DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF
ONLINE FAMILY DISPUTE RESOLUTION CAPABILITIES

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
(ATTORNEY GENERAL’S DEPARTMENT)
AND
RELATIONSHIPS AUSTRALIA (QLD)

Final Report
30 March 2011
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .......................................................................................................... 8

1 OVERVIEW ............................................................................................................................ 16
   1.1 Purpose ......................................................................................................................... 16
   1.2 Recipient ...................................................................................................................... 16
   1.3 Activity ......................................................................................................................... 16
   1.4 Report Activity Period ............................................................................................... 17
   1.5 Document Control and Distribution ........................................................................... 17
   1.6 Glossary of Acronyms and Terms ............................................................................ 18

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND .............................................................................................. 19
   2.1 Project Context ........................................................................................................... 19
   2.2 OFDR Definition ....................................................................................................... 19
   2.3 OFDR Capabilities ................................................................................................... 19
   2.4 Current FDR Services via TDRS and FRCs ............................................................. 20

3 PROJECT SCOPE ............................................................................................................ 22
   3.1 Project Scope .............................................................................................................. 22

4 PROJECT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE ..................................................................... 23
   4.1 Project Structure ....................................................................................................... 23
   4.2 Project Roles .............................................................................................................. 23
   4.3 Project Sub Committees ........................................................................................... 24
   4.4 Meeting Schedule .................................................................................................... 25
   4.5 Project Phases ......................................................................................................... 26

5 DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES OFFERED BY OFDR .................................................. 27
   5.1 OFDR Portal / TDRS Website .................................................................................. 27
   5.2 Intake Session .......................................................................................................... 28
   5.3 Family Dispute Resolution Session ......................................................................... 29
   5.4 Pre-FDR Education ................................................................................................. 30

6 EARLY VISION ................................................................................................................ 32
   6.1 Early Conceptualisation of Use ................................................................................ 32
   6.2 Geospatial Mapping of Clients and ADSL Exchanges ............................................. 33

7 TECHNOLOGY ................................................................................................................. 37
   7.1 Selecting a Technological Solution ........................................................................... 37
   7.2 System Design Principles ........................................................................................ 39
   7.3 The OFDR System ................................................................................................... 41
7.4 Installation and Customisation ........................................................................ 43
7.5 Acceptance Criteria and Testing ................................................................ 45
7.6 Go-live ........................................................................................................... 47
7.7 Ongoing Issues ............................................................................................. 48
7.8 Security issues .............................................................................................. 49
7.9 Mobile Devices and New Technologies ....................................................... 51
7.10 Potential Costs ............................................................................................ 52

8 PRACTICE AND TRAINING PROCEDURES ................................................. 54
8.1 Developing Templates .................................................................................. 54
  8.1.1 Lobby ........................................................................................................ 55
  8.1.2 Intake Session .......................................................................................... 57
  8.1.3 Family Dispute Resolution Session ......................................................... 58
  8.1.4 Pre-FDR Session ...................................................................................... 60
8.2 Developing Content .................................................................................... 62
8.3 Assessment Expansions .............................................................................. 62
  8.3.1 OFDR Screening Tool ............................................................................ 64
  8.3.2 Administration Training .......................................................................... 69
  8.3.3 Practitioner Training .............................................................................. 70

9 RESEARCH AND EVALUATION ................................................................. 74
9.1 Overview ...................................................................................................... 74
9.2 Evaluative Frameworks ............................................................................... 88
  9.2.1 Literature Review Summary ................................................................. 91
9.3 Summary of Pre and Post Implementation Learnings .............................. 120
9.4 Client Screening .......................................................................................... 124
9.5 Study 1. Client Readiness – Precontemplation .......................................... 129
9.6 Study 2. Staff Engagement and Precontemplation .................................... 151
9.7 Study 3. Intake Evaluation .......................................................................... 163
  9.7.1 Staff ........................................................................................................ 163
  9.7.2 Clients Experience ................................................................................. 173
9.8 Study 4. Mediation Evaluation .................................................................. 188
  9.8.1 Staff – OFDR Practitioner Post-FDR Feedback .................................... 188
  9.8.2 Clients’ Experience of On-Line FDR .................................................... 190

10 PRE FDR EDUCATION SESSIONS .......................................................... 192
10.1 Pre FDR Evaluative Framework ............................................................... 192

11 CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS ............................................................... 222

12 PROJECT MANAGEMENT ........................................................................... 231
12.1 Scope Management .................................................................................... 231
12.2 Cost and Procurement Management ................................................................. 231
12.3 Management of Risks / Issues ......................................................................... 232
13 REFERENCES FOR RESEARCH AND EVALUATION ........................................... 236
# TABLE OF FIGURES

| Figure 1 | First Conceptualisation Of An Online Mediation Room – July 2009 ........................................ | 33 |
| Figure 2 | Frequency Of TDRS Clients By State Of Registration ................................................................ | 34 |
| Figure 3 | Frequency Of TDRS Clients As A Proportion Of State Population ........................................ | 35 |
| Figure 4 | Telstra ADSL-Enabled Exchanges With Tdrs Client Frequencies (By Region) ........................ | 36 |
| Figure 5 | Intake Phase ............................................................................................................... | 38 |
| Figure 6 | Pre Family Dispute Resolution Phase ........................................................................... | 38 |
| Figure 7 | Family Dispute Resolution Phase .............................................................................. | 39 |
| Figure 8 | The Meeting Room Analogy ........................................................................................ | 55 |
| Figure 9 | Decision Tree Underlying The OFDR Client Screening Tool ......................................... | 67 |
| Figure 10 | Levels Of Evidence ...................................................................................................... | 121 |
| Figure 11 | Decision Tree Underlying The OFDR Client Screening Tool .......................................... | 126 |
| Figure 12 | Proportion Of Male And Female Respondents ................................................................ | 135 |
| Figure 13 | Distribution Of Respondent Age Frequencies ................................................................ | 135 |
| Figure 14 | Reported Weekly Pre-Tax Income Range ....................................................................... | 136 |
| Figure 15 | Proportion Of Employed And Unemployed Respondents .................................................. | 136 |
| Figure 16 | Highest Level Of Educational Achievement .................................................................. | 137 |
| Figure 17 | Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander Or Both ................................................................. | 137 |
| Figure 18 | Domestic Violence Was A Current Or Past Issue .......................................................... | 138 |
| Figure 19 | Party As (Initiator) And Party Bs (Respondents) Within The Survey Sample ................ | 138 |
| Figure 20 | Access To A Personal Computer .................................................................................. | 139 |
| Figure 21 | Computer Access And A Current Internet Connection .................................................. | 139 |
| Figure 22 | Reported Internet Connection Speed ........................................................................... | 140 |
| Figure 23 | Respondents With Web Camera Access ........................................................................ | 140 |
| Figure 24 | Diagrammatic Overview Of Research Predictions ......................................................... | 142 |
| Figure 25 | Aggregated Ratings For Performance Expectancy ......................................................... | 148 |
| Figure 26 | Aggregated Ratings For Social Influence ..................................................................... | 148 |
| Figure 27 | Aggregated Ratings For Facilitating Conditions .......................................................... | 149 |
| Figure 28 | Aggregated Ratings For Trust In OFDR Technology ..................................................... | 149 |
| Figure 29 | Aggregated Ratings For Personal Web Innovativeness ................................................... | 149 |
| Figure 30 | Aggregated Ratings For Behavioural Intention ............................................................. | 150 |
| Figure 31 | General Model Of Organisational Change .................................................................... | 152 |
| Figure 32 | Ofdr Implementation Themes ....................................................................................... | 154 |
| Figure 33 | Ofdr Training Plan ....................................................................................................... | 156 |
| Figure 34 | FDRP Human Computer Interaction With The OFDR System ........................................ | 164 |
| Figure 35 | FDRP OFDR Intake/Mediation User Interface Aesthetics ............................................. | 164 |
| Figure 36 | OFDR Post-Intake Staff Survey Measures Graph ......................................................... | 169 |
| Figure 37 | Client Age Categories .................................................................................................. | 176 |
Figure 38  Client Gender
Figure 39  Client Highest Education Level
Figure 40  Client Employment Status
Figure 41  Client Yearly Income
Figure 42  Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander Status
Figure 43  Client Post-Online Intake Evaluation Survey Scale Results
Figure 44  Client Satisfaction With Service
Figure 45  Client Overall Preparedness
Figure 46  Client Quality Of Human-Computer Interaction
Figure 47  Visual Quality Of The OFDR System
Figure 48  Client Trust In The Technology And TDRS
Figure 49  Client Rapport With Intake Officer
Figure 50  Client User Acceptance Of Technology
Figure 51  Overall Client Preparedness For FDR
Figure 52  Client General Well-Being
Figure 53  Client Mediation Self-Efficacy
Figure 54  Client Perceived Knowledge and Awareness Pre and Post Information Program
Figure 55  Client Co-Parenting Behaviour Pre And Post Information Program
Figure 56  Client FDR Information Session Satisfaction
Figure 57  Client Satisfaction With Facilitator
Figure 58  Client Perceived Knowledge Increase
Figure 59  Client Satisfaction With FDR Services So Far
Figure 60  Proposed Relationships Between ‘Meta-Themes’
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1  Integration Of Jacobs' Model With The IMCBE And Associated Tasks. ................. 89
Table 2  Data Collection Overview.................................................................................... 90
Table 3  Perceived Barriers To Participation In The OFDR Project. ................................. 128
Table 4  Constructs Within The Extended Technology Acceptance Model..................... 132
Table 5  Significant Difference Test Between OFDR And TDRS Clients ....................... 133
Table 6  Significant Difference Tests Between OFDR And TDRS Clients ....................... 134
Table 7  Descriptive Statistics For Technology Acceptance Constructs ....................... 141
Table 8  Results Of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis .................................... 142
Table 9  General Categories That Arose From The Grouping Of Client Comments ........... 144
Table 10 Client Suggestions For OFDR System ............................................................ 146
Table 11 Thematic Analysis Of Job Analysis Data......................................................... 155
Table 12 Application Of Knowles' (2005) Assumptions To OFDR Training .................... 158
Table 13 Application Technology Training Literature To OFDR Training Program ........ 159
Table 14 Collated Training Evaluation Data ................................................................. 161
Table 15 Mean Responses To Technology Acceptance Attitudes Pre- And Post-Training .. 162
Table 16 FDR Practitioners Who Completed The Survey ............................................. 163
Table 17 Number Of Survey Responses By FDR Practitioner ........................................ 168
Table 18 Number Of Party A And Party B Clients ......................................................... 168
Table 19 TDRS Client Population Characteristics (N = 3272 Clients) ............................. 173
Table 20 TDRS OFDR Client Sample Characteristics (N = 136 Clients) ....................... 174
Table 21 OFDR Client Post-Online Intake Survey Demographics (N=19 Clients) .......... 180
Table 22 Post-Online Intake Client Evaluation Survey Scale Mean Scores ................... 181
Table 23 Pre FDR Education Evaluation Survey Respondents Demographics ............... 197
Table 24 Measurement Scales For The Pre-FDR Education Evaluation Surveys ............ 199
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Online Family Dispute Resolution (OFDR) represents a uniquely accessible, relevant and user-friendly online alternative to traditional forms of mediation. This report details the development, implementation and rigorous evaluation process undertaken by RAQ in response to a request by the Commonwealth Attorney General’s Department to develop and evaluate OFDR capabilities, including video conferencing. As the existing provider of the Telephone Dispute Resolution Service (TDRS), RAQ has over three years experience providing a national telephone-based mediation service, the knowledge and experience from which has informed the conceptualisation, development and testing of an online alternative over a 21 month period from 1 July 2009.

The product represents unprecedented success in integrated web conferencing technology. Unique in design and intent, the brief required an innovative technical solution that provides a safe, secure online environment in which a family dispute resolution practitioner (FDRP) may actively facilitate a mediation session. User accessibility and usability were key considerations in developing the technology, as was the security of information being shared, the flexibility of functions within the interface and overall continuity and reliability of the mechanism through which the service would be delivered. Features successfully integrated into the technology include:

- video streaming so that each participant can safely see and communicate with the other;
- screen features including small windows (pods) which can be scaled, resized and repositioned and hold a variety of information;
- visual sharing of information, including document sharing, online demonstrations and whiteboard feature;
- ability to record notes which can subsequently be emailed to the FDRP; and
- secure access to functionalities via FDRP authorisation.

Scope
The scope of the pilot initially included the development of an OFDR Web Portal, OFDR Intake and OFDR (joint) session. The OFDR Web Portal was subsequently identified as unnecessary due to the ability for clients to access online sessions by email link. The scope and budget was
extended in September 2010 to include an evaluation of pre-family dispute resolution (Pre-FDR) education for non face-to-face clients (OFDR and TDRS clients) prior to the joint session, an additional intervention frequently used in Family Relationship Centres. The development of a TDRS website (which will include secure access to information, resources, electronic forms, links, Frequently Asked Questions, contact details and a feedback mechanism) is a closely related existing project under development within RAQ, and it is proposed that this infrastructure may also be an entry point for OFDR clients in future. This website is planned for launch in May 2011.

Project Team
A multi-disciplined Project Committee incorporating internal stakeholders from practice, technology, research and finance was formed to manage the development and implementation of the pilot. Sub-committees were appointed at relevant stages of the project to provide input (and report back to the project committee) regarding a specific area of expertise, for example in relation to cultural considerations.

Services Offered
The services offered within the OFDR process, as discussed in depth in the report, include Registration, Intake, Family Dispute Resolution and Pre-FDR education.

The system provides flexibility to deliver online sessions with or without video conferencing and for sessions to be conducted individually, jointly, by co-facilitation, shuttle or with interpreters (including sign languages) and/or support people. However, the scope of this pilot did not allow for testing or evaluation of all of these options.

Technology
A preferred communication integration company was identified after a four month selection process as the company who could best meet the requirements of the system within the technological infrastructure, operations and values of RAQ.

The following are some of the key system design principles (described in detail in the report) identified by RAQ to underpin the development of a secure, safe and controlled online space in which to conduct OFDR:

- Granular redundancy, allowing continuity of service if any aspect of the technology is interrupted;
- Common look and feel, ensuring ease of accessibility and use;
- Common Authentication Directory (Windows);
• Flexibility of System, ensuring maximum functionality and relevance; and
• System Environment within RAQ which could fully incorporate the OFDR technology.

The final product is web-based and therefore highly accessible. The system is able to be operated across most platforms (Windows, Mac, Linux, Solaria and others), and only requires an internet browser and connection, Adobe Flash Player and a web camera. Testing with some success has been undertaken using mobile devices such as Samsung OMNIA 18000T and iPhone4, but further development and testing is required to ensure seamless use of OFDR technology with mobile devices. Geospatial mapping of client data from over three years of TDRS operation indicated that the majority of TDRS clients would have had access to the communication infrastructure required by OFDR, and the costs apart from data transmission (which depends on individual internet provider fees) are negligible.

Installation and customisation of the OFDR technology was impacted heavily by the unprecedented nature of the system requirements – namely a complex integration of web conferencing, telephony infrastructure, audio conferencing and a Secure Access Gateway. Whereas web conferencing systems ordinarily aim to provide end users with maximum flexibility, transparency and some degree of control, this system required a safe, secure online environment (in particular, ensuring confidentiality of client information) controlled mostly by the FDRP. Extensive internal resources were required to test and progress the development of the technology relating not only to security, but also aesthetic, audio and other considerations.

The Project Committee maintained a user-centred approach in developing acceptance criteria for the product, and developed 74 criteria against which to test the system. Failure of the web conferencing system to fully integrate the telephony function was primarily responsible for failure to meet all the acceptance criteria upon testing in June 2010, with most other issues able to be promptly resolved. The granular nature of the technology meant that the OFDR system could still function without the telephony integrated, as the web conferencing and audio aspects of the system could successfully operate independently of one another.

Implementation
Before commencement of the service, a toolkit was developed to help determine user (FDRP) competence and site (technical) readiness, and this informed further training and site preparation. Training was provided to staff in group settings and individually in the use of the technology and effective screening of potential OFDR clients. The screening tool and decision map used in this process helped staff to identify:

• Motivation/desire to be involved in OFDR;
• Technology access and capability;
• Suitability of home set up; and
• Specific requirements or conditions within the case.

For the purpose of the pilot, preliminary screening also allowed the early exclusion of hostile or distressed clients and complex or otherwise inappropriate cases, to avoid unnecessary pressure for those clients and enable the cases most likely to progress to a joint session to proceed.

The first screening survey occurred on 5 July 2010 followed by the first OFDR Intake session on 15 July 2010, during which the process proved seamless and effective.

After six months of service delivery, most aspects of the system remain robust, consistent and easy to use. Full integration of telephony and web conferencing functions requires further testing for a positive outcome to be confidently reported.

**Research and Evaluation**
A rigorous research process was undertaken that involved several independent studies lead by RAQ’s research team. These studies centred on:

• Implementation;
• Client readiness;
• Staff readiness;
• Staff training evaluation;
• The client experience of OFDR;
• The role of Pre FDR education in OFDR; and
• Cultural considerations.

The results of the studies are promising, in general both staff and clients are motivated and able to use on line technologies for service delivery. Moreover, individuals from diverse backgrounds such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and staff are enthusiastic and willing to work out ways to adapt and adopt on line technologies to improve services to vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and groups who require complex services.

Some of the **key findings** from this research include:

• Clients rated online services as more convenient than other forms of FDR, and rated a web based camera service as more appealing than telephone as it was more personal. Face to face FDR remained the preference for most clients.
Clients’ intentions to adopt OFDR may be influenced by attitudes toward the usefulness of OFDR, the perceived ease of use and security of the system itself, the anticipated time savings of an online process and the influence of others/peers.

Staff exhibited positive attitudes toward OFDR implementation including recognition of the broad applications of OFDR technology and alignment with a trend toward online services.

Overall clients reported favourable impressions of using the technology and interacting with the systems; clients reported a high level of satisfaction with the service provided through OFDR and indicated a willingness to use OFDR again. Clients reported building good rapport with their FDRP.

Pre-FDR education had an effect of increasing participant knowledge regarding the needs of children around separation, as evidenced across all twelve parental capacity items in our scale.

Some of the key lessons learned in our research include:

- Host organisation specifications need to articulate from all perspectives, including practice, training, client services, quality assurance, risk management and security, user interface design, functionality requirements/modifications and useability, with a focus on ICT.
- Importance of ensuring client side technological suitability for online services.
- Promoting reliability of technology and ease of use would improve client trust and uptake in OFDR.
- Important to provide staff training around using video feedback on non verbal and verbal behaviours, for example use of eye contact on web cameras.
- Clients are highly experienced in using systems such as Skype, and staff group needs to be equally as familiar with such technology.
- Due to the challenge of maintaining a skilled workforce, formal training needs to be supplemented by ongoing mentoring and coaching.

Successful cross-cultural implementation of new online services depends on 3 principles:

1. Development of a relationship with the community through a staged consultative process;
2. Identifying surface and underlying community needs through communication with local people and elders; and
3. Implementing technology with the aim of transferring ownership to the community such as building skills and capacity to self manage.

Various recommendations have been made throughout this report drawing on wisdom gained
and findings made in the development, implementation and evaluation of the OFDR pilot, and may inform the development of the proposed Best Practice Guidelines. These recommendations are summarised in the next section.

The OFDR pilot has allowed the development of an accessible, relevant and user-friendly online alternative to traditional forms of mediation. As evidenced in RAQ’s experience and research findings throughout the pilot, this technology presents a unique opportunity for the sector to provide cutting edge, reliable and secure online services to clients and to remain at the forefront of this technology into the future.
Summary of Recommendations

1. Development of an OFDR technical solution that ensures a secure, safe and controlled online space requires consideration of specific System Design Principles including:
   - Granular redundancy;
   - Common look and feel;
   - Common Authentication Directory;
   - Flexibility of System;
   - System Environment; and
   - Site readiness, including work and staff readiness.

2. Installation and customization of the technology must prioritise security of information shared in the online environment to ensure privacy of client data and the ability to withhold confidential information.

3. Resources need to be allocated to enable the ongoing investigation and review of current and emerging technologies to remain current and relevant for the intended client group.

4. System design should continuously consider the cost to the end user, including potential internet and telephony charges related to video and voice transmission.

5. Development and promotion of the technology needs to support ease and confidence of client engagement as well as etiquette and ground rules for the online environment.

6. Consideration must be given to the complexity of the online environment and detailed guidelines should be developed to include all aspects of the online service for clients. These should include for example a consideration of transparency, the sharing of documents, email protocol, photo sharing and confidentiality.

7. The consideration of both practice and technical issues is required in considering layout and design for the online sessions.

8. Screening processes for clients involved in an online service need to include Client readiness and appropriateness. Considerations should include:
   - Motivation or desire to be involved in online services;
   - Technology access and capability;
   - Suitability of the client’s home setup to ensure an online conducive environment; and
• Case requirements or conditions that support online services as an appropriate option.

9. **Staff training and readiness** for online services is essential for the successful roll-out of online service delivery. Staff training should incorporate:
   • Use of computer skills to a basic level;
   • Clinical practice skills; and
   • Interest and Engagement in online services.

10. The design of an OFDR system should aim to promote a **sense of trust** in technology, in particular a high rate of reliability and promoting privacy and confidentiality provisions.

11. **Staff training** could be supplemented with mentors or coaches to assist in skill maintenance for all staff, and the development of super users to play the role of help desk, troubleshooting roles.

12. **Pre FDR Education** should be part of the OFDR model, and could be offered in an online or self directed workbook format.

13. Implementing OFDR technology **cross-culturally** needs to consider privacy and competing demands within that community (for example by implementing the technology as a community level rather than individuals homes) and cultural diversity must be acknowledged and respected throughout implementation.
1 OVERVIEW

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 This final report reports on the development and evaluation of Online Family Dispute Resolution (OFDR) capabilities in accordance with the contract from The Commonwealth Attorney General’s Department between 1 July 2009 and 30 June 2011.

1.2 Recipient

1.2.1 The recipients and audience of this report are:
   I. The Commonwealth Attorney General’s Department
   II. Relationships Australia Queensland (RAQ)

1.3 Activity

The OFDR contract specified the following:

1.3.1 To develop Online Family Dispute Resolution capabilities including the evaluation of video conferencing as an additional medium for service delivery for those clients assessed as suitable for the existing Telephone Dispute Resolution Service.

1.3.2 The activity also includes the development of a Pre Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) education session to be incorporated into the non face to face service model. This means that Pre-Family Dispute Resolution education sessions should be made available for online Family Dispute Resolution clients as well as telephone dispute resolution clients.

The activity includes the provision of an Evaluative Report which must be provided to The Commonwealth Attorney General’s Department by the 30th March 2011.

1.3.3 The Evaluative Report is intended to inform the development of a Best Practice Guide by The Commonwealth Attorney General’s Department. The Report will include:
• A summary of the Online Family Dispute Resolution pilot and outcomes;
• A description of the services offered via online family dispute resolution such as pre Family Dispute Resolution education, Intake, and group sessions;
• The learnings from implementing an Online Family Dispute Resolution capacity including videoconferencing platform;
• Post implementation learnings;
• Practical and operational issues such as security measures, Intake issues (including but not limited to assessment expansions, screening for suitability, impacts to the organisation, technological capability checks of client safety and other risks); and
• Client issues such as client technological resources, access, potential costs and client acceptance.

1.4 Report Activity Period

This Report Activity Period commenced on 1 July 2009 and ends on 30 March 2011. Progress Reports have been submitted to the Agency on 31 December 2009, and 31 March 2010.

1.5 Document Control and Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Version Number</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Author/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26/8/10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Project Manager/Research</td>
<td>Cindy McKenzie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/2/11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>OFDR Report Sub Group</td>
<td>Cindy McKenzie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/3/11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>OFDR Report Sub Group</td>
<td>Cindy McKenzie, Tristan Casey, Elisabeth Wilson-Evered, Mark Thomson, Jennifer Murray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/3/11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>OFDR SC</td>
<td>Matthew Horsfall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/3/11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>OFDR Project Team</td>
<td>Mark Thomson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/3/11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>OFDR Report Sub Group</td>
<td>Elisabeth Wilson-Evered, Matt Horsfall, Jennifer Murray, Mark Thomson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/3/11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Executive Team</td>
<td>Mark Thomson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/3/11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Executive Team</td>
<td>Elisabeth Wilson-Evered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/3/11</td>
<td>Final Version</td>
<td>Attorney General</td>
<td>Shane Klintworth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 1.6 Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term/</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TDRS</td>
<td>Telephone Dispute Resolution Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODR</td>
<td>Online Dispute Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFDR</td>
<td>Online Family Dispute Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRC</td>
<td>Family Relationship Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAQ</td>
<td>Relationships Australia Queensland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGD</td>
<td>Attorney-General’s Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Client Contact Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intake</td>
<td>Screening and clinical assessment of client appropriateness for Family Dispute Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>Collection of personal and statistical data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre FDR Education</td>
<td>Preparation for Family Dispute Resolution and increasing client awareness of children's needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDR/Mediation</td>
<td>Family Dispute Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFP</td>
<td>Not for Profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Government Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDRP</td>
<td>Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIRO</td>
<td>Telephone Information Referrals Operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VoIP</td>
<td>Voice over Internet Protocol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 Project Context

The Telephone Dispute Resolution Service (TDRS) was identified as an ideal site by the Attorney General to explore the use of extended technologies to provide Family Dispute Resolution services online. The TDRS is a telephone-based, child-focused Family Dispute Resolution service that is funded by the Commonwealth under the Family Relationships Services Program. The TDRS is operated by Relationships Australia (Qld) in partnership with Relationships Australia (NSW) and operates as a component of the Family Relationship Advice Line (FRAL). The TDRS is a national service that provides assistance to separated parents with parenting and property disputes. The service operates from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and from 10am to 4pm on Saturday (local time in each State and Territory), except national public holidays.

This alliance between government and the Not for Profit (NFP) sector presents exciting opportunities for both the general public (in terms of broadening access to Family Dispute Resolution mechanisms) and the Australian mediation community. The opportunity to trial OFDR methods on a national scale represents a unique chance to strengthen empirical knowledge regarding online negotiation and develop best practice guidelines for Internet-based service delivery. This section provides a description of OFDR, the context and the project background and development.

2.2 OFDR Definition

For the purpose of this project, “OFDR capability” has been defined as; the reliable and effective delivery of OFDR services (i.e. registration, Intake, pre-FDR education, OFDR sessions, client information and referrals) utilising user-appropriate and accessible online technologies (i.e. video conferencing, video streaming, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), document sharing and manipulation, text chat).

2.3 OFDR Capabilities

To demonstrate capability in the successful provision of OFDR, two essential components must be displayed; first, a delivery mechanism and, second, a forum for sharing information
(Clarke & Cho, 2001). At its core, the specific characteristics of OFDR capability are determined by factors influencing users’ access to technology and the appropriateness of that technology for their particular requirements at that time.

With these considerations in mind, the design and implementation of OFDR capability must consider:

1. Client accessibility to the required technology
2. Usability factors
3. Reliability factors
4. Evaluation of OFDR outcomes versus established methods of FDR (e.g. face to face, telephone)
5. Potential leveraging of technology to extend and enhance current FDR processes

**OFDR capabilities are not isolated purely to the realm of the technical.** Principles of human/computer interaction and consideration of changes to traditional FDR facilitation process with the online context (Eisen, 2001) require a systematic and integrated approach to the OFDR Pilot Project. Investment in research throughout the project seeks to develop an understanding of the efficacy and sufficiency of OFDR capabilities according to the requirements of the program, clients, Practitioners and the host organisation.

### 2.4 Current FDR Services via TDRS and FRCs

The TDRS currently offers a three-step FDR process for clients; 1. Registration, 2. Intake and Assessment, and if appropriate, 3. participation in Family Dispute Resolution session/s. Many of the Family Relationship Centres (FRCs) offer clients a further step, pre-FDR education, which is provided either in a group setting or a booklet and DVD that is provided as a “take home pack”.

Following discussion among the OFDR Project Committee and subsequent discussions with the Agency, the scope of the project was extended to adopt the four-step process in developing OFDR capabilities in line with the process used in most FRCs, being the significant providers of FDR services in Australia. Given the important role of FRCs in the Australian community it is also likely that they may benefit from a ‘best practice’ guide arising from the results of the current pilot project.
To sum up, OFDR capability is defined as; the reliable and effective delivery of OFDR services (i.e. registration, Intake, pre-FDR education, OFDR sessions, client information and referrals) utilising user-appropriate and accessible online technologies (i.e. video conferencing, video streaming, VOIP, document sharing and manipulation, text chat).

Given the findings and principles emergent from the literature review, the details of the contract, the constraints in terms of budget, time, and available expertise, the Project Committee determined the scope of the project discussed next.
3.1 Project Scope

The first Progress Report outlined the determining factors the RAQ Senior Management Team and OFDR Project Committee considered in defining the scope of the project.

The following components were initially identified as being in scope for the project:

- OFDR Web Portal
- Intake
- OFDR Session

Other components initially identified as out of scope of the project but considered as value adding initiatives to enhance OFDR services included the TDRS website and Pre-FDR Education. In September 2010 the pre-FDR education component was included as being in scope of the project as a result of additional funding and a variation to the OFDR Agreement.

Management of scope is reported in section 11 of this report.
4.1 Project Structure

The Online Family Dispute Resolution (OFDR) project requires the consideration of a wide spectrum of perspectives. A multidisciplinary project team within Relationships Australia (Qld) draws together the experience and wisdom of multiple departments that are aligned towards a common goal.

Membership of the project team changed at various times during the term of the project as a result of staff movements; however this was mitigated by having a number of key personnel from each department involved throughout the project and keeping extensive records and documentation in accordance with the risk management strategies identified in the project plan.

4.2 Project Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>Mark Thomson</td>
<td>Director, Virtual Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Coordinator</td>
<td>Cindy McKenzie</td>
<td>OFDR Project Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFDR Project Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>Shane Klintworth</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>Samantha Aldridge</td>
<td>Exec Director, Practice Development and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jeff Taylor</td>
<td>Director, Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April O'Mara</td>
<td>Senior Clinical Leader, FDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matthew Horsfall</td>
<td>Coordinator, TDRS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Stuart McFarlane</td>
<td>Manager, ICT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ryan Scherer</td>
<td>ICT Project Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Andrew Teh</td>
<td>ICT System Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Dr Elisabeth Wilson-Evered</td>
<td>Director, Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tristan Casey (to Nov 2010)</td>
<td>Research Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jennifer Murray</td>
<td>Research Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Warren Crompton</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Project Sub Committees

A number of sub committees were formed at relevant times to focus on specialised issues or topics, reporting regularly to the main project committee.

Sub Committee
Registration – Decision Matrix
Matthew Horsfall – TDRS Co-ordinator
Shamene Karimshah – Client Contact Centre Team Leader
Elisabeth Wilson-Evered – Director Research
Tristan Casey – Research Assistant
Mark Thomson – Project Manager
Cindy McKenzie – Project Coordinator

Sub Committee
Pre FDR Education
Jeff Taylor – Director, Practice
April O’Mara – Senior Clinical Leader, FDR
Matthew Horsfall – TDRS Coordinator
Elisabeth Wilson-Evered – Director, Research
Rebecca Cook – Manager, Marketing
Mark Thomson – Project Manager

Sub Committee
OFDR Cultural Considerations
Elisabeth Wilson-Evered – Director Research
Deborah Bennet, Director Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Programs
Tristan Casey – Research Assistant
Research Assistants Uni of QLD and Griffith Uni
Mark Thomson – Project Manager

Sub Committee
TDRS Website Development
Stuart McFarlane, Director, ICT
Tsvetana Trifinova, ICT Website Design Officer
Rebecca Cook, Manager, Marketing
Mark Thomson – Project Manager
## 4.4 Meeting Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Type</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Project Team Meeting** | Project Sponsor  
Project Manager  
Project Coordinator  
Project Committee | To review detailed plans (tasks, assignments, and action items)          | Weekly                             |
| **Practice Meeting**      | Practice Committee Members               | To review clinical matters relating to the project. Plan and implement staff training plans | Regularly Scheduled                |
| **Technology Meeting**    | Technology Committee Members             | To inform the project committee of best technology options             | Regularly Scheduled                |
| **Vendor Meeting**        | Comlinx                                  | To ensure technology timelines are adhered to                          | Regularly scheduled and weekly during implementation phase |
| **Research Meeting**      | Research Committee Members               | Research planning for the project                                      | Regularly Scheduled                |
| **Sub Committee Meeting** | Registration Decision  
Matrix  
Pre – FDR Education  
Cultural Considerations  
TDRS Website Development | To inform the project committee of best practice options               | Regularly Scheduled                |
| **Board Meeting**         | Project Manager and other Committee Members as required | To inform RAQ Board of progress of project                             | As Required                        |
| **Other Meetings**        | As determined by Project Team            | General communications                                                 | As Required                        |
## 4.5 Project Phases

The OFDR project was divided into the following phases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Contemplation</td>
<td>Before the new technology is experienced</td>
<td>1/7/09 – 31/3/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemplation</td>
<td>On viewing and experiencing the new technology</td>
<td>3/9/09 – 31/12/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre Implementation</td>
<td>Developing Acceptance Criteria and Tests for all aspects of the implementation</td>
<td>4/1/10 – 28/2/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Implementing the new technology</td>
<td>1/3/10 – ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Evaluation of Implementation</td>
<td>1/3/10 – 31/3/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Lessons Learned</td>
<td>Reviewing all components of the project, including project management methods</td>
<td>1/3/10 – ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Maintenance</td>
<td>Recommendation for maintaining Project in Host Organisation</td>
<td>1/7/10 – ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handover</td>
<td>Handover Final Report on project deliverables</td>
<td>31/3/11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES OFFERED BY OFDR

5.1 OFDR Portal / TDRS Website

Initial planning identified the requirement to provide an OFDR portal for clients to access the online services that would be developed. Installation of the OFDR system and subsequent testing soon identified that there was no immediate requirement for an OFDR portal, as clients can directly access their online session by clicking on a web link that is provided by e-mail.

The web link directly connects the client to a customised login page, where on secure authentication, the client is directed to an online “reception room”.

At the designated appointment time, the FDRP will telephone the client and when commencing the session, will be able to accept the client from the “reception room" to a secure virtual meeting room for the online Intake or FDR session. Most other information and features that had been intended for the OFDR portal can be made available to clients by e-mail or through the proposed TDRS website.

Although the development of a TDRS website is outside the scope of this project, this function is significantly related. As the TDRS operates as a component of the Family Relationship Advice Line and is a referral-only service, it is proposed the TDRS website will be password protected and accessible only to registered TDRS clients. For the purpose of ongoing service delivery beyond the term of this project, the TDRS website can provide an alternative secure entry point for clients to access OFDR services, including pre-FDR education and other TDRS resources including Forms, Policies and Information Sheets. Specifically, the TDRS website will include the following features:

- Information about the TDRS, including OFDR
- Privacy and confidentiality statements
- Resources, including parenting and property prompt sheets and educational material
- Electronic forms able to be downloaded and printed, or submitted online (e.g. fee reduction form; agreement to participate in FDR)
• Links to Family Relationships Online
• Secure electronic fee payment options
• Secure access to OFDR sessions
• Frequently asked questions (FAQ)
• Contact details and e-mail form to facilitate communication with the TDRS
• Facility to submit feedback for the purposes of continuous improvement and evaluation service performance

Through an existing relationship with RAQ and the School of Management and Information Systems at Victoria University, assistance has been provided by Professor John Zeleznikow and his team about designing a purpose-built website that is evidence-based model compliant with relevant technical and accessibility standards. The criteria include conforming to strict XHTML and CSS standards for application to a range of mobile devices and potentially ‘future proofed’ that is taking in to account future developments of OFDR to a mobile phone application.

The TDRS website is proposed for launch in May 2011.

5.2 Intake Session

After a client has registered their details, the first step in the FDR process is an Intake session. The Intake session is a process of screening and assessment, an opportunity for the FDR Practitioner to meet with a client one-on-one to share information about the FDR process, the family law system, and to investigate the background to the situation of why the client is engaging in FDR. In parenting matters the session usually goes through subjects such as historical information about the previous relationship between the clients (e.g. as parents, grandparents or otherwise), issues surrounding domestic and family violence, previous levels of communication, a focus on the children and their current status despite the conflict between parents, the nature of the dispute and a robust discussion about what range of outcomes are being sought in the FDR process.

