

What are the challenges of communicating research projects trans-nationally and how do you manage this communication?

Communicating trans-national research

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The project and empirical surveys

- PhD project: “Internet communication and organic research networks”
- The project is a co-operation between the Institute of Information and Media Studies, University of Aarhus and DARCOF
- Objective: How the internet can be used to support trans-national science communication between the research community and stakeholders
- Empirical surveys: How is the internet used for organic science communication, who are the users and how do they use the net?

Why is this relevant for you?

- The internet offers great possibilities for international research communication
- Different web tools will be presented today
- Still, there are some things you have to be aware of when you use the internet for science communication
- My studies can give you some input you might consider when you plan the communication of your project

The empirical methods used

- Exploratory study
 - Web statistics: CORE Organic website, QLIF website, SAFO website and EISfOM website
 - Databases of newsletter subscribers: QLIF news, CORE Organic news, SAFO news and DARCOF news
- Web-based questionnaire survey
 - Among subscribers of the QLIF and CORE Organic newsletter
 - Distributed by e-mail and submitted by 514 respondents
- Qualitative interviews
 - 16 interviews with researchers and stakeholders in Denmark, Germany, United Kingdom and Italy

Many different target groups

- There is no one joint target group for organic research
- There are a lot of different interests in organic research and different needs for research-based knowledge
- My studies provides information on four kind of users:
 - "experienced" organic researcher
 - "Newcomer" organic researcher
 - Advisers
 - NGOs

Personas

- *Persona*: A fictive user who represents typical characteristics of a larger target group
- A method used within web communication and web design
- Advantages of personas:
 - Introduces to a hypothetical user who has a name, personal characteristics and habits that you can use for web design specifications
 - Stand-in for characteristics that represents a larger group of users
 - Gives you a sense of the users need for knowledge and how your web communication can support these

Gustav – "experienced" organic researcher

- His work varies: teaching, office work, visiting research farm, working at home
- Internet use: E-mail and information search
- E-mail: communicates with colleagues on national and international level
- Searching for: literature for research papers and to keep up to date with the research
- Searching for a specific purpose
- Uses Google, ökolandbau.de, Fibl and organic eprint
- Uses EU-project websites that he is involved in
- Grey literature is of interest but difficult to find
- Language is often a barrier
- Combines internet search with international network contacts
- Newsletters are irritating and time consuming
- Prefers to look for information himself through internet and his network



51 years old
Germany
Martin-Luther-University in
Halle-Wittenberg
Interest in organic
research: livestock health
and welfare

Michael – "newcomer" organic researcher

- Working day varies: teaching, office and laboratory work
- Background in conventional research
- Uses the internet for his scientific articles and for keeping up to date with the research
- Google, international journals online: conventional research + natural sciences and sometimes DARCOF website
- Is not aware of any EU project websites of organic research
- There is not much organic research to find on the websites of the international journals he usually uses for research
- Within the conventional research area he has a large international network that he communicates with through e-mail
- Doesn't have an international network within organic research



42 years old

Denmark

Faculty of Agricultural
Science, University of
Aarhus

Interest in organic
research: Plan nutrition

Greg - organic adviser

- Work: advising consultants and farmers through field visits, seminars and writing articles
- Hasn't got much time to look for and read scientific articles
- Needs short and condensed description of the research
- Applied research
- Google, DEFRA website and Soil Association
- Often finds it difficult to find the knowledge he needs because a lot of the websites are too research-oriented
- Knows some of the EU project websites but doesn't use them
- Old and poorly up-dated websites is a big problem
- Would like to have more contact with advisers in other countries
- Contacts researchers to get another perspective on the research
- Interested in grey literature because he can get access to the research a lot faster
- Finds it difficult to overview the research that is going on



45 years old

United Kingdom

The Biodynamic
Agricultural Association

Interest in organic
research: adviser in
vegetables

Isabelle - environmental organisation

- Work: political lobbying and communication of information on nature and environmental issues to members and the general public
- Part of her work is to keep up to date with relevant research
- Interested in short descriptions of the results
- Knowledge for specific assignment
- Internet search is the primary source for knowledge - hasn't got time to read books and articles
- Google and some national websites
- Doesn't use any international research websites
- Is not familiar with any of the EU project websites
- Newsletters are a good way to keep up to date
- Subscribes to a lot of different newsletters from different Italian stakeholder organizations
- Scans the newsletters



39 years old

Italy

Legambiente

(environmental org.)

Interest in organic research: nature and environmental issues

What do you have to consider when communicating trans-national research?

- Think of your target groups when you develop the communication
 - What kind of interest do they have in organic research and what are their needs for knowledge? (personas)
 - How do you reach them?
- Don't expect that the users will discover and use your website automatically
 - Social networks are important for internet use
 - Get in touch with the target groups through their 'virtual communities'
- The users love gray literature
 - Faster way to communicate research than peer reviewed publication
 - All kinds of research is allowed
- The web page should not replace and exclude other means of communication
 - A lot of users are requesting more direct and 2-ways of communication

What do you have to consider when designing a web page?

- Think of your user when you describe your project and results
 - What is relevant for your target groups to know when they come to your website?
 - How is the research project relevant for them?
 - Be careful not to make it too research oriented
- Make the web page as simple as possible and easy to overview
 - A lot of users come to the website while looking for something else
 - They will only visit the website once if it is difficult to overview
- Update it frequently
 - Don't have old and outdated information on your web page
- Not everyone will read your newsletter at once
 - Make it possible to search the newsletter
 - Make it obvious from the front page
 - Reach the users through their virtual communities
- Provide contact information
 - Users are often interest in more information on your research or another angle
 - Reliability