ATECENTRAL

Outreach Kit

For an online version of this document, please visit

https://atecentral.net/OutreachKit

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ATE Outreach Kit: Overview

The National Science Foundation (NSF) requires grantees to demonstrate broader impacts in an effort to ensure the NSF's mission: "To promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense; and for other purposes." This means that an outreach and dissemination plan is a critical tool for fulfilling the requirements and goals of your Advanced Technological Education (ATE) grant. Fortunately, outreach and dissemination is not only a requirement, but also likely to support your project's success and sustainability.

In educational communities like the ATE program, the terms "outreach" and "dissemination" are often used interchangeably to describe activity that brings the experiences, knowledge, expertise, and information of your ATE project or center to a wider audience. The terms cover similar ground: outreach is the effort to connect with or to extend a benefit to a wider population; dissemination is the broadcast, circulation, or spread of information. But in actual use, they're a bit different: outreach implies audience engagement or a two-way communication between sender to receiver, while dissemination is a more one-way communication from sender to receiver. In practice, outreach and dissemination can take many forms, such as public talks, lab visits/tours, school or conference presentations, white papers, workshops, and more. The most effective plans incorporate several forms: a white paper that coincides with a press release and a conference presentation, for example.

On this site, we provide an "Outreach Kit" that includes paths for dissemination. You'll find ideas for outreach and dissemination in the **Planning**, **Social Media**, and **Communications Guides**, as well as the section for additional **Resources** at the end.

Your organization's mission and available resources will guide your individual outreach plan, but all ATE projects and centers share three basic goals:

- Promote the project or center's research findings and work to peer groups, educators, students, and the public at large.
- Share and grow the excitement of science and technology with the project or center's institution's body of administrators, faculty, and students, as well as industries and other key stakeholders.
- Stimulate discussions and interest in important educational and technological issues addressed or introduced by the project or center.

Now that you're ready to show broader impacts, where do you begin? Get started with the ATE Outreach Kit, including guides, tips, tools, and templates.

Getting Started

The ATE Central Outreach Kit is organized into four parts:

- The **Planning Guide** helps your project or center define, plan, and execute outreach goals. The guide includes project management and assessment tools.
- The **Social Media Guide** provides a thorough introduction to some types of social media, how your project or center can make use of social media, and how you can use social media for your own professional development. In addition, we've collected a list of the ATE Centers and Projects that are using social media, along with some ATE partners and collaborators, so that you can easily find examples of best practices, professional development, and staying in touch with the ATE community.
- The **Communications Guide** provides an overview of how to develop your project or center's outreach messages, how to pitch your project or center (and what you do) to various media outlets, how to build your own Media Kit, and which outlets may be best suited to your project or center—including outlets within the ATE community and NSF.
- The **Resource Appendix** collects PDFs of important documents from throughout the Outreach Kit as well as links to best practices within NSF and the ATE community, free and low-cost outreach tools, helpful links, and suggested reading.

ATE Outreach Kit: Planning Guide

Overview

Getting Started

The planning guide should help you get your outreach efforts started on the right track.

Having a good plan in place will help your organization effectively track impact, increase participation, and make a case for sustainability. An effective plan will also help you communicate your organization's unique and compelling story to your audience.

Outreach works best if you integrate your efforts throughout your organization's entire planning process. Support for outreach may start at the leadership level, but all levels of staff should be kept in the loop.

The Planning Guide

The Planning Guide is organized into three sections:

- Use **Best Practices** to identify specific practices that lead to more effective outreach;
- Use the **Outreach Practice Assessment** guide to help evaluate your organization's current practices and needs; and
- Use **Sample Assessment** to see how ATE centers and projects could use outreach.

Outreach Best Practices

This review will help you identify specific practices that lead to more effective outreach. Every group should consider conducting these steps, whether they have a staff of two or twenty.

Step 1: Audit Current Outreach Practices

The first step is understanding your project or center's current outreach efforts and capacity. An informal audit will help you assess your practices and provide a snapshot of your efforts to date so that you can build a plan going forward. You'll learn what's working and where you want to improve. We recommend a system for auditing your practices and performance at the end of this overview.

Step 2: Develop an Outreach Strategy

This second step will help you determine the purpose and scope of your organization's outreach efforts. Here you identify your messages, audience, goals, and collaborators. This is the "Why" of outreach planning.

1. **Identify the collaborators**. Who is leading the outreach effort and what contributors are necessary to its success?

2. **Identify your organization's mission and/or messages**. Describe the basic content in one paragraph (or 90 seconds) or less. Your outreach message should align with, but be distinct from, your project or center's mission. (Please refer to the Communications Guide for help in developing your project or center's message.)

3. **Define target audiences**. Audiences should be specific and include key stakeholders, decision makers, and individuals, industries, or groups with influence.

4. **Define strategy**. What's the big idea (purpose/scope) for connecting your audience with your message?

5. **Scan the marketplace**. What opportunities, challenges, or other variables could affect the success of your strategy? Are there any conflicts with dates or competing news?

6. **Define goals**. Create specific and measurable targets or metrics for your strategy.

7. **Draft a brief**. Capture all of the strategic information (covered in points 1-6) in a 1-2 page document and use it to communicate your plan throughout all levels of the organization. See Sample Brief in the Case Study for ABC Education that follows for an example of how to complete this step.

Step 3: Establish an Outreach Plan

This third step is to devise a *realistic* and *achievable* outreach plan. Here you will create a timetable, budget, and workplan. This is the "How" of outreach planning.

1. **Select promotion channels**. Social media, publicity, e-mail, conferences, etc. are all examples of potential channels for finding an audience and delivering your message. Factor time into your decision, as some channels require longer lead times than others.

2. **Develop tactics, activities, and tools**. Tactics get the job done. What specific tactics will support your strategy and goals? Prioritize tactics and identify activities and tools for each promotion channel. For example, a tactic might be to promote your project through conference presentations, the first activity might be to identify conference proposal deadlines, and you would utilize a tool such as a timetable or workplan to meet those deadlines.

3. **Create a timetable**. Establish a promotion timeframe, noting important milestones, dates, and contingencies. Once you've developed tactics and activities, identify who is responsible for each piece of the plan and assign deadlines.

4. **Create a budget**. Identify what resources (staff time, money, technical infrastructure) are available and how to maximize them.

5. **Develop messages**. What are you going to say to your audience in the various channels? What is the elevator pitch for your project (90 seconds or less)? What are your talking points? These elements serve as the basis for press releases, flyers, postcards, and other standard communications. (Please refer to the Communications Guide for pointers.)

6. **Identify spokespeople**. Messengers should be viewed as credible by your audience(s), should be comfortable with extemporaneous writing and speaking, and don't have to be limited to project or center staff. They should be readily available.

7. **Create a workplan**. Expand your timetable to include tactics, activities, and tools along with deliverables and staff assignments. This is your day-to-day project management document. Be sure to update it frequently, noting what's complete, pending, and canceled as you go.

Step 4: Ensure Outreach Execution

This step will help you make certain that your best-laid schemes do not go awry.

1. **Use project management tools**. Successful project management utilizes a strategic brief; a workplan with deliverables, milestones, and roles assigned; and a budget. Be prepared to revise based on emerging opportunities and evolving priorities.

2. **Create and maintain promotional materials**. Materials should be created for a specific purpose or distribution and in a variety of formats. Printed elements might include a one-

sheet or handout describing your project, a brochure, a postcard, etc. Digital elements might include a website, blog, or e-mail. Consider how these materials will be regularly updated and made accessible to staff.

3. **Build partnerships**. Create and foster relationships with internal and external stakeholders (faculty, industry, program officers, etc.) who can help refine and improve your outreach practices and mission and amplify your efforts.

4. **Train spokespeople**. Once you've identified messengers, they should be trained in key communications and have the materials they need to deliver consistent messaging.

5. **Develop consistent and timely communications**. Does your workplan include a regular series of target audience contacts? Are you looking for opportunities to tie in with important milestones, news, and events? See the **Communications Guide** for help with "what makes news" and working with media outlets and other dissemination paths.

Step 5: Evaluate Your Outreach Efforts

It's tempting to let this step slide. Don't. This is how you maintain quality throughout your outreach efforts. It's also critical in determining next steps.

1. **Measure effects**. What data can you gather to show the effects of your outreach activities? Evaluate, either quantitatively or qualitatively, as much of your outreach activity as possible. Gather hard data such as website activity or e-mail metrics as well as informal anecdotes and testimonials.

2. **Analyze results**. What insights or "lessons learned" have you gleaned from the various activities? Report on the value of your efforts throughout the organization, as well as any recommendations for a change in strategy or tactics based on your experience.

