



IDN Variant TLDs Program Public Session Summary

ICANN 49

26 March 2014 | Singapore

Overview

The ICANN public session provided a presentation and status update on the IDN Variant TLD Program. Updates included progress made on the implementation of the IDN Root Zone LGR Procedure, presentation of program's timeline and outreach efforts to script communities, followed by a presentation on version 1 of the Maximal Starting Repertoire and a short training on Representing Label Generation Rulesets (LGR) in XML.

Finally, representatives from the Task Force on Arabic Script IDNs presented on the status of the Arabic Generation Panel.

Agenda:

- Program Update
- Maximal Starting Repertoire
- Representing Label Generation Rulesets in XML
- Community updates
- Q&A

Presenters:

- Naela Sarras (ICANN)
- Kim Davies (ICANN)
- Michel Suignard (Integration Panel)
- Nicholas Ostler (Integration Panel)
- Tarik Merghani (Task Force for the Arabic Script)

To access the presentations and audio recordings, please visit the [IDN Variant TLDs Program](#) session page.

Questions/Comments and ICANN Response

Below is a chronological list of all questions and comments received as well as the ICANN responses. Please note that transcriptions have been edited for consistency and clarity.

1. Question: In the generation of the MSR, do the exclusions have anything to do with visually confusable characters?

ICANN Response: The exclusions have nothing to do with visual confusability. Exclusions are based on the principles that we are going to present a longer presentation in the afternoon where we go into all details about the types of inclusions and what we are doing:

<http://singapore49.icann.org/en/schedule/wed-lgr-integration/presentation-lgr-integration-26mar14-en.pdf>

2. Question: Does ICANN provide a reference implementation for the LGR tool?

ICANN Response: We don't yet, but we intend to. Furthermore, we've been encouraging other parties in the community to develop their own implementations as well. We're aware of at least one other committed party in the community that will be implementing the LGR tool. As the specification evolves, internally we are developing two different implementations at varying levels of maturity. As we get closer to finalizing the specification we hope to make them complete reference implementations.

3. Question: I see that you reference RFC 3743 here. I understand that the IP (Integration Panel), or this particular phase of the project, does not really look at certain kinds of dispositions that were used in previous IDN variant tables, specifically for Chinese, the preferred variant concept. I haven't read the draft, but I just want to make sure that this particular XML format covers some of those previous dispositions.

ICANN Response: The answer is that it should, and definitely RFC 3743 was a specific consideration. We believe we've captured the entire nuance in that specification in this new specification. It should be a complete superset of what's required. That being said, please do review it, and if you have any concerns that it doesn't capture something that's required, that is the kind of feedback we're looking for.

4. Question: One of the concerns from the Chinese community is how preferred variants are eventually dealt with. I understand this is the IP (Integration Panel) level, and in this particular phase we might not be specifically looking at the delegation part of things; however, I want to make sure is that this particular concept will not, at a later stage, be no longer eligible. This whole concept applies to the case study report and into the integrated report and all the documents from before. So that's a suggestion and a question – whether the IP will look at it, have looked at it, whether there were any inconsistencies that could potentially come out, and whether that would be summarized for the community.

IP Response: In general, the IP has been casting a very wide net of making sure that the background information is accessed and reviewed. In fact we have looked back at the various parts of the integrated issues report for useful information in constructing the MSR. Remember, at this point the only thing we have done is construct the MSR. In terms of what the mandate is for the IP that is given specifically by the Procedure document, and everything in it. The IP fully intends to make its part of the process comply with the framework that is set out in there.

ICANN Response: The IP is setting out a framework into which the LGR, the Language Panels, can submit. A lot of the issues that were being considered with the integrated report and in the previous working group reports are about the allocation of variants, and the kinds of clashes which can arise. The various groups should be aware of these issues and they have these reports at their disposal. Then they can decide within their own domains which choices they want to make regarding their scripts. Then they'll propose them and hopefully we'll dispose of any issues effectively and exactly. So I think all those issues can be met. It only requires alertness on the part of the different script panels to make sure they are brought in. The framework is open to that.

5. Question: What is ICANN doing to ensure community feedback actually occurs in the New Brahmi script case the community is either unaware or uninterested? Expecting community members to track ICANN at its meeting is not unrealistic. ICANN needs to be in those communities. What is your plan for outreach?

ICANN Response: We realize this is a part of the Procedure that puts a lot of responsibility on us to do a lot more outreach than simply relying on the ICANN meetings, for example. I can assure you that within the last two months we've been working with our Communications Team to conduct a targeted outreach program. We're in the process of identifying relevant events for us to attend and recruit participants. We are using executives on the ICANN Management Team, as well as community members, and we are appealing to them to use their contact books to reach out to additional people. We're also identifying relevant professional groups and asking them to encourage or sponsor the participation of their members. So we're looking beyond volunteers. I assure you that we're doing a lot in this area, and if you have ideas for us – events, people – please by all means send them to us. I'm going to put up an email address so that people can reach us.

