

# Communication as a TA-method

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# Outline

- It's all about impact
- It's not that complicated
- Example projects Rathenau Instituut
  - Human enhancement
  - Broadening the debate on shale gas
- Discussion



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It's all about impact

And how to generate it.



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## We strive for impact, because:

- We want to make a difference.  
We want to change something in the world
- We want to raise awareness of people  
We want politicians and policymakers to act



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Statement:

A sound communication strategy is the most powerful instrument to generate impact



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So this will happen ...

I strongly advise the minister to read the excellent report of the Rathenau Instituut on this subject...



Instead of this ...



# Writing a good communication strategy...

- Is not that complicated
- In fact ... it's simple
- Just ask five questions



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## But remember...

- Don't ask these questions when your project is finished
- Ask them when you start your project
- And keep on asking them while working on your project



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## These questions are ...

- WHAT is my objective? WHAT is the main message of this project?
- WHO is my audience? WHO should act?
- WHY is this important? WHY is this urgent?
- WHEN is the best moment to present my message? WHEN do I have the best chance to draw attention to the project results?
- HOW can I get the message to the audience? What tools and channels are best suited?



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# Example project: Human enhancement

- 2003 – ??
- From restoring functions to improving human functions
- Main reason for TA project:
  - HETs may have huge impact on society and raises important political questions
  - But hardly any societal debate and interest among policy makers
  - Debate was either academic or on single issues (e.g. Ritalin)
  - Actively involved these actors in (series of) project(s)
  - Plea for more general framework to assess HETs and to reflect on societal issues that HETs raise
- Now we see that the issue is picked-up in society

# Example project: Human Enhancement

## Research **Brief**

WWW.RATHENAU.NL - RITS, nummer 6



### Human enhancement challenges policies

Improved school performance, better looks or mood? It might sound desirable. But we should worry about unwanted side-effects for users and society, according to the report *Goed, beter, betwist*, edited by the Rathenau Instituut. It details the views of the Dutch on the use of enhancement technology by healthy people. The government should be aware of this, when developing policy.

Enhancement technologies are medical means used by healthy people to obtain, for instance, a better appearance or improved performance. Well-known examples include beta blockers to combat stage fright or even stress, cosmetic surgery and doping. However, there are other technologies, already existing or expected, too: concentration enhancers, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, so that the characteristics of your baby are not left to chance, and electronic brain stimulation to improve your mood.

Discussions with focus groups have revealed that participants are wondering whether the use of such technologies is safe. That is often unknown territory because in most cases, the technology has not been extensively tested on healthy people. Furthermore, participants are apprehensive about the social consequences of human enhancement.

The degree of acceptance differs per technology and depends on how familiar people are with a technology and how much they know about the technology. The effects for the individual and for society also have a bearing on the extent of acceptance.

Rathenau Instituut promotes the formation of political and public opinion on enhancement technology. To this end, the Instituut studies the organization of development of service systems, publishes about social impact of technologies and organizes debates on technology.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Human enhancement affects various responses.** It is a high time and vital that the government prepares for the arrival of new technologies to ensure that they are safe and to look ahead to this. How can the government proceed?

#### Look for opportunities

To benefit from the advantages of enhancement technologies, it is important to create conditions that take account of the wishes expressed by these technologies.

#### Ensure safety

The risks and negative side-effects of enhancement technologies must be properly investigated in good time. This is possible if, for instance, the European Union encourages the technologies and European laws and regulations relating to medicines and medical devices.

#### Consider undesirable consequences

The Dutch are concerned about social risks, such as social coercion in the workplace and a split in society between those who do and those who do not use enhancement technologies. The government must investigate which policy initiatives can combat undesirable social consequences.

#### Think before publishing

How does social enhancement are still developing. The government must therefore consider enhancement technologies only if there are solidly supported fundamental objectives.

#### Provide sound information

People need to know more about – legal and illegal – enhancement technologies. They want to know more about what the risks are and the risks involved. The government provides that information.

**En, bent U al perfect?**

**Goed, beter, betwist**  
 Publieksonderzoek naar mensverbetering

Mirjam Schuijff en Geert Munnichs (redactie)

Rathenau Instituut

van **vergeetpil** tot **robotpak**

Human enhancement voor een veilige en rechtvaardige samenleving?

Redactie  
 Jacqueline B. de Jong  
 Ira van Keulen  
 Jeannette Quast



# Human Enhancement

- **WHAT?** Raising knowledge, forming attitudes and opinions, advising policy makers on policy options
- **WHO?** Public, politicians, policy makers, scientists.
- **WHY?** New possibilities to enhance healthy people raise pressing ethical, legal and societal questions
- **WHEN?** Active participation in public debates *and* agenda setting by own activities
- **HOW?** Reports, public events, blog, media (articles, interviews, opinion pieces), workshops for policymakers, discussion in the EP, quiz, test, serious game



# Human Enhancement

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://www.rathenau.nl/web-specials/superhuman.hti>. The browser's address bar and tabs are visible at the top. The website header is pink and contains the text "Rathenau Instituut www.rathenau.nl" and a "Contact" link. The main heading is "SuperHuman: how far will you go?". Below the heading is a navigation menu with "Home", "The game", "Human Enhancement", "Why this game?", "Features", and "Screenshots". A search bar with the text "Zoeken" and a right-pointing arrow is also present. The main content area features a large image of a mountain peak with a colorful, stylized human figure overlaid. The figure is composed of various colored triangles and has a dashed outline. A yellow path is drawn on the mountain, with two points labeled "Leg 2" and "Leg 3". To the right of the image, there is a text block: "Climb the mountain as fast as you can. But it will take focus, stamina and strength. Will you win all natural or make the most of state-of-the-art technology?" followed by "SuperHuman is a multiplayer, realtime game. It is also totally free and without advertisements." Below this text is a black box with a white border containing a smartphone icon and the text "Available on the App Store". At the bottom of the screenshot, a Windows taskbar is visible with icons for Internet Explorer, VLC, Outlook, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.



