LOS ANGELES – Language Services Focus Group on Translation for ICANN.org
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ICANN – Los Angeles, USA

NORA ABUSITTA:　　　　　Good afternoon everyone. This is Nora Abusitta, I'm Vice President for Development and Public Responsibility at ICANN. I welcome you all to the focus group on document translation for the new ICANN website. This was a focus group that we setup a few months back, to really educate ourselves a little bit about our translation services, how much we currently do, how we do it, and what we need to do better in order to deliver our content to all of our stakeholders in the six UN languages.

And also keeping in mind the improvements that were seen on the ICANN website, and how those improvements can be also reflected in the translated content. I welcome everyone here, in particular, Christina Rodriguez, who is the Director of Language Services at ICANN. Chris Gift, Vice President of Online Community Services, Siranush who is one of the most active community members I've heard of and this time met properly.

And I'm sure she will share with you more her affiliation with the different groups in ICANN, and Jana is the Director of Global Content and Social Media Engagement at ICANN. Of course, I look forward to hearing from all of you at the end of this session, but to start with, I'm going to go over a little bit, why did we do this focus group.

And the reason why we did this focus group is that, for the past couple of years at least, since I've joined ICANN, there has been many speculations and demand and theories about what language services

should do and what it shouldn't do. And it quickly became obvious that, depending on your cultural background or geographic background, your needs for language services change.

So whereas some people thought just a simple translation, even if it's not very well written, would suffice, other people insisted that the quality of translated materials should be as good as the original language. The discussion also covered a lot of the websites, how much should be translated on the website, how much of the local experience should the user have on the website, and then of course, it took us further to, if we translate the website, do we do it all through human translation?

How costly is human translation? What are the other options? And so on and so forth. So we put together this focus group to really just look at what we have currently, educate ourselves a little better about the different types of documents that ICANN generates, as well as the different translation methods out there that perhaps we should be open minded about.

And the deliverables of the group where basically to answer two questions. The first one is, what contents should we see translated on the new ICANN website? And what methods of translation should we be using for it? But of course, the conversation took us to many other topics that are related and also very interesting.

The participants of the focus group, we had 27 participants from 17 different countries, covering about 15 different languages, of which we had six active community members.   So we tried to have

representatives from different ICANN offices, different ICANN departments, as well as community members from all over the world.

So, we had four sessions for the focus group. The first one was really an introduction, explaining what the deliverables were. And then the second session really looked at what we currently do, what works, and what doesn't work. And the third session was a very detailed overview actually, of the different translation methods, and then finally, we conducted a survey.

I'm sorry, this is really light. Actually we had five sessions. The very last, almost invisible line here is we did discuss the recommendations, and then we circulated the document. So the survey that was conducted was really to determine what the community and staff would recommend regarding translation methods, that should be used to translate general ICANN content, but more specifically, content that goes on the website.

The survey was focused to the focus group and to ICANN staff, and we had 45 participants that completed the survey. Of course, the survey went through a very extensive list of the types of documents and content that we produce in general, and ask which method of translation should be used for each kind of document.

So, I'm going to start talking a little bit about translation methods, and perhaps I can ask Christina who is the expert here, to just give us highlights of what the group concluded around translation methods.

CHRISTINA RODRIQUEZ: Hello everybody. My name is Christina Rodriquez. As Nora said, I'm the director for the Language Services department at ICANN. Well, it was very interesting few couple of months, working on these focus group. Our expectations actually were at the end of the focus group, we're going to end up with a greater rate of methods to translate and to localize the material.

To our surprise, actually, the conclusion was that most of everybody actually preferred that we remain producing translation and localization through humans. This means, you know, of course that the quality, it's the most important thing on one hand, and also the proper use of terminology and the consistency on the material that is translated.

Nevertheless, we will continue to review the options and the quality that we can attain, utilizing other methodology, that will actually add up and allow us to produce even more material, then perhaps at one point, languages, if that will be something that we are inclined to do. For that I mean, of course, we will remain working on the five UN languages, the five English UN languages.

And it seems to be, as we are going to focus our translation methodology to stay through the human translation.

NORA ABUSITTA: Thanks Christina. And as we see a little bit later, the group did identify that there is a very, very small percentage of content that could be translated through a machine, but definitely not the content that is for the reading pleasure of our community members, you know, things like agendas or logistics could potentially be translated by machine.

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So I'm going to go over the survey findings real quick, and then I'm more interested to hear from the participants of the focus group about the recommendations. So the key findings covered the following. As Christina said, after the participants listened to details about different translation methods, they contributed that they prefer human translation over any other kind of translation.

And like I said, machine translation could be used for agendas and schedules, but definitely not more than that. We had a very long discussion about crowd translation, or crowd source translation, and the interesting thing about crowd source translation is that it's perceived very differently in different regions, and so for some regions, it could work potentially because people are very happy to work on a project that they don't get paid for, just because they want credit for participation, whereas in other regions, we can't really rely on it unless we hire people to do the translation.

One of the themes that was covered extensively as well, was that you know, do we really need to translate full documents? Or would a summary of a document suffice? Of course, further, the content creator should then be asked to create a summary and do they always have the time to do so?

