Field Note

Knowledge Translation and Strategic Communications: Unpacking Differences and Similarities for Scholarly and Research Communications

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Abstract

Knowledge translation (KT) involves communication of research evidence. Within research-relevant organizations there is considerable overlap in the roles and activities associated with KT and strategic communications (SC), which calls for greater role clarity. We untangle the differences and similarities between KT and SC, bringing clarity that may benefit organizations employing both types of workers. As KT practitioners (KTPs) take hold in organizations that have long had SC personnel, there is tension but also opportunities for defining roles and exploring synergies. What follows is a description of how we have explored this duality within our networks and an analysis of how SC and KT roles are similar and divergent.

Résumé

L'application des connaissances (AC) suppose la communication des données de la recherche. Dans les organisations qui s'occupent de recherche, les rôles et les activités associés à l'AC et aux communications stratégiques (CS) se recoupent en maints endroits, à tel point qu'une clarification des rôles s'impose. Nous démêlons ici les différences et les ressemblances entre l'AC et les CS, dans une mise au point utile aux

Barwick, Melanie, Phipps, David, Myers, Gary, Johnny, Michael, Coriandoli, Rossana. (2014). Knowledge Translation and Strategic Communications: Unpacking Differences and Similarities for Scholarly and Research Communications. *Scholarly and Research Communication, 5*(3): 0305175, 14 pp.

organisations qui emploient les deux types de travailleurs. En effet, à mesure que les professionnels de l'AC prennent leurs marques dans des lieux de travail où s'affaire depuis longtemps un personnel voué aux communications, des tensions se créent, mais aussi des occasions de définir les rôles respectifs et de développer une synergie. Voici comment nous avons exploré cette dualité au sein de nos réseaux, ainsi qu'une analyse des ressemblances et des divergences entre les CS et l'AC.

Mots clés
La diffusion des connaissances; L'application des connaissances; Les communications stratégiques; Connaissance traduction praticien

Goal of the field note

Strategic communication (SC) is a corporate function that disseminates and reinforces messages in support of an organization's strategic plan. To be "strategic" means to communicate the best message, through the right channels, and to measure against organizational and communications-specific goals (IDEA.Org Blog, 2011). Communication is strategic when it is completely aligned with a corporation's mission, vision, values, and is able to enhance the strategic positioning and competitiveness of the organization (Financial Times Lexicon, 2014).

Knowledge translation (KT) is a "dynamic and iterative process that includes synthesis, dissemination, exchange, and ethically-sound application of knowledge to improve health, provide more effective health services and products, and strengthen the health care system" (CIHR, 2014). Communication is implied within the concepts of *dissemination and exchange*, however, KT reaches beyond these concepts to include synthesis and application of knowledge that stems from research evidence. The KT process takes place within a complex system of interactions between researchers and knowledge users, which may vary in levels of intensity, complexity, and engagement depending on the nature of the research and the findings as well as the needs of the particular knowledge user" (CIHR, 2014). Although this well-recognized definition refers to health, KT is widely viewed as applicable to other sectors such as education, agriculture, and the social sciences.

Canada has seen a rapidly growing interest in KT and associated concepts (McKibbon, Lokker, Mathew, 2014); the process by which the academic research-generated flow of discoveries, ideas, and innovations encourage social, economic, technological, and health benefits. These benefits accrue to society through collaborations with private industry, health, education, social policy groups, government, community and voluntary health organizations, and health practitioners. Knowledge translation is an umbrella term that encompasses a range of activities linked to KT goals. Graham et al., documented 29 different terms used by 33 different health research funding agencies in their publications, including knowledge transfer, knowledge mobilization, knowledge exchange, implementation, and translational research (Graham, Logan, Harrison, Straus, Tetroe, Caswell & Robinson, 2006). Of all of the terms identified, knowledge translation is the one gaining prominence in Canada.

