

TORONTO – New gTLDs Update

Monday, October 15, 2012 – 11:00 to 12:30

ICANN - Toronto, Canada

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome senior vice president Kurt Pritz.

[ Applause ]

KURT PRITZ: Thanks, everyone. Could we close the doors so the people that want to pay attention can hear and then the people that want to pay attention later can come in? That would be great.

The new gTLD program is off and running. So I will give you guys a chance to fix that.

The translation feed was coming through, so we're going to cut it off. Thank you.

You didn't know I was so talented.

While applications are being assessed, there's still lots to be done. Infrastructure is still being developed. There's a lot of discussion about the details of implementation. There is many needs to be met, but I think we're all filled with -- filled with anticipation that we now know, you know, there is over 2,000 applications. There's going to be more than 1,000 new TLDs in a couple years, maybe as many as 1400.

The program is starting to fulfill its promise, and we can't wait to see what's' going to happen. The conversation has sort of turned. It has turned in my office anyway about looking at the applications to

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wondering what they're going to do and how they can provide value and how that's going to fit with the other ones. And I see the conversations in these hallways, too, turning that way, seeing what new things are going to happen and what new services there are going to be. We know it is going to be really different. We don't know what it is yet.

But we said it could be big, all this stuff you have been working on for the last many, many years. And you know what? It is big. But, let's get back to work. First, I stuck this slide in here. I want to give kudos to the new gTLD team. They're often mentioned and their work is often described in good and bad ways. First I want to welcome Ms. Christine Willett to the team. She will lead the new gTLD team forward. She was here for a day and then we sent her back to work. She is back in Los Angeles managing the process of applications. She comes to us from a very rich background. She ran her own business for many, many years as a consultant working with many large companies, managing very complex projects. So she's managing this complex project now.

The team, I think, likes her. I like her. She's fit in well on a chemistry basis, and we think that's going to be terrific. So the new gTLD program team continues to grow in new ways. And I want you to know that team is really concentrating at the task at hand, that they're working many, many hours a day to answer applicant questions, address changing environments and managing the applications through the application process. Trang and Serge -- they are names you know -- Chris, Steve, Deb. I never have to call them on their cell phone because I know they're always at their desk no matter what time it is. They are always the first ones there, and the last ones to leave. And applicants



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are focusing on their business. And these guys are focusing on the business of the applicants and they should be congratulated. Our trust in them is well-placed.

So what are we going to talk about? We are going to talk about what we are going to talk about the rest of the week. So we are going to describe the sessions we are going to have here and where we can talk about them in detail. And we are also going to provide some information about what's going on in the program.

While we have kind of a short period of time together, we're going to touch on many things: Recent developments in the program, some application statistics, the progress ICANN is making and its evaluation team, we conducted a clarifying question pilot. Those of you that know about it, know about it. Those of you that don't, I will explain what that means later; but it is part of our process to ensure that the applications are processed in a consistent, clear manner.

How we're handling the comments made on each application, we'll provide some detail there, what's happened next. We'll have a report about customer service and what we're doing in communications. There's a couple specific projects we want to talk about here, one of them is EBERO, the emergency back end emergency operator and our others is the applicant support project. I will only touch for a minute on trademark clearinghouse and Uniform Rapid Suspension and the prioritization drawing, the answer to batching, just for one second. We really don't want to talk on those here because for trademark clearinghouse, Uniform Rapid Suspension and prioritization drawing, there is dedicated sessions to that later in the week.



What are those sessions? Well, there's -- yesterday, there was a new gTLD information session, sort of a new gTLDs 101. So if you went to that and came here, you will understand what we are talking about. But there is a whole bunch of people at ICANN and in the communications department and the new gTLD team who are willing to educate and bring up to speed any of you who wish to learn about the program.

Later this afternoon, about 5:00, we're going to have a working session on the sunrise and trademark claims process. That's not a general session. That's a roll up your sleeve and talk about the nuts and bolts of where data flows, when it flows, how much of it should flow, who touches the data to ensure that these trademark -- this trademark protection mechanism gets implemented in a timely way and way that works good and lasts a long time.

On Wednesday, there's a more general trademark clearinghouse session. So if you want to learn about what the trademark clearinghouse does and how it works and where we are on the implementation of that, come to that session on Wednesday. That's more of a general information session.

There is another important session on Wednesday, the universal acceptance of TLDs. So we're going to be introducing TLDs that are IDNs or long words and are all the applications written and browsers configured so when you type in those addresses or those URLs into your browser that it will go to the right place? Not always. And this is an education effort for ICANN. And when I talk about ICANN, I mean everybody in this room and everybody out there drinking coffee has to - - can play a role in making sure this new program succeeds and meets



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its potential by addressing these issues associated with acceptance of TLDs. It is an important session.

Prioritization, the thing that used to be called "batching" and then it was called something else but we wiped that name from our memory, there will be a session on that on Wednesday. ICANN posted a paper just before this meeting describing a potential solution for that, that we are all pretty darn excited about. A lot of careful thinking has gone into that solution, but I'm sure not enough. And so we want the feedback of the community in this session to inform us and inform the model and flesh it out so that when it's launched, it works good.

On Thursday, there's a session on IDN variant programs, the program. That is -- for those of you that know, IDN variants are a form of variant. A character in some languages can be represented in more than one way, and that can be very confusing if you create a domain name with one type of character or the equivalent type of character. And there are strict rules around what can be put in the root zone and actually what can be put in TLD zones that way. This is a very complex project, and some of the smartest people you will ever meet, bunches of them that are globally based, have been working on this problem for the last year. We're driving towards a solution where IDN variants can be delegated. It is very important because it will open up the Internet to more users. If you use a certain dialect -- I don't even know how to use these words, but a certain dialect or a certain character set that others who speak your language don't use, the Internet may or may not be more accessible to you.



Finally, on Thursday, there's a program on another rights protection mechanism, Uniform Rapid Suspension. This is sort of a microcosm of the whole program. Right as we implement it, as the rubber hits the road, we're learning a lot. We're learning that some of the things we talked about during the program's formations were the right things but some were the wrong things. Now we are faced with reality and implementing certain problems are crystallizing. One of them is here where we want to get some of the cost out of the model of this Uniform Rapid Suspension so that trademark owners can use it in a way that benefits them.

So a ton of good sessions this week. If you have a question about these things, you should try to hold them until that session because that's where the detail will be.

So what's going on? Very recently, like I said, we published a paper -- ICANN published a paper proposing a solution for how to process applications once the evaluation's done. So we're evaluating 1,923 applications. When that's done, how does that rat go through the snake? There are certain operational limitations and there's root zone scaling limitations. We can't delegate all 1900 or 1409, it will be, at one time. So this is a process for metering applications through the process.

We also conducted a clarifying question pilot. I'm going to explain more about what that is later, and we're going to share some of the findings of that pilot with you. And then finally we're upgrading the new gTLD microsite. So the status of every application is on the microsite. So what you see right now if you go on the microsite, you will see the application, applied for string, the applicant, its status, whether or not



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there has been an objection filed against that application and whether any changes to that application have been approved.

Shortly we will be augmenting that as things happen. So in November we're going to be adding columns on to that matrix where you can see if a GAC early warning was filed against that application, whether that application, that string is in contention with another one as those results are published. And some of the early evaluation results will be put in there.

Later on as more information becomes available, that will be published, too. And there will be more rows for the matrix, and so you will have to buy one of those extra wide computer screens. And we will be publishing whether GAC advice was asserted against an application and the rest of the evaluation results. All of that will be ready in April in time for that.

What's this timeline look like going forward? We revealed the 1,930 applications, were revealed on June 13th. And I.E. was supposed to begin a month after that. It actually began sooner than that. We started evaluating the applications right away.

