
ICANN83 | PF – How to Launch/Further your Tech Career
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SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you. My name is Siranush Vardanyan and I will be your remote 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. During this session, questions and comments will only be read aloud if submitted in the proper form, as I have mentioned in the chat space.

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And it's my pleasure to introduce my colleague from OCTO team and I hope that you know what is OCTO. What is OCTO? Hmm. So, it's in the schedule. Yes, please.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER

I think it's the Office of the Chief Technology Officer.

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SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Excellent, excellent. So Ulrich is my colleague in from OCTO team, and today it's my pleasure to introduce him and give the floor who he will be facilitating and running this session actually for all of you. But I am looking forward to your engagement, active engagement, and interaction during this session. Ulrich, the floor is yours.

ULRICH WISSER

Yes. So, hello. My name is Ulrich. I work in OCTO in the Technical Engagement Team, which means I travel a lot to technical meetings and talk about DNSSEC, Universal Acceptance, KINDNS, which we heard in the morning. All that stuff is, well, what I focus on. And so, in this session, I will be talking about tech careers. So, I will actually talk a little bit about my career and then all of you in this room who are not fellows and not NextGen, it's called upon you to put up your hands and tell us about your careers because it's a little bit boring only I'm talking all the time. Okay. And then obviously we hope for a lot of questions from the group and see what we can do. So, let's start.

I'm German and I have studied computer science at the University of Aachen, all the way in the west in Germany, west as you can get. And after that, I took a job as a developer, actually embedded systems. And what I would like to say about this time at the university, which was really fun, but also that all the programming languages I learned at university, I use none today, but all the basic principles of computer science that I learned at the time, I still use

to this day. And I would say that is, let's say some, if you work in IT, this is something that is repeating. The basic principles will stay because it's the basic principles, it's how IT works, but a lot of stuff changes, sometimes faster, sometimes slower. If you don't want to have a lot of change, IT is not your business.

So, in 1999, we actually moved to Sweden and I got a job at a search engine marketing company and learned Swedish at the job. And in 2007, I got a job at the Swedish Internet Foundation running .se. And my first job was to implement DNSSEC in all their production systems. So, registrar website, EPP client, EPP server, registry database, billing you name it, everywhere. And so, I worked for many years as a developer for these systems. And then I changed to a role as a DNS expert, went to IETF meetings. I was co-chair of CenterTech. Center is the, let's say, association of country code top-level domains in Europe. Then since last year, I work at ICANN in technical engagement.

Well, things that are important in my career is, well, one thing that I found really important is that you have to be true to yourself. For example, in one of my jobs, my boss actually asked me to lie to our customers. You know, and it's like, sometimes it's like, yeah, your product is not exactly there where you want it to be and, you don't have to tell the customer. But there's a difference between we don't have a product, but we tell the customer that we have one. And, well, our product is not 100%. You know, if we're 99% there and we say, yeah, yeah, we can do it, that's a difference from we don't have anything and we tell the customer it's all done. And you

have to decide yourself where in the spectrum you want to be, but I want to be closer to 99% than zero. I think that is something that is really, really important to me.

And then think that was always important to me is to, I like to try new stuff. So whenever there was a new development project, I would jump on it and see where we can go with it. And, yeah, here I am. Good. So, questions, or somebody else wants to jump up and tell about their career.

CLAUDIA LEOPARDI

Hi, everyone. For who doesn't know me, I'm Claudia. I'm an old NextGen from a couple of years ago. And now I'm interning in ICANN actually. So I'm part of the organization. And my question to Ulrich actually, is during a conversation earlier that we had, you mentioned how entering the tech career was different before and in our current time. Could you elaborate a bit on that for everyone?

ULRICH WISSER

Yes. So when I entered this, tech was, I mean, there was really a nerd business. I knew the five guys in my school that would do computers. But that's not how a lot of young people today interact with tech. And that doesn't mean that you can't have a tech career just because when you were 10 years old, you didn't program your father's computer at home, something. That has changed over time. We all used to be like really nerdy nerds. You don't have to be that anymore.

You can start your career without being already proficient at programming. So there's a lot of more roads in tech today and more ways into it than they were in the beginning of the 90s. So on the other hand, there's a lot of more, employers expect a lot more from you. In the 90s, it was like, I have seen C programs, and then you were hired as a developer. That's not going to be happening today. Today, you have to be a developer, you have to have written programs, you have to have experience that's expected of you before you even can raise your hand and say, yeah, I want the job.

So there's shifts and everything. And then there's technologies that were really important to me. I mean, actually at the time, I was a teacher for Turbo Pascal. Anybody of you heard of Turbo Pascal? Yeah, I don't have to show your age, but if you did, you know who I'm talking about. And it's like totally irrelevant, but at the time, it was like the latest shit you could do. So, yeah, it changes a lot. In the middle of the 90s, if you could do ping, you were a network engineer. So, yeah. And today if you don't know, if you're not proficient in BGP, you can't be a network engineer. So requirements change and it makes a lot of things harder, but it also has given us a lot more roles how you can enter tech.

