
CR - NARALO Monthly Meeting
Monday, March 12, 2012 – 14:00 to 15:00
ICANN - San Jose, Costa Rica

Beau Brendler: Okay. Why don't we start? This is the North American Regional monthly meeting here in Costa Rica. We didn't have one last month, so this is kind of a double meeting and hopefully we have some people that are going to participate remotely. I see some folks on the Adobe Connect Room, which is nice to see, so we'll try to make it as interactive as we can. So if we could, just go ahead and do our roll call please, per the agenda.

Gisella Gruber: So, for today's meeting we have Eduardo Diaz, Alan Greenberg, Annalisa Roger, Ganesh Kumar, Glenn McKnight, Evan Leibovitch, Darlene Thompson, Beau Brendler, from staff we have Heidi Ullrich and myself Gisella Gruber. And if I also could just remind you all to state your name when speaking for transcript and interpretation purposes. Thank you.

I don't believe we've got – oh sorry yes we do have people who have connected to the Adobe Connect Room.

Beau Brendler: I can read them if you like. Allan Skuce, Gordon, Gareth Shearman, Hadja – I don't know who Hadja is – and Joly is connected via Adobe or connected to the chat room, and we also have [Camera]. Okay, so let's get started with the agenda then. I'd like to actually skip down to the item that says "update from the ICANN Costa Rica meeting 10 minutes" and for doing that I would like to first turn to our representative on the ALAC, Evan Leibovitch, who can give us some feeling for what kinds of issues are hot here in Costa Rica and what the discussions have been so far. Evan I will call on you first.

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Evan Leibovitch:

Thanks Beau, this is Evan. I guess the big issue right now is trying to clean up everything now that's left for ICANN to do now that the gTLD rollout program was passed previously. So now ICANN is catching up on all sorts of other things. It has to deal with a new CEO that it's in the process of hiring. It has a new Board Chair who's feeling the ropes and a number of issues are coming up. Some of them are directly related to the gTLD Program, specifically the issues related to the International Olympic Committee and the Red Cross; that the Board has asked for some special status to be granted for them related to reserving their top level domain names. There's been some push back about this.

There's also some significant activity within ALAC regarding IDNs. This has traditionally not been a big hot issue for NARALO, but it is in other regions. And also, there's a WHOIS Review Team going on, Chaired by Carlton Samuels that is doing a lot of work on trying to nail down this issue on which ICANN has been going around the block for a long time.

And I'm very happy to be a part of something called the Future Challenges Working Group, which is involved in taking ALAC and giving it a very high level view, for the first time exercising its mandate from the ICANN Bylaws to take an overall view of ICANN what needs to be fixed, what needs to be kept in terms of preserving the multi-stakeholder model in light of a new number of threats coming from outside, especially governments that are looking to replace the multi-stakeholder model with something purely governmental.

Those are the main focuses that I've been able to identify, but it might not be complete.

Beau Brendler:

Thank you. Questions for Evan? We have some comments from the chat that there's some audio issues with the translation, did you guys see that? That's for the phone as opposed to the Adobe I think. Alan, did you want to add anything

based on your current work with GNSO and the liaison role that you're in with ALAC and anything you want to add to Evan's assessment?

Alan Greenberg:

No, I don't think so; not from that perspective. Clearly on the GNSO side one of the hot issues is the IOC/Red Cross and how that will play out will be interesting. And I'll have a new draft of the motion for distribution shortly. Something I just sent to the list, both the ALAC list and the North American region list a few minutes ago may well prove to be one of the more interesting discussions in this meeting. There are commentaries on a talk Rod Beckstrom gave today that may resonate with a lot of people.

Beau Brendler:

Thank you Alan. And based on a conversation we had yesterday I feel that I must remind you that you owe this group a update on the Rules of Procedure.

Alan Greenberg:

I do indeed. I committed a long time ago to suggest some very specific changes that have been identified as necessary, and thank you for the reminder.

