ICANN75 | AGM – RSS Governance Working Group Meeting (5 of 6)
Tuesday, September 20, 2022 – 15:00 to 16:00 KUL

OZAN SAHIN:

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With that, I will hand the floor over to Brad Verd.

BRAD VERD: Thank you, Ozan. Welcome, everybody. The last day. Two sessions today—this one and one following after a 3-minute break. That will conclude our substantive discussions here in KL.

So again, thank you for all of your contributions so far. And I'm really looking forward to this one, as I feel this one should have some passionate responses, much like we had the other day. So I'm looking forward to this.

Today, RSO designation and removal. Obviously, we are again trying to focus on governance principles. While my guess is that we'll touch on a number of architectural ones, we want to try to draw that back to governance ones and capture what the thought process is so that we can have bigger discussions later when the rubber hits the road and we start really arguing about [and we] drill down to what our principles are, again, for the functional documents of the governance system.

So with that said, let's jump into designation and removal. This is, again, from the white paper that everybody's seen. The document that we've been adding notes to all along.

Principles to be used by relevant participants in the root server governance structure to decide whether or not to designate an RSO or remove the designation of an RSO or alter the number and nature of RSOs.

Again, I'd like to, when we have our discussion, try to focus on trust and how we increase trust, how the RSS governance system can increase trust so the stakeholders think that. Well, so the stakeholders trust it, believe it, feel good, feel safe, feel like they're represented or that they don't have any ill feelings towards it. So let's try to keep asking those questions of that.

So with that, I want to open up the floor if there are any people who have done some homework and done some thought process and would like to share some principles around designation and removal. If not, I have a few I can jump in with and hopefully get the conversation going. But I hope I don't have to get there. So does anybody want to jump in and try to kick us off?

Liman.

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: I have one that to me is very obvious, but I want to have it at a prominent place in all of these discussions. And that is that these transactions should be, to the extent possible, based on the technical reasons and that we try to maintain that the Root Server System as a whole is technical infrastructure and we try to avoid making it something that becomes a political game. So, to focus on the technical parts is something that I would like to see. Thanks.

BRAD VERD: Okay. Unfortunately, that is not a drop-the-mi moment and walk away. So I assumed … Sorry. For those of you not in the room, a couple of people were like, "Amen," hands up, whatnot. But I had assumed this was going to come out rather quickly. Principle 5 in RSSAC037. I'll just read it.

"Architectural changes should result in the technical evolution and demonstrated technical need. RSOs should embrace emerging technologies affecting the RSS as long, as the internet's globally unique namespace is preserved."

That is an architectural principle, as clearly stated. And so what I'd like to ask of you, Liman, and others in the room is how do we pull out or tease out that governance principle around that?

It went a little quiet. We'll do Kaveh and then Jeff Osborn.

KAVEH RANJBAR: So I think it should start with the measure, basically. So how to measure if something qualifies for technical need or not. And I think measuring that then leads us to governing it and enforcing monitoring and all of that. Right?

BRAD VERD: I don't know. What do people think?

KAVEH RANJBAR: So by measure, I mean we need to have something that we can basically say, "Okay, this meets this criteria over whatever" and that the end result is, "Is this a technical need or not?" So basically, an assessment tool.

BRAD VERD: All right, we'll let that cogitate for a minute. Geoff, you wanted to go?

GEOFF HUSTON: Yes, I had my hand up. Can you hear me?

BRAD VERD: Yes. Geoff Huston, please. And Geoff, just for the just for the record, I was referring to you as Mr. Huston in the last meeting

because there were too many Jeffs in the room. So apologies if that came across [inaudible].

GEOFF HUSTON: I will accept that protocol, Mr. Verd, from here on [inaudible].

BRAD VERD: I was just calling on Jeff Osborn and you answered, but please go ahead. And then we will jump to Jeff Osborn. So Mr. Houston, you have the mic.

GEOFF HUSTON: I find that issue of measurement as a technical thing leading to principles of designation in particular, or removal, to be tenuous insofar as the system to date has actually demonstrated remarkable versatility in adapting itself to evolving technical requirements without changing the designation of root service operators. And the ability of the system in its current form to adapt and change without necessarily changing the entities who operate is actually, I suppose, a critical factor here.