KUNLE OLORUNDARE

Yeah, sure. All right. Thank you very much. So my name is Kunle Olorundare. ICANN fellow. I listened to you very well. Well, I'll come to that later. But what I actually want you to dwell on is the issue of maybe foundational education.

In the olden days, people didn't really have access to the internet the way we have any today. And, yeah, if you want to learn things in those days, you really needed to get somebody that is fast in that particular field. Maybe you want to learn programming. You want to learn anything. You just need to get somebody that's going to take you through the rudimentaries.

But nowadays, you will agree with me that the internet has changed so many things. In fact, I may just go to the internet and start learning something today. And if I'm committed, right, in the next one month, I become very proficient. To the extent that probably maybe if I want to write, let's say, certification, I can learn a lot of things on the internet and I'll write my certification and after that, I'll become an authority.

So I've seen that there's this great pattern shift from the way we used to learn in those days from what is obtainable nowadays. So the question is, do we still need to go through all those four-wall educational protocol before we start learning the skills that we need to make ourselves relevant in the current IG ecosystem? That's the question for you. And secondly, you didn't tell us whether you actually lied when your boss issued an idea. So I wanted to tell us the answer. Thank you.

ULRICH WISSER

So I think that for certifications, you often have to learn very concrete stuff. So I mean, how to use the command line or how to do something in Windows, how to configure this software or that

software. And I think that is absolutely an important skill, but it's an important skill right now because in five years from now, that software won't exist any longer, but you still want to have a job. And so the most important part is not to understand how that software works today, but the most important part for you is to understand how this whole ecosystem works in general. What's the principle behind it? Because that principle will continue to exist 10 years from now.

And then there will be some other software that you have to configure, that you have to learn. But if you have to understand the principles, I mean, once you have understood how a word processor works and how all this font stuff and paragraph and it's very easy to change word processors. But if you don't, then you just like, I can't word. And when word changes the menus, scream go through all the offices in the country because I don't know how to use it anymore.

It's like, yeah, obviously you haven't understood how to use a word processor because otherwise you would be able to use it because they do the same thing as they did before, just with a little bit of different interface. And so I think that is the important part for your career to understand these things that I need to learn now. And you absolutely need to learn how the software works, but you need also to understand the principle behind it so that you can easily advance your career into other things.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Yeah, go ahead and then we'll have an online, the question from remote participant.

SUNCICA ROSIC

Hello, can you hear me? Hello, Suncica, and thank you for sharing your experience. And I would like to reflect on the point you just mentioned about understanding the principles behind a certain system or a certain software. And I think with the AI, we have seen a shift in the sense that developers and data analysts can have a functional code with the help of AI, even though they don't fully understand it. I think this is an amazing opportunity and danger. And in my own work, I often think, okay, if I rely on AI, yes, it will speed up my work, but will I maybe lose the ability to think critically about my code and solve errors that cannot be easily solved by ChatGPT. So I wanted to ask you if in your current work, like, do you use AI? How do you use it? And how to not let AI hinder your critical thinking? Thank you.

ULRICH WISSER

Well, no, thankfully, I don't do so much, thankfully, but I don't do so much development anymore. But I think I actually haven't managed to do a real program with AI that really worked. I tried, I really tried, but so for small stuff, it really works, works very well. But when I tried to do some more advanced stuff, it would always, like, produce me some code that didn't do what I wanted, and it didn't even understand the algorithm I wanted it to implement.

Then it would randomly forget some subroutine that it needed. So I have not managed to get AI to do what I wanted.

But yes, I think in general, obviously, this will improve and AI will do what we want it to do. But whatever you need to do, you need to be able to have checks and balances. We do this everywhere. We need to have somebody to check on the result. Is the result real? And currently AI is really good at stuff, but we don't know if it's lying or not. And that's if I ask it questions about DNS, it's very easy for me to decide if the AI is right or not. But if I ask it questions about medicine, well, I have no idea. So I have to find a doctor.

I think that that doesn't disappear. We need to have an expert, and even if you go to a doctor, if it's something serious, you go to a second source because a doctor can be wrong. And so we need to, even for AI to have the ability to check the result and we need to have the second source and maybe not the same AI as the one that made the program, I would guess, hope.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

It's a follow up?

KUNLE OLORUNDARE

So just to add to what you have said, and based on what you said the other time, talking about understanding the fundamental processes, etc. I think that is very important because, take for example, if you want to do programming, and you just go to ChatGPT, Gemini, name them, and probably you just ask it is, why

it will give you ideas and it will give you wrong. But the fact that you know the fundamentals, when you put it in and it's not working, you will be able to tweak it to what is suitable. And at the end of the day, you can always prove is right. Why? Because the program will run. If it doesn't go wrong, that means it is wrong.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Okay. The question is from Gottsway [ph]. Interesting so far and I love the fact that you emphasized never to lie to your career lie in your career path or else it will come back to hit you hard. And here's the question. What are some common pitfalls to avoid when advancing in tech career.