The OFDR Intake session can be conducted by web-based videoconferencing, with the client using the telephone for audio. To facilitate service delivery, a number of wide-screen, camera-enabled computers were purchased for the OFDR project. Amongst other benefits, the wide screen enables the Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner (FDRP) to view an online meeting
room on one half of the screen, and an electronic Intake form on the other half of the screen. This enables the FDRP to type relevant notes directly onto the Intake form as the online session progresses.

For clients who do not have access to a web-camera, but have access to a computer and the Internet, online Intakes may still be utilised if other functions of the OFDR system may be of benefit to the client (e.g. desktop sharing, document sharing, electronic whiteboard).

5.3 Family Dispute Resolution Session

Once all clients in the proposed dispute resolution have participated in an Intake session the case is assessed for appropriateness to proceed for Family Dispute Resolution. If the case is assessed as appropriate, an FDR session may be arranged where the FDR Practitioner, with the parties, will have a facilitated discussion about the children using various conflict resolution techniques.

It was noted in the previous reports that it is intended to offer the joint FDR session by videoconferencing and in addition, it was proposed to include the following features, all of which have now been successfully implemented:

- desktop sharing
- uploading of documentation, including photographs
- the ability to manage documentation printing
- breakout rooms (for private sessions)
- shared viewing of documents and other electronic content
- shared display of a dynamic agenda and agreement
- shared access to an electronic whiteboard
- the ability for the FDRP to e-mail themselves a copy of electronic notes made in the meeting room, including the agenda and agreement

The OFDR system provides flexibility to deliver online FDR sessions with or without videoconferencing and for sessions to be conducted jointly, by co-facilitation, shuttle or with interpreters (including sign languages) and/or support people. It is acknowledged however that the limited scope of the project did not provide for all of these options to be employed or evaluated.
5.4 Pre-FDR Education

The development of the pre-FDR education component will provide access to an additional step in the FDR process for all clients of the TDRS. This pre-FDR education step is to be completed after both parties have participated in the Intake session and before the FDR session. It is expected that three modes of delivery will be available:

**Printed Workbook**
For clients who cannot access the Internet, a printed workbook has been developed that will be sent by mail for the client to read, engage with, and to record notes in. The workbook has been developed and designed with the guidance of evidence-based goals and content, drawing on the work and extensive experience of the RAQ Practice and Research Teams during the course of this project.

**Self-guided Online Resource**
The content of the workbook has been adapted to an online format and will be available to clients to participate in as a self-guided resource.

The OFDR system allows for multimedia presentations to be played and a variety of information and content to be introduced and displayed through various modalities including graphics, quizzes, diagrams, illustrations and photographs.

The results of quizzes can be immediately displayed to the client and the TDRS can produce a variety of reports and view relevant data. It is intended that if required, the client can pause and save the self-paced session and return at a later time.

Clients who have questions arising from engaging in the material will be able to access the FAQ section of the TDRS website, or forward their question to the TDRS team by e-mail or telephone the service. It is envisaged that the feedback received will inform continual improvement processes and the continuing development of the FAQ section of the TDRS website.

**Facilitated Online Groups**
The third option is participation in a facilitated online group session. It has previously been reported that the OFDR system provides the facility for multiple participants to engage in an online meeting room. It is proposed that group sessions will initially contain a maximum of five clients. The Facilitator (FDRP) will guide clients through a group discussion that may utilise the
electronic workbook and other multimedia presentations as a focus. The workbook (effectively an interactive PowerPoint presentation) can be viewed on the screen along with other features, including document sharing and an electronic whiteboard as examples.

If required, the FDRP will be able to use breakout rooms to engage in a private session or small groups and chat facilities will also available, including the use of emoticons. As with all online sessions, the FDRP will at all times control each of the features the client can view or has access to, including videoconferencing, text and audio.

The online group session is reliant on the successful integration of the video and telephony features of the OFDR system. This is discussed in extensive detail later in this report.
6 EARLY VISION

6.1 Early Conceptualisation of Use

From commencement, the vision of the OFDR Project Committee has been to develop an accessible, online environment where separated parents can participate in the mediation process in a safe and secure space. Importantly, the online environment must be conducive to the mediation process and not a hindrance – the technology should operate seamlessly so participants are able to focus on their respective roles in the mediation.

The first meetings of the OFDR Project Committee were used to develop a needs analysis, analysing each step of the FDR process and identifying the different tools utilised by FDRPs to assist clients with discussing parenting and property disputes. Differing requirements existed for each element. For example, the ability to conduct private sessions is not required in the Intake stage but is considered an essential element to the FDR process. Likewise, the ability to engage with educational material and view multi-media presentations may be relevant to pre-FDR education but not a necessary component of the other steps in the process. The needs analysis assisted to inform the early conceptualisation of use for an online FDR system and to inform the brief that was presented to vendors when seeking a technological solution. From those initial meetings a conceptualisation of what an online mediation room might look like was drafted. Interestingly, the original concept is not dissimilar to the product now in existence.
6.2 Geospatial Mapping of Clients and ADSL Exchanges

The funded activity has been to develop OFDR capabilities including videoconferencing…for those clients assessed as suitable for the existing Telephone Dispute Resolution Service. The TDRS is a national service, so an understanding of the spread and density of clients using the service, and their access to ADSL connectivity, was deemed important to designing a system that would be appropriate for the needs of the client group.

The TDRS has been in operation for over three years, which is a sufficient timeframe for trends analysis of client data. Client registration data (postcodes) was retrieved from the Client Information System (CIS) to facilitate the geospatial mapping of client density as a function of regional area. A summary of these results was reported in the first Progress Report. The primary aim of this geospatial project was to inform the OFDR project regarding TDRS client density in relation to ADSL connectivity throughout Australia. A secondary aim was to explore geographical trends in TDRS client data for use in strategic and operational planning.
The sample consisted of 5714 client registrations. Key findings included:

- The majority of TDRS clients (31.8%) registered with a Queensland postcode, and a minority registered with a Northern Territory postcode (0.98%);

- Expressing state of client registration as a proportion of total state population revealed that the TDRS has the greatest market penetration per capita within the ACT, while NSW was the least penetrated (as a function of total state population);

- Region data indicate that the majority of clients belong to the ‘SE QLD’ Australia Post delivery region. Geospatial mapping suggests that TDRS client registrations are typically clustered in metropolitan areas that are covered by ADSL-enabled exchanges.

We concluded that based on historical registration data, access to the communication infrastructure that would be required by OFDR should be available to the majority of TDRS clients.

**Figure 2 Frequency Of TDRS Clients By State Of Registration.**
Figure 3 Frequency Of TDRS Clients As A Proportion Of State Population.
Figure 4 Telstra ADSL-Enabled Exchanges With TDRS Client Frequencies (By Region).

* Yellow dots indicate Telstra ADSL-enabled telephone exchanges, and blue circles indicate frequency of TDRS client registrations (by region).
7.1 Selecting A Technological Solution

On commencement of the project RAQ invited two communication technology integration companies to formulate innovative concepts to meet the technical challenges of the OFDR project. The preferred vendor proposed a solution that was built around three phases that align with business related requirements within the dispute resolution workflow, namely:

- Phase 1 – An Intake Phase (refer to Figure 5)
- Phase 2 – A Pre Family Dispute Resolution Phase (refer to Figure 6)
- Phase 3 – Family Dispute Resolution Phase (refer to Figure 7)

The selection process was extensive, with a period of four months passing from the commencement of the project until an order was placed for the chosen products and associated technological needs. In sum, the capacity of the potential integration companies was carefully considered within the context of the solution that had been offered, the business needs, and the degree of technical complexity of the project.

The preferred vendor had previously managed projects of a similar complexity and scope on behalf of RAQ and had built a solid understanding of the technological infrastructure, operations and values of the business. This understanding assisted to provide a solution that was built by bringing four key vendors solutions together to meet the exact requirements of the scope across areas of Web Conferencing, document sharing, flash based video, text chat, secure access, audio conferencing, telephony, recording and boardroom video.

As is common in the ICT industry, buying ‘shrink wrap’ software is quite often preferable to building from scratch. While the OFDR project has employed readily available shrink wrap software, the integration component must still be built. This carries a number of associated risks that were identified and analysed as part of the project planning process. These risks have been previously reported and relate to all aspects of the project. A final evaluation on project management and risk management is provided in section 11 of this report.
Figure 5 Intake Phase

Figure 6 Pre Family Dispute Resolution Phase
Figure 7 Family Dispute Resolution Phase

7.2 System Design Principles

The system integrators for the project have responsibility to manage the collaborating vendors through existing and new business relationships. In addition, it has been the role of the system integrators to manage customer (RAQ) system design specification across the multiple vendors. The state of these relationships is transparent to RAQ and has been reported extensively in the first two reports. System design principles for the project have included the following:

Granular Redundancy

The model and method of integration was chosen, in part, to ensure granular redundancy is employed concerning service delivery. Granular redundancy in the OFDR Project means a service may be delivered without (for example) a video feed to any party. It may also mean that document sharing may cease if network conditions dictate service delivery is being adversely impacted due to one or more parties experiencing difficulties with their connection. Regardless of either component being ceased, service delivery is theoretically able to continue utilising traditional telephone dispute resolution practices as voice is delivered across the public
switched telephone network (PSTN).

The decision to employ the principle of granular redundancy has proved of great benefit during implementation. As an example, challenges that have been encountered in achieving full integration of the telephony features with the web conferencing software have proven not to be a barrier to online service delivery, with each component able to operate independently from the other. This issue is discussed in detail in section 7.6.

**Common Look and Feel**

With the solution provided, it became a necessity to allow for a common look and feel to ensure the following:

- Ease of use for FDRPs to remove human error factors
- Ease of use for the end users
- Simplicity for IT support

Each of these principles have been addressed in detail in the second report.

**Common Authentication Directory**

RAQ technology systems are primarily based on the Windows operating system utilising Windows Active Directory. Importantly, the individual components that were selected to make up the OFDR system each have a robust mechanism or mechanisms to facilitate secure authentication utilising Windows Active Directory, enabling a common authentication directory across all components.

**Flexibility of System**

The system chosen by RAQ was required to be flexible in terms of the design of virtual service delivery rooms and in terms of cosmetic appearances. The strength of flexibility in virtual service delivery rooms is that the environment can be constructed to suit both the number of participants and the context in which service delivery is occurring.

**System Environment**

The selected technology of the OFDR project was able to be fully adopted into the infrastructure of RAQ. The nature of this infrastructure is that technology resource levels (CPU / Memory / Storage) are scalable and will therefore continue to meet demand as and when it grows. Users of the OFDR system, both Practitioners and clients, are provisioned within an industry standard directory service. Doing so provides flexibility, security, independent operation, and the opportunity to repackage users account details in a manner which best facilitates relative anonymity.
7.3 The OFDR System

The OFDR system was developed with reference to the identified design principles noted above and within the capacities and scope of the chosen technologies. This process has provided for an online environment that we believe meets the early visions for the project, being to develop an accessible, online environment where separated parents can participate in the mediation process in a safe and secure space.

The OFDR system is web-based and able to be operated across most platforms (Windows, Mac, Linux, Solaris and others). From an end user or client perspective, the only requirements to use the system are the following:

- Adobe Flash Player version 9+
- Internet browser
- Internet connection
- Web camera

Adopting the principle of granular redundancy, the audio in the OFDR system is carried by telephone over the public switched network. This means that if for any reason the Internet connection is lost and the web conferencing features cannot be utilised, the session can continue by telephone in the usual manner for telephone-based service delivery. Similarly, if the telephone line was to be disconnected, participants may still be able to communicate by video and text through the web conferencing system, assuming internet connectivity has not also been lost.

Clients can access the OFDR system from anywhere they can access a telephone and a computer able to be connected to the Internet. The system can be used with or without web cameras, subject to clinical assessments and technical considerations (e.g. low bandwidth, or a dial-up connection).

The OFDR system has a very flexible user interface. The screen of the online meeting room is broken into a series of small windows or ‘pods’ that can be scaled, resized and repositioned on the screen. Each pod provides one of various functionalities that are available, including videoconferencing, a participants list, document sharing, the ability to take notes, and an electronic white board. The host of the meeting (the FDRP) can assign users with the required level of authority to utilise some or all of the functionalities available within each of the pods, as is appropriate in the circumstances. A number of templates have been developed for the
various stages of the FDR process and to provide for variations in the number of participants. These templates are described in detail in Section 8.

One of the influencing features when selecting the system was that the manufacturers of the web conferencing software already offered a collaborative solution with the telecommunications technology that RAQ currently employs. This provides the possibility for a seamless integration of the audio conferencing with the web conferencing solution. Such a system also provides for ease of use, with the operator focusing on only one screen rather than controlling the web-conferencing features on the screen and the telephony from the phone on the desk.

With a broad set of combined audio and Web conferencing features, we believe the solution is appealing to government, education, financial services, health care, telecommunications and other organisations that want an integrated audio and web conferencing solution that can be installed on-premise, behind their fire walls, for security or confidentiality reasons.

Key features of the telephony integration include:

- Integration to Web Conferencing solution
- Scalable to 2,500 users
- Installed behind fire walls for Security or Confidentiality requirements
- Instant Access to web and audio conferences
- Start/Stop and Conference features controlled on screen
- Mute and Hold of participants on screen
- Synchronised web and audio conferencing
- Flash-based
- Easy accessibility for any browser

Secure remote access to the OFDR system is provided through the Secure Access Gateway, a component of the system that was purchased, installed and integrated for the project. The security features of the OFDR system, including the Secure Access Gateway, are discussed in detail in section 7.7.
7.4 Installation and Customisation

Preliminary issues concerning the installation and customisation of the OFDR system has been reported extensively in the previous reports. In summary, the ordered technology was delivered in January 2010 and installed soon after. The installations were scheduled to occur during non-operational times to ensure minimum disruption to existing services. Once the process of installation had occurred, the integration and customisation phases commenced, providing for a period of working closely with the vendor to prepare the system for handover in the coming months.

The technical complexity of this project has been evident since commencement. Indeed, the brief required an innovative technical solution, as what was proposed had not been done before. The requirement was to provide an online environment specific to the precise needs of the FDR process, necessitating the development of a secure, safe and controlled online space. These needs were sometimes in conflict with the intended purpose of Web conferencing systems, generally designed to provide the end user with maximum flexibility, transparency and some degree of control.

When these issues are considered in addition to the complex nature of the integration of four different components (Web conferencing; Telephony infrastructure; Audio conferencing; and the Secure Access Gateway), the project was identified as unique in its design and intent. It was of no surprise therefore that the installation and customisation phase was a very active period for the project, requiring extensive internal resources to assist the vendor in progressing. And it was of no surprise that some road-bumps were met along the path.

For example, various different issues were observed when external connectivity to the system was first enabled, the majority of which involved things breaking randomly. However within a week, successful tests were conducted with meetings facilitated from a variety of devices including a PC, a Mac and an iPhone – content sharing and video both working flawlessly across all three devices. For some months such successes were to be recorded intermittently, whilst various other problems arose. Most were dealt with swiftly, whilst some persisted.

Also during this period, some useful features of the product were identified that had not previously been known to RAQ. For example, when purchasing the system it was not known that the notes written in the notes pod could be emailed to the Host of the meeting (the FDRP). This feature is now regarded as a significant benefit, requiring a relatively simple configuration
of the Web conferencing software in order to integrate RAQ’s exchange server for the delivery of email.

In the initial stages, a number of practical issues were identified in regards to optimising video quality. In testing the OFDR system through role play scenarios we discovered that the quality of the video stream being transferred was sometimes dependent and variable on the following conditions which could be controlled by the Practitioner:

**Room Lighting Conditions**

Some limited research into the effect of lighting on video quality pointed to the type of light which would illicit the best quality connection. We found that fluorescent lighting alone would usually lead to a poorer quality video and possible distortion, whereas incandescent, halogen or natural light lead to the best quality video. We also identified that the position of lighting would further impact the quality of the video – any lighting behind the practitioner / client can lead to a ‘ghosting’ where the features of the person are distorted and blacked out leaving just the outline of the person. Instead a light source coming from behind the computer, highlighting the person’s face, ensured the best clarity possible.

**Computer Settings**

Settings were detected within the HP Touch Smart machines where the webcam settings are required to be altered from the default. The anti-flicker setting needed to be reduced from 60 Hz to 50 Hz as well as a backlight compensation setting turned on. Without these setting the picture was being affected by quite noticeable black waves of interference through the picture.

**Settings with the Web Conferencing Software**

There are settings within the online meetings that can be accessed via the settings ‘cog’ in the camera and voice pod which can reduce or increase the quality of the video depending on the quality of the Internet connection with the client. Whereas the best possible quality is advantageous to transmit the best possible picture of the client, a ‘lag’ can be created if the quality is too high and the Internet connection cannot cope with the amount of data required. A ‘lag’ is a distortion between the synchronisation of the audio and video feed. A faster connection can handle the ‘high quality’ settings however a poor connection might need to be reduced to the ‘fast images’ or ‘medium images’ setting to ensure the video is transmitted efficiently and not causing video lag.
A general principle of video, film and television is that light pastel coloured backgrounds provide the best visual perception of a room. In selecting the colour palette for the OFDR system, we identified that neutral shades such as beige, tan, pale gray or a pale slate blue would work best. A search of available resources published on the Internet revealed that these colours have generally been reported to provide the best ergonomic background and to reduce eye strain when viewing the video images. Stark whites and the darker palettes should be avoided as they do not provide optimum background for viewing. Whatever the colour scheme, muted pale tones are preferred.

Generally, vibrant colour can reflect light and cast a hued pallor onto the individual's video image. Painted walls are best in a flat or semi-flat finish. On recommendation, we chose to avoid gloss or enamel finishes as they reflect light. Important too, is to avoid tight, intricate patterns, such as striping, checks or tight swirls. These patterns can cause the video image to appear distorted and flicker rapidly.

The above guidelines for room and wall colours match evenly with the requirements for FDR Practitioners, or the hosts of the meetings. We determined that Practitioners wear appropriate coloured, non-patterned clothing to ensure the best possible picture quality.

While accessories themselves do not present a problem for online service delivery, we noticed that personal spectacles without reflective coating can lead to a distorted image of the person delivered via webcam. The effect of such eyewear was noticeable white circles over the glasses instead of the person’s eyes.

### 7.5 Acceptance Criteria and Testing

After a five month period of integration and customisation of the products, a date was set for the vendor to formally handover the integrated solution to RAQ. We previously reported that a user-centred approach would be adopted to acceptance testing, through multi-disciplinary collaboration between Practitioners, the OFDR Project Team, the Practice and Training sub-committee, the IT department, Research staff and external suppliers. Indeed, we carried out this plan. Handover was a collaborative process, demonstrating the product by utilising role-play scenarios during the various FDR steps and systematically evaluating all aspects.
RAQ set a total of 74 acceptance criteria used to assess the OFDR system against Practice process and requirements.

The first attempt of Acceptance Testing occurred in the first week of June 2010. The meeting was attended by eight staff from RAQ and two staff from the Vendor, including their System Engineer. Many of the functionalities were able to be demonstrated by proceeding through the various OFDR steps and scenarios; however the demonstration was not without issues. Of the 74 acceptance criteria, 40 criteria were met, 31 criteria were not met and 3 criteria were not tested. Some of the successes included:

- Three meeting rooms were operating simultaneously using a variety of internet connections and computers (including a Mac).
- A group meeting was hosted by video.
- Chat pods were used by multiple participants, with responses moderated by a host.
- Documents of different formats were successfully uploaded and shared, with blackboard overlays and other functions fully operational.
- PowerPoint can be filled in individually, without affecting other participants.
- Video connections were clear and within acceptable time lags.

Some of the issues included:

- The integrated telephony functions were not operational. The non-functioning telephony was responsible for 14 of the criteria not being met.
- FDRPs and client surnames must not be displayed
- The password reset function was not operational; some error messages and e-mails need to be customised.
- If the host (FDRP) unexpectedly loses their connection without having ended the meeting, the clients can still stay connected by video.

Actions items were assigned and a date set for another handover attempt to occur the following week. Many of the issues were resolved by this time, however some issues remained outstanding and only a partial handover was completed. A significant issue that remained outstanding was in regards to the integration of the telephony and web conferencing components, as described in section 7.7.
7.6 Go Live

Whilst only a partial handover was completed on the second attempt, the OFDR system was effectively ready for use. The granular nature of the system has assured that the delays to integrating the telephony and web conferencing components were no barrier to commencing online service delivery.

Previously, we noted that in anticipation of the project ‘Go Live’ date, the research team developed a toolkit to assess OFDR readiness. Checklists were developed for assessing both user (competence) and site (technical) readiness. Technology readiness checklists have been used extensively by organisations to ensure that implementation is as efficient as possible (Helsop, McGregor & Griffith, 2001; Graettinger et al., 2002). Typically, moving technology out of the development phase and into organisational environments is described as ‘technology transfer’ (Helsop et al., 2001). Organisations utilise checklists in these scenarios to determine the viability and anticipated success of innovative new technologies. Consequently, the emphasis is on risk management and assessing the maturity of a particular innovation (i.e., readiness for implementation). As previously reported, the OFDR readiness checklists adopted a different emphasis; focussing on the capability of site infrastructure to support the technology and the ability of users to competently deliver online services. Given the high reported rate of technology implementation failure (Emam & Koru, 2008; Charette, 2005; Glass, 2005), OFDR readiness checklists may serve as an additional benchmark to eliminate adverse (and unexpected) variables.

The identification of OFDR practitioner competencies occurred in conjunction with the development of the staff training plan. Specifically, reference materials supplied by external trainer and OFDR training objectives were used to develop a series of assessable user competencies. The user readiness checklist encompasses the following areas of assessment:

- User competency in delivering FDR services via the web conferencing product and integrated telephone system, including back-up operations
- Knowledge of OFDR work-related procedures
- Confidence in using the OFDR system
- Understanding of the new work processes involved in using OFDR

Site readiness is an equally important consideration, given the project’s reliance on technological infrastructure. Manufacturer supplied technical specifications informed the site
readiness checklist. The site tool consists of the following elements:

- OFDR system readiness
- Work environment readiness
- Support staff (e.g., Venue staff) readiness

Following a further period of staff training and site preparation, user competencies and site readiness were established.

The first online Intake Session occurred on the 15th July 2010. The client was a shift worker from Ringwood (Vic). The technology worked seamlessly and the client engaged enthusiastically with the process.

7.7 Ongoing Issues

With the benefit of more than six months of testing and use since handover, the selected technology has proven to be robust, consistent and, from and end user point of view, the software is very easy to use. At this point in time, the OFDR system has been fully incorporated into the day to day functions of the ICT department with regard to support and operation.

Whilst there have been identifiable benefits in adopting a collaborative approach to technology and working with shrink-wrapped products, there has also been some challenges in regards to customisation and integration of those products, as reported above. This has included technological challenges as well as challenges in communication and collaboration between the individual vendors in order to diagnose and remedy problems in a timely manner.

As previously discussed, the integration of the web conferencing and telephony elements is a pivotal and defining characteristic of the OFDR system. Indeed, the integration of the systems and the customisation required to fit the particular needs of this project are, we believe, uniquely defining features to the OFDR system that has been developed. However, the challenges encountered have resulted in full integration of the videoconferencing and telephony systems not occurring within the timeframe of this project. Though advice had been received at the time of writing that all of the outstanding issues noted below have now been resolved, further testing is required for a positive outcome to be confidently reported. The project team is cautiously optimistic that full integration is near to completely achieved.
Issues arose early in the installation phase, with the telephony and web conferencing systems both communicating; however there was an error when creating an Audio Profile which was required to bring calls into a meeting. Interactivity between the two systems was to be temporary and intermittent thereafter, with a number of other integration and customisation issues arising during this time. Though most were able to be readily addressed, four issues remained outstanding as of 1 March 2011:

- Calls dropping out after 67 seconds
- The audio conference is not supporting breakout rooms
- No recognition of participant’s status in Attendee list even in he/she disconnects the phone
- Need to restart services at least once in every 24 hours

During the term of the project, our integration partner has liaised extensively with the RAQ ICT team and with the individual developers of the web conferencing and telephony products to diagnosis problems with the integration as they arose. Various solutions and subsequent modifications were applied and tested, however with each solution a further problem would sometimes be identified, or the solution would be short-lived. During this time, the ‘snapshot’ feature built into the products was activated for safety as a rollback mechanism prior to applying patches and other modifications.

A challenging and time-intensive in the exercise was isolating whether the issues were with the web conferencing or the telephony products, To do so, individual diagnostic testing was carried out independently by each company. The unique nature of the system meant that no time frame could be provided in regards to resolution. Some pressure applied to the vendor ensured the issues were escalated within the respective organisations and each of the four outstanding issues were allocated to business teams for addressing. Regular joint teleconferences were then conducted between the providers until a resolution was finally achieved in March 2011. As noted above, further testing is critical to assess the success of the integration. We have learned that solutions achieved of site do not necessary transfer to work effectively in practice

7.8 Security Issues

In developing the brief for a technical solution for the OFDR project, werecognised that security of data and the safety of all those participating in an online session, including clients and FDR Practitioners, were primary considerations. Whilst the Internet provides a powerful tool for
communications to occur between remote or disparate locations across the globe, it can also be an insecure channel for the exchange of information and is subject to misuse.

When possible solutions for the video-conferencing component were first considered, we recognised that products already existed on the market that readily provided web-based telephone and/or video calling capabilities. One of the most popular of these products is Skype with 663 million users registered in 2010 (Wikipedia).

**Products such as Skype are limited not only by their lack of flexibility in their interfaces but also in the weak security frameworks, and were quickly excluded as options for the OFDR Project.**

One of the four components that made up the integrated solution for the OFDR project was a Secure Access Gateway (SAG) to provide secure access across all of the necessary systems. After some initial teething issues, the SAG has now been successfully integrated with the web conferencing and audio conferencing products, and importantly, with the Active Directory authentication system already employed by RAQ. The system was initially designed so when an authorised user (FDRP) logged on to the OFDR system they were directed to the SAG, where they were required to log in again to gain access. With the successful integration of the SAG and the Active Directory, this process has now been streamlined for single sign-on.

For the end-user (client), access to the OFDR system is provided by entering a username and password that is generated and provided at the time an Intake is booked. As an additional security measure, the client must change the password when they first accesses the system, which must comply with standards for high-level protection (e.g. the password must contain an upper case and lower case letter, a number, and a special character key such as the hash sign).

Once the client’s details have been authenticated and they have connected with the OFDR system, the host (FDRP) must then ‘accept’ the user into the meeting room, providing yet another layer of authentication. To ensure transparency, once the client has been accepted into the meeting their name, along with the name of the host (FDRP) and names of all who have been accepted into the meeting, will always appear on the Attendee list which is on display in each template.

Whilst the visibility of names is an important security and safety feature, it has also represented a challenge in the particular context of delivering family relationship services. For personal security, it is a preferred option that RAQ staff members providing FDR services are only
identified by their first names. However the web conferencing and audio conferencing components and the Active Directory all require First and Last names to be entered, which resulted in the full name being displayed in the Attendee List when the staff member is hosting or participating in any sessions. It was also recognised that some clients will have changed their surnames since separation, and in some cases the visible presence of the changed name throughout the session may not be productive to negotiations.

A significant exercise in customisation was undertaken to remove the surname of staff and also of clients from the Attendee List; however this was successfully achieved prior to handover. A more difficult exercise in customisation was found in the need to mask the phone numbers of the participants in the Attendee List. In the same context as the need to mask surnames, we deemed it was essential to provide for the personal safety of the participants. The full masking of phone numbers proved a difficult exercise, with the vendors providing initial solutions that masked only the last four digits of the number. This first attempt was not satisfactory to the OFDR project team, as the area code and first four digits of the phone number is capable of identifying a general geographical area which could potentially compromise the safety of one or more of the participants. With significant efforts this critical requirement was met with eventual success in December 2010; all numbers are now fully masked from view.

### 7.9 Mobile Devices and New Technologies

In an age where new and emerging technologies in communications are ever present, it is a challenge for a developmental ICT project of this nature to remain current and relevant for the intended client group. Indeed, the development and use of mobile devices has increased significantly since the project commenced in July 2009 – their extended use for a broad range of activities is now becoming a common feature in modern society.

**With high accessibility, clearer pictures, wider screens and video camera functionality, the use of mobile devices for service delivery has been a necessary consideration.**

To test the interaction and adaptability of the OFDR system with current and emerging mobile technologies, it was previously reported that a Samsung OMNIA 18000T All-in-one Windows Mobile telephone had been purchased for the project. Features of the telephone included videoconferencing capabilities and the ability to add and engage with the Web Conferencing application. At that time, the Samsung model was one of only a few suitable options, with the first three versions of the iPhone not being viable due to there being no availability of a front facing video camera.
With the launch of the iPhone 4, the device contained two cameras and in February 2010 the software developers launched a free App for the iPhone that enabled limited participation in the OFDR meetings. The native iPhone application was built using a pre-release version of Flash and allows mobile access via an iPhone or iPod Touch to rich communications including collaborative meetings, training sessions and Web seminars.

Initially there have been a long list of bugs identified by the developers and users across multiple platforms, and there have been significant limitations, including unable to use camera, difficult to see shared content on screen and users have reported room connectivity problems.

Indeed, tests conducted by project members using the Samsung and the iPhone confirmed the limitations and unreliable nature of the current versions. However the prospect was very visible and enticing and with the product in its infancy phase, many improvements are expected, including developing the product to cover more mobile devices and platforms.

The active and ongoing development of the Web conferencing component for mobile devices is encouraging in regards to future service delivery options. This level of activity by the manufacturers of the selected Web conferencing product has been identified as one of the significant benefits in adopting a ‘shrink wrapped’ product that is supported by significant levels of developmental, technical and financial resources.

### 7.10 Potential Costs

In addition to any service fees that may be charged by the TDRS, the potential costs for users (clients) to utilise the OFDR system also includes Internet and telephony charges. The costs for video and voice transmission must be accounted for by the client and host organisation in assessing the full costs of conducting or participating in this type of online services. These costs are made transparent to the clients of the TDRS when they are deciding to use the OFDR service.

**Internet Costs**

One of the features of the OFDR system is that no special software is required to access online services except for an Internet browser (e.g. Internet Explorer, Safari) and Flash video. Flash Video is reported by Wikipedia as being the format of choice for embedded media on the Web, with notable users being You Tube, Google Video, Yahoo! Video and Reuters News. It is
estimated that approximately 99% of all computers connected to the Internet already have Flash Video installed. A version of the Flash Video application is readily available for free and the file size is less than 2 megabytes, which would result in negligible costs to the client for transmission of the download.

Testing has shown that on average, during an Intake session (just two video streams) the system will transmit approximately 50Mb of data in the one hour appointment. This number increases with the more participants. For an FDR session with three video streams, approximately 75Mb of data are transmitted. With four video streams, testing has shown that approximately 100Mb per hour is transmitted.

Telephone Costs
For clients of the TDRS, the telephone call costs are currently funded by the service and sessions are initiated by the FDRP calling the client. Therefore no telephone call costs are incurred by the client.
8.1 Developing Templates

The templates developed for the OFDR project have been designed by senior members of the RAQ Practice Team in consultation with the Project Committee and a number of the FDRPs who are working for the TDRS. In developing the templates, consideration was given to the relevant web design and project design principles that have been previously discussed in this report.

When creating a ‘meeting room’ within the web conferencing software, the meeting appearance and features are based and designed on a pre-determined template for the purpose. Three shared templates were initially developed as a standard in the system:

- Default Meeting Template
- Default Training Template
- Default Event Template

The meeting rooms are customisable and can be created with one or more ‘layouts’ (e.g. pages), each layout with a different use and focus. A host (e.g. FDRP) can navigate between the different layouts by clicking a tab at the bottom of the screen that is visible only to the host. Within each layout are a number of different pods are available, depending on the features required.
For example, with the default Meeting Template there are three layouts created:

- **Sharing** – this layout has an attendee list, chat box, note pod and a large share pod
- **Discussion** – this layout has an attendee list, note pod, camera and voice pod, chat pod, poll pod and discussion note pod.
- **Collaboration** – this layout has a camera and voice pod, attendee list, note pod, whiteboard, chat pod and file share pod.

Separate templates are required for the purposes of Intake sessions, pre-FDR group information sessions and Family Dispute Resolution sessions. These templates have specific layouts created for the different phases and requirements of the sessions as well as being functional (e.g. size and placement) and modified for the TDRS (e.g. branding and custom design).

### 8.1.1 Lobby

Feedback from the staff evaluation was that it would be preferable to not connect straight to
live video with clients without first having the opportunity to talk with the client about the online environment as well as cover some ground rules and other information about online appointments.

Of particular concern was in engaging with people whilst they are in the comfort of their own homes. Would they be in an appropriate environment conducive to conduct an online FDR Session?

Practical issues must be addressed, for example: privacy and confidentiality being assured, background distractions minimised and ensuring nothing inappropriate is being transmitted before the camera is turned on (e.g. being aware to ask if the client is appropriately attired or asking for assurance that nothing offensive or private is in their background).

In addressing these concerns, a lobby ‘layout’ was created as the first and default position where clients enter and are welcomed into the online meeting. In creating this environment it was essential that the room not be too cluttered and to have elements to draw the client’s attention into the screen. Therefore it was decided that this layout would include pictures sourced from Family Relationships Online (www.familyrelationships.gov.au) to ensure a consistent corporate image for the Family Relationships Advice Line of which TDRS is a component. The page also contains a PowerPoint which can be controlled by the FDR Practitioner – the PowerPoint was designed to include prompts to aid the Practitioner to discuss ground rules and etiquette for online appointments as well as to engage and settle the client into the virtual environment.

It was essential that this and all other layouts have the attendee list permanently in sight for the FDR Practitioner and the client so that there is full transparency in who is attending the session. This is of particular relevance when it is considered that it is possible to participate in a meeting without a web-camera. As reported in section 7 of this report, the presence of surnames in the attendee list presented an initial problem where the software showed the full names (first and surnames) to the all parties.

For the security and safety of the FDR Practitioner and clients, it was deemed essential that only their first name be displayed. This feature has now been enabled. The attendee list is also the interface where the FDR Practitioner remains in control of the settings for the session, enabling and restricting the rights of participants in the session to access features.

The lobby screen principle that has been developed is transferable to any OFDR template that
is created, as the same information and features are relevant to Intake sessions, pre-FDR group sessions and FDR sessions. This creates a familiar entry point into the system for returning FDR Practitioners and clients to aid in the level of comfort being as high as possible.

8.1.2 Intake Session

As described earlier, each client’s journey through Family Dispute Resolution begins by completing an Intake session which includes screening and assessment. This session is one-on-one with a FDR Practitioner where the client’s background and service details are discussed in greater detail. The FDR Practitioner in front of the computer terminal will need to have the web conferencing software open as well as the Intake Form so they can take appropriate notes of the sessions and information provided. These two windows can be spread across half of the screen evenly, making it important to have adequate computer hardware for this to still be big enough to operate with.

A template was developed and optimised to allow the FDR Practitioner to connect and meet with just one client for an Intake session. A slight variation to this was a template that was developed for one FDR Practitioner with their Supervisor in attendance to connect with just one client for the appointment. A feature of the Web conferencing product is that a Supervisor (or other person) can join and observe a session with their camera turned off. Whilst the presence of the Supervisor will be displayed in the attendee list, the lack of any other onscreen presence is designed to cause minimal distraction to the parties.

As per the above discussion on Lobby screens, the first layout in the Intake template is the default lobby screen where the FDR Practitioner will begin the session with the client, going through housekeeping matters and investigating any technical issues before progressing with the session.

Once the information has been discussed in the Lobby screen and the Practitioner and client are both able and comfortable to progress, the FDR Practitioner clicks a tab at the bottom of the screen to move the session to the next layout. This is where the FDR Practitioner conducts the majority of the Intake appointment. This layout is characterised by the first inclusion of the camera pod to enable video between the participants as well as a large share pod. The camera pod at this stage allows the Practitioner to enable a participant’s camera (if appropriate) and conduct the session with the aid of video. The size and dimension of the video pod was determined on only needing enough space for a maximum of two video screens in this layout, and considering that the bigger the size/resolution of the video being transferred
the more internet data the session would consume. Having the camera pod at the top of the screen helps the FDR Practitioner both watch the video and engage with the client via their webcam which is mounted to the top and centre of the screen by giving a greater appearance of maintaining direct eye contact. The size and location of the video pod is customisable and can be enlarged depending on the needs of the client.

