gTLD Registry Failover Project Update

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The gTLD Registry Failover Plan is intended to provide protection for registrants and add to the security and stability of the Internet in collaboration with experienced registries. The plan defines ICANN’s role if the event of gTLD registry failure. This is a key project in the 2007-2008 Operational Plan.
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- Plan calls for registries to have their own contingency plans to maintain critical functions for a period of time until a replacement can be found or provide a notice period to registrants on closure.
- An initial draft was published on 20 Oct 2007, and revised on 25 Nov 2007.
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- ICANN successfully executed the gTLD Registry Failover Exercise on 24-25 January 2008
- Exercise was designed to validate processes and procedures associated with implementation of the draft ICANN gTLD Registry Failover Plan
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- Four exercise objectives:
  - Validate and harden draft ICANN gTLD Registry Failover Plan
  - Train the staff for crisis response to specific failure situations
  - Assess maturity of ICANN’s technical decision making progress
  - Achieve completion of a key ICANN project during fiscal year 07-08
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- 5 scenarios touching on following elements:
  - Escalation of temporary issues
  - Implications of DNSSEC
  - Internal vs External communication
  - Failure of a sponsored TLD
  - IDNs
  - Natural disaster
  - Government/regulatory action on gTLD
  - DDoS attack/terrorist attack
  - Backend provider issues
  - “Bad” acts
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- Following the exercise, staff revised the draft plan on 5 Feb 2008.
  - Revised definitions for an event and what triggers crisis communications plan
  - Added section on information sharing to improve communications during normal operations
  - Identified need for ICANN to have a coordinated inter-departmental response and outside communications if an event were to occur
  - ICANN also exploring certification of backend registry operators
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- After Action Report and description of the Failover Exercise will be provided to SSAC
- Latest iteration of Failover Plan will also be provided
- Staff looks forward to continued discussions with SSAC on this topic