

Effective Communications for Independent Fiscal Institutions

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Madrid, Spain



The Canadian Parliamentary Budget Office

- A legislative budget office accountable to the Canadian Parliament
 - Administratively housed within the Library of Parliament
 - CAD2.8 million annual budget with staff of 12-18
- Mandate includes independent analysis into the:
 - **National economy (≈USD1.825 trillion)**
 - **Estimates/appropriations (≈USD250 billion),**
 - **State of the nation's finances (forecasting, budget, sustainability)**
 - Costing of measures under the jurisdiction of Parliament (social programs to military procurement)
- Supports four parliamentary committees (HoC Finance, HoC Public Accounts, Senate Finance, *HoC Estimates*)



Objectives of the presentation

1. Defining the organizational context
2. Strategies for Effective Communications
3. Technology as an enabler





Defining the environment in which an IFI communicates

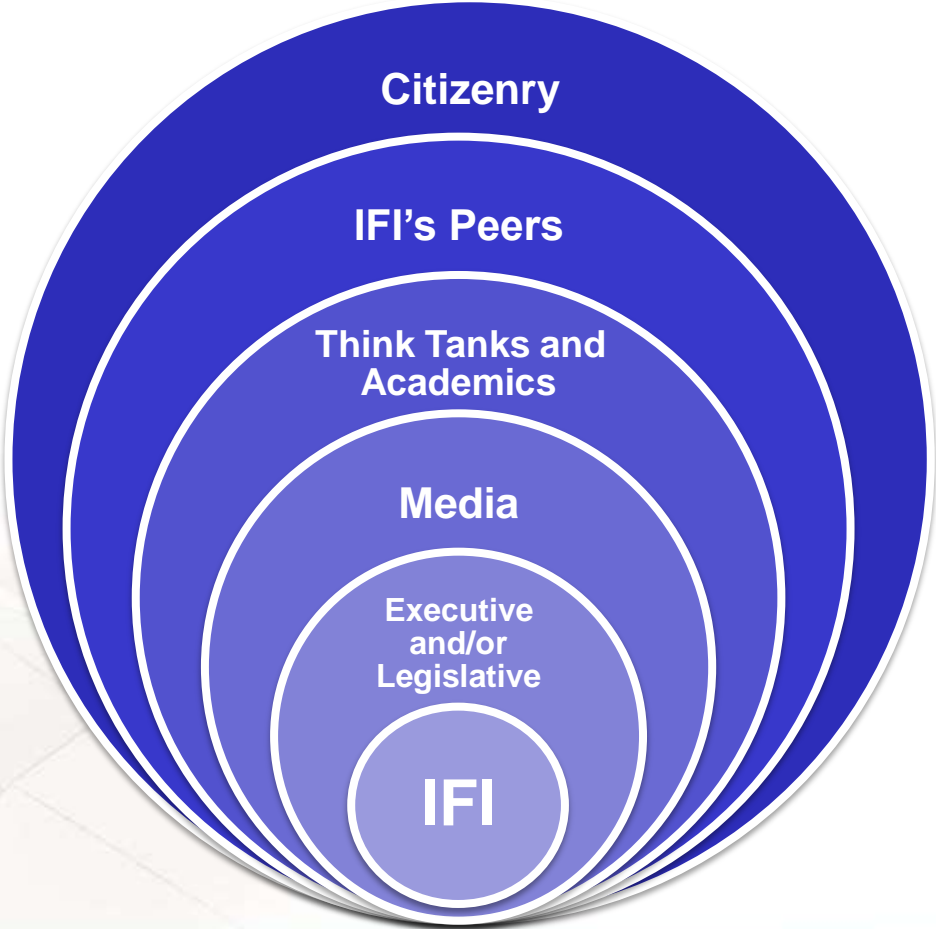
CONTEXT



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Context – the stakeholder universe





Context – the environment

- Legislative and fiduciary obligations
- High expectations from a complex stakeholder universe
- Complicated institutional arrangements
- Limited resources
- *A different language in politics*





Context - diversity of topics posed challenges...