On September 26th, the comment window on those applications closed. And more on that later, but I want you to know that the application comment period really never closes. You can comment on every application at every time -- at any time. What this means is that all the comments received by September 26th were sent to the evaluators. And, so, they're reading through those application comments, the comments against each application and weighing whether or not that would change the scoring of that application.



Surely after this meeting, we expect early warning notices from the GAC. I spent some time with the GAC yesterday. ICANN staff members are supporting them. They've taken -- they have taken this very seriously as we knew they would, but they are working through their job and have compiled results. They're not known to me, but we expect them -- to see them in the next few weeks.

Now, in December, we're going to hold this prioritization drawing. This drawing will prioritize the applications, meaning it will be the order in which applications are released and then processed through the rest of the evaluation. So the ability to choose the form agreement as your form of contract, to select an appointment and to go through pre-delegation testing and then, finally, go to delegation will be determined by this drawing number.

Wealth of detail behind this that will be discussed in the meeting on this, and I will touch on this later here. But that drawing will occur in December.

The first initial evaluation results will be published in March. So this advances the schedule for publishing any evaluation results. We were going to publish all the evaluation results in June or July. By prioritizing -- excuse me, by prioritizing the applications, this allows us to pull forward and release some of the evaluation results early. And then we'll continually publish evaluation results in lots -- I will not say "batches" -- in lots, weekly lots, say every time every week. Say, every Friday at 5:00 or something like that we'll publish a set of applications.

The objection period around which anyone can object, anyone with standing can object to an application, will close just before the initial

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evaluations are posted. So that objection period will last nine months, and then it will end on March 13th.

Now, it's important to note for reasons we will go through in other session that is no contracts will be executed or delegations be made before the Beijing meeting. But shortly after that, we'll execute agreements that have been selected or negotiated and then pass the applications on to IANA delegation.

And we should be through all the evaluation results in June. And, you know, I can't help but point out that our original time frame called for us processing 500 applications every five or six months or so. So you divide 1900 by 500, you get 3 4/5, multiply that by five months, you get a lot longer than what we've published our projected window for finishing. We are actually finishing four or five months ahead of what we projected.

I could talk a lot about why that is, but it is due to the work people in this room and beating the heck out of our consultants.

So some statistics, seven applicants have withdrawn applications or sent us notice to withdraw applications. Six of them are completed. The money is given back and their names are posted. One is still in process because there's back and forth between us and the applicants, so in order to make everything official, that's where that is.

No objections have been prod. We've received mistakes in attaching objections, typos, changing string names, changes of primary contact as organizations morph, so we are really careful to create a process so that all these change applications were considered the same way using the



same criteria and having worked through that, worked through it with the board and the executive staff, we now have a routinized way of considering these. We expect the processing of these now to happen pretty fast.

We finished -- well, we finished meaning we've approved 29 of the change requests. 84 of them are still in review and 14 of them we've requested some additional information from the applicant. As those changes are made -- am I going to talk about this later in the thing? A little bit? So I will just -- and then the other statistic is we receive a lot of comments, 8900 comments have been filed so far against each application.

So how are we doing? Here's seven types of evaluation that each application undergoes. Some of the reviews are targeted at the applicant. Some of the reviews are targeted at the string and the application. We've narrowed down finishing dates for each of the firms. And we've essentially allocated -- so to go through some of the detail, we've essentially allocated all the applications to the different firms with the two exceptions that you see and the financial review and the technical review, the two most complex reviews, these are the questions all the applicants filled out and their scored questions. We have many evaluators who want to normalize results, make sure they're consistent.

The way we're managing that is we assign applications in lots, or batches, to those evaluators with the idea that we want to maintain competition and consistency across the application. So we assign a lot of applications. We give them, the evaluators, the chance to do that



work and come back to us with a price of the remaining new applications. Based on that price, one panel might get more applications than another panel. So it is a way that we continually keep competition in the evaluation process, keep our costs low and keep our speed up.

So in the last column you see here are preliminary results. The reason why they are preliminary is really twofold. One is, as I've said, we've just closed the comment window. So even those applications that are through processing, the application panels -- the evaluation panels are now looking at the comments and seeing if that changes their thinking in any way.

Additionally, there's this issue of clarifying questions and we're going to talk more about that in a bit. But we have preliminary results, but in many of these evaluations, the evaluator can go back to the applicant and request more information because something is left out or something is not clear, there is not enough information in order for the evaluation firm to assign a passing score. So there's a built-in iteration into the program that was intended so that the evaluators could go back to the applicants. So these preliminary application results really run up against that clarifying question window.

And how does that work -- I will just talk about that for a minute. So one of the lessons learned from previous rounds was to really keep communications between evaluators and the applicants at arm's length. And in the sTLD round, it was difficult to manage with ten applicants and now we have 1900. So it is really important that we maintain this strict arm-length relationship.



So instead we have this formalized process where we ask these -- we can ask these clarifying questions. So, for example, in a technical evaluation, if there is insufficient information or some incorrect information or conflicting information, some applicants, you know, they've attached 60 or more documents to every application, sometimes they -- there's such a wealth of information, sometimes they contradict and the evaluation panels need to get to the bottom of that.

So the technical and financial panels might ask for more information. There might be a really clear requirement in the guidebook that the applicant just skips, and it happens quite often because a failure to attach required documentation, that can be easily cured.

In geographic names, the supporting documentation of the government might be missing or it might be insufficient. The guidebook is pretty clear as to what that supporting documentation should say.

Similarly, the DNS stability service, if a registry service does not make it clear that service can be operated in a way that does not affect DNS stability, there might be a question.

A few words about the evaluations, the technical and financial reviews are being performed by Ernst & Young and KPMG and the third firm is JAS Global Advisors. Why three firms? One to give us capability that we can process this many applications. Two is to manage conflicts so that if one firm has a conflict, they can hand that application off to another firm. And that is managed very strictly.



You can imagine in the case of KPMG and E & Y, they probably share a lot of clients. So we have a backup as JAS. So there is a third opportunity to evaluate applications instead of conflicts.

These panels have done three pilot runs and got around the table and traded answers and traded scores. We're getting to a pretty steady state level of consistency across the scores. When you get to the final scores, pass/fail after CQ, they are pretty much 100% consistent. There are still some differences in how they might score questions initially or how they might ask a clarifying question. So we are working on normalizing that.

There's an extensive QA program. The results will be published. We do in-process reviews. Do I talk more about this later? No. So in-process reviews. We do de novo reviews of applications, making sure the quality firm got the same score as the evaluating firm.

We do procedural reviews to make sure each firm is complying with its procedures and actually compensation is based on quality scores.

So all this work around pilots and normalizations is leading to a release of these clarifying questions that's targeted for November 26th. So you'll see real clarifying questions around that time.

Background screening is performed by PricewaterhouseCoopers, and it is underway. It is a review conducted on the applying entity, officers, directors and major shareholders.

String similarity is being performed by Interconnect Communications in conjunction with the University College of London.



Hi, guys.

The standard they're using is the standard straight out of the guidebook. So the standards and the criteria being used by the panels is the criteria you see in the guidebook. That's consistent. The string similarity review will be done next month.

Did I go the wrong way? Geographic names are being performed by two panels, an arm of The Economist called the Economist Intelligence Unit and then the ICC again with the University College of London. So they've split the geographic names. And the questions you'll see from them, like I said, will be, "Where's your letter of" -- where's your government letter of non-objection or of support?"

In the guidebook, we said we would give extra time because this is a hard thing to get sometimes, letters from governments, or if it is from a region, letter from governments.

And so the guidebook provides for extra time. The results will be published by late November. We'll give from then -- if we haven't received the letters, we will give from then to the end of the initial evaluation to get those letters. That's June.

If we don't receive them by that time, we'll notify the applicants that, you know, their application won't pass without this documentation. And we'll give them another 90 days after that.

