

BOOST YOUR POWER TO INFLUENCE WITH EVIDENCE-BASED CONTENT

How to make storytelling the cornerstone of your communications activities to foster patient & HCP engagement



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There can be no doubt, world events have firmly thrust the digital age in pharma upon us with alarming speed. Medical communication matters to the life sciences and pharma industry. Life sciences and pharma companies need to deliver the same key messages in multiple formats and via multiple channels to reach and inform patients, healthcare professionals (HCPs) and their own non-specialist staff. This practice of producing multiple versions of the same theme, known as content atomisation, heralds a new approach to content development. It relies on evidence-based storytelling to effectively convey a key message or theme across multiple channels by strategically remixing, refreshing and repeating content. But it is not only the adaptability of the content that matters, it is the quality as well.

Until now, much of the conversation on content has centred on how to measure its impact through the use of new tracking technologies and methods. In parallel, companies have developed strategies to gain deeper insights into what their target audiences want and need. Medical education and awareness campaigns are then designed and refined based on these audience and impact insights. Regardless of how campaigns are evaluated, effective physician learning continues to rely first and foremost on

the development of quality content in the form of compelling digital stories.

To develop such impact stories, the primary question to answer is not *what you need to say*. Instead, the question is *why should your audience care about what you are saying?* This means adapting the style and substance of each piece of content to the varying perspectives of the target audiences. This includes, for example, developing medical education content for HCPs, disease awareness campaigns for patients, and clear and accessible material for non-specialist professionals.¹

The key to effective audience engagement is found in a simple equation: content must be relevant and have one of three attributes – it needs to be 1) insightful, 2) useful, 3) emotionally powerful. In the context of pharma and life sciences, content must also be accurate, understandable and trustworthy. It must be evidence-based.

Not all content is created equal. Life sciences and biopharma content communicates complex issues and often rapidly developing scientific advances. Creating content for this industry, therefore, requires therapeutic area expertise in addition to creative skill. This means that quality control and validation must be built into the process of transforming a complex message into effective and engaging evidence-based stories.

THE VALUE OF QUALITY CONTENT IN INFLUENCING YOUR AUDIENCES

In the life sciences and pharma sector, devising messages to influence audiences presents its own challenges:

1. Translating complex issues into clear, concise and compelling content
2. Constantly monitoring rapidly developing scientific advances to account for the latest company innovation in its scientific context
3. Taking into account regulatory and ethical considerations
4. Addressing issues pertaining to social perception and trust

In response to these multiple challenges, the communications model of this industry is rapidly evolving. Much of the conversation revolves around measuring the impact of campaigns using digital technology innovations and strategies. Another part of the conversation is focused on insights and feedback as they relate to customer needs and engagement. Despite intense focus on measuring and insights, it is content development that matters first and foremost in implementing an effective programme/campaign strategy.

Content is what underpins and maintains the conversation between the life sciences and pharma industry and its stakeholders – patients and HCPs. Yet, not all content is created equal. Content development for the life sciences and pharma industry requires both subject matter knowledge, such as therapeutic area expertise, as well as creative and editorial skills. Accuracy and quality control must be built into [the process of transforming a complex message into compelling content](#). This can be achieved by relying on the talents of science and medical content creators with the right subject matter expertise and knowledge and understanding of compliance. Quality life science and biopharma infographics that make an impact with a wider audience, for example, should be created and ‘validated by specialists’.²



