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AT-LARGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ALAC Statement on the Variant Issues Project Case Studies

Introduction

By the Staff of ICANN

Salanieta Tamanikaiwaimaro, ALAC member from the Asian, Australasian and Pacific Islands Regional At-Large Organization (APRALO), composed an initial draft of this Statement after discussion of the topic in an ad-hoc At-Large IDN Workgroup meeting in Dakar.

The Statement was then discussed by email amongst various members of the IDN Working Group.

The Statement was then posted on [its corresponding wiki workspace](#) on 16 November, 2011.

On that same day, Olivier Crépin-Leblond, Chair of the ALAC, requested that At-Large Staff send a 24-hour call for comments on the draft Statement to all At-Large members via the ALAC-Announce Mailing List.

On November 17, Olivier Crépin-Leblond, Chair of the ALAC, requested that the Statement be transmitted to the public comment process, copying the ICANN Staff member responsible for this public comment topic, along with a note saying that the document was currently undergoing ALAC ratification with a vote to start shortly.

[End of Introduction]

The original version of this document is the English text available at <http://www.atlarge.icann.org/correspondence>. Where a difference of interpretation exists or is perceived to exist between a non-English edition of this document and the original text, the original shall prevail.

ALAC Statement on the Variant Issues Project Case Studies

The ALAC would like to acknowledge the extraordinary work done by the IDN Variant Issues Project (VIP) case study teams.

The ALAC recognizes the significance and importance that IDNs play in enhancing diversity, preserving language, and democratizing access. Furthermore, the ALAC recognizes the rights of consumers to express themselves in the language of their choice. We embrace cultural diversity as a driving force of development, not only in respect of economic growth, but also as a means of leading a more fulfilling intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual life. The ALAC therefore recommends that the Board set aside financial and technical resources for outreach purposes on the adoption and accessibility of IDNs and factor it into the 2012-2015 Strategic Plan.

On the work of the VIP case study team reports, we observe a diverse set of issues and unique circumstances for the different languages and scripts considered. From the documented IDN variant issues, we note that issues stem from various origins, including technical (Unicode codepoint allocations), historical, political, language evolution and usage, coincidental “look-alikes”, etc. The ALAC therefore would advise the VIP case study teams to identify and report on the types of issues that should be handled as IDN variant issues versus those that should be handled by other user confusion avoidance mechanisms applicable overall to non-IDN as well as IDN TLDs. Such distinction and explanation would provide important and useful context for the general community to provide comments to the work of the VIP case study teams.

The ALAC also observe the possible disparity between the policy and technical implications of implementation. We therefore advise the VIP case study teams to also identify the readiness of implementation, including the level of consensus within the language community, the impact across languages, and most importantly to avoid disadvantaging language communities that have implementable policies available.

We thank the VIP case study teams for their prompt and thorough studies and look forward to the integrated report and the equally prompt implementation of IDN variant TLDs critical to the language communities currently disadvantaged by the incomplete IDN implementations especially those in the new gTLD process.

The ALAC will be inviting all At-Large Regional At-Large Structures to solicit views from their members on the case studies and will provide additional advice on the VIP integrated report when it is published for public comment.