
RECORDED VOICE: This meeting is now being recorded.

JIA-RONG LOW: Okay. Good morning, again, afternoon and evening everyone. My name is Jia-Rong from the ICANN Asia Pacific hub here in Singapore. And we are very excited to be hosting this webinar today on what internationalized domain names, or IDNs, and what does it mean for you. And this webinar we are doing in collaboration with APRALO, as part of the APRALO capacity building webinar series.

So today we are very, very excited. We have quite a full program for the next hour. So let's get started right away, and we'll be inviting my colleague, Silvia, who is representing, speaking on behalf of Siranush, the APRALO chair, to talk about the APRALO capacity building webinar series.

Then we will start with the content proper from our colleagues, Sarmad Hussain, who will be presenting on IDNs and the IDN work at ICANN. Then we will have Sharon from the community perspective, from Edmon Chung, he's dot Asia CEO, but he's also the At-Large IDN policy working group co-chair. So we will be having that perspective as well.

Then we will move into Q&A. And these are, some of the [inaudible] instructions. We will, the dialing numbers are there, so if you want to ask a question on the phone, do dial in on the phone, because that gives you less technical problems if you want to ask questions. And after this,

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we will be making the recording and slides of the webinar available at the link below.

And I'll be talking about how to ask questions, but when we are moving to the Q&A section, but this is just for you to take note in advance. One thing I want to highlight, see on this slide, is the last point on the post-webinar survey. We always want to improve ourselves, so please do visit the link and give us your feedback after this.

So now we will be inviting my colleague, Silvia, to be introducing the APRALO capacity building webinar series. Again, very, very excited and happy to be collaborating with APRALO. So we'll pass the line to Silvia please.

SILVIA VIVANCO:

Thank you very much, Jia-Rong. Welcome to this first webinar of the APRALO AP hub series. This webinar is being developed jointly with the AP hub staff. I want to express my appreciation to all of them for their great support and work. And it's part of the implementation of the APRALO ICANN hub pilot framework. And it's specifically area two, which is leveraging APAC for the capacity and capability building.

The themes, as chosen by the user's preference expressed in a survey, which was completed by all APRALO ALSs about a month ago. And the themes will be published on a Wiki page. We will have one webinar per month, and the themes will be structured in three levels: basic, intermediate, advanced. And this is intended to build up knowledge in a progressive and in a very structured fashion.

As Jia-Rong [inaudible] and this webinar is interactive. We encourage you to make comments and ask questions, and there will be a Q&A session afterwards. And a survey will be distributed after the webinar. Please complete it. Your feedback is so important for us to develop better webinars, according to your needs, to whatever is important to you.

The ICANN universe and Internet governance is quite complex, and we realize that. So we want to give you the level and the intensity that you require. So please, feel free to type your questions on the chat box, and to send questions even to staff, if you would like us to improve some part of this webinar.

So without further comments, I will turn it over to Jia-Rong to start, or to the first speaker, perhaps Sarmad who I think is already ready to give the presentation. Thank you.

JIA-RONG LOW:

Thank you so much Silvia. This is Jia-Rong speaking again. And yes, we will be handing over time to Sarmad in just a second. So I will introduce Mr. Sarmad who is the IDN program senior manager, and we are very happy to be partnering with him during this time. And he's actually calling, dialing in, on the US timing, while on a business trip. So we appreciate having him take the time to do this with us.

Sarmad will be going through the IDN, what IDNs are, the IDN work currently that's happening in ICANN, and how you can be involved. At any time, during his presentation, you can type in the question as it comes up, or you can ask a question later on the call. But we encourage

you to type your questions in any time, that we will address all questions during the Q&A section at the later part of the call.

So now I will hand the floor to Sarmad. All yours Sarmad.

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

Thank you Jia-Rong, and greetings to everybody. So here is the agenda for my part of the talk. I will be very briefly introducing what IDNs are, and then we will go into more details of the IDN work which is currently been undertaken at ICANN. And then towards the end, I will also share with you how you can get involved, because a lot of work, actually most of the work of IDNs at ICANN is based on community participation.

So we will really like to get you involved in this process. And I will share with the [inaudible] as well. So let's start with what are internationalized domain names, or IDNs for short. So we are obviously are, we are already familiar with domain names. And here is an example of a domain name. And domain name actually can be divided into multiple labels. So in this particular example, www.cafe.com, .com is normally where, the top level domain label. Café is the second level domain level. WWW is the third level domain level and so on.