ULRICH WISSER

Well, there is never any discussions between being a generalist and being a specialist, you know. So, it depends on the way you want to end up. So, I ended up to become a specialist in DNSSEC. But I also I have done development. I have done other stuff. But everybody who works in tech has to do a lot of stuff. You can't be just, you know. Nobody is doing just DNSSEC, you know. But I think that is something that you have to-- there needs to be something that you need to be really good at.

And there's a lot of things that you need to know about. And you have to decide what that is. And sometimes it's really hard because there's a million things that you could be good at in IT and a million things that you maybe want to be good at, but you don't find the

time to be good at. And then you have to reconcile this with yourself and say, well, there's things I can do and things I can't do. And what is good enough for myself? And I think that is important for yourself to decide where you want to be in this spectrum. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

And as you talked also about AI, there is another question. How do you find the AI taking over the tech jobs concept and AI implementing the ethics?

ULRICH WISSER

Well, AI implementing ethics, I don't know. It doesn't seem to happen anytime soon. So, AI taking jobs, I mean, that's obviously a reality. We don't need to-- there's no way around it. But I think there is a lot of development in the field. But what I feel is that if you try to remember back to, let's say, 2017, I think BMW promised us a self-driving car 2025. I haven't seen it. And I think neither have you. And there is something that is in all these exponential curves, sometimes they stop being exponential. And the last 20% are often a lot harder than the first 80%. And we don't know where we are with AI. We don't know if we just in the first 20% or if we already have reached 80%, then it won't get any much better. So, I mean, obviously, it will get better. But you know, how much better is a big question. And we don't know. That's all I can say about that.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you. Novak, please go ahead.

NOVECK GOWANDAN

Thank you. Noveck Gowandan here from Trinidad and Tobago, second-time fellow. So, just two minutes for a story. So, on that point about Pascal, way back in secondary school, in the age of dinosaurs, I actually dropped computer science because I didn't like Pascal and chose to do history instead. Now, it's kind of strange because the point is where you start is necessarily where you end up. I ended up doing undergrad degree in information systems, pivoted to leadership and management, and then did a degree, PhD in governance. But along the journey, I went back to the very, the bits.

So, the Linux operating system, I was curious. So, I started playing with this red hat like two or three back in 2004. And about 10 years later, I actually worked with the Linux Foundation for everyone. Linux powers the web as we know it. It's the operating system that powers the web. And I worked with the Linux Foundation to write and develop certification exams that's being used across the industry. And the funny story is, I would have dropped ComSci way back when and ended up creating certification examinations that people around the world are using.

And just to sort of follow up on my colleague there who asked the concept of are degrees still relevant? Well, I've been in higher ed for 20 years. And I just wanted to share some experience in that space in that a degree would open a door for you to get a job.

Certifications would land you the interview. And you as the person in the room sitting in interview would land a job based on your personality. So, it's a combination of all three. The value that you bring, the certifications or the knowledge that you have, and the foundation at the very least. Because most of the jobs that are in the market right now would have the requirements of okay I need an undergraduate degree, I need a master's degree. So we can't escape that reality.

So the degree would open the door for you, but the unique value that you bring would essentially get you that job I'm sorry if I spoke too quickly.

ULRICH WISSER

Well, I would like to add that if you need a certification or a degree, it depends highly on where you are in the world. I'm from Germany, you absolutely need a degree. There's no question, otherwise you will never get a job that's just out of the question. In Sweden not so much. In Sweden you get hired when you, you could get hired after high school, immediately do a job. So it's really very much dependent on where you are in the world, but what I would say is that depends on also what you want to work with.

So it's like programming a pacemaker, doing interesting medicine work. Anybody of you wanted to have a pacemaker that was developed by people who didn't have a computer science degree? Exactly. So, there is fields where you have to have one. And if that's part of your interest, then you probably better get one. But it

depends a lot on you, where you end up. So on your interest. And a lot of times, I mean, IT is everywhere. So, I mean, you could have an interest in model airplane flying. And I guarantee you that there's programmer jobs for model airplanes. So it doesn't matter if you have a favorite sport, there's an IT team taking care of everything, organization around that sport. I think that is something. So don't dismiss non-IT experiences for your IT career.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Yes, we have over there the question. Yes, please come closer to the mic.

BENJAMIN FARINE

Hi, I'm Benjamin Farine. I'm working as a lead DNS engineer for ICANN. Thank you for the sharing. I have two questions. The first one, why do you move from the registry to ICANN? And the second one, which is, I think, more important for me. It's very difficult to find people working on DNS and DNSSEC. Do you have any idea to encourage them working on DNS and DNSSEC? Thank you.

ULRICH WISSER

Oh, the last one is easy. Give them a job. Really, we talked about this at lunch. And so I go to a lot of these meetings, a lot of network operator groups, and everywhere people are complaining about, oh, the young people are missing. How do we bring in young people? And it's like, well, give them a job. That's easy. That's how we all entered the tech industry. It's not that half of the people here

are here because it's some of their hobby. We are here because most of us have a job in the IT industry. And that's how you get people to join the cause.