3. **Adjust your plan**. Revisit the audit and assessment to evaluate next steps. Formative evaluation of your outreach efforts is crucial—it's an iterative process.

Now that you've reviewed some best practices, the next step is to assess where your organization stands with each practice. In the next section, Outreach Practice Assessment, you will learn how to gauge your organization's current outreach practices and needs.

Outreach Practice Assessment: Understanding Your Outreach Practices and Needs

To assist with your outreach assessment, this rubric has five different performance levels that you can assign to each current outreach practice.

1. **Integrated (INT)**: The practice is a routine part of your organization's outreach program. Your project or center has determined the best way to perform the practice and has systematized it, coordinating with other aspects of your project or center. A practice at this level is proactive, valued, and successful.
2. **Well-Developed (WD)**: The practice has resources allocated, responsibilities are assigned, and the process is managed. The practice may still not be completed regularly, perfectly, or punctually, but it's deliberate and proactive.
3. **In Development (DEV)**: The practice is unorganized, unassigned, and has little to no resources committed to it. This doesn't necessarily mean that it's completely unsuccessful—it may just mean that one individual is performing the practice with very little assistance. Because of this, these practices are often inefficient, overdue, over budget, or just plain incomplete. A practice at this level is often performed in a reactive (rather than proactive) manner.
4. **Not Performed (NP)**: The practice hasn't been attempted by your organization, or hasn't been accomplished for a long time. It doesn't mean that the practice isn't applicable, just that it's been overlooked or set aside.
5. **Not Applicable (NA)**: The practice, for any number of reasons, is impractical or not a viable option for your project or center. It's possible that the viability of this practice will improve with time and planning, but it doesn't apply to the organization's current situation.

Strategic Practice	Description	Level				
		INT	WD	DEV	NP	NA
Identify collaborators	*Who is leading or contributing?*					
Identify mission	*Basic outreach content (90-sec)*					
Define target audiences	*Key stakeholders, groups*					
Define strategy	*Purpose/scope*					
Scan marketplace	*Opportunities/challenges*					
Define goals	*Specific/measurable targets*					
Create outreach brief	*1-2 pages communicating plan*					

Planning Practice	Description	Level				
		INT	WD	DEV	NP	NA
Create a timetable	*Milestones, dates, contingencies*					
Create a budget	*Staff, time, money, overhead*					
Select channels	*Social media, email, publicity…*					
Develop tactics/activities	*Promotion channels, actions*					
Create a workplan	*Map timetable w/ deliverables*					
Develop messaging	*Elevator pitch, talking points*					
Establish spokespeople	*Credible messengers*					

Execution Practice	Description	Level				
		INT	WD	DEV	NP	NA
Project management	*Use of brief, workplan, budget*					
Develop promo materials	*One-sheet, website*					
Build partnerships	*Strategic relationships*					
Train spokespeople	*Consistent communications*					
Timely communications	*Contacts, news tie-ins*					
Measure impact	*Qualitative/quantitative data*					
Analyze/report results	*Report value, insights, lessons*					
Adjust your plan	*Prepare for next steps*					

Tip: Plan to revisit your audit at a future date, perhaps quarterly, and at least annually. In addition, anytime your project or center experiences a significant change or directive (NVC feedback, leadership or funding changes, etc.), an audit will help your organization align with those changes.

Ready to start planning? Follow the case study in the following section, Outreach Assessment: Sample Audit, with examples throughout.

Outreach Assessment: Sample Audit

Ready to start planning? The next few sections provide a case study to demonstrate how an organization could utilize the Outreach Assessment tools from the previous section to audit and assess their outreach practices and needs. This first section is sample audit for the organization ABC Education.

Case Study: ABC Education

Step 1: Audit Current Outreach Practices

Sample Audit

KEY: INT (Integrated), WD (Well-Developed), DEV (In Development), NP (Not Performed), NA (Not Applicable)

Strategic Practice	Description	Level				
		INT	WD	DEV	NP	NA
Identify collaborators	*Who is leading or contributing?*			X		
Identify mission	*Basic outreach content (90-sec)*			X		
Define target audiences	*Key stakeholders, groups*		X			
Define strategy	*Purpose/scope*			X		
Scan marketplace	*Opportunities/challenges*				X	
Define goals	*Specific/measurable targets*			X		
Create outreach brief	*1-2 pages communicating plan*				X	

Planning Practice	Description	Level				
		INT	WD	DEV	NP	NA
Create a timetable	*Milestones, dates, contingencies*		X			
Create a budget	*Staff, time, money, overhead*		X			
Select channels	*Social media, email, publicity…*		X			
Develop tactics/activities	*Promotion channels, actions*			X		
Create a workplan	*Map timetable w/ deliverables*		X			

Develop messaging	*Elevator pitch, talking points*		X			
Establish spokespeople	*Credible messengers*		X			

Execution Practice	**Description**	**Level**				
		INT	**WD**	**DEV**	**NP**	**NA**
Project management	*Use of brief, workplan, budget*			X		
Develop promo materials	*One-sheet, website*		X			
Build partnerships	*Strategic relationships*		X			
Train spokespeople	*Consistent communications*		X			
Timely communications	*Contacts, news tie-ins*			X		
Measure impact	*Qualitative/quantitative data*			X		
Analyze/report results	*Report value, insights, lessons*			X		
Adjust your plan	*Prepare for next steps*				X	

Follow more of this case study in the following section, Sample Assessment, to see how ABC Education used their audit to better understand their current outreach performance and capacity. In addition, this section will show how they used these tools to develop a strategy, establish a plan, ensure execution, and evaluate their efforts.

Sample Assessment

Step 1: Audit Current Outreach

Here you will see how "ABC Education" used the Sample Audit to understand their current outreach performance and capacity. ABC Education used these tools to develop a strategy, establish a plan, ensure execution, and evaluate their efforts.

Strategy

We do some outreach, but typically only when a grant is due or it is specifically requested by our funding organization (i.e., NSF, Program Officer, Institution). This occasional outreach has usually been done by whoever is writing the grant proposal and only revisited when annual reports are due or important conferences arise.

Our audience and mission are well defined, and will probably not change over time.

Planning

Our organization puts a number of different resources behind development of a mission, goals, materials, and messengers for more formal outreach efforts. However, one person is responsible for more routine outreach efforts.

Outreach rarely makes it into the budget as a specific item. The outreach budget tends to appear only if surplus funds within a grant need to be spent quickly or if a short-term outreach campaign is suddenly given a higher status.

Execution

One staff member handles editing, publication design, audience database management, and dissemination. This person is not allocated enough resources to dedicate time to outreach and other responsibilities. In addition, only some outreach occurs on a regular schedule and has established policies and materials for outreach to target audiences.

Areas for Improvement

We will focus on improving budgeting, communications, project management, and tactics.

- **Budgeting**: Outreach should be given a distinct and reasonable budget for time, money, and resources.
- **Communications**: The organization should develop a communications strategy that is not tied to specific projects, reports, or grant proposals. This will allow us to pay more attention to goals and outcomes and assess competition, circumstances, and opportunities.
- **Project Management**: We will emphasize *consistent messaging* and *cross-training staff*. One staff member will be designated the outreach leader, but others will also understand outreach practices and be able to assist.
- **Tactics**: We will develop a short-term tactical plan for the next 3-6 months to help train staff, improve practices, and scan the marketplace for opportunities.

Step 2: Develop a Strategy

Tip: Consider what will allow your organization to concentrate its resources on the greatest opportunities to expand and affect your audience. Whenever possible, poll your audience to discover which channels connect with their interests and needs.

Create a formal document with a date on it so that you have a record of your outreach plan. This plan will change over time, so make sure you keep copies so you can return to past ideas, consider new ones, and keep from reinventing the wheel every time you review your outreach strategy.

Introduction

ABC Education will publish new research findings on the effects of digital media on STEM instruction in K-12 classrooms. The findings suggest that digital media instruction has a significant effect on student outcomes. We will broadcast the report in the winter/spring to the widest possible audience of policy makers, educators, and others with influence. We hope to encourage the adoption of more professional development for teaching STEM with digital media at the state, district, and school level.

Mission

Build a 3-month plan counting down to the biggest event for educators in the first quarter of the year: the annual XYZ conference with over 10,000 attendees.

Audience

Primary: Teachers, educational technology community at XYZ conference. Secondary: Program Officer, Partner Institutions.