This Intake screen layout also allows an FDR Practitioner to use the share pod to display a document to the client which might be pertinent to the session – for example a common element of the Intake is to show and explain the ‘Agreement to Participate in FDR’ form, or the ‘Parenting and Property Prompt Sheet’ which can be used to stimulate discussion and reality testing. As the FDR Practitioner loads and views the document on their screen it is simultaneously displayed on the clients’ computer. The Web conferencing software also includes features in the share pod to edit a document in real time by enabling a ‘white board overlay’ which could be used by the FDR Practitioner to highlight important points or add notes.

The final layout which has been designed for the Intake template is a ‘discussion’ layout where the video of Practitioner and client remains, however instead of the share pod there are two note pods where the Practitioner can type notes for the client to view. The Practitioner moves with the client to this screen by clicking the appropriate option at the bottom of the screen. The note pods are designed to assist the client begin to note and record their items to talk about and their range of proposals. In the past this has been discussed verbally with TDRS clients, however in asking them to note down responses and then seeing those visualised, it is a possible outcome that this can begin a process of the client preparing for their session at a deeper level than might what otherwise occur.

In the transition from Intake to FDR it is beneficial for the client to continue to prepare thoughts and lists of things they wish to discuss and possible options for resolution. The use of the note pod feature here enable these lists to begin to form with the Practitioner then able to instruct the client how to save a copy of the list themselves and a request that they continue to prepare and finish the list before any proposed FDR session can occur.

8.1.3 Family Dispute Resolution Session

The template design for the FDR sessions builds on from the learning and development of the online Intake template. As such the transition from Intake to FDR lends to familiarity for clients and Practitioners in what to expect from the software and how to interact with it appropriately.

The starting point for the FDR session is the Lobby screen as previously described where
clients are brought into the online meeting room.

**The Lobby served as an ideal starting point to an FDR session as it enables all participants to settle into the session in the least threatening or challenging experience.**

Perhaps the biggest additional feature from those which were used in an Intake is the ‘breakout room’ function. In this pod, with a control panel out of sight of clients, the FDR Practitioner is able to pre-allocate each client to a separate room so that when required, the click of a button can separate the clients into a private environment. It was proposed that this feature would be used at the start of the session so that the FDR Practitioner and client can talk privately and the Practitioner can view each participant’s camera in private to ascertain no technical issues arise and that the client has an appropriate background before commencing with the FDR session. This feature is then primed and used throughout the session whenever a party calls for private caucus or as a safety option to use if the clients are escalating their conflict and need to be separated for a time.

A common tool used by FDR Practitioners during the course of FDR sessions is to use photographs of the children to ground and re-focus the participants on their common goal, ‘the best interests of their children’.

**The web conferencing software allows for appropriate and screened photographs to be uploaded by the Practitioner for all clients to view at times when a child focus intervention is required.**

Detailed work instructions were developed to ascertain how to obtain these pictures from clients, what constituted an appropriate photo (e.g. while school photos are a universal standard which could be used, could they compromise a client’s privacy of where they might be living?) and how to use the photos in the session for the most therapeutic intervention.

After the Practitioner has commenced the session in the lobby and used the breakout rooms to check in with the clients and their environment privately, they will begin the session by progressing to a ‘sharing’ layout screen by clicking the appropriate option on the screen. This layout uses the camera and share pod features as described above to allow three (or more) participants to see each other and view documents, such as the agreement to participate, that the Practitioner needs to show and discuss with the clients.

An important part of the online FDR process is the ability to write agenda items and agreements. When the Practitioner has progressed in the session to require this they are able
to select a layout specially designed with note pods to take and write down this information. This visual element of seeing agenda items and agreements being developed by the Practitioner may assist with greater clarity of what is being discussed and agreed on, compared to FDR conducted only by telephone.

It is intended that the Practitioner can move freely amongst the different layouts as required in the session, as well as having the flexibility to resize and relocate the arrangement of pods depending on the needs of the clients.

In customising the layouts, it was necessary to consider both practice and technical issues. For example, it was initially considered that agenda and agreement items could be viewed in the FDR session by sharing a Microsoft Word document. It was proposed the document could then be saved and forwarded to the client at the end of the session. Whilst this provided the required functionality, it was identified that sharing a document requires additional bandwidth and data usage. The agenda and agreement items were therefore allocated to the basic meeting template as note pods. All the information contained in the Note pods was included within the 8-15kbps transfer of basic meeting information. Another advantage of the notes pod is the separation of agenda and agreements (both can be displayed simultaneously rather than having to scroll the application). Each party has independent control of note pod scrolling. It is also much simpler to grant the client the necessary control to a notes pod to allow them to contribute wording as required, compared to attempting some form of screen sharing option.

8.1.4 Pre-FDR Session

The development of the pre-FDR education component will provide access to an additional step in the FDR process for all clients of the TDRS. This pre-FDR education step is to be completed after both parties have participated in the Intake session and before the FDR session. Out of the three available options for delivery, the option of a facilitated online group session required a customised template. It has previously been reported that the OFDR system provides the facility for multiple participants to engage in an online meeting room. It is proposed that group sessions will initially contain a maximum of five clients and one Practitioner/Facilitator.

The group template also draws on the learning and development of the templates used for Intake and FDR sessions, again bringing consistency and familiarity to the Practitioner and the clients. There are several similar features used, however some features have different applications when operating in a group dynamic.
The Lobby template and break out rooms are used in much the same way as discussed with FDR sessions, with the Practitioner able to invite participants into the group with no active web cameras. The software allows for the Practitioner to allocate each participant to a private breakout room where they can meet privately and view each others camera one-on-one to have a better assurance of the environment, before starting the session. As there are multiple parties it was essential that the software allow for each participant to be placed into a separate room and have complete separation of voice and video.

The main features from the Intake and FDR sessions are also used again in a group environment, with all parties able to see and hear each other in a larger video pod to ensure all participants can be clearly seen. The Practitioner is also able to share documents with clients and keep notes for all to see on their screens. These features would be utilised to show items like internal documents relevant to FDR, brochures or books which have been sourced. Note taking in a group environment may be helpful for all participants to keep track of who is actively participating and some of their background information.

The share pod for a group session is also used by the Practitioner to show an electronic workbook with embedded multimedia such as videos or music to aid the group session and learning dynamic. The workbook allows for screens to be shown to all clients with the possibility of working individually or collectively to answer a quiz, or write a short response to presented questions. Steps in the workbook can be protected and timed to ensure someone cannot progress through without first answering questions, or even at a level where a correct answer is required to progress.

New features used for the first time in a group setting are the use of chat pods. Similar to most private chat software, the embedded feature in the Web conferencing software allows for participants to type messages to each other. It was important for a group session in this setting that options to chat privately with each other are disabled (except for the Practitioner who can chat privately with a client) and that all chat correspondence is clear for all to see and recordable. It was also important to ensure some ‘moderation’ of the discussion where the Facilitator can view any requests to post a question before it is shown to ensure appropriateness.

The software allows for a question and answer style feature where questions are submitted by the group to the Facilitator who can answer and release the question and answer at the same time. This feature is very important in a group session to allow for continued interaction after the official finish of the session, where clients can stay and ask questions if required before
logging off the meeting room.

8.2 Developing Content

The web conferencing product enables a Practitioner to upload documents to be shown to clients during sessions. A database that can be accessed during an online session is able to store and show content in various forms such as PowerPoint, FLV video, PDF documents and JPEG photos which covers a wide range of useable media. A collection of up-to-date and quality approved information has been used as a standard source of content, with procedures in place for continual updating and improvement. The security settings are such that clients cannot access the documents without the Practitioner enabling access by displaying them during a session.

The range of content selected for upload into the shared content library was chosen on its usefulness during Family Dispute Resolution and the frequency at which the documents are commonly used. This was also tempered with reference to the TDRS Funding Agreement which made preference to resources sourced from the FRAL. As such the range of documents is a mixture of resources created and used by RAQ and RA National, documents from the FRAL and the Federal Government (via the Attorney-General’s Department, the Department of Families and Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Family Court, Child Support Agency and Centrelink). The resources largely are based on parenting and property matters, preparation for FDR, the Family Law system and post-separation parenting.

8.3 Assessment Expansions

When potential new clients call through to register for FDR with the Telephone Dispute Resolution Service (TDRS) they are initially connected to a TDRS Operator whose role it is to:

- Assess the client for their presenting need; e.g.
  - Does the client require mediation or another program (e.g. counselling, children’s contact service, parenting orders program)
  - Does their matter relate to parenting or property matters
- Find a suitable day and time for their initial Intake and assessment interview
- Register the client into the client information system, including gathering contact details and statistical information
• Provide any necessary information about the service and referrals as required

The TDRS Operator has two options on how the Intake appointment will be conducted – via a telephone call or by using online technologies through the OFDR system. The decision by the TDRS Operator to proceed via the use of telephone or OFDR will be made at the time of registration rather than later in the process (e.g. prior to mediation). This has several benefits for the service and the client:

• From the service’s point of view this strategy will give time for the administration team to register the client into the computer system, email out materials in an information pack (which explain the use of OFDR in greater detail) and set up the appropriate meeting room templates.

• From the client’s perspective it will allow time for them to read the information about OFDR and FDR in general, change their password to access the system and complete a connection test prior to their first appointment to ensure their system is capable of connecting to OFDR.

The practice implication on the development of this strategy is the benefit of seeing the client operate within the OFDR environment in a one-on-one situation prior to attempting an online FDR session. This strategy has been developed to deliver a ‘smoother’ mediation session than otherwise possible, as the Practitioner has the ability to ensure the system works adequately on the computer which the client will use for any subsequent mediation session, spending time to troubleshoot with the client at the Intake stage rather than at a mediation (there is a risk of creating power imbalance if with two clients, one is very computer literate and the other is not). This also gives the Practitioner the ability to assess the environment behind the client (e.g. security concerns – giving away information which is private – location, school etc) as well as factors which could exacerbate the situation (e.g. photos of new partners or recent purchases etc).

At the end of an OFDR Intake the Practitioner can make a more informed assessment indication of whether the case should progress to an online or telephone FDR session.

If the client experienced too many technical difficulties, was not proficient in using the system, was not able to engage effectively with the interface and camera or had security / privacy concerns, the Practitioner will recommend not proceeding with Online FDR.
8.3.1 OFDR Screening Tool

In addition to the standard questions asked at registration for the TDRS, a process was developed by the Research Team to screen clients for OFDR. After testing and training, the Client Contact Centre staff used an automated tool to take the client through a short series of questions. The answers to these questions determined inclusion in the OFDR Pilot Intake or to proceed to the usual telephone Intake session.

Research staff developed a survey tool designed for the Telephone Information Referral Operator (TIRO)s to use and provided training with each TIRO before administering with clients. Detailed work instructions relating to the tool were developed for staff members to reference when working. The training delivered in group and individual sessions was essential to educate the staff member about the OFDR Project background and its rationale, as well as giving the person time to see the software in action during a live demonstration.

The survey assessed the clients’ intention and ability to use OFDR as well as their suitability to use OFDR instead of remaining with a telephone based service. Questions also gauged interest in participation in the pilot project and advised about the research requirements for involvement in the pilot. The OFDR Practice and Training along with FDRPs determine which clients should be offered an online Intake under what conditions.

A series of meetings with TDRS staff, Practice and Development staff, the Research team and Project Management culminated in a series of proposed criteria implicated in client suitability for OFDR. From these discussions and the accessibility data obtained from the OFDR Client Attitudes survey, four key decision categories were derived:

1. Motivation or desire to be involved in OFDR
2. Technology access and capability
3. Suitability of the client’s home setup to ensure an OFDR-conducive environment
4. Case requirements or conditions are such that OFDR is an appropriate option

First, a decision map incorporating these considerations was developed by service staff and refined by researchers. An iterative process was employed whereby project staff simulated client registrations and applied the decision map to identify errors in decision logic. Decision categories relating to technological accessibility and exclusion criteria were revised throughout
this process in consultation with the Project Manager. In addition, a series of ‘preliminary considerations’ were created based on the operating context in which OFDR clients would be screened and selected. These considerations were designed to provide TIROs and TDRS administrators with guidance and decision support in the event of hostile, distressed or otherwise inappropriate clients for the OFDR pilot project. The considerations were as follows:

- **OFDR appointments must be available within a certain timeframe**
  - It was important to ensure that the client’s case was not delayed because of participation in the pilot as there were only limited numbers of OFDR Intake appointments available per week. The number of appointments available increased over time, as more staff were trained to screen clients in (administration training) and complete online Intake appointments (practitioner training).

- **If screening a Party B, Party A must have successfully completed an online Intake**
  - It was an important principle that as the Intake prepares the client for the mediation (e.g. how to prepare for telephone mediation versus how to prepare for online mediation) that as much as possible the Intakes for both parties should be conducted using the same medium as what the mediation would be conducted.

- **If the client disclosed the presence of a Domestic Violence Order**
  - As we pilot and test the use of online technologies, only cases without the disclosure of DV have been selected. This has been to allow the FDRPs to become properly familiar with the new technical process prior to managing complex power imbalances in the virtual space.

- **If the client was already in an upset or agitated state or if they were in a hurry**
  - As there is additional time taken in the registration process to complete the OFDR questionnaire, callers who were upset or agitated, or who displayed other signs to indicate a swift and simple registration process was required, were not selected for screening into the project.

- **If the client required an interpreter or use of the National Relay Service**
  - Whilst the potential for the use of interpreters is an exciting and real prospect, it was decided that for the purpose of the project, clients who required an interpreter or the use of the National Relay Service, would not be selected for screening.
- If the client immediately requested shuttle mediation, a support person, or otherwise involved multiple parties, if the case was assessed as complex and/or is there a very high level of conflict between the parties involved
  - It was determined to begin with testing FDR in its most simple context with two clients and one FDRP – the addition of other methods or participants would increase the initial strain on the mediator as they adjust to the new technology which could potentially decrease the quality of service to the client.

The complexity of the implementation environment required the use of an automated delivery mechanism. Specifically, a means for assisting staff to provide a consistent and thorough screening process was needed. The project team identified a pre-existing and tested survey package (Limesurvey) as the most appropriate platform. In addition, staff were familiar with the survey interface following their involvement in the Client Attitudes Survey research project; therefore, training requirements were minimised.

Following the finalisation of decision criteria, the Research Team constructed a prototype of the client screening tool. In alignment with the principles of user-centered design (Tullis & Albert, 2008; NIST, 2007), the research team evaluated the prototype with staff using a combination of scenario testing and measures of user experience (i.e., aesthetic quality, ease of use, usefulness). An iterative design approach comprising both process, performance and subjective data (e.g., Kelkar et al., 2005) was adopted to ensure that revisions to the tool incorporated user feedback and recommendations. Through scenario testing, the Research Team identified several usability issues, including: lexical complexity and length of scripted text, readability and prominence of operator content and specific topics to include within the implementation training. Modifications were made to the tool following discussions with project management.
Figure 9  Decision Tree Underlying the OFDR Client Screening Tool.
Supporting infrastructure, including work instructions, an appointment management system and training resources, were developed to assist project staff with the implementation of the screening tool. Throughout staff training events, role-plays were conducted to evaluate the revised tool and provide exposure to the experience of client screening in a simulated environment. TDRS administration staff were also provided with screening tool training.

Two TIRO staff were selected to participate in the initial ‘live’ trial of the OFDR client screening tool. Following the provision of training and ‘go live’ date, client screening commenced on the 5th July 2010. **The project team maintained a commitment to continuous improvement by collecting ongoing data regarding screening tool usability and the efficiency of related administration processes.** Consequently, modifications were made to the system of appointment booking (creating a specific diary for online mediation clients) and minor revisions performed on the wording of screening tool questions. Additional TIRO staff were trained in screening tool administration as required to maintain project momentum.

Given the complexities of the implementation environment, the development of an OFDR client screening tool was instrumental in facilitating the change management processes associated with the project. Of note, a user-centred design process ensured that sufficient testing was conducted prior to roll-out. Subsequently, usability issues were identified and removed, which assisted staff uptake and engagement in the screening process.

Moreover, close consultation with Client Contact Centre stakeholders informed the Project Team with respect to the practicalities of screening tool administration. Preliminary considerations and ‘screen-out’ criteria were developed to conservatively select appropriate OFDR participants.

Additional screening may be of benefit to reduce the prevalence of client-side technical barriers. Closer adherence to the Connection Test protocol and additional attempts to follow-up with clients prior to the OFDR session may improve screening accuracy. Overall, this screening process highlights the challenges of ensuring client-side technological suitability for online services.
8.2.2 Assessment for Suitability

Once all parties to the proposed FDR process have completed their individual Intake interview the case is assessed for appropriateness to proceed to a joint FDR session. There are guidelines available to FDRPs which outline the considerations for FDR generally and whether a case should or should not be progressing to a joint FDR session. This assessment has been expanded to also include what mode and structure the mediation should take. For example, the session could be joint or shuttle mediation, co mediation, including support people if required, and whether the parties should be brought together face to face, over the telephone or now using online web conferencing.

During the Intake a range of questions are asked about any proposed face to face contact and the parties’ level of comfort around that occurring, any concerns about security and allowing parties to see inside each others homes via webcams, and the client’s level of technical proficiency. If the clients both express a feeling of comfort with the visual element of web conferencing as well as comfort in the use of the software then a case could progress to an online FDR session. Therefore this will only be ascertained so long as all parties have completed an online Intake session.

8.3 Developing and Delivering Training Packages in Use of the System

When looking at introducing the new concept of online service delivery for RAQ staff it was essential to assess, develop and deliver training to all stakeholders through the life of the project.

8.3.2 Administration Training

“I have a very high opinion of using OFDR as it has really enhanced what work we’ve been doing in telephone service delivery. It adds visual elements which will be of huge benefit to the right people.”

RAQ Staff Member

A training plan was developed and implemented to all TDRS Administration staff as well as all Client Contact Centre staff to cover the registration and administration aspects of the OFDR system. Multiple training events were held to ensure all staff were adequately trained in OFDR Administration. These training events covered topics such as basic knowledge and information about the OFDR Project, its funding and desired outcomes, use of the client registration survey
tool (as described above), the use of the web conferencing software to establish new users, send client information packs, and establish meeting rooms for all appointments as well as answer and assist in basic level troubleshooting with clients on technical issues such as software requirements. The training was initially delivered in a group setting however more one-on-one follow up was required in the use of the survey tool.

8.3.3 Practitioner Training

“Initially I hesitated about my ability to be able to navigate my way around the program, however, after a few Intake sessions I was confident I could conduct them without any hesitation.”

RAQ Staff Member

When approaching the development and delivery of online services in the TDRS, it was necessary to consider that all staff had varied professional backgrounds, skill levels and experience in FDR and use of technology. Additionally a number of the TDRS staff had not recently participated in face-to-face FDR sessions. Other considerations included the attitudes, opinions and beliefs of RAQ clinical staff directly affected by the inevitable change that OFDR implementation brings. The main elements which needed to be addressed by any staff training program were defined as:

- Use of computer systems to a basic level
- Clinical practice skills (previously assessed by clinical review)
- Interest and engagement in the OFDR project

The training program consisted of initial class-based orientation training, followed by a series of smaller ‘refresher’ self-paced online modules.

Pre-‘GoLive’ training was conducted prior to implementation of the OFDR system. We were informed by the results of our organisational survey and staff interviews to determine the focus and delivery methods of the training program. Specifically, we incorporated the following identified training needs:

- Use of video-conferencing software
• Interpreting non-verbal communication signals (particularly for staff without experience in face to face service delivery)
• Software troubleshooting
• Organisational process/procedure in relation to OFDR services

Research also identified the modes of OFDR training delivery preferred by staff:

• Experiential activities (role plays, simulations, ‘hands-on’ demonstrations)
• Ongoing mentoring/support following training
• Take-away resources and materials
• Structured sessions
• Clear content

Orientation training was conducted over two days. Day one focussed on the technical knowledge required to operate the OFDR system. Day two involved a series of role-plays and demonstrations that gave participants a realistic simulation of OFDR. Further specialised training was conducted with staff who were to become OFDR Practitioners, devoting time with each to conduct observations of OFDR sessions for modelling and trialling role play demonstrations to allow the Practitioner to become familiarised with FDR and online web conference software.

The self-paced online modules, similar in design and structure to the pre-FDR group work booklet, enabled Practitioners to participate in the learning in a self-guided manner. The OFDR system allows for multimedia presentations to be played and a variety of information and content introduced and displayed through different modalities including graphics, quizzes, diagrams, illustrations and photographs. The results of quizzes can be immediately displayed to the participant and the TDRS can produce a variety of reports and view relevant data. The Practitioner is able to pause and stop the online module whenever required and return to it at a later stage.

Training has been ongoing with all staff members involved with online service delivery reviewing the work instructions frequently and making adjustments where required.
8.4 Developing Administrative Procedures

Once a client has registered for the Telephone Dispute Resolution Service an information pack is sent out by the administration team via email (or post if requested). The letter and its attachments are useful to provide to the client all the relevant contact details for TDRS in the event they need to re-contact the service prior to their appointment as well as to provide useful information to the client to help them prepare for their involvement in the FDR process. Where a client has been registered to participate in the OFDR project there were several different aspects of the administration process which needed alteration.

**Delivery**

As clients were participating in an online service delivery mode it was decided that the primary method of communication would be via email. As all RAQ employees have email accounts this is something familiar for the Practitioner to use, however as email addresses are based on a staff member’s first initial and surname this did not meet the adequate requirements for ensuring professional anonymity. As such an independent OFDR Admin account was created with a generic address so that all staff could access a joint mailbox and send items to clients anonymously.

**Inclusions**

The letter and the information pack needed to be modified in several ways for it to be fully preparing clients for FDR in addition to the online experience:

**Usernames and Passwords**

To ensure secure log on for clients each client receives a username and password. A link to the password reset facilities to ensure they can customise their personal password for greater security. The inclusion of rules and best practice suggestions about password security.

**Connection Test**

A link to the a connection test which would complete a preliminary test of the client’s computer software, ensuring the latest version of Flash Player and internet browser is installed as well as testing the speed an ability to connect to the Adobe servers.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

For OFDR clients a document was created for frequently asked questions. The list of questions was developed from the testing phase of the software from the actors who played
clients in scenarios who had never before interacted with the software. The sheet has proven useful for both staff and clients to help them with any technical questions which may arise. The document remains a dynamic work which can be added to as more client questions arise.

By ensuring these things are sent to the client immediately after registration and in advance of the appointment the administration team has the ability to ask the client about their ability to have successfully changed their password and passed the connection test. If the client at confirmation has not completed / passed these activities the online Intake can be rescheduled if need be or reverted back to a telephone Intake to save administrative and practitioner resources in establishing and preparing online meeting rooms.

By creating a template for a meeting room the OFDR administrators were able to encompass the role of meeting establishment within their work depending on the nature of the booked appointment. Detailed work instructions were developed for administrators to use which directed when, how and why meeting rooms were created, who had access for security, and how they were named and stored. The OFDR administrators were also responsible for managing all communication with clients outside appointment times and collecting all relevant statistics to pass onto the Research team.
9.1 Overview

The research methodology for the OFDR Evaluation was designed specifically to be broad and deep. Broad in the sense that a range of topics and times were researched and deep in the fact that detailed quantitative and qualitative methods were incorporated into the methodology. Our approach was intended and did provide a rich picture of this human service intervention. We adopted the approach that the OFDR implementation required a focus of three main perspectives in relation to target groups for study. These targets included a staff piece, a client piece and an exploration of their interaction with each other, the services, systems and technologies over time and stages of the FDR process.

We conducted a number of studies which are summarised in this section. Subsequent sections describe the studies and their respective findings, the way in which we used the findings, and our learnings from the process. In addition to studying staff and client attitudes and responses to the OFDR system, the research team of two staff led other major initiatives and contributed to other activities. These were the development of the screening tool for inclusion in OFDR pilot, development and evaluating of staff training, work process mapping, acceptance testing, report writing, project management and in a participative action research project to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The latter project sought to elicit considerations that must be taken into account in the uptake of these technologies. Finally, we developed the framework and method to evaluate and executed the evaluation of Pre FDR Education.

All studies involved a review of the extensive body of literature and development of methods and measures grounded in the theory and empirical literature. Results have been published at a number of conferences and in papers prepared for submission to reputable journals.

The remainder of this section illustrates the OFDR evaluation methodology, including the measurement time-points, constructs, research questions and hypotheses, proposed measures and modes of delivery; for example, survey, interview or direct observations. The information is presented in tables, flow charts and models.
Overview of the OFDR Evaluation Research Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Timepoint</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time1</td>
<td>Pre-Go Live Testing</td>
<td>Collection of baseline data from staff and refinement of measurement tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time2</td>
<td>Client Registration</td>
<td>Collection of baseline data from clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time3</td>
<td>Intake</td>
<td>Collection of post-Intake data from clients and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time3a</td>
<td>Pre-OFDR Information Session</td>
<td>FDR Evaluation methodology; focussing on Face To Face Session Evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time4</td>
<td>OFDR Session</td>
<td>Collection of post-OFDR data from clients and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time5</td>
<td>3-Month Follow-up</td>
<td>Collection of long term outcome data from clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time6</td>
<td>9-Month Follow-up</td>
<td>Collection of long term outcome data from clients</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Flowchart of OFDR Evaluation Process
Pre Go-Live Testing

Rationale

The purpose of the pre-go live testing was to evaluate the use of the OFDR measures within a controlled environment. Staff and client measures were trialled on users prior to the Go-Live date. Therefore, the research questions guiding this phase of the evaluation will be exploratory in nature. In addition, staff baseline measures were obtained at this point to facilitate longitudinal comparisons.

Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1</td>
<td>What is the expected level of impost on clients and staff undertaking evaluation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2</td>
<td>What is the face validity of the proposed evaluation measures?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3</td>
<td>What are staff's current attitudes toward the use of the OFDR system and computers in general?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ4</td>
<td>What is the level of computer self-efficacy amongst OFDR staff?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ5</td>
<td>How is the OFDR system interface perceived by staff?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ6</td>
<td>What usability factors are important to consider when designing and implementing an OFDR system?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ7</td>
<td>What are the training needs of OFDR staff?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>High computer 'liking' will predict higher intentions to use the OFDR system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Low computer anxiety will indirectly predict higher intentions to use the OFDR system via increasing perceived ease of use of the system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Low computer self-efficacy will indirectly predict higher intentions to use the OFDR system via increasing perceived ease of use of the system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>High self-efficacy will predict lower computer anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>Over time, self-efficacy and perceived ease of use will increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6</td>
<td>Higher overall HCI quality will predict greater ease of use of the OFDR system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H7</td>
<td>Over time, staff’s flow (involvement and control) during use of the OFDR system will increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H8</td>
<td>Higher navigability and aesthetic quality of the OFDR system will predict higher trust in the OFDR system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Constructs and Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer self-</td>
<td>Staff’s confidence in their ability to use the OFDR system to successfully</td>
<td>Computer self-Efficacy Scale (Compeau &amp; Higgins, 1995) 4 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>efficacy</td>
<td>perform tasks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward</td>
<td>Computer ‘liking’ and anxiety</td>
<td>Computer Attitudes Scale (Nash &amp; Moroz, 1997) 5 items - Modified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>computers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward</td>
<td>Predictors of OFDR uptake intention</td>
<td>Modified UTAUT Measure (Venkatesh et al., 2003) 15 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFDR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of HCI</td>
<td>Aesthetic quality, flow (control and involvement) and ease of navigation</td>
<td>HCI Quality Scales (Van Shaik &amp; Ling, 2005) 21 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional client measures will be piloted during pre-Go Live testing, please see T2-T6 for details.

Additional qualitative measures will be used to obtain the details of staff experiences during their use of the OFDR system.

Observational tools will be trialled during staff role plays.

Methodology

Throughout staff pilot testing of the OFDR system, which included role plays with mock client scenarios, the suite of OFDR evaluation measures were trialled on staff. Anticipated client impost was determined by administering the proposed baseline, post-Intake, post-OFDR and 3 and 9 month follow-up batteries on project staff. Specific staff-related measures such as attitudes toward OFDR/computers and computer self-efficacy were administered prior to pre-Go Live testing to obtain baseline measures allowing comparison with post-session measures. The administration of a measure of human-computer interaction (HCI) quality informed the OFDR user interface design process assisting with the customisation and usability testing phase prior to Go Live.

Progress

This stage was completed on 1st July 2010.

- Report submitted to Project Management
- OFDR Site and User Readiness Checklists completed
- Questionnaires modified following trials and feedback from staff (in particular, questionnaire length and item wording)
- Final versions of each questionnaire developed and tested
**Client Registration**

![Circular flowchart diagram]

**Rationale**

The purpose of the evaluation conducted at and following client registration was to establish baseline measures; allowing for comparisons post-OFDR. The OFDR Client Screening Tool captured initial accessibility data and attitudes toward the OFDR system. A follow-up survey collected additional data.

**Research Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1</td>
<td>How accessible to clients are the technologies required by the OFDR system?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2</td>
<td>What are clients’ attitudes toward the use of OFDR and how do these attitudes change over time following exposure to the system?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3</td>
<td>What are the current levels of inter-parental conflict, communication and children’s wellbeing of the clients accessing the OFDR service?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ4</td>
<td>What are clients’ current attitudes toward the use of the OFDR system and computers in general?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ5</td>
<td>What are the levels of computer self-efficacy amongst OFDR clients?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hypotheses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Lower quality of the inter-parental relationship (conflict, communication) will predict lower intention to use the system via reduced perceptions of OFDR usefulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Higher computer ‘liking’ will predict higher intentions to use the OFDR system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Lower computer anxiety will indirectly predict higher intentions to use the OFDR system via increasing perceived ease of use of the system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>Higher computer self-efficacy will indirectly predict higher intentions to use the OFDR system via perceived ease of use of the system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>Higher self-efficacy will predict lower computer anxiety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Constructs and Measures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer self-efficacy</td>
<td>Staff’s confidence in their ability to use the OFDR system to successfully perform tasks</td>
<td>Computer self-Efficacy Scale (Compeau &amp; Higgins, 1995) 4 items (Venkatesh et al., 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward computers</td>
<td>Computer ‘liking’ and anxiety</td>
<td>Computer Attitudes Scale (Nash &amp; Moroz, 1997) 5 items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Methodology

The OFDR Client Screening tool is currently used by TIR Operators to collect data regarding clients’ accessibility and attitudes toward OFDR. Following registration, a link to an electronic survey is emailed to clients requesting their participation in an electronic survey. The survey contains a battery of measures, including; computer self-efficacy, attitudes toward computers, inter-parental conflict and inter-parental. Clients are required to complete 53 items. Clients are instructed that the baseline measures need to be completed prior to the online Intake appointment. Responses are returned via email.

### Progress

This stage is ongoing.

- Client screening tool designed, developed, tested and implemented
- Client screening tool usability report submitted to Project Management
- Client screening tool Interim report submitted to Project Management
- Over 600 clients have been screened and provided data on this study.
Intake

Rationale

The purpose of the evaluation conducted following Intake is to collect data from staff and clients regarding their experiences of the session; specifically, the quality of human-computer interaction, client satisfaction and the impact of technology on practice and process.

Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1</td>
<td>How does technology influence the quality of relational development between OFDR participants (and the organisation)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2</td>
<td>To what extent does the introduction of technology impact on the Intake process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3</td>
<td>What are the training needs of staff and clients involved in the OFDR process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ4</td>
<td>How is the OFDR system interface perceived by users?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ5</td>
<td>What usability factors are important to consider when designing and implementing an OFDR system?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ6</td>
<td>Does the OFDR Intake meet the objectives of a telephone or face to face Intake?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ7</td>
<td>How satisfied are clients with the OFDR Intake process?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1</td>
<td>Lower HCI quality will predict lower rapport between client and FDRP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2</td>
<td>Higher rapport will predict in higher trust between client and FDRP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3</td>
<td>Lower HCI quality will predict lower perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of the OFDR system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ4</td>
<td>Lower HCI quality will predict lower trust in the OFDR system and the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ5</td>
<td>Higher preparedness will predict higher client satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ6</td>
<td>Higher perceived usefulness and ease of use will predict higher client perceptions of FDR preparedness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Constructs and Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of HCI</td>
<td>Aesthetic quality, flow (control and involvement) and ease of navigation</td>
<td>HCI Quality Scales (Van Shaik &amp; Ling, 2005) 15 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in technology and organisation</td>
<td>The belief that an object or agent shows ability, benevolence and integrity</td>
<td>Trust in Technology and Trust in TDRS (adapted from Mayer &amp; Davis,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Rapport

Feelings of positivity, synchronisation and interest between two or more people

**Rapport Scale**

(Puccinelli & Tickle-Degnen, 2004)

5 items

### Client satisfaction

The level of contentment with the services rendered

**Short satisfaction measure**

(Cronin, 1992)

3 items

### Perceived ease of use and usefulness

The degree to which participants felt the OFDR system was easy to use and useful in their situation

**Modified UTAUT measure**

(Venkatesh et al., 2003)

2 items

### Preparedness scale

Perceptions of readiness for FDR following participation in an OFDR Intake

**Author-developed scale**

4 items

---

**Methodology**

**Clients.** Following participation in the OFDR Intake, clients are asked to complete an online survey (email format) regarding their experiences of the session. The survey consists of 37 items, which are administered at the conclusion of the Intake. These measures include; HCI quality, trust (in technology and TDRS), rapport (with FDRP), satisfaction, perceived ease of use, usefulness and preparedness for FDR. In addition, a qualitative item is included to allow clients the opportunity to provide open-ended responses regarding their experiences with the OFDR system.

**Staff.** At the conclusion of the OFDR Intake, Practitioners complete an online debriefing questionnaire, which contains 40 items. These measures include; HCI quality, trust (in technology and TDRS), rapport (with FDRP), perceived ease of use and usefulness. In addition, several qualitative questions are included (approx. 3-5) to allow staff the opportunity to provide open-ended responses regarding their experiences with the OFDR system.

**Progress**

This stage is ongoing.

- To date, 19 clients have completed the post-Intake questionnaire, which represents a response rate of 26%.
- First wave of practitioner post-Intake responses captured (up to sessions delivered in March, 2011).
**OFDR Session**

![T1 → T2 → T3 → T4 → T5 → T6]

**Rationale**

The purpose of the evaluation conducted following Intake is to collect data from staff and clients regarding their experiences of the session; specifically, the quality of human-computer interaction, client satisfaction and the impact of technology on practice and process.

**Research Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1</td>
<td>How does technology influence the quality of relational development between OFDR participants (and the organisation)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2</td>
<td>How does the OFDR process compare to telephone and face to face?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2</td>
<td>To what extent does the introduction of technology impact on the OFDR process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3</td>
<td>What are the training needs of staff and clients involved in the OFDR process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ4</td>
<td>How is the OFDR system interface perceived by users?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ5</td>
<td>What usability factors are important to consider when designing and implementing an OFDR system?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ6</td>
<td>How satisfied are clients with the OFDR process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ7</td>
<td>To what extent does client perceptions of OFDR ease of use and usefulness change over time (following repeat exposure to the system)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hypotheses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Compared to telephone and face to face, the OFDR process will be characterised by extended time spent in the initial stages of the session (opening statements, agenda setting) and overall longer session times (i.e., 2 hours +)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Compared to telephone and face to face Practitioners, OFDR Practitioners will spend more time talking than clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Compared to telephone and face to face sessions, the OFDR session will have more frequent silences and interruptions by other parties (overall, higher conversational disfluency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>Higher conversational disfluency will predict lower rapport and trust between participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>The relationship between perceived service quality and overall service satisfaction will be moderated by perceptions of procedural justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6</td>
<td>Higher perceptions of distributive justice will predict higher satisfaction with agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H7</td>
<td>Lower HCI quality will predict lower trust in the OFDR system and the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H8</td>
<td>Lower HCI quality will predict lower overall short-term mediation outcomes (as measured by the MOSEQ)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Constructs and Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward OFDR</td>
<td>Attitudes toward the use of the OFDR system</td>
<td>Modified UTAUT Measure (Venkatesh et al., 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in technology and organisation</td>
<td>The belief that an object or agent shows ability, benevolence and integrity</td>
<td>Trust in Technology and Trust in TDRS (adapted from Mayer &amp; Davis, 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapport</td>
<td>Feelings of positivity, synchronisation and interest between two or more people</td>
<td>Rapport Scale (Puccinelli &amp; Tickle-Degnen, 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client satisfaction</td>
<td>The level of contentment with the services rendered</td>
<td>Short satisfaction measure (Cronin, 1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of HCI</td>
<td>Aesthetic quality, flow (control and involvement) and ease of navigation</td>
<td>HCI Quality Scales (Van Shaik &amp; Ling, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediation short-term outcomes</td>
<td>The degree to which participants felt; the OFDR process was fair, the mediation was useful, the agreement was satisfying, confidence in the agreement and reconciliation with the other party occurred</td>
<td>Mediation Outcome Standard Evaluation Questionnaire (MOSEQ; Poitras &amp; Le Tareau, 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of justice</td>
<td>The extent to which participants felt the interaction between participants and overall FDR settlement was fair</td>
<td>Justice (Interactional and Distributive) (Colquitt, 2001; Pruitt et al., 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversational sequencing tool</td>
<td>Seeks to document the pattern of interaction between OFDR participants</td>
<td>Observational tool/coding scheme (Bales, 1950)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Administered by research team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediation process analysis</td>
<td>Seeks to document the content of interaction between OFDR participants</td>
<td>Observational tool/coding scheme (Slaiekeu et al., 1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Administered by research team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Affect</td>
<td>Client’s pre-session mood</td>
<td>Positive and Negative Affect Scale – Short Form (Thompson, 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Methodology

*Clients.* Following participation in the OFDR session, clients are asked to complete an online survey regarding their experiences. At this stage, completed 56 survey items at the conclusion of the OFDR session. These measures include; HCI quality, trust (in technology
and TDRS), rapport (with FDRP and the other party), satisfaction, attitudes toward the use of OFDR, intention to use OFDR in the future, perceived service quality, perceived justice and mediation outcomes. In addition, several qualitative questions will be included (approx. 3-5) to allow clients the opportunity to provide open-ended responses regarding their experiences with the OFDR system.

