Transcription ICANN Durban Meeting

IDN Variants Meeting

Saturday 13 July 2013 at 15:30 local time

Note: The following is the output of transcribing from an audio. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases it is incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages or transcription errors. It is posted as an aid to understanding the proceedings at the meeting, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

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Jonathan Robinson: ...and then looks as follows. We're going to hear from Edmon now. We're going to discuss the work of the JIG on the variance and the response to the questions from the board.

We will then take a short break, stretch our legs and so on and then reconvene at just after 4 o'clock in order to look at our interactions with the board and the GAC.

Tomorrow I'm conscious this is a very long day and aware of that for me, you and all of us here. We may try and cut short elements of the agenda later in the afternoon (unintelligible) tomorrow we'll take a rain check on that and after the session with - on discussing (trends) with GAC.

Are we ready to record the next session to have a recording for the next session?

Coordinator: At this time I'd like to inform all participants that today's conference is being recorded. If you have any objection you may disconnect at this time. Thank you.

Edmon Chung: Yes our lines are open and the audio timestamp for the IDN Variance meetings originally scheduled for 15:30 extending till 15:50. You're recording.

Jonathan Robinson: Thanks very much. Welcome Edmon, look forward to hearing from you on the work of the JIG and the updates and the proposed outcomes.

Edmon Chung: Thank you Jonathan. Edmon here. And I guess the JIG was formed from the GNSO and the ccNSO a little while back to look at IDN issues that are of a common interest and one of which is the IDN variant TLDs.

A - recently a board resolution adopted a number - a couple of reports from the variant program, the IDN variant implementation team I guess.

And essentially that particularly board resolution asks any of the supporting organizations and advisory committees to provide input and guidance in the implementation and recommendations.

I guess this somewhat relates to one of the things that we talked about and in terms of how the GNSO should continue to play a part as implementation proceeds.

So I think, you know, it - it's a - it should be a good opportunity for the GNSO to respond.

So this was originally the request was for the SOs and ACs to respond by July 1. Of course that has expired.

I guess the board and staff would still welcome our input. So that's part of the premise. But in any case I'll - a letter was draft.

Jonathan Robinson: Sorry and just to clarify, I did write to the ICANN board and request that they accept our latent input. I haven't had the response but that is on record and...

Edmon Chung: Okay. So I'll jump right into the draft letter anyway. It's a joint effort from the ccNSO and GNSO from the JIG.

And it's the high level summary basically consists of three main points one of which is that we've talked about IDN variance from quite some time now.

And the reports seems to indicate and I guess reconfirm that the IDN variant TLD issue is not a purely technical matter. It cannot be solved purely technically.

And there requires, you know, there are requirements of policy decision. I'll come back to what I really mean about that. But that's number one.

Number two is right now the reports and the implementation process doesn't provide any kind of review mechanism or, you know, how the GNSO continues to play a role in the implementation.

So that's point number two is to reinsert or, you know, ensure that the SOs are involved in that process.

And the third one is a broader item. It's just that in view of the reports from the IDN Variant team there were a number of issues raised in terms of implementation of IDN Variance.

Most of them are much more about educating the general users and the technical users as well on those issues.

So, you know, part of the response is to say that ICANN should devote some efforts into that area. So those - that's the summary of the three items.

I'll jump into, you know, a little bit more detail in each of them. And that's pretty - essentially that's the letter or the substance that was drafted.

So the - one of the things about, you know, a clear indication that policy is required in the IDN Variance issue is that there was a clear sort of observation that there are two competing views of being conservative.

You know, we always talk about, you know, implementing IDN TLDs and IDN Variant TLDs being in a conservative manner.

But it becomes very apparent that what is meant by conservative for the technical community and what is meant by conservative from the linguistic community is quite the opposite.

And the reason for that is that the technical community thinks that, you know, the less amount of number of TLDs, Variant TLDs include the more conservative guidance.

But in the linguistic community that's the other way around. The more that is included that create, you know, provides more protection. And that is more conservative in the linguistic point of view.