It's possible, technically, to demonstrate a need for change. But it's not as easy to demonstrate that that need for change necessarily leads to a designation or removal action. Because equally, the existing players can change what they do to adapt to those changing circumstances.

So I'm not I'm not aligned to "if we measure it, it becomes clear" because I'm not sure that's the case. Thank you.

BRAD VERD: Yeah. Mr. Huston, I would agree with that. I think, again, measuring it is getting into some sort of technical nature or technical architecture principle. But that's just my initial response to those comments from Kaveh and Geoff Huston.

Mr. Osborn.

JEFF OSBORN: Thanks. Jeff Osborn, ISC. I just want to make sure I understand. Lars made the point that the political considerations should be out of scope of this discussion. Are we all agreed on that?

There's a great statement in the last sentence of this where it says "... trustworthiness ethos, funding, business models, openness, community participation, and politics are out of scope ..." And so I'm stealing that and asking, does that apply to this? Are we saying this is an entirely technical discussion and that other things are out of scope? It changes the discussion substantially, I think. Right?

BRAD VERD: Any response directly to Jeff on that before I jumped to Robert? Liman.

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: I would argue, yes, insofar as when we're talking about triggering factors for making changes. As the discussion goes further and we get further into the weeds, we may need to adapt to some of these things. But as a triggering factor, I think the answer is yes.

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: Wes. And then we'll go to Robert.

WES HARDAKER: This is Wes Hardaker, USC. The only thing that I might alter to that, Jeff, is the need for organizational diversity and—

[JEFF OSBORN]:   [inaudible] curious [inaudible].

WES HARDAKER: I would sort of leave that to the SAPC replacement to deal with how to do that. But I think if we designated a lot of new things that were all very similar, that might be a bad thing.

BRAD VERD:	Robert. And Mr. Osborn, your hand is still up.
ROB CAROLINA:	Yes, thanks. Rob Carolina, ISC. A couple points. The first, just to draw out the statement from RSSAC024, which is up on the screen right now, this is kind of an interesting historical artifact that I stumbled into which is, of course, RSSAC024 is a description of technical elements for potential root operators. It is a very technically-focused ... It is entirely focused on technological considerations for designating new RSOs.

The reason that I dropped this text into the working document for your consideration is not because that document talks about technical things, but because almost as an "oh, by the way" in Section 1 Paragraph 3, there's this statement which says in effect ... You can go and look at the document RSSAC024 directly because this is a little bit ... I tried to decompose the sentence a little bit.

But it says "non-technical aspects like trustworthiness, ethos, funding, business models, openness, community participation, and politics ..." We're not going to talk about it today in RSSAC024, which was many years ago. But what I find interesting was the continuation of the statement that says, "but they're important and we're going to need to talk about them eventually."

So what I would challenge you to do would be to consider that this is the day to begin that discussion. So RSSAC024 really just stands for the principle that, for a very long time, there's been an acknowledgment that these are the kinds of issues that have to be thought about in designating a new root server operator. So I would suggest to you that they should not only be very much on the table … All of these elements—trustworthiness, ethos, non-technical—all of that stuff. But it's [quarter] requirements.

Now it may well be that you choose only some of these as being important and others as not being important, but I think that those should be knowing choices with a principle that underpins them.

What I'd like to suggest, though, is that what comes out of Principle 5 … Carlos, if you scroll up just a little bit from RSSAC055. Principle 5 of RSSAC055 is a classic example of what looks on the face of it like a purely architectural principle. And I think that RSSAC055, a lot of those principles, have an overwhelming component of architectural principles in them.

But if we look at it really closely, I think there's an interesting governance principle to tease out from that. And the principle, I'm not exactly sure how to wordsmith it, but it's something along the lines of … The process of designating and removing RSOs

really ought to be—should I say—a small "c" conservative process.

In other words it's the kind of thing where if somebody says, "I have an idea. Let's designate an additional 50 RSOs in two months," that's probably, on its face, a bad idea. Why is it a bad idea?