And the way these domain labels, or each of these domain label is formed, there have been some rules which are applied to them. So the second level or third level domain labels can be formed by letters, using letters A through Z. One can use digits or one can use a hyphen. And so combinations of letters, digits, and hyphen can form a label. However, there are some additional constraints on where a hyphen can go, and the maximum length of the label is restricted to no more than 63.

So those have been the traditional, in a way, rules which controls how a label can be formed. However, the top level domains are special, or However, the top level domains are special, or there are some additional constraints on forming the top level domains. The current practice has been that the top level domain names are only restricted to letters A to Z, and normally digits and hyphens are not used for top level domain names.

And of course, the length of the label remains between two and 63. So that has been the traditional sort of constraints to form labels. And the labels constraints for top level domains was a second or third level domains. When we go to internationalized domain names, internationalized domain names allow us to write domain names, but in other scripts.

So this is an example of a Thai domain name. Again, domain name labels can be divided into top level domain level, and second level, and so on. However now, since we are not using ASCII or [inaudible] anymore, we are actually using Unicode to form these labels. There are different rules which govern how these labels can be formed.

So for second and third level labels, for example, the labels have to be formed using Unicode letters. However, there are additional constraints in forming these labels, which are governed by the IDN 2008 protocol which has been devised by Internet Engineering Taskforce, or IETF.

When these labels are eventually used and [inaudible], they are actually promoted into ASCII labels. And the way they're done is that the

Unicode label is [translated?] into a corresponding ASCII level. It's called Punycode, and that's prefixed by XN dash, dash. So since the complete label has to be uplinked, 63, the Punycode length cannot be more than 15 letters because four characters are taken up by XN dash dash prefix.

So those are the concerns of second or third level labels. Similar to additional constraints which are for top level domain labels, the IDN top level domain labels are also special in the sense that they, the label principle which was also used to develop ASCII labels is carried over to IDN labels as well.

So the top level domain names should be restricted to quote/unquote letter principle, meaning only letters should be used, and of course, digits and so on for other marks or code points, which are generally allowable for second and third level, may not be used for top level domain levels.

So let me stop here and hand it over to Philadel.

JIA-RONG LOW:

Thanks Sarmad. So as part of the marking our webinars more interactive, so we will try Internet pop quizzes in the presentations, and we will now be having a pop quiz. So we'll hand it over to Philadel to do this section.

PHILADEL YEO: Okay. Hello everyone. So for our pop quiz number one, the question is, a domain name consists of a series of label separated by dot, what is the Unicode form of an IDN label called?

I see input already.

JIA-RONG LOW: Yeah. So it's at the bottom of the pod, so just go in and click what you think is the answer. Don't be pressured by other people thinking that [CROSSTALK] thinking that may not be the right answer. Follow your instincts.

Sorry, today is our [inaudible], we have a big team. So you hear a lot of laughter. So it's A label, you think A label is the right answer, click A label, or U label, click U label.

We'll give it another few seconds.

PHILADEL YEO: Yeah.

JIA-RONG LOW: All right.

PHILADEL YEO: Okay. I think that is all. So we have two answers that are being submitted. The majority is with U label, and then the second one, one person said A label. Well in this case, it's good to follow other people,

because the answer is U label. All right. That's all for pop quiz number one, watch out for more coming up. And now I'll hand it over to Sarmad right now. Thank you.

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

Thank you. So let's move on. So let's talk about the IDN work which is going on then at ICANN. I will start with a summary. So the work at ICANN is largely focused at top level domain names. So most of the programs are projects which we are undertaking currently, focused towards the top level domain names, how they defined. I will talk in more detail about them.

[The pilot] is some additional work which is being undertaken by ICANN. It looks at the IDNs at second level as well for gTLDs. And I will also talk about a couple of projects which we undertake. And then finally, obviously would like the community to get involved, because all of this work is being carried out and spearheaded by the community.

And therefore we also spend significant effort outreaching to the community, to get them involved in the process. And then, so [inaudible] this presentation, I will share some of the outreach efforts we have done, and also share more details on how you can get involved.

So let's move on. I will start with the IDN TLD program. So if you remember, we just talked about IDNs. Our domain names which are in different scripts, beyond just Latin script, or ASCII characters. And then we will also, when we are also talking about the top level domain names, you will also remember we talked about that their top level domain names are special, because they are more constrained, more

conservative in how they can become sort of ASCII second level domain names can be formed by letters, digits, and hyphens.