Beau Brendler:

Okay. I would like to recognize Eduardo who mentioned to me earlier that there is a little bit of an update to the work that we did in past meetings on the .pr issue and redelegation. So Eduardo, would you mind giving us an update on that?

Eduardo Diaz:

This is Eduardo for the record. The last time I mentioned, the last time we met I think was in Dakar, I mentioned that the parties, University of Puerto Rico and NIC PR, were going to start to disclose evidence about the allegations, and that was going to happen in May. I just learned that this is going to happen in March, at the end of March. And that is becoming now, I learned that the judge

that is looking at this case wants to understand what this domain system is, the technical stuff behind it, so now they're looking for experts and this is in that stage.

This case, for what I see, is going to take about two or three years before it's going to get resolved. And we all believe that, depending on the final outcome it can go all the way to the Supreme Court. I don't know why, but it might go there. Since this is a type of case that is new in the legal system in Puerto Rico, so that's where we are.

Beau Brendler:

Thank you. Anybody have any questions for Eduardo on that update? Okay. As we're still talking about Costa Rican fun and such, Annalisa would you like to give us an update from the raft trip went, for those of us, such as me, who were unlucky enough to go? I heard you saw a sloth, is that right?

Annalisa Roger:

Thank you Beau. No, I was hoping to see a sloth before I leave the country. Darlene had showed us a photo of her holding one in a previous ICANN trip so. But it was a wonderful raft trip. 50 ICANN delegates joined together and 50 people from ICANN got a chance to know the rainforest. And we all participated in a reforestation project, we planted trees and really had a great sort of community bonding experience I guess, and we all survived. That was the good news.

There's great photos available over at the .green/NeuStar booth. Yeah, it was really a great experience. The idea is that if everybody who's here in Costa Rica has a chance to go out and see some of that beautiful rainforest, when you go home you're going to take those memories and those feelings back with you. And it's our planet and we're all in it together. Thanks Beau, for letting me share that.

Beau Brendler: Yeah, you're welcome. Do you want to take just a brief second and tell us how things are going with .green?

Annalisa Roger: Wow, thank you, yeah I'd love to. We are in the TAS system. We have; we're really actually doing really well. When we get back from this ICANN meeting we're going to do some minimal editing before we actually hit the submit button, but we're ready to go and we're super excited about the May 1st reveal date, as is everybody I'm sure. .green is well situated and we have a team, an office, a staff and we're ready to go about our business of promoting sustainability in the world. So wish us luck. We hope we get that.

And we have, Kim Switzer leading the show as COO and CFO, so we're very fortunate about that, along with a great dedicated team. Thank you Beau.

Beau Brendler: You're welcome. We do wish you luck. Okay, moving on in the topic here I think I'd like to go, at this point, to the update on the NARALO outreach video, which a lot of hard work has been done on that by Mr. Glenn McKnight who is going to give you a little bit of a guide to it and we're going to show it. I think it was actually supposed to have its premiere yesterday, but we ran out of time, so we'll premiere it here. Can we do that? Alright, let's roll it. See if we can find it first huh? Oh, okay.

Well, while you're doing that, I can – oh okay it's going to come up. There it is, alright.

Glenn McKnight: There should be sound with it as well.

[video plays]

Beau Brendler:

Okay so, since a lot of hard work was done on that we're going to just take a minute or two, these folks will take a minute or two as our meeting progresses so that we can play that with audio that you can hear. Just to briefly talk about the video a little bit, the one that you saw there is sort of I guess what we would call the final version. It's been through an iteration of comments from Scott Pinzon of ICANN. I've also reviewed it. Glenn made some changes based on what Scott had to say and other comments that came in.

And our intent is really to begin publicizing this now, here in Costa Rica, in other words, launching it. So, those of who want to post links to it on our Facebook accounts or Twitter or any sort of viral promotion that we can give to this at this point would be good. I don't think any of us has the expectation that creating a video and sending it out is going to bring loads of people into At-Large, but hey, we need to do as much as we can to recruit and do outreach.

