# David Cross and Michael Oppenheimer use comedy to amplify urgent climate warnings



David Cross is known for many roles: an accomplished comedian, an Emmy winner, and a bestselling author. Yet, as he humbly acknowledges, he is not a climate scientist. This unusual combination, however, might be the very reason he can convey the pressing need for action against global warming to a broader audience.

In a new video produced by Climate Science Breakthrough, Cross collaborates with prominent environmental scientist Michael Oppenheimer. The video aims to present urgent climate messages in a manner that is both accessible and engaging. Oppenheimer articulates serious climate concerns, noting, “Heat records are being broken all over the world. In fact, last year was the hottest year since the industrial era began.” Cross then rephrases this critical alert for everyday viewers: “Translation: the shit is hitting the fan. And the fan is on maximum.” This approach highlights the effectiveness of humour as a tool in communicating complex, often daunting information.

Climate Science Breakthrough has been active for the past two years, enlisting various comedians, including UK talents such as Nish Kumar and Jo Brand, to make climate science more relatable. According to producer Ben Carey, the initiative seeks to “reach beyond the converted and depolarise the debate.” If this latest offering garners a positive reaction, the team plans to collaborate with more scientists for future projects.

The use of humour in addressing climate issues isn’t a novel concept. Historically, artists and comedians have used satire to illuminate societal concerns, from George Carlin’s critiques of censorship in the 1970s to Bill Hicks’ commentary on political matters. Cross aptly references literary giants like Molière, Voltaire, and Mark Twain, who have long employed humour to provoke thought and inspire action.

The significance of humour in conveying serious topics has gained further traction in recent years. A parallel project, "Climate Science Translated," has also demonstrated the impact of comedian-scientist collaborations. Climate scientist Mark Maslin highlighted a joint effort with Jo Brand, which has received over three million views, showcasing how humour can effectively bridge the gap between complex scientific concepts and the general public. Such endeavours are increasingly viewed as vital in a crowded media landscape, where attention is often scarce.

In the current climate discourse, engaging diverse audiences is critical. Oppenheimer suggests that humour can make a tangible difference in promoting dialogue around climate issues, especially when traditional storytelling is overshadowed by competing narratives. Moreover, he points out the necessity for scientists to hone their communication skills beyond academic training, emphasising that crafting messages tailored to resonate with varied demographics—be it through humour or other means—could enhance public understanding and encourage action.

While comedy may serve as a powerful conduit for raising awareness, it is just one of several tools scientists are beginning to embrace. Different communicators can connect through various lenses—be it religion or parental concerns—demonstrating the multifaceted nature of effective science communication. As more scientists acknowledge the need for diverse strategies, the urgency of the climate crisis can be communicated with clarity and creativity, crucial for galvanising public engagement.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2025/jun/02/david-cross-comedy-climate-crisis), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2025/jun/02/david-cross-comedy-climate-crisis)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2025/jun/02/david-cross-comedy-climate-crisis), [[4]](https://www.chortle.co.uk/correspondents/2024/02/20/55031/how_comedy_can_help_spread_the_climate_change_message)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.theconversation.com/jo-brand-translated-my-science-im-certain-that-comedy-can-connect-people-to-climate-change-223745), [[5]](https://www.theconversation.com/climate-comedy-works-heres-why-and-how-it-can-help-lighten-up-a-politically-heavy-year-in-2024-224457/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.climatesciencebreakthrough.com/), [[7]](https://www.beyondthejoke.co.uk/content/14046/nish-kumar-climate-science)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2025/jun/02/david-cross-comedy-climate-crisis> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2025/jun/02/david-cross-comedy-climate-crisis> - David Cross, an Emmy-winning comedian and New York Times bestselling author, collaborates with environmental scientist Michael Oppenheimer in a new video campaign to communicate the urgency of global warming. The video, produced by Climate Science Breakthrough, features Oppenheimer delivering a serious climate warning, which Cross translates into layman's terms, emphasising the critical situation. This initiative aims to make climate science more accessible and engage a broader audience through humour.
3. <https://www.theconversation.com/jo-brand-translated-my-science-im-certain-that-comedy-can-connect-people-to-climate-change-223745> - In this article, climate scientist Mark Maslin discusses his collaboration with comedian Jo Brand to make climate science more accessible. The project, 'Climate Science Translated,' pairs comedians with scientists to convey complex climate issues in an engaging and humorous manner. Maslin highlights the effectiveness of humour in science communication, noting that their video with Jo Brand has been viewed over 3 million times and gained mainstream attention. ([theconversation.com](https://theconversation.com/jo-brand-translated-my-science-im-certain-that-comedy-can-connect-people-to-climate-change-223745?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.chortle.co.uk/correspondents/2024/02/20/55031/how_comedy_can_help_spread_the_climate_change_message> - This article explores the role of comedy in communicating climate change messages. It highlights the 'Climate Science Translated' project, which features comedians like Jo Brand, Nish Kumar, and Jonathan Pie collaborating with climate scientists to make complex issues more relatable. The piece underscores the importance of humour in engaging the public and driving action on environmental issues. ([chortle.co.uk](https://www.chortle.co.uk/correspondents/2024/02/20/55031/how_comedy_can_help_spread_the_climate_change_message?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.theconversation.com/climate-comedy-works-heres-why-and-how-it-can-help-lighten-up-a-politically-heavy-year-in-2024-224457/> - This article discusses the effectiveness of climate comedy in engaging audiences on environmental issues. It references the 'Climate Science Translated' project, where comedians like Jo Brand collaborate with scientists to communicate climate change in an accessible and humorous way. The piece highlights how humour can make complex topics more relatable and spur action. ([theconversation.com](https://theconversation.com/climate-comedy-works-heres-why-and-how-it-can-help-lighten-up-a-politically-heavy-year-in-2024-224457/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.climatesciencebreakthrough.com/> - Climate Science Breakthrough is an initiative that collaborates with comedians to translate complex climate science into accessible and engaging content. Their project, 'Climate Science Translated,' features comedians like Jo Brand, Nish Kumar, and Jonathan Pie working with climate scientists to make the science more relatable and spur action. The initiative aims to reach beyond the converted and depolarise the debate on climate change. ([climatesciencebreakthrough.com](https://www.climatesciencebreakthrough.com/?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.beyondthejoke.co.uk/content/14046/nish-kumar-climate-science> - This article discusses comedian Nish Kumar's involvement in the 'Climate Science Translated' project, where he collaborates with climate scientist Dr. Fredi Otto to make climate science more accessible through humour. The piece highlights the importance of using comedy to engage the public and drive action on environmental issues. ([beyondthejoke.co.uk](https://www.beyondthejoke.co.uk/content/14046/nish-kumar-climate-science?utm_source=openai))