So I think that is an important part. The industry has to think about how to give jobs to younger people. And that has been a problem. One of the problems is that we have made IT more efficient, and that means we need fewer people to do it. And so the people we already have stay at the job, and there's no place to hire new people. So, very easy. And I think that is something we need to do. So why did I change to ICANN? So, personally, I really think that the core of the Internet is super important. The core of the Internet should be protected, and it's important for our lives. And ICANN cares about the core of the Internet, and so that was an easy sell.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Another question from a remote participant. How can I position myself for leadership roles in the tech industry?

ULRICH WISSER

Well, first of all, I would say start working in the industry, and then diligent work. I mean, that's how you get leadership positions in any industry. You do the work, you do it on time, all that stuff. You show up on time, you deliver on time, you put in the work, and you hope that your boss sees it or you make your boss see it. Well, the idea is that you make your boss see it. Don't wait that your boss sees it on their own. You have to make them.

That's important. That's really important to realize that part of your job is to tell others what you're really doing. Don't expect others to come to you and ask you, oh, did you really do good last week? Well, if you really did good, tell them about it. It's your job to tell others what you do. It's not their job to ask you about it. And even if it's your boss and you think they should know, I agree, but life is what it is. So be your own best and promote yourself. And you don't have to be over-promoting. You don't have to brag. You don't have to-- say what you did. That's good enough. So yeah, that would be my advice.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Yeah, for example, like in my case, in my early 30s, I would never think of that in my late 50s I will work with tech company or in tech industry having no tech background at all. And you need to show to your boss. So the question was what if the boss doesn't see it? So you need to show to your boss. Yes, please. Go ahead.

ULRICH WISSER

Just I wanted to add one thing. I think what you also should consider is a career doesn't mean that you have to become management. So I don't manage people, but I still consider myself having a career in IT. So you can become an expert in some field in IT and work as an expert and have a successful career. You don't have to become a manager. So that is something that you need to think about what you want to do.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

This is exactly the example when we are telling to fellows that it doesn't mean that if you are not in a leadership position within ICANN, you do nothing. The role you play on your regional level in your regional community is much more beneficial and can give much more perspectives to your own career. Yes, please.

DINARA KARIMOVA

Thank you. My name is Dinara. I'm from the HR team at ICANN. I just wanted to add on the answers given to the question about how to evolve in a leadership role. And then I love the fact that you highlighted that people in management is not necessarily leadership role. And I think it's important to also work on the leadership skills. And it's not leadership is a big word. But what do we expect from a leader? It's empathy, people who would listen to us, to take our ideas, to talk with us. So that's something very important to develop as well.

But also create your own path. What you do here is great. You come to an event, you connect with people. That's exactly what you need to do. You can wait for your manager to see you. And it's good if you have a good manager. It's not always the case, unfortunately. So go to events, build your network. If you want to talk to someone, go. It's very easy. We have LinkedIn. We have many, many different channels. So there are so many ways to

develop those skills and get the connections you want to get, really. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you, Dinara. Good interaction. And actually, indeed, I would agree with you that leadership is not just the position. It's a combination of skills. It's a networking skill. It's a facilitation skill. It's a communication skill. So this is the combination of skills which you should start working on yourself and learn. You are not born with these skills. We need to develop this. Mayssam.

MAYSSAM SABRA

Thank you. My name is Mayssam. Actually, I got inspired from the lady from HR to ask Ulrich. So you are a tech expert. I'm not technical at all, but I am seeking different areas of interest to be engaged with ICANN. So my question to you is how do you balance your technical skills with your soft skills in your career? Because many people think that technical people, I'm sorry, but they don't know how to communicate. They cannot network. They don't have the soft skills. So I just would like to hear from you how do you balance this and what is the positive impact that should bring to a technical or technology expert? Thank you.

ULRICH WISSER

You have no idea how much time I had to put in to learn all of this, and I'm still not good at it. Yeah, it's true. Obviously, different jobs attract different styles of people, and introverted people are more

overrepresented under the technical community. That's true. It's what it is. So it's a different style of communication. I mean, if you ever have been to the IETF, it's very different. But obviously, I've chosen a career path where I need both. So being able to be very technical and being able to talk to policy people and doing community outreach. So a lot of people are surprised when I tell them that I'm an introvert, but I am. But it's a learned skill, and if you're interested in that, you are actually able to learn that.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

In response to your question as well, so being a non-technical person by myself, I always was afraid of tech people by asking questions. Because I was thinking that my question is a totally stupid question to ask, but trust me, they are good people. Sana?

SANA NISAR

Hello. Hi, I'm Sana Nisar, and I have a question. What can you suggest for someone who, after a few years, really wanted to transit themselves from the management side to the technical side in the tech space? What are the specific actions or steps you can suggest? My friends share that the soft skills matter, as we all know. So does the soft skills help us enter tech?

ULRICH WISSER

Usually, when you are in management, soft skills are much more important. So you should already have some of those. But what I find is that when you work on the technical side, you often want to

do projects. You see deficiencies in your software, you see deficiencies in your network setup, whatever it is. So there are some things you want to do, but usually the technical side is not the side with the money. That's management. They decide where the money is put. And so somehow you have to communicate this is what we want to do, and that's why we want to do it, and all that stuff.

