ICANN70 | Virtual Community Forum - GNSO - RySG Brand Registry Group Community Update
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JULIE BISLAND: Hello. Welcome to the ICANN70 RySG Brand Registry Group Community update. Please note that this session is being recorded and follows the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior. During the session, questions or comments submitted in chat will only be read aloud if put in the proper form as noted in the chat.

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Mute your microphone when you are done speaking. The session includes automated real-time transcription. Please note: this transcript is not official or authoritative. To view the real time transcription, click on the "live transcript" button in the Zoom toolbar. With that, I will hand the floor over to Martin Sutton, you may begin, Martin.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thank, Julie. A lot of terms and conditions there. I hope we all got those but first of all, thanks for joining us, at this, one of the first sessions of ICANN70. So, welcome to you all. I hope you've all had a safe and uneventful trip to your laptop and are not suffering from any jetlag.

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For the benefit of those like Jeff Neuman. I expect you're quite happy for the last year, not to have lost your luggage and go searching for days to find that, so welcome. My name's Martin Sutton. For those that are unaware, I'm representing the Brand Registry Group, which is a trade association for .brand operators and future applicants.

And we are a member of the Registry Stakeholder Group where we're regularly participating in the various policy work and activities within that group. Let me just move on. So we thought we'd take the regular opportunity, just to give you some insights as to what is occurring in the .brand landscape, and certainly taking a look and reflecting back on why our members and other brands are enjoying the use the .brands.

One of the other areas that we'd like to focus on today, is where it's time to move onto the next round. So, we've seen quite a lot of activity recently, in the policy space, and we'd like to flag some of that activity to those of you on the call today. And then, we'll round this off with a Q&A at the end, so if you do have any questions that you want to ask as we go through, do feel free to pop those into the chat.

But the lines are open so that you can unmute, and raise your questions, and we can have an interactive session at the end, just to make sure that we get through the content that we've got outline, here, but ensure that we've got enough time to answer any questions that you may have at the end.

Okay, so it's been a number of years that our members and the wider .brand operator landscape has been in action, so a lot of things that people find out over time is how useful their .brand is and whether or

not some of the initial ideas and thoughts about how they would use it have materialized.

So we took the opportunity quite recently just to pose the question to our members and they reinforced a lot of those reasonings and rationale for applying in the first place for a .brand and here are some of the example of the feedback that we've got.

And this was not any formal questionnaire, or multiple choice, or anything like this. This was a very spontaneous reflection from our members, during one of our regular monthly calls. And certainly, some of the examples here, you'll see: it's great, it's ours, and only we can use it.

Some of the time it's more about relating to the end-to-end control that it provides a .brand operator, right through from being able to register the domain and control that particular zone of the Internet. And that increased control also provides greater security in their mind about operating the .brand and their digital positioning across the Internet.

For some it meant a chance to undo quite a lot of things that have built up over time that have become complex and scattered around the Internet. So, it gave them a chance to have a refresh and think about how to invent that new space in the way that they would want to, as if they were just starting out again, across the Internet.

So, a chance to rebuild what has become a very complex structure across legacy and ccTLD environment and there are opportunities to bring different things together in their own .brand space.

Notwithstanding the fact that our members typically run very large portfolios of domain names, not only just for using them but also for protecting their brand from malicious activity and trademark abuse.

It does mean that it falls, partly, within a wider domain portfolio. So it helps them to realize different ways to optimize that portfolio, going forward. So these are some examples, there are others, and what we'd like to do is to just turn over for a few minutes each, to our member who are on the call.

And I'm just frantically checking to make sure that we've managed to hook some in. But I see we're missing one. So what I'll do is: Heath, I'm going to move straight onto you, if you don't mind, and we might need to come back to [Cruise], shortly, if he can connect. So, Heath, if you'd like to unmute, I'd love for you to be able to just give us some insights on Amazon.aws for the audience, today.

HEATH DIXON: Sure. Thanks, Martin. So I'm excited to actually get to talk about one of our uses, finally, because we've had done some things that were … Well, I guess most of the focus for us was on .Amazon in the first place, trying to win it. And so we're pleased to announce that we are getting very close to be able start using some .Amazon names.