So the balance between those two, you know, how we decide to balance between those two, that is the policy decision that needs to be made.

And therein lies, you know, why I think it is within the prevue of the SOs and also - that also means that there should be need for periodic review of the process that is put in place to implement IDN Variant TLDs.

And I guess that's also what is also important is that the two SOs, the ccNSO and the GNSO would need to separately provide policy recommendations for IDN variant TLDs.

And that's - and following up I'll - there are - that - the letter then splits into two parts. I'm talking about what the situation of the ccNSO and the situation of GNSO is.

So there's one more item on the particular report that board is asking for response on. There is a set of recommendations that pertains IDN - registries and how they act and how they handle IDN Variant TLDs.

That is considered to be optional by the authors of that report. And we want to make sure that ICANN continues to realize that that's optional because two reasons.

One is the actual processes of the registries in handling IDN Variant TLDs is already included in the AGB and implementation.

And but it's also recognized that different cultures and different languages would require different implementations.

So, you know, having a sort of one slice fit all uniform recommendation might not be the right approach.

And that's also the reason why the authors specifically stated that they should be optional.

The other reason is that if there is to be implementation to require registries to do certain things in that case then there is no policy recommendation for that area.

And there would require a policy development process if those are being put in place.

I don't think they need to be. And, you know, the office said they don't need to be. But, you know, this is just flagging this particular issue. And which brings me to actually the conclusion is essentially that the policy recommendations that were given through the new gTLD policy recommendations from the GNSO is already sufficient. I'll get back to that.

But the situation for the IDN - the ccNSO is a little bit different. In the IDN CCPDP final report they specifically did not talk about IDN Variant TLDs and just put a placeholder. Essentially it does just say placeholder there literally.

And therefore the recommendation there to the ccNSO is to - for them to go back and start working on and provide such policy recommendations.

As for the GNSO the situation is a little bit different. Looking back at the outcomes report of the IDN Working Group which was formed as part of the GNSO policy recommendation for new gTLD there was already a number of policy recommendations that were put forward which were adopted and included in the new gTLD recommendations including, you know, how Variants are handled for a few areas.

I won't go into details. You can check it out in the link. But it includes, you know, how to deal with having one string per application for normal applications and then for certain applications that contain variants perhaps that that actually means that there would be multiple strong per application.

And, you know, how confusing these similar strings, how they tie into the confusingly similar strings of the - I mean the process of the overall new gTLD process.

So the basic recommendation is that what is in there is already provides enough guidance for staff to continue the implementation as set out in the documents that were - that the board adopted.

And finally part is again that's as I mentioned, there are a number of issues that were identified for IDN Variance TLDs. And they require the technical community to be aware of, you know, IDN Variant TLDs and to work with them.

They're very similar to universal acceptance of IDN TLD issues. And we've identified that, you know, and think that, you know, that's in the process of universal acceptance and also new gTLDs.

I think this is one of the additional things that need to be in that outreach process as well.

And finally in the letter it comes back to the current variant TLD reports have not yet included the view mechanism. It has a process that is laid out, you know, that would generate what is called a label generation rule set which will be implemented for at ICANN to determine whether based on a given applied for TLD - IDN TLD what the IDN Variant TLDs are.

And but that - and if (unintelligible). patients that should be reviewed.

So in terms of the letter itself actually I think it has been circulated to the council just - yes. And essentially it includes three annexes which is provided for the two councils to consider and to use.

And basically one is a draft letter for, you know, the ccNSO and one's draft letter for the GNSO to send this report to the board. And one of the annex is the report itself that I just walked through just now. So that's pretty much it.

Jonathan Robinson: Thanks very much Edmon. So there's really two issues. Is there any discussion on the substance of the response and then for us as a council, the mechanism by which we might communicate that to the board and whether or not I guess really we need to either commit through a consensus to send a letter or whether we need to actually form some sort of motion or vote on sending that letter.