The collage includes several key elements:

- Top Left:** An F-35 fighter jet in flight against a blue sky with clouds.
- Top Center:** A population pyramid for Canada in 2010, showing age groups from 1 to 100. The left side is labeled 'Male' and the right side 'Female'. The pyramid is wider at the bottom (younger population) and tapers towards the top (older population).
- Top Right:** The cover of the 'ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN 2012' titled 'JOBS GROWTH AND LONG-TERM PROSPERITY' with the Canadian coat of arms.
- Middle Left:** A soldier in full combat gear shaking hands with a young child on a dirt road.
- Middle Center:** A graduation cap (mortarboard) with a tassel, resting on a stack of books.
- Middle Right:** A photograph of a building with a distinctive cupola or tower.
- Bottom Center:** A line graph titled 'Imports and exports: per cent of GDP' showing data from 1965 to 2005. The Y-axis ranges from 0 to 50. The legend includes: Real exports: per cent of real GDP (solid blue line), Nominal exports: per cent of nominal GDP (dotted blue line), Real imports: per cent of real GDP (solid red line), and Nominal imports: per cent of nominal GDP (dotted red line). All lines show an overall upward trend over the period.
- Bottom Left:** The coat of arms of the Federal Court of Canada, featuring a shield supported by two griffins, topped with a crown and scales of justice. Below the shield is a banner with the motto 'FIDELITY STABILITY INTEGRITY'. The text 'Federal Court' is written below the coat of arms.
- Bottom Right:** The cover of the 'ESTIMATES 2010-11' report, Part II - Report on Plans and Priorities, published by Canada.



Context - the political environment



Context – stakeholder expectations



“Do you want to be useful or useless?”

Deputy Chair

House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance



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Context - the challenge

- Legislative and fiduciary obligations
- High expectations from a complex stakeholder universe
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The Canadian PBO Case: balancing rigor and accessibility

STRATEGY

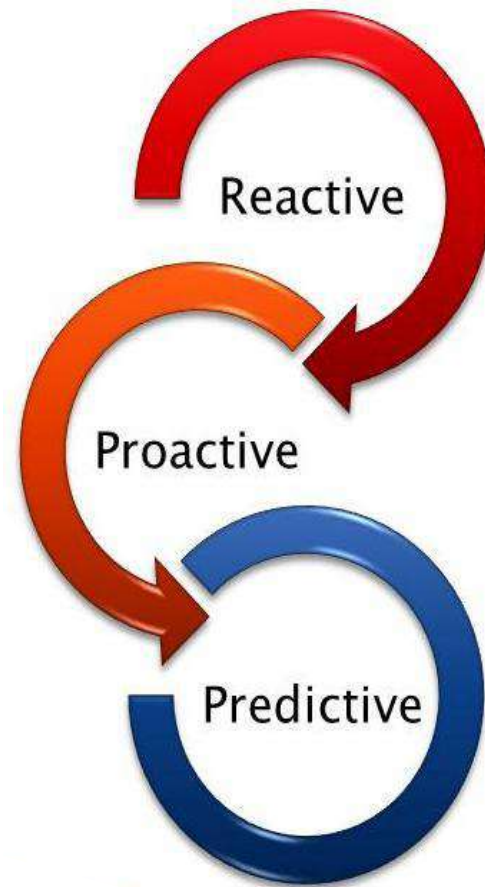


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Strategy - reactive, proactive and predictive

- Political space is a zero sum game in the short run
- IFIs must compete to gain and hold political space
- 50% of the effort, on a given report, will be on the follow-up after publication
- Reactive strategies can be dangerous



Strategy - the analytics



- Through feedback and web analytics, we learned a great deal about how our reports were being read...and it was not what we had thought

Strategy - **balance** is key...



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Sacrificing one for the other will not get you very far



Strategy - how did we achieve balance

1. Report approach and structure
2. Know your client(s)
3. Briefings – political, civil service, media and public
4. Dissemination – television, print, radio, Internet
5. **On-going client training...important to changing language**



1. Report approach and structure – the response

- The report had to appeal to multiple constituencies, including motivated partisan opponents
- Over time, reports went to four components:
 - Executive summary
 - Main body of the report
 - Appendix
 - PBO website



2. Know your client(s)

- When we first started in the Canadian PBO, a political staffer advised us that we had no more than ½ dozen clients in each political party
- Working with political staff and parliamentary researchers/bureaucrats, along with broad consultation with MPs and **Senators, we tried to identify the “target market”**
- Accessibility of the reports was initially focused on this group of early adopters



