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ICANN73 | Virtual Community Forum – North America Space  
Wednesday, March 9, 2022 – 15:00 to 16:00 AST

JOE CATAPANO:

Welcome to the North America Space at ICANN73. My name is Joe Catapano and I am the remote participation manager for this session.

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NAELA SARRAS:

Thank you, Joe, and welcome, everyone. I am so delighted to be welcoming you here today to our second North America Space session at ICANN73. My name is Naela Sarras, as Joe stated, and I am the vice president of Stakeholder Engagement for the North America Region here at ICANN Org. In this capacity, I lead the Engagement Team that works with the North America Region with several of my colleagues, which I will introduce in a slide upcoming here shortly. Can I have you advance the slide, please, Joe, to the beginning of the session?

Okay. So as I said, this is only our second time doing this session. We are delighted to be getting this North America space off and running. We are always open to ideas of how this would be of better service to the community and become an avenue where regional community and staff can work together. So all ideas are always welcome. Taking this opportunity here, we want to cover the following topics that we designed for today’s agenda. My apologies that today’s meeting is only 60 minutes as opposed to a typical 90-minute session. This is the best time we could secure for this time around.

So we’re going to have a little bit of an update from our team on the engagement activities we’ve been working on since the last time we

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updated you in the autumn meeting, so in the ICANN72 meeting last October. Then we also are delighted to have a presentation from our colleagues at the North American Network Operators Group today. It's a session where they will introduce themselves and tell us what they're up to and how to work with them and all that stuff. We're also happy to hear from NARALO, the North American Regional At-Large Organization, today where they'll give us an update on also their recent activities and what's happening at NARALO. And if time allows, I'd like to have a little bit of a Q&A discussion today, specifically on how to tailor this session going forward. So next slide, please, Joe. I think I can do it. Okay.

So a little bit on our team. The slide is updated since the last time, I think, we used it. So this is the team we have that makes all the magic happen in the North America region. I'd like to just state right up front that we also work with multitude of other staff within the organization and then community members. So this is the team that leads, but we do have a lot of other people that we work with.

So we have Joe Catapano, who introduced himself at the beginning of the session, our stakeholder engagement senior manager, and we work very closely together.

We also have on the team, David Huberman. He resides in the Office of the Chief Technology Officer, so he's in the OCTO team. But he's dedicated to North America region engagement. So he was our technical engagement manager for the North America region. So a lot of times when you see us putting together webinars that involve

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expertise from the OCTO team, David Huberman is the one that's facilitating that work with us.

Alex Dans is our communications director for the Americas, and Alex is the one that works on our communication efforts for the team.

Please do take note of the fact that we do have a mailing list. If you're not already on the mailing list, please join us. We'd love to share news with you, which we try to use, to share internal and external news that's worth sharing with the community. So if you're not there, please join us. All right, go ahead. Next slide, please. Thank you, Joe.

So a little bit of an update on what we've been up to, as I said, since last October, since we last talked to you in this in this space. I think last meeting, what we did is we went through the North America Engagement Plan, which we developed together with the community. We kind of laid out what the plan is and how it really ties very closely with the ICANN strategic plan. While ICANN strategic plan lays out what we want to achieve, the engagement plan kind of focuses a little bit on how we want to achieve it. The overall goal of the plan is really to strengthen the engagement and participation in ICANN at the end of the day.

Since October 2021, when we did this update, we've continued what we laid out in the plan is to do webinars on topics of interest throughout the year. So we've continued that webinar series. The most recent one we did was in January, where we did a webinar with our partners, with our colleagues at the Internet Society. We did a webinar on proposed legislation that's developing currently in

Canada, and we wanted to discuss a little bit on what that proposed legislation is. It was specifically we zeroed in on the Online Harms Act that's currently proposed. And so we just did a discussion with several other community experts. We were the convener between ICANN and the Internet Society but we also hosted other experts to speak on the topic.

We also partnered with NARALO and the Universal Acceptance Steering Group on the Universal Acceptance training series, which ran for a four-week session from January to February. It was a really great successful training series. I'm not going to say anything on it because I know NARALO will go through and explain what we did there. But it was an excellent partnership with NARALO that we really enjoyed putting together.

We did a blog—we put a link here—that kind of wraps up what we did in 2021 and what the different activities were. So I thought it would be helpful to put a link to that on here.

