



Australian experience with on-line communication tools for probability-based climate products

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Australia is truly a land of droughts and flooding rains, with significant regional economic activity in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and other resources. Recently, Australia has been researching and developing on-line educational and information tools for products such as seasonal outlooks (those products that rely strongly on probability information and also assist with risk decisions). These tools have been developed to complement more standard text-and-graphic products and web pages by making use of video, animation and meteorologists as presenters. Their development followed wide but targeted consultation with users, via workshops – it was clear that users did not have one preferred way of getting their outlooks and related information. Some wanted maps, some wanted data, some wanted numbers, some wanted graphs and some wanted a video. The video concept scored highly with those consulted. Also, some wanted educational tools relevant to their industry sector – leading to development of explanatory videos suited to rural users, with some innovative approaches. Australian examples will be shown and our experiences with their reception by the Australian community, especially the farming community will be described. Some “rules of engagement” for community engagement will be suggested. Climate videos ended up being shown on a long running Australian rural-focussed, rural issues TV program called Landline (a weekly program with an audience of up to 500,000). The work also led to a new relationship, including a Memorandum of Understanding, between the national broadcaster (the ABC) and the Bureau of Meteorology around weather and climate content.

Relevant websites include:

www.bom.gov.au/climate

<http://www.abc.net.au/tv/programs/landline/>