So any way you slice what the guidebook says, this gives applicants, we think, sufficient time to get this sort of complex support documentation.



DNS stability, whether the string itself would tend to break the DNS, and the evaluation of the registry services, whether they would tend to break the DNS is being performed by Interisle who performs a lot of stability evaluations for ICANN. It is performed against the criteria that are right in the guidebook.

We plan to release results again at the end of November. If additional information is required, we will release those clarifying questions again.

So I have said this word, "clarifying questions," a lot. What the heck are they? Like I said earlier, clarifying questions are intended to give the applicants a chance to refine their application. There is a long set of questions. The answers are complex and long. All the applicants sought to be very thorough in their answer. Sometimes there is contradictory information. Sometimes something is missed. Sometimes a document from one application is attached to another. We really want the applicants to meet the criteria in the guidebook; and we want to help with the criteria of the guidebook by taking their answers, showing how it falls short and asking them in way that doesn't contradict the earlier information to provide additional information. So there's one of these opportunities during this initial evaluation process. If the applications don't pass and go to extended evaluation, there will be another chance at that.

During very early evaluations, we found that there will be a large number of clarifying questions. So this is sort of a surprise to us.

So if you think about a very high percentage of the applications being asked clarifying questions, and there's 1,900 applications, it becomes a complex task. And we want to ensure that there's consistency across



these clarifying questions. You know, I know there's going to be somebody at the microphone holding up, you know, two applications with identical answers and different clarifying questions. And so we want to avoid that. And we've worked very hard with the firms meeting and comparing notes and, you know, everybody staring at clarifying question verbiage against the wall to get this right. And one of the tools we've used, besides this internal collaboration, is we decided to do a clarifying question pilot. I'm going to ask Trang to come up. I'm going to talk a little bit about it and then -- careful. So I'm going to talk a little bit about the pilot and then Trang will share the results with you. And all the results are actionable so we think that's good. Trang, I think everybody knows, heads up the customer service center and has answered thousands and thousands of new gTLD questions and knows the answer to every one herself. Because she's read them all and (audio problem) most of them.

So the purpose of this pilot was to ensure consistency. We think the questions are clear, concise, understandable, and will garner the right answers, but that's all of us sitting in a -- you know, a conference room with no windows in Los Angeles. So we wanted to look outside and conduct the survey which was sent on August 31st. We solicited the participation of 41 applicants, more or less randomly but targeted in some areas so we're sure we covered the field because we wanted to be as efficient as possible. 36 of the applicants responded. And it's just really clear that the answers did not impact the application or the scoring. So it's a pilot and all the answers get thrown out and these applicants will be asked clarifying questions again when their time comes up. Maybe refined, based on the results of this. So the



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participation or non-participation in the pilot didn't affect the scoring at all. But I want you to know that they were real clarifying questions. In other words, these applications were evaluated and these -- and these clarifications were written by evaluators. So all real from that standpoint. So do you want the clicker? So really, just to introduce Trang's work, we had applicants answer the clarifying questions but more importantly we attached a survey to the end of it and we thought the survey was really more important than the answers themselves, so in big font on the pilot we put, please answer these questions, and actually the applicants did a very good job of that.

TRANG NGUYEN:

Thanks, Kurt. That's right. So with the -- with the set of clarification questions that went out we also sent a survey and asked five questions of applicants. You can see them on the board there. But the first question really gets at, is there enough space allotted for you to answer the question. The second question that we asked was, are these clarifying questions clear, and if not, which ones were not clear. The third survey question was, do you have any suggestions or comments for improving the structures of the CQs that we've written, and the fourth question is, did we allow you enough time to respond to these clarifying questions and if not, how much time is needed and why. And then any other comments that you may have with regards to clarifying questions.

So what I'm going to do right now is I'm just going to run through the results of the survey really quickly and then we'll talk about some of the actions that we're going to be (multiple speakers) -- and then we're



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going to talk about some of the actions that we are going to take based on the feedback that we received.

So with regards to the first question, did we allow enough space for the clarifying question responses, 72 percent of the respondents said, yes, there was enough space and 28% said no, there wasn't sufficient space. The 28 that said there wasn't enough space suggested on average 12,000 characters.

And on the clarity question, more than half, 61%, said that the clarifying questions were clear. They were able to understand what the evaluation panel requested and understand what needed to be provided. 19% said it was not clear and another 19% said some of the clarifying questions were clear but some were unclear. So they were a bit split. We also asked those that said that the clarifying questions were unclear, you know, which ones of the questions were not clear. And on the financial questions, which is questions 45-50, for question 49, in 56% of the instances the participants said that that question was not clear. And then on question 50, about 37% -- instances, in 37% -- in 37 instances out of 100 the participants said that that question was not clear. And again, these are just sort of the top ones. There were other questions, for example 48, 47, there were a small percentage that thought that those questions were not clear there but I just picked sort of the top ones.

On the tech side, which is questions 24-44, you can see the percentages on the screen there. The highest is on Q44 which is actually an optional question. But -- so if the panel issued 10 CQs on question 44, about 7 of them were found to be unclear.



So we also asked for suggestions on improving the clarifying questions and these are some of the suggestions that were provided. Use bullet points instead of paragraph form. Be more specific with what it is that you are asking us to provide. So, you know, in some instances we may be asking you to provide EPP extensions or something like that and, you know, for what? Allow participants to correspond with evaluators. Kurt talked about that a little bit earlier, but we did get some suggestions with regards to that. Some applicants or participants suggested that we disclose the current score. So did I pass this question or did I score a 1 on this question? Why am I being asked this clarifying question? What is my overall score? You know, and sort of that system of to tell them whether or not they need to respond to the clarifying question. And another suggestion was to provide sample LOC, and this is -- this is a suggestion that's not new to us. This actually came to us, you know, quite a bit during the application window as well. But it was brought up again.

On the question around time, is two weeks enough time, you can see the numbers there. So more than half said that two weeks was just not enough time to respond to CQs. And only 11% said yes and 33% said yes, but, you know, depending on the volume of the CQs that I'm getting and also, you know, what it is I need to do. For example, if I need to go to the bank to get another LOC, two weeks may not be enough time. I'll go into this a little bit more when we talk about what actions we're going to do as a result of these feedback.

So, you know, our open question, what are other comments that you might have with regards to CQs. A lot of the same type of comments. Sample LOCs, allow applicants to correspond with evaluators. You

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know, their bullet point is actually interesting. Some applicants actually told us that there are some information that we are requesting that are just confidential information that they will not be able to provide to us. And the last bullet point, you know, some applicants that the information that we are requesting, there are CQs that are actually not applicable to the business model that they are proposing, so -- you want to go through this?

KURT PRITZ: No, go ahead.

TRANG NGUYEN: So based on the feedback that we received from the CQ survey, these are some of the actions that we're taking. We feel that based on the survey results that we've actually done pretty well. You know, we -- you know, the percentage of people that said that our clarifying questions were clear were pretty high, and of those that said that they were not clear, ICANN fixed all of the issues that they -- that led them to saying that it's not unclear, such as rephrasing the questions a little bit. You know, so I think once we fixed that, we have confidence that, you know, our CQs are at the point where we feel they could be issued.

The issue around the two-week time frame, so, you know, when you drill down into it, the issue with the two-week time frame and whether or not that's enough time really has to do with question number 50, which is a COI. You know, and responding to clarifying questions in general, I think people can respond to that within a two-week time frame. It's just when they need to go out to get, you know, a new LOC



or to fix an LOC, that takes time. So, you know, we're considering, you know, potentially extending that two-week window to allow folks additional time to do that, given that there are many clarifying questions that will be issued on question number 50. And some of the other things that we're also thinking about doing to help applicants prepare in advance of receiving clarification questions are posting what we call advisories. So advisories, you know, what we want to do with advisories is provide applicants with specific examples of issues that we find in things such as LOCs so that, you know, if you look at one of these advisories and you say oh, okay, so my LOC said that and ICANN has identified that as an issue that will generate a CQ, maybe I can get a head start and go fix that. You know, so the whole purpose of the advisories is to help you get started early.

