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ICANN69 | Community Days Sessions – ccNSO Members Meeting: Impact of Covid-19 (2 of 2)  
Wednesday, October 14, 2020 – 16:00 to 17:00 CEST

KIMBERLY CARLSON: Thank you and welcome to part two of the ccNSO Members Meeting on the Impact of COVID-19. My name is Kimberly Carlson. Along with Claudia Ruiz, we will be your remote participation managers for this portion.

As a reminder to all, this call is being recorded and recordings will be posted on the ICANN69 website shortly after the call. Please feel free to ask your questions via chat or raise your hand and ask your question verbally. Again, finally, like all other ICANN activities, this is governed under the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior. And with that, I'd like to hand the floor back over to Yuri Takamatsu, our session Chair. Thank you.

YURI TAKAMATSU: Thank you, Kim. Hello and good evening. Good morning, all. Welcome or welcome back to part two of COVID-19 session.

In part one, we have five presenters who are also the panelists of part two, and each presenter share their trends regarding registrations, numbers or others, and also various action they took during the COVID-19. So in part two, we will have the panel discussion regarding various factors that drive these trends.

So five presenters are Patrick Myles from CENTR, who introduced us about global and European market trends that are in part one; Alex

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Corenthin from .sn (Senegal and African region); David Curtin from .ie (Ireland and EU region); Ai-Chin Lu from .tw (Taiwan and AP region); and Alejandra Reynoso from .gt (Guatemala and LAC region). So let's start the discussion and then I'll pass the floor to Irina.

IRINA DANELIA:

Thank you very much, Yuri, and hello, everyone. Good morning, good day, good evening. I would like to bring to your attention that we are having a panel discussion, which I would like it to be a conversation, not necessarily just questions and answers. So please do not hesitate to come with your own comments or questions. And not only panelists, but also those who are attending this meeting virtually, please do not hesitate to share your ideas or comments or suggestions.

Also, in part one there were a couple of comments in the chat that we were not able to address immediately. There were questions to particular presenters and also comments, questions to all presenters. So please, if you want to repeat them or if you had no chance to ask them, do not hesitate to do that now.

To begin with, I want to bring to all panelists two very similar questions that we had in part one. One was from Young-eum Lee and the second one from [inaudible], and the questions are regarding the current trend. So we saw in many cases in many countries and particular registries new registrations being increased during COVID-19 time. Do you expect this trend to continue or do you expect new

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registrations to go even higher up or probably lower down? Any thoughts on these? Who's going to start, please?

ALEX CORENTHIN: I'm happy to start.

IRINA DANIELIA: Yes, please, Alex.

ALEX CORENTHIN: Okay. Thank you, Irina, for this question. Another side, I think that it was a good opportunity to keep the scene going on. What we expect on that is after this crisis, after this specific sort of time where people are going to be more active in the digital, we want to tackle all sectors which is impacted by the COVID. And we have the strategy about the post COVID registration. The post COVID registration that we want to handle is to talk to our consumers that we need to be resilient for the future. And for the future, we are talking to our consumers and to our communities that it was important that they have the registered domain and they try to be online. And with this strategy, to make this trend continues and to be able to continue to have this same amount of registration are the next steps.

For Senegal, for instance, I can just highlight one specific sector that are not going on the digital which is tourism. As you may know maybe, tourism is one of the measured activities in Senegal. All the activities are stopped by the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown of the air

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transport. These things are starting now and we are going to these specific communities, which is hotel and so on, to help them to be more present and to make them available for all the world and expecting that it will bring back the tourists in Senegal. So in conclusion, we have to maintain strength but the need for us to marketing the national top-level domain.

IRINA DANELIA:

Thank you, Alex. David?