Several of these terms are used synonymously, including knowledge translation, knowledge transfer, knowledge mobilization, knowledge exchange, and knowledge

brokering. Different sectors have their preferred terms, for instance, universities often use knowledge mobilization. Some KT terms reflect sub-specialities of KT and are linked to specific KT goals (e.g., building awareness or interest, informing research, sharing knowledge, facilitating practice or behaviour change, promoting policy change, or moving research innovations into a commercialization pathway). For instance, implementation research or research utilization is a sub-discipline of KT that focuses on the how best to facilitate the uptake of evidence in practice and community settings; translational research is a sub-speciality that moves evidence from bench to bedside, building on basic research advances – studies of biological processes using cell cultures, for example, or animal models – and uses them to develop new therapies or medical procedures; and knowledge management is a sub-discipline focused on knowledge exchange within organizations. Some terms are used as nouns in reference to the whole KT process, whereas others are used as verbs to represent specific strategies or processes that facilitate uptake of evidence in practice. The term knowledge broker/ing captures the person and/or the action of linking researchers and decision makers together, facilitating their interaction so that they are able to better understand each other's goals and professional culture, influence each other's work, forge new partnerships, and use research-based evidence. Brokering is ultimately about supporting evidence-based decision-making in the organization, management, and delivery of services.

The umbrella terms capture the movement of research evidence to practice, along a continuum that captures several translational moments; from basic to human research; from human clinical research to clinical practice (including the role of knowledge synthesis); and from clinical settings to implementation of practice change in community, policy and global health settings (Westfall, Mold & Fagnan, 2007). There are also differences in terminology across countries. For instance, the term knowledge transfer is preferred in the United Kingdom, but is used to refer to technology transfer uniquely, and not to the larger science to practice activities to which we refer when using the term, knowledge translation.

Within organizations that have a vested interest in research (*do it, use it, share it*), communications can be about the type of research being conducted, noteworthy research awards, or significant findings from research that might inform a broad audience in meaningful ways. We envisage that research-relevant organizations encompass hospitals, educational institutions, community-based organizations, research networks, academic-industry enterprises, non-governmental organizations, and governmental organizations. Within these organizations, research communications may emerge from communications offices, KT offices, or individual scientists. SC and KT offices can be embedded within various levels of the organizations (e.g., core administration, specific departments of faculties, or executive levels, i.e., vice-president of research). Research funders may also develop communications about funded research and, in some cases, may exert control over the nature of a research communication.

Because KT activities necessarily involve dissemination and communication of research findings, there is often considerable overlap with SC roles and activities within research-relevant organizations. The plurality of responsibility for research related

communication calls for greater role clarity for those who develop and implement communications within these organizations. This article aims to clarify the often subtle differences between knowledge translation (KT) and strategic communications (SC), both of which play a role in research dissemination. Such clarity will benefit organizations employing both types of workers by helping to define distinct job roles for hiring and performance evaluation. Clarity will also benefit communications professionals hoping to branch out to offer KT services, and KT practitioners (KTPs) striving to build careers in this new profession. KTPs are taking hold in organizations that have long had personnel responsible for SC, creating both a tension between these roles as well as opportunities for defining roles and exploring synergies. What follows is a brief overview of the SC and KT roles, an analysis of how they are similar and divergent, and a description of how we have explored this duality within our networks.

Strategic communications

SC can be seen as the efforts made to inform, influence, or persuade a target audience or audiences in support of identified goals (Paul, 2011). It encompasses the fields of public relations, communication, and advertising, but is now generally seen as a sub-field of communication that engages in "purposeful communication" with an emphasis on strategy rather than on tactics (Thorson, 2013). SC can be undertaken by governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as corporations and institutions. The role is typically the purview of communication or public affairs departments, working in concert with other departments (e.g., marketing) to develop the communication strategy that reflects the overall organizational plan (mission, vision, and goals).

Knowledge translation

Interest in KT has been largely driven by research-funding organizations such as CIHR (CIHR, 2014) and SSHRC (SSHRC, 2014), hoping to increase the return on investment and societal impacts of the research they support. This focused attention on KT has led to the emergence of the new profession of Knowledge Translation Practitioners (KTPs). Some KTPs work in discipline-specific organizations (e.g., *Evidence Exchange Network* at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health; *the Evidence-Based Education and Services Team* at the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board; Knowledge Mobilization (KMb) office within the *Ministry of Education*; KT Core facility within *NeuroDevNet*, a Network of Centres of Excellence; KT office within *The Ontario Brain Institute*; KT program within the *Hospital for Sick Children*).

