ICANN75 | AGM – GAC Capacity Building and Outreach Workshop 8: DNS Roles and Responsibilities - GNSO Registrars
Sunday, September 18, 2022 – 16:30 to 17:30 KUL

TRACY HACKSHAW: Thank you very much, and this is it, this is the last of our sessions for the capacity building weekend. So I'm glad to see people are still here, which is fantastic. And this last session is going to be yet another volume of information, but I understand it's gonna be somewhat interactive or at least there's an attempt to be some less talk to you and maybe talk with you.

So during the session, we will get the perspective of the GNSO registrars, they will present the current state of the registrar and domain industry, identify the current priority issues and explain their views on topics of mutual interestfor registrars and governments within the ICANN community.

It's interesting because the person I will hand it over to was actually a GAC member at one time, so that's going to be an intriguing statement of a multi-stakeholder movement. So she is now in the private sector, and the registrar, so from the government to private sector to the registrar business. So feel free to ask all the questions you need to ask about that change as well. So I'm gonna hand you over toAshley, and along with here, we have James, and Owen. Ashley, over to you.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN:	Thank you, Tracy, for calling me out, and hello everyone, I'm guessing the best was saved for last today, or at least I will tell myself that. I want to first apologize to the interpreters, I will speak too fast. So please feel free to tell me to slow down if necessary.

Thank you all for having us today. This is part of a capacity building weekend for you all, but I do hope that in the future we get to interact more often, because we can all benefit from understanding our perspectives, as we proceed in things like PDPs, so hopefully this is not the last time we get to meet with you more formally. Before you have the agenda for today's session. We don't have as much content as the registries prior to us but hopefully that will allow for some Q&A, and feel free to ask us questions as we go along.

So I want to first I guess introduce you very briefly. We have James Bladel here from GoDaddy and we also have Owen -- I am not going to try to pronounce your last name, go for it.

OWEN SMIGELSKI: Smigelski.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN: Smigelski from Namecheap. And they will be assisting me today and presenting to you all. So with that, we'll go ahead and get started, so if we can go to the next slide, please. So intro to the Registrar Stakeholder Group, we'll get those out of the way first before we get to the more interesting part of the presentation. So in a nutshell, what do we do?

As the name indicates, we are the representative body for registrars and it's important to note here that these are ICANN accredited registrars, and we participate in the ICANN policy making process as the voice of the registrars.   And how do we engage within ICANN? We are part of the GNSO similar to the registries, we are one of the stakeholder groups within the GNSO, and as noted in the previous presentation by my registry colleagues, we are the other half of the Contracted Party House. So we have three representatives to the GNSO, we try to break that down as regionally as possible, and we have one individual who serves on the Nominating Committee of ICANN. Next slide, please.

This is who our current leadership is. Myself, I'm the Chair of the RrSG, Owen is the Vice Chair of Policy and then we have a whole host of other individuals who may or may not be in the room in

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today, including Jothan, who is my Vice-Chair of tech operations. We have a secretary, a treasurer, and these are our current council reps. So we have Antonio Chu, who is from The Age of Pacific, working from Alibaba, Greg DiBiase, North America Amazon registrar and Theo Gurt, who is a realtime registrar, is from the European region and Pam Little who is in the audience, who is our NomCom rep.

Next slide, please. And this is just to give you a flavor of the different kind of work that's currently underway in the Registrar Stakeholder Group. We have subgroups, we have compliance subgroup that deals with compliance matters as it pertains to our contracts with ICANN. We have a DNS abuse sub group, a finance team and a number of groups that meet more on an issue-specific areas often based on PDPs, which you will see on a issue-specific area, often based on PDPs.

The PDP project-based teams, which should be on your right side but not sure how it's displaying, as well as a number of contracted party house subgroups that we participate in as well, including a DNS abuse group.

Next slide, please. And now that we have the formal stuff out of the way, I'm going to turn it over now to James who's gonna talk

a bit about the state of the Domain Registrar Industry. So please, James, take it away.

JAMES BLADEL: Thank you, Ashley, and thank you everyone for allowing us some time today and for those who were here in the previous session, I think you will hear. Some of this is a repeat of what you heard from the registries today, so I will cover it as quickly as possible, and then perhaps we'll leave a little bit more time for questions. Next slide, please.

So domain name basics, I know that for some folks in the room this is very beginner-type material but some may be hearing it for the first time. Domain names are not content, they're not even necessarily required to be descriptive of content, they can exist completely independent of the content they are located to and then as I think you heard the registries mention in the previous session, taking action against a domain name does not take the content off the Internet.

And I think this is an important concept that is sometimes overlooked. And to some extent, I think registrars have blurred this line a little bit because we have diversified our businesses to engage in content hosting and content development, and so sometimes it looks like it's all one package but domain names and content exist independently and separately.

