



GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

ICANN LISBON MEETINGS

INTRODUCTION

The Lisbon round of ICANN meetings was very successful in particular compared to the ICANN Sao Paulo round which seemed to lack spark due to the then looming festive season. Just recovering from winter, Lisbon was fairly warm and receptive to those from warmer climates!

My feeling was that the meetings were very fruitful in various ways, and a lot was achieved by various ICANN structures and organizations.

ccNSO

The country code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO) meetings were the main focal point for the ccTLD managers. As usual, the ccNSO had various presentations including:

1. ICANN CEO presentation

As usual, Paul Twomey (ICANN's CEO) made a presentation about ICANN's current projects and the work of the ICANN Board. He was accompanied by Vint Cerf (ICANN Chair). He highlighted the e-IANA project which will allow for a more reliable, robust authentication regime for zone files. IANA was working closely with the Polish registry (NASK) to deliver this project.

The report was well-received, but some delegates stated their reservations about a proposal in a certain draft paper which sought to allow the US government to be solely responsible for signing the DNSSec root. The ccNSO was invited to make its views known about this issue leading to ICANN San Juan.

2. Registry fail-over

Patrick Jones of ICANN made a presentation about registry failover. This project began at ICANN Marrakesh and is intended for gTLDs, but ccTLDs were invited to share their experiences about how they dealt with it.

3. Role of ICANN's General Manager: Public Participation

Kieren McCarthy (ICANN's new General Manager: Public Participation) clarified what his role was about. He cited poor communication between ICANN & the broader public as

the main reason for the creation of his position. The problem was being addressed through the introduction of ICANN newsletters and interactive website.

4. IANA update

Kim Davies of IANA and Olivier Guillard (.fr) of the IANA Working Group reported that the group had had discussions with IANA about a number of issues including the accuracy of data and the definition of the term "sponsoring organization". Kim particularly highlighted the importance of the new root zone management workflow automation project. The first version of this automation would start functioning in the next few weeks.

5. Regional ccTLD organizations

Presentations were made by Don Hollander of APTLD, Michuki Mwangi of AfTLD, Margerita Valdes of LACTLD, and Peter van Roste of CENTR. They all reported what was happening in their regions and how these organizations intended to work closely with each other. The meeting was encouraged to hear that AfTLD was moving forward positively and would have its first ccTLD workshop in Cairo in April/May 2007.

6. ccTLD updates

As usual, there were presentations by various ccTLDs, including .eu, .cz and .rs. The continued lack of presentations by African ccTLDs continues to pose a somewhat poor image of Africa, but one hopes that the success of AfTLD should make it possible to see African ccTLD presentations at ICANN meetings.

7. IDN sessions

Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) project continues to gain momentum, and will enable more people to access and use the Internet easily using familiar sets of their language characters. The main drivers of the project are Arabic, Middle and Far Eastern, and some European ccTLDs. The ccNSO received presentations from .gr (Greek Registry), Min-Jung Park (.kr) and Jonathan Shea (.hk).

A draft issues paper had been prepared and it was agreed that this should be discussed in detail by the joint ccNSO-GAC meeting at ICANN San Juan.

In addition, the ccNSO had joint sessions with the Government Advisory Committee (GAC) regarding IDNs and ICANN Regions.

OTHER ICANN DEVELOPMENTS

1. At-Large Advisory Committee

ALAC continued to report positive developments. The launch of Regional AT-Large Organizations (RALOs) gained momentum when the African RALO (AfRALO) and European RALO (EuRALO) were launched. AfRALO went to elect its own representatives to ICANN and these were Mohamed EL Bashir (.sd), Hawa Diakite of Mali, and Didier Kasole of DRC. Alan Levin facilitated the AfRALO sessions.

On 29 March AfRALO signed a memorandum of understanding with ICANN, and this was a well attended ceremony. On the same day, EuRALO also signed an MOU with ICANN.

2. .xxx Registry Application

This registry application got ICANN delegates really talking about the pros and cons of the application. In various ICANN structures the application was discussed in detail. At the end, the ICANN Board voted in majority against opening a .xxx gTLD.

3. ICANN workshops

On 25 March there were very useful open workshops on IPv6, the changing market for expiring domain names, and domain name secondary market. The last 2 focal areas particularly revealed dynamics that registrars have to deal with and how the domain name industry is maturing as entrepreneurs find more ways of generating more money.

OVERALL IMPRESSION

My overall impression was that the ICANN Lisbon meetings achieved more than ICANN Sao Paulo as they were more substantive in content and generated a lot of discussion. The number of attendants also seemed quite higher than ICANN Sao Paulo and ICANN Marrakesh.

The social life of the event was also enjoyable, and its highlight was to have regional soccer teams. The African soccer team boasted a South African presence in Calvin Browne (co.za), who was a useful goalkeeper, and myself. I managed a notable fit of scoring a free kick in the first match and then an own goal in the second match 😊!

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