
ICANN71 | Virtual Policy Forum – At-Large Policy Session 2: ccTLD Governance Models - Testimonies From At-Large End Users
Tuesday, June 15, 2021 – 10:30 to 12:00 CEST

GISELLA GRUBER:

Good morning, good afternoon, good evening and a warm welcome to our second At-Large policy session on ccTLD governance models, testimonies from At-Large end users. My name is Gisella Gruber and I'm the remote participation manager for the session. Please note that this session is being recorded and follows the ICANN expected standards of behavior.

During this session, questions or comments submitted in the chat will only be read aloud if put in the proper format as I've noted in the chat. I will read the questions and the comments aloud during the time set by the moderator for the session.

Interpretation for the session will include English, French and Spanish. Click on the interpretation icon in Zoom and select the language you will listen to during the session. If you wish to speak, please raise your hand in the Zoom room and once the session facilitator calls upon your name, kindly unmute your microphone and take the floor. Before speaking, please ensure you have selected the language you will speak from the interpretation menu. Please state your name for the record and the language you will speak if speaking a language other than English.

Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

When speaking, be sure to mute all other devices and notifications. Please speak clearly and at a reasonable pace to allow for accurate interpretation. The session includes automated real-time transcription. Please note this transcript is not official or authoritative. To review the real-time transcription, click on the closed caption button in the Zoom toolbar. With that, I will hand the floor over to our moderator, Olivier Crépin-Leblond. Thank you.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you very much, Gisella. My name is Olivier Crépin-Leblond, and I look forward to this interesting session today about country code top-level domains, ccTLDs.

In the world, there are various types of top-level domain-s. You have the generic ones, the gTLDs that we usually find as .com, .net, .org, and a whole flurry of new ones that have appeared about ten years ago. Then we also have those ccTLDs, those ones that are linked to a specific country that are linked to a country code, and most people out there on the Internet have no idea, really, of the difference between one and the other. In fact, they just use these interchangeably.

In ICANN, of course, we are well aware of the differences because of the generic top-level domains being dealt with in the Generic Names Supporting Organization, the GNSO, and the country code top-level domains being dealt with in the Country Code Name Supporting Organization, the ccNSO.

So we know there is a difference there, but we don't quite know so much—well, some of us do—that there is a difference also between the different types of ccTLDs, so the different legal structures for ccTLDs and also sometimes different governance models for these country code top-level domains.

Today, We're going to explore this. We will start first with a great presentation from Katrina Sasaki who was a previous country code name supporting organization chair, and she's going to provide us with details of the differences between the different country codes that you have out there.

Afterwards, we'll have some reflection on the end user experience from users in the At-Large community around the world. Some of these users have their local country code being run by local governments, some of them by private sector, some of them by a not-for-profit organization. We will be able to see what they think of their ccTLD and to explain a little bit how the governance works in their part of the world.

So, here we are now. We're a little bit running behind, but that's fine. We've got some time afterwards to have a full discussion with everyone on the call. But first, we'll start with Katrina Sasaki who now is a mere ccNSO member, but as I said, used to be the chair of the ccNSO. Welcome, Katrina. I hand the virtual baton over to you. And I believe that there is a presentation that's going to appear magically on the screen.

KATRINA SATAKI:

Yes, absolutely. Magically. Thank you very much, Olivier, and hello, everyone. It's really great to see you, even if only remotely, and even if all I see is those names.

I don't know if you remember last time we met face-to-face. It was in Montréal, and we talked about ccTLDs and the ccNSO. So as Olivier already alluded to, there are many different nuances that one needs to know and understand about ccTLDs.

So let me start with some slides from that meeting to refresh your memory. When we talk about top-level domains, we of course talk about country code top-level domains and generic top-level domains.

The most experienced ccTLDs go back as long as 30 years. Very few gTLDs are as experienced. Many domain names have been registered over the years. Some ccTLDs are big, some ccTLDs are rather small, but if you look at the list of top ten largest top-level domains by the number of registered domain names, so you can see that seven of them are ccTLDs.

So from the technical perspective, there is not much difference between ccTLDs and gTLDs. Policy-wise—and here I use the word “policy” in its broadest sense—differences are huge.

First of all, again, you may remember from my presentation in Montréal, ccTLDs get assigned following the ISO 3166 list. Only those countries that are on this list can have their ccTLD.

Each ccTLD manager—that's the entity that is ultimately responsible for the operation of the ccTLD—their obligation is to ensure that the respective ccTLD, well, works. That's the most important thing here.

So, how to ensure that? Well, and another thing is that when we talk about governance model of ccTLD, again, it's broader than just the ccTLD manager. So we always stress that one size does not fit all, and it's absolutely true. You cannot take one model and replicate it to a different ccTLD. It just won't fit. Of course, you can take some elements, or learn from each other—that's what we at the ccNSO always do, we share and we learn. But you still have to consider your local circumstances, local laws and public policy that you have in the country or the respective territory. So at the end, you will be following your own model, your own policy and your own Internet community.

Other things that differ from one ccTLD to another are such things as the registration model, management model, and of course, the legal structure of ccTLD manager. What type of organization is it? The legal structure is what We're going to stress on today, but we're probably going to discuss whether the structure of the ccTLD manager influence the way a ccTLD is governed.

Maybe you will arrive to some interesting conclusions here. But still, before you do, there's something I would like to stress here. The ccTLD manager, as I already mentioned, has to ensure that the ccTLD works. So it must be either technically competent itself, or it has to be competent enough to recognize that they have no technical

competency, therefore, ensure that the ccTLD invites a backend provider to ensure that the ccTLD is run properly.

Because at the end of the day, what matters is that the ccTLD is run properly from a technical perspective. It must be up and running, because if that ccTLD does not work, then it won't matter whether the ccTLD manager is not-for-profit or a for-profit company, and it won't matter whether all stakeholders can be invited to sit around the table. ccTLD must work, and that is probably the most important thing that ccTLD managers have to attend to.

