



# The role of social media in risk communication for healthcare professionals

Alexander Talbott, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014

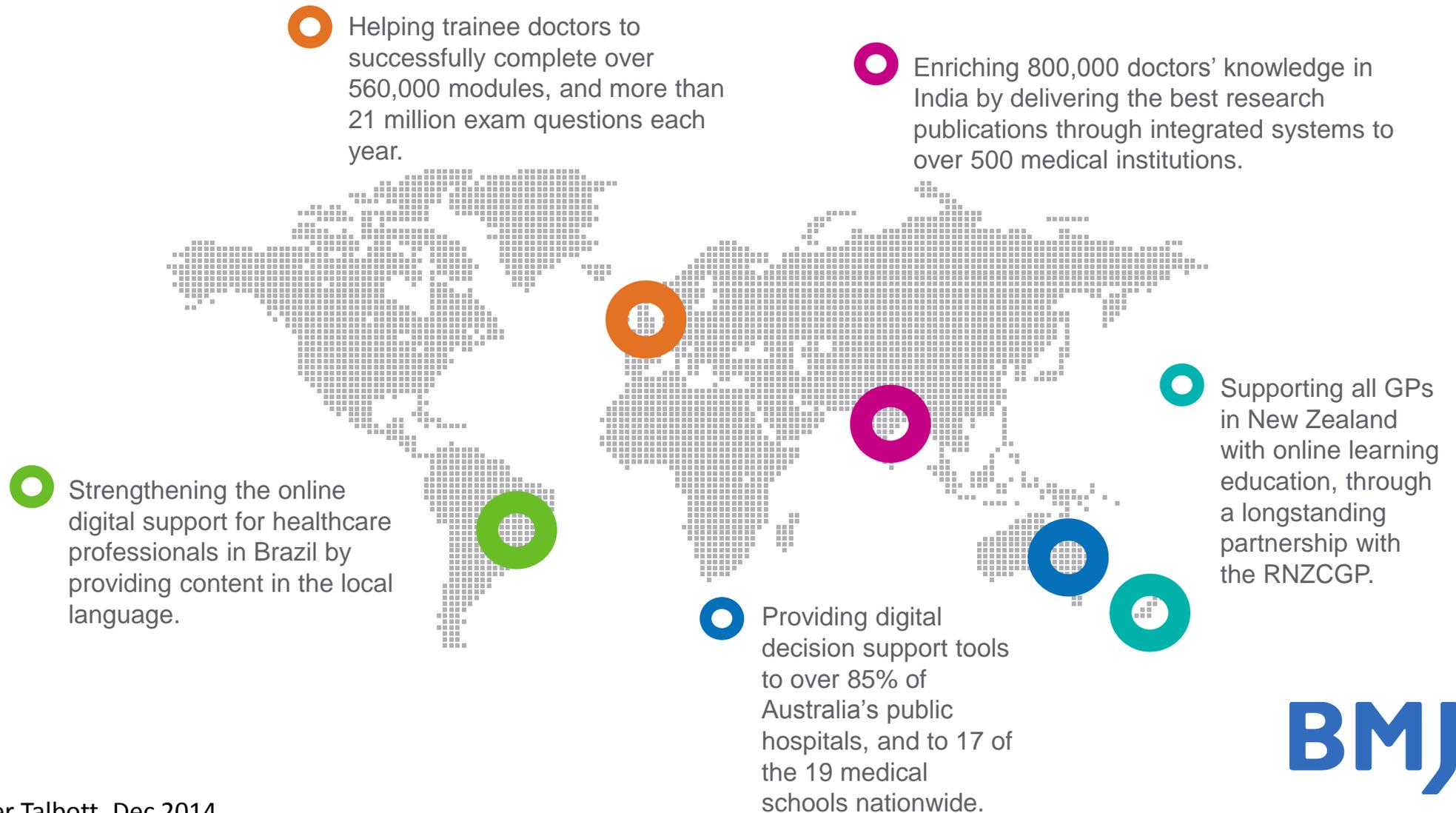


## A global healthcare knowledge provider

Sharing knowledge and expertise to improve experiences, outcomes and value.