Well, Principle 5, "…changes should result from technical evolution demonstrated technical need." And then in the explanatory paragraph, must evolve with caution. "Evolve with the caution expected…"

So there's a huge cautionary note here, and I think that cautionary note is one of the key principles that ought to try to be abstracted out in the discussion. That sort of conservative … Things need to move at a careful, considered, cautious pace.

BRAD VERD: Thank you, Robert. Suzanne, Peter, and the Ash.

SUZANNE WOOLF: Thanks, Brad. I'm going to concur with Rob's comment and sort of take it another step in more or less the same direction. I think it's safe to figure that the technical requirements we're setting up are not that terribly difficult to meet. We're not going to be scouring the earth looking for people that can provide the service

to a professional level consistent with the technical requirements we have.

So that almost leaves the non-material factors as the differentiators. And I think we need to keep that in mind, whether we want to have a longer list of principles for guidance in setting up the criteria or in judging in the situation we find ourselves in. But I think it's important to keep in mind that the day-to-day operational things …

It's a high mark. We should not be compromising the mark there. But we are much more likely to have more offers of candidates than fewer. Thanks.

BRAD VERD: Thanks, Suzanne. Peter and the Ash.

PETER KOCH: Peter Koch, DENIC as a ccNSO appointee. First, maybe a direct response to the previous statement. I think we might want to distinguish between the technical criteria to be applied to a potential root server operator—whether that's an additional "not"—or technical criteria for making a decision about numbers or replacement because those might be different.

On a more general note, I don't think that "technical" is a term that will have the shielding effect that we might want to achieve

with that or that some someone might want to achieve with that in the same spirit that security, stability, and resilience is now also used as a reason for things that probably have little to do with security, stability, and resilience. Just as an as an example.

So the next step would be that we argue about whether or not something is a technical criterion. And that's probably a waste of time and will not stop people to propose that they would be a good addition to this.

And with that, I think we might ... Well, the obvious situation is something where there's a row of candidates for becoming a root server operator ... There might be situations or there might be a situation that comes earlier, is the question of replacement, for example.

And that could happen all of a sudden if one of the root name server operators—and looking at no one in particular, just for making the point—decides to cease operation. And then immediate question would be, does the system have to replace this operator or can we run with the remaining ones and still argue that the system is stable?

And that's it. Thank you.

BRAD VERD: Ash.

ASHWIN RANGAN: Thanks, Brad. I see this as a two-phase operation, and the second phase has a couple of steps to it. So the first phase for me is, is there a need to promote an additional root server operator and what are the criteria to determine that?

And I think the governance principle there needs to be some sort of yardstick that says that there is indeed a need. Now when once the need has been identified, then it goes to the second phase of identifying potential candidates.

The way I read this is that there could be a set of technical qualifiers which become necessary conditions in order for somebody to step up to the plate and become an RSO. But that those technical qualifiers are not a sufficiency condition. And I think the governance principle for me there would be the non-technical aspects which would really have an impactful sway on whether or not to admit that qualified candidate from a technical perspective to indeed become a candidate to be considered.

The fact that they have technical qualifications, I think those are concrete factors and the non-technical aspects become much more subjective. And therein lies the art of governance where you have a governance body that adjudicates whether they should be admitted based on those non-technical aspects as much as their qualification to technically be competent. Thank you.

BRAD VERD: Thank you, Ash. Jim, welcome. Please.

JIM REED: Thanks very much, Brad. Jim Reed, speaking as an IETF nominee to this committee. I was a bit concerned about this comment we've got down here from RSSAC024—"… believes these non-technical aspects to be important and expect them to be part of the overall evaluation."

                              If this committee is not going to be the organization of the entity which deals with those non-technical aspects of this whole exercise, who is? Does this mean that we're going to chuck this one into the wall and say "it's nothing to do with us" and leave it to ICANN to figure out how all of these non-technical considerations get taken into account?

                              It seems to me that this is probably something this committee should be doing because there's probably nobody else that's got the necessary expertise, even though we're not politicians.

BRAD VERD: Thank you, Jim. Geoff Huston.

