
PRAGUE – IDN Variant TLDs Program Update
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ICANN - Prague, Czech Republic

Dennis Jennings:

...I'd like to reiterate my invitation to those of you in the back of the room to come forward so that you're not in the gloom at the back and I can see you should you raise your hands. There are some seats at the front, there's seats round; that might make it a little bit more intimate and leave the seats at the back for the hordes of latecomers that we expect. This reminds me of a Catholic Mass in a country village; absolutely nobody in the church but the porch is packed. This is a local analogy, it may not make much sense to you but it appeals to me.

Alright, let's get started. Thank you for coming here. This session is on the IDN Variant TLDs program, to update you on the program; how we've revised the program based on the community feedback, and an update on the projects that we've prioritized for the program. So if we have a look at the first slide Francisco. The agenda for this session – and those of you who've seen me present at the GNSO and elsewhere will probably recognize this slide deck; except this time we're going to go through it a little more slowly and provide a little more detail and more time for questions and answers.

We're going to look at the program; going to present the projects that we hope we will complete in Fiscal Year 2013; that's calendar 2012-2013; quickly mention the projects that will follow on the hopefully successful completion of the prioritized projects; announce the team – I

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don't know where we are on the contracts, but to the extent that we can we'll announce the team of consultants for each of the projects and we'll tell you who's the staff on the project. We'll go through the call for volunteers for project 2.1 and then we'll open up the floor for questions and discussion.

And after that, and not later than 1:00, we will spend half an hour on an update, a more detailed update on project 6 and discuss that at some length. So if we look at the next slide I think we can skip that one. My name is Dennis Jennings; I think most of you may know me. So the background to the project is the previous project, the Variant Issues project, which was to facilitate the development of approaches to the deployment of IDN Variant TLDs, was initiated in 2010 by the ICANN Board of Directors decision. And the way we approached that project was to divide it into two parts.

The first part was to have six, initially it was five, we expanded it to six script case study teams from the community covering Chinese, Arabic, Devanagari, Latin, Greek and Cyrillic scripts, that's Unicode scripts. And have the teams with the support from ICANN staff look at the issues that arose in considering the deployment of IDN Variants. Those six case studies reported, produced excellent reports, did a lot of very hard work and I should reiterate how grateful we are to the members of the community who participated; did a lot of hard work in those case studies.

And then we went on to produce an Integrated Issues report, which was produced by the ICANN staff on the team with support from quite a number of the members of the six case study teams, script case studies,

to produce an integrated or summary issues report, which was published for comment just before the end of the year, and completed and published in February. And I would recommend very strongly that you read that report. It's not the easiest read, but it's very interesting and it provides a summary of the issues that were identified by the issues project.

The Integrated Issues report also highlighted a number of next steps that it recommended should be undertaken, and these are the next steps which form the basis for what we now call the IDN Variant TLD Program. So if we look at the next slide, the goal of this program is to define the processes that must be in place to enable the management of IDN TLDs with variants. And it's important to note, as a result of the public comment and feedback, that the work is focused on exchangeable code point variants only. That is code points that can be exchanged for other code points or short sequences of code points, generally one on one code points.

On the next slide we'll see the original timeline for this program and the original projects, and we're not going to leave that up for long because that was published in March for public comment and we were very pleased to get such a substantial amount of public comment which I think is summarized here on this slide on the screen. Summarizing those public comments there were five main areas of comment. One that the number of case studies and scripts should be expanded. And of course we're expanding it to all scripts in the Unicode tables. So we're following that recommendation.

A lot of comments about the necessity to support IDN Variant TLDs to minimize user confusion and fraudulent use, which of course is very high on our agenda and very high on the set of issues that are identified in the case studies. The third point was to prioritize code point variants over whole string variants. In the case studies and in the Integrated Issues report, we identified, the teams identified two general categories of variants. Those that were code point, exchangeable code point variants arising from the substitution of one code point by another code point, and the different class of variants which were to do with the characteristics of the whole string.

These characteristics being things like synonyms or dialectic variations and so on. In the Integrated Issues report the team highlighted the fact that it was very difficult to conceive of a deterministic way of arriving at what was a whole string variant. There was no precise definition. And keeping that on the timeline would have delayed the project. So the public comments said “really this isn’t as important as prioritizing the code point variants, so defer consideration of whole string variants and prioritize exchangeable code point variants” and as you’ll see that’s what we have done.

