

**ICANN Costa Rica Meeting
Joint ccNSO/GNSO IDN Working Group meeting - TRANSCRIPTION
Monday 12th March 2012 at 16:00 local time**

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Coordinator: This is the operator. The recording has started. Thank you.

Edmon Chung: Hi. Thank you everyone. This is the Joint ccNSO/GNSO IDN Working Group Meeting, and thank you for joining.

So I guess I sent around an agenda. I don't think it - because it was a little bit late, so I don't think it was reflected in the Web site, but I'll get to there.

But before that, I guess we'll go around the room a little bit just to quickly introduce who you are so we can have a - have sort of a roll call. Shall we maybe start with (unintelligible).

Man: Okay. And I'm (unintelligible). I'm not a member of this working group, I'm just a guest here.

Andrew Sullivan: Well, I'm Andrew Sullivan. I'm here I guess at the behest of the Variant Issues Project.

Francisco Arias: Francisco Arias, ICANN Staff.

Nadia Sokolova: Nadia Sokolova, ICANN Staff.

Glen de Saint Gery: Glen de Saint Gery, ICANN Staff.

Naela Sarras: Naela Sarras, ICANN Staff.

Woman: (Unintelligible), ccNSO.

Chuck Gomes: Chuck Gomes from VeriSign. I'm really not a active member but an observer - long time observer I guess of the group.

Dennis Jennings: I'm Dennis Jennings. I'm the Consultant Project Leader of the IDN/VIP Project.

Man: (Unintelligible).

(Nigel): (Nigel) (unintelligible).

Man: My name is (unintelligible).

Woman: (Unintelligible), ccTLD. Also the co-Chair ccNSO.

Edmon Chung: Edmon Chung from DotAsia and co-Chair from the GNSO.

Chris Dillon: Chris Dillon from Universal College London. And I would describe myself as an active observer of the group.

Patrick Falstrom: Patrick Falstrom, Chair of SSAC.

Steve Sheng: Steve Sheng, ICANN Staff and support for SSAC

Edmon Chung: And I believe there - we have a couple on line on the telephone.

(Daniel): Yes, (Daniel) (unintelligible) from the (unintelligible) just joining.

Edmon Chung: Okay, you might have to speak up a little bit more. But there was - there's one, and we have another one online as well, right?

Anyway. So welcome again, and let's get started.

So we - in terms of the working group, I usually had a few slides that - to talk about the background. I guess with the people convened here, I'll skip through that and jump right into the agenda.

So - but before the - just one thing before that. We - in recent couple of meetings, we have been issuing a call out for additional volunteers. I guess we observed that the - we're hoping that the enthusiasm for the discussion would grow a little bit more.

So since then, we have I think a - six or so added from the - well, from the ccNSO. I think it's still waiting for a confirmation for them to be added to the list. But, we're also waiting for additional volunteers from the GNSO.

This is - currently, we do have a - quite a lot of people on the mailing list, but a lot of them have been silent participants so far. So one of the things that the group is working on is to try to encourage a little bit more participation, especially on the - one of the first things that we want to talk about.

Generally when I talk to people about the universal acceptance of IDN TLD's, we do get a lot of interest. And I think a lot of people, especially from the IDN ccTLD's as well as the new gTLD program, there is a lot of interest. So we hope that - we hope to have more participation from the community as we talk about this.

And just a quick note on where we have been - what we have been doing. In terms of the JIG, the - an initial report went out on January the 6th this year,

and the intent - there was a number of questions there, and the intent is to do - to try to stimulate some discussion.

The public comment period will close on March 23rd. That will be sometime next week I believe. And - so right now, we're going through that process of public comment and hoping to get some more input.

The idea is to - currently, the - what went out for public comments was that - was a lot of - which built on the SSAC recommendations that came out a few years ago. And we looked into potential policy aspects and different areas where ICANN can play a role in terms of influence in the - to - on this topic of universal acceptance of IDN TLD's.

So we identified four main areas, policy - possible policy aspects, organizations which ICANN could work with, areas ICANN could focus its efforts with - on, and types of work that ICANN sort of prioritize on.

So in terms of the working group plan, we are joining the staff TLD universal acceptance round table as a public session in Cost Rica. And as I mentioned, the public comments close next week, and we're hoping that we'll come up at least with another document between now and Prague. That's sort of the plan.