So Glenn, is there anything that you wanted to add about the content or process of the video before we look at it again?

Glenn McKnight:

Yeah. What Matt did, he downloaded another version which was pre-edit, so I posted in the chat, which has the transition questions and then Beau answers and then Garth answers, then Eduardo answers. So the second you'll see with my name, the post; I'm not sure why Matt posted that one, but the link in the chat is the right one for distribution. Okay? And there is a longer one, but we cut that down to the three minutes.

Beau Brendler:

Okay. While they're doing that, I'd like to take a moment to bring up a organizational or housekeeping topic and that is, it's not all that long before the next North American meeting, this one being in Toronto. And we probably should give some consideration to, if this hasn't necessarily been talked about already, getting some leadership together on the effort for getting that organized.

In San Francisco we had the terrific efforts of Eduardo and others. Evan, since this is in your home bailiwick, have you had any preliminary – I’m not volunteering you, but I’m just saying have you had any preliminary conversations with ICANN meeting staff about the Toronto meeting?

Evan Leibovitch:

The answer so far is no. As it turned out I did share a hotel shuttle with Byron Holland, the President of CIRA and so hopefully there is a get together where I’ve offered my help towards logistics. And in terms of ICANN meeting staff, they do what they do. I mean I’m familiar with the surroundings. I know the hotel that I think they’re planning to go to. And I’m already in the process of trying to book a Niagara Falls tour for the day after the conference. Outside of that, I don’t have much to report. But I’ve started contact with CIRA, that’s the main sponsor of the conference in Canada, and as updates come out I’ll show them.

Beau Brendler:

So in your opinion, would it be helpful at this point to ask for and then appoint Toronto meeting point person?

Evan Leibovitch:

I’d say no at this point, if only because I don’t think ICANN has made any place for us. In that typically ICANN, when they go to a meeting, they’re activities for local engagement are, shall we say, nebulous. And so while there are a number of ALSes in the Greater Toronto area – Glenn is here, I’m here, I notice Gordon is on the chat – so there’s certainly a lot of ALS support. And I’m hoping maybe we can introduce At-Large to the local internet community in Toronto and vice versa. But beyond that, I don’t know typically if there’s a lot of direct engagement between ICANN meeting staff and the local community, unless we press the issue.

If there’s a specific thing we want to get out of this, then there’s something to request. As it is, it’s my understanding that there is a proposal for the ICANN

Academy to be held in the Toronto area before the conference, so there already is a certain amount of activity over and above the regular conference. If there is a specific request, a specific ask we can certainly do it and I can look it up locally, but without that I'm not totally sure what such a grouping would be doing.

Beau Brendler: Thank you. I saw Alan's hand up and Darlene.

Alan Greenberg: The question that comes to mind is, is there an interest in a showcase this time or is the proximity to San Francisco just to close and not wanting to hold another one?

Beau Brendler: I will leave that question for consideration. Darlene?

Darlene Thompson: I was wondering when we would find out whether we would be getting funding for having a GA or not, because then a lot of these questions will then be taking care of that. Because I mean, if we do end up having a GA, then yeah we're going to need to have a leadership team, we're probably going to want to do something in the way of like we did in San Francisco, so that's my question.

Heidi Ullrich: May I? This is Heidi for the record. I don't know the exact date, but it's going to be prior to July 1st obviously. And that means that yes you will have time to prepare something for the Toronto meeting in October, end of October.

Darlene Thompson: We'll find out by July 1st?

Heidi Ullrich: Oh yeah. I mean the Fiscal Year start in July 1st, so you will find out – I think it's May that you should find out; the budget is posted, but yeah, definitely by 1st of July.

Beau Brendler: Okay, thank you. Does anybody have any thoughts regards to Alan's question about a showcase? This time I saw Annalisa first and then Darlene.