Now, looking ahead to 2022, we want to, of course, continue this cadence of having webinars, briefings, updates through the newsletters throughout the year. So we were committing to continuing that. We want to continue our outreach to different stakeholder groups for the engagement plan, so the regular stakeholder engagement that we have, but also reaching beyond the regular stakeholder engagement work that we've done. We will continue, hopefully, this year or to resume or start again the hybrid events as conditions allow. So it's no secret that I think—this is a great

meeting we're having, but we're all ready to resume perhaps hybrid where we will have the in-person experience for those of us who can have the in-person experience, but also continue a really strong and meaningful remote experience for those of us who cannot travel to wherever the meeting is happening. So we're really hoping this will be the year where we resume that and get some meaningful events going that way. Next slide, please, Joe.

Okay. I'm really excited that we have this happening today, where we have our colleagues from NANOG presenting. This is happening as a result of a lot of work that we've been doing in the last, I would say, few months, where we work very collaboratively with our colleagues in NANOG under a Memorandum of Understanding that was signed between ICANN, NANOG, and the Internet Society. It's really between ICANN and NANOG. That one with Internet Society is all different. So let me just focus on the ICANN and NANOG one.

So in that MOU, we're all committed to collaborating on technical projects, technical activities, where it makes sense for both of our communities. So several of us here on this team meet with NANOG team members and we talk about what we want to do together and to promote our activities and to put on meaningful activities together. So today we are fortunate and happy to have Edward McNair, who is the executive director of NANOG, presenting to us kind of an overview of who NANOG is and how to engage with NANOG and take advantage of the meaningful work that they do. So over to you, Edward.

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EDWARD MCNAIR:

Thank you very much. I'm Edward McNair, as Naela said, the executive director of NANOG. Let me share a little slide deck that I'll go through, give me a chance to talk a little bit more about the organization.

So the agenda is little things to talk about is, first of all, what is NANOG? Go over a little bit of NANOG's governing structure, talk about the NANOG program, talking about our outreach initiatives. And then I want to talk a little bit about COVID and how it affected us as an organization and how to respond to that change, and how that in that chaos we found opportunity to actually strengthen and broaden our organization. I'll cover the lessons learned, and if there's time, a little bit of chance for a bit of Q&A.

So what is NANOG? We are a community-driven nonprofit organization. Our roots date back to 1987 when Merit was tasked with reengineering and managing the NSFNET. NANOG's original charter was formed in 1994. In 2011, the NANOG community voted for independence from the Merit organization. And then NANOG is the first and still the largest Network Operators' Group.

So what does NANOG do? We put on conferences that showcase innovative, educational content that aims to drive new solutions for the networking community, and what challenges they face. Mentoring is a big part of what we do. We're trying to focus on expanding and creating the next generation of networking professionals.

We're also seeking to empower those who support Internet access in underserved regions across North America. There's this scenario

where we partner with ISOC, where they drive a lot of those efforts, and we do what we can to support what they're doing in that space.

We are also actively encouraging diversity, inclusion, and collaboration within our community. As most of you know, tech tends to be very male, very white, and also tends to scale on the older side. So we're trying to get more young people more engaged and more diverse people engaged in the Internet community.

So our conferences kind of give a little thumbnail of what they look like. We have on average a thousand plus people attend our face-to-face conferences. On average, 200 plus are first time attendees. They represent people from 20 plus countries around the world. And we, on average, have 15 students that participate in our College Immersion Program. It's a program that's focused on allowing students to participate and to collaborate with network professionals and get a feel for the industry and make contacts to help them move forward with their careers.

Our reach. Currently, on our mailing list, we have 13,000 plus subscribers, both professionals and students. Our LinkedIn followers sit around 9300. We have a very, very big presence on YouTube. Right now, currently, we have 18,000 plus subscribers on YouTube. We've had over 2.3 million YouTube views since January 2013. And an interesting thing about YouTube, our conferences have two lives. There's the lives will take place when people are watching them in person, and then there's the live that takes place once they're posted on YouTube. We get hundreds of thousands of people who are



watching the videos and content. In fact, at some of our conferences, there are people who are so busy, they can actually watch them live. What they tend to do is to pick up the content later on in YouTube.

In terms of our governance, for our board of directors, we have individuals here. I'm also on the board of directors and I'm also on staff as well. So in staff, we have seven people. NANOG is a small organization. I'm very, very proud of our staff, I think we do a lot for the size of the organization that we do have. We do have some contractors that work with us, but the core of what we do takes place with board guidance and staff getting things done.

So now we've got several committees that build up our organization and beyond the staff of the seven people that I mentioned and the eight members of the board. We also have volunteers that support our efforts on communities. We have a Program Committee that focuses on managing and delivering in our programs, Elections Committee, Audit Committee, Compensation Committee, Mentorship Committee, Education Committee, Scholarship Committee, and Outreach committee.

