Jorma Kuopus

Towards electronic administration

Introduction

The purpose of and methods of operation adopted in Finnish oversight of legality have established themselves in the past 90 years. The revisions of the fundamental rights provisions in the Constitution that were carried through in 1995 and 1999 have added sturdiness to the foundation of norms on which activities are conducted. The reforms steer oversight of legality more clearly in the direction of implementing the demands of good administration and people's fundamental and human rights. The Ombudsman's work has the aim of strengthening the rule of law and safeguarding fundamental and human rights.

The greater the impact of the Ombudsman's efforts, the more successful she will be in her task. The effectiveness of oversight of legality is more forward-oriented than backward-looking and punitive. Thus the deeper significance and influence of oversight of legality lie elsewhere than in bringing numerous prosecutions.

Oversight of legality includes, naturally, both the overseer and those who are the subjects of oversight. The overseer him- or herself has been the subject of much discussion and writing in various connections – including this publication. New, and indeed surprising, perspectives on the overseen are created when the evolution of the real world in the organisations that are the focus of oversight and among their personnel is examined and evaluated. Also complainants have networked as users of social media.

It became clear already when the 2002 Parliamentary Ombudsman Act was coming onto the statute book that the subjects of oversight include not only authorities, but also others. Whether or not a person or an organisation is subject to the Ombudsman's oversight can sometimes be difficult to determine in practice, since the concept of a public task and new ways of organising services for citizens along with privatisation pose increasing challenges.

The profound transformation that has taken place in administration includes the information technology that the public sector uses, growing data management as well as the ICT law that regulates all of this information and communication technology. I shall now go on to examine the long development towards electronic administration and electronic transaction services, which oversight of legality should examine from the perspective of its own "strict compliance with law" perspective and that of the demands that clients of administration make.

Then, to conclude, the reader will probably find it interesting to learn how the Ombudsman and her staff have themselves familiarised themselves with information technology and use it in their work.

Changing electronic administration and regulation of it

Finnish public administration has been evolving towards being electronic in character for half a century now. This technicalisation has changed also regulation of the sector in especially mass administration, above all taxation as well as in social insurance and social welfare matters, and in its operating methods. Even when the old Administrative Procedure Act was replaced with a new one, a central starting point was the rapid development of information technology in Finland. The use of electronic means of communication in official actions had to be permitted in the new legislation.

Public administration has been guided in various ways. Before the nineteen sixties era of typewriters, a sufficient objective for administration was that the law was complied with scrupulously in the manner of K.J. Ståhlberg and Veli Merikoski. Then, compliance with the law meant carrying out the obligations of official actions, such as good administration. The style and demands have changed in the 50 years since then. Government offices are "accounting offices", "management-by-results offices" or "employer/Vhs (state administration standard) offices", when the organisation functions as the management system in public administration. Nowadays, management by standards/norms and information guidance are spoken of even in data management. It is, however, true that in recent times information guidance has come in for criticism for inefficiency in, for example, the educational sector.

Modern ICT law is founded on a mixed regulation model. It includes legally binding regulation, soft law-type self- and co-regulation models, such as sector-specific practices and the VAHTI (an acronym for Government Information Security Management Board) guidelines as well as other guidelines that are not strictly binding in the legal sense. Those that are significant in practice are the State's concern-type centralised IT guidance (JulkIT), with JHS (pub-

lic administration standard) recommendations (such as JHS 129) and, in the sector of data management, the VAHTI guidelines. All in all, there are over 150 sets of national recommendations and guidelines of this kind. A common administrative and operational model has also been developed for the State and municipalities' joint information system services.

At the same time, the coverage of legislative provisions has grown since Finland's accession to membership of the European Union in 1995 (European administrative law). Yet traditional provisions of administrative and criminal law have not retained a particularly significant numerical share in information technology objectives and plans, even though the bindingness and guidance effect of these laws are greater in a legal review.

Ensuring the reliability of contracts and contractual practices (such as the IT2010 terms of contract) and of contractual partners as well as the importance of open tendering processes are great everywhere in the public sector's practical data management. The Ministry of Finance decided on 19.8.2009 that telecommunications and telephone traffic projects would be ordered within the State administration to be put up for tender as a joint project. The aim is that centralising procurement and subjecting contracts to a new round of tendering will enable costs to be reduced by about 15–20% from their present level. The objective of cutting costs is typical for present-day multi-channel administration with scarce resources.