And most domain names in fact are not associated with content, they are often considered to be inactive domain names so they're registered either defensively or in anticipation of a future website but they're not currently hosting any web content. And then talking a little bit about the roles, the registries who you met recently are contracted by ICANN to operate a specific top level domain, like .com or like GoDaddy top level domain like .club. GoDaddy

Registries are required to serve all ICANN accredited registrars on an equitable basis, in a non-discriminatory fashion sothis ensures that there is a level competitive playing field for registrars who are choosing to operate or offer a gTLD. But registries do not have direct relationships with registrants, the registering partiest that are using the domain names. And I think ths is an important concept, is that registries operate through their relationships with registrars, and it is the registrars that then have either the direct or indirect relationship with the registrants. Next slide, please.

And registrars, that includes our group here. We are the parties that have a contract with ICANN called the Registrar Accreditation Agreement or RAA, that gives us the ability to register domain names in top level domains on behalf of our customers. We can pick and choose which TLDs we want to offer to our customers, all of them, none of them, there are some registrars that are very prolific in the top-level domains they offer and some are more

selective. And we use our agreements both with the registries and with the registrants to enforce ICANN policies in the registration and use of domain names.

Next slide. There are a variety of different types of registrars, it's much more I would say diversity than most folks realize in terms of business models. I think the most commonly understood registrar business model is that of a retail registrar, and that is similar to GoDaddyGoDaddy and Namecheap that they would offer domain name registrations to the public, to customers who come to that website specifically for the purpose of registering a domain name and establishing a web presence. But there are other categories as well. There are wholesale registrars that only serve resellers. These are companies or businesses that then go onto serve retail customers.

There are corporate registrars. These are registrars that are specifically tailored towards large enterprises, large companies, large brand holders and assist them in managing their diverse portfolio of domain names as well as defensively protecting their brand names in their Domain Name System. And there's also After Market registrars. And these are registrars that are focused on serving buyers and sellers of domain names sometimes called domain name investors who have valuable, memorable or short domain names that are more valuable to other users, and they

are connecting those buyers and sellers on their marketplace.

Next slide, please. There was some discussion in the previous session about a reseller. A reseller is a business that finds it valuable to offer domain names to their customers but domain names are not their primary business. So they will work through a registrar to offer those domain names on behalf of the reseller's customers. And here are common examples, a web hosting or design company or perhaps an advertising firm, we have seen real estate firms or firms that are real estate agencies, or even large portfolio holders that want to provision domain names but are not interested necessarily in becoming directly accredited with ICANN will work through one of those wholesale registrars.

This is important because the contractual relationship, I think it was one of the questions in a previous session – is between the reseller and the registrar. However, there will be some pass-through provisions that the registrant, the ultimate end user is required to enter into and to execute in order to activate that domain name.

Next slide, please. Noting here some of the trends that I have seen even in just my time here at ICANN and in the industry, and I think that are things that we're broadly noticing in the domain name industry; first of all, domain name sales are very price

sensitive. We have noticed that because registrars are treated equally amongst the registries that there's very little value in one registrar or another just the domain name provisioning.

Now, there are always other services and products that can be attached to a domain name and that is usually how registrars distinguish themselves and compete with each other. But in terms of domain name themselves, it usually unfortunately comes down to one decision making at the retail level, which is price.

The shift from new registrations to aftermarket growth, in the time that I've been at ICANN, we have seen the growth in new domain names registrations slow, and even become flat for some TLDs in some regions, whereas the marketplace for people buying and selling domain names that have already been registered has become more sophisticated and has allowed sellers and buyers more and more effective ways of connecting to one another and transacting in domain names.

There has also been a significant amount of consolidation. Many years ago, the Registrar Stakeholder Group had a much larger number of members in a variety of different regions and we have seen that a few families of registrars have grown to kind of consolidate, a lot of them in fact just recently, in the last week we

saw a large family of registrars acquire the largest corporate domain registrar, MarkMonitor, and that was announced in the week before the ICANN meeting, so more registrars joining forces and consolidating their businesses.

And then finally, vertical integration. Once upon a time, there was a very clear distinction between what was a registry and what was a registrar, and now we are seeing the same companies or families of companies that are operating both as a registry and a registrar, GoDaddyGoDaddy I think being a good example of one and Identity Digital and some of the others. And as long as ICANN is satisfied via its audits that those registries are offering its TLDs on equal and nondiscriminatory terms, including to affiliated registrars, vertical integration is now permitted under the newer registry agreements.

Next slide, please. So why do registrars come to ICANN? I think there are a few central themes; first is obviously ICANN is the counter party to our most important contract, the Registrar Accreditation Agreement. It's a very strange contract in that we agreed in advance to abide by changes to the agreement called the Policy Development Process. The PDP will add consensus policies to our contract and become enforceable by ICANN.

So essentially, we are agreeing to changes sight unseen when we execute an RAA with ICANN. We also use ICANN meetings as an important opportunity to connect with registries. They are our most important business partner. We learn about their business plans, their promotions, their marketing programs, and coordinate with their policy priorities as well.

