
ICANN82 | CF – GNSO: RySG BRG Membership Working Session
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SUE SCHULER

Hello, and welcome to the Brand Registry Group Membership Working Session. My name is Sue, and I'm a Participation Manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy. If you would like to speak during this session, please raise your hand in Zoom. When called upon, virtual participants will be given permission to unmute in Zoom. On-site participants will use a physical microphone to speak. Please state your name for the record and speak at a reasonable pace. I will now hand the floor over to Crews Gore.

CREWS GORE

Thank you, Sue. Hello, everybody. Welcome to our BRG meeting today. My name is Crews Gore, and I'm the President of the Brand Registry Group. Today we're going to be talking with Amazon, talk about their dot brands, and get to hear from Matt Crossman and Christina Bedore. First, before I make introductions, I wanted to let everybody know that the BRG is looking for an Executive Director to lead us through the next phase of growth of opportunity that's coming in the near future. For this Executive Director, we're looking for someone with leadership experience to have leadership for our

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BRG members, looking for industry relations and promotion of the Brand Registry Group. So if you know anybody who's interested, please feel free to pass them on our information to have them send their resume over. So now to introduce our panelists. So we have Matthew Crossman and Christina Bedore from Amazon. Matt and Christina are here to give us some insight on how Amazon operates its brand TLDs. Matt is a Senior Corporate Counsel at Amazon and leads the domain's legal team, which provides legal, operational, and strategic support for the Amazon Registry, AWS Registrar, and Amazon's own portfolio of domain names. Christina is Corporate Counsel at Amazon supporting Amazon Registry, including both the gTLD portfolio as well as their .brands. So thank you and welcome to you both. Today we're going to have a Q&A, kind of go back and forth and discuss a few things, have a little bit more insight into Amazon and .brand space. So if you want to give a little bit of background of how you both got into the ICANN space and got involved with ICANN and .brands.

MATT CROSSMAN

Yeah, sure. Thanks, Crews, and welcome everyone. Just want to say first, welcome to Seattle. This is our hometown. I live here. Really happy to have everyone here. Hope you're getting a chance to get out and enjoy the city. A little bit of rain yesterday, but I think that's an appropriate introduction to our wonderful climate here. So yeah, welcome to Seattle. You know, a little bit about me, I took sort of an unusual route to the domain industry. I started as a white-collar litigation lawyer at a law firm in D.C., mainly doing sort of government investigations, litigation. And after six years of that,

I was ready for a change and was looking around at opportunities. Had looked at a couple roles with Amazon and then got approached about supporting the registry business. And my first thing I said was, what is a registry business? Had never heard of registries, registrars, really wasn't aware of the domain name industry. So it was a little bit of a leap of faith. I joined in 2017, supporting, again, the Amazon registry business. And it has been a tremendous experience working at Amazon as my role has grown and supported more of the things that we're doing across domains. I like to think my outsider perspective gives me sort of a unique view on this space. I think, you know, like to think big about how we can innovate and do things differently with our dot brands. And then I think, you know, Amazon in particular is a really interesting place to be working on this sort of thing because we sort of famously obsess about our customers. And so bringing that sort of customer obsession and that commitment to innovation to the dot brand space has been a really interesting opportunity.

CHRISTINA BEDOR

Hi, everybody. My name is Christina Bedor. I'm a corporate counsel at Amazon, as I think was already said. So I am a relative newcomer to the domain name industry. I started at Amazon in July of 2022, so about to hit my three-year mark before that I was a commercial litigator for a number of years. And then I worked in-house at an auditing company for about seven years. And I, like Matt, also was not so familiar with what a registry was or even what a TLD was before I started here. And now I know, obviously, a lot more. There's always more to learn. But I think, like Matt says, working at

Amazon on the registry side is very interesting because we have, obviously, a lot of dot brands that we do a lot of interesting things with that you're about to hear about. But it's also been interesting to see what other brands are doing with their dot brands. Like, some of that is very public-facing and some of it is not so public-facing. So it's been interesting to see, as I've learned more about the community and about the industry, what others are doing and learning more, even about what we're doing and sort of advertising that internally at Amazon to see what more we can do and to always sort of be open to new and innovative ideas in terms of how we can use our dot brands.

CREWS GORE

That's a good segue into, you know, what do you see as the benefit of dot brands?