**BMJ**

# Impacting healthcare worldwide



# Learning points from the H1N1 and Ebola outbreaks

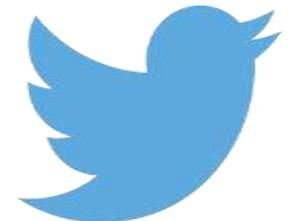
- Target audiences are using social media
- Healthcare agencies and professionals should use social media
- Create draft content prior to a confirmed outbreak
- Practice – who in your teams is able to monitor social media platforms?
- Develop a social media personality
- Share quickly and often
- People are looking for information online – fill the void before misinformation does.

# Setting the context

Setting the context

# What is social media?

- Network-based online platforms that enable two-way communication, independent of position, location, gender, age or education.
- Popular (in the UK) examples of such platforms are:



Figures correct as of March 2014. Source: Ofcom's Communications Market Report 2014.

Setting the context

# What is so important about social media?

- Flattens hierarchies
- It can drive the news agenda
- Changes peoples' information consumption habits
- Can directly compete with healthcare agencies information releases and promotions.

Setting the context

# What is risk communication?

- An attempt to align perceived risks with actual risks.

# Examples of using social media for risk communication

# Examples of using social media for risk communication

## Twitter

**CDC** @CDCgov Follow

#Ebola is spread by direct contact w/bodily fluids of a sick person or exposure to contaminated objects, like needles

**Facts about Ebola**

- You can't get Ebola through air
- You can't get Ebola through water
- You can't get Ebola through food

You can only get Ebola from:

- Touching the blood or body fluids of a person who is sick with or has died from Ebola.
- Touching contaminated objects, like needles.
- Touching infected animals, their blood or other body fluids, or their meat.

Ebola poses no significant risk to the United States.

RETWEETS: 4,256 FAVORITES: 1,104

12:23 AM - 1 Oct 2014



**Tweet Like A Girl** @TweetLikeAGirl Follow

To everybody who is freaking out about Ebola

**Facts about Ebola**

- You can't get Ebola through air
- You can't get Ebola through water
- You can't get Ebola through food

You can only get Ebola from:

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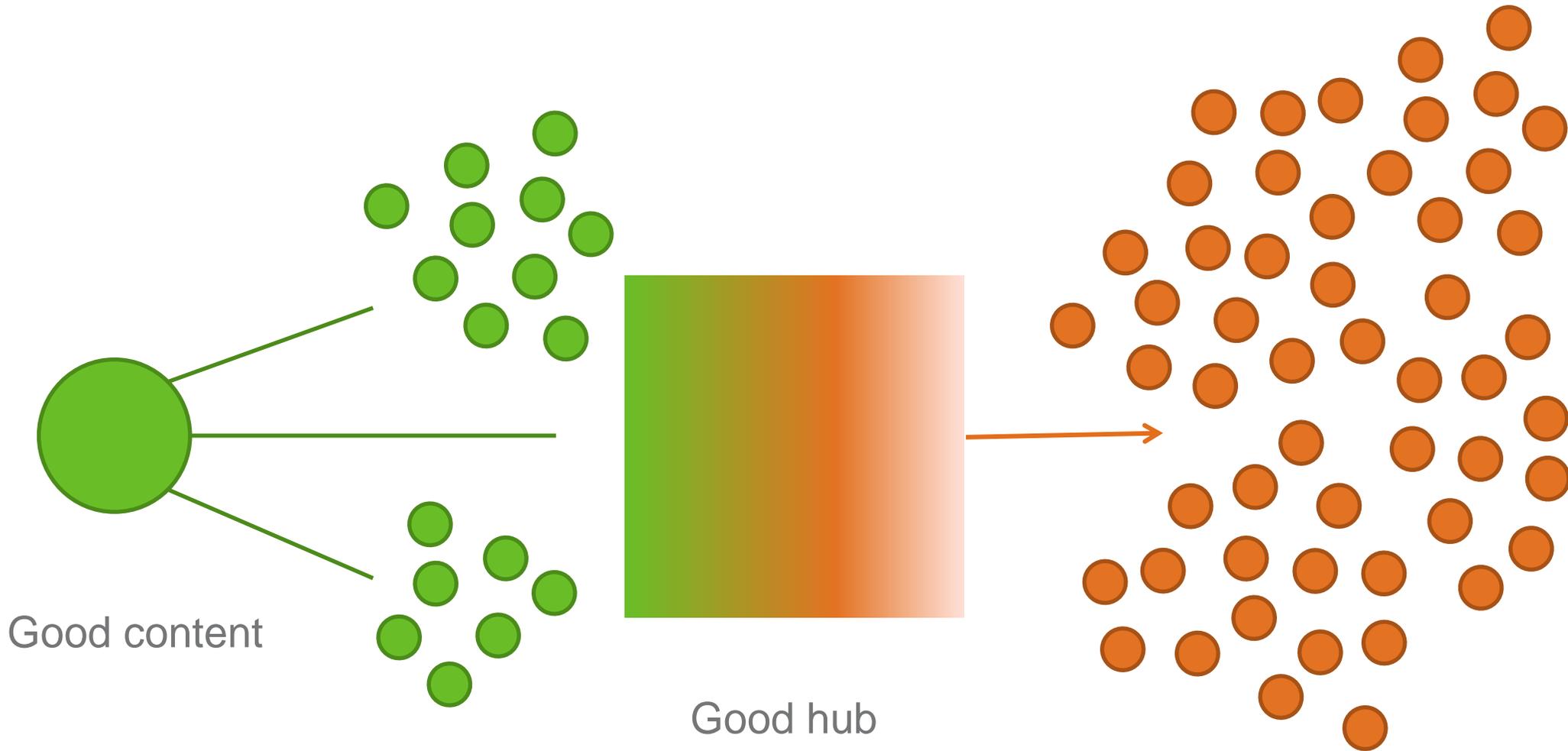
Ebola poses no significant risk to the United States.

