

**Using videos to disseminate information to extension agents and the general public.**

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## **Introduction**

A vital part of academia is sharing research and evidence-based practices with the public. Extension has historically been, and still is, a translator tool for many different audiences. Within this role, it is essential that extension agents stay informed on educational updates, evidence-based practices, new research findings, the best ways to communicate or translate these findings to their audiences, and ways to evaluate their efforts in sharing this information. It is a lot to ask agents to do this in addition to providing programing and completing their other job duties.

Currently, most of this information is shared with extension agents or educators via writing either through peer-reviewed academic journal articles or shorter factsheets. There has been a decline in the amount of time a person in the United States will read in a day. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (n.d.) found that in 2020, people between the ages of 15 and 44 read on average about twelve minutes each day. This means that people are more likely to read headlines, two or three sentences, short emails, or PowerPoint slides when looking to get information rather than reading longer journal articles (Gabelkov et al., 2016; Gann et al., 2013; Gelles-Watnick & Perrin, 2021). Expecting extension agents to be different from the average person by wanting to read lots of work material is unrealistic and unsustainable. If extension agents are not obtaining or being educated on the information they need from research, this can help increase the gap between research and practice (Hirschorn & Geelan, 2008; Spoth et al., 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to find different avenues to share information with extension agents and the public (Hirschorn & Geelan, 2008).

There are continuing education sessions and webinars given by many organizations throughout the year, however, these can cover large content areas, consume hours or days, and may not be available for the agent to find and watch whenever they need resources. Having short, concept-specific resources the agents can explore whenever they want might be a good tool to use when communicating new or updated information with agents. We addressed this challenge in the area of conducting surveys and analyzing data for program planning and evaluation by developing a series of “bite-sized” videos for agents.

## **Methods**

To offer alternative ways to provide education and information to extension agents, two series of PowerPoints were created at the University of Florida: 1)Using Qualtrics and 2) Creating surveys (this is an existing UF EDIS publication). These areas were picked as the first videos due to all extension agents needing to have program evaluation knowledge and skills (Diaz et al., 2019), and this is an area of expertise for the graduate student and advisor. After being reviewed for content validity, voice recordings were added to the PowerPoints with live examples. The videos were about 10-15 minutes each and were placed on UF’s PDEC extension site for agents to access as they wanted. It is believed that the videos should cover one or two topics and be around ten minutes long to provide information in bite-size amounts for the agents to learn and use. Creating videos like this to share information is best suited for best practices, processes, and other information that does not frequently change.

## Results to Date

The two series of videos, 19 covering Qualtrics and 10 covering surveys, were created at the University of Florida and posted to a central website and were advertised on social media and through email. Two months after the videos were released, a survey was sent to 350 extension agents and state specialists assessing the need for alternative modes of delivering information and usage of the videos. The actual number of views of the videos was unable to be retrieved due to website changes. The survey indicated that of the 43 respondents, 41 used varying EDIS publications to find information, and 55.8% ( $n = 24$ ) of respondents wanted to see information shared via alternative methods, such as videos or audio. The respondents' reasons for wanting alternative sharing methods consisted of three themes: 1) being able to reach different learning styles, 2) having short videos that they had time for, and 3) they could use the resources in teaching clients or audiences. When asked about the video series, only 7% ( $n = 3$ ) of the respondents had viewed them, and all these respondents found them helpful and thought there should be more topics presented in this way. Of the other respondents, 86% ( $n = 37$ ) did not know the videos existed, 2.3% ( $n = 1$ ) could not find them, and 4.7% ( $n = 2$ ) meant to view them but had not done so.

## Future Plans and Recommendations

Better ways of marketing the series to see if more agents will view the videos needs to be assessed. Further investigation into the content extension agents would want the most needs to occur and then a few videos related to the top requested content need to be created. These videos are planned to be less than 10 minutes long each covering only one topic. Evaluation of this method of information sharing with the already available series needs to be studied more to assess what changes should be made to future video delivery methods.

It is recommended for others that want to create this type of information within their states that they first find a frequently used website/page to store the videos. They should also assess what videos the extension agents in their area want the most and produce those first along with an abundance of communication that these new resources are available.

## Resources

The creation of these videos needs a good amount of time for development and implementation. These series at UF were created by a graduate student requiring about 150 hours to create 29 videos. The only cost involved in creating the videos was the graduate student's pay per hour, their advisor's supervision pay of about 30 hours, and about 10 hours of work for an IT specialist to create a page to house the videos. If more videos are added, there also needs to be a more advanced website that can house the videos and a system to search the videos for different topics. As the results at UF indicate, there needs to be a way to advertise the resources to ensure the agents know they exist.

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