Research-immersed KTPs are typically graduate students who assume KT activities as part of a research assistant role, funded by discrete research grants, and situated within research teams. In contrast, KTPs situated in research-relevant organizations are emerging as KT specialists defining a new profession. While some KTPs work within specific disciplines or sub-disciplines (e.g., spinal cord injury, education, mental health), others function as KT specialists without subject matter alignment, to provide KT support and services to a range of knowledge users as defined by the mandate of their organization. Some KTPs are connected through networks linking universities seeking to connect research to policy and practice partners (e.g., *Canadian ResearchImpact-RéseauImpactRecherche* [*RIR*] network or the *Development Research Uptake in Sub-Saharan Africa* [*DRUSSA*]). Other networks exist to link KTPs with KT

researchers (*Canadian Knowledge Transfer and Exchange Community of Practice*) to share knowledge, stimulate practice-based research and research-informed practice.

What did we do to explore this duality?

KM in the AM is a regular research forum hosted by York University (Toronto, Canada) that connects researchers with community leaders and policy professionals (Phipps, 2011). The *KM in the AM* forum in April 2013 focused on the role of knowledge brokers. Four speakers addressed the audience from their unique perspective working as or studying knowledge brokers and intermediaries: a research institute (Nylen, 2013), a university (Bhanji, 2013), a community organization (Wedlock, 2013), and a study on research brokering organizations (Cooper, 2013).

During the discussion, an audience member raised an interesting question, "What are the differences between knowledge mobilization and communications." The ensuing conversation did not leave this question for the balance of the morning, and it was clear that this was a topic that merited its own time and space.

Four days later, York University's Manager of Knowledge Mobilization presented to the university's strategic and institutional communications professionals about the intersections of knowledge mobilization and communications. It was a critical look at the respective roles of each function, acknowledging where these offices work well, while highlighting needs and opportunities for collaboration and engagement. As a result of the interest in this presentation and the *KM in the AM* forum conversation, a blog post was created that shared experiences and reflections on the topic of knowledge mobilization and communications (Johnny, 2013).

Arising from these lively discussions, we created a LinkedIn discussion (Phipps, 2013) on the Research Impact (RIR) LinkedIn group posing the original questions, "What do you think about KMb (knowledge mobilization) and communications? How are they the same? How are they different? Do you see knowledge brokers and communicators as interchangeable?" Twenty two people contributed to the LinkedIn discussion, making a total of 48 comments to date. We were compelled by the activity generated, as most posts on the Research Impact (RIR) LinkedIn group generate few or no comments. Prior LinkedIn posts generated seven comments, with three posts receiving six comments. Receiving 48 comments from 22 people was unprecedented for the Research Impact (RIR) LinkedIn group.

We were able to identify four participant categories by virtue of the role they identified on their LinkedIn profile and by the information shared in their comments:

> The *Research Based Knowledge Translation Practitioner* is an individual who is working as a researcher (faculty member, student, research staff, or community-based researcher) on research that has a mandate for both creating new knowledge and connecting that knowledge with knowledge users. While these positions are well established in institutions and are held by subject matter experts, the knowledge translation role may be new to many researchers. Author Melanie Barwick is an example of research based knowledge translation practitioners.

The *Institutional Knowledge Translation Practitioner* is an individual who is employed by or affiliated with an organization to support knowledge translation. While not subject matter experts, they undertake knowledge brokering roles and may also support social media, clear language writing, or knowledge translation events, to build capacity for knowledge translation. They do not usually become part of the research team but may support researchers in a consultative or supportive capacity. These positions are emerging in many organizations (Barwick, Bovaird & McMillen, in revision, Evidence & Policy). Authors Michael Johnny and Gary Myers are institutional knowledge translations practitioners.

