

565864481-6668-17785-189-196  
From: Barbara W Wainman <bwainman@usgs.gov>  
Sent: Tue, 17 Aug 2010 15:54:05  
To: GS FOIA 0134 <foia0134@usgs.gov>  
Subject: Fw: thanks for your response! And welcome back!

Barbara W. Wainman  
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----- Forwarded by Barbara W Wainman/DO/USGS/DOI on 08/17/2010 03:53 PM

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From: Anne-Berry Wade/DO/USGS/DOI

To: "Elissa Myers" <elissa@elissamyers.com>

Date: 08/11/2010 05:36 PM

Subject: RE: thanks for your response! And welcome back!

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Hi - Thanks for sending your questions and explaining the scope of the article you're writing. Based on your questions, it would be more appropriate if you were to contact the federal agencies who were directly involved with the daily oil budget rather than the USGS. Our involvement was primarily to help develop the actual modeling tool (ie the computer program that was used. NOAA and the Coast Guard are perhaps your best bet.

And based on your questions about the interagency communications, perhaps your best bet is to contact the Deepwater Horizon Incident Joint Information Center at 713-323-1670 or 713-323-1671.

And finally, Ive tried to figure out who from NOAA might be your best contact but have not heard back from them. Their website has this information which you've probably found on your own already.

NOAA Headquarters

Interviews with NOAA leadership, policy issues, budget and legislation.

Justin Kenney, Director

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Director

Scott Smullen, Deputy

202-482-6090

Constituent affairs, stakeholder relationships, business/industry liaison, exhibits.

External Affairs

Affairs

Andrew Winer

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Public Affairs Officer (Acting)

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For Eastern Region issues contact Hannah Hamilton

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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 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?

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?

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

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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:

Im just now catching up to a number of emails after being on vacation last week. What's your deadline and can you send me your questions please. That may help facilitate things.

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For Eastern Region issues contact Hannah Hamilton

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565864481-6668-17785-189-196

From: "Elissa Myers" <elissa@elissamyers.com>

To: <abwade@usgs.gov>

Date: 08/09/2010 01:54 PM

Subject:

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

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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.

Elissa Matulis Myers, CAE

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[attachment "STC March 2009 issue -- Adapt or Die.pdf" deleted by Anne-Berry Wade/DO/USGS/DOI]