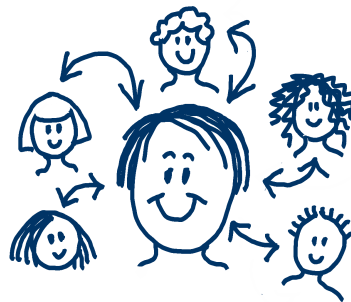


HOW DO YOU MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR COMMUNICATIONS?

Communications are almost always works in progress – and so too is their evaluation. First up, it's obviously important to know what you want to achieve and how you'll reach your goals.

But how will you measure success in engaging and positively impacting your key stakeholders?

People often measure what is easiest, including so-called 'vanity metrics' on social media, such as 'likes' or 'impressions'. Email newsletter distribution services can report who opens newsletters and how many times they forward them. Media monitoring agencies can provide statistics to show that one story has reached a certain number of consumers.



But say you are quoted in a media outlet that reaches one million people, or you have hundreds of thousands of followers on social media, or you are frequently posting content that inspires loads of reactions. Does this really give you the answers you need? For example:

- Who 'likes' you? Who are your followers? Have you been able to cut through the noise and encourage people to apply your information in practical ways?
- Can any of your work be attributed directly to a major shift in government policy, incremental industry changes or re-framing of public narratives?
- Has media exposure of your work resulted in new industry or research partnerships? Has it attracted more students to your courses?
- Would a stakeholder consider using you as an expert researcher, speaker or consultant?

If you really want to dig down further, check this list of potential indicators from the book *Communicating Your Impact with Social Media*.

Dissemination: how many people are coming across your work:

- Reach of media content
- Listens or views of content on external sites
- Number of downloads or pageviews on project website
- Growth of followers on social media
- Retweets or shares from other influential social media accounts
- Mainstream media mentions (with estimated audience figures)
- Reposts on external sites
- Percentage of web traffic from social media
- Newsletter subscribers.

Engagement: online and in-person conversations stemming from your dissemination efforts:

- Range of content targeted at multiple target groups
- Likes, shares and comments on social media
- Mentions on social media from research beneficiaries
- Number of comments received
- Other blogs or websites linking to your content
- Time spent on page compared with other media
- Case studies of external partnerships
- Workshop attendance with diverse range of participants
- Sentiment analysis of social media related to research product.

Impact: demonstrable change resulting from either dissemination or public engagement:

- Reuse of data or software in another setting
- Invitations to speak at conferences and workshops
- Policy or decision-makers mentioning research
- Industry partnerships or spin-offs based on research
- New collaborations emerging from research communication
- Effects on local/global community

For more tips, visit <https://abdc.edu.au/abdc-communications/tips-to-improve-communication/>