MATT CROSSMAN

Yeah, it's a good question. I think, you know, when I think about the sales pitch on dot brands, I sort of break it into two buckets. So I think the first is kind of this branding, marketing angle. And, you know, at its most basic level, there's a brand protection opportunity here. You're ensuring that no one else can use a TLD using your brand on the internet. I think the only people that get excited about that, though, are the trademark lawyers. Fair enough. So I think, in my mind, that's just sort of like table stakes. That's the point we start from, and everything else sort of grows from there. So, you know, we think about them as tremendous branding and marketing opportunities for our products and

services. Being able to place a specific brand name or a specific service or product right next to Amazon sends a very clear, compelling message to our customers. There's also a lot of opportunities to, given the availability of names at the second level with your dot brands, the opportunity to build sort of interesting, unique, customer-friendly naming schemes. I think Cole had an amazing presentation, I think we were in Paris, about some of the thinking that Microsoft had done around the 365 product. And I think that is such a great way to message your services to clients, or to customers, I should say. And so there's just tremendous opportunity to be creative about, with particular brands, particular services, how you're structuring those domain names so that you are sort of guiding customers in a very tailored way through that customer experience. You know, we are always sort of cost-conscious, and it is increasingly expensive to acquire great domain names in .com and other TLDs. And so .amazon for us, and our other .brands, there's a cost-savings angle that I think our businesses get really excited about, that they can have the name that they want without having to put forward significant capital on an acquisition. There's the ability to be super creative about the sort of names that are being chosen, whether it's, again, these specific brands or services or short, memorable, pithy names. We've seen a lot of our customers and businesses get excited about using this as link shorteners on social media and other platforms, which I think is a really interesting and compelling use case. And then lastly, I just think there's a kind of, from a big-picture perspective, there's just a sort of trust and authenticity angle here.

What we're really trying to do slowly over time is help our customers understand that for certain things, if you see it on .amazon or one of our other brand TLDs, that communicates a level of trust and authenticity. And so you can trust that the message that is coming from this .brand is authentically from that .brand. I think there's a really interesting and important trust angle there and something I think all of us who are .brand operators are trying to do with our customers. I think we're sort of only in the early stages of that, and that's going to take a lot of customer education. But I think if you think big-picture and look down the road, if we can be successful at pushing that trust message, I think that's something that's incredibly compelling for our customers. So that's kind of the branding and marketing side. I think the other piece of this that maybe doesn't get talked about enough, I think people automatically gravitate towards these branding use cases because it's sort of the obvious way to use these .brands. But the kind of security and technical benefits of using a .brand within your organizations, whether that's external-facing or, in our case, for a lot of internal infrastructure, they're really significant. You're able to have a level of control over the domain name and the domain space. You're eliminating third-party dependencies. You're able to set policies and architecture over a specific space in a way that you just can't with something that's not a .brand. I think we've had some interesting conversations as well with folks about the potential to sort of insulate services from attack. That, given the availability of good second-level domains, you can separate your offering so that you're not just building off of one single second-

level domain with subdomains for the various aspects of a service. If something goes wrong with that second-level domain, it's going to take down the whole thing. Our security folks are doing some deep thinking and being really strategic about how do we separate out services using our .brands so that you have that layer of insulation, which I think is a really interesting use case. And then the last thing I'll say sort of from the security side that, again, I don't think gets talked about enough is the value of .brands as internal infrastructure. When we go and talk to our security people about what we have available with our .brands, the thing that they get most excited about is building infrastructure using the .brands. And it's that control. It's the ability to set policies. It's decreasing external dependencies. You can build that infrastructure in a safe and managed way that, at least from talking to our security folks, it's something that they are really trying to lean into more with our products and services.

CREWS GORE

So we talk a lot about the values and great benefits that .brands have for brand owners. But what about the challenges, especially for up-and-coming applicants? What headwinds should .brand owners be aware of?

