

Geneva, 26 - 27 March 2024

Workshop on Ethics in Modern Statistical Organisations

Ethics and proactive communication: the Istat case



Outline

- Introduction – the context
- What are the main ethical principles that govern communication?
- How does Istat respect such principles?
- Charter of Services for Users of statistical information and guaranteed quality standards
- Next steps



About us



After graduation and a Master's degree in economics with a subsequent Master's degree in communication, she has been working at Istat since 1998. Web Content Specialist, usability and accessibility expert since 2003. Since 2001 to 2019 she dealt with social media and with users' satisfaction. Since 2016 to 2019 she was responsible for the relationships with users. Member of WP1 - User analysis of project for Digital communication, User analytics and Innovative products (DIGICOM) of the European statistical system. She also is a member of the working group on the usability of the Public Administration. In 2019 she became member of the Unece Strategic Communication Framework and actually she is member of the UNECE Capabilities and Communication Group. She is currently responsible for the Istat website.



She has been working in the field of Communication for over 30 years. Graduated in Languages, she worked for about 15 years at 3M Italy S.p.A. as Public Affairs Specialist in the Legal Affairs and Public Relations Department. She moved to the Public Administration in 2001 (Istat, Central Communication Directorate). Since then, she has worked as Internal communication and Web communication expert for about 10 years. In the last years she has been mainly dealing with social media and relations with external users. Actually, member of the UNECE Capabilities and Communication Group and former member for two years of the Unece Strategic Communication Framework project. For one academic year, she also taught Corporate Communication at the European Institute of Design, based in Rome.

Introduction

Statistical information:

NSIs can't avoid conveying it, but they can communicate it well or poorly

Today, Communication often fails to respect rules and principles

Result



- Low respect for the target groups
- Failure to address specific audience needs
- True media abuse



Building trust and preserving a positive reputation requires ethical communication

The main ethical principles that govern communication

- **Transparency** – being transparent about motives, intentions and conflicts of interest
- **Fairness and balance** – to present information avoiding bias and offering a balanced view of different point of view
- **Privacy** – respecting people’s privacy to avoid unauthorized disclosure of sensitive or confidential information
- **Cultural sensitivity** – awareness and respect for cultural differences
- **Empathy** – considering the feelings and perspectives of others
- **Responsibility** – being aware of the potential impact of one’s words and actions on individual and society
- **Accountability** - correcting any misinformation or harm caused when errors occur



VISION



MISSION



VALUES

How does Istat respect such principles?

Transparency

- Dedicated website area
- Transparent communication as content is replaced

Impartiality

- Istat never expresses value judgements when disseminating statistical information
- All content is disseminated simultaneously to everyone.
- The calendar of the economic data is announced every December for the following year to avoid the risk of thinking that the release is instrumental for the public debate (e.g. in view of the elections)

The image shows two screenshots of the Istat website. The top screenshot displays the 'AMMINISTRAZIONE TRASPARENTE' (Transparent Administration) section. The header includes the Istat logo and navigation tabs for 'POPOLAZIONE E FAMIGLIE', 'SOCIETÀ E ISTITUZIONI', 'ISTRUZIONE E LAVORO', 'ECONOMIA', and 'AMBIENTE E TERRITORIO'. The main content area lists categories such as 'AMMINISTRAZIONE TRASPARENTE', 'DISPOSIZIONI GENERALI', 'ORGANIZZAZIONE', 'CONSULENTI E COLLABORATORI', and 'PERSONALE'. A sidebar on the left contains navigation icons. The bottom screenshot shows the 'PRESS CALENDAR' section. The header includes the Istat logo and navigation tabs for 'POPULATION & HOUSEHOLDS', 'INSTITUTIONS & SOCIETY', 'EDUCATION & LABOUR', 'ECONOMY', and 'ENVIRONMENT & TERRITORY'. The main content area includes the title 'PRESS CALENDAR' and a description of the calendar of releases and events, along with a link to the '2023 press release calendar (pdf)'.

How does Istat respect such principles?



Privacy

- Dedicated website area
- Istat has adopted a cookie management policy on its websites in compliance with the current GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

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HOME > ANALYSIS AND PRODUCTS > INTERACTIVE CONTENTS > BABY NAMES

HOW MANY BABIES ARE NAMED...?