So there's two issues. There's a discussion of the substance. Are there any questions or matters arising from the substance? And then the second is how do we turn that into action mindful of the board's request that we give some feedback ideally by the first of July which we've clearly missed? But it does highlight the - and they're aware of that it highlights the need for some timely sending this letter.

Although Edmon I understand from you that your view is it's not desperately important to get this letter off as long as it is committed to the record because there can be back channel communications that understand much of the substance of this letter in any event.

Edmon Chung: Well two things. I think yes in general yes. I think there is not a high urgency on this. I think Steve there could probably add to this as well.

And the other thing is that much of the recommendation is more of a later stage item, you know, like the review item, like, you know, the policy aspects and, you know, what needs to be done as we implement.

And the implementation process, what is most important is to note that at least, you know, the group thinks that none of the - if we implement it as described by the - already by the policy recommendations from previous GNSO recommendations then there is no further action needed at this point. So anything further would - wouldn't need to be urgently raised.

So that's a reason - so two reasons is that yes I think this - the staff team that is working on it is already aware. And the other one is that this - these set of recommendations are - requires action at a slightly later time.

Jonathan Robinson: Zahid your comment to input?

Zahid Jamil: Yes just I was thinking that I haven't heard anything. I don't anticipate there'll be any issues around this letter. It's just a letter that has been sent out.

And if we - as my - to the extent that we can send it out I think it's something we - I would definitely support and even though it may require action that means could be taken later. But there's no reason why we need to delay it. Let's go ahead.

Jonathan Robinson: Thank you. Mikey?

Mikey O'Connor: Mikey O'Connor for the transcript. I'm going to yank us up to a pretty high level for this. And I'm going to refer back to the report, you know, w- that came out last year that had a section five that talked about challenges with uses of variants.

Can you - Edmon can you just remind us which report that was because just name it. I...

Edmon Chung: That is the user experience report. And I think Steve Sheng right next to you is not one of the authors, at least one of them that is following closely.

Mikey O'Connor: Right.

Edmon Chung: Yes.

Mikey O'Connor: Well the point that I we've invited you and (David Jennings) no...

Edmon Chung: (Dennis Jennings).

Mikey O'Connor: ...(Dennis Jennings) -- I knew it was a D -- to join us at the ISP constituency meeting later this week. And here's the reason why.

Basically when we read that report the Section 5 that says challenges with the uses of variants -- and there's a big long list -- variance non-intuitive, variance defined and consistently, var - you know, accessibility and privacy, variants aren't searchable, search rankings are unpredictable, you know, blah, blah, blah, blah -- this giant sort of list of horrors.

And then Section 6 which is the answer it's like Mars and Venus. No it's like - and where at least where the ISP and connectivity providers are coming from and saying well we kind of slept through this our bad.

But given where this sits right now it looks like these don't work. (Dennis)' phrase in one of the meetings was this is like building and airplane with the wings mounted upside down. It will not fly.

And the reason that I'm really interested in this -- and it's because I represent a bunch of ISPs is because if we fly this airplane with the wings bolted on upside down you all aren't going to get the phone calls. We're going to get the phone calls.

And we'll probably come up with a really simple solution after we start getting these phone calls which is we'll block them.

Because there is so much work that looks like needs to be done in the application community, you know, in all of these technical communities. And this reports sort of waves its hands and says oh those technical people they're just conservative, they're just not helping us out, that's not going to help us very much.

So that's the reason we invited you. I sort of wanted to give you a preview of that cause I'm going to do the same rant when you show up you poor dear.

But I also want to alert the rest of the council that I think we've all sort of slept through this. You know, I certainly did and I'm pretty engaged here.

And so my concern with this letter is this is sort of like signing a contract without understanding the contract you're signing.

And I would just caution the council to be kind of careful before you send this letter off to the board that says oh yes, everything's fine. You can just keep implementing because I'm not sure that's true.

Jonathan Robinson: You respond Edmon?

Edmon Chung: Yes thank you Mikey and two things. First of all, one, most of the things that is listed in Section 5 you can probably say that for new gTLDs in general, a lot of them, especially IDN gTLDs with or without Variance.