So that's a really good skill to have, to understand the technical side, be on the technical side, but being able to communicate with management what you want to do. And being able to, in terms for management, because on the technical side, you have this engineer, you have this we're doing a craftsman. We want to do a good craft. I want this clean network setup. Everything is and the management side is, what, that's \$1,000 extra? No. And you get it. The management side is a lot more about how does the company make money, and the technical side is like, oh, how do we have good technical operations? And these two things overlap at some point, but they're not fully overlapped.

And so to be able to bridge this and to communicate between the both is really, really important and it's the same with legal. For example, at .SE, we wanted to publish our zone file, and the zone file contains IP numbers. So IP numbers in the EU are considered private data. So that's a problem. And then our legal team said we cannot publish it, but then we found some other laws that we have to publish it, obviously, because otherwise the DNS wouldn't work.

But they were very specific about how we could do it, and in the end, it turned out to be, well, if you publish the zone, if it's public data, and we would say, like, but the people have given us the data to publish it. They have given us their permission to publish it. Then they can also retract that permission. But according to the law, we cannot tell them how to contact us about retracting the data. So now if we would just publish it, they could call us, they could write emails anything, and then we would have to act on it.

And that's obviously an operational hazard for registry. You cannot have 100 people calling you, and you have to hunt IP addresses and whose IP address is it really and stuff like that. So that's what the legal team would protect us about, but they weren't really good in their communication, and the technical side wasn't really good in their communication, and so they had a really hard time meeting.

And so being able to bridge this gap and being able to explain what every side wants to do so that we understand each other and then come to a good solution is really, really valuable. That's a good career move, actually. So you're on the management side, and you find a niche and technique that you want to enter, and you can do that. You have really valuable skills, I would say.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Yes, David, please.

DAVID MARGLIN

I'm going to jump in here, David Marglin, for the record. So I want to make the case for being a good problem solver and a good student. I think if you're a good communicator, that helps as well. I did not consider myself a tech person when I went to law school at all, but there I was, Harvard Law School. I graduate. My law firm is representing IANA. It's 1998. We find ourselves hosting the very first Board meeting of ICANN in 1998. Years later, 20 years later, I find myself working for ICANN, and I find what I do, which mainly is helping the ombuds, but it's problem solving.

I'm faced with problems, and I have to learn what I have to learn in order to solve those problems going forward. And I think a lot like tech, you can get there different ways, but being around, being present, not relying too much on AI, which is not you solving the problem. You might cheat it. You might be good at inputting, but it's not really necessarily at this point going to help your problem solving skills, which I think are a great way to advance your career in technology and in ICANN, generally speaking.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Okay. Any questions? Yes, Naima.

NAIMA AWAN

Hello, everyone. I'm Naima Awan. I'm an ICANN fellow from Pakistan. I just have a question. What do you recommend how to stay informed on rapidly evolving tech landscape, especially if you are from a non-tech background? Thank you.

ULRICH WISSER

Well, so generally informed is a lot different from being able to do stuff. So as a technician, I'm always in this, I want to know the details, but obviously I'm not able to do that. I can't know the details of everything. I don't know how to run a Kubernetes cluster. I mean, I really would like to, but no. And that is, you have to, this is level of what we call informed. There's technologies I understand. There's technologies that I have a basic understanding how it is used, but I can't do it myself. And then there's the stuff that I really, really know.

And so I think that is an important thing to see where do different parts of technology fall into that where you need, how much do I need to know about it? And yeah, it's not easy to know about all of that, but it's something you have to find out and see what you really need in your line of work. Yes. And as a non-technical person, well, following technology can be really hard because technologies often are very technical in their presentation of their stuff.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Rolla.

ROLLA HASSAN

Thank you. Rolla Hassan, for the records. ICANN follow for the third time my strike. So my question is what you are looking in when you have CVs that sent to you to oversee them or what is the qualification you are seeing? Especially that they are, all of them

are qualified enough and they're having certificates, etc. What is the extra thing that you choose over one of the other things? Thank you.

ULRICH WISSER

Well, so if you think of what you really want from a colleague, or a coworker, or an employee is like you want people to solve problems for you. And ideally, you want to give them a problem and then they tell you it will take two weeks. And after two weeks, they come back and they have solved the problem. So they're self-going, self-driven, stuff like that. And that's what I usually would look at in a CV. So to see there's people that do what needs to be done. And then there's people who solve problems. And it's not very clear. It really is not. But some people, you can see in the CV how driven they are. Some people are just more on to the stuff. And it doesn't have to be in IT.

At . SE, I did a lot of work with high school students. We had internships after high school. They could work for four months for us. And, I mean, obviously, they didn't have any tech experience, high school students. But you could very clearly see the ones that had done stuff. Just being you are the coach at your sports club. You are or the scouts, or what do I know. Whatever your interest is, but you not just went to training two times a week because your parents told you, but you also went the extra mile and you were a leader in your sports club, or you did stuff, basically.