So I'll talk a little bit about the NANOG program. The NANOG program is at the very heart of NANOG. It is what it's all about. I often tell my team that if we had an incredible program, we could have it in the field and people would come. The program is again the very core of what we do as an organization. The Program Committee is appointed by the board. However, once appointed, the PC itself is self organized and operates independently. It's made up of 25 industry professionals who

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curate our talks to assure that they're relevant to the network professionals. The board staff have no interaction or no say so to what that content is. It's strictly at the hands of the Program Committee.

So, outreach. Outreach is something that NANOG as an organization is really kind of jumping out of itself and moving beyond what we are. Originally, we were kind of really inwards focusing. Our main push was just on the conferences. But now we know that to grow as an organization and to better serve our community, we need to outreach beyond ourselves. This is part of what drove the initiative to reach out to ICANN and ISOC to kind of form better strategic relationships, allow us to do more work within North America.

So education is central to our mission. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit education organization. And through outreach to colleges and universities, affiliate NOGs, and other remote tech communities, we're able to provide greater access to NANOG's tools, resources, and educational programming. This is a big deal to us, and this is something that we believe is the future of our organization. We're doing all we can to manifest that.

So what is our focus? Our focus of our program in three distinct areas: industry education for networking professionals, education and career development for colleges and graduate students, and training within underserved regions of North America.

Our college programs. First of all, we have a scholarship that we offer. We have two scholarships, the Aba Ahuja Scholarship, which is \$10,000 given to two recipients and we focus specifically on its [ordinance] to

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women. We have a John Postel Scholarship, also a \$10,000 scholarship. Those can be won by either men or women. We have a committee who looks at the various applicants. We decide to find people who want to have the educational aptitude or maybe they may have certain financial needs, whatever. We try to find students that are promising and that we believe that these scholarships can help them further their career, and in the long run further the industry as a whole.

We also have a NANOG College Immersion Program, the NCI Program. So it's designed to give educators an opportunity to sponsor up to five students to come to a NANOG conference. It helps students gain a competitive edge by engagement with seasoned industry professionals, direct access to best-in-class content on the latest Internet technologies, and participation in hands-on training, networking, and also potential employers and business contacts. Recently, we have pushed beyond just the education that comes through sitting in a chair and listening to someone speak, and we're developing our own educational, structured courses, and we're also expanding our mentorship program. This is a big focus for us and we're trying to do everything we can to make sure it's successful.

Underserved communities. It's a big deal to us with the understanding that there are many within North America who don't have true access and the inequality that exists is unfortunate, and there are a lot of people who perceive that America is probably one of the wealthiest countries in the world, and that, of course, there will be no such thing as Internet inequality. But 19 million Americans, 6% of the population,

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still lack access to fixed broadband services with threshold speeds. In rural areas, nearly one-fourth of the population, 14.5 million people, lack access to the service at all. And in tribal areas, nearly one-third of the population lacks access.

This is something that it's a big deal to me. I believe that in the world we live in right now, Internet access is critical to participating in a modern society. And those who don't have that access are literally cut off from participation in our modern economy, in our modern world. And so this is something that we're really trying to focus on partnering up with ISOC and any other organization we can, ICANN, to be able to help those who don't have true legitimate access to the Internet.

ISOC's Indigenous Community Summit, we participate in that. I've gone and spoken at the conference before. We're trying to let them understand the vast access of information and tutorials that we have that they can leverage and use. We also offer support through our mailing lists. We are also building out—we've developed a new community server, [community.nanog.org](http://community.nanog.org). We're going to be creating specialized help areas where those people in those communities can reach out to professionals within the NANOG community to get assistance as they go to try to build out their own, support their own community networks.

NAELA SARRAS:

Edward, sorry. Can I just do a quick interruption? Slow down for interpreters.

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EDWARD MCNAIR: Oh, I'm sorry.

NAELA SARRAS: It's okay.

EDWARD MCNAIR: Thank you. So, community outreach. One thing in particular I want to chat about, this is not something that's really a formalized policy within NANOG and that stem. To really get people engaged, we need to get in as early as possible. I had an opportunity to go into the city of Montgomery, and I got a chance to visit some schools and talk to some students about careers as Internet professionals. This was Valiant Cross Academy, and it was specifically for at-risk youth. And it was just an amazing opportunity to sit in front of these young men and get a chance to talk about what opportunities there are for them, what things that they can do to change their life trajectory by getting involved in fields of technology. So even though this isn't formally what we do as an organization, whenever I get a chance to get in front of students, I always will jump at the chats. I used to teach years ago. It's just I have a passion for students, oldest with seven kids. So I think the youth are our future and our investment in them is worth every penny that we put into it.