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CONTENT ATOMISATION

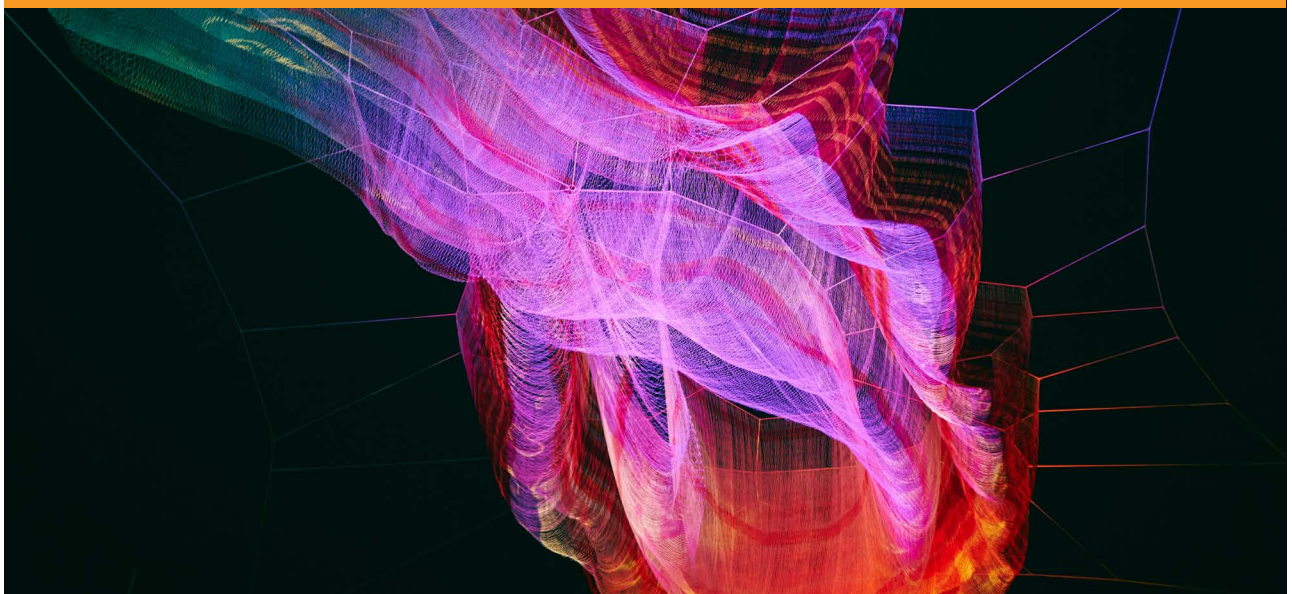
In content development, the primary question to answer is not *what do we need to say*. Instead, content needs to be designed to answer the following question: *why should our audience care about what we're saying?*

In the life sciences and pharma industry, this means adapting the style and substance of content to the varying perspectives and needs of practitioners, patients, and non-specialist professionals. This spans the spectrum of understanding from post-doctoral specialism to a lay-person's passing knowledge. To achieve this, communications teams adopt a tactic called content atomisation, where a single key message or theme is distilled through multiple formats and adapted to various channels.

Although the core message will be the same, the 'clothes it wears' are tailored to the needs and characteristics of each audience segment. For example, in its bid to raise awareness of the public health threat posed by antibiotic resistance, Public Health England's [Antibiotic Guardian](#) campaign created quizzes, animations and videos for patients. In parallel, the campaign deployed case studies, technical toolkits and educational resources for healthcare and veterinary professionals. Another campaign with a similar focus was promoted by the government of Luxembourg under the title [Les antibiotiques ne sont pas des bonbons](#). The campaign addressed the same topic with a similar variety of materials in different formats geared to engage different audience groups, public and professional.

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The right question is not *what do we need to say*, but *why should our audience care about what we're saying?*





CASE STUDY:

INFOGRAPHICS – A TOOL FOR DECISION MAKING WHEN COMMUNICATING MEDICAL INFORMATION TO NON-SPECIALISTS

One of the many objectives for a communications team is to enhance patient and HCP understanding of the innovation a company brings to them and to underpin their ability to make informed decisions.³ Infographics are well-suited to present and communicate complex information quickly, clearly and effectively. Perceived as appealing and user-friendly content, they are associated with higher reader preference,⁴ making them more likely to be read by non-specialists. Suitably conceptualised, infographics make medical and scientific information more accessible to target audiences and can enhance audiences' understanding and ability to make decisions.⁵