So, as you can see here, 38% were against translation of executive summaries, whereas 62% were for it.

So I'm going to go over the recommendations, very important to point out here that was a focus group, it was more like a study group to see where we are now. So these are recommendations that we were able to deduce from the conversations, the participants checked them and

they were okay with them, but by no means does it change the direction of what we're going to do. It informs us in our next steps, but I saw it more as an educational process, an informal discussion rather than, you know, something that is set in stone.

So, the first thing was, and Chris don't get upset about this, but one of the first things was that all content on ICANN dot org should be translated in all UN official languages. Now, this is a request that I hear a lot, but people are not aware of what this really means in terms of cost, and effort, and manpower, and all of that. And we'll go back to that in a minute.

The second recommendation was that documents translated into all UN languages should be released simultaneously. And this we hear from community members all of the time. Why do you release English content before you release translations? Aren't you prioritizing some community members over others when you give them access to information before?

And so, everybody agreed that all documents should be released simultaneously. Of course, that's a challenge because some documents are time sensitive, and need to be seen as soon as possible, and translation takes time.

Executive summaries of select reports and documents can be translated in view of the full document, unless requests for full document translation are made by the ICANN community. The method of translation should always be tagged on the document, to set informed expectations of the reader.

It's very important, if we choose to use machine translation or crowd source translation, that we clarify this to the reader or to the public. We've had excellent projects in Asia with crowd sourcing, but we require that any content that's translated there should be marked properly, or should be tagged properly. In line with the current efforts, the language services department should continue their work to create an inventory listing which documents and content have been translated into each language.

What we found out from talking to our language services team, is that a lot of the translations actually never make it to the website. So we have an inventory of documents that have been translated and sitting on a shelf somewhere, which is a huge loss of time and resource. And then, the focus group recommend that the issue of document translation beyond the six UN languages, for specific reports and outreach documents, can be discussed with staff.

And so, some of our regional offices require us to create content, or translate content into languages beyond the six UN languages, and of course, we're always ready to do that and to support them. So, to start with, I'd like to ask Jana to give us her view about how realistic it would be to implement some of these recommendations, you know, in particular releasing the documents simultaneously, and also the whole aspect of executive summaries versus full reports.

JANA JUGINOVIC: Thanks Nora. We have discussed this as a team when we were part of this focus group, and we thank Nora for inviting us to be a part of this focus group about the challenges between timeliness and quality of

translations and getting things quickly to the site. Oftentimes, we can't give the translation team, the language services team, enough time to translate because some of our content has to be put up quickly.

So for example, if we have an announcement that needs to go out, we don't have the ability, oftentimes, to give it to the language services team hours in advance to translate. So we balance the issue of getting the material out with waiting for translation. So there is some things that we can't wait to have translated first, that we do have to get out in English first, and then wait for translation.

That's a trade-off, that's not ideal, but it's a trade-off that we oftentimes have to make, especially when it comes to getting announcements to the media. There is also the issue of social media, which has changed the type of content that we do produce. So you have larger documents that we can do in advance that can get translated, but oftentimes, for example, whether it's a Tweet or a social media post, sometimes those things are not practical to try and get the proper translation, again, in a timely fashion.

So these are the challenges that we work with in terms of timeliness and we welcome the feedback of the community to give us some guidance on what you think is best for us to do, whether it's best to wait, or it's best to not, in terms of getting that information out because it's not just that we have to deal with the media aspect as well, and getting them information.

NORA ABUSITTA: Thanks Jana. And from experience, we've also noticed that, God forbid, we release a language before the other, community members do get very upset because we've prioritized one language over another language. So, I think that there is a lot of limitations or challenges that we face internally, but we need to find some kind of middle ground where the community feels like it's being informed together, without compromising press releases and so on and so forth.

Siranush, I was going to call on you because I have a question for you, but please go ahead and comment and then I'll ask you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thanks Nora. Siranush Vardanyan for the record. The issue is of timeliness, being in a timely manner, releasing of those documents is vital. Just a small example, in London we had ATLAS 2 and we had 150 ALSs coming to London. And the travel document, which is usually posted, English language was posted on time, but can you imagine, of the five languages when they were posted? In September.

And the London meeting was in June. So, we should take this into consideration, at least not be late. And travel document for LA was posted only in the middle of September. So it's, even before people need a lot of time to go for visas, etc., and they need these documents in advance. So this timely manner, it's very vital for community members as well. Thank you.

NORA ABUSITTA: Siranush, regarding the other recommendations, how do you feel they would impact the work in your community? How would they help you?

Would they help you all together? If you can give us some insight on that.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thanks Nora. Siranush Vardanyan for the record. As you know, the region which I'm representing, Asia-Pacific, it's quite huge, and there are tons of languages we speak. Just a small example, only India has 22 official languages, so it's really hard region to cover every single document in local language.

One of the recommendations there which we had one of the outcomes of our focus group for translation of executive summaries in favor and against, we had 38% against executive summary, this is huge numbers. It's more than one-third of the whole community. So we cannot ignore their expectations as well. So while giving executive summary, we also should consider that there are more than 40% of people who can't get enough information out of this.