With Variance there's an additional, you know, nuance to it. But many of the issues that are pointed out there.

So, you know, are we calling a stop for the whole new gTLD process? I hope not. That's number one. Number two is (Dennis) like to use that analogy. The way I see it is that if we do not have IDN Variant TLDs in place that's exactly what the situation is.

If we do not have the IDN TLDs in place it would be like having, you know, wings upside down.

And there is a good example for that. I mean people can argue to death whether it is really IDN Variant TLDs. But we do have it in .china and .Taiwan implemented in as IDN ccTLDs with IDN Variant TLDs.

You can, you know, there are people who disagree that they are called IDN Variant TLDs but you can give them whatever name you want they are allocated and delegated as, you know, two different TLDs. And they are working well.

And, you know, the user experience report actually does talk about that and how that works as well.

So there is proven experience that the sky's not going to fall. But yes there are still issues that needs to be ironed out. And I think that's the part where, you know, on Number 3 on the screen here is that, you know, we as the community including and with ICANN's help, staff team help, we need to go out and tell people about these coming issues, you know, whether you eventually, you know, have (high speeds) block every, you know, IDN TLD or even gTDL, new TLDs right? They're a nuisance for some.

But that's, you know, that's a high level session. And on this specific topic, you know, that as we said, that's very much higher level discussion.

On this specific topic I think, you know, this is what is already in place and what is been being proposed by staff is already an integration of a lot of knowledge from the community and, you know, from the experience of IDN implementation.

Jonathan Robinson: Okay that looks like yes Steve?

Steve Sheng: Thank you Edmon just one comment and one question. Regarding Mikey's question I am one of the staff that supports the effort to - that leads to that report.

And one of our starting premise is with introduction of new technologies there will be problems. And I think is - ICANN has the fiduciary responsibility to document those problems.

I think it's out for the community to discuss, you know, the benefits versus the risks and take for example, you know, when .info is introduced there are many email systems that doesn't support. And today many of them still do not.

I think (unintelligible) may be, you know, as new things are introduced and technologies change and those are changing, you know, as well which really highlights, you know, the overall. And today IBM hasn't been used that much. It has been registered in large numbers.

But in terms of the actual traffic hasn't been used. You know, as IDNs get more and more used, more and more of these problems, you know, would occur. As a community what do we do with those problems? How do we get them, IDNs more accepted? I think that's a kind of overall question.

At a more kind of more specific regards to the letter one of the points you mentioned that the ccNSO and GNSO should have a kind of review (unintelligible) I think it would help to clarify either in this letter or subsegment efforts, you know, what details of those review means?

Does it mean that a console asks staff to provide regular updates? Does it mean that there's going to be a non-PDP Working Group?

Does it mean that council periodically sends letters to staff when those things doesn't work? I think it will be helpful to clarify those either in the response or in other subsequent efforts. So that's a quick comment on that.

Jonathan Robinson: Thanks Steve. So you're saying we modify the letter to accommodate those comments or we just to clear what action rises from your comments?

Steve Sheng: I think it - the letter could be more specific what, you know, the GNSO consider its oversight or review those will be helpful. It brings more clarify. If it's more discussions then maybe, you know, subsequent efforts can tackle those.

Jonathan Robinson: Okay. Edmon you want to respond and then I think we've got to bring it to a close and take a break...

Edmon Chung: Just quickly I think at this point in time I think it will require a little more discussion and it won't fit into this letter.

I think both this ccNSO and GNSO that might be something that, you know, our regular council, two council meeting could start bringing up and say, you know, on this issue whether there are clarifications are needed. But probably not within this timeframe and in this letter.

Jonathan Robinson: Okay great. Thanks. Thank you Edmon. Thank you for the contributions, well done. Let's see if you've carried that time single-handily and you've pushed an important issue.

We're going to take a quick break now, got ten minutes. I hope you'll get a breath of fresh air and then a coffee. And then we've got an important session to come back and discuss our interaction with the board and the GAC. So see you in ten minutes everyone. Thanks a lot.

END