Staff. At the conclusion of the OFDR Intake, Practitioners were asked to complete either a hard copy or electronic debriefing questionnaire, which contains approximately 50 items. These measures include; HCI quality, trust (in technology), rapport (with each party), perceived justice and mediation outcomes. In addition, several qualitative questions are included (approx. 3-5) to allow staff the opportunity to provide open-ended responses regarding their experiences with the OFDR system. A system usability and reflection tool was also completed.

Progress

Two OFDR sessions have been completed and we are awaiting feedback from clients. Staff members have completed surveys on two online mediations. We have observed to sessions to trial our process observation tools.

- Source process observation tools identified—additional testing and customisation required
3-Month Follow-up

Rationale
The purpose of the 3-month follow-up evaluation is to determine the impact of OFDR involvement on long-term outcomes.

Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1</td>
<td>What are the long-term client impacts of OFDR? Does OFDR participation improve inter-parental cooperation and children’s wellbeing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2</td>
<td>What are the sustainability of parenting agreements reached in OFDR?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3</td>
<td>How do clients perceive the OFDR service (satisfaction, intention to use in the future) over the long-term?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ4</td>
<td>What services do parents access following OFDR?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HQ1</td>
<td>Compared to baseline measures, 3-month follow-up data will show an improvement in parental conflict and communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQ2</td>
<td>Client satisfaction with the service will predict long term intention to use OFDR in the future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Constructs and Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inter-parental conflict</td>
<td>The severity of conflict between parents</td>
<td>The Parental Acrimony Scale (Shaw &amp; Emery, 1987) 20 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-parental communication</td>
<td>The frequency and content of communications made between parents</td>
<td>Ahrons’ Quality of Parental Communication Scale (Ahrons, 1981) 10 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement sustainability and post-OFDR resolution behaviours</td>
<td>Parents’ ratings of the degree to which agreements have been followed by either party</td>
<td>Author-developed items 2 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Satisfaction</td>
<td>The likelihood of using OFDR again in the future</td>
<td>Short satisfaction measure (Cronin, 1992) 3 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-OFDR Service Access</td>
<td>Frequency of access of other services</td>
<td>Author-developed item 1 item</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9-Month Follow-up

Rationale
The purpose of the evaluation conducted at and following client registration is to establish baseline measures (allowing for comparisons post-OFDR).

Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1</td>
<td>What are the long-term client impacts of OFDR? Does OFDR participation improve inter-parental cooperation and children’s wellbeing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2</td>
<td>What are the sustainability of parenting agreements reached in OFDR?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3</td>
<td>How do clients perceive the OFDR service (satisfaction, intention to use in the future) over the long-term?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ4</td>
<td>What services do parents access following OFDR?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HQ1</td>
<td>Compared to baseline measures, 9-month follow-up data will show an improvement in parental conflict and communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQ2</td>
<td>Client satisfaction with the service will predict long term intention to use OFDR in the future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Constructs and Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inter-parental conflict</td>
<td>The severity of conflict between parents</td>
<td>The Parental Acrimony Scale (Shaw &amp; Emery, 1987) 20 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-parental communication</td>
<td>The frequency and content of communications made between parents</td>
<td>Ahrons’ Quality of Parental Communication Scale (Ahrons, 1981) 10 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement sustainability and post-OFDR resolution behaviours</td>
<td>Parents’ ratings of the degree to which agreements have been followed by either party</td>
<td>Author-developed items 2 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Satisfaction</td>
<td>The likelihood of using OFDR again in the future</td>
<td>Short satisfaction measure (Cronin, 1992) 3 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-OFDR</td>
<td>Frequency of access of other</td>
<td>Author-developed item</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methodology (3- and 9-month follow-up)

Following completion of the OFDR session, permission was sought to contact the parties by phone at 3 and 9 months after service exit. A short verbal survey regarding post-OFDR dispute resolution behaviours and agreement sustainability is administered, and further permission sought to send a link to an electronic survey. The survey asks clients to complete three measures; the parental acrimony scale, the quality of co-parental communication scale and the strengths and difficulties questionnaire. At this stage, the 3 and 9 month follow-up surveys require clients to complete **approximately 57 items**. Client compliance with survey returns may lead to revision on survey content and methodology.

Progress

Two OFDR sessions have been completed and these clients will be followed up. Surveys had been sent out and follow up telephone call made.
9.2 Evaluative Frameworks

The Research Team developed an integrated framework to evaluate the OFDR service in comparison to existing face-to-face and telephone services. This framework was informed by a review of the dispute resolution and general program evaluation literatures. Notwithstanding the longevity of dispute resolution services, the literature yielded minimal evidence of an evaluation model that was appropriate for both practice and research contexts. However, our review of the dispute resolution evaluation literature identified two suitable frameworks; Jacobs' (1988) five-tiered model and the Integrated Model of Community-Based Evaluation (IMCBE, Telflair & Mulvihill, 2000). Table 1 depicts the integration of Jacobs' model with the IMCBE.

We drew on these frameworks to inform the project management plan and identify key tasks to complete at each stage of the evaluation process. Moreover, OFDR-relevant process and outcome variables were identified from reviews of the dispute resolution, computer-mediated communication and information systems literatures, and discussions with internal subject matter experts. These outcome indicators were used to inform our selection of evaluation tools and measures. Specifically, we identified the following variables of relevance to the OFDR project:

- Information quality and client preparedness for mediation
- Client beliefs regarding mediation effectiveness
- Trust in the organisation and OFDR technology
- Communication quality
- Quality of human-computer interaction (HCI) via the OFDR user interface
- Parental conflict and communication quality
- Interaction process
- Agreement quality
- Rapport
- Agreement compliance
- Client satisfaction

Further reviews of source literatures were conducted to identify psychometrically-sound measures to assess each variable.
Table 1 Integration of Jacobs’ model with the IMCBE and associated tasks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jacob’s 5-Tiered Model</th>
<th>IMCBE Stage(s)</th>
<th>Key Associated Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs Assessment</td>
<td>Pre-existing Condition Decision-making and Planning</td>
<td>Review extant data Define problem to be addressed Clarify working relationships Examine service delivery principles Evaluate feasibility of strategy Develop evaluation goals Design evaluation method and tools Commit to evaluation method Assign responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilisation and Satisfaction Clarification</td>
<td>Implementation and Action</td>
<td>Conduct evaluation activities Establish quality control Communicate with stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term Outcomes</td>
<td>Data Review and Interpretation Report Writing</td>
<td>Determine variables to be analysed Assign data analysis roles Review data quality Carry out analysis Finalise data and documentation Review original goals of evaluation Maintain clarity of results Discuss preliminary report Establish timeframes for final report Develop structure and outline of report Assign responsibility of report Presentation of results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedure

Following pilot testing of the psychometric measures with staff, the evaluation framework was implemented at OFDR ‘Go Live’. Table 2 provides an overview of the OFDR evaluation data collection points. Electronic client questionnaires were created using Adobe InDesign—the portable document format (PDF) was selected due to widespread diffusion and the requirement of this technology for OFDR purposes. Client questionnaires were manually emailed at the conclusion of each OFDR stage. Clients returned their responses via email—the attached questionnaires were stripped of identifiable email addresses and saved within a restricted
access folder (viewable only by the Research team).

We used the Limesurvey platform to deliver post-session questionnaires to staff. Confidentiality was maintained by requesting that participants generate a non-identifiable code at the commencement of each questionnaire. This code enabled longitudinal tracking of responses throughout the stages of OFDR service delivery.

First, we collected baseline data from staff and clients (prior to Intake) to control for individual differences using a combination of observational and self-report measures. Second, self-report measures were administered to clients and staff following Intake and mediation to capture post-session reactions and outcomes. Finally, we plan to follow-up with clients at 3- and 9-month time points to investigate the long-term outcomes of OFDR.

### Table 2 Data Collection Overview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Timepoint</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>Pre-Go Live Testing</td>
<td>Collection of baseline data from staff and refinement of measurement tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>Client Registration</td>
<td>Collection of baseline data from clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>Intake</td>
<td>Collection of post-Intake data from clients and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>OFDR Session</td>
<td>Collection of post-OFDR data from clients and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T5</td>
<td>3-Month Follow-up</td>
<td>Collection of long term outcome data from clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T6</td>
<td>9-Month Follow-up</td>
<td>Collection of long term outcome data from clients</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.2.1 Literature Review Summary

Relationship separation is a traumatic experience for the parties involved (Kelly, 2000; Koch & Lowery, 1984). Parents, as well as children, face a particular set of challenges that must be overcome if long-term psychological, physical and economic adjustment is to occur (Amato & Keith, 1991; Kelly, 2000; Power & Matthews, 1997; Walton, Oliver & Griffith, 1999; Koch & Lowery, 1984). Family conflict may arise as a co-morbid condition of the separation process (Amato & Keith, 1991; Lopez-Larrosa, 2009; McIntosh, 2003) and if unresolved, leads to outcomes that can persist throughout a child’s adult life (Dube, Anda, Felitti, Edwards & Williamson, 2002; Kelly, 2000).

Recent research conducted in Australia supports the detrimental effects of conflict on family functioning. Zubrick, Smith, Nicholson, Sanson and Jackiewicz (2008) demonstrated that interparental hostility was a strong and consistent predictor of negative outcomes for infants and young children. The methods that parents use to resolve conflict are also predictive of a child’s adjustment and wellbeing.

**Measures of a child’s fear and distress are significantly reduced when parents use compromise and negotiation rather than verbal “attacks” (Cummings & Davies, 1994). Family Dispute Resolution is one service that is assisting families to resolve conflict and form suitable co-parenting agreements regarding their children.**

Previous efforts at evaluating the efficacy and effectiveness of dispute resolution have suffered from a lack of thoroughness. For example, evaluations of dispute resolution have been criticised for adopting a narrow focus and utilisation of a limited range of measurement tools (Bailey & McCarty, 2009; Hollett, Herrman, Eaker & Gale, 2002; Poitras & Le Tareau, 2009). Determinants of mediation success are typically quantified by data such as service utilisation, frequency of resolution and characteristics of the agreements reached during the session. In addition, a common mistake made by evaluators of mediation programs is the failure to consider both process and outcome; two distinct aspects that must be evaluated conjointly to provide an accurate picture of overall efficacy (Hollett et al., 2002; Kelly & Gigy, 1988).

Therefore, the evaluation of OFDR should address these shortcomings by adopting a thorough and systematic approach. We propose that the adoption of a formal model of program evaluation and empirically-valid measurement tools will ensure that the assessment of OFDR and the resulting learnings are maximised.
The Importance of Program Evaluation

The evaluation of community services is often poorly done. Unmotivated or frustrated program staff (Mancini, Marek, Byrne & Huebner, 2004; Small, 1990), low awareness of evaluative methodologies (Hughes, 1994) or mounting pressure to develop, implement and report on a program in a short timeframe can mask the true effectiveness of a community-based program (Mancini et al., 2004).

However, evaluation - done correctly - is important on two broad levels (Small, 1990). First, demonstrating the effectiveness of community programs increases awareness and can inform policy, which may result in funding opportunities for future endeavours. Second, an absence of rigorous evaluative data may force new programs to invest significant resources in “reinventing strategies that others found promising or repeating the same mistakes made by earlier programs” (Small, 1990, p. 132). The evaluation of the OFDR pilot is vital if we are to realise the potential of online service delivery and appreciate the integrity and rigour adopted by the OFDR Project.

Research and Evaluation Questions

The following broad questions are proposed to guide a thorough evaluation and investigation of the OFDR pilot project:

1. What are clients’ experiences and level of satisfaction regarding the OFDR service? Specifically, to what extent were clients’ expectations of service quality realised following their experiences with the OFDR project?
   a. Are clients’ expectations of an OFDR service realistic?
   b. What is the level of difference between client expectations and perceptions of the OFDR service?

2. How does OFDR compare to other modalities (i.e., face-to-face and telephone)?
   a. How is the RAQ facilitative mediation model implemented within an OFDR environment and how does this compare to other modalities?
   b. What is the impact of contextual variables (i.e., characteristics of the case) on OFDR process and outcomes compared to other modalities?
   c. How does technology influence the quality of communication between OFDR participants?
3. What is the quality of human-computer interaction between OFDR users and the system?
   a. What usability factors are important to consider when designing and implementing an OFDR system?
   b. How is the OFDR system interface perceived by users? Do these perceptions differ depending on individual differences (e.g., attitudes toward computers)?

4. What cognitive demands are placed on users of OFDR?
   a. To what extent do these cognitive demands influence the FDR process and task performance? Specifically, are existing processes impacted by the addition of OFDR-related tasks?
   b. What are the training needs of staff involved in the OFDR process?
   c. How effective is OFDR training in terms of moving staff from novice to mastery?
   d. Does ongoing exposure to OFDR affect the self-efficacy and attitude of staff towards the use of computers?

5. Does OFDR lead to positive outcomes for clients? More specifically:
   a. What are the short-term outcomes? Does client participation in OFDR lead to (F2F and TEL equivalent) positive perceptions of justice (procedural, distributive, interactional), confidence and satisfaction with agreements and mediator usefulness?
   b. What are the long-term impacts? Does client participation in OFDR lead to (F2F and TEL equivalent) improvements in co-parental communication, inter-parental conflict and the wellbeing of children?

6. What is the effect of pre-OFDR education on mediation outcomes?
   a. Does the knowledge and information obtained during pre-OFDR education impact positively on mediation outcomes?
   b. Do the training objectives of pre-OFDR education meet the needs of clients?
   c. Does the method/style of delivery and provided content result in a positive client experience?
Proposed Methodology

Following a review of the available literature on University databases (ProQuest, Medline, A EBSCOhost Online, Expanded Academic, Business Source Premier, ScienceDirect) on dispute resolution program evaluation, we proposed that assessment of the OFDR pilot project should occur at the following stages:

- Staff training
- Staff pilot testing
- Client registration
- Intake
- Pre-FDR education
- OFDR (mediation) session, and;
- At 3 and 9 months following OFDR service delivery.

A detailed overview in diagrammatic form of the proposed OFDR evaluation methodology (specifically, client and staff commitment) is provided of the next two pages.
### Proposed Client Commitment to OFDR Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
<th>Time 3</th>
<th>Time 4</th>
<th>Time 5</th>
<th>Time 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-parental Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Acceptance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Wellbeing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Usefulness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in OFDR Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating Conditions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural Intention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalized Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility to Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADISC3 Demographic Details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Quality (Expectations)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Constructs
- Co-parental Communication
- Parental Acceptance
- Children’s Wellbeing
- Perceived Usefulness
- Trust in OFDR Technology
- Facilitating Conditions
- Behavioural Intention
- Personalized Information
- Accessibility to Technology
- ADISC3 Demographic Details
- Service Quality (Expectations)

### Measures
- Quality of Co-Parental Communication Scale (Aboba, 1999) 18 items
- Modified UTAUT measure (Weinberger et al., 2008) 4 items
- HCQ Quality (Lau & Ng, 2005) 21 items
- Report (Amos & O’Donovan, 2006) 5 items (x 2 parties)
- MOBEO (Brederle & Le Vare, 2009) 15 items
- Justice (Interpersonal & Distributive) (Cottrell, 2001, Frett et al., 1993) 6 items

### Proposed Measures
- Modified UTAUT measure (Weinberger et al., 2008) 4 items
- HCQ Quality (Lau & Ng, 2005) 21 items
- Report (Amos & O’Donovan, 2006) 5 items (x 2 parties)
- MOBEO (Brederle & Le Vare, 2009) 15 items
- Justice (Interpersonal & Distributive) (Cottrell, 2001, Frett et al., 1993) 6 items
Proposed Staff Commitment to OFDR Evaluation

**Measurement Points**
- Staff Pilot Testing
- Staff Intake Interview
- Staff Intake Survey
- Staff Pre-OFDR Education Survey
- Staff OFDR (mediation) Interview
- Staff OFDR (mediation) Survey
- Training Follow-up Survey

**Time Points**
- Time 1
- Time 2
- Time 3
- Time 4
- Time 5

**Constructs**
- Computer Self-Efficacy
- Perceived Voluntariness
- Computer Anxiety
- Perceived Organisational Support for Computer Use
- Afford (Towards Computers)
- Usability (eye tracking, errors)
- Perceived Usefulness
- Perceived Ease of Use
- Trust in RAQ
- Trust in OFDR Technology
- Rapport
- Information Quality
- Staff Experiences (verbal)
- TBC
- OFDR competency

**Proposed Measures**
- Computer Self-Efficacy
  - (Compas & Nappo, 1988) 11 items
- HCI Quality
  - (van der Ham & Coo, 2009) 21 items
- Modified UTAUT measure
  - (Venkatesh et al., 2003) 12 items
- Modified UTAUT measure
  - (Venkatesh et al., 1999) 22 items
- Computer Attitudes Scale (Kanaw & Sime, 1997) 13 items
- Modified UTAUT measure
  - (Venkatesh et al., 2003) 12 items
- Rapport
  - (P'Connor & Tickle-Degge, 2004) 5 items
- Information Quality
  - (Lee et al., 2002) 64 items (to be reduced)
- Information Quality
  - (Lee et al., 2002) 64 items (to be reduced)
- OFDR Training Follow-up and Feedback Surveys
  - (Coney, 2015) varied items
- Process Observation Tool
  - (completed by research staff)
Rationale for Measures Used

Here we summarise the empirical literature supporting each proposed construct within the OFDR evaluation/research model. Further sources of reading are provided in the References sections of this document.

Technology Acceptance

Numerous studies have demonstrated that constructs such as the perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of technology predicts both intention to use and actual usage (e.g., Davis, 1993; Taylor & Todd, 1995; Venkatesh, Morris, Davis & Davis, 2003). According to theories of technology acceptance, innovations that are easy to use and have direct applicability to the user’s current needs/situation are more likely to be adopted (Davis, 1993). Additional acceptance constructs such as the influence of social groups and access to sufficient knowledge/resources have also demonstrated strong predictive power (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Usage of Technology (UTAUT) provides a useful framework to measure and predict the strength of users’ intentions to adopt a particular innovation (Venkatesh et al., 2003). The model was successfully extended by Casey and Wilson-Evered (2009) within the context of client attitudes towards OFDR. Trust in organisation (e.g., Lippert & Davis, 2006), trust in technology (e.g., Lippert, 2007; Lippert & Davis, 2006) and intrinsic motivation to try out new online services (e.g., Fang, Shao & Lan, 2009) displayed significant predictive power over and above the UTAUT model.

Previous research has demonstrated that measuring technology acceptance variables at multiple time points (i.e., pre-, during and post-implementation) provides important diagnostic data to inform the implementation process (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).

Human-Computer Interaction

The paradigm of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) integrates perspectives and measures from a wide range of empirical fields, including information technology, psychology, engineering, management and sociology (Olson & Olson, 2003). The goal of HCI research is to design technical systems that are usable and useful (Carroll, 1997; Olson & Olson, 2003).

Theoretical frameworks used to explore and evaluate the quality of HCI are typically clustered into two camps; cognitive modelling (e.g., perceptual, motor and cognitive...
performance; Olson & Olson, 2003) and theories of innovation uptake/adoption (e.g., social factors and attitudinal factors; Davis, 1993; Venkatesh & Davis, 2000; Venkatesh et al., 2003). ‘User experience’ refers to the broad consideration of the quality of interaction between person and machine (Tullis & Albert, 2008). Research in this area has provided a number of useful measures ranging from psychophysiological (Park, 2009) to subjective attitudinal ratings (Ghani & Deshpande, 1994; van Shaik & Ling, 2005).

The proposed OFDR evaluation measures have considerable support in the HCI literature. Computer interface quality has been previously shown to influence usability, and hence, performance (Tullis & Albert, 2008; van Shaik & Ling, 2005). Valid and reliable measures of usability proposed for use in the OFDR project include flow (Ghani & Deshpande, 1994), ease of use and usefulness (van Shaik & Ling, 2005). Other subjective measures such as aesthetic quality have also shown utility as predictors of interface usability and positive user experience (Tractinsky, 2005; van Shaik & Ling, 2005).

Finally, task performance (e.g., error rate, time to complete, process observation; Tullis & Albert, 2008) and psychophysiological measures such as eye-tracking technologies (Kim, Bae & Jeon, 2009; Jacob & Karn, 2003) have strong validity in a range of technological contexts. The application of these measures within the OFDR evaluation could result in the formation of empirically-informed improvements to the design of the OFDR system (Tullis & Albert, 2008).

**Communication Quality**

An additional consideration for the OFDR project is a measure of the quality of communication between participants, as mediated by the virtual environment. Prior research has shown that the quality of communication conducted in a virtual environment (e.g., video-conferencing) can potentially be more confusing (Thompson & Coovert, 2003), less efficient (Fussell, Kraut & Siegel, 2000) and less satisfying (Kies, Williges & Rosson, 1997) compared to face-to-face interaction.

Other work involving corporate samples suggests that organisational and individual characteristics influence the uptake of video-conferencing technology (Webster, 1998); in the context of OFDR and the organisational environment of Relationships Australia (QLD), it may be useful to examine staff attitudes towards and experiences of online service delivery from a communication efficiency perspective. Consequently, measures such as interpersonal rapport (Puccinelli & Tickle-Degnen, 2004), conversational disfluency (Gratch et al., 2007) and conversational sequencing (Jupp, 2006) could
prove to be useful in determining the effects of the online medium on communications made during traditional face-to-face and telephone dispute resolution. In particular, scholars have argued the importance of maintaining rapport during a dispute resolution session, suggesting that developing a personal connection between mediator and participant is a key practice skill (Goldberg, 2006; Goldberg, 2005). If the online environment does result in a less efficient or frustrating experience for users, rapport may be adversely affected.

Use of ‘micro’ level analysis such as conversational sequencing may also uncover additional insight into the dynamics of communication within the OFDR environment. The analysis of conversation by examining the sequence of interpersonal behaviours has previously been used to analyse conflict in family environments, which demonstrates some validity for the measure’s use within the conflicted environment of dispute resolution (Vuchinich, 1984).

Information Quality

The addition of a virtual medium (with potential challenges to interpersonal communication) and additional cognitive load (due to the simultaneous operation of multiple computer system) could impact on the quality of data that is recorded at Intake. Given that a high standard of information quality is conducive to effective decision making (Price & Shanks, 2004), evaluation of the quality of electronic data collected at Intake may assist with assessing the impact of technology on existing service procedures (such as TDRS co-ordinator decision making effectiveness).

The proposed measure of information quality was obtained from the information systems literature, and refers to the accuracy, relevancy, comprehension and retrievability of obtained data (Lee, Strong, Kahn & Wang, 2002). To our knowledge, this measure has not been previously validated within a community-services context; however, prior research investigating the effectiveness of information system quality suggests that the scale is psychometrically sound and useful to determine gaps in collection, storage and retrieval processes (Lee et al., 2002).

Justice

As an empirical construct, justice has seen considerable use as a measure of dispute resolution process fairness (Hollett et al., 2002; Kitzmann & Emery, 2005; Poitras & Le Tareau, 2009; Pruitt et al., 1993). Justice, as a psychological construct, arose from the application of a legalistic perspective to the perceived fairness of organisational decision making (Byrne & Cropanzano, 2001). Within the psychological literature, justice has
been defined and operationalised as three separate dimensions, namely procedural, distributive and interactional (Colquitt, 2001).

Procedural justice refers to perceptions of process fairness, whereas distributive justice focuses on the fairness of the outcome given the level of effort expended (i.e., was the end product ‘worth it’). Interactional justice describes perceptions of being treated fairly (Colquitt, 2001) and in the context of FDR, provided with sufficient opportunities to contribute to the discussion (Pruitt et al., 1993).

Measures of procedural justice seem particularly important within the context of dispute resolution, given the importance placed by mediators on the fairness of the process irrespective of the final outcome (i.e., impartiality, neutrality; Kitzmann & Emery, 2005; Poitras & Le Tareau, 2009). Measures of distributive and interactional justice may provide convergent evidence of OFDR efficacy when used in conjunction with the aforementioned attitudinal and observational measures (avoiding issues such as common method variance).

**Mediation Process and Outcomes**

The dispute resolution literature is replete with the recommendation that mediation process should be evaluated separately to the outcome (e.g., Hollett et al., 2002; Kelly & Gigy, 1988). In addition, previous evaluations of mediation programs have suffered from a lack of specificity and thoroughness of the measures used (Bailey & McCarty, 2009; Hollett et al., 2002; Poitras & Le Tareau, 2009).

Following a review of the extant dispute resolution evaluation literature, the Mediation Outcome Standard Evaluation Questionnaire (MOSEQ; Poitras & Le Tareau, 2009) was selected as the primary measure of OFDR process and short-term outcomes. The constructs measured within the study were validated theoretically (integrating common themes in previous research) and psychometrically (exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses; Poitras & Le Tareau, 2009). Thus, the MOSEQ seems to represent current best-practice in the quantitative evaluation of mediation process and short-term outcomes.

**Inter-parental Conflict and Children’s Wellbeing**

Parental separation increases the risk of socio-economic, emotional and psychological hardship for both children and adults of the affected family unit (Amato & Keith, 1991; Kelly, 2000; Power & Matthews, 1997; Walton, Oliver & Griffith, 1999; Koch & Lowery, 1984). Conflict within the family may arise as a co-morbid
condition of the separation process (Amato & Keith, 1991; Lopez-Larrosa, 2009; McIntosh, 2003) and if unresolved, leads to outcomes that can persist throughout a child’s adult life (Dube, Anda, Felitti, Edwards & Williamson, 2002; Kelly, 2000).

Prior research has demonstrated that the methods used to resolve conflict can predict family member’s long-term outcomes such as emotional adjustment and psychological wellbeing (Cummings & Davies, 1994). Previous research has been equivocal regarding the efficacy of child-focused family dispute resolution on long-term family and child outcomes (e.g., McIntosh et al., 2007). These negative findings suggest that further investigations should be done to determine if the results are replicable. Consequently, the OFDR project should incorporate measures of inter-parental conflict and children’s wellbeing to help determine whether online service delivery is an effective long-term intervention. Emery’s (Shaw & Emery, 1987)

Parental Acrimony Scale (PAS) is a widely used measure to indicate the level of conflict between separated parents. The PAS has previously been used to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of dispute resolution at reducing conflict between parents (e.g., Emery, Laumann-Billings, Waldron, Sbarra & Dillon, 2001; McIntosh, Wells & Long, 2007). In light of the difficulties inherent with consent and practicality, children’s wellbeing has been successfully measured via indirect means (Goodman, 1997).

The Strengths and Differences Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997) requires parents to rate the wellbeing of their children across five dimensions. The scale has demonstrated excellent psychometric properties, including statistical validation of the proposed factor structure and reliability (Goodman, 2001).

**Service Quality**

The quality of service provided to clients and customers is especially important to measure because it allows organisations to determine whether expectations ‘live up’ to actual experiences (Wisniewski, 2001). Service quality has been defined in a multitude of different ways (Wisniewski, 2001); however, one consensus is that good service appears to be the provision of intangibles that result in the customer feeling satisfied and positive about their interaction with the organisation (Brysland & Curry, 2001).

The ServQUAL measure—developed and refined by Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml (1991)—has been utilised extensively (Brysland & Curry, 2001) as a measure of service quality. Within the not-for-profit community services industry, the ServQUAL instrument has shown applicability and utility in assisting to determine customer/client satisfaction (Medina-Borja & Triantis, 2007). As an additional consideration, technology has...
introduced new methods of delivering services to clients, in particular the rapid proliferation of convenient online platforms (Bitner, 2001). However, some scholars argue that client expectations have not changed—the provision of high quality service is perhaps more important now that ever before (Bitner, 2001). Consequently, the technological nature of OFDR may impact of the level of service provided by the TDRS. A measure of service quality is a necessary element of the evaluation of the OFDR pilot project.

**Computer Self-Efficacy and Affect and Anxiety**

Previous investigations into factors affecting technology uptake and adoption have explored the influence of moderating relationships between core acceptance constructs and individual differences (e.g., Compeau & Higgins, 1995; Venkatesh et al., 2003). Specifically, computer self-efficacy, computer 'liking' or affect and computer anxiety (Compeau & Higgins, 1995; Nash & Moroz) have been found to influence usage intentions and behaviours. In the context of OFDR, these variables may impact on task performance (if anxiety is sufficiently high, users may attempt to avoid the use of computers; Higgins & Compeau, 1995) and desire/intention to use the OFDR system.
Benefits from Research and Evaluation

Benefits to RAQ and the Not-for-Profit (NFP) Sector

The evaluation of the OFDR project in the manner described has the potential to benefit RAQ and the legal and community services sector in a number of important ways. Specifically:

1. Future funding opportunities that endorse the use of empirically-defensible research methodology
2. Wider and more efficient accessibility to vulnerable or at risk clients where evaluation data are used to improve online service delivery
3. Marked increase in the organisation’s and sectors’ competitive advantage, potentially leading to:
   a. Diffusion of a technologically innovative reputation throughout the sector
   b. Benefits to employment branding – potential benefits to recruitment and selection (attracting and retaining innovative employees)
   c. Recognition as an industry leader in technology implementation and program evaluation
4. Contribution to the development of a research culture throughout the organisation, in alignment with the strategic plan
5. Identification of future research projects within the organisation, raising the research profile of RAQ

Community-wide Impacts

Similarly, projects such as OFDR have broader community implications especially in terms of increasing reach and access and range of RAQ services to the clients most in need and underprivileged. Specifically, this OFDR project has

1. Maximised contribution to the development of OFDR ‘best-practice’ guidelines, which will ensure that vulnerable or at risk populations continue to receive high quality services
2. Increased opportunities to collaborate with local and interstate universities
3. Maintained the development of a research and evaluation culture within RAQ and the sector, which could lead to better outcomes for the community though access to services continuously improved by using substantive evidence
4. Contributed to the body of empirical knowledge regarding online service delivery, human-computer interaction, program evaluation and Pre FDR Education outcomes

5. Potentially increased the efficiency of program evaluation within other community-organisations by disseminating the learnings of the OFDR pilot project.
List of OFDR Evaluation Measures

**Client Demographics**
*Administered to Clients at Registration*

1. Client code
2. Party A or B
3. Age
4. Presence of domestic violence
5. Income range
6. Country of Origin
7. Aboriginal or Torres Straight Islander heritage
8. Employment status
9. Education level

**Staff Demographics**
*Administered to Staff prior to Intake*

1. Tenure
2. Gender
3. Age
4. Employment status (full-time/part-time)
5. Education level
6. Experience with face to face service delivery? (estimated time)

**Client Accessibility to Technology**
*Administered to Clients at Registration (Screening Tool)*

1. Do you have access to a computer in a private location?
2. Is your computer currently connected to the Internet?
3. What type of Internet connection do you have?
4. Do you have access to a web-camera?

**Quality of Co-Parental Communication Scale**
Administered to Clients following Registration, and at 3- and 6-month follow-up.

Items are rated along a 5-point rating scale (1="never" to 5="always"). The full scale consists of 10 items and 2 subscales (degree of interparental conflict and support).

Conflict
1. When you and your former spouse discuss parenting issues, how often does an argument result?
2. How often is the underlying atmosphere one of hostility and anger?
3. How often is the conversation stressful and tense?
4. Do you and your former spouse have basic differences of opinion about issues related to child rearing?

Support
1. When you need help regarding the children, do you seek it from your former spouse?
2. Would you say that you are a resource to your former spouse in raising the children?
3. If your former spouse has needed to make a change in visiting arrangements, do you go out of your way to accommodate?
4. Does your former spouse go out of the way to accommodate any changes you need to make?
5. Do you feel that your former spouse understands and is supportive of your special needs as a parent?

Unified Theory of Acceptance and Usage of Technology

Administered to Clients at or following Registration, and following Intake and mediation.

The scale consists of 8 items.

1. The Online Family Dispute Resolution system was/would be useful in the context of my current situation
2. I would find/found the Online Family Dispute Resolution system easy to use
3. People who are important to me would approve/approved of the Online Family Dispute Resolution system
4. I have/had access to enough knowledge and resources to use the Online Family Dispute Resolution system
5. I believe the Telephone Dispute Resolution Service is trustworthy
6. I would feel/felt secure using the Online Family Dispute Resolution system
7. In general, I am hesitant to try out new online services
8. If Online Family Dispute Resolution was available now, I would use it

Rapport

Administered to Clients and Staff following Intake and Mediation

Measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1="strongly disagree" to 7="strongly agree"). The scale consists of 5 items, measured from the perspective of each conversational partner.

1. I felt aware of, and interested in the Intake officer/mediator/other party
2. I liked and felt warms towards the Intake officer/mediator/other party
3. I felt a comfortable rhythm with and felt coordinated with the Intake officer/mediator/other party
4. I felt rapport with the Intake officer/mediator/other party
5. I felt that the Intake officer/mediator/other party had each of these same feelings

Quality of Human/Computer Interaction

Administered to Clients and Staff following Intake and Mediation

The majority of items are measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1="strongly disagree" to 7="strongly agree"); however, the seven Aesthetic quality items are measured using 7-point semantic differential scales. Some items were removed based on their level of applicability to the current study.
1. Disorientation
   a. I felt lost
   b. I felt like I was going around in circles
   c. Navigating in the OFDR system was a problem
   d. I didn’t know how to get to my desired location
   e. I felt disoriented

2. Flow - Involvement
   a. I thought about other things
   b. I was aware of distractions
   c. I had to make an effort to keep my mind on the activity
   d. I was aware of other problems

3. Flow – Control
   a. Time seemed to pass more quickly
   b. I knew the right things to do
   c. I felt like I received a lot of direct feedback from the OFDR system
   d. I felt in control of myself
   e. I felt in harmony with the environment

4. Aesthetics
   a. I judge the OFDR system to be:
      i. 1="Very incomprehensible" to 7="Very comprehensible"
      ii. 1="Very illegible" to 7="very legible"
      iii. 1="Very disordered" to 7="Very ordered"
      iv. 1="Very unappealing" to 7="Very appealing"
      v. 1="Very meaningless" to 7="Very meaningful"
      vi. 1="Very bad" to 7="Very good"
      vii. 1="Very simple" to 7="Very complex"

Mediation Outcome Standard Evaluation Questionnaire
Items measured using a 6-point Likert scale (1="strongly disagree" and 6="strongly agree"). The scale consists of 15 items.