A lot of comments about individual community needs in various ways, and comments about the advantages and disadvantages to various script communities; all about the idea that some communities are ready to proceed, or assert that they are ready for some definition of ready to proceed more rapidly than other communities and they shouldn’t be disadvantaged because they are ready. And of course the completely opposite that some communities need to be advantaged and not disadvantaged by allowing others to rush ahead without putting a lot of

work into perhaps very minority languages that use some of these Unicode scripts. And obviously we're going to do the best we can in the program.

We then published the revised program plan and we received feedback on that. That public comment closed just recently and we hope to have an analysis of the public comment and publish that analysis, summary and analysis as soon as possible after Prague. The feedback we received is summarized here "to accommodate individual processes for different script communities". Much along the same earlier comments, some communities are more prepared than others, so accommodate that. A concern that the IDN Variant TLDs program move ahead rapidly enough so that the first IDN Variant TLDs could be included in the first batch of delegated new gTLDs in the current new gLD program.

I think that's an optimistic goal. I think that's unlikely to be achieved, although as I've commented in other presentations, if the new gTLD program continues to be delayed by various unfortunate events, then that may happen by default, but I think it's unlikely that the first IDN Variant TLD will be delegated at the same time as the first batch of new gTLDs. But we'll see.

Comments on working with technical and language communities, and that's both obvious and exactly what we will do, just as in the issues project and in the case studies and in the Integrated Issues report. We will be heavily dependent on the community input to these projects to help us define various things and to participate. So this will be a very large, global community effort and we're very hopeful that just as we achieved in the issues project that we will get the support of the

community to participate widely and to contribute to this project. We also hope that organizations around the world will also provide local support to their communities. Not to participate necessarily in the ICANN aspects of it, but to support their local communities with communication, travel locally and meetings and facilities locally as well.

And further comments on terminology, we, in the first version of the program, we I think still in the second version that's published, indeed yes, still in the second version we reverted to using the terminology IDN tables, IDN Variant tables. And we got comments that it would be better to use the more precise terms that were developed in the issues reports, particularly in the Integrated Issues report, using the term "code point repertoire" for the code points and "label generation rule set" for the set of rules to do with exchangeable code points, which rules may indeed be expressed in tables, but that's an implementation detail.

So, looking at the next slide, we see that we revised the project plan based on the feedback to the first project plan to focus on the issues on the critical path. We've kept the same project numbering, just in case you're wondering, and we're still calling it the IDN Table Format 2. I think we will revert to "label generation rule set 2", but Kim will talk about that. That's project P1. A significant technical challenge, and the most important challenge, is the process for creating the label generation rule set of the tables for the root, and that's Project 2.1, and we'll talk about that in a lot more detail.

Now note we're talking about the process, how we go about that, in order to agree that, with the community, a later project would be

actually to fill out the rule set so that it can be used to implement the IDN Variant TLDs. And the third project on the critical path is a project on the user experience with active variants. An attempt to define first of all what is an acceptable user experience and then to explore the issues around a user experience and we'll talk about that in a lot of detail, and to reprioritize the other projects.

So I think the next slide has the revised timeline as of now, the three critical projects which need to be completed first before we can actually move on to any implementation are there in sort of pale green. Then there's the critical milestone around April 2013 where it will be a "go, no-go" point. We are hopeful that it will be a go, that these projects will be successful and we can move on to the follow-on projects, and our overall target is to achieve that on or around that timeframe.

And then there are the follow-on projects which we mention very briefly. So on the next slide we are going to talk about the projects to be completed in this coming 12 months, and the first of those is Project P1; I think that's the next slide, which is the label generation rule set table format specification. And I'm going to ask Kim, Kim Davies to talk about that.

Kim Davies:

Thanks Dennis. So essentially what Project One is about, is identifying a way that we can express all the different IDN table formats that exist today in one common format. Today there's a number of IDN tables, most of them being submitted to a repository that's on the IANA website and they all represent different ways that different registries are checking both for code point eligibility for registration and also the

methodologies that they use for generating sets of variants. Now, there's no common approach to doing this, and of all the different formats that have been somewhat used today, there's known deficiencies in those that mean that they can't be used to express the entire set of registry policies and registry approaches that we know about.

So as a precursor to implementing some kind of process in the root, which we're making the assumption will likely involve taking a lot of the existing body of work in terms of eligible code points and variant approaches and then merging them or somehow using them together, we identified a need to have some approach where ICANN can take those different tables and use them in its tools and use them in its processes. Independently of that we also know of a general desire that's been the case for many years from the community to have a more developed IDN table format available to them, independent of the work on the variant IDN project.

