



Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

ROSS Gemini Centre
NTNU/SINTEF

Current Themes in Risk Communication

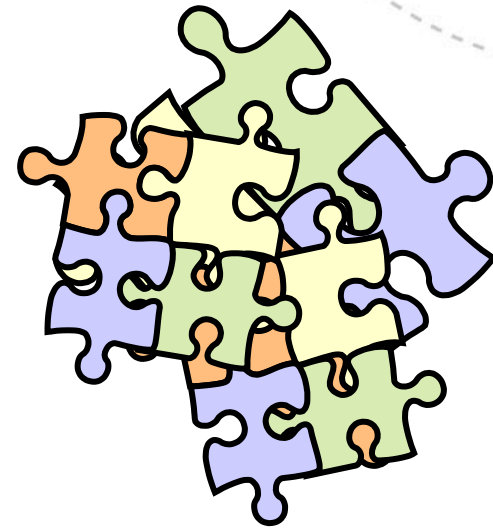
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Communication: Interested parties

- Authorities; regulators
- Authorities; local implementers
- General public; target groups
- Industry; producers
- Special interest groups
- Media
- Independent experts



Overview: Communication frames of reference

Regulations, recommendations, control

Media; news, information, commentaries, etc.

Branding, culture, health and safety, consumer satisfaction, etc.

Intergroup structures, work efficiency and work satisfaction, etc.

Group dynamics, leadership, coordination, goal efficiency, etc.

"Personal chemistry", individual skills and abilities, interaction patterns, "climate", etc.

Cognitive capacities, emotional reactions, "mental modelling", heuristics, biases, etc.

BASIC level; values, ethics, definitions, validity, etc.

Societal level

Corporate level

Organisational level

Groups, teams

Interpersonal level

Individual information processing

Overview: Communication frames of reference

International treaties; international corporations; media availability, communication technology, etc.

International level

Common regulations; Implementation, harmonisation; comparisons; cooperation, etc.

European level

Regulations, recommendations, control

Societal level:
national

Media; news, information, commentaries, etc.

BASICS; values, ethics, definitions, validity, etc.

Areas of communication research related to:

Regulations

- Limits; doses, thresholds, etc.
- Prevention natural disasters; flooding, etc.
- Industrial enterprises; energy, transport, dams, computerization, etc.
- Consumer products; mobile phones, children's toys, etc.

Recommendations

- Use and non-use in relation to regulations
- Health promotion; food products, vaccination, etc.
- Safety enhancing behavior; travel, leisure activities, etc.

Research trends

In Communication policy

- "Risk based" or "risk-informed performance based" approaches
- Increased interest in preparations for communication in catastrophic events: natural events and terrorism
- Comparisons of "international systems" (e.g. EU and US) evaluation, management and information of hazards

In Media and risks issues

- Providing risk knowledge to inform citizens
- Modulating public acceptability of different risks
- Motivating the public to take responsibility for, and action regarding, risks
- Providing imaginative schemata regarding voluntarily chosen risks

(Bakir, 2010)

Research trends

In Communal & organisational contexts

- Use of new interactive technologies
- Development and integration of "local" risk-(ROS-) analyses to larger, transboundary, fields
- Human (and technology) interaction patterns and efficiency
- Conflict prevention and resolution

In Psychology

- Relationship cognition (ability, information load, knowledge, etc) and emotional reaction (stress, fear, aggression etc)
- Mental models (various actors) & models predicting behavior
- Group / team / leadership communication efficiency
- Comprehension and behavior (under uncertainty or stress)
- Social processes; trends, trust, attitude change, etc.

European trends; projects

- **Knowledge-based approach to develop a Culture of Risk prevention (From 2011-01-01 to 2013-12-31)**
 - The KULTURisk project aims at developing a culture of risk prevention by means of a comprehensive demonstration of the benefits of prevention measures, especially water-related disasters, such as floods and landslides, and involves **efficient risk communication and warning methods, as well as active dialogue** with and between public and private stakeholders.
- **Food Risk Communication. Perceptions and communication of food risks/benefits across Europe: development of effective communication strategies (From 2010-06-01 to 2013-10-31)**
 - FoodRisC will characterize key configurations of food risk/benefit relationships and the consequent **implications for risk communicators**, make recommendations about the unique potential of new social media (e.g. social networks and blogging) and provide a systematic understanding of how consumers deal with food risk/benefit information.