Yet, computer-assisted and even automated decision making must meet the requirements of being on a statutory basis, accountability for official actions when automated services are availed of as well as protection of confidentiality (the expectations of clients of administration) and other expectations with regard to legal remedies in the process of dealing with an administrative matter. Electronification of administration is changing the regulations that govern functions, processes (such as complaints made by e-mail), procedures (such as hearing testimony in courts via electronic channels) as well as the way in which public administrative services are produced (such as electronic self-service).

The function of fundamental rights is to serve as a cord that links together various sectors of law in a network of new sectors and traditional ones that transcend boundaries, including ICT law. The fundamental values of also traditional administrative law are protection of the weaker, definition of the legal limits of public power and the subordination of administrative actions to the law.

These fundamental values should be regarded as the starting point in regulation and oversight of electronic administration. The fragmented nature of regulation and the many forms that it assumes have led to it being manifestly ineffectual in reality. This is being added to by

the often technical and otherwise narrow competence background of skilled personnel in the IT sector. They often adopt the view that excessively detailed and mandatory guidance through norms is a rigid model in an integrated IT environment. However, the need to predict problems and take preventive action increases when the object is to achieve solutions that work well from the perspective of individuals and society.

Organisation of electronic administration and personnel in the public sector

Automation of the public administration operational chain – administrative procedures – is changing the models that the authorities have traditionally followed in their activities. The evolution towards electronic administration is shaping the organisation of administration at the same time. Dependence on the private sector and its IT-related know-how is inevitably increasing. What is meant by "electronic administration" is the use of information and communication technology in public administration. It includes:

- electronic transaction services
- electronic work flow management systems
- operative basic and background systems
- data networks linking IT components as well as
- users of information systems and services inside and outside the administrative sector.

Thus electronic administration is official activities in which these building blocks of electronic administration are used in various administrative processes.

Matters that have been identified as problems in development of information technology are fragmented systems that are difficult to integrate (many storage places for data and fragmented search services) as well as multiply overlapping and manual work (many passwords and many roles of users). From the perspective of public management, following the work situation and forming an overall picture have often been awkward. Indeed, this has not even always been set as an objective in ministry-led result negotiations. To add efficiency to the use of shared data resources, minimise multiple data collection and facilitate processes that transcend sectors of administration, the IT and electronic communications environment should be made into one that is uniform, secure and interoperable both technically and in terms of its data content. Shared IT services, such as an identification service, a transaction account and a service platform, bring authorities clear financial savings in their efforts to increase the efficiency of administration and contribute to the development of client services

proper. Better use than earlier of basic databases (basic registers) and increasing joint use of data make it possible to take care of public services more productively.

The phrase "IT activities" is often used in such a way that it covers the coordination, management, definition, planning, implementation and maintenance of information technology within an organisation. The new State IT Service Centre (VIP) and the State Treasury are key actors in this field. However, the activities of VIP, which are guided by the market, are not subject to the same binding requirements as was the case with the State Computer Centre (VTKK), which was a State-owned commercial enterprise, and were enshrined in the legislation on that body.

Under Section 119 of the Constitution, an agency or institution is an organisation that has been created to take care of one or several particular tasks of the State. If the tasks that an agency or institution performs involve the exercise of public power, those tasks and the powers of the body performing them must be laid down in an Act. In other cases, an agency or institution can be established through a Decree.

Under the current regulations governing it, the State Treasury has been allowed since 23.5.2009 to produce electronic support services, as ordered in a Decree, for transactions and administration within the public sector. The operative production and management of shared IT solutions for public administration are organised in other respects in such a way that responsibility for their procurement, inauguration and maintenance resides with a joint organisation that has the requisite statutory powers. The preparatory work began in summer 2009 and the solution that will be developed is due to be in operation by 2011. The current regulation does not make it possible for VIP to be the exclusive provider of services, for which reason municipalities will probably continue to have to invite tenders for their own IT projects, unless the legislation is revised.

