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Abstract:	The purpose of this document is to set out how the HBP Communications team will lead and coordinate dissemination of information about activities of the HBP to its different key audiences. Topics covered include target audiences and their concerns, the impact we wish to achieve, constraints on our communications, our communications aims, strategy and organisation.		
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## 1. Executive Summary

The Human Brain Project (HBP) Communications Team is responsible for disseminating the Human Brain Project's activities to its internal and external audiences. The team at EPFL in Switzerland is charged with coordinating the communications effort with the entire HBP consortium, including the European Commission, and for procuring external consultants to help develop the HBP brand when appropriate. The broad goals of the dissemination plan are to support the execution of the HBP, while communicating its achievements at all levels of the HBP's multi-disciplined initiative.

At full strength, the HBP Communications Team will comprise a Chief Communications Officer, a Communications Coordinator, two Design Specialists, a Science Copywriter and at least one individual responsible for communications at each HBP partner. External resources such as creative agencies and museum consultants will also be utilised to manage the HBP communications effort.

The HBP consortium's internal communications management is broad and decentralised. The management systems that the communications team in Switzerland are putting in place will maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of our communications dissemination, while supporting the overall execution of the HBP and communicating its achievements at all levels to a global audience.

The development of a brand identity and a multi-level message platform, accompanied by instructional tools and a training program, will prepare all HBP consortium members to implement professional communications dissemination in a variety of formats. These tools and preparation will be supported by a data-driven strategy for audience segmentation, content development and media management.



## 2. Introduction

Today's communications environment is complex. Much of the message control is in the hands of the public, via social networking communities that move faster than most organisations can manage. The organisational approach the HBP communications team is taking to keep up with a continuously changing communications landscape is a blend between centralised and decentralised management that is intended to provide guidance, support and empowerment to all HBP partners.

The communications team will provide an organised, disciplined and professional approach towards disseminating the Human Brain Project's (HBP) research, educational and organisational activities.

The development of a brand identity and segmented message platform will drive HBP's image. To attain a consistent image over time, a training program will be designed and delivered to all HBP consortium members on proper usage of HBP brand elements. A constantly evolving constituent database will be utilised to target audiences with HBP branded content through strategic distribution channels and a public relations strategy.

The dissemination of HBP content through a multi-level message platform and communications system is meant to attract and inspire consortium members, and maintain a continuous conversation with all of HBP's constituents that informs and educates them about HBP's activities. A multifaceted message structure is critical due to the unique challenges of communicating brain research within a multidisciplinary project that has sensitive ethical issues and potentially large social impacts to manage.

The following communications dissemination plan outlines the aims, audience segments, desired impact, and organisation of the HBP communications strategy.



## 3. Aims

The communications dissemination strategy focuses on organising, building support, creating excitement and simplifying complexity, to create a sense of ownership throughout the project and to provide guidance and support to the entire consortium's communications efforts. It aims to support the execution of the HBP while communicating its achievements at all levels of the HBP's multi-disciplined initiative.

The aims of the HBP communications dissemination strategy are:

- To communicate efficiently and effectively the targeted outcomes of all the levels of the HBP to a multifaceted audience by developing standardised communication and branding mechanisms.
- To organise the internal and external communications needs within the project utilising risk assessment strategies, customer relationship management tools and staff development techniques.
- To simplify the complexity of the project and its messages, its audiences and the appropriate media channels by adopting a multi-level segmentation strategy.
- To build support for the HBP throughout our internal and external constituents by communicating the project's multidimensional benefits to society.
- To nurture a shared value environment within the consortium by creating balanced visibility and sense of ownership for all HBP partners and creating a two-way, group communications system for collecting and providing strategic HBP input and materials.
- To create excitement about the project throughout a global audience via informative, educational and entertaining content.



## 4. Audience

The audiences listed below represent the major audience segments that should receive specific and targeted content about the HBP. These segments will be further broken down as necessary (e.g. general public - adults, children, adolescents) as we identify strategic needs throughout the project.