And that is the interesting part. You had a pet project, programming something, or you're building something. It doesn't really matter what it is. But there was something that you were bragging about, and you did. It can be anything, you know. You built a treehouse or something. But you had things that you bragged about, and that's usually a sign for people that get engaged and do stuff.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

But for problem solver, if you are looking for problem solver, there should be also the problem giver. You should have the better of both.

ULRICH WISSER

Well, when you work in technology, there's enough problems to solve. I have a list if you're in need of problems.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Okay. I am a giver. That's why. Thank you. Hanna.

HANNA FRANK

Thank you. Hello, Hanna Frank for the record. Third-time fellow. How do you handle, or how would you suggest about handle with the pressure of the work field? We are in a highly competitive world here. ICANN is a highly competitive ecosystem. And how would you handle with that pressure, that if you are not in a leadership position, you are like nothing, or you are not growing up in your

professional academic life? And what would be your suggestion about it?

ULRICH WISSER

Well, I mean, I think a leadership position is, I don't think that it has a lot to do with the position. The question is, do other people listen to you when you're a leader? And you don't have to be the CEO of the company. When I talk about DNSSEC, people listen to me because they know that I know my stuff, you know. And so you don't have to be a formal leader position to be a leader. But then obviously the work is highly competitive and depends also where in IT you are. But I would say the important part is here actually is communication.

So, I mean, you have a job to do, you have a problem to solve, and the important part is that you have to know if you're able to solve it, and you have to know if you're able to solve it in time. And if you can't do it in time, you have to talk to let people know, because often there is other resources that could help you, but they're not going to jump on you and say, hey, can we help you? So I have spare time, can I solve your problem? I have yet to meet somebody like that. So you have to communicate, well, here's something that probably will delay our project, I need help. We need to look at this together. And then you will find that you most often can get help. I mean, at least if you're in a good place, then you will get help.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Excellent. Romia, please.

ROMIA NAFISA

Hi, I'm Romia. I'm a second-time ICANN Fellow, and I am a cybersecurity professional working in London. So my question is, does this program allow participants to shadow or collaborate directly to ICANN OCTO team or any other technical projects like integrating blockchain in DNSSEC or any other research?

ULRICH WISSER

Yes, yes. The OCTO team is very approachable. We are really happy to discuss. That's our job, technical engagement. We have a lot of people in technical engagement. Part of my job is to talk to you about this stuff. Yes.

ROMIA NAFISA

All right. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Suncica, and then we have an online question.

SUNCICA ROSIC

I'm Suncica, and I'm a NextGen. I think a lot of tech students are struggling with finding even the entry-level jobs because even the jobs that say that do not require experience actually do require some experience. And it seems that the jobs that used to be done by juniors are now being replaced by the AI. So that makes me feel

that technical and academic knowledge today is not enough. So what do you think, what are other skills that we need to work on and we need to develop in order to be able to overcome this challenge? Thank you.

ULRICH WISSER

Well, I don't have all the answers. But, well, I wouldn't say that entry-level jobs are getting replaced by AI. There is a special type of job that gets replaced by AI. That is totally true. But I think there's still a lot of places. What I think is that in a lot of places there is a mismatch between what the people expect, experiences that young people don't have, but I expect them because when I was that age I had them. And that is a mismatch that we have to somehow solve because obviously that's not a good fit. But I think there is a bigger problem than that AI is taking jobs.

But one of the things that you always can do is, I mean, you know all of this, how to write your CV and stuff, but I think it's important that you highlight really stuff that you have done, things that you can do, and be it just a university project that you had to do, but it's an experience that you did. You did do it. And that's the important stuff. Do not think about stuff like, yeah, yeah, I did that because I had to. I don't know. Yeah, it's something we did in school. No, no, no, it's something you did. Be proud of the stuff you do. Do the stuff that you have to do, but then, as I said, talk about it.

If it's your boss or if you're looking for a boss, tell them about what you did. Be proud of yourself. Don't think that, oh, the stuff I did

was so little, like it doesn't count. Of course it counts. You think all the other students already have a Ph. D. and did fly a rocket to the moon? I don't think so, you know. So they are not more qualified than what you are. Be proud of yourself, and present yourself, and present the stuff that you did.

At Nordesse, again, I did a lot of that stuff there. I did actually invite six students to interviews. And the last one, I actually only invited her because three girls had applied. And then I invited all the three girls. What can you do? I mean, it's just slack. And we had the interview. At the end of the interview, she asked me, this sounds a lot like it had something to do with networks.

Internet Foundation, yeah, it has to do with networks. And she was like, oh in school, we made this Cisco administrator course. So I'm a certified Cisco administrator. At the time, the Internet Foundation didn't have a single operator who had a Cisco administrator certificate. She got the job. She didn't write about it in her CV because it was something she did at school. So think about that. Think about what you did. Even if it's just your homework, it is something that you did and that you can be proud of.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you. So there was a question from Jayit. I work in a slow-moving government organization in Bangladesh where bureaucratic delays often hinder security progress. I want to reform the system instead of quitting, but waiting is hard. How can

I stay patient and motivated while slowly making changes, especially with technology?

