

IASC Task Force on Information Management

Process for the Naming of the Inter-Agency Web Platform

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Introduction

1. The purpose of this document is to outline the process for determining a suitable site name for the inter-agency web platform, provisionally called OneResponse. The document will also provide an overview of best practices for determining the name of a website, as well as definitions of key terms used in the naming of websites.

Background

2. In December 2008 the IASC Working Group requested that IASC Task Force on Information Management (Task Force) develop agreed guidance and tools to implement the revised *Operational Guidance on Responsibilities of Cluster/Sector Leads & OCHA in Information Management*. In particular, the Working Group requested the Task Force to develop an improved inter-agency web-platform to support and manage the exchange of operational information in emergencies, taking into account relevant existing web platforms and avoid duplication of existing agency web based resources.
3. 3. Since December 2008 the Task Force, with the support of Microsoft, has been developing an inter-agency web platform, provisionally called OneResponse, and which has been piloted with humanitarian partners in Pakistan, Haiti and at the global level. Consistent with the Terms of Reference of the Task Force, a review of the pilot commenced in June 2010 to assess in determining if the concept, architecture, technology, and implementation processes for the site are appropriate for current and future emergencies. A key component of this review is to examine the branding of the platform, including the naming of the site, to ensure the name reflects the site's purpose, and the full diversity and complementary of the humanitarian sphere. Some NGO members of the IM Task Force objected to the OneResponse name as they felt it did not reflect the diversity of the inter-agency community involved, and the Final Synthesis Report of Cluster Approach Evaluation Phase 2, also recommended that consideration should be given to renaming the site "in order to avoid confusion between the cluster approach and the One UN policy and demonstrate that proper coordination doesn't mean reduction of diversity"^{1 2}

Key Definitions

4. For the purpose of selecting a suitable site name for the inter-agency web platform; the Task Force will use the following definitions:
 - a. **Branding:** "A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, association, trademark or design which is intended to identify the products or services of one provider or group of providers, and to

¹ IASC, *Final Synthesis Report of Cluster Approach Evaluation Phase 2*, p.90

² For more information on the One UN see the Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel, *Delivering as One*, 9 November 2006 [<http://www.un.org/events/panel/resources/pdfs/HLP-SWC-FinalReport.pdf> last accessed 7 June 2010]

differentiate them from those of competitors. A brand has functional and emotional elements which create a relationship between customers and the product or service.”³

- b. **Brand Essence:** The brand essence is an articulation of the "heart and soul" of the brand. A brand essence is typical three to five short word phrases that capture the core essence or spirit of the brand positioning and the values characterizing the brand. The brand essence is the description which defines a brand and the guiding vision of the brand.⁴
- c. **Brand Slogan/ Brand tagline:** An easily and recognizable and memorable phrase which often accompanies a brand name in marketing communications programs. The brand slogan and tagline helps customers to remember the brand and reinforces mental associations. Consistent and well-known examples are Nike "Just do it", HSBC "The world's local bank", HP "Invent", and Singapore Airlines "A Great Way to Fly".⁵
- d. **Uniform Resource Locator:** the address of a web page, ftp site, audio stream or other Internet resource; for example, "http://en.wiktionary.org/"⁶

Purpose of Branding

5. Consensus views amongst industry experts, as well as in the relevant academic literature, are that an organization's website – in this case the inter-agency web platform - is potentially the most important piece of marketing collateral it can own. The overall design and branding of the site are critical to the ongoing and long term success of an organization; therefore serious consideration is required when deciding how to brand a website. In this instance, the name of the inter-agency web-platform needs to stand out from related sites and distinguish itself as the main platform for operational inter-agency information exchange.
6. For well established entities, establishing a unique, instantly recognizable domain name was a fairly simple exercise as many organizations choose to use their name or an abbreviation of it when the internet became a mainstream business tool in the early 1990s. Examples of this within the humanitarian community include <http://www.care.org/>, <http://www.wfp.org/> and <http://www.interaction.org>. Domain names like these allow the target audience of the organizations to easily remember the site name, as well as allowing employees to be able to promote the site via word of mouth, as well as on traditional media such as business cards and promotional materials.

Purpose of the Inter-Agency Site

7. The inter-agency site is a collaborative tool, designed to enhance humanitarian coordination within the cluster approach, and support the predictable exchange of information in emergencies at the country level. The website intends to support Clusters and OCHA fulfill their information management responsibilities as per existing IASC guidance, in order to improve coordination, situational understanding and decision-making at the operational level.
8. Core services of the site include:

³ Source: http://www.venturepublic.com/resources/brand_glossary.asp

⁴ Source: http://www.venturepublic.com/resources/brand_glossary.asp

⁵ Source: http://www.venturepublic.com/resources/brand_glossary.asp

⁶ Source: en.wiktionary.org/wiki/uRL

- a. Provide a one stop shop for the exchange of clusters/sector humanitarian information at the operational level;
 - b. Provide a global entry page, where all cluster/sectors and cross-cutting guidance materials can be located;
 - c. Provide a platform for online collaboration and sharing of inter-cluster and intra-cluster information;
 - d. Offer a low-bandwidth environment when connectivity is limited;
 - e. Allows clusters/sectors to directly manage their own content on the site at the national and global level;
 - f. Allows sensitive information to be made accessible only to cluster specific working groups by allowing information to be categorized as either public or private; and
 - g. Provide the possibility of creating a specific disaster site within 24 hours during the onset of a new emergency.
9. The primary audience for the site at the country level is Cluster/Sectors and OCHA at the country level (i.e. those organizations working within the cluster approach). The secondary audience, but no less important than the primary audience, are the Member States, global Cluster/Sector leads and members, and OCHA.

