

We need to talk –

communication with partners in statistical programming

Michaela Kohring

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Agenda

- Programmer's life plan vs. real world
- What is communication
- Plan your communication
- Conclusion

A programmer's life – as planned



Welcome to the real world

- Get your specification – and start programming

```
/* Create a new atrsort including sex information */
proc sql;
  create table gentrt as
  select g.*, sex, trim(left(substr(atrsort, 1, 5)))||trim(left(substr(sexdc, 1, 1))) as atrsortn
  from (select * from ads.gentrt where analno = 2080013 and atrsort in ('B00100' 'E00035')) as g left join
  (select study, ptproj, sex, sexdc from ads.bascodem) as b
  on g.study = b.study and g.ptproj = b.ptproj;
quit;

data ctr.rul423_gentrt;
  set gentrt;
  atrsort = atrsortn;
```

- ... but what is baseline – guess or ask ?

Last observation carried forward (LOCF)

For quantitative endpoints, missing values will be replaced by the last observed measurement on treatment. If the patient has no on-treatment value, baseline value is carried forward. This method tends to result in more conservative estimates than a ... is. The ... during the re-

- That's where communication starts ...

INTERACTION
WITH PARTNERS

What is communication

- Definition:

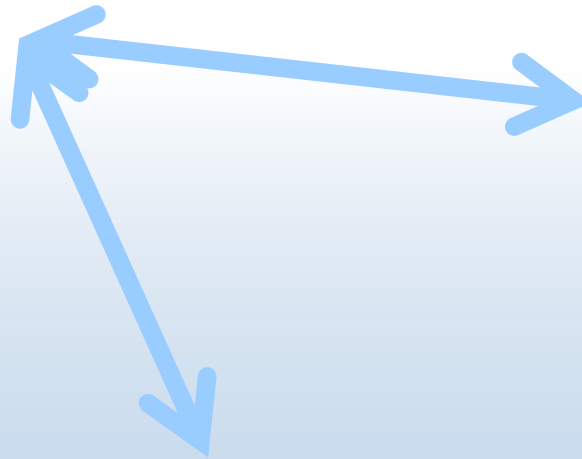
Communication (from Latin *commūnicāre*, meaning "to share"^[1]) is the act of conveying intended meanings from one entity or group to another through the use of mutually understood signs and semiotic rules

(Wikipedia.org - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communication>)

- It can be verbal, non-verbal, written, spoken, Even machines do communicate.

How to survive in the old days

First Prog: How do I derive baseline? Before treatment start or is day of treatment start still ok?



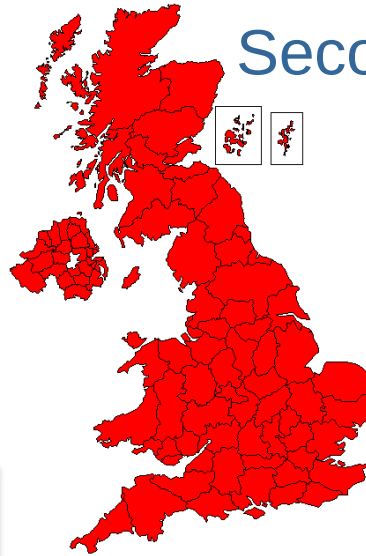
Second Prog: Good question! But I don't know for sure as well.

Stat: Let's sit together and find the right answer.

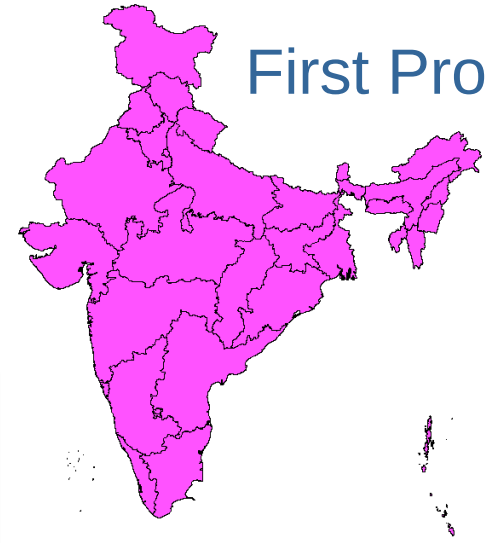
?????!!

And today ...