DAVID CURTIN:

Yeah. So I think based on what we see in Ireland, I can see that this trend actually will continue and for a couple of reasons. There's a high proportion of SMEs who thought that the lockdown would be temporary and they envisaged that shoppers would come back in store very quickly. Our research is showing that that's a high proportion. So unfortunately, as we can see, most countries now are heading into, in fact, a second wave. So that expectation of a short-term return of shoppers, it's not going to happen. So I think SMEs who are interested in keeping their sales up will need to look at digital. And the offliners, as we call them, will come to the web for the first time, and the easiest way to do that is with a brochure website that tries to tell local people what they have for sale and what their hours of opening are.

The second reason is that web developers that we speak to, they say they have a very full pipeline of orders and some are SMEs that might

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have neglected their websites for a while, but others are brand new customers. So for those two reasons, I think we will see an ongoing uptick and growth. Thank you.

IRINA DANELIA:

Thank you, David. Patrick, would you want to probably do also some prognosis?

PATRICK MYLES:

Yeah. Like I said before, already the numbers show that at least for across European ccTLDs' creates, so new registrations are still up, they're still going up so we had sort of a small slowdown in August. So, usually at this time of year, what we see across European ccTLDs is that you have a spike in March. March is usually often the most common month to have the highest number of creates across Europe. This one was already bigger this year but of course, as mentioned, those spikes were much, much bigger in April, May, and June. Since then, like I said, there's a small sort of reduction. But again, the early numbers from September show that similar to what David is saying, it's likely to continue and also, given the extended lockdowns happening across Europe, I would say it's even more evidence to suggest that new domains will carry on as more and more people are put in precarious positions financially. So they're looking for new ideas and all those businesses, of course, who are shop fronts are bolstering their online presence through websites. So I don't see it going away. And it's just a matter of how long, I suppose, and that's the nature of this pandemic as it's quite unpredictable what's

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happening. But yeah, that's my thought. I do see it's going to continue for a little longer.

IRINA DANELIA: Thank you, Patrick. Alejandra, do you want to add?

ALEJANDRA REYNOSO: Yes. Thank you. Well, I was thinking how things might be in the future. Predicting the future, it's not easy. In Guatemala now in October, the restrictions were lifted in the country. Of course, we have some health measures and precautions, but now people also feel like they are back to normal. So we don't know if that will affect the numbers of new registrations now, but since we are a little late on the development of COVID regarding, for example, Europe, I believe that we will also get another wave of high cases and maybe lockdowns again, and then we will see how that behaves. If people try to prevent another, say, being out of business all of a sudden, maybe they will do new registrations. But so far, I believe that the growth of the domain names will be steady. It will not go to higher numbers but I'm not sure if it will go to lower numbers. In my opinion, at least for .gt, it will stay steady. So, we'll see.

IRINA DANELIA: Thank you, Alejandra. Ai-Chin Lu, would you want to comment?

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AI-CHIN LU: Yeah. I want to mention the pandemic has no significant impact in Taiwan. Yeah. So I think in the future, the .tw I think it will be quite stable but I think under no wholesale promotion. That’s why I want to ask the other panelists. If you didn’t do the promotion or you didn’t take any measures, do you think the number of domain name will still be increasing? That is my question. I can ask the other panelists.

IRINA DANELIA: Thank you, Ai-Chin. Who would be the first to answer?

AI-CHIN LU: Yeah. Patrick, can you answer this question?

PATRICK MYLES: Sorry, yeah. I’ve got thoughts on promotion. I mean, I was going to ask that sort of question as well because I’m not really personally convinced that domain discounting is the best strategy for long-term sustainability and growth of a ccTLD. Personally, I think—and I’m interested in the panelists on this—because if you’re a business and you want a domain name or a website, it’s quite likely that you will get one whether or not that discount is there. Whether it’s a \$5 or \$10 discount, it’s so unlikely that that’s going to be a factor in their decision. So what remains is that price discount will attract a certain type of buyer, which may not be the best type of buyer for sustainability of the ccTLD. In my mind, it would be better to put the money that a ccTLD puts into its discount program rather into the promotion of the ccTLD, if you’re going to promote the ccTLD at all.