And just want to let people know the public comments went out and the comments that we received so far, we had three of them, one of which coming from the registry stakeholder group, which is kind of interesting. We had a fairly extensive number of questions there, but not in a format of a survey, but the comment came back and said maybe a kind of survey is the way to go on some of the issues that we're trying to get feedback from.

And ALAC also responded to I guess agree with us that even though ICANN, in terms of policy aspect, may not solve this issue, but there are many things

that ICANN can do to influence and promote universal acceptance, and that solutions are not always technical.

So - and then there was another comment that didn't seem - it seemed fairly general and not specifically on it.

So this is - so what we received so far, and with that I wanted to turn it to the Wednesday session. We mentioned a public session that is joint with the staff team that's looking on - looking at TLD universal acceptance. And I'm happy that Nadia can join us, and perhaps Nadia can give a little bit of update on that.

Nadia Sokolova: Yes, thank you Edmund.

So we have a planned session for Wednesday, and we will focus on clarifying what we mean when we talk about universal acceptance. And we appreciate JIG putting together the report. You have - you raised very good questions, and include relevant considerations.

Our session that is going to take place on Wednesday basically focuses on the technical aspect of universal acceptance. Some software implemented on the intranet imposes some constraints for domains, and these equally apply to ASCII TLD's and IDN's as well.

Based on what we've observed, certain techniques like domain validation checks based on the TLD lens or a fixed list of TLD's results in many valid TLD's that are currently in the (unintelligible) to be deemed as invalid just because of the way the checks are being performed.

So I think the comment made by ALAC in response to the JIG report is very true. While there is some technical aspects - technical work that can be done on this issue, it is more of an awareness of making sure that everyone from

TLD registry operator to software developer, and ultimately to end user accept the diverse and dynamic Internet (unintelligible).

So the session that we have on Wednesday's schedule is a discussion. We would like to invite everyone to simply talk about the current issues. We have current TLD registry operators who will be present there and they will share their experiences.

So we'd like to collect feedback and see what and how in more clear and specific ways when we talk about organizations ICANN should work with, areas ICANN should prioritize on, what exactly can be done to ensure universal acceptance of all domains.

Thank you.

Edmon Chung: Thank you, Nadia.

I guess at this point I wonder if anyone has any questions on where the JIG is on the issue and perhaps any questions for Nadia on the topic? Chuck?

Chuck Gomes: Maybe I should comment a little bit on the registry comments, because we weren't really clear on what the JIG was looking for in response to that. There was an awful lot in there. There were a whole bunch of questions.

It wasn't clear whether you wanted us to answer the questions or to say, yes, they're the right questions to be answered, and that's why we ended up suggesting, you know, maybe if a simple conversion of what you're looking for was put into a little - a simple survey. Not a formal, elaborate survey. It might be easier to respond.

Now not too much time left in the comment period, but maybe even for the sake of us here now, maybe some of you can explain what you were really looking for comments.

Edmon Chung: Thank you, Chuck.

I think it's all of the above. I mean, in fact you know we wanted to ask - because it was very difficult. We went in to the discussion, and we found it more easier to raise questions than to answer them. So it's both, whether these are the right questions and you know what you might think about possible answers.

We did try at one point to jump to some you know suggested answers to it. We felt - that was also at the point where we felt that we needed to expand the participation. That's when we - that's when I guess Avri suggested at that time that we need more active volunteers to try to answer some of those questions.

So when this document went out, I think the intent was to ask whether these are the right questions as well as you know, if you have ideas on how to answer them.

Chuck Gomes: Thanks Edmund. This is Chuck Gomes again. I don't think that what you just said was in the document though, and that would've been really helpful. And in fact for the - when's the comment period end?

Edmon Chung: March the 23rd.

Chuck Gomes: Okay, so that's not...

Edmon Chung: That is the end of the...

Chuck Gomes: There's not very much time left It would probably be helpful if that was stated to get comment.

Now there's - it's also a very busy time for people to respond to such a all-encompassing document. I think I can say safely for the registries, although - that you know, we're supportive of everything the group's doing. And we certainly, of all people, know - recognize the need, so...

