

NRCEN Session 1/D Notes:

April 13, 2007

Dan Steinberg – MRSEC, ERC, USAMI

Marni – In a way, she's here. Her contributions.

Education vs. outreach, important distinctions

Help educate this country, more science literate, communicate science and what we do, that's what we're here for.

Press, public relations, images, photographer! Multi task, communicate, write press relations, websites, etc. Highlights (nuggets)

Hoping that we all learn how to do all this better

Bob – MRSEC in Pasadena

Product generated from this session, chosen speakers from important areas, interested in focusing on first principles from experts in particular areas, Marv (printed words), Rita (Images), Image and Meaning conferences, use of images, visual communication, web

Second session, please stay for the second session, as centers we're responsible for communicating research as well as with our funders, what are the model practices in designing highlights to max effectiveness, guide written by education directors for education directors from experts and NSF, education and research highlights, treated separately, but there are some similarities, all to be contributors, on tablet, write name and affiliation, (distribution on web and to others), questions on tablet for the end of the session, answer as many as possible, but also use for guide

Participants:

Diana, National Center for River (University of Minn)

Christine Morrow Boulder MRSEC,

John Whitmer (NISE)

Jennifer Weil (Cornell Nano Bio Tech)

Mary Poats (NSF)

Leyla Conrad Materials Devices (Georgia Tech)

Diana Palmer (NINN, Georgia Tech)

Jean Alley (Vanderbilt)

Gary Webber (U Kansas)

Mark Benthien USC SCEC)

Eileen Sheiu (Chicago)

Diane Swanboro

Nora Co PI Environments U of Washington

Gary Widdard UA Sustainable Water

Marvin Coyner ACS (largest scientific society)

Rita Tavilla (Harvard)

Marvin Coyner:

Nancy couldn't be here (sick)

Jill's 5w's – we are translators, spot on

Science to audience

Not a lecture – ask questions,

What do you need to make your job easier and more effective

What? Do you have to offer and what do you want to achieve

Georgia Tech – what do you want to communicate to the public – researchers – it would take days, mainly organics, photonics, electronics, chemists, 50% chemistry, 3 universities, 35% engineering, OLEDs, Device applications, what does that mean to the public – LEDs energy consumption and lifetime of source

Has applications that the general public can relate to. What does it mean to my mom in Baltimore? That's what you need to keep in mind – why should your audience care

What do you hope to achieve in communicating? Recruitment of graduate students (Christine Morrow)

Diana – funders what to see results

Nora – research in learning in informal audience, audience includes researchers in science to teach better

Eileen – general public to know we're doing something cool that excites – what beyond that

Mark – earthquakes, take action to save lives

NINN – workforce development

Jennifer – additional funding

What are you contributing to society, quicker LEDs, earthquake prediction,

Contribution to local economy – important to reporters, doesn't have to be in science section, may be a story in business section, also want to emphasize science

RELEVANCE is the key

Newspaper clipping PUMA, what did it take to get it in the paper, relationship with the reporter

Dan – Trenton is close, we found that for us, for us to write our own press releases, there is a lot of turnaround at the paper, Trenton Times, there is a different reporters, fax press release, we're more qualified to write them, we know the science and we know the program, found the relevance

Competing with lots of people for stories, not just an interesting story, relationship with news source, contact information to talk to the reporters, send something that stands out

Kids and dogs sell, local, community impact, world impact

Call reporter, are you on deadline? Am I interrupting you? They really appreciate that. Understand they're busy.

Who is it that you want to reach? Target audience? Possible students, funders, public at large, parents, congress, etc. Identify ahead of time, multiple targets, but be aware of who you're writing for. More precise the better, be aware that people outside target will see, pass the neighbor test? Would it make sense to my next door neighbor? Refrigerator test – would someone put it on their refrigerator? At a paper, there was an editor with an actual refrigerator door in his office to post interesting story

Christine – highlights, multiple audiences, how does one go about shaping highlight, cool factor... different outlets for different targets, if the general public will see it, have a version like a news story, as well? Two versions? Highlights on their own, small, not necessarily get a story in the paper, this is press releases, not highlights, but both require 5ws, Dan - use your own press release for the highlight,

Public Relation Offices – some are good, some are not, don't ignore them, access and relationships with reporters, know what they want, they can help you target, but you may have to do it all yourself, Dan – don't ask, don't tell, sometimes, send it to office as well,

Mary Poats – maybe need to make sure the press office knows about , dangerous to put stuff out that hasn't been cleared

Dan – we don't put anything dangerous in there

Bob – relationship with office,

Marv – office isn't the expert, there may be things they don't want out there, they might help to tone down jargon, don't ignore them

Mark – work with lots of institution, use the office for contacts, with each new reporter, have to educate them to not make it USC focused, and get everyone proper credit, focus on collaboration, but be careful not to forget to mention USC

Why should people care what you're doing? Why should you communicate? Relevance! WIIFM What's in it for me? Sometimes there should be something for everyone, obligation to garner public support, help public see why they should support science research, wisely spend taxes, NISE – we want to reach practicing researchers, mission – education and impact, trying to get people to implement research, doesn't matter if you learn and don't apply, Applications important, achievements, Jill mentioned internal and external audiences, publish!