CHRISTINA BEDOR

Sure. And, of course, with anything that has so many benefits, of course, there are going to be drawbacks. So I think probably the most obvious one for folks that are already in the .brand space or thinking about sort of dabbling is obviously the cost. A .brand is not

free, as with any sort of brand protection. There are two main kind of buckets of cost. First is your ICANN application fee. That's all up front. Don't quote me. It's \$200,000-something for the next round. But then there's also the cost of the ongoing operation of the TLD. You have to pay ICANN fees in many cases. Unless you're going to build your own back end, you have to pay an RSP and a few other vendors, like your escrow provider and things like that. So it's not free. There is definitely a cost to having a .brand. But I think given a lot of the benefits, at least internally here at Amazon, we feel that the cost is worth it. Particularly given what Matt was just talking about in terms of the expensive domain acquisitions that we're avoiding by having a .brand domain that we have at the ready. And, of course, the security benefits, which have value in and of themselves. So that's one, I guess, drawback or at least consideration to think about if this is something that you are going to expand your experience with if you already own .brands or something that you are thinking about for the next round. The other challenge that we see is around kind of education and socialization of .brands. So obviously everyone in this room, or probably most of us, I will go out on a limb and say, you know, gTLDs, brand TLDs, they're sort of our bread and butter. We live, eat, breathe, and sleep it every day. That's not the case for others out sort of in the world. Many people are just familiar with legacy gTLDs like a .com or what have you. So depending on what your company is or what your brand is, what products and services you offer to customers, there can be some education and socialization. I don't know if you guys can hear me okay on the mic. That needs

to happen. And I will say internally we view that sort of on two tracks. Educating people internally within your organization and educating people externally. By and large, that's customers or clients. So on the internal side, and again, it depends really what your brand is and who you're talking to internally. Is it marketing folks who are going to be using your .brand for external marketing pages? Is it tech folks who are going to be using it for some of the technical infrastructure cases that Matt had talked about? So I think just educating people can be a challenge. And what we've done internally, our team, is just taking every opportunity to remind them about TLDs and .brands and that we have these .brands and that they're something that they can use. And keeping sort of brand TLDs in the conversation. In terms of customers, the way that we've found to educate really, again, sort of depends on the product or the service that you're dealing with. So, for example, we have .Amazon and we have .AWS. Those are two of the large brand TLDs that we have. We find, for example, that a lot of our AWS customers are already very familiar with .brands and seeing things on websites that are not necessarily .coms or things like that. So, for example, AWS just put out this tool called PartyRock, which you can go right now. It's PartyRock.aws. You can put in natural language prompts to build your own app using AI in the background. So our AWS customers don't really blink when they see a .brand in a website name. Whereas other customers may require a bit more education. And depending on what your company does or what you're trying to put out there in the world, you may want to think a little creatively about how you educate

and how you socialize your .brand. Whether you put a marketing campaign behind your .brand, whether you want to launch a certain product or service on your .brand. That's all stuff you have to consider by virtue of the fact that the general public may not be as familiar or as comfortable with a .brand. So those are sort of two challenges to think about as people enter the space.

CREWS GORE

Totally understand that. But you were mentioning, you know, PartyRock.aws. So what are some other ways that you are using your .brands?

MATT CROSSMAN

Yeah, sure. So we can flip through a few of the slides here. I pulled some examples that are out in the wild that I think are interesting. So the first is smallbusiness.amazon. This is collecting all of the different resources and services that we have available for small business entrepreneurs. So there's a small business academy that has a number of educational programs that entrepreneurs can access. There's a business accelerator. But it's a really clean, nice, well-branded site for all of these really interesting resources for small businesses. Next slide. So Christina talked about this. This is PartyRock.aws. I echo Christina. And if you haven't tried this yet, it is spooky good. You can not only build your own apps, but access apps that others have built using the service. And there's just a lot of really interesting things that people are building using this. But, again, it's a really nice, clean, well-branded name, PartyRock.aws. Next slide. So our health care team is also really leaning into our

.brands. So this is an example, pharmacieservices.amazon. Again, this is sort of clearly communicating to the customer the service, but then making it obvious that this is something offered by Amazon, hopefully something that creates some, as we talked about, some trust signals for customers, especially in a space like health care. I think there's some real interesting use cases in kind of signaling that trust in spaces where that may be especially necessary. Next slide. This is our own registry site. We should eat our own dog food, as we say, internally. So our registry site lives on registry.amazon. Next one. This is kind of interesting. Our Prime video team has set up primepremiere.amazon. There's nothing up there at the moment, but they basically cycle through different upcoming releases, and there'll be a countdown and access to different watch parties. Really kind of a cool way to get folks engaged with new content that's coming out on Prime Video. Next slide. This is a really nice, if any of you are AWS customers, you may have used this site, community.aws. Really nice collection of resources for customers, and different announcements and programs and posts. It's just a really, I think if you use AWS at all, it's a really nice community to be a part of and sort of keep up on what's happening within the builder community on AWS. Next slide. And then just lastly, sidewalk.amazon, which I think is super interesting technology. It's sort of low power, long range Wi-Fi networks. And so that business lives at sidewalk.amazon. Next slide. And then I think, again, going back, the stuff that I can't put on the screen is all of those sort of technical infrastructure use cases. And I think the more that we socialize our dot brands and the

more we're talking to businesses, we are increasingly seeing, you know, not just, and frankly, almost the majority of the requests, it's not just these sort of traditional landing pages, but that infrastructure that folks are finding really valuable.