But what I'd like to talk about today is actually a pretty interesting use case for .AWS. So with .AWS, we started out using it primarily for marketing and so things like Build On .AWS was a marketing campaign that we did and so we were able to use a .AWS name for that.

But the new direction we're going is actually now to use .AWS for IPv6 service end points. And so I'm going to talk a lot more about it at the April meeting—the members meeting of BRG. But today, I just wanted to talk a little bit about what it is that AWS is doing.

So we recognized that we needed to have new domain names for our service end points that would be IPv6 enabled. And so the AWS team started tossing around some ideas for what to do. And what we settled on was using .AWS names for a lot of the reasons that Martin was just outlining on the reasons that people like their .brands.

It gave us the ability to undo some complexity. It allowed us to start over with the [service] end point names. And so we'll still be maintaining all the IPv4 service end point names. But as we build into the future, we wanted to be able to put together a set of names that made sense to us and made it easier to manage those service end points and made it easier for our customers to access those end points.

So the model that we settled on is API.Service, and that's the name of the service, .region, and that's the name of the AWS region. So something like [US East One]**,** for example, .AWS. And so by setting up with that structure, it gave us a couple of different benefits.

First, by using region.AWS as the name of the second level, that allows us to have a few dozen names that we'll be able to manage for all the service end points. And we can allow the DNS team to be the ones that actually doing the management, there. And then the services are building out at the third level.

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And then at the fourth level is where they're able to put down things specifically, like APIs or storage buckets, or other things that customers would actually be accessing. A couple of things to take away from that. One is that whenever we typically look at a TLD to see whether it's successful, one of the metrics that you use is the number of domains under management.

And for us, with that AWS, that's not going to be something that you're going to see, a large number of names, because the region structure [for it], as opposed to building it out with all the different service names, means that we register a smaller number of names to provide all of those services, which means that, if you look at the number of names that are registered, you're not going to think that there's a lot being done with that AWS. But as we move into the future, it's going to become the pivotal point for how customers access Amazon Web Services in general.

Like I said, I'll be talking a little bit more about it at the BRG members meeting, coming up in April. But I just wanted to call it out because we're pretty excited that it's a very fundamental use of the new TLD as a critical part of how we delivery our services to customers. Thanks, Martin.

MARTIN SUTTON: Heath, thank you and we look forward to seeing what materializes over the coming months, and certainly within the BRG the members are keen to hear about this particular use case. One of the things that you've mentioned there is very apparent within the new gTLD space,

but specifically for .brands is that the number of domain names is fairly irrelevant and it's what happens under those domain names that is the real activity, much of which is not resolving to a website. It's other stuff. And it's not always something that can be freely shared, but we look forward to finding out more on that and good luck with that.

HEATH DIXON: Thanks, yeah it's … You mention that it's not something where you can see the websites. When I tell my parents what it is that I do and I try to tell them how exciting this is, they say, "Well, where's the website?" and I can't point them to anything and I have to assure them that it's really important because it's how we deliver the services. And so, yeah, pretty exciting.

MARTIN SUTTON: Right. We look forward to hearing more and we'll have the opportunity, as I said, for Q&A at the end. So if there are any questions that come to mind, don't forget to pop them into the chat and we can come back to those towards the end. Right, so, I'll move on next to Dawn and an update with some activities on .Sky and why you're liking your .brands so much.

DAWN SHACKLETON: Hello, I hope everybody can hear me.

MARTIN SUTTON: Loud and clear, thanks.

DAWN SHACKLETON: Great. Hello everyone, good afternoon. It's good afternoon in London. Good morning elsewhere and, I'm assuming, good evening. So I often talk at the BRG sessions at ICANN summits and I'd like to, instead of just showing the latest website or talking about, necessarily, something else that we're doing with the domains that we have now registered in our TLD, is just to go back to the initial question as to what we like best about our top-level domain.

So, if we could go on to … Perfect, thank you, Martin. So, at Sky, we're using it for all sorts of different things and one of the best things is that it's exclusive to Sky. As most of you can probably imagine, Sky is the brand and it's a three letter generic word—the sky, above our heads.