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# Example project: Broadening the debate on shale gas

- 2013 –
  - Type of gas that requires deep drilling and “fracking”
  - Project
    - Background: geopolitical issues concerning availability
    - In the Netherlands pilot projects were about to commence
    - Rather narrow risk-benefit analysis (safety and economic benefits)
    - Need for broader perspective on social and political issues, including the views (and emotions) of local populations and broader sustainability considerations
- media analysis, interviewing stakeholders and policymakers at municipal level



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# Example project: Broadening the debate on shale gas

## Het Bericht

WWW.RATHENAU.NL • 2013, nummer 5



### Schaliegas: veelzijdig debat vereist

De discussie over schaliegas is vooral over technische risico's en economische voordelen gegaan. Maar voor een besluit over (proef)boringen zijn meer zaken van betekenis: maatschappelijke belangen zoals de drinkwatervoorziening en lokale bedrijvigheid, duurzaamheid en vooral de samenwerking met provincies en gemeenten. Dat concludeert het Rathenau Instituut in het rapport *Samen winnen. Verbreding van de schaliegasdiscussie en handvatten voor besluitvorming*.

#### AANBEVELINGEN

Voor het Ministerie van Economische Zaken zijn de volgende aanbevelingen van belang:

- **Verbreed de discussie**  
Besluit de recente reacties op het onderzoek van het ministerie als aanknopingspunt voor een bredere politieke discussie over schaliegaswinning.
- **Verhelder de rol van schaliegas voor duurzaamheid**  
Besluit de betekenis van schaliegas voor een duurzame energievoorziening. Wil én kan Nederland schaliegas gebruiken tijdens de overgang naar meer duurzame energie?
- **Handel in de geest van de Structurele Ondergrond**  
Boren onder de grond kan bovengrondse gevolgen hebben. Invoorbij voor landschap en milieu. Provincies en gemeenten gaan nu niet over wat er onder de grond gebeurt. Daarover gaat het Rijk. De Structurele Ondergrond, waarvan de conceptie eind 2013 versprekt wordt, moet tot meer afstemming leiden.
- **Voorwaarden voor proefboringen**  
Als er gebod gaat worden naar schaliegas, volbreed aan de volgende voorwaarden:  
1) houd vooral rekening met omwonenden, bedrijven en ligplaatsen van de betreffende lokale, zoals de aanwezigheid van drinkwaterleidingen.  
2) werk samen met de betrokkenen, aan procedures, bijvoorbeeld over calamiteiten en schadevergoedingen.  
3) leer permanent van ontwikkelingen in andere landen waar geborst wordt.



Technology Assessment

### Samen winnen

Verbreding van schaliegasdiscussie en handvatten voor besluitvorming

Annick de Vries, Rinie van Est & Arnoud van Waas (red.)

Rathenau Instituut



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# Broadening the debate on shale gas

- **WHAT?** Advising government and parliamentarians on policy options
- **WHO?** Government and parliamentarians
- **WHY?** Huge differences of opinion and beliefs between citizens and local government on the one side and the national government on the other side
- **WHEN?** Presentation of report prior to a government decision
- **HOW?** Report, debate for politicians and stakeholders, media (articles, interviews, opinion pieces)



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# Project results: impact

## Human Enhancement (2007 - 2014)

- Opinion pieces, articles and interviews in all major newspapers, radio and magazines
- Some public en political debate, invitations from policy makers
- Beginning next year: two television series on human enhancement made by influential journalists. Debate organised by public broadcast organisation, national newspaper and Rathenau Instituut.

## Broadening the debate on shale gas (2013)

- Lots of media exposure: national television, radio, frontpage of major newspaper
- Parliamentarians of all major political parties came to the press conference
- Reaction of the minister of Economic Affairs
- Many parliamentarians mentioned the Rathenau report in parliamentary debate

# Don't forget to evaluate: LESSONS LEARNED

## Human Enhancement (2007 - 2014)

- Message was rather complicated to communicate
- Now we have impact at last, it's hard to say goodbye
- Not enough knowledge for the making and the marketing of serious game

## Broadening the debate on shale gas (2013)

- Media exposure led to political attention, but also to disturbed relationship with the minister of Economic Affairs
- How to deal with expectations of pressure groups (who think you're on their side)?



## Discussion on dilemma's

- Generating impact is a long term project. Can you ever say goodbye to a theme?
- Journalists want sharp messages and conflicts. TA institutes have well balanced messages: how to deal with that tension?