Edmon Chung: Avri?

Avri Doria: Thank you. Avri Doria. That brings up a thought. Perhaps if there hasn't been enough time, if we didn't put the call out with the right clues, perhaps this is one of those times when extending a comment period and reinforcing it with the extra comments might not be worth considering.

Edmon Chung: Thank you Avri. And we did extend it already, but I think it is worth - you know, I think the feedback Chuck just gave is very useful. We probably - in the write up on the description page probably should include the part where, you know, this is exactly what we're looking for.

But that being said, I wonder whether it - it's an open question, but I was wondering whether it's even better if we close this round, we - you know, we don't try to jump to a final report first. We tweak what we have and either you know perhaps look into a potential survey kind of thing and produce that type of thing before we just, you know, continue extending the public comment period.

That's - Chuck?

Chuck Gomes: I think you have a good point there. And any - if you do decide to go that route, anything you can do to simplify the document so that it's easier for people to spawn it.

And frankly, you're asking for a lot there, and it's all stuff you should be asking for. But it's kind of intimidating for groups that are all very busy and do that.

So anything you can do - and that's why we made the one suggestion that it may not be the right way to go. But anything that can be done to simplify, groups that will respond or individuals that will respond, would really help. So I kind of like that idea, especially if you do some tweaking to it and make it easier for people to respond to.

Edmon Chung: Yes. Thank you Chuck.

And so I guess before we beam off this topic, I think it's important - one of the things that - last - in our last conference call we did touch on is exactly what Chuck, you just said. Is that you know, we might need to chunk it up a little bit as well. But more important, I want to go to Nadia or - sorry for putting you on the table perhaps, is to get an understanding of what staff is already planning and working on.

There are some surveys that I think that have - that has been done or is being planned. So you know, if we have a little bit more information there - or you know right now one of the things is to - I guess to directly ask the question, what are you guys planning on? And how - what do you think we can, you know, do on our side to support that?

Nadia Sokolova: You have a lot of good questions there as well.

So the session that we plan to have on Wednesday is designed to specifically do that - to discuss. So as you know, and you included a little bit of historical review of what has been done in the past, this effort has been ongoing in many advisory committees and ICANN already contributed to it with the publishing of ASAC paper back in 2003, the publishing of an RFC in 2004, and the work ICANN has done.

So as of right now, we are - we have contacted the current TLD registry operators just to get them on board with how can we assess in this situation?

And scheduling this session to discuss what needs to be done and what is best to do?

We are developing several informational materials, but I think input from the community is essential in better prioritizing.

As Chuck pointed out, you have a very good report that you put together, and there are a lot of questions. So we would like to consider and discuss all of these things, but in order to be effective, we need to prioritize and probably set more specific goals.

So if we are looking into working together with ICANN community or ICANN stakeholders, we need to be a little bit more specific and properly targeting the right people as we can all discuss and realize what needs to be done.

But unless the people who are in power to make a change are informed and are on board, we're probably not going to be able to move too far. So that's where we are.

Edmon Chung: Agree.

(Ron), you wanted to add?

(Ron): Thank you. This is specifically about the acceptance issue. I guess my - and I see some of this in the panel Nadia. But I'm wondering if acceptance at the DNS level is really a problem anymore? And that the real problem is at the application level where I'm not certain how much influence or weight ICANN has, or certainly has no control in that area.

One area that I'm really curious about is, you know, ICANN is going to conduct a workshop - a panel, pool several of us and ask for - solicit inputs from the community. JIG has a report on acceptance and some ideas on what to do about it.

But what seems to be at least not clear to me, should I use the word murky, is that it's very uncertain about what role ICANN itself can play? I mean with a little bit of coordination perhaps.

But the players who need to be involved it appears to me are not on the table or not involved here. And you know - so that's kind of my concern overall. You know, even in JIG - JIG puts a report out, but I fear that it's, you know, a tree falling in the woods.

Edmon Chung: Thank you (Ron).

Actually in our discussion, we did identify a few things that ICANN can do, at least potentially. One of them -- just put back to the slide -- one of them that - there are potentially policy that ICANN can implement.

For example, we identified at least two. One is that at least for new IDN TLD's, for them themselves, their own systems to accept a universal acceptance. For example, in contact information, in named servers, you know because that is not in - that is not a - in the new gTLD program for example.