Editorial, Business, and Technical Objectives

- Present STEM research findings
- Convince policy makers and educators to act on findings
- Advance ABC Education as leader in STEM education
- Promote professional development for teaching STEM with digital media
- Suggest additional research for a future grant
- Create visually clean, smartphone-compatible website landing page for research

Content Features

The report will appear on the ABC Education web page (or blog). The intro will include information on the relevance and purpose of digital media in STEM education. Beneath the introduction will be a hierarchy of project highlights: 2 or 3 large project features with video and limited text, followed by smaller project features with video, images, limited text, and links representing core competencies. This will also be made into a flyer for non-digital outreach.

Timeline

From today's date in January through the end of March. (Conference date: March 25.)

Budget

$1,500 plus two dedicated staffers part time

Step 3: Establish a Plan

Tip: Conduct polls to determine how best to reach your audience. (Do they use social media? Attend conferences? Spend a lot of time checking their e-mail?)

Get together with your team, like ABC Education did, and conduct brainstorming sessions to collect group ideas about what might work. Make sure to write everything down, no matter how silly or far-fetched it seems. That way, you'll have a record for later and a ready-made list of ideas when you expand your outreach even further. This list can also help you determine your timetable and budget (see sample below.)

Brainstorming: What are some strategies and tactics for our budget?

- Social media is quick and cost-effective.
    - We need goals to make social media use measurable.
    - Achievable goals: get coverage from 5 education blogs, establish Facebook page with 100 fans, establish Twitter feed with 100 followers
- What are other channels for outreach besides social media? (See promotion map below.)

PROMOTION MAP	Publicity	Institution	Email
	Press Release	Announcements	Newsletters
	Pitch Letter	Meetings	Targeted Campaign
	FAQ		Listserve
	Elevator Pitch	**Social Media**	Email signature
Partners	Talking Points	Networks (Facebook)	
Influencers	Testimonials	Video (YouTube)	**Promotion**
Networks	Editorials	Images (Flickr)	One-sheet Handout
Site Links	Op-eds	Blogs	Brochure
Events	Media (long/short lead)	Bookmarking	Postcard
Sponsorship			Giveaway
Endorsements	**Monitoring**	**Website**	Teachers' Guide
	Google Reader	About Us	
Presentations	Google Alert	Press Room	**Advertising**
Webinar	Google Analytics	Blog	Print
Seminar/Workshop	Facebook Insights	Reports	Online Banners
Conference		Help	Online Text
	Hooks		
Research	News Event	**SEO**	
Whitepaper	Contest	(Search Engine Optimization)	
Survey	Advocacy	Keywords	Links
Poll	Holiday	Submissions	Tags

- What kinds of tactics should be used in these channels?
    - Publicity release with research results, timed to coincide with conference presentation.
    - Webinar to be recorded and posted on ATE Central.
    - E-mail and postcard campaign to keep research fresh in the minds of collaborators.
- What is the expected timetable for the activities?

Timetable/Budget

	TACTIC	DESCRIPTION	DATES	STAFF HRS	COST
1	Audience survey	Survey Monkey poll in email newsletter	Feb	5	$250
2	ED Blog outreach	Connect with top 5 education bloggers	Feb	10	$0
3	Facebook	Set-up, post 7x/week, polls	Feb	70	$0
4	Twitter	Set-up, tweet 3x/day, contests	Feb	70	$0
5	Postcard	1 brochure or postcard for conference	Mar	20	$2k
6	NSF release	1 announcement on research findings	Apr	10	$200
7	Webinar	1 pre/post conference offer?	Apr	10	$300
8	Email campaign	Coordinate w/ 1 conference listserv	Apr	5	$0
9	Other Opportunities	Presentation opportunity?	Apr	TBD	$1k
		Total (priorities only)		175	$3,750

Tip: Keep an inventory of what creative assets (images, logos, etc.) are available for promotion, with an eye towards repurposing elements for multiple uses.

Now ABC Education needed to consider what messages they needed for each tactic. In this case, the Project Manager (PM) was designated the primary **messenger**, managing all of the social media communications, with the Director as a secondary messenger, committed to media interviews at the conference.

After they addressed the scope of their plan, starting with a timeline, tactics, activities, and metrics for the social media channel, they identified the **activities** and staff assignments for a social media **workplan**.

Sample Workplan: STEM Outreach Campaign

DATE	ACTIVITY	STAFF
1/7	Project brainstorm	All
1/14	Define project scope	All
1/21	Create messaging themes, talking points	PM, SA, All
1/28	Create tactics, identify activities	PM, SA, All
2/10	Identify education blogs	SA
2/17	Create Facebook/Twitter accounts, start messaging	PM, SA
2/21	Start bi-weekly check-in on metrics and engagement; review messaging	PM, All
2/28	Cross-promote with partner listservs, feeds	PM
3/7	Develop text for Postcard; send to printer	SA
3/14	Post about NSF release in social media; Develop text and list for Email Campaign	PM, SA
3/21	Contact bloggers with NSF release preview; Record Webinar on Report	PM
3/23	Press release to NSF, PR Wire; Put materials online and on flyer.	PM
3/25	Conference	PM, All
4/1	Follow-up w/ conference contacts, partners	All

Step 4: Ensure Execution

ABC determined the following **guidelines** for executing their workplan:

- For day-to-day management, the Project Manager took charge of posts/tweets on T/Th and the Assistant took charge on M/W/F.

- One Facebook post/day; 5-6 Twitter posts/day, including re-tweets.
- Message mix: incorporate humorous/newsworthy/informative posts (1/3 each), and include specific calls to action, e.g., contest participation.
- All staff members were asked to find and read one related blog or media outlet, and post comments or links to project when appropriate.
- Document and share established message themes for consistency throughout the organization, promotion channels, and promotional materials.
- Create a social media calendar with weekly messages for Facebook and Twitter posts/tweets; use a free publishing tool, HootSuite (see Social Media), to schedule posts in advance.
- When posting on educational forums, blogs, and communities such as Classroom 2.0, ensure that posts lead back to ABC Education.
- Establish bi-weekly meeting to review metrics, tactics, engagement, etc.

Step 5: Evaluate Your Efforts

Tip: Capture metrics on the effectiveness of different channels, tactics, and activities in a document as you go. Host a team meeting/session to evaluate the effectiveness of your overall strategy using these metrics. This will help you adjust your plan as needed instead of waiting until the campaign is over! It will also, of course, be a big help in the evaluation.

After three months, ABC Education revisited their initial outreach audit, the plan, and the metrics. They considered ways to revise the themes and messages based on feedback from teachers and partners, as well as upcoming opportunities. But before they did anything else they celebrated their results!

ATE Outreach Kit: Social Media Guide

Overview

Deciding whether and how to use social media is easier than it looks. The most popular choices — Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Google+ — have distinct audiences, and require different commitments of resources. In this section, we review the pros and cons of each. We'll also look at other networking options such as blogs, web analytics tools, and search engine optimization. The key to using social media effectively is choosing what you are going to use based on your individual project's needs and constraints. While social media is "free," it does require a commitment of time and resources.

So what is social media exactly? First and foremost, it's a tool to begin conversations. Conversation arising from social media can build awareness, engagement, relationships, and site traffic. On social media platforms, you should definitely share the latest news about your project. However, you should also contribute to the online community by sharing news that's relevant to the field, commenting on blogs or Facebook profiles, and retweeting other people's tweets. In other words, be a good conversational partner!

Getting Started

The Social Media Guide is organized into five parts:

- A short glossary of the **Most Popular Tools** used in social media
- An explanation about how to use social media to develop **Your Professional Profile**
- A section on how and when to use **Blogs**
- A description of **Analytics and Tracking** tools
- Some **Social Media Resources**

Most Popular Tools

Facebook

Facebook (124 million unique visitors) is the biggest and most popular of the big four, with the broadest reach and most mainstream audience. Creating a fan page takes just a few minutes, and becoming a fan of other pages gets the introductions started. A fan page is a solid, relatively low maintenance way to connect.

Pros of Facebook:

- Large audience — many people already have a Facebook account
- Easy to set up and low-maintenance afterward
- Analytics (Facebook Insights) are built into the page
- Easily post status updates, links, photos, videos, and documents

Cons of Facebook:

- Not ideal for short-term projects — building a fan group can take some time

What to plan for:

- Post 1-3 times per day
- Respond to comments, interact with other Facebook users
- Create ways for your users to interact with your page (ask questions, use the polls feature, etc.)
- Connect your website to your Facebook page by including a "Find us on Facebook" link

Twitter

Twitter (26 million unique visitors) is good for reaching an influential but small educational technology audience. Your Twitter audience generally won't overlap with your Facebook audience, so it's okay to repeat what you post on Facebook if you decide to do both. Twitter requires more maintenance than Facebook, but it's worthwhile if you want to communicate with a cutting-edge audience.