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GEOFF HUSTON: Thanks, Mr. Verd. I have two comments. Firstly, I think I'll chime in and say, again, I don't think I agree that you can view this issue through a purely technical lens. And the reason why is, I'd refer back to the issue of instilling trust. Ultimately, trust is not technical. Trust encompasses politics, geography, perceptions of control, participation, ethos, etc. Even history. And you cannot simply dismiss all of those factors and say, "Well, the resultant recommendations, people should trust them," because you haven't addressed the core issue of actually what makes trust.

My second thing is that we're talking a lot of principles without understanding what we're talking about, or at least clearly defining this. When we say "adding or removing a root service operator," what do we mean? Is it the letter? In which case, isn't A and J being run by the same entity already sort of an anomaly here? Certainly one could merge entities behind two letters and make them one entity, as we already have with A and J. So do we mean letters or entities?

Secondly, what is the root? And I would actually say it's the root hints file set of IP addresses, all 26 of them. So are we talking adding or removing IP addresses from the root hints file? It's not clear to me, even at a technical level, what this discussion means when it says "adding an RSO" or "removing an RSO."

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I think there's an assumption that it's the package—the letter, the IP address, the entity. But they are separable concepts, and I think we should apply a little bit more rigor to the definitions here about what we mean, at a technical level, oddly enough, in order to have a broader debate about instilling trust and the politics of trust. Thank you.

BRAD VERD: Thank you, Geoff. I'm in the queue here in front of you, Robert, real quick. A couple things. One, Geoff, I agree. I don't know if we should define anything versus maybe adopt definitions that have already been done.

There is an RSSAC document. I was just trying to look through the RSSAC publications. I can't remember the number off of the top my head, but it is a document that defines essentially what a root server is. And it's three things. It's in the hints file, in root servers.net, and in the apex of the root zone.

That's really distilled down, but there were those three items that defined what an RSO—or an identity was that defined what the RSO was. I think maybe we just inherit that and maybe that addresses your question. If not, then let's talk about that.

Secondly—

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GEOFF HUSTON: Can I make a quick—

BRAD VERD: Absolutely. Yeah, please.

GEOFF HUSTON: [inaudible] very quick follow up.

BRAD VERD: Please, jump in.

GEOFF HUSTON: The assumption is, here, that the IP address, the letter, and the entity are bound together, and different entities have different attributes. But even today, that's not the case. And I and J are an example of that. So it's not quite as clear-cut as the documents would lead us to believe. There was the point I was making. Thank you. Sorry to interrupt.

BRAD VERD: RSSAC030. just found it as you were talking, Geoff. RSSAC030 is the one I'm talking about.

GEOFF HUSTON: Thank you. I'll look it up.

BRAD VERD: We can add it to the chat, also. Okay. My other comment that I wanted to make, just on a personal note, you know we're talking about ... Sorry, I had made a note here. I'm trying to do too much at once here.

So regarding what Robert had said with the small "c" conservative approach or process. The way I think about it is— and I've kind of said this for a long time in different venues, including ICANN—is that I've always considered the root to be over the wire. It's just another zone.

But it's not just another zone. It's different. It's special—I don't know— white glove. I don't know how you want to talk about it, but it's different. And so I kind of agree with taking a very cautious approach to it.

So when I think about trust and I think about things that can either add to trust or degrade the trust, I think of expanding quickly. I think that would degrade the trust. Meaning expanding the number of identities, adding an RSO, and touching on those three items in RSSAC030. Overexpansion, adding just hundreds. I think that would ... If I'm outside, I think that wouldn't help in the trust. It degrades in the trust.

And then operationally, I put my hat on. If you have over expansion or lots and lots of them, to me the more change you

have going on in a zone that you need to be very careful with and very diligent with, the more opportunity for problems and/or errors. That's just like Operational 101 that just comes to my mind when I think about that.

So those are just thoughts that I wanted to add to the conversation. Robert, you were next in the queue.

ROB CAROLINA: Thanks very much. Rob Carolina, ISC. I'd like to pick up the challenge that Geoff Huston has put down because I think it's a very good one. And I think it's important to clarify it to bring that rigor to what is being discussed.

And what I'd like to suggest is this. The subject under discussion is the designation of root server operators. Now in my mind, that triggers the idea of the entity who is actually operating the infrastructure as opposed to the infrastructure itself. Now what's in my mind kind of doesn't matter. What matters is, what's the task at hand?