That in itself might be, you know, at least one thing that ICANN can do directly to promote universal acceptance of IDN TLD's.

So - and the other aspect is a budgeting aspect to, you know, think about this as an ongoing project.

So in terms of what ICANN can do directly, at least - this sort of went out for a public comment, and these are two items that we've identified that ICANN perhaps can directly do.

You want to respond?

Man: (Unintelligible)...

Edmon Chung: Okay.

So - but there are a number of other things that we tried to - but we - the first question I just want to quickly answer to (Ron)'s question is the first question it was that. When the group looked into the issue of universal acceptance is what can ICANN do anyway? It was the main question, and that was the motivation behind what has been produced and you know identified as possible areas.

(Ron): Yes, and thank you for that. I do recognize it and I didn't mean to say that - I understand you did the background of it. I'm trying to push a little bit further in this and say, yes - the - some of the recommendations from the JIG are immediately implementable and can be made to happen, right.

Acceptance in named servers. Certainly forms, things like that that ICANN has control over. But almost all the rest of it is in the area of persuasion and influencing, right?

And I think perhaps that's where ICANN needs more help and more advice, you know from us as a community, to say do this, not that. And perhaps the workshop will be helpful there.

But the real underlying - the underpinning thing is that it's - ICANN is one little tiny knob anymore. It used to be much bigger five, six, seven, eight years ago relative to acceptance of TLD's.

Edmon Chung: Thank you, (Ron).

I guess with that - oh, Chuck...

Chuck Gomes: Just two things. Number one - and (Ron) will recognize this better than anybody. The points you're raising and the questions you're asking were the same ones in the first round. Just a little historical perception.

One other point from one of our participants in the registry stakeholder group - and I understand that this is a -- and so did he -- that this is an IDN working group. But the bottom line, if this issue isn't restricted to IDN's, so...

Edmon Chung: Right.

Just on that point, Chuck, this issue was only a gTLD issue when it's not an IDN. But it became a - you know, an issue of common interest between the ccNSO and the GNSO because of IDN. And that's the reason why we're talking about it here.

Chuck Gomes: But you may want to have - just point that out in - when you get to your final report, just make it clear.

Edmon Chung: Yes. Yes. Okay.

So we did identify a number of items. I hope we get a little bit more response, but I think it's important that we take that - the current response back and we probably need to re-chunk it up a little bit better so that the community can provide more specific response to some of the things. Because right now, it's nothing like - you know, it's a bit broad.

So in - in view of time, I'll be moving on to the next topic, and that's the single character IDN TLD's. I think we went through a process and produced a report on it. The Board acted on the issue as well and made a resolution.

And when we - and then the JIG also prepared a response to that Board resolution. It was first drafted by the JIG, and then it was refined and redrafted by the ccNSO Council. It was eventually adopted by both the GNSO

council and the ccNSO council, and urging - basically sent a letter to the Board urging a clearer road map.

Since then, there has - actually about the same time, the SSAC came out with the report. I guess it's part of the action as a result of the Board resolution. So - and sort of reconfirmed that some of the process needs to be updated.

I very briefly sort of summarized the SSAC report in this slide, but I wouldn't go through it because I was hoping that - and I'm happy that Patrick can join us today and perhaps talk a little bit about it.

Patrick Falstrom: Yes. We have actually a slide that Steve is trying to get displayed, which I hope it works.

Steve, it seems that Edmond has the connection to the projector.

Is everything okay?

Man: Yes.

Patrick Falstrom: Okay, cool. Thanks.

So what happened was that SSAC, ALAC, and GAC got questioned from the Board on what issues we saw with one character TLD's. So we went away to look at things more in detail based on the JIG report.

So some background. There - we of course are aware of the discussions that have been going on over here, but we also have to remember that so far, TLD's have consisted of two or more characters, gTLD's three or more, and ccTLD's two. The question, blah-blah-blah.

You know, there's - next slide please.

So the findings that we have has to do with specifically confusability. And one of the issues with confusability in the ICANN context is that that we - specifically if you look at the rules for the two character TLD's - IDN TLD's from the IDN/ccTLD (unintelligible). Would you allow more confusability for one of the code points if the other code point is distinct?