So, getting back to the legal structure, again, we can observe a great diversity among ccTLDs. However, interestingly enough, exactly a year ago when the ccNSO looked at this issue, we asked our four regional organizations to summarize some information from their region, from their members. They came up with some numbers, and it turned out actually that in each of the regions, one of the models is dominating. Well, maybe marginally, but still dominating.

So here we can see those legal structures, models that are dominant in each of the four regional organizations that we work with. But as you know, things may change. Sometimes they do change. And it also applies to ccTLD managers. Sometimes management of ccTLD gets transferred from one entity to another.

We looked at the transfers from 2003 until 2019. As you can see, these are numbers of transfers. It doesn't mean that it's the number of ccTLDs

being transferred, because some ccTLDs were transferred several times, two or three times, probably in a search for a perfect model.

But what we did, we looked into those transfers and tried to identify whether transfer also meant change in the legal structure. Here you can see the table. And again, as you can see, the largest number of transfers has occurred when the ccTLD manager was a private company, or in our case, for profit. Definitions vary from region to region, from country to country. So of course, all those numbers are pretty approximate rough numbers. Another thing is that, as you can see, the largest number of transfers went to government structure, whether that's an agency or any other.

So those are the numbers I wanted to present, that's what we managed to collect on such a short notice. So this is the summary slide. Back to you, Olivier.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you very much, Katrina. And this is particularly interesting because you see that it's not just a one-size-fits-all but also various parameters. So you could have a mix of a government-run country code top-level domain mixed with a governance structure or an input structure for end users that is very similar to one based around a not-for-profit, for example. Is that the case? Is that possible?

KATRINA SATAKI: Anything is possible. And maybe your members would attest to that.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: The mix and match. Okay. Thanks very much for this whole presentation here. I think that we've got a good idea now that it's neither a one-size-fits-all nor a restricted number of parameters that we're dealing with here.

We now have a number of members from around the world that are both registrants in those country code top-level domains but also, some of them are not registrants, they're just Internet end users using the local ccTLD, and they will now share their experiences with this. They all have been asked to touch on whether they know what structure their ccTLD is following, what kind of governance it is following, and also to bring the general feedback about how well or how bad their experience is in their part of the world.

And we'll have the following people, unless some have not made it yet, but I think that they've all arrived finally. So we'll start with Barrack Otieno. Barrack is actually ALAC liaison to the ccNSO and member of AFRALO as well. Of course, Barrack is in Africa. Holly Raiche, ALAC member from APRALO. She is of course in Australia. She'll be speaking to us about .au. Andrew Molivurae, member of APRALO, again, from Vanuatu, .vu. Sébastien Bachollet, who's the chair of EURALO, and he'll be speaking to us about .fr. Yrjö Lansipuro, again, a member of EURALO speaking about .fi. Of course, .fr, France, .fi, Finland. Alberto Soto, member of LACRALO who will be speaking to us about .ar, Argentina. Humberto Carrasco, member of LACRALO speaking to us about .cl, which is Chile, and Marita Moll finally who'll be speaking to us—well,

she's coming from NARALO, North America, speaking to us about .ca, the Canadian model.

So it's going to be interesting, and we're going to go straight over to Barrack. And I think that some of the participants have slides, so I'll see if staff can do all the magic to get these things going. Barrack, over to you.

BARRACK OTIENO:

Thank you, Olivier, for that great introduction. Can we move to the next slide? I'll try and be brief. And I want to say that I also wear another hat as the secretariat of Africa top-level domains organization, the regional organization for African ccTLDs, and I have worked a lot with Katrina while she was chair of the ccNSO and I was happy to be part and parcel of this project.

So yes, what Katrina said is right. I come from Kenya, and one of the things I can say, there has been increasing interest in country code top-level domain registries in the African region by governments, particularly because of the role of the Internet in the political and social arena. And this has informed the change of models or structures of ccTLDs.

I did this presentation in 2017 and presented it at the Africa Internet Governance Forum. It was a desk survey, and it showed that government-owned structures were 45%, which is a slight increase from what has been presented in the slides by Katrina. University-owned structures have gradually reduced to 12%. Privately-owned

companies are still 26%, and public-private partnerships are 17%, as you can see.

So governments have increasingly become interested, but of course, most of the time, they don't have the expertise that is needed to operate the country code top-level domain registries, as Katrina rightly indicated. And that informs the transition or the shift that we are seeing on the screen.

The other thing is most of the governments have elected to remain as the administrative contacts whereas they have moved the technical bit to technical organizations within their respective countries to be able to operate the country code top-level domain registries. And we can see that progressively, in most countries, legislation has come up to actually govern the operations of country code top-level domain registries. But inversely, we also see a scenario in which most of the countries that have successful country code top-level domain registries are either privately owned companies or public-private partnerships, because these have the necessary expertise that is needed to operate the country code top-level domain registries.

And finally, another observation we have made is that the most common and successful model is the three R model, or the registry, registrar, registrant model where there is a dedicated organization to operate the technical infrastructure which is the registry. We have registrars. I'll give an example. South Africa has 400 registrars and [.zd] is the biggest country code top-level domain registry in Africa.

Kenya has 200 registrars, and I think Nigeria has almost a similar number. These are some of the biggest markets when it comes to the registrar business. And finally, there's also the question of registrants. So remember, right now we are in an era where most countries are coming up with data protection mechanisms. And so the content that is hosted by the registries in the WHOIS—which is registrant information— is increasingly coming under a lot of scrutiny, and so obligations of registrants are also coming to the fore.

I will stop at that and come back later on. I believe I have exhausted my three minutes, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you very much, Barrack, for these very interesting details. I remember some of these top-level domains starting up back in the mid-'90s with two or three people putting their heads together to register it and get it running, and now it's great to see how it's all progressing. The growth is just astounding.

Let's go to the next person, and that's Holly Raiche. Now, she is over in Australia, and .au is the ccTLD she's going to be speaking about.