6. Question: What actions have ICANN taken from the feedback received from the IDN workshop in Argentina? I remember reading lots of comments but it's not clear they've been acted upon.

ICANN Response: We received a lot of really good input in Buenos Aires, and what we started doing, beginning with the Buenos Aires event itself, is taking all the questions, and publishing what we're doing about the comments and questions we receive. So if you go back to the Buenos Aires presentation there will be a link that says [Access the Public Session](#)

[Summary and Q&A](#). We plan to continue that every time we do one of these events.

- 7. Question:** Is there a mechanism for the learnings from one generation panel to be shared to others? For example, it would be interesting to see what the Arabic Script Group has done as it impacts some languages used in India, like Kashmiri, etc.

ICANN Response: The mechanism for how panels can learn from each other – inter-panel learnings – is something that’s very much being discussed right now. It’s called for in the Procedure and we’ve already set up one email address: LGR@icann.org. This will essentially foster communications and dialogue between panels, and then between the generation panels and the integration panel. It has an open archive. You can go back and review any of the discussions that are happening between panels.

- 8. Question:** My first question is about the MSR. You said that for those who start now, or they already have their scripts in MSR, they were not allowed or not recommended to make a change for an MSR-2. I don’t know if that will give limited time for those who started earlier. I think for those who have not started, will they have enough time to review and everything? It may not be fair. My second question is about mixing. Is it allowed, to have a mixing between the scripts in the TLD and the root zone? Between the Chinese script and Arabic script? Will something like that be allowed?

IP Response: The root is a shared resource. There’s a restriction on mixing scripts in the root, except for some communities like Japan. We apply the root for the scripts independently of one another. Regarding MSR-1, we’re following the rules that ICANN gave us. And now it’s to some degree up to the community to react to the work that we did and provide feedback in due time. Regarding modifications to MSR-1, our concern is stability. You want stability so it is not a moving target, otherwise it will be very difficult for an LGR to work on its own repertoire, if the base repertoire keeps changing. We’re not saying that the MSR will never change, but it’s reasonably easy to add a few things. Removing things would be impossible, because then you have to look at everything that was delegated, make sure you’re not creating an issue for delegated labels, to make sure that your new set doesn’t prevent existing delegated labels to basically be valid. So there’s much more work once you’ve started to delegate root level TLDs, to say, “We made a mistake, we should remove that character. We can’t do that anymore.” So there’s a need to be stable, and we need to make progress here. There’s some concern about communities that haven’t provided feedback yet. We have been floating the idea of removing some script for which we’re not getting feedback because it may be dangerous to have MSR-1 containing content that did not receive any feedback. But we don’t like that situation. That’s the decision that still has to be taken at this point. We have the MSR out. People are encouraged to provide feedback on it and we’ll listen to every comment we get. There are a lot of different processes and I’m sure ICANN staff can go into more detail on how that will

be done. But at this point, MSR-1 is not complete. We still have a few months before we finalize the first version. After that it'll be version two, so it's still not the end of everything.

9. Question: I just want to know why the Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and Hindi languages have been left behind in making initial work on the script? Because I know all these languages are highly resourceful languages linguistically.

ICANN Response: This is a feature of the Procedure. It is community based. We have to work at the speed that the community works. These panels are not left behind. They're in various stages of formation. Between now and the next meeting in London, hopefully you will see a few more come online and start their work. But from the preparation side we're certainly in place and ready to support those community teams, but we need them to also be ready on their end as well.

10. Comment: Part of the Variant Program – specifically project numbers seven and eight – I'm eager to see come out, or at least as some sort of draft. The reason why is because they represent the actual delegation allocation of IDN Variant TLDs, and that may or may not require policy adjustments or some additional policy work, depending on what exactly is brought up and proposed. Both the gNSO and the ccNSO are waiting eagerly I think to see that come out. In fact, both of the SOs will need to go back and take a look at whether additional policies may or may not be required. So this process may take longer, and I think a lot of people – especially new gTLDs, IDN TLDs, and also IDN ccTLDs that have variant considerations, are hoping that process could proceed.

ICANN Response: I do want to assure you that we understand. We're putting the bulk of our energies right now to implement the Procedure and have an LGR materialize, but that's not to take away from the fact that we have been doing some work and basically identifying a lot of questions. You're right. There are some questions that we need to have answered for ourselves in order to be able to think about what the processes would look like. So we expect, in the next few months, that we would have these questions more documented, and to come to the community and ask for help and how to answer these questions. So we're certainly not trying to make any decisions, but I'll be completely honest with you. The bulk of our work – in fact, what we've been directed to do is to focus 80% of our time on this, specifically so we don't have this, "Some communities are getting left behind," "Some communities aren't ready." We really need everyone to rally behind the LGR Procedure first to make it materialize. We're not ignoring the other parts naively. Perhaps we think that by the time we're ready with an LGR we should be ready with the other processes, but you're absolutely right. It's something that we are aware of, and you should see us talk more about it in the future.