So let me talk a second about adapting to COVID. Like everyone else, COVID hit our organization really hard. We asked ourselves a series of questions. How do we keep our staff and community safe from the

disease? We are a community event organization, that's what we are. It's our core. And how do we maintain relevance in a world where you can't have face-to-face meetings? Can we manage to financially support ourselves without events? NANOG as an organization, our revenue model was sponsorship that came from sponsors supporting our events, and what do we do in a changing world? And then that big question: how long will the pandemic last?

So scrambling like everyone else, due to the uncertainty, it took several weeks to determine that having an in-person meeting was just out of the question. Once that decision was made to go virtual, we were fortunate enough that we had our contractor, who was helping us with streaming our videos, had a virtual platform. So we were able to, within six weeks, make that switch, use their infrastructure, and we able to deliver our first virtual event. However, due to scheduling conflicts and scarcity in the marketplace, after that meeting was over, we were left without a streaming provider for our next event, which puts us in a position where we had to expedite the development of our own in-house virtual platform, which we were able to accomplish in a three-month time period. So chaos creates opportunity, and that's only true if you're in a position that you can take advantage of it.

So for the virtual platform that that we built, it allows the ability to stream video from any platform, whether it's from Zoom, anything we want. We have that flexibility. We have flexible display options. People can watch it as video in a window with chat on the side or all chat or all video, whichever they want to do. We have Zoom integration built into real-time chat, so people can chat with each other real time. Built

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in Q&A, online help system, and virtual expo booths for our sponsors. And real time polling, which comes through a third party support. Everything else was based upon open-source software, and so we kind of built our own.

Then we dug in, went into development as the pandemic extended on. We created our own event management system within our website. We built our own registration system that would give us a lot more flexibility, allows for registration of both in-person and virtual registrations, registration of team members, membership, purpose purchases, renewals, and donations, all within this kind of shopping cart feature.

We also have released a 360 live camera. In our conferences now we have a camera that's mounted, which allows people to see the conference in real time if they choose to in 3D. They can literally spin around and look at the event from all aspects. And it's designed to give people a sense of being in and on that conference itself.

We're currently developing the meeting appointment tool that allows people to schedule meetings within that conference. We're looking to have that released at our meeting that's coming up in Montreal in June.

So if you shift online, the one thing we had to really kind of come to terms with is that online, content is king. We were trying to make sure that we exist beyond just those three conferences and that we had content that is coming up on a regular basis. So one thing we looked at our existing content that we had online, and we start to go through

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and curate it and we developed what's called NANOG TV. It highlights the hundreds of previous NANOG talks that we've had and brings to light those old talks that have significance and relevance in terms of how many people have viewed. We do monthly webinars targeting students and those that are new to the industry. We increased in community engagement by kind of doubling down on our social media, more newsletters, blogs, interactive polls, etc.

Then also recently we came up with the Internet innovators series. We're trying to focus on those people who have made significant contributions to the development of the Internet as we know it today. So we've had a chance to interview Vint Cerf. We've recently did an interview with Leonard Kleinrock. We have Scott Bradner, Geoff Huston, and Radia Perlman was the keynote speaker at our last NANOG event, and so I had the pleasure of interviewing her as well.

So broadening our scope, trying to be more than what we were, working with ISOC and ICANN, as I've mentioned before, focusing on outreach initiatives in North America. We're committed to providing structured educational programs at our conferences, developing mentorship programs, as I've mentioned earlier.

We also recently reinvent our Hackathon. Originally, our Hackathon was sponsor-driven. We've rolled it back. We're trying to focus on something that is more educational, more engaging. So now our Hackathon is expanding. We set up particular things which are designed to get students engaged. And we're also shifting to get more open-source projects involved in our Hackathon. At our last



Hackathon that we had in February, we had seven open-source projects that were being developed and worked on during our Hackathon event.

Then recently, we introduced Ombuds to support diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging within our community. I know that ICANN communities had one for years and it was part of the inspiration where I kind of had said to the board, “This is the way to go.” If we’re really saying that we want this to happen, we’ve got to really put our money where our mouth is, and get someone there to help support and make sure that we have an environment that’s going to be conducive to supporting diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging.

COVID also exposed our weaknesses. Sponsors want face-to-face engagement, they’re concerned about ROI. Being small has its advantages, you can change course quickly. Being small has its disadvantages, your resources are limited. We need to explore other alternative sources of revenue. As an organization, a nonprofit, we’ve never kind of looked at grants or other ways of funding an organization. So now we’re kind of focusing on those things. And the world has changed, it’s COVID, and it’s never going to be the way it was before. So as an organization, we’re trying to rethink and ask yourself, if we were going to build NANOG today, what would that look like? What would our organization look like if we’re starting from scratch? So we’re using that kind of as our touchstone as we start to kind of reinvent our organization to be able to have what it takes to last for another two or three decades and beyond.