So with all that in mind, we started developing this format designed to represent all the available tables. We did a survey of all the IDN tables and IDN approaches we're aware of. That analysis went into writing a first draft of a particular format; it's published as an internet draft right now. That draft has since been revised and as of right now, I'm aware of a few additional requirements that have been expressed to me just in the last few weeks. So I suspect a third version of that document will likely be published in the new two weeks.

The idea is ultimately we're seeking to settle on a particular format, be confident that it represents all the likely scenarios in which the table

format needs to support, and then either seek publication as an RFC, presumably informational, or otherwise publish it to the community. In tandem with this, for our own purposes although we are sharing it with the world, we're creating an implementation of the tables so that we have a toolkit associated with the table format where essentially you take a table, you take a string, you input them into the tool and the tool will tell you is it eligible or not eligible and it will also compute the set of variants as appropriate.

It will also do table manipulations so you can for example feed in multiple tables and it will merge them together, identify conflicts and so forth. So that's where we are with this project. I really would appreciate a review particularly of the standard to identify firstly does it meet any requirements that you have, and also for those that have already implemented approaches to variants or something similar, that the table format as described can support the way your registry operates. I think if we settle on a format and then discover later that there is a significant user that can't use it because it misses a particular feature than that would be disappointing.

So please review the document and contribute and then I think this will be a useful precursor to go into the other project.

Dennis Jennings:

Thanks Kim. And where will people find this document?

Kim Davies: So it's published in the ITF internet draft repository. Obviously I probably should have provided you some slides. It's under the name "Draft-Davies-IDN Tables".

Dennis Jennings: So, "Draft-Davies-IDN Tables", okay right. So good, thank you very much indeed. We'll take questions later on, let's move on to the Project 2.1, which is the process for creating and maintaining the label generation rule set of the IDN tables for the root zone; the root, root zone in fact in this slide – I didn't spot that. Well, just to hammer home the point, it's for the root, root zone. Francisco, would you tell us about Project 2.1?

Francisco Arias: Thank you Dennis. This project is about to develop the common framework, the common process that is needed to define variants in the root. For example, to define what community should be based on script, language, or some other criteria. Also other things, like for example, whether there should be some expert ruling on the tables or should the tables be just accepted directly from the community without any review. Other things that need to be identified here and defined for example where there has to be a limitation on the script property for example in Unicode that's not necessarily an exact match with the script as used the word in the right instance for humans; there is a big overlap, it's not exactly the same.

So there has to be a decision where that's important or not. And there are more issued that are described in the issue report about the kind of things that need to be defined in this process. As I mentioned this is the

common framework for determining variants in the root. The idea is that there will be a follow-on project for which Dennis is going to talk about later, that will be then focused on the specific communities as defined in this process, so those communities can populate the label generation rules for their use.

Another important thing to mention on this project is that we are issuing a call for volunteers for people interested in helping us with the development of this process. We are, there is a slide later on in the presentation that contains the URL for you to check. It will be interesting if you can read and see if you can participate if you are interested in participating, or if you know someone else that would be interested, that would be very helpful. Let me now talk a little bit about the proposed milestones for the project.

We are aiming to have the rough straw man proposal or perhaps we should not call it proposal at this point, but just a highlight of the risks and trade-offs of the different approaches that can be taken on this process by the end of July. That's one month from now. It's a little bit aggressive and we'll see how we go with this. And then doing August we plan to have the first round of consultations with the volunteers, which by the way we aim to have selected by the second half of July. During August we will refine the process or build based on the feedback received from the volunteers, perhaps having a face to face meeting at the end of the month.

And then during September we will publish the first public version of the draft for public comment. Then we will have a second round of consultations with the volunteers during September and October. We

are planning to have a second face to face meeting with the group just previous to the Toronto meeting, probably on the Friday and Saturday previous to the meeting, again trying to refine better this draft process. Then we intend to publish again for public comment on November; again, a review based on the public comments received in March [before] the final process.

This is the highlights from the project. Thank you.

Dennis Jennings:

Thank you Francisco. For those of you who would like to look at this more closely, there's a very good section in the Integrated Issues report which details a number of the possible approaches and some of the characteristics that may need to be examined in identifying that approach, largely written by Andrew Sullivan who is here with us and who might later on respond to some questions about that. But it really is an eye-opener to read that document and see the complexity of what we're trying to do just on the process side. So moving on to the next project, which is Project P6, and I'm going to ask Steve Sheng to describe this project to us.