Rather, to promote the brand of the ccTLD, it's linked to the country and all those sort of things, which I think will provide a better sustainability to the viability of the domain.

And another factor is that if your domain discount—as we all know, the lower you go, the more attraction of sort of bad faith type registrations and junky type domains. And this creates a small, slow, insidious degradation of the ccTLD in terms of how it's perceived in the country, I think. If it's being used for spammy type stuff, people see that, and they subtly see that stuff. So I think domain discounts, if not done correctly, can be kind of problematic, I think.

So I'm kind of interested because to me it seems like a short-term measure like, yes, you'll get some new registrations and you'll get a few extra dollars for that year, but is it really worth it for the long term the brand of the ccTLD? And there's an opportunity here because people are coming online so they're looking at this stuff way more. So what do you want to be showing yourself as, a good, reliable brand or not?

We start tracking pricing in CENTR as well. We track that from quarter to quarter on the largest registrars of ccTLDs. So far, we haven't seen a big change but we're starting to analyze this data from quarter to quarter now, looking at the number of promotions going on, and even correlations between how domains are being used as well. But I think that's really, really important to note, that pricing aspect as well. I had another point but now it escaped my mind. But yeah, I'm curious to



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know. What makes you think a price discount is good for your ccTLD in the long term?

IRINA DANIELIA:

Thank you, Patrick. I see Alejandra and then Alex willing to reply. Alejandra?

ALEJANDRA REYNOSO:

Thank you. Well, what I wanted to say is that we offer the promotion now, not necessarily seeking to have these people for the long term. Of course, that's always our aim but it was not with that purpose. We were aiming to help people who may be lost their job, were in a very uncomfortable financial position, and to lower a little bit the barrier of getting the new domain. Since we only provide domain names, we don't see the content, the website, or any other aspect of that. That's how we thought we would contribute to our fellow citizens to somehow have a better way of getting themselves together online and provide for themselves.

I cannot tell you about spam or any other people who get advantage of these discounts. We don't see, as I've shown in my graph, that we have such peaks of increased new registrations due two promotions. They do help and most of them—again, I'm guessing because I'm not looking at the content—but those specific domain names are for entrepreneurs who want to, "Well, okay, let's try this and see if it works." So it would be good to track if those domain names remain

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through time, and that's maybe a homework for me. But so far, we haven't seen any negative effects of doing the promotion. Thank you.

IRINA DANELIA:

Thank you, Alejandra. Alex, would you want to respond as well?

ALEX CORENTHIN:

Yes. I think it's really interesting concern highlight by Ai-Chin. And I think it's really important to notice that the increase of registration during this period is not only due to the free registration, because in our country, we make only the free registration available on upgrade. And after that, we got to see that we're increasing number of people getting a domain name under the ccTLD. It's free for the registrant to get to be on the net using the ccTLD or using the.com because all the ISP, the provider provide also .com all the extension. So it's not a [plus] issue, it's not the delivery issue. I think what is important to notice is the national identity. And we're not increasing the needs to the people to be more involved in the national economy and maybe to be related to the country and to the country, and also to the consumers that they want to attract. We continue to see this increasing people coming to the .sn, which is I can maybe tell you is about five times more expensive than the .com in Senegal. Many of these people continue to come to .sn because I think they want to be localized, and more localized because of the market share inside the country. There's a need to be clearly identified on that. This is one of the positive impact of the COVID-19 on the ccTLD, I think.

IRINA DANELIA:

Thank you, Alex. We have two questions from the audience, one from David Morrison from the .nz and the second from Miguel. I will start with the second one which is addressed to Patrick. Patrick, do you have any information from CENTR members on how discounted registrations behave? I'm talking about renewal rates on discounted domains.