European trends; projects

- **Designing Evidence-Based Communication for Elderly Consumers in Financial Distress** (accepted)
 - To facilitate the transfer of the fellows internationally acclaimed expertise in behavioural economics, financial planning, and the design of financial education and counselling interventions into Europe, first, **to use of principles of risk perception and risk communication to assess** asset decumulation, debt management and financial planning strategies of European consumers in old age
- **CAPHAZ-NET - Social capacity building for natural hazards: Toward more resilient societies** (From: 2009-06-01 To: 2012-05-31)
 - To identify and assess existing practices and policies for social capacity building in the field of natural hazards and to elaborate strategies and recommendations; ... to develop and apply a conceptual frame for institutional learning and transfer of existing knowledge and best practice into action, so that stakeholders and policy makers would be included in the main activities of CAPHAZ-NET **to enhance and foster communication between the scientific community, practitioners and policy-makers**

European trends; projects

- **OPTI-ALERT - Opti-Alert: Enhancing the efficiency of alerting systems through personalized, culturally sensitive multi-channel communication** (From: 2011-01-01 to: 2013-12-31)
 - to develop an alerting tool that (a)allows for a rapid simulation of the **impact of different alerting strategies** (depending on the selected media-mix and ...
- **E-COM@EU - Effective Communication in Outbreak Management: development of an evidence-based tool for Europe** (From: 2012-02-01 to: 2016-01-31)
 - Although scientific knowledge to respond to outbreaks has increased, deficiencies remain in **the ability of health authorities to communicate** the need for large-scale measures such as vaccination and ...