CREWS GORE

Yeah, from these examples, I mean, you've got pharmacy, you've got AWS, you have Prime Video. It seems like it's across several different businesses within the company. And Amazon's such a huge company that, you know, how do you effectively get buy-in for dot brands across the entire company?

MATT CROSSMAN

Yeah, it's a challenge. Obviously, Amazon is doing a lot of different things. And so trying to connect with, you know, the wide variety of businesses and let them know that these resources are available is a real challenge. But I know, you know, not all companies are structured this way, but we are lucky enough to be sort of the sole intake point for domain name registration requests across the company. That is such a great point to educate about the availability of dot brands. So when our folks are coming to us wanting to register a name that's not available on dot com or elsewhere, you know, we are often sort of either in response to something not being available or even proactively if we think there's an interesting use case, educating them at that sort of choke point. So we sort of benefit from sitting at that point. That's sort of advantageous to us. But I think it's also just what Christina was talking about that it's finding every possible opportunity to get

this in front of people. We, you know, whenever we're talking to business teams, we just wanna make sure that they're aware that these resources are available. And so finding those opportunities to raise it, even where you think it might not be necessarily on point given the discussion. I think we found that the vast majority of folks that we raise this to as a resource are excited about it and sort of get it and get the value proposition. And so I think that's made us very sort of bullish on raising this at every chance we get. Sort of in tandem with that, I think one of the most important things you can do in an organization is find those internal champions as well. Get people on board outside of, you know, we're in the legal organization, finding people outside of legal who can evangelize for us and at least on our side that has been hands down the security team. I think if you, you know, I'm sure some in this room have had this experience of talking about dot brands with security professionals, they get incredibly excited about the opportunities. Like I think they more than anyone understand that underlying technical value and the potential, you know, potential frankly to solve, I think what we've found is solve a lot of the problems that, you know, they are maybe dealing with in their own organization and thinking about, you know, the domain name portfolio or interactions with customers or customer harm. Like there are dot brand solutions to a lot of the problems that security folks are struggling with. And we have found just a great relationship in kind of bringing them into the tent and having them be evangelists for us in other parts of the organization. It also, it doesn't hurt that like, I think when like security talks, people listen, maybe more so than

legal. So that's been really helpful. And then lastly, I think it's just being noisy about wins. And I think Christina said this, it's not just about, you know, we'd like to not just showcase what it is that Amazon is doing with dot brands, but when I see things coming out of the BRG, you know, things that Fox is doing, you know, Crews was sharing earlier, I guess two months ago about some of the relief efforts in LA and the pages that Fox had spun up on dot Fox. Like we sent that around internally. And so I think finding those opportunities to say like, look, this is not just us who's leaning into these use cases. There are others. Here's interesting things that Fox is doing. Here's interesting things that Microsoft is doing. Sky is doing. We really try to take advantage of any opportunity we can to sort of celebrate those wins.

CREWS GORE

That's a really good point. I'm gonna have to probably bring that back to my team too, and just share those experiences, because that is important to let them know that it's being used across the community. Another question that I had, and I'm sure a lot of people in the room have this. A lot of us brands, we only applied for one dot brand. Amazon applied for several. And you were very active. We're not just brands, but TLDs in general. So you all were very active in the first round. What are you guys thinking about the second round? Do you guys have a strategy there? I know you can't share. We'll see what you can share, but what are you guys planning?

