**Abstract**

Dissemination is a key stage in crowdsourcing contests. Different categories exist for dissemination however this is largely dependent on the original purpose of the contest and the outcomes generated. Effective dissemination is necessary to ensure the output of the contest reach the target group who can then make use of them. The key steps to consider and main strategies for dissemination are discussed here.

**Introduction**

Crowdsourcing is the process of having a large group, including experts and non-experts, solve a problem and then share the solution with the public (1). Crowdsourcing has been used in many disciplines and is increasingly being used in health and social research (2). Thus, crowdsourcing contests are a powerful tool for developing new ideas and innovations. One of the most important stages of community-engaged research projects is the process of disseminating results (3). The main aim of the dissemination stage is to share with others the knowledge produced through crowdsourcing and/or to implement crowdsourced ideas (4). Dissemination in crowdsourcing is highly contest-specific, and the particular audience/setting to which the information/outcome is directed may determine the dissemination method. However, there are some general guidelines and key steps to follow when considering how to report and spread contest results. One of the most important things to consider when disseminating the contest information is the purpose of the challenge. Crowdsourcing contests vary in their mission; for example, some challenges aim to deliver an actionable outcome to a specific community. In other cases, the contest is organized simply to raise awareness in regards to a particular issue. Some barriers to effective dissemination include institutional priorities/organizational culture, practical difficulties, and technical and infrastructural barriers (5).

At the end of a crowdsourcing contest, the final solutions can be shared with the public in different ways mainly depending on the outcome(s) of the contest. The first step is to establish the purpose of the contest. Once this is done, it becomes easier to disseminate findings. Next is to identify target audience and the relevant platforms that to appeal to the specific audience. Finally, take action with specific audience on the platform identified and receive feedback if needed.

**Categories for dissemination**

There are different broad categories of disseminating the outcomes from a contest depending on the aim. If the main aim of dissemination is to increase awareness and understanding, then sharing data would be an appropriate form of dissemination. Dissemination then goes beyond formal publications if the aim is to change practice or behaviours. This will require engaging with stakeholders to inform policies or implement programmes. Broad categories are explained below:

**Sharing data**

This will include online dissemination via web pages, social media platforms and/or other digital repositories. Data resulting from contests can also be shared through formal presentations at conferences, publications in journals or books and can include non-refereed publications such as newsletters.

Forms of online sharing include creating a simple website or wiki sites reporting the contest and its proceedings; exceptional entries can be archived and the link to the site shared widely with relevant networks. Oftentimes, infographics are created of key findings from the contest to be shared online using social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn). ([Piktochart](https://piktochart.com/) is a wonderful resource to help design your own infographics.)

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| Example 1: The UJMT Fogarty Global Health Fellows Program Contest | |
| The [UJMT Fogarty Global Health Fellows Program Contest](http://www.seshglobal.org/UJMT-Contest) employed online dissemination for contest results and outcomes using social media channels | |
| Purpose | To increase interest in the UJMT programme by engaging UJMT partners (in-country collaborators, fellows, alumni, and others) to reflect on their experience and create messages to showcase the program. The results will be used in order to further promote the UJMT program |
| Target Audience | Potential applicants to the UJMT program |
| Platform | [**Facebook**](https://www.facebook.com/FogartyGlobalHealthFellows) |
| Action | Posts on Facebook advertising the UJMT experience |

**Presentations and publications**

This is another form of sharing data. Here, the contest process and outcomes are written up as a press release or research paper/communication brief in a relevant journal (identify suitable journals in relation to the subject and scope of the contest). [Medium](https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/how-to-use-medium) is a great resource to write and publish your own articles and results. You may then share the article on any social media platform, newsletter or email listserv that your organization may have. An abstract of the project can also be submitted for an oral or poster presentation at appropriate conferences or other relevant events.

**Informing policies**

Some contests are designed to directly inform policies for commercial purposes, tackling economic and societal problems or improving health guidelines. For example, the purpose of a hepatitis testing innovation contest was to identify descriptions of hepatitis approaches to support local programmes and inform WHO guidelines on hepatitis B and C testing. The contest solicited descriptions and exceptional entries were then included as best practice cases in the 2017 World Health Organization Hepatitis Testing Guidelines (6).

**Implementing or piloting outcomes**

Another form of disseminating the outcome of a challenge contest is to implement the solution or pilot programs in real settings. Here the key findings from challenge contests can be pitched as an idea to stakeholders in the relevant organizations to inform policies or implement new programmes.

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| Example 2: The clinical diagnostics and AMR Clinical case contest | |
| The [Diagnostics AMR](http://www.seshglobal.org/DiagnosticsAMR2018) crowdsourcing contest led to an educational resource that is being piloted for implementation. | |
| Purpose: | To create open access online learning resources on diagnostics and AMR using a challenge contest to crowdsource clinical cases on AMR/diagnostics |
| Target Audience: | Medical students, physicians, healthcare providers |
| Platform: | [**CME Module**](http://43.255.106.192/myflash/story_flash.html) |
| Action: | Learning module was created |
| Next steps: | Pilot finalized version of the module among physicians |

**Conclusion**

Typically, the contest is not fully complete until the findings have been disseminated effectively. As seen in the examples provided above, the dissemination of crowdsourcing results is key to the success of the contest. By following the guidelines provided above, crowdsourcing contests will be able to reach a wider audience, and will ensure that the purpose of the challenge is satisfied.

**References:**

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