RETWEETS: 12,008 FAVORITES: 9,055

7:08 pm - 1 Oct 2014

Getting to know your hubs

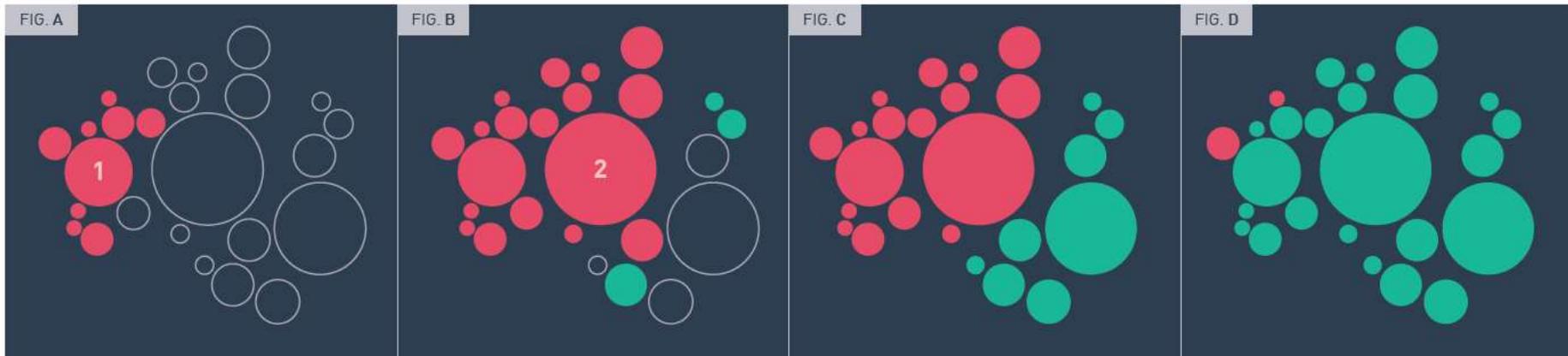
# Social media royalty: content and networks



TELL ME risk communication poster

# The power of social media poster

 **Case study:** How does Twitter deal with misinformation?



Misinformation



Associated Networks



Discreditors

# Examples of using social media for risk communication

## Twitter



# Examples of using social media for risk communication

## Facebook

**BBC**  
EBOLA  
COMMUNITY

**BBC Ebola**  
Community

Like Follow Message

Timeline About Photos Likes More

PEOPLE >

8,582 likes

Invite your friends to like this Page

ABOUT >

This a platform for Members to share experiences on Ebola.  
Members should Always treat other members with respect

Post Photo / Video

Write something on this Page...