Pros of Twitter:

- Large, tech-savvy audience
- Short, 140-character messages
- You can post to Twitter from a Facebook page if you already have one

Cons of Twitter:

- Slightly higher-maintenance than Facebook
- Faster pace means that tweets can become buried quickly
- The specialized vocabulary can be daunting at first, but Twitter's Help Center has lots of tips and instructions for everyone from beginners to Master Tweeters.

What to plan for:

- Post ("tweet") 5-10 times a day
- Repost ("retweet") other people's messages
- Use hashtags (#) in your tweets before keywords or to connect to different audiences. Here are a few education hashtags: http://www.cybraryman.com/edhashtags.html.
- Connect with other tweeters by using @replies to get conversations started

YouTube

YouTube (84 million unique visitors) is the most popular video sharing site. It's is an effective way to widen the impact of a project blog or page by adding dynamic, creative supporting content. It's an excellent element of any promotion campaign.

Pros of YouTube:

- Great viral reach
- Video format makes YouTube ideal for documenting processes, tutorials, and interviews related to your project or center's mission
- Easy and quick to set up a channel on which you can store an unlimited number of videos

Cons of YouTube:

- Requires original video content
- Is better used as an arm of an outreach campaign (for example, a place to upload videos that you will then link to from Facebook) than as the central part of your outreach plan.

What to plan for:

- Upload short videos (under 15 minutes) documenting some visually interesting part of your project or center. These can be interviews with students, faculty, and staff, mini-documentaries, or any number of other things. Let your creativity run wild!
- Link from your videos to your website and other social media outlets

LinkedIn

LinkedIn (15 million unique visitors) is the largest and most vibrant professional network. It represents an opportunity for indirect project promotion and thought leadership. Business pages are most appropriate for your project's umbrella organization or host, but individual networks can also be useful. For example, individuals can contribute to groups or associations and related conversation, and they can also respond to answers, an area which takes queries from various fields.

Pros of LinkedIn:

- Connects your project or center to a professional community audience

- Good site for presenting research findings, white papers, or other documents about your work
- Minimal maintenance time

Cons of LinkedIn:

- Relatively small and specialized audience
- Focused mostly on professional-to-professional connection (rather than, for example, community-building)

What to plan for:

- Create a business page and include Facebook and Twitter links if available
- Join groups and comb through answers for opportunities to engage with and contribute to the community

Google+

Google+ is an emerging social network that combines aspects of Facebook and Twitter. It's unclear how businesses and organizations will be using it, but individuals might find it helpful for their own needs, and organizational usage may evolve into something more substantial.

Pros of Google+:

- Elegant design allows you to create pages and post updates, photos, and videos, initiate Skype-like hangouts, and group your users into circles (like, for example, Staff, Students, and Industry Partners) that you can communicate with individually
- The page analytics are some of the best out there

Cons of Google+:

- It's a new social media network that's still in beta (draft form), so uses for it are still emerging
- It replicates many of the features of Facebook, so it's unclear whether adding a Google+ page if you already have a Facebook page is worth the time

What to plan for:

- Spend some time checking it out and comparing it to Facebook. Here's an overview to jumpstart **using Google+**.
- Best practices are still developing, though we can guess that 1-3 posts a day and basic attention to your audience will be standard

For a listing of ATE Projects, Centers, partners and collaborators who are using Social Media check out our **ATE Social Media Directory**: https://atecentral.net/index.php?P=SocialMediaDirectory.

Even if your project or center isn't ready to jump into social media yet, the tools profiled above can also be useful for professional development and your professional profile. For more on how to use social media for your own development check out the next section: Your Professional Profile.

Your Professional Profile

Although social media may not be right for your project or center, you might want to consider it for yourself. Here are a few tips for using social media to stay in the know and the mix:

Facebook offers more full-fledged content updates from a wide variety of sources besides individual friends, such as associations, publishers, brands, broadcasters, schools, etc. As with Twitter, you don't have to use Facebook to broadcast information, though there are benefits if you do. To get started:

1. If you don't have a personal profile, you can create one with basic information in minutes.
2. If you do have a profile and network of friends, you might consider posting updates on project milestones, telling stories, and sharing photos.
3. Ask questions to get feedback from the community, or create polls using Facebook tools.
4. Add organizations that you're interested in following by finding them and liking their fan pages.

Twitter can be used to promote yourself and your work if you post regular updates. But it's also the best way to follow breaking news and leaders in various fields. The good news is that you don't have to post. You can use Twitter as a news feed for a low maintenance approach. To get started:

1. Create an account either using your name (useful if your presenting yourself) or a description that defines you. The name should be short (fewer than 15 characters is ideal).
2. If you plan to tweet, write a short description in the profile using keywords so that people are more likely to follow you and your posts.
3. Look up news outlets, thought leaders, colleagues, etc. in the search box and review their profiles to confirm they are who you think they are. Follow them. This is the best way to get breaking news!
4. **Hashtags** (e.g. #science) are the most direct way of searching for a topic or conversation. They will also help you to discover other resources/people that are worth following.

LinkedIn is a very direct way of presenting yourself and your project to other professionals, but it's also a resource to keep up with colleagues' work, query your network about opportunities, find answers to questions through professional groups, and more. To get started:

1. Create a profile that serves as a calling card for you.
2. Include a description of your work that uses the most relevant keywords for a web search.
3. Connect with colleagues and friends to expand your network.
4. Find and join groups relevant to your field, and participate in the discussions with questions and answers. This one of the best ways to build your Personal Learning Network.

For another way to connect with your audience, check out the next section on Blogs.

Blogs

Blogs are one of the older but enduring forms of dissemination on the Internet. A blog can serve as:

- a publicity tool, announcing project updates;
- a thought leadership tool, offering research, findings and comments on the field;
- a search tool, using keywords and links to promote the project in site rankings.

One of the best blog models is Gordon Snyder's ICT Center blog (http://www.gordostuff.com/), which offers perspectives on ICT industries and education. On his blog, Gordon does several things that are considered best practices, including extensive linking to other sites (which raises both awareness and search standings) and links to share and comment on information.

Before committing to a blog, browse a few others in your field, considering what their topics are, how often they publish, and what sorts of comments they attract. Here are some lists and examples:

ATETV Blog
http://blog.atetv.org/

Florida Advanced Technological Education Center
http://flate-mif.blogspot.com/

ICT Learning: Industrial Skills Training
http://www.itclearning.com/blog/

Community College Spotlight
http://communitycollegespotlight.org/

Business Industrial Network
http://communitycollegespotlight.org/

Top Educational Blogs (ranked by Technorati)
http://www.livemocha.com/education-blog-list.htm

Top 100 Educational Blogs (Online Education Database)
http://oedb.org/library/features/top-100-education-blogs

Blogs can be friendly, accessible ways to communicate with your audience and key stakeholders. The role of a blog should be to help your project or center build and shape your public voice and brand. Before diving in, consider these tips:

Blogging Tips

1. Your blog should have a **goal** — write with a purpose or you'll have a tough time keeping an audience. On a similar note, make sure your blog is well-written and **readable**. Spell-check and edit!
2. Know who your **audience** is (or who you want it to be) and write to that audience.

3. Blogs should be **personal** and **familiar**, not copies of press releases or fact sheets. Be a good storyteller or teacher, and don't be afraid of a little humor.
4. Write with **authority**, **creativity**, and **excitement**. Sell your project or center and get comfortable with tactful self-promotion.
5. Be **respectful**. Assume that your audience is just as smart and knowledgeable as you are. Check your facts and tone, and embrace the expertise that will come your way.
6. Be sure to give **credit** where credit is due by citing and linking to sources and thanking contributors.
7. Keep your blog posts at a **reasonable length** — usually 300-750 words. Blogs are not dissertations (thank goodness).
8. Make it **easy to share** your blog with others. If you want people to find and follow your blog, utilize all the key sharing plugins on your homepage.
9. **Evolve**! Learn from your audience and from your experience. As your project or center evolves, your blog should, too.
10. Be sure to know your industry's **keywords** and sprinkle them throughout your posts to help people find your blog and boost your search rankings.
11. **Be patient**. You won't get hundreds of readers instantly, and you'll need to blog consistently for quite a while to build an audience.
12. Determine **who** will write your blog and how much time they're expected to utilize. Get a commitment from your writers, and create a realistic posting **schedule**.
13. **Monitor hits** and **comments** to assess interest in various topics.

Most Popular (Free) Blogging Platforms

Blogger.com is the easiest to use, and has almost instantaneous setup. You can go from blog-less to publishing your first post in less than 15 minutes thanks to an extremely easy setup process. Blogger supports drag-and-drop template editing, and much more.