3. Briefings – Parliamentary, media and public

- Following OECD principles for Independent Fiscal Institutions, PBO reports were published for simultaneous access via the PBO website
- However, the first technical briefing provided on the report was done for parliamentarians in an in-camera session
- A second briefing was done afterwards for the media, and on roughly the same model
- Typically, the briefings were done using PowerPoint slides...a key tool



3. Briefings – Parliamentary, media and public

- Throughout the first day of report release, additional briefings were provided to parliamentarians and media
- Additional parliamentary briefings could continue into the subsequent days and weeks based on the level of sustained interest on the particular report
- Briefings were provided to the public, NGOs, lobbyists and pretty much anyone who paid taxes



4. Dissemination – television, print, radio, Internet

- The report publication was always considered to be only 50% of the task at hand
- Government reaction to a report could occur through the media and the PBO response was often done in the same fashion
- In some cases, parliamentarians would seek additional understanding as part of their own media activities



4. Dissemination – television, print, radio, Internet

- The PBO website had as many as 10,000 registrants
- The website served as important tool for transparency and dissemination
- Updates/errata and clarifications to the report could be uploaded to the site
- Many clients used the website to be alerted for new reports and to receive additional content related to the reports

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO). The header includes the organization's name in English and French, along with navigation links for Home, Contact, and Français. Below the header is a menu with categories: About, Our Publications, Research Resources, Proactive Disclosure, and Information Requests. A search bar is located on the right. The main content area features a large graphic of a world map with financial data overlays. To the right of the graphic is a 'Welcome' message and a 'Login to your account' section with fields for email and password, and a 'GO' button. Below the login section is a 'Register' link and a 'Forgot password?' link. The bottom of the page is divided into three columns: 'RECENT PUBLICATIONS' with links to 'Fiscal Analysis of Veterans Funeral and Burial Benefits', 'Economic and Fiscal Outlook Update 2013', and 'Expenditure Monitor: 2013-14 Q1'; 'UPCOMING EVENTS' with the text 'No upcoming events'; and 'OTHER RELEASES' with links to 'OECD Principles For Independent Fiscal Institutions - October 2013', 'Statement by Sonia L'Heureux, Parliamentary Librarian', and 'IR0113 - Compliance Chart Revised July 25, 2013 to include Responses Received After July 19, 2013'. Each column has a 'VIEW ALL' button at the bottom.





5. On-going client training

- This is different from report briefing
- Understanding and language must be addressed before reports are published
- Training can be linked to committee processes and hearings
- Political staff as well as parliamentarians need to be included in the process
- On-line tools can be developed to leverage resources (e.g. PBO IMD)
- Media can be part of the training process



Measuring impact - levers

- Headlines versus story
- On-line versus print
- Television versus print
- Financial media versus political media versus national media
- Evaluations – passive and active tools



Lessons learned

- Writing accessible reports is difficult
- Rigor cannot be sacrificed for accessibility
- There are approaches, both short and long-term in nature, to improve accessibility and understanding
- The approaches are about editorial process and dissemination but anchored in the organizational mandate and the needs of stakeholders
- Change is difficult – ultimately, accessibility of reports is tied to **changing the language of your stakeholders...a process that can take years if not decades**



Revisiting strategy – reactive versus proactive

- Impact is about an IFI providing a richer planning environment for **stakeholders...not about being right or wrong**
- This expectation must be proactively set in the minds of stakeholders in the foundational stages of an IFI



Enablers for Leverage - more than a website

TECHNOLOGY



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Technology Enablers

- Web (web-centric, models, data set, data visualization)
- Software tools (IMD, Ready Reckoner, Budget Simulator)
- PowerPoint
- Webinars
- Alerting
- IFI Portal (Capacity and Leverage)





Content Management App and Expenditure Database

The screenshot shows the website header with the logo and navigation menu. The main content area includes a 'Welcome' message, a 'Login to your account' section with a registration form, and three columns for 'RECENT PUBLICATIONS', 'UPCOMING EVENTS', and 'OTHER RELEASES'.

The screenshot shows the search interface with filters for 'Search By Authority' and 'Search By Outcomes'. It displays search results for 'Agriculture and Agri-food' with a table of financial data.