**BBC** **EBOLA COMMUNITY** **BBC Ebola** shared a link.  
5 hours ago

Volunteer Ebola health worker: 'I'm not crazy, just brave enough'

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-29965637>

# Examples of using social media for risk communication

## Facebook



The image shows a screenshot of the BBC Africa Facebook page. The page header features a large photo of a man in a suit holding a trophy, with the BBC Africa logo and name to the left. Below the header are navigation tabs for Timeline, About, Photos, Likes, and More. On the left side, there is a 'PEOPLE' section with a red circle around the number '1,419,059 likes'. Below this is an 'ABOUT' section with a right-pointing arrow. The main content area shows a post from BBC Africa, 57 minutes ago, with a text update about a minister's firing. The post includes interaction options like 'Like · Comment · Share' and '36 Shares'. At the bottom of the post, it says '91 people like this.' and 'Top Comments'.

**BBC Africa** Media/News/Publishing

**1,419,059** likes

**BBC Africa** 57 minutes ago

President Uhuru Kenyatta has fired internal security minister Joseph Ole Lenku and appointed Joseph Nkaisery as the new Internal security minister. Opposition politicians and civil societies have been calling for his resignation following a spate of terror attacks in Mandera and other parts of the country.

Like · Comment · Share 36 Shares

91 people like this. Top Comments

# Communication considerations when using social media

# Communication considerations when using social media

## Monitoring

- Who will do the work?
- Ignore? Release counter-information? Directly rebuff?
- Privacy issues?

# Communication considerations when using social media

## Monitoring is local work too

NEWS

NHS issues statement after Cheltenham Ebola hoax



NHS issues statement after Cheltenham ebola hoax

First published Wednesday 29 October 2014 in News

Last updated 17:45 Wednesday 29 October 2014

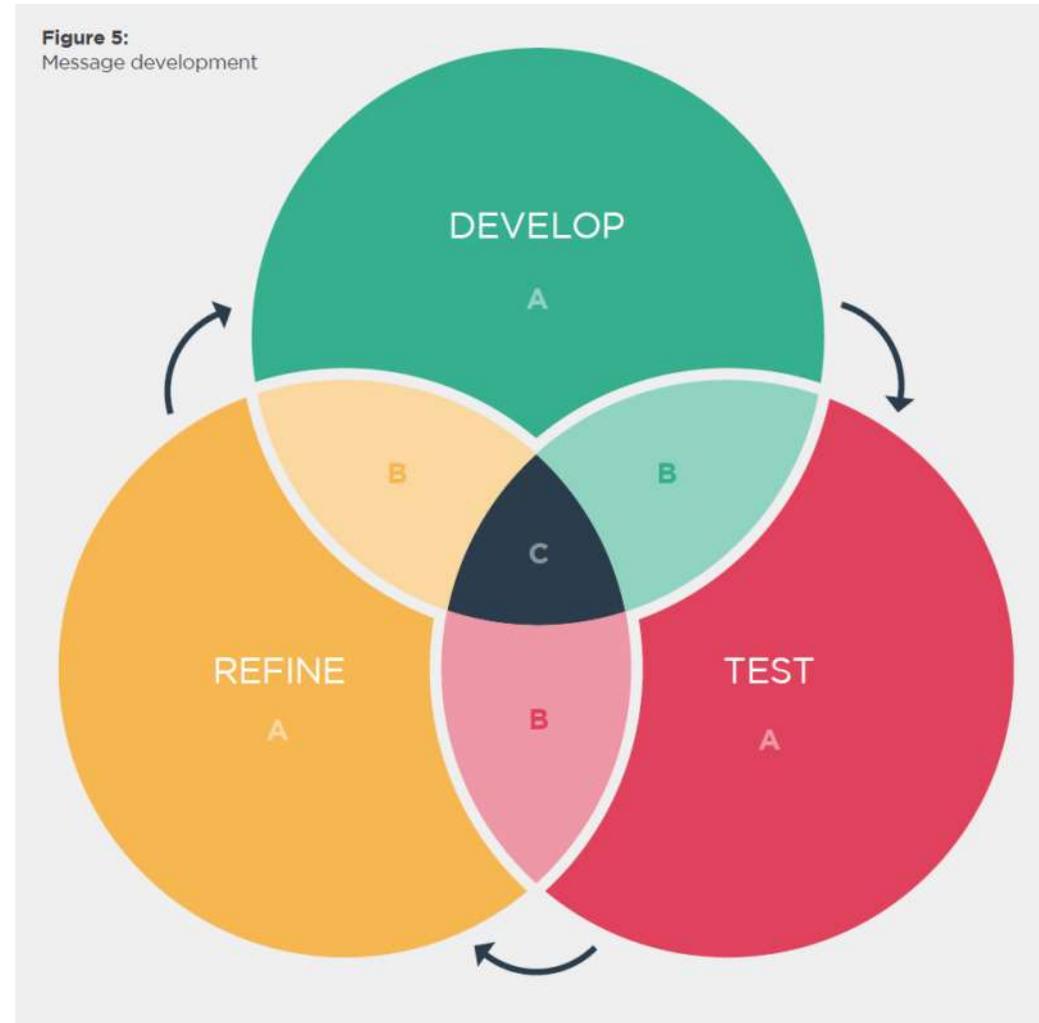
NHS bosses have issued a statement after bogus rumours have circulating on social media claiming an Ebola case had been confirmed in Cheltenham.