KURT PRITZ:

So in one of our earlier webinars we described results where there were clarifying questions and they were really -- a lot of them were focused on certain questions. Question 50, for example, the LOC question that Trang just described. There's one having to do with IDNs in the technical section. And so we see, across many applications, the same question. And so we want to help you by, before the CQs are actually released, we'll say here's some of the problems shared by -- or issues shared by many of the applications, and applicants can read that and look at their application and see if they're in that family of applications and start to work on it.

And the other point I think I want to make is, we are saying that we're going to provide additional time to answer CQs. How we manage that,



we're not certain yet. We could extend the two-week period to four weeks, we could keep it at two weeks and have requests for extensions. What we want to get to at the end is a time certain when all the CQs are due or applicants, you know, have another bite at that apple. They can go on to extended evaluation, which isn't the worst thing. So we want to provide applicants for more time but provide some end date so we can get through the initial evaluations and get the evaluations done.

TRANG NGUYEN:

That's right. And, you know, the other thing that we can also -- that we're also considering doing in order to help people plan better for clarifying questions is to issue prior notification. So, you know, some of the comments that we got back was from people saying, you know, well, I'm on vacation during part of the two-week time frame that you give me so, you know, one of the things that we can consider doing is just posting maybe a schedule of when CQs will be released and whether or not your particular application will be within -- you know, will be -- will have CQs that will released within that batch.

KURT PRITZ:

Or they could come to work at ICANN and not get a vacation.

TRANG NGUYEN:

Oh, and that too, I guess.

KURT PRITZ:

Okay. Go ahead, sorry.



TRANG NGUYEN:

And as Kurt mentioned earlier, you know, additional or direct contact between the applicants and evaluators will not be permitted through the CQ process.

One other thing that I want to come back to is the number of characters allowed for CQ responses. We're also taking a look at that. Obviously that involves changes to the TAS -- system changes, so we're talking with -- we're talking with the engineers to see what are the implications of, you know, providing additional space for CQ responses. And as of right now the target CQ issue date is November 26 and it will be done through TAS.

Application comments. Did you want to –

KURT PRITZ:

Press the button and see what happens. We received, like I said, 9,000 comments. Each comment has to be bucketed. In other words, the comments are asked to pick an application and pick a topic for comments. You see a lot of comments here, but you have to read them to really get a sense of what's going on. For example, in the registry services category, that's the -- the most comments. A lot of those comments are about support of a certain application. So that's where people team together to support different types of applications. Similarly, with string similarity, that's an area where people got together and they teamed together and said our application is not similar to any other application so don't worry about it, even though it's close.

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So all the comments are being sent to the evaluators in the way they're written, ICANN is not editing them. That's just, you know, too fraught with peril and we didn't want to put ourselves in that job.

CQs, there's a back-and-forth about comments or the comments are effective only in the case where it changes the scoring. So if it changes the scoring of an application then, you know, we'll issue one of those clarifying questions to find out more.

TRANG NGUYEN:

And the other thing that I want to mention about the application comments is that applicants, just like any other person out there, can submit a comment on their own application and it will go to the evaluation panel for review as part of that application. However, the applicant's comment is not considered part of the application. It is what it is, just a comment. You know, so the only official additional information that will become part of the application is anything received back through the CQ process.

KURT PRITZ:

So for customer service, Trang (audio problem) runs that and I'm going to ask Michele Jordan to come, who leads ICANN's communications effort for new gTLDs.

TRANG NGUYEN:

So for customer service, I want to talk about customer service, you know, in terms of systems, resources, processes, and content. So on the systems side, we've done quite a bit of things. You know, as many



of you may know, we've completed the move of the SugarCRM system or the ticketing system behind Citrix. I believe that was done back in June. You know, I know that makes it a bit cumbersome for somebody used to use the CSC portal, but it does introduce an additional layer of authentication and therefore additional security, so we felt that the move was justified. We've also heard many of you with regards to the templates that the CSC uses. So we've worked on modifying those templates and making them a lot more user friendly. Those templates will be rolled out sometime next week. And we're also working on multiple initiatives to improve the usability of the CSC portal. You know, some of the changes will be, you know, look-and-feel type of changes. Some will be navigational type changes to improve access to certain information on the portal and then some of the changes will be functionality, providing enhanced functionality such as the ability to submit a question for a specific application. So what we're working on all of those and they are scheduled to be rolled out sometime in late November or early December.

On the resourcing side, you know, recruiting efforts are underway. You know, we have several positions posted on the ICANN Web site with the intention to expand our support to various regions, or additional regions. We currently have one person in the Brussels office, but we're looking to expand and provide, you know, additional support in some of the other regions that do not have coverage at this point in time. And the idea there is to leverage the time zone and the language skills to be more responsive to the applicants' needs.

So processes. I want to talk about the change request process a little bit. Like Kurt mentioned earlier, we've received a large number of



change requests, and, you know, we've posted a process on the microsite and, you know, I really encourage you to go and look at that and leverage that process if you are going to be submitting a change request because it will really, really help us expedite things. So the first thing that needs to get done is that the -- only the primary contact can submit a change request to an application. And with the request you also have to submit a form and also a red line document of the changes that you want to request. Once we get that information there's a verification and validation process that we have to do behind the scene with the person that submitted the request. Then the request, once it's verified and validated, it will go in front of the -- you know, a group of -- it will go in front of a group of people for review against the seven criteria that we have also posted on the microsite. And then, you know, for those changes that we do approve, we're going to post those updates on the microsite and everyone will have 30-days to comment on the changes. You know, one for the applicants and what that means to the applicants is that if there are comments that are received and the changes that we have approved on your application, we may reach back out to you for additional information. So keep that in mind.

And I don't know if Kurt mentioned this earlier, but we have approved about 29 requests, (multiple speakers) if I remember that number correctly? And the applicants have been notified, and we are going to be posting those updates on the microsite by this Thursday.

And then on the content side, obviously Michele and I have been working together to provide some additional contents to applicants, you know, the monthly webinars that we do and we would like to hear back from you, and see what's working and what's not working with that.



What we can do to improve it. Michele will talk a little bit more about the Applicants' Corner that we created on the microsite and then the advisories that I had mentioned earlier. Those should get posted, you know, within the next week or so.

MICHELLE COTTON: Thanks, Trang. So some of the things we've been doing in communications. We've really focused our efforts between Prague and now on communicating to applicants. So like Trang said, we started the monthly applicant webinars and these are designed to give you guys an update on application statistics, where things are in the evaluation process, and other relevant information. We've also had a couple other webinars, as the need arises. We had one on batching and metering to get more input from you on possible solutions for that. And then at the beginning of October we had one for URS which was basically like a precursor to the URS session that we'll having on Thursday.

If you have any suggestions, any ideas for things -- for topics that you would like to see a webinar on, like send us an e-mail. You can send it to [newgTLDcommunications@icann.org](mailto:newgTLDcommunications@icann.org) and we'll definitely look at all that. We've been posting weekly updates, or almost weekly updates, that give just little snippets of information. We remind you about important dates. So like the -- when the application comment window was closing on the 26th of September, we try and remind you of that, let you know the objection process -- the window is still open, so you can still file objections. You know, updates on change requests that we've received, anything like that we'll try and put in there and let you guys know what's going on. We've started video updates, which are just



super short, about one minute long little video updates on a certain program process that just gives you a high-level description of it and then where you can go to get more information.