The *Research-Based Communications Professional* is an individual who is employed in a research-associated organization (i.e., health charity, environmental NGO, research institute, hospital) with communication responsibilities, but who also contributes to stakeholder relations, media, and public relations. These are well established positions that are staffed by people who have acquired subject matter expertise. Author Rossana Coriandoli and two of the participants in the LinkedIn discussion who identified themselves as Health Communicators would be considered research-based communications professionals.

The *Strategic and Institutional Communications Professional* works in a centralized communications office that has responsibility not only for broadcasting strategic messages but also leading media and public relations. Their work creates communications standards and policies and builds capacity for communication activities, such as talking to the media, but they are not research based subject matter experts.

An analysis of the LinkedIn comments allowed us to extract nine activity themes from the discussion and to generate conclusions regarding how these four categories of KT/Communications professionals engage in these themes. Themes were identified if more than one comment addressed the same issue in the debate or if a comment was endorsed by another discussion participant. Table 1 illustrates how these themes are practiced among the four categories of participants.

In all themes except "practicing communication skills," the Institutional and Strategic Communications Professional was different from the Research-Based Knowledge Translation Practitioner (columns 1 and 4). There is greater similarity between Research-Based Communications Professionals and Institutional Knowledge Translation Professionals.

It is evident from the descriptions of the participant categories, as well as from the emergent key themes, that Research-Based Communications Professionals and Institutional Knowledge Translation practitioners share functions and tasks that are not shared by Research-Based Knowledge Transfer Professionals and Institutional Communications Professionals. This allows us to conceptualize this relationship as a Venn diagram with Communications Practitioners (red) and Knowledge Translation Practitioners (blue) having distinct as well as overlapping functions (see Figure 1).

Table 1: Communications and KT themes practiced by different categories of KT and SC professionals

Theme	Research-based KTP	Institutional KTP	Research-based communications	Institutional & SC
Practicing communication skills	Y	Y	Y	Y
Practicing knowledge translation skills	Y	Y	Y	N
Big C or Little c communications[1]	Little c	Little c	Little c and Big C	Big C
Promotion of the institution	N	N	Y	Y
Training & accreditation[2]	N	N	Y	Y
Brokering research relationships	Y	Y	Y	N
Understanding of research methodology	Y	N	N	N
Institutional brand support	N	N	Y	Y
Goal: research to inform policy and/or practice	Y	Y	Y	N

Note 1 - Big C and Little c: LinkedIn participant Alex Bielak describes "the distinction between big-C and little-c communications, with Big-C being the pre-dominant role of traditional communications units in companies, gov't and academe. They principally push info. Little-c encompasses the … spectrum of (knowledge translation, knowledge brokering, knowledge mobilization) etc. You can do Big C without ever worrying about little c …" (Bielak et al., 2008).

Note 2 - Training and Accreditation: There are established training (including degree and diploma) and accreditation programs for communications. Some universities offer individual courses in knowledge translation but there exists no degree or diploma program in knowledge translation. One exception to this is the Hospital for Sick Children's 5-Day Knowledge Translation Professional Certificate Program that is accredited by the University of Toronto (Barwick, 2010) and is recognized as a Leading Practice by Accreditation Canada.

Figure 1: Overlapping functions for communications and knowledge translation professionals
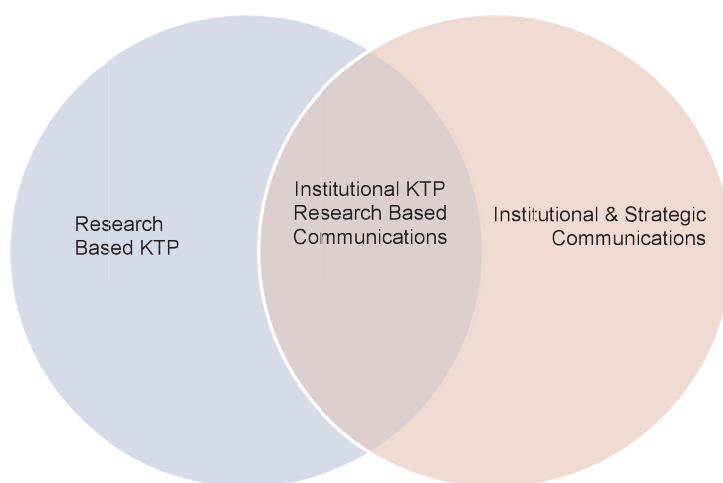
The Institutional-Based Knowledge Translation Practitioner and Research-Based Communications Professional fill the space where these two overlap (see Figure 1). Indeed, this visualization was identified by a number of participants in the LinkedIn discussion. Paula Robeson, Team Leader for Knowledge Mobilization at Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse wrote, "I do not see this as an either/or issue. I see (visual thinker that I am) a Venn diagram of sorts where there are overlapping skills and

