ICANN73 | Virtual Community Forum – GNSO RySG: Brand Registry Group: Competition in the gTLD Space
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With that, I will hand the floor over Martin Sutton. Please begin, Martin.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thank you, Julie. And thanks, all, for joining us today. If it's still Wednesday for you, great. If it's Thursday, you may be a bit mad, but you're very welcome. And it's lovely to see you here.

Now, today's session is very much about looking forward but also having a bit of a reflection on the last number of years and, in that time period, looking not just at ICANN and what affects us directly but perhaps a wider perspective. So in the last ten years, we've seen growth in artificial intelligence. We've seen virtual reality, the explosion of the cloud, the changes from 4G to 5G, electrical vehicles. So who now talks to their car and plugs it in at night? We've got smart homes with virtual assistants. So you may talk to your lightbulb or your refrigerator. You now talk to your watch and communicate with it. So all Star Trekkers are delighted with that.

But on top of that, you've got fitness tracking and health monitoring all from that same device. Wireless is great. I'm so pleased not to have so many wires cluttering up my desk and home. And wireless has helped us achieve those sorts of things. I'm terrible, though, with recharging everything. The family of gadgets every night don't get the attention they need. So often I find I have to revert to some of the wires/devices I still have.

And more recently we've had to deal with COVID. Now that's driven our tendency further for the digital world, remote working, grocery shopping, virtual meetings (which we love, I know). And these are just a few examples. So in the last ten years, a lot has changed in that decade.

And what we need to recognize is that the world does keep moving on, and innovation does continue.

Now, a couple of weeks ago, the Registry Stakeholder Group hosted a session in Prep Week, which was really to celebrate the ten year since the new gTLDs launched in 2012. It was, I think, an enjoyable reflection, quite nostalgic at times, and reflected on what an exciting time that was. It was challenging, but actually it was the ICANN community that made it all happen, made it work. And from that session, we got a lot of lovely feedback. If you were unable to join us, I do recommend that you take a look at the recording. It was really a celebration of all of the hard work and achievements and really giving personally insights—limited to a few people, obviously, but I think shared amongst many that had similar experiences and personal insights at that time.

So to some extent, today we will be reflecting on the past but taking also a look at what is happening going forward and how that may affect us in the industry with a particular focus on our journey forward and the impact on competition in our space.

So I'm really pleased to welcome, today, Tom Barrett, Martin Kuechenthal, and Peter LaMantia to help discuss this, present, and engage with you all. So one of the things that we were keen on doing here is to make it conversational, to make it open, so you've got the ability to put in questions to the chat. And all of the good questions, the interesting questions, the fun questions that see, no doubt, will go to the top for us to try to push into discussion as we go forward. And what we'll do is, during the session, stop and do some Q&A with you all. So

that gives you an opportunity to inject to the conversation as we go along rather than stack it all up at the end where we sometimes and often run out of time to encourage that engagement.

So I'll turn to each of them now in turn just to introduce themselves. So it I can start with Tom, then we'll go to Martin, and then Peter.

TOM BARRETT: Thanks, Martin. And welcome, everybody. And so I am Tom Barrett, President of EnCirca, which I founded in 2001. And we specialize in what I would call the regulated top-level domains offered, oftentimes partnering with those registries with some custom engineering to enable their business model. I'm also Chair of the Blockchain Committee for the International Trademark Association and very active in the blockchain space.

So Martin asked that we also share with you our most fascinating gadget that we've been using. And I can hold this up and show it to you right now. This is what's called a hardware wallet. And soon all of you are going to have one of these. And if you don't, all of your kids will and your grandkids will because this is how you are going to manage your cryptocurrency, this is how you're going to manage your NFTs, and this is how you're going to traverse the metaverses out there and control your digital identity and how you share your information with. So this gadget is going to be as ubiquitous as the cell phone is today.

Thank you very much.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thank you, Tom. I'll go to Martin.

MARTIN KUECHENTHAL: Thank you, Martin S. This is Martin K. speaking (so there's no confusion). Thank you very much for having me. I'm the co-founder and CEO of LEMARIT, a German-based ICANN accredited registrar and also having an [approved ISP] within the ICANN world. And we're specialized in digital brand protection since 2002. So we just celebrated our 20-year birthday, actually, last week. And for those who want to participate, there's a really nice [inaudible] going on on LinkedIn. So I invite you to join.

On the side, I hold a seat in the Executive Board of DENIC and also on the Board of Directors in the BRG because dot-brands is one of my favorites. I'm really looking forward to what's happening there in the future because we have been deeply involved in the past. And I'm looking forward to talking a little bit about what happened the last ten years in our industry from a very high-level perspective.

And Martin asked for the gadget. And prior to 2020, my favorite gadget was a small device sitting in my suitcase to have a life tracking where my suitcase was going when I was traveling. And since the two years, it shows the same position. And that's very sad. And I hope that changes very, very, very soon.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thank you, Martin. And congratulations for 20 years. And let's hope that tracker has got a battery in it to record what happens this year because let's hope there's a bit more movement for it. Thank you.

Peter, over to you.

PETER LAMANTIA: Thanks, Martin. Hi, everybody. And I agree. I can't wait to see all these faces in person pretty soon. My name is Peter LaMantia. I'm CEO of Authentic Web. We're a domain registrar but with a real focus on really empowering teams to address security risks and compliance gaps on the DNS. We all know how difficult it is to understand what's going on in your zone file, so we built a lot of tools related to that.

On the brand TLD front, I operate as the Chair of the Best Practices Committee for the BRG, working with committee members, and working with clients to help develop strategies and business cases. And in ten years, it's a good thing that we've got the gig to deal with the security side because I'm a huge proponent of the [inaudible] brand TLDs.

Martin asked me to share some stuff on that today, which I'll do and look forward to it. In terms of gadgets, I think I might be a little boring. But I look at this thing—an iPhone 13—and I just can't believe how these things have evolved. Martin mentioned Star Trek. When I was a kid, I used to watch that and I'd think, "Man, if we could ever get to the point where we have real communicators, that would really be something."

Well, the iPhone 13 has got much more than that except that transferring is done with the planet surface.

So, good to be here. Good to see everybody.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thank you, Peter. Yeah, beam us up, Scotty.

So thank you for the introductions there. That's great. And I think this is a very rich discussion that we're about to entertain here. But let's try and think about what have been some of the key characteristics of change in recent times that are close to the Internet world but perhaps not so much a focal point for ICANN and the DNS as such that we're familiar with.

So I think what would be useful … And know, Tom, you presented some of this yesterday to another audience, and, for some, it may be repeating that, but it'd be lovely if we could have a look at the decentralization effect caused by blockchain and alternative roots and how that's building up and what we could expect to happen in the future.

