

# The Cultural Value Triangle

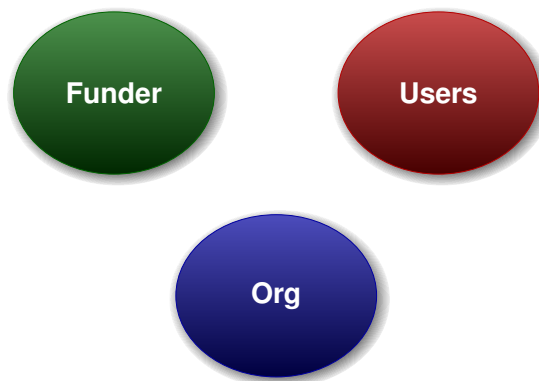
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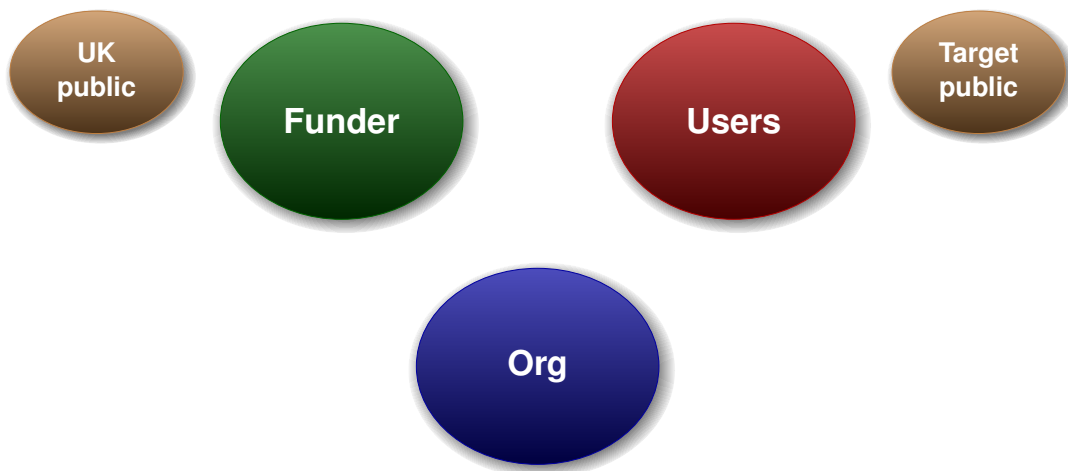
## 1 Cui bono?

The value of an organisation is different for different people, and for different groups of people. And the way people talk about value varies according to who they are and whom they are talking to. It follows that if we are to have a coherent analysis of the way value is envisioned and articulated for BBC World Service (WS) and the British Council (BC) then at each stage we need to be clear about viewpoint – whose values we are considering and to whom they are being expressed.

I propose a model of the relationship between the different actors in the process which focuses on the triangle of funder – organisation – users.



To these we can add, but at one remove, the UK public, who ultimately pay for WS and BC but have no effective say over what they do; and the target public – the people whom the funder is trying to reach but who are only affected indirectly via the users.



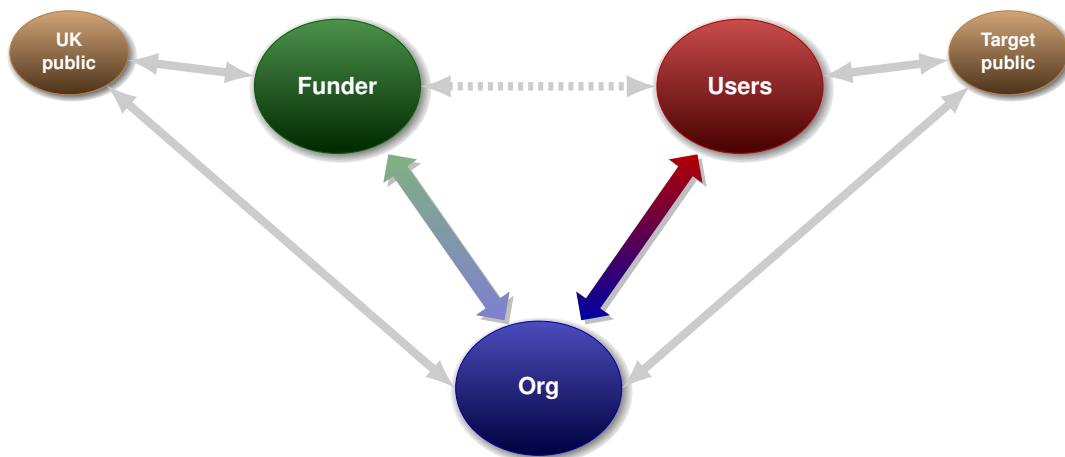
This model becomes more complicated later, once we start to unpack what we mean by ‘organisation’, ‘funders’ and ‘users’.