Tumblr.com uses a shorter even less formal format called micro-blogging. It's a combination of a full-fledged blog and a Twitter feed. It focuses on short, frequent posts that are not much longer than Twitter updates. Tumblr is a great solution for people who aren't looking to commit to a blog as a time-consuming project.

WordPress.com is an open-source platform that offers an almost limitless variety of options: themes, plug-ins, and gadgets of all stripes. It isn't as simple to set up and configure as the others, but once you get going, the sky is the limit. It's also a scalable solution, allowing you to do everything from maintain a single blog with a single user to an entire stable of blogs with multiple users overseen by one site administrator.

Are you interested in more social media uses? Check out the next section: Analytics and Tracking.

Analytics and Tracking

Analytics and Tracking are used to measure, collect, and report data to help you understand and optimize your social media usage and audience.

Facebook Insights offers basic metrics about page growth and activity. It also gives demographics about who is visiting your page.

Hootsuite is a publishing and monitoring tool for Facebook and Twitter. It's one-stop-shopping for posting to both sites, and allows you to schedule your posts ahead of time. Hootsuite also provides a streamlined dashboard for reviewing all of your posts, as well as who has mentioned you, emailed you directly, etc. Using Hootsuite to manage both Facebook and Twitter cuts staff time down significantly.

Google Reader allows you to set up a search for your project or industry keywords. It is the least complicated, most low-tech way of keeping track of your identity and conversations online. A daily (or weekly, whatever you decide) email to your inbox shares all of the relevant links and mentions. No maintenance required.

Google Analytics offers free code to embed in your site that evaluates site metrics and performance. Traffic patterns and audience demographics are among the metrics visible. Ultimately, Google Analytics is one of the best indicators of overall performance of a site online. No maintenance required, just viewing.

For additional social media resources including some planning tools, tips and tricks for getting started, and a quick spin through Social Media 101, check out the next section: Social Media Resources.

Social Media Resources

The list of social media resources is as seemingly endless as the web itself, so we've focused on recommending the best planning tools and tips and tricks for getting started with a quick spin through Social Media 101 at the end. In addition, we've also provided you with a PDF version of the Social Media Guide in its entirety.

Planning Tools

Social Media Calendar Template
http://www.closingbigger.net/2010/08/social-media-calendar/

Create an Editorial Calendar for Social Media
http://www.reachcustomersonline.com/2010/08/20/09.16.39/

Sample Social Media Tactical Plan
http://www.marketo.com/b2b-marketing-resources/best-practices/video-social-media/social-media-tactical-plan.php

Tips and Tricks

Social Media Best Practices
http://www.facebook.com/SMMBestPractices

Effective Facebook Wall Posts
http://socialtimes.com/5-metrics-effective-facebook-wall-posts_b58490

Facebook Metrics
http://www.socialtechnologyreview.com/articles/facebook-marketing-what-facebook-metrics-matter-and-how-track-them

The Twitter Guide Book
http://mashable.com/guidebook/twitter/

Build a Following on Twitter
http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/10-ways-to-build-a-large-quality-following-on-twitter_b12298

Social Media 101

Statistics for Social Media
http://www.ragan.com/Main/Articles/43169.aspx

Social Media Handbook
http://mediaengage.org/SocialMediaHandBook/10-tools.cfm#1

Alexa offers free traffic metrics, search analytics, demographics, and more for websites. Check out your competition! Visit: *http://alexa.com/*

HubSpot is a commercial marketing company that offers free webinars about social media strategy, tips and tricks. Visit: *http://www.hubspot.com/marketing-webinars/*.

Mashable is a premiere site for social media news, tips and tricks as well as 35 different case studies with examples of different types of social media in action. Visit: *http://mashable.com/*

Technorati offers comprehensive data and lists on all website categories and subjects. Check out their evolving ranking of top 100 sites and their blog directory at: *http://technorati.com/*

For a listing of ATE Projects and Centers and ATE Partners and collaborators who are using Social Media check out our ATE Social Media Directory at: *http://atecentral.net/socialdirectory*

ATE Outreach Kit: Communications Guide

Overview

Public relations (PR) is the practice of managing communications between your organization and its audience(s). PR uses topics of interest or news items to promote awareness and it builds rapport with a wide-ranging constituency from internal staff to the general public. Common PR activities include speaking at conferences, working with the media, and social media engagement.

Working with the media in particular can seem daunting at first. But a little homework, planning, and persistence can produce meaningful results. In addition to raising awareness of your organization's work, news coverage supports your credibility in the community, attracts collaborators, and demonstrates your project or center's impact. With some preparation, practice, and persistence, getting good media coverage is not very difficult, and the rewards can be excellent.

Getting Started

The first step is to choose one person to become your **media or outreach** liaison. This person will be the point of contact for media and others who are interested in your project or center. Having one person will make it easier for the media (and other audiences) to find you and it helps to keep your communications consistent.

Next, you should develop tools for a successful communications campaign. Most of these tools can be widely repurposed, so tracking them all in one **master messaging document** will save a lot of time and energy. You don't want to wait until media calls to have the latest version of these materials pulled together. Everyone should have access to the document in the event that the liaison isn't available.

The Communications Guide is organized into eight parts:

- Suggestions for how to develop your organization's **Mission Statement**
- Help with creating your project or center's **Key Messages**
- Tips on how to **Make News**
- A section on how to **Pitch Your Project or Center**
- Guidance on **Creating a Media Kit**
- A section to help with **Choosing Media Outlets**
- Descriptions of **Potential Outreach Paths** for all of your outreach and dissemination needs

This Guide walks you through how to create and work with each of these tools. Don't miss the helpful sources and resources at the end!

Mission Statement

Your **Mission Statement** spells out your organization's purpose. It describes the goal, the primary stakeholders, and core values or principles. You should be able to read your mission statement in 90 seconds or less. A mission statement consists of three parts:

- **Who is your organization for?** (Who is your target audience?)
- **What contribution do you make to your audience?** (Do you increase retention of Hispanic students in chemical engineering? Do you develop curriculum for high school physics teachers?)
- **What makes your contribution unique?** (What makes your project stand out from other projects working towards similar goals? What are your strengths and values?)

A good statement aligns both internal and external perception of your project or center. It is clear, well-written, and understandable to a layperson. It inspires other people to get excited about your project or center.

Here are some **sample mission statements** from other ATE Projects and Centers:

From ATEEC Tribal College Programs
http://ateec.org/tribal-colleges/about

The mission of this project is to strengthen environmental science and technology programs at Tribal Colleges consistent with the unique needs and traditions of these communities. More specifically, this project will strengthen STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education at Tribal Colleges while acknowledging that there is a critical cultural component to the study of environmental science by Native Americans.

From The Center for Nanotechnology in Society at Arizona State University
http://cns.asu.edu/

The guiding conceptual goals of CNS-ASU are two-fold: to increase reflexivity within the nanotechnology enterprise and to increase society's capacity to engage in anticipatory governance of nanotechnology and other emerging technologies. "Reflexivity" refers to the capacity for social learning that informs about the available choices in decision making about nanotechnology. This reflexiveness can signal emerging problems, enabling what we call anticipatory governance — the ability of society and institutions to seek and understand a variety of inputs to manage emerging technologies while such management is still possible. Through this improved contextual awareness, we can help guide the path of nanotechnology knowledge and innovation toward more socially desirable outcomes and away from undesirable ones.

From the CalWomen Tech Project
http://www.iwitts.org/projects/calwomentech-project

The intent of this NSF initiative is to broaden the participation of girls and women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education. In particular, the extension services are to "provide consulting services to educators and institutions, to enable them to adopt and embed proven gender-inclusive policies and practices in pedagogy, the design of curriculum materials, student support programs, educator, and faculty development (NSF 2004).

The CalWomenTech Project has three goals:

1. Increase the number of women enrolled and retained in STEM education in the eight selected CalWomenTech community colleges.
2. Institutionalize gender equity strategies in each participating college to make sure that the successful recruitment and retention strategies are used beyond the life of the project.
3. Illustrate to the California and national community college system that STEM gender equity strategies increase recruitment and retention of women in STEM courses through both state and national dissemination of the project.

Create Key Messages

It's never too early to develop key messages! **Key messages** are phrases of different lengths that provide a description of your organization in very succinct and understandable terms. The messages should generally be short and should use clear, precise language to convey your point. Here are a few questions to get started:

- What is your **organization**? What do you do and why? (A brief variation on your mission statement)
- Who is your target **audience**? Who does your project or center focus on?
- Who **funds** your project or center?
- Who **hosts** your project or center? Where are you based?
- Who are your **partners**?
- What makes you **unique**?
- What **successes** have you had? What are your plans for the **future**?