PATRICK MYLES:

Not in terms of data but just anecdotal stuff related to some studies. I remember CIRA did some work on this—if Alan may be in the room, he might comment about it—some years ago. My perception over the years is that I've never really seen too much compelling evidence to suggest that it's a good long-term strategy. For me, in terms of discounting domains and helping the business, to me, I only see business risk. So if you have cheap domains or discounted domain, it depends on the starting price. Alejandra said a discount is helping people. So I'm not sure what the domains are being sold for in your country, but in Europe the average wholesale prices, €7 or €8, with a retail of maybe—I can't remember, 12 or something—but it's not in the range that is going to be a big factor, like a 20% discount is not going to be a big factor to sort of help someone, really, because they're going to get it or they're not going to get it. A few dollars is not going to make any difference to them. The hosting and all that sort of stuff is the big deal. So to me, it's like if you have a portion of your zone that's bulked up with new domains that are not particularly well used

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because they bought them because they were cheap or whatever. Number one, it's a risk. And number two, it's a higher increase in the likelihood of instable revenue stream because it's going to go up and down. So predictability of revenue will surely be impacted by that, whereas if you have a more portion of domains that are used, well, you have better predictability of income. And that's the thing. If you buy something at a higher price, you're probably more likely to use it anyway. If you buy it at a cheap price, you're like, "Ah, I don't really care." I mean, that's a theory, anyway.

But coming back to the question, we don't have any hard data on the impact, at least on a macro level across Europe on pricing and behavior of registrants. But it's something we're kind of slowly getting to in CENTR. We're sort of gathering a lot more data. Obviously, the registration data is very, very strong now for at least a decade. We have a lot of good data on that and now we're starting to collect this pricing data and also the domain usage data. So bringing them all together across, say, 30 different ccTLDs in Europe is slowly giving us a better picture of how domains have been used and we can pull out the interesting insights from that over time, I guess. But for the moment, it's hard to say without referring to just anecdotal stuff.

IRINA DANELIA:

Thank you, Patrick. Now I would like to read the question from David Morrison who says, "In New Zealand, we expect recessionary impacts due to Covid-19 to eventually bite and close businesses and domains along with them, and that this may balance some of the surge in

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growth we are seeing. Is this something that you think may occur elsewhere?” Is there anybody ready to comment here?

PATRICK MYLES:

Personally, from my point of view, I think it’s a really interesting point. It’s something that I hadn’t personally thought about, but it’s kind of the link to that, as they say, the births and deaths of business in a country. And so, of course, yeah, if you have a number of businesses closing, then I suppose that it’s natural to say that those portion of possible domain registrations will be no longer as well. So, I suppose the question is linked to how the distribution of business is within a country.

It’s interesting. I always find the Irish a really great case because David’s doing so much work there in gathering data and looking at the market of small to medium enterprise or small businesses. So I think maybe David had some thoughts on that I’m not sure of. Yeah. Sorry to throw you in, though. You're on mute.

DAVID CURTIN:

That’s fine, Patrick. I think for us the key thing is that the domain gets activated very quickly after registration. And if that’s the case, even if it’s only for a redirect, I think you will see pretty high levels of renewal. That will be our experience.

With regard to the impact of the recession, I think, no doubt, companies will fail. I think once governments start turning off the taps of support, especially for furloughed employees, I think that’s when

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recession will really bite. We hope that COVID stops its impact before that happens and that a vaccine comes in because there will be, I think, a pretty severe recession if governments can't afford to keep doing what they're doing and then lots of businesses will fail. So, I would see that having a poor impact, but obviously some sectors will suffer more than others. Tourism, for instance, I think would be very badly hit, restaurants, pubs, small service operations like that. And I think you can see pretty high levels of non-renewal happening if that ever happens. But hopefully we can outrun the pandemic. I'm a very optimistic person. It looks like vaccines are on the way and let's hope that they arrive next year to make a big impact.

IRINA DANELIA:

Thanks, David. I see Pablo willing to comment and Alejandra's hand, and Ai-Chin.

