

552881332-7486-19150-186-165

From: Barbara W Wainman <bwainman@usgs.gov>
Sent: Tue, 17 Aug 2010 15:54:18
To: GS FOIA 0134 <foia0134@usgs.gov>
Subject: Fw: Questions from the reporter about "technical communications" and who authored the oil budget report

Barbara W. Wainman
Director
Office of Communications and Outreach
US Geological Survey
119 National Center
Reston, VA 20192

(703) 648-5750

----- Forwarded by Barbara W Wainman/DO/USGS/DOI on 08/17/2010 03:54 PM

From: Barbara W Wainman/DO/USGS/DOI

To: Vic Hines <vhines@usgs.gov>

Cc: Wade Anne-Berry <abwade@usgs.gov>

Date: 08/11/2010 11:11 AM

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Subject: Re: Questions from the reporter about "technical communications" and who authored the oil budget report

I agree send her to BP but inform DOI

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Director
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119 National Center
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From: Vic Hines <vhines@usgs.gov>

To: Barbara Wainman <bwainman@usgs.gov>, Wade Anne-Berry <abwade@usgs.gov>

Date: 08/11/2010 11:09 AM

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Subject: Re: Questions from the reporter about "technical communications" and who authored the oil budget report

I agree government communications could be a story, I just don't think any of what she's asking is ours to address. I initially thought her focus was going to be on public communications, but reading the questions she seems far more focused on the flow of information within and between the numerous entities involved.

Vic

Vic Hines
Chief, Office of Communications
Western Region
U.S. Geological Survey
206-220-4573
vhines@usgs.gov

On Aug 11, 2010, at 7:20 AM, Barbara W Wainman wrote:

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> I agree with Vic we cannot comment on BPs communications but if she
> ever
> looks at the other side of the story at government communications
> she might
> also have a story
>
>
> Barbara W. Wainman
> Director
> Office of Communications and Outreach
> US Geological Survey
> 119 National Center
> Reston, VA 20192
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>
>
> From: Anne-Berry Wade/DO/USGS/DOI
>
> To: Vic Hines/DO/USGS/DOI@USGS, Barbara W Wainman/DO/USGS/
> DOI@USGS
>
> Date: 08/10/2010 06:43 PM
>
> Subject: Questions from the reporter about "technical
> communications" and who authored the oil budget report
>
>
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>
> here they are...
>
> A.B. Wade
> Public Affairs Officer (Acting)
> 703-648-4483 office
> 703-477-2851 cell
> For Eastern Region issues contact Hannah Hamilton
> *****
>
>
>
> ----- Forwarded by Anne-Berry Wade/DO/USGS/DOI on 08/10/2010 06:41
> PM -----
>
> From: "Elissa Myers" <elissa@elissamyers.com>
>
> To: "'Anne-Berry Wade'" <abwade@usgs.gov>
>
> Date: 08/10/2010 06:26 PM
>
> Subject: RE: thanks for your response! And welcome back!
>
>
>
>
>
>
>
> Anne, thanks so much, and welcome back! Hope the vacation was
> splendid.
> I'm shooting for an end of August deadline, but the article will be
> published when I'm finished, and I'll be finished when I have an

> article!
> The preliminary questions I've created are pasted below. I've also
> attached an issue of the magazine that I'm writing for in which I
> wrote the
> cover story recently - you can see my article.
>
> I worked for the American Society of Association Executives for 25
> years -
> 12 of them as publisher. I'm not trying to write an "expose" - I'm
> trying
> to help other organizations learn from this extraordinary
> communications
> challenge. I specifically wrote to you because of the enormously
> important role that Marsha McNutt has played in this entire crisis
> management. I was most recently intrigued by the controversy over the
> Administration's statement on August 3 - "What Happened to the Oil"
> -- a
> paper that Dr. McNutt participated in.
>
> So your help will be greatly appreciated and tenderly and carefully
> applied!
>
> Thanks in advance!
>
> Preliminary Questions:
>
>
> The role of the technical communicator, who brings an understanding of
> technical processes, as well as an ability to communicate
> information in a
> clear and usable way to different groups, from consumers to end

