Creating Change with Science:
What are Messages that Stick?

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Science, Technology Transfer, & Local Government Policy

♦ what are messages that matter?
♦ how are they best communicated?
♦ how do they affect local urban forestry policy?
♦ how does science information move around?
Two Research Phases

- assessment of technology transfer products - underway!
- case study analysis of cities - late 2008
  - recent “adopters” of urban forestry
  - 100K population

sponsors: US Forest Service, National Urban & Community Forestry Advisory Council, local collaborators

What Have We Learned?

- Theory of Innovation Diffusion
  Everett Rogers
- Theory of Organizations and Diffusion
  J.D. Eveland & E. Rogers
- Theory of Communities of Practice
  Etienne Wenger
Background Principles!

- Innovation Diffusion & Adoption
  Everett Rogers

Innovation Diffusion

“universal process of social change”
Innovation Diffusion
Main Elements

- an innovation,
- communication channels,
- time,
- a social system

Innovation Diffusion
Adopter Traits

- Innovators - venturesome
- Early adopters - respect
- Early majority - deliberate
- Late majority - skeptical
- Laggards - traditional
Innovation Adoption - Individuals

Rogers Adoption / Innovation Curve

Cumulative Adoption Curve

Urban Forestry in KY?
Background Principles!

- Innovation Adoption by Organizations
  J.D. Eveland & E. Rogers

Organization Innovation
Innovation in Organizations

- Matching
  - recognizing a problem, what might help?
- Redefining
  - payoffs of the innovation are demonstrated, and it can be done
- Structuring
  - begin to develop the individual and organizational relationships
- Interconnecting
  - full and accepted adoption, ongoing systems in place

Background Principles!

- Communities of Practice
  Etienne Wenger
Communities of Practice

1. People form communities as they pursue shared enterprises over time.

2. Engagement in social practice is the fundamental process by which we learn & become who we are.

Communities of Practice

- **Community** (belonging)
- **Practice** (doing)
- **Meaning** (experience)
- **Identity** (becoming)

**LEARNING**
local government “communities”

planning

public works

parks

executive

early adopters? change agents?

outside influences?
First Research Results

- assessment of technology transfer “tools”
- 90 responses
- analyzing for format and message
- what is missing? . . . . . the “ask”

“take the bull by the horns”
Two Questions

- The Ask!
  What is it in your community?
  - consider individuals - early adopter or laggard?
  - consider community of practice - professionals inclined to respond
  - consider organization innovation - readiness?

- What are pieces of the “Ask?”

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