CHRISTINA BEDOR

Sure. Yeah, of course we can't share a list. But we are working on one internally, I will say. I can give you sort of broad strokes what we've been thinking in terms of strategy for the next round. So suffice it to say that a lot has changed since 2012. I think on the internet, in the world, at Amazon. There's brands that we have that didn't exist in 2012. We've acquired entities, we've launched stuff. So the way we sort of started to think about the next round, we started maybe, I guess, a year ago. We started with kind of a roadshow across Amazon, because again, there are many businesses at Amazon introducing the idea of the next round. And for some teams, that's explaining what is ICANN, what is a TLD. Because some of the folks that we're meeting with are not so familiar with all of this information. But doing a roadshow across Amazon so that folks who work for some of these new brands are aware of what this even is, what the timing is, what the benefits can be that Matt talked about earlier, so that they have it on their radar that this is coming down the pike. It's something to think about. So we started those conversations last year because 2026 will be here before we know it. We wanna make sure that our internal business teams have time to plan. If we were to apply for a dot brand, what's the use case? What are we gonna use it for? Do we have budget for it? And in terms of what those conversations have looked like, by and large, we're meeting with marketing folks and tech folks. A lot of the tech folks, as we sort of alluded to before, already have background on what a dot brand is, and they easily understand a lot of the benefits, the tech use cases. A lot of the marketing folks have familiarity with dot brands, but less so. And I think by and

large, when we've been speaking to them and explaining, hey, here's what you can do with a dot brand, here's what we're doing with our dot brands, here's what these other brands are doing with their dot brands, they all think it's super cool, they're very excited by it. So that's been fun to engage on. So initially, we sort of did this roadshow to introduce the idea, tell people what this is, and give them sort of a timeline. Like here, it opens in April 2026, here's what you need to be thinking about, here's what you need to be budgeting. And internally, we're putting together a list of which dot brands we may be applying for, and we're going from there. So I think particularly on the marketing side, it's taken, like I say, a bit of education, and then just being there to answer questions for folks as they have them. And I'll say even certain brands might not be necessarily, maybe this is unique to Amazon, but certain brands might not be interested in applying for a new dot brand, but we've just taught them about dot Amazon, maybe that's something they wanna use. It just socializes it more throughout the organization. In terms of this roadshow, we do get a lot of questions from folks. So a lot of people don't understand, why should I care about this? I'm launching something in a year or two years or whatever the case may be. They think, a lot of people, especially marketing folks, align in their mind getting a domain with getting a TLD. A domain, you sort of get ad hoc whenever you want. You go to your registrar or your hostmaster team and you get your domain. A TLD, as I'm sure everyone in this room knows, the opportunity to get your own TLD, historically, has come up very infrequently. So it's sort of like, if you want to get your brand TLD, you have to act now. Obviously,

I think we all hope that this opportunity comes up more frequently, but just in case it doesn't, we want them to understand why this April 2026 event is so important. So we get a lot of questions around that and timing. We get questions about the logistics, like what does it take to operate a brand TLD? So a lot of these teams we're meeting with, they have, again, no background. So we explain what an RSP is. So that's something you would have to explain to folks within your organization and the different sort of compliance and other things that go into running your own brand TLD. And then we get questions around just the application and process in general. It is kind of a unique beast. Like what are the steps? What happens if someone else applies, who has a similar brand? Or if you have a brand that's kind of a generic word, we answer questions about that as well. So it's been interesting to see the reactions that we get from people across the company. But again, by and large, I will say they are very positive. People think it's very cool. And like Matt said, they think it's very cool to see what we've been doing internally with our own .brands. Many of them, this may be their first foray into that and to see what others are doing with their .brands as well.

CREWS GORE

Great. One of the other things we've been talking about the last couple of meetings and people have been bringing it up is outlook for .brands in the future. How do you both view the outlook for .brands? Maybe you have some ideas?

MATT CROSSMAN

Yeah, I'm overall really positive about the future for .brands. I think it really feels to me like we're just sort of barely scratching the surface of the opportunity. I think there is still so much sort of interesting, innovative stuff that we could be doing. And so I'm looking forward to continuing to explore that. I think that's one of the things that's great about these meetings and getting together with all the folks in this room and sharing some of these use cases. I think there's a real opportunity to sort of spark ideas and conversations. And I think that's one of the best things about these BRG meetings really, because I think there's really so much more we can do. And so I'm excited about the future. I think it emphasizes for me though, just how important it is that we have sort of brand friendly policy in the ICANN space. This is, as Christina said, this is kind of a foreign world to a lot of brands who may be coming to this space for the first time for round two. And so super important that we think about, how can we make this as accessible? How can we think about and keep in mind the .brand business model when ICANN policies are getting developed? I think that's gonna be increasingly important if we want to incentivize brands to get involved and be innovative in using their .brands.