The task at hand is about trying to figure out governance principles. And governance principles ultimately revolve around this problem of what do people—or in this case entities—do. How do we trust that a system … Or how do we show accountability and responsibility among persons? Among entities?

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So I would urge you all to take the approach of focusing the conversation on the actual problem of assessing the entity itself. Now there may well be—I suspect there must be—a really interesting discussion to be had around all of the technological and architectural characteristics that are coming up, which is: how many letters? Can letters be shared? How often do you change the IP number that you broadcast?

All of those things are incredibly important principles. However, I think that you'll probably make the most progress if you focus very specifically on this question of: who are they? Look at the entity itself and will …

In fact, one of the things that I've put down in response to Geoff Huston's comment that Carlos has up on the screen because I think … It's been said a couple of times, and I think Geoff Huston put it very, very strongly that trust is a core issue. So one of the suggested …

And remember, these are not principles that are being agreed. Nothing's being agreed. These are just a laundry list of principles for further discussion and exploration. Decisions concerning designations of RSOs by which—when I drafted that sentence, I assume that means the entities fulfilling the function and determining the size of the RSS—those key criteria must preserve and enhance trust in the RSS.

This will be my last comment and I'll switch the mic off—for a moment—and that is, trust must be reposed in persons. Trust is a function of personal relationship. And then the technological tools that enable and signal that trust are part of the technical architecture that gets born from the process. They're both important. You can't have one without the other.

But where there's been limited focus up until now and where the big opportunity today is to focus on that entity level, what does it take to trust the people who are making the decisions?

BRAD VERD: Thank you, Robert. Any feedback? Ash.

WES HARDAKER: Brad, are you looking at the queue in Zoom?

BRAD VERD: I'm sorry. I have been looking at the queue in Zoom. There was nobody in it when I called on Ash, and the only person in it right now   is   Erum. And she just got in it.

ASHWIN RANGAN: Sorry. Am I taking someone else's spot?

WES HARDAKER: No.

ASHWIN RANGAN: Do you want to speak, Wes?

BRAD VERD: Did I screw up, Wes?

WES HARDAKER: I'm queuing up in the GAC Board [Discussion room], but …

ASHWIN RANGAN: Oh, okay.

BRAD VERD: That would be a problem, then.

ASHWIN RANGAN: That may be a small problem.

BRAD VERD: You might be getting called on and not answering. Just letting you know.

ASHWIN RANGAN: We trust you to make the right call here, Wes.

BRAD VERD: To Ash, Erum, Peter. And then we'll do Wes.

ASHWIN RANGAN: Thank you. I want to pull on the trust threat a little bit more. I think there is an aspect of trust of the RSS as a collective, and therefore the manner in which the world looks at the RSS as a collective. There is an aspect of how we govern the expansion or contraction of that collective. So there is that layer of governance.

There is an aspect of trust that is pertinent to the entity or entities that are admitted to be a part of the RSS collective, and there is an aspect of governance associated with that. And in the selection of or the deselection of, there will be trust issues one way or another—positive or negative.

There's a third layer of governance if and when entities are either admitted or unselected. And that is in the trustworthiness of the infrastructure resulting from the admittance or the lack thereof of those entities. At the end of the day, that is the impact that's felt by the world. The other factors contribute, but the technical infrastructure is where the impact of what we do, our actions, will actually be observed by the rest of the world.

So I believe that there are layers of governance involved here, and we need to be cognizant of those layers as we go forward because the question here is, what is the governance connotation stemming from the architectural considerations?

So I think the architectural considerations for me become very much checkboxes of ensuring that the entity that is requesting to be a part of this RSS collective has those capabilities and we're able to observe and we're able to make sure that they're available. But the governance considerations are multi-layered. Thank you.

BRAD VERD: Thank you, Ash. Erum.

ERUM WELLING: Thank you. I very much agree with what Ash just said. The one thing I would like to just make sure that we all recognize is that trust is really in the eyes of the beholder. And if you try to focus on trust, satisfying trust in some usual, non-technical—where you bring the politics into it or you bring other perhaps non-logical aspects into trying to satisfy the concept of trust, I think you're going to fail. I've seen it over and over again.