Steve Sheng:

Thank you Dennis. This study responds to important issues raised in the Integrated Issues report; that is should the variant TLDs be activated. Many user roads will be impacted. The Integrated Issues report identifies some of these typical roads, such as registrants, registries and registrars, but also some of the additional roads that people don't even think about; application developers, system administrators. So the goal

of this project is to do a deep dive to understand what are the specific impacts to those user roads.

The expected outcome of the project is first a set of recommended rules of guidelines a TLD should operate under, a variant TLD should operate under in order to provide an acceptable user experience. And second, to the extent possible, a useful reference for education, application developers and others affected by these changes. We kick off this project in late May. We have contracted Sarmad Hussain, Professor Sarmad Hussain who is a [professor in hat] at the Center of Language, Engineering at the University of Engineering and Technology in Pakistan.

And also, Mark Blanchette who is a member of the Internet Architecture Board, and also a member of the Internationalization Program to help us. Next slide...So the first task that we do is we develop a detailed study proposal on how to scope these issues and propose methodology to understand, to address these issues. We circulated the proposal to the open VIP mailing list last week, which Sarmad and Mark is going to present in more detail later on. We have used the Prague meeting as a useful venue to consult with many members of the community on this proposal, and we're really grateful of the feedback we received so far. And we continue to welcome your feedback.

One of the important – through this consultation process we realized the timeline we had here is probably too aggressive, and so we're looking, taking the feedback into consideration, we're looking to revise the timeline which we'll publish with the final project plan. So with that, I'll give it back to Dennis.

Dennis Jennings:

Thank you very much indeed. The VIP list, that's our list for a general open list for everybody's who's interested to monitor what's going on. How do people sign up to that list: I don't remember? Can you remember Steve? We'll come back to that. Okay so please note that there is a VIP list; we'll come back to you before the end of the meeting with information on how to sign up and that, and that's where you will be able to monitor what's going on, ask questions and participate as a general member of the community.

Okay so those are the three critical projects that have to be completed before we can move forward, are on the critical path, and nothing can be done until we finish those two projects. Following on from those projects, there's Project 2.2, which is actually taking the process that's agreed by the community and populating the root zone or the tables. And then Project 7, updating the programs to reflect whatever we've learned from these projects, and Project 8, updating ICANNs operations to cope with the handling requests for and processing IDN Variant TLD applications.

So those are our follow-on projects. We don't have details of those yet; they're heavily dependent of what we learn the prioritized projects for the coming year. So the next slide talks about issues that we have already identified and that are going to have to be addressed. This is something that we will communicate to the community as we go along, and we expect that other issues will be identified and we've already promised the ccNSO and the GNSO and the advisory committees that as we identify issues we will communicate them.

We think, our best current thinking is that these issues can be addressed within the current policy framework, but we're not 100 percent sure of that, so there may be policy issues here that have to be addressed, and here's a list of some of them. The first is the atomicity of the IDN Variant TLD sets, by which we mean is such a set an indivisible unit, an atom, so that it challenges to any aspect, any element in the set is a challenge to the whole set. It's not possible to break it apart. It exists as an atomic unit; an important issue.

What are the conditions for delegating? Clearly there will be technical conditions that will come out of the projects we're going, and there will be others as well. Dear to people's hearts, the evaluation requirements and fees – I think the policy framework of cost recovery is applicable, but exactly what the evaluation requirements are will come out of some of our projects. And the fees, I expect will be based on cost. And then the question is what additional work does ICANN have to do to process an IDN Variant TLD – additional or less work that ICANN has to do to process an IDN Variant TLD request.

Ongoing fees for registries and registrars, requirements for registries and registrars and whether these are expressed in contracts or convention are issues that will come out of this work. Issues for WHOIS, WHOIS output and I know there is work already going on in WHOIS, but I'm sure we'll have thoughts to contribute and issues and requirements to contribute to that. And then rights protection mechanisms – what if there is a right, a trademark that somebody wants to protect which is a variant of a TLD, and how is that handled. And I think that brings us right back to the first point, whether a variant TLD set is an atomic indivisible unit or not.

So, we'll keep people apprised of progress here. Now next slide talks about the call for volunteers for developing the root table or root label generation rule set for Project 2.1. We're seeking – Francisco, do you want to tell us a little about this?