How many children born and registered at the Italian Registry Office in a year have the same name? Istat's **name counter** will help you find an answer to these questions.

Just enter a **name** and the **sex** to obtain the **time series** for the number of children born in a given year and registered at the Registry Office with that name from 1999 to the last available year.

The **ranking** of the most popular names by year is also provided. Clicking on one of the names in the list you also get the time series for the number of children with that name.

Graphs are interactive: a descriptive tooltip is displayed when hovering the cursor on them. The icon next to the title allows you to download each graph in different formats.

Enter a name and select a gender M F

List of most common names among babies born in

List of 10 most common names among babies born in 2022

	Males		Females		
	absolute value	% of total males	absolute value	% of total females	
1 Leonardo	7.888	3.90	Sofia	5.405	2.87
2 Francesco	4.823	2.38	Aurora	4.900	2.58
3 Tommaso	4.790	2.37	Giulia	4.198	2.21
4 Edoardo	4.748	2.35	Olivera	3.846	2.02
5 Alessandro	4.729	2.34	Victoria	3.814	2.01
6 Lorenzo	4.693	2.22	Beatrice	3.333	1.75

Cultural sensitivity

- Istat never uses language, images or colors that invoke cultural stereotypes
- Attention is also paid to religious differences, in line with the focus on avoiding any form of discrimination

How does Istat respect such principles?

Empathy

- We listen and interact with our users in an empathetic way. This allows us to adapt our tone to the person we're talking to and thus improve our services



Responsability and Accountability

- Two sides of the same coin involving awareness of the potential impact on achieving our goals of the words and images we choose to communicate
- Attention is always high. However, this does not always prevent us from making mistakes. Taking responsibility for such failures and acting to adjust our focus, learning from the lessons, is crucial



Charter of services for Users of statistical information and guaranteed quality standards

For more than 15 years, the Communication Directorate has developed a service charter for users. It is regularly updated and defines the quality standards of communication and dissemination services.

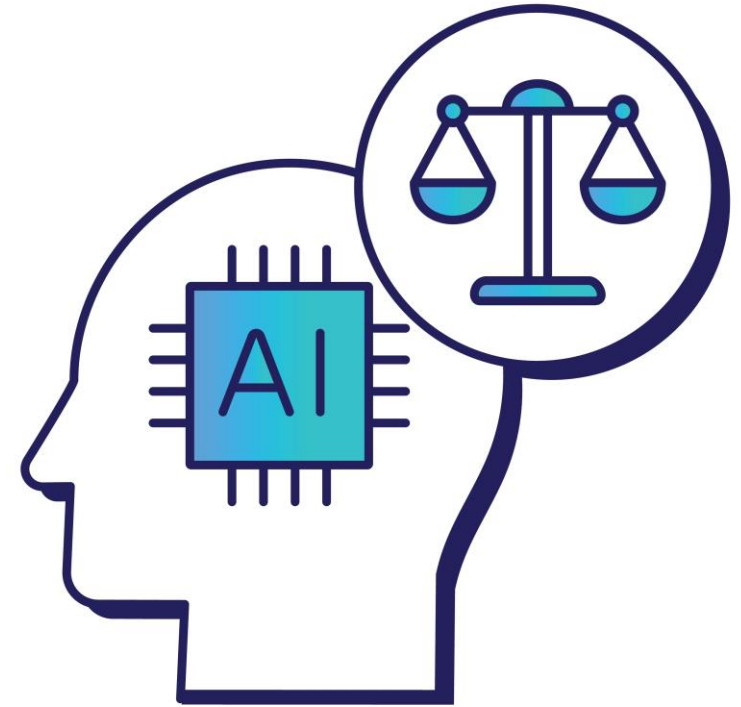
These standards are based on ethical communication with users and are embodied in the following principles:

- Equality
- Impartiality
- Continuity
- Clarity and Transparency
- Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Accessibility
- Participation



Next steps

- 2024: A new section of the website dedicated to ethics
- Two newly formed task teams:
 - To develop guidelines for an inclusive internal training program
 - To develop a gender policy for employees
- To continue the work of the Unique Committee for Equal Opportunities within the Institute
- **New challenge:** respecting ethical principles when using AI in communication



Thanks!

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