This implies that depending on the context, we do allow more confusion than if it is the case that you have little - sorry. We do allow some confusion for individual characters if it is the case that we have more context which makes it easier for individuals to for example, know what scripts we're talking about.

So the first finding in the report had to do with lower amount of context, higher amount of confusability.

The second finding is that we do not see any other kind of problems apart from the confusability, which means that in the domain name system, et cetera, of course one character TLD's works as well as others, specifically through IDN TLD's, it actually represents there's an - a label. That it has more than one ASCII character, so that's no problem.

It's also the case that the third finding that we have is that there is quite a lot of discussions regarding string similarity and confusability and the algorithms around that that is ongoing inside ICANN. And because of that, we also - that is also another - and also variants - of course the variants work. So that's also additional arguments to urge ICANN to be careful.

Next slide please.

So what we do is that we recommend a very conservative approach to delectation of senior character TLD's. And we do recommend that by default, delegation of single character IDN's - ccTLD - IDN TLD's is disallowed. And this is one of the things that currently - there has been some issue in the IDN

ccTLD Fast Track where the default is non-confusability and confusability is to be proven, or the other way around.

Because when you discuss confusability or TLDs or strings in general, you have the clear cases which are not a problem at all, you have the clear cases which absolute are problematic and then you have a large gray area. And the question is where are the boundaries between the clear cases and the gray area and how wide is the gray area. One thing that we did look at very carefully, and we really went through all different kind of metadata that exists around Unicode characters like the clause, the scripts, whatever, and we could not find any one of those that could be used to algorithmically say what one character strings are okay.

So our first approach was to try to see whether we could come up with some kind of simple rule to say what one characters are safe or, like, the other things that are absolutely safe. But the conclusion of that exercise was that that is not possible. Okay - oh sorry, go back.

The other thing we were looking at that we also were thinking to start with that (unintelligible) I talked to some of you about at the previous meeting was that maybe it's the case that it's possible to find some scripts, which is one of those variables, and say every code point in Unicode in this script is safe for one character. And then we sort of asked around and asked people and even they said, "Well, wait a second. We don't talk about confusability only within the script but also across scripts."

So when we looked at the various scripts that could confusability or what pairs of scripts do have one or more code points or zero that might be confusing to each other, is there a well-known sort of academia that you can reference that say what groups of scripts do have overlapping problems, like Latin, Greek, Cyrillic or the other groups. Yes, we found other groups, so it's not only Latin, for example, no not only (unintelligible), it was actually the (unintelligible) words that we referenced in the report, but found another

group. So one of our findings - one of the things that we are confused is - that we urge for is that - or that we are nervous about is that there are other groups of scripts that are unknown, so we simply don't know what pairs of script are safe or not.

On the other hand, we do recognize that absolutely the need of one character TLDs exists, absolutely. But what is needed is that someone writes down an algorithm that can be used to decide whether an applied-for string is safe or not, that everyone agrees to. And I'm now not talking about whether people agree on so much whether something is confusing, but that people must agree that the algorithm is correct because my interpretation of what is going on, for example, regarding IDNs as a TLD Fast Track is that people are arguing about what the algorithm actually is.

Even though we have one clarification that has been made, it is still the case that people disagree sort of not only are these two glyphs confusing or not, it's like no, that is not how you should evaluate. And that's not a very fun situation. I'm just looking out for the people that I know that is involved in that discussion, yes.

Okay, the last thing I wanted to mention regarding - now let's see if I remember the last thing - oh, yes. Another thing that came up was this report from the Internet Architecture Board regarding M-class characters. One thing that - when thinking about the (M-star) character case, we understood that wait a second, the question was about one character, and one character is actually a little bit too undefined when we talk about real algorithm here.

Because one character can - normally when people talk about character in these contexts, we talk about one glyph, as it is, sort of displayed for the user. That might be more than one Unicode code point, which means that even the question to (F-cycle) is not clearly defined enough. So what's the question about single Unicode code point TLDs or single characters, et cetera, and that made us also a little bit nervous.