Francisco Arias:

Sure. So we are seeking volunteers with expertise listed here; it's similar to what we did with the issues report with looking for experts on DNS, IDN, linguistics, Unicode with the understanding of the ICANN process, including policy development, given the nature of the work. We released this a few days ago and the end of the deadline for receiving the expressions of interest in the 13th of July. There is the URL there. I encourage you to read it and see if you are interested, and I think that's it.

Dennis Jennings:

Thank you Francisco. Yes we have significant amount of interest from the community already, but we'd like everybody who feels that they have an interest and an expertise and an ability to contribute to put their name forward. We're very determined that this will be a global, community driven project, so please, if you have interest, ability and availability please volunteer. We have quite a number of responses already. I don't know how we're going to build the team from that set of responses, we don't want it too large, we don't want it too small, we don't too many people from one community. We want broad representation but we'll do our best and we will announce the list of volunteers as soon after July 13th as we can.

Okay, next slide is questions. Cary – please introduce yourself for the record if you would, and let’s have your question.

Cary Karp:

Okay, Cary Karp for the record. I have two questions. There are two issues here that seem to be external to a variant project. And if there indeed is going to be a prescriptive listing of code points within which variant relationships might be identified, is that really the VIP issue? Isn’t this sort of either to the left of it or on top of it or under it or to the right of it but not inside of it, which is a variant form of the next question which is this notion of atomicity? Are you talking about creating a molecule, defining some sort of a hierarchal relationship that can never be split back into atoms, or do you really mean atomic in which case the concept of variant is not defined. These are two code points that are the same for the purposes of the operations on the root that are going to be involved in the process.

The notion of preferential participation in a molecular structure that you are calling atomic doesn’t quite work, or does it. I mean that’s the question.

Dennis Jennings:

I think I need notice of that question Cary. I think you and I need to sit aside and discuss that. I am not quite sure what you mean and I’m not quite sure how to answer you therefore. Let me pass it on to my colleagues. Francisco, do you have thoughts about this?

Francisco Arias: Well actually I was going to ask if you could elaborate more on the question. I'm not sure I understand.

Cary Karp: Okay, during the earlier VIP work, we spoke in terms of there being a preferential code point. I mean this is the code point and for some definable set of purposes another code point needs to be equivalent to it. But if the resulting is molecular, sorry, atomic, how do you note the preferentiality of one of the code points over the other?

Francisco Arias: But I thought you were referring to the issue of what's listed in a previous slide, this – are you talking about this?

Cary Karp: I'm talking about two things. I'm talking about two issues that seem to me to be outside of variant study. The one is deriving the parent listing of code points. This is the repertoire of Unicode code points permissible for inclusion in labels that are encoded and then parked in the root. Within that repertoire there will be selected code points that may need to be treated as equivalent again under certain clearly defined conditions, and I would have thought that determination to be the focus of a VIP study, not the collation of the parent repertoire.

Dennis Jennings: I think we have to do both. And that's the assumption and we need to talk more about it. When we talk about the atomicity – difficulty in that word – we're talking about the sets of variants that arise from these

processes. One of which may be a preferred variant; these are the strings, not the code points. So these are the TLD sets. Having gone through this process you may have a set of TLDs, one of which is preferred, one of which is equivalent the other are blocked – and so that’s the set I’m talking about.

Cary Karp:

That’s what’s got me confused then because I thought we were talking about code point equivalents, not concatenated code points as being equivalent; one sequence of concatenated code points being equivalent to another sequence of concatenated code points. And again, if I’m confused on this, probably others might be.

Dennis Jennings:

Indeed, and therefore I think we should sit down and try and clarify it outside of this meeting, because I’m not quite sure I fully understand and therefore I’d like to move onto other questions and you and I need to talk. So having fumbled that question, who else has got a question for me? Yes please again, remind people to introduce themselves.

Hiro Hotta:

My name is Hiro from .jp ccTLD registry. I may have missed what was said, but I believe that some IDN ccTLDs, which are Orient, are already delegated and on the root zone. So have they already been active and if so is it running in the expected way as variants?

Dennis Jennings: The only variants that variant TLDs that have been delegated and activated are the pair of Chinese character variants for .china and .taiwan; a pair of simplified and traditional TLDs which have been delegated. And I understand the experience with those is pretty good. I understand that the way that they have been managed as a pair is working out very satisfactorily. Francisco, do you have any additional comment? No? No additional comment? Andrew do you want to comment?

Andrew Sullivan: My name is Andrew Sullivan. I thought that those were explicitly not variant. They were simply two related delegations that were somehow linked together but the entire question of whether they were variants was in fact reserved.

