

ARATA 2012 National Conference – Bridging the AT Gap

A strategy to communicate research findings to stakeholders.

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Abstract

There is a continuing gap between the creation of new knowledge by government-sponsored researchers and the various stakeholder groups positioned to uptake and apply the knowledge. For Assistive Technology programs, these broader stakeholder audiences include clinicians, consumers, manufacturers, policy implementers and knowledge brokers. But how can an investigator efficiently and effectively reach such diverse audiences? The author suggests one approach is to communicate through national organizations representing these target audiences. How national organizations view and treat research knowledge was determined through a method called Knowledge Value Mapping (KVM). A series of comparative case studies involving interviews with spokespersons for six selected national organizations, based on semi-structured interviews within a ten item questionnaire. Results show that each national organization is interested in collaborating with researchers to share relevant findings, while they vary along the following dimensions of knowledge engagement: create, identify, translate, adapt, communicate, use, promote, absorptive capacity and recommendations for facilitation. The study concluded that national organizations are appropriate channels for bridging the gap between researchers and their stakeholder audiences, and that such collaborations can help document evidence of use by the organizations or their members.

Summary

The paper describes a strategy for communicating research findings to multiple stakeholders – in this example the AAC field -- by engaging national organizations.

Knowledge Value Mapping is an approach for understanding how such organizations relate to research findings, and determines how they can help close the gap between knowledge creation and application.