But it's again, clearly everybody understand that this is resources, this is time. There should be some solution to this. So some kind of middle, something middle out of these extremes. So, that's my two cents for now.

CHRIS GIFT: Thank you. This is Chris Gift. Around the question around timing, while I do agree that news announcements and so on, it is certainly critical. Siranush said on other documents, it's also critical and there should be time to put those together. The issue there, to be frank, is really around

internal processes, and it's not with the language translation services, it's with the remainder of ICANN staff.

When we have processes for document creation, I've seen frequently that language and the time it takes to translate documents is not included in that process. And so sometimes language is treated as an afterthought, and therefore is squeezed in after the English language document has been produced.

So, I think, if we were to truly address the problem of timeliness, and just language translation in general, it needs to be embedded throughout the organization, throughout all of our document creation processes. But to be frank, that is a large task, and won't happen immediately. And to be frank, also it needs to be driven from the top.

NORA ABUSITTA: Thanks Chris. And actually one of the benefits of the focus group was that we had a very good discussion with the coms team to see how we can improve internal communication, or internal education, to make sure that all staff understand what the process is for submitting translations, for getting them in a timely manner, and so on.

So hopefully, as soon as we're back, we're going to be embarking on a new campaign around the ICANN departments to, you know, explain to staff what the process is. We did grow extensively in the past year, and I'm sure a lot of the new staff are not familiar with these procedures. Siranush, I have a question for you as well, and perhaps some of the other parts of the community can chime in here.

Would the community feel… If we translated only a summary, or if we created localized content for certain communities… I've heard from some community members that they would see that as us trying to hold back certain information from them, by giving them something else. I know this is, you know, a conspiracy theory, but do you think that some community members would feel like we're excluding them from access to certain information by giving them a different kind of information?

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Siranush Vardanyan for the record. This is really very tough issue because complaints will always be there, even when we're doing great job, and we know that we're doing great job, complaints are always there. So we should also consider these complaints as a kind of in a positive way, so this will give us some floor for improvement.

To post… It's just my personal view, if the document will be posted fully in English language, and the executive summary will be given in other languages, this may not be such an issue, a huge issue, for community members, that something is just hidden from them. So they will have access to the bigger document, to the whole complete document, and in case, if there are some specifics they need to go further, and to know deeper inside of the document. They can do this machine translation for themselves, to find out more details.

But the executive summary would be at least a starting point, because it's difficult to translate all the documents, and considering the pace of issuing of those documents, it's really impossible to have all documents fully translated into all six languages, posted simultaneously, posted in timely manner.

So, this is hard. But at least we should give them the initial document in one language, and give summary in other languages, for them to have a general idea. Thanks.

NORA ABUSITTA: Thank you. I'd like to take a look at every recommendation in a bit more detail, specifically the first one, which is a pretty large ask, you know, translating all of the ICANN dot org and localizing it so that the users have a very local experience when they're navigating through the website, so I would like to hear from Chris about, you know, how realistic this expectation is, how costly it is, and so on.

CHRIS GIFT: This is Chris Gift. So if you don't know, my team is responsible for the website, or helping the community manage their web assets as well, so that the At-Large websites and so on. This is a big problem. So, and an opportunity as well, so it's just not a problem. So a few other facts that may help.

Right now, the website, we have roughly 37,000 items that are published on the website. So that includes a little over 17,000 webpages, and then over 19,000 documents. And honestly, a lot of our documents are multiple pages, if not, tens and twenties of pages, they can be very large and complex.

So that's quite a bit of content. So when we talk about translating a website, we have to… One of the first questions I ask myself is, does this include historical content? And if so, how far do we go back? And

also, or is it this a go forward strategy? So in other words, you know, English is what it is for now, and we start translating going forward.

Out of all that content, roughly 5%, a little less than 5% has been translated and made it to the website, so as Nora had said, additional content that is translated that is not on the website. So, give you a little context on why that's not on the website, and that is, because the methodology that we have is a process where content gets translated, and it goes to what we call the web admin team, web administrative team, and then they post the content to the website.

The web admin team hasn't grown in the past few years, for budget reasons. And so as we continue to grow around them, we continue to produce more content, they have become a bottleneck. We're well aware that they're a bottleneck, and as are they, the poor people, and since they work long hours, we're trying to distribute content management, so that other people can post the content directly and don't have to go to the web admin team.

And specifically around translations, as we move forward into a new model of translating content for the website, we definitely want to do that for the translation so that we can speed that up even more. And that will help us and cost us some of the timeliness issue, and some of the problems around that.

However, if you think about the amount of content, so I said we had about 5% of the content that is translated. I don't know how much additional the team has translated, but nonetheless, if you start to think and do the math, the amount of money that it would take to keep up,

not only to translate the past, right? The archives and so on, but to keep up, is going to be considerable.

I don't even hazard a guess, maybe Christina can say, is it 10% that we've already translated to date and are keeping up with?

