

Identifying Your Audiences and Tailoring Your Outreach

Carson Connor Clark
Communications
Specialist



Purpose

- ❖ This cyberseminar is for investigators, research staff, and those who coordinate communications for their Research Center and/or Medical Center
- ❖ An overview of how to determine your key audiences and tailor communications outreach to their interests and needs



Today's Agenda

- ❖ Define your audiences
- ❖ Define your purposes: forward the science, identify collaborators, reach operational partners for implementation
- ❖ Tools
- ❖ Your questions/discussion



Poll Question #1

- ❖ What is your primary role in VA?
 - » Student, Trainee, or Fellow
 - » Clinician or Researcher
 - » Administrator, Manager or Policy-maker
 - » Not affiliated with VA
 - » Other



Poll Question #2

- ❖ How would you describe your knowledge of research dissemination?
 - » Poor
 - » Fair
 - » Good
 - » Excellent



Use funding application framework to ID audiences and outreach methods

- ❖ Specific aims
- ❖ Significance of research and relevance to Veterans' health
- ❖ Innovations, features
- ❖ Methodology
- ❖ Expected results
- ❖ How results will affect other areas





Define your various audiences

What is important to them? Will you reach others through them?
What actions will they take to forward your purposes?



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Rank your audiences by potential actions they can take

- ❖ Consider allocating your time spent on outreach in the context of the action they might take to:
 - » Forward your specific study or the field
 - Professional organizations
 - The journal that publishes your article
 - Your colleagues in that field



Rank your audiences by potential actions they can take

- ❖ Consider allocating your time spent on outreach in the context of the action they might take to:
 - » Collaborate on future studies
 - Extend quantitative study to include qualitative work
 - Expand data analysis
 - Expand population studied (rural, women, etc) and geographic locations



Rank your audiences by potential actions they can take

- ❖ Consider allocating your time spent on outreach in the context of the action they might take to:
 - » Implement results
 - Operational partners
 - Researchers who have successfully translated work to care, outcomes, etc



Rank your audiences by potential actions they can take

❖ Forward

❖ Collaborate

❖ Implement



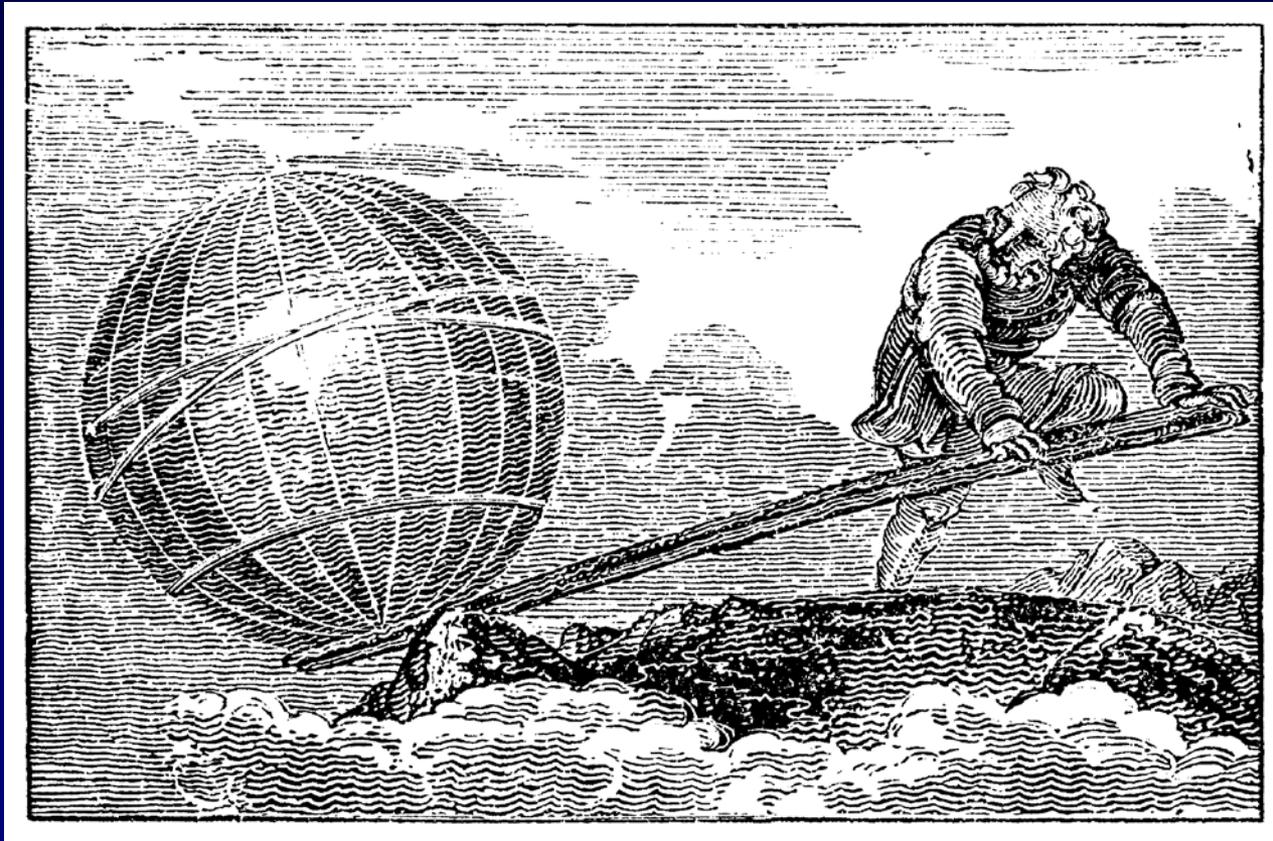
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Consider the strength/weakness of your ties to different audiences

