



Office of the  
ICANN Ombudsman



PACIFICA

HUMAN COMMUNICATIONS

Using Analytical Data  
to Evaluate the Performance of  
an Ombudsman Office -  
A Case Study

International Ombudsman  
Association

St. Louis, April 2007

# What we'll cover today

- Information about the organization, the ombudsman, and the outside expert
- Some assessment basics – planning and implementing assessment over time
- Using criteria found in the literature to assess your Ombuds program
- Using a third party to verify results

# Yours hosts:

- Frank Fowlie
- ICANN Ombudsman
- Doctoral candidate
- Canadian
- Practitioner & Researcher
- John Zinsser
- Principal -  
Pacifica Human  
Communications
- MA - 1st MACRA  
Grad
- American
- Consultant &  
Researcher

# To Start

- What is your Program's purpose?
  - Is this what you or your Organization wants?
  - How do you know that?
- Are you structured to deliver that?
  - How do you know?
  - Anyone helped you check on that?
- What does your Program deliver/create?

# About ICANN

- Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
- Administers the Domain Name System DNS
- .com. Net. .org etc (Top Level domains)
- .biz .travel .xxx etc (sponsored TLD)
- .us .ca .uk etc

# More ICANN Info

- \$40 million budget based on domain names
- 89 staff and a team of consultants
- Head office in Marina del Rey
- Office in Brussels and Sydney
- Staff in Canada, Mexico, Italy, Egypt, Bulgaria, Niger, Netherlands, France, Australia
- Staff represent about 20 countries and 29 languages

# ICANN's Office of the Ombudsman

- Product of a reform movement
- First Ombudsman appointed Nov 1, 2004
- Executive Ombudsman scheme
  - In the organization but complaints from the outside
  - Investigates
  - Reports
  - Recommends



# More about the Ombudsman

- Ombudsman – sole practitioner
- Complaints of unfairness about ICANN
- Complaints and contacts
  - 2004 – 10
  - 2005 – 1682
  - 2006 – 319
  - 2007 – likely in the range of 250 +

# Purpose of the Ombudsman

- ...ICANN is working towards a stable, secure, and universal internet.
- In working towards that goal, the Office of the Ombudsman will assist ICANN by:
  - Ensuring that members of the community receive fair and equitable treatment;
  - Helping to raise service and administrative standards;

# Purpose of the Ombudsman cont.

- ...ICANN is working towards a stable, secure, and universal internet.
- In working towards that goal, the Office of the Ombudsman will assist ICANN by:
  - Improving communication links between ICANN and the community; and,
  - Issuing reports, and maintaining a website that informs consumers, and the ICANN community about issues of interest.

# About Pacifica

- Founded 1990
- Assays, builds, and advances ICMSs  
Especially ombuds programs
  - Also Intercultural Communications &  
Organizational effectiveness
- Conducted three largest Ombuds assessments to date.
- Won OPM President's Award for Federal ADR, in part for O measurement activities

# Why Assess?

- Demonstrate Value?
- Is it working?
- What can be improved?
- Celebrate successes?
- Ensure service standards?
- Demonstrate integrity?
- Appointment renewal?
- Other?

# Lexicon

- **Measurement**

1. The act of measuring or the process of being measured.
2. A system of measuring: measurement in miles.
3. The dimension, quantity, or capacity determined by measuring: the measurements of a room. (*dictionary.com*)

## **For our purposes:**

Activities, undertaken PRIMARILY by the Ombuds, to determine what outputs and outcomes occur or not, and what satisfaction results from these activities.

# Lexicon

- **Evaluation**

1. Act of ascertaining or fixing the value or worth of
2. An appraisal of the value of something  
[synonym: valuation, rating]
3. Converting an expression into a value using some reduction strategy. (dictionary.com)

**For our purposes:**

Efforts to determine the economic and/or Humanistic value of Ombuds activities' and the outcomes of these activities. Can be determined by the Ombuds with input from organization or external experts.

# Lexicon

- **Effectiveness**

1. a. Having an intended or expected effect.  
b. Producing a strong impression or response; striking: an effective performance
2. Capable of producing a desired effect: an effective reprimand; an effectual complaint; an efficacious remedy.  
*(dictionary.com)*

## **For our purposes:**

The alignment among Ombuds' activities, these activities' outcomes, and the intended effects desired by an informed and well meaning host organization. Generally determined by the organization in concert with the Ombuds or other experts.