AI-CHIN LU:

Yeah. I can say that I think in the short term, we cannot see this kind of situation because every domain name we have, I mean, perhaps registered one year or two years. So I think during the COVID-19 just one year, right? So I think the last period of time, the domain name maybe in the next two years, we can see this kind of situation. In the short term, we cannot see this kind of situation. We just can predict whether or not they have some increase or decrease, but not the need to long term to see this kind of something will happen in the long term. Yeah. Maybe three years or four years, yeah. Thank you.

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IRINA DANELIA: Thank you, Ai-Chin. I see Pablo’s hand. Pablo, please.

PABLO RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, Irina. And thank you to all the panelists for this excellent session and previous presentations, very informative. Very quickly, I would like to point out that there are a number of factors that may promote the salvation of many of these brick-and-mortar businesses that may stop doing business as a result of the COVID-19. However, they will find a place in the Internet. Factors that may promote or impede how quickly can they go online and start doing business will depend on the banking laws and the prevalence of the use of credit cards, and that is more or less a cultural thing. While in Europe, and perhaps Asia, the use of credit cards is very prevalent, in some countries, it’s not so much the case. So, we will have to start moving towards marketing and education types of programs to get people to use credit cards and to buy online more such that many of those businesses that were brick-and-mortar type of businesses can move to the online space and continue to do business. But that remains to be seen. Thank you very much.

IRINA DANELIA: Thank you, Pablo. Alejandra?

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ALEJANDRA REYNOSO:

Yes. Thank you. I wanted to comment on the question regarding if in the next year we will see that these domain names that we got this year will remain or not, or if maybe they will no longer exist. Since we have these promotions and the ones that benefit most are entrepreneurs, we are kind of used to not to having them necessarily exist for too long. Again, this is only a guesstimate. I need to look at the numbers. But having a population in Guatemala that it's mostly on the young side of the population and the creativity of the people trying to seek out new ways of get getting into business and having a good livelihood, I would say that maybe if something doesn't work out, that doesn't mean that the numbers will decrease. It's that they will try another thing. So maybe if that domain name didn't work, they will find another one. So maybe I'm too hopeful and I guess we won't see a decrease, but that's how the Guatemalan people are. Maybe this didn't work, they will try another thing. And they will, of course, try to be online more now that they saw what could happen.

On another note, just a quick comment on why do we do the promotions. Also, when this pandemic started here in Guatemala, the people are very solidarity. So there was a lot of communication of if you can help your fellow citizen, do so in the way you can. It doesn't have to be a major thing or anything. So that's why maybe all of the people who didn't lose their jobs or who could sustain themselves still were looking for ways of helping their fellow citizens. And that's why we went inside and said, "How can we help our fellow citizens?" and that's the way that the promotion got out. Thank you.



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IRINA DANELIA: Thank you, Alejandra. Any immediate comments on this topic?

PATRICK MYLES: Yeah. Just one more, because I saw some comments still in the chat from John McCormac and David. In my view on the question of “Will deletions increase?” I guess it’s possible. So we’ll only know that in the coming months, like John says. It’s hard to say because it’s an unpredictable time, but I think there’s this window of opportunity for ccTLDs to ensure that their brand is well established and being used well and sort of getting the knowledge of the ccTLD linked to local stuff, which is really, like David said in his presentation, a lot of the awareness of local and deglobalized stuff is going.

Also that links a little bit to the speculation aspect, as well, somebody brought up. I think there might be maybe a possibility of suffering to speculation. I think ccTLDs are actually quite well positioned there as well, because at least our numbers show the usage of ccTLDs tends to be better than at least the top 100 gTLDs based on our crawls. So from that point of view, if you’re going to delete a domain, you’re probably going to delete something that’s not really being used versus a business registration.

IRINA DANELIA: Thank you, Patrick. I’m not sure that everyone has seen the comments Patrick has referred to. So may I ask Kim to read them to make sure?

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CLAUDIA RUIZ:

Hi, Irina. Yes. Okay. The first comment from John McCormac was, “The deletion trends due to business closures from COVID will become apparent over the next six months or so due to the registration period, which is one year lag. It is still a bit early for the main trend.”