I'm not asking you… I'm just saying. Even if it is 10%, 5% is what's made it, and there is another whole set of 5% that's out there, which would make a lot of documents. That still means that we have a team of eight that is only able to keep up with 10%. So if you want 100%, do the math. Right? So and are we prepared, as an organization, to prioritize the translations to that amount.

And I think that's just an organizational decision, but we have to realize the magnitude, and obviously more math would have to be done, more analysis would have to be done on the cost, but we have to realize the magnitude of what we're asking for.

I think my last comment, and it's one that I already touched on, is around process. I think to do this effectively, there has to be significant internal process change management within ICANN organization, and I don't just mean staff, I mean, within the organization as a whole, we have to think about not only does how much ICANN staff translate, staff documents, but does this apply to this, OAC websites, how much of their content that comes to us do we translate?

Do we have to go back to them for permissions around the translation? So there is a lot of process work that needs to happen that we need to, I think, need to work on. And again, there have been a lot of change management that would have to happen, significant, and it's just

something we have to again, be recognized and be prepared to take on, because I think if we just say, you know, we're going to do this, and let's do some education, I think we will fall short.

And I know the translation team, language services team is well aware of this, as well as Nora, and I think we would have to do quite a bit of work in prepping staff, and prepping everybody, and then really getting onboard. And then also realizing that this will take time, change management will not happen overnight. It will take some time to make it through. So I think those are my comments for now.

JANA JUGINOVIC: One of the things that, when we met with language services, and the meeting was really helpful for communications to understand the challenges that they face, and the challenges that we face. And one of the recommendations that Christina and her team made to us was, when we create pieces of content, we shouldn't give it to them as a fait complete afterwards.

That if it's possible to involve them, as you said, in the process early on. So for example, we are working on creating some videos and some infographics for some departments, and Christina and her team had suggested, well don't give us a script at the end, that involves in the beginning so that we're much more involved, so that translation, interpretation can be ready much more quickly, and that it's not as much of a challenge to translate it into those languages, because they've been involved in the process, and that's something that communications needs to do better, when we can, is involve language services early on in that process.

And that's something that we're working on.

NORA ABUSITTA: Thanks Jana. One takeaway really is that we need to do a better job at educating, but also like Chris said, there is a revision or even, you know, a rethinking of the process, not just around translation itself, but the content creation and all of the supporting processes around it. Moving on to the next recommendation, which is around methods.

I wanted to hear more from Christina about that, in terms of how much have we try to use [inaudible] translations so far, if ever? And perhaps I'd like to hear from community members as well. Siranush, if you have had experience with other methods of translation. So Christina.

CHRISTINA RODRIQUEZ: Sure. Well, we haven't translated any ICANN material utilizing machine translation, and there is a very specific reason for that. The material produced at ICANN, it's highly specific, you will say. I always say that ICANN is sort of a monster on its own when it comes to languages, or terminology, because we, in ICANN, we create our own acronyms. We have terminology that just becomes.

We were discussing earlier today with a few members of my team, and we were thinking about it, and one word came to mind right away. Multistakeholderism. That word does not exist in the English dictionary, yet ICANN, that word became at ICANN, and now it's used at ICANN.

However, the word multistakeholder itself, doesn't exist in Arabic, much less multistakeholderism. So those are the type of challenges. And

going back to what Jenna was saying, that we face, and why it would be so helpful to in some of the production of the material, we are involved from the beginning, so that we can address words, and terminology that is existing or not, and that it is, be able to translate or not.

We need also to remember that some material is translated, and some of the material needs to be localized. The reason for localization, it comes to our table because you have to take into account, the sensibilities of different regions, how to approach specific material that you're translating, you know that you localize, actually you keep the content in the context of the material that you are providing in this other language, but in a language that is more appropriate to the country or to the region for which you are translating.

Machine translation for ICANN, it's actually something, a tough to grasp, nevertheless, it's not impossible. We are very lucky to have, grow into a platform which were used first as a single license as we work with a platform that is called [inaudible]. And as we grow into that platform, and that platform also grew and became better and better, through the years, this platform also offers machine translation.

But what this platform offers is a machine translation method where you educate the platform with everything that we saved. This means segments of previous translation, terminology databases, so they are overused, you know. And we configure this in a way so we can sort of penalize when a word is translated differently, and this help us in consistency, which in turn, equals quality.

So, it's… We see in the very near future the possibility of putting through machine translation within the context of this platform that we

use, of course, some documents like, you know, public comment periods, reviews, the conversations, or that happened, you know, the messages that go through, the questions and comments that the community offered to the public period.

And we can also, we are also hoping to use, or review and the possibility of using these when it comes to agendas and schedules, as Nora mentioned, maybe a few more things, you know, like transcripts. Those transcripts, they take a very long time, and they are very specific to produce, you know, from an audio file. If your audio file was lost, so we can produce that with a machine translation.

And this material becomes really available to the community, yet at a much lesser cost.

NORA ABUSITTA: Thank you Christina. Siranush?

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thanks Nora. Siranush Vardanyan for the record. I'm not surprised that the results of focused group related to method, the majority voted for human translation, because I personally have the experience of machine translation from English into Russian and Armenian, and if you ever tried this, it's just, the text is ridiculous. You just, hard to love, because there is nonsense.

