

A Document Ethnography of Sitreps

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The Ethnography Continuum

Experience-intensive

Information-intensive

OCHA in the field

OCHA sitreps

"It depends on the personality"

"Sitreps represent the consensus of the humanitarian actors on the nature of the emergency"

Sitrep Anthropology

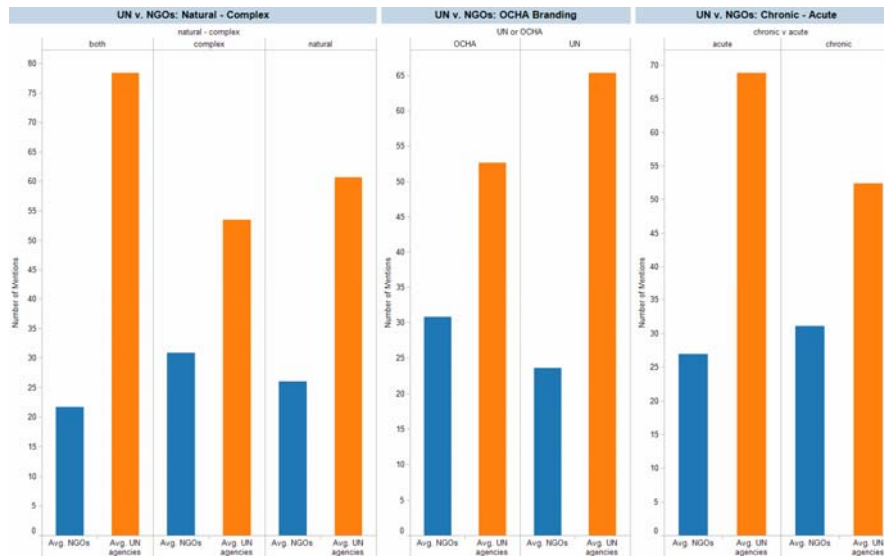
- Attempts to observe their use not very successful
- So we used sitreps as “informants” to triangulate what we were finding out in interviews

Sitrep Anthropology

- For example: sitreps are supposed to represent UN agencies *and* NGOs responding to the emergency.

Do they?

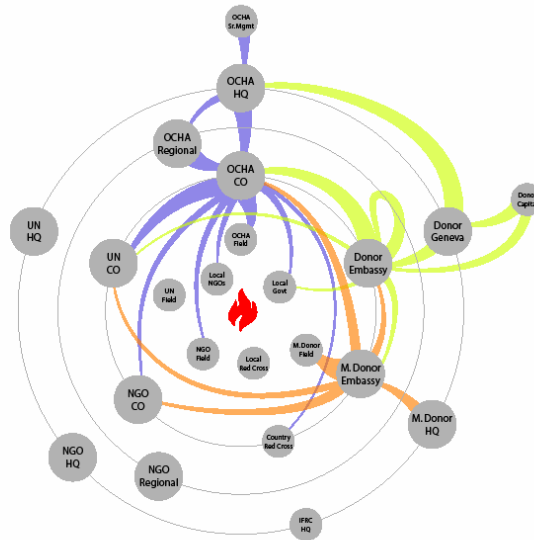
Sitrep Anthropology



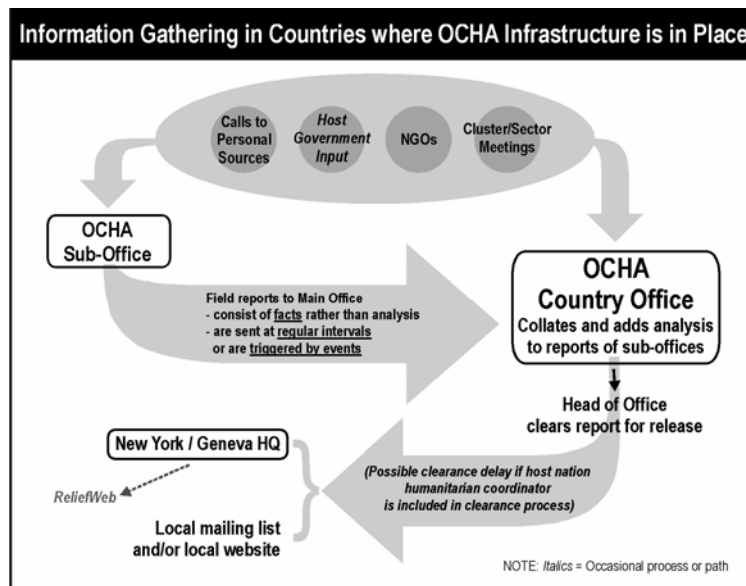
Staple Yourself to a Sitrep

- Understanding the process behind sitreps was essential to find the various failure points
- No manuals, procedures, or organizational chart to guide us
- So we asked everybody, and triangulated