So should we switch? I think you've got a few slides to talk us through that so that we're all familiar with the landscape here. Perhaps if we start with that and then I'll go into a few questions for the panel. And then we'll open up to the audience after this particular segment.

TOM BARRETT: Thanks, Martin. And just as a quick introduction, you know all about the emergence of cryptocurrency and NFTs. And there's things like decentralized finance and supply chain to combat counterfeiting. And now we're hearing about metaverses. And so what I will try to do today is to give you an idea of what I think is motivating all of these innovations into what's called the decentralized web and who's really passionate about realizing the utopia of this decentralized web.

And so if you go to the next slide here, I think this pretty much captures what is going on. If you're not paying for a product, you are the product. And so this is what happens on the Internet today. And consumers are fed up. They're fed up that they spend time on social media and they find out they're being monetized. Their personal information is being sold and distributed and multiplied and there's a big part of the community that's upset about the fact that they don't have control of their online information.

So if go to the next slide, I think the decentralized web is really a backlash by consumers against their loss of privacy. I spend a lot of time hanging out with the blockchain developers. They're either in Discord or Telegram. And this is all they talk about: how they're going to gain back control of their personal data and gain back their personal privacy. And this in my mind is what really is motivating the decentralized web.

So if we take it to the next step, I held up my digital wallet earlier. The digital wallet is not just for cryptocurrency or NFTs. It's also for your personal information. So there's something called self-sovereign digital

identities, which is a form of a wallet that consumers will use to traverse the metaverse. And I notice in the chat someone already registered that name a few months ago. But the idea here is that they are going to basically eliminate these third parties that they perceive as sniffing their data. And so that's the Web 2 browsers. It's social media. It's ISPs. It's certificate authorities, like GeoTrust or Let's Encrypt. And it's ICANN and its contracted parties that are required to collect WHOIS data, that are required to have consensus policies that would take down someone's website and remove what they've perceived to be their freedom of speech.

Next slide. And as the consumers go to the metaverse, brands are going to follow, just like they did with social media. And so we've seen a spike in trademark filings. All brands are filing goods and services related to NFTs and the metaverses, and so they understand that this is going to be a different paradigm that what we're seeing today: what I would call Web 2.0.

Next slide. So I also envision a third browser wall. So for a little bit of history, the first one was back in the '90s. Something called Mosaic was pretty much the first major web browser to dominate the web in the early years. Microsoft came along, bundled a free browser with their Windows desktop, and, by 2001, Microsoft had won the first browser war. And they enjoyed that position for several years until Google came our with their browser in 2008/2009. And each one of these browsers had new features for usability, to improve the user experience. And certainly, by 2015, the Google browser dominated the space, and the others are very far behind in terms of market share.

So the next wave of browsers for the decentralized web are going to look very different. They'll have this digital wallet idea. This is a hardware wallet, but there'll also be software wallets. And in those wallets, they'll be embedded into the browser. They're going to be privacy-focused. The individual, the consumer, will have control over who they give permission of their data to. In Web 2.0, there's something called a public suffix list, maintained by the Mozilla Foundation. It is the list of the ICANN TLDs. So every browser is supposed to check that to determine, hey, is the user trying to go to a valid TLD? These new browsers will not use that public suffix list. They're going to use an alternative root to enable the consumers to navigate to the metaverses and to the decentralized web.

Next slide. So these alternative roots are proliferating, and you have several different types, I would say. You have alternative roots where the domain name plays a supporting role. So these are blockchains like Ethereum, Solana, and Polkadot. They all need domain names but the blockchain is really there to provide other types of applications. It might be decentralized finance. It might be supply chain tracking, etc. And then there's a class of blockchains providing alternative roots where issuing domain names is the leading role for that blockchain. And the major providers there are Unstoppable Domains and Handshake. But there's a whole cast of other players coming up fast to basically allow anyone to get a domain name of their choice.

Next slide. So I call this the democratization of top-level domains. Anyone who wants one can get a top-level domain on an alternative root today. So I get my personal digital identity—dot-thomasbarrett—

and that's what I use as my persona as I roam the metaverse. I could get a community TLD. People like to eat cake in this example. Or I can get my dot-brand TLD. And what's interesting is, if it turns out that my dot-brand is taken in a particular alternative root, well, then I can go find another alternative root to get my dot-brand and then will have competitive TLDs in different roots with the same string.

Next slide. So let's talk about Handshake a little bit. Of all the options out there, I think this is the frontrunner in terms of serving digital identities on the decentralized web. So Handshake has, again, what I characterize as a sunrise period. They're already halfway through that sunrise period. And this I where the reserved the ICANN root. They reserved the top 100,000 websites. And they said, if you can claim that you own one of these domain names or TLDs, then we will unreserve this name and give it to you. So they have a claims process. So that sunrise is probably halfway through today. They went live in February 2020 and, if you look at the registrations, there's the usual mix of early adopters and speculators. There's certainly some bad actors. We can see some obvious trademark infringement. We can see some homographs. And we can see that they don't follow the ICANN restrictions on the types of strings or labels that you can register.

Next slide. So this is what happened when they went live in February 2020. Again, the ICANN root is at 1,500 TLDs. In the first month, they allocated 3,000 TLDs. And as you know, ICANN is very careful, as it should be, doing some root scaling exercises. I think they've decided not to add more than 1,000 TLDs per year. So, after this first year, in this

case for Handshake, there are roughly 500,000 TLDs. And as of the end of February, just a week or so ago, they reached 3.5 million TLDs.

And so that's Handshake today. There are other alternative roots that no doubt will be become emergent. But it's certainly the frontrunner today.

So let's go to a little scenario for forecasting, looking ahead, if we go to the next slide. So ICANN, we think, is at 1,500 (roughly) TLDs today. And of that last round, we had 1,200 unique strings, approximately. So let's assume, in the next round, there's 1,500 unique strings. So that would say that they start getting delegated. I'm depicting here 2026. It's anyone's guess when that might start. But certainly, by 2030, all 1,500 of those unique strings will be delegated in the ICANN root. So the ICANN root will be sitting at 3,000 TLDs.

So let's look at the same scenario for alternative roots. If we go to the next slide, Handshake now predicts, by the time the next round starts, we'll be at 20-30 million TLDs. And by 2030, I'm forecasting 100 million TLDs. So, again, a lot of these are consumers. They're not companies or brands getting a TLD, paying $185,000. They're individuals who are getting these self-sovereign digital identities to live on the decentralized web. So it's a slightly different type of TLD owner. Not all of them are selling second-level names. They might be dot-less. They just be their dot-thomasbarrett as their persona on the metaverse.

