

Ensuring effective steering the dissemination function based on actionable monitoring

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Abstract

As a statistical organisation, Eurostat does not have a limited number of big communication campaigns to plan and evaluate but a multitude of data releases for which we create dissemination products on different channels. In such a context, the question is how to effectively steer the dissemination function based on actionable monitoring?

Monitoring is key when it comes to ensuring the effectiveness of our Communication and dissemination strategy. The process underling our monitoring of dissemination activities is: Monitor – Evaluate – Adapt.

We conduct three kinds of monitoring – activity measurement, channel monitoring and qualitative analytical monitoring. This monitoring is carried out through a number of means – user surveys, user research, usability testing, user dialogue (hearings, focus groups, advisory committees, peer reviews, support, user feedback, social media, etc.), and error reporting.

Using the results of this monitoring, we evaluate our communication activities against performance indicators (clearly linked to communication objectives) and assessing whether these objectives have been reached.

Based on these evaluations, we then adapt our communication products and services.

The paper will outline important elements to ensure an effective steering of the dissemination function, such as the link to the Communication and dissemination strategy and the need to focus on user expectations. The monitoring system needs to be comprehensive, covering a multitude of products and channels and if possible users groups. Monitoring needs to go beyond output indicators, also including meaningful result and impact indicators as well as qualitative user feedback. Targets need to be realistic and ambitious. Progress is monitored on a regular basis to take corrective action if necessary. Monitoring and evaluation activities also allow for the identification of trends.

The paper will also discuss the difficulties of setting up an effective monitoring system. These include the multitude of products and channels to be followed, evolving trends and user expectations, the lack of benchmarking, and the difficulty to obtain user input to measure the impact of our actions.

Given the difficulties, the importance is not to have a fixed system, but to remain agile and refine the metrics over time. The monitoring system has to be actionable and acted on, not a one-off exercise for the preparation of the annual reporting. It has to be an integral part of the management of the dissemination function.