And, therefore, in the domain world, it becomes very difficult to register the domain names. Sky-something.com, for example. It's nigh-on impossible. So, having our own top-level domain mitigates some of the difficulties that we have to register domain names, especially when we're building platforms for new products and services that we provide to our customers and also our business clients.

So, exclusivity is key to us, largely because our brand is a generic word. And the best thing is that no one else in the world can use a .Sky TLD. It's always on-point regards our brand and it's also proven to be trustworthy. Our customers and our clients, they trust it. We put sufficient information out there and we've been using it now, in the public space, for about three to four years.

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And so, our clients and customers are very used to seeing a .Sky domain name and it's trusted. And my great nephew tells me, "It's dope," which apparently is the latest word for cool. And he said, "Aunty, you're being really old-fashioned and ancient by using 'cool', so it's 'dope.'" Optimization is key to us. We had a pretty extensive defense portfolio.

It was getting on in excess of … It was heading well towards the 20,000-domain-registration mark and something of that size, portfolios of that size are … It's time-consuming and it's expensive. So when Sky got the top-level domain, part of our role, in my team, was to optimize our domain portfolios.

And we managed to do that and, at the same time, incorporated the top-level domain within our Internet namespace and, indeed, our overall and overarching domain name strategy. As I've mentioned before, Sky, being a three-letter generic word, having a TLD helps us to reduce the number of defensive domains that we have in the portfolio.

And therefore, when you can reduce your portfolio … And I have to say it's standing now … We managed to reduce it by 50%, which is a big number. And so, we're down in the region of just over 10,000 domain names on the books. So that's a considerable saving over a period of two-to-three years.

And the other use for it—it's really handy, and especially our technology teams find that if they've got their own .Sky domain for a piece of infrastructure that they're building, it reduces by about at least one the sub-level that they're using. So it just makes it easier for them to name

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the different parts of the infrastructure and the platforms that they're using.

And the control of it is great. You do get a substantial map … Well it's far more control over the domains that you have in the top-level domain. So it's very, very quick to fire up a new domain name if you want it.

Equally, it is also very easy to delete the domain name when that service, in particular a website or URL shortener, is no longer required and effectively is redundant. It also … If you work in a large organization, the chances are—that has been around for 20-30 years—your online platform estate has grown organically and also, incredibly likely, that your DNS has grown organically.

So at Sky, we have a legacy of split-brain and some of the more technical folk out there will understand what I'm talking about regards split-brain DNS. And from the get-go, what we decided with our DNS systems teams was that we would avoid split-brain when it came to using the .Sky TLD. So it's cleaner and it gives us more control over the domain names that we have in the TLD.

And it's also, as I said before, embedded in our Internet namespace strategy. So it's a little bit larger than just saying domain names. Our Internet namespace strategy does also include what we do in the DNS world. And our main public website is SkyGroup.Sky and Sky Group is Europe's leading direct-to-consumer media and entertainment company.

And we are also part of the Comcast NBCU family and are incredibly proud of that. So having a TLD, it does help us to cross all of the different territories on Europe that we are across and provide services to. So any questions? Martin, I know, will come onto this.

We launched a new website, and I'm going to leave it hanging there, earlier in the year and it was and is our first consumer site to our customers, as opposed to the corporate side of things and the technology side of things that currently, to date, we have been using the TLD for. So, Martin. Thank you.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thank you, Dawn. Some great progress there as well, by the sounds of it. And thanks of sharing that. That, I think, is really helpful to illustrate that over a long period of time of consistent effort and drive, that can result in huge benefits. And you've highlighted that in terms of the portfolio optimization for a start. So I think we'll come back to some questions I can see emerging in the chat but we'll come back to that later. Thank you Dawn.

DAWN SHACKLETON: Thank you.

MARTIN SUTTON: So, we'll keep on this sort of theme, here. There are a mixture of reasons that are still valid for individual use of domain names that are registered or the wider application of the TLD within an organization's

strategy and operational deployment. These are a variety of things that actually keep everybody going within our .brand space to push this further and become a consistent element of their digital platform.

So, let's move on a little bit here, though. The whole question of new gTLDs is often about, how well do they get adopted? And I think what we're now starting to see is some real, significant changes within the use of .brands that are hitting Alexa rankings.