**Stroud News**  
& Journal

# Communication considerations when using social media

## Monitoring and message development

- Monitoring feeds into this cycle



# Future knowledge and skills requirements for healthcare professionals and public health staff

## Future knowledge and skills requirements

# Social media skills

- Monitoring (software, processes)
- Social media etiquette
- Content creation
- Working via advocacy (not top-down control)
- Network analysis
- Maintaining consistency across all platforms
- Horizon scanning
- Flexibility
- Quick fire research and decisions
- Personable online

Knowledge of the complex and interwoven nature of regional, national and international healthcare systems.

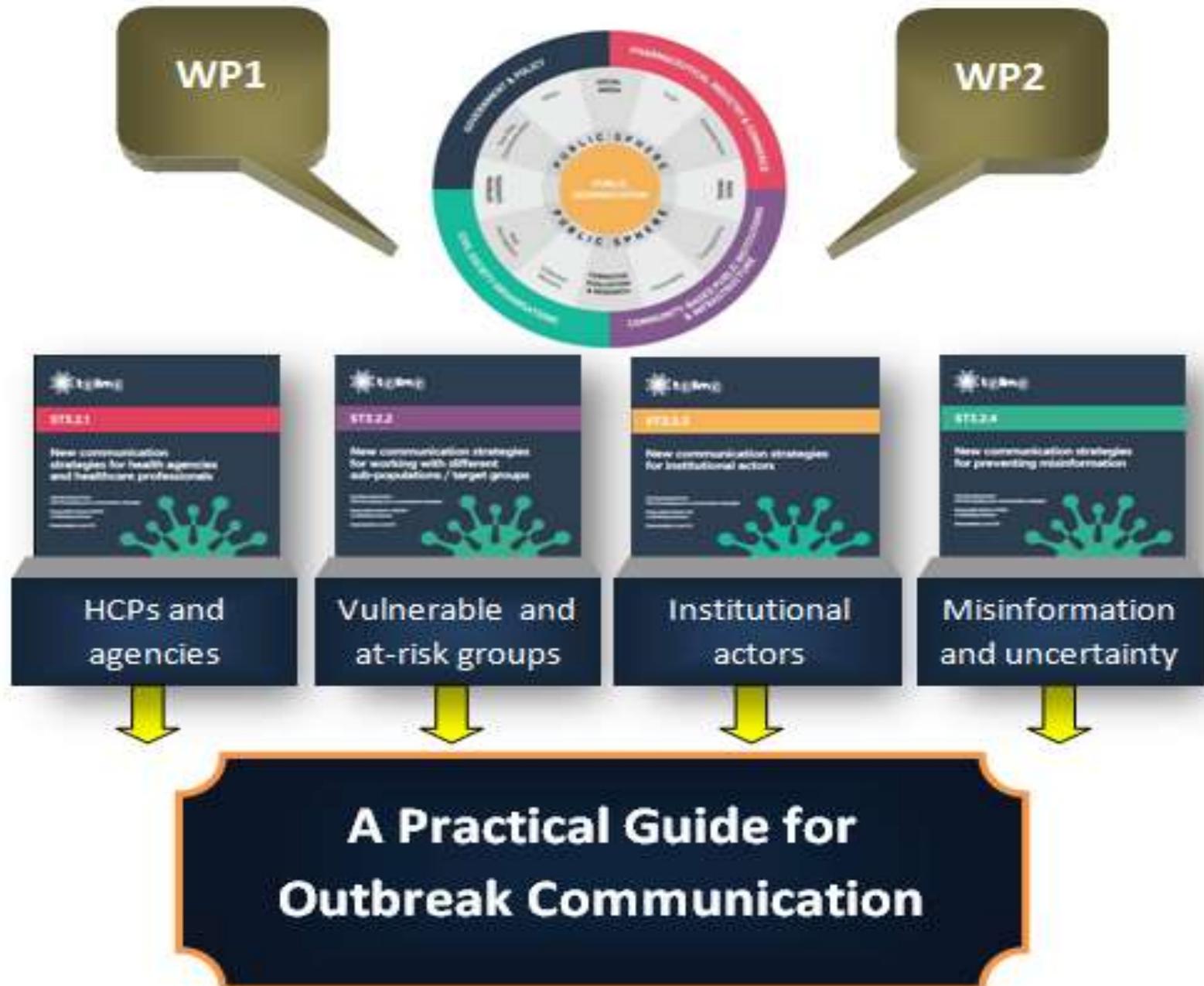
# Six top tips for using social media in risk communication