Both a dearth of resources in public administration and ageing and retiring public servants are increasing the perceived need to take care of public administrative tasks as simply and efficiently as possible and at moderate cost. The general objectives that the State Treasury has set for modernising administration is that guidance relations and structures are made clear and uniform from the perspective of financial management, personnel administration and management by results (e.g. theOhma administrative management project 19.9.2005). Other factors in the background to strategic choices include an overhaul of the State's information management system, preparatory work for the State's IT strategy, decisions-in-principle by the Government (including one dated 6.3.2009) as well as the State Administration Productivity Programme.

Of the 14 sectors of administration in Finland, 1 are ministries. The other three are the Office of the Prime Minister, the Office of the President of the Republic and the Eduskunta. The clear role that the ministries have in principle played is that of directing their respective spheres of administration. A ministry should be a guiding unit that concentrates on strategic questions and sets the objectives and policies that the administrative bodies subordinate to it are to implement. Ministries render reports on the results achieved within their own sectors, but otherwise there are no statutory obligations on the administrative level with respect to financial management. By "sector of administration" is meant a ministry and the organisation (agencies, institutions, commercial bodies) operating in subordination to it. A problem of the present organisational structure, at least in resource guidance, is that the responsibilities of various instances are unclear.

It would appear, however, that the onward march of IT in the public sector has not led to a significant drop in the number of public servants. Nevertheless, the number of State civil servants (120,931 according to the 2008 statistics) is moderately declining as a result of the productivity programme for the public sector. A university reform to take effect at the beginning of 2010 is likely to affect the number of civil servants in that the number of State employees receiving their salaries through the budget will probably fall to below 90,000. No significant change can be anticipated on the municipal side, either, where the number of employees in 2007 was still 424,000 – unless the economic recession of 2008–10 forces cuts in the municipalities, which will themselves decline in number in 2010.

The special status of public servants hinges on their employment relationship under public law, their tenure of an official post. According to the principle of administration by public servants that is expressed in Section 124 of the Constitution, the exercise of public power should not, a priori, be entrusted to any person other than one holding an official post with a public body. The special position of a public servant includes greater responsibility than others bear for errors in the performance of their official duties, i.e. official accountability, which is founded in the Constitution. The reason presented for responsibility of this kind is that public servants exercise public power. In addition to that, public servants are required to demonstrate impartiality and behave in a manner commensurate with their status and tasks.

The state sector is still the biggest employer of experts on norm guidance, lawyers. About a half of all law graduates are on its payroll, most of them working within the judicial system. All in all, there were about 12,000 lawyers in the workforce in August 2007, with about 3,400 (28%) in the judicial system and 2,600 or so (22%) elsewhere in the state administration.

Oversight-of legality emphases in electronic administration

New problematic questions relating to the focuses of oversight of legality and its impacts are awaiting resolution. After all of the changes, what will be left in electronic administration as the playing field for the Ombudsman's oversight: intervention in the IT infrastructure or serving citizen clients in accordance with good administration? In the same way it can be asked whether flawed processes will be criticised or the individual public servants that have been participants in them (Section 118 of the Constitution). Collective accountability has, however, been adopted in criminal law and the criminal responsibility of a legal person in Chapter 32 of the Penal Code.

The problem of focusing oversight of legality is by no means new in public administration that uses information technology, although the recent development with projects like SADe (Electronic Transactions and Democracy) have made it even more topical than it earlier was.

Former Deputy-Ombudsman Pirkko K. Koskinen reflected as long ago as 1989 in an article titled "The Ombudsman in a regenerating society" (Artikla r.y.) that the staff at the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman had been trained in information technology and that significant hardware procurements had been made in the same year. She believed that in the future at least some inspections would have to be focused in a new way. When administration that used information technology was inspected, it would be purposeful to begin the checks where the programmes were devised, i.e. in the central administration, and devote less attention to local administration. In her view, however, no technical aid substitutes entirely for inspections in situ as well. She also predicted that expanding use of electronic data processing would require new kinds of knowledge and abilities on the part of inspectors. More time than in the past would have to be devoted to training.

Dr. Koskinen's stances were based in part on a study that I had done for the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman. The subject of the doctoral dissertation that I presented at the University of Helsinki in spring 1988 was the Tax Administration's EDP-related problems and the legal remedies available to persons liable for tax. My research focused on the delays in receipt of tax rebates that introduction of the tax office's new computer system had caused (inter alia, decision 3332/80 by the Ombudsman). Decisions by the Ombudsman and especially the Deputy-Ombudsmen as well as by the Office of the Chancellor of Justice relating to the use of electronic data processing, information technology and communications technology as well as the problems arising from this use in public administration go back to as long ago as the latter half of the 1980s.