Top level domains are restricted to being formed only using letters. And then we come to these other scripts. We carry that [conservatism], that principle, the letter principle that we want the top level domain to be restricted by only those core points that quote/unquote qualify as letters in different scripts, and not, and shall not be called by other code points or characters.

But one of the, when we're going through other scripts, one of the first challenges we face is that it is not very easy to define what that letter principle is. What is a letter when we go into different scripts. And there was a problem we were at ICANN, you know, we started to address, when we started working on IDNs. And so this is a fairly large project, which we are undertaking, and we are [inaudible] a few things.

I detail that in the next slide as well. However, again, the core concept is that we wanted to find out what is an unique across different scripts, and what kind of other interesting challenges can come up when we actually undertake that exercise. So in order to understand the problem, the project started, [inaudible]... We looked at multiple scripts, looked at six scripts which are listed here, Chinese, Cyrillic, [inaudible] Greek and Latin.

And the idea was to find out what are, how these scripts work, how they are imported, what are the issues around these scripts, and how we could identify basically constraints to define top level domains using factors in these scripts.

Once the issues were identified, we went into a second phase which was conducted in 2011 and 12, were based on the input from independent case studies on different scripts. An overall problem was formulated, and based on that problem in 2012 and 13, the [inaudible] of the problem started, where we started looking at what would be the possible [all start] in defining, in collaboration with the community, what should be the possible solution to define the state of top level domains, to formulate valid top level domains.

And that basically exercise, led into this process which we call label generation rule process. This process, as I said, was developed in collaboration with the community, and the process that determined the rules through formulate labels for top level, one would need to go out and consult with the relevant communities, because the communities hold the expertise and can define rules for each of their scripts.

So the idea was to reach out to the script communities [AUDIO DIFFICULTIES]... one peer panels, which we call generation panels, organize the communities into these generation panels [AUDIO DIFFICULTIES].

And then ask to get ICANN recommendations on which core points from the scripts, and [inaudible], by Unicode should be carried over and considered as relevant for making top level domains, and which core points should actually be excluded and so on. So there was a process which, and then there was a second part of that process as well where the community group recommended the characters, and then there was an integration panel, which is a team of expert consultants which

ICANN... proposal in Chinese, Arabic, and all that into a single large table which will be used for groups of top level domains.

This data was being developed. So there was a lot of linguistic data was being developed through this process, would be developed through this process. And there was also leave to organize that data into a formal mechanism which can be processed by machines, and therefore P1 project was also, which was focused on devising a specification to store this data so that you can actually be consistently imported, and eventually used by different users.

And then there was redone on [inaudible] on variant TLD [inaudible] because in some cases, or in many cases, what happens is that a label can actually be imported in multiple ways, but end users still appears to be similar or sane based on, [inaudible] similarity, or visual similarity, or... some other kind of similarity.

And therefore, an end user's [AUDIO DIFFICULTIES] ...same or similar to each other, and basically there was a study done to see whether the variant TLDs are related, what user experience, education it can have. So based on that planning, eventually now we are in the phase of this project where we are actually executing. The process which allows us to develop this label generation rule set.

I will go into details, more details, in the next slide. In addition, we are also developing a tool which will enable easy use of the [AUDIO DIFFICULTIES] format. And also, once the [inaudible] has been developed and the tools are in place, we will also go into implementing the IDN TLD variance as...

So moving on, when we have to define these label generation rules for the root zone, as I shared that this will define rules on how TLD can, a top level domain name can be made or constructed in different scripts. And we need to be able to do that, we need to answer three questions for each of the scripts which are integrated into the root zone. So for example, if you're doing Chinese, or Arabic, or Cyrillic script, we need to answer which of the code points from [inaudible] for use in top level domains.

In addition, if there are particular characters encoded in different ways, you know, we need to identify that and labels to different encoding of the same character as variance. So for example, is simplified Chinese and traditional Chinese characters [inaudible] so they are identified as such. Similarly, in addition to core point level variance, we also need to look at traditional constraints may come on the label.

So there are additional rules which can still constrain top level domains. So for example, if you take Arabic script, maybe there is a possibility to use combining marks in a label, but the label may not be able to start with a combining mark. You know, that could be a rule which has further constraints, how a label can be formed.

Since we are talking about top level domains, this process has to be very conservative. It has to be done in a very skilled fashion, meaning that, you know, the way labels are generated, they must not pose any type of security threat to end users. And this has to be done at script level. So the root zone is not a language based standard, essentially it's script based specification.