Annalisa Roger: I have a question. The showcase that we had in San Francisco, I mean we must have the list of who was there and I'm wondering if it were ALSes that were closer to that region. Because Toronto and San Francisco are quite far, so maybe a showcase again in Toronto is not that repetitive, is what I was thinking.

Beau Brendler: In the hopes that perhaps some folks from some of the further reaches in Canada could come and participate – that's a good idea. I assume if there's funding; we can hopefully try to provide some funding for that. Okay, I think we can move on from this topic. So next, do we have the video ready to run yet? Okay, let's do that; let's run the latest version of the video with some nice audio behind it so we can get the full effect.

[video plays]

Beau Brendler: The next item I'd like to go to...

[audio skips]

Beau Brendler:

Can we call up the PowerPoint Presentation that Glenn put together for the survey? It doesn't have any sound, no. Good. There it is. It's a bit small. So, to tell you a bit about this while we're getting it ready to launch here; a few ICANN meetings ago we decided that we would do a relatively broad survey in order to ascertain out in the community what some concerns that user community might have about ICANN policy. So, this particular survey is not of ALSes, but we are hoping, much in the same way as the video, to launch it here in Costa Rica and we want to kind of lean on as many people as we can to virally send it out. There will be more details on that coming before the end of the week.

Glenn, again, did a great deal of the heavy lifting on this. We collaborated together on some of the wording of the questions. And when you look at the questions they may seem to you like this is sort of unusual for an ICANN survey, but it was really kind of our attempt to try to get some feedback from some people who are not intimately familiar with the DNS system about ICANN policy, or about policy that pertains to ICANN that they might be interested in. Glenn, can you take it away?

Glenn McKnight:

Okay, how do I get control, or you'll click the next slide? Who's got the control of the...Okay great, so as it says here "The scope of the project" – we assembled a team, Allan Skuce also volunteered on this and we assembled the questions and we've asked on a few meetings for feedback; for people to log into the survey and give your feedback. Any comments can be put into the Wiki. I've posted the link from the confluence, or the Wiki itself. So the idea, can you...

No, there was above that there was the other page. Yeah, it was just the scope. And as it states on the deliverables, the first stage of this was to create it as a Google Forum, come up with the testing and then port it to [big pulse] working with ICANN. And Heidi's been working with us for that. So we still want more feedback from people for the survey. We can go to the next slide.

Again, there was questions that was touched on in terms of policy, power, obvious concerns here and right now we have 23 questions. We don't want to make this the most definitive survey in the world, but we'd be happy to take more questions on the approach. And then we have to worry about the distribution strategy. Next.

Okay, so back in Dakar we had a public session that Beau conducted before I got there because I was with NomCom. Again, we're still inviting feedback from members and that's one of the reasons we're here again, to show you the survey and get feedback again. Next one. It's a pretty easy survey to complete. If you want to scan with your QR code or click on the tiny URL. So that's the screen capture of the survey itself. And we broke it down in four different sections. Next slide.

So, next steps is basically after the feedback is the promotion, and then we also discussed translation into French and Spanish as well and to get the word out. That's it.

Beau Brendler:

This last slide really talks about the distribution, which we'll be kind of tackling over the next month or so. It would be really nice to get 1000 respondents for this in order to give us a robust sample to work with. And depending on the results that we get, we will possibly issue a NARALO press release on the results. And obviously we'll be getting back to you more on distribution when that time is appropriate. Anybody have any questions or feedback on the survey?

Okay, let's move to another topic which has taken on some kind of interesting timeliness as of today. A couple of meetings ago I mentioned; a couple of At-Large or a couple of NARALO meetings ago I mentioned the idea of drafting a letter to send to the Board raising concerns about potential conflict of interest of the Board – or excuse me, not the Board – the NomCom Committee Chairperson, in waiting, whose term begins shortly.

