



ELIXIR Communications strategy workshop

11 December 2015, Cambridge, UK

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Introduction

The Communications strategy workshop will provide a forum for an ELIXIR-wide consultation on existing challenges and priorities in ELIXIR communications; the discussions and outcomes will provide basis for developing the ELIXIR Communications Strategy.



Meeting objectives

- To make a significant progress towards developing a common ELIXIR communications strategy. Discuss and agree on key aspects of the Communications strategy.
- Build stronger links between people working directly in communications across ELIXIR infrastructure
- Learn from each other's experiences of ELIXIR communications and share best practices

Agenda

9.00-9.20	Welcome and introduction (Andy Smith)
9.20-9.45	ELIXIR Communications - current state, presentation of the ELIXIR Communications strategy (Premysl Velek)
9.45-10.30	Good practice presentations Slots for short (max 10 minutes) presentations and discussions from volunteers amongst the participants, on their specific experiences in communications and best practices. The volunteers can choose their own topic.
10.30-11.00	Coffee break
11.00-11.45	Breakout sessions
11.45-12.15	Presentation form the Breakouts - discussion
12.15-13.15	Lunch
13.15-14.00	Breakout sessions
14.00-14.30	Presentation form the Breakouts - discussion
14:30-15:00	Coffee break



15.00-15.45	Breakout session
15.45-16.15	Presentation from the Breakouts - discussion
16.15-16.45	Summary of the event and its outcomes, agree on next steps (Andy Smith)
16.45	End

Breakout sessions

The purpose of the breakouts is to discuss in smaller groups and come back with a set of recommendations for further discussion. The breakout session co-leads will ensure smooth running of each session and will report back afterwards. Each meeting participant has been pre-assigned to a breakout group.

The topics of the breakout sessions reflect both the results of the pre-event surveys (the interviews and the online survey carried out) and the practical need to drive the development of the ELIXIR Communications strategy. They all relate to a specific section of the proposed strategy document, the outcome of the discussion will ideally be a list of recommendations for this section - all written, together in one (i.e. shared by everyone at the meeting) Google document.

The description of the breakout session below, give a brief introduction to the topic and suggest a few questions to be discussed.

The outcomes of the discussions will be presented to the whole group (in the following 'plenary' session). Each breakout group will briefly summarise their discussion and list briefly its proposed content. The recommendations are then open to discussion within the whole group.

If you think there are some important topics missing, you can suggest an additional topic. Please contact Premysl V. at premysl.velek@elixir-europe.org.



Morning session: 11.00-11.45

1. ELIXIR mission statement and key messages

A mission statement communicates the purpose of an organisation. They are normally short and simple statements defining and outlining the organisation's goal and how they are connected to the organisation's target audience.

A good mission statement answers the following questions:

- What you do
- For whom
- What's different about the way you do your work
- Impact you make
- Unique benefit derived from your activities

Key messages build on the mission statement and provide the necessary proof - concrete examples on how the organisation's target groups can benefit from it. The key messages are tailored to each specific target group and respond to most common questions.

ELIXIR has been using several messages and 'boilerplate' texts:

Boilerplate:

ELIXIR, the European life-science infrastructure for biological information, is a unique and unprecedented initiative that consolidates Europe's national centres, services, and core bioinformatics resources into a single, coordinated infrastructure.

ELIXIR brings together Europe's major life-science data archives and, for the first time, connects these with national bioinformatics infrastructures throughout ELIXIR's member states. By coordinating local, national and international resources the ELIXIR infrastructure will meet the data-related needs of Europe's 500,000 life-scientists.

Open access to bioinformatics resources provides a valuable path to discovery. ELIXIR is identifying core data resources that are essential to the larger international community and is developing a robust framework to secure their long-term sustainability and accessibility.

Taglines:

Building a sustainable European infrastructure for biological information, supporting life science research and its translation to medicine, agriculture, bioindustries and society.

A distributed infrastructure for life science information

**Question to discuss:**

- Do these statements communicate well ELIXIR goals and activities?
- Do they need to change?
- What would a ELIXIR mission statement look like? What would be ELIXIR key messages?

2. ELIXIR stakeholders - target groups

ELIXIR has three primary target groups:

1. Bioinformaticians
2. End users - life science researchers - biologists
3. Policy makers / funders

Questions to discuss:

- How do we define our target groups?
- Do we understand their needs and challenges in dealing with biological data.
- What is our goal in relation to communications to those three target groups? What do we want them to know about ELIXIR and why?
- Are there any important groups missing?

In 2014 ELIXIR Hub commissioned a user research project to better understand the needs of life science researchers (biologist). The report is available at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/oB7btK9HAXhx1OERqVnVPQmpMVVE/view?usp=sharing>

The report can provide some initial ideas on how to define our target audiences and how to position ELIXIR in relation to each target group.

3. Branding (of ELIXIR services)

As distributed infrastructure, ELIXIR services are provided by multitude of research institutes, all across Europe.

Questions to discuss:

- How can we ensure that all ELIXIR services are recognisable as part of ELIXIR?
- How can we make sure that are target groups connect those services with ELIXIR?
- In most cases ELIXIR brand sits on top of the brand of the specific organisation providing the services. How can we strike the right balance between those two?
- What should be the minimum requirements for an ELIXIR service / ELIXIR Node / ELIXIR event in terms of branding?



Afternoon session I: 13.15-14.00

4. Websites

As a distributed organisation, ELIXIR is presented on many different websites. Some Nodes have developed (or are planning to develop) a dedicated website for ELIXIR, some others present ELIXIR on the website of their institutions.

ELIXIR Hub has been developing a dedicated theme for ELIXIR and a out-of-the-box Drupal installation of it. Throughout 2016 it will be gradually deployed across the network.