The Applicants' Corner is something that we just posted on the microsite and it is the applicant's one-stop spot for everything new gTLD related for applicants. So the way we've structured this site, this page, is that we've separated it into program stage basically, so there's a column for evaluation and there's resources linked under there for the evaluation stage of the program. There's a column for delegation and then for post-delegation. There's also other resources such as links to get to the change request process, the withdrawal process, TAS, the CSC, lots of resources. You will notice on that page that not everything is linked currently, and that's just because we don't have enough information on that particular topic. But as soon as we do, we will get a page created and that will be linked.

I've already received feedback of one thing we could do to improve the page, and I've already updated it. It was to add dates to each link as far as when that page was last updated. So that will help you guys, you know, know what's been updated way easier when you go to the page. You can say oh, this page was updated yesterday. I better see what happened. And again, if you have any -- when you're on the page, if you have any ideas of ways we can make it better, a resource that you really need and it's not there, you know, send an e-mail [newgTLDcommunications@icann.org](mailto:newgTLDcommunications@icann.org) and we'll get it updated. The advisories that Trang talked about are an important part of that page and the -- the advisories will be posted on that page. Next slide?



Okay. So what we've been doing as far as communications beyond the ICANN community, we've been doing some regional outreach. There's been outreach to various governments in Latin America and the Caribbean about the application comments, about the objection period, about GAC early warning. There have been presentations on new gTLDs at MENOG 11 in Jordan and PacNOG 11 in Fiji. Also the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity in Fiji and then also presentations at the European Union and DIGITALEUROPE ICT Business Group. Those are presentations just giving the current status of the program, application statistics, the relevant information of where we are at this stage in the program.

Since Prague there has been over 150 news articles on new gTLDs from outlets such as "The Wall Street Journal-Europe," "Washington Post," Reuters, Al-Jazeera TV. The topics of these have mainly been on application comments, about the extension of the application comment period, on the objection process. There's been some articles about contentious strings, based on the application comments that we've received, and then, you know, trademark protections, policy -- privacy issues, and then just on the overall program.

We're still moving along with social media. We have increased our Twitter followers, up 3500 since Prague, and that's -- so we're up to about 67,000 Twitter followers.

That's the ICANN and new gTLD accounts combined.

The average impression per tweet is about 68,500, and out in the Twittersphere there have been about 33,000 -- over 33,000 mentions of either ICANN and/or some variation of new gTLD.



With Facebook, our "likes" are up 818. With each post, we reach over a thousand people. About 1300 people, we reach with each post.

And some interesting -- I think it's interesting. Our biggest followers, countries, for Twitter are Indonesia, Brazil, and the Philippines. And then for Facebook, some of our biggest followers there are from India, Germany, and Brazil.

And then another thing that we're planning is a microsite refresh, so we're going to take the new gTLD site and it's going to get a facelift, basically.

It's going to have a new look. Hopefully it will be a little bit easier for you to find the information that you need, and again, I'm happy to hear suggestions for how you think we could always make it better. Thanks.

TRANG NGUYEN: So now we're going to have Karla Valente come up and give you an update on applicant support and EBERO.

KARLA VALENTE: So good morning, everyone. My name is Karla Valente. I'm with ICANN staff and I work with several team members, actually, on two different programs.

One is called the applicant support program and the second one is called the EBERO program, and I'm giving you today an update on both.

The applicant support program was developed in parallel to the new gTLD program and it is designed to help applicants with certain



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qualifications to get a reduced fee when applying for the new gTLD program.

As you know, the fee is 1,085 -- or \$185,000, and through this program, the applicants that qualified would pay 47.

To date, we've had three applicants for this program, and we composed a panel that has five members, very qualified members, that have representation, geographic representation, different know-how, like how a registry operates, how a small business operates, know-how from how things work in developing countries and so forth.

So these five panelists are now reviewing the three applications that we have received and we will render the results of that by the end of November. The target date now is November 30th.

They have been working based on a handbook that outlines the criteria and the process for this program. This is posted on the new gTLD microsite and if you read, you will see who qualifies and how exactly it works for this process.

These five members, this is the support applicant review panel. That's what "SARP" stands for.

These five members are individuals, and their names will be revealed when we have the end of the results. The reason for that is just we give them some space for, you know, being able to review the program. If you see all the evaluators, basically they are shielded by the company name, so we know KPMG is working on something. But in this case, for



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the individuals, we chose to reveal their names at the end of November when they finish the evaluation process for these three applications.

So this is where we are now for the applicant support program.

The next steps for that after we finalize this more towards the end of the round is really to look at the program, what went well and what can be improved and, with the help of the community, make it better for subsequent rounds.

The second program I'm talking about is the EBERO, yet another acronym.

EBERO stands for "Emergency Back-End Registry Operator."

So we know that in the future, we are going to have hundreds, an X number of registries, and we know X is high and we know X is spread around the world.

And there is a likelihood, like any business reality, that some of those registries might fail.

And if they fail, the impact of a registry failure happens on many levels.

It happens on a registrar, happens on users, registrants, et cetera.

So ICANN is developing this program that we will have a back-end registry operator that, in the case of an emergency will step in and take over the five main functions of a registry.

So basically ICANN will ensure that in an emergency situation, the lights are on to the critical functions.



So how is this program running?

So what we did is we posted an RFI at the end of last year, and we got 14 responses from companies with significant geographic diversity and robustness.

We were quite happy with the quality of the respondents that we got.

From that, we evaluated based on several criteria, and we had some oral interviews or presentations done by short-listed candidates, and then we waited a little bit and that was a little bit of a delay in the time line. We waited a little bit for the new gTLD data to be released, because we wanted to have better information about the applicants, where they were coming from, the size of the applicants, the information that they provided on their COIs, and all of that was used to inform better the choice of the EBEROs, and also to help develop the terms of the agreements that we are going to have with the EBEROs. And this is what we are working on right now is the development of the terms of this agreement.

You are going to know soon who the EBEROs are. Once we negotiate the agreement terms with them and share some of the data, we will make the final choice. It is likely to be three to four EBEROs. We're looking at the geographic distribution.

If you'll recall from previous statistics, we had a lot of registries from North America, from Europe, and from Asia, so it's likely that we're going to have EBEROs representing those regions for obvious reasons.



So once the EBEROs are selected, what happens next is that we will collectively -- so ICANN and the EBEROs -- will work together to refine the design of the EBERO process.

So how are we going to respond in an emergency situation? What are the steps that are going to be taken, who's involved, the escalation, and so forth.

So detailed process and procedures that will apply in an emergency response that, as you know, has to happen quite fast.

We also plan on having simulations. At least two. One simulation that is in, I will say, friendly emergency situation in which we have all the parties cooperating in the transition, and one that is not as ideal. For whatever reason, we don't have the communication with the registry and the escrow, and for whatever reason we are not able to, you know, deal with the emergency situation in an optimal communication environment, so it's less than idea but yet very important to make sure that in the simulation we are able to respond the same way that we are able to respond to an emergency situation that is -- you know, we have all the parties communicating.

So this is what we mean by simulation and test is to make sure that all of the processes that we have designed work and all of the EBEROs apply the same procedures and ICANN internal staff is ready to respond to an emergency situation.

That said, this is not going to be the only test. We plan on running this test on a yearly basis by surprise, so we make sure that everybody is ready to respond at any time.



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The goal now is to have this plan or this whole program, service, go live in May 2013. So this is what we have for the EBERO program.

Who is next?

Trademark clearinghouse. And that's not me.

[ Laughter ]

KURT PRITZ:

So I want to -- thank you, Karla. That was great.

I want to just touch on these briefly. We're going to have sessions -- two sessions on the trademark clearinghouse, one on uniform rapid suspension and then a session about batching.