So we've now started this work since more than a year. We have actually reached out to all of the communities, script communities, and asked them to organize themselves, start their work to define which code points should be usable for top level domains, which of them are really [inaudible] and if there are any additional rules that need to be considered for each of these scripts.

And so far, we have Arabic, Armenia, Chinese, and Japanese generation panels, which are fully formed and they are working towards developing their own proposals for their scripts, which prepares a generation panel as already completed with a little proposal, and it is currently being reviewed for finalization. And Armenia, Chinese, and Japanese communities are also working towards finalizing their proposals which will eventually be handed over to the integration panel to eventually evaluate and finalize and integrate into the root zone.

There are other script communities like Cyrillic and [inaudible], and Korean, which are also in the process of being formed. They've identified [inaudible] groups, but currently from finalizing the scope of their work, and the proposal to start that work. And then obviously, there are many other communities which are initiating, but are still looking for volunteer members for people to participate in the process and take the process forward.

And, of course, these are some of the areas where many of you can participate and contribute your expertise. Moving forward, as this data or label generation rules are created, eventually the idea is that they should be effectively used. And so we need to have tools which can

allow their usage. We are actually currently in the process of developing a tool.

The first thing this tool is allow people to create a [inaudible] so the generation panels, which are working, they will be able to put data into using a very friendly interface. And this will create the actual encoding in the back for that purpose. Plus the LGR has been created, a common community member person [inaudible] can come and use this tool to eventually verify whether a domain name in a particular script has been created, is valid or not.

And if it is valid, what are its variants, and whether those variants are blocked or are useable as far as top level domain names are concerned. And then there are some tools will develop also management of LGRs, for example, comparing the different LGRs to see whether they saying [inaudible]. And what we do, what we intend to do is use this open source so that the community can widely use it, and we will in house it.

So that's one of the largest projects in which you can directly get involved, where we are trying to define how top level domains actually can be formed. And where the two levels are distinct or they can really [inaudible] each other. One of... Another project which the IDN program at ICANN undertakes is the evaluation and delegation of IDN ccTLD fast track process.

Implement IDN ccTLDs, and that is done through the prospect process, implementation prospect process is the process developed by the ccNSO community of ICANN. And through this process, basically, a

country or territory can apply to a string, and it is evaluated by the IDN program. Again, parameters which have been defined by ccNSO.

And then the process is handed over to IANA, a department within ICANN to delegate the string. And so far, we have, the IDN program over the last five years, has evaluated 46 different top level domain labels in different scripts, from 36 different countries and territories. And then obviously, people have seen these applications and processing these applications.

So let me stop here and hand it back to Philadel for our next pop quiz.

PHILADEL YEO:

Thank you so much. Hi everybody. It's pop quiz time again. So, the second question is, just a minute. And let me hide the results so that there is no herd mentality going on.

So second question is, applications from how many countries and territories have been successfully evaluated by the IDN and ccTLD fast track process? Yes, time starts now.

We definitely have more varied answers now. Okay, we'll give it a few more seconds for you to input your answers.

JIA-RONG LOW:

All right. Five, four, three, two, one.

PHILADEL YEO: All right. And actually, most of you got it correct. The answer is 36. Well done people. Back to you Sarmad.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Thank you. So let's move on. So far I've talked about the work that we are undertaking to address the top level domains. However, as I initially shared with you, there are a couple of projects that also focus on the second level for the gTLDs. And the first process which is normally the [inaudible] the IDN implementation guidelines for the second level, is a project which focuses on the process part of second level for the [inaudible], for the gTLDs, specifically.

And the motivation behind it is that IDN registration policies and practices vary obviously quite a bit, and the motivation behind this particular project is to bring the different registries together, to discuss different challenges, and they face as far as second level implementation were concerned, and possibly harmonize along those policies and practices, so that we can reduce the risk and confusion for end user customers, or end users.

These guidelines have been revised from time to time, and we had the third regional guideline available since 2011. Or it was since then that it has been, there have been many changes in the IDN world, the additional guidelines, additional information, RFCs, additional standards being developed. And therefore, there was a request recently by the GNSO community to revisit these guidelines and to update these guidelines, and currently we are undertaking that process.

And obviously, our community members can also get more in this review process by either participating in the process, or by reviewing these guidelines when they are available for public comment. The second work which we are undertaking is not focus on process, but on data, which is used for second level label generation. So as part of the new gTLD process, each new gTLD which is offering IDNs at a certain level, they have to submit a table then that table has to be tested during what is called the pre-delegation testing, or pre-delegation process.