And you're sitting here jumping hands, and I'm sorry. And I'm probably using taxonomy that makes, like, (unintelligible) - we have decided to sit down one and a half hours on Wednesday to sort some of these things out. Okay, so - but we do point out then is, and what we also - we had a briefing with the Board Sunday, is that work on trying to resolve this because of the lead, must start immediately to resolve this issue.

And also that the - first of all that this recommendation should be reviewed every year and probably we have something to say, et cetera, blah, blah. The rest you know, thanks.

Edmon Chung: Thank you, Patrick. And I guess before I, you know, I wonder if anyone has questions. But immediately I was wondering a couple things. I just want to observe that, you know, the JIG actually discussed pretty much all of the issues that you brought up.

So a couple of things, one is that the JIG actually took the viewpoint that we do understand the string similarity and those type of issues are still outstanding, but we felt that it was out of scope of the JIG to work on it. And we felt that the core findings, however, was that that particular argument would be exactly the same for more than one character. Because if you try to compare a two-character string, you would still have, you know, those issues would still exist.

And the second point was that the JIG actually identified a - actually a way sort of, to define what we meant by a single character, that was taking the earlier work on IDNs and formed part of the recommendation. So I was wondering, you know, if SSAC felt that was an adequate and, you know, perhaps, you know, why that...

Man: I think the general different between what - as you say, the actual findings are not very different from the JIG report and what SSAC wrote. I think the

difference is that - the difference had to do with how - with the calculation of risk to make the wrong decision and what happens if it is the case that you're actually allocating something or making a decision of something that later is discovered not to work. I think that is the main difference.

Oh, let me also - the first question though is something where SSAC absolutely saw a difference which is that confusability for two characters, just like it is written out in the guidelines with IDN ccTLD Fast Track, it is - if you have two characters, it is - you can - it is enough if one of them is distinct. Then you can accept a high degree of confusability for the other one of the two code points. So two string TLDs can be very confusing in one of the code points if the other one is distinct, and that's why there is a difference between two characters and one-character TLDs.

Man: But if you reserve all single character strings, it also means that two character strings or three character strings need to compare with the single character strings to make sure it doesn't conflict with a reserved name, in a sense, right?

Man: No, the - I don't remember that part of the applicant guidebook on the top of my head. I'm looking at people that know that a little bit better, but the comparison - there is no comparison for non-allocated TLDs except for the two-letter (unintelligible) that might end up in the ISO 3166. Otherwise there is no comparison for confusability.

Man: It does say that it cannot be similar to single character strings in any script.

Man: Okay, in that case, you know that better than I. In that case I should absolutely not try to answer your question.

Man: Anyway, so I wonder if there are any other...

Man: But my point is, once again back to - it seems that you don't - that I might explain myself not clear enough, because it seems to be the case that you don't understand really - or I cannot really express this thing with the context. Because if you have a two-character string, that can include one character that is confusingly similar with another character just because the other one is distinct. But that confusing character cannot exist in a TLD because it doesn't have any context.

So a code - a character that is acceptable in a two-character TLD might not be acceptable in a one-character TLD. Does that make things more clear? Okay, Avri doesn't - Avri says no, it's not more clear.

Avri Doria: I guess I have the problem - I mean, I can see certain cases where an alphabetic something like that may be the case. When you're talking about non-alphabetic scripts, you're talking about languages where people actually do have words that are one character, and they are able to clearly distinguish those without context, without a second letter - or second character. And so I'm actually curious - and I have not read the report clearly enough - on the methodology of this test and the scope of this context testing that you've done that sort of allows you to make a blanket statement that says in all cases, single character does not have enough context to be differentiable.

Man: We have enough cases - this is once again the problem of what should we - what should be proven with you allocate a TLD. This is the overall meta issue which means that it doesn't have to do with whether something is confusing or not. The question is should confusability be proven or should non-confusability be proven, that seems to be what we really are discussing here.

Edmon Chung: And Chris?

Chris Dillon: Well, I think different people are confused by different things. And I mean, yes, I mean, if I were a scammer, if I were some sort of gamer, I think one thing I might do would be to, you know, apply for something with really large

Chinese characters, you know, the characters with more than 50 strokes. Some of them have more than 80 strokes.

And the problem is that they get to the first in critical mass, and in the browser address bar, they just, you know, you just can't see because some of those address bars are really quite small. So yes, so what I'm saying is I can see that side of it. But another thought of confusability would actually be the sort of needle in the haystack style confusability and this would be actually a very long gTLD.