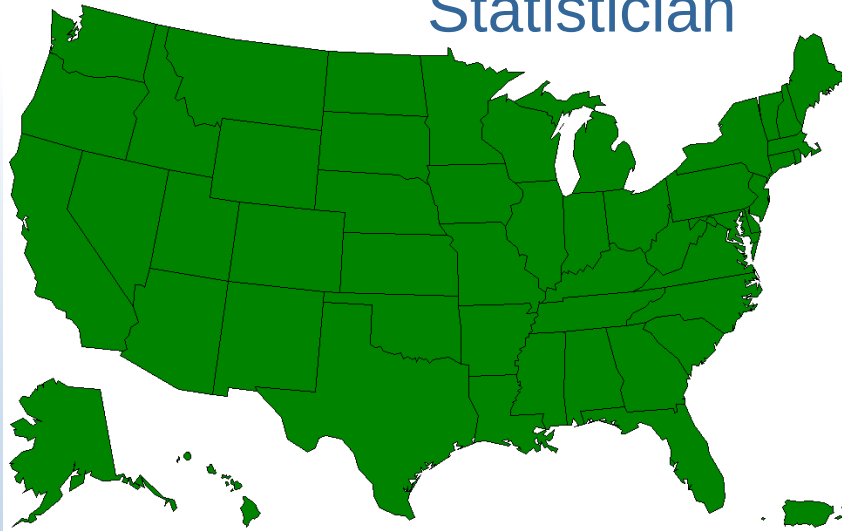
Second Prog



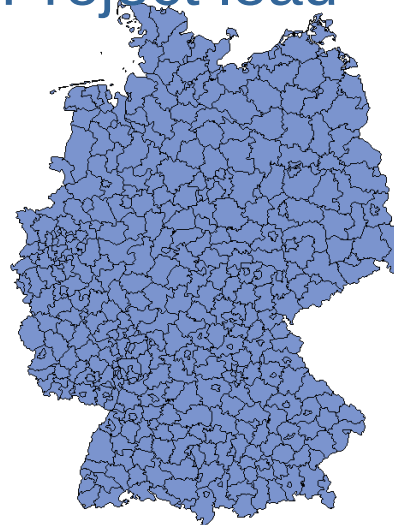
First Prog



Statistician



Project lead



Challenges today

- Teams are growing, ten and more programmers are dealing with one clinical trial report;
- Statistician, programmers sitting around the world, working in different time zones;
- Meetings will be virtual using internet capabilities;
- Teams will change over time;
- **→ you need to have a plan**

Planning your communication

- Categorize communication;
 - Formal vs. informal
 - One shot vs. recurrent
 - Timing urgent vs. long-planned
- According to the categories find the appropriate way to share the information;
 - Knowledge base, project Wiki etc.;
 - Regular meetings – project status, training etc.;
 - Mailing rules
 - Rules for emergency contacts, e.g. DBL approaching, urgent authority questions etc.;
 - How to escalate, if we don't come to an agreement;

Meeting structure

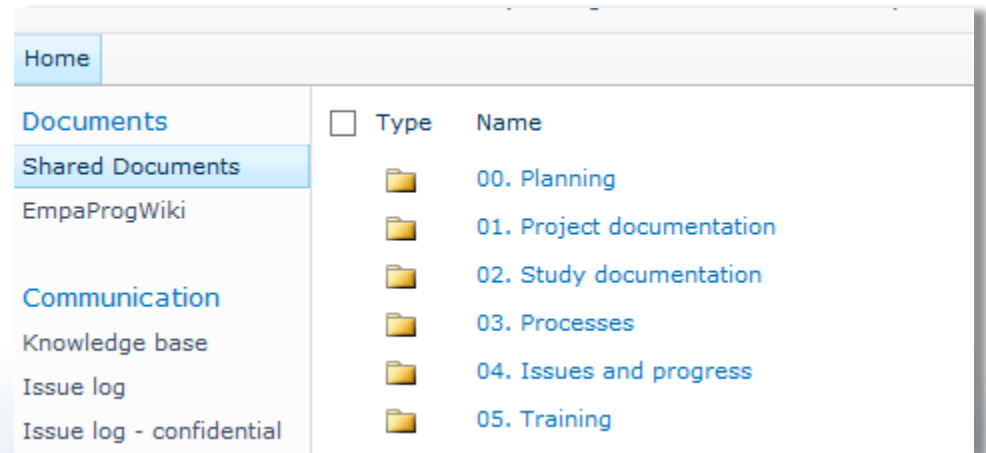
To organize the collaboration you should think of specific meetings from the beginning:

- Project / trial meetings on a regular basis;
 - Talking about status;
 - Planning of upcoming work packages;
 - Even if you feel there is not much to talk, a short meeting might bring up new thoughts and ideas;
- Meetings of special interest:
 - Get together;
 - Trainings;
 - Whenever possible try to arrange face-to-face meetings;
- Minutes or decision logs can make meetings more traceable;

Information hubs

Information hubs support:

- Training;
- Regularly coming up questions;
- Tipps and tricks;
- Study / Project documentation;



The screenshot shows a web application interface. On the left is a sidebar with a 'Home' button at the top. Below it are sections: 'Documents' (containing 'Shared Documents' and 'EmpaProgWiki'), 'Communication' (containing 'Knowledge base', 'Issue log', and 'Issue log - confidential'). The main content area on the right has a table with columns 'Type' and 'Name'. The table lists five items, each with a folder icon in the 'Type' column and a name in the 'Name' column.