# Lexicon

- **Assessment**

1. The classification of someone or something with respect to its worth

[synonym: appraisal]

2. The market value set on assets

3. The act of judging or assessing a person or situation or event; [synonym: judgment] *(dictionary.com)*

## **For our purposes:**

The entire set of activities undertaken to understand an Ombuds Program's activities, outputs and the value of these, i.e. a set of sets. Likely done by others, with the Ombuds' support.

# *Assessment*

The diagram consists of a large outer oval labeled 'Assessment'. Inside this oval, there are three smaller shapes: a circle labeled 'Evaluation', an oval labeled 'Effectiveness', and a horizontal oval at the bottom labeled 'MEASUREMENT'. The 'Evaluation' circle and 'Effectiveness' oval overlap each other. The 'MEASUREMENT' oval is positioned below the other two and does not overlap with them.

**Evaluation**

**Effectiveness**

**MEASUREMENT**

# Assessment Principles

- Fair, honest, accurate
- Established assessment plan
- Understandable and relevant criteria
- Assessment tied to comparative analysis
- Multi faceted analysis
- Use of outside assessment experts

# My Assessment Criteria

- Multi stage, multi pronged, multi year
- Ongoing, formative, summative

# To Begin

- Plan the assessment
  - Results Based Management Accountability Framework (RMAF)  
<http://www.icann.org/ombudsman/documents/rmaf-08feb05.pdf>
  - Logic model
  - 7 assessment questions
    - 15 criteria

# Steps to Date:

- Two sets of ongoing assessment questions for the Annual Report
- Statistical Comparison
- Client Satisfaction Survey
- Literature Based assessment and Independent Review
- <http://www.icann.org/ombudsman/program.html>

# Literature Based Assessment

- There is little research in the literature
- Three articles and one dissertation
  - Danet 1978, next significant works in
  - Ayeni 1990,
  - Male 1999 and
  - Hertogh 2000
- General approaches: files closed, per capita work, benchmarking, overview and qualitative

# Whither Criteria???

- Three key documents
  - Creating the Office of the Ombudsman
    - (Rick Russell)
  - Essential Characteristics of an Ombudsman
    - (USOA, Gottehrer et al)
  - ABA Ombudsman Standards



# What to do with the Criteria

- Compare the criteria to your practice
- Apply
  - Logic
  - Fair and reasonable standards and comparisons
- Use your
  - knowledge base
  - Documentation, annual reports, charter
  - Survey findings

# The List

- Handout listing the criteria used
- Bear in mind that The List is not limited to one of organizational, executive, or classical Ombuds. It is a generic list, and some criteria may not apply to you, or some criteria may be repetitive.
- Other sources may also speak to your office even better.

# The Third Party Review

- Fact-Check/Verify
- Commentary
- A neutral, independent voice about Ombuds functions
  - For Leadership
  - For Users
  - For the Ombuds

# The Third Party Review

- Simple Process
  - Review the contributing material/report
  - Interview (if needed)
  - Examine performance claims via data
- Simple Report
  - Repetition
  - Augmentation of voice

# The Third Party Review

- Adds Another Iteration/A Hand
- Enhances Veracity
- Relieves Self-promotional Challenge

# LBE - Context

- When one endeavors to determine what any ombuds program, of any type, does or achieves, the absence of established measurement, evaluation, and assessment criteria immediately becomes apparent.
- Only recently has the subject received meaningful attention. Much more remains necessary.

# LBE - Limitations

- Not about program performance
- Does not quantify Office activities/Outcomes (measurement).
- Does not examine measures to generate a value proposition (evaluation).
- Does not pursue whether ICANN achieves, by creating the Office, any intended outcome (effectiveness).

# LBE - Focus

- Design Intent
  - Was it put together thoughtfully?
  - Did it consider what is known?
  - Incorporate that?
  - Built for its purpose?



# LBE Core Finding

- Summarizing, the Report engaged sound methods and offered factually accurate findings. ... the ICANN Office of the Ombudsman is well founded, likely serving well the designated population, and better assessed already than almost all other Ombuds Programs.

# So, now what???

- Who do you give copies/summaries to?
  - Board of Directors
  - Management
  - Staff
  - Stakeholders
  - Public postings (Annual Report – website)
  - Other Ombudsmen
  - Other

# How do you.....??

- Implement improvements you identify
- Fix problems
- Celebrate your successes
- Communicate:
  - your contribution and
  - program integrity
- Deal with service standards

Questions?

# Contact us

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