Next slide. So this is really my last slide. I'll leave with you a few thoughts. These alternative roots are not going away. This is not New.net circa 2003. The most successful alternative roots probably

used reserved ICANN strings. So, Ethereum, for example, has got ETH. That just so happens to be a reserved ICANN string, not likely to be unreserved by ICANN anytime soon. Namecheap has do-p—a single letter; dot-p. Probably not going to be allocated by ICANN. All these singular and plural forms of the ICANN strings are prohibited in the next round. They're not prohibited on the alternative roots. So there certainly will be impact to ICANN TLDs that could be minimized claimed their string from the reserved names list that Handshake and NexBLOC and others have.

So there's an opportunity to defensively secure their TLD strings before the sunrise period ends. But I would also anticipate people like Unstoppable Domains—that has got crypto—would certainly file legal objections against anyone else applying for that string in the ICANN round. And I'm sure there'll be many more examples like a dot-crypto that have gained such sufficient legal standing or trademark standing that they might be able to block applications in the next round.

So that was my quick summary. I'll hand it back to you, Martin, to see if you want to handle any questions, or we can go on.

MARTIN SUTTON: Tom, a couple first to you and the panel. And then there are some questions, I think, in the chat that we'll come on to. From what you're explaining here, I think there is a sense that alternative roots have existed for a long time already. But the explosive nature that we're seeing of interest and use of these alternative roots has been substantive in the last few years.

And what you've indicated is that that perhaps is driven by privacy requirements. So there's very much a focus on privacy. But I'm assuming then that also the cost of entry is particularly low and there's no sort of regulatory control of these. So authenticity is a question mark in this space. Regulation isn't. You don't know how this will pan out. And therefore you don't even know which rights you have when you acquire these alternate roots going forward.

So it sounds as if there's still some risk, but the fact is that that low entry level, the minimal regulation around it, is very, very interested and exciting for those that can see this as a space to exploit.

Does that sound about right? Is there any other driver that you think we need to be considering as to the increased use of alternative roots?

TOM BARRETT: I think you've summarized it well, Martin. Like cryptocurrency and NFTs, we don't know yet what the regulations will do to this space. We were just reading this morning that President Biden is about to issue an executive order about digital assets on the blockchain. And a key part of this is that they want to encourage innovation. And so they're not going to come down with a heavy hand and try to regulate blockchains. They want to encourage innovation.

Certainly, they will eventually need to be regulation for the decentralized web. And we're seeing that happen, for example, with Delegate for the decentralized autonomous organization of the Ethereum naming service. It looks like ICANN. It has policies, policy

groups, that are coming together. I have what I call governance tokens, where I get to vote a certain way on these different policies. So they're trying to come up with different types of policy-making bodies that will … And there are apparently dozens and dozens of these decentralized autonomous organizations that are popping up to try to govern the decentralized web.

I think what is clear to me is that ICANN is not going to be the regulator of this decentralized web. Fundamentally, the goals of privacy and having a self-sovereign digital identity are basically incompatible with what ICANN has built up as a regulatory framework. And I don't see ICANN doing it. They certainly care about collisions. And we can have a debate about that, but I don't see them, for example, requiring WHOIS or zone files or takedown procedures or UDRP or any of that stuff. I don't see any of that happening—coming from ICANN, anyway—for the decentralized web.

MARTIN SUTTON: Actually, then, that leads on to a question that's in chat from Michael Fleming. If I can put this to all of you, it leads on from there, but much of the future of the metaverse is speculation at this point, but can you envision a future where alternative roots coexist with ICANN? And how can the decentralized web coexist with the current web? There's additional parts to that. I think if I stop there and just pose that question to the panel, I'll hand it first to whoever wants to.

Peter?

PETER LAMANTIA: It's really interesting stuff, Tom. I'm going to come around to that question specifically Michael in a sec. I think, when you look at this and you look at what the blockchain is and how it's evolved and the pace by which it has invaded all sorts of different business plans, where it's finance or recordkeeping on contracts, there's no question that the blockchain is a revolutionary technology. And I think what we're seeing with the TLDs coming up is, first of all, the extraordinary demand that exists out there, where this has been such a debate in the world of ICANN—whether or not there is even a demand for TLDs.

Where it goes? What is Web 3? What is the metaverse? I think we're going to see as we go forward. But it kind of comes around. You have a brand-new technology that is revolutionary in a lot of different spaces. And we've had a lack of opportunity for ICANN and the IANA root to expand. And innovation will go where there's predictability and where there's growth. So I still believe, if ICANN can move it forward, they can stay relevant. But otherwise, I'm not so sure.

I think, in terms of interoperability, you're going to see and start to see technologies building tech that interoperates between the regular DNS and the ENS and other naming systems. I think we're plug-ins away from a tipping point where these things can be made available to the general public.

MARTIN KUECHENTHAL: May I add one thing here, Martin? When you see what happened the last five years and where the alternative roots have been five years ago and where are today, with all the concerns, a lot of them may also be valid. I don't want to say that the problem is just that this will develop and this will go on. And when ICANN closes and is not moving forward [or] accelerating the speed, the scissors between these projects or these two roots will just be bigger and bigger and bigger. And there might be a possibility to somehow get it together and maybe find something but not when ICANN waits even longer.

These alternative roots will develop and they will not go away. You can condemn them or whatever but they will not go away because there's innovation and there's power and there's a lot of money in that as well. There are a lot of people invested. We should not underestimate that. And if the traditional DNS—let me call it that—is still waiting and waiting, then the party is happening without the traditional DNS.

PETER LAMANTIA: I think you're bang-on, Martin. People will go if there's opportunity, and if there's no opportunity in the expanding of the IANA root, the money, the energy, and the thinking will all go towards the decentralized web on the blockchain.

MARTIN KUECHENTHAL: Agree.

TOM BARRETT: And I'll just make one comment, Martin, as well. I agree with each comment. It's not an either/or. They're both going to coexist. We've always had alternate roots. So these will coexist as well. If you are a brand owner, you're going to be in both. Just like people are filing trademarks today to be in the metaverse, if you want to be a dot-brand, you'll probably be in both. You'll have a Web 2 presence and a Web 3 presence. They could be the same dot-brand TLD. One is on the ICANN root. One is on the alternative root.

MARTIN SUTTON: I think that sounds feasible in terms of … As we said, in a highly unregulated space, brands will find it difficult to have no real solid signposts, if you like. So the dot-brand facilitates the authentic links, I suppose, to anything that is created and developed in these alternative roots and metaverse so that there could be visions of that working together going forward. So it seems realistic that these would be coexisting.