Best practices for brand selection

10. When determining the most appropriate name for the site, the branding process should take into account prevailing best practices. The process should also take into account practical considerations such as the availability of the domain name. For example; consensus opinion may identify that www.hydra.com is the preferred name for the site; however the domain name is already registered and therefore unavailable or available for sale at a high price.
11. In selecting the brand name the following guidance should be taken into account:⁷
- a. The name should be short and easy to remember by the target audience;
 - b. The name and/or tagline should contain words that have the power to position both the content and functionality of the site;
 - c. The name and/or tagline should contain one or several keywords in order to support search engine optimization (SEO) - i.e. allow the website to arrive on the first pages of Google's search

⁷ For more information on the branding strategies, please see <http://sparxoo.com/>, <http://www.marketingpower.com>, [MarketingMagazine.co.uk](http://www.marketingmagazine.co.uk), http://www.venturerepublic.com/resources/features_and_articles.asp, <http://www.action-redaction.com/choisir-son-nom-de-domaine.htm>

results;⁸

- d. Avoid negative connotations or words that have a completely different meaning in another language or culture; and
- e. Reflect consistency in message between the site's brand, logo and navigation layout

12. The following constraints should also be taken into account:

- a. Avoid choosing words for which there is already a high competition because they are widely used or used by large corporations (e.g. avoid using the word *Google* or *Gogle* in the domain name).
- b. Ensure that the selected URL is not similar to existing humanitarian sites (e.g. if the selected name is www.reliefweb.co.uk, it may easily be confused with www.reliefweb.int)¹⁰.
- c. Similarly avoid selecting a name that may potentially lead to trademark or brand infringement issues (e.g. www.helpinghand.info may breach trademark laws in respect of <http://www.helpinghand.co.uk/>).
- d. If the name is already registered, but not actively used, consideration could be given to purchasing the domain name within existing resources (e.g. <http://www.humanitariancoordination.info/>).

13. Based on the above best practices and constraints, as well as feedback received from Cluster/Sector leads, IASC members, and cross-cutting issue focal points, the selection of the brand name for the site should be reviewed according to the following criteria:

- a. Reflect the diversity of the humanitarian community that the site aims to support;
- b. Convey a clear message about the site's coordination and information exchange purposes;
- c. Have an available domain name (URL);
- d. Provide a name that is short and easy to remember;
- e. Provide a name that does not have a negative connotation or a completely different meaning in another language or culture;

⁸ Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the volume or quality of traffic to a web site from search engines via "natural" "organic" search results. The assumption is that the higher a site appears in the search results list, the more visitors it will receive from the search engine (*Source: Wikipedia*).

⁹ "URL" stands for Uniform Resource Locator. It specifies where an identified resource is available and the mechanism for retrieving it. The URL of a website is what is commonly called a website "address" (for example <http://www.google.com>) (*Source: Wikipedia*).

¹⁰ "URL" stands for Uniform Resource Locator. It specifies where an identified resource is available and the mechanism for retrieving it. The URL of a website is what is commonly called a website "address" (for example <http://www.google.com>) (*Source: Wikipedia*).

- f. Does not exclude the retention of the current OneResponse name; and
- g. Provide a name that promotes search engine optimization.

Branding Review Process

14. In order to ensure the branding process complements and feeds into the review of the pilot implementation, the branding review process should take place in late June or early July 2010. This will allow the preliminary results of the exercise to be considered for presentation at the IASC 77th WG, as well as by the Task Force.
15. The review process will be coordinated by the Task Force, which includes members of the IASC substantively engaged in improving information management within the cluster approach. The review process will also be inclusive of IASC members not directly engaged in the work of the Task Force. The proposed process would consist of the following steps:
 - a. **‘Naming Workshop’**: At a non-UN venue in Geneva (such as the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue) conduct a facilitated half-day workshop to identify a short-list of suitable and available names. The facilitators for the event would be humanitarian practitioners that have not been previously engaged in the deliberations regarding the naming of the inter-agency site. The workshop would be open to representatives of the broad IASC membership, including cluster/sector leads and members. Activities could include:
 - i. Brainstorm possible names: i.e. the workshop participants spontaneously share ideas for the brand name without critiquing the merits of each suggestion.
 - ii. Short-list names: i.e. based against the agreed criteria, identify a preliminary short-list of possible names for further consideration.
 - iii. Domain availability: i.e. check to see if the preliminary short-list of names are available (i.e. not already in use).
 - iv. Register domains: i.e. register the short-list of names to prevent interested parties from purchasing the site names.
 - b. **‘Naming Poll’**: Conduct an on-line poll – through the IASC and cluster/sector leads – to gauge the support of each name within the humanitarian community (disaggregated by organization and gender).
 - c. **‘Decision Event’**: The Task Force submits to the IASC WG – in person or electronically – recommendations for the naming of the inter-agency platform based on the Branding Workshop and Branding Poll. The WG selects a name for the site, taking into account the branding process exercise.

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