1. Mediator’s usefulness
   a. The mediator’s intervention was determinant in advancing discussion
   b. The mediator had an important impact on the progress of discussions
   c. The mediator’s contribution was critical to advancing discussion

2. Procedural justice
   a. The mediation meeting was run without bias
   b. Mediation was run in a neutral and objective manner
   c. Mediation took place in an impartial climate

3. Satisfaction with the agreement
   a. I am happy with the solution we came to
   b. The settlement of conflict was satisfactory to me
   c. I am content with the agreement we reached

4. Confidence in the agreement
   a. I believe our agreement will be applied
   b. I am convinced the agreement reached will be respected
   c. I believe we will abide by the provisions of the agreement

5. Reconciliation between the parties
   a. I am reconciled with the other party
   b. I feel like my relationship with the other party has been restored
   c. I believe I have rebuilt my relationship with the other

**Justice**


**Administered to Clients following Mediation**

Mediation-relevant items were developed by adapting the multi-item measure developed by Colquitt (2001) to the mediation context. The work of Pruitt et al (1993) assisted with the wording of items and the conceptualisation of the distributive and interactional justice constructs. The proposed scale consists of 6 items.
1. Distributive Justice (Colquitt, 2001; Pruitt et al., 1993)
   a. The agreement reflects the amount of work I put into the mediation
   b. The agreement reached is fair to me
   c. The agreement reached is fair to everyone involved

2. Interactional Justice (Colquitt, 2001; Hollet et al., 2002)
   a. I was treated with dignity during the mediation
   b. I was treated with respect throughout the mediation
   c. I had the opportunity to discuss my own ideas during the mediation

**AIMQ Information Quality Measure**

*Administered to Staff (TDRS-Coordinators) following Intake*

This measure of information quality is measured on a 10 point scale (0="not at all" and 10="completely"). The complete scale consists of 64 items. A shorter version of this scale might be more suited to the context of OFDR (focussing on quality of recorded information rather than quality of the recording system).

1. **Accessibility**
   a. This information is easily retrievable
   b. This information is easily accessible
   c. This information is easily obtainable
   d. This information is quickly accessible when needed

2. **Appropriate Amount**
   a. This information is of sufficient volume for our needs
   b. The amount of information does not match our needs (R)
   c. The amount of information is not sufficient for our needs (R)
   d. The amount of information is neither too much nor too little

3. **Believability**
   a. This information is believable
   b. This information is of doubtful credibility (R)
   c. This information is trustworthy
   d. This information is credible

4. **Completeness**
   a. This information includes all necessary values
   b. This information is incomplete (R)
c. This information is complete  
d. This information is sufficiently complete for our needs  
e. This information covers the needs of our tasks  
f. This information has sufficient breadth and depth for our task

5. **Concise Representation**  
a. This information is formatted compactly  
b. This information is presented concisely  
c. This information is presented in a compact form  
d. The representation of this information is compact and concise

6. **Consistent Representation**  
a. This information is consistently presented in the same format  
b. This information is not presented consistently (R)  
c. This information is presented consistently  
d. This information is represented in a consistent format

7. **Ease of Operation**  
a. This information is easy to manipulate to meet our needs  
b. This information is easy to aggregate  
c. This information is difficult to manipulate to meet our needs (R)  
d. This information is difficult to aggregate (R)  
e. This information is easy to combine with other information

8. **Free of Error**  
a. This information is correct  
b. This information is incorrect (R)  
c. This information is accurate  
d. This information is reliable

9. **Interpretability**  
a. It is easy to interpret what this information means  
b. This information is difficult to interpret (R)  
c. It is difficult to interpret the coded information (R)  
d. This information is easily interpretable  
e. The measurement units for this information are clear

10. **Objectivity**  
a. This information was objectively collected  
b. This information is based on facts  
c. This information is objective  
d. This information presents an impartial view

11. **Relevancy**  
a. This information is useful to our work
b. This information is relevant to our work
c. This information is appropriate for our work
d. This information is applicable to our work

12. **Reputation**
   a. This information has a poor reputation for quality (R)
b. This information has a good reputation
c. This information has a reputation for quality
d. This information comes from good sources

13. **Security**
   a. This information is protected against unauthorized access
   b. This information is not protected with adequate security (R)
c. Access to this information is sufficiently restricted
d. This information can only be accessed by people who should see it

14. **Timeliness**
   a. This information is sufficiently current for our work
   b. This information is not sufficiently timely (R)
c. This information is not sufficiently current for our work (R)
d. This information is sufficiently timely
e. This information is sufficiently up-to-date for our work

15. **Understandability**
   a. This information is easy to understand
   b. The meaning of this information is difficult to understand (R)
c. This information is easy to comprehend
d. The meaning of this information is easy to understand

---

**Modified SERVQUAL Instrument**

*Administered to Clients following Registration and following Mediation*

Items are measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1=”strongly disagree” and 7=”strongly agree”). The complete instrument consists of 22 items. Item wordings were modified to fit the context of OFDR. The questionnaire consists of two separate administrations: a measure of client expectations and a measure of actual perceptions following service delivery.
**SERVQUAL Expectations Measure**

1. **Tangibles**
   a. Pilot OFDR services will have modern technology
   b. The facilities provided by pilot OFDR services will be visually appealing
   c. Employees of pilot OFDR services will be neat-appearing
   d. Materials associated with the service (such as pamphlets or educational resources) will be visually appealing in a pilot OFDR service.

2. **Reliability**
   a. When pilot OFDR services promise to do something by a certain time, they will do so
   b. When clients have a problem, pilot OFDR services will show a sincere interest in solving it
   c. Pilot OFDR services will perform the service right the first time
   d. Pilot OFDR services will provide their services at the time they promise to do so
   e. Pilot OFDR services will insist on error-free client files

3. **Responsiveness**
   a. Employees of pilot OFDR services will tell clients exactly when services will be performed
   b. Employees of pilot OFDR services will give prompt assistance to clients
   c. Employees of pilot OFDR services will always be willing to help clients
   d. Employees of pilot OFDR services will never to be too busy to respond to client requests

4. **Assurance**
   a. The behaviour of employees of pilot OFDR services will instil confidence in customers
   b. Clients of pilot OFDR services will feel safe in their transactions of confidential information
   c. Employees of pilot OFDR services will be consistently courteous with clients
   d. Employees of pilot OFDR services will have the knowledge to answer client questions

5. **Empathy**
   a. Pilot OFDR services will give clients individual attention
   b. Pilot OFDR services will have operating hours convenient to all their clients
   c. Pilot OFDR services will have employees who give clients personal attention
d. Pilot OFDR services will have the clients’ best interests at heart
e. The employees of pilot OFDR services will understand the specific needs of their clients

SERVQUAL Perceptions Measure

1. Tangibles
   a. The pilot OFDR service has modern-looking technology
   b. The pilot OFDR service has visually appealing facilities
   c. The employees of the pilot OFDR service are neat-appearing
   d. Materials associated with the service (such as pamphlets or educational resources) are visually appealing

2. Reliability
   a. When the pilot OFDR service promises to do something by a certain time, it does so
   b. When you have a problem, the pilot OFDR service shows a sincere interest in solving it
   c. The pilot OFDR service performs the service right the first time
   d. The pilot OFDR service provides its services at the time it promises to do so
   e. The pilot OFDR service insists on error-free records

3. Responsiveness
   a. Employees of the pilot OFDR service tell you exactly when services will be performed
   b. Employees of the pilot OFDR service give you prompt service
   c. Employees of the pilot OFDR service are always willing to help you
   d. Employees of the pilot OFDR service are never too busy to respond to your requests

4. Assurance
   a. The behaviour of employees of the pilot OFDR service instils confidence in clients
   b. You feel safe in your transactions of confidential information with the pilot OFDR service
   c. Employees of the pilot OFDR service are consistently courteous with you
   d. Employees of the pilot OFDR service have the knowledge to answer your questions

5. Empathy
   a. The pilot OFDR service gives you individual attention
   b. The pilot OFDR service has operating hours convenient to all its clients
c. The pilot OFDR service has employees who give you personal attention
d. The pilot OFDR service has your best interests at heart
e. Employees of the pilot OFDR service understand your specific needs

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

Administered to Clients following Registration and at 3- and 9-month follow-up.

The full measure consists of 25 items, each scored on a 3-point scale (0="not true", 1="somewhat true" or 2="certainly true"). Five scale dimensions have been confirmed through studies employing factor analysis methods (Goodman, 2001). The scale requires parents to rate the frequency of their child’s behaviours to provide an indication of the child’s general social, emotional and psychological wellbeing (Goodman, 1997).

1. **Hyperactivity Scale**
   a. Restless, overactive, cannot stay still for long
   b. Constantly fidgeting or squirming
   c. Easily distracted, concentration wanders
   d. Thinks things out before acting (R)
   e. Sees tasks through to the end, good attention span (R)

2. **Emotional Symptoms Scale**
   a. Often complains of headaches, stomach-ache or sickness
   b. Many worries, often seems worried
   c. Often unhappy, down-hearted or tearful
   d. Nervous or clingy in new situations, easily loses confidence
   e. Many fears, easily scared

3. **Conduct Problems Scale**
   a. Often has temper tantrums or hot tempers
   b. Generally obedient, usually does what adults request (R)
   c. Often fights with other children or bullies them
   d. Often lies or cheats
   e. Steals from home, school or elsewhere

4. **Peer Problems Scale**
   a. Rather solitary, tends to play alone
   b. Has at least one good friend (R)
   c. Generally likes by other children (R)
d. Picked on or bullied by other children
e. Gets on better with adults than with other children

5. **Pro-social Scale**
   a. Considerate of other people’s feelings
   b. Shares readily with other children (treats, toys, pencils, etc.)
   c. Helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill
   d. Kind to younger children
   e. Often volunteers to help others (parents, teachers, other children)

**Parental Acrimony Scale**


*Administered to Clients following Registration and at 3- and 9-month follow-up.*

The Parental Acrimony Scale (PAS) consists of 25 items, each rated on a 4-point indicator of behavioural frequency (1 =“almost never”, 2=”some of the time”, 3=”much of the time” or 4=”almost always”). The final score represents a uni-dimensional indication of the severity if inter-parental conflict.

1. Do you feel friendly toward your children’s other parent? (R)
2. Do you feel friendly toward the other parent? (R)
3. Are gifts to the children a problem between you and the other parent?
4. Is the parenting time schedule a problem between you and the other parent?
5. Do you have friendly talks with the other parent? (R)
6. Is the other parent a good parent? (R)
7. Do your children see the other parent as often as you would like? (R)
8. Do your children see the other parent as often as he/she would like? (R)
9. Do you and the other parent agree on discipline for the children? (R)
10. Are your children harder to handle after spending time with the other parent?
11. Do you and the other parent disagree in front of the children? (R)
12. Do the children take sides in disagreements between you and the other parent?
13. Are child support payments a problem between you and the other parent?
14. Do you children feel hostile toward the other parent?
15. Does the other parent say things about you to the children that you don’t want them to hear?
16. Do you say things about the other parents to the children the he/she wouldn’t want them to hear?
17. Do you have angry disagreements with the other parent?
18. Do you feel hostile towards the other parent?
19. Does the other parent feel hostile toward you?
20. Can you talk to the other parent about problems with the children? (R)

**Computer Self-Efficacy (CSE)**

*Administered to Staff prior to Intake and following Mediation.*

Developed by Compeau and Higgins (1995), the CSE scale consists of 10 original items (plus an additional item added during the staff OFDR pre-contemplation survey). Participants are asked to indicate (yes/no) whether they would be able to use the specified system to complete a task in light of each scenario. A 10-point scale is also provided to allow for ratings of confidence that the task could be achieved successfully (0="not at all confident" to 10="totally confident").

1. I could complete the job using the OFDR system if:
   a. there was no-one around to tell me what to do as I go
   b. I have never used a package like it before
   c. I had only the software manuals for reference
   d. I had seen someone else using it before trying it myself
   e. I could call someone for help if I got stuck
   f. someone else had helped me get started
   g. I had alot of time to complete the job
   h. I had just the built-in help facility for assistance
   i. someone showed me how to do it first
   j. I had used similar packages before this one to do the same job
   k. I had received sufficient training in how to use it
Computer Attitudes Scale (CAS)


Administered to Staff prior to Intake and following Mediation.

Originally developed by Loyd and Gressard (1984), the revised version of the Computer Attitudes Scale (CAS) consists of 35 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1="strongly disagree" to 5="strongly agree"; Nash & Moroz, 1997). The full scale reduces to four stable factors; computer confidence/anxiety, computer liking, computer usefulness and attitudes towards computer training (Nash & Moroz, 1997). Within OFDR, independent use of the anxiety and liking sub-scales may be more appropriate than the full instrument.

1. **Computer confidence/anxiety**
   a. Generally, I would feel OK about trying a new problem on the computer
   b. I'm not the type to do well with computers
   c. I think using a computer would be very hard for me
   d. I don't think I would do advanced computer work
   e. I'm no good with computers
   f. I have a lot of self-confidence when it comes to working with computers (R)
   g. I would feel very comfortable working with a computer (R)
   h. Working with a computer would make me very nervous
   i. I do not feel threatened when others talk about computers
   j. Computers make me feel uneasy and confused
   k. Computers make me feel uncomfortable
   l. Computers do not scare me at all (R)
   m. I get a sinking feeling when I think of trying to use a computer

2. **Computer liking**
   a. When there is a problem with a computer that I can’t immediately solve, I would stick with it until I have the answer (R)
   b. I do not enjoy talking with others about computers
   c. The challenge of solving problems with computers does not appeal to me
d. Figuring out computer problems does not appeal to me

e. Once I start to work with a computer, I would find it hard to stop (R)

f. I don’t understand how some people can spend so much time working with computers and seem to enjoy it

g. I think working with computers would be enjoyable and stimulating (R)

h. If a problem is left unresolved on a computer, I would continue to think about it afterward (R)

i. I feel aggressive and hostile toward computers

3. **Computer usefulness**

   a. I will do as little work with computers as possible

   b. I’ll need a firm mastery of computers for my future work (R)

   c. Learning about computers is worthwhile (R)

   d. I expect to have little use for computers in my daily life

   e. Working with computers will not be important in my life’s work

   f. Anything a computer can be used for, I can do just as well some other way

   g. I can’t think of any way that I will use computers in my career

   h. Knowing how to work with computers will increase my job possibilities (R)

4. **Attitudes towards computer training**

   a. It wouldn’t bother me at all to take computer courses

   b. I would feel at ease in a computer class

   c. It is important for me to do well in a computer class/training
9.3 Summary of Pre and Post Implementation Learnings

The learnings from the OFDR Project can be summarised into two broad categories. First, those lessons learned from embarking on the evaluation methodology. Second, the particular and important lessons learned from the results of the evaluation.

Learnings from the Evaluation

We embarked on an elaborate and sophisticated research methodology for this project for two reasons. Primarily, we were keen to establish a strong research methodology for all aspects of the OFDR project so that we could apply the same methodology to the other modalities of delivery FDR Services; TDRS and Face to Face (F2F).

Second, RAQ has a commitment to evidence based practice and by that we mean evidence that is rigorous according to accepted framework for Evidence Based Practice among medical, health and scientific communities. Though randomised control trials were not appropriate for this study given operational and funding constraints, compared to most not-for-profit human services organisations, we conducted substantial studies that were designed to produce Category 11-2 evidence (See below for description).

- Category I: Evidence from at least one properly randomized controlled trial.
- Category II-1: Evidence from well-designed controlled trials without randomization.
- Category II-2: Evidence from well-designed cohort or case-control analytic studies, preferably from more than one centre or research group.
- Category II-3: Evidence from multiple times series with or without intervention or dramatic results in uncontrolled experiments such as the results of the introduction of penicillin treatment in the 1940s.
- Category III: Opinions of respected authorities, based on clinical experience, descriptive studies and case reports, or reports of expert committees.

In taking this approach, we significantly stepped up requirements from staff and clients to engage in research. The evaluation project involved changes to practices and processing to include the range of data collection points and times we chose. Given the busy operational context in which this evaluation as conducted, we achieved impressive involvement in studies that have yielded very important outcomes. Notwithstanding our successes, we have learned some lessons as follows:

1. **Staff compliance and communication**: ensure staff are engaged and reminded to fill in feedback and evaluation forms.
2. **Client compliance and communication**: ensure staff members are engaged and able to remind and encourage clients to complete feedback and evaluation forms.
3. **Use and established survey platform**: to obtain data from staff and clients and ensure there is capacity for clients to access online feedback surveys. Our survey distribution was less than ideal as we emailed surveys that had to be returned to us; reducing the likelihood of response. However, future development of RAQ’s web strategy will improve that functionality as clients have web access to RAQ’s surveys.
4. **From this learning**: we strongly advise other organisations to develop an efficient online system for obtaining client data. Second, operational staff rather than research staff are better placed to secure client and staff feedback at the time of the service experience.
Learnings from the Findings of the Evaluation

**Overall, the results are promising:** in general, both staff and clients are motivated and able to use online technologies for service delivery. Moreover, clients from diverse backgrounds such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are enthusiastic and willing to work out ways to adapt and adopt online technologies to improve services to vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and groups who require complex services.

Technology enabled services can reach further, have a wider range of resources and be accessed by more people through systems such as OFDR. We believe the evidence is present in our studies that the technology has benefits in terms of ease of access, ease of use, being trustworthy and readily available in the hands of our skilled and experienced Practitioners. Once again, some valuable lessons have been learned as we summarise below:

1. Provide additional training to staff using video feedback on non-verbal and verbal behaviours, e.g. use of eye contact and facial experiences while using web cameras.
2. Precontemplation Research is extremely useful and provides important evidence about different preferences among groups and segments of the population that can be used to develop targeted communications.
3. Developing new work methods, communication systems and processes could encourage more uptake from those willing and interested clients to adopt online service delivery.
4. Clients are highly experienced in using systems such as Skype and have fast efficient technologies for their use. Staff should be equally experienced.
5. Host organisations need to have the levels of sophistication in their ICT systems and infrastructures, users, interface development, speed and back up processes to ensure satisfying user experiences and effective service provision.
6. Specifications grounded in service delivery requirements need to be articulated from all perspectives at the outset of the contract when working with vendors and customising software and technology interfaces.
7. Important that ICT informs the strategy but does not lead the design of client service delivery initiatives though technologies. The interface design should involve end users from practice, training, client services, quality, risk management and security, user interface specialists, and be grounded in functional requirements; so that modifications are made with a focus on staff and
client useability.

8. Using project management methodologies is essential; Project management of ICT systems' implementation requires special and skilful team supported by structured project management methodologies and tools.

9. Technology testing with the vendor before go-live and development and implementation of detailed acceptance criteria are critical for success.

10. Evaluation must be factored into the project concept development and design and endorsed by senior management in project plans. This approach was a key factor in the success of our evaluation methodology.

11. Develop and test effective communications with clients in terms of ensuring they are ready and supported and fully informed about the procedures used for the On-Line Service encounter.
9.4 Client Screening

**Screening Clients Suitable for OFDR**

The client screening tool was developed to assist service staff to systematically select appropriate participants for the Online Family Dispute Resolution (OFDR) project. The current registration process for TDRS clients (primarily) involves the warm-transfer of clients from FRAL staff through to Telephone Information and Referral Officers (TIROs) and TDRS administration staff. The TIRO staff provide information and referral services across a wide range of RAQ programs with the assistance of the Client Information System (CIS), organisational procedures and work instructions, an Intranet website and external referral databases such as Family Relationships Online (FRO). Often, clients have been involved in extended telephone conversations prior to their transfer to the TDRS. Clients may also be distressed, upset or aggressive based on their current personal circumstances.

Initially, clients are provided with an explanation of the TDRS and—if the client consents and the case is deemed appropriate—offered an appointment time following a 10-15 minute registration process. In essence, the OFDR screening tool implementation environment is particularly complex given the existence of multiple technological tools, the array of program-specific knowledge that staff are required to possess and the potential for highly emotive interactions with clients (e.g., crisis calls).

**Development Methodology**

A series of meetings with TDRS staff, practice and development staff, the research team and project management culminated in a series of proposed criteria implicated in client suitability for OFDR. From these discussions and the accessibility data obtained from the OFDR Client Attitudes survey, four key decision categories were derived:

1. motivation or desire to be involved in OFDR
2. technology access and capability
3. suitability of the client’s home setup to ensure an OFDR-conducive environment
4. case requirements or conditions are such that OFDR is an appropriate option

First, a decision map incorporating these considerations was developed by service staff and refined by researchers. An iterative process was employed whereby project staff
simulated client registrations and applied the decision map to identify errors in decision logic (see Figure 11). Decision categories relating to technological accessibility and exclusion criteria were revised throughout this process in consultation with the Project Manager. In addition, a series of ‘preliminary considerations’ were created based on the operating context in which OFDR clients would be screened and selected. These considerations were designed to provide TIROs and TDRS administrators with guidance and decision support in the event of hostile, distressed or otherwise inappropriate clients for the OFDR pilot project. The considerations were as follows:

- Online appointments must be available
- Domestic violence, high conflict or other duty of care issues have been disclosed
- The client is upset, agitated or in a hurry
- If screening a Party B, Party A must have successfully completed an online Intake
- An interpreter is required, and/or;
- The case sounds particularly complex (e.g., three or more parties)

Second, the complexity of the implementation environment required the use of an automated delivery mechanism. Specifically, a means for assisting staff to provide a consistent and thorough screening process was needed. The project team identified a pre-existing and tested survey package (Limesurvey) as the most appropriate platform. In addition, staff were familiar with the survey interface following their involvement in the Client Attitudes Survey research project; therefore, training requirements were minimized.

Following the finalization of decision criteria, the Research Team constructed a prototype of the client screening tool. In alignment with the principles of user-centered design (Tullis & Albert, 2008; NIST, 2007), the research team evaluated the prototype with staff using a combination of scenario testing and measures of user experience (i.e., aesthetic quality, ease of use, usefulness). An iterative design approach comprising of process, performance and subjective data (e.g., Kelkar et al., 2005) was adopted to ensure that revisions to the tool incorporated user feedback and recommendations. Through scenario testing, the Research Team identified several usability issues, including; lexical complexity and length of scripted text, readability and prominence of operator content and specific topics to include within the implementation training. Modifications were made to the tool following discussions with project management.
Figure 11 Decision tree underlying the OFDR Client Screening Tool.
Implementation Methodology

Supporting infrastructure—including work instructions, an appointment management system and training resources—were developed to assist project staff with the implementation of the screening tool. Throughout staff training, role-plays were conducted to evaluate the revised tool and provide exposure to the experience of client screening in a simulated environment. TDRS administration staff were also provided with screening tool training.

Two TIRO staff were selected to participate in the initial ‘live’ trial of the OFDR client screening tool. Following the provision of training, client screening commenced on the 5th July 2010. The project team maintained a commitment to continuous improvement by collecting ongoing data regarding screening tool usability and the efficiency of related administration processes. Consequently, modifications were made to the system of appointment booking (creating a specific diary for online mediation clients) and minor revisions performed on the wording of screening tool questions. Additional TIRO staff were trained in screening tool administration as required to maintain project momentum.

Interim Evaluation

An interim evaluation was conducted on 13th September 2010 to determine the effectiveness of the client screening tool. Basic descriptive statistics were calculated on screening data, which provided an indication of screening success and specific challenges that may have been preventing clients from participating in the project.

Of note, 124 clients (15% of total TDRS client registrations over this period) participated in the screening process. Thirty clients (24%) were deemed appropriate to participate in the project. This figure is congruent with the predictions made using client attitudes data (by calculating the proportion of respondents who indicated access to the required technologies).

Analysis of 54 client comments suggested that a number of perceived barriers prevented their participation in the project. Table 3 describes these challenges in rank order of prevalence within the sample.
Table 3 Perceived Barriers to Participation in the OFDR Project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Prevalence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to technology (non-specific)</td>
<td>“Doesn’t have the technology”</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to a webcam</td>
<td>“Client does not have a web camera”</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet access/reliability</td>
<td>“Client does not have reliable Internet connection”</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment availability</td>
<td>“[OFDR appointment] Times did not suit the client”</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived complexity</td>
<td>“Client believed [the] online service would be too complicated”</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference for non-visual communication</td>
<td>“Don’t want to see the other party”</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other party</td>
<td>“The other party won’t want to do it online”</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal effort required</td>
<td>“Sounds like a lot of hassle”</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data suggest that clients engaged in ‘self-screening’—following a description of the pilot project, the majority of unsuitable clients (70%) recognised that they did not have access to the necessary technologies and elected to discontinue the screening process prematurely. A smaller percentage indicated that the availability of OFDR appointments (7.4%), perceived complexity of the system (5.5%) and preference for non-visual communication (5.5%) prevented participation.

Further, session success data were examined in conjunction with screening responses to determine the client ‘conversion’ rate (i.e., the ratio of successfully screened clients to completed OFDR Intake sessions). In total, 22 OFDR Intake sessions were completed successfully—this represents a screening success ratio of 73% (roughly 3 out of 4 clients were correctly assigned to the project).

Of the eight OFDR sessions that were unsuccessful, the reasons recorded by Practitioners in rank order of prevalence included; client-side technology issues (n = 3), non-arrival or cancellation of FDR process (n = 2), lack of client preparation for OFDR session (n = 2) and TDRS-side technology issues (n = 1). Client-side technology issues commonly involved slow or unstable operating environments. Regarding preparation, clients reportedly failed to satisfy the requirement for privacy and one had neglected to complete the connection test prior to the session.
Summary and Implications

Given the complexities of the implementation environment, the development of an OFDR client screening tool was instrumental in facilitating the change management processes associated with the project. Of note, a user-centred design process ensured that sufficient testing was conducted prior to roll-out. Subsequently, usability issues were identified and removed, which assisted staff uptake and engagement in the screening process.

Moreover, close consultation with Client Contact Centre stakeholders informed the Project Team with respect to the practicalities of screening tool administration. Preliminary considerations and ‘screen-out’ criteria were developed to conservatively select appropriate OFDR participants.

Preliminary evaluation of the screening tool indicated that predictions of client uptake based on pre-contemplation survey data were accurate (roughly 25% of all TDRS clients were deemed suitable for participation). As expected, access to the required technologies was the most prevalent barrier (55.5%). However, follow-up investigation of OFDR session details suggested that additional unscreened challenges reduced the number of successful appointments. Specifically, unexpected client-side technical issues, client non-arrival or late-cancellation and lack of client preparation were common reasons for session discontinuation.

Additional screening may be of benefit to reduce the prevalence of client-side technical barriers. Closer adherence to the Connection Test protocol and additional attempts to follow-up with clients prior to the OFDR session may improve screening accuracy. Overall, this screening process highlights the challenges of ensuring client-side technological suitability for online services.

9.5 Study 1. Client Readiness – Precontemplation

Securing consumer perceptions of a new product or innovation can be useful to determine the likelihood of future uptake. Indeed, marketing scholars suggest that without market research, new products are more likely to fail (Crawford, 1977). Moreover, some organisations mistakenly conduct consumer research after products have been developed—arguably, research should inform development (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1995). Marketers of new products and services are encouraged to develop
and conduct research at an early stage to ensure that differences between and within market segments informs product development (Goldenberg, Libai & Muller, 2001).

**The Diffusion of Innovations**

The diffusion of innovations throughout society is expected to follow the distribution of the normal ‘bell’ curve (Rogers, 2003). Specifically, the model suggests that roughly 68% of the population corresponds to the early and late majority—consumers who wait until a new product is relatively well-known, tried and tested before deciding to adopt. Conversely, 13.5% correspond to the early adopter’s category and only 2.5% are innovators. The latter two groups are more likely to try new products given intrinsic personality traits that may drive innovative behaviour (van Rijnsoever & Donders, 2009; Vishwanath, 2005).

Research in this area highlights the importance of social communication (i.e., word of mouth) as a means to traverse the diffusion ‘gap’ between groups of users. Market surveys may identify and clarify potential reactions of users to the introduction of new products and services—assisting organisations to review marketing and promotion strategies to maximise uptake.

**Moving Individuals Toward Change Readiness**

In addition, the transtheoretical model of change (Prochaska et al., 2001) suggests that individuals move through a series of psychological stages prior to action (committing to a new behaviour). Of note, the first stage of change is termed the ‘pre-contemplation’ phase; before action can occur (such as the adoption of a new OFDR service), awareness must firstly be raised (Prochaska et al., 2001). Market research can help to uncover factors throughout these sub-populations that facilitate successful uptake, and introduce new concepts to move individuals toward change readiness.

**Technology Acceptance**

The prediction of information technology uptake has received significant attention from the research community. A key motivating factor behind this interest is the particularly high failure rate of IT implementations (Kelly, 2007; Markus, 2004; Lippert & Davis, 2006; Aiman-Smith & Green, 2002). Arguably, human factors have the potential to either ‘make or break’ IT projects (Lorenzi & Riley, 2000).
Many psychological variables have been shown to influence the uptake of new technologies, including trust (Pavlou, 2003; Fang, Shao & Lan, 2009; Lippert & Davis, 2006; Lippert, 2007), innovativeness (Fang, Shao & Lan, 2009), ease of use (Davis, 1989; Taylor & Todd, 1995; Hu & Stoel, 2009), perceived usefulness (Davis, 1989; Taylor & Todd, 1995; Hu & Stoel, 2009), subjective norm (Taylor & Todd, 1995; Mathieson, 1991), attitudes towards technology (Taylor & Todd, 1995; Wu & Chen, 2005), self efficacy (Venkatesh et al., 2003; Taylor & Todd, 1995) and motivation (Davis et al., 1992).

In addition, a number of demographic variables are thought to affect the relationship between uptake antecedents and users’ actual behaviours; of note, gender, age, experience with technology and perceived voluntariness of use are demonstrated moderators of this relationship (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

Given the established impact of these individual-level variables on technology acceptance (Taylor & Todd, 1995; Venkatesh et al., 2003), we sought to identify patterns and trends among potential OFDR users. Consequently, the design of the OFDR system benefited from pre-contemplation research conducted with both clients and staff. Specifically, the results of this research were used to inform; system development (including specific technologies to employ), staff training, client preparation and awareness-building, project management procedures and change management interventions.

**OFDR Pre-contemplation Research**

Previous work laid the groundwork for the application of marketing and technology acceptance principles to the OFDR context. In particular, Conley and colleagues (2003) surveyed a sample of the Victorian population and found strong public support for the introduction of online mediation systems. We built on this work to develop a more detailed set of survey items based on technical and hypothesised attitudinal requirements for successful participation in OFDR.

Of note, we adapted a leading model of technology acceptance—the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT; Venkatesh et al., 2003)—to explore the relationships between OFDR-relevant attitudes and behavioural intention to adopt the system. The key constructs that comprise this model are described by Table 4 below. Moreover, we included survey items relating to technology accessibility (i.e., private computer, web camera, Internet connection speed). Open-ended questions provided
opportunity for staff and clients to enrich this quantitative data with additional contextual and reactionary information.

**Table 4 Constructs Within The Extended Technology Acceptance Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance Expectancy</td>
<td>The perceived usefulness of OFDR technology within the client’s current situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort Expectancy</td>
<td>The perceived ease of use of OFDR technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Influence</td>
<td>The level of anticipated support for OFDR from important others (e.g., friends, family)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating Conditions</td>
<td>The client’s estimated access to the necessary knowledge and resources to participate in OFDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in Technology</td>
<td>The level of security that the client ascribes to OFDR technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in the TDRS</td>
<td>The client’s belief that the TDRS will act in a professional manner during OFDR service delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Innovativeness</td>
<td>The degree to which a client seeks out and trials new online technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural Intention</td>
<td>The likelihood that the client will engage in OFDR services in the near future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Method**

Following registration for the TDRS service, clients were asked to participate in the pre-contemplation research survey. A rudimentary computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system was developed to facilitate the collection of client data. Specifically, telephone information and referral officers verbally administered the OFDR pre-contemplation survey. An open-source survey package (Limesurvey) provided operators with the specific items to administer. Logical branching technology guided the questioning process; client responses influenced the appearance of subsequent questions. Single-item measures were designed to reduce client impost. Following administration, data were submitted by the telephone operators and manually

---

1 Constructs contained within the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology were derived from the work of Venkatesh and colleagues (2003); trust constructs were developed with reference to Lippert and Davis (2006); and web innovativeness was drawn from research conducted by Fang and colleagues (2009)
downloaded from the server by the Research Team at periodic intervals.

## Key Learnings

### Sample Characteristics

The final sample consisted of 621 usable responses, which represents a response rate of 13.17%. Of note, the sample was generally typified by middle-aged (28 – 45) respondents with low to average weekly income. In addition, we conducted statistical analyses to determine whether the sample of OFDR survey respondents differed significantly from a random sample of the TDRS client population. The hypotheses used in these analyses were:

\[
H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 \\
H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2
\]

A statistically significant difference between the means of each sample would lead us to reject the null hypothesis with 95% certainty—that the means are not equal, and hence not drawn from the same population.

To work out whether our study sample was the same as the boarder populate of TDRS Clients we conducted standard statistical procedures. A comparison sample of 627 cases were randomly selected from the total TDRS population. There was a large amount of missing data within the extracted sample. Following list-wise deletion of cases with missing values, 167 cases remained. Due to changes in FRSP reporting, data that were previously collected during client registration were not available; consequently, analysis was possible only for income, age, employment status and gender. Table 5 reports the results of these analyses for continuous variables.

### Table 5 Significant Difference Tests Between OFDR and TDRS Clients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>X1</th>
<th>N1</th>
<th>X2</th>
<th>N2</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>36.56</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>42.04</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>$T = -20.749$, reject $H_0$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given that the remaining comparison variables were categorical, the differences between proportions for each category were evaluated against the $Z$ distribution. Table 6 describes the results of these analyses.
Table 6 Significant Difference Tests Between OFDR and TDRS Clients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>p1</th>
<th>N1</th>
<th>p2</th>
<th>N2</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender – Males</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>Z = -0.016, accept H₀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender – Females</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Z = -0.050, accept H₀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Z = -1.652, accept H₀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Z = -1.066, accept H₀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income - $0 to</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Z = -3.350, reject H₀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income - $15000</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Z = 0.4352, accept H₀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to $20000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income - $20001</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Z = -0.4009, accept H₀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to $30000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income - $30001</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>12.57</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Z = -0.5731, accept H₀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to $40000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income - $40001</td>
<td>Unable to test – no cases within comparison sample</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to $50000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income - $50001</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Z = -0.3662, accept H₀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to $60000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income - $60001</td>
<td>Unable to test – no cases within comparison sample</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to $70000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income - $70001</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Z = 0.4329, accept H₀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to $80000 and above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income - $80000</td>
<td>Unable to test – no cases within comparison sample</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of this comparative analysis suggested that the results of subsequent statistical testing may not be generalisable to the population of TDRS clients—the differences between the respondent group and the population were significant on two demographic indicators (age, income) were significant. Of note, the OFDR sample population was slightly younger (M = 36.56) and less representative of lower-level income. In effect, the sample we recruited for this research may be biased on the basis of age and income, which limits the generalisability of inferences drawn from these data to the general client population.
Males (n = 309, 51.7%) were slightly more represented than females (n = 289, 48.3%).

The majority of the sample (68%) were aged between 28 and 45 years; the average age was 36.5 years (SD = 8.90).
The largest proportion of respondents reported a weekly pre-tax income of between $150 – 249 (including Centrelink payments); the majority of the sample reported a weekly income of $800 or less (n = 329, 68.5%).

Roughly one third of the sample were unemployed or not in the labour force (n = 216, 35.5%).
A majority of respondents indicated that Year 10 was the highest level of education achieved (n = 199, 38.9%); tertiary education was less prevalent (n = 69, 13.5%).

A small proportion of respondents identified as Aboriginal, Torres Straight Islander or both (n = 18, 3.0%).

Australia was reported as the country of birth by most respondents (n = 509, 83.7%), followed by New Zealand (n = 22, 3.6%) and the United Kingdom (n = 17, 2.8%).
Figure 18  Domestic Violence Was A Current Or Past Issue.

A fair proportion of respondents indicated that domestic violence involving the other party to the dispute was an issue (n = 83, 13.9%).

Figure 19  Party As (initiator) and Party Bs (respondents) within the survey sample.

‘Party As’ (initiators) were overrepresented in this sample—a total of 520 (85.5%) dispute initiators responded to the survey
Technology Accessibility

Items pertaining to technological accessibility were also included within the survey; in particular, critical technologies required by OFDR were identified by the Project Team to ascertain existing levels of diffusion throughout the TDRS population. Of note, these statistics suggest that personal computer and Internet access present less of a challenge to OFDR uptake than web camera technology. Figures 20 to 23 present a graphical overview of relevant technology accessibility statistics.

Figure 20  Access to a Personal Computer.