ICANN is also an excellent opportunity to interact with ccTLDs, even though they aren't directly accredited by ICANN, they have their own accreditation programs, their own policy development processes and their own governing structure, and since everyone is at ICANN, it's a good opportunity to connect. And then of course we use ICANN as an opportunity to engage with governments, with law enforcement agencies through the Public Safety Working Group, with security and other information services like SSAC, and really just to branch out throughout the industry and connect with all stakeholders in the domain name space.

I think that might be my last slide except for some questions, if you want to go to the next slide -- sorry, I had one more slide here. Some of the challenges or headwinds that the industry is facing I think is one that comes up quite frequently in the context of ICANN, is the concept of privacy versus accountability or domain name security.

Registrars are often caught in the middle between governments in the private sector or even between different facets of government in terms of providing domain name information, registration information, or statistics related to cyber security, but also being entrusted to protect the private information of our customers, some of which is very strictly governed and regulated by local laws. So it's becoming a gap that we have to continually reconcile either through contracts or products or terms of service or sometimes ICANN policies to help us reconcile what often looked like contradictory directives from different stakeholders.

Another challenge associated sometimes with consolidation but also with the growing complexity of the regulatory space around domain name industry is regional representation. When I was first starting in the industry, we had several registrars in Central and South America, in Africa, I think we had more diverse North American and European registrars as well, but consolidation has moved many of those registrars into a few families of registrars and also the regulatory complexity has meant that smaller registrars have opted to convert themselves to resellers, and I think that's true as well for a new entrance into the industry.

When faced with all of the challenges of participating and maintaining a contract with ICANN, a start-up might be more interested in just becoming a reseller of an established registrar

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as opposed to becoming a registrar in their own right. And unfortunately, this leads to a less diverse registrar population, because there are some areas where they're almost entirely served by resellers.

We continue to struggle with the discrepancies between local laws in our ICANN contracts. We made a number of commitments to ICANN when we executed those agreements, and in some cases, local legislation will run counter to that and will outpace the change of those ICANN agreements, and it is challenging then for registrars to both uphold their commitments to ICANN and ICANN compliance while simultaneously abiding by their local laws.

And finally, we're just seeing a more common approach around the world to resolving problems on the Internet whether it's mostly problematic content by using the Domain Name System as a choke point, and I think Allen Woods on the previous panel very expertly articulated the nature of this problem, is that the Domain Name System is a very blunt and imprecise tool for dealing with content issues.

If there is a problem on a social media platform, or a marketplace, we have one and only one lever we can pull, which is to take that domain name, whether it's Facebook.com or Amazon.com

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completely off the Internet; certainly I think a lot of folks would agree that is out of proportion to a problematic post or an unresponsive seller on a marketplace. And that is why we continue to encourage folks to contact the Webhost or the actual provider of the web content on the operator of the website as a more appropriate channel for dealing with those types of complaints. And I think now we just turn it over to Owen. So thank you.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN: Well, real quick, thank you. I just wanted to make sure first folks are still awake by asking a question. Do you have any idea how much registrars are accredited by ICANN? Anybody brave enough to answer?

That's better than I thought. Did you say 3,000? It's 2,556. And what I think it's important to note, is that it does not take into account this familial structure, and there really aren't that many, as at least in the thousands, but it's also important to note that the pie chart that you saw in the registry presentation in terms of the breakdown regionally is very similar to what we're experiencing.

So most of the registrars are in North America, second by Europe, and then Asia and then I will have to say it's pretty much nonexistent in South America and in Africa. There are some, but

when you compare it to what you see in North America and Europe, it's not really at all a lot and I think that has to do a lot with the economics involved of being a registrar, the complexities and the requirements that are included in our contracts, just make it very difficult to be a registrar.

So I will stop there with that little tidbit of information and turn it over to Owen. So sorry for taking up your time.

OWEN SMIGELSKI: No, it's quite alright, Ashley. So my name is Owen Smigelski, I'm the Vice-Chair Policy for the Registrar Stakeholder Group and I'm with the Registrar, Namecheap. James did mention earlier in his presentation that we sign a contract and sight unseen agree to abide by future changes through the consensus policies; that's kind of a little bit of a mischaracterization, because we actually get to participate in that process so it doesn't happen and one day we wake up and oh, no, what are we supposed to do we with this policy? We have the opportunity to participate in that and so we actually do dedicate significant time and efforts to that.

Next slide, please. So I oversee the policy efforts for the Registrar Stakeholder Group, and we have a registrar policy sub team, we have monthly meetings, we have about 20 members in there,

although not everybody always shows up because sometimes it's not the most exciting of topics. A lot of these changes to the policies can take a long time, there's a lot of wordsmithing and some very obscure concepts, so there needs to be quite a bit of involvement, it's not something you can show up one day and be able to participate. There really is a lot of information to digest and be aware about and generally have a little bit of a history, but we do get new people and bring them on board as well too.