I'm very heavily involved in the ITU side, and I can tell you that people from different backgrounds will bring in entirely opposite

views of what you might consider as being trust. So I think to approach this as much as possible, what we started the whole discussion with is the triggers. Right? We've got to focus on technical triggers.

The one thing I have found is that the more you focus on the technical aspects, the more you can be transparent about the technical aspects of your decisions, but the more trust you will gain just by the fact that people cannot bring the emotions, cannot bring their politics, cannot bring their agenda into the picture.

So I just wanted to mention that. That I really do believe that trust is in the eye of the beholder, and it's not something that we can grasp for based on, really, anything outside of technical aspects because people will bring their background very much into it and it becomes very much a ... There's too much politics involved in it and too much personal views. So, thank you. That's all. Thanks.

BRAD VERD: Thanks, Erum. We've got Peter, Wes, and then Mr. Osborn.

PETER KOCH: Okay, thanks. So on this trust issue, in the end it is nice to say it as in people, but that usually doesn't scale. Right? And also, in reality we rely on institutionalized trust. I trust a certificate, not

because I know the people behind it. And maybe even if I knew them, I wouldn't trust.

But that set aside, there's institutionalized trust in processes, in oversight, and so on and so forth. There might be one shim somewhere which then would define the target audience for the trust. But the scaling issue would suggest to me that even the ICANN community is too big to be that shim. That makes me ask, who is the audience? Who are the trustees who would trust the people in the end to institutionalize the trust in the Root Server System or in the roots of operators collective? Because you can't shake everybody's hand.

BRAD VERD: Thank you, Peter. Erum, your hand is still up. Is that old?

ERUM WELLING: Apologies.

BRAD VERD: Wes.

WES HARDAKER: Thanks. Wes Hardaker, USC representative. I should say when I'm in this room, I have no other hats. I wear at least three hats—thank

you, Warren—if not more. But when I'm speaking here, it's really just as the USC representative to the root server.

The designation and removal is our favorite subject to talk about. Right? It's hard, it's interesting, and it's incredibly important. So I'm going to echo a little bit about what Rob said with respect to our scope, but frame it in a different way.

Our goal here is to define a government structure. It is not to answer that question. It is to define the bubbles that do answer that question. And where should it be answered and when that decision is needed to be made in the future, how should it be done, and how should the evolution of the governance structure take that into account?

Maybe they need to change in the future. We need to define the policies and procedures for the evolution of where this decision is made. And it probably won't be consistent over time. But it's not to us to define how to deal with designation and removals. It's to us to define how that decision should be made which sounds very meta, but it's turtles all of the way down.

But I love the discussion of trust. Right? How do we define these bubbles such that we trust the decision things that come out of these bubbles will be made with the proper consideration of information that they have available? And that, really, to me comes down to when these bubbles are going to act. Not only do

we trust who's in the bubbles, but what information are they allowed to use? What information are they allowed to take into consideration when they're making their determinations?

When we were talking about RSSAC037, a lot of thought went into auditing and designation and removal. And do you use RSSAC047 stats and things like that in order to figure out where that bar is? And how many RSOs there should be or how many designations there should be was defined in the SAPF. In the new world model, in the new Org model, it was really the SAPC and ad hoc committees, from what I remember of standing up and actually doing the designation and removal as needed.

So my plea is that that's where we should restrict our scope to—defining the governments and all of that make that decision in the future. And it's pushing the can down the road, unfortunately, but that's the job of this group—to figure out how to make the decision, not to make it. In my humble opinion.

BRAD VERD: May I, Jeff, really quick? So really quickly, my train of thought around that is a couple of different things. One going back to RSSAC058 and the principles, a couple of things in the success criteria. We say that somebody who were to take over an RSO or whatnot should be "subject to careful scrutiny to assure that the

transferee is an appropriate entity (i.e., a 'fit and proper person' ..."

So those are all things that I think we've spent a lot of time talking about and defining. And we need to remind ourselves that when it comes to ... What I hear you saying, and I'm trying to feed it back to you—and I'd love you to tell me I'm wrong or right, I don't know—is that we are trying to define the principles here that will be used to defend what you just said—meaning the process.