- Internal HBP partners (institutions, researchers, communications teams, etc.)
- European Commission
- Governments and politicians
- Non-government agencies (NGOs)
- Academic institutions
- Relevant industry executives
- Private philanthropic organisations and individuals
- General public
- Scientific community
- Media organisations

## 5. Audience Concerns

The following audience concerns represent priorities for the communications dissemination strategy:

- The proper organisation and management of the project.
- Equity among HBP partners.
- Significant visibility for the project, its activities and its successes.
- The breadth and diversity of the project.
- The balance between European and global participation.
- The economic and health implications for society.
- Ethical issues raised by the research.
- Transparency of the project's activities.
- Educational aspects of the project.
- Innovation driven by our research and its commercialisation.
- Science fiction-type fears.

Other concerns will be identified as we monitor the reactions to our strategic messages and will be incorporated into our strategy throughout the project's duration.



## 6. Desired Impact

Our goal is to project an image that represents an international, organised and collaborative research effort driven by Europe that is attempting to unify our understanding of the human brain. In addition, we want to project an image that the HBP research also contributes significantly to global economic and health issues. A few key perceptions that we wish to encourage about our research are:

- An image that evokes technological innovation.
- An image that we are moving toward personalised patient treatments.
- An image that the HBP research will contribute to alleviating health costs.
- An image of global collaboration.
- An image of innovative neuroscience research.

## 7. Constraints

The HBP communications dissemination strategy's major constraints are the size, diversity and complexity of the HBP. The following constraints illustrate some of our critical challenges:

- The project is a large and diverse operation, regardless of whether you measure it by partner institutions, principal investigators, researchers, subprojects, governments or funding groups. This makes it more difficult to coordinate actions across the whole.
- Complexity: the many moving parts within such a large project make it more difficult to manage consistent HBP messaging.
- The project consortium's decentralised management system makes it more difficult to ensure that institutions and individuals adhere to policies and procedures.
- We operate in an increasingly complex communications environment that gives more and more control to the public over propagation of messages about our project. The value associated with audience-generated messages is variable and is more difficult to manage.
- The public fear propagated by Hollywood that artificial intelligence could get out of humanity's control in the future makes it essential that we are careful about who we let produce content and how we distribute our research and science.
- Communicating complex science in language that the general public can understand.





## 8. Strategy

The following HBP communications dissemination strategy describes the elements that will support an organised, content-rich, branded approach to supporting the execution of the HBP and informing its constituents about HBP's various achievements and outcomes of the entire HBP. There are five main strategic areas to consider: (1) the overall strategic approach, (2) the organisation of the communications team, (3) the development of content, (4) the delivery of project information, and (5) the measurement and reporting of the communications effort. Additional details regarding these five main strategic areas are given below.

### 8.1 Strategic Approach

The strategic communications approach emphasises five strategic themes (listed below) that are intended to achieve an effective level of consistency for a continued and powerful HBP brand reputation. A consistent brand effort is meant to maximise the support of the project's execution, while strategically informing the project's constituencies of all levels of HBP achievements.

- 1) Attract and inspire: captivate the HBP's constituents and motivate them to support our efforts through consistent messaging of the HBP's impact on society.
- 2) Build upon the project's current communities: expand interest in the HBP to include other sciences, governments, universities, industries, NGOs, the general public and the media. Establish the HBP as the authority on brain research.
- 3) Manage the conversation with HBP constituents: utilise our brand identity and architecture, constituent database and other resources to maximise our communications effort.
- 4) Reach constituents in their existing communities and natural environments: engage HBP constituents during peak times in their information gathering, decision making and entertainment consumption, driven by a science centre/museum dissemination strategy that will make HBP content available through these outlets.
- 5) Develop communications systems to gather and distribute critical HBP information throughout the consortium via various organisational mechanisms, such as a communications collaboration portal within [www.humanbrainproject.eu](http://www.humanbrainproject.eu).

