

## Getting Your Point Across - Efficiency in QC Programming across Virtual Teams

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### ABSTRACT

Programming with the colleague sitting next to you is easy (!) ... but becomes much more difficult when working as part of a Virtual Team possibly thousands of miles apart. You are QC'ing an output, it has failed. How do you communicate? This paper will present key tips for communicating efficiently with colleagues across sites, demonstrating potential software assistance and the possible pitfalls involved.

### INTRODUCTION

Working on a High-Profile Drug in the Phase IIb stage at Amgen Ltd, I have had a lot experience with programming in a Virtual Team (definition: a group of individuals who work across time, space, and organizational boundaries with links strengthened by webs of communication technology.)

With this style of working, it is vital to communicate effectively and most importantly efficiently. The emphasis of this paper is to demonstrate software tools that can assist with this communication, such as the much-used SnagIt Screen Capture Software.

The main aim of this paper is to show the best way to 'get your point across' to another colleague.

### DO YOU WORK IN A VIRTUAL TEAM?

The simple answer is most probably – Yes. If any or all of the following four points are true then a virtual team is defined.

Do you...

- have membership from many different locations and functions?
- manage across functional areas and national cultures?
- use collaborative technologies and other techniques to leverage the best talent and deliver competitive solutions?
- interact without the benefit of social cues [e.g. non verbal physical gestures]?

[Source: Duarte, Deborah and Snyder, Nancy Tennant, Mastering Virtual Teams, Jossey-Bass, 2006.]

If this has been established then we can move on to look at ways of communicating within a virtual team, both effectively and ineffectively.

### A QC ISSUE – HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE?

Hypothetically, an N count within a QC validation table does not match that of the production output. Your colleague is located at another site and possibly within a different time zone. What methods could be used to communicate this problem?

#### TELEPHONE

*Advantages*

Real-time

Human element

*Disadvantages*

Hard to visualize problem

Reliant on similar working hours

#### INSTANT MESSENGER

*Advantages*

Real-time

"Quick" (!)

*Disadvantages*

Hard to visualize problem

Reliant on similar working hours

Prone to slang usage and typos

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## EMAIL

### Advantages

- Works across time zones
- Can be visual

### Disadvantages

Too many emails / information overload  
Prone to misinterpretation due to large amount of text

## OFFICIAL VALIDATION FORM

### Advantages

Works across time zones

### Disadvantages

Usually in conjunction with email, unnecessary additional step  
Prone to misinterpretation due to large amount of text

## NETMEETING / SCREEN SHARING

### Advantages

Visual  
Real-time  
Human element

### Disadvantages

Reliant on similar working hours

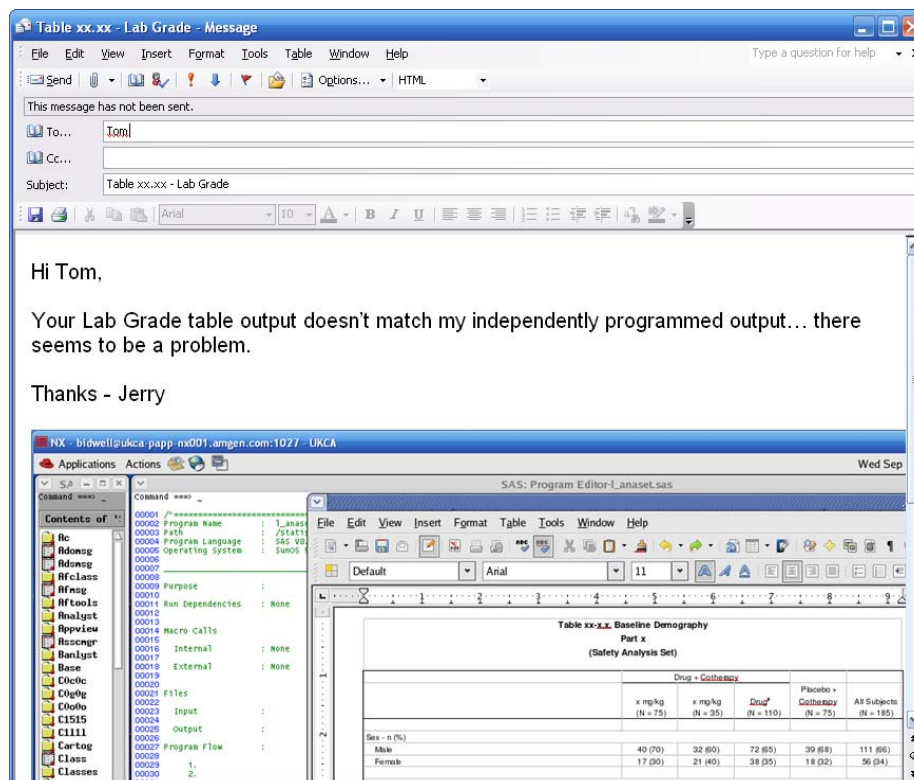
To be effective and efficient with QC programming we should be looking towards combining these technologies for our communication. For example if we were to follow up a sent email with a phone call, this will combine the advantages of both technologies and soften a few of the disadvantages. Another good example of this combination is the Netmeeting technology.