And the principles that we're trying to iron out here are what's going to defend all of those processes that are going to be put together on how to choose, what to choose, where to choose, and so forth. Is that ...

WES HARDAKER: Yeah. I think that's another fair way of restating it. If there's ever a moment where we shouldn't get into the weeds of how to make the decision, it's this one. Right?

So how do we construct the right representatives that go into each of the groups that have to make that decision such that we trust the results and we trust the governance system as a whole to make that decision in the future because we're not going to make it today? So I think we're in rough wording agreement.

BRAD VERD: Thank you. Sorry, Jeff. Jeff Osborn and then Geoff Huston.

JEFF OSBORN: Thanks, Brad. Jeff Osborn, ISC. I'm missing the forest and the trees and the rest of it. I think what I'm trying to figure out is … We're talking about adding and subtracting organizations, and then the need is sort of secondary. I'm just wondering if we publish something that says, "Here's the acceptance criteria for somebody who wants to be a new root server operator," I suspect it's going to look like a line for Rolling Stones tickets. I think an awful lot of organizations are going to want to do this.

So on the other hand, we're acting like someday, if it becomes important to let somebody in, we'll have a process. And so we're designing a dam in a desert. That might be a problem because if trust requires the inclusion of more organizations, then that's a different problem from, "How does the process work currently?"

I'm going to steal a Brad phrase that I really love, which is "what does good look like?" And I would like to say, what does a good root server operation look like? What does a good RSS look like? And from my limited view, the current one looks pretty good. We've got a great track record with no outages since God wore shorts, and it's all kind of working.

So I'm not seeing the compelling reason to quickly patch it. And absent that, it's difficult to say, "Why would you need to add or

subtract them?" So, I guess, are we missing a problem statement? What exactly are we trying to solve? What would a good Root Server System look like? Is it much different from the current one? Are we just trying to address growth? Is there a problem we see coming that we're trying to prevent?

Or, the 800 pound gorilla in the room. Is there a political problem we're going to have until there's inclusion of a whole bunch of people who think they need to be involved in this for the world to be a fair place?

WES HARDAKER: I'd be happy to [inaudible].

BRAD VERD: Okay. Wes, you're in the queue. Geoff Huston.

GEOFF HUSTON: I couldn't agree with Jeff Osborn more, and I think it actually reflects back on us. This is not yet another meeting of the RSOs and their fellow travelers. This is not a meeting solely of the incumbents in a process. Because if you ask incumbents to a cartel, are you trusted? The obvious answer is yes. It'll always be yes, and you get endless justification as to why this collective is trustable.

But what if you encompass diversity and ask others? Do they trust it or do they feel coerced because of the lack of choice? And is that lack of choice a problem? You know, trust is many things. And part of the issue in today's real world is, "Well, one of ours is on the inside of that fence, therefore we trust the collective because one of our champions is in there."

But this is not like that. The consistent answer to "I want it, too" is no and not yes. And what goes through my head is the totally abstract thought process, what if that long queue that someone said was going to happen—whether it was Wes or whatever—what if the answer was yes to every single one? Just, yes. What would it change about the perceptions of trust? Once you remove the irrational perceptions of exclusivity, how do you then instill trust?

And we're starting to get into some interesting questions here that it's not for us to solve. But I think those are the key questions about the structures of the Root Server System, the accountability and mechanisms of trust, that we have to build things that have sufficient diversity that they can take these folk who appear to have legitimate opinions that vary from the incumbents.

If you went into the room of GAC and you asked each of those folk individually, you'd find a much broader diversity than you'd find

in this room right here, right now. Now I'm not suggesting this is soluble by us. As I said, that's not the case.

But I think this key element of trying to encompass a plurality of views and a diversity of views that when you talk about fundamental changes in the composition of operators—adding, designating, expanding, whatever—you have to create structures that include that diversity of views in order to make trusted and accountable decisions.

And so as a key principle here, the real principle is that diversity of collaboration and diversity of opinions and views before you reach any conclusion about altering the structure should be a decent principle to actually work on. Thank you.

BRAD VERD: Thank you, Geoff Huston. Jeff Osborn, your hand is still up. Are you …

JEFF OSBORN: Sorry.

WES HARDAKER: Wes, you're in the queue. And then Kurt.