### 8.2 Organisation of the Communications Team

#### 8.2.1 Organisation

At full strength, the HBP communications team will comprise of a Chief Communications Officer, a Communications Coordinator, two Design Specialists, a Science Copywriter and at least one individual responsible for communications at each HBP partner. Student interns will be utilised to help manage high-intensity production activities such as event management. External resources such as creative agencies and museum consultants will also be utilised to manage the HBP communications effort. In addition to the communications team members, project managers and communications specialists from the European Commission will coordinate with and support HBP's dissemination efforts.



## **8.2.2 Training Architecture**

The training activities listed below address how to support our consortium partners by providing them with an effective level of understanding of the HBP communications systems, including how to use the HBP brand elements as they become available. In addition to the brand standards manual listed under the brand identity strategy, online and onsite training programmes will be designed and delivered during the second half of 2014.

- A mixture of online and onsite training programmes that help HBP consortium members understand the brand architecture, message platform and brand elements use will be designed and delivered. The training programme will add modules as feedback is collected and assessed on completed training modules.
- One critical area of focus will be how to communicate effectively the HBP's benefits to different audiences, with particular attention to the general public.
- Word choice, tone and visual identity are critical components. All HBP consortium members must learn to use these properly in order to maximise message consistency.
- Public speaking workshops will be offered to consortium members who are not comfortable with public speaking. These will be conducted in different geographical locations, as appropriate.

## **8.2.3 Constituent Database**

Development of a constituent database will start in 2014. It will continue to be updated on a regular basis during the duration of the project. Characteristics of the initial constituent database will include.

- Multiple levels of segmentation to optimise the mapping of constituent needs with the HBP's message positions.
- Segmentation by research area, subproject and constituent interest.
- Correlation to a media database.
- Links to appropriate websites such as [www.humanbrainproject.edu](http://www.humanbrainproject.edu) and other communications systems, including a media database and media monitoring system.

## **8.3 Content Development**

### **8.3.1 Brand Identity**

The HBP brand identity supports the desired impact of the HBP communications dissemination strategy. A coordinated effort is needed to support the consortium with the development and use of the HBP brand. The following items are being developed to help guide and support our partners' communication and branding activities, and hence to maximise brand consistency:

- A new logo that visually represents the HBP's multi-level, collaborative nature was created for the launch of the Human Brain Project in October 2013.
- A brand standards manual to maximise a consistent brand identity by instructing consortium members on the proper use of logos and other identity elements. This will be published and distributed electronically in the second quarter of 2014, and will be updated periodically as the project's branding systems expand.



- A standard presentation package for all HBP consortium members, including a high-level HBP PowerPoint presentation, HBP brochures, HBP pull-up banners, backdrop banner and current news, will be developed for delivery in the second quarter of 2014.
- An HBP letterhead and business cards will be designed and made available during the second quarter of 2014.
- A brand architecture model that illustrates how all groups, projects and researchers relate to one another within the HBP's brand portfolio will be developed in the course of 2014.
- A new, "branded" Geneva headquarters close to the United Nations is being designed for the HBP Switzerland site move at the end of 2014.
- A brand materials production and ordering system will be launched during the second quarter of 2014 and incorporated into the HBP communications collaboration portal.

The timeline is fluid for much of the brand identity development and partner distribution, as the creative process is naturally iterative and evolutionary. However, a new logo and supporting material, such as a PPT template, were created for the HBP launch in October 2013. A fine-tuning process for the logo and other identity items will take place during the first half of 2014, and iterations will evolve over the duration of the project as needed.

### **8.3.2 Message Platform**

The HBP messaging platform will evolve as environmental conditions shift during the life of the project. However, the following strategic message activities will be completed during the first half of 2014.

- The HBP speaker pool will be outlined and segmented by vision/mission, research area, country and language. This speaker strategy will evolve continuously as needed.
- Message positions are being developed and segmented by vision/mission, research benefits, public benefits, organisation, etc.
- Message positions will be correlated distribution channels, audiences and the constituent database.
- Message positions will be compared to other large-scale brain projects to ensure that the HBP maintains its position of authority.

### **8.3.3 Branded Content**

We will pursue a highly branded content strategy that will inform, educate and entertain. This will drive our creative message development during the project. A combination of in-house communications personnel and external agency expertise will share in the development of branded content focusing on the following points.