## Six top tips for using social media in risk communication

# Top tips

1. Build a presence before an outbreak occurs.
2. Go to where your audiences are.
3. Monitor and observe what is said, shared and popular – learn from it.
4. Create excellent sharable content and an online personality.
5. Answer your audiences' questions.
6. Feed in perceptions and knowledge gained from social media to message development cycles.

# A distillation process...

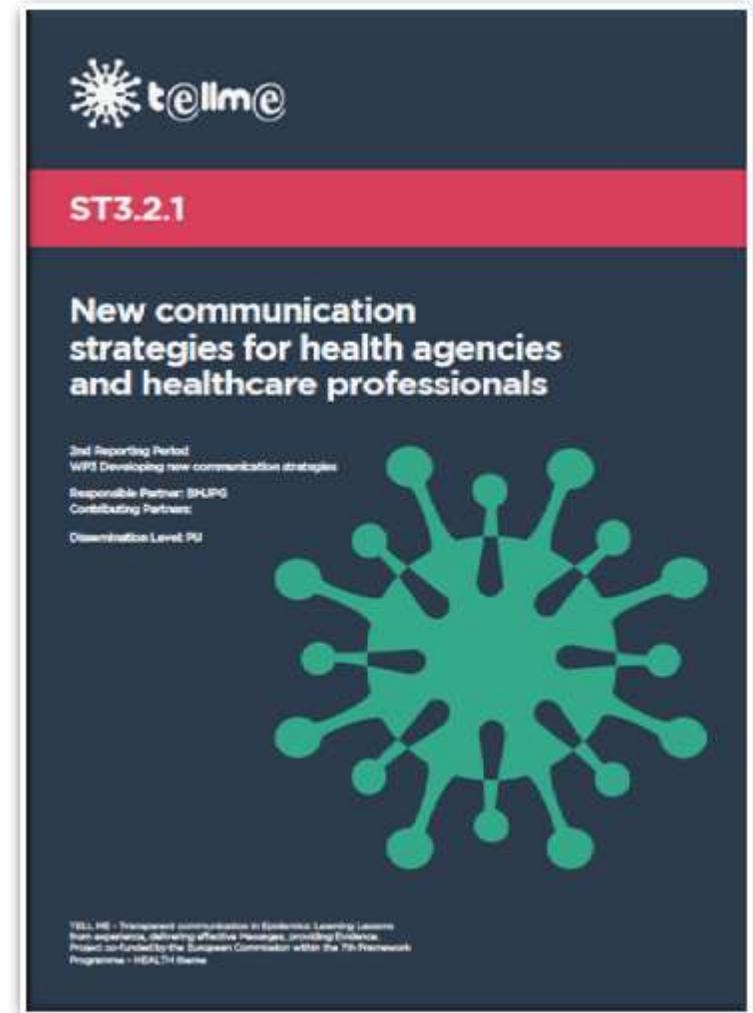


# Guidance document #1

## Healthcare professionals and agencies

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Strategies for increasing vaccine uptake among healthcare professionals and engaging with vaccine-resistant groups during infectious disease outbreaks.