I think, in the chat, we've got some mentions—we covered this a little bit earlier—of protections for the end user and, if you like, registrants or whatever they would be termed in this space. It's not as significant as [it would be] in a regulated space. And therefore it doesn't attract innovation. It does attract also malicious activity.

So one of the questions here from John McCormack is, "With blockchain TLDs and domain names, what happens if someone compromises the underlying cryptographic algorithms of the blockchain?" I'm not technically minded enough to decide for all of that and work out what

would or wouldn't happen, but is there any response that you'd like to cover on that question?

TOM BARRET: Well, as you all know, a successful trademark is one that consumers trust. And so it'll be no different on the decentralized web. There will be alternate roots that you trust and alternate roots that you don't trust. And so, for example, do you fundamentally trust an alternate root by a non-profit, like ENS or Handshake? Or would you rather trust an alternate root run by a VC-backed startup like Unstoppable Domains? So they're both trying to build trust in their versions of the decentralized web. And it's the same thing with traditional web as well as the alternative.

MARTIN SUTTON: Okay. And we'll take one more question before moving on to the next section. Michael Graham asks, "What is the cost process of Handshake TLDs?" Is there anything that we can refer to or help?

TOM BARRETT: Yeah. So there are three scenarios if you want to get a Handshake TLD. If it's a reserved string—let's say you own Facebook.com—you just have to make sure you're running DNSSEC 256 or higher. And it's a fairly trivial process to claim your second-level name if you're on that list of top 100,000.

If you're an ICANN TLD, again, it's a little more complicated because of how TLD DNS is being tamed. So you need the cooperation of your backend registry provider.

But again, essentially, in both instances, you're creating a key from the Handshake blockchain, and then you insert that into the DNS of Facebook.com or dot-Deloitte. And you insert it as a TXT record in the DNS. That's it. Then it takes three days, and you now own the corresponding Handshake TLD for that reserved string.

If it's not a reserved string and it's still available in Handshake, then you actually have to initiate an auction. And it's called a Vickrey auction. If you want something, you initiate the auction. Anyone who wants to who happens to be monitoring the Handshake auctions can participate in that auction. And so there's roughly a five-day auction period. And whoever wins that auction gets the Handshake string.

So it's a little tricky in terms of … There's something called sniping. That's very common in Handshake. It's where people at the last minute will outbid you. So you need to be aware of that activity. You need to have a certain bidding strategy to basically make sure you win that auction. But if you look at the recent history, most strings are going for less than $10. Fairly inexpensive to acquire a Handshake TLD unless you're talking about a short string [inaudible].

And the third option is, obviously, if it's already taken, you need to go on the aftermarket. But, again, most of these TLDs have been purchased for relatively little money, and so the aftermarket, I think, is fairly inexpensive at this point in order to get your own TLD.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thank you, Tom. In terms of the competitive environment, this explores already things that could be competing with or working with what we know and understand from the gTLD and ccTLD market and industry.

But perhaps if we could just turn back onto that, closer to home, thinking about what's happened since the last round of new gTLDs has occurred and what we think might be happening as we go forward and hopefully as new rounds emerge. Perhaps I could open that up to Martin. I know you've got some slides to keep us pointing in the right direction. So if we could move to you and if you could talk to those, then we'll open it up again to some more Q&A. And thank you, Thomas, for the details there to run through.

MARTIN KUECHENTHAL: Thanks, Martin. Thanks, Tom. There's also a really interesting chat going on. I'm sure we cannot cover even close to all the questions later.

I want to look at our industry itself, the insights, and also the reasons and also the risks for what leads to problems from my point of view in the next round or the next possibility for—let's use the term traditional DNS—expanding the traditional DNS, which will take much longer. And it's about the consolidation and the reduced choice and also maybe reduced competition.

And I tried to do three very simple slides, oversimplified and probably also maybe a little philosophical. And really the idea to get the

discussion started from how it's been before 2012, after the 2012 application phase and the delegation, and how it looks today.

Sue, please go to the first slide. So I just tried to make some very simple thoughts. And how has it been in the old times? I don't want to call them good, but it has been the times before 2020. So it was the first ten years of my time in the domain and ICANN world. Actually, at the time, we had the situation where we had registry oligopolies, I would say, a very limited choice of TLDs compared to what we have today. We had the really clear structure. You were either a registrar or a registry. And it was like registrars had to apply for access to the TLDs. It was, "May I sell you a TLD? Please, please, please accept me as your registrar." And from that side, I think the registries were one important limiting factor for industry success.

And then, at the end, in 2011 and 2010, already before the first round started, there was an enormous, great energy and excitement for the next round. Who can remember all the parties in 2010 and '11 and 2012 and the excitement for the coming opportunities. And this changed a little bit after the 2012 rounds.

Next please, Sue. So there was a much broader choice of registries, of TLDs. We achieved the first IDNs in the generic namespace. And somehow it switched. Suddenly, huge amounts of registries had to apply for access as registrars. I know the battles. And I've been taking part in meetings where the registries tried to get the registrars to get [inaudible] TLDs. So it came now to the question, "Could you please

sell my TLD?" instead of, "May I sell you a TLD?" So it has changed really a lot.

And from that side, I think the registries were one important limiting factor for industry success. So who had the registrars as a registry could also have better success with the TLD. And a couple of new players entered actually the ICANN space, like Google, like Donuts. Some of those are totally without any history in ICANN. And also, the ICANN reality of the extremely slow delegation process produced a lot of headache and took away a lot of the spirit and this has developed until today.

Next please. The last five years actually have been extremely interesting because we have an ongoing consolidation, both in registry and registrar business. We have something which is called vertical integration. We have something which we didn't really hear of before the 2012 round: registrars and registries in the same hand. And personally I think it's good: professionalization of the industry. And also the industry has become a target for professional investors. There have been only very, very few players in the market before 2012 who have been in the stock markets. And we see a couple of those today in private equity or whatever.

And now, again, actually it flips a little bit from broad choice to development of—it sounds a little bit rough, maybe—conglomerates. Do we face new oligopolies in our DNS industry? And does this all lead to less consumer choice, competition, innovation, and willingness to push a next round? There's are questions which have been looking at in

the last few years. And we have, of course, something within the organization, maybe in the ICANN multi-stakeholder model, but also from the industry side, from the industry internal side. I don't see a lot of pushing forward to the next round. And I think this could lead exactly to what I just mentioned: less choice, less competition, and less innovation.

