**AT-LARGE COMMUNITY POLICY ISSUES – WHY END USERS SHOULD CARE**

[**Accountability & Transparency of ICANN**](https://atlarge.icann.org/topics/accountability-transparency)

* End users are an integral part of ICANN’s multistakeholder community. Through At-Large Community, they play an important role in holding ICANN accountable.
* Their contributions are essential, especially due to their experience in understanding and explaining public interest and their ability to be innovative and propose solutions.
* End users’ participation will ensure the legitimacy in the process of enhancing ICANN accountability. It will also strengthen an inclusive, transparent, global, and collaborative model of governance fit for our present and future.

[**Contracted Party Agreements**](https://atlarge.icann.org/topics/contracted-party-agreements) **(i.e. Registry Agreement, Registrar Accreditation Agreement)**

* Contracted party agreements empower individual registrants to submit complains to ICANN, if they believe certain contracted parties are in violation of agreements and treat them unfairly.
* Policy changes to RA and RAA directly affect individual registrants’ rights, obligations, and overall experiences using the domain name registration services.
* As contracted party agreements are critical to the security and stability of the domain name system and have implications to the public interest, they also affect average end users who do not have domain registrations.
* Individual registrants and end users can actively shape the contracted party agreements through the GNSO processes.

[**Engagement & Outreach**](https://atlarge.icann.org/topics/engagement)

* Engagement and outreach efforts are a focus of the At-Large Community.
* They are critical for maintaining a sustainable flow of end user volunteers from diverse regions, ensuring that they are versed in ICANN policy issues and can effectively counterbalance other stakeholder groups.
* At-Large has been collaborating closely with ICANN Staff departments on the development and implementation of a variety of programs and events, which aim to get end users involved in ICANN.
* Promoting diversity and inclusion, At-Large often leads initiatives that target underserved communities (e.g. Applicant Support Program for New gTLDs applications, Captioning Pilot, Tribal Ambassador Fellowship, etc.).

[**IANA Functions & Stewardship Transition**](https://atlarge.icann.org/topics/iana)

* The IANA functions delivers the ‘One Internet’ for the world, enabling every computer to reliably find and connect to other devices or information sources regardless of physical locations.
* Although the IANA functions are operational functions, they do require global governance and stewardship, in which end users play an important role.
* Specifically, an ALAC Liaison is involved in the operational oversight, previously performed by the NTIA, as it relates to the monitoring of ICANN’s performance of the IANA naming functions.
* Ultimately, the transition matters to every end user, as its success will allow for the continued expansion, diversity, and innovation of one open, unified, and interoperable global Internet.

[**ICANN Operations / Finances**](https://atlarge.icann.org/topics/operations-finances)

* Since ICANN is the one and only organization that manages the Domain Name System, end users should care about its operational excellence and financial wellbeing and responsibilities.
* End users should take advantage of consultation opportunities on ICANN operations and finances to monitor and comment on issues of concern.
* Through ICANN’s special budget request process, the At-Large Community can request additional funding. Once approved, they can apply the resources to advance end user interests.

[**ICANN Policy Processes**](https://atlarge.icann.org/topics/policy-processes)

* As an ICANN Advisory Committee, the ALAC publicizes, analyzes, and provides advice on ICANN policy proposals and decisions that reflect the views and needs of individual Internet users at regional and global levels.
* The ALAC acts on the interests of a wide range of individual Internet users. They include registrants, consumers, and the billions of average web users and visitors.
* The ALAC not only advises on the DNS policies developed through SOs. It also advises on the work deliverables from ICANN Community, Board, and Staff on a wide range of topics.
* While ICANN is a technical organization with a focused mandate, individual Internet users that don’t have vested business interests, political interests, or even technical backgrounds can influence the evolution of the critical logistical infrastructure layer of the Internet. Such power is rare to find in other international organizations in the world.

