Strategic Outlook
FY23 Trends Identification

ALAC Trend Session Summary

Session date & location: 4 March 2021; Virtual session
Number of participants: 14

Session facilitators: Nathalie Vergnolle, Becky Nash, Victoria Yang (Planning team)
Points of contact: Heidi Ullrich (Org), Gisella Gruber (Org), Yesim Nazlar (Org) / Maureen Hilyard (chair)

Description of the session:

Participants were divided into three subgroups and engaged in a brainstorming exercise to:
- Identify and track the evolution of trends that may affect ICANN.
- Evaluate the impacts that these trends pose to ICANN, either in terms of threats or in terms of opportunities.

Subgroups shared their ideas with the larger group, and additional discussions followed, allowing participants to dive deeper into areas of interest.

At the end of the session, participants were invited to vote for their top-three highest priorities that ICANN should be focusing on, (each individual participant could select up to three from all trends, risks and opportunities identified by any subgroup during the session).

This year, the brainstorming exercise was structured around the five areas of focus of ICANN's new strategic plan for fiscal years 2021 to 2025. The elements collected in previous years have helped identify these different focus areas:
- **Security** – relating to cybersecurity, Internet of Things vulnerabilities, DNS security, root service reliability, resilience and interoperability, DNS abuse.
- **ICANN's Governance** – referring to ICANN's governance rather than Internet governance in general, ICANN's multistakeholder model of governance, efficiency and effectiveness, transparency and accountability, inclusiveness and openness.
- **Unique Identifiers System** – evolution of the unique identifiers system in the context of the evolution of its uses and its user base, considering external technology advancement (such as blockchain, IoT, rise of artificial intelligence etc.), alternate roots, alternative infrastructures, universal acceptance, and IDNs.
- **Geopolitics** – including effects on ICANN of legislation and regulation, and other globalization topics such as the global reliance on the Internet, or the Internet fragmentation.
- **Financials** – including financial sustainability, financial responsiveness to changing industry economics, funding strategies, and cost management.

Top Priorities from session

Top priorities from sessions are based upon the number of participant votes received, indicated by the number in parentheses.

Security:
- **DNS Abuse** (9 votes): DNS abuse remains a challenge that needs to be more rigorously addressed. A related risk is erosion of the DNS trust and therefore ICANN's as a whole. There is an opportunity for ICANN to develop predictive analytics. There is also an opportunity for a community designed notifier program. Is there a way to enforce measures at the registrars, registry level to combat DNS Abuse?
- **Internet of Things Security** (3 votes): Security of IoT devices. IoT is a major development especially with 5G adoption forcing more security protocols.

Unique Identifiers System:
- **Internet of Things** (3 votes): The absence of IoT standards is a risk for technology stack interaction. A suggestion is that ICANN could consider the IoT stack as a potential extension to its mandate.

Geopolitics:
- **Legislation & Regulation, Data Protection & Privacy Legislation** (11 votes): There is a trend of new national regulation and data protection policies, which could impact ICANN directly and indirectly. Increasingly national law impacts on what ICANN does -- for example GDPR, or the Digital Services Act (DSA). Impact towards Contracted Parties which may lead to further consolidation and therefore less consumer choice. Another risk is the denial of access to content from certain region (name access denial). ICANN needs to be agile to keep up. A suggestion is to have a quick response policy process. Another suggestion is that ICANN should actively explain to governments the limits of national regulation vs. better engagement in ICANN through the GAC.

ICANN's Governance:
- **Engagement & Participation** (4 votes): Loss of social capital due to virtual meetings -- not sustainable. A related risk is crop and outreach initiatives.
- **Diversity & Outreach** (3 votes): How to really enhance diversity in ICANN? With this online world we are losing end-user participation.
- **Complexity of Topics to be Dealt With** (3 votes): In a MSM, it is critical to have the voices of the public - but the issues are complex and participation is not easy. A related risk is if remote meetings become the norm, do we see increase in cost

reductions, does this undermine the MSM goals and achievements. Another risk is a serious drop in participation rates ie. comments, constructive feedback.

Financials: (3 votes):
- There are Industry challenges -- domain names no longer as valuable. A related risk is that a less healthy domain name industry could lead to further consolidation therefore less Consumer Choice.
- With the mergers of some registrars is there an impact on governance?.
- Although it seems this year fundings are going well, the number of registrants are going down.

Transcription of Session's outputs:

The elements collected during the session are presented in the next pages. The results have been regrouped by focus areas and topics discussed (by staff).
Bullet points are a direct transcription of inputs collected during the session. Repetitions or duplications have not been removed, as the intent here is to reflect the full information received.
The number of votes for high-priority that each statement received is indicated in parenthesis after that statement.