And I want to hear your thoughts and discuss that with my fellow panelists: if I'm alone with this opinion or if there's others who have the same thoughts on that.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thank you, Martin. And I think that raises some really interesting points, particularly with regards for pushing towards the next round and making it happen. The community last time had a lot of driving force, if you'd like, because those that had been involved in ICANN up to that stage, which is probably a lot less people that we see now engaged with ICANN, wanted to see the space upon up and would drive that at ICANN meetings a lot more than, I think, what we see today. And perhaps some of the suggestions that you're talking about there, where we've seen consolidation in the marketplace, where the original applicants in 2012 don't really need or want any more to deal with, either from a registry or a registrar perspective … And perhaps that driving force doesn't therefore present itself as much in front of the ICANN Board, ICANN staff, then what we would seen at the beginning of the 2012 round.

But I'm interested in getting Peter's and Tom's points on that and reflection. Tom [inaudible]. Peter?

PETER LAMANTIA: Sure. I think there's a lot of desire for another round. I just look at the work that was done in the SubPro Committee—four years of working like crazy to work through policies. I think a lot of people, myself included, have a lot of respect for the challenges of ICANN to address all of the constituency needs, all the different viewpoints that have to be developed and fleshed out and solved towards getting that consensus policy. So there's a little bit of respect: okay, even though we thought there would be a next round a year or two after the first, we have to let the SubPro do its work.

So I think people are sitting back, and some of you are saying, "Okay, the SubPro Committee has done its work. It did great work. Majority consensus. Approved by the GNSO. But now we need to move." And I think you're right and that there are some vested interests that don't necessarily want another round to create more competition. But I think we're [all so] experienced[.] I think this is an existential threat for ICANN and its governance over the Internet and that there is another Internet being formed. And it's a plug-in away from taking control.

So I think, if ICANN came forward and said, "Okay. Yes. Committed. We are doing a next round. Estimated timeline__," I think you'd find hundreds of hundreds of people that would come to the support of ICANN to be able to support ICANN to get that next round down. That's my view. I think there's a silent majority here that's looking for it.

And in the face of alt-root TLDs, when it comes to a brand top-level domain, I don't think it's ever been more important for brands to own their own space that is definitely theirs in the IANA root.

MARTIN KUECHENTHAL: Martin, may I add one thing here? I agree with Peter about that there's a pretty huge demand on one part of the industry. I'm in this business and I am totally committed. I'm sure there are hundreds and hundreds of brands who want to apply for their own top-level domain within the ICANN space.

But these are, when you count them, hundreds of single registries. And on the other side, when we think about the generic terms controlled and offered to the market by, finally, fewer and fewer groups of registries under one control or under control of one party, I don't feel a very big desire on that side for a next round.

That is actually the differentiation I would make. I agree with you there is a need and there is also power and a push to do that. But when you compare that with 2010 and 2011 and this total excitement and these great ideas about the possibilities which will come with the new TLDs, they have been totally lost.

And I remember from the ten-year anniversary, there was this dot-wed example. I think … Was it Lorna? I'm not sure who talked about that, but it's a great example yet really innovative, a total failure but really innovative— these ideas just to do something new, something different which we haven't seen before. Also, within the existing registry

operators or group of registry operators, this is missing from our side, from my point of view.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thank you. Tom?

TOM BARRETT: Just to add, I absolutely believe that the whole concept of dot-brand TLDs obviously makes more sense than ever before, not only for the branding component of having your own dot-brand but from a security perspective as well. Security continues to drive the need for all companies pretty much to get their own dot-brands. So I think that need remains.

So what has changed since the last round is the innovation of what's emerging out of the blockchain. So every business, just like 20 years ago, had to figure out their Internet strategy. Now they have to figure out their blockchain strategy. And they're going to have to decide, "Can I execute my blockchain strategy with an ICANN TLD?" So that I think is a calculus that I think every company is going to go through. ICANN has put out some statements or made some actions regarding their view on these decentralized domains. So you get a sense of where they are today. But certainly people have to weigh that in terms of, "Okay, we have to figure out our blockchain strategy. Dot-brand makes a lot of sense. Is it an ICANN dot-brand or it some other dot-brand that we move forward on?"

MARTIN SUTTON: Okay. I know the conversation—I've tried to keep up in the chat—was an awful lot, and it does tie back to alt-roots and such. And it just, I think, illustrates the need to 1) understand this more, track what we think will be happening with it in the future, and understand how it will affect and impact the industry that we're familiar with and I think ties back to the very start of the conversation, which is: things are moving on, the world moves on—how do we keep up with all of this?

So I saw a question which just keeps moving up as everybody puts chat messages in. But it's kind of an interesting question. Ching Chiao, hi. You've asked if there's any legal consequences for ICANN-accredited registries or registrars to run or sell alt-root TLDs. I'm not aware of any, but I don't know if others could comment on that more definitively.

TOM BARRETT: Are you talking about from a government legal perspective, or are you worried about how ICANN might react?

MARTIN SUTTON: Well, I'm assuming—and, Ching, please feel free to clarify; and I think the lines are open if you want to—

PETER LAMANTIA: Martin, is this maybe referencing … I think Uniregistry was selling some TLDs that were also paired with blockchain TLDs. And ICANN is doing a review before allowing that sale to go forward. I don't know the details of that so I can't really comment further. But I think that's the reference.

TOM BARRETT: Yeah. He clarified that in the chat. He does talk about how ICANN might react.

Look, this is not a registry service that ICANN regulates. If a registry decides to innovate outside of the ICANN root, that's not really an area that ICANN should be concerned with. We've already had several ICANN TLDs, like .lux, .art, and .cred that have done integration of their TLDs with the blockchain. Again, nothing has broken as a result.

And so the analogy I have is that blockchain and decentralized web is a bullet train. It's leaving the station. You can decide to get on that train or you can decide to lay down in front of the train. But it's leaving the station. And I don't see there to be any real justification from ICANN's perspective to block innovation for a TLD registry operator.

MARTIN SUTTON: And in fact, in the space at large, part of the role of ICANN on the TLD space that is covered is really to try and create that innovative capability.

One of the questions here—again, it still relates back to blockchain … So I'll do this one and then we'll move on to the last question shortly afterwards. But Anne Aikman-Scalese says, "Are there any aspects of an alternative-root blockchain dot-brand TLD that would disadvantage it? For example, slower speed of resolution with blockchain." So it could be a very technical, practical issue versus other concerns.

