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ELIXIR: Communication, collaboration and community outreach in a distributed infrastructure

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ELIXIR (www.elixir-europe.org) is a distributed research infrastructure for biological data. It unites Europe's leading life science organisations in managing and safeguarding life-science data generated by publicly funded research.

ELIXIR's approach to communication is defined by ELIXIR's two main characteristics: (1) Distributed and virtual infrastructure. As a federation of resources and expertise, ELIXIR connects over 180 institutes from 20 European countries. (2) Diverse community. ELIXIR brings together diverse research communities (bioinformaticians, life scientists, software developers and others) from multiple domains (genomics and rare disease research, plant and marine sciences).

This presentation will provide an overview of ELIXIR communications with a focus on some of the challenges in communications for a distributed infrastructure. It will give concrete examples of communications activities from the ELIXIR Hub (the ELIXIR coordinating body) and from two national nodes, ELIXIR Czech Republic and ELIXIR UK.

The ELIXIR Communications Strategy provides the framework for all ELIXIR communications activities and also serves as a reference document for ELIXIR's national nodes. The interplay between national and European level in communications and between several communities will be demonstrated using social media activities.

ELIXIR UK (www.elixir-uk.org) presents special challenges for communication and engagement because it is itself a network of an increasing number of groups within numerous institutions, both universities and research institutes, that need to develop a community spirit to deliver the UK's contribution to ELIXIR. We will discuss the increasingly sophisticated strategy for outreach that this requires.

ELIXIR CZ (www.elixir-czech.org) node is rather heterogenous from the perspective of the institutions forming the national infrastructure and the user community. We will present the communication strategy of the national node as an example of ELIXIR communication strategy adaptation to the local needs.

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