ULRICH WISSER

Well, I think from that sentence we cannot take away Bangladesh because government and slowly is universal. So what can I say? Governments are slow, and they will be slow even in the foreseeable future, at least. You have to be patient or change jobs. Really, what I can say is change jobs. Luckily enough, we are in an industry where it is relatively easy to get jobs. I don't say that it's easy. It's never easy to get a new job, but it's relatively easy. If you have friends in, let's say, communications or advertisement, ask them about how it is to get a job.

So if you're really unhappy in your job, ask yourself, is this where I want to spend my life, my time? Is this something that is worth suffering for? One of the guidance in my career was when I have sleepless nights for the whole weekend over my job, then I change jobs. So if I come back to the work on Monday and I didn't sleep over the whole weekend, that's a no-no. If it's a bad boss or something else, whatever it is, but life is too short to fight windmills. You don't win against the CEO. That's for sure. Sometimes you have to change ships.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

There was a question over there and then Rolla.

BENJAMIN FARINE

This is not really a question. I would like to go back to the CV discussion, which is, from my perspective, very important. I just reviewed more than 80 CVs last month. To be honest, I see the same mistake on approximately 90% of the CVs. A lot of people are using AI to generate the CV. The problem with AI, this is always the same structure. That means when you have to review 20 CVs, this is always the same CV. What we are looking for when we want new candidates, we are looking for the skills, but also the experience, as Ulrich explained. For example, if you need DNS sec and DNS skills, we are just checking their experience. If you are not working on DNS ecosphere, that's really easy to just skip the CV. My recommendation is do not use AI to generate the CV. Just make it simple. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Make it personal. I agree. Rolla, and then we'll come back.

ROLLA HASSAN

I just have a comment about my colleague's online question about the government and the slow movement of the situation. My background is government also.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

And you work with government, right?

ROLLA HASSAN

Yes, the key is persistence. You have to be persistent and keep moving. And try to make consensus with other players so they can move it from their side. So you have some measure, like making impact, that this policy is very important and this is urgent, etc. So you have to move it from other side and making informal communication and always keep the back doors open. So that's my advice. And that's all. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you, Rolla. Very good advice to one government representative to another. Please go ahead.

BARNABAS PETER

Hi. My name is Barnabas Peter. I'm a NextGen. I just wanted to contribute on what Susita said about getting jobs as a student. So based on my experience currently, I'm a master's student and currently also a junior consultant at EY. So from my experience, getting a job as a student, like recruiters really look at certifications. For example, in my docket, as a Microsoft consultant, working with Microsoft technologies, they really need certifications in Microsoft. Because you're not taught that in school.

So it's very important you go to the Microsoft platform, do a few certifications relevant to the job you're looking for, place them on your LinkedIn. Very important to publicize yourself, put yourself out there. This is you're selling yourself to the company that, hey,

I'm good in this and I can help you with work. Because also for junior roles, they don't really need you to have full experience because it's also part of lack of training. They're going to train you along the way. Thank you very much.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Yes, Dana.

DANA KRAMER

Hi, sorry. I'm Dana Kramer. I'm a fellow, but I'm also a PhD student in Canada. And I was wondering about in developing a career that one piece of advice I keep reading is that you should bounce around different kind of stakeholder groups in order to build significant expertise. So say, do some work in academia, maybe you do some work in the private sector, government, etc. And I should mention, I'm not a technologist. I'm more of a policy person. And I'm wondering, though, in trying to create more of a portfolio career, how do you then negotiate, for example, vacation time?

And this is very administrative, but vacation time, you can probably negotiate raises between. But then also to certain aspects that you might want career that lets you take on more professional development. How do you kind of get that negotiation going if you're bouncing around workplaces instead of climbing the corporate ladder? Thank you.

ULRICH WISSER

Difficult, I would say. But, well, I think one of the things is that you - again, you think of yourself, I'm new to the place. I can't contribute so much, so I can't demand anything. But on the other hand, you got hired for a reason because they think that you have a lot to contribute, otherwise they wouldn't hire you. So don't take yourself more seriously. Put yourself out there and say, I can do this, even if you're not 100% sure that you can. But if you have experience in solving problems, you know that I will find problems. Maybe if you can solve most of them, then the last 10% you need help. Okay, but that's not strange. We all do.

I think it's a lot of thinking more of yourself and demanding stuff. Because the company has hired you to solve a problem, and if they value you, you will get stuff. Because that's what we want. What we want is people who come to us and say, well, I can do all of this for you. You pay me a normal wage, but I do all of that stuff. It's much more valuable than somebody who says, I do everything you tell me to do. I think that is the key to all of this. Put yourself out there, make yourself valuable. And making yourself valuable is to say, I can do this. Maybe it doesn't work with the first project, maybe not with the second, but third time is a charm.

DANA KRAMER

Thank you. And sorry, I just want to clarify too, it's not just about vacation time. But even in the back of my head, I think about pensions and how many sick days, because as you get older, you're

probably going to need to take more personal time off and stuff, like if you have children and such. So your advice is essentially just demonstrate that you are that expert and negotiate on it very hard in that contract?

