

Final reporting on the workshop; Capacity Enhancement through Scientific Communication: Information Portals in Vietnam

Details of the event:

Vietnamese workshop on Capacity Enhancement through Scientific Communication: Information Portals in Vietnam, Central Institute of Economic Management; 19 August at CIEM, Central Institute of Economic Management, Hanoi

Organizers were:

Chief Librarian and IT-adviser Anja Møller Rasmussen, NIAS Nordic Institute of Asian Studies

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Main objectives of the conference:

The main objectives of the workshop were to give an introduction to the concept of scientific communication, networking and information portals and touch upon a series of relevant issues such as:

1. The potentials of improved research communication in relation to different stakeholders
2. Promote the use of research results by policy and decision makers: how to facilitate dialogue among researchers, decision makers, and other involved stakeholders in order to embed research results in a Vietnamese context
3. Strengthen dissemination of research results to a wider audience – to present strategies for disseminating research results to broader audiences by using collaborative tools like information Portals (e.g.: research communities, local communities, private sector and international decision makers and research funders)
4. Most problematic are the gulfs between the people who commission research, the people who conduct research, and the people who the research is meant to benefit. Effective research communication can be challenging, so why do it?

Through the use of Open Space Sessions the general ambition was to identify burning issues and hot topics such as what are the issues, ideas, possibilities and opportunities, etc. around communicating effectively in research projects and networks; do portals still have a role to play and how do we use it as a collective tool and as a networking entity?

Key issues from the presentations and Open Space sessions:

Four rounds of Open Space sessions and five key note speakers were introduced during the workshop.

The Open Space Sessions aimed to develop communication skills, build strategies and make practical products.

The four main themes for the Open Space Sessions and the key note speakers were:

1. Creative approaches to scientific communication; how to enhance capacity through communication and dissemination
2. New ways of making information partnerships work.
3. Collaborative working tools, sharing knowledge resources by using Portals and other forms for information infrastructure
4. The power/culture issues; private sector, state and information needs

A fifth key note speaker addressed the economic consequences/knowledge economy of research communications based on UK experiences.

During the Open Space Sessions web 2.0 tools like Twitter, Facebook, and blogs were used for communication between the different sessions. Unfortunately bad Internet connections prevented the groups to use the tools in an efficient way.

Summary of conclusions:

Less lost more Portals

It is imperative to disseminate results from the projects and ongoing research. During the last decade communication forms and possibilities has change dramatically

Today research output is been made available through several channels; That is what the audience our user will expect

Communication infrastructures was defined as:

- Print and electronic journals
- Portal including social networks
- Web sites
- Books and working papers
- Seminars and workshops
- Informal channels

So back to the basis: communication is not a single information structure - it is a complex process of several outlets all put together as one strategy.

Realistic we need a broader and collective view at communication. The polling of the different outlets is imperative for a professional communication profile; research and researcher visibility; reuse of information and knowledge

The communication of science is no longer simple dissemination, but rather a process in which different players produce knowledge, messages, attitudes and new practices. Science plays a fundamental role, but in this process many other actors want to have a say, including the media, institutions, civil society, private sector, and the general public.

In the research programmes funded by the DANIDA, DFID, EC and others, projects are contractually required to include communication in their strategy and the expertise is freely and publicly accessible. Today communicating is considered a strategic function by the majority of organizations which identifies them, justifies them and the invested budget, allows them to gain consensus and to obtain additional resources and grow.

A feasible approach to research communication need to be based on four premises:

People respond not to the world as *you* see it, but to the world as *they* see it. They frame your issue in their mental pictures of the situation.

Effective communication starts with hearing and understanding rather than talking and trying to convince. We know in our personal lives that the more we know about someone, the more effective we can be in communicating with him/her. This is no less true in a public setting, but it is more difficult.

Communication is what the receiver does. Until and unless your "message" is heard and understood by the persons you are trying to reach, it is just noise. There are no magic bullets. There is no single channel or information structures that are going to connect with everyone.

Communicating is an activity per se and should be carefully planned as it has consequences in terms of financial and time expenditure. Accessing professional training and updating on new information and communication tools is necessary.

Communicating should be envisaged as a continuous and regular activity rather than an ad hoc event. Access to new available knowledge and new opportunities offered by the Internet and web 2.0 tools should be followed

In order to communicate your research results in an effectively way, you will need to develop a communication strategy with the adequate resources and tasks allocation.

Issues for follow up:

The workshop organizers will work on publishing parts of the papers as a special issue of Vietnams Economic Management Review.

A f2 day follow up workshop involving more researchers will be organized in March 2011

DDRN

The financial support from DDRN was mentioned in the programme, at Vietnam Economic Portal with logo and acknowledgement, in the welcome speech and during an interview with Vietnamese TV. All workshop participants received the flyer from DDRN in their workshop folder.