The purpose of this paper is to promote the use of Screen Capture technology combined with email (and voice) techniques discussed above.

## SCREEN CAPTURES

With a simple annotated screen capture, sent via email and followed up with a phone conversation (where possible), communication of a QC problem can be effective and more importantly, efficient. To receive a visual image of the problem alleviates the potential obstacle of misinterpretation and/or miscommunication, especially between cultures and language barriers.

### AN EXAMPLE OF A POOR SCREEN CAPTURE

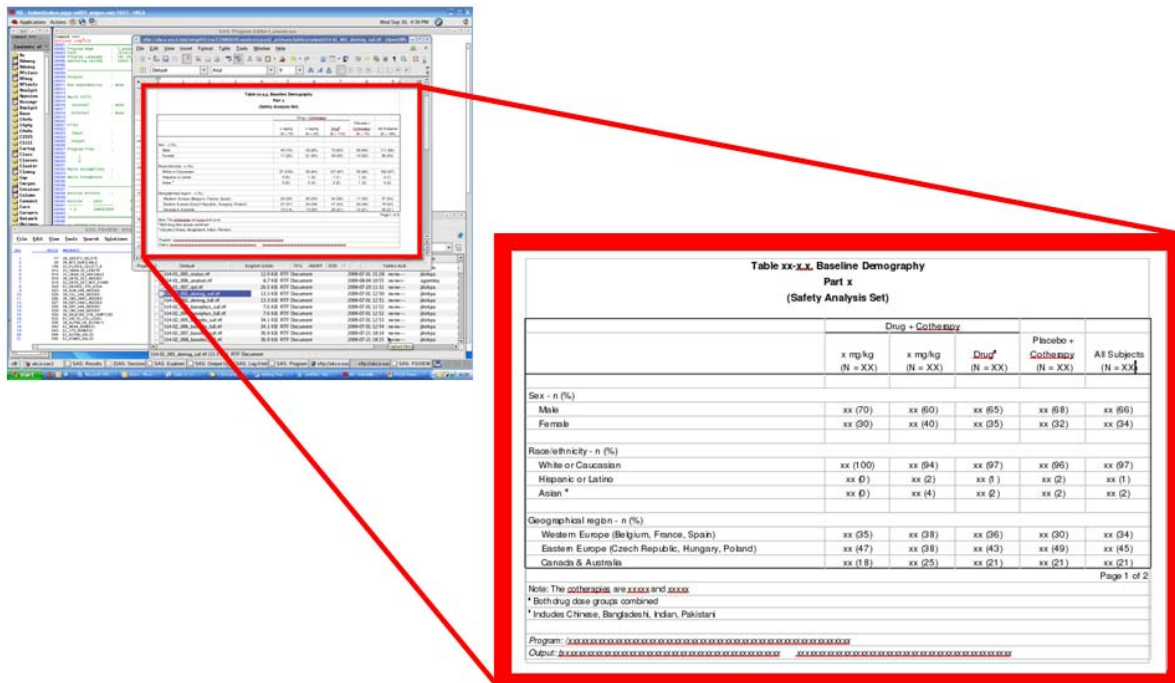


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This example of a poor screen capture is large, busy and has unnecessary extra information that doesn't assist with the problem in hand. To receive this email one would have to scroll horizontally to fully realize the image. With no emphasis of the problem and poor accompanying text, this would hinder the QC communication. As an aside, with large screen captures, email inbox capacities can be quickly exhausted.