So to Heath's point earlier about it, it's not so much the volume of domain names, it's really about usage that sits underneath that and that can be in a variety of forms. At least with the Alexa rankings, we can get some good indications and very strong indications about user adoption of certain domains.

And we've got a selection of .brands that are reaching heights within the Alexa rankings that just goes to show that, with an approach that is thought out, with the right communications to your consumers and Internet users, these are being adopted very easily and in a trusted way by the users.

So again, here's a variety, and they cover the globe, so they're not just limited into one individual location or one sector of business. It's across sectors and it's across regions and countries. Here are some other examples, as well, that we've seen. Some of these that we've highlighted within some of our session before, so we're not going to go into details on any of these.

But I think it's a very good indicator for the ICANN community to see new gTLDs out there, being used effectively, in a mass-market environment. So these domains are definitely registered with purpose. We're not seeing lots of protective registrations in this space. It is very much designed to use domains that are set-up within each of these registries.

And for those that are pushed out into the market by use of websites or e-mail, these are starting to be recognized very easily by consumers and certainly engenders trust with Internet users, particularly where we've seen, for instance, social media sites where brands have applied URL shorteners that utilize their .brand.

And what we have noticed over especially the last year with the pandemic, where there was a lot more migration to digital activities, and certainly from us having to all think of different ways that we will work and live our lives during various lockdown scenarios and restrictions, easy mechanisms to make sure that your status of services are available and up.

Or if there are any concerns, typically, these can be buried within support service sites, but here are examples where, quite quickly, consumers uses of that particular organization, go directly to a status .brand or status .country/.brand. Very simple, very easy to capture that information.

For graduates and job-seekers, some of the .brands, their first visit to engage with these as potential employers in the future, are via careers websites set up on the .brand. Notice here that there are a variety of

ways that those domain's terms are used and that fits with the local requirements and target markets.

So, whether it's the appropriate language, the action-oriented domain, or whether it's simply about careers, about the topic. So a variety of ways that they feel are the way that they want to interact with these potential employees of the future. And we know that over time, Heath mentioned it earlier, the complexities that have built up as more content and more usage of the Internet has developed over the years … There is a lot of stuff out there.

So to make it as simple as possible for users to drill down and find that content within your organizational space, whether it's within the .brand environment or spread across your digital landscape, there are ways that you can simplify this and make it easier. Or apply documents, like manuals, into easily findable spaces.

Again, not buried at a very low-level and difficult place to find within a website. And Dawn referenced this earlier. So the adoption of their .brand was highly focused on their corporate area to begin with. But as that's grown and people have become used to that within their internal organization, they've been able to move on and make sure that the .brand is utilized for their B2C space. And so, with that, they've designated new areas like SkyAccessibility.Sky, very much focused on making sure that people, their users, their customers, that have disabilities, can enjoy access to their various services.

So, a very good, easy way of raising that to the attention, rather than , again, buried somewhere in the depth of a very heavily-layered website.

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So, I'll stop there for now. That gives you, hopefully, a bit of flavor as to what's been going on. There's lots of activity out there. There are lot of areas that monitor this space so that you can find out a bit more information of specific brands, if you're interested.

But I hope that gives you a bit of an insight and flavor of positive and steady growth within the .brand environment. What I'd like now to do, is just to turn to what has been happening within the ICANN space and we've been very closely associated with the work over the many years that it has taken place. And that is relating to the subsequent procedures.

And we feel now it's a good time to make sure this moves on efficiently and effectively to shape up the next round. And what we wanted remind everybody is of the tremendous work that has been undertaken by the PDP working group, assigned to focus on a huge number of topics, not just specific to concentrate on policy, but ways in which it can be implemented as well.

So, providing guidance as to how that translates into a new Applicant Guidebook and processes that surround it. And to do that, that called upon a huge number of ICANN community members. So there were 250-odd members and observers enrolled into that working group.

Not only that, there was a large policy support staff as well as staff observers from ICANN to track progress and provide input. In fact, even prior to the PDP Working Group forming, ICANN staff had previously prepared its set of observations from 2012 and offered learnings and

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opportunities to improve for future rounds, as was designated by the original GNSO policy, where we would see this repeatedly occur.