And so again, if I was a gamer, I think what I might do would be to apply for something, say in a language like Turkish - now Turkish has got the letter I as in English, but it also has another I which doesn't have a dot. So what you could do is actually apply for a Turkish TLD which, you know, it looked really like some English words, perhaps, but then actually it has this I without the dot on it, extremely easy to miss. What I'm saying is that sometimes you read what you want to read, and you will lose that Turkish dot in the haystack.

That is another sort of confusability but the interesting thing is that that sort of confusability is actually opposite, because it depends on length.

Man: I guess when Patrick mentioned the multiple characters, that might give a better context is, you know, to determine that and that is part of the...

Edmon Chung: Were you finished?

Man: Yeah.

Edmon Chung: Okay well thanks, Patrick. First of all, the context argument made sense to me, I got that. I'm a little slow on a lot of these things but I think I got that, that helps. I heard you say two things, I think, on algorithms.

In the one case, you came to the conclusion that there is - you can't come up with an algorithm, and then later you said when you define an algorithm. So I'm trying to - did you mean - in the latter case, did you mean more - rather than an automatic algorithm like for example we have in the guidebook for just an initial similarity review, or did you mean a set of criteria that would be used to test for confusability?

Patrick Falstrom: A very good question. In the first case, I was thinking more of a mathematical algorithm like in the (unintelligible) 2008 standard that say exactly what cod points are allowed or not. In the second statement of algorithm, I was talking more about the explicit sort of rules that if a clarification for the two-character IDN ccTLD Fast Track, for example, that is in the guidebook, so I talk about the second. And I hear a lot of proposals here, so what we - once again, what (unintelligible) that someone needs to write down what kind of evaluations ought to be done.

So, like, write that down and that's also what the Board was talking about Sunday when we met them and had exactly the same kind of discussion.

Edmon Chung: Okay, thank you, Patrick. And I guess we'll consider whether the group would take our next steps. One thing I did - I think it became clear today is that we - maybe we need to respond and to alert the Board on at least one thing.

Because if the - based on the SSAC report, it also means that, you know, comparing similarity with single characters would be an issue, and that could be an issue with the current applicant guidebook as well. So we might want to look into raising that to - perhaps to the Board.

Patrick Falstrom: Can I come with a personal recommendation? So personally, I think you should think about writing down what kind of criteria you think would be needed to allow the really clear cases which absolutely are safe and not create any problem whatsoever with any kind of (tin foil) character person in the word. Because I think the Board and SSAC and everyone else would

absolutely accept if this is the case, that it came up with some (unintelligible) of crystal clear cases.

And then we can look at how we sort of might in the future open up those things that are closer to the gray area, but start the focus on which - what cases are the crystal clear ones. I think that helps.

Edmon Chung: Okay, thank you, that is - Chuck.

Man: We are running out of time.

Edmon Chung: Okay, I'll be real quick. But it seems to me that the clock's running out in doing that task. For future rounds, I mean...

Chuck Gomes: I mean for the first round. We're almost past the time on that, that might be very hard to do. But that's my only comment, so I understand and we've got plenty of time for the second round, at least in the gTLDs, so.

Edmon Chung: Okay, so I guess - thank you, Chuck. And with that I'll move on to our last topic, which is the IDN VIP Project Plan and how this group can continue to interact with Dennis' VIP team.

Dennis Jennings: Yes, thank you. Dennis Jennings here for the record. As we're running out of time, let me first say that the session that you need to go to is at 9 o'clock on Wednesday, where we actually present the Integrated Issues Report and the next steps plan. So if there's one message I get across in the few minutes that are available, it is that we have a one and a half hour session on Wednesday morning at 9 o'clock and we strongly urge you that - to attend that because we need feedback from the community.

We had a slide deck but it takes at least 15 minutes to canter through it at a great rate, so I'd like to bring up one slide, which is - before I put up the Project Plan, if you could identify the slide, the status slide that shows the

three - the two phases that we have completed, just to put the - set the context. That's a diagram...

Woman: Sorry, we don't have the completed one. We have the next phases on this...

((Crosstalk))

Dennis Jennings: Okay, well then let me just verbalize.