A study on educational infographics and sun protection knowledge, for example, found that 'skin cancer education through infographics demonstrated significant improvement in patient understanding of appropriate sunscreen usage and label interpretation.'⁶

Likewise, in a study on concussion knowledge, participants reported that infographics met their knowledge needs (91%) and provided them with new knowledge (87%). Significantly, 55% of participants also reported that they intended to use the infographics to educate others.⁷

The following infographic example focuses on the effective communication of messages related to hospital-acquired infections (HAIs). It combines a visual element with text and data. The visual is, of course, vital in communication but readability is important too. Readability here refers to a language that is both accessible and useful to a target audience.⁸ In this case, the target audience is policy makers.


Another infographic example depicts the key findings from published new research on the rare disease Neimann-Pick disease. The infographic is aimed at a general audience. It was conceptualised and produced by a creative team with subject matter expertise and it was validated by specialists (the scientific researchers behind the published study).

What is a hospital-acquired infection?

A hospital-acquired infection (HAI):



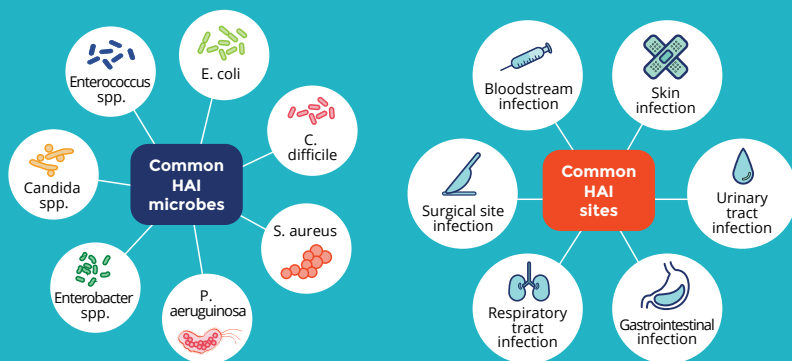
Is an infection that is contracted in a hospital environment



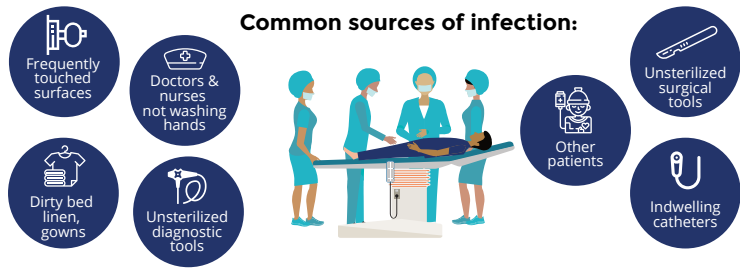
Is not present at the time of hospital admission



Typically manifests beyond 48 hr after admission



Common sources of infection:



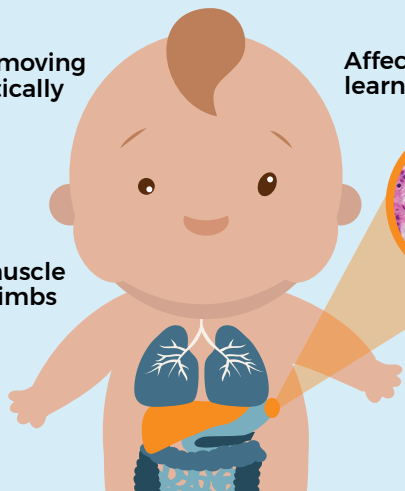
2 new biomarkers to diagnose Niemann-Pick disease

Niemann-Pick disease is a fault in lipid (fat) and cholesterol metabolism

Trouble moving eyes vertically




Affected brain cells cause learning difficulties

Loss of muscle tone in limbs



Enlarged liver and spleen from cellular cholesterol accumulation

Condition needs more diagnosis tools

-  **New Biomarker A**
(Sphingosylphosphorylcholine)
-  **New Biomarker B**
(lysosphingomyelin-509)
-  **Works with existing biomarker test for better prognosis**

