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Module 5: PROMOTION AND DISSEMINATION PLANNING

Presenting the promotional techniques aiming general public and how to be organized effectively.

Promotion and dissemination

Dissemination is a term used by the European Commission in many of its documents and simply means to spread widely. All projects are encouraged to share (or disseminate) the successes of their project; this means that even after your project finishes, the successes can still have an impact in the future.

The reason for promoting and disseminating

The main aim is to spread the word and endorse the project's results. It can help raise the profile of your organisation, create new opportunities to extend the project and develop partnerships for the future. You will also be asked to detail dissemination activities as part of reporting requirements, so it is a good thing to bear in mind at the start of, during, and after your project.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of a Dissemination Plan is to identify and organize the activities to be performed, in order to promote the commercial exploitation of the project's results and the widest dissemination of knowledge from the project. The plan is expanded in two directions: towards the marketing activities, in order to enhance the commercial potential of the system and towards the notification of project's results in the scientific, EC and general sector. Dissemination is a horizontal activity and concentrates on disseminating the results of a project itself to a wide range of existing or potential stakeholders.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

An infrastructure for communications and therefore dissemination is established by building a robust framework in which dialogue and interaction can take place. This applies equally to internal and external communication.



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Establishing stable conduits

These will be used to disseminate information about and solicit input. Contact can be maintained and facilitated by:

Electronic mailing lists

Internal Lists: An electronic mailing list should be established, which aims to provide a mechanism for internal project communications. Currently this includes members of the project team from each partner site.

External Lists: Digital archiving covers many areas and it may be difficult to reach all stakeholders without using several existing lists to communicate to the wider community.

Focus Groups

The use of focus groups as a mechanism is suggested for external communication. It suggests that the "purpose of these groups will be to provide a feedback loop for formative evaluation, as a means of involving all the stakeholders in the project; and as a means of communication and dissemination".

Working Groups

Similarly, internal project working groups can be used to manage project work and provide an effective mechanism for formative project evaluation. The work of these groups will focus on specific practical issues.

Developing a publications programme

At a minimum this will comprise:

- targeted informational literature designed to raise awareness
- methodological guidelines
- strategic guides to good practice

Developing effective mechanisms for disseminating material

The worldwide web

Use of electronic mailing lists

- information about activities including contact details, background information, working papers, events (seminars, workshops, conferences) etc.
- instructional material
- frequent news and updates to keep the community informed

For internal communication, the web site may also be used for distributing administrative, policy, and procedural documents for use. Where necessary, documents and sets of documents may be accommodated on password protected pages and thus made accessible to selected individuals and/or groups.

Printed publications

Printed copies of selected informational/publicity and/or instructional materials maybe available for distribution, freely or on a cost-recovery basis.

Promoting dissemination

Conferences, workshops, seminars can be organised in order to:

- raise awareness about activities, resources, etc.;
- act as training venues e.g. for disseminating instructional material
- act as fora for more public discussion of research, development, collections, standards, or other strategic and substantive issues of interest

Supported and Assisted Dissemination

A series of dissemination events can take place as well, towards the end of the project. This event will provide on-site support for institutions concerned about digital preservation and developing sensible long term strategies for access and preservation of electronic materials. The project will bring its knowledge and experience to these events as a way of providing support and hands-on assistance to SMEs within the context of their local situation.

Elements of effective Dissemination Plan

After you have developed your dissemination policy statements, you are ready to turn your attention to more specific dissemination planning. Remember that your dissemination planning should start at the beginning of your research activities,



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not at the end. While some details of the dissemination effort will be suggested in your original proposal and refined as you progress through your research, your dissemination plan goals and objectives should be clarified at the beginning of your research project.

1. **Goals:** Determine and document the goals of your dissemination effort for your proposed project.
2. **Objectives:** Associate each goal with one or more objectives that clarifies what you are trying to accomplish through your dissemination activities.
3. **Users:** Describe the scope and characteristics of the "potential users" that your dissemination activities are designed to reach for each of your objectives.
4. **Content:** Identify, at least, the basic elements of the projected content you have to disseminate to each of the potential user groups identified.
5. **Sources:** Identify the primary source or sources that each potential user group is already tied into or most respects as an information source. Consider ways to partner with these sources in your dissemination efforts.
6. **Medium:** Describe the medium or media through which the content of your message can best be best delivered to your potential users and describe the capabilities and resources that will be required of potential users to access the content for each medium to be used.
7. **Success:** Describe how you will know if your dissemination activities have been successful. If data is to be gathered, describe how, when, and who will gather it.
8. **Access:** Describe how you will promote access to your information and how you will archive information that may be requested at a later date. Consider that most people will use your project-related information when they perceive a need for it – not necessarily when you have completed your research project.
9. **Availability:** Identify strategies for promoting awareness of the availability of your research-based information and the availability of alternate available formats.
10. **Barriers:** Identify potential barriers that may interfere with the targeted users' access or utilization of your information and develop actions to reduce these barriers.