Woman: Just talk a while.

Dennis Jennings: Let me just verbalize. Just to put everybody - to remind everybody that in Dakar we reported on Phase 1 of the Variant Issues Project, which is the case studies, the six case studies, and we presented those to the community. And we also started Phase 2, which was the phase to produce an Integrated Issues Report, which I'm happy to say we managed to publish just before Christmas with a tremendous amount of effort from the team, and great support from a selection of the case study teams who provided an advisory committee to the ICANN team to get that report out.

That report was published for public comment. We didn't get many comments. Whether that was a good thing or a bad thing it's very hard to evaluate, and we published - the team published the final report some time ago.

And in that report, there were a number of next steps identified, which are there for people to look at. Subsequently, we've published a proposed project plan for the next steps, and that is out for comment. I think that public comment closes at the end of this week which may or may not be enough time for anybody to comment on it, and therefore there is an issue there.

But we are genuinely and seriously looking for feedback from the community on those proposed next steps. Are they the right steps, are they in the right

sequence, is the right emphasis, and so on. And when looking at those next steps, it's important that you read the report because there's a lot of context in the report that helps to explain what the next steps are.

It's also important that you have read the report if you're intending to come to the session, because the presentation doesn't do great justice to this short presentation of the next steps. So there is the timeline up on the screen now - I hope that's available to people remotely as well - on the projects that we're proposing and the initial proposed sequence, and obviously we're looking for feedback on that. These next steps, if they're agreed by the community and more importantly they're approved by the Board Variant Working Group and the Board who oversee this project through the Board Variant Working Group, will be community driven projects.

They - in the current plan they extend over a fairly lengthy period of time, and the only comment I'll make about that is that these are pretty damn complex issues and we're not going to have solutions to these issues and implementable proposals without a significant amount of additional work. So, having said that, and it now being three minutes to the hour and we have a meeting in three minutes - this team has a meeting in three minutes - may I remind you that the session is at 9 o'clock on Wednesday in La Paz A.

I'll take questions. Thank you very much indeed.

Edmon Chung: Thank you, Dennis. Yes, we have three minutes left and I actually have to move to that meeting as well, but - Chris, please.

Chris Dillon: You must forgive me if I've missed something, and that's - but it's some time since I read the plan in detail, and I didn't notice anything about the topic we were just talking about, actually the single character TLDs. I mean, you know, are any of those plans actually covering that sort of area, presuming we still have the problem when it starts up? Perhaps I should be more optimistic and think that the problem may have gone away.

Edmon Chung: We will certainly be studying the question of variants of single characters. The question whether single character TLDs are to be delegated or not is a different question which we are not explicitly addressing in the project. I suppose we're presuming that that question will be addressed before we come up with solutions on the - how to identify the variants and so on.

(Ram): May I quickly add - the single characters and variants are interrelated, but they're not exactly the same. And single character is not in the Charter currently, in (unintelligible) Variant Issues Project.

Edmon Chung: Thank you, (Ram). And Naela?

Naela Sarras: So thank you for making that clarification, (Ram). And so related to what Chris said, we have one of the proposed projects related to the topic we just discussed is project 4.1, which is the visual similarity process enhancement. It is something that, again, it is not in the Charter of what variants are but at some point in the report we had to accept that single - visual similarity is something that people refer to in the context of variants, so we put it in the taxonomy of variants as one side that people talk about.

And we are certainly interested in improving that process. As staff work on the Fast Track, this is a very personal interest of mine as well.

Edmon Chung: Thank you, Naela. Unfortunately we've run out of time, but I think, you know, we did really - one of the things that I want to add is that it's seeming to me that at least a lot of these issues which we think are independent are really interrelated, more and more so. And especially from the SSAC report on same characters - identifying three issues that need to be resolved before single character - you know, that's the recommendation - before single character TLDs are considered.

So anyways, there are interrelations I think and, you know, more and more we need to look at them together. It seems we have run out of time and thank you everyone for joining the JIG session here. We will continue with the biweekly calls after this meeting and take on these issues and think about the next steps, especially with the input that we've gotten today, so thank you everyone.

Coordinator: Okay, thank you, that does conclude the conference. You may disconnect at this time.

END