Diana - If you don't communicate, only negative stuff will come out, if you don't give your input,

Marv – if you have a relationship, the reporters will call you in there is a negative tip to get the straight story,

Headlines often don't match, reporters don't necessarily write headlines, copy editor,

Dan – reporters taking notes, Marv – often writing notes on who to talk to next, things to research later, Dan – how do they get stuff so wrong sometimes? Marv – some reporters do have an agenda beforehand, reporter isn't obligated to vet it past you, but sometimes, they'll ask you what your agenda is, sometimes you can offer, but they won't necessarily follow, mostly they won't

Controversy – establishing the relationship will help avoid

Prepare talking points, can drop in “That's a good question, but did you know...” You can direct the conversation a bit

Become familiar with media – read the papers and pay attention to reporters, news releases, calendar announcements, often newspapers have their contacts listed somewhere, television, need something that will look good on camera, photo ops, activities going on, radio remotes – radio station comes to event, advertise – requires money, but you have more control. Press releases are not advertising,

Press release 5Ws, old style, but effective – inverted pyramid, first sentence all the important information to hook, descending importance; tip sheet, bullets of 5Ws, essential facts,

Other vehicles: newsletters, open houses, speeches, science fairs, visits, business community, government, make sure you're not stepping toes, Mary Poats – movies, video clips, radio spots, public service announcements, podcasts, youtube,

Diana – Uminnesota science buzz

Rita – Picturing the message

Pictures are a powerful tool for communication, not as easy as you'd think

Early stages of communicating message using an image, there are some questions

What is your message? (ambiguity is bad), if there are going to be nontechnical people there, have a nontechnical person help

Who's your AUDIENCE!! (technical, mixed)

Test on people for feedback

Recognition – people get it

Confirmation that it's effective

Brief, Clear

Sometimes a message doesn't need a lot of words, takes a lot of work to refine

People's reactions are very interesting

Chessboard – Harwick, Bauhaus, great for someone who doesn't know how to play chess because the moves are indicated on the pieces

Color – powerful tool, Red vs. Blue, Hot vs. Cold, different for everyone, cool serene, vs. oppressive, people are coming from different points of experience, important to understand their background, who's going to see it? Educators, corporate, etc.

Hot cold, statue, vs. hot sauce ad, untraditional image

Some organizations have very set way of communicate, may need to think outside the box and push the envelope, beyond boundary to communicate

Snow coming through door, literal

Hot (red) glass, abstract

Nora – different culture what do you do if your audience is mixed

Rita - need to consider that, you have a responsibility to understand those cultures, need to research possibly misconstrue
Interpretation depends on experience

Christine – tutorial, print commercial advertising, is there a place to go for information on how to use color? Is there a reference?

Rita – not really, experience is the best, but even if there was one, it wouldn't be reliable, because people aren't that predictable. Communication Arts – cutting edge imagery, wonderful articles

Gary (UA), visual display of technical information – Edward Tuftee (Visual Display of Quantitative Information) seminars on effective images, get three books,

Nora – lots of centers work with artists, people are resources, Felice Frankel,

Bob – Image and Meaning products, good resources

Christine – looking for guidelines, there has been research done, is it available?

Audience is going to interpret it differently

Devil is in the detail – Renoir – details on coat design, hands are not that well defined, details on something the audience isn't familiar with, people already know what a hand looks like, don't waste your time explaining something everybody knows already

Eileen – often work with research without pictures, explain to someone who doesn't know what it is, will come up with their own visualization, maybe someone can describe that to you and use the visualization for other people. What images come to mind? Maybe useful.

Dan – what if the expert doesn't like the image, how do you convince the person to agree to use it?

Talk it out, take time to work it out

Green Blue – Pattern, want to touch it, Felice's, drops of colored water on grid, appeals to someone who doesn't know what it is, makes you want to know. Engaging image that provokes discussion.
(sometimes hard to find)

Dan – image is more compelling because of the aesthetics, arrangement, diagonal, black space behind

Bald guys – Alopecia – doesn't require a lot of color or content, Mapplethorpe – human, engaging, touching, tough in our field, but sometimes still possible, humanity, reactions

Hands in surgery – human element, engaging, serious, basic understanding, medical, not necessarily, teamwork, collaboration, time, lots of interpretations, don't discount images at first glance, may be value in unexpected places,

Program cover – a lot of people at Harvard were afraid of this because it was not traditional, Harvard can be very conservative, not used to this, initiative is a non-traditional institute, this symposium was a fundraising tool, not talking down to the experts, but still not leaving out the non-experts.

Video

IIC – disseminate findings of computing...

Astromed – astronomical medicine

Collaborating with scientists

Astronomy and Medical – similar in image analysis

Astronomy – mostly 2D, velocity – 3rd dimension, slices like an MRI, more complete understanding and new discoveries

Good length of time – 5-6 minutes

So many tools out there that a crew isn't necessary, camera work, editing, etc.

This video took 2 months to produce; shoot was 2 days, story board, script, etc.

Lots of discussion, the shorter it is, the longer you need to spend working it out