Dennis Jennings: It's been finessed, yes you're right.

Andrew Sullivan: I just want to be very cautious about this because we haven't developed the rules and if we don't have the rules then we can't actually determine whether something is a variant.

Francisco Arias: Yes, you're right Andrew. I guess we could say they are potential variants according to that because we don't have yet the process to define those. I guess what we could say here is we have two

experiences that would be very helpful in understanding the issue given that the pair definition of this pair of TLDs.

Dennis Jennings: Thank you Andrew. Question?

Edmon Chung: Thank you, this is Edmon Chung. I just wanted to actually respond back to what Cary mentioned earlier. I think using the word “atomicity” might itself be a little bit confusing. So perhaps one of the things is to not try to continue to use that. The other point I actually question is I think one of the things in terms of table that the schedule, I saw action in July, August, September and November and then there was a long time before it was actually published in March, yes that’s when. What’s the anticipated work between November and March that requires four months period?

Francisco Arias: Oh yeah, so the public comment period and given the fact that there are holidays there, so meaning since November it’s by the end of November, so the process will take, the complete process takes some time.

Edmon Chung: Okay it just seemed like a big gap where you have public comments in September as well and you continue to do work. Just curious if that could be moved earlier, or is that because of some anticipated Board discussion until it could be finally published.

Dennis Jennings: No it's simply as Francisco said that the public comment and revision just takes time. If we can pull it forward Edmon we certainly will, let me assure you. Please go ahead, question.

Wei Wang: This is Wei Wang from CNNIC and also from CDNC. My question is there are about 46 Chinese domain name applications for new gTLD and most of them follow the CDNC model, that is just apply a simplified or traditional forms and waiting for your solution from the VIP about the variants. But I also noticed that some applications is applied for both; for example [Shangrudiy] Hotel, both in traditional and simplified.

I'm not sure what kind of batching solution ICANN will have, single batching or go on the digital archery, but they probably will start an evaluation job in the season. So I just wonder what is the VIPs opinion about should they evaluate them both or just they should evaluate just one of them and wait for the variant solutions after you finish the whole VIP job.

Dennis Jennings: Thank you for the question. Unfortunately I'm not able to impart or authorized to discuss in any way the new gTLD program. I'm aware of the situation that you've described, but I cannot comment on it. But I'm sure that the new gTLD program people are also very much aware of it and will find a way of dealing appropriately with it. I know that's a sort of non-answer answer, but that's the best I can do at this point. Please go ahead.

Vladimir Shadrinov: Vladimir Shadrinov. I just wanted to highlight a possible logistical issue. I noticed that you'll be publishing the team for the Project 2.1 sometime in July and then there is a meeting in Marina del Rey sometime in August, which only leaves one month between the publication and the meeting. So presumably some of the team members will be coming from countries that need a Visa to come to the US and this is not really sufficient timeframe between that. I don't know how you're going to proceed with that, but that might be an issue.

Dennis Jennings: Thank you for highlighting that. Francisco, do you want to comment on that?

Francisco Arias: Right, yeah well I guess we are being a little bit aggressive on the timeliness as you suggested. I'm not sure what to say at this point. We will aim to have it on the end of August. If we need to move it one week or two I think we may be able to accommodate it without too much trouble in the overall agenda of the program.

Dennis Jennings: But it's a good point and the United States of America is not the easiest country for some people to enter, so thank you for reminding of that and we will do our best to address that issue at the earliest opportunity.

Vladimir Shadrinov: Thank you.

Dennis Jennings: Andrew, please identify yourself.

Andrew Sullivan: My name is Andrew Sullivan. I just, there was some grief about this work atomicity and since nobody is talking I thought I would. I thought that would be amusing. I think the reason for that word atomicity is not by analogy with physical atoms; it may be my fault for introducing it because I'm an old database geek and when I think of atomicity I think of transactions. So I think that that's actually probably the inspiration for that. So if somebody has a better word for that and you want a different word that was the origin of my thinking about that; that these things go around together and if one fails to commit the whole thing fails to commit. If you want a better word for that maybe think about those in those terms.

Dennis Jennings: Thanks Andrew. Inseparable – is that the word we want? Perhaps. Seeing no great demand for more questions I'd like to move on to the second part, which is to discuss in more detail the study proposal for P6. So Steve, over to you and your team to handle this. Before we do that have we any more information on the consultants and the experts? We announced some of the names. Francisco have you anymore information?

Francisco Arias: So on (inaudible) we are also planning to have a group of consultants to help us with the work, but we are still in the process to finalize the contracts. So I would not like to mention names yet since we don't have that process finalized.