Now, over the five years, the working group itself met for nearly 250 meetings of varying times. So I think typically an hour and a half, perhaps two hours was quite a frequent time for those sessions. That ignores all of the leadership meetings that took place in between all of those. So that's a colossal amount of effort amongst a large team of community members, so I'm not sure what the calculations would be in terms of man hours, but it would into the tens of thousands, presumably.

But it was over five years of work to focus-in on a whole host of topics, and to reach out to the community. So there were six public community periods, and various outreach to the ICANN community. And even once those public comments were reviewed and received, there would be often some interactions, again, to clarify, check, and see what needed to be worked back into that working group.

So it was pleasing, I'm sure, to the members of that working group that the combination of all that effort turned into a final report that was presented to the GNSO Council in January. So, with over 40 topics, all but one of those achieved full consensus or consensus. So, again, amazing result, I would say, for the working group to achieve that after all of the discussions.

And it goes without saying that we never aimed to make it perfect. It's about listening to everybody from the community. Tying to work through relevant changes that people can back and support within the

confines of that working group, to deliver these consensus results to the GNSO Council.

So it was pleasing then, that the GNSO Council, after reviewing the reports and having a session with the co-chairs of that group, that it was approved unanimously by the GNSO Council in February. I think at this stage, I would just like to call out a huge thanks to the co-chairs of the Subsequent Procedures Working Group and the ICANN staff that made this all happen.

I think there was a lot of necessary drive and motivation to achieve that result from the group. Otherwise, discussions could continue for many, many year onwards. So there were some really good efforts for the community to work together to achieve those results. And now it will be going towards the board for their review and that's where the next steps lie.

So, one of the things I would call out from the final report is that they do include changes. So the idea there was that we could identify improvements for future rounds of new gTLD applications. And some of the main changes that are noteworthy of flagging here are things trying to improve the process and streamline to take out some unnecessary duplication of effort. And we see that, for instance, in the registry service provider pre-evaluation process that has been recommended.

Also, we want to make sure that things are more predictable. So in the last round, quite a number of things had to change, or were forced to

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change, after the start of the process and that caused uncertainty and frustration amongst the community.

So building in a better predictability model is included in the final report. There are others here, as well, about improving and making a more robust applicant support program, differences to the string similarity review, and also improvements to the community priority evaluation.

So there are some changes that this has proposed, but overall it is still a basic foundation from the previous round in 2012. It does make some adaptations. It's trying to make some improvements, based on the influence of the community and all of the input that we've received over the last five years. So I don't think it's about reinventing the wheel.

It's about trying to make those changes and think about the different terrain that we're going to go across and make those improvements to the wheel as we need to. But it is, fundamentally, a base, using the 2012 application process. Notwithstanding that, there will still be challenges ahead. We will continually have challenges and different issues that come to the fore.

And there are still quite a few that we consider are important and need to be addressed. Whether or not it's before the next round or can continue in parallel as a continuous improvement approach, is something that really needs to be considered, here. The problem is that there are always going to be changes and issues that need to be addressed and considered by the community.

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But underlying that, we should be able to see a process that begins to create a lot more predictability and requires some gradual changes over time. It doesn't need to be stalled each time for many years before changes are made. So we don't want the snakes and ladders process where we make two steps forward but slide back five. It needs to be considered through the point of what the issues are and how we can best address those.

One of the issues that we see constantly at the moment and is highly topical within the ICANN space and beyond is regarding DNS abuse. And the BRG, we believe it's an important area for ICANN to be involved. Certainly, our members are typically trying to balance issues from running a registry for their .brand but they're typically involved with trying to protect their brand online as well and are very familiar with issues caused by phishing, pharming, and other malicious activity.

So we do believe it's an important area. And it is an area that the community needs to play their part. It's not just singled out to registries and registrars that can address these issues, there is a combination of problems that are involved with DNS abuse and trying to tackle it in a managed, and controlled, and coordinated, fashion.

And we've got to understand that by making improvements, typically, fraud and malicious activity doesn't go away, it moves somewhere else—to the path of least resistance. So we've got to understand what our actions will also create as we develop better mechanisms and coordination to treat this. What we do believe: it shouldn't be a barrier for any new entrants.