In this pre-delegation testing, in this pre-delegation testing, we've found there has been a variety in tables and tools to make sure that [inaudible] is concerned so that the user experience remains consistent and secure. What ICANN is doing is developing a series of language tables. These language tables will be developed in consultation with the community, and will be made available as reference tables for gTLDs so that they can use them to develop their own tables, they can [inaudible] these tables.

So again, a choice will remain with the gTLDs, whether they want to use these tables or deviate from these tables, but at least some reference will be available for them to work with. And again, once these tables are developed, we will share them with the community for feedback. And currently the process for developing these tables are also open for public comment, and all of you can get involved in that process, and [inaudible] in the tables so that we can make these tables as effective, the most effective for the community for its proper use.

So those are the two projects which we undertake at the second level. And finally, to get people involved, to inform people, what's going on,

we do significant outreach activities which include IDN session programs at ICANN meetings, which all of you are very welcome to come and attend. We also give regular updates to different communities within ICANN. And then we also go out to communities outside of ICANN meetings, like TLD meeting on IDN meetings.

And then also [inaudible] like this, and blogs, write blogs, so that we can get the message out to the community and get them involved. And let me stop here. So basically what we have done today is looked at some of the different projects that we are undertaking for focus on the top level domain, and also for second level for gTLDs. And I will now pass it back to Philadel for the... So, yeah. So I'll pass it back to Philadel.

This part, I guess this quiz, we have not given you information on this, but let's see if any of you are still familiar with how many gTLDs have been applied for, who are filling out IDN applications. So Philadel.

PHILADEL YEO:

Thank you so much. Okay, pop quiz number three. Some of you have already begun answering, but okay, let me read it out anyway. So how many new gTLD applications are IDNs. We will give you about 30 seconds to answer.

All right. Five more seconds. Let me do a countdown to make it more exciting. Five, four, three, two, one. And there you have it. So let's see. Okay, we have a very smart group today. So yes, the majority is correct. Again, the answer is 116, or 116. Thank you very much. So let's move on from here.

JIA-RONG LOW: Yeah, this is Jia-Rong speaking again. As Sarmad has mentioned, the, okay. Hold on while we are doing...

SARMAD HUSSAIN: ...jump in here, and basically share with you that you can get involved with the IDN program at three different levels. You can directly volunteer for us, and please do if you want to contribute to a script generation panel. Please email us at IDN TLD at ICANN dot ORG. And contribute to this generation panel work. If you cannot contribute back much time, please sign up on our list, it's VIP at ICANN dot ORG, and participate in the public comments.

Or even if you don't want to [participate], please still join our email list for IDN program. We are [AUDIO DIFFICULTIES] dot ORG, and you know, keep listening in on the progress we are making through the project. So thank you very much for your very patiently listening to my presentation. And I hand it back to Jia-Rong.

JIA-RONG LOW: Thank you Sarmad. I'm testing my voice a little bit. If you can give me some feedback whether you can hear me clearly, that will be great. And now we will be moving onto Edmon, to share his section regarding the perspective from the community. So, in the meantime, if you have any questions for Sarmad's presentation, please feel free to type it in the Q&A pod, and we will be taking those questions very shortly, after Edmon's portion. So Edmon, all yours.

EDMON CHUNG:

Thank you Jia-Rong. And thank you for tuning in, I guess, and always happy to talk about IDNs, which, as some of you may know, is one of my favorite topics. So I saw the pop quiz earlier, and this is, I guess, a slide that if you slowly try to count all of them, these are the 100 or so gTLDs that have applied for in IDN.

So, really a kind of shifting gears a little bit here, to go back to a question of why, why IDNs? And that's, I guess, what Jia-Rong has asked me to talk a little bit about. And this is a question that over the last 15, 16 years that I've been working on IDNs, that is recurring. And with all of these problems, if you will, or all these issues that we need to work on IDN, the question is, what is, why are we doing this?

And if you look at the screen right now, I'm sure, unless you're really proficient with languages, it is really a, you know, you probably won't know all of the words in the, you know, on the screen in front of you. So the question is, why are we bothering? And I think it ultimately, sorry I'm stopping for a moment here. I see on the chat that most really cannot hear me.

I wanted to see if I speak slower, does that help? Or...?

JIA-RONG LOW:

Edmon, thanks for pausing. Can you hear me, Edmon?

