

Rest of the World (ROW)

Technically, the search area is not a closed system. There is always a chance that the subject could be outside the boundaries of the search area or has left the area entirely. In this context, the whereabouts of the missing person outside of the search area is considered to be in the “Rest of the World” (ROW).

By definition, an open system implies that there is always a significant chance that the missing person is outside the search area. Bayes’ Rule in true Bayesian mathematics states that all possible outcomes must be considered. If one acknowledges the possibility of finding the missing person outside the search area, then one must acknowledge some probability that such a find will occur – i.e. POD for ROW. *(No technique for assessing this probability has ever been developed!)*

Therefore, the POA of ROW will be addressed through investigation and scenario analysis, not mathematical computation. For the purposes of this Handbook, we will not use or recommend the use of ROW.

Consensus - Assigning Probability Values to Segments

The assigning of POA values to segments is a very important step in the planning process. With some modification, the scheme as originally developed by Bob Mattson (USAF Ret.) involved the principle members of the search planning or management team individually and independently assigning values to each segment. The total of each person’s “ratings” had to add up to 100 and then the values were averaged.

This system was fundamentally flawed as it was applied to consensus in search management. First of all, probability distribution was not consistently applied in the same manner by each of the prospective evaluators. There was also a characteristic remainder bias in that evaluators tended to overrate the first few segments, especially when many segments were used. When this occurred, evaluators simply borrowed some of the rating points from the first segments. In addition, there is no leavening factor for numeric subjectivity. This means that everyone has different perceptions of percentages