Internationalized Registration Data Working Group

Meeting Notes

26 April 2010

Attendees: Edmon Chung, Bob Hutchinson, Owen Smigelski; from staff: Francisco Arias, Gisella Gruber-White, Julie Hedlund, Dave Piscitello, and Steve Sheng.

Action Items: 1) Edmon will send out a question concerning how transliteration will be handled; 2) staff will provide an example of what a WHOIS reply might look like if the Working Group recommended that both an ASCII-7 and UTF-8 (IRD) version of a record be returned (Done); 3) staff will assist the Working Group in developing a set of preliminary recommendations for a Public Forum at the ICANN meeting in Brussels.

Discussion Summary:

The Working Group members discussed the three models in the matrix. The staff asked whether the Working Group members had a preference concerning the model or whether a particular model could be used as the basis for preliminary recommendations.

Bob Hutchinson asked what was the technical impact of the proposals for transliteration for each of the models. Steve Sheng responded that both models 1 and 3 requires a "must be present" script, so the impact would be similar, but that model 2 has a greater impact on registrars and registries because the registration data could become fully internationalized. Bob also asked what is the technical impact of the models on applications on Port 43. Steve clarified the different technical impacts of the models as follows:

- Model 1: Somewhere in the middle – some in US ASCII but with the option to add localized script;

- Model 2: Fully internationalized registration data; and

- Model 3: More like the system today.

Bob said that it would be helpful to have an example of what we think the text content for Port 43 would look like. (See action item above and message from Dave Piscitello.) Steve noted that if you characterize the applications that use WHOIS – Port 43, web browsers, and others – the following would be the technical impacts:

- Web browsers: Display would be dependent on the IDN support in both the operating system and also the browser. However, this would be a lesser problem because one could upgrade to a newer browser or download OS support that would support the internationalized registration data; and

- Customized applications: Display and input would depend on the client libraries, operating system for their support of IDN.

- Port 43: Similar technical impact across all the three models, currently WHOIS protocol does not recognize encodings, either the protocol has to be changed or outside arrangements have to be made (for example a flag to specify encoding).

Bob noted that there currently is no formal standard for how WHOIS data is presented and thus it is virtually impossible to create an automated system for handling the data. He wondered whether the Working Group also should be considering recommendations for a standardized form for WHOIS data. Dave emphasized that this is an issue that is being considered in parallel activities on WHOIS service requirements, but that the Working Group could decide to comment on that topic. Bob added that without a standardized form it would be difficult if not impossible for a user to know what he or she is viewing. Edmon Chung expressed the concern about the Working Group setting rules that could have implications for existing WHOIS. Steve emphasized that if WHOIS is internationalized a non-native speaker will need some context in order to interpret the data, such as field labels. Bob agreed that if you look at some WHOIS data for Port 43 applications the data is buried in registrar contact information and if this is internationalized it becomes difficult for a non-native reader to identify each piece of data. Edmon agreed that this could be in the scope of the Working Group's discussion as long as the Working Group is not defining the format for the WHOIS in general, but only for the internationalized part. Dave emphasized that the issue of the format for the WHOIS in general is being addressed in a parallel effort.

Edmon asked whether the Working Group had discussed how each model would handle the transliteration. Julie Hedlund said that although the Working Group members had discussed transliteration during the 12 April meeting, they had not discussed specifically how transliteration would be handled. Edmon noted that there might be two ways to handle the data. He agreed to frame this question in an email to the Working Group to stimulate discussion.

Edmon asked staff what were the expectations for Brussels. Julie said that if the Working Group produced preliminary recommendations these could be presented at a Public Forum in Brussels. Otherwise, if there was no consensus on the recommendations, there could be a presentation on the status of the discussions. Edmon said that it would be preferable for the Working Group to present preliminary recommendations in Brussels since this would be more likely to encourage participation and discussion. Julie agreed that staff could assist the Working Group in developing preliminary recommendations, perhaps by suggesting a strawman approach.