I sent a draft of that out a couple of days ago, but I've been having some problems with my email, so I re-mailed it again today. It's relatively short. And I also posted it yesterday to the At-Large chat, in which it drew quite a bit of interest and there was some talk about the At-Large adopting the statement. I think those talks are ongoing. And then today, as I sent and as Alan has also sent an email, it was interesting to note that Rod Beckstrom, during his speech after the Opening Ceremonies, raised the specific issue of how he is concerned that the NomCom is dangerous to the ICANN process, and some other very interesting quotes in there.

So we need to do two things. One is, I want to make sure that NARALO is comfortable in this with this statement. We have been talking about it for months. I have sent the text around. So I just want to make sure that everybody in North America has had the opportunity to make feedback known. So why don't we open the floor to that first and then we'll reopen it to a discussion of the issues. Any comments from members of North America about the content of the draft letter? Alan Greenberg?

Alan Greenberg:

Beau, I'll admit I haven't had a chance to reread it in a long time. So I will make a suggestion, which may have been taken already and may not. I would suggest we stress the poor optics of the situation as opposed to any accusation of potential future improper action. And as I said, maybe it's there already. I haven't had a chance to reread it today, and it's been a long time. But I really think the issue, the critical issue is how it will be perceived by the community in general, as opposed to any impropriety as such.

Beau Brendler:

Thank you Alan, that's a good comment. I think actually what Beckstrom said today gives us an opportunity to perhaps use that as a way to go at this notion so that we can be perhaps less, perceived less as being critical of a particular human being as opposed to a process or a function. Yeah, go ahead.

Alan Greenberg: But do be careful, his comments are being viewed as sour grapes and why didn't he say it at the beginning of his tenure instead of at the end. So I'm not sure whose shirttails you want to go on too much.

Beau Brendler: The Chair recognizes Jacqueline Morris from LACALO as a special guest and contributor.

Jacqueline Morris: One of the things that Rod did say previous years to the NomCom was that he would prefer a headhunter approach. And in 2011 that was attempted, but it didn't work out that well because a lot of what they also said they wanted on the Board was kind of really specific. So the headhunters came back and said "Listen, one the Board works too hard for no money. Two, there's no money. Three, people are not accustomed to working that hard. And four, most of them are not comfortable with coming in a field that they know so little about." So the people that they would have found were the same people that were the usual suspects.

And NomCom has been working to try and do more outreach and stretch that and get people who aren't, especially for the Board, who aren't in the space already. But it is very difficult. But Rod has said previously that he would prefer that the NomCom not exist and that we just go with a straight headhunter approach for the Board. So it's not brand new that he said it; it's the first time I think he said it in actual public, but he has said it privately to other organizations, other meetings before.

Beau Brendler: Thank you, that's interesting. Does anybody have any additional...Eduardo?

Eduardo Diaz:

Yes. This is the first time I'm reading this, I mean the letter, and I'm not sure. I worked with Bob in NomCom last year and it didn't seem to me that it was pushing for anything from where he's coming from, from his business and I found him a very straightforward guy. That's what I learned when he was working in the NomCom. I mean he was appointed in the NomCom by his constituency. He didn't get there by himself. I don't know. So, going into what Alan was saying, we should look at this and maybe not to go to a specific person, by make it more as a general thing maybe.

Beau Brendler:

Anybody else have any comments? I think everybody has kind of heard what I have to say about this so I prefer to hear from others. Evan, did I see your hand go up?

Evan Leibovitch:

I wasn't sure whether to say anything about this. I've been talking to a lot of people inside and outside ALAC since being aware of the letter. And I guess part of the issue is trying to figure out the positive affect that a letter could have, as opposed to just getting people's nose out of joint. One of the issues that was meant to me is there's confidentiality – and we've got a number of NomCom people present and former here in the room, and I was told, and please correct me if I'm wrong, that the confidentiality aspects of the NomCom are there to protect the applicants primarily. They're not there necessarily to prevent abuse of the process internally to the NomCom or to the NomCom people. Could any of you elaborate on that?

