



ICANN LOS ANGELES 2007 MEETINGS

INTRODUCTION

The General Manager attended the ICANN Los Angeles round of meetings with the Chairperson of .za DNA, Dr. Hasmukh Gajjar. The Chairperson's attendance was of crucial importance in consolidating the ongoing work of developing .za policy and procedures. In the light of the various feedback received from the public consultation process, it was important that various proposals should be tested against what leading registries do. His attendance therefore enabled .za DNA to test various policy scenarios.

The overall organization was impressive as the meeting was hosted at the Hilton Los Angeles Airport Hotel. This being just outside the LA airport, travelling time to and from the airport was really cut down to most delegates' convenience.

NEW CHAIRPERSON FOR THE ICANN BOARD

One of the main highlights of the ICANN LA meeting was the end of term of office of Dr. Vinton (Vint) Cerf as the ICANN Board Chairperson. Vint had been at the helm of ICANN for many years since its inception almost 10 years ago. He saw ICANN grow to become one of the most-recognized global institutions and left it as a very strong institution. His contribution to development and governance of the Internet cannot be over-emphasized and he deserves all the accolades for his immense contribution. For more on this, please go to <http://www.icann.org/announcements/announcement-31oct07.htm>.

Peter Dengate-Thrush (a New Zealand lawyer) was elected as the new Board Chair. Peter has also been involved in various ICANN levels and has all the ingredients to take ICANN to another level. We wish all the best in his new leadership challenge. For more on this, please go to <http://www.icann.org/announcements/announcement-3-02nov07.htm>.

ICANN STRUCTURES MEETINGS

As usual, meetings took place as usual in various ICANN structures, including ccNSO, gNSO, ALAC and GAC.

GAC

As usual, the Government Advisory Council (GAC) meetings were the first to occupy the agenda, and these are attended by governments. South Africa was well-represented in

Mbali Hlongwane and Jim Patterson. GAC dealt in particular with pressing issues such as the proposed policy for the next generic Top Level Domain (gTLD) application round and the impressive work done in the area of Internationalised Domain Names (IDNs).

ccNSO

The country code Names Supporting Organisation (ccNSO) was as usual the main focus of ccTLDs such as .za DNA. The agenda had the usual ccTLD updates and this time presentations were made by .cn, .jp and .at on anti-phishing. Other presentations made included an overview of domain name policies around the world (made by Hilde Thunem of .no), and the Internet Governance Summer School (University of Aarhus, Denmark), and the DNSSec survey results by Gabriella Schitteck of the ccNSO secretariat. There was the Tech Day looking at the technical aspects of the DNS.

It was also encouraging to note the progress made by regional ccTLD organizations such as AfTLD (Africa), APTLD (Asia-Pacific) and LACTLD (Latin America & Caribbean) when they reported about various events they held.

KEY TOPICS

.test IDN project

Definitely one of the 3 most topical issues for ICANN LA was the launch of the test version of IDN TLDs. IN early October 2007, several IDN TLDs were entered into the DNS root zone for evaluation purposes. The important feature of the .test program was the online functionality that allowed Internet users, registrars, application developers and other role-players to evaluate these localized IDN TLDs and provide feedback to ICANN.

This very important project is still ongoing and it will go a long way to opening up Internet access to millions of people around the world, mainly in the Arabic, Far Eastern and Russian regions.

- **IDN survey**

Chris Disspain of .au (Australia) and is the ccNSO Chair presented results of the survey done among ccTLDs regarding the need for IDN TLDs. From the results it was clear that geographic location influenced each ccTLD's stance on IDNs. Overall, many ccTLDs did not have pressing needs of IDN TLDs, but the percentage changed dramatically when the need was assessed on a regional basis.

New gTLDs

The proposed framework for new gTLDs was another important subject, and the gNSO working group behind this had the task of explaining the proposed policy. The aim with the introduction of new gTLDs is to give consumers more choice. This has become very important as millions of people adopt the Internet as means of business and communication per annum.

In addition to a specific workshop, the framework was presented to various structures including GAC and the ccNSO. The overall feedback was that the proposed policy was acceptable and the work should continue. More on this can be read at <http://gnso.icann.org/>.

DNSSec

Gabriella Schitteck presented (to the ccNSO) the results of a DNSSec survey conducted among ccTLDs prior to the LA meeting. The overall finding was that more ccTLDs were aware of DNSSec and were starting to implement it while an even bigger number intended to do so in the next 2 years. More on this can be found at <http://losangeles2007.icann.org/files/losangeles/presentation-ccnso-dnssec-survey-results-schitteck-30oct07.pdf>.

IANA UPDATE

As usual, Kim Davies of IANA gave various ICANN structures updates on the work done by IANA to date. His presentation explained the deployment of .test IDNs into the DNS root zone, and there was also an important part explaining how IANA's signature of the root zone was different from that of Verisign. More on this can be read at <http://losangeles2007.icann.org/files/losangeles/presentation-ccnso-iana-updates-davies-30oct07.pdf>.

SPECIFIC MEETINGS

The GM and Chair took the opportunity to meet several players in the DNS mainly ccTLDs to discuss and test various issues relating to .za policy development. Probably the most empowering meetings were with .uk (Lesley Cowley – CEO) and .au (Chris Disspain), as they shared their experiences in detail. Both these registries have the same structure as .za and have faced challenges similar to those of .za DNA. A detailed report on these will be given to the .za DNA Board.

OVERALL IMPRESSION

Overall ICANN LA was a success in many ways, particularly from a substance and logistic points of view. The progress made in the area of IDNs, new gTLDs and DNSSec was impressive and there is hope that the next ICANN meeting will see even more progress.

Written by:

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