Messages can serve your organization as a whole or specific events (workshops, conferences, summits) or initiatives (curriculum, research). Messages should tell your organization's story in a memorable way and hook your audience, whether that audience is a prospective partner, an administrator, or the general public.

After you generate your messages, create a **hierarchy**, ranking the most relevant, compelling statements at the top. For example, you probably want to describe what you do and why that's unique before talking about who funds your project and where you're located.

Once you've generated your messages, you can use them in multiple ways:

- As **talking points** that you'll expand on, moving from general to specific statements.
- As part of an **elevator pitch**, or a description of your organization in 60 seconds or less (the time it takes for a short elevator ride).
- As the basis of an **FAQ** that anticipates audience questions.
- As part of the **about us** and/or personal biography for press releases.

For tips on how to modify key messages for each of these uses, read on!

Tips for Talking Points

1. Talking points are a set of mid-length (2-4 sentence) key messages that build on information conveyed in your mission statement and/or respond to the most commonly asked questions.

2. Identify and prioritize 5-10 talking points for each audience. Different talking points are relevant to different people. The general public, for example, will not have the same priorities and interests as leading scientists in the field or a funder.
3. For media interviews or speaking opportunities, select 2-3 (no more than 3) talking points that are the most important for the topic being discussed.
4. Expand your point from the general to the specific. For example, "Robotics are a critical part of STEM education . . . because they have X,Y,Z impact."
5. Bring your points to life by putting them into context, for instance by using a personal story or statistic.

Tips for an Elevator Pitch

1. Keep it short. Time it. Practice. Try it out on colleagues, friends, staff, and students.
2. If you feel like your message is too complex to fit into 60 seconds, focus in on your impact — who do you help? Then explain how you make that happen.
3. Explain why you and your team are the right people for your mission.
4. If possible, include a story — try putting a face or name to your cause.
5. Know your goal for the pitch. Are you hoping for more time to discuss a financial contribution, or even just future engagement?
6. Script it or use bullet points. Also, share it with your whole organization so that everyone can use it.
7. Delivery really matters. Make it clear that you don't just work for your organization but that you are a believer and active participant. People will respond to passion, clarity, and focus.

Tips for Your FAQ

1. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) should be just that: if possible, informally poll your organization and audience to find what those questions are.
2. Revise and update the FAQ as new questions surface.
3. The FAQ should be in the press kit and on your website — amplify your hard work by repurposing it whenever/wherever possible.
4. A good FAQ for media and the general public is relatively short: no more than 3 pages.

Tips for About Us

1. An About Us document goes beyond the mission statement to include a history of the organization as well as its successes, supporters, events, etc.
2. Use supporting information to make the details vivid: facts and figures or a list of advisory board members, for example.

3. Don't assume a common understanding on terms. Explain anything that should be explained to the general public.
4. Take a look at what competing organizations are saying about themselves in the About Us sections of their websites

Now that you have Key Messages, it is time to craft a news story. Go to the next section to find out about Making News for your project or center.

Making News

Now that you've decided how to tell your organization's internal story with a Mission Statement, Talking Points, FAQ, and About Us, it's time to craft a story or pitch that's newsworthy. What is news? Here are a few examples:

Sample News Hooks

Special Events: Just having an event doesn't necessarily constitute a story—you also need a hook like a unique speaker, a major award or milestone, or information about how the event or program will affect the community or your institution.

Services and Programs: Describe how the demand for your services or program is changing, and how that change is tied to external situations – for example, the economic downturn, a change in demographics, or new legislation.

Studies: Share the results of your new study. Focus on how these results will affect your mission, the community, your institution, or society at large.

Participant Stories: Ask beneficiaries of your project or center's work to talk to the media about how you have positively affected their lives.

Public Policy: Make sure the media knows how new bills, regulations, or budgets will affect the resources of your organization. This type of story can be an opportunity to educate reporters about specific programs that are directly impacted by a proposed policy.

Partnerships and Collaborations: Talk about any new partnerships or collaborations, especially those that will lead to jobs or innovative growth. Make sure you represent both partners, and talk frankly (but tactfully) about how you agreed to work together, difficulties you encountered, and benefits that will result.

Leadership: Consider a release about the attributes of new leaders and their aspirations to successfully serve your organization.

Whether you're conveying a story to your institution's communications person, pitching a story to an NSF Program Officer, or sending in an article for LiveScience, you'll need to have a hook (or two) in mind. Also consider that not all of your news will generate an article—sometimes the goal is just be to be listed on an event calendar or announcement page.

Now you that you know a little more about what makes news, you can take stock of all the communications outlets available to your project or center. For more information on Pitching Your Project or Center to dissemination outlets check out the next section.

Pitching Your Project or Center

Evaluating Opportunities

Take stock of your communications environment and create a list of short-term and long-term media leads. **Short-term leads** don't require a lot of time to publish. For example:

- Submit an article or profile to your institution's newsletter.
- Post news updates on Facebook, Twitter, and/or your website.
- Update content of blogs, webinars, podcasts, etc.

Long-term leads take a while to cultivate and range from national media programs such as CNN or the New York Times Magazine to publications on the NSF site to local news stories and editorial pieces.

There are also outreach paths within ATE that can help you spread news. (See: Potential Outreach Paths.) Be sure to take advantage of your project or center's connections and let them help you.

Working with Media

Before you craft a press release or assemble a media kit, consider who you're directing it to: not just the audience for a publication, but also the specific editor, reporter, communications assistant, etc. that you're contacting. Here are some recommendations for putting your best foot forward:

Develop Media Contacts: Working with the media is about building relationships. Media professionals are usually not experts at subjects they cover; they depend on the people they interview and the research they do to provide them with the information they need. If you can establish yourself as an expert in your field and provide reliable information, they'll often return to you for additional news stories or solicit your comments on related news events. If they run a story that you submitted or quote you accurately and positively, be sure to send a thank you note.

Know Your Audience: Who is the audience of the publication you are hoping to publish through? Students, women, Latinos, faculty, industry, the general public? Avoid using complicated vocabulary; an 8th grade reading level is appropriate for most audiences.

Localize Your Story: Relate the story to your community or the audience you are trying to reach. If you have created a press release, try to include quotes from local industry or community leaders. Definitely include any available statistics that make your project or center's work relevant to a broad audience.

Tie Into Current Events: Stay aware of events the media covers both locally and nationally. If media outlets everywhere are closely covering stories about an issue related to your mission or programs, it's

a perfect time to send a press release about your project or center and how what you do is relevant. You can also call local media or your campus communications department and offer to serve as a local resource or expert on the issue.

Avoid Jargon and Acronyms: Government institutions are notorious for using too much jargon and too many acronyms. Keep your message accessible by avoiding terms and acronyms that are not general knowledge. Don't take for granted that others will know what you mean. If there is no other term to use then be sure to briefly define its meaning.

Use Good Judgment: Don't inundate your media contacts with story ideas, research findings, or press releases. Generating regular media coverage for your project or center is great; flooding your media contacts with information is not helpful for those relationships.

You've developed a mission statement, key messages, and identified newsworthy stories and news outlets. Now it is time to create a Media Kit so you'll have an information packet ready to go for anyone who wants more information about your organization.

Creating a Media Kit

A ***media kit*** is an information packet about your organization, or for a specific initiative or product. The kit's goal is to grab the reader's attention, make a lasting impression, provide quality information, and generate future interest in your organization.

Media kits can be paper, digital, or both. Paper is less frequently used now unless the quality of the materials is high and visuals are included. A digital press kit is increasingly common—many organizations have a dedicated **Press Room** area on their websites where their kit and breaking news are posted. For a great example, see the Foundation Center's Press Room (http://foundationcenter.org/media/). Find out how your audience likes to be contacted and what their needs and interests are. If there are guidelines for submissions on a publication's website, follow them. In the previous sections, you created and prioritized your organization's messaging with a mission statement, elevator pitch, talking points, and About Us statement. Now it's time to draw on them to create the two most critical tools for any media pitch:

- The **Pitch Letter** is an attention-getting introduction to your organization that integrates your elevator pitch, a news hook, 2-3 talking points, and media contact information.
- The **Press Release** tells a newsworthy story. You should include a short About Us statement or organizational biography at the end.

Beyond that, the contents of the kit can vary depending upon the event, audience, and situation that you're creating the kit for. Your goal is to inform a source of the most relevant and current information they need to tell your story, not everything that you've ever done.