So, final thoughts. The plan that got us to the point where we are now may not be the plan that gets us to the next point. We need to always be willing to evaluate any process or procedure. Change is essential to any living thing. Oftentimes organizations are resistant to change but, if you look at the pure definition of a living thing, it's that which changes. And so anything that doesn't change is either inanimate rock or it's going to die and wither away.

Change is difficult. It's hard. We feel comfortable with the things that we're familiar with. And when we're pressed for change it's a really difficult thing for us. And, as I mentioned earlier, if you're building your organization from scratch today, what would that look like? So thank you for your thoughts and I'm open to any questions.

NAELA SARRAS:

Excellent. Thank you, Edward, and congratulations. The achievements you list there, just that two pages of development effort that you've gone through is amazing. Thank you so much for the update.

I believe we have Alex helping us to deal with some questions. And we did get some questions in the chat coming across, so Alex, can I please ask you to read out the questions we have? And I'm also going to allow people to ask questions in person if they want. So raise your hand if you want to ask your question in person, but we'll start with the ones Alex collected.

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ALEXANDRA DANS: So, thank you, Naela. The first question is from Glenn McKnight. Does NANOG have a fellowship program? If yes, is it open to non-North Americans?

EDWARD MCNAIR: The way we're going through fellowship right now is that that's through our virtual platform. We have it where you can join for free or you can pay \$100 if you choose to. We are looking to have expanded fellowship. I will say that our fellowship would be focused in North America because we're the North American Network Operators' Group. But as resources allow us, we hope to get there.

I will say—and this is a thank-you to ISOC. ISOC has committed to sending one to two people at every NANOG event from their Indigenous communities for them to be able to experience and become part of the community and to make connections that will help them further their communities.

ALEXANDRA DANS: Thank you. The other question we had is from Roberto Gaetano. When you say 90 million Americans, do you mean US, North America, the Americas?

EDWARD MCNAIR: Oh, thank you for that. That would be US-specific. So it's broader than that if you go beyond just United States.

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ALEXANDRA DANS: Thank you. The other question is from Patrick Cain. The question is are you engaged with the broadband equity access and deployment program at NTIA?

EDWARD MCNAIR: No, currently we're not. But I would love to talk to them. We're trying to find any partners that we can that we can collaborate with to better do outreach within North America.

ALEXANDRA DANS: And I have another question from Glenn McKnight. Does NANOG work with the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers chapters through US and Canada? They are involved with local connectivity issues and part of the Foundation Strategy.

EDWARD MCNAIR: Currently we're not. But, again, we would love to collaborate with anyone. Just send me some contacts. And we'll talk and see what we can get going.

ALEXANDRA DANS: Thank you. I believe that was the final question.

EDWARD MCNAIR: I think Alfredo has a question. He has a raised hand or has that already been asked?

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ALFREDO CALDERON: Yes, this is Alfredo. I hope everybody can hear me. My question is basically, Edward, do you have any alliances with the National Digital Inclusion Alliance? That's a North America organization that deals with underserved communities. And they work closely with different federal agencies to empower some communities in getting broadband access as well.

EDWARD MCNAIR: Again, no, but I would again love to chat with them.

ALFREDO CALDERON: Okay, thank you.

EDWARD MCNAIR: Again, that's part of the reason why I'm here. I'm trying to get more affiliations, more connections, seeing what we can do as an organization to support those in North America.

ALFREDO CALDERON: Okay, thank you.

EDWARD MCNAIR: Thank you.

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ALEXANDRA DANS: We also have a comment from Ahmad Aghar. Love those final thoughts. Good base to move forward.

EDWARD MCNAIR: Oh, thank you.

NAELA SARRAS: Thank you, Edward, again. And thank you, Alex, and I completely agree. This is exactly why this is awesome to have Edward here. And so, Alfredo, Glenn, the questions you asked about IEEE and the National Digital Inclusion Alliance. Let's talk about how we can make these connections, please, between you guys and Edward.

All right, so I think we can go ahead. Oh, I'm getting a hang on. Is there another question?

ALEXANDRA DANS: Yes, there's another question from James Paek in the chat. So has there been action plan on how to restructure for funding and planning for the future of NARALO at this moment? It's okay if there is not, just want to get your thoughts on it.

EDWARD MCNAIR: So the question is do we have an action plan to be able to get more financing—is that what he's asking—or funding?

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ALEXANDRA DANS: James, let us know if—

EDWARD MCNAIR: Yes, sorry, yes. There has been. We have a strategic plan that's focusing on turning those things around.