Department/Agency	Total Year 2014-15 (\$000s)	Total Year 2013-14 (\$000s)	\$ Variance (\$000s)	% Variance	Reported Spending 2014-15 (\$000s)	Reported Spending 2013-14 (\$000s)	\$ Variance
Total Expenditures View Chart	2,253,190	2,408,771	-215,575	-9.0	193,394	228,752	
Business Risk Management View Chart	1,297,306	1,331,496	-34,193	-3.0	33,359	69,616	
Market Access, Negotiations Sector Competitiveness View Chart	211,033	0	0	0	17,173	0	
Farm Products Council of Canada View Chart	2,493	2,606	-167	-6.7	749	632	
Science, Innovation and Adoption View Chart	519,170	0	0	0	62,528	0	
Industry Capacity View Chart	72,191	0	0	0	7,116	0	
Canadian Per-Mixure Agency View Chart	34	-421	456	108.0	1,232	-1,216	
Internal Services View Chart	150,473	202,058	-162,486	-69.0	53,667	57,604	

Department/Agency	Total Year 2014-15 (\$000s)	Total Year 2013-14 (\$000s)	\$ Variance (\$000s)	% Variance	Reported Spending 2014-15 (\$000s)	Reported Spending 2013-14 (\$000s)	\$ Variance
Total Expenditures View Chart	288,487	310,681	-22,194	-7.1	38,693	42,242	
Enterprise Development View Chart	184,652	174,202	10,450	6.0	10,620	25,622	
Community Development View Chart	87,458	98,066	-10,607	-11.0	6,498	7,167	
Policy, Advocacy and Coordination View Chart	11,362	0	0	0	2,333	0	
Internal Services View Chart	25,115	27,602	-2,487	-9.0	7,363	7,667	



Budget Simulator and Tax Rules of Thumb

Citizen Budget

Get citizen budget pro

Citizens submit define local prio simulator.

[Learn more](#)



All revenue impacts in millions

Marginal Tax Rates	Default	Your choice	Impact
Lowest Rate	15%	15%	\$0
Second Rate	22%	22%	\$0
Third Rate	26%	26%	\$0
Highest Rate	29%	29%	\$0

Tax Brackets	Default	Your choice	Impact
Second Bracket Threshold	\$43,953	\$43,953	-\$0
Third Bracket Threshold	\$87,907	\$87,907	-\$0
Top Bracket Threshold	\$136,270	\$136,270	-\$0

Basic Personal and Spousal Amounts	Default	Your choice	Impact
Basic Personal Amount	\$11,138	\$11,138	-\$0
Spousal/Equivalent to Spousal Amount	\$11,138	\$11,138	-\$0

Capital Gains Inclusion Rate	Default	Your choice	Impact
By 1 percentage points	50%	50%	\$0



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IFI Portal



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HOME ABOUT EVENTS COMMUNITY RESOURCES KNOWLEDGE HUB

Dashboard | Learning Centre

The GM-PRO community aims to provide a platform for knowledge and experience sharing on good practices, concepts, challenges and opportunities related to the design, establishment, and operation of Parliamentary Budget Offices (PBOs) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) in non-OECD countries. The online platform will also act as a global forum for members to interface with complementary networks, such as the OECD network on PBOs and IFIs, regional networks of parliamentary budget committees, and networks of government budget officials.

As the site is currently under development, it is normal that you will experience some issues. If you identify or are experiencing any issues, please email Garry directly at epb@quicksilk.com. Our staff will investigate any reported items and report back to you as soon as they are fixed.

Notices

Notices content goes here

Latest News

There are no items found

Events Highlights

October 3, 2014
History
August 31, 2014
Elymology
August 30, 2014
Canada

Reports

Please enter content here

Quicklinks

Economic & Fiscal Outlook

Latest Discussions

August 4, 2014
Nisi eleifend elit
malesuada
August 2, 2014
Artisanal Mining
August 3, 2014
FEATURED - Topic 1 - topic that belongs to dog
July 31, 2014
Dogs topic title is here
July 31, 2014
Cat first topic title

Events

View all

November		2014				
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	1	2	3	4	5	6