So I just want to describe them briefly and then leave a few minutes for questions.

Because this is a general information session, but I think most people here know that the clearinghouse is a repository for registered trademarks and that the operator will validate those trademarks.

The key milestones for this project were to secure providers -- and we are working with Deloitte and IBM to furnish those services -- develop a data verification process, and develop a sunrise and trademark claims process.

And that work is going on here. A lot of the work is settled but there are a lot of important questions being considered here.



In Toronto, there's the session later today, the nuts and bolts session about trademark clearinghouse, sunrise, and IP claims processes. And then Wednesday there's a more general update.

On URS, URS you know is a complement, a faster, cheaper method than UDRP for taking down clear-cut examples of domain name infringement.

ICANN issued an RFI back in September, interviewed the candidate firms, and we're going to make a selection on those firms this year in December.

And there's a session in Toronto which is here on Thursday to discuss progress there.

There's key issues with the URS about meeting its cost targets. We're going to meet the cost targets in order for it to become a cost-effective mechanism.

With regard to the thing formerly known as "batching," we need a way of prioritizing applications so that we can process them through the endgame of pre-delegation, contracting, and delegation.

And we've published a method that we think is equitable and reliable, provides every application with the same chance of moving forward, meets root zone scaling and operational capacity requirements, and enables a timely processing of applications.

That's sort of screwed up, isn't it. How the heck did that happen?



So as sort of a joke I was going to take you through this in rapid-style fashion but the translators and scribes would be angry with me so I won't do that. But I do encourage you to come to the session which is scheduled for Wednesday.

So with that, I'll close, and we have a team here. We'll answer any questions you might have. Come to the microphone. And Amadeu is coming and I brought my notebook but I don't have a pen.

Hello, Amadeu.

AMADEU ABRIL i ABRIL: So you said there will be a session on the prioritization or however we call that now, correct?

KURT PRITZ: Yes.

AMADEU ABRIL i ABRIL: So I may do you a favor. We don't talk about that.

I have two or three very quick suggestions and a couple of questions.

The suggestions would be: Could we reopen the TAS, please? You remember the TAS. That thing that we used to love.

A suggestion for Michele: Just open a Facebook page for TAS and just see how many "likes" you get there.



But, you know, the problem is that, for instance, the preview did not generate the list of attachments, and four months and a half later we are not completely sure which attachments we put in those places. Because once attached there, you cannot see the content of the attachments or even the filename, but we discovered that we made some mistakes -- at least we, CORE, we made some mistakes, but we cannot check for all duplications, and this could save some work for the evaluators if we were simply able to see where we made the mistakes.

Second, a suggestion on the customer support portal.

You know, passwords tend to fail for some reason and we need to generate new passwords. Can we find a different way than your famous secure fax line? Come on, it's 2012. A fax? No. I mean, let's do something else to generate new passwords, please.

Now, the two questions is: One is regarding change requests.

What's the -- is there a window for the change requests? For instance, you are doing the applicant evaluation in the background. Now suddenly we have a couple of customers, one is a public administration, elections, and a new government -- right? -- so we need to update that.

But is there a deadline or a time after which it doesn't make any sense to send change requests because we are in the middle of the evaluation or we need to send each time we discover there's a change or even -- either an old mistake or a new fact?

And the other question would be regarding the time line of objections, but I think we should deal first with these change request things.



KURT PRITZ: Thanks, Amadeu.

TAS is going to be reopened in November.

AMADEU ABRIL i ABRIL: Wow. Party!

KURT PRITZ: And is there a way of sending -- the answer to this may be "no," so I shouldn't ask questions I don't know the answer to, but is there a way of furnishing the applicants with their application with attachments before that, if we need to?

TRANG NGUYEN: I don't know the answer to that question. We'll have to check with the -- with the technical team back in the L.A. office, but the plan right now is that TAS will be reopened on November 26 to allow for clarification questions to go out to applicants. At that point in time we are anticipating that the applicants will be able to view the attachments to the applications within the TAS system.

KURT PRITZ: Then with regard to change requests, we really can't close the window on that because the applicants are obligated to report changes. So if your organization changes -- and then what happens is if it comes at such a time that there needs to be a reevaluation, then there will have



to be a reevaluation. If it comes at a time where it's a material change and it's too late for an evaluation, then it's too late.

So in a sense, the opportunity to request changes never closes, but the burden on the system and therefore the burden on the applicant and their ability to get the application to the process diminishes over time.

AMADEU ABRIL i ABRIL: Okay. And now the real question regarding the substance is: In the new proposal for the drawing, there is also a change of the date for the objections, correct? I mean, they have been pushed -- the end date -- to March.

I fail to understand the logic about that date but the most important thing is that I fail to understand how -- I mean, when the objections are processed.

And I want to explain to you about the concrete -- two concrete problems here.

The first one is that let's take, for instance, there are two different processes in many instances for the same subject matter. Take a string contention. Nobody will file an objection based on a string similarity before the string evaluation panel says whether there is similarity or not. That's absolutely logical. It's built that way.

On the contrary, with communities, we have community objections and the community priority in case there is contention, and indeed, the reaction of most people that may have an issue there, either an applicant or somebody that supports a concrete applicant, is, "I won't



file an objection because indeed there's community priority for, let's say, the good application, the one I think that serves the needs of the community. The other one I think harms the community." Wherever the marriage of these beliefs are, I mean, this is why we have the process.

Now, the problem is that the community priority will happen, will be done, after the end of the objection period, so this way you are somehow forcing people to submit to overshoot to meet an objection, when it probably is useless because community priority will solve that, but they don't know whether it does or not.

And the other question is that it seems that all the community -- sorry, all the objections will be solved sometime at the very end, which means that even if they are filed today, they won't be resolved today, which means that we will lose the effect of -- I wouldn't say precedent, but there is clarification for people to know what is likely to succeed or not and to adapt to that.

So we'll lose the pedagogical way. So could you explain a little bit more how -- the interplay between the objections, the evaluations, and the community priority works?

KURT PRITZ:

I can explain a little bit but you took a lot of time and there's a lot of people in the queue and we can talk more about it later.

But the date for ending the objection was done through this careful balancing of, you know, how long is it reasonable for a party to



determine that they want to file an objection, providing certainty to applicants that there's not a pocket objection somewhere and having them sustain operations for a year or a year and a half, while all the time there's a pocket objection.

And, you know, community -- you know, like I said, this is complex, but community -- community objections can be filed against applications that say they are communities and those that are not, and the intent of the objection is to say, "That TLD should not be delegated into the root zone," and so we ask objectors to make up their mind about that, you know, within one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine months' time, not in 12 months or a year and a half or even longer, which would create a great deal of uncertainty for the applicants and also tax this dispute resolution process that we've constructed.

And I'm looking at Amy, but I think, you know, there's a fair -- there's a fair time certain, right? Once the application is filed, that sets a clock in motion, according to the rules, so once an application is filed, yeah, you're right, it does have to march along to a certain time frame.

So, you know, we should try to implement a two-minute rule to get through this.

Hi, Tony.

TONY:

Hello.



First of all, thanks so much, Kurt. After six years of hearing postponements, you told us about things happening earlier. I'm emotional about this. Thanks so much. And --

[ Applause ]

-- the second thing is about the draw.

Thank you for that also. I think that's very equitable as a solution.

My only suggestion with the draw would be perhaps it might be a little more fair to people who have only one application, like myself -- that's a selfish request, of course -- perhaps in the -- when you go to the draw, it might be more, let's say, equitable if, in the first tier of the draw, you had, per applicant, one slot.

In other words, I should have the same opportunity for my application as somebody who has 200 or 300 applications.

So the first, let's say, tier of getting in the queue.

KURT PRITZ: Yeah.