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So as we talk about the next round of new gTLDs, the barriers that are created, basically, because of activity that has been going on for years shouldn't be something that gets in the way of creating opportunities for new entrants to join as a registry provider, or registrar in the future.

And with this in mind, I'd also like to flag, and I often do this, but we do have different registry models in-play now. It's not the same as it was 10 years ago where there were a handful of legacy TLDs and country code TLDs. We've grown into a combination of different registry models and that one-size-fits-all approach is not applicable.

To illustrate that a bit further, let's think about the DNS abuse and how it manifests. Or, I should better say, where it's more susceptible to abuse. Perhaps it's where environments are more open-access, there's a strong commercial drive behind the activities, and they rely on a highly distributed channel. Whereas, we've got other models that have been in play now, with extremely limited access. They know their customers, if it's not them already.

So for .brands it would be themselves. But others, where they have highly restricted access and term and conditions, they know who is using the domains and allocated domains on those registries. And these would typically be of low commercial interest or no commercial interest, in terms of operation, and they have very limited distribution channels.

So this actually helps to, in its own way, create a model that is not susceptible to the levels of abuse that, perhaps, other open registries are. And that's not to say that these are, at all, wrong in the way they're

operated. There are different mechanisms and controls that are applied by these different registry models to manage those risks.

So I think that's a very important thing to understand and there are lots of positive activities to combat DNS abuse and manage that effectively within the environments that they can operate and control themselves. So what I would like to point out then is that, from what we've seen as the commitment of the multi-stakeholder approach and a set of recommendations that achieved full consensus or consensus, that we'd now like to see that move towards, and very quickly towards, a board approval. We know that is isn't now reinventing the wheel.

We should have good, strong experience and knowledge within the community and within the ICANN team, as well, to be able to move this forward in an expedient manner and make sure that implementation work commences as quickly as possible.

And I think , also, we need that predictability, built in. And committing to a new application window time-frame is something that we will no doubt hear more and more as we go along. And that is something, I think, given the fact that there is a lot more planning, there's knowledge and experience of what we've been through before, there are potential ways to commit to that even if it is a minimum to maximum time-frame that can be provided.

With that, I will turn back to Dawn if you don't mind, just to think about those that are contemplating applying in the future. Here are some steps that Dawn has pulled together which just outlines some key stages to the people should consider. Thanks, Dawn.

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DAWN SHACKLETON: Cool. It's really very straightforward. I was, some will say unfortunate, and others will say fortunate, enough to be involved in the first application window for Sky. And yes, I've been there a long time now. And so, I put this slide together just to illustrate the steps that we went through for the first application. And it worked for us, because, you know, it resulted in us getting the top-level domain.

And hopefully, this will provide people who are interested, going forward, especially brands, to really kick-start the possibility that they could, eventually, when the window opens—think positively here— they'll be able to apply for a top-level domain. So there's always a beginning. You have to start somewhere.

And, for the next round, I would heartily recommend that you research the brands that already have their .brand TLD. And, obviously, a good starting point would be the Brand Registry Group website. And, also, to start the conversation with your legal, your marketing, your corporate business teams and, indeed, your technology teams.

They're your stakeholders and it's about highlighting, "This could happen. Are we interested as a brand?" And I would also recommend, find yourself a sponsor, somebody senior in the organization who has bought into the fact that, actually, yes, this would be a good thing to do for the business.

And then it's a case of making people aware of the application and what other brands, who already have their top-level domain, are currently

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doing, and what, indeed, a brand TLD is. Then you move into the discovery mode. So it's about the appetite within your organization to go through the application process.

And what we did at Sky, we ran a feasibility study. We used a corporate registrar for the project to come up with the findings from that study and we agreed the business case and the budget internally, based on the findings of the study.

And I hasten to add, in a large organization, it's incredibly important to NDA the people, the stakeholders, that you are involving in the study and the business case and moving forward if indeed the study recommends that you move forward with an application, for the simple reason, in commerce, any e-commerce platform, which will be a brand, you have your competitors.