HOLLY RAICHE: Thank you. This is referring back to Katrina's slides and to the different categories. And to put auDA, as our manager is called, into that frame. Our legal structure, now, we did not start as a not-for-profit. We started what Olivier talked about, which was one person running out of

Melbourne University for profit. But we were the first country code delegated by ICANN in 2001.

The structure is not-for-profit. There is government oversight, and indeed, in 2017, the government had a very significant review of auDA. The result was, I would say, we changed CEOs, we changed chairs, we changed boards, and we wound up with what's called the terms of engagement that are very firm, these are the things we expect.

The current arrangement is very cordial. There's a very good relationship, arm's length but quite workable. There is a provision in our telecommunications act that will allow our communications regulator or has the power to delegate a manager. That's not likely, but that is, if you will, a sort of power sitting there in case the government is concerned. But for the moment, it's run very well as a disaster recovery as a not-for-profit corporation.

The management, we have TLDs, we have a number of them, some of them are no longer used. We have a range of policies for them. We have what's called open top-level domains for as long as someone meets the criteria, they can have a name. We have what's called community names, and those are reserved for individual communities in Australia wanting to have their name as a second-level domain. We also have closed where there are specific rules. So if you want an edu.au, you have to be an education institution and meet certain criteria. Same with government and CSIROs, commonwealth scientific industrial research organization. So they have specific rules as to when an entity can actually use that name or not.

Our actual operator—and this is picking up exactly the same model—we have a registry operator that is not auDA. It is Afilias Australia Proprietary Limited, and we have registrars and registrants. So registration is done through the registrars and their resellers.

The auDA Board several years back in principle endorsed direct registration. What's happening now is working to arrange policies, finalizing them, and the expectation is that direct reg will be implemented perhaps in the next year or so. But time will tell.

The participation—this is a big point in the terms of engagement the government made and that auDA follows, which is it's very transparent, very open.

There are standing committees of auDA. One's technical, obviously, but one is general, and that includes representatives from various sectors in the Internet community and the business community and the consumer community.

In addition, when there is to be a review or development of a new rule, an advisory panel is established, and that panel has membership that's representative of all sectors. And the minutes of those meetings and the final decision of the Board are on the website and they're public. Next slide, please.

I'd like to contrast that with—you'll all be familiar with ISO 3166. When Jon Postel was handing out country code names, he did not do so on the basis of political sovereignty but simply on the fact that they were territories. So even though there are territories that are Australian

territories with Australian sovereignty over them, four islands got their own country code. There is no problem really with the Cocos Islands. Heard McDonald is way down here, and that's testament to the Australian presence and interest in the Antarctic.

But there are two issues. One is Norfolk Island. Norfolk Island was independently run, now it is [broke.] It's in the hands of administration. So we're in a rather strange position of an Australian-appointed administrator but the actual NF is still run by somebody else.

The more worrying is Christmas Island. Christmas Island since 1955 was an Australian territory. Jon Postel back in the '80s said however, CX is going to get their own two-letter code.

In 1997, an American came along and said, "I'll have it. Thanks very much." And it was given by IANA—this is pre-ICANN—to the American who then reached an arrangement with Verisign, and Verisign sublets the domain to other companies.

Unfortunately, it's one of the major sites for child abuse and other criminal activity, and I have to say that has been a concern to the Australian government. And increasingly, people are urging Australia to assert its political sovereignty over CX. It hasn't done so yet, but the most interesting thing for me was an entry into Wikipedia that basically said in 2018, the CX was listed for sale at \$500,000 but in 2019, it's registered and used by another company, and I don't know who that is. But at the moment, we still have as a political territory in Australia a site that is notorious as a bad site. CX, Christmas Island, is a real problem,

and it's one that we just haven't sold. So I would say it's a contrast very much of a very well-run country code and one that's not so well-run. Thank you.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you so much. It took a little more than three minutes, but it's fascinating to see the whole area. So, thank you for the whole background on this. We'll continue swiftly then on the list so that we don't end up too late and we'll have plenty of time for discussion. I see there's a good amount of chat going on already. Next is Sébastien Bachollet, because I believe that Andrew isn't with us yet. So Sébastien Bachollet will speak to us about .fr, the French registry.

SÉBASTIEN BACHOLLET: Thank you. Sébastien Bachollet speaking—will try to keep my three minutes—EURALO chair and AFNIC Board member, and within AFNIC, I'm chair of the finance and risk committee. I am talking to you from Burgundy in France. I hope to see you in face-to-face as soon as possible.

Established in 1997, AFNIC is an acronym for Association française pour le nommage Internet en coopération, so French network information center.

AFNIC, a not-for-profit association, is a registry for .fr, and some other French territories like [.re for Réunion.] I will put in the chat all of the

territories where there is a domain name. It's not just a country, as you will see, and that's an interesting point, I guess.

AFNIC is also a backend registry for brand and geo TLD, like for brands, [inaudible] or for geo, like .paris and .alsace. Since 1986, .fr has been French national TLD. Until 2006, it was open only to company. Since then, end users like us can have a .fr.

Because .fr ccTLDs are a public good, AFNIC's role is considered one of general interest, consisting and contributing on a daily basis to a secure and stable Internet open to innovation in which the French Internet community plays a leading role.

AFNIC budget is 19 million euros, staff is around 80 people. .fr is 38% of the market share in France and 3.8 million domain names all sold through registrars accredited by ICANN, and resellers, of course, but it's the task of the registrar.

The Board of AFNIC is composed by five founding members from INRIA, the research center who ran .fr before, AFNIC, and ministers. Five elected members, one by the international college, two by the registrar constituency, and two by the user constituency. I currently represent Internet Society France as a user in the AFNIC Board. I'm at my eighth year at the Board of AFNIC. And I am a registrant of various .fr domain names with different registrars.

