

37th IEC Conference, Bucharest 2011

WORKSHOP

WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO USE NEW TECHNOLOGY TO PROMOTE IPA?

This year at the 37th IEC in Bucharest the PEB suggested holding a workshop for the delegates and observers, asking them to discuss the role of new technology in our organisation's life.

All 135 participants were placed in 9 groups according to their indicated language knowledge. Six English, one German, one French and one Spanish group were formed with 9 leaders.

We handed out a flyer to each participant to monitor the type of communication with IPA members in their own sections. We collected these flyers and evaluated the results. 55 sections were involved in this 'survey'.

Common consensus: No size fits all.

Our aim is to communicate with our members as often as possible: keeping them informed of ongoing activities, events, visitors, meetings. We all agreed on the fact that all available means within IPA and the police service should be used to communicate our message and news. Traditional means of communication are waning due to cost of postage and time involved. BUT it is still very necessary not to alienate or exclude any grouping within our association who may not be familiar with or have access to newer technology (i.e. maybe our older member).

E-mail communication is most common. Some Sections use e-mails all of the time and maybe one regular post (snail mail) per year. Internal e-mail is popular within the police service. Some police authorities allow access to all police e-mails addresses through IPA.

A Section's Webpage is a crucial area of communication. We can create news groups, such as groups who want to be informed about cultural events or sports events.

The importance of up-to-date information on the site was emphasised by all. Old or outdated material can and does, have a very negative effect and will not prompt revisits by our membership.

One suggestion from the groups was to look at easier types of translation technology and to review the current four official languages.

The Website competition was thought to be a good idea and one suggestion was that the ICC should host a Webmasters conference for all sections so that best value, improvements and ideas can be discussed.

New ways of communication include Facebook (FB). Some Sections have set up FB groups. In some countries officers are not allowed to set up Facebook with any mention of police, but most of the police forces use social networks as a platform for communication.

LinkedIn has been found successful in communicating amongst the higher ranks of our police authorities.

A suggestion was that perhaps either the IP or the IAC create a Twitter page and tweet IPA business and updates on that.

It seems no-one is using RSS feeds but we should look into this.

Sections are invited to visit www.qrsolutions.ie and learn of the uses and advantages of this new advertising tool and while on the site generate their own QR Code for FREE. The QR Code can be printed in Section magazine or flier, directing the reader (scanner) to the Section's Web address; email; phone; events; houses etc... . Many of our members, particularly our younger members, own "Smart phones" and will find scanning the IPA QR Code a convenient and trouble-free way of keeping themselves informed of IPA business and follow-up enquiries or questions ... all through their one stop visit via their Smart phone. Sections are invited and encouraged to investigate this system and use it to the advantage of IPA.

If we want to promote IPA, we will have to be in the front-line with relevant materials, language, and means that enable us to communicate with young police officers, young recruits, police academy, police units and more. Relevant language is that used by young police officers: social networks, YouTube, Internet. If IPA is not there, we do not exist for them.

The new media is: relevant, quick, interactive, and controllable.

Security: As Police officials we must use new media in a responsible manner. We must be educated in security systems to avoid difficulties for the police.

You can control and use wisely any social network. You control and monitor the data. If there is a problem, delete it.

We spoke about the possibility of having a database of experts in various fields, e.g. police dogs, international policing but this requires a necessary level of security on the website. Log in and so on, but it could be used.

Group Nine was of that opinion that in the first instance, potential members needed to be exposed to IPA in some other form prior to them utilising electronic or social media to discover more about IPA. It was believed that the most effective way of exposure was through:

- *Promotional visits to Police Academies*
- *Sponsorship of policing events*
- *Advertising of IPA website*
- *Distribution of promotional advertising material*
- *Personal contact with IPA members (word of mouth)*

We should provide a period of coexistence between traditional and new communication technologies, long enough to get:

- ✓ All email addresses through respective national sections (using a promotional campaign in the respective web sites and newsletters).
- ✓ Help to those sections which do not have web site (with the help of other national sections).
- ✓ Identify and promote at least one social network to be used by IPA members and official web sites (Facebook?).
- ✓ Promote digital discussion forums.
- ✓ Introduce the IPA through digital encyclopedias such as Wikipedia. This case would be more work for our webmaster.
- ✓ Formation in new technologies. Especially in using new security issues around technologies (perhaps Gimborn could plan online training through the net?).
- ✓ Promoting links with the various committees: ERC- IPC-ICC-IIC-ISC), reporting past and future events (international and national website level)

IN CONCLUSION

- ✓ New technologies have the potential to accelerate IPA development.
- ✓ Processes involved include “creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings.”
- ✓ Frequently involves enduring relationships between partners.
- ✓ A main objective to use new technology, promoting IPA, is to create customer value (our members).