WORLD CONGRESS OF
SCIENCE & FACTUAL PRODUCERS

World Congress of Science & Factual Producers Announces 2026 Focus on Digital Media with Speakers Tony Pastor, Ian Shepherd, and Julie Walsh Smith

The 2026 World Congress of Science and Factual Producers (WCSFP) will put the rapidly changing digital media landscape at the heart of its programme, bringing some of the most influential figures in creator-led media to the stage including Tony Pastor (Goalhanger), Ian Shepherd (Electrify), and Julie Walsh Smith (Complexly).

Between them, their organisations generate around 200 million views, streams or downloads every month. Their presence at WCSFP 2026 reflects a fundamental shift in how factual content is being made, distributed and discovered. WCSFP's programme will explore what this means for the future of factual storytelling, and, importantly, how the traditional television industry can work with this rapidly expanding ecosystem.

Tony Pastor, Co-Founder of Goalhanger, will bring insight from one of the UK's most successful independent podcast networks with a portfolio including *The Rest Is History*, *The Rest Is Politics*, and *The Rest Is Science*, among others. The company generated more than 750 million full-episode views and streams in 2025 and now reaches tens of millions of people every month across audio, video, social and other platforms. Tony will be in discussion with **Richard McKerrow,** Co-Founder and CEO of Bake Off and The Piano producer Love Productions, now CEO of Free Productions and FreeSpace, to explore the rapid rise and success of Goalhanger and the changing economics of factual content. They'll discuss how you build global audiences without traditional gatekeepers, and what podcasts can teach television about talent, loyalty, and community.

Ian Shepherd, Co-Founder and Co-CEO of Electrify, has pioneered a new business model that invests in and scales informative and inspirational creator-founded companies. Electrify represents a portfolio that spans 21 brands, more than 65 million YouTube subscribers and over 2 billion views in the last year, including some of the world's leading knowledge and science creators like Veritasium, fern, and Astrum. **Julie Walsh Smith**, CEO of Complexly, brings the perspective of one of the world's largest educational media producers. The organisation behind Crash Course, SciShow, PBS Eons, and other major digital education brands currently reaches more than 32 million YouTube subscribers, with more than 5 billion cumulative views. Ian and Julie will be interviewed by digital factual pioneer **Sam Barcroft**, CEO of Attention Industries. He'll interrogate them on their very different ways of building their YouTube empires and what the future holds for factual content creators.

"At World Congress of Science and Factual Producers, we don't want to set up a false divide between broadcast and digital," said Sara Ramsden, Editorial Director at WCSFP. "We want WCSFP to be where that conversation moves from talking about change to shaping what comes next."

Furthering the conversation on digital media and new technology will be **Anthony Morgan,** Co-host of CBC's The Nature of Things and a neuroscience graduate. In a session about AI and creativity, Morgan will interview Estonia's leading neuroscientist **Professor Jaan Aru** to explore the effects of technology on our brains. Smartphones and social media have already trained us to crave constant stimulation, and now AI can think for us too. Morgan and Aru will break through the noise to discover how we can embrace these extraordinary tools without outsourcing the very human abilities that make great content.

World Congress of Science & Factual Producers 2026 will take place in Tallinn, Estonia this 9-12 November. The full programme is now available at www.wcsfp.com

WORLD CONGRESS OF
SCIENCE & FACTUAL PRODUCERS

#####

For media inquiries or partnership opportunities, please contact:
River Ferris
rferris@wcsfp.com

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.