ALEXANDRA DANS: Okay, thank you. Naela, I believe we don't have any more questions. Thank you.

NAELA SARRAS: Very good. Thank you, Alex, and thank you, Edward. We will now shift to our second presentation for today, from NARALO. And this one is with Mr. Eduardo Díaz, NARALO chair, and Mr. Glenn McKnight are both presenting to us today. So over to you, Eduardo.

EDUADRO DIAZ: Thank you so much, Naela. Give me one second here while I set up this thing here. Okay. My name is Eduardo Díaz like Naela has mentioned. I'm the current chair of the North American Regional At-Large Organization, which we call NARALO.

For those of you that are not familiar with NARALO, NARALO is the organization that groups and user organizations and individuals who have engaged to participate in the ICANN policy development process through the at-large organization. This meeting right now is being live-streamed to about 11 social channels. And the idea is for our reach

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and engagement part of our strategic plan. So if you want to follow us, you can follow us on Twitter at TeamNARALO and like us in the NARALO group on Facebook.

Today Glenn McKnight, our secretary, and I will provide an update on NARALO. Next slide, please.

This year we are continuing to implement the same strategy. In fact, I'm sorry. I got lost here.

One of the main responsibilities of an at-large regional organization is the outreach and engagement of organizations and then user individuals. One of the main things that we do to encourage engagement is having monthly meetings with all our members. Now, during these meetings, we bring up to date everyone on some of the things that have been happening around ICANN and provide an opportunity to anyone eager to talk about their own work or each organization.

The pandemic, as Edward mentioned, it also obligated us to think out of the box. And we kind of turned around the monthly calls to be more focused on capacity building and discussions about what we consider were hot topics or issues of interest to our community. Next slide, please.

In 2021, we provided presentations on issues like human rights in ICANN, updates on the [current and upcoming] policy work, IDN abuse, DNSSEC, accessibility at ICANN. We did talk and discuss the North American Strategy Plan that Naela prepared. and others, which



also include—believe it or not—a virtual beer tasting. As a result of all this we were able to maintain our membership participation at the same pre-pandemic levels. Next slide, please.

This year we have continued to implement this strategy that we set out to do in 2021. In fact, our last presentation was yesterday on blockchain and the centralization of domain names. You can find this video in one of our social channels. Next slide, please.

Naela and her team have been instrumental in helping the region, in providing contacts, prospective speakers, and other things and such. But more than that, in 2021, we collaborated in the coordination and implementation of a full-week course in Universal Acceptance, which was a very successful thing. This Universal Acceptance course took many months to collaborate between NARALO and the North American Global Stakeholder Group. And it was just four weeks of Universal Acceptance course that went from the basic all the way to the actual coding of how you provide access and manage some of these Universal Acceptance addresses in emails and such.

So I'm going to pass the microphone to Glenn to give you—next slide, please—some details about the Universal Acceptance course and the results. We believe that we were very successful in recruiting and the participation through all this week of some of the students. So, Glenn, please.

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GLENN MCKNIGHT:

Great, thank you, everybody. I need to shout out to our coordinator. It was Bill Jouris. And all of us from myself, Bill, and Eduardo, were the NAROLO representatives. And we had weekly calls to facilitate the organization and marketing of the sessions. Now this is the second round of Universal Acceptance. The first group—and I think we learned a lot from LACRALO. LACRALO organized their sessions. Their sessions very, very well attended, highly successful. And we had a really high watermark to raise to. And so we had expectations but I think—and I won't be very long on this. You'll see in the next slide that we did extremely well. So let's go to the next one.

So here's the list. Back in January we launched the first class in this. And it was an hour long. And it was an introduction to Universal Acceptance and EAI. The second one was on January 27. And it dealt getting into the Java programming and scripting with the facilitators on EAI configuration, followed by February 3<sup>rd</sup>, a UA for Java software. And then Mark did a—and I believe Mark—welcome, Mark, he's on the call today as well. And Mark did a really good wrap-up, what it's like to be the life of a UA ambassador. And some of our goals of this initiative is to get people who had the language skills and interest to actually get involved with us, to actually join the working group as a UA ambassador. Next slide, please.

So this is what one of the benefits of attending at least three of the four sessions. They received a certificate of completion. And we had a very substantial number from Jamaica, which is not in the North American area but is an English-speaking country. And they were happy to join the sessions and it was really great. And that was largely

because of ICANN staff that actually did have great contacts with two universities in Kingston. And they were able to attend. But we had representatives—and you’ll see in the graphic in the next slide—from a lot of different countries. So if we can go to the next slide.