> users, is

> increasingly recognized as an important one in virtually every modern

> industry and enterprise. Some examples of people within the technical

> communication field are: content developers, documentation

> specialists,

> indexers, information architects, information designers, instructional

> designers, researchers, teachers, technical illustrators, technical

> writers

> and editors, translators, usability and human factors professionals,

> visual

> designers, and web designers and developers.

>

>

> Technical communicators have the crucial job of planning, designing,

> organizing, writing, editing, and testing information. That

> information may

> be safety critical, keeping consumers and employees from harming

> themselves

> and others by unintentionally misusing products. That information

> may also

> be what makes consumers and employees productive and happy by

> showing them

> how to perform their tasks quickly and easily.

>

>

> 1. How does/did BP use technical communications/communicators in its

> operations? Has anything changed in the role of the technical

> communicator

> at BP during these past months?

> 2. We know from early news releases that one of the problems was the

> engineers on site were using the WRONG document, an earlier version

> of the

> blueprint and they were trying a solution based on this. They did
> not have
> the most recent document. So who was in charge of making sure there
> was
> accurate information exchanged and managed?
>
> 3. The future of technical communication is the managing of cross
> communications, across silos in companies, across companies, across
> professions and disciplines, and across countries (both in terms of
> work
> flow in developing documents and in responsibility chain of government
> officials.) The more complex the project the more there is a role
> for a
> high level, CROSS functional communication efforts.
>
> There are at least a dozen major corporations and agencies directly
> involved in this oil spill –and a host of different professionals:
> engineers, marine biologists, public relations specialists,
> economists. “On
> May 24, Admiral Thad Allen announced that the director of the United
> States
> Geological Survey (USGS), Marcia McNutt, is leading the Flow Rate
> Technical
> Group – scientists from the U.S. Coast Guard, National Oceanic and
> Atmospheric Administration, Minerals Management Service, the United
> States
> Department of Energy and academics outside government tasked with
> providing
> the government with an independent scientific assessment of the
> scope of
> the disaster and of BP's efforts to stop the flow of oil,” plus BP,

- > Transocean, Hyundai Heavy Industries, Halliburton, and many more. What
- > challenges and issues make technical communication within and
- > between these
- > organizations particularly difficult, and how are they handled?
- >
- > Who is managing the documentation exchange and the flow of
- > communication
- > between interested parties?
- >
- > 4. During March and April, 2010, multiple platform workers and
- > supervisors
- > expressed concerns with well control.
- > On May 17, BP issued a statement rebutting allegations that its
- > Atlantis
- > platform in the Gulf of Mexico operated with incomplete and inaccurate
- > engineering documents.
- >
- > “Responding to claims that flawed or missing documentation posed a
- > threat
- > to safe operation of the platform, recently made in various news
- > programs
- > and print media, BP said it had thoroughly investigated these claims
- > when
- > they were first made by a former contract worker in 2009 and found
- > them to
- > be without substance.
- >
- > “The investigation found that the operators on the platform had full
- > access
- > to the accurate, up-to-date drawings (topsides, hull and subsea)
- > necessary
- > to operate the platform safely.