EDMON CHUNG: I can hear you perfectly, and I was hearing Sarmad perfectly earlier as well. I am connected through the phone.

JIA-RONG LOW: Yeah. I'm making announcement on the chat for everyone to try to dial in via the phone, so those who are on the phone line can hear clearly. So the Adobe Connect side is the one that is breaking up. So I suggest what everyone to dial in via the phone. So just use the instruction that I have, on the top left of the Adobe Connect room, you can see a phone icon, click on that. Then ask it to dial out to your phone number, wherever you are.

So let's give that a minute, and we apologize for this technical issue. And no rush, Edmon. So just take your time to do your presentation, and we'll give it another five, 10 minutes for Q&A at the end.

EDMON CHUNG: Okay. Did you want me to continue or did you want me to pause for maybe a minute or so, so people could dial in?

JIA-RONG LOW: Yeah, Edmon, could you pause for a minute or so? And maybe you go back just one slide, then everyone can get back to where you are.

EDMON CHUNG: Okay. I'll wait for your cue.

JIA-RONG LOW:

Yeah, I'll give you a cue. Thanks so much Edmon.

PHILADEL YEO:

Okay, we are doing audio tests right now. So I'm just going to speak for a while, while our tech support person, Rachel, gives the voice test. 1, 2, 3. Test, test, test, 123....

JIA-RONG LOW:

All right. I think most of us have moved over to dialing in on the phone. So I'm handing it back to Edmon. Edmon, all yours.

EDMON CHUNG:

Okay. Thank you Jia-Rong. And I'll guess I'll rewind a little bit and start. I'm kind of on this slide here, which I was just saying, this is kind of the answer for the pop quiz number three. If you slowly count the number of words, I mean, the strings here, they are the 100 or so new generic top level domains, IDN generic top level domains that were applied for.

So as I was mentioning, shifting gears a little bit here is really to talk about why IDNs? Sarmad has given a very full description of all of the issues and all of the matters that we are going through, in order to implement IDNs right now. And there has been 15, 16 years of that kind of work that has been put into IDNs as well.

So over these 15, 16 years that I've been working on IDNs, there is a recurring question of, so why are we bothering? This is so complicated. And what is the problem with just using English or ASCII? And I think it really boils down to a matter of world view. After 15, 16 years of

answering the same question, I understand that really there are people in this world that really views a, I guess, a mono-lingual or everything consolidated into a few characters, as a world to go forward with.

But I think there is also a world view that multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and a more diverse world, is something that we want. And I think IDN, on the Internet, IDN provides that kind of aspect. And I think that is a reason why we're gathered here, and that is a reason why we are continuing to work on this project. The other thing that I think is really important, is that we look at the world today.

There are about two billion that have gone online, but there are seven billion people in the world, and of the next few billion that will come online, one of the things that I'm pretty sure is that they are much less familiar with English as a language, and certainly they are unlikely to be speaking English as a first language. So their IDN is even more important.

One of the things that I always like to refer to is, imagine that the Russians, or the Chinese, invented the Internet, and every time we have to go to a website, we are forced to type in Cyrillic or Chinese, or another language, whoever invented the Internet. That is the reality for the rest of the world today. And that is one of the reasons I think that it's very important for us to continue to work on IDNs.

Yes, there is a lot of issues to still work through, and this is the reason why we're calling for your participation, but the value is there, and the value is about a multi-cultural, multi-lingual and diverse Internet. And I think another important thing is also about the small and medium sized

businesses. Especially, you know, businesses in China, in other places around the world.

Today, there are about 8 to 10 million small, medium sized businesses in India. Most of them speak to their customers in their local language. And only about half a million of these 8 to 10 million small businesses are online today. So most of them are still not online. And I think IDNs is a very important part of getting small, medium sized businesses online as well.

And if you think about it, also, you must have gotten a business card, a name card, from somebody, maybe from China, or from Japan, and on one side of the card, it is perhaps in English, and on the other side, it is the local language. And that is a very common convention. But today, if you look at the local language side in Japanese, or Korean, or Chinese, the email, or the domain name, is still in English. And IDNs provides that ability to complete that cycle as well.

And I think, most importantly, as businesses communicate with the local audience and local customers, in their own local language, and IDN is that identity that they can put online that is in synch with their offline identity. Another thing that we like to look at is also, there are people who say, hey their IDN has been, I guess, in circulation for a good few years now, but nobody uses them, or very few people use them.