All in all, positions of this kind were adopted in about a hundred complaint cases and in some matters investigated on the Ombudsman's own initiative in the period 2001–08. Shortcomings and failures in the public sector's information systems have been intervened in through decisions of both the Ombudsman and the Chancellor of Justice, but also reforms that reinforce fundamental rights, such as the principle of publicity and the use of one's own language in administration, have been noted.

It is interesting that in the Ombudsman's decisions also the JHS (public administration) recommendations have been referred to on four occasions, but only alongside interpretation of fundamental rights and good administrative practice. Only on fairly rare occasions has the Ombudsman said anything in advance about extensive public-sector EDP projects that were in the pipeline (e.g., 656/02, 186/04, 259/05 and 3802/07).

The problems that have manifested themselves in the authorities' information systems have been found, when the matter was examined in the light of the relevant technology, to result from incomplete definition, inadequate quality assurance, a lack of competence demonstrated in implementation of the system, flaws in the training given end-users, a failure of risk management, a failure to manage data security properly, use of incomplete software as well as problems relating to competence in the procurement of software. IT problems accumulate in the implementation stage of administrative reform. What can result is an information system that is, evaluated also from a legal perspective, conducive to jeopardising implementation of good administration and the individual's legal security. The causes of failures of extensive IT reforms are often excessively tight timetables and a dearth of personnel resources in the restructured administration as well as inadequate evaluation from the point of view of clients.

The aim with the SADe (Electronic Transactions and Democracy) project is to promote electronic transaction of business in public administration so that by 2013 it covers all of the key services in this sector. This is how the objective with respect to electronic transactions and administration up to 2015 was defined in the final report on the project in January 2009: "Finland will have a networked public administration, in which administrative services are available through multiple channels and easily findable to support citizens' lives and companies in the various stages of their development. Citizens and companies will see public administration as a single and coherent totality." The national leadership's vision was also in other respects that electronic invoices would be sent to all and a citizen's transaction account would be created online in 2010. The university administration likewise has the aim that in 2010 the internal information network service will be a central and easy-to-use information, communications, interaction and work instrument, i.e. an electronic desk, for

students and faculty staff. The development is international, because also on the European Communities side the i2010 programme, of which electronic transactions are an essential component, has been drafted.

Looked at from the perspective of clients of administration, however, also the negative impacts of rationalisation benefits are associated with these objectives insofar as the physical distance to the points where the authorities envisaged within the Regional Administration Development Project, municipalities and also the police increases and centralised advisory services and familiarisation with matters that are only register-based may create a remoteness from local circumstances. Within the Pora I project to restructure the national organisation of the police, the services based on court districts were replaced with effect from 1.1.2009 with 29 new local police services. From the perspective of protection of privacy, it may be also an adverse development that the amount of personal data about clients of administration that is collected and networked is constantly growing. These data, some of a sensitive nature, are available to more and more instances and users through official networks. As the National Audit Office pointed out in a detailed statement in autumn 2008, a comprehensive and well-functioning system of identification and encryption solutions has so far not been made available for the use of authorities. In addition, electronic identification has lagged behind other technical development also on the client side, especially since the citizen certificate that was proposed as long ago as the mid-1990s has not gained favour. The present VETUMA (an acronym meaning identification and online payment service for citizens) practice, which is partly based on bank identification codes, appears on the basis of some complaints to prompt misgivings in the minds of citizens about private and public data being mixed together. Reforms aimed at developing identification practices are currently in the pipeline. It will be interesting to see what happens with the new mobile certificates and biometric identification data in passports.

The Virtu system (for identification of officials and management of rights of use) is planned to be implemented as a division of labour by means of which overlapping of maintenance of officials' user data in state offices will be reduced. The system would support the spread of the self-service principle in the state administration's internal information systems. It would also smoothe the way towards the introduction of strong identification, because it would offer a flexible path of transition towards the use of official certifiers. Obviously, new legislation on the use of these identifiers will be needed. This is already on the statute book with respect to e-identification and quality certificatesand on 16.6.2009 theEduskunta passed the Act on Strong Electronic Identification and Electronic Signatures, which entered into force on 1.9.2009.