Jacqueline Morris:

Basically when we had the NomCom review, what it came out as was NomCom has a duty of confidentiality to the people who apply. The people who may not want people to know that they've applied, they certainly may not want people to know that they were applied and turned down. The information that we get on them is very, very detailed. And that's a serious responsibility that we have.

However, since that happened from 2010 come forward, there has been a balance, we've been trying to do a balance between transparency on the process and confidentiality on the people.

So the process is as open as humanly possible. We tell you what we're doing, when we're doing it, what day you should expect to get things back, what day – all that kind of stuff and the entire process. Who does the due diligence. When we're doing the due diligence and so on. But we can't say anything about the people at all.

Evan Leibovitch:

What I'm getting at by this is if our representatives, if the people representing At-Large in the NomCom see something wrong happening, not in particular in regard to any particular candidate, but in regards to what they see as a misguided use of the process to select between them, are they able to talk about that? Without talking about any particular candidates, or any particular strengths, or any particular ranking or anything like that, if you see something wrong going within the NomCom itself, are you able to talk about that; because that's process and you can do that without naming names and without it having to do with any particulars about the applicants.

Jacqueline Morris:

It hasn't happened, but yeah I think we would be able to talk about that. I think the general way we work is we would probably bring it up in the group first and say "Listen, I don't think this is right. I don't think we should do things this way," and usually it gets worked out that way. If it's something really egregious and so on, if it's something that's against say the At-Large principle of something, then yes you bring it up in the meeting and say "hey listen, At-Large would like it to be this way." If it doesn't come out that way then yes I guess we could come back to the people and say "Listen, this is what is going on and your principle is not being..." I don't know what we would do after that.

Evan Leibovitch:

Here's what I'm getting at specifically, and by this Glenn I'm talking to you because you're our person there now from North America. We now have what we have and we can complain about it and we can talk about the optics about it, but we have what we have and the Board is not going to reconsider what has already been selected and what has already been done. So what we have to do right now is make sure that we are extremely vigilant and make sure that the process isn't abused. Even though the optics are bad, it's still possible to ensure that internally within the NomCom there's nothing funny going on.

And that's why I'm asking to make sure that we have the ability to not only to be vigilant, but if we see something weird going on, to be able to blow the appropriate whistle on this and bring it to the attention. So, if we can't change what's already been done, and we've been told repeatedly that the Board has reconsidered and is aware of the optics issue and is comfortable with what it has done, that having been the case now, the best that we can do now is to be vigilant going forward and make sure that there's no real or imagined abuse of the process.

Beau Brendler:

Just to add to the discussion, I was approached by somebody who I obviously can't name, but who said that this community would not be the only one were it to register some concern about the conflict of interest specifically. Our community is not alone in having some rather substantial concerns about the Chairmen of the NomCom being from, being President of Momentus and the former plaintiff against ICANN and all that sort of stuff so. I really don't; I really hope that we don't back away from this for the wrong reasons.

I think that we should; if the Board thinks that this is okay, then I think that shows that there's a problem with the Board. I don't think it's indicative that our opinion is wrong. If the CEO, whether it's sour grapes or not, raised in a public arena his concerns about the situation, then maybe we can do it in a depersonalized way. But we owe it to the user community to call attention to – I mean has anybody here ever really heard any talk about this situation as its

happening? I mean did anybody really sort of hear the talk about Peter Dengate-Thrush until the event actually occurred?

Anybody have any response to that? By the way, we basically have to leave in about two minutes, 15 minutes, but we're going to lose staff as of now. So I can continue to run the board from here, but does anybody have anything they want to add? Have we heard from everyone on the phone? Anybody on the remote?

Heidi Ullrich:

We had Glenn, Gordon, Gareth is online.

Beau Brendler:

Okay, alright. Okay, so we don't have any further comments from any remote participants. I'm inclined at this point to adjourn this meeting unless there is a significant objection. Okay, thank you for attending.

[End of Transcript]