- ❖ Strength of your connections varies, and expected outcomes vary, too
 - » Awareness
 - » Consideration
 - » Decision to collaborate, invite, include
 - » Advocacy through their own work



Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum on
which to stand and I shall move the world.
Archimedes



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Leverage internal resources

- ❖ Communications staff at
 - » HSR&D, ORD
 - » medical center and academic affiliate
- ❖ Your center administrators
- ❖ Colleagues and potential collaborators across VA
- ❖ VA operations leaders and policy makers



Leverage external resources

- ❖ Identify and inform communications staff:
 - » Like-minded organizations with active communications vehicles
 - » Editorial staff at journals
 - » Professional organizations
 - » Veterans Advisory Board at your site



Give them what matters to them

- ❖ Announcement of newly-funded work
- ❖ Results
- ❖ Impact on clinical/operational systems
- ❖ Publications, presentations, awards
- ❖ New collaborations
- ❖ Mentions of your work in other media



What do they want to know?

- ❖ Impact on Veteran health and healthcare
- ❖ Include Veteran human interest story if possible
- ❖ Consider your research findings in terms of implications for:
 - » Clinical care
 - » Operations
 - » Policy



Cautionary Note

- ❖ You are not authorized to reach out directly to the media or elected officials. Contact the Public Affairs Officer at local or regional VA
- ❖ Your communication does not necessarily represent the views of the VA or the US government.



Audiences at different steps on the road

❖ Communication leads to:

- » Awareness
- » Consideration
- » Decision
- » Advocacy



Hub and spoke communications



Tools -- email

- ❖ According 2018 benchmark report by GovDelivery's:
 - » 85% of people send and read email daily
 - » Email metrics:
 - 21% public sector open rate
 - 18% private sector open rate
 - 16% non-profit sector open rate



Elements to improve email

- ❖ Subject line is the #1 driver of the open rate
- ❖ Other factors include sender information (aka strong ties/weak ties), time of day, quality of distribution list
- ❖ Don't create clutter – consider your call to action, keep your message simple, link to more information
- ❖ Keep those links at the top of the page



Web site

- ❖ Golden rule: web traffic is not linear. Users rarely start on a homepage unless you provide that link. Most visitors enter terms/names in a search engine.
- ❖ Maximize the quality of your on-line presence
- ❖ Ask organizational communicators about their meta-data and search engine optimization strategies



Newsletters, bulletins, updates

- ❖ Craft consumer-friendly version of your aims, abstract, study results to provide to communicators for their existing vehicles
- ❖ Take advantage of opportunity to link to other sources:
 - » YouTube are most likely to be shared and clicked
 - » Twitter likely to be shared but not opened
 - » Pinterest 2nd highest click rate but not for our audience!



Consider the context

- ❖ Open rates and click rates are very high for these topics
 - » Veterans
 - » Science and research
 - » Education



Create something to measure

- ❖ Stay focused on your call to action
 - » Click on a link?
 - » Share with others?
 - » Invite you to present or speak?
 - » Contact you with their questions or progress?



Measure and assess

- ❖ Consider your most important audiences and reflect on what methods were useful and effective
- ❖ Communications habits and trends develop over time (eg, live Tweeting national academic meetings!)
- ❖ Once or twice a year, ask your key partners if your information is useful



Coming up in this series

- ❖ 10/15/2018 Writing for a Lay Audience
- ❖ 11/19/2018 Dissemination Strategies
- ❖ 12/17/2018 Using Social Media Effectively



Your questions

- ❖ Carson Connor Clark: carson.clark@va.gov
- ❖ [VA CHERP](#)
- ❖ <https://www.vapulse.net/people/carson.clark@va.gov>
- ❖ 215-823-4159



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