



Enhancing EducAtion, TraininG and Communication Processes for Informed
Behaviors and Decision-making ReLatEd to Ionizing Radiation Risks

Improving media relations and delivery of information on ionizing radiation risks (IRR): EAGLE stakeholder statements

Work Package 2 Report

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EAGLE WP2 “Mass Media, Social Media: Move towards mutual understanding” - *Objectives*

- Analyze **how IRR information sources deliver** public information through traditional and new media. Identify best practices.
- Understand **how mass media view** these practices and how these align with own goals.
- Identify areas for **mutual adjustment** and improvement.
- Understand the **role of new media**, especially **social media** in the delivery of information.



Del2.1 Good Social Media practices after Fukushima

- *Engage designers to create an interactive website with hypertext features linked to social utility tools.*
- *Talk directly to stakeholders who can respond, forward, discuss messages, connect and share with their community.*
- *Conduct focus groups from three age categories (i.e. youth, adult, senior) to determine desired information, layout, features.*
- *Test-run website & social utility (sharing) tools, improvise if needed.*
- *Inform stakeholders quickly, accept loss of control over the process.*
- *Distribute messages via on-line newspapers and via social media => hi re-tweeting, higher visibility, fewer backlashes (boycotting).*
- *Publicize the social media sites to the public.*
- *Monitor social media (requires human resources).*
- *Create powerful and efficient crowdsourcing for emergency response, information sharing...*

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Our Media Dialogues - a Process Focus

National Encounter (7 dialogue workshops, 70 p, 100 seats): Practitioners from information sources and media in 4 countries (Fr, Po, Ro, Slo) take a step back to **analyze goals and actual performance.**

International Encounter (RICOMET 2015): Larger network shared experience, best practice (including media reps from “no-nukes” countries Au, De).

Elaborating conclusions, recommendations (Here)



Why is it important to review media practices?

- Traditional mass media (radio, TV, press) are main info providers for populations
- Print, audio/visual and digital media are not neutral intermediaries, but participants in the **social amplification (or attenuation) of risks**
 - Certain elements can be intensified or downplayed, affecting individual and social perceptions of risk, and broader consequences (ripple effects)
- Media may convey, and choose, **framings** = *selection of information to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, advice on response...*
- **EAGLE**: Try to bring more mutual awareness into the process >> in the interest of **citizen-centered communication**

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Why is it important to review media relations?

- WP₁ findings: Institutional sources output IRR information *"to educate people about ionizing radiation"* and *"to reduce fear of ionizing radiation in the public"* (almost never *"to empower people to participate in decision-making"*)
- Majority **do not systematically investigate needs, baseline knowledge** of the public. Outcomes of this resource-intensive activity may therefore be poor.
- Dialogue workshops = a joint reality check of how information is relayed by media, and why
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 - decision-making
 - training
 - informed behaviors
 - education

Dialogues identified familiar frustrations:

- Basic scientific curriculum in the schools is inadequate
- Public's attention span is short, and the media play on an appetite for sensation
- Media are deadline- or profit-driven and give equal importance to all risk statements no matter how founded these may be
- Scientists and arrogant experts speak in jargon
- Sources are either blindly trusted or their motives are suspected
- Institutions continue to undervalue and under-invest in communication and its specialised tools.



Also, a subtle joint analysis of the pressures:

- IRR phenomena are complex and uncertain
- Societal communication about risks is a pluralistic ecosystem that cannot be easily channeled
- Different actors involved in communication have different values, needs, experience and objectives
- Organizations and persons have to accept change and learn, if communication is to unfold differently
- Communication must seek a balanced consideration of costs and benefits of ionizing radiation applications
- Trust-building dialogues with the public are resource-intensive and long-term efforts

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MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOURCES

Agreement among dialogue partners

- Developing '*risk culture*' is a worthwhile objective for public communication about ionizing radiation risks
 - *Risk culture means that people are aware of the existence of risks but also, of preventive and protective actions that are taken by the authorities, or that people themselves can take in some cases.*



Technical (content) elements

- Adapt public information to everyday life & observed needs of citizens
 - Make info consistent & coherent with decisions
 - Be affirmative, responsive (not tentative, prudent)
 - Translate, clarify content:
 - Simplify, use metaphor, comparison, reference points...
 - Train scientists to meet media needs (clarity, rapidity)
 - Offer training to journalists
 - Provide highly accessible and attractive data presentations (**infographics**)
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Ethical aspects

- Respect the different perspectives, needs, and roles of participants in the communication process
- Deliver information that helps people make a choice in their situation (don't tell them if the risk is acceptable or not)
- Carefully consider and investigate the justification of uses of IR, with the population
- Figure out in dialogue how, when, why, where these uses & associated risks are acceptable = de facto joint management
- Admit that a nuclear accident can happen = open up to dialogue, permit questions, elaborations
- Consider the diversity of risks faced by communities

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Channels, organizational, institutional aspects

- Give proper resources to source institutions for info, communication (they can support TV documentaries too)
- Foster multiple sources, plurality of voices considering the issues and speaking to the public
- Facilitate the activity of civil society organizations responding to citizen needs "on the ground"
- Involve community structures (like science museums)
- Develop institutional independence and transparency, credibility and balance – also through **legislative means**

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Human aspects

- Offer narrative so that media can tell a story
- Reference iconic figures people can identify with
- Create open discussions during crisis and non-crisis periods, where members of the public can ask their questions

Requests for ongoing dialogue

- Officials, specialists of radiological protection and nuclear safety and media professionals want to **go on exchanging and learning in the interest of building solid relationships, risk culture and public understanding.**
- Convergence with OECD-NEA regulatory communicators: *"need to organise periodic and regular exchanges with the media and stakeholders not only during times of emergency, but also during routine periods in order to build strong relationships between the two parties."*



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PROPOSED DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- 1) PRAGMATIC SUGGESTIONS FOR ORGANIZING ENCOUNTERS; WHAT COULD BE DISCUSSED THERE?**

- 2) CONSIDER SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FROM CIVIL SOCIETY**



Civil society recommendations

- More activities assessing public opinion and understanding about current communication on ionizing radiation.
- Participative discussions should address the different publics, different situations and different professions to reflect on communication as a whole.
- Study the effect of the language and words employed (which today are often difficult to understand and create anxiety).
- Provide elements for understanding, and communicate even on doubt and uncertainty.
- Citizens should be drawn in and involved in these subjects, not made to feel responsible for risk management but encouraged to look into the issues through various resources and form their choices.

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Example of analysis from... another context

'Because the administration failed to explain clearly and candidly (...), confusion and uncertainty persist. The cryptic message invited misinterpretation and suspicion, and refusal to elaborate or explain its meaning provided no reassurance.'

'Above all, the administration should disclose, fully and clearly... Despite recent pledges, [stakeholders] still doubt the administration's sincerity. In an area as delicate and serious as this, absolute frankness is essential.'