

# Disseminating Standards Effectively: Conceptualizing Communications Plans to Enhance Adoption

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**Abstract:** *The standards community should have a well-conceived, clearly-documented, and ubiquitously-practiced communications skill-set, structure and system. Research has found that one of the most insidious failures in technical work is the pernicious absence of effective communication of the findings and analysis of the effort. This paper opens with a brief review of formal, informal and anecdotal evidence of the dearth of effective communications that is severely constricting the transfer of the research insights and emerging technical capabilities. A short transition section will discuss the applicability of these observations in regard to the efforts of the standards community and of the conduct of combined operations of multi-national alliances. This section will identify and discuss the impact of technical, metrical, and cultural differences across the globe and across the various degrees of industrial development. The next section will outline the Organization Behavior disciplines of Communications Management and Systems Engineering to refresh the readers' familiarity with terms and concepts of those two academic subjects. The underlying theoretical foundations, rubrics, heuristics and practices will be surveyed and considered. Some major actions involved will be addressed: establish goals, define stakeholders & audiences, identify data-flows, create dissemination strategy, create materials, set milestones and implement communications. Then the paper turns to the needs for standards in research and the quantification of the results obtained. Then a more extensive section presents early observations of this issue within the community and offers a "straw-man" description of what such a plan may look like, using virtual human issues as a prototypical emerging technology. This section is not presented as a formal proposal or even as a validated plan, but as a starting point for consideration of developing and validating such a plan in the immediate future. The final major section will be an analysis of the impact such a communications management plan could have on the concerned professionals, from basic researchers, through developers, to implementers, via early-adopters and finally to the users in general. In each case a cost-benefit analysis will consider both the benefits of the approach and the costs imposed in terms of funds, focus and physical efforts. Also included is a suggestion as to how such a plan could be pursued and a realistic look at what impact that may have on the community, based on decades of experience with similar efforts. The conclusory section will consist of a review of the underlying fundamentals, observed current conditions and the futures with or without such an effort.*