So, vice versa, it's a little bit better because from Russian and Armenian, the English is quite close to the reality, but when you want to do the opposite one, it's just nonsense. No need to do that type of translation

into share it, because people will not get anything out of that. So my experience is quite bad.

NORA ABUSITTA: Thanks Siranush. And this is one of the reasons why we discourage community members, or some of the constituencies around ICANN to, you know, some of them install some kind of like Google translate on their website, or Bing translate or whatever it is, and then they're very disappointed with the results. And we discourage our community members from doing that.

If anything, machine translation should be done in a more professional way, which is what Christina was referring to, basing the work on an educated memory that we have built from our glossary. And if you recall, last year, we had a very good project to update all of our ICANN glossary, all of our memories are updated, so we try and be consistent with the terminology.

I will call on Kelvin from our Singapore office to share experience with another form of translation, which is crowd sourcing. And this was a collaboration with [inaudible]. Go ahead Kelvin.

KELVIN: This is Kelvin [Mong?] from the APEC hub for the record. So okay, this initiative, it's in collaboration with [inaudible]. The idea is for ICANN staff and [inaudible] together prepare a set of documents that we think is important for the community to translate. Now of course, I guess, well everyone has the experience of scrolling the website, which has a lot of information.

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But what we wanted to do is to distill some of this information so that it would be easier for the community to translate. Now these documents would have contained background information, as well as updated development on issues, such as WHOIS, universal acceptance, for example, and of course we have very [inaudible] materials, like what is ICANN, for example.

So these are few set of materials that is really for download on our community website, I can share the link in a while, when possible. And I'm just, for download by the community is so, we are trying to get community members from the ALS [inaudible] to do this. I'll be talking a bit more about this tomorrow's session, so this is just a bit of an advertisement for tomorrow's morning session [inaudible] meeting. Okay.

NORA ABUSITTA: Great. Thank you Kelvin. Again, we notice, this is from a larger development public responsibility department context, we did notice that specific regions have specific engagement needs. And so, whereas, you know the Asia office for example, requires more languages to be done, and the crowd sourcing concept is much more acceptable and more feasible, in Europe, there isn't that much more interest in it.

So thank you for your team to, because you embarked on this project, and it's proving to be, if anything, a great engagement experience, and very helpful for the community as well.

KELVIN: Sorry, can I just add this? Kelvin again for the record. The whole…

Okay, the whole idea is that, as you can see, I think Siranush just mentioned about the need to, and the [offshore?] languages of just India alone, so we have many languages. And let's say we talked about having and translating and doing a single language, and then people will be asking, when are this? So when [inaudible], why not Hindi?

Why not Vietnam this? Japanese? So we have that problem. And so this idea is really to share the cost of translation with the community. If you are interested to have it in your local language, then you have us translate as well, and then we work on this together. So the whole idea is that. Thank you very much.

NORA ABUSITTA: Great. Of course one word of a disclaimer, always, any crowd source translations, we need to tell everybody that these are crowd source translations, for legal issues. Siranush.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Siranush Vardanyan for the record. And why not in Armenia, yeah? So, I really would like to thank Kelvin. We, [inaudible] we worked really hard on getting, to finding out the needs for our community. As we said several times, it's really very huge and diverse. And we also are in the process of asking volunteers from community members to help us with this translation.

Honestly, there is not too much enthusiasm there, but at least we, from our perspective, there is a great communication and partnership with our Asian hub, as APRALO, and there is huge support coming from our

VPs all over the region, we have five VPs covering our region only. So you can see the diverse and the huge territory of our region.

And we, just tomorrow during our APRALO monthly call, we will give this call for volunteers from community to help us with this translation of some key documents into local languages. Of course, this may not be for publish, I mean for the general people, but for ourselves, within the community it may be really very helpful to share it.

NORA ABUSITTA: I am in total agreement Siranush. Thank you. Now I'd like to touch on the last, is it the last…? Actually, no it's not the last. Before last recommendation, which is localization of content. Something that Christiana mentioned a little bit earlier. When we started talking about localization, we realized that people have very different definitions of what localized content is, and it does range from translations that maintain key messages that are written in a different style, to the creation of local content.

So basically, nothing to do with the source language, really creating a content to answer certain needs. And I remember that I had a conversation with Michael, who is, who works closely with us from the GSE in Russia, and he said that a lot of the content that we're creating just is not very digestible in our area, so how can we create content that is attractive?

And so this goes more into content creation rather than translation or language services, but definitely an effort that we can support because of our experience. But Jenna, I wanted to ask you a little bit, how

localizing content, whether changing it a little bit but maintaining the core of the source language, or creating something completely new would affect your work stream?

Is it too much to ask of the coms team and so on?

JANA JUGINOVIC: I think it depends on the piece of content. So, for example, on videos and infographics, more long term projects, you would have the time to get language services involved in the process early. With things like announcements and quick blog posts, or social media posts, it's much more challenging.