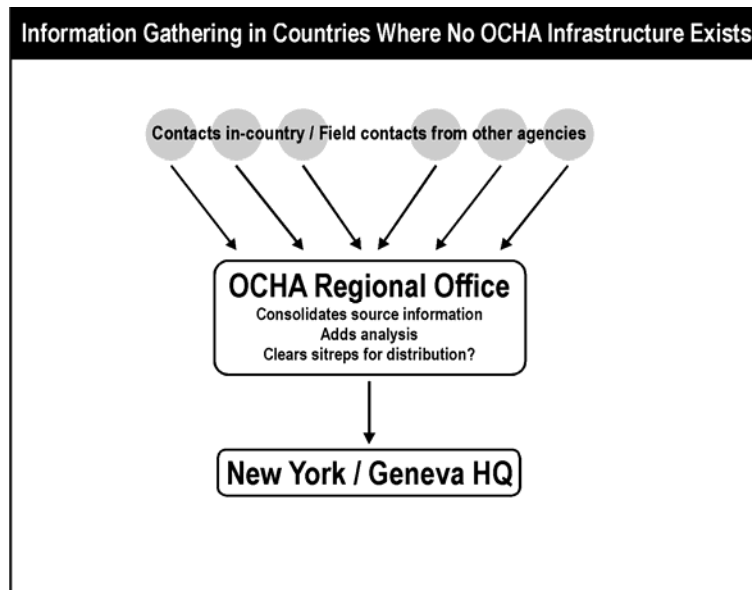
Staple Yourself to a Sitrep



Staple Yourself to a Sitrep



Staple Yourself to a Sitrep



Sitrep Domain Info Model

- Main issues in defining sitrep domain:
 - Too many documents call themselves sitreps when they are very different among themselves; are there rules that people are tacitly following in naming 'real' and 'fake' sitreps?
 - Are there tacit categories that indicate an informal template that people are following? Can we make them explicit?

Sitrep Domain Info Model

- Document analysis:
 - element harvesting
 - definition
 - consolidation

Sitrep Domain Info Model

DATE	DAYS COVERED	REGION	EMERGENCY	SITREP?	ALT NAME	CHRONIC OR ACUTE
March 19	1	Kazakhstan	natural	Y	-	acute
March 7-17	10	Colombia	complex	Y	humanitarian situation report	chronic
March 20	1	Somalia	complex	Y	-	chronic
March 21	doesn't say	Albania	natural	Y	-	acute
March 20	doesn't say	Southern Africa	natural	Y	-	acute
March 25?	doesn't say	Bolivia	natural	Y	-	acute
March 26	doesn't say	Albania	natural	Y	-	acute
March 24-28	5	Zimbabwe	complex	Y	weekly situation report	acute
March 27	1	Ethiopia	natural	Y	-	acute
March 28	doesn't say	Southern Africa	natural	Y	-	acute
February 28	doesn't say	Madagascar	natural	Y	-	acute
April 1	doesn't say	Tajikistan	natural	Y	-	acute
April 2	doesn't say	Iraq	complex	Y	humanitarian situation report	chronic
April 1	doesn't say	Ecuador	natural	Y	-	acute
April 3	31	West Africa	both	Y	monthly situation report	chronic
March 29 - April 4	7	Zimbabwe	complex	Y	weekly situation report	acute
April 10	doesn't say	Southern Africa	natural	Y	-	acute
April 11	doesn't say	Somalia	complex	Y	-	chronic
March 1 - 31	31	Uganda	complex	Y	humanitarian situation report	chronic
no date	doesn't say	doesn't say	natural	Y	-	acute
April 15	doesn't say	Baghdad	complex	Y	-	chronic
April 16	doesn't say	RDC	natural	Y	rapport de situation	acute
April 16	doesn't say	Tajikistan	natural	Y	-	acute
April 18	doesn't say	Somalia	complex	Y	-	chronic
April 17	doesn't say	Gaza	complex	Y	humanitarian situation report	chronic
April 20	14	Ecuador	natural	Y	-	acute
April 23	doesn't say	Gaza	complex	Y	-	acute
April 5 - 21	17	Colombia	complex	Y	humanitarian situation report	chronic
April 16 - 25	10	Somalia	complex	Y	-	chronic

Sitrep Domain Info Model

Category	Actual name	# of docs
WEEKLY	weekly humanitarian news	5
	protection of civilians weekly report	5
	weekly bulletin	4
	humanitarian action weekly bulletin	4
	weekly situation report	2
	weekly note on emergencies	1
	weekly information bulletin	1
FORTNIGHTLY	situation humanitaire - rapport hebdomadaire	4
	fortnightly situation overview	3
	bulletin d'information hebdomadaire	3
MONTHLY	monthly situation report	1
	monthly cluster report	1
HUMANITARIAN	situation humanitaire	15
	humanitarian update	5
	humanitarian situation report	5
	humanitarian situation update	3
	humanitarian fact sheet	2
	humanitarian bulletin	1
	humanitarian overview	1
	humanitarian action snapshot report	1
	action humanitaire: fait et chiffres	1
	regional humanitarian update	1
VARIOUS	joint factsheet	1
	update on insecurity	1
	socio-economic fact sheet	1
	pastoralist voices	1
	protection of civilians summary data tables	1
	implementation of the agreement on movement and access	1
	ERF and NGO micro-grants	1

Sitrep Domain Info Model

SITUATION	# of instances	COMMENTS
highlights	xxxxxxxxx	often in a separate box
situation overview	xxxxxxxxx	
situation update	x	
situation	xxxx	
situation analysis	x	
key observations	xx	
significant developments	x	
main developments	xxxx	
context	xxxxx	
impact	x	
summary	x	
preliminary information	x	
RESPONSE		
activities	x	
national response	xxxxxxx	sometimes overview, sometimes
international response	xxxxxxx	by agency or sector
UN response	x	
NGOs response	x	
resource mobilization	x	
situation per department	xxx	
cluster/sector response	xx	
humanitarian situation	xx	
update on humanitarian activities	x	
humanitarian response	x	
humanitarian impact	x	very similar to response by clus
access and security	xx	
socio-political and security situation	x	
headers specific to the situation		(fuel supply, energy crisis, power supply, early reco)

Sitrep Domain Info Model

- Vocabulary problem!
 - Is *highlight* the same as *situation overview* and *situation update*?
 - Sometimes yes, sometimes now
 - Find the most common usage, and encode it as a rule

Sitrep Domain Info Model

End result: a Word template very similar to the current one

but

With explicit common rules, common definition, and common names