TOM BARRETT: I could respond to that. Certainly, if you are trying to be the next Facebook or Twitter or Google, then you want as many eyeballs as possible to be able to reach your presence. [inaudible]. Certainly, as I mentioned earlier, there's a new set of browsers that will be coming out to support Web 3 or the decentralized web. If you remember the analogy of "crossing the chasm," we're still early in the process. Not everyone is running these new versions of browsers. So if you think you need a billion customers in your business or anticipate a billion customers, then certainly it'll be an obstacle for a while. But if you're content with ten thousand customers, then you are probably able to persuade them to use the right browser in order to interact with your business.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thank you, Tom. Okay, we'll move on because I think we're doing good for time. But if I could now switch attention a bit more to one of the key areas that we focus on, particularly in the dot-brand environment (but it extends far beyond that and is indeed part of ICANN's mission in terms of security and stability of the naming space that it operates), I think, in terms of that, we've got a number of other issues that were tagged onto it. And the favorite topic for many years has been DNS abuse—quite rightly so. It's an important area. But there are different ways that that plays out across different models that are introduced into the DNS. And certainly the last round, as we saw earlier, introduced a large quantity of TLDs. A large proportion of those were dot-brands.

So if I could switch over to you, Peter, just to give us a bit more background on the security and trust element of dot-brands, I think this is an important area as well to explore in terms of impact on competition or lack thereof in the current environment until we can open up this space again in future application rounds. So if turn to you, then we'll come back to Q&A after that.

PETER LAMANTIA: Sounds good. So you can see my screen there, Martin?

MARTIN SUTTON: Indeed.

PETER LAMANTIA: Okay, great. Martin asked me to put something together here, and I thought about going back to the basic principles of what ICANN's role is here: to ensure the security and stability of the Internet, with the prime target or customer really being Internet users. So I thought I'd frame that in terms of what a brand TLD means to that or could mean to that with additional rounds. And then we can have a discussion around it.

So how did it help consumers? So I always look at that and say, well, do consumers really trust the Internet? Can you trust what you're clicking on the Internet? And I think the answer generally is, no, we don't. We know there's a lot of scammers out there trying to get us to click on everything. It's now into our text messages. It's everywhere. And that's

a real challenge for everybody, every brand, that pushes stuff out on the Internet and engages with people.

So if we can't really trust the Internet, how do we then trust a digital brand. So what is a digital brand? And I provide these couple of slides to people to help them understand what the DNS and how important it is in how they operate their digital business.

So for that consumer out there, the digital brand is everything that you do online, from communications to subscriptions to engagements and applications—everything we do online. And all of that digital brand is that brand, and it runs on the DNS. And when I see the DNS, I refer to that [inaudible] DNS.

So with that thought, we know the corporations register hundreds, thousands, and, in some cases, tends of thousands of domains. So from a consumer's perspective, how can consumers even know what to trust? Brands register these things for good reasons. They need to protect their trademarks. They have new programs that they're launching up to market. I had one client advise his C-level to say, "Well, we're actually confusing our own clients on all of these domain names that they're registering." And we do this because business is digital. Again, just to reaffirm it, digital runs on the DNS. And, again, here I'll refer to the IANA DNS as the world that we all have known since 1998. So I believe there really is an appetite for brands to shift over to the brand-authentic, trusted spaces. But they haven't been able to.

And because they haven't been able to … I saw one comment in the chat that most brands applied for IP reasons. And that's absolutely

right. They didn't know what this was. In the next round, when that happens, you're going to see brands with fully fleshed-out strategies and business cases to engage. That will then drive those that own their own TLDs to also invest more in it. Why? Again, to create that safe space for people to engage with brands that they love and subscribe to.

It is a trusted, secure, controlled, and authentic space. And that is what ICANN has over everybody else—over the blockchain TLDs. They have a verified, authentic anchor of trust as the IANA root.

So I wanted to make that clear. When we think about why brand TLDs are trusted, a domain is a domain is a domain. But that's not really true because, in a brand TLD, in the IANA-ICANN space, first of all, it's the trust anchor. It's got a stamp of approval that it is authentic. There is more ability to establish security policies at the TLD level or by policies with DNSSEC, SPF, DMARC, end-to-end encryption. And I could go on.

Some might say, well, you could do that in every TLD on the market. Well, no, you can't really. Not all support DNSSEC. It's not easy to do that across all different TLDs, whereas, in a brand TLD, you've got one control lever that you pull down and say, "These are our security policies. And this is how we ensure it." So a brand operator can ensure that their entire space is secure and they can be trusted by people on the Internet.

And it's a proprietary at the root of the Internet. And I used to always just say "root," but now I'm having to say "the IANA root," because there is another root here. And I, like Tom, believe that the alt-roots are going to flourish. But partly they're going to flourish because there's a

vacancy here. ICANN has left open an opportunity for a substitute disruptive technology to take over in an area.

There are a lot of attribute of a brand. Brands can create all sorts of different use cases based on trust, different marketing use cases, security uses cases. Lots of opportunities to drive different types of use cases in innovation. But that innovation won't happen until the world know that that IANA root will expand in a predictable manner.

I also thinks this goes for generic and restricted TLDs. All the work that has been done by all the people on this call and across ICANN has been fantastic—the work towards support of a secure, safe, one Internet that we have today. I think all of that actually is at risk right now without ICANN moving and keeping pace or at least offering the opportunity to keep pace with what's going on in the blockchain. And I think that'd be an absolute disaster.

Tom showed it. The TLDs' growth from 1990 to 2022 kind of looks like this, more or less, and we've had a decade of nothing. We've had consolidation, to Martin's point. And then we've had the decentralized root take off. Two million, three million—it's arguable what the actual number is, but there's a demand out there for TLDs for people to operate in their own spaces. And we should move on that.

Quickly, in summary, the growth of the blockchain is massive. So the tipping point in near. It may be past. But with a few plug-ins, to Tom's point, on alternate browsers that are going to come, DNS providers started to resolve on different roots, like the ENS. This stuff is happening, and it's happening because there's a void in the current

architecture for people to be able to innovate. And I think this is a real risk to relevance without near-term and predictable IANA root expansion. I really do. Innovation thinking and investment will go where there's predictable growth path.

And that all sort of summarizes that, in my view, ICANN is an organization—and the community as a whole—that really needs to shift to an execution bias here. There's always a reason in any venture, whether you're a business or whether you're a regulator, to do more analysis, to understand what's going on. And it can be sometimes hard to argue. The challenge is that the Internet is not slowing down. The blockchain is real. It's exploding. It's impacting all sorts of industries. By the time you complete the analysis, the world is different again and you'll be doing more analysis.

I think you also—and I mentioned it earlier … If ICANN, the Board, and the Org shift position to execution, I think a next round could happen quite quickly. The ODP is in place. The whole purpose of the ODP was to accelerate the process so that it can move forward quickly. We have a guidebook that needs to be adjusted based on the consensus policies that four to five community members toiled with to get there. The GNSO has done it. The only thing that needs to happen is for it to be directed to be executed.

I hope that's helpful. But that's one perspective, from my point of view.