Figure 21  Computer Access and a Current Internet Connection.
Basic descriptive statistics were computed on response data for each technology acceptance construct. In general, ratings captured by the 5-point Likert response scale (1 = “Strongly Disagree” to 5 = “Strongly Agree”) were positively biased, which suggests that attitudes toward OFDR uptake were favourable amongst a large proportion of respondents. Indeed, descriptive statistics (see Table 7) indicated that attitudes toward system usefulness (M = 4.02, SD = 1.13), system ease of use (M = 4.01, SD = 1.08), trustworthiness of OFDR technology (M = 4.16, SD = 0.99) and the influence of
important others ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 0.98$) were generally positive. Please refer to Appendix Z for a graphical representation of aggregated responses.

Table 7 Descriptive Statistics For Technology Acceptance Constructs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>PE</th>
<th>EE</th>
<th>SI</th>
<th>FC</th>
<th>Web</th>
<th>Trust in Innov.</th>
<th>Trust in Org</th>
<th>BI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skew</td>
<td>-1.16</td>
<td>-1.13</td>
<td>-1.11</td>
<td>-1.35</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>-1.29</td>
<td>-1.52</td>
<td>-1.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the extended technology acceptance model was supported by the statistical analysis of client data. We conducted hierarchical regression analysis to determine the relative contributions of each predictor to the criterion measure—behavioural intention to use OFDR (see Table 8). Our hypotheses were as follows:

$H_1$: The core UTAUT model, consisting of Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy and Social Influence would significantly predict Behaviour Intention.

$H_2$: Facilitating Conditions would fail to reach statistical significance in the presence of Effort Expectancy.

$H_3$: Trust in Technology, Trust in the TDRS and Web Innovativeness would add significant variance to Behavioural Intention over and above the contributions of core UTAUT variables.
The results of the statistical analysis indicated that clients’ intentions to adopt OFDR may be influenced by attitudes toward the usefulness of OFDR, the perceived ease of use of the system, the influence of important others—and, to a lesser extent, access to sufficient knowledge and resources.

Thus, the data supports hypothesis one. Hypothesis two was not supported—Facilitating Conditions remained significant despite the inclusion of Effort Expectancy within the statistical model. This result may have been an artefact of our use of single-item measures.

Table 8 Results of hierarchical multiple regression analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t-value</td>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t-value</td>
<td>p-value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>0.379</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>0.278</td>
<td>6.937</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>0.141</td>
<td>3.927</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>0.088</td>
<td>2.347</td>
<td>0.019*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in</td>
<td>0.209</td>
<td>5.312</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis three was also partially supported. **Trust in OFDR technology and web innovativeness emerged as significant predictors of Behavioural Intention.** Surprisingly, trust in the TDRS was not a significant predictor of Behavioural Intention.

Given the referral pathway of many clients (firstly speaking with FRAL for an extended period), trust in service providers may have ‘transferred’ to the TDRS based on previous encounters with FRAL staff. In addition, clients may not perceive the TDRS as distinct from the FRAL given the use of warm transfer and aligned branding. Future research should examine the role of trust in service provider in predicting behavioural intention for organisations that are differentiated from existing services.

### Qualitative Data

Adopting a mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2007), we facilitated further client responses by requesting a general comment. Following the removal of blank and ‘no comment’ responses, a total of 102 client comments were included in the analysis. We adopted a combination of the ‘affect’ and ‘initial’ coding methods to conduct the first-cycle qualitative analysis (Saldana, 2009).

First, we coded each statement for its affective qualities using three-category system; positive (e.g., “sounds like a great idea!”), neutral (e.g., “it’s the first time I’ve used anything like this or knew it existed”) and negative (e.g., “thinks face to face is always better”). We applied a mutually-exclusive perspective to our coding—client statements were allocated to only one category. Results from this coding process indicated that the majority of clients reacted positively to the OFDR service (n = 54, 53%), whereas two roughly equal proportions of the sample were neutral (n = 27, 26%) or reacted negatively (n = 21, 21%).

Second, we conducted more detailed coding utilising the ‘initial’ method to extract common categories within the client sample. Following this initial development of codes, 10 categories were identified (see Table 9).
Table 9 General categories that arose from the grouping of client comments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Societal/commercial trends</td>
<td>Increased usage and awareness of technology in general society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal communication</td>
<td>Positive and negative aspects of computer-mediated communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case context</td>
<td>Perceptions that OFDR may not be appropriate to all situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General design considerations or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitators</td>
<td>suggestions that would increase client uptake of the system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User readiness/preparation</td>
<td>User factors that should be addressed prior to use of the system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications</td>
<td>Anticipated uses and benefits of OFDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal and confidentiality</td>
<td>Perceived issues and uncertainties relating to privacy, legalities and confidentiality of OFDR proceedings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service promotion</td>
<td>Increasing the public’s awareness of OFDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service quality</td>
<td>Features of the OFDR service that encourage client satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access and reliability</td>
<td>Concerns relating to users’ access of required technology (e.g., webcams)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and the reliability of the OFDR system and other required technologies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among these codes, statements relating to communication quality (n = 12), time frames (n = 10), technological familiarity (n = 8), convenience (n = 8) and service quality (n = 7) were mentioned with higher prevalence by clients. The issues represented by these codes were shared by the greatest number of respondents; therefore, we propose that these concerns are worthy of greater attention given the consensus among clients.
Key findings that emerged from this analysis included:

- Text-based chat was perceived to impact negatively on communication (e.g., “if it were to be typing it wouldn’t work very well as you would miss all meaning for [sic] e.g. people’s tones”).
- Comments were equivocal in relation to preferences for face-to-face and phone interaction; for some clients, face-to-face was clearly preferred (e.g., “I would much rather talk to real people”) whereas other respondents felt that the phone provided useful distance from the other party (e.g., “he pushes my buttons and I can hide my reactions over the phone)”
- The implicit assumption in operation amongst some clients is that OFDR, or technology in general, improves the speed and hence, the efficiency of community services (e.g., “an online service might be more speedy than the current service on offer”).
- Client statements indicated that their uptake of an OFDR service is contingent on the anticipated time-saving advantages (e.g., “if it makes it quicker or easier I would use this service”).
- Clients’ language indicated that gender (e.g., “maybe females would be disadvantaged”), anticipated technical mastery required to use the OFDR system (e.g., “…not an expert on online services”) and regularity/comfort of Internet use (e.g., “I don’t use computers much”, “not comfortable with Internet technology”) may act as barriers to client adopt of the system.
- Online services were perceived as more convenient (e.g., “great idea for accessing service from home and info at your fingertips”); although, the connotations of OFDR as a home based service may require additional after-hours service capacity (e.g., “easier for people who work full-time”).
- Respondents perceived a webcamera-based OFDR service as appealing, due to personalisation (e.g., “such a service would be more personal”).
- Contextual complexities were raised by participants as potential barriers to participation in OFDR—particularly in relation to violence (e.g., “when violence has been an issue, an on-line service would not be appropriate”).

A number of suggestions regarding system development, implementation and promotion were also raised by clients.
Table 10 provides a summary of the coded suggestions. Respondents typically suggested strategies to develop a ‘user-friendly’ system (i.e., adopting a simple user interface design) and to ensure that information is accessible (i.e., available to users and worded at a basic level of technical capability). Second, clients made suggestions regarding service promotion techniques—Centrelink was mentioned as a potential marketing venue by two respondents.

Table 10  Client Suggestions For OFDR System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestion Category</th>
<th>Exemplar Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information quality</td>
<td>“make sure all information is available and up to date and easy to understand for people that may only have limited knowledge of computer systems”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software accessibility</td>
<td>“use software that is readily available so people don’t have to try and get it” “information about an online service at Centrelink offices would be useful for clients”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service promotion</td>
<td>“information about an online service at Centrelink offices would be useful for clients”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of use</td>
<td>“it needs to be simple to use”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT help desk</td>
<td>“Or a facility could be set up for people who need help with the IT side of things”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant monitoring</td>
<td>“making sure only the 2 parties are involved and others are not listening or being part of the process” “can the person who answers the phone take down specific details re. the situation so that the client doesn’t have to remember”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information efficiency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary and Implications

Conducting pre-contemplation research proved useful to the development of the OFDR system. Whereas the respondent sample was significantly different to the TDRS client population on several demographic indicators (income, employment status and age), the characteristics of potential OFDR users provides valuable information to guide system implementation. Specifically:

- Initiators (Party As) may be more inclined to participate in OFDR; respondents (Party Bs) may benefit from additional coaching and persuasion if two parties are to successfully engage in OFDR.
• Educational characteristics of the respondent sample may inform the development of the OFDR user interface and associated preparatory information—ease of use and clarity of instruction would be useful design principles. Thematic analysis of client comments lends further support to the need for system simplicity; specifically, themes such as ‘information quality’ and ‘ease of use’ identified respondent concerns regarding technological complexity.

• In light of income and employment demographics, service costs should be made explicit at the time of registration. The ‘hidden’ costs associated with service use (e.g., data downloads) should also be explained.

Targeting users’ attitudes toward technology through promotion strategies, system design and preparatory, educative information is likely to improve the uptake of OFDR services.

In particular, clients who believe that 1) the system will be useful in their particular dispute context, 2) the system will be easy to use, 3) their use of the system is supported by important others, and 4) the technology is secure and trustworthy are more likely to engage in OFDR. To a lesser extent, clients who exhibit innovative behaviours online—seeking out and trying new services and products—may be more inclined to participate in online mediation. Particular learnings emerged from this research:

• The design of OFDR system should aim to promote a sense of trust in technology among users. In particular, ensuring a high rate of reliability and promoting privacy and confidentiality provisions may assist users to feel comfortable engaging with an online service.

• Promoting the ease of use of the OFDR system would likely improve the chances of client uptake. Strategies such as ‘sandbox’ demonstrations (whereby clients can login to a practice session to observe and interact with the system) could improve clients’ intentions toward uptake by providing a tangible referent, against which, existing skills and abilities can be compared.

• As evidenced by respondent comments, clients may hold particular expectations of online services—of note, themes relating to speed of service and convenience emerged from the data. Subsequent service quality research may be useful to identify pre-existing expectations of an OFDR service and gaps in the existing client offering.
• The moderate level of domestic violence reported as an issue by respondents, in combination with qualitative data that indicated clear preferences for service modality, indicates that further research is required to clarify the impact of domestic violence on intention to use OFDR. Follow-up correlation analyses showed that presence of domestic violence was negatively related to Behavioural Intention ($r = -.095, p < .05$), Performance Expectancy ($r = -.142, p < .05$), Effort Expectancy ($r = -.082, p < .05$) and Facilitating Conditions ($r = -.108, p < .01$). From this preliminary data, it is likely that domestic violence may have a suppressing effect on clients' willingness to engage in OFDR. Multiple service options should be provided (e.g., removal of video feed) to cater for client preferences where possible.

Figure 25  Aggregated Ratings For Performance Expectancy.

Figure 26  Aggregated Ratings For Social Influence.
Figure 27  Aggregated Ratings For Facilitating Conditions.

Figure 28  Aggregated Ratings For Trust in OFDR Technology.

Figure 29  Aggregated Ratings For Personal Web Innovativeness.
Figure 30  Aggregated Ratings For Behavioural Intention.
9.6 Study 2. Staff Engagement and Precontemplation

Introduction

Modern organisations exist within an ever-changing operating environment (Waddell, Cummings & Worley, 2007). The information age—with knowledge as the primary resource—is further accelerating the pace and extent of organisational change (Jones, Palmer, Osterweil & Whitehead, 1996). In addition, external pressures (e.g., government bodies, regulatory authorities, economic conditions) frequently require organisations to innovate and adapt to remain competitive; in essence, the strategic management and implementation of change is in high demand (Ledford & Mohrman, 1993).

Indeed, effective change and project management strategies are vital to maximize the success of technology implementation projects. According to the information systems (IS) literature, between 15% and 35% of all technology projects fail (Charette, 2005; Emam & Koru, 2008; Glass, 2005). Other scholars have argued that this failure rate may be as high as 70%—depending on the definition of project failure (i.e., over budget, over time, feature reductions, general challenges).

Of the factors implicated in technology project failure, people- and process-related challenges are commonly cited (Kappleman et al., 2006). Specifically, senior management support, project management expertise, stakeholder consultation, clarity of project documentation, change control and communications strategies are likely to influence the success of large-scale project implementations (Kappleman et al., 2006).

Individual factors may also impact on the implementation of new technologies. Scholars have warned against making the assumption that a high-level desire to change translates to readiness at the employee-level; “leaders tend to be particularly action oriented, and they react with impatience and frustration when their employees are not prepared to follow immediately” (Prochaska et al., 2001; p. 254).

Failure to match change implementation to employee readiness can be costly—potentially resulting in change failure and turnover (Prochaska et al., 2001). Moreover, individual characteristics such as openness (Judge, Thoresen, Pucik & Welbourne, 1998; Vakola, Tsaousis & Nikolaou, 2004), organisational commitment (Judge et al., 1998; Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005; Yousef, 2000) and job satisfaction (Yousef, 2000)
create a particular context in which change occurs.

Throughout this project, we adopted a planned approach to organisational change (Graetz et al., 2002; Waddell et al., 2007). As shown by Figure 31, our change strategy consisted of three steps—entry/contracting/diagnosis, information gathering/processing/feedback and design/implementation/evaluation — which were informed by feedback loops at each stage.

Figure 31  General model of organisational change.

In particular, our initial organisational diagnosis and implementation strategy were informed by three areas of focus:

- Organisational context for change
- Task/job analysis
- Individual consideration

Moreover, our extended model of technology acceptance (with modifications) was validated within the staff population. Staff attitudes toward technology such as perceived usefulness, ease of use and the perceived influences of peers and management directly predicted behavioural intention to use OFDR. In addition, trust in both technology and the organisation, and web innovativeness, influenced behavioural intention indirectly via the mediating effects of core UTAUT constructs.

Organisational Context for OFDR Implementation

Organisational consultation was undertaken as the first step of the diagnostic process. Preliminary consultations were performed with executive management, the project management team and clinical Practitioners. Further analysis of organisation-level needs was conducted through a review of the strategic plan and associated governance documentation.
Research suggests that staff attitudes (Mathieu, Tannenbaum & Salas, 1992; Noe & Schmitt, 1986) and organisational context (Colquitt, LePine & Noe, 2000) can influence the effectiveness of technology acceptance. Therefore, an organisation-wide survey was designed to capture employee attitudes toward the implementation of OFDR technology. Approximately 50% of the organisation responded to the survey (N = 127). The survey assessed variables including experience with computers, attitudes toward technology, computer self-efficacy, job satisfaction and commitment to organisational change.

The slight negative skew and low variances suggested that at an organisational level, job satisfaction (M = 5.35, SD = 0.89) and commitment to change (M = 5.35, SD = 1.10) were favourable. However, aggregated attitudes toward the uptake of OFDR technology were less positive and more varied.

In addition, we evaluated the extended UTAUT model with a sample of staff to identify attitudinal factors implicated in employees' OFDR uptake.

A multiple regression results indicated that these attitudes accounted for 49.4% of variance in OFDR adoption intentions, F(3, 88) = 30.62, p <.001. These results suggested that technology attitudes should be targeted during training.

In addition to this quantitative survey, a series of 17 interviews were conducted with clinical staff. Of relevance to the organisation level of analysis, data were collected regarding past experiences of technology training in RAQ. The results of this analysis revealed a number of themes of relevance to the OFDR change management process (see Figure 32).

A large proportion of interviewees (38.9%) exhibited positive attitudes toward OFDR implementation—staff recognised the broad applications of OFDR technology and alignment with a trend toward online services (e.g., “I'm excited about it…parents coming through in the next 5-10 years will appreciate it”).

Sufficiency of technological infrastructure was highlighted as an important organisational consideration by 27.8% of respondents—reliability and trust in technology are likely implicated in uptake behaviours. The importance of adequate technology training was raised by a large proportion of interviewees (44.4%). In addition
to building users’ self-efficacy (Compeau & Higgins, 1995), effective training may increase perceived organisational support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) —bolstering employees’ commitment and engagement in change initiatives.

![OFDR Implementation Themes](image)

**Figure 32 OFDR Implementation Themes**

### Job Analysis

Job analysis (JA) is a widely employed (Morgeson & Campion, 1997) method to define and/or clarify organisational positions. Typically, a JA involves the collection of data on a particular job regarding the tasks and functions performed by incumbents, details of the organisation and working environment and responsibilities of the position (Arvey, Passino & Lounsbury, 1977; Langeland et al., 1997; Maurer & Tarulli, 1997). More specifically, a job analysis identifies the behavioural requirements of a position (Landy & Vasey, 1991) and/or the personal knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies of a successful incumbent (Morgeson, Delaney-Klinger, Mayfield, Ferrara & Campion, 2004; Thompson & Thompson, 1982).

Collecting information on the nature of a job can be useful to identify inaccuracies, inefficiencies or changes to an existing role. In particular, we employed a job analysis methodology to estimate anticipated changes to the existing family dispute resolution practitioner (FDRP) role. These data then informed our training plan and implementation strategy.

The Research Team conducted a series of 17 job analyses with a range of incumbents—a common task-level approach according to the training needs analysis literature (e.g., Leat & Lovell, 1997; Moore & Dutton, 1978; Taylor & O’Driscoll, 1998). The job analysis instrument was designed by drawing on the human resources literature (e.g., Arvey et al., 1977; Cranny & Doherty, 1988; Langeland, Johnson & Mawhinney, 1998; Maurer & Tarulli, 1997; Morgeson, Delaney-Klinger, Ferrara, Mayfield & Campion, 2004; Sackett & Laczo, 2003).

154
The job analysis conducted in the precontemplation phase produced data that were subjected to qualitative analysis methods using two independent researchers. The job analysis also sought to uncover job related knowledge, skills and abilities required to use of the OFDR. Given we were not able to demonstrate the OFDR role requirements and possible role changes using the OFDR system at the time, our findings are tentative. Table 12 presents a summary of extracted job analysis themes.

### Table 11  Thematic Analysis of Job Analysis Data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Exemplar Statement</th>
<th>Prevalence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical training in OFDR system</td>
<td>“program specific training regarding the application”</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic computer skills</td>
<td>“keyboarding skills”; “how webcam works”</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical practice skills</td>
<td>“also training for face to face who haven’t done phone…visual/verbal cue training”</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational policies and procedures</td>
<td>“understand exactly what the procedure is”</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troubleshooting skills</td>
<td>“what happens if something goes wrong”</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following the job analyses (and the development of OFDR technology), considerable effort was devoted to identifying the specific skills and tasks that are required to operate the system. This instrument was then used to inform the design of the training program.

### Training Plan

Implementing new technologies can be difficult due to contextual and individual differences (Gattiker, 1992). A user’s prior experience, self-efficacy, technological familiarity, expectations (Compeau & Higgins, 1995; Gravill & Compeau, 2008), attitudes (Davis, 1982; Taylor & Todd, 1995) and even mood (Venkatesh & Speier, 1999) may impact on implementation success. However, through careful training needs analysis, program design and change management, these challenges can be mitigated—producing greater technology uptake (Adams, 2005; Johnson & Marakas, 2000).
We integrated the data collected through staff interviews and the organisation-wide survey to perform a training needs analysis. Brief reviews of the adult education and technology training literatures further informed our training approach. Figure 33 depicts the overarching OFDR training plan.

Figure 33  OFDR Training Plan.
**Individual-Level Considerations**

As supported by the change management literature (Howell & Higgins, 1990; Markham, 1998) and the results of technology acceptance modelling, project ‘champions’ were selected by the project manager. Through their enthusiasm and expertise, champions, or ‘super-users’ rally support for projects and may contribute to project success (Markham, 1998); particularly during the implementation of technological innovations (Howell & Higgins, 1990). The Project team assumed that competence in the following areas was held by the OFDR super-user group:

- Use of computer systems to a basic level
- Clinical practice skills (previously assessed by clinical review)
- Interest and engagement in the OFDR project

Consequently, additional assumptions were made regarding the pre-existing performance and individual needs of staff selected for OFDR training. This issue was addressed during the training evaluation whereby training needs and competencies were directly assessed to inform the development of self-paced online training modules and future training events.

**Adult Learning Principles**

Effective adult learning is contingent on a series of assumptions and principles that should be considered during the development, delivery and evaluation of training events (Knowles, Holtong & Swanson, 2005; Pratt, 1993). Knowles’ (2005) set of assumptions regarding adult learning appear to be useful when approaching the design and delivery of content in a range of organisational contexts (e.g., Birzer, 2003; Milligan, 1995; Roberts, 2007)—these principles were used to inform the design and delivery of the OFDR training program. Table 12 describes the application of Knowles’ assumptions to the OFDR context.
Table 12  Application of Knowles’ (2005) Assumptions To OFDR Training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowles’ (2005) Assumptions</th>
<th>Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults are self-aware of their needs and prefer to seek out learning opportunities to fulfil them.</td>
<td>Use of free exploration during system training. Self-paced online modules. Participant discussion used as a teaching tool. Technology-savvy users were called on to demonstrate features and help other users. Participation in the OFDR training program was voluntary—trainees were selected based on their enthusiasm for the project. Participant feedback used to fine-tune system design and procedures. Competency-based approach to assessment specified clear learning and behavioural objectives of direct relevance to the OFDR role. Practical handouts were used and generated by participants during the training (e.g., video-conferencing etiquette tip sheet). Training began with project overview and discussion of skills required for OFDR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults have valuable work/life experience that can be incorporated into the learning process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults prefer to be motivated by internal sources, rather than external impositions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults prefer to focus their learning on problem solving or improving personal performance (i.e., practical outcomes).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning materials that have direct relevance to adults are more likely to be engaged with.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults prefer to have the reasons for learning justified (i.e., self-evaluation of learning worth).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Design and Delivery of Effective Technology Training**

A number of features demarcate effective computer training programs. For example, technology training is most effective when student self regulation is encouraged (Gattiker, 1992; Gravill & Compeau, 2008; Santhanam, Sasidharan & Webster, 2008), Facilitators engage in behavioural modelling (Compeau & Higgins, 1995; Gattiker, 1992; Johnson & Marakas, 2000), procedural and declarative knowledge is balanced (Gattiker, 1992; Olfman & Mandviwalla, 1994) and the learning environment encourages
knowledge sharing between participants (Goh, 2002). We drew on this technology training literature to inform our approach; the application of this knowledge is described by Table 13.

Table 13  Application Technology Training Literature To OFDR Training Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empirical Recommendations</th>
<th>Application to OFDR Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encourage student self-regulation (Gattiker, 1992; Gravill &amp; Compeau, 2008; Santhanam, Sasidharan &amp; Webster, 2008). This may also reduced skill decay (Arthur, 1998).</td>
<td>Hand-outs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural modelling (Compeau &amp; Higgins, 1995; Gattiker, 1992; Johnson &amp; Marakas, 2000).</td>
<td>Trainers acting as role-play exemplars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated course difficulty, building positive attitudes and confidence (Compeau &amp; Higgins, 1995).</td>
<td>Video-tape of training available to staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain a balance between declarative and procedural knowledge (Gattiker, 1990; Gattiker, 1992; Olfman, 1994).</td>
<td>Super-users selected according to experience and attitudes toward computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a cooperative learning setting (Gasco, Llopis &amp; Gonzalez, 2004), which allows knowledge sharing and networking (Adams, 2005).</td>
<td>Emphasis on practical application of theoretical knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supplementary resources distributed (e.g., glossary of terms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trainees were selected from the same department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role plays were conducted with rotating partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trainees were at an equivalent level (Coordinators)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The training program consisted of initial class-based orientation training, followed by a series of smaller ‘refresher’ self-paced online modules. Pre-‘GoLive’ training was conducted prior to implementation of the OFDR system. We were informed by the results of our organisational survey and staff interviews to determine the focus and delivery methods of the training program. Specifically, we incorporated the following identified training needs:

- Use of video-conferencing software
- Interpreting non-verbal communication signals (particularly for staff without experience in face to face service delivery)
- Software troubleshooting
- Organisational process/procedure in relation to OFDR services

Research also identified the modes of OFDR training delivery preferred by staff:

- Experiential activities (role plays, simulations, ‘hands-on’ demonstrations)
- Ongoing mentoring/support following training
- Take-away resources and materials
- Structured sessions
- Clear content

Orientation training was conducted over two days. Day one focussed on the technical knowledge required to operate the OFDR system. Day two involved a series of role-plays and demonstrations that gave participants a realistic simulation of OFDR service delivery.

Following each day of orientation training, participants were asked to complete an intra-training evaluation questionnaire. The Facilitators reviewed this feedback at the conclusion of day one and adjusted the training to ensure that participants’ needs were addressed. For example, participant comments indicated that the technical terminology presented on day one was difficult to understand. Therefore, day two commenced with a visual overview of technical concepts to review and consolidate this knowledge.
Trainee reactions are commonly used as an indicator of training effectiveness (Bassi, Benson & Cheney, 1996). The intra-training survey consisted of several attitudinal and affective measures. Table 14 outlines the collated responses obtained at the conclusion of each session. Participants responded to the questions by using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 = “strongly agree”). Results indicated that trainees were satisfied with the training, and gained increased confidence in OFDR technology use.

Table 14  Collated Training Evaluation Data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Question</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>$X_2 - X_1$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How relevant was the training content?</td>
<td>6.58</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>+0.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How clear was the delivery of training content?</td>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>+0.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you enjoy the format of the training?</td>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>+0.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you find the Facilitators’ style in regards to the effectiveness of your learning?</td>
<td>6.43</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>+0.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following today’s training, please rate how confident you feel in regards to using OFDR technology</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>+0.37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative comments were also generally positive. Common themes extracted from this qualitative data included:

- The practical nature of the training was well received
- The training environment was conducive to learning
- Confidence seemed to increase, with participants reporting that they found benefit in role-plays and independent exploration of the software.

Further evaluation was conducted via a post-training survey, which measured attitudes toward technology, self-assessed competency across learning objectives and anticipated future training needs. Overall, the results indicated that staff anticipated they could achieve OFDR competency with only a small amount of additional training.

The attitudes of staff toward the use of OFDR were measured previously by the organisation-wide survey. These data provided a useful means of comparing the degree of attitudinal shift following exposure to the OFDR system. Participant-generated codes
facilitated response matching across surveys. Unfortunately, only half of the OFDR training participants previously completed the pre-contemplation survey, which limited the generalisability of the results. Table 15 describes the pre- and post-training mean responses.

**Table 15 Mean responses to technology acceptance attitudes pre- and post-training.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Participant 1</th>
<th>Participant 2</th>
<th>Participant 3</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Use</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Influence</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in Technology</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, direct behavioural observations (via the user readiness checklist) were taken to assess end-of-training competence prior to ‘Go Live’. In the context of task-focussed training, scholars have recommended the use of behavioural benchmarks (Taylor & O’Driscoll, 1998) to evaluate ‘training transfer”—the degree of skill development and improvement under realistic and generalised job conditions (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Cruz, 1997). The OFDR ‘Go-Live’ assessment provided additional objective evidence of practitioner readiness to engage in clinical practice.

Subsequent training sessions have used this training methodology and evaluation and continue to deliver positive results. **We are confident that the training method, the development of super-users and coaches is an effective way to build capability among staff in using OFDR.** The challenges for us as with other organisations are as follows:

1. Allocating staff to training roles and training participants during the busy operational demands of TDRS
2. Maintain staff skills in FDR and Intake online following training
3. Updating and maintain currency of training program and packages as we develop new templates and processes on OFDR
4. Maintaining the training evaluation, analysis and reporting when training is delivered by operational staff.
9.7 Study 3. Intake Evaluation

Between 26 June 2010 and early March 2011, there were 75 OFDR Intake sessions, from which staff supplied evaluative data on 16 sessions and clients supplied feedback data on 19 sessions. This section provides the results of the staff and client feedback on their Intake experience using the OFDR Technology.

9.7.1 Staff

Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners (FDRPs) overall experience with the Online Family Dispute Resolution (OFDR) System

This section outlines the overall perceptions by FDRPs on the use of the OFDR system as a whole. The following section after this, outlines the FDRPs’ perceptions of using the OFDR System specifically for Intake sessions.

User Feedback

Four Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners (FDRPs). Two females and two males (4) with varying levels of experience with the OFDR system completed surveys and usability tools to document their experiences in providing OFDR related services to clients.

Quantitative Survey Results

Table 16  FDR Practitioners providing Feedback on Intake

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Online Intake Sessions</th>
<th>Number of Online Mediation Sessions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FDR Practitioner 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDR Practitioner 2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDR Practitioner 3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDR Practitioner 4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 34 FDRP Human Computer Interaction with the OFDR System

Figure 35 FDRP OFDR Intake/Mediation User Interface Aesthetics
Qualitative Survey Results

- **Describe your level of confidence in using OFDR?**
  - Low level of confidence due to only conducting 1 Intake some weeks ago.
  - Good
  - Initially, I hesitated about my ability to be able to navigate my way around the program, however, after a few Intake sessions I was confident I could conduct them without any hesitation.
  - Very confident in using the system now because of having done so many online Intakes.

- **Describe your opinions of using OFDR compared with TDRS for Intake and Mediation?**
  - Because my use of OFDR is so very limited and my experience with TDRS is very large at present I am personally a lot more comfortable with TDRS but can see the benefit of having agreements in front of both parties for discussion and approval.
  - Better as you can see and share information with the client.
  - I find the process to be more intense... and a higher level of concentration is required. The Intakes take much longer and can often run over the appointed one hour session, particularly if there are any issues around issues such as: domestic violence or child abuse/neglect. I can see the benefits for a mediation session and perhaps the experience for the client.
  - I have a very high opinion of using OFDR as it has really enhanced what work we’ve been doing in telephone service delivery. It adds visual elements which will be of huge benefit to the right people.

- **Describe your experience as an OFDR Practitioner?**
  - I wasn’t very comfortable with the technology due to inexperience but found it very similar to TDRS and F2F work.
  - Good, lets you interact with the client and thus allows you to build a better rapport.
  - I had no prior experience using web-cam prior to doing OFDR. My experience is limited – having only completed 17 Intake sessions.
  - It has been one of learning and experimenting as this is a pioneering road to take, I have had to think on my feet and be adaptable in the process to work out what will be successful or not in using OFDR.
• **What went well for you in the OFDR Intake or Mediation Sessions?**
  - That I was able to complete the session and the technology ran smoothly.
  - All of it.
  - My ability to make the experience for the client as professional as possible. There were never any long pauses or errors made that impeded my ability to control the process.
  - The use of the cameras, the use of a note pad to write agreements, the use of the share pod to bring up documents to refer to.

• **What didn't go well during these sessions?**
  - I had no concerns except that I had to go slowly due to unfamiliarity. I also had to be aware of my own body language.
  - Some of the technical issues.
  - A very COMMON frustration – people rarely changed their passwords prior to the Intake session, which meant spending approximately 15 to 20 minutes with the client assisting them to change their password – depending on their level of skill. It appears people do not thoroughly read the emails sent to them.
  - Perhaps managing the clients use of the camera, as it was so new, it was hard to think of appropriate strategies to discuss and minimise clients using the video to taunt each other (smirking etc) e.g. needing to address what is appropriate behaviour more with clients before starting.

• **What did you change in your approach or preparation between sessions and with experience?**
  - No changes in approach or preparation.
  - The way I conducted the session changed with time and got better and more relaxed.
  - Nothing really, but I had thought of the need to stress the importance of people changing their password, prior to the Intake session. This was my only frustration as an Intake Officer.
  - Extra time was needed to set up before the mediation all of the necessary technology, in the session more time was needed one on-one with the client to ensure everything was working before bringing them together to start the discussion.

---

**Staff Debriefing**

• **Did you encounter any challenges with using the OFDR system?**
  - Unfamiliarity with the technology. I am sure these challenges will disappear
with use.
- Yes, technical issues in regards to the system.
- On one particular day whilst doing online Intake sessions, I was able to see the client, however, they were unable to see me. This was due to an IT issue, that hadn’t been rectified. The only other issue was the confidence of the user and their ability to use a web cam. Many were inexperienced users.
- Details: The co-mediation model of working out who was responsible for doing what, as both people were hosts it was difficult to work out if one person would take a lead role in managing the system. This wasn’t discussed but should be next time. The use of pods and size, it was necessary to customise the layout as we went to allow for the size of text etc. Party A (female) kept dropping out of the video as her screen went to screensaver, it would be good to talk with clients about this next time and perhaps ask them to disable their screensaver.

- **Can you anticipate or describe any issues that may arise with staff or clients when using OFDR more commonly/frequently that we are now?**
  - Unsure at this stage.
  - Not at this point in due time maybe.
  - Yes, changing of passwords prior to undertaking Intake Session. Issues that require the expertise of the IT Team….it would be good if a Specialist was on-hand at any time - should any issues arise.
  - Timeframes, it did take us longer to prepare and complete a session, for the mediation we had reached the 2 hour timeframe and could have continued on as there was more to discuss but the female party had only banked on 2 hours being needed and had to go to work – we had to schedule in a second session.

- **Do you have any suggestions or comments regarding how the OFDR user interface could be improved?**
  - Not at this stage, perhaps some suggestions when I have had more use of OFDR.
  - The Intake Interface is fine…however, I cannot comment on the mediation template.
  - Perhaps the work instructions need to be updated for an FDR session with the new learnings from above but otherwise the design and layout worked perfectly for everything that was required.
  - Please provide any additional comments regarding your perceptions of the OFDR Intake user interface:
    - I feel that the idea of OFDR is a great way of offering clients another way of
having Dispute Resolution. Because I have had such a limited experience of OFDR I don’t feel I am able to offer very in-depth answers to this survey and may not be doing justice to OFDR.

- I don’t have any additional comments for the Intake Interface.

### Staff Post Intake Survey Results

Overall there were 16 OFDR Intake Sessions that were evaluated using the OFDR Practitioner Post-Intake Survey.

#### Number and Type of Survey Respondents

There were four different FDR Practitioners who submitted OFDR Practitioner Post-Intake Survey responses for the 16 OFDR Post-Intake Sessions.

#### Table 17  Number of Survey Responses by FDR Practitioner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Survey Responses (N = 16 Intake Sessions)</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FDR Practitioner 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDR Practitioner 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDR Practitioner 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDR Practitioner 4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 18  Number of Party A and Party B Clients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number (N = 16 OFDR Intake Sessions)</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party A</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>93.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**OFDR Post-Intake Staff Survey Measures (N = 16 Intake sessions)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number (N = 15 Intake Sessions)</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Did you encounter any technical difficulties with the OFDR system?**

1a. **Please describe the details of these technical difficulties or any related comments below:**

- The client could not access the meeting room using her password. It is possible that she has reset it and forgot what it was. Used guest access to enter the room.
- There was a slight delay while the participant's computer processed that I had activated my camera. This delay lasted about 30-45 seconds. Once activated, the client indicated that the lag time was acceptable. Also, I noticed that the master template had been modified once I created the room and had to remove this editing during the session (one of the shared documents had been drawn on and I couldn't find the erase button).
- The camera's stopped working at the 3/4 mark in the session - the client pointed it out to me before I noticed it - it appears as if he lost his internet connection.
- The client had not reset their password which added approximately 10 minutes to
the Intake. In addition, the client's internet connection dropped out at the start of the Intake and we had to wait until it reconnected. During the Intake, the client was unable to view shared documents (agreement to mediate) or content on the notes pod despite my attempts to.

- I was unable to see the client on my webcam; however, they were able to see me.
- Client had not received email, therefore had to give client the URL address to access meeting room.

2. Did you encounter any difficulties with FDR practice during the online session?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number (N = 15 Intake Sessions)</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2a. Please describe the details of these difficulties or any related comments below:

- I found it difficult to maintain direct eye-contact with the client (via looking into the camera) while also filling in the Intake form and checking the participant's facial reactions. It is definitely more complex than telephone without these visual cues.
- I found it was a conscious effort to maintain rapport with the client - in effect, I had to think about what I was doing with my eyes (e.g., how long to look at the camera). I felt that at times, I was missing a lot of client's visual communication cues because I was focussed on looking directly into the camera (as opposed to the video feed). Should we be looking at the camera or the participant's video? I am now leaning more toward the latter, in terms of the richness of data that is being lost (in my opinion).
- I am still finding it difficult to remember to balance my gaze between the client's visual feed and the camera. Consequently, I am not finding that I am gaining much of a sense of rapport based on the visual cues. It is my hypothesis that clients may benefit more from the video than Practitioners during the Intake.
3. Did any part of the OFDR administration process seem cumbersome or inefficient?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number (N = 15 Intake Sessions)</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3a. Please describe the details of your experience and any suggestions for improvement:

- Client reported that the number of emails sent out is confusing - wasted some time at the start of the session digging out the right one and finding username/password details. I had to find the clients username to speed up the process.
- I felt that there is an additional 15-20 minutes of administration involved with an online Intake that may need to be factored into future.
- The room link had only just been setup and sent out 5 minutes prior to the appointment. We will need a better workflow/system in place to ensure this is done in time. Also, clients do not seem to be reading/following the instructions in the emails - three of my online clients have failed to reset their passwords prior to the session which wastes time.