## 2 Different dialogues

To varying degrees, and in various ways, the actors are communicating with one another. For example:

- the actual output or activities of the organisation are the prime communication from **organisation** to **user**;
- market research is one important means of communication from **user** to **organisation**;
- **funders** and the **organisation** communicate through agreeing objectives setting targets and reporting performance;
- **organisations** and the **target public** communicate with the wider public through marketing and research;
- **funders** have relatively weak direct lines of communication with the **users** and the **target public**: they are, after all, commissioning the **organisation** to provide this link.

There are many more lines of communication that can be fitted into this framework.

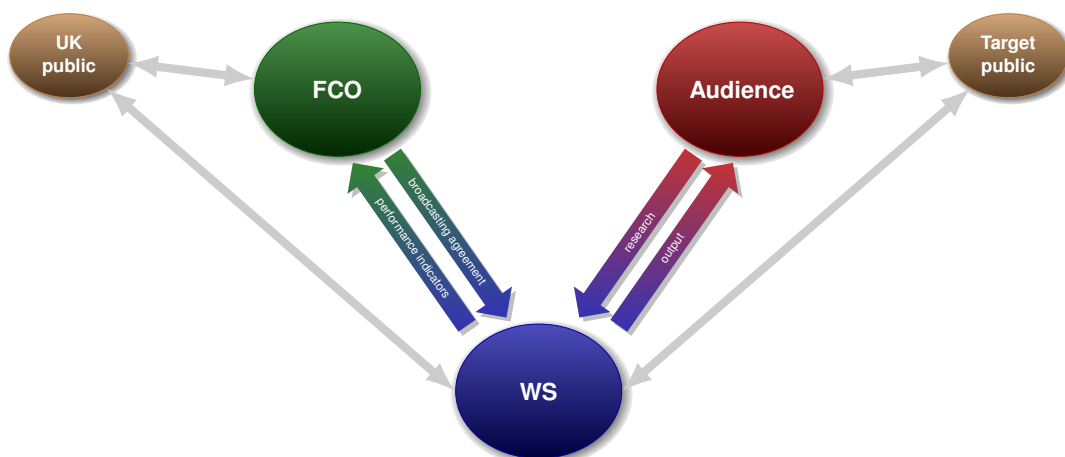


Much of the research that we are doing is, in effect, listening in on these communications; we need to be aware at all times that the way people will talk about value depends on which line of communication we are tapping in to; further, that the dynamics of the communication are complex: sometimes there is an asymmetric dialogue, sometimes an artificial dialogue, and sometimes in practice a monologue.

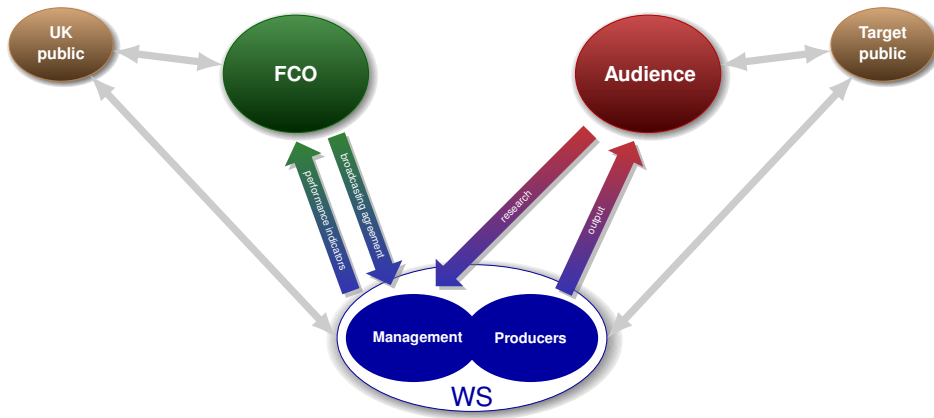
Much of this will become clearer when we look at WS and BC individually.

### 3 BBC World Service

The diagram below illustrates some aspects of the current arrangement, where the FCO controls the funding of WS and the taxpayer, who is the ultimate funder, has little involvement.



For an even clearer picture, though, we need to show some of the internal dynamics within WS:



This is, of course, an over-simplification: for example, the division between ‘management’ and ‘producers’ is not clear-cut; and much feedback from research does go, directly or indirectly, to producers. But it brings into play the fact that the values of WS for producers, the things that motivate them to do their best, are not necessarily the same as those of management, let alone the values that are implied in dialogue between WS and the FCO or in audience research.

From this year on the picture changes. WS will be mainly funded from the overall BBC licence fee; there will also be income from advertisements. The FCO will have a reduced (and ill-defined) role and the main relationship with government will be between the BBC Trust and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). As domestic BBC (thanks to the licence fee) is more accountable to the UK public than WS has been, this group will have a greater role. The relationship between WS and other parts of the BBC becomes much more important.