- Content that provides the appropriate weighting to all HBP partners.
- Content focused on researchers, research area, subprojects, institutions, countries, funding partners, research benefits, societal benefits, and other subjects identified as appropriate during the project's evolution.
- Educational and informative content will be driven by a science centre/museum distribution strategy.
- Content for institutional publications such as annual reports will focus on the quantifiable success of the project.



- Wherever possible, we will communicate the project's progress through stories and create content for a variety of sizes and formats.
- We will make emotional and rational connections with audiences to maximise the positive responses of our constituents.

## 8.4 Delivery of Project Information

### 8.4.1 Media Planning

The following media planning activities represent strategic priorities for the HBP media strategy. A segmentation approach will be applied to the media strategy that correlates message strategy with distribution outlet. We will use media monitoring data to evaluate the effectiveness of particular media outlets and adjust our plans on a continuous and evolving basis. Critical elements of the media planning activities include:

- Segmentation of communications channels by constituent interest and information needs.
- Development of a conference and events scheduling / speaking opportunity management system for the entire HBP consortium.
- Development of a public relations system, to be updated as external conditions demand. We will involve EPFL Mediacom, the European Commission and consortium partners' communications teams in the HBP's PR effort.
- Creation of a journalist database and building of personal relationships with critical journalists by appropriate consortium partners.
- Monitoring global HBP and other appropriate science news and disseminating it to HBP constituents.
- Amplification of the HBP brand image through media outlet management. Online systems will be incorporated to collect information and push content to a diverse set of media distribution channels including social and traditional media.
- Maximisation of message control through the development of the organised systems outlined above.

### 8.4.2 Digital and Social Communities

Although digital media will be critical in telling the HBP's stories and monitoring their pickup, we will still utilise other communication formats diligently. However, the use of digital communications is efficient and effective because of its social, emotional and expansive reach, and will be emphasised in our communications dissemination. We will utilise dynamic and interactive strategies that will be tied to the HBP website. The development of digital communications will begin in the first half of 2014 and continue with an iterative treatment throughout the life the project.

- We will redesign the website in 2014 to fit our new brand identity and to create a content-rich environment that illustrates the HBP as the authoritative source for information on brain research and diseases of the brain.
- The website content will be dynamic, interactive and comprehensive regarding all elements of the HBP and its benefits to all of its constituencies.
- We will implement a Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) strategy to attract online users to HBP websites.



- We will organise/segment social networks and use our constituent database to correlate relevant HBP messages to appropriate segments.
- We will constantly monitor social networks to maximise the effectiveness of our message platform.
- We will adapt our branded content to exploit cutting edge technologies including mobile and other portable devices.

### **8.4.3 Public Education**

Public education is a critical aspect of the HBP communications dissemination strategy. We plan to adapt much of the HBP content to inform and educate the public about our sciences and the social impact of our research. The HBP science centre/museum programme will be a major driver of our public education efforts. Activities planned for 2014 and beyond include:

- Developing and supporting a global science centre/museum programme in conjunction with the planned Geneva “Neurosphere.” The HBP Neurosphere will comprise of an area reserved for scientists and a teaching area open to the public.
- Organising a system for site tours of the HBP Geneva campus and the Neurosphere. The Neurosphere will become a prime destination for tourists, conference delegates and employees of Geneva’s many international organisations.
- Designing a Geneva office visitor centre where visitors can visually engage with our project through an interactive power wall and exhibit space.
- Managing external producers of documentaries and other content developers interested in relaying our stories to the general public. It is important to carefully assess the quality of proposals for documentaries and other formats.
- Supporting the HBP Education Programme as necessary.
- Designing a publication strategy that provides both scientific and non-scientific audiences with appropriate information via standard vehicles such as annual reports and white papers.

