Official Transcript: Optatus Nchimbi (Part 2 of 6)

Role:	Information Network Assistant
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Interview Summary

Optatus Nchimbi outlines his information management responsibilities at the ICTR. He explains the evolution of processes for archiving audio and visual materials collected and generated by the Tribunal. He comments on the importance of different levels of security and access to trial archives for Tribunal personnel that depend on role and seniority. In addition, speaking in his role as President of the ICTR Staff Association, Nchimbi describes the Association's purpose and discusses various tensions between staff and their supervisors.

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Part 2

00:00   Lisa P. Nathan: Can you talk about the difference between the information management system you work with and what OTP, the Office of the Prosecutor? How, d-, do they overlap, how do you . . . ?

00:11   In fact for us who are using TRIM, that's Tower Records, Tower Records and Information Management. For OTP they are using the software called ZyFIND. But now the OTP they have access to our database also. We, we are restricting them to access. So in fact the ZyFIND is mostly, is j-, just used in OTP and I think it's chambers. But it's ma-, mainly in OTP, ZyFIND.

00:35   LPN: (__) . . .

00:36   W-, TRIM is across the board. Yeah, everybody is using TRIM. What we limit them is access, access to which source of, type of information.

00:44   LPN: So can you speak again, you mentioned one of the challenges is finding out which level of access. Can you explain that a little bit more, how . . . ?

00:54   In fact we need to coordinate with the program manager or the supervisor; those who are, who are dealing directly with the records to know exactly what security level should we give to who. When they file the document normally there, there is a filing form. They come with the filing form, I identify exactly what type of document that is supposed to be, in which security level that document should be put.

01:18   Those who're working the same case in fact they should have the same security level. It's like those who are working the, in the chambers; they should have all the same security levels. For them we are giving them ex parte prosecution, ex parte defense because they have access to, to the defense, defense, defense filings. But for those who are working in the, those who are working in the OT-, Office of the Prosecutor, they just have the ex parte de-, ex parte prosecution. So they don't have access to ex parte defense.

01:51   Now the, the (_____) thing here which I can see from this system of TRIM is that the defense, they don't have access to what the prosecution team has. Okay. For the prosecution team, we are giving them access as ex parte prosecution. But for the defense, we don't, they don't have access to TRIM. Yes, they don't have access to internal TRIM because we have two types of TRIM.

02:19   The first one is a website based TRIM; that's, it's a public. And the second one is TRIM Context which is client-based TRIM, which we are using internally. So the Office of the – I mean the, the, the defense they don't have access to that one. So even the document that has been filed by them, they cannot even see them in the system because of the security level. They are using the public one.

02:42   They are not using the internal database. So in, in the area of juris-, jurisdiction, you find that they're underprivileged somehow, because we are dealing with the same client, one is prosecuting them and another one is defending them. But the person who is prosecuting them has more access to the information than the person who is defending them.

03:04   So what they are supposed to do basically is to go and look for the particular cases of their own case. But for the prosecution, they can have access to all cases irrespective of their cases. But for the defense, it's, the limit is only for their particular case. They can just come to the archives and ask for the document they want, then we give them according to what they are supposed to have.

03:28   But the person let's say who is defending – I can just give the name of an-, any accused – who is defending Akayesu cannot be given the Kayishema and Ruzindana documents which are strictly confidential. But for the system, a person who has strictly confidential access means he can access, he or she can access all documents irrespective of the case.

03:51   So you find that the persons who are working in the defense, in terms of records they're underprivileged.

03:56   LPN: So do you know how, when did this decision go in to place? Is it . . .

04:02   Initially they were having access to TRIM according to security levels. But because of the security issue, they decided to disconnect them from that system. I think the reason basically was that in course of proceeding, the ac-, I mean the, the, the accused person can just say, "I don't want to use this cli-, this person my defen-, my lawyer."

04:34   So because of the security issue of the records, I think that decision was based on that security level. Because today he can say, "Okay, this is the person, this is the one who is defending me." In three or five weeks he says, "No, I don't want this one, I want another one." Now if we're giving access to that person who has, who is defending a person, in the course of time say no, I just want to get out. So they say it's, it's a security breach for them.

05:01   LPN: In a perfect world – pretend we lived in one – can you think of a way, if it perhaps was a, a later version of TRIM or something like that, of how to fix that situation? Do you have any ideas how to make it more equal for defense and prosecution?

05:22   There, there is no way especially when you're dealing with the, when you're dealing with the Webs-, Web-, WebDrawer; it's called Web-, WebDrawer, the website TRIM based. It's difficult, especially for the logging in, log in issue. It seems to be very difficult to implement. But for those who are in-, internal ICTR, normally they are given the username and the password.

05:49   But for the less, those who are using the TRIM-based one, the user name was "public;" no, wa-, wa-, was, was "guest," login was "guest" and then the password was just "public." Basically they can just have access to public records only. You know there's these hackers. Because of the hacker person can just hack into the system and get the, get the information.

06:10   Now based on that we say no, it's, you cannot control the password of the person, so the best way is to restrict them to use it. But when we are using the internal system, there is, there is a firewall that can block them access from if a person is not authorized. So it's easy to control the hacking in, within the system but not when you are using the TRIM, I mean the WebDrawer, that the internet based TRIM. It's difficult to control the hackers.

06:35   LPN: Have you had issues with hackers that you are aware of?

06:39   You know once you're giving a password to somebody, they can be careless. They can just leave it elsewhere so anybody can just have access to it. Or a person can be committed elsewhere and say, "Oh, please can you take this password and go to the system, look for these documents for me." So we cannot control that issue outside.

06:58   But internally it's, it's, it's easier to control. When we started the TRIM initially, we used to set the password after every three, three to six months that you should prompt to change the password after three to six months to control hackers. But (__) the course of time they say it's going to be difficult for them because somebody wants information now, he has to call Aru-, to call Arusha to change for, so it was, seems to be a difficult, difficulty, difficult situation.

07:24   So they, they decided to say, "Okay now let, let us just put the password." It should be uniform. Once you have your password and your login name, you can just log in. It's, you can change but not in a, a specific time frame.

07:37   Now the problem of this TRIM when you're accessing from outside, if it's difficult to download the bulk documents becau-, because of the slowness of the system, the, the internet; that's another disadvantage the defense lawyer has.

07:55   LPN: Because they're using the web based?

07:57   Yeah, they are using the web based, so it's very slow, so it's difficult even to download a page. It takes ages to download a page. But our internal one is very fast and efficient. Even those who are using the, who were here during the case, the court proceeding, they have information but to download them it's hard.

08:17   We have some documents with 500 pages, like the supporting documents, statements of the persons. It's, it's a thick document so it takes ages to download them. Now basically (_____) put this information in the, in the system, we are using either text image format, that's .TIFF, or we are using .doc electronically this one M-, Microsoft

Word. So most of the information as, as they're scanned and then we have put it in, in the system.

08:50   But the scanned one is difficult to download them. Most of the t-, all the transcripts, almost all the transcripts, we are using .doc, .doc, extension of .doc. But the rest is either PDF or TIFF, text image format, so they take a lot of space in the system. And sometimes once you download it, the computer can just get crash because of the badness of the documents.

09:14   LPN: So do you find that defense counsel, how do they, do they often come to you directly then to avoid that?

09:22   Yeah, normally they sup-, they are supposed to go to the trial chamber coordinators to ask for those particular information. But for us if there's a problem with TRIM, then we can just fix it for them.