And then we have a second comment from David Morrison. It says, “I think of creates as lead indicators showing what is happening now and cancels as lag indicators and names are not renewed. It will be interesting to monitor over time.”

IRINA DANELIA:

Thank you, Claudia. With that, I would like to discuss another topic. Many registries did certain steps and took certain measures to respond to the COVID, or did not. But that was already six months before today. So from our today’s view and from what we know now, what would you have done differently? If you return right now in March, what would you do, or probably what you wouldn’t do? Is anybody willing to share? I see Pablo’s hand. Is it an old hand or a new hand?

PABLO RODRIGUEZ:

Apologies, Irina. It’s an old hand.

IRINA DANELIA:

Thank you. So then, anybody from panelists? Alex?

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ALEX CORENTHIN:

Yes, Irina. I will try maybe to check what we can do differently. I think mostly what is in my point of view, maybe if I go back maybe three months before is the way that the ccTLD is working because we are quite confidential and what we make, maybe it's more communication on the consumer at the local communities about what is a domain name or what they can expect from the registry to the local communities. So if things are to be done, I think we do it differently, not to [play] for free, but more working on the communication way and do the capacity awareness of our community about what is a domain name, what is digital and non-digital and so on, so that people could know about that. Not waiting for the price to handle this kind of topics. I think this is mainly what I will do, in my mind, will do differently. More advertising, more marketing, more awareness.

IRINA DANELIA:

Thank you very much, Alex. David, do you want to comment?

DAVID CURTIN:

Yes. Thank you, Irina. I think we would do very much the same as we did before. We've got some very good advice early on and that was, "Don't be in sell mode. This is a pandemic. So be very careful about selling too much." The advice was kind of "Be useful and stay relevant." So from that point of view, going back again, I would not try and sell more.

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But I agree with Alex’s point. If we could go back to March, I think a little bit more preparation to be that helpful and, in particular, again with our target market, which is small business, to tell them in advance, “It is actually easier than you think.” And also to line up maybe where they can get some help from. Because when we did our survey, even those who invested that 33% said, “It was easy, but I needed some help,” and 25% said “It’s easy and required little time.” So that means the remainder, they need help but they really don’t know where to go for help. So if I went back in time, I would line up the hosting companies and the registrars to say, “Be ready with some material that can be helpful for free, and that will get you customers.” Thank you.

IRINA DANELIA:

Thank you, David. Ai-Chin, do you want to comment?

AI-CHIN LU:

Yeah. I think if you can give some advice for the registrars, it’s very good. Maybe you can remind the registrar he can renew the domain name. But I think there is the part of a registrar that needs to provide this kind of service as user, not just during the COVID-19 the registrars need to do. I think as user, routine job for the registrar, if you want the registrant to renew, rate is less higher. I think he needs to make some effort for this part. Thank you.

IRINA DANELIA:

Thank you, Ai-Chin. Alejandra, do you want to add?

ALEJANDRA REYNOSO: I was thinking about if we would have done anything different—and I cannot think of anything different right now, other than we launched some campaigns over Facebook regarding, of course, domain names—our social media specialist has been very active in increasing the awareness of .gt and also in educating the population on what is a domain name, what is it for, what is a website, what is a host, and how are they different. As it had been said, maybe if that had been done earlier, that would have been more useful. But things were then I think the best way they could, given the situation.

IRINA DANELIA: Thank you, Alejandra. Any comments from the audience? Is there anybody attending this meeting remotely who would like also to share his thoughts? Yes?