Doing transactions in electronic administration is to a growing degree a long and complex information process. In such an operating environment of cooperation between numerous official instances, reconciling various fundamental rights, such as good administration and protection of privacy, with the economic pressures of administration can be problematic within the framework of Section 22 of the Constitution. Under Section 21, the demands of good administration are a part of protection under the law. As guarantees of good administration, an individual has the right, inter alia, to refer his or her case to a legally competent authority as well as the right to have the matter dealt with appropriately and expeditiously and without undue delay. The content of good administration has been left open in the Constitution, which is complemented elsewhere in legislation with the obligations imposed on authorities and individual rights.

The scant resources available for public administration and the way they are allocated inevitable come up for evaluation in oversight of legality. In particular the Ombudsman's inspection activities and the choice of the sites visited could be made more efficient through smoother cooperation with other instances that oversee electronic administration, such as the National Audit Office, the National Archives Service and the Office of the Data Protection Ombudsman. The Equality Committee appointed by the Ministry of Justice is already examining possibilities to develop cooperation between various human rights actors in matters to do with equality, gender equality and discrimination. However, Finland does not appear to have a need for a separate "publicity ombudsman" along the lines of the Information Commissioners who in certain English-speaking countries (the UK, Canada and Australia) work closely with the Data Protection Ombudsman and as part of that organisation (Switzerland). In any event, competence requirements relating to information technology or management of totalities will increase in oversight of legality.

The Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman's own data management

As I have already mentioned, information technology and office automation have been used in the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman for a fairly long time beginning in the late 1980s. The Office is a separate unit within the Eduskunta and receives assistance in IT-related affairs from the Eduskunta's information management personnel. However, under the Eduskunta's Data Management Policy 2008–2011, the separate administrative units (the State Audit Office and the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman) are responsible for developing their own core systems.

The systems and electronic databases that support the Ombudsman's issuance of decisions are, in addition to ordinary office, library and e-mail systems, its own electronic diary (inaugurated 1991, most recently modernised 2001), an electronic text archive in accordance with the Archive Regulations (contains several databases, inaugurated 2002) as well as the Ombudsman's web site and public text archive. However, researchers and others requesting information will still have to be served within the framework of a manual archive for a long time. Nevertheless, the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman has since 2006 been working with the Eduskunta's Data Management Office on preparations for a changeover to electronic desks and work-flow management and a preliminary study has been drafted to facilitate definition of the demands that an electronic work flow management system will be required to meet September.

The use of information technology is intended above all to facilitate the performance of oversight-of-legality work tasks expeditiously and to a high standard of quality. A revision of the relevant constitutional provisions in 1995 added responsibility for overseeing implementation of fundamental and human rights to the Ombudsman's tasks. The demands that this brought lengthened the times taken to deal with complaints. The challenges then were responded to by adding staff, developing work and operational methods and putting resources into training.

The response to growth in recent years has been to make handling of complaints more efficient by revising the work methods involved to make them more streamlined and speedy as well as increasing the input of the personnel who advise members of the public in investigating simpler matter. The number of complaints and other oversight-of-legality matters has continued to increase strongly.

Electronic transactions – in practice the ease with which complaints can be made by e-mail and the online complaint form - are a factor that has especially contributed to the growing number of complaint cases. However, problems associated with dependable encryption and official certifiers are a practical restraint on transacting business electronically. The number of matters arriving through traditional channels – sent by post, delivered in person or faxed – declined somewhat in 1997–2007. By contrast, the number of oversight-of-legality matters arriving by e-mail grew strongly. In 2008, nearly 43% of all matters arrived by the electronic route.

Numbers of complaints and other matters reaching the Ombudsman through traditional channels and by e-mail and overall number in 1998–2007

Year	*Traditionally*	*Electronically*	*Altogether*
1998	2,479	49	2,528
1999	2,559	147	2,708
2000	2,529	230	2,759
2001	2,730	336	3,066
2002	2,575	382	2,957
2003	2,403	473	2,876
2004	2,298	968	3,266
2005	2,501	1,234	3,735
2006	2,455	1,690	4,145
2007	2,302	1,467	3,769
2008	2,313	1,594	4,107

Clients are reminded on the Ombudsman's web site that there are security problems associated with the information network despite the efforts of the Eduskunta and the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman to ensure the security of the e-mail system. Thus it is not advisable to send matters that are required to be kept secret or are otherwise sensitive by ordinary e-mail, using the online form or as an attachment to it. It is expected that in the future the Ombudsman will place more sophisticated electronic services and a secure e-mail link at the disposal of citizens to facilitate handling of confidential matters.