.fr is a common good, so it's only natural that its profit are returned to the community. 90% of the profit generated by the management of .fr go to the AFNIC Foundation for Digital Solidarity. Under the aegis of the

Fondation de France, the AFNIC foundation financed more than 100 local projects each year to reduce regional divide and promote Internet access for all to foster digital inclusion and combat digital illiteracy.

Each five years, the French government opens a call for applications to run the .fr. It is the case as we speak. Thanks. One world, one Internet, one .fr. Thank you very much.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you very much, Sébastien. So that's an interesting model. Again, interesting to see the progression that has happened over the years that's not-for-profit, but there are also some top-level domains that are under government model, such as the Finland one, .fi, and Yrjö Lansipuro will be speaking to us about this one.

YRJÖ LANSIPURO: Thank you, Olivier. Yeah, the .fi is certainly an odd one out in the sense that it is one of the rather few government-run CCs in Europe. .fi goes back 35 years. It was one of the early CCs allocated by Jon Postel and it went to the Tampere university of Technology in 1986.

After that, it was run by the academic institutions until '97 when the government took over. In the beginning, it was quite restrictive management, that is to say only Finnish legal persons could have a domain and it had to be exactly the trademark or the name of the business and so on and so forth.

Then it was relaxed step by step until finally, there was a review in 2012 and all opportunities or alternatives were on the table. Finally, they settled for the government model, but with a full registry/registrar model, and all these residency requirements were scrapped so that now, anybody anywhere can have a .fi domain name.

Today, it's 520,000 domains. It was a remarkable rise during the pandemic. Next slide, please. So these comments come actually from my good friend who is the CC manager and many of you know, Juhani Juselius. So it's like looking at these models from the CC point of view, but at the same time, I would say these are also relevant for users. That is to say, there is a financial stability and certain reliability with .fi. There are clear responsibilities and rights written in law, and they maintain that this model gives them a better oversight over registrars. That is to say, pushing them to reduce DNS abuse. Basically, when they say know your customer, it's not only something written in the contract, it's actually an order.

So there are [hindsight,] of course, bureaucracy changes are needed, process is slow, and what is worrying, of course, there have been budget cuts and they have shrunk the domain team to a minimum. That of course is also bad for the end user and for service. Thank you.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you very much for this, Yrjö. It's interesting to see the for and against, the positives and the negatives. There's always tradeoffs with every model that we're seeing. For another government-based model,

we're going to jump to another continent, and that's to Latin America. Alberto Soto is going to speak to us about .ar, Argentina. Over to you, Alberto.

ALBERTO SOTO:

Thank you, Olivier. Good morning, good afternoon, good evening from Buenos Aires, Argentina, at 6:00 in the morning with 6 degrees Celsius. Our NIC started operating on August the 20th 1987 without restrictions, without too many regulations, registration for free. Collections only started in 2014. There was abuse of that gratuity and it was a serious problem further on, but when standardization was expected, hundreds of people had hundreds of domains registered without any justification and with doubtful intents behind. Now it depends on the office of the technical secretary, of the office of the president of the country, which manages all domains except for .edu, which has been managed by the university networks, some 50 universities, which since 2017 have implemented DNSSEC by myself before 2016. It has also its own WHOIS since 2017.

[inaudible] is the Argentinian Internet house that gathers most of our Argentinian ISPs, and from 2017, together with NIC.ar, it has set up the Anycast network which offers redirection services, readdressing, to go to the nearest node supporting access and supporting the [inaudible] exchange.

The methodology to sort out multiple domain names, multiple individuals registered without foundation as I said before, were first of

all [conference registers,] then interests, then general availability. Today, any individual or entity can register domain names that have not been reserved, meaning there is an annual renewal. When it is required, it is published on the official gazette for two days. The cost is included in the domain cost, and then it is approved. Anyway, there's always a possibility of appeal for those who are interested.

The final user on the left on my PDF can require before NIC AR, before going through the Argentinian [IRS] called AFIP, through the ISPs that don't typically offer this service, registrars offering the service, and also hosting services. But all of them need to be registered with this government agency and duly documented.

There are initiatives such as [inaudible] tools, blockchain federal Argentina and [connection universal.] If there are any questions, please go ahead.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you very much for this, Alberto. It was, again, an interesting, different angle, and as you said, it's a government model, so you'll also see differences between the different government models that we have out there. For another ccTLD in Latin America, we'll jump across the Andes to the other side and we'll see Chile, .cl with Humberto Carrasco. Humberto.

HUMBERTO CARRASCO: Thank you very much, Olivier. I'm Humberto Carrasco. [inaudible]. All my great friends I had not seen for quite a while. Things have been more complicated for me because I was appointed dean of the law school of the university I work for, but when I was invited to speak about what is going on with the CL domain in my country, I took a few minutes to deal with this.

I will deal from the user perspective. I'm sorry, I don't have a presentation. I will talk about the three questions by Olivier Crépin-Leblond, my great friend, especially about NIC Chile.

NIC Chile is a registry that has a very peculiar legal setup, because it reports to the University of Chile, of the school of mathematics of IT.

Up to a short time ago, it was part of the IT department but a couple of years ago, it became a center as part of the university structure, which is very important because at the end of the day, it is public law legal entity, it's not private law legal entity, so it is regulated by consumer laws. The contract of the end user with NIC Chile is under the regulation of the civil law and [consumption] law as well.

Its legal structure today, it is a central part of the University of Chile, but it has a hybrid system first. Here, Margarita Valdez, [inaudible], Patricio Poblete would better explain governance, but I'm looking at this from the standpoint of the user. But as a user, I have several domains, and the system is quite friendly for registration purposes. At some point in time, the purchase price for the domain were pretty affordable, a bit more than \$10 per year. At the beginning, it was for free, some 30 years

ago, but because of the abuse of domain registration, it started being for a price and there are over 700,000 domains for a country with 18 million people. It's not that bad.