>
> “A second investigation of the same allegations by the Ombudsman’s
> office
> focused on project document and filing procedures and had no bearing
> on
> operating or regulatory issues. After this review BP made some
> procedural
> changes in the project execution plan, but these likewise had no
> connection
> with the safe operation of the platform.
>
> “As CEO Tony Hayward constantly makes clear, safe and reliable
> operations
> are his number 1 priority for BP and the company has a very strong
> record
> of safe and reliable operations in the Gulf of Mexico,” a company
> spokesman
> said. “It is completely erroneous to suggest that the minor internal
> process issue we identified and immediately amended last year on the
> Atlantis platform suggests anything different.”
>
> “The design, construction, installation and operation of Atlantis have
> received a high level of oversight by both the US Minerals Management
> Service (MMS) and the US Coast Guard. BP has and will continue to
> work with
> the MMS or any other regulator when concerns are raised about any
> aspect of
> our operation.
>
> “The Atlantis field has been in service since October 2007 and has
> safely

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- > produced many million barrels of oil. The platform was successfully
- > maintained through the course of two major hurricanes in 2008. Its
- > safety,
- > operations and performance record is excellent.”
- >
- >
- > On June 17, Congressman Markey (D, Massachusetts), during House
- > Hearings in
- > the House investigation of the oil spill, accused Tony Hayward of
- > willfully
- > ignoring the warnings of BP’s own engineers, and in fact, of firing
- > two
- > whistleblowers involved in the warnings.
- >
- >
- > What actually happened?
- > 5. Certainly there must have been/continue to be conflicts between
- > clear
- > technical communication and the silence mandated by litigation. How
- > does
- > BP walk this line?
- >
- >
- >
- > 6. Are there written BP policies governing communication by BP’s
- > technical
- > communicators and the media; public/ government?
- >
- >
- >
- > 7. Once Admiral Allen assumed command, did authority to communicate
- > technical issues change? Does the government team employ technical

- > communicators, and how do they relate to the technical communicators
- > employed by BP?
- >
- >
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- >
- > 8. On August 3, 2010 the Obama administration issued a report/
> statement "BP
> Deepwater horizon Oil Budget: What Happened to the Oil?" Some have
> called
> the report premature at best and sloppy at worst - ie "A lot of
> this is
> based on modeling and extrapolation and very generous
> assumptions. If an
> academic scientist put something like this out there, it
> would get
> torpedoed into a billion pieces." On the other hand, others are
> arguing
> that it is a pretty good estimate and the best that is possible.
- >
- >
- > who actually 'wrote' the report? what standards/policies/interests
> informed
> this particular final report? was there a technical communicator
> involved?
- >
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> 9. The Huoma Command Center appears to be the ultimate
> “technical
> communications center.” Can we do a mini-case study on what it took
> to set
> it up, what was learned, and what techniques were employed to
> foster
> communication?
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>
> Elissa Matulis Myers, CAE
> Advice & Consensus
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> Springfield, Virginia 22151
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> <http://www.examiner.com/x-56360-Fairfax-PetFriendly-Places-Examiner>
> Passionate Leadership & Good Governance Built on Classic Principles
> and
> Contemporary Techniques
>
> From: Anne-Berry Wade [<mailto:abwade@usgs.gov>]
> Sent: Tuesday, August 10, 2010 4:58 PM
> To: Elissa Myers
> Subject: Re:
>

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> I am a reporter working on an analysis of the process of technical
> communication in the events leading up to and following the BP Gulf
> oil
> spill, for the Society of Technical Communicators.
>
> I just finished reading the most recent public report from the
> National
> Incident Command on "What Happened to the Oil."
>
> My primary question is a simple one - can you tell me who wrote the
> report?
> I could see from the acknowledgements the many outstanding
> scientists, like
> Dr. McNutt, that contributed to its content. But I'd like to talk
> to the
> individual who wrote the report - "the technical communicator,"
> responsible
> for taking the complex scientific findings and explaining them in
> terms the
> public good grasp.
>
> I'd also like to interview the individual on the USGS staff
> responsible for
> the "technical communications" coming out of your offices relative
> to the
> BP Gulf oil spill. I would be happy to submit questions in advance.
>
> Thank you so much for your help.

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> Passionate Leadership & Good Governance Built on Classic Principles
> and
> Contemporary Techniques
> [attachment "STC March 2009 issue -- Adapt or Die.pdf" deleted by
> Barbara
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