Thank-you



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Data from UK OBR Review

EXTRA SLIDES



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About us



- The objective of the Jean-Luc Pepin Research Chair is to:
 - Produce research in Canadian and international public finance
 - Support parliamentary institution-building in Canada and abroad through leading multilateral organizations such as the World Bank, OECD, IMF, among others
 - Provide advisory services to governments, parliaments and non-governmental organizations on budgeting, fiscal analysis, transparency and governance
 - To develop a Centre for Fiscal Studies & Public Finance at the University of Ottawa



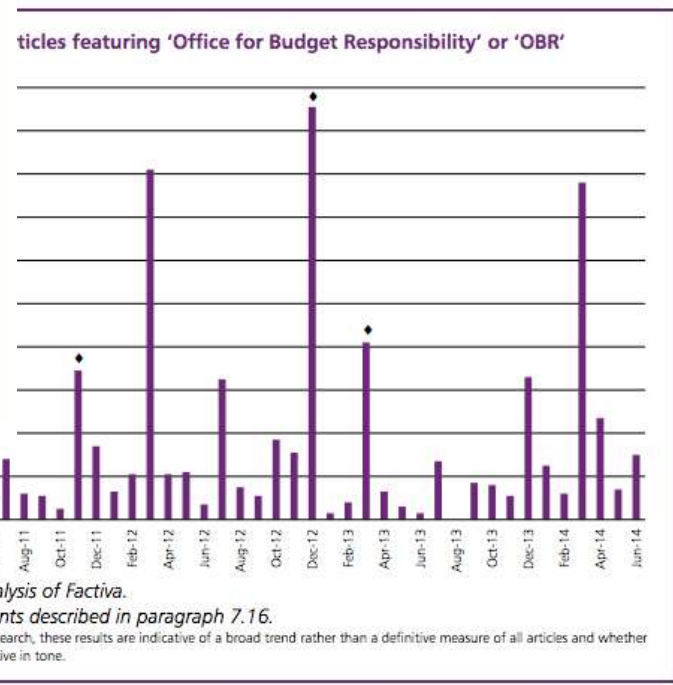
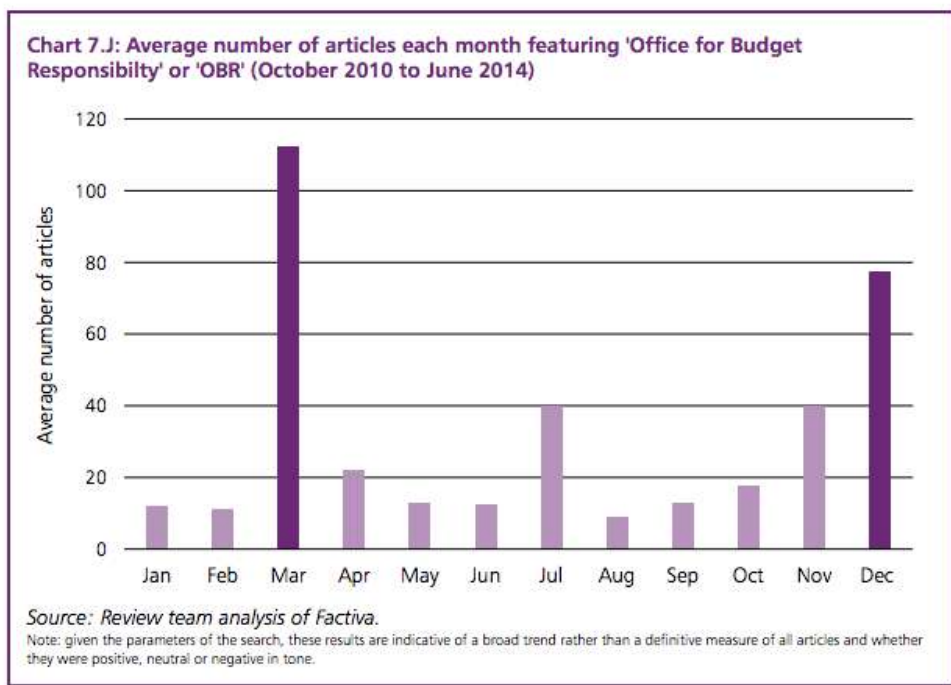
Sahir Khan

- Visiting Senior Fellow (University of Ottawa, Canada)
- Assistant Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO, Canada)
- Advisor to the Prime Minister and Clerk of the Privy Council on budgetary matters (Privy Council Office, Canada)
- Managing Director, corporate restructuring RKG Osnos/Deloitte (New York)
- B.Comm (Queen's University at Kingston), MBA (Columbia Business School, New York)