One thing we do try to do is to ensure that we represent the diverse interests of the Registrar Stakeholder Group. So I am with Namecheap, we are a retail registrar, we're based in North America, but when I speak on behalf of the Registrar Stakeholder Group, I'm speaking on behalf of all of the membership, so when I'm working on a statement or working in a Working Group, it's something that has to cover all of those groups that James spoke about earlier, so generally quite often, the interests of my registrar is different than say, a brand protection registrar, such as MarkMonitor, who represents businesses and trademark interests, they might have different goals than my company might have. So it's attempting to find a way to reconcile and bring them all together and ensure that we all do find positions of how we can get along.

We do comment on -- so there is the policy process on ICANN

periodically for various types of things for reviews, contract amendments, they put things out for public comment and you can find that on ICANN's website, and what we do is look at that every time there is a public comment and see whether it is something that would impact either registrars and our business, or also importantly, registrants, because while there are some registrants who participate in ICANN, there is no specific stakeholder group or advisory committee or group at all for registrants.

So that is very important for registrars is to be able to speak on behalf of our customers and make sure that their interests are represented, and they are protected, and any type of policy or anything that's proposed has the interest of the registrant in there. I put a link in there, that is a list of the various comments that the Registrar Stakeholder Group has put together. I won't go through all. You can see them if you want and that just shows the various things that we've come up with.

Next slide, please. When it comes to drafting a comment, and quite often, it's not a surprise that something comes up through public policy, myself and many others in the Stakeholder Group are involved in these or are monitoring them, so we kind of have an idea of where they're going, and so me as the Vice Chair, I will be the one who will do the initial draft, I will look at what is out

there, see how this could impact registrants, how it could impact registrars and kind of put some thoughts in there.

What I will also do is quite often if there is some type of thing coming out, we probably have somebody in the Registrar Stakeholder Group who has participated in that, so I will reach out, have a chat or via email to get their thoughts and their ideas, because it's not possible with all of the different things that are going on in ICANN to be able to participate in everything, it's just impossible. So that is also another thing we do, is if there is a policy effort or whatever Working Group or something out there, we try to make sure that if it's going to have an impact on registrars or registrants that we need to have at least one representative, if not more there just to make sure that we have people there understanding what is going on and can give that feedback.

So once we get that feedback, then we can kind of do an initial draft and then at those monthly meetings that we have with the policy sub team, I will just go through with it and that is the point where I haven't been doing anything on behalf of my company, I may mention this is what we think but what we need to do is come to almost a consensus within the Registrar Stakeholder Group about what we're doing.

There are some occasions where we do have say for example a reseller model, registrars don't like the change or they think it should be slightly different. We will actually note that in our comment stating that most but not all registrars, members of the Registrar Stakeholder Group agree with this just to let the community know that there are other opinions. What we will also do is encourage, and this is for every policy process, is we do encourage the members to submit their own comment as well too just because again, registrars aren't the same, they may have different needs, interests, goals. So we will encourage that, especially when there is that divergence, we want to make sure that their voices are heard and considered as well too for those that go through.

So once we have a draft that the policy sub team has worked on together, we will then present that at our membership. We have every two weeks a 90 minute membership meeting and there is a time slot in there for me to present this stuff and then we will take questions from the Stakeholder Group, we'll share the draft, we'll circulate it via email, and then there is a discussion period where the Full Membership can give their feedback and suggestions. More often than not, there's not that much that happens, but on occasion it does get interesting and we have to have some more discussions and revisions in there, but ultimately we'll end on something that the full stakeholder group membership agrees

on, at which point, we will submit that to ICANN and then that will be published in there for that.

Next slide, please. So again, I mentioned participant groups that impact registrants and registrars, and then another thing we also do, we also want to make sure that we're doing diversity within the Registrar Stakeholder Group; not just from registrars but also from regions, we want to make sure that we have various regions represented as well as gender, background, some like that, so we really try and strive for that to make sure we're representative and inclusive in that. And that is it for me.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN: All right. So we have here, a lot more information is available on our website which you will find here. We do have a charter, we have a list of our members, which is significantly smaller than that 2,000 number I quoted earlier. But I do encourage you to check out our website, we have a lot of good content there, particularly for those of you who are interested in DNS-abuse-related matters. Next slide, please.

And what I wanted to show you today, particularly since you all weren't I assume notable to go to the DNS Abuse outreach session earlier today, is a tool that the registrars put together to help

identify who it is you should be contacting on different abuse type of issues. And why we figured this was helpful, is that often people will first come to a registrar to deal with abuse, whether or not we are the appropriate starting point. And I think you have heard more than once that we have a very blunt instrument available to us in dealing with abuse, and that is pretty much taking the domain down, and sometimes you need more of a scalpel approach.