CHRISTINA BEDOR

Yeah, I just kind of echo everything that Matt says. I think it's been, like I said up top, it's been interesting to see what, to learn about what we've been doing with our .brands at Amazon since I've been working there and to see what others have been doing in the space. So I think sort of the sky's the limit. I think I'm excited about, to see

what other .brands get applied for and what people use them for in the next round. And I'm just excited.

CREWS GORE

I think we all are a little bit. So from a BRG perspective, can you talk a little bit about your experience with us in the BRG and why it's important to Amazon?

MATT CROSSMAN

Yeah, so now I make my sales pitch for the BRG. You know, Amazon was one of the founding members of the BRG. So we've been involved from the very beginning. I think there's a ton of benefits for folks who are thinking about becoming members. I think the first one is there's just a tremendous amount of expertise among the board and our members in terms of operating .brands. You've got folks who are sort of grappling with the same issues, having the same conversations across their businesses, thinking about a lot of the same things. And so the opportunity to get together and have those discussions and share ideas and information, I think it's a tremendous benefit. And so, you know, I'd really encourage if folks are not members, really think about, especially as we go into the next round, the sort of value of having an organization that has this kind of expertise and can help guide you through some of these often arcane, I'll say, policies and procedures. So I think that's one big benefit. I think the other one is, and this goes back to my sort of point about ICANN policy and ensuring that it's friendly for .brands. You know, the BRG is actively engaged in that policymaking process. We are here to be that voice in the policymaking process

to make sure that those interests are represented. And so I think that's an incredibly important role that the BRG plays and really appreciate, you know, across the board and our membership, the folks who are here and are engaged and helping push things in a positive direction. I think this executive director hire is really important for us. We're really excited about sort of growing what we're doing as we lead up to the next round. So really encourage if folks, either you personally are interested in the role or you know someone that you think would be a good fit, please come and talk to any of us. Frankly, this week we would love to have that conversation. And then, you know, more broadly speaking, if you have questions, if you're interested in the BRG, if you're interested in talking about .brands, I think we're all happy to do that. And so please find us. Let's grab a coffee, let's chat. We're more than happy to do it and talk a little bit more about what the BRG does.

CREWS GORE

All right, great. Well, that's the questions that I have right now. Thank you so much. Matt and Christina for taking the time. I'm gonna kind of open it up right now to Q&A. So if anybody has any questions, thoughts, sure. Martin.

martin sutton

Thanks, Matt and Christina. That's lovely to see some good examples and different examples coming through. So something I was looking at is through the variety there, you did mention some bits which could be a bit more technical maybe, but I just wondered if you've had any experience or considered some of the protocols

that you can apply at the top level, such as HSTS preload, DMARC that .bank deployed, just to see if there is anything more valuable that you can apply to your TLDs at this stage. And if there's any ROI that you're starting to measure now, which is starting to build up the internal business case for any new applications that you're building.

CHRISTINA BEDOR

Sure, thanks for the question. So we have considered things like that. So for example, you asked about the HSTS preload list. Last year, maybe two years ago, we added all of our .brands to the HSTS preload list. And that was at the recommendation of our security team. So Matt and I are both lawyers, so we can talk, I guess in general terms about a lot of the security benefits, but we work very closely with our EdgeSec team and others on the security team about the security benefits. I don't know sort of off the cuff statistics on benefits to your question, but all of your broader point, like what are the setting security policies for your brand TLDs, that's something that we think about. And we did add them to the HSTS preload list last year.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER

Yeah, I had a question. I was wondering if you could give us a picture of what it looks like in your domain office when a business unit approaches you to register a new domain. So the aspects of this question are, do you typically steer them towards .brand namespace by default? How do you prevent against the proliferation of domain names? Is that even part of your

governance posture, is that something you're concerned about? And then thirdly, how do you manage situations where there's internal competition for a domain name? And it's like, who gets the name? Is it first come, first serve, or how are those kinds of struggles resolved?