And so, it's very important to ensure that you keep things within the family, so to speak. So agree who will be deciding whether you move forward or not, and you've got to continually keep talking to your main stakeholders about the application. Don't let it drop. Just remind them every three months, "Oh this is coming." Even if there isn't a date for the application, it will come at some point.

And that's what I did. I just kept reminding people in the organization, "It's coming, it's coming—don't know when, can't give you a final date, but it will come." Three is about the decisions. So, we showcased the study in front of the vast majority of the board of directors at Sky.

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And the decision, fortunately for Sky, was yes, go ahead. And it's about obtaining agreement from all of the main stakeholders. And also, affirming, it's important to continually affirm the sponsorship that you have for the project, going forward.

And, also, I would utterly recommend that the application is run by a team or it becomes a responsibility within one of your teams, withing the organization. Martin and I, and others from the brand registry group, know from taking to members and indeed seeing people change throughout the … The people actually attending BRG meetings, that people move on.

They either go to another business or they move somewhere else within the organization. And so it's important that your application, and your project, and indeed your TLD is owned by a team of people, as opposed to a single person. I hope that resonates with folk. It's crucial at all stages.

And, again, it's about continually promoting awareness of the application project. And then you come to the application itself. So again, the recommendation is use a corporate registrar to manage the application process with you and indeed the contracting process with ICANN. And you've got to also contract with a raft of other suppliers, so you need a back-end. You need a front end. You need escrow. And, indeed, you need the registrars.

So there are all of these supplier contracts that you need to engage with during the application process. Also, I would highly recommend taking up membership of the relevant ICANN community that your TLD would

fall into. Well, in this case it would be the Registry Stakeholder Group. And although at Sky, we're not an active, active-active, truly active member of the Registry Stakeholder group, the information and the support that you get is excellent and it's needed.

You're new to the game and there are more experienced people who know their way around ICANN than you do. And it's also important to budget travel expenses. You need to budge for the contracts, your membership fees, the registrations, and all of the legal fees that come with all of that type of work.

And again, continually promote awareness of the application project. And lastly, you're in it for 10 years, so it's important, once you've got your TLD, to regularly review your domain strategy, your TLD operations with the suppliers that you use, your supplier contracts, your budgets and also, very, very important to diarize the regular compliance and ICANN event dates.

Also, I found it incredibly useful that my back-end supplier and my front-end supplier, they talk to each other, they talk to me, and it's that's conversation, and constant review … When I say constant, we don't meet all of the time, but we do talk to each other, sometimes at ICANN events, but we do try and talk to each other every three months or so, and have a catch-up and review the state-of-play with regard to the TLD and what's coming up.

And then, also start thinking about planning any migrations over to your TLD. I know from experience of moving our corporate website over to SkyGroup.Sky, that whole project took 18 months and it's not the

most complicated website that we have. So it's about being mindful of these things.

These things do not happen overnight. And then continually promote awareness of your top-level domain. I was just going to finish. Incorporate your TLD within your company's overall domain name strategy, it's key. It goes with the territory. And make sure it's a team, not a single person. And promote.

MARTIN SUTTON: Thank you. I think travel expenses might be a lower feature on the budget, though. In the current circumstances.

DAWN SHACKLETON: Depends on where you're going.

MARTIN SUTTON: Right, thanks for that. We're just going to come through to Q&A. Just to highlight, there is a community briefing that we've circulated. If you haven't received it, there is access to this on our website and also on the agenda page, so you'll be able to download that straight away. It's a quick flyer so it's just a couple of pages that we share with members of the community.

We know that everybody gets bombarded with lots of e-mail and content, so we try and keep it as brief as possible. The presentation will be available to download, and that gives you information about the

Brand Registry group. And there's our contact information and the website address for you.

So I notice we did have some questions in the chat already. I'll open it up now if anybody wants to raise their hand. And whilst we're waiting for that I may just … I think it was Tom who mentioned something about the SSAC114 report that's come out from the Security Stability Advisory Committee.

So I think it's a good point to raise and I think, or hope that through some of the conversations through the last hour, you've probably heard the fact that there has been a tremendous amount of work for the SubPro to reach this final report—achieving all the consensus it needed for more-or-less the entire, bar one, set of topics.