And to be as plain as possible, there are better places to go to address the abuse than straight to a registrar or to a registry. So what this tool does is that, if there is a domain that you suspect is involved in some sort of abuse, you can type it in to this box here that says 'domain name'. So Zoe, I believe you are here, and able to put something in, even though we just lost the screen. We're going to show you how the tool works.

So basically we're just going to type in, I believe, the Registrar Stakeholder Group domain, so that is RrSG.org. And then once you put that in, you will get this handy dandy little readout that will kind of go by abuse type in very broad terms. So if you have concerns about phishing, malware, bot nets or general content issues, we direct you towards a hosting provider, so in this case, Black Knight is our hosting provider, so that information is shown here.

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If you have some sort of email related issue, in this case I think something along the lines of spam or something like that, you want to go to the email service provider, so again, in this case we use Black Nnight. If you have other DNS abuse related issues, then that is when you want to go to the registrar and here is a registrar information. So I think what is really useful here is, at least in theory, is that if you direct to the right party dependent on the abuse, it's likely that you will get a much quicker and effective and efficient response to your concern.

So this isn't the most beautiful website but we were hopeful that this will be helpful to those who are trying to find the appropriate contact, because it's not always easy to know who the hosting provider is. So I encourage you all to play around with it, I encourage you all to share this with interested parties back in your countries, with your law enforcement, because I think this is a good first step to more effectively dealing with some of the abuse concerns. So I will stop there and see if anybody has any questions for us.

ABDALMONEM GALILA: This is Abdalmonem Galila for the record. I think slide #16 was talking about the challenges, so we have many scales of registrars worldwide. The smaller one, the medium one and the bigger one,

so what are the challenges for the small and the medium registrars to join the acquisition process for ICANN? It is a good idea or good for the registrant to have registrar accredited from ICANN. So what are the challenges for them? This is the first question.

The second question is related to DNS abuse, what you are talking here about content identifier. What I think is, mitigation of DNS abuse is working in an active way, not in a reactive way. I mean, the DNS abuse system waits for reporting from other one in order to have an actual [inaudible 00:36:54]. At the same time, there are many algorithms for AI and [inaudible 00:37:01] language processing any alibi to mitigate that in a automatic way. So what could work is then in a reactive way rather than an active way. Thank you for this.

OWEN SMIGELSKI: Thank you for the question. I can respond to the first part of your question about the different challenges at which it would be considered friction for start-up companies to become new registrars. I think there was a time when getting an ICANN accreditation and creating a website to sell domain names was a viable business model, but I think two forces that have gone in opposite directions, the first one being that the increasing complexity of the domain names space, the increasing obligations under the ICANN agreement and consensus policies;

for example there are numerous now technical obligations that a registrar must fulfill, there are SLA's that a registrar must meet, and certain performance characteristics of their systems, they must operate and receive reports of abuse, including reports of abuse from law enforcement agencies.

They may be financial challenges, either with the ICANN fees that are associated just for accreditation fees or even for individual domain name registrations have fees associated with them. The fees are I believe payable either only in US dollars or in dollars and Euros, so for some regions that may present a currency exchange risk. So there's just a number of challenges associated with cost and burdens for setting up a registrar.

And on the other side, we have seen that the margins that one can sell a domain name for continue to shrink and approach closest to the cost of a domain name, so to the point whereregistrars diversify their offering to other products and services and use the domain name essentially almost at or near the wholesale cost that is charged by the registry.

And I think those two trends have been pulling in opposite directions to make becoming a new start up registrar a much more -- a riskier business venture, particularly when you look at some of the wholesale registrars and how feature rich their reseller programs are, the path of least resistance for a start-up,

at least initially, maybe when they grow they might want to look at becoming an accredited registrar, but for starting out, it makes much more technical and financial sense to become a reseller of an established registrar. I hope that helped answer the question.

OWEN SMIGELSKI: And then I just want to go to another thing about the abuse and reactive versus preventive. Yes, obviously if somebody reports abuse that is easy to do an action and do that. It's a lot harder to guess who is going to be doing something abusive, especially if you look at a domain, you don't know whether it's being used for legitimate purposes or not.

That said, I know a lot of registrars, myself, GoDaddy, we do have internal stuff where we do have cross-check, fraud prevention things, our own algorithms, machine learning, we get feeds from third party providers that can give us suggestions about whether something is harmful or not. So there is a lot of stuff in there, because there is a cost associated with having that abuse either through a reputation or through additional resources needed to combat it. So we are doing things, but the flip side of that is a false positive is an unhappy customer who has had their domain name suspended or their service canceled for an incorrect reason and you are taking that away from them, so we have to balance

the customer's interest with being able to prevent fraud and abuse.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN: And just a quick follow-up on that, I think a fairly recent example is when the COVID pandemic first began, and there were lots of calls for us to preemptively, proactively not allow registrations of names with COVID or Corona because the assumption was that they were going to be used for bad purposes, but that wasn't really the case. In fact, there were lots of legitimate uses of those domains, and if we have gone and taken down, we would have taken hospital programs and all sorts of things. So it's hard to be proactive because we can't really understand all the different ways or different things that people are doing. So anyway, for whatever that is worthy, I add that. Any other questions? Yes, please.