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WES HARDAKER: Thank you. So I think that the purpose, Geoff, in particular to respond to your earlier statements which are fantastic—what does a good RSS look like? That is absolutely a key question.

But the question of what is a good RSS and what does it look like is sort of the purpose of creating some entity. I mean, in both proposals it's been the SAPF, SAPC-like body for determining what is good. How many RSS are needed? Many people have said we have too many now. Right? It should really be eight, is a number frequently floated which doesn't have much grounding behind it.

But the question is not, today, "Should we make changes?" The question today is, "When changes are needed, when somebody is needed …"

Let's say this new body gets created and it currently thinks, "Hey, the RSS is good today. We don't need to make changes." Is there a procedure for somebody to challenge that notion? Is there a procedure for somebody to come in and say, "Look, we're missing something. Where do I make my logical argument, my technical argument to say that changes are needed?"

And then where is that discussion held where half of the body stands up and says, "No. Changes aren't needed"? Where is that battle going to happen? That's what I think we're defining today.

So I agree with you. I think that the RSS is well-serving the Internet. We've proven that. It's never fallen down. It's always been up. We have instances all over the world. From a technical point of view, that's the case. But there's no place for anybody to challenge that notion between you and me thinking that's good right now. Right? Where do people go to make those determinations?

BRAD VERD: Thank you, Wes. Kurt.

KURT PRITZ: Yeah. This is a little bit of a change, and I don't know if it's implicit in what has been discussed so far. But even the heading of this document is "Designation and Removal" as if it's a one-stop shop. And the only time an argument could be made for making it one group would be if every removal required a designation. But we know that's not the case. So I think we should make it explicit that removal and designation are completely separate functions requiring different skill sets and talents.

And going to what Wes was saying earlier about the governance model, we could identify or have a source ready for identifying the skill sets required for the removal function versus the designation function which is a much different problem that we have to solve.

And then lastly, in our previous meeting we talked about a separate group determining what the right number of root zone operators is. So I'm thinking that should be separate also because people who want to designate will find a bigger number needed for the Root Server Systems.

So I think as sort of a check and balance, there should be three separate tasks—removal, designation, and then what's the right number belongs in a home somewhere else. Thanks.

BRAD VERD: Thank you, Kurt. Is there any feedback or thoughts here? [Inaudible] thumbs up in the room. All right.

We've got five minutes left here in this session. I have one that I want to bring up, but it's a much bigger topic. So I think I'm going to wait for the next hour.

WARREN KUMARI: We can think about it during the break, Brad.

BRAD VERD: That's like throw the grenade and walk away. Is that what you're saying?

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: [inaudible]

BRAD VERD: Okay. I'll throw the grenade. I'm well-known for doing that. Going back to money, which has always been a very interesting topic here—I'll be honest, especially after our last very passionate discussion we had a couple of days ago—should designating be a source of finance? I know how I feel about it, but …

WES HARDAKER: Can you restate that again? I don't …

BRAD VERD: Jeff, do you want to take that?

JEFF OSBORN: I believe, in English, what Brad just said is selling off a letter to the highest bidder.

WES HARDAKER: I wanted to make sure I was interpreting … Okay, thank you.

BRAD VERD: I didn't use those words, Jeff, but … No, I think this is something we should talk about. This is something that … What is the

principle? Is the principle that it ... And again, not to be answered now because we're coming up on a break pretty quickly. But you guys wanted to think about it.

The obvious question that I have a heartache with is, should it be a source of revenue? I think it is something that we need to address in the governance system and have it as a principle so that there's no misinterpretation anywhere down the road. And that's either, "Yeah, you can do it" or "No, you can't." And either way you do it, I think we need to have words to back that up.

Jeff, do you want to add to that?

JEFF OSBORN: Well, that plays havoc with the notion of trying to let people know that having a root server letter is not that big a deal, but we're willing to see how much people are willing to pay for it. Those messages are in conflict.

BRAD VERD: Okay. All right, so with that why don't we break? Let people think on that for a bit. It's a couple of minutes early. I think we're two minutes early. So we'll come back at 4:30 and finish our sixth session. All right?

Thank you, everybody. We'll be back.

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