LOBBYING

Why contact with governments (and the people) isn't evil

James Forrester & Philippe Beaudette (in our personal capacities)

Image:Capitol_Building_Full_View.jpg, by [[User:Noclip]]; public domain

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WHO WE ARE
(... And Why You Should Listen)

James Forrester

6 years as a UK government Civil Servant

My policy areas were lobbied via Ministers, my bosses, and even directly to me.

This was by a variety of organisations, not all of whom share in the goals of the Wikimedia movement.

Philippe Beaudette

Formerly a paid political staffer, working with state and federal campaigns to get candidates elected.

Also was a lobbyist: worked on issues relevant to social change organizations. Lobbied from the "unpopular" side in a very conservative mid-US state, where the only "carrots" available were our sincere thanks.

WHAT DO WE MEAN?

- Legislative (**laws**)

  - New ('it should be legal/illegal to do <X>')

  - Exceptions/exemptions ('it should differ for <Y>')

  - Scrapping existing ones ('it shouldn't be legislated')

  - Long-lasting but limited to one jurisdiction, hard to achieve, and can have unintended consequences

*Image: The House of Commons, 1833 by Sir George Hayter.jpg, uploaded by [[User: Dcoetzee]]; public domain ***

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WHAT DO WE MEAN?

- Executive (**power**)

  - Speaking to Ministers, Civil Servants, *etc.*

  - Can get changes in action (executive direction), policy (white papers), possibly larger cultural shifts

  - Easy and highly-visible, but can be short-term (*e.g.* only lasts one administration) and easily reversible.

Image: IMG_0167_-_Wien_-_Parlament.JPG, by [[User:Thisisbossi]]; CC-BY-SA 2.5

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WHAT DO WE MEAN?

- Judicial (**courts**)

  - Fight laws/decisions in court

  - Can get major changes, but can also prompt retaliatory action making things worse

  - Hugely expensive and risky; limited to single jurisdictions and takes many years

WHAT DO WE MEAN?

- Public (**movement**)

  - Convincing the public of how things should be

  - Changes in public opinion have knock-on effects

  - Can also encourage them to lobby in their area

  - This is much more our style! (But slower and less "focussed" than other forms.)

Image: Washington crowd mobs the White House Pickets. An indignant crowd of real Americans . . . - NARA - 533780.tif; uploaded by NARA; public domain

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STRATEGY

Image:Wikimedia Strategic Planning logo (3).svg, by MZMcBride; public domain

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STRATEGY
What Do We Want To Achieve?

- Able to create our content

- Able to distribute our content

- Able to attract new contributors

- Able to support existing contributors

- Able to get rid of bad contributors

- Able to raise funds to support this

- Able to spend funds to support this

- Engage others to open up their content

- Engage governments so to do

- Take on new open content projects

- Split projects that'd be better elsewhere

- *Do whatever we think of next! ;-)*

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STRATEGY
What We've Done To Date

Tactic	*Has this been a success?*
• Small-scale involvement with executive branches	• Maybe; some excellent examples - e.g. in the GLAM sector, or having joint events
• Rare large-scale protests aimed at public/legislators - itwiki, ruwiki, enwiki	• Very significant use of our social capital; seemed to work for enwiki, itwiki so far
• Occasional *amicus* briefs for legal cases where we have an interest in the result	• Yes? But we're not focussed on this, it can be very costly and time-consuming

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LOBBYING STRATEGY
-- Disclaimer --

- Any and all lobbying activity may have implications for the movement. The legal issues here aren't simple: don't think a bit of reading can get you an understanding!

- WMF is restricted as to how much it can engage in lobbying, and you may be putting the Foundation (and therefore the projects) in grave jeopardy.

- Always, always, always run potential activity in this area by the Foundation's Legal and Community Advocacy team.

- There may be a project already running that you don't know about - in that case, join forces!

LOBBYING STRATEGY
A Brief Suggestion

- All lobbying should be public if possible

Where this would be problematic, we should be open about our involvement and publish our input as soon as possible.

- For each issue, we should have a plan

This should show who in the movement is doing what, and invite community input at all stages (except where impractical).

- To avoid wasting effort and donor funds we should not expend resources unless it is a priority

This means having (and sticking to) a prioritised list of movement-wide objectives…

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LOBBYING STRATEGY
Suggested Priorities - Issues Which...

1.… are critical to our current activities

libel protection for Wikimedia bodies; IP waivers; patents related to software

2.… affect our readers/users/community

scope and reforms of IP; nature of charitable purposes; trademark protections

3.… we would love to see happen

Internet as a "human right"; governmental transparency; funding for cultural bodies

LOBBYING STRATEGY
What Actions Could We Take?

"Sign on" to publicly endorse a project.

The use of the brand/marks to support a project.

Use the sites to make the point (ie, Blackout).

Partner with other organizations to create a movement.

Monetary support.

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LET'S GET TO WORK!

Image:Foresters discussing tactics at Buck Mtn-Oregon-1967.jpg, by US Forest Service; public domain

QUESTIONS?