One area that I think is also important for the development of IDN is actually search. Yes, perhaps, people in China, in Japan, or in India, currently don't use as much IDN. There are many reasons for that, but if you think about it, I don't think anybody search the Internet with

English in China. At least most of the time, they would be searching in their own local language. And this is another area that is very important for the development of IDN, because if you want people to find you online today, a lot of them will go through search engines.

And if a small business, or even a large business, or any product online, if you have an IDN that is how local people in China, in India, in Japan, will search for you, that actually enhances your ranking online. And therefore the development of search engines, in fact, drives, I believe, IDN, and drives the importance of IDN when you want to create, what I call, serendipitous meeting of your customers, or your potential customers, when they're looking for products for you, from you, and they're looking for products and your services, in their own language, online.

Another area that is pretty clear is, for example, in social networking. Yes, we may still be typing in English character domain names, but in social networking, in social network searches, everything is done in their local language, and there again, IDNs play a very important role. So if you are still not convinced with IDN being a way into the future, think about the mobile Internet and think about for voice recognition.

Think about how a person in China would be speaking into their phone and trying to navigate the Internet. Will they, at that point, try to type, you know, try to speak in URL name or domain name in an English form? It is much more prevalent, and I believe it is much easier for people to speak in their own language, and also that is, I think, another very important aspect of IDN, is to be able to navigate the Internet in their own language.

And I think I'll use this slide also to call for the participation from the community, to help us develop the IDN policies. I think Sarmad gave a very complete description about how the many aspects of IDNs are being worked on at ICANN. And it seems, you know, we've talked about U-label, A-label, we talk about LGR, you know, project one, project two. Many different acronyms or very seemingly technical ways of describing it.

But really, a lot of the issues are really user focused and policy driven. And one way I sometimes like to speak about what is called the label generation rule set, we refer to it as LGR, is really a way to look at the nuisances of languages. Today in English only, or ASCII only, world, we actually have a mapping between, for example, capital letters and small letters.

The problem with IDNs in other languages is that the same, or the similar, mechanism is not available in the technical part of the solution. And therefore, we're looking at a policy driven solution to handle these types of issues. I need to say also that this, of course, each language has their own unique situation, and it is vastly different from the capital letter and small letter issue with English, but, you know, it is the easiest way to think about what we call IDN variance, and what we call about call label generation rule set.

Those, I think, are the policies and issues that we are grappling with right now at ICANN. And yes, there will be linguistic matters. You should be aware of the language that you want to work with. But it is also, but it is also how it requires users to ultimately think about the issue, and this is, I think, we would call for more participation from

users. Another thing is that, yes, we want to match as much as possible what we call IDN variance, but ultimately, we cannot match, eliminate all of these issues.

Some of the issues will still, you know, users will still ultimately need to learn, for example, even in English, the digit zero and the letter O, digit one and letter I, and the letter L, they form situations where people may confuse between the two. So there are choices, and there are decisions that need to be made in terms of the policies. And these are quote/unquote, arbitrary decisions, and ultimately these are policy decisions and not necessarily purely technical decisions that need to be made.

And therefore, participation from users is very important, as we make these policy decisions. And after determining these tables, we're also going to need to move into implementation, what characters, what names are allowed into the root. What names are allowed into the second level domain names. All of these policies are currently being formed, and a lot of them, it has to do with a choice. A choice of how, and a balance between the security and stability of the Internet, the simplicity of the system, and also the importance of the linguistic nuisances. So and between these balances, I think it is very important, of course, for the technical community, of course for the linguistic community to participate, but also important for the user community to have our say in terms of how we want the Internet to work.

And with that, I really turn to how I think about the future of the Internet, with many different top level domains, including English and IDNs. And it is really more of, we today think of people or companies

having a single domain name. I think that future has changed, just like a business card with two sides, with the local language and English, I think in the future, companies will have multiple domain names, in different languages, especially in markets that they work on.

Because ultimately, domain names are really online identities that should reflect their offline identities, and their identities that connect with people. With that, thank you for hearing me out. I hope you think that IDNs are important, and I hope that you are better, or those who are already converted, I hope you're armed with some arguments to move forward, to convince more people to participate and to make IDNs work and to make IDNs a reality for the Internet. Thank you.

JIA-RONG LOW:

Thank you so much Edmon. I'm conscious of time and because of the technical issue, so let's take the next five minutes to do Q&A. We will do a hard stop at 12:10 PM exactly. So we will not overrun to take too much of your time.