There has been an explosion from the pandemic, some 2 million new domains from the last year as of today, which is something that really catches my eye. I have an interesting view of the system, because at university, we have an agreement with NIC Chile, a user advocacy program in place in the face of arbitration proceedings. We have over 300 arbitrations that we have been counsels for for the center. I also have this organization that I run.

There's a lot of improvement for the support of the end user. The weakest point in this relationship between the owner of a brand and someone who wants to have a .cl domain. That is in general terms. I hope it's okay. Thank you for allowing me to be with you, Olivier.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you very much, Humberto, and congratulations on your new position, and thank you for taking the valuable time. I understand it's the middle of the night, so we caught you at the right moment, unless of course they expect you to work at night too.

HUMBERTO CARRASCO: 5:00.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Get ready to go to work soon. Now, I'm told that Andrew Molivurae has now reached us and he is going to be speaking to us about .vu, for Vanuatu. And that's got a government model. So Andrew, I hope the technology works.

ANDREW MOLIVURAE: Hi Olivier. Hi everyone. So yes, I've only got one slide there, [very new.] I come from the ccTLD management, but I'm going to speak from a user perspective. So .vu ccTLD has been run by the incumbent telecom operator for quite some time, almost over 20 years, and it's just a simple registration and [inaudible] maybe a few hundred. But then up until ten years ago, there was a law that required the management of the ccTLD to be moved to the telecom regulator's office. So that's when the work started to begin and during those years, a transition took a few years and eventually by 2020, we had the separation of registrar and registry. That was not the case over those years. And there was as regulation as well developed five years ago that was used as a management guide for that ccTLD.

However, at this point in time it's very easy to register a .vu name from different registrars. We have about 25 registrars, including international registrars that can register domain names at a .vu namespace.

But one other thing that is seen at the moment is that names are still a bit too high. You can buy a .vu name currently at around 85 US dollars, which is a bit expensive especially for the local users. For the Pacific

Users

users locally, this is a challenge, to register names and renew them at that cost.

Anyway, despite the regulation that provided the governance of the .vu, there still needs to be some review from a user perspective of the actual regulation. There are some things that need to be changed, need to be added.

And one of the things is the dispute resolution service that is still missing at this stage. Hopefully, I think that is going to happen. But one thing that I think should be changed is also the fee structure that would allow the fees to really go down so that there can be a takeup of the namespace, both locally and internationally.

So probably this is my one or two minutes that I can spend on this slide. Thank you.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you very much, Andrew. And I note the common thing between country code top-level domains in that they are administered locally, so the rules are dealt with locally in each ccTLD. So the improvements that we see that could be wished by end users are sometimes different from one territory to another around the world.

ANDREW MOLIVURAE: Yeah, that is correct. We have the local users opportunity to launch a complaint and also talk to us directly. Not to us, but to the management of ccTLD. One thing that is also good is that there's a requirement in the

regulation that says the primary DNS server needs to be in country. So these are some of the things that sort of localize the governance of .vu.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Yeah. I remember that discussion, and in fact when a number of ccTLDs were created in the '90s, because the local infrastructure wasn't up to the level to operate a ccTLD, the infrastructure was outside, but it's good that you mentioned this. This has also been a trend in many places. I don't even know now if it's possible to operate a ccTLD without having the infrastructure locally in the territory.

But no doubt, someone will have the answer to this in the discussion that we'll have afterwards. Thank you, Andrew. Let's swiftly move to Marita in a slightly colder climate, but no doubt equally as warmhearted. And of course, she's going to speak to us about Canada, .ca.

MARITA MOLL: Thank you, Olivier. It is summer here, so we're not looking at three feet of snow outside, thank God. I'm here to speak about the .ca domain name. The Canadian Internet registration authority, CIRA, runs this domain name and has done so since 2000.

It is a Canadian not-for-profit organization and it sees itself as a steward of an essential public resource. There are 12 elected Board members and three advisors. There's some very light arm's length government

oversight, and 3 million domains under management. The Board provides oversight and strategic directives.

there's a NomCom process that filters candidates for various types of expertise, as we do also at ICANN, and there's one Board member elected from the member community, sort of a people's choice kind of thing. I happen to be a Board member under that for a three-year term, so I am pretty familiar with the governance structure.

But I want to speak about myself as a user, registrant experience. I like the fact that CIRA has membership structure. I can join as a member, which means I can vote for the Board and run for the Board and meet other members at what we call member meetups that used to be in local pubs around town. There are [various centers.] Currently, they're virtual, of course.

For me, .ca is my home on the Internet. I never even considered any other options. I like the fact that my domain name identifies me as a Canadian. And I have to show some evidence of Canadian presence to even get a .ca. So that feels really good. I also always really appreciated the fact that my personal information was never openly available even before the whole GDPR crisis discussions came around.

Does it serve my needs? Very well. I feel protected for privacy and security. CIRA does a lot of great things in the public space. It has partnered with other actors to set up IXPs for example to route more traffic through the country rather than across the border south and then back to us, which happens a lot, and we all know that when our

data crosses a legal jurisdiction, it also changes the way our data is perhaps received and can be treated. So that's a good thing.

It also has—very similar to what Sébastien was talking about at .fr—a fund, more than \$1.2 million is given back to the community through the Community Improvement Fund which offers small grants to charitable entities supporting digital literacy, local innovations, and environmental monitoring, mesh networks and social housing. [Some little, sometimes larger] but often small projects find it very hard to get any money for startup up elsewhere.

It also runs a performance test, so I can check the quality of my Internet connection. That's been used in various jurisdictions to argue for necessary upgrades. CIRA supports the Canadian Internet Governance Forum, runs a firewall service that's extensively used by the municipal university, school and hospital sectors.

Improvements, are you asking whether or not there are improvements? I'd like to see more community Board members, of course, more open Board meetings like we have at ICANN, but I think that CIRA is really well-run and it does pursue a lot of very public interest-type projects. So I'm a happy camper at CIRA, and that's what I have to say. We're sort of no drama.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you very much, Marita. So, smiles all around. Thank you. And we can therefore end the session. Oh no, I've forgotten we still have questions and comments. Okay, so let's now move on and let's open

the floor for comments and questions, but whilst everyone ponders as to what questions and comments they would like to ask, I know that there are a few that have already been posed in the chat and some comments being made. In order to speak, by the way, you'll have to put your hand up.