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Possible Issues Related to Dissemination Strategizing

User Groups

- Limited user readiness to change
- Widely divergent format and level of information needed
- Multiple levels of contextual information needed
- Less than clear relevance to own needs
- Variety of dissemination media preferred
- Limited number of information sources trusted

Source

- Low level of perceived competence
- Limited credibility of experience
- Suspicion regarding motive
- Lack of sensitivity to user concerns
- Limited relationships to other sources trusted by users

Content

- Low confidence in quality of research and development methodology
- Limited credibility of outcomes
- Restricted comprehensiveness of outcomes
- Unclear utility and relevance for users
- Non-user friendly format
- Costs or equipment required to access
- Lack of statistical power in research design, procedures, and data analyses

Context

- Limited applicability to current issues in the field
- Competing knowledge or products
- General economic climate and circumstances
- Lack of relationship between outcomes and existing personal knowledge or products



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Medium

- Limited physical capacity to reach intended users
- Long timeframes required to access
- Unclear accessibility and ease of use
- Lack of flexibility
- Limited reliability
- Cost effectiveness
- Limited clarity and attractiveness of the information "package"

Training Events and Product Development

Dissemination planning provides an opportunity for dissemination goals, strategies, and activities to be conceptualized and carefully considered. In your planning process, it is important to remember that training events, such as:

- conferences,
- workshops,
- academic courses,
- meetings,
- computer-based discussion lists, and

products, such as:

- reports,
- journal articles,
- video tapes,
- newsletters, and
- websites

are primary tools that may or may not help you reach your dissemination goals with certain target audiences. A thoughtful dissemination plan allows you to move beyond the simple listing of events and products as your dissemination strategy. The most effective dissemination outreach efforts are not designed in broad-brush fashion to equally reach any and all of your designated target audiences through a single training event or product.

Developing a dissemination plan will facilitate the translation of your research



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into practice. Your dissemination plan will include six major elements:

- I. Research findings and products—What is going to be disseminated?
- II. End users—Who will apply it in practice?
- III. Dissemination partners—Individuals, organizations or networks through whom you can reach end users?
- IV. Communication—How you convey the research outcomes?
- V. Evaluation—How you determine what worked?
- VI. Dissemination work plan—Where you start?

Specifying Research Findings and Products: What You Intend to Disseminate

Draw the boundary around your research finding or product as broadly or as narrowly as you wish, depending on your dissemination aims. Be specific. The more concrete you can be in defining your finding or product, the easier it will be to complete the tool. For example:

You may want to disseminate 1) an event reporting system as a large product or 2) separately disseminate the taxonomy, measuring tools, or data analytic methods that you developed as smaller aspects of the reporting system.

You may want to disseminate a best practice guideline, a curriculum that you developed around the practice, or research findings on outcomes resulting from adoption of these guidelines.

Issues to consider in selection what to disseminate:

Think about the pros and cons of disseminating portions of the research vs. all related products and findings. Different end users (e.g. policymakers and health care providers) may be interested in different aspects of the research.

Is your research finding ready for dissemination?

How strong is the evidence on your research findings? How generalizable are your findings?

How does your research finding/product conform to current procedures?

What additional research (for a finding) or testing (for a product) would be needed before launching a dissemination effort?

Identifying End Users

End users are individuals or organizations that could benefit from and use your

research finding or product. These end users are the ultimate target for your dissemination efforts. Specifying your target audience and their needs will provide focus for your dissemination plan and will help you tailor your offering to their needs.

List the end users for your research finding or product. Be as specific as possible.

Describe how your research finding or product is useful to your end users. Why would they want to use your finding or product? For example—does it increase efficiency? Improve quality? Provide legal protection?

What recent or future events might help or hinder end user interest in your finding or product?

Have you involved these end users in your research project? How? How can you involve them at this point?

What barriers might your end users face in trying to implement your finding or product? What suggestions might you have for overcoming these barriers?

Communicating Your Message

Effective dissemination relies on the use of varied channels—e.g., publications and reports, Web sites and other electronic communications, meetings and conferences, person-to-person communications, formal collaborations or information networks.

Consider what methods and channels you might use to bring your research finding or product directly to your end users or partners. Consider also how your dissemination partners communicate regularly with their constituencies—your end users. How you might use their channels to disseminate your finding or product?

You should consider all of these channels to ensure that the widest possible audience is exposed to your research finding or product and in ways that are both accessible and easy-to-use. Cost and cost-effectiveness are obviously important considerations in choosing the right medium.

Your end users could obtain information about research findings, products, or



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innovations in health care through various means. Optimally, you will need to use a combination of methods to reach end users.

- Broadcast media
- Personal contact
- Academic journals
- Book chapters
- Technical reports
- Trade magazines
- Regular newspapers
- Special interest newsletters
- Radio or TV interviews
- Interest group listservs
- Web sites
- Academic detailing
- Clinical specialty associations
- Informal professional networks
- Professional conferences
- Professional meetings (e.g., grand rounds)
- Workshops and other CME/CNE training
- Participating in improvement collaboratives or test beds

Evaluating Success

Evaluating the success of your dissemination efforts is an iterative process. Once you have begun to disseminate your research finding or product, consider how you might evaluate the effect that your dissemination strategies have on getting your message to end users. Dissemination is not a one-time activity; rather, it is a long-term relationship with your users that will provide ongoing feedback to help you improve your message.

How will you know if you have met your dissemination goals? What are your success criteria? Are there measurable indicators for these criteria?

How will you involve end users in evaluating the dissemination activities? Obtaining feedback on how easy the research product was to use, what was needed to translate research findings into practice in their setting.

How will you involve end users in evaluating the dissemination activities?



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Issues to consider in evaluating success of the dissemination effort:

What are ways that you can measure the success of your dissemination effort?

How will you keep in contact with users and potential users?

How will you provide feedback to your users and dissemination partners? How will you incorporate their feedback in your future research, product design, and ongoing development?

Developing A Summary

After you have considered the components of your dissemination plan, use the last page to write a summary of 100–200 words that outlines your basic plan, based on the structure in this planning tool, by completing the following statements.



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