## A GOOD SCREEN CAPTURE – TIP #1

Only capture what you want you want to display. Any additional material will only distract from the problem in hand.



## A GOOD SCREEN CAPTURE – TIP #2

Annotate using the screen capture software. A highlighter tool, arrows and text annotations will all help to point straight to the problem.

| Table xx-x.x. Baseline Demography<br>Part x<br>(Safety Analysis Set)                                                                                    |                     |                     |                               |                                    |                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                         | Drug + Cotherapy    |                     |                               | Placebo +<br>Cotherapy<br>(N = XX) | All Subjects<br>(N = XX) |
|                                                                                                                                                         | x mg/kg<br>(N = XX) | x mg/kg<br>(N = XX) | Drug <sup>a</sup><br>(N = XX) |                                    |                          |
| Sex - n (%)                                                                                                                                             |                     |                     | 61                            | 66? not 65                         |                          |
| Male                                                                                                                                                    | xx (70)             | xx (60)             | xx (65)                       | xx (68)                            | xx (66)                  |
| Female                                                                                                                                                  | xx (30)             | xx (40)             | xx (35)                       | xx (32)                            | xx (34)                  |
| Race/ethnicity - n (%)                                                                                                                                  |                     |                     |                               |                                    |                          |
| White or Caucasian                                                                                                                                      | xx (100)            | xx (94)             | xx (97)                       | xx (96)                            | xx (97)                  |
| Hispanic or Latino                                                                                                                                      | xx (0)              | xx (2)              | xx (1)                        | xx (2)                             | xx (1)                   |
| Asian *                                                                                                                                                 | xx (0)              | xx (4)              | xx (2)                        | xx (2)                             | xx (2)                   |
| Geographical region - n (%)                                                                                                                             |                     |                     |                               |                                    |                          |
| Western Europe (Belgium, France, Spain)                                                                                                                 | xx (35)             | xx (38)             | xx (36)                       | xx (30)                            | xx (34)                  |
| Eastern Europe (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland)                                                                                                        | xx (47)             | xx (38)             | xx (43)                       | xx (49)                            | xx (45)                  |
| Canada & Australia                                                                                                                                      | xx (18)             | xx (25)             | xx (21)                       | xx (21)                            | xx (21)                  |
| Note: The cotherapies are xxxxxx and xxxxx                                                                                                              |                     |                     |                               |                                    |                          |
| <sup>a</sup> Both drug dose groups combined ← Typo                                                                                                      |                     |                     |                               |                                    |                          |
| <sup>*</sup> Includes Chinese, Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani                                                                                           |                     |                     |                               |                                    |                          |
| Program: /xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx                                                                         |                     |                     |                               |                                    |                          |
| Output: bxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx |                     |                     |                               |                                    |                          |

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### **ADVANTAGES OF SCREEN CAPTURES AND EMAILS**

The advantages of using screen captures to visualize your message cannot be underestimated. By providing a clear, visual and most importantly quick point to your colleague, communication can be made easier and more efficient. To create an effective screen capture it should be straight to the point in hand, highlighting the problem and should not detract from this by including material that is not-useful to the recipient. When communicating across time zones, a visual screen capture ensures that there is less chance of a misunderstanding with language barriers across cultures. A picture speaks a thousand words.

### **CONCLUSION**

With technological advances, there are numerous ways to communicate with our colleagues within virtual teams. Dependent on company culture, site location, or preference, we decide to use these communication tools as and when needed, sometimes with an ineffective result. Combining the technologies available to us can aid our communication effectiveness, and also considering thinking 'outside of the box' by using Screen Captures in conjunction with email and direct messaging has been proved both effective and efficient within the team that I work. I encourage you to experiment with the tips provided above, especially when working within virtual teams.

### **REFERENCES**

Definition of Virtual Teams

[Duarte, Deborah and Snyder, Nancy Tennant, Mastering Virtual Teams, Jossey-Bass, 2006.]

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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