PABLO RODRIGUEZ: I would like to point out—and I concur with many of the comments that have been made—that one of the things that we are currently doing is preparing promotional and educational material to work with Chambers of Commerce, associations of business people, small business enterprises, to teach them how they can create a presence online and engage in ecommerce. And that goes to the point that David was making. That is spot-on. He is very spot-on. That is exactly why people are afraid. Many people are afraid of, “How do I create my presence? How do I engage in ecommerce?” And of course, it has to do

a little bit with what are the banking laws of the particular respective countries. But at the end of the day, we as registries and our registrars can work together to promote how can our small- and medium-sized enterprises can have a presence online and engaging in commerce that will be extremely helpful and, without a doubt, will increase domain registrations. Thank you.

IRINA DANELIA:

Thank you, Pablo. Now I would suggest to have a brief glance in the future. During the spring of March, we all had impression that it's something urgent but some think that we will end soon. I mean the COVID-19 and its impact. And in summer, at least in Europe, we felt some relief and we were able to get out from our homes, and some people even managed to go on vacation. But then now in many countries, we see increasing second wave already influencing our everyday behavior. Some countries already introduced quarantine back. So, do you see any need for immediate measures right now to respond this second wave, or probably you see the need for any long-term steps or even adjustment of your strategy? What are your plans and how do you see your future life, actually, in this long-term COVID situation? Is anybody willing to comment? Maybe David?

DAVID CURTIN:

Yes. I think we're in for a long, hard winter, I'm afraid. Russian winter, you know, it would be nothing by comparison. So I think the lockdowns are going to continue, really, across Europe. I can see it getting quite bad over the winter. But let's hope that the springtime

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brings a new dawn, so to speak. We're very optimistic, really, that once we get past this wave that the vaccines will be available and we can finally get ahead of this curve.

So in business terms, we'll continue to support the channel. We're prepared to invest in the channel. Thankfully, we have some reserves that we can call on, if need be. But we need to keep that channel alive. We are dependent on them for renewals, for new registrations, and to mind our customers, our end customers. If you take the channel out of the equation, then we would not be happy at all. So what we'll do in the immediate future is stay very close to our registrar channel, be aware to be alert to what it is they need, and try very hard to meet it as much as we can.

IRINA DANELIA:

Thank you, David. Alejandra, please.

ALEJANDRA REYNOSO:

Well, it is hard to predict the future. But what I would think that would be a good idea, without being pessimistic or being seen as taking advantage of the situation is maybe prepare the population more. As in maybe now, as I said, here in October, the restrictions were lifted and people think, in general terms, that everything is back to normal. But if we also get again lockdown, quarantine and everything, again businesses will close down, and again there will be a hard time for many people. So maybe it would be a good idea—again, pessimistic or

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too dark mode—to let people know that they could actually go again in this phase and they need to prepare. That would be one thing.

The university where .gt is based is now working on a plan on how to return to activities in a safe way. So, they're trying to keep as much people working remotely as possible, and also bringing only the students that need to be on campus because of laboratory and equipment and things that they don't have at home. And so far, the government has not said anything regarding bringing students back to the schools or the universities yet for next year. Our year starts in January and it's now in October, so we'll see.

IRINA DANELIA:

Thank you, Alejandra. Anybody else? Yes, Ai-Chin, please.

AI-CHIN LU:

I think, fortunately, in Taiwan we have no second wave. But I agree with the David's point. Maybe we need to communicate with the registrar and if we do the very communication, I think it is helpful. But important things I want to mention, every registry need to keep the [inaudible] remain operational as usual. I think the [inaudible] is the key point. If you did a domain name system, related to the system, if you keep them working, I think it is very important during the COVID-19. Thank you.

IRINA DANELIA:

Thank you, Ai-Chin.



PATRICK MYLES:

I'll just jump in. For me, of course, I'm not running a registry but from the numbers that we see in CENTR, like I said earlier, if deletions rise, of course that's going to put a pressure on the growth and, in some cases, may start retracting or reducing the overall domains in the registry, which in some cases has happened over the last five years. We've seen some reduction in overall domains in the portfolio of some ccTLDs and this could occur again, which is again why the quality of the domain will be so crucial. So if you have good quality domains—and quality is subjective, of course—but if they're being well used, you're in a better position for sustainable future and being able to serve your market.