MARTIN SUTTON: It raises some interesting points in terms of, how do we drive things forward? And perhaps the tendency has been for us to drive messages at ICANN staff, at the ICANN Board, given that it's been over a year since the policy work of four to five years was completed, and to try and move into more of an execution phase for that work.

And I suppose the other point that you're trying to suggest is that, the longer it takes, how does that affect the relevance of ICANN going forward?

So I think that would be interesting to come back to in a second, but I've also seen some comments referring to not so much security but the DNS abuse side of things. And we've heard or seen a lot of reports issued, and the EU published their DNS abuse study recently, which has been a subject of various discussion during this week at ICANN.

I think there is an importance to understanding that, yeah, we can put hurdles in the way—it's easy to do that—but is it the community then that needs to really get behind this and say, "Look, there is a work product, and we now need to see Org and staff deliver it and be more forceful in that and directive in that approach," because otherwise what we're seeing potentially is loops of discussion occurring before the Board even makes a decision on this outstanding work.

So I'll just open that up for comments, and then I do want to come back to the EU report and some of the messages I've been hearing, which I think are important to relay and prevent this from becoming an unnecessary burden for the next round.

So, Peter?

PETER LAMANTIA: So I think the community does need … And I think the community members that have toiled away on the Subsequent Procedures are front and center, pushing for this. The work that was done was to follow the guidelines, to follow the method, of a bottom-up policy-based organization. And the community has spoken now. It has been approved by the GNSO. And now there's a need to move. In my view, with all due respect, with all the different constituencies and questions that come up around collisions or demand and all the analysis, we're really in paralysis by analysis. And at the same time, you have three million TLDs in the blockchain. And it's only going to grow.

Everything that Tom said … There's elements of truth in everything there. And the hard part is to predict the future. But the future is clearly with where the opportunity is. That's where the money will go. That's where the mindshare goes unless ICANN opens up in very near order. And to Martin's point on the scissor, the gap is getting bigger by the day.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thanks, Peter.

MARTIN KUECHENTHAL: May I add? Thank you. My personal preference and my personal belief is that, rather than a controlled than protected space, with my view on the things from brand owners' perspectives, it's absolutely desirable to

give not only the consumers also higher certainty about what they can expect but also the brand owners worldwide. But somehow, if I may use this analogy, ICANN behaves a little bit like overprotective parents at the moment. And what happens is they don't get in the line or they are in the line for the food, and other kids just run forward and get the food or whatever.

I like what Peter said about the executive behavior which should be shown now. And we have been waiting. And we have been working a lot the last ten years to move this forward. And now it's time for execution. Otherwise, again, the picture of the scissor … Things will move on. And at one point, the money will be allocated somewhere else.

Finally, it's about, where's money? And at one point, it's somewhere else and not in the traditional DNS. And that's something I personally do not wish to happen. That's the reason why we should start the phase of execution as soon as possible.

TOM BARRETT: And just to echo what Peter and Martin are saying, we've already gotten through a round. We should have a pretty well-oiled machine at this point in terms of going into another round. The SubPro really did not come up with a lot of material changes from what transpired in the first round. So it really comes down to that ICANN has a limited number of resources. They need to decide what their priorities are. And obviously there's a lot of competing priorities. Those are the subject of another session. And this needs to be elevated compared to some of the other priorities they have.

PETER LAMANTIA: One comment on that, too, Tom. I think you're right about all of that. Limited resources, perhaps. And we all know that probably a lot of people that worked at ICANN in the last round—it was ten years ago—have moved on to other lives. However, if ICANN puts that statement out and says, "We're going to do it. Here's an estimated timeline," there are hundreds of people—many of them on this call—that would welcome the opportunity to get involved and work to develop the next round. We've done it. It has happened. There's an adjust but it could be executed quite quickly. We need to start thinking in terms of execution in the business world, the digital pace of change, or ICANN is just going to be left behind here and we're going to find ourselves in a very different world very quickly. And the blockchain TLD stuff that Tom showed us is just showing the pace. It's extraordinary.

MARTIN SUTTON: So I just wanted to bring to attention some comments on the EU DNS abuse paper because there is some of what I would term as misleading message that gets incorporated into some of the summaries, whereas the substance behind it may well detail certain elements. But I noted yesterday that there was a comment from Jeff Bedser during one of the sessions that it's problematic to call out new gTLDs as disproportionate in terms of the DNS abuse when there were 1,000 of them introduced in the last round. And in the report, the volume is clearly only tied, in terms of DNS abuse, to less than five of them. And it's often remarked that is a new gTLD problem. And it does need to be clear, I think: some

obstacles that are put in the way of progress need to be better understood and better terms of relaying that information across the community so it isn't misused and effectively problematic for progress.

Now, Tom, I just thought I'd turn to you as well on this point because we've talked about dot-brands a lot, but you've been involved in dot-bank, dot-cpa, and others, where, again, the model implies and is created on the back of security policies and stringent entry controls as well on those. So does that resonate with you as well in terms of the comment from Jeff and in relation to the EU report that has been circulated?

TOM BARRETT: Absolutely. Dot-bank, for example, requires all those security standards that Peter put up on a slide: DNSSEC, DMARC, and SSL. So they are probably the most secure TLD that's out there. And it's as you would expect for someone who's hosting hundreds of community bank websites.

So certainly I think that's going to continue to move forward. I love what's happening in DANE, which is a new DNS type of record that allows you to insert digital certificates into the DNS. And so as you can see, the drive is towards more privacy [as in] encrypted data. So that's kind of a different topic.

But I think, with the abuse issue is obviously is, at your pointed out, there are the five new TLDs, but we also see it in legacy TLDs as well.

There's obviously a disagreement about what the definition of DNS abuse is. And that's, I think, slowing things down as well.

PETER LAMANTIA: I have a comment there, too, Martin. Along your notes in there, Tom—that this exists in legacy—this has always been issue. Pick a TLD that we know who have been here for a while. I think it was dot-tk that used to have trouble. Dot-info had problems when they offered them out for free. All of these things have existed forever.

The difference now is, though, is … We are supposed to be thinking about that consumer and keeping them safe, but the difference is that ICANN can regulate that. ICANN can enforce policy on that if it so chooses. Set aside the ccTLD for a moment, but all the good work that's been done over the years at ICANN for RPMs and registrant rights and the rules that registrars have to follow—all of these things—can be managed. And to say that that's a reason not to move forward when there's three million TLDs being spun up in another space that's completely unregulated doesn't make sense to me whatsoever.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thanks, Peter. Now, I just wanted to open up to the audience. I've seen some questions, but I think, from Michael, it looks as if there's been responses already. So do flag if that is still an open question if you want to find out more. Otherwise, if anybody else wants to put their hand up and ask our esteemed panelists any questions, here's a good opportunity.