Mashima, R et al.: "Elevation of plasma lysosphingomyelin-509 and urinary bile acid metabolite in Niemann-Pick disease type C-affected individuals," Molecular Genetics and Metabolism Reports (2018)

Source: <https://www.journals.elsevier.com/molecular-genetics-and-metabolism-reports/top-articles-selected-by-the-editor/elevation-of-plasma-lysosphingomyelin-509>

THE MEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS EQUATION

How can we persuade someone to give up their time and attention to engage with content? The key to a successful disease awareness campaign or a popular medical education course lies in a simple equation. Content must be relevant and have at least one of three attributes:

1. Insightful –

Does it offer valuable information on a new, emerging or poorly understood issue? Or does it offer a novel analysis of a familiar topic?

2. Useful –

Does it offer a timely solution to a current problem?

3. Emotionally powerful –

Does it provoke a reaction from delight to outrage (the latter being an emotional trigger in fundraising campaigns by non-profit organisations, for example).

At least one attribute must be in play to engage an audience. However, to engage and persuade people to act, transact or change behaviour, the most successful campaigns are likely to draw on two or all three attributes and be played across different content formats, media or channels.



The case for interviews in conveying evidence-based information

Digital stories, such as interviews and profiles of key opinion leaders, represent opportunities to more effectively engage with HCPs. In contrast, interviews with patients open the door to communicating with wider audiences, particularly in disease awareness campaigns. Ultimately, using such interviews may impact people's lives. The underlying goal is to offer value to these stakeholders. "Digital [content/communications] is an enabler in that it can help us change the behaviour of the people we have in front of us," explains Haider Alleg, Swiss-based Global Head of Digital Excellence at pharma company Ferring. "We should aim to build something more meaningful based on clinical evidence and which helps our doctors do a better job". This approach can also help patients make better decisions.

An advantage in choosing the interview format in conveying messages and information to HCPs or patients lies in its versatility; an interview can be presented in text, audio and video. This makes it possible to convey a single core message via multiple channels for targeted distribution to different audience segments.

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EuroScientist 4 years ago
June Andrews: policy support for dementia needs to be adequate #Dementia

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A better management of chronic illnesses such as dementia can be done by harnessing technological solutions. But this kind of innovative support cannot be used unless it respects the rights of people affected by the disease. In contrast, those close to dementia patients have a responsibility to adopt preventive steps to manage the disease. But this can only happen once governments implement adequate level of support. In this exclusive EuroScientist interview, June Andrews, director of the Dementia Services Development Centre at the University of Stirling, in Scotland, UK, analyses the potential and the drawbacks of innovation for the 50 million people worldwide affected by this condition.

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“If we listen better to our customers, then this is the first step in being able to better address their needs.” Linda Valenta

- Created by SciencePOD



Linda Valenta, Global Director of Healthcare Innovation at Boehringer Ingelheim is scheduled to speak at the [Marketing and Customer Innovation Europe](#) conference, which is happening in London from the 15–16th October. Linda will present an award-winning case study entitled “How Boehringer Ingelheim’s Interactive Guidelines support HCPs in the daily management of asthma patients.”

We asked Linda some questions about this area, the case study, and the upcoming conference.

Your case study presentation is about the use of technology to deliver value to HCPs – how do you think technology is helping pharma meet customer needs?

ENGAGING YOUR AUDIENCE – THREE SCENARIOS

Compelling content offers an effective route to engage and persuade different audience segments, for example:



1. Engaging Patients

EU rules prevent direct promotion of prescription medicines to consumers. However, providing public health information in the form of disease awareness campaigns is permitted. It offers a valuable route to building brand trust, authority and recognition while serving the civic good.

