Communicating extreme event science over multiple educational scales

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The year 2008 is the International Year of the Planet Earth and it provides an excellent opportunity for scientists to critically survey recent efforts to communicate with the public about extreme natural events. There is much to be learned from the relationship between scientific research and the way the public perceives and governments deal with catastrophic situations. While news about such extreme events is disseminated more and more rapidly, its scientific content is still very poor and usually not easy to understand - except for a small community of experts. On the other hand, scientists are increasingly able to predict – at least to some degree - catastrophes such as flooding, landslides, disappearance of species, etc. There is an urgency to better disseminate to the public the understanding of the nonlinear aspect of these natural events conducting regularly to extremes.

My own efforts in this direction started in 2002 with youth oriented outreach web site *Les Chroniques volcaniques avec Vicki Volka*, financially supported by governments and my research centre (originally in the French language, now bilingual). Over the years it has evolved and spawned a children's book about volcanoes, educational fact sheets, visits to schools and day camps.?But efforts are needed at all scales from the scientific community itself, and from the household scale on up. A non exhaustive list of outreach and educational suggestions will be presented to benefit from this exceptional year and provide some key tools to better promote to the public knowledge of nonlinear Earth phenomena and their "common habit' of producing extreme events. A better understanding may help to promote better policies.