☐	Type	Name
		00. Planning
		01. Project documentation
		02. Study documentation
		03. Processes
		04. Issues and progress
		05. Training

But:

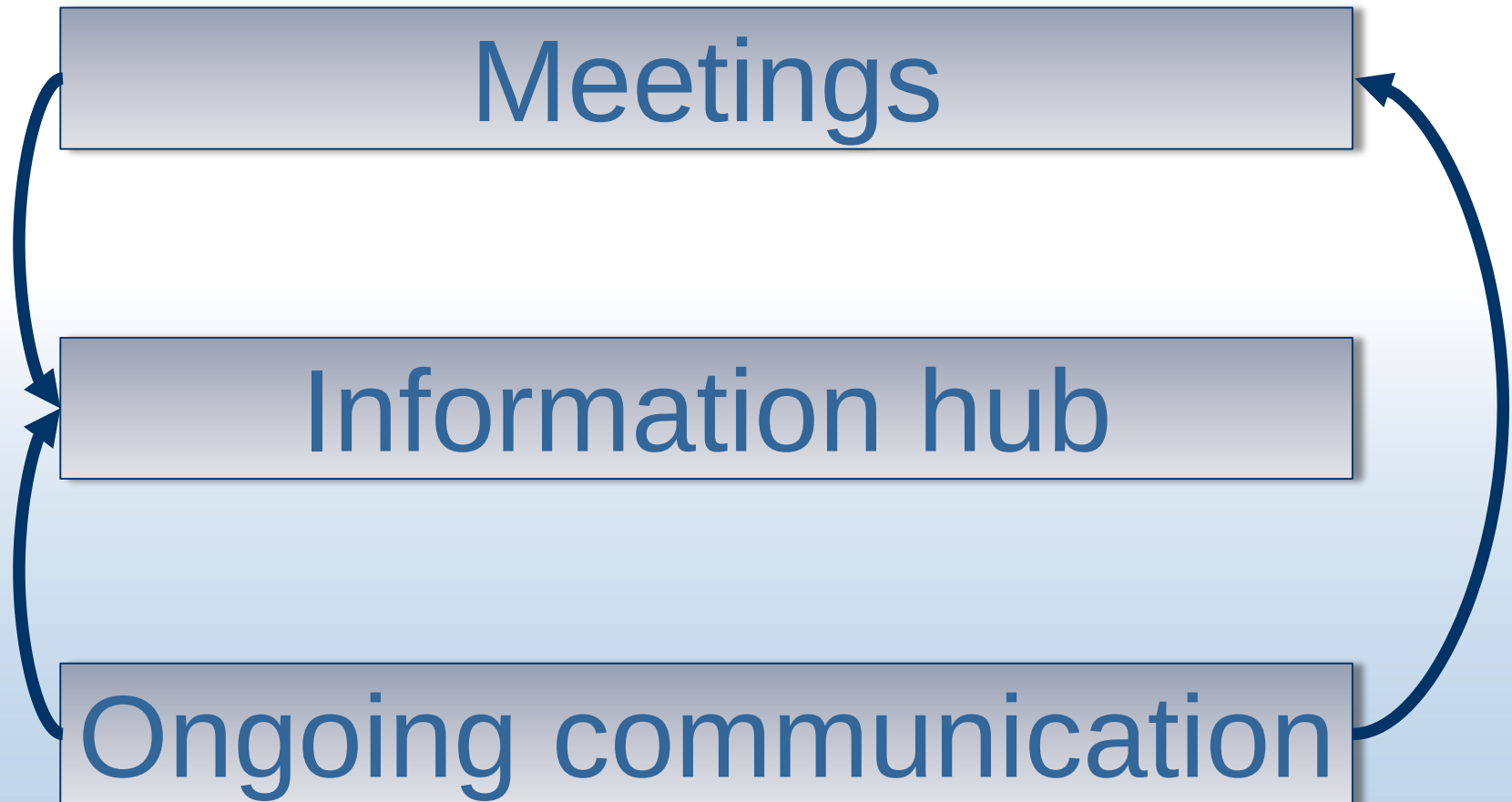
- think of maintenance – information should always be up-to-date!
- A roadmap can help to find the information stored at different places, e.g. sharerooms etc.;
- Keep it as simple as possible – so the acceptance will be much higher;

Ongoing interaction

Not everything can be pre-planned, but you can have a plan or some guidance, how to deal with those cases:

- Mails – how timely do we want to react;
- Issue logs – can be better accessible and tracked than mails, that are always limited to the addressees and might fall under company's record retention;
- Phone calls – for urgent questions, especially during busy times, e.g. preDataBaseLock, important timelines;
- Messengers – if available, for informal information exchange;

Information interchange



Communication Netiquette

- Better think twice and drink a cup of coffee before writing a mail or picking up the phone;
- Good collaboration must be acknowledged;
- Don't forget about small talk;
- Dozens of mails might indicate, that you need to change your way of communication;

Conclusion

- A well planned communication will simplify your life;
- It can help to enlarge your visibility as you will gain time for the essential topics to be dealt with;
- It can support on-boarding of new hires;
- Weaknesses in processes can be identified more easily;

Questions?