Questions to discuss:

- Given these variety of approaches, should there be any common requirements in terms of design or content?
- Can we come up with a common requirements for content and structure of an ELIXIR website (e.g. a news section, events calendar)?
- What kind of support form the Hub is needed to develop and maintain an ELIXIR website
- How we should best share and exchange the content published on different websites across ELIXIR?

5. Social media

Question to discuss:

- How to ensure synergy and information flow between various social media account across the ELIXIR network.
- What should ELIXIR social media guidelines look like? What are the best practices in using social media in science communications?

6. Newsletters and mailing lists

ELIXIR Hub sends out weekly internal newsletter, quarterly external newsletter and an email update to ELIXIR industry partners (with irregular schedule).

- As the recipients of the internal weekly newsletter - how can the internal newsletter be improved? Is it the right format? and content?
- How do we source content for those newsletters? - both from the Nodes to the Hub and from Hub to Nodes
- What are the best practices in email communications? In terms of periodicity, content, design, format

7. Conferences attendance / public engagement

Question to discuss:

- How can we ensure ELIXIR is presented at all important meetings and conferences, both at international and national level?
- How to best coordinate the conference attendance across the ELIXIR network?
- Should we have a central calendar to collect all the conference where ELIXIR will be (or was) presented?
- What are the requirements of the Nodes when presenting ELIXIR at a conference (banners, stands, posters, leaflets, slides...)

Afternoon session II: 13.15-14.00

8. Outreach to industry

Outreach to industry is an important part of the ELIXIR communications activities, the ELIXIR Hub runs the Industry and SME programme, many ELIXIR national Nodes run their own dedicated activities for industry in life science research.

Questions to discuss:

- What is the best venue to engage industry (dedicated meetings, conferences, training)
- How can we demonstrate value of ELIXIR to industry?

9. Information exchange within ELIXIR / ELIXIR Communications network

To keep the discussion alive and drive the development of the Communications strategy, we plan to establish a network of communications experts across the Nodes. This network will serve to regularly exchange information about communications activities within ELIXIR and provide venue to discuss ELIXIR communications in general.

Questions to discuss:

- What questions should be discussed within this group (press releases sign off, leaflets and print publications, branding,...)
- What should be the scope of the network?
- What should be the next steps in developing the Communications strategy? What should be the follow-up on this event?



10. Good practices in setting up national communications / Reaching out to user communities

Some Nodes have already established communications channels and structures; some are in the process of doing so. The ELIXIR can support this process and provide guidelines and training (if necessary).

Questions to discuss:

- What are the best practices?
- Can we come up with a set of recommendations on how to reach out to user communities at national level?
- What are the resources needed to establish an effective communications
- How to build a national bioinformatics community?

Breakout groups

Participants have been assigned to particular breakout sessions. However, they are free to switch the sessions, if they think some of the topics are more relevant to their roles and expertise in ELIXIR. Contact Premysl V. at premysl.velek@elixir-europe.org if you want to change the sessions assigned to you.

Morning session: 11.00-11.45

1. ELIXIR mission statement and key messages

1. Mary Todd-Bergman
2. Vicky Schneider
3. Sara Light
4. Nicole Doelker
5. Frederik Coppens
6. Premysl Velek

2. ELIXIR stakeholders - target groups

1. John Hancock
2. Terri Attwood
3. Manuel Corpas
4. Ilkka Lappalainen
5. Pavel Dvorak
6. Brane Leskosek
7. Femke Francissen



3. Branding (of ELIXIR services)

1. Maren Veranneman
2. Mascha Jansen
3. Dimitris Kafetzopoulos
4. Hedi Peterson
5. Andy Smith
6. Nils Peder Willassen

Afternoon session I: 13.15-14.00

4. Websites

1. Pavel Dvorak
2. Terri Attwood
3. John Hancock
4. Dimitris Kafetzopoulos
5. Premysl Velek
6. Femke Francissen

5. Social media

1. Sara Light
2. Frederik Coppens
3. Manuel Corpas
4. Nicole Doelker
5. Mary Todd-Bergman

6. Newsletters and mailing lists

1. Maren Veranneman
2. Hedi Peterson
3. Vicky Schneider
4. Mascha Jansen

7. Conferences attendance / public engagement

1. Andy Smith
2. Ilkka Lappalainen
3. Brane Leskosek
4. Nils Peder Willassen



Afternoon session II: 15.00-15.45

8. Outreach to industry

1. Andy Smith
2. Ilkka Lappalainen
3. Frederik Coppens
4. Dimitris Kafetzopoulos
5. Brane Leskosek
6. Vicky Schneider

9. Information exchange within ELIXIR / ELIXIR Communications network

1. Mary Todd-Bergman
2. Premysl Velek
3. Mascha Jansen
4. Nicole Doelker
5. Maren Veranneman
6. Sara Light
7. Femke Francissen

10. Good practices in setting up national communications / Reaching out to user communities

1. Terri Attwood
2. John Hancock
3. Pavel Dvorak
4. Hedi Peterson
5. Manuel Corpas
6. Nils Peder Willassen

Venue

Buckingham House Conference Centre
Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge
Huntingdon Road
Cambridge
CB3 0DF
UK

<http://www.murrayedwards.cam.ac.uk/>

Participants are kindly asked to arrange their own accommodation and transport.



Contact

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Participants

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Sara	Light	ELIXIR Sweden
Brane	Leskosek	ELIXIR Slovenia
Manny	Corpas	ELIXIR UK
John	Hancock	ELIXIR UK
Femke	Francissen	ELIXIR Netherlands
Ilkka	Lappalainen	ELIXIR Finland
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