Dennis Jennings: Sure, thank you. But we would expect to announce names as soon as possible.

Francisco Arias: Yes. To give more information here we already have the candidates identified and we are working with them to finalize the contracts.

Dennis Jennings: Thank you. Steve, over to you.

Steve Sheng: Thank you, Dennis. I will let Sarmad to present, but let me pull up this. Do you need this?

Sarmad Hussain: Thank you Dennis and Steve. So we are going to talk a little bit more about P6, which is a study to look at the possible impact on user experience if variant TLDs are introduced. Next slide please. So basically the study would look at this from various contexts. The first question to answer is obviously what is an acceptable user experience. Once the yardstick is set, once it's defined what an acceptable user experience is then we need to look at gaps basically in the context of

technology, policy, contracts which exist and see how clarifying some of the follow up work. Next slide please.

So, just to look at this problem or define this problem a little more clearly, obviously there is an IDN space we're talking about. There's also this variant space, which we're talking about. And in addition to this there is actually this top level domain space which we're talking about. So the scope of this project is actually not across all these different domains, but around the intersection of these three different domains, which is highlighted by this dark circle here.

And so even though are scope strictly talks about the intersection of these three areas. What we anticipate is that when we get into the study we will have to look a little bit outside of this strict intersection and also look at some of the things which are around this slightly liberal view to this strict intersection. Next slide please. So the starting point for determining the user experience is to actually start looking at usability and system acceptability and how these things are defined. And then start looking at our context and start refining these definitions to perhaps more precisely understand what we mean by user experience and the context of variant TLDs, IDN Variant TLDs.

Next slide please. And this is obviously not very straightforward to do. So once we define what are the dimensions of what is the framework through, which we are going to look at this particular problem, the next step is to define what are the potential user rules, which actually get impacted once the variant TLDs are introduced. And this is a tentative list of users which will have potential impact – it includes, obviously, the end users who access content online.

It also includes registrants which register for domain names. Includes registrars, resellers, proxy/privacy providers, registries, dispute resolution providers and then people who are also working at the back and including implication developers, system administrators, network managers and security and restrictors, law enforcement agencies and so on. And so this is a very wide range of users and obviously as you can see the challenge of this project would be to identify what is that right set of users which we need to study and once we've actually grappled with that fact that who the relevant users are, we then what we need to do is start looking at what is the possible impact of introducing IDN variant TLD for those specific users.

What we aim to do at this time obviously is to identify how each of these users will be interacting with the domain name system; so what are all the different use cases. And then perhaps identifying with each use cases whether there is an impact caused for that use case if variants introduced in the DNS. So this is an example of an end user; it's a simplistic view of this potentially most challenging end user role which we will probably face, so an end user can read a domain name or write a domain name. So those are two possible users this role has. But hidden behind these two simple use cases are a variety of things which cause a lot of complications, for example, understanding language versus script level because TLDs are going to be most likely defined at script level, but the user is going to come from a language perspective.

So how is that going to connect when users in access variants? There will obviously be font limitations, input matter limitations, look in limitations and many other limitations when end users access variants online. This is an example of some of the tentative ways a registrant for

example would be interacting with the domain name system. A registrant may register a domain name. A registrar in itself may complicate issues because now instead of the current process obviously is that registrant goes online or goes physically to a place and requests for a particular label for a domain name.

But in this case, when a request is placed the registrant will be responded, perhaps by the registrar, with maybe 1000 variants and asked to choose between them and how a registrar is going to react to that, how would that be enabled perhaps online. So there are many interesting questions which will arise and which need to be addressed before obviously any of these variant TLDs are introduced and so on.

And so these are some of the use cases which a registrar may face. So these are some examples of how we are thinking about approaching these problems, so we obviously will try to understand what are the different uses each user has, and then in that context, try to define what are possible impacts. And then once we know what the possible impacts there are, what the gaps are in the current technology policy and contracts to where we need to be. Then we obviously need to have some thoughts or we need to do some thinking about how we bridge those gaps.

So this is the very initial stage of this study. We're still at this time for example grappling with the definition of what user acceptance itself is in the context of domain name systems – who the users are, what their uses are in the context of domain names which are relevant for variants, and these are exactly the things which we are requesting all of you to consider and give us feedback on this as we go ahead and go forward on

this work. There is for that purpose, or the purpose of your feedback, we've put a draft outline for you to read through, to look through and provide feedback on.