TONY: It's just a suggestion and I'm sure some people won't be happy with that, but I think, you know, we should have the same opportunity as any other applicant with deeper pockets.



KURT PRITZ: Yeah. Thank you, Tony.

TONY: Thank you very much.

KURT PRITZ: Hi.

ELAINE PRUIS: Hi. I'm Elaine Pruis from Minds + Machines. I have a couple of comments. The last one is a question and that's the most important one, so bear with me.

KURT PRITZ: Okay.

ELAINE PRUIS: First of all, I just wanted to say thank you to you two. You've been very helpful in the last couple of months in figuring out things like password resets and clarifying questions. So thanks for those efforts.

I want to reiterate what Amadeu said about the password reset. If you would please get that sorted out before you relaunch, fantastic.

You know, there's a -- the problem is that you can't have special characters in your new password, and most users have been trained that when you create a new password, to, you know, make an exclamation point or something unique so it's harder to guess.



So if we could have that, it would be good.

The draw document that was just published said that the objection period would be extended to March 13th. Is that a board-approved date or is that out for comment, as indicated in the paper?

KURT PRITZ: That whole process, including that date, is out for a 30-day comment period.

ELAINE PRUIS: Okay. All right. And then as far as the clarifying question: Pilot program, I'm very happy to have been involved in that. I think it was very well done, very helpful to us, and it sounds like it was helpful to you as well.

So a couple of points on that.

The timing being extended if there are some circumstances that warrant, that's a fantastic thing, considering this would be done, you know, in between Thanksgiving and Christmas, so it may be hard to get ahold of our bank. Whatever.

So that's really good.

The extended character allotment is an excellent thing too. Some of our responses we were able to get honored, but some of them we weren't.

The November 26th to December 10th two-week period probably overlaps the draw date. Maybe. So if we could, as soon as you know,



have an idea of which applications and which questions we will get clarifying questions for, we'll be able to figure out our resources and plan well.

So that will be fantastic. Please do that.

KURT PRITZ: Trang, is that all the CQs or is that the start of a rolling issuance of CQs?

TRANG NGUYEN: It's just the beginning of the issuance of CQs, not all CQs.

ELAINE PRUIS: Oh, okay. Good. And can we ask to get slated later, maybe?

KURT PRITZ: Later?

[ Laughter ]

I don't know. I've never heard that question before.

[ Laughter ]

ELAINE PRUIS: Right. Okay. So thank you for that.

And then the other thing is, we're very disappointed to hear there will not be any back-and-forth.



I understand that in previous rounds, it just went on and on forever, but I think there needs to be a little bit of capacity for it, at least, because if we completely misunderstand the evaluator's question, we fail or we go into extended evaluation, which is extremely expensive, puts us at the end, with a significant amount of time and money, so there should be a little bit of opportunity for that or some appeal mechanism. We need to have, you know, a pressure valve release on that one.

Last point, the -- releasing the scores. I would really appreciate knowing if I got a 2 or a 1 or a 0 on a question so I can figure out how to allocate my resources and my attention for particular answers. Thank you.

KURT PRITZ: Yeah. Thanks, Elaine.

JIM PRENDERGAST: Hi, Kurt. Jim Prendergast with the Galway Strategy Group.

Two clarifying questions on clarifying questions. I've been wanting to say that for so long.

[ Laughter ]

First off, the responses to the clarifying questions. If they are changes to the application, will those then be subject to an additional 30-day public comment period, similar to any change request that an applicant would submit?



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KURT PRITZ: No. We've talked about that quite a bit. That's a -- that's a -- that takes some clarifying thinking.

[ Laughter ]

JIM PRENDERGAST: Glad I asked.

KURT PRITZ: I think the -- you know, the idea is to post the clarifying questions.

If the -- and the answers to the clarifying questions will be posted, and it is open for comment, so then it's a matter for how the applicant -- how the panels treat that.

You know, if it's a clarifying question to a confidential part of the application, it really doesn't matter.

JIM PRENDERGAST: Right. But in the case of a publicly posted one...

KURT PRITZ: Yeah.

TRANG NGUYEN: (Speaker is off microphone) -- but the majority of the questions that will be issued are obviously on the tech side and those are obviously on



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confidential parts of the application, so they wouldn't be publicly posted anyway.

JIM PRENDERGAST: Okay. And then one of the bullets on the clarifying questions said that they will be asked to get an applicant a passing score, but some of the pilot questions referenced the -- you know, in order to get two points.

KURT PRITZ: Right.

JIM PRENDERGAST: You may not need two points on every question. So is that a change from the pilot to what's going forward or are we still going to see some

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KURT PRITZ: No. No, so if your application has not scored enough points yet, you'll get clarifying questions —

JIM PRENDERGAST: Okay. So you may need those two points in order to pass.

KURT PRITZ: -- and you might need those two points.



JIM PRENDERGAST: And then –

KURT PRITZ: And the evaluators are pushing for and want to ask clarifying questions almost in every instance. So if there's an opportunity for two points on any question, they'll seek the –

JIM PRENDERGAST: Okay. And then last question on the time line that you had up there.

I understand that you won't sign any contracts before the Beijing meeting, but you plan to enter into that phase as soon as possible afterwards.

Will you sign contracts before GAC advice is issued?

KURT PRITZ: So, yeah, the idea is -- the idea of that timing is not to. The idea of that timing is to align the process with the GAC advice.

JIM PRENDERGAST: Okay.

KURT PRITZ: So we're going to have to see how that -- see how that evolves.

JIM PRENDERGAST: I think we all hope it's Beijing at the latest, but...



KURT PRITZ: Right. But what I want to point out to you, though, is there's an opportunity for applicants to elect the standard form of contract or negotiate a contract without executing it, and that's how they get in line to do the pre-delegation testing.

JIM PRENDERGAST: Right. But you wouldn't actually execute those contracts –

KURT PRITZ: But we wouldn't actually execute the agreement.

JIM PRENDERGAST: Okay. Thanks.

KURT PRITZ: Thanks. Hey, Jordyn.

JORDYN BUCHANAN: Jordyn Buchanan with Google. So two hopefully quick questions.

The first is the timing of the release of initial evaluation results set to begin in March under the current proposal. What's driving that date? It looks like based on the list of -- the progress on evaluation, it looks like that might -- it might be conceivable that you would have results earlier than that. Is that -- are you -- is that actually the first time you think you



will have results available to be released or is there some other thing driving the –

KURT PRITZ: Yeah. So that's the first time we'll have evaluation results in priority number order. So by that time, each application will get priority numbers.

In December when that occurs, we will rejigger the order in which evaluations are fed into the evaluation panels.

So some of those high-priority ones or low-priority ones, whatever you want to call it, will be done but we want to fill in with the rest.

So that period from December or March allows us to release the first tranche or lot or batch of the highest-priority applications.

JORDYN BUCHANAN: So this is just so you have an even pace of release after you start?

KURT PRITZ: Right, right. And that will probably wrap up a little slowly, but we want to get the high -- you know, we want to do them in priority order and that's what it lets us do.

JORDYN BUCHANAN: So second question, I think, relates to something Elaine said, which is, you know, I'm a little surprised or curious about, you know, looking at



the -- at the pilot on clarifying questions, you know, you see that some of the questions, you know, people find confusing to the order of 70% or something like that, and people asked you to have dialogue with the evaluators or to have some sort of back-and-forth, and the result of these two data points was you cannot talk to the evaluators.

So that was surprising to me, and I wonder, you know, unless you believe that you already know what all of the clarifying questions are and they've already gone through this pilot process, you're going to be posing some new questions that may be confusing to people, and if there's no opportunity for dialogue, how do you avoid confusing questions being posed at a later point and the applicants not being able to recover from that fact?

KURT PRITZ: So a very good question.