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responsibilities between the two roles but distinct ones as well. Often this is dependent on where you work, the organizational structure, and your job description."

Convergence and divergence

Fundamental differences and similarities between KT and SC can be identified in planning models, approaches, tools (strategies), and competencies. Key elements of KT work as captured by the Knowledge Translation Planning Template (Barwick, 2008, 2013) provide a useful structure for discerning the work of these types of knowledge workers (see Table 2). Differences in the core elements of SC and KT work are evident in a number of areas. In KT, the content and main messages of the communication stems from research evidence, whereas SC focuses on internally developed messages that may have no relation to evidence. Both KT and SC involve partners but at different times in the process, and there are differences in the roles partners play. SC and KT differ in the range of communications/KT goals, with KT having a broader focus that includes informing research, policy, practice. Both KT and SC share tools, formats and channels, although the SC toolbox is somewhat more limited. From a process perspective, SC functions on a "push" strategy whereas KT encompasses, pull, push, and exchange strategies. With respect to impact and evaluation, both KT and SC strive for impact but they define it differently. SC concerns itself with return on investment,

Table 2: Similarities and differences for core KT elements

Core KT element from template (Barwick, 2008, 2013)	SC	KTP	Analysis similarities + differences -
Source of content	Focus is on messages developed internally to meet the organization's strategic plan	Focus is on knowledge stemming from evidence, where evidence is defined as empirical (but may also include practice experience, and user need or experience)	-
Type of content	Data, information, knowledge	Data, information, knowledge	+
Project partners: range of partners, including knowledge users (target audience), as participants in crafting the communication	Consult with target audiences to learn what is needed to craft message and format (market research)	Encouraged, yes, but not relevant in all cases	+/-
Degree of partner engagement	Partner engagement is often at the front end.	Partner engagement is variable, but encouraged throughout (integrated KT)	+/-
Partner roles; what will partners bring to the activity? How will they assist with developing, implementing, or evaluating the KT/comms plan?	Partner sometimes involved beyond message crafting, if at all	Partners often play a broader, more varied role in developing the KT plan, implementing it, and evaluating it	-
KT expertise on the team	Requires a communications specialist	May require a range of KT specialists (which can include a communications specialist)	+

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Core KT element from template (Barwick, 2008, 2013)	SC	KTP	Analysis similarities + differences -
Knowledge users / target audiences	Identified	Identified	+/-
Main messages	Identified, but sources can vary	Identified, but source is based in evidence	+/-
KT goals	Narrower • Generate awareness, interest, practice change (non-clinical, corporate), behaviour change, policy action • Impart knowledge in the form of information	Broader • Generate awareness, interest, practice change, behaviour change, policy action • Impart knowledge, tools • Inform research, product development/patent (commercialization)	+/-
KT strategies (Tools of the trade) +Formats: • Graphic/visual (art, data) • Written – oral (speak) • Written – aural (hear) +Channels: *how the information is transmitted:* • Web • TV • Radio • Print • In person	Limited: • mass media campaign • direct mail • publications (newsletters, letters, speeches) • press release • social media (channel) • opinion leaders All formats All channels	Broader: • interactive small group • educational outreach • reminders • IT decision support • multi-prof collaboration • mass media campaign • financial incentive • combined interventions • conferences (didactic) • opinion leaders • champions • educational materials • patient-mediated interview • performance feedback • substitution of tasks • peer reviewed publication • CQI • press release • patent license • arts-based KT • social media • networks • communities of practice • Café Scientifique • webinar • website All formats All channels	+/-
KT Process	Focus is on PUSH (end)	Focus is on PUSH, PULL, EXCHANGE (end, iKT)	+/-
Impact	Strive for impact, defined differently: • return on investment • market share • brand recognition • policy change • public opinion change	Strive for impact, defined as: • on research • on services/programs /care • on policy • on health, well-being, school success, etc.	+/-
Evaluation	Evaluate against goals in Strategic Communications Plan	Larger focus on evaluation, aligned with KT goals and impact of research on end users	+/-