European trends; projects

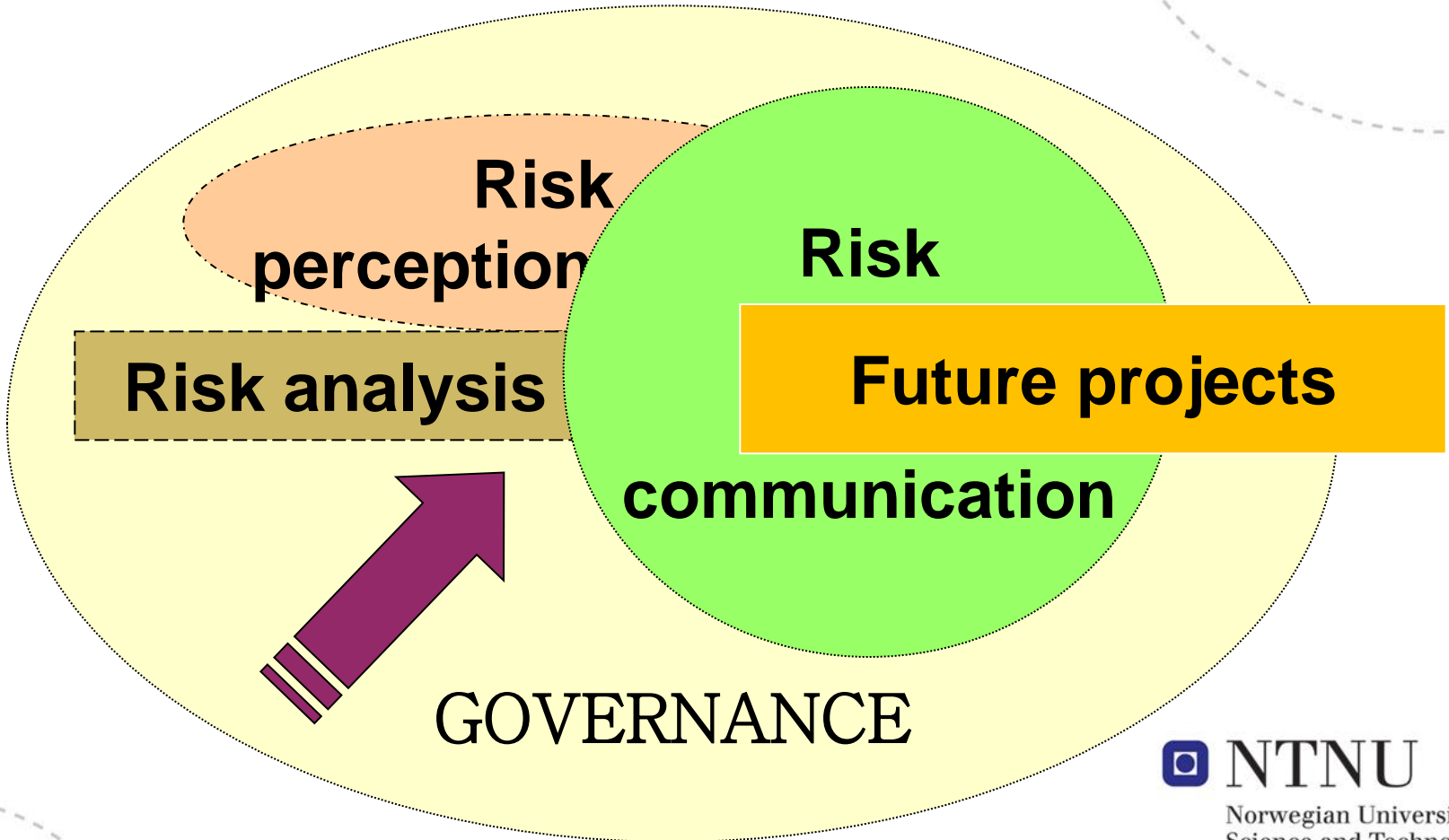
- **TELL ME - Transparent communication in Epidemics: Learning Lessons from experience, delivering effective Messages, providing Evidence** (From: 2012-02-01 to: 2015-01-31)
 - a 36 month Collaborative Project, which aims to **provide evidence and to develop models for improved risk communication** during infectious disease crises.
- **PROMISE - Protection of consumers by microbial risk mitigation through combating segregation of expertise** (from: 2012-01-01 to: 2014-12-31)
 - strives for **multidimensional networking thus fostering integration**; strives for **sustainability through involvement of risk communicators**; to **integrate stakeholders** like public health authorities and national food safety authorities from the old and new member countries in order to ensure the exploitation of research results into standardisation and harmonisation efforts.

European trends

- **GMO Risk Assessment and Communication of Evidence** (from: 2012-06-01 to: 2015-11-30)
 - a) elaborate and sustainably implement a transparent framework for the review of GMOs or GM food and feed effects on environment, socio-economics and health and b) reconsider the design, execution and interpretation of results of animal feeding trials as well as in vitro studies for assessing the safety of GM food and feed. This will **provide valuable and accessible information addressing** the main issues associated with GMOs and enabling risk assessors, managers, scientists and the general public to reiterate and update their evaluations and conclusions on GMOs.
- **TRIMAP; Mapping Terrorist Risk Perceptions Comparatively** (from: 2011-10-01 to 2013-09-30)

Illustration of merging research areas

Time



Recommendations (Lofstedt, 2013)

- Strengthen the communication departments of food regulators
- Training regulatory officials in risk communication
- Media communication guidelines
- Neutral third party experts
- Risk communication advisory boards
- Promote Science-based food regulation
- Separate Science communication from public relations

Conclusions



- Increasing number of fields and hazards are approached strategically for risk management and societal sustainability
 - From science areas (e.g. volcanoes, landslides, nanomaterials, etc), technological infrastructure (e.g. various networks, city planning, transport) to health issues (e.g. spread of disease, food and feeding issues), demographic developments, socio-economic development, consumer preferences, individual beliefs, values and behavior, social (change of) values, etc.
- Increased collaboration between disciplines in most types of projects
- Emphasis in EU projects on building knowledge (data-)bases, widespread dissemination of results, harmonisation of standards, to achieve "resilience", etc.
- Integration of communication issues in most projects

Implications

- Experts (especially) must learn efficient communication but also others, because
- Communication is the key to managing risks and societal development