ULRICH WISSER

It's not necessarily very hard, but you know, I mean, negotiate. Don't sell yourself short. It's like, you are this expert. They consider hiring you because you are, otherwise they could find somebody else. They have a reason they're talking to you, so use it. And taking time off is always, you have to talk to your employer. That's also something that is very, what to say, very culture dependent. In Sweden, your employer has to give you four weeks off in the summer. No questions asked, they have to do it by law. So you don't have to make any negotiations around that in Sweden, but other places may vary, yes.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Gentleman over there, Claudia, if you can give the mic.

PABLO ALVAREZ

Hi, my name is Pablo Alvarez. I have the luck to work in a family company, so I've been hearing a lot since I'm 10, 11 years old about the domain name industry, very technical stuff, but I started business, I'm a business major, so I found myself very stuck in meetings, in daily conversations with technical staff. I work with

EPP systems. What do you recommend me, or what sources do you recommend me to study this stuff and know more about?

ULRICH WISSER

Well, so you're working with a registrar? Yes, yea. Well at ICANN, we always want a registrar to run DNSSEC, and it's kind of my thing, so, yep. Well, I mean, I think in our field, if you want to be at the what's really happening in networking and especially in DNS and stuff, is following the IETF. I would say, for example, right now is RPP, the RESTful provisioning protocol, the latest and greatest, obviously. So there's a lot of stuff that you can look at, but, yeah, I would say follow the IETF. That's my best advice.

IGOR

Hello, my name is Igor. I'm a second-year student, and I would like to start my career in cybersecurity, but I'm finding problems of finding really any employer that would like to take a junior role, whether it's in simple internship or anything, and I always think about maybe I should firstly go into a related field, say networks, for example. Would you recommend that, or do you have a different recommendation in that case?

ULRICH WISSER

Well, in cybersecurity, I would say you have two main roads in. One is our technology, and one is our policy, and it depends on what interests you more. My son is doing cybersecurity, and he's totally on the technology side. He's like, these policy people, I don't

understand them, what they want. But you can also be a policy person and think like, really, do we really need firewalls? it depends on what you're interested in, I would say. But, yes, it's a good idea to at least know one of the fields, ideally both, but at least one.

IGOR

Okay, thank you very much.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Nikesh?

NIKESH B. SIMMANDREE

Igor, you come to Mauritius, for me it's difficult to find a cybersecurity expert. You can come to Mauritius, I'm searching for a cybersecurity expert, it's difficult in my country. So, for the record, I am Nikesh from Mauritius. I have a comment for Suncica Rosic, regarding AI, and I have also a question for you, sir. Actually, you were talking about AI. So, for me, AI can't replace everything. AI helps you, it guides you, but it can't replace you. Because a doctor, if you have a headache, he will also take a painkiller like paracetamol, but it will not help you to do a surgery, for example. So, another thing, regarding my career, I was working at AfriNIC at a regional level, so now I want to work at a global level like ICANN. So, what is your advice?

ULRICH WISSER

It depends on where at ICANN you want to work. ICANN has a lot of policy work, obviously, but it also depends on a little bit what you're interested in. Working at ICANN is, in some things, I like talking about technical stuff and going around doing that, but on the other hand, in a lot of places, ICANN is very, very hands-off. At ICANN Org, we are not supposed to have opinions about a lot of stuff, because that's community work. The community is all the interesting. ICANN Org doesn't have an opinion on stability and security. That is SSAC that has an opinion on that. And ICANN doesn't have an opinion on how to run root servers. That is RSAC that has opinions on that.

So, a little bit, you have to see what is it you want to do, but if you want to have opinions and influence the work, then probably ICANN Org is not the best place for you to be. Then probably you want to find some of those organizations that staff the community and work for them. But if you want to work for ICANN, then we have a technology site, we run a root server. There's a lot of places that you can work at ICANN.

NIKESH B. SIMMANDREE

Thank you. Actually, maybe I was not well-precise. I was working for AfriNIC. I knew the former CEO was Adiel Akplogan, who is now the VP for ICANN.

ULRICH WISSER

Who is now my boss, yes.

NIKESH B. SIMMANDREE

Yeah. So, my question is, since I was already working for the community at the original level, so I want to move like a global level to be heard more because everyone wants to climb the ladder.

ULRICH WISSER

But it's not climbing the ladder. That's something very different. You know, at AfriNIC, you do a lot of work about distributing IP addresses. And you could think go to ICANN, then ICANN has the source of all IP addresses. But really, it's the address something council. I don't know all the abbreviations yet, but who decides how addresses get distributed?

So, actually, if you work for AfriNIC and get sent to the address council, you have a lot more influence than working for ICANN. So, depends on what you see as where you want to end up. So, if you end up in IANA and be the one who edits the database, is that a higher position or is that a more boring position? Up to you. I'm not judging on any of this, but I don't think that you should see this as layers. It's really different roles, and I think working for AfriNIC is a total superb role.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you. And thank you, everyone, for participation, and thank you, Rich, for an interesting, insightful session. I think everybody

enjoyed this. With that, our meeting is adjourned, and see you tomorrow for our next session together.

ULRICH WISSER

Thank you for having me.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you. Can we stop the recording, please?

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]