And there are always opportunities for input along the way. And this is a very late submission from SSAC. We are still reviewing a lot of the content and we're doing that, primarily, via the Registry Stakeholder Group, so that we channel some feedback via them if that's the case. But one of the other areas with the abuse activities is just to bear in mind that it's not consistently spread across all the environments.

So, I hope I illustrated today that it is in pockets of the environment and therefore it does beg the question as to, why should the rest of the community be help back because of what is probably a relatively few number of actors that haven't perhaps got that element under control? There is lots of activity and work that has been going on and continues to flourish with regard to that topic.

And we hope that that would be that would be the way to go, where there was more progress amongst the community—more coordination of effort is probably one area that needs to be focused on sooner, rather than later. Has anybody got any questions they'd like to raise? You can un-mute and we'll be happy to cover those.

SUE SCHULER: Martin, there are a few questions in chat. There's one from Yoshi Murakami: "How can we communicate to the ICANN Board that there is demand for .brands?"

MARTIN SUTTON: Good point, Yoshi. I think this is one way and trying to make sure that those voices are heard. The Brand Registry Group certainly tries to communicate with members of the board to make sure that they are aware that we already have members that have been waiting to apply.

There are many more brands out there that have waited very patiently but have probably been told that ICANN works at a tremendously cautious speed, shall I say. But there is a time now, as we've proceeded with the production of the final report, which has gained the GNSO approval. It's now for the board to push that along and we hope that they will recognize all of the tremendous efforts that have been involved with that work.

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SUE SCHULER: Okay. We have a question from Ching Chiao: "Can future .brand applicants become BRG members?"

MARTIN SUTTON: Good question. Yes, thank you. Yes, they can. I've just mentioned there a moment ago we have members that are future applicants. So, we have a membership criteria that suits those. It's a non-voting membership, which we call "associate member." So yes, we'd happily welcome them to the BRG. The info@brandregistrygroup.org is a great way to connect, or direct them to me. So, if you've got anybody that's interested and they'd like to find out more, please do let me know or contact via the info@brandregistrygroup.org.

SUE SCHULER: And we have a question from Brian King: "Martin, if you had to guess, when do you expect the next application round to open?"

MARTIN SUTTON: Well, at a guess, I would say it's not going to happen this year, Brian. But bearing in mind what I mentioned earlier, there are lots of elements to the final report which support how the 2012 round was processed, if you like. So, with that in mind, we're not starting from scratch.

There is a lot of groundwork that has already been covered. The advantage this time around is that, even though the capital costs for developing new systems, etc. … They'll get payback over a number of

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years because they will be reused rather than discarded as they were in the 2012 round.

So, we think that there are quite a lot of efficiencies built in, not only with the final report recommendations or assertions that support a lot of the activity of 2012 round but there is also implementation guidance throughout that work effort, as well. So, that should help smooth the pathway to implementation and give a lot of guidance to the Implementation Review Team when it's installed.

SUE SCHULER: I think we have time for one more question, further back in the chat from Fan Yu: "In the next round of applications, will the application time for .brand TLDs be the same as for generic TLDs?"

MARTIN SUTTON: Well, currently that is the case. So, the final report that has been presented is one that would see the round opening for all types of applicants. It was discussed as options within the working group process over the years, and that was particularly an option that was raised as a consequence of the fact that there is a different risk model associated with different types of registries, including .brands.

Nevertheless, it's one of those things that, together, we have agreed that this is the set of rules that we think we can all live with and go forward with, so that is the way that that has been geared up at this stage.

However, that does beg the question as to if there are barriers that are built up as a cause of things that don't affect certain types of registry model. I think that that would be a very quick one to revisit and resurface if we don't see the right movements from the board and the ICANN community to move forward with the final report that has been delivered.

SUE SCHULER: Okay. Thank you, Martin. I think we will need to wrap up.

MARTIN SUTTON: Excellent. Well, thank you very much, everybody, for joining us. I wish you a very successful ICANN70 and look forward to Zooming in on a variety of those sessions with you throughout the week. Okay. Bye for now.

SUE SCHULER: Thank you. We can end the recording.

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