4. What learning or suggestion do you have regarding your own professional development for next time you perform an OFDR Intake (if relevant)? Please also specify any additional comments you wish to make that relate to the OFDR pilot project.

- As Intakes are so time intensive as well as pressure to gather a lot of information I believe the FDR sessions themselves may be easier to facilitate than an Intake
- During the session I forgot about going to the third screen re: agenda items and option generation with the client.
- I felt I built significantly more rapport with the client with the F2F element - I observed another Intake earlier and felt much more affected by the client's emotions than I normally would during a regular F2F or telephone session - perhaps because the voice and sight were so pronounced, there were no other distractions, and I was so focused on tone of voice, appearance etc. - I felt that I still seemed able to focus on collecting and providing all the information, and that it was being taken in, because I was able to monitor the
client's reactions to what I was saying - At times the client made statements that I felt I had trouble hiding my reaction to - could be an issue with clients saying inappropriate things and how this is handled online.

- Forgot to use the agenda/agreement pods when writing up issues for mediation, which normally I'd want to do in Intake.
- I will ensure that I devote an equal amount of time to looking at the camera and at the client's video feed (I found myself looking only at the camera to maintain rapport/eye contact).
- I will be mindful to balance my eye contact between the camera and the video feed. I also took note that the participant implicitly suggested that we could investigate how to make the Intake more interactive - perhaps she felt that the OFDR system wasn't adding to the experience?
- I need to manage the timeframe of the Intake more - they seem to be going over time by 15-20 minutes due to technical issues and my failure to better control the discussions. I feel less able to interject and confront clients - maybe this is due to the visual element?
9.7.2 Clients Experience

Introduction

There were 138 Telephone Dispute Resolution Services (TDRS) clients who registered to participate in the OFDR pilot project from June 2010 to early March 2011. These OFDR clients were selected from the general Telephone Dispute Resolution Services (TDRS) population (N = 3272 clients). Specifically, at time of registration TDRS clients were asked if they would like to participate/volunteer in the OFDR Project. In addition, 19 of these OFDR Clients provided feedback on their OFDR Intake sessions via the OFDR Client Post-Online Intake Survey. This section compares the client demographic data from the TDRS, OFDR, and OFDR Client Post-Online Intake Survey respondent populations to examine their similarities and differences. The demographic data reported here for the TDRS and OFDR client populations was sourced from the client registration data stored in the Relationships Australia Queensland (RAQ) client information system. The demographic data reported here for the Client OFDR Post-Intake Survey respondents was sourced from the client information provided on the survey.

Table 19 TDRS Client Population Characteristics (N = 3272 clients)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age (N=3218)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>729</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>1439</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 or more</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender (N=3272)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1667</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1605</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest Education Level (N=3095)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>1803</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary (University or Institutes)</td>
<td>1199</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never attended school</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Status (N=3224)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 20   TDRS OFDR Client Sample Characteristics (N = 136 clients)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age (N=136)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 or more</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender (N=138)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>50.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest Education Level (N=134)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>52.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary (University or Institutes)</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>44.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>66.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yearly Income (N=96)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0-6000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$6001-34000</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
$34001-80000  
$80001+  
Other - Centrelink payments  
\textbf{Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander (N=136)}  
No  
Aboriginal  
Torres Strait Islander  
Both  
\textbf{Current State (N=138)}  
New South Wales  
Queensland  
Victoria  
Western Australia  
South Australia  
Australian Capital Territory  
Northern Territory  
Tasmania  
New Zealand  

\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Population Characteristics}  &  &  \\
\hline
The following graphs compare client demographic data across the TDRS client population (n=3272), the OFDR client population (N=138), and OFDR Post-Intake client survey population (N=19).  &  &  \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
Figure 37 Client Age Categories

The graph above compares the different age groups across the TDRS, OFDR, and Post-Intake client survey populations. The OFDR client population appears to have included more clients in the 31 to 40 age year bracket, compared to the TDRS and OFDR Post-Intake client survey populations.

Figure 38 Client Gender

Males and females are represented almost equally in the TDRS and OFDR client population groups, while there seems to be more males represented in the OFDR
Post-Intake client survey group compared to females. However, this gender inequity may balance out once more OFDR Post-Intake client survey data are collected.
Figure 39  Client Highest Education Level

There are slightly more tertiary educated clients represented in the OFDR Post-Intake client survey data compared to the general TDRS population. Alternative data collection strategies may be required to recruit more High-School educated clients into the OFDR Post-Intake client survey evaluation.

Figure 40  Client Employment Status
The TDRS and OFDR client populations seem to have an almost matching representation of unemployed and employed clients.

The TDRS and OFDR client populations seem to have an almost matching representation of yearly income categories, while there is some difference when compared to the OFDR Post-Intake client survey group. These findings should be interpreted with caution given the small sample size of 19 clients for the OFDR Post-Intake client survey group.
Figure 42 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Status

All of the 19 clients in the OFDR Post-Intake client survey group were from a non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background. Interestingly, there seems to be a slight increase in representation for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients in the OFDR client group (5.2%) when compared to the general TDRS client population (3.3%).

Table 21 OFDR Client Post-Online Intake Survey Demographics (N=19 clients)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age (N=19)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 or more</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender (N=19)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest Education Level (N=19)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary (University or Institutes)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Status (N=19)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly Income (N=16)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0-6000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$6001-34000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$34001-80000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80001+</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22  Post-Online Intake Client Evaluation Survey Scale Mean Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Cronbach Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Client Satisfaction Scale</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(From 1 = Low to 4 = High)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparedness Scale</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(From 1 = Low to 7 = High)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCI Disorientation of OFDR System</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(From 1 = Low to 7 = High)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCI Flow Control of OFDR System</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(From 1 = Low to 7 = High)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCI Flow Involvement of OFDR System</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(From 1 = Low to 7 = High)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCI Aesthetics User Interface</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(From 1 = Low to 7 = High)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in OFDR</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(From 1 = Low to 7 = High)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in TDRS</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(From 1 = Low to 7 = High)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapport with Intake Officer</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(From 1 = Low to 7 = High)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User acceptance of technology</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>6.86</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(From 1 = Low to 7 = High)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next, we provide a set of graphs that are self-explanatory and provide client feedback of their Intake experience using the OFDR Technology in relation to those questions we outlined in the methodology sections.

![Client Feedback Graphs](image)

**Figure 43 Client Post-Online Intake Evaluation Survey Scale Results**

**Overall, clients reported favourable impressions of using the technology and interacting with the systems.** Though satisfaction was just over moderate, all other scales suggested that users were well prepared and able and trusted the technology and found the experience to be highly positive.
Clients generally reported a high level of satisfaction with the service and the provided though the OFDR technology and were willing to use OFDR again.

Clients reported a high level of preparedness to engage in the online Intake sessions and though these clients had not received Pre-FDR Education given they were TDRS clients, their preparedness was high. This result suggests that clients
perceived that adequate information was provided in the sessions to prepare appropriately for the mediation.

Figure 46 Client Quality of Human-Computer Interaction

This graph suggests that clients were comfortable and well orientated to the OFDR technology and found it easy to navigate.

Figure 47 Visual Quality of the OFDR System
The visual quality of the OFDR system was rated favourably by clients being comprehensible and legible. This result suggests that work done by our practice staff in preparing templates was well received. Moreover, the complexity of the system was viewed as moderately low.

![Figure 48 Client Trust in the Technology and TDRS](image)

**Figure 48 Client Trust in the Technology and TDRS**

Trust in technology is a very important concept in its acceptance, uptake and perceived usefulness. Clients rated both the OFDR system and the TDRS as highly trustworthy from their Intake experience.

![Figure 49 Client Rapport with Intake Officer](image)

**Figure 49 Client Rapport with Intake Officer**

- Rapport with Intake Officer (N=19)
One of our key concerns was the possibility that the OFDR system would interfere with the development of rapport. This graph provides evidence that rapport was well established though the use of webcam and telephone.

![User Acceptance of OFDR (N=19)](image)

**Figure 50 Client User Acceptance of Technology**

In terms of user acceptance, clients considered that the OFDR System was easy to use and appropriate and useful for the purpose of Intake. Moreover, they were highly likely to use it again. These clients were also willing to spend time exploring and learning how to use web-based technologies.

**Comments and Suggestions**

1. **We asked clients to provide further comments.**
   - Not sure as yet it’s my first session maybe ask for this after all completed.
   - I found the experience of the OFDR system very rewarding. Rather than just a voice on the phone I felt more involved with the mediator which helped me feel more comfortable and more able to speak the truth and confident that the interview was kept confidential as I was able to see and trust the mediator more.
   - "I understand that the Online Officer's have a lot of information to get across....however it feels a little ""automatic pilot"" and makes it quite difficult to ask questions or be heard.
   - It is an excellent scheme and I hope that it continues.
   - The video feed of the Intake Officer was not smooth and may need greater bandwidth and processing power.
The only comment I have is that 3/4 of the way through the Intake we lost video connection, but apart from that the session was great.

The only thing I found difficult was using the online interface yet having to rely on the telephone handset. An hour holding the handset was a long time and as I am comfortable with using Skype I guess I am comfortable using that format (i.e. no handset, internal speakers). There is more freedom of movement I guess. Otherwise great idea.

I felt that the mediator was knowledgeable, concerned, very helpful with guidance, and ensured my understanding of the whole process to date.

I was put at ease and communication was good. All matters here explained clearly to me. Thank You.
9.8 Study 4. Mediation Evaluation

9.8.1 Staff - OFDR Practitioner Post-FDR Feedback
This section presents the results of from two FDR Practitioners who at the time of this report have conducted the only two Online Mediation Sessions to date. These tables present the results of two staff.

### Qualitative Survey Results

1. Did you encounter any technical difficulties with the OFDR system?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number (N = 4 Online Mediation Sessions)</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Did you encounter any difficulties with FDR practice during the online session?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number (N = 4 Online Mediation Sessions)</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Did any part of the OFDR administration process seem cumbersome or inefficient?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number (N = 4 Online Mediation Sessions)</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. What learning or suggestion do you have regarding your own professional development for next time you perform an OFDR Intake (if relevant)?
   - I found that, as it was the first mediation using video conferencing, it was beneficial to have 2 FDRPs present so that each could focus on one element (i.e. clinical work/technology), then swap if/when applicable. As experience is
built, I think it would be ok for just 1 FDRP to be present. I think the session time would need to be increased, or perhaps additional time prior to the session allowed so that the client’s technology can be discussed. While we didn’t experience any technology difficulties from our end, one of the clients kept losing internet connection & her camera kept falling down. We were able to get her into a routine each time the internet dropped out so that she could reconnect without interrupting the flow of the session, however when it occurred the first time, we did have to stop discussions so that she knew how to sort it out.

- For this particular case, webcams were not utilised. The details of this case were also unique, in that negotiation was not really required, it was more about them discussing a particular issue that was critical in the life of their child that they had not had the chance previously to discuss due to no communication for a number of years. I do not think this survey and my responses are at all relevant in the running of OFDR in this case, as FDRP intervention was not required for the majority of the session. While we had no difficulties at all with the OFDR technology, it had little impact on the outcomes of the session.

- This FDR session was completed without the use of web cameras - this was a client preference as they had no interaction for over 5 years and thought it would be too much of a shock to the system to see the other party’s face. It seemed to work well however it was hard to keep people engaged with their computer screen as there was nothing happening in between times writing agenda items and agreements.
9.8.2 Clients’ Experience of On-Line FDR

At the time of writing this report there have been two mediations conducted on the 17th and the 22nd of March, 2011. All four parties have been sent evaluative questionnaires and were telephoned to elicit verbal feedback. No surveys have been returned to date. Two clients have provided verbal feedback as reproduced below.

Mediation – Client Feedback

Online Mediation Case 1 - Male Client (Party B)

Respondent: Male client, 33 years old – mediation is about post-separation parenting issue – lives in other state from the other parent.
Data collection method – Research Officer called the male client to gain telephone feedback about the recent online mediation process.

- Overall the male client said that “he found the online mediation process very good”.
- The client said “that he had a good rapport with the FDR Practitioners” and got along with them very well.
- The client did mention that his partner “would never follow through with the parenting plan”.
- The client had no concerns with the technology – the client mentioned that “he has very fast broadband”.
- He said that his “webcam worked and that he could see the FDR Practitioner and they could see him”.
- The client said that “his broadband connection was so fast that he was able to see that the FDR Practitioner’s lip movements were in sync with the telephone conversation”.
- The male client mentioned that he was able to see the FDR Practitioner doing facial expressions (i.e., such as rolling eyes) during mediation. The male client was not perturbed by this though. He just thought it was worth mentioning – it was the one thing that stuck in his mind.
- Overall, the client was very satisfied with the online mediation.
- However, no agreement was reached at the end of the online mediation process and another mediation session was to be booked at a later date. He said the FDR Practitioner was going to get back to him about this.
- The client is happy to be contacted at 3 and 9 months post-mediation for follow-up feedback on short-term and long-term outcomes.
Online Mediation Case 1 - Female Client (Party A)

Female client, 24 years old – post-separation parenting issue – lives in different state from the other parent.

Data collection method – Research Officer called the female client to gain telephone feedback about the recent online mediation process.

- Overall the client was “very satisfied with the online mediation process”.
- The client said that “she had a very good rapport with the FDR Practitioners”.
- The client had no problems with the technology, except that her online connection would drop put at times because her screensaver would come up on her computer during the online mediation session. She felt “that this didn’t hinder the mediation process at all as she still had the telephone connection with the FDR Practitioners and Party B”. She stated that she was easily able to re-connect to the online mediation session and that the FDR Practitioners’ handled this issue/interruption very well.
- The client thought it was great that “she could put a face to the name and voice of the FDR Practitioner”.
- No agreement was reached at the end of the online mediation session and another session was to be booked.
- The client is happy to be contacted at 3 and 9 months post-mediation for follow-up feedback on short-term and long-term outcomes.
10 PRE FDR EDUCATION SESSIONS

10.1 Pre FDR Evaluative Framework

Background
The Attorney General’s Office provided funding to Relationships Australia Queensland (RAQ) to pilot an Online Family Dispute Resolution (OFDR) Project in a bid to help increase community access to Family Dispute Resolution services. Traditional Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) sessions involve having a third impartial FDR Practitioner present in a formalised meeting to help parents resolve disputes relating to their children, in terms of access visits and financial arrangements. As part of the standard Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) process, parents/caregivers must also physically attend a mandatory FDR group information session beforehand, to help them prepare for the FDR session.

Parents have reported in past research studies that FDR information sessions are very helpful in preparing them for the mediation process (Brandon, 2006; Blaisure and Geasler, 1996; Mathis, Tanner and Whinery, 1999). In addition, mediators have also reported, in an American nationwide survey, that pre-mediation education sessions make parents more child-focused in mediation compared to parents who had not gone through the same education process (Arbuthnot and Kramer, 1998).

To assist with the development of new FDR information services (such as online and also self-directed workbooks) that would complement the newly designed OFDR Service, the RAQ Research Team, on behalf of the OFDR Project Team, evaluated the FDR Group Information Sessions that currently occur at Queensland Family Relationship Centres (FRC). This report outlines the results of that evaluation.

The aim of the evaluation was to collect information on what was currently happening now in the FDR information group sessions in terms of content and process (via qualitative methods) and to also get client feedback on these sessions in terms of learning outcomes and satisfaction levels with the process (via quantitative methods).

This information would then be used to inform the design of any future modality versions of the FDR information program (such as online, self-directed workbooks) and also would be used as a quality control device for the current face-to-face information program in terms of evaluating the program’s effectiveness in preparing parents for the FDR/mediation process.
Introduction

This section outlines the qualitative and quantitative evaluation results for the RAQ FDR Group Information Sessions that were conducted at the Family Relationship Centres (FRC) of Upper Mt Gravatt, Strathpine, and Cairns during the month of February 2011.

The evaluation data on the current FDR Information program was collected through two research methods – qualitative (through observation of the information session by the Research Officer) and quantitative (through client evaluation surveys).

Evaluation Framework

• Kirkpatrick’s (1998) Four Levels of Evaluation –
  o Reactions (training satisfaction scales + service satisfaction)
  o Learning Outcomes (four learning objectives + self-efficacy)
  o Behaviour (conflict + negotiation) and
  o Overall Results (not measured in this study due to project time and scope restraints)

• Additional variables – control –
  o demographics and background information
  o help-seeking behaviour
  o level of self-care and general well-being
  o overall preparedness for FDR (readiness)
  o resentment for doing mandatory session
  o current quality of co-parenting relationship
  o level of cooperation between the parents
  o Readiness for adopting new ways of receiving FDR information – client preference for delivery of information sessions

• Qualitative – capture processes and content of FDR information session across the three FRC sites. What are similar and what are different? Do the content and processes relate to the four key learning objectives found from the Pre FDR Education Literature Review?

• Quantitative – Pre and Post Survey Methods. Criterion Measures based on Literature Review. Pre and Post methods helps determine effectiveness of FDR Information Session in improving important outcome variables identified from the literature review.
Qualitative Method and Results Procedure

There were three parts to the qualitative procedure.

First, the Senior FDR Clinical Leader was interviewed about the current FDR Information Session practices that currently occur in the Queensland Family Relationship Centres (FRCs). Secondly, the documents that are handed out to clients during the FDR Information Session were analysed for themes. Thirdly, during the month of February 2011, the RAQ Research Team (Research Officer and/or Director) visited three different Family Relationship Centres (Strathpine, Cairns, and Upper Mt Gravatt) to observe and take notes of their FDR Information Sessions and to collect and analyse any FDR information documents (e.g., Workbooks) that were given to clients at that time. The Research Officer and/or Director also distributed surveys at the same time (see Quantitative Data Collection).

Following on the above, the Research Team observed and wrote qualitative notes on 20 different Family Dispute Resolution Information Sessions. Of these 20 information sessions, there were 10 different Facilitators of three main professional backgrounds; five were Child Consultants, four were FDR Practitioners (who help mediate FDR sessions) and one was a Community Educator. The FDR Information Session was scheduled to go for one and half hours and the average class size was 5 people.

Tools
An observation tool was developed to document and collect the qualitative notes on the FDR Information Session by the Research Team.

Results
This section outlines the results of the interview with the senior clinical FDR leader and the observation of 20 FDR Information Sessions and document analysis of the FDR Documents that are handed out to clients during the FDR Information Session.

General FDR Information Session Themes
The following themes are presented in all of the FDR Information Sessions across Upper Mount Gravatt, Cairns and Strathpine.

1. Adults and Separation – the grief process
2. Children and Separation – effects of conflict and separation on children
3. Models of Co-parenting – Conflict, Parallel, Co-operative
4. FDR Process and Steps
5. Participants are referred to other contacts in the back on the workbook
Interview results – Overall Summary

Currently Pre Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) Education/Information sessions are predominantly delivered in group sessions at particular Family Relationship Centres (FRC). The Pre FDR Education/Information session is mandatory for parents and/or caregivers before they complete the Family Dispute Resolution process. If parents are unable to make a group session they are mailed a Booklet (with accompanying video) to complete before the commencement of the Family Dispute Resolution.

Pre FDR Education is delivered at each of the FRC venues; however, some variation exists in style and approach depending on staff professional background and experience. At some venues all FDR staff take a role in facilitation at others, two or more staff regularly lead the sessions.

Some Pre FDR Education content is common across FRC venues; specifically, separation and grief, impact of separation on children, procedural information regarding mediation and developmental stages of children. The current Pre FDR Education does not include skill building.

In terms of the video media used during the Pre FDR Education sessions, Venues mainly use ‘Remember Me” in most sessions. Some venues use PowerPoint, others prefer narrative delivery. However, the sessions are broadly similar across the three sites.

Currently, the evaluation data are captured through the FRSP client feedback form and entered into the client information system. The evaluation data are used variously by the organisation to inform continuous improvement.

Document Analysis Results

We conducted a document analysis of the FDR Information Session Workbooks that are handed out in each FDR Information Session across the three FRCs (Cairns, Strathpine, and Upper Mount Gravatt).

In summary, the three workbooks have similar themes in terms of talking about the impact of conflict on children, types of co-parenting, information about the FDR process, and a contacts page for separated parents/caregivers resources (such as legal aid, counselling and domestic violence). However, the workbooks do differ in some ways in relation to the level of content and resources. For example, the Cairns Workbook has more content and detail compared to the Strathpine and UMG’s Workbooks.
Observation Results

- All of the participants in the FDR Information Session are given a workbook to refer to and to take home to read later.
- All of the Facilitators referred to this workbook and highlighted areas to parents that they needed to know about, such as getting parents to understand the grieving process and the impact of this on the other parent and/or mediation, the effects of parental conflict on children, the steps and processes of the FDR session and briefly referred to resource contacts for parents at the end of the book. These resources were mostly legal and/or counselling contacts.
- All of the Facilitators first ask participants to state how long they have been separated, the number of children they have and their ages.
- The Child Consultants tended to focus very much on the effects of separated parents conflict on children and tried to get participants to understand the feelings of the child.
- Child Consultants and other Facilitators who used micro-counselling skills (such as re-phrasing and reflecting) tended to involve the parents more in the discussion and asked them more questions. From clients reactions this seem to make them feel more at ease.
- One Child Consultant gave reference to a good book and bookshop for how parents can tell children about the separation. The participants seemed very receptive to this.
- The FDR Practitioners were very good at discussing and communicating about the mediation process by giving examples from their experience. In addition, FDR Practitioners were very good at answering questions from clients about the FDR process.
- In most of the 20 information sessions, either some part or the entire DVD “Remember Me” was shown to clients. In some of the information sessions the DVD “Consider the Children” was shown at the discretion of the Facilitator.

Quantitative Method and Results

Participants
The survey respondents consisted of 67 adult males and females who attended mandatory Family Dispute Resolution Information Sessions at a Family Relationship Centre either situated at Upper Mount Gravatt, Strathpine or Cairns during the month of February (see table for breakdown of participant location details). Out of the 92 Clients approached during the FDR information sessions, 67 consented to complete the Pre
and Post evaluation survey, resulting in a 73% response rate. The majority of the sample were males (57%), aged 31-40 (46%) and were Party A (58%) respondents (people who initiated the mediation process).

Most of the sample was separated (49%); an average mean length of separation of 29 months (SD = 38), which is equivalent to 2.4 years. When the length of separation from other parent measure was categorised into different groups, the most common separation length category indicated by parents was 1 to 11 months (52.2%). See Table 23 for details of the sample.

In sum, we found that the majority of parents requiring mediation assistance for child dispute issues were less than one year separated from the other parent.

Table 23 Pre FDR Education Evaluation Survey Respondents Demographics (N =67)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age Group (in years)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 or more</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defacto</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of separation from other parent</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 11 months</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 to 23 months</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 to 59 months</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2 – 4.9 years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 168 months (5 to 14 years)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>58.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First time to FDR?</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Design

The research design for the quantitative research used pre and post survey method using psychometrically valid tools grounded in theory and empirical evidence.

Data Collection Procedure

At the beginning of the FDR Information Session the Facilitator introduced the Research Officer and/or Research Director and explained their reason for being at the FDR Information Session. The Research Officer/Director then distributed the survey evaluation packages to the clients and provided information about the evaluation project including the purpose, participation and withdrawal information, what was involved, risks, confidentiality, security of data, and ethical clearance of the project. If the participants agreed to participate in the study they then signed the consent form and completed the first evaluation survey (pre-test).

The Facilitator would then commence the FDR Information Session. The Research Team person would also sit in on the FDR Information Session and take qualitative notes about the content and process of the session after gaining all of the session participants’ verbal consent (see qualitative method section). After the FDR Information session was completed, the Research Officer would then ask the consenting survey participants to fill out the second survey (post-test). Once the post-test survey was completed participants gave their sealed envelopes to the Research Officer.
Survey Measures

The following survey measures in Table 24 were considered important learning and behaviour outcomes to assess in relation to preparing parents for the FDR process based on a review of the Pre FDR education empirical literature.

The Pre and Post survey method would determine if the FDR Information Session was effective in increasing or positively influencing these learning and behaviour outcomes. In addition, the participants’ reactions (satisfaction) to the FDR Information Program and/or FDR Service was also captured as research indicates that clients’ positive or negative experiences with a human service program can influence their participation, engagement or withdrawal rates with those services (Larson et al., 1979; Giangreco, Sebastiano, and Peccei, 2009).

Parents’ demographic details, general sense of well-being, help-seeking behaviours, level of quality of relationship and communication with the other parent, resentment levels for doing the mandatory information session, and overall preparedness for the FDR session were also measured as they may impact on the FDR process and outcomes as well.

Table 24 Measurement Scales for the Pre-FDR Education Evaluation Surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-test Survey Only</th>
<th>Pre-test and Post-test Survey</th>
<th>Post-test Survey Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Demographics</td>
<td>1. Knowledge &amp; Awareness Scale</td>
<td>1. Client Satisfaction with Service (so far) - Cronin &amp; Taylor (1992) – 2 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 7 items</td>
<td>- 12 items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behaviours – (3 items). Author developed.</td>
<td>(conflict &amp; negotiation) –</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 12 items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwick-Edinburgh</td>
<td></td>
<td>a. Perceived Facilitator Performance (Cronbach alpha = .88) – 4 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Well-being</td>
<td></td>
<td>b. Perceived Usefulness of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale (WEMWBS) –</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart-Brown et al</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7 items)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results

Clients Experience With FDR/Mediation

Of the 59 survey respondents, providing an answer to Question 8 “Is this the first time you’ve been through the FDR/Mediation Process?”, 85% responded “Yes” whereas 15% responded “No”.

Help Seeking Behaviours

Of the 67 survey respondents, 30 (45%) of them reported using other services besides mediation to help them with their co-parenting issues. Of the 30 help services reported, 53% was legal help, 30% was individual counselling and the remaining types (17%) were miscellaneous services, such as Men’s Helpline, Psychologist, Private Mediator, Doctor and Property Specialist. Out of the 30 help services reported the average helpfulness rating from respondents was 3 (helped to some extent) out of a possible range from 1 (Very little extent) to 5 (Very large Extent).

Preference for Delivery Method

In the Pre-test survey, participants were asked rank from 1 (most preferred) to 5 (least preferred) the following choices on how they would prefer the FDR Information session to be delivered:

- Printed Workbook – self-directed (no Facilitator involved)
• Internet – self-directed (no Facilitator involved)
• Group session with Facilitator
• Internet – with online Facilitator guiding through exercises and content
• Printed Workbook with telephone Facilitator to guide you through the exercises and content

**Group Session with Facilitator**

The group session with Facilitator was the popular choice with 58.7% of respondents putting it as number 1 or 2 choice of preferred delivery method. The reasons survey respondents put Group Session with Facilitator as number 1 or 2 preferences were:

- Best option
- Able to ask questions
- Can ask personal questions
- Being able to ask Q&A face to face. The other options are crap.
- More personal
- Prefer face to face group
- Need to talk.
- Discussion
- More helpful.
- More opportunities for questions and feedback.
- Prefer dealing with a real person face to face and hearing from others how they manage.
- Face to face. More topics covered.
- Easy explanation
- More information.
- Ability to ask questions and hear others' questions.
- Contact with humans is better.
- Good - Questions can be asked.
- Makes it personal. You can see you are not alone.
In terms of preparedness, participants reported mixed results in relation to the four key goals of the group information session. However, overall preparedness increased slight between surveys. Whereas global measures are useful, the wording of this scale is worthy of some thought. Previous focussed scales had shown improvements in some of these areas.

Figure 51 Overall Client Preparedness for FDR

Figure 52 Client General Well-Being
The graph above indicates that despite going through a challenging life event, the participants reported relatively high levels of general well being. The lowest (average-3) score was related to feelings of being relaxed. General well being is important as it affects performance both within the session in general coping with the demands of this experience. The findings suggest the parents are seeking information from other sources and are managing their self care effectively.

### Figure 53 Client Mediation Self-Efficacy

The preceding graph shows the findings both before and after the session comparing participant’s perceptions of their confidence regarding mediation. It is not uncommon to find participants reporting high levels of confidence before an information session or education experience that declines when presented with new information. This finding was apparent during the pilot where that was a decline in confidence in a number of areas. Such an effect is indeed positive and demonstrated receptiveness and openness to new learning - a positive state to be in for the mediation process.
When we evaluated parents’ opinion about the needs of children before and after the session, it was evidence that the program had an effect of increasing such knowledge across all twelve items in the scale. This is an important finding as literature suggests that the session focus is clearly on the effect of family discord and children and the session helps parents to improve their opinion in these areas.

Given the vital parental role in securing the health and well being of children through their behaviour, these results are promising for two reasons. First, they confirm the topic is important and change is measurable over a very short time (1 hour) as a result of information. Second, the scale appears to be sensitive in measuring those changes.
Dr Jennifer McIntosh and other authors have identified “putting children in the middle” parental behaviours, such as “insulting the other parent in front of the child/ren” and/or “sending messages to the other parent through the child” as detrimental to children’s mental health and well-being. Therefore important to assess if the FDR Information Session sensitises parents to wanting to decrease these types of behaviours.

In addition it is also important to see if the FDR Information Session sensitises parents to wanting to show more positive negotiation like tactics towards the other parent.

Items 5, 6, 7, 8 and 7 to 12 all show changes between the times before and after the sessions. Marked improvements are evident in behaviours that support co-parenting and promotion of positive co-parenting behaviours is a key goal of the Pre FDR Information Session. As such the session appears in most domains to meet this goal.
Participants showed high levels of agreement that both the Facilitator’s approach to managing the session and its goals and objectives were met.
Perceived Knowledge Increase After Information Program

Participants' Mean Level of Agreement
(From 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)

20. Program increase awareness of impact of divorce on child
21. Program increase awareness of positive co-parenting
22. Program prepared for FDR Process
23. Program increase awareness of other parent resources

Figure 58 Client Perceived Knowledge Increase

Client Satisfaction with Services so far

Participants' Mean Level of Response

Quality of Service So Far
(From 1 = Very Poor to 7 = Excellent)
Feelings towards FDR Service So Far
(from 1 = Very unsatisfied to 7 = Very satisfied)

Figure 59 Client Satisfaction with FDR Services So Far
Comments section

The following section details the comments to the open-ended questions at the end of the post evaluation survey.

1. **What was the best thing about the information session?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus on the Child's Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The End. Sorry didn't get anything out of it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of personal situation with Facilitator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding out the next steps. Knowing my ex will also read the information about putting the children first. Knowing I'm not alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The videos showing the children and realise what they are going through. It makes you realise how they are feeling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information relevant to the children's ages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Video.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying different co-parenting arrangements and the impact these have on children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not too long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open discussion. Video.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight to the point. Easy to understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing other people going through a similar experience to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking about the process and what to expect in mediation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to the stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another lady in the group had been through and was willing to share her experience - similar to mine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It covered everything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Info - re parenting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't feel I gained much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on child. Parenting alliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing what to expect from the mediation. Importance of positive co-parenting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on co-parenting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to ask questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining the process of the night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The DVD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation of the best interests of the children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just to get a better understanding of the whole process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better understanding of moving forward peacefully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realising most situations where conflict etc have occurred that perhaps my own feelings were normal. Also reaction to same. &quot;Validation&quot;. Also to understand the effects of my behaviours and what to avoid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVD - laying out potential parent dispute issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning other people talk about their parenting and plans they have with their partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being around people going through the same thing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group information - clarification of procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing things can be resolved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mediation was very good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having other people input and learning how to become a better parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide range of information. DVD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining the need to communicate. Explaining about children's needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It gave me a good insight into some of the more emotional issues that might be going on in the background.
Seeing the effects of separation on children and ways to make it a co-operative relationship between the separated parents.
Hearing other people's stories.
Hearing from others e.g., mothers and getting their point.
DVD and resources. Facilitator was great.
The video were very familiar.
The DVD and seeing the affects arguing has on the kids.
Short
Reassured what I already know.
Clarification of issues.

2. What could have been done to improve the information session?
Ask why here. Find out the goal - intention or interest.
More time (some taken up by survey).
Not much.
More practical examples & discussion.
Better/clearer English speaker.
Longer section.
Pre-pollmed for participation in the survey so this time from the session was not taken up while I completed.
Finding out what people need before a session and tailoring sessions to suit.
I have done every course have invented, so very tired of it all.
Some more suggestions on issue.
More time
More relevant to the situations of the people in the group.
Ask more specific questions about participants' cases. Early in the day would be better - mind not too busy with million other things at the beginning of the day.
Not sure.
More sharing.
Mediation example DVD.
Nothing I can think of.
Maybe get more participation from people. Acknowledge that we filled survey which out blew? Session time.
Maybe more information on situations involving younger children say under two years old.
A cup of coffee
You do a great job considering the group size.
Have some more women in the session. All blokes and 1 woman made for a closed session.
More on younger children, babies and how they are affected by separation as I have a young baby.
More structure.
More emphasis on the group individually. For example, if the children are young concentrate on that - if mixed - old and young - mix the conversation.
More group discussion.
It was very good.
No suggestions.
There were no real tools given to prevent conflict or manage conflict. There was no education, just reassurance of how we were feeling and some validations.
Maybe a little bit longer to talk more in depth about certain projects.
Maybe more time
Nothing.
Nil

3. **What else in the information session would have been useful to help you prepare for FDR and/or your current situation?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It's not really my ability or the information - it's the communication to the 3rd party.</td>
<td>Helpful information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I found the topics too emotionally confronting to be comfortable participating actively in front of strangers. I was not aware in advance of how emotionally confronting the session may be. Participants were asked age of children &amp; the Facilitator volunteered the first participants response &quot;11 years old, right?&quot; on their behalf. This is not providing privacy for participants who may not want to share this information.</td>
<td>At the end of the day mediation will only work if both people are prepared to work together. The reactions of children to separation and conflict were areas of my knowledge due to my job and this will be the reason for some &quot;negative&quot; responses. For people without this, I'm sure they would find it more helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn't feel the session really related to me and my current situation. Would have preferred to do this online. Didn't really provide any further knowledge for next sit down with my ex and do the rounds over his wishes for the youngest child.</td>
<td>The session was informative and gave me a clearer understanding of what to expect from mediation and the benefits of it. Thanks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All good.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More younger children samples in video for comparisons for people with younger children.</td>
<td>Thank you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator was very friendly and calm talking about all aspects of separation and children.</td>
<td>I think it would be good to talk about how to heal the emotional issues so mediation plans could be put in place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More concrete tools needed. More focus on conflict resolution skills.</td>
<td>Thank you I've taken some great points to consider. I look forward to my ex-partner participating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A very good service. Thank-you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **Any other comments?**

No comments were recorded for this section on the surveys by any of the clients.
**Recommendations for Continuing Evaluation.**

The trialling the tools and methods yielded useful information for developing robust evaluation methodologies for RAQ’s education sessions. Given the short time of session attendance, plausibly evaluation questionnaires are given to clients prior to attendance. Alternatively, they could be posted to participants and made available online. Post evaluation questionnaires should be completed at the time of attendance.

Second, preliminary results from three clients and one presenter show satisfaction with the sessions and at the same time provide valuable information of key variables for measurement. Further analysis is being completed of these data (t test, correlations).

**Methodology Recommendation 1**

- To send out explanatory statement form, consent form and pre evaluation survey to participants at the Intake stage and to inform clients to bring the consent form and survey along with them to the FDR Information session

**Methodology Recommendation 2**

- Request participants fill out the preference for modality measure at the registration or booking of the Group Information Session. It is important to make sure individuals also return the completed tool on the day of the session to avoid bias from attendance and importantly the loss of valuable data if unable to attend for any reason.

**Methodology Recommendation 3**

- Use randomised allocation to treatment groups and identical evaluation methodologies to improve level of evidence.

**Content Recommendation 3**

- Streamline the survey content to key variables and reduce completion times. On further analysis with SPSS and XLS, those variables that show sensitivity to change over time and/or sufficient variability to provide useful information shall be retained.
Pre FDR Information Evaluation Survey Measures

Pre-test Measure Only
The following measures were administered only once, in the BEFORE SESSION Survey, before the FDR Information Session commenced.