But first I wanted to give the floor to Javier Rua-Jovet who had comments. Some of you might now—well, some of you in At-Large might know Javier and now I guess some of you in the ccNSO might know Javier, too. Javier, you have the floor.

JAVIER RUA JOVET:

Hi to all. It's so great to be here. I'm in a place right now which I'm in my two homes, the At-Large and ccNSO. So, quickly, my comment—personal comment, of course—is it's understood in conversations and I think it's really important that the ccNSO and the CC world, the fact that these entities span ... The governance of these entities spans the whole spectrum from public to private. That cannot be understated as an important fact of the multi-stakeholder model itself.

Not only the diversity it brings into discussions, the fact that you can have these very well run private entities protecting the public interest but being run privately is a bit of a backstop to purely [state-based] and multi-lateral type forces which are kind of like what the multi-stakeholder model usually, from my perspective, tries to defend itself against a lot in Internet governance.

And also the fact what Holly and others have mentioned, just the fact that non-sovereign entities like Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans like myself get to have our own presence in the Internet as equals, and not only the preservation of identity but just the fact that you can be at the table.

So, I just wanted to mention that. I think it's very important the diversity of the CC world itself with all these different types of entities—as diverse also as At-Large. In At-Large we have people that come from governmental backgrounds and commercial backgrounds. Other communities are less diverse, like GAC which is pure government. So I just wanted to bring that to the table. Thanks.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thanks very much for this, Javier. It's good to mention this. I've noticed also some questions that were asked before we opened up and so on. So I'm going to first go through the questions. In fact, some have already been answered on the chat and I see the line is [queuing] up slowly. That's good. Then I'll read a couple of comments as well, which I thought were pretty interesting.

First question was from Sven Echternach. What are annual registration fees for African ccTLDs so much higher than for Western European TLDs? And Barrack Otieno responded with the response I was going to give as well from experience, which is that the infrastructure costs are more expensive in some parts of the world, so the cost of the

registration in those ccTLDs reflects the infrastructure costs in many of those cases.

Chokri Ben Romdhane asked a question whether there are any local laws or s that require government institutions to use exclusively the local ccTLD in a country or region.

I know that this exists in some places. I don't know where. Perhaps some people will be able to help us out on that one.

Thuy Mai asks if there is any country's law that stipulates the ccTLD as public resources and registrants only own the right to use it but not the domain name themselves.

An interesting question as often, do you own or do you rent a domain name, provided if you stop paying for it, the renewal for, it gets taken away from you.

Then there were a couple of comments, one from Lito Ibarra who mentioned that conceptually or historically a ccTLD is part of the Internet core of each country or territory and should serve its own community from the Internet development and deployment perspective.

And another comment, which actually brought forth the Tunis agenda, from Bob Ochieng. And that's an interesting one because ... I'd like to turn to Katrina, actually, about the question [phased] on this, actually. But the point by Bob Ochieng was paragraph 63 of the Tunis Agenda reads, "Countries should not be involved in decisions regarding another

country’s country-code top-level domain. Their legitimate interests as expressed and defined by each country in diverse ways regarding decisions affecting their ccTLDs need to be respected, upheld, and addressed via a flexible and improved framework and mechanisms.”

I was under the impression that ICANN and the ccTLD, ccNSO, and the GAC had worked on a thorough document called the Framework of Interpretation. So I was going to turn over to perhaps Katrina to summarize this in a minute if she can. The [inaudible] probably takes a year, not a minute.

KATRINA SATAKI:

It does take a year, and yes, absolutely correct. No country has the right to interfere with other country’s ccTLD. Furthermore, nor ccNSO nor ALAC nor ICANN in general has rights to tell other countries how to run their ccTLDs.

If I talk about Framework of Interpretation, there was a working group—a ccNSO working group—and they looked into RFC 1591 and the comprehensive report can be found online, so I probably will not waste your time. Please come to our website and read it.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND:

My mouse is running away from me. Excellent. Thank for this, Katrina. I should stop muting myself. Anyway, we’ve got, as I’ve said, some time for questions in addition to this.

Vanda also put in the chat. Vanda Scartezini asked whether any country code had already adopted RDAP. That's the Registry ... Well, the new protocol for registration directory access protocol—there you go, RDAP. Please answer in the chat.

Let's now go over to our queue and we'll start with Humberto Carrasco.

HUMBERTO CARRASCO: Thank you, Olivier. I apologize for speaking Spanish but I'd like to take advantage of translation services, and at 5:00 AM it's easier to speak in Spanish than in English.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: ... in the Zoom room, which is English, French, and Spanish. Now, if you do use another language, you will have to apologize.

HUMBERTO CARRASCO: Some clarifications. Friendly [inaudible] made by our board member, Patricio Poblete, about some wrong figures. And I think I should clarify this because this session is being recorded. He is saying that in 2020, [inaudible] grew by 90,000 domains, a little bit by 15% and since the beginning of the pandemic, it's grown by 120,000 domains—about 20%. I'd like to thank Patricio for this clarification because information has to be provided accurately. That's it. Thank you.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you, Humberto. Next is Alberto Soto. Thanks for the accuracy, Humberto; and to Patricio Poblete, of course. Go ahead, Alberto.

ALBERTO SOTO: Thank you. Based on Javier's comment, I'd like to say that because of a lack of time, I didn't talk about [NICR] initiatives. They're basically focused on the end users, even though they may also be used by other users. But there's an initiative that's [inaudible] federal Argentina that is a multi-stakeholder platform that uses no virtual currency that is open, participatory in that group's industry, commerce, academia, national, provision, and municipal governments as well as civil society.