So you can see the registrations when we started this off. And this is normal, guys. You all know this. Lots of people register and life gets in the way. So we had over 300 people register. It was amazing. And no one believed that we could get this kind of numbers coming to our session. In fact, I think, Eduardo, didn’t we have a bet? Didn’t you lose the bet with me that I said over 300?

EDUARDO DIAZ:

Yes, I lost the bet at 100.

GLENN MCKNIGHT:

I can’t remember what the bet was for, but you owe me. Because I think I won the bet. So as you can see we started off. And then each of the sessions, and especially when you get to the last session, people have done the three sessions. They’re not necessarily going to opt into the fourth one. But we still maintained a good number as you can see in the numbers. And thank you, Daniel Fink, for doing this graphic for us.

But the average time was pretty good, in terms of retention. And each of the classes also had quizzes. So it wasn’t like we let them sit back and be idle. We probed them with the questions throughout the session. And then the slideshows were available so that they can

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review them afterwards. And again we encouraged them with a post survey to get involved. Next slide.

Okay, so you can see we were wondering where they were coming from. And I'm sure Ed is quite interested in this. See, from the technical community we had almost 20%. 23% from the business community, 38% from academia, and 17% from civil society. So we had quite a mix.

And the majority from a programming language point of view were not real experts at it. But still 34% had a programming background. And at this point I don't know which type of programming they had. But we hope it was relevant. So again, the relatively good split in terms of gender and then the level of knowledge from novice right up to expert. Next slide.

Okay, yeah, so this is a breakdown. I want to point out that a lot of people—and you can see the huge amount from Jamaica—but we had people from India, from Ghana, from Brazil, from Trinidad. So it wasn't restricted to just North American attendees. But our marketing worked internationally and they were more than welcome. Next slide.

And you can see, as from a marketing point of view, things were a bit slow. But then it really kicked up in terms of—this is typical, right? People jump into this stuff at the last moment after you bug them like crazy. Make sure you register. Remember in high school you never did your homework till the night before. So it's the same thing. People finally registered.

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Next slide. And that's it. I'm going to turn it back to Eduardo on the next steps.

EDUARDO DIAZ: Except for me, well, I don't have the next steps. So we go to talk to Naela about it.

GLENN MCKNIGHT: Okay.

EDUARDO DIAZ: Thank you.

NAELA SARRAS: Okay, so this is coming back to me. Thank you, Eduardo, and thank you, Glenn. This was next steps with regards to the Universal Acceptance, right? The course, that next steps? Okay.

So what we aim to do and hopefully we can achieve is, so as Glenn said, we had amazing registration, amazing participation. So now how do we make sure that the people that we engaged with during this training really remain engaged? And how do we check on was that training of value? And did they follow up on it? And are they actually utilizing it?

The quizzes that we did throughout the course gave us an insight on who they are. So are they like server operators, people who configure email servers, and are able to put this to use? And then another place

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where we directed them to during that four-week session is to engage with the Universal Acceptance Steering Group.

At some point we should probably discuss that here and explain who the UASG is. But it's a huge effort that's really led mostly by the community and supported by ICANN staff. They're working on several different areas of Universal Acceptance from how to do the technical part and how to communicate and how to get people as ambassadors to advocate for this, etc.

So we aimed to try and connect back with those students a few weeks to a few months after the training and see has it stuck. Did we really engage with them? Are they using it? Have they gotten involved with the UASG? And what further support or what further learning can we get from this participation that we could apply in future offerings?

That's, I think, what we'd like to achieve. That match with what you, Glenn and Eduardo, hoped to get out of this? And, Bill, I know you're here too. Okay, I don't see any hands up or anyone speaking. So I'll just say that's hopefully what we want to do next.

EDUARDO DIAZ:

Oh, I didn't have my microphone on. So I say, yes, I would agree to what you said. Yes. We need to follow up with people to see how people are applying these concepts going forward. So basically that's what we said. Thank you.

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NAELA SARRAS:

Exactly. And I think as laid out in the ICANN Strategic Plan, in our engagement plan, in just about almost every session that we go to in this ICANN meeting, for example this week there's a lot, a lot of talk about Universal Acceptance. And how do we get the TLDs that are currently in the Root Zone to be working equally regardless of the script that they're expressed in? Or how long they are beyond the traditional two-character, three-character TLDs?

So there's not a shortage of work and opportunity to engage in this work. And that's what we hope to do.

So thank you, NARALO. Thank you for partnering with us on this. It was really a fun experience. And I'm looking forward to future opportunities to do more of this. So we do have a few minutes left. Alex, do we have any questions to NARALO about the presentation they did or any questions in general?

ALEXANDRA DANS:

We don't have [inaudible] questions. I don't know if someone wants to raise their hands but not in the chat.