MATT CROSSMAN

Yeah, those are great questions. So I'll try to take them one by one, and you may have to remind me as I forget them. But in terms of what it looks like when a domain name registration request comes in, we have a sort of centralized ticketing system that those come through. I think our preference is to generally defer to the businesses and their choices of names. That's just sort of, I think that's good practice overall. But we will give them an idea of what is and isn't available, and make that suggestion at that point. Sometimes it's not an either or. It's, yeah, let's pick up this .com for this service, but hey, by the way, there is our .brands, and could we get you interested in that instead, or maybe as a redirect? And so, again, we've got policies then around sort of this idea of domain sprawl, right, and making sure we're not getting too wide. And some of that goes to this kind of naming structure idea. And frankly, we have that both within some of our .brands, but also just our Amazon portfolio in general, being really thoughtful about subdomains and where they live, and so we do have policies around that to kind of prevent and guide our businesses, even if we're deferring to their name choice on kind of where that name gets to live. And then your last question, oh, conflict between businesses, yeah. It comes up more often than you would think,

particularly with the .brands, where we do have these really great second-level names that could apply to multiple businesses. It's easier when you've got a specific service that comes to you and says, we want to register our service name. It's like, great, you got it. But with some of these more kind of generic terms that could apply to multiple businesses, we basically develop a policy where we get the right decision-makers together from the business side and at a senior enough level, and they decide amongst themselves. Let the suits sort it out. And we're happy to allocate it wherever they decide it's most valuable.

NISHA PRAKASH

So I just want to jump in on strategy where we are. So I'm Nisha Prakash, Head of Domain Management from Sky. One thing that you need to know on requests for domain registrations is, so when you register into, well, when I register into .sky, it's public. So you have to be really, really aware as to whether you're dealing with an NDA or not. So it's really important to understand that the moment you put a product into your registry, that product is going to be publicly available. So we launched SkyGlassTV, for example, I had to stay fully away from launching anything into the registry, glass.sky. When they wanted to go through their testing phases, it had to be put onto a .com domain. It had to be registered away from Sky ownership and things like that. And then the other thing to point out is so many good use cases for .sky in Sky, but we're a generic term, so we can't forget the .com and the ccTLD space. If you register something in your registry, you're technically creating your domain string. So if I registered Nisha.sky, Nisha.sky is the

string. I can't, I may not be able to leave .com. So I might have to register Nisha.sky.com to protect it. So there is still that angle. And I think one thing about the BRG is there is those transparent conversations. We don't want to keep everything really fluffy and, oh my God, the registry is amazing. Because, yeah, of course it is. But we want to have those conversations with people so that they're fully aware that they still have to protect ccTLD, gTLD space. And this is why it's been so great with our members coming and being able to have those open, honest conversations. We're not here to sugarcoat things. I've been managing the .sky registry for 12 years, and we've had a lot of challenges. And I will say, if your term is generic, I mean, Sky couldn't be any more generic. We all sit under the sky. Everybody has a stake to the sky. We have a lot of challenges in the brand protection space. But we barely get that many infringements, I'd say, because we have a robust structure as to how we protect ourselves, both in the registry and still with the .com space. Sorry.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER

You said something that actually kind of grabbed my curiosity. But why wouldn't you just use a sublevel domain for testing in the .sky? Why would you register a .com, where that itself also goes directly into the zone, and anybody can find it? I know it's unaffiliated with Sky, I understand, but still.

NISHA PRAKASH

Yeah, because if you're going and launching a product, and we're putting a subdomain to an existing domain, then we've told

publicly that we're launching this product. You have to register a domain stealth. So if I was to launch a domain for testing, say we're launching a product, the domain has to be completely and unassociated to Sky.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER What if it was on the fourth or fifth level, for example? It doesn't necessarily go into the zone itself.

NISHA PRAKASH No, you're looking at the domain. You can look up the ownership of the domain.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER You can look up the ownership, but what I'm saying is if it's several layers down, it doesn't necessarily go into the zone file itself for everybody to see.

NISHA PRAKASH Yeah. No, that's a fair point. But we wouldn't do that as an organization, because there is still risks in that. And then what will happen is a speculation. People wonder why things get released before press release, and KitKat was a really good example. KitKat launched KitKat Vegan, and they actually registered KitKatVegan.com, and it got leaked before press release. And you can't do things like that. I don't know what we're talking about. Testing phases is much deeper, but you just can't risk it, having a term that relates to a product that's going to shake the industry,

and we have to register stealth domains. So then what I'm saying is you kind of have to remember that you can't do that in your registry.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER

Hi, a question for Amazon, and I might have missed it if you already said that, because I arrived a little late. Apologies for that. But have you considered moving the primary source for delivering all your services to your TLD, i.e. your Amazon web shop, your categories, all the different products living under .amazon, and the other domain names in the other TLDs, just redirecting there?