ALISA HEAVER: Hi, this is Alisa Heaver for the record from the Netherlands. In the Netherlands we have a complier or explained list for certain Internet standards, and our local and national government have to comply with this list or explain why we don't use these safety standards on this list. It is for example DNSSEC and https, and also IPv6, which isn't a safety standard, but another very useful

standard. And with this introduction, I was wondering to what extent do you think that registrars should also encourage customers to use these basic security standards such as DNSSEC and https, and should registrars also give the correct example with ensuring that their websites have these standards? Thanks.

JAMES BLADEL: I think socializing and encouraging security standards is always a positive and I think that many of our registrars probably do comply with those standards. I know that for example GoDaddy, in addition to a lot of other services, offers SSL certificates so that our customers can secure their websites with https. We support DNSSEC; I think it is a little challenging to explain the benefits of DNSSEC to end users and why they should look for DNSSEC, but it is something that we support and help facilitate.

But generally, I think these security standards probably fall under the umbrella of best practices and I think can always use encouragement from government and industry working together to encourage and foster broader and more widespread adoption. I think that from our perspective, setting a good example as you mentioned, but also making sure that there are no barriers on our platform for customers to use if they have their own SSL certificate from another provider or if they want to use DNSSEC

that they're managing their own key rollover for example, that we facilitate those and just kind of -- I guess the first answer is make sure we're not getting in the customer's way and then also providing those tools for those customers who maybe need a little bit of help in setting up those standards.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN: And we're talking as a web host now.

JAMES BLADEL: Now we're speaking a little bit outside of the registrar.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN: Yeah, so this is a good opportunity to highlight the difference here. What you are talking about is definitely a web host function -- or can be and, as GoDaddy, we do make that service available for interested customers but that is not a registrar thing to do. But I think to the point of DNSSEC, and sorry, I'll just nerd out on you; I think if you really want to help with the DNSSEC introduction and usage, the best place to spend time is talking to ISPs. But I'll stop there.

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JAMES BLADEL: I think it illustrates a good point though that a lot of these security approaches require kind of a full stack approach, whether it's registrar, web host, SSL provider, DNS provider, and some of these may be your registrar, they may be a different company, it's certainly possible that someone could register a domain name at Namecheap and host it at GoDaddy and get a SSL certificate from a third party entirely, so it does require that sort of industry coordination and that full stack intraoperability in order to meet all of these security standards that you mentioned.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN: I think we have a couple more hands in the audience and then we have a hand raised in the Zoom. Yes sir, please.

TARIK MERGHANI: Hellor, Tarik Merghani from Sudan. We had a problem in Africa about the number of registrars in Africa; you said it yourself that there is about 2500. How many in Africa, not just Africa, the center of Africa, if you take South Africa away and North of Africa, it's less than 5% or something like that, the number of ICANN accredited registrars and that is a real problem. I don't know what your group can do to encourage more registrars in Africa. It's a big problem.

For example, I work for many years for our ccTLD. Our registrar doesn't need to be an ICANN accredited registrar to be a registrar for Africa, but for gTLDs or for TLDs, they have to be. For example, .Africa is not out there in Africa; African people cannot get .Africa easy. Why? Because there are not enough ICANN registrars in Africa, it's very difficult to find one in Africa.

Maybe one of the problems – because I don't know how many you have to pay to be an ICANN registrar, maybe $7.000 or something like that, I don't know the figure for us to contract with ICANN. This is a lot of money for new registrars in Africa. Maybe for big companies like you here it's not a big deal. But we need to create more registrars in Africa. Many people in Africa, for example in Sudan, they don't have credt cards, most of the people, to buy a domain from GoDaddy, from a website.

For example, for us, they come to our premises to get a domain, they get a domain by getting it or from the ccTLD. We before talked about why don't the ccTLDs can't have the chance in Africa, for example, have a chance to sell domains like .Africa, but they are not an ICANN accredited registrar to do so. So what can your group do to encourage more registrars, ICANN accredited registrars, in Africa so that such domain like .Africa be available for the African people? Thank you.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN: Thank you very much for the question. I think there are a lot of different ways to respond to this, but I think first and foremost, as companies, we don't really go out and insist that their -- creation of more companies, but I think governments within these countries can make it easier for these types of companies to have the right environment to exist and to come into creation.

There is also a session tomorrow, we're going to have an outreach session -- I'm drawing a blank on the time, but ICANN will be there to talk about how you become an accredited registrar. You could ask ICANN questions about, are there ways they could lessen the barriers to becoming accredited, that's quite a good question for ICANN.