So we think there will be -- you know, we think, as Trang said, we'll be able to address the clarity issues that were described during the pilot and apply those to other questions.

To Elaine -- to Elaine and you, you know, we see that in interaction between the -- the evaluators and the -- and the applicants as just kind of fraught with peril.

You know, the bad Kurt says that, you know, "You haven't received enough points to pass. Here's a chance to get enough points but you



submitted an application that doesn't pass. You still get another bite, two more iterations through extended evaluation."

So we'll think carefully about and talk a lot about interaction and how that -- you know, if there's some way that can occur at arm's length or something like that, if there's a question about a question.

JORDYN BUCHANAN: And I'd suggest that it would be particularly important in situations where it's a question that hasn't been already -- hasn't already been through the pilot, essentially, because you're at much greater risk then.

KURT PRITZ: Yeah. Thanks.

RUBENS KUHL: Hi, Kurt. Rubens Kuhl, nic.br.

I have two questions.

One is if the participants of the pilot CQ program will get feedback on their answers to their clarifying questions, so you have feedback with clarifying answers.

KURT PRITZ: Yes. Yes, we will, but in a general way.

So we're not going to contact applicants generally, but we will post information about what types of clarifying questions will be the most



asked and what are some of the areas in the most applications that we see are, you know, most frequent.

And so we're not going to respond to the applicants themselves on the clarifying questions, but we'll be issuing advisories to help applicants prepare for clarifying questions.

>>

Kurt, I hate to interrupt but we have five more minutes in this particular session. Thank you.

KURT PRITZ:

All right. 30 seconds.

RUBENS KUHL:

The other question is about the draw. In Digital Archery, there was a regional balance mechanism of balancing between two applicants from Asia, Latin America, Africa, North America, and that mechanism that could be applied to the draw was not, so what happened to regional balancing, balancing regional proponents within ICANN?

KURT PRITZ:

One of the reasons for the regional balance was to take into account that entities different from wherever the Digital Archery target was might be disadvantaged and we wanted to remove that disadvantage by doing that regional cycling. We're seeking to serve the public interest. There's a lot of -- there's a lot of ways to go about that.



One way is for the introduction of letting IDNs go first, so that's a change.

So in the current model, that regional balancing is in there because regardless of geographic origin, every application has the same chance, and we were concerned about that a little bit with Digital Archery.

So you're free to comment on the model and make that comment.

RUBENS KUHL: Okay.

KURT PRITZ: So Christina, I'm really excited. Just like a couple of minutes.

KRISTINA ROSETTE: I'll talk really fast. Kristina Rosette, Covington & Burling. Recommendation would be that to the extent you hadn't already planned to do so, that if you've identified patterns among the requests for changes to the applications and you have identified kind of categories of those application change requests that are approved, that you integrate those into the advisories. I think that would save everybody a lot of time.

Second, from my experience, getting a letter of credit from -- that met the requirements in the guidebook that a bank was actually willing to issue was, in many cases, the most difficult part of the whole application, and I understand based on the number of CQs, it's been a widespread issue.



I would really encourage ICANN to strongly consider putting together a sample LOC that reflects consultation with banks in kind of representative countries, to ensure that you all aren't asking for something that, frankly, a bank won't give.

KURT PRITZ: I just want to say that --

[ Applause ]

First of all, that's a great comment.

[ Applause ]

(Speaker is off microphone.)

KURT PRITZ: I know. Somebody asked me to do something more slowly today.

But I look at these CQs as -- not CQs -- this letter of credit as a remarkable success for the program, because we were all struggling for some sort of protection of registrants and almost every applicant going for the three points has submitted a signed letter of credit.

And where those letters of credit fall short, we want to -- we want to make sure they get their three points and, you know, like I said, it's one of the -- the successes of the program because everybody's got money set away to protect --



KRISTINA ROSETTE: So is that a yes, ICANN is considering putting together a sample to the extent necessary?

KURT PRITZ: So LOCs are like snowflakes and so are CQs.

[ Laughter ]

But what we want to do is post an advisory saying, "Here's the areas where the LOCs have fallen short, so if yours doesn't have this, you should try to get it."

Wendy, can this gentleman go?

DESI VALLI: Hi. My name is Desi. I'm from Net4 India. I have a few questions but I'll put one together because it's about clarifying questions.

Will the clarifying questions be sent only to those who are drawn out or will that be sent to all simultaneously? That's one of the questions.

And the second is: You said during the pilot you found that the two weeks is not enough, but also I didn't understand whether it's been extended. If it's extended, how much is time?

And third is: You said another geographic TLD will give time till June 13th for getting letter from the government. Will that be part of the CQ process or will that be separate from the CQ process?



The final one is: Will that be sent simultaneously to all applicants because people like us are consulting few applicants -- you know, around 15 applicants -- so if that's being sent simultaneously, we may be having difficult times to answer as a consultant. Will that be sent one-by-one to applicants? Is there any process clarity on that?

KURT PRITZ:

So geographic names is a little bit different than all the other applications, and so we call those CQs, but it's really you don't have your letter of support or non-objection and we're giving you a much longer time to do it. Months.

Because those are -- those are harder.

We'll be publishing how -- under what circumstances we will extend the CQ process. Maybe we'll make it four weeks, maybe we'll make it two weeks, and you can request for more.

And the CQs will be sent out as they're generated, so if one panel has CQs ready, they'll send it to the applicant and then you might receive CQs from another panel.

DESI VALLI:

So you didn't answer the question. When will that be sent? When it's drawn-out applicants in the first lot, in the first tier? The CQ, will it be sent only to the drawn-out applicants?

KURT PRITZ:

They'll be sent out as -- as prepared.



DESI VALLI: As prepared. Okay. Thank you.

KURT PRITZ: Okay. Wendy, do you want to ask one question from the outside?

WENDY PROFIT: Sure. This is Wendy Profit on behalf of the remote participants.

Is there any current estimate on when the trademark clearinghouse will open?

KURT PRITZ: What's the -- who is here from trademark clearinghouse?

So we have a current time line -- right? -- that indicates that the clearinghouse will open before the first new gTLDs are delegated.

So I'm not sure of the date, but I know it's before that date. And like I said, we have problems to work through. There's risks associated with it.

But that's our time line.

Jon?

JON NEVETT: Thanks, Kurt. Jon Nevett, Donuts, chair of the new TLD applicant group called NTAG, and I just want to make an announcement that right after

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this meeting at actually 1:00, there will be a meeting of the NTAG, so any applicants in the room, I encourage you to come. If you're a member, come and join, and if you're not a member, definitely come and join.

Essentially the NTAG –

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What's the NTAG?

JON NEVETT:

The NTAG is an organization comprised of applicants that we put together to represent the interests of applicants at ICANN. It's already comprised of over 80 members and about 900 applications. 50% of the members have only one application, and over 75% of the members have five or fewer applications. We have a very good diversity of members and we're growing every week, so I encourage all applicants in the room to show up. It's 1:00 at the Harbour A/B room, and that only gives you a half hour to grab a donut at the break, and we'll see you then. Thank you.

[ Laughter ]

KURT PRITZ:

Last question from inside and then one more question from outside.



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ATSUSHI ENDO: Atsushi Endo of JPRS. Thanks for the presentation and I have two questions. One -- first one is the –

>> Kurt, we really do need to stop this session in less than a minute, if you don't mind.

ATSUSHI ENDO: Yeah. When is -- when will the target date of release of the -- release of the agreement, standard agreement? My understanding is that Specification 5 of the AGB is the base agreement draft, so it's important to do the -- to the whole process next year to take a glance at the final agreement one.

KURT PRITZ: All right. I'm not -- I don't remember Specification 5, so if you'll give me your card, I will get you an answer.

All right. Thank you very much, everybody. We got to go. Great session.

[ Applause ]

>> END OF SESSION