1. **Demographics.** Participants were asked demographic and background questions that are commonly asked in the separated parent literature. These questions were about who initiated the mediation process, the time of day of the information session, gender, age group, current marital status, length of relationship separation from other parent, and was this the first time they had attended the FDR Information session. The majority of the questions were close-ended and included response options, while others were open-ended questions. The demographic questions were sourced from the literature and/or author developed.

2. **Help and Information Seeking Behaviours.** Participants were asked if they had sought help from elsewhere for their co-parenting issues. This was an open-ended question. Participants were then asked to rate overall how helpful this was on a 5-point scale (from 1 – “Very Little Extent” to 5 – “Very Great Extent”). This measure was Author Developed.

3. **General Well Being. The Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (SWEMWBS).** The 7-item Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (SWEMWBS) developed by Stewart-Brown et al (2009) based on the original Tennant et al. (2007) Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) was used to measure participants’ general well being. The SWEMWBS comprises of positively worded items relating to different aspects of positive mental health. The 7 item scale is a shortened version of the original 14 item WEMWBS and includes selected items from that scale. Example items include “I’ve been feeling optimistic about the future” and “I’ve been feeling useful”. The original 14 item WEMWBS instrument was developed by an expert panel drawing on current academic literature, qualitative research with focus groups and psychometric testing of an existing scale. The original measure was validated on a student and representative population sample. The original 14 item WEMWBS (Tennant et al 2007) showed good content
validity. Confirmatory factor analysis supported the single factor hypothesis. Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was .89 (student sample) and .91 (population sample) (Tennant et al., 2007). The correlation between the 7 item and 14 item versions has been found to be .954 (Stewart-Brown et al., 2009). In addition, the 7 item version was found to satisfy the strict unidimensionality expectations of the Rasch model, and be largely free from bias. Robust measurement properties combined with brevity make the SWEMWBS preferable to WEMWBS at present for monitoring well-being in populations.

Pre and Post Test Measures Only
The following measures were administered before and after the FDR Information Group session in both BEFORE and AFTER Info Session Survey:

1. **Mediation Self-Efficacy Measure** (O’Connor & Arnold, 2001). A mediation self-efficacy scale was developed based on the design of the O’Connor and Arnold’s (2001) pre and post negotiation self-efficacy scale, which had reported Cronbach Alpha’s of .84 and .85 respectively. The mediation self-efficacy scale measures the level of confidence a parent has in preparing for mediation, understanding and going through the steps of mediation, knowing where to access additional information and ability of the other parent and themselves in coming to an agreement. Two example items are “I feel confident in my ability to prepare for the Family Dispute Resolution (mediation) process” and “I feel confident in my ability to participate fully in the Family Dispute Resolution (mediation) process”.

2. **Perceived Knowledge and Awareness Questionnaire** (Francescato et al., 2006). The design and scale of the measure was based on a Perceived Knowledge Questionnaire developed by Francescato and colleagues (2006). However the majority of items for this measure were adapted from Brandon (2006) and Feng and Fine (2001). The measure asks participants how much they thought they currently know (on a scale of 1-Very Little Extent to 5 – Very Great Extent) about 12 areas related to the topics of impact of divorce on children, positive co-parenting, mediation preparation, the mediation process and awareness
of other separated parent resources or services. Francesato et al., (2006) reported a Cronbach alpha of .84 for their Perceived Knowledge scale.

3. **Co-parenting Behaviour** (Brandon, 2006; Straus et al, 1996) – This scale measures the level of perceived dysfunctional conflict and negotiation behaviours that occur between the separated parents. The Pre-test measure asks participants to indicate on a scale of 1 – *Very slightly or not at all* to 5- *Very Much* their level of behaviour when interacting with or relating to the other parent in the past month. The Post-test measure asks participants to indicate their intention to exhibit the same behaviours in the *next month* on a scale of 1 – *Highly Unlikely* to 5- *Highly Likely*.

Perceived dysfunctional conflict behaviours were measured using six items from Brandon’s (2006) 10 item parental conflict behavioural measure, which itself was based on the well known Arbuthnot & Gordon’s (1996) description of negative parental behaviours that put children in the middle. An example item from the measure is “talking to others about the other parent when angry at that parent” and “sending messages through the child/children to the other parent”. Brandon (2006) did not report any internal reliabilities for her scale (i.e., Cronbach Alpha). However the conflict items are very similar in nature to the O'Leary-Porter Scale (Porter & O'Leary, 1980) - a widely used measure of parental conflict - which has a reported test-retest reliability of .96 (Long & Forehand, 1990).

Parental negotiation behaviours were measured using a 6-item negotiation sub-scale from the widely used Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus et al., 1996). Straus and colleagues reported a Cronbach alpha of .86 for the 6-item measure. Straus et al (1996) define negotiation behaviour as actions taken to settle a disagreement using both cognitive and emotional displays of behaviour. An example of a cognitive based item is “say to the other parent that I was sure we could work out a problem” and an emotional based one is “show the other parent that I cared even though we disagreed”.

4. **Overall Preparedness Levels** – This 3-item measure asks participants to indicate how generally they feel prepared for the FDR session and understanding their child’s needs. This scale was author developed. An
example item is “I would rate my level of overall preparedness for the future Family Dispute Resolution/Mediation Session as”. The response scale for this item ranged from (1) - “Very Unprepared to (7) – Totally Prepared. The other two items had a response scale ranging from (1) – Very insufficient to (7) – Very sufficient”. An example item was “I would rate my level of knowledge regarding my child(ren’s) needs as”.

Post-test Measures Only
The following measures were administered only once in the AFTER SESSION SURVEY after the FDR Information Group session had been completed:

1. **Participants' reactions to the education program.** Two measures were used to assess participants' satisfaction with the education program. The first one was the Training Satisfaction Rating Scale developed by Holgado-Tello et al (2006) and assessed participants' satisfaction with objectives and content, method and training context, and overall usefulness on a 5-point rating scale (1 = totally disagree, 5 = totally agree). The second education program evaluation measure was developed by Giangreco, Sebastiano and Peccei (2009). This measure assessed three components of an education program:

   a. Perceived Facilitator Performance (Cronbach alpha = .88)
   b. Perceived Usefulness of Information Program (Cronbach alpha = .80)
   c. Perceived efficiency of Information Program (Cronbach alpha = .66)

2. **Participants' satisfaction with the FDR service so far.** This 2 item scale measures the clients' level of contentment with the FDR services received so far and is based on Cronin and Taylor (1992) Short Satisfaction measure.
Document Analysis to Develop the Evaluation Methodology
FDR Education Workbooks
The table below outlines the content of Preparation for Family Dispute Resolution Workbooks that are currently in use at the different FRCs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRC</th>
<th>Topic/Content Area</th>
<th>Specific Areas</th>
<th>Media Used</th>
<th>Learning Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Adults &amp; Separation</td>
<td>• How adults experience separation – talks about the different emotions people go through once separated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Help for you – talks and refers to support services for parents e.g., counselling services, doctor, free reading materials, lifeline number, relationships Australia, Parentline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Write down answers to activities in workbook</td>
<td>• Write down answers to activities in workbook</td>
<td>Awareness of other parent resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Could be how to prepare for mediation – emotionally – but not sure if required as some parents have been separated a long time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>2. Children &amp; Separation</td>
<td>• Watch DVD then do activities</td>
<td>• “Remember me” – DVD</td>
<td>Impact of divorce on children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• How do children experience separation? – parents complete an activity about children – e.g., “What is it like to be your child at the moment”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What is my children going through? – Talks about the impact of conflict on children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The cost of ongoing conflict for children</td>
<td>• Write down answers to activities in workbook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Help for your children – where to get help for children – lists support services and recommended readings for different ages groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRC</td>
<td>Topic/Content Area</td>
<td>Specific Areas</td>
<td>Media Used</td>
<td>Learning Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|     | 3. Supporting Child/ren through separation | • Models of co-parenting  
• Cooperative co-parenting – characteristics and how children cope with this model  
• Parallel co-parenting - characteristics and how children cope with this model  
• Conflict co-parenting - characteristics and how children cope with this model (consequences)  
• Activity on models of co-parenting  
• Additional Ways to help your child/children – gives general parenting tips for e.g., “express your love and gratitude” and “have clear expectations” | • Workbook – lists and pictures of parents  
• Write down answers to activities in workbook | Promotes positive co-parenting – note that it doesn’t say how to positively co-parent – just says what it looks like |
|     | 4. Preparing for Mediation | • Preparing for Mediation – Forming a parental alliance  
• Asking whether the parent feels mentally and emotionally prepared and obtain help if need to  
• Start working on your parenting relationship  
• Activity – “Decide how ‘you’ want your future to be”  
• Mediation (Dispute Resolution) – What is it? – Overview, Pre-mediation, during mediation, and post mediation  
• Outcomes & Agreements – what happens if no agreement reached, partial agreement and full agreement | - Preparing parents for mediation – emotional – although doesn’t say what this might be or look like. Doesn’t refer back to parent resources outlined earlier  
- Preparing for mediation - cognitively |
<p>| Cairns | 5. Preparation Checklist | • This section outlines how to practically and cognitively prepare for mediation – e.g., “Write your list of issues/items you | Preparing for mediation – practically &amp; cognitively |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRC</th>
<th>Topic/Content Area</th>
<th>Specific Areas</th>
<th>Media Used</th>
<th>Learning Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>6. Attachments</td>
<td>This section has the following attachments:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Preparing for mediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Contact List for Support Services</td>
<td></td>
<td>– practically &amp; cognitively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• A poem/narrative – “My dream Mum and Dad” by John Winslade and Gerald Monk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Guidelines to a Child’s Rights after separation – adapted from Back on Track:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Finding a way through separation and re-partnering – Commonwealth of Australia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– not sure if this is breaching copyright</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Client Information and Agreement – Family Dispute Resolution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Parenting Prompt sheet – living arrangements, holidays, health, education,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>transport, religion, financial support, discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Property Prompt Sheet – may be a Cairns only procedure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>1. Separation and Grief</td>
<td>• Stages of grief</td>
<td></td>
<td>DVD – Consider the Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount</td>
<td></td>
<td>• How do adults cope with separation?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravatt</td>
<td>2. How do children</td>
<td>• Do you think children experience the same kinds of emotions about their</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cope with separation?</td>
<td>parents separation as parents do?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What stands out in the DVD?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRC</td>
<td>Topic/Content Area</td>
<td>Specific Areas</td>
<td>Media Used</td>
<td>Learning Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|     |                    | • How has conflict in separation affected these children?  
|     |                    | • What can we learn from these children?  
|     |                    | • Lists issues to consider  
|     |                    | • **Children may feel like they are in a tug of war**  
|     |                    | • **Guidelines to a Child's Rights after separation** – adapted from Back on Track: Finding a way through separation and re-partnering – Commonwealth of Australia – not sure about copyright here | | |
| Upper Mount Gravatt | 3. Ongoing Conflict costs Children too much | • Outlines the impact of ongoing conflict on children  
| | | • "Research shows that high levels of parental conflict have a negative impact on children's ability to cope with the separation as well as on their further development" | | |
| | 4. Importance of Parental Alliance for the Children’s well being | • Lists characteristics of Parenting Alliance vs. Disrespectful Co-parenting  
<p>| | | • Key ingredients to alliance are conveying respect for the other parent, maintaining constructive communication about the child – including information exchange and problem-solving, developing a way of sharing responsibilities for childrearing task | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRC</th>
<th>Topic/Content Area</th>
<th>Specific Areas</th>
<th>Media Used</th>
<th>Learning Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Supporting your children through the separation</td>
<td>• Quiz asking parents to take perspective of child</td>
<td>Space in workbook to answer quiz</td>
<td>• Take perspective of child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Also gives more ideas on how to help children through separation</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Impact of divorce on children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. What happens in dispute resolution?</td>
<td>• Outlines in details what FDR is about and what happens during the process</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Prepare parents cognitively for FDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. How can I prepare for dispute resolution session?</td>
<td>• Has checklist of what to do to prepare for dispute resolution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Models of co-parenting</td>
<td>• Cooperative co-parenting</td>
<td>Workbook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Parallel parenting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Conflict parenting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Quick contacts that may assist</td>
<td>• Lists useful contacts that may assist parents or caregivers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Clients are also given handouts at end of session</td>
<td>• Child development and age appropriate contact (Legal Aid)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• FDR Client Information and Agreement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Parenting Prompt sheet – to help write down and prepare issues for mediation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Property Prompt sheet – to assist client more effectively about property and financial matters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathpine</td>
<td>1. How do adults cope with separation?</td>
<td>• Group Discussion</td>
<td>Whiteboard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Client ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. How do children cope with separation?</td>
<td>• Questions – what stands out for you in the DVD</td>
<td>DVD – Consider the Children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strathpine: How do adults cope with separation?
Group Discussion
Whiteboard
Client ideas

Upper Mount Gravatt:
5. Supporting your children through the separation
- Quiz asking parents to take perspective of child
- Also gives more ideas on how to help children through separation

6. What happens in dispute resolution?
- Outlines in details what FDR is about and what happens during the process

7. How can I prepare for dispute resolution session?
- Has checklist of what to do to prepare for dispute resolution

8. Models of co-parenting
- Cooperative co-parenting
- Parallel parenting
- Conflict parenting

9. Quick contacts that may assist
- Lists useful contacts that may assist parents or caregivers

10. Clients are also given handouts at end of session
- Child development and age appropriate contact (Legal Aid)
- FDR Client Information and Agreement
- Parenting Prompt sheet – to help write down and prepare issues for mediation
- Property Prompt sheet – to assist client more effectively about property and financial matters

Strathpine:
1. How do adults cope with separation?
- Group Discussion

2. How do children cope with separation?
- Questions – what stands out for you in the DVD

DVD – Consider the Children
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRC</th>
<th>Topic/Content Area</th>
<th>Specific Areas</th>
<th>Media Used</th>
<th>Learning Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Supporting your child through separation</td>
<td>• Some ideas for supporting children through separation – make connections, be positive, express love &amp; gratitude, encourage capability, keep healthy, have clear expectations, maintain routines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathpine</td>
<td>4. A child’s rights after separation</td>
<td>• Handout</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. What happens in dispute resolution</td>
<td>• Lists what happens step by step</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|     | 6. How can I prepare for Dispute Resolution | • Read and consider and be prepared to sign the “Agreement to Mediate” Form  
• Seek assistance from a legal advisor |                                 |                    |
|     | 7. Models of co-parenting             | • Handout                                                                    |                                 |                    |
|     | 8. Conclusion and question time       |                                                                               |                                 |                    |
|     | 9. Some quick contacts that may assist | • Counselling  
• Legal  
• Other contacts & support services  
• When violence or abuse is an issue |                                 |                    |
Introduction
Throughout the development of the OFDR system, the project team explored the implications of cultural diversity on client uptake and engagement with online service delivery. Specifically, the team considered the design, promotion/engagement and provision of online services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.

1. A literature review was conducted to explore the notion of technological ‘cross-cultural compatibility’ and inform future projects that would leverage the infrastructure of the OFDR system to progress social justice initiatives.

2. In addition, a series of project conceptualisation meetings were held with organisational stakeholders (including Senior Management), which resulted in endorsement and the development of a preliminary action plan in alignment with the organisation's commitment to reconciliation.

3. RAQ engaged in a series of community consultations that showcased the OFDR system and invited suggestions and comments from participants.

In 2007, life expectancy was 17 years less for first nations’ people: Infant mortality was three times as high and there were significantly higher rates of chronic diseases, communicable diseases, disabilities and mental health problems among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Other disadvantages include family income at 62% that of the national average wage and their children are half as likely to stay at school until the end of Year 12. As a corollary, the unemployment rate was three times a high and living in rented housing is at a rate of over 63% where overcrowding is common. Importantly, family violence, suicide and child abuse was much higher than none Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities depending on their location (http://reconciliation.org.au/nsw/education-kit/about/ 2010).

On-Line services offer opportunities to extend the reach and range of services provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in urban, regional and remote Australia.

Despite considerable research interest in cross-cultural technology design, scant work is available that clarifies principles relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—particularly in the emerging area of virtual community services. Therefore, our research represents a unique and valuable opportunity to contribute to this body of knowledge while also addressing local community needs and creating empowerment through a participatory action research (PAR) methodology. In
Historically, the impact of culture has often been ignored or assumed during the development of technology—implying that characteristics of user interaction are consistent across different cultural groups (Frandsen-Thorlacius, Hornbæk, Hertzum & Clemmensen, 2009; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). However, recent human-computer interaction research has demonstrated that culture plays an important part in determining a user’s overall experience with a technological system (e.g., Clemmensen, Hertzem, Hornbæk, Shi & Yamiyavar, 2009; Frandsen-Thorlacius et al., 2009; Noiwan & Norcio, 2006). Consequently, cross-cultural compatibility is becoming an important consideration during the design and evaluation of technological innovations (Jagne & Smith-Atakan, 2006).

Within Australia, technological diffusion across cultural groups faces many challenges. In particular, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities experience significant disadvantage in comparison to the general population across a number of social determinants; for example, health, education, exposure to violence and access to technological infrastructure (ABS, 2002; 2006). Moreover, Australia’s ‘digital divide’ creates marked geographic, social, psychological and socio-economic barriers to the uptake of technology among regional and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (Cullen, 2000; Daly, 2006). Whereas national communications infrastructure aims to improve access (Conroy, 2010), technology acceptance is contingent on the successful resolution of barriers stemming from the human-computer interface (Dyson, 2003).

This section describes an ongoing program of research that aims to inform the design, implementation, promotion and practice model for an innovative online mediation service currently under development by Relationships Australia Queensland (RAQ). First, the context of the project is described, including the research objectives that guided the development of our approach. Second, we describe the general Participative Action Research (PAR) process and give a brief outline of the historical context of research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Third, is a description of the specific methodology adopted for this research. Finally, the results and implications of the research are discussed.

Initiation

Toward the end of 2009, our research team commenced a sub-project titled: ‘Cultural Considerations in OFDR’ which was an independent project initiated within the project team rather than being part of the project brief. The purpose of this project was to develop an understanding of
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and areas of current social, physical, mental and technological disadvantages in relation to the general population of Australia, with reference to the opportunities for service delivery presented by the OFDR system. The project is grounded in the premise that technology is an artefact of the culture in which it is produced (Demeester, 1999).

Essentially, this position argues that characteristics of technology—such as iconography (Olson & Olson, 2003), media (Dyson, 2002), language (Tractinsky, 2000) and methods of interaction (Onibere, Morgan, Busang & Mpoeleng, 2001)—are influenced by culture, which may produce inefficiencies, misinterpretations or usability errors if technology has not been adapted to suit the context and preferences of its users. In relation to the OFDR project, this realisation prompted our group to explore the relationships between technology design, promotion and implementation, and the subsequent likelihood of system uptake among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We sought to develop an appreciation of the versatility offered by OFDR to address local community needs.

In stage one of this project, we sourced extant knowledge among Aboriginal and other leaders, the literature, white papers and reports from Government and State organisations who have taken this journey before us. Following a brief review of the technology acceptance, human-computer interaction and general Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literatures, we produced a comprehensive report and presented the findings to the organisation. During the discussions that followed, a number of action steps were proposed. The organisation supported further research to increase the cultural appropriateness of future online services. Several research objectives were proposed:

1. Develop further practical understanding of culturally-appropriate models of family mediation
2. Identify a collaborative research methodology that could be adopted in future projects involving aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
3. Establish networks and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
4. Inform the development of a culturally-appropriate OFDR system that promotes effective human-computer interaction and user experiences.

The second phase of the project began the process of consultation and collaboration with a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The research team partnered with the Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs to assist with the conceptualisation and preliminary planning and implementation of this process and the Director of Virtual Services to engage in the PAR process. Local internal stakeholders especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander staff and key Zone Directors were also engaged to assist with the identification of relevant participants and community representatives.

Three research sites were selected to ensure a broad elicitation of community perspectives; urban (Ipswich/Eight Mile Plains), regional (Townsville) and remote (Thursday Island). In addition, these locations represented a variety of cultural group and provided a full range of social and economic disadvantage and variety social needs. Participants included both local Aboriginal (Ipswich, Eight Mile Plains, Townsville) and Torres Strait Islander (Eight Mile Plains, Townsville, Thursday Island) who shared perspectives and offered advice throughout the consultative process.

**An Urgent Need for Services**

We reviewed the historical and social context of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to ground our cultural understanding in past experiences and contemporary issues. Social statistics indicated that methods of conflict resolution are urgently required by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, particularly given the historical dislocation of people and the high prevalence of underlying stressors (e.g., overcrowding at home, death of close family member or friend, alcohol and/or drug-related problems, serious illness or disability and exposure to violence; ABS, 2005). Moreover, cultural differences in the structure, roles and responsibilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities suggested a need to adopt a collaborative and adaptable approach to OFDR development and implementation—ensuring that local needs are met.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access to technology is significantly lower than the non-Indigenous population (Daly, 2006). However, once problems of physical accessibility are solved, additional social and psychological considerations must be made if technology is to be adopted by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities—further reducing the ‘digital divide’ (Chin & Fairlie, 2006; Cullen, 2000).

Scholars have argued that successful cross-cultural technologies are:

1. implemented at the community level (Henry & McTaggart, 1996)
2. sufficiently adaptable and flexible to meet local needs (Crespigny et al., 2008; Davies, 2007)
3. accompanied by skills training to facilitate the transfer of ownership to the local community (Singleton et al., 2009).

**Only by considering the broad technological infrastructure and social context, as well as individual needs (e.g., confidence in using computer technology) can OFDR implementation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities be successful.**
Following our review, we highlighted three areas of research; community implementation; technology design, engagement of local communities and adaptation of implemented services to meet local needs. These areas were used as the basis for our subsequent community consultation process. We drew on the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan to guide our research and interactions with first nation's peoples. According to Deci and Ryan (2002), the three psychological needs motivate the self to initiate behavior and specify nutriments that are essential for individual psychological health and well-being. These needs are said to be universal, innate and psychological and include the need for competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

**Method**

As recommended by other scholars (Dickson, 2001; McIntyre, 2003; Tsey et al., 2007), we adopted a participatory action research (PAR) approach. The PAR methodology adopts a philosophy of collaboration, shared ownership and emancipatory action (Burnes, 2004; Jenks, 1970); therefore, it is not surprising that this process has been used extensively to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in practical, community-focused research (McIntyre, 2003; Tsey et al., 2007).

As is typical with action research approaches, PAR is iterative and cyclical—distinct stages of planning, action, observation and reflection are conducted in collaboration with the community to develop and refine the project over time (Burnes, 2004; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; McTaggart, 1991; Molineux, 2007). Adopting this flexible approach ensures that local perspectives, changes to operating conditions and emerging research learnings are incorporated into a continually evolving process.

**Participants**

Both community and internal RAQ workers were participants in this research. We selected three locations to engage a representative sample of perspectives—urban (Ipswich), regional (Townsville) and remote (Thursday Island). The number of participants ranged between groups; Ipswich was the smallest group with five participants (including one community member), whereas Thursday Island was the largest, with nine participants (seven community members). A wide consultative process ensured that—where possible—a diverse range of services and cultural backgrounds were represented.
Procedure

A modified focus-group procedure was developed for the purposes of this research and consultative process. Specifically, we drew on previous work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations (Halcombe, 2007; Willis, Pearce & Jenkin, 2005) to inform the design of our research procedures. In addition, we included a staged semi-realistic simulation of the OFDR process to provide focus group participants with additional context.

The scenario walked participants through the mediation process, which consisted of a mock Intake session followed by a significantly reduced family dispute resolution session. An Indigenous staff person was remotely linked into each demonstration via video-conferencing technology to participate in group discussions. A member of the research team acted in the role of the OFDR practitioner (remotely linked into discussions) while two Facilitators answered questions and prompted discussions between each stage of the demonstration.

Qualitative Analysis Process

With participants’ informed consent, each session was video taped and transcribed by the Research Team. In addition, the Facilitators recorded personal reflections of performance, logistics, structure and process following each session. This information was used in accordance with PAR principles to refine the research procedure over time.

Our analysis strategy consisted of three primary stages; first, a combination of initial and in-vivo coding (Saldana, 2009) were used to summarise the body of data. Second, codes were revised and reorganised into more meaningful higher-order categories. Third, categories were grouped together to form themes and ‘meta-themes’ (abstract relationships between thematic units).

We employed a number of procedures to ensure adequate validity and reliability of the results:

1. Review of video-taped sessions
2. Engaging in individual reflection following each session, which was
3. Following a scripted demonstration process across groups
4. Seeking input and verification of data interpretation from local workers and internal stakeholders
5. Coding was conducted by two independent researchers—discrepancies in codes and themes were resolved through discussion

In sum, we are confident that the data collection and analysis procedures retained integrity between groups and were in accord with the NH&MRC Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical
Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research and the APS Ethical Guidelines for the provision of psychological services for and conduct of research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.

**Key Learnings**

Following the qualitative analysis, we developed a tentative model of interrelations among themes. As shown by Figure 60, successful community implementation of new online services depends initially on three core principles;

- d. development of a relationship with the community through a staged consultative process
- e. identifying surface and underlying community needs through communication with local people
- f. implementing technology with the aim of transferring ownership to the community such as building skills and capacity to self-manage.

The relationship between these foundations and service equity (‘closing the gap’) depends on; the cultural ‘fit’ of the service model, the technology and practice skills; ongoing promotion and awareness building within the community; and characteristics of the service, such as provision of support, ‘linked up’ services, personalisation and convenience.

![Figure 60 Proposed relationships between ‘meta-themes’](image-url)

"Figure 60 Proposed relationships between ‘meta-themes’."
Focus group discussions were grouped into nine overarching content domains; community implementation, awareness of cultural diversity, the ‘digital divide’, social and cultural context, broad applications, service engagement and promotion, clinical skill-set, visual and auditory design and geographical location. From these themes we developed a series of recommendations relating to the design, implementation and promotion of OFDR services within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities:

1. OFDR should be implemented at the community level—due to a lack of privacy and competing demands, many homes were not expected to provide the required conditions for successful online service delivery.

2. Cultural diversity must be acknowledged and respected throughout the implementation process; diversity within and between cultures, communities, families and individuals should be recognized by a willingness to contextualize services at a local level.

3. Australia’s ‘digital divide’ represents significant challenges to the success of OFDR; specifically, access to required technological infrastructure in regional and remote locations.

4. Service providers must remain mindful of basic priorities (e.g., food, shelter) and existing issues (e.g., literacy, health, wellbeing) of people living in remote communities and incorporate mitigating strategies into the design of service models and technology.

5. Ensure local communities are able to adapt the technology to suit local needs; for example, facilitating communication between geographically dislocated parties.

6. New services must aim to engage communities through the development of trust; specifically, demonstrating a genuine commitment to clients, personalizing services and facilitating an easy transition between services (‘shopping around’).

7. A particular set of clinical skills should be developed within OFDR Practitioners to improve cultural competence and client engagement—specifically, some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are likely to require emotional, cultural, legal, linguistic and technical support to feel comfortable within an OFDR service environment.

8. Visual and auditory media should be embraced by OFDR system designers—the attention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients can be captured through media that encourages cultural identification and comprehension of session content.

9. The needs of urban, regional and remote geographical locations are unique and must be individually determine by local community collaboration.
Reflective data from the Facilitators were organised into eight overarching themes; an ‘easy’ process, ‘setting up the basics’, prior testing, research integrity, session effectiveness, practical constraints, community consultation and emerging clarity. The knowledge and experience from this project enabled us to develop a number of recommendations relating to successful research collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities:

1. Facilitators should adopt a process that encourages participant involvement and control over the session—essentially, a semi-structured process that balances the provision of content with opportunities for free-flowing discussion.

2. Whereas clarity and confidence emerge as part of the iterative PAR process, Facilitators may benefit from conducting background research to increase their knowledge of local communities and culture—building rapport and trust with participants.

3. A positive, welcoming and culturally respectful environment assists participants to engage and contribute to discussions.

4. Technology demonstrations must be supported by extensive prior testing and contingency planning.

5. Facilitators and researchers must remain vigilant for ethical concerns and ensure that adequate time is devoted to explaining the extent of participant involvement prior to obtaining consent.

6. The presence and involvement of community workers and Elders are critical success factors (in terms of logistical organisation, participant engagement and relationship formation).

7. Researchers are enthused and ethically bound to form ongoing partnerships with communities to ensure that local perspectives continue to inform and guide the nature, content and delivery of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

The Research Team and colleagues plan to return to these communities in the near future. Ongoing partnerships will be maintained through regular communication and consultation to ensure relationships remain strong over time. Indeed, the Thursday Island group spontaneously formed a reference committee to assist RAQ with further research and implementation projects. RAQ is actively pursuing opportunities to apply these learnings to processes, procedures and service delivery models with the intention of improving service outcomes for culturally-diverse clients. We shall continue our engagement, roll out of technologically supported services, designed and evaluation within the framework of the Indigenous Research Agenda and using PAR.
12.1 Scope Management

The scope of the project changed during the term of the project and was managed in accordance with the risk management strategies developed for the Project Plan, reported in section 12.4.

12.2 Cost and Procurement Management

The Activity period for the OFDR Project ends on 30 June 2011. Final financial reporting will be submitted at that time.

As advised in previous reports, the following cost and procurement approach was adopted by RAQ to achieve the most effective use of the funding available:

a) ensure that at least two quotations from different suppliers were obtained for technology prior to purchase
b) the cost of installation of equipment at remote venues was taken into account
c) the cost of RAQ staff roles in the project was also factored in
d) the cost of providing and resourcing education for staff and clients included

There was a large contribution in kind from RAQ for this project which included:

- project management
- organisation expenditure which would normally be funded through on costs such as human resources, payroll, workplace health & safety, computer processing time, full accounting function and accommodation costs
- education and installation in remote locations
- communication to clients, staff and other stakeholders
- research, community consultation, training and evaluation
- organisation implications for practice
- additional training requirements in line with training plan
### 12.3 Management of Risks / Issues

A number of risks were identified and analysed as part of the planning process. These risks relate to all aspects of the project and are shown in the matrix below. The risks were managed, reported and monitored by the steering committee throughout the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Description</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>Control/Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timeframes too tight to achieve quality product</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Weekly discussions on progress and management of variance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope Varies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Project planning documentation and meetings, processes implemented to manage variation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Manager or leader changes or is unavailable</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Prepare a suitable substitute. Ensure good processes in place and arrangements established early to ensure business continuity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Sponsor or leader changes or is unavailable</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ensure RAQ management is briefed appropriately to manage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research team changes or is unavailable</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Documentation of placement activities and thought processes on T:Drive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological failure/inadequacy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>OFDR tech sub-committee engaging in risk management through identification of multiple tech sources and partners. ITC engaging in needs analysis and monitoring effectiveness of tech throughout implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of sponsorship/support from senior leadership</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Engagement of RAQ senior management through weekly meetings, progress reports and literature review, building of professional relationships via regular communication.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Organisational changes needed to support OFDR Roll-Out not identified or implemented

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview Stakeholders to understand appropriate organisational changes, gain buy-in and commitment from individuals to implement organisational changes, gain buy-in and commitment from steering committee to implement changes.

### Organisation not ready for associated changes

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use an organisational readiness test to assess level of readiness at each stage and plan, involvement of staff throughout each stage of the implementation, conducting focus groups to monitor staff attitudes.

### Resistance from various groups within the organisation

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Engagement of RAQ employees via intranet postings, formal training (for staff directly involved) and availability of educational resources.

### Consequence of Risk:

1. **Insignificant**
   - No impact.

2. **Minor**
   - No slowing of project only a small distraction.

3. **Moderate**
   - Will require action but project is still largely on track

4. **Major**
   - Will cause disruption and will either require more resources, more time or reduce quality.

5. **Catastrophic**
   - Will stop project. Will not achieve objectives and requires immediate attention.

### 10.5 Risk Analysis

Risk management is an essential component of any project, but particularly for a project of the scale that has been undertaken. The initial identification of, and planning for, risks and issues has largely been a successful strategy in ensuring progress of the project has proceeded within the vision and scope of the Project Plan. Some issues surrounding the identified risks have arisen at various times throughout the project and are summarised below:

#### Timeframes too Tight to Achieve Quality Outcomes

Weekly meetings of the project committee provided for continuous monitoring of progress and milestones against the Project Plan. The Project Plan has been a dynamic document and updated
throughout the life of the project to reflect current situations and progress, and to ensure that timeframes were achievable.

**Scope Varies**

The project scope was reported in the first Progress Report dated 31 December 2009. However during the term of the project the scope has been varied to reflect changes that have occurred through research and development, increasing awareness of technical capabilities, and ongoing negotiations in regards to varying the OFDR Funding Agreement. The first Progress Report recommended the TDRS website and pre-FDR education session as value-adding initiatives. An amendment to the OFDR Funding Agreement was subsequently negotiated to include the pre-FDR education session as part of the funded Activity. The TDRS website remained out of scope for the project however was progressed through internal funding and resources.

**Project Manager or Leader Changes or Is Unavailable**

The project manager did not change or become unavailable during the term of the project.

**Project Sponsor or Leader Changes or is Unavailable**

The project sponsor did not change or become unavailable during the term of the project.

**Research Team Changes or Is Unavailable**

There was one junior staff movement within the research team of two during the latter term of the project. The strategies that had been identified in mitigating this risk were successful. We were committed to comprehensive documentation of all activities. Additional work was supplemented by supervised placement students in organisational psychology supervised by the Director, Research. In addition, the research officer was replaced and worked exclusively on OFDR securing continuity of the research and evaluation work.

**Technical Failure / Inadequacy**

As detailed in this report, there were a number of issues that arose and impacted on the technical capacity for the project. Technological development projects carry an inherent risk by nature, particularly in a fast-paced environment of new and emerging technologies. One of the strategies in mitigating this risk was through identification of multiple technical sources and partners. This strategy has largely proved successful, with the granular nature of the OFDR system providing for ongoing service delivery and for continuing development when technical failures or delays were present. However there have been lessons learnt in regards to dealing with risks related to developing a technological infrastructure that relies on integration of different components.

Initial discussions with the integrator were primarily within the context of the integrators ability to access and influence the global manufacturers supplying the products. With partner status as our
principle connector, RAQ chose to proceed. Lessons learnt would indicate that contract penalties for late completion are required in order to avoid having to rely on good will. While RAQ has a very high level of goodwill from the integrator, reliance on such is not a good business decision. While it may be near impossible to achieve, the recommendation is that integration of like technologies is either witnessed functioning first hand OR that appropriate contractual penalties are agreed to prior to signing a project into life. There is nothing new here with the concept of project penalties being standard project contract management. The compounding nature of a discovery project is that this element was overlooked at the time contract negotiations where undertaken.

**Lack of Sponsorship / Support From Senior Leadership**
The executive and senior management team provided sponsorship and strong support throughout the term of the project.

**Organisational Changes Needed to Support OFDR Roll-Out Not Identified or Implemented**
The strategies identified during the planning process were successful in providing the organisational change that was needed to support the project. This included interviewing stakeholders to understand appropriate organisational changes, gaining-in and commitment from individuals to implement organisational changes, gain buy-in and commitment from steering committee to implement changes.

**Organisation not Ready for Associated Changes**
The use of organisational readiness tests to assess levels of readiness at each stage of the project, and the involvement of staff throughout each stage of the implementation, has proved a successful strategy in preparing the organisation for the associated changes resultant of the expansion of service delivery modes to include online services. Comprehensive results and analysis of the organisational readiness tests are detailed in the Research and Evaluation Sections (9-11) of this report.

**Resistance from Various Groups in the Organisation**
The communication strategy outlined in the Project Plan assisted to minimise resistance from various groups in the organisation. Engagement of employees via intranet postings and formal training for staff involved were supplemented with regular presentations and updates to all sectors of the organisation.
OFDR References


Evaluation Methodology References


Medina-Borja, A. & Triantis, K. (2007). A conceptual framework to evaluate performance of non-


**Study 1 and 2 Additional References:**


Pre FDR Education References


Cultural Considerations References

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2002). National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey. Canberra: ABS.


Branas, J. & Gooda, M. (2006). Putting the users of research in the driver’s seat: the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health’s new approach to research development. Australian Aboriginal Studies, 2(1), 27 – 35.


groups. Journal of Clinical Nursing, 16(6), 1000 – 1011.


Morgan, D. (1997). Focus groups as qualitative research. Qualitative Research Methods Series, 16(2).

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2003). Values and ethics – guidelines for ethical conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research. Retrieved from