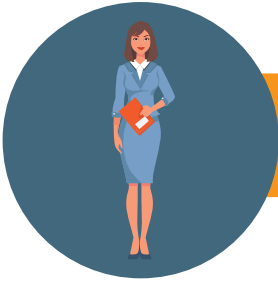
GSK's [Tackle Meningitis](#) campaign, for instance, recruited former England rugby player Matt Dawson, whose infant son contracted the disease, as an advocate to help parents better understand the risks and symptoms. Sports stars of other nationalities, such as [Irish rugby captain, Rory Best, were recruited and geo-specific surveys among parents were carried out to help spread the message in other countries.](#)



2. Engaging Healthcare Professionals

When communicating with HCPs, it may be tempting to merely provide a technical description of a product or service. Although this is a vital element of a campaign, it is only a baseline necessity. To truly engage new or existing customers, life sciences and pharma companies need to take a different path. They need to develop content that provides added value to their audience.

Take, for example, the educational resources website of biotech product development company Thermo Fisher which offers an array of learning tools. These range from general courses in bioinformatics for data scientists to stem cell research training with the company's R&D scientists. The value-add comes from problem-solving content that offers insights to a time-poor audience. This helps build customer trust and affinity with the brand.



3. Supporting Non-specialist Professional Staff

Long gone are the days where physicians are subjected to dry, highly technical material. Today HCPs expect to receive accessible and engaging content, including medical education or digital portals. Content needs to be geared to help teams answer the question: why should potential customers care?

The lessons outlined above are simple enough. However, the execution of successful medical affairs campaigns requires creative flair and careful planning. Above all, it requires a willingness to produce content that goes beyond what everyone else in the industry is doing.



CASE STUDY:

CREATING COMPLEX TRAINING MATERIAL FOR SPECIALISTS

The request from a multinational biotechnology company that provides analytical and laboratory products was to create content for a new educational portal. The educational content created aims to assist scientists using a molecular biology technique called real-time – or quantitative – polymerase chain reaction (qPCR). The objective was to help scientists optimise the outcome of their experiments and provide advice in troubleshooting. This case required the delivery of clear, concise, scientifically accurate content tailored to an audience of specialists. Topics covered in this project ranged from 'Real-time PCR basics' to 'miRNA analysis and real-time PCR'.

In a large content project such as this, accuracy and quality control are paramount. At the same time, there is still a need to ensure that the result is useful, insightful and clear. Therefore, it required a team of content creators with expertise in content creation (science writers and editors) as well as qualifications and experience in biomedical science, molecular biology, medicine and computational modelling.

Real-time PCR training center (qPCR)



This training center centralizes the presentation of educational resources in a wide range of fields of application of PCR in real time. Select an application area below to view a collection of different types of educational resources on this subject, including articles, application notes, videos, and online seminars. Browse the resource library to view all of the real-time PCR resources organized in a table where you can easily find and sort information.

Sub-sections on real-time PCR



Fundamentals of real-time PCR

If you're new to real-time PCR, also called quantitative PCR (qPCR) or want to learn more about new applications for qPCR, we have the educational resources, including videos and online seminars, to help you understand the technology and get started quickly.



Genetic expression

Gene expression profiling simultaneously compares the expression levels of many genes between two or more types of samples. This analysis can help scientists identify the molecular basis of phenotypic differences and select targets for gene expression for further study. Profiling gene expression provides an interesting insight into the role of differential gene expression in normal and pathological biological processes.