market share, etc., whereas KT seeks to capture impacts on research, services, policy, and health. SC professionals typically evaluate their outcomes against goals in the SC plan, whereas KT evaluation aligns with KT goals and impact on knowledge users.

Phipps, Jensen, Johnny, & Myers (2013) reported on a number of strategies to communicate and disseminate academic research that complements traditional academic approaches. These include clear language research summaries, press releases, opinion pieces, policy briefs, clinical practice guidelines, research fact sheets, knowledge briefs, and structured abstracts. However, this report did not assign responsibility for these strategies. Clearly, some of these strategies/tools are assumed by

Table 3: Similarities and differences in KT competencies

Competencies	SC	KTP[1]
Formative background	Narrow	Varied
Training	Existing	Emerging
Roles	• Exchange information • Organize information • Obtain information • Manage projects • Apply research knowledge • Manage relationships within the organization • Manage relationships outside the organization • Manage or broker relationship between the organization and external organizations • Acquire research knowledge for application • Problem solve and manage decision making process • Resolve problem areas • Market and promote the organization and the SC office	Top third: • Exchange information • Organize information • Obtain information • Manage projects • Apply research knowledge • Manage relationships within the organization • Manage relationships outside the organization • Manage or broker relationship between the organization and external organizations Middle third • Acquire research knowledge for application • Problem solve and manage decision making process • Resolve problem areas • Market and promote the organization and the KT office Bottom third • Understand the basis of intellectual property • Recognize commercial opportunities • Understand areas of law & impact on KT operations • Develop commercial opportunities • Manage opportunities within a legal context • Manage the commercial interface
Skills and knowledge	• Organizing events • Identifying and addressing knowledge gaps • SC planning and development • Developing and executing the communications strategic plan for the organization • Partnerships and external networks management • Strategic plan evaluation • Supporting communications research • Researching communications • Consultancy (consulting within your organization) • Developing communications policies	Top third: • Organizing knowledge translation events • Identifying and addressing knowledge gaps • Project management • KT planning and development • Knowledge brokering • Developing and executing the KT strategy for the organization • Partnerships and external networks management Middle third: • KT evaluation • Supporting KT research • Researching KT activities • Consultancy (consulting in KT within your organization) • Developing knowledge exchange policies Bottom third: • Intellectual property management • Technical support/IT • Commercialization management and support • Start ups/Spin out companies

[1] KTP competencies are based on a national survey of KTPs (author, submitted).

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SC (press releases) and some are the responsibility of KTPs acting in conjunction with the researcher (structured abstracts, clinical practice guidelines). Still others might be practiced by both SC and KTPs (e.g., policy brief). Researchers themselves would have responsibility for creation of opinion pieces.

Similarities and differences are also evident in competencies associated with the KT and SC roles. Using competencies identified among KTPs in a national survey (Barwick Bovaird and McMillen, in revision), Table 3 identifies the top, middle, and bottom third of endorsements for competencies that both SC and KT professionals could conceivably have in common, depending on the nature of their position and context in which they work. The two areas of divergence lie in knowledge brokering, which is a highly endorsed competency among KTPs, and commercialization that is less common among KTPs but does figure within the realm of the role for some.

KTPs share activities, qualities, and skills as well as theoretical underpinnings with SC professionals. KTPs have thus bisected the duality of scholarly dissemination (seen as an individualized research-driven activity) and communications (seen as an institutional activity). As an institutional and/or individual capacity driven by engagement as well as translation and transfer, KT practice shares elements of both scholarly dissemination and research communication.