Tip: Keep everything you've ever done in an **archive** for future reference: press releases, newsletters, flyers, etc. If you have logos or headers that you will need again, make sure to keep them in an easy-to-access file. In addition, you may want to use the following resources as you design your kit:

Publicity for Nonprofits
http://www.nonprofitpublicity.com/publicity.htm
(includes a message development worksheet in its appendix)

Sample Nonprofit Publicity Toolkit
http://download.ei-ie.org/docs/IRISDocuments/EI%20Campaigns/EFAIDS%20Programme/2009-00010-01-E.pdf

Here's a quick summary of potential elements for your media kit:

Media Kit Checklist

☑	Element	Description
☐	Pitch Letter	Attention-getting introduction to your organization that integrates your elevator pitch, a news hook, 2-3 talking points, and media contact information
☐	Press Release	Document that tells a newsworthy story, hooks and all. A short About Us statement or organizational biography is always included at the end
☐	About Us	Narrative describing the organization's background, important events, awards, research, supporters, etc.
☐	Fact Sheet	List of specific organizational features, statistics, and benefits
☐	Recent Press	Listing of recent news coverage or interviews
☐	Recent Publications	Bibliography of publications or abstracts
☐	Biographies	Key staff, individuals, scientists
☐	Images & Logos	A CD with high-resolution images, or links to logos in different formats
☐	Product Information	Describes products or services your organization provides (workshops, events, summits, survey results, learning resources, curriculum, etc.)
☐	Presentation Links	Videos, audio (podcasts, radio interview), PowerPoints, webinars
☐	Promotion Material	Recent awards, grants, and partnerships; a newsletter, flyer or brochure
☐	Organizational Profile	A longer, more detailed and sometimes more technical version of About Us, including partner information, facts, and statistics about your industry or audience
☐	Testimonials & Endorsements	Quotes you've solicited from experts, partners, etc. stating the impact your organization has had on them or the field. Always get approval to use quotes or testimonials in promotional material

Choosing Media Outlets

There are a number of ways to establish a **media contact list**, but the best place to start is with your institution's own communications office. They'll have contacts in education media that they may be willing to share, or they might distribute a press release themselves.

Also, identify the publications and other media outlets where you'd like to be highlighted—local newspapers, industry news, etc.—and note the bylines of the editors and reporters that are writing or talking about your topic. Keep a file of articles and writers you like. Search the source for guidelines on submissions or ways to reach media contacts directly. Be sure to mention your awareness of their work in your pitch letter.

The Yahoo Directory for News and Media (http://dir.yahoo.com/news_and_media/) allows you to drill down by subject, region, publication type, columns and columnists, etc. It's uneven, but has a good amount of in-depth information.

For general media, one of the best resources for contacting a targeted media list of major and minor publications and bloggers nationwide is **PR Newswire** (http://www.prnewswire.com/). It's very user-friendly and offers generous non-profit rates. It also provides sample press releases and other points of reference for free.

A **social media** press release is a slightly different animal. As you might expect, news via social media is punchier and more direct. There are online resources, such as *How to Write a Social Media Press Release* (http://www.copyblogger.com/social-media-press-release/), which help you define the difference between your media press release and social media press release. You can find links to top bloggers in various categories through Technorati (http://technorati.com/blogs/top100/) or a list of top education bloggers, such as OEDb's *Top 100 Education Blogs* (http://oedb.org/library/features/top-100-education-blogs), and go "door-to-door" pitching bloggers. But there are also commercial tools for disseminating your news broadly, such as PitchEngine (http://www.pitchengine.com/). To get a broad sense of the entire social media press release landscape and process, check out a PBS blog called MediaShift (http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/2010/04/social-media-release-must-evolve-to-replace-press-release113.html).

Tip: Be sure to monitor any publicity your organization receives, even if unsolicited, and keep a list of outlets covering issues related to your project or center.

Media Outlets

- **Local newspapers or magazines**: Don't forget to consider the media source's audience(s). Ensure that you understand the audiences it reaches and that you are trying to reach. Remember, your target audience may change depending on the nature of what you are distributing. Even a listing in the community calendar can have an impact.

- **Specialty/industry publications (including web sites)**: Many of these local publications (and some national ones) will be interested in your project or center.
- **Television and radio news, current events shows**: Often these shows will have episodes focused on a specific industry or current event related to your project or center.
- **Campus and industry**: Track down your institution or industry's newspapers, bulletins, social media feeds, or newsletters.

In addition to the traditional and social media outlets mentioned in this section, there are many publicity opportunities within the ATE community, NSF, and beyond. Go to the next section for a quick guide to Potential Outreach Paths within the NSF and ATE community.

Potential Outreach Paths

In addition to traditional and social media outlets, there are many publicity opportunities within the ATE community, NSF, and beyond. Here's a quick guide:

ATE Central

http://atecentral.net

ATE Central was created as a place to help educators, students, and the general public discover all that the ATE program has to offer. Through the online portal, visitors can access the full range of ATE resources available. In addition, ATE Central aggregates information about the ATE Centers and Projects, which helps educators, administrators, and others connect to one another and the ATE program. ATE Central also serves as a central communication and support point for all of those involved in ATE centers and projects, offering a number of features to help with outreach and dissemination including:

- An events page where your organization can post any event its producing for broadcast to a larger community
- ATE Central Connection (ACC), a monthly newsletter that highlights projects and centers, resources, events, and ATE news and updates
- The ATE Central homepage, featuring ATE news, announcements, and updates along with new resources.

Please email **info@atecentral.net** to ensure that your project or center (and its resources) is represented.

Teaching Technicians

https://www.teachingtechnicians.org

Teaching Technicians is a destination for information related to faculty development for technician educators. Teaching Technician's mission is two-fold: (1) to make it easy for technician educators to learn about and take advantage of exemplary professional development opportunities provided by the National Science Foundation (NSF) ATE grantees and others, and (2) to increase participation in faculty development by providing NSF ATE grantees a central place to broadly announce their events that will proactively alert instructors of opportunities. Registration on the Teaching Technicians website is free and allows you to:

- Post or edit any development event that you'd like to publish.
- Create an event search that allows you to define the type, time, and location of any professional event that you may be interested in.
- Request that Teaching Technicians email your event search results to you.

Teaching Technicians is a simple, free, and popular path to disseminate your project or center's development events. For more questions, email: **SCATE@fdtc.edu**

ATE Centers

http://atecenters.org

The centers of the National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological Education program lead dynamic, productive partnerships among industry, community colleges, and other education sectors. The mission of the ATE centers is to provide models and leadership and act as clearinghouses for educational materials and methods. The centers are meant to be cooperative efforts, and in order to fulfill their mission, ATE centers mentor new PIs and projects within the same and related technological fields. Centers also have "broad outreach, community-building, and leadership development among educational institutions, employers, professional and trade associations, educators, and practicing technicians leading to high visibility and support at the collaborating educational institutions."

ATE Centers are wonderful resources for those looking for outreach and dissemination paths related to their specific technological area. The centers are there to help you in your efforts, so do not hesitate to take advantage of their expertise, wide audience, and resources. For more information, email: **matec@matec.org**

Advanced Technological Education Television (ATETV)

http://www.atetv.org

The ATETV project aims to show how ATE centers and projects are relevant to the modern workplace and help attract students to these growing fields. ATETV produces multi-disciplinary web-based television episodes that combine the power of video and the Internet to link education, government, and industry by providing a window into careers and workplace skills. ATETV features weekly episodes that broadcast via the web and each episode is designed to engage and impact prospective and current technicians with the real worlds of technology and industry. ATETV can help you immediately by providing you with applicable videos for any outreach you'd like to conduct. Search through their comprehensive video library to find short videos that may work for you. In addition if you have an ATE story you'd like to share, you can submit a post to the ATETV blog (via blog@atetv.org) and share your story and hard work with their audience. For more information, email: **info@atetv.org**

National Science Foundation (NSF)

http://nsf.gov

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent federal agency created by Congress in 1950 "to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense; and for other purposes." They have an annual budget of almost $7 billion, and are the primary source for almost 20 percent of all federally supported basic research conducted by America's colleges and universities. The NSF requires that all grantees demonstrate Broader Impacts and in order to help their grantees with this task they provide access to a number of their in-house outreach outlets. The best route for ATE projects and centers to share their news directly with NSF is to develop "Behind the Scenes" pieces for **LiveScience** (http://www.livescience.com), a science news website that is partnered with the NSF. As you develop your piece it is a good idea to talk to your program officer for feedback and ideas and look at previous ATE examples (see below). Once a piece

is shared as a **LiveScience** story, they are then generally repackaged as **Discoveries,** stories that are later repurposed for the U.S. News & World Report's science section.