Security

FY23 Trends	Risks or Threats associated with these trends for ICANN?	Opportunities or Suggested Actions?
DNS Abuse ● DNS misuse or abuse continues to increase (2) ● DNS Abuse remains a challenge (4) ● DNS abuse still a lingering problem that needs to be more rigorously addressed (1) ● Is there a way to enforce measures at the registrars, registry level to combat DNS Abuse	● Erosion of the DNS trust and therefore ICANN's as a whole. (1)	● ICANN dev predictive analytics (1) ● Community designed notifier program
Internet of Things Security ● Security of IoT devices (2) ● IoT is a major development especially with 5G adoption forcing more security protocols (1)		
External Tech Advancement ● Disruption by DoH - outside DNSSEC (1)		● Public education re *potential* Disruption by DoH - less "unique" identifiers possible (1)
Trust Issues ● Security and stability is job one. Goes directly to trust issue.		

ICANN's Governance

FY23 Trends	Risks or Threats associated with these trends for ICANN?	Opportunities or Suggested Actions?
Engagement & Participation ● How do we make sure people of poverty have a voice when they have no representation on the ICANN Board (1) ● Difficulty in growing the "community" as it is replaced by a less tight group of people that wander in and out of online meetings ● High bar for newcomers ● Face 2 Face meeting continue to be virtual for the time being ● Accessibility ● Access and connectivity	● Reduction of volunteers in the multi-stake holder community ● Covid-19 creates a new treat to MSM	● Diversity of opinions and of stakeholders ● Explore how to support ICANN participants with vaccine
Effectiveness of Multistakeholder Model ● Multistakeholder model is unique but it needs to be more agile ● Maintenance and enhancement *of* the Virtual aspects of our meetings grown out of the *opportunity* that fully Virtual has forced upon us ● Difficulty in getting agreements when not face2face	● Multilateralism vs. multistakeholder model -- will MS prevail	
Increasing Awareness of ICANN ● Need for ICANN to make its role better understood		
Prioritization Challenges ● Prioritization is good but if we wait for the end of this work we will not do anything		

Unique Identifiers System

FY23 Trends	Risks or Threats associated with these trends for ICANN?	Opportunities or Suggested Actions?
Internet of Things	• No IoT standards for technology stack interaction	• ICANN could consider the IoT Stack as a potential extension to its mandate (3)
Emerging Identifier Technologies • ICANN also means numbers, is it doing enough to increase the IPv6 adoption? (1) • Disruption by DoH - less "unique" identifiers possible • At some point a unique IP version will be needed to have a stable Internet		
Internet Evolution and DNS Relevance • Apps vs DN (1) • Use of ccTLDs above gTLDs (1) • The growth of mobile is important and recognition of the gender gap on access • Open and interoperable standards	• Further Internet Fragmentation	
New gTLDs Program • Increase in gTLDS will keep increasing		• Hold new round (1)
Universal Acceptance • Universal Acceptance still needs to be promoted and explained within the community • Difference between IDNs and local content (local languages) • Lack of UA still a threat to ICANN legitimacy.		

Geopolitics

FY23 Trends	Risks or Threats associated with these trends for ICANN?	Opportunities or Suggested Actions?
Legislation & Regulations ● Need to be agile to keep up with Gov (2) ● National Regulation (1) ● I am not sure it is a threat but increasingly national law impacts on what ICANN does -- for example GDPR (1) ● Europe is doing it again with the Digital Services Act (DSA) initiative, not having clear if registrants and registries are out of it.	● Difficulty in outreach and engagement (1) ● National Regulation: Impact towards Contracted Parties which may lead to further consolidation and therefore less Consumer Choice	● Quick response policy process? (1) ● ICANN should actively explain to Governments the limits of National Regulation vs. better engagement in ICANN through the GAC (1)
Data Protection & Privacy Legislation ● Data protection (2) ● Data protection policies ● New legislation and regulations on privacy and data services	● Denial of access to content from certain region (name access denial) ● New legislation and regulations could impact ICANN directly and indirectly. Need to be watchful and engage with the actors (1)	● Deeper engagement with "government" policy makers (1)
Internet Fragmentation ● Splinternet and the Dark Web-Impact (2) ● Decentralization of the DNS ● The issue of national governments putting firewalls around 'their' internet ● Internet shutdowns (1)	● Moving into a world of more dependency and yet less trust in the internet (1)	● Fragmentation

Financials

FY23 Trends	Risks or Threats associated with these trends for ICANN?	Opportunities or Suggested Actions?
Domain Name Industry Changes ● Industry challenges -- domain names no longer as valuable ● With the mergers of some registrars is there an impact on governance? (I don't know the answer) (1) ● Unstable situation economically coming out of pandemic	● Less healthy domain name industry could lead to further consolidation therefore less Consumer Choice (1) ● Reduced income for ICANN	● Coming out of the pandemic, need to be cautious about spending and new program roll-out
ICANN Funds/Budget ● Although it seems this year fundings are going well, the number of registrants are going down (1)		● Learnings from the pandemic mode for future resiliency and planning This is not likely to be the only great disruptor to how we traditionally have worked in the future (1)

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