That's why I say there's this kind of interesting opportunity that this pandemic has forced us to be quite a bit more local oriented. Small businesses are showing up online like they haven't before. And a lot of the time they are local businesses, which is really the domain of the ccTLD. It's a national identity. And so making sure that that is reinforced and carrying on the good work of ccTLDs is really important. Particularly as there's so much competition in the market now as well with gTLDs who are not afraid to be very commercially aggressive, as well. So we need to make sure that we're not being complacent to that and not being unrealistic to the fact that we're a non-for-profit oriented style, for the most part, business sector but we're in a very commercial world.

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IRINA DANELIA: Thank you, Patrick. I see also Alex willing to comment.

ALEX CORENTHIN: I totally agree with Patrick’s analysis and what he say is really relevant dealing with the ccTLD strategy. Whatever, just to a country, your question about the second wave, I don’t think so that we have second wave in Africa. Now we are going very slowly and we hope that what’s happened in [inaudible] that happened in our continent. I pray for that. But hopefully if we can have—I think that most of the companies that we talked about under [inaudible] when we talked about the business, all level actually planned for continuity of activity. Because now as I get in mind that something can happen and they have to drive a continuity activity plan. And mostly what happened is I think if we have something happening another crisis and they are they are working to be able to handle any kind of catastrophic income at this time because they keep it in mind now, and I hope that this may be [usual]. Very interesting to have it at all the levels of the local company, plus big companies to be able to handle any crisis, and I think this plan of continuity having activity, may be the only solution that we can have on the path to handle a potential second wave in Africa. Thank you.

IRINA DANELIA: Thank you, Alex.

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YURI TAKAMATSU: Irina, sorry for the interruption. But now we have five minutes left for the whole session. So please do summarize or wrap up, finish the panel discussion in a few minutes.

IRINA DANELIA: Yes. Thank you, Yuri. That was exactly my intention, to apologize to all those typing comments in the chat that we are not able to respond. And if we have one minute left, at least only one minute, I saw Jiankang Yao whose hand's up. So if one minute is okay for you?

JIANKANG YAO: Okay. Thank you. At [inaudible] about a second wave and the first wave at [inaudible] are different because now a vaccine will be available in December. Some vaccine already tested with good result. So I see next spring or next autumn will be better. So I think if we keep up and speak to the [inaudible] survival six months then we'll be better. Everything will be normal, I think. So we just keep up. No worry. That's the point.

IRINA DANELIA: Thank you very much, Jiankang. And with that, I'm going to return back to Yuri.

YURI TAKAMATSU: Okay. Thank you, Irina. I'd like to wrap up today's session. Thank you, Irina and panelists, and those who gave some questions and make the whole panel discussion really interactive.

What I introduced as a goal for the whole session at the beginning of part one was to become a platform to share their stories, focusing on restoration trends. So I think we've achieved this goal very well. And moreover, we really dive into the broader topics about the trends and also discounted or free domain can be helpful to the registrant or like promotion, education activities. And I really think that if the similar thing happened—I don't really want to, but if it happens in the future—I believe we can take better action than now because we learned from the lessons and always thinking about a better solution. We really had a fruitful information sharing and also extending a lot of opinion, really. I really appreciate all for joining this session. So I hope we can have this kind of session like next year and think more about or look back on what we had and what happened after one year. This can be really informative to all. I really feel like that.

So thank you, Irina and panelists again and who gave us the questions, and those who joined the session, and also Kim, Claudia from the ICANN staff. I'd like to finish today's session. Thank you all. This is not as a session Chair, but as a Meeting Program Committee member, after the whole ICANN meeting session, we are going to have the survey. So if you have not only to this session but to others, please give some opinions, suggestions or anything to the survey. We will take that ideas to next ICANN meeting. Thank you very much for joining today's session. Thank you all.

ALEX CORENTIN:

Thank you. Bye.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]**