So there is the URL up in front of you which has links to this outline. Please go through it. Please send us feedback at this list, which forwards your feedback to all people involved in the project. If you want you can please feel free to contact any one of us individually here or otherwise my email and we'd love to hear more from you in this context. So thank you and we'll take any questions.

Male:

Any questions, comments? Edmon?

Edmon Chung:

Yeah this is Edmon Chung speaking. Thank you, Sarmad. I think it's a very good start and then quite the extent of which is a very good beginning for this particular project. A couple of things – you did identify the three circles that sort of some of the issues are IDN and some are variants and some are TLD and we're focusing on the intersection of which. It's I think as we go along, some of the things that you pointed out, there are likely going to be, we are likely going to look at issues that may not be specifically about the TLD or items that identify specifically for IDN Variant TLDs, but I think what is important, I think there are important issues to be looked at and also included in the studies.

But it is also important to include in the studies a distinction between what is specifically issues on the TLD level versus a general IDN Variant

issue. That's one thing and the other thing is, I wonder, some of the items as actually you mentioned as well might even be even broader and I think I encourage the team to take a look at it, but also to identify them as separate. The other thing is you mentioned that these are some of the issues that might be prevalent on even ASCII domains potentially. So perhaps some of the things that we might need to do is comparison of what is the normal, a normal sort of, how should I say, when you do an experiment you have a normal.

That might be one of the things that we need to think about as well so that we don't create, when we identify the issues about IDN Variant TLDs we don't confuse it with issues that have a broader scope.

Dennis Jennings:

Thank you Edmon. Sarmad, Mark, any response?

Sarmad Hussain:

So one remark each for both of your comments. First of all what we're going to do for TLDs, yes we do understand that some of it is going to be applicable in second level and third level, and if something is likely to propagate downwards or have a broader influence we will definitely point that out in the report. And do you want to comment?

Mark:

I think if you take the point of view of the user, the user doesn't only type TLDs. It types domain names, URLs and stuff. So obviously we cannot separate the user with only the TLD. So having said that, at the same time our focus is on the issues related to IDN Variant TLDs. So

we're not mandating to talk about everything, so we need to be careful in the scope. So it's a more restricted scope.

Dennis Jennings: Edmon you have a response?

Edmon Chung: Yeah, Edmon here. I'm actually encouraging you to do the study, but in the policy aspect of which it would inform the policy if you can identify which part specifically is the TLD; that's what I'm trying to drive at and I agree that it has...thank you.

Dennis Jennings: Agreed. Andrew?

Steve Sheng: Any other questions, feedback? Please, Han Chuan?

Han Chuan Lee: Han Chuan from Singapore, just a question. The Project 6 is to look at a user experience but you are using the definition for usability and also ISOC has a definition of what user experience is. Why the usability versus user experience; why do you choose the other definition?

Steve Sheng: Probably ignorance. The usability, the user experience is probably a larger circle and usability is a smaller set of the larger user experience. And one of the reasons we want to focus on usability is because usually

those are quantifiable and measurable. But given that said, I'm not aware of the ISOC also has a definition of user experience, so I'll definitely look that up. Thanks. Any other questions, feedback? Well so we really...

Dennis Jennings: We have one more question Steve.

Steve Sheng: Please. It's a question from remote.

Wendy Profit: Hi this is Wendy Profit, speaking on behalf of the remote participant Joseph Yi. Comment – "Probably just need to continue expanding use case, but it seems the slides focus a lot to registration process and lack of internet service providers experiences in three fronts." That's it.

Male: Alright. So if the person who asked the question is going to the URL and see the document it actually has multiple roles and start of use cases for all the others, so what we presented are just an extraction of the few user roles. So we agree and it's already in, so please comment and review as much we would really like to have.

Dennis Jennings: Thank you very much Steve. So please do comment. And even if you think something is covered and you have a comment, feel free to have a comment on it. We want to encourage people to raise their queries and

comments and to initiate a dialogue. So I mentioned the VIP mailing list and there's the information you need to join the VIP mailing list, so I won't read it out, but there's where you go and I presume it's pretty obvious and you follow your nose and you end up as a member of the VIP list. Yeah?

Good stuff. Thank you very much indeed. We've managed to finish in good time and before the scheduled time. I regard that as good. If there are any other individual questions that people would like to ask and are a bit too shy to come up to the microphone, we'll hang around for a few minutes. So if you want to come up to the table here and talk to us please feel free to do so. Thank you very much.

[End of Transcript]