But I think what we like to do, and I think now that we're meeting in-person again and hopefully we will have a chance to go to Africa again, it gives us the opportunity to meet with other companies who are interested in these types of things and reach out to them and have dialogue with them. So perhaps that is an opportunity we will have in the future, but if there is any country or company that you would like to have talk to us, we are happy to talk to them. But it's a multifaceted concern, and it's not really in our power to help create companies, but I understood the

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concern. James, you want to add to that?

JAMES BLADEL: Just a response, and I agree with everything that Ashley mentioned, but also we had a similar problem not maybe ten years ago in trying to foster more ICANN accredited registrars in Asia. And one of the things that we discovered was translation of ICANN documents and consensus policies was a primary barrier for new registrars and new participants in some of these areas.

So –it seems like a simple thing, but one first step would be to make sure that all of the languages in the regions that you described in central Africa would be covered by a translated version of all of the ICANN agreements. And then the second thing would be some training for registrars or prospective registrars so that they understand what the ICANN RAA requires of them both in terms of technical and operation and financial concerns so that there is a greater awareness of what it means to be a registrar.

Now, that can backfire because when you present all of that to a company, they may make the decision that it makes better business sense to become a reseller. That was not an option many years ago and it is now, and I think that that might be the most logical course for a new company starting up in some of those regions, but at least removing some of those barriers of

translation and training I think would be a good first step.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN: I saw a whole bunch of new hands. The hand in Zoom seems to have gone down, so we'll go back to the audience. We will start here and then go so the back. Please.

BRAZIL: Just following up on a few of the questions from our colleagues from Egypt and Sudan. The problem is of course I think this is part of a much bigger problem, and I understand from a policy perspective that it's not up for you to make those decisions. But we live now in a world where this expanding digital economy is not necessarily benefiting everyone in the same way. And I think this level of concentration of the registrars that was mentioned here is part of the set, and I understand from the answers that you are giving that you believe that's an issue for the market itself to sort out. But I think we have to see if ICANN itself can do something to incentivize the more centralized system, because it's not good for the legitimacy of the system itself. And quite frankly, I understand your position, you are not there to incentivize new competitors

So again, there is a problem in how the system works. If you are doing the rules that benefit your own position, perhaps there is a

conflict of interest there as well. So I think that ICANN should look into this very seriously because it's part of a much bigger picture. And if we don't have a digital economy that somehow gives the chance for more countries to benefit from it, we really have a problem for the future. Thank you.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN: All fair points. And the back, please.

CALVIN BROWNE: My name is Calvin Browne and I was just chatting to the guy from Sudan. I know somebody used to run a secondary for Sudan, I'm not going to mention any names, I don't want to get anyone into any trouble. And I am also part of the team that looks after the backend for .Africa. So if you are talking about that specifically and you have got some issues, we do have various programs that allow non-ICANN accredited registrars to go through certain mechanisms to get that. So please, I'm over there if you want to speak to me or grab me afterwards, and I can take you through those guides that the guys have set up.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN: Thank you. Any other questions? I see a hand in the back.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Just a quick question. From the tool you showed us earlier on, who are the third party data providers from an African and Southern American perspective?

OWEN SMIGELSKI: So we're not actually getting data from providers. What we do is we have set up a tool that goes and looks up who all that information is. So if you look up the Registrar Stakeholder Group's website, all that is showing is what the Registrar Stakeholder Group's website has chosen to utilize as our providers. If you were to look up say a domain name from Vietnam, you might find that there might be significantly different hosts or registrar information in there. So we're not actually providing and getting any data from sources in the sense that we're utilizing a provider; we're just looking up what is currently being used by the registrant of that domain name.

ASHLEY HEINEMAN: Any other questions? Yes, over here.

JAPAN: Thank you for the great presentations. They're very much informative and I appreciate that. And one question, out of curiosity -- and I am from Japan actually, sorry; I'm [inaudible – 00:56:31] from Japan, the Japanese Government Ministry of the Internal Affairs and Communication. And my question is that if possible, could you give us some examples of the cases that the registrars take down servers because of responding to the report of abuse from customers or third parties or lawyers, et cetera?

OWEN SMIGELSKI: When we get a report of abuse, our first thing isn't just to shut it down, because again, we're canceling our customer's thing, and quite often, we're breaking our contract with the customer cancelling that contract. Out contract has generally terms, and I'm speaking of my registrar. But also most registrars do have something like that in there which says if there is a report of abuse and we can verify it, then we will cancel your services. So when we receive an abuse complaint report, the most important thing is to give us the documentation, the information that we need so that we can verify that that's there.

There was another session earlier where the DNS AI -- I don't recall specifically what that means; the DNS Abuse Institute, they created a tool called NetBeacon, which helps with submitting abuse complaints to registrars and make sure that there's a minimal level of documentation for a registrar to action that; so my team wants to see the domain name confirmed that it's our customer, is there something there that violates our Terms of Service, phishing, malware, bot nets, and some other types that we'll take action?