[**Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs)**](https://atlarge.icann.org/topics/idn)

* IDNs give users around the world the same rights to access the web in their native tongue, making it easier for them to discover/remember websites and promote local content via service providers likely in their own countries.
* It is expected that IDNs will increase the Internet penetration in emerging economies of Asia Pacific, Africa, and Latin America where English is not the primary language.
* Due to the lack of universal acceptance, using IDNs can be challenging across browsers, emails, and mobile apps. ICANN’s work on the universal acceptance will ultimately improve user experience, increasing the IDN uptake and making the Internet truly multilingual.

[**Internet Governance**](https://atlarge.icann.org/topics/internet-governance)

* Underrepresentation of any component in Internet Governance would adversely affect the Internet's smooth operation. Users' freedom to innovate is at the core of the Internet’s success.
* End users’ participation ensures that the Internet Governance ecosystem is not stifled by specific interests. They are empowered to advocate for equal rights and to counterbalance possible attempts from the private sector and governments that reduce freedom of choice and market competition, which is against public interest.
* Direct user involvement will also contribute important skills and expertise to the Internet policy making process, as well as establish a quick reaction loop to verify their effects.
* Users’ involvement will significantly increase the geopolitical diversity of governance bodies.
* Any policy that does not take into account the needs and values of the user community will be unenforceable and ineffective.

[**New Generic Top-Level Domains (gTLDs)**](https://atlarge.icann.org/topics/new-gtlds)

* New gTLDs offer much greater flexibility for individual registrants to create memorable, innovative names for their websites.
* As New gTLDs open up opportunities for new registries and registrars to enter the domain name industry, individual registrants have more choices when purchasing services.
* New gTLDs also could cause widespread confusion, as users may have to learn the new addresses of websites that they are using.
* In addition, users may be exposed to fraud, counterfeiting, and identity theft when criminals take advantage of this confusion to create hostile sites with new gTLDs.

[**Public Interest**](https://atlarge.icann.org/topics/public-interest)

* The Internet has become a critical part of the global public sphere. As the influence of commercial interests and state powers has been increasing, stakeholders need to work together and form a comprehensive vision on the Internet that addresses the protection of civil liberties, such as free speech and privacy.
* Discussions on the topic of “public interest within ICANN’s remit” have been ongoing for years. The potential definitions of this term are often contested by stakeholder groups and constituencies.
* Within ICANN, there is a pressing need to devise mechanisms to effectively address the public interest, counterbalancing the commercial pressure, as the domain name industry is primarily dominated by big commercial players.
* Public Interest is a key topic of the At-Large Community. Specifically, EURALO has advocated for related principles such as Open Access, Free Software, and Creative Commons since its inception. Its leaders also drafted the thesis paper on public interest and led the creation of the At-Large Public Interest Working Group.
* One sub-topic that At-Large cares deeply about is the Public Interest Commitments (PICs), especially pertaining to the Category 1 TLDs defined by the GAC, such as .doctor and .bank.

[**Reviews at ICANN**](https://atlarge.icann.org/topics/reviews-improvements) **(Organizational Reviews & AoC Reviews)**

* End users have a critical role in holding ICANN accountable. Their expertise is needed in various review processes.
* Specifically, end users are directly impacted by the Organizational Review of the ALAC and the wider At-Large Community.
* This Review will evaluate At-Large Community’s organization effectiveness and how well it has fulfilled its mission of acting on the interests of end users worldwide in ICANN. Inputs from end users are essential.
* Recommendations evolved from this Review, once implemented, will likely cause changes to the At-Large Community, impacting on the representation, participation, and influence of end users in ICANN.

[**WHOIS**](https://atlarge.icann.org/topics/whois)

* WHOIS data is key for fixing system problems, maintaining Internet stability, and enhancing the accountability of registrants.
* Its “one-size-fits-all” disclosure of identifying information may also expose registrants, especially individual registrants, to potential spam, phishing, and identity theft.
* Due to its implication in privacy, data protection, policing, security, and malicious use and abuse, WHOIS matters to end users, especially individual registrants.