That is, it is a multi-stakeholder model with the support of NIC Argentina that groups all interests and provides full reliability, just like the block chain system but without using any virtual currency. Thank you very much.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you, Alberto. That's an interesting project, which no doubt several people around the world are looking at closely. We'll next move to Pat Kane.

PAT KANE: Thank you, Olivier. Good morning and good evening. So, I apologize I was late to the meeting so I missed the original presentation from Holly. I just wanted to address a couple of things about what I'm reading in

the chat window, especially the report that my friend, Dean Marks, has posted in terms of [dot-ccs].

So, Verisign, through a wholly owned subsidiary [ENIC] operates on the path of [inaudible]. So, [dot-cc] is [inaudible] asset of the [inaudible]. I would call your attention, though, to the Wikipedia entry that's been mentioned and that is focused on second-level registrations, [co.cc] and not the TLD itself. So, again it's still an asset of the [inaudible].

As far as some of the bad behavior that has been seen in the past in [dot-cc], a 2019 report that talks about 2018 data about child sexual exploitation [inaudible]. It was published by an Internet [inaudible] foundation and they do a great job in identifying behavior and things that go on. And we joined IWF at that point in the time to [address] [inaudible].

So, this is old data. We are working towards getting the routes to that data taken out, such that behavior has dropped off the most recent IWF report. So we were working with the [inaudible], with IWF to address the behavior that is in that specific report and I think that we're doing a good job in conjunction with the IWF in addressing that.

So, if there's any questions specifically around that, happy to take those questions.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thanks very much for this, Pat. I did notice the chat going on about [dot-cx]. Let's continue next with Sébastien Bachollet.

SÉBASTIEN BACHOLLET: Thank you, Olivier. I'm going to go back because I think that those exchanges and presentations of ccTLDs by final end users is extremely interesting and I can see we have a big diversity and also similarities. We know that historically, dot-FR, dot-CA are managed and organized in a similar way. It's not exactly the same but quite similar. And historically there were many exchanges with dot-CA but it's true as other ccTLDs and I would like to take this opportunity to indicate the presence of two people, Lucien Castex, who came to AFNIC not long ago and is doing the PR—public relations—for us for AFNIC. And my friend, [inaudible], who is the President of the international committee, AFNIC international college. He is a representative at the Board, just like I am.

And I would like to end by saying that the work we started here today necessitates for us to keep going and to do more and to see how end users—and I know that each ccTLD is independent but I believe that we can work together so that the end users are heard in each and every country and each experience can be used—I'm not going to say the best practices but I think we can share a lot. Thank you very much for this exchange and we have to keep going. Thank you very much.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you, Sébastien. It's a very worthwhile question. The voice of end users and how is it heard in the different levels that we have here. And we've in seen, in fact, that in some cases the voice is being heard very well indeed, no matter what the model is above that.

Let's go to the next person. That's Holly Raiche. And I'm going to close the queue after Barrack because of time constraints. As you know, we can't overrun and I'm used to overrun, so I'm receiving a barrage of hate at the moment from staff. Let's go to Holly Raiche. Holly?

HOLLY RAICHE: Yeah, very quickly. I'd like to say thank you to Pat from Verisign for his intervention and I'm very pleased about the news about the recent action to Verisign to address the comments that I have to say were around for a while, and if they are being addressed, I'm sure that [inaudible] very happy that that's been addressed. So, thank you, Pat.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thanks, Holly. Next is Stephen Deerhake.

STEPHEN DEERHAKE: Thank you. I just want to bring to everyone's attention the FOI that was mentioned by Katrina a little bit earlier. It's only 12 pages, and basically the bottom line is unless there is serious misconduct by the current ccTLD operator, there's no provision within ICANN policy to swap out operator A for operator B. Thank you.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thanks for this, Stephen. Well, there's also a link to RFC 1591 and Bart did mention to us that the FOi was an interpretation of RFC 1591. Katrina, do you have any comment to make on Stephen's point here of

the lack of enforcement? I mean, I can't see ICANN enforcing things over ccTLDs.

KATRINA SATAKI:

Absolutely, no. Stephen is absolutely right. He was on this Framework of Interpretation Working Group, and as I said, yes it explains what the different aspects of RFC 1591. It's worth reading. As I said, it is a comprehensive report. Stephen is correct that it is 12 pages long and it explains many aspects, many terminology that is used in 1591 and applies it to the world of ccTLDs. So, if you're interested, please read it. It's really not a ...

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND:

And Katrina, it's Olivier speaking. Since its publication—it's been a few years—is this generally followed? Because I guess this really is guidelines, aren't they? They're not rules. They're not actual standards.

KATRINA SATAKI:

You're right, it's not a policy, but currently the ccNSO is working and almost have completed one part of this policy development process on these ... Again, maybe Stephen can comment more because he's the chair of this CCPDP working group.

STEPHEN DEERHAKE:

The ICANN Board acknowledged it, so it's basically de facto policy within the IANA PTI.

Users

KATRINA SATAKI: Yeah. He's referring to FOI report. It is used, and actually according to this document, the terminology has been changed [inaudible] database. Now we talk about ccTLD managers, not sponsoring organizations. Many things, they change and we continue working on policy documents, CCPDP, for delegation, transfer, and review mechanisms [inaudible].

STEPHEN DEERHAKE: Retirement.

KATRINA SATAKI: Yeah, retirement. So, Stephen, if you want to comment on that or draw our attention to the final report here.

STEPHEN DEERHAKE: Yes. Stephen Deerhake here for the record, Chair of the ccNSO Working Group tasked with retirement and review mechanism. Retirement policy, we have developed and it's coming out for Council review at our upcoming meeting next week on retirement of a ccTLD. These things do happen. Czechoslovakia being split into two ccTLDs as a recent example. It's an outgrowth from the Framework of Interpretation Working Group from several years ago. So that's where we are with that. Thank you, Katrina.