I think that we need, again, to do a better job of working with language services to find those words that don't, that are not translatable, so we need to get better at using words that are much more universal, changing the type of language that we use. But in terms of the long-term projects, I would say, for sure, we would have to do a better job of involving them earlier, and we're starting that process.

NORA ABUSITTA: And would you, would it be accurate to say that localizing content could compromise messaging sometime? I mean how much, I hate to use the word control, but how much do we have to, how closely do we have to follow this?

JANA JUGINOVIC: Again, I think it would depend on the piece of content. Like for example, we're working on a project with contractual compliance now

on an infographic, and having language services involved in the scripting of it, helps us for them to highlight certain words that are not translatable.

I think we can always find a word that can convey something that everyone would know. There is not, you know, a weasel word, but I think you can come to something that's pretty close, and I think it's our responsibilities, it's incumbent on us to make it understandable for the majority of people, we can't think of it as just English language and translating.

I spoke to Christina a couple of days ago, and we don't see language services as just translating, they provide content. And the content is only valuable if the majority of people can understand it. So I think that is part of, again, what Chris said, is involving language services early in the process.

NORA ABUSITTA: Thank you Jana.   Now I know one of the participants is Robert [inaudible], he is one of our vendors, and he has been working closely with the ICANN team, and definitely an expert in localization. Robert, from your experience, how realistic are these expectations in the context of ICANN, because you're very familiar with ICANN.

ROBERT: Hi, Robert [inaudible] with [inaudible]. A lot of clients…

Robert [inaudible] with [inaudible]. A lot of clients that I work with face exactly the same issues, not enough resources and budget to translate

all of the content that they would like to translate. And business priorities and requirements tend to drive a process or structure of where the type of content falls. And it often has to do with the longevity or the shelf life of the content, that can change if the investment or resource you put into a language.

If the shelf life is a blog, or social media that has a two, couple day shelf life, before it is outdated. That can affect the equation of how much investment to make. But the strategies that are in the recommendations, seem reasonable to me. The question is, is there different kinds of content that have a higher priority, or a higher value to the community at large. And coming up with a reasonable formula or a function that the community could support, that's how the decision is made.

So that it doesn't appear one language is being prioritized over another. Or one type of content is being prioritized over another. Legal content has much a different aspect for translation, and usually no localization applied because it's a legal document, where some of the other program guides which are meant to convey a new program at ICANN, localization could have an impact on the understanding from the community.

NORA ABUSITTA: Very helpful Robert. And you bring us to the last recommendation, which is really around legally binding documents. So as we all know, the only legally binding documents in ICANN are the English documents. However, there are model contract translations that can be provided in

the six UN languages, so that the community members can understand what the contracts contain and mean.

And they can only be used as a reference or a guide. Unfortunately, nobody is here from the legal department, but they were with us through the sessions for the focus group, and just finding out what the details are around producing legally binding documents, the sheer volume of them, I was personally surprised.

So to expect that we're going to translate every single contract that ICANN produces or signs, is just not realistic. I think with this, I'd like to, you know, open the floor a little bit for a discussion from our participants here. And I'm looking at Sebastien.

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET: Thank you. You think we get to participate in a discussion regarding the use of languages? I think we should use the service, since we're at it. I'll give you the time to grab your headsets, to find the right channel, to find a headset that works, and make sure that everything is operational.

I would like to thank you for this presentation. It has been a wonderful presentation indeed, because all the subjects relating to the matter of general localization are included. It's not only about ICANN's website, but it's more general than that and it is more interesting, so I would like to thank all of the team for having to work on putting together this presentation, both from the staff and community volunteers who took part in this initiative as well.

I think it has been a wonderful improvement of our stock taking of the situation. I would like to go back to some of the items you presented. I

am a champion of translation of executive summaries first. And I think that should lead to several evolutions in the way we work. On the one side, it will allow us to realize that 20 pages can go a long way, and it is not necessary for us to translate 100 pages.

And secondly, that we should use words in English which are more easily translated into foreign languages. I'll just give you one example. ICANN organizes a town hall at the IGF meeting in Istanbul. They organized this last time in Istanbul. So I wondered, is it that we're going to the town hall itself? What does this mean? And I realize that even English speaking people didn't understand what it meant.

This is American English, it is not global English. So personally, we're going to have to speak English, not Australian English, or American English, or Kiwi English, no varieties. That would be a huge progress. And secondly, when we get to choose words, I think we should try and find words that are less complicated, or in other words, more simply understood and then more simply translated. If we were to do all of this work, then it would mean a great progress, because even for those who have a hard time understanding English, being able to read something that's in simpler [inaudible] English would be better.

I don't want to take up all of your time, but then, I also wanted to go back to legal documents. I know we cannot have documents which are reference documents in the language which they are produced. It doesn't mean that only English, I don't even know how to say this in French, and I excuse myself for that.

It's not only English that should be binding, all documents in all languages should be binding. If I create a document, then the reference

would be French to me and not English, because that is my language, and that is what I sign. It's a matter of reference. If ICANN goes on saying that we only reference is only California and English, and California English, then I don't think we'll get very far.