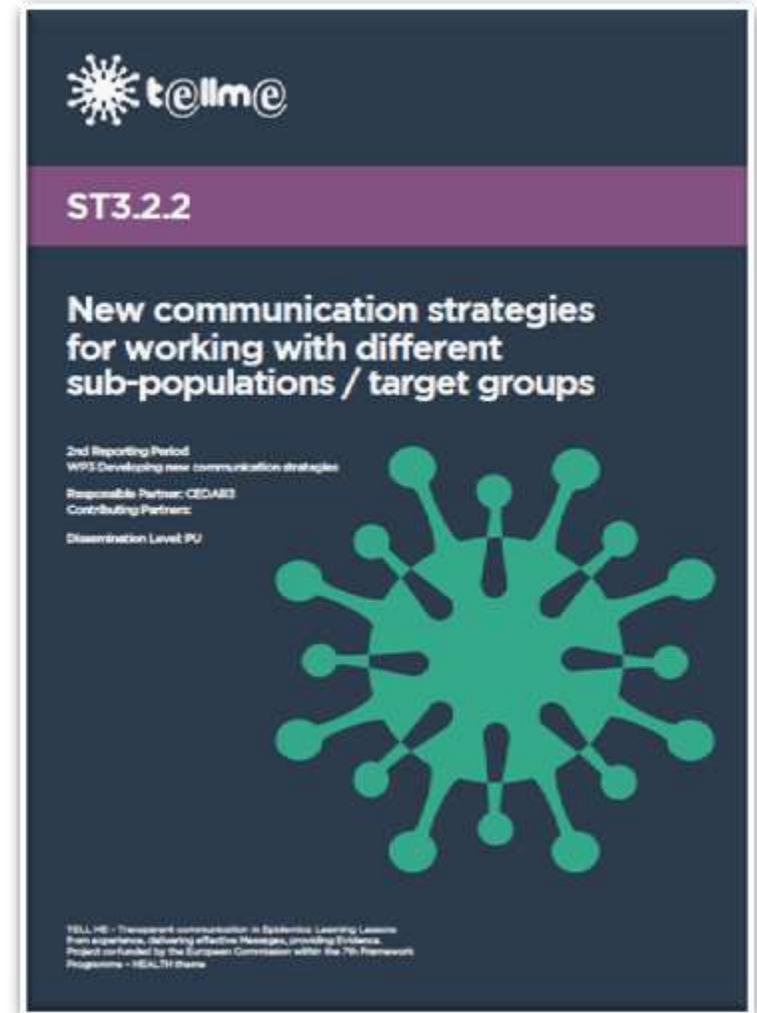


# Guidance document #2

## At-risk groups / vulnerable populations

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Strategies for communicating with vulnerable populations and at-risk groups recommended for immunisation in EU countries.