Users

KATRINA SATAKI: Thank you, Stephen. Olivier, back to you.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you, Katrina, and thank you, Stephen. I'm smiling because you mentioned the recent split between dot-CZ domain—sorry, dot-CS to go into dot-CZ and dot-SK, and of course that's not so recent. It's about more than 20 years ago and I had exactly the same feeling.

KATRINA SATAKI: That's not the only example. Again, if you read the report, you will see many [inaudible].

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: No, no, I'm just saying that in the history of Internet, things have happened so quickly that sometimes it feels like things were just happening yesterday, and in fact ... Well, they were, strictly speaking in the larger continuum of time, but they're not that close.

We'll finalize the queue with Barrack Otieno.

STEPHEN DEERHAKE: The ccNSO has a longer view on things.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Indeed, indeed. Way before ... Well, there was life on the Internet before ICANN, that's true.

STEPHEN DEERHAKE: Yes, [no] ccTLDs, for example.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Barrack Otieno, you have the floor.

BARRACK OTIENO: Thank you very much, Olivier. I will make a couple of closing points and I want to touch on the evolution of ccTLDs which has been a subject that you have just talked about.

We found from our research-focused approach to a technical forecast approach, and right now globally and more specifically looking at the global south where I come from, most of them are viewed as social enterprises or businesses gradually, because of the role in which country-code top-level domain registries are playing in transforming the lives of citizens, either financially or in terms of bringing information.

And as I finalize, most ccTLDs are denoted with the term “NIC” (Network Information Center). And I think from an end user perspective, they have to live up to the [billing] or to the name Network Information Center.

Information drives societies. Information drives economies. And I think that’s a critical issue to look at from an end user perspective. And in Africa, one of the things we are doing through the Africa domain name

system forum that is spearheaded by AF TLD, ICANN and the African Registrar Association, we are right now looking at establishing national DNS fora that bring this conversation closer to the communities, closer to the people and I think that is the way to go.

Thank you very much for a well-moderated session.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you very much, Barrack. Very interesting, and of course it's timely because we are reaching the end of this session and we have to look at the next steps.

And the topic that you just addressed here—the National DNS Fora—is something which perhaps the At-Large should follow-up with, as in learn from and find out between this meeting and the next meeting find out more about.

The other suggestion that I've seen was made by Sébastien Bachollet is for the At-Large community of end users to talk to each other between now and the next meeting to coordinate as in how can the end user voice be heard more across all of the different models.

Forgive me if I'm wrong but I didn't see any model here where the end users seemed to be completely shunted aside because obviously the end user often is the customer, and the organization that mistreats its customers doesn't have very much of a future.

So, it looks as though things are doing quite well across the board, but perhaps how can the input of end users be heard more is an avenue to

look at. And starting the group, maybe the discussion group with the panelists that we had here today and who have been able to speak to us about the models they've had in their country.

Closing words with Katrina Sataki, or indeed anyone else from the ccNSO if they wish to speak, but I guess Katrina you're the one who is on camera.

KATRINA SATAKI:

Yeah. Well, thank you very much. Thank you for inviting us. We managed to get some useful information to you to kickstart your discussion. One important thing I want to raise here is if you continue this discussion, I believe there is a common understanding that you want to continue these discussions, please do not forget to invite ccTLDs to the table. We will be happy to participate. Thank you.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND:

Thank you, Katrina. And I was thinking perhaps we can already pencil in a call in the next ICANN—is it 72 at that point it's going to be, isn't it? Yes. And why am I saying call? Let's hope it's a face-to-face meeting. Next time we see each other face-to-face at ICANN72, let's be assertive. We can certainly follow up and it'll be interesting to see where the ALAC has progressed from today's teachings. So, thank you so much for coming to speak to us and for you and your colleagues to be so helpful.

I will hand the floor over to Hadia Elminiawi who has been the organizer of this session. Hadia, you have the floor.

HADIA ELMINIAMI:

Thank you so much, Olivier. I want to thank first and foremost the ccNSO for being with us today. Actually, we look forward to more sessions like this one. This one was basically an introduction to the various legal structures and governance models.

What's good about this session, that it wasn't only done from a ccNSO perspective but it was also done through the eyes of the At-Large users.

We've seen very good constructive suggestions for a way forward. By the way forward here, I mean the inclusion of the Internet users. Sébastien and others have made suggestions to think more about how can the voices of the end users be heard.

We've seen some models, for example, like CIRA, where they have a member from the community and other models also that do the same. Barrack also with the introduction of the [IDF], having a national DNS forum. It's also maybe I think what users are looking for is to have a secure and safe online experience. We are always focusing on gTLDs and we are sort of forgetting that there are ccTLDs, so we thought [inaudible] important here because they reflect the security and safety of the users online. So, I thank you again. We look forward to more discussions like that.

Also, I would say some of the ... Maybe Holly did introduce some dissatisfaction coming from governments, but I think what we are looking for here is more satisfactions coming from users. We always like to know how this goes along with how much a government is satisfied

or not with its ccTLD. And again, this is based again on what Holly was saying. It's good also to note the user perspective in relation to what she was talking about.

Again, thank you and I'll stop here and hand it over to Olivier.

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you very much for these words, Hadia. We have two minutes. In fact, I'll just use one to point out Adam Peake's message in the chat which points us to an interview of my good friend, Jörg Schweiger, the CEO of dot-DE, DENIC, which covers a lot of interesting issues and many of them are relevant to this session. So, once you're finished with this session, you can go straight over to watch the interview.

Okay. Well, thanks very much, everyone. This has been really, really great and let's hope we can do this again at the next meeting, but let's try for face to face. Thanks to the interpreters and to staff for having permitted this session to proceed forward absolutely seamlessly. And I believe that we have 30 seconds until we get cut off. So, have a very good morning, afternoon, evening, or night wherever you are. Goodbye.

SÉBASTIEN BACHOLLET: Thank you, Olivier, for your managing of this session. Well done.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Thank you.

EN

Users

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Thank you. Bye.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]