MATT CROSSMAN

That's my dream, for sure. I don't think we're there yet, but I think that goes to this idea that I sort of mentioned earlier that I think we're just scratching the surface still. I think there's still a lot of big, innovative, interesting ways that we could be using this, and we're sort of just getting started.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER

Yeah, thanks for the great examples. I really appreciate it. One technical question, are you using one of your .brands for email already? Or, if not, are you planning to do?

MATT CROSSMAN

I am not aware of a current email use case. It's definitely something we've talked about, but I don't think any of them are currently being used. But I think that is a great example of that sort of

customer trust signal that could be really compelling with some of our .brands.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER

The question is why, when I just may add that, we had a conversation with a couple of potential .brand applicants where they said, why is .brand helping to prevent phishing? The answer, or the question was, it's not, yeah. It's not by itself, but by using it, by communicating, by educating your audience, it can help to sort these kind of things out. And I think that is a message we as a BRG and in general as a .brand has to broadcast that, no, it's not directly helping to prevent, but when you educate your audience and the users, in the end, if everything goes on the .brand email, you know what's legit and what's real, and that's why I think it's also for good examples and use cases in the future also for next round to see .brands using their .brand for email, because I think that's the most secure space for email, not only on the web services side, but also on the email side.

NISHA PRAKASH

So there are opportunities to prevent phishing. We use contact.sky, and we use that for all third parties sending email on our behalf. So an example of sky, you might go to the website, put something in your basket, and then an example of sky, you might go to the website, put something in your basket, andIn this lecture, I'm going to talk to you about how you can set up a third-party e-mail account. So, if you have a third-party e-mail account, you can set up a third-party e-mail account and then forget that you have, or

you don't want to purchase it, we will send out an e-mail from yourbasket.contact.sky. The actual setup has DKIM and SPF and DMARC, so the thing is there, is whilst you're trying to hijack that, and somebody else takes it over and then starts using that to send phishing, and there's a use case straight away. That was a live example of how we're discussing in the VAG, so that's, yeah, I mean, honestly.

MARTIN SUTTON

Just keeping on the theme there, sorry, Martin Sutton, TLDs. Just keeping on the theme there for the e-mails, I mean, sometimes it's a heavy lift to try and transfer everything over on e-mail, all your public-facing e-mail, as well as internal e-mail. Others, some have done it, including Canon, et cetera, so they went straight ahead with those sorts of things, but it strikes me that businesses, especially large organizations, are still suffering from spear-phishing a lot more these days. High vulnerabilities in terms of your data, invoicing processes, things like that, so we've seen an uptick in brands that want to use it, at least partly for services and B2B-type activities, so there isn't a big pushover to migrating all of mail. It could be pockets of e-mail that actually make a big ROI for the benefit of that transition, so some of those things are useful to consider, and some brands have really focused in on that.

CREWS GORE

Any other questions? Do you want to introduce Gio and Jason?

COLE QUINN

So I had asked Crews to give me a minute on AOB, just to say, so this is Cole Quinn with Microsoft, and I've been around for a while here, and I served on the board of directors and was president for a while, a few years back, and so I wanted to introduce Gio. Gio Garcia is my colleague at Microsoft, and he's coming from the cyberspace abuse protection and threat intelligence, so he was part of the RiskIQ acquisition, and he gave an internal presentation at Microsoft on WHOIS and RDAP accuracy, and afterwards I hooked up with him, and I said, you've got to check out ICANN. So this is his first ICANN. Welcome, Gio. And on my right is Jason Guyversen. He's my engineering manager that leads the team that has built our internal domain manager tool that I've demonstrated at different brands and domains events and stuff, and so this is also his first ICANN, and I just wanted you to make him feel welcome and also know that if you see him around or whatever, feel free to get him up on LinkedIn or give him your card, and there's just this kind of impossible learning curve, an acronym overload, so just bear with him, but you'll be seeing these guys going forward in addition to my own participation when I'm able to, so thanks.

CREWS GORE

Awesome. Well, welcome to you both, and any other questions or AOB from members? If not, then we can give a few minutes back to your day. Thank you all so much for coming, and remember we're looking for that executive director role, so if anyone comes to mind, please have them reach out to us or apply directly, and thank you all so much. Have a great rest of the day.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]