Jaan Aru**, Estonia’s leading neuroscientist, who will explore how AI affects the human brain. These alongside the full programme which is due to be announced later in the month, tackle the dichotomy of today's industry across broadcast and digital, where WCSFP aims to provide clear steps on how broadcasters and creators can effectively define the future of the industry together.

World Congress of Science & Factual Producers 2026 will take place November 9-12 in Tallinn, Estonia, bringing together the global community of science and factual storytellers across broadcast, streaming, and digital-first platforms.

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For media inquiries or partnership opportunities, please contact:
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World Congress of Science and Factual Producers is a not-for-profit, member-driven organization dedicated to celebrating the best in factual filmmaking, digital production and the wider industry. WCSFP is the place where science, history and natural history content creators and executives gather to share, explore and reveal how advancements within these industries are communicated to the world. Past Congresses have been held in such cities as Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2025), Marrakesh, Morocco (2024), Seattle, USA (2023), Glasgow, UK (2022); Tokyo, Japan (2019); Brisbane, Australia (2018); San Francisco, USA (2017); Stockholm, Sweden (2016); Vienna, Austria (2015); Hong Kong (2014); Montreal, Canada (2013); Washington, D.C., USA (2012); Paris, France (2011); Dresden, Germany (2010); Melbourne, Australia (2009); Florence, Italy (2008); New York, USA (2007); and others. It is administered by a board of directors and an elected editorial committee that deals primarily with editorial matters. WCSFP is managed by Documentary Campus. For more information, visit http://www.wcsfp.com.