Writing for Public Comment

Wrap Up Session!

April 20, 2018
“Decisions at ICANN are made by people who show up. People who scream most loudly.”

- Kathy Kleiman
“Decisions at ICANN are made by people who show up. People who scream most loudly.”

- Kathy Kleiman
Writing for Public Comment
First Session
February 21, 23 2018
Communicate Effectively

- Speaking
- Listening
- Writing

NCUC Noncommercial Users Constituency
Communicate Effectively

- Verbally communicate ideas
- Listen and comprehend
- Summarize in writing
Public Comment Process

Most effective way for members to participate in ICANN policy development
Prepare members to collaborate towards developing a succinct, coherent response to issues raised during a Policy Development Process
Reasons You Write

- Developing writing skills develops confidence
- Broadens pool of contributors
- Diversity and new ideas
- Stronger voice
Reasons You Write

- Opportunity to build NCUC through constituent feedback
- Share diverse opinions as first step towards collaboration
Opportunity to engage outside of ICANN as a member of ICANN community
Writing for Public Comment

NCUC
Noncommercial Users Constituency
Writing for Public Comment

Vast differences in:
- Thought Process
- Structure
- Clarity
- Message delivery
- Effectiveness
Plan Your Comment

- Identify the issue
- Determine specific areas of concern
- Limit your concerns
“Do only what is necessary to convey what is essential. Carefully eliminate elements that distract from the essential whole, elements that obstruct and obscure...
…clutter, bulk, and erudition confuse perception and stifle comprehension, whereas simplicity allows clear and direct attention.” - Richard Powell
Plan Your Comment

- Develop your reasoning, research support for your claims and evidence
- Determine how your position would make the policy better
- Reach consensus on the message
Structure Your Comment

- Address specific group or individual
- State the issue and your position on it
- Explain why your constituency is uniquely qualified to comment
Structure Your Comment

- Describe how your constituents would be affected
- Suggest your alternative
- Explain how your position improves the policy
- Close with a compelling summary and a Call to Action
Burj Khalifa
Can You Pass the Elevator Test?
“If I had more time, I would have written a shorter letter.”

- Blaise Pascal
  Mathematician and Philosopher
Write Your Comment

Remember!
- Be Respectful
- Be Direct
- Be Convincing
- Be Brief
Paragraph #1
- Identify yourself
- State the issue and your objection
- Recognize the work of volunteers
Write Your Comment

Paragraph #2

- Support your objection with reason and evidence
- Explain why you or your constituency is qualified to comment on this issue
Paragraph #3

- Connect to the people you represent
- How will they be affected?
- Distinguish your comment from others
Write Your Comment

Paragraph #4

- Propose your alternative solution with a Plan of Action
- List key indicators of success
- Present a timeline to monitor success
Paragraph #5
- Be compelling in your summation
- Express appreciation to the policy makers
- Urge a Call to Action on your alternative solution
Small Group Collaboration
Deconstructing the Comment
Deconstructing the Comment

2009 Letter to ICANN Board of Directors

“…to correct problems with the NCSG Charter.”

150 NCUC individuals and organizational members
Deconstructing the Comment

“very struck by how emotionally charged”

“very long to convey the message”

“language a bit too offensive”

“direct but still respectful and balanced”
Reassembling the Comment

- Consolidate the message
- Adjust the tone
- Expedite its delivery
Narrowing the Focus

FY 19 Operating Plan and Budget
Narrowing the Focus

- Constituency
- Travel
- Crop Program
- Next Gen
- GDRP
- Language Services
- GSE
- Reserve Funds
- Staff Allocations
Narrowing the Focus

Choose one issue from the document as your focus.

Use any of the research to structure and support your comment.
Individual Comments

- dot Amazon
- Name Collision
- Meeting Strategy
- Jurisdictional Immunity
- GDRP Effect on Asia
- Statistical Analysis of DNS Abuse in new gTLDs
So What Did We Learn?
“Lack of vocabulary comes across as a problem for me…but also I tend to structure all my positions in English just so I don't get lost in the translation.””
“It’s easy to write both in English and Arabic. For me it’s more about being able to translate whatever I write and read in English here to Arabic to the people back home, for instance, with all those technical terms that are there.”
“The way you structure the sentence in your language, or in other languages you work, is different from the way you structure them in English.”
Language & Translation

“This is something I have just started to pay attention to a couple of years ago. But it’s a game changer because then you see that your texts start to be a little bit more clear.”
So What Did We Learn?
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- Five-Paragraph Template
So What Did We Learn?

- Five-Paragraph Template
- One-Page Comment
So What Did We Learn?

- Five-Paragraph Template
- One-Page Comment
- Face to Face Collaboration
Writing for Public Comment
Wrap Up Session!
April 20, 2018
By Garr Reynolds

By Brenda Ueland
Thank You!

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