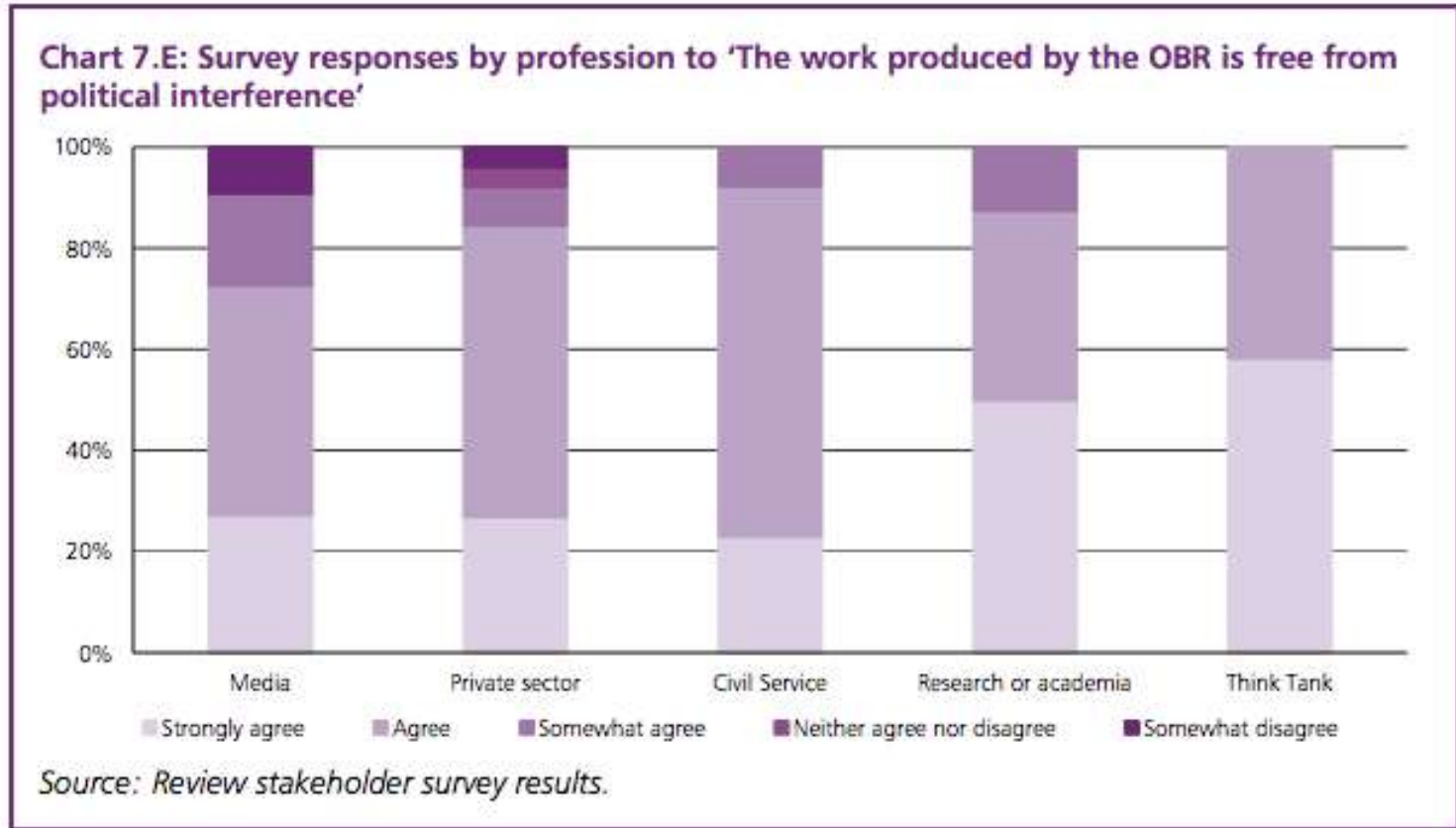
Media citations - seasonal and tied to reports



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/external-review-of-the-office-for-budget-responsibility>



Perceptions – media is most suspicious





Media found the reports the least understandable