And I think this should be considered as well. It doesn't mean that the documents produced by legal teams, which work in English, that would be a reference document, but if other people work in other languages, then they should have reference documents in that language. Thank you very much, and once again, thank you for having participated in this group. Thank you.

NORA ABUSITTA: Nora Abusitta takes the floor. Thank you very much Sebastien. It's just a question I have on documents, and this is a matter that greatly extends the work of languages, on the language services department, but now I think you have just proposed another question, which is why do we translate? Why do we interpret? Why do we have a service?

Is it more than just a service? I think that Chris wants to comment on this as well.

CHRIS GIFT: Thank you once again. Starting, perhaps starting small with a broader range of documents, like the executive summaries is a great idea, if for no other reason than that we should be writing those in English as well, and I think that's a good best practice for any document.

I also agree with the English, and that is something that people have been talking about for quite a while, that we needed to improve the English. The English with what we write can be overly technical, overly dense, and we use 100 words when 50 will do, so there is quite a bit that we can do there, and training we could do to improve internally. And that will, in turn, improve the translations, right? That will…

You know, when it comes to prioritizing documents, I agree with the comment earlier that we have to do that, to say we're going to do them all, I think, is unrealistic in the near term, or even perhaps in the medium term. So a prioritization, if for no other reason, again that the comment was made, that the community would have a set expectation, they would know, okay, when this document is produced, it will come out in five languages, because to be frank, right now, it's somewhat random because it is staff dictated by the author.

So the author says, you know, "Oh, I will send this to translation," or "I will not send it to translation." And then the community perhaps requests it, but they don't request it. And so the content that gets translated is somewhat haphazard, which, as you can imagine, makes it very difficult to create a website. I don't know, or we don't know, if this content is going to be translated or not, or when it will come.

And so that just, that ripples throughout the organization. So if we had a consistent rule around documents, that would help everybody tremendously.

NORA ABUSITTA: Thank you. So Christina here is telling me we do have rules, but I think what we have to do is build on them a little bit and communicate them better, and reeducate staff, and take another look at the creation of documents, and I really like Robert's idea of, you know, specifying priority. And priority could change, so this could be something that we revisit at ICANN meetings, you know, how, what is most important for you as a community in the next six months? Or in the next year?

And we produce translations faster for those rather than not. Any other comments or questions?

Well, I think, sorry, go ahead. Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hello everyone. My name is [inaudible] from [inaudible] Academy of Tech Research. We have [MOU] with ICANN, this July. And we…

Sorry. We have coverage with ICANN Beijing engagement center, with Mr. [inaudible], yeah. We have translate some introduction of ICANN material to Chinese. And, yeah, and I send the material to Mr. [inaudible] and as our result of cooperation. And since our team have follow the ICANN meeting and the ICANN works for more than five years, we look through the English materials, and translate them into Chinese for our research, and for our government, our community, and new gTLD registry, and [inaudible] something like this.

We found that it can lose some meaning when the translation. And we also found that in ICANN's website, and your official translation for some [inaudible] documents, and there are some maybe mistake, or maybe misunderstanding, the English between Chinese, there are some

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misunderstanding. So we, since we are research, we are Academy of Research, so we can use our research to help the translation to be more correct.

And though we are not specialist language service, but we are research on ICANN, and Internet governance, and new gTLD, so we can do our effort to help the translation more correct, and I think we can give our efforts with ICANN to maybe train the local interpreter, or something like this. And we can have… In last August, we have workshop on the Internet governance and the new gTLD, and we introduce our research about Internet governance, new gTLD, ATRT review team, something like this, the progress, and the IANA stewardship transition, then to explain that…

…to Chinese committee. And they think they have more new, they get more new information, and for, you know that for some budget reason, not all the people focused, ICANN go to this meeting. And so I think we can introduce the meeting to Chinese community. After this ICANN meeting in Los Angeles, and we can explain our week at the information from the meeting, and then translate, maybe to the Chinese community, or we can give our research results to ICANN website, maybe for Chinese work and the English work.

So, I think we have, since we have [MOU] with ICANN, I think we can, we can do more close to operation with you. Thank you.

NORA ABUSITTA: Thank you. And you're probably going to wish that you didn't tell us this, because now we're going to be after you for help, and some

advice. But our team is a very open team. It engages very often with the community to update its glossaries to make sure that our terminology is really what is being used in the industry. In some places, we discovered that terminology, it doesn't even exist, and so we're working on some focus groups, or some work groups to help create the terminology.

So thank you for this. You bring me really to… Thank you because you bring me to my conclusion, which is really why are we doing all of this? The reason why ICANN spends all that money and effort into language services and other programs, under the development of public responsibility, is to better serve our community and broaden it. And one of the best ways to broaden our community, is to reach them instead of having them come to us, with as many languages as realistically we can.

And so, whereas initially we had a traditional approach to languages, we had six UN languages, now we're much more open-minded about how we can do it better as well with less cost, because cost is a big issue here. Cost is a big issue because when you think of, you know, a certain budget, and the budget is being utilized for facilitating participation or broadening community, the decision to take some money out of the language services bucket and putting it into education, or taking it from education and putting it into, you know, next generation engagement, these are very, very difficult decisions that we have to make, and we base our decisions on community need.