And if yes, we will do -- as James mentioned earlier, we can't take down a particular page, so if somebody thinks that there is an infringement or something offensive or a libel on there, that's not something that can really action, we can't just take down that page. But what we can do is change what's called the EPP status code or we can change the name server so the domain name just stops functioning, you can't get to it at all, it's basically turned off.

So that's why we do need to have a good amount of documentation and evidence. Because sometimes we do get pushback from our customers and they will say, "Why did you do This." We won't necessarily show them the information, almost never would we do anything like that, but we will say, "Oh, we received an abuse complaint with documentation, you violated out terms of services." And so that's kind of how we would do that. And again, the process does vary by registrar, but generally,

they're similar.

JAMES BLADEL: And if I could just expand on that a little bit, that all registrars are required to have a procedure to take in complaints of abuse and to investigate those complaints, and to take appropriate and prompt action based on those complaints. But ICANN doesn't get -- the ICANN contracts and ICANN policies are not overly prescriptive on what that review process or what those remedial actions look like. I think in a number of cases that is to our benefit because of course everything that happens at ICANN is open and transparent and it would certainly give all of the threat actors a window into our processes if everyone were for example following the same exact playbook. So it is good that we have some diversity in what we review and how we review it and the actions we take.

But the key thing I think at the end of the day is, if a complaint results in an investigation that a domain name is behaving abusively and we do decide to take action to mitigate that abuse, the important thing is to stop the domain name from resolving to any attached services and to take it out of control, lock it against future changes by that registrant to ensure that the abusive behavior does not continue or can't be restarted.

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ASHLEY HEINEMAN: Any other questions? I don't know how we are on time. We're done. One more quick thing. There were some questions in the chat about the ACID tool. And just to note that, we did previously talk about the DNS abuse, it was abusetool.org and we did change the name. You can still use that domain if you want, it will be directed to ACID tool, but we changed the name for a number of reasons -- it was more like the beta stage, and this is what is like the final version. So that's that.

But otherwise, thank you all so much for taking the time to listen to us. I know it's late in the day and I appreciate all the questions, so thank you very much.

[applause]

KAREL DOUGLAS: Thank you very much, Ashley, James, and Owen for your fantastic presentation. And I think we are well informed. We have had a whole series of stakeholder presentations from the community, and I think you as GAC members are much better informed about what is going on in ICANN, to be totally frank, and I think this is something that you asked for and we delivered. I want to thank

all of our presenters who are here today and who came earlier and yesterday. And just to let you know that we are planning to do more of this.

Please reach out to all of the presenters that were here today and yesterday if you need further information, if you want to get more deeper dives into what has been going on and make a feedback to us that you've had request from group x and group y, and this is your chance really to build upon what you already knew and what you have learned this weekend. We're appreciative of these fruitful discussions, and I hope you feel better prepared to start the week with our GAC plenary tomorrow at just about 10:15 a.m., I believe, and the upcoming sessions next week.

So we kick off those sessions, yes, at 10:15 with the GAC open plenary, just after the opening ceremony at 9:00, this is local KL time, and you will have the opportunity to introduce yourselves formally to colleagues, you will have more GAC members in the room very likely tomorrow, but [inaudible – 01:03:22] GAC members, and you will also have the opportunity to put what you have learned this week into practice.

And the third session tomorrow will cover issues related to Subsequent Procedures followed by a joint session with the GNSO to deal with more of these issues that the GNSO are raising

through their stakeholder groups. Our Chair, Manal, will review the sessions of the week tomorrow, and I really hope you enjoyed learning more about the GAC itself, ICANN, and the wider community in ICANN. Thank you very much for attending this weekend. It was a pleasure to have you here, face-to-face and online, and to exchange issues of common interest amongst ourselves.

We will ensure that these capacity building endeavors continue after the meeting, ideally in a remote setting, because obviously it's going to be more effective to do that between now and March next year. Our intention is to have webinars on topics related to ICANN bylaws basics and on topics related to new gTLDs as a continuity. So don't hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the interpreters who are here for the last day and a half on a weekend. Thank you so much for all of your hard work.

[applause]

And for the wonderful tech team who kept everything up and running, the Zoom sessions and the audio and everything. Thank you, tech team, ICANN tech.

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And of course by no means last or least, ICANN staff, who you guys don't know, but the amount of work they put in to get this running smoothly and so effectively is just phenomenal. We have worked with them over the last few months, and I think you would agree it went very well. I would like to thank Rob, Julia, Fabien, Gülten, Fabien and the rest of the staff for the wonderful efforts to get our capacity building weekend together up and running, and I hope you will [inaudible – 01:05:40] to have some interaction with the staff and with ourselves, and spend time to give the staff a party a round of applause. Thank you so much.

[applause]

And with that, I think this is it. Thank you very much. Enjoy the rest of your evening and see you tomorrow.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]

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