TOM BARRETT: Well, I'll ask one for the audience while we're waiting. What should ICANN be doing in terms of the decentralized web? Should they get involved at all? Should they only care if there are collisions? Or, for example, should DNS abuse be expanded to include abuse of a decentralized web? How do we have that discussion?

MARTIN SUTTON: And that's out to the audience, not the panelists. So if there's anybody that wants to interject, you're more than welcome to engage.

TOM BARRETT: Volker has his hand up.

MARTIN SUTTON: Volker, go ahead.

VOLKER GREIMANN: Thank you very much. I think competition is always a hard part when you try to maintain a certain monopoly that you had in the past. And if the competition is very easy to reach, very easy to manage, and it certainly looks like this is going to be the case at some point in the future, where registrations are easy to get, and you don't have to have much paperwork, you just have to do it and have to want it, then the only way that ICANN can compete is by deregulating and making its own TLDs as attractive as possible to their consumers—and not only

their consumers but also the people that ICANN wants to use their version of the web because ultimately it's going to be various versions of the Internet that are going to exist in parallel if the future described by Tom is going to happen in this way.

So if we overregulate everything and make it too difficult to register a domain, to use a domain name, to work with a domain name, then we will decrease the attractiveness and possibly increase the appeal for alternative roots. Thank you.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thank you, Volker. And I note others are putting comments in the comments box. So please feel free to read those from … I can see one from Thomas already.

But let's go to Michael. Michael Fleming?

MICHAEL FLEMING: Thank you, Martin. Well, I already asked this question in the chat, and Tom replied, but I would think that the first step for ICANN, before even starting to jump at policies or looking what we can do about the decentralized web, is to actually look at security and stability issues. I'm not sure as to what point they can do that or how feasible that might be, but I think that would be in support of ICANN's current mission for the security and stability of the authoritative root. And from there, we can start looking at other issues that would need to be addressed.

TOM BARRETT: And if I can respond real quick to Michael, you're right. I think it needs to be addressed. There is a names collision advisory process that just published a report a few weeks ago. But its scope is really limited to what we call accidental collisions, such as from corporate networks that leak onto the general root. And in fact, it's measurement of air traffic and collision traffic really does not have the visibility as to what's going in the alternative roots because they're separate. So it's a whole different area. It's a different type of scope that hasn't been approved yet for ICANN to proceed with. And maybe that's something they should be doing.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thank you, Tom. I'm just going to read out a couple of comments, and then I'm going to turn to our panelist to provide a closing comments for our session today as we come up to time. But I just thought it'd be useful to read these out.

And Thomas Rickert is saying, "Suggesting ICANN should promote the benefits of its approach to policies, protections, compliance enforcement, and all that forge trust and educate. At the same time, ICANN needs to up its game and come up with predictable timelines and then execute based on shorter timelines."

From Marc Trachtenberg, "ICANN should stop demonizing alt-roots. It's not that I don't recognize the issues it creates for ICANN and security and stability, but blockchain roots are not going away. And just saying that they're bad and not addressing the risk creates greater risk."

And Jeff is suggesting we refer back to review ICP-3.

TOM BARRETT: And, Martin, just to interject, I do want everyone to take a look at the NCAP report that came out a few weeks ago. What's fascinating about it is that there's some acknowledgement that the historical thinking that the root servers, which see all error traffic, has been declining over time … And there now is something called public resolvers that see traffic that the root servers never see. And so the DNS is evolving. And some of things that you thought of back ten years ago are changing. And we might have to rethink some of our old assumptions.

I see Jeff wants to talk.

MARTIN SUTTON: Okay, Jeff. Keep it short and then we're going to have to turn to the rest of the panel to close this out. Please go ahead.

JEFF NEUMAN: Thanks. I encourage everyone—I know I've said it many times—to read IPC-3. ICANN does have policy on this. I know it was 2001, but that also was derived from work by the IETF and more specifically a paper by the Internet Architecture Board on the dangers of not having one authoritative root.

So if we are going to do future work, let's not completely reinvent the wheel but rather ask the question, "Is there a need to change ICP-3 or not? as opposed to starting from scratch.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thanks. Okay, let me close this off by offering an opportunity for our great panel just to reflect very briefly on, what factors do you think are there that are most important that the ICANN community considers when we're looking at the effective competition as we've explored it today? It's still fairly limited in what we've done, but it's certainly very topical. And what would your recommendations be on how we go forward with the community, the Board, and the Org to turn this into a positive course for ICANN? So who wants to go first.

TOM BARRETT: I'll go first.

MARTIN SUTTON: Tom, go ahead.

TOM BARRETT: Sure. So alternative roots are not going to go away. And so if you're a brand owner, you'll have to participate both in the alternative roots as well as the ICANN roots. That may mean you start with defensive registrations on the alternate side. And we'll see what happens over the next few years.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thank you, Tom. Who's next?

MARTIN KUECHENTHAL: Let me do that. I can echo a lot of what Tom was just saying. I'm supportive of the ICANN model. Otherwise, I wouldn't be here today. And I think there's been done a lot of work. And this execution bias should be the next step. There's no need to wait. And from a personal perspective and from the business perspective of my daily work, we are all ready and we have to advise our brand clients and our dot-brand clients about what's going on outside of ICANN World. And depending on the speed, they may decide to allocate their funds somewhere else when things are not going on.

So this is what we have to do to protect our clients' brands and to give them the right advice into the future. And I personally hope it will be the ICANN way. And I just strongly support that there should be some faster execution and development right now.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thank you, Martin. And Peter?

PETER LAMANTIA: Great session. This new technology has emerged and you cannot deny. What we're seeing happen now is it really threatens all the work that's been in ICANN over the last 25 years. The community did, in good faith, do the work and dedicated volunteers and many hours to form largely a consensus recommendation in Subsequent Procedures that was approved by the GNSO. It really is time for ICANN to say, "Okay, we are a bottom-up organization. The community has spoken. We need to move it."

And I really believe that, when that happens, you're going to see a shift in focus. You're going to see a shift in investment and people willing to support and get on the train and get this next round out. But the failure to do that? People move on, including myself. [inaudible] and figure that out. I believe a lot in the value of brand TLDs and the IANA root and the protections that are in place, but if it doesn't move, we need to move on.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thank you, Peter. Thank you, all. And to our audience as well, it's great to have your interactions and population of the chat and speaking up. I really enjoyed that. I hope it's been insightful and useful to explore and feeds into what our work endeavors are within the ICANN space going forward.

Thanks again, everybody. I really appreciate you joining us today. We'll catch up soon at the next meeting.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]