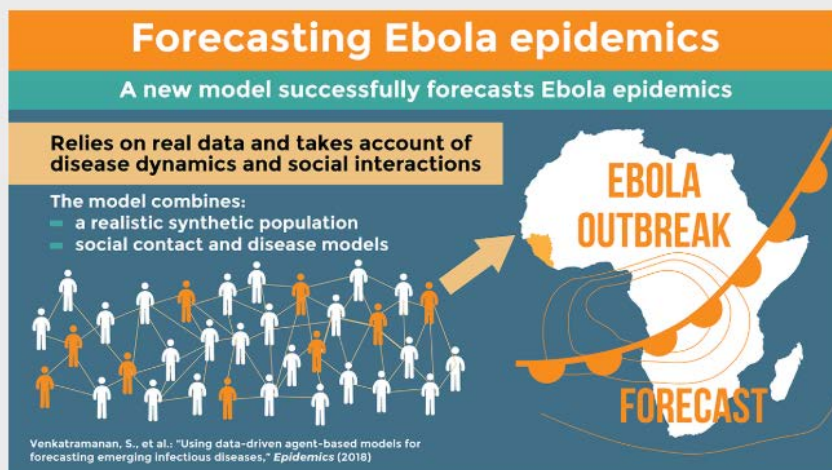
TRUSTWORTHY AND UNDERSTANDABLE

Life sciences and biopharma content must speak to a variety of stakeholders and audiences, specialist and non-specialist. Whether it takes the form of a white paper, leave pieces, a feature combining text and infographics, a podcast, video or a disease awareness campaign, the content must be understandable to the target audience and above all trustworthy. A variety of channels offers more and new opportunities to reach

audiences and digital technologies allow medical affairs teams greater insights into customer needs. As Linda Valenta, Global Director of Healthcare Innovation at Boehringer Ingelheim, in Germany, asserts, listening is key. Why should your audience care about what you're saying? 'Make sure it is because you've listened, your content is accurate, it offers value', it is understandable and trustworthy.

FEATURE WITH INFOGRAPHICS

Real world use case: A model for Ebola



The Ebola virus is one of the deadliest human viruses. Infection begins with flu-like symptoms, progressing to vomiting, diarrhoea, a rash and in many cases bleeding internally and from the ears, eyes, nose or mouth. On average, half of those infected with the Ebola virus die from their symptoms.

The biggest known outbreak of Ebola virus disease occurred in West Africa in 2014, eventually infecting over 28,000 people. The outbreak inspired a global [forecasting challenge](#), in which several teams submitted forecasts of the outbreak to the [US National Institutes of Health](#), using synthetic datasets under several different scenarios.

The teams were asked to submit forecasts at the local and country level, over the short- and long-term, and to provide estimates at several different timepoints along the development of the simulated epidemic.

One team in this challenge, based at Virginia Tech's [Biocomplexity Institute](#) (and now at the [University of Virginia](#)), built an agent-based model during the 2014 outbreak, with the express purpose of helping policymakers.

Lead author Dr Sridhar Venkatramanan explained how the model works: "In an agent-based model, the evolution of the system state is modelled by encoding the actions and interactions of individual agents. In the context of infectious diseases, the evolution of

<https://www.elsevier.com/life-sciences/journals/modelling-epidemics-the-maths-behind-disease-outbreaks>

WHITE PAPER ON HOSPITAL-ACQUIRED INFECTIONS



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	
CABG: Coronary artery bypass grafting	
CAUTI: Catheter-associated urinary tract infection	
CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	
CLABSI: Central line-associated bloodstream infection	
CRBSI: Catheter-related bloodstream infection	
ECDC: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control	
HAI: hospital-acquired infection	
ICU: Intensive care unit	
INICC: International Nosocomial Infection Control Consortium	
MRSA: Methicillin-resistant <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	
SSI: Surgical site infection	
VAP: Ventilator-associated pneumonia	
YES: Vancomycin-resistant Enterococci	
WHO: World Health Organization	

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RESEARCH SUMMARY

EPJ E
2018 Impact factor **1.686**

Soft Matter and Biological Physics

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EPJ E Highlight - How lactoferrin clamps down on free roaming iron ions to stop nefarious effects on cells

Published on 20 September 2018

Closed lactoferrin.

New study elucidates structure of the protein lactoferrin as it undergoes transition from an open to a closed structure to decrease the level of free iron ions in the body

What prevents our cells from being overexposed to iron ions roaming freely in the body is a protein called lactoferrin, known for its ability to bind tightly to such ions. These free ions are essential for a number of biological processes. If found in excessive quantities, however, they could cause damage to proteins and DNA in the body, sometimes even leading to cell death. This is because free iron ions lead to an increase of the concentration of reactive substances with oxidising power roaming freely in the body. This has driven scientists to develop a better understanding of how lactoferrin's structural change helps to clamp down on free iron ions. In a new study published in *EPJ E*, Lilia Anghel from the Institute of Chemistry in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, and research collaborators study the changes in the structure of lactoferrin as it binds to iron ions, using combined experimental and molecular dynamics simulations.