And so, hearing you and hearing Siranush, and experiences from the community, really educate us, you know, to plan ahead. So if there are

no more questions or comments, I think we can conclude the session. Thank you again to all of those who participated in the focus group.

Ah, there is one more comment.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sorry, I had to grab a friend of mine who was very involved in the indigenous community, and I am going to put him on the spot, because he's very passionate about indigenous languages. And it might not be the largest groups…

NORA ABUSITTA: Hi Tony, welcome.

ANTHONY: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Anthony [inaudible], and I'm with NARALO, but more specifically, I'm trying to be a voice for indigenous people, not just within Canada but around the world, but focusing my comments on Canada. Within Canada, we have over 400 separate nations.   We are separate mini-governments within a government structure.

So we have a community government that governs our governance. But within those 400 groups, we have several languages. And out of those language groups, we manage to have one community get the ISO standards two years ago. And so, with that group kind of on the east coast, I'd be looking to help them kind of start bringing the language to the domain name system, so that they can start using the languages in their communities.

Even though it's regionally specific, it's a first step in a direction to help them start having their, not only their language preserved, but also transmitted to the future. Because our philosophy is, we plan for seven generations ahead, that's over 250 years. And that's what our languages are because they're spoken languages. And it's our history is found within the language, our knowledge is found within the language.

So this is an opportunity for them to start coming to the global level, and sharing their language, not only amongst themselves and preserving it, but with the rest of the world. Because, even in my community, I speak, my community speaks [inaudible] Cree, but that's one of 25 dialects of [inaudible] Cree. And so, their languages would be very specific to the regions, but to have it on the global level, allows them to reach community members that may have moved out of the community for whatever reason, to another part in the world.

So this was a very interesting opportunity to raise the point, because throughout ICANN, and this has been my third meeting this year, since I was introduced to ICANN, it has been ICANN almost every day. And so, I would be looking for assistance because, within the First Nation communities, as with other indigenous communities, they're not necessarily third worlds, but they're communities living in third world conditions, and what can be called first world countries.

And so there is that jurisdictional gap that exist. A gap that has existed historically since first contact, we call it. And so, I'm excited to bring the issue to ICANN as kind of a doorway to start introducing the communities to the global discussion. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you very much Tony. That needs some digesting, you know? To say the least.   Please engage with us.   We should continue this discussion. The issue we're going to continue to face, you know, which is, I think the primary discussion point, is really all around prioritization, from the community to us about… You know, we do, at the end of the day, have limited resources, but nonetheless, that's a problem that we face.

You know we hear it also from that there are over 200 languages in India, if I recall.   How we address these all is monumental.   But nonetheless, thank you for bringing it up. And please do engage with us on this. Please.

If there are no other… Oh, there is.

NOELLE CLARK: Hello, Noelle Clark here. I'm with the Internet Society and a few other activities around the ICANN piece as well. I thought I would throw a quick one in along the same lines as Tony's intervention, in that, in my day job, with another organization called ACCAN, that's A-C-C-A-N, in Australia, a consumer organization, we have recently been running a project for the deaf community, and that's capital D-E-A-F, we of course, with our own policies for our website, and all of our documentation, we produce everything in accessible format so that people with disabilities can get ready access to all of our materials.

The project we recently ran, well actually it's close to completion now, surveyed a lot of the sign language translations that are available within Australia, and looked at the quality of sign language translations, and

found a huge variation in the quality, as you've all been discussing today, with the [Oz land] translations.

And so we have, this project is close to completion but it will be producing a framework and a rubric for translation standards for [Oz land] translations. So if ICANN ever makes that next step to translating again, all of these spoken word languages into the visual form for those people who have hearing impairments, then perhaps, I hope our framework will be of some assistance, if it translates. Thank you.

CHRISTINA RODRIGUEZ: Don't go. I have a question actually. Forgive my ignorance, actually, in the matter of language, of sign language. But how does it work? First of all, this is scary, just the thought that maybe I am, my ignorance is not that much, and I'm thinking that each different language has a different sign language?

But my understanding is that there is a universal sign language, right? No?

NOELLE CLARK: No. And there are many, sorry, Noelle Clark again for the record. There are, in Australia, most of the deaf community will speak, that will use [Oz land], so AUS LAN, Australian sign language, that is distinctly different from American sign language, and from the sign languages used in many other parts of the world. So the European forms, there are some common roots for this language, but and there are also different dialects across Australia, so different, there are different signs used in different places to mean different things, much as the same…

You know, I've actually been explaining the word [inaudible] to everybody here this week, an Australian word, if you are P-H-Y, [inaudible], which is something that everyone thinks is absolutely truth, but actually is not. So that is a word that I use commonly, that I think applies very well to ICANN, and ICANN meetings, rather not ICANN itself, but ICANN meetings.

But it is not a word that you have ever heard, and I am sure there are many different sign language for this word as well.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Thank you everyone for attending. I appreciate this. The meeting has come to a close.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]