NAELA SARRAS:

Okay, all right, thank you. Please go ahead and raise your hands if you have any questions. Or if you want to engage with any of our presenters today.

What I wanted to do, taking the last few minutes in this session, is to think with you guys on how do we want to structure this type of

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session going forward. Greg, I see your hand so I'll call on you in a minute. But essentially this is our second time where we designed this session. And I want to keep it alive and keep it fresh and keep it interesting.

I think hearing from you is much more interesting than it is for us to go over what we think is important to talk about. So this is an invitation to everyone to please contact us. I presented the team at the beginning of this session. I will put our emails for Joe and myself in the chat. If you have ideas for what topics you want to see us cover in more of these invitations where we have people like Edward presenting on NANOG, a partner we don't typically hear from at the ICANN meeting, we'd love to do more of this.

So any ideas on how to make this session serve what purposes that was created for would be really appreciated. So I'll stop here and go to you, Greg. Please go ahead.

GREG SHATAN:

Thanks. I just wanted to respond with not what you just said but—which is a fascinating question but just not what I was responding to—I have both the hat on of the president of ISOC-New York and also a current member of the ALAC through the NomCom but from NARALO. And just wanted to say that essentially on behalf of ISOC-New York we're really looking for opportunities to partner with ICANN and with NANOG and with ISOC-Global as well as with other ISOC chapters, which we do do, for any kinds of programs, virtual or now we can go back to live programming.



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New York is both a hot bed and a desert of internet governance activity in a number of odd ways I don't need to go into right now. But there's certainly a lot of opportunity. So I'm just offering up our mailing list and team and stuff like that and functional spaces that we have. So happy to try to make things work. Joe Catapano and I have put on a number of things in the before times. And somehow the pandemic was not inspiring but it's time to get re-inspired and put more stuff on. And just looking forward to anything that we can do. Thanks.

NAELA SARRAS:

Excellent, thank you, Greg. And I know you're no stranger to Joe. And I know he's told me about successful things that you've put on before. So we'll certainly take you up on that offer. I can promise that much, Greg. So thank you. Glenn, I see your hand up.

GLENN MCKNIGHT:

Yeah, very quickly. I have to commend you and Joe for your openness and your accessibility. You've been great helping us with ideas on our month-to-month calls, providing speakers and suggestions, which has been a huge success. So we appreciate your feedback and advice. And as you know we are trying our best to empower our community and educate them.

And again I just wanted to shout out to Greg. His chapter is one of the oldest ISOC chapters and well established. Great group and a great job that Greg is doing, so we're happy to help you in any way possible. And

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as we move forward away from these restrictions, look forward to lots of great stuff. So again thank you for all the work.

NAELA SARRAS:

Thank you, Glenn. That's really kind of you to say. And I'm grateful for you recognizing us. Joe and I are trying as best as we can with the restrictions that we have. But we're really looking forward to some of these restrictions going away and being able to hopefully engage and even do more. For sure in person when we can, absolutely. All right.

EDUARDO DIAZ:

Naela, before we go. Another thing that we can do during this meeting is also something that we do, just a very small presentation of something key, like a keynote type thing, version. But not for the whole period, just for a while, maybe have a discussion about that specific thing. Would make it more dynamic in that sense.

NAELA SARRAS:

Yeah, I really like that, Eduardo. And I was trying to think earlier. I like that idea. And I think we need to pick the topic based on maybe like something on the agenda of this community or the North American space that we want to kind of push or tease out or get more input on. So I completely agree with you.

And I think what we'll do next time, before we organize this, is engage on what is it that this community wants to talk about. Who do we want

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to question? Who do we want to get more information out of? I like that idea a lot. So for sure we will be reaching out.

We do have one more minute I should say. In terms of timing of the space, it's not envisioned that we'll have this space in every ICANN meeting. Because as you know the meeting moves around the world. So we're thinking to have the space around the meetings when it's meaningful in terms of time zone.

So when it's somewhere in the Americas it seems to be a better time zone for the North America space to happen than when the meeting is somewhere, let's say, in Asia for example. So we'll be communicating and engaging in terms of cadence and how often to have it. And when does it make sense to hold this session.

Okay, so I see no more hands and I see no more questions. There's some comments in the chat. But I think, seeing as we are almost at the top of the hour or we are, I want to thank everyone so much for joining this session.

Thank you for your time being here today. Thank you for your contributions to the presentations today. It was enlightening and helpful and very good to connect the community together in this fashion. We really appreciate your time and hope that you enjoy the rest of your ICANN meeting.

Thank you very much. This session is now closed. Please stop the recording.

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