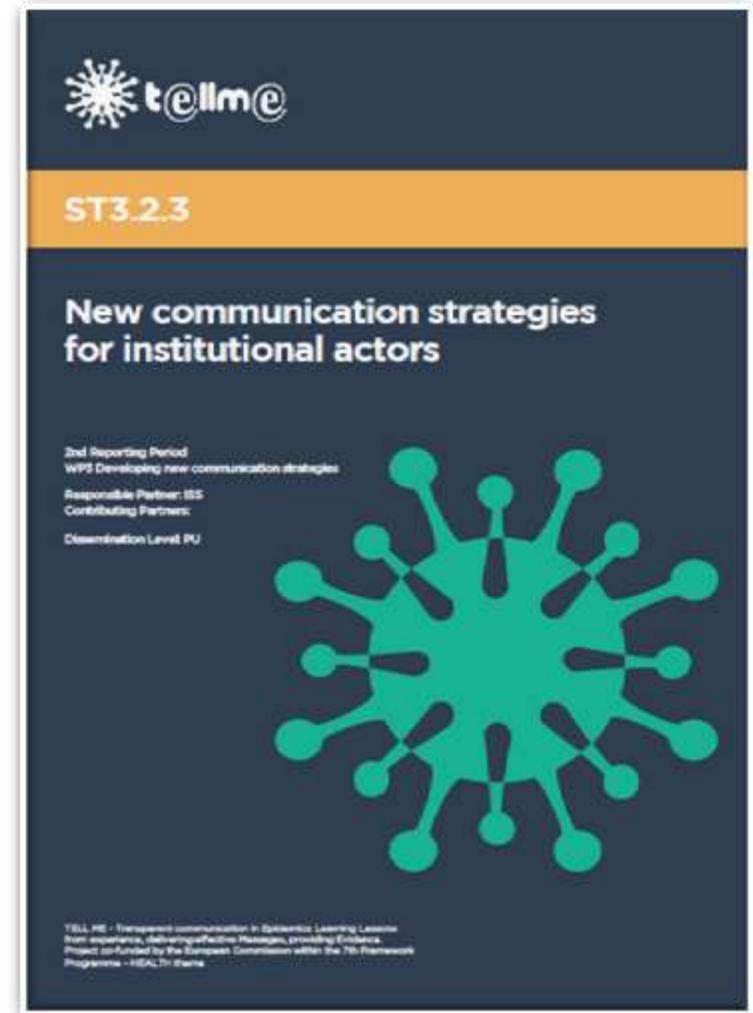


# Guidance document #3

## Institutional actors

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Strategies for institutional actors to engage more effectively with populations' behavioural responses in times of an outbreak.

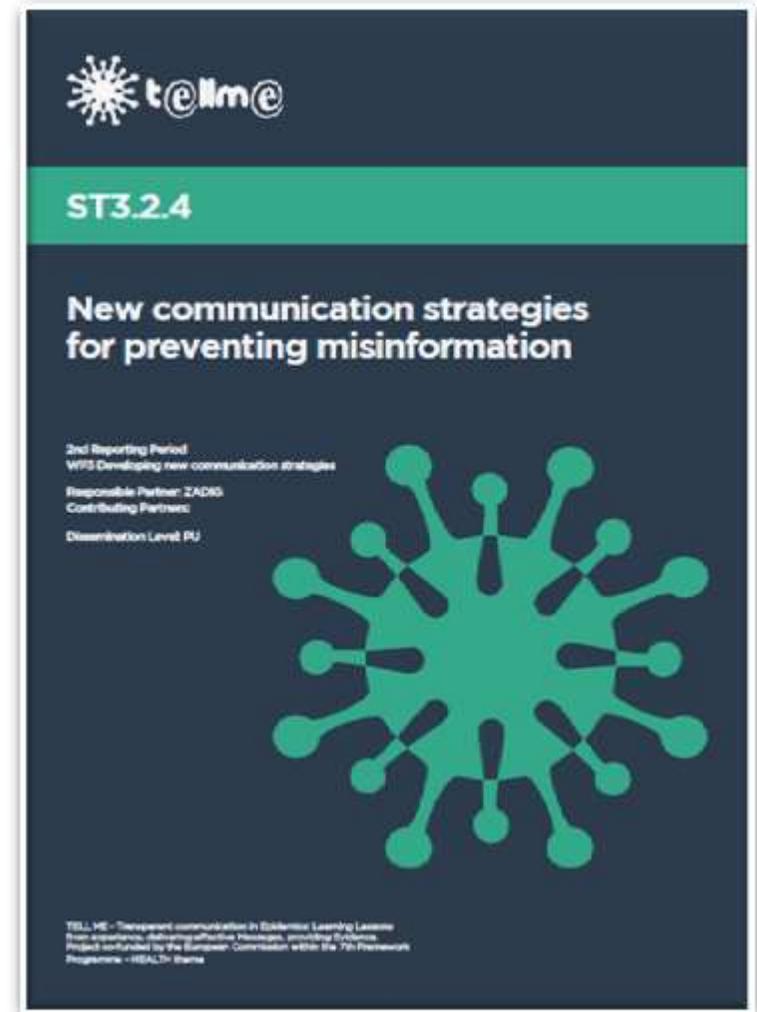


# Guidance document #4

## Misinformation and uncertainty

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Strategies for preventing the emergence and spread of misinformation and rumours in the course of an outbreak.



# Practical Guide for Outbreak Communication

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## Principal aims:

- Present communication strategies with a participatory approach in mind, building on concepts presented in the Framework Model.
- Highlight key aspects for effective risk and outbreak communications.
- Suggest communication strategies to meet different population segments' information needs in the course of an outbreak.
- Offer communication tools and templates to support the development of messages for communication of risk or achieve better compliance with suggested public health measures.

# Thank You

Web: [bmj.com](http://bmj.com)

Twitter: [@a\\_double\\_tt](https://twitter.com/a_double_tt)

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Alexander Talbott, Dec 2014