Conclusion

The *KM in the AM* forum and the LinkedIn discussions illustrate a growing tension between SC, as an established role and profession, and KT, which is an established role but is emerging as an institutional profession. There appears to be a lack of sophisticated understanding of the similarities between KT professionals employing communications skills and communications professionals working to translate research into policy and practice. Although Sandra Nutley and colleagues present strategies researchers and research commissioners can adopt to enhance dissemination (a research communication activity) of research findings (Nutley et al, 2007; page 239), this distinction fails to appear in the literature (Holmes, Scarrow, Schellenberg, 2012), where it is claimed that KTP includes communications but is broader in scope. This was also reiterated in the LinkedIn discussion, when one participant, self-described as a health communicator, (a Research-Based Communications Professional) claimed that "75% of KT is not a new discipline. It's just now called KT." As such, she implies that 25% of KT is a new discipline, with the rest being communications. Carlile (2004) also describes knowledge transfer as a form of communication. We suggest that a number of issues maintain the tension between SC and KT.

Skills vs. profession

It is important to differentiate the *skills* of communication from the *profession* of communication as it relates to the skills and profession of KT. One resource for KT presents a chapter on developing a communications strategy illustrating both the function of good communications in KT and the confusion between skills and roles (Bennett & Jessani, 2011). KTPs practice communications skills but are not communications professionals. Many communications professionals working in research-based institutions feel they have KT goals even though they may not use certain tools within the KT repertoire, such as clinical practice guidelines or audit and

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feedback. Recently one author (DP) participated in a search for a *Director of Communications and Knowledge Mobilization* based in a Faculty of a university. There were two failed searches. Only communications professionals were applying for the position and presenting as communicators not as KTPs. The Faculty reworked the position to be *Director of Research Partnerships and Knowledge Mobilization* and secured a successful candidate in one search. In this recruitment, communications professionals thought they were knowledge translators but knowledge translators didn't apply because they knew they were not communications professionals, which was a key goal of the position as first advertised. In the shared space of Institutional KTP and Research Based Communications (Figure 1) there is blending of the roles and sometimes confusion around titles with similar roles being played. One author, Rossana Coriandoli, was hired as Communications Associate but the role has evolved to be more of an Institutional KTP role.

Shared skills yet (sometimes) distinct goals

As shown in Tables 2 and 3, KTPs and SC professionals have highly overlapping competencies, but differ with respect to core elements of their approaches and tools/strategies. There appears to be little distinction between institutional-based KTPs and research-based communications professionals. Nonetheless, cultural biases between the professions of KT and SC can still create tension even in the centre of the Venn diagram. Rossana Coriandoli is associated with a discipline-specific research network that employs a Research-Based Communications Professional. The use of Twitter as a tool for SC vs. KT is under discussion, with the SC professional being concerned about brand and message control in light of the more engaging and conversational use being proposed to support KT goals. The two have the same overall goal, the same research, and the same tool, but different perspectives on its use.

KTP as an evolving profession

Knowledge translation is broader than communications; "Communications is an important aspect of KT and an important practice distinct from KT—but KT goes beyond communications" (Holmes, Scarrow, & Schellenberg, 2012). Ward et al (2009) identified communication as a skill of knowledge brokers. In addition to being a trainable skill, Phipps and Morton (2013) have identified communication as a quality of KTPs that is innate to the person's character rather than something that can be trained, insofar as it includes linkage and partnership development.

Knowledge translation is not a new activity but it is emerging as a specialized profession and practice. It was evident from the in-person *KM in the AM* forum and the LinkedIn discussion that Research-Based Communications Professionals feel they have had KT goals for much of their well-established careers. As an emerging field, KT is seeking to carve out a professional as well as practice niche, especially as it is an eligible funding category for many grant funding programs. Tension arises when a new profession seeks to carve out a space that has been traditionally claimed by Research-Based Communications Professionals. We can begin to resolve this tension and work towards SC and KT collaboration when we can identify distinctions that unpack the differences and similarities of each of these professions.

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