Something that will have to be decided in planning the work flow management system is how the Office will respond to this challenge that practical needs and indeed also good information management practice poses. Will citizens be offered access to the Office's services through, for example, the transactions account built by the Ministry of Finance? Or will applications with the aid of which the Office can build its own electronic services be interfaced with the system, whereby the work flow management system will double as an electronic transactions platform?

At the moment, a client can make a complaint using the form provided on the web site or send one in by e-mail or use the form provided online to send feedback or make an enquiry. The functionality and user-friendliness of both forms were improved in 2008. In the prioritisation of IT development projects in the Office, pride of place has been given to integrated

systems, especially linking the electronic diary and the electronic text archive together and the work flow management associated with this.

Development needs

Hardly any room was accorded legal changes in the discourse on the information society even in the 1990s. Indeed, the view was even taken in some utopian scenarios that the legal profession would become more or less superfluous as bureaucracy and legal disputes were transferred to reliance on computers. Correspondingly, in the early stages of the Internet the idea of open information networks that also the public sector would avail itself of as a new operating environment unregulated by law clung to life for a long time.

In today's state governed under the rule of law, however, the trend is in a different direction. The number of matters that require regulation is growing and the scope of ICT law is expanding. This applies just as much to information networks as to their use for various purposes. The legislator generally responds to the regulatory needs that changes in society bring through individual revisions of regulations and legal provisions. Although it was proposed in Sweden as early as 2007, Internet service providers can not set about policing the web. In a state governed under the rule of law, it is not private companies that decide what is legal and what isn't. In a democracy, private companies do not look after investigation of crimes – nor dispense judgements.

In my own assessment, the content of oversight of legality is changing and the Ombudsman's reactions along with it. It would be appropriate to provide clients of administration who have suffered as a result of errors in electronic administrative processes with clear compensation in the same way as has long been done in Sweden within the framework of decisions by the Chancellor of Justice there. Already now, it has happened that the Ombudsman has recommended to an authority that it pay financial compensation to a client who has suffered as a result of an EDP error in administration. Ombudsman Riitta-Leena Paunio has already (in her commentary article in the 2005 annual report) dealt with the question of recompense for violations of fundamental rights. With respect to delays in administration, a recent development proposal drafted by the Ministry of Justice contains more detailed evaluations of four alternative models (protest about delay, referring delay to an administrative court, a formal complaint to the Ombudsman about delay and development of oversight of legality), devoting mainly no more than a mention to recompense. In general also, the legal remedies that exist in delay situations can not be deemed sufficiently effective from the perspective of the demands enshrined in Article 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Handling of complaint cases would be speeded up if the reports, statements and other documents that are needed in the process could be sent to the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman through electronic channels. In other respects, too, there would be a need in the future to develop oversight of legality that takes place online, even though the web sites of various authorities are already being used fairly extensively as information sources. It would be advisable at the same time to expand electronic transactions between the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman and authorities that are subject to oversight, with the proviso that the means of identification and encryption available create legal possibilities for this.

The matters that are looked at in the Ombudsman's inspection activities include the situation with respect to administration and the handling of other matters in the office, the backlog of cases, legislative amendments of topical interest, the personnel situation, complaints made about the office, the guidance by results of activities that the ministry in question does and the objectives it is intended to achieve, the quality goals set for activities, the organisation and changes in it as well as questions of the legal remedies and possibilities of appeal available to clients. Conducting inspection activities through an information network does, of course, have its own limitations, as the State Audit Office has likewise pointed out.

In any case, the use of so-called social media has increased among citizens, the media and complainants in virtual communities. The phrase "social media" has been defined as a process in which individuals and groups build shared meanings with the aid of contents, communities and network technologies. Associations formed to promote protection under the law, interest instances and citizen activists are already making extensive use of their web sites, blogs and Wikipedia, where they record decisions by also the Ombudsman for either appreciative or critical purposes. Only stances by the Ombudsman that are up to date and understandable can gain the support of also the Internet community.

Thus demands for expertise on the part of the overseers of legality and for oversight to be timely are growing.