

4.2.9 Systems

- *4.2.9.1 Explanation of Subject*

There did not appear to be any guidance specifically related to technical systems in the 2007 Final Report.

ICANN developed and deployed a number of applicant-facing systems to facilitate application submission and communications between ICANN operational staff and applicants. The TLD Application System (TAS) was used to allow applicants to submit their applications and to receive the results of the various evaluation procedures, such as Financial Capability, Technical/Operational Capability, Registry Services, overall Initial Evaluation Results, etc. The Customer Portal was responsible for allowing applicants to submit questions to ICANN and for ICANN to provide responses.

In addition to these two primary systems, there were additional solutions developed to support the program, including Digital Archery, Centralized Zone Data Service, and the Application Comments Forum.

- *4.2.9.2 Questions and Concerns Related to Subject*

There were several systems that applicants had to utilize throughout the application process, many requiring different logins, and many presenting a different user experience. Members of the DG suggested that a more integrated set of applicant-facing systems would be a more user friendly, robust approach. There were distinct issues with some of the systems, in particular the TAS system. For instance, TAS required first logging into the Citrix ZenApp layer, which provided a browser agnostic environment, then subsequently logged into TAS itself. While there were benefits to creating a browser agnostic environment, particularly security benefits, it proved to be a poor user experience with applicants having trouble keeping track of multiple sets of login credentials, downloading required software properly, uploading supporting documentation, and even pasting their question responses into the proper fields. Additionally, TAS suffered an applicant data security glitch, which required the system to be taken offline in April of 2012. After an extensive audit, ICANN felt confident that it understood the extent of the issue. After having resolved the cause of the glitch, the system was brought back online in May of 2012.¹

As mentioned, many of the other applicant-facing systems did not share architecture or a credential database, so they had very little integration, creating what DG members found to be a fragmented experience. Because of issues like the TAS glitch, DG members also recommend more robust security testing and as a result of the negative comments received about user experience, user experience testing is likely also beneficial.

¹ Details related to the TAS Glitch: <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/tas/interruption-faqs>

- *Relevant Guidance*
 - Recommendation 1
 - Implementation Guideline A

- Rationale for policy development:

The DG did not anticipate policy development work in regards to systems. However, a potential PDP-WG on New gTLD Subsequent Procedures may want to consider providing implementation guidance, such as a minimum set of security and infrastructure standards, for consideration by ICANN during implementation of subsequent procedures.