

Develop reporting media

You may develop a number of reports, in different formats, for different sets of stakeholders.

Work with your primary users and stakeholders to determine when and in what form they want to receive evaluation reports. Also determine who you will involve in viewing draft and interim reports.

Points to consider in choosing the format are:

- How does the audience prefer to receive information – text, graphics, numbers, written, visual or a mixture of all of these?
- What is the preferred length (or duration if an audio/visual presentation)?
- What access does the audience have to information technology (this may inform whether you use web-based formats)?
- What is the purpose of the report and how does this inform the choice of format? Purposes may include:
 - keeping stakeholders engaged during an evaluation
 - providing feedback to and maintaining the commitment of people collecting data during implementation
 - flagging emerging findings and implications for ongoing program development and for the evaluation
 - presenting interim recommendations
 - seeking feedback on draft reports to assist in identifying causal factors
 - informing planning, funding or policy decisions
 - broader dissemination of findings to support use

Methods

- Traditionally, written reports have been the main form of media used for evaluation reports. However, we now know that the full technical report is not enough to meet the learning needs of our audiences. The presentation of your report should help your reader quickly and easily understand your key points.

Written

- Increasing report readability makes it more likely that readers will be able to learn from the report.

Reporting in the order of importance allows readers to easily access those things which they are most interested in. These are generally the findings and recommendations which, therefore, should appear early in the report. Less relevant details, such as the evaluation background and methodology, belong in an appendix or can even be posted online for reference.

- [Aide memoire](#)

An aide-memoire generally refers to a document that is produced to summarise key findings and important recommendations of an evaluation.

- [Executive summaries](#)

The executive summary of an evaluation report is a shortened version of the full report – usually one to four pages – that highlights findings and recommendations and is placed at the front of the report.

- [Final reports](#)

Evaluation reports can be read by many different audiences, ranging from individuals in government departments, donor and partner staff, development professionals working with similar projects or programmes, students and community groups.

- [Interim reports](#)

Interim (or progress) reports present the interim, preliminary, or initial evaluation findings.

- [Memos and email](#)

Memos and emails can be used to help maintain ongoing communication among evaluation stakeholders through brief and specific messages about a particular issue.

- [News media communications](#)

News media communications can include communication channels such as newspapers, magazines, and radio, as well as digital formats such as online news sites, podcasts, social media, and blogs.

- [Newsletters, bulletins, blogs, briefs and brochures](#)

Short communication formats—such as bulletins, briefs, newsletters, blogs and brochures—can be used to highlight particular findings or angles on the evaluation.

- [Postcards](#)

Postcards can be used to collect information quickly, and they can also be used to provide a short report on evaluation findings (or an update on progress).

- [Website communications](#)

These days, having a website is common practice for development organizations working beyond the community level.

This has opened the possibilities of disseminating information such as that coming from evaluations.

Presentation events

- Presentation audiences are likely to be most interested in only a portion of the full evaluation report, such as the key findings or a lesson learned about evaluation methods. Thus, it is wise to focus the presentation on only that portion, while making the fuller report available to anyone interested.
- [Conferences](#)

Attendance at professional conferences to understand how other evaluators frame and discuss their findings is a key component of building evaluation capacity.

- [Feedback workshop](#)

A feedback workshop is a meeting that brings together evaluators and key stakeholders in which the findings of an evaluation are discussed.

- [Teleconference](#)

Teleconferences can be used to facilitate the discussion of evaluation findings via telephone.

- [Verbal Briefings](#)

Verbal briefings are a way of providing specific information to an audience of interested participants allowing for a structured question and answer format based on that information.

- [Webconference](#)

Webconferencing is a conference hosted on the internet that can allow people who live in different parts of the world to get together.

Presentation materials

- [Displays and exhibits](#)

Through the use of pictures, video or audio representations, maps or models, displays and exhibits can be used to draw attention to certain issues and assist in community engagement.

- [Flip charts](#)

Flip charts are large sheets of paper, usually positioned on a tripod, to be used with thick and differently coloured marking pens.

- [Posters](#)

A good poster communicates your message clearly, quickly and succinctly.

- [Powerpoint](#)

Structuring presentations with a series of powerpoint slides is now the most common way of presenting information to groups.

- [Video](#)

When produced well, videos provide an excellent means to convey messages coming out of an evaluation.

Creative and/or interactive

- Presenting your report in a creative or interactive manner may be the most relevant means to get your information across if the context allows for it. You may consider working with an artist, a graphic recorder or designer to produce creative or interactive displays.

- [Cartoons](#)

Cartoon images can be used by evaluators to an understanding of program impact, scenes of program implementation, main findings or issues.

- [Data dashboard](#)

Stephen Few defines a dashboard as: "A data dashboard is a visual display of the most important information needed to achieve one or more objectives, with the data consolidated and arranged on a single screen so the information can be monitored at a gla

- [Infographics](#)

An infographic (information graphic) is a way of representing data visually so that the information is able to be quickly and easily understood.

- [Photographic reporting](#)

Adding photographs to an evaluation report can make it more appealing to readers and also make the key messages more memorable.

- [Poetry](#)

When preparing an evaluation report, one way of communicating vividly the experience of participants, or the situation in which the program has been implemented, is to present some of the findings in the form of a poem.

- [Reporting in pictures](#)

"A picture is worth a thousand words." Pictures or images provide another way of presenting information, and increasing understanding of your results.

- [Theatre](#)

There are several different ways of using theatre to communicate evaluation findings and engage intended users in responding to them.

Graphic design

- Simple graphic design principles applied to your reporting documents will ensure readability and maximize learning. You can use design elements and visual depictions of your data to assist the reader.

- [Arrangement](#)

Arranging text and graphics on a page or slide can be a challenge for those not familiar with graphic design. Some basic principles can be easily implemented and boost readability and engagement.

- [Colour](#)

Blocks of background colour can help group similar items or separate reporting elements like sidebars.

Text intended for narrative reading should be set in black or dark grey on a white or very light background.

- [Images](#)

Written reports and presentations should always include images. Beyond just charts and graphs, photographs or drawings increase the relevancy of the material to the audience and make the report more engaging.

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Visualise data

- Also refer to the task [visualising data](#) to find options.

Resources

Guides

- [A short primer on innovative evaluation reporting](#)

This book by Kylie Hutchinson presents a number of innovative ways of reporting, including different methods for presentations, narrative summaries, presenting findings visually and making use of digital outputs.

- [Visual language for designers: Guide](#)

"Within every picture is a hidden language that conveys a message, whether it is intended or not. This language is based on the ways people perceive and process visual information.

- [Evaluation report layout checklist](#)

This checklist from Stephanie Evergreen distills the best practices in graphic design and has been particularly created for use on evaluation reports.