Here is a sample piece developed for **LiveScience**:

> "Engineering Students Build Underwater Bot" (9/4/2009)
> *http://www.livescience.com/5675-engineering-students-build-underwater-bot.html*

Here are two samples from NSF's **Discoveries**:

> "The Molecular Workbench Wins SPORE Award" (8/4/11)
> *http://www.nsf.gov/discoveries/disc_summ.jsp?cntn_id=121271*

> "Weld-Ed Sparks Training and Development for Welding Students and Educators" (8/1/11)
> *http://nsf.gov/discoveries/disc_summ.jsp?cntn_id=121197*

Here is a list of ATE stories that have appeared since Dec. 2010 as Discoveries at nsf.gov and in **US News and World Report**:

> "Transforming Agriculture for Future Generations" (8/17/11)
> *http://www.usnews.com/science/articles/2011/08/17/transforming-agriculture-for-future-generations*

> "Blending Science Knowledge with Ancient Traditions" (7/7/11)
> http://www.usnews.com/science/articles/2011/07/07/blending-science-knowledge-with-ancient-traditions

> "Promoting Sustainable Agriculture" (6/21/11)
> *http://www.usnews.com/science/articles/2011/06/21/promoting-sustainable-agriculture*

> "Geospatial Technology as a Core Tool" (5/11/2011)
> *http://www.usnews.com/science/articles/2011/05/11/geospatial-technology-as-a-core-tool*

Important Tip: The NSF recommends using the Advancing Science, Serving Society (AAAS) tools for communicating your science piece:
http://communicatingscience.aaas.org/WorkingWithReporters/Pages/MediaInterviews.aspx

Once you and your program officer are happy with your article, please contact: V. Celeste Carter, Lead Program Director, telephone: (703) 292-4651, email: **vccarter@nsf.gov**

Communications Resources

ATE Media Kit Examples

Florida Advanced Technological Education (FLATE) Media Kit
http://www.fl-ate.org/news/docs/Press%20Kit%20(092908).pdf

Boston-Area Advanced Technological Education Connections (BATEC) Media Center
http://batec.org/about/publications (go to the bottom of the page)

Other Educational Non-Profit Media Kits

Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) Educational Excellence Media Kit
http://www.acsa.org/FunctionalMenuCategories/Media/TalkingPoints/EdExcellence/MediaKit.aspx

Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) Techniques Magazine Media Kit
http://www.acteonline.org/uploadedFiles/Publications_and_Online_Media/files/Techniques_2011-2012_Media_Kit.pdf

Society of Women Engineers Press Kit
http://societyofwomenengineers.swe.org/?option=com_content&task=view&id=172&Itemid=97

Nonprofit Association of Oregon Press Kit
http://www.nonprofitoregon.org/sites/default/files/uploads/file/PressKit_Basic.pdf

NC STEM Media Kit
https://www.ncstem.org/news-and-events/media-kits.html

STEM Florida Press Kit
http://www.stemflorida.net/PressKit

ATE Central's ATE Outreach Kit (what you are reading now) is also available online at:
http://atecentral.net/outreach

ATE Outreach Kit: Resources

ATE/NSF Outreach Resources

BATEC Outreach Kit
http://www.batec.org/download/outreachtoolkitforweb.pdf

BATEC Media Kit (Under Downloads at bottom of page)
http://batec.org/about/publications

FLATE's Educational Outreach
http://madeinflorida.org/educational-outreach/

ATE Social Media Directory
https://atecentral.net/index.php?P=SocialMediaDirectory

Teaching Technicians Help for ATE PIs
http://madeinflorida.org/educational-outreach/

American Physical Society (APS) *Outreach Guide*
http://www.aps.org/programs/outreach/guide/

NSF Broader Impacts Criterion
http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf022/bicexamples.pdf

Free Outreach Tools

Google Analytics (http://google.com/analytics/) Embedding the code on your web site or blog is worth the effort — the information about traffic sources to your site, top links, geographic distribution, etc. is invaluable in identifying your impact.

Google Alerts (http://google.com/alerts) Create an alert that lets you know whenever/wherever your project or center is mentioned in the media, in blogs, etc.

HubSpot (http://hubspot.com/) An online marketing agency that offers a series of high-quality, accessible webinars about all aspects of digital marketing from web site optimization to best practices for webinars and e-mail.

Slideshare (http://slideshare.net/) A popular tool for sharing presentations. Do a search by topic to find inspiration from other sources.

Low-Fee Tools With Non-Profit Rates

Adobe (http://www.adobe.com/cfusion/event/index.cfm?event=list&type=eseminar) A fee-based service for conducting webinar, with presentations that include video. A competing service, GoToMeeting.com offers similar functionality.

Basecamp (http://basecamphq.com/) One of the most user-friendly Web-based project management tools that's excellent for managing contributors from different locations, as well as files, milestones, messages, and more.

Constant Contact (http://constantcontact.com/) A subscription-based e-mail and event marketing service with easy editing/design tools and templates for creating HTML e-mail messages and newsletters.

Google AdWords (http://adwords.google.com/) Online keyword advertising can offer a very cost-effective targeted solution for connecting your project with trending news.

PR Newswire (http://prnewswire.com/) Press release/news distribution, targeting, monitoring and marketing.

SurveyMonkey (http://surveymonkey.com/) A well-designed survey service that's easy to use and delivers results in a convenient, easy-to-analyze format.

Other Useful Links

The **U.S. Department of Health and Services** offers a simple dissemination planning tool (http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/advances/planningtool.htm).

The **USDA** has a sample outreach toolkit (http://www.summerfood.usda.gov/library/toolkit.pdf) with recommendations for working with partners, creating promotion material, and more.

Suggested Reading

Presentations

Resonate: Present Visual Stories That Transform Audiences by Nancy Duarte

slide:ology: The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations by Nancy Duarte

Publicity

Guerilla Marketing for Nonprofits by Jay Levinson

Publicity for Nonprofits: Generating Media Exposure That Leads to Awareness, Growth, and Contributions by Sandra Beckwith

Social Media

Social Media Marketing All-in-One for Dummies by Jan Zimmerman, Doug Sahlin

The Dragonfly Effect: Quick, Effective and Powerful Ways to Use Social Media to Drive Social Change by Jennifer Aacker, Andy Smith

ATE Outreach Kit: Glossary

#: *see Hashtag*

About us: a brief handout or web page that covers your organization's background, key players, important events/awards/research, supporters, etc.

Blog: short for "web log," a public journal comprised of posts about a topic or organization.

Dissemination: the broadcast, circulation, or spread of information from a person or organization to a wider audience.

Elevator pitch: a 60-second description of your organization, focusing on what you do and your impact.

Facebook: a free social media platform for long-term outreach to a large audience via organization pages.

FAQ: *see Frequently Asked Questions*

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): a document that provides answers to the questions most often asked by your audience and the media.

Google+: a new, free social media platform for outreach to a growing variety of audiences.

Hashtag (#): place this symbol before key words or phrases in your Tweets to signal your interest in those topics (for example #tech or #NSF).

Key message: short phrase (1-2 sentences) that provides a description of your organization in condensed and understandable terms.

LinkedIn: a social media platform used to develop connections with other professionals and members of industry.

Media kit: a packet of up-to-date information about your project or center, including a pitch letter and a press release.

National Science Foundation (NSF): an independent federal agency created by Congress in 1950 "to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense…" The NSF is the funding source for about 20% of all federally supported research conducted by American colleges and universities.

NSF: *see National Science Foundation*

Outreach: an effort to reach out and engage a wider audience; involves two-way communication between organization and audience.

PI: *see Principal Investigator*

Pitch letter: an introduction to your organization that integrates your elevator pitch, a news hook, 2-3 talking points, and media contact information.

Post: a substantive or new addition to a social media site or blog. Also used as a verb *to post:* the action of adding to a social media site or blog.

Press release: a document that tells newsworthy story about your organization in a form that can be used by the media.

Principal Investigator (PI): the individual (or individuals, in the case of co-PIs) designated by the grantee and approved by NSF to be responsible for the scientific or technical direction of the project.

Social media: a group of web-based technologies designed to allow users to build conversation, share links, videos, photos, and observations, and engage an audience.

Talking point: mid-length phrase (2-4 sentences) that builds on the information in your mission statement or answers a frequently asked question.

Tweet: a short, 140-character message posted to a Twitter account.

Twitter: a free social media platform that allows users to compose short, frequent messages (called Tweets) and connect with specific audiences via hashtags.

YouTube: a free social media platform that allows users to upload videos up to 15 minutes in length.