### **8.4.4 Internal Communications**

The communications office will support and manage the following internal communication efforts:

- Creation of a communications collaboration portal that can be accessed through [humanbrainproject.eu](http://humanbrainproject.eu). This collaboration portal will be linked with EMDESK for reporting functions, but will also offer a user-friendly experience for submitting and collecting a full-range of consortium information.
- Supporting administrative communications needs with necessary material development.
- Creation of a communications system that segments our consortium into appropriate and effective groups such as subproject leaders, communications personnel, and research areas.
- Utilisation of social networks to enhance the HBP consortium community.
- Development of a digital HBP news/magazine, to be launched in 2014.
- Development of the HBP consortium communications teams’ network, comprising communications personnel in all the partner institutions and areas of the HBP.



The activities listed above are initial efforts identified for 2014. The internal communications effort will develop as needs are identified throughout the life of the project.

## 8.5 Measurement and Reporting

The following types of tools will be used to measure and report on HBP visibility and message dissemination.

- Google analytics: This will be used to generate detailed statistics and reports about humanbrainproject.eu's website traffic, user behaviour and traffic sources.
- Global media monitoring: With this, we will track relevant online and traditional media coverage, listen to social conversations, monitor other brain initiatives coverage, and measure PR and communications effectiveness. Our media monitoring will be based on carefully selected search terms. While these will vary depending upon specific situations, we will utilise a core set of terms such as "brain initiative", "human brain project" and "karlheinz meier" for regular monitoring and reporting.
- Online meetings management: We will streamline and automate a process to provide visibility for all consortium events and meetings. We will create an online system to capture information about all consortium meetings through a customised form and maintain a central repository for all meeting and event data hosted or attended by our consortium members. Quarterly reports will be generated.
- We will encourage HBP Partners' communications managers to report systematically via our EMDESK online management information system.
- We will generate detailed monthly and quarterly communications reports, and disseminate these to the internal HBP constituents.

The specific tool types above will be launched in 2014 and executed throughout the duration of the project. Additional tools will be added as necessary.



## 9. Timeline

The following chart provides an overview of the major communications activities during the Ramp-Up Phase of the HBP. When the shading moves from light to dark, this illustrates a higher level of activity in the area concerned.

	Q1: 2013	Q2: 2014	Q3: 2014	Q4: 2014	Q5: 2014	Q6: 2015	Q7: 2015	Q8: 2015	Q9: 2015	Q10: 2016
Staffing										
Training Program										
Database										
Logo										
Brand Identity										
Additional Branding										
Message Platform										
Branded Content										
Media Plan/Dissemination										
Website Redesign										
Science Centre Programme										
Communications-Collaboration Portal										
Measure/Report										

Table 1: Overview of Communications Activities in Ramp-Up Phase



## 10. Conclusions

The communications dissemination plan aims to build support and create excitement among the HBP's internal and external constituents worldwide, to organise and simplify the complexity of the HBP communications environment, and to communicate efficiently and effectively while nurturing a shared value environment throughout the HBP consortium.

The communications team will create a global and consistent brand identity with a messaging platform segmented by audience and researcher. A training programme will be designed and delivered to educate members of the HBP consortium how to use HBP brand identity elements. In addition, a multi-level constituent database will be built to support all media planning activities, including public relations. Branded content will be produced for all media including digital, social, print and public outreach activities. The team will support a variety of internal communications activities and encourage rigorous reporting by HBP Partners' communications staff.

The HBP is a large organisation with many moving parts. It has a complex, decentralised organisational structure that demands sophisticated communications management. A dynamic outside of our control is the complex external communications environment where message control is shifting from organisations towards the general public. This increasing lack of control increases the need for professional communications management. Hollywood's appetite for encouraging fears about artificial intelligence increases the difficulties for our message management. These external dynamics demand that a professional and organised communications dissemination approach is taken for the HBP.

We want to attract and inspire the HBP's constituents, build upon the project's current communities and manage the conversation with the HBP's constituents by reaching them in their existing communities and natural environments. To support these efforts, we will develop a communications system to collect and distribute critical HBP information throughout the consortium in an organised, disciplined and professional manner. All planning and execution of communications is designed to support the execution of the HBP, while communicating its achievements at all levels of the HBP's multi-disciplined initiative.