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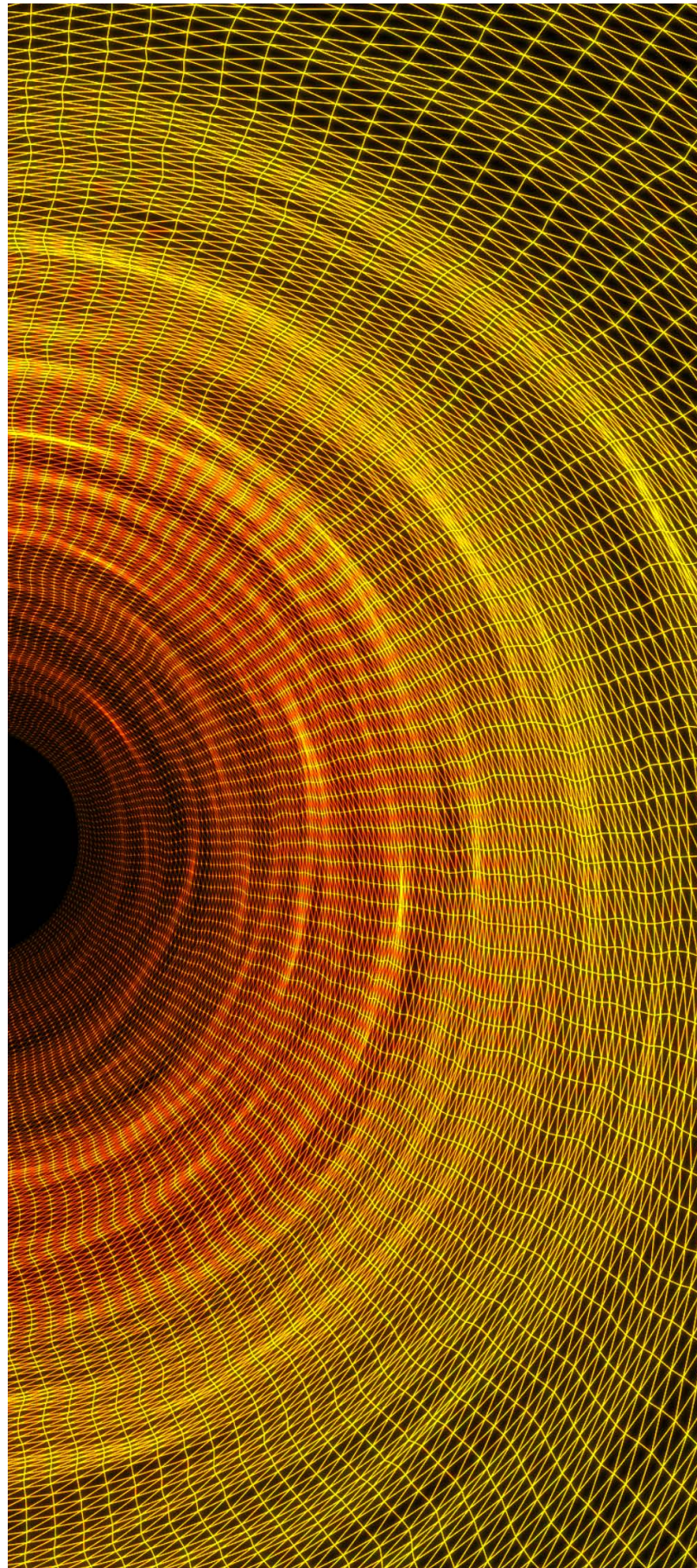
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