So I just do want to emphasize and thank Edmon for making the point that, the work that we are doing for IDN will pave the way into the future of a multi-lingual Internet. And this cannot be done from just staff from ICANN, or one or two people, or the different communities who want to use the Internet in local language have to be involved. So now let's move into Q&A, and we have a first question from Alan on the chat.

I will also open for questions on the call, if you want to dial in on the call. Just hit star six to un-mute your line, but I will read the question

from Alan first. So the question is to Sarmad. How much longer will the language generation rules be done? And sorry, my chat pod is being... And I cannot really read it now. So how much longer will the LGR be done? And question two, I see that there are several language groups dealing with labels, should we wait until all language groups are done before we can implement the rules on the IDN TLDs of one language?

So Sarmad if you have, over to you please.

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

Okay. Thank you Jia-Rong. So, first of all, I would like to answer the first question. And we have about 28 scripts that the generation panels need to work on. And [inaudible] generation panel, which is being formed, is going to be looking at nine scripts. So the total number of generation panels we need is about 19, or maybe a few more depending on if we have more scripts which need to be added to LGR.

How long it's going to take? That's not an easy question for us to answer, as ICANN, because it really is dependent on the communities to get together, formulate themselves, and then [inaudible] develop these proposals. So we're expecting the first version of the LGR to come out in the third quarter of this year. This also goes into the second question, which is, are we going to wait until all the scripts are done? Or are we going to do intermediate versions of LGR?

So the answer to that is that the procedure, when it was designed, looked at this as a risk and addressed the solution by saying that each script which is ready can be integrated into the LGR. And therefore, we don't have to wait for all of the scripts to complete for the LGR to be

ready. How we would in some cases, like the case of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, with their using different languages, uses same script. They need to coordinate with each other.

So in that case, they are dependent on each other, and one script cannot be accepted until the other languages and scripts with which this generation panel is coordinating, have also [inaudible]. So, just to summarize, LGR will be implemented developed, and the pace of it depends on how different language communities contribute to this process.

JIA-RONG LOW:

Thank you Sarmad. We have one minute, so let's take the last question from Amal. I think this question goes to Edmon, this question is, what is feasible to come up with IDNs? Is there a demand for IDNs? And as customers prefer more global and standard domain names that can be expressed using any keyboard. Maybe Edmon can address this question?

EDMON CHUNG:

Sure. I think, again, it is a matter of thinking about the Internet. We think about it as a global medium, but more and more, I think, if you look at the development, it is about what we call local situation. The local Internet is as important as the global Internet, as you provide services to your local customers. And this is really, in terms of IDNs, it is both a world view issue of whether you believe in the multi-cultural community, and also serving your local customers.

And I think, ultimately, I think Amal, you're very correct, that people will end up having multiple domain names, just like they have multiple identities where they need them. There are certainly small businesses that only cater to the local customers, and those ones may only have an IDN domain name that is serving their own local community. But if they want to serve a global community, and having a different, having an English or an ASCII domain that they believe they can reach more people, then that is also a possibility.

So ultimately, I think it is much more about, and for IDNs I think it is a lot about also search optimization. It is about the social network, and it is also about the mobile development and the voice recognition aspect that I mentioned, is making people, making it easier for people to connect with you. You started with having making people easier to connect with you with a single language, but if you want to reach the diverse group of audience, it may be better for you to have multiple domain names, multiple channels that can connect you.

And it doesn't have to connect to the same place, right? You have an English domain name that connects to your English website, you have a Chinese domain name that goes directly to the Chinese website, because you're catering your services and products to the audience, and to market that, you want to reach out to, and IDNs provide that channel as well.

JIA-RONG LOW:

Thank you Edmon. I do hear that not everyone can hear the line clearly, but again, we will be posting the recording, and APRALO side will also be

assisting with providing the transcript. So we will be doing that. We have run out of time. So if you have additional questions, you can always email the questions to us at APAC hub at ICANN dot ORG, that's A-P-A-C H-U-B at ICANN dot ORG, and we will follow up with any questions that cannot be answered.

And do feel free to go and take the post-webinar survey. There is a link at the bottom of this. And once again, a big thank you to all of our presenters. And also to the APRALO and At-Large folks who are online with us today. And a big apology for the technical problems that we are facing on Adobe Connect. We'll try to make sure that doesn't happen again. This doesn't actually happen... This is the first time it's happening to us, so a big apology.

So